

AUSTRALIAN
VOICE

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“To China with Love”



John Gagliardi

The cover photo shows Keith Cleland at the signing ceremony of the 'Agreement' for a joint venture between International Christian Chamber of Commerce" and the Guandong Metal Industry Corp.

This sets in motion the development of a 3 million tonne steel mill, the profit of which will fund a 6000 Christian based Technological University of World Standard.

“Media Mover” — John Gagliardi

Twenty-two years old and the Chief of Staff at Brisbane’s Channel 9 TV — that was something to brag about.

I had been at the station only 18 months when the promotion came through. When I joined the channel as a political reporter I had no idea what the job required, but always being one for jumping in at the deep end, I figured I could handle it.

Media held an attraction for me and right from the time I left school and took a cadetship in journalism at the *Brisbane Telegraph*, I seemed to be gifted with an ability to succeed in it. I gained a lot of kudos as a reporter, so much so that I was graduated to fully graded reporter status two years before my cadetship finished. On top of that I was promoted to assistant features editor.

Giant strides for a young cub, but I was not satisfied. I was driven by an all-consuming ambition. Others talked casually about “getting ahead”, but with me it was different. It was a compulsion.

After just six months at that post I felt I was stagnating, so I looked around for fresher fields and greater challenges, and when a higher grade position as political reporter came up at Channel 9 I was in boots and all.

There was no time for training; it was all done on the job and my first assignment was to interview the future State Premier of Queensland on his first day as a cabinet minister. It was appropriate really — him on his first day as a cabinet minister being interviewed by me on my first day as a political reporter.

I enjoyed the job immensely. There was plenty of freedom to use

your initiative. But ambition, always riding close to the surface, clothed me with a false sincerity. I chose to mix with those I saw as “tall poppies”—the movers and shakers. I felt that whatever it was they had would surely fall on me.

As Chief of Staff I was in control of Channel 9 news, with 16 journalists reporting to me. My 2IC was 55 and, of course, the position was tailor-made for my insatiable ego.

Itchy feet

Four years on I was hit with itchy feet and began scanning the job market again.

I thrived on work and seemed to find success in whatever I turned my hand to. And the more success I gained the more I basked in the glory and the more my ego expanded.

But on the inside of me I saw a different personality; one that would wake up of a morning with the realisation that my life was terribly false. There was a tremendous rift developing between me and this superficial sincerity that was paraded before the watching world.

On hearing a whisper that there was big money to be made in public relations, I embarked upon a new career with a Brisbane company equipped only with my personality and four years of political and business contacts built up during my time with Channel 9.

Within a year the company had expanded; I was made Queensland Managing Director and we operated in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra as well. Before we knew it we were the third biggest PR company in Australia, servicing the largest of the national companies.

Our client list included a number of political party branches and I was personally appointed as a consultant to the then Prime Minister, John Gorton. You can imagine what that did to my ego! My lifestyle started speeding along in grand style and the gap between the real me (introvert, shy sort of person), and the apparently extrovert, ambitious consultant to prime ministers was getting wider all the time.

God of the bottle

I desperately needed something to hold the two personalities together and I soon found it. Unfortunately it was not the God of my upbringing; rather it was the god of the bottle. The first time I had a good drink I suddenly felt so together. It was incredible.

The first sign that drink is going to be a problem is when it does more for you than it should. I didn't know that then. All I knew was the booze made me feel good so I took to it more and more.

It gave me an aggressive edge I hadn't had before; it gave a boldness, but also a callousness, cynicism and a disregard for my family. Ever so slowly booze changed my whole personality.

Kay, my wife, asked me many times what had happened to me. I was so different, she said. All I was interested in was the project I was working on or the next one coming up.

I made a very successful contribution to the PR company and earned a lot of money, but my reliance on booze effectively finished me. While I never became a rolling-in-the-gutter drunk I got to the point where I

would start the day off with a drink and keep up a steady intake throughout the day. My exuberant personality hid the facts from everyone but Kay.

The deception became intolerable—I had to get out.

I made the break and we headed north to Townsville. I took a job with a mining company there as manager. Of course, the drink followed me but things were generally pretty good—for three or four years—then the drive for a better slice of the action took control and I started my own PR company in Townsville.

The plan was to have a small business running out of home—no overheads, no hassles. But it wasn't to be. In a short time many of my former clients heard I was back in the market and I landed some big accounts.

At one stage I had over a billion dollars worth of projects on the go. It was my job to lobby them through State and Federal government; their success depended on me.

Obviously, in big business the movers want their pound of flesh, so the pressures on me to perform mounted continuously. Then came the crunch.

Jupiters

I took on the responsibility for lobbying the Gold Coast Casino, Jupiters, into existence for the Jennings Group. It was a massive project and all-consuming in terms of time. But not only that; it also involved work that launched me into a whole new spectrum of questionable activity.

To lobby the Casino into existence we first had to lobby several rival groups out. One of the groups was very definitely connected with organised crime, and in combatting them my life was threatened. So was Kay's. Our telephone was tapped and I was involved in high speed car chases as the opposition sought to get me out of the way.

Looking back, it was exciting stuff; the sort of thing you read about but would rather not be involved with yourself.

In a way I enjoyed the lobbying. It was knife edge tension all the way; literally a matter of life and death. And of course the pay was good. It would have to be for those risks. I was taking between \$8-10,000 per week. Of course, I was spending a lot too.

I had two Mercedes, a big house, swimming pool, the whole shooting match. I spent most of my time living in jets flying from Townsville all over Australia. Hotel penthouses became more familiar than my own home. But it was still a hollow sham, propped up by booze and ambition and little else.

I don't know exactly what triggered the fall, but I do know that when the decision was announced that Jennings had been awarded the casino rights, I was flat on my back in a psychiatric bed.

I'd had a complete breakdown brought on by a combination of stress and too much drinking. At the time I should have been lapping up the accolades for pulling off what was considered to be one of the biggest PR coups in Australia, I was out of it: a depressed lump lying in a hospital bed.

Black tunnel

I'd been in the hospital for two weeks and was not getting any better. I was in the grip of a pathological depression. It was like being in a black room with nothing but darkness in any direction; or like being in a black tunnel and there's no light at the end.

As far as I was concerned my business was a complete ruin. My family was still with me but I knew I had let them down badly and I felt I had lost them.

Easter Sunday, 1981. It was 3 am and I hadn't slept all night. Lying on the bed I decided that I was really only a burden to my family. I was well insured and I couldn't see me ever getting back to gainful employment. It was time to end it all—a cold decision made on a cold sleepless night.

As I lay there thinking of a suitable method to depart—dramatic, but not too messy—there came from a way back in the past a spark of an idea that there was an answer.

Without any real confidence, without any great flashing lights, it just struck me that I might as well try the God of my Sunday School days; I mean, I had nothing to lose—I was going to kill myself anyway.

I didn't utter any smooth flowing prayer: just a real gut cry. "God, if you're there, I give up. I just can't cope. If you're there, I hand my life over to you." It was that simple.

Immediately I was conscious of a presence in the room with me. I felt light, almost weightless. The blackness that was threatening to suffocate me seemed to recede, giving way to a magnificent white light.

I got out of the bed and on to my knees— something I'd never done outside of a church before. I started to pray and knew that Jesus Christ was in the room with me. There was no logical reasoning behind my knowledge; I just knew it was Him.

Tears started to come and I knelt there and sobbed until daylight.

The first song of the day that greeted me over the airwaves was Simon & Garfunkel's *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. Hearing it at that time was like an omen to me; it struck me that there really was a bridge over troubled waters and boy, were my waters troubled.!

Sledge hammer

There was nothing intellectual or logical about this thing—it was a totally trans-rational experience that hit me like a sledge hammer.

It changed everything; turned me upside down. I hadn't done anything clever or read any great complex treatise. I simply opened my heart to the fact that maybe there was a God who could get you out of trouble when you're in big trouble.

When Kay came to visit me that morning she thought I'd flipped out. Yesterday she saw me a little black heap of self-pity. This morning I was bursting with plans and enthusiasm, ready to take on the world again. But the emphasis had changed; there was a clean ring to my plans. It wasn't the pride trip; I wanted to achieve something worthwhile.

It would be nice to say from that point everything was fine, but it wasn't.

I went back home to Townsville and before long the urge to drink

returned. But nothing stays the same and this time I coupled drinking with pills. For a year I was a mess. On the booze then off again; up, then down. I was trying hard to hold on to the experience I'd had with God but it got awfully difficult at times.

I would never have seen the year out had it not been for the faithful prayers and loving support of Kay. She had never given away the faith of her early years and throughout my ambitious climb from cadet reporter to top-dog PR man she continued to pray. And I think it was her prayers that pulled me out of my downward spiral.

I was unemployed for a whole year. I applied for 50 jobs and my written applications showed me to be a top flight prospect. But no one wanted me.

I had time to kill and this led me to the second major spiritual encounter of my life. I was sitting in my study and there on the shelf was a version of the New Testament called *The Living Bible*.

I casually picked it up and flicked through the pages. I started at the book of Matthew and idly glanced over a couple of lines. Then it hit me. The same sledge hammer effect. Something riveted me to the page and I started to read hungrily. It was just as if the words were going straight into my heart and again the tears flowed down my face as I read.

For the first time in my life I read the Bible voluntarily. I read all four gospels and they absolutely changed me—probably as much as the first experience. I realised then that the person who came into my heart in

the hospital room had filled the gap booze used to fill. At that time I didn't know Him by name or understand what had happened to me. But by reading the Bible it all clicked together and very soon the drinking problem just stopped.

Call it coincidence if you like. I prefer to call it God; but soon afterwards, after 50 job rejections, the local paper rang and offered me a job as political reporter.

Full circle, I thought. Could I handle starting over again? I swallowed my pride and took the job. I was back on the road. I had the power of God in my life. I was reading the Bible and other literature and was beginning to understand what it was on about. Yet no one had ever told me that there were churches who practised everything I had experienced. I never knew there were churches that operated in that realm. Until I missed a plane out of Cairns sometime after starting at the paper. . .

Killing time

I was on assignment and missed my Sunday morning flight back to Townsville, so I thought I'd kill time by wandering into the church just over the road from the motel.

The place was called the Christian Outreach Centre. I'd never heard of it before, but guessed I could sneak quietly into the back row unnoticed.

No way! After the exuberant handshake and welcome at the door, I was shown to a seat right down the front of the church. There was singing and hand clapping and people lifting their arms in the air; such goings on in a church I had never witnessed before!

As the preacher spoke the presence of God was evident. The same presence I'd felt twice before. At the end there was an invitation for those who wanted to become Christians to come out the front and make it public. Without thinking about it too much I left my seat, went out the front and made a public statement concerning my desire to follow Jesus Christ.

It was no big deal, but it was clear in my mind now—I was a born again Christian.

Back in Townsville I didn't tell Kay what had happened. I did say I'd been to an unusual church and suggested we go to the local branch. The next Sunday we bundled all the kids off with us. They all sat back and laughed at these supposedly intelligent human beings dancing round from one foot to the other, waving their arms and singing to music that sounded more like rock'n'roll, than Rock of Ages. But something got them and they wanted to go back for more.

Next Sunday we were all there again and when the preacher gave an invitation for people to commit their lives to Christ I heard a shuffle along my row. Glancing up I nearly flipped to see my four teenage kids move as one out to the front to become Christians.

They were prayed for, to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, and were knocked off their feet by the power of God.

They were still floating six inches off the ground when they returned to their seats.

That night the same thing happened to Kay and not till then did I

tell her what had happened to me in Cairns.

It was great. Once we were a typical upper middle class family going to hell on a highway. Now we were a family of religious fanatics floating on cloud nine! Who would have believed it?

Obviously the rest of my family did. They'd written me off and the only way they could explain the change in me was to agree that something totally super-natural had happened to them too.

Looking back on my life now that I'm in my 40s, it's incredible to see how all the experiences I chalked up have helped develop me and prepare me for what I am doing today. Nothing is ever wasted, it seems. God can resurrect even the most hopeless case.

I'm still in the communication business, but it's advertising this time, as GM of Queensland's largest privately owned ad agency.

I've been asked whether I'm afraid history will repeat itself; whether the drive for success will take control again. I say no. Being born again is not some spiritual diversion, it's for real. And that means different motivations; different priorities, plus the certainty that what I am doing is the will of God for me.

I'm glad to be in an agency where there are a number of fellow Christians and where there are high ethical standards. We exercise discretion over the type of accounts we will handle and have a strong commitment to various Christian ministry organisations, using our skills to help them communicate the

Kingdom of God better.

There's a satisfying balance in my working life now. And that makes me a better husband and father as well. The driving compulsion has gone, and what's more, God gets the credit, not me. That old friend ego has been cut down to size! •

John Gagliardi is General Manager of David Delaney and Associates Pty. He and Kay have four children: Jason (23), Nicole (21), Simone (20) and Damian (18).





ALAN CARROL - The Guru's Touch

The engines screamed as the plane sped along the airstrip and lifted from the ground. I could feel myself being pulled up on huge metal wings into the blue above the clouds.

I closed my eyes and entered into my own spiritual flight that some called paradise and some called oblivion.

The air hostess may have stopped to offer me orange juice, but I transcended the banal world.

Below me, the Tasman Sea was buried beneath floating clouds.

Behind me, in New Zealand, was my second wife and our children. I blotted them out of my memory,

surrendering my mind to the absolute - the Divine Principle - becoming one with the Cosmos.

I was deep in meditation.

When the plane began the long descent to land I opened my eyes and looked out the window. I was excited, because this was the time I would meet my Guru.

I had been involved in the Divine Light Mission for a few years, and now was my big opportunity. I had been asked to go to Australia and get accommodation and travel arrangements ready for Guru Maharaji.

It was an exciting movement. We would gather every night, listening to

the teachings of Maharaji and practising his form of mediation. I was living proof that his religion worked. For years I had been a nomad, travelling from town to town, from country to country, from woman to woman. I had several children, but I never stayed around long enough for them to remember my face.

For fifteen years I had wandered aimlessly, getting work where I could, finding a lonely woman to sleep with for a few months, then hitting the road again. But my life had been transformed by the Divine Light Mission. I felt I had something to stay around for.

Running away had been part of my life. My father had run away from my mother when we were kids, so perhaps it was bred into me. I deserted ship to get married when I was very young, but being used to adventure and travelling from one side of the earth to the other, it was difficult to settle down. So after 4 years of marriage and 3 children I just packed my bags one day and left.

I still remember the sound of the kids crying as I headed out the door.

Years later I drifted into a second marriage without even thinking much about it. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but even before our honeymoon was over I knew I'd made a mistake.

It wasn't long before my wife started getting on my nerves, and

we'd be fighting and I'd feel my feet begin to itch. But I hardly expected that the "someone more exciting" to come into my life would be a young Indian guru!

His name was Guru Maharaji, a Messiah to the West and the leader of the Divine Light Mission. Maybe deep down, the heart of the restless wanderer was looking for something that could be relied upon; a love that would stand the test of time; a peace that would satisfy in my hour of need.

It seemed the Maharaji was one to give it to me; he changed my life. I gave up eating meat and drinking, and I stopped womanizing. I tried to live a pure life, uncontaminated by illicit sex or alcohol. But it was too late to save my second marriage.

However meditation gave me peace that showed itself in my divorce proceedings. As we visited solicitors and signed papers, there was no haggling over money, and we were not cruel to one another. It seemed like Maharaji's hand was upon me. I had been in the situation of separation before, I knew what it was like; the arguing over the furniture, the fights over the debts and who would pay the overdraft. That's why I found it easier just to pack my suitcase and leave. "To hell with the new lounge suite- let her have it!" I would say

to myself. It wasn't worth the fight. But this time it was different. I knew why and I told everyone; Maharaji was with me.

I felt the Guru's touch.

It was when the divorce was propelling me into a deeper commitment to Maharaji that I received a phone call asking me if I would be willing to go to Australia to organise accommodation on his visit. I had nothing to lose, so I pawned some furniture for my airfare and left.

Meditating in the presence of one's Guru, and experiencing his teaching at first hand was like sitting in the presence of God. I felt spiritually charged. After his visit, when my work for the Maharaji's tour had ended, I stayed on in Australia, living and working with members of the Divine Light Mission.

But when the Guru left, I felt like some part of me had gone away. Meditation lacked something; I was just sitting alone with my eyes closed, not becoming one with the Cosmos anymore. If I could be with Maharaji all the time, I thought, perhaps I would be satisfied. But he had gone away and I needed to recapture my spiritual peace on my own.

For the first time I felt like the meditation didn't work for me anymore, and I began to feel lonely. My father had been in England ever since he had walked out on us back in the 50's. I had not seen him in years, and he was now an old man. I decided to write to him and make contact. I began thinking about my children too. I had not seen any of them either for a long time. I began writing letters inviting my children to

come and visit me. All of them were grown up and married, and I hoped that seeing them would fill the gap in my life that grew as Maharaji's power seemed to dwindle.

My daughter came over and stayed with me and I went to England for 18 months to visit my father. But still I was lonely.

My two marriages, numerous girlfriends and lovers had failed to give me the love that I was looking for. The contacts I had re-established with my family were good, but failed to give me any lasting satisfaction.

When I got back from England I had nothing. No job and only enough possessions to fit into a suitcase. Some devotees of Maharaji offered me a place to stay on the floor at their house. I bought a stretcher and moved into a dim back room.

It was nearly my 50th birthday, and I was becoming increasingly disillusioned with the whole thing. I had been with the Divine Light Mission for seven years - far longer than I had ever stayed with any woman - but my feet were once more getting restless and making me think about moving on.

"Half a century!" I said. "What have I got to show for it? A suitcase and a stretcher!" And so it was on my 50th birthday that I bought some cheap wine and went out looking for a woman to spend the night with—breaking my vow of abstinence from drinking and illicit sex.

I was not the only one for whom the claims of Guru Maharaji were wearing a bit thin. The Divine Light Mission was slowly dying, and as the devotees' enthusiasm dwindled, they

had a meeting once a week instead of every night.

I spent the extra time returning to my old habits of drinking.

"Abstinence!" I laughed as the alcohol invaded my blood stream and my thinking. "I've wasted 7 years when I could have been having a good time!"

One of my lovers during that time was a closet Christian, and (as strange as it may seem) we moved in together. She was a bundle of ironies: a Christian living with a lapsed Divine Lighter! She talked about Jesus to me, but never went to church and didn't tell her friends about her secret faith. Through her I became interested in Jesus, and I began watching videos of American TV evangelists. I sat on the couch and watched them waving their big black Bibles in the air, hanging on every word they said.

It seemed to me that the claims that Jesus made were similar to the claims of the Divine Light Mission.

Purpose

Hope

Love

Peace

Fulfillment

Meaning

Isn't this what we are all looking for?

But I'd had enough of self-made Gurus. They came and gave inspiration, but then they went away leaving only video-tapes of their sermons behind. Then they would die like ordinary citizens of the planet, and their devotees would have to carry on without them. What if Jesus' claim that he would "never leave, nor forsake" his disciples were

true? What if Jesus still lived on after being put to death two thousand years ago. What if he was more than a great Guru-teacher - and was the very incarnation of God?

My mind was blown away by such ideas as my eyes were glued to the evangelists on television.

One day in particular everything the preacher was saying finally clicked into place. Yes, I thought, Jesus is what I have been looking for. He was the one I had to devote my life to. The TV preacher asked those who wanted to accept Jesus as their Lord to repeat a prayer after him.

I knew what it meant to follow a teacher as Lord—I had followed Maharaji for 7 years and wanted Jesus to be my Guru—the one who was my spiritual master and teacher.

"I realise that I am a sinner. . ." the preacher said, leaving a pause for the TV audience to pray the same words. I bowed my head and repeated the prayer, "I believe that Jesus died for me to wash away my sin. . . I receive him as my Lord and Saviour of my life. . ."

I looked up from my prayer of commitment, and saw the TV preacher beaming back at me through the tube.

"Congratulations," he said, "You're now born again to a new life with Christ!"

At first, nothing much seemed to happen, and I was disappointed. "Perhaps", I thought, "All religions are just the same—playing on people's emotions for someone's financial gain."

But as the weeks passed, I began to see that Jesus had, in fact, entered my life. I went to church and publically

acknowledged Jesus as my Lord.

A sense of guilt came over me about the fact that I was living with a woman without being married. And even though it was through her that I came to know Jesus, I realised that I had to leave her—not because I was bored and wanted to walk out, but because I wanted to do what was right. I had begun a new life with Christ as my master and I wanted to live how he wanted me to. I went to the pastor of the church I had joined and asked him if there was any place that I could stay.

He nodded and smiled—and I ended up sleeping in the new church building as a caretaker! I was overcome by the feeling of belonging, and by the love that the people in the church showed for me. They came round to help me move in, and for working bees.

My life had been marred by brief, furtive relationships with women. I had no commitment to any of them and walked out when things got tough or when I got bored. I had remained a wanderer with no reason to stay in one place long enough to get to know the wallpaper.

All of that changed when I met Jesus, I married a lady from the church and we began a life together—“till death us do part”. My feet are firmly planted in the Lord’s garden and I am enjoying being under his care, never to wander aimlessly again.

Diana and I have been married three and a half years. We had our ups and downs in the first year, but in handing our marriage over to the Lord and continual prayer together, God has blessed our marriage.

All things that I searched for I have found in Jesus. And though the power of the Guru’s turned to emptiness, I have never been disappointed by the security I have found in Jesus.

Alan Carrol and his wife Diana live in Ipswich, Queensland, Australia. Alan works for the Brisbane City Council, and is President of Ipswich FGBMFI.



NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF GOD TO CHANGE LIVES

— John Vander-Velde —

I was born in the Melbourne suburb of Greensborough. Six months after my arrival my father left home, and I did not see him again until I was 18 years old. My sister and I were shifted from house to house during those early years and left with friends and relatives as my mother was in and out of hospitals.

At the age of nine I was taken in by my grandmother and aunt who took responsibility for my upbringing. My grandmother was a non-church going Roman Catholic who insisted I attend the RC Church in Hawthorn near our home. I was taught to recite the Lords Prayer by my grandmother but as far as church went I was only taught about Joseph and his multi-coloured coat, and Mary.

Some years passed and I tended to search for a father figure, in relatives or friends. At the age of 14 I left school and commenced an apprenticeship in electronics at RMIT Melbourne and completed 4 years during which time I was employed as a TV Technician and later as an applications engineer.

I met my wife Val when I was 18 years old and married at 19. The early years were a challenge to prove I could make a success of life given my rocky start.

I moved into management and progressed into senior management with national based companies, but there was an **emptiness inside** I could

not overcome.

My life started to display the wrong fruits as in Galations 5. V. 19 The acts of a sinful nature rather than the fruits of the Spirit also in Gal 5. V. 22, being love, joy, peace and patience. We moved to Perth now with a son and daughter for a two year management transfer from Melbourne.

Towards the end of our two years in WA I was walking down St. Georges Terrace in a main city street when I was approached from behind by a man who tapped me on the shoulder and asked **“Have you seen Jesus? He is probably round the next corner”**. If I could meet up with that man today I would shake his hand and thank him for planting seed which would later bear fruit.

As a family we returned to Melbourne and although my wife had committed her heart to Jesus while in Perth, I did not want anything to do with that “religion”...as I knew it.

I resigned from the company and secured another position with more of a technical/management profile, but I still had no peace, because all I was doing was satisfying my financial and material desires.

I kept heading into brick walls having no direction to go in that would fill the empty space. Rejection by my father was really hurting, my mother was on and off the scene, my grandmother had since passed away, and my aunt was getting old fast. My wife and children were going in the

opposite direction.

I had no one to turn to so I decided to take my life—and that's exactly what the enemy 'Satan' wanted.

I drove down to Mt Eliza a Melbourne seaside town, and parked my company car facing a fence in a secluded area. Beyond the fence was a thirty foot drop to the water below.

The car was running, the stereo was flat out, and the windows up I was ready to put it into gear and finish my life. Then, over the stereo noise, I heard a tap at the driver's side window and as I turned I saw a woman's face. I wound the window down and she said, "What are you doing?". I said "I am going to drive over the cliff" (the stereo was still flat out). She then said "God has got a plan for your life." I then leaned over to turn down the stereo and as I went to look out of the driver's side window she was gone, nowhere to be seen. Suddenly it hit me what a stupid thing I was doing. I got out and looked everywhere for this woman, but there were not even foot prints in the loamy sand by the car....no trace.

Two weeks later I tried again—this time down on the winding road to Apollo Bay. I sat behind a truck waiting for it to leave sufficient space so that I could pretend to miss a bend and drive over the side. Once again I could not find the room to either overtake or turn off the road, so I returned home.

A week later I arranged for my wife and children to visit their nanna, which left me alone to try once again. This time the hose in the exhaust trick, but guess what—I could not start the car.

We had my mother-in-law staying with us over a two day break, my wife Val was going to a bible study course at her brother's place in Ashburton. So I decided, as we only had one car, to drop Val off at her bible study course and continue on and take her mother home.

Once I arrived at my mother-in-law's house I thought that if I could delay by having a cup of tea, Val's bible study would be over and I wouldn't have to go in.

But when I returned to pick up Val they hadn't finished and guess what—they invited me in.

Val's brother said "Would you like to join us?" I said; "No I will just sit over here out of the road." With that Val's brother said I might just as well read something and passed me a Bible: that's all I needed! So I thought, to make it look good, I will pretend to read it. It fell open in my lap and suddenly I was confronted by **Proverbs 1:22-33** (Living Bible).

"You simpletons" She cries. How long will you go on being fools? How long will you scoff at wisdom and fight the facts? Come here and listen to me, I'll pour out my Spirit of wisdom upon you, and make you wise.

I have called you so often but still you won't come. I have pleaded, but all in vain. For you have spurned my counsel and reproof. Some day you'll be in trouble, and I'll laugh. Mock me, will you?-I'll mock you.

When a storm of terror surrounds you, and when you are engulfed by anguish and distress, then I will not answer your cry for help. It will be too late though you

search for me ever so anxiously.

For you closed your eyes to the facts and did not choose to reverence and trust the Lord, and you turned your back on me, spurning my advice.

That is why you must eat the bitter fruit of having your own way, and experience the full terrors of the pathway you have chosen. For you turned away from me - to death, your own complacency will kill you. Fools', but all who listen to me shall live in peace and safety, unafraid.

I could not believe what I had read. I shook and went grey. This passage summed up my life—GOD HAD SPOKEN THROUGH HIS WORD to me. My wife lent over and saw my face and said, 'What's wrong love?' I responded with a low voice, 'I think God is speaking to me.'

One week later Val had broken or badly sprained her ankle. I made up a board in the bed to keep the sheets from touching her ankle and a broom to walk with if she had to get up.

With that I went to leave for work, and said I would see her that night. She said, 'don't worry, the children and I will pray and Jesus will heal my ankle.' I thought this is too much and went on my way.

That night I was confronted by Val running up the drive to greet me; no swelling, no bruises. I could not deny that it was a miracle.

One week later on Boxing day I fell down on my knees and cried my heart out to the Lord asking forgiveness for my sins and accepting him into my heart.

Today I have the good fruits the

Lord has given (Gal 5), my family has been restored and I now acknowledge my Heavenly Father.

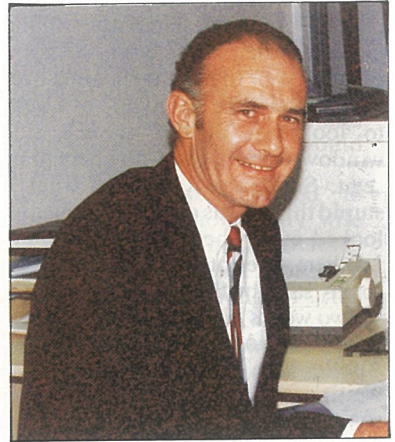
He has provided me with my own business as a Management Consultant operating in Melbourne, which in turn gives me the opportunity to bear witness to what Jesus Christ has done in my life.

John is currently President of the Knox Chapter of FGB and is managing director of a Management Consulting firm.

He lives with wife Val, and children.

John Vander-Velde

Praise the Name of JESUS



DR. KEITH CLELAND -

“To China with Love”

I was always a seeker. There had to be more to life than a series of ups and downs. Surely happiness didn't depend on whether there was a dinner on Friday night and an outing on Saturday.

But listening to the vicar's sermons as a choir boy for many years I became convinced of one thing: if there was an underlying truth, it could not be found in the Christian religion.

As a cadet at sea there were many opportunities to travel the world - to visit other countries and learn about people's religions. I witnessed the incredible deprivations of an Indian population crying for food and housing whilst seeking relief from a variety of Hindu deities. I saw the camel riding Muslims of the Middle East, fathers raised in tents in the desert, whilst their sons were being educated at Eton and Oxford as oil reserves flowed in different directions. I looked closely at the bland, impassive face of the East and witnessed their devotion to Buddha housed in regal shrines. Surely in Buddha's attempts to reach Nirvana, the place of nothingness, beyond toil and sweat, free from worldly cares, anxieties and pressures, I would find the truth.

After leaving the sea I studied accounting through a correspondence school, and was later offered the position of State Principal at the Correspondence College. Although this was a well paid and secure job, in heart I was not content. Where was truth?

I undertook a part-time Arts Degree, majoring in philosophy with a sub-major in Political Science. Some five years later I graduated, achieving the Commonwealth Parliamentary Prize for the political science subject 'Philosophy of Political Science' and topping the class in philosophy. Nevertheless I could not find the elusive truth. Could it be that it existed beyond my imagination?

I enrolled for a Masters degree in the political philosophies of Jean Jaques Rousseau since I had extracted a glimmer of excitement from his theory of good will.

After a four hundred page thesis and four years later, I came to the conclusion that Rousseau's theory was, at best, an ideal of his imagination. Yet it was this ideal that stirred the hearts of men at the time and which can be traced through the events, the American Declaration of Independence, the French Revolution and in the growing sense of each man as a contributor to the affairs of a nation rather than a pawn in the hands of a king.

By now I had invested in a gold exploration company determining that if I could not find the truth, I would not miss out in making a dollar or two. Every few weeks I would visit the field and check on progress, the days came when I stood on the edge of a mile-long shelf calculated to contain \$60 million. I had found all the money I would ever need yet it left me wondering what I would do with it.

My company needed more funds to sink more shafts into the reef, and in despair I approached a friend on my return to the city. To my surprise he suggested that I come to a mid-week meeting at the cathedral. My immediate response was to point out that although having been an Anglican choir boy for many years, I did not believe there was any point in such a visit. Yet perhaps he would introduce me to someone with the funds at the church? In the end it turned out to be a healing service conducted by Canon Jim Glennon. He spoke briefly and convincingly.

After the service I was invited to supper in the chapter house, but left. I drove off intending to have an early night before carrying on the search for funds the following day. Before turning the bed light off, however, I scanned the book my friend had given me. It was titled 'The Cross and the Switchblade'. Something caught my attention and I began to read it. The bed light was overtaken by the dawn light before I put the book down, and it was only when I had finished the book that I felt as though a great load had been lifted from my back. I broke down in tears of joy and peace and tremendous excitement. I had at last found the truth; the essence of life. And the truth was not an idol or a statue, a philosophy or a religion. Truth was God.

Almost immediately I was out of bed and on my knees asking forgiveness for the past wrongs that came to mind: I wrote letters to people I had offended; I went to Canon Jim Glennon to tell him what had happened and asked to attend a weekend conference he had spoken about.

An Anglican vicar from All Souls, London, visited the Cathedral and spoke of the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He said that when the Bishop laid hands on you at the time of confirmation, his words included 'receive ye the Holy Spirit', at which time we should have received. But due to a major hiccup in the Anglican (and Catholic) professions which had been going on for centuries, the reality of this confirmation exercise had subsided into prayer-book words recited much as any piece of literature. The clergy not understanding, the confirmees lacking instruction, came together as a matter of ritual. Now this matter was put right as Michael Harper prayed for some forty of us who went forward for prayer. I sensed a physical visitation of power not unlike electricity passing through me. I knew I could stop it as a matter of decision, but I didn't want this contact to cease. I was soon gasping for breath until Michael said 'open your mouth'. Instantaneously I did, and words flooded out in a torrent of expressions, words which were foreign to my tongue. I could hardly stop until an hour or so later when the service was called to order. I couldn't hold back in the car on the way home, not through the night, or in the morning. Word expressions and languages flowed endlessly, from my mouth and I had no idea what they meant.

When I picked up my Bible, however, and started to read Acts, it was as though the words jumped out as in a kaleidoscope - so real, so

meaningful, so immediate and present in time, as though the events recorded were as yesterday.

By this time in my life I had entered the academic world, initially as Senior Lecturer and then as Head of the Department of Accounting in a tertiary institution. It was while walking to morning lectures from home each day that I began to discover something about this language phenomena, which could manifest at will. Each day, during the three mile walk along the isolated country road, I would allow free expression of the language. It seemed to bring a sense of peace after flowing for a period of 20 minutes. After a fortnight or so I became aware that certain critical attitudes I had difficulty with in the past were no longer apparent. I wondered if my new-found language was an inbuilt psychiatrist of divine origin, assisting me in cleaning up obstacles, blockages and faults locked into my subconscious.

These things inhibited me from being free of being the real me. Was this the prison from which we were to be set free? The prison mentioned in Isaiah 61 and read out by Jesus at the commencement of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth - referred to in Luke 4:18-19?

If so, what an incredible gift we were given when we received the Holy Spirit. And how eminently sensible it seemed. This was the only way to be truly set free. How logical that we, who could not find God by our own reason and needed to receive Him as a free gift, could not be left to our own devices to 'work it all out'. We needed His input more than

ever before if we were to intergrate this new found awareness with the day to day life of our humanity. So He gives us an indwelling teacher, guide, comforter as a permanent resident. To call up at any time; to be on tap wherever and whenever; never to be taken away. What a blessing!

After twelve years in the University system, including five as a foundation Professor of Accounting, I commenced my own consulting business, primarily to the Accounting Profession. My work with accountants and their clients had clearly indicated a need not being catered for in the universities or the profession itself.

My work prospered and I was free to travel throughout Australia and overseas, consulting with the largest as well as the smallest of the Accounting Profession. Shortly, the concepts and related software in use would be exported to the European Common Market, where the same needs exist.

One of our early projects came in the form of a request to build a university in China. Sensing the matter was one that needed to be followed through, we visited and spoke with the relevant officials in the Higher Education Bureau. They agreed that if we funded and supported the university, we could appoint the Vice Chancellor and share controller on the Board of Governors. They also expressed no objection to our appointing Christian Staff providing they were of international status. It would be primarily an English speaking university. The question of funding such a venture costing \$200 million

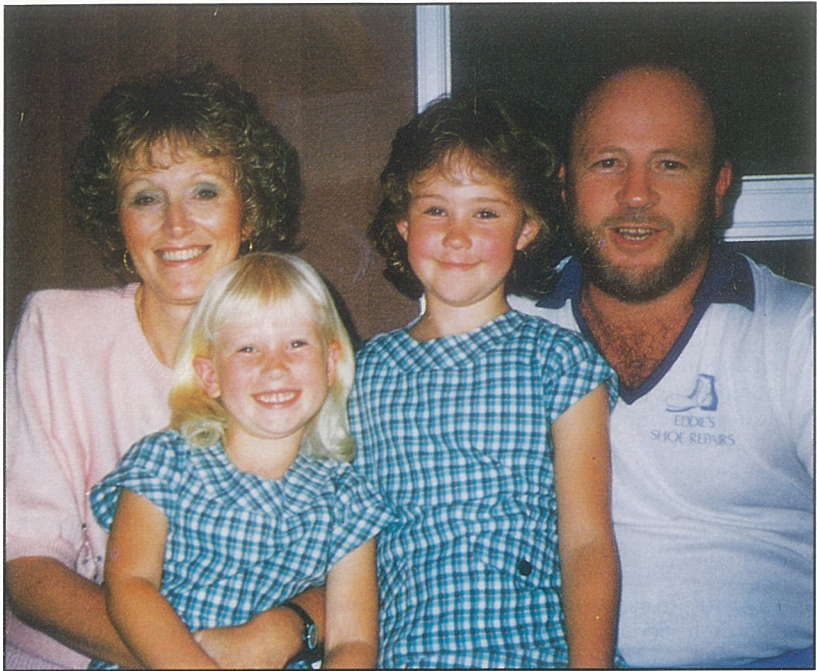
and \$30 million a year to run was a matter for earnest prayer. We were led to ask for a commercial venture big enough to sustain the funds required. The Chinese responded with a request for a \$3 million ton p.a. steel mill - exactly half the current Australian output. We have subsequently negotiated an agreement in which we share the profit 50/50 with the Chinese (our 50 going to fund the university). For that we have to organise all the funding (\$3-4 billion) and the construction. As a result of knowing nothing about steel mills we have been led stage by stage to the point where the whole project appears ready to become a reality. The consortium comprising some of the world's leading mining, constructive engineering and finance groups has given a clear indication of its readiness to begin work once the central government in Beijing has given official approval. On 9th November, we made our 15th visit to China, our first to Beijing on this occasion to speak with the minister concerned. We were received as honoured guests with all expenses paid. 'Who are you people - the ICC?' was the question. 'We are a group of Christian business men who believe in putting things back in' we replied. 'You will be honoured in our country' was the response. We sensed the love of the Father as never before for these people. He wasn't bringing a pulpit and a preacher for them. He was giving them good gifts in the form of a steel mill employing 10,000 people and a university for 6,000. Who can speculate on the long term outcome of this project? We are content to leave it to Him in whom we

live and move and have our being, having come the hard way to appreciate that it is His job to do it and our job to trust Him. In the words of colossians 2:6, **'As you have therefore received Jesus Christ as Lord so walk in Him.'**



Keith is married with two children and operates his consulting business from Armidale in N.S.W.

He is currently a National Director in the F.G.B.M.F.I. and International Vice-President of the International Christian Chamber of Commerce.



EDDY EDMONSON

Healing while you wait

I was born in the Lakes District in the north of England in 1946 and at 22, emigrated to Sydney Australia. In those days I discovered that in order to gain respect you had to be a good drinker, womaniser and fighter. Needless to say I spent many hours going for the three.

One afternoon at a typical Bondi party I met a Kiwi girl named Dallas, and within 10 months we were married. A few years down the track I had everything going for me - a good

marriage, two beautiful daughters, a nice home and a successful business. I thought I was happy. What more could I want?

Four and a half years ago my eldest daughter Hayley was having a severe asthma attack and I did something I had never done before - I cried out to God to do something. That night I awoke to see a vision of a face, and soon after I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit pour over me and knew God had shown Himself to me.

Even though something miraculous had happened to me, I kept it to myself - not sharing it with my wife or friends.

I was unaware at that stage that four families in our street were Christians and that they had been meeting on a regular basis praying for me and my family. We were on holiday at Surfers Paradise and looked up an old friend and his wife. We had heard they had gone 'strange' and apparently, they loved Jesus now. We thought we would see them nevertheless. On our second outing with them they shared Jesus with us - all night! I will always remember Colin saying with such honesty that he was so grateful that he was saved and that he would not be going to hell. Frankly at that time I could not understand why or how Hell could be so real to Colin. Anyway, after we returned to Sydney they wrote to us, posted cassette tapes of church services and some biblical literature. At this point Dallas had accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour and informed me that she was going to Church. After all that had happened with my vision, and talking to Colin & Irene, I knew I had to go too. We went along and boy were we blown away. People dancing and jumping around and praising Jesus with all their hearts.

My Church experience as a child was never like this. I was embarrassed for them and wondered where they kept the beer. Nevertheless I was touched by it all and I couldn't wait for the next meeting. We started going to mid-week fellowship and spiritually grew stronger and stronger. All the old things that I felt were important in my life started

to fall away. Even the excitement of gambling went. The Lord took away my craving for cigarettes and I was able to give up smoking after being heavily addicted to them for 25 years. Dallas had a healing on her back which had been giving her problems since she was a teenager. God is good! The Lord has blessed us so much.

In our shoe repair business we find that we have not only been able to save 'souls' but also help in 'healing while you wait.' God has transformed our business and private lives in so many ways. He has allowed us to enjoy a whole, healthy prosperous life and at the same time serve Him.

God only requires us to put our trust in Him. As we share with others He lets us share in the joy of introducing them to Jesus, of seeing illness healed, marriages restored, finances put in order and that emptiness that is in so many, filled.

We constantly thank God that He has His hand on us, and we have had the joy of sharing God's love with others in Australia, New Zealand and England.

If God can change and use me He can change you, just open your mind and heart to Him, it is as easy as *holding out your hand*. Eternity is a long time to spend in Hell, the alternative is *eternal life* - it is part of the package deal-for God loves you.



... in hearing personal testimonies like those you have read in this magazine, other men are sharing their testimonies at F.G.B.M.F.I. breakfasts, luncheons and dinner meetings across the nation.

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SIX SCRIPTURAL STEPS TO SALVATION

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

- 1. ACKNOWLEDGE:** "For all have sinned and fell short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23
"God have mercy on me, a sinner" Luke 18:13.
- 2. REPENT:** Unless you repent, you too will all perish" Luke 13:3. "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out" Acts 3:19.
- 3. CONFESS:** "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:19. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" Romans 10:9.
- 4. FORSAKE:** "Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him . . . for He will freely pardon" Isaiah 55:7.
- 5. BELIEVE:** "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" John 3:16. "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" Mark 16:16.
- 6. RECEIVE:** "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" John 1:12.

Why not make your eternal decision right now?

I am convinced by God's word that I am a lost sinner. I believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners and shed His blood to take away my sins. I now receive Him as Lord and Saviour of my life and will, by His help, announce that fact to others."

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- 2. To provide a basis of Christian Fellowship among all men everywhere through an organism not directly associated with any specific church but cooperating with all those of like mind, and to inspire its members to be active in their respective churches.*

The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International does not start churches. Rather, we desire solely to be a service arm to existing ones.

- 3. To bring about a greater measure of unity and spirit of harmony in the body of Christ, where members are united in a common effort for the good of the whole body.*



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