

# FROM JAZZ BAND TO PULPIT

Some time ago I was traveling along with another minister and we entered a city. It was a large city, and it was late on a Saturday night. In fact it was around midnight. As we drove up the main street of the city, we could see the night clubs, the drinking places. In many of them we could see through the windows, and see the people standing at the bars drinking. Some of them had popular music playing that you could hear. It was a warm night and the doors were open. The other minister turned to me and said, "I wonder, sometimes how long God is going to put up with the sins of this world?" I looked at him a moment and said, "Well, my friend, but for the grace of God, I would be in one of those places tonight." I said, "I suppose the Lord is continuing to have mercy on those people because He just hates to give them up."

God loves His children. I love that text over in 2 Peter 3:9 that tells us how much God loves us. It says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The Lord wants all of us to be saved. If there is any possible way that God can reach your heart and mine, He is going to do so.

In Matthew 14:14 it tells us that our Saviour is a man of compassion. It says, "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick." If Jesus were standing here tonight in my place looking down into your faces, reading your problems, knowing your heartaches and your physical pains, He would be moved with compassion; and He would long to get down and do something for you. One writer has said that, "Pity looks down, but compassion gets down." So the Lord was willing to get down with the people and minister to their needs.

I think of a story of a great professor over in the old country, Professor John Stewart Blackie, who was the headmaster of a boys' school, and one of the greatest educators of his time. He was a stern disciplinarian, but he was a man with a tender heart. He was a tall man with an appearance somewhat like Abraham Lincoln. One day he was giving an entrance examination to a group of boys who wanted to enter that school, and the boys were very anxious to pass the examination. When it was over the professor, who was seated on a little platform, began to read the names of the boys. One by one he read them and they came forward very quickly and very smartly because they were following the discipline of the school; and as they got before the professor they clicked their heels together and with the left hand behind the back, they extended the paper with the right, saying, "Here you are, sire," very smart and very nice. So, the professor called the names one by one, and finally the name of one lad was called, and the young man stepped out from his seat, but it was very apparent to those about him that he

was trembling and fearful. He came forward hesitantly, walking somewhat sideways, and when he got up there in front of the professor he clicked his heels, but not as smartly as the other boys, and he extended his paper with the left hand instead of with the right hand, and the hand was shaking and trembling as he said in a halting voice, "Here - you - are -, sir."

The professor looked down, and said, "Young man, you're not presenting the paper in the proper way. You must present it with the right hand." And the young man's head dropped for a minute, but he looked up again with a beseeching look in his eyes, and he held out that paper again trembling, and he again said, "Here - you - are -, sir." He looked so much like he wanted the professor to take it. But the professor said, "Young man, unless you present the paper in the proper way, I'm going to have to disqualify you for entrance into this school. The boy's head dropped, and a sob escaped his lips, and the tears began to run down his cheeks. He had been standing somewhat sideways as if he had something to hide. Then he started to turn around, and the professor saw very quickly that the young man didn't have a right hand, nor did he have a right arm, and immediately the professor's heart was greatly touched. He was a man of compassion, though he was particular about the discipline in his school. When he recognized the situation and saw that the boy was broken-hearted because he thought he was disqualified for entrance into the school, the professor leaped from his platform and grabbed him in his arms and tears were running down his cheeks, and mingled with the tears of the lad, as he cried out, "I didn't mean to hurt you laddie. I wouldn't hurt you for all the world!"

O my friends, Jesus is a man of compassion. When He looks upon us and sees our infirmities and our heartaches and our troubles. He just yearns to take us in His arms and let us know how much he loves us.

I like to think of our Saviour being both a Father and a Mother to us. You know a mother never gives up a child, unless she is not a true mother. You know as well as I do that usually the black sheep in the family is the one that mother loves the most, or at least the one that she showers more love upon, because she wants to help that one. Well, that's the way my mother used to be to me. I didn't realize it then.

One time a young minister and his wife had moved to a city where they were to take care of a church. They had a fine little daughter. But they hadn't been there very long when their happiness was disrupted. The wife was afflicted with an incurable disease. And of course she began to die by degrees, and it was a heart-breaking experience. Finally the young mother passed away leaving this young man with his little daughter. The people in the church wondered what would happen. They thought perhaps some relative would come, someone of the feminine sex who could give

the little girl the attention of a woman, but no one came. Weeks and months went by, and every week the young minister and his daughter would come to church, and the daddy would lead his little girl by the hand. When it was time for the church service to begin, he would meet her and lead her down to the front and she would sit right on the front row, and look at daddy with adoring eyes.

One day the daddy was preaching about Mothers. It had been several months since his wife had died. He was talking about the love of a mother, and particularly the mother of Jesus, and he was extolling her virtues, and what a wonderful mother she was. Then he made the statement, "Who can ever take the place of a mother in the home?" At that point his voice broke, and his head dropped, and tears began to run down his cheeks while his congregation sat in silence. Their hearts were aching as they sympathized with their pastor over his lost wife. There was a complete silence, but in the midst of that silence, where you might have heard a pin drop, a voice spoke up right then, and the voice was the voice of a little child. That voice said, "A father can do every bit as well, daddy dear." His little daughter wanted to tell her daddy how much she appreciated what he was doing for her. Yes, he was keeping her neat and clean. Her hair was always combed, and her clothes were just as neat as they could be. You know, my dear friends, our God has more than the love of a mother, because we are told that while a mother may forget her child, that God will never forget His children.

In Isaiah 49:15, is one of the most beautiful texts in the Bible, it says, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." O my friends, our God cannot forget us, because we have been engraven upon His palms. You know, the leper thought he was forgotten. He thought everybody had turned against him, and he was not loved by a soul. Wherever he went the people scattered to get away. But one day he came to Jesus and we are told that Jesus was moved with compassion and He healed that man. He fell at the feet of Jesus and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. Jesus said, 'I will, be thou clean.'"

I often think of the prodigal son who left his home. He said to his father that he wanted his possessions so he could go to the world and see life and have a good time. The father's heart was breaking as he saw his son disappear over the horizon, riding a good camel and very finely dressed. He had plenty of money, and in the city he soon had lots of friends who were ready to help him spend his money. He entered into a life of riotous living, drunkenness, carousing. His money soon was gone; a famine came to the land and he was not well known. He didn't have a good reputation. His so-called friends, we better call them his cronies, left him stranded, and so he went to take care of the pigs. He ate and slept with the pigs, and he smelled like them.

Finally he came to his senses and he decided

that the servants in his father's house lived better than he was living, and he would go back to his father and home. That was the best decision he could make, but he thought surely my father will never receive me as a son again because I've gone so far astray. He didn't know that his father was praying night after night in the upper chamber for him.

One day that father looked down the road and saw his son coming. He might not have recognized him for his apparel. He wasn't riding a camel and his clothes weren't fine. He was in rags. He was filthy. But the father hurried down those steps. I can see the tears streaming down his cheeks. He's thrilled that his boy is coming home, and I can see him tottering down the road as fast as his feeble limbs will go, and he finally reaches the boy. The boy is ready to make excuses and tell his father that he is not worthy to be his son, but the father brushes that aside and grabs him into his arms with tears of rejoicing flowing from his eyes. And he calls for a great feast, because the one who was lost is now found! O my dear friends, that's the kind of a God we serve. Even though a mother may forget her child, we are told that God will never forget His children. He is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

I think of the story of a mother and her daughter who lived in very poor circumstances out in the country. One day the daughter said, "Mother, I want to go to the city and get a job and earn some money to take better care of you." And the mother said, "No." The daughter's name was Mary. She said, "Mary, please don't go to the city. I'm afraid of what might happen." The daughter said, "Nothing will happen, Mother. Let me go and I'll write to you every day." So her mother finally agreed, and away she went. She soon had a job, but it wasn't very long before the letters weren't coming regularly, and finally that ceased coming at all. Mother found out in a round-about way that her daughter was running around with the wrong associates and was drinking and carousing and had fallen into immorality.

That mother gathered what little possessions she had and went to the city to search for her daughter. She went from one drinking place to another, and she searched for several days, but did not succeed in finding her daughter. Finally her means were gone and she had to return home. So, she went to the managers of the various places and she asked permission to put something on the wall, and several of them agreed. Some of them didn't. She went on home. A few nights later her daughter with her drinking friends came into one of these places and they sat at a table and they were ready to spend the night drinking and carousing. Suddenly the girl looked up and there on the wall she saw something that looked familiar, so she got up from her seat. She thought, "no, surely that couldn't be, not in a place like this." So she moved over closer. She thought, "I must see for sure." And as she got nearer she recognized that it was a picture of her mother, and there was something written underneath. So she hurried over as quickly as she could, and she read it, and it

said, "Mary, I still love you. Please come home." "O," she thought, "Mother still loves me, and mother knows; she knows all about me." She whirled around without a word of explanation to her cronies, and to her room she went. She gathered together her possessions and soon was on her way home. When she arrived home she was received with rejoicing into the arms of her mother who still loved her in spite of the fact that she had fallen into a life of shame.

Oh my dear friends, no matter how far in sin we may go. God still loves us. I tell you, that's a wonderful thing to me. God saved me when I was deep in sin.

Now, I do not like to tell the story of my experience because it sometimes may seem I am elevating self, and I do not wish to do that. I'm not proud of some of the things that I did. I used to think that the world was mighty big and Christ was very little. I found out that I had a wrong conception of things.

I had a mother who was a godly woman. I'll never forget my mother. She died some years ago of a paralytic stroke. She was an invalid in her last days. And I think that I was responsible for bringing much of the grief to her soul, because I was her wayward son.

My father was not a Christian, and he was not interested in religion at that time. He wanted his sons to make a mark for themselves in the world. My father played the drums. That is, he did it just for a sideline. He dabbled in politics and other things. My father's father was a drummer in a fireman's band so I just sort of inherited rhythm in my bones. My father taught me how to play the drums. So I became a swing drummer, and in my high school days I started playing in different orchestras for dances and became quite attracted to that life. My father thought it was a great thing, but my mother was very grieved over the way I was going. Finally, when I finished high school, I decided that the entertainment world would be my life.

By this time I had organized an orchestra. We called them the six cylinders. We played in different places. In hotels during the summer and in night clubs during the winter. Then later on I organized a bigger orchestra. I called it "Buddy Harris's Happy Hot-n-tots." And so things went on and on, and finally my band was playing on the radio in Jersey City, New Jersey. And one night while we were playing, a radio man from New York, from WHN, one of the large stations in New York, was there and heard us play. He invited us to come over and play on WHN on Friday night from 11:00 to 12:00 midnight. It was to be a program for theatrical people, and the different stage performers on Broadway would come in after their shows and perform. Nick Kenny was the master of ceremonies. He was a writer for the **New York Daily Mirror**. We would have dancers, singers, and comedians perform, and we played for them.

From there we were invited to play in one of the large hotels in New York City. We were contracted to play in the hotel Victoria on the corner of Seventh Avenue and 51st Street, right off Broad-

way. Well, for the first time, there was my name in lights. I thought, surely now I have reached the height of success, and I was just 18 years old. I really was very thrilled by what I was doing.

One thing I never did care for was drinking. The other boys in the band, when the guests in the hotel would invite them up to their rooms for a friendly drink would go, but I didn't go. I wouldn't say that I never drank but thank God I never had a love for things like that. The boys in the band used to call me the gentleman orchestra leader. They used to tease me because I did not smoke, drink or swear.

We also played a short contract in the Hotel Taft. Then we were hired to play on the stage; the Lowes Theater circuit, and we played in Lowes State Theater on Broadway in New York City. That was when they had vaudeville. My band then was considered to be a good one as the world goes, and it was a wonderful thrill to sit up there in the center of the stage with all those beautiful instruments, those shining drums. I had all the equipment, the Tom Toms, Sock Cymbals, Korean Blocks, all that it took to make noise, and I was in the center of the band upon a little pedestal with the colored spotlight playing down on me, and it was just a wonderful thrill to hear the applause of the people. I thought, "This is the life for me."

But my dear Mother was a praying soul if there ever was one. And, Mother, though she had already had a stroke, and was partially paralyzed on one side, would go door to door giving out religious tracts, dragging herself up the steps by the banister, when she could hardly walk. She just loved the Lord. My Dad used to fuss about it. He'd say, "Why don't those lazy people in the church go out and give out those tracts themselves instead of bringing them to you to distribute when you're practically an invalid?" But it would have taken away her life if she couldn't have served the Lord.

Many a night when I'd leave the house her door would be standing ajar and I could hear Mother praying. O how she'd plead to God in tears to save her son, and I want to tell you when I'd leave the house my heart would be very heavy.

I remember finally, that Mother had a second stroke. This placed her in bed, she was partially paralyzed. At this time we were under contract to travel. We were to go to Chicago to play in a night club and then we were to go to the West Coast and then down into South America and the tour would take almost a year. I had a major decision to make. Would I go and leave mother who was in a serious state of health? I knew that it was already breaking her heart. Mother used to say to me, "Bub"—that was my nickname. She'd say, "Bub, the morning that you were born I dedicated you to God, to be a minister of the gospel." I used to laugh Mother to scorn. I'd say, "Me, be a minister of the gospel? Why that's absolutely impossible. I could never, never be a minister of the gospel." Mother said, "I dedicated you the morning you were born, and I'm praying that God will accept you and use you in preaching the gospel." I never thought that could ever be, but I knew that Mother's condition was serious and I must make an important decis-

ion. "Should I go and leave Mother for almost a year?" I finally thought, "Well, I haven't brought very much happiness to her so I think I'll try to give her a little bit of happiness now. I went to her and said, "Mother, what would make you happier than anything else?" She said, "The thing that would make me the happiest woman in the world is for you to go away to college and train to be a worker for the Lord." I said, "Mother, I don't think I could ever be a worker for the Lord, but I will go to college if you want me to, and try it out." I said, "You pick the school, and I'll go." I packed all my equipment and stored it in the attic; the drums that I loved so dearly. I fully intended to come back to them again. So I said to Mother, "Now what school do you want me to go to?" She picked a school down south. It was almost a thousand miles away from home. But she said, "This is a Christian school, and you can work and you can earn part of your way." Mother wasn't able to help me very much. I had some money. I had saved money in the orchestra business, and so away I went.

When I arrived at this Christian college and stepped into the administration building, they looked at me with surprise for I had on one of those wild looking zoot suits. I'm sure they wondered what kind of a creature I was. One of the first things they said was, "Do you want to work?" And I said, "No." I had some money that I had saved up so, what was the sense of working. I thought college would be just a good time. I fully intended to have a good time. I had satisfied Mother's wish and had gone to school, and I thought I had fulfilled by obligation.

I wasn't there very long when I found that they were working on me to try to make a Christian out of me. So I thought I'd be clever and not put up with that kind of thing very long, so I just decided I'd join the church and take all the fight out of them, and I did. I joined the church, but I certainly wasn't converted when I did. I would sneak off at night and was gone quite a bit of the time, and I'm not too proud of the things that I did. I wasn't settling down to school very well.

I remember one night they had a march. The students made formations and worked out all kinds of patterns, and I stood there watching it. At this school they raised a lot of soy beans. So we called these marches soy-bean hops. It was the strangest kind of a dance that I'd ever seen in my life. I stood there watching the students marching around. I finally sidled over to the college band. I said to the drummer, "How about letting me play the next number?" So he said, "All right," and I slid in there and, well, everybody turned and looked when they started hearing the drumming. One of the faculty members, a particularly stern looking one, came over. When the number was over he said, "That's the jazziest band music I've ever heard." He went to the faculty and told them I didn't belong in that school, that I just didn't fit in. Well, I was about to think that myself, though I had made a profession of accepting Christ.

I remember one day I took my little radio out of the trunk. I thought everybody had gone to

chapel, so I turned it on. I got the jazziest music I could get, and started tap dancing all over the room. I thought everybody was gone. But suddenly I was aware of the fact that somebody was watching me and I turned around and saw my roommate, who was a very fine boy, standing in the door watching all this. So I quickly turned if off and wiped the perspiration from my brow. He said, "Stan, are you a Christian?" I replied, "Well I joined the church, why?" "Well, I just want to tell you that what you were doing looked mighty cheap." You know, that struck me right between the eyes. I realized that I was nothing but a cheap counterfeit. But I still didn't have any particular desire to change.

Finally when springtime came and the school year was ended and I was out of money, I decided to go back home and go to playing dance music again to make more money. I thought, "Well, I've given school a fair trial—Mother should be satisfied." So home I went. When I arrived home and informed Mother that I was going back to playing in a band, she looked like I'd hit her a terrible blow. She looked like she was broken hearted. She said, "Why Bub, I had such high hopes that you would make a worker for God." She said, "I'm going to pray that God will cause you to return to school."

I went to an agency in New York that had been handling my contracts before and I asked them if there was any band needing a drummer, and they said, "Yes, we have a job for you." A popular band was going to be opening up in the Meadow Brook Country Club in New Jersey. So I went and auditioned and was accepted, and all week long I rehearsed with this band and learned the musical arrangements. Finally, when the week was over, I knew them by heart and was ready to go.

Saturday night arrived for the big opening and my Dad loaned me his car, and I was getting my equipment and starting out of the house. Finally I came to the room where my mother stayed, and as I came to her door, the door was standing ajar and I was ready to bid her farewell, but she was praying. O how Mother was praying. I never heard her pray like that before. I could just hear her in agony, crying to God with tears, "O God, save my son." Well, I turned and started out the door thinking, "I wish that Mother wouldn't pray like that." I just hated to break her heart, but I had to make some money I thought, and so away I went.

I arrived at the fashionable club where drinking, dining and dancing were featured. The time came to start. The leader stood up and the cue was given and we were ready to begin. Right at that point God intervened. The Lord answered Mother's prayer right then. I just couldn't seem to manipulate my leg to beat the rhythm. It just seemed like my leg was paralyzed, and I couldn't make it function no matter how hard I tried. I strained every muscle in my body. My hands would function but my right foot, that I beat the rhythm with, just wouldn't function. Finally we got through the number and the orchestra members were turning around with a puzzled look, wondering what the trouble was. The band leader

came over and said, "What's the trouble?" I said, "Well, Frankie, I don't know." But down in my heart I had a sneaking notion that my mother's praying had something to do with my predicament.

So we tried again on a second number, and it was worse than ever. I just could not beat the rhythm, and it was becoming noticeable to those who were dancing, and even the management was becoming concerned. So after that number Frankie came over and said, "Well, Bob, just what is it?" And I said, "Frankie, I don't know." I asked, "Do you have anybody in the band who can beat the rhythm?" He had one boy who was playing another instrument and he called him over to the drums, and I got back in the wings and sat down with a very heavy heart. I felt like I was disgraced. O how sad I was! I sat there all the time the program was on, and all through the night until the early hours of the morning. When they were all through Frankie said, "Well, Bob, perhaps you'll feel better tomorrow." I said, "No, Frankie, I've played my last time—I'll never play again." Well that was true. I have never played popular music since then.

I packed up my drums and started home. Mother was always awake when I got home, no matter when I got in, she'd always say, "Bub, come on into my room, and I'd always go and sit by her bed and she'd always ask, "Well, how did it go tonight?" Never did she scold. I can't remember Mother ever being unkind. I sat down by her bed, and I was dreading the question. She finally said, "Well Bub, how did it go tonight?" I said, "Mother, it just didn't go." She said, "What do you mean? I said, "Mother I couldn't play tonight." She said again, "What do you mean?" I said, "Mother I don't know what happened but I couldn't use my right leg." And I said, "I'm through. I can't play any more." "Oh," she cried, as she lifted her head and tears were in her eyes, "God has answered my prayer at last." I told her that I guessed she was right. She said, "Why don't you go back to school again. Make something out of yourself." "Well," I said, "Mother, I guess I'll have to do something." So I agreed to sell my instruments to the very first one who'd come along and make an offer, and I advertised it in the paper. A young man came along and he didn't have much to offer but I took what he had and I watched him go away with those beautiful drums. It was practically a giveaway, but I received enough money from him to get back to school.

So I packed up my belongings and away I went again. When I arrived on the campus and entered the administration building, they looked at me as much as to say, "What, you again?" Yes, I was there as big as life, and I went to the manager of labor. I said, "I need a job." He said, "You—you want to work?" I said, "Yes, I want to work." He said, "What can you do?" I said, "Well, I can type, I've taken typing, and I can, perhaps, keep books, I've had a course in bookkeeping." I said, "I'd like to work in the office." He looked me over rather cynically, and he said, "Well, I'll tell you what, you report down at the farm tomorrow morning at 6:30."

I didn't know the first thing about a farm, but

I arrived down there in my zoot suit and the farm manager looked at me and said, "Son, those aren't the kind of clothes you ought to wear on a farm; you should wear overalls, not dress clothes." I didn't know what I was supposed to wear. But anyway he said, "There are two white mules in the barn. Go and harness them up." I looked at him in amazement, but I wasn't going to admit that I couldn't do it, so I went on into the barn. Those mules were big fellows, and they were mean, at least they looked that way to me. So I climbed up on one wall, (I didn't want to get in the stall with them; I was afraid I'd get crushed to death). I tried to lasso him with the harness, and he moved over to the other side. So I went around and climbed up the wall on the other side and tried to get it over his head, and he moved away again, and I hurried over to the other side and tried to get him, but he moved away again. About that time a young farm boy came along and he said, "You having trouble?" I said, "Yes." So he said, "Let me help you." So he harnessed up those mules and brought them out and hitched them up to a wagon and then I went to the farm manager and said, "All right, now what do you want me to do?" "Well," he said, "I want you to take the team and the wagon and go through the campus and collect the garbage." I said, "You mean you want me to collect garbage?" He said, "Why of course."

Well, I climbed in the wagon, (this was a mighty low estate I had reached, I thought) and started down the campus. I didn't know much about driving mules, but they seemed to know the way. They had done it every day. They walked along and when they got to garbage cans they'd stop and I'd get out and I'd look around. I didn't like people seeing me do it, but I'd empty the garbage. And you know, after a while I learned to love those old mules, and I think they kinda liked me a little bit. I got proud of the job I had, and I'd ride that mule team down the campus like I was a king seated on his throne.

They gave me various jobs. One day we went out and had to bring in loads of hay, and I pitched hay until I was just splitting all over. I never slept so hard or ate so much in all of my life. But you know, I felt good. Finally one day the farm manager came to me and said, "I want you to work with five other boys, and I'm putting you in charge. I want you to build a silo." I looked at him like he might be crazy. I hardly knew what a silo was. He said, "We have the diagram to show you how to do it." And he said, "It's a galvanized silo that comes in sections." So we got out there, (it was awfully cold then) and we looked at this jigsaw puzzle that was supposed to show us how to put the silo up, and we'd put one section in and then take it out again, and put another section in and maybe it would be all right and we'd go on. We worked and worked. Our fingers were numb and blue from the cold as we screwed thousands of those bolts into place, but the silo was going up and up and up. Finally it was finished, and O how proud I was as I looked upon that beautiful monument. Every time I return to the school, I do not go to see the new administration building or the

new demonstration building, or the new science building, or the library. I always hurry in my car as fast as I can to the farm to see if the silo is still standing. It was still standing the last time I was there.

About this time they had a revival week in the college. They had a fine man come to hold the meetings, and I was convicted as he spoke about the nearness of the coming of the Lord. In the after-meetings I'd go in with the students who wanted special help, and every night he'd go around the circle and ask them what was their problem, and what did they want to be remembered about in the prayer. Every time he'd come to me I'd say, "O it's jazz. It's jazz. I can't get it out of my system." I remember how patient he was and he'd say, "Well, the Lord will help you to overcome." And, thank God, the Lord has taken that out of my system. As Paul says, "The things we once loved, we will hate, and the things we once hated, we will now love."

There was a young lady attending college whom I became interested in, and soon we were engaged. She was a very fine Christian girl and I felt like she'd be a help to me and stabilize me, so we were married right after school was over, and we both went to teach school down in Georgia. We had a very little money since that was during the depression.

I remember that first week-end we went to church and we only had twenty-five cents between us, and it was another week before we'd get any money at all, and there we were without food, and only twenty-five cents. We had to decide whether or not we would give it to the Lord. I said to my wife, "We can't go to church without giving an offering." So we got down and prayed and said, "Lord, we want to give an offering, but we don't have anything but twenty-five cents. We told the Lord we knew He could take care of us, so we went to church and we gave the twenty-

five cents, and when we got home we unlocked the door of our apartment, and underneath the door was a special-delivery letter. When we opened it we found a ten-dollar bill in it from my wife's sister 800 miles away. She is a nurse in a hospital. Later, when we saw her, we asked her, "Why did you do it?" She said, "I don't know why," but she said, "All that day something kept saying, 'Send ten dollars to Elizabeth and Stanley—send ten dollars to Elizabeth and Stanley.'" She said, "I just couldn't put the conviction away, so I went and mailed ten dollars." And she said, "When I was putting it in the envelope it just seemed like something said, 'Send it airmail special delivery.'" "So I did that." Well the Lord answered our prayer the day before we ever even prayed it.

The next year we went to Birmingham, Alabama, and taught school. In the summertime I helped out in evangelism, leading music for different evangelists. Finally one day a telegram came and said, "Would you like to be the pastor of a certain church?" and it mentioned a place in Tennessee. Oh how thrilled I was. Immediately I sent a telegram to mother and I said, "Mother, your prayer is now answered, your dedication of your son to God to be a minister of the gospel has now been fulfilled."

Every time I went home to see Mother while she was still living, she'd always want me to sit by her side and tell her what was happening. I didn't have to tell her about playing in night clubs and shows any more. I could tell her of the wonderful exploits for Christ.

My mother is now sleeping in Jesus. I'll never cease to thank God for answering her prayers for my salvation. I'm looking forward to meeting her some day in the kingdom. Dear friend, I hope you will be in this joyful reunion around God's throne. I trust we will all meet in Heaven, and fellowship together throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.