

Full Gospel Business Men's

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VOICE

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TEENS

Where are you going?

Mike Braccia and Steven Wilk were more than two "wild and crazy guys." While still in high school, they formed a unique partnership and grew rich by distributing large quantities of drugs to local teens.

Today they are partners in a different "enterprise," and are going in a totally new direction. But before they arrived where they are now, their "high life" of teenage adventure turned into a nightmare of . . .

DOUBLE



Mike Braccia & Steve Wilk
Norwalk, Connecticut

MIKE

I started using drugs when I was eleven years old. By the time I was fourteen, I had already been stabbed and shot at. I

and because I admired Mike who was just a little older than I. We were part of a gang of more than a dozen guys who loved nothing better than to go places — like dances and parties — and start trouble.

MIKE

We loved to go partying and get drunk

TROUBLE

was part of a crowd of “hippies” (as they were called then) tripping out regularly on LSD, mescaline, speed, and cocaine. In a way, I lived a “double life,” for on the other hand I was polite to my parents, a respectable student, and an active athlete. In fact, I felt really smug about how I had everything under control — using drugs and still carrying on as if I were straight.

STEVE

I didn't start using drugs and alcohol until I was fourteen, but I, too, was just as proud of the way I could “handle myself” being a good student and athlete, and still taking drugs.

Mike and I met in high school (a Catholic high school no less). We hit it off because we both had an itch for trouble,

or wired out. It was a big game to see how much we could fool our parents by coming home and behaving like angels after a night of partying.

After a while, we started dealing drugs together out of the trunks of cars in the school parking lot. We were proud that our school had the best drugs in town, and that we were some of the chief dispensers of those high-class poisons.

STEVE

Our business really grew and we began tapping into some big drug suppliers. Mike peddled hash, his brother peddled marijuana, and I peddled cocaine. Being “successful” we had access, twenty-four hours a day, to the stock of several liquor stores. Doors opened for us wherever we turned. We were admired for our

money and the cars we drove. We were flying high.

MIKE

Then things started to crash. One night in November, 1978, the two of us got badly beaten up by five other guys. They nearly killed us. Before the year was over both of us had been arrested several times on drug charges. Then, on New Year's Eve, I took ten hits of LSD. Later that night I listened to a little statue in my room tell me I was going to die. Two months later I was involved in a car accident that took the life of one person and badly damaged four others, including me.

STEVE

Mike's brother called me at six-thirty in the morning, just a few hours after the accident, to tell me about it. "Michael, Todd, and Joey," he reported, "were on their way home last night from drinking at a bar that served minors. They hit another car head-on at high speed. The driver of the other car was killed instantly, and Joey may not make it. His stomach and spleen were nearly ripped out of his body."

I shuddered.

"Mike's face took nearly two hundred stitches, but it looks like he and Todd will live — thanks to that doctor."

"What doctor?"

"Believe it or not, this doctor was playing tennis in the middle of the night right nearby. He heard the crash, dropped his racket, grabbed his bag, and ran."

"Whew!"

"That's not all. When the doc got there, he found three guys still breathing, and each one needed an IV setup. That doc told me even he couldn't believe it when he looked in his bag and found the three setups he needed."



Police photo of the March '79 accident.

MIKE

Two days after the accident, the surgeon came into my room. "Mike," he told me, "I went down to see what was left of the car you were in. You'd better

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look up and say 'Thank You' because you shouldn't be alive. The impact drove the car's engine into your chest. How you weren't crushed to death is a mystery. The doctor who found you said you were lying in the road, the spattered blood showed that you had walked away from the car and then collapsed."

I did what he said. I looked up and said, "Thank You." God had spared my life, and it was scary to think about. Why would He be kind to a guy like me?

STEVE

Joey didn't die, after all. But he went from 187 pounds down to 64 pounds, while what was left of his stomach healed. Like Mike, I was sobered by the experience. I began to think about God and how He might really be there.

But as Joey and Mike slowly got better, my thoughts of God diminished. Once again, I was dealing drugs and "having fun." However, another shocker came soon after when two guys from our school were burned beyond recognition in an auto wreck after a football game.

Life refused to be as rosy as it had once been.

MIKE

The accident changed the direction of my life. I had been good enough at playing football to get a scholarship offer from a college in Pennsylvania. But the accident ended my dreams of being a sports hero. With that gone, I went back to drug dealing with a vengeance. I enrolled in a college in Connecticut and started dealing full-time. My brother and I became the biggest drug dealers in both Stamford and other parts of New Haven.

But life was no barrel of laughs. Within a short time, my girl broke up with me. At the same time, I was addicted to opium, and my drug trade went so flat I was broke. One morning after a night of drinking, I found myself looking down from the ledge of a window on the fourth floor of my dorm. Below was solid concrete. "I'll die instantly," I thought. "My parents will be relieved, and I'll be relieved." Suddenly I heard a voice say, "What are you doing? Get back inside and pray!"



... we started dealing drugs together out of the trunks of cars in the school parking lot.

Who said that? I looked behind me, but no one was there. It freaked me out but I went back inside, got down on my knees and started to cry. I cried and prayed a long time, but when I was done, I knew I needed to leave that school and go back home.

Later that morning I was out on the highway with my backpack, hitchhiking my way home. "What are you doing here?" my dad greeted me when I walked through the door. I broke down and cried, telling him everything I'd been doing and how I wanted to stop. He let me stay.

But did I go straight? Not for long. Soon I was working for my brother as a strong-arm loan collector. I carried a .38-caliber pistol under my jacket, and I broke people's fingers to convince them they needed to pay my brother the money they owed him for drugs. I also carried a baseball bat and laid some heavy bruises on my brother's debtors.

Then there was another problem:

Inside I was secretly bitter and full of self-pity because I couldn't be a football player. And that bitterness affected the relationship with my folks. One time I got so nasty with my mom that she let me have it with a number ten cast-iron frying pan, right in the back of the head.

After this, I looked at my life and what it held for me. Here I was, a loan collector and a bouncer who could ride a Harley and be with the bikers. Was that all my life was going to amount to?

Meanwhile, another thing was happening in my life. My Uncle Tom dropped by every now and again. His sole purpose was to read and briefly explain a short passage of the Bible. When he was



In high school, it was drugs, parties and football. After graduation there was only time for the drugs and parties.

done, he would get up, say good-bye, and leave. I didn't have any use for him or his Bible, but for some reason I can't explain, I always wanted to listen — like I was hungry.

Then, one day I discovered that my brother was attending a prayer meeting. "That's crazy," I thought, but it started me thinking and reading some books about the end of the world and the final judgment. My brother and I and some

other guys would sit around and talk about these things. The immediate effect on me was that I stopped breaking people's fingers. My brother and I also agreed not to sell drugs to any new customers, just to our regular clientele who were already hooked.

Then there was one other thing my Uncle Tom did. He repeatedly invited me to come to a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship dinner. Eventually, I relented and went. I was comforted to see many familiar faces in the crowd that night, and was intrigued to listen to the testimony of Norman Williams, a man who had survived a collision even more momentous than the one I'd been in.

Norman had been aboard one of the two jumbo jets that collided on the runway at Tenerife in the Canary Islands in 1975. He spoke convincingly of the way in which the Holy Spirit had lifted him from the burning wreckage and escorted him to safety without any significant injuries.

As I listened it was as if the hand of God lifted a shroud that long had covered and enclosed me. The light broke through and I knew this was the truth. When Williams gave the invitation to receive Christ, I bolted from my chair and was the first one to reach the front. What I felt as I gave my life to Jesus was an immeasurable happiness that would never leave me.

STEVE

When I heard about what happened to Mike, I felt abandoned and betrayed. Whenever I saw him, all he wanted to talk about was sin and repentance. I told him I didn't want to hear about it.

After that I got deep into the cocaine business. My cohorts and I used to go out into Long Island Sound on yachts to cut the cocaine and prepare it for sale. We did a big business and I was earning thousands of dollars. I was also using coke, and before long, I was free-basing between five and six-hundred dollars worth of cocaine a night. In addition, we got involved with some bookies. But in spite of all the activity and excitement, I was growing increasingly miserable.

Then I got a job with a highly successful rock band. So, off I went on a tour of the East Coast. Just before I left, Mike gave me a pocket New Testament and told me to hang onto it, no matter what might happen. I said fine and left.

Near the end of the tour, when we were in Greensboro, North Carolina, I skipped a show and went to a party. The next morning I found the band had left without me. So, I hitched a ride with a truckdriver. Together we consumed enough Jack Daniels to get a good buzz-on. But at the next rest stop, he disappeared with my clothes and money while I was in the bathroom. There I was, left with only the clothes on my back, and I hadn't eaten in a couple of days.

Quite a storm was brewing because Hurricane Dean was coming up the coast. Consequently, no one was out on the highway. I was utterly alone and stranded. Finally, in desperation, I said, "God, You've got to show Yourself to me and get me out of this one. I have no one else to help me." As I said those words there came a sudden break in the storm. The sun shone through intently and warmed my body for a few moments.

I was overwhelmed by a sense of the



... the band had left without me ... I hitched a ride with a truckdriver ... at the next rest stop, he disappeared with my clothes and money ...

goodness of God as I broke into tears and started thanking Him. Then I pulled out the New Testament Mike had given me and opened to where Jesus was talking to His disciples about shaking the dust off their feet and going on to the next town. I said to myself, "I'm getting out of here!" With that, a car came down the road and picked me up. I was on my way home!

When I got back into town at six-thirty in the morning, I realized I had a choice to make: I could either go to my cocaine partner, get an ounce of coke, and go back into business — or I could head over to St. Thomas' Catholic Church (the church to which my family belonged), and give thanks to God at the early morning mass for what He had done for me. I decided to go to St. Thomas'.

The parking lot of the church was empty except for one car — my father's.

I slipped into the sanctuary and took a place a couple of rows behind where he was kneeling. After mass, he invited me to come home for a cup of coffee. And so I moved back home after an absence of nearly eighteen months.

However, my self-centeredness came to the fore almost as soon as I was back in the house. My sister-in-law was expecting a child and was suffering from toxemia, so my mother was devoting a lot of time and attention to her. Was I concerned for my brother's wife? Did I try to be helpful? Far from it. Instead, I was jealous that she was getting more of my mother's time than I was. After all, I was the prodigal who had come back home. They were supposed to kill the fatted calf and make a fuss over me. When they didn't, I was disappointed and felt very sorry for myself.

But the situation soon changed. A cou-

ple of weeks after my return, my mother wasn't feeling up to par. The next thing I knew, she was lying comatose in a hospital bed, on the brink of death. That was when the Lord brought Mike back into the picture.

MIKE

One day I got a nudge from the Lord to drop by Steve's house. I had heard he was back in town, but, when I arrived at the door, the house was dark and no cars were around. Steve's brother Mark answered the door and told me that everyone was at the hospital where his mother had been in a coma for the past two days as a result of liver failure.

Steve's mother was special to me, so much so that I, too, called her Mom. I went directly to the hospital. When I got to the room, the parish priest had just left after administering extreme unction — the anointing with oil. Steve's father, two of his daughters, and a couple of aunts and uncles were standing around in the room.

"Mr. Wilk," I asked, "Is it okay if I read to Mom from the Bible?"

He nodded and I went to her bedside. I opened to the Ninety-first Psalm and began to read aloud as I sat on the edge of the mattress. When I was about halfway through the reading, Mrs. Wilk's eyes opened. She sat up and looked at me intently and with recognition. Then she laid back down. My heart began to beat so fast that my shirt was vibrating.

I bent down and spoke into her ear, "Mom, Jesus told me to come here. He loves you and wants you to call on Him." I could tell she was hearing me. I continued, "Even if you can't speak, call to Him

in your heart."

Later that day, another believer, an X-ray technician who worked at the hospital, came to Mrs. Wilk's room. He asked everyone, except me, to leave the room briefly so we could pray for her in private. We both laid hands on her and prayed the prayer of faith in Jesus' Name.

The next day, Steve called me to report that his mother had died. "But, before she did," he said, "she came out of the coma and had a chance to talk with everyone in her family, one at a time. We each made our peace that way. Then she lay back and was gone. It was a beautiful thing."

At the funeral I found myself bawling until I heard the Lord say, "Peace, be still. She is with Me." After that, I looked up, laughing and crying simultaneously. I tried to keep it down, but I couldn't. I was overjoyed by what I had just heard.

STEVE

I wasn't there when Mike came in to pray for my mother. I was out getting a haircut because I wanted to please her by my appearance in case she came out of the coma. When I left, everyone was crying, but, when I came back, the atmosphere had changed completely. I looked at Mom. She was silent, but her eyes said all that was needed,

I said, "Ma, I'm really sorry."

"I love you," she replied. They were the last words she ever spoke.

After that, Mike pestered me to make Jesus the Lord of my life. I told him it would happen in my own time, but he said it had to happen in God's time; God says that today is the day of salvation,

not tomorrow.

Finally, I gave in and went to a Full Gospel Business Men's dinner with him. The warmth and joyous smiles on most of the faces impressed me when I got there. Meadowlark Lemon spoke, and when he finished, he gave the altar call. Suddenly, I found myself on my feet. As I walked toward the front of the room, I

new brothers in Christ stood with me patiently, helping me to take one step at a time in God's direction.

After a while I was ready to ask the Lord to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. By then I had begun to recognize I needed more power to live as God wanted me to live. One night I told Mike, "I have to get the baptism in the Holy Spirit."



Steve (second from right) on an FGBMFI airlift to the Dominican Republic. He's celebrating with a group of newly saved teens.

told the Lord, "I don't want to be up here, in front of everyone, and be made a spectacle of. Just go easy on me, and don't let me cry, okay?"

God paid no attention at all. Soon, I was bawling my eyes out. I felt the cleansing power of God pour through me as I recited the sinner's prayer for mercy. It was something wonderful and full, such as I had never felt before.

That was the beginning of a slow process of restoration. I didn't stop using drugs and alcohol immediately, but my

"All right," he replied. So he went over to the brother who was leading the home meeting we were attending that night, and convinced him to join him in praying for me. As they prayed and laid hands on me, I was filled with God's Spirit and started speaking in tongues, just as it happened to the believers in the Bible.

Mike's hands were first laid on my mother, and later on me. These were the hands that had hurt people seriously . . . hands that had cut lines . . . that had damaged people for life. These lips that



(Above) *The Braccias: Shari, Rebekah, Mike.*
(Left) *Steve Wilk and his fiancée Ginger.*



read the Word of God and prayed in the Name of God, had once uttered perversities. And eyes that now shined with the love of God had once only glistened with lust. Amazing . . .

MIKE

Some years have passed since then. Today I feel especially blessed because God has given me a wonderful wife, Shari. And we have a wonderful daughter, Rebekah Nicole.

STEVE

And I've been blessed to see my witness to several of my family members bear fruit. God is at work in my family in wonderful ways. He works especially

through my nieces and nephews to show His power and His love.

MIKE

It takes a real man or woman to stand up and say, "Jesus, come into my heart." Faith in God is not a crutch; it's the only way. The world has nothing to offer but death. Jesus offers only life — life everlasting. Hallelujah!

STEVE

Amen!



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Since the events described in their testimonies, Mike (a warehouse supervisor for the Shipping and Weighing Systems Division of Pitney-Bowes) and Steve (a self-employed house painter) have become involved in a work called Morning Star Productions. Through Morning Star they conduct gospel concerts in southern New England. Due to their efforts, gospel concerts have gained a much wider acceptance among the youth in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

In addition, Steve and Mike have produced a multi-media presentation called "Don't Sell Your Soul To Rock'n Roll" which they present to churches and youth groups. They also minister in prisons and drug rehabilitation centers as well.

But their primary ministry is to kids through Full Gospel Business Men's

breakfasts, dinners and conventions. Teenagers listen to them because they've been there!

Steve reports that he recently experienced quite a miracle of healing in his own life. Having fallen from a second-story ledge, he broke his heel. The surgeon who operated announced that the damage was so bad that he would probably not be able to walk on it again.

Steve was confident that the doctor was wrong because he had already been anointed with oil and the prayer of faith for his complete healing.

When the cast was removed after only three weeks, the bone was strong and completely mended. Nor was there any sign of the surgeon's incision. The doctor said he'd never seen an injury heal so rapidly in the thirty years he'd practiced medicine!

Steve plans to marry his fiancée, Ginger, this July. Mike and his wife, Shari, have been married four years and have a daughter, Rebekah.

Both Steve and Mike are members of the Norwalk, Conn. chapter where Steve is Membership Vice President, and Michael is Director of Chapter Youth Outreach. □



Harold Cole
Asheboro, North Carolina

NEVER TO WALK AGAIN?

Waterskiing was a natural sport for me to take up since we lived on a lake in Michigan from the time I was very young. My father, a civil engineer, was the largest lake developer in the Midwest. He was also a former state champion waterskiier and carried me out on his skis from the time I was only three years old. Both my parents encouraged my skiing. Consequently, I quickly excelled in waterskiing and trampolining during those early years.

When I was twelve, my father, fed up with the rat-race, left the family and headed for the mountains of Nevada. He was intensely interested in the occult in an attempt to tap into the "universe of knowledge." The excruciating inner hurt that I experienced from my parents' divorce, triggered quite a streak of rebellion in me. In ninth grade I became the first one in the history of my private school to be expelled for insubordination, and in my senior year was thrown out two more times.

Somehow, in the deep recesses of my private imagination, I convinced myself that I had better stick up for and defend my father because, after all, he had left for a purpose. When he finally connected with this great knowledge, he was going to do something great for mankind, thus justifying and making up for all the pain we had gone through.

But when this didn't happen, I decided to channel all the energy that throbbed from my inner wounds into waterskiing.

At age sixteen I applied for a position in the ski show at Sea World of Ohio and was the youngest skier ever hired. In my first year I mastered the most difficult acts in the show, including mixed doubles, jumping, and back barefooting, and became the third person in the world to complete a difficult ramp gainer.

With my new-found fame, for a short time my childhood hurts seemed farther and farther away. Besides, while learning new skiing maneuvers, I was also learning how to be the life of the party. My motto was, "Get drunk, act stupid, and be somebody." Before long, I was burning the candle at both ends, skiing all day and drinking all night.

This lifestyle, however, was more than my body could handle. Before too long I began dislocating my shoulders. I suffered seventeen dislocated shoulders, had two major shoulder operations, three concussions, and was thrown in jail six times for drunkenness, all within two years from age seventeen to eighteen.

My life was out of control. I was trying to live life to the fullest, but never found lasting fulfillment. Although many people envied my happy-go-lucky lifestyle, I was



(Above) Harold demonstrates a strong neck during a ski show prior to his accident. (Right) Harold proudly displays his 1983 championship trophy.

empty inside. At this low point, instead of taking my life, I cried out to the Lord for help. God heard my cry and answered it by bringing dynamic Christian friends into my life.

My new friends refused to attend the parties I went to or follow my loose lifestyle. Yet, there was an excitement in their lives that I knew I did not have. My friends told me I could have the same joy they had if I asked Jesus to come into my heart and allow Him to change me. Al-



though I was raised in a religious home, I had never known that you could have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Finally, one night I found myself at a Bible study at my boss's home listening

to a retired Assemblies of God minister explain this new life in Christ. It was then that I prayed to receive Jesus Christ into my confused life.

God wasted no time making Himself real to me. Within a month, new opportunities began to open up in my waterskiing career. I became the first person in the world to complete the once thought impossible full twisting ramp gainer on waterskis.

At this time, auditions began at Sea World for skiing and acting roles in the movie Jaws 3-D. I was the only skier to be awarded the two main skiing parts. I was also asked to do my new full twisting gainer through fire in 3-D. It was a dream come true. The directors were so impressed that they were talking to me about doing stunts in other movies.

Then, on the first day of filming, disaster hit. While practicing my new trick, I crashed, breaking my ankle and blowing out my knee. But, what could have been another reason to drown myself in alcohol and drugs was instead the way God chose to show me the Bible is true and that I was a new creation. Old things had passed away; a new life had begun (2 Cor. 5:17).

Much to my surprise, God had delivered me from the desire to drink. Where the time off from skiing due to injuries used to be spent in bars, my hours were now devoted to Bible study and Christian fellowship. It was during this time that I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Not only did God give me a prayer language that only He could understand, but He gave me the desire and boldness to tell others about the life-changing power of Jesus. After four months I was

back skiing, giving all the glory to God.

I began to sense that God wanted to use more than just my waterskiing talent. An opportunity at our church arose to go to Jamaica on a short-term mission trip. There was only one problem, however. The week after the mission trip was the World Freestyle Skiing Championships. I needed all the time I could to practice. But, I knew that God wanted me to go to Jamaica. So, I went.

In Jamaica we had crusades every night. Our job during the day was to invite people to these crusades. Being a young Christian, I did not have a great amount of Bible knowledge. So rather than embarrass myself, I volunteered to pray for every need and everyone I came in contact with. Much to my surprise and amazement, everyone I prayed with came to the nightly meetings because God had answered their prayers the very day I prayed!

Through the many miracles and healings, God showed me that if I was willing, He could use even a ski-bum like me. After returning to the United States I had less than one week to practice for the World Championships. I had been very sick in Jamaica. As a result, my balance was off which caused me to take many hard falls. Yet, I was not injured.

Finally, the day before the tournament, my skiing came together. Although I was not favored to win, I led every round and at the end of the day, found myself a World Champion. Although skiing was no longer the most important thing in my life, God had given me the desires of my heart.

Only weeks after the tournament, I enrolled full-time at Southeastern College of

the Assemblies of God in Lakeland, Florida to follow my call into the ministry. For the next year I kept busy in school, skied on weekends, and shared my testimony wherever a door opened.

The next summer, God continued to bless my skiing. I remember the day I won one of the biggest championships. But with all the hoopla and adoring crowds that surrounded me after the event, I still felt an emptiness inside. Something was missing. Then it dawned



(Top) Harold making friends during a crusade in Jamaica. (Above) Harold and others ministering in New Orleans at Mardi Gras. (Right) Harold and his wife "special" Kaye.

on me: I had shot for this award all my life, yet it wasn't even a big deal to me anymore because now I knew that nothing is as exciting as knowing and having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I was now absolutely convinced that no earthly award could ever compare with the thrill of leading someone else to Him!

Then, on my twenty-third birthday, December 22, 1984, my life and future were literally in God's hands. One minute



I was a World Champion waterskier and the next minute I was a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down. I miscalculated a double front flip on a trampoline.

An ambulance rushed me to a hospital

that specialized in spinal injuries. By the time I was in the emergency room I could not even feel a needle poke me. The X-rays showed that I had broken my neck at the C-5 and C-6 vertebrae. The angiogram showed that the spinal cord had been severely damaged. The nurse screwed a bolt three-quarters of an inch into each side of my skull and put my neck in traction with twenty-five pound weights.

I was placed on a rotating bed in the intensive care unit and was hooked up to a heart monitor and a breathing machine. All this took place during the first eight hours after the accident. The doctor's prognosis looked good for me to live, but I would be in the hospital for at least six months and would never walk again.

After hearing the prognosis, doubts and fears about my future began to fill my mind. However, in an odd way I also felt a strange sense of relief that my skiing career was over. Why?

Because I was tired: tired of six shows a day; tired of constant rehabilitation for my endless chain of injuries; tired of always having to learn new tricks to stay on top.

So I thought I'd start a wheelchair ministry, and have the best wheelchair ministry that ever was!

But praise God, those thoughts didn't stay long! Instead, the Lord brought peace to me through the Bible verse Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and who have been called according to His purpose."

I had the most awesome feeling that Jesus was right there with me every

TEEN SUICIDE...

A Tragedy of This Generation

In 1988, an estimated 400,000 young men and women will attempt to end their own lives. As many as 15,000 may succeed. A majority of those who succeed will be white males; but the tragedy of teen suicide will cross all cultural, racial and economic lines and



When Death Came

take its toll on members of both sexes. Its pain will also span the generations, as parents and grandparents of victims and would-be victims deal with the questions that always follow in the wake of a real or attempted suicide.

In the following pages, professional

musician and popular Canadian soloist David Bauman tells his story of near self-destruction. In doing so, he shows that even believers aren't immune to suicide's dark reach — but that the light and love of Jesus Christ reaches further still.



David Bauman
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

It was a mid-November night, and I was alone. My brother and sisters had already gone to bed; my parents had left the house for a few hours to attend a church service. Downstairs in my bedroom, I stared at the pages of the book in my lap, eyebrows knit together, gnawing absentmindedly on the end of a pen.

Romeo and Juliet. One of my favorite stories. But tonight the thought of writing an essay — about this story or any story — filled me with dread.

I shouldn't have been discouraged. At sixteen I was already on my way to accomplishing some of my biggest dreams and most ambitious goals. In addition, I knew and loved God, and had wonderful Christian parents as well.

But that night, these facts were overshadowed by a growing sense of hopelessness. Trying to shake the mood and get on with my homework, I climbed

Near

the stairs to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. And that's when I saw the carving knife lying on the counter and made the decision to end my life.

* * *

"And now...please welcome...live in concert...David Bauman!" Spotlights flood the stage. The crowds cheer. Back-up musicians play a dramatic intro as I approach the grand piano center stage. Flashing a grin into the lights, I nod, lift my hand in a brief wave. The cheering and applause fall into near-silence.

"Pssst. David. They're waiting."

I blinked and the vision faded. "I'm going to sing . . . I'm going to sing the song 'Put Your Hand in the Hand of the Man from Galilee.' Mrs. Ross is going to play the guitar while I sing."

Mrs. Ross nodded twice for encouragement, then one more time to start our number. I sang my heart out, pretending the several hundred "campers" at our church's family retreat were a thousand paying fans; pretending the fluorescent overhead bulbs were a single, brilliant spotlight; pretending my sweaty hands clasped tightly in a knot were in fact dancing over a keyboard to the rhythmic beat of a back-up band.

I wanted to be the youngest gospel singer on stage. I wanted to be a professional singer and pianist. I wanted my music to make me happy, rich and famous.

But then, dreaming comes easy when you're six years old.

I still remember hanging around our church watching guest musicians set up

their equipment for the evening's performance. My father, a minister, often invited gospel singers and groups to visit our church in Ontario, Canada, and many times they stayed in our home. To me, these people were stars, and I was going to be one, too.

I asked Jesus into my heart when I was twelve, at a Billy Graham crusade in



Toronto. Then at fifteen, I joined a local Gospel band, singing tenor and playing keyboards almost every weekend. In a limited fashion, my dreams were actually coming true! There were microphones, drums, amplifiers, speakers, guitars, and — as our popularity grew — even chances to travel around and perform in other cities.

I was ecstatic.

But in the face of all this excitement, my passion for school began to fade. Soon my grades were dropping . . . and then the bottom fell out of everything.

The band was still successful and our weekends booked. But suddenly it seemed as if criticism and discouraging



David Bauman, 1986-87 Covenant Awards' "Top Canadian Gospel/Contemporary Soloist" nominee, sings with gratefulness and praise to the One Who heard his cry for help.

words were coming from all sides. Some people felt I was too young to be doing what I was doing. They suggested that I wait until I was older to launch my music career. One pastor told me he didn't like the way I played; someone else felt I should quit performing until I perfected a unique piano style all my own.

These words frustrated me, and I spent many nights crying out to God. I knew God wanted me serving Him with my music; what I didn't understand was why He was allowing discouragement to come my way. I prayed, but God seemed

all of a sudden very far away, even though I know now that He was right there all along.

About that same time, several other members of the band came under attack as well. I remember the seven of us sitting in a circle before practice, praying for one another as was our custom. Suddenly our drummer broke into tears. "I've got to get my life straightened out with God. I actually thought about ending my life this week. You gotta' pray for me."

In a matter of months, four different

band members admitted that thoughts of suicide had entered their minds. I didn't dwell on their comments, except to honor their requests for prayer. But the tension in my life continued to mount. And then it was nearly too late.

* * *

I stood alone in the kitchen, mesmerized by the cold glint of the stainless steel. The knife seemed to flicker and glimmer by itself in the dim light, and a voice began to talk to me through my thoughts.

"Is life really worth living?" I heard the words as they filtered repeatedly through my mind. "Think of Romeo and Juliet, and how sorry everyone was after they were dead. It would be the same for you. Everyone would be so sad. So sad. And you'd be in Heaven. You're a Christian so you'll go to Heaven."

Then the house began to get very cold. Suddenly, I had no fear of death. I pictured my parents coming home in an hour or so and finding me lying on the floor with the carving knife in my chest.

It wasn't until I looked down at my feet and discovered they were already carrying me toward the knife that fear gripped me. I cried out, "Jesus, help me!" My right arm extended — seemingly out of my control — toward the knife.

"David! What are you doing!"

I looked up to see my parents staring at me from the doorway. They weren't due home for another hour — but I believe the Holy Spirit had urged them home early. Now they saw why.

"What are you doing!" my mother repeated.



With his mother and father, David got "a brand new start."

From somewhere deep within me, I said defensively, "I'm tired of it all. I want to end my life."

Then I turned and looked at my dad. For the first time in my life, I saw his tears. And I seemed to hear his spirit saying to mine, "I love you, son."

Before I knew what happened, Mom and Dad were standing next to me, their hands laid on my head and shoulders, praying fervently and powerfully for my deliverance. In an instant, that coldness left the house — and my heart.

I had seen and felt Satan's power at work. But more importantly, I'd seen that power crushed by the power of Christ. The very next morning, I awoke feeling renewed and hopeful. About six weeks later, on the very first morning of the new year, I knew somehow that I'd shaken off the last remnants of all that had been

holding me back.

Later that day, I was relaxing with my dad in the kitchen of my grandmother's house where we were staying for the holidays. "Dad," I announced, "I feel like I've got a brand new start . . . like everything's fresh. This year's going to be different. It's going to be the start of something really special."

Several months later, I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and began, for the very first time, writing music to express my feelings and love for God. It was indeed the start of something special, as a short time later I went solo, releasing my first album by the time I was eighteen and my second two years later.

The memories of my attempted suicide seemed to fade farther and farther into the past. But other teens I knew weren't so lucky.

During my last year of high school, about the time I was working on my first album, I was sitting in my first class of the day when the public address system popped and crackled and the principal's voice carried into the room. It quietly announced that over the Easter Break, a girl named Leslie had "passed away." No further explanation was given. But within the hour the details swept campus as students huddled in clusters and whispered the rest of the story.

Leslie, a bright, good looking girl with lots of friends and excellent grades, had taken her father's gun and shot herself in the head that very morning. No one knew why, but there was speculation about the violence-oriented brand of rock and roll she'd been listening to the night before she died.

Later that year, a second vague

eulogy was delivered from the P.A. system. I learned minutes later that the young man shot himself. He, too, had been engrossed in rock music just prior to his death.

Because of my own close call, these deaths struck a painful chord in my heart. I knew that these lives had been seeded with potential by a loving God whose every desire was to see them live to choose to love Him back. I knew also that their deaths weren't necessarily responses to major tragedies or truly hopeless circumstances. Like me, these teens may have been influenced at just the right moment by just the wrong thing: a song, the philosophy of a rock star idol, a story they read.

Nearly seventeen years after a six-year-old boy stood in front of his family church camp and dreamed of spotlights and acclaim, the dreams have come true. What I didn't envision, however, was the hue of eternity that will be forever cast over all my dreams and accomplishments by one, solitary act — or near act — in my life. A note of gratefulness and praise will accompany me for the rest of my life, each time I remember my near destruction, and the Heavenly Father Who heard my cry for help. □

David Bauman was recently nominated "Top Canadian Gospel/Contemporary Soloist" in the 1986-87 Covenant Awards. He lives in Ottawa, Ontario where he attends the Wooddale Pentecostal Church. He is a member of the Amprior Chapter of FGBMFI.

David is presently working on his third recording. God also works mightily in his ministry through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

David can be contacted at: Box 5132, Station F, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K2C 3H4, or by calling (613) 224-4842.

COLE continued

minute. While in intensive care, a nurse took my address book and began to call my believing friends all over the country to pray for my healing.

Matthew 6:33 was the next scripture that became real to me: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." At three o'clock in the morning, on Christmas eve, I was praying for strength and praising God for the peace He had given me. All of a sudden I felt warmth come all over me. For the first time in two days, I had movement and feeling in my whole body. God had healed my paralyzed body!

I walked under my own power, my first day in therapy and walked out of the hospital thirteen days after breaking my neck! Both were records at the hospital. Because of God's miracle power I was once again living life to its fullest.

What looked like tragedy was now a documented miracle. Word of the miracle soon spread. Before long, I had many opportunities to share my healing testimony, including many Christian and secular television programs. Whenever God opened the door I would tell what

He had done for me. One month I had over thirty speaking engagements.

God has truly given me a life worth living since He saved me during the summer of 1982. Although there have been tests and trials along the way, His peace and joy have never left me. Now He uses those trials for His glory.

2 Corinthians 1:3 reads, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."


Today, the excitement of Jesus supernaturally changing my life from the inside out is renewed every time I have the opportunity to witness to others. □

The Lord has led Harold and his wife Kaye into many special outreaches and street ministries to show young people the joy of personal evangelism. Harold says, "God showed me that I don't need invitations to large churches to be used by Him. The real need is on the streets of America and around the world."

On their honeymoon, Harold and Kaye went to Japan on a missions internship. After graduating from Bible college, Harold took a position serving the Lord in the areas of missions and evangelism at the First Assembly of God in Asheboro, North Carolina. Someday, he and Kaye would like to go to the mission field.



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



I rolled my motorcycle to a stop in the driveway of the deserted construction site. I killed the engine, then heard gravel crunch beneath my shoes as I dismounted and waited for my younger brother, Brett, to climb down from his bike. At 7:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning in Issaquah, Washington there wasn't much chance of being spotted — but we still glanced twice down each stretch of the street before heading headlong toward the half-built house.

It was our weekly ritual that after delivering the Issaquah Sunday paper from our motorcycles, we would break into one of the new homes being erected in our addition and steal any tools left lying around over the weekend. At fifteen and thirteen years of age, we thought our "hobby" was daring and adventurous.

A Family Trans- formed

John Dunnington
Issaquah, Washington

Later that Sunday afternoon Brett and I were, as usual, horsing around in the livingroom. Dad was watching old westerns on TV as Mom bent low over her sewing machine, working up a dress for my sister, Rhonda. When Brett and I started boasting about our morning's foray and reenacting our theft as we typically did, Mom opened fire.

"Not again! John, Brett, you know good and well that what you did isn't right. It isn't right! You stole those tools — they don't belong to you. I want you to stop. Now. You'll get in trouble with the police. There'll be nothing I can do to help you if you do." Then Mom turned to Dad. "Why don't you say anything? Why don't you tell your sons to stop stealing?"

He spoke for the first time since the outburst began — but his words weren't directed at Brett or me. "Don't tell me what to do," he told her. "I'm a grown man, I can decide for myself, without your help, if and when I'm going to tell anyone . . ."

Brett and I quietly disappeared from the room as they launched into an argument that would rage for hours.

Maybe the atmosphere at home had something to do with the restlessness I felt as a teenager. Mom and Dad fought all the time. Our home was empty of love or respect. Brett could attest to that, remembering the time I beat him up.

All I know is that when opportunities to get into trouble presented themselves, I took them. Drinking, drugs, stealing, reckless driving . . . I, John Dunnington, dabbled in just about everything. Luckily, I rarely did more than just dabble. The restlessness that spurred me into a new, exciting vice also moved me out of it and

into the next, and the next. I was searching for something. I just had no idea what it was.

And then there was my relationship with Mom. She didn't seem to get a lot of respect from Dad, so I figured she didn't need any from me, either. I still remember the day she hollered down the stairs that I had a phone call from a girl I liked. I picked up the downstairs receiver and launched into my conversation with Lynn without realizing Mom had yet to hang up. Lynn got right to the reason for her call: "John, my parents just left the house. You can come over now. We'll be alone."

Within seconds I ran upstairs and grabbed my coat. "Mom, I'm going over to Lynn's!" I shouted as I lunged for the stairs.

"John, wait." She appeared in her bedroom doorway. "I . . . I heard what Lynn said to you over the phone. I know why she said her parents had left. I want to know what you think you're going to do over there."

Her words hardly phased me. "It's none of your business what I do. Just stay out of my life! You have no right. No right to interfere. Just stay out!" With those defiant words I disappeared out the front door.

About that time I landed a part time job at a metal fabrication lab. My new boss, Steve Campbell, picked me up every day after school, then drove me home when we closed shop at 5:00. I liked Steve. Thirtyish, with black straight hair and a dry wit, he seemed to have a real knack at getting along with us younger guys. Little did I know that I'd been targeted for something more.

My second day on the job Steve ambled up to the workbench where I was standing. Filing a piece of steel about the size of a toothpick, he watched me for a few moments. I just hoped I was filing the thing right.

Then he said, "John, do you believe the Bible, or do you think it's just a bunch of bunk?"

I filed faster, a sweat mustache ap-



The Dunningtons: (back row) Shannon, Brett, John; (front) Wayne, Charlene, Rhonda.

pearing on my lip. What was this guy aiming at? Was I doing that bad? "Sure. Sure, I believe the Bible."

"Do you believe in God?"

The back of my neck began to heat up, and I felt myself weld my stare onto the piece of steel in my hand. No one had ever talked to me like this before. "Yeah, I believe in God," I finally mumbled.

"Do you believe in Jesus?"

Now this was too personal, even if Steve was my boss . . . even if I needed the job. My shoulders squared for battle. I wanted to shout, "You have no right!" just like I'd done to Mom. Instead, I answered defiantly: "I've been to churches before. Of course I believe in God, the Bible and Jesus."

"John," Steve said gently, "It's not enough to believe in Jesus with your mind. You have to ask Him into your life and make Him Lord of your life."

My heart grew heavy. "I've never heard that before."

"Have you ever asked Jesus to forgive your sins?"

Sins? Now those I knew about. I laid the steel part on the workbench, turned and slumped down in one of several folding chairs next to my workstation. Steve sat down next to me. "Sins?" I repeated. I began to shake as I remembered the drugs, the booze, the thievery, the disrespect . . . even Brett's beatings. Even at my young age, I'd tried to fill some void deep inside with the illicit excitement that comes from breaking all the rules.

Suddenly I was blurring my life story — with all my rebellions and failures — to this stranger sitting next to me. Part of me wanted to shut up — shut up and get out of there. But the words kept tumbling out and spilling themselves all over Steve. Finally the torrent slowed and a small fear gripped my heart. "You won't tell my parents?"

"I won't tell anyone, John." And from the look in his eyes, I knew he meant what he said.

Before Steve took me home that night, he explained what I needed to do if I decided to ask Jesus into my life. Several

hours later, I shut the door to my room and knelt by the side of my bed. I felt as though all the sins I'd blurted to Steve — and more — weighed like a heavy load on my back. I prayed, "Jesus, forgive me for all the times I've sinned. Come into my life and be Lord from now on."

For the first time love filled my life. The empty space — the need to search for something more — was gone and something wonderful was in its stead. God loved me, and I could love the world — and that meant the parents and brothers and sister I'd tormented for too long.

Less than two weeks later I was passing through the kitchen just before dinner time when Mom stopped me dead in my tracks with a question.

"Johnny, what's happened to you?"

"Whaddya' mean?"

"What's happened to you?" She repeated, wiping her hands on a kitchen towel. "You don't yell at me like you used to."

"Mom, have you, well . . . have you ever asked Jesus into your life?"

"No."

"Well, that's what I did. That's what happened to me."

A short time later, Steve and I were sitting in his truck, praying, when he began to pray in another language. I'd never heard anything like it — and I wasn't too keen to hear anything like it again! As soon as he was finished I blurted, "Don't ever do that again in my presence. If you ever do that again, I'll quit. I'll quit!"

Steve explained calmly that he was praying in tongues, and that the Bible talks about it in connection with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He honored my "request," however, and didn't pray in

tongues in front of me again . . . until one night we were together in my room, praying and worshipping the Lord.

Despite Steve's silence — and my uneasiness about the whole concept — the desire to be "baptized" in the Holy Spirit and speak in a new language from God began to consume me. I thought about it all the time, and began to wish I'd never made Steve promise what he had. Then came the evening in my room, praising God in prayer together. And suddenly it happened. With no prompting from Steve or even much conscious thought from me, I was worshipping God in a new language. That experience quenched my thirst and filled me to overflowing with an even greater love for God and desire to serve Him.

Over the following weeks, Mom watched the changes take place in my life. As I studied God's Word, she would sit down with me at the kitchen table — usually over a plate of her famous oatmeal cookies — and listen and talk about the new things I was learning. Even Brett noticed the difference in my life — his physical safety was no longer threatened on a near-daily basis.

A few months later, Mom asked Jesus into her heart as well. And that's when the atmosphere in our home really took a leap for the better.

It didn't happen overnight. But before long, Mom wasn't screaming back at Dad when one of their fights would have gotten off the ground. Slowly, she received the grace to forgive . . . and forget . . . when Dad or one of her kids, said something hurtful or mean.

Perhaps the biggest change of all came out of the fact that Mom used to be

worried and anxious all the time; now she was quiet and peaceful. The nagging and fretting that used to fill our days fell by the wayside as she began to exhibit a quiet strength.

And that's when Brett, Shannon and Rhonda asked Jesus into their lives as well. Only Dad held out, staunchly committed to the philosophy that he didn't need what we'd found.



By now the family who lived in my house hardly seemed like the collection of people I'd grown up with. Each morning before I left the house around 6:00, I'd tape a verse from that day's devotions on the front of our refrigerator. Mom told me again and again how much she looked forward to coming downstairs to fix breakfast just so she could read the verse I'd left; and how often the verse God gave me ministered to a special need in her life as well.

At school, Brett joined me in turning the campus upside down for Jesus. We used to take tracts and *Voice* magazines

to school, taping them to lockers, bathroom walls, door frames and windows.

Of course, it wasn't all fun and joy. I still get a knot in the pit of my stomach when I think about one particular event that took place in the campus cafeteria.

I was sitting alone, my Bible at the top of the stack of books I'd laid beside me. Suddenly the most popular guy in the entire school came up behind me and



(Left) John, center, on first FGBMFI airlift with Steve Lightle and Steve Camp. (Above) John and his new bride Veronica.

grabbed my Bible. Dan was the all-around-athlete, girl-killer type . . . recognized as the best dancer, best personality, best everything by just about everybody. Suddenly there he was, hoisting himself up onto the cafeteria table with my Bible in hand. The pages fell open to Revelation and he began reading, laughing, and mocking my new found faith in God. I was humiliated, but not crushed.

I'd already seen too much of the power of God; experienced too much in my

personal life and in my home life. I'd been changed. We'd all been changed, and Dan couldn't take all that away.

During my last year in high school, I began attending the luncheon meetings of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. I met godly men — not unlike Steve — whose love for God and for me set them up as spiritual mentors and role models in my life. At the same time, I continued to pray that my father might experience the love that had changed me.

It was also through the Fellowship that I had the chance to travel to Europe, the Middle East, West Indies and the Soviet Union, giving my testimony and assisting Full Gospel member Steve Lightle as he ministered throughout the continents. Since returning home, I've established my own business, JD's TV and Video Repair, and am continuing my efforts to serve God wherever I am, in all that He calls me to do.

Finally, five months ago, I experienced one of God's greatest blessings with my marriage to Veronica, a beautiful deaf woman whose love for Jesus Christ radiates to everyone she meets.

When I was seventeen, I witnessed God's transforming power in my life and in the lives of members of my family. In the past nine years, I've witnessed His keeping power as He has drawn me even closer to Him and enabled me to grow and mature. Both have been awesome experiences. Today, I thank Him that Veronica and I have the opportunity my parents didn't take: to establish our relationship and family on the solid foundation of our union with Christ.

It's still my prayer that Mom and Dad will have the same experience; that Dad will come to know the Lord as the final link in a bright chain of miracles within our family; that when it's all said and done, except for eternity with Christ, our circle will remain unbroken. □

John Dunnington and his wife, Veronica, live in Issaquah, Washington. They attend New Life Christian Fellowship where John is one of two youth leaders. John owns his own business, JD's TV and Video Repair. He has given his testimony in many FGBMFI chapters all over the world, and prayed for hundreds of people for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He enjoys speaking to both adults and youth, encouraging them to have a deeper walk with Jesus Christ.

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CONVENTIONS

CAROLINAS MEN'S ADVANCE

June 9-12, 1988

Camp Lurecrest
Lake Lure, NC
Contact: Reidy Lawing
c/o FGBMFI Carolinas Office
P. O. Box 9027
Charlotte, NC 28299

NORTH ARKANSAS RALLY

June 24-25, 1988

Holiday Inn
Mountain Home, AR
Contact: Joe Murphy
155 Meadors Dr.
Alma, AR 72921

1988 WORLD CONVENTION

July 5-9, 1988

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

COLUMBIA GORGE CONVENTION

July 28-30, 1988

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

ST. LOUIS AREAWIDE REG. CONVENTION

July 28-30, 1988

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

TENNESSEE COUPLES ADVANCE

July 29-31, 1988

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

MISSISSIPPI REG. CONV.

August 4-6, 1988

Holiday Inn Downtown
Jackson, MS
Contact: William R. Keller
314 No. Magnolia
Laurel, MS 39440

ROCKY MTN. REG. CONV.

August 4-6, 1988

Raffles Hotel
Denver, CO
Contact: Dave Thompson
7525 Native Dancer Dr.
Evergreen, CO 80439

ASIA CONVENTION

August 10-13, 1988

Hotel Hyatt Central
Bangkok, Thailand
Contact: Mr. Komol Antakon
c/o FGBMFI Bangkok
P. O. Box 12-1080
Bangkok, Thailand 10500

MICHIGAN REG. CONVENTION

August 17-20, 1988

Raddison-Southfield
Southfield, MI
Contact: Lynn Savage
13510 Coral Rd.
Coral, MI 49322

WEST. NEW YORK/ROCHESTER CONV.

August 17-20, 1988

Genesee Plaza Holiday Inn
Rochester, NY
Contact: Jim McDonald
79 Norcrest Dr.
Rochester, NY 14617

WEST VIRGINIA STATE CONV.

August 25-27, 1988

Ramada Inn
Morgantown, WV
Contact: John W. Greene
Rt. 1, Box 87
Fairview, WV 26570

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SET FREE PRISON MINISTRY UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that three new chapters have been added to our ever-growing list of Set Free Prison Ministry outreaches throughout the world.

One was recently established at the Augusta Correctional/Medical Institution in Grovetown, Georgia. The second was opened at Eglin Federal Prison Camp in Florida, (sponsored by the Fort Walton Beach chapter of FGBMF), and a third founded at Gila, Arizona State Prison Complex in Douglas, Arizona.

President Ronald Reagan, Oral Roberts, Demos Shakarian, and Pat Robertson are just a few of the many lives that have been touched and encouraged by the anointed poetic writings of Peter Enns. A new series of Bible story videos, books/tapes released by Kids International, features Peter's unique writing and narration. This Spirit anointed production is impacting the lives of boys and girls, and entire families across the country.

A Full Gospel Poet

Peter Enns
Tulsa, Oklahoma

On June 2, 1986, my world wanted to stop. Through a series of bad business decisions I had made, I lost everything that I had worked for during the past 15 years. "Stories That Live," a series of Bible story books and tapes I had authored and produced, were my baby. June 2 was black Monday for me. It was the day my "baby" died.

For several days my mind was numb. Questions raced through my mind. Why had God allowed this to happen? Had He

not given me the inspiration to produce "Stories That Live" in the first place? Why hadn't God answered our prayers?

My wife Dorothy and I had stood together through many trying times. This time she was devastated. I would find out



days later that she had contemplated suicide.

On June 4, Dorothy was alone in the house. Depressed and despondent, the enemy was stalking his prey. She had enough prescription medication in the cupboard to put her to sleep permanently. Angry at God, she was listening to Satan's suggestion to end it all when the upstairs phone began to ring.

That night she told me her story. In the midst of her torment, she got this call on a phone line we never used. The phone hadn't been connected for months. But that morning someone had "accidentally" plugged the phone to that line. It was Ron Kite, the support ministries director from our church calling. "Dorothy, are you all right," he began. "I'm fine, Ron," was her reply. "Are you sure?" he insisted. There was a moment of silence; then Dorothy began to cry.

Ron had never called our home before, and even now was calling on the wrong line. Almost embarrassed for his intrusion, but obedient to the Lord, he ministered encouragement to Dorothy.

That night as Dorothy and I prayed together, we knew that God had our number! Few people knew about our business problems, but God knew. That afternoon, God had confirmed that He cared for us, even when we had made bad decisions. Dorothy and I would celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary in a few days. Although I was forty-eight years old, perhaps we could start over again. But what had happened?

Raised in a conservative Mennonite home, I came to know Jesus as my Saviour at an early age. Like Timothy in the Bible, I was taught the Word at my mother's knee.

Born before the days of television, I can vividly recall the first picture I ever saw. It was Jesus with a group of children around Him. I remember my first song: it was "Jesus Loves Me." As a little boy of three, I can recall telling my grandmother the story of Cain and Abel.

But although we knew where we would go when we died, we didn't know

how to live. We knew nothing of the abundant life God offers in this life. Growing up in miserable poverty, riches were considered worldly, and we didn't want any of that. Going into business was the last thing on my mind.

As a teenager, I had a strong desire to know God's Word and to serve Him, but since I thought that would mean becoming a preacher, I had no desire to do that. I enjoyed music very much, but could hardly carry a tune.

What I could do, and do rather well, was to write poetry. So I became a one man band, sharing my poetic messages at every opportunity. I married and life went on, my yearning for God basically unfulfilled.

During the mid '60s, the winds of charismatic renewal were blowing across the Canadian prairies. My wife Dorothy and I were hungry to know more about the Spirit-filled life. One night we were sitting in a crude tent in a small Mennonite community, listening to a visiting evangelist. Suddenly our eyes were opened to the truth of the Holy Spirit.

From then on we began to see Him on every page of the Bible. Scriptures that had been veiled and obscure, suddenly came alive!

Timidly at first, we began moving into the flow of the Holy Spirit. Suddenly I realized that being born again had made me ready to die to self, but my baptism in the Holy Spirit had made me ready to live for Him! Now there was new power in the poetic messages I was writing. I didn't know it, but this was God's anointing on my creative ability.

The new realization that "nothing is impossible with God" changed my life! I

began seeking earnestly for the definite purpose of my life. The car business I was in lacked giving me fulfillment. I was looking for a nobler calling.

One night when I came home from work, our four-year-old daughter Kimberly, was listening to a children's Bible story record. Suddenly the needle began to skip and jump. Instantly I saw my calling! I would produce children's Bible stories on cassette tapes to be played on inexpensive cassette recorders.

On January 1, 1972, Dorothy and I made a quality decision. We would follow the dream of "Stories That Live." We disposed of everything we owned and went out by faith into uncharted waters. The years that followed were hard years, but by the mid '80s we had produced and sold over a million "Stories That Live."

Our product that God had birthed through imperfect humans, was a success, but our business was a failure. Poor business decisions, unwillingness to confront and a lack of management controls finally took their toll. June 2, 1986, was the fateful day that it all ended . . . or was it the day that it all began?

On that day I spent my last available cash and purchased a round trip ticket to Hong Kong. Aware of a growing video market, I was going to explore animation and video production sources for a new series of Bible stories.

Away from the phones, 37,000 feet high, flying over the Pacific Ocean, a new dream was being birthed in my heart. A dream of using TV and video cassettes as tools for reaching an entire generation for Christ, beginning with the children.

I had seen the remarkable effect of our "Stories That Live" books and tapes.

I knew that the impact of videos could be so much greater. But I really didn't understand animation and was more than broke financially. As the creative juices in my spirit began to flow once again, I sensed an increased anointing as I put the plans on paper in that 747 jet.

I was a total stranger in Hong Kong, but I knew there was a Full Gospel Business Men's chapter there. As I shared my new dream of putting animated, poetic Bible stories on video for kids, these high caliber businessmen gave me immediate confirmation. Of the half dozen nationalities represented, they all were excited about getting videos for kids in their nation. But where would I get the financing for such a product?

It was Sunday morning and I was sitting in the Mabee Center at Oral Roberts University, where our church meets. My mind and my spirit were at war. Our pastor was challenging us to believe for miracles. "Plant a seed for a specific need," he exhorted. I had a specific need . . . for about a half million dollars! I had no cash to give, but then an idea hit me. Give the church a gift of the 2,000 "Stories That Live" books and tapes which I had in the warehouse. They were already paid for. The church could then sell them through

its bookstore.

I wrote a note and put it in the offering envelope. "Here is my seed of \$5,000.00 for a harvest of a half-million debt free dollars for a new video project," I wrote.

Minutes after dropping the envelope in the offering basket, I felt a tap on my shoulder. The lady sitting behind me asked to see me after the service. As we talked, she explained that the Lord had spoken to her that morning.

"Invest part of your insurance settlement into the work Peter Enns is doing," was the message. She knew nothing of my past problems or about my plans for the future.

But it was the beginning of a miracle. In the months that followed, the Lord enabled us to raise all the debt-free money we needed for our Kids International Bible story videos and book/tape project.

On October 15, 1987, our first video series was released. These new "Stories To Remember" from the World's Greatest Book have been an instant hit.

Looking back today, I can more clearly see that what the enemy meant for evil, God has turned for good. Now there is a new confidence in my heart. With God nothing is impossible. All things are possible if we willingly believe! □



Peter Enns currently resides in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In addition to being a speaker and poet, he has authored eighteen best selling children's Bible story books, with sales upwards of two million copies.

For further information on his tapes, books and videos write: Editor, FGBMF/USA, P. O. Box 5079, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

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

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

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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.

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

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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-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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DOUBLE TROUBLE



Mike Braccia and Steve Wilk were two "wild and crazy guys" in high school— friends and partners in meeting the drug needs of local teens. They're still friends and partners but they're meeting a different need now.

2



In 1988, an estimated 400,000 young men and women will attempt suicide. David Bauman, a Christian teenager, found that even a believer could be a victim to personal fear, frustration and torment — and susceptible to the dark reach of suicide.

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