Isn't it weird how events that seem unimportant when they occur sometimes mark the start of something big in a person's life?

Events like an interrupted phone call.

In April, 1972 I was in a hotel room in Reno, Nevada, talking on the phone to my dad in San Francisco. Suddenly the switchboard operator broke in to say that Evel Knievel, who was in the next room, needed me right away.

I'd met Knievel in 1969 when he came to San Francisco to do a show at the Cow Palace. My dad, an Examiner sportswriter gathering material for a column on the daredevil, intro-
duced us and we hit it off right away. In fact, I even helped Knievel set up for his stunt.

Some Hell's Angels were in the crowd that night, and they did all they could to break up the show by throwing heavy objects at Evel. When they couldn't prevent him from jumping, a couple of tough Angels dashed out of the stands and attacked him. I ran over to join in the fun. I'd won the Seventh Fleet heavyweight boxing championship and several other titles, skills that helped me whip the daylights out of those guys.

Knievel was impressed. When he invited me to go on the road with him I quit my job and joined his team as right-hand man, bodyguard, and set-up man. Before long I was performing some of the same death-defying feats before large crowds.

The stunt business appealed to me because of the thrilling entertainment it provided the crowds and because it is devoid of phonies. Stunt performance leaves no place for pretense.

I guess I owe a lot of my attitude to my parents. My dad, Prescott Sullivan, wrote about hard-nosed sports personalities for 50 years, while my mother was a captain in the Air Force WASPs during World War II and flew B-25 bombers as a ferry pilot along the Aleutian chain.

But about that phone call.

When I walked into Evel's room he was lying on the floor and couldn't get back into bed. He had broken his ankle a few days before during a show and I was replacing him until he was able to return to jumping. I helped him back to bed and sat down to watch TV.

A talk show was on and Pat Boone was guest. Pat talked about his relationship with Christ. I snickered a little but deep inside I was impressed. Boone didn't come across phony. There was something real about his belief in Jesus.

About a month later I decided to leave Knievel and go out on my own. I was back in Reno for a few days when a man invited me to a breakfast sponsored by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. Although I wasn't especially religious I'd go anywhere for food so I accepted the offer.

I stuck out like a sore thumb at that affair. Not only was my lifestyle 180 degrees opposite most of the men but my size set me apart from everyone else. At that time I weighed 240 pounds, was lifting more than 400 pounds, and served as a nightclub bouncer in my spare time.

The physical contrast between the speaker and me was hilarious. The program committee had called in Albie Pearson, the smallest baseball player in the major leagues, to give the message. Pearson stood about five feet four and was known as "The Littlest Angel" when he played for California.

Albie talked about establishing a personal relationship with Jesus, then introduced a friend who shared his personal testimony. What a story the
man told. He had been a hard-core heroin addict for six years but when the Lord entered his life the man just threw away all his drug-related paraphernalia. He said, “I want to tell you that I woke up the next morning a free man. I haven’t had a single withdrawal symptom. God totally delivered me.”

Two things happened to me when I heard about God’s power in the speaker’s life. First, I began to weep; second, I saw that everything I had done in life added up to zero. All my efforts to live up to high character standards were worthless in the sight of God, nor was He impressed with my ability to ride bikes through walls of fire. He had brought me to the end of myself.

When Albie Pearson invited those who wanted to receive Jesus as their Saviour and Lord to come forward, I stood to my feet.

My prayer went something like this: “Lord, whatever I am now, whatever I will be, wherever I go, whatever I do, I now totally commit my life into Your hands. You will be my Lord from this day forward. I want You to lead me in anything I do or say.” In my mind I visualized myself signing the bottom line of a contract. When the prayer ended I belonged to God.

“Now, brother,”—it was Albie’s voice—“we are going to lay hands on you and God will fill you with His Holy Spirit.” I didn’t have the slightest idea what that meant but I was sure it would happen. Sure enough, four men laid their hands on me and I began to speak in an unknown tongue.

I felt as though scales had fallen from my eyes and I could see the difference between right and wrong more clearly than before. I knew I should give up the wild partying I’d enjoyed for so long, but it wasn’t a problem for me. I wanted to give those things up.

The Lord had a bonus for me: marriage to the woman I had loved for several years but feared to marry. You see, my parents had divorced when I was small and some fears carried over from my experiences with a broken home. Now the Lord gave me peace.

For a time I returned to the stunt business, all the while asking the Lord to make me a faithful witness for Him. Opportunities came from every direction—TV and movie contracts, performances before huge crowds. Then the Lord pulled me out of the public eye to prepare me for something better.

One morning I was reading the Bible and the Lord said, “Gene, I want you to give up everything.” I saw that He was really taking me up on my promise at the breakfast meeting in Reno.

I called my manager and canceled
the contracts. In a single phone call I walked away from the one thing in life I knew how to do. God was now my only guarantee of security.

A few weeks later I went to work as shipping clerk for a Christian magazine, and mowing lawns for a church lawn service. Nobody there seemed impressed with my press clippings; no one cared about my boxing records and skills with a bike. For two and a half years my chief claim to fame was setting up overhead projectors for Bible teachers.

Aren’t God’s ways fantastic? I had to stay in the meetings to shut off lights, etc., so night after night I was exposed to the truths of Scripture. The Lord knew better than I that the rough edges of my life could be sanded smooth only by repeated encounters with the Word. One lesson I needed to learn was that only the person who is faithful in little things can be trusted with larger responsibilities.

Early in 1978 I began to pray seriously about my future work. God renewed the vision I’d had earlier about using a cycle to witness for Him, but I was filled with questions. Where was I going to get a bike? How could I put together a show when I was nearly broke?

That’s when the Lord gave me some basic training in faith. First I received an invitation to put on a program, then the Lord sent me a bike. I began to get the picture. God was putting the whole ministry together so I couldn’t take credit.

At last, after six years of spiritual preparation I was ready to take off. The site was a church parking lot, not the big stadium I was accustomed to, but the action was the same as before. I’d begin with some “wheelies” while I circled the lot, then get ready for the big jump.

At the climactic moment I headed toward a long row of barrels and a flaming 16-by-8-foot fiberboard placed at the end of the long jump. I felt myself airborne over the barrels, then I was through the blazing wall and on the ground again.

But unlike those earlier times the show wasn’t over. Not yet. Not until I had shared my testimony and invited onlookers to accept God’s forgiveness.

Wherever I go, that’s how the show works. Many towns give the ministry front-page coverage but that’s for the Lord, not me. He gets all the credit because the show belongs to Him. The same goes for TV interviews and public performances.

I always want the show to center around the person of Jesus Christ, not my stunts. People may forget my name or how far or what hurdle I jumped, but when the show is over I want them to know that knowing Jesus Christ is more thrilling than being a stuntman. I want each person who hears me or reads my testimony to know that he, too, may experience this exciting life in Christ.

The Six Steps to Salvation on page 31 is a helpful guide to any person seeking this satisfying life. Additional help may be obtained by dialing Prayerline, (714) 754-1400.
This humorous testimony, with its skillful use of colloquialism and vivid descriptions, may make it difficult to believe that Paul Yarbrough is not a professional standup comic. He is, however, a successful investor in stocks and oil.
One of the big turning points of my life happened during the gas scare of 1974. You remember, that was the first time you had to sit in line for a gallon of gas, and they wouldn't even give you a free Bugs Bunny glass for it. They even started cutting down the amount of gas you could use in car races, and a few poor guys have run out of fuel just feet away from the finish.

A friend of mine at that time who owned a Volkswagen dealership had been filled with the Holy Ghost for about a month. They say we oughta lock 'em up for the first six months, and that's just what I thought should be done with my buddy when he told me he was going to sell his dealership. Why, people were just flocking in for the privilege of buying one of them little bugs! When he asked me what I thought he oughta do with his money, I told him to buy himself some land. He followed my advice, but a few days later he was back to break the news that God wanted him to buy a Lincoln dealership.

"Man, people ain't been buying them cars for eight months," I said.

"Well," he said, "that may be so, but God wants you in with me."

I figured he needed a little practice hearing the voice of God, but then be-

fore I knew it I was in Weatherford, Texas selling Lincolns at a time when everybody but Arab oil sheiks was buying bicycles.

Now before I go any further, maybe I oughta explain a little bit about myself. I was raised down in Mississippi, during Hoover's campaign. That was when cotton was about a nickel a pound. I was the worst plowhand on the place. (I got two opinions on that—mine and my daddy's.) I just didn't have my heart in it. I was kind of a daydreamer, and the only thing I wanted to do was get big enough to get away from there.

Well, the day came when I did just that. I got myself a job selling magazines in Chicago. Before that little deal was over with, plowing that mule was about to look glamorous. The only thing got me out of that situation was Pearl Harbor. I was so bad off I figured hand-to-hand combat couldn't be any worse than grappling to get somebody to part with the price of a year's subscription.

So my brilliant idea was to join the Marine Corps. I sat down and had a real heart-to-heart with this nice recruiter, and he promised to make me an aerial photographer. I want to share this with you: everything me and that sergeant talked about, not a
bit of it has ever come true to this very day.

Instead, they made me an infantry machine gunner and several close shaves later I found myself in a hospital in New Caledonia. I picked up a book there that said the average life span of a machine gunner in combat is 46 seconds. I figured I’d done better than average, all right, but now that I knew the odds I didn’t much want back in the game. I had what they call “mixed emotions” when they told me I wouldn’t have to go back to the front.

Back in the states, I had just one thing on my mind and that was to get them dollar bills together. I thought if you could gather up enough of ’em in one place at one time you could be happy. Well, the dollar bills started to add up, but it didn’t seem to make any difference. The more I put together, the more I spent and the more things I had to do to entertain ol’ Paul. That got to be my fulltime job—entertaining ol’ Paul.

Then’s about when folks started saying, “Ol’ Paul’s a fine feller but he drinks too much.” And I’d always come back with, “I can quit any time I want to.” Only thing was, I never got around to wanting to.

Finally I did get around to wanting to—and found out I couldn’t. That’s when a living hell set in around me and my household. The only prayer I could come up with was to ask the Lord when I’d go to sleep just not to let me wake up. I thank Him today for unanswered prayers.

I went to every drying-out hole in America, and if they ever put together a tour of those places I could easily be the guide. I went to Warm Springs, Hot Springs, Glenwood Springs and a few other springs I can’t remember. Even the folks at Alcoholics Anonymous couldn’t square me away. They give you a cigarette lighter if you can stay sober one day at a time for a year. (I guess they figure smoking ain’t as bad as drinking. At least you never see a man in the gutter from smoking too many cigarettes.) Anyway, they give you this lighter with your initials on it. But you know, I struck matches for 10 years. Couldn’t get me a Zippo! Drunk awhile, sober awhile. I was miserable... miserable.

Then a miracle happened. My wife and a couple of other ladies prayed me into a prayer meeting. I know it had to be a miracle because I had no desire to be there, and that’s the understatement of the decade. I had me a king-sized hangover and I figured there wasn’t but one thing that could cure me and that was a drink of whiskey.

So there I sat in that prayer meeting, and all I could pray was, “God, get me out of here and into a bar where I can get some emergency treatment.” Thank God for one more unanswered prayer.

Well, this thing went on and on and finally I heard somebody say, “Let’s pray.” I kind of perked up then because, most religious gatherings I’d been to, when somebody says, “Let’s
I kept thinking about that drink...

pray," it's all over with. Not this bunch, though. Then some wiseacre says, "Let's pray for ol' Paul," and before I could object there were hands all over me. They prayed and prayed and prayed some more, and the whole time I just kept thinking about that drink I'd promised myself as soon as this ordeal was over.

Finally they turned me loose and I went straight home to the liquor cabinet and poured me an extra big snort. Well, I started to drink that thing—but then I set it down. Picked it up, set it down again. Then I walked off to another part of the house. I came back and made another pass at it. But you know, as bad as I knew I needed it I couldn't take it.

And here's the truth. I haven't taken that drink up to and including this day, and that's been over 14 years ago.

Now, that wasn't the end of it, of course. A few days later I got finagled into picking up an evangelist at the airport. My objective was to unload him as soon as possible, but God saw to it that I was in church that night when the evangelist gave his testimony. You know what his testimony was? He had been a drunk just like me! Drank himself out of an executive job with a big advertising outfit, went the whole rumdum route, even went to AA just like I did. Only difference between him and me was, he got his Zippo. Then this old boy had a spiritual experience with Jesus and ended up in the ministry.

I went to hear him preach every night after I heard his testimony, and a few days later I found myself driving
south towards Palestine, Texas for a big Methodist camp meeting.

Well, Waterloo hit me there at the meeting one night. We were in one of those sharing groups, you know, and there was an old boy across from me and, man, he had alky written all over him. His face looked like a Texas and Tennessee road map. Pretty soon the group leader asks for prayer requests and this old boy says, “I want you to pray for my brother. He’s a alcoholic.” I started working him over in my mind, thinking, “Man, you’re the alky and you’re blaming your poor ol’ brother.”

All at once this voice said, “I don’t know anyone who’s more capable of praying for that than Paul.” I want to tell you, that changed my thought pattern in a hurry. I wasn’t much up on public praying and I suppose shorter prayers have been said, but only in emergencies.

Anyway, when I prayed something happened inside me. God honored that little dinky prayer, touched my life and took away all the desire for alcohol. And that vacuum I’d always felt inside somehow got filled, and I know it was Jesus who came in and filled it.

After the meeting I was walking across the compound with this dentist fella and for some reason I just blurted out, “I ain’t never going to drink no more whiskey.” When I said that he started laughing. He grabbed me and hugged me. I started trying to bust loose from him but he wouldn’t let me go. I wasn’t used to that kind of carryings-on, but later on I found out what was happening. The Bible says that when a soul gets saved all the angels rejoice, and this old boy was just rejoicing right along with ’em. The only thing was, he was kind of overdoing it.

Well, one morning I was sitting on a log talking to the Lord and I said, “Lord, I’ll do anything You want me to do, no matter what it is.” I’d made deals like that before to get out of jail and such like. But this wasn’t the same, and God knew it and took me up on it. Pretty soon I found myself working with alcoholics. Did that for over four years, and I want to tell you I don’t recommend that line of work to people I like. Only thing I can say is, there weren’t a whole lot of people in line trying to take my job away from me. It showed me for sure, though, that Ol’ Man Barleycorn treats us all the same, whether you’re a farmer, schoolteacher, race driver, banker, doctor or preacher. All sorts of people came my way and many of ’em are still sober today, many of ’em came to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour, many of ’em got filled with the Holy Ghost, and a bunch are out there today carrying the Word.

Now, what does all this have to do with the gas scare of ’74?

Well, even after I was saved it was a long time before I could accept in my heart some of the things the Holy Ghost will have us do. God showed me miracle after miracle. He even healed me of my old war injuries, and
that’s a story in itself. But some of us, see, have so much pride that God just sort of has to peel us down layer by layer. He’d been doing that pretty good with me, but now here I was in Weatherford, Texas and we needed some kind of miracle to sell those Lincolns.

So one day me and my partner asked God for somebody to come and pray over the business. Few days later, we were entertaining some monogrammed-shirt types from Detroit when this fella walks onto the floor lugging two suitcases and announces, “The Lord sent me here to pray for your business.”

I looked around real careful to see if the Detroit guys heard it, and when I saw they hadn’t I kinda whispered, “Let’s go pray in the office.”

“Hallelujah!” the fella shouts. “Glory to God!” By now I had a kind of pleading tone in my voice. “Why don’t we go in the office?”

He sat right down on the floor and started to pray. I wanted to pray too, but not under those conditions.

Then this woman came in to pick up her car. “Here,” I told the guy, “I want you to pray over this woman’s car. Is that all right, ma’am?” The woman said it was, and the guy laid hands on the car and started praying all over it. Then he prayed for the lady. The fella that brought the car out from the shop took off running. The boys from Detroit just gaped at us. The girls in the office, the mechanics and the parts guys were looking at us like a treeful of owls.

I felt like such a fool but it just didn’t matter anymore. I turned around and told that guy to pray for every wrench, every screwdriver, every piece of equipment in the whole place. And I looked straight at the guys from Detroit when I said it.

Meantime, that lady has big chill bumps on her arms, and I can tell she got something from God that wasn’t on the accessory list. And the fella with the suitcases is marching around the building seven times, and it doesn’t matter to me if it falls down or not.

That was the turning point for me—when I finally turned it all over to God and decided that it was all right to be a fool if I could be a fool for Christ’s sake.

Let me tell you, it’s one thing to meet together and worship, but when God puts you on a showroom floor or in the middle of a bank or hotel lobby, that’s when you learn whether or not you’re ashamed of Christ and His gospel. I believe the day is coming, if it’s not already here, when we have to confess with our mouths whose side we’re on. Jesus is coming back real soon and every knee’ll bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we oughta get in practice right now.

It’s been a long road to bring this old alky to a place of total surrender to God. But I tell you what, if He could do it for ol’ Paul He can sure do it for you.
HAROLD "HAYSEED" STEVENS, Oil Consultant, Weatherford, Texas

Still hung over, I straddled the back of the jittery prize bull. His indignant snorts and twitching muscles told me he couldn’t wait to buck me to the ground, once we cleared the chute.

In the reality of the morning light, I was less confident than I had been the night before in the semi-darkness of the Oklahoma bar-restaurant and the haze of half a dozen drinks. More than just my body and reputation would be riding that bull, which—for a year on the rodeo circuit—had thrown
everyone who had dared mount him. I had bet $1,000!
The whole thing had come about suddenly, unexpectedly.
Over a bourbon and water, one of the Oklahomans had boasted that nobody could ride that mean bull. Such a statement doesn’t go unchallenged by a proud Texan.
So there I was as the bull charged out, bucking higher and higher. Jostled and bounced, I clung as if my life depended upon it. Then I understood why this bull was a champion. He knew every trick. I began to slip to one side, the ground coming up fast. I could see the self-image of Hayseed Stevens tarnished, the $1,000 disappearing, and hear the triumphant laughter of the Oklahomans.
Stubborn, hardheaded, determined, I jerked myself upright, vowing that no bull was going to throw me. And what do you know? After what seemed a forever of vicious bounces and instant black-and-blue spots, I felt the bull gradually slow down, finally becoming reluctantly docile.
That was it.
Winning had always seemed natural—although, as I think of my start in life, I can’t quite understand why.
Born not far from Abilene, Texas in the town of Tye (too small to have its own zip code), I was the only child at home to do chores for my sharecropper parents: slopping hogs, feeding cows and chickens, milking, and picking cotton. (My sister, 13 years older, had left home during my infancy.)

We didn’t originate poverty but we had all the benefits of it. Debts always seemed several laps ahead of our income, $500 gross in 1952. After selling milk and eggs to make money for clothing and other necessities we usually subsisted on watery gravy with bread.

My early days were all work and no play—chores before and after school and on weekends. Although some of my clothes came from the store, my shirts were usually made by my mother from feedsacks.

Sundays were a little easier, mostly services at Tye’s First Baptist Church, where my father was a deacon. Nobody beat our family in attendance. During a revival at the old rustic tabernacle when I was nine I listened to a preacher’s explanation of the plan of salvation—at my mother’s urging—and was moved. That very night I invited Jesus Christ to be my Saviour and Lord.

Three years later I had to make a crucial decision. Once I graduated from the seventh grade, I had to make up my mind whether I was going back to the cotton patch and farm for the rest of my life or transfer to Abilene and complete my education.
I decided in favor of Abilene. Competitive sports attracted me. Despite my small size—five feet, nine inches and 145 pounds—I was a scrappy football player.
At that point I had the nickname “Hayseed” thrust upon me by a teammate who had made the mistake
of spending the night at our house, becoming involved in evening and morning chores and not getting enough sleep. During the first period at school the teacher woke him from slumber and asked for an explanation. My friend responded, pointing at me:

"If you had spent the night at the house of that hayseed, you'd understand." And I've been Hayseed Stevens ever since.

I gave everything I had to sports. Winning was what it was all about.

A second factor influenced my decision. I was certain that there must be more to Christianity than I had yet experienced. It was my hope that fulltime Christian service would be the remedy to bring relief of an ulcer-like gnawing within. Religious education was among the disciplines offered by this church-related college, and I chose it as my major.

The conflict inside me was as rough as that on any gridiron—religious education versus football. The game gradually became my god. I worshiped it, gave it my all.

Hardin-Simmons won the Border Conference championship in 1958 with me at quarterback. Then in 1960 according to NCAA figures I led the nation's quarterbacks in passing statistics, was voted "Outstanding Colle- giate Passer in the Nation," and in the Copper Bowl All-Star Game I was voted "Most Inspirational Player and Outstanding Back." These accomplishments led to my being signed by a professional football team, the New York Titans, forerunner of the New York Jets.

Married to my high school sweetheart Mary Gene, and with a small child, I took leave of absence from the team to be with my family during a crisis, never rejoining the Titans.

Instead, I launched myself in a lucrative business career—oil, investments, insurance, real estate, marketing. I made fortunes, lost them and made others, buying everything that's supposed to make a person happy—
big home, expensive foreign cars. But it was all emptiness, a round hole in me. I had tried to shove a football into it, but it wouldn’t fit. Then I had tried the whiskey bottle. That didn’t fit. Neither did prestige, pride or ego.

In desperation I turned to the Bible, opening it at random. My searching finger found John 20, about Jesus appearing to Mary and Martha after His resurrection. In that moment it was revealed to me that the Saviour whom I had accepted as a poor farm boy is alive today. He is not just the risen friend of Mary or Martha, who lived 2,000 years ago. The miracle-working Son of God is my Lord, too.

God filled that vacuum within, and He continues to fill me. Jesus baptized me in His Holy Spirit. My prayer language has been important since the day I first received it.

That happened when I was alone in an El Paso hotel. Frustrated by an unworkable business deal, I threw myself on the bed, crying out to God for a solution. The Holy Spirit brought Romans 8:26 to mind, that even when we don’t know what to pray for, the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. I believed it, asked for it and experienced it. Within an hour the problem that I could not solve was settled. Praise God!

In reflection, I handled my newfound faith with the finesse of a fullback crashing through a wall of linemen. I knew my parents would be excited; they’d been praying for me for 20 years. Man, I hit the front door, grabbed Mother and Daddy and shouted, “Praise God, the Lord has filled me with the power of the Holy Spirit!” They jumped back and cried, “Oh, no, not that much!”

Next I ran home and told my wife, and she reacted the same way. (Since then my wife, two sons, our daughter, my mother and father have all received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.)

I closed a highly profitable business to become a fulltime evangelist, traveling and giving my testimony from Maine to Mexico, from small-town churches to a maximum-security prison in Ohio, and as far away as Alaska and Indonesia.

Recently God directed me back into the oil business as a consultant and gave me this promise: “And I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness, secret riches; and you will know that I am doing this” (Isaiah 45:3, LB). True to His Word, He has been doing it. On our very first venture God miraculously gave us a flowing well in the midst of 11 dry holes.

Another scripture He gave me explains why He is blessing me: “… so that there will not only be enough for your own needs, but plenty left to give joyfully to others” (2 Corinthians 9:8b, LB).

Had I remained in the game, today I would be a retired professional football player reading clippings of victories past. Instead, Christ has made me a player and, thank God, I’m on the winning team.
The track at Langhorne, Pennsylvania is famous for eating up drivers. It runs uphill and downhill for a mile around corners and is very narrow, with absolutely no straightaways. On a blazing Sunday afternoon in June, 1965 the track nearly claimed another victim—me.

I was running in eighth place when my motor started rattling badly. I knew it was coming apart. Finally a rod flew loose, sawing the engine in two and spilling oil on the tires. Moments later I hit the fence with the left side of the car. My head ricocheted off the roll cage, knocking me out as the car burst into flames. There I lay in my car, melting. When they finally put out the fire and pulled me loose I had third-degree burns over 40 percent of my body.

At the Burn Center in San Antonio I had plenty of time to think about the events leading up to Langhorne. Doctors said I'd be in the hospital nine
months, which seemed like eternity to a guy who had never been inside a hospital longer than for a visit.

I was a depression baby, born in 1933 to Mr. and Mrs. Everett Kenyon in DeKalb, Illinois. My father, an automobile mechanic, moved our family when I was two years old to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where Dad found work repairing refrigerators. As I grew, I became interested in mechanics.

The idea of becoming a race driver hit me when I was 13 years old. My brother Don and I, walking to Sunday school, passed a sleek midget race car parked in a gas station and my eyes just about popped out. It was an old homemade car, painted silver with a big red “O” on the side. That afternoon my dad took Don and me to our first race at a small dirt track outside town.

Eventually I drove stock cars in competition, and in 1958 Don and I became partners on a midget car. Don handled the mechanics and I became the driver of our team.

In 1964 I married Marianne Neu- mann, a commercial artist. Marianne had never seen a race car before but she learned about them quickly. That same year our team won its first of five national midget championships and the following spring we headed for Indianapolis.

We had won all three midget races entered prior to the Indy time trials and things were really looking up. I was sure that I had the same control over my life and destiny as I had over my car, but I was about to learn that I really had very little control over any of these things.

During my qualifying run I averaged 153.5 miles per hour, a time that held up until I was bumped from the field by Bill Cheesebourg. There wasn’t time to climb into another car and try to get back in the field, but I was sure

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The Three-fold 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 full 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.

HOW TO START A FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S CHAPTER

Requests come in daily to start new chapters. If you have this burden laid on your heart and see the vision for your community, write for complete information to:

Chapter Department
FGBMFI
P.O. Box 5050
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
February 6, 1979 was a cold, blustery day in Hot Springs, Arkansas. I had gone to the track early that morning to race in an upcoming meet. It was a familiar routine; I had been licensed over a hundred times in more than 20 states during my 17 years as a jockey.

The head steward took me completely off guard. “I’m sorry, Eddie, you’ll have to come back tomorrow. We can’t get a printout on your past record. I’m going to have to check into this further before you can be licensed.”

I left his office and walked along the backstretch.

EDDIE DONNALLY, Jockey, Crystal Beach, Florida
rail bordering the racetrack where the local TV station was filming a spot about the new race meeting. Little did I dream that before the day was over I'd be in front of those same cameras.

I just happened to glance back in the direction of the steward's office in time to see two well-dressed men come out and walk toward the nearby parking lot. I realized at once who they were. Since there seemed no need to delay the inevitable I went to meet them.

"Eddie Donnally?" the tall one asked. "FBI. We have a warrant for your arrest. You have been indicted in the state of Massachusetts for sports bribery."

I got into the agents' car as they directed, and rode in silence to the Federal Building in downtown Hot Springs, where I was photographed and fingerprinted. A few hours later I was arraigned before a magistrate. Television cameras were allowed to film the proceedings.

The next day my picture hit the front pages of the Hot Springs and Little Rock papers as well as the Boston Globe and American Herald. A shadow of suspicion was cast over my entire character. It looked like my riding career was over.

Arkansas, needless to say, refused to license me, and my wife and I and our two children returned to our home in western Florida. There the racetracks refused even to allow me on their grounds. The only job I could find was exercising horses on a farm.

My family and I attended a small
community church in the area. Warm and supportive of us, the church members began to offer prayers on our behalf. When the pastor asked me to drive him to a Billy Graham crusade which he had helped organize at the Tampa Stadium, I was more than happy to do him the favor. It wasn’t until later that I realized who was really being helped.

My wife and I listened to Dr. Graham’s message with open hearts, and when he gave the invitation to accept Jesus Christ we stood, joined hands and walked together down to the floor of the stadium where hundreds of people were converging for their prayer of commitment.

I had looked for God in the past, but never had I experienced His presence as I did that night. As I asked Jesus Christ into my heart, giving Him control of my life, I felt an electric current flow through me. Tears cours ed freely down my cheeks.

As king God’s forgiveness for my sins, I made a covenant with Him: “I will bring Your gospel to the racetrack if You will restore my career to make it possible.”

It was now time to go to Massachusetts to stand trial. Because our entire savings had been depleted during the eight months since I had been accused, we had to move in with my wife’s parents.

I had expected the trial to be a devastating experience. Instead, God used it to show me His wonderful grace and mercy. All charges were dropped, the case against me dis-

missed, and I was free to race again.

Men often, in times of deep trouble, make promises to God that are soon forgotten. I had not forgotten mine. God had kept His part of the covenant I had made with Him on the day I was saved. Now I determined to keep my part.

I returned to Hot Springs, and with the assistance of a local minister we began to hold Christian services at the track.

Next I moved to Arlington Park in Chicago. I had real difficulty finding a minister or a church willing to extend their mission to the racetrack because of the gambling that takes place there.

Finally someone put me in touch with Ed Targus of Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International. Ed was eager to help me.

After only a few weeks we had outgrown the tiny racetrack community center where we first began to meet, and had moved to the track cafeteria. Ed brought men to our meetings with whom the track personnel could identify—men who are living proof of the power of God’s Holy Spirit to change lives.

When Christ gave the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20 I believe that He included the men, women and children of racing’s backstretch community. Acts 1:8 tells us that we are to be witnesses unto Christ “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” I am grateful that in restoring my career God put me in position to bring Christ to the racetrack.
CONVENTIONS
EASTERN AND WESTERN REGIONS

12TH INDIANA REGIONAL
April 1-4, 1981
Essex Hotel
Write: Indiana State Office
FGBMFI, P.O. Box 19032
Indianapolis, IN 46219

KANSAS REGIONAL
April 8-11, 1981
Broadview Hotel
Write: Paul Farmer
801 East Mt. Vernon
Wichita, KS 67211

COASTAL GEORGIA RALLY
April 10-11, 1981
The Buccaneer Motor Lodge
Write: Bill Holder
123 Cross Brook Drive
Brunswick, GA 31520

HOUSTON REGIONAL
April 16-18, 1981
Adams Mark Hotel
Write: FGBMFI
585 Sovereign Dr., Ste. 124
Houston, TX 77036

PRAIRIE REGIONAL
April 23-25, 1981
Write: Martin Zip
P.O. Box 7047
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Canada S7K 4J1

PRINCE GEORGE REGIONAL RALLY
April 24-25, 1981
Delta's Inn of the North
Write: Len Tisdale
Box 61
Prince George, British Columbia
Canada V2L 4R9

For a complete listing of conventions, rallies, and advances, write to Conventions,
P.O. Box 5050,
Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

FGBMFI COUPLES ADVANCE
April 24-25, 1981
Tucson Ramada Resort
Write: Frank Evans
5625 East Burns Street
Tucson, AZ 85711

MODESTO-TURLOCK
April 30-May 2, 1981
War Memorial Building
Write: Enoch Christoffersen
P.O. Box 337
Turlock, CA 95380

NORTHWEST REGIONAL
May 20-23, 1981
Red Lion Motor Inn
Write: John Wehliitz
12020 Southwest Tremont
Portland, OR 97225

28TH ANNUAL WORLD CONVENTION
June 30-July 4, 1981
Philadelphia, PA
Write: David Byram
World Convention Coordinator
P.O. Box 5050
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S CHAPTER OUTREACH

As this issue was being prepared for publication, the following chapters were submitted as having been recently chartered. The president's name and telephone number are included in this list for your information. Write for information regarding the date and location of a chapter meeting in your area.

we’d be back next year.

Even as I lay in the Burn Center I was sure I’d pick up my career where I’d left it a few weeks before. I was making rapid progress—in fact, I was way ahead of schedule—when suddenly I developed an infection.

Up to that point I’d been a model patient. Although I was suffering with those third-degree burns I was learning to keep the pain under control and wasn’t causing anyone much trouble. But once the infection entered the picture I discovered I didn’t have it under control at all. Pus pockets, sometimes up to three inches long, formed all over my body, oozing so much fluid every morning that it ran over the edge of the bed and onto the floor. I couldn’t lie down, but had to sleep sitting up on a rubber thing shaped like a donut while holding my badly burned left hand high in the air. I took out my discomfort on doctors, nurses, even my wife. Finally I got the message; there was only one Person who could help me get through this predicament: Jesus Christ.

Why is it that when we get into trouble we pull out our list of things to try and Christ is always at the bottom of the page? We keep checking off approaches that won’t work and finally we get down to the Lord. I was no different than other people; He was at the bottom of my “help list,” too. I soon discovered that He belonged at the top.
There in the hospital I found Jesus Christ and discovered the big and wonderful difference He can make in one's life. Although I'd gone to Sunday school every week as a boy and was brought up in the church, I had never really accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I looked on going to church as a duty. It had no real meaning. Then came my accident and the long recovery period.

With Marieanne’s help, I fully accepted Christ into my heart and turned my life over to Him. There was no big clap of thunder or band playing or anything like that to signal my conversion, but several days later there was definite improvement in my condition, both spiritually and physically. It was as if the dark clouds had been swept away and the sun had come into my life.

That was the turning point. My body began to heal remarkably fast, but the doctors felt it necessary to remove part of my fingers. Every time they cut away pieces of my hand I would say to myself, “This is going to make it more difficult for me to get back into racing,” but I didn’t lose confidence in what God could do.

During the off-season Don, my dad and I completely rebuilt our midget car in preparation for the 1966 season. We designed a glove-and-socket affair for my left hand by welding two pins to form a “T” pin, then clamping it on the steering wheel with a couple of hose clamps. Dad made a socket attached to a leather glove which fits over the “T” pin and is locked in place. The system has proved so efficient that we never had to change it.

Sure enough, on Memorial Day, 1966 we were back at Indy where I finished fifth, some five laps behind the winner, the late Graham Hill. With the Lord’s help we've won five national midget championships and missed a sixth by only four points. In addition, I've been able to finish as high as third in the “500.” I've been able to do so much more with a hand and a half, and the Lord’s help, than most people can accomplish with two good hands.

I've never wanted anything as much as I want to win the Indy 500. But of greater importance to me than any goal I have for my racing career is my ambition to become the best witness I can for the Lord Jesus.

I'm not a professional speaker and I don't preach or give sermons, but I've had a chance to share my faith in Christ with various groups around the country. I like to tell people that although tragedy strikes our lives because of our mistakes and human frailties, God is with us even in trying times. The Lord means a lot to me and I rely on His guidance and strength in everything I do, especially when I’m driving at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Marieanne and I have come to know God through His Son Jesus Christ. I pray that through my story others will come to know Him without having to go through an unfortunate experience like mine.
Philadelphia World Convention
Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International
June 30—July 4, 1981

Join men and women from around the world for a new kind of family vacation in the City of Brotherly Love.

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Mail to: World Convention Dept., 3150 Bear Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626—or call (714) 754-1400.

Come and Be Loved
Talk to a few race drivers and mechanics and you'll notice a pattern about their lives. For most of them, interest in racing started as a hobby, grew into a passion and finally became a fulltime profession. That's what happened to me.

In 1971 I reached the stage where I thought seriously about making a living on wheels. I'd been working around cars for 15 years but didn't have enough money to go out on my own, nor did I have prospects of gaining a sponsor.

Even nonreligious people like me find it helpful to pray now and then, so I turned to God for advice. He surely didn't owe me any favors but He showed me in my heart that I should take the plunge and become a racing pro.

Sure enough, God led me to a nationally known oil company. They were putting together a team of drivers and I was one of 27 selected to represent the firm.

Just to be sure I didn't forget who was responsible, the Lord allowed several incidents to happen that I couldn't predict ahead of time. For instance, the company decided that the drivers should go into the schools and talk to kids at assembly programs. That definitely wasn't my bag. I'd never been able to stand in front of people and give speeches, but God gave me the strength to overcome this fear.

Then during the energy crisis of 1973-74 when the oil company eliminated 26 spots from their team, I was the only driver they kept employed. In a
way I could see that God was up to something in my life, but I still had no special commitment to Him.

In fact, I’d get ticked off when my wife played Christian records so loudly that I could hear them through closed doors and windows while I worked outside on my racing equipment.

She hadn’t been that religious when we married, but one night she attended a prayer meeting at the invitation of a nun we both respected. There was a radiant glow about this little lady, and after the prayer meeting she led my wife to a personal encounter with Christ.

When my wife tried to share with me what it meant to be born again I turned her off. I got sick listening to her excitement about spiritual matters—not to mention those stupid records.

Then in August, 1975 she asked me to join her for a Christian luncheon at a construction firm. This was a regular event over there and she had invited me many times before. This time I agreed to go with her.

The speaker talked from his heart about the love of God and I began to feel strange about what I was hearing, as if the Word of God were melting me as I sat there. Before leaving that meeting I opened my life to Jesus Christ and accepted Him as my personal Saviour and Lord.

That very night I asked my wife to put on the turntable those records she’d been playing. I started listening to Christian programs on radio and television and couldn’t get enough Bible study.

I guess the biggest change was getting my racing career into the right perspective. Before I met Christ, racing was the most enjoyable facet of my life; now I would rather talk about the Word of God and what the Lord is doing in the lives of people. In my new order of priorities my family comes next, with racing third.

In 1979 I realized I needed a new trailer to transport my racing car. I had envisioned a 20-foot enclosed vehicle with the Lord’s name on it in sparkling letters to honor Him, but I didn’t know where to start. After praying about this need, within two months I had both the plans and materials for building it. The Lord provided everything I needed, including the lettering and paint. We get many comments about the lettering as we travel, and during TV interviews the cameras zoom in on the Lord’s name on the truck or on my uniform or car. In talks to groups I tell people how the Lord has wonderfully provided these things for us.

We’ve also been able to use the trailer for small worship services. At an Ohio rod run we held a Sunday morning service inside, and we conducted a big prayer meeting in the pits at the National Drag Races in Indianapolis. Drivers and their wives, racing officials and sponsors attended.

Sometimes we get into conversation with people about their personal needs and we’re able to take them inside the trailer for prayer. The results can be dramatic. One time a mechanic working in the pit area cut his hand.
and doctors were pessimistic that they could save it. They told him that he’d never be able to use that hand again. We prayed with him and after the stitches were removed his hand was as good as new. Doctors pronounced his healing a miracle.

On another occasion we visited a school where the principal’s wife suffered from incurable cancer. She drove up behind our trailer and saw the words, “All things are possible with God.” Through that simple verse God touched her and she received complete healing!

We’re also able to share the Lord’s working through radio and television interviews. Even national media people who have no commitment to the Lord seem to be interested in what we’re doing for Him. God does some unusual things in this area of our witness.

I’ve learned to apply the Word to my activities. As I get buckled into my car before a race I repeat Bible verses and talk with God. I know He’ll protect me, even when I make some serious mistakes.

I learned how valuable His care can be the day I raced an airplane. The pilot took off at full throttle and as he went over the starting line I was to accelerate from zero. The car won, but only by a few seconds. Television cameras were filming the event and I swerved the car back toward where the crew was shooting. The brakes were overheated and wouldn’t slow the car. Pumping wildly, I roared past the cameras at 100 mph.

In front of me was a fence with a busy highway beyond and planes parked wing to wing on both sides of the runway. At the last moment I saw an open space at the left, right beside the fence, and spun into the grass sidewise, narrowly missing the lanes and the fence.

As I got out I saw that it was in first gear. That had to be the Lord’s doing. There’s no human way I could shift from second to first, because of certain controls. Even the cameraman was touched. He came up and said, “Boy, God really is your Pilot!”

Another time I discovered a gasoline leak during a race. A hose had come off and the fuel injector was spraying gas all over the red-hot exhaust system. Normally there would have been a terrific blaze, but this time—nothing. It could only have been the hand of God.

I pray for every part that goes on the race car. My dependance on Christ in everyday situations as well as in the crisis moments has been a positive influence on my five children. They are learning with me that Jesus Christ is not only our Protector; He also gives life real meaning.

Are you in need of someone to counsel you from God’s Word and to stand with you in prayer? Call PRAYERLINE, (714) 754-6351 or 754-6357, Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 9 PM (PST).
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 come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

2. REPENT: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).

3. CONFESS: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

4. FORSAKE: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord . . . for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7).

5. BELIEVE: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).

6. RECEIVE: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:11,12).

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 put away my sins. I NOW receive Him as my personal Lord and Saviour and will by His help, confess Him before men.”

When you have made this greatest of all decisions, please let us know so that we may send you a booklet, NOW THAT YOU’VE RECEIVED CHRIST.

NAME ____________________________

ADDRESS _______________________________________________________________

CITY/STATE/ZIP ___________________________________________________________

Mail to: Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

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