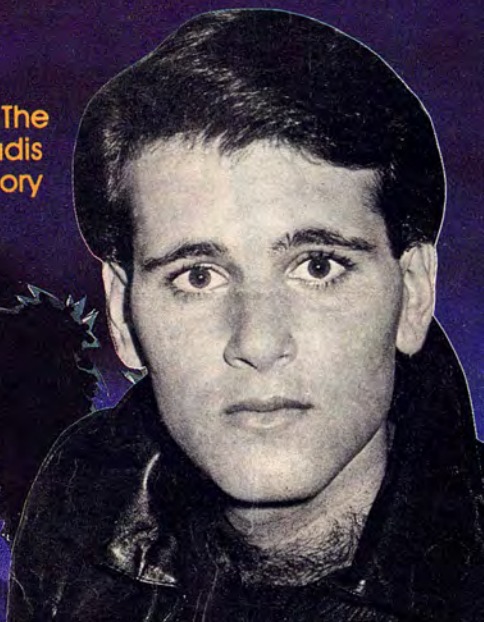


Full Gospel Business Men's

07-90
VOICE

HOLLYWOOD

The
Dino Andreadis
Story



HOLD

ADMIT ONE

TICKET
TO THE
STARS

Dino Andreadis
La Salle, Quebec

YWOOD

A solitary figure stood on a dark, deserted hilltop, high above the City of Angels. Overhead, a myriad of stars twinkled in the beautiful night sky as the blazing neon lights below beckoned intensely. . .

I was the lone figure on the Los Angeles hilltop. It was 1978. I was 19 and at last I stood on the threshold of my dream becoming a reality. The dream had gripped me since boyhood — that of becoming a Hollywood actor.

Grasping for the slightest chance to make a connection in the movie industry, I visited the posh Woodland Hills mansion of movie actor Telly Savalas. Being a Greek like myself, I was certain Telly would be my link with Tinsel Town's big league.

Every nerve ending in my body was tensed with a strange mixture of energetic excitement and fear as I knocked on the massive door of the Savalas home. In a few moments the

door to fame and fortune would be opened wide.

The door swept open with expensive ease.

"Good evening. Is Mr. Savalas in?" In spite of my jolting nerves, I managed to sound cool and collected. "This is it!" I told myself, "Your ticket to the stars!!"

The stranger standing in the brightly-lit doorway stared at me for several seconds. Then he laughed. As the ornate door was slammed in my face a few moments later, all I could hear was the stranger's laugh as he looked at my shocked face, and told me that Telly hadn't lived there for at least ten years!

My fascination with show biz went back to my childhood when, at the age of four, I was already a fan of the fabulous Chubby Checker. Once, during an ocean voyage with my parents, I heard the ship's dinner orchestra strike up a familiar Checker tune. Before my parents knew what had happened, I

bolted onto the dance floor to a round of applause. That night, I stole the show.

In my teens, I lived for the dynamic night life of Montreal. Entertainment paid good money. I was earning about \$400 a week, quite a bit of cash for a seventeen-year-old back in 1976.

One day, my vice-principal told me I should consider going to Hollywood. The idea caught hold of me with a passion.

With high hopes and nearly empty pockets, I arrived in Hollywood in 1978. In a morass of eight million people, I began to pound the pavement earnestly along with thousands of other hopefuls . . . in search of stardom.

Each night I returned home to my tiny, humble apartment with tired swollen feet and not a break in sight. Every night as I went to sleep, I looked up at the ceiling crying out to an unknown God, "If You're up there somewhere, please help me!"

As long as I can remember, I always had a longing for truth. I didn't go to church and I didn't know God, but as I cried out night after night to the lonely ceiling in my L.A. apartment, I was crying out for help, for truth, for reality. There was something missing in my life . . . perhaps stardom was the key that would fill the void.

Several long months passed. Still no hope of a breakthrough. I decided to sneak promotion photos under the doors

of casting directors at the major film studios.

Out of the blue one day, my telephone rang. My heart pounded with inexpressible excitement. It was the casting director of a major studio. He wanted to see me. At last! We met for a forty-five minute interview, which is a long interview in Hollywood.

The man wanted to meet me again later that evening. I could hardly contain the thrill inside of me at this dynamic turn of events. At precisely 8:00 p.m. a white Mercedes sports coupe arrived to pick me up. The casting director took me out to a popular night spot. After fifteen minutes with him, I began to feel uneasy. I couldn't explain it. But I was not totally naive about the lifestyles of people in the entertainment world. Bluntly, I asked the man what he wanted from me.

With sickening horror, I realized I was face-to-face with the Hollywood casting couch. The casting director said he would give me a part in his next film if I paid the price . . . sexual compromise.

Much later, I discovered just how many are willing to pay that price for the chance at stardom. I asked the casting director to take me home immediately. I needed to think about my life; what he was asking me was out of the question.

Then an acting tryout came through from NBC studios. A script arrived by

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messenger. What a sensational feeling! A chance to do Harvey Korman's lines on the Carol Burnett show!

Arriving at the studio, I saw Tom Snyder finishing a show on my left. Further on, I saw Bob Hope finishing a Christmas special. I couldn't believe it! Suddenly, my knees began to shake. I stood in front of a big camera, heard the director say "Action!" and I froze. Not a line of my memory work came to mind. I ran out of the studio, terrified and embarrassed, a scared 20-year-old kid.

Yet a windfall of calls began pouring in after that! My dream was unfolding faster than I could keep up with it! Experienced actors were utterly amazed when I told them about the calls I was getting.

Finally, a major breakthrough. An offer came in from the casting director at 20th Century Fox for a part in a series. There was one slight hitch. The director said he wanted to hire me but he couldn't.

"What?! Why not?" I exclaimed.

"Because you're Canadian," he said.

"Canadian? What do you mean, I'm Canadian? So is William Shatner. What does it matter if I'm Canadian?"

The problem was simple. I was an illegal alien. I couldn't be hired for a legal job in the U.S. without a green card or working permit.

"How do I get a green card?" I practically shouted. "I'll get one! I'll do anything!"

"This has to be it!" I cried out to the ceiling and to my unknown God that night. How many hundreds of nights had I cried out like this? Not for a minute did I realize that in all of those heart-rending cries, I was searching not for my dream



of stardom . . . I was searching for God.

The next day I handed over \$96 to a lawyer, who presented me with two options for getting a green card. I could invest \$65,000 in a business in the U.S. or I could marry an American girl. What could I do? I didn't have a quarter for a bag of candy! How could I invest in a business? There was only one option. I began to search for an American wife.

The very next day, amazing as it seemed, I met a man who introduced me to a lady who would marry me to get me my green card. The fee was \$500. I paid a deposit on the five hundred. Two days later, I called to check the progress of the arrangements and discovered I'd been had. The woman and her "business manager" had disappeared.

Frantic to get my green card, I began combing the L.A. night clubs in search of



a woman who would marry me. A few days later, I met a beautiful young woman who told me she had fallen instantly in love with me. When she heard about my dilemma, she said she was willing to marry me.

Elated, I rushed home and began making plans. Things were falling into place. A wife! A green card! An acting career! On the crowded bus, a young man slipped a piece of paper into my hand. Five words stared up at me: "Jesus Christ Is Coming Soon."

The message pierced through my cluttered thoughts like a lightning bolt. I had heard about Jesus Christ. But something told me, "This is the truth! I believe this!"

Suddenly I felt confused. In my desperation to get home and put my thoughts in order, I jumped off at the wrong bus stop. Standing there was the young man who had given me the tract. He mentioned he, too, had somehow

landed at the wrong stop.

Discussing this coincidence, we began walking together for a short distance. The young man's name was David. I decided to invite him to my apartment for a cup of coffee. I had some questions about the tract to ask him.

David began sharing the message of the Bible with me. He told me about God's love for me, and that God has a special plan for each person's life.

Suddenly, I wanted David to get out of my apartment. I didn't want to hear anymore.

"What's the matter," David asked. "You wanted me to tell you these things!"

"Yes, David, I did. I know I can't live the way I would have to live if I gave my life to Jesus Christ as you're encouraging me to do. I know if I did that, I'd have to give it all to Him. There's too much at stake in my life right now. I can't do it. Get out! Get out!" David left.

The next morning at ten, I had an appointment with my bride-to-be. I pushed thoughts of David and his message about Jesus Christ out of my mind.

Early the next morning, before my young woman arrived, there was a knock at my door. A kindly woman stood there.

"David told me about meeting you," she said. She introduced herself as David's pastor. "When he told me about you, I couldn't stop thinking about you . . . I felt compelled to pray for you throughout the night. Dino, don't do whatever it is you're about to do," she said. With that, she turned and left. I was flabbergasted.

Somehow, I felt a warning in my heart

to do as she said. I didn't realize it at the time, but God had led this woman to my place at the right time. If she had not come, I would have married this woman I hardly knew and God's plan for my life would have been shattered.

When my young bride-to-be arrived an hour later, I told her I couldn't go through with our plans. Deep inside, I had always wanted to marry and to build a life with a special person. To marry now and divorce three months later suddenly seemed a sham.

Hurt and angry, the young woman cried: "Dino! What about your green card! Don't throw everything away! Don't be crazy!"

"Go! Just go!" I told her.

"Dino, you have a television series in the palm of your hand!" I told her I was sorry and asked her to leave.

However, the next day I decided I was letting go of the chance of a lifetime. I had to find a wife. All of my convictions of the day before were forgotten.

I called up an old girlfriend whom I had dated in Montreal, now living in Wisconsin. When I explained my situation and the need for a green card, she said she would be willing to marry me. We made our hasty plans. The day she was to arrive, I had a strange feeling she wouldn't show up. I placed a call to her home in Wisconsin. Sure enough.

"Dino, I can't explain it, but I just couldn't go through with it."

My plans were falling like a row of dominoes. In my anguish, despair and confusion, I turned to reading the Bible. David had given me . . . searching for answers . . . any thread of direction to show me what to do.

For four months I immersed myself in the Word of God. I realized that I needed more than stardom to fill the emptiness in my life. It was then that I asked Jesus to be my personal Saviour. I didn't understand it, but God was breaking the walls of pride in my life so I could open my heart and draw close to Him.

One day, I sensed a quiet urging within me. "Go and preach the Gospel on the corner of Western and Wilshire." I thought I must be going crazy! Then God's Holy Spirit prompted me again.

But how could I go preach in Hollywood at 1:30 in the afternoon? Nonetheless, I followed the prompting in my heart and off I went.

"Shut up, you idiot!" "You're out of date!" The insults flew fast and thick as I went on the corner of Western and Wilshire and preached the Gospel. People laughed and jeered. "God, what do you have me doing this for? What's the



purpose in all of this? Show me!" I cried silently.

Then it happened. A man came up to me. Humbly, he asked me to tell him more about Jesus. As I began talking about the Bible's message of salvation, hope and new life in Jesus Christ, the man got on his knees right in front of me and asked Jesus to be his Lord and Saviour. I was so excited, I took the man home, and baptized him in the bathtub of my apartment.

Walking the streets of L.A. and the skid row areas, I began to share the Gospel, day after day. But I hadn't forgotten about my quest to become an actor. Even though I was serving God, I still wanted to pursue my long-held dream of stardom.

A call came through for a part requiring a six-foot, two-inch blonde guy with blue eyes. I'm five-foot nine, with brown eyes. I had a new agent and I quickly phone him, asking why they would be calling me when I didn't even fit the description for the part. They had torn up the script and put in my characteristics. It simply wasn't done for unknowns like me. But with this new offer, the things of God began to diminish in my life. Hollywood started to consume me again.

I stopped reading the Bible and praying. It was the first sign of Christian backsliding but I knew nothing about "falling away" from God. Instead of praying and seeking God, I went to see a fortune-teller near my home. I needed some answers again and had forgotten all that God had done for me.

As I entered the fortune-teller's, I was greeted by terrible, hideous screaming. "GET OUT OF HERE!!"

I couldn't understand why the woman was screaming at me. I had never seen her in my life. Trying to make some sense of the situation, I drew closer. She raised her hands in front of her face, pulling away from me, unable to even look at me and screamed and bellowed even louder: "GET OUT OF HERE!!"

I hightailed it out of the fortune-teller's completely baffled. Although I was going my own way, doing my own thing, God in His mercy was protecting me. Something deep within me still wanted God's way and I know now that He saw that and rescued me from my own follies.

About this time I had an unusual experience. Before I went to sleep one night, I saw something that I will never forget. In a vision, I saw a man preaching the Gospel, with people all around him. As he preached the Gospel, in the midst of his preaching, I heard a loud sound like a trumpet and above me in the clouds, I saw Jesus, clothed in a white robe, His face brighter than sunlight.

Suddenly, we were all rising up to meet Jesus together in the air.

Shaken and startled, I opened my Bible and read these words which I had never read before: "for the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a mighty shout and with the soul-stirring cry of the archangel and the great trumpet call of God. And the believers who are dead will be the first to rise to meet the Lord. Then we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. So comfort and encourage each other with this news" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Everything began to make sense to me, as though the pieces of a puzzle were being fitted carefully into place in my mind. I recalled the tract from David and the conviction of its words when I had read it. From that point on, my desire to preach the Gospel was renewed.

Once I went to the skid row area of Hollywood, a sad, pathetic gathering of destitute, homeless people. Jesus had



Dino Andreadis has given up his pursuit of being a star. Today, along with his wife, he serves the Creator of the Stars.

made himself so real to me. I felt I had to preach the love of Jesus to others. I began preaching wherever I went. People were giving their lives to Christ as I shared.

Another call for a screen test. I had no green card, but the studio was willing to sponsor me. In a large studio, filled with a group of attractive women, one lady

spontaneously asked me: "What do you think of common law marriage — modern marriage?"

Prompted by the Holy Spirit, I began preaching the Gospel to those women and within minutes, most of them had tears running down their faces as God's conviction took hold of their hearts.

Within a short while, I felt God's direction to let go of my Hollywood quest and to return home to Montreal. I ended up working in my mother's boutique as I took time to sort out what God wanted me to do with my life.

A terrible salesman, I soon found out that God had other plans. Before long, it was becoming more like a church than a boutique. It was then I felt God's call to go to Bible college.

Bible college! How could I do it? Another call from Hollywood. They were still finding roles for me.

That night, I got down on my knees and put all of my life into God's hands. The next day, I called L.A. and asked them to tear up all of my files for acting roles. "Don't call me anymore," I said. The chapter was closed. The quest had ended.

Reaching for the stars hadn't brought the fulfillment I'd been seeking so long. But finding Jesus Christ, knowing and serving Him with all my heart — the One who created the stars — brought me to the fulfillment of my quest for true happiness. God has given me the greatest life there is. □


Dino graduated from Bible school in 1984 and is presently involved in ministry as an evangelist affiliated with Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. He can be reached in care of Trinity Pentecostal Church, 7780 Champlain Blvd., La Salle, PQ H8P 1B2 Canada.

His story was written with writer Susan Michaels.



THE "SCREAMING SKULL"

Barry Taylor
Lake Arrowhead, California



I cracked a couple of eggs and dropped them into the frying pan in my home in Huntingdon, England. I was aware of my mother's hovering presence as my glazed eyes vainly tried to focus on the eggs.

"What are you doing, luv?" she asked gently.

"What do you think I'm doing? I'm frying some eggs," I snapped. It seemed obvious to me.

"Well, don't you think you should turn the gas on first?"

Of course, I should have, but when you're trying to fry eggs after taking LSD, it's easy to overlook the obvious.

Looking at me strangely she asked, "Are you all right, son?"

Fortunately, she didn't realize what her fifteen-year-old had been up to. She had probably never even heard of LSD.

We were an ordinary working class family. My father was employed by a gas pipe installation company, my mum sold confectionery in a sweet shop, and I had a younger brother. We were just a loosely connected group of people who were not big on communication; we were intense, but silent.

Going to Hinchingsbrooke, an historic grammar school, should have widened my horizons, but instead of taking the opportunity to advance, I chose to self-destruct. In a word, my assessment of school was BORING. It was a stultifying exercise that did nothing more than button up my already introspective personality.

Around the corner from our house lived the O'Reilly family (not their real name). Seventeen-year-old John was a "Skinhead," and a pretty good shoplifter who was always ready for a fight. I was fascinated by his violent persona and for some strange reason, he liked me, too.

John and his friends were heavily involved in drugs, which were readily available in Huntingdon. He never forced me to take any, but I was intrigued with the way they appeared to make him more "alive."

He spent every night in a pub called The Lord Protector which had a Friday night disco. Although I was underage, on John's say-so, the bouncers let me in.

One fateful Friday night, I got curious as to what those pills he was popping were like. I decided to give "speed" a try.

As my heart began to pound, I became very animated. Dropping my usual inhibitions, I started to talk to everyone about everything. My emotions, which were usually locked up tight, were

liberated. Speed had set me free.

John and his friends introduced me to many kinds of drugs after that. After a few years my body began to suffer, but when you're young you think you're immortal. Although I'd wake up tired, depressed and with racing, strange thoughts, I told myself, "I can handle it."

One night my friend, Kevin, got into a car with a friend who was drunk. Soon the car was wrapped around a lamp post and Kevin was killed. It was a grievous blow.

Feeling a sense of bewildered desolation, I increased my drug intake and became even more reclusive. The futility of my life overwhelmed me, so I decided to get a job, earn some money and get out of England.

By this time any meaningful communication with my parents had completely dried up. When I announced I had quit school, they just stared blankly at me and said nothing.

I went with another friend, Mark, to Holland. We got jobs in a fruit packing factory, where I worked for nine months, living a monklike existence in a rented room.

Because I didn't speak Dutch, I spent most of my time trying to figure out the meaning of life by reading philosophy. My desperate search to understand life was like a nagging headache that wouldn't let go.

Finally I decided that maybe I should forget about trying to discover life's meaning and concentrate on the real issues — like having fun, doing as little work as possible and ingesting all the drugs I could.

I decided to go home.

THE MADDENING CROWD

A wall of hysterical screams greeted my friend Ian and me as we pulled up in a rental truck outside the Apollo Theatre in Glasgow. As I peered at the thousands of frenzied girls I turned to Ian and said, "This is absolutely nuts!"

The sobbing fans carried placards saying, "Ian, Eric, Les, Derek and Woody; We Love You!" Thinking our van carried the Bay City Rollers, they surged forward, pressing against the truck. Actually, all we had was the stage equipment, as the police tried to clear a way for us.

This hysterical scene took place just six weeks after I returned from Holland. I had met a couple of older guys, Pete and Derek, at The Lord Protector on a Friday night. When Derek (a guitarist), Pete and Angus, their dog, rented a house close to

Barry and Cathy Taylor.



my home, I moved in with them.

Derek had a knack of turning any living environment into a quasi recording studio. Once he found the right room (which was usually the living room), within hours it would be cluttered with amplifiers, guitars and drums.

One night Pete told me, "Ian just called. He's going on the road for six weeks with a group called the *Bay City Rollers* and needs someone to help load the equipment. Why don't you give it a whirl?"

How could I pass it up? I didn't have a clue what I was doing, but following Ian's lead, I got through our first gig in Glasgow.

Every night the same decibel-breaking "Rollermania" would come forth as we pulled fainting girls out of the orchestra pit and wrestled others off stage. At least it was more lively than packing fruit in Holland.

Halfway through the tour, one of the guys in charge of equipment was suddenly called away. With no time to bring in another sound engineer, he gave me a quick lesson on how to work the board. I discovered I had a knack for it and soon was transferred from active combat with teenagers to mixing sound for the group.

Before long I was traveling all over Europe with different singers and bands including Marvin Gaye, and *Gladys Knight and the Pips*. One day I heard that a "band from Australia" was looking for a permanent road crew. The money would be great, but the big appeal was that they were going to America. Their name was *AC-DC*.

America beckoned, although I had no idea where all this would lead.



THE SCREAMING SKULL

I gazed in disbelief at the enormous pile of food on my plate. "I thought I was getting a sandwich, but this is Sunday dinner between two slices of bread," I shouted to Ian as we sat in the Carnegie Deli on Broadway.

What an introduction to America! Ian then told me I had one day to recover from jet lag before we'd be taking, "a little drive to Texas."

I've seen some wild crowds in my time, but nothing compared to the one in Austin, Texas where they went mad over *AC-DC*. This same scene was repeated for some 40,000 miles as we zigzagged across the country on that first US tour.

When I went home for Christmas, I learned that Derek had left England and moved to Los Angeles, hoping to make it big. One day Pete told me he was very concerned: "We've had a weird letter from Derek."

He handed me what looked more like a book. Page after page, Derek talked

about becoming a Christian. What did he think we were? We chalked it all up to the fact that he was living in L.A. Everyone knew that was the final resting place of most of the weirdness on this planet.

Yet something bugged me. Derek wasn't the type who'd get involved in a religious cult. Suddenly old memories started to haunt me about my search for the meaning of life. What was I supposed to do with my life? What was it all about?

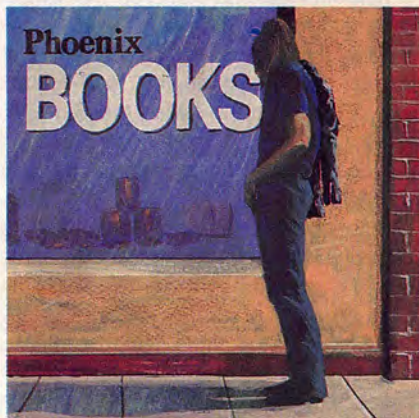
A friend had a pet nickname for me. He called me "The Screaming Skull." With my pale English skin that barely saw the light of day, I had a penchant for wearing black. With my long hair, he thought I looked like a walking skeleton. Looking in the mirror one night, I was suddenly confronted with the reality of what I saw. It was most unsettling.

Derek had obviously found something that changed his life, but why Christianity?

As Pete and I brooded over the problem, we hit on an admirable solution: We would attend the Christmas Eve service at the local church after the pub closed.

That would clinch the fact we were Christians.

However, one thought still plagued me: Derek needed our help.



BACK ON THE ROAD

I was dressed in my usual attire — a black motorcycle jacket, black T-shirt and jeans, and three dangling earrings. While our sound equipment was being unloaded in Phoenix, I decided to go on a

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mission; to find a bookstore where I could buy a Bible. This was something I had to check out for Derek, my poor deluded friend.

When I finally found one I'm sure I wasn't as apprehensive as the lady behind the counter. I don't know how many "Screaming Skulls" she had walk into the shop.

"Do you have a Bible I could buy, luv?" I asked as she cowered behind the counter. Finally she came up with a selection for me to choose from. I left carrying a large Open Study Bible under my arm. From there I stopped at a nearby liquor store to buy a copy of *Rolling Stone* magazine.

I had just spent three days with Derek. When our tour hit Los Angeles, I had arranged to stay with him rather than with the band at the hotel. It was a big mistake.

Those three days with him and the joyful people he lived with were worse than any chemistry class back in Huntingdon. They were so genuinely happy and their relationship with Jesus was so real that I became upset.

At last my stay was over and I prepared to bear the bad tidings of his total insanity to all my friends back home. But as Derek dropped me off at the hotel, he handed me two books to take with me. They were *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, and *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey.

As our bus wound through the desert of Arizona, I thumbed through them out of boredom. They talked about a God who was actively at work in the earth, who was intimately involved with the humans on it, and who had a plan.

Determining to disprove these writers for the sake of my poor friend, I spent much time looking up every one of their references in the Bible.

Finally I decided to just study the Bible for myself. There was an awful lot about "sin" and God's dealing with it. It seemed to be a condition from which we have no hope of liberation outside of Jesus Christ. I certainly didn't regard myself as "sinner" material, but something about it pricked my conscience and spoke to my lonely condition.

Also, the Jesus I read about in the New Testament certainly wasn't the one I'd heard about. Deep inside, something was starting to happen. I'd always been bugged by the question, "Why am I here?" The Bible was telling me that it was because a loving God had a purpose for me.

After awhile I muttered to myself, "Well what about all the other religions? Aren't they all the same?"

To make sure they were, I amassed an amazing assortment of books on any religion I could find. I welcomed all those people with handouts in airport terminals. My friends thought I had smoked one joint too many and never came back.

Finally I came to one firm conclusion: all religions are not alike. Most of them put you under pressure to perform; to capture the attention of "God," whoever He might be. Then there was the threat that if I blew it in this life, I'd come back in the next as an ant someone was going to step on.

Somehow, the Bible was the only book that seemed to understand me. But wasn't I already a Christian? My friends figured that since we were basically

good-natured with no plans to kill anybody, we'd all do well at the pearly gates.

But since I'd already experienced the death of several of my friends, I had my doubts.



AND THE BAND PLAYED ON

As the arena lights lowered, a full roar arose from the 18,000 hard-core AC-DC fans at the Cobo Arena in Detroit.

Suddenly, right in the middle of the concert, the thought flashed through my head: "Barry, you've either got to forget all this God stuff and carry on with the life you're living, or stop it all and go on with God."

I reflected on the life I'd been living. All my efforts to find answers and some kind of inner peace, had resulted in my becoming a hardhearted, cynical, drug-wasted young man.

All at once I felt an overwhelming sense of futility and loneliness. For all their initial pleasures, drugs had not been

good to me. And as much as I loved music, there was no redemption in it.

I had seen the folly of riches and the incredible length that people will go to reach the top — only to be replaced the next year.

As the band played on I finally faced all the hypocrisies and the absolute emptiness of my life and had to admit, "I don't want to carry on this way."

And so with a firm resolution, I prayed for the first time in my life: "God please get this concert over quickly so I can give my life to You!"

Back on the bus, the stereo system was blasting, the porno video we'd all seen countless times was running once more, the drinks were flowing and drugs were going down. A "good time" was being had by all — except me.

In the midst of all this, I took out my Bible. Not sure what to do, I was flipping through the pages when an old prayer from school sprang to mind. After I said it and meant it for the first time in my life, I then whispered, "God, I want the life You have for me. Whatever it is and whatever it takes, I want to live for You on the earth. Amen!"

What would come next, I wasn't sure. But I was sure that things would change — and soon. □

Since that night on the tour bus, much has changed in Barry Taylor's life. Married since 1981 to Cathy, they make their home in Lake Arrowhead, California. Barry still travels, but not with a rock and roll band anymore, but as an ambassador for Jesus Christ, journeying to countries where the church is threatened, persecuted or impoverished. Barry is also full-time pastor of Lake Arrowhead Christian Fellowship, a far cry from the "screaming skull."

*His testimony is an adaptation from Barry's upcoming book with Dan Wooding, *Singing In The Dark*, published by Dove Christian Publishing.*

CONVENTIONS

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2404 Coolidge, No. 103
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As the winner of numerous Grammy, Dove and other music awards, Larnelle Harris is a musical "household name." Later this year, the talented singer and lyricist will be releasing his eleventh solo album.

However, since he has been reluctant to publicly discuss it, most people aren't aware that his voice was nearly extinguished before his first solo album release in 1975. In facing the challenge of a lost career, he struggled with bitterness, questioning why God subjected him to such suffering and wondering if Christianity even worked. It took years to resolve his doubts, but he now appreciates how the trials helped prepare him for . . .

Beginning

Larnelle Harris
Louisville, Kentucky

Barely five years out of college, I approached the hardest test of my Christian life. Had God not taught me so much crossing this mountain, my musical career might have evaporated in a smoky haze of resentment. For when vocal cord damage left me with no singing voice, it touched off a battle that Satan tried to use to destroy me.

Tracing my musical career to its deepest roots stems to the second grade. A love for choir attracted me to the school chorale and soon I performed my first solo concert in church. But my youthful soprano tones provoked taunts from male classmates, and more than once I

resorted to fisticuffs to prove I wasn't a "sissy."

After one of those early-morning boxing matches, I found myself descending the three steps into the principal's office, the threshold to a deep, dark dungeon. Mr. Summers was the acknowledged disciplinarian, and a trip to his quarters was universally feared.

But as I reached the scene of my anticipated licking, the scowl suddenly left Mr. Summer's face. He broke into song! Amazed, my trembling smoothed into a smile as I marveled at the beautiful, high tenor voice. Singing never again posed a problem.

Over the years, I cultivated a talent for drumming and earned a scholarship to Western Kentucky University. There I got my music degree and prepared to enter the teaching profession, when the unexpected intervened.

It came in the form of a trip to a rehearsal camp in Brighton, Michigan, sponsored by a musical entourage called *The Spurlows*.

In addition to touring the country for Chrysler Corporation, they staged concerts entitled the "Splendor of Sacred Songs." When I decided to audition, I had no idea they were a Christian-based group.

At that camp I saw how excited the members were about the Lord. They talked about Him as if He were real and



Again

enjoyed a real relationship with Him, not some quickly-worn emotional high.

Near the end of the three-day camp, one of those young men asked me if I could remember a time when I had asked Christ to come into my heart.

"Well," I replied, "I can't say that I have. I joined the church when I was twelve and was baptized, but I don't know if I really understood what that all meant. I want to be sure."

That simple, quiet experience propelled me down a new path. It was one of constant traveling that left my teaching dreams back at Western Kentucky.

Today, when the agony of travel bothers me, I can contrast it to those five years of 100,000 miles a year on the road, when I spent nine out of twelve months away from home. Joining *The Spurrlovs* as a drummer, I later played drums and tenor saxophone and sang lead for *First Gear*, which spun off from the original group.

Our grueling schedule — two or three daily high school assemblies and other programs — eventually wrecked my voice. By the time I left *First Gear*, nodules had formed on my vocal cords. Nodules are similar to the hard deposit of skin that forms a callus on your hand.

They can be removed surgically if they don't disappear with rest, but the operation can change some of your voice's characteristics. I chose rest.

I then landed jobs as a drummer with various big bands and a Christian concert choir, but the pay was neither steady nor impressive. Luckily, my wife, Mitzy, had taken a teaching job that helped keep us afloat, but when we learned she was pregnant with our first

child, I wondered how we would make it.

For a young couple who had lived foot-loose on the road for a couple years and never had many bills, our first mortgage payment appeared insurmountable. But the Lord was using our unsteady income to prove how He provides for His children, no matter what our circumstances.

However, the economic lesson paled in comparison to my questions as to why the Lord had taken my voice away. Hadn't I used the talent He had given me to serve in a ministry? Now it was gone.

For a year, I traveled to doctors from Pittsburgh to Las Vegas, even consulting one physician who reportedly had treated Elvis Presley. They marveled at the difference between the voice on my music tapes and the raspy whisper sitting in front of them.

My voice was so weak that writing notes became my primary method of communication. Frequently, I would grumble about Christianity and wonder, if this could happen to me, whether having faith had any value.

This fanned a growing cynicism regarding another problem . . . prejudice. I reflected on the insults I endured as a member of *The Spurrlovs*, when some white churches would refuse us admittance because of our black members. And one time a restaurant automatically evicted our racially-mixed entourage.

"Why?" I wondered. "How can people call themselves Christians and still hate black people? How come as Christians we can't gather enough faith together to love someone of another race? If it doesn't work here, how is it going to work?"

There were other problems I grappled

with, but I think you get the picture of the "oh woe is me" syndrome I had fallen into. Praise the Lord that He allows us to wallow in our juices and get mad at Him without returning our anger.

God nursed me through this stage and with rest, my voice gradually returned. As I emerged from the shadow of frustration, I gradually put away my cynicism, saying, "I don't know about some of the things I have seen done under the guise of Christianity, but I do know there's a God and He is the One who refuses to let me go. He loves me and is caring for me."

Nevertheless, it took years of spiritual growth before I realized that God didn't do anything to damage my voice. Instead, He used this potential catastrophe to teach me many things, including the fact that I am His servant.

Today I'm still learning about servanthood. The best biblical illustration is found in John 3, where John the Baptist's disciples come to him, questioning why Jesus was baptizing more souls. Their natural inference was, "Aren't you jealous or upset?"

I love John's response, which in effect was, "Watch guys, read my lips: I must become less so that He will become greater still."

I had read that scripture hundreds of times, but the revelation of servanthood contained in that passage just came to me a couple of years ago. I realized that my ministry and Christian stature would grow step-by-step in God's sight in correlation to my willingness to allow Him to become great. He must always have first place in my life.

I also appreciate how life's trials have

helped prepare me for what I do now. Quite honestly, without past personal setbacks, I could not honestly sing about joy and the hope Jesus offers to those who are looking for a real anchor in their lives.

In developing into a mature believer, I have learned to quit ducking circumstances and tests, and begin looking at them for the lesson God is teaching me. This thought is expressed in the chorus of a song I wrote earlier this year, which says, "When I find myself under a load of circumstances and care, God wants to know what I'm doing under there, when there's His joy, there's so much joy."

I'm not referring to a phony "smile-on-the-face-everything's-fine" demeanor, but the sort of joy that the Lord has instilled in my heart that can't be quenched by any circumstances.

Because I live in the musical spotlight, many people find it hard to believe that I battle despair. They can't see those times when I don't particularly want to perform or when I sit down to write music and it's the last thing I feel like doing.

Nor do those who go to sleep in their own bed every night understand what it's like when your family is preparing to go on a picnic and you're leaving for the airport.

One of the biggest disappointments I've ever known occurred early in my solo career, when my son was a baby and I was out of town for three weeks. The night I returned, I tiptoed in to look at him. The changes in his tiny frame were so pronounced that the shock led me to vow that I would never again be away from home more than several days at a time.

Believe me, except for a few more people knowing who I am and coming up to say "hello," there's no difference between my life and yours.

Although I'm happy to win Grammy awards and have best-selling albums, my real priorities are set on things such as how to be a better father and husband, and being a better son and son-in-law as our parents age.

Because of what I have endured, I know that many people have similar struggles, wondering how they can cope with life's setbacks.

The title track of my last album, "I Can Begin Again," addressed those doubts. After it was released, I saw a television interview where a naval employee wondered what she would do if the military closed down the ordinance where she

had worked ever since leaving high school. Millions of industrial workers displaced in the computer age can relate to such fears.

But this song says to them, as it did to me, "I can start again. All I've got to do is get out there and get at it. I can do anything."

After all, scripture teaches us, "With God all things are possible."

Larnelle Harris has captured five Grammy Awards, eight Dove Awards, a Stellar Award and several others. In addition to ten solo albums, he was a member of The Gaither Vocal Band from 1984-87 and recorded two albums with that group. He has sung for many Billy Graham crusades and appeared on the 700 Club, Trinity Broadcasting Network and Robert Schuller's "Hour of Power."

Larnelle lives in Louisville with his wife, Mitzy, and two children, Larnelle (Lonnie) Jr., 15, and Teresa, 11. You can write him in care of New Life Productions, P. O. Box 19073, Louisville, KY 40219.

Moving Testimonies from this VOICE Magazine



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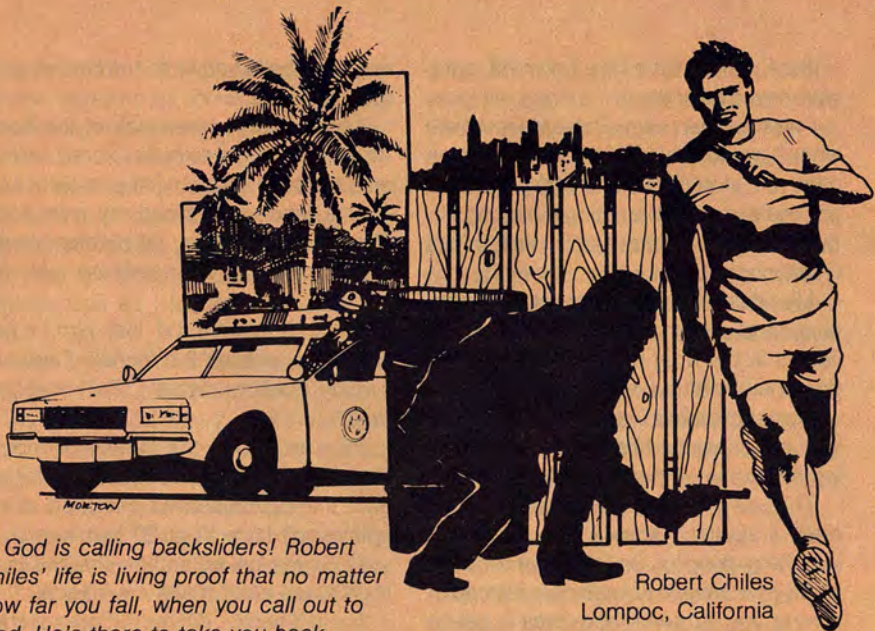
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God is calling backsliders! Robert Chiles' life is living proof that no matter how far you fall, when you call out to God, He's there to take you back.

Robert Chiles
Lompoc, California

FROM TRASH TO TREASURE

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12, NKJ).

It was 1978 around summertime. I was driving from the city of Whittier to

East Los Angeles to take care of some business.

As I drove along, I thought back to early that morning when I had awakened and was just lying there, puzzled over where my life was heading. I was so empty inside that I knew sooner or later I was due for a head-on collision with fate.

That day everything seemed fine on the outside, but inside something felt wrong. What could it possibly be? I had everything I wanted . . . money, cars, women, homes and perfect health. I wasn't into drugs, cigarettes or alcohol; just health foods, gymnastic workouts and running to keep myself in top shape.

But deep inside I was miserable. I went to bed every night with a .357 under my pillow and a shotgun on the bedpost. When I drove around, I had a secret compartment with another gun in each of my cars.

Sure, I had all the toys I wanted, but it was never enough.

I was a driven man. There were weeks when I would stay awake for two or three days non-stop (with no drugs) just to set up deals and make things happen. In fact, I couldn't sleep until I had things under control.

My "deals" ranged from robbing, conning, and fencing jewels to being involved in the drug business. I hated the drugs; all I wanted was the money.

Somehow there was an evil force that kept me chasing "Miss Money" and taking a chance on the thrills of life.

That day as I drove to my appointment, I suddenly knew I was not to pull into the parking lot. So I drove around the block and decided to walk over instead of driving, just in case there was a set-up waiting.

As I started walking, there were people around the area but no cops . . . so I thought! After my brief meeting I was walking away, when I noticed a man in a jogging suit who didn't look like the other pedestrians. I started through the parking lot to zigzag to my car when that same strange face appeared with a gun and yelled, "Stop! Freeze! I'm the police."

I ducked behind a car, pulled out my gun and shouted back, "So what?"

Then, making my way through the crowded streets between buildings, traffic and bystanders, we shot at each other.

Because of my top physical condition, I began to lose the backup police who arrived, but this one guy stayed right on me. Since he didn't have a radio, he eventually lost his backup communica-

tion, so it boiled down to the two of us on foot, non-stop.

I tried every street trick in the book, running through streets, stores, alleys, etc., but he kept pace. At one point I fell over a fence and sliced my shirt open. The bundle of money I'd received in my deal broke and scattered all over the grass.

Since I thought I'd lost him, I proceeded to pick up the money. Tired and sweaty I said to myself, "This is not my day."

Just as I lifted the bundle of money from the grass and was reaching for my gun, the cop appeared and fired at me point-blank from 15 or 20 feet away.

Our eyes locked and he shouted loudly, "Please don't make me kill you."

I yelled back, "Kill me!" So he started to go for it.

Right then I felt something strange surround me and come between us, almost like an angel of God stepped in and said, "Stop!" Because at that moment we both froze, as if locked in time. Neither of us could pull the trigger.

Then, in a split second as he ducked behind a house, I jumped over a fence, running for my life. Although he stopped chasing me, helicopters were now closing in, combing the area.

I finally ran out of wind and slipped into a fenced trash area. There was a tree in the middle which I used as an overhead cover from the helicopters.

Sitting there with sweat running all over me and the stink of trash from the cans, I knew it was all over. You just don't play shoot-em-up with the police and expect to surrender once you run low on ammunition.

By this time I could see through the wooden holes in the fence that they had the area surrounded and were combing it carefully. Loudspeakers in the background were telling people to stay inside their homes or across the street and not to enter the vicinity.

Trying to catch my breath, my mind wandered off as I looked deep into my past.

I was born on the west side of Los Angeles in an old Jewish community, which in the '50s was a nice neighborhood. My sweet little mother was a strict Catholic although she didn't have a personal relationship with the Lord.

My dad didn't believe in God at all. He was a ladies' man and had many women in his life, but provided well for his family. But because he was hardly ever home, I left home to fend for myself at the age of twelve. I thought this was a real grown-up, smart move to make, but my life became one of hell and death every step of the way.

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10, NKJ).

These words became a reality in my life. From the very start I fell onto a path that led to drugs and money, trips in and out of youth authorities, and even involvement in the occult.

It was in a cell in a mental institution that Jesus Christ first became real to me. In that lonely room I screamed out, "If there truly is a God in heaven, please help me. Please forgive me. I'm sorry for my involvement in calling demons and messing with witchcraft. Please free me from these oppressing demon spirits."

I repeatedly cried out with my half

drug-controlled mind, and then something happened. I now know that it was God who helped me, and I know from experience that He is far more powerful than the evil one.

I also know that He forgives and is merciful to us. But in those days all God was to me was someone to go to weekly and dump my sins, guilt and burdens on. He had not yet become my Lord, Master and Saviour.

Therefore, it was easy for me to miss the mark and fall back on religious tradition, thereby confining God to my head and missing a real understanding and experience of Him in my heart.

How ironic that the mind is only eighteen inches from our hearts!

But even though I missed the mark of salvation by eighteen inches, my limited experience with God in that cell left a deep impression on my mind. He had been trying to get to my heart for a full commitment. But because I didn't really understand how to accept Jesus into my heart, I went right back to my old ways.

By the age of 17 I was already on my way to Soledad. In the hole there, the only books allowed were a Bible or dictionary . . . no TV's, radios, hot books or novels. So I read the Bible and received a basic knowledge of God and His plan of salvation, but I still wouldn't make that full commitment. I flat-out rejected God's free gift for the pleasures of sin.

Now, as I sat in that confined trash dump with the cops closing in, I knew this was it. Suddenly, a Scripture I'd read long ago flashed through my heart:

"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord: 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as

white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool'" (Isaiah 1:18, NKJ).

With this I knew it was time to listen to God's reasoning and not my own. So right there I prayed, "Oh, Father God, forgive me. Forgive me for my sins once and for all. I ask You to please come into my heart and be Lord of my life. There's nothing good in me. You delivered me from the bondage of demon oppression. You've kept me from dying many times. You've done so much good to me and I've done so much evil to other people, but above all, to You.

"I've hurt my parents and everyone who ever came near me. I can't do good. Please take me, Jesus. Please just let it end today and let them kill me so I won't hurt anyone anymore."

In tears, I felt the burden of my sins leave me and the peace of God flood me for the first time in my life . . . right there in that trash dump!

I then took the remaining bullets out of my gun and the spare rounds out of my pocket, and threw them all in the trash. Then I stood up and stepped out the gate of the fenced area.

Leaving the enclosure and walking down a long alley, it felt partly like I was standing still, and partly like I was moving in splices of time.

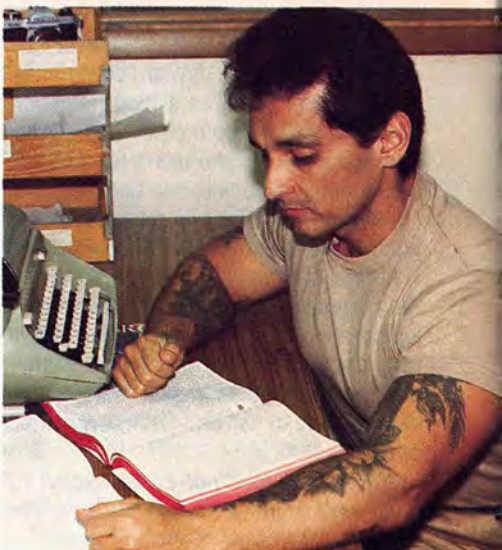
People were standing in their yards or front doors, but not one noticed me.

A police car drove by and the officers looked right at me, but kept driving.

After getting to my hideout near Palm Springs, I sat in my house in a daze for many days. When friends tried to call to take care of some "business," I pretended I wasn't home.

This went on for months. Finally, little by little with the help of Jesus Christ, I started to cut the ties with my old "business cronies."

I knew God had kept me from getting killed. I also knew I was running out of chances to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour into my heart. I thanked God



Robert Chiles takes time out from his prison job to study the Bible.

for giving me this last chance!

There is such a difference between knowing about God and knowing Him personally. During my time in the desert, I really learned that. He also began to deal with me about the evil foundation I had laid for my life.

Although I was never arrested for my chase scene, other charges started popping up left and right, from state to

federal.

As fast as my riches had come, what I had sowed all my life started catching up with me in every area, and they flew out the door.

For although I knew that Jesus forgave me of all my past sins, man isn't always as forgiving.



Robert Chiles and Full Gospel Businessman John Bennett, left, share a moment at a prison chapter meeting in Lompoc.

I know I should have been sentenced to death many times over, but God's mercy is great. After all my trials, I ended up with five years for a state charge and eighteen years for a federal bank robbery.

Accepting this, I threw my life at the mercy of God's grace. Besides, I had a lot to be thankful for. Eventually my whole family was saved through my testi-

mony and baptized in the Holy Spirit.

My dad was saved and healed from cancer while we prayed for him in the visiting room of San Quentin in 1980. The doctors had told him to go home and get ready to die within five months. Instead, he lived five more healthy years as a Christian and then died peacefully in his sleep.

My mother also accepted Christ into her heart and over a period of two years was healed from high blood sugar, high blood pressure, arthritis and a slipped disc in her back.

Jesus healed our family relationship as well, nurturing a great love between us.

After I was moved to Lompoc Penitentiary in California, I met John Bennett, a member of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. He has been coming here for eleven years to minister to us, bringing Monday evening Bible studies and a video ministry.

There are men here from around the world, and most of them will be deported back to their countries. But when Jesus gets done with them, they'll be deported as nationals for the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

As we begin to let go and let God work, powerful things begin to happen. So let us all, small or great, free or in chains, rich or poor, press forward! Our Lord Jesus Christ is waiting patiently at the door to return and take us home.

Let us all watch and not be found sleeping, but live in obedience to Christ. There is so little time left.

Above all, I pray that you will not put off accepting God's love gift of salvation for one more day of sinful pleasure. □

6 STEPS TO SALVATION

Men still cry, "What must I do to be saved?" The Bible provides a clear answer.

1. Acknowledge "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

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

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

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

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

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

Why not make your eternal decision now:
"Lord Jesus, I believe You died for my sins and I ask Your forgiveness. I receive You now as my personal Saviour and invite You to manage my life from this day forward. Amen."

Write us to tell of your decision. We'll send you a booklet, "Now That You've Received Christ." Our mailing address:
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CHAPTER OUTREACH

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

Ghana: Kade Chapter, President Emmanuel A. Mensah; Nsoatre Chapter, President Agye Korang; Ashaiman Chapter, President Nana Osei-Sarpong, 221-2848. **Nigeria:** Aqbor Chapter, President Stephen Egen; Azare Chapter, President Stephen S. Zaccheus; Birnin Kebbi Chapter, President Abraham Umoh; Biu Chapter, President Pat Odiyi, 735-2055; Eket Chapter, President Abraham Umoh; Ekpoma Chapter, President Roland Uhunmwangho; Gwagwakada Chapter, President Olusola Ajolore; Ibadan East Chapter, President Arc. Dotun Kumapavi; Igarra Chapter, President Augustine Owolabi; Ikom Chapter, President Richard Ojog; Kaduna North Chapter, President Kayode Ipinmiroti; Kaduna South Chapter, President Ekere Essiend; Mubi Chapter, President Timothy A. Ikyo; Oboso Chapter, President Alex Ikhu-Omoregbe, 4-6212035; Offa Chapter, President Emmanuel Fache; Oji Chapter, President Chris Echeta; Oshogbo Chapter, President Johnson Koledowd; Potiskum Chapter, President Olukunle Olaniran; Saki Chapter, President Falade Ademola; Suleja Chapter, President Ifeanyi Odedo, 950-0017.

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Flame Will Ignite 1990 Congress — Torches from the summer-long Torch Runs from Ottawa, Washington, D.C., Mexico City and Los Angeles will meet in Indianapolis. The flames will be united and carried into the congress on Wednesday evening by Silver Medalist and track star Jim Ryun.

Evangelize the World, Now!

International Directors

The international directors listed on these pages give direction to the multifaceted ministries of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International in 106 countries of the world. They also provide leadership in achieving the goals of the Fellowship.

Their names and addresses are provided as a point of contact for you to learn when and where chapters meet in your area, or to receive needed spiritual ministry.

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