

Full Gospel Business Men's

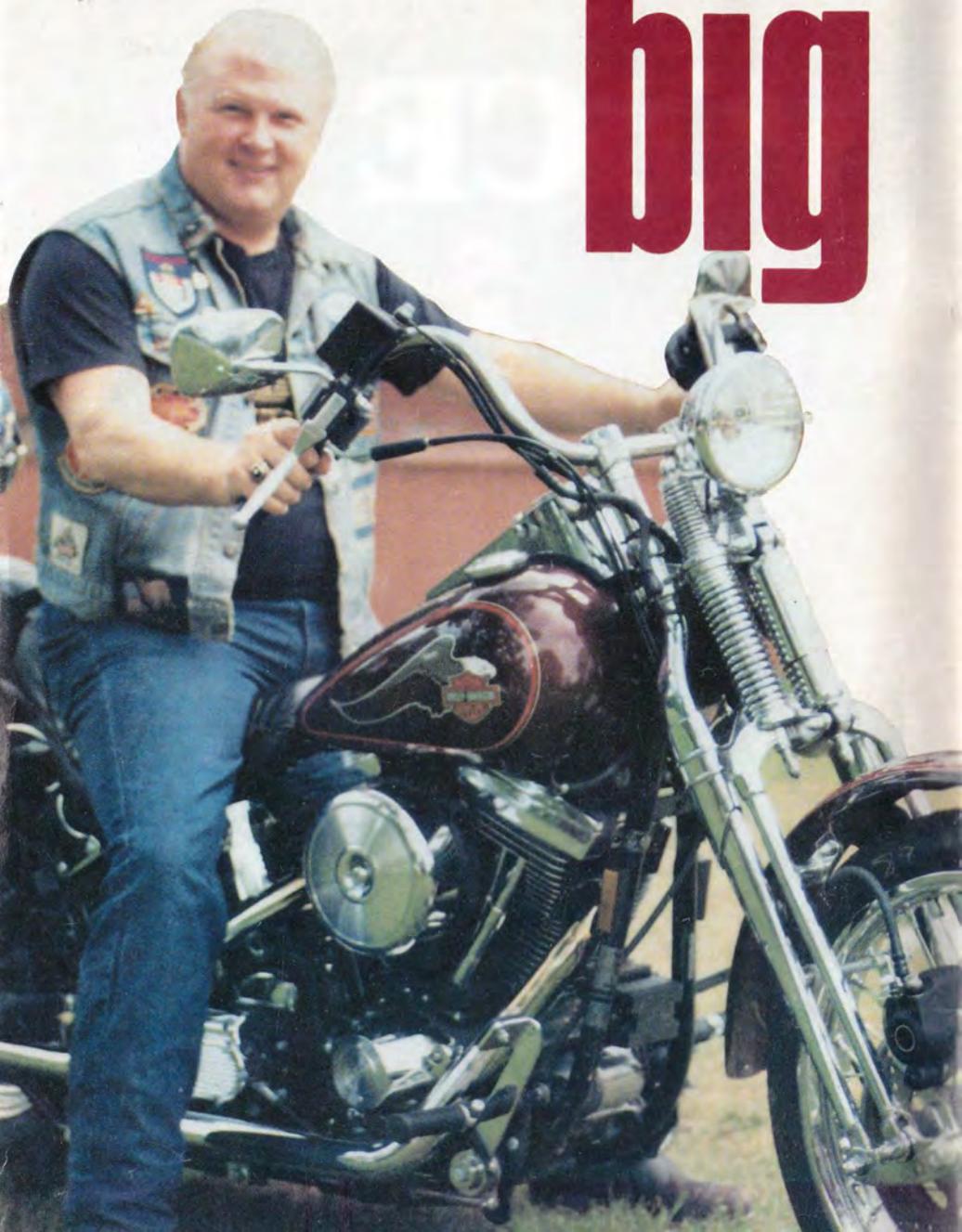
VOICE



02-94

Big Mac Gober is no hamburger. An outlaw biker with a chip on his shoulder, he changed his ways but not his means.
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big



mac

Mac Gober
Autaugaville, Alabama

Vietnam! Humidity so thick you felt like chopping through the air with a machete. Sickening smells. And death. Lonely nights on patrol, ducking enemy fire, were sheer torture. Screams ringing in my ears, buddies constantly dying, I prayed my own end would come quickly.

I went to Vietnam looking to become "somebody." There I vented my rage that had built up through childhood—a wandering existence symbolized by alcohol and a lack of love. Daddy only taught me two things: how to shoot a pistol and fight.

In Southeast Asia, I learned karate and went into the bush to train others in hand-to-hand combat.

Because I could break bricks and boards with my bare hands, I felt important.

But as soon as I returned with a pair of distinguished service medals and three deco-

rations, my self-worth vanished. I didn't receive the recognition I expected. Certainly not that of a hero or somebody who had proudly served their country.

I went over trying to help us stay free. When I came home, the United States turned its back on me. Those who didn't go to Vietnam often don't understand how betrayed soldiers felt who obeyed their government. Returning, many were spat upon and cursed.

Bitterness quickly set in. When the military discharged me, I walked out of the gate, took off my uniform and stomped on it.

Afterwards I met a group who admired my military service: bikers. In the late '60s a lot of motorcycle gangs stood up for America's fighting men. It's no wonder many of today's outlaw bikers are Vietnam vets.

I didn't become a bad dude overnight. Searching for a new status symbol, I bought a big red Harley Davidson. I hung out at bars and met a few riders, gradually becoming one of the boys.

To earn respect and admiration, I turned into the craziest. Combine the anger seething inside and my resentment along with the drug habit I picked up in Nam and I was trouble waiting to explode.

I feared nobody. If someone jumped in my face or threatened me, I'd laugh, "Big deal! I faced gunfire for a year. You think that scares me?"

At the peak, I wore long, scraggly hair and a huge bushy beard. A string of fights left me with no teeth, other than two fangs hanging down at the corners of my mouth. I looked like

Mortimer Snerd walking backwards. I was ugly and I stunk. Real bad.

Though I acted brave, torment filled me. The police arrested me and threw me in jail so many times I quickly lost track of the number.

I left three marriages in my wake, too. My first wife I left in a pool of her own blood. Thankfully, someone found her and got her to the hospital in time.

I'm not proud of living through hell for 30 years. However, I hope my testimony helps you understand that *no-body* is too bad to come to Jesus Christ.

His love first touched me the day I stood in line at Western Union in California. This little guy walked in passing out leaflets. I started to toss it on the ground but it stuck to my thumb. (Lots of things stick to you when you don't bathe!)

So I read it. It said most people will never make it to heaven; they think they have to get rid of all their bad habits first, go to church, and be good before God will have anything to do with them.

"That's a lie," the leaflet said. "God commended His love toward you. While you were yet a sinner, Christ died for you. In the darkest hour of your life, Jesus got on that cross and

died for you, regardless of what your sin might have been."

There was more and it blew me away. Nevertheless, I stuck it in my pocket and forgot about it.

A couple of weeks later I stopped at an apartment where drug addicts hung out. When I opened the door I saw a pamphlet lying on the floor. I picked it up. It was about God.

"What is all this stuff?" I thought. "God. God. God. Everywhere I turn it's God."

But I read it. And started thinking, "What if God's real? If He is, I'm in a heap of trouble."

Just then a pal staggered out of the back room, holding himself up against the door.

"What's up, Big Mac?"

"Not much, man," I replied. "Where did you get this religious thing?"

"Oh, this afternoon a big, old, fat woman was passing them out. I just punched her in the mouth and ran her off."

He called her an ugly, repulsive name. But I will be forever grateful for this anonymous saint who had the guts to leave her church walls and minister in a tough neighborhood. For two weeks I constantly thought about her.

"What kind of love does she have

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that she would go out and knock on doors in a place like that?" I wondered.

I still thought about her the night I returned to that apartment. Entering an upstairs room at 2 a.m., something startled me worse than any Vietnam firefight. I looked up and saw Jesus hanging on a cross. Like in a vision.

As soon as I saw Him I realized that Christ had died for me. Not just for the world. For *me*. A smelly, dirty, rotten hood who terrorized society. I burst into tears.

"I love you, Mac," the Lord said.

That made me cry harder. Shaking my head, I said, "But You couldn't love somebody like me."

I could understand God loving good, honest people who work hard and pay their bills. But the world's filth? I wasn't worth walking across the street to spit on. Nobody cared about me. Even me. I was dying physically and emotionally.

"Mac, I love you," He repeated.

"You couldn't love me," I said. "Don't You remember the time I raped that woman and..."

Before I could finish the sentence, He cut me off with His precious voice.

"Mac, I love you."

That made me bawl harder. I fell to my knees and cried, "God, please don't let this be some mind game. I can't stand any more pain. Is this really You? Jesus, if You're coming back, please let there be room at the cross for one more. Please don't let me die and go to hell, God."

Until Jesus filled my heart I didn't know that kind of love existed. When I



Though he no longer looks like the stereotype outlaw biker, Mac Gober continues to witness at the bikers' annual gathering in South Dakota.

discovered it I wanted to spend the rest of my days telling people the truth about Christ.

I made two requests that night. I asked Him to let me find my mother and apologize for all I had put her through. And to let me help young people find the truth so they could avoid what I went through.

When I found Mom, she, too, lay mired in alcoholism. She had divorced my father when I was 16 and had been living with another alcoholic—until booze killed him.

"Mom, can you ever forgive me?" I sobbed. (I used to fly into rages and drag her across the floor by her hair.)

She didn't get saved right away. But four years later she gave her life to the Lord. She spent 11 years serving God before she went to be with Him.

As for telling people about the Lord, I decided to go back home to Alabama. There I started attending a little church, dressing up on Sundays as best I could.

I quickly figured out people weren't breaking down the doors to get inside. So I started going to bars and parties to reach them.

One night I talked to an old boy for two or three hours. Finally, I said, "You need to get saved."

"Okay," he replied.

"Now what?" I thought. "I got me one and I don't know what to do with him."

Then I remembered my pastor lived next door to the church. Grinning, we climbed into my clunker, my long hair flapping in the breeze. When we got there I banged on the door. He came out wearing a bathrobe and slippers.

"Mac, it's midnight," he answered my greeting.

"I know, but I've got one out here."

"You've got what?"

"I've got a sinner and he wants to get saved," I grinned.

Bless his heart. That pastor walked through the tall grass that night and opened up the church, turned on all the lights and led that man to Jesus.

After repeating this scene a couple times, the pastor called me to the church. I sat there, palms sweating, figuring I had messed up. It was like facing The Boss.

After staring at me for awhile, he said,

"Brother Mac, we've been meeting quite a bit here lately."

"Yes, sir."

"I've got something for you," he said, reaching into his pocket for a set of church keys.

"Brother, I think you've got it," he said. "Now you can come in any time you want to."

I began hauling in visitors by the carload. That little old church grew into a big one. Several months later this elderly man gathered some others around me and started crying.

"Ever since you started coming here with that big, old, crazy grin of yours and inviting people, every Sunday someone's getting saved," he said. "We're having baptisms every week. Families are coming together. Young people are coming in laughing. We haven't had that in 40 years.

"We've all been saved, but we forgot to go out and tell others what Jesus did for us. I just want you to forgive us as a church for forgetting."

That was easy, because I knew how much God forgave me. And, I never forgot those bikers, drug addicts, and thieves who were my friends. I wound up in full time ministry to them.

Joining me in this effort is Sandra, the beautiful woman who became my wife. She's an angel. Only an angel would put up with the junkies, alcoholics and Hell's Angels who trooped through our home over the years.

We felt like the old woman who lived in a shoe. At our house, men slept in the kitchen, the living room, the basement, wherever they found space.



Mac and his wife, Sandra, operate Canaan Land, a residential facility offering study, worship, work and recreation. The Gober family: (back row, l. to r.) Caleb, Mac; (front) Joshua, Sandra, and Rachel.

This informal outreach grew so large I formed a ministry to handle the needs. Word spread about the place where men could get real help. So I wasn't surprised one night when a guy called from Pennsylvania.

"Mr. Gober, I'm shooting up in both arms. Please help me," he pleaded.

"Son, ordinarily I'd take you right in, but we have absolutely no more room," I replied. "Let me give you some num-

bers to call around. If you can't find anything, call me back tomorrow night."

Sure enough, the next night the phone rang.

"Mr. Gober, I called all these numbers and the quickest I can get in is four months." Starting to cry, he said, "My veins are collapsing. I'm shooting up right now and I need help bad. If I don't get some help I'm going to die."

Remembering my state several years before, I cried, too.

"Son, you come on home," I said. "We'll make room somehow."

The next morning I asked God to help me find some bunk beds. I called around. Nothing. Late that afternoon I tried one more number.

"I have 72," the man answered. "How many do you need?"

"Why do you have 72 bunk beds?"

"My wife and I and six children live on 70 acres of land," he said. "There's an A-frame chapel here, a lodge that sleeps 35 and a creek runs through the property."

As he described it, it sounded like Canaan, a land where a man could leave the world to come to a place flowing with milk and honey.

"You wouldn't want to sell it, would you?" I asked.

"It's negotiable," he said.

We went out to visit. He wanted \$285,000. Some of my board of directors looked at it and offered him \$150,000. He refused, saying, "I can't give it away."

A Holy Spirit-boldness came over me. I said, "If you sell it, you'll sell it to me and you'll sell it for \$150,000."

The next day another board member drove by to look at the property and the owner ran to him, offering to sell for \$150,000!

At Canaan Land Ministries, we offer a sort of one-year Bible college. We help men get their GED, learn a trade and get grounded in God's Word. All for free and without a penny of government funds.

There are lots of state and federally-supported programs battling substance abuse; some charging as much as \$12,000 a month. If you have insurance or can get a second mortgage, they'll help. But Jesus Christ didn't charge me anything to turn my life around, so I don't charge these men (or their parents) anything, either.

Jesus Christ is the one who gives these guys new life. I've seen hundreds blossom the past 12 years. Our success rate is 85 to 90 percent.

Many marvel at that. But I'm not surprised. God is in the miracle-working business. After all, who else could have loved a battered, smelly old Big Mac? ■

Mac Gober is founder and president of Canaan Land in Autaugaville, Alabama. Open to people of all ages, this residential facility offers disciplined study, worship, work and recreation. There are similar homes in Africa, Canada and the Cayman Islands, and one for girls coming out of prostitution. Gober has been featured on Kenneth Copeland's "Believer's Voice of Victory," "The 700 Club," and "Heart to Heart." He still rides Harley Davidson motorcycles (now with the "Tribe of Judah"), witnessing at the annual bikers' gathering in Sturgis, SD. He also speaks at schools, colleges, FGBMFI chapters and churches of all faiths. He and his wife, Sandra, have three children: Rachel, 14; Caleb, 13, and Joshua, 11. Mac's life story, *Unchained: The Mac Gober Story*, was published by Word in July of 1993. Copies are available by writing to Canaan Land Ministries, P.O. Box 310, Autaugaville, AL 36603, or by calling (205) 365-2200.

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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 115 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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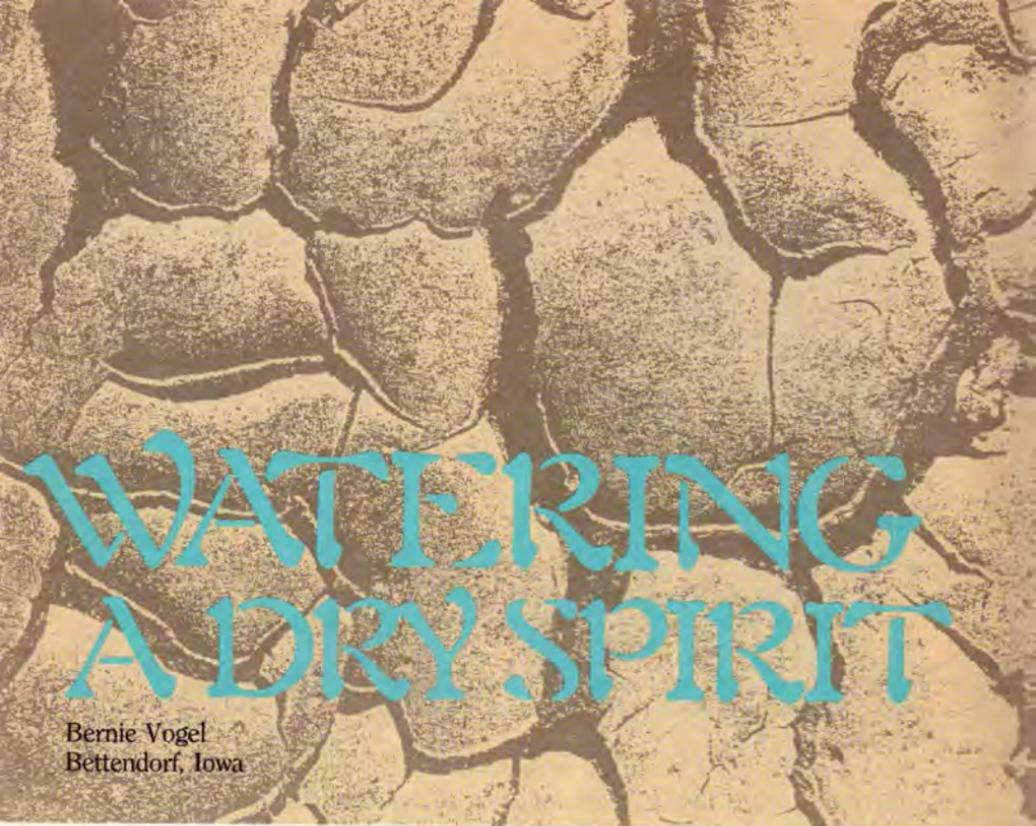
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WATERING A DRY SPIRIT

Bernie Vogel
Bettendorf, Iowa

Though the remarks were uttered decades before, in my mind they were as fresh as if they had exploded the previous week. Coming on the heels of my father's sudden, unexpected death, they inflicted deep scars.

"Hey, Vogel!" some neighborhood kids taunted. "Catholics go to hell and Protestants go to heaven!"

I didn't expect to see all these Four-square and Assembly of God members—people I considered "fringe Christians"—participating in a Catholic prayer group that summer of 1971.

Sister Catherine, of the local Carmelite community, had invited me to the session. Once hidden from public view, the 1960s Second Vatican Council opened up face-to-face contact with the Carmelites.

I arrived in the midst of a struggle—disillusioned and burnt out. My extensive involvement in organizations had brought me to a dead end. My enthusiasm had turned to cynicism and my faith life could not support me, though outwardly I continued to do the same religious things.

Like many Catholics, as I grew up, faith and the church were inseparable. I did have two wonderful faith models growing up. My mother raised six boys alone with literally nothing during the '30s. Her faith and joy were a model for us. She was deeply Catholic, but she also loved to sing some of those good old Protestant hymns. My Uncle Zeno, who became my surrogate father, was another wonderful faith model. He was a deeply prayerful man, cheerful, kind and universally loved.

My upbringing instilled a love of sacred music. As I pursued this interest, it eventually led to a career as a music teacher.

An instructor in public schools, I also established and directed the choir in my parish, and in the 1960s participated in congregational leadership activities.

I had always been very active in the church in my adult life, and I remember at least two occasions of deep personal encounters with the Lord. Now I had gone dry. I remember thinking one day, "Prayers might make people feel better, but I don't think God responds to prayer, at least not mine."

At that point, divine direction played a little part in my life. My spirit was *dry*. Life bumped along on its own momentum, carrying me downward.

When I accepted the invitation to join this newly-founded prayer group, I wasn't sure what to expect. After a few weeks, it struck me one night that I was feeling a special close relationship to people I had thought held anti-Catholic biases; I was learning from them, and I was feeling a real excitement

about it. The scales had dropped from my eyes.

Up until this time I had met few people who spoke freely and with enthusiasm about a personal relationship with Jesus. In fact, that would have made me uncomfortable.

I had gone through a spiritual gathering with a Catholic group several years before, but there was no follow-up and the glow of that weekend retreat had faded.

Now I found it returning. As the meetings progressed, I began experiencing a lot of love from group members. Praising God became a new and thrilling experience.

The leaders invited us to commit our lives to Jesus and receive Him into our hearts. They also talked about receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

"Surely I'm a committed Catholic," I thought, as I reflected on my long-time church membership and service. "But they have something I don't have and I want it."

There was a hangup, though. I wanted to remain in control, and it troubled me to think of giving anyone authority over my life, even the Lord Jesus.

However, I kept going back, and the love and flow of the Holy Spirit gradually melted down that resistance.

One of the key participants in that group was the local Full Gospel Business Men's chapter president. Known as "Mr. Pentecost," the Lord had led him to draw together Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians and others into times of prayer and unity.

He had a tremendous influence on my life and because of him, I later joined FGBMFI.

Just as my church affiliation is different from many of my chapter brothers, so is my experience with the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Six years would pass before I would receive the gift of tongues, but I know that I was filled with the Holy Spirit during my first year in that prayer group. The evidence? Knowing His powerful presence, having a newfound desire to pray and study the Bible, and feeling an indescribable joy.

When I decided to trust God and express my faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, He began to work some amazing changes.

I could hardly put the Bible down as it began speaking to me in a fresh, personal way. Prayer, too, became a very intimate experience that I relished as never before.

A wonderful kinship also developed with the other people in the group, especially those dear friends from the Foursquare and Assembly of God churches.

And I was awed at hearing how the Holy Spirit worked in people's lives. People testified about being freed from physical ailments, hurt relationships, drugs, alcohol and depression.

It didn't seem to matter what denomination everyone belonged to because we had become one in Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Hugging each other to express our love became natural, although before that I would only hug my wife.

I began to share about this experience and discovered it helped my faith grow. At first, I felt like a spiritual baby, learning to walk. But as I reflected on what I had learned through the years, once-dry church rituals came alive.

I believe what I have learned can benefit others, particularly those who get baptized in the Holy Spirit and then rush around, trying to force everyone else into the exact same kind of encounter.

At first, I couldn't understand why everyone couldn't receive the same thing I did just for the asking. Now I understand that it is not just the experience, but also my continuing response to this experience with God that matters.

If all I had was an experience, today it would be a distant memory. But as I live out my commitment, I learn that God shows Himself in unique ways to each one of us.

In the meantime, my spiritual arrogance caused friction and hurt feelings within the church. This has forced me to learn to accept and love people where they are instead of where I think they should be.

This Carmelite prayer group continued for five years, and when it disbanded after the community moved to new quarters outside of town, I felt a void in my life.

A few years later, FGBMFI helped fill that void, and these dear brothers helped me as I walked through my next major adjustment—a new career at age 52.

Although the Holy Spirit had watered

my dry spiritual life, that wasn't true of my work.



Bernie Vogel

At that time, it was impossible to separate the school and church choirs, along with the wide range of extracurricular activities jamming my life. Twenty eight years in the public school system left me emotionally drained.

Seeking His direction, I prayed fervently. Something that had always been in the back of my mind became crystal clear: God had a purpose for my life, but what I did for a living should never be the key to that purpose or my happiness.

"I want to do what You want me to do," I told Him, and then I got on with it. Quitting my job, I decided to utilize the sales experience I had gathered during summer jobs, when I sold everything from insurance to Fuller

brushes to cemetery lots.

Maintaining my independence, I worked on straight commission for a company that manufactured roofing and building maintenance products.

After a year of this, I decided to set up my own business as a roofing contractor. In the past 11 years, I've progressed through many stages and transformations.

While Vogel Commercial Roofing has flourished the past couple years, I came pretty close to the financial edge several times.

Yet, the Lord has always provided the people needed to complete key contracts and the money needed to keep the doors open. During a financial crisis seven years ago, He also opened up a part-time, salaried position as the choir director at another parish that has turned out to be a perfect match.

My real business thrill, though, has come through discovering the ministry I have in this field. I have had an opportunity to share the Lord with many roofing workers who have been in prison, on drugs or are in some kind of personal rehabilitation.

I also frequently share my faith with customers and keep a supply of *Voice* magazines on hand.

But what's most important is the consistent witness of my personal life. My faith affects the way I deal with customers, because I always want to serve as a good example.

This is the Lord's business and I try to let His agenda come first. Pleasing Him is more important than making money.

Many stories in *Voice* tell of dramatic healings and other miracles. I praise God for them, even though I can't point to a lot of spectacular incidents in my own life. However, I believe showing the daily fruit of God's love is the way most of us will influence people in our Christian walk.

I discovered I didn't have to give up anything when I gave my life to Jesus, although He did change some of my priorities. It's a supreme struggle in our performance-oriented society to put God first, wife and family second, others third and job last. That's the reverse of the world's order.

My salvation and these changed priorities have been keys to surviving the ups and downs of running my own business. Since worldly success is not crucial, I didn't have to fret over money all the time. Nor do failure or disappointments drag me down like they did in the past.

The assurance that Christ is living in me provides His peace, although God left enough things unchanged in me to work on for a lifetime. In the meanwhile, my greatest privilege is to encourage and tell others about Jesus and what He can do for them. ■

Bernie Vogel has operated Vogel Commercial Roofing since 1980 and is choir director at Christ the King Catholic Church. He has served as vice-president of the Quint Cities FGBMFI chapter, which meets in Davenport, IA. He is also a member of the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce and a local businessmen's Bible study. He and his wife, Mary Frances, have five children and two grandchildren. They are active in neighborhood renewal groups through their parish.



BIBLE BASIS FOR BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Today's charismatic renewal has created a great hunger for, and many questions about, the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Here are the Bible answers:

THE PROPHECY

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:28-29).

THE PREDICTION

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

THE PROMISE

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

THE PURPOSE

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:7-8).

THE PREPARATION

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve” (Acts 19:6-7).

THE POWER

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE

1. You have the Holy Spirit, you received Him when you accepted Christ as your Saviour (Acts 2:38-39; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19).
2. Since you have the Holy Spirit, the manifestation blessing—tongues—is coming from within, up and out of you; rather than coming from heaven down into you. “Out of your belly (heart) shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit...” (John 7:37-39).
3. You are going to pray that God will now baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and when you have prayed, begin to worship God, *not in your native language*, but worship God in tongues.
4. Open your mouth and make a start (i.e., give voice, make a sound, make an utterance). God will lead you right into your own prayer language. You can quickly and easily receive the manifestation of speaking with tongues. Remember, whatever you say is the manifestation of the Spirit. Accept it as such.



SECOND CHANCE



Joseph Leichte
Enola, Pennsylvania

“Steve,” I panted, “I’ll have to rest.” The missionary walking with me through the Conrail yard nodded and stopped. Visiting from Taiwan, he was spending the week at our church. One afternoon we toured the facility where I had completed a 42-year railroad career just two months earlier.

We casually inspected the diesel shop and the rest of the facilities, but as we crossed the “hump”—an elevated track area—terrific pains shot through my neck. I gasped for air and turned to my companion.

After my short plea for rest, I passed out and fell to my knees and stopped breathing.

“God, don’t let him die here!” Steve Cochran exclaimed.

My life hung by threads. Only God knew if I would get a second chance.

For years I would have argued that I deserved one. My only vices were cigarettes and swapping dirty jokes at work. I didn’t drink, gave to the March of Dimes and raised two daughters in a long-lasting marriage. I thought that made me a pretty good guy.

That wasn’t the message preached at the church I attended as a youngster, but I wasn’t listening too closely. My primary source of strength growing up during the Depression was my mother. I don’t remember my father, but she did a fantastic job of raising our family.

Trained to do right and work hard, after high school I secured an apprenticeship in the Pennsylvania Railroad (known as the PRR) shops. In just seven years, I worked my way up to supervisor and later ran a television sales and

repair shop in my spare time.

My career had barely got on track, though, when Uncle Sam called with the World War II draft. I had advanced to Army infantry sergeant when we shipped out for England in the fall of 1944. In December, my regiment rushed into the Battle of the Bulge carrying our .30 caliber, water-cooled machine guns.

The Germans launched a counter-offensive on December 16, and three days later they captured my whole regiment, (part of the 106th Infantry Division) and part of the 28th Division, which was on our right on the Siegfried Line.

On Christmas Eve, we were still packed in boxcars, cringing as English bombs pelted the earth around us. We would wind up in a prisoner-of-war camp 30 miles south of Berlin, 400 men crammed like sardines into each tent. I was in three different POW camps and was in boxcars in one of them.

While many POWs have suffered greatly, my experience wasn’t that bad. Maybe if it had been, I would have called out to the Lord sooner. But once I left for the Army, I would seldom see the inside of a church for the next 26 years.

Freed by the Russians a few weeks before the war ended, within months I married Martha, the girl I had been dating before I went overseas. We settled down to raise our family and own our part of the American dream.

For me that meant a side business to supplement my railroad pay. I set up a TV shop with the help of a couple

part-time workers. My eyes were on the money, but that extra cash would literally become a pain in the neck.

I'm not sure what brought it on, but I believe it stemmed from constantly wrenching my neck as I carried large, table model TV sets by myself. Finally, I had to seek hospital treatment for a pinched nerve.

I wore a cervical collar for a week and the therapy helped the pain vanish. It would reoccur about every five years, but I kept my collar and would use it to perform self-rehabilitation.

These occasional pains were a physical mirror of my fleshly strength. I could do fine for quite awhile on my own, but eventually my efforts would fail and lead to anguish.

Maybe that's why I listened when our daughters invited us to attend their church in 1979. They had both been saved and their constant witnessing convinced us to go see what this was all about.

About two months later, we were attending a Sunday evening service. I don't remember what the message was about, only that the pastor preached from Revelation. When he finished, the choir sang, "The Savior is Waiting," and I just *knew* I had to go forward. Martha walked with me.

Life took a dramatic change. I was a new person and excited about it.

Soon I held several church positions, including head trustee and president of the men's group. I knew from the Bible that it wasn't my works that determined whether I could enter heaven. Only the blood of Jesus could ensure that. But I

wanted to work for Him in return for all He had done for me.

Several years later, I would face the worst adversity of my life. On September 16, 1985, I retired from the railroad, but only enjoyed a week of sleeping late before taking Martha to the hospital. She had suffered the latest in her continuing bout with blocked leg arteries.

Over the years, she had seven artery operations, although never losing the use of her legs. However, after the latest surgery a blood clot moved and lodged in her brain stem. After being in a coma for eight days, she died.

Retirement is a tough phase of life when you enter it. Now I had to adjust to it alone.

"Lord, I can navigate during the day okay because I can share with other people," I prayed. "But give me peace at night."

How I praise Him for answering that prayer.

Knowing how badly I needed companionship, He quickly provided that, too. Only four months after she died, my son-in-law and the son-in-law of my future wife asked me to take her to a "sweetheart banquet" sponsored by our church.

I agreed, but told her son-in-law to bring her and I would meet her at the hall.

"If you want to be a man," the Lord told me later, "you'll go to her home and pick her up."

When I told her that Sunday I would be coming to get her, Meda smiled, "I know. I prayed about it."

Meda suffered the loss of her husband just four days before my first wife died. We believed God put us together, and were married on June 5, 1986.

One reason I'm so happy I united my life with Meda's is that, through her, I learned about Full Gospel Business Men. Since my church didn't believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I attended my first convention with a great deal of misgivings, even though my new wife had foretold of my Spirit-filling.

A few months before, I had been out mowing the lawn and two words came to my lips: "Abba da." I didn't know they were in the Bible, but after it happened twice more, Meda said, "You're going to get the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

At the last minute, I decided to attend one of the morning meetings at a nearby convention in August of 1986. Afterwards, I went forward and told one of the officers about my experience while cutting the grass.

He smiled, prayed with me and I received a heavenly prayer language. With it, my appreciation and understanding of the Bible grew deeper.

At that convention, I also met chiropractor, Dr. Jack Herd, and started going to him for treatments. Dr. Herd was an international director of FGBMFI at that time.

A few weeks later, I took Meda to the driver's license bureau. While crossing the street, pains throbbed through my arm and neck. I nearly passed out from shortness of breath.

Dr. Herd advised me to go take a stress test. I ignored him; a second,

more severe attack followed in October. After my wife and son-in-law, who is a pastor, laid hands on me and prayed, the pains subsided, so I quit worrying. I didn't know I had just suffered my second heart attack.

A few weeks later, when I was touring the railroad yard with Steve Cochran, the third attack struck. As it happened, the Lord was already sending help.

Some long moments passed after my missionary friend said his frantic prayer. Suddenly, I coughed and started breathing again. Just then a car drove across the hump. The driver offered to call an ambulance, but Steve told him to help lift me into the back seat and he would keep me still.

Still groggy, I remember hearing a voice say, "Pull your feet in," but didn't regain consciousness until we reached the hospital.

They did a test on my heart, which showed it was only working at 33 percent of its capability. After 14 days in the hospital, I returned in January of 1987 for a heart catherization. Another test showed that my heart was now operating at 69 percent of capacity.

First God had carried me through three heart attacks and now He was healing my heart! Nevertheless, the miracles had only just begun.

My catherization showed I had a right coronary artery totally blocked and two descending arteries clogged 50 percent or more. Our family doctor and cardiologist said there was nothing else they could do.

I called Dr. Carolyn Shaffer. She and her husband were the only husband-

and-wife open heart surgical team at that time in the United States. She reviewed my X rays and told me she could operate. It would require four bypasses.

In early March, I went in for the surgery, which lasted more than eight hours.

Afterwards, Dr. Shaffer told Meda there had been a problem in the operating room: I died, my heart didn't respond to the first medicine to get it started. Finally, they used a stimulant called Procon-2. She said, "He'll probably be on this for the rest of his life."

However, the third day after the surgery, they didn't bring me the large caplet. When I asked why, the nurse said, "The doctors told me you didn't need it any longer."

After only eight days in the hospital, I returned home. Several office visits later, Dr. Shaffer released me from her care. By the end of May, I was riding my motorcycle and mowing the lawn again.

I'll never forget my final trip to see this fine physician.

"You have a wonderful ministry of healing through surgery," I smiled. "Do you know Jesus?"

"I sure do," she replied.

No wonder I recovered so quickly! Lest you think that's all, more miracles awaited me.

After my extensive heart operation, some of the pains returned to my neck and arm. Thus, I returned to Dr. Herd, who treated me until March of 1988, when I went on a group tour of Israel and Egypt.



Joseph and Meda Leichte

Though I had been baptized after my salvation, I wanted to be baptized again in the Jordan River. The tour director, Pastor Ken Gaub, and Leo Nehrt of the Harrisburg FGBMFI chapter performed the ceremony, and I came up praising the Lord.

Today I'm still praising Him for this reason: ever since I came out of those waters, I have never suffered from pains in my neck or arm.

Not that they didn't try to come back. For the first year after returning home, if I got up in the middle of the night Satan tried to put those pains back on me.

I would bind him, rebuke him and tell him, "There's no room for pain in my body. I don't accept it."

Finally, the devil quit bugging me. I learned you not only have to believe in healing, but keep trusting that the Lord will keep you healthy.

I applied that lesson a couple of years later when my right ear went numb and I lost all hearing in it. The doctor sent me for a scan to see if he could pinpoint the cause. Meanwhile, every morning I prayed, "Thank You, Lord, for healing me."

A month later, without the doctor discovering what was wrong, my hearing had returned.

"What was it?"

"I don't know," he said.

"I know," I smiled. "I have the Great Physician."

You tell people that and a lot of them will look at you like you're nuts. If that's true, I have a question, "If I'm crazy, why am I walking around healthy?" God is a God of the "second chance." ■

Joseph Leichte has served as secretary and treasurer of the FGBMFI Harrisonburg, PA chapter, where he has also managed the chapter's distribution of *Voice* magazine. He is founder of Pennsylvania-Capital City Chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners of War. He and Meda are members of Christ Community Church in Camp Hill, where some time ago he served as deacon. He was a supervisor on the pre-Penn Central and finally on the Conrail for 35 of his 42 years of service to the company. Joseph has given his testimony at Full Gospel chapters and has spoken to a large group of Hershey Foods retired persons at Founders Hall in Hershey, PA. His extended family includes five daughters and 16 grandchildren.

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ORDINARY MEN— EXTRAORDINARY WORK!

Richard Shakarian
President, FGBMFI

Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International is a global network of men filled with the Holy Spirit and dedicated to serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in 120 nations of the world, and growing, we speak not of those things which divide men and nations but rather the unifying, lifting, saving and healing power of that wonderful name—Jesus.

We call men from all the world... with only one objective...to focus on the person of Jesus Christ and to receive His forgiveness, salvation, love and power. We have discovered the lifting power of Christ—His ability to heal broken lives and enrich all who come to Him.

Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals, Orthodox, Mennonites, Presbyterians, and Anglicans; members of almost every religious group join with us.

The Fellowship transcends denomination, doctrine, language, nationality, race, color, custom and culture.

Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship has members from high and honored positions to ordinary men. Our members range from a member of the World Court at The Hague, to presi-

dents, cabinet ministers, high court judges, generals, commanders, industrialists, businessmen, contractors and laborers. However, we of FGBMFI, with the power of Christ, transcend wealth, riches, poverty, education, status, position, power and politics.

Being part of the Fellowship means having wonderful Christian brothers who have the same problems, challenges and needs that you experience.

None of us are alone, we are a global network of businessmen who have been touched and lifted by the person and power of Jesus.

We enjoy the friendship and comradery of thousands of men of all walks of life and from all parts of the world. We, individually, become a link in the golden



chain of tens of thousands of special men who in a positive and powerful way interact with each other.

Our vision is to see millions of men in every nation who now live in bondage and the consequences of life without the Lord, become acquainted with

the Father of us all, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who humbled Himself and gave Himself to be our sacrifice so we could have forgiveness and our Creator...the Father of mankind.

We need ordinary men to do extraordinary things for God! ■

THE VOICE OF OUR READERS

The Impact of A Voice

I'm writing this to you so that you will know what kind of impact having my testimony published in *Voice* has had on my life the past year and a half.

About the time my testimony was published, the Lord had been dealing with me about making a cassette tape, singing gospel music. He directed me to print 2,000 copies, because you can't harvest a crop if you don't plant the seeds. Ultimately, He opened doors for me to go to Japan, through a missionary there reading my testimony in *Voice*. He opened the door for ministry and blessing in Australia. Next, a door opened to sing at a local TV station, then to make a videotape, then to appear on Christian TV as a singer and guest. In all, His timing and leading was apparent.

The Lord is faithful. His Word doesn't return void, but accomplishes whatever it sets out to do. So He has done in using *Voice* magazine to bring His people together

and accomplish His purpose for our lives.
T.B., Midland, MI

See What A Voice Can Do

I would like to report on the kinds of responses I received from my testimony "Against All Grief I'll Stand."

I received 35 letters from as far as Nigeria, Africa, and as close as California. Letters came from prison inmates, from recent widows crying out for help and consolation, from grandmothers hoping I'd write a word of encouragement to their children who faced loss of a loved one; from a teenager requesting a pen-pal relationship with my children, from mothers who drew strength for the battle against Satan's attacks on their children, from those deterred by the article from committing suicide, from those corporate managers in shock over the death of loved ones, from those who have come out of cults to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour, from those trying to reconcile with family members, from those wanting to send copies to loved ones with cancer, and on and on.

I have answered some: "Let the Holy Spirit heal that deep wound and fill it with His anointing. Ask Him to give you fresh and clean thoughts, to fill your home with His presence, and to destroy Satan's plan to shred your lives."

God has now carved out a new Grief Healing Ministry, where we teach that only Jesus Christ heals *all* wounds. Miracles are constantly happening at this little gathering.

Thank you for *Voice* magazine...It has had great impact in many lives.

D.M., Anaheim, CA



GLOBAL REPORT:

Bro Richard Shakarian
International President
F.G.B.M.F.I.
3150 Bear Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
U. S. A.

Dear Bro Richard,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am writing to congratulate you on your new office as International President of the Fellowship. Your appointment has come at a crucial time in the life of the Fellowship and I trust you will bring all the experience you acquired under your father for the 40 years you served with him to bear in your new office. Already, there are signs of the perseverance with which you will work - what with the efforts you made to get a visa to Ghana and Nigeria for the convention!

You have proved that you will make yourself available to the people at all times through the punctuality and timeliness with which you attended all your schedules during the Nigeria convention.

As a speaker on that Friday, the Lord used you mightily to reach us at the convention. Your message on salvation, healing and integrity was a blessing to many. Thanks be to God for making yourself a useful vessel in the Hands of the Lord that night.

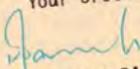
The joy, enthusiasm and cordial response that welcomed you in Nigeria show that the brothers in Africa have accepted your leadership position and are prepared to work with you. Please do all you can to maintain this fire that is burning in the hearts of our African brothers.

With regard to your visit to The Bahamas, I would like to encourage you to undertake many of such visits to all parts of the world. The visit is a step in the right direction. The people must know you and such visits provide an effective means of endearing yourself to them. You have my blessing in this mission.

I cannot conclude without a word for Vangie, your dear wife. We at the convention were greatly inspired by her presence to provide both spiritual and moral support. Her presence added beauty to the convention. I encourage her to stand firmly by you as you fulfill the great role that has fallen on your shoulders. We in Africa love her greatly. She is a source of pride to us.

May the peace and blessing of the Almighty God be upon you, your family, business and the entire staff who provide support for your ministry.

Your brother in the Lord,


KWABENA DARKO

AFRICA

RICHARD SHAKARIAN

I am excited and filled with anticipation with what the Lord is doing. I just returned from Nigeria where I spoke at the National Convention with 7,000 people in attendance. I was greeted by members of the government cabinet and gave Lifetime Membership pins to 180 brand new members! I was humbled the night I spoke, as the aisles, all the way to the back, were filled with people who were coming forward to commit their lives to the Lord. What a wonderful time it was.

SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

My parents were first-generation Christians and we all went to church. However, I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus, nor confess Him as my Lord until April 1967, just before I went to Ahmadu Bello University.

I left for the university in October, and was very grateful that I knew the Lord (those who did not went through much confusion due to distracting forces prevalent on campus).

I had the opportunity to lead the Christian Fellowship at Ahmadu Bello. It was a wonderful privilege because many of those who helped us are now leaders in different Christian organizations. We were well trained in the Word so that through the turbulent years that followed, we had a stabilizing factor—a good foundation in the Word. I cannot forget what they did in this respect.

I later went to the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, where I was also the

President of the Christian Union. It was the first time an African held this position. They gave me a lot of support as I emphasized evangelism. I challenged them to go out and win souls and as we did, the union grew. By the time I left in 1974, a mark was left that is still alluded to today.



Praise and worship at the Nigeria National Convention. Vangie Shakarian, wife of Richard, is center in the front row.

At the university there was also a wonderful minister of the Word who had an expository approach to preaching. He took us through the books of the Bible systematically. It was like going through a Bible school.

I came back to ABU as a lecturer. And with the secretary of the university chapel, attended by about 1,000 students, I purposed to nurture the students not only academically but also spiritually and to prepare them for life. Two decades later, I see some of these students and they are still going strong with the Lord.

It has been a great opportunity for me, not only to know the Lord but also to serve Him in leadership areas.

I am now the Secretary of Agriculture in Nigeria. I feel that God is involved because this is the first time in many years that the mandate of agriculture has been given to a Christian.

I am doing everything in my power to ensure that there is a qualitative change, so they can say that having a Christian in this position has made a difference. If agriculture progresses, being the heart of the country, then the whole nation will experience progression.

DR. OLUWOLE FAGBEMI

I have chronic pain in the shoulders, as well as in the backbone and it has pained me for about five years. But during the national convention in Abuja Jesus Christ healed me. Praise the Lord. When Richard Shakarian prayed the prayer of faith I felt a healing in my shoulders, as well as in my backbone. When I woke up this morning, I didn't have any sign of pain.

NGOZI DBIEFUNA

I have an upset stomach. This has been going on for a very long time. I watch what I eat. I don't eat fruit and milk and things that upset me, even ice cream. But yesterday it was gone. I felt the vibration of the Lord. Today I drank a lot of milk and ate whatever I wanted, and nothing has happened. I am really thrilled and I know the pain is over.

MRS. EKEOMA EGBUJOR

My problem started about five months ago. I used to have these pains in my ribs, just under my skin.

When it comes it feels like air bubbles. It used to be very painful. I can't straighten up whenever the pain strikes. I have gone to various hospitals, but none of the doctors have been able to help. They have given me drugs, but when I quit taking them the pain returns. Yesterday, during the fellowship meeting, I wasn't able to get up. I just sat there, restless. The people around me knew I had a problem. So the sister sitting next to me prayed and instantly the pain went away.



Oluwole Fagbemi



Ibiere Peterside

MISS IBIERE PETERSIDE

In 1976 I had an appendicitis operation and afterwards I was having pains. I would go to the hospital for checkups and tests but they didn't know what was wrong. When the pains came I could not work. The doctor that performed my operation said they would have to open me up again to find out what was wrong, but I refused. The pain has gone on and on. When I came to the convention on Wednesday I felt terrible. At the breakfast meeting on Thursday I was holding my lower abdomen because I was in pain. It felt like something was sticking me inside. The doctor said it was possible that something was forgotten inside, but they would have to check it out and remove it. Then yesterday, when Richard said

we should pray, I was touching my lower abdomen. Suddenly it felt like something fell off my lower abdomen. It used to be very stiff. I couldn't touch it before, but now the area was soft, normal. I give God the glory for what He has done for me.

CLINTON C. EMEKONA

For about six months I have had arthritic pains at the base of my two forefingers. I also have occasional pains in my knees and elbows. But last night, as Brother Richard Shakarian ministered healing and asked the sick to raise their hands, I did. Then he asked the people around us who were not sick to lay hands on us. There was nobody laying hands on me—everyone

around me was sick. So I laid my sick fingers on my neighbor. As soon as I did, the pain disappeared! I flicked my fingers vigorously and the pain was gone. I praise Jesus. Hallelujah!

UNKNOWN

I am a medical doctor. I had a terrible pain in my right hip. I have had it for years. I injured it playing tennis. I have gone to almost anybody who could give me aid, including men of God. I have taken all kinds of medication to no avail. But tonight when the man of God was talking about pain in our bodies, I was healed. Now, for the first time in my life, I can stand without pain. Praise God I'm completely healed. ■

CHAPTER OUTREACH

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

CANADA: Quebec: Hyacinthe Chapter, President Marc Morais, 514-772-5920. **GHANA:** Akropong-Akuapem Chapter, President Fred William Ofori-Akuffo; Bogoso Chapter, President Moses S.K. Adinyira; Nsawam Chapter, President Felix Boateng Odum. **FRANCE:** Chantilly Chapter, President Richard Gevaert; Dijon Chapter, President Jean-Pierre Bersot, 8-046-0855. **MEXICO:** Ciudad Juarez Chapter, President Juan Flores Flores, 16-125-6150; Colima Chapter, President Carlos Blasquez, 523-312-6059; Cuernavaca Chapter, President Roberto Sola, 527-0246; Fiesta Americana Chapter, President Garbiel Gutierrez, 537-6867; Hermosillo Chapter, President Roberto Rios Pena, 526-712-1588; Los Mochis Chapter, President Jose Garcia, 526-814-1722; Matehuala Chapter, President Ezequiel Bernal, 528-412-2017; Mazatlan Chapter, President Gerardo Tosrrijos, 526-982-4101; Morelia Chapter, President Jose Jack Ayuso, 529-928-6002; Monterrey Chapter, President Salvador Gonzales, 528-339-8088; Morelia Chapter, President Carlos Capetillo, 524-515-6420; Nuevo Progreso Chapter, President Arturo De La Cerna Vigil, 5-224-5211; Executive Chapter, President Adolfo Alvarez, 522-243-0729; Puerto Vallarta Chapter, President Miguel Angel Mendez, 523-224-0560; Tecate Chapter, President Ernesto David Hernandez, 526-654-0776; Tijuana Chapter, President Luis Enrique Rodriguez, 526-830-1595; San Luis Potosi Chapter, President Jose Luis Algara, 524-817-9968; Villa Hermosa Chapter, President Miguel Perez Acosta, 529-312-1719. **NIGERIA:** Atimbo Chapter, President S.O. Ibadapo; Daura Chapter, President Femi Ajigbo-Oluwa; Eheré Chapter, President Chuma Okoroafor, 8-222-0649; Ekenwan Chapter, President Emmanuel Adesina, 5-224-5211; Executive Chapter, President Mike M. Iheukwumere, 8-222-2823; Gateway-Abba Chapter, President Ezekiel A. Maduagwu, 22-2674; Ibusa Chapter, President Francis Ogwude; Kaduna Barnawa Chapter, President Isaac Owolabi, 21-1765; Kwale Chapter, President Felix Ezem; Odoakpu-Freedom Chapter, President Jerry Emeke Asoanya, 4-621-8457. **SPAIN:** Jales Chapter, President Honorio Amaden, 17-632-2400. **TANZANIA:** Arusha Chapter, President John A. Njau, 57-2521; Dar Es Salaam Chapter, President Joseph Collet Correia, 2-0056; Kinondoni Chapter, President Festo Kijo, 2-9684; Mount Meru Chapter, President John Aghombo Douglas, 2075; Mwanza Chapter, President E.T. Mwasuluka, 4-0428; Njombe Chapter, President Vitus S.A. Msufu; Shinyanga Chapter, President Sospeter Wilson Mooke, 2235; Singida Chapter, President E.W. Raphael; Songea Chapter, President J.Y. Mwanjila, 2667. **UNITED STATES:** Texas: Capitol of Texas Chapter, President Josue C. Lopez, 512-532-0841. **New York:** Central Nassau Chapter, President Daniel P. Buttafuoco, 516-746-8100. **WEST INDIES:** St. Vincent Chapter, President Jeffrey B. Williams, 809-457-1410.

THE BOX

H. Parker Eales
Raleigh, North Carolina

My alcoholic father abandoned us when I was two years old. My mother, who also became an alcoholic, had a terrible struggle providing for her two children. When I was five years old I got my first and only letter from my father. He said he was sorry he missed remembering me at Christmas but would be sending a large box. I never heard from him again.

Things were so bad at home, I left at the end of my third year of high school and worked at night living in a rented room to finish high school. I was depressed because I wanted to go to college and had no money or support and my high school sweetheart had just broken off our three-year relationship. I think I had always felt unhappy and different. To my shock and surprise, I won the largest scholarship in my school to the university I wanted to attend.

In college I learned a great deal that made life seem even more empty, meaningless and dark. I fell into despair so deep that only the pursuit of pleasure seemed to have value. After a number of years, I stopped and just worked for awhile. These were Vietnam years and soon the Army had me. While in basic training the Red Cross contacted me and told me my father was dead and to come claim the body. I went home and made arrangements. In the funeral home, my sister and I cried. We finally got the promised box—but he was in it.

After discharge, I went to Europe and backpacked around for a considerable time. I only grew more depressed. I came back from Europe and had only enough money to make it to Chicago where I stayed with a college buddy until I could get a job. There was a recession at that time and jobs were hard to find, so I took a job as an orderly at a nearby hospital. I just wanted to support myself and not impose anymore on my friend. To my surprise, the hospital assigned me to work with dying cancer patients. It was winter and other

orderlies frequently didn't show up for work so I often did double shifts. One man I had taken care of a great deal died in my arms—it was the first time I saw someone die. I had to take him to the morgue myself and leave him there.



H. Parker Eales

That night I walked back to my rented room through a heavy snow. I was exhausted after many days of double shifts. When I got there, I just fell on the bed in my uniform. I said my first real prayer, "If there is a God who can hear me, please hear I am sick of this life. I am sick of human pain and suffering and waiting for an accident, disease, old age, or insanity to get me. If You have any mercy take my life now! This night!"

I fell asleep. What I remember next was that I was moving forward very slowly in a great fog. I could only see an inch in front of my face. All of a sudden, I was eye to eye with someone. I looked into this person's eyes and

saw an innocence that flooded me with emotion. Suddenly, I was moving backwards from these innocent eyes and that's when I saw it—a face in great agony and a crown of thorns on the head.

The next thing I knew I was sitting up, sweating and trembling. I fell out of bed on my knees. Something beyond anything I could explain had happened. I didn't understand it all but there was no doubt I was different.

A few days later I was bathing a dying man. As I was washing his feet I realized I was washing the feet of Jesus and had been caring for Him.

Depression, despair was gone. I had an incredible sense of how precious life was and a sense of great purpose. From that day on my life has been blessed.

Today I have family, career, and home. But most of all, I have the most precious gift of all, the knowledge that Jesus of Nazareth is alive, real, loving and available. Since that night, I've had an incredible sense of destiny and purpose.

Cry out to Him. He will find you. Your *real* Father will send you His Christmas present. It won't be in a box, but in those innocent eyes of a Living Saviour. ■

Parker Eales, after serving in the U.S. Army, was vice-president of CCHC, Inc. (a coastal corporation) and is currently CEO/Administrator of RIM (a multi-specialty physician corporation). He has also been a member of the FGBMFI Raleigh, NC chapter since 1975. He and his wife, Chris, along with daughter, Megan, and son, Benjamin, live in Raleigh, NC and attend the Covenant Church of Raleigh.

GOD HE

Joel Nelson
Schenectady, New York

A lone, on my own, in my newly-rented apartment, in a new city, I prayed, “*God, help me!*”

It was a simple yet sincere prayer of desperation. No stilted, flowery phrases. Just an anguished call for help.

I wasn't a drug addict, nor an alcoholic, gravely ill or unemployed. None of these problems applied to me.

I was athletic, with enough physical endurance to bicycle distances most people would have to drive.

I was about to start a good-paying job and was living in a better section of town.

From a natural standpoint it appeared that everything was going well for me.

So why was I asking for God's help?

Because I had a serious problem... one that is more common than people realize. You see, I had a life and nothing to do with it.

There was this empty space in my life that needed to be filled with something meaningful.

There never was any problem having something to do while I was in school.

Even during summer vacation, I spent my time preparing for next year's courses. My job kept me busy during working hours, but when I came home from work, there were no tests to study for, no more homework, nothing with which to occupy my mind.

During the months following my simple but significant prayer, I tried to fill up my spare time with what I thought would be profitable. I took night courses seeking inspiration. I drove around the area until I ran out of roads to explore. I frequented taverns looking for fellowship, all to no avail.

Fortunately, God was working—answering that little prayer in His own way and time.

Because I had to change the state of my driver's license, it was necessary to take a motor vehicle eye test. To play it safe, I decided to get new eyeglasses.

Being new in town, I looked for an optometrist in the phone book, one close to my apartment. I selected Dr. David Lamb, a friendly person. After the eye examination, we got to talking.

LP ME!

When I mentioned my shortage of friends, he invited me to his home for dinner. He was a Christian believer. After dinner he asked me if I knew Christ as my personal Saviour.

Normally, I would have answered, "Yes." I had done that so many times before. Looking back, I know I was not a Christian.

Most non-Christians rarely believe or admit they are not Christians. They feel they are good enough as they are.

But God opened my eyes that night.

I saw myself as one who drank heavily on weekends. I rarely went to church—and when I did go, I got very little out of it.

The last prayer I had prayed was that three-word prayer, "God, help me!"

So I answered Dr. Lamb's question "No" with a kind of supernatural honesty. He asked me if I wanted to become a Christian. And blessed with supernatural common sense, I answered, "Yes." He led me to the Lord that memorable night on June 27, and I praise Him for His grace.

It was wonderful to be a member of God's family!

Now it seemed God was working in and on my life at a faster pace.

Dr. Lamb invited me to a Saturday night fellowship for people my age at Brighton Presbyterian Church. Imagine! Instant friendship!

Soon I became involved with some of the people from the fellowship through transportation. Even though it



Joel Nelson

meant driving many miles every day, it provided me with something positive to do with my car. It was doing something wonderful for me, too. All of this led to Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner invitations for me.

God was changing me gradually. This approach did not frighten me. Because of the Saturday night fellowship, I stopped drinking heavily on weekends. Of course, the church wasn't equipped with a bar, and I was unable to be in two places at the same time.

God enabled me to give up cigarette smoking and alcohol, without drugs or counseling. It was a definite miracle!

God dramatically changed my circumstances from single to married. I never thought I would marry; however, in 1977 I married one of the young ladies I had been providing rides for to and from church.

Another thing, I never thought I could ever learn to play the guitar, but because of the generosity of Christian

friends from a number of churches who supplied me with instruments and instructions, I did.

Again, I never thought we would ever be able to own a home of our own. My wife's dream was to have her own garden. The impossible became a reality as God pulled off some financial miracles. By November, 1986, we were living in our own home, in the country, on a lake!

This is just a sampling of what the Lord has done for my wife and me. Life is no longer a bore. We praise Him for His great love toward us.

I have a reason to get out of bed every morning. All because of three dynamic words expressed in prayer, "GOD, HELP ME!" ■

Joel and his wife, Joann, live in Schenectady, NY. Joel is a senior computer programmer analyst at New York State Department of Social Services in Albany. They have a son, David, 13, and attend Christ Church of the Hills in Rotterdam, NY.

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FGBMFI NEWS

Maryland Chapter Inspired by Voice Magazine

The Lower Patuxent River chapter in Solomons, Maryland has been stirred with the vision of *Voice* magazine.

Chapter president Hank Madjeski, Sr. met with *Voice* editor Jerry Jensen at the 1992 FGBMFI World Convention. Hank was deeply touched as Jerry shared the vision of *Voice* and how it was used to take FGBMFI's vision around the world. Hank was so moved he began to encourage his fellow chapter members to send \$100 a month to the international office. The members agreed and immediately began getting involved.

The chapter also initiated fund raising efforts for the publishing of *Voice*. During a local celebration, they set up a food trailer selling crab soup, crab ball sandwiches and clam chowder. A *Voice* magazine was given out with every order. The two-day event was a big success!

National directors Roy Garrison and Jim Priddy of Maryland secured the use of an auction house in Chesapeake for the purpose of holding a fund raising auction for *Voice*. People donated furniture, glassware, radios, televisions, tires and more. One elderly Christian lady felt led to donate her finest things—oil paintings, antique furniture, and a set of 300-year-old stained glass windows! Word of this quickly got around and others began donating their services



—an ice cream parlor donated dinners, a five-star restaurant donated a special dinner for two, and a local businessman donated his limousine service.

The auction lasted over three-and-a-half hours. Each attendee received a free copy of *Voice* and an invitation to a local chapter meeting. The event was so successful it may become an annual event!

BRIEFS

FGBMFI and Reinhard Bonnke

Word comes from Reinhard Bonnke of his campaign held in Africa:

"I am writing to tell you of the wonderful gospel campaign we had in Kumasi, Ghana. We saw an avalanche of blessings: in five meetings 615,000 people attended, of whom 195,000 made a commitment to Christ..."

"Brother Kwabena Darko [FGBMFI International Vice-President] has been of great help to us. What a wonderful man of God he is. I want to congratulate you for having such fine people in FGBMFI. I love you in the Lord and pray for your ministry."



Reinhard Bonnke with Africa leaders at attending his crusade in Ghana. Kwabena Darko is 2nd from left, front row.

Delaware Couples' Advance

The annual Couples' Advance was held at the Princess Royale Hotel in Ocean City, MD. Fifty-four couples attended and enjoyed speaker Jim Moore from Grand Bay, Alabama.

Frank Cairo, membership chairman, reports on the tremendous time had as God moved and worked miracles. Marriages were healed and lives blessed as couples reported the move of the Holy Spirit among them.

The 1994 advance is already being planned with great anticipation!

Gulf Coast Rally Report

The Gulf Coast Rally '93 was hosted by four chapter: Pasagoula and Biloxi, Mississippi and Slidell and Mobile, Alabama. This was their sixth rally and the theme was "Let the Fire Fall" and indeed it did! The average attendance at each meeting was 100, with about 80 percent coming forward for ministry.

A special altar call was held after the breakfast meeting at which almost all came forward for ministry. The chapter officers prayed for the anointing to explode in their lives. It was like the Book of Acts. We have been able to confirm many healings and deliverances that took place.

All of the meetings were charged with expectancy and the people were not disappointed. One lady was set free from several demons and was later seen ministering to others the joy of the Holy Spirit—what a difference!

So much happened during these meetings, but one of the most beautiful parts was that many of the chapter officers were involved in ministry and not just the speakers.

Previous rallies have been a success with the expenses met, yet nothing left over. However, this year the people gave in excess of \$1,000 over budget and pledged another \$800 for next year's rally!

The secret to their success was the result of coming together and praying

in the Spirit for as long as necessary to be cleansed and brought into unity. The vision for the Fellowship has become a reality as they move and continue to grow in Him. The Lord has shown that the best is yet to come for the body of Christ and the Fellowship will see the fulfillment of all the Lord has shown.

A Turnaround in Michigan

Richard Shakarian submits this report following the Michigan Men's Advance.

The entire advance was centered on the Lord, worship, encouragement and commitment. For this I greatly compliment the directors—Stan Cool, Lynn Savage and Russ Sperling. They are really doing a wonderful job. Their greatest desire is to lift up the Lord and it shows. All the meetings had a 100-percent spiritual flow.

They were looking for a "turnaround" because they were previously headed the wrong way. Praise God the turnaround came in several areas.

1. Stan Cool announced that because of a lack of member and financial support, the regional convention would not take place. Mark Harris, one of the speakers, and I immediately asked the men to give and the \$3,500 advance money needed was raised right there. They also were financially blessed with extra in their advance expense offering.

2. The young businessmen present really caught the fire. The Lord had already been dealing with them to start young professional chapters, and that all should be used regardless of personal finances. As a result, they are starting their own chapters—the newest is "Power Chapter."

3. A strong commitment to the fact that FGBMFI is a ministry raised up by God. This included a new recognition of

our place in God's plan. Several attendees did not know Demos' original vision, so 19 copies of *The Happiest People On Earth* were sold. We received new young men as members.

Michigan indeed got their turnaround.

30th Annual St. Louis Regional

This beautiful convention, held at the Airport Hilton, brought together many anointed speakers ministering to all ages. A special teaching session, "The Secrets of the Anointing," featured Richard Shakarian, FGMBFI international president, and Leonard Riebold, national director. These sessions have been making a great difference in the spiritual lives of many men.



DeCarol Williamson prays for Leonard Riebold at "Secrets of the Anointing."

In addition to the "Secrets" meeting, special speakers Dr. Ralph Herron, Tracy Harris, Bishop Dwight McDaniels, Gary Bortz, Gene Brown, Raphael Green, DeCarol Williamson, Roger Johnson and many others ministered in God's love as souls were saved and healings blessed many. The Fellowship workers, members and attendees were truly being a light in their city as they lifted up the name of Jesus.

RELIVE FGBMFI'S 40TH WORLD CONVENTION BOSTON '93

Cassette Tapes—\$5 ea. / Video Tapes—\$20 ea.

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Tuesday, June 29

___C6901 Evening Mtg.—Paul Walker—"Demonstration Of Discipleship"

Wednesday, June 30

___C6902 Breakfast—DeCarol Williamson—"What God Is Saying To FGBMFI"

___C6903 Afternoon Seminar—Paul Walker—"Spiritual Warfare, Scriptural Strategy"

___C6904 Afternoon Seminar—Paul & Joyce Toberty—"Prophetic Ministry"

___C6905 Evening Mtg.—Fr. DiLorenzo

___C6906 ___V8886 Evening Mtg.—John Hagee—"Battle Cry"

Thursday, July 1

___C6907 Breakfast Mtg.—Sir Lionel Luckhoo

___C6908 Ladies' Luncheon—Lonise Bias—"Touch Times Like These"

___C6909 Evening Mtg.—J. Maurice Prindville—"Testimony"

___C6910 ___V8887 Evening Mtg.—Fr. Robert MacDougall—"Testimony Of A Catholic Priest"

Friday, July 2

___C6911 Breakfast Mtg.—Bob Edmiston

___C6912 Sports Luncheon—Jimmy Johnson—"Testimony"

___C6913 ___V8888 Evening Mtg. A—Gordon Fee—"A Prayer For Times Like These"

Saturday, July 3

___C6914 ___V8889 Military Breakfast—Lt. Gen. Alonzo Short, Jr.—"How Shall We Live?"

___C6915 Afternoon Seminar—"Secrets of the Anointing"

___C6916 ___V8890 Evening Mtg.—Demos Shakarian, David Duell

Convention Sets on Cassette Tape: ___5 Evening Mtgs.—\$24 ___16-Tape album—\$64

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Feb. 2-5, 1994
Decatur, IL
Contact: Howard Hite
RR# 1, Box 6D
Dalton City, IL 61925
217-874-2274

PEACE COUNTRY 5TH ADV.

Feb. 4-6, 1994
Travellers Motor Hotel
Peace River, Alberta, Canada
Contact: Bob Savage
P.O. Box 884, Grand Prairie
Alberta, Canada T8V 3Y1
408-538-1040

EL PASO QUARTERLY RALLY

Feb. 5, 1994
Holiday Inn, El Paso, TX
Contact: Roger D. Rappe
8321 Verdelland
El Paso, TX 79907
915-591-0216, 915-779-1968

REGIONAL RALLY

Feb. 11-12, 1994
Ramada Inn, Sterling, CO
Contact: Ross Lindstrom
303-522-2328

GREATER MISSISSIPPI CPLS.' ADV.

Feb. 11-13, 1994
Camp Lancaster, Florence, MS
Contact: Don Armstrong
P.O. Box 776
Florence, MS 39073-0776
601-845-8654

OKI MARRIED COUPLES' ADV.

Feb. 25-27, 1994
Kings Island Inn, Kings Island, OH
Contact: Duane Kinnison
P.O. Box 1386
Fairborn, OH 45034
513-879-3943

ADVANCE FOR JESUS

Feb. 26, 1994
Chain 'O Lakes Complex,
Winter Haven, FL
Contact: Leonard Hanks
530 So. Florida Ave. # 1215
Lakeland, FL 33801
813-647-5639

EASTERN OHIO CPLS.' ADV.

Mar. 4-5, 1994
Salt Fork State Park Lodge,
Cambridge, OH
Contact: William J. Cooke
8950 Charington Ct.
Pickerington, OH 43147
614-861-3979, 614-472-0954

SO. ALBERTA REG. RALLY

Mar. 11-12, 1994
Medicine Hat Lodge, Medicine Hat
Alberta, Canada
Contact: Ernie Murschel
524 B Ash Ave. S.E.
Medicine Hat, Alb., Can. T1A 3B5

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If you wish to contact any of the above directors, call FGBMFI Headquarters at (714) 754-1400, and ask for Dian Scott.

SIX 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: FGBMFI/Box 5050/Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

YES! I have made my eternal decision. I have read the Six Steps to Salvation and have asked Jesus to be my personal Saviour.

Signature _____

Please send me the booklet *Now That You've Received Christ.*

Name _____

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Clip and mail to: FGBMFI, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92628

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big mac

Big Mac Gober wanted to be somebody. Returning from Vietnam, he was treated like an outcast. He did find acceptance, however, with one group of society—bikers. And with a big red Harley Davidson he soon became one bad dude. But it didn't take long before he found someone who could make him feel even bigger.

2

SECOND CHANCE

Joseph Leichte was one of those men life seemed to always give another chance. A prisoner of war in World War II, he was freed; a widower late in life, he found a new woman to love; and a victim of heart attacks, he received a new chance for life.

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