

FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S

NOVEMBER 1976

25¢

VOICE

OUR FATHER WHICH ART
IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED
BE THY NAME. THY WILL
BE DONE AS IN HEAVEN
SO IN EARTH
GIVE US THIS DAY
OUR DAILY BREAD



FROM GUTTER TO GOD'S GLORY The BLACKY BIRRELL Story

Full Gospel Business Men's

VOICE

Volume 24 Number 10

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FROM GUTTER TO GOD'S GLORY



THIRTY-TWO YEARS in prison! Thirty-two years of being arrested, tested, searched and researched, computerized and analyzed, studied and programmed—to no avail. Classified as an incurable, hopeless, institutionalized "product of the penal system," I finally found the "key" through Jesus Christ, the only hope of mankind for freedom, both physically and spiritually.

Jails and prisons were my life style all of my adult life and even in early childhood, from the age of four.

As of this month, November, 1976 I have been out of prison for three years, have married a wonderful Christian lady, have my own Christian book store, have written a book, and have given my testimony to thousands of people throughout America. I am a member of the Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, and have



by **BLACKY BIRRELL**

**Christian Bookstore Owner/Manager,
Richland, Washington**

received commendations from the mayor, the Rotary, the Lions, and many youth groups. But most important of all, I am a proud member of God's family, the largest family in the entire world!

As I said before, prisons were my home. I knew all the angles, all the games and ruses to play and use when I needed them to get a good job, good living quarters, or to make some money. I was used to brutality and bloodshed, and would turn a blind eye to anything immoral or illegal, following the code that "whatever happened to any other con was none of my business, unless that con was a relative or a crime partner." I would do my time and have no fear of getting released, for I knew that within a few weeks I would be "back home." I had

absolutely no fear of prisons; it was the free world that I feared.

In 1971 I was in an atrocious jail in Kansas that was under investigation by the Civil Rights Committee. In the section where I was housed, there were six cells with two bunks in each cell. These were left open day and night so that we could go into a bull-pen area to eat, go to the toilets, and so on. An outer cell door kept us from going home. Nightly we could hear the screams of kids being sexually abused from the other jail sections and we just laughed. It was their problem and none of our business. Besides, the jailers were treating the eleven men in our section with extremely good privileges—like bringing us whiskey, pills, good food, color TV—just about everything we



wanted except freedom. The jailers felt that we all would take the stand, or sign an affidavit, that they were humane and decent. At that time we would have done just that. But, something happened!

One afternoon, a jailer opened the outer jail door and physically pushed a young kid into our section, saying as he did so, "Here's a cute one for you guys!" We knew what he meant. Evidently, the

The boy came back to his bunk amidst a barrage of whistles and nasty remarks. He seemed resigned to the fate that awaited him. Here we were, a bunch of grown men, hardened cons, knowing we had a weak kid cowed and enjoying every minute of it.

The evening meal arrived and the kid was too frightened to come out and get his. One guy said, "Maybe he's fasting,"

"I took one look at what he had written, and flipped!"

boy had given him some static at the admissions desk and he wanted him abused. The kid was seventeen, but was frail and looked more like fifteen. He was frightened and took the only bunk in the section that was open—the bunk above me. The cons in the tank had already begun to whisper among themselves about how they would make sport of him. I lay on the bottom bunk reading a porno book and just slightly nodded at the boy as he got up on the top bunk and lay there, terrified.

A little while later, the kid had to get up to go to the bull-pen area to the bathroom and I looked up in time to see him writing on the wall with a felt-tip pen. I thought to myself: "He's just like all the others." All the kids that come in jail usually write some obscenity about God, the establishment, or something they think will give them personal recognition. It follows the old adage: "A fool's name and a fool's face always appear in a public place!" My name is inscribed in many jails and prisons.

so we laughed and ate his chow.

The reason he was scared to come out was because later in the afternoon of the same day I had gotten up from my bunk and walked by to see what he had written on the wall. I took one look and flipped! Running back to the cell I pulled the kid off the top bunk and began to kick him in the ribs. I wanted to stomp his face in, but a Chicano prisoner pulled me off. I turned to him and said, "Did you see what this Jesus Freak wrote on that wall? Go take a look for yourself."

The kid had written the entire Lord's Prayer on the wall. The other inmates hee-hawed and made sport of him all afternoon, reminding him what was in store for him when the lights went out at night.

Things settled down after the evening meal and cons went about their jail activities. About 8:30 the kid once again had to get up and he braved the barrage of insults to go again to the bathroom. I was on my bottom bunk and glanced up as he came back, holding in his hand a rag with

On May 14, 1972 I found the answer to my question—why all of these Christians could love a guy like me. Nick Cadena, an ex-convict who now runs a Halfway House for drug addicts in Los Angeles, came into the prison and talked about God's gift of love. It was then that I knew where the love of these Christians came from and that I knew the meaning of "Agape Love." That evening I requested to be prayed for. As brothers and sisters laid hands upon me in prayer, I turned my life over to the Lord: "I need you, Lord. I want you. I believe!" And during those few moments, I was cleansed, born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. There was no "in between" for this sinner. I was blessed with the new birth and the Baptism at the same time. Tears flowed like wine from my eyes as I unashamedly spoke in an unknown language. It was so neat to know now for sure that I, too, could become a new creature in Christ. Hatred and bitterness left me almost instantly and as I came up from the prayer circle, I embraced those who only moments ago I had contempt and jealousy towards. His precious love lifted me.

After that my life inside the prison began to change—old desires faded and new, healthy desires took their place. I got deep into the Word and became aware of an inner peace and tranquility I had never before known.

Shortly thereafter, I made a parole—a miracle as far as mankind was concerned, for with my record, I would never even have given myself a parole. They released me from prison with \$15.00, a suit of

clothes and a plane ticket to Kansas City, Kansas. I chose to go there, as I figured that if I ever could make it on the outside, it would have to be with that family in Kansas.

I had it rough in Kansas, for no one would employ me. Only three days before my time was up to get a job, however, I had five job offers after speaking at a Full Gospel Business Men's dinner in Kansas City, Missouri. Then I began to do wonderfully, speaking in churches and helping kids.

I had been phoning June, a lady in Richland to whom I had been writing for some time, and one day she said she was packed and would be down to see me. She came on the train and for two weeks we were together. That was when I knew I loved her, and hoped and prayed I could make her a good husband. With the blessings of the parole officer, I came west with June, meeting her family and her neighbors who accepted me. We were married with a full church wedding and a large reception in my home. "My home"—how sweet the sound, and what a blessed reward from Jesus!

Someone once told me, "Let God do it," and so I did. My walk with Christ grows stronger daily, and each day is replete with surprises and joys. Since becoming a Christian I have had joy, peace, love and happiness. I had been told all Christians were crazy, but if being a Christian means living as I've been living since my experience with Christ, then I would like to be declared totally insane! ■



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These are the six world-wide ministries through which the Fellowship is reaching 1½ billion people this year:

1. Global Outreach

Local chapters active in forty-three countries. Radio broadcast beamed to fifty countries in twenty-one languages. Airlifts carry American laymen to minister overseas. Huge international conventions. Original editions of FGBMI literature published in German, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish and English.

2. Fellowship

Some 1500 local chapters meet weekly or monthly, attracting 500,000 people to informal gatherings in restaurants and hotel banquet halls. More than 100 regional conventions and rallies each year.

3. Good News Media

Regular GOOD NEWS programs on some 150 stations each week—also 70 radio stations. Good News Tonight five-hour TV conventions saturate major U.S. cities.

4. Literature

VOICE—a magazine enjoyed monthly by hundreds of thousands of readers.

CONVICTS for CHRIST—is prepared especially for prisoners.

BOOKS—containing the testimonies of many within the traditional churches who have been caught up in the move of God's Spirit today, as well as the testimonies of peace officers, military men, attorneys and doctors.

TRACTS—more than three million colorful, pocket-sized pamphlets have been distributed, telling true stories of how businessmen encountered God.

5. Stewardship

You can provide for a portion of your estate to continue spreading the Gospel for years to come. The Fellowship offers assistance and advice concerning wills, trusts, and other financial matters.

6. Prayer & Teaching

Institute for Christian Living intensive two and three-day Bible seminars in cities across the nation. One hundred to be held in 1977. Confidential Prayer Ministry takes needs before the Lord and responds with warm counseling letters.

Every \$10 donation reaches 2800 people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Write to the International Headquarters for a brochure explaining more about the Fellowship's ministries.

World Report



ENCOMPASSES MANY AREAS

"Good News Tonight" reaches New York's Millions

The Fellowship's five-hour TV convention came to America's largest metropolis August 30, and New York gave the greatest response yet to "Good News Tonight." The 160 phones set up to receive viewers' requests for prayer were busy nearly all of the time. In addition, funds were raised to enable the Fellowship to tell more than sixty-five million people around the world about Jesus.

Blind woman healed at Portland "Good News Tonight"

The restoration of a young woman's sight was among the miracles which took place during the Portland, Oregon **Good News Tonight** August 22. "When I called up, I was blind in my right eye, and my left eye was almost totally blind," she reported. "Right afterwards, I was very enthused when I could see; when my eyesight was getting better and better, time after time, minute after minute. . . . And then I saw. I could see very much." The next day, she was reading her Bible without glasses.

"Good News Tonight" is . . .

Good News Tonight features exciting music, interesting interviews, and incisive Bible teaching. Guests include Pat Boone, Graham Kerr, Oral Roberts and U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield.

If you would like to see the program aired in your community, urge your chapter officers to contact Omega Advertising (the Fellowship's in-house agency) at (714) 751-3700 or 17791 Sky Park Circle Dr., Irvine, California 92714.

Paris Fellowship activities

A three-day rally, a breakfast, and a workshop with International Vice-President Tom Ashcraft were held in Paris in September as the French chapter accelerated its outreach. According to Marcel Banoun of Paris, "We are doing our best to obey God as He said at the Fellowship's European Convention in Brussels (May 5-8): '*Avancez! et alors j'élargirai votre tente!*' (Move forward and I will extend your tent!)."

The "suicidal pain" grew progressively worse...



A CASE FOR HEALING

by JOHN W. ERVIN, J.D., LL.M., S.J.D.
Attorney-at-Law, Beverly Hills, California

IN 1964 I developed severe, piercing pains in my face diagnosed as trigeminal neuralgia or "tic douloureux," sometimes referred to as "suicidal pain." Doctors agree that this pain is one of the worst known to medical science. For the next five years I used various types of extreme medication with serious side effects as the pain grew progressively worse.

During this time my wife, Patricia, fell and injured her back, incurring the excruciating pain that attends a ruptured disk. I remember the Thanksgiving to Christmas period in which my wife was in the hospital. I would arise at 5:00 a.m. to prepare my lectures at the University and get the three children off to school, drive fifteen miles to the University for my morning lectures, go to my Beverly Hills law firm where I practiced until 5:00

o'clock, return to the University for evening lectures, and arrive home around 10:00 o'clock. My facial pain was so severe I could scarcely eat.

As my pain grew worse and the medication less effective, a friend encouraged us to attend Kathryn Kuhlman's services at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles where I became an usher. During one of the services Patricia was healed of her long-standing back pain.

The following Friday I had pneumonia and was in a coma at a hospital. My wife was called and told that I had no vital signs—no pulse, heartbeat or respiration. For the next ten days I remained in a coma, and during certain times electric encephalograph tests showed no brain function. Patricia had many people praying for me but the neurologist told her that even if I lived I probably would have



serious brain damage. When the attending physicians obtained a corneal reflex, and later when I regained consciousness, everyone in the hospital used the term "miracle."

Several weeks later I was flown to Massachusetts for surgery to relieve the nerve pain. The operation seemed to be successful, but then I developed an intense, burning pain throughout the entire inside and outside of my teeth, tongue and face which was finally diagnosed as analgesia dolorosa. This rare and terrible pain syndrome occurs in about two percent of the surgeries on the fifth cranial nerve, and there is no surgery or medication that will relieve the pain. In lay language it is "the end of the road."

Then to make matters even worse I developed an internal fungus infection which caused my tongue to be so badly erupted I could tolerate nothing but skim

milk, broth and medication. Each day was a living hell in which I took twenty-five to thirty assorted types of medication for my various ailments without any apparent effect. I was unable to speak without severe pain and too weak to dress myself.

My experience was Job-like. I next developed a skin cancer on the back of one of my arms requiring an operation. Patricia told the surgeon that I was too sick to stay in the hospital, so it was decided that she would take me early in the morning to surgery and bring me back home from the recovery room.

I then developed papillomas on the bottoms of my feet so that I could not walk and these required medication and surgery. Each night I had to scrub my lacerated and infected tongue with a toothbrush to remove the fungus, then paint it with gentian violet. The only respite I had from pain was sleep during

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Dr. Ervin was the director and editor of *Institutes on Federal Taxation* at the University of Southern California from 1947-1970 where he was also a professor of law teaching taxation.

which my dreams were very troubled.

My wife, who never gave up the faith and hope that God would restore me to an active life, took me to a Christian doctor some twenty-five miles away to see if hypnosis would be of any assistance. It was not, and the jiggling of the car made my pain even worse. Thereafter, following his surgical hospital rounds on Friday evening this doctor drove for one hour on the freeways to come to my home where he would spend three hours encouraging me, speaking of new solutions for my various medical problems and encouraging me to speak to him about religion. It took him five hours after his regular work each Friday. I had never heard of anyone showing this kind of care and love. And there were others who gave of themselves, one being a young pastor from another church who spent three hours each Wednesday with me.

Often during this journey through the valley of the shadow of death I envisioned myself being cradled like a little child in the arms of Jesus, as I sought sleep and relief from pain each night. This brought me blessed sleep and rest. Although I knew and loved God and Jesus intellectually, now I knew Him as my loving, personal Saviour with all the compassion of a father, mother, brother and friend coming to me each night to hold me in His arms and give me the gift of rest and sleep.

By Divine Providence, the young minister that visited me each Wednesday had in his congregation Dick Ross, at that time the producer of the Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman programs. The

*I told him I had not
thought of praying
for anyone else
as needy as I.*



pastor asked him if Oral Roberts would see me and pray for me. He was in Los Angeles taping a TV special. Dick Ross made the arrangements and my wife and the young minister took me to the NBC Burbank studios. I found myself sitting directly in front of the Bible when Oral Roberts came before the TV cameras for the taping. I did not think I could sit there for such a long period of time, but I did. After Mr. Roberts had left the set and the World Action Singers were singing the

show's theme song, my ears seemed to pick up without my thinking, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing your way." I felt my heart strangely warmed, the way John Wesley must have felt at Aldersgate when he heard someone reading Luther's Introduction to Romans, and I could not speak of that event for the next month without weeping.

I was led into Roberts' dressing room. Among the lead questions, he asked me whom I was praying for who was in terrible need like myself. I told him that I prayed for my pastors and my church, my wife and my children, and my business partners—all of whom were carrying me as a burden—but I had not thought of praying for any other person in terrible pain.

He then said to me, "What are my needs?" I had heard him mention that it is a very difficult task to build a university, make TV programs and do all the things that he was called upon to do for the Holy Spirit and I said, "You must need many gifts of funds and service." He then said to me, "Put your hand on me and pray for my needs." I did so, and prayed a very simple prayer, after which he put one hand on my shoulder and the other on the side of my face where the pain was and prayed to God that I would be healed from the top of my head to the soles of my feet. I felt no change in my pain level but my wife said that I looked better and the following Sunday I found strength enough to attend church. Upon visiting the physician treating the fungus, he found that it had cleared and I was able to take some food in my mouth besides milk. This gave me additional

strength so that I was able to try to go off my medication.

I slowly grew stronger until I was able to resume an active life. That was over four years ago. The first thing that my wife and I did was to form a small prayer-healing group in our home which we later moved into our church. During this time we have laid hands on and prayed for sick people of many faiths. God has blessed us with miraculous healings of "incurable" cancer, serious heart damage, internal growths and cysts. There are even two cases of very advanced multiple sclerosis that are showing steady improvement.

Although we both work in my law firm to earn our living, we devote every spare moment of the day and night to work for the Lord in the Full Gospel way. We believe in what Jesus said to His disciples in Mark 16:18, ". . . they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

We have not only been saved by Jesus and baptized in the Holy Spirit, but we, like Demos Shakarian, have found the secret of "The Happiest People on Earth."

It is such a great blessing to go among the sick, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord and praying for them that they may be made whole. It is such a great joy to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit as He moves among us doing His great work and teaching us all things. It is such a privilege to follow Jesus and praise God as we see Him glorify His Son by the mighty works of His Holy Spirit. We constantly look to Him and wear His garment of praise. ■

Let Go and Let God

by WILLIAM G. STRAUSBURG
Salesman, Mountain View, California

LOOKING BACK on the last sixteen years, I can now see that God was trying to guide my life. I was unaware of this as I tried from time to time to determine my next course of action, accepting no help from anyone yet always wondering why the pieces of my life didn't fit.

I was born in Pasadena, California and raised in Hartzell Methodist Church there. Church to me was just an experience to cope with, so after I grew up I stopped attending, married, left school, and started a family.

Going to work for a metal fabricating company gave me security, even though I started at the lowest job they had to offer. During my sixteen years there, I worked my way upward until the company offered me a chance at selling and a transfer to San Francisco.

This was the start of my downfall, for I was put into situations that made me compromise my morals. I had a decision to make: give in or quit the job. I couldn't quit so I gave in.

Entertaining became the "in" thing to do. There were always parties, with plenty of drinking. My wife, Leslie, was the one to suffer. I always took my problems out on her, and many a heated discussion ended in my giving her the silent treatment for weeks at a time.

Something had to give. We tried counseling with our pastor and others, but the answer was always the same: "The change must come from within." I had to *want* to change.

By now we were attending church regularly (on Sunday only) "for the children's sake."

About that time we bought a house in San Jose which put me about fifty miles from my office in San Francisco and necessitated my spending about one and a half hours commuting each way every day.

This on top of my other problems brought me to the breaking point. In desperation I turned to prayer while driving to and from work. Finally one day I prayed, "God, I can't go on any longer this way. I give in to you; show me the way out of this dilemma!"

It was if someone else took over the steering of my car that morning. A voice not heard but nonetheless there gave me directions to drive first left, then right, and finally to stop in front of a business firm that had been one of my customers several years before. Wondering what I was doing there, I got out of my car and went inside. To my surprise I was welcomed by the owner like a lost son.

"I have been looking for your phone

number for an hour, and here you are," he said in astonishment. "Why?" I asked, and he replied, "One of my salesmen quit and I was going to call you and offer you his job." "When do you want me to start?" I asked. "Tomorrow," he said.

Arriving at my office in San Francisco, I debated what to do next, and finally wrote a letter of resignation to the vice president, stating that if I received no reply within two weeks, the resignation would be final. I marked it *personal* and mailed it.

The two weeks came and went with no reply, so I left to try my hand in a new field of sales, that of a glazing subcontractor to the construction business. I found out later that the vice president was on a sales trip and didn't receive my resignation till after I left.

The pressures were now gone, and I finally came to the realization that Someone greater than I was helping me in my struggles.

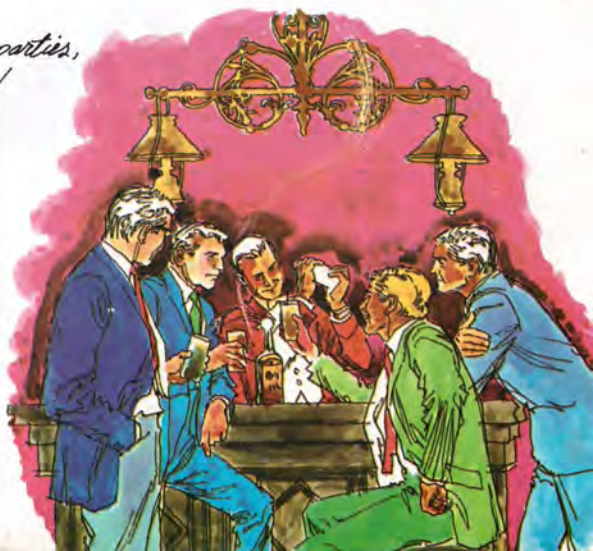
Several significant events happened during the next seven years. Leslie and I came to know and love each other again. My mother-in-law received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and was healed by Jesus of a deteriorating spinal condition that had forced her to wear a full body brace. Then my own daughter and oldest son both received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

We have as a family always taken our vacations together, and except for business trips Leslie and I were never apart. When Leslie said she felt the need to visit her mother, I was surprised but readily agreed. Together they attended a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship meeting at which my wife received the Baptism. Afterwards she called to tell me the news and I knew by her voice that she was a new person in Christ.

Three down and two to go—my youngest son and I. Which of us would be next?

Please turn to page 28

*There were always parties,
with plenty of drinking!*



**I didn't need the specialist's services.
A Greater Physician performed . . .**



Closed Heart Surgery

by P. C. BOBB

FOR THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS I have been a Christian, have loved the Lord and have served Him. For the last two years I have been a member of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship and have regularly read the VOICE magazine. But about a year and a half ago I suffered an experience which caused me to realize that I was growing very slack in testifying for my Lord.

As was my custom, on Sunday, February 16, 1975 I arose to prepare for Sunday school and church. However, feeling a strong hurting in my chest and thinking it was just a bad case of pleurisy that would soon pass, I suggested to my wife that she go on without me so that she would not be late to teach her class.

She left, but returned home after Sunday school. All the time the pain on my

left side steadily grew worse and by mid-afternoon had spread to my left armpit. Having had considerable nursing experience in hospitals and nursing homes, my wife began to realize these pains as symptoms of a heart attack. She called in our neighbor, Linda Teeple, who is an ambulance driver and attendant, to check me out. Linda suggested that they get me to a hospital immediately.

Pinal General Hospital is located at Florence, ten miles from my home town of Coolidge, Arizona. There my physician, Dr. Clemens, met us and checked me out. By this time my mind was dulling and my thoughts were hazy. Realizing the seriousness of the situation and the lack of proper care and equipment in the local hospital, Dr. Clemens had me put on a stretcher, loaded into an ambulance, and



taken to Tucson Medical Center. If my life was to be spared, he believed we should see a heart specialist at Tucson. By the time we got there, I blacked out and remembered nothing until awaking in Intensive Care sometime after daylight Monday morning.

Many good Christian brothers and sisters were alerted of my condition before we left home. Their prayers went up for me continually and undoubtedly reached the throne of God in my behalf. This was very evident when Dr. Schocket at the Tucson Medical Center told my wife of the great miracle that had taken place.

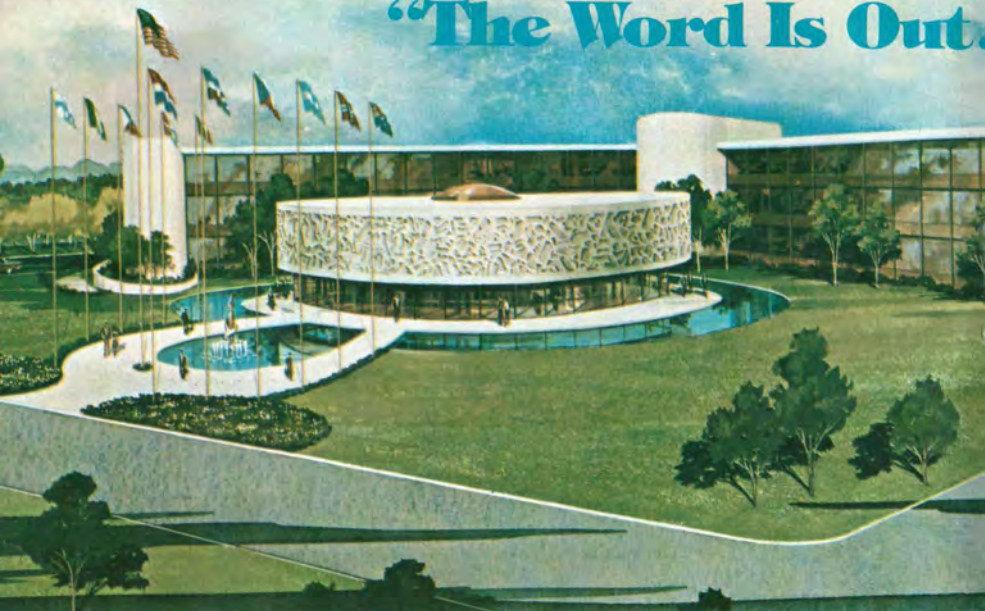
"When your husband arrived," he said, "there apparently was a blood blockage in the main artery leading to his heart, which had actually stopped beating. At his age of seventy-five there was just one

chance in three for him. Open-heart surgery was necessary immediately. My attendant and I scrubbed up, preparing to do this surgery, but upon returning to the operating table I discovered that your husband's heart had begun to beat again. I was dumbfounded. This is very unusual."

Dr. Schocket is a heart specialist and a good one. He has saved many men through open-heart surgery, but in my case his services were not necessary. The job was done by an even greater physician—Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. Yes, the prayers of many were answered that day.

Since that time I have promised God to witness to the whole wide world if possible of His great healing powers—physical and spiritual. ■

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BEYOND



By **ROBERT E. RIDDLE**
Insurance Agent, Jackson, Georgia

BRICK WALLS are fascinating. They can teach you the most valuable lessons.

You would think that anyone in his right mind would know better than to try to run through a piece of solid masonry headfirst, but I tried—and failed, of course.

Brick walls have since become my friends, and I have learned enough from them to last a lifetime.

The third Sunday in March 1970 I shall never forget. That was my last day in the pulpit. I had had it. Never in my life had I experienced such frustration, failure and hopelessness. I was dry and walked in darkness, and there was a void that defies description. The Spirit was still and quiet, no message would come. Two weeks before, I had given my resignation without explanation, not that I could explain anything. It didn't dawn on me that the membership had suffered as much as I, but then I only thought of myself at that

time. I had run headlong into a brick wall and the wall had won. I immediately found a job traveling and lost myself in my work.

For a period of three months I did not read my Bible or pray or attend church. Then in June I began to have trouble falling asleep and would lie still for what seemed hours before sleep would finally come. Upon awaking I was as tired as if I had worked the night through.

One night, with my eyes closed waiting for sleep to come, I saw a brick wall. That's all, just a plain brick wall. And I was sitting on a beautiful lawn just staring at that wall. This vision came every night for at least three weeks, and then from somewhere someone said, "Tomorrow night you will see what is on the other side."

The next night as I was waiting for sleep to come, it occurred to me that there was a small, low gate in the wall to my right.

THE WALL



This was confusing since the gate must have been there all the time and I hadn't noticed.

Quickly I crawled through and found myself in the midst of a beautiful garden. This was not the usual formal flower garden that most of us have seen at one time or another, but a primitive place that defied description. From somewhere again I received a message, "Sit quietly and rest." And rest I did for the first time since I had left the ministry.

Each night as I closed my eyes I could see myself sitting in that garden, just resting and waiting as I had been ordered. This part of the vision lasted for about six weeks, then I received a set of new orders, "Move out!" "But where?" I asked. "Just go," came the reply.

Being obedient to that voice, I went out reluctantly only to find myself in a wilderness of utter despair and loneliness, a desolate place of low shrub brush

and rock, with no human habitation or anything that resembled civilization. This part of the vision lasted for thirty months. Thirty long, agonizing, lonely months.

Then in the early part of 1973 I came out of this wilderness and found that I was standing on a hill looking over into the most beautiful land that I had ever seen. Then another message, "This is your promised land. You will be told when to enter."

The vision lasted for a period of three years. Then I received the interpretation.

The brick wall was my frustration and sense of failure that caused me to quit the ministry. The Lord taught me that whatever the wall we run into in this life, there is always an opening through that wall if we look for it. In my case, it took three weeks.

The six weeks of waiting that followed was a period of rest before my long and

Please turn to page 34



Illustrated by Author

by **BOB BLAIR**

Salesman, Bulimba, Queensland, Australia

SPEEDING at 90 miles an hour, I had gathered sufficient courage to steer the car into an electric light pole in an effort to crash and end my life. Faced with a financial and domestic crisis of my own making, I had decided that suicide was the only way out.

Being born into a Christian home is no guarantee that one will be able to face the criticism and pressure of society. At seventeen years of age, I began an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic. I tried to keep from taking part in the filthy jokes, smoking and drinking, but criticism and mockery made me decide that I must change my ways in order to be accepted. I renounced my Christianity and became just another pleasure seeker. I became a loner and the authorities warned me that my way would eventually lead to prison.

I had been raised in the Salvation Army, and one night I attended an open air meeting and the words "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" hit me hard. The following Sunday was Easter, and that night I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. Although I still had deep flaws in my character, which I found impossible to overcome in my own strength, I was advised to become very active in church work and the flaws would soon pass away. I absorbed myself in youth work, but the problems remained.

On May 11, 1963, I married Noela, my childhood sweetheart. In a few years,

after the birth of our third son, I found that my income was not meeting our obligations. The pressures of debt caused me to seek more profitable employment.

I trained as a professional salesman and soon began to see a "mountain of gold with my name at the top", which motivated me to give everything towards financial success. Although Noela reluctantly agreed with me to pursue this career, she could see that my spiritual life was becoming flat and that my new business left little time for spiritual things.

I rationalized with myself that Christianity had only been a set of rules that I had developed and that God was not interested in my problems at all. I had prayed and had not noticed any results so I decided I would make it on my own without God.

Even though I began receiving three times my former salary, it seemed the more I received the more deeply I became involved with the finance company. I would have a spiritual 'burst' for a time, only to find myself and my problems back at square one. With an ego as large as the world, I became a smooth talker and a great liar. It was evident that my way of life was separating me from my family, my church and God.

Completely in the hands of Satan, I began seeking extra-marital relationships and looked to the horoscope for guidance. This continued until April 1, 1973. On that day Noela discovered my decep-



Bob and Noela Blair: "Our lives were changed."

tion and my world collapsed around me.

I walked out of my house, got into my car and drove around for six hours in no particular direction. I realized that my life was shattered and I coldly and calculatingly decided to end it. But when I attempted to steer the car into a crash, the steering wheel locked in the straight ahead position. Try as I might, I could not alter it. It was as though a mighty hand had taken control of the car. God began speaking to me: "You have tried all your life to do things your own way. Either you hand your life over in total surrender or I will let the wheel go." In an atmosphere charged with love I gave the Lord my life and asked Him to lead me where He would have me go.

On the following Saturday, Noela and I

attended a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship meeting addressed by a pastor from New Zealand. I knew no one at the meeting except the person who had invited us. The pastor began to speak about a man who was proud, egotistical and self-sufficient and also about a woman who had insecurity in her marriage. He said that both persons were at the meeting and that he could reach out and touch them. We were sitting not more than six feet away from him!

The invitation was given and Noela went forward. When I tried to go, my feet would not move. I looked at the person who had invited us and said: "I want to go, but you will have to take me." As he reached out to me my feet became free. I sank to my knees at the altar and God began to deal with me. He said: "I am taking away your pride and a number of your other character problems." I had never felt so empty. Then floods of God's love began to fill the void and I was baptized with His Holy Spirit. Unknown to me, Noela was filled with the Holy Spirit in the same moment.

Our lives were gloriously changed. We were back together and the past seemed very far away. My personal and family life had been revolutionized, Christ is now the center of our lives and our ambition is not to store up treasure on earth but to store it up in heaven. ■

INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING SCHEDULE, NOVEMBER 1976: Denver, Colorado, 5-7; Chicago, Illinois (during Convention), 11-13; Columbus, Ohio, 18-20; Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 18-20; Buffalo, New York, 18-20.

A NOT-SO- DESERTED ISLAND



by DAVID H. LUDLOW

AS I READ the article about the VOICE in the bottles (April 1976) it reminded me of an experience I had last fall.

While traveling through Newfoundland, Canada I decided to spend a week on a deserted island off the northern coast. As I disembarked from the boat that brought me there, I saw a small cabin on an island a mile and a half directly across from the one I was on. It was the only sign of civilization.

A couple hours later I was surprised to see an old fishing boat, piloted by an

elderly man coming from the other island. He had seen me by myself, with no sign of a boat, and was concerned for me.

After we had introduced ourselves and I had explained about my arrival, he invited me to his island cabin for supper. When I walked in, there on the table was a well-worn black Bible and a three-month-old copy of VOICE! Well, you can be sure we made the place ring with the praises of the Lord!

Through this experience I've realized the value of VOICE and its far-reaching ministry. ■

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LET GO AND LET GOD

continued from page 17

The impact of Leslie's baptism in the Spirit upon our family was readily apparent. She was always reading the Bible and praying—for me, I found out later.

At my wife's suggestion, we registered for a charismatic clinic at Calvary Community Church in San Jose. This was my first experience with people who really loved Jesus and showed it. I heard for the first time singing and praying in the Spirit, speaking in tongues and interpretation, and witnessed many healings. All this in one week. But I was like a sponge that could not be saturated. After the clinic was over we continued to attend Calvary for the Sunday evening services, and our own church all other times.

About eight months after the clinic I finally confessed that I couldn't do it myself and asked Jesus to come into my life one hundred percent. Consecrated hands were laid on me and I fell under the power of the Holy Spirit. I can best describe the feeling as that of being completely detached from my body, floating in a warmth and glow of color. I felt a great release of tension and pressure and a sense of a direct communication with Jesus.

After that experience I became much more aware of my surroundings and my fellow workers. God enabled me to witness and to lead several of them to the Lord. At the same time I began to feel the need to make a change in my life. I didn't know for sure but I thought it was concerning my employment. While the pay was good the working conditions left

much to be desired. It was not uncommon, for example, for my co-workers to use foul language, causing me considerable mental discomfort. So I began to pray for guidance as to whether I should stay there or leave.

One Saturday morning I went to a breakfast meeting of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship to hear Dick Mills. I had heard that the Holy Spirit will give him either Bible verses or a revelation about the person with whom he is dealing—and in my case I received both.

Rev. Mills told me that he saw me standing outside a formidable gate, on the other side of which were people involved in a swinging life-style in the business world, the military and in politics. But because they were unhappy, I was to be given the key to unlock that gate and tell them my story. I was also given four passages of scripture that substantiated the vision. These passages were: Luke 2:52, Proverbs 3:4, 1 Samuel 2:26 and Deuteronomy 33:23. The key to the opening of the gate was favor in God's sight.

Not understanding how this fit into my present style of life, I kept on praying for guidance about my job.

On Friday morning, September 20, I was notified that my employment was terminated, which put me in a state of shock. I had never lost a job nor had to look for a job. People had always asked me to work for them.

Our family was planning to go to Lake Tahoe that evening and I knew that if I told them about my job, we would probably stay home and have a miserable

weekend. I got down on my knees and asked God if this was His planning and if it was, to please help me through this weekend and the trying times ahead. When I finished praying, I felt a great peace and knew that I was not alone.

Sunday night when we got home from Lake Tahoe, our son Mark, who had not gone with us, informed us that he had been laid off the night before. On top of that, my sister had written that her husband had lost his job. It was then my duty to tell my family that I too had been laid off.

While I was thinking about where to look for employment, and feeling sure I did not want to work for the same type of company again, I prepared a resume and mailed it to companies for which I thought I would enjoy working.

While this was going on, I received a phone call from Larry Yaggi, the president of Mardix, a small electronic security company. He is a Christian and does business with a Bible on his desk. Larry asked if I would come to work for him for four months as project manager of a job they were doing at Lockheed. I thanked him but said I had hoped to get a permanent job.

Six job offers followed. On the surface they all seemed good but none worked out. About this time we received a phone call from a Spirit-filled Christian by the name of Bud Sheridan, a family friend. He had lost his job in Southern California and had come north to San Jose to find work. The first company he went to hired him.

We invited him over for the evening. Before leaving, he prayed that I might

find a job. As he did so, God gave him a vision of my flying all around the United States on business and witnessing to my faith.

Two days later I received a call from one of the companies to which I had sent my resume. They set up an appointment for Thursday at 9:00 a.m. for a job interview. On Thursday morning, just before I was to leave for my interview, the phone rang. It was Larry Yaggi, wanting to know if I was working yet and whether I could accept his offer. I told him about the coming interview and said that if they made me a good offer, I would accept it. He asked me to see him after the interview and before accepting the other company's offer. At the end of the interview, this company made an offer that meant no loss in pay and a good steady job. I wanted to accept but for some reason was unable to say yes. They said that they would type the offer into a contract and have it at my house at 3:00 p.m. for my signature. I agreed to this.

I then went to Mardix for my meeting with Larry, wherein I reiterated that I could not accept a four-month job. He told me that he was scheduled to meet with his vice-president that afternoon and that he would call me later at home with a new offer. At three o'clock the phone rang. It was the other company reporting that they had been unable to get the contract typed and would I mind waiting until the next day. I had just hung up the phone when it rang again. It was Larry Yaggi. "Bill, we want you to come aboard and do this four-month job, and

Please turn to page 38



Dateline: Fellowship Highlights

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS INSTALLS IN-HOUSE COMPUTER SYSTEM

"Good News" has a new look

Much more music and special guest co-hosts are part of the new look for the Fellowship's current season of weekly TV programs. Beginning in December, the program will also feature a revamped set and a sparkling new musical theme.

Tapes for Christian Living

Teaching by the nation's finest Bible instructors is now available on cassette tapes recorded at the Fellowship's Institutes for Christian Living. Dr. Robert Frost, Rev. Kenneth Hagin, Rev. Ken Copeland, Fr. John Bertolucci, Rev. Dick Mills, and Dr. Howard Ervin are among the many Institute instructors you can hear. Order a free tape catalog from the International Headquarters.

An Emmy for "Good News America"

The Fellowship's super-special which aired across the nation last fall has won a local Emmy from the National Association of Television Arts and Sciences for "Special Achievement in Technical Arts" in the Cleveland, Ohio region. The award was received by Robert Muller and John Roche for video and lighting work on the Pat Boone song segment taped in the studios of Cathedral Teleproductions in Akron, Ohio. Earlier, "Good News" make-up artist Harvey Holocker was one of just two men in the entire United States nominated for a national Emmy in religious programming.

Robert Muller



and "Good News America" Emmy.

New Computer System

An improved in-house computer system has been set up to process VOICE subscriptions and donations to the Fellowship. Difficulties with the old computer system had delayed the mailing of receipts for donations during the early part of this year. We apologize for any inconvenience to you.

Dateline: Prayer & Teaching



NEEDS MET THROUGH PRAYER

Mail received daily at the International Headquarters indicates the many ways that God is meeting people's physical, financial and spiritual needs through the power of prayer. Here are two answers to prayer recently reported—both telling of physical healings.

"Suddenly, I was aware of a strange stillness."

"I had been suffering for a week or more with muscular pains and a feeling of utter fatigue. My body ached so much. . . . Two days ago, I brought in my mail from the letter box, I looked through a brochure of the FGBMI Regional Convention in Philadelphia. Suddenly, I was aware of a strange stillness; the hurting had stopped. I had peace. I asked aloud, what happened? It seemed to me that the regional brochure had something to do with it. So I opened it again and read the second time the quotes printed there: 'The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2). 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' I have felt no pain or fatigue since. Thank God."—New York

"The Doctor Could Not Believe It"



"My husband was in a terrible motorcycle accident. He broke his back and jaw, and the doctor said he would be in the hospital for five to six weeks and would be out of work three to four months. But, thank the Lord, he was out of the hospital in eleven days and back to work in twenty days. The doctor took X-ray after X-ray, and he could not believe it."—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Whatever your needs, God can meet them. Write to Fellowship Founder/President Demos Shakarian at the International Headquarters. You will be prayed for, and you'll receive a warm letter with Bible-based counsel. God answers prayer!



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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).

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

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

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

Why not make your eternal decision right now: "I am convinced by God's Word that I am a lost sinner. I believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners and shed His blood to put away my sins. I NOW receive Him as my personal Lord and Saviour and will be His help, confess Him before men."

When you have made this greatest of all decisions, please let us know so that we may send you a booklet, NOW THAT YOU'VE RECEIVED CHRIST.

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Mail to: Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, California 92626

BEYOND THE WALL

Continued from page 23

agonizing journey through the wilderness. This nine weeks of the vision took me up to the first half of August 1970, at which time I was fired from my traveling job due to a recession in the industry in which I was employed. It was at this time that I started my journey of thirty months. I was unemployed for a period of three months, then I found work as an Insurance Debit Agent. During this time God was silent, the Spirit was not moving and to read the Bible and pray seemed to be a waste of time.

Due to unemployment and many months of too little income, in January 1971 we had to sell our home in order to pay up the backlog of debts. February 1 we moved into an old house that was more like a barn, and for the first time since the early days of our marriage, my wife had to take an outside job to help pay the bills.

Little by little, the gap began to widen between my wife and and me, and by the end of 1971 she let me know that she no longer loved me. This must have been when I was in the deepest part of the wilderness, for surely this was the deepest part of my misery and suffering.

I now felt it necessary to decide whether I should leave her or continue to live with her. It seemed reasonable to me that if you lived with someone, you lived with them because you loved them and they loved you. In prayer I told the Lord that I loved my wife, and wanted to remain with her even if she didn't return that love. Then I began to make every

effort to show my wife that I loved her. My words at first must have sounded false to her, because she only mocked me.

Here, I learned a valuable lesson, namely that if you practice love you will learn to love. Not many weeks later I discovered that I didn't have to practice anymore, I really *did* love her. More than that, I appreciated her.

I suppose she must have detected the change. No doubt I must have stopped sounding false. I would not have you believe that we immediately started our second honeymoon, but there definitely was a change. While she did not show any love for me, she did stop showing bitterness and resentment. For me this was a miracle.

In most areas of my life, however, there was no change, except for the worse. I continued to be depressed and frus-

***"If you practice
love, you will
learn to love."***

trated, as the insurance company put increased pressures on me to sell more. The pressure finally got to me, and in October 1972 I resigned and took a job selling automobiles.

Here I was nearing the end of my wilderness wanderings. In auto sales, there are times when you work hard and are busy for days, but at other times you may sit around for a week or two and not

sell a car. It was in one of these slack periods that something began to happen.

One day in January of 1973, as I was sitting in the showroom looking out for would-be customers, I had a strong urge to pray for a boyhood friend. I had not seen this man for years, but I knew I had to pray for him. I said, "Lord, I don't know why, but he must have a need, so please help this friend of mine; visit him right now and supply his every need." The urge to pray went away only to return about thirty minutes later.

I prayed again, "Lord, this man must have a *tremendous* need. You know everything about everyone, so *right now*, Lord, please meet every need for this man." The urging of the Spirit went away and everything was quiet. I hurried home that afternoon and placed a call to my sister, who lived in the same town as this friend I had prayed for. I asked her to check on him and let me know his state of affairs and if he was in trouble.

Three days later she called to tell me what she had learned. This man had run into serious financial difficulty. Besides this, his wife had been unfaithful and was planning a divorce. The pressure was too much and he had been admitted to a mental institution. The day that the Spirit moved me to pray for him was the day that he was released from the institution on probation. He has never returned to that institution or had any further treatment. Today he is back in business and his wife did not get a divorce. God answered my prayers and saved a good man and his home. Praise the Lord!

One evening, as my wife was working

the evening shift at a nursing home, I was in the house alone. Having nothing better to do, I decided to watch TV, but soon discovered there was nothing on that would interest me. While scanning through the TV Guide, I noticed there was a new TV station called The Christian Broadcasting Network, in Atlanta. Out of curiosity I turned to Channel 46. There I heard report after report of prayer being answered and miracles taking place, unbelievable miracles. After the program had gone off the air, I prayed, "Lord, I want whatever these people have—their joy, their peace, their confidence, their spiritual power."

I began to pray as I had never prayed before. I asked the Lord to show me why I had to leave the ministry and why my life had been so filled with frustration. As I paced the floor, praying and searching for an answer, I picked up a copy of "Good News For Modern Man" that was on a nearby table. I prayed, "Lord, I am going to open this book and I ask you to let me turn to a scripture that will give me an answer." I opened the little Testament and under my thumb I read these words from 1 Timothy 1:7, "They want to be teachers of God's law, but do not understand their own words or the matters about which they speak with so much confidence." "That's it," I cried. I had tried to preach and teach, and I did not know what I had been talking about. I prayed again, "Lord, please, just one more time let me turn at random to another scripture and tell me what I must do about my ignorance." I did so, and this time found right under my thumb these

words from 2 Corinthians 13:9, "And so we also pray that you will become perfect." The Lord was saying, "Grow up and be mature if you want to be my servant."

I had been hearing about the baptism in the Holy Spirit on that TV program, and I knew I had to know more. The next day I went to a Christian book store and asked the manager to recommend some books on the Holy Spirit, especially the "Baptism." I bought two books and hurried home as soon as I had finished work. That night I began to devour these books in the privacy of my bedroom.

I was reading "A Taste of New Wine" by Keith Miller when suddenly I looked up. There stood Jesus. Friends, I don't mean I thought I saw Jesus or that I felt His presence. I mean that He was there in person, and He was saying, "I paid the price for you a long time ago and all you had to do was take it."

Now I knew what the Apostle Paul meant when he said that he had been caught up into the third heaven and

heard words that were unlawful to utter. I began to cry, and all I could say was, "Oh, Jesus, Jesus, I'll take it!" Jesus was my personal Baptizer, for at that moment I knew that I was truly born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues—and that I had entered the Promised Land—all at the same time!

Shortly thereafter the Lord made a way for me to go into my own insurance business in Jackson, Georgia. He has prospered me and now I have even more and greater opportunities to witness for Him to those who come into my office. Since I am no longer a Baptist preacher, but, rather, God's insurance agent, I have many opportunities to preach in churches of other denominations, even the black churches of this area. In my spare time now, I am writing a book in order to acquaint people with these walls that we all run into and how to find the way through.

Of course, the only Way is through Jesus, the Door. ■

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LET GO AND LET GOD

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when it is finished, I and the marketing manager will train you to sell our products. You will then travel throughout the United States, calling on the men in charge of security for some of the largest companies in the United States, and also on the men in the military."

I hung up the phone in a state of shock. I knew nothing about electronics, let alone security.

Later that night at dinner we were discussing the day's events when Leslie's mother, after hearing about the job offer said, "Do you remember what Bud Sheridan said the other night about his vision and you traveling the United States?" I then recalled Dick Mills' vision and prophesy, and got out the tape recorder and played back the tape of the breakfast meeting where he had given the prophesy. Now, it seemed, the entire vision and prophesy were about to come true.

I told Leslie that I still wasn't sure about which job to take.

On the Friday night before the retreat our church had scheduled at Mission Springs, I could not sleep. And it was not until I told God that I would accept "His" job—the one at Mardix—that He let me go to sleep. It was almost 5:00 a.m. God then gave me a wonderful, peaceful weekend.

At eight o'clock Monday morning I called Larry and accepted his offer. He asked, "Why aren't you here at work?" Surprised, I answered, "What do you mean?" His reply was that on Friday night he had the witness that his prayers had been answered.

After I had been at work for a few days, Larry told me that some five months before, he had started praying that God would send the right man to fill the job.

Although I regretted leaving Mardix, God was preparing me for something even better, and in recent months He has made it possible for me to enter into a sales business partnership in a small glass company with another Christian. I thank the Lord for His many blessings, as we daily witness for Him. ■

FGBMFI PRESIDENT HONORED IN OKLAHOMA CONVENTION

Demos Shakarian named "Chief Spotted Bull" by Sycamore Tribe



Henry R. Freese, FGBMFI field representative, president of the Muskogee chapter and convention chairman, adjusts headdress presented to Demos by John Lewis Stone, president of the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce and editor of the Muskogee Daily Phoenix Times-Democrat which gave the convention front page coverage for five days, thereby overriding its usual policy for an event of this nature. The Tulsa Daily World also gave good coverage to the convention. Demos received the name "Chief Spotted Bull" because of his success as a dairyman and breeder of choice Holstein cattle.



Don Locke, FGBMFI vice president, was a main speaker, and Dean and Jeane Romanelli, husband and wife singing team, also ministered effectively during the convention.





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