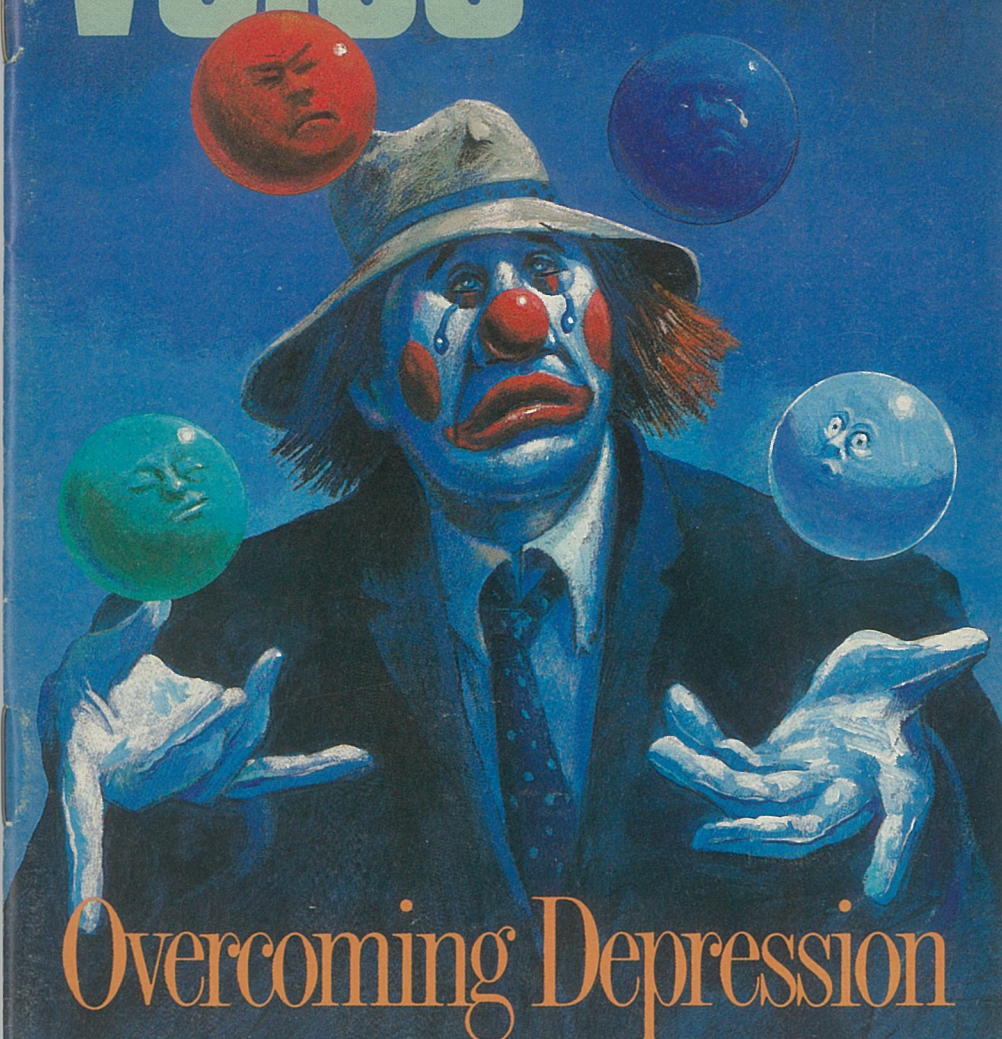


Full Gospel Business Men's

# VOICE



Overcoming Depression



# Overcoming Depression

Hopelessness. Failing to live up to the expectations placed on you either by yourself or others. Submerged anger. Despair. All of these can be a part of one thing: depression.

Today, severe depression affects an estimated 30 to 40 million Americans and is a factor in 60 percent of all suicides. It has become so serious among successful executives that it has even been termed "winner's depression."

Many things can trigger depression, but I believe one cause can be trauma buried deep in a person's life that has never been dealt with.

What is trauma? Most people think of it as sudden, severe damage to the body. However, emotional blows can be just as severe. Being rejected, getting fired from a job, experiencing a devastating failure or witnessing violence in our personal lives can be traumatic.

Likewise, betrayals, browbeatings or being the underdog or a "loser" too many times can also be events that blossom into depression later on.

I believe there are millions of people in our society who feel useless, unworthy, apathetic and suffer needless depression because they have either been too embarrassed, are too afraid, or don't understand their true feelings enough to reveal moments in their past when they were victimized — physically, mentally or emotionally.

If the depression is not dealt with, it can go on to spawn a whole host of even more dangerous manifestations including uncontrolled anger, fear of loss, alienation from others, distrust, an intense fear of death, emotional coldness, violence and even suicide.

In my life, depression resulted directly from the trauma I suffered in Vietnam. It was the beginning of what I later learned to be Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). But as countless other men have discovered, the whole syndrome started with depression.

The initial signs of depression aren't difficult to spot. They can include insomnia, feelings of hopelessness, loss of appetite, irritability and low self-esteem.

But what is the answer to this invisible torment? I only know of one.

In all my years of experience with depression both in myself and others, I have found just one *lasting* answer to even the worst depression . . . and that is to accept the only One in the universe who can truly help you, our Lord, Saviour and Deliverer, Jesus Christ.

*(Chuck Dean's full testimony can be found on page 11.)*





# 21 Tries

# ...and Hopeless!

Mike Wourms  
San Diego, California

My "last chance" was gone.

When Hilti Fastening Systems transferred me from Los Angeles to Santa Maria, California, to sell tools in that territory, it was my last chance with the company. My lagging sales in Los Angeles had motivated Hilti management to transfer me.

"The territory is dying," they reasoned, "so why not give Santa Maria to Mike? Since he isn't producing much anyway, he can't mess it up."

But somehow, I did.

After ten months, my sales sank so low that I was in the bottom ten out of 500 salesmen in the country.

And no wonder.

My typical sales day consisted of leaving the house about 9:30 in the morning, although job sites are open and ready for business at 7:00 a.m. I'd make a couple of "safe" calls to customers I knew or to customers who had called my answering service to order materials.

About 11:00 a.m., I'd stop for lunch . . . not because I was lazy or tired . . . but because depression and fear had once again attacked my body and mind.

At lunch, my hands shook, my stomach twisted in pain, my brow perspired, and my voice quivered whenever I spoke. Ordering a hamburger required a major energy effort. The only relief I ever experienced from this debilitating depression was either on weekends (when the guilt from not working left), or on a rainy day when it was impossible to call on job sites because contractors couldn't work.

Oh, how I loved the freedom of rainy days!



The Santa Maria community radiates a friendly, small town atmosphere, yet I was terrified of my customers or of anyone else who lived and breathed. Once I walked out of a supermarket with the wrong type of gum because the clerk misunderstood my request and I was too depressed to repeat it.

My early lunches were to avoid crowds. My selected seat at the far end of the restaurant allowed me to hide behind a newspaper or magazine so nobody would recognize me or come over and start talking.

Depression and fear monopolized and terrorized every aspect of my life.

After lunch, I'd excuse myself from working with a convenient lie: "I can't call on job sites now. After all, they're breaking for lunch." Instead, I'd drive around town in my red company van, burning up gas so my fuel receipts at the end of the week showed some activity. If I felt especially productive, I'd falsify my weekly call sheets in the cab of my van, lying about most of my calls by putting down the names of contractors I'd supposedly seen by randomly picking their names from a phone book.

Sometimes, I'd take the eighty-minute drive down to Santa Barbara just to sit in the dark of an afternoon porno movie, comfortable that no one would recognize me in that city.

Finally, about 3:30 p.m., I'd check with

my answering service, and if no customer was calling for anything, I'd go home, complaining to my wife about my tough day.

And tough it was! When you spend entire days, weeks and months running from depression and fear and trying to hide it from others, it's tough. Exhausting. Emotionally draining.

But after thirteen years and twenty previous jobs, the charade finally had come to an end. My "last chance" was over. My depression was totally out of control and I was tired of pretending to be productive.

About three working days a month I felt "normal." In those few days I managed to produce enough sales to keep our family going. The rest of the month I drove around in circles, driving by job sites without stopping and often crying as I hit the steering wheel in frustration, feeling like God had played a dirty trick on me.

In my mind, God was a very cruel fellow, sitting up on a cloud with His legs hanging off, laughing as He looked down at this creature called "Mike." There He sat, throwing invisible darts at me, hitting my body and especially my feet. I visualized myself like the rat in the joke who keeps going around in circles because his foot is tacked to the floor.

I was angry at God for the cruel trick He had pulled, giving me a quick mind,

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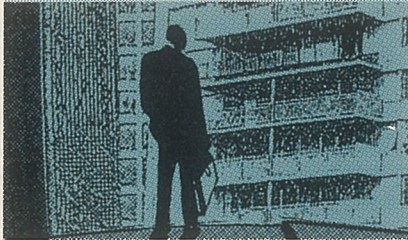
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then suffocating my talent with depression and fear that made me useless.

In college, I had graduated with a 3.1 average despite working 40 hours a



**“ . . . my sales sank so low that I was in the bottom ten out of 500 salesmen in the country.”**

week and carrying a full load. At the beginning of my junior year, I married Karen De Carlo, my high-school sweetheart. I was sure she would make the difference in my already hurting life. By graduation, Karen and I already had the first of our three children. To others, we seemed like the perfect couple. I was the fellow everyone was pointing to, saying, “That guy is going places.”

But they couldn't see the hurt inside.

When I graduated from Loyola, a Catholic university, I received a teaching assistantship at the University of Santa Clara. Despite getting A's in my classes, I functioned in the secret terror that my graduate professors would one day discover my incompetence.

After only one year, I left Santa Clara

depressed and in fear. In my distorted mind, I was a terrible teacher, even though my classes were always the most popular on registration day.

Leaving Santa Clara began a tragic series of failures.

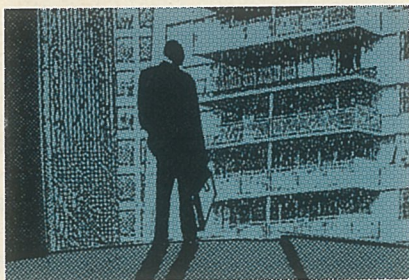
I held jobs as an Internal Revenue Officer, an insurance agent, an insurance company owner, a photographer, a maintenance company owner, a quality control person for IBM, a dishwasher, a waiter, a tool salesman, a freight waybill typist, a drug salesman to doctors, and many other professions that all ended the same way . . . I was either fired or quit before I could get fired.

I often cursed God, wishing He had created me with a visible handicap. “Lord, why didn't you put me in a wheelchair or create me without legs . . . then people would understand my lack of productivity. Why did you mutilate me on the inside, where no one could see? You've cursed me with an invisible disease and created an EMOTIONAL PARAPLEGIC! You've given me brains, but shackled my mind with depression and fear. You've given me a pleasing personality, yet paralyze me in every social situation. I'm strapped in an emotional wheelchair, a virtual vegetable, totally useless. You must hate me! You've even robbed me of the sympathy of others, since no one can see or touch this crippling disease You've given me.”

Now, it was happening again at Hilti . . . job #21. My life was hopeless.

I drove the red van into my driveway and walked into the house, greeting my wife with the words, “I've had it. I simply cannot function like a normal human being. Honey, I've got to get help. It's





**“Lord, why didn’t  
You . . . create me  
without legs . . .  
why did You mutilate  
me on the inside  
where no one could  
see? You’ve cursed  
me with an invisible  
disease and created  
an emotional  
paraplegic.”**

probably time you check me into a mental institution.’”

My wife immediately sensed this was not one of my ordinary depressed days, but that I really was at the end of my emotional tolerance. “Do you mind if I call a friend over to pray for you?” Karen asked, remembering a very special lady she had recently met.

“What is this, a stupid circus?” I yelled.

Then I let out a sigh. “Hell, I don’t care who you call. Call your friend, call a Buddhist monk, call anyone you want. I just want to get well.”

Karen immediately went to the phone and called Jo Anne Corn, who in turn called Ginnie Moore. Within minutes, the two ladies were knocking at the door.

Without wasting any words of introduction, they sat me down in a big chair and started praying. At first, they prayed in words I could understand, then they lapsed into the sounds of an unknown tongue.

Nothing that happened in the next hour and a half made much sense to me except one thing . . . something good was going on. Down at the very tip of my toes, a strange, fire-like feeling was starting. Intuitively, I knew it was something spiritual, supernaturally cleansing my inner-body of all the gunk that had stopped me from functioning for all these years. The fire went slowly up my legs and trunk and into my mind. I thought it would escape out my mouth.

Instead, when it came to my chest, it lifted me slightly off my chair and came out my chest. I sank back into the chair feeling relaxed, exhausted, cleansed . . . and the most peaceful I had ever felt. I didn’t understand what had occurred but there was no doubt in my mind I was a changed man!

The two ladies ignored my plea for an explanation. Although they understood deliverance through Jesus Christ, they just kept saying, “God has changed you. You will be different. It is not important right now that you understand exactly what happened. Just enjoy the change.”

And enjoy it I did!



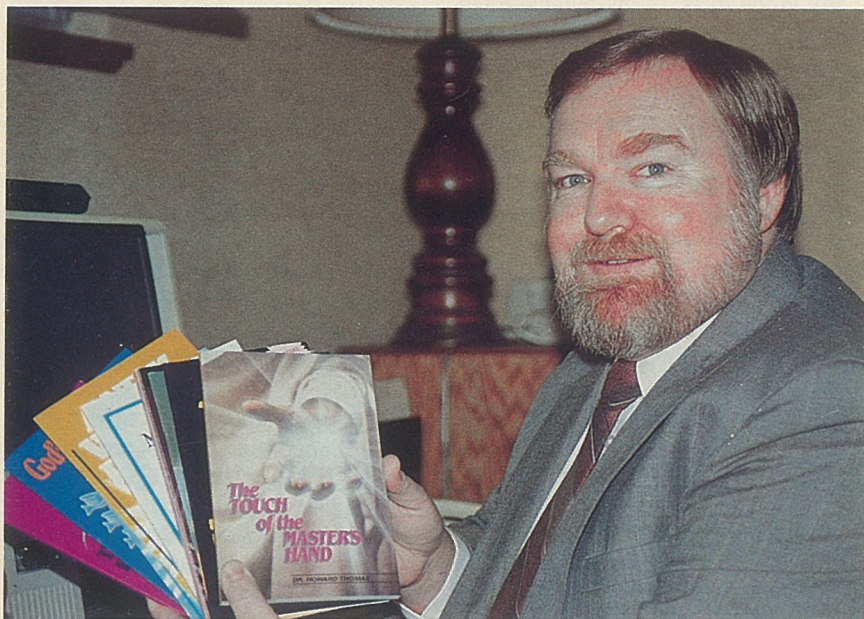
Within two months after my deliverance from depression and fear, I rose from being #490 out of 500 salesmen to the top twenty. Within another three months, my miracle transformation placed me in the top ten! Since my territory had no major building going on, no one in the company could understand where my sales were coming from. My excited boss kept asking me, "What happened? What books have you been reading?"

Every time he'd ask, I told him the same thing: "I read all the books on self-help, self-confidence, salesmanship, self-hypnosis . . . and nothing worked. It was

God who changed my life. Now I'm His! He has taken away all my depression and fear. Finally, I can function like a normal human being."

For years, my only prayer had been, "Lord, let me be productive like normal people." Now, here I was, Mike Wourms, one of the top salesmen in the nation! For the next two years I received the annual "President's Club" citation, my company's highest accolade, and earned enough money to buy a beautiful home.

But then an interesting and very unexpected event occurred in the midst of my personal success.



*Today, Mike Wourms assists Christian ministries and individuals in producing books, educational material and fund-raising tools.*



For thirteen years, Karen had functioned as the center of strength for our family. She had encouraged me and put up with me through thick and thin. She had lived through all the job failures, all the false promises, and all the abuse that a man who feels miserable inside can inflict. Naturally, because she was closest, Karen had received the brunt of my anger and frustration.

"If you were more loving," I'd chastise her, "if you would just hug me more and pay more attention to me, then I wouldn't feel so useless and I could be a successful salesman." In my own, depression-distorted mind, I had believed this statement was true.

But in the midst of my miracle transformation something happened to her. Just as we were about to buy our new house in Santa Maria, I received one of the largest commission checks we had ever seen. When I showed it to her, instead of the happiness and excitement I expected, she dropped into a deep depression herself! One day I came home and found her sitting alone in the closet, crying. She refused to come out.



*Mike and Karen Wourms*

Finally, the depression became so acute that she entered into intense personal therapy. It took a few months before it became clear what had happened.

Karen had single-handedly held up our family for so long, raising the boys without any emotional support from me, subjugating her own anxieties and frus-

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## WHEN YOU'RE DEPRESSED —

### Encouragement From God's Word

- Psalm 9:9-10
- Psalm 42:5,11
- Psalm 146:8
- Psalm 31:22-24
- Isaiah 35:3-4
- Isaiah 54:14
- Isaiah 50:10
- Jeremiah 29:11-13
- Isaiah 26:3
- John 14:27
- James 4:7
- Ephesians 4:27
- Luke 4:18-19
- II Timothy 1:7
- I Corinthians 2:16
- Philippians 2:5
- Ephesians 4:23-24
- Hebrews 12:12-13
- Isaiah 60:1
- Galatians 1:4
- Nehemiah 8:10



trations for my benefit . . . that when she finally felt safe enough in our marriage to let go, her reactions to the hurt and pain of all those years let loose like a time bomb.

After a few months of treatment, she became much stronger, and together we began to learn about the miracle-working power of our Lord from Ginnie Moore (the lady who prayed for me) and her husband, John. They were spiritual teachers in the community and taught us about the Holy Spirit.

As we learned more about what happened the day the Holy Spirit had delivered me from depression and fear, we wanted to do the same for others. Within months, our house became a haven for people with hurts. Miracles flowed as soon as the prayers were completed.

One man, addicted to alcohol, was healed instantly and never touched beer again. We then believed God could change ANY life — no problem was too great! Even though we lacked a strong biblical background at the time, God honored our prayers for others and often healed the brokenhearted without us saying a word. Sometimes we would just sit silently, praying in support while the Holy Spirit did the work.

But the next few years were not all miracles and love. Even though I had a new life in God, some of my old habits still remained. I did not instantly give up some of my sinning ways, especially the trips to the porno theater.

Only after a devastating and humbling eighteen-month stay in Louisiana was I finally (and\_totally) broken of the "old man" inside me. I had lapsed into lying

and pornography during this time and once again brought damage to my family.

We returned to San Diego from Louisiana in 1981 penniless, but I was finally where God wanted me . . . ready to serve and trust Him unconditionally without turning back to my old ways.

Today God has given me a new profession . . . writing for His glory. With all the depression and fear gone, I finally felt "brave" enough to enter the profession I'd been trained for back in college . . . writing. This is the area of ministry I believe God intended for me since my birth.

And how that ministry has exploded!

Today, I am president of Christian Services Network and have been blessed with the opportunity to help many other Christian men and women tell the stories of their own miraculous transformations through books and other literature.

Of course, even in the midst of my current walk with God, there are still days when I wake up depressed, but these days rarely come and the depression remains only a few hours, not months and years on end. Most importantly, I always know it will disappear. There's no panic when it hits, only the confidence that the Lord has changed me, that He is my strength, and that no depression can remain in His holy temple. □

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*Mike Wourms, his wife Karen, and their three children, Paul (23), Tim (22), and Mitch (18) all live in El Cajon, outside San Diego, California.*

*Christian Services Network, the company Mike founded, assists ministries and individuals across the nation in the creation, coordination, and printing of books, brochures and fund-raising projects.*

*His business address is 1959 Longs Hill Road, El Cajon, CA 92021.*



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(LAST) (FIRST) (M.I.)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

List full name of your **immediate household members** included in your registration as they are to appear on name badges. Please add children's ages to 18 years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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## AVOID THE CRUSH! SIGN UP NOW!





# Making Peace

# With Your Past

Chuck Dean  
Bothell, Washington

In February of 1963, about the time the Beatles were making their first appearance on the Ed Sullivan show, I stood staring at a lifesize poster cutout in the window of the U.S. Army recruiting office in Centralia, Washington. I was awestruck by the figure in the poster. He was tall, clean shaven, and the most rugged-looking man I'd ever seen in a military uniform.

His dark green "class A" uniform was perfect, but it was his boots which led me into the tiny recruiting station.

No other branch of the service had the privilege of wearing jump boots with their dress uniform, and that sold me on becoming a paratrooper. I had always wanted to be original; jumping out of planes would definitely set me apart.

So after enlisting for a three-year tour, I was sent to Fort Ord, California for basic training. I had signed up as "Airborne unassigned," which meant that I didn't care what job I got. All I knew was I wanted to see some action. I was gung ho to win some medals, but there was no war.

One day I met a man who had arrived from duty in Okinawa. He said that while serving with the 173rd Airborne Brigade there, he was sent over to a place called Vietnam. He described life on Okinawa as having no guard duty, no KP and a chance to get some combat decorations without the long-term commitment to the drudgery of a war.

I spent the next year jungle training on Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines and various other rain islands in the South China Sea. Life was good.



In May of 1965, President Johnson ordered us into South Vietnam as the first regular combat unit to enter the war. We were told that we would be in South Vietnam for a temporary duty assignment of sixty days. We were excited. Here was our chance to do a little fighting, win a few medals and then get back safe and sound. But it didn't work that way.

After our temporary duty, we were extended indefinitely to South Vietnam. Other Army divisions and units began to arrive, and we knew that the good life was over.

### **The Lucky Ones Died**

It was two o'clock in the morning and the temperature was still hovering in the 90s. We had turned in our weapons and gear the previous day and were confined to a tiny barbed wire compound on Ton Sanh Nhut Air Base for a day-and-a-half. After thirty cans of beer each, we scrounged for a place to sleep.

Our plane, a commercial jet airliner, would be arriving and leaving in four hours. Our duty was over . . . we were going back to the world. Everything would be right again. Home was only a few hours away.

I managed to find a mattress inside the semblance of a building made of corrugated tin and scrap wood thrown together. I was on the brink of slipping into a drunken stupor when the frightening concussion of mortar explosions knocked me to the ground.

Instinctively, I threw the mattress over myself as the air-bursting explosions ripped through the tiny compound.

I pounded my fists into the ground in

anger as I yelled out, "You're not going to get me, Charlie! You're not gonna get me now!" Then I broke. I sobbed out to God, "Oh God, I've been through too much to get taken out now. Just let me go home. Please."

As suddenly as it had begun, the explosions ceased. My thoughts of God vanished in the confusion. I heard the wounded crying out and someone vainly screaming to his dead friend to get up. I went to a wounded GI nearby. His stomach was gashed open. I ripped off my T-shirt and applied it to the wound, yelling for a medic.

Seven teenage soldiers died that morning in the tiny compound halfway around the world. After spending a year in hell, this was their reward. How unjust it seemed. But later I thought that they were the lucky ones. They escaped every memory and hidden side effect of Vietnam . . . we did not.

**“My dark little apartment became an ideal sanctuary. I could control my environment when I was alone, but being around people who didn't learn how to be prepared for danger, drove me up the wall.”**



## Among the Aliens

Eighteen hours from that dirty little compound of death, terror and heart-ache, I found myself in a mystical, dream-like place called San Francisco International Airport. As I walked through the crowd I was amazed. There were so many clean people, and the perfume and cologne were nearly overwhelming to a nose that for two years had smelled only decaying flesh, human waste, gun powder and pungent Asian food.

As I stumbled through the masses of "clean" people, I caught bits and pieces of conversations: "Oh, I don't know. I'll take a Jag over a Mercedes any day." "I like the large refrigerator, you know. The one with the double doors and an ice-maker." "Just got back from Big Bear. Skiing is great up there right now." It was strange, alien language. These people, whom I had spent two years dreaming of rejoining, were like foreigners to me.

I felt myself beginning to lose my bearings and a deep confusion set in. I found a lonely corner near my assigned gate and, squatting with my back to the wall, mentally walked through my course of action should any of these "foreigners" invade my space. I was alone again, but I would survive at all costs.

After spending the next few months of my remaining enlistment in Seattle with a military police detachment, I was honorably dismissed from the U.S. Army. I had spent four of the most critical years of my life in the military. Now I found myself confronted with the difficulties of adjusting to civilian life.

The trauma was too much and a debilitating depression set in. I soon discovered that the only time I could put

up with other people was when I was dead drunk. When that didn't work, I isolated myself and smoked pot until I became unconscious.

My dark little apartment became an ideal sanctuary. I could control my environment when I was alone, but being around people who didn't know how to be prepared for danger, drove me up the wall.

Since I couldn't relate to anyone at home, three months later I entered another Army recruiting station to sign up for another hitch.

I was assigned to Fort Ord, California, and my work was to continue as an MP, since that had been my last duty prior to my discharge.

Then came the assignment of becoming a drill instructor for basic training troops. I took it.

## Stoned, Courtesy of Uncle Sam

My next two years were a maze of depression-ridden conflicts, doubts and further alienation. I avoided any personal relationships with the young men I was training for Vietnam. Looking back I honestly believe my time as a drill instructor solidified many of my PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms.

Old fears of getting too close to someone and then having him get killed or wounded rose up from the ashes of my mind. I didn't want to know anything about the hundreds of teenagers I was sending to a distant land of terror, drugs and pain.

Under the constant pain and guilt that I felt in my new job, I graduated to LSD every weekend. Something happened to



my mind under the influence of this potent drug.

Soon it was apparent to my supervisors that I was out of control as a drill instructor. Their response was a "special assignment" in Vietnam as a CIA operative.

This was the final straw. I went AWOL.

With my hippie wife, I hit the road, moving from one commune to the next for the next six drug-laden years. During this time my depression deepened and a tremendous remorse set in because of my AWOL status. Finally I went to the Vancouver Airport and turned myself in to U.S. immigration authorities. Life wasn't working.

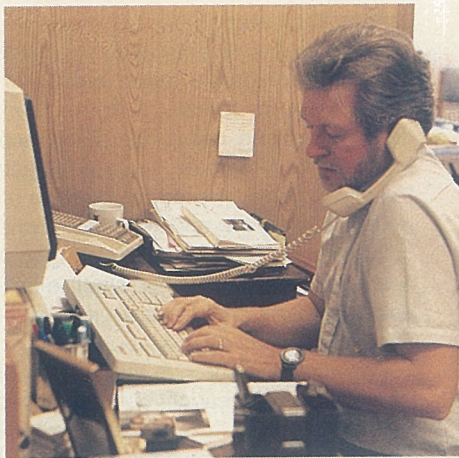
Ultimately I was given an undesirable discharge and was offered amnesty and work in an alternate service program.

To escape the emptiness, depression and pain, I became immersed in the New Age movement and Scientology. Things quickly went from bad to worse. My wife and I divorced and I moved into a cockroach infested apartment where, entering new depths of depression, I would only leave once a day to get some beer and a two-day-old chicken at the greasy little store next door.

To purge myself of layers and layers of pus from Vietnam, I became obsessed with writing.

### **Entering Uncharted Waters**

About this time a miracle happened. A friend introduced me to a friend of hers. What a different person Athena was — strong, self-reliant and beautiful. She was a successful business owner with so much class that she scared me half to death.



*Chuck Dean now heads up Point Man International Ministries, a veterans' support organization.*

We began to see each other, and I believe the only thing that brought me out of my cockroach apartment was the intrigue that I had for this interesting creature. She was definitely from an area of society I had never experienced. I would go shopping with her in her new BMW.

I had never seen a woman shop for clothes with a shopping cart. She ripped and tore through long racks of the finest dresses at Bonwit Teller in Beverly Hills. With a flick of her credit card she would walk out with what seemed like half the store.

It was a world I had never known, but I didn't plan to leave until she asked me to . . . it was too much fun to watch.

Athena became Mrs. Charles Dean on Valentine's Day, barely two months after we'd met.



## The Curse Returns

For the first three or four months of my marriage my depression seemed to vanish. But in time the curse again reared its ugly head.

Every time we went to a party where there was drinking and doping, I would overdo it. I would get drunk because it would give me a chance to be crazy and have an excuse for it.

I can also remember sitting on the floor beside our bed, drinking a full gallon of wine and muttering to myself after Athena had fallen asleep during one of my stress-related conversations. I actually found myself hating her for not having the interest to listen to me all night long.

Many times I would drink myself into a staggering mess. Then at four o'clock in the morning I'd climb into my car and drive with blinding rage through the streets of Burbank or Los Angeles. I flew at dangerously excessive speeds down streets with cross-streets. In reflection, I believe that I was trying hard either to kill myself or to provoke a cop to do it for me, because I know that if an officer had stopped me I would have opposed him to the point of "it's either him or me."

These times of depression-instigated stress boil-over were often triggered by my wife's disinterest in my problems. I would flare up and do obnoxious things just to make her notice. Out of self-pity I created problems that were so crazy that she had to get interested. My insanity was surfacing, and I found myself in panic states trying to cover it up.

The financial services business that Athena and I created became very successful. We both loved it in the beginning, but I soon became bored and

began to withdraw. While we worked as a business team, we had much in common and our married life bloomed. But it took on a different tone when I began to show disinterest in the business and stepped back to do other things such as writing, painting and fundraising. However, it wasn't until we moved to Seattle that things became really bad.

## A New Fanaticism

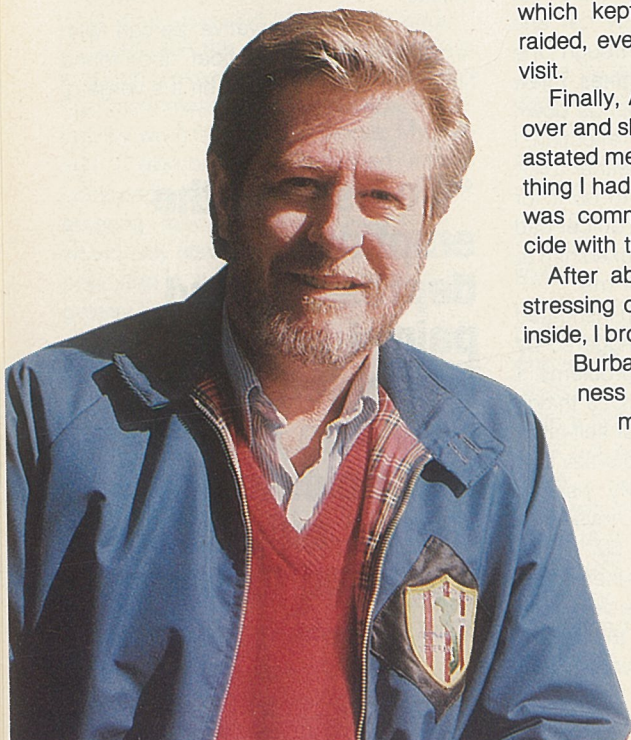
There I went off the deep end when I got together with an old friend who was a Vietnam veteran. He was involved in an organization that protested taxes and radically opposed the current government structure. This "patriot" movement really hit a chord with me and I became a fanatic.

Athena, a conservative person who rarely likes to rock the boat, soon found herself married to a man on the verge of

**"To escape the emptiness, depression and pain, I became immersed in the New Age movement and Scientology. Things quickly went from bad to worse."**



**“The heavy symptoms of my PTSD felt like part of another life that I had once lived, but now was dead and gone.”**



going to jail. I felt I needed to change the government, the tax system, license system and every other system connected with modern American life.

Within a period of three months I submitted affidavits to all branches of the government, revoking my driver's license, social security number, marriage license and fishing license. I sent them all back and declared myself a natural born citizen of the United States who did not need to be licensed to be a citizen. I then returned my license plate to the Secretary of State and mounted my own, which said, "Just Skip It."

When the IRS and state's attorney came to visit, that snapped the camel's back. I had been running my fundraising business through a "warehouse" bank which kept few records. When it got raided, everyone with an account got a visit.

Finally, Athena told me that it was all over and she wanted a divorce. This devastated me. I knew that she was the best thing I had ever had in my life. Yet here I was committing another relational suicide with the best woman in the world.

After about a week of freaking out, stressing out, insomnia and going crazy inside, I broke down and called a friend in Burbank. Bill was in the same business as Athena and had helped us many times before.

I called and simply said, "Bill, I really need a friend right now." He was quiet for a moment and then replied, "Chuck, you need the Lord." His statement sur-





*Athena and Chuck Dean with his newly released book Nam Vet: Making Peace With Your Past.*

prised me. A week earlier I might have laughed, but at that moment, my life in shambles, something inside told me that what he was saying was true, that here was the answer I'd been seeking, though outwardly avoiding, for years.

I straightened up in the chair, wiped my mouth and brushed the tears from my red, swollen eyes. "Yeah, yeah, that's one thing I haven't tried," I answered. "Maybe that's what I need to do."

Then Bill said something else. He asked me if I was willing to pray with him about it. I agreed, because I knew that continuing to run my life myself would result in disaster. Right then and there, over long distance Ma Bell, I prayed with him, giving my heart, soul and life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I got off the phone, I didn't hear angels singing or rockets going off. But I felt different. I didn't have any glitzy TV or Hollywood-hyped religious experience. But there was a peace in my mind that I hadn't felt before, a sense of release far beyond any of my writer's dumps. Gradually, I realized that I had been inducted into a new army: Heaven's.

I also realized that I had been the cause of the marriage problems between Athena and me, and I was willing to move out of her life if that would give her more peace. I didn't expect or demand anything from anyone anymore, because in an instant God had filled my inner void. This secret desire to be filled with His love was one that I had never known existed until I surrendered all my problems to Him. I was now what I had always told myself I would never be: a Christian.



Now I could understand that a Christian is a person remade by God into a new, eternal, joyous being. Whatever happened now, it would be all right. I would be all right. This calming secure sensibility replaced the feelings of depression, hopelessness, death, fear and agony that I had carried for so long and had expected to experience for the rest of my life.

### Let's Get Fixed

After my phone conversation with Bill and the resulting change in my life, I spoke with Athena briefly and told her I was no longer resisting the split-up. I said she would always be my favorite person in the world, but that all I wanted was for her to have a peaceful life and good prosperity.

Perplexed by the gentleness that had suddenly come over me, she discovered I had talked with Bill. After I left she called him to find out what was going on.

Athena had never had much exposure to God, Jesus Christ or the church. So when Bill told her that I had asked Jesus to come into my life and save me, she laughed skeptically. "Chuck a Christian? You've gotta be joking! That's the last thing I'd ever expect from him."

Despite the fact that I was willing to let her go, I still prayed that God would fix the mess I'd made of our marriage. Two days later He put His big hand in the middle of our lives and smoothed out all the ugly wrinkles. Her heart softened toward me and we were restored as husband and wife. The divorce plans were whisked away forever.

Three weeks later, Athena asked the Lord to forgive her and enter her life.

Seeing her transformed as I had been added to the miracle that had happened to me.

Our restored marriage was the beginning of the healing God had in store for my traumatized mind. I soon found out that He also erased my dread of dying. My urge to drink and use dope vanished abruptly.

The heavy symptoms of my PTSD felt like part of another life that I had once lived, but now was dead and gone. The nightmares and horrible mental pictures of the war were no longer part of my new life.

It was as if Jesus had taken all the mental images from my subconscious mind and mounted them in a photo album. I could still see them from time to time, but they no longer impinged on my life or dictated the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Thus repressed trauma of Vietnam ended for me. I had finally found peace for my troubled mind.

This deep inner peace has replaced all depression and has stuck with me ever since that liberating phone call to Bill. □

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*Chuck Dean is executive director for Point Man International Ministries, a Seattle-based veterans' support organization dedicated to healing the wounds of war with the Word of God. Athena is the director of the organization's Project Home Front which helps the wives and children of Vietnam vets.*

*Chuck's new book, Nam Vet: Making Peace With Your Past (Point Man International, \$6.95) is the first self-help book dealing with PTSD symptoms and their cure. It can be obtained by writing to Point Man Ministries, Post Office Box 440, Mountlake Terrace, Washington, 98043.*

*He resides in Bothell, Washington with his wife and four children. Chuck is a member of FGBMFI and attends Cornerstone Community Church in Mountlake Terrace.*



*Many men's testimonies center on how the Lord's power released them from the slavery of sin. However, Bob Huff received salvation years before he was freed from guilt and depression. It wasn't until he was filled with the Holy Spirit that Bob triumphed over Satan's attacks.*

*But the Lord even worked through the trials, leading Huff to become a Christian counselor who can deeply empathize with his patients' pain and anguish.*

*Bob's story is truly one of a man coming*

# UP From Despair

Robert Huff  
West Hyannis Port, Massachusetts

**S**MASH!

The ashtray shattered in hundreds of slivers, a few of which scratched red marks on my arm as they glanced off the wall and landed on the carpet.

**BAM!**

Wood sprayed across the office as I smiled, proud that I had demolished the side chair that used to get in my way whenever I was in a hurry

I looked around my office, trembling.

The venting of my slowly-evolving rage had not satisfied me, yet the booze that flowed through my veins urged me to keep going.

"Hey," a voice inside me suddenly whispered, "you can break everything in here, but the real satisfaction would be to just get life all over with. Then those jerks who mistreated you would really be sorry."

The suicidal thoughts that flooded my mind that day finally convinced me I could no longer fight this battle alone.

That's how I wound up on the table in a nearby hospital's psychiatric unit, watching medical technicians strap electrodes to my head. Back in 1963, no drugs were administered to reduce the danger of convulsions.

During the long hours prior to my first shock treatment, my mind wandered





back over my life. I wondered how it had degenerated to this level.

It's hard to trace the feelings of inadequacy that had constantly plagued me. They partially stemmed from the fear and poverty of the Depression, when my father lost his business, as well as my mother's negative outlook on life. Also, my older brother had died during infancy, and her overprotectiveness made me uncomfortable.

In trying to be encouraging, she used to say how proud the family would be when I became the first to graduate from college. But these great expectations only resulted in a deep-seated fear of failure.

I remember returning home from World War II feeling very lost and empty inside. I completed a year of college in New Jersey before I was drafted, and re-enrolled in engineering studies. But I had no sense of purpose and soon dropped out.

The one activity that brought joy to my life was the young adult fellowship at the church I sometimes attended. As a close-knit group, a number of us decided to go to a church in Jersey City when we heard our pastor was participating in a crusade there.

During the first service I heard the Gospel message like it had never been presented when I was a youngster. Deep inside, I knew my emptiness would be filled if I would acknowledge that I was a sinner, ask for forgiveness and receive Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour.

I went forward when the evangelist gave the invitation and the weight of depression lifted! I felt clean inside.

However, I had much to learn, and afterward my first attempt at discovering what had happened when I was born again resulted in disappointment.

"Well, you don't want to get overly emotional or carried away about all this," my pastor counseled. His reaction watered down my enthusiasm and I left that church when I moved with my parents to Long Island.

However, the experience didn't sour me on God, and on the Island I joined another church whose pastor urged me to study for the ministry. Inspired, I enrolled in religious education at New York University and served as the pastor's unofficial assistant.

But I never made it to the pulpit because a life-changing event kept me out. I learned the woman who was to become my wife was pregnant. I know that in today's liberal moral climate that may seem trifling, but in 1950 it was devastating, particularly in my situation.

The weight of guilt was overwhelming. I felt I had committed the unpardonable sin. I went to my pastor and poured out my heart, longing to hear about God's mercy and grace. Instead, his message was: "You've really let me down, Bob."

Crushed, extremely depressed and convinced God could never use me again, I looked to the business world as a means of finding new direction. My studies included a liberal arts background, which enabled me to secure a job in the advertising department of a New York industrial manufacturer.

As the printing production manager, I determined where hundreds of thousands of dollars would be spent on corporate advertising materials. Al-



though my underlying depression had never been resolved, suddenly I was popular. Artists and graphic designers and printers all wined and dined me, hoping I would award them contracts.

Beer was the only alcohol I drank in the Army, but I had given that up after receiving Jesus. Now, with the pressure of the rat race and the ever-present guilt of my pre-marital mistake, I discovered hard liquor as a wonderful way of escape.



**"I went to my pastor . . .  
longing to hear about  
God's mercy and grace.  
Instead, his message was:  
'You've really let me down,  
Bob.'"**

After a short time, I advanced to the advertising department of a large company and over the next seven years the pressures mounted. Not only was I being treated to plenty of drinks, as I traveled around the country, I switched roles and became the buyer in entertaining customers.

The stress and my drinking became so bad that at a sales meeting one of the vice presidents said, "I'm putting out a warning to the people who are going out drinking at lunch time. Don't think we don't know who you are. If it doesn't stop, there will be fewer people at our next meeting."

I knew that comment was aimed in my direction. But like many alcoholics I still didn't know how to handle my suppressed guilt and despair, so I chose the route of geographical escape and moved my family an hour north of New York City, where I went to work for a small ad agency. I rationalized that this was a more exciting position and, as an account executive, I would make more money.

But instead of resolving matters, the pace stepped up. The man who owned the business was a workaholic and as I followed in his footsteps, I worked around the clock. The world was closing in. I had to please him, satisfy clients, and meet grueling deadlines, all the while battling the secret fear that I would fail. For I was looking for security in the world's treasures such as paychecks, insurance policies, pension plans and a fat bank account. It took a layoff from a middle management position during the recession of 1970 to demonstrate how misplaced my priorities had been!

Already a hard drinker, I drank more. The alcohol caused me to do things to my family that I later regretted. While I never hit my wife or children, I yelled at them constantly, only to wind up hating myself and feeling even more guilty.

The Saturday that the lid blew off and I wanted to end it all followed a session at



the yacht club, where we always imbibed with the boss for several hours after a full morning of work.

Scared by my violent behavior, I told my wife about my struggle with suicide. She sent me to a psychiatrist, who suggested the shock treatments.

But as I lay in the hospital waiting, I heard another voice, one which surprised me. It was so small I had to concentrate.

"I have never stopped loving you," God said. "It's not your life to take. You gave it to Me 17 years ago. Now if you'll give it back to Me, I will put the pieces back together and make it whole again."

Given that dramatic scene, some have asked why I didn't check out of the hospital right then. I didn't because I thought those treatments might be something the Lord could use to reassemble the pieces.

But ultimately it wasn't them or the

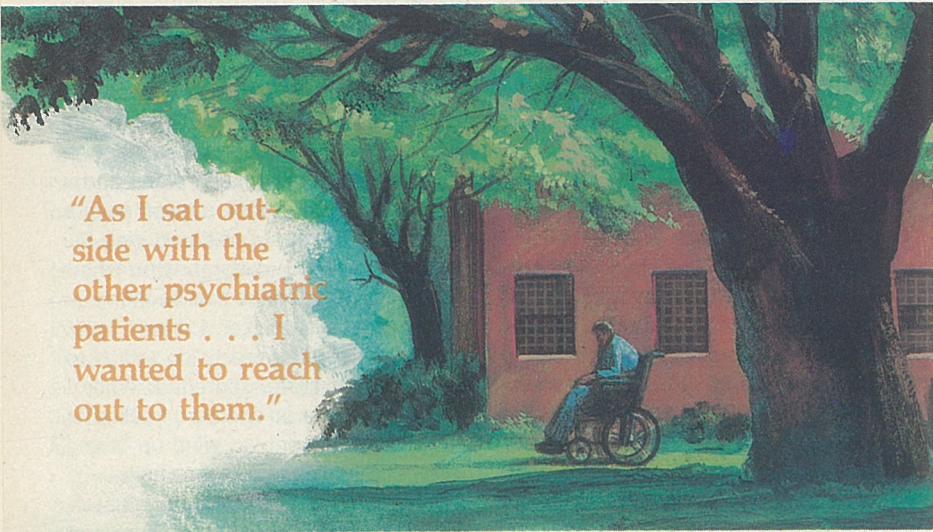
psychotropic drugs that healed me. It was God, even though it took many more trials and years before He finally coaxed me off the merry-go-round of liquor and self-condemnation.

After that I moved around so much and had so many different jobs, that all the details could fill a book. I was restless and had no idea how to get back in touch with the merciful God who had spoken to me on the gurney.

Then one day God broke through.

"Dad, you just won't believe this!" my two sons exclaimed in unison, excitedly talking about a prayer meeting they had attended at an Episcopal church. Still fighting the demons of despair, it didn't take much to convince me to join them at the next service.

I was pleased with what I saw. People were singing with hands raised and arms waving, the joy leaping off their faces. I looked up and saw a stained glass win-



"As I sat outside with the other psychiatric patients . . . I wanted to reach out to them."



dow with a picture of Jesus holding a lamb and knew I was home where I needed to be.

When they gave an invitation to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I said, "If this is of God, I want it!"

People laid hands on me after I reached the altar and two things happened. First I spoke in tongues and then I began to laugh. I laughed so loud and long that everyone around me started laughing.

I had the Lord's joy! I realized God had renewed me and now His desires could become mine. I started reading the Word daily and was in church constantly . . . not my old, dry church, but a body where the people were alive and excited to be serving God!

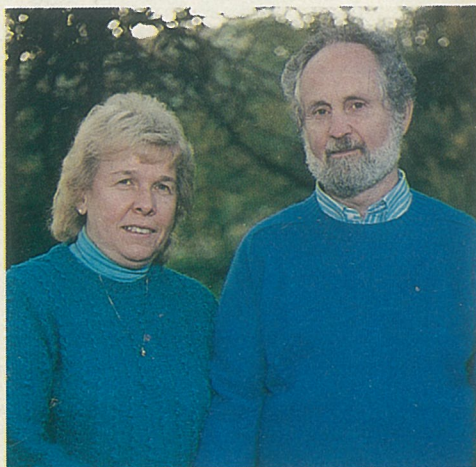
Nevertheless, it took four more years before I finally obeyed the call that the Lord had placed in my heart back in 1963, when I was recuperating from the shock treatments. As I sat outside one sunny afternoon with other psychiatric patients, He had filled me with compassion. I understood their trauma, their pain and suffering, and I wanted to reach out to them.

Finally, when we moved to western Massachusetts in 1975, I acted on that desire. My initial training in psychotherapy came at a Christian counseling center operated by two pastors. While working there, I completed my master's degree at a nearby college.

My next step was to open a halfway house, where we ministered for several years to persons of all ages suffering from mental and emotional problems.

Because of a lack of steady funding, we had to close down in 1981. Bankrupt,

having sold our home and lost all the other equity we had built up, we sought the Lord's direction and He led us to the Cape Cod area on Massachusetts' east coast.



*Bob and Elinor Huff*

There I became a supervisory counselor in a detoxification center, where I gained experience in group therapy and became a certified alcoholism counselor. Then I left for a mental health clinic to work other types of cases such as sexually and physically abused children, delinquents, and the suffering elderly.

In addition to these fulltime jobs, I offered Christian counseling out of my home in the evenings. This sideline reached the point that I saw I finally had to take a step of faith.

Thus, Christian Counseling Services of Cape Cod opened for business in January of 1986. In three years, we have grown to eight people as a part-time



staff, which enables us to offer a well-rounded treatment program and have a fulltime office manager.

We use a sliding fee scale, so no one is ever turned away.

We see an average of 89 people per week. Alcoholics, homosexuals, abused women and children, couples and families being destroyed by anger and resentment are among those we treat with the best tonic available, the love of Jesus Christ.

Every day I am in awe over the ways He uses me as an instrument for His

healing. For someone who once thought he would never be used or loved by God again, this is a miracle in itself. You could say it's His "grace in action." □

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*Bob Huff recently began his fourth year as president of the Hyannis Chapter of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. He is also a member of the Association of Christian Therapists and the Order of St. Luke. He and his wife, Elinor, are members of the First Baptist Church of Hyannis, where he serves as a deacon. The Huffs have three children: David, 38; Bobby, 35; Marcia, 32; and 10 grandchildren. You can reach Huff through Christian Counseling Services, 24 Bayberry Square, Building F, Centerville, MA 02632, phone (508) 778-2225.*

# CONVENTIONS

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## **B.C. LOWER MAINLAND MEN'S ADV.**

**March 3-5, 1989**

Cultus Lake  
Lindel Beach, BC Canada  
Contact: Art Dick  
3519 McKinley Crt.  
Abbotsford, BC, Canada V3G1B4

## **LINCOLN SPRING RALLY**

**March 17-18, 1989**

Clayton House  
Lincoln, NE  
Contact: Eugene Dankert  
5934 LaSalle  
Lincoln, NE 68516

## **EUGENE MINI-CONVENTION**

**March 24-25, 1989**

Valley River Inn  
Eugene, OR  
Contact: Stan Merrell  
90440 Hill Rd.  
Springfield, OR 97478

## **PRAIRIE REGIONAL CONVENTION**

**March 30-April 1, 1989**

Ramada Renaissance Trade/Conv. Ctr.  
Regina, SA Canada  
Contact: Larry Moleski  
Box 3896  
Regina, SA S4P 3R8 Canada

## **13th SO. NEW ENGLAND CONV.**

**March 30-April 1, 1989**

Hartford Treadway Hotel  
Cromwell, CT  
Contact: Don Carlson  
1052 Farmington Ct.  
West Hartford, CT 06107

## **OHIO MEN'S ADVANCE**

**March 31-April 2, 1989**

Kings Island Inn  
Kings Island, OH  
Contact: Loren F. Minnick  
4711 Judith Dr.  
Dayton, OH 45429

## **GREATER WEST TEXAS MEN'S ADV.**

**April 7-9, 1989**

First Christian Church Camp  
Happy, TX  
Contact: Leroy Linney  
506 Carrol  
Stanton, TX 79782

## **MID-AMERICA REG. CONV.**

**April 13-15, 1989**

Ramada Inn & Towers  
Topeka, KS  
Contact: Hue Hamilton  
2232 Tammarron Terr.  
Manhattan, KS 66502

## **20th INDIANA STATE CONVENTION**

**April 19-22, 1989**

Indianapolis Marriott  
Indianapolis, IN  
Contact: FGBMFI — Indiana State Conv.  
P. O. Box 19032  
Indianapolis, IN 46219

## **1989 HAWAII REG. CONV.**

**April 19-22, 1989**

Ala Moana Hotel  
Honolulu, HI  
Contact: John L. Witwer  
1164 Bishop, No. 1007  
Honolulu, HI 96813

## **OLYMPIC PENINSULA MEN'S ADV.**

**April 21-23, 1989**

Fort Flagler State Park  
Nordland, WA  
Contact: Harold L. Stephens  
210 South Cambrian  
Bremerton, WA 98312

## **B.C. NORTHERN INTERIOR MEN'S ADV.**

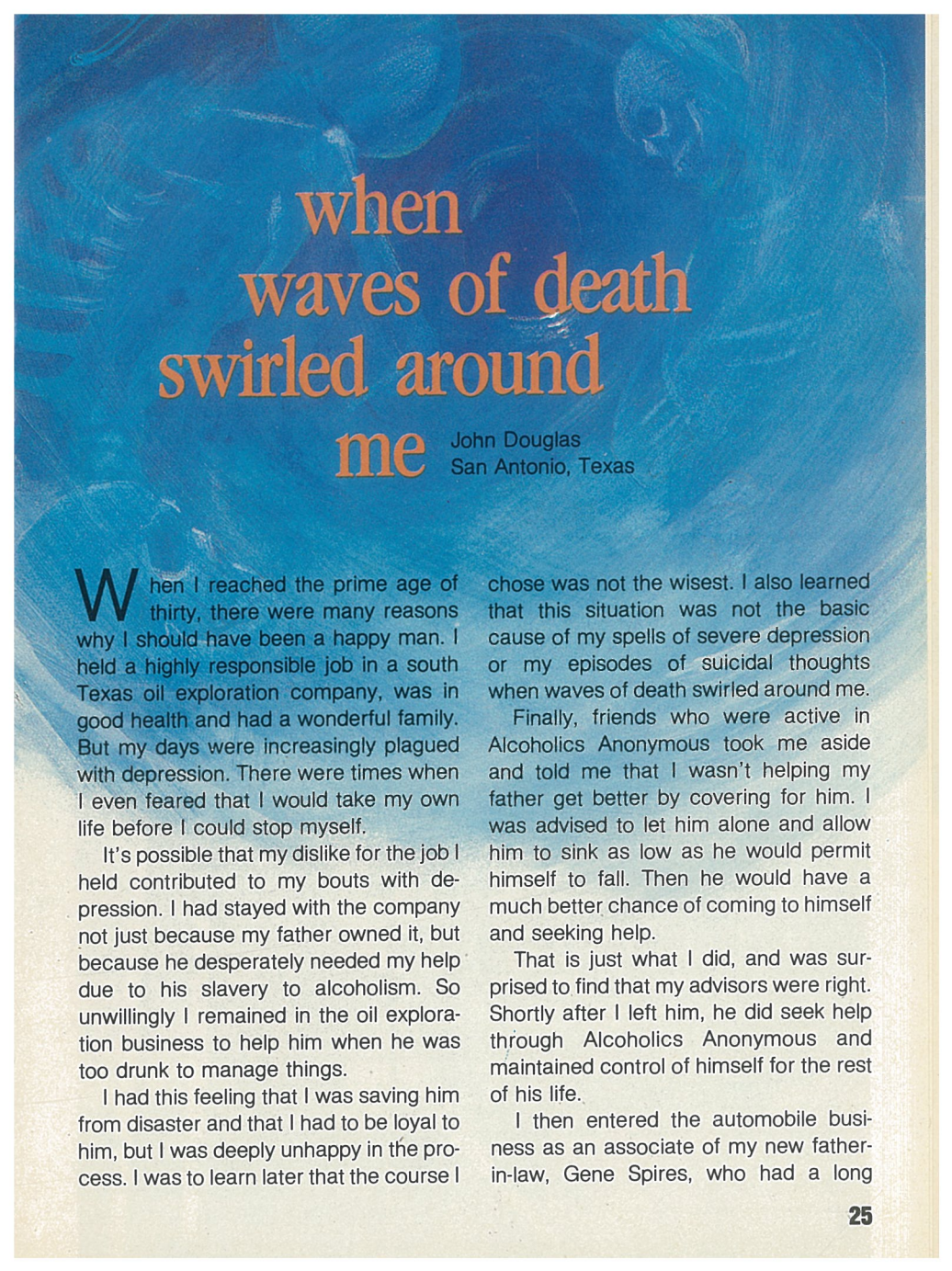
**April 28-30, 1989**

Hudsons Bay Lodge  
Smithers, BC Canada  
Contact: Peter Neaves  
Box 325  
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0 Canada

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**CONVENTIONS PUBLISHED IN THIS ISSUE WERE APPROVED ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 20, 1988.**





# when waves of death swirled around me

John Douglas  
San Antonio, Texas

When I reached the prime age of thirty, there were many reasons why I should have been a happy man. I held a highly responsible job in a south Texas oil exploration company, was in good health and had a wonderful family. But my days were increasingly plagued with depression. There were times when I even feared that I would take my own life before I could stop myself.

It's possible that my dislike for the job I held contributed to my bouts with depression. I had stayed with the company not just because my father owned it, but because he desperately needed my help due to his slavery to alcoholism. So unwillingly I remained in the oil exploration business to help him when he was too drunk to manage things.

I had this feeling that I was saving him from disaster and that I had to be loyal to him, but I was deeply unhappy in the process. I was to learn later that the course I

chose was not the wisest. I also learned that this situation was not the basic cause of my spells of severe depression or my episodes of suicidal thoughts when waves of death swirled around me.

Finally, friends who were active in Alcoholics Anonymous took me aside and told me that I wasn't helping my father get better by covering for him. I was advised to let him alone and allow him to sink as low as he would permit himself to fall. Then he would have a much better chance of coming to himself and seeking help.

That is just what I did, and was surprised to find that my advisors were right. Shortly after I left him, he did seek help through Alcoholics Anonymous and maintained control of himself for the rest of his life.

I then entered the automobile business as an associate of my new father-in-law, Gene Spires, who had a long



established Buick dealership in San Antonio, Texas. In hindsight, I can see that God was watching over me even then and had prepared this fine opportunity for me. But surprisingly, my job change and my father's recovery from alcoholism still did not take away my intense bouts of depression.

Although I was not a true believer, I did read the Bible and found a kindred spirit in David, who also had his share of depression and encounters with self-destruction. In II Samuel 22:5-7 he writes: "The waves of death swirled about me, the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me. In my distress I called out to the Lord."

As an Episcopalian, I turned to the church but found no satisfactory answers. Even so, I was faithful in my attendance and in time did receive some help.

But serious questions still plagued my mind. "What is the meaning of life?" I'd continually ask myself. "Why am I here?"

The first answers came from an unexpected source. They came directly from God.

I had been fasting because of my personal problem with gluttony. One day when I was lying down during this fast God actually spoke to me. He said, "The meaning and purpose of life is love, and the rule of life is love."

The important thing about this revelation was not just the message, but the fact that God had truly spoken to me! I believed it, experienced it and knew it was true.

Now I knew for certain that God

existed. I believed that He had spoken to me because He knew that it was the only way He could get through to me.

With this realization, I came to definitely believe in God. Before this I had had many doubts, even though I was a loyal church member. I now knew that the Holy Spirit had begun to teach me, but I had a long way to go.

I continued to attend church regularly but now I had a different perspective: spiritual pride. I was, as far as I knew, the only one in our church congregation whom God had spoken to directly. This, I thought, was really something important!

God had taken away some of my despair and depression, but when Satan filled me with the sin of pride, I was not humbled by God's mercy to me. Instead I felt superior to the other churchgoers be-

**“ . . . I was not humbled by God's mercy to me. Instead I felt superior to the other churchgoers because God had spoken to me personally.”**

*John Douglas opened his new auto dealership in 1986 by clearly and colorfully giving credit where credit was due.*



cause God had spoken to me personally. I was later to learn that Satan uses every opportunity to distort or damage a believer's faith, especially a new believer who is just beginning to know God.

I then attended a retreat that my church sponsored at Laity Lodge in Kerrville, Texas. At the conclusion of this weekend, Bob Cody, the leader, gave the invitation for anyone who wanted to receive Christ as his personal Saviour, to raise his hand.

I was so scared my hand would pop up that I literally sat on both of them for the remainder of the service.

Part of me really wanted to surrender to Jesus because it would provide the answer to another question that had been plaguing me: "What can I give my life to?"

But there was another part of me that refused to give in. My pride was still there.

A spiritual war raged inside me as I sat there with both hands under my seat. God had given me the ability to accept Him or reject Him. At that time I chose to reject Him.

But the thought of turning my life over to Jesus stayed with me after the retreat. Not many months later my church had a "Faith Alive" weekend when Episcopal laypersons who had had an experience with Jesus came and gave their testimonies to small groups of church members. One Saturday night a man from Dallas testified how pride had been a great barrier in his own life, and how it had kept him from turning his life over to Christ.

While he was talking I realized that this





was my problem! Right then and there the Holy Spirit convicted me of the great pride I had developed in my life. I saw how I had resisted Jesus because I had wanted to be on my own and remain in control of my life and not let Him take over. Even when I was on the verge of suicide, I still didn't want to give my life to Christ. But when I heard the man from Dallas speak, I realized that this was exactly what I needed to do.

So the following morning at the Sunday service, I asked Christ to come into my life, to take away my sins and to be reborn in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The amazing thing was, when I asked Him to come into my life, He did! I believe that at that very moment I came out of darkness and entered into light, and was delivered from death into life.

Ever since that day I have never again experienced the desire to take my life. Instead of thoughts of suicide and despair, Jesus has given me a meaning and purpose for living.

I feel like John Wesley (founder of the Methodist church) must have felt when he said, "... God has forgiven my sins and delivered me from the law of sin and death."

One thing God has done since I surrendered to Him, is teach me that a big

problem in my life was fear. He wanted me to overcome that fear, and this was something that I needed to work on.

Looking back, I can't think of a better place to overcome fear than in an automobile dealership! In this business there are many problems requiring courage in the day-to-day operations. God used my position there to prove to me that His love and provision are greater than my fear.

Then He showed me that there was another problem in my life. I realized how much I had been motivated by a desire to please other people and to look good in their eyes.

Before I became a Christian, I wanted to please the world. When I became a Christian this was changed to wanting to make a good impression on other Christians. Now I have to come to the point where the only desire in my heart is to please God. This was difficult for me to do.

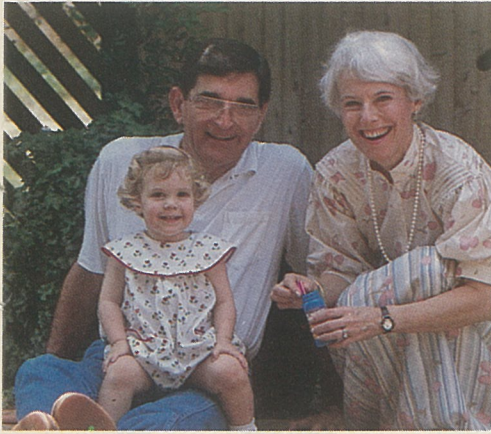
Since I surrendered my life to Jesus, I still have lots of questions. But the hysteria, agony and depression have been taken away because I know that God is faithful to provide the answers.

One of my questions was, "What should my career as a Christian be?" I wondered if I should leave my business and make drastic changes in my lifestyle. Well, I tried leaving the business world and going into church work, but each time I tried to make the change, God intervened (sometimes in miraculous ways) to tell me that I was in the place He wanted me to be.

Just like the prophet Habakkuk, He wanted me to "stand at my rampart" (Habakkuk 2:1).

**“... I've discovered a secret. You can be in ministry right in your own business.”**





*John and Frances Douglas with granddaughter Edith*

Since then I have found that working in the automobile business is a good place to be in ministry. I had always thought in order to minister to people you had to be in the church, but I've discovered a secret. You can be in ministry right in your own business. The 15th chapter of John taught me this where Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit."

I found that if I get up in the morning, read my Bible and open my heart to God through prayer, He does abide in me. Then when I go to work at my dealership, whole avenues open up where I can minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

For example, one day one of my salesmen called me in to talk to a lady who was considering buying one of our new models. In the car business we call this "helping with the close." As I was listening to this woman and the salesman a type of vision appeared in my mind. It was very real and seemed to be a picture

puzzle of people of all denominations, coming together to worship God. As the sales process proceeded I hardly heard a word, but watched this mental picture develop.

Then suddenly there it was, a clear picture of the Lamb of God. I was so excited at seeing this dream-like vision take form that I blurted out, "That's it! It is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." I didn't know how this customer was going to react.

To my surprise, she immediately burst out crying. She then spent the next two hours pouring out her heart, telling me the needs in her life and the blessing of hearing the name of Jesus.

I've found that there is a direct connection between the time I spend abiding in Jesus and the ministry God has given me. My business has been completely turned over to God, and my greatest goal is to abide in Him daily.

By setting an example, I try to lead my employees to abide in Him, even amid the stresses of the automobile business. I do not always succeed, but I have learned that God is faithful.

And just as He was faithful to deliver me from overwhelming depression and the winds of death, He will always sustain me and provide the answers I need. □

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*John Douglas and his wife, the former Frances Spires, have two grown sons, John, Jr. and Gene, and one granddaughter, Edith. They are members of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. John is a board member of the San Antonio Youth for Christ and a sponsoring committee chairperson for the John Quest San Antonio Area Revival to be held in May, 1989. His mailing address is c/o Spires Douglas Yugo, 501 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.*



# FREEDOM FROM FEAR

H. Brian Winkelspecht  
Redondo Beach, California

*Many times, depression is deeply intertwined with fear. In the following story you will see how the Lord also will deliver you from fear.*



“If you say anything to the police, I’ll get you! I’ll find you and finish you off! I’ll kill you! Understand?” My jaw was broken in two places and my mouth was full of blood. Blood was also streaming down my face from a cut over my right eye. My head and my body ached all over, and my heart was pounding with fear. I knew his threats were real. After years in jail, he was out on parole and this incident could send him back.

I was eighteen years old, living away from home, and working my way through college. One evening my buddies and I had gone to eat at a popular diner. There were a couple of girls there I didn’t know, and one of them began hurling insults at one of my friends. I thought she was so obnoxious that I gave her a low-quality piece of my mind. I didn’t realize that her boyfriend was a tough ex-con I knew. He was several years older than I and about fifty pounds heavier — mostly muscle.



To make matters worse, we had despised each other for years. Defending his girlfriend's "honor" gave him a good excuse for a physical confrontation.

Although I was just a skinny kid, I was too proud and too foolish to back down when he challenged me to a fight. We walked to a nearby parking lot, and he threw the first blow. Wham! His punch knocked me down, but I got back up on my feet.

During the exchange that followed, I surprised myself by landing a few punches well enough to floor him. The problem was that he was doing the same to me, only better. At one point he connected with my right eye so hard that I was stunned and couldn't see for a few seconds.

As soon as he realized I was vulnerable, he grabbed my head by my hair and broke my jaw with his knee. Then several of his friends who were watching began to punch and kick me as I lay on the ground. My friends quickly pulled them off, but it was too late — the fight and I were both finished. The anger in his voice and the hatred in his eyes had a chilling effect on me.

Twenty-three years later, I can still recall his threat of murder and my fear of dying quite vividly. Because I pursued excitement with a passion in those days, there were also other life-threatening situations I faced that made my heart pound with fear — events like near fatal motorcycle accidents and a horrendous car wreck. For me, the fears of those situations came suddenly and were incredibly intense, but they usually subsided within a short time.

All of us have fears to face, but there

was another kind of fear I had endured most of my life — the fear of being condemned by God.

I think it started when I attended a parochial elementary school and learned that God expects us to live by His guidelines. I remember making a conscious decision as a young child to violate these standards, thinking that I could always ask for God's forgiveness.

By the time I was eleven years old, I felt anxious, alone and afraid. While this is typical of many pre-adolescents, these feelings were intensified by my inner sense of being unacceptable to God.

On the outside I looked religious and moral, and by adult standards my misdeeds probably appeared petty. But something within me seemed very wrong. I felt that nobody understood my inner struggles and, worse yet, no one seemed to care — least of all, God. Although I never attempted it, I contemplated suicide several times.

Later I graduated from high school in the top five percent of my class and had the admiration of my teachers, but by then I was drinking and partying all the time. I had become so incorrigible that my father told me to leave home and take responsibility for my own life.

I moved in with a friend, got a job, quit going to church, enrolled at Penn State and began working my way toward a degree. A local shopkeeper tried to explain salvation in Christ to me. I denied the inner guilt I felt and told myself that this guy was merely some religious fanatic. Besides, I felt I could never live up to God's expectations, even if I tried.

For the next eight years my life was a continual parade of restless activity. The



**“I searched for so much and found so little, and this left me feeling more anxious, empty and alone than ever. I began to fear that nothing could make my life meaningful, and I felt more afraid of God than I had in my youth.”**

anxiety, emptiness and loneliness I felt drove me to seek relief in as many places as I could think to look. Not only did I pursue a major in mathematics and science, I also immersed myself in literature and art.

Even though I was a responsible full-time worker and a full-time student with good grades. I continually indulged in wine, women and song until the early hours of the morning. Later, I traveled across America several times and even rode on freight cars from California to Illinois. For a while I enjoyed the thrills of riding my motorcycle recklessly, but afterward I spent a month meditating peacefully at a commune in the rain forest of Maui.

I searched for so much and found so little, and this left me feeling more anxious, empty and alone than ever. I began to fear that nothing could make my life meaningful, and I felt more afraid of God than I had in my youth.

Eventually a friend and I decided to abandon the regimen of society's demands. Our goal was to find fulfillment and peace by living in the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest, and we started a construction business in Philadelphia to earn our stake.

By then I had heard the Gospel again on three different occasions — from a personal friend, a corporate vice-president I had met, and a total stranger. Each of them claimed to have a personal relationship with Christ, and all said that God would forgive and accept me if only I would trust in Him and let Him lead me through life. Each time I heard these things I repressed my desire to know if they were true. God's way of life was the





*Brian and Lisa Winkelspecht*

one thing I did not want to find. I wanted to be in control of my own path. I decided to avoid hearing about Christ anymore.

Soon winter came and we decided to move our business to Los Angeles so that we could continue working toward our goal. My partner, his wife, Lisa (my

girlfriend) and I packed up and went to California. Before long we were living in a beautiful home in Hermosa Beach, a town known for parties and good times, and we had made a lot of new friends. Our construction business did well and it seemed that our dream was closer to fulfillment.

One day we needed a loaf of bread so a friend and I went to the grocery store on our bicycles. He went in to buy the bread, and I stayed outside to watch the bikes. Two girls approached me and began telling me about Christ. Because I was guarding two bicycles, I couldn't leave. As they talked I realized that my reluctance to yield to God was probably foolish. Those girls really looked happy and at peace with themselves.

A few days later, Lisa and I attended a church service. We decided to pray for Christ's forgiveness and commit our lives to Him. Each of us felt an incredible sense of relief, and I suddenly realized that the peace and fulfillment I had searched so hard to find had just become a reality within me.

For the first time since my childhood, my fear of being condemned by God was gone. It's hard to express in words, but my anxiety had spread its roots into so many parts of my being and suddenly it was gone! Our lives quickly began to change for the better and our friends began to notice.

Within a month we decided to abandon our journey to the wilderness and Lisa and I were married. We soon found ourselves involved in public ministry, although at first we didn't realize it.

We began by sharing our newly found faith with others, and soon I was asked



often to preach to our congregation. Then we became teachers in our church, and in time many came to us individually for personal counseling.

For several years I also played electric bass guitar in a band dedicated to evangelism. Eventually I accepted an invitation to sit on a board of directors at church. Throughout this entire period we operated our construction business and raised our family.

All people face struggles in life and at times ours have seemed overwhelming. We almost lost our first child by miscarriage, and she had to be delivered by Caesarean section. Then we lost our next two children midterm in Lisa's pregnancies. We were devastated emotionally, but we wanted to try again.

When our daughter was six years old, our son was born, but he had to be rushed to the hospital's neonatal center for a week of intensive care. For the first three years of his life he suffered from febrile seizures often, and we were afraid he might be mentally impaired.

We endured long periods without construction work during times of recession and high interest rates. Six members of our families died within a period of a year and a half. My wife suffered a concussion, and I had to have emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix. A sudden change in leadership threw our church into upheaval and I resigned under an attack of rumors and false accusations. The list goes on.

In all of these troubles, it would have been so easy for me to become fearful and anxious, but Christ has sustained us in every way. He has provided us with the direction, courage, hope and re-

sources we needed to take each step of life, one at a time.

Several months ago, I lost my job as a Senior Facilities Project Manager during a big aerospace layoff, and was looking for another position. Often I got frustrated because I didn't see a breakthrough in my job search. Sometimes I started to fear that we wouldn't be able to pay our bills.

But in these moments the Lord gave me a strong sense of how much He cares for us and would care for us in this situation just as He always had in the others. He renewed my confidence that He would continue to provide for our needs and I no longer felt alone in this struggle.

God demonstrates His ceaseless care for us by renewing our strength, hope and peace in difficult circumstances, and by providing for our needs in times of adversity. To me, this insight has become the most valued treasure of all.

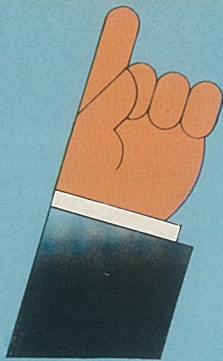
In spite of my human weaknesses and imperfect faith, His divine strength and perfect faithfulness continue to relieve my fears and anxieties just as they did fifteen years ago when I first trusted in Him.

Now I know without a doubt that he whom Jesus sets free is free indeed! □

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*Since this article was written, Brian Winkelspecht has taken a position as Project Manager and Director of Marketing of a construction management firm. His wife, Lisa, manages a sportswear and pro shop in a Los Angeles area health club. He, his wife and their children, Jennifer and Micah, are currently members of the First Foursquare Church of Van Nuys, California, better known as "Church on the Way." Brian and Lisa continue to minister in personal counseling, and Brian recently helped lead a team of volunteers who participated in building a new Foursquare Church in Stathelle, Norway.*





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# 6 STEPS TO SALVATION

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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). "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.**

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

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# VOICE

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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 ninety-six 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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## 21 Tries... and Hopeless!

*Of his company's 500 salesmen, Mike Wourms had some 490 better than him. Even though he began his day at 9:30 a.m., by 11:00 a.m. he was through — not because he was tired but because he was overcome by fear and depression.*

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## Making Peace With Your Past

*It was the striking figure in the military recruiting poster that inspired Chuck Dean to enlist. He spent a year in jungle training throughout the South China Sea area and life was good. Then he was transferred to Vietnam. He survived — but only physically.*

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From: **FGBMFI**  
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