

Season's Greetings
Full Gospel Business Men's
VOICE




The place of my birth on June 27, 1943 was dictated by my government much as Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was determined by the decree of Herod.

Hate and hysteria intensified in the months following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, to such a degree that on March 1, 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 authorizing removal of all Japanese from the west coast by the War Relocation Authority.

My parents, second-generation Americans, were among the 110,000 Japanese Americans uprooted. At first they were restricted to a five-mile radius from

Then, after years of hard work and a measure of success in produce, he and my mother were ordered to appear at the Pomona County Fairgrounds assembly center with little more than the clothes on their backs.

My mother's secretarial skills were employed to help process the people, who were temporarily housed in horse stables and tents while waiting to be shipped out. Instead of being bused to Manzanar, California desert camp to be with their relatives, they were put on the last train to leave and sent to the relocation camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming. There they survived the bitter cold winters and sweltering hot summers in one



Richard Takeshita, Long Beach, California

RELOCATION

their home. Then they received a bulletin in the mail instructing them to report for relocation. The days that followed for my parents and other Japanese were filled with unimaginable difficulties and deprivation. Businesses were closed abruptly, homes sold at a fraction of their value, personal possessions disposed of in haste.

My father had come to Los Angeles at the age of 17 from his birthplace in Hawaii with only five dollars in his pocket.

room of a tarpaper barracks enclosed by a barbed-wire fence. It was here that I was born 10 months after their arrival.

During their detention my father was drafted. Then, miraculously, he was given a deferment and, irony of ironies, allowed to work in a Chicago defense plant.

The shame and humiliation my parents felt from their two years of "imprisonment" was much like that of a rape victim. The wounds and resentment were so deep that their experience was

never mentioned in our home. I grew up completely unaware of what had happened until I was a junior in high school.

The school I attended as a child was in a low-income neighborhood with mixed racial groups, but few Japanese. I didn't feel part of any of them. Alienated, many times I screamed heavenward, "Why wasn't I born white? Why was I born Japanese?" It was almost like a curse.

In high school I excelled in both student government and athletics. Consistent with Japanese tradition, my parents exerted strong pressure on me as the oldest son to get a college education and enter a profession. But my eventual discovery of the injustice they had suffered simply because they were Japanese, coupled with my own sense of alienation, gave birth to a growing rebellion.

After two and one half years of college I dropped out, disenchanted with my life and my lack of identity. I thought making money would solve the problem of my insecurity. Discovering an innate knack for sales, I worked in a series of positions of that kind in the Los Angeles area. While I attained a satisfying degree of success, I failed to find fulfillment.

In my early twenties I searched for meaning in Greek mythology and astrology, philosophy and the eastern religions and, because I was so disillusioned with American democracy, even took a look at communism.



Takeshita (right) is shown with parents (insert)

My exposure to Christianity was nearly zero. After my grandparents died, my parents, having been raised Buddhist but wanting to become assimilated into society, dropped my brothers and me off at a Presbyterian Sunday school and picked us up an hour later. I would enter through the front door of the church and run out the back door to a liquor store, where I would read magazines until it was time to return home. That was the extent of my Christian education.

Ten years ago on a dreary, rainy night the world seemed to fall in on me. I was 30. Nothing made sense and I couldn't open up to anyone. In the lonely darkness of my bedroom, I cried out, "If there's a God, I challenge You to reveal Yourself." Only silence met my cry. But out of that silence came a peace I had not felt for a long time. I was able to sleep that night without the use of drugs. Night after night, possibly as long as several weeks, I repeated my challenge to God.

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against background of relocation housing in which he was born during his family's internment.

Thus began a three-year spiritual odyssey. I am an avid reader, and for some reason I felt a tug to purchase and read a Bible. Consistent with my habit of reading the last part of a book first to see how it comes out, I began with the book of Revelation. It said that Jesus Christ was King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That name had been only a curse word in my vocabulary.

My spasmodic reading now turned serious. During the first year I read the Bible two or three times. At one point, reading the account in John 3 where Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again, I got down on my knees and prayed to be born again. Because of my spiritual immaturity I prayed that request night after night for weeks. My prayer was answered and as a new babe in Christ Jesus, I began to grow.

I bought reference works at Christian bookstores and discovered in my New Testament study that every believer is to be part of the body of Christ. Melodyland Christian Center with its thousands of worshipers each Sunday appealed to me as a place where a loner wouldn't need to get involved.

The Lord began to deal with me about my bitterness and resentment. He helped me most in these troublesome areas of my life five and one half years ago by bringing me a lovely Christian lady to become my wife. My grandfather, living in California, had obtained his bride by mail order from Japan. While theirs was a good marriage, how fortunate I was to receive my wife Alice by God's order and design!

Another important means which God has used for changing my life is Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. I attended a meeting of the Long Beach chapter at a business partner's invitation, and although I am not a joiner I became a member at my first meeting and later a life member.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit and my wife, Russ Kleinhans and other chapter men, I have been lifted out of the mire of bitterness. I can honestly say I am totally opposite of the person I used to be. I love people. I love the souls that need Jesus Christ. I want to be involved in the Church and I'm striving to bring others to chapter meetings because we are able to reach many men and women

who would not go to a church.

I'm a licensed private investigator specializing in civil investigations. Law firms representing injured plaintiffs hire me to investigate accidents. This provides me with many opportunities to share my faith and to pray with hurting people as the Holy Spirit leads.

I've a special burden for my Japanese people. The agonizing nightmare of guilt, shame and bitterness my parents and I endured helps me to understand men and women who chafe under the memory of injustice. . . . The injustice of being confined not because of their actions but because of their ancestry. . . . Loyal American families, uprooted in the absence of hard evidence of a threat of invasion or subversion. . . . People treated as traitors who lost homes and businesses, and something far more valuable: they were stripped of their dignity.

Now, as a result, 40 years later, many of them and their children are rarely touched by the Gospel.

Today thousands of Japanese in this country and millions in Japan sit in dark-

ness. I pray that God will use me and my testimony in a special way to tell them of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, who came to me when I cried out in that dark, lonely bedroom and brought me peace.

Only a few months before the birth of the Christchild, Zacharias prophesied following the birth of his son, John the Baptist: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76-80). □

Richard Takeshita has been a licensed private investigator for 13 years and owns and operates Takeshita & Associates in Long Beach. He and his wife Alice have a son, David, 17. They are members of Trinity Christian Center in Artesia. Richard is assistant state coordinator of the Freedom Council and vice-president of the Long Beach Chapter of FGBMFI.

Richard, Alice and David



RAINY FRIDAYS



Linwood P. Stroud, Charlotte, North Carolina

Rainy Fridays aren't likely to win many popularity awards. On a scale of one to 10, most people give drizzly days a minus five, but not me. That's because two red-letter days in my life took place on rainy Fridays.

The first one was while I was a passenger in my brother's car, driving to a shopping center in Charlotte, North Carolina, my hometown. I had tried to beg off making the trip because I was coming out of a five-week drunk and still had the shakes. My brother wouldn't take no for an answer, so I reluctantly agreed to ride along.

My brother and I were a study in contrasts. He was a high-school principal, a respected member of the community, while I was your basic booze addict. At

45 I had been incarcerated and left a trail of broken hearts in my wake. I even thought about taking my own life. At times that did seem the best way out of the pain I was causing myself and others.

How had liquor gotten such a grip on a man brought up in a Christian home? My mother and father loved God with all their hearts and brought up their six children to live by His standards. In my early years I thought that everybody followed God's commandments, but during the Depression my understanding of the world took on wider dimensions. Like many little black boys, I made a shoe-shine box and went uptown to earn a few nickels. There were so many of us that the shine parlors forced us off the

streets. The owners of a men's club told me I'd be welcome there, so every afternoon I headed over to Tryon Street with my homemade "stand."

At the club I was around alcohol for the first time. I never touched a drop during my four years of shining shoes, but I did learn about another pastime—gambling. I learned about marking cards, hustling pool, etc., and before long I was making good money out on the street. The tricks I learned as a young teen helped support my drinking habit later.

I tasted booze for the first time at age

this period I crossed that invisible line between social and compulsive drinking. I was an alcoholic and didn't even know it.

When World War II came along I joined the army, serving in both European and Asian theatres. Looking back, I see that I spent more time draining whiskey bottles than I did shooting at the enemy.

Back in Charlotte, I got married and began raising a family. Dad had been one of the best waiters in town and had taught all his sons the food business, so finding a job wasn't a problem for me.



Linwood P. Stroud, recipient of Jefferson Award, receives congratulations.

15, on the way to a dance with a friend. He stopped and bought a bottle of wine and gave me a couple of swallows. Until that night I'd found it impossible to talk with girls, but whatever was in that bottle loosened me up. I relaxed and even kissed a girl for the first time in my life before the evening was over. I didn't dream that I'd taken my first step along a 30-year trip to hell.

I graduated from high school and spent two years at Johnson C. Smith University. My gambling skills paid off and I wore the best clothes and partied my way through school. At some time during

Drinking was a problem, and after years of trying to get the monkey off my back, my wife quit. One day Willie Mae said, "Linwood, it looks as if we can't make it. We'll have to separate." She took the children and I went to live with my mother. The next eight years were the low point of my life.

To get enough money for booze I'd slip out of the house with presents my brothers and sister had given to Mother on special days. Pawnshops near the Square would always pay a few dollars for these items.

Although I was away from my wife and

daughters they kept in touch with me. I agreed to give away two girls when they married, but was always out drinking when time for the wedding arrived. That figured; I hadn't even been at the hospital when they were born.

Through it all I seemed to be favored by good luck. In 1964 I was asked to set up a catered party for a bank, and they must have liked my work. A few days later I got word that the president of the bank wanted to see me. I hesitated, because I didn't have decent clothes and looked like just another drunken bum. When I finally presented myself, the president gave me a job.

He was a devout follower of Jesus Christ. He kept me on his payroll when other employers would have sent me packing. Once after being on a two-week binge I asked, "Mr. Carl, why do you give me so many chances?" He replied, "God sent you to me." Now I know the president was right.

On that rainy Friday, I'd returned to work after a five-week absence. I had no resolutions left, and wasn't even sure I enjoyed being sober for a few hours. Strange, but in the back of my brother's car I began to think about God. I remembered my religion classes at Johnson C. Smith, and Bible stories I'd learned along the way.

Most of the incidents were connected by a common theme: God's desire to forgive men and women who had failed Him. Hadn't he taken back Moses, the man who murdered an Egyptian, and David, after his adultery with Bathsheba? Why, God even took time to restore Noah after the ark-builder got drunk! All

these examples gave me courage to believe that God could do something about the problem that had nearly destroyed me.

That night in my brother's car I prayed, "God, please help me." I felt no great emotion, but I knew instinctively that God heard my prayer. Later my brother and I talked seriously, and the next week I sat in my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. I haven't touched a drop of liquor since that day in 1966.

So on that rainy Friday God taught me that He does answer prayer; that He points us to people with answers to problems we can't handle by ourselves. Thanks to the Lord and A.A., I performed better at work. Before long, my wife and children came back home.

My story might end right here if it hadn't been for another rainy Friday.

I was braving the elements on my way to work when I noticed a businessman, briefcase in hand, walking along at a brisk pace. He was singing in the rain—a hymn I'd heard as a boy. The man's smile stood out in contrast to the grim expressions others wore, and his joyful spirit gave me a lift. I began feeling good about myself and my job.

Moments later I spotted a magazine lying on the ground. I picked it up and was about to toss it into a trash barrel when my eyes riveted on these words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). These words, spoken by Jesus Christ years before, reminded me that God has a purpose for my life. He didn't want me to simply sit back and

bask in my newfound freedom, but to reach out to people around me who needed His love.

I began to let my light shine in the ghetto of Charlotte, an area I knew so well. I started using my influence to secure jobs for men and women who were out of work, and helped needy families find financial aid. Soon I was active in prison ministries, Alcoholics Anonymous and various county and state programs for rehabilitating alcoholics.

Strangely, for several years I didn't see the need for attending church. My Christianity amounted to a solo performance without group worship and fellowship. One Sunday morning the Lord spoke to me about getting involved with His people the way I was doing with social agencies and help groups. Thanks to the preaching and personal influence of some godly pastors, I've come to see that the church has a relevant message, that God's word speaks to the everyday situations we face. In 1979 I was ordained a deacon at my church.

That same year I attended my first meeting of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. The teaching I've received from FGBMFI has given me a closer walk with the Lord than I ever dreamed possible, and the friendships with these men can't be described in words.

In 1979 I spent a few days in the hospital. During my recovery, visitors swarmed into my room day and night. Cards covered the walls and my family had to remove the bouquets of flowers every day to make room for new ones that just wouldn't quit. Sixteen years

earlier I had been a patient in the same building and my son had been my only visitor. What happened on two rainy Fridays made the difference.

In 1981 I received the Jefferson Award, a bronze medallion given in recognition of "outstanding public service." I feel honored that community leaders considered me worthy of such a citation, but even more important is the approval of God. I look forward to hearing Him say, ". . . whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me" (Matthew 25:40, NIV).

Thank God for rainy Fridays! On those days I learned what really counts in life. I found the help of God to follow the path He showed me. He can do the same for you, if you give Him a chance. □



Linwood Stroud is administrative services assistant at First National Bank's headquarters, Charlotte, North Carolina. Winner of the Jefferson Award for selfless service to his community, he has been active for many years in hospitality care, jail ministry, prison department programs, the Randolph Clinic (a treatment center for alcoholics), Alcoholics Anonymous and Black Mountain Alcohol Center. He is a member of FGBMFI's Charlotte Chapter. He and his wife Willie Mae have five children: Gerado, Genola, Wynona, Uther and Trina, and are members of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, where Linwood is a deacon.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

from Demos Shakarian
FGBMFI Founder/President

I am certain that you have received a Christmas gift so pleasurable and practical that you wanted one just like it for a friend. As I reviewed this last year, one thing has meant so much to me that I would like to share it with the millions who read *Voice*.

Rose and I celebrated our Golden Anniversary August 6. I sincerely wish that every couple could be blessed with the happiness we have enjoyed. Many ask me, "What is the secret of your happy home?" My answer is simply "Jesus."

"Yes," comes the reply, "but I know Christians whose marriages have failed. What's different about yours?"

Rose and I have no secret. We've simply applied basic Bible principles. They work.

Commitment is the bedrock on which we built our home. Our wedding vows were not an agreement which could be broken because of dissatisfaction. We entered into a sacred covenant with God and each other.

Daily we make an effort to express our love and respect for each other. As an example, whether or not Rose is in a meeting with me it is natural for me to express appreciation for her. When we are apart, no matter where I am, I phone her each night.

(continued, page 25)



**And suddenly there was
with the angel a multitude
of the heavenly host
praising God, and saying,
Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace
good will toward men
(Luke 2:13,14)**



The alcohol buzzing in my head gave me the courage to do it. I staggered down the tracks toward the railroad bridge in Quantico, Virginia, my mind in grim neutral. I had one thought: this morning would be my last on earth. The early-morning freight train would be my last sight as it slammed into me.

It wouldn't make any difference to anyone anyhow, I told myself. Nobody cares—and why should they? Nobody wants a drunken bum with a learning disability and epilepsy. I stepped determinedly onto the bridge.

It probably started when I was just a tot. I was the last of six children. My mother loved me, but she didn't really

want another baby. I don't remember my father. He left the family several times, coming back long enough to get Mom pregnant again. When I was four he left for good. Mom couldn't support all six of us, although she tried. Alcohol became a way to forget, and often she forgot us, too. Besides, she was holding down two jobs as waitress and church custodian.

My oldest sister would come home from her own job at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning and get us younger kids out of

years can only be described as hellish. Most people didn't understand learning disabilities as they do now. I was a dummy—a retard. My foster parents thought that physical punishment was the answer to my "stubborn refusal" to learn.

I spent as much as eight hours at a stretch standing on one foot in the corner because I had committed some real or imagined sin. I endured having my ears hit and pulled, beatings and insults. All of



SECONDS TO SILENCE

Stanley L. Gority, Springfield, Virginia

bed to feed us. Sometimes we hadn't eaten all day.

Still, I remember those times with nostalgia. At least the seven of us were together. I did my best as a child of four and five to earn my share. I walked all over Alexandria, helping little old ladies with their shopping or housework for a dime or a quarter.

We were poor, but I grew up knowing that Mother loved us all. Then when I was six the world came to an end. Because of our difficult situation, our family was separated and we children were sent to foster homes.

I was a slow learner and a sensitive child. I saw too much that I didn't understand, and somehow I got it into my head that the family split-up was all my fault. I lived with that irrational guilt well into my adult years. It was part of the reason I drank.

My life in the foster home until my teen

this only added to my learning problems. Although I was in public school till I was 16, and in a trade school for the handicapped for another year, I never got beyond the fourth grade.

After trade school I worked as a printer, then in construction and janitorial work. When I was 23, blackouts I had had as a child developed into epilepsy. By this time I had already been an alcoholic for three years. I would start at 6:00 in the morning, drinking it straight from the bottle. I wouldn't shave, didn't care how I looked, and lost job after job, but I always managed to find enough money for another drink.

Through all this, instinctively I knew God was with me. There were times when I wished He would leave me alone, and other times when I thought He had, but I see even more clearly now that His hand was always upon me.

In the foster home I had learned about

Jesus from Grandmother Green. She was a devout Baptist who had taken me to church and taught me to pray. As a result I stopped drinking a few times and tried to serve God—but I couldn't do it alone and my friends would laugh and hand me a beer. Well, at least when I drank I had friends—until my money ran out.

One day I had had enough. I was too weak to serve God and too drunk to care anymore. Every day on my way to work at the power plant in Quantico I walked down the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad tracks and across the railroad bridge. (I didn't have a driver's license because my learning disability prevented my passing the written exam.) This day I decided I'd wait for the train.

I walked out on the bridge where I was sure I couldn't get away when the train sped by.

I heard the whistle and watched the train heading straight for me. Too miserable to be afraid, I just wanted it all to be over. Suddenly a voice from above and behind me spoke over the roar of the train: "If you will stop feeling sorry for yourself and seek My face, all these things will be added to you. Now *get off those tracks!*"

Too surprised to do anything but obey, I pressed myself against the railing. The train missed me by inches.

There was no way any human could have been on that bridge without my seeing him; I was 20 feet up and 20 feet from its end. I had no doubt that God had spoken to me. Thoroughly frightened, and suddenly absolutely sober, I left the bridge and went on to work.



**I heard
the whistle and
watched the train
heading straight
for me**

That was in 1973. It hasn't been all easy since then. I never mentioned my experience on the bridge to anyone, but I started going to church for awhile and tried again to stop drinking. In 1978 they discovered I had a brain tumor and I was put on Dilantin for the epileptic seizures.

The struggle with epilepsy and my desire for alcohol continued for several years.

But in 1979 God saved me at an independent Pentecostal church in Alexandria, and in 1980 He filled me with His Holy Spirit. I had finally cried out to God one day, "If You want me as much as I want You, You'll have to do something about this alcoholism, because I can't do it myself."

That was the surrender God was waiting for. Shortly after that, in an altar call at my church, I received a heavenly language as the pastor prayed for me. Since that time my life has changed fast enough to leave my head spinning.

When I met Jonni at church in 1980, God brought into my life someone who is very supportive of me and very special. That year I got my driver's license and my first car, thanks to a Spirit-filled Full Gospel Business Man who reached out to help. In 1982 Jonni and I were married. I find I can remember things as I never was able to before, and I have been going to school at night for two years to earn my GED certificate.

I've held my present job for more than two years, much longer than I've held a job before. Yesterday when I jokingly asked my supervisor if he was going to fire me, he wouldn't joke back but answered with one firm word: "No!"

I lost 10 years of my life to alcohol, but there's no going back to that now. And why should I?

I praise God that the very sight of a bottle of beer or liquor turns my stomach, and if I'm around the smell of liquor too long I literally get sick. I went to the Washington for Jesus rally in 1980 ex-

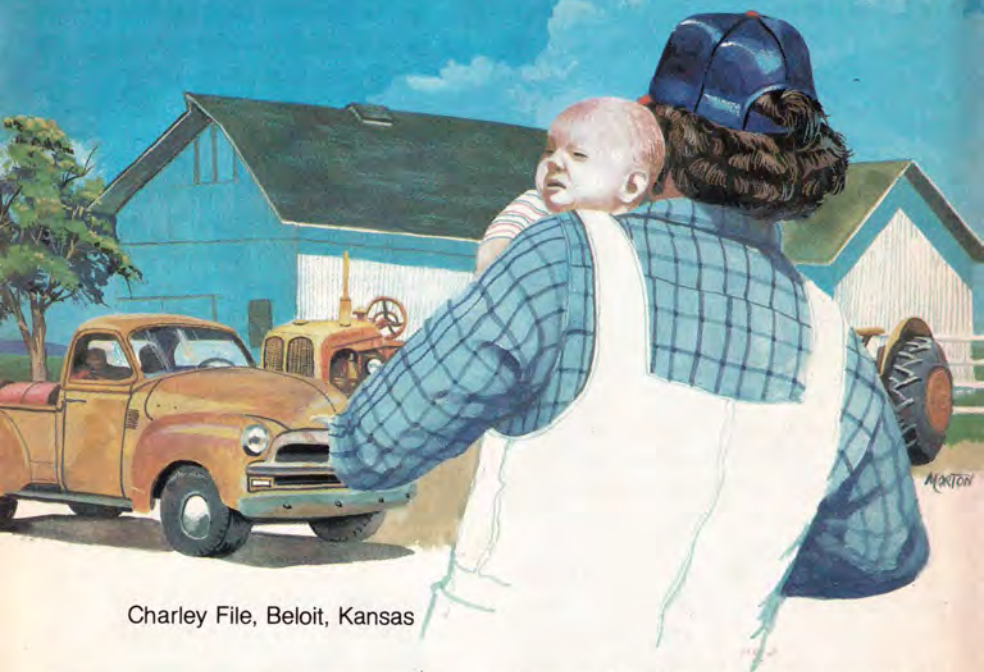
pecting to be healed of epilepsy, and the Lord healed me. Standing there in the crowd, I was in an actual spiritual battle for two hours as the pre-seizure symptoms came upon me. Then I began to feel as if a heat lamp was being applied to my head. Gradually the symptoms left, and X rays made afterward show that the tumor, which had been the size of a baseball, is gone. I haven't taken any medication for epilepsy since, and I am completely free of seizures.

When an evangelist visited our church, my back problems, stemming from those long hours in a corner as a child, were healed. And the Lord is quietly continuing to heal my memories and my emotions.

It all happened because God loved me enough to care what happened to a "drunken bum" on a railroad bridge. □



Stanley Gority is employed by Educational Reading Service in Alexandria, Virginia, where he is a shop laborer. He is a member of the Alexandria Chapter of FGBMFI and he and his wife Jonni are members of Reality Gospel Church.



Charley File, Beloit, Kansas

Gary

My wife Kathy had just left the house when the phone rang. "Gary's stopped breathing . . . we're taking him to the hospital!"

Kathy had been away at a county clerk's convention and I was taking care of the kids morning and night. During the days, while I was working on our farm machinery and feeding cattle, I would take them to a babysitter. This particular morning when I started dressing three-month-old Gary I noticed that he was

fussy and irritable, something unusual for him. But even though I had sort of an uneasy feeling about him, I still dressed him and the two older children and took them over to the babysitter's for the day. *After all, I told myself, Kathy will be home today, and it's probably just my imagination anyway.*

Nevertheless, I was uneasy when I left him with Lorene and went on to work. That noon when I came home for lunch, the phone rang. It was Lorene, the babysitter.

I could tell by her voice that she was upset. "Charley, we just took Gary to the hospital. It was an emergency . . ."

"Emergency?" I almost shouted. "What happened?"

"He was having trouble breathing," she said. "So I called your mother-in-law and we took him to the Beloit/Mitchell County Hospital. She's there with him now . . ."

Not waiting to hear anything more, I jumped in my pickup and raced to the hospital. They were taking X rays and running tests on him when I got there. When they finished, Martha (my mother-in-law) put Gary on her shoulder and carried him to his room. I walked behind her.

That was when I saw his first seizure. It was brief. His eyes rolled up in his head for a moment, and that was all. But at the time I didn't know what it was and I didn't think to say anything about it.

The doctor diagnosed Gary's condition as "a virus that's going around." He told us to take him home and watch him. I asked Martha if she would take him to her home and she agreed. My own parents lived only a block from there, so shortly Gary had both his grandmothers watching over him.

I went on home. Kathy arrived and I told her what had happened. That's when she left to see Gary. And that's when, less than a half hour from the time we left the hospital, I got the phone call: "Gary's stopped breathing!"

As I raced to the hospital for the second time, some of the events of my life ran through my mind. After high school in Kansas I had gone on to McPherson College, majoring in farming operations so I could follow in my father's footsteps. Kathy and I had begun dating in high

school and married during our college years. Soon we had two children, Robin and Darin.

I should have been happy with my lovely wife and children, but I wasn't. I had this feeling that I was missing something in life, but didn't know what it was. I could see happiness and excitement in the lives of others, especially in Jerry and Mary Van Pelt, but none of it seemed to rub off on me.

Disillusioned with life, I soon began working day and night, seven days a week, at three or four jobs (farming, ranching, seed sales, hog finisher and any other odd job in town). I told myself, "The extra money will save our marriage."

But I was fooling myself.

Then one day when I finished making a seed delivery to Jerry Van Pelt, he shared with me the secret of his and Mary's happiness: it was God in their lives. I told him I'd like to think there was a God who had our best interests in mind. Jerry invited me to a Bible study in their home that very night. I decided to go, but my wife's Catholic background stood in the way.

"If you want to go, then go," she told me. "But I'm not going."

So I began attending. Soon I was going to one or two Bible studies a week when I could. Then Kathy and I started going to the Catholic church together. I was so hungry for everything God had that I also attended the New Life Christian Center, where I learned about the Holy Spirit. Though Kathy had been praying for me and was glad, still things weren't turning out quite the way she

expected, and for quite awhile she would not go there with me.

I received Jesus into my life and began to soak up the word of God. Little did I know that my new faith would soon be put to the test. . . .

By the time I got to the hospital, the doctors agreed that our little son probably had some kind of meningitis. They took him by ambulance to Salina, 50 miles away, where they could feed him intravenously. He had trouble breathing and it was all they could do to keep him

he would have to be moved to Wichita by helicopter. A friend from Beloit drove us. On the way I was praying. Suddenly a great peace flooded me, and I felt as though the whole problem was lifted. It was as though God was saying, "I've been in control, I *am* in control, taking care of everything."

I believe that that's when God began His healing process. By the time Gary got to Wichita he was resting without seizures. The crisis hadn't passed, though, and he remained at Wesley



They told me that if Gary had one more bad seizure we would lose him

Gary at five months and at two and a half years



alive. In Salina they told me that if Gary had one more bad seizure we would lose him. Even as the doctor was telling us that, the nurse came running. "Doctor—the child's having another bad seizure!"

I let go of Kathy's hand, ran to the telephone and dialed Jerry's number, but was so distraught that when his wife answered I could hardly talk. Jerry came to the phone and understood me. He said, "I'll get a group together to pray." He called some people and they went down to the local Baptist church to intercede.

Their prayers worked. The doctor came from Emergency. "All I can say is, it's a flat-out miracle. He was gone, but he came back—and he's alive."

Nevertheless, this hospital didn't have the necessary facilities to treat Gary and

Medical Center for three weeks, the first week of it in a coma. During that time I went to the chapel and prayed, "Lord, is it normal for Gary to be like this?"

The Lord spoke to my heart. "He'll be all right, he's resting. His body needs rest." I relaxed again.

Gradually Gary began mending. They did a cranial tap to drain excess fluid from each side of his brain to ease the pressure. But the doctors cautioned us, "You probably can expect him to have a lot of brain damage, and he may not be able to walk or talk correctly."

I refused to accept that prognosis and headed straight for the chapel. "Lord, " I said, "I won't accept brain damage for my child. In Jesus' name, I ask You for a totally healed boy—just like he was before all this happened."

Finally the day came when Gary was released. He was still having some problems with fluid in his ear canal but we were allowed to take him home.

About a month later at a home Bible study I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues. And with that experience *everything* changed. My whole life changed. My relationship with Kathy changed. Everything!

One night after a Bible study, I invited some of my believing friends to come to our home and lay hands on Gary in agreement for his total healing. The doctor had warned us they might have to operate on Gary's ears. So we quietly trooped into my home at one o'clock in the morning and prayed. Kathy was in bed asleep and didn't even know we had been there.

A few days later Kathy's mother and I took Gary to Salina for an ear check. As we drove I shared with her the reasons for the tremendous changes in my life. She listened and God brought us into a greater understanding of each other and of Him.

The ear specialist checked Gary thoroughly, then looked at us. "There's nothing wrong with this child. He is totally healed!" I said "Praise God!" and the doctor said "Amen."

Kathy didn't understand all that was happening to me but she liked it. About a year ago she began to get up an hour early to pray and read her Bible. We didn't discuss it. The Lord was taking care of things in His time, not mine. We both began going to Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship meetings, and I

became treasurer of our local chapter.

Not long ago I had the wonderful privilege of seeing my wife receive the Baptism while sitting in a restaurant, after Chuck Carney, who had spoken at our FGBMFI meeting, prayed for her. Praise God! Since that time, our marriage has never been better. Our family life has never been happier. And I am now seeing God work in the lives of my family and friends.

I want to say to people, don't hold back. Let the Lord lead you. It may save one person, or it may save a hundred and one. There's no way to know all of the wonderful purpose God has for you in any small or large thing. You can trust Him. When you put God and His word to the test, they pass with flying colors. □



Charley File is a farmer and seed salesman in Beloit, Kansas. He is vice-president and former treasurer of the Beloit Chapter of FGBMFI. He and his wife, Kathy have three children: daughter Robin, 8, and sons Darin, 6, and Gary, 3.

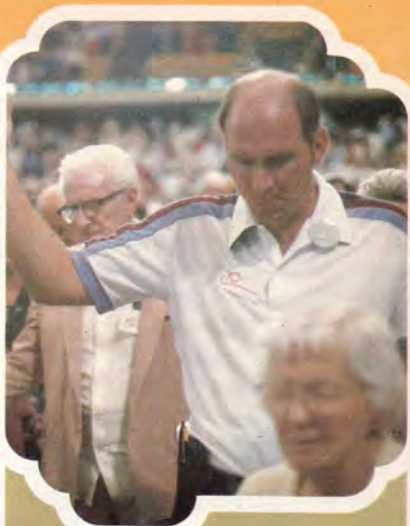
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Note: Speaker schedule subject to change.

DETROIT 83

NIGERIA

Peter Oriakhi
Benin City, Bendel State, Nigeria

The man was crippled. And he was in a wheelchair right next to where I was standing. Suddenly he pulled himself to his feet. He took a step. Then another. He staggered and nearly fell. And then he began walking!

Nothing I had ever experienced had prepared me for this moment. I was born in Benin City in Nigeria, usually called "The City of Blood," with good reason. It was a very pagan city. And I was as pagan as any of the others.

I was a reckless rascal and did all sorts of wild things. I smoked and drank and was rebellious. Because of this my friends called me "Danger." I hated my father because he paid little attention to me.

I was the 13th or 14th son of my father, who had five wives. At the time I was born no official records were being kept—sometimes a mark on the wall would serve as a record—so I am not positive of my date of birth. But as I grew older I was told that I was born December 7, 1953.

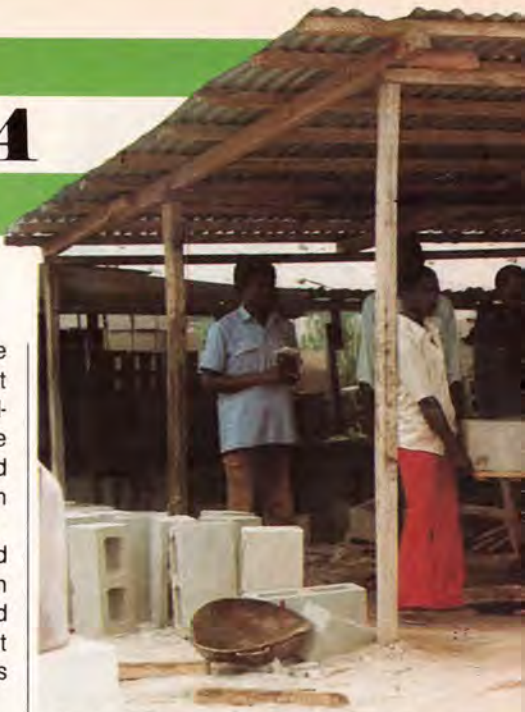
My father still believes in our ancestors, or forefathers. He believes if he foregoes all the sacred things which have been passed down to him and if he should start to serve God, his forefathers

will become unhappy with him, he may become ill and then all the people will say, "Ah, it's because you do not worship and serve your forefather!"

To this day he has in his home a sort of shrine left to him by his father as he died. (It is customary in Africa to leave to the first male child in every family a kind of *Ju-ju*.) They would always sacrifice a goat or chicken on it to appease the gods when the children were sick.

My mother was a Christian, but I didn't believe there was anything real about God. Even though I took Bible subjects in high school, I held the Bible in such low regard that I used its pages for toilet paper.

Just before my high-school graduation, all of this changed. A South Amer-





Peter Oriakhi and some of his workers at the cement-block factory

ican evangelist was conducting a crusade in our city. I made fun of the meetings and told my friends that the evangelists were phony.

"They're just here to take money from the poor, innocent people," I told them. Nevertheless I planned to go to the crusade—to prove to them that I was right.

And so in April of 1974 I went to the stadium to mock. Instead I witnessed the presence of the living Christ.

When I arrived I saw beaming faces and heard shouts of victory. "People are getting healed!" those around me were shouting.

That wasn't what I expected to see and hear. Despite all my bravado I began to tremble. *What's really happening?* I wondered.

The first miracle I saw was that the evangelist did not take an offering. And I saw miracles of healing take place. But since I viewed them from the rear of the stadium, I decided I would go back the next night. I would arrive early enough to get a seat near the front where I could witness these "miracles" close up and determine for myself if they were real.

That's how it happened that I was standing right next to the crippled man in the wheelchair and saw with my own eyes as he got out of his chair and began to walk. In that very moment the Spirit of God showed me that God was real and that He loved me. When the altar call was given I made my way forward with the other seekers and fell upon my knees.

I didn't know how to pray. I didn't know how to get to God. But as I was prayed for, I opened my heart and received Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, making Him Lord of my life. As I did so, I was filled with the joy of the Lord.



Demos and Rose Shakarian with Peter and Queen Oriakhi

All the way home I rejoiced. I cried and prayed, "God, I never knew that You loved me!"

On the last night of the crusade, which was Saturday, the evangelist urged all of us to go to church somewhere the next day. And to help us choose a church, he suggested several. I determined to go to one of them.

The next morning I got ready and started out, believing that the Lord would direct me to the right church for me. The first one I came to was the Church of God Mission, and somehow I knew it was the one.

Because I was late the church was already packed with people and I had to

squeeze my way in near the back. It was so crowded that I couldn't see or hear very well. Just then somebody announced, "Everybody who is here for the first time, stand up." I stood with the other newcomers.

The pastor welcomed us, then said, "All of you come down to the front." We moved down to the front and those sitting in the front rows gave us their seats. That surprised me.

Something else surprised me. When the pastor preached, he said, "I am going to *give* you the message. But it will *cost* you your heart, your whole life." I thought about his words. That's what I had done at the crusade: I had freely received the words the evangelist had preached. But I had "sold out" my heart and life to Jesus! It was a good feeling to belong to Him.

When I finished high school I hoped to be able to go to the United States and study to become an architect. But my mother said, "I can't pay for all of that."

She has no education or bookkeeping skills, which was a disadvantage to her as a butcher. Since she sold to many customers on credit, this meant that she was unable to keep a good record of her sales. As a result, it was easy for many traders to cheat her.

I knew about this problem but I didn't want to get involved in her business, so I didn't do very much to help her. But on New Year's eve in 1974, my attitude changed. My pastor challenged all of us to trust God with our whole hearts in all that we did: "Because God said, 'If you trust Me completely with your full tithes, I will pour out a blessing beyond your



**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)**

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE *(from page 11)*

Being human, we have our moments of disagreement, but we won't let them fester. The Bible says, "Let not the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). Misunderstandings are settled before the lights go out.

Jesus is the answer to a happy home, and in every other situation—not just when you accept Him, but when you obey Him. The testimonies in this issue of *Voice* confirm it. Linwood Stroud, once an alcoholic, became a community servant and earned the Jefferson Award. Jesus delivered him. Born into a pagan culture of ancestor worship, Peter Oriakhi is now born again into a new life in Christ. Private investigator Richard Takeshita failed to find healing of his bitterness until he found Jesus.

These and the other thrilling real-life stories affirm that the greatest gift anyone can receive this season is that which is wrapped up in the story of the manger birth.



NIGERIA (from page 24)
highest expectations.”

I thought deeply about those words that night. The next morning my mother was telling me how tired she was. “I have so much to do,” she said. “The business is not doing well, I have cows to slaughter and many other things. You go and sell for me . . .”

I thought of my commitment of last night and decided to act on it this day. So I went to sell for my mother.

It is a common saying in Benin City that no matter how much money a butcher invests in his business, he will go bankrupt. I did not want to fail. But because of the commitment I had made to the Lord the night before, I agreed to try.

So on the first day of 1975 I became a butcher.

That night I came home with a good report. “I did very well selling for you today!” I told my mother. She was very happy and told me to “Try it another day.” So I tried it again and God rewarded me again, just as He said He would.

I had saved a little money which I had hoped to use to go to America but, since I was committed to trust God for everything, I decided to invest in the business and asked Him to multiply it for me.

I had read where God said, “. . . before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear” (Isaiah 65:24).

I reminded God of those words in January of 1975 as I put all of my money into my mother’s business, and all of my trust in God to prosper us. That same day I began tithing. That first month I tithed only 15 *naira* (about \$25), but since that day

God has blessed me so much that my tithe has increased thirty-fold.

I also vowed to the Lord that I would always be concerned with His work. I would give to His people, to His Church, to anything He showed me to give to. So I began donating to Christian organizations that were winning souls, especially in Nigeria.

In October, 1977 I went to Jerusalem to a Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship convention where a sister from Atlanta, Georgia prophesied that God was going to bless me greatly and that He would “perfect that which concerneth me” (Psalms 138:8). From that time God has blessed everything I have set out to do.

In addition to managing the butcher business, I started a cement-block manufacturing company. At first I thought I would have only one machine, but God has prospered me and I have three, a part of the land, and as many as 24 employees. I invite many of them to church.

God also gave me a wonderful woman to be my wife. Queen found the Lord in 1979 and we were married in March of 1981. Since then God has blessed us with two children, one of them a son whom we named Uyi-Oghosa, which means “Glory to God.” (My pastor calls him “PTL” for short.)

In Anaheim, California at the 1980 FGBMFI World Convention I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit when Oral Roberts was speaking. I was so blessed that I went back to my hotel room and praised God nearly all night long.

My old friends in Nigeria are continually surprised at how my life has

changed. They say to me, "Come with us to the pub and let's have a beer." Instead, I invite them to eat with us in our home, then I share Jesus with them.

Today I love my father and he goes with me to our FGBMFI chapter meetings. *Voice* magazine has been blessing and challenging him. I praise God for giving me success in all I do and for giving me such a wonderful wife and family. Best of all, He has taken away all my old resentment and has filled me with His love. □

Peter Oriakhi is owner of Osamudiamen & Company Ltd., a cement-block manufacturing company. (Osamudiamen is his native name which he now understands to mean "God Is with Me.") He also operates a butcher shop. He and his wife Queen have two children: son Uyi-Oghoşa, 2, and daughter Iyosayi, 1. The Oriakhis attend Church of God Mission in Benin City and Peter is a member of Benin City Chapter, FGBMFI.



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UPDATE!

Fellowship News from Here,
There and Around the World

AIRLIFT TO CENTRAL AMERICA IS FULFILLING



Five FGBMFI members—Cecil Dorsey, Roy Hutchinson, Phillip Ward, Keith McAllister and Bob Bobola—embarked from Houston last May on a whirlwind, eight-day airlift to Honduras and Belize.

International Director Oscar Pinto Rossell, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, arranged a full schedule of appointments which included meetings with FGBMFI chapters, university students, government officials and prisoners.

Roberto Moncada, chapter member and El Salvador military attache, and astronaut Bob Bobola were among those who testified at a banquet attended by 200 at the Maya Hotel. A Supreme Court justice, cabinet officers and bank officials were present. Fifty persons, including several prominent men, accepted Jesus. Men and women were baptized in the Holy Spirit and physical healings were evident.

At a breakfast meeting 200 guests, mostly university students, were hosted by the chapter. More than 20 students accepted the Saviour and a professor received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

The five men from the United States were accompanied to Comayagua by International Director Rossell; Antonio Membreno, secretary of Bank of Honduras; Julio Bonilla, Swiss consul general; and others. Eighty-two visitors packed the place, set up for only 65. Twenty-five came to the Lord. Many were baptized in the Holy Spirit and families were restored. Eyes, legs and spines were healed.

During a meeting with General Alvarez Martinez, supreme military commander of Honduras, FGBMFI members shared the purpose of their visit to his country. Bob Bobola reports, "He was visibly moved and permitted us to lay hands on him and pray for his family, and for wisdom in his responsibilities."

In a prison courtyard, about 400 of the 1,400 prisoners assembled, and 100 raised their hands in response to the invitation.

Ministry in Belize included lunch with Premier George Price, a chapter meeting in St. Ignacio and a Rotary luncheon. When the Rotary speaker failed to appear, Bob Bobola was privileged to share his testimony with many of Belize City's key businessmen, British military personnel and the American ambassador.

The five airlift members returned to Houston bonded together, and with the satisfaction of knowing that they had been used by the Prince of Peace in one of the troubled areas of this world to bring peace to many hearts. □



1. Airlift members (left to right) Philip Ward, Roy Hutchinson, Cecil Dorsey, Bob Bobola, Belize Premier George Price, Keith McAlister, George Auwil and Avril Ulaite. 2. International Director Oscar Pinto Rossell (right) interprets for Bobola. 3. Team members enter prison to witness.

ASIAN OUTREACH PLANNED

The All-Asian FGBMFI Convention, Manila, Philippines, will be a time of inspiration, instruction and gathering. In addition to a strong representation from each of the Asian nations, the May 21-26, 1984 conclave is expected to attract believers from around the world.

Seeds for this harvest time were planted last spring when FGBMFI leaders from five nations met in Jakarta, Indonesia, for a two-day planning session to develop outreach strategies. Among those in attendance were FGBMFI International Vice-President Khoo Oon Theam, Singapore; International Director Narciso Padilla, Philippines; Lucas Helm, M.D., Jakarta; Bishop Cho Thieu, Singapore; and Jim Dermanoski, United States, representing the International office.

Following the session a three-day Advanced Leadership Training Seminar was held in a nearby community with 70 men participating. Khoo Oon Theam, Bishop Cho and Jim Dermanoski were instructors.

4. Attorney Talas Seanture and International Director Khoo Oon Theam sing praises in Jakarta.



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Threefold Purpose of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship

1. *To witness to God's presence and power in the world today through the message of the total Gospel for the total man, and by this to reach men for Jesus Christ, especially those having the same social, cultural or business interests as the person doing the witnessing.*

2. *To provide a basis of Christian fellowship among all men everywhere through an organism not directly associated with any specific church but cooperating with all those of like mind, and to inspire its members to be active in their respective churches.*

Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International does not start churches. Rather, we desire solely to be a service arm to existing ones.

3. *To bring about a greater measure of unity and spirit of harmony in the body of Christ, where members are united in a common effort for the good of the whole body.*

How to Start a Full Gospel Business Men's Chapter

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 92626.

September, 1940 to September, 1982 is a long time. Forty-two years in a life in which to make the right or wrong decisions.

My life has been full of ups and downs—one mountain after another to climb. I suppose I am no different than a lot of other men who were reaching out in all the wrong places. One day I found the right place, a church filled with love and understanding, where I could find the answer to all my searching, and some people who really cared.

My early religious training was in a Protestant church, but even though I continued to attend, sing in the choir, usher and attend Bible classes, it was

Robert V. Phelps
San Diego, California

the run away

really more a matter of being socially acceptable than anything else.

I was married at 18, the same year I graduated from high school. Three children later, having problems with drinking and running around, I devoted the majority of my time to my work as a police officer for the County of Rock Island, Illinois, which left little or no time for my wife and kids. When I was home we had terrible, violent fights. After enduring seven years of an unhappy marriage, we mutually agreed to end it with divorce in 1966.

During the divorce proceedings the only guidance I received was when I went to my minister for counsel. Because I couldn't see all of my responsibility for our problems, it seemed he didn't see my side of things at all. I felt

totally alone and alienated, had several words with him and wound up by leaving the church.

In 1966 I remarried. Sherry had four small children by a previous marriage and throughout our 17 years together we have had what we thought was a good life filled with a lot of love and understanding. We had all the material things in life that most people would ever want.

After 10 years on the police force I left, built a nice four-bedroom home and decided to start a small business of my own, selling recreational vehicles.

Then in 1973 we were dealt a bad blow. I was so preoccupied with our new business venture that weekend visits

from my children had become less and less frequent. I telephoned to make arrangements for my natural daughter Kim to spend her thirteenth birthday with us and learned that she had run away from her mother's home two months before. Even though I realized I'd neglected the children, I was filled with a frustrated anger to think that no one had bothered to let me know.

We began our search, looking and inquiring everywhere. But neither my 10 years' experience working with the police force nor the police, private detectives, connections with the underworld or psychics working with the sheriff's department could find Kim. Our leads turned out to be nothing more than rumors and dead-ends.

My frustration and utter helplessness

over our inability to locate Kim went on for days. The days led into weeks, the weeks into months and the months into years.

During this time our nation was in its first gasoline scare. People were not spending money on motor homes or travel trailers. Business was bad. By the first

returned home and again tried to find work there. A month later, still unemployed, but with the Texas job waiting, we managed to pack our car and move to Texas.

There we began to rebuild our shattered lives, keeping in contact with the sheriff's department and with Jack



of the year we had lost not only a daughter but our business and home as well.

Out of work for several months, I was forced to look for a job elsewhere. I left my family in Illinois and did not return until I'd found a job in Texas. But since in the meantime Sherry was immobilized in bed with a pinched nerve in her back, I

White, a close friend and private detective. From time to time we would receive reports of my daughter's whereabouts. At one time they were sure they had found her body in Iowa, but it turned out to be somebody else.

Finally after three years of this turmoil and pain I began to let the thought of Kim



Robert Phelps (left) with daughter Kim, her husband Paul and Paul, Jr.

My frustration over our inability to locate Kim went on for days

rest, refusing to talk about her and becoming angry whenever her name was mentioned. During this entire time I never once asked God for help. Sherry suggested church a number of times and I would agree to go at Christmas. When the time came I always backed out.

After four years in Texas a restlessness caused me to look for a new job. When an offer came up in Mesa, Arizona with a large RV sales dealership I accepted and started advancing with the company. Soon I became manager. I handled the stress of new decisions and the added responsibilities wonderfully; alcohol became a great relaxer. My social drinking now became an every-night affair.

In 1979 Sherry and I were given a job award of a trip to Athens, Greece. During the trip we met Tammy Roberts, married to Bob Roberts, owner of a camper and trailer sales company in Oregon, and several of her husband's employees. We all became very close friends during that short week. Sherry and I didn't know exactly what it was about them; we just knew we really enjoyed their friendship.

A few months later we met Bob Roberts when he and Tammy came to Phoenix for a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship convention. Sherry and I didn't know anything about FGBMFI and didn't attend, but we did enjoy getting together with the Robertses. They invited us to be their house guests the next month in Portland and we gladly accepted.

Saturday evening in their home Bob invited us to go to church with them next morning. It had been 15 years since I

(continued, page 37)

You can share
in the Vision...

*Jesus said: "The harvest
is plentiful, but the
workers are few. Ask the
Lord of the harvest,
therefore, to send out
workers into his harvest
field"*

(Luke 10:2, NIV)

The Harvest IS Ready!



Become a member of
FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL.
Write FGBMFI / P.O. Box 5050 / Costa Mesa, CA 92626
for your membership application.

CONVENTIONS

MEN'S WINTER ADVANCE

December 2-4, 1983

Pictured Rocks Camp, Monticello
Write: Mr. Richard Mangler
R.R. 3, Sunset Beach
Manchester, IA 52057

FLORIDA STATE MEN'S ADVANCE

December 8-10, 1983

Lake Yale Baptist Assembly Grounds
Lake Yale
Write: FGBMFI, Box 5968
Clearwater, FL 33518

ODESSA/MIDLAND REGIONAL

December 8-10, 1983

Odessa Convention Center
Write: Mr. Ralph Conley
Box 3226
Odessa, TX 79760

GRAND ISLAND NEW YEAR'S RALLY

December 30-31, 1983

Ramada Inn, Grand Island
Write: FGBMFI, Box 604
Grand Island, NE 68802

PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL

January 11-14, 1984

Hyatt Regency
Write: Mr. Bill Pyatt
Box 37695
Phoenix, AZ 85069

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL

January 13-14, 1984

Miramar Hotel, Santa Barbara
Write: Mr. Walter Wolf
Box 3601
Santa Barbara, CA 93130-3601

HAWAII REGIONAL

January 17-21, 1984

Pacific Beach Hotel, Honolulu
Write: Mr. John Witwer
1164 Bishop St., Ste. 1410
Honolulu, HI 96813

SAN PABLO RALLY

January 20-21, 1984

San Pablo Civic Center
Write: Mr. Dario Rabak
Box 34, San Pablo, CA 94806

OKI COUPLES' ADVANCE

January 27-28, 1984

Kings Island Inn, Kings Mills
Write: Mr. Jerry Wagner
445 Lexington Rd.
Eaton, OH 45320

WASHINGTON, D.C. INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL

February 16-18, 1984

Shoreham Hotel
Write: Washington, D.C. Conv. Ofc.
Box 350
Manassas, VA 22110

31ST ANNUAL WORLD CONVENTION

July 3-7, 1984

Anaheim, California Conv. Center
Write: FGBMFI World Convention
Box 5050
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Conventions published in this issue were approved on or before August 15.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS: If experiencing difficulty in receiving *Voice*, please contact us immediately. If receiving more than one copy each month at the same address, or if there is variance in the way your name appears, please return undesired label. IF PLANNING TO MOVE, send label with your new address 60 days in advance to: FGBMFI, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

Full Gospel Business Men's 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 in this list for your information. Write for information regarding the date and location of a chapter meeting in your area.

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RUNAWAY (from page 34)

had been in church. After several attempts to say no, I agreed.

The Assembly of God church to which they took us was a little different from churches I remembered. Things seemed to have changed quite a bit.

No one had ever asked me if I wanted to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, or to come and kneel before an altar, and no one had ever asked to pray with me. That Sunday in February of 1980, the pastor asked me to do all these things.

It seemed as though everything he said in his sermon he said directly to me. Without going forward or raising my hand, there in my seat I accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and asked Him to come into my heart.

I had never felt so good in all my life. Letting go of all those years of sinning, I cried and felt I'd been granted the chance to start all over again. I was a free man! Sherry also accepted Him as Saviour that morning.

Later that day, Bob and Tammy prayed with us about our new commitment to Christ. We decided to move to Portland for a while, keeping our Arizona home, however; Bob asked me to spend some time working with him in his company. In March of 1980 I resigned my position as manager back home, but I also gave up something else: my old "crutch" of booze. The desire to drink had left me for good.

Bob began taking me to FGBMFI luncheons, where I met many godly people. I discovered one could be a successful businessman and a good Christian at the

same time. Bob conducted his company as a Christian organization and I was greatly impressed that his employees took time for prayer meetings and Bible studies.

Bob and Tammy held prayer meetings in their home. Naturally, I soon was invited to participate. I decided to check it out. At first I just sat back and observed. Then they asked me to join with them in praying for the business; economic conditions were getting bad and business was very slow. Next we prayed for Bob's daughter and her new baby.

*As they prayed,
the grief of seven years began to
pour out of me*

Then, out of the blue, Bob asked me if I would like them to pray for my daughter Kim. I was shocked. I hadn't mentioned her in years, and certainly not to the Roberts or anyone else in that room. Bob explained that Sherry had told Tammy about our situation, and also that Sherry was fearful if we moved to Oregon Kim might not be able to find us.

Reluctantly I agreed. Everyone in the room began to pray for the renewal of my relationship with Kim, and that God would cause her to seek and find me. I was touched and overwhelmed that six God-fearing people, who didn't even know my daughter, had enough faith to ask God for her return. I don't remember all that was said, but the grief of seven years began to pour out of me.

That was in June. Our time spent in Oregon left us many fond memories of joy and love for the Lord. I don't think we were ever happier in all our lives. But as time passed we had a growing desire to return to Arizona. Business was so slow, and it seemed like the right time. Some of our close friends gave us a cassette tape called "In His Time" and on the trip home July 31, we got most of the songs down pat. The title song was very special to encourage us.

On arrival in Mesa, I felt the need to take a few days to decide what I would do before starting my job-hunt. Our first day home, the telephone rang. It was my old friend Jack White. There was excitement in his voice as he asked where we'd been all this time.

He had good news: "I think we've found Kim. All we have is a phone number in Chicago, but I think it's hers."

Rattled and apprehensive, I dialed the number. A man answered. After I explained who I was, he asked me to hold the line. The next voice I heard sounded like that of an angel, saying, "Hi, Daddy! I love you and I miss you!"

Kim and I talked and cried for quite awhile. Only the Lord knows the joy I felt. I made arrangements to see her within the next few days and because I didn't have a job yet I could leave immediately for Illinois.

Kim explained that she and Paul (who had answered the phone) were going to be married and Paul had wanted her to

find me before they "took the big step." He asked if I approved of him and if I would bless their marriage. Of course I would!

My daughter who left home at 13 and came back at 20 could have turned out very different after exposure to the world. She and Paul are married and have a beautiful baby boy, Paul, Jr. She is a beautiful woman, knows Christ as her personal Saviour, and is very soft-spoken and full of love for the Lord.

I don't have to know all that happened to her during those seven years. God had His eye on her all that time, and we all give Him the glory and praise for bringing her back to us.

I have just said, "Only the Lord knows the joy I felt when Kim and I were reunited by that phone call." I also think I know a little more how God must feel when someone like you or I return to Him.

Jesus said in the parable of the lost sheep, "... there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent" (Luke 15:7, NIV). What rejoicing there must have been the day Kim and I, her dad, were both safe in the fold! □

After being a police officer for the County of Rock Island, Illinois for 10 years, Robert V. Phelps went into recreational vehicle sales in 1972. He is now general manager of Stimac Trailer Sales, San Diego. He and his wife Sherry have four children.

If you have a testimony that will glorify God and bring others to Jesus through Voice, you are invited to request guidelines from the Editorial Department, Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.



World Laymen's Headquarters

Full Gospel Business Men's

VOICE

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December 1983

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SIX SCRIPTURAL 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" (Rom. 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 right 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: Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

Hon Memorial Prayer Chapel





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