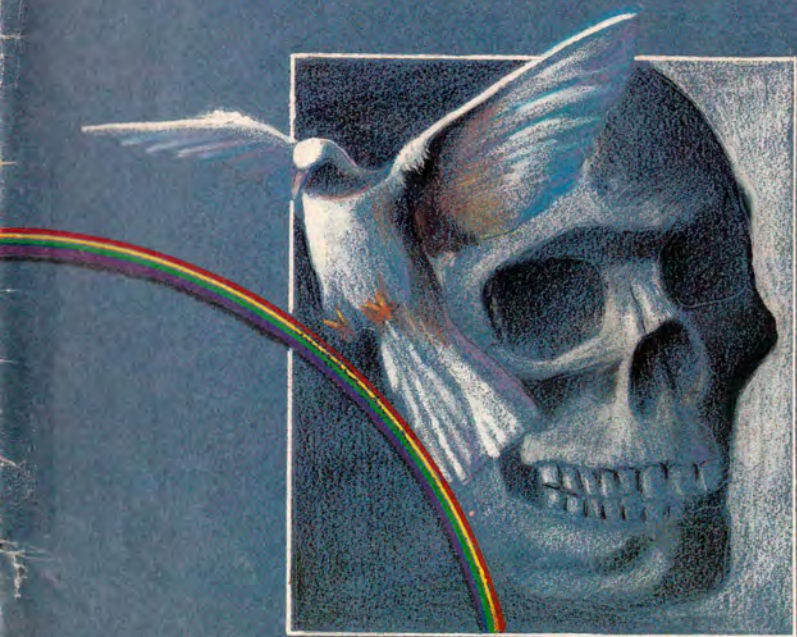


09-88

Full Gospel Business Men's

VOICE



OVERCOMING
FEAR OF DEATH

OVER FEAR

When the threat of death knocks unexpectedly at the door, we are confronted with the terrorizing thoughts, "Where am I going?" "What does life after death hold in store?" "How am I going to die?"

These are among the most prominent fears in men and women today.

For some, it's not the fear of death itself that disturbs them the most, but rather fear of how they will die.

Death represents the final unknown—something that in itself is fearful to many people. Yet American society seems obsessed with death.

- The panic over AIDS is rapidly increasing despite massive educational efforts about causes and prevention.
- Spurred by the humanist-leaning public education system, classes about death have been incorporated into many curriculums. The move has stretched down as far as the first grade.
- In Florida, one district instructed six-year-olds to create model coffins from shoeboxes. Other, older

students have been instructed to sit in coffins to confront the fear of death or have learned the metric system by measuring themselves for caskets.

But no matter what schools try to teach about death, its reality is something we only can touch through experience. Trying to prepare for death is akin to trying to prepare for a final examination without ever reading a book or attending a class.

Some people dread separation from loved ones. Others are afraid of leaving behind unfinished business, are afraid to resolve old, bitter disputes, or are terrified of dying of a slow, painful disease.

Most importantly, there is the fear of not being ready to meet one's Maker, since after we leave this life, it is too late to change our decision.

In the following testimonies of Dr. Don Whitaker and Larry McCallister, you will see how two men faced death in very different ways, both emerging with confidence in an eternal life with God and everlasting joy.

COMING OF DEATH

In 1975 I was an atheist on my deathbed. I was petrified.

You see, it's easy to be an atheist when you're healthy. It's easy to be an atheist when you're affluent. But when you're on your deathbed, it's harder. I know; I've been there.

Today I'm a Christian doctor who specializes in preventive and orthomolecular medicine. But for 37 years I wanted nothing to do with God. I even tore the covers off Bibles and burned them. Why? The roots of my rebellion were very deep.

When I was born my mother died of postpartum hemorrhage. She bled to death.

By the time I was four years old, I knew something wasn't right. All the other kids had mothers, but I had a grandmother instead. So I asked an elderly lady, "What happened to my mother?" She said, "God took her home." Hearing that, something snapped inside me. I was never the same again. From that tiny seed grew a feeling of rejection and despair that I carried my entire life.



Dr. Don Whitaker
Mission Viejo, California

Because my father held me responsible for my mother's death, he only came to see me twice the entire time I was growing up. My sister, too, would have nothing to do with me. So feeling rejected, unloved and unwanted, I turned to rebellion in the worst sense. However, I did develop the habit of working extremely hard.

I worked my way through high school; worked my way through college; and worked my way through professional school, becoming a successful nuclear physicist before I went into medicine.

Believing that success was the only way to happiness, I continued to work extremely hard. Within three years of becoming a doctor I was one of the most successful physicians in Southeast Oklahoma. I was "Doctor of the Day" of the state of Oklahoma for seven years. This is the highest honor that state can give you.

I had arrived. Setting out to become successful, I was affluent, powerful and still thought I could buy happiness. I had achieved peer recognition and high honors, but inside I still felt rejected. Not being able to cope with the overwhelming frustration of this secret, inner state of mind, I took to drinking. Soon I became a hard core alcoholic. This then became a stepping-stone to drug abuse.

My insatiable hunger for excitement to

fill the emptiness sent me looking for happiness in all kinds of activities. I looked for it in flying across the continent, in scuba diving, in running guns to the Caribbean and in drugs. I had to have hard drugs every four hours.

By 1975 I was so out of control that I could not practice medicine. But if you had looked at my financial statement, you would have said I was a success.

One day I received a phone call from Hoyt Axton, who was a friend of mine. He and some other superstars were doing a TV special on the West Coast and he asked if I'd like to come out for a visit. I said sure.

At that time I was drinking a fifth-and-a-half of straight tequila a day coupled with eight joints of marijuana, cocaine and using the needle. By the end of the week my stomach was in such bad shape I knew I'd have to have surgery.

The surgeon I wanted to use was in Texarkana. So loaded with Demerol and Percodan, I flew into Oklahoma City, hoping to catch a connection. But as luck would have it, there was a big ice storm in Oklahoma City and small planes couldn't get out. So I called a senator friend and said, "Jim, I'm sick. I've got to get to the hospital." He sent a car out to drive me 270 miles to Wadley Hospital in Texarkana.

I was in such bad shape they couldn't

FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S VOICE (ISSN0042-8264) is published monthly for \$4.95 per year by FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL, a worldwide evangelistic fellowship of Christian businessmen, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, California 92628, U.S.A. Incorporated January 2, 1953 as a nonprofit religious corporation. Second-class postage paid at Costa Mesa, California and at additional mailing offices. All rights reserved. September, 1988, Vol. 36, No. 9.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Voice* at the above address. In Canada send return copies to P. O. Box 1704, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6Y1. Yearly subscription: U.S.—\$4.95, Canada and overseas—\$5.35. Bulk rate cards sent on request. Also available in French, German, Norwegian, Swedish and English (U.K.)—\$5.00; Spanish—\$3.00.

operate for two days. After the surgery, I woke up on a respirator. I couldn't breathe. An endotracheal tube was "breathing" for me.

Then I heard somebody say, "Man, his hair is long" (I had very long hair then). Another dude said, "Not near as long as it's gonna be before he gets out of



Dr. Don Whitaker

here!" A third guy chimed in, "He ain't gonna get out of here."

They were talking about me! Totally helpless, there was nothing I could do but lay there, a prisoner of devices and tubes. There was a tube in my throat, one going down my nose, blood dripping through an I.V. in one arm, five tubes running in and out of my belly, a cardiac monitor checking my heart, and a Foley catheter. I knew I was sick.

When my good friend (and doctor) Duncan came in and I said, "What did I have?" He said, "Acute hemorrhagic necrotic pancreatitis." What this added

up to was the fact that I was literally, nearly dead.

I said, "How long do I have?" He answered, "I can't tell you. But I'll tell you this, if you have anything to get signed, get it done now."

I learned later that he had told my two sons I'd be dead in six hours. If by some miracle I made it past that, I'd definitely be dead in three days.

He'd advised my oldest son Eric, "You're going to have to be the man of the house." Now, you don't strap a story like that on a fifteen-year-old kid unless you mean it.

At that point 1/4 grain of morphine sulfate every two hours wasn't even touching the pain. Lying there, all I could think was, "Why is this happening to me?" I was only 42 years old — too young to die!

You feel hopeless when you know you're going to die. Yet there was nothing I could do. For the first time, I couldn't buy my way out and there was nothing medical science could do. I even felt like the hospital was waiting for me to die — they needed the bed.

All of a sudden it occurred to me, "Here I am, about to die and I'm not saved!"

Now isn't that something? For ten years I'd been a professed atheist saying there was no such thing as God. After all, nobody could show me God in a laboratory, or show me God under a microscope. I couldn't find Him anywhere and some of the finest institutions in the world had confirmed that God was dead.

But on my deathbed, my perspective changed. Knowing I was ready to "make the trip" I thought, "I've got to do some-

thing about this. I don't have long!"

Suddenly I remembered that in my entire life, there was one man. . .one man who had spoken to me about the love of Jesus and the love of God. For five years this one man had gently tried to get through to me.

Ron worked in my hospital. He talked to me about Jesus and several times, when he prayed for patients, I saw miracles that medical science could not explain.

Now I was dying in Intensive Care and thinking, "Ron's the only one who ever told me about Jesus. I've got to see him."

This was ironic because in the past, whenever Ron had tried to talk to me, I'd sworn at him and chased him away. Yet when I was dying I felt that only this one man stood between me and hell.

I had no idea how to get saved. In my ignorance I believed that I had to have Ron in order to accept Jesus. I didn't know I could ask Jesus into my heart all by myself. All I knew was if I wanted to have salvation I had to see Ron.

So I called the nurse and gave her Ron's number. Well, Ron wasn't home. He was somewhere in Alabama.

Believe me, that was the longest night I've ever experienced. All I could do was stare at the ceiling, terrified. My tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth. But worse than the agony of death was the terrorizing question of what would happen afterward. Immersed in fear, I realized the fact I was dying was no longer as important as not being saved.

Being a doctor, I'd seen all kinds of people die . . . the young and the old. I've seen them go to their death screaming,

and I've seen them go with a smile on their face. I've seen them burn to death, get shot to death, or go because they were stabbed. But the reality that gripped me with an intensity I wouldn't have thought possible was the fact I was not



Dr. Whitaker ministering spiritually and physically in Africa.

saved. I was so scared I could hardly believe it.

In the midst of my struggle I could see the nurse looking down at me saying, "Dr. Whitaker, Dr. Whitaker, Dr. Whitaker . . ." then there was total silence.

In an instant I was pulled into a deep, black void. It was totally black. I started sliding into the hole at a 45 degree angle. I could feel wind on my face and in my hair as I slid downward, faster and faster.

Sliding further and further down, I then saw what appeared to be a flickering fire. Then came an overwhelming feeling of impending doom. Totally alone, I was petrified. I can actually remember feeling my blood turn to ice. My skin started to crawl. Still, I kept sliding down this chute,



(Above) Dr. Whitaker in Israel with TBN's Paul Crouch

"Since we, God's children, are human beings—made of flesh and blood—he became flesh and blood too by being born in human form; for only as a human being could he die and in dying break the power of the devil who had the power of death.

Only in that way could he deliver those who through fear of death have been living all their lives as slaves to constant dread."

Hebrews 2:14-15, The Living Bible

the sense of impending doom becoming so hideous that I tried desperately to get away. Digging my fingers into the bed, I made one agonizing attempt to pull my soul back. By the grace of God He let me return.

Bathed in my own perspiration, I laid there shaking so badly that I thought I was having an epileptic seizure. But it wasn't a seizure. The truth was I couldn't hold still because I had glimpsed something so real and horrible that I didn't want to have anything to do with it again.

But against my will I made three trips that night. Three times I slid down into that black void and three times, by the power and mercy of God, He let me come back. Through this I became abso-

lutely convinced that there are two worlds beyond this one: heaven and hell. I almost made the wrong trip.

At 10 o'clock the next morning, Ron arrived. I've never been so glad to see anyone in my life. He said, "What are your chances?" I said, "I have none."

"Then now's the time to accept the Lord."

"You're right!"

Ron sat down, opened his Bible and led me in the sinner's prayer. As I prayed, a peace came over me that I'd been searching for all my life. The joy of the Lord filled me. I could hardly believe that it was there all the time . . . just for the asking!

I laid back on the bed, still knowing I was going to die but filled with His love and peace. There were still five tubes in my belly, an I.V. going into my arm, a gastric nasal tube down my throat and the wires to the cardiac monitor. But I was no longer afraid.

Looking back, I can see that fear of death can even torment men who have practiced medicine for twenty years. Fear of death and fear of the unknown had gripped me. Ruled me. I had lived in bondage to fear.

But with one prayer God took away this fear. From then on I knew that my time and my life were in God's hands.

The day I finally surrendered to God, Ron held up his Bible and said, "It says here that if a believer lays hands on you, you will be healed."

Now, I'd only been a Christian five minutes when he told me that. Here three of the best doctors in the South-west were telling me I was going to die, and this man tells me that all I had to do

was believe and I'd be healed!

Well, I'm no fool. I may have been a little hard headed and a slow learner, but when Ron laid hands on me, prayed and said, "Don, God has healed you," I believed and said, "Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!"

I figured that if I was going to get healed, I'd better say thanks. Soon I was to learn that where man stops, God can begin.

On the first day after surgery, Dr. Duncan had tears in his eyes. He was a personal friend of mine and had not expected to see me alive. The second day he came in again, but still got choked up. The third day he looked at me a little strangely. After all, the 72 hours were up and I was still alive.

The fourth day passed, then the fifth and sixth. Puzzled, he said, "Don, I don't see how, but you are going to make it. But if you do, you're going to be a bad diabetic." Reading the surgical report, I saw that only one quarter inch of my pancreas appeared to be healthy. Unless I continually pumped enzymes and chemicals into my body, I'd never be able to digest food, and would die.

But let me tell you the kind of Heavenly Father we have. Two weeks after the surgery, I was in the Bahama Islands. Before I left the doctors took my blood so many times to try and prove that I was diabetic, that I almost became anemic. I had asked Duncan, "Since I'm going to be a six-hour plane ride from any hospital, what do I look for if I'm headed for a relapse?"

He answered, "I don't know. You're the first case I've ever had like this that has lived."

Now every doctor knows that without a pancreas it's impossible to live without massive doses of insulin and enzymes plus a strict diet. But by the mercy and love of God, today I take absolutely no insulin, no enzymes and I eat anything I want. That's a miracle of God! There's no other explanation.

One night as I was driving down the road, the power of God came upon me and I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Today the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead quickens my mortal body. Christ abides in me.

Since then I've traveled the world with T. L. Osborn and seen many other miracles. One night in Cazuma, Africa, 33 blind people received their vision. As a physician, I examined one formerly blind child after God put eyes in her head where there had only been indentations. It made me realize that our Heavenly father is not an imitator — He is the Creator.

Today God uses me to minister to men in the area of depression, anxiety and fear. There is so much fear binding the Body of Christ!

One thing men fear is that they're not good enough for God to forgive them. They really don't know that God promises that if you ask forgiveness, then you are forgiven, not later, but right then. Still, some people aren't sure.

But I've found that if we fear God, we have no reason to fear anything else . . . least of all death.

Several months ago I came close to death once again. This time I had about two minutes to think before I faced a fatal plunge.

A friend and I had gone up a steep mountain in a cable car to look at a TV tower. It was windy and the authorities had told us not to go if the wind reached a certain intensity.

When we started out, everything was under control, but halfway up our mile-long ride, the wind whipped into ferocious gusts. The car shook violently, tossing like it was coming apart. We could hear that the cable was ready to tear loose. My companion screamed into his walkie-talkie, "Get us down! Get us down!"

I quickly calculated that it would take 30 to 40 seconds for my body to hit the ground after the cable snapped. I admit that I was not looking forward to being splattered all over the countryside.

Eventually, the wind stopped and we were safe. But even in the face of this violent death, I had a deep inner peace. I also had the indescribable comfort of knowing that I was walking with the Lord as closely as I knew how and that I was going to be with Him! In that moment I knew without a doubt that in Him I had overcome all fear of death. □

Today Dr. Whitaker has a far reaching family practice with offices in both Texas and California. He specializes in preventive medicine stating that, "After 20 years of treating disease, I am convinced that the majority of all degenerative diseases are preventable. It is far better to prevent them earlier than to treat them later."

In addition to fulfilling international speaking engagements, Dr. Whitaker has a weekly TV program on Trinity Broadcasting Network called "Calling Dr. Whitaker" which has won two Angel Awards in the past three years. An Angel Award is the highest award a Christian program can receive.

Dr. Whitaker's tapes and other information can be obtained by calling 1-800-232-6234 or by writing him at 340 West Marshall Avenue, Suite 301, Longview, Texas 74604.

In his latest book, Facing Death and the Life After, Billy Graham offers many keys to overcoming the fear of death.*

Here he shares some insights and answers to our questions.

"If You Knew the moment and manner of your death in advance, would you order your life differently?"

How should we face death?

Today we are confronted with so many voices telling us how to live. We are told how to look young, stay trim, keep healthy, have a good image, think positively, make more money, have more friends. All these are reasonable ambitions, but they indicate that we are trying desperately to cling to this present world. The truth is, life is transitory. "What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:14b). If we want to make the most of life, we need to face the fact that it is going to end. My father-in-law, Dr. L. Nelson Bell, wrote many years ago, "Only those who are prepared to die are really prepared to

live." The uncertainty is not the dying, it's the preparation.

Where should we seek answers concerning death?

" . . . We can come to grips with the need to get our life's priorities in order. However, we cannot begin to understand the riddle of death without the guiding knowledge of the Word of God. Outside of the Bible, death will forever remain an unknown phantom, stalking helpless human victims."

Why talk about death?

"If we are in a battle with this enemy called Death, I believe we should learn about it, in order to know how to confront the dying experience. We need to

know how to face that enemy on our own behalf, and how to deal with the inevitable deaths of loved ones and friends."

What is the most important reason for facing death and the life after?

My wife saved an article from *Moody Monthly*, published over thirty years ago. When she gave it to me, I was working on this book and I marveled how the Lord brings information to us just at the right moment. Now I would like to share it with you.

Five Minutes After . . .

It may be a moment, or after months of waiting, but soon I shall stand before my Lord. Then in an instant all things will appear in new perspective.

Suddenly the things I thought important — tomorrow's tasks, the plans for the dinner at my church, my success or failure in pleasing those around me — these will matter not at all. And the things to which I gave but little thought — the word about Christ to the man next door, the moment (how short it was) of earnest prayer for the Lord's work in far-off lands, the confessing and forsaking of that secret sin — will stand as real and enduring.

Five minutes after I'm in heaven I'll be overwhelmed by the truths I've known but somehow never grasped. I'll realize then that it's what I am in Christ that comes first with God, and that when I

am right with Him, I do the things which please Him.

I'll sense that it was not just how much I gave that mattered, but how I gave — and how much I withheld.

In heaven I'll wish with all my heart that I could reclaim a thousandth part of the time I've let slip through my fingers, that I could call back those countless conversations which could have glorified my Lord — but didn't.

Five minutes after I'm in heaven, I believe I'll wish with all my heart that I had risen more faithfully to read the Word of God and wait on Him in prayer — that I might have known Him while still on earth as He wanted me to know Him.

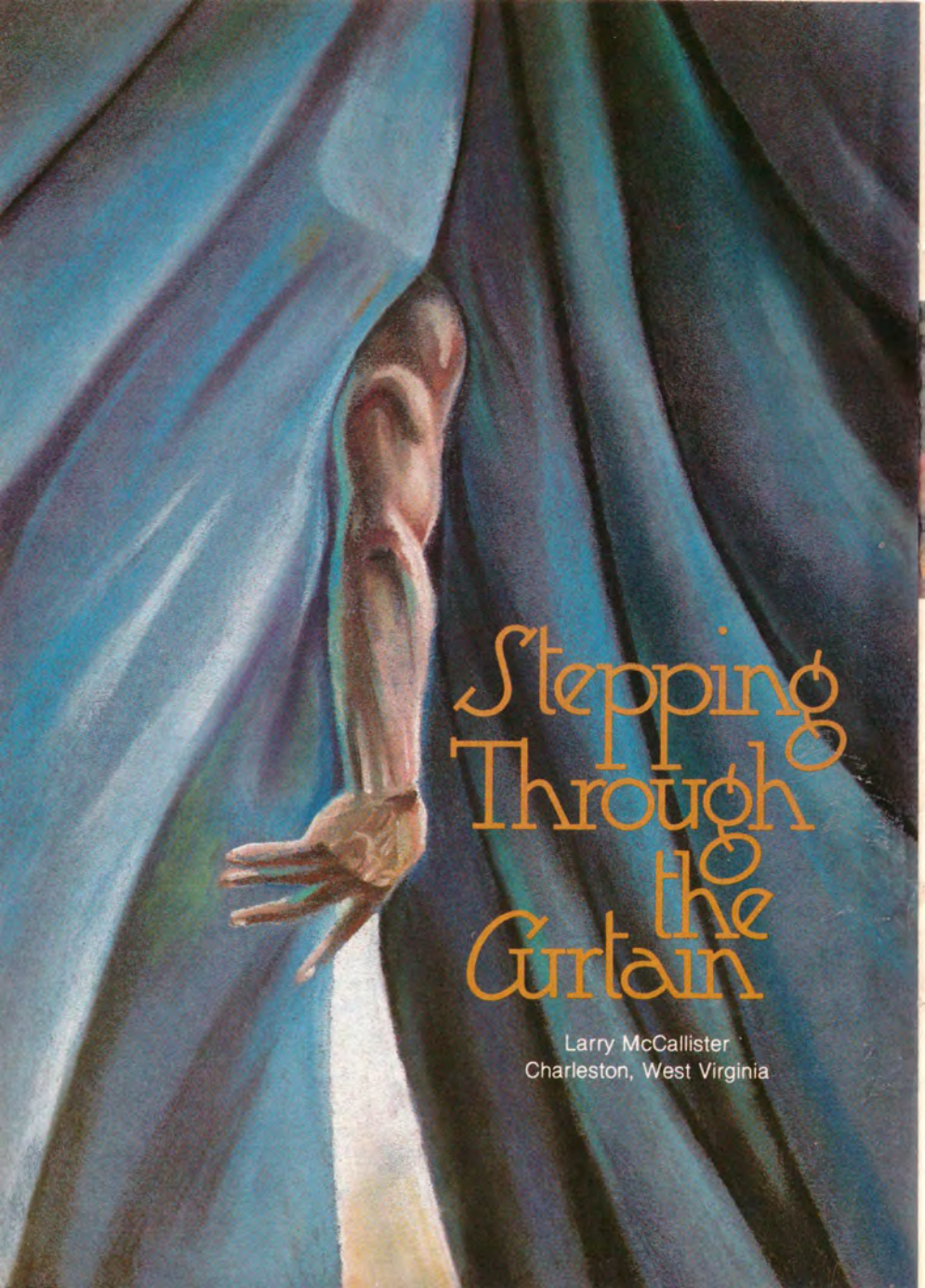
A thousand thoughts will press upon me, and though overwhelmed, by the grace which admits me to my heavenly home, I'll wonder at my aimless earthly life. I'll wish . . . if one may wish in heaven — but it will be too late.

Heaven is real and hell is real, and eternity is but a breath away. Soon we shall be in the presence of the Lord we claim to serve. Why should we live as though salvation were a dream — as though we did not know?

"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

There may yet be a little time. A new year dawns before us. God help us to live now in the light of a real tomorrow!

* Adapted from *Facing Death and the Life After*, copyright 1987, by Billy Graham, published by Word, Inc., Waco, Texas.

A painting of a hand reaching through a blue curtain. The hand is positioned vertically, with fingers slightly spread, as if grasping or pulling the fabric. The curtain is a deep, rich blue with visible folds and highlights, creating a sense of depth and texture. The background behind the curtain is dark, making the hand and the blue fabric stand out.

Stepping Through the Curtain

Larry McCallister
Charleston, West Virginia

Larry McCallister faced death in the jungles of Vietnam in 1965 and again 21 years later as a result of his war wounds. He combatted fear on both occasions. The first time, he knew his life wasn't pleasing to God. The second time, he had a vision of hell and mistakenly thought God had deserted him. But then he saw Jesus, who instructed him to "tell what great things I have done for you."

“Oh, God! . . .the pain. . .God, please heal me. . .just get me back home alive and I'll serve You. I promise.”

My vow followed a vicious battle in which Viet Cong attackers sprayed me with machine gun fire after a hand grenade blast had knocked me flat. Battered, I unleashed a volley from my M-14 automatic that cut down seven men and forced the survivors to flee.

I was guarding the perimeter of a camp in Long Binh, south of Saigon, in 1965. Our advance party of 200 from the 18th Infantry was preparing for the arrival of U.S. troops. When word of the tent city reached the enemy, they tried to slip in at 3 a.m. to destroy our headquarters, but I foiled their surprise attack.

General William Westmoreland later visited the Okinawa hospital where I was recuperating and awarded me the Purple Heart, Bronze Star and Silver Star for bravery and gallantry above and beyond the call of duty.

But one night, lying in that hospital, unspeakable terror gripped me through a nightmare in which my enemies were

standing over my bed, pumping more bullets into me. I could feel their heat searing my body as I relived the night I lost my left kneecap, the top of my left foot, and got a bullet lodged permanently in my chest.

I screamed and shredded my body cast trying to escape before the orderlies were finally able to hold me down for a tranquilizing shot.

But as soon as my wounds began healing, I forgot my promise to God. I was far from Him.

While growing up, my parents had always taken us to church in the hills of West Virginia, 35 miles east of Charleston. We lived on Cabin Creek, in a tiny place called Decota, which was more of a spot between two coal mines than a town.

My father spent 45 years as a miner, while my mother worked as a waitress in Decota's only restaurant. I was born in 1933 and my parents struggled to raise me, two brothers and two sisters in the midst of the Great Depression.

Times were so tough I left home just shy of my 15th birthday and lied to get into the Army. By the time they learned my real age, I had turned 17 and owned a distinguished record, so they let me remain in West Germany.

When I turned 21, I decided to get out, but the job market proved to be worse than expected.

I returned to the military in '56 and served 18 more years. I saw action in Korea, Lebanon and Vietnam. I enjoyed the sights of Germany, France and Hawaii; and lived in numerous areas of the United States.

My physical travels mirrored my spiri-

tual wandering, as I forgot about God's ways and took to alcohol and other vices. I was drinking heartily on my first tour of Vietnam, but on my second tour in 1968, the brutality pushed me over the brink.

I retired in 1974 as a chief warrant officer, that classification's highest grade. I then settled in West Virginia where I met my present wife, Billie Carol.

I had initially resisted the idea of coming home, but a property management company that wanted to hire veterans kept calling until I accepted their offer. It was hard adjusting to civilian life, but I plunged into my new occupation — managing an apartment building, which required 16-hour days, seven days a week.

Over the next seven years, I advanced to corporate vice president of the Silver Spring, Maryland office, where I oversaw rentals of 13 apartment buildings and 85 houses. I may have been living the American dream, but mentally I was drained. Finally, I quit and spent a couple years taking it easy. This was followed by a brief job as a military civilian before being laid off. There I was, out of work again.

One night I was overcome by an inexplicable desire to come back to West Virginia. I had no idea why, but the feeling rose up so strongly that I packed up my Volkswagen Beetle at 1:30 in the morning and headed north.

Two hours later in the pitch-black mountains of Tennessee, I was fiddling with the radio, annoyed by the preacher who had come on the station. Incredibly, no matter where I turned the dial, all I could hear was that preacher. His message was about how much Jesus suf-

fered before He went to the cross.

As I listened, the Holy Spirit flooded my memory with thoughts of my old "fox-hole covenant" in Vietnam. I began to shake and cry.

"Oh, Lord," I muttered between the tears cascading down my face, "please forgive me for not keeping my promises."

Suddenly, the pressure and burdens I



Larry and Billie Carol McCallister

had been carrying for years vanished. For years I had attended church out of a sense of tradition. It hadn't done a thing for me, but now I knew I could know the Lord personally! Tears of joy washed past tears of repentance.

I rushed back to share the good news with my sisters and soon joined their small, non-denominational church. Later my wife accepted Jesus as her Saviour, too.

It was at that church, on October 19, 1986, that a prophecy was given to me. The words I remember are, "I know the oppression that has come against you, the suffering and afflictions that face you, but I will be with you and your healing will come in My own time and in My own way." At the time, I had no idea what it meant.

The next afternoon I was in my office at the Charleston apartment complex where I had been hired as manager three months earlier. As I talked on the telephone, a severe pain struck my back and forced me to my knees.

Handing the telephone to my secretary, I gasped, "You better call the paramedics. Something is wrong. . .real bad."

That "something" was an aneurism. The large vessel that carries blood to the heart, weakened by my old war wounds, had burst. It was spilling blood into my stomach cavity and cutting off the flow of blood to my heart.

When I reached Charleston General Hospital, I was slipping in and out of consciousness. Because I was near death, I was rushed to surgery without stabilization or anesthesia. During that eight-hour period, I clinically died three times. As my spirit left my body I could hear medical personnel saying, "All his vital signs are gone."

Soon my spirit was traveling down a dark tunnel, where I detected images of little black imps who were waving their hands and mocking me with hysterical laughter. I became so disquieted I couldn't pray; I could only grope helplessly for words.

Halfway down the tunnel, as the

laughter intensified and grew wilder, I gathered enough strength to throw up my hands and cry, "Holy!"

The noise ceased.

"Holy!" I repeated, and a glimmer of sunshine appeared. I said the word a third time and it was as if time stood still.

When I awoke, I was in a bright room, surrounded by God's presence.

"Why, God?" I asked. "Why?"

He answered, "In you, I am well pleased."

"Why was I allowed to see the brink of hell?"

His only response was, "In you, I am well pleased."

Over the next few days, no doctor or nurse believed I could possibly live, while my family and church knew I would not die. During this time, I experienced a number of dreams and visions.

The most thrilling was when I gazed at Jesus piloting a huge wooden ship across the horizon. For some reason — possibly my own impurities — I couldn't look directly into His eyes.

What puzzled me was the sad look on His face. It was not anything like the pictures of gladness I'd seen portrayed so often. He didn't say anything, but He motioned to me twice with a sweeping wave of His hand.

Later, I again felt His presence and saw His silhouette amidst a blinding brilliance. The sadness was gone from His face which now flowed with such glory that I will never forget it. He commanded, "You are to equip yourself and go forth and tell what great things I have done for you."

However, in my vision of heaven I witnessed some heartbreaking things,

too. I saw my father, but my mother (who quit going to church when I was 13) and my brother who also had died, I didn't see.

Another vision that is still not totally clear involved my pastor, who was on stage preaching. The wide doors to the sanctuary were open, but a thick,

"During one of my surgeries, my doctor told me there were five people working on me, but he counted a total of 12 hands!"

impenetrable fog blocked the doorway. The church was almost full, but there were many stranded outside.

A tune I had never heard before ran through my mind: "Yesterday you couldn't find time for Jesus on your mind; you finally came to call His name, one day too late."

I knew that this song was not only for those outside, but those in the pews who were not yet serving God from their hearts.

I spent a total of 68 days in the hospital. During one of my surgeries, my doctor told me there were five people working on me, but he counted a total of

12 hands during the operation!

All my major organs had died except my heart, and my feet were slowly dying. Plans were made to amputate them, to do a colostomy and to hook me up to the dialysis machine.

I returned to the hospital in late January because I was going blind, but gradually the Lord restored my eyesight. He also began the miraculous total restoration of my body.

Today, I keep very busy serving the elderly in the apartment building I manage, tending to both their physical problems and spiritual needs. It brings me great joy, and I know it's one of the reasons the Lord spared my life.

No matter what I do, I am filled with joy. I know that when I step through that curtain of death again, I will be with the Lord who loves me so much. When the time comes, I hope you will join me in heaven. All you have to do is invite Jesus to live in your heart.

But please do it today. Tomorrow may be too late.

Larry McCallister and his wife, Billie Carol, manage the Charleston Arbours, an apartment building whose 240 residents are age 62 or over. They still attend Hope Christian Assembly on Cabin Creek on Sunday mornings, then hold services for the building residents every Sunday afternoon and Thursday evening. They also invite a Christian singing group to the Arbours twice a month. Larry has five sons, one stepson and 11 grandchildren.

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, P. O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

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1988 WORLD CONVENTION REPORT

The 35th annual World Convention held July 5 - 9 in Toronto, Canada was an overwhelming success. The theme, "The Vision Intensified," literally came alive as thousands of people from all over the world filled the Metro Toronto Convention Centre with songs and shouts of praise. More than 100 delegates from Africa, in their native costumes, glorified the Lord in song and dance as the vision God gave Demos took place before his very eyes.

Ninety percent of the speakers were from various parts of the world other than the United States. Their messages were delivered with a powerful anointing and resulted in a great harvest of spiritual results. Included in the international speakers' list were: Bruno Berthon, France; Ian James, New Zealand; Alan Jones, England; Gerry Kibarabara,



Kenya; Custodio Pires, Brazil; Dr. Joy Seevaratnam, Malaysia; Bill Subritzky, New Zealand and Adolph Zinsser, Germany.

The Men's Luncheon featured Norman Norwood and Convention Host Ernie Voth, president of FGBMFI in Canada. Rose Shakarian, wife of our Founder/President was speaker for the Ladies' Luncheon.

The convention centre was packed for the closing banquet. Demos Shakarian, once again re-elected as president of the Fellowship, gave a challenging message on forgiveness, dedication and opportunity. Demos explained that he and our newly elected Executive Vice-President, Gene Ellerbee, would be working together with the Board of Directors to see this Fellowship move ahead with God's anointing in a greater way than ever before.

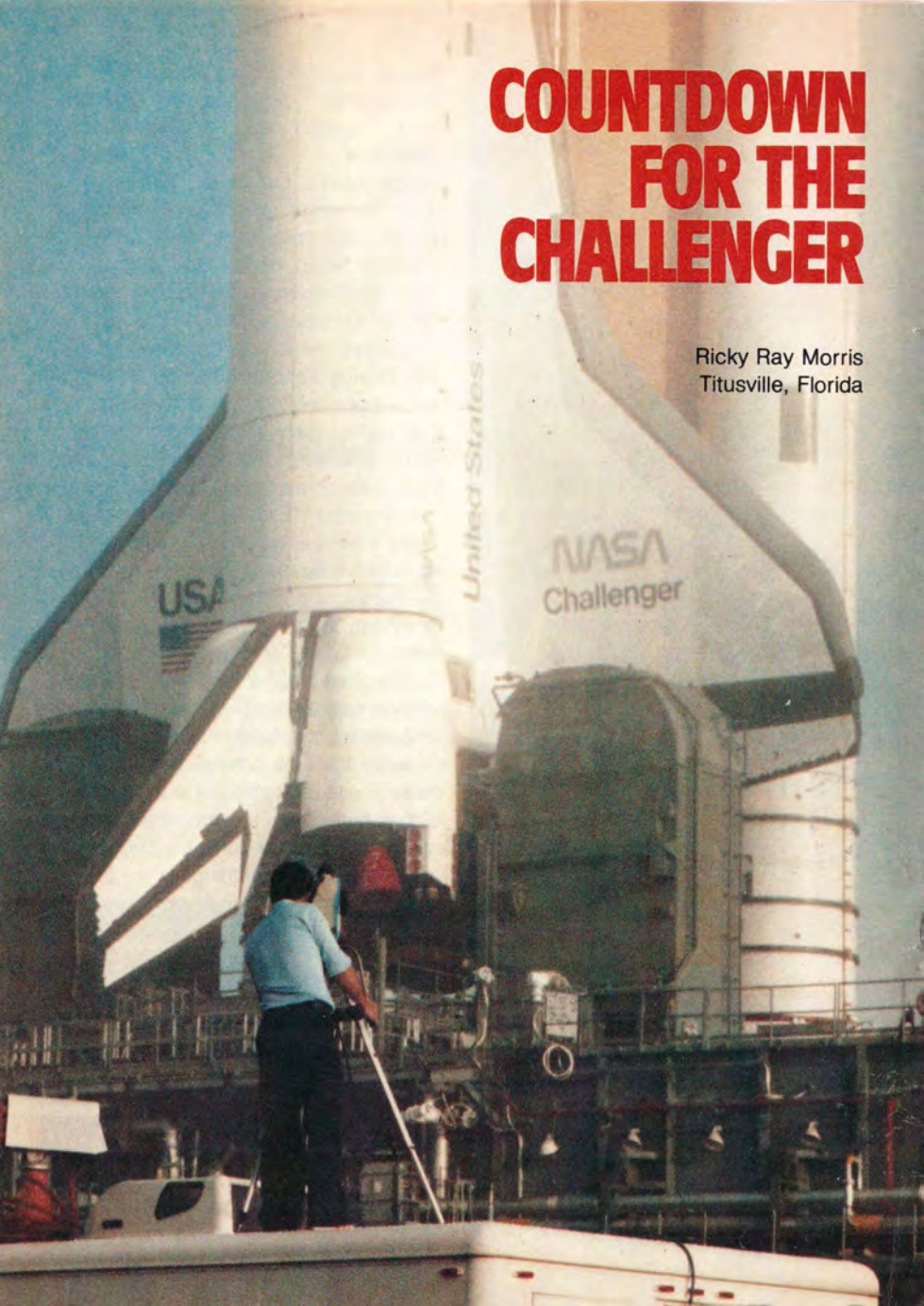


The banquet climaxed with a great prayer service as Demos anointed and ministered to hundreds who filled the area in front of the head table. As he prayed one after another was slain in the Spirit and God Himself intensified the vision and sent us forth to "redeem the time" before His coming.



COUNTDOWN FOR THE CHALLENGER

Ricky Ray Morris
Titusville, Florida



That morning as I drove to the Space Center for work, beams of light bathed the Space Shuttle Challenger, which was poised on the launch pad ready for takeoff. Like many people, I will never forget where I was when it met its tragic end.

On the morning of the launch, I had to report to work at 2 a.m. As one of the "videographers" (color TV technicians), I was one of those whose responsibility it was to show the world on video what was happening at Kennedy Space Center from the time the astronauts arrived to the launch of every shuttle.

I enjoyed waiting for launches at the camera sites. It gave me a chance to read my Bible and to share Jesus with my co-workers. The morning of the Challenger launch, I remember praying for the success of the launch and for the safety of the astronauts. But at the same time, I had a terrible premonition that something was going to happen.

That day I was one of two camera teams allowed within the danger zone of the shuttle. In fact, we were so close that NASA provided us with air tanks, fire retardant clothing, gas masks and other safety equipment. As usual, I had my Bible, the greatest "safety equipment" of all.

My co-worker Bob and I were working together that day. He operated the TV van and I operated the live camera. Everything went smoothly at the C-7 exit as the astronauts came out. The TV pictures looked great as they entered the Astrovan.

After we got to our next camera loca-

tion a mile and a half south of the launch pad, we rushed to get the camera up and running. It was bitter cold and we could hardly wait to get into the van for warmth. We had waited nearly 1½ hours before the launch. The wind whipping across the water in front of our location made the cold even harder to deal with.

As Bob and I settled into our cramped quarters in the TV van, I pulled out my small New Testament to read quietly. Bob pulled out a well-known magazine that some people could consider quite offensive.

Deciding to get some air, I stepped outside. I loved Bob, but he believed that the way to heaven was HIS way. Actually, Bob wasn't sure what he believed. He professed to be a Black Muslim, yet had no real idea of their religious beliefs. In a way he was open to what I had to say because he said I sounded like his grandmother.

Thus, he didn't really mind hearing about the Lord as long as I didn't force the issue. However, I did give him a book called, "Power For Living." I have found that this little book really cuts through to people's preconceived ideas about Christianity. Bob took it gladly and said he would read it. I told him I would be praying for him.

Meanwhile, something else besides Bob's salvation weighed heavily on my mind as we waited for that final takeoff.

A few days earlier another worker and I had gone to install the camera in the white room of the Challenger. The white room is the one you see just before the astronauts crawl into the cockpit of the

shuttle. For weeks some of us had been noticing the strain and hurried pace for the work place. Everyone was edgy, arguing with each other, swearing at each other, and generally under stress.

"Get a move on. Hurry up!" people would yell at each other.

In retrospect, I shudder. Seventy-one seconds after its launch, the entire shuttle broke apart above our camera location. My camera became eyes to the world of the most devastating space related tragedy in history.

I simply did not want to believe what my eyes had just witnessed. Inwardly I frantically prayed, "Lord, let them survive!" Bob wept openly. We were all shaken.

Soon we were all in deep mourning for the seven astronauts. At the same time we had to work long hours of overtime to support the thousands of media people who were stampeding to Kennedy Space Center.

I continued to share the Gospel with Bob as we labored through these long hours. I believed he was a cocaine user, and had a strong premonition that if he didn't stop doing drugs, he'd be dead within a year. The Holy Spirit was impressing me that it was still my responsibility to witness to him, although I'd already told him about Jesus.

As the weeks quickly passed and layoffs came, Bob chose to take a voluntary layoff. During this time I had no chance to see him or speak to him.

Then, nearly eleven months after the shuttle accident, while on layoff, Bob died. He was 36 years old and his life was over.

He had been at the beach with friends

and after eating and drinking had waded into four feet of water and drowned. It was hard to believe since Bob was well over six feet tall.

Once again tragedy had struck, closer than ever this time.

My heart fell as I asked myself, "Had I done my job in telling him about God's plan of salvation? Had he read the book I had given him? Had he made the commitment to Jesus? Was he in heaven or not?"



Ricky Ray Morris

Someone had told me that Bob would not have a Christian funeral because he was Islamic. But as we settled in for the service, my heart leaped as a minister of the Gospel stepped forward to officiate the service. Almost everything I had been sharing for years with the men at work was shared with them at Bob's funeral.

God was speaking to their hearts once again. The water of His love was poured

out on the hard ground of their hearts that day.

Over and over I wondered, had Bob made that commitment to Jesus Christ? Had he told his family? Would I see him resurrection morning? Only God knows for sure, but I have to believe that Bob is with Jesus now.

The morning of the Challenger countdown, several decisions were made — decisions which the men involved will be accountable for forever.

“The morning of the Challenger countdown, several decisions were made . . . which proved to be wrong . . . Today I beg the people I meet not to make the wrong decision during the Lord’s final countdown of their lives.”

That day they made the decision which they thought was right, but which proved to be wrong, and their decision cost seven people their lives.

Bob also had to make a decision . . . one that would cost him eternal life. Which decision did he make?

Which decision have you made?

Today I beg the people I meet not to make the wrong decision during the Lord’s final countdown of their lives. I challenge them not to put off their

chance to know Jesus Christ and His salvation one more day. Decide before it’s too late! You never know what tomorrow will bring.

For those we loved on the Challenger, was it too late? Was it too late for Bob?

Jesus has already paid the price for you. Don’t put off your chance to know Him. For “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; He who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (I John 5:11-13).

If you do not know Jesus as your personal Saviour, please say with me now, “Dear God, I am now willing to go Your way. I give You my life. I accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord. I believe He died for my sins and has risen from the dead. I surrender to Him. Make me what I ought to be in spirit, in soul, and body. Give me power to do right; if I have wronged any, give me the strength to repent, to confess, and to restore, no matter what the cost. Wash me in the blood of Jesus that I may become Your child and manifest You for the glory of God, in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Don’t wait for the final “countdown” of your life. Be assured of eternal life now! □

Ricky Morris has been working in television since high school. He is presently working for a television station in Orlando, Florida. He and his wife Griscell and their two children (Anthony, 14 and Anna, 10) attend Park Avenue Baptist Church, where Ricky plays the drums, sings and teaches Sunday school. He is also involved in a jail and hospital ministry. Ricky belongs to the Titusville chapter of FGBMFI.

A stylized, painterly illustration of a race track at night. The scene is dominated by a line of cars, with a prominent yellow car in the foreground. A large checkered flag is in the lower foreground. The background shows a dark sky with colorful confetti or stars. The overall style is expressive and dynamic.

***The
Checked
Flag...***



...Then What?

Lake Speed
Kannapolis, North Carolina

Auto racing is America's leading spectator sport, outdrawing such familiar names as the National Football League and Major League Baseball.

Many racing buffs are well acquainted with Lake Speed, who in the 1970's managed a large go-kart parts shop and on weekends was a professional racer.

In 1980, he shifted to stock cars and has averaged nearly \$120,000 a year in prize money since he joined the NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) Winston Cup circuit. His first Winston cup victory occurred on March 27, 1988, when he won the Transouth 500 in Darlington, South Carolina.

NASCAR racing, just one segment of the sport, attracted nearly 2.6 million fans in 1987.

While he makes a living doing what he knows best, Lake no longer idolizes racing. He has discovered a fulfillment far greater than the fleeting fame of the winner's circle.

The checkered flag dropped and the crowd roared as I zipped across the finish line . . . the first American driver to ever win the World Karting Championship at LeMans, France!

But the emptiness that gnawed at me an hour after the race can barely be described in words.

"Big deal," I thought, staring at the ceiling. "So what? What now?"

The next year they would hold another race and all I would have to show for my

efforts would be another trophy that would eventually rust and another zillion magazine articles that sounded like all the rest.

For the first time since I took the wheel, I lifted my nose from racing's grindstone and looked at my life. The view wasn't pleasant: I saw pain, mystery, destruction and shattered relationships. Here at the peak of my career, I felt like a tiny, deserted island.

How I wished to be surrounded by people! Even the embarrassment I had felt one Sunday in front of 2,000 people crowded into the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Mississippi, was preferable to this loneliness.

A slight flush had crept over my face when I walked the aisle of Jackson's largest church. In my early teens, I decided it was better to go ahead and get my commitment to God over with since I hated "going forward" in front of all those people. I didn't feel anything, but everyone else was getting baptized so I went along with the crowd.

My father had once been a deacon, but he was 49 when I was born and not as active in the church. He was also preoccupied with his duties as mayor of Jackson. When I was two years old we moved to the countryside and he shifted his attention to selling stocks and bonds, helping finance major projects throughout Mississippi.

Since my closest sibling was eight years older, I grew up like an only child. My love affair with go-karts blossomed because of the influence of a neighborhood friend.

My parents would only buy me a modified version of the racer I wanted, so I

secured a summer job from my uncle in order to obtain the kart of my dreams. I entered my first race at the age of 13.

With a name like mine (Lake Speed is my real name), I took a lot of ribbing. If I won, the kidding was pretty good-natured, but if I lost it was easy to become the object of corny jokes.

As a teenager, racing was a weekend pleasure. However it was interrupted by enrollment in the University of Mississippi, where I spent a year before transferring to Mississippi College near Jackson.

In the summers I took a part time real estate sales job. My father's reputation smoothed the way, and I became so successful making money during the week and racing karts on weekends that I never finished college.

A year before I finally left school I married a 17-year-old girl from my hometown. By the time our son arrived three years later we had moved into a nice home with a carport which served as headquarters for my rapidly-growing hobby of repairing karts and ordering supplies for friends.

This evening pastime became so successful I finally faced a choice: devote my time to real estate or turn my hobby into a business. In 1971, Speed/Karts, Inc. opened its doors. In a short span we moved three times, winding up in a 6,000 square foot building crammed with parts and accessories.

On the weekends, I hit the road . . . Oklahoma, Texas, Georgia, Florida. Every time I won a race in new surroundings, it generated more customers for my healthy mail-order trade.

By 1973, I had captured six national go-kart titles, so when I learned about the

world championship in Europe, I thought it would be simple to duplicate the feat overseas. My pride fell quickly that first year as I failed to even place.

But the setback whetted my appetite for the world crown. Racing became my idol, and I had no time for any relationships outside the track. It took five years

left in January of 1978. "You're never home."

At first that didn't even phase me, as I plunged ahead, determined to win it all in Europe. When I did nine months later, I was lonely and a bit stunned by my divorce, since I had never abused my wife nor cheated on her.

The worst thing about capturing the world title was that hardly anyone noticed. I might as well have won a basket weaving contest for all the attention it brought me in Jackson. That shook me up because the world teaches that if you work hard and "go for the gusto," many rewards will be yours.

I hardly raced at all the following year, blaming the sport for my misery. I went back to running my kart shop, but in the evenings I looked for excitement by pursuing women and liquor. A few months later, my body hurt . . . but my spirit ached even worse. Nightlife wasn't the answer.

Turning my attention back to racing, I spent about six months visiting different tracks, studying cars, drivers, sponsors and potential earnings. Stock cars seemed to be the best alternative, since they were the fairest form of competition.

"Stock" means autos cut from the same stock as cars on the street, and all the parts must be available to everyone. Thus, in a lineup of 40 cars, about 25 are capable of winning, because there are a lot of talented, knowledgeable people in the field.

The easiest way to explain my entry into this new arena is that, through a series of extraordinary circumstances, doors opened. A month later I was out on the track. I purchased a used car and



Among his many patches, champion racer Lake Speed, wears one which reads "Jesus Christ — The Winning Team."

to reach my goal, but in attaining it I lost all my friends and my marriage.

"I still love you, I just can't stand our lifestyle," my wife shrugged when she

hired a couple guys for my own team, doing well enough in 1980 to place second in Rookie of the Year point totals.

For the first two years, I kept my go-kart business alive, commuting between Mississippi and NASCAR tracks, but as the circuit got in my blood, the parts house became a drain and I closed it down.

Alternating between operating my own team and driving for other owners, I spent more than three years rounding the ovals without realizing I was trapped in the same pattern that had soured me on go-karts. I still idolized the things of the world.

Praise the Lord for the faithfulness of the NASCAR chaplains who hold informal Sunday morning services in the garage areas before races. I began attending them as a way to escape the crowds and autograph seekers, but wound up listening.

The seeds planted by those racetrack sermons finally bore fruit in May of 1983, when I found myself leading Alabama's Talladega 500 with just 20 laps to go. Suddenly, a small voice inside of me asked, "What are you going to do if you win?"

It was a small flash, departing in an instant. But it got my attention. The answer to this question was more important than the fact that a poor pit stop resulted in a third-place finish. I know now if I had won that race, I never would have searched for it.

Back in Jackson my girlfriend, Rice (pronounced Reesa, who is now my wife) and I began reading the Bible, seeking the truth that was missing from our lives. Three months later we decided to attend

services at a non-denominational, charismatic church where they raised their hands, worshipped with enthusiasm and spoke in other tongues. I had heard about all that, but never seen it. These people were different. They really wanted to be there!

When the pastor finished his message, it was time to meet Jesus Christ. I had known of Him, but not met Him. I turned my life over to Him, but as I approached the altar, the devil taunted, "You'll never race again! You'll never race again!"

But the Lord showed me otherwise. He filled me with His love, and several days later I was filled with His Holy Spirit. Not only did I continue my career at the start of the 1985 season, I had the opportunity to witness to the nation on CBS television after placing second in NASCAR's biggest event, the Daytona 500.

Miraculous circumstances enabled me to enter the race. All through the winter our team had been dead broke, rejected at every turn in our search for sponsors. But the Lord kept assuring me, "It's going to be all right. I'll take care of it."

When my young partners and I reached Daytona, we still had no backing. But the afternoon before the 500, a man "happened" to come by and start asking me questions, since this was the first time he had attended a race.

The curious onlooker was the President of Nationwide Auto Parts, and after we talked, he asked if we would be interested in Nationwide as a small sponsor. Since they were our only one, we plastered the car with the company's

name as if they were a major backer. The lettering was still wet as we lined up for the race.

At the finish line, the first person to shake my hand was the President of Nationwide, who told me, "Don't worry about sponsorship for the rest of the year. It will be taken care of."



Lake's family: (l. to r.) his son Lou, wife Rice, their daughter Sara Ann, and Lake.

Then, as the CBS cameras rolled, I had the chance to relate how the Lord had delivered the necessary finances for the race. As I talked about how He had brought it all together, the reality of His love touched me and I broke down. Spectators mistakenly thought my tears were caused by the thrill of being the runner-up, but they weren't.

Today, I am constantly overwhelmed by His love and guidance. What really astonishes me is that I can race hard, do my best and not compromise my standards in order to do it. Believers don't have to do what the world does to be a winner. God's Word tells me to do everything I do as unto the Lord.

I'm no pushover on the track, although I am much fairer now than I used to be.

During my go-kart days, a survey was taken of what driver the others would least like to have on their bumper; I was the overwhelming choice.

But I know that the Lord watches over me. For example, in 1986, I was taking a test drive at Talladega when I lost control of my car, spinning out at 205 miles an hour. The rushing air whooshed the vehicle off the ground, but instead of tumbling as is normal, it sailed 150 yards through the air and landed on all four tires!


For all practical purposes, that car should have been destroyed, but instead I raced it the next month in the 1987 Daytona 500!

Best of all, God restored family life to me. Rice and I later married and the thrill of having our little girl will soon be doubled when my wife gives birth to our second child.

Today, my family takes priority over my profession. When I hit the road for races, they go with me. At home, my racing headquarters is in a 10,500 square foot building 100 yards from the house, where they can easily visit me.

In the world of cars, it's common to rebuild engines. But the Lord, the Master Mechanic, has rebuilt my life from the ground up. No longer do I experience that horrible emptiness at the top. I know there is Life after the checkered flag. □

Lake Speed's total winnings in his first eight seasons on the NASCAR circuit were \$945,540. He is the leader of an eight-member racing team that works under the corporate banner of L. Speed, Inc. Sponsors for the 1988 season include the Wynn Oil Company, K Mart, Delco Battery and Oldsmobile. He and his wife, Rice, have a 21-month-old daughter and are expecting their second child in September. They are members of the First Assembly of God church in Concord, North Carolina.



**"I've got
to get
OUT!"**

George Morrison
Arvada, Colorado

I strode into the chaplain's office, determined to display such lunacy that he would immediately recommend me for release from the Marine Corps. It wouldn't be difficult: my daily snort of cocaine had shed all my inhibitions.

The surprised chaplain looked up as I stripped to my shorts, flailed my arms and screamed, "I'm crazy! I've got to get out!"

"Now, son," he replied calmly, "Let's pray about this . . ."

His urging fell on deaf ears. I didn't want any prayer, I just wanted out of the military so I could grow some hair and rejoin normal society.

I had enlisted in the Marines on an impulse after watching one of their

television recruiting commercials in 1968.

"Why not?" I pondered. "I'm going to be drafted anyway."

I had reached that predicament by getting thrown out of two high schools, capping a youthful rebellion against my good, Catholic upbringing. I was truly a "rebel without a cause."

We enjoyed plentiful living in my youth, since dad was the wealthy vice president of a box manufacturing plant founded by my grandfather. I was born in Pottsville in eastern Pennsylvania, the oldest of six children. My brother, Robert, a year younger, and I had barely reached Boy Scout age when we embarked on a destructive path.

In coal towns, there isn't much to do — there's a bar and a church on every corner and an occasional dance. In our early teens, we began stealing booze from the liquor cabinet; eventually we became so fearless that we even broke into a friend's house.

There we guzzled a fifth of his father's whiskey in an hour and stormed out for the local dance. Given alcoholic courage beyond my wildest dreams, I tried to pick a fight with the largest football player present. Luckily, he laughed at me.

We didn't fare as well at home. Rob spoiled our plan to sneak in when he missed the last step at the top of the stairs and tumbled backwards, landing at dad's feet in a smelly, incoherent mess.

Without hesitation, my 5-foot, 9-inch, 245-pound father punched me over the couch, then collected both of us in his huge paws and dragged us upstairs. There he flung us into the bathtub and began mercilessly squeezing the liquor

out of our now-pale bodies.

The next day, we attended a counseling session with a priest, who advised us that if we took up weight lifting, it would take our minds off evil pursuits. Soon we were the strongest drunks in town.

Not long after, tragedy struck. When I was 15, my father told us how he wished we were old enough so he could turn over control of two of the box plants to us. After hiring a new manager the next night, he died of a heart attack.

What little restraint had existed in my life disappeared. With six children to care for and my youngest sister with Down's Syndrome, my mother had no time to curtail our shenanigans. Dad was barely in the grave when I took the shiny new Chevrolet Impala my grandfather had bought for us and — drunk out of my skull — demolished it on the way to a football game.

Rob and I accelerated our incorrigible lifestyles until a year later, when Satan drove a wedge between us. It happened at the end of a particularly rowdy dance when Rob beat up a bouncer so badly he needed medical care.

At home, I began berating my brother for his behavior, poking him with harsh verbal jabs. Pausing for breath, I turned away momentarily to inspect the refrigerator when...smash!!!

Enraged by my prodding, Rob had picked up a large mayonnaise jar and flung it across the room, striking me in the head. As I slid down the kitchen wall, blood spurting from my temple, he flung a knife in my direction that hit my leg.

Something broke in the spirit that night. The close relationship we had developed through bunking together,

playing together, drinking together and fighting together, vanished. No longer did I love this man. No longer did I want anything to do with him.

From then on we went our separate ways. Rob gave up drinking and later became one of Pottsville's first hippies when he moved to Greenwich Village. My exploits continued, leading to expulsion from both the Catholic and public high schools.

Even the state trade school, where I landed through family political connections, couldn't take any more of me. Expelled in my second spring there, I partied my way through the summer, but weeks before draft time joined the Marines.

After boot camp and air corps training, I shipped out to Camp Pendleton in California, the last stop before Vietnam. The name meant nothing to me. I didn't even know where the country was located.

Just before I left, I had a surprise phone call from Rob, who had moved to California. He survived by living in a tree house in a national forest and stayed loaded via drugs of all kinds.

Meeting him that night at the beach, he provided me with my first "hit" of LSD and we howled at the moon for three hours. The experience whetted my appetite for more adventure. When I got to Vietnam, I volunteered for duty as a door gunner on a Huey helicopter. Between battles, we were constantly high. Sometimes we would mix opium, marijuana and LSD in our beer, guzzle it down and lay on the runway underneath landing aircraft.

Despite those jungle exploits, I returned safely to San Francisco. But our

arrival at the airport proved more psychologically damaging than all the enemy fire I had dodged for thirteen months.

I was devastated when I learned that a bus had picked us up at the plane because they wanted to avoid the anti-war protestors at the gates. That did it: I wanted out, and used every ploy imaginable, including my celebrated strip routine for the chaplain.

But though some overseas vets were earning early releases, my commander said no to me: my air training was too valuable. He then assigned me to warehouse duty near Los Angeles. Furious, I moved off base into a house with four drug abusing ex-Marines.

There, as well as on duty, I stayed stoned on cocaine or marijuana from the constant parties we staged. I lost all concern for my personal safety, more than once stealing military trucks and other goods — offenses that would have resulted in a federal prison sentence, had I been caught.

Believe it or not, despite this insanity, I thought I "had it together." I felt sorry for my brother whom I considered to be in bad shape. I shook my head in pity when I heard he had moved to New Mexico and was living in an underground commune. So when another letter arrived telling me he had accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour, I classified it as one more nutty event in the life of that poor soul.

But, strangely, a peace settled over me, too. Somehow I knew I no longer had to worry about Rob. That was a relief, because soon my brother, David, who was six years younger than me,



showed up.

I had remembered him as a little kid on the backyard swings, but I soon discovered he had been using drugs since the age of 12. He was eager to join our scene: mattresses strewn over the floors, psychedelic posters on the walls and marijuana stacked two feet high on the kitchen table.

July of 1971 marked a turning point in our lives, although at the time the message of Rob's marriage in Denver seemed nothing more than another excuse to celebrate. To generate extra funds for our trip, we decided to turn David's \$1,000 high school graduation present into \$3,000 via marijuana sales.

The plan called for him to drive my car to Denver while I returned to Pennsylvania and disposed of our "grass." Then I flew to Denver, smiling as David approached in the familiar red, white and

blue spray-painted Volkswagen. My mood turned sour when he proclaimed that he, too, had "found" Jesus.

"You guys are crazy," I snarled. When the preacher showed me around the church before the rehearsal, I snapped, "I don't know what you're trying to do. This may be okay for you guys, but I don't want anything to do with this."

The next evening, I stood at the altar, reflecting on Rob's ceremony, happy I could witness it as his best man. Suddenly, as the couple neared the end of their vows, I looked up at the ceiling and saw a cloud descending and resting on the wedding party.

It was so close I could reach out and touch this strange apparition. Right there I began sobbing, uncontrollably! At the reception, I asked people if they had seen the cloud and was greeted by blank stares, until the matron of honor told me, "You know what you saw, George? You saw the presence of God."

"You guys are crazy," I spat again. But two days later, camped out in the Rocky Mountains en route to California, I looked out over a breathtaking valley and glanced up to heaven.

"God, I don't know if You're real, but there's something real different about those people back in Denver. God, if You're real, show Yourself to me," I begged.

Silence greeted my plea. Shrugging, I tossed my gear in the VW. Thirty miles down the road I picked up a hitchhiker. When I started to swear an inner voice commanded, "Don't say those words anymore." I reached for a cigarette and the voice instructed, "Get rid of those." I thought of the cocaine in my back seat

and that same voice urged, "Get rid of it."

Back in California, I was so new to this "Christianity business" I thought all Christians lived in Denver. Since I didn't know where to find a Bible, I just talked about my experience, ignoring the wine



George, Cheryl and Kelly Morrison

and joints at parties to pass on the story of the new peace I had discovered.

Two months later, I managed to find a Bible while attending church in Costa Mesa, but it took the Lord's special protection to keep me from jail. It was then that I discovered that God's power is real!

The knock on the door came in the midst of a 30-day fast, when I was reading my Bible six to eight hours a day. A "freak" asked for one of my roommates and a moment later narcotics agents flooded through the doors.

I sat quietly, reading my new found treasure, waiting to be handcuffed. After considerable commotion, the door slammed shut and in the quiet, God told me, "I blinded their eyes from seeing

you. Now, I want you to get out of here."

Incredibly, the next day at the base, a stranger walked up and said, "You're a Christian, aren't you? God sent me to you."

I moved in with him and found a Christian fellowship. Later, I started a Bible study on base, which quickly grew from two to several dozen Marines.

Just before my final month of duty, I attended a New Year's Eve service in Denver, where I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I also received a vision in which the Lord instructed, "I want you to come back to Denver and go to school. I've got a job for you."

I obeyed, and wound up as a general contractor, although I had no construction experience when I first entered the field. In addition, I got married and my wife and I became the parents for a youth home operated by the same church I once wanted "nothing to do with."

Today, my favorite verse of Scripture is John 10:10, which talks about Satan coming to kill, steal and destroy, but that the Lord has come that we might have abundant life. Because of His grace, I know the truth of that promise!

After using his construction company to build a new sanctuary for Faith Bible Chapel in 1979, George Morrison closed his construction business and became an associate pastor of that church, located in Arvada, Colorado. In 1984, he took over as senior pastor of the non-denominational, charismatic body. His brother, Rob, went to an Arizona Indian reservation in the 1970's as the church's first missionary and returned to the church staff as an associate pastor in the spring of 1987.

George and his wife, Cheryl, have one daughter, Kelly, age 12. God has used George mightily to minister to youth, adults and leadership. He has spoken to ministers and leadership conferences in the United States, the Philippines, Africa and Japan.

CONVENTIONS

FORT DODGE/IOWA REG. CONV.**September 1-3, 1988**

Holiday Inn
Fort Dodge, IA
Contact: Harold B. Brown
P. O. Box 13
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

NORTH COAST RALLY**September 2-3, 1988**

Eureka Inn
Eureka, CA
Contact: Rolly Anderson
P. O. Box 725
Fortuna, CA 95540

MARYLAND STATE MEN'S ADVANCE**September 2-4, 1988**

New Windsor Service Center
New Windsor, MD
Contact: James E. Click
1645 Hughes Shop Rd.
Westminster, MD 21157

EMPIRE STATE COUPLES ADVANCE**September 9-11 & 16-18, 1988**

Silver Bay YMCA Conference Center
Silver Bay, NY
Contact: Fred Lawrence
Box 206
Homer, NY 13077

WEST SO. DIST. MEN'S ADVANCE**September 16-18, 1988**

Lakeview Camp
Palestine, TX
Contact: FGBMFI
13401 SW Fwy., Suite 207
Sugar Land, TX 77478

MEN'S SPIRITUAL ADVANCE**September 16-18, 1988**

Aldersgate Camp
Turner, OR
Contact: Floyd Bennett
176 Liberty NE
Salem, OR 97392

VIRGINIA STATE CONVENTION**September 29-October 2, 1988**

Pavillion Tower Hotel
Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: FGBMFI-Virginia State Conv.
1043 Luxford Ln.
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

B. C. REGIONAL CONVENTION**October 13-15, 1988**

Harrison Hot Springs Hotel
Harrison Lake, BC
Contact: Art Dick
3519 McKinley Ct.
Abbotsford, BC V3G 1B4 CANADA

HOOSIER 1988 COUPLES ADVANCE**October 14-15, 1988**

The Good Shepherd
Huntington, IN
Contact: Dean Dawes
P. O. Box 545
Wabash, IN 46992

7TH SO. INDIANA MEN'S ADVANCE**October 14-16, 1988**

Lincoln State Park
Dale, IN
Contact: Charles Conrad
R. R. 1, Box 356
Georgetown, IN 47122

WISCONSIN STATE CONVENTION**October 20-22, 1988**

Holiday Inn
Madison, WI
Contact: Marilyn Peters
P. O. Box 20741
Milwaukee, WI 53220

COUPLES ADVANCE**October 21-22, 1988**

Holiday Inn
Grand Island, NE
Contact: Richard Mendyk
4123 Mason Ave.
Grand Island, NE 68803

SO. SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY RALLY**October 21-22, 1988**

Hodel's
Bakersfield, CA
Contact: Robert Miller
1402 26th St.
Bakersfield, CA 93301

MIXED SPIRITUAL ADVANCE**October 21-23, 1988**

Best Western Motel
Coffeyville, KS
Contact: FGBMFI Border Chapter
P. O. Box 364
Caney, KS 67333

CAROLINA'S MEN'S SPIRITUAL ADV.**October 28-30, 1988**

Camp St. Christopher
John Island, SC
Contact: T. Clark Bowman
2413 Pristine View Dr.
Charleston, SC 29407

MEN'S ADVANCE**October 28-30, 1988**

Echo Valley Conference Centre
Fort San, SAS Canada
Contact: John Protsko
Box 1390
Yorktown, SA S3N 3G2 CANADA

CONVENTIONS PUBLISHED IN THIS ISSUE WERE APPROVED ON OR BEFORE JUNE 13, 1988.

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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: FGBMFI / Box 5050 / Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

CHAPTER OUTREACH

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

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VOICE

Vol. 36 / No. 9 / September, 1988
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(714) 754-1400

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

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

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OVERCOMING FEAR OF DEATH

"How am I going to die? What comes after death?" Death represents the final unknown. Dr. Don Whitaker and Larry McCallister are two men who faced death in very different ways but gained a common confidence in what lay ahead.

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The Checkered Flag...Then What?

Auto racing has become America's leading spectator sport and Lake Speed — a name embodying his ability — is one of its more successful champions. Once racing was the center of his life. Now when he pulls into the winner's circle, it's no longer just his victory.

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