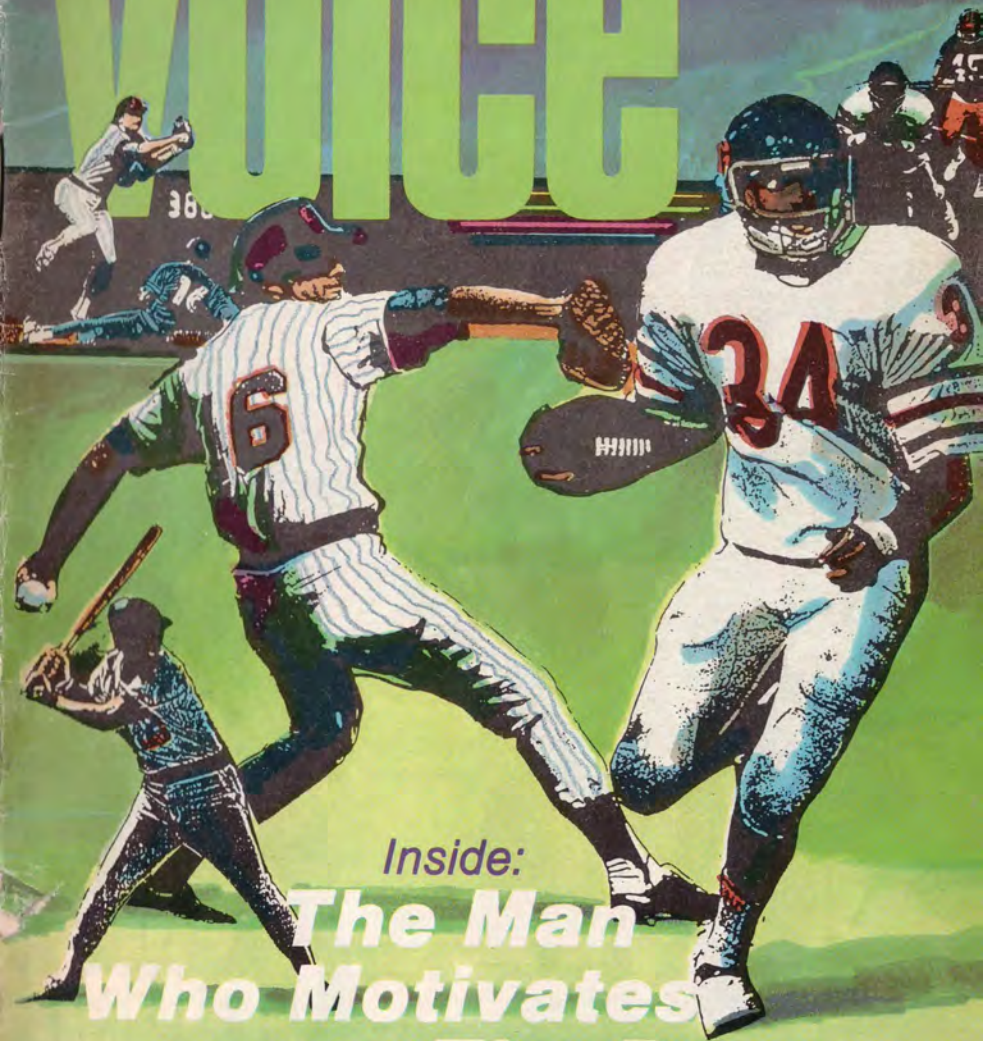


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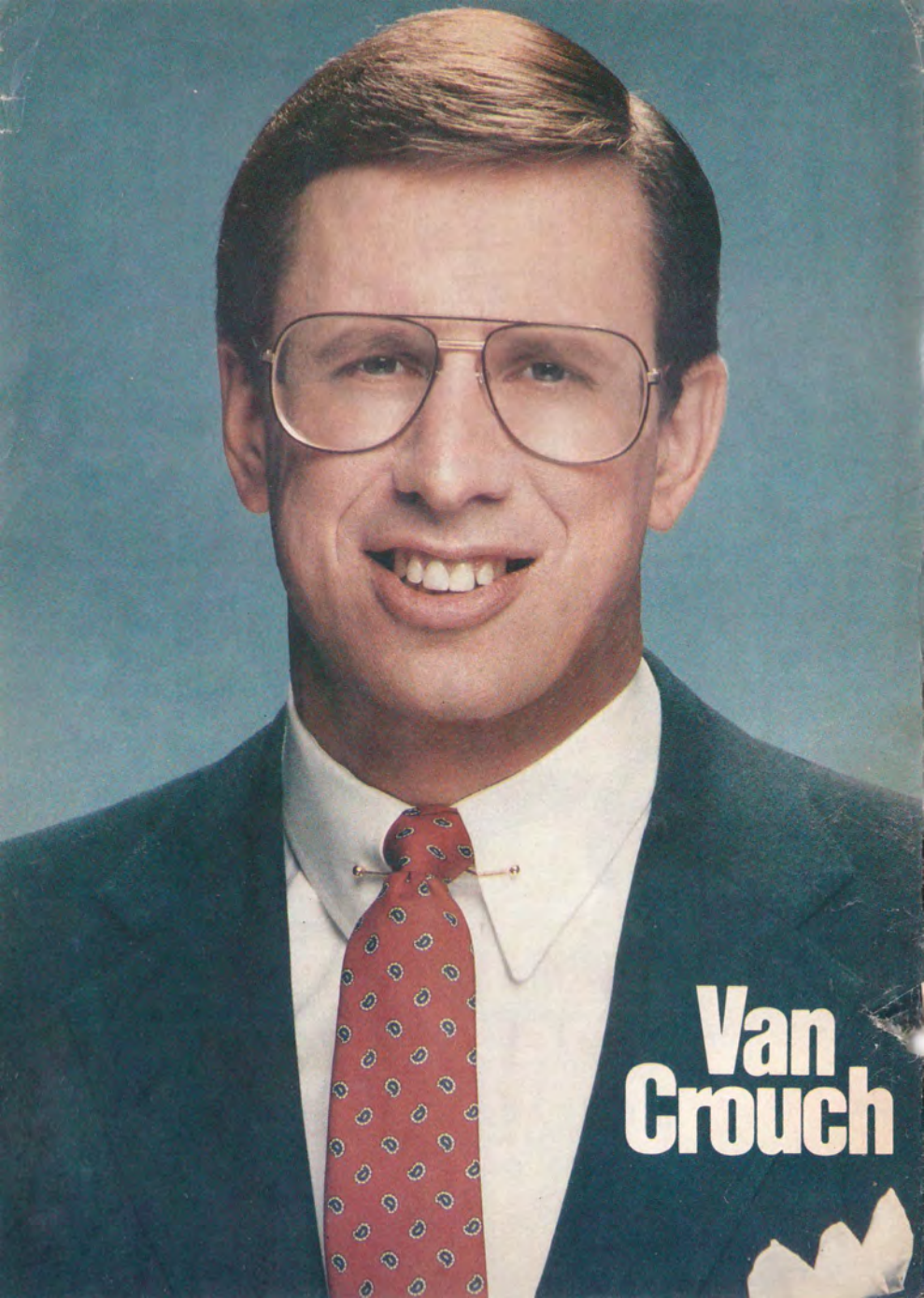
Full Gospel Business Men's

# VOICE



Inside:

**The Man  
Who Motivates  
The Pros**



**Van  
Crouch**

*From his start as a struggling, misguided teenager obsessed with sports, Van Crouch has become a leading motivational speaker, consultant, sales specialist and humorist whose roster of clients includes AT&T, IBM, Delta Airlines and American Express. He also "motivates the pros" as chapel coordinator for the Chicago Cubs, the White Sox, and as Bible study leader for the Chicago Bears.*

*But although he motivates, trains and teaches with an incredible sense of humor which has become his trademark, Van has a deep concern for men who find themselves in the same place he has been — that is, back down at the bottom of the ladder with the almost overwhelming challenge of having to start over.*

*How does a man pick himself up again after a series of devastating personal blows? Find out from . . . .*

# The Man Who Motivates The Pros

Van Crouch  
Oak Park, Illinois

**O**ne day, ten years after my high school graduation, I went back to my alma mater. Introducing myself to one of my teachers I said, "I'm Van Crouch." She said, "You couldn't be. He's supposed to be in prison." That was the kind of reputation I'd had.

During my high school days, we lived in Grove City, Pennsylvania. Basically, I was somewhat of a "juvenile delinquent" who couldn't be bothered with drugs and alcohol; I was too busy pulling pranks, causing problems and not getting along with my teachers.

Academically, I was in the third of my class that made the upper two-thirds possible. Still, I had hopes for a future, so I told my guidance counselor, "I'd love to go to college." She answered, "Van, we've got a lot of young men in this school who don't know what's going on in life, but you don't even suspect anything."

With these strikes against me and an unsettled family life at home, the only thing that saved me was sports. I signed up for everything I could: football, baseball, basketball and track.

Then a man named Dick Bestwick came to the high school as head football coach. Dick became a legend. He was someone to look up to; someone

to receive approval from. I believe that much of the success I have in life today can be attributed to his discipline and guidance. His practices were so tough and hard hitting, that we looked forward to the games as a night off. As a result, our team was feared and very seldom lost.

**A**fter high school, I hitchhiked to California and spent the summer working in a factory. I didn't know what to do about college. All I'd ever been told was, "It would be a waste for you. You may as well go into the Army."

Finally I found a college that would take me, but fell in with the wrong crowd. About then Dick Bestwick found out that Clarion State College (northeast of Pittsburgh) was looking for college football players. He sold them the idea of giving me a work scholarship so I would be guaranteed a job in return for playing football. So off I went to Clarion in January, 1962. My college football career had begun.

While at school I met a beautiful young lady from Indiana, Pennsylvania. After a time of intense dating we were married. As much as I knew about love (which wasn't much) I did love her

and was thrilled to have someone who cared about me. We were married in our sophomore year. Soon our daughter Wendy came along.

**T**o earn extra income I worked for a finance company collecting bad debts. I then received a graduate assistantship to Colorado State University. It didn't take me long to find out that football takes tremendously hard work to be well prepared. Coaching is as much work off the field as it is on. I decided to go into business.

I selected a job in the money order division of American Express in Chicago. Upon arriving in Chicago on a blustery cold morning in January, 1968, I was given a territory on the tough west side of town. I tell people it was so tough that when Al Capone lived there he worked as an Avon lady, and the police had an unlisted phone number. But in my quest for achievement I still managed to run up big records and made it into the top echelons, receiving three promotions in the two-and-one-half years I was there.

Then, in the spring of 1968 a fellow prankster from my high school days came to town. He was now a tractor

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trailer truckdriver, and we went out to play some basketball. I was amazed at the changes in him. The first thing I noticed was that he wasn't trying to start a fight on every other rebound. Neither did he curse a blue streak when his shot didn't make the basket. He was different.

When we got back to my home in Oak Park, he shocked me by changing the conversation from basketball to the Bible. He asked me if I was "born again." I didn't know what he was talking about. Then he asked me if I had ever heard "Amazing Grace." I figured she was some woman magician on television. Next he asked if I knew where I would go when I died. I answered, "Probably to the funeral home on Lake Street."

**W**hen I took him back to his truck that night he said, "Van, if this Bible turns out to be just a bunch of folklore, then I will have been a better person for having believed it. But if what it says is true, then without Jesus you'll spend your life in vain, without any purpose, and you'll spend eternity in what the Bible calls hell."

Well, I jumped back into my car and headed north to Oak Park. I'll never forget what happened as I turned on the AM radio looking for some Motown music from Detroit. Instead of Motown, the only program that came in with any clarity was Dr. Billy Graham's "Hour of Decision." Dr. Graham was saying that God loves man, but man has a problem.

That problem is sin, and it separates

man from God. But God did something about man's problem. He sent Jesus Christ to bridge the gap between sinful man and a holy God. Because of what Jesus did, I could be reconciled to God if I would make a clear cut decision to invite Jesus into my life.

Later, that's exactly what I did: I went forward at a Billy Graham crusade and was born again. However, I did not live "happily ever after." Years of agonizing problems in my personal life soon followed.

**I** attribute this difficulty with my Christian walk to several things. First, in my early years as a Christian I learned nothing of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the power of the Holy Spirit, or my true identity in Christ. I loved God, but had no real comprehension of what a victorious life in Him was all about. Unfortunately, the first church I went to can best be described as "The First Church of the Frigidaire." It didn't give me a good, solid foundation of teaching, so I never became rooted in faith.

Second, I knew nothing about spiritual warfare. So while I wanted to change, wanted to be more loving, and wanted to see the circumstances around me change, I had no spiritual power for anything. Emotionally, I plunged into a down-hill slide while publicly, I was a success.

**A**fter working for American Express, I joined New York Life Insurance Company. Within five years I was

ranked in the top 10% in first-year commissions out of more than 9,000 New York Life agents. I was a consistent qualifier for the Million Dollar Round Table, collecting a whole pile of plaques and trophies as I tried hard to keep up with the Joneses. I just didn't realize that the Joneses weren't going anywhere.

I had a lot of wrong heroes, wrong goals, and wrong objectives. Gradually I realized there must be more to real "success" than just the business side, but I didn't know how to find it. I also knew my Christian walk was going nowhere, but didn't know what to do about it. In desperation I began to seriously seek God. Before long, He answered.

In the spring of 1977 I was watching a local TV show which announced that a Full Gospel Business Men's seminar was being held outside Chicago, so I went to the meeting. It was there that one of the men said to me, "Van, how's it going with you?"

I began to share how my life was out of kilter and my Christian life was a sham — up one day and down the next. I told him that every Sunday I'd have this great desire to live for God, but by 5 o'clock Monday night I was a mess.

The man shared how God wanted to give me the power to live for Him. Several businessmen then sat me down in a chair, prayed and "laid hands" on me. After the meeting I didn't think there was anything different in my life — but there was.

Before that day, the Bible had been my cure for insomnia — two verses



(Above) Van Crouch with Dallas Cowboys Coach Tom Landry. (Right) Van shares with Jack Buck, "Voice of the St. Louis Cardinals."

and I was out like a light. But after I received the Holy Spirit, God's Word came *alive* and revolutionized my life. The baptism in the Holy Spirit also opened for me the revelation of who I am in Christ. No longer was I bogged down in a dead religion; I was revitalized in a personal relationship with the Living God.

But instead of flying up, up and away into the "abundant Christian life," the exact opposite occurred. My marriage began to crumble, and in 1978 my entire life began to fall apart. I was depressed, despondent, discouraged — and those were my strong points. I was ready to throw in the towel, not only on my business, but on life.

What had happened? Or better yet, *how* could it happen at a time when I was finally seeking God with all my heart and was starting to move in His Spirit?

I found my answer in Jesus' warning that when some people hear the Word of God, "Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts" (Mark 4:15). In other words, Satan will do everything in his power to try and force us to



cough up the Word of God and steal our faith. Since I lacked the foundation of good, solid teaching in the Word of God and didn't understand spiritual warfare, I was nearly destroyed.

Eventually I learned that *God is not the problem: He's the solution*. If only I'd known that then. For I became disillusioned with everything . . . my family life, my faith, God and everyone around me.

**I**n 1979 I was sued for divorce. Financially, things had been going all right, but when I decided to contest the divorce and try to get my children, my finances disintegrated.

I found myself living in a studio

apartment so small that when I threw my handkerchief on the floor I had wall-to-wall carpeting. Soon I was thinking of suicide. The only problem was the apartment was a garden apartment and the lady next door had an Afghan hound. I thought if I shot and missed I might hit the dog and just have another bill on my hands.

At that point a friend said to me, "Van, what you need is psychology." I said, "What's that?" He explained, "You need someone to dialogue with."

So I went to see this guy in Oak Brook. He said, "I must ask you some questions. Does anyone in your family suffer from insanity?" I told him, "No, we all enjoy it very much." He said, "What's your church preference?" I said, "Brick colonial with a white trim. But what does that have to do with anything?"

An hour later he took a nice hunk of change out of my checking account for this "counsel" and told me it would make a big difference if I just "knew my identity."

Now, let me ask you, do you know your identity? You say, "Yes, I'm a businessman." Or, "I'm a student." But that's not what you are, it's what you do.

Later I did find my identity — the only identity worth knowing, and that's in Jesus Christ. I discovered that it makes a tremendous difference in your life when you begin to know Who your Heavenly Father is, what He has, and what He can do. Then and only then will you begin to see who you are, what you have, and what you can do. It will also become very clear who the



enemy is and what he will try and do, for Satan has come to kill, to steal and to destroy.

So although my divorce began as a crisis from which I thought I would never recover, I could tell you countless stories of how God worked with me, little by little. Step by step, my faith and new life in Him grew.

**O**ne thing I discovered about the Holy Spirit is that He gives you the desire to dig down deep within your own spirit, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and decide to go on with God.

## Van Crouch's Principles for Spiritual Growth

At the root of all spiritual growth is the realization of who you are in Christ. What a difference it makes when you begin to realize who your Heavenly Father is, what He has, and what He can do for you.

### 1. **DON'T MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS WHEN YOU'RE IN A DOWN CYCLE:**

This is especially true following the breakup of a marriage or significant relationship, or following a business reversal or downtrend. You don't have good judgment at these times, and time is needed to bring perspective and balance to decision-making.

### 2. **KNOW GOD AND KNOW HOW TO OPERATE IN HIS PRINCIPLES:**

There is no substitute for studying God's Word and obeying its principles. Referring to the abundant life offered in John 10:10, God says that the only way to have that abundance is to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). This can only be accomplished through daily study and then *applying* these biblical truths.

### 3. **YOU MUST BE IN A CHURCH WHERE THE PASTOR IS STRONGER THAN YOU ARE:**

It is most important for you to attend and worship at a Bible-teaching church where the pastor is producing saints who know who they are in Christ.

### 4. **GET A VISION OF WHAT YOU WANT TO DO:**

Goals and objectives are important. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision the people perish." Another Scripture states, "The Lord said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tables" (Habakkuk 2:2).

### 5. **WITH YOUR MIND RENEWED ON THE UNCOMPROMISED WORD OF GOD, YOU ARE READY FOR ACTION!**

The fact is, God didn't send Jesus simply to get you out of hell and into heaven. God sent Jesus to get God out of heaven and into you! You are what the Word of God says you are. You can have what the Word says you can have. And you can do whatever the Word says you can do.



Granted, at that point in my walk I was still getting discouraged and depressed for weeks at a time. But I learned to get myself out to a meeting, go down the aisle, pray and ask God to help me keep going.

Businessmen also helped me. During that time I received almost \$5,000 of untraceable money in cashier's checks given to me through my church from businessmen who encouraged me not to quit.

I spent nearly \$8,000 trying to get my children. One night I was watching the NCAA basketball finals on TV when my teenage son was delivered on my doorstep. I had the privilege of raising him for the better part of four-and-one-half years as a single parent. Things didn't always go smoothly, but at least I had the opportunity to be a positive influence, and little by little, God began to "restore the years that the locusts had eaten."

**A**fter my divorce, I remained single for nine years. Although I did date, I spent many of those years looking back and trying to see if there was any possibility for my marriage to be reconciled. To this day I'm not sure how a person becomes the husband of somebody who doesn't want one.

But during that time I grew. I spent a lot of time listening to Christian tapes and renewing my mind with the Word of God. He then began to open the doors for speaking engagements. I received numerous requests from major corporations all over the

country. Tapes, video tapes, a radio show and opportunities for extensive work with pro sports teams also mushroomed.

Then suddenly, my life changed. Early one morning during a time of intensive prayer, the Lord spoke to me about the woman I was to marry. I was astounded, because I knew who she was and we had not hit it off. Surely, I thought, this was the mismatch of the century! However, God had revealed the identical thing to her in prayer and showed her my heart. We were married on January 25, 1988.

While God is opening new doors to us, I'm trying to make sure that our foundation is secure. I'm laying a base, starting right in my family. I'm tremendously excited about what God is doing. We're believing God is going to open new doors, not only nationally (which He is already doing), but around the world to bring many more men and women to Christ. □

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*Van is currently the founder and president of the consulting firm, Higher Dimensions, Inc., which challenges individuals to achieve excellence in their lives. He also fulfills a vigorous schedule of speaking engagements in the areas of sales, marketing, inspiration and motivation.*

*On his recent video, "Laughing Your Way to Excellence," Van's vibrant message of faith is mixed with a good, clean humor and radiates the power of God. It is available from Harrison House. In addition, he is in the process of writing two books and is a free-lance sports director/reporter with WCFTV-38 in Chicago.*

*He can be contacted through: Higher Dimensions, Inc., 125 N. Marion, Suite 203, Oak Park, IL 60301. Phone: (312) 383-2340.*

# CONVENTIONS

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## **NORTHERN NEW YORK RALLY**

**May 6-7, 1988**

Ramada Inn  
Watertown, NY  
Contact: Mr. John Barone  
1114 Boyd St.  
Watertown, NY 13601

## **KEYSTONE STATE MEN'S ADVANCE**

**June 2-4, 1988**

Messiah College  
Grantham, PA  
Contact: Mr. Ray Dougherty  
314 Eight St.  
New Cumberland, PA 17070

## **MEN'S SPIRITUAL ADVANCE**

**June 3-5, 1988**

University Inn  
Moscow, ID  
Contact: Bob Rehwaldt  
Rt. 2, Box 861  
Pullman, WA 99163

## **EMPIRE STATE MEN'S ADVANCE**

**June 10-12, 1988**

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

## **SOUTHERN CA MEN'S ADVANCE**

**June 10-12, 1988**

Forest Home Christian Center  
Forest Falls, CA  
Contact: Al Bellanger  
231 W. Linfield  
Glendora, CA 91740

## **MARYLAND STATE CONVENTION**

**June 16-18, 1988**

Western Maryland College  
Westminster, MD  
Contact: Frank Davidson  
Rt. 5, Box 16  
Hagerstown, MD 21741

## **NORTH. ONTARIO MEN'S ADVANCE**

**June 17-19, 1988**

Lurentinn University  
Sudbury, ON Canada  
Contact: FGBMFI  
190 Attwell Dr., Ste #304  
Rexdale, ON M9W 6H8

## **IOWA STATE MEN'S ADVANCE**

**June 23-25, 1988**

Howard Johnsons  
Des Moines, IA  
Contact: Mr. Duane McLean  
1668 13th St. N.W.  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405

## **1988 WORLD CONVENTION**

**July 5-9, 1988**

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

## **ST. LOUIS REG. CONVENTION**

**July 28-30, 1988**

St. Louis Airport Marriott Hotel  
St. Louis, MO  
Contact: Walt Thorn, Jr.  
1062 Sarola  
Des Peres, MO 63131

## **COLUMBIA GORGE CONVENTION**

**July 28-30, 1988**

Portage Inn  
The Dalles, OR  
Contact: Rodney M. Vickers  
4300 Hwy. 35  
Hood River, OR 97031

## **TENNESSEE COUPLES ADVANCE**

**July 29-31, 1988**

Quality Inn  
Sweetwater, TN  
Contact: FGBMFI-Couples Advance  
901 Eastview Cir, NW  
Cleveland, TN 37311



# The 35th World Convention is coming to Toronto! ...THE VISION INTENSIFIED

FGBMFI 35th  
WORLD CONVENTION



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Come join us in Toronto, Canada, July 5-9, 1988 for the 35th World Convention of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International.

Ensure your seating and reservations now by mailing your registration form today.

Fellowship leaders from throughout the world will participate in this historic convention as we share, encourage and minister to one another. We expect God to move in a powerful way!

## REGISTRATION FORM

Complete this form and mail to: FGBMFI, 190 Attwell Dr., #304, Rexdale, Ont., Canada M9W 6H8. Send a **\$10 registration fee** per household (or per single) with this form. No registration fee required for youths under 18 years of age.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

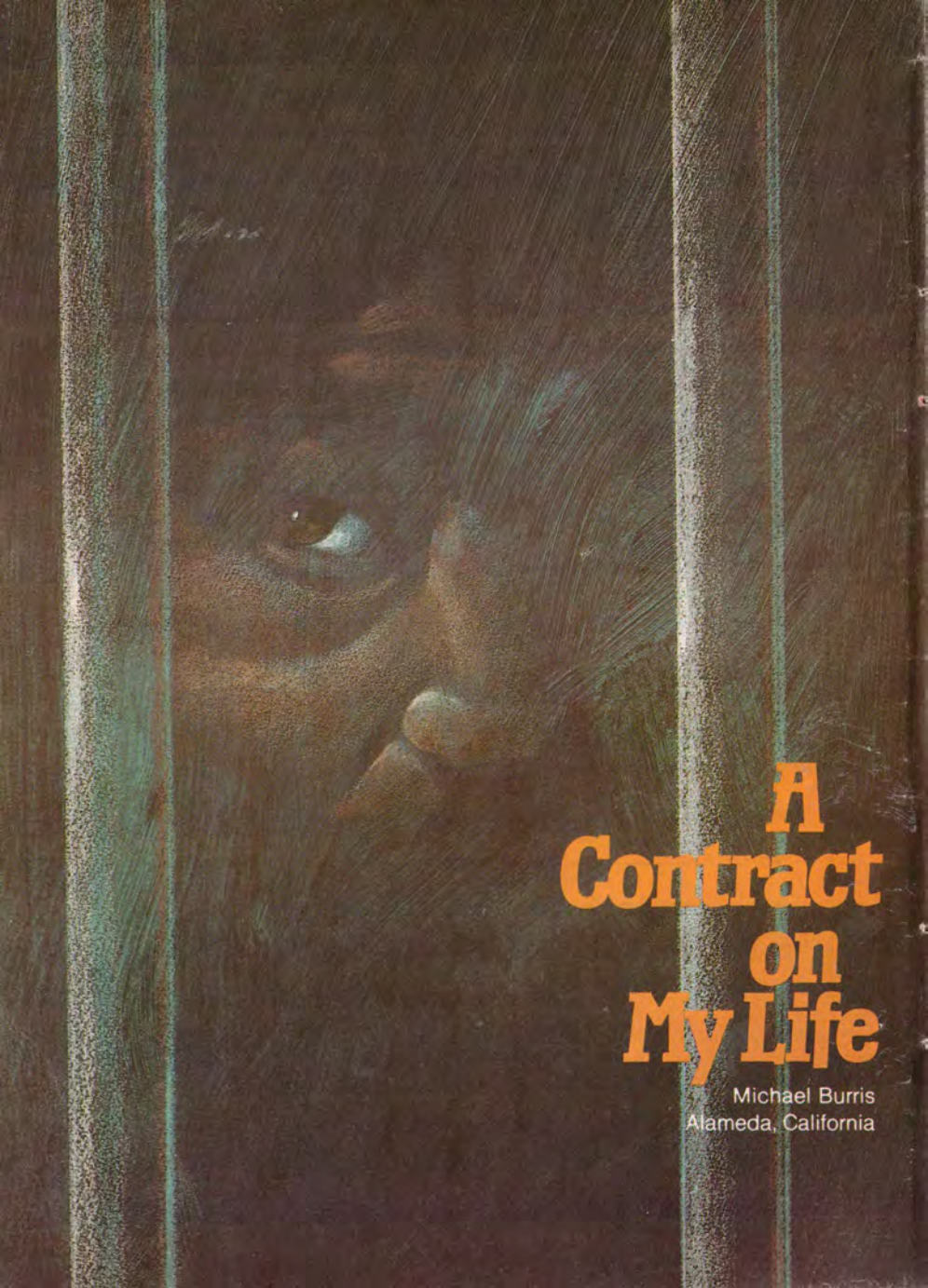
Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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**A  
Contract  
on  
My Life**

Michael Burris  
Alameda, California

I grew up in southern California, just south of Los Angeles. When I was four, my father and mother divorced. I stayed with my mother and my grandparents, and was very close to my grandfather, but he died when I was ten. After that, the bottom fell out for the family.

My mother had a nervous breakdown and we didn't see her again for 11 years. I went to live with my father, but I didn't get along too well with him.

He wanted me to come home at night, but I would hang out with the guys in the street. One night we went around breaking into glove compartments and burglarizing the neighborhood. When my father found out about it, he decided to put me in juvenile hall. I was only 13 or 14 at the time.

A little later on I was sent to a foster home in San Diego. The woman in charge really tried to help me, but I was closed off inside. I was not very athletic, so I didn't fit in with the other boys. I went out of my way to be accepted, but I just was not able to relate to them very well. So the woman brought me back to juvenile hall.

From there I went to another foster home, then back to juvenile hall, then to another foster home, and back again to juvenile hall. By now I had also begun to use drugs.

At the age of 18, I was released from juvenile hall in San Diego, but was just as hung up inside and still using drugs. It wasn't long before I got into very serious trouble—a conviction for second degree murder and two counts of armed robbery. I was sentenced to a term of 25 years to life.

I ended up in a California prison. The

prison officials assigned me to a psychiatric program, which I took part in for four years. The only thing I remember about it is a report which said that I had no "constructive center" to my life. It was true. I had no foundation for any moral belief or conviction. I had a habit of lying that I just could not break, and I had no self-control.

After four years in prison, I found out that my life was in danger. The man I killed had friends in the prison gang, and there was a contract out on me. It had taken the gang a while to check into it, but they had finally tracked me down.

Fortunately, they seemed to be a little scared of me at first, so they didn't move in right away. However, I developed a bad case of paranoia. I never knew when someone was going to come through the door and stab me full of holes.

All of my prison friends began to turn away from me. Most of the prison officials and officers felt that my death would be justified; I'd be getting what I deserved. They had their way of letting me know that they were consenting to whatever the gang wanted to do.

I tried to talk with one of the prison officers about the situation. He assured me that nothing was going on and that it was all in my head. Later on, as I was in the chow hall getting ready to eat, one of the gang members came up to me and told me that this prison officer had told him what I said.

That really capped it off! The prison officer had turned on me. There was no one I could trust anymore.

As I happened to walk by the chaplain's office I saw a stack of brand new

Bibles on the shelf. I took one and brought it to my cell.

I had no one on the outside to whom I could go. I had nowhere else to turn for help, and so I began to flip open the Bible and read it at random. One day I happened to turn to the Book of Job. As I read, it described the very thing that was happening to me:

"He has alienated my brothers from me; my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. My kinsmen have gone away; my friends have forgotten me."  
(Job 19:13-14, NIV)

As I read another passage, I was immediately reminded of my encounter with the gang member in the chow hall:

"When he has filled his belly, God will vent his burning anger against him and rain down his blows upon him"  
(Job 20:23, NIV).

I knew it was talking about me. The description was so accurate it nearly scared me to death! But as I read on, it got even more frightening:

"Though he flees from an iron weapon, a bronze-tipped arrow pierces him . . . Terrors will come over him; total darkness lies in wait for his treasures . . . The heavens will expose his guilt; the earth will rise up against him . . . Such is the fate God allots the wicked, the heritage appointed for them by God" (Job 20:24-27, 29, NIV).

It was just too vivid; it fit the situation

too well. It was as if this was the final word — it was going to happen!

The only thing I could think to do was to ask the prison officials to grant me protective custody. At first they didn't want to give it to me, but finally they agreed. So I ended up in isolation — in "the hole," as they call it.

You have plenty of time to think while you're in the hole. I thought about what I had read in the Bible. I felt that if the consequences of my actions were so accurate, then maybe everything else about the Book was true, too.

I began to read the Bible regularly and systematically. Reading it brought about a change in me. I saw who I really was in relationship to God — a sinner in need of His forgiveness. I realized that Jesus had died for me, that He had already paid the penalty for my sin. Recognizing this fact, I asked for His forgiveness. I asked Him to come into my heart and to change me from the inside out.

One passage in the Gospel of John really got my attention: "God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24, NIV). I had lied my whole life, and now I saw that God demanded the truth. At this time, I was about to go up for a parole board hearing, and *I had never told them the truth before.*

I knew that telling the truth at that hearing might mean doing more time. And doing more time would increase my chances of being killed by one of the gang members. But I made up my mind that no matter how much more time it was going to get me, I was going to tell the truth.

Until that point, I had never admitted

to the board that I had committed the crime. But this time I did. I truthfully answered every question that they asked me.

To my amazement, they didn't add any more time to my sentence. It was a real victory. I had told the truth!

I continued to read the Bible and to pray every day. I also began to memorize passages of Scripture. This helped me to control my thought life, to think about good things.

I was also able to get a radio, and began to listen to a Christian radio station. I especially enjoyed the music and would memorize the songs and hum them to myself. This also helped my frame of mind.

The parole board hearing wasn't the only trial I was to face. Every 90 days I went before a review board which decided whether to keep me in that prison or to transfer me to another. There were gang members in the other prisons, and



*Michael Burris could only listen to Christian radio in prison. Now, he and his wife host a daily radio program in Merced, California.*

I would be less protected there. I knew that if I were transferred, I would probably be killed.

But it seemed like whenever the day came to go before the review board, I would read a Bible verse that would jump out at me, like "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you" (Psalm 55:22, NIV), or "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1, NIV).

For three years, I went before the review board every 90 days, and every time they extended my stay another 90 days!

Then other good things began to happen. I was assigned to clean-up duty, and I did so well that the prison officials increased my responsibilities. Soon I was working in the kitchen, helping to serve all of the units in the prison.

Some of the officers and inmates I worked with taunted me about being a Christian. But I found prayer to be a great source of strength. As I read passages of Scripture, I prayed that God would help me to apply them in my life. In the Lord's Prayer, for example, I read these words: "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us" (Luke 11:4, NIV). So I would ask the Lord to help me forgive those people who were giving me a bad time. I found I was able to continue to do a good job and to not hold any hostility against the people I worked with.

I also kept tuned into the Christian radio station. I went to sleep with it and woke up with it. It was my only source of real companionship, and the preaching I heard over the radio helped strengthen me.



*The Michael Burris family.*

The next miracle in my life was a change in the parole system. In 1979, the laws changed in such a way that some people in prison ended up getting more time and some got less time. It worked out that I got less, and I was given a release date of December 1981. I was very happy, of course, but I also wondered if I would live to see the day.

I continued to work hard on my job. By now I was doing laundry for my entire unit and keeping up the administrative offices as well. At one point, the staff's superiors were coming to make an inspection. For some of the staff, their jobs were riding on it. They kind of handed me the ball to get their offices in shape, and I went to work. I was able to do a beautiful job, and the staff wrote some very nice things about me in their reports.

The time went pretty quickly, and in December 1981, I was released from prison. I decided to visit the radio station that had meant so much to me. During my visit, I got a chance to talk to the director. I told him my story and what listening to the



station had done for me. He took interest in me and even mentioned the possibility of a job with the station in the future.

A few months later, the manager of the radio station telephoned me. He said there was a position available in the print shop, and offered me the job. I accepted immediately and arranged to have my parole transferred to that location.

Although I did the best job I could, I didn't find it very fulfilling. Before very long, a position opened up in the programming department. I worked very hard in my spare hours to develop the necessary skills and was eventually hired for the job.

Over the last few years, I have worked for the station in a variety of capacities. I helped to produce a program for Christian families, selected the music for other programs, and even worked as a news broadcaster one year. Among my other duties, I was responsible for an instrumental music program which airs daily.

I know that God has turned my life around and has helped me to overcome many doubts and obstacles. The one thing that's held my life together has been the Word of God, and I feel obligated to share it with other people.

They say that prison is supposed to *reform* the prisoner — to change his behavior and bring him into line with the laws of society. But what God did in my life was to *re-form* me. He put a new nature in me and forgave the guilt of my past. Through Jesus Christ, He has changed me from the inside out! That's the only lasting change.

My time in prison was rough. But as I look back on it now, it's not an unpleasant memory. In many ways it was a beautiful time, because God was with me.

We usually think of miracles in terms of an instant healing or a sudden, unexpected blessing. Maybe an even bigger miracle is how the Lord is able to comfort people in the midst of affliction — whatever the situation. □

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*Michael Burriss is now married. He and his wife Lisa have a baby girl. Together, Mike and Lisa minister in convalescent homes, holding several services during the week and three on Sunday.*

*In addition, they have a 15 minute radio program which is aired five days a week in Merced, California. Michael says, "Thus far the road has not been easy, but it has been shining brighter and brighter. I am often amazed at what the Lord has done and wonder how it could be."*

**SET FREE  
PRISON  
MINISTRY**

**UPDATED**

We are pleased to announce two new chapters in our Set Free Prison Ministry.

The first is in Alpharetta, Georgia. The second is in Pleasant Valley, Boise, Idaho.

These are just a few of the many new "soul saving stations" that are springing up in the United States and throughout the world.

Coming home, my wife and I drove past a high-traffic intersection on Interstate 35 and Texas 46. My wife exclaimed, "Oh look, they're tearing down your old filling station."

broken into five times. Those were the days of the long lines at the gas pumps. Gas was short and I was only allotted so much. They would break in, shattering the overhead doors and doing extensive

# The St. Patrick's Day Massacre

Harold Brown  
Seguin, Texas

In my mind I couldn't help going back to St. Patrick's Day 1974. It was a Sunday. I remember it so well. I had loaded my pickup truck with the mattress from our camper, loaded my sawed-off 12-gauge double-barreled shotgun, and stuffed my .380 automatic in my hip pocket as Marilyn despairingly looked on. She knew I was going to do it, no matter what she said. As I angrily got in the pickup and backed out, she said, "Please be careful!"

I drove up to the station with many things racing through my mind. Would the shotgun work? It was really an old external hammered mantel piece cut off at stagecoach length (18") which is legal in Texas. I had never shot the gun. Just in case, I had my pistol in my hip pocket.

Would they come back? Most likely not, but I was going to satisfy myself by being there anyway. You see, in the previous four weeks my station had been



Harold Brown — moments after his ordeal.

damage. They would turn on the pumps, break the handles off and steal the gas. Inside, they would steal tires, oil, tools, etc. — anything they could pack off. They even took a new jacket my wife had

ick's  
one →

bought me as a present.

I was angry because the police would come out, make out a report and do nothing. So if the police would not catch the thieves, I would! As I backed the pickup into the first bay I thought, "I'll never really catch 'em." Nevertheless, I was there; I was going to try.

This was a large interstate station with three bays and three islands, canopy-covered. It was dusk. My plan was to back the truck into the bay next to the office, by the switch box. I would turn out all the lights behind me, leave office lights on and a few outside lights which would shine in through the glass bay doors. I lay down on the mattress in the back of the pickup to wait, or to sleep.

I couldn't sleep. Over and over my mind raced — what if this would happen or that — would I be alive by morning? Cars would pull in and stop for one thing or another — air, water, to read a map —

then go on. One pulled in at the closest pumps to the office, opened the hood and trunk. I thought they just needed the light. They banged around awhile. Little did I know they were breaking nozzles loose.

I lay there quietly waiting for them to leave, when all of a sudden it sounded as though a bomb had gone off in the station. The bay door had not yet had the glass repaired from the break-in a couple of days before. Only a piece of plywood covered the opening. I was to find out later that what sounded like a "bomb" was a large rock they had thrown hitting the plywood and the plywood slamming down flat on the floor, making a loud bang.

I got in position on my knees intending to spring up and say, "Put your hands up, I've got you covered!" But my plan wouldn't work. One went on one side of me, the other one to the other side where the pump switches were. I thought, "What can I do? If I jump up and cover one, the other one will shoot me from behind, or vice versa. If I don't do something, they'll be gone. And I'm outnumbered."

It was an instantaneous decision. I jumped up, shot towards the one at the switches, spun around and shot in the direction where the other one was ducking into the darkness. Then I dropped down out of sight.

All was quiet. The one at the pump switches (I'll call him Joe) ducked into the office; I couldn't see him. The other was quiet; the only great noise was my heart-beat.

Then from the office came a cry, "I'm hit — get me a doctor." Was it a ploy to get

me out in the open? The only shells were spent in the shotgun. He kept crying out, so I jumped out between the truck and the wall. I edged my way to the office door. I put both hands on the automatic and jumped into the doorway, ready to shoot first. I knew I would be a silhouette in the lighted doorway; I had to get in and out quickly.

What I saw made me jump back into the shadows. Joe was lying in a pool of blood, kicking with one foot, propelling himself around and around. It made me sick, but I couldn't move into the light, not knowing about the other man.

I crept around until I reached the other man but he lay silent on the floor. I raced to the phone. About fifteen police cars were there before I could hang up the phone.

This was to begin a change in my life. I spent the rest of the night at the police station. The next day I was like a tourist attraction. Then the phone calls started. A low scratchy voice said things like, "You're a dead man." A carload of men pulled up, took my picture and drove off. Another phone caller said, "You're under contract." All this, and myself to live with ... that was the worst.

Over and over I would ask myself, "What have I done? Was this stuff worth a life?"

The law was happy — these were known criminals at the time, but that changed nothing. Joe (who'd lived) asked me if I would write the judge a letter for him. I did, believing he had been punished enough. I didn't know why at the time, but Jesus had put this on my heart to do for the future. In spite of many other things, the judge gave him

ten years probation and set him free. I believe it was because of my letter.

I left the filling station business and became a postman. Through many strange events, I found Jesus — whom I wasn't searching for. I began to study the Bible vigorously and began to preach the Gospel. The Lord then led me to preach at the county jail. Things calmed down as years went by.

One day as I walked into a filling station, there was Joe, all dressed up in a three-piece suit. He was getting gas in his pickup. We started talking. The bitterness and hate that Joe had stored up for me was soon obvious. He told me how he had been in California for the past few years, but now he was back. Patting his left chest, he told me he was carrying a .357 Magnum. He began to tell me how he was watching me, how he knew where I delivered mail, and when. He also told me how the memory burnt within him and how he could still feel the pain. I could see that I could not talk reasonably with him, and bid my leave.

The phone calls started again. He said it was just a few weeks until St. Patrick's Day and the score would be even. I was a Christian by then and had chosen God's way. "Lord, what am I to do?" I began to pray. I was no coward. I could as easily intimidate him — hide behind the bushes in his yard and, as he came by, snap the hammers on my gun and laugh; or just say, "Get your gun and let's get it on." But this was not God's way. Don't repay evil for evil the Bible says. But love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you (Luke 6:27-28). For once, I was going to be obedient.

The Bible says, "The fervent prayers of a righteous man can accomplish much." Well, my righteousness is Jesus, and my prayers were fervent. I prayed all the way to work, at work, on the way home, and would go for a walk to pray after supper.

I was a relief carrier, called a T-6. I carried five different routes; all were walking routes, and jump forward a day



*Harold and Marilyn Brown*

each week. Eight days before St. Patrick's Day, I was delivering on another downtown route. I was going down the street behind the jail praying as I delivered the mail. There was a little alley right behind the jail that I had to go down to deliver mail to some apartments.

I had to face the jail as I went down that alley. As I got to the closest point to the jail, the Lord spoke to me, "Yea,

though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." I jumped, threw my arms up and shouted, "Hallelujah!" He had answered my prayers! I quit praying, knowing the situation was taken care of. I went my way in peace.

Eight days later was St. Patrick's Day. My route rotated back to the downtown route and once again, I walked down that alley. When I reached that same place where the Lord had spoken to me, someone yelled to me out of the third-story window of the jail, "Hey, Harold, come up here."

I waved and headed on around through the courthouse and back towards the sheriff's office and jail, all the time wondering who wanted to see me up in the jail. From preaching there, I knew many of the inmates. When I got to the sheriff's office the sheriff was sitting there and I asked, "Walter, who is on the third floor who wants to see me?" He kind of laughed and said, "Oh, that's your ol' buddy you shot."

As I walked away, I saw the miraculous way that Jesus had taken care of the problem — Joe was locked up before, during, and after St. Patrick's Day. And to let me know that it was He, Jesus Himself, protecting me, He had spoken to me at the very same spot I was to find out Joe was in jail.

Jesus could have answered my prayers anywhere . . . but He didn't. He chose the exact spot Joe yelled at me, that I might know that He had answered my prayer. The irony of it was, Joe was in jail for the very thing he was doing to me; he threatened a police officer and was

locked up. After he got out of jail, he left town again.

You might think that this is a fitting end to this saga, but no. The Bible says that, "He who starts a good work in you is faithful to complete it." A couple of years went by. One Saturday morning I had, as always, gone to a monthly Full Gospel Business Men's breakfast, when in came a doctor friend of mine with a guest. Guess who? Yes, it was Joe, whom I had shot. Not knowing the circumstances and seeing me, the doctor thought I might be a good influence on him. So he sat Joe down between us for breakfast.

Poor Joe was so nervous he couldn't even eat. I was cordial and friendly, but a little uneasy. Oh, the mysterious ways of God! The next thing that happened seemed like someone was playing a joke on me . . . and it was God. But He, in His infinite wisdom, knew what He was doing. For my doctor friend got called away and asked me, as a favor, to take his guest home.

As I drove him home, we talked about Jesus, His love and mercy. Then we sat in front of his house in the car and talked for a long while. As we did, a healing began to take place.

Joe began to phone me but it was different this time . . . not threats. He just wanted to talk about Jesus. Sometimes he would be drunk and shooting off his mouth; other times he was very sincere. It was in one of these conversations that he told me that he, too, had died a day-and-a-half after I had shot him. He had seen his friend that had been killed that night. He said Jesus let him come back; he said that that was not his death, but his birth.

He told how through the years Jesus had removed the hate he had for me and said Jesus would take care of me — we were brothers. Many times Joe has called for me to pray for him.

I have asked many times, why did all of this have to happen. Romans 8:28 states that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose. I have to believe that this has worked for good, even though at the time I didn't know the Lord — He knew me, and I was called according to His purpose.

I don't know what the end will be of all this, but on the night of Thursday February 5, 1987, Joe called, weeping bitterly. He said his mother had been airlifted to a major hospital in San Antonio. She was gravely ill and was at death's door. He desperately wanted prayer. He said, "Harold, you're the only one I can trust."

How can a love and trust like this form out of two bitter enemies? It can only come from the hand of God!

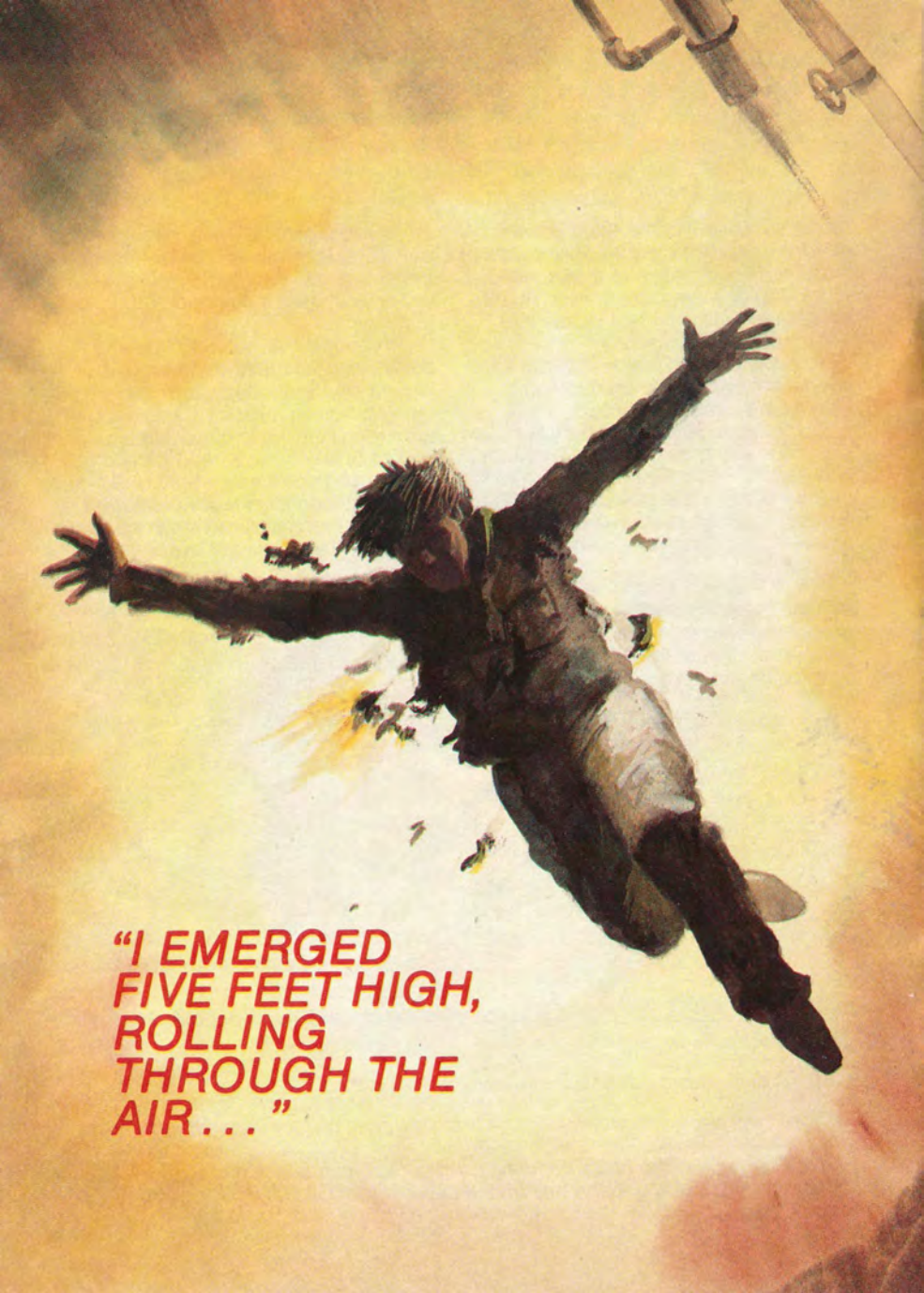
I prayed for his mother and told him she would be okay — just go to bed and rest. The prayer was answered.

Yes, the old station is gone, but its legacy lives on. Jesus said to pray for your enemy. If you'll do it, He'll make him your brother. □

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*After high school, Harold served in the U.S. Navy as an aircraft mechanic. He has spent much of his life as a mechanic on airplanes and automobiles. He owned a service station on two different occasions until he joined the postal service in April, 1976. Several years ago he left the Post Office to spend more time in the jail ministry and to tend his eighty acre ranch. He has been a member of FGBMFI since 1980.*



A man in a military uniform is shown falling through the air with his arms outstretched. He is wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants. The background is a bright, hazy yellow and orange, suggesting a high-altitude or post-explosion environment. In the upper right corner, a portion of a mechanical device, possibly a parachute or a piece of equipment, is visible. The overall scene conveys a sense of a dramatic and dangerous event.

**"I EMERGED  
FIVE FEET HIGH,  
ROLLING  
THROUGH THE  
AIR..."**



*"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*

*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God . . ." (Isaiah 43:1-3, NKJV).*

# The Fiery Encounter

Charles Schaub  
St. Croix, US Virgin Islands

I giggled at the colors oozing down the living room walls, the surreal images sometimes jumping through the air to blend with the late night television characters in front of me. This picture of madness stemmed from my LSD-fogged brain.

Suddenly, I stopped laughing and gasped. Across the room, a motionless figure had appeared in a chair. It was . . . me.

Some months before, I had started experimenting with drugs. I liked their mind-expanding qualities, but this out-of-body experience was anything but exciting. Paralyzed by fear, I tried to crawl back into my body and, when I failed, reasoned that I must be dead. In a short time the attendants would arrive to take me to the morgue.

Sweat formed on my forehead as I pondered my fate: trapped in hell, locked away like some of my friends who had

taken "trips" from which they had never returned.

Luckily, at that moment the TV station's sign-off began, prompting me to check the clock. In my numbed state, I couldn't see the hands move, so I glanced at it several times a minute. I figured that if time went on, I must still be alive.

In the midst of my panicked motions, the sign-off prayer concluded. As the choir appeared on the screen and began to sing with eyes lifted up, a strange presence invaded, causing me to shiver. Instantly, a sensation washed over me and I knew that I had joined a "universal mind" that enabled me to touch my own divinity.

Not long after this late-night deception, I quit college and, with my wife and several friends, migrated to the mountains just west of Denver, Colorado. We were alienated from society, which we

had judged to be as a straight-laced, corrupt "Babylon" that would quickly perish.

As I look back on this warped period in my life, I both laugh and shudder. But strangely enough, my entanglement in the drug culture began with an innocent quest for God.

I grew up on a farm outside the northern Colorado city of Greeley. In my teens I enrolled in the confirmation classes that were an integral part of my family's German Lutheran church. One day as we clasped our hands for prayer, the pastor instructed, "All of you who sense the presence of God, raise your hand."

Since I always considered myself a good student, I pushed mine up, only to jerk it down with a blush when I discovered no others were in the air.

"What do you mean, feel the presence of God?" I muttered. "What in the world is he talking about?"

I set out to find the answer and through a series of books and other writings, concluded that mind-altering drugs represented the way to spiritual perception. Thus, a naive, sheltered, farm kid was seduced by the same ugly terror that plagues major metropolitan cities.

In 1970, my drug-induced thinking led me to live on a mountain top, where my friends and I moved into an isolated log cabin built by settlers in the 1860s. Electricity was our only modern convenience.

Thank God that in the midst of this perilous time, my mother steadfastly prayed for me. Her intercession succeeded one wintry night, when harsh mountain winds whipped up chest-high drifts around our doors.

Inside, I pondered the heartiness of the early settlers, the type who had constructed our cabin. Those hearty pioneers journeyed west without benefit of medical care, scraping for food and combating ever-present dangers with a little muzzle loader.

Such strength must have required something more than ordinary courage . . . a faith. Yes, faith. A faith in something stronger and mightier than any man.

During this contemplation, I picked up my Bible and read through the Gospels, but this time I studied them with a new perception of Jesus. I accepted the fact that this Man was indeed the Son of God.

As I sat reading, a presence again entered my room. But this time it was a peaceful Spirit, who hovered and radiated with thousands of pinpoints of light. Soon everything glowed and a strong beam surged forward and landed on my wife's Bible, lying on a table across the room. The brilliant light shone directly on a cross that decorated the book's zipper, reflecting into my eyes.

It dawned on me that Jesus Christ died for me on the cross and He was telling me that He loved me. Then I knew the truth that God is real, that He loved me even in my condition: a drug user with hair down to his rear end and a big, flowing, bushy beard who looked like an odd mix of Santa Claus and Satan.

Touched by that realization, I moved off the mountain and began spreading the Word with the fervor of a John the Baptist. I would grab acquaintances and with a gleam in my eye, say, "I want to tell you an amazing story about what changed me . . ."

Not only did He save me, the Lord healed me. Drugs had eroded my brain, leaving me unable to think clearly — I would often forget what word to use in the middle of a sentence and then totally lose track of the conversation. But, after my conversion, I re-enrolled at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, one of the world's top engineering schools, and graduated with honors.



*Charles and Jana Schaub*

In fact, the Lord did such a good job that upon graduation, my wife and I were able to live comfortably because I had my choice of a number of attractive job offers from oil companies. From a goofball who was lucky to remember how to tie his shoes, I became respected as a man with the answers.

After two years with a major oil company, I took a promotion with another firm and became Operations Superintendent at a Denver refinery, scene of the

most miraculous experience in my life.

The incident occurred on a foggy June morning. Rain had steadily drizzled for several days, and the gray sky served as an unnoticed warning of impending disaster.

I sat in my office, attacking a pile of paper work, when the call came: "We got trouble."

Instantly, I began praying in the Spirit, which I had learned unlocked my mind and gave me knowledge in many situations where I didn't have the answers.

Dashing into the hallway, I witnessed a dense fog of deadly, heavier-than-air, hydrocarbon vapor creeping across the refinery floor. Inside the control room, I learned that a maintenance man working on a stripper charge drum had accidentally ruptured a piece of pipe connected directly to the drum.

Thousands of gallons of petroleum elements were stored in the vessel at pressures of up to 200 pounds per square inch. When they escaped, the poisonous vapors quickly knocked out two victims, who now lay on the control room floor. Eyes rolling, their speech sounded like a bar room conversation at 3 A.M.

Our crew questioned the numbed duo, trying to determine what had happened so we could isolate the problem and cut off the gaseous flow. Grappling for a solution, I headed out the door towards the leaking cylinder.

That probably wasn't too smart, but I wanted to get an idea of what we could shut off. As I headed into that cloud, the hair on my arms stood up and an awareness of impending disaster hit me. A spark of light flashed . . . the tank was

going to explode!

I had reached a jumble of pipes near the damaged unit and turned quickly to flee. But before I completed my first stride, a giant roar and angry flames caught up with me, then raged past. I was engulfed by the inferno.

Because of emergency training, I remembered to "roll and run," and tucked my legs in preparation for the first tumble. But before completing a turn, something strange happened which has no earthly explanation.

The men in the control room later told me what they observed: a giant flash and me coming out of that fireball. Only I wasn't close to the ground, I emerged five feet high, rolling through the air. No wonder. I felt a hand lift me out of that flame.

Splating on the cement, I slid into a corner, my smoldering clothes spitting smoke. Like a good superintendent, I leaped to my feet and shouted instructions, "Okay, kill the compressors! Take the feed out of there! Put the steam to the riser! Open the bypass! Get the pressure down on the absorber! . . ."

While I was directing the mission, I put my hand to my face and watched in horror as a patch of skin slid off. In the reflection of the control room glass, I noticed the back half of my shirt was gone. I touched a spot on the blackened surface and it fell away, exposing red flesh.

As attendants bandaged my body for the ambulance trip, I grimaced in shock, not understanding why God had allowed me to be burned. But, as I agonized, I felt a healing Spirit moving like radar up and down my back.

When my wife arrived at the burn unit, the doctors greeted her with their diagnosis: second and third-degree burns, with the second-degree over 80 percent of my body that would require skin grafts and six months in the hospital.

A few hours later, after the burn tissue had been removed, I sat up in bed — despite the intense pain — opened the Bible and began reading. I remembered somebody saying, "The Word of God was sent to heal you, to deliver you from destruction," and I could just picture the Word coming out of my blood stream, going up and ministering to all those cells on the surface.

The power was so strong I couldn't sleep, even when they gave me pain killers. Later, the doctors told my wife the second-degree burns weren't as bad as they had first thought and they would have to re-evaluate my condition.

The next day when she came to find out how long I would be hospitalized, my surprised wife accompanied me home. Now, I hurt, and I did suffer a bit after that, but I'm convinced the Lord totally healed me. Today, it's still a testimony in that hospital's burn unit, about the guy who came in with second-degree burns and left the next day with minor third-degree.

Glory to God, it was His Spirit on me and, as believers, we can all be vessels for the glory of God! □

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*In May of 1987 Charles Schaub left his position in Denver to become the Manager of Operations for Amerada Hess' St. Croix Refinery in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the largest name plate capacity refinery in the Western Hemisphere. He and his wife, Jana, have three children, J. Cristy, 20; J.C., 17; and Jenni, 14. They attend St. Croix Community Fellowship.*



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*From being a young man who worshiped the Emperor of Japan and longed to be a kamikaze pilot, to becoming a diplomatic interpreter of the U. S. Government for Presidents Carter and Reagan, Mr. Iida's life has undergone startling and dramatic changes.*

*The occupation of his country by Americans after World War II had a profound effect on him and his spiritual walk. Looking back, how does he view these events today?*

# Banquet at the palace

Cornelius K. Iida



## R venge

Skimming distant treetops, a cluster of five or six objects moved towards where I stood. As I gazed at them from the platform of a rural Japanese railway station, they appeared to fly at a speed like that of model airplanes. Soon, their wings and chubby fuselages became distinguishable. Glistening in the sun, they appeared to have the wingspan of no more than two feet, their engines were strangely soundless. I thought: "Beautiful model airplanes! I wonder who made them."

I was almost mesmerized.

Suddenly, the early afternoon quietness was shattered by a harsh voice: "Hey, kid, take cover! Do you want to be killed?"

Startled, I looked at the aged station master, who frantically pointed towards the grove. The approaching objects, I realized with a sharp pang in my chest, were real warplanes! As I jumped off the platform and tried to hide myself, the Grummans restarted their engines, and opened fire.

The roar of the engines and the bursts of the bullets shook the air. From where I lay, I thought I saw the eyes of a pilot behind the goggles, as he sharply pulled up his slow-moving craft after a strafing pass. Was it hatred or fear that I saw on his face? The deadly aircraft roared as if to challenge me to come up to engage.

When the brief raid was over, I no

longer wished to take the train to the next town. I went home to my mother.

"How glad I am to see you safe, son! Where were you during the raid?" asked mother.

"I was already at the station, Mother. I was about to board the train," I replied. I told her about the incident. As mother chided me for not being watchful, secretly I resolved to become a fighter pilot when I grew up, and retaliate against the adversary. I was fourteen years of age that early summer, and did not know that the WWII was about to end.

## **A**t the Palace

Some 35 years passed. One evening I sat behind President Jimmy Carter in the state dining room of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. I had become a diplomatic interpreter of the United States Government, and accompanied the President on his state visit to my native land. Emperor Hirohito, the host of the evening festivities, sat to the left of our President, and the two talked warmly.

To accentuate the excellence of the US-Japan relations, the President courteously referred to the "unfortunate period of time" that the two nations had experienced long ago. The Emperor responded quietly. Seated directly behind them, I felt that I could almost touch the feelings of sorrow and love that flowed between the two who represented two great nations.

I felt as if I were in the presence of God. I knew that the Spirit of the Risen Christ, the Prince of Peace, was directing the interaction of the moment.

To me, a person who had once aspired to become a kamikaze pilot, to witness profound goodwill between an American President and the very Japanese Emperor, for whose honor I would gladly have died, was profoundly moving. I was impressed by the sense of the love of God more than anything else all through the evening in Tokyo; that same love that transformed a former worshiper of the Emperor into a child of God.

## **W**onderful Name

I grew up worshiping not only the Emperor, but many gods. Only after the defeat of my nation in war did I hear about the only one God the Creator of the Universe. One evening in August of 1946, I was taking a walk near my house. When I came to a small farm, I heard singing voices coming out of a shack. Fond of singing, I was drawn to the shack and peeked in. There were a dozen or so people inside and the singing was led by a young man. Another young man invited me in, opening a "song book" to the page where the pleasant "song" was. The songs were hymns, and a gathering turned out to be a mid-week Gospel meeting.

The mud-floored shack had been part of the barracks which the Imperial Army used to house the young soldiers manning the anti-aircraft artillery. It contained a dozen wooden benches, an upright piano and a lectern. When the singing was over, a middle-aged man stood behind the lectern and began to speak. That was the first Gospel message I ever heard in my life. I was taken aback when the preacher said that "all our

righteousnesses" were "as filthy rags," quoting from the 64th chapter of the Book of Isaiah. I wished to leave the meeting, but did not want to disrupt it by so doing. The man soon began to refer to one Jesus Christ.

I became quite curious about this man, whom the preacher alleged to have died for the sins of all mankind, and rose again. The Gospel was, from the very first time I heard it proclaimed, a comforting message. I went back to the meeting a week later, attracted by the name Jesus. My attendance became regular. Some months later, I found out that the preacher had spent his wartime years in solitary confinement in a Tokyo penitentiary.

His only "crime" was that he preached that even the Emperor of Japan had to repent and accept God's salvation to escape from the wrath to be poured upon sinners. Though tortured, the preacher reportedly would not recant. But thanks to the American occupation forces, he was free again to preach the Good News.

## **A**mericans prayed

My heart hungered after spiritual nourishment in those days immediately following the defeat of my nation. Along with the messages that I heard every Wednesday at the old barracks, a special book became the source of rich spiritual strengthening. It was an unpretentious paperback volume, with a photograph of the Sea of Galilee on its cover. At the time I received it I was grateful, but the significance of the gift was not obvious to me.

Years later, when I attended a theological seminary in the United States, I realized that the paperbound New Testament was one of the tens of thousands that were printed in New York City during the War.

While there were mortal combats going on in the Pacific, American Christians prayed for the salvation of the Japanese, and gave offerings that produced New Testaments in the language of the enemies. The paperbacks were ready for distribution in Japan soon after the hostilities ceased, and the Allied occupation began.

That was a remarkable occupation. As one who grew up during that period, I can testify that the occupation changed my entire outlook on life. The people whom I was taught to expect to be "demons and beasts" in reality were compassionate, caring human beings. Even as I write these words, images of tall, gentle GIs, in their military uniforms, passing out Gospel tracts at the busy Ginza street corners appear in front of my eyes.

General MacArthur, though misunderstood by some of his own countrymen, was an undisputed force behind the peace and goodwill that promptly emerged between my native land and its conquerors. I grew up admiring him and his leadership in the governing of the occupied land. Yet, I did not realize that his personal faith in God apparently made all the difference. Only after President Carter's visit to my homeland did I become aware of the spiritual impact the late General had in the US-Japan relations.





*President and Mrs. Reagan host Japanese Prime Minister and Mrs. Nakasone at a 1987 White House reception. Interpreter Cornelius Iida is seen in the center.*

## **M**y life for my people

William Manchester tells us in his biography of General MacArthur, *American Caesar*, how the Japanese Emperor called on the Supreme Commander of the occupation forces on September 27th, 1945.

According to the author, the Emperor told his host, "I come to you, General MacArthur, to offer myself to the judgment of the powers you represent as the one to bear sole responsibility for every political and military decision made and action taken by my people in the conduct of the war" (p. 491). Manchester further states that upon hearing this, the General reportedly felt "moved to the very marrow of (his) bones" (p. 491).

I think the reason why Gen. MacArthur was so deeply moved by those words of the Japanese ruler was because the General himself knew of the love of God, and of the sacrifice Jesus offered to fulfill that love. The Emperor's offer reflected his selfless spirit. However, unless the Commander who received that offer believed in Christ as the One who alone could make the atonement

for many, the Emperor's offer might have appeared to him as a mere gesture. In that sense, it was the sacrifice on Calvary's hill that helped establish the close bond of mutual respect and admiration between the American warrior and the non-Christian monarch.

It was indeed fortunate that it was Douglas MacArthur who, representing the Allies, received the sovereign of the empire at the onset of the occupation of the realm. As a teenager, I felt that General MacArthur acted as if he represented the welfare of the Japanese people to the government in Washington.

In retrospect, these events in the high places of the government had a strong bearing on my spiritual life. They affected my decision to follow Jesus Christ. For, even though I never mistook Christianity for an "American religion," in my mind the GIs and other Americans represented to Japan what Christians were like. And I liked what I saw.

Repenting of my sins, among which were hatred, idolatry and pride, I accepted the salvation offered freely to all who believe. When I was baptized in 1949 (about three years after I heard the

Gospel for the first time), my heart was full of joy. Some 38 years have passed, and I am unashamed to sound almost trite: every day in Jesus has been better than the day before!

Of late I am convinced that as a post-war Japanese convert to Christianity I must thank the venerable Emperor also. When he acted out of compassion to his people, his spirit moved General MacArthur, and as a result the occupation policy springing from a Judeo-Christian sense of value was pursued with vigor and consistency. The Emperor, in my opinion, shares with the American General the honor for the success of that policy, to which I am a debtor both materially and spiritually.

## What language

Last year, when President and Mrs. Reagan invited the visiting Japanese Prime Minister and Mrs. Nakasone to the third floor apartment of the White House, I interpreted between the two gentlemen. Mr. Nakasone told our President that he was very moved when he read my autobiography, and proceeded to describe a couple of chapters, including the one on the little old shack where I first heard the Gospel. Then he said, "Now, Mr. Iida, you must make sure to interpret for Ron all I have said."

When I finished interpreting, President Reagan asked me, "Tell me, in which language do you pray?" I thank God that He gave me the gift of speaking in tongues.

The testimony I failed to give to the President that evening in the White House, I now wish to convey to him and to

all my American friends. For my prayer, my life, in fact everything about me dramatically changed when I received the Holy Spirit some 22 years ago. Yes, ordination into the ministry was denied me. I also lost a pastorate, mainly because of the changes that took place in me through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But, I never regretted it. On the contrary, I am delighted to be one of the President's interpreters . . . the one that speaks in tongues; the one that is known as a born-again Christian!

The Lord has given me a position in the government that affords many unique opportunities to bear witness of His Son. It has been exciting to serve God and this country as an interpreter between the heads of two of the greatest nations of the world.

As I observed firsthand the American President interact with the Japanese Prime Minister, I know that the relationship between my native country and the United States is built upon mutual admiration and respect. And I believe it is good to remember the role the love of God played in the resumption of relations under General MacArthur and Emperor Hirohito. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. And that is true also when you work in the arena of international relations. □

---

*Mr. Iida completed eight years of diplomatic interpreting for the White House and US cabinet members as the sole official interpreter into Japanese.*

*He became a US citizen in March, 1973. He and his wife Isako have two daughters and a son. In addition to his other outstanding accomplishments, he has authored an autobiography by Kodansha of Japan entitled Iesu No Toki, (The Hour of Jesus) 1986.*

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# 6 STEPS TO SALVATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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May 5, 1988

**NATIONAL  
DAY OF  
PRAYER** 

# CONTENTS

## Van Crouch The Man Who Motivates The Pros

From his start as a struggling, misguided teenager, Van Crouch has become a leading motivational speaker to both top corporations and pro sports teams. But his success came only after he picked himself up from some devastating personal blows.

3

## Banquet at the palace



Cornelius Iida, a young patriotic Japanese, grew up worshipping his emperor and swearing revenge on those who warred with his country. Then, as an adult, he found himself, still patriotic to Japan, no longer worshipping his emperor but now in the service of his sworn enemy.

30

Van Crouch — The Man Who Motivates the Pros . . . . .	2	The Fiery Encounter . . . . .	24
Conventions . . . . .	10	Banquet at the Palace . . . . .	30
A Contract on My Life . . . . .	12	International Directors . . . . .	36
Set Free Prison Ministry Update . . . . .	17	Six Steps to Salvation . . . . .	38
The St. Patrick's Day Massacre . . . . .	18	Chapter Outreach . . . . .	38

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