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Full Gospel Business Men's

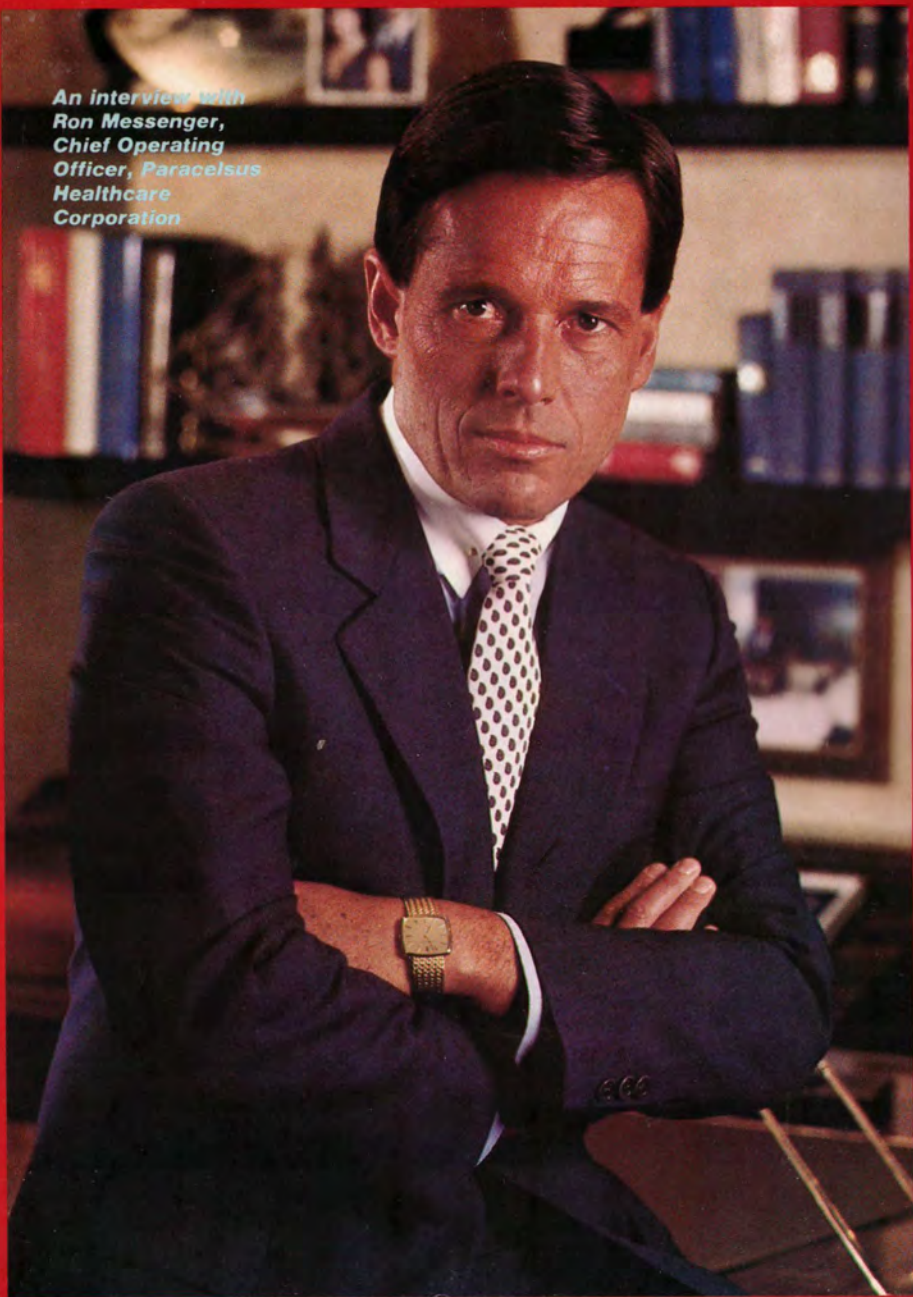
VOICE

TOTAL HEALTH

AN INTERVIEW WITH
RON MESSENGER,
CHIEF OPERATING
OFFICER, PARACELSUS
HEALTHCARE CORP.



**An interview with
Ron Messenger,
Chief Operating
Officer, Paracelsus
Healthcare
Corporation**



Q Give us a little background on your company.

A Paracelsus Health Care Corporation is an international company. We were founded by a single shareholder, Dr. Hartmut Krukemeyer. He established the company back in the mid-sixties. He's a West German and lives in West Germany. He started the company in Germany. In 1981, he acquired the medical division of Ramada Health Care Corporation. That was his first investment in the United States.

I'm Chief Operating Officer of the United States operation and also sit on the board of the international company.

Krukemeyer is the single largest health care provider/owner in the world, as a single shareholder. I think the Federation of American Hospitals ranked us fifth or sixth largest in the world.

Domestically, we own 26 hospitals; 21 acute care hospitals and 5 convalescent hospitals and then various health care companies.

Our U.S. operation started in 1981 with nine hospitals. Revenues at that time were about \$50 million. When I joined the company, two and one-half years ago, our gross revenues were \$150 million. We ended our current fiscal year with revenues of over \$400 million.

Q What are the plans for the future?

A There is a prediction that over 1,000 hospitals will go out of business in 1990 because of the changes that are taking place in the industry. I think we've seen almost 300 hospitals that have shut their doors. It is having a major impact on hospitals. Fortunately, our company's earnings have increased 30 percent this year over last year. We're budgeting for an increase in earnings next year, but we've got to closely evaluate which would be the most efficient way of delivering health care in this country. We must develop a program that will be profitable, whether it's in an outpatient setting or in a home environment, or whether it's delivering a lot more of those

TOTAL HEALTH

Ron Messenger was seemingly blessed with everything he wanted. His efforts and prayers never appeared to go unanswered. As chief operating officer for a major medical corporation, he had attained the business success he had wanted. His family and social life were full and outwardly fulfilling. Everything should have been fine. Yet inside this man, a desperate struggle took place which eventually led Ron back to his roots, and the God he had learned to rely on as a youth.

services in an out-patient department within the hospital instead of an acute inpatient center.

Q *The predictions they are making are rather shocking. What will that do to health care for people in America?*

A I think the quality of health care will be jeopardized because, first, money won't be available for research, so cures for many diseases won't be found as fast. Heavy capital expenditures for major programs, like heart surgery, will be more centralized. So services in outlying areas will be less accessible.

Q *Why has the cost of health care increased so much faster than the inflation rate?*

A There are many reasons for the increase in health care costs, but we'll talk about two or three major reasons. First of all, the scope of health care in this country has increased dramatically in the past three decades. We do far more in the way of treatment for patients than we used to. Technology has increased, and we are now doing things that we never thought were possible. In the past few years, we've been doing open heart surgery, and radiation therapy for cancer treatments, as routine treatment. We're seeing many diseases treated that were not even identified several years ago.

Ron Messenger is president and chief operating officer of Paracelsus Healthcare Corporation (PHC). Prior to becoming president of PHC, he was senior executive officer of National Medical Enterprises (NME). He is on the Board of Directors of the Federation of American Health Systems, the California Hospital Association, the Health Resources Institute, and Calvary Church of Ontario, California. His wife Fran, and their two daughters Jodi, age 14 and Morra, age 12, attend Calvary Church of Ontario, California. Ron is a graduate of the University of Southern California, where he received both his BA and MBA.

Secondly, with the new regulations that have come out of Washington, and at the state level, health care providers are required to do things and document items, which increase the cost of health care substantially more than before.

Thirdly, the legal system has helped to raise the cost of care due to the increased number of malpractice suits being filed. In just the last two years, insurance costs have tripled.

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Those are the major factors affecting the cost of patient care. Patients require more people today to provide that care, and a much higher capital investment is required.

Q *What is the industry trying to do to remedy the problem of costs for health care?*

A Health care, as a percentage of gross national product, has reached 11 percent in this country. When you look at that statistic, you realize something has to be done. That is a lot of money that our society is paying for health care. You can't fault the government or the people, for looking at trying to reduce those expenditures and attempting to make the system more efficient. However, I think things are moving too fast and people aren't aware of the impact that it's having on the system. There needs to be more analysis and planning so providers and patients will have the opportunity to adjust to the new regulations that are going to be required.

There will continue to be pressure to reduce health care expenditures. There's certainly pressure to reduce the Medicare budget. The number of people over 65 is increasing, so long term care versus short term care has become more profitable. That is one of the reasons we see so many senior citizen living centers and retirement homes. There's a huge demand for them because of the aging population. I think you will also begin to see more acute care services being provided in the long term setting.

Q *How about AIDS? We've read so*

much about cures or approaches to cures for AIDS. Is that actually happening?

A Not really. Some drugs have been developed that put the AIDS virus in temporary remission. But basically, AIDS as I understand it (and I'm not a medical doctor) is really a form of cancer. Before they will be able to cure AIDS, they're going to have to find a cure for cancer and then, hopefully, they'll be able to find a cure for AIDS. But that's becoming an international problem. They just had the big AIDS international conference in Paris two months ago. The number of people that are carrying that virus in this country is absolutely astounding. There have been some rejections in our local greater Los Angeles area and by 1995 most of our hospital beds will be filled with AIDS patients. That demand is going to be so great, and so it's something that society will really have to take a look at and determine how we're going to deal with it.



Q *We would like you to share with us, from your heart, your personal testimony on how you found Christ, and what it has meant to your life and to your business.*

A I found Christ as a youngster. I had a grandmother who was a very powerful woman and loved the Lord with all of her heart. My parents believed in Christ, but they were not really practicing Christians. Since my grandmother lived across the street, she made sure that I stayed in church. I accepted Christ around the age of 10, and was filled with the Holy Spirit at the same time. During my formative years, Christ was a very important part of my life. I basically only asked God for a couple of things. One request came when I was 15 years old. That's when I first saw my wife. She was attending a youth rally with a preacher she was dating. I remember sitting next to my pastor at the rally. I nudged him on the arm and said, "If God would give me something like that, I would serve Him for all the days of my life."

I prayed for that at 15 years of age. A couple of years later we actually dated, and she didn't like me, so we stopped seeing each other for a few years. But later in college, we got back together and were married in our early 20s.

I had a difficult time getting into the university that I wanted. They would not accept me, as I did not score well on my college exam — my entrance exams. So I prayed, "Lord, if you'll help me get a degree and help me get through this environment, I'm your boy. I'll serve You with all the gusto I can muster all the days of my life." God was good. He an-

swered both of those prayers. He helped see me through my educational process. He also helped me through graduate school. I was able to go through with honors and essentially, straight A's. God provided a beautiful opportunity for me to go to work at North American Rockwell and eventually I became responsible for the logistics in the missile system.

Q *Why didn't you continue on with Rockwell?*

A I didn't want to stay in the defense business, so we prayed about what field we should go into. At that point in time, God made it very clear to us that health care was an emerging field, where business needs for professional management would be growing. So we prayed that He would open up the door for us to be able to enter that field. Fortunately, He did that, and I was able to become a consultant in a health care environment. That was in 1968. Eventually, I was in charge of research development activities in that consulting firm. Within a year or so, I was promoted, and had outside clients. One of my clients was a hospital, which was owned by National Medical Enterprises. That particular hospital made me an offer to come to work for them as their associate administrator.

I was very happy in the consultant arrangement, so that was a difficult decision. But through prayer, God directed us to make that decision. After a couple of months, I had the opportunity to have my own hospital—to be administrator of the hospital. Within two years, that hospital became the most profitable hospital of any acute care hospital in the United States. Because of that, some

other people, private investors, made me an offer to start my own company.

So, I made a decision at that time to leave and start my own company. When



I gave my resignation, the president called me in the office and said, "I want to try to talk you out of leaving" and made me an offer. At that point in time, I did not know what to do. So Fran and I went to Lake Tahoe and spent the weekend together in prayer. Again, God showed us that it was best for us to stay where we were. That was a very difficult decision for us, since, we had actually given our word that we were going to make that change. But it was God directing our lives, and we could see His hand in these decisions. Today, we see those other people, and what happened to them later on, we can see that it would have been a very bad decision for us to make.

At this point, the president wanted me to come up and be his assistant. He was

going to teach me business, in the big business world, not only at the hospital level, but at a corporate level. I thought that was a wonderful opportunity. But I experienced a major disappointment when I got up there. To my surprise, he was never around, and I didn't know what to do. I got very frustrated and I said to God, "Is this where You want me?" I'm here twiddling my thumbs, and I'm going nowhere. It seemed like I was at a dead-end street. I thought to myself, "You know, you've got to do something." So I decided to go out and start looking for hospitals to buy, and just kind of create my own portfolio. That was really the major synergism, I feel, for the growth in National Enterprises. We had about 60 million dollars in revenue at that time. For the next ten years, I was involved in the acquisition of most of the assets and companies that they have today. Today, they're over a 4 billion dollar company. Through that process, we acquired Medco Corporation, an East Coast company that was listed on the American Stock Exchange.

My company asked me to move fast and run that particular company, as well as the corporate development organization on the East Coast. I didn't want to go. My family was here. We lived in the same town my parents lived in. We were very well situated. We prayed about it, and for some reason, God directed us to go to the East Coast. That was probably the best decision that we've ever made. When we got there, we found a very autonomous environment. It was very similar to running our own company, because it was a private, as well as an independent company.

We were only there three or four months, when we got a major contract with Saudi Arabia. It was the largest health care contract ever awarded. It amounted to a little over 1 billion dollars. The company then asked me if I would go overseas to set up all of our international offices throughout the world. So, on a 48-hour notice, I moved my family to London, and we lived in London, and spent the next few months setting up offices throughout the world. This was a wonderful experience that we could never have duplicated. We had the opportunity to meet a lot of fine people and to witness about Christ. We were heavily involved with our business.

We returned to the East Coast, and were only there a few months when a major reorganization occurred in the company. Suddenly, I was asked to come back west. I was torn...I wanted to move back, but my guts told me not to. We prayed about it, and I don't know that this decision was God or us, but we decided we'd come back west to run all the western operations of International Medical Enterprises at that time.

We got back here and the company was in the process of reorganization. Suddenly, things became centralized. A lot of the power and authority that I had in the East was not being made available to me here in the West, because I was so opposed to the corporate offices. I thought, "Boy, did I blow it God. I really made the wrong decision here." I became very despondent over that decision. It was during that process that a major recruiting firm in New York contacted me and asked me if I would be interested in interviewing to become

Chief Operating Officer of another small health care company.

I said no, because I was one of several people that were really slated to become president of NMA, a 4 billion dollar company at that time. That was a tremendous opportunity. As we prayed



about it, something just sort of nudged us and said we should go through that interview process. So I met with the people in Miami, Florida and they described the organization and I said, "That was nice." I had a nice interview and went home, and

I didn't hear anything for a few months, so I thought it was dead. Then all of a sudden, I get a call from New York and they want me to come to New York to meet the president, who is a West German, and the single shareholder of this company. I said no, that I was too busy at that time and could not go. To make a long story short, we went into one whole year of negotiations back and forth and it was only through prayer and God really giving us a sense of direction that we decided to make this change.

We did that in 1984, and it's probably been the best career decision that we could have ever made. Since then, my former company had major reorganization changes. The company has changed in complexity to such a degree that I know I would not have been happy had I stayed there.

Today, I have the opportunity to really have the authority and responsibility to run this company. With the single shareholder being 8 thousand miles away, it gives me a lot of freedom, that I never would have had, had I not made this decision.

So, God was really in it all through that decision-making process. We relied on God and went to prayer about these decisions. And, I firmly believe that God has really directed every step of our professional life and growth.

Up to about a year ago, you know, you get to the point where you think you almost have everything. The company was doing well. We doubled it in over a year — actually more than doubled it. Our family was doing well. We have two girls. Our marriage was good. We'd never had any conflict in our marriage

and we'd always worked together and always had a tremendous relationship. I mentioned earlier that God gave me my wife when I was fifteen years old. We were established in a big church. We were sitting under a good ministry. We had wealth of money. We had power. We got heavily involved in the political system. Everything seemed to be right for us. Everywhere we looked there was success.

But at this point in my life I looked and said, "What else is there?" And that's when I started to have some real problems. That is when I began to question everything, and I went through, I guess what most people would describe as the mid-life crisis. One guy I know, a stockbroker in New York, when I was telling him about my problems, he said, "Oh yeah. All of my associates have gone through that. That's when you want to drive a red Porsche 200 miles an hour. That's when you want to find some young honey and that's when you want to start all over again." And basically, that's what I was feeling, and there was no reason to feel that way. It was just something that was there, and I had no control over it.

I didn't know what to do because I could not talk to people that I was close to, because I was afraid of losing confidence. I talked to my wife. We were very much involved in trying to work out this problem. We went to some of the best psychologists in the world. You know, Christian psychologists in the world. Every time we would describe our problem, it was, "Yes, you're right in the middle of the mid-life crisis." They didn't really have an answer. I was in a lot of

pain. I didn't know which direction to turn. During the whole process, I could not really touch God. The desires of my heart and the devil were so much greater than just touching God.

I eventually shared with my secretary the fact that I was having this problem and she suggested that I talk to her pastor. Since he was someone who didn't know me, or my family, and didn't know anything about me, he was somebody I could go to. He was a younger guy. We became friends. We started meeting on Saturday morning once a week for breakfast, and he really helped guide me through this process.

I also obtained a book written by Edwin Luccer of the Moody Institute in Chicago. The part that caught my eye was titled "passions." The central theme dealt with sensuality and talked about the mid-life crisis, in terms of the sexual aspects. When I started evaluating what was happening to me and identifying it, it really became a sexual problem and a sexual desire. Basically, I've always lived a very clean life. I accepted Christ at a very young age and had been faithful to my wife all those years. But I still had all of these desires. I did not know how I was going to control them. It took a lot of work through this pastor and this book to help me find God and understand His grace, and what it meant to completely rely on Him.

Growing up, I relied on Him to make decisions, but I never had any personal problems, that I had to turn over to Him. I really had to have His mercy come in my life. He took me up by the boot straps and lifted me up and I said, "Here I am." It was a process that we went through.

God interceded in a powerful way to help heal me because I was in a tremendous amount of pain. I was in so much pain, every night I would come home and sit in the jacuzzi, to allow the hot water to get the cramps out of my stomach. It was something that I couldn't control and it was something that I did not understand, and it was only God who helped me through it. I had to start setting new goals for my life and start working towards those goals.

Once you've achieved certain things, you start asking what else? Then you start asking what is life all about? You start focusing on life hereafter and you start focusing on eternity, and you have to start really asking yourself some really hard questions. I had to almost reevaluate the whole creation over again. Is there a God? Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? Where do I really want to be? I went through the whole process.

Fortunately, I came back to the original conclusion and had a much stronger belief in God than I ever had before. He is real. He exists. He's up there, and He's also down here living in me. My energy and directions now have to be focused much more in the spiritual sense on what I can do for Him and not what He can do for us. Up to that point, my focus was pretty much self-centered on my material and professional accomplishments, and not spiritual accomplishments. Hopefully, we can set some goals that God will want us to achieve, and that we will strive to really focus on.

I was in our country club the other night and there was a judge there and he said, "Ron, I saw you out jogging the other day." I said, "Yeah, I'm training for



a marathon." He said, "Marathon! What do you want to do that for? You crazy? I said, "Well, have you ever heard of mid-life crisis?" He said, "Well, that's just a bunch of malarky." I said, "Well I decided that either I was going to have to run a marathon or have an affair, so I chose a marathon." That was a goal through this whole process that I established. And last month, I ran my first

marathon, but it was a discipline. A lot of times, God requires us to discipline ourselves. He wants us to be disciplined people. The whole period of training was a very disciplined point and time in my life. It was not only disciplining myself with the training to be able to run the marathon, but it was disciplining my thoughts—directing our spiritual life in terms of getting back into the Bible. Really trying to again rely upon God as our source, our strength, and our direction. You really have to get down to the basics. Nothing we have is ours. God has just given us this, to oversee...that now we have a greater accountability. We have to do for Him because of what He has given us.

When you really start focusing on that accountability, then it becomes a real responsibility to serve Him. This process I've gone through gave me an opportunity to talk to a lot of people that were hurting. As I was hurting, I recognized all the different people I came in contact with—business men, politicians and church people, ministers—a lot of people. They are facing the same type of problems I was facing in terms of sexuality. I think that is something you really want to talk about. Sex is probably one of Satan's most important tools of temptation. Yet, modern man will not admit it, and start evaluating what he is thinking about. Men start hurting, and they're not being honest with themselves, in terms of dealing with this whole problem of sensuality and sex in their lives. When I talked to these people, everybody was focusing on different directions. I tell you, if they don't get ahold of themselves, it's going to drive them right to hell. You



basically have to get to a point where you're going to have to make a commitment. What does God really expect of us through the process. I don't think God did this to me, but He allowed it to happen.

Over the past year, I've read almost every Christian book I could get my hands on. They all seem to relate in one way or another to this problem of sexuality. It's a real phenomenon that we have to deal with. I think a lot of people go through a mid-life crisis and don't realize what they're going through. Fortunately, I was able to seek counseling in the right direction.

Q *How did your personal relationship influence the way in which you manage your firm as well as the way you relate to the people who are supportive of you?*

A That's a good question. I've been trying to evaluate that, especially since I've been growing out of my problem with the mid-life crisis, so that I can really be more of an example to the people who I come in contact with. I do not go around preaching. I try to be very fair, but firm and tough in dealing with my subordi-



*Paracelsus Healthcare Corporation
headquarters in Pasadena, California*

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nates. Our company is not an easy company to work in. The expectations are very high. Turnover of management in personnel has unfortunately been very high, because we have very definite expectations of what we want our people to do and to be. Even though we might have a Christian spirit, that doesn't impact our expectations of our people. Either they perform or they're not with us.

We wrestle with how much to get involved in someone's career; how much training and how much effort to really put into someone's life, to help make him more beneficial to the organization. We're trying to deal with that. The thing is, the people in our organization know our standards. They know that we are Christians. They know that I have a Bible study in our home for couples, so they know that there are certain forces that are spiritual forces and godly forces that are in place within our company. When they have a problem, and we have an opportunity to counsel them concerning those problems, we will bring God into those discussions, especially when it's similar to my own circumstances. I think God can use us in our company to witness to these people we come in contact with, and I've not been as outspoken as I would like to be, but hopefully, that is developing.

Q *How many employees do you have?*

A We have 5,000 in the U.S. Our corporate office in Pasadena, California has about 100 employees. We have regional offices in the Southeast and various subsidiary companies that have their own smaller corporate offices. We

decentralize the organization into smaller operating units and then the parent—the major corporate office is in Pasadena—that's about 100 people.

There's a tremendous amount of spiritual warfare today. We've gone out and prayed for a lot of businesses in this area—small businesses—and it's amazing what God has done to bring forth miracles. But as time progresses, I believe we'll see more and more of that because the pressure is immense. No one is beyond the pressure either. It's happening and touching a lot of different people.

The more we can bring God into our business, the more He's going to help us make better business decisions and be a better testimony to people who work for us, and give us services.

I never realized the devil has the power that he has. But every time I would make some progress this past year, I would get hit by the devil twice as hard, and he would come twice as hard as he ever came before, every time I would try to do something for God. I'm really seeing the devil work out there. The devil can take an inch and then he can wait years and take another inch. It's a creeping...he's got all the patience in the world. If you continue to give him those inches, he's going to continue to creep into your business and your life, and he's going to control us at some point in time, and we're going to fall.

I pray for businesses by pleading the blood of the Lamb over our businesses and over our lives. I think that's a very important aspect, that we need today to counteract the devil's influence out there. □

Guilty Pleasure
Better

INTELLECTUAL
WHAT'S MISSING
COURES NOT CHEAT THRILL

More Places
the Show.

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY
FEELING IS BELIEVING

with too many
ive reason

atter You

GET MORE
DISCOVER
The pleasures

WRESTLING
WITH GOD



King Harris
Pebble Beach, California

Read the Book
BIBLE

Elizabeth was staring into the fire, sobbing softly, her blue eyes swimming in tears. My hostility permeated the air. The subject of our discussion was a curse to me: religion!

"I'm talking about Christianity, not churchanity nor religion," Elizabeth said.

My wife and I were going through the ultimate crisis. Elizabeth had just informed me that she had accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour. "From now on He is going to carry my baggage," she stated.

"Born again," I quipped. "If you wish to call it that," she replied. "Jesus Christ is now the center of my life. He's number one."

"Hogwash!" I shot back.

To me, the mere mention of Jesus Christ was thick gruel. I tested her newfound commitment. Elizabeth is an animalholic; her devotion to animals is total and all-consuming. I lose track of all the horses, dogs, and cats who drool around our table.

"Number one, is He?" I repeated. "Do you put Jesus Christ before your animals?" Her reply was emphatic, "Of course."

"Ahead of me?" I felt threatened. "Certainly," her response was kind but quick. Somebody else was sitting in the cat-bird seat.

"God helps them who helps themselves," was all I could say.

"That's not in the Bible," Elizabeth answered quietly. "Actually, Ben Franklin wrote that."

Words in the Bible, however, fed my inward agitation: humility, repentance, righteousness, faith and obedience.

I am an addict of self. Master of my

own destiny. Nothing happens unless you make it happen. As a closet atheist, God never played a part in my world! His commandments conflicted with the pleasures and desires which spiced my life. No way was Elizabeth going to sway me from my enmity with God.

At an early age, Satan had me in his hip pocket. I walked out of the Roman Catholic Church and never looked back, drowning out the Lord in vice. I rose to the top of the advertising agency business, and as a humanist, felt that anyone who believed in creation showed a defect of character.

I wrote ads which twisted the truth: ads which depicted happiness as driving the right car, ads for products which polluted our bodies, ads which inferred that using the right deodorant was the path to acceptance. I laughed when a priest told me that God wants us to be as He made us—not as the commercials say we should be!

Yet, achievement in a success-oriented world was meaningless and without fulfillment. I turned to Goethe's dictum—"the world only goes forward because of those who oppose it"—and co-founded the nation's first public interest advertising agency, a counter culture, anti-establishment agency. Our arrows were loaded with choleric barbs aimed at the heart of God's directives.

We were *against* school prayer, *for* abortion, *for* homosexual rights, *for* the current fad—"if it feels good, do it!" In short, I condoned immorality. It was not exactly an atmosphere where the Lord wanted to function. As a result, in three years, the agency went belly-up!

Elizabeth had approved of the original

basic concept of my pro-bono work. The idea had been to represent the unrepresented, gain access to the media for those without a voice, and plead the cause of the needy. But she cast a jaundiced eye as I continued to launch my unrelentless humanistic missiles.

I knew that Elizabeth believed in God. However, I was shocked when she talked about her personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This was a new dimension. My angry retorts ricocheted around the room when she said that God was Jesus Christ in human form, who died for us and rose from the dead. That we had been bought with a price! God had created a new beginning for the human race for those who would accept His gift. Elizabeth and I were walking on brittle grass.

I felt depleted inside. When I can't handle something, I retreat into my cocoon and sulk. Pride kept me from vomiting my hurts in front of male friends. Ours had been a marriage of substance. We shared and grew together. We enjoyed one another's being.

Memories of yesterday's calm days kept running through my mind. Elizabeth with her grey mare, "Ah Declare," flying over five-foot fences, her dogs jumping alongside her. Elizabeth is a non-plastic

woman of sunshine and passion. Neatly packaged with internal and external beauty, Elizabeth abhors status-seeking, trendiness, fence-sitting, running with those of the world and other manifestations of insecurity. Outside of having a black belt in tongue and occasional spurts of loutish behavior, she is a vital and loving companion. Now a division had come between us!

I was under siege on two fronts: wrestling with God and suffering from financial indigestion. The real estate market was in a downward spiral and interest rates were high. I was stuck with a large property in the state of Virginia. A mortgage eroded our cash flow. I juggled figures.

Elizabeth refused to consider cut-rate propositions. "Patience," she kept repeating. "If we put our trust in Jesus Christ, He will sell the property at our price, in His time." I stewed in silent fury.

Trying to find a responsive chord, I agreed to go with Elizabeth to a "700 Club" seminar at the Christian Broadcasting Network in Virginia Beach. I was still wrestling with God. This "pie-in-the-sky" stuff was not for me. How wrong I was!

I walked into an atmosphere where four hundred people were singing praises to the Lord, loving each other, laughing with Pat Robertson and Ben Kinchlow. All were lifting up their hands in praise to Jesus Christ. At the end of four Spirit-filled days, Pat offered the call to accept the gift of salvation for which Jesus Christ died. Something inside nudged me to raise my hand in acceptance.

I had accepted the Lord with my lips





*Elizabeth Harris and "Ah Declare"
at Los Altos Hunt.*

but not my heart. It would be almost a year before I would feel the winged angels on my back. I was now a closet Christian. I prayed by rote. I read the Bible daily, but failed to realize there had to be a humbling of self before I could understand its teachings. I was unable to relate to God in a personal relationship.

I entered into the Lamb's Book of Life when God manifested himself in two phenomenal ways. First, in answer to continued prayer, He lifted our financial burden. God gave a word-of-knowledge: "Sell the property in parcels."

Within one week, the first parcel sold and two weeks later, the remainder of the property was sold at the price which God had set! God spit us out of His computer in His time, and in His way.

Next the doors of the Lord opened with a miraculous healing. Our eight-year-old dog Sandor, a magnificent russet-colored Vizsla, was suddenly stricken with a massive heart attack. He clung to life for four days. The veterinarian said he had done everything he could, but the dog would never recover because the heart muscles were gone and the liver was destroyed. He said the kindest thing would be to put the dog down without further delay.

So we went to a source higher; when science ends, faith begins! Praying with more conviction than ever before, we suddenly felt elation and a peace that the dog had been healed. We claimed the healing and gave thanks to the Lord.

The next morning Sandor, who had been carried into the vet's office the day before, ran out through the woods with his young puppies with vigor and vitality. No plastic parts for Sandor. God had blessed him with the new heart of an athlete. Sandor lived another five happy years before slipping away in his sleep at the age of thirteen!

After witnessing the power of prayer, I plugged into the big board and became a full-fledged child of God. Words in the Bible now spoke directly to me; I shed years of hostility and frustration; I now had a relationship based on the deepest respect and love for my Saviour. The Lord's gentle hand really touched me, and after He did some radical house-cleaning, there was room for Him. I was born again!

Now that I am living under the shadow of the Almighty, Satan has renewed his attacks. To my initial surprise, life was still full of problems. Now, however, I

have the weapon to fight back. I constantly seek the Lord's face and help, no longer depending on myself nor other human beings, but putting all my trust in Jesus Christ. With the Spirit of the living Lord within me, adversity has never deterred me in my commitment to God.

Mine was the gradual surrender of a world-class sinner to the Lord, leading to the spiritual joys and intoxication of a life filled with true meaning. I asked myself, "How could Jesus possibly do anything more for me?" I found the answer one night at a meeting of Full Gospel Business Men.

Jim Sepulveda was the speaker. I walked up to him just to say hello. He took my hands, looked into my eyes and said, "Jesus loves you." I felt a surge of electricity pass through my body. My prideful self-control collapsed. I fell to the floor and an inner peace swathed my body. I had been blessed by the Holy Spirit.

That night there must have been a twenty-one-gun salute in heaven for this sinner! For Jesus said in Luke 15:7, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." □

King Harris is a native San Franciscan and a graduate of Stanford University. He was a Captain of an LST in the Pacific during World War II, and spent his entire business career in advertising. He is a member of the Monterey chapter of FGBMFI. Currently, he is a freelance writer, living in Pebble Beach, California with seven dogs, six horses, two cats and one wife.

The testimonies of Sandor's healing and God selling King Harris' property in Virginia have both appeared on "The 700 Club" several times in 1985.

REBEL

WITH A CAUSE



Fred Zariczny
Tustin, California



I may not look like your ordinary Christian. I have long hair, a beard, an earring, and I wear a black leather jacket with a club patch on the back. I'm a member of "Christ's Disciples" motor-

cycle ministry, a Christian biker organization. I visit places that few people would dare go. I scan heavy-metal concert crowds looking for young people with a deadly attraction for the fast lane. I hang out with bikers, drug addicts, hookers, and wayward teenagers. The street people know me simply as Fred Z. When I find them, I tell them about Jesus and they listen.

From the time I was thirteen years old until I met the Lord, I used and sold drugs. Later in life, I rode choppers, and chose the life that I wanted to live. Not many things slowed me down—not a drug bust in the '70s, a stint in the military, not even drug overdoses. However, one thing did slow me down. In 1974, I crashed a motorcycle into a stone wall.

I'll never forget that crash.

A friend and I were cruising down an unfamiliar road at about 85 miles an hour

when a sharp corner loomed ahead. Realizing I couldn't make the turn, I looked for a way out. To my left was a small dirt road. Dense foliage obscured my vision of what was down the road, but I decided it was my only chance. As I turned down the road, I looked up and saw a stone wall about twenty feet ahead.

Panicking, I down shifted and braked as fast as I could, hitting the front brake lever so hard that the metal lever broke off in my hand. I could feel my heart racing uncontrollably, as I anticipated the worst.

We were still doing about fifty miles an hour when the bike slammed into the four-foot-high wall. On impact my friend (who was on back), flew over me, and the wall. He rolled a few times, then got up with only a few minor cuts and some sore ribs.

As my body lunged forward, I heard a loud crack. My face bounced off the gas tank and handlebars, and my left leg was jammed under a lip at the bottom of the gas tank. The impact ripped a hole in my leg four inches around and two inches deep, missing the main artery by a hair.

By the time the paramedics arrived, I was delirious with shock, screaming about my bike, kicking and clawing at them as they lowered me onto a stretcher. They had to hit me up with Demerol three times before I calmed down.

Hours later, I woke up in the hospital at Milford, Massachusetts. My back was broken, and I was bleeding from the spine.

This became a turning point in my life. For the next eight months while recovering from my injuries, I began thinking about God, and what life was all about.

Often I thought back over my young years, and the life I had lived....

For me, rebellion had been a way of life. At age 13, I started smoking grass and drinking beer. When I didn't have enough money for a sixpack or a bag of weed, I'd get together with my buddies and we would sniff glue or gasoline.

At 14, I graduated to speed, downers and sex. Soon I was into LSD two or three times a week. I even took it while in classes at school.

At 16, I had my first experience with bikers. I was at a parade when about fifteen outlaws pulled up and began to party. They defied anyone who challenged them. Soon two bikers from a rival club rode up, and a fight broke out. One guy was cutting at another's ear with a beer can pull tab. It was radical! I was actually rooting for them...like a Roman cheering the gladiators.

Soon afterward, I started working at a Harley Davidson motorcycle shop in Boston, cleaning and waxing the new bikes—and dreaming of the day that I would be a biker, too. I saved up a few bucks and bought an old 65cc Harley. Although it was small, I had a great time riding it in the fields and dirt roads near my home.

At 17, my dependence on drugs grew stronger. I started eating reds and ludes like they were candy. I also tried snorting and shooting heroin. To support my habit, I had to rip off cars and break into houses for money.

Eventually, I dropped out of school and began hitchhiking across the country, ending up at a large May Day antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C. Everyone that was anyone in the antiwar

movement was there—Yippies, Black Panthers, the Weathermen, you name them. Everyone was loaded and planning to take over Washington for one day. We figured it would show the government our strength, then they'd listen to our cause. I really believed in what the radicals were attempting. So I joined the Yippie movement.

During the concert part of the demonstration, I found a guy selling acid and bought a four-way hit of Orange Sunshine. Counting on my high tolerance for drugs, I took the whole thing. For hours after the hit, it seemed that the Washington Monument was melting right before my eyes like a huge candle. Finally, I was taken to a medical tent screaming. But when the acid wore off, I rejoined the action. By this time, the radicals were getting violent. At one point, I saw National Guardsmen moving toward us, shooting tear gas into the crowd. People were screaming and running everywhere.

I was among the many who were arrested and herded like cattle into a large stadium (the jails were already full). Toward the end of the day, the authorities were letting us go, if we promised to leave D.C. and never return.

My radical lifestyle soon landed me in jail. The law gave me a choice—go to prison or join the military. I arrived at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center less than two weeks later.

Even the military became a joke to me. Within a few months, I was back to dealing drugs again and getting into more trouble.

I was trained as a ground support technician. One night while on duty, a

friend and I smoked some really strong dope. I became so stoned that I ran the tail section of a jet fighter into the guard rails at the fuel pit. The damage was estimated at \$200,000. I blamed the accident on poor lighting and was let off the hook.

While in the Navy, I bought my first large street bike, an 850cc Norton Commando. I raced people for cases of beer and bags of dope, and rode with a bike club. It was during this time that I had my accident.

Finally, I was discharged from the Navy. I went home for a few months, but couldn't handle being tied down. Even with a large metal brace strapped to my back, I left home again, eventually heading up to Alaska. I fit right in with the locals, and was soon back to partying. I got myself another bike and hung out at all the favorite beer joints.

From the time of my accident, I had been doing a lot of soul-searching. Eastern religions were of particular interest to me. Often, I sat around reading the Bagavad Gita and other Eastern literature, and meditating.

One day a Christian girl invited me to her church. I smoked a few joints and figured I'd just go in there and tell those Christians how deceived they were. But I didn't count on the power of the Holy Spirit.

The preacher of that charismatic church seemed to be talking directly to me. Slowly my defenses broke down. I could feel something tugging inside me. So when the altar call was given, I ran down the aisle. I accepted the Lord, was baptized in water and filled with the Spirit all in the same night.

My life changed radically. God had given me the gift of evangelism. The next few months, the church people watched in wonder as this long haired guy with Harley wings on his jacket herded his van load of young people into the church every week. I served the Lord at that church for a year, and even tried going to Bible school.

But something was wrong. Although I was filled with a lot of zeal and emotion, I wasn't grounded in the Lord. Before I knew it, my "old nature" started rearing its ugly head. My Christian experience seemed like a yo-yo. For a few months, I'd do great, then go back to partying (weakened), then make a comeback to the Lord.

During this time, I met a beautiful girl named Sydney. We began dating, fell in love, and married a few months later. At first, things went well for us. However, worldly desires crept back in, and we slipped away into our former way of life.

We left Alaska and finally settled in Northern California. The change in scenery didn't help, because of the instability of my spiritual leadership, and lack of priorities, our marriage collapsed. My wife fell away, and left me with the custody of our eight-month old daughter Melody. During the hard times that followed, I really got serious with the Lord, and accepted His rule in my life. Shortly after I began divorce proceedings, Syd contacted me. She was living in a Christian community called Jesus People U.S.A. in Chicago, and had also given the Lord full reign in her life. I stopped the divorce proceedings, moved out to Chicago, and we allowed God to totally heal our broken marriage. Within a few

months, we were back together again. That was four years ago.

The Lord called us into ministry, and we have found our church home at Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa. Since we both have made Jesus our Lord, He has blessed our family beyond measure. We now have three beautiful little girls—Melody, five years; Sandra, two; and Andrea, one. With our histories of drug and alcohol abuse, we thank God for His mercy, in giving us three perfectly healthy little girls. I'm the Sales Manager of an office machine dealership, but hope to someday be in the ministry full-time.

God has given me a burden to reach out to bikers, drug addicts, cultists, and teenagers. I've helped start three Christian motorcycle ministries. I'm a member of the I.C.B.A. (International Christian Bikers Association), the C.M.A. (the Christian Motorcyclists Association), a charter member of CMC ("Christ's Motor Club"), and a patch holder in Christ's Disciples Outreach Ministries. Within "Christ's Disciples," we have members throughout Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Michigan, and now here in California. We use our motorcycles as tools for evangelism, sharing the gospel on the streets with everyone we meet. I've had the pleasure of bringing the gospel into the jails, juvenile halls, and hospitals. I've also been active in promoting Christian Rock bands, that offer an alternative for young people. We've seen many backsliders reconciled and many souls saved in the last few years.

Jesus has freed me from the bondage of drugs, alcohol and sin. I've discovered that serving Jesus is the only way to have

peace and direction in life. And it is very exciting to live for the King, in His service.

Once, I was a rebel *without* a cause. I'm still a rebel, but now I *have* a cause, to reconcile the lost of this world to my Lord and King, Jesus Christ. □

conventions

Fred Zariczny and his wife, Sydney, live in Tustin, California with their three daughters Melody, age 5; Sandra, age 2; and Andrea, age 1. He is currently working as sales manager for Precision Office Machines in Santa Ana, California. He is a former member of the Anchorage, Alaska chapter of FGBMFI, and a current member of the Costa Mesa and Santa Ana, California chapters. He and his family attend Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, California. Anyone wishing to reach Fred, may do so by writing Christ's Disciples Outreach Ministries, P.O. Box 4305, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

**WASHINGTON D.C.
REGIONAL CONVENTION**
Feb. 5-7, 1987

Ornni-Shoreham Hotel
Contact: Reggie Elliott
3724 17th Place N.E.
Washington D.C. 20018

ILLINOIS STATE REGIONAL CONVEN.
Feb. 11-14, 1987

Decatur
Contact: Howard Hite
RR1 Box 8D
Dalton City, IL 61925

INLAND EMPIRE MIXED ADVANCE
Feb. 13-15, 1987

The Coeur d' Alene
Contact: Leonard Sampson
E. 15420 Second Ave.
Veradale, WA 99037

NEW JERSEY COUPLES' ADVANCE
Feb. 13-15, 1987

Star Lake Lodge, Bloomingdale
Contact: Doug List
11 Andrew Jackson Court
Cranbury, NJ 08512

EAST OHIO COUPLES' ADVANCE
Feb. 20-21, 1987

Salt Fork State Park Lodge
Cambridge
Contact: William Cooke
29 E. Fifth Ave.
Columbus, OH 43201

**LUBBOCK/AMARILLO
REGIONAL CONVENTION**
Feb. 26-28, 1987

Lubbock Plaza Hotel
Contact: Virgel Merriott
Box 64037
Lubbock, TX 79464

**COLUMBIA RIVER
REGIONAL CONVENTION**
March 5-7, 1987

Hanford House, Richland
Contact: Lewis Schweiger
2122 Hudson Ave.
Richland, WA 99352

CALIFORNIA STATE CONVENTION
March 5-7, 1987

Holiday Inn, Sacramento
Contact: FGBMFI
Box 23901
Oakland, CA 94623

WISCONSIN COUPLES' GET-AWAY
March 12-14, 1987

Best Western Royale, Stevens Point
Contact: FGBMFI
Box 20741
Milwaukee, WI 53220

OHIO MENS' ADVANCE
March 13-15, 1987

Kings Island Inn
Contact: Jerry Wagner
445 Lexington Rd.
Eaton, OH 45320

SOUTH. INDIANA COUPLES' ADVANCE
March 13-15, 1987

Clifty Inn, Madison
Contact: Gerald Bennett
1424 Brookside
Evansville, IN 47714

18TH INDIANA REGIONAL
March 25-28, 1987

Atkinson Hotel, Indianapolis
Contact: FGBMFI
Box 19032
Indianapolis, IN 46219

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL
March 26-28, 1987

Cromwell, CT
Contact: Don Carlson
1052 Farmington Ave.
West Hartford, CT 06107

MID-AMERICA REGIONAL CONVENTION
March 26-28, 1987

Salina Holiday Inn
Contact: Max Albert
2809 Patty Dr.
Salina, KS 67401

MISSOURI MARRIED COUPLES' ADVANCE
March 27-29, 1987

Sedalia Inn
Contact: FGBMFI Couples' Advance
Box 1111
Sedalia, MO 65301

1987 WORLD CONVENTION
June 30-July 4

Anaheim, California
Contact: FGBMFI
Box 5050
Costa Mesa, CA 92628

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The Most Important Miracle of All

Darryl Smith
Beaumont, California

The one thought that strikes terror into the heart of a train engineer is that of hitting a gasoline tanker. A full tanker spreads a flowing coat of gasoline and flames over the ground when it is hit by a train; but an empty tanker is even more dangerous. It is filled with volatile fumes and also contains approximately thirty gallons of fuel in the bottom. It is a virtual bomb. Upon impact, as metal scrapes metal and sparks fly, the gasoline fumes ignite one another and a fire-bomb type explosion destroys tanker, engine and usually the next four or five cars on the train. The engineer is burnt to cinders. I had never heard of an engineer



who had hit a tanker and lived to tell about it.

On September 23, 1984 my train was going about 60 mph down the track. I was a mile away from the intersection at Vineyard Avenue in Ontario, California when I spotted a fuel tanker pulling across the tracks. This was not an unusual occurrence at this distance from the Ontario Airport, and I expected it to continue moving across the tracks. However, within moments terror gripped my heart. The tanker had stopped still on the tracks and I knew that there was no way I could possibly stop the train in such a short distance. The momentum built up as three engines, each weighing 200,000 pounds, speed along at 60 mph is incredible. With full brake application, I knew we would still hit the tanker. If only it would begin to move!

Throwing the train into emergency brake application, I felt my thoughts spin in turmoil. What would happen to Sue and our two sons? That tanker was going to explode into flames. What would happen to me? I visualized myself, a human torch, running from the wreck. I had always heard of people who faced death seeing their lives pass before them. Mine did.

I was the last of eleven kids, and as a ward of the court, I sat in the bus station in Beaumont waiting for a bus to take me to a foster home in Oxnard. Thirteen years old and depressed, I sat on the bench bent over and hopeless. Suddenly, a lady walked up with a little red booklet about two inches square, which contained scriptures from the Bible. As I thumbed through it the words, "I will never leave you" leaped out at me. Not comprehending what they meant, I suddenly felt engulfed by a warm loved feeling. I tore that page out and put it in my wallet, where I carried it for the next ten years. On the trip to Oxnard, I sat beside a nun who led me to the Lord.

Confessing Jesus as Lord, and actually coming to the point of a personal walk with Him, are two different things. Over the next few years, I became a real juvenile delinquent, spending much time in juvenile hall and in drunk tanks.

Even after I married and began working for the railroad, I was little more than a working drunk. Many were the times after a long haul when I would go to my motel room sloppy drunk and think about my wife and little babies and what I was doing to them. There, I would pull out that little paper and read it over and over



again. It always made me feel warm and happy.

My wife's parents had opposed our marriage. As Pentecostal people who loved God, it broke their hearts to see their daughter marry someone who seemed to them like the devil himself. I had, however, come to a point of knowing that I needed what they had. I went to my father-in-law and asked him how to get it. I wanted the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As he prayed with me that night, the power of God came upon me and I prayed in tongues; I laid flat on my back for several hours, praying in the Spirit, oblivious to everything around me.

One day in 1980, I arrived at work after learning that my dad was dying in the hospital. Even though I had started work, I couldn't fight off the overwhelming urge to go to him immediately. I got a replacement and left for the hospital. I guess if the Lord can use a donkey, He can even use a sinner who has no personal relationship with Jesus. That was how He used me that day. Only by the intervention of God was I allowed to enter the ICU room. There, I told my dad about the little paper, about Jesus Christ, and about how to receive Him as Lord and Saviour. As we prayed together, I watched the strain on his face turn into a peaceful glow that is evident on the faces of those who are in the presence of the Lord. As I stood beside him, he left this life and entered the next.

A few moments later, as my car roared up Highland Springs Avenue, I cried out to God in a confusion bordering on anger. "God," I cried, "why did You save him? He never did anything for You! He wouldn't even give You the time of



day!" An audible voice spoke to me inside the car. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," it said. Only later did I learn that those words came from the Bible.

The next day, God again entered my life supernaturally. As I was backing a train up to couple with another train, I awaited the signal from the man at the back of the train. Although there was no reason to slow down because the signal had not come, suddenly I felt fear grip me. I watched my hand move to apply the brake while my brain said, "What are you doing? You don't brake until you receive the signal!" When I finally received communication from the rear of the train, I learned that there had been a perfect coupling that was so easy it was not even felt. Had I not applied the brakes at that instant, the force of hitting the other train would have been so great, that I would have been thrown backwards through a window and terribly injured.

All of that was in 1980. How my life had changed in four short years! I was jerked back to the present.

As the train approached impact, the brakes had slowed it to 40 mph. In a panic, the second brakeman threw himself from the train. Later, I learned that he was severely hurt. With a lump in my throat, and my natural mind engulfed in fear, I placed my hands on my face and leaned against the bulkhead. From the depth of my spirit came calm faith-filled words, "God, help us!" I said.

The next thing I remember, I was finally stopping the train more than one-half mile beyond the wreck. We had hit the tanker, sliced right through it and we were still alive. Shaking, I looked back at the mass of smashed metal on the tracks that had been the tanker. As fire trucks arrived, the firemen stood around in bewilderment. It was impossible. All those fumes and the gallons of fuel in the bot-

tom of the just-emptied jet fuel tanker had to ignite on impact. It was a physical law, as predictable as the rising and setting of the sun. But my God, the God of nature and predictable laws, is also the God of miracles. He had just performed one for me.

Since the accident, I have seen pictures of what has happened to engines which have hit fuel tankers. One memorable shot showed a caboose which had been immediately behind an engine. The pot-bellied stove inside the caboose had been melted beyond recognition by the intensity of the heat.

An official of the railroad came to me with a piece of the truck. "Here," he said. "Take this and frame it. Then put it on your mantel. You shouldn't be alive today." I am only alive today by the grace of my God.

After reminiscing on my past, I see clearly that the miracles on the train do not compare with the miracle God did in my heart. When He saved me and baptized me in the Holy Spirit, I truly became a new creation. There is no greater miracle than that. Have you asked Him to become your Lord yet? The greatest of miracles will only be the beginning of miracles in your own life. ☐

Darryl Smith, age 30, has worked for Southern Pacific Railroad for 10 years. He was promoted from fireman to engineer in 1979, one year before his baptism in the Holy Spirit. He is a past member of the New Covenant Fellowship church in Beaumont, California, and director of their Prison Ministries Outreach. He and his family currently attend Abundant Life Fellowship in Yucaipa, California. Darryl and his wife, Sue, have two children, Jason, age 8 and Matthew, age 6. Darryl currently teaches Bible studies at Oak Glen Correctional Center and Twin Pines Youth Authority, and ministers to abused children at Child Health U.S.A.

Demos Shakarian Receives Award for Charismatic Leadership

Ten thousand Christian leaders were present in New Orleans, Louisiana as Demos Shakarian received an award for his leadership in the charismatic renewal. Also honored were David DuPlessis and Oral Roberts. The award, given by the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelization, states in part, "For his prophetic leadership in founding and leading the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International thereby raising up a worldwide army of Spirit-filled lay witnesses to Jesus Christ, we, the leaders and participants in the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelization, do present this award."

The award is signed by Vinson Synan, Chairman of the North American Renewal Service Committee,



and indicates Demos' life-long dedication to the building up of a body of lay people in these last days that will take the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the business and secular community. □



YEAR OF THANKSGIVING

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Come join us in Anaheim, California, June 30 through July 4, 1987 for the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, 34th World Convention. Now is the time to ensure your seating and reservations by mailing in your registration form today.

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List full names of all immediate household members included in your registration as they are to appear on name badges.

Complete this form and mail to: FGBMFI, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.
Completed form and \$10 registration fee per household must be included with each registration form. No registration fee is required for youth under 18 years of age.

3204-05-7336

ENEMY OF LOVE

Glen Pero
Hampton, Ontario



When I was twelve, my life took a dramatic change for the worse. Two events, and two bad decisions, would cause me to be totally separated

from God for the next twenty years.

During confirmation, when the bishop asked me to forsake the world and follow Jesus, all that I could think of, or see, was the bright lights and the glitter of the world. The desire to taste and see all of what the world had to offer was too great, so with my mouth I said "yes," but God knew my heart. I was supposed to receive the Holy Spirit, but absolutely nothing happened. I was not ready to let go of the world, nor the passing pleasures of sin. That was the first of my two bad decisions.

A few months later my grandfather, whom I loved dearly, went home to be with the Lord. When I was a child, my parents lived in the same house as my grandparents, and I was his favorite. We often went down into the basement and while he worked, I puttered around, just enjoying his company, and thinking I was a help. I remember most that he loved and approved of me. He could get me to do practically anything, because I knew he really cared. He was always gentle and kind, and I never heard him complain about life or say a bad word about anyone. He was the light of the Lord in my life, and even though he didn't know it, he remained the one light that would shine in my darkness for the next twenty years.

Just prior to the funeral service, when the time came to close the coffin, I was kneeling, looking at him for the last time when I suddenly froze. One of my uncles had to pull me away. I was told not to stay for the funeral service, because I was so upset. As I walked out of the church, I was seething with anger and hatred towards this God who had taken

my grandfather from me. I lifted my head towards heaven and swore an oath saying "You might have him, but You will never have me." I had deliberately made myself an enemy of God. In the following years, I was to learn that that decision was the worst I had ever made.

I was left with a deep void within me. I felt totally confused and lost. And, because I had not really given God up, I began to search for Him in other people.

Until that point in my life, things had been very good. I have two wonderful parents and a younger brother. They have always tried their best to give me a happy life. I was always in the top of my class in school, and I was reasonably talented in sports. Within a couple of years of my grandfather's death, I had started smoking and spending my time in pool halls. I stopped doing my homework, and began skipping school, and in no time, I was at the bottom of my class. I left all the outdoor sports for a dirty smokey poolroom that was the cornerstone for all the hustlers and gamblers around town. I was in Satan's paradise, but I didn't know it. However, I found one older man who reminded me of my grandfather. He took the time to listen, talk, and care for me. If the poolroom was good enough for him I reasoned, it was good enough for me. Besides, I thought, I was a pretty fair shot. He owned the poolroom, so no matter how hard my parents tried, I refused to leave that place.

School had become a place of defeat and failure, so as soon as I was sixteen, I quit and went to work in a gold mine. The man who owned the poolroom died, so I found a new older friend. This man was a gambler and a heavy drinker, but he liked

me and used to spend time sitting around talking. The next thing I learned to do was gamble, and for a couple of years, I lost most of my money. As soon as I could get away with it, I started going to the bars where I found that I loved the feeling I got from drinking. But the great feelings soon turned to arguing, fighting and hangovers. My friend left town, and I settled down to a life of wine, women and song. This lasted about three years. Then I returned to my old habit of playing cards, and one night a few of my friends that I was playing with cheated me.

By this time, I had found another elderly friend. He knew most of the hoodlums and cardsharks in the area. He introduced me to a couple of professional gamblers who taught me how to cheat. I got even with my friends, and my life continued its downward spiral.

I had more money, women and drunken parties, than I ever had before. I was also motivated into acting tough, because I feared the violent men I hung around with. As long as I acted the toughest, I seemed outwardly to be in control, but inwardly, I was afraid someone would see through me. If I looked tough enough, nobody would dare challenge me. As a young boy, I couldn't sit through the first movie I saw, but went and stood in the back crying, because I was afraid something would happen to the hero. I remember barely being able to keep my eyes open, during the first wrestling match I saw. I was extremely sensitive to evil and violence. Now, I was trying to be someone totally the opposite to the way I really felt. Life and the world were becoming extremely hard things to cope with.

My friends would do anything but work for a living. Women were becoming nothing more than sexual objects, partly because I had been badly hurt once, but mainly because I was hardening my heart to all feelings. Anything that had to do with virtue, honor and self-respect I mocked. I decided working was only for those who didn't know any better, so I quit as much as possible. The things that I had despised most as a child were the things that I had become. I had traded away my self-respect and sense of values for money and self fulfillment.

The longer I continued in this way, the more empty life seemed to be. I was filled with anger, bitterness and contempt, mainly for myself, because I hated what I had become, but also for the hypocrisy I saw in the world. I couldn't have a lasting relationship with anyone. My selfishness was in total control, and I wanted everybody to please me. I often thought "I would rather shoot a person than a dog. At least dogs were faithful." I was disappointed with people. My life was very empty and unhappy. But, in spite of it all, I had no thoughts of turning away from what I was doing.

But, God had other plans. One morning, after having gambled all night, I decided to have a couple of beers, so I could relax and go to sleep. As I sat in the bar I thought "I wonder where I'll be in ten to fifteen years." Instantly, in my mind's eye, I saw myself standing at a podium speaking to many people about God. I became extremely afraid and swore to myself "Never, never, anything but that." Then I prayed "Satan, you had better stick close to me, because He's after me."

Outwardly, nothing much changed, but inside, I started to despise the things I was doing. I began living with an extremely attractive woman and her two children. I believed I would never find a better woman, anywhere. She would often say to me "You're too good to do the things you're doing." Her words ignited a little spark of hope within me. I started to think that maybe I really could amount to something. That small spark of hope seemed to stay with me continually. I started to make a conscious effort to change my lifestyle. I stopped gambling, and cut down on my drinking.

Somehow, I had managed to become an electrician throughout the years, so I began working more often. I thought that I was leading a pretty good life, but I was still completely empty on the inside, and perfectly selfish on the outside.

I found myself thinking about what would be good for the world. I remembered Jesus taught love, but I thought He was either a con man or crazy, because He included loving God in His teachings. I couldn't understand how anyone could love a God who was somewhere up in heaven. I couldn't even properly love the woman and children I was living with. How could I possibly love a God I couldn't see, feel or know until I died. The one thing I would often remember was that my grandfather believed in Jesus and he was still the greatest man I had ever met.

I was also bothered by the fact that my life was flying by pretty fast. Even if I lived to be old, it would be over very quickly, and then I would have to face God, if He really did exist. I was less than overjoyed by that idea.

The emptiness of the world continued to drag me down, so one night, at the age of thirty two, I knelt down and prayed "God, if You are there, I'm here to tell You I hate this life. You must know what You made me for, so if You are there, I'll do it Your way this time."

Within two weeks, I awoke in the middle of the night to see a hand outstretched to me. Two thoughts went through my mind, "That is the hand of God" and "If you take it you shall surely die." I laughed to myself and said "God, if that's Your hand of course I'll take it." I was afraid I was going to physically die. Instead, that old nature within me died, and a new man was born by the power of God. I had finally agreed to live for God and die to this world and sin. After the experience, I was so emotionally high, I was afraid I would not be able to sleep, so I prayed "Jesus, please let me sleep," and the next thing I knew, it was morning.

When I awoke, I had an assurance that God was with me and for me. Within a week or so, I realized that Jesus was in me. I felt a love for people, and I could now understand others, and see their hurts and needs also. My heart felt new. It seemed so large, warm and heavy. For the first time in years, I sang, usually to God. I started remembering hymns and psalms that I had heard in church.

I went home and told mom that God was in me. She had been a faithful churchgoer all her life, but soon realized that she didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus. She turned her life over to the Lord that day and is still faithfully serving Him today.

Over a period of time, the Lord sepa-

rated me from the woman I was living with, but not before He saved and baptized her with the Holy Spirit. He had me quit drinking, smoking and many other ungodly habits that I had acquired. He taught me that the Bible is His Word and although He is very gentle, He means what He says and expects us to obey Him.

He has used good and bad circumstances to mold and shape me into a man after His own heart. There is no situation that He is not in control of. Sometimes this refining process causes me considerable pain and sorrow, but I know He is doing it for my own good.

I thank God that I can feel good about myself once again. There are many hard and lonely times, but instead of running from them, I'm learning to overcome them all. Jesus doesn't remove difficulties, but He is always with me in the midst of them. I feel like I'm over the world instead of under it.

I can't help but thank God for sending His Son to die in my place, so that I might not only know Him now, but live and rule with Him forever. He has given so freely, I don't want to withhold anything from Him. My prayer is to be found faithful til death, and I'm sure He'll grant my request. □

Glen Pero is currently working as an electrician for the Darlington Generating Station in Darlington, Ontario. He attends the King Street Pentecostal Church in Oshawa, Ontario and is a member of the Timmons chapter of FGBMFI. He is single and lives in Hampton, Ontario.



**"For we are
laborers together with God..."**
I Corinthians 3:9

Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International is an organization which unites businessmen with a single goal: taking the full Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. Starting in 1953 with a single small chapter, the Fellowship today has 3,000 chapters meeting in 93 countries, with ministries reaching 700,000 each month.

Your membership will be a fulfilling experience. You will enjoy growth in the Spirit, find fellowship with dynamic laymen, and discover many new witnessing opportunities in your area. Every one of our members becomes a leader, through our highly successful leadership programs. You too can

**Let's
serve
Him-
together**

become a more productive laborer in Christ's harvest field.

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6 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" (Romans 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 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:
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Requests come in daily to start new chapters. If you have this burden laid on your heart and see the vision for your community, write for complete information to: Chapter Department / FGBMFI / P.O. Box 5050 / Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

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WHO WE ARE Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International was founded in 1952 by Demos Shakarian to reach men for Jesus. One year later, God gave him a vision of the people of every continent, revealing that the ministry of the Fellowship would result in people everywhere being brought to Jesus and linked in loving community.

That vision is becoming a reality through the Fellowship's ministries, now touching eighty-seven nations and transcending denominational, racial and cultural barriers. Men interested in participating in this exciting end-time ministry are invited to write: Chapter Department / FGBMFI / P.O. Box 5050 / Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

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TOTAL HEALTH

Ron Messenger's efforts and prayers never seemed to go unanswered. And as the head of a major medical corporation, he attained success and social prominence—but inside he was fighting a desperate struggle.

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REBEL

WITH A CAUSE

Fred Zariczny began his fast lifestyle at age 13 and with each year went faster—and wilder. Drugs...alcohol...sex...more drugs...bikers. But then he was forced to slow down—after hitting a stone wall at 50 mph and confront his rebelling.

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