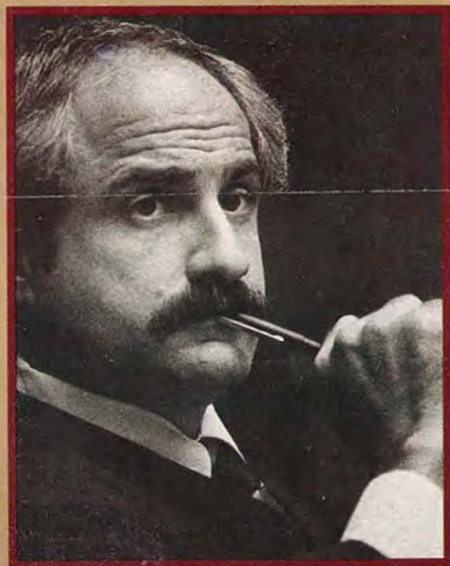
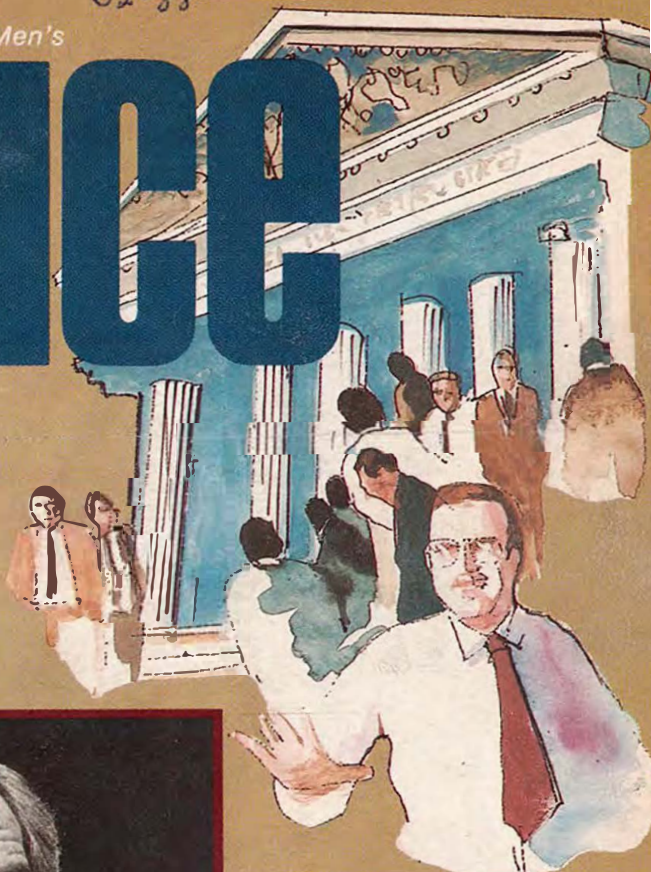


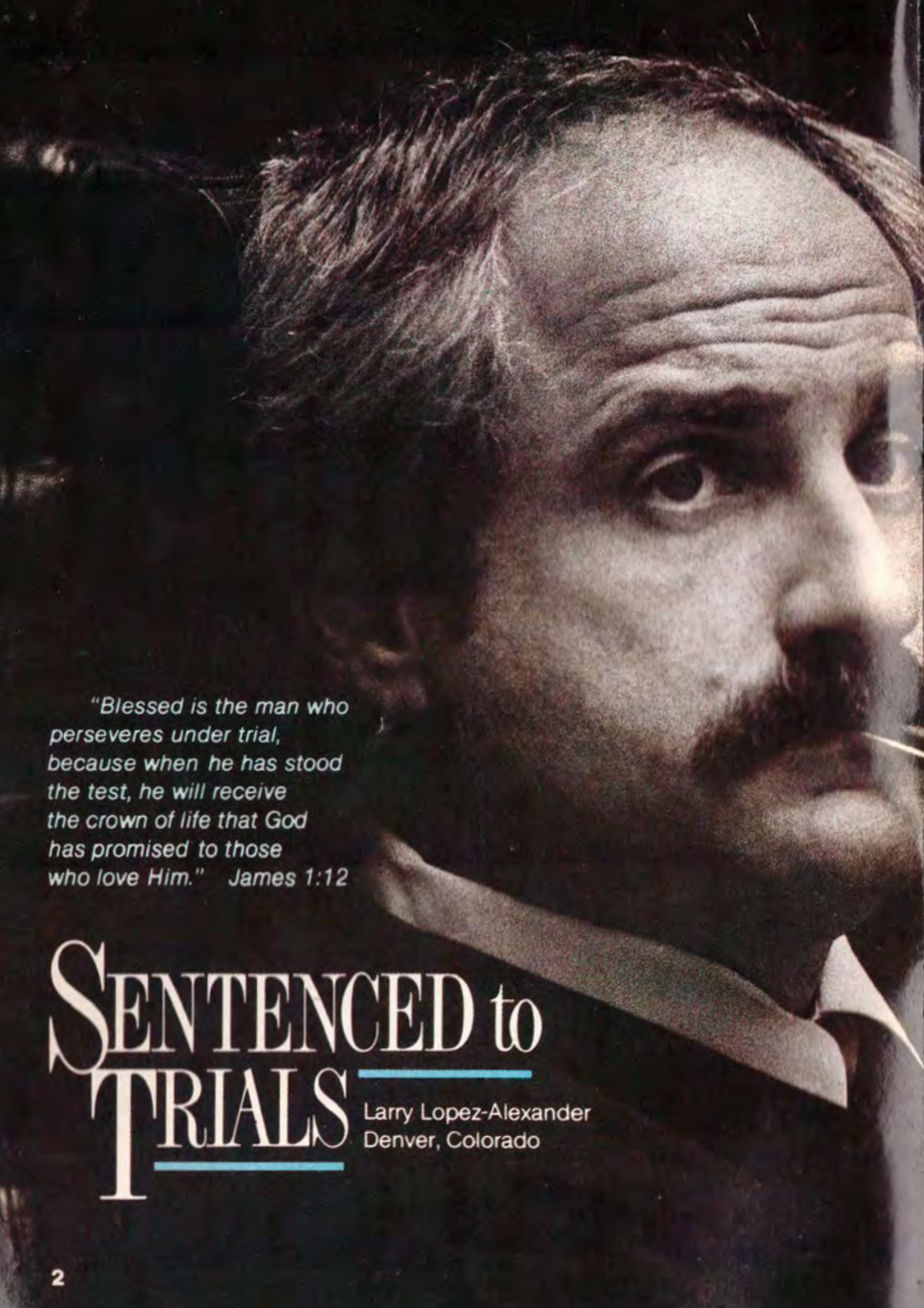
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Full Gospel Business Men's

VOICE



SENTENCED to
TRIALS —
THE
JUDGE LARRY
LOPEZ-ALEXANDER
STORY



"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him." James 1:12

SENTENCED to TRIALS

Larry Lopez-Alexander
Denver, Colorado

Spurred by outrage over the mounting death tolls in the early 1980s, society's pendulum swung to a harsh view of intoxicated driving. Nonetheless, considerable resistance thrived against actual enforcement of the laws. Even tougher ones passed by many states were still subject to the "plea bargain justice" so prevalent in America's courts. Thus, the statutes often served as mere window dressing to soothe the public's indignation.

However one judge, Larry Lopez-Alexander, took the law seriously. He began handing down unheard of sentences and soon gained notoriety for his one-man judicial crusade against the carnage on our highways.

That action brought a quick response. In 1982, various defense attorneys periodically delivered a message to this judge, Larry Lopez-Alexander. The aim of those lawyers (whose clients were suffering the stiff punishments he meted out) was simple: "We're going to get you."

Three years later, they succeeded.

I am the Denver County Judge who stirred up national attention with my supposedly "crazy" actions.

I remember how, with all the newspaper reports about the trial to oust me from office, Paul Harvey told his entire radio audience about one lawyer's testimony that I had allegedly jumped out of a courtroom window to avoid being served notice of an appeal. The truth was that the windows on the first floor of the Denver City-County building (where my office was located) could only be opened six to nine inches!

During this time many newspapers also reported that I had sentenced a traffic offender to an outrageous two-and-a-half-year sentence for the mere offense of skipping out on five traffic tickets (though the sentence was changed just two hours later). However, those same newspaper stories neglected to mention that the offender

drove a Porsche and had laughed in court, "I just can't afford to pay those tickets, your Honor."

Therefore my persecutors, failing on their first attempt to remove me from office because they couldn't find adequate grounds under the city charter, dreamed up a new definition for official misconduct. Despite the fact that the interpretation never existed before, they used it to force me out.

After the ordeal (which culminated in my firing by Mayor Federico Pena), I received a letter from a retired teacher in Salt Lake City. She was a treasured former neighbor whom I had known while growing up in suburban Denver.

"Please remember me to your parents," she wrote. "And let them know that I'm very, very proud of you, that your integrity cost you your job."

The letter brought tears to my eyes as I remembered the kind woman, now in her 90s, who had used her spare time from teaching English to provide me with speech therapy. The training was necessary because, at the age of four, I had suffered an accident that caused a total loss of hearing in one ear and a partial loss in the other.

As a result, I had problems communicating. Since I could only hear 40 percent of what people said, to compensate I delivered painfully loud

speech. Even my father could hardly bear to listen, until that compassionate teacher schooled me in proper speech patterns.

Thus empowered to function in society, I set out to reach my goal: the Presidency of the United States by age 40. After graduating from Wheat Ridge High School, I enrolled at the University of Denver. First, I earned an accounting degree, then I continued on through law school.

Not long after the bar exam, I secured my first political appointment as Director of the Denver Election Commission during the 18 months of preparation for the 1976 presidential election. Soon after, I advanced to the post of prosecutor, where I served for three years at both the local and federal level. Finally, at the age of 30, I rose to the heights of county judge, and was one of the youngest in Denver's history.

It seemed that my timetable for the land's highest office was right on schedule.

However, these plans changed when, in my early days as a prosecutor Jesus touched my heart. There were many factors involved in the decision to accept Him as my personal Saviour, but none were as important as the realization of who Jesus is.

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Suddenly my views on life and the law took a whole new slant.

During those days I also decided to follow the old Celtic-Hispanic tradition of my family, which added my wife's maiden name to my own. I faced tremendous criticism from the Hispanic community, which thought I was attempting to shield my background from the rest of society. However, this small tempest was to prepare me for the future.

When I ascended to the bench, I

to stem the tide. The decision garnered me a reputation as a "hanging judge," and while I was known for my toughness on drunk drivers, I approached other drug and alcohol related crimes in an equally grave manner.

I believe that one of the things a judge has to do is use punishment, because punishment is part of the criminal code. But, unfortunately, in the state of Colorado about 90 percent of the judiciary do not believe that.



“...90 percent of all crime is created and committed under the influence of alcohol...”

took my Christian beliefs along. This included the job description in Deuteronomy 1:13-17 which discusses the need for equal justice for all.

After donning my black robes, I had to administer the law based on the sobering reality that 90 percent of all crime is created and committed under the influence of alcohol, some other drug, or a combination of the two.

I decided the situation posed enough of a threat that it demanded active enforcement of the law in order

I know, I went to those judicial conferences. For six-and-a-half years there were people who were embarrassed to have me sitting as a judge in the same courtroom with them. They say it's because I didn't follow the law. I say it's because I made them look bad. But I never once violated anybody's rights in the law. They couldn't find me guilty of violating any statutes.

But still, defense attorneys cleverly went after me when I dared to jail

some of their brethren on contempt of court charges.

My conduct was questioned at length in two Denver newspapers. The Colorado Defense Lawyers made their case to have me fired, as did the Denver Bar Association's board of directors. The cacophony carried into the mayor's office, and a commission was appointed to examine whether I was guilty of official misconduct.

First, the legal powers examined the Denver charter, which contained four grounds for removal. After lengthy study, they decided to charge me with habitual intemperance. However, the legal meaning — according to both Webster's and Black's Law Dictionary— of the term is "drunkenness." Despite attempts to redefine it as "losing one's temper," the author of the city-county charter testified that the phrase referred solely to intoxication.

Foiled in that attempt, the lawyers postponed the hearing for more than two months. When it reconvened, they had concocted a new meaning for willful misconduct in office. Among other things, they said, it meant "the accumulation of seemingly innocuous incidents."

Armed with a definition that would convict anyone who rises out of bed for work, the prosecutors proceeded. At varying intervals that stretched on for months, they introduced evidence of my alleged temper tantrums, overly harsh sentences and ill-suited courtroom demeanor. When the series of hearings concluded, the recommendation for dismissal bore little surprise.

How many million-dollar lawsuits

could I have filed? Quite a few.

But when Jesus was on earth, He warned believers to settle legal disputes on the courthouse steps, lest they go inside and wind up losing everything.

I truly believe that Christians should not be looking to government for justice, but to God's instruction and guidance.

Besides, I didn't want revenge for the "beating" I'd suffered, because through it I learned a multitude of lessons, even though they weren't easy to swallow.

You get to the point where you've been demeaned and demeaned and demeaned and it's real easy to get angry. That's what happened to me. I am generally a little assertive, but not overly aggressive. However, I do fly off the handle when I feel there's injustice.

While I endured the attacks of my peers, equally maddening was the "encouragement" I received from Christians, who with monotonous regularity quoted the passage from James 1:2-4 about counting trials as pure joy.

"Right," I thought whenever another well-meaning individual quoted that Scripture, "they have 14 spears in my back and I'm supposed to be happy about this. Paul Harvey has just told everybody in the world that I leap out of windows in a single bound and my cousins are calling to ask if I hurt myself . . . and I'm supposed to have joy?"

Yet through the Scriptures, I realized that my experiences did constitute a

testing of my faith, which has helped me develop endurance and strength of character to overcome life's daily problems.

Perseverance has been necessary for survival, since my banishment from the bench was only the introduction to my role as an outcast. Back in civilian life, I discovered that not only were those who removed me from office angry, they were vindictive.

At one point in my employment search, I was interviewed by a con-

terminated, I wound up with only a one-hour radio broadcast weekday afternoons on two Christian outlets.

My lack of employment has really taught me the meaning of faith. Since no other source existed, I had to depend on God for all of my provisions. Wondering how all the bills would be paid because of a bad month for advertising on my show, one day I strolled to my post office box and opened \$400 in unexpected checks. That type of "coincidence" is the steady fare on which I have learned to live.

Finally, I was able to scale the biggest barrier of all, that of forgiving my attackers. At first I was bitter and angry about the way I'd been treated, but now I count it as pure joy. What did Jesus tell us about those who love Him? He says, we're going to get beat up. But, understand that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.

And that's exactly the point. Those lawyers, like Joseph's brothers, meant it for evil. God meant it for good. I couldn't witness effectively under the Canon of Ethics — it was like living in a straight-jacket. But once you begin to realize that your human persecutors may be instruments of God's will, it's a lot easier to forgive them.

I have found tremendous insight and strength in Ephesians 6:12, which warns that we struggle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual powers of darkness and evil.

I think we're taking our laws in this country entirely too lightly. But it's because of that spiritual struggle between good and evil. Satan doesn't want us to face responsibilities on earth for viola-



"...Christians should not be looking to government for justice, but to God's instruction..."

struction firm in the Northwest. After running some background checks, the company officer informed me, "I'd love to hire you, but I can't afford to. We talked to lawyers in Denver and they can't say anything nice about you. Your reputation is international in scope. We can't even send you to our division in Bangkok. If they knew we'd hired you..."

Luckily, I found several months' work as a host with one of Denver's AM talk radio stations and could continue feeding my family. But when my contract

tions of earthly law, because he doesn't want people to understand what happens when they violate God's Law.

Such views have put me at an extreme with much of society. But now that I've lost the opportunity to achieve my worldly goals, I find little appeal in seeking the world's approval. Degrees, wall plaques and other scholarly paraphernalia now lie in a box, gathering dust along with my former ambitions.

In the same bin is my former admiration for money. Instead of worrying about it and wondering why so many of God's people don't seem to have much of it, I realize that the Lord is trying to tell us that His grace isn't dependent on material riches.

When my income dwindled, I started examining the monthly cash flow that went towards the Lord's work, as compared to the amount drained by my revolving charge accounts.

That led to immediate "plastic surgery" with American Express, MasterCard and other budgetary habits. In the months since, past debts have steadily declined, while my post-tithe giving has increased.

With this change came the revelation of how easy it is to be bound up by the world system.

Many of the newer translations of the Bible have replaced the word "mammon" and put in "money," "wealth" or "riches," but don't get lost in that trap. The word "mammon" in Scripture refers to the world system that is designed to enslave you. If you look at Proverbs 22:7, it says the lender rules over the borrower.

Christ used the word for that reason.

What He was telling us is that mammon and God the Father are complete opposites. Mammon is the Babylonian money system that allows for debt. There wasn't a Hebrew word for debt because God's law and God's economy don't allow for debt with interest.

I'm now thankful for the trials that have taught me these lessons and have allowed me to start living a life that is centered on my walk with God. This new walk has revealed to me the three R's of Christianity: receptivity, revelation and response.

I look forward to the next trial, knowing it will come as certainly as the sun rises each morning. But realizing this, I admonish those who are called to be "lightning rods," that they will always face criticism for expressing God's Word when it doesn't square with conventional wisdom.

However, because of what I've endured, being at odds with God is the only condition that could ever alarm me.

As far as I'm concerned, theology can be explained in one verse, Philipians 1:21: "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." I'm going to continue to try to do the very best I can for Jesus Christ, because it is He who saved me, and it is He who gives me the courage to go on. □

Larry Lopez-Alexander lives in a suburb of Denver, Colorado with his wife, Gale, and two children. His only source of employment is his talk show, broadcast on radio station KQXI in Denver. He is a frequent speaker at Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship chapters throughout the Rocky Mountain region.

CONVENTIONS

MICHIGAN MEN'S ADVANCE**February 5-7, 1988**

Stouffers Hotel
Battle Creek, MI
Contact: Carl A. Milbrandt
4941 Moonglow Dr.
Troy, MI 48098

NORTHERN MAINE RALLY**February 5-7, 1988**

Northeastland Hotel
Presque Isle, ME
Contact: Wayne Thibeau
R. R. 2, Box 68
Fort Fairfield, ME 04742

COUPLES ADVANCE**February 5-7, 1988**

Hotel Saskatchewan
Regina, Saskatchewan
Contact: Owen McCormick
Box 2361
Melfort, SAS

ILLINOIS STATE CONVENTION**February 10-13, 1988**

Holiday Inn - Conference Resort
Decatur, IL
Contact: Howard Hite
R. R. 1, Box 6D
Dalton City, IL 61925

WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL CONVENTION**February 11-13, 1988**

Grand Hyatt Hotel
Contact: Reginald Elliott
3724 Seventeenth Place NE
Washington, DC 20018

EASTERN OHIO COUPLES ADVANCE**February 19-20, 1988**

Salt Fork State Park Lodge
Cambridge, OH
Contact: William J. Cooke
8950 Charington Ct.
Pickerington, OH 43147

WEST TEXAS CONVENTION**February 25-27, 1988**

Lubbock Plaza
Lubbock, TX
Contact: Virgel W. Merriott
P. O. Box 64037
Lubbock, TX 79464

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL CONVENTION**March 3-5, 1988**

Hanford House
Richland, WA
Contact: Lewis J. Schweiger
2122 Hudson Ave.
Richland, WA 99352

CALIFORNIA STATE CONVENTION**March 3-5, 1988**

Holiday Inn
Sacramento, CA
Contact: Ronny Svenhard
335 Adeline St.
Oakland, CA 94607

1st ANNUAL TRI STATE MEN'S ADVANCE**March 11-13, 1988**

Hulldoom
Quincy, IL
Contact: Donald F. Seward
1251 Kentucky
Quincy, IL 62301

WESTERN OKLAHOMA MEN'S ADVANCE**March 17-19, 1988**

Methodist Canyon Camp
Hinton, OK
Contact: Bill Blasel
2122 Lakeview
Woodward, OK 73801

MID-AMERICA REGIONAL CONVENTION**March 17-19, 1988**

Holiday Inn Convention Center
Great Bend, KS
Contact: Darrell J. Hoskinson
7505 Ida
Wichita, KS 67233

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND REG. CONVENTION**March 24-26, 1988**

Treadway Hartford Hotel
Contact: Donald Carlson
1052 Farmington Ave.
West Hartford, CT 06107

TEXAS STATE CONVENTION**March 31-April 3, 1988**

Adam's Mark Hotel
Contact: FGBMFI - Texas
International Regional Office
13401 S. W. Freeway, Suite 207
Sugar Land, TX 77478

1988 WORLD CONVENTION**July 5-9, 1988**

Sheraton Centre Hotel
Toronto, Canada
Contact: FGBMFI
190 Attwell Dr. #304
Rexdale, ONT M9W 6H8

CONVENTIONS PUBLISHED IN THIS ISSUE WERE APPROVED ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 16, 1987.

**SET FREE
PRISON
MINISTRY
UPDATE**

We are pleased to announce that our first Set Free Prison Ministry chapter has been chartered in Alaska at the Fairbanks Correctional Center in Fairbanks. Steve Jones is its president, Guy W. Whitney is the area's International Director, and Thomas J. Miklautsch its Field Representative.

We hope and pray that this chapter is just the beginning of many such "soul saving stations" in prisons throughout Alaska. □

What is it like to lose a child? Jack Perry's initial reaction to his child's death was one of despair, confusion and rage against God. How could he ever serve a God who kills babies?

Jack Perry
Broken Arrow,
Oklahoma

DID GOD KILL MY BABY?

“Jack, there's been an accident,” I heard my neighbor's voice over my office phone. “You've got to come home right away!”

A friend agreed to drive me home. I can't remember how fast we drove as we careened toward the navy housing where I lived with my wife and two sons. The car screeched to a halt at the end of the common driveway we shared with several other navy families. Just a few feet away a gathering of neighbors peered across tape barriers, past an ambulance and two fire trucks.

Lying on the concrete, shrouded

in a white sheet, lay the still form of my two-year-old son.

Friends ushered me into the house where my wife paced tearfully. Sarah had tried to run into the driveway as the first fire truck arrived and she realized something terrible had happened. But friends pulled her back inside, assuring her that everything possible was being done for James. They didn't want her to hear the truth until I was by her side. Sarah still didn't know that our baby was dead.

I couldn't tell her, either. After they lifted my son's body into the ambulance and took off for the hospital, Sarah and I followed in our car. Sarah still hoped for the best. I let the doctor tell her James was killed instantly when a moving company van which was moving our neighbors, backed over him.

I'd never been much of a religious man. But now, the death of my son created a hatred for God, where before I'd felt only apathy. I didn't want anything to do with a God who killed babies. In fact, I figured I'd rather go to hell and be with the devil than go to heaven and be with a baby-killing God.

I convinced the navy doctors that my wife needed valium to get through the funeral — but I don't think she ever took a pill. I, on the other hand, ate them like popcorn and washed them down with the whiskey that I lived for.

A few nights after we buried James, I remember sitting on my bed, my grief and anger overwhelming. “Why did You kill my son?” I shouted through the ceiling to a God I vowed I'd never serve. “Come down here and tell me why You killed my son!”

**“ . . . after we buried James
I remember sitting on my
bed, my grief and anger
overwhelming. ‘Why did
You kill my son? . . . ’ ”**



I didn't realize it, but I was letting this tragedy push me farther away from the one thing that could have satisfied the deep hole I seemed to have inside. All my life I'd been searching for "something." After James' death, that something seemed even further beyond my reach.

Growing up, I'd always felt isolated. Like I didn't belong. My brothers and sisters did well in school — I had to struggle to maintain my D average.

But at 11 or 12 I had found my "niche" — at the local bars and pool halls. My drinking buddies accepted me. And I liked to drink. I remembered from church that God gives people different gifts, and I figured mine had to be getting drunk.

When I joined the navy at 17, I really found myself a home. I mean, I was a sailor now — people *expected* me to get drunk. And I worked hard not to disappoint them!

But even in the navy, crammed on a destroyer in the Pacific Ocean with 250 other men, I felt alone. Something was missing. I was searching.

When I didn't find what I was looking for on the West Coast, I asked for a transfer to the East Coast. And when the empty hole still didn't go away, I transferred back to the West Coast.

And all that time I kept trying to fill that hole with all the whiskey I could drink. I wished I could buy a liquor store and lock the door and sit inside and drink. I wanted to dive into a swimming pool filled with whiskey and drink my way out. I wished I could shoot the stuff into my veins to feel its effect faster.

People began telling me that I



The Perry Family

needed to get married. They assured me that a wife could end my loneliness and help fill the void I'd felt for so long. So I proposed to the only girl I'd dated on a semi-regular basis, and we tied the knot.

Unfortunately, it didn't take me more than a few minutes to discover that I didn't feel any differently after the ceremony than I did before. Nothing had changed. Before the ceremony, I was a drunk sailor, single, with a sin problem. After the ceremony, I was a drunk sailor with a sin problem and a wife.

To make matters worse I had to put a roof over her head . . . and there went some of my drinking money. Then I had to buy furniture for her to sit on . . . and there went more of my drinking money. Then I had to buy food and dishes to eat the food off of . . . still more drinking money.

When Sarah got pregnant, I felt a ray of hope. Maybe fatherhood was the ingredient missing from my life. I loved my infant son, Jackie, and James who followed. But it didn't take long to dis-

cover that whatever I was looking for wasn't children, because there went more of my drinking money for diapers and formula.

At some point before James' death, Sarah rededicated her life to the Lord. While she relied on God to get her through the grief, I relied on whiskey and dope. Each night I drank until I passed out — and when I awoke in the morning, I'd reach for the bottle just where I'd left it lying the night before. I had my first drink of the day before my feet ever hit the floor.

I still remember the morning I woke up to an empty bottle, drained from last night. Grumbling to myself, I climbed out of bed and padded through the house looking for a spare. And that's when it hit me:

If whiskey contained that "something" I needed to fill my void, I should have found it in the first bottle I opened. But innumerable bottles later, I was still empty. I realized then that if I had all the whiskey in the world, it could never be enough.

A few hours later I began the steps to check into a navy rehabilitation center. If whiskey wasn't the answer to my emptiness, I might as well dry out.

When the center insisted that I do one thing each week with my family, I was stumped. I'd spent my lifetime drinking whiskey and running the streets. What in the world was I supposed to do with a woman and a kid? That's when I remembered that Sarah liked to go to church, and I had my answer. I'd take Sarah and Jackie to church. Then I'd go to my rehab meetings once each week, and I'd live

happily ever after. I'd have what I was searching for.

The people at the little church we attended seemed nice enough — and the women were great cooks. But they were all stuck on two Bible verses they seemed to broadcast whenever they got the chance: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), and "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

For months I sat in the last pew of this little church, bored stiff, with these two verses ricocheting around in my head. Then one Sunday night, I finally heard what they were saying: Satan, the thief, comes to kill, but *Jesus came to give life*. God wasn't a baby-killer after all! Suddenly I knew that I wanted to go to heaven and be with God and James rather than go to hell and be with a *devil* who kills children.

That night I walked down the center aisle and told God I wanted to serve Him. I asked His forgiveness for the years I'd rejected Him. I knew by then that nothing I'd tried for the past 33 years could fill the hole inside — it was time to try God.

The following months weren't easy as I tried to live out my new faith. At that time, I was working in the engine room of a navy submarine rescue vessel. I'd walk into that engine room a Christian — but within ten minutes a pump would bust or an engine would grind to a stop, and I'd be a sailor again, turning the air

blue with my sailor's "French."

Then I began hearing testimonies of people who gave their lives to God and *immediately* lost their desire for drink, or forgot all the dirty language they'd spent their lives perfecting. Some people said they seemed to see Jesus, hear angels sing or see lightning at their moment of salvation. I hadn't experienced any of that.

But I kept praying and going to church for two simple reasons: I had to give God the same chance I'd given Satan. I lived 33 years of my life for the devil — I had to give God at least that many years before I gave up on Him.

Secondly, I read in Romans: "If you believe in your heart and say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, believe that He died, and God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." God's Word didn't say anything about seeing visions or hearing things or even feeling any different. It said believe and confess — and I'd done all that. I had to be saved.

One evening I was driving home from work when a thought hit me: In all my travels, I've never met anyone who was born a full-grown man or woman. Even Jesus was born a baby. Walking up the sidewalk to my front door, I saw a baby cricket poised on the concrete. Even bugs are born babies. Flowers don't sprout from the ground in bloom, and grass starts as tiny, baby blades.

And I realized that Christians are not born full-grown either. They're born baby Christians. When an infant messes his diapers, we don't throw him away — we clean him up and love him, because we can see that a little ways into the future, he'll outgrow that stage. God wasn't

going to throw me out just because I still had a long way to grow up.

The alcohol rehab center taught me to make two lists every day. On one sheet of paper I'd write everything I'd done right. I remember at the beginning, stapling the two sheets together just to list all the things I'd done wrong. But every day I did one thing right: I chose Jesus Christ. I would pray, "God, forgive me for all the things I did wrong today and help me be a better Christian tomorrow than I was today."

And He has. I used to think I'd need to give God the same 33 years I gave the devil before I could really judge whether or not He could fill my void. But after almost 14 years, I'm sure! The people who knew me before I met God can't believe I didn't end up dead in some gutter. The people I've met in the past 14 years can't believe I ever lived like that. My prayer today is that God will transform me as much in the next decade as He has this past one!

And one day, when my life is over, I'll go to heaven to be with God and with James. There's nothing in the world I'm more sure of. □

Jack retired as a Chief Petty Officer in the navy after 20 years. At present he works as a diesel mechanic for Cummins Southern Plains, Inc. In addition to speaking at a number of Full Gospel Business Men's chapters, he had also served as president of the Tulsa chapter of FGBMFI for three years.

Every Sunday night he ministers at Mother Tucker's House of Prayer Rescue Mission in Tulsa. Jack also has a prison ministry to both maximum and minimum security institutions in Oklahoma.

He and his wife, Sarah, have eight children.

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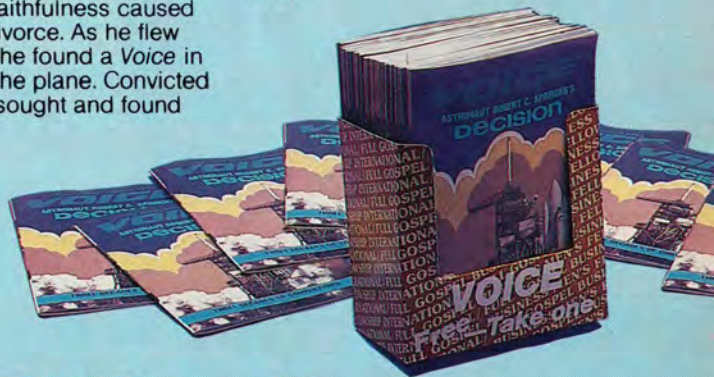
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By the time he was 29, Bob Williams had spent half his life behind bars. Restless, never satisfied, he was searching for bigger and better things — and the easy way. Crime, drugs and hustling were his way of life. Only after an encounter with the devil did he realize he was on a path of destruction. He tells the exciting story of how Jesus rescued him from the pit, and set his feet upon a better path.

The guards were smiling at me that day — not because I was a model prisoner, but because I was getting out after four years. And they knew, as in the past, that I'd be back. This was ending my 14th year in lock-up — from Reform School, Men's Reformatory, State and Federal Prison.

I never seemed to stay out long. From age 14 to age 29, I was "on the street" maybe a year and a half. Crime was my way of life, and I could not get interested in anything else. If other people wanted to work for a living, that was their problem. My companions were thieves, hustlers, and con artists; and I had no time for anyone with a different lifestyle.

While waiting for my release, I felt this time would be different. Age and experience were in my favor. If the world had gotten wise to guys like me, then I had gotten wise to the world. So, on January 6, 1967, at the age of 29, I left prison for the fourth time.

For the first three years I kept pretty clean, trying my hand at being a

liquor clerk, bartender, cab driver, and salesman. I had also married a nice girl I met the day I was released from prison. But after three years with me, she wasn't called a nice girl any more. Sin was taking its toll on her life also. With pills, parties, and con games, she became as hard as me, and soon relatives and friends had given up on us. The doors were slamming shut all around us, and it was definitely time to move on.

My dependency on pills was getting stronger, and I figured California would be the place to go. It turned out better than I expected; within a couple of years I found out where the action was, where to score . . . and was only arrested twice — once for attempted murder, and once on a several thousand dollar diamond heist, but they let me go for lack of evidence.

From people I'd met in Las Vegas and L.A., I learned that prostitution was in demand. The risk was small, and the money was great. (One client shelled out \$17,000 in less than three

As a Roaring Lion

Bob Williams
Anaheim, California

months.) And, my "way with girls" made it easy. The clients were vice cops, lawyers, doctors, and businessmen.

Calls were coming from every major city in the United States, with reservations made in advance. The action was there, money was flowing in every direction. At last, I was where I wanted to be, and had the Cadillac and diamonds to prove it.

I was popping from 10-25 pills a day, chain-smoking grass, and had a vodka tonic in my hand by 10:00 a.m.

One night, a sax player I knew introduced me to a guy who turned out to be a hypnotist from Hollywood. He hypnotized me and some of my friends, and all of us were fascinated. I began to practice his method because I had a good voice for it. The results were amazing, and the power was wonderful!

Using hypnotism, I could completely relax myself and others, and improve their self-confidence. My mind seemed much sharper, and I had even more ability to manipulate people.

At the very first it was fun, something to experiment with. But after a time, it began to annoy me. I was messing around with something I didn't really understand at all. Meanwhile, everything I programmed turned out successful beyond my wildest dreams. I continued to exert my control over situations and could actually feel waves of power leaving my head.

I no longer needed pills or marijuana, as I was actually afraid of what my mind would do. I became alarmingly aware that "something" had control of me.

And then, it happened. One night, while waiting in my car for a girl to come from an appointment, Satan appeared in the front seat, right next to me — for about five seconds! This red, swine-looking thing had huge black eyes, flaring nostrils and a heinous smile. He looked right at me, and my heart was in my throat. I gripped the wheel, afraid to move, afraid to speak. Seeing this devil beside me, and for a split second realizing I might have to go with him, my mind shouted wildly, "No, no!" Then, as suddenly as he had appeared, he was gone.

I sat there, weak and shaking, popped out with sweat. What I'd seen was real — not brought on by some super weed or pep pill. I hadn't had drugs for weeks. I took a deep breath and felt certain I'd been in touch with hell, and it was more than I could handle. The girl I was waiting for could take a cab. I had to get out of there!

The rest of the night my mind raced. I honestly didn't know who to turn to, or who would believe me, for that matter. I thought maybe I was flipping out because my story was so strange, and my life even stranger. Actually, only a handful of people knew what I had going for

BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT, BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKETH ABOUT, AS A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. / Peter 5:8



“I saw the statue of Jesus, ‘The Good Shepherd’ — then I knew the answer.”

cheer me up failed. It seemed ridiculous to sense evil around this “Harem of Happy Hookers,” but I did. The elite clients, heavy action, drugs, money... for the first time in my life of 38 years I was afraid of it all, and I felt like getting out.

There was an awareness in my heart and mind that hadn't been there before. Suddenly, I knew God was real, and I had to find out more!

That night, March 19, 1976, was a night I'll never forget. While at the apartment of a friend, there was a loud rap at the door. A chill gripped me as I quickly opened the door, only to find no one there. I remember thinking of something I had heard once, *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”*

I couldn't get out of there fast enough and went straight to my own house. I had a friend who lived in L.A., and I knew she went to church. She had told me about Jesus a year or so before, but *then* I wasn't listening. Tonight I would listen!

Calling her on the phone, I began telling her about this strange “power” coming over me, about instant financial successes, etc., hoping the fear would not show in my voice.

She asked if I “knew Jesus” yet, and I said no. Then she said, “Be careful, Bob, you can also receive power from the devil!”

me, and even they couldn't believe it. The set-up was too perfect.

The next day was even worse. I was uneasy about everything. I went to see the girls to see if they knew something, with no results. I could sense they felt I was up to something. Business was going along as usual, and everybody seemed to be really happy. But, efforts to

Her words hit me cold, and I knew then why I'd seen Satan the night before, and where I'd gotten my strange, new powers. Frightened beyond words, I put down the phone. Demon possession is nothing to fool with. I had to pray. I had to find a church. The devil had me and I wanted loose, no matter what.

The bar in my den, which had seemed so plush before, took on an aura of evil which was very frightening. I raced to my car and drove away, tears streaming down my face. Flashing before me was my whole, rotten life. Shame and guilt battered my very soul.

God was showing me how Satan had me bound — has us all bound — keeping us forever in the dark, and tonight I understood more than I ever had in my entire life. How we grab everything anybody says . . . transcendental meditation, hypnotism, horoscopes, drugs, etc., — but when someone tells us about the power of God, we spit it out like a bad taste. Oh, what a fool I'd been!

I drove on, believing it was too late. My life was over, and I was going to die right there in that car. I just knew God would not let me live any more. How could He? I deserved to die. Even Satan gave me special powers in my final days, and now it was time to pay. All my life I'd never given God a single thought. I had been Satan's disciple. And he had revealed himself, mockingly, because he was taking me to hell.

I wept bitterly, telling God I was sorry. I just didn't know, or my life would have been different. If only I could find a church.

Somehow, I remembered Orange



Bob Williams and his wife of 20 years, Colleen.

County Hospital had a chapel. That's where I could pray! I drove as fast as I could, but when I hit the lobby they told me the chapel was closed. It was early morning, but I wasn't going to leave until they opened up. I would just sit there and wait.

About this time, a man coming off the elevator said, "If you want to pray, there's a church two blocks down and turn to your left." I was so grateful as I hurried out the door to my car.

Moments later, I was driving through the gates of Garden Grove Community Church. It felt like I was driving through the gates of heaven. I actually thought that beautiful place had dropped out of the sky just for me. I had lived in Orange County for eight years and had never noticed it (or any other church, for that matter).

A night janitor watched me park my car, and he came out as I wandered around. "Is there something we can do?" he asked.

Afraid they would make me leave, I blurted out, "I need to pray!"

He said, "There's a place out front —

a statue. You could pray there."

I ran around to the front — and there — I saw the statue of Jesus with the sheep, "The Good Shepherd". And then, I knew. The answer was JESUS! He would save me! I cried out and fell to my knees, weeping from the very depths of my soul, as I clung to the hand of that statue.

I prayed with everything I had. Sin had crusted my heart to stone, but God's mercy was breaking it loose. I cried and prayed for what seemed like forever. As sin began leaving my heart, God's wonderful love came rushing in; and Jesus Christ became Lord of my life. I was free! I had met The Master face to face.

The janitor came out again and said he thought I should get some sleep in my car. I was so happy, tired and weak that I agreed, and shook his hand. I really loved that guy. I didn't know him ... but I loved him.

The next morning I awoke about 6:00 a.m., cold and shivering, and I looked again at that beautiful church. Driving away, I began to wonder if what happened to me was for real. As I hit my



Bob and his son Tony, age 18, work out together daily.

radio button, I heard beautiful gospel music, and the speaker said, "The Holy Spirit has instructed me to announce that the angels in heaven are rejoicing because another name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life. A soul has been saved for Jesus Christ!" The power of God came into my car, and I shouted, "That's me! Glory to God, it's me! It's true! I'm saved!"

Realizing I was *really free*, I stripped the diamonds off my fingers and jerked off my expensive watch and threw them all in the gutter. I had worshiped them long enough. I had a Pearl of Great Price now, worth far more than anything money could buy. I would never sell my soul again.

Then the devil, taking Jesus up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give you, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish — therefore if you will worship me, all will be yours."

· Luke 4:5

The devil is still dealing today. The powers of darkness continue to give us all that we want, but the price we have to pay is far greater than we could ever realize. The payoff is eternity without God, lost forever, with no hope. God can, and will, put your life back together, as He did mine. And, this is not the *end* of my story, it's only the beginning ... □

Today, Bob is a private chauffeur for a California executive. Weekends are spent in prison ministry, and street preaching in the Hollywood area.

Bob and his wife, Colleen, attend Zion Christian Center, Orange, California.

From Madness to Miracles

Dick Penner
Niagara Falls, Canada



I came into this world in 1928. My dad was an ordained pastor in the Mennonite church in Alberta, Canada. I was the seventh of eight children and very rebellious. My family reminded me of a litter of chickens — there's always one who is going to get pecked to death, and that was me in our family. So I grew up having one pity party after another because I was alone in a world I hadn't asked to come into.

We went to church every Sunday because the church was in our house. I skipped out of Sunday school pretty often. When I was 14, I had a bad accident. I fell off a horse and injured my neck so badly that I was no longer able to focus decently. As a result, I had to drop out of school. By the time I was 19 I was an alcoholic.

Because I never finished high school, I was determined to make something of myself and be recognized. I worked very hard and ended up as the owner/operator of a taxi company in Alberta.

About that time I married Elsie. Our love lasted about the same length of time as the ceremony. We had four daughters and sort of knew the Bible. I thought my life was very scriptural because Paul had a thorn in his flesh and I had Elsie and the four girls. Everybody has their crosses to bear. Since I had my fill of them (Elsie and the girls) I knew that spiritually I'd get by.

I taught Sunday school and was on the board of our church because I also thought I could work my way to heaven.

At work I had become the area manager of one of the largest trucking

companies in Canada. I left just before I had a total breakdown and joined General Motors as a clerk. Again, the built-in desire to be a "somebody" drove me until I was a supervisor in the foundry. I worked very hard, drank very hard, and earned my way up the ladder of success.

This almost earned me a divorce. The only reason we didn't separate was because of my church upbringing. We didn't believe in murder and we didn't believe in divorce. We thought about it... we just didn't do it.

So Elsie and I made a pact: When our youngest was 16 we would go our separate ways. The agreement was firm. We would have done our duty in life, having raised our girls to the best of our ability. They would go their ways and we would go ours.

When our youngest was 11, I had a total physical and mental breakdown. This landed me in the psychiatric ward. I had searched for peace and love in the occult, in transcendental meditation, and in hypnosis, and I couldn't find it.

Also, because of my earlier accident, the vertebrae in my neck were rapidly getting worse. I had to go to the chiropractor almost every day, gulp a bottle of aspirin and drink a quart of booze just to survive.

At the age of 45 I signed myself out of the psychiatric ward and became a "thing" in our family room. Day in and day out I'd sit in a brown upholstered chair taking prescription pills, morning, noon and night. My case was considered hopeless and the doctors only gave me a short time to live.

The previous year our two eldest

girls had gone to a Mennonite youth camp north of Toronto where they had gotten saved. They tried to tell us that we needed to ask Jesus into our hearts, but I was adamant: None of us needed Jesus because everything they needed to cope with life came from us anyway. We had even taught Sunday school and hadn't needed Jesus. So if they didn't like it in our house, the door swung both ways. They could leave. Thank God they elected to stay home and pray for their mom and dad!

The girls didn't know which way to turn because I was so sick, so one day they brought home a little book called *I Believe in Miracles* by Kathryn Kuhlman. It was similar to *Voice* magazine because it has testimonies of real people having been helped by the real Jesus.

They talked Elsie into reading one of the stories but her reaction was, "God doesn't heal anymore today because we have the Bible. He doesn't *need* to do that anymore." After all, we had been in

church for years and had never seen anyone healed (not even on television). That was in 1973.

The next morning, Elsie went to work and the girls went to school. I found this book and read that Kathryn was holding meetings in a Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. I called Pittsburgh to see if this was true. It was.

So I went to my psychiatrist to see if Elsie and I could go to Pittsburgh and check this person out. He said that it would be a good idea if we went to Pittsburgh and had a good vacation because it would probably be the last vacation we would ever have. Besides, it would give Elsie some very fond memories of vacationing in Pennsylvania with her late husband, Dick.

So we went to Pittsburgh and checked into the old William Penn Hotel. We had to get up at 5:00 a.m. to stand in line for an 8:00 a.m. service.

I had never stood in line before. If I couldn't buy my way in, it wasn't worth

Dick Penner's daughters: Janet, Debbie, Kathy, JoAnna



going. But that day I took my pills, smoked my cigarettes and stood in line.

The doors opened and 5,000 people flooded into the church. I had never cried in my life, but for some strange reason Elsie and I started weeping as soon as we got inside. We didn't understand it because we were tough people ... a determined man and wife who were making it even though they couldn't stand each other.

The organ played "Hallelujah" all morning long. I have no idea what Kathryn talked about, but halfway through the service an usher came and knelt down beside me. She whispered that God had revealed exactly what was wrong with me. She said that my vertebrae were deteriorating, my liver was very sick, and my lungs were black as tar. But then she said, "God is healing you."

I said, "I didn't come for that. I came for a little peace-of-mind because the doctors have given up on me and I'm going to die."

The lady assured me, "Jesus throws peace-of-mind in, but you are here and He wants to heal you."

Instantly I felt a hot, burning sensation in the back of my neck. Seeing my reaction she said, "What's wrong?" I told her, "I think the fellow behind me just threw a cigarette at me." She said, "No, Jesus is healing you. Stand up and do something you haven't done for years."

I threw my head back as hard as I could and there was no pain! The usher got excited and said, "Do something else you haven't done for a long time."

Well, I had had bursitis so badly

that I hadn't raised my right arm above my shoulder in two years. The arm went flying up.

Then the usher asked Elsie, "Can I borrow him for a minute?" Elsie answered, "You can have him." She hadn't gotten saved yet.

Meanwhile, there was a medical doctor on hand who validated all the miracles at the meetings. You had to go through him in order to get up on stage with Kathryn Kuhlman.

I told him how I was an out-patient of a psychiatric ward, having suffered a complete mental and physical breakdown. I showed him all the pills I was taking and he said, "That's authentic. You can take him up to see Kathryn."

Standing beside her I said, "Kathryn, how come I feel so light in here?" (I was referring to my chest area.) She said, "Because Jesus has saved you. He has taken all the sins and thrown them in the sea of forgetfulness."

Then she reached over and said, "God bless you real good." Suddenly I was on the floor. How did she do it?

So I got up and challenged her: "You want to try it again?" This time she didn't even touch me. She just looked at me and said, "God bless him real good," and down I went again.

When Kathryn gave an altar call, Elsie was the first one up to ask Jesus into her life. Later I said, "Why did you do that?" She replied, "Because all through my Sunday school teaching career, I've tried to teach people about the Holy Spirit. This morning I saw Him in the form of Jesus walking up and down the aisles touching people and healing them. I could hardly wait to meet Him in person

and ask Him into my heart."

We checked out of the hotel and went to our car. But when I got behind the wheel something happened that was just as miraculous as what had occurred that morning. I reached over and took Elsie's hand. At that moment our marriage was healed. We have been on a honeymoon ever since November 23, 1973.

When we called home that evening, our eldest daughter answered the phone. Excitedly Elsie told her, "Dad and I got saved and God healed Dad." Our daughter said, "Last night we went to a youth meeting. Before we left, our youth pastor said, 'Let's all kneel down and pray for these two girls' mom and dad, number one, that they will get saved, and number two, that if it be God's perfect will, that their dad will be healed, because this is a family of four girls that still needs a dad.'"

Overwhelmed, the girls asked if they could bring the young people (all 60 of them) over to the house on Sunday night to play "Show and Tell" ... to show them how God answers prayer.

So the following Sunday we had 60 kids in our family room. It was wall-to-wall kids. It was the first time I ever shared my testimony.

I went to see my psychiatrist the following week and told him, "I won't be seeing you anymore. Jesus told me to go to work on Monday."

I went to work and told everybody from the president of the corporation on down about my new friend, Jesus. Some of them looked at me kind of strange, but later, when they were in trouble, they would come by and say, "Would you



Dick Penner

introduce me to your friend, Jesus?"

I left General Motors as the Assistant Traffic Manager in 1981.

Today I'm the office administrator of a law firm in Niagara Falls. All three lawyers are born again: We're known as the "praying law firm in Niagara Falls." Life has been very interesting since I got saved. I've graduated from high school, gotten my Master's Degree in Theology, and am presently in training as a paralegal.

Since I received Jesus I have lost all desire for alcohol and cigarettes; it's all gone. I had X-rays taken of my neck after the healing and they say that I have two *NEW* vertebrae (no calcium on them). My

lungs and liver are good as *new* as well, and I have a *new heart* where Jesus lives.

This last September I went on a Full Gospel Airlift to Japan. Many things happened even before I left. God impressed me that He would have men pay my way over and also provide my spending money. Within two days after the Lord told me that, two men came and said they had been impressed by the Lord to send me to Japan. The next day another man said he wanted to give me the spending money I needed.

On the way over, twelve people were led to the Lord before the plane even landed!

When we arrived in Japan we gave away 5,000 *Voice* magazines, countless tracts of "The Way to New Life", and several hundred copies of *The Happiest People on Earth* — all printed in Japanese. We saw 350 people give their lives to the Lord, and 450 were filled with the Holy Spirit. Many more were healed.



Dick Penner and the President of the FGBMFI chapter in Sapporo, Japan

We were able to start several chapters while over there. We also gave some seminars on "How To Run A Chapter" and we shared Full Gospel's vision in many churches. Every pastor we talked to was excited about FGBMFI.

Another one of my "ministries" is to convince everyone to use *Voice* magazine and *His Voice* New Testament. I always explain to them how to use the contents of *His Voice* to lead people to the Lord and to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I believe that both *Voice* and *His Voice* are invaluable tools which can be in every country and nation. It is so easy to lead people to the Lord with *Voice* magazine. Help us get these tools to people everywhere! □

Dick and Elsie Penner



Dick and his wife, Elsie, attend Central Gospel Temple, St. Catharines and are very active in their church.

Dick has been a Field Representative and a president with Full Gospel, and is now a Life Member in the Niagara Falls, Ontario chapter. He travels extensively speaking at chapter meetings, and at Men's Advances and Conventions in many parts of Canada and the U.S.A. He was co-founder, and president of the Waterloo chapter last year.

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Political enemies can be deadly foes, as Ambassador Emmanuel Pelaez found out during a nearly-successful attempt on his life. Yet God had a purpose — even in this!

It was some time in 1980 when I first came to know a group of young businessmen in the Philippines, who invited me to attend a meeting in one of the downtown hotels in Manila.

The topic of the meeting, they told me, was to be Jesus Christ and His Word.

Frankly, the invitation sounded strange to me. In my country, businessmen and professionals frequently meet to discuss business or their professions or burning political, social or economic issues of the day. They frequently meet, yes, but, as here in your country, they meet as Rotarians, Jaycees, Lions, Kiwanians or as mem-



CHRIST'S

AMBASSADOR

... THE SOUND OF SCREECHING
TIRES . . . RAPID GUNFIRE . . .
THE SHATTERING OF GLASS

Ambassador Emmanuel Pelaez
Philippine Ambassador to
the United States
Washington, D.C.

bers of service clubs — that is, service to the community. But they never meet to discuss service to Christ, except as part of their church or religious activities.

It seemed incongruous to me that businessmen and professionals, whom I had never known to be religious in the traditional sense, would meet to discuss the gospel (for they called their organization the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International). They met in such secular settings as downtown hotels.

Nevertheless, I went to the meeting. A prominent Manila businessman "shared" — that is, he shared his life with us and recounted how Christ had touched him and taken him by the hand. I came out of that meeting impressed . . . but convinced that I would never have a future encounter with the Lord.

In my smugness, I deemed myself already a good Christian — although my religion was a Sunday affair, my prayers were sporadic and I had no familiarity with the Word of God.

You see, in the old Catholic environment of the Philippines, Scripture was read out to the faithful only at Mass, and there were no Bible studies at all.

I complied with my duties as a Catholic. I went to Mass on Sundays, confessed once in a while, took communion and generally observed the commandments, keeping my nose clean and rendering justice to my fellow men. In my judgment, this was enough to spare me from the fires of hell.

I made it a point never to discuss my religion in public, afraid that, as a politician, I would be accused of wearing my religion on my sleeve and using my faith for political advantage. Besides, I thought religion was a private matter between the individual and his God, not to be bandied about in the marketplace of secular life.

So, while I admired my friends in the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, I told myself that it was not for me.

Looking back, I realize now that I was a marginal Christian — until the Lord shook me and literally took hold of me and my life.

The Lord's intervention took the form of a vicious assassination attempt against me, which, without His infinite mercy, I could not have survived. The incident took place on the evening of July 21, 1982. The police found 68 bullet holes in my car.

I had been involved in a running public debate with high officials of the Marcos government, which had imposed a monopoly in the coconut industry of the Philippines to the detriment of millions of small and poor coconut farmers, who not only were deprived of the true market value of their produce but were also required to pay a levy on their sale.

Total levy collections had reached the equivalent of over \$1 billion and there was no accounting of the funds, which were squandered by Marcos' cronies. In my continuing denunciations of these anomalies, I stepped on the toes of quite a number of powerful people who apparently wanted to silence me.

There could have been no other motive. I am and have always been a man of peace and had no personal enemies. In any event, the perception of my countrymen was and is that the attempt against my life stemmed from the coconut issue.



Philippine's Ambassador to the United States — and Christ's Ambassador to the world — Emmanuel Pelaez

To go on with my story, it was past eleven o'clock of that evening of July 21, 1982. I was going home from a diplomatic dinner in a chauffeur-driven car. About 500 yards from my home, a car suddenly overtook and blocked us. It was dark, so my impressions came from sounds — the sound of screeching tires, of an engine being revved, of rapid gunfire and the shattering of glass. I was at the rear seat of the car. Instinctively, I dove to the floor and stayed there until the firing stopped.

As the police reconstructed the incident, a car had overtaken us with the people in it firing submachine guns at us, until my car came to a full stop. Then a gunman pulled my driver out and shot him several times. He was found dead on the street, with his head and face shattered.

Meanwhile, another gunman went to the rear right window of the car and fired more than ten rounds into the rear seat, apparently because he thought I was seated there, but I was face downward on the floor.

I suffered 5 gunshot wounds to my back, which broke five or six of my ribs, and a gunshot wound to my left elbow which went through the flesh, but did not damage the bone. I was later to realize that I could not have survived the attack without God's having spread His protective mantle over me that night.

After the firing died down, I managed to get down from the car and proceed to a nearby home whose steel gates I pounded with all my might. As it turned out, the home belonged to a born-again family, who then brought me to the hospital.

In that hospital, events took place that convinced me of God's intervention.

While I was in the operating room, my family — my wife and several children with their spouses — kept vigil outside. You can imagine how distraught they were. Then, one of my daughters, who had been a member of a charismatic group for several years, took out her pocket Bible from her bag and opened it.

She told me later that before doing so, she prayed and asked God to give my family an indication of His will for me. When she opened the Bible, it opened on the page with Psalm 30, which in the Catholic Bible carries the heading "Prayer of Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death." She read the Psalm aloud. Let me give you a few verses from it:

"I praise you, Lord, because
you have saved me
and kept my enemies from
gloating over me.

"I cried to you for help, O Lord
my God,
and you healed me;
you kept me from the grave.

"I was on my way to the
depth below,
but you restored my life.

"I called to you, Lord;
I begged for your help:

"What will you gain from my death?
"What profit from my going to the grave?"
"Are dead people able to praise you?"

"Can they proclaim your
unfailing goodness?"

"You have changed my sadness
into a joyful dance;

"You have taken away my sorrow
and surrounded me with joy,

"So I will not be silent;
I will sing praise to you.

"Lord, you are my God;
I will give you thanks forever."

You can imagine the effect of these words on my family. Literally, their sadness was changed to joy: they knew God was telling them that I would survive.

When they told me of this incident later, during my convalescence, I kept reading and re-reading Psalm 30. And each time I read it, the last verses would seem to jump at me:

"So I will not be silent;
I will sing praise to you;
I will give you thanks forever."

I read it until I felt I had discerned the Lord's will: that I should retire from the public service and spend the rest of my years proclaiming His goodness, as I am proclaiming it to you now, and help in building His kingdom on earth, in the hearts of men.

After two months of convalescence, I returned to the National Assembly of which I was then a member. I took the floor and announced that I would not run for reelection, but would devote the rest of my years to the service of God. My colleagues politely applauded me at the end of my speech — but I knew from their looks that they thought I was crazy.

I then set about to put my life in the Lord's service. But before I could do this, He tested me whether or not I could accept Him into my life on His terms. Strangely enough, the first test that He gave me was whether or not I really understood the meaning of the "Our Father."

As I came to in my hospital room after the operation, I prayed the "Our Father," almost automatically, as I had done in the past. It was then that I realized that I had said this prayer countless times with my lips rather than with my heart.

As I came to that part which said,

"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," these last words would get stuck in my throat.

"No, Lord, not this time. I could not forgive those who had killed my driver, an innocent man, and had wanted to kill me." I would start to pray again and again, but the Lord, speaking through my conscience, would say to me: "You must forgive, no matter how grievous the wrong. You must not hate. Because a Christian is not allowed to hate. You must forgive, because without forgiveness, there can be no love, and if there is no love . . . you cannot be a follower of Christ."

I wrestled with my conscience and with my emotions (which called for hatred and revenge) . . . but the Lord's prayer was immutable: you must forgive. After time, I surrendered myself to Him. "Yes, Lord, I forgive, I will not hate, I will bear no ill will; I will love those who tried to kill me because You will it so." With this act of surrender, an overwhelming peace came over me . . . and I vowed to spend the rest of my life serving Him.

Thereafter, I set about re-ordering my life, putting Christ at the center of it, in every endeavor and situation, 24 hours a day. I discussed what had happened to me with my spiritual advisers, with friends. They all agreed that the Lord was calling me to a mission. But how unprepared I was. I did not even have any familiarity with the Word of God.

So, with the help of a charismatic priest who is among the leaders of the charismatic renewal in the Philippines, I had Bible studies for over a year-and-a-half together with a small group of

friends whom I invited to join my wife and me.

I became involved in the propagation of the Bible in the Philippines as a member, then board director, then President of the Philippine Bible Society. Together with the PBS and Cardinal Sin, we launched a Bible distribution project called "A Bible for Every Family," which brought at least a million copies of the New Testament into Filipino homes. I became active in the charismatic renewal and spoke to many audiences, including those of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International in the Philippines.

When President Corazon Aquino called me back from retirement to serve as the Philippine Ambassador to the U.S., I at first declined, wishing as I did to devote more time to evangelization. When she insisted, friends convinced me that my being the political ambassador of my country here would in no way prevent me from being an Ambassador of Christ.

Indeed, I have come to know and love so many committed Christian brothers in Washington and elsewhere in the United States that I feel it is the Lord who ordained my being here in this beautiful country.

I ask your prayers for my nation, the Philippines, that seeks to build a just society under God; I ask your prayers for its courageous president who proclaims God's goodness in her prayers and her actions; and I ask your prayers so that the Holy Spirit shall inspire all of us to become servants of the Lord and builders of His kingdom on earth and in the hearts of men. □

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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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Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International was founded in 1952 by Demos Shakarian to reach men for Jesus. One year later, God gave him a vision of the people of every continent, revealing that the ministry of the Fellowship would result in people everywhere being brought to Jesus and linked in loving community.

That vision is becoming a reality through the Fellowship's ministries, now touching ninety-three nations and transcending denominational, racial and cultural barriers. Men interested in participating in this exciting end-time ministry are invited to write: Chapter Department / FGBMFI / P. O. Box 5050 / Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

CONTENTS

SENTENCED to TRIALS

Judge Larry Lopez-Alexander took the laws of this land seriously — handing down unheard of sentences to drunk drivers and other offenders. Defense attorneys realized in order to spare their clients these sentences, they'd have to get the judge first — and they did.

2

As a Roaring Lion

By the time he was 29, Bob Williams had spent half his life behind bars. Never satisfied, he was always searching for something better. Then an encounter with the devil showed him where his search was really taking him.

16

Sentenced to Trials.....	2	From Madness to Miracles	22
Conventions.....	9	Christ's Ambassador	29
Set Free Prison Ministry Update	9	International Directors	36
Did God Kill My Baby?	10	Six Steps to Salvation	38
As a Roaring Lion	16	Chapter Outreach	38

From: **FGBMFI**
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