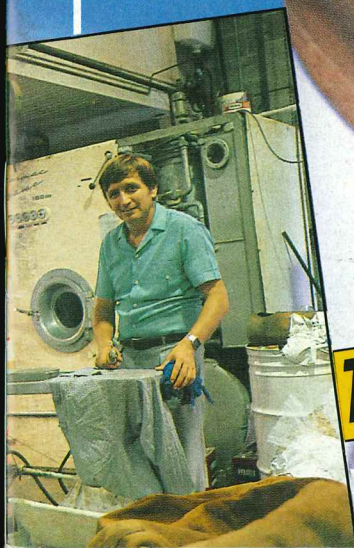


SOUTH PACIFIC
VOICE



Taken to the cleaners!



TAKEN TO THE CLEANERS

Vic Stolar
Townsville

Cruisin' through the streets of Brisbane on my first night out with Fay, I felt all right. This was to be the perfect night and no one was going to ruin it for me, not even the crazy motorist who had just overtaken me and clipped my fender in the process. "I'll fix him," I thought, "and impress Fay into the bargain."

I tried to out-drive him but he wouldn't be out-driven and we eventually ended up having an altercation on the busy city streets. I splattered his nose all across his face with one mighty punch. "That'll fix him," I said to myself. Once you hit them hard enough you get the upper hand because they're not usually too keen to continue the confrontation after that. At least that's the theory of it but this guy obviously wasn't up with the play in that regard. He came back at me quick as a flash and with blood pouring from his face, grabbed hold of me, and let me have it. He head-butted me against the lamp post and left me lying there with a smashed nose, two beaut shiners and shattered pride.

Needless to say Fay was none too impressed and for some reason I had great difficulty in getting her to come out with me after that little episode. But that was me. I'd fight anybody at the drop of a hat. I learned later that the crazy motorist was none other than Eddie Perrin, the Australian Armed Forces boxing champion! He was contender to Jimmy Caruthers when Caruthers was world champ and Caruthers wouldn't even fight him! But muggins me, with a violent nature and a quick temper, was in without thinking. It wouldn't have surprised me if I'd ended up picking a fight with Mohammed Ali. It was indicative of the life I was leading.

Growing up tough

My parents had experienced a hard life too and knew how to take the knocks. They were Ukrainians who



had come as refugees to Australia in 1949.

It was hard for my parents to adjust to the new lifestyle they encountered down under. And even I, being a member of a refugee family, experienced many difficulties and took many knocks.

Mum and dad couldn't speak English very well and it fell to me to be the interpreter. Here I was, knee high to a grasshopper, being the spokesman for the family and acting on its behalf in many situations. It was a heavy responsibility for a lad my age but it toughened me up and taught me to take nothing lying down.

Because both mum and dad had been through hard times before coming to Australia, and even here having to suffer the indignity of being refugees, they were determined that I was going to be spared the same conditions. Their one goal was for me to be successful. It overshadowed all other considerations and left no room for any expression of love in our family.

Pressure

To do well at school was the first step on the road to success and I was pushed by my parents to be the best. They weren't interested in me playing sport because they considered that a waste of time. But I loved it. It was one way of becoming integrated with my Australian school mates and being accepted by them. Mum and dad couldn't see this and the only physical exercise I was allowed to indulge in was compulsory work on the new house my parents were building.

However, where there's a will there's a way and I soon managed to get round my parents' ban on sport. I played football right through school from grade three on. My parents never knew because I used to explain my time away from home by telling them I was going on educational trips and that they were part of the school

programme. Even when I came home with broken arms and what not they'd still believe me. On those occasions I'd tell them that I'd fallen off the bus while on one of the trips.

Such deception marked the beginning of a double life. I began to live a lie — one life for my parents and another for my Australian friends. I found that whenever I spoke the Ukrainian language in front of Australian people the kids would throw off at me and needle me. This always embarrassed me and I used to retaliate by fighting. I was fighting from the time I was a toddler and it was part and parcel of learning how to fend for myself. But it was not often that I managed to emerge unscathed from such encounters. Torn shirts, ripped collars and missing buttons were commonplace and I became quite an expert at repairing such damage to my clothing. I had to do the repair work myself to keep my father from finding out what I was up to.

One rule my father enforced with strict discipline concerned my academic standing at school. If I did not come within the top five places in my class I would get a hiding. Now this was a terrifying thing to have to live under and brought tremendous pressure to bear on me. Until one day I happened to find some blank report cards at school. Thereafter I never came worse than fifth!

I grew up resenting the pressures my parents made me live under. It seemed to me that the only thing they cared about was me doing well by standards they imposed. They never told me they loved me or were pleased with me and consequently all communication between us died. This was, probably due to the difficulty they had in bridging the gap between their old culture and the new. My father was a good man and I know he worked his heart out for me, but he just didn't know how to show love and this caused deep hurts and resentments to take

root in my own life.

As I got older my father and I got on less and less. Life at home was marked by ever-increasing violent confrontations with him and this put the whole family in an extremely tense situation. It culminated one day in a major fight where I clobbered my father and knocked him to the floor. He was bigger than I but the combination of my temper and frustration gave me added strength.

To see my father sprawled on the ground nearly reduced me to tears. I was overwhelmed with a sense of regret and sadness that threatened to burst my heart. I had thought that I hated my father but at that moment I knew how much I loved him and just how much I needed him to love me. I wanted to help him up but he just brushed me aside, got to his feet and started throwing my belongings out of the house. I had been given my marching orders.

Making my own way

One thing I had acquired during my early years was a determination to succeed, and an ability to be able to make it on my own. In spite of my temper and a tendency toward violence when provoked, I was generally an easy going bloke and found no trouble in getting along with most

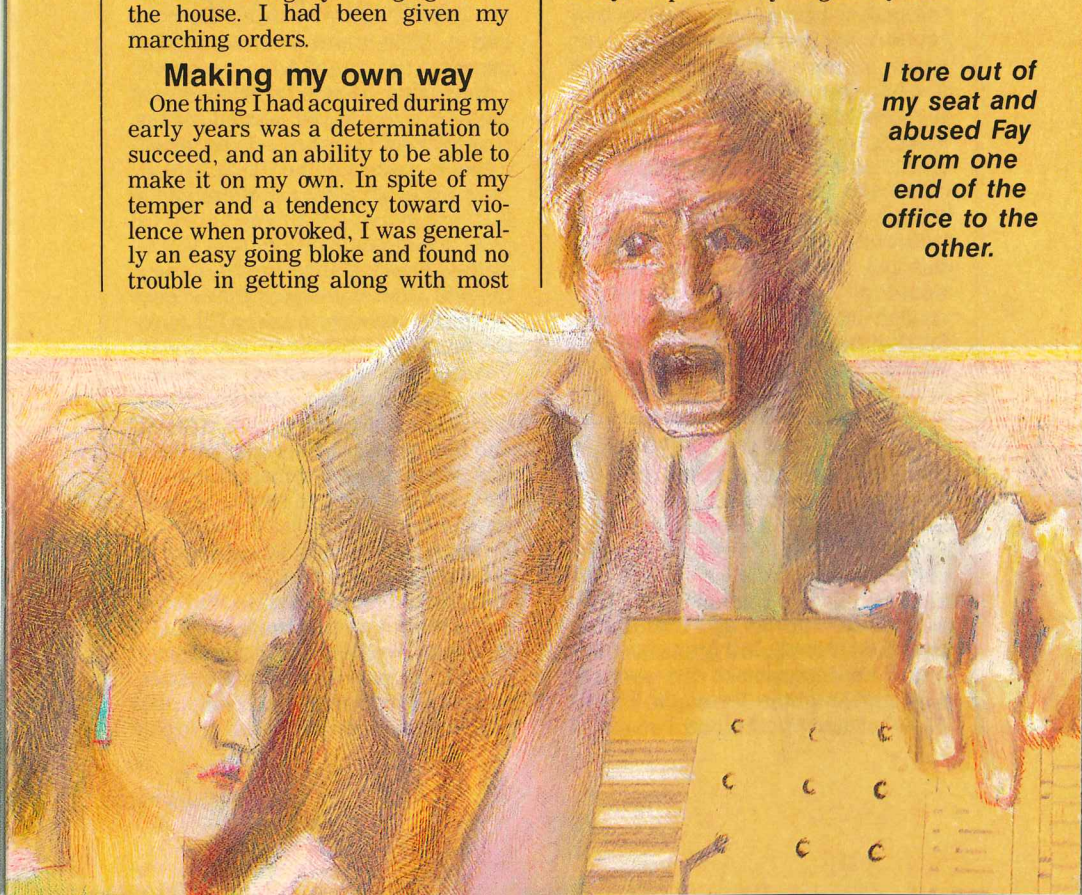
people. I guess it was this ability that enabled me to do well as a salesman for a large Brisbane company which specialised in selling boilers and laundry and drycleaning machinery. I moved all over Queensland and Northern New South Wales selling large quantities of this equipment.

But even in success I still had difficulty in coming to terms with my temper. One particular instance which I recall vividly involved one of the girls at work.

Fay was her name and she was the switchboard operator. I was taking a telephone call from a very valuable client and somehow or another Fay cut me off and consequently put a large sale in jeopardy.

I tore out of my seat and abused Fay from one end of the office to the other. I was wild and let her have the benefit of my temper and my tongue. My boss

I tore out of my seat and abused Fay from one end of the office to the other.



overheard me (I'd say the whole building "overheard" me) and had stern words with me on how to treat people and how to conduct myself in a civilised manner. That did it. I turned on him as well and told him exactly where he could stick his job and walked out.

A few hours later the boss contacted me and asked if I would come back. It seemed that in spite of my behaviour they didn't want to lose me. By this time I had cooled down somewhat and I swallowed my pride and agreed to return. It wasn't as though I was going back having won any concessions by my outburst. On the contrary, I felt a bit of a fool for the way I had mouthed off at Fay and I was none too bold when I entered the office the next day. They were ready for me. All the girls in the office banded together and made sure that my life thereafter was as dangerous as they could make it. They'd put salt in my coffee, remove things from my desk and have me on at every opportunity. It got so that I'd never know what was going to happen next. But if nothing else it sure taught me a thing or two about the damage an uncontrolled temper can inflict on people.

Fay left the company shortly after this and I phoned her up to see if she would go out with me. Strangely enough she accepted and off we went for that ill-fated meeting with Eddie Perrin.

Love or money

Although we got off to a shaky start things did get better. I used to really like going round to Fay's home because it was such a contrast to the one I had been used to. It was a peaceful place and her family were so easy going, you felt like you belonged. They were church people and I think they wondered more than a little about this rowdy, boisterous bloke who was keen on their daughter. I thought I loved Fay — on and off. She had a beautiful

nature and I reckoned that she'd be a good wife for me. So I asked her to marry me.

I didn't know what love was. I'd never experienced it and as I watched Fay coming down the aisle of the church on our wedding day, I knew inside that I didn't have the right to make her my wife. I knew somehow that I would end up destroying her because of the deficiency in my own life.

From the first months of our marriage it was obvious that things were going down the tubes. We worked hard, both of us, and bought our own house and all the other trappings that go with material success. But we drifted apart more and more and eventually ended up living separate lives. I didn't even attempt to change my wild ways of wine, women and song. It was what I had been used to all my life and now that I had someone to look after my house for me I had a little more time to indulge myself.

One thing I knew for sure: to get anywhere in life you needed money. And I set out to find it, setting myself a goal to make a million dollars by the time I was 40. After all, there had to be more to living than what I had experienced to date. There was still an empty, lonely feeling inside of me. I thought the wife-swapping scenes might be one way to add a bit of excitement and began to manipulate Fay into the same way of thinking.

But before we got right into that a business opportunity presented itself and I jumped at it, knowing that I had to make a start in business for myself if I was ever going to realise my million dollar goal.

During one of my selling trips up to Townsville I came across a dry-cleaning business for sale. With my line of work I was not unfamiliar with the whole drycleaning industry and so I sold up our house in Brisbane, moved to Townsville and bought the drycleaning set up. I didn't give Fay

any choice in the matter — I just expected her to do what she was told.

Townsville agreed with me. I borrowed money to get into the dry-cleaning business and from there things just snowballed. It's always hard to raise the first loan but once you've managed that and have got some venture underway, it becomes easier to get others. After six months in Townsville I owned two hardware businesses, two public coin-operated laundromats, a number of commercial properties and the original dry-cleaning business. I was working hard and although I was in debt the businesses were succeeding and the cash flow was enabling me to meet my payments. However, Fay and I were just as far apart as ever. We had absolutely no communication and no love for each other.

Hard living lady

I used to do a run picking up dry-cleaning from different depots around the town. One of these depots was a coin-operated laundromat run by a hard-living, foul-mouthed woman named Eunice. I got along all right with her but was amazed at the number of cigarettes she got through. The whole laundromat stank of stale smoke and you'd often have to fight your way through the haze to find her. She had two ash trays, one at each end of the shop, and they each had two cigarettes burning in them continually. As Eunice moved about the shop she would have another one lit in her hand so she could put down and pick up cigarettes anywhere in the shop. You just never saw her without one.

One day I walked into Eunice's shop to pick up the drycleaning as usual and she was different. Her eyes were different — there was a beauty coming out of them that penetrated right inside me. She no longer appeared hard and most surprising of all to me, there were no cigarettes in sight. I took all this in for about a week and

then curiosity got the better of me and I asked her what on earth was going on.

Religion! She talked to me about God and religion. I wished I had never asked. Every time I went in I'd get more of the same. Religious posters appeared on the laundromat walls and all over her car. In fact her car was covered in stickers from bumper to bumper. I just couldn't handle it and in the end I got one of my employees to do that run for me so that I didn't have to talk to her.

But strangely enough I found that I missed talking to Eunice (I never told her that though!) — and I went back to see her often for one reason or another. There was something about her now that was breaking down my resistance and getting through to me. As much as I disliked her religious explanations of what had happened to her, I couldn't deny the radical changes I had seen taking place in her.

Two old ladies came into Eunice's shop during one of my visits there and got a coin jammed in one of the washing machine coin mechanisms. No matter how much they tried they couldn't dislodge it. Eunice fiddled with it in spite of me telling her there was no way that coin was going to come out. I could see that the whole mechanism would need to be dismantled, and I even offered to come back and do it for her the next day. But no, she wouldn't listen. She continued to play around with it until finally I was so irritated that I said sarcastically, "Maybe you'd better try praying it out!"

Suddenly the coin popped out without anyone touching it. Quick as a flash Eunice turned to me and said, "See, he's got a sense of humour."

That incident really got me going. It stunned me and started me thinking more and more about God. I'd pretend that I didn't want to know but all the time I would find reasons for go-

ing to Eunice's laundromat so that I could talk some more and ask questions. I couldn't handle the outward trappings of posters and things but I was looking beyond them for answers which I desperately needed.

Turning point

All this time Fay and I were down the tubes — at least our marriage was. I was just the same as I'd always been: bad tempered and violent. I'd put my fist through the walls of our house without a second thought. (I tried to plan it so that I missed the studs but I wasn't always successful!) One thing I never did was physically hit her; I ripped her to bits with my tongue but I never hit her.

One particular morning I was at it in fine style. I abused Fay something awful and shouted that I'd had enough of her. I told her that I'd sell the house, give her what she was legally entitled to, and send her packing. I didn't want to see her again. And with that I went off to work.

During the course of that day I ended up at Eunice's shop. I wasn't feeling on top of the world and in a sense religious talk was the last thing I wanted to hear. Yet in another way I felt it was the only hope I had. Out of the blue Eunice said to me, "What would happen, Vic, if you got hit by a car?"

"I'd die I guess," was my reply.

"Yeah, but your spirit would live on. Either with God or Satan," she answered.

It hit me then, for the first time, that Satan was real. In fact, I realised that over the months of talking with Eunice and seeing the changes taking place in her life, that I was much more aware of God and the whole spiritual world.

Anyway, her challenge was out and the ball was in my court. I was curious. How could I get my spirit to live on with God? I was at the point of surrender but didn't want to let on to her

so I nonchalantly asked, "All right, what do I do to become a Christian?"

"Come with me," was her answer and she took me out the back and gave me a booklet entitled *The Four Spiritual Laws*. "Read that and believe it fair dinkum in your heart and you'll be born again. You'll be a Christian," she said.

Big deal

I did read it right then. I read every word on every page, even the printer's details, because I didn't want to miss one single thing. I wanted to know everything I possibly could. I did all that the booklet said. I prayed a prayer and asked God to forgive me for the way I'd lived my life. I thanked him for the death of his son Jesus on the cross and accepted that he died there for me.

There were no lightning bolts shooting out of the sky but instantly I became aware of an incredible sense of tranquillity flooding my whole body and mind. Something was definitely happening and I knew God was real.

I rang Fay straight away and told her what had happened and how I'd become a Christian. I was so excited that I just had to let her know. I was sure she'd be pleased and even welcome the change that was taking place within me. "Big deal," she spat. And that was that. I guess I could hardly blame her for her lack of interest. After all, I had given her a real dog's life and treated her like dirt. And I'd never been interested in anything she was into.

Yet, it still hurt in spite of all that. It was the first time Fay had ever been able to touch me with words and it rocked me back on my feet. For the first time I felt what it was like to be cut down by a bitter tongue.

First time in church

Church had never been mentioned over the time I had been observing and questioning Eunice. But now she suggested I should go to the one she

went to. Somehow I felt drawn to that church and I even asked Fay if it would be OK. I drove past it a few times during the day and each time I felt it drawing me like a magnet. The next Sunday night I sneaked in the door and sat uncomfortably in the back row, hoping like crazy no one would notice. I felt horribly alone.

Then Eunice arrived but that was even worse. She took me right up to the third row from the front and made me sit with her there. I was sure every eye in the church was on me. I felt them boring into the back of my head. I experienced burning sensations all over my body. I wanted to get out but I couldn't without drawing attention to myself.

Once the service started and people began singing I began to relax a little and decided that I liked what I was hearing. Even the preacher made you feel like he was talking intimately to you.



At the end of the sermon the preacher asked anyone who wanted to become a Christian to come out the front. I knew that I'd already become one (I had prayed a prayer from the booklet) but I thought it was best to be sure so out I went.

The preacher asked me why I had come out. I thought, "This is unreal. He should know why I'm here because I certainly don't." I managed to blurt out: "I don't know, man, but I want what you've got!" He laid his hands

'I tried to burst his bubble' - Fay's story

The night Vic came home from the church I knew something supernatural had happened. For the first time I sensed love coming from him. He had never told me he loved me and the whole change that came over him left me rather confused. I didn't understand what was going on and I certainly wasn't used to being treated so well.

I tried hard over the next couple of weeks to burst his bubble. I tested Vic whenever I could to try and make him lose his cool but I never had any luck. It wasn't that I didn't like being treated nicely, it was just that I wanted to be sure that what had happened to him was real and permanent.

I was convinced after two weeks that Vic had truly had an encounter with God. He was completely changed and with that evidence I couldn't deny my

upbringing any longer. I became a Christian too, but it wasn't until I had been baptised in the Holy Spirit that I began to understand what Vic had been through and saw the confusion go.

After his conversion the staff at work used to pump me to find out what had happened to Vic. "What are you feeding him on?" they'd ask. "He's so different. Whatever it is you'd better keep giving it to him because we like it."

God has miraculously restored our marriage and we find more in terms of love and unity in our relationship than we ever imagined possible. He has blessed us with twin girls, now five years old, when the chances of us having children was very slim indeed.

on my head and prayed for me. The experience was out of this world. It was like being lifted up into a tremendous field of tranquility. And then it seemed that brick walls on either side of me crumbled and I began to be hosed down from the top of my head, right to my feet, with wave after wave of love. I had an overwhelming sense of being cleansed and a deep joy coming right from inside me. I was experiencing love for the first time in my life. It was God awakening love in me and enabling me to love others. For the first time ever I was experiencing love for Fay and I couldn't wait to get home and tell her all about it.

I opened my eyes when I thought the preacher had finished praying for me and was shocked and terribly embarrassed to find myself lying on the floor at the front of the church. I had no idea how I had come to be there and all I wanted to do was to escape, not because I didn't like what was happening but from sheer embarrassment.

The preacher was still praying for me and as he continued I began to speak in a strange language. Now, I could speak three languages but I assure you that the language I started to speak then was not one I had learned. This was what they called the baptism in the Holy Spirit and I was engulfed in an awareness of God's presence and power. No one had ever taught me to know God like this in my whole life. I just didn't know what I had been missing. There was a deep cleansing and healing going on while I was lying there. My entire life up to that point shot before me and God began to heal the hurts that I'd carried from childhood and the anxieties that I had picked up from my parents. He taught me to love, to forgive and he taught me to be a man.

If this is love . . .

I finally left the church feeling like I was walking three feet off the ground

and rushed home to get Fay out of bed so I could tell her what I had experienced. I guess it must have all been a shock to her, especially since I had to rouse her out of her sleep. I said, "Fay, I know I've treated you like a dog all our married life and have wronged you time and time again and I don't blame you if you want to leave. I'll still sell the house and split things evenly with you. But God's done something for me tonight that's hard to explain and I want you to know that I love you." I don't think that I'd ever told Fay that before.

I put my arms around her and as I did so I started to weep. I hadn't wept since I was a boy. I had tried to and wanted to often, but the hurts I carried wouldn't allow me to. Now I just burst on the inside and wept and wept.

Fay didn't know what to make of it all but she knew something had happened to me. Within a few days we would have been separated but after that night it didn't happen. Not long after that Fay became a Christian too. She had proof that I had changed permanently and that my Christianity wasn't just a flash in the pan. Since that day, over seven years ago, temper and violence have been replaced with love. My business is run on Christian principles, and my life with Fay is what I intended it to be on that very first night I took her out!

Five years ago Vic Stolar's business ventures were collapsing around his ears. He owed \$80,000 and was tempted to walk out and leave it all behind.

But Vic had reason to believe that all was not lost. He had entrusted his life, family and business to the God of miracles and knew that his Lord would somehow provide.

Now, five years later, the \$80,000 debt has been repaid, his turnover is nine times what it was and he employs 30 people.

Says Vic, "When you've been blessed by God you can't deny it!"



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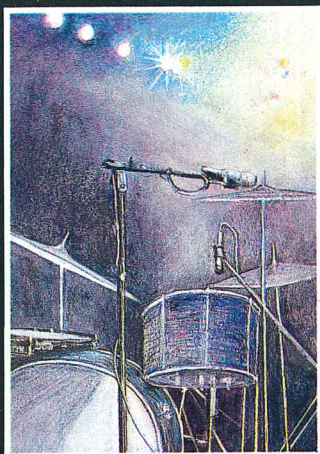
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One Man's Dream

Jack Moyle, Mt Maunganui
New Zealand

Split Enz: one of the more colourful segments of New Zealand's history; the first local band to put New Zealand on the map as far as the international music scene was concerned. A band that was new before the new wave arrived. And playing support act for them was the highlight of my life. Surely this was to be the beginning of all I had ever dreamed about.

We were given the opportunity to open for Split Enz when they played in Tauranga as part of their 1980 tour of the country. "Short Notice" was the name of our band because it was exactly that. We put it together from top local musicians just for this one date. We never played again after that gig but that didn't matter. Just to be playing second fiddle to the country's top act was the biggest buzz I'd ever experienced.

I loved music, more than anything else. It was the one thing I wanted to succeed at. As a kid I had an incredible urge to play drums. Nothing was safe — I'd pick up my mother's knitting needles and beat away with them. I'd hammer the table tops with my hands or my knife and fork. In fact, the only whack I ever remember getting from my father was for drumming at the meal table one night with my knife and fork. I was incurable. But it was an all-important confidence builder for me. It was one thing at which I could hold my own.

The dream

I had a dream! And that was to be a superstar in the rock game. My aim was to be a famous drummer and to beat my name into drum skins across the stage of the world! Big dreamer — that was me! But I never lost sight of it in the years that followed.

At fifteen my life's savings amounted to \$50 and I managed to scoop a bargain drum kit for just that amount. I was stoked! With two friends, we formed the first band I was ever in-

olved with and we set off into the wild, wild world of music. I guess it wasn't that the music was so wild — it was more the accompanying lifestyle. I got into the "juice" more than anything and at 16 I was regular at the local every Friday night and would stay juiced up for most of the weekend.

Our band was going OK. We played gigs at local pubs, did weddings, socials and local dances. We got paid, of course — a little — but that wasn't the motivation. To make it into the "Big Time" was the name of the game. I reckoned we were making it one step at a time. We got to back a few national acts including Brendan Dugan, Johnny Devlin and Lou Clauson and that was a buzz.

Teenage weddings were part of the rock 'n' roll dream. Late 50's and early 60's lyrics extolled the joys and virtues of young love, and I was a starter. I remember as a 12 or 13 year old attending our local Pukekohe church youth club, not because of any spiritual interest, but rather because of all the young girls that attended. I was starting to try my wings a little.

I met Barbara not long after that. I must have been about 14 or 15. When I was 18, I married her. She was 16 and I guess to an outside observer, we were an example of a typical teenage marriage. Two local kids giving it a go in the matrimonial stakes.

It wasn't only our ages that were stacked against us. The lifestyle I was leading didn't do a scrap to help us succeed in staying together. At that stage I was still into sports as well as music. Two nights a week I was out at rugby practice; two nights a week at band practice while Friday and Saturday nights the band would be playing gigs. Rugby games took up most of Saturday during the winter while squash or running occupied the off-season. That basically left Sundays for Barbara and I to spend together — except that I was often so tired by

that stage of the week I'd go to bed for the afternoon.

Breaking away

Kim and Haley were born to us during those times and it was not long after Haley's birth that I sensed this growing urge to break out and leave the old home town. I wanted something new. I wanted to feel I was achieving my dreams and I felt hemmed in where I was. Barbara didn't share my restlessness, at least, not at first. But some time later, to escape the hectic lifestyle I was leading, we both decided to leave Pukekohe for greener pastures.

We rented a house in Tauranga before finally buying a home across the harbour in Mount Maunganui. It was a good place to live and it didn't take too long to meet some people. Two guys in particular, Nev and Paul, I hit it off with straight away. They lived in the same street and it wasn't long before we were growing our own grass and having regular sampling sessions. It was a great night out: cards, juice and dope, and they became pretty regular sessions. I liked the dope and had it at home. I leaned on it and looked to it as a source of happiness.

Music still figured largely in my life, I hadn't thrown away my dream and it wasn't long before I was right back into it. If anything, the move from Pukekohe had intensified my lifestyle, not slowed it up. I was playing with some pretty reasonable bands and was backing national singers such as Bunny Walters and Split Enz.

I loved drumming and was good at it. In fact I was told that I had the ability to be one of the best and I was encouraged to get into it. If we were not playing, I would be out listening to other bands, studying the drummer's technique. I wanted to make it. Sitting behind my drum kit, I was peaceful and happy; it was the one place I knew I fitted. Even more than home.

I loved Barbara and the kids — we had added a set of twins not long after we arrived at the Mount — but I loved me more and my music always took priority over them.

Utopia

As far as I was concerned in 1983 I had everything I ever wanted — a nice family, a nice home, good job, good sporting reputation (I ran in the Fletcher Marathon in 1981, '82 and '83 and was playing E grade squash) and a good band. I had no burning questions about life apart from the occasional wondering what it was all about. But I was happy how I was.

About the only thing I was beginning to get despondent about was the fact that the elusive break I had been looking for as a rock musician never seemed to come along. It seemed that my dreams of superstardom were fading on an unreachable horizon. The band I was in was good but we just didn't seem to get that break we desperately needed.

But there was another dream. One I wasn't expecting. Barbara had it one night. It was about God. Here I was, so badly wanting to make it in music — badly in a cruisy sort of way, that is — and my wife produces dreams about God. I mean, he just hadn't figured in my life since the days I was a toddler in Sunday School.

However, Barbara, who had been raised in a Christian home, knew a lot more than I did and she decided to start going to church. She found one she liked and began to attend regularly. She took the kids to the Sunday School too which was OK by me. It gave me a good opportunity to have a sleep in on Sundays. It didn't take too long for Barbara to become a Christian after that! She committed her life to God and the moment she did, I noticed a change in her. She became so much more loving, as if a fire had been rekindled in her. I thought that was all right too! But not only that,

she was happy and peaceful and handled the kids, and me, with far greater ease. The change in her whole attitude and actions made me, for the first time in my life, begin to wonder what this God thing was really all about.

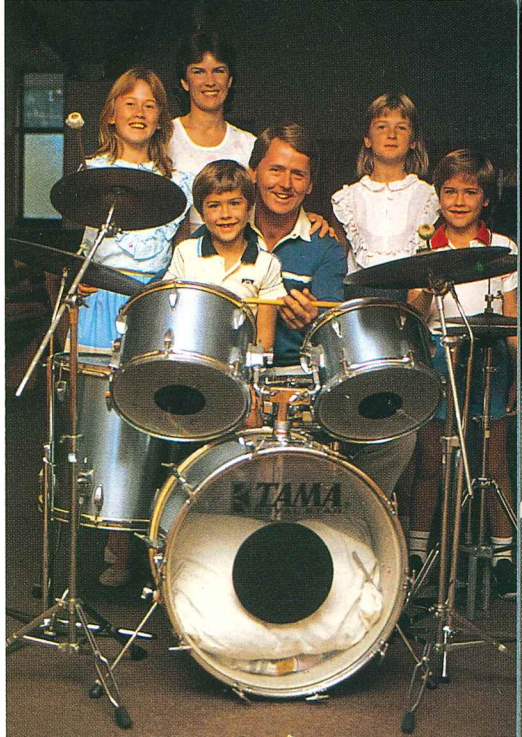
Barbara would come home from the church glowing at Sunday lunch-time to find me loaded and juiced up ready for an afternoon of sport-watching on the telly! But the buzz she brought home always seemed to out-shine the one I got off dope. It was annoying.

I never tried to stop Barbara from going to church. I could see there was something in it, but I made sure that she didn't neglect my well being. She was late home from church once and I tore strips off her because she didn't have my lunch ready on time. Another time I nearly tossed her out of the house because she bought a Bible. But in all of that she never pressured me, which was a good thing because I wasn't interested in religion or in God and as far as I was concerned I was never going to darken the door of a church.

For the children

Don't say never, because never has the bad habit of becoming once, then twice, and so on. One morning, my two girls handed me a note: "Dear daddy, will you come and see us in our Sunday School play at church next week, please?" What can a father do? I went, of course, out of a sense of duty. I thought churches were dark, dreary places, but I was in for a shock at this one.

As soon as we got in the door, a woman came up and gave Barbara a big hug. My eyes nearly popped out of my head. What's going on here, I thought. Then the singing started and I was blown away. People were really getting into the music and singing their hearts out, clapping their hands and I sensed they had love and care



The Moyle family, "walking to the beat of a different drum".

for each other. It was amazing.

I told Barbara I would come again some time when I was more sober and straight. Whatever it was, something in me had been awakened – first by the change in Barbara and then by this crazy church!

I told Paul and Nev about the whole deal at one of our regular sessions. Nev knew what I was talking about because his mother went to the same church and we all decided to go along together.

By the time I finally got around to going back to the church with Barbara, they were having a baptismal service where they were baptising believers in water. I stood there looking around, when six rows back my eyes alighted upon Nev. He had come with his mum.

The preacher preached right at me. At least it seemed that way. He was talking about not having any idols in

your life. Music and sport, I thought. He said people needed to get their lives right with God and I knew I did.

Hello family

That night I made a commitment in my heart to God. I said, "OK, God, I need you to fill the gap in my life that music and sport haven't been able to." There were no trumpets sounding above my head but the next morning the first thing I noticed was the language of my workmates — it was terrible. I'd never been aware of it before, but now I couldn't handle it. I had a battle holding on to my new faith. It was pretty weak and I wasn't too well-informed as to how to survive. But I did.

The next week at church I went up to make a public stand for Jesus. I wanted people to know that I had given my life over to Jesus Christ. The preacher talked to me about the Holy Spirit and how he would fill me with power to live a Christian life. I wanted that, so he prayed for me and I was baptised in the Holy Spirit and spoke with a new language I had never heard of before. I had taken Paul with me to the church that night and he wondered what had hit him. But like Nev and I, it wasn't long before he too became a Christian and then, some time after that, both their wives followed.

I went home from the meeting that night hardly able to contain myself. I had never before experienced such a sensation of love and happiness. It seemed the car jumped all the way home. My life was different, transformed by the power of a living God. Suddenly I didn't need dope or juice or sport or music to boost my confidence. God did it for me. The illusive dream of breaking into the big time rock 'n' roll now seemed rather insignificant and unimportant and I pulled out of the band I was in. Besides, now I was going to change this country for Jesus through my music. I was going

to play in great evangelistic outreaches up and down the land. I was going to give God a hand. At least, that was what I'd planned.

God had other ideas though. I was painting the fence just a couple of months after becoming a Christian when God spoke to me and almost in an audible voice he said, "You must spend more time with your family." I nearly fell into the paint pot! I dropped the brush and tore inside to tell Barbara what had happened.

And that was it. All at once I saw what a selfish man I'd been. What a poor example of a father I was. My wife and children were not my number-one priority — I was. My music and my sport had replaced my family. From that time I set about re-ordering my life and focussing it on Barbara and the kids. Now my sole aim in life is to spend my time on them.

God, who once didn't warrant a second thought as far as I was concerned, awoke within me my responsibility to him and to my family. He replaced my superstar dream with a contentment that far outweighed any peace I had experienced before. He opened up a whole new world of contemporary Christian music to me and even allowed me to play in a few Christian outreaches! I still love music but am now far more aware of the message that is conveyed through the medium. (I think that was the main reason I stopped playing in bands). I want to see more and more the life that I have discovered in Jesus Christ become the message in the music I listen to or am involved with in the future.

Jack lives with his wife and four children — Kim, Haley, Jarrod and Duane — in Mount Maunganui, where he operates a forklift at a pulp and paper storage depot. He is a member of the Tauranga Chapter of FGBMFI.



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Win Dale, Opotiki
New Zealand

I thought I had a broad mind until I took up taxi-driving. Even though I worked in a small, fairly tame city, I still found an amazing array of colourful characters from the seamy side of life occupying the passenger seat of my cab.

My first job was picking up five people who had been at an all-night party and dropping them off at the pub at nine o'clock in the morning. They'd obviously been knocking it back in fine form and I don't know which stank more; them or the stories of what they'd been getting up to the night before.

I picked up people who at nine o'clock in the morning had the manners of the Queen but at 10pm were the most foul-mouthed drunkards you

TAXI

could ever hope not to meet.

One night I picked up a young woman who was as high as a kite and drunk with it. She was obviously in a bad way so I made a quick trip to the hospital but they wouldn't admit her. Neither would the police station have anything to do with her. At one stage of the journey we were tearing along and she tried to jump out. I leaned over and clouted her, which kept her quiet until I could get her home.

The next day she came with her fiancé and apologised for the fiasco she had created and he thanked me, too.

Though I was often disgusted by the encounters I had with society's down-and-outs, I was something of a paradox myself – even a hypocrite. For I was a heavy drinker myself and far from being a paragon of virtue.

Around Christmas of my second year taxi driving, I was continually drinking and driving. That particular Christmas Eve I had already been on the road for 16 hours. And, in true Kiwi fashion, I had been celebrating by having a beer with each person I dropped off.

As I headed back to the taxi stand I saw the dreaded red flashing light in my rear vision mirror – a cop! Pulling to the side of the road, I gathered myself together and got out of the car. I knew I could stand up, but that was about all. Looking me straight in the eye the traffic officer said that my reverse lights weren't working properly. I hastily offered to hop back in and jiggle the switch while he checked – and the light worked all right. Just at that moment I received a call on my R.T. from the office for a chat. The traffic officer, thinking I had another call, left me to it.

With my heart in my mouth I continued on my way, knowing full well that if I had been asked to take a breath test I would have gone for a skate. I would have lost both my driver's licence and my job.

Yet, when it boiled down, my heart wasn't in the job anyway. I had been brought up on a farm and the land was in my blood. I had always preferred jobs associated with farming.

There were four children in our family and our one outstanding characteristic was that we argued from daylight to dark. We were all stubborn as a mule and would never admit to being wrong. The arguments got so bad that at the age of 19 I decided to leave home. I couldn't stand it any more. And my mother said that I was never to set foot in the house again.

I went truck driving for six months and, after one of my many drunken sprees, ended up on the doorstep again. To my surprise – and relief – I was welcomed back into the home again. I continued like this for the next few years, going from job to job and drinking more and more heavily. At 22 I married Jeannette, and eventually ended up sharemilking with my father.

Lepto

However, my milking career was to be suddenly cut short. I contracted the disease every dairyman dreads – leptospirosis. I spent one week barely conscious while they pumped me full of penicillin and spent another month off work. The final blow came when I discovered, on my return to work, that half of the cows had dried up. We were forced to sell up and I was only able to recuperate half the value of the herd. I went truck driving for a couple of years and then bought the taxi in Tauranga.

On that memorable Christmas Eve I drove back home for tea, shaking but with a sense of relief at not being caught. As I was eating my little four-year-old boy looked up at me with his big eyes and asked: "Dad, are you going back to work?" "Yes," I replied, taking another mouthful. He looked so crestfallen, and in that moment the sense of how I had neglected him and

the rest of the family came heavily upon me. That guilty feeling, coupled with the awareness of the drinking/driving tightrope I found myself walking convinced me. I wanted out. I resolved that night to sell the taxi and look for another job.

In the midst of all this, unbeknown to me, Jeannette had been making some important discoveries. She could see that my drinking and long working hours were destroying our family life. I was hardly ever at home. In fact, I used my home more as a hotel — a place to eat and sleep. Jeannette was also coming in for a fair helping of abuse from me, both verbal and physical. As a result, she was nearing rock-bottom emotionally. The Lord met her in a beautiful way and gave her something to live for.

It was at this point that my drinking problem resolved in a remarkable way. I ended up sick in bed for a week after a drinking bout. Once on my feet again, I naturally went straight back to it. Only this time, I couldn't keep it down, and can't to this day. I think God was working on me even then.

Jeannette had been a Christian for about 10 months when she dug up the courage to ask me to go along to church with her. I had nothing to lose, so I agreed. Besides, I had been reduced to nothing as it was — I had given up smoking and drinking, I couldn't work on the land because of the lepto, and my marriage wasn't working.

I went along a few times and then was persuaded by Jeannette and some of her friends to attend a marriage seminar. I had to admit that I really wanted an answer for our marriage. I wanted the love that I saw in these Christians.

Five couples met together and did the studies on marriage. After a few sessions someone turned to me and said: "Well Win, I think it's time you gave your heart to the Lord." Just like that. And I knew he was right. I had

been watching and listening, and, although I didn't understand too much, I saw my need. So I took the step and told the Lord I was his from that point on.

To begin with, I didn't feel any different, but two weeks later I was filled with the Holy Spirit and everything happened for me. My relationships with Jeannette and the children were revolutionized. I found that I had brand new feelings for them, feelings that had long since vanished from my boozing, selfish lifestyle. I saw how much I had neglected them and felt an incredible desire just to be with them and be a husband and a father.

Life still had its moments, though. By this time I had started a new job, having sold my taxi. I was just getting settled into it when I saw it advertised in Saturday's paper. My job! Come Monday morning I fronted up to the boss and asked what the story was. He told me I still had a job in the company but that it was not the one for which I had initially been employed.

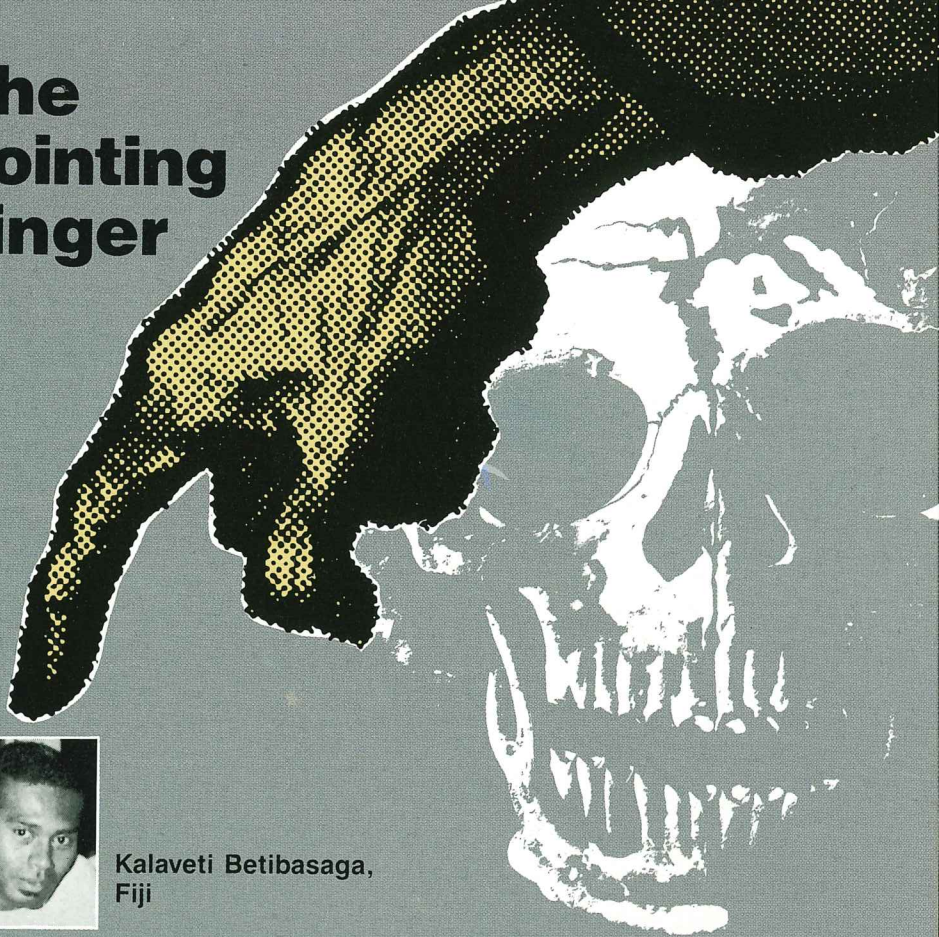
Previously this would have incensed me. But, instead, I determined to praise the Lord.

That little incident was an important lesson in learning that life is more than jobs and status.

I suppose the greatest blessing has been getting back on to the land again. I asked God to heal me of leptospirosis and he has graciously done that — there have been no recurrences. Three years ago I started farm and orchard work here in Opotiki, and, one year ago my boss asked me to start milking. I am back on the land where I belong, in the midst of God's creation, working as a dairy farmer, and I love it. I have put my roots deep down in the good soil of the love of God.

Win and Jeannette have three children — Tony (20), Helen (16) and Selwyn (12). Win is Field Representative for FGBMFI in Eastern Bay of Plenty.

The Pointing Finger



Kalaveti Betibasaga,
Fiji

I had finished my studies for the night and was putting away my books when I chanced to look up at the window.

In that instant of fearful recognition my stomach went to my feet and a cold sweat rose up my back.

It was him. My dreaded nocturnal spirit visitor, standing at the window pointing his finger at me, the way he always did. This apparition hadn't just happened once or twice; for three years I had been haunted by this evil being.

It was now November 1979, the end of another school year in Fiji. Though my natural abilities should have seen me sailing through my school work,

I felt physically and mentally crippled. This ghostly visitor had destroyed my scholastic achievements, imprisoning me in a dungeon of fear.

Deadly mix

To European ears this experience may seem fantastic, but in Fijian society, where religion and witchcraft form a deadly mix it is tragically common.

In my village of Naboutini, on Fiji's Coral Coast, traditional magic practices are combined with Christianity in the mistaken belief that both roads lead to heaven. Though the local Catholic priest might have the privilege of performing the last rite,

it is the witch doctor who attends to the practical needs of the living: sickness, demon possession and so on. Until recently most of the older people in my village were afraid of the government hospitals, not trusting white man's medicine. They called the hospital *were ni mate*, which means "death house."

On occasions I travelled the 55 miles from Suva to Naboutini to seek help from my family concerning my night caller. However, instead of pointing me to Jesus Christ, the deliverer, my parents just consulted a witch doctor. This only made matters worse.

I have much to be thankful to my parents for: They taught me to endure hardship; they taught me that hard work is honourable, that sweat rolling down your face is a privilege, not an insult. But they did not teach me that Jesus is the only way to freedom. Consequently, as I entered my 18th year I was a lonely, despairing boy who saw little hope for a happy future. I had wearied myself in the search for ways and means of getting out of the demonic hold that was on my life. I was a very confused person, not unlike those that the prophet Isaiah describes in the Bible:

"We hope for light, but behold, darkness; for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope along the wall like blind men. We stumble at midday as in the twilight. Among those who are vigorous we are like dead men."

Wandering

One day as I was wandering the streets of Suva I came across an open-air youth meeting. I was attracted by the Gospel music and stayed to listen. The message that was given convicted me that I was a sinner and needed Christ to be my Saviour.

That very day I gave my life to him and began to trust him and walk in his ways. The inner conflict did not disappear overnight but in time the Lord set me completely free from the

demonic influence on my life and the hereditary spirits of my ancestors that had been accusing me in the form of my night time visitor and keeping me and my family deceived.

Two years later I went back to my village to share the freedom I had found with my people. I lived among them for three years pastoring a church and preaching the gospel.

The Lord used me to proclaim his truth in several villages and farming settlements along the Coral Coast. I was conscious of his power in my life as I spoke out against heathen practices and many people believed in Jesus and were made whole.

The mixture of religion and witchcraft is deceptive and dangerous. Even today, while believers wait for the Lord's return, most of the elders in my district are waiting for the return of a Fijian prophet by the name of Apolosi Ranawai, who died more than a decade ago and promised to return. In recent times he has appeared to many of his followers in dreams and visions, frequently through demon possessed mediums.

My father, who worked closely with Ranawai, believed that he was the saviour of Fiji and that when he returned Fiji would be a republic with a head of state. Apolosi Ranawai's followers believe him to be Apollyon, a figure who appears in the book of Revelation, but are blinded to the fact that Apollyon is described as an angel from the kingdom of darkness.

I have known that kingdom — its fear, its confusion and its hopelessness. There was no way out for me, but Jesus found me when I did not know where to seek him.

I did not break into his light; he crashed into my darkness!

Kalaveti Betibasaga is a preacher and volunteer worker for the Prison Fellowship in Fiji. He is uncompromising in proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the only hope for mankind, and that all other roads lead to destruction.

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 fall 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 1:9. "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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The Threefold Purpose of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship

1. To witness to God's presence and power in the world today through the message of the total Gospel for the total man, and by this to reach men for Jesus Christ, especially those having the same social, cultural or business interests as the person doing the witnessing.

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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