



From The President's Desk -

As the old year came to a close, I found myself looking back over 2019 and asking myself "What prevented any major growth to the fellowship, or more to the point, where have the negative influences come from?" My conclusion was angels, demons, principalities and powers of wickedness. The more I pondered these matters, the more I realised that we as Christians don't understand a lot about these areas of influence, and indeed the fact that we live our lives in the flesh in a realm parallel to and influenced by the spiritual realm. Now for those who are in Christ Jesus and understand that a very real part of our salvation is the restoration of our dominion over such forces. **Ephesians 1:3.** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places (spirit realm) in Christ.* Speaking to those frontline members who have come under attack since our very successful National Convention, let me encourage you; God is building a people of power who understand what it is to come under such spiritual attacks that influence our natural wellbeing. Hence these attacks have manifested mainly in our flesh or in our finances, as the enemies of Christ Jesus have desperately tried to throw us off our purpose and callings in Christ Jesus.

Today isn't the day of disappointment, but rather a time to press further into God and His Word than we ever have before. A good example being found in **Isaiah 60:1-2.** *Arise; shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you and His glory will be seen upon you.* I couldn't stop reading until I reached the end of the chapter and I encourage you to do the same to draw inspiration from it. Well worth noting is that the first line has been written in the past tense. Therefore all who have been born again and baptised with the Holy Spirit have received the glory of the Lord and it can and must be seen upon us; for we are a part of God's new creation recreated in Christ Jesus. Yes! We are God's plan A for the salvation of those to whom He has called us to share our testimonies and the Love of God with.

As born again Christians we clearly understand that life is about the choices we make. I thank God that He placed good Bible believing men and women around me to encourage me on the road to salvation and once I reached out to Jesus, these self-same, God fearing people lovingly kept me on the right path. I started to grow as I studied the Bible, listened to sermons; watched strong men of God, how they conducted themselves, how they prayed in public, the words that they spoke among themselves always building me up and encouraging me in the things of God. These people were very much the foundation builders to my Christian walk, showing me that life wasn't all about myself, but all to do with Jesus, the one who brought my life out of the kingdom of darkness and into His glorious light. The price of this awesome transaction being the shedding of His Blood for my salvation, yet still the life to choose was left up to me to make.

This year of 2020 is the start of a new decade and we can choose what we are going to make of it and what spiritual forces we are going to allow to influence the direction we determine to take. The right to choose is still ours - as for me and my house we shall serve the Lord, with a new spiritual awareness that only comes by seeking God and His righteousness. Friends, the old things of the past, the sin, the mistakes and all that garbage have already passed away; God has cast it all into the sea of His forgetfulness never to be used against us ever again. So must we, if we are going to go forward in the power of His Holy Spirit with signs and wonders following our ministries. Over the past

years God has been maturing us, preparing us for the great spiritual awakening that this nation of Australia so desperately needs, before things will change for the better.

I look to God concerning the spiritual state of the nation; its okay for the political elite to call us a post Christian nation, but the question remains; how did we get to this low spiritual point? It's not rocket science, under the influence of demonic forces we as a nation have allowed our very Christian foundations to be eroded, as the law makers went on their own merry way moving even against our constitution. Laws that would eventually put our own children at risk of complete spiritual annihilation which is death.

Hardly a word from the Christian establishment, now look where we are. Babies taken from the once only real secure place of their mother's womb and destroyed before birth, (even King Herod had to wait till after the birth before he set out to destroy the babies of his time). We have young children who by law can't be left at home alone and yet under the same law makers, can now decide their own gender. Has God turned His back on this nation? As we, as a nation have indeed turned our back on God, has God lifted His hand of protection from us leaving us to our own devices or have we come under a massive demonic attack? Fires, drought, fears, traumas, losses on the stock market, losses of production and the list goes on.

Remember **2 Chronicles 7:14.** *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land.* The time is now, the year and this decade is ours, therefore let us stand as one man in this nation by getting ourselves into Godly order by seeking God's face until we know that we know that we are in the good an perfect will of God; then as one voice speak the Word of God over this nation until it is once more the GREAT SOUTH LAND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Join with me as we go forward spiritually, for it's going to be a great year and we will see things happen during this decade that only the Bible spoke of before these end time days. Get ready to ride the wind of the Spirit, for I believe God is about to move on this nation once again during this decade.

Len.

Coffee & Conversation with James **By Ron Oastler**

What an autumn – and what a summer coming...! Even if there are no fires in the area, there certainly is heavily polluting smoke; you just can't get away from it.

I had not long taken my seat at a cafe table when James arrived. Not surprisingly he made comment about the smoke haze that was thick enough to obscure the far side of the Port. 'Ah, we seem to have an abundance of suspended particulate matter again today,' was his abstruse remark.

'I presume that you mean the smoke haze?' I asked.

'Indeed,' James responded 'suspended particulate matter, or SPM as it is known, is microscopic solid or liquid matter suspended in the air. In our case of course, it is microscopic solid – ash in fact.'

'Thank you for that' said I, 'perhaps I will stick with "smoke haze" for now.'

'Either way, you will find that one thing leads to another with these fires.' James stated. 'Dry vegetation on a forest floor becomes fuel for fires. The aggregation of particles from the surface fire and a crown fire

up in the canopy can affect the life of the fire by carrying embers and, by influencing the air, the wind in the area is affected. One thing leads to another, so to speak. And that is life...' James was only getting started.

'I recall a number of speaking engagements that were clearly concatenated.' He continued. 'it started with an invitation to speak at a Sales Breakfast run by the SWAP (*Salespeople With A Purpose*) Club in the City CBD. These were always excellent opportunities to deliver value on the topic, with a clear connection to ethical behaviour and the needs of the sales prospect. The other clear connection was always directed to the Scriptural principles involved in any successful endeavour, and our need to have an experiential relationship with the Lord.'

'At the conclusion of my talk at this SWAP Club meeting, I was approached by a gentleman who introduced himself as a member of the committee that was organising a District Conference of APEX Clubs. He asked if I would consent to be a speaker at their conference, to which I agreed. And so, it came to pass...*one thing having led to another.*'

'Using a similar overall approach, I endeavoured to deliver practical value to the audience on the given topic, linked it to Scriptural principles and concluded with the "need" and "how" to have an experiential relationship with the Lord. It all went well.'

'Again, at the end of my session at this APEX Conference, I was approached by a gentleman who said that he was the Deputy-Principal of a major High-School on the south side of the city. Year-end was in sight and they were seeking a speaker for the final Assembly of the Senior School, prior to the Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams. He was a committed Christian and was concerned to ensure that students had a clear choice about their future and their relationship with the Lord. Would I therefore consent to be the speaker at this Assembly? *One thing led to another...again!*'

'So it was, that I had the opportunity to paint a picture for the students, of their future – to share the essentials of an experiential relationship with the Lord and, while an "altar call" was not permitted, an encouragement and challenge was given for students to seek the Lord and receive Christ as their Lord and Saviour.'

'A wonderful thing happened at the conclusion of the Assembly. Some twenty or so students, obviously young Christians themselves, crowded around the Deputy-Principal and myself. They were excited to hear a senior businessman proclaiming the Gospel and sharing his own faith. Many of them I believe, needed encouragement for their own faith, especially given the peer pressures they experienced in their high-teen years at school.'

'So, my friend' James concluded 'there are positives and there are negatives in the process of "*one thing leads to another*". The real issue is to know "what leads to what" and to make your choices accordingly. The starting point for this process in our daily life and living is the Scriptures. As the Reformers said in the sixteenth century, it is *Sola Scriptura* or The Scriptures alone.'

By: "*Happy Jack*" *Burbridge*

Author of the amazing prison book: "*The Enforcer*"

Another time a beautiful black prostitute hopped into the car when I stopped for a red light. She started coming on to me and I laughed and reached over to the switch that locked all four windows electronically. She looked a little worried and said, "What you doing, man?"

"Well, if you're so eager to hustle," I explained, I'm going to take you to my place and put you to work hustling for *me*."

"Who'er *you*?" she asked as her eyes got big.

"Happy Jack." -"The Happy Jack!?" She went to work for me and made a good prostitute. About a year later, I had to sell her because she started using drugs - something I never allowed.

One night three high school kids jumped me on a dark street. I took care of them, then took them to the police station and turned them in. "I brought you three muggers," I said as I shoved the three kids into the station. "They jumped me." The cops had to laugh at the situation.

Of course, I usually wasn't the "victim." When I was in a bad mood, which was almost all the time, I would punch some poor guy for no reason, and wind up in court the next day. One day a man honked his horn at me, and I got out of my car, pulled his head out of the window, punched him in the mouth, sending his false teeth flying. I drove off leaving the man hanging out the window with his false teeth on top of the car. Violence was my way of relieving frustration.

After I would punch some guy who had done nothing to me but honk his horn or get in my way, I'd get a phone call the next morning. "Jack," my lawyer would sigh, "We have another assault and battery charge against you." I'd go into court and pay the fine and walk out.

We both got tired of the routine and it was costing me a lot of money, so I put an end to it. When he told me that someone had filed an assault and battery charge against me, I would find out who was filing it, go to his house and tell him to go down to court and drop the charges or he'd be hurt a lot worse next time. The charges were always dropped.

There were so many incidences of violence I was responsible for... and I'm now certain God wasn't laughing. One night a man used physical brutality on one of our girls. I heard a scream, went flying upstairs, and hauled the man outside. After I worked him over, I maimed him for life with a knife. I wanted him to remember me. Every time he looked at his hands, I wanted him to remember that he tried to cross Happy Jack.

A nice old Salvation Army man came by my cigar store every week to collect donations from my customers. One week when he came in, I was annoyed and threw a \$10 bill in his hat just to hurry him up. I didn't want my customers bothered with religion. When the old man saw the bill, he exclaimed gratefully, "Why, son, God bless you! I'll be praying for you ..."

"Son, I'm praying for you ... God promised and I'm praying for you ..." Mom's words always brought back a flood of emotions. I felt the anger rise up inside, and I hit the old man, picked him up and threw him out the door.

Off and on, I worked at a bar named "the Doghouse." Its motto was: "We guarantee a fight a night or two on the weekends." If I was there, I was the fight. Often, I would beat guys so hard that I'd break a bone in my hand or wrist. Then I would go home and set the bones myself until they healed enough for the next fight.

I'll bypass all the many incidences (they are in the book "The Enforcer" for those interested in reading about them) of how just about every law enforcement agency in various parts of the country was trying to come up with enough evidence to send me off to prison for life ... or probably better yet, hear about me being dead by some lucky vindictive syndicate enforcer. Staying one step ahead of the law was a thrill for me all of its own, though it added a lot of stress that drugs needed to help take care of.

GOD'LL MAKE SURE THE LAW'S GONNA GETCHA BOY

However, my luck staying one step ahead of the law eventually began to run out. Four days after my arrest, I was handed a letter through the bars. It was from my wife, Carolyn. I sat down on my cot and began to read. I wasn't prepared for this:

"I have given up all hope for you," the letter began. "I have prayed for you for seven years, but now I know that not even God could reach that far down in the gutter ... not even God could change a man like you. I know that you will be out soon, but I don't want you to see me or the children again – ever."

At last, all the anger and hurt that my wife had suffered all these years had come out. When Carolyn heard that I had robbed another bank and had been arrested, she couldn't take any more. She was sick of the hurt I had caused her; sick of loneliness and fear. I didn't blame her. She had been faithful to me all these years; she had stayed with me and loved me. As I read the letter again, I realized how much she had loved me to stick it out this long.

I had pushed emotions aside for so many years. I hadn't felt the sting of rejection since I was a child. At first, I was sorry that I had lost my last tie with the outside world. But then I realized the aching in my heart was something deeper terrible loneliness swept over me as I sat on the cot staring at the letter. I suddenly realized than no one in the whole world *loved* me.

Overall, violence in me didn't end while in prison, but I'll fast-forward my trying years in prison and now get to the *best* part.

I began to long for God to make Himself real to *me*, or otherwise all the "Jesus talk" that was kept being offered to me was simply not making any solid, real connection. But God determines what each of us needs to make a fruitful, lasting connection with Him, and evidently He determined it was the right time to make His reality known to me *personally* that wouldn't be a waste on His part, because when He did make Himself real to me, I went into the cell, fell on my knees and cried like a baby. I hadn't cried since I was 11 years old, but now I couldn't stop the tears. My family had called; Carolyn still loved me. God had done this – He had given me back my family – not just the sign I asked for that someday I could have them back. God *did* love me. Jesus *did* go to Calvary for me.

I didn't care that 27 other prisoners were standing in the cell watching me. Nothing mattered to me but God. My surroundings fell away, and I was a thousand miles away from the jail. I didn't know how to say a prayer. But I remembered that Mr. Lytton had told me to ask Jesus into my heart, and He would wash my sins away. I couldn't get the words out fast enough. "Jesus," I cried, "I don't know what you can do with this mess I've made of my life, but if You want it, it's Yours. Oh Jesus, come into my heart and make me a new person."Continued

CONFIDENCE

- By Pastor Paul Locke for loxland.com 2/01/2020

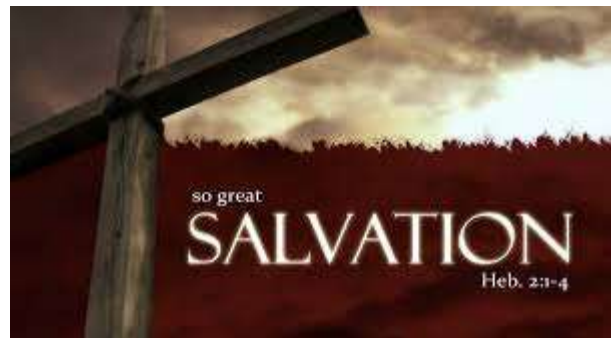
Faith is confidence in Bible promises of the power to overcome the world by the blood of Jesus (1Jn 5:4-6). Boldness is confidence in our standing as Christians to have the shield of faith to extinguish the fiery arrows of the enemy. (Eph 6:16) The fiery arrows are ploys of Satan to undermine our confidence in Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith so beware of negative thoughts, the tools of the enemy.

Fear is a demonic spirit and a frontline weapon of Satan and this is why it is written that god has not given a spirit of fear. (2tm 1:7) fear is the opposite to faith, a negative outworking of our position in Jesus. The fear of god is different and means heeding the word of god so when under attack we are commanded to fear god and resist the devil and he will flee. (James 4:7)

Forgive and you will be forgiven and this is opposite to hate. (Mtt 6:14) This is why Jesus tells us to bless those who curse us. (Lk 6:28) This is the best way to deal with people who curse us because the responsibility for these people is now handed over to Jesus. Our faith is left unblemished when we do this however, watch and see how swift Jesus acts to correct the actions of our enemies.

Failure to accomplish is lack of self-esteem which can be restored by stating 'I am more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus.' (Rom 8:37) Also say, 'I can do all things in Christ Jesus who quickens me.' Confidence overcomes failure and guilt that Satan uses to undermine us and is cancelled by stating our sins are washed in the blood of Jesus and forgiven. (Rom 6:22)

Future is eternity with Jesus in heaven because we believe in him. (Jn 3:16) We are spirits living in a flesh body that goes back to dust when we leave this earth and our spirit goes to be with God or the Devil, you choose now before it is too late. Jesus tells us to go with Him and that he has made a place for us and the good we do on earth is recorded as a reward in heaven. (Jn 14:1-4)



EVENTS – See webpage for details



INTERNATIONAL Our Mission

FGBMFI is one of the largest Christian business organizations in the world. Founded in 1953, we are in 142 nations - meeting in over 7,000 chapters. Our members and leaders include every race, culture, social status and language.

By God's grace, we connect people with opportunities to reach out and help others find a better life and work together to build better communities.

We do this by:

Calling people back to God...

There is a better life by following Jesus Christ.

Promoting integrity and good character...

Being a reflection of God to our world.

Participating in God's good work...

Releasing gifts, talents and resources to help others.

Working together to build better cities & nations...

Impacting our leaders and our culture.

Taking the message of God's love to every family...

A true grass roots effort that is changing the world.

"The mandate from God is that we break the chains of despair in the world. Our mandate is to destroy the isolation of loneliness, and link the world to God!"

Demos Shakarian, Founder



"It is our destiny to lift up God in every business center, every marketplace, every government center and university... every nation, city, town and crossroads of the world. People of faith, shining with God's glory, bringing the uplifting message of God's power... reaching out, helping, encouraging and lifting. Today, through our efforts, we believe that over 2 million people come to God each year."



International President Mario Garcia



The Awakening Giant

A book review by Ian Eckel

Wow what a great book, written by a female, yes, the wife of an FGBMFI member, Val Fotherby. And if you're like me, you may have been in FGBMFI for years and nobody has introduced you to this amazing display of the history of the worldwide impact that FGBMFI has had on millions of souls, in nations in every corner of this world, just by sharing their personal testimonies.

How's this for an opening statement, "FGBMFI is perhaps the largest and most important Christian Laymen's organization... in the world" (ref Dr Vinson Synan). I want to thank three people for being influential and responsible for the journey that brought me to this book. First is Nell Grey who gave me a copy of Bernie's book "Following the Vision" at the FGBMFI end of year dinner.

I had read 'The happiest People on Earth' 25 years ago when I was new to FGBMFI and so, was curious to read Bernie's story (well, his testimony). This stirred the embers in my heart for the passion I have for the scripture, Rev. 12v12' the very one that has been burning a hole in me for some time; it is the one that fits the vision of FGBMFI. Since the days of the disciples, I know of only one other group of laymen that had a similar impact, and that was the Monroviens. The next step I took was to reread the 'Happiest People on Earth' again. That brings me to my friend Dean, who handed me 'The Awakening Giant', after I had been raving on about how great Demos' autobiography was. The 'Awakening Giant' had been given to him by an FGBMFI member at a dinner, but Dean is not a reader, so he had never read it. I want to thank that member for loaning it to Dean, otherwise I would never have read it. I've never heard of 'The Awakening Giant' in all the years I've been in FGBMFI and was eager to read more about the history of FGBMFI. Here is just one of the testimonies that will whet your appetite.

Quoted from page 166. "Florencio De Leon's story has to be one of the greatest testimonies to the power of God. To say he was born disadvantaged is the biggest understatement. Florencio was born and lived on a rubbish dump. He was fortunate to be alive. His food source was the rubbish bins, and he was totally destitute and filthy. One day he was standing on a street in Guatemala City outside the biggest hotel. Two men who were smartly dressed in suits asked him if he would like to go into lunch that was taking place, they would pay for him. He looked at the business men and how they were dressed, and looked down at himself, dirty and in rags. Then he looked at the big hotel and said he couldn't go in there. 'Why not' they replied, 'We're inviting you' Florencio said, "I have no shoes". No problem. 'Forget about your shoes; just come in with us' they replied. It was a chapter meeting, a very high class affair, with men from the American Embassy and the World Bank, and many other business men, and they seated Florencio next to an architect. He ate a fantastic lunch and then listened to a story of how Jesus had changes someone's life, and then about the Shakarian family, when Demos had prayed for his cows to be healed in the name of Jesus and they were.

At the close of the luncheon, Florencio prayed, 'O God, if you can heal Demos' cows, perhaps you could change me'. That day he committed his life to Jesus, was filled with the Holy Spirit and his life was transformed. He learned the reality of Romans 8v31, 'If God is for us, who can be against us'. He could have died from disease, or malnutrition, or been killed-*but* God was for him. Florencio travelled to 14 different countries sharing his story and became a leader in the FGBMFI.

'God', prayed Demos Shakarian, 'when are you going to move and bring multitudes of souls into the kingdom before the return of Jesus? Too many people are dying and going to hell without ever hearing the name of Jesus'. The answer from God surprised Demos. 'I am waiting on you. I've given you My Son, His name and authority. I cannot give you any more. Take what I've given you, and as you go the revival you've been waiting for will break out around you.' That was in 1984, and so great a revelation was this in the eyes of Demos that he called the leaders from around the world to come to a gathering at the Lake of the Ozarks in the USA to share with them. Later he wrote about this in *The Vision Intensified*."