

## Part 2

### Chapter 14

## Red Lights and Buckets of Urine

We had received many opportunities to evangelize in other cities throughout Germany. We felt that if the tent would not be effective there we would try another method, and left full of zeal aboard our Scania Cruiser for Nuremberg.

A small church let us use their building to live in. There was a small kitchen in the back. During the day we conducted street meetings on the great walking street, and invited people to the church for special meetings every night. There was a little problem though; the pastor took me aside and informed me that he had to leave for the entire week we would be there. "I will hand the church over to you, and you do as the Holy Spirit directs." Oh boy! I had never had a church before.

The first meeting was a get-to-know-you affair. Everybody was older than we were, but full of life. Most of them had lived through the war. And even though there were only about twenty people, there was a beautiful Spirit in the meeting. I felt like I had inherited a church of grandma's and grandpas.

There was this very "on fire" brother named Bruno. He had been with the SS during the war... he showed me the tattoo. He had marched with the one hundred thousand storm troopers that invaded Russia; and he was one of only a thousand who returned. He choked up just talking about it. Bruno had gotten saved in his later years, and truly was *on fire* for the Lord. He was the first to go with us on the streets to evangelize.

It was in this time that I met a hippie named George. He had just gotten saved and followed us back to the church. George joined our ministry and later become one of our leaders, and went with a team to Afghanistan. After eighteen years he was captured by the Taliban, but was marvelously saved from harm. He is still there today with a team, preaching the gospel to the Afghan people.

In the church service I preached from the book *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, by Jonathan Edwards. Afterwards I felt I should gear down my next sermon a little, as I had scared a few, and at their' age a message like that was not advisable.

My next message was about going out and preaching the gospel. I explained that, to make this message more real, after the meeting we would all go to "The Wall" to witness. This was the red light district where prostitutes would sit on display behind shop front windows and sell themselves. Men would come and stand in front of the windows and choose their girl. It was like the *Cash and Carry* of human beings. There were small rooms inside with a bed, and when a customer entered they would just pull the curtain shut and do their business. We actually had a sister in our ministry who had come from one of these areas, and her testimony revealed the terrible evil and sadness of such a life.

Being there you could feel how deeply God loved and had mercy on these people. At first everybody seemed scared at the prospect of entering the area, but everyone got into the bus anyway. I must say they seemed more than just a little scared... they had never even seen this place before.

That evening we passed out tracts and talked to the girls. They came out and took our tracts. It was like church right there on the streets. We prayed for a number of people. The next day a young man who had repented came to the church. The brethren were full of joy, as this had been the first convert in many years. They next night they were ready to go. I saw these older sisters weeping and pouring out their hearts to these young men and women. We cranked up a street meeting and Bruno fired off a gospel message, and we prayed for more people. The next night they didn't want to hear me preach in the church at all, they just wanted to get back to the wall!

But this evening was different. The girls said that the pimps were going to hurt us. I felt worried for the older brethren and decided we would leave, but they would have nothing of it. They hit the area like gangbusters! There were some threats, but we still cranked up another street meeting. Some of the antagonists turned a strong water hose on us, aiming it at our mouths. But that couldn't stop Bruno. Then they got serious, and started throwing buckets of urine on us. My wife got an entire bucketful on her head, and they left the bucket right there. Then it became more violent. I got punched to the ground. The older brethren stepped forward to shield us. They dared the pimps to come out and get some of us... and they took up the offer! But it amounted mostly to a lot of yelling, and throwing some of us down, but there were no major injuries.

"Tomorrow night is death night," they said. Still, we were able to pray for some people, and more followed us to the church. That night we all sang and felt like we were real soldiers of the cross. The next night I knew it was going to be bad, but everybody was so pumped up that there was nothing to do but go.

As we arrived there was a group of policeman lined up with Billy clubs, blocking both entrances to the zone. "Any one who passes will be arrested," they said, "and those who resist will be dealt with." The older brethren tried to break the line and gave themselves to be arrested. The police chief took me aside and said that they had gotten word that the pimps were going to kill us, and also that we were interfering with "legitimate business." He also informed me that in just four nights we had almost shut down business in the entire zone!

The next day the pastor arrived and, upon hearing all this news, was very upset. I thought he would be happy as we had a real revival on our hands. He came to me saying, "What if someone had gotten killed? Or arrested? It will take me months to get everybody back to normal. What kind of testimony is this?" It was visibly clear that most of the brethren there didn't have long to live anyway. I guess he just wanted them to go peacefully. We had no choice but to leave right away, but not before shedding many tears, as we kissed our grandpa's and grandma's in the Lord goodbye. Bruno wanted to go with us but he suffered from a serious intestinal problem he had received as a youth carrying this big Nazi flag in Hitler's parades. Leaving, we felt we would never see them again... and for sure the pastor never wanted to see us again.

## Chapter 15

# Strange Lessons

When we got to Dusseldorf, the host church put us up in an abandoned building. It was just like home... if you had grown up in an abandoned warehouse. We quickly hit the streets again, but didn't see any of the brethren. In one of the street meetings a man who was reviling God and us as we preached, fell out right in front of us. Within minutes an ambulance came and hauled him off, and we were told later that he had died. People seemed more attentive after that.

When the pastor came we were impressed that he was so young, and he showed a lot of love. It was good because after a few days in this abandoned warehouse we were starting to feel a little lonely. We shared a bit during the Sunday service and were told they had a good offering for us.

I proceeded up the stairs to the office. The pastor's wife was at the typewriter making the check. It was evident that she was very pregnant. I was just trying to act spiritual and said, "Praise God! Jesus is coming back soon." She stopped typing and said, "I don't want Him to come back!"

I didn't know how to respond. I could see she was visibly upset. Here I am trying to be spiritual and end up offending the pastor's wife as she is preparing our offering... what luck. She went on to say that she wanted to see her new baby; to which I quickly replied, "Amen sister!"

"I want to see my baby grow up. I want to care for him and send him to school. I want to see him go to college." I didn't say a word, but I was thinking, "This woman is really backslid." She handed me the check and I was down those stairs in a moment. The team was waiting in the bus, and with a "Praise the Lord!" we were off.

As we went down the road I felt a voice inside me say, "At least she's honest." This kept coming back to my heart, over and over. Then some other words... "Do you really want me to come back now?" I felt convicted as the scriptural admonition to "love not the world, nor the things in the world" came to my mind. I knew I had a lot of love left for things that I shouldn't have. I asked for mercy and thanked God for that truthful sister.

### **Bad Breath Dog**

Later we went on to Langenfeld, and to Hanover. Then we went on to Braunschweig, one of our greatest times in Germany. We all stayed in homes of the brethren. I stayed in a beautiful country home owned by a certain brother Lothar, and he showed us great hospitality. I really got to know German people in a new way. The love and hospitality was overwhelming. Lothar had three young children, a son and two daughters. He had a ministry for drug addicts in the countryside. They also had a dog-named Molly.

Molly was a huge something'r'other, solid black, with a head that seemed even bigger than his huge body. I could see they loved that dog. I have never been a real animal

lover myself. I support them (at most) when they are in their own environment. This dog lived inside the house and, for some reason, fell in love with... of all people... me. He followed me wherever I went, and slobbered on me at every opportunity. When I would enter the house he would jump up on me and have a fit. The family would say, "Look Molly loves you!" To which I would put on my hypocrite smiling face and say, "Oh yes, how nice!" But when no one was looking I would talk mean to him and threaten him. He didn't seem to care, and would just look back at me with these big eyes full of love. I felt that maybe he needed a girl dog.

At night Molly would come into my bedroom where we had our mattresses on the floor. Many times I would wake up smelling something foul. Often I would awake and find Molly sleeping near me, with his head right next to mine, mouth wide-open, breathing right into my face. All I could do was pray.

For breakfast Lothar and his wife would fix these dynamite German meals of cheeses, different cuts of meat, crescent rolls, and delicious jams. I felt like a king. Molly would go under the table and put his head on my lap while I was eating, and just look up at me. At times he even seemed to smile. Finally he got my heart, and I would feed him my sausage. His big tail would hit the top of the table and everyone would laugh... except me. I felt in myself that I had done something good. That I was dying to myself through Molly. But in prayer the Lord convicted me and touched my heart. He impressed upon me that he wasn't like Molly, and would not be satisfied with me throwing a piece of meat to Him at my own discretion. That I should not to feel so good over some little act of piety that cost me nothing at all. I looked at Molly in a different way after that.

### **Dear Brother Carl**

We used a coffee shop for our evangelism. After our street meetings we would bring people in for coffee and ministry. We had meetings every night and a special "spaghetti night" too. Young and old would attend. The leadership of what is now one of the most moving churches in Germany got saved in those meetings.

Carl was an older man who owned a local Mercedes dealership. He was soft spoken and came from a well-known family. Some time later he came to visit us in Italy. It was one of those situations where you really get to know and love a person. Carl had a heart for the Lord. God had forgiven him of much. He never talked about his old life but he was separated from his wife, and since his conversion he longed to be back with her. As the years passed we always stayed in touch with each other. Every year for four years I took a group there to work with the church, and Carl was always full of zeal for the Lord. He eventually became an elder, but his wife wouldn't have anything to do with him or his faith.

Then one day I received a message that Carl had cancer. Upon visiting him you could see the damage it had done. He had no hair because of the chemo, and he looked twenty years older. But I saw a real joy in his face as he shared with me.

"My wife has come back, and she loves me!" I was astounded, and rejoiced in the Lord. He then told me that I would not see him again until we were in heaven. It was hard to

say good-bye. My heart ached, but I felt that if I never accomplish anything else for the Lord, Carl alone made my life to be “not in vain.”

## Chapter 16

### **The FBI and Pulled Teeth**

I want to share about a special personality we have in the team, Alessandro. We were in Palermo having a crusade when a small figure came toward me. A little fellow of about four feet six inches, with very visible deformities. One of his legs was bent at an angle, which he dragged along as he walked. One arm and hand was paralyzed and fit closely to his chest. He had an oversized head from which a tumor the size of an orange had once been removed. His eyes were very big and seemed out of proportion. But with his chipmunk looking face and small buckteeth he had a kind of cute appearance, and a smile that was incredible. And... he wanted to join the team.

“How old are you anyway?” I said. He looked as if he was about ten; but he stated that he was fourteen years old. I felt some relief, as I didn’t want to offend or make the little fellow sad.

“You are too young. You must be at least eighteen.” And I told him that he needed to be in a local community to be cared for, as our life style was hard on normal people without physical handicaps.

“We can talk about it when you are older,” I said. And he was determined. Three years later the day guard came to me and said a brother had entered camp and asked to be systemized into one of our living quarters.

“He said you had okayed everything Clark,” one of the brothers said.

“I’ll see about it later.”

“No Clark, you need to see this brother now.” So I went, and there he was... little Alessandro. He hadn’t grown an inch, and looked exactly the same.

“Alessandro you must get permission from your pastor,” I said.

“I have it.”

“But you must be prayed over by the church.”

“That’s been done.”

“Well... your... your mother must call us too!”

I tried everything I could to squirm out of this, but all to no avail. He had covered everything. So my final word was, "OK. But you must take care of yourself and be as the other brothers." He limped off and said, “No problem, I came to preach the gospel.” That was over seven years ago.

His vocabulary is that of a teacher, and his mind is that of someone much older. He is one of our most fervent brothers and always being used in an exceptional way.

One day he brought me two one-hundred-dollar bills that were torn up. He asked if when I visit the states I could change them at the bank. He found them in front of a Chinese restaurant. I was to have some meetings shortly in the states, so it seemed no problem. When I got to the USA, I gave them to my bank and started tending to my meetings.

Some time late I got a phone call from the FBI. They had been by my fathers home looking for me. I was having meetings in Connecticut at the time, and my Dad told them how to get in touch with me. The agent sounded upset, saying he had flown to Tennessee to see me, and that I was hard to track down. I explained what I was doing and he insisted that I come to D.C. You have some serious questions to answer; you're going to be charged with passing counterfeit notes. Then he started asking questions.

"Where did you get the money?"

"Palermo, Sicily," I said. Immediately he was more interested.

"Who gave them to you?" "Alessandro Sacco."

"What kind of name is that?"

"Italian." More interest.

"Where does he live?"

"In a tent by the stadium in Palermo."

"Where did he get the money?"

"In front of a Chinese restaurant," I said.

"What's is Alessandro's physical description?"

"Well, he is about four foot six and..."

"Wait a minute! Don't get funny with me. I'm a federal agent fellow!"

"I'm serious! I'm a missionary. And so is Alessandro."

"Wait a minute... you're trying to tell me that a missionary midget, who lives in a circus tent in Sicily, passed counterfeit money to you which was acquired on the ground in front of a Chinese restaurant?"

"Yes, that's right."

"He could also be involved in the Mafia, and probably is."

"Well, you are reading things into my story, but I will be back soon in Palermo. Just send someone to our camp and they can see for themselves. In fact they will see some stranger things than that."

"If I put this story on a report I will loose my job."

My wife, who had been listening on the other line, came into the room and said, "Why did you say that?"

“What? I only said the truth.”

“But, please Clark, it sounded so much like a cover up! They will probably track us down and arrest us after a story like that.”

I hoped that he would feel no one could have made up such a ridiculous story, and if they could that they deserved being ignored! I never heard from him again.

### **“Heil Jesus” And The Dentist**

We were back in southern Germany and having a great time. We were doing street meetings on the walking street and gathering big crowds. As we were sharing on judgment and repentance an elderly gentleman stepped forward and screamed, “Hitler would have known what to do with all of you.” A cold feeling goes up your back in such a moment. Maybe we needed to be preaching on love. Not all encounters were like that though. In fact on one occasion I was standing in front of a department store with Jerry who was across a broad sidewalk from me. My tract had been so long in my hand that it was nearly worn in half. It was a crowded day and nobody would stop or take a tract. I tried everything. “Jesus loves you,” “get saved,” “think about Jesus!” Finally I thought I would change my presentation.

I yelled at Jerry, “how do you say, Jesus saves?”

Jerry put his hand to his ear and yelled that he could not hear me. Then he responded “heil Jesus,” but I couldn’t understand what he was saying.

“How do you say that again?”

“Clark, just remember in the old movies when every one would shout ‘Heil Hitler!’” The words were out of his mouth, loudly, before he caught himself. But I tell you that stopped the crowd! Every one froze in suspended animation, and looked at us in unbelief. I do not think it helped the testimony of Jesus, but it sure got their attention.

We also had some great moments of gratitude shown to us for what we did. Andreas had a bad toothache, as did some others in the team. It was as if the devil was attacking our teeth. I went to the drug store and asked for medicine but the pharmacist told me to go to the dentist first. I took that as a word from the Lord and walked up the street to the first dentist office I could find. I asked the receptionist if there was a way to get a discount as we had little money and our brother was in pain. “Come back tomorrow,” was the answer.

I brought Andreas the next day, and his jaw was swollen. He went into the office and came out an hour later and to my surprise every other tooth was pulled. He looked strange but was very happy to have had all his bad teeth removed. Bring in anyone from your team and I will do any extractions for free was the message he left Andreas. I made appointments over the next week for at least seven of the team. This guy loved pulling teeth! Everybody came back with multiple extractions and they probably could have saved a lot of those teeth under normal circumstances, but we felt like Jesus was coming back so soon that it didn’t matter anyway. When Joni laughed she looked like a horse. After the last patient I went to thank this man and also have a chance to witness

to him. He looked like Arnold Swarzanegger. He was very young and had arms like a horse. I thanked him and he asked me to sit down in the chair.

“Oh No, no... my teeth are just fine...” But before I could finish saying anything his fingers were in my mouth. I was gagging and trying to pull myself up when he said, “Don’t be afraid, it won’t hurt.” He was even stronger than he looked. I was saying “nein! nein!” to no avail. He stuck a hypodermic needle in my mouth and then it was over. He reached in and pulled out a molar. I was sweating and breathing deep. He had a big smile and wished me good on my mission. I figured I was being paid back for laughing at Andreas and Joni! (I just recently got that gap repaired after twenty-eight years.)

## Chapter 17

### **Terrorists, CIA, and the Pink Panther**

We were working with a small church this time... the only one in Straubing. I loaded about eight of the team in the back of our van and headed downtown. It was a van I had just bought and got a great deal on because it had been registered as a loading van, and only two people could ride in it legally. I was a little nervous but thought, “how could the police ever catch this?”

I stopped to get some fuel and while I was pumping a policeman came around the front of the van and told me to put my hands up. Now this was the time of the Bader Meinhof gang, and the red army faction that was terrorizing Germany, and the police were on the lookout for suspicious looking people. One of our intelligent sisters named Debby had opened the back door to get some air and, when a police car passed by, she shut it quickly. I had already warned them not to do that before we had left the house, and even told them why.

I put up my hands and then other police swarmed in and arrested us all. I thought to myself, “we are going to get a real fine for this one.” They opened the van and couldn’t believe the sight... and by coincidence it was *all females*.

They took us to the station and asked for our identification. But because I feared losing my documents I never carried anything on me; and neither did the other sisters. I found out that was a big mistake. They kept at interrogating us the whole day. They looked tired. All this for an over loaded van. I sure was glad I wasn’t speeding. We tried to explain but they didn’t seem to believe us.

I tried joking with the policeman who had come around the van at me.

“I could have taken you out if I had been a terrorist with just a fast draw.”

“No, Mister Clark, you couldn’t have. We had placed a sniper, and he was aiming at the back of your head. If you had not raised your hands you wouldn’t be here now.”

I gulped hard and thought, “Lord, what do they do to a guy who is speeding?” It didn’t seem like a very funny joke to me then.

Evening came. They asked where we had come from.

“Pastor Al’s house. He is sponsoring us here.”

They took the address and dispatched a special squad to the house. They put lights up near the windows, and looked into the kitchen. Brother Al and Sam were stamping a small mountain of tracts on the kitchen table with the address of the church. The police thought they really had something. They turned on the lights and knocked in the door telling everybody to hold up their hands. I felt sorry for poor brother Al. He had never had such an experience. His wife was in shock. A policeman walked over and took a tract off the table. After glancing at it they started apologizing and backed out of the house very embarrassed.

At the station my Gestapo friend pulled his wide brimmed police hat over his eyes and said “Raus, Raus “ (just get out of here). I realized they never even thought about the over loaded van. They really thought we were terrorists. What an opportunity we had to witness. As we left they seemed really tired, and not in a very good mood at all.

Exactly one year later I was in the area to organize an outreach in Straubing. Pastor Al is a courageous man as this was just one of numerous incidents that happened with us. He invited us back, and my wife and I were off to Regensberg to see about another outreach.

I had borrowed brother Al’s old Opel station wagon and we were off to conquer another area for Christ. My wife asked me if I had brought by driver’s license and the passports. I still didn’t like carrying them. But I joked and said, "Oh, we are Americans. If they stop us we’ll just let them know who won the war." I was in a joking mood, but my wife wasn’t.

“If you get pulled over I will let the police know that you are just negligent, and to take your little hide in. It will serve you right.” Why are wives so right?

About an hour out of town on a winding road in the country a policeman stepped into my lights and had me stop. I looked at Sue but saw no sympathy. “This is it, I thought, “I’m a goner.”

I prayed, “God have mercy on me a sinner!” The policeman asked for documents.

“I left them at home but I can explain.” He yelled in a louder voice for my driver's license.

I stuttered and then heard a familiar voice... “Mister Clark, is that you?” Can you believe it? My *good friend* Colonel Clink from the police department! I smiled, and he said inquisitively, “Don’t tell me you have no documents?”

I smiled again.

“And you haven’t your’ driver’s license, right?”

I just kind of moved my head to say yes.

He turned to the other policeman and said, “I know this guy. And he will waste your whole night. Just let him go!”

I gave hearty thanks and said I hoped to see him again. He gave the top of the car a bump and I was off. (Sometimes it’s good to be well known). My wife just looked at me and said, “He *knew* you?!”

“Oh yes, I am well known in these parts.”

God's hand is on us even when we don't deserve it... I saw that many times.

### **The CIA and The Pink Panther**

Bringing a team back to the south of Germany, we decided to hit Munich again and I had a good team. A new brother was with us that my wife had met on the streets of Naples and had brought to camp. He was an American who had been traveling with a famous dance group. My wife came into our tent and said she had brought this guy to camp that was very open to the gospel. I stuck my head out of the tent to see a very skinny guy with jeans on that were one continuous patch. His hair looked like a lion's mane, and he made Bob Marley look bald. I could not even see his face.

"Sue, take him to Andreas and tell him to find a bed for him in the brother's tent. He looks pretty hopeless."

The next day I saw this clean-cut, good-looking guy running around camp and looking for something to do.

Someone said, "That's Paul, the dancer from Boston. He got saved last night!"

Talk about instant sanctification! Paul went on to lead our Portugal team and became one of our top linguists. His accomplishments are too numerous to mention, and today he is one of the pillars of our work.

He came at a price though. Once, as we were singing, a man approached me and asked, "Are you Clark Slone?" He had a trench coat on and looked a little like the pink panther. "I want to have a word with you. I am from the CIA."

This guy knows my name? And flashes a badge? Lord! They finally got me. I'm sure I must be guilty of something! Once again my mind was going wild. I have to confess I was fearful.

He pulled out a letter signed by Edward Kennedy. He asked for my co-operation, as Senator Kennedy desired my help. (Another Forest Gump situation to be sure).

"Sure, I would be glad to help!" In my mind I was thinking, "Edward Kennedy knows me?"

The he said, "Can I just have thirty minutes with Paul G?"

I said, "Sure! He is up the street doing another street meeting." He's the white skinny guy with an Afro hair cut.

"Can I just approach him?"

"Sure. He's a good brother."

"Well, I was told that he had been captured by a weird cult and had been hopelessly brain washed. That he was being held against his will by you, the cult's leader."

I laughed and said, "Hey, you want to take him home? That's ok. He's free to do whatever he wants." The man walked off looking confused.

That evening Paul shared that his mother had gotten the embassy to track us down and had convinced Senator Kennedy to haul him in for "deprogramming."

Later I asked Paul, "How did it go?"

"Well, I gave him my testimony, and he left me saying I was more normal than the ones who had sent him."

A few months latter we were in Palermo Sicily for the third time and I had just moved into an Old Scania bus that had been donated to us. There was a knock on my door and there she was. I knew who it was in my spirit, "The mother of Paul!"

She stepped in and said, "Where's my son? Where are you holding him? I demand that you let him go."

Just then my wife walked in and the spirit got after her; "You're the woman who took my defenseless son off the streets and brainwashed him!" That was the beginning of a long relationship with one of the strongest characters I have met to this day. I believe she could walk into the oval office if she wanted to. She even threatened me with that possibility if anything ever happened to her Paul. If she ever gets saved she will be such a mover that I would feel sorry even for the devil if he crossed her.

## Chapter 18

# The End Has Come

Our tent was now up in Latina, a major city that was created by Mussolini. A vast swamp had to be drained to make way for this beautiful city, created in all the glory of fascism. The government buildings are made to show pride in their grandness. Much like the temples of Rome. And this spirit prevailed in the city.

The local brethren were very excited, and we started our meetings with great hope and hit the streets with force. Jared invited my family for a pizza before the meeting. Everything seemed very calm. It was getting late and we noticed we would miss the first part of the meeting, but Sven was preaching and we felt he could handle whatever might come up.

A strong wind blew open the door of the restaurant, and we could see the trees bending, but just for a moment. Then all was calm again. As we arrived at camp we saw fire trucks and confusion. The whole camp had been destroyed by a strong wind that came in from the sea. It did its damage and went back out. Every thing was on the ground and firemen were cutting through the tent looking for survivors. The meeting had just finished when a tornado hit. The tent was well attended. I went to my tent and a tent pole had crashed through it and crushed the top bunk bed where my son Grant slept. If he had not been with us he would surely have been killed. God saved my boys. But how many had died in the big top?

The tent, big enough to hold three thousand people, contained tons of steel poles, ridge work, lights, and other hardware. Moments seemed like hours as the search went on. And then, to make things worse, it started raining hard. With the emergency lights and police all around it was a dreary sight in the rain. But as the evening progressed, to our

amazement, not a single person had been killed or even hurt. Steel had fallen all around and missed some by inches, but *no one* was hurt. God had miraculously saved everybody.

We moved into the church building and, as you can imagine, we were top of the news. Here, a group of end-time prophets had come to town announcing the end of the world, and “for them it seemingly was, as a freak windstorm destroyed their camp late this evening.” What publicity! To say we were depressed was an under-statement.

The only things that survived were our outhouses. The next day I went to survey the damage. The rain was relentless and everything was sinking in the mud. A dear brother stood beside me and gave a eulogy: This is the end of Christ is the Answer. I walked away trying to figure things out, but there were no answers. I walked to a coffee bar and started witnessing to the proprietor of our great miracle of no one being hurt. His response was quick.

“What do you mean no one was hurt? My friend was walking by when your big plastic sign blew down and swatted him like a fly! He was rushed to the hospital *quite* hurt.” I quietly backed out of the bar as he served another coffee, praying he didn’t see me leave.

There were over a hundred of us. There was no money. We were in the middle of trying to publish our first real Jesus paper. Connie and Paul were on a publishing budget of two hundred dollars. There are times you feel like “cheer up things could be worse” just means, “yea, things got worse!” The rain would not stop day or night for over three days. We were hauling people here and there trying to keep things together somewhat but the only church was very small. They did what they could, but things were getting stressed. Then came the sun and dried everything out. I felt a new lease on life.

“Lets get the stage up and put our big light in front.” Jared, Sven and myself got to work. No tent? OK... then it’ll be open air. The show must go on! When we got the meetings underway again, they were better than with the tent, and God held back the rain night after night. The team got back to the streets and the barracks tents went back up. They had bigger holes now, but that was ok as we were getting use to this “open air” thing. After the third day a man pulled into camp looking for me. He had a tent making company in the North of Italy. A brother in Turin who was close to us had heard of our disaster and sent him down to us. He laid out how he would build us a beautiful vinyl 3000-person tent. I explained we had no money but if he would build it we would believe God to provide.

That was fine for him, but he paid his workers only when his tents were paid for. “They have families and depend on those who order the tents,” he said. I felt my faith was at a crisis point, but with the encouragement of Jared and Sven, we decided to “go for it.” And we also felt that Jesus would probably be back before the tent was finished anyway. So why worry?

God started doing His miracles. The next day Big George walked into camp. He was an itinerate evangelist from Florida that we had met a year before. He lived totally by faith. Sometimes he seemed a little strange, as he stood over six feet tall and was always shouting hallelujah, and shaking. Then he would pick you up in a bear hug and spin

around. He never had luggage and always a pressed suit on. He always looked like a very dignified businessman from a distance. I was told that he carried a toothbrush in his pocket and a pair of pajamas under his suit. I gained a new respect for him that evening before our meeting. He looked around camp and pulled out a roll of Swiss francs... a big roll, tightly compressed. He placed it in my hand, let out a "hallelujah," shook a little bit, and was gone. God will send his servants and angels! I've seen it many times. And it is never those you think it should be.

A businessman from Turin called and said that he would pay half the tent price. That really charged my faith. As the tent came to completion I went to Turin to pick up the money. The brother came to the door and looked pale and sick. He went to the corner of the living room and just stared, then cried. He sat me down and told a story that really put my faith to work.

Just a few days after he called and made the commitment to me, the finance police came and closed down his factory that made discs for grinders. Apparently he had not paid the proper taxes. In fact, before he got saved he ripped the government off "royally." But they had caught up with him, and froze his bank account. Even his phone was gone. He said that he couldn't even buy food. His apartment and all he had would soon be gone. I wanted to go to the corner and stare and cry too. All I could see was the poor tent factory workers with starving kids waiting for me to pay them.

We prayed for Mario and left his home, confused once again, but feeling that God had gotten us this far, and that we could make it to the end. We were also a little discouraged that Jesus hadn't come back yet, as our time was running out for the payment of the tent. You are probably wondering what we did with all the team.

When we finished up our open-air meetings in Latina, we broke the team up into four groups, each with two elders. Each group had a vehicle, and they were to go anywhere they could find in Europe to evangelize, using our normal outreach program. Each team had enough money to get to their first meeting. We weren't to come back together until we had enough money for the tent. It was one of the longest outreaches we ever had! It lasted over six months, with the teams going to so many places that I could do another book on those adventures alone, and how God took care of them. But it didn't exactly work as I had planned; when we finally got back together there wasn't enough money. And Sven had kept a small team doing repair work on our equipment, and that had some big expenses too.

I went to the factory trying to come up with a story for Mario Polletti. Upon telling him we could only give a down payment I was expecting a negative reaction and I had been rehearsing what to say. God was there in the office that day. Giving credit in Italy is like committing suicide financially. Many of their jokes are about credit. It is not like America. But even in America I would have had a hard time with our team and situation.

Mario said something I will never forget. "You trust in God and we will trust in you." Upon completion, send your truck, and the tent is yours. By the end of our first campaign in Vittoria, Sicily (with the new tent), we were able to pay it off and have new living tents made also!

## **Dangerous Work**

We used a semi tractor to pull up the big-top center poles, and would do all three at the same time. It was a dangerous procedure and we always came together as a team to pray before hoisting them up. The poles were big, made of heavy gauge steel. As they were hoisted up it came to a critical tension point about half way. This particular night was a nightmare.

It was close to midnight and raining hard. I was working by the lights of the truck. We had a deadline to meet on the new lot. In the mud the wench-truck slipped causing the poles to jerk, and the cable snapped. Just prior to the snap however, in order to adjust a cable, Antoine and Cindy stepped right into the path of the poles. When the poles crashed back to the ground I saw both of them struck on the heads, and fall to the ground with the two ton pieces of steel. I fell to my knees in the cab and prayed... or maybe it was more like I *screamed* out to God. There was no way a person could have survived under that weight, and I knew it.

I crawled out of the cab and found Cindy and Antoine being cared for... for minor head wounds. Someone had stacked two big tires, still on the rims, right at the point of impact, which kept the poles from completely crushing them. God came through again! Antoine joked that it would take a lot more than a few tons of steel to hurt a Dutchman's head (he was from Holland). I realized that was probably so with Antoine. It was Cindy I was really worried about, because she is a blond and a hit on the head could make her more spacey than she already was. These two went on to be pioneers in our first work in India.

The following day we flew the new tent. That big, blue, brand new tent was the most beautiful sight I had ever seen! Not because of what it was, but because of what God did for a poor little group of hippy Jesus' people. It was the biggest gospel tent in all of Europe.

Putting up in Vittoria was a battle. Another wind came and knocked down all our barrack tents again before we could get our new tent up. All these were freak winds that are extremely rare in these areas. One day a sister in the team prophesied, saying it was because of me, and my lack of wisdom as a leader, that these things were happening to us. She might have been right? But it sure didn't make my job easier, or lessen the pain of what was happening. I could repent of sin and make things right, but I couldn't repent of being the main elder of the team. And if I did it wouldn't change any thing. It drove me to ask for more wisdom in the future. My eyes were set like flint, and I was determined to use that tent for the preaching of the gospel.

Since then we have worn out five big tents in a row, and presently need another one. Keeping them up all year round, day in and day out, puts the best tents to the test. But they have proven to be very fruitful in the harvest of souls whatever the cost or dangers of keeping them up.

## Chapter 19

# **The German Mafia**

Messina is a beautiful port city, but one that has been completely destroyed by war, earthquakes, and even tidal waves. It gives a feeling like no other city on the island of Sicily. It is also where some of the first believers came to preach the gospel from Wales and America after the Welsh and Azusa Street revivals.

I had come to looking for a tent location, and went to a Valdese church. I was told the pastor there had a lot of knowledge of the situation in Messina. After the service, which was a cross between a Catholic Mass and a Lutheran's get-together, I was looking for the door. I was feeling strange. Not really sick, but not really well either. A woman approached me and asked if I spoke German.

"As a matter of fact I do. But I am American. Why do you ask?"

"My husband is German, and he loves to speak his language. Would you join us for the midday meal?"

I had no place to stay (or eat) and this seemed to be the Lord. But I got progressively sicker and started getting a fever (this particular sickness followed me for over fifteen years, and I never knew what it was.)

Upon arriving at the house I met a very old and distinguished German gentleman, Mr. Pilot. We talked and laughed at old war stories and I gave my testimony. He had been a soldier during the occupation of Sicily. He fell in love with an Italian girl and stayed after the war. He said he was a dentist but he didn't seem at all like a doctor, and wouldn't talk of his profession. I started feeling more feverish and asked if I could lie down on the couch, where I quickly fell asleep, and didn't wake up until two days later.

After waking I had to spend another whole day in bed before I had the strength to get up. The wife told me that my fever had risen dramatically and that I had been talking incoherently. I could only hope that I blabbered in English since neither of them spoke it.

The wife nursed me in those days like a baby. As I would share the gospel Mr. Pilot would listen intently and even shed tears, but then harden his heart. I grew to really love both of them and they insisted on me returning when the tent got to town.

"I do not have a lot for the tent yet," I explained. His answer to me was, "just pick out a piece of property and put up your tent."

"But what about permission, and the authorities?"

"Don't worry about them. Just put up your tent."

It was an unusual discourse, and I thought, for a dentist he sure has optimism. Later I found a great lot by the sea in a central location, and went to the port authorities to ask for permission. The commander in charge said, "I will not even take your application. Now get out of hear." I persisted, but he stated that he knew what I wanted and what I wanted to do and that the answer was "no."

"That's impossible," I said, "we have never met, and you've never had anything to do with us before."

Looking real mean he snarled, "I know you and what you are... now get out!"

The zeal of the Lord came on me and I told him that only the devil and God had that information, and that he was obviously the devil (but I said it while moving *backward* at a fast pace, and without turning my back to him!)

Wherever I went my efforts were in vain. Mr. Pilot's words began coming back to my mind... *put up the tent anywhere you want, and don't worry about it.* Finally I called and told Mr. Pilot that I had found a lot, but that Satan himself ran the port authority. Again he told me, "Put up your tent and don't worry. Nobody is going to bother you." I thought to myself, *Clark you may regret this. But hey, you have regretted a lot of things in your ministry life. Have faith in Jesus and Mr. Pilot. Who knows maybe the mayor has a big bill with him or something.* (You never know with a dentist.)

I called in the troops from Siracusa. Everything went well and we got the tent up with no problems, and the last of the trucks were coming in. Our nightly meetings had started with a bang, and the tent was packed every night.

One of the last trucks to come in was our five-ton English made *Traitor*. While driving through Catania, and climbing up a hill, it backfired and stalled. Normally that's not a big deal, but the Traitor wasn't normal... it had no brakes. Our drivers would just "crunch the gears" to slow it down. The truck rolled backward smashing a Citroen (car) under the back end, and together the vehicles rolled towards a steep lava embankment that dropped off into a deep abyss.

As they came to the edge, a girder sticking up from the railing caught the car and saved all of them. The young man climbed from the car and was so shaken he couldn't speak. Our wise brother got out of the truck and, in a firm way asked why he was driving so close behind the truck. The young man asked for our insurance forms, and the driver just said we had them, and not to worry about it.

Later the vehicles were pulled apart, and the young man regained his composure. He said he was a lawyer and that somebody was going to pay "big time" for this. Not only that, but his father was the ex-mayor of one of the biggest cities in Sicily... the city of *Catania*.

Later his son supposedly had an emotional breakdown over the accident. His father called me to his villa in the mountains and chewed me out terribly. His son came out of the bedroom in a bathrobe. "He is so disturbed by this act of negligence that it will affect his upcoming marriage. And he is now under the care of a psychiatrist." To think we even affected his sex life... was I ever in big trouble.

The military police came out to camp and asked me all the questions about the truck and, at the end, for the insurance papers. We didn't have any. They told me to report to the local police head quarters, as I would be booked for a number of crimes. They gave me the name of the officer who would be doing the booking and told me to report the next morning, and that I was in serious trouble.

The next morning I prayed, took a deep breath, and walked to the station. I asked for the officer and they said he was out for a coffee.

"When will he be back?"

"Oh... about five o'clock."

It was only nine in the morning... what a coffee break. But I was happy for the time. Upon stepping out of the station I noticed that I wasn't far from the home of Mr. Pilot. One last good meal was my thought before they locked me up.

Mr. Pilot and his wife offered some coffee and we talked of different things. He asked if my family could come eat with them Sunday. I said with embarrassment that I would probably be in jail, and explained the whole story to him. He raised his voice, grabbed his jacket, and asked why I hadn't come to him sooner? We were out the door before I could respond. To my surprise we raced right to the headquarters of the military police (whose jurisdiction is the whole island of Sicily).

As we approached the two guards just nodded their heads and we walked right past. I guess they knew Mr. Pilot? We entered the secured area of the offices in the same manner, no one said a word. We walked up to these two huge wooden doors just past a secretary. Mr. Pilot didn't knock; he just barged in. Behind a huge engraved desk was the General of the military police. He had gold bars all over and the brim of his hat was gold leaf from one end to the other. He snapped to attention and took the hand of Mr. Pilot, held it and made a bowing gesture and said, "How can I be of service?" I could only wonder... who is this Mr. Pilot?

Before we arrived at the office Mr. Pilot had said not to say a word, and not to respond to anything said. I was more than happy to oblige. The discourse got hot immediately.

"My dear friend came to visit me from America and had a little accident and now he is being prosecuted."

"There must be a mistake? This could not be true."

Upon request I gave the name of the officer who was dealing with my case and the General called immediately and started yelling in Sicilian. The whole floor could hear it. Then he slammed down the phone, stepped out from behind his desk, and asked my forgiveness for this lack of hospitality. He said it was all a mistake and that all charges had been dropped. He took my hand and, with a nod of his head, hoped the rest of my visit would be more positive. Mr. Pilot just turned and walked out. But what about the ex-mayor of Catania, and his son?

"Don't worry, I'll take care of them" Mr. Pilot assured me.

As we left he said, "If you have any problems just mention my name."

"You mean, *Mr. Pilot?*" I asked?

"No, just say contact the German, and he will explain."

Upon returning to camp there was a car of policemen waiting for me. I said, "Before you go any further, you might want to contact *the German* as he is helping with this."

With that, they got into the car and left not saying a word.

But I felt bad for the ex-mayor and his son, as the car was badly damaged, and his son seemed on the verge of being committed. I made a call right away. The father answered the phone, and responded in a nice tone, "Oh, my American friend is calling me!"

I once again apologized and stated that I wanted to repair the car, as I knew a brother in Catania that could do it.

“No, no! Don’t worry about that old car! My son had two cars anyway.”

I insisted on visiting him to make things right (and also to be able to witness to him more). He replied emphatically, “No, no. Don’t do anything that would take your time and energy.”

“But I also want to talk to your son.”

“Oh my son; don’t worry about him, he’s just a spoiled kid.”

What a change! It reminded me of the power of the name of Jesus Christ. I compared in my mind... *If anyone asks you, just say see Jesus and he will explain.* The name of Jesus is better than any German Mafia Godfather for sure.

I paid another visit to the home of the ex-mayor and he met me as if I was a saint. I insisted on taking care of the car.

“Anything you desire to do,” was the only response.

“I came also to tell you and your son my testimony.”

Immediately the son came out of the bedroom and was dressed well this time and seemed in his full mind. It seemed he had a miraculous healing! They listened to me so attentively, and in such total submission, I was amazed. Afterward they wanted to take me to a restaurant to attend a wedding and give an offering. Upon leaving they asked me to forgive them of any inconvenience. This was only one of many miraculous events that happened in the seven years of traveling the island of Sicily. But all was not over for us in Messina.

## Chapter 20

### **So Close, So Sad**

The meetings in Messina were great. We saw many people saved. Many of the fruit of that time went on to leadership roles in the body of Christ later.

After a week I received a visit from a distinguished looking, middle aged gentlemen, who introduced himself as Doctor Rucifisono. I felt he expected me to react, but I just held out my hand and said, “Hello.”

“What are you doing here on my property?” I explained who we were and what we were doing. He said that he would forgive our trespassing, but that he wanted a small portion of the offerings. I felt in my spirit that I should not use the magic *name*. Who knows, I thought, we might become responsible for some sort of turf war?

He came by the next day in a sharp looking gray Alfa Romeo, and wearing a suit that Al Capone would have been envious of. The offering of the night before had been small, and I could see he wasn’t impressed. He wanted to take me for a ride in his car, so I went with him. I immediately started witnessing to him about sin and forgiveness, and tears quickly welled up in his eyes. He pulled the car over, and told me that he was a part of the Franciscan order of the Catholic Church, and was being very diligent in his

religious duties. I brought him to a point of prayer, and he confessed that he wasn't ready to die. But he refused to repent of his sins, and said we weren't going to get out of paying for the lot, and then dropped me back at camp. But he also invited me to his home in the coming days to eat, and to meet his family. He said he would think on what I said, but just needed a little more time to think about it, and to talk to his priest. He seemed close to the kingdom of God.

I wanted to see him again, even though I knew he would be there to collect more money from us. But the offerings were so small; I was sure neither of us would be getting rich. Two days passed and no sign of the good doctor. Then a man in a long black coat approached me in the camp and asked if I was Clark. He said the doctor had spoken of me, and that he felt I would care to know that he had died, and also that I could visit him in the hospital. "That doesn't make sense," I thought. "If he is *dead*, why is he still in the hospital?"

The messenger explained, "He has suffered a massive stroke, and is brain-dead. But his heart is still beating."

I rushed to the hospital and knew immediately that this man was a very important person. The police were guarding the segment of the hospital where he was. After asking, I walked up to his room, but there were two armed policemen at the door.

"I'm a friend," I said.

"No. Only priests are allowed to enter."

"I am an *evangelical* priest," I said. With that they stepped back and showed me in.

There he was. And to think that just two days before he was so full of life... and pride. His wife was there in typical Sicilian mourning apparel.

"He spoke of you before he died," she said.

It was a bad sight, as all they had was a sheet on him, and his eyes were open. I looked into his eyes and could see he was dead. I prayed anyway, but to no avail. I went back to camp in silence, and could not shake the experience. Some people are so deceived I thought, believing that after they die they will go to purgatory, and some family member will get them released by burning candles to their name. I hoped that wouldn't have been the case with the doctor. You always hope that at the last minute the truth came to certain ones, and that they repented. It just didn't seem very likely.

I realized once again how true it is that no man knows his time of passing, and that today is the day of salvation... not tomorrow.

## Chapter 21

# Grave Robbing

We put together a team for Switzerland and were looking forward to going to one of the most beautiful areas of Europe. It was a real contrast to the tropical island of Sicily. It

was much cooler, and the fog that came in the evenings only added to the charm of the Alps, with the snow-capped mountains all around us.

We would be evangelizing the area of Lake Geneva, an historic place of deep evangelical history. We were invited to work with a small conservative church in the city of Montro where a dear pastor who had two daughters in our team opened up his church to us.

I was given the opportunity to share in the church service there, and I felt a special anointing that Sunday. I preached on faith and it seemed to really “flow.” After the meeting I was greeting everybody when two old sisters approached me and presented themselves. They were from Holland, and recently their helper had died. They looked exactly what you would think in your mind a *missionary* looks like... all the way to the shoes.

“Do you believe what you preached about?” they inquired.

“Of course I do, as it is the basis of our spiritual life.”

“OK. At four o’clock meet us at the church, but don’t tell the pastor.”

I immediately felt nervous, but “OK” just came out of my mouth before I could catch myself. I bit my tongue, as I knew I had blown it. “But then,” I reasoned, “what harm could two little old ladies be?” Boy was I wrong.

We had our mid-day meal with the pastor and then I explained that I was going for a long walk. I justified myself by thinking, “Well, I am going to be *walking*.”

The ladies were waiting for me, and one of them had a long screwdriver sticking out of her large handbag. They shared how they had evangelized the area for many years, and that a sister that had worked with them had an epileptic attack, and had fallen two stories to her death.

“This was an act of the devil, and we are not going to allow it,” they said. “And you are, as a man of real faith, going to help us.” Now what help could I be?” I thought. Was I ever in for a surprise.

“Follow us,” was the command, and then these two old soldiers of the cross started up a street so steep that I was soon gasping for breath. It was starting to get a little late in the evening, and a fog was starting to cover the cobblestones. It was that soupy kind of fog that moves as you walk. It was also getting a little chilly, and I pulled my jacket up a little, but the cold didn’t seem to phase these sisters. “What in the world are we up to?” I thought. If I had known, I would have taken off running to go fall at the pastors feet, and beg forgiveness for not mentioning that I had this secret appointment.

Shortly we arrived at the graveyard. It looked like something out of Transylvania, with all these ancient, tall tombstones, many with spires and old gothic pillars. It was downright spooky. I would not have been shocked if Bella Lagosi had popped out from behind a grave and chased us out of there. It was getting late and now the fog was really creepy, and yet we marched right on to the middle of the graveyard. Boy, was I ever dumb... I still didn’t get the jest of what was happening. Like a sheep going to the slaughter I just trudged along behind.

We approached a small building that was used as a temporary place of storage before people are buried. I think it is like that because there isn't embalming procedures, and so they want to make sure they are dead before they bury them. The sisters pulled out their big screwdriver and started prying the door open. My heart raced, and I told them they couldn't do this. One of them put their foot against the doorframe and it popped open with a loud crack. For sure the lock had been busted.

We entered and there were three caskets on bunk bed racks, and one in the center of the floor. Then they started doing the unimaginable... they tried springing open the casket top.

Once again I protested, "No! You can't!" But to no avail.

"Just back off and don't get in our way," was their response, said in a way that only the Dutch can say it.

I went to the door in a cold sweat, certain that the police would be raiding the place any minute. What would I ever say? That these two sweet old ladies are body snatchers? I wanted to run, but at that moment, with one final grunt from this frail little sister, the top popped open.

I turned to see this little old lady with a face that was literally flat. The nose was completely smashed, and her eyes were displaced. The skull had taken an incredible blow. On top of it all, she was dressed in a huge white wedding gown. I was horror-stricken! All I could do was stare.

"What happened? She looks terrible?" I said.

"The devil pushed her off the second floor. What do you think she should look like? Lay hands on her now and raise her from the dead!"

I looked back at the door thinking the cops would be on us any moment... and the only thing worse than getting caught by German police is getting caught by the Green Alpine Patrol. With their green uniforms and wide brimmed hats they were scary enough; all they needed to complete their outfit was riding pants and a floor-length leather trench coat.

I put my hand out, symbolically, to pray, but that wasn't enough for them. I had better get to *praying* I thought, as the fog was coming inside, and one of my eyes could not leave the door. I said a prayer and rebuked the spirit of death.

"OK, I prayed. Nothing happened. Now can we go? It must not be God's will."

They rebuked me and asked, "What kind of prayer was that?"

"Put your hands on this sister, and we will stay here and believe till she raises!"

What a mind battle I was having! You talk about distraction. But the sisters were having a powerful prayer meeting. They went on and on and on, but finally they gave up. And good thing, because I felt like I would be the next one they would have to raise from the dead if they didn't stop!

After slamming down the lid in disgust they walked out the door. Not even closing it as they left. I didn't want to get into any theological discourses on faith, and they didn't seem to be in the mood to talk. I took my leave and headed home.

I felt like a bird set free. Nothing happened and we didn't get caught. I walked into the kitchen and the pastor was sitting where I left him earlier. At first he was just silent, but then asked where I had been.

"Oh, just walking around and enjoying the evening."

"What else?"

"Why do you ask?"

By now all my short-lived joy had left me. "How can I tell a lie and still be truthful?" I thought. That's really hard to do.

"Did she rise from the dead?" he said. I was shocked!

"You knew all along?"

"Oh yes. When I saw my two sisters talking to you I knew what they were up to. But I am surprised at you, as you should have said something to me. You could have gotten into serious trouble. He said it not as someone who felt betrayed, but as a father. I apologized to him, and left Switzerland with a lot more wisdom than when I arrived. This dear brother acted like Jesus, and that raised some life in my soul. Still, I will never forget those two old Dutch saints who put my faith to the test... and I came up lacking.

## Chapter 22

### **Big Money?**

There was one time we almost got rich... financially speaking that is. I go to the States when I am invited, to share in churches the burden we have for Italy. It is not really for finances as I am about the worst fund-raiser you could imagine. But I do convince a lot of brethren to come and pay a visit to our team, and visiting church groups are a special blessing to all of us. I also try to recruit help for the big job we have here in Italy. God always blesses my lack of ability in the area of finance.

One time I was sharing in a church in Connecticut. I poured my heart out about missions. After the meeting a young sister invited us to have an Italian dinner. She introduced her husband to me, who said he was a bricklayer. They were both quite young, and I didn't notice any kids. I could tell she was of Italian origin.

We had been surprised while looking up their address, as it was located in a very posh area of New England. Their home was huge and obviously expensive... not at all what we would have expected for such a young couple. They were very nice to us, and showed us around their beautiful home. I remember thinking to myself, "Man! They must pay brick layers good money in this part of America!"

As we walked about she opened up and explained that she had been fighting a rare cancer and was just now getting back on her feet. And they did have children, but they were already in bed. It seemed that in just a few moments we became quite close, and we had a great evening together. Later, as we were finishing our meal, she said she had

a confession to make. She said she had ulterior motives for inviting us, as they had need for some serious counsel.

Her father had been an Italian immigrant who came to the New England area and took up painting. Eventually he had his own company. But he did not trust banks and, as many uneducated people did in those days, he invested his earnings in land. At that time land was mostly forested, undeveloped, and cheap.

He became very successful, and just kept buying up land wherever he thought it was a deal. Especially when he got older. He never even told the family what he bought, and many titles were even lost. The family was well taken care of and when he died they didn't make a lot of effort to look into what he had.

This young lady was an only child, and after the death of her mother, she started getting phone calls from people wanting to buy tracts of land that were owned by her father. They had traced ownership to her through the courthouse registry of deeds. It was usually small stuff, but she said it added up to a very comfortable situation for them. A short time before my visit she was contacted by a contractor who offered her three million dollars for a piece of land in a very exclusive part of the state that she previously didn't know about.

"What is the counsel you need sister?" My heart was already starting to race.

"Well, it was your sermon, and the great need for the mission field. It really stirred me, and I felt God spoke to me."

Yes... yes... yes... my heart cried out. Finally my boat has come in, and I am in port this time! Thank you Lord! New tents passed before my eyes in an instant. New semi trucks, and a multitude of other things in just a moment of time. That's probably the way it will be on judgment day... just in a different context.

I started thinking about needing a lawyer to set up a trust fund or this and that... and it all passed through my mind in mere milliseconds. And all the while I was trying to keep my composure, and to be spiritual. It's hard to be calm when your mind is flipping out.

Three million dollars, I thought. Wow. I could stop peeing in a bucket, and add a couple of feet onto my container home. My heart was really racing now! In my mind I was already an "abundant life" evangelist.

"We do not really need the money Clark, and it could be used in such a great way."

"Oh, yes sister", was my reply, as I was attempting to put the fork to my mouth. Then came the bombshell.

"This is why I need your help."

"That's why I'm here dear, please just ask. Whatever I can do."

"Well this is strange, but as you were pouring your heart out this morning I felt the Lord said I should give that money away."

"Oh? That is not such a strange thing. You know the Lord works in mysterious ways." (Both my legs were twitching under the table by now.)

“But Clark, this is what’s strange. As you were talking about the great need on the mission field, the Lord told me to give the money to the Christian School where my daughter attends.”

I thought I was going to have a heart attack right there at the table.

“He said *what?*” I was losing control. “Are you *sure* that was God?”

That’s why I am asking you Clark. I am confused. My flesh clicked in immediately.

“Is every body in that school saved? I would check that out before you do something you would regret.”

“But God spoke so clear to me Brother Clark.”

“Sometimes we need discernment dear sister! Pray about this. Who knows maybe there are others more needy.” Then the Lord got a hold of me and shook me to my senses.

“What are you saying, you covetous manipulator?” are the words I felt go through my heart. I looked at my wife and I thought, “Do my eyes look as depressed as hers?”

But finally, I got myself together in the Spirit and said, “Sister, just obey God. If you feel that strong about it, then you should do it. You will be blessed. Then we changed the conversation, which was not easy, but it was a lot less stressful.

At the end of evening we all hugged and thanked them for a great time, and prayed. I did leave a brochure on the table at the last moment that had my bank account number on it. You might ask if that was a right thing to do? Hey... nobody’s perfect.

## Chapter 23

### **Stinky Ground and Self Pity**

We put up camp in Zona Zissa, Palermo. It was a good location in a densely populated area. I wondered how such a big piece of property could have survived right in the midst of what seemed like people living in beehives all around it. I could see then that Brooklyn (New York) was no mere accident; Italians love to live stacked up on top of one another. The more the better it seems!

The electric company came out to hook us up. There was this long pole with a heavy cable coming off of it. The lineman put two heavy wires together and suddenly an arc of light shot off of it like a bolt of lightning! That’s three-phase power and three hundred and eighty volts **alright lets put on your interrupter.** I hoped he got saved in the meetings, as I didn’t think his days were going to be long on earth. Other than that, all went well and we soon cranked up the nightly meetings. From the opening evening God began moving.

The rain came and brought us a surprise. After three days of unrelenting downpours, the ground started smelling real bad, and became soft and slushy to walk on. It was like earthen diarrhea. It was then we learned that the property had been a garbage dump

until only recently. The city had just put a layer of dirt on it and pressed it down... and this was the reason the rats in camp were so big that they chased the cats!

One evening I was in my tent feeling really sorry for myself. The tent was leaking and had been for a while. The only dry spot was an area big enough for my two son's bunk beds. They were still babies then. There was also a lone cord in the middle of the tent with a light bulb at the end. I was sitting on my bed with a piece of old plastic draped over my head and shoulders, having a real self-pity party. I had left my career as a banker, my new home and cars, along with hamburgers and KFC. Poor Clark! The tent looked so depressing, and that rain just wouldn't stop. Why continue? It seemed nobody cared. Not even the Lord I thought. Is this my repayment for leaving the comfort of my old life?

I had to go to the toilet, and that required sloshing across the stinky camp. The toilets consisted of four wooden boxes with a grill mounted in the middle and a hole cut in the center. Underneath were simply garbage cans. You had to mount yourself on the grill like a parakeet, placing one foot on each side of the hole. It worked rather well really, but sometimes you would experience what we called "flashback" (splashing). That was simply aggravating. It definitely taught you perseverance. The official title for these units, if ever asked, was *chemical toilets*. Many times in strong winds they would blow right over! And if you were unfortunate enough to be in one at that time it really brought you to the test of seeing if you were a true disciple. We still use this system... especially for those who want to *really* feel consecrated. But a few years ago a dear guest paid for a new toilet system that, though still not what we might call "normal," is much closer.

After sloshing back to my tent I found a book that had been put on my bed. A book I had never seen before, and to this day no one admitted to putting it there. I am not saying for sure that it was delivered from heaven by an angel, but to find an English book in Sicily is close to miraculous; especially the book *Spiritual Secrets*, by Hudson Taylor. The next hours were to change my life forever.

I was not in the mood for reading but it was impossible to go to bed as the rain kept coming down. Eventually I opened the book, and by divine chance my eyes came to a chapter well into the book that seemed interesting to me.

It was about Hudson Taylor's little boy. He spoke of the child in such an affectionate way, and described him in a way that seemed he was talking about my own boy. The little fellow would follow him around, hold on to his pants, and ask all those questions little boys ask. He was his prayer partner, and they spent many hours just being together. A great love grew between him and his son. He was one of those special kids that come along in life. I kept seeing my own little boys, and was feeling the same emotion. It warmed me up inside just to meditate on this touching story.

On day brother Taylor was going up the Yellow River to have a series of village meetings with his beloved little traveling companion. The boy came to him and said, "daddy, I feel hot." After the next statement I burst into tears, and couldn't see to read anymore... for in just a few hours after that, the little boy died. Brother Taylor guided his boat to the riverbank and, with a paddle, dug a shallow grave for his beloved son. Then he prayed, "Thank you Lord for the time my son and I have had together."

I looked at my son sleeping and felt an ocean of gratitude sweep over me. They were healthy, and alive, and with me. That's all that mattered. In the following days the mud got deeper. The rains didn't stop. And my wife had to continue sleeping in the back of an old truck for a while. But that was OK. *Everything* was OK. I was happy and thankful for everything. I didn't have to pay the price of losing my small boys. I was blessed! The example of this true and dedicated servant of God has given me the strength over the years to overcome any obstacle. Oh the power there is in gratitude... to be thankful for all things, and any circumstances, from the heart. To be joyous for the simple and profound fact that one is in the service of the Lord!

## Chapter 24

### The Triangle of Death

We made our way to Bagaria, Sicily. This is the town they used as a basis for the film *The God Father*. Some of the filming was actually shot there.

We found a great lot right in the middle of town. I asked around and learned that the location's unofficial name was *the triangle of death*. I never knew its real name, as it was never mentioned. Apparently, this was the place the mafia dumped dead bodies after a hit. A perfect place for us, I thought. I mean, hey, who wants to go to any old boring lot when you can go to someplace there's a little action and life (or should I say death)? All joking aside, this was the only lot we could find.

I went to the Major to apply for permission. They said that they couldn't give it but that I should go talk to Guiseppi. He was not a local politician, or the vice major, as I initially thought. He was the local propane seller. I was confused, but I did as I was told, and went to this "hole-in-the-wall" looking place, and found this old man sitting at a door that was broken down.

"I am looking for Guiseppi."

"You're looking at him," was the reply.

One didn't need a degree or to be a rocket scientist to understand that Guiseppi did things other than sell propane.

I explained who I was, about our group, and what we wanted to do. "We want to bring the gospel to town."

"Go ahead and bring it," he said.

"But we need the triangle of death to put up our camp and big tent."

"Go ahead."

"But we need permission."

"You got it"

"But we need written permit"

"No you don't."

I knew not to argue about it, and thanked him. I was waiting for him to hold out his hand or something (perhaps to kiss his ring?). As I was leaving he had a little mercy on me and said, "If you want to you can have permission from the city government."

"Oh? Great! Where do I go?"

"To the pharmacy. They'll take care of you. They'll know I sent you."

The pharmacy... now that was another first for me. And to my surprise, they gave us the permit. After that I thought to get our electrical contract we would probably have to ask at the local gun store. I could see this was going to be a different campaign.

The Pastor we worked with had the same name as the Mafia boss who was gunned down in the Saint Valentines Day Massacre. When I asked if he was related, he avoided the question and just commented that he had relatives in the USA. He was a wonderful brother and did everything he could to help us.

Our meetings were great. The tent was packed. From the beginning night young hoods made their way to the altar and found Jesus. Where sin abounds, grace shows its presence. Everything was going well until after a meeting one night. Omar, a Chilean brother, was pulling night guard duty. A house at the corner of our camp was having a little cook out, as they do in Sicily, where the whole family bring chairs out of the house in the cool of the evening and sit in the street. Omar was very near to them when a car pulled up in front of the gathering. A shotgun barrel came out of the window and shot the father right in the face, at point blank range. Omar had been a nurse and tried to do what he could, but the man was dead. His whole face was gone.

The next evening Omar returned to give his condolences to the wife, but to his surprise, when he mentioned the act, she looked at him sincerely and stated she didn't know what he was talking about. She said her husband had died of natural causes. He didn't press the issue. We were just beginning to understand the Mafia doctrine of "omerta." You keep your mouth shut about everything, and you never see or hear anything that hints of the families activities... even as it involves the death of a loved one. We could see that this Mafia stuff was not a game, or a good movie line, but a terrible reality.

We live with a reality that is hard for people to understand from another society. It is not that everybody is vehemently against the Mafia. All businesses pay for protection. They call it insurance. They insure you that your business doesn't just blow up one day. But it has benefits too. If you have a store, and pay up, then nobody can move into the area and compete with you. If they do, they have this strange way of simply burning down. We have seen it. And where the courts are slow, street justice is swift.

One night a man in dark glasses entered the back of the tent. He looked so typical Mafia that it seemed he must have been faking it. His hair was greased back under a Stetson hat, and he wore an expensive pinstriped suit under long black trench coat. He made his way to the altar that night, and had a real encounter with the Lord. It was a very emotional sight as he repented and the joy of the Lord filled his heart. My wife and a couple of other brethren ministered to him until very late that night.

Every day after that this stretched black Limo would arrive and leave food for our team. Sometimes he would fill the car with team members to go to his home to minister to his family members. But his dress never changed.

One day as he entered camp he called me over and said, "Tomorrow I do the cooking." Sure enough, he showed up the next day with all this food, went right to our kitchen bus, and started cooking. What a sight to watch this brother in his dark glasses and pin-striped suit cook a meal for the entire camp. He went on to live a truly changed life in the Lord.

But with such characters, an *ongoing* changed life was not always possible, such as with Carlo Mirabello. He bossed a big Mafia clan, but one day got saved, and testified in our tent. He had been converted in a small church. He shared how that we would never see him alive again on this earth, because he was just too big a fish for the Mafia to let live. It was an emotional time for everyone in the tent. Two weeks later, he was gunned down in broad daylight, right in the center of town, while walking down the street. Of the hundreds of people walking the streets when it happened there was not a single witness. Not one person saw or heard a thing. We all felt the loss of a real brother.

Things were really moving. More and more people were getting saved, and the Spirit of God was visiting us in a great way. Before one of the nightly meetings a man approached me and told me he was from the circus, and that we had to leave the premises within twenty-four hours. He produced a permit that was procured before we had asked for our permission. The city government, it appeared, had made a mistake in giving us permission. Actually, I should say *the pharmacy* made a mistake.

We were to leave immediately if we knew what was good for us. Yet something about the whole thing seemed fishy. But I had seen the seriousness of fighting these circus people, so I announced in the meeting that night that this would be our last meeting as there had been a mistake, and we had to tear down camp and leave. My heart was torn because we had no place to go. Once again our faith was put to the test. After the meeting our Mafia friend came and said, "Don't touch a thing! You are not leaving. I want you here... you got that?"

"We don't want to leave brother, but it seems official. And there could be serious trouble as those circus folks can be pretty mean. And they are pulling in with their trucks in just a few hours."

"Don't you worry. And don't touch a thing!" He turned and made a dynamic exit with his long coat sweeping the back of his legs. Robert Di Nero would have been green with envy. What do you do in a situation like that? Get chased off by elephants and kangaroos, or ruffed up by the mob? I went to bed in a lot of prayer.

Very early the next morning I got a visit from our circus friend. He shook my hand and said apologetically that there had been a big mistake, as they had never even wanted to come to Bagaria at that time. He asked for my forgiveness for the mistake, and also said if we needed any help with our tent that he would send his technicians to help. He even offered trucks... If we needed them they would be sent immediately. I kept saying, "No, Thank you," but he kept insisting on doing something. Finally he said, "Ok. But if

you ever need help, you call me, as we are friends and share the same life style. Isn't that right?"

"Well, not exactly. But thank you anyway for the offer."

He left camp with the humblest look; like the appearance of a dog with its ears down, and his tail between his legs.

God works in mysterious ways when we trust in Him. Even if our faith is lacking. It was a fruitful time to the very end. But sad to say, the owner of the pharmacy (who was also a senator) was gunned down while opening the store shortly after our departure. We were not sure if he had made a decision for Christ, but he had the opportunity, and that is why we were there.

## Chapter 24

### **India – Land of Adventure**

In the mid-seventies we sent from Italy four teams overland to India. *Youth With A Mission* gave us an old Mercedes bus that we fixed up for our first team of twenty brethren, who made the month-long journey through some of the most difficult areas of the world. The teams were led by Brother Douglas (an ex-biker), and Brother Jamon (an ex-drug pusher). These two would lead teams from Brindisi, to Greece, on through Turkey, Iran, Afganistan, Pakistan, and finally into India. They made Indiana Jones look like a wimp.

Every time they would arrive in India, and contact us, we would be shocked again that they even survived the trip! But these teams of sold-out soldiers for Christ went on to establish evangelistic teams that evangelized hundreds of thousands of souls throughout India and other countries, by simply moving from city to city having open-air crusades. It was not uncommon to see twenty to forty thousand people in their meetings. We were privileged to be a part of this work in the beginning by equipping and sending out teams from Italy. They were brethren from all parts of Europe and America that had been disciplined here, and in the United States. Later I also had the privilege to labor with them over a six-year period, going back and forth from Italy.

Arriving in India is like arriving in no other place in the world. I exited the airport and was overcome with the heat and smell of curry in the air, not to mention every other kind smell hovering around. I stayed in a Christian Hostel. The first night was bad. I heard a baby crying. I mentioned to the brother with me that I was going down to take a look. The streets had been packed with people before but now in the early morning hours they were packed with people sleeping everywhere. As far as the eye could see, on very wide sidewalks, people were sleeping. What an impression.

There lying in front of me was a child crying. A stick like figure that I could see was dying of dehydration. His eyes were matted and his flesh hung on the bones. I stooped down and cried out, "Hurry, hurry, lets get him to a hospital before he dies!" An Indian brother who had exited with me said, "Look up brother!" As I looked, I could see child after child

in the very same condition. “Which one do we take?” I could see his point. Many of them would die there that very night, and a reality of human suffering settled over me, as I had never imagined before. Walking and seeing large rats walk over the faces of the people sleeping, who would just roll over as if nothing took place. I had nightmares of that.

The next morning was just as bad as a truck stopped and two men got out and started picking up the dead from the night before. They would throw them into the back as if they were mere sacks of potatoes. And the children... I can't even talk of that, as going back in my mind to those memories is so hard. To think that my six-year-old grand daughter would have to suffer the same existence is unimaginable. But there are millions just as beautiful as her living in such a reality. I can only thank God for what he has given me.

In Ahmedneger I was struck by the lack of green plants. It seemed that not even weeds grew there. The only thing that flourished was people and red dirt. It was a dusty place. While there I bargained a street salesman for some pairs of sandals. My pride of accomplishment on such a good deal was soon dashed as a brother told me of the days of work they put in the shoes, and because of their desperation were forced to sell them at any price. My heart sank as I wanted to return and give the cobbler some more money, but it was too late. I had a lot to learn about being like Jesus.

I received an invitation to preach in a series of churches in the villages, and was picked up by a very distinguished looking middle-aged brother. He was very tall for an Indian and had graying sideburns. He spoke perfect English, and drove an “American”, which is an Indian car produced in the late thirties by the British. The Brits turned the factories over to the Indians after the liberation, and they still produce exactly the same car. It looks like an old Packard, and really runs.

Our first meeting was in a mud hut where about fifteen church members gathered. All day long we went from one fellowship to another. I preached on love, compassion, and acceptance. I felt good in myself... here I was, with the poor of this world. I started to figure that maybe God was really happy with me.

At the end of the day we were eating curry snacks and talking of the day's meetings. I complimented the brother as one being very used of God as a pastor and an apostle, but he was quick to correct me.

“Oh, I am not responsible for these fellowships.”

“Well, you sure look like the pastor type to me?”

“I was chosen to help you because I have a car and can speak English, and interpret for you. In fact I have only been saved a short time.”

“But who then is responsible for all the wonderful little groups I shared in?”

“The pastor was in every meeting... right in front of you.”

“Oh no! Not him?”

In every meeting I had been in, there was a little brother who would squat right in front of me as I shared. He was very short and seemed to have suffered polio, as one leg was deformed which he just dragged along. His eye's also seemed a bit crossed, and

his head was too big for his body, and he had only a few long teeth in the front of his mouth. In the first meeting he approached me and I thought, "What a poor little brother." He seemed to want to talk, but after a few moments (of what I felt was great patience on my part) I gently put him off. He was the type who would get right close to your face to talk, and had breath that was a killer.

The next meeting, there he was again. And again he would limp up to me with a big smile and want to take more of what I figured to be my valuable time.

Then again in the next meeting... the same thing. By this time I was getting a little impatient. "Wait a minute," I thought, "who is this little Jedi of a brother taking up all my time?" I started to just ignore him, and went on to the next meetings, where of course, he kept showing up.

I had literally *blown-off* the apostle of the whole area! There were no churches at all until this little man went from village to village, year after year, establishing the work of God in the area. I felt like a real jerk. I must go back and apologize. A great desire came over me just to see him again, spend time with him to show him love and appreciation. But the brother said no that we must return for the crusade and that it didn't matter. But it does matter! No Clark, as this brother is a real man of God and doesn't desire recognition. He would only be saddened and embarrassed at your gestures. In that moment I sure didn't feel like a real man of God.

How many times has Jesus presented himself to us, but we didn't recognize him because he didn't have the appearance we expected? I could see I had a long way to go and a lot of things to learn; and that being like Christ amounted to much more than the ability to preach an A.W. Tozar message with a Billy Graham style.