

Chapter 8

More bumps and adventures in Michigan

We continued to hold church in the old office building down town Flint although I did not feel called to be a pastor. I sold all my share of the construction equipment and paid off all my bills and rented a big garage..



Our son Abe is wining souls at the age of 2 by working on a Church bus

We had a bus and auto repair business where we worked on lots of church buses which we did to help the soul winning procedure. West Flint Church of God rented out one of our bays so they could paint some church buses. Junior Bruff one of their members informed us that the church was wanting to start a bus ministry. We developed an instant love for Brother Bruff. About Christmas time we agreed to close down our church and take our buses and church members and take them to WFCOG. Pastor Wooten wanted the bus people and had the classroom and teachers to minister to the additional income of folks. The church had about 300 members and a few buses . Pastor Wooten set a goal of having 1000 in Sunday school by Easter which was 5 months ahead. I was put in charge of all the bus routes and bus workers. Every one wore buttons. Teachers were excited. People were getting saved by the hundreds. Easter came and we had over 1000 in Sunday school. The headquarters of the Church of God heard of the evangelism explosion and made Pastor Wooten evangelism director of the entire state of Michigan. To tell the truth he had been Pastor for many years and the church attendance had not grown. It was the bus ministry winning souls that God was blessing. A new pastor was installed that was not a soul winner and he saw no purpose to have all the new folks in church. For instance he held CPR classes and boy scout meetings on Wednesday evenings in place of a prayer meeting or regular church. Well Brother Bruff and the new new pastor banged heads almost literally. Bruff was a deacon and at a deacons meeting the new pastor announced that he wanted to stop the bus ministry. Wow they almost had a fist fight. I found a new church that would take all the bus kids and buses. One of our bus drivers Kenny Kish had been attending a revival meeting at Peoples Full Gospel church on Red Arrow road. The bus ministry was kicked out

and Kish took all the buses and riders to that church.



Kenny Kish center took the buses and riders to Red Arrow Road church. 1980.

During the next 3 years Jane lost both her parents and I preached at the funerals. Of course I had an invitation for people to accept Jesus as savior. After the funeral Jane's brothers confronted me back at her parents house. They cornered me in the kitchen and ruffed me up because I embarrassed them by having an altar call. They were the ones that needed it and one of the brothers got saved in the front room of the house that day after Jane and I gave them some more gospel.

We're out of here

Jane and I headed to Phoenix Arizona to work with Pastor Tommy Barnett at Phoenix 1st assembly of God. How in the world did you get from the freezing cold of Flint Michigan to the blazing sun of Phoenix Arizona.? That is a good question because Jane had never been to Arizona and I had only passed through Phoenix on highway I 17 while on the way to Flagstaff one winter to look for a snow plowing venture. But I 'm glad you asked..Here we go Wild West soul Winning.

Trying to be a good bus ministry person I observed the Pastors that had the most successful bus ministries..I went to Dr. Wally Beebe's bus seminar in Ruskin Florida where Dr. Jack Hyles was the key note speaker. I admired how the Baptist folks were such soul winners. I wondered why Pentecostal churches were not into the bus ministry. I looked in Wally Beebe's magazine and saw that Tommy Barnett in fact had an Assembly of God Church with a bus ministry, West Side Assembly of God in Davenport Iowa. That church had recently been the fastest growing church in America. Jane and I called the church and secretary Lynn Lane said it was OK to come have a look. She got us hooked up with a place to stay with the Carper family who had gotten saved at a city wide evangelistic rally that was held in the big stadium down town. Barnett got his friend Johnny Cash to come and sing. The Carpers, a good Catholic family answered Barnett's Altar call and the Carper family got saved. We had a new baby, Wesley that slept in the bottom drawer of the dresser in our bedroom at the Carpers' house. We planned to meet pastor Barnett that evening at the

youth meeting but he fell asleep in the airport in Chicago and we had to wait until Sunday to meet him. We went out in the snow on one the bus routes and we got charged up on soul winning. Barnett has invitations for salvation at every meeting he holds. We headed back to Flint on fire for God. The fire soon got doused when we learned that West Flint was stopping the bus ministry. We were given a short time to find another church that would take all the bus folks. As I previously stated Kenny Kish took the bus kids to Red Arrow road. I went along to some of the church services. During one of the meetings the pastor stopped his preaching and turned around and pointed his finger at me, You, the guy playing the saxophone I have a word for you. He said get ready to be blessed financially like you never dreamed. I laughed. I did not want to get financially blessed I just wanted to win souls. As long as I had food, clothes and gas in my bus I was happy. The laugh was on me. We left Flint with in 60 days in a church bus with 3 kids and all our clothes. We flew back home 3 years later From Phoenix Arizona in our own twin engine airplane with a hired pilot. How did you do that? Glad you asked.

After having 4 churches kick us out because of the soul wining bus ministry I wanted to go to a church that welcomed the bus ministry. One day while praying in my bed I felt the Holy Spirit speaking to me about Pastor Barnett. Why not go to Davenport and work in Barnett's bus ministry? I called West Side the next morning and the secretary told me that Barnett had left the church and was in Phoenix Arizona. I called Phoenix 1st Assembly and secretary Lou answered the phone. I asked to talk to pastor Barnett and she laughed. He is not here and he is not very good at returning calls. I said oh well here is my phone number. With in 30 minutes he called back. Hi pastor Barnett do you remember me when I visited WSAG? What are you doing in Phoenix?. He said yes I remember. I took over this church of 200 a few months ago. Do you have a bus ministry I asked ? We are trying to start one but the buses are all broke down and only run in consistently. I asked if he could use any help in the area of a mechanic. He said yes send us your resume..

That is when I met Lynn Lane again. She had just arrived from Davenport and was again Barnett's secretary. I sent her a copy of my masters mechanics license, pictures of my tools and sat and waited. 2 weeks later she sent me a letter stating that the church was not financially able to hire a bus mechanic at this time. I called her on the phone and told her that I was not asking for a paid job I was willing to be volunteer. She asked Barnett and he said come on down but it must be clear that we can not pay you..I said We'll be there in a month.

Before we leave our adventures in Michigan I have a request by Jane's son and my adopted son Bob Harvey. He called last week and said "Dad you have to tell the story about

how God turned water into oil for us.” We had taken some kids to camp in Hillsdale Michigan and we were on our way back home in our old burning, smoking Chevy van. I had gotten it from the phone company after they had worn it out. We had painted it red and put a couple of kitchen chairs inside to sit on. After camp was done one of the parents of the campers gave us \$3 to buy enough gas to get the kids back to Flint which was about 100 miles to the north of Hillsdale. We put the 3 bucks in the tank but we had no money for oil. We were on I 75 about half way and it was hot and the van had no air conditioning in it. The oil pressure dropped and the motor started knocking real hard. I pulled over to the side of the road in the grassy shoulder. It had been raining and there was water in the ditch. It was dirty and had a scum on top with Lilly pads growing in it with frogs sitting on top of some of the Lilly pads. I emptied out the wast basket on the floor of the van and headed for the ditch. The kids were watching. I pushed the scum and weeds back and dipped out a gallon of water. I got back to the van and I told the kids the story in the Bible of how Jesus turned the water into wine for his mother at a wedding. I asked them if they believed that God could turn this water into oil so we could make it back to Flint. Those little kid were fresh out of a week at church camp and were full of faith in Jesus.” Yah lets do it” they said. We prayed and I poured in the water. I cranked up that old van and it roared to life. The oil pressure went up and the smoking stopped. We made it back to Flint with no problems. Now this was July and we drove that van every day in the summer heat. Well some of those kids told their parents about how God turned the water into oil and it got back to pastor Smith. Soon summer and fall passed and it was after Thanksgiving. Brother Smith was from Texas and he revered the cold Michigan winters. One after noon just before Christmas pastor Smith came by our shop and asked to have a word with me. He gave us \$5 and said “you need to go buy some oil and get that water out of that engine before it freezes up and ruins the engine completely. I said “what water” ? He said “the kids told me about you pouring water into that motor on the way back from camp.” I said “come her brother”. I opened the door of that van and lifted up the engine cover. I pulled out the dip stick and showed him that there was no water in that engine..He knew that we had no money to buy oil because he had paid my tuition to bible college that year. He shook his head and said “we'll brother how can I disagree and try to diminish your faith.” We drove that van for another year until we sold it and got a newer vehicle. Oh by the way we never took out that water turned to oil. We did pour into that motor the oil from our french frier when we put new oil in the frier. It smelled like Mc Donalds french fries as we drove thru the neighborhood on the way to church..