

The Circus of God

By Clark Slone

*I m thanking you God, from a full heart.
I m writing the book on your wonders.
I m whistling, laughing, and jumping for joy;
I am singing your song, high God.*

Psalms 9:1 (The Message)

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INTRODUCTION

I want to start out by saying this is not fiction. I have sought the Lord a long time to do this. Much of what's here might seem like the fantasy of some screenwriter, but it isn't. I took pains not to exaggerate. And I have had my wife go over this since she went through many of these things with me. She has always been a great help to me over the years as a missionary wife, and one who scrutinized my messages and ensured historical truthfulness and accuracy. She always had that gift and was never afraid to use it.

Much time passed between the events written of here, and I could not cover all the experiences since it would simply be too long. I am just touching some highlights from one expansion of time to the next. I left out many stories even more unbelievable than these for fear that many might not believe them, and thus dilute the message I am attempting to get across.

I also am not giving a lot of statistics of crowds and great numbers of people being saved. There were at times such great fruit and, at other times it was as if we were in an immense spiritual desert and feeling that we were just wasting our time. It was in these times that we were taught 'true discipleship'.

The first half of this book is in chronological order. Being that events similar to these are still taking place, I have tried to keep things moving and give glory to God for what He has done. The people mentioned are very real, and nowhere in any recounting of events have I intended to demean anyone. I thank God for all the personalities that have in one way or another enriched my faith.

I write of what has taken place over thirty years of traveling with a team that rarely numbered less than one hundred, using a gospel tent that held thousands. In Italy we have at times been called the "Circus of God", and I somewhat consent to it, since every day is like a new show that takes place in our lives. There's never a boring moment!

From the very beginning of *Christ is the Answer Crusades* (CITA) in 1972, during the time of the Jesus Revolution, my wife and I made a commitment to the Lord then that we would serve Him as long as He provided. And since then our lives have been one incredible experience after another! We have been traveling across Italy from city to city with our large tent and team seeing God do miracles to provide for us. At times it's been hard, and at other times just down right great!

I write this not to take glory to myself for great feats on the mission field, but to share true experiences that will motivate the courageous to step out by faith and believe God to take care of them in full-time service. I have seen first hand that God will do it... if only we will put our life in such a position that, if He doesn't, we will simply die. As C.T. Studd said, "All God needs is a broken heart, as any old empty pumpkin head will do". I am a living example of this.

These events took place not because of me alone, but because of thousands of people who sacrificed months or years of their lives. All their names are too numerous to mention in this book, but I love and appreciate each one of them.

PREFACE

My wife, Sue, and I grew up in normal American families from the south. Our lives were the common American graffiti of the times. From childhood the church influenced both of us. But we ran the course of many others... going to Sunday school and church meetings throughout our youth, followed later by rebellion, and leaving church altogether as young adults. Though we came to feel church was rather boring, and we lacked a real relationship with the Lord, we did have knowledge of Christ from our church experience. In this God had a lot of mercy on us, as the teachings we received protected us from much evil (even though we were unaware of the influence).

We started going back to church after I got out of school, and God did a work in our lives at that time. But even though we tried doing all the right things and going to all the meetings we still felt incomplete. After a while we fell back into all kinds of sin, and felt helpless to do anything about it. We became classic hypocrites.

Sue and I married very young and had two boys right away. I went on in school and ended up eventually as finance manager in a bank. I became a yuppie (before the name was even coined) as I progressed rapidly in the finance world, and became very addicted to "success" and material things.

My wife didn't share my desire for the fast life though, and at twenty-three years old I found myself facing the end of my marriage.

Sue started leaving me for extended periods of time, staying with her family. I started praying as never before for God to do something. Three months passed, and Sue was temporarily home with me (some of her sisters were experts in divorce issues, and told her to return so that she could get the house.) It was not the happiest of situations to say the least, but God was hearing my prayers.

One day we heard of a group of traveling hippies that had come to town who were having meetings in a big tent. They were called *Christ is the Answer* (or CITA), and rumor had it that they did nothing but dope and have free-sex. These people were always on the streets, and one day Sue received a gospel tract from a young lady inviting her to the tent. We thought this was unusual and went to see what was really going on. To our surprise we found a group of longhaired converted hippies playing gospel music that I really liked. Then it was just called *Jesus Rock*. After a while another longhaired man came forward and preached the hardest gospel message I had ever heard. We were both convicted that night, and went up the "old sawdust trail" to the altar and repented of our sin.

God really shook us up at this time, and we started seeing the Bible in a different light. Our relationship with the Lord was no longer just Christian meetings, but quickly became a life given over to God. Six months later we completely forsook our careers, sold our possessions, and gave the proceeds to the poor. With some of the money we bought an old camper and hit the road to go preach the gospel.

We started out on our own, sharing in Bible studies and on the streets from city to city. After a short time however we realized that this could become a better business than what we left behind! We could see that we might soon be right where we left off, only now it would be *gospel business* instead of *worldly business* profiting us. We began to feel strongly that we needed to be under authority and guidance. In our hearts we knew it was with the tent team of CITA, but it was hard to accept.

Eventually we went looking for this band of traveling Jesus freaks, not knowing really if they even still existed. We had heard that they all had been arrested in Florida (and just about every other place they visited) for witnessing in shopping centers, which didn't add to our view of their credibility. Still, we went on looking, and later found them in Norfolk, Virginia. Somehow we knew that this was our new family and ministry.

It is from here that I would like to begin our incredible story and, in a way, take you on a journey with us... continually on the road for Jesus.

*"We have found" the Savior... "Come and see!"
(from John, Chapter 3)*

*Clark Slone
June, 2003*

Chapter 1

Cleaning Fish

I will start with my experience on the mission field with my dear wife, Sue, and our two baby sons, Grant (who was just three years old), and Todd (fourteen months).

After quitting my job as a banker, and selling all of our possessions, Sue and I headed for the 'Jesus tent' in Norfolk, Virginia. There we planned to serve the Lord with this group of hippies who evangelized with a big tent and went to the streets every day to share the gospel. Today, many would think it a weird cult, but then nobody really knew of cults. We were just simple kids who had gotten saved and wanted to share the love of Jesus Christ.

We arrived with our little camper, full of zeal, and ready to preach the gospel. But this new environment was strange to us. Here I was; a straight looking banker, fresh out of a suit and a beautiful home, in the midst of all these hippies with faded blue jeans and long hair. Only a few in the group didn't have beards (and they were the sisters!). Long dresses and combat boots was normal attire for the women, and I won't even mention how the brothers looked. I wondered if they had ever known what a home was. But still, I could feel God in the lives of these people. We really felt the Lord's presence in each of them, and soon came to appreciate the new life God had for us.

In our first morning meeting with the group, which was called *Body Meeting*, I praised the Lord until I was dizzy. During that meeting brother Bill (who was the main elder) asked, "Who knows how to fish?" I blurted out, "Hey Bill, I even brought my fishing pole!" He shouted, "We have our man!" So that day I was recruited... not to fish, but to *clean* a couple hundred pounds of fish for the team.

I must have done a good job, because after that the elders asked for my work qualifications. I stated proudly that they could make good use me

in the office since I was experienced in finance, accounting, and office management. They responded, "That's great! But we're electing you as *kitchen overseer*, since it seems that's your greatest attribute." This was the beginning of a new life of faith, as I was put to work in the back of a semi-truck, preparing food for this team of disciples.

Taking On Washington

After a month of cooking lentils and noodles, Bill came to me one day and asked if I would go with another brother to look for a tent lot in Washington D.C. I was flattered and asked, "Why me?" He explained that I was one of the few 'straight looking' people in the team and that the others might scare off the authorities; that made me feel really great... but soon I was off to Washington with a buddy named Delan.

In Washington brother Delan and I found a 'Jesus House' that was taking in kids with drug problems. They let us stay for free. The person in charge was a Jewish sister named Doris who, prior to being saved had sold T-shirts on the beaches of Miami. She tried to make us feel at home... and we would have if we had been raised in an insane asylum.

One guy, who I will call Ben, was totally "burnt out" on drugs and spent his entire day staring at the wall. Doris was once so fed up with him she pushed him out the front door and told him to go get a job. Eight hours later I opened the front door and there was Ben... he hadn't moved one inch.

Then there was Freddy. He had orange hair and could climb anything. He was as crazy as a bed bug, but was manageable... that is until Ben decided to try to nail him on a cross in the back of the house. I thought that was bad enough until the day Freddy climbed into the bell house of the Methodist church across the street during a big wedding. Just as the groom was about to say, "I do," Freddy let out a yell and, like the hunch back of Notre Dame, jumped down from the church rafters! This made Doris dream of returning to selling T-shirts in Miami.

Eventually we got around to our purpose for being in D.C., and went to the park commission for a permit to set up our five-thousand-person tent. They laughed at us and said they would arrest us if we even came to D.C. with our trucks. Returning to the house we were very discouraged. It seemed totally impossible. Later Delan and myself thought, "Well, here we are in D.C., let's go to the White House." So we gathered up some tracts and a few *Jesus Street* papers (a publication of CITA with testimonies of the team) and headed out.

When we arrived we saw an old gentleman in front of the White House with a big brief case looking as if he were waiting for somebody. Delan and I approached him and started talking to him about the Lord, and we gave him one of our *Jesus Papers*. He asked, "What are you guys doing in D.C.?" We introduced ourselves and explained that we wanted to come into town with a big tent to preach the gospel, but that the park commission had turned us down. He said, "Why not put your tent on the mall grounds in front of the Washington monument?" We just looked at him blankly. But then he went into talking about how anti-war demonstrators get permission for things like this, but Christians can't. We said, "Amen, brother! But what can we do?" He scribbled something on a piece of paper, handed it to us and said, "Be at this address tomorrow morning at nine o'clock." Then, just as a limo pulled up, he reached out and shook our hands and said, "I'm Senator Hubert Humphrey. Keep up the good work." I wanted to say, "You mean, the ex-Vice President? Forgive me, but you look a lot different on television." But he disappeared into the limo before we could say anything at all.

The next day we went to the address he gave us where we found two marines with white gloves waiting for us. They took us to an elevator in the office and we went down to what seemed like a secret entrance, and then onto a small cart on rails that took us under the House of Congress. Here we were just a couple of simple Jesus people standing in the corridors of congress with the tourists looking down from above on us.

A gentleman approached me and introduced himself as Senator Hughes. He asked if we would mind waiting for a while as Congress was still in session, and that he would meet with us immediately afterwards. In my heart I wanted to look at my watch and say, "I can't wait long, I'm a busy man." But in reality I acted like a puppy dog and said, "Oh, no problem, take as long as you like. The government must go on."

After a short time that seemed an eternity, he returned and told us he was born-again, and that Senator Humphrey had asked him to help us. He asked what we needed. I explained our need for a lot to put up the big tent and a place for the team to set up camp. He asked, "What sort of group are you?" I began to explain, "The main elder's name is Bill..." and before I could say anything else he said, "Oh, Billy Graham crusades?" I replied, "Well... not exactly." In my mind I was visualizing Brother Bill in his shoulder length hair and foot-long beard; He looked more like ZZ Top than Billy Graham. But I didn't want to blow our cover, so I just told him that we were an old-time tent revival team. (In my heart I whispered, "God forgive me for not mentioning that we *a/so* have a Jesus rock band, and that most of the team

members are ex-drug addicts, *Hells' Angels* mamas, ex-pimps, and representatives of just about every other strange sub-culture imaginable.”) Senator Hughes got excited and said that he wanted me to meet Senator Hatfield and join him at the upcoming Presidential Breakfast. I was so excited that I nearly shouted “Sure!” But then he said, “First, we want to visit the team when they get into town.” I thought, oh no... there goes my moment of fame.

When we returned to the park commission, they had a distinctly different attitude. They were *very* polite and said they had never received word from “so high up” regarding the use of the mall grounds. “Even Billy Sunday was turned down, so how did you guys do it?” I said, “We know the Man at the *very top*.” They asked how many days we wanted to occupy the grounds, to which I replied, “Not days, but two months.” He took a step back and asked me if I knew that this was the most expensive piece of real estate in the world. “That’s why we want it”, I exclaimed, adding, “Perhaps we need to go back to Senator Humphrey?” He gasped! “Oh! No, no! We will have your permit in a few days.” We danced all the way back to the Jesus House. When we got back with the others at the main camp we were considered heroes of the faith... but that didn’t get me out of the kitchen. Even a Vice-President couldn’t do that.

Junkyard Caravan

Our move into Washington was a sight to behold. The ministry consisted of eighteen old, worn out semi-trucks that we had dragged in from the junkyard and painted, along with forty other odd vehicles and campers. This rickety caravan was over a mile and a half long, and I think we had killed every insect from Norfolk to D.C. since every vehicle smoked like a chimney. I drove an old step-side bread truck and felt like Indiana Jones before there even was one. Just outside of town I had to slam on the brakes which caused a bar of steel to slide forward and smash the dashboard (missing me by inches). My buddy shouted, “Praise the Lord! They fixed the brakes!” I felt protected in a special way until a state trooper pulled me over and told me to go with him.

I was taken to the major’s office. A gentleman approached me and said he was the Vice-Mayor, and that I had to stop the caravan that was moving into the city. I said there was no way I could do that since I was not in charge. About then a man walked into the office and screamed, “They’re all down town now, and they’re clogging up the streets!” At that moment I remembered Bill telling me he was going to stop right in front of the White

House to take pictures with the trucks out front, but I didn't believe he would really do it. Now I knew that Bill had allowed me to be taken in (instead of him) simply to buy time. I thought to myself, "I'll be doing hard time for this one!" (I had always desired a prison ministry, but at that moment I felt I would rather be in prison than in the ministry.)

Then, for reasons I may never fully know, everything suddenly changed and, after a short time, I was told we would get a special escort out Pennsylvania Avenue to Anacondia Park. I was praising God all the way in that old bread-truck (even though we ran over two light poles on the way in). Who would ever have believed this could be done? But soon the big top was up, and a great gospel campaign was underway... right in front of the Washington monument.

Jesus Save Us

Our main camp was established in a demolished part of the projects (the ghettos of D.C.). While we were there, the crime rate dropped to zero, and the authorities testified that there were no rapes or murders. The police said it was truly a miracle.

One night, as we were returning from the street evangelism in our old bread truck, we were oblivious of the crowds outside walking down the streets with color televisions, surf boards, and just about everything else imaginable (including a kitchen sink). But then we heard glass breaking and people yelling and screaming. It had become a habit to stick our heads out the van window and yell, "Jesus loves you" at every stoplight. But I didn't realize we were in the middle of a riot until all those around the van were just staring back at us in disbelief. Then I heard someone shout, "White folks!" and a chill ran up my spine. I had about fifteen white sisters illegally stashed in the back, and one of the back van doors was missing which made the whole situation even more intense. Besides that, the sisters just kept screaming how Jesus wanted to save everybody. I started praying then that Jesus would save us.

The traffic was bumper to bumper. It was truly a mess. But then it all just cleared up, as if just for us. I stomped on the gas and to my amazement we took off without stalling (which was also a miracle for this van). God's hand literally pushed us out of there and back to the camp, and I am convinced He *did* save us.

Forest Gump

A few days later, Senator Hatfield came out to camp and spoke to the entire team. It was a precious moment. His testimony was powerful. Some time later I attended the presidential breakfast. It was a real *Forest Gump* experience. I sat with Brother Scales, who was a Pastor and an adviser to the Mayor. I felt like I was a real 'somebody' for the moment.

Seeing the big top in front of the Washington monument was truly incredible. One day we saw the presidential limo pull up right in front. It idled there for a moment and then sped off. This was during the time of *Water-gate*, and I prayed that Nixon had heard why we were there. Bill wanted to make sure of it, so he told me to go apply for another permit, this time to put the tent up right in front of the White House. So (can you believe it?) I did.

The officials said they already wanted to ask us to move... but not there! They were nice, but the expressions on their faces were pretty mean. But they gave us the permission after our old permit was up, and we set up the big tent with a banner on top that read, "Repent and be saved! The end is near!" The very next day a big wind came and blew down the tent. That just made us mad at the devil, so for the next week we worked at sewing up the tent, and then put it back up even in a rainstorm. Every day thereafter Nixon was able to read the message of that banner from his balcony... until he was impeached.

During these victories, God had a lesson for me that always stuck in my heart. My wife and I, with a small team, had gone out to 14th Street to witness to the prostitutes and pimps. There I found a drunk holding on to a fire hydrant and vomiting in the street. I knelt down and put my hand on his back and started witnessing to him right in the midst of all this filth. The Lord spoke to me right then saying that whether I was in the presence of the vice president or this sickened drunkard, it made no difference to Him. There was a little change in my life that night as I started to come back to reality. Besides that, the elders didn't want me to get too distracted by all the politics; I was still needed in the kitchen.

Go Ahead. Shoot Him

Another incident happened when I was with a brother we called B.B. He had the fullest beard I have ever seen. It was like he just cut two eye-holes out of the hair on his face. He made the wolf-man look clean cut.

One night he and I were in front of a bar witnessing to people as they went in and came out. Suddenly a guy came out and put a pistol in my face yelling, "Go away or I will blow your head off!"

My dear friend B.B. jumped in saying, "Go ahead, he's not scared!"
"Now wait a minute," I said, "let's talk this over!"

The man looked really mad and rushed back into the bar. I was thinking how B.B. should learn to speak for himself as I looked for which way to run before the guy came back out. I figured B.B. could have this corner for himself!

Just then the man came back out ... with two sandwiches. He said he did that to all the Christians who went there, just to see if they are really serious. I put my chest out and said, "You ran into the right guys, because we are here to stay." Courage filled my bones at that moment.

Chapter 2

Suicide Gas Truck

We passed from city to city, and though it was one of the quickest years of my life I could write an entire book just on that first year. Some weeks after the Washington crusade, we found ourselves in the tiny town of Weldon, Illinois, where an old elementary school served as our ministry headquarters. But before long it was time to hit the road again, and our *junkyard caravan* was off to Phoenix, Arizona.

The group was divided into sections. Bill took the semi trucks, and the rest of the group left in segments. Sue and I were in a caravan of twenty campers and cars. This was the start of an odyssey that really changed my life.

We left full of joy. It was great to be getting out of Weldon. To service our little caravan segments we were accompanied by an old fuel truck we had picked up in Nashville. It had some serious problems though, not the least of which was gas leaking from the back main valve. To "fix" it the brothers hung a bucket on the valve that swung back and forth as it went. And (as if a slopping bucket of gas wasn't bad enough) the truck backfired continuously. You can probably understand why we christened it *the suicide truck*.

Brother Louie, who had an Afro so big it brushed the top of the driver's cab, had been put in charge. He was a skinny guy, and you could tell the years of drugs had taken a real toll on him. The only thing bigger than his eyes was his faith and love for God. We all hugged Louie good bye, just in case he didn't make it. His job was to follow us and, as we ran out of gas, come and fill us up. We would pull over about every 150 miles to wait, count how many had made it, and send the mechanics back to help bring in

the stragglers.

Woman Overboard

After a week of old sandwiches, hard donuts, and anything else we could find our nerves were getting tangled. We were averaging very few miles each day and sometimes we sat on the side of the road the whole day. It was hot, and the only car that gave any respite was the one without a windshield. The brother who drove it wore goggles (and a tarp if it rained) and looked like the red barren with long hair.

We were now parked on a ledge near the interstate, and things were looking increasingly hopeless. Suddenly an overweight sister came running from the back of the caravan screaming that she couldn't take it any more and was going to commit suicide. All I could say was, "why tell me? I'm not responsible here! Go ahead!" But then I came to my senses and thought, "what did I say?"

I think I had eaten too many old Twinkies. But it was too late... she ran to the ledge and jumped off. Another brother ran up to the car and yelled, "What happened?" I looked as innocent as I could and said I didn't know. Then another guy, one of our brain-dead, ex-marijuana brothers came walking up with his hands in his pockets and said in slow motion, "that wife of mine has always been *really* emotional." Finally, regaining some composure, I went over to the ledge expecting the worst. But God was gracious; the sister was so fat that she simply rolled down the steep hill, and wasn't even hurt. Getting her back up was another matter. I was tempted to leave her, and so was the husband. But we pulled and tugged until she was back with the caravan.

Sister Dian came and asked if she could use my battery to start her van. I said sure... and that was the last time I saw her or my battery until Oklahoma City. It was a good thing my car was running when they had removed the battery.

To make matters worse, a state trooper pulled me over and said I had no plate on my camper. "That's funny," I said, "it was there when I left Weldon." But just then another squad car raced up and the trooper shouted, "There's a madman in a fuel truck coming up on us! It's leaking fuel all over the place, and when it goes it will take out two city blocks!" About that time Louie came over the hill backfiring as he came. The two squad cars took off peeling rubber and didn't bother looking back.

I told Louie that the gas was leaking badly out the back. He said, "Oh, the bucket must have fallen off." Soon we were off again, still not knowing if

we would ever see Louie again. He was such a weirdo, but we loved him so much.

We arrived at the border of Oklahoma and our motor stalled right in front of a gas station. An attendant with a belly that covered his belt buckle and wearing a huge cowboy hat that covered much of his face came over and opened the hood. Then he looked at me with a look of wisdom and said, "Son, your problem is you don't have a battery." I said we had set our sights on Oklahoma City and were travelling by faith. He asked if we also needed gas, to which I replied, "Yea, but we don't have any money."

"Let me get this straight," he said. "You have a wife and two babies and you're traveling without any money?" My only response was, "we serve Jesus." With that, he put a battery in the car, and said, "You got funny faith," and he hit the car with a smile. I thought to myself, maybe this is Jesus in disguise!

We hit the road again and found the rest of our team at a rest stop down the road. An attendant there said we had just missed Bill with the semi trucks by one day. He said Bill and his bunch ate in the café and then hit the road. I thought to myself, *he ate!* I had to fight a bad attitude in my heart, as I was really hungry.

Just then Dave drove up to me and said, "Clark, the other elder in charge just ran off with all the money and I'm going to chase him down. You're in charge." Finally I was in charge! I was the big deacon now. But my euphoria was short lived, as the mothers soon came together and demanded I do something, as their kids were hungry and there was no food anywhere. There was a lynch-mob spirit in the air! I suddenly felt I was beginning to understand the motto in the team that said, "*You start at the bottom and work your way down.*"

Could Life Be Any Better?

I took the team into a small town called Big Horn. We went to some churches asking for help but we scared them to death. Then we went to a little church that was still in service. They showed us some love and asked if the person in charge would speak. Here was my chance at the pulpit! But I froze up and could only plead for a little mercy, and a bath. This little group took all of us to their homes and we were able to bathe and eat. I was taken to the pastor's house, because I was the big deacon of the clan. I even watched football and drank coffee... I thought, "Could life be any better?" They were good to us, but they didn't have enough money to get us back on the road.

A Christian rock band from Sweden called the “Hogavisan” had been visiting our ministry, and they were with my segment of the caravan. They had really been going through it spiritually as they were used to eating and having a coffee once in a while. Besides that, the lead singer got a terrible fungus in his private area and thought he was gonna go sterile. I think it was his European underwear. I assured him it would be ok since I had it also, and was still functioning fine. But he didn’t seem convinced, and I felt their “calling” to work with our ministry might be short-lived. But they fooled me, and showed real guts when the going was tough. They took their guitars and hit the streets and did a real concert with their guitar cases opened in front of them. We finally got in contact with Bill and he wired us some money so we could get back on the road. The bad feelings in my heart turned back into love for the moment.

Finally, we arrived in Oklahoma City. Along the way I had gotten separated from my wife (which is another book I may write someday). Here we were, full of faith, but wondering what to do. As it worked out, we moved into the parking lot of a ministry for the homeless in downtown Oklahoma City. The dear old brother who took us in said that he collected all the old sandwiches from the vending machines throughout the city and that we could have all we wanted. But we also needed more money to get us onward to Phoenix.

Barbecue Sandwiches

The man of faith I am was put to the test. The first day we all went out and gave blood. But it wasn’t nearly enough money and they wouldn’t let us do it again. Then we went to Manpower. They sent me to a factory with another brother that processed dead cows that had died on the range. The stench was so bad that the brother with me started vomiting in the parking lot. He left me there and headed back to the blood clinic!

The place was like something out of the Middle-Ages. Any dead animal was put in a big pot like a stew and mixed up like a milk shake. Then the liquid was sent through a hot tube and made into pellets to be shipped to starving countries. The boss was very motivated and said that some day the process would involve human bodies, and our survival would depend on it. He said the job opportunity was incredible and I was in on the ground floor of the business. Boy... was I excited.

My job was stacking the boxes that the corpses arrived in. The boxes had big staples that stuck out that had caught rotten flesh on them. As I would crush the boxes and throw them in a stack the meat would hit me in

the face or slap me in the mouth. At least that kept my hunger down. After three days we had enough money among us, and I turned in my resignation. The boss said they wanted to put me in management to keep me from leaving. I said it was a very difficult decision, but that I had to leave this career position behind for the gospel. What “sacrifices” I have made for the mission field.

We were lining up to leave and the director of the mission station brought out the last bunch of sandwiches. I thanked him and said those were the best barbecue ham sandwiches I had ever eaten. He looked at me kind of funny and said, “There wasn’t any barbecue ham sandwiches.” I gulped, and asked what the stuff on the ham was. He looked me over and asked how I felt, and I said I felt ok. Then he said, “Well, a few spoiled sandwiches never killed anyone.” I prayed he was right.

Popcorn Dinners

With my wife having been separated from me in Tulsa, Brother Dave decided to send a sister named Candy to help me with the kids until Sue caught up with us. She jumped into the car and informed me she would be my baby sitter until Phoenix. Now Candy was as cute and skinny as she was sweet and helpful. I got really nervous as I thought about being one or two weeks on the road alone with her. My sanctification was leaving me by the minute.

I left the car and ran to John who was one of the Jesus paper artists. To say he was spacey was an understatement. He was a prime example of what excessive marijuana smoking does to your senses. But he was a good brother and would do anything for you. You just had to get used to him staring into space all the time, and continuously using the word “*man*” as an adjective.

I asked John to ride with Candy and me. And not just to ride, but never to leave my sight for even one minute. At night there were no lights or electricity. I told John to sleep by me and always be alert, to feel for me in the dark, and even to accompany me to the bathroom. He felt I was exaggerating. I took another look at Candy and said, “I might be sanctified, but I’m not petrified.”

That evening Candy offered to pop us some popcorn. That’s all we had other than a can of sardines that we were saving for a big occasion. The smell was incredible. When you are hungry and the last thing you had to eat was a rotten ham sandwich, popcorn is great. Candy did a great job preparing it. She reached into the cabinet and shook a lot of salt on it. It

made the lukewarm water we were drinking taste good. We devoured it. We even licked our fingers and cleaned the pan. But after about five minutes my stomach began to turn and swell. It made a weird noise and soon I had gas that smelled like propane. I thought, "oh no... a delayed barbecue ham sandwich attack!" But then John had the same symptoms. Candy took a candle and looked in the cabinet and found that she had doused the popcorn with meat tenderizer instead of salt. My stomach was so messed up. Sick was not the word. But on the bright side I didn't get hungry again until we got to Phoenix three or four days later. God is good!

Good Bye Louie

After one month, and losing twelve of the twenty vehicles we had left Weldon, Illinois in, we finally found ourselves in Phoenix, Arizona, putting up the big tent. I asked someone where Louie was and was told that he had broken down in Arizona and was at a filling station living in the bathroom. It was Thanksgiving Day and I felt bad for poor Louie. But we got word later that a customer who used the bathroom asked Louie why his sleeping bag was in the other booth. After Louie had shared his story, the man brought him a thanksgiving dinner right there to the station, and I was wishing I could be with him. Putting up camp in Phoenix didn't allow for festivities. I told Bill that we needed food and sleep, but he said those were the very two things that he was asking the Lord to deliver us from! Remember I said there weren't any cults around at that time? It's a good thing, as I would probably have run off and joined one.

We were having an elder's meeting when the subject of Louie came up again. It would cost two hundred dollars to get the suicide truck to Phoenix. But Bill protested and said he would not invest a dime into that "worthless piece of junk," and that we should tell Louie to get it here anyway he can. No sooner had the words come from his mouth that a brother came in and said, "Hey! Good news from Louie! A man wants to buy the truck for eight hundred dollars." Bill said, "What! That's a valuable truck, and I'm not gonna just give it away!"

Well, we never saw Louie again. We heard that after a month at the station he put a sign on the back of the truck, sold all the gas, and was last seen hitch-hiking east. I guess he didn't like the environment of the bathroom.

Chapter 3

Grapefruits and Donuts

I was full of joy to be back with the main camp in Phoenix. But the first night back I heard motors starting throughout the night. What was happening? I smelled a lot of exhaust fumes. I finally got to sleep, but woke the next morning to find that over thirty people had “split” during the night. Most were families. Two brothers left to become Baptist pastors. I thought to myself, “What’s going on? I thought we were supposed to be neo-Pentecostals?” But after being in *our* ministry for a while, it was easy for some to seek out a place where there would be peace and quiet. Even I was thinking of leaving... and was considering the Amish community.

It wasn’t that our ministry was in numerical danger, since we still had about a hundred and fifty folks in camp. But the meetings were very low in number. We had just been donated A. A. Allen’s old big top. It was the biggest gospel tent in the world *with the world’s smallest attendance!* When we cranked up the old diesel blow heaters they would churn out a cloud of smoke that would hover over the meeting. With the lights shining through it gave us a real wilderness children-of-Israel experience. It was a little hard on the lungs though.

From Phoenix we hit a number of cities. Tucson was one of the tougher ones. Almost nobody came to the meetings. I guess there were just too many weird-looking people on the streets, so we didn’t draw much interest.

Somewhere along the way a brother had donated about a ton of grapefruits. Can you guess what we ate every day after that?

Every night Thor (my helper in the kitchen) would go with me to *Dunkin Donuts* where they would give us all their excess donuts after hours. One evening the manager said he couldn’t give the donuts to us any more as, by law, they were required to throw them into the dumpster. And being that most of the police department was always there, well, it created a real problem. I thought, “Now *this* could be the end of our ministry!”

But Thor had an idea. He would get inside the dumpster, and when they threw the bag in, he would just catch it. I went back to camp feeling victorious until Thor showed up as white as a ghost. The first thing they threw into the dumpster was not the donuts, but the flour! Thor’s hair was beyond his waist, and he had a pork chop mustache that looked like a hair-brush. So you can imagine what he looked like covered in flour from head to toe. But even without the donuts we survived, because someone else

donated a truckload of avocados. Guess what we ate everyday then? But still we praised God, as it was a blessing just to have food.

Bill was confused why there wasn't more food, and the apathy of the church in town was bothering him. He called us all together and gave a Bible scripture that we were to be content with food and clothing. He went on, "Well, if we don't have sufficient food then we don't have to be content." We all cheered, "Amen! We won't put up with it another day!" We were ecstatic. More food was the rally cry. Then Bill said we would start a three-day *fast* to seek God and ask why He hadn't provided! I never complained about food again.

My Waterloo

Then I hit my Waterloo. I found a great lot in Riverside, California. Only one or two problems: It was too far out of town for anybody to come to the meetings, and the winds were so strong that it blew down the tent. And a tent pole hit Bill in the head landing him in the hospital.

Then one beautiful clear evening a group of *Hell's Angels* rode into camp wanting to know who was in charge. Bill told them I was. They said they had a monthly party on the lot we were using, and though they did not want to scare me, they would kill me if we didn't vacate the area.

With this and the head injury, Bill began to feel that perhaps my calling was somewhere else. He asked me if I would like to take my family to the European team. This team had started one year earlier. They had started in Sweden and were having a real effect on the country. We had been studying Swedish hoping for this moment for a long time. This was the beginning of a whole new chapter of our lives.

Chapter 4

Off to Europe

We were being sent out. As I look back, it was more like being kicked out, but that was ok... the results were the same. But God was not yet finished with me in the good-ole USA.

I want to take a moment in giving tribute to men like Drifter, Lizard, Snake-Bite Sam, and Wheelchair Bob. These and many others defied their past and did great works for God. Their appearance was like their street

names. But their faith was radical. They brought more people to the Lord in a few months than most do in a lifetime. I feel that when the books are open there will be a multitude of men as these receiving their reward. They were not just rejects; some wouldn't even be permitted in many fellowships. But they were welcome in the "pits" of society where they brought the gospel. In this first year it was such personalities as these that formed my faith, and their testimonies that influenced me to have the edge I needed for what was ahead, and the challenges that have become a great part of my life.

Bill approached me and asked if I was ready to go. It had only been about twenty-four hours since he had asked me to leave. I don't know if my desire for a quick departure was spiritual or motivated by the sound of motorcycles coming to get me (God's calling can be strange at times?!). We were prayed over, and Bill handed me the keys to an old Dodge van. He said for me to take my family to D.C. and fly out from there. He said in D.C. there was a new ministry that helped street kids where I could stay for a brief time. I said, "Thanks, but I have had enough of such ministries." I figured I would just fly on out while my Swedish was still fresh.

I held out my hand for money to cover the expenses. I must have been dreaming. Brother Bill just said, "The van has a full tank of gas."

From Riverside, California to Europe on a tank of gas! The only positive thing I could think of was that this was probably the first time in the history of the team that it actually had a full tank! Then I thought, "Well, for Bill that's pretty generous". Also I knew the team didn't have any money and I felt the faith of the Lord going through my bones.

Strange People

The day came for us to leave, and as we climbed into the van my mind flooded with thoughts of that past year. We were leaving one of the most loving and weird groups of people I had ever imagined. I thought of the big tent full of people, praising the Lord in harmony with the rock and roll Jesus music. Brother Joe doing rips on the guitar. He had recently cut his beard off only at his chin (exposing that he didn't have one) and now looked like the case of the longest side burns in the world.

I thought about Mark, who was responsible for pushing "Wheelchair Bob" around on the streets to evangelize. One day Bob pulled himself out of his

chair and Mark got into it, and wheeled himself inside a W.T. Grant store. It was packed with people, and he went right to the middle of the store. Then, another brother came in and started preaching to him. Mark acted the part of the sinner (which was easy for him to do!) while the other brother preached at him in a loud voice. Mark played the part well, rejected the gospel vehemently as a crowd stared gathering to watch. People started deriding the preacher to shut up and leave the poor invalid alone.

As the discussion came to a crescendo you could feel the tension building in the air. Just then he laid his hands on Mark's head and prayed for a miracle of healing. Mark screamed as if devils were coming out of him, and leapt to his feet screaming, "I'm healed, I'm healed!" Needless to say, when the truth of the situation was exposed, we were not very welcome in the W.T Grant store any more. (Sometimes God had to work miracles just for us to keep our testimony... and the Lord His!).

I remembered too the sister who asked if she could borrow my toothbrush at the community-water faucet (and my wife swearing never to kiss me again). I remembered lending out my shoes and never seeing them again. Almost everybody had been arrested, some numerous times, for witnessing in the shopping centers in the cities we visited. My wife still has a criminal record! But the love! Oh the love that I felt every day. Jesus said that those who are forgiven much will love much also. It was undeniable... we would miss these brethren very much.

S t o w a w a y s

I was surprised when starting the van produced squeals from the back that was not from my kids. As I pulled out, I looked in the back and there was a group of four sisters and a brother praising the Lord for the opportunity of going to Europe to preach the gospel! As we went down the road I told them I didn't have any money, and asked if they would help with the expenses. Then Edna said, "What! Bill said you had all the money and you were responsible for getting us all to Europe." In that moment I wanted to turn around and... well, I won't say what I felt.

Then I had an idea that I felt was from the Lord. Being that each person was from a different part of the States, I would drop them off at their homes along the way where they could try to get a few bucks together to get to the east coast. I would meet them in Washington in a few weeks. Then we would put our money together and go from there by faith again. But we had a thousand miles before the first drop off!

We stopped at the first gas station in Flagstaff. I took up a *body collection*... that is, we all dug into our pockets for every last penny hoping there was still one we didn't know about! But the girls were broke.

I remembered how tightly Wheelchair Bob had hugged me before I left. He was a pitiful sight, paralyzed from the waist down. But what a smile and a heart full of God. Bob had squeezed an envelope into my pocket without my knowing it. Lo and behold, instead of thirty-five cents, I found I had six hundred dollars! That was the miracle we had hoped for. We even "fleshed out" (which was what we called *eating*) and praised God all the way across America.

I dropped everybody off at their homes, and went on to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, to see my parents and pick up a \$230 income tax refund. That was one of the hardest times I can remember of this particular period; God taught me a special principle.

Good Bye Mom

My mother was a small thing. About five foot one, and ninety pounds (soaking wet). I was always the mama's boy growing up. She stayed close to me my whole life, while my brothers were a lot with Dad, who was a sportsman and gun enthusiast. His license plate was the letters "NRA" (National Rifle Association) and I do not want to say what his bumper sticker said. Whenever I used his truck I always got respect.

Mom taught me a lot of things around the house and we were very close. I do not think she ever forgave my wife for marrying me, or me for not moving next door (where she could continue to take care of me). She spoiled me. She would draw my bath water and make sure water softener was added. My clothes were always ironed and set out when I left the tub, and a big towel always waiting for me.

The day after my honeymoon I woke up to frying eggs and ham. What a wonderful wife I had married! But on the second morning, there was nothing but the (quiet) snore of sweet Suzy. I nudged her and said softly, "It's time for breakfast dear." She turned in astonishment and said, "Now wait a minute buster! I did it yesterday, today is your turn." Boy, did I miss my mother now.

Anyway, you can imagine how close my mom and I were. Upon my departure mom came to me with tears. She sunk her face in my chest and cried. "Don't go! Don't go! You can serve the Lord right here. The church up the street needs a Pastor, and the house next door is for sale. And that group you're with is unstable." (I felt in my heart that *unstable* was not the

only word!). I put my arms around her and cried too, and told her I probably would never see her again on this earth. In that moment I saw the real price in serving the Lord. And it was painful to pull her away as she grasped me so tightly. The Scriptures on discipleship suddenly became very real. My career in the bank, my education, my new home and cars were nothing to abandon compared to this. I felt the Lord ask, "Do you love me more than her?" Only the experience can teach you such things.

Chapter 5

Mud Wrestling

After saying good-bye to Mom and other family members, and seeing my familiar home town once again, we were back on the road heading to Washington D.C. I had Brother Stecon with me, a Swedish brother who was illegally in the States, and was one of the brethren Bill had told I would get to Europe. He was a very quiet brother who spoke little English. He looked like a six-foot Leprechaun, and his beard covered his entire mouth. He was bald, but you would never know it as his cap never left his head. It looked like something a Danish fisherman might wear. Stecon was a patient brother and always wanted to please. After driving all day I was really tired and asked Stecon to take over driving. I curled up in the back and fell asleep. I heard the crash of steel and a loud noise. We had gone into a ditch and side swiped a guardrail. I awoke with a chill going down my back thinking the worse. Stecon was all right but shook up.

"What happened," I asked.

"I don't know," he said. But then he added how this was the first time he had ever tried to drive, and didn't realize it was so hard!

The van was only lightly damaged and I was able to pull back on the interstate but not before a state trooper pulled up behind me. He was very nice and asked me to get into his car as it had just started to rain. I was nervous to say the least, as Stecon the six-foot leprechaun did not look American. But the trooper had another question on his mind. He asked about the license plate. He said it was almost two years out of date. "My secretary must have forgotten to take care of it?" He just looked at me and smiled. Then I shared what I was doing, and about being in the ministry. After a while he shook his head and said, "Such a story as that couldn't be a lie." Once again I saw God's deliverance. What had amazed *me* was not that the plates were expired, but that they were actually the right plates for the

van! Bill had a habit of swapping plates from one vehicle to the other; and sometimes used no plate at all. He called that traveling by real faith.

We arrived first, ahead of the others. What a place we found! Our host ministry was established in an old two-story house right in the slums. We moved into the basement for a while, but the smell of fungus and rotting wood (which didn't seem to bother the brethren living there) quickly drove us back upstairs. Their ministry was one that took in males needing help. I couldn't help but feel *they* needed some help themselves. The workers drove trucks delivering bread, which was one of the ways they supported themselves. There was never a shortage of bread, Twinkies and other pastries to eat. Once again, even in these drab surroundings and strange circumstances, we felt the genuine love of the Lord.

Babysitting

We called the brother running the place D.T.. One day he asked me if I would baby sit. He was leaving for a few hours and needed his two small kids not just watched, but *protected*. He went on to share how a few weeks before his wife had run off with a motorcyclist who was part of a violent gang. And he was afraid she would come back to take the kids. Something told me to say no but I thought... what could happen? It's just a little baby sitting for a brother in need.

Brother D.T. was a very charismatic fellow. He could sing and preach well. His appearance was that of the high school jock. He was very muscular and fair skinned. He looked all American. He looked the part of someone who would be successful in whatever he put his hands to. It surprised me that his wife would run off with some greasy biker hoodlum. But I soon found out why.

He wasn't gone an hour when the doorbell rang. It was an old time door with a huge glass window. There she was, and immediately I knew it was D.T.'s wife. She was a beautiful, tall and slender woman with an athletic build. She had the face of an angel, and her voice was as sweet as her appearance. I presented myself through the glass and said D.T. was out for a few hours. With the sweetest voice she asked if I could let her in to see her kids. I told her she would have to come back later when D.T. was home, as he told me to not let any one in. She looked at me with these puppy-dog eyes and said, "Please... just for a minute?"

"I'm sorry but I can't." I felt really stupid. Here was a delicate, caring mother who wouldn't hurt a fly, wanting to see her cute little babies. I felt like the devil incarnate. I thought, "Why couldn't she have been some huge,

ugly, mean-looking roller derby queen with bad teeth?" It would have been easier to take a stand.

She asked me to crack the door a bit so she could hear me better. I thought, "How sweet, now she wants to talk this out." When I turned the key to the door, she dropped kicked it open! I went flying, and she went for the stairs. I threw my body in front of her begging her to leave, but she grabbed me by the shirt and threw me into the banister so hard I fell to the bottom of the stairs. I ran up the stairs and she was in the room with one baby in her arms. I told her to put the baby down or I was going to act. I yelled for Sue to come and help me, but she just yelled back that she never got involved in personal family disputes.

Just then the women put the child down and started punching on me like Muhammad Ali! To limit the affects I got close to her and tried to hold her arms in a bear hug. My face was already bleeding, and I could feel my nose go numb. She started screaming and spinning around. I thought my wife was tough until I tangled with this gal! We stumbled into the hall and down the stairs, out the open door, onto the porch, and finally into a front yard that was nothing but a mud hole. This mud wrestling looked like so much fun on T.V. Before I had gotten saved I had always wanted to do it. But now it wasn't fun at all. I guess God wanted to show me the reality of mud wrestling.

We rolled and rolled. She screamed and I told her I wasn't going to let go until she calmed down. Then as I looked up through the mud on my face, there were policemen with Billy clubs ready (they had gotten a call that a man was beating up a woman... I wish it could have been true!) I let go of the woman immediately saying I could explain everything. They just told me to shut up.

The woman started crying. She looked so sweet and beautiful even with mud all over her. The police asked her what this scum of a man was doing to her. She stated with a squeaky and innocent voice that all she wanted was her babies, and I wouldn't let her have them.

I protested and said, "Officer, it isn't as it seems." One looked angry, started slapping his Billy club in his hand, and got into my face. He said, "I love taking guys like you down town." He said, "Honey, let me book him and teach him a lesson for beating on defenseless women, and keeping you from your little babies." She could have continued the act. These police were ready to put me away. But praise God, she just asked to have her babies, and said she would not press any charges. The policeman said I was lucky that this happened with such a sweet and merciful woman. But that if he ever saw my face again he would make sure I paid dearly for my crime.

When they left I pulled myself onto the couch, as my dear wife was preaching to me that I deserved it for being so stupid. I agreed with her. Not a half an hour later and who shows up, but brother D.T. He looked at me, noticed the condition of the house, and immediately asked, "Where's my kids?" I said, "Let me explain. Your wife just left with them." He turned into a madman and started beating on the cupboards and yelling at me. I knew right away it was time for us to find a new place to stay.

I went to Sanford Connecticut to a friend of Brother Bills. Bill had led the man's son to the Lord a number of years before in a little revival that he had preached at the U.S. embassy in Austria. It was a beautiful New England home. He was a teacher in one of the main universities. They were very formal and even with my vast educational background I was still a Tennessee boy.

My family and I really tried to fit in. But it was hard especially for my kids. I know the family tried, but after a week I could see things were getting strained. The mother, who was the epitome of New England culture, asked my three-year-old boy when we were leaving. He told her, "When the Lord supplies the money for us to go to Europe."

"But how are they going to get it?" she asked. To which he replied, "I think brother Bill is going to send it." But she knew Bill too well! And this put a great fear in her heart that these Tennessee, Hill-Billy, Jesus People were here to stay! Their son was really a very good brother, and though he felt bad, he was given the task of telling me that we had better find another arrangement.

I also felt we needed to get back to D.T.'s place, since my little group of tag-along sisters should have arrived by now. I hoped that D.T. had calmed down, and prayed that he and his wife would get back together. But I hoped it would be after I got far away from the U.S. as she had given me a new respect for women (and mother bears).

Chapter 6

No Turning Back

Upon returning to D.C. we were welcomed by the team and ministry. I was thankful, and D.T. was showing a lot of humility and hospitality.

I had some extra money, so I went out and bought my first double sleeping bag. For a year Sue and I had used individual military "mummy bags." They

are warm, but you sacrifice a lot of affection from your wife (and I was feeling frisky and couldn't wait to try out our new bag!)

I was shocked how cheap they were. It was synthetic but seemed very well made. I thought, "Why did I wait so long to buy one of these?" We slipped in, and I thought this would be great for Europe. But after a while we noticed we were sweating, and I mean *big time*. I told Sue I could not remember generating so much heat in the past. Then the inner lining started sticking to us. It didn't take long before we were feeling clammy and sticky! We burst out gasping for air. When the cold air had chilled us off, we were back inside and overheating again... and on it went! Well, more on *birth control bags* later.

We headed back to our old stomping grounds of D.C. on 14th Avenue. Many people knew us from before, and it was almost like a homecoming. We hit the streets hard in the evening, after the sun went down. We would approach the cars that stopped for the street girls and ask them if their wife new they were here. Then we would explain how Jesus knew all about it. Some were hard, but you would be surprised how many opened up to the gospel, and how many we prayed for. Little did we know that God was preparing us for the red light districts of Europe; districts that made this place look like Sunday school.

MY OWN LIMO

The avenue was also full of nightclubs, and at night they really lit up. It was quite a sight. I had left Sue with a sister and headed to *The Iron Butterfly* (one of the well known clubs). But this time it was different. As I started handing out tracts a young punk came up with a weird smirk on his face. He grabbed my neck and pushed me against the wall and said, "I am going to kill you if you don't get out of here." I looked and saw Sue. She was with a very distinguished looking middle-aged man. I yelled, "Run for it honey there's going to be trouble!" She walked over and said, "That's my husband I told you about, Clark." She looked at me and began to laugh. She said, "Clark, this is Tommy. He works for the Butterfly, but he's close to getting saved." He extended his hand and said he was just checking me out... and I was happy to know that.

The man with Sue invited me inside. His name was Lothar. He was from Germany and, looking more like a Pastor than a nightclub owner, seemed out of place here.

We had a big supper and he shared how he had gotten to know Sue with her visits to the corner of his place. He started opening up how he had a

son my age that had left home. He told us how he loved him, but that his son didn't love him. As the days passed we got closer. He would come to pick us up in his limo to go out and eat. He loved to hear the gospel, but did not want to give up his sin.

In one of these encounters at a restaurant he spoke of our little boys and their future. We explained that we did not believe there was a future in this world and that Jesus would come back soon (probably within the next several months!). He asked how we were sure. I just said, "Hey! Hal Lindsey said so."

He threw a set of car keys on the table. "Those are for the limo... and it's yours." "What do you mean?" I said. He explained that he owned one of the large hotels in town, and two first class restaurants. The *Butterfly* was just a hobby for him. He then explained that he wanted me to become his accountant, and that I would have to work less than twenty hours a week, and would be well taken care of. We could be a family he never had. I looked up and thought, "God, why does something like this happen now? It would have been a dream before I got saved."

I looked at Sue who was looking back at me like a scared rabbit. I took a deep breath and pushed the keys back. His body guard said, "Go on! Pick'em up! This isn't a joke." I said, "I have greater things to do with my life. I already gave up on that stuff before, and this is no time for me to turn back."

Doesn't that sound spiritual? But after Lothar left, I thought to myself, "Clark, what did you do you dummy!" My mouth was saying one thing but my heart was saying something else. It was almost like a pain that passed through me. I began to reason, "Hey, I could serve the Lord in D.C. too? I could handle the money, and I would be free to preach the gospel with so much free time." But deep down I knew it was a test... and I never saw Lothar again.

PROVISION

The next day, to my amazement, I was in the newspaper. A reporter had taken my picture, and I was being shown being persecuted for my faith. He made up a story of how I had been beaten and strangled for my faith, and that Christians were being persecuted right in America, on 14th Avenue. It was a good story; it just wasn't 100% accurate.

I received a call the next day from a Baptist brother who was a big shot with the Kerns Bakery Co. He asked me to come to his office. He had

called the paper and some other Christians had told him how to get hold of me (and my personal contacts with the bread truck drivers helped too).

He asked me what a Christian was doing in that part of town at night. I explained that I really did not want to be there, but wanted very much to get to Europe to preach the gospel. He pulled out a checkbook and wrote a check. He then handed me the check and said, "Leave before you get killed." I was happy to oblige. This was the beginning of the finances for our trip.

The group to go was growing also. Bill sent the mother of one of the sisters in the European team to go along with us. We praised God to learn she had money with her! We were now within seven hundred dollars of being able to leave. I called Bill and he sent the rest of the money we needed. Once again he was to me a great man of God... at least for the moment.

I'll never forget Iceland Air; just \$190 per person for one-way tickets. Hallelujah! We were off! We had passed a month in the halfway house and developed some real emotional ties. I never saw D.T.'s wife again, but there was something inside for her too.

I had never flown before, so this was exciting. As we neared our destination an announcement came over the PA that we were passing Belgium. I turned to Sue and said, "Oh no! I think we got on the wrong plane. We're in Africa!" My father had once said he served in the Belgium Congo. I didn't know Belgium was a country. Was I real missionary material, or what? But to my relief we landed in Luxemburg. I still didn't know where it was, but it sounded closer to Sweden.

We waited for eighteen hours. I had a number to call but it didn't seem to work. I prayed Bill had made contact with the team of our arrival, but no one came. After about twelve hours we put our money together and were able to buy one large Swiss chocolate bar. Each one of us took a bite and then would pass it around again. Chocolate never tasted so good!

At midnight, to our joy, an old 1954 Scandia bus pulled up. We knew it had to be for us; who else would drive such a bus? Brother Sven Peterson was at the wheel. We tried our first official Swedish out on him along the way. Sven was a tall but thin, slightly balding brother with a big smile. He was very clean cut and had no beard. I thought, "Could he really be one of the team?" He went on to share with us that the European team had cut their hair and beards, because in Italy that was a sign of rebellion and communism. I said, "Italy? Where is that in reference to Sweden?" He said, "Oh, not far, only about twenty five hundred miles!" Had we been misinformed? Well, it didn't matter to me. We were on the European mission field now, and there was no turning back.

Sven asked if we were hungry. We said, “Oh, just a *little*.” He said, “That’s good. We are over a day from the camp and there won’t be much eating till then.” We were given some dark brown bread and chocolate spread to put on it. It was like eating a *Twinkie*... and we ate it *very* slowly.

Chapter 7

Reaching Rome

Arriving in Rome we went to the church and started moving our things into the basement. While we were working, my youngest son, who was just over two years old, darted out in front of a bus. I was just around the corner of the church when I heard a scream, “Bambino!” And then the terrible screech of tires. I came back around the corner, and my blood ran cold. I cried out, “Please God, no!” and ran into the street, but there was no sign of Todd. Everyone said he was right in front of the bus. I ran to a van parked about ten feet away and there was Todd, shaking and trembling under the seat. As I lifted him in my arms I thanked God for such a precious gift. Many times we don’t appreciate something until it is, or *almost* is lost. I have never forgotten the sensation that took place in my heart that day. It helped me so much as my boys grew up... to appreciate them even when they really goofed up in our ministry.

One of the first brethren I met was Andrea, from Germany. He was about twenty years old and had been a shepherd in Austria. He spoke good English. He didn’t wear shoes and was always dancing around playing the flute. He reminded me of the mythological creature *Pan* (the only thing missing was the hoofs). He told me that he could go to any vacant lot and find enough herbs to make a meal. I thought that’s really great. “By the way,” I said, “Who’s responsible for the kitchen in this team.” Andrea said, “Oh, I am.” Now I was picturing myself grazing out in the vacant fields!

I couldn’t help but wonder how or why our ministry managed to attract such “different” (to say it nicely) personalities. Andrea was just one of over a hundred team members that had joined. Besides all the Americans, people had come from Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Italy. Until today CITA has maintained a definite international mix. But it seemed strange to me that, no matter what country they came from, they always seemed to have common characteristics... Or, in other words, *we always seem to get the outcasts and weirdoes*. But I have seen that when you get

a bunch of *nobodies* together, it will become *something* when it is from God.

I should not be too critical though, and do not want to give the impression that everyone was psychotic, strange or weird. We had our share, even many or most even, God knows. But there were many like myself who were just your average “run-of-the-mill” kind of people (until I joined this ministry anyway). And yet, over the next several years we sent out over one hundred missionary workers from Italy (driving overland) to India. They went out in old worn out buses donated by YWAM, and established four major teams that are still going on in India today (though they have “morphed” into other major missions projects of their own). Some of these people have received international attention for being kidnapped and persecuted.

People also went out to Spain, the Philippines, France, and Portugal, where we saw large tent teams established and living by faith. This is not to mention groups that also went on from CITA in the USA to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico. And these works are still going on. We started teams in Russia, the Ukraine, Romania and two teams in Italy. And in our thirtieth year we are still going on with a new team and tent project toward Kazakhstan (as this book is being written).

It may seem hard to believe that a great number of the people involved and used were people whom the world had given up on. But God is still working in the same way with us to evangelize “as many as we can until He returns.” It’s been rough and hard times, strange events and happenings, unusual people and circumstances. But we have seen that we will only lose if we quit, and that there is no victory without a battle.

Chapter 8

Transvestites and Communists

We got the tent up in Milan, which is the major business center of Italy. We had a great lot in one of the central districts. We were hitting the streets and having open-air meetings in front of the major cathedrals with amplification. The police would come, but the people who gathered would ask them to leave us alone. We thought... this is great! They’re so hungry for the gospel! We found out later that the people were so rebellious to authority that anything they perceived as also being rebellious to authority was ok. Well, we praised God anyway, as we had never had such liberty before.

One day Brother Jamon, an energetic and enthusiastic American brother, came into camp looking as if he had run a marathon. He had been at the Duomo cathedral doing a street meeting, when a large communist rally marched by. Jamon gave them the gospel... and they gave him and the team a good chase, and destroyed the P.A. system to boot. We started understanding then that this wasn't the good old U.S.A.

At night the meetings were great and the tent was packed, but we started noticing after the meetings that a few girls were on the corners. Well, not a few... and not girls. We were told that there were over two thousand transvestites who walked the streets in the area. At first we worked just the area around the tent, handing out tracts to drivers who would stop, and talk to the men of their sin. Some started coming to the meetings and praying. We felt to expand our evangelism to the whole area, and all hell broke out.

I was at a corner when a tall transvestite approached me and said he would beat me death if I didn't leave. I said that I was there because of the love of Jesus, and was not leaving. He took off a high heel shoe and put it up to my head. All of a sudden I had this mental image of my mother receiving the message of my eternal departure. I could hear it now: "Was he shot? Was he beaten or tortured?" "No, a raging transvestite killed him with a high heel shoe!" I thought no, I don't want to go like that. I left the corner rapidly telling him to repent (as I made a getaway... retreating to fight another day).

My wife had brought a "trans" to our tent where we lived. He was a good looking "women!" He seemed to listen to us. My wife prayed with him and it seemed positive. Some time later Sue saw him again, and approached him. She felt there was a friendship, if you could call it that. But then he got mad and acted jealous. I had witnessed to him a number of times as well, and he told my wife that I was in love with him and to let me go to love again! When I got home that evening to the tent Sue was looking at me strangely and said, "A *man* is in love with you." I told her I would try to resist the temptation. But things got a lot hotter.

Basel and two other elders were talking in front of a wall just outside the camp, when suddenly a car came toward them and tried to pin them against the wall. They jumped aside as this crazed trans crashed into the wall. He screamed obscenities all the way to the police station. That night we realized that this was *real* war.

One evening the team developed a new idea, and dressed me up in black with a big black cape and vampire teeth. I had white pancake make up on with black eyes. The appearance was of a scull. I was to get behind the transvestites and when a car stopped jump out and shout, "The wages of

sin is *death*.” But then a guy approached me and started taking my picture. I gave a few Dracula poses and hoped he liked the shots. Later that week the Italian magazine 'Gente' (which is the *Time* or *Newsweek* of Italy) had my picture on the front cover. The article was about a new cult that had come into Italy and the picture was purportedly of one of the disciples! Just when you think things can't get worse, they do.

A few nights later the elders were discussing the strategy for the night, and how to divide the groups up to witness, when suddenly I saw a trans enter from my right, hold up a revolver, and start firing! Then automatic fire came from the front. The windshields of the trucks were smashing and we all hit the ground. It was like bumblebees passing our ears. We knew exactly what was happening and started crawling. And I never new before how fast and I could low-crawl! Then they opened up on the big tent. A bullet hit the leg of a chair where Mitch was sitting on stage and flipped him to the ground. They opened up on the shower truck where my wife and Ejia from Finland were taking a bath, getting ready for a big evening on the streets. They thought someone was outside shooting firecrackers, but then heard shouts that we were being fired upon. Sue completely panicked as the sounds were coming from the direction of were our tent was, and where our boys were sleeping.

The next morning we checked out bullet holes in the back of the truck at head level. But with the entire firing *not one person was hit*. We only lost some windshields. The police investigators came out and told us the reason: in two weeks we had shut down nearly all the prostitution business in the entire zone. Customers didn't want to come into the area at night anymore.

Well, things got much better (less violent that is) and we saw many people get saved. My biggest problem after that was this one guy who kept coming into camp and flirting with me! Then another big national magazine named Panorama who had heard of our problems came out and did a good article on the positive effects the gospel had on the area. God got the glory in the end, and this was the start of something much greater than we had ever imagined.

Chapter 9

The Lady of Sin and the Coffin

We had moved to Turin, the “Detroit of Italy,” and put up our big tent in Parco Ruffini, the best location in the city. Brother Douglas had been reading about William Booth and his *Salvation Army*, and how they had done street dramas in London. We were all a bunch of hams anyway, so it took no time at all to get a street drama team together.

Our drama plan developed quickly, and soon we had it all together. We would load up on a five-ton truck and drive to a suitable location in the center of the city. Once there we would pull out a big cross with Jesus on it (played by Brother Doug), and I would be the executioner and the one who would beat Jesus throughout the half-mile walk. We had Roman soldiers, the disciples and mother Mary... the works. We would do the whole crucifixion scene. At the end, just as Jesus cried out, “it’s finished,” the truck would pull up and we would all load up and be gone. We did our impromptu drama skit many times with the police coming up in our rear view mirror. But we had great success, as street teams would follow up and preach gospel messages to the many onlookers.

Then Doug came up with another skit that the *Salvation Army* had done. We built a coffin and put a 12-volt PA in it. We covered it with flowers and had Massimo (a priest who had been converted and joined the team) walk in front of the procession in full religious garb, counting the rosary. About fifteen of us dressed up in black and followed stoically behind, as Beethoven’s death march played over the speakers. Immediately behind the coffin sister Zelda, playing the part of the bereaved wife, would cry and act hysterical. Every one thought some big mafia man had died. The whole street would come to a stop. Many times the police came and directed the traffic for us! Hundreds and hundreds would stop to pay their respects. This thing really “clicked” with the Italian mentality.

When we saw everything was just right, we would come to a stop, and Zelda would run to the coffin and beat on it. That was the cue for Pedro (playing the part of the corpse!) to come back to life, jump up from the coffin (dressed up in the usual white suit of the dead) and preach a fifteen-minute message on the resurrection! The people would just stand there, completely stunned, and listen to Pedro preach!

Needless to say the tent was packed in Turino. It was not uncommon to see two to three thousand people each night. But we loved the street work! Even today, after thirty years, we have people approach us and ask, “Do you still do that coffin skit?” How much fruit it bore only God knows. But that wasn’t our best skit yet... there were new ideas coming every day!

The *Lady of Sin* was a powerful skit played by Sister Kathleen. Kathy had spent time in jail, accused of being a terrorist with the *Weatherman*. Her

husband (once one of the FBI's most wanted) had been caught and put behind bars. One of the courthouses he had blown up nearly killed Kathy's own father, who was there that day for some minor infraction. She was a fearless sister who would take on any challenge. And this skit was actually dangerous because, for some reason, people would get fighting mad when we passed by.

It consisted of Kathleen dressed in black with a cape (sound familiar?), with a skull face, and egg whites all through her otherwise beautiful black hair (which made it stand straight up). Then we had a big logging chain with several different people attached to it, each person representing a different sin. One girl dressed up in a mini skirt and gaudy make up was *immorality*. Another guy in a fancy business suit was *greed*. One outfitted as a priest played *religious*. Another sister in a pretty gown would play *vanity*, and on it went. We had *communist* and *fascist* too. There were as many as twenty characters, all representing some form of sin.

Kathleen would scream out, "You're bound by sin, you're bound!" And all the characters would be shouting the name of their sin as we moved along. Kathy would pull sharply on the chain (showing total control), while we all moaned in unison. Each time she would let out the screech of a witches' glee, laughing wildly; she was very good at her part. All of this was done at a very slow pace along the streets, and would be followed up by a street meeting.

One day, in the central park of Turin, it was getting late. The truck pulled up and we all got out. I felt a bit more nervous this time, as there seemed to be an abnormal amount of people. And they seemed a bit loud and rambunctious. My wife was chained behind me playing the part of *lust*. I was playing *pimp*. There were about ten of us.

We started going through the park slowly presenting the drama as usual, and immediately a crowd developed. They were agitated and started screaming out insults. Some of them grabbed the chain and started pulling on it and kicking us. A fight started with two people in front of us. It looked like a brawl, and then everybody started getting into the act. A guy lunged at my wife and punched at me, but I ducked and he hit a guy behind me. Sue and I both jerked to get back up. I was trying to get between the man and my wife. As we jerked in unison, the chain snapped up and smashed the guy right across the teeth. Blood went everywhere. By now the fight was out of control. I could see some lying on the ground, others were fighting. Our team was trying to get loose from the chain; but our depiction of sin had us bound (literally!) too tight. Then the riot police arrived in full gear. Sue and I finally got our hands free, as did a few others, and some-

how we got through the crowd to the edge of the park. Our truck pulled up just as we arrived.

We jumped on the flatbed and took off just as the street meeting team was being arrested by the riot police. I could see Brother Basel being man handled into the patty wagon, with the others. Basel was about fifty years old and was heading the team up at that time. He was a retired teacher. He really stuck out in the crowd. I was worried about Kathleen as I saw her go down early in the mayhem.

We got back to camp and Basel arrived shortly afterward, but crew was still out. We did some praying, and late that night they arrived. They were not as upset about being questioned by the police as they were for having to sit on the street corner all evening waiting for a ride. People gave them some strange looks, and we were worried. For Kathleen, this was a piece of cake! She just said, "Awe, you don't know what real trouble is." What a trooper of a sister she was.

The next day we had made the paper once again. The whole gang was there, with Kathleen right up front, in all her black-caped glory, waiting on the corner for their ride. The story explained that they were from a group of tent people set up in Parco Raffini to preach the gospel. I do not know what people thought when they saw that.

It turned out that we were not the cause of the riot. There had been a political rally shortly before we arrived, and the communist and fascists were already at each other's neck. The police had been expecting trouble. We were just in the wrong place at the wrong time; or, was it the right place at the right time? As it turned out, God used this incident to bring many people to our tent meetings.

Chapter 10

France for the French and the Cherry Pickers

At times we would break up into small groups of about twenty and go to different places throughout Europe to preach the gospel. We would ask local churches if we could live in the sanctuary and use the bathrooms. We would cook in the bus or, if possible, in the church building. Using the church literature we would go out on the streets and invite people to special meetings during the week, where either the Pastor or the team leader would preach. It worked very well, and we saw a lot of fruit.

On one such trip we went to Paris, France and, along the way, stopped to see some beautiful cherry trees. I had never seen such big trees in the States. There was a farmer hoeing near by and we asked if they were his. He said, "Yes, and if you want to pick some go ahead, because those are just for the birds." We went right to it! We brought out our big pans and started filling them up. There were so many cherries, and we were praising God as we thought how wonderful our oatmeal would taste the next morning.

Just as we were finishing up a police car arrived. Our French Canadian brother, Vital, came and tried to explain that we had permission from the farmer. Vital was a fun guy who always told jokes that were never very funny. But we always got a good laugh when he would crack up himself at his dry jokes. He brought joy to every situation.

But the police said it was impossible for us to have permission, since these were not a *farmer's* cherries, but were *French* cherries, and since we were obviously not French they confiscated them and warned us to make it for the border. As they pulled away laughing, we could see them putting cherries in their mouths. I guess the Lord was teaching us to love the unlovely?

We stopped in a small village on a round-about. There was plenty of parking and no traffic. We were going to eat something and rest for a while. Then a small car came barreling around the corner and slammed into us. The man got out saying something to Vital. Our bus was only scratched, but his car got it pretty bad.

The police came to make a report and asked for our insurance. I mentioned we could just forget it, and that we didn't want to press charges. The policeman looked at me and said, "What! We're pressing charges against you, since this is your fault, and either your insurance will pay, or *you* will."

"Wait a minute," I said, "We weren't even moving! We were just sitting here." With a proud look, the policeman replied, "If you didn't exist, then he wouldn't have hit you. So it's *your* fault."

I took a step back. My heart was ready to react "in the flesh." I wanted to yell, "Hey, don't forget who won the war!" But I refrained myself. I could see that these French were a different people, and we would need much more patience.

Arriving in Paris we had no place to stay, so we camped out in a big park. It was like a city in itself. You could be totally hidden with the trees. We pulled out our burner and put on some pasta. We made a lot, and as we were serving it up, some people approached and asked if they could eat with us. We had plenty and started serving them. But they obviously weren't street people, and even looked rather elegant and sophisticated. They

were very polite and courteous, accepted our tracts, and listened to us tell them about the Lord, and then they went on their way. Now we had seen another side of the French people. I thought, "If only we had some wine to serve them, they probably would have gotten saved."

Our time had come. I put on my costume, and looked like a monk with a mini bathrobe and pointed hat. It was sackcloth and itched so bad, and I wondered how people could ever have worn this stuff? The brothers had their Roman uniforms on, and they looked good with their spears and helmets and all. Brother Ronnie's hairy legs looked funny, but I didn't say anything (because my wife had told me mine were a poor excuse for chicken legs). Then of course there was Jesus, played out by Brother Douglas. We poured fake blood on him, and he asked me not to get so much into the flogging because the last time it had drawn some real blood. I apologized and said, "It's just that I get so excited in this particular skit."

We headed for the Eiffel Tower. As we went under it and Jesus was raised up on the cross, I felt the presence of God so strong my knees got weak. The crowd was awestruck, and then the street meeting began. But before long the police raided us and arrested everybody. Somehow in the confusion Ronnie and I managed to get away through the park. As we stood near the street, other cars stopped with people wondering what we were doing.

At the police station Basel asked what we had done wrong, and if there was a law prohibiting what we did. The police said they were sure there was. They said the problem was where we did it... in front of the Eiffel tower.

"Ok," we replied, "Can we do it in front of the Dames Cathedral?"

"No. Not there either."

God showed us that there is no place too hard to preach the gospel; you just have to be willing. *You only lose when you quit.*

Chapter 11

Hitting the Gestapo

To get around Europe with the different teams was an adventure, particularly since we did it in 1950 era Scandia Vabis buses. One we dubbed "the Pig" because that's what it looked like. Another we called "the Cruiser" because it could hit sixty on a straight road (the Pig could do fifty-five on a good day.) But, though they were not much to behold, they were

tough. Originally built for fifty people, we could move twenty-five comfortably, and sleep nine in the back on bunk beds we had built. There was also a small area for a stove and a small cabinet.

I drove both of them, but liked the Cruiser better. It had a wood frame and a huge four-cylinder engine. The wood frame was great until termites attacked it. But that's another story. The border guards thought we were egocentric, rich Americans who were driving around Europe in antique buses. Most of them were too young to ever have even seen such buses on the road.

Once, I was coming from Germany and crossing the Austrian border at Garmish. I took the scenic route; I don't know why, as it was night and I had never taken this road through the Alps. We passed this huge warning sign that said "deadly decline," but it was too late. The bus was heavy with all the band equipment and a full load of people. To say it was overloaded was an understatement. The descent suddenly seemed straight down, and the engine rpm's were too high for me to downshift. I hit the brakes, but it felt like stepping on a tennis ball... almost no response. We picked up speed and I hit the first sharp curve, then the next. I seemed to be losing control by the second turn. It was a drop off of hundreds of feet into the Alpine valley.

My wife who was next to me screamed "let me out of here" and ran to the back of the bus. Everyone could feel what was happening. I screamed, "Pray! I can't control it!" Everybody started speaking in tongues! Even those who never had before! It was an instant Spirit baptism! I felt as though my life was passing before me in that moment. We rumbled around one hairpin curve after another; our headlights illuminated the trees and the tires were screeching as we careened around the corners. On one curve I felt our big old bus begin to tip over, as we went around the curve on two wheels.

But then I believe God took over, as the steering wheel began to spin at the corners faster than I could have turned it. Finally, the road straightened out and relief came over my soul. But my relief was short lived, as a German policeman stepped out of the darkness with his "Halt" stick in hand. I panicked, because I knew what it meant to cross a German policeman! (They still have the appearance of being in the SS, with the jackboots and high brimmed hats. The only thing missing is a Monical.)

My fears were not baseless. Some months before this I had passed a small construction sight in northern Germany, driving a car that a brother donated to the team. Prior to donating it he had used it for a *chicken coop*. The police didn't like its appearance and pulled me over. I don't think they liked the odor any better, even though I had tried to clean it up.

“VAS MACHST DU MIT DIESER AUTO... on our roads?”

I explained that I was a missionary on my way to Sicily 2000 miles away. He started writing on his pad with a look in his eye that seemed to indicate I would soon be on my way to the Ravensbrook concentration camp. Then I started asking for a break, which only made him madder. So I asked for mercy, and he gave me a look as if he didn't understand what the word meant. Finally, falling on one knee, I begged him for forgiveness! And by God's grace, my begging worked. He told me to move on and not stop until I was out of the country. I felt like one of the children of Israel who had just passed the Red Sea. So with this, and a number of other negative experiences with the German police, my blood ran cold.

In my head I remembered the voice of Sven saying, “Never pull up on the emergency brake while the bus is moving, or you'll be thrown out the front windshield and die.” But at that moment I felt I would rather be dead than hit a German policeman, so I grabbed the brake and pulled. Smoke quickly filled the bus and in the mirror I could see smoke billowing from the back wheels. The policeman jumped out of the way in the nick of time. It looked funny as I think back on it. I rolled another three or four hundred feet before we came to a stop. And I thanked God those old brakes didn't work as well as they were supposed to.

My hands seemed glued to the wheel. My heart was racing. Brother Keith, from New Zealand, was following us in a van with the rest of the outreach team. Keith is one of the calmest people I have ever known. He was an engineer (though at one time he was a swimming champion competing to go to the Olympics.) He sundered up to the bus and said, “Clark, you really know how to drive that bus! I could hardly keep up with you!” I was still shaking and couldn't even respond. He also mentioned I should be careful, as it seemed my brakes might be a little hot. (Inside everybody was still choking on the smoke... the only reason I didn't choke was because I wasn't breathing.)

Those old buses served our Italian team non-stop for over twenty more years, taking us from one part of Europe to the other. When we weren't using them to travel in they were used as homes for families. And, given the lifestyle of our team, they were regarded as an American would regard a split-level home! The pig was eventually converted into a kitchen and, ten years ago, we sent it to our Ukrainian team. They are still using it today. The Cruiser went to one of our Romanian teams, and is also still in use.

God will extend and bless the life of tools used for His glory in the same way He extended the clothes and sandals on the children of Israel.

And its fortunate for us since Brother Bill had bought these buses from a junkyard in Sweden in the first place. He picked up the buses, a semi rig, and a furniture delivery truck *per kilo!* For the price of scrap steel! And these were the vehicles given to get the team started, and for hauling the big tent in. God must have been with us... because if he hadn't been we would surely have died or gone mad.

Chapter 12

Smudge Pots and the Key to Naples

We lived in camping tents as families, while the single brethren lived in military barracks tents that we had picked up in Holland. They had been thrown away and were so "holy" that the brethren could look up from their beds and see the stars twinkling at night! You were considered blessed if your bed was in a spot that didn't get leaked on. The married couples' tents weren't much better. Many a night we would wake up and see stars as the wind had blown the tents away in the night. The ground straps were often too rotten to hold them.

In the winter we used smudge pots for heat, just like the ones used in the orange orchards. To light them was an experience. Sometimes the fumes would build up, and when lit would "pop" and throw flames out. You had to stand back. One time the night guard had a great idea to start the stoves easier... just mix a little gas with the kerosene. A German brother, who had recently gotten saved, came in from the street work and went to light his stove. I heard an explosion and ran to the tent just in time to find the brother exiting from the flap door with his head smoking! His eyebrows were gone, and his long bushy hair was burned half way back on his head. He was beat red, and even his eyelashes had vanished. I looked in amazement and asked how he was. He looked at me and said, "I'm ok," as he stumbled away and was rushed to the hospital. He recuperated, but his hair never seemed quite the same; though I think it cleared up his acne problem.

And then there were the rats. They would come into the living tents if you had any food at all. We slept on ground level and at times we would wake looking right into the eyes of a big rat. This time it was Brother Andrea with an idea. He figured that if the rats had plenty of food *outside*, they wouldn't be coming *inside*. So he took it upon himself to feed them every night while he was guarding. He also loved playing his flute on guard duty,

and whenever I was with him I felt like I was with the pied piper and the rats. I think I was. Imagine what the local Christians thought of this front line ministry.

Andrea's idea didn't work. One night a sister had bought a pizza and put it on a little table beside her bed. She was tending to something else for a moment, and turned around just in time to see her pizza *run* out of the tent. That would have been good publicity for *Pizza Hut*.

In the years that passed, the times in these tents did a work in me that couldn't be done in any Bible School, and we felt a joy and grace from God that to this day blesses us. The grandeur of your house is not what makes it a blessing.

The Key To The City

We had heard it said, "Once you see Naples, you can die." So we were excited to go there. And what a city it is. An area of over three million people all pushed together on the side of a volcano.

We put our tent up in front of the stadium, and our first night was much more than we expected. A big communist rally was being held in the stadium. People started coming over to our tent, and they kept coming until there were about two thousand people, and all were men. I think it was more because of our sisters, who were witnessing in front of the stadium, than our political beliefs that drew so much interest. Once inside our tent they started chanting and singing revolutionary songs. One of the men went up on stage and started railing on social problems. Just when it seemed things might be getting out of hand, the people started leaving. And before we could even get enough control back to preach to them, they were gone.

I thought this was so strange. Where did they go, and why? Then one guy informed me that it was time for supper! He said, "Here in Italy *supper* has priority over class warfare and social reform." And not only that, but their mothers had probably cooked all evening, and if they knew what was good for them they wouldn't dare be late! Lenin might have been their leader, but mama was in control of everything else. Italian culture was coming to life before my eyes.

Once again we had set up in the middle of the red light district of Naples. How we seemed always to manage this I do not know. But we felt it fortunate that this time it was all females in the tent area, and not transvestites. We were also in front of a NATO base, and this was an important area for them. In the beginning they were using our parking lot for a bedroom.

So we sent Michael out in the evenings, before the meetings started, to shine a big flashlight in the cars to scare them away. Michael was a big Florida boy who looked like Paul Bunyan with red hair, so when they looked up and saw him there was no back talk... just burning rubber. Some times it would take a few minutes for them to adjust themselves to drive away though... if you know what I mean. They got the message quickly that it was time to find another love zone.

But slowly, many of these people started coming back to the meetings, and bringing their families. We would go out in the evenings and talk to them, giving new testaments and tracts. Some of our sisters had testimonies they related to. One young girl who didn't look the part was a prostitute and got gloriously saved. She left the streets and her whole family opened up to the Gospel. The story became known throughout the area and was picked up by the local newspaper.

A senator by the name of De Angeles came to camp to see what was happening. He was touched and wanted the government to help us, so he arranged an encounter with the city mayor. All the elders were to be present with the young (now converted) prostitute, and we were to give an account of what we were doing to the journalists. Then we were to eat together, after which the mayor was to give us the key to the city, and we were to give him a Bible.

It turned out to be a political affair though. The mayor spoke in such a way as to imply that he was partly responsible for what we were doing, and that he was working for the recuperation of the street girls. He was just fishing for votes. Nevertheless, we later presented the Bible with a word of testimony, and Basel received the key to the city while cameras snapped up pictures of everybody smiling and with an arm on one another's shoulder.

As the journalists were writing away we were asked what we would like from the city as a gift in honor of the key. Basel stepped forward and announced that we would like visas to be in the country because we were all illegal aliens. The mayor nearly choked and said, "Don't write that down! They are legal; they just do not understand what they are saying in Italian!" We were immediately hustled out and Senator De Angeles looked worried. Then an aid of the mayor came and said we could apply, and would be legalized immediately.

We had been told for a couple of years that this was impossible. But they dug up an old law (passed in the 1800's) when the king of Italy (who was married to a gypsy princess) made a special exception for *nomads*. We fit right into the classification, and for all these years we have been the

only people ever to have such visas! God will make a way if we put ourselves in His hands.

Chapter 13

The Squeaky Toilet Role

The place now is Munich, Germany. I went to Munich to put up the tent, and labored for six months to get permission. We had a small group with us to do evangelism also. We lived with a group of Christians in the suburbs. The team would visit Christians to announce our soon coming arrival, and to minister in prayer groups and churches.

One evening Ronny came back from a Thursday night prayer meeting. He shared with us how the people were kinda weird, and believed everybody would one day be saved... including the devil himself. I said, "Well don't be going back there. We're having enough problems without the devil getting saved." He then pulled out a thousand Duetch Marks and said the group had given it as an offering. We needed the money, as the dear brethren hosting us had us paying for everything. They would even listen to the toilet-paper roller squeak to know how many sheets of tissue you were using; the limit was three squeaks. Because of this and other expenses racking up, I sent Ronny back to this fellowship. I said, "they might be a little weird, but they sure are more generous than these *normal* ones we know here."

One day the police came to the door wanting to know whose car was out front. It was an old Opel that we had wrecked a few times but still ran. The rust had eaten it up so bad around the wheel-wells that it looked like it was jacked-up. We had put Illinois license plates on it, and being that this was Munich, Germany, it did look a *little* out of place.

The policeman said we were trashing the neighborhood with the car. In Munich, just hanging your *laundry* outside on Sunday can get you a fine. I started feeling as if everything was illegal, including talking too loud or sneezing. I hid the car to avoid getting hard time in prison. One of the first German words I learned was "RAUS" (which means, "Get out... right now!")

We put the tent up with the help of brother Klaus, a well-known German interpreter who had also helped us get the legal documents for the big tent to go up. But after we started they informed us that it was still not sufficient for us to have meetings. All our money was gone by now and we had no where to go. It had cost us over ten thousand dollars to get this far.

Brother Bill came over to visit, and was in camp when a group of police came and gave us the final solution, or ultimatum. I was so tired of dealing with the German situation. I felt like I wanted to go and check myself into some local concentration camp! But God wasn't over with us yet.

A high ranking officer from the police came out with a number of others to tell us we had twenty four hours to pull down the tent or they would come and cut it down. Bill stepped forward and said we weren't moving, and that if they cut it down it would fall on all hundred and twenty of us. We would pay with our lives he said, and they would relive history. (Bill was always so dramatic.) They left in a fury.

"Call the embassy! Call the newspapers!" Bill said. Have them here for this event to see how Christians are being persecuted. I felt that calling some ambulances might be more appropriate... or some psychiatrists. But surprisingly, the police never returned. An embassy car came by the next day, observed for a few minutes, and left. Contacting the embassy is usually an act of futility anyway.

We finally went on with our meetings, but the church completely ignored them, and after two weeks we fled back to Italy. After all those months, and risking all that we had, even the house ministry we had stayed with said they didn't feel it was the Lord's will to attend. I wondered if they had heard me squeak out more than my limit of three sheets of toilet paper, or if it was something more serious. I really didn't know, and could not understand. These are the hardest things to deal with on the mission field.

We had hoped that the tent would have been used, as it had many times before, to bring an air of unity to the church of Munich. We were broke now, and leaving with a sense of defeat. But this was just the beginning of my German experience.

Chapter 14

Saved From a German Chain Gang

I received a message in Italy from Klaus. He was really mad. He said that the architect's office had billed him for four thousand marks (two thousand dollars). They told him they would take his furniture to begin with, and he had thirty days to comply. Both our names were on the tent permit. I assured him I would return and pay the debt. I had no idea we owed this money, and I wondered how many debts I had that I didn't know about in

Germany. There was also a penalty of six months labor for the state... I could just see my self on some German chain gang.

Brother Bill was bringing a group from America for a special crusade in Sweden. I was told to take a bus to Paris and pick up some people who would join us in Italy, and a second bus to take some of them up to Sweden. At the French border they looked at my Illinois license plates on these old, Swedish buses and said, "No way!" I started believing the old European saying that "France is only for the French."

I parked the buses and prayed for a miracle. At about three O'clock in the morning I noticed most of the lights were off and I could not see any guards. I walked to the office and saw a distinguished looking man sleeping in his chair. I woke him and he asked what I wanted.

"To go to Paris, go ahead and have a good time my friends," I didn't know who he was, but I felt I should go for it. So we cranked up the buses and were off. I thought, "Praise the Lord! The French aren't so bad when they're sleeping."

At the airport it was good to see some of my old teammates, and they were excited about going to Sweden. Bill put his long arm around my neck and pointed his finger toward the corner.

"That's Sue and her child," he said. Sue was the ex-wife of Brother Jared, one of our elders. To me Jared was not just a brother; he was one of my closest friends. We had been praying together for his wife for some years. Bill had promised her a free "European tour" if she came along.

Bill said, "She's your responsibility Clark. Take her to Jared. But first *get her saved*, because they need to get back together."
"I'm not Jesus, Bill! But I will do the best I can."

"I didn't ask for your best... that's not good enough. Just do it!" Bill never lacked words.

So there she was... this beautiful, blond-haired and bra-less young girl, looking for a good time in France. I was with Jerry who had hooked up with us in Germany. He spoke good German. My German was getting better, but I still brought some good laughs in my preaching (which in German congregation can be quite an accomplishment in itself!)

So off we went, and Sue took an immediate liking to me. We talked, and I tried to humor her. She liked stopping to pick up old bottles and trash that had French or German writing on it. Jerry would remind me from time to time that we needed to do more witnessing and less fraternizing. I could see she had no interest in the Gospel (and what she seemed interested in I didn't want to think about.)

I explained my situation and how I had to go to Germany first and take care of a debt. I told her we had no money, but the Lord would take care of it, and that I might have to pull some time, but that it was O.K. since I needed to improve my German anyway. She laughed and thought it was funny; and ridiculous.

We arrived in Munich at the home of Sister Anna Lisa, an elderly and very fervent Christian whom we had grown to love. She had started the M.S. foundation and was well known in her younger days. She had known Hitler personally and drank coffee with him discussing politics well before he took power. She liked him. She also had an SS officer as a lover. Of course she wasn't saved then.

Hitler is a prime example of how bad company perverts a person. "It was that Gerbels who influenced him; he was a good boy" she would say. I had never heard that before, and what made it even more amazing is that she was mostly Jewish. What a person she was! So we were staying at her home, an old sixteenth century villa set in the trees of Soln.

I set out to talk to the person responsible for my case at the "Rat House." That's what the Germans call their City Hall... and I like that better than what we call ours. An old and very articulate gentleman, with eye-brows like Leonard Breshnev, told me that I had twenty-four hours left to pay. If I failed, he said I should bring a change of clothes with me, as I would be serving the state for a while. I envisioned myself staring from behind a barbwire fence with a poor fitting outfit, a shaved head and a sign in the background reading, "Arbeit Macht Frei" (work makes you free). Your mind goes crazy in moments like that.

Anna Lisa was with me and pleaded that we be allowed to make payments... and was he the understanding type. The veins in his neck popped out and he said, "Not one D' Mark more, or one D' Mark less!"

"Take me now! I confess... *I'm broke!* I won't sleep tonight! Just get it over with!" He just looked at me and said, "You have twenty-four hours, not more, not less. Good day."

I walked from his office onto Marien Platz under the Glocken Spiel. There it's as if you step into the Middle Ages in the beauty of the town square. I was deep in thought. I felt so far from those beautiful hills of Tennessee. But still I felt good about being where I was, and would rather be here in this situation than in the comfort of my old life. I decided to just pass out a few tracts and talk to some people before heading back to Anna Lisa's house.

Anna always had good German coffee waiting... and a new story from her full life. One that always stuck with me was of the time she was on

her roof patching a hole. Her house was the only one that had remained from the bombing raids by the Allied forces. A dive-bomber came over and strafed her roof while she was on it. Hundreds of bullets hit all around her, and she wasn't touched.

Another time a five-hundred-pound bomb came through the roof, and she stared at it in disbelief, thinking any moment would be her last. But it never went off. She felt that even in her ignorance of God, He had kept her for Himself. (I believed not only for Him, but also for *me*, as I do not know what I would have done without her strong faith and love toward the team and I.)

She was also instrumental in helping all the India teams. For a while we used her home as a base for sending teams overland to India, and for the preparation of legal documents to get the vehicles out of Germany.

After just a few moments of passing out tracts a man approached me and asked if I was Clark. I was taken back by him, and even though he spoke beautiful German, I could tell he wasn't.

"Do you know me," I asked?

"You were doing street meetings here during the summer on the Fuss Ganger Zone (the walking street). I used to come and listen, and asked someone your name. What are you doing here? I haven't seen you or the meetings for many months."

I explained we had left rather suddenly and that our burden for Italy had grown immensely... due to the time we spent in Germany. He introduced himself as Rudolph from Romania. I could see he was a believer, as the joy of the Lord was in his eyes. He shared for a moment how his wife was still in Romania and couldn't leave. This was during the time of the Ceausescu regime. I could see that he loved and missed her.

Again he asked why I was here. I said that I needed to take care of some things that were left from the previous tent ministry there. He said, "You look troubled." Then he smiled and said, "You need money." I was surprised as I was sure I gave no indication of my financial predicament.

From an old pair of jeans he pulled out a role of one-hundred D' Mark notes. How much do you need? My wicked little heart jumped a beat. I just stared at the money. I know I stammered. My tongue was tied.

"What ever the Lord puts on your heart," is what finally came out of my mouth. But my heart was saying "Four... no... five thousand. Wait, maybe it's six!"

He took a serious look at me and peeled off a big pile of notes and stuck them into my hand saying, "I hope this will do." He then turned and quickly walked away. I looked at the money in my hand. Then I looked up to

see that he was gone. I thought an angel of God had just saved my skin. Rudolph is not just a reindeer to me... but an angel too!

I must say that, though I felt joy, I also felt a bit strange inside. It's hard to explain, but I was even having feelings of fear. Even after all the years since my conversion I had thoughts like, "There really *IS* a God!" I just *knew* that there was four thousand D' Marks in my hand. How could it not be? I found a corner and started counting it... only three thousand. I thought, "Clark! You dummy! Why didn't you just ask?" My flesh was going wild. I remembered again my Nazi friend in the architect's office saying, "Not one more, and not one less!"

I arrived at Anna Lisa's house full of joy, but also wondering what was next. I knew I could sell my blood to get money, but I would have had to have been an Elephant to earn enough. Anna went to her bedroom and came back with five hundred D' Marks that she had already planned to give to me. She apologized that it wasn't enough.

Still I could hear little Adolph saying, "Not one more or less." We had some of her good coffee, and were talking when she said, "Oh, you have gotten a letter from the electric department." I had used her address when we were there. My first thought was negative. But then I opened it and there it was... a check for one thousand D' Marks... for an overpaid bill! That was a real miracle, as we had never overpaid *anything* in the life of our ministry.

We danced around the room and thanked God. Anna went to bed, but Jerry and I were just too hyped; and we had drunk a lot of coffee. We sat at the little coffee table with a big reading lamp over it, praying. Kathy came in, who was also a part of this little team effort. Then Sue came in and sat down. She started crying and said she thought we were all either crazy or on some very good dope. She had thought I was a goner and had told God, in her own rebellious way, that if He supplied this money she would believe in Him.

We prayed together, and in that moment we saw a sinner come to God. She cried and prayed all night. The next morning I was ready to head out. We even had enough money to get back to camp in Naples, and I was missing my wife and kids. Sue came out with this long Jesus people dress on and a Bible in her hand.

"I'm going out to witness with Kathy," she said. God is a real miracle worker, because she even had a bra on.

I couldn't wait to get to camp. I knew Jared would be ecstatic. It was like a scene from a movie. We pulled in and the whole team was waiting in

the middle of camp. There was silence and, one after another, we all filed out of the bus. Then Sue came out; it was like it happened in slow motion.

Jared was tentative, trying not to act too emotional, unsure how Sue would react after five years of divorce. But she ran across the camp, in front of over a hundred cheering onlookers, and jumped into Jared's arms. They were remarried a few months later, and went on to pioneer our team in Spain; a team that is still bearing much fruit today.