

Chapter three

The end of the old life in Michigan

The snow was coming down at a rate of 2 inches per hour in Flint Michigan. Few cars were out on the city streets. It was Sunday afternoon 2 hours before church was to start at Faith Tabernacle. I was plowing the snow in the parking lot with my case tractor with my Pall Mall cigarette hanging out of my mouth.. It was puffing out smoke as fast as the diesel engine in the tractor. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a car pull up and park in the freshly plowed area and I was about to tell him to get out of the way when a man walked to me and asked "what time is church tonight"? I blew a fresh puff of smoke off to the side, near his face and answered 7:00 pm. He said great hope to see you there. I eased back down on the tractor seat and sat back down on my can of Skoal chewing tobacco..

Suddenly an over whelming sense of wrong doing came over me and I asked my self what did you just do ? You are inviting this stranger to church where you just knelt at the alter on November 4th 1974 and you're blowing cigarette smoke in his face while inviting him to church..Are you nuts? No one had ever told me that a Christian should not be smoking and inviting people to church. I had a brief period of Catholicism during my first marriage and I saw the priest smoking and drinking at the Bingo and other church functions. Wham O ! this was my first encounter with the Holy Spirit. In that instant I decided that if I was going to be (inviting people to church which is the simplest form of soul winning) I must clean up my act. I did not sleep for the next 3 days. I pulled out my hair by the hands full as I tossed, turned and growled in my bed. At the end of that terrible with drawl experience I finally was free of cigarettes and chewing tobacco...I have never smoked another cigarette or sucked on any chew for nearly 40 years now.

My new Christian life had lots of surprises and events like this ahead. Now after 37 years of living for and loving Jesus Christ, God has taught me how to win thousands of people to Jesus Christ. Just before my 69th birthday I am writing this book to teach others how any one can be a soul winner and enjoy every thrilling minute of it. The last words and wishes that Jesus gave were the desires closest to his heart. He said in Mark 16:15 KJV,And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. What does this have to do with Wild West Soul Winning ? One foot of snow and the motor city of Flint Michigan is surely not the the Wild West. Fasten your seat belt and hang on. You are about to take a ride on the soul winning express..The old life of living for my self and a life without Jesus Christ has come to an end. It has many speed bumps in the road but the trip has been

great. I had not won one soul to Christ in 21 years since being saved in 1953 at a church camp but that was all about to change.

First soul via church

Now feeling like an embarrassed fool I thought now I'll be kicked out of church for smoking on church property and talking to visitors with a cigarette in my mouth : and only after a few months of being saved. After I loaded up the tractor I saw a guy wading through the knee deep snow drifts coming towards the Church. As George Chreneko got closer I saw that as he lifted up his legs high walking in the knee deep snow it revealed that the falling snow was hitting on his steel leg braces and melting, water was running down his leg into his shoes. He asked the same question how long before Church starts. I told him an hour. George explained that the buses were not running and he had started out walking the five miles at noon to get to church on time. With tears in my eyes I asked how are you going to get home after church.? He said walk. I told George "as long as I go to church here you will never have to walk again." I took George home after Church. He lived with the Zimmerman family who had a home for a dozen or more mentally handicapped men. It wasn't long before I was taking George with me to church 3 times per week and to the Full Gospel Business Mens' breakfast every Saturday where he could out eat any 2 men there even though he was 54 years old.

The beginning of soul winning

I had seen the Sunday school report at church and it had numbers from what they called a bus ministry report. I had remembered back in the 50s when a bus came down our gravel street on Parkway avenue and picked up kids for Sunday school. My parents were not Christians but they let my only brother and I ride the bus to church.. I liked Flint Bible Temple church and in 1953 at the age of 11 years old I went to Church camp at Port Hope Michigan. We had handicrafts, walks in the woods, and swimming in Lake Michigan. We also had Bible teaching which I had little interest in. On the last evening, in the last Church service of the first week the preacher had a large piece of ply wood shaped like a tree on the floor. There were light sockets with bulbs in them labeled with every boy in the camps name on it..After the sermon the preacher asked the boys if they wanted to accept Jesus Christ. If so they were to go up and turn on the bulb with the names of the campers on them. By 10:00 pm. all the lights were lit up except mine. They waited, sang, prayed and finally just after 10:00 pm. I reluctantly went up and turned on my bulb..Back at our bunk house my counselor came to my top bunk and talked to me about what I had just done and asked me to pray a good night prayer over the boys. He helped me pray and I liked it so much that I decided to stay

for additional week. I sent my mom a post card which I still have and asked her for more money and got permission to stay for another week..That was the beginning of my life as a soul winner.



After returning home I began telling every one about Jesus. No one told me that I needed to wait a while after being saved. My parents just patted my head and said it's OK son this stuff will wear off in a month or so. While I was at camp my brother George had ridden my bike and broken off the pedal. Before camp I would have knuckled his head and made him pay for it. I just said its OK and I got Mr. Pierson next door to weld it back on for \$1.

I continued to go to church and to lots of activities that the church had for kids. I attended regularly for several years. I remember one time I was going to a Christmas play on Sunday evening. It was freezing cold and snowing. I walked to my cousin Harry Swanks house a mile away and asked him to go to the church play with me. I wanted Harry to get saved. Harry said it is too cold to walk but he would go if he could drive. So Harry got the keys to his dad's car and we stole it and went to Church. His dad had ridden home from work that evening with another guy and as they passed the church on the corner Harry's dad saw a car that looked like his shiny Lincoln. When he got home the car was gone. Right near the end of the wonderful Christmas story the cops came in and motioned for us to come outside..O wow

Harry got his hind end tore up and the cops took me home..That was the last time I went to that church, and the beginning of my back slid-den life for the next 19 years...

Running from God

During the next 19 years of running from God I lived a rowdy teen life, worked at Buick Motor Division, was a partner in an excavating company with a great Christian man named Jesse Gargus. After 11 years of a miserable marriage to a real nice girl who could not live any longer with a self centered rotten guy named Chuck Rosa she left with our 3 kids... In February of 1974 after I returned home from snow Mobile racing at the I 500 at Soo St Marie Michigan I saw moving van tracks in the snow and a partial empty house.



Soo 500 race team. L to R., Me Harold, Butch and Jesse Gargus. 2 years later I was Chaplain at the track and doing the invocation at the start of the race.

She left our new Cadillac sitting in the drive way. I was shocked and my life had come to a rotten end, I thought

I was devastated. My world had collapsed. In desperation I started attending a catholic counseling group once a week. At the first session they asked every one present to go to a chalk board and write a list of goals they wanted to obtain for their life. Other participants wrote out a list of goals. When it came to my turn I wrote one sentence. "I want to go to heaven when I die.!" The class continued for several months using a book called I'm OK you're OK.. The class did me no good, I felt miserable listening to other people with the same problem as me. It was like having a flat tire on your car and someone stops and says

"I know exactly how you feel, I had a flat tire last week too" and drives off..

Jesse my business partner put up with my downward spiral for a few months and he left our business. Now everything was gone in my life that I had worked for. My wife, kids, partnership and possessions. The divorce was a very fair settlement. I got the business which I spit with Jesse..My ex wife got the house, new Cadillac and the 3 kids Chuck IV, 11, Angie 8, and Andy was 3. Pretty sad picture right? But it has the most wonderful ending any one could hope for..

Being a partner of Jesse for several years had provided the sewing of seeds into my spirit of a Christian man. I asked Jesse what church he went to and when was church time.? It was Faith Tabernacle and I went to Sunday morning service in November 1974 for the first time. After service Pastor Berniece Matejcek came back to the Church lobby and came up to me. She put her hand on my forehead and prayed a strong prayer for me.

I returned that evening for the evangelistic service featuring the singing Colvin family. At the conclusion of his preaching I ran to the altar and at 9:00 pm. in that evening in November of 1974 Chuck Rosa III died up under the altar. At the new Years eve service a month later I was baptized in water. My Grandmother Juanita Rex was my sponsor. Grandma is the cousin of evangelist Billy Graham. She often stated that being a relative of Billy Graham meant nothing to her salvation . Being the child of the most high God did.. Now back to my Wild West soul winning.