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GREATEST
NEED



THE FIRE IS STILL BURNING

by General Superintendent Eugene L. Stowe

It all started on the day of Pentecost.

The fire of the Holy Spirit fell on a band of believers in the upper room in Jerusalem and bonded them into the church of Jesus Christ. Immediately they began to witness about their risen Lord. That very day 3,000 people accepted Him as their Savior and united with the church.

And it's been going on ever since.

All over the world—even in the People's Republic of China—the fire of evangelism is still burning. The witness of Spirit-filled Christians is resulting in the salvation of the lost and the growth of the church.

All missionaries were driven out of China in 1949. But that did not put out the fire. Twenty-five years later the Cultural Revolution closed the doors of every church. But the fire kept burning. The church went underground and continued its witness. Souls were saved and the Body of Christ kept growing in this tremendous country of 1 billion people.

Earlier this year Mrs. Stowe and I spent three weeks in China. We were there at the invitation of Yanchan University where our daughter was teaching. She was one of 120 Christians who were employed by the Chinese government to instruct their people in the English language. While they could not do missionary work as such, they were free to add their witness to that of millions of Chinese Christians.

On both Sundays we were able to worship with believers. First, in Beijing, the capital city. There a congregation of nearly 800 people braved a snowstorm and bitter cold to meet together. Then, in Guilin the pastor preached a dynamic sermon on the subject, "God Is Alive." Our English words joined with their Chinese in

singing, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," "Jesus Loves Even Me," and "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

In both services the Spirit broke down the language barrier and we found that Christians everywhere are "one in the bond of love." It was encouraging to note the large number of young people attending the services. Chinese youth are responding to the gospel call.

In Shanghai we were privileged to visit Dr. P. K. Li and his wife Mary. Now in their 80s, the Lis are still actively serving Christ. Mary recalled her conversion in the Church of the Nazarene in Kansas City when she came to America to study. She then earned a master's degree in religion at Pasadena College (now Point Loma Nazarene College) and started the Chinese Church of the Nazarene in San Francisco.

Feeling led of the Lord to return to their native land, they have been stalwart witnesses for Christ there for more than 35 years. They reported that 10 churches are now functioning in Shanghai, and all are full to overflowing. The largest packs 1,000 people into its sanctuary and loudspeakers carry the service to hundreds outside. A second service has now been started and a third is contemplated in the near future.

In addition to these organized churches where thousands give public witness to their faith, as many as 20 million believers gather in house churches to celebrate the Lordship of Christ. Yes, the fire is still burning in China.

Reader-friend, have you accepted Christ as your Savior? You can be born again and become a member of the family of God. The fire of faith will be kindled in your heart and you can join Christians all over the world in bearing witness to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus.



HERALD of HOLINESS

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SPECIAL ISSUE

ARTICLES

THE FIRE IS STILL BURNING.....	2
	<i>General Superintendent Eugene L. Stowe</i>
BEAUTY FOR ASHES.....	4
	<i>A. Brent Cobb</i>
FREE AT LAST!.....	7
	<i>Joseph Harshman</i>
PRISONERS FREE IN CHRIST.....	10
	<i>Nina Beegle</i>
I KEPT GOD'S APPOINTMENT.....	12
	<i>Fay Clary Beck</i>
SOMEONE CARES!.....	14
	<i>Charles Panoyan</i>
"TRIED WITH FIRE".....	16
	<i>Pauline E. Spray</i>
WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.....	20
	<i>Bill Carson</i>
UNFAILING LOVE.....	22
	<i>Joyce McWhorter</i>
I'M KEEPING A PROMISE.....	24
	<i>Sheila I. Williams</i>

POEMS

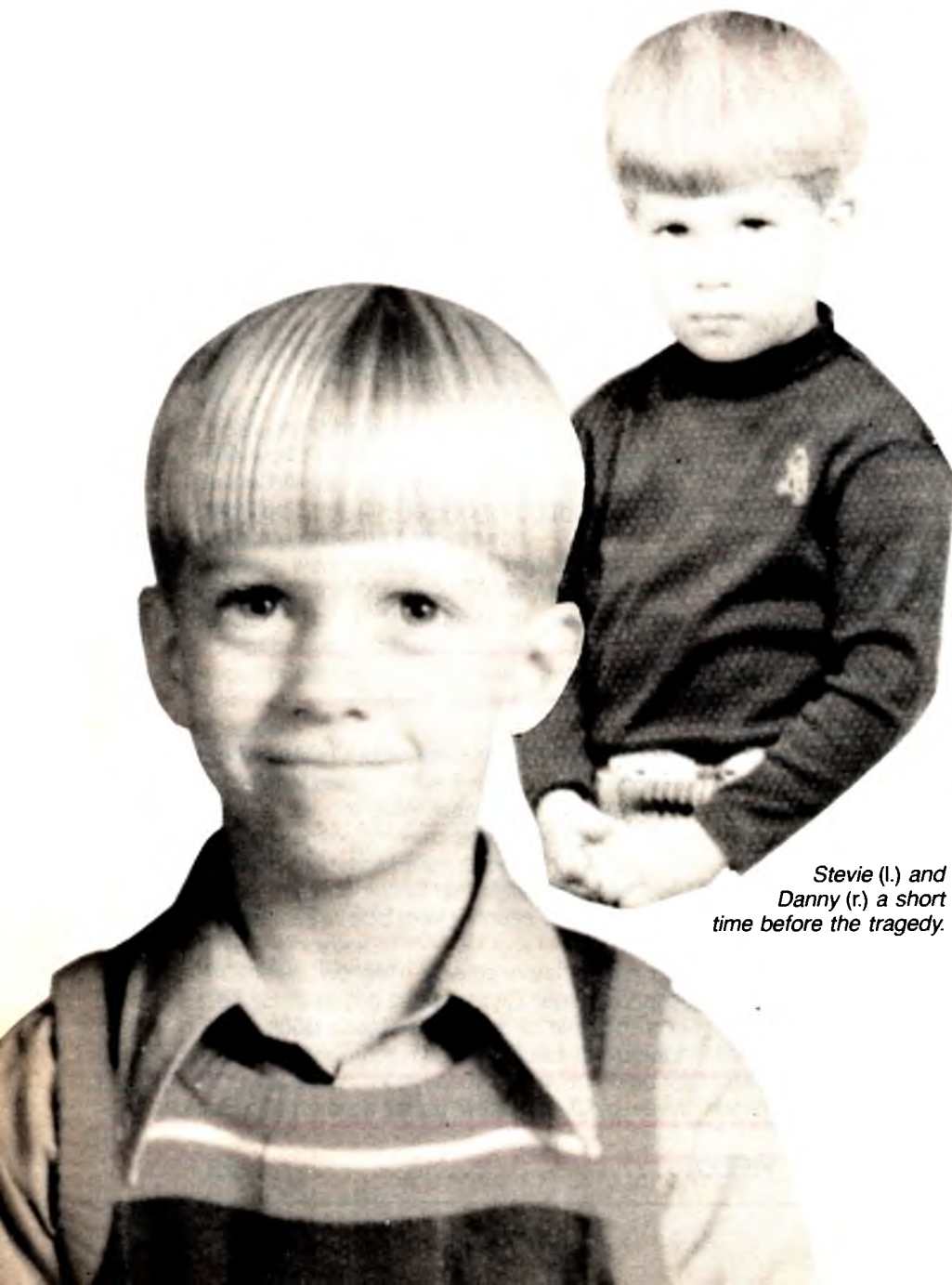
EMERGENCY WARD.....	6
	<i>Elva McAllaster</i>
QUESTION.....	9
	<i>Merle Lamprecht</i>
RESOURCE.....	15
	<i>Evelyn M. Dencen</i>
I MUST HAVE JESUS.....	19
	<i>Mabel P. Adamson</i>
IMAGES.....	21
	<i>Sharon Lee Roberts</i>

EDITORIAL

CHRIST IS YOUR GREATEST NEED.....	28
	<i>W. E. McCumber</i>

Beauty FOR ASHES

BY A. BRENT COBB



Stevie (l.) and
Danny (r.) a short
time before the tragedy.

Seated beside my wife, Mary, in the packed funeral chapel, I stared straight ahead, my heart as cold as the driving rain which lashed the windows. The thunderstorm outside was nothing compared to the storm raging within us.

This can't be happening to us! I reasoned. Until five days ago our lives had been storybook perfect. Through my mind flashed the shattering events which had brought us home from Seoul, South Korea, where we were missionaries with the Church of the Nazarene.

"My God!" I heard myself crying out again. "My God, help me find my boy!"

Just a few minutes earlier Stephen, age six, and Danny, age four, had reported in to us. They were happily playing frontiersmen—wearing coonskin caps and toting toy rifles. The 13-acre mission station was an idyllic spot for our boys to grow up.

About 15 minutes after they had run off to play, the whole area shook from the blast of a huge electrical transformer. It was nothing new, but this time terror gripped me.

Intuitively, I bolted from the house, blowing the whistle which had always brought the boys running. From the wooded valley Danny emerged, stumbling toward me as fast as his little legs could carry him.

"Stevie!" he shrieked, "Stevie! burning! Stevie is on fire!"

I raced down the path that led through the big woods, nestled below our house. "Steve-e-e!" I screamed. "Steve-e-e! STEVE-E-E!" Silence . . . utter, maddening silence.

In a few moments I had covered every place I knew to look. It was then that I poured out my pitiful plea to God: "My, God, help me find my boy! Please help me." Then I saw the most revolting sight I could possibly have conceived.

No! God, no! It can't be. God, my precious Stevie! He and I were very close and much alike. Not just the blond hair and blue eyes, but in personality too. Yet, there he was, dangling above me like the victim of some brutal murder.

One foot was wedged in the framework of an electrical tower.

had begun to climb, and he was hanging upside down. I was sure he was gone.

Marty's anguished cries filled the valley. I felt a rush of compassion for her. Intercepting her, I took her in my arms and said: "Honey, he's gone! you must not see him. It's awful . . . unbelievable."

"I have to see," she insisted. "He's *my* son too." We stared in agonizing silence at our son. He looked as though he had exploded; his clothes were blown away except for some charred strips. All but a few seared wisps of his blond hair was gone.

Suddenly we sensed the nearness of the divine Presence, and realized that our loving Lord was going to see us through even this. Marty, amid her sobs, stammered, "Thank God, we know he's with Jesus."

What was that strange cooing sound? It was dovelike and came from the tower. And was that a slight movement we saw? *Impossible! There can't possibly be life left in him*, I kept telling myself.

But there was. He was regaining consciousness, and to us it seemed he was back from the dead. "Please help me get him down, God," I begged. "Help me not to drop him." Then a supernatural peace calmed me. We both felt that peace, a result of surrendering the matter into our Master's capable hands.

Just then a rescue team from Korea Electric Company arrived. Before they reached out to secure him with ropes, I shouted, "Stevie, don't move. Just stay still and we'll get you down." Instantly he stopped twisting and riveted his attention to my continued coaching.

They lowered him into my waiting arms. Soon we were jostling our way through rush hour traffic to Severance Hospital. Stevie was in extreme pain. And to me, the pungent odor of singed hair and seared flesh was almost unbearable.

In my halting Korean, I struggled to communicate with the emergency room workers. Their frantic efforts to find one vein that had not collapsed sickened me further. The I.V. hook-up never really flowed right, though for hours the nurses kept sticking him in their attempts to make it work.

By 7:30 P.M. we were in a private



Recent photo of the Cobb family (l. to r.) Sara, Dan, Marty, Adam, and Brent.

room, gathered around his bed—Marty and I, and a handful of Korean friends. He was coherent and begging for a drink—which we couldn't give him. We groped for words to help him understand what had happened and how critical his condition was, since he did not know how he had been hurt.

Stevie couldn't recall adventurously climbing the tower as little Danny watched his big, brave brother. Nor did he know that a low-slung high-tension line had arced and snatched the steel barrel of his toy rifle with the suction of some giant vacuum cleaner. Nor that 30,000 volts of electrical current had burst through his body, leaving third degree burns over 75% of it.

"Honey," Marty whispered to our son, "do you remember that song—'Jesus, I Heard You've Got a Big House'?" Well, the doctors say that you're hurt badly. And you may be going to Jesus' big house soon." We were fighting back the tears.

"Mama . . . Daddy, don't cry. It's OK." He spoke calmly, though with difficulty. And he showed a total trust—in us and in God.

My mind raced back five weeks and thousands of miles to our home church in Lexington, Ky. An invitation was being given for those who

*Through it all
we're learning that
when life is
reduced to ashes,
God is there.
Immanuel—God
with us. Present
when His people
mourn. Present
to sustain and
strengthen—to
keep His promises.*

wished to come forward and put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Stevie had stepped out, walked to the front, and knelt at the altar. . . .

Clearly, the issue now was not his faith but *ours*. It was a question of whether we would be willing to surrender Stephen into the Lord's hands.

By the next morning his condition was deteriorating rapidly. The Assistant Chief of Army Chaplains at the Pentagon was working on arrangements to transfer Stevie to the U.S. Army hospital in preparation for a possible "Medivac Flight" to the States.

But that journey to the burn center in St. Louis never happened. Stevie was barely stable enough to transport across the city. Despite the frenzied efforts of the 121st Evacuation Hospital, headed by Dr. Daniel Cavanaugh, it soon was clear that Stevie would not survive. His internal injuries were beyond repair. Already his kidneys were failing.

The doctor ordered us to go home and get some rest. Just after midnight the phone rang. Marty did not even hear it, she was so totally exhausted. The voice was that of Dr. Cavanaugh, urging, "Mr. Cobb,

you must come quickly. Your son is failing fast."

We started our mad dash by jeep across Seoul City after curfew. Overcome by fatigue and grief, Marty closed her eyes to pray. And there appeared to her a graphic visualization. Large hands and arms were reaching down to her. Then she recognized that Jesus was asking her to trust Him, knowing that *He* does all things well.

She was torn . . . ambivalent. Soon, however, all resistance ceased. And a sweet sense of peace came as she, in her vision, voluntarily lifted our son and placed him in the nail-scarred hands of the Savior.

Once on the army post and inside the small military hospital, we hurried to see our son alive one last time. He lay unconscious but fighting for his breath.

For 33 hours he hung on by a thin thread, but then quietly, even peacefully, Stephen Brent Cobb slipped away. He went to be with Jesus at His "big house" at 2:15 in the morning.

Twelve years have now gone by. In that time our lives have been enriched by the coming of Sara and Adam—both with blond hair and blue eyes. And we've found that our

tragedy has served to "sensitize" us to the needs of people who are hurting, and has taught us how to help them.

Through it all we're learning that when life is reduced to ashes, God is there. Immanuel—God with us. Present when His people mourn. Present to sustain and strengthen—to keep His promises.

The Lord is always there "... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness . . ." (Isaiah 61:3). *You can be sure of it!* □



A. Brent Cobb served for two terms as a missionary in Korea. He now pastors Sacramento, California, First Church of the Nazarene.

Emergency Ward

*God, pour in Grace
to disinfect his wounds?
He has been stabbed
and stabbed by life.
Grief-edges suppurate;
the gangrene spreads.
Cleanse out
the poisoned, poisoning depths,
the stench
of dark infecting hates;
kill these fierce germs of anger,
malice, vengeance,
where they multiply.
Great Healer, great Physician,
pour in Grace.*

*What bandages, what swabs
can I supply?
What scalpels shall I run for?
Your Grace, O Father.
Pour in Grace!*

—ELVA McALLASTER
Greenville, Illinois



FREE AT LAST!

**Eighteen years ago Jesus
Christ became my Lord.
When I came to Christ
I was a poor excuse of
a man. ● BY JOSEPH HARSHMAN**

Raised in an orphanage until I graduated from high school at the age of 18, I was embittered against the church and resentful toward the whole world. I had spent 10 years in the Home and was forced to comply with its regulations. All the children said their prayers in the evening and at meal time. We all had to attend Sunday School and worship services.

I recall being yelled at and cursed at all the way to the door of the church, then sitting in the same row of seats with the one who had just moments before told me I was no good and that nobody loved me or wanted me. One woman used to tell me repeatedly, "Nobody cares if you live or die. You are trash." As I listened to Sunday School teachers and preachers tell of God's love and goodness it fell on unheeding ears. I lived in constant fear of tomorrow. Over and over, for 10 years, I was constantly shamed and ridiculed by those in authority. The church and its teachings made little or no sense to me. I heard one thing but was subjected to something totally different.

When I was turned loose after 10 years, I hated the world and blamed everyone I met for all the years of misery and hurt caused by those ungodly and uncaring people.

I had been drinking since I was 12 years old. At first I did it simply because I was told I couldn't. It provided



me with a way of beating those who thought they had control of me. But then they were out of my life and I could now live as a free man. There was no one to tell me what I could or could not do. No one would ever control my life again. I was one man against the world. Everyone would pay for those years spent in agony and torment, years that hardened me to all emotions except hate. I could not trust anyone. I was fearful and alone. Like a wild animal that had been caged all its life, I was free but the freedom was a nightmare.

My greatest enemy was my own poor self-image. I had been told so often that I was worthless and dirty, and that no one would ever love me. I set out to prove that they were all wrong. I met and married a farm girl. She wanted to get away from the farm, I wanted to prove that someone wanted me. We were both miserable. I had thought that marriage would prove to me and to everyone else that I was a good and lovable person. Instead it confirmed the opposite. I drank more and more, sometimes so much that I didn't even know where I was when I woke up in the morning. I started to gamble away the money that I didn't drink up. This added to the already devastating problems in my life.

We had three children during our first seven years of marriage. I could not tell my wife and children that I loved them. The idea of love was alien to me. I had never known it and could not now express it to those who meant most to me. This added more anguish to my already mutilated self-image. I ached inside because I didn't want my children to grow up without being loved.

My life was fast falling apart at the seams. Many times I took a gun, went to a remote area, and drank myself into a stupor trying to get enough courage to end it all. I would tell myself that everyone would be better off without me. At this stage in my life, I was so miserable that nothing could pull me out of my self-pity. Alcohol was the only friend I had. I could run to it and my fears would leave me, even though the escape was short-lived. I needed alcohol every day just to exist.

After seven years of marriage my wife had divorce papers served on me. I was in such a drunken state I could only laugh and make a joke about it. I picked up my six-year-old son and said to him, "You don't want your daddy to go away, do you?" His reply still echoes in my ears: "I don't care, you don't love me anyway." My entire body reacted to that statement. Tears came to my eyes for the first time in my life.

That night God showed me a panorama of my entire life. It made me sick to my stomach. I saw it as if it were happening then and there—every ugly, ungodly, wicked, wretched thing that I had done in my life. I suddenly realized exactly what kind of a mess my life was in. I was an alcoholic. Alcohol ruled my life every moment of every day. I begged God to give me another chance to raise my children. "Dear God, if there is a God, give me another chance and I will raise the kids as You want me to." That was the first time in my life I had ever prayed.

I thank God for the First Church of the Nazarene in Huntington, Indiana, and all the wonderful people who had a part in showing me what love really was. We began to attend the church. My wife told me, "Go to church or pack your bags." How quickly we forget our

promises to God. Many times I went to church in a drunken stupor, going just to keep peace in the family. But something began to happen to me. I saw in those people something that I could not understand or believe. They took an interest in me, though I smelled of alcohol and tobacco, and my language was often foul. They loved me.

I was strangely drawn to the church and its people. One lady in particular, Charlotte Singer, took an active interest in my family. She spent many hours on her knees in prayer for us, but more than that, she involved herself in our lives. She encouraged her Sunday School class to reach out to us. We were invited into their homes and we saw love in reality. They just wouldn't give up on us.

I found myself going to church to see more of this exciting life-style and to find the peace that it offered. Satan would not let me go easily. My drinking was still a problem. One Sunday morning I awoke with a hang-over from the night before, in which I had boasted that I would never go to church again after this Sunday. I stood in the sanctuary that morning shaking with conviction. Charlotte Singer came to me and asked, "Joe, don't you want to go and pray?" I ran to the altar.

There at the altar I met Jesus and for the first time in my life I knew that I was truly loved. I went to the altar in the aftermath of drunkenness and vileness, but there I finally found what my heart had yearned for all my life—love and acceptance. Everything that had enslaved me—alcohol, tobacco, hatred, vengeance—lost its grip. There at the feet of Jesus I was a prisoner set free. The old things that had bound me were taken away. I was free and the nightmare had ended. Every day since I met Him, Jesus has grown more precious.

Some folks say I am an alcoholic who hasn't had a drink in 18 years. Some folk practice abstinence from alcohol but are threatened every moment of every day. The allure of alcohol is still a cloud over their heads. I praise God that I have not wanted or needed a drink since Christ saved me. He alone is my anchor. In Him I find daily strength. Trials come and go but Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. I am truly free from Satan's grasp and he rules me no more. Jesus has set me free. What He has done for me, He can do for all who will come to Him in humility and accept His gift of love. He can liberate from any form of slavery. To God be the glory! □



Joseph Harshman pastors the Church of the Nazarene in New Haven, Indiana.

QUESTION

*Does it matter
this form in the gutter?*

*Fragile as porcelain,
or puny fledgling
flung from the nest,
or fetus curled
in the womb.*

Drunk or dying?

*I wish I could be sure
he was drunk.*

*Look down
but keep on going.*

*But my son
would need a Samaritan!*

—MERLE LAMPRECHT
Ciskei, South Africa



PRISONERS

Free in Christ



Sandi, (l.) young teen, was imprisoned for murder a few months after this photo was taken. "Sandi does not look much like this picture now," says Beverly Turner (r.). When Christ changed her heart, her countenance was also changed.

BY NINA BEEGLE



Nina Beegle is Division of Church Growth editor at international headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri. She is the wife of a Wesleyan pastor.

Sandra was only 17 when she was first arrested for prostitution and sent to a juvenile center, but this had been her livelihood since she was 13. After her release she was sent to the Hamilton County Justice Center (HCJC) in Ohio on a second offense—murder. There she met Beverly.

Beverly Turner is many things: chaplain at the HCJC; registered evangelist in the Church of the Nazarene; speaker at women's retreats and conferences; supplier of pulpits; mother of two grown children; and a grandmother. She is a member of the Lebanon, Ohio Church of the Nazarene.

But on Thursdays Beverly's heart is undivided. She goes to Cincinnati to conduct Bible studies and minister personally to girls like Sandra.

When she arrived one Thursday morning for the regular Bible study, she observed a giddy, light-hearted girl on the elevator, accompanied by an officer. The officer said, "I tell you, that girl has enough on her to send her to the chair if she was

an adult, and she thinks it's party time."

But Beverly saw behind Sandra's facade. The memory of Sandra as she saw her later that day, sitting in the large "pod" where she was isolated because of the severity of her crime, stayed with Beverly all week. The next Thursday she asked permission to talk to Sandra. She was met with the girl's flippancy.

"Sandi," Beverly said, after introductions and amenities were over, "One day someone told me that God loved me in spite of all my sins. It was hard for me to believe that, but it was true. It was the greatest news I ever heard. And Sandi, Jesus loves you too, in spite of all your sins. He is here to help you."

All the hardness that the girl was trying to hide behind suddenly was dissipated, and tears welled up in her eyes.

"She squeezed my hand," Beverly said, "and I asked her, 'May I start a Bible study with you?' She answered, 'Sure, you know, why not?' I started meeting with her every week for a Bible study and she got

so excited she could hardly wait for the next one.”

“When Beverly first came,” Sandra recalls, “I thought: *Oh, no, not a church person!* But it is different now. I am learning so much, and I can’t wait for the next Thursday to come.”

“Her response was unbelievable,” Beverly said. “She accepted the Word of God with eagerness. We met together for about six weeks before I felt it was time to present the gospel for salvation. She literally leaped at the opportunity to receive Christ. Her whole expression, even her body, responded with a big YES. She knelt there on the cement floor and asked Him to come into her heart. I have definitely seen the fruits of repentance in her life since then.

“She was just a street girl, and a lot of people would have looked upon her as garbage, but God saw a hurting little teenager. As I nurtured her in the faith, I handed her a *Herald of Holiness* one day. As I did so the sad realization gripped me that this was not an adult. This child needed teen magazines. She should be enjoying the things teens enjoy, like getting a new dress, or going to a ball game, and here she was facing life imprisonment! At the very least she will get 15 years, making her more than 30 years old when she is released.”

With the sadness Beverly experiences in this ministry, there is also the excitement of seeing the beauty of Christ emerge from a life redeemed from the depths of sin and degradation.

Amparo Vega is another trophy of Christ, one whose beauty was disarming both physically and spiritually after Beverly introduced her to the Savior.

Amparo was trying to feed and clothe members of her family in Colombia, South America by being a contact person for drug deals. Her alcoholic father had unmercifully beaten her and her brothers and sisters until his death when Amparo was 13. She was left to care for the family.

“We didn’t have food for our tummies, or shoes for our feet,” she said.

Amparo was flown to Los Angeles to make a contact, but the



Amparo Vega (center) with her two children, Alexandria, age 18, and Franklin, 15. The children live with an aunt in Beverly Hills, Calif. Contact has been made with Nazarenes in the area who are inviting them to church services and functions.

people who had promised her money had not delivered. She could speak little English and the only person whose name she knew was the pilot of the small plane that had brought her there.

Her beauty made her vulnerable. When she called the pilot, who was single and wealthy, his way of helping her was to keep her in the U.S., bring her sister and two children, and provide for them all—until he got “busted.” She was with him when the police found cocaine in the trunk of his car.

Again, Amparo was “used.” Though the police knew she was not involved in the drug deal, they let her think she was. They told her she would not be brought to trial if she would tell them what she knew about drug dealers in Colombia. She worked with the Los Angeles police for almost a year, unaware that she was being “set up.” Though the police had promised her immunity, and twice she had nearly lost her life when helping them uncover drug rings, they allowed her to be arrested along with those she had helped to capture.

It was at this juncture she was brought to Ohio and met Beverly Turner.

Once a month an evangelistic team from Lebanon Church of the Nazarene accompanies Beverly to hold worship services in the prison.

“It was on one of those Sundays that I saw this strikingly beautiful, scared-to-death little person. There she stood, her frail frame trembling. We shared our love with the women, let them know we cared about them, and presented the gospel. Amparo was the first to hit the makeshift altar.

“Her conversion was one of the most glorious transformations I have ever witnessed,” said Beverly. “I now call her ‘God’s Little Missionary.’ She is winning people to Christ in unbelievable numbers and situations as the love of Jesus emanates from her. She has a group of girls that she is teaching from the Bible. She told me with great excitement, in her enchanting accent, ‘Beverly, at last time I stand on the table and tell them about Jesus, and I preach the gospel.’”

There is some hope for an acquittal in Amparo’s case. In Los Angeles she became a close friend of a man who personally heard the promise made to her by the Los Angeles police. He is wealthy and has hired a reputable lawyer to go to Ohio and help her.

But Amparo’s greatest acquittal has already been granted because of a volunteer chaplain who took her case to a great and merciful Judge. That pardon has given her a freedom that no prison can restrain. □

I KEPT GOD APPOINTMENT

I thank God for His appointment and for sharing His miracles as He sets captives free and saves families.

BY FAY CLARY BECK



My friend dropped me off with the warning, "Don't leave the bus station until your hubby comes to pick you up. Rapes and murders are common in this town. Don't even talk to anyone."

I snuggled into a seat nearest the ticket window. Attending a Personal Evangelism Conference all week had whetted my appetite to know more. Slipping a book from my bag, I relaxed for the hour-and-a-half wait.

A soldier slumped into the next seat. I sensed his interest in my book, but kept reading.

"Lady," he asked, "is that a Christian book?"

"Yes," I responded, not looking up. His shoulder touched mine. I moved away. He followed my motion.

"Lady, do you know Jesus?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, pretending absorption in reading.

"My name is Mark Daniels. Will you tell me about Jesus? I need to know Him," he insisted.

I looked at the soldier for the first time. His immaculate military dress contrasted with his sad face and wasted frame.

"I've bought three Bibles; they all say the same thing. I don't understand them. I'll go anywhere you say if you'll tell me about Jesus," he blurted out.

Darkness had fallen. Was this ruse to get me outside?

"I've heard of a fine minister who lives here. I'll find his phone number for you. If you'll call him, he'll be glad to help you find Jesus," I offered.

His eyes lowered and his chin quivered a little. "I meet people often who say they know Jesus. They all pass me to another. If you know Jesus, why can't you tell me?" he pleaded.

The quarter hour was approaching—time for another bus de-

TESTAMENT

parture. The crowded station was noisy. "I'll go anywhere," he repeated.

Silently I sought God's guidance. "Mark, if you want Jesus enough to seek Him here, I'll help you."

"I'll do anything," he said.

Taking my Bible from my carry-on case, I pointed out scriptures. Mark slipped a faded Testament from his pocket. "A gift from a buddy," he explained.

Silver clanked down the throat of a jukebox. Rock music reverberated in the smoke-filled room. I struggled for breath. We were competing with clamor for tickets, conversations, and bus calls.

"It's so noisy," Mark complained.

"You can't stop now, Mark," I urged.

As Mark read aloud of God's love, tears splashed on the little Testament. His sobs attracted military police. They stood behind us listening, but soon moved on.

Girls with heavy make-up and strong perfume paused briefly. A rumpled, sad-eyed young woman struggling with a fretting baby and a diaper bag stopped. Pushing against my shoulder, she strained to hear Mark reading John 3:16. "My grandmother taught me that when I was a little girl," she whispered to no one in particular. She wiped tears from her hollow cheeks with a corner of the baby's blanket and rushed out as the last call came for her bus.

As we prayed together Mark accepted Christ as Lord of his life. A quiet joy radiated in his eyes.

"How do I go on from here?" he asked.

"Read your Bible and pray daily," I instructed.

He sighed. "I live in Waco, 30 miles from here, and I don't know anyone to help me."

"Mark, I have a minister friend in Waco. I'll call Rev. Robertson when I get home. He will help you grow spiritually."



Mark a few months after his conversion. He is now retired from a government job and works full-time in a Christian rescue mission.

"Lady," he said seriously, "I don't know why you think you are here tonight, but I know. On my way to work this morning I remembered that when my commanding officer makes an appointment for me, I keep it. I looked up and said, 'God, if You are up there and have a soldier anywhere, please send him to me.' He sent you."

Biting his underlip and pounding his fist on his knee for control, he continued, "Lady, I've lived a wicked life. Last night I was drinking as usual. I kicked my wife out of bed and her face struck a chair. This morning her face was black and swollen. My four-year-old daughter cried and I whipped her too hard. I've mistreated them for years, but I never wanted to," he groaned.

Mark swallowed hard as tears filled his eyes and his drooping shoulders shook. "My wife is deeply depressed. I'd decided to kill her,

my two little daughters, and myself tonight."

My husband arrived and stood listening. I introduced him to Mark.

"Sir," Mark glowed as he grabbed the extended hand, "Thank you. Your wife just helped me find Jesus."

As we left, Mark shook my hand and said, "Remember to call Rev. Robertson."

Mark reached home at 4:00 A.M. Ann was unimpressed with his testimony. Another drunken dream, she thought.

Morning broke with a new beauty for Mark, but Ann believed nothing he said. Her overloaded nerves snapped and she was hospitalized in a distant state. Her parents took the children home with them. They blamed Mark for Ann's condition and refused to let him see the children. Mark visited Ann at every opportunity and worked hard to regain her confidence.

Under Rev. Robertson's guidance Mark made spiritual progress. The change in his life was reflected by the change in his home. He cleaned and painted the house, mowed the yard, and planted flowers.

When Ann came home in six months she found the differences persuasive.

Mark's life became a living gospel to Ann. She soon accepted God's gift of love for her life. They brought their children up around a family altar where the Bible was read and the family prayed together daily. The two daughters are in a Christian college today, preparing for God's service.

I thank God for His appointment and for sharing His miracles as He sets captives free and saves families. □

Fay Clary Beck, formerly an educator, now has a counseling office in her home in Bethany, Oklahoma.

Someone Cares!



BY CHARLES PANOYAN

During a recent visit to one of the prisons, three inmates asked a special favor. They wanted me to see an old wino who was one of the occupants of their tank. They said, "He is being ridiculed; his face is scarred, but in spite of everything, he says nothing. Brother Charles, will you please see him?"

Then they came with another request. "That old wino would like you to buy him a pair of glasses so that he will be able to see and read again. He lost his old pair when he was arrested for drunkenness." They told me that the number of his old glasses was 15. I obtained glasses at a drug store and sent them to the old man by a prison officer. Later the young men came to say, "The old wino wishes to express his thanks. He wants to see you personally."

As soon as possible, I met the wino in the Conference Room. I shall never forget the moment he entered. He seemed very old; his face was wrinkled and scarred; he walked with difficulty for his leg had been severely injured. He sat down and quietly said, "Brother Charles, I have heard so much about you. Everybody loves you in this jail. Thank you for supplying the glasses. I can see now."

I acknowledged his thanks and proceeded to the routine questions used when I am interviewing a prisoner for the first time. "What is your name? How many times have you been in prison? What crime did you commit? Are you married? Do you have any children? Have you ever been in the military services? Do you have any education?"

When he replied, his speech was deliberate and slow. He said, "Brother Charles, I never speak of these things in the cell. The men push me around; sometimes they steal my lunch, and at other times I exchange my food for cigarettes. I never speak to them for I am ashamed. In 1925, I graduated from Yale University as a medical doctor. Then I joined the Navy and served as a surgeon for 47 years. I am now 77 years old. During the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, I was

seriously wounded. The doctors inserted a steel plate into my head, but they said my leg would need to be amputated. I advised the doctors what to do in order to save this leg, and later I was flown to a hospital on the mainland.

"But then everything seemed to go wrong. My son was killed in Vietnam and my wife died of cancer. Alas, that was the beginning of my downfall. I have two daughters married to doctors, and a 50-year-old son who is a captain in the Navy. They all occupy important positions and I am too ashamed to let them know of my present condition. Increasing drunkenness led to many imprisonments. My large pension has always been spent on liquor either for myself or for other winos with whom I lived."

I listened attentively as he described his years of drunkenness and sin. When he was finished, I asked, "How do I address you? Do I say Captain or Doctor?" To be honest, I felt insignificant in the presence of the old man. In spite of his dereliction, he was still a great person.

He thought for a moment and said, "I was an M.D. before I was a Captain."

Then I asked, "What led to your present condition?"

He replied, "After my son was killed and my wife died of cancer, *I had no anchor!*"

I enquired, "What kind of anchor are you expecting to find? You already possess most of the things offered by this world. You have education, degrees, prestige, and fame. You have been a man of great importance; a man of destiny. Your name is in *Who's Who in America*, and you are mentioned in encyclopedias. I feel honored just to be sitting here with you, and yet you are looking for an anchor. The Bible speaks of Christ as the anchor of the soul. He is the only One able to hold you when the storms of life threaten destruction.

"Doctor," I continued, "what would have happened if you had died during the attack on Pearl Harbor? Where would you have gone—for there are only two destinations—heaven or hell?"

The old man stared at me and then with great deliberation gave a thumbs down signal.

Instantly I responded with a thumbs up signal, and asked, "What about this way, Doctor?"

He replied, "I don't know how to get there."

Then I gave my own testimony. I told him that at 11:30 p.m. on October 16, 1939, I also faced severe storms in my own life, but because of my surrender to Jesus Christ, I was held fast. I assured him that my anchor has been holding ever since, and I was convinced it will continue to hold until all the storms are over and I shall see Christ face to face.

He replied, "I have never owned a Bible; I have never read anything in it."

I read Psalm 142 and told the old man that this was God's message especially for him: "I looked on my right hand, and behold, there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul." Then I emphasized the following verse: "I cried unto thee O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge."

When I had completed the reading of the Psalm, I asked, "Would you like to submit yourself to this Savior; this wonderful refuge? You may have felt as did the Psalmist when he said, 'No man cared for my soul,' but Christ cares for you, and I also care for you. Would you like to ask God for forgiveness? You have been destroying yourself. Let God help you make a new start."

It was a wonderful moment when he bowed his head to ask God to forgive him. When he raised his head, I wept for joy as I saw his wrinkled face shining with happiness. Quietly he said, "I met many chaplains in the service, but I never met anyone like you. Your boldness and sincerity are unmistakable. As I said earlier, I never laid hands on a Bible, but now I would like to possess my own copy."

I gave him my own Bible, autographed at his request. He said, "When I leave this prison, I hope to travel, but this Bible will go with me."

He asked me what my favorite hymn was and I replied, "The Old Rugged Cross. The author of that hymn was a friend of mine. We used to have lunch together prior to his death in 1958."

The doctor told me that his favorite was "When the Roll is Called up Yonder, I'll be there." He said, "I used to hear the boys singing it on the ship, but I never sang with them for I knew I would not be there. I did not wish to sing lies! But, Brother Charles, let us sing it together right now."

As we did, we both wept tears of joy. The Conference Room had become a sanctuary. □



Charles Panoyan, known widely as Brother Charles, conducts the Brother Charles Prison Ministries, Inc., in Santa Barbara, California.



RESOURCE

*In the pale gold
of early morning
the baby jays
scream for food
and attention.*

*In the quiet night
of soul despair
I cry for God's
satisfying bread
and blessing.*

*Baby jays are fed,
And I read
"He who hungers and
thirsts after righteousness
shall be filled."*

Thank you, Lord.

—EVELYN M. DENEEN
Sacramento, California

TRIED WITH FIRE



Laura was praying. That's the last thing her husband remembers before their plane crashed and the gas tanks exploded. That accident left them physically scarred for life, but it did not stifle their praise or defeat their Christian testimony.

● BY PAULINE E. SPRAY

Fred Baker owned and operated his own plane. He and Laura had made several trips since his retirement. Now they were returning from an excursion with friends.

Each summer the Bakers took a short trip with the Sprungers. Howard also pilots his own aircraft. This time they had flown to Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., where they left their planes and took a train trip into Canada and back.

On Wednesday morning, August 1, 1984 the Bakers and Sprungers took off for St. Ignace. There they planned to spend the night and return to their homes the next day.

The sky was clear, the day was beautiful. But just before reaching their destination, the travelers ran into a storm. The Sprungers were able to escape. The Bakers were not as fortunate.

Fred's plane was old and without proper instrumentation. When he started to turn around, it was too late. After hitting a fog bank, he became disoriented and crashed in a swampy area.

When Laura came to, they were in the trees. She heard the three gas tanks explode and saw flames. Somehow she unfastened her seat belt, dived out, and rolled on the ground. Instinctively, she reached for wet leaves and pressed them to her burning face.

Then she remembered Fred. He was still in the plane. "Lord, don't let him suffer," she prayed.

When he awoke, Fred's first thought was of Laura. Seeing she was gone, he attempted to push open his door, but the plane was leaning on its side.

"Lord, I'll never make it," he prayed. "I need Your help." Later, he said, "To this day I believe somebody got hold of my feet and pulled me out."

As soon as the Bakers were reunited, they fell down on their knees and prayed together.

The horribly burned figures then staggered through the swampy area. They somehow made it over a fence and onto the highway. There Fred flagged down a passing motorist. Eventually emergency medical assistance arrived.

Concerning the next few months, the Bakers remember virtually nothing. Laura made the long trip from St. Ignace to the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor via ambulance, with a brief stop for emergency respiratory treatment at a hospital en route.

At first it appeared that Fred was worse off than his wife. Therefore, a plane was chartered to fly him to Detroit. A Survival Flight helicopter then took him to Ann Arbor.

In the Burn Unit examinations were made. Over 40% of Fred's body was covered with second and third degree burns. Over 60% of Laura's body received mostly third degree burns.

The long painful battle for survival had begun. It would be six to eight weeks before anyone was sure either of the Bakers would live and two and a half months before they were out of the Intensive Care Unit.

Their pastor, Rev. Derl Keefer of the Three Rivers, Mich., Church of the Nazarene, immediately called his people to prayer.

And the family began their long and loving vigil. During that first night, while waiting for her parents to arrive, Linda went into a hospital chapel to intercede for them.

"I don't remember what I prayed," she said, "but such a peaceful feeling came over me that I knew everything was going to be OK."

That wasn't the only time God gave Linda this assurance. When Mr. Baker took ARS pneumonia, it looked like he would not make it through the night. But Linda knelt by her couch and again experienced that same peace. Fred was improved by morning.

About a week after the accident, Laura was removed from the respirator, but because of internal injuries Fred was on oxygen much longer. In fact, he was told he would always need oxygen and would have to carry an oxygen tank with him the rest of his life.

But one night when Mr. Baker awakened, Jesus Christ was standing at the foot of his bed.

"Fred," He said, "you don't need that oxygen anymore. I have healed your lungs."

"I took that oxygen mask off," Fred said, "threw it against the wall, and went back to sleep."

Tests were taken all the next day, that night, and the following day. At 3:00 P.M. the doctor said, "You're right, Fred. You don't need it anymore."

"And I've never had any oxygen since," Fred declares joyfully.

Laura remembers awakening in the hospital while the nurses were bathing her. She was screaming at the top of her lungs, begging them to stop because the pain was so intense.

"Would you like me to pray with you, Laura?" a Christian nurse asked.

And Laura lapsed back into unconsciousness.

Skin grafting was something

The Bakers' Taylor craft prior to the accident.



**They have been
“tried with fire,”
but their faith
continues to shine
brighter than the
“gold that perisheth.”**



All that was left of the plane (top). The middle of this photo (above), where some white covering on the seat can be seen, is where the Bakers were sitting.

Laura feared tremendously. She knew it was excruciatingly painful, so she urgently asked God’s help. When the doctors came to do the grafting, she felt a warm glow go through her body. From then on, she experienced no discomfort, although she went through the procedure many times because her burns were deep and extensive.

The accident occurred in a swampy area and the Bakers picked up many infections. This prolonged their recovery. Fred suffered from five varieties. Since his problems were diagnosed and treated first, the medical staff was

able to treat Laura’s infections more quickly.

There were no mirrors in their hospital rooms, but Fred and Laura caught glimpses of themselves in the shining bathroom towel dispensers. At first Fred declared he would never go out in public again. “But it’s something you learn to live with and it gets better as time goes by,” he said.

Laura had always said she hoped if anything happened to her, her face would be spared. However, she faced reality courageously, leaning heavily on the Lord. And He has not failed her.

After being in ICU for two and a half months and in the Burn Unit for four, the Bakers finally returned home. But first, both had to be able to care for their own wounds and Laura had to prove she could keep her own house and prepare meals.

Laura is once again working full-time. Fred is building another airplane.

“They are in every service praising God and serving Him,” Mrs. Keefer said.

Fred and Laura Baker are living testimonials to God’s healing and keeping power. During their hospital stay, they witnessed to nurses, doctors, and fellow patients. And they praise the Lord continuously, despite further surgeries which await them. Surely it can be said: “They have been ‘tried with fire,’ but their faith continues to shine brighter than the ‘gold that perisheth.’” □



Pauline E. Spray is a free-lance writer, frequent contributor to Nazarene periodicals, and has written a number of books. She and her husband, Rev. Russell Spray, reside in Lapeer, Michigan.



I Must Have **JESUS**

*Many, many needs we have
while dwelling on this earth,
but Jesus is my deepest need
and through new birth—
provided freely by His death
on Calvary's rugged hill,
He's mine! He gives me all I need—
And all I ever will.*

*Bread and water, basic needs
we must have to survive.
Bread of Heaven, He feeds my soul,
my spirit He revives.
Water of Life, I thirst no more,
He floods my soul with peace
and hope and love and gladness;
His blessings never cease.*

*Shelter from the elements—
a need common to all—
And when the storms of life arise,
on Jesus I can call.
I hide myself secure in Him,
eternal Rock of Ages,
Safely sheltered in His love
from whatever tempest rages.*

*Feeling loved and being wanted
is something I need so.
Christ fills this need completely—
He loves me! This I know.
Some others not to be denied:
a goal, good rest, a creed—
but one there is surpasses all,
Christ is my greatest need!*

—MABEL P. ADAMSON
Kansas City, Missouri

WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT



BY BILL CARSON

Mary Jo is teaching me what life is all about. Mary Jo is a lady in our church. She's a mother of two grown children, a high school teacher, a business woman, and even a young grandmother. However, when I met her she had rheumatoid arthritis and would stiffen up easily. I'd see her get up in the middle of a service and slowly walk out. As I observed her life, I saw a lady who had a keen sense of commitment to Jesus Christ! I heard her give a testimony one service that made me think. She said, "This arthritis has made me reevaluate my Christian life. It's made me grow." Then the shocker came when she finished by saying, "If I had to choose between not having rheumatoid arthritis and remaining the Christian I was, or having rheumatoid arthritis and experiencing the growth God has brought to my Christian life, I would choose the arthritis!" Powerful! That's how she came to be such a committed Christian!

But the story doesn't end there. About a year ago she found out she

had cancer. Surgery and chemotherapy were necessary, but with no guarantee. Following the surgery, when everything was still up in the air, she made a profound statement in two short words: "It's OK." It was OK no matter what was to happen. This was true because she had found a peace with God. She came to the place in her life where she could say, "Nothing else really matters." For, you see, she found healing that went deeper than a physical healing. She could say, "I learned what God's healing was." It was a deep spiritual healing.

Her key verse is found in Galatians 3:4 (NIV): "Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing?" Following her surgery and treatments she received a clean bill of health. The cancer was gone! It was God's will for her to be healed. And because of her suffering she can help others cope. She has experienced agony, and she can help others.

She's a people-person. Since her recovery she has said, "I've strung myself out on people." I've seen her

Images

Shattered—
like broken glass—
my dreams and
aspirations;
tiny pieces crashing
to the ground.

You gently picked them up,
and reassembled
in a far different pattern
than I had ever
thought of . . .

The breaking was painful;
the reassembling
confusing,
but I let go
and let You
complete
Your work;
and now,
out of my brokenness
I am completely
and forever
whole;
and in the
mirror
I see a
far nicer
image
than was there
before . . .

—SHARON LEE ROBERTS
Waterford, Connecticut

paraphrase of Galatians 3:4: "I give you this suffering to teach others."

One day when I went to her home she was teaching an adult computer class. As I walked in I heard her tell one lady to teach another lady what she just learned. I was puzzled since Mary Jo was the teacher. Then it made sense when she told me, "You haven't learned something until you can teach it to someone else." In her Christian life she has experienced suffering; now she is teaching other people. She has learned what life is all about. And now she's teaching me. □

Bill Carson is associate pastor of the Harvester Church of the Nazarene in St. Charles, Missouri.



sew a wedding dress in a weekend for a future daughter-in-law. I've seen her holding informal counseling sessions in her ceramics room. I've seen her go out of her way to make a summer Associate Pastor feel at home. I've seen her counsel with ladies having struggles in their marriages. I've seen her take special interest in a teen-age girl in our church whose mother has passed away and whose father is ill. I've seen her take guardianship of this teen to give her a normal Christian home with two healthy parents. I've seen her love her husband with a genuine love. I've seen her sharing with children and teens about spiritual issues. I've seen her give, love, do, be! Her



Mary Jo sharing with a friend on her back patio.



Mary Jo making a wedding dress



Mary Jo taking time to spend with her teen friend/daughter—the one they've taken guardianship of.

UNFAILING LOVE

The long dark night seemed endless. Would dawn never come? Through the long sleepless hours the doctor's grave diagnosis, "Melanoma—less than a month to live," became a relentless litany in Bobby Chapman's agonized thoughts.

BY JOYCE McWHORTER

In those dark hours, the drama of his life seemed to be replayed. He remembered growing up in a large family in a coal mining town in West Virginia, under the influence of a godly mother and Christian neighbors who took them to church in spite of his unsaved father's resistance. At this little holiness church he found the Lord as a young boy. However, as a teenager he drifted away from God and into deep sin. By the time he joined the Air Force in 1959 habits of drinking and smoking were firmly entrenched.

During these years, God sought Bobby's attention through numerous incidents. While in Guam, he saw jets loaded with bombs ready to strike at any time during the Cuban missile crisis. In April, 1963 a typhoon hit the island with winds up

to 265 miles per hour. Many lives were lost, but Bobby was spared.

After his discharge, he was married and fathered two beautiful daughters. Sadly, because of his wicked habits, the marriage ended in divorce. A few months later, Bobby encountered an old drinking buddy. Two boys were with him, and he invited Bobby to go riding and drinking with them. Bobby got into the car but then asked them to let him out. A few hours later, word came that there had been an accident and all three had been killed.

In 1970, after falling in love and marrying again, Bobby moved his new family to Lynchburg, Va., pledging never to drink again. He began to work as a welder in a structural steel shop, and attended a small Baptist church occasionally. On May 31, 1971, a crane

operator accidentally turned a three ton steel beam over on Bobby, crushing his body and breaking his spine in several places. The last thing he remembered in the emergency room was the doctor telling the nurse that he would not live until morning.

For the first time in years, Bobby prayed, "God, please help me." He survived, although the doctors had given him up for dead several times. Then the doctors said Bobby would be paralyzed, but once again God touched him. Though he was somewhat disabled, he could walk. Bobby realized that God had graciously spared his life, but he was still a sinner.

Bobby returned to the doctor for a checkup, and the doctor noticed a mole on his right chest wall. It proved to be cancerous and Bobby was devastated. He called his saintly mother to pray for him.

About three weeks earlier, Bobby and his family had begun to attend the Church of the Nazarene in response to the invitation of a friend. After hearing Pastor Bob Daily preach, Bobby knew he wanted to get back to God. He had felt trapped, however, by his chain-smoking habit.

Now, as the light of dawn finally began to break, Bobby felt strongly impressed to go to Pastor Daily's

Bobby Chapman is doing well spiritually, as well as physically. He sings in the choir and drives the church van. He is pictured below with some of the children he picks up for Sunday School.



On a Work and Witness trip to the Azores, Bobby (r.) introduced John (l.) to the Church of the Nazarene.

house. He was warmly greeted by Bob and Betty Daily who told him they had been burdened for him throughout the night. Bobby told them of the doctor's diagnosis, and Rev. Daily asked, "Bobby, do you believe God can save you?"

After thinking it over, Bobby responded, "Yes."

The pastor assured him that God could save him, and heal him from cancer. They knelt together and the pastor began to pray. It had been so long since Bobby had known the Lord that he couldn't pray at all. Satan told him they were wasting their time. Bobby was dying of cancer and couldn't even pray.

He started to get up, but the Lord spoke to him clearly saying, "Bobby Chapman, this is the last chance you will have to call upon My name. If you accept Me as your personal Savior, I will save you, heal you, and clean up your life. You will have eternal life in heaven, but if you re-

ject Me now, I promise you eternal punishment."

Bobby fell back, crying aloud, "God, please forgive my sins and save me! Clean up my life and heal me of cancer! My life is Yours." After speaking these words, with his eyes closed tight and his head buried in his hands, Bobby saw a ball of smoke about the size of a softball float out of his right side and vanish. The next thing Bobby knew, he and Pastor Daily were praising God. A lost sheep was reclaimed and back in the fold!

The joy of the Lord pervaded Bobby's being throughout the day, and the next day he and his family went to church. During the morning service, the Holy Spirit prompted Bobby to share his experience and several persons sought and found the Lord—including his wife.

As scheduled, Bobby checked into the hospital that afternoon, feeling happy and assured in Jesus Christ. Doctors began to run tests and were puzzled. They told Bobby they were going to postpone surgery because something had happened which they could not understand.

His doctor told Bobby he could find no trace of the melanoma but wanted to do exploratory surgery anyway. A few hours after surgery, the surgeon found Bobby walking in the hall, feeling good and praising the Lord. The surgeon told him they found no trace of cancer anywhere in his body. The doctor said he had heard of such miraculous occurrences, but his was the first time he had witnessed one firsthand. He then asked Bobby to pray for him.

Seven years have passed since God reclaimed and healed Bobby. Bobby and his family are serving the Lord and attending the Church of the Nazarene. His father was saved shortly before dying of lung cancer several years ago.

Surely, Bobby is a marvelous example of our Father's unflinching love. □



Joyce McWhorter, resident of Troutville, Virginia, is a member of Roanoke First Church, and is Director of Women's Ministries for the Virginia District.



I'm Keeping a Promise

Lord, please don't let me die. Let me live to see my daughter and to raise her and I'll repay You somehow.

BY SHEILA I. WILLIAMS



It has been over three years since I first attended the Church of the Nazarene. I was raised in another church and never heard of the Nazarenes where I came from. The only thing I could relate to Nazarene was Nazareth—Jesus of Nazareth. He was very real to me. I would like to share my experience on coming to the Washington, D.C. First Church of the Nazarene.

My first pregnancy was very difficult for me. I had the usual morning sickness just about every day. I didn't have much of an appetite, so I didn't gain much weight. My labor pains began around 9 P.M. on a Wednesday night while my husband was at work. I was home alone. The pain wasn't too bad and the contractions were very far apart. But by 6 A.M. Thursday morning I was ready to go. I called my husband at his work and called the doctor. My brother-in-law took me to the hospital.

I was in labor until Friday morning when they decided to perform a C-section. Shantal arrived at 2:01

A.M., October 16, 1981, a six-pound bundle of joy. I was thrilled to see her. She was fine. My husband had survived the delivery room routine and was happy because he had wanted a girl all along. I was taken back to the recovery room and that's when everything went wrong.

My blood pressure, temperature, and heart rate went out of control. The doctor couldn't or wouldn't tell me anything. My temperature reached 107.6°. Something was desperately wrong. My husband looked tense and frightened, and stayed with me the entire time after having worked all night.

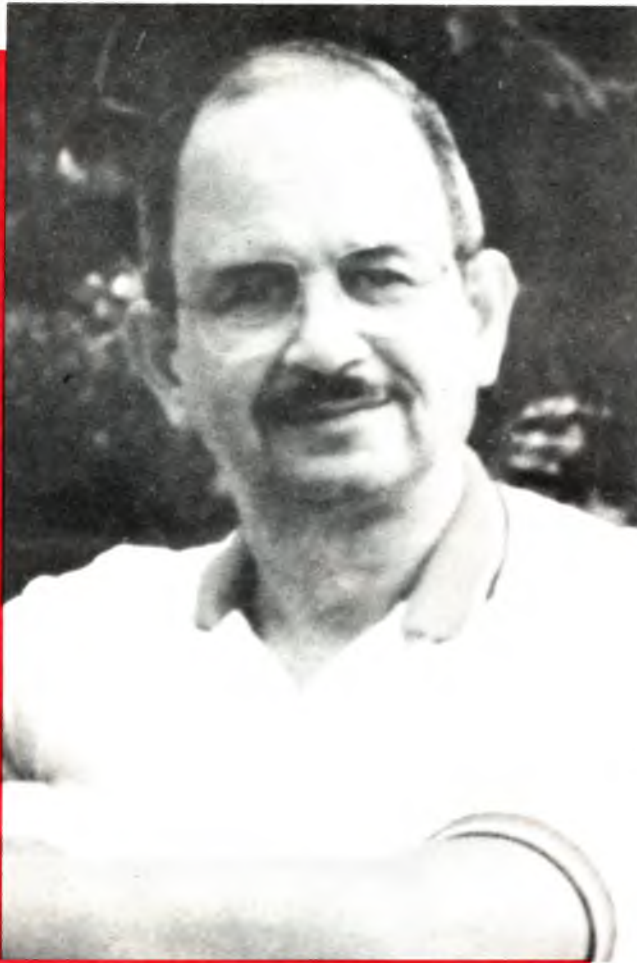
My doctor called in a cardiologist, and another doctor and two student doctors were in the room watching while I lay there dying.

I began to pray, "Lord, please don't let me die. I know I haven't served You very well in the past but just let me live to see my daughter and to raise her and I'll repay You somehow. Please, dear Lord, let me live." I was so afraid. All I could think of was, "I'm going to die."

The nurses continued to take blood—every five minutes it seemed. My ankles were strapped and being monitored by a machine. Nurses were sponging me down with alcohol the entire time. Other nurses were running in and out, and other people kept coming into the room. I was alert, or seemed to be, but so afraid. I couldn't believe this was happening to me.

The doctors continued to probe and ask questions about heart failure and high blood pressure in my family. They wouldn't tell me what was wrong with me. However, they finally got my temperature down to

The Williams family (l. to r.) Sheila, Channing, Shantal, and Lindsey. They reside in Silver Springs, Maryland. **Sheila** is employed by the National Endowment for the Humanities as a Grants Specialist. She is active in the Washington, D.C., First Church.



**Leon Britt:
I thank God for
that man. Leon
and his family
helped us a
great deal.**

104°, but that's as low as it would go. I was taken to ICU at 6:01 that same morning, four hours after Shantal had been born. I was in ICU for two days and prayed and thanked God for giving me another day. My mother had arrived by this time and was shocked to find me in ICU.

When I was removed from ICU, I was taken to a private room. I was told that I had contracted some type of infection and they wouldn't allow anyone in the room with me. I was the talk of that hospital floor. All the nurses came in every day to see how I was doing and to give me reports on my daughter. I wasn't even allowed to hold her for the first five days of my stay.

The following Monday my doctor returned to see me. Before he began his examination he told me, "I don't know how you made it." I didn't either, but I believed my prayers were answered and I was given a second chance at life.

After 11 days and a lot of prayers

I was going home. I thanked the Lord and assured Him I wouldn't forget my "promise" to Him. "Just show me what You want me to do," I prayed. It took exactly 13 months for that to happen.

One November morning I woke up early from an almost sleepless night. On the way to work, at the bus stop, I saw a man coming across the street and I said to myself, "Oh boy!" I wasn't in the mood for talking to anyone, and he looked like a man who wanted to make conversation.

The gentleman struck up a conversation and before long he was telling me about his church. It sounded too good to be true, but I accepted his offer to attend the following Sunday, and I and my family have been attending ever since.

I thank God for that man, Leon Britt. I also thank God for showing me that it was time to repay Him for that morning of October 16. Leon and his family helped us a great deal. For almost two years he

drove us to church every Sunday and on Wednesday nights.

I've been praising the Lord and serving Him ever since. I'm happy to worship in His house with true Christians. My church is a wonderful place and the people who make up the fellowship are a blessing to me. They have been good to me and my family. The pastor is there at any time to help with any concern. He was there for me when my son, Channing, was born. I wish people like that had been there to help me when I was struggling with the aftermath of Shantal's birth. However, the Lord was with me.

I often think of Isaiah 41:10 when I'm distressed about something. The Lord was with me then and continues to renew my faith daily. I have a lot to be thankful for. And I'm happy to say that I am fulfilling my promise and I will always serve God. He has brought to me many wonderful blessings. The best of all those blessings is His own fellowship. □

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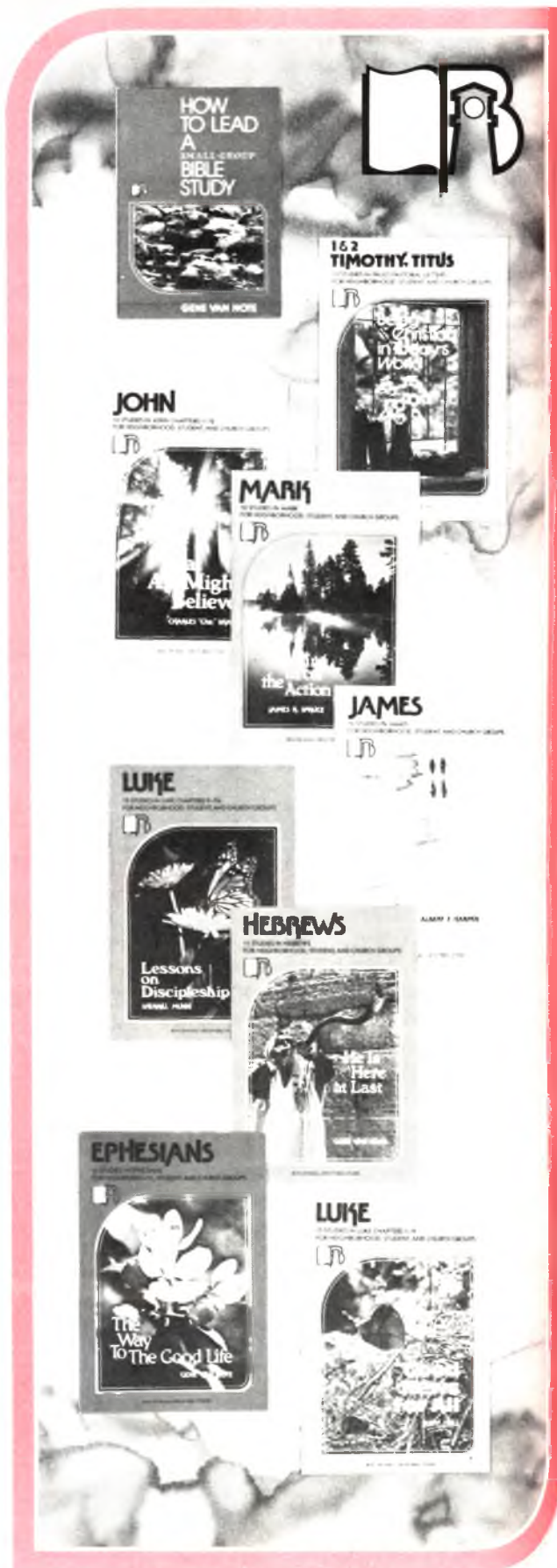
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W. E. McCUMBER
Editor

JESUS CHRIST is everyone's greatest need. That is the claim He made about himself. That is the claim the Church has repeated with emphasis across the centuries.

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Throughout the centuries thousands have believed in Him and the results have been marvelous. They have experienced a sense of release from their sins, a sense of peace with God, a sense of power for daily living, a sense of hope for the future that fills life with courage and empties death of horror.

This is why Jesus came and what He offers. No other can bring us into a right and happy relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves.

The deepest needs of people have not changed with time's passing. The man who soars across the Atlantic in an SST has the same fundamental needs as the man who once trudged across Israel with an ox-cart. Science has made us more comfortable, but not less guilty; more clever but not wiser; more sophisticated but not better.

Jesus Christ saves from sin. Jesus Christ reconciles to God. Jesus Christ empowers for holy, happy, helpful living in today's society. Until these needs are addressed and met, you can never truly live, regardless of the measure of your education, health, riches, and "success."

Christ makes himself known through the Bible, God's Word. As custodian of that Word, the church proclaims and offers Christ to a lost, broken, confused, and unhappy world. You need to go to church, to hear the Word expounded, to meet Jesus Christ as a Savior and Friend.

No one who ever found Christ was disappointed in Him. You will not be. He is your greatest need.