



# A LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN **HERE**

The Challenge of the Deliverance Faith  
Within Urban Black Culture  
And Mainstream American Culture

BY

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# DEDICATION

To  
Lena Evans

In Recognition of a Great Debt Owed  
For Her Sixteen Years of Love and Labor in My Life

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# FOREWORD

By  
Rev. Joe Greer

This book is addressed to educated general readers and to academics and professionals. Few of these readers have probably ever known the experience of the Black members of Faith Deliverance whose testimonies form the central part of this work. My principal concern in this Foreword is to help suggest a rationale for this professional reader to relate PERSONALLY to the central message in these testimonies and to avoid focusing on these people as unusual or on their faith as applicable only to THEIR needs. The deliverance faith that I teach and live is as relevant and as important to the affluent as it is to the poor, as significant to the educated professional as it is to the day laborer.

In this country there is a system of what we call "higher" education for our citizens. Within this current system, we have mainly directed our efforts to develop human intellect. I have great respect for the intellect, but I have long believed that there is a HIGHER education that we have desperately neglected to deliver. The higher education I am speaking of not only broadens the intellect, but also enhances man's awareness of himself and widens his horizons of true achievement. Every leader, every educator should be committed to this deeper concept of consciousness, should be committed to this higher level of education. He can no longer be satisfied with perpetuating the kind of education that only prepares the individual for the temporal, that merely prepares for success in the immediate society.

Those in leadership positions must recognize that in man there is an objective consciousness led by rational thought through man's intellect, and there is a subjective consciousness led by universal mind through man's intuition. Man taps into the universal creative source only to the degree he relaxes his conscious mind to open out into the subjective realm of universal or spiritual intelligence. Of course, while we speak of man's intellectual and his spiritual faculties as if they are separate, in fact they are unified aspects of the total mind of man, of the total potential of the human mind. Mind does not separate these two avenues to awareness and knowledge. Man, for his own needs, creates this division. Intellectuality and spirituality are in a sense shadows of one another, and the great mistake of modern man has been his choice to ignore the spiritual shadow of his intellect and to look only at the objective, physical world, ultimately convincing himself that the intellect and the objective world it reveals is all there is. Yet, man cannot dream and not know that there is a subjective consciousness and a subjective world. And, of course, the ordinary experience of dreaming is merely the tip of the iceberg once man learns to make the subjective available to himself. For the convenience of narrow-minded intellectuality our society defines this subjective world as illusion, to keep us away from it.

Modern man has excelled in all areas of the objective life: technology, science, even the enhancing of his own social condition. Such a man is great, and it is not my intention to diminish the importance of the intellect. But for man to pursue only objective knowledge through his intellect and to totally neglect the infusion of higher knowledge that pours forth from his subjective consciousness, which flows from behind all intellect, is to miss the larger framework of truth and knowledge. Without this larger sense, man renders himself merely a temporal individual caught up in the present. Without the knowledge of his universal potential, his potential to be part of all men, to be a part of all life, man is diminished as a prince for the times, but a pauper for eternity.

When man makes his transition, called death, and moves into the subjective or universal realm, he cannot take his worldly possessions or temporal knowledge with him. What can man bring to the foot of the universal teacher that could possibly impress him? There is nothing. The only gratifying knowledge that man can take with him at his transition - called death - is the knowledge that he has touched the true connection, the real connection with all life. He can only go into whatever transition death is with the knowledge that he will become one with all things, knowing that he has always been one with all things.

The individual who embarks on a quest for a true higher education will discover not only that there is a broadening of his outlook and of his awareness of those about him, but also that there is a principle at work within him, a principle that is immutable, a principle that is eternal. And being principle, it affects change within the individual. As this person recognizes and seeks to live by that principle of the God within, he comes to be really educated in a higher sense. As man gives vent to the light of higher knowledge, he realizes that he has a more significant purpose for being, he realizes that there is a world about him, a world of immeasurable beauty, a life of riches beyond comprehension that are at his disposal and that he can touch upon such riches, that he can touch upon such beauty and come to really live within the reality that he is born to know. It is a higher education of this kind that brings about harmony because such a man is at harmony with himself, and he can set goals in harmony with both himself and the world about him.

The pain that I feel in religion is that it has failed to educate man as to his true self. It has desperately failed. For some reason man has reduced the truth of Jesus' teachings into a bunch of meaningless and narrow-minded doctrines, dogmas and rituals. Such religion has totally lost the essence of the Christian teaching and the purpose of the Christian mission. Only in the plan of divine mind can we hope for the eventual eradication of these errors, misconceptions and illusions that religion has foisted upon mankind.

The reason our society has not been appraised of the choice for divine awareness is because religion does not seek to deal with the intellect. Until religion comes to grips with the science of truth, it will never appeal to the intellect, nor will it ever really touch the lives of those who are successful in a society which is devoted to an intellectual approach to life. Without a science of truth as the basis for religion, the successful person, who is on his exclusively intellectual path, can never be made aware of the divine dimension of himself that he is missing. Rather he thinks he has made it, that he has everything. He is not even aware that with his intellectual, occupational, material, financial and political success he has only achieved the purpose for his PHYSICAL existence. He has only used his creative ability in a limited physical sense. He has failed to embrace the source of his creativity, the universal wellspring that gives a larger sense of direction to his activities and meaning to his achievements. Unless the successful person can relate to the universe of which he is a part, he has failed to become a complete human being, and he is destined to live only unto himself, whether it be unto his family, or his friends, or his possessions, or the philosophy of his group. He is successful, yet he is incomplete. He has everything the intellect said would bring him fulfillment, yet even he senses that something is missing. Ultimately he is bored, frustrated and quietly desperate as he approaches the end of his physical life.

Religion has not reached the successful person because it has forgotten its message of self-awareness. Yet it is this successful but partial person who leads and directs modern society. Without enlightened leaders, we cannot expect any real social change. So these

leaders must be reached. They must be reached intellectually so that they recognize the need for a new awareness. They must be reached personally so that they know intimately the reality and power of this awareness. And they must be reached professionally, so that they can reorient their efforts and redesign their programs in terms not only of the intellect but also of the universal sense of self, others and the natural world.

In my own ministry I have worked at different times with the very successful and with the destitute. At the present time my ministry is mainly to urban Blacks who are seeking to overcome the problems of Blacks in our cities. The life testimonies in this book reveal how the deliverance faith that I teach and preach has benefited different Black people with different difficulties in this urban situation. Because these testimonies do not reveal the meaningfulness of this faith to successful professionals, as most of the readers of this book will be, I have taken the opportunity in this Foreword to stress the value of awareness of the universal or spiritual realm to American society generally and to those in professional leadership positions within it particularly. I hope that in reading the testimonies in this book professionals will not just see poor Black people with problems unrelated to their own for which "deliverance programs" would be appropriate. However different the background and problems may be of professional readers from the people testifying in this book, these readers must see through these differences to the common, universal reality that each of the testimonies in this book reveals. These professionals can then understand the significance of this REALITY to themselves personally, not just for those people testifying – who happen to be urban and Black and what are often called "disadvantaged." Ultimately, divinely inspired solutions to social problems must begin with the realization by those in leadership positions that they are part of all mankind, one WITH the "disadvantaged" they seek to help. When professionals operate from this universally informed perspective, they will also realize that they are included IN their solutions. When neither the people, nor the problems, nor the solutions are seen as separate from one another, the adequacy of the solutions will reflect the universality of the truth behind them. They will be REAL solutions, not "programs" for the moment. Deliverance will then be the emergent reality.

I am personally convinced that in time mankind will ultimately come to express himself in terms of universal and divine awareness. Whether man will achieve this condition through war and destruction or revolution, or spiritual evolution, I do not know. But it must come to pass, because there is nothing that comes into consciousness that does not ultimately produce reality. The very consciousness of the possibility of spiritual awareness will bring about the reality of it. We see it coming every day. We see Man becoming less entertained by his gadgets. We see successful, modern Man bored with the things that the intellect said would bring him contentment and fulfillment. Man is going to eventually start to reach back within. He has to.

Fortunately for man, he has volition. He can chose the path he will take. Fortunately, too, the individual can chose the path of divine intelligence for himself before his society as a whole elects it. The universal is available to individuals, groups and mankind alike. The option for divine self-realization is open to all. Each individual must decide for himself. The quality of individual life as well as the way the destiny of mankind will be played out, whether through destruction of civilization as we know it or creative evolution within this civilization, depends on people making the right choice.

# PREFACE - 2010

It has been thirty years since I first wrote A Little Bit of Heaven Here. In 1979 and 1980, I made a concerted effort to locate an academic publisher for this work, but I was not successful. Perhaps the work was too challenging to the worldview of the academic world with its exclusive focus on the intellect. Or, perhaps it did not fit neatly into the established paradigms of thought about Black culture and Black religion at the time. Or, maybe it was felt that as a researcher I had allowed myself to become too close to the subject and lost the mandatory critical and objective perspective. Whatever the reason, once academic tenure no longer was an issue in my career, I shelved the document. In addition, I had become somewhat concerned about the integrity of Rev. Greer's ministry, not the value of his core message or his commitment to it, but the rather messy organizational structure of the church and the tendency to adopt rather expedient strategies to address what seemed to be always looming financial needs. So, while I continued to respect the value of Rev. Greer's message, I was reluctant to publish a work that could be seen as celebrating the man and the church as such. I waited to see if this concern resolved itself. But, over the next few years, there was no change in this dilemma; so I continued to hold publication efforts in abeyance. And I moved on in my own research pursuits.

I worked for four years on a detailed life history of a psychic healer in an effort to understand the evolution of her capabilities and the relationship of these abilities to her personality and the circumstances of her life. And I continued to explore the role of intuition and the spiritual in American and western art, creativity and religion. In the process of this exploration, which had received its most impressive boost during my years with Faith Deliverance, I became convinced that there was a way to understand and justify at the intellectual level not just the value of but also the connection to reality provided by human intuitive competence. Whether we are talking about the core religious experience, the psychic experience, the artistic experience, or the experience of creative insight or inspiration in science and invention, I became convinced that it is the human intuitive mental faculty and its utilization that is the essential underlying factor. And while the intuitive is a very different mental faculty from the intellect, it can be understood as an integral part of overall human mental competence, which collectively and in concert with human emotions and instincts puts us in contact with reality as we know it. It is developing a worldview conceived along these lines that has been the consuming interest of my career, and the results of my research experience in Faith Deliverance were formative in setting this course for my career as a social scientist. Over the years I have written several versions of this "expanded" worldview, the culmination of which is my recent work, Dynamic Humanism [2007].

Now the time has come for me to return to A Little Bit of Heaven Here and finally allow this document to see the light of day. In behalf of achieving this result, I have changed the names of all the primaries in the church as well as the church name and its location. In this way I have made an effort to protect all concerned by asserting their anonymity. And by adopting this course, I am able to present the core message of the church as well as the experiences of those testifying regarding it while avoiding any concerns about identifying or celebrating the church and its leaders specifically. I had already changed all of the identifying particulars in the testimonies in the 1979 version of the work.



For the 2010 version of A Little Bit of Heaven Here I have not updated the academic references. My research since the early 1980s has taken me into other domains, quite apart from Black culture and Black religion, and I have not followed the literature of this specific American subgroup. At this point I am more concerned that the core message about the importance of human intuitive competence that comes out of my experience in Faith Deliverance be understood and incorporated into mainstream American culture than that it be recognized and adopted within Black culture – though that would be desirable. It is a bit of a paradox that while today people worldwide face the terror that is the outgrowth of narrow religious fundamentalism, one Black church, which operates within the fundamentalist Christian idiom, offers at its core a view of the spiritual basis of all religions and so points a direction from within fundamentalism itself for how fundamentalism can escape its own limitations. It is a message that greatly exceeds recommendations from within mainstream religious denominations for religious tolerance. Unfortunately, as desirable as religious tolerance may seem, it still allows its followers to claim exclusive truth for their faith, which is the keystone for all religious jihads or crusades. It is Rev. Greer's underlying "science of mind," which includes a key role for the spiritual or intuitive, that has the potential to encompass fundamentalist believers where they are in their literalist beliefs and take them through tolerance to full spiritual liberation, without having to curtail the spirit or diminish the importance of intellect. Rev. Greer has not brought his congregations to the point of this new, liberated spiritual-intellectual awareness, but it is an essential element in his ultimate goal for the members of his church communities.

All four of my recent works are available for free electronic download from my website: [www.dynamic-humanism.com](http://www.dynamic-humanism.com)

Dynamic Humanism: Balancing Complementary Human Perspectives and Mental Faculties: Science and Spirituality, Intellect and Intuition (2007)

A Little Bit of Heaven Here: The Challenge of the Deliverance Faith Within Urban Black Culture and Mainstream American Culture (2010)

The I Within Me: The Life History and Intuitive Development of a Psychic Healer (2010)

Right On: Selected Short Writings of Thomas A. Burns (2010)

## PREFACE - 1979

In the most specific sense, A Little Bit of Heaven Here reports what six Black people say the importance of the divine spirit has been in their lives. Because it is the Christian Deliverance faith that shapes the way these six members of Faith Deliverance church understand the role of the Spirit in their lives, the book is also about the deliverance faith that a young pastor of a young church preaches and teaches.

In a broader sense, A Little Bit of Heaven Here is about the solution one religious community proposes to the universal human and cultural problem of balancing the opposed perspectives on life and reality of the material versus the spiritual, the objective versus the subjective, the rational versus the intuitive. Stated succinctly, the Faith Deliverance solution is a kind of applied Christian mysticism, which is espoused within the

ritual of traditional Black Pentecostalism. Located in a nearly all Black area of Baltimore, with a nearly all Black congregation and with a Black spiritual leader whose ministry is oriented to inner city Black people, Faith Deliverance Evangelistic Church sees itself as promoting a new concept of the Spirit within Black Christianity and as advocating the value of this new conception within urban Black culture. The life testimonies in this book are of a rhetorical form, which serves to substantiate the value of the Faith Deliverance solution or perspective, and so these testimonies support the church's proposition to the larger Black community. This contention is something that must be evaluated [See Chapter IX].

As can be seen in the "Foreword," Rev. Greer does not think the value of the Faith Deliverance perspective is restricted to the Black community. While Rev. Greer is a Black man ministering primarily to Black people in a Black religious idiom, he contends that his message is of universal importance. While ethnic and white working class culture touches directly on the urban Black experience, the most pervasive outside influence is that of mainstream American culture with its control of the media, the schools, the larger economic and occupational spheres, and the law enforcement and social service domains. Because Rev. Greer's view of the faith he espouses is expansive, A Little Bit of Heaven Here must consider the challenge to mainstream American culture of the Faith Deliverance proposition on the nature of man and life. In evaluating this challenge, I will suggest that the principle of Spirit in man and life is at the center of the dynamic tension that exists between delivered people and street people in urban Black culture as well as between urban Black culture and mainstream American culture in the larger context [See Chapter IX].

Six life testimonies form the core of this book. These testimonies detail the experiences of six individuals of different ages, sexes, positions in Faith Deliverance, and with different difficulties in life. Each found the Deliverance faith as taught and preached by Rev. Joe Greer, founder and pastor of Faith Deliverance, to be inspirational and transforming for his or her living. Each feels he has a testimony to give that is worthy of the attention of others, whether Black or white. Quite apart from the more sensational blessings, healings and miracles that these testimonies reveal, there is a more general message in these accounts that claims a central position for the spiritual faculty in man, with consequences, when it is used, to both awareness and practical living. These people have something to say, a challenge to offer, to all individuals. Their challenge deserves to be heard.

My task as a professional social scientist has been to observe and participate in the events of the Faith Deliverance community over the past five years and to sit and talk with many members of the church about their lives before and since discovering their deliverance faith. From the thirty-one life testimonies that I tape-recorded in these talks, I selected the six for this book. In addition, from our taped conversations I have edited into a chapter on the Faith Deliverance world view [Chapter VIII] Rev. Greer's remarks on the goals of deliverance for the Black person and the Black community and his statements on the nature of the deliverance faith. I have contributed a section to this worldview chapter indicating the urban Black cultural context within which most church members practice their faith. In the final chapter [Chapter IX] I explore and evaluate the challenge of the Faith Deliverance worldview within urban Black culture and to mainstream American culture.

Most lengthy field research constitutes a personal journey with changes to the investigator. A Little Bit of Heaven Here, if it is to be an honest report, must finally be about these personal transformations. Appendix A includes comments by Rev. Greer on the

testimonies and my development as a researcher within the community. Following Rev. Greer's remarks, I describe my journey into understanding of the community as a field worker in the religious sub-cultural setting.

For those professionals concerned with the form of the life testimony and the process whereby the testimony texts that appear in the book came into being, I have included discussion of these important, but specialized, topics in Appendix B. Some readers may wish to examine the materials in these appendices before, rather than after, approaching the testimony chapters.

Between Rev. Greer and the six people testifying in this book we hear a strong voice. It is the voice of one Black church, a voice that is at once liberal in the implications of its spiritual-universal doctrine and conservative in its social doctrine. In the nature of this intriguing mix of liberal-conservative perspectives an interesting and consistent position emerges. In the current framework of thinking, this new deliverance proposition may seem oddly ambiguous, yet it is in fact not ambiguous when fully understood, and it is exactly this apparent ambiguity that makes this viewpoint refreshing. Most current scholars of Black culture will probably find something to cheer and something to decry in what deliverance people have to say. That they will look beyond their own positions to at least recognize the new synthesis deliverance is proposing is what Rev. Greer, the six people testifying, the larger church membership, and I hope will be the case. In any event the voice is coming from within Black culture and from within the Black church. It may be ignored because it may not fit easily into the polarized camps of those who would glorify everything Black as vestigial or culturally unique or those who would condemn everything Black as deviant, but the voice cannot be denied.

In recent years the scholarly literature on Black culture has tended to focus on the family, street culture, and the secular arts. The Black church has received precious little study and over much rehashing of old data, with rhetorical pronouncements pro and con. In the main, A Little Bit of Heaven Here aims to permit one independent Black church to speak for itself. The voice we hear expresses a faith that is more akin to the faith of the Black cults than it is to the faith of the standard denomination Black churches. Arguments have been made for and against the significance of the independent Black churches in Black religion. But these arguments have rarely been grounded in what the members of these churches themselves have to say. Past the rhetoric of scholars, churches like Faith Deliverance do have a coherent message to deliver. It is a message from within Black culture for both Black culture and mainstream culture. It is time we listen and try to understand.

# I

## INTRODUCTION

### THE PASTOR AND THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

A ride in a car on its way to a Tuesday evening Healing and Blessing service at Faith Deliverance Evangelistic Church is sufficient to convince a person that the travelers are on their way to an event that they regard as valuable and important in their lives. Evangelist Marjorie Wilkins, the driver, has spent a long day as a parent-teacher coordinator in her neighborhood middle school. She came home after school with three phone calls yet to make trying to reach working parents of students with school problems. Between fitful efforts to rest, she has spent an hour on the phone with her calls to these parents and talking briefly to the other three women from her area that usually ride with her to services. She has made dinner for herself and her husband who has a good job as a machinist but who dislikes his wife spending so much of her time and money at a church he will not even attend. Evangelist Wilkins must be at the church by 8:30 p.m. because she is the one called upon by the assistant pastor toward the beginning of the service to read the notices and to welcome visitors to the church. Evangelist Wilkins considers it a privilege to volunteer her services to her church, and she looks forward to any opportunity to assist because she wants to contribute to her pastor's ministry and because she knows that each new experience will help to develop her own ministry of prayer and teaching. Tonight she will give \$20 in the offering, other nights \$10, and sometimes \$100 when asked for a special sacrifice. She will return home after service between twelve and 1 a.m. and will be up again for another workday shortly after 6 a.m. In spite of her frequent short nights and long days, Evangelist Wilkins says that even in her late forties she now has more energy to do more than she has ever had in her whole life.

Sister Anita Brown usually walks the two blocks to Evangelist Wilkins' before the two set out in the 1976 Chevrolet Nova. Sis. Brown is a junior in high school who met Evangelist Wilkins through her aunt about a year and a half ago when she was very depressed. Anita's aunt was concerned because Anita's grades were slipping badly, so she asked Evangelist Wilkins if she would try to help. Evangelist Wilkins talked to Anita and convinced her to go with her to a service at Faith Deliverance. Cautious at first, Anita found herself intrigued, then caught up in Rev. Greer's ministry. She is a junior usher now and attends services regularly, even on school nights. The little sleep that she gets as a result, she says, is no problem because the Holy Ghost enlivens and invigorates her during service so that she finds she doesn't need so much sleep.

With her new energy and outlook, Anita can do her schoolwork well and deal with the problems of her two older sisters being at home with their babies. Before she was "delivered," Anita was irritated by the fussing of the babies and upset because her sisters, one unmarried and one separated, seemed very willing to live at home and sit around all day without doing any of the household chores. Anita felt she was the one left to clean up after her lazy, good-for-nothing sisters. With deliverance, Anita has decided not to dwell on the problems her sisters create, and she feels that since she gave up the resentment she was carrying, she is better at maneuvering them into doing a few things for the family. No longer subject to explosions of insult, Anita can humor and cajole her

sisters in her direction and go on about her business. Before leaving home this evening Anita straightened up the living room, she washed two loads of diapers and hung them to dry in the basement, and she cleaned up the kitchen after dinner. Now in her white usher's uniform she has come to Evangelist Wilkins' house for the trip to church.

Mother Meeks does not walk to the Wilkins' home from her house, four blocks north and three blocks west. She would and certainly can make the walk as a spry seventy-seven year old great grandmother of nineteen, going on twenty, great grandchildren. But Evangelist Wilkins won't let her make that walk because there is one stretch in there of development housing that is too uncertain for a single woman much after five in the afternoon. Besides, Mother Meeks deserves the respect of Evangelist Wilkins as a stalwart mother of the church, so she is picked up. Mother Meeks has been in church all of her life and as a saint she knows the Lord. Before Rev. Greer came to town she served for twenty-seven years in various capacities in the Christian Palace, the largest Deliverance tabernacle in the city. She was one of the first to join Rev. Greer's church when he began his ministry in an area rental hall. She remembers the Palace warmly but found in Rev. Greer's ministry something real and dynamic. She also admits frankly that after years in the Palace under white ministers, she was excited to discover a Black man starting out to establish a deliverance ministry grounded in the gifts of the spirit like discernment, prophecy and healing. Mother Meeks shifted her allegiance to the new ministry of Rev. Greer and has never looked back. In the beginning she did most anything, from singing to leading devotions to chauffeuring people around in the church's older Cadillac limousine. Now as an honored member of the Mother's Board she lends her spiritual and financial support to Rev. Greer's ministry and sets the example for younger members to emulate.

This evening Mother Meeks has left home after a run-in with her fifteen-year-old great grandson. Seven years ago Mother Meeks took in one of her granddaughters and her four children after her granddaughter's husband was killed accidentally in a local grocery store during a hold-up attempt. Since then Mother Meeks says her granddaughter has become an alcoholic living on welfare and leaving the raising of the children mostly to her. Mother Meeks has twice had her granddaughter committed to the hospital to be dried out, but once back home she has slipped back into her old habits. This afternoon, when she came home unexpectedly to find her great grandson, Willard, sitting in the living room with three of his friends smoking pot, Mother Meeks set about letting Willard know who was who. She sent the other boys out of the house, but they were so high one of them had disrespected her, and Willard was so stuporous that she doubted that what she had said had had much effect. Without his mother there to back her up, Mother Meeks fears that she may be losing the battle to keep her great grandchildren from drifting off into the street life. She worries and today's episode was upsetting. As she got ready for service she prayed about it and asked the Lord to take the burden of it from her mind. She read the 23rd Psalm, and it is this psalm that is in the back of her mind as she goes down the steps from the row house she has owned for thirty-four years to the Wilkins' car double parked outside.

Sister Henson is the last to be picked up because she lives several blocks west of Mother Meeks. Evangelist Wilkins met Sis. Henson recently in a clothing store where Sis. Henson works part time. Over the selection of a dress they began talking and Evangelist Wilkins ended up giving Sis. Henson a ride home. The subject of Faith

Deliverance came up early in the conversation when Sis. Henson said that she was looking for a church home, but had been dissatisfied with the Methodist and Baptist churches she had tried. A large woman in her late thirties, Sis. Henson complained that her doctors had diagnosed her for high blood pressure and prescribed pills she has to take four times daily. Evangelist Wilkins did not miss the opportunity to tell Sis. Henson about Rev. Greer and the many healings that she has witnessed in the church. Sis. Henson received this information with reserve since she really did not believe in that sort of thing. Still she was curious, and after several offers by Evangelist Wilkins to take her to church, Sis. Henson agreed about a month ago to go to a Friday night Healing and Blessing service. Sis. Henson has been going regularly since. She still has difficulty with the shouting and falling out, and she still has high blood pressure, but she finds the message of Rev. Greer uplifting and encouraging. She wants to be healed and she wonders about the Holy Ghost that everyone talks about, but she is not sure she is ready for that yet. She is also beginning to talk about joining the church.

Sis. Henson is especially proud of her two teenage sons. Despite her husband's adventures over the past two years with another woman and his sometimes drunken, obstreperous behavior in the home, Sis. Henson has managed to keep her sons out of the streets and in school. Sis. Henson is especially pleased with her eldest son who besides being captain of the wrestling team and state champion in the 167-pound class is also a good student. He has qualified for a summer program in accounting at Temple University in anticipation of a college education in business.

After only a month in Faith Deliverance and with her own marriage seemingly disintegrating, Sis. Henson has sent for the information on the test for the General Education Degree, a high school diploma equivalency test. Sis. Henson is thinking about going into nursing, and she will need her high school diploma to qualify for admission to nursing school. The area interests her, and with her husband's tendency more and more to spend his money elsewhere, Sis. Henson realizes she must find some occupation that can more substantially support her family. With her daughter by an early teenage union now living with her with her two young children, Sis. Henson is especially anxious about the financial welfare of her family. Struggling within her on-again off-again marriage, Sis. Henson feels she must be the center of strength within the family. She thanks Faith Deliverance for helping her to think more positively about what she can do to change her situation instead of getting caught up in an endless cycle of worrying.

Sis. Henson is early in her experience in Faith Deliverance and she has a kind of youthful excitement about going to services. Before she is picked up by Evangelist Wilkins, Sis. Henson has overseen the evening meal, helped her daughter with the baby that is irritable and not feeding well due to a cold. With her husband home this evening, she has engineered a truce by separating the father who is high from her eldest son, whose ambitions and educational success make him the target of disparaging remarks by his father. With the home quiet for the moment, Sis. Henson leaves the house to join Sis. Anita in the back seat of Evangelist Wilkins' Nova.

It is a twenty-minute trip to the church over Watney and down Grand Street. Initial greetings feed into brief catching up on personal lives. Personal talk can touch on but should not dwell in complaint. Sis. Henson still has to learn about this and she

sometimes carries on too long about her problems. When she does this evening, Mother Meeks reminds her about negativism not having a place in their minds as they go to church. They are to leave their troubles behind and begin to get into the right frame of mind as they approach the church and the service. With this mild rebuke, the topic shifts to Rev. Greer's "The Blessing Path" radio broadcast that morning. They all listen daily when they can to this fifteen minute radio broadcast at 10:15 a.m. Sis. Henson recalls one testimony on the program by a mother with a son on drugs and how that son straightened out through the mother's joining in prayer with Rev. Greer over the period of a couple of months. In prayer the mother gave the problem to God, claimed the solution and began to deal with her son as if the problem was resolved. It is a poignant testimony, and each woman relates to it in her own way as is reflected in her comments. As remarks on the testimony subside, Evangelist Wilkins recalls the announced topic of this evening's service, "Let God Change Your House to a Home." From the back seat there is a simultaneous, "Amen." Evangelist Wilkins says she has heard Rev. Greer speak on the subject before and that Sis. Anita and Sis. Henson can look forward to a real message. Mother Meeks adds that the text Rev. Greer uses for that subject is the 127th Psalm. As the others comment on Rev. Greer's illustrated delivery, Sis. Henson opens her Bible to Psalms and reads number 127. Sis. Henson reads the psalm twice and finishes looking up and out the side window, reflective.

The church is a few blocks away and the car is quiet momentarily. Mother Meeks begins humming the tune to one of her favorite songs, "Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave it There." Through one verse Evangelist Wilkins and Sis. Anita join in humming quietly while Mother Meeks sings softly. Sis. Henson is silent, hands folded on her Bible in her lap, still looking off out the window. Past the last stoplight, Evangelist Wilkins pulls the car to the curb and stops. Ahead they recognize Brother Lester's car, and coming up on the sidewalk from the subway is Sis. Townsend and three others in her group from South Baltimore. The four women get out of the car, and with greetings of "Praise the Lord" to several others, they approach the church entrance. They have arrived.

Something must be happening inside Faith Deliverance that makes the trip these and other people make worthwhile - considering the expenditure of time, energy and money involved in attending services two or three times a week for a three to four hour service. What it is that is valuable will be seen in the life testimonies of the six people that form the core of this book. At the center of the experience for all of these people is one person, Rev. Joe Greer, leader, pastor, founder and Bishop of this independent Black church. Faith Deliverance is the creation of this man, and life in the church revolves around this dynamic spiritual leader. Faith Deliverance as a church and a community is a reflection of this central personage. Through the man, we can see the themes that inform the composition of the group.

So, who is this man? First some background. Rev. Greer is a Black man who was raised in the holiness-Pentecostal Black church by his devoted mother in what he refers to as the Black ghetto of Baltimore. He left Baltimore at 19 because he found the holiness-Pentecostalism of his upbringing too limited, too lacking in an intellectual base. In Los Angeles Rev. Greer found the broader perspective he was seeking, being trained in metaphysics, mysticism and what he refers to as the spiritual sciences. Rev. Greer emerged from his training with what he calls "true deliverance for the whole person." For several years Rev. Greer conducted a successful counseling practice based on his new

syncretism. His practice was mainly with upper middle class Blacks and some whites, especially in the entertainment business. Gradually he became less and less enchanted with the life problems of the relatively well off and began to orient himself to helping Blacks in situations like those he had known in growing up. He built a church in Watts, then another in Fort Worth. These churches were successful, but Rev. Greer found them to be restricted in their appeal. In California and with counseling as a focus, he had had his perspective broadened and his spiritual abilities developed, but he had adopted with these changes a more intellectual orientation. It was not until Rev. Greer returned to north Baltimore and added the full Black religious idiom to his approach that his ministry within the Black community began to be received with enthusiasm by large numbers.

Rev. Greer grew up in holiness-Pentecostalism and is now a pastor in a nearly all Black section of Baltimore, but his experience and perspective is much broader than most ministers of this description. From his perspective he looks out to the neighborhood of the church and the Baltimore Black community, but his outlook is not confined to it. He is a Black man concerned about Black people, but his concern is to assist Black people to become complete human beings and in doing so to transcend the limitations of their Black image of themselves. Rev. Greer's message is not designed to rally his members around the issue of race per se. His is a universal message about the self and about the spiritual in life and living that happens to be directed primarily to Black people, but that applies to all people.

Rev. Greer's experience begins in and his message is directed within the Black community, but his vision looks out far beyond these boundaries. His is not a reclusive, introspective, religion that celebrates "blackness." As an evangelical organization, the church looks outward for converts, but more significantly its converts are encouraged to think expansively about themselves and about their place in the world. With two young churches, the mother church in Baltimore and the addition of an even larger, more recent church in Philadelphia, a youthful minister in his late thirties sets the stage by looking between these two churches and cities in his pastoral duties. Reaching still further outward is Rev. Greer's fifteen-minute radio broadcasts, "The Blessing Path," which is heard in most cases daily in a dozen cities from Houston to New York City. The Baltimore Faith Deliverance community is well aware of this larger broadcast appeal of their pastor and participates in supporting it. With different introductory and closing announcements, these programs not only inform the local community about service topics and times, but also create in their common core a sense of a much larger Faith Deliverance community.

Rev. Greer is the model for the spiritually mature, assertive, outward looking individual that he attempts to make out of his converts. Dressed in expensive and colorful clothing and driving his Rolls Royce, Rev. Greer presents the image of someone who has got his act together: spiritual, mental, and material. An expansive and flamboyant individual himself, Rev. Greer has created a church organization that centers around an individual, and that speaks to each individual to make the most of him or herself. Rev. Greer is the hub of the community and like a wheel, wherever he travels or focuses his attention, there is the community center. From Rev. Greer radiates the many aspects of the larger church effort, and all issues and decisions tend to appeal to this center. An



organizational complex is present in each church, but it is quite dependent for movement on Rev. Greer.

The structure of Faith Deliverance in Baltimore is modeled on that for most Black churches with various boards: ministers', nurses', ushers', mothers', choir and Sunday school boards, along with various auxiliaries: men's, women's, pulpit circle, etc. But all of these are activated and active in the context of Rev. Greer's interest and direction. Each is responsible for a domain of importance, but none has authority to act in any consequential way without his direction. Because Rev. Greer cannot be all places with all groups at once in the expansive program he has built, the activity and effectiveness of groups waxes and wanes with the amount of attention Rev. Greer decides to devote to each of them at any given time.

Busy is hardly the word to describe Rev. Greer's day. Virtually every day is a working day for Rev. Greer, and nearly every workday is sixteen to eighteen hours long. If Rev. Greer averages four hours of sleep a day he is doing well. Typically Rev. Greer is doing two or three things at once, with a flurry of secretaries moving here and there, especially to and from phone calls. While he is in the church basement listening to the electrician's diagnosis of a major air conditioning problem, he is asking for the totals from the day's mails and is asked to advise a member who is distraught over a son who is in jail. Busy is too light a term to describe a man who produces a radio show six days a week, delivers the message and prays for each individual in large, three to four hours services in two different cities four to six times a week, responds to hundreds of letters a month, attends to the personal needs of two large church congregations, manages the real estate and finances of the entire church complex, and directs the various organizations of the two church communities. Most outsiders would say Rev. Greer's life is hectic, at best, and indeed Rev. Greer tends to burn out most of his personal assistants and private secretaries within a few months. But Rev. Greer himself is doing what he wants to do, to engage life fully and with all of his faculties. Because of his spiritual development, Rev. Greer indicates he is literally able to do more. He can operate at different mental levels simultaneously, and because he can rest completely when he does rest, he does not require the amount of sleep most people demand.

Faith Deliverance as a community is a reflection of its pastor. Focused on the individual, the deliverance faith of Rev. Greer promotes spiritual or intuitive development and the use of the awareness that comes with this development to engage life more youthfully, fully and successfully. When this perspective is combined with an outward, public focus and an organizational structure that depends on an individual, Rev. Greer, at its dynamic center, the result is an open, loosely structured community. This is what Faith Deliverance is. It is not a tight knit community that looks inward to itself for identity and satisfaction. Faith Deliverance looks out to the stranger, not to draw him in to some reclusive group, but to reshape his view of himself so he can direct (or redirect) his life out in the world to become happier, more self-reliant, and more successful. Faith Deliverance is about personal change through spiritual awareness, together with the practical application of this awareness.

But Faith Deliverance is not just about individual self-realization. Rev. Greer is reaching out to others to help them. His is a social, humanitarian ministry, not just a mission of personal fulfillment. In the deliverance Rev. Greer preaches, the break through by the

individual to his divine or spiritual self in the born again experience is simultaneous with becoming aware of the unity of all things, from which the feeling of brotherly love emanates. True spiritual development in Rev. Greer's ministry is one with a recognition of social responsibility. The pursuit of individual self-realization and success that is spiritually informed must consider others. The very mission of Faith Deliverance as an evangelical church reflects this social orientation. The ministerial board of evangelists, preachers and missionaries together with the Prayer Band, Usher Board and Nurses are all organized to serve and assist others, inside and outside of the church. Smaller prayer and study groups express the same sense of obligation at the informal level of church structure. Song and music are understood as prayer and so the contribution of the choirs and instrumentalists is to assist the congregation by leading it in the supplication of the Spirit. Faith Deliverance focuses on spiritual self-realization, but like its pastor, there is a strong sense of social responsibility within this focus, indeed even inherent to it.

With an initial idea of what the Faith Deliverance community is like, we can return to Evangelist Wilkins' group. Each of these women has come to service to assist Rev. Greer in his ministry and to be led by that ministry. They anticipate his arrival. When he appears, smiling, their own smiles broaden. They are ready to receive his message and his message will lift them up. As well as some of them know him, there will always be something new, even surprising, in the message and the service. In different ways they experience the Spirit that is at the root of his message and ministry. Sis. Henson feels a tingling in her toes begin to creep up on her. It scares her and through her fright, it is removed from her. The message strikes Sis. Anita deeply, and she feels the Spirit and dances her holy dance in the rear aisle. At Rev. Greer's side, Evangelist Wilkins focuses her attention so keenly as Rev. Greer prays during the prayer line that she feels a jolt like a shock wave strike her when a relative newcomer is slain by the Spirit and falls out on the floor. And as Brother Timothy sings "Oh Blessed Lord," Mother Meeks raises her arms and sways as she feels the Spirit overtake her, "Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord," and she floats as she sways within the song, and the song within her.

As Evangelist Wilkins' group departs the church in her car, each takes something home from the service: some experience, some point in the message. Those like Sis. Henson in the congregation, who hear the message through, will be challenged to see themselves as masters of their lives through their spirituality, and they will be encouraged to apply what they have learned from the service, especially in the home. Other services will work from different texts to direct a similar message to other areas of life until collectively all of life is circumscribed. Hearing the message, feeling the Spirit: that is the easy part. Developing, applying and changing by utilizing what is learned and felt: that is the hard part. Change is what the testimonies in this book are about because change is at the center of the Faith Deliverance message.

## II KEITH JONES DELIVERANCE FOR THE YOUNG STREET CRIMINAL

### Introduction

Keith Jones' testimony describes the odyssey of a young man from his rurally oriented home, through the lure of the glittering life in the city streets, and back to the values of his parents. Religion, and especially the Deliverance faith, constitutes Keith's way back, his means to return. The strength of Keith's account rests in the quality of his reflection as a delivered person about his earlier pursuit of crime in the streets. Though few young street criminals are probably as intellectually aware as Keith of their criminal behavior as an adventure upon which they have elected to embark, the pattern of Keith's criminal activities is typical. Many of the women in Faith Deliverance have suffered through the criminal behaviors of at least one teenage son like Keith. And most Faith Deliverance members have been the subject at least once of the criminal acts of such young men in the ghetto.

The draw of the street with its material and physical enticements is very strong for most men in the ghetto, and the teenager feels this draw most deeply as a boy emerging into manhood. It is in the street scene that the young male is judged for his social and physical adequacy. Few young men are able to disregard either the allure of the street or the street judgments of their character. Once drawn into the domain of the street, young men quickly discover that whatever the talents or qualities of character may be that are deemed desirable at home or in school, it is money that is essential to success and status. Money is power because money provides the means to get the material things that display high status, to act so as to call social attention to one's self, and ultimately to attract women. And the wider the male's circle of influence and the more stunning the women are who are in it, the more of a man a male is accorded to be. So young street men need money, but having quit high school to pursue the streets, the jobs for which they are eligible do not pay enough. And they are not willing to wait or delay. Hustling on the edge of crime or crime itself are the quick ways to get the needed money. And, most examples of successful street men that young Black males see are either hustlers or criminals. Alternative routes to success in military service or continued education to trade and professional occupations are available, but these routes take the young man out of the street world where he wants to shine, and often require him to postpone seeing the monetary rewards that he needs to be successful in the present. In addition, many young men do not orient to the outside world of occupation because they do not really believe there will be a job for them at the end of the "rainbow." Drugs, gambling, prostitution, and entertainment are the enterprises of the street hustler. Theft, robbery, the moving of stolen goods, and con games are the enterprises of the street criminal. Apart from entertainment, these pursuits represent the most common ways for the young street oriented male to shine and to sustain success within the street scene.

Deliverance opposes the street world and the activities of young men like Keith for two reasons. First it views the street occupations of hustler and criminal as unethical and immoral because they disregard, demean or directly undercut the quality of life of one's fellow man. Second, Deliverance regards the street as a lopsided world focused exclusively on the material and physical. In this world, Deliverance holds that the young

man is encouraged to grow in terms of a very limited view of his full potential as a human being. It is a diminished concept of self that the street preys upon and promotes as Deliverance sees the situation. And a diminished concept of self is a weak concept of self. So, according to Deliverance it is a weak self-concept that lies at the core of the street world. While Deliverance recognizes that family structure, upbringing, and racial discrimination may and sometimes do contribute to a weak self-concept, Deliverance locates the source of the street person's diminished view of self in the nature of the street life itself. Indeed, in the main, Deliverance contends that the home, the church and the school are in a very serious battle to channel young people away from the street world, not into it.

That an incomplete or weak self-concept is at the root of the street world from the Deliverance perspective is clear when Keith speaks from his present delivered position about what the Deliverance faith can mean to a young man. According to Keith the most important consequence of Deliverance for the young person is the dramatic change in the way that person sees himself, his surroundings, and his relationship with others. Keith's observations on this subject are elaborated upon and reinforced in the testimony of the other street oriented male in this book, Mark Scott. Keith says that Deliverance puts the person in touch with the positive side of himself, his good side, his divine side. With this contact, the person discovers who he really is and recognizes that there is another way open to him for making it in the world - through divine guidance and faith. The implication is that spiritual contact leads to a more complete and balanced sense of self, not a self so oriented to the physical and material that the quicker, but more hazardous street route to success and status is sufficiently enticing. With his spiritual, mental, and social dimensions of self opened, Keith indicates that the delivered person also comes to realize that he both can and wants to succeed in life through legitimate social channels. Not surprising in this light is the fact that once delivered, Keith himself decides to pursue higher education, where he is very successful.

As valuable as Keith's testimony is for revealing the significance of Deliverance for the young street criminal, there is another aspect of Keith's testimony that deserves comment because it applies to Faith Deliverance members in general. People who are attracted to Faith Deliverance and who benefit most from it definitely tend to be avid readers, or have been at some point in their lives. Usually this active reading begins in the early years of members' lives and correlates with a strong interest in school to adolescence. At this point peer pressure to orient to the street intervenes, but reading continues intermittently, whether what is read are historical novels, romance magazines, or newspapers. With deliverance, a shift usually occurs to reading the Bible, Bible commentaries, and all types of spiritual literature from occult works to parapsychological studies. One of the consequences of members' pervasive involvement in reading prior to deliverance is that Faith Deliverance members are able to fall back on a well developed reading skill to assist them when, following deliverance and a reorientation in their goals, members frequently return to formal education. Most often the first step the person who earlier quit high school takes is to prepare to take his or her General Education Degree examination in order to qualify for a high school diploma. Typically Faith Deliverance members succeed beyond their expectations on these tests. But such success is really not very surprising in light of the members' generally high level of reading ability and considering the knowledge which has accrued slowly from the steady or periodic use of this talent over the years.

I have no "explanation" for why an interest in reading is typical of the Faith Deliverance community. But perhaps there is a relationship between an interest in reading and the generally high levels of industry, perfectionism, and intellectual curiosity which are also characteristic of Faith Deliverance members, even before they encounter Deliverance itself. It might be argued that what Deliverance does is to give a spiritual charge to already industrious, intellectually curious people who have reached situations of despair in their lives severe enough to seriously threaten these basic tendencies in themselves. In this light, the common inclination to reading can be seen as one manifestation, usually early in life, of the person's intellectual curiosity. Certainly, Keith displays vividly the relationship between curiosity in life and reading. Indeed, in Keith's case it even seems that the mythology he reads with such vigor as a child supplies the programmatic model for his own odyssey in the streets as a young man. At the very least it is this model that informs his life story from his current delivered perspective.

## Background Summary

By age twenty-two Keith Jones had been in jail, reformatory, and prison nearly forty times, all from the age of fourteen. On the edge of becoming a hardened criminal, Keith found Faith Deliverance, and since that time his life has turned around dramatically. One indication of this turn-about is Keith's recent graduation with academic honors from junior college.

Keith's childhood involved a great deal of moving since his father was a career man in the armed forces. Whether living on or off base, Keith says he was always regarded as a military child, and an outsider in the community schools he attended. What with moving and being an outsider, Keith indicates that he never really had a chance to get to know other children very well. While he was well liked, Keith always felt himself to be a loner. But it was not just his being a military child that Keith says made him feel different. With nine children in the family living on an enlisted man's salary, Keith's family was poor. As a child, Keith talks about both eating his share of beans and chopping wood when money for coal ran out during the winter.

Keith says his mother was mostly responsible for raising the family since his father was often gone on tours of duty. A devout Christian with a decided preference for the Holiness faith, Keith's mother sang spirituals all the time in the house during the day, and prayed through her tears in her room at night. From the rural south, both of Keith's parents were church goers, with Keith's father preferring the more traditional Baptist church. With two religious parents, Keith says he went to church regularly as a child, frequently going with his mother to Holiness services. From his early church experience Keith says he came away believing in God and respecting the church. He also had been impressed with the power of God and the spiritual abilities of certain gifted ministers as a result of attending evangelistic meetings where people had been dramatically healed. Keith says he incorporated his parents' basic values, which he describes as "country," meaning that his parents were trusting and honest and always willing to help someone else, even when it was they who really needed the help. Also, they did not believe in quarreling or fighting. In general, Keith describes his parents as basic people, good people, but unsophisticated people.

All of his life Keith says he has been an avid reader, always with a stack of books by his bedside for reading whenever he gets the chance. Knowledge itself Keith considers valuable, and when he was younger he especially wanted to learn about how other people lived in other places. For several years around age ten Keith says mythology was his favorite subject. At that time, Keith would read any mythology book he could find, with The Odyssey being his all time favorite. What the gods and heroes were able to do was what fascinated Keith, and he would wish he could perform the deeds of these characters. He particularly admired Odysseus as a man who was bold enough to go it alone and who was willing to venture into new and dangerous situations to discover for himself what was there.

Along with reading, Keith says he enjoyed writing. He would write to pen pals far away and would enjoy trying to determine what kind of person each one was. Generally, Keith says he likes to watch people and to see if he can figure them out. But for the most part Keith indicates he does not trust impressions, especially those of others. He has to see for himself because too often people are underneath not what they appear to be on the surface. Keith cites himself as an example of someone who has done many things that do not reflect the real person he is.

Keith indicates that he took his parents' attitude about the issue of race: everyone was the same in the eyesight of God. As a young child Keith reports being one of four Black children to integrate an all white elementary school in Tennessee. Keith found the experience extremely uncomfortable, first because he was never accepted by the students, teachers, or school administration, and second because he could not avoid the comparison between the clothes, bikes and hot lunches the white children had versus the hand-me-downs and peanut butter sandwiches that were his routine in school. Keith was delighted to "escape" from this school when six months later his father was transferred. From that point on, Keith spent most of his time in predominantly Black schools where his friends were all Black. In fact, Keith says that among his friends, a person could not associate with white students and be accepted. The prevailing attitude was anti-white with rivalry between the races being common at the schools he attended. In this context Keith says he did his share of fighting, mostly in response to whites calling him and his friends names or vice versa.

At age thirteen, going on fourteen, Keith emerged with his family from eight months in the backwoods of West Virginia where he says there was nothing to do and no one his age to talk to or interact with. Keith's father had decided to go to Vietnam, so the family moved to Wilmington. It was Keith's first experience in a city, and he says he was ready for a change after eight months of pine trees. What especially attracted Keith were all the "young ladies" in the neighborhood and in the school. Keith says he had to find out what was happening in the streets since that was where the ladies were. His parents could not tell him about the streets because their background was "country," and their "country" values did not seem to fit. So Keith says he had to find out about it for himself.

With his father gone to Vietnam and his mother trying to settle in and look after her nine children, especially her daughters, Keith says he just "eased on out into the streets." Pursuing the women, Keith graduated quickly from throwing bricks through school windows to stealing cars at fourteen. School was boring according to Keith, but with a car he could explore the territory, mostly looking for ladies. Unlike his friends, Keith says

he would usually steal a car alone, not to cruise around Wilmington, but to go to other places, especially Baltimore. Keith was caught eight times for stealing cars before at age fifteen he was sent to a mental institution for tests. All of his tests indicated that he was a very bright person, and Keith was told by the psychologist that he had the potential to be either a social leader or Public Enemy Number One. After hearing that, Keith says he thought he was "slick." So, with something of a reputation at this point in the community of his peers, Keith decided he would take the easy way to get what he wanted. Besides, he says after quitting school at sixteen, he could not find any job that would pay him anything decent. And Keith was not going to be honest if it meant being poor. So he began stealing.

First it was TV's and appliances which Keith and his partners would sell to people they knew or to some junkie. The only problem for Keith was that he was always getting beat by his partners because he could not keep any of the goods at his house due to his mother's suspicions. When he was not present, his partners would sell the goods and then not make good on their promises to pay Keith his share.

At sixteen Keith was caught for the second time burglarizing and finally he was sent to a reformatory where many older men were located. Under a five-year sentence, Keith took the exam for the General Education Degree, mostly to satisfy his mother's desire for him to finish high school. When he passed, Keith says he was again impressed with himself, and when he was released, again he chose to use his talents to get what he wanted the easy way, by putting into effect some of the things he had learned from the older men in the reformatory.

By age seventeen Keith says he was committed to trouble. Slowly his thievery became more substantial, with Keith priding himself particularly on his ability to break into a store - ease in, and ease out "like a cat." The burglarizing itself Keith says he did not feel bad about. He only felt bad when he would get caught and knew that he would lose his girlfriend while he was in jail or prison. But jail did have positive effects also, since Keith says it was there that his life slowed down long enough for him to rest, read, write, and reflect about life and about his future. As Keith says, nothing the authorities tried to do in jail did anything to change him, but if it had not been for those times when he was slowed down, he probably would not have stayed alive mentally.

By his later teenage years Keith indicates that while some of his friends and acquaintances were intensely anti-white, his position was that some whites were good and some were bad. He could not hate all white people because he says he had not personally had experiences with whites that were awful enough to lead him to that conclusion. In fact Keith says that it was white people, as school counselors and as psychologists and teachers in prison, who helped him in his late teenage years to recognize his potential to succeed in the straight world, when and if he wanted to. Keith indicates that to that point in his life no one, Black or white, had taken the trouble to tell him about his potential. He says it was extremely important to him to realize that he did have the choice. He did not have to feel that he was necessarily confined to the illicit activities of the streets as his only way to succeed in life.

But in the periods when Keith was free, the knowledge of his potential was not enough to change his orientation from illicit street activities to pursuits in the straight world.

Rather, Keith's dislike of constantly being taken advantage of by his burglarizing partners resulted in an escalation of his crime from thievery to robbery. Robbery was clean and it was fast, but as Keith says, it was "dirty." Keith found it particularly disturbing during hold-ups to have to beat up the people to get them to give him their money. This, Keith says, did make him feel uncomfortable because he felt that hurting people went against his basic principles - the values of his parents, which he says remained alive in him. Keith reports that he could never become hardened enough to overlook the fact that he was injuring people. Finally, when the robbery of two old ladies resulted in Keith having to beat one woman so that she fell and struck her head, Keith says he decided then and there that he would never rob anyone again. Even today Keith says he still cringes when he recalls the crack of that elderly woman's head against the wall as she fell - and all for a dollar and change.

Keith's testimony in his own words begins with his description of the role of religion in his life during his criminal period in the streets. Keith then explains the conflict he felt between the values his parents had instilled in him and his realization that becoming a con-artist was the type of crime for which he was really best suited. With Keith's last experience in jail, Faith Deliverance emerges on the scene.

### Church During Street Life

Through all my life in the street I still believed in God, and I would go to church, ESPECIALLY when I was in trouble. I would go to different Holiness churches in Wilmington. But the churches I'd been to weren't good enough to hold me. I had been saved. I had gone to the altar and said, "Lord, I'm here." I had tried, I had listened to what the preacher was saying, but it wasn't GOOD enough. I came and asked the Lord, "Forgive me." And I shouted, and I felt the Spirit, and I felt good inside, but then I'd go back home and there'd be nothing there to HELP me. The preacher hadn't said anything but, "You're saved," but all you have is you, and YOU are the one that got in trouble. So there was nothing there that was holding me up. You go home and you are on your own, there was nothing to go with. And when you come back the next day, all the preacher does is try to make you feel BAD. It wasn't enough. It wasn't GOOD enough, so I was saying to myself, "That church is good enough for some people, but it's not good enough for me." I would come through and get saved, and two or three days later - TROUBLE. Trouble on the horizon. There was nothing in the program that really made me TRY to hold out, keep on going. I believed in God, but I had to find somebody that could give me something to walk with when I'm NOT in church, something to convince me. I got tired of getting up, saying, "Lord, forgive me." I wanted to be forgiven, but I couldn't see repenting today and sinning tomorrow. I didn't think that was the way it was supposed to work.

Still, when I was coming through church, there was this one minister who used to go to court with me all the time. He was a Holiness man, and whenever I would get in trouble I would call him or write to my mom to go tell the man I'm down here in jail. And he'd PRAY for me! I must have been to court eight times before they sent me away for stealing cars, so I said, "Boy, the Lord MUST be good." So when they DID send me away, I said, "I DESERVE it." I had no bad feelings or anything. Eight times is pretty good because there are people that go to reformatory after two or three times in court. I only did two months, so I said, "Pretty good. You can't beat this with a stick." So, I had respect for the power of prayer. And this man would always go to court with me, and he



used to always tell me when I was younger, when I was about thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, when I was going through there getting saved and it wouldn't last, he could see something that I didn't see. He used to tell me, he said, "I was praying for you, and the Lord showed me that if you would give your life to Him, and live for Him, you would have a congregation bigger than mine." I figured his congregation is about 300 strong out there. And I said, "Yeah, OK. That was OK, if I want to get into it, it's nice. Right now I'm trying to get out of trouble down HERE." He would always tell me something like that. I'd listen to him, "Yeah," and walk on off.

## Con-Artist and Parental Values

Before I really got into religion, I wanted to be a con-artist. I always had the gift of gab, and I figured I could use my looks to my advantage, and if I could be intelligent enough to talk my way up on someone, I could get what I wanted without going through all the other hassles. I figured this out when I went to prison and they threw me in there with these older guys. I said, "If I'm gonna be a hoodlum, if I'm gonna be a part of the street scene, then I want to be a con-man."

I always WANTED to be a con-artist, but I never WAS one. The problem was that I knew I had the potential to be a manipulative individual, to say the right thing to get what I wanted. But the problem was the abuse that's involved in BEING that type of individual, and the conflict was always before me, one side saying, "Con-artist is what you ought to be, cause you can do it, and then you don't have to get dirty like these other clowns." But then there was this other side saying, "But that's not YOU. What will you look like out here, talkin' people down? Talkin' them down's just as bad as BEATIN' them down." It's even worse because a con-artist can hurt you much MORE than somebody who just beats you up one time and goes on their way. A con-artist has the ability to keep on coming back, keep ON beating you down. And that always bothered me. I would say to myself, "OK, if this is what I'm gonna be, I will have to set aside my emotions," but I couldn't do it, I couldn't DO it.

I really think it was my parents' values that stopped me from many things. I couldn't BE a con-artist, and there were so MANY things I couldn't do in prison. And I'm glad for it, too, because SOME of the things I saw happen to people, there's no way in the world, NO WAY I could do that. I've seen some treacherous things behind those prisons, no WAY. I saw people that go in there and become more convinced that they can succeed with crime. I was like that for a while, because when I first went to prison it was more or less like being in school, to go back out in the streets and apply it, and see what kind of feedback you get. But after I grew in that, and I got out here and started manipulating, I started seeing what I had to DO to get to whatever I wanted. And I just couldn't DO it, I couldn't BE that. Every year I was growing older, every day I was learning more. And the more I knew, the more it took and the more of a criminal I was. And I knew I couldn't go far enough to get what I wanted, because then I wouldn't have what I really want anyway. Because all I really WANTED was to be happy.

That's how I knew that kind of life wasn't for me, that's how come I wasn't happy with it. There were so many attitudes you had to accept into YOURSELF, and I just couldn't relinquish myself. To me, it was too much to ask of ME. I would have to give up too much of me, the REAL me.

When it came right down to it, it was always this thing before me, "Here's what you can BECOME. Here's what you ARE." What I was at the time didn't seem to fit into what I could become. But to discover what I AM, I had to get in the streets and find out what I could become. And it was some good, some bad, but never enough to say, "This is really IT." Some things I did didn't phase me at all, like when I stole my first car. I wasn't thinking about what I could become. But after a while when I was doing things and THINKING about doing things that didn't fit the real me, I had to really sit down and start considering the road I was traveling. And it became more a thing of what I could become versus what I am, and the power to decide which one it'll be.

I had done a lot of things, which took me through some changes, mentally and physically. But I feel now that all the changes that I went through have only brought me back to what I really WAS from the beginning. I don't think I've changed that much. What I did enabled me to experience living in the city and becoming a part of city life. And going through the changes that I've been through as a city resident has enabled me to seriously take a look at the morals and the values that my mother and father tried to instill in me, and did SUCCEED in instilling in me, versus the values and morals that my peers TRIED to instill in me. It really gave me an opportunity to weigh the two values. And there was only so far I could go with the street values, and then I found out I had to return to the values I started with from my parents.

### Last Experience in Prison

Two and a half years ago was my last experience in jail. I had really settled down in the time before that. For over a year I was really trying to get ahead in life, HONESTLY. I had a very good job, I was staying with my girlfriend, I was in love with her, and I had a daughter by her. I had a nice apartment. I had established a family, and I had grown financially. To me, I was on TOP of the hill at that particular moment. Still something had been bothering me for about a year, and I was getting restless. SOMETHING about the situation wasn't right. On Sundays I wouldn't be in church. My girlfriend and her family would be getting high, and I'd be thinking, "I'm not going to church today. I'm sitting here getting high." But it would BOTHER me, all the way down through that year.

So this one night, my girlfriend and I had an argument, and I was ANGRY when I left home, and I was out there driving all FAST like a fool, and I had an accident. I TOTALED the car. It rolled over five times. I didn't get hurt. I didn't get scratched. And so I got out the car window, went over across the street, called the police, said I had an accident. Well, at the same time that I had had THIS accident, there was an incident taking place near where I lived, about six or seven Greer away, where a policeman had gotten beat up. Somebody had smashed and beat him pretty bad. And somehow they made the equation that I had something to do with that and I was trying to get away from there. That's the accusation that was made. So, I was taken to a police barracks, and questioned. I was taken to NO hospital. Now, I had flipped my car and totaled this thing out. They weren't fair about not taking me to a hospital. But as far as they were concerned, they had the person who beat this policeman. So when they finally figured out, "Well, maybe he ISN'T the one," they told me at the police station to WALK home ten Greer from the middle of nowhere. I didn't know WHERE I was. They told me, "Well, if you want to get home, Route 1 is that way, when you get to it, you just head north." And this made me MAD, because I figured that they should take me home or to a hospital, SOMEWHERE! They don't just take a person who has an accident like that,

and just go question him for two hours, and then THROW him out of the police station. I thought it was WRONG.

So I'm walking home, and I got tired of walking. I wasn't hurt, and I'm not even going to say I was hurt. I wasn't hurting in the LEAST way. I just got tired of walking, that's all, so I broke into this car place. I saw this truck, and I was going to take the truck and ride on home. That was the reason why I broke in the place. Well, before I even got in that truck the police were around me. And all I could see was flashbacks of all the TIME I had ever done. And I knew this time I was going to do some time. I was CAUGHT. And so they took me out to the jailhouse. And I KNEW, just behind the fact that it was a burglary, that I was going to do some time. That's what I'd been doing time for, ever since I turned into an adult, for burglaries. There'd be car theft every now and then, but mostly burglaries. They KNEW that was my pedigree, burglarizing. And this was about the fortieth time I had been caught. And I had been caught at least three or four times for burglarizing since I was an adult, and these burglaries were BIG burglaries, nine, ten thousand dollars in merchandise. So, just the sheet itself said, "This is a criminal. This guy here, he's been arrested all these TIMES, and done ALL this time, and he's STILL doing it." So I said, "Well, I figure now they're gonna make an example out of me." There were the two charges on me, the burglary itself and trespassing. They're going to get me on one. They usually do that. When you get caught they give you enough charges where they'll get you on one. So I thought about it. I thought, now I've lost my job. My girlfriend and my daughter were at the house, and they had NO means of paying for rent or anything. She was really worried, and I was concerned. All I had WORKED for that whole year, that was destroyed. That ONE burglary, to me, just brought my WHOLE world down, and I KNEW I was going away to prison for a while.

So they gave me a lawyer, and he came and he said, "Well, you know how much you've been in trouble," and I knew it. He said, "You're gonna do some time." And I said, "I know it." He said, "It's just a question of how MUCH time." I said, "How much time are they talking about?" and he said, "Well, five to fifteen months," he said, "If you accept the bargain." And he said, "If you go to trial, they're gonna try to give you maximum," which was ten years. I looked at him and said, "Are you CRAZY?" So I'm thinking and thinking and thinking. I said, "Lord, I'm not doing it, I'm not doing five to fifteen months." I felt I had to give up everything that I had worked for, and I had been honestly trying to work it out the RIGHT way for a year. I had given up burglarizing and stealing and all that. I really TRIED. I applied myself, and I was getting ahead. Then THIS happened, and this man is talking about five to fifteen months, and I said, "Hmmm, I'll just have to be a criminal from now on," because I was feeling then like they had taken EVERYTHING, I lost it ALL. And my own lawyer tells me I'm going to jail. He wasn't even TALKING about getting out of the situation. So I said, "Hmmm, I've got to think it out, try and come to terms with it," because it really hurt me to be in that position. There was just something about doing ONE MORE DAY of time that would have made me say to myself, "I'll be a criminal the REST of my life, and get this guard and all the REST of 'em out here. I'll be just like some of these individuals I know, cold-blooded, don't care about ANYBODY. If I kill, I'm gonna KILL." They just made me feel like that. If I had to do some time, I had made my mind up I would not try again in my life to be something good, to have it better, to be a person and hold onto my principles.

Then what happened was, they put me in a cell, and I was upset. And I remembered, I said, "Mmm-hmm, should have been going to church like you're supposed to." All that came across my mind. I was saying to myself, "Yeah, if you had been to church you wouldn't have been out there TEARING your car up. You'd be HOME where you belong." And I was saying, "You haven't been living right. You haven't been going to church, so there's no need to be crying for the Lord. But I was also saying, "Well, I have to cry with SOMEBODY," I said. "Well, I'll TRY." I had come to the point where I said, "I'm gonna believe, I'm gonna try it for MYSELF. If You can hear me, hear. If You see me," I said, "I'm serious," and I WAS serious.

I began reading the Bible I had in my cell, and I really began to get down into some SERIOUS prayer, saying, "I'm gonna try." I said, "I don't know what it's gonna take," I said, "but I'm gonna pray, and I'm gonna try it and BELIEVE it," and I was praying. I would pray EVERY day, ALL day. I'd walk. People would look at me, just walking up and down the tier, saying nothing, just meditating, fasting, praying. I would say, "Lord, I don't know what's gonna happen, but if I have to do some time, don't let 'em give me THAT much time. I don't want to do a whole bunch of time, cause I can't take it, I can't DO another long sentence. I have to take care of my daughter, my woman." I was just praying for EVERYTHING, about every bad thing about me. I didn't want to turn into a gorilla, but I said, "Lord, if I go to jail, I'm gonna turn into a gorilla. I'm not coming out of here like this anymore. I can't take this any longer." I was just praying. I said, "You see, I try," I said, "I haven't been out here treating people dirty." I said, "I'm not a BAD person," I said "If I've got to do more time, I'm through with any concept of Christian living, any THOUGHT to do with it. I don't want to HEAR it, cause I've tried, and I got the bad end of this one, the way this came down. But if I have to do some time behind THEIR mistake, you better believe I'm gonna make my OWN when I come out. I'm losing time for MY mistakes from now on." That's what I was saying to myself. I can BE a dirty individual, but I didn't WANT to do that. I really didn't. I said to myself, "You got to get out of this one. Go try it, TRY it this time."

Now there were times before when I would come home from prison, get caught in some violence out in the streets, and suffer the frustrations of failure and defeat and rejection. I would tell the Lord, "Lord, I give up. I can't DO this." But as soon as I felt a little better, like the weight is off, I'd get a little flirty, and I'm out here doing the SAME thing! I had come to the realization that there was a Lord, but I hadn't really come to the point where I was TOTALLY convinced that only He could get me out, and if HE can't get me out, I'm going to ROT.

So I was praying for three weeks solid, ALL the time. After a while I really was getting to believe that, "Well, I'm gonna get some time, but maybe not that much. Maybe I won't have to be a bad person." I was beginning to get myself together. When it finally came time to go to court, I went in and the man says, "The only thing we can offer you is FIFTEEN months, that's the LEAST time you can get." I said, "No, you take it back and tell the judge I'm not GOING for it." So they brought me MY lawyer, and I said, "As far as I'M concerned, you can get off the case too. I can get fifteen months, I can get THAT by myself. I don't need YOU to bring me that." So he said, "Well, I'm sorry. Then I'm through with it."

I turned around, HIT the wall, said, "Lord, lookie HERE. If THAT's your kind of deal, if THAT's what I've been praying for, fifteen months, You keep it TOO!" I was HOT! I hate to say it, but it was the truth. "Lord, You KEEP your fifteen months. I'll go and do fifteen YEARS if that's what's coming down the slide!" I was getting hot. And I went back in, and I was sitting in the cell thinking. I said, "Well, maybe I should take the fifteen months and just turn into a crook." Then something said, "Try it again, hold on just a LITTLE longer." Something just said, "Hold on." And I said to myself, I said, "HOLD ON? I'm TIRED of holdin' on, I can't HOLD ON any longer, not ME, not by myself." But finally I said, "Well, Lord, I'm opening this Bible ONE more time. I'm gonna read something in here, but when I start reading it, You better TALK to me, and I mean to CONVINCE me of something. I don't just want to read, 'Joseph went to Bethlehem.' That doesn't even apply to me." That's the concept I went into that Bible with. If I opened this book up, I wanted something that was going to give me something to WALK with. And when I opened it up the first thing I read was, "Be not doubtful." That was the FIRST THREE WORDS I read in that whole Bible. I said, "Hold it RIGHT there. Something's UP. Hold it!" And I looked again, and I read it, I said, "That's IT, that's IT!" Everybody looked at me, "You gonna flip now?" but I said, "That's IT!" It just - something was talking to me, and I just told myself that day, I said, "Well, whatever comes down the slide, Lord, it's up to You now, it's YOURS. If I got to do some time, I'll go DO it. I was wrong." I said, "I'll go do it. I'll just have to TAKE IT, trust in the Lord."

So I called my mother up, told her what kind of deal they made, and my parents couldn't understand it. So I went on back to my cell, and the rest of the day I was just kind of content. Something came over me. I just got in the mood where I was saying, "Well, I'll take it, whatever comes, I'll just TAKE it, DEAL with it, I GOT to deal with it," you know. "I can't be LESS than a man. I can't turn into a beast."

Next day the authorities called me up, told me to pack my CLOTHES! They were going to let me OUT! You can't BELIEVE how happy I was. And when I came out of the place, would you believe, the SAME people I used to go out and make trouble with and get drunk with, they came out the same time as me. Well, they had to get high right THERE, that's what they wanted. But I was so HAPPY about getting out, because I had time to do in Pennsylvania, and if I ever got locked up, the conditions were I would do the time in Pennsylvania FIRST, and then come and do the time for the crime I had committed in the other place. I was supposed to be IN jail. I looked at these two that came out with me and I said, "N0000, I got to go find OUT something." And what I had to find out was about this God thing. I really wanted to KNOW, because I couldn't continue to live without coming to terms with it. I said, "I'm gonna get it TOGETHER, now. I want to know what is HAPPENING."

### First Experience in Faith Deliverance

I already knew when it DID come time to really apply myself to the principles of believing in something greater than myself, I couldn't take any religion where the concept of God was less than MY fantasies. Too many of these religions out here are limited when it comes to the concept of God. I already had MY concepts, what I thought it should be, what I was going to accept and what I couldn't accept, just from reading so much mythology. I didn't really know what the God I believe in now COULD do, but I just had a FEELING that He could do about anything. And now that I KNOW, I know He can do much MORE.

But there were many religions I couldn't accept even THEN because they were too limited. That really is what kept me out of a lot of these formal churches, Baptist, Methodist, mostly a bunch of formal structure. I never believed in formality, formal rituals, every Sunday is the SAME THING. First you have the hymn, then you would have this, then you would have that, and then you can go home! No Lord in there. Just going to another program, another ritual. I didn't think that kind of stuff could help me personally, just going to a program. That was a WASTE of time. And in the more formal religions there was no one-on-one with the Lord. It was too much of man in between you and God, and I couldn't accept that. I had to know Him PERSONALLY. I wanted something where I could go straight, DIRECTLY to the Lord.

So when I came out of prison looking to find out about this God thing, I KNEW what I didn't want and I was determined to search for what I DID want, and I came home and let them ALL know. And that's when I can say this last change really started. I had just turned twenty-three, and my mother and sister had been telling me about Rev. Greer for the last couple of months, and they had been coming to his church in Baltimore for about a year. I kept telling them, "Yeah, I'm gonna come, I'm gonna come." But I never came, I was too busy getting high. They'd come over to my place, talking, "Oh, you're LIVING in sin!" I said, "Well, sorry." They were trying and get me to come, but I didn't, and when they said, "The man's good," I'd be wanting to check him out, but I'll check him out for MYSELF. He can be good for you and miserable for me, as far as I was concerned.

So finally the day after I came home from prison I came to service to SEE this Rev. Greer. I brought my girlfriend, and my daughter was there, and my mother and sister. We came in and we sat down, and Rev. Greer came out there, and I looked and said, "Hmm, the man's clean." I was looking at him. And at the time I only had twenty-five dollars in the bank, bills were overdue, and I didn't have a job. I wasn't even getting unemployment because I just came home. I had PROBLEMS. So he came out there, clean, and he started preaching, and I'm listening. I said to myself, "I'll give him a chance. I'm not gonna pre-judge him. By the time I leave I'm gonna have a judgment or something." So I was listening to the man, and he got to preaching, and I said, "Hmmm! Now this is what I like" because he's talking PROGRESS, he's talking GETTING somewhere, TRYING something. I can go for that. So I'm looking and I'm saying, "He sounds good preaching, but I've heard good sermons BEFORE." I said, "That's cool. He's nice to listen to, but I'm still sitting here." So, he got to prophesying, and he had been prophesying for a couple of people, and I said, "He's really DOING it," and THAT made up my mind. I said, "HE's the one." So then he called ME and told ME to stand up. He said, "Come here," he said, "come out into the aisle." And he told me, "The Lord has work for you to do, and He's getting you ready for it right NOW." And when he touched me, I went OUT.

Well, when I came around, I said, "This is it, this is IT, this is THE ONE." I KNOW this is it, this is what I've been looking for, right HERE. I said, "This is the ONE! INTELLIGENT! He's talking about getting AHEAD. He's not sitting around and trying to scare me into getting saved like some preachers do, "You might die tonight. If you don't come up here now you might DIE tonight." That's their whole sermon. "You might not make it through the night." I know that. But that hasn't scared me into staying saved yet, it doesn't work

because it isn't going to KEEP me. I don't NEED scare tactics. Present me with facts, that's what I thrive on, REAL things. And Rev. Greer, I could relate to where he was coming from. The man's talking something for REAL. He's talking REALITY. He isn't talking scare tactics stuff. The man is being for REAL.

So I went home, and my girlfriend didn't know how to take it, but I was saying to myself, "THAT's the one. That's the one RIGHT there. I'm gonna try HIM." So I got into bed, feeling good. And as soon as the light went off, BAM! Something came and stood in the door. I don't know what it WAS, but this thing looked like it was so tall, it sounded, it just FELT like, I could FEEL something REAL TALL. I mean, if I could picture it, it was REAL TALL, and it looked like it was just standing there and looking, felt like it was looking. I couldn't see anything. I didn't open my eyes and look, and I didn't move or anything. But just from the VIBRATION I got, it just felt like He was just standing there LOOKING at me, laying in that bed. I don't know WHAT it was, but I knew it was in there, just something IN THAT ROOM, and it SCARED ME! I mean He scared me out of my WITS, and I've NEVER been scared like that in my LIFE. It scared me so bad, that I just was lying there, "Lord, take it, take it AWAY." It must have been there two-three good minutes until I finally felt like it had left. But I was OUT after that. The next morning I just wanted to know whether my girlfriend felt it, but I didn't want to ask her because I thought she might think I'm CRAZY. So I finally got around to it, I said, "Did you feel something last night?" She said, "Yeah, feel real BIG too, didn't it?" I said, "Yeah," and I said to myself, "That's all right, I wasn't dreaming." I haven't interpreted that experience yet. It scared me so bad I left it ALONE. But I just think about it every now and then. I think about it because SOMETHING came in there.

## Religion, Race and Reverend Greer

Religion is the place where I have had the MAJOR experience with white people that has stayed with me during my life. I remember when I was younger, my mother used to go around to various faith healers. They were the big evangelists like Oral Roberts and A.A. Allen. When I would go in their meetings they really impressed me, because to me they were demonstrating what I thought a God could do. I was in one of A.A. Allen's meetings in Texas, and that was the first time I saw miracles. Deaf people were being healed, blind eyes were being opened, and people in wheel chairs were being touched and they'd be up and RUNNING.

Seeing these white men doing these great acts of God, only made me dissatisfied with Black ministers. In the Black churches that I was going to, it seemed to me that the God part of the deal was very limited. I didn't see the same things happening. And so I would wonder how come whites have cornered this market on the power of God. I would ask, "What are Black people doing? What is their problem?" So over the years I've looked at a lot of Black ministers to try to find out why they haven't reached that same depth of experience. And the answer is that most of them don't put their time in. Most of them become entangled in the pettiness that can come with their little organizations. And then too, they get so caught up in WORLDLY things that I can see why they never become Black evangelists on the same level with the great white ministers. A lot of these black ministers, all they want to do is drive a big car, wield a little bit of power in their little community, and not think further than the state line. With that kind of thinking in their minds, I see why they are in the shape they're in.

I don't think the white evangelists like Roberts and Allen make these mistakes. I think they put their time in seriously, fasting and praying. I think they truly put themselves OUT there to be a vessel for God, so God can do these great works through them. I really think these white ministers were the kind of people who just sold out to the Spirit and that was IT. That was all they wanted to do in life. A vessel for the Spirit was all they wanted to be. So when it came to my thinking about what I believed to be God, what I believed to be religion, I always remembered what I had seen in these white evangelists' meetings, more so than what I saw or heard in Black churches.

I always have looked for a Black church where the great gifts of the Spirit would be manifested through the minister. To me the presence of these gifts is testimony of the degree to which God is using the minister. I always thought to myself that if God is colorless, then there MUST be a Black man somewhere that's doing it. Faith Deliverance was the first church I found where a Black man WAS doing things like the great white evangelists that I had seen. That's one of the reasons Faith Deliverance was so important to me. Seeing Rev. Greer confirmed the fact that a Black person COULD do what I thought a Black person SHOULD be able to do. So it also affirmed me as a Black person to know that Black people CAN do the great works of the Spirit. Up to that point the situation was, I knew the great works could be done, but so far I was only seeing white men doing them. I believed Black people could do it, but I didn't see them doing it. How come? Seeing Rev. Greer doing the works put another piece in the puzzle, Blacks ARE doing it and Blacks CAN do it. It really helped me a lot to see a Black man who had gotten past the small ideas and the small church and the position that goes with it. And then beyond just SEEING it, I thought, "I'm black, he's Black. Maybe he can teach me." And because Rev. Greer was Black I was more prone to try to learn from him and I thought he might be more willing to teach me what this spiritual thing is all about. So, when I found Faith Deliverance, a lot of the questions were answered.

The fact that Rev. Greer was a Black minister with outstanding gifts of the Spirit was important to me. That was what I had been looking for in a minister, so that made it easier for me to commit myself to the church and it meant I could get into the message of Rev. Greer's teachings in a way I hadn't been able to before. And when it came to my personal life at the time, I needed the practical applied faith that Rev. Greer was preaching. I needed the teaching that made the Spirit relevant and important to moving ahead in THIS life.

As a young Black growing up, I had been the kind of person to go through a lot mentally, without my thinking ever really influencing my actions. Most of what I did when I was younger and in the streets, the actions were superficial compared to the intricate thoughts I experienced. My physical actions were a reflection of my limited environment. I felt I had to do what could immediately be done with what was at my disposal. I was in the street world and my actions were dictated by THAT world. But in my MIND, in my intellect, I could always see beyond that limited world to a higher realm of existence. It was as if I had two independent, parallel paths going at the same time. They were both present, and yet they didn't run together. There was an intelligent mind and with it acts that almost seemed contradictory to intelligence. This was my problem. In my actions I couldn't get beyond the dictates of my environment, my Black background, the street world I was in. I couldn't bring my ACTIONS into accord with my THOUGHTS.



Without even knowing it, I was searching for something to bring my life together, but I didn't know WHAT to look for, or WHERE to look, and I didn't have anyone to really be a guide to me. Before I met Rev. Greer it seemed like none of the things I tried brought me happiness. All the material pursuits when I was in the street hustle failed to offer me any SOUL satisfaction. It didn't offer me contentment so I could say I was happy to be a part of that scene. And then, by the time I met Rev. Greer, I had a nice little apartment, a nice little job, a wife and child, but I was STILL frustrated. At that point I knew I could make it in the straight world if I wanted to. I had been in school. I had been in sociology, psychology, philosophy, and I could understand the dynamics of things, but there was still the absence of being able to blend me with it. There was still the God thing, and that wasn't there. I had come to realize that the straight way wasn't enough by itself because I wasn't HAPPY. What good was getting up in the morning, and having a bank account, if I wasn't happy. I knew I could do it, but it didn't seem to be valuable. It wasn't enough to make me say, "Yeah, this is it. This is what life is about. This is what I want to be." The material thing, the family, the drugs, the straight job, the intellectual world, none of these things and all of these things together hadn't brought me to where I could come to terms with ME. I tried these different things and when they didn't work out or when they sometimes made me miserable rather than happy, I could get very low, very DEPRESSED. And, in fact, there had even been two or three times when I had tried to commit suicide, as a result of being dissatisfied with what life was showing me. I could get that LOW. And in all honesty, I think if Faith Deliverance hadn't come along, then I doubt that I would be around today. I don't think it would have been too much longer before I would have just checked out - either suicide or just given up on being a human being and become a COMPLETE hoodlum.

Finding Faith Deliverance was VERY important for me. I didn't just find a spiritually gifted Black man. In the deliverance faith that Rev. Greer teaches I found a way to bring my actions into harmony with my thoughts through a REAL understanding and application of the Spirit. For the first time I came to understand what the message IS in the Bible and what it means to me, how it applies in a REAL sense. In Faith Deliverance I learned just how much this brown skin of mine really means, as opposed to the true worth of my MIND and how unlimited it can be. I discovered who I am because I discovered the missing element in my puzzle. I found that along with the physical and intellectual and social parts of me, there is an active SPIRITUAL part. And only when this spiritual part combines with these other parts do I become whole and life become complete and meaningful. And only when I could see myself whole could I put my being a Black person in the proper perspective.

### Changes Since Faith Deliverance

The BIG difference between Faith Deliverance and other churches I have been to is that Faith Deliverance convinced me to TRY God for myself. I always knew there WAS a God, I believed it, I had seen Him in motion. But Faith Deliverance has succeeded in making me try it for MYSELF, really sincerely APPLY myself to it, not just LOOKING at it, saying, "Well, I'm giving up a lot for this." Because I'm giving up NOTHING for what I'm getting. Day to day Faith Deliverance has given me HOPE, made me believe if you hope and if you APPLY yourself to what you really feel is RIGHT, you can have your needs fulfilled. Since I've been to Faith Deliverance I've learned to hope, which has really been the BIGGEST change, hope, to BELIEVE it, and have faith that things WILL

come to pass. Maybe not as quickly as I want them to, but I've seen things happen that I didn't think would happen for YEARS.

When I came home from jail over two years ago, I REALLY didn't expect to be where I am at now. I couldn't see ANYTHING ahead of me. I had twenty-five dollars, and I was broke, BUSTED. But Rev. Greer is showing me, and I've TRUSTED in God for the last two years, I put HIM up front. I haven't lived like I should all the time. I've made my mistakes, done my sinning, just like the next blind man. But through it all, in these last two years I have seen what just a LITTLE bit of faith has done, to BELIEVE and the practical application of it. Whether or not I'm DOING it all the time is a different story. I don't stand and say I'm so RIGHTEOUS. I've got my hang-ups, but just TRYING to do it, applying myself TO it, has shown me you CAN go places, you CAN do things. You can DO it, it's there, it's there to have.

I have done more things in two years as I have SINCERELY applied myself to serving the Lord than I've done all my LIFE trying to do it by myself. I've gotten MUCH further, and I have more peace of mind than I've EVER had. These last two years have been VERY fruitful. They have weeded out a lot of bad things, a lot of things that have been hindering me have been brought to light. I have learned phenomenal amounts that I didn't know. It's just the whole PICTURE, the girlfriend, the money aspect, the living the life of success, the peace of mind. Also I realize that if I DO slip and fall, I can get up and go on.

Am I GETTING somewhere in life? Am I SATISFIED with life? Is it WORKING? Am I being fulfilled MENTALLY enough to be happy PHYSICALLY? Is my faith taking care of the TOTALITY of my life? Faith Deliverance has given me ALL that, like nothing ELSE I've ever had. I tried women, I tried getting high with alcohol and various drugs, I tried lying and cheating and stealing and robbing and beating on people to get what I wanted, and ALTOGETHER that falls WAY short of what I have now, and I'm looking for MORE. I'm looking for COMPLETE happiness, to know it, to believe it, and it's MINE. Faith Deliverance and the Deliverance faith has succeeded in giving me the faith that with God I can strive for that happiness and at least come close. And I can be happy WHILE I'm on the way. And Faith Deliverance has instilled in me the knowledge that I don't have to be satisfied or content with second best. Sure, I might not get just what I want right now, but if I want it BAD enough, I'll get it eventually. I don't have to look at life and say, "Oh, I'm not gonna make it. OH, there's no way I can make it." I can look at life now and say I look FORWARD to tomorrow.

The major change since Faith Deliverance has been in ME, morally. Going to prison and being out in the streets, there was a breakdown in my moral character. Morally I was beginning to entertain thoughts like, "Yes, man is good, and all that's nice, but I can't MAKE it being good. It's wrong to be bad, but I can't DO it any other way. I'm gonna have to get out here and BEAT some heads." And now I STILL got to get out here, but I don't have to get out here and SNEAK mine and do to them like they do me to get the respect. I can be for REAL. I can tell people just how I feel. I don't have to worry about lying to them. And the TRUTH has got them straight. All this lying was like, they're standing up good but they weren't LISTENING. Now they listen, because they know I'm telling the TRUTH, and when I say it, I MEAN it, and that's it! THAT has helped me phenomenally, just to be HONEST with some of these people. Sometimes it hurts

me just to tell them the truth, but since I started that, I haven't had the stigma of being bothered with somebody when I really don't WANT to put up with their foolishness. What I'm about now is being for REAL. It's hard when you can't be yourself, when you got to be somebody else. I don't like that, REGARDLESS. Now, I know WHO I am and I can be myself.

When I made that promise that I was going to TRY to be a Christian, that AUTOMATICALLY meant I had to reevaluate the whole social picture. It wasn't just a matter of different friends. I had the opportunity to REALLY clean house. I was overdue for the house cleaning. There were a lot of individuals that had been coming around that I wanted to get rid of, really wanted to get AWAY from. Being a Christian just gave me the biggest reason in the world. "I'm a Christian now. You all got to cut that short." But that didn't sit well with them, and I was so happy, I could HOLLER. I finally figured out how to get rid of you all. Because I was SURROUNDED by people I didn't particularly care to be around, a conglomeration of JEALOUS people, people that weren't talking anything good for me. I said, "Yeah, I'm cleaning house now," and that's JUST what I did. They all think everybody is supposed to act a certain way, but now I act like I want to act! I said, "I don't function for people. I function for ME!" So, becoming a Christian gave me an opportunity to establish new relationships. I had stopped doing that, I was just SITTING DOWN, life had just DIED, I was just dead standing up. And I came over here to Faith Deliverance and I've met more people and done more things in the last two years than I had done in a long time, just helping MYSELF grow. And I figure if I can help ME, I can help somebody else. I believe that, and the more I GROW the more I can DO.

Before I went to prison, I was living with my girlfriend. I was in love with her. Of all the young ladies I've been with, she had the most BEAUTIFUL personality. And I had a child by her, a girl two years old. But my girlfriend's family were like the partying people, they got high, and gave their parties, and before I came out of prison I was out there doing the same thing. We smoked our share of the reefer. We used to smoke reefer, do speed, and drink. And I had the best apartment, and that was a problem, because the rest of the people in her family were jealous behind that. The people would come over to MY house and get high, comfortably, and the in-laws didn't like that, because nobody went over to THEIR house. So, I had to deal with that jealousy and where that was coming from. I didn't see WHY they were jealous, because I thought if you go out and work for something, whatever you get, you DESERVE. If you apply yourself to it, you deserve it. And the in-laws, they didn't like that, because they didn't feel like APPLYING themselves. But I was determined to have a NICE apartment with my little kid running around and all that.

Well, when I came out of prison, I came out a Faith Deliverance Christian and I was DOUBLY determined to get ahead. I had started going to college, and they were seeing me progress. But when I started talking about "I'm gonna be a Christian, and I've got no TIME for getting high," they took that kind of like a slap in the face. That was really the bottom line. "He wants to be a CHRISTIAN now." And they KNEW it wasn't just lip service. I was cleaning the house. "If you all want to get high, you get high OUTSIDE the door. Don't be coming here with that junk." And I was having this thing with my girlfriend. She said, "Well, they're my friends, they can come over and get high." I said, "This is MY house. They AREN'T coming." So that was causing problems. She didn't

like that. We were cat and dog over that, and I'd tell her quick. If she did have them in when I was out, and I came in, I'd go in the room and shut the door while they were getting high. She thought that was pretty arrogant, but I was DETERMINED. I was going to fight if I had to, literally. Because, to me, getting high was nice, but it had its limitations. And it was running out FAST. When you came down, there was nothing THERE. And you couldn't go back up with it, because you had to eat, had to go to work.

So I had HER family bothering me. They didn't think I should be a Christian, not THAT kind of Christian. And I didn't think that I could be a Christian HALF way. So for a whole year I kind of had to fight them. It was like, "He thinks he's too GOOD for us now," you know, and I didn't feel right. I loved the young lady I was with, but SHE didn't want to stop getting high. So it was hard.

Well, it all came to a head one morning. I came home and found another man with my lady, and that hurt me, that hurt me BAD. And it made me MAD. So I went and got this ax, and I was going to CHOP their heads off that morning. But when I got there the guy came down the stairs, but when he saw me, he went back up the stairs. My girl friend was carrying on and I hit her, knocked her down. I didn't particularly LIKE hitting on her, because I was coming to get HIM. I was going to take his head off and KICK it down the street. But he wouldn't come DOWN! And by the time he came down, he had the police there, so that stopped me. I wanted him bad enough, but I knew I couldn't get him, not in front of the police. I had to wait. And her family was over there talking a whole bunch of smack. I told them, "I'll blow you ALL UP out of here." I would have, too. THAT day I would have. I was upset, I didn't see ANYTHING but that head rolling down the street. I was S0000 emotionally upset, so ANGRY at the time that the only person I could have got that would have calmed me somewhat, temporarily, was my daughter. I love my daughter, I always have. So, I went and took her out of school, and I knew as long as she was around me I was going to maintain SOME sanity. It was going to give me time to think a little bit.

So I said, "Well, while I'm waiting, I'm going over and see Rev. Greer first," and I was saying to myself all the way over, I said, "He's going to tell me SOMETHING, cause if he DOESN'T tell me something, no problem. I didn't feel any pain or strain. I was going to see that head roll. So I came here to Baltimore and I caught Rev. Greer at the church. I caught him in the back. I said, "Rev. Greer, I got something to talk to you about," I said, "and it can't wait. Can't wait ANOTHER day, cause when I leave here I'm gonna do ONE thing or the OTHER." I told him just what I was ready to do. So Rev. Greer heard me and then he got to telling me what was happening. He was telling me that my girlfriend was the wrong person for me, anyway, that it wasn't meant to be. And that really what had happened was the Lord was going to get me up out of it, one way or the other, because the family just was not conducive to my spiritual growth. And he said I have a desire to live the Christian life, it's not like I'm just here because He rescued me, that I WANT to go further and higher and deeper into it. But he said I couldn't express my true self in that environment, but that I didn't want to leave my girlfriend. And he said it was to a point where either I express myself or I stay there. And he said the Lord was going to move me up out of there anyway, and this man that she's with, he didn't just show up. Rev. Greer said he's been around a while. When he told me that, I was saying to myself, "Now, that's IT. That's the BOTTOM line," because to me a woman isn't supposed to mess with another man, for ANY reason. And if I find out, it's

THROUGH, and he's through. And I thought that he had just showed up. And Rev. Greer was telling me that it was done for a reason, and he said, "It's the best thing that could have happened to you," he said, "Those people over there, they want to see you in jail anyway." He said, "As far as the woman goes," he said, "You can get almost any one you want." So, anyway, what Rev. Greer said, it was enough to take away the hate I had built up in me.

When Rev. Greer got finished talking to me, I said, "Now THAT'S why I serve the Lord." When I'm in trouble, I need HELP. I don't need to go down there and for some old preacher to tell me, "Oh, it'll work out. You're good enough." When I get to that point where I say, "Lord, You're gonna SAY something or I'm gonna DO something," you better not come at me with "Well, in due time, Brother, you'll be all right." And every time it has come to that, I've HEARD something. Rev. Greer has been able to really SAY something to me, and it's been enough to stop me. I say, "If I can see a man get up out of a wheelchair, I believe the Lord can speak." And that's one reason up until now, I haven't been able to hold on, because before it's always been, "It'll work out." Well, THAT day, if I had gotten, "It'll work out, just go home," I'd have gone home like I came. And I'd have REALLY been in trouble. I KNOW what would have happened. Now, it's been things like that that have helped me keep on going, keep on trying, because Rev. Greer can help keep you on the right track. He can USE the gifts of the Spirit he has to really HELP you.

When I got saved, I said, "I got to DO something." I couldn't just sit at the house and do NOTHING. I didn't particularly want to go back to work right then. I needed time to get myself together, I didn't have a job, and I didn't have any money, so I had to decide what to do. So I thought about going back to school. I had been in college for one semester before and flunked out. What happened that time, I had got my GED like I say when I was in jail when I was sixteen. So at that time I said, "Huh, it'd be pretty nice to go to college at sixteen." So when I came home, I went. But the element I chose to GO with was like everybody was getting high, and so would I. I wasn't going to class, and when I WOULD go it didn't mean that much to me. I eventually just let it all go, just walked out, didn't even bother to withdraw or anything. So I got a couple of E's on my transcript behind that. I didn't really care about it, but I did have a few credits.

So, anyway, I concluded this time to try college again as a Christian, and what really decided me was I was being exposed to Rev. Greer and he was talking about this, "Get off your hump and DO something." Being in Faith Deliverance and hearing the message, it brought me out. It brought me out. I always DID get up and go, even if it was in the wrong direction. I always was the get-up and go type. But its application in a CONSTRUCTIVE way came from Faith Deliverance and Rev. Greer talking about Christian living, talking about believing in the Lord, talking about Him first, talking about Him helping me and me getting on out there and DOING something, GETTING somewhere. When I came to Faith Deliverance, Rev. Greer was talking this being DELIVERED. I could SEE it, I could apply it to ME, it was in ME, I said, "Let me get on up here and DO IT! TRY IT! See if it WORKS."

People had been telling me in school, "You can make it. You should be making A's and B's." But I had never made A's and B's in my LIFE. They were telling me I COULD make them, but the report card was saying another thing. Maybe it was because I didn't go to

class all the time. Sometimes I just didn't go to class, PERIOD. It was boring, it was too BORING. So when I finally came to college, this time I just told myself, "I'm gonna see if I can make those grades." And so, I TRIED, and I made it, made A's and B's. It wasn't hard at all. I made the Dean's list, which really kind of made me start thinking, "Wonder how far CAN I go?" Really made me say, "I'll TRY, I'll try." It was something I WANTED to do, something I believed I COULD do. So going back to school this time was a totally DIFFERENT experience. I had given myself to Christ, and learning to trust in Him, and at the same time I was getting back out there and doing the kind of things I always thought I COULD do. After a while I was really beginning to enjoy getting up and doing something. Between going to school and working, and then with the fact that I was still staying with my girlfriend and my daughter, trying to keep this thing together, I was beginning to ENJOY functioning. I couldn't sit still, I had to get my life TOGETHER. That's what I was working towards doing.

Sometimes when I was in some of those classes it seemed like it couldn't get done. I couldn't make it, and it seemed like I wasn't going to get the grade that I wanted, I wasn't going to make it on a test or something. And at times the grades I was getting WERE depressing. I was trying to maintain an average, and it just didn't seem POSSIBLE. I would pray on it, and I'd ask the Lord to help me, help me pass the test, pass me in this class, get me through this one. And I came through, I came through.

I know in French, I prayed on that class more than ANY class. I did all I could do, and I KNEW it wasn't enough as far as grades go. And I said, "Lord, You gotta help me. I need it, I want it. I've done all I can do." I'd pray and look at the book and it would be Chinese arithmetic still, I STILL didn't understand that stuff. I didn't experience any REVELATION as far as that book went, and it used to frustrate me sometimes, because I used to expect to look at the book and understand. I'd look at the book and it was the SAME book, the SAME problem, and I just said, "Well, I'm gonna go take the test ANYWAY. If I flunk it, I'll just have to study some more." I asked the Lord, "Give me a C, Lord." The teacher would know I was home, trying to learn, and I'd tell her, "I don't understand this here." She'd say, "You're catching on, you're catching on," and I'd look at her. "Man, you just don't KNOW. I don't know ANY of this." Rote memory, that's what got me through. I had to put some effort into rote memory because in French you BETTER have some rote memory, or you won't get ANYWHERE. I said, "Well, I'll just try to memorize the words because I can't put this structure together." It was just BEYOND me. But at the end of the course, it was coming through like a baby. And my faith helped give me strength to hang in there. Faith just kept me hanging in there, because that book was definitely trying to throw me out of the box. I had the faith that the Lord would see me through the class. I said, "Lord, see me through this one, just see me through this course here." And I prayed on it, and I got through.

### Relating to Whites Since Deliverance

Since I discovered deliverance, there is DEFINITELY a difference in how I see white people. It is hard even to EXPRESS the difference. It is FUNDAMENTAL. The root of it is that now I know myself and whites to be PEOPLE. I know by FAITH that Blacks and whites come from the same source. Some people are white, some are Black. FINE. That doesn't matter any more. We are all one big human family. Now I know that I can take the whole racism thing and stick it between the pages of my Bible and come up

smelling like a rose. I know I don't HAVE to hate whites and I know it doesn't matter if whites hate me, because it's not going to make any difference in the end.

I know that there ISN'T any difference. In my mind and my heart I KNOW this. But I'm no fool. I'm still aware of different attitudes among different ethnic groups, and I don't say that race, Black and white, isn't an issue. Because it is. But now I think you have economics running side by side with race and I think that right now the economic part is more fundamental than race. Before I only saw it as a racial thing. Whites were the ones that had it. Blacks were the ones that didn't. But now I see that there are plenty of white people out here that are at least as bad off as the Blacks. Reading The Wall Street Journal is a REAL eye-opener. There you find out who has the money, and the way I see it now the whole deal is about money. So now, the only time I get perturbed about race is when it comes down to the economic issue. Just the FACT that a person is white doesn't bother me anymore. It is the economic POSITIONING of whites over Blacks that bothers me now.

This situation doesn't concern me for ME. It disturbs me when I think about Black people. As far as I'M concerned, from where I am NOW in deliverance, I look at the end of the formula and I know that my opportunities will only be limited by ME. Not by the issues. The issues dictate the world for most people, but they don't dictate how I see myself, because I no longer see myself in terms of Black-White, rich or poor. I see myself as a child of God with unlimited opportunities to apply myself.

When I come up against difficulties with whites now I'm a whole lot more creative about dealing with it than I was before. It's fun now. I see it more as a game now, where before I tended to take it personally as a Black person. I know now that if I allow myself to really depend on the God I believe in, it won't be a problem if I am Black and I have to deal with white people in positions over me. If I DON'T depend on this God, then my relations with whites can end up causing me trouble. I can only go so far as a human being, thinking, without the balancer, God. I have to have God in there to remind me, "Hey, that's another one of my creations. I love him, just like I love you." I am still subject to racial or economic discrimination, but now I know I can rely on God to see me through these outside difficulties. With God I can apply myself constructively to overcoming these problems without lowering myself to a RACIAL attitude. Things are a lot easier to deal with if I'm not thinking "race," if I realize that color is not necessarily the problem.

I know now that everybody isn't thinking that everybody else is somebody. Some people get their thrills by wielding a little power over you. So now, when that power gets thrown toward me, I'm more likely to just take it, not see it as a racial thing and get on with my business. Only if the power play is consistently unfair do I react to it now. So I'm more willing to try to keep people happy. But I'm not going to be any less than a person. I treat the people around me like they are somebody, and I won't be treated as anything less myself. Now I hold my tongue when I run into a tense situation, and if I can't hold my tongue, I'll be very straight forward and articulate and very honest to state my opinion. Before I would be likely to have cussed the person out or offered them out, and that in turn might lead to my being fired. That was unproductive. Now I see the situation more as a game of power and economics, and all that matters is being IN the game. I never want to be on the sidelines just watching again.

Before deliverance, I hardly associated with white people, except when I HAD to. Now I'm to the point where I will pursue some relationships with whites. I will sit down and talk with them, I'll let them check out my ideas, and I'll check out theirs. I want to better know and understand whites, to at least KNOW. If you don't know, that's the worst position to be in. So I sit down with the white guys at the job and I talk to them and they talk to me. I see what's on their minds. They see what's on mine. And from what I've seen and heard, white people ARE different from Black people. They are VERY different. And it has been intriguing for me to SEE this.

One of the BIGGEST differences is in the conditioning that the person experiences, growing up. Since I've begun to understand myself, and recognize where I have come from, I now appreciate that in most cases the conditioning experience of Blacks is very different from that for whites. Generally among Blacks there is a mentality of, "Well, I won't ever have, because I'm Black." This attitude is part of the conditioning that is in the Black family itself. It is a really prevalent part of people's thinking and it exists because of a lack of awareness, a lack of education, a lack of self-appreciation. It is conditioning like this that Black people like myself have been raised in. And in many cases, this negative attitude comes to be expressed in the entire life style of the person.

I go to work and I hear many Blacks talking about how afraid they are of lay-offs. They look at the situation and they are TOTALLY lost. Instead of utilizing their God-given intelligence that permits them to create their environment, the attitude is, "I was lucky to get this job, and I don't know WHAT I'll do if I lose it." They don't look at themselves and say, "It's my ABILITY that got me this job, and I'm looking for BETTER." The negative approach that so many Blacks have to getting ahead in life comes out of fear and lack of self-esteem, and it is conditioned in early in the life of most Black people. And it is other BLACK people who do this conditioning as much or more so than white people.

Besides this negativism, many Blacks are never exposed to the possibilities that ARE at their disposal. Because my father and my father's father were never exposed to the range of what IS out there, it is only their limited way of thinking that I came to know as a Black child. Often this means that a very high value is placed on the closeness of family, while there is almost NO appreciation expressed for the intellectual, the academics of life. The family DOES have its value and it is important within your personal feelings and emotions, but when you are grown and you look around and see where you have missed or neglected other areas of life because of a lack of awareness, and when you see how important these areas are to being successful in life, you can find it VERY frustrating. This kind of conditioning among Blacks is self-destructive. If somewhere along the line a Black person is not able to snap that trap and allow his mind to take in as much of what he missed as possible, then that same conditioning will take him on through the rest of his life. It will dictate how he will go through life: negative, fearful and limited, and underneath, frustrated and angry with himself and others because he can't find a way out. A lot of people will look at that person and say, "Shiftless," or "Lazy," or "Just didn't want to," but that person is the result of YEARS of earlier conditioning.

There are only two ways a person can get beyond this conditioning. Either he discovers the POWER of God within himself or he has someone behind him motivating him. With



so many Blacks, especially in the environment that I come from, there is neither. They don't UNDERSTAND God, and they don't have that SOMEONE behind them with the ability to motivate them in the areas that will lead to their success in life. So eventually what you have is a generation coming through as dropouts on the streets or as blue-collar workers, both subject to the environment, instead of being people that CREATE their environment. And it goes on and on.

Most young Blacks go through this conditioning, and as in my case, they are caught in the frustration with limitations. You are not put away in any PHYSICAL prison, but your ENVIRONMENT has put you away. It is easy to be free in the physical sense, and still FEEL put away. I think that is how a lot of young Blacks feel. And so, when they are out in the street pursuing what seems to the person outside to be a self-destructive course, they feel they are at least doing SOMETHING and seeing something come back to them - until the FEELING of being put away becomes the reality of being either blown away or put in prison.

To move in this vicious cycle is a prison in ITSELF: the street hustle, prison, back out, can't get a decent job, don't have a family to push you to values that lead you to success and self-esteem, that same ignorance, that same frustration, that same trapped feeling, and soon you find yourself back in the street hustle. Most Black people DO feel the prison of their environment, and what may look like SELF-destruction, almost feels like self-destruction pursuing YOU.

The conditioning that goes on in so many of the lives of young Blacks is what shapes them later on. And that's why you can have perpetual anti-white feeling among Blacks. It's something that starts young. "They got and we don't." And it's never really explained WHY. The true self-worth of Blacks as a people and as human beings hasn't been made available to Blacks. It is a superficial knowledge of history that most Blacks have. They can only tell you about the atrocities that have been perpetrated and that only goes to reinforce the anti-white feelings they already have. And because so many Blacks aren't raised to have that inquisitive desire to know, to find out how DID this slavery thing happen, they take what they hear at face value. They are told they were snatched from Africa, made to do the white man's work in slavery, freed but not allowed to be equal, and by the time they are given real opportunity, all of value has been taken.

This superficial view of history dictates the knowledge of many Blacks. They don't know what's beneath the surface, how did this really happen? You find plenty of Blacks that can tell you that Africa had great empires. But they never ask, what HAPPENED to those empires. They just jump from empires to say how many Blacks were snatched and put into slavery by the white man. They see empires, they see slavery, and they see the situation now, and all they can do is BLAME it on the white man. It is a matter of ignorance, they just don't know, and they don't want to know the full picture because then they won't have such a good excuse. They don't want to hear about why their Black empires fell, or about the slavery that existed in these empires, or about the Blacks that caught and sold other Blacks to the whites, or about the Black overseers, or about the Uncle Tom house Blacks or about the arrogant free Blacks. When history is read superficially and everything is blamed on the white man, it can become an excuse to live in the PAST instead of trying to shape your present, and having some impact on your future.

I have been able to get past the limitations of my background, but I KNOW that I am the exception in this regard. The difference for me is that though I have grown up in a Black experience, in my mind I have ALWAYS experienced much more. I have been inquisitive. I have read. And I've always looked for something that would SNAP that trap, something to show me that life isn't limited simply because I'm a Black person, brought up like I was. If I had followed what environment dictated, then I probably would have gone the way I see so many of my friends going, and it PAINS me to see: negative, limited, frustrated, unhappy, unsuccessful, incomplete people raising families or separated from families that are repeating all the same mistakes.

Most white people never experience the negative, limited conditioning that most Black people are raised in. The whites I talk to tell me about mostly happy childhoods. They say they grew up expecting to become somebody and they say their parents always encouraged them to think about the future and how they could contribute to it by what they might do. People who are raised this way are very DIFFERENT people. Their value structure is almost TOTALLY different. Even for me, even though I am delivered and have gotten past the limitations, my values are different from these white people's values. Where for me, at the top of my list of values is God, for whites advancement is at the top. They seem to put the greatest importance on succeeding in their jobs. Both Blacks and whites know the value of a job, but the way they approach work is COMPLETELY different. Blacks tend to be survivalists, "I'm fourteen. I have to get a job." They need a job, they go out and get one without giving it too much thought. They do the work and earn the money. The white person is different. He decides what he LIKES, what interests him, and then he goes to school and finds out all about that area before he even THINKS about a job. So he knows all the background BEHIND the job. He knows the intellectual aspect of what he is doing. He knows the science behind the job, and he understands that his advancement depends on his MASTERY of this science. Most Black people just know the job, and sometimes they don't even know there IS a science behind it. Blacks just go for the job and it shows because most Black people are blue-collar workers. White people have most of the white-collar jobs and what I have discovered is that this is not because Blacks can't do the work. It's because Blacks make money what is important from a job, not advancement IN a job. So Blacks don't go for the science behind the job.

This difference between Blacks and whites shows up in different attitudes about education and many other areas, not just jobs. Black people only want to learn what they have to learn to do something to survive. White people want to learn everything they can ABOUT something so they can figure out how to do it better so they get promoted. For Black people knowledge is important only if it has an immediate practical use. Knowledge is important in and of itself for whites because it may lead to change, so white people have broken everything down into segments and whatever you want to know they have information about it located in some category. Then it is up to each person to go and find it, if you want to know about it. In the groups I grew up with, we knew this information EXISTED, but we rarely experienced it. We knew that white people knew how to get to the moon. We knew the FACTS. But few of us had any real idea HOW that was done. As survivalists Blacks aren't encouraged to look for the ideas, the theory, behind the facts. White people just take an interest in this kind of knowledge for granted. It wasn't until I began to read The Wall Street Journal that I began to learn

about the ideas and interests that lie behind the business enterprise in America. I never was aware before of the intriguing games white people play with money. Billions and BILLIONS of dollars. Now I at least know the names of the companies that DEAL at these levels. Now I can relate better to what the company I work for is all about. I can understand monetary structure and what profit and loss margins are all about.

At the present time, I think the greatest difference between myself as a Black person and white people is religion. Most white people just don't have the same understanding of God that most Black people have. White people who claim to be religious, like the Catholics, they talk to me about praying to Mother Mary to talk to Jesus to get to God. Now that puts them a LONG way from God, and even for these people I don't see where their God sense has much to do with the rest of their lives. They seem to have God over in a corner where they occasionally go when something comes up. But for me as a Black person, I think of God as an awareness that is part of everything. And as a Black person studying to become an engineer, I would think this awareness is essential to discover the scientific truths in nature. I wonder how white engineers come up with the magnificent things they do, because they don't seem to have God in their plan. God doesn't seem to be part of how they discover what they discover. As a Black engineer, I would have in my mind the awareness that God IS the universe, and therefore the principles of engineering are an expression of God and unlimited. So, for me an awareness of God is the way to these principles and how they can be used. It puzzles me how white people can see to these truths EXCEPT through God and contact with the God in them. But the way whites talk about it, it's like God is irrelevant and they look at me as if I'm STRANGE. This is a BIG difference between whites and Blacks because I think God-awareness is at the center of the thinking and the lives of many Black people. This is certainly the MAIN difference that continues to exist since I've been delivered between myself and the white people I know.

### Faith Deliverance Viewpoint

My fantasies really had a lot to do with me saying, "I'm going with Rev. Greer," because Rev. Greer was the only one to do something BETTER than the things that I have read. And the way Rev. Greer talks, when he really has time to give you and you can get him one-on-one, he really has something you can WALK with. But I know Rev. Greer doesn't appeal to everybody, it's only a certain group of people. Other ministers appeal to other people. There are some people who wouldn't touch Rev. Greer with a ten foot pole. They say, "He ain't no good. I'm not giving THAT man my money." Then there are people like me. I'm getting what I want, and I don't mind giving. Some people come in the church, they can't accept it, they say, "This man, he's acting, he's nothing but another Rev. Ike." That's what you hear from some. But to realize what's in Faith Deliverance, you can't just come in one time. Most people have to come more than once before they get past the surface of things and begin to see what's REALLY happening. But for me, I KNOW I can get what I need at Faith Deliverance, even though I do KNOW there are other places. I know one place I used to go to, surely it's still there. It's the same God over there as it is over here, I KNOW that! But, the APPLICATION of faith TO ME, I didn't get it over there.

You take the Holiness preacher, you see this man dressed in this somber outfit, the basic black suit, he's preaching up a FIRE sermon. The totality of that man says ONE thing which appeals to some people. He's talking hell fire and brimstone, he's talking

FIRE, that's what he's talking, which is OK. Now the application of the religion he's preaching, it's keyed up to DYING. It's not keyed up to living. You go to church, you get a sermon concerning when you DIE, where will you spend eternity. But these folks have got to go home to that same rat and roach infested place. Now when I see a Holiness preacher like that, I see custom and tradition. And I say, "We are in transition. I'm for tomorrow as well as today." So we have to be able to fight the effects of custom and tradition, or else religion becomes stagnated. And when religion gets all surrounded by form and fashion, it loses its essence, its Spirit, and it can CAUSE more problems than it can solve. So I'm not a custom and tradition person because it doesn't TAKE me anywhere.

Rev. Greer, he doesn't believe in custom and tradition. He believes in getting you ready for LIVING. Faith Deliverance is not a church to get you ready for dying, that's the big DIFFERENCE. Most churches get you ready for dying. That's their whole thing. Faith Deliverance tells you to be yourself, and it lets you know you don't have to DIE to go to Heaven. You don't have to give everything up, you don't have to be POOR and SUFFERING to go to Heaven. The application of faith in Rev. Greer's church is to the condition of LIFE. Rev. Greer says, "We're not waiting to get to the other side of Jordan to live. We've got to live NOW too. We are alive, we have these things in life to deal with." And that's the way I feel. If you want to present the Lord to me, bring Him down here to the ghetto. If He CAN do something, bring Him on down, because religion should be able to HELP me in MY situation. I wouldn't expect the people in the ghetto to listen to ANYTHING if the Lord couldn't HELP them in their predicament. Faith has to have PRACTICAL application to your PARTICULAR situation. If it can't, then it becomes just like the rest of the formal religions, DEAD, with no application. In order to get somebody to listen to you, you have to give him something to interest him enough that he WANTS to listen. Rev. Greer gives people that.

In Faith Deliverance your faith applies to the TOTALITY of your life. Holiness just tells you to get saved, if you don't live right you're going to Hell. A moron knows that. We all know that, whether you believe or not. Faith Deliverance applies itself to living holy, but LIVE life. You don't have to be hungry to talk to God. Faith Deliverance is for real, because it applies itself to life, to LIVING. It tells you to get OUT of there, get up off your HUMP, and go DO it, and as you're doing, don't forget the Lord, because He makes the way. People in Faith Deliverance apply themselves to the TOTAL spectrum of life. I don't just go to church to get scared because a car might hit me and I'd die. When I go to service at Faith Deliverance, I get what I came FOR. I'm no fool. Give me something to LEARN, STIMULATE me, show me how I can get AHEAD in life. Show me how I can go out here and function with the world AS IS, not some fantasy. It's for real out there and I KNOW it's for real. They can't get me in church if they're going to put me to sleep with that scare stuff, because I KNOW what I deal with out there in the world. I KNOW I've got to pay these bills, and I need a job. I KNOW that this is real, and Faith Deliverance people apply their faith to that, to the WHOLE of LIFE. And that's what's exciting about Faith Deliverance, because there you find ministers that are giving people a new way of VIEWING their situation.

Faith Deliverance frees you from that EVIL, that NEGATIVISM, those thoughts that you have held that have STIFLED you. It gives you the key so you can open up the door, the recognition that the Christ within you can deliver you from these barriers. The

discovery of the God that's in you, that is IT. To be exposed to the omnipotence of it, that is the key, that is the WHOLE thing, that He's ALREADY there. He's IN you. It's the YOU in you that says, "This is right, this is wrong." The You that strives to do BETTER. But the you that doesn't do ANYTHING, it doesn't have ANYTHING to do with that.

Once you find the God in you, it keeps you on the go. It keeps you going. It's a revitalization, an affirmation, it's confirmation, rejuvenation, ALL those things in one. Sometime it's even release. When you touch it in service you go out saying, "I KNOW it's real. I came in here with a little bit of doubt, but now I'm gonna try it again, because I GOT it, I KNOW I got it." And you go back out there, and if it doesn't work, you come back in some more, and go try it AGAIN. Sometimes I get to where I say, "Whew, it hasn't been WORKIN' lately," but then I come in the service, and I FEEL it, and something says, "It's gonna work, it's gonna WORK, it's GOT to work! Go back and TRY it again."

If you're trying, like I did in jail, when it came to the point where I said, "Well, YOU are God, I'm gonna give YOU my life, but You've got to SHOW me something," I made the first move, and I made it in sincerity. I'm coming over here acting like I'm NOTHING but me. If a person will APPLY themselves in all sincerity to making that one step, then God will make two. But you have to TRY, seriously try in ALL situations, from paying on tithes to saying a prayer. Put GOD up front. And then look at the rest of life and say, "No, there's no problem. I've got the LORD and I'm coming out here to DEAL with life."

Now, some people say, "I got the Lord," and they expect Him to wash the dishes or clean the house. I don't believe that. What I need is to realize that there IS a God that CAN pick me up when I can't. I'm not looking for Him to just CARRY me. Just to realize I've got HELP is all I need to know. My problem has not been LAZINESS, it has been the fact that I have constantly run up against my LIMITATIONS, and didn't know which way to go from there. But NOW I know. There are no limitations with the God in me, sure I have restrictions and I can get to a point where there is a problem, but I know where to go, what to do. Now I KNOW what to do, how to function, what to do next.

### Faith Deliverance and Young People

Now with what I have from Faith Deliverance, I think about the people out there doing like I was, and I try to deal with those kids because I was THERE. I know there are people out there that feel they're not getting ANYWHERE. It's really DEPRESSING. It's depressing to think that you can't get a job that pays good. It's depressing, especially when you know that there's no way in the WORLD you're going to settle for that. There's no way in the WORLD! So you're going to do SOMETHING. I've seen too many people out in the streets that would make me forget my problems behind the misery they were going through, behind the feeling that the only way you're going to get it in life is to steal it or rob it or take it. And I would constantly tell them, "You don't HAVE to do that. You CAN get it together." The only way I can reach someone in that situation is to present him with something that is STRONG enough, something that is able to PROVE to him that he CAN come out of the feeling that there is no other way to get it. There's a whole psychological rebuilding there. There has to be something in the program, you have to give the individual something STRONG to come at the feeling that he CAN'T make it, that he WON'T make it. You HAVE to present people with something that is able to CONQUER the fear of failure or defeat.

Most of the things people try to give these teenagers in the street just don't hold up. And the BIGGEST problem is not enough of these teenagers are exposed to CONSTRUCTIVE thinking. There's more brainwashing than constructive thinking. I think constructive thinking is setting your mind FREE, not binding it again to something ELSE. There has to be FREEDOM of thought. So at the present time when I talk to people, the same kind of people I used to be, I try to present them with REALITY, present them with the TOTALITY of life. Nobody told me too much of anything, I had to find it. So now when I'm teaching Sunday school, I think about that, and I say, "Nobody told me ANYTHING."

I had to get out there and learn. I had two brothers, but they never went to the street like I did. They never CHOSE the street. They couldn't TELL me, and I chose the street! I could have stayed home and gone in the Army and become one of them. I could have taken that route. But I didn't. It was a choice I made. To me, when I was going through all that street life, I was going through it to meet people that had enough insight into life, people that I respected for WHO they were, and certain things they would tell me that I KNEW was the truth. I was looking for people with enough insight to be sensitive enough to MY situation, and REALIZE that I was going through a turmoil, a trouble. And I met just a FEW, and they had enough insight to tell me, "You CAN be something, you HAVE something to go with. You GOT something." The psychiatrists they were sending me to see, the teachers I would have at these different institutions, they DID that. And the way I would talk to other people then would reinforce it.

So when I teach Sunday school I don't take away the young people's power of choice. I just try to present all the possibilities, as someone having gone through SOME of them. And I try to present the kids with the life I see now. I want them to realize that God is real for them. He's REAL. I mean I'm not talking about a GHOST, number one. And I try to bring out the BASICS. I feel all human beings WANT to be nice, they WANT to be kind, they WANT to be understanding and helping. I try to show them there's no SHAME in being that way. There's nothing WRONG with being that individual that people try to make you think you SHOULD be. The way life is sometime, you feel you don't have any business BEING that way, but there's nothing wrong with holding onto it, regardless of WHAT you do in life. I know some aren't going to make it. They'll go on doing wrong. I would have done it, probably. But I try to talk to them and tell them there's no harm in holding onto the concept that man is basically GOOD, even if you DO go out there and do something wrong.

To me the basic unit is the person. So I tell the kids never let your PERSON go, don't lose it, hold onto it. And hold onto your concept and your BELIEF in God. And whether you believe like I believe, or whether you just entertain the thought that there IS a God somewhere, take time out to TALK to Him, whether you BELIEVE while you're talking or not. That's not the concern right now, because when you GET to the crossroads, you WILL need something, and if you can just have belief, just enough to TRY, you can get over.

I tell the kids in my class that education is fine, because I believe ALL people should be more educated, but I believe in the reality of living too. And some people aren't cut out for school. Some people may finish high school and go on in the service. Some people

may pursue college degrees, but whatever their pursuit is in life, I say APPLY yourself to it. Don't apply yourself to something that is NOT you. And to me, anything that IS you, you can succeed in doing, and get to what you want much faster than trying to be something you're not. If you hold onto YOURSELF, regardless of WHAT you get into, you can come out of it. Maybe you'll do something so BAD that you'll think you might as well throw AWAY your concept of good and morality. But regardless of what you do, I say hold onto the good in yourself. Especially if you don't have any God, you better hold onto yourself. And if you do that, it will BRING you to God. Personally, that's the way I feel, because the You in you is the GOOD in you, and the Good in you is the God in you.

Older kids who are already IN the street, you have to get to know them individually, and they have to be willing to open up and tell you just how they REALLY are, and that's really hard for some people to do. A lot of street people don't want you to think that they have any problems. But I've found that most individuals over seventeen and in the streets are depressed, deep DOWN they fear that, "Hey, there's nothing OUT here, man." You have to present them with HOPE. You have to WORK with them. And it takes time, it takes TIME. But it works. A lot of people that I have talked to, when I come around they are glad to see me. And they bring some joy to MY life. Most of them have not said, "Well, I'm gonna try it your way," but they are TRYING, even if it's in their own way. Maybe I'm not satisfied with how FAST they are trying, but they have begun to apply the principles to themselves.

That's what I'm all about, that's what I tell them. "I'm bringing you the philosophy, the faith, the God that I have found. It WILL, work, it CAN work, it is yours to have, free of charge. It can make the difference between bondage and FREEDOM! It can bring you to the FINAL AWARENESS that there are NO limitations in living. There ARE restrictions. Restrictions are real. You must apply yourself in a REAL way. You can't just DREAM, you have to DO something. And if you do that, you can get to what you want."

Still, a person has to recognize a lot of what we've been programmed to think is WRONG. We have been programmed to believe a dream, the material dream. We're led to believe if you're here, you ought to be successful, and if you're successful you ought to POSSESS this, and DO that. I don't believe that any longer. The most IMPORTANT thing is your happiness, and it doesn't necessarily take a FINE car and a BIG house or beautiful THINGS to be happy. Because in life you can be happy with MEAGER things if there's love and understanding with the people who REALLY count. You have to learn to appreciate what you HAVE, the HUMAN things in life, not just the material things, because a lot of people are never going to HAVE these big houses. They're going to have to learn to get up OUT of that dream and be for REAL with their situation, deal with it first. They have to look the situation in the EYE first. I think once you learn to look at your situation, your PLIGHT in life, the point where you are AT, that's the beginning for attaining the real JOY in life, the REAL happiness, the real ability to APPRECIATE living, being ALIVE and going from day to day. Then you can deal with all the rest of these people out here. But the ability just to look at life, to look at it objectively and no strings attached, and stare it down, THAT'S what I want these people to do. THEN when you get up and MOVE, you move with a REAL plan, and you move with God IN the program.

This is what Faith Deliverance teaches you to do, this is what I had to learn, and this is what I try to get across when I talk to young people in the streets doing like I did. But THEY have to make the choice. All I can do is try to show them there IS a choice, there IS another REAL way to make it.

I hope my testimony will show these young people that they don't have to live torn by actions that contradict their thoughts. They don't have to ACT out of the limitations of their environment when their mind suggests they should act another way. As happened for me, these young people CAN get themselves together. If they come to know who they REALLY are spiritually, their thoughts and their actions will become one, unified in the Spirit, and they will discover themselves at a higher plane of existence where the limitations of their background and environment have been overcome and where they can apply what they truly ARE to what they feel they want to become. It is in this way that I hope my life can be a useful example to young Blacks. If they can see the UNLIMITEDNESS of God within me and realize they can find the SAME thing within themselves, if they can see in me a mind that is in harmony with my actions and that has gone BEYOND the limitations of my Black upbringing to discover peace with myself and with the universe, if they can see in me someone TRYING to walk in a constructive manner with ALL people, not just for myself or only with a few other people, then maybe these young Black people can feel encouraged to try what I have discovered for themselves.

## Epilogue

Two years have passed since my final testimony session with Keith. During this time I have seen Keith in church on several occasions but only talked to him a few times. Keith is one of those who usually leaves service immediately at its conclusion. The times I have talked with Keith have more often been before service, after he has finished conducting the lesson for the teenage Sunday School group, which Keith has taught throughout the two-year period. Our recent meeting to discuss the final draft of his testimony gave me an opportunity to discover what has been happening in Keith's life over the last two years, beyond the outline I knew from our brief greetings in church.

During the time when Keith and I met in behalf of his testimony, he had a good job working in a veneer factory, overseeing the operation of a machine that mixed the glues for different types of high-grade plywood. The pay was very good and Keith had had the job while he was in junior college, working mainly in the evening and nighttime hours of the swing shift. With the money he was making, Keith had financed a brand new Pontiac Grand Prix, he had located himself in a nice apartment, and he was paying on the furniture he had bought to set the place up the way he wanted it. About three months after our last talks, Keith says he got himself involved in the street life again. Keith indicates there was no criminal activity, only running after "the ladies." According to Keith, with school finished, with the swing shift making it difficult for him to get to church regularly, and with all the money he was making, he allowed himself to be drawn back into the street world. Although the veneer plant job was a good one, Keith says he was bored with it, and after one series of long nights in the street when he had not rested like he should, he went to sleep on the job and was caught. Keith says he knew there were no second chances for the violation because flammable liquids were involved. He was fired on the spot.



With no job and several payments to meet, Keith says he found himself in difficult circumstances in a couple of months. Over the next eight-month period Keith was unable to find a good job, and he lost everything he had - car, furniture, and apartment. Keith now looks at his earlier situation with dismay, wondering why he allowed himself to be distracted from his goals and to overextend himself financially. On the positive side, Keith says he learned from that experience how vulnerable he is as a new person in the Deliverance faith.

The goal Keith has before him now is to become a Deliverance evangelist. To acquire the knowledge necessary to reach his goal, Keith has enrolled in a well-respected three year Bible college in the Baltimore area. He plans to finish the program at this school and then transfer to another Bible college for his senior year and earn his Bachelor of Arts degree. As he becomes more knowledgeable in the Word and as he simultaneously develops his spiritual gifts, Keith expects that an opportunity will arise where he can use his talents and launch his ministry.

To finance his full time, year-round school program, Keith finally managed to locate an excellent job operating a computerized carpet weaving machine. The pay is better than \$10/hour, and Keith says the real advantage is that he can set his own hours so his job does not interfere with his school schedule. Keith has had this job for about nine months and has been saving his money to buy a car so it is easier for him to get to school and work. This time Keith says he will wait until he can buy the car outright, and he is looking to buy a two or three year old car rather than pay the prices being asked for new cars. Keith says he is determined to stick with his job, his education, his Deliverance faith, and a social life that is relatively quiet and church rather than street oriented. As Keith comments, he is tired of always having to learn the hard way, from his mistakes. Keith feels that if he uses his intellect and his faith more adequately, he should be able to anticipate problems and avoid them.

Besides his own personal goals, Keith is also determined not to forget his daughter by his former girlfriend. Keith says he sees his daughter as often as he can, at present only twice a month, because she lives in another city and he has no car. Keith wants to be certain his daughter has what she needs and that his former girlfriend is not financially burdened with extra expenses for their daughter.

With a full-time job, a demanding full-time school curriculum, and a daughter to look after, Keith has created a mountain for himself to climb. He does not expect to falter, but as Keith says in his testimony, if he does slip, now he knows he has the kind of faith that encourages him to get up and carry on.

## Commentary

By

Keith Jones

I can begin by saying that the testimony is accurate in the sense that the experiences as they are given and put together here are true to my life. In this respect what appears here is MY testimony, and I don't think there are any events left out or included that I would not have included if I were to write the account. Moreover, I think the testimony contains the major thoughts, the development of my religious understanding and the effect this has had on my life. But in saying this, I have to also indicate that the

testimony Dr. Burns has put together from our conversations differs in some ways from what I would have done if I were writing it. I will come to these differences as I address the matter of working with Dr. Burns as a white researcher.

I have had a number of different feelings and thoughts in the course of this project. As far as sitting down and talking with white people is concerned, I have never had any problem. I have always looked at white people as people, and I enjoy talking to intelligent white people because they can talk about things I like to talk about. A lot of times I get bored talking to my family or my friends because I cannot talk about the ideas that I like to discuss. Working on my testimony with Dr. Burns has also provided me with the opportunity to do something I have wanted to do for a long time, to tell a white person how it feels to grow up as a young Black person. I want all white people to know what young Black people feel, what we go through, and what some of us fight and overcome. If white people know this, then maybe they can understand why there are so many angry young Black people out there and why it is so difficult for them to get out of the negative cycle they are caught in.

At the same time there were positive aspects of doing the project, there were other things that led me to be reluctant, and these things contributed to my being difficult at times to get for interviews. A major problem in the beginning was just time. When Dr. Burns and I first started, I was working full time, I was going to school part-time, I was active in the church, and I was single with a very active social life. I was busy, especially when Dr. Burns was talking about sitting down and talking for two or three hours, and maybe I was not in the mood for it. In that situation, I made excuses, because I wanted to do something else.

Other people and what they were saying had an effect on me too. Any time a Black person from my background sits down and talks to a white person about his life, there are going to be individuals close to that Black person wondering what he is doing. "How come you're doing this?" "He's white." "He just wants to know your business." And if enough people tell you this, you may think about it. I know I did, sometimes. "Why AM I doing this?" "Should I be telling him these secrets?" So, I was not sure I should talk to Dr. Burns. Other people would talk to me and stress the financial side. They would say, "Why should you tell him and let him get the credit and the reward?" "What are you doing? You're going to let this white man make money off of you?" In some people's view it doesn't matter what Dr. Burns would say about not being paid anything. It was the idea. "His skin is white and he's making money off of it." These types of comments did not have much effect on me, but they were part of the picture.

As far as I was concerned I really did not look at the testimony in financial terms. I saw the testimony in terms of it being an educational experience for all those who would partake of it. So, my main concern was with whether the testimony would be effective. I would be thinking, "What is this man going to do with this material? Am I going to be happy about this?" "What are this man's qualifications for presenting me to other people?" "Is this man going to do my life justice, or is he just going to throw something intellectual together, and then have people pick it up and miss the point?" "Is that what is going to happen?" If so, it would be a waste of my time. This was the foremost thing that came to mind when I thought about my conversations with Dr. Burns. "Will he capture what I want to say, and will he capture his readers?" Because I was not sure, I

was reluctant. I was talking to a white man about the experience of being Black, and whether Dr. Burns felt what I felt, I was not certain.

With the completed testimony I still have some reservations. I wonder about the oral style Dr. Burns has used. I wonder if the readers will see past the informality of this presentation and recognize the depth of the thinking, feeling person behind it. If it were just me writing the testimony, I think I would have employed a more polished, written style so the readers could see in the expression itself an intelligent person. Dr. Burns feels that the more informal oral style will engage the readers more personally. Maybe, but I am not sure that such a style promotes the right image of me.

Besides style, I was concerned up to the time Dr. Burns made the last revisions with whether the testimony revealed the complications, the really involved mental changes that lay behind the actions of my life. A lot of these changes had to do with my experience of growing up as a young Black in a limited environment, and I didn't feel that aspect as strongly as I wanted to in the testimony. Why the Black aspect was not there, I really do not know. Dr. Burns, as a white researcher with his particular interests, may not have been sensitive to its importance. I realize that different interviewers bring out different points in the same experience, and I think Dr. Burns was more concerned with the religious part, the changing role of faith in my life, than he was with the blackness of the experience. I think it is probably also true that because Dr. Burns is white I felt reluctant myself to bring this racial part out in our conversations.

When Dr. Burns and I met to discuss my commentary on the testimony, I was able to express my feelings about the missing material on race. At that time we talked generally about my experience as a Black person and what deliverance had meant to me. Initially Dr. Burns thought he might be able to include this material as an expanded version of my commentary. Later, he contacted me and said that he thought this racial material was too important to be just added on at the end. It needed to be integrated into the testimony, and we needed to meet again to get into the detail of my experiences as a Black person. From these two meetings, Dr. Burns developed different sections on my experiences as a Black person and reshaped the testimony to include them. The result is a testimony I feel much better about. I think my testimony now really does reach into the deeper aspects that have influenced me, and it shows how important the deliverance faith can be in dealing with these issues.

In working through this additional material with Dr. Burns it was clear that Dr. Burns was really concerned that we had missed this important area of race. His decision to explore the matter with me and to see it brought fully into the testimony helped me to see him in a different light. Dr. Burns is a white man. I am a Black man. But where I had my doubts before, I am satisfied now that the man is for real.

Someday I hope to write my testimony myself. When I do, I will be able to create it exactly as I might want it. The testimony that appears here is a collaboration, and as such it represents some compromises. I realize this, and whatever reservations remain with me about the testimony in its present form, I think it is a legitimate testimony. It is a good testimony, and I hope it can serve to bring enlightenment to white and Black people alike.

### III

## LORETTA COOK

### BORN AGAIN, DELIVERED TEENAGER

#### Introduction

Loretta was a week-old, born again, delivered teenager at the time I met with her and taped her life testimony. Anyone who has encountered a person in the period immediately following a deep religious experience like being born again knows the kind of radiant excitement and enthusiasm that the person typically displays. When the born again experience is combined with a dramatic healing and occurs in a young teenager, the result is a smile that seems to reach from head to toe and to last from dawn to midnight. Like this smile, so much of the evidence of the intense religious experience lies in what those around that person see: the openness of the eyes, the straightness of the posture, the quickness of the step. Often the emotional intensity of the experience swamps the person's ability to put it effectively into words, and it is only in non-verbal ways that people are able to observe the consequences of the experience. To the person involved, language seems somehow to be too slow for thought, and actions rather than words appear to be demanded. Indeed, it seems the younger the person, the more likely it is for such swamping to occur. It is part of the beauty of Loretta's testimony that as a young, newly born again teenager, she is so verbal. Still the reader should catch in Loretta's shorter sentences a kind of breathless pace that reflects Loretta's newfound vision and enthusiasm.

In addition to a verbal talent, Loretta's testimony reveals a bright, reflective young woman who has mentally grasped at a young age the essence of what the Deliverance faith is about. As such, Loretta's testimony combines the immediacy of the religious experience with both a mental awareness of the beliefs upon which that experience rests, and the verbal talent to relate both the experience and the beliefs. All together, Loretta's testimony proves to be at once fluid, enthusiastic, reflective, and well-informed. And all this in a fourteen year old. This combination of characteristics, though fortuitous, is certainly not the norm among young people in Faith Deliverance. Yet it is just this unusual combination of abilities in the face of the born again and delivered experiences that is necessary if the printed page is to have any chance of revealing what Faith Deliverance can mean to a young teenager. After all, the fundamental experience is the same, to whatever degree people differ in their ability to verbalize or intellectualize it. The choice of Loretta's testimony is a good example of a research situation where it is only through the selection of the person with atypical abilities, that the richness of the typical experiences can be revealed for the reader.

#### Family and Childhood

Mine wasn't a very happy childhood. My mother lived with my father for a while, but she wasn't married to him. He wanted to get married, but she said no, because he was running around too much. So they split up when I was just a baby. But my father was around and I saw him. He used to do a LOT for me when I was younger. He'd take me out places. He'd take me to the beach or to amusement parks or the movies, or take me shopping. Anything I wanted, he'd buy. Just about every summer we used to go away on vacation. And on the way, in the car I used to sit on his lap and everything, and it was nice. We used to go and play in the water, and play in the sand, and eat on the

beach, and after that we'd go on the boardwalk and go on rides together. He'd play games and win prizes for me. We'd spend a day like that.

And then my aunt, my father's sister, she didn't have any kids, and she would come and take me out too. She still does, and that was terrific, but the problem was my other brothers and sisters resented me getting all this attention two or three times a month from MY relatives, and so they would call me spoiled. And my sister, she always resented me and had this jealousy for me. And we used to get into arguments, and she'd get together with the two younger ones. They used to ALL get together and form one big GROUP against me. They wouldn't talk to me, and if they had something, they'd leave me out of it. They'd all jump on me, and it was just something hard for me to go through because that was ALL the time. It would just be a day or a week with my father or my aunt, but the problem in my family went on for a long time.

As I got older I guess my father got too busy. He's a minister and he would spend all his time with his church life. He didn't have any time for me anymore. And now, this past year since he got interested in a woman and got married, he doesn't want to do ANYTHING with me. He always has excuses or says he's so busy and everything. And I just don't think that's right, because a man and wife are supposed to cling to each other, but I don't think he's supposed to leave his CHILD out. I mean, he could at LEAST send me some money, anything. He doesn't do that, and he HAS money. He buys houses and he bought a new van, but I ask him for something, and he always gives me an excuse. He lives just two and a half blocks away in this big, LOVELY home. He always SAYS he wants to do something with me, but if I call him up, he'll only talk a little while and he'll always say he's busy in church work and everything. But I don't think God would want you to be so BUSY that you leave out your kids.

He's my father, but the past couple of years I don't really CONSIDER him a father, because he never does anything for me that a father might DO for a child. So now I just consider myself never really having a father. I try not to let it bother me. It does bother me, but I'm just trying to FORGET it, shut it out and just go on living my own life, because there's NOTHING I can do about it. But I know when I get older and have my kids that I'll make SURE that their father takes care of them, and takes them places. I want them to grow up, you know, with their father.

Maybe a year and a half ago my mother had her boyfriend to come and live with us, and THAT was a lot of problems. He was with us around a year, and they were going to get married. But he was so CRUEL to us, that it actually drew us younger kids closer together. We thought he was a real nice person, but the day after he moved in, he started hollering and being mean, bossing people and arguing and cussing and fighting. It SHOCKED me. He wouldn't let us see our mother for DAYS at a time, and when she did come home he'd always say, "Your mother's tired. Leave her alone," and he'd put her in the bedroom, and leave us in the basement. We spent most our LIFE in the basement. My mother would say, "Did the kids eat?" He'd say, "Yeah," say he fed us chicken or some steak. He used to cook THOSE things for them or himself, and he used to feed us like we were in the army. He did come out of the army, and they released him because something's wrong with his head. He used to feed us - like a big slop pots of beans. And he used to beat our dog. He even shaved the dog one time. He used to pick it up by the collar and throw it over the fence.

And then he used to invite friends over to the house, and he'd say to us, "Smile." We were very UNHAPPY kids when he was there. We never smiled or anything. And he used to make us like wait on his friends that came, "Go get this and go do this and go do that." And he'd say, "Smile!" And my sister wouldn't smile, until he grabbed her by the mouth and FORCED her to smile. And that's the only time I really felt hate for ANYBODY. I just used to HATE him and DESPISE him. And he was so crazy he used to call us Private this and Private that. He was SOMETHING. It used to just SHOCK me inside, because we had never been around anything LIKE this. Usually we were happy.

One time he was fussing because the dog came inside the house, and he was going to beat us with this big brush. He said, "WHO let the dog in the house?" We said we didn't know. And my older brother came and said he heard us holler and everything. My brother said, "What are you doin' with my sisters?" He said, "You shut up and go downstairs." My brother says, "No, what are you doin' to my sisters?" And that man put a knife to my brother's throat. And I was just - something in me just DROPPED, and he put my brother in a room, and he was hitting him and going to cut him. My brother couldn't move. So we called the operator and told her to send the police, and they came. And they were going to put him in jail, and we were so GLAD. But then he came back again. He stole money from my mom, and my mom told him to get out, but he didn't leave. He used to always argue and fight with my mom, and she used to always SAY she's going to put him out, but she didn't do it.

He used to PAY my younger brother to get him out of the house so he could try to rape us. One time he tried to get my sister drunk and rape her. My mother went out and he came home, and he tried to rape my sister. He told her to sit on the couch, but she was fighting and everything. And my mom came in the house. We were downstairs scared. He sent us to bed. But we were awake. And then my sister said, "Mommy, George tried to RAPE me!" My mother said to him, "What are you DOING?" They started fighting, and I just heard something break. I think she banged an ashtray over his head. She gave him four dollars, and she said, "Now you get OUT of here." She called him a cab and he left. And that night he went to a bar and got into a fight and got stabbed in the stomach. But before he left my sister said, "I hope you get KILLED!" And that night he went to that bar and he DID get killed. He was in critical condition and he died. And when my mom told us he died, we went upstairs and we said, "YEAH!" We were actually JUMPING for joy and laughing.

But as it turns out, now my older brother is JUST LIKE HIM! He fights with my mother, he threatens my mother and EVERYTHING. He fights with her and he threatens to kill her. He doesn't even respect her. He acts CRAZY, and his eyes dilate sometimes. He smokes a lot of pot and that's probably what's doing it. And he walks around, he's doing all kinds of crazy things. He's REALLY something. He's paranoid, he's thinking everybody's AFTER him. He demands things. Like, he'll tell you to do something and you don't DO it, he'll cuss at you and try to hit you and everything. He's just - SOMETHING.

What bothers me is not just my brother treating US like that, but ESPECIALLY doing it to my mother. And my mother, it seems like she takes it out on ME. It was me to do EVERYTHING. But no matter how much I'd try to do to PLEASE her, it seemed like

NOTHING worked. She always criticized what I did or put it down, or called me lazy, half-doing it, just CALLING me things. She wouldn't cuss or anything. Just little names, but they can hurt you, especially if it's your MOTHER who's calling you these names.

## Asthma and School

Being sick with asthma, that's just ALWAYS been a REAL problem. I've had asthma from when I was small, a young child. My aunt said I was born with it, but I first remember it when I was about four. I remember being RUSHED to the hospital and given needles and taken upstairs and put in a plastic tent, and I was better in around a week or so, and they let me come home. But since then I've probably been taken to the hospital ten times for asthma.

When I was younger my asthma was so bad that when I walked up STEPS, I'd be wheezing. I wouldn't be able to catch my breath, and I couldn't run. I couldn't even SLEEP because every time I lay down on my back or something, I couldn't breathe. And I had to have a vaporizer. It seemed like EVERY time I'd sneeze, I'd wind up GASPING for breath, and my chest would just TIGHTEN up. I couldn't stand the hot weather, because I wasn't able to breathe. Any kind of heat OR cold. When everybody else would be out playing in the snow, if I went out there to play ONCE in the snow, I'd go back in the house SICK. For me to do ANYTHING, like play or walk, I'd have to keep taking these asthma pills. I had to keep TAKING that medicine.

Since I got older, ten, maybe eleven, I haven't been going to the hospital, but I've still been getting sick, and I've been spending so MUCH time being absent from school because of this sickness. I'd go to school and I'd catch a cold, and then the asthma came with it. I keep going to school, and I get a head cold AND a chest cold, and when I keep going to school, pretty soon the cold will be all BUILT up in my chest, and I have asthma. And then I am OUT for two weeks. I get better again, and I go back to school, and I catch some flu or something else, I have that and I am out of school for two MORE weeks. I was out of school so much this past year, I was surprised that I PASSED.

I couldn't keep up, really, and my grades got worse. And it got to where I didn't LIKE going to school. I said, "Well, what's the use of going to school. My grades are TERRIBLE." I always used to get A's and B's, and it dropped to B's and C's and a D. And I even FAILED a couple of subjects, and I had never got an F in my LIFE or D in my LIFE on my report card until this last year. And all because of being SICK all this time. In some classes, like in the Spanish class, you miss one day, and you're a lot behind, so you KNOW how behind I was. It was really BAD. I used to LOVE going to school. When I was younger, I was what you call a bookworm. Even before I could read, I used to always take a book and PRETEND I could read and look at the pictures. But, once I started reading, I just LOVED to read. I just became an INSTANT bookworm. I don't know what drove me to do it, I just liked reading. I like reading all KINDS of books. I LIKED going to school. It was a new experience for me, and the teachers were nice. The school was a very nice school, and I enjoyed going there. We learned a lot, and I learned to read very fast, and I caught on to things very fast, and I just had ambition to keep learning, especially when I got praised for it, and they told me how smart I was, how great of a student I was, and I used to get awards and certificates and things for it. But this past year it was just a different STORY.

## Church Before Faith Deliverance

Before I went to Faith Deliverance, I HATED church. I hated the service, I hated Sunday school. I'd rather stay home, watch TV, do ANYTHING but go to church. But my mother used to LOVE us going to church. She probably thought we were enjoying our selves. Even though she couldn't go herself, she always wanted US to go. She worked all week and Sundays she wanted to stay home and keep the house clean. And she'd rest because she was tired. But she saw to it that WE went to church. Miss Doris, my sister-in-law's mother, she used to come and pick all of us up. She was the one on the church, she was related to the pastor. And I was just sick of everything ABOUT that church. It just made me HATE church. I'd used to say, "Oh, NO, Sunday." I just used to say, "Oh-oh, Sunday's coming." I couldn't WAIT till Friday and Saturday; the street was up and alive then. But then Sunday came, I used to make up any way POSSIBLE to get out of going to church. I said, "Mom, I'll stay home and clean up with you today," just to get out of going to church. My mom, she said, "I need somebody to wash clothes." I said, "I'LL do it!" Or, "Oh, Mom, I got a stomachache. I'm sick." "Oh, I got a headache!" One time I was so DESPERATE to stay home from church, around three o'clock Sunday morning I got up and filled up a big thing of water and swallowed it and then spit it out in the toilet like I was throwing up and went to my mom and told her I was sick. And she told me, "All right, just get into bed and stay home the next day." And the next day she kept me in bed like I WAS sick. And I was taking all these medicines, and I was saying, "Oh, Lord, don't let me get sick. I don't NEED this medicine."

That church turned me away because I wasn't LEARNING anything. And I got SICK of singing on the choir; I got sick of LISTENING to the same boring old preaching; I got sick of just GOING! All we used to do is just sit there, and just - SIT, that's what we would do, SIT. It was the same thing EVERY Sunday. We used to do the SAME THING, go to the SAME places, everything was just like we were computers, follow the same service every Sunday. I DESPISE preachers with schedules. Like they just give a certain amount of time to God. Like they say, "Well, we got to be out about three o'clock." But to me, they got their mind on the time instead of having their mind on serving God.

In my old church all they said was, "Jesus is coming back again," and they taught how the moon would turn blood red and the sun black and everything. That was in Sunday school they taught that. But in the sermons they would teach you parables, or they'd teach about you must be saved in order to go to the Kingdom, and He's coming back. In that church, faith was important only to accept Christ. There and most every church that I go to, they say, "You must have faith to accept Christ in your life." "You have to have faith to go to Heaven," that's what they say. If you have faith, BOOM! You're going to go to heaven. You can go out here and dance and party and do anything you want to, and they still think that they're going to go to heaven.

In the old church they never taught you anything ELSE. They never taught HOW to get saved. If somebody did get saved, that person was saying, "Now what am I supposed to do, I'm saved?" Well, so what, I'm saved. Just because you're saved, I mean, you're not going to be ZIPPED off to Heaven. You got to still live HERE until that time comes. In that old church they talked about faith and everything, but I never saw any faith really



WORK in that church. I never saw any kind of shouting. They talked about faith and everything, but I never saw it USED. I didn't hear that you need faith to be healed or faith to be blessed or anything. Back then I didn't even know what REAL faith was. I just thought that faith was a word.

## Experience in Faith Deliverance

I guess I was about eleven when my aunt told me about Faith Deliverance. Rev. Greer hadn't been in Baltimore long, and my aunt knew I was really down about my family, and my asthma was bad. So she came out to see me. She said, "I want to take you to this church and have this preacher pray for you. I think he can help." I said to myself, "What's she TALKIN' about?"

But when I went to Faith Deliverance, it was just a whole different ATMOSPHERE from my old church. The people there made me real welcome. Even though they didn't KNOW me, they used to come up and kiss and hug me. And that made me really feel at home in the church. As soon as I walked IN the church I felt a warmth, like drawing me into the church. I just felt DIFFERENT. I could FEEL God's presence. Right then something snapped in my mind, something said, "It MUST be God, because you can FEEL Him."

When we came in the first time, Rev. Greer was already up on the platform. I looked up there, and that's what scared me, because when I looked at him he didn't LOOK like any other minister I'd seen. There was something different about him, and when I looked at his face it seemed like something was just SHINING around his whole face, like his whole FACE was lit up, and it scared me because I was used to the minister just saying a couple of things and then he reads a verse and shouts. I would just sit there and halfway go to sleep, listening to these ministers. But when Rev. Greer got to preach, it just FASCINATED me. The words were just POURING out, and every time he would talk or every time the Spirit hits him, like he'd go, "HEY!" and it hit ME in my seat, and I'd get so SCARED. Rev. Greer, he just has the gift to set people on fire. When he preaches, you know, I'm sitting there LISTENING to what he's saying.

And THEN came the prayer line. And my aunt said, "When you go up there, tell him you have asthma." I was so scared I went up there, and when he went to touch me, I backed away, and he said, "Come on up, I'm not gonna hurt you." I went up there and I backed away again, and he just touched me and let me go back to my seat, and my aunt HOLLERED at me. She said, "Why didn't you TELL him?" I really didn't know. I was just scared. But after the service I said to myself, "I LIKE this church! I want to come back AGAIN."

In fact I couldn't WAIT for the next service, and then the next. And I kept going, and I really ENJOYED myself, because I saw how open it was, and I saw even young kids shouting. I became ENTHUSIASTIC to go to church, to THAT church, anyhow. I was so enthusiastic I couldn't wait, couldn't WAIT to get to the service, couldn't WAIT to pray, couldn't WAIT to see what was going to happen, I couldn't WAIT to see the blessings, and I couldn't WAIT to praise God. But before that I DESPISED church. And now, even when I'm sick - Sunday, Tuesday, Friday come - I go to church SICK. That's how much I love to go to THAT church.

When I first went to Faith Deliverance I had never seen anything LIKE it. It SCARED me, but it really FASCINATED me too. Seeing the people being healed, that REALLY fascinated me. They would be healed instantly, right before my EYES. I had never been around anything LIKE that. And I saw all these people shouting, or they fell out on the floor when Rev. Greer prayed for them, and it used to SCARE me. And when people used to say it's fake, I knew MYSELF that it wasn't fake, because I had seen things. A man came up in the line and his hand was all withered up and Prophet prayed for him, and right THERE his hand was straightened up, right in front of my EYES, and I couldn't BELIEVE it. And then another woman came there, and she said she had tumors or something in her nose, and Rev. Greer prayed for her, and she went into the bathroom and she blew her nose, and she blew the tumors right out into her handkerchief, and she put them in a bottle of alcohol and brought them back the same night in a bottle. And then the same day a man went up there and he was deaf and he was blind. He had cataracts on his eyes. So Rev. Greer said, "I'm gonna pray for you." So first he prays for his eyes; he anoints his eyes with oil, and he wiped the man's eyes with his handkerchief, and the cataracts fell right out into the handkerchief. I was standing right THERE. They looked like little fish scales laying in that napkin. And then Rev. Greer said, "Can you hear me?" He said, "When I snap my fingers the third time," he said, "you're going to be able to hear," and he snapped his fingers three times, and he said, "Can you hear me?" and then the man said, "Yeah, I CAN hear you!" He started SHOUTING and JUMPING and - it just scared me so BAD. I didn't know WHAT I was going to do.

It scared me too when Rev. Greer used to prophesy to people, because I thought he might have something to say to ME. One day I thought he was looking at me. He was looking at my aunt. He said, "Now, I'm going to test this right now." He told her, he says, "Somebody here needs some money," he says, "Orville - Orville - I'm gettin' some letters I can't understand." He says, "Orville, is there an Orville here?" She stood up. He said, "OH." He says, "You need some money." He says, "Tomorrow, at 11:00, you are going to get a check. I see a check coming your way." And he says, "Do you believe that?" And she says, "Yes." And he said, "Amen." And then he went on to somebody else, and I said, "Now, I gotta SEE tomorrow at 11:00." The next day she was up cooking breakfast and everything, and I said, "See, the check didn't get here." She said, "It isn't 11:00 yet." So I had to be smart. She had bought me a watch for graduation. I got up and was sitting at the door, watching it, and around one minute to 11:00 the mailman came up and 11:00 on the dot the check slipped in the door. And I said, "Cora, it CAME!" She said, "I knew it was gonna come." And I was SHOCKED, and I had something else to tell when I went home.

The first three years in Faith Deliverance meant a lot to me. I'm just not anything like I was before I went. I mean you wouldn't BELIEVE the difference, even before all that's happened THIS year. Faith Deliverance was really important in changing the way I saw myself. When I was younger I used to be shy and I used to eat, and that's what made me gain weight. I was shy and quiet, and when I used to play with my friends, THEY used to be like the main event. I was just like maybe a sidekick or a side event, and that made me quiet and withdrawn. I was really SKINNY when I was a little girl. And I didn't even notice when I started to get fat. But people used to TELL me I was fat, and I guess when I got sick of people telling me that, I decided to change. I just looked at myself one day, and I noticed I couldn't do a lot of things. That was just after I started going to Faith

Deliverance, and Prophet said, "You ARE somebody." He said, "Never lose your self-identity or your self-respect," and I started to realizing myself, and not just as a background figure or sidekick to somebody else, but as ME, as a person. And when I started doing THAT I just let go of that shyness and started becoming outgoing. That's when I gained a personality, and started being myself. That's also when I noticed my physical self, and started working on my appearance. I put my mind on sports, I put my mind on friends, and eventually I stopped eating so much. So I lost that weight and that shyness, and I looked at myself and I said, "Now, Loretta, now people say you don't look bad; you're a really nice person." So I started fixing myself up and realizing that I AM somebody. I started being MYSELF.

But still, all during those first years going to Faith Deliverance, I'd always backslide. I had a lot of trouble with backsliding, because I couldn't stay in Baltimore and go to Faith Deliverance regularly. So I'd leave Baltimore after a nice visit with my aunt. I'd been going to nearly every service at Faith Deliverance, and my spirits were HIGH. I was so enthused that I HAD to go home and tell what I had seen, and what had happened at the church, and things we had done and everything. I felt LIFTED. I felt HAPPY, and I didn't feel depressed. For a while I didn't even care about what my friends thought. I just felt like I wanted to live my life for Christ. So I'd go home and try to make it so REAL to my family - but they wouldn't believe. I used to tell my mom. I used to just try and make it so real, show them how things were - how it was DIFFERENT. I used to try and tell them how Rev. Greer would preach and everything. And they wouldn't BELIEVE me. I said, "Why won't they BELIEVE me? It's TRUE!" And it IS true, because I never heard Rev. Greer tell somebody something and it didn't happen.

But then my sister, she kept saying, "Oh, he's a fake," and it just pulled my spirits down, knowing that they didn't believe me and everything. So I'd go back to dancing, and talking about partying and anything. I never used to smoke reefer; I didn't even start smoking cigarettes. But like I'd be right out there just THINKING about doing it. I mean hanging with the crowd and being around all this drinking and stuff. Even though I won't participate, I'll be around it. And I'd feel so DEPRESSED. I felt like I turned my back on God or something. And it got to where I didn't feel like God was WITH me any more; felt like He LEFT me; felt like I turned AWAY from Him, and I just felt real BAD, and I used to just rather stay in the house.

Then, if something would happen in the family, I'd get depressed over that, or the asthma would get bad. And when I feel depressed, I mean I feel DEPRESSED. I used to just feel like maybe I'd leave home or something. I used to think about running away and everything, but I knew that couldn't solve my problem. It got so bad I thought I was going to wind up going crazy sometimes. It just felt like I didn't have any CONTROL over myself. I just felt like I didn't belong ANYWHERE, or nobody WANTED me but myself. I didn't even want myself. Felt like God - felt like I had turned away from Him and He didn't WANT me anymore; I didn't feel Him anymore, and my mother, and my family, and my friends, plus grades. I was so DEPRESSED about my grades going down from me being sick. That REALLY bothered me. It just felt like my whole WORLD was just exploding. I just wanted to dry up and BLOW away. I felt like I wasn't wanted, I wasn't needed, and there was no purpose here for me on Earth.

It got so bad, at one point this year I was thinking about committing suicide. I didn't feel like a PERSON anymore. I didn't WANT myself. I used to talk to my boyfriend about taking an overdose of sleeping pills or something. I knew I wouldn't DO it, but I FELT like doing it. I KNEW I didn't want to kill myself, but I THOUGHT about it, and it scared me THINKING that way. It scared me because I wanted to get UP, but I didn't know HOW. I didn't want to be down, depressed. I tried to make myself smile, but it didn't work. I said, "What's wrong? It's not working." I usually could pull myself out of a depression like that, think of something good, you know, start smiling and laughing. I couldn't even FAKE a smile anymore.

## Healed and Born Again

It's just been this recent visit to my aunt's, when everything has happened for me. I only planned to come and stay a week but everything just started to happen and I stayed three weeks. That's when - EVERYTHING - just happened so fast. One thing right after another, it started happening.

The asthma was the first thing. Rev. Greer had prayed for my asthma before, MANY times, but I wasn't ready for a complete healing then. He prayed for me one time and he had his hand on my chest, and he said, "Heal this asthma," and I felt a warmth going through my chest. And when I went home I slept good that night. It didn't bother me, but it wasn't gone, because I didn't believe in MYSELF. I went home and was taking those pills anyway. Even though I was feeling better from prayer, I was taking pills anyway, and I guess lack of faith was finally what made me miss my healing.

But it was different this time. This time I was READY. I had been back home, and I had been in bed for a week. I couldn't sleep. I was up all night till daybreak with asthma. I would go to bed, but I couldn't sleep. I was tossing and turning and I just accepted the fact that I couldn't sleep. Then something said, "You gotta get back to that church," and I couldn't sleep, my asthma was bothering me so much. And I began to smell that scent. It's something associated with me and Prophet Greer. I don't know - when I think with him, it seems like his spirit comes to me, or it's a scent; it smells like some kind of holy oil that comes every time I feel his presence. And so I went and called my aunt and I said, "I GOTTA get back to Faith Deliverance," and she said, "All right, I'll come and get you."

I couldn't WAIT to get to the church. We went on a Tuesday night. And I said, "I have to go up in the prayer line. I'll ask Rev. Greer to pray for my asthma again." As soon as I stepped in the line, soon as I start walking closer up to the altar, I can FEEL the power hitting me from back where I was. And I asked Rev. Greer to pray for my asthma, and my backaches and everything, and so he did. And I walked back to my seat, and just as soon as I sat down, I felt like a warmth or movement in my chest, and something like electricity. You know how people take a spear and jab something - it felt like the power hit me RIGHT in my back, and I JUMPED like I was startled. And I felt the tightness in my chest ease away and my breath and everything coming evenly and the asthma was GONE. And I started breathing, and I couldn't believe it was GONE! I had BELIEVED that it would leave, and like Jesus said, "According to your FAITH, you are healed," and I started believing and that's when it happened.

I was so GLAD, I went home that night, and my sister and I, we just TALKED. We just kept talking and talking and talking about the church, and I was talking about EVERYTHING. And then that night I just fell right off to sleep. And I slept so GOOD, I didn't wake up once during the night. I slept till TWO o'clock on the dot the next afternoon. And I haven't had a TOUCH of asthma since then. I haven't had any problems with my asthma since. The doctors always told me, "You will GROW out of it," you know. But what's the use of me spending my LIFE growing out of it, and when I get older, I'll be too old to enjoy being out of it? Jesus did for me in one NIGHT what those doctors couldn't do for me in just about all my life.

So the next day after I woke up and I realized how GOOD I slept, I said, "Something MUST have happened, I can't WAIT till Friday." We were just talking about the church every night. We sat there and talked about the church, and one night my sister and I, we stayed up about three HOURS singing! Just singing church songs, something just came over and we were singing so loud that the people out in the street heard us. They said, "What are those girls up there doing, singing those church songs?" And we were just singing and singing and finally I fell asleep. But when Friday came, I was feeling sick. I had pain before the service, but when I left the service, I was in high spirits. I just felt so GOOD. It felt like my mind was just off to a DIFFERENT dimension. I was real quiet and I was just meditating on the Lord.

And then Tuesday came again. Rev. Greer called everybody up to the altar after the message. I always go up to the altar, I go up there and ask for assurance or a double portion of the Spirit. So, I went up, and this time I really FELT something come OVER me. My right hand would shake and I couldn't control it. It was just SHAKING. And then when I left to go back to my seat, Rev. Greer said, "Hug somebody, and shake their hand; and tell them, 'I feel GOOD'." And I just felt like a COMPLETE different person. You know how they say, like you've been born again, that's JUST how I felt; like something came over me, and I just felt completely DIFFERENT. And right there, following my heart, like my spirits were LIFTED. Like I felt my body was real LIGHT. It felt like, inside it just felt CLEAN. You know, it just felt like a new FRESHNESS, like a new start, like I had completely different BODY. And I went home this time and I was in real deep meditation in the Spirit.

The next service was Friday, and something said, "You get up when he says 'testify.' You testify, or your healing won't be complete." So he called people up there to testify, and I was just as nervous, and he said, "Anybody here been HEALED since you've been here stand to your feet." And I stood up. And everybody looked at me like I'm CRAZY, because I'm young, but I went up there and I told my story, and then I went back to my seat, and I felt real good about it. And then Prophet had the prayer line, and I was in the prayer line, and I came up to him - first time I went up - he said, "Lord, FILL her with the Holy Ghost," and I started to walk away, and that's all I remember. I started to walk away, and something HIT me, felt like someone had pushed me, and I fell. But I felt something RUSHING through my body like a warm breeze, like someone had BREATHED on me, and something just RUSHED right through my body. And I didn't know WHAT happened. When I got up it was still on me, but I got back to my seat, and I got out some more money. I got in line again, and I put my money in the basket, and Prophet touched me, he touched my forehead and he touched my face. And he said,

"Look at me," and I looked, and he said, "There's something God wants you to do." He said, "The Lord has a work' for you to do." And so I said OK and I went back to my seat.

When I went home that night my mind was in a deeper thought, and this time not only my MIND was - off, but my whole BODY. It was in the Spirit. And Rev. Greer said, "When you leave the church, be still," and I was. I didn't say anything. And when I went home that's when Christ had really started working in my life. I didn't even have the desire to do the things I used to do. I was surprised MYSELF. When this girl was sitting arguing with my sister, now, if that was the OLD me, I'd be down that girl's throat and probably THROW her out or something. But it doesn't get to me any more, because I KNOW now that I'm a different person, and living a whole NEW life. I'm still the same person, but I've just put out the bad part of me, like, put out the negative part, and added the positive. I learned to control my anger, and I'm just starting to UNDERSTAND people, because I know people have problems, because I was there before. And I can talk to people better, and if they say something, I won't get offended or anything. It's just being HAPPY. Like they say, goodness brings goodness. When I'm being good to people it usually comes back to me. If I'm being nasty, it will come back to me, but what I'm trying to do is live up to being a good person. I'm trying to live life to the FULLEST.

Now I'm ready to stand, you know, like a ROCK. Before I just felt like a little pebble, if something would just come along, it would blow me away. Now I feel like a big brick WALL. NOBODY can knock me down. Everybody has strength and energy, but when you accept Christ and you receive the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost is the activity of Christ in you. And it seems like the Holy Ghost, or the activity of Christ in you makes you much stronger because it makes you feel much HAPPIER. You feel that He's WITH you; also He lifts your spirits higher and it seems like He gives you more energy. Like everybody has their own battery, but when you have Christ in you, Christ is the second battery, your source of power that makes you combine BOTH powers together, and it gives you one great BIG power, that's what it seems like. And when you accept Christ it seems like you have the knowledge how to USE your energy, how to strengthen it and how to get what you want.

The other night one lady said to me, "The way you talk, you sound like you should be an evangelist," I said, "Well, I don't know. I haven't heard anything from God about that yet." Sometimes I feel like God DOES talk to me because one time I was talking to my friends and God told me to tell them before they went to bed to say, "God is real." I mean, I expected this big BOOM, POWERFUL voice saying, "GOD IS REAL." But it was just this little, little teeny thing on my mind saying, "Just tell 'em before they go to bed tonight to say, 'God is real'." I hear it, I FEEL it, really. It's part with hearing and the feeling. But sometimes when I'm in church or I close my eyes, sometimes even when I do homework, I close my eyes, it's like a blue flame moving, side to side, slow like. It's short and loose at the bottom, and then gets larger and larger at the top, and then it's just like a big FOUNTAIN of blue flame, and it's just SOMETHING. Every time I see that, I always feel God WITH me. Sometimes when I see that, He'll be speaking through me and it's like a real - just a little tinge of hearing, but more of a feeling. And every time I've had that feeling, it's always right. So far, it's ALWAYS been right.

Now, I'm teaching myself so when the time to pray comes and I can't take the time out, I can go ahead and pray and keep on working or whatever. I taught myself to do that. I

can be sitting here eating, or talking, and still be in my mind praying and meditating on God. I don't know HOW I can do it. I can just DO it. At first I COULDN'T do it. I had a one-track mind. But NOW I can talk to someone and probably be praying at the same time.

## Race and Deliverance

In my home, of course my father didn't live with us, but I never heard anything bad come out of my mother's mouth about white people. I know she changed her job at least one time because some of her co-workers wouldn't treat her right, but we never heard her take an attitude toward white people. There's too much white in her own family background for her to do that. So, I think I took my attitude from her, that there's good and bad in both races.

As a child all my friends were Black and I never really noticed or paid any attention to racial discrimination. When I got into junior high school the school was mixed, Black and white, and there I began to hear more about it. Before I went to that school I never really had any experience with white people. We were all a little nervous about it at first, and I didn't become buddies with the white girls right away. I'd talk with them in the classroom, but as the year went on I got really CLOSE with these white girls, and we had a lot of fun. They came from a different neighborhood, but in school color never bothered us. We didn't care. And we had the nicest time. In fact, the way it turned out, most of my friends in school WERE white. It just seemed like my white friends were better friends than my Black friends. My Black girl friends would hassle me about little things. They'd get mad at me just to get mad, and then they'd tell everybody else to be mad with me, "Don't anybody speak to Loretta." And these Black girls in my class would get on me about my white girlfriends, "What you want to be hanging with those WHITE girls for, you want to be white?" And they used to tease me and call me "white girl." But my white friends weren't like that. They treated me as just part of the group, not better and not worse. They treated me as an equal. And my white friends were all intelligent and college bound. They were good students and had high reading levels. Not all my Black friends, but most of them weren't college bound, and they really didn't CARE about education. But I did. So I was right in there with the white girls, when it came to grades and tests. And so these Black girls would put me down because I was trying to be somebody and do well in school. They'd call me a snob and say I was trying to be better than them. Then they'd say, "That's the white man's education, why you want to learn? They're not going to give us any dollars anyway. They're going to make us go to school, but when it gets to jobs, they're going to hire the white people first anyway." They'd say these things, but I didn't believe them because these Black girls just weren't into schoolwork. They were more into running the street.

I didn't relate to these Black girls when it came to school, but I wasn't blind to the fact that there WAS racial discrimination. I would hear from the older Black girls that on their jobs they would not get promoted even though they were the better workers. The whites would get the promotions. Other ones of these girls would say how they would find out they got jobs just because they WERE Black. But they'd be the only Blacks on the job, the token Blacks. And I'd see the same thing in commercials on TV, or in ads, the token Blacks - usually somewhere in the background. So I KNEW the problem. I just didn't let it get to me. And now that I'm delivered, I feel like, coming from a ghetto and being Black, makes me want to be somebody all that much MORE.

I've only had one experience that I'd really call a racial incident in my life, and it happened just this summer. We were walking through the Lintton area because we missed the last bus. We had gone to the movies and we had stayed for the late show and then gone for pizza, so it was after midnight when we started walking home. It was a beautiful summer night, but Lintton is a white area and we had about two blocks to walk before we got home. So as we were walking the people were watching out of their houses and when we'd go by they'd turn on their floodlights. We didn't pay it any mind, but it made us nervous to have all these people LOOKING at us. There were six of us, I think, one eighteen year old boy, two teenage girls, one was nine months pregnant, and then there were three younger children. So we were just walking minding our own business trying to get home, joking about the people watching, but then this group of white teenage boys drove by and they started cussing at us. They were calling us "nigger" and saying, "Your mother's so and so," and saying we should get out of there. We just kept walking, but I had never experienced anything LIKE that and I said, "I thought this kind of stuff was all over." So this same group of boys circled around a couple of times, and each time they were calling us something worse. Then they left, and we thought that was over. But then this other group of older teenage boys drove by calling names and one of them threw a bottle at us. By this time we still had several blocks to go. Well, these same boys must have parked their car somewhere because they started coming up behind us. They were calling us "niggers" and talking about the fat belly on this one older girl. We kept walking, but a little faster. But then as we got closer to our neighborhood they got closer and they began to throw things at us. So one of the younger kids with us kept an eye out and we would duck, but we made a plan that if it got TOO bad we'd run the last two blocks. And that's what we had to do because the closer we got the closer they got to us and the more stuff they were throwing till we HAD to run. One of us gave the signal and we took off. At the end they were throwing anything they could find, rocks, bottles, even bricks. And the one girl was VERY pregnant. That's what REALLY got me. She could have really gotten HURT and she had no business running any two blocks. But we made it.

I thought that kind of thing only happened in stories or in the South. But it happened right HERE and it happened to me. Up to that time I really hadn't had much to even think about that was racial in my life. But that was really SOMETHING. I was really scared. I had never experienced anything like that in all my LIFE. The name-calling we could deal with. We just ignored it. But when they started throwing rocks and yelling, "Get out of here niggers," I couldn't believe it. It hurt me, to think that people could still do that kind of thing and think that way about other people - just because of the color of their skin. But this was the first incident to tell me it's STILL going on today. I'm just glad that the white people I knew before that happened were beautiful people, and the ones I've met since then have been beautiful. If they weren't nice people and I hadn't become born again, I think I would have a lot of bitter feelings. I might have even thought about revenge. But the way I look at it now, that was just one event and those were just a few misguided teenagers and a neighborhood of adults that could watch and not stop them.

A lot of Black people love to blame EVERYTHING on the white man. They feel like they have to blame SOMEbody, so they blame the white man. But I think it's a cop out to blame the white man. They'll say, "I don't LIKE white people because they made us slaves." But white people didn't make that person a slave. They made his great-great-



great-grandmother a slave, but she's been dead for generations. But here he is still talking about being a slave. What white man has come up to him and directly done anything to him? Most of the time there hasn't been ANY white person, or at most a few fools like I ran into in Lintton. People get over with blaming the white man because society accepts it. But there shouldn't be ANY white man, or Black man, able to keep you from doing what you want to do, IF you really want to do it, "Where there's a will, there's a way." If you REALLY want to do it you're not going to let anything like discrimination stop you. A lot of times the people who sit and complain are just afraid to put themselves out to do better.

Deliverance can help the Black person deal with his racial feelings. Race is not the up front thing most often, it's not the thing that brings the person to Deliverance, but it may be as important as any of the problems the person DOES think he has. When a Black person experiences discrimination he FEELS it. You try to throw it off, but you DO feel it. But with deliverance, the person has the power to overcome the feelings and to carry on and not to give up. As the person grows in grace, he finds out he doesn't HAVE to confront the other person and he doesn't HAVE to hate. He discovers that he doesn't have to take the slights of others into himself and let them question who he is. He doesn't HAVE to feel inferior.

I know before deliverance I used to feel very inferior. In my case a big part of that was because I used to feel like an outcast in my family. But some of it was related to being Black. I had a complex about not being good enough. I would look at myself and I'd always see something wrong. I used to feel like I was not going to make it, "I'm not going to amount to much because I'm Black." "I won't be able to live there, or I won't ever be able to have a home like that." I used to be very limited in what I thought I could be and have. I felt, "If you're Black, keep back." You are not going to get very far. But now, I'm Black, and I know I'm still going to hit some racial problems from prejudiced people, but I've now learned that being Black is no reason to feel limited. There is no reason to doubt who I am just because I'm Black. In deliverance, beneath Rev. Greer's ministry I've found out I AM somebody. I've found out that God loves me, not because I'm Black or white but because of what is in my heart.

The Spirit has no color, and that's why the Bible says to walk in the Spirit. If someone does discriminate against me today, the Spirit helps me to overlook it, because God gives me the love to know that everybody doesn't understand. The Spirit comforts me, but the Spirit also gives me that extra fighting power to go ON. I know now that if I do run into a racial problem I will overcome it because I'm not JUST a Black woman now. I'm proud of being a Black woman, but now I have God in me working THROUGH me to guide me. And I know the Spirit will lead me past ALL problems, racial or otherwise. I know that if I ever get down or begin to doubt myself because of the white man, I can find my strength in the Word. In Romans it tells me that through Christ I can overcome all things, because "Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world." It also says, "If God be for you, who can be against you?" So through the Bible I have the armor to overcome and to conquer ANY racial problem. Deliverance really brings this active part of the Bible out, and though Rev. Greer may not say much about race itself, everything he says applies to this problem. I am reminded of the song, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, WHOM shall I fear?" That's the way I feel now. I really don't think about color since I've been born again and filled with the Spirit. I just think of myself as a

Christian woman, and what I want is for people to see the divine Spirit glowing in me, what EVER the color of my skin or theirs.

### Deliverance, Rev. Greer, and Personal Goals

To me, Rev. Greer is more like a father figure than anything else. There's something about him that I feel very close to him, even though I'm not close to him, like personally. It's just like, when he's in the service, and he tells you things: how to prosper, and how to realize you ARE somebody, and how God loves you - it's just like how a father would love his children. And how a father would try to keep his son close to God, try to lead his son throughout his life, and that seems like what he does when he tells you to get a good education, and when he tells you how to keep an UP attitude, and how to realize your self-identity. It's just like what maybe a father would say, or maybe my father would say to me, if I was with him. And I really despise it when people say, "Well, do you love Rev. Greer?" I say, "Yes, I love him," but I'm not IN love with him. But I love him. I love everybody, but there's such a thing as love for a friend, there's husband and wife love, there's motherly love, there's brotherly love, and there's love for your pastor.

Prophet is just almost UNREAL in a way. He's serious, but he can joke and he can laugh too. That's what I really enjoy, because he'll get serious when he has his mind on God. But he'll also joke and play around. His whole life's not SURROUNDED by God, even when God is a very big - the MAIN event in his life. And Rev. Greer, he teaches that if you have a down attitude, how to get up, how to think POSITIVE about things. When he says, "You are SOMEBODY," he makes you really FEEL like somebody, because you ARE a child of God. At my old church I used to think that God was billions and trillions of Greer away. He was in Heaven, which wasn't here. But at Faith Deliverance I learned God is - yeah, He's in Heaven, but He's still with you HERE, by us, in us, and with us, ALL the time. I KNOW that God is with me, and so I don't feel alone. I always feel like I have somebody to talk to about my problems. I just feel like I have another part of ME, and it makes me feel protected.

What I really like about Rev. Greer is he teaches how to GET saved, but also how to LIVE while you're saved, and how you can be IN the world but not possessed BY the world. He teaches you how you can prosper, how to have faith, how to USE your faith, how to make faith work for you, how to get closer to God. If you want something, he teaches you how to get it, through prayer, through fasting, and how to release your faith and to make God WORK for you. That's what I like. Rev. Greer dresses nice, he drives a nice car, he smells nice - I mean, it's GOOD! God also wants you to ENJOY yourself. And Rev. Greer teaches prosperity, self-realization, how to pray, how to make faith work for you. A lot of preachers don't believe in material things. They think that once you give your life to Christ that you have to stop LIVING. One man said he thought that you can't watch TV. Well, God doesn't want you to make an idol out of it, like you'd rather stay home and watch Sunday afternoon football than go to church. That's what He doesn't want you to do, but God wants you to enjoy life to the FULLEST. That's why He put us here, and some people get the WRONG meaning.

Since I have been Born Again I have realized that I AM somebody and I want to BE somebody. I want to be a GREAT person. I want to be recognized and noticed. I don't want to be known as, "That's Rev. Cook's daughter." I want to be noticed as, "That's Loretta, that's Loretta Cook." When you get the feeling that you're special, that you ARE

somebody, and especially a child of God, it makes you FEEL like somebody, it makes you want to HAVE something, it makes you want to be somebody, and to make yourself recognized.

I had some ambition before, but it wasn't as strong as it is now. I mean, I wasn't ready to get up and go. I was waiting for somebody to make something happen for me. Before I was thinking about finishing high school, but not going to college, just taking whatever came, living, maybe an average or below average life, having an average or below average husband, having an average or below average family. But NOW I think I'll do much better in my work because I have more ambition to finish school, and I have more ambition to keep my grades up. Plus now with my asthma gone I don't have to worry about being sick, so I'm kind of looking FORWARD to school. Before, because I was feeling so depressed, I wanted to dry up and blow away. I never thought about success or being somebody, wanting to have things. I mean I used to think about it, but I never was this ENTHUSIASTIC about it. Now that the depression has left me, I feel GOOD. I feel like carrying on with life. I want to finish high school, that's my main goal. I want to go to college, and I want to have a profession. I just want to be - be SOMEBODY, be well off. I don't want to be STRUGGLING the rest of my life. I want to be able to have a better family life than I had, be able to give my family some of the things I didn't have a chance at. I don't know which profession I want. I used to want to be a nurse, then I wanted to be a doctor. I don't know which - maybe a lawyer or marriage counselor.

Rev. Greer says, "If you have a down attitude, you're gonna STAY down." But now I have a POSITIVE attitude, I feel like I can accomplish things. I can GO through school. I can GO through college. I feel like I can DO what I want to do, BE what I want to be, SAY what I want to say, but also - do what HE wants me to do and say and be. I feel so GOOD. I feel like a NEW person. It feels like I'm leading a whole DIFFERENT life. I just feel like I have CONTROL, I have STRENGTH, I have ASSURANCE, and like Rev. Greer says, "I got Jesus, and that's ENOUGH." I feel like when you let Him take control of your life, you really DO feel like a brand new person. I thought that that only happened to older people or just SOME people. When it happened to me, I really felt GOOD about it. And I think if I keep myself tuned with Him, I feel like I can do just about ANYTHING.

## Epilogue

Two years have passed since Loretta and I met for the purpose of taking her life testimony. I have seen her occasionally since then, especially in the first year, and I have talked with her aunt frequently. Her aunt has said Loretta is all right, but not seeing Loretta at all in the past year, I wondered about her since I knew how critical the sixteen-seventeen year of age is for a young woman in Loretta's community. Our meeting to discuss Loretta's responses to my edited version of her testimony was the first real chance we had to get caught up.

Our discussion revealed that the last two years have not been easy for Loretta. The same older brother that Loretta describes in her testimony as causing trouble at home two years ago has been the major problem for Loretta since. According to Loretta her brother got progressively worse until he had the entire family living in constant tension and fear. Into drugs, this brother was so paranoid he virtually would not allow non-family members into the house. Loretta reports that he kept knives and guns stashed all over

the home. Most troublesome was the fact that the family never knew when he was going to have one of his crazy fits. Loretta describes the "trigger change" her brother would display in going from normal to mean, threatening and abusive. Anyone who happened to be present would be the target. For a year and a half Loretta says her constant prayer was that her brother would leave the house. The family tried to get him to voluntarily seek help, but he refused. Finally the situation became so impossible that Loretta says her mother had to go to court to have her son put out of the house and under treatment.

Since her brother's departure, Loretta's life has become more normal. Home is relatively quiet, though Loretta says her cousin, with her husband and baby, have recently moved in, causing some problems since Loretta says her cousin does not do her part in the house. Still these difficulties are small irritations compared to the constant tension Loretta says she felt during her brother's "reign." Through the period with her brother Loretta says she never lost faith in God as she had in previous years. Loretta's experience in Faith Deliverance she says had been deep enough to sustain her. She knew through it all that God was with her, and she was strong enough to believe, independent of what others said. With her faith, Loretta says she kept her personal self together, not succumbing to the pressures that she says led nearly all of her friends to become pregnant and go on welfare. Loretta says she and her boyfriend talked about the problem of their sexual desires, and since both of them want to make it out of the ghetto and go to college, they decided they must resist the pressure. Loretta's boyfriend is an athlete and not part of the "icy crowd," the group that is into sex, crime, drugs, babies and welfare.

Although Loretta managed to sustain her personal self, she says that her impossible home life did affect her physically and academically. Loretta has had no return of her asthma, but she did gain about thirty-five pounds. In the six months since her brother has left, Loretta has got herself back together and has begun a diet on which she has lost about ten pounds. Academically, Loretta says it was impossible to study in the house, so she fell behind. It reached the point where Loretta was so depressed by her own poor performance in school that she attempted to avoid school altogether and many days stayed at the homes of her girlfriends. Loretta says her teachers tried to help, but she could not discuss the real source of the problem with them. Loretta's poor record meant that she was barely passed in her sophomore year, and was failing most of her subjects in the first half of her junior year before her brother left. Her teachers were dismayed and could not understand what had happened to their former star pupil. Finally, her brother was put out of the house, and Loretta says she began to take control of the rest of her life - including school. By the conclusion of her junior year Loretta had brought her failing grades up to A's and B's. By attending summer school Loretta further made up for her earlier academic deficiencies in her sophomore year. When she returns to school this fall, Loretta will be all caught up and ready to pursue the academic track which leads to college.

Loretta says that what kept her through the bad time was the fact that she never became so depressed that she felt God had left her. She says that she always remembered the voice that had come to her soon after she returned home and the trouble with her brother started to become worse. The voice had said, "Loretta, I will never leave you or forsake you to the end." She could not deal with the situation her

brother created and she stumbled, but Loretta says she kept her personal self together and never fell.

Now Loretta is up again, eager for school, and as assured in her faith as ever. Her plans for the future focus on working with children and teenagers like herself. She wants a Deliverance ministry for herself so she can help young people see the positive possibilities in life for themselves instead of feeling caught in the ghetto and trying to escape in drugs and the street life. To prepare herself for her ministry, Loretta is now thinking about some combination of college training in social work, Bible college, and experience in working with young teenagers in urban youth centers.

Loretta expects to marry her boyfriend after college, and perhaps to have her own youth oriented Deliverance church. Until that time arises, Loretta says she is active in her faith, back on her own track, and witnessing and talking to the teenagers around her to encourage them in the way of Deliverance. Loretta is able to make it to Faith Deliverance only a few times a year. She remains ever grateful to Faith Deliverance and Rev. Greer for truly bringing God into her life. But Loretta now feels she takes God with her at all times, and now she says she is able to discover the Spirit in other churches. Now she is able to depend more on her Deliverance faith and less on a specific church.

## Commentary

By  
Loretta Cook

In reading my testimony as Dr. Burns has put it together with me, I find that it brought back many beautiful memories of what it was like to be truly born again for the first time, my spiritual encounters with Christ, and many experiences at Faith Deliverance Church.

It was a great pleasure working with Dr. Burns. Not only did he help me realize the essence of my testimony, but he also helped bring my testimony to life. Working with Dr. Burns was a new experience for me. Seeing interest shown by a white man in the spiritual religion of the community helped me become a more open-minded person. It helped me to realize more fully that the essence of spiritual religion is love and brotherhood among all men.

It has been two years now since I gave my testimony, and during that time I have grown stronger in the Lord. And thanks to my wonderful pastor and his teachings, my faith has increased a great deal. In closing I would like to express my love to Rev. Greer, Dr. Burns, the readers of this testimony, and most of all, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

# IV

## DELIA ADAMS

### FAITH IN THE FACE OF LOSING YOUR MAN

#### Introduction

Delia is a woman in her mid-thirties, permanently separated for two years now from David, the one great love of her life. Delia's testimony reveals the dilemma of the deeply committed, delivered woman who, with much of her life yet before her, wants to find a man with whom she can share her Deliverance vision. But men in the church are few, and few of those who are there are of an age to interest Delia. Moreover, Delia is a woman with four children, and most men, Christian or not, are reluctant to take on a whole family, even when the mother will continue to work, as Delia would. It is a difficult situation for Delia, and her circumstance is shared by many women in the church. Before, when Delia was out in the world, she was fulfilled in the physical sense, but she was often miserable in the emotional and mental dimensions. Now she is fulfilled spiritually, and has gained control of her mental world, but she is periodically torn emotionally by her lack of physical fulfillment. Moreover, Delia's new religious beliefs not only separate her from many environments where eligible men are to be found, but also arouse her guilt over her relationships with men not being sanctioned by marriage.

As a woman in her thirties with four children, separated from eligible men, and requiring marriage for a relationship, Delia's situation is not easily remedied. But the Deliverance faith encourages Delia, and people like her, to claim what they want and need in this world. Since Delia most wants a husband, a husband is what she is claiming. And her faith that she will find one is strong, even in the face of a reality that suggests the odds for her success are poor. Yet, because the Deliverance faith is a faith of action, not just of hope, Delia's chances for getting what she wants, however slim, are probably better with Deliverance than they are with the beliefs of most other religious groups.

The husband focus of so many women in Faith Deliverance is a mixed blessing for Rev. Greer, who happens to be single and in his thirties. While Rev. Greer's personal situation attracts many women to the church, it also blocks the progress of some in applying the Deliverance viewpoint in their own lives when they "fall in love" with the pastor. Rev. Greer's conduct in the face of this plethora of opportunity is laudable, a fact that should come through, if subtly, in several of the testimonies, including Delia's. Indeed Delia's testimony about her experiences in churches prior to Faith Deliverance reveals a not unusual situation young, attractive women face when they look to the church for help. Often they find pastors who are more interested in their bodies than in their mental and spiritual well-being. Then again the pastors are not the only ones at fault since they are often the subjects of fairly direct solicitations by the women they do help. Pastors find themselves in a difficult situation where so many in their congregations are single, divorced, or separated women who are sexually frustrated to begin with or who become so in the course of the demands of their church experience. Rev. Greer manages to skillfully walk this difficult tight rope, at once playing upon his attractiveness and availability, and at the same time encouraging the women in the church to engage their faith in looking elsewhere for husbands.

Whatever Delia's success or failure may be in finding a husband and resolving her physical and emotional needs, Delia knows she is much better off with her present problems than she was with her old ones. Even if a husband does not appear for Delia, her new stability and active faith mean a great deal for her children's prospects. Prior to Faith Deliverance, Delia was on the brink of a complete nervous breakdown, and her children were suffering from the side effects. Delia is well aware that there is no more critical time for a mother's spirits to deteriorate than when her children become teenagers in the urban Black community. Yet it is exactly when mothers like Delia reach their early thirties and their children approach their teens that marriages often reach their depths, that children seem the most confining, and that the prospects for the future appear the least promising. In this context more than a few mothers let go their good intentions for their children and abandon themselves to despair. This almost happened to Delia, but she found Faith Deliverance while she was stumbling, and she never fell. Now, if nothing else, Delia is in a position to even more emphatically carry through with her positive intentions for her children. Along the way, there could even be a good man. With her faith, Delia has a sharp eye out, and will not miss the opportunity if it comes along.

### Background Summary

Delia was born and raised on a farm in the Deep South. The family was large and the parents were hard working. Delia says her father was particularly industrious and tough. In fact she says he was a perfectionist. Although she was slight, Delia says she became her father's right hand "man" because she was the one among her sisters most willing to work. Delia describes plowing or cultivating from dawn to dusk with her father. Delia says she knew what it meant to plow behind a mule. At other times Delia would cut down trees with an ax or operate a two handed saw with her father. Delia also tells about regularly carrying two water buckets from a spring nearly a mile away, and points to the creases in her hands that still show. As her mother was not well, Delia says many of the inside chores also fell to her, including raising one of her older sister's children from a baby. Many times Delia missed school because she had to work with her father or care for her nephew. While Delia says she loved school, she describes suffering from being teased by the other children for the man's work she did, and for her poor appearance, especially having only work boots to wear to school. Frequently Delia would end up in fights standing up for herself or her brothers and sisters. From the time she was small, Delia says she had a bad temper if provoked.

From all the hard work she had to do, Delia emerged as a teenager, on the one hand priding herself on the traits of industry, persistence, and perfectionism that she took from her father, and on the other hand resenting the heavy burden that was placed on her. By the time she was a teenager, Delia was determined to get away from the family farm and go north to the big city where she dreamed of becoming a nightclub singer. She says she had seen enough of hard work that was not getting her parents anywhere. Moreover, having raised her sister's child and washed diapers for years, Delia was also determined she would not have children. In fact she was not even interested in marriage. She says she wanted to come north, get a job, work hard, make money, go to school, get ahead, and make a nice life for herself.

Toward her mother, Delia took her father's attitude. Delia says that her mother was a saint. She was a staunch Christian woman with deep, abiding faith, and she was constant in her Baptist church going. She lived a saint's life in the home, praying,

singing, talking to the Lord through the family's struggles and her own ill health. And, of course, the mother's devotion meant that Delia and the other children were throughout their childhoods equally constant in their attendance at Sunday school and church, all day on Sunday, rain or shine, sick or well. But like her father, Delia could not see what all her mother's faith gained her. It did not seem to improve her mother's situation, especially her diabetes which had affected her eyesight. So while Delia had grown up respecting the saintly life of her mother, she did not understand or appreciate her mother's religion or faith.

From her parents Delia says she took her mother's attitude about race: that color was irrelevant, that there was good and bad among both Blacks and whites, and that each person should be judged as an individual. As a child Delia adopted an attitude of challenging the prejudice of whites where she encountered it. In fact, Delia tended to seek out the white people who were said to be the most prejudiced against Blacks. Delia's approach was one of letting these people talk all they wanted, while she allowed the quality of her work and talents to speak for themselves. Using this approach, Delia says she has almost always been able to get past the prejudice and to command the respect of the white people she has encountered in school, work and the social world.

At sixteen Delia set out in pursuit of her dream. She came north to the bright lights of Baltimore to live with her brother and his wife. As she said she would, Delia got a job working full time. One night a week she worked for her sister-in-law and two nights a week she went to school to learn how to model for advertising concerns. From the advertising school, Delia says she graduated first in her class, and at nineteen she got a job through an agency doing magazine ads for stores like Saks and Lord and Taylor. Delia's career in advertising came to an end when she became pregnant as a result of her first experience with a man. The man was older, in his fifties, and Delia says she became involved with him because she was attracted by all the wonderful restaurants and nightclubs and bright spots where he would take her. Delia had her first child, only to discover in the hospital that the father was already married. Bitter about losing the career she had prepared for, and being deceived by this man, Delia nevertheless determined to keep her child and raise it herself. Since this first child, Delia has continued to work full time at a variety of skilled jobs, mostly in manufacturing. After a year or so at a job, Delia says she would have mastered the work and would usually get bored. So she would quit and go to training school to learn something new. From her upbringing, Delia called upon her industry and her abilities to concentrate and to use her hands to master many different job skills.

It was while on one of her jobs that Delia met and became involved with the second man in her life, an African exchange student who was working during the day and going to college at night. Delia says that she was fascinated with this man because of the descriptions he gave of his native land and because he was so different in his ways. But Delia says she never really loved him. When she became pregnant and delivered her second child, the man wanted to take Delia and the child back to Africa, but Delia refused and finally had to go into hiding to avoid him.

Back at work again, Delia lived in her own apartment with her two young children. In the same apartment house lived a man whose peculiar behavior of always standing outside and looking up the street caught Delia's attention each day as she returned from work.



An opening conversation led to dinner and various evenings out with David, who Delia says was hard working and had a good job as a construction foreman. Delia discovered that David's peculiar behavior was the consequence of his wife having left him and run off with his four children. As his wife was an alcoholic, he was worried about his children's welfare, and he looked in the direction where he had previously lived in hopes he might see the children one day. For some time David had not been able to locate his family. As Delia and David's relationship progressed, David began to eat meals with Delia and her children. At about this time, Delia says, David discovered his children who had been virtually abandoned for nearly five months in an apartment with no electricity, no hot water, and a bathroom whose toilet was out of order. The children were filthy and suffering from malnutrition. Delia says the condition of the youngest child, still in diapers, was so poor that the doctor who examined him filed a child abuse complaint against the mother.

With the discovery of his children, David approached Delia with the proposal that they join together as one family and pay his mother to take care of the children while the two of them continued to work. After she saw the pitiful condition of David's children, Delia was touched and agreed. Several months later, and after innumerable trips by Delia to the clinic, David's children were back to normal and healthy. In the meantime David and Delia's relationship became closer and closer until Delia describes herself being totally in love with the man. With both of them working at good jobs, they were well off financially. For a two to three year period, Delia says that everything she and David touched seemed to turn to gold. She would pick winners at the track, and they might make as much as two or three thousand dollars on a Tri-Fecta. The children were cared for, the combined family worked out well, and Delia and David had a child together. Financially well off, the couple had money and time to spend at fancy restaurants and nightclubs. They pooled all their money and bought bonds with the money they did not spend. Soon they owned a house, fine furniture, fancy clothes, and new cars.

Then Delia says the relationship began to change. When David became prosperous, he became more and more involved in the street life, and was gone more of the time. Delia says she was so in love with him that she gave him his freedom so long as he would come back to her. But according to Delia, David took advantage of her. Without telling her, David took all of their money from their joint savings and their bonds and bought a nightclub. And with the club at night and his regular job, David spent less and less time at home, until it reached the point where he would be home only for occasional weekends. Sometimes Delia says he was gone for weeks. Finally David moved his kids out of the house and took most of the furniture, leaving Delia with almost nothing. Delia says her heart became heavier and heavier. She cried through the nights waiting for David, whom she continued to greet with open arms when he would return for an occasional visit. Delia says she was desperately miserable, at one and the same time hopelessly in love with David and full of hate for what he had done to her, especially after all she had done for him and his children.

Delia's testimony begins at the point where in the depths of her despair, she begins to look to the church, first to a Methodist church, and then to Faith Deliverance.

### Delia Turns to the Church

I was BLINDED by this man. I was blind. But all this I paid for. SUFFERED for falling in love with a married man, and living with a married man. I was living with this man up

until I met Rev. Greer. And I wasn't saved when I was living with this man. I was living in sin. And I was suffering and I knew I needed help. I loved this man so, I didn't know whether I was going to go crazy. I couldn't even face living without him. I used to cry a lot at night, and my neighbors and my girlfriends couldn't understand why I didn't crack. One woman said, "I don't understand how you keep your sanity behind all what you've been through with this man."

There were nights I couldn't even sleep. My heart was BROKEN. I was beginning to let myself down. I would stop fixing myself up. I would stay shut up in the house. And my neighbors, all they saw were my children. They didn't know what had happened to me. My one neighbor, she used to worry about me. She and her mother would knock on my wall and say, "How you doing over there? You all right?" And a lot of times I had been crying so my pillow would be wet with tears from crying, and I couldn't answer them, because I had cried so I even lost my voice. And my eyes, a lot of mornings I couldn't face ANYBODY. I would put on my dark glasses to hide my eyes because they would be swollen so bad.

My heart was so heavy I just couldn't pray. I couldn't even find WORDS to say, even though I wanted to. I even tried to remember the prayers from when I was a young girl. I tried to recall some of the prayers I used to hear my mother pray to give her strength. But I couldn't even relate to any of THOSE prayers. I just felt like DYING. I even said sometimes, "I hope I never wake up to see the next day." That's how BAD a time I had before I met Rev. Greer.

For about two and a half years it went on like that. It went on, went on, went on. I just couldn't face that I had lost my man for good. One Sunday one of my neighbors said to me, "Seems like you're going through a BAD time with your husband." I said, "I must find a house of God to go to, to try and find relief for my heart." She said, "You will go to church?" I said, "Yes, where is your church?" She said, "My church is only a few blocks from here." She said, "I belong to a Methodist church." I said, "Well, let me think about it, and I'll get back to you."

But it seemed like every time I promised Mrs. Madison I was going to go to church with her, that Sunday would come and I wouldn't go. Seemed like it always would be on a Saturday night David would finally come and spend the weekend with me. So that Sunday I couldn't go to church. Then finally I said, "No, I can't DO this any more." I said, "I'm going to church Sunday." I promised God if I would just LIVE to see the following Sunday, I was going to ANY church I could find.

So I went to church with Mrs. Madison that Sunday. It was a Methodist church. I listened to the word of God being read out of the Bible. And I observed all the saints in the church, and it made me think of my mother. I went to that Methodist church a few Sundays, and then I joined. I was there for about five months, and I even started singing in the choir. But I had to quit that church because my pastor fell in love with me. I went to service one Sunday, and the pastor got up and preached about compassion and love. And he was looking at ME, and when I went past the communion table, he GRABBED me. People were looking, and he didn't even care WHO saw him. After service I vanished and I never went back.

## Faith Deliverance Experience and Dealing with David

I met Rev. Greer through a neighbor of mine. She said, "Your mind is confused, your heart is broken, but I want to take you to meet this man. He's from California, and he's a prophet." She said, "This man can tell you ANYTHING." So she took me to see Rev. Greer, and I'd never seen this man before in my life. But he told me my history. He told me EVERYTHING. He told me about my church, he told me about my life. He told me what I went through, the experience I had. He told me all this, and he prayed for me, and it FASCINATED me. So I had to admire this man. But I didn't become a saved Christian right away. That took time.

When I first began to be saved there were a lot of things that went through my mind. There was a lot of hurt. I never thought I'd live to see the day that God would take all my hurts away from me, because a lot had happened to me. But when I first started out I had just begun to know God, and to recognize a lot of the things that I would have to pray about. A lot of things I couldn't change right away, so I'd have to say, "Well, Lord, You'll make another way for me to get what I need. This isn't the end of the world with me, because I'm young." But it was a long time before I could stop thinking about David, even after I was in church, especially if I got lonely and by myself. I would want him, want to be NEAR him, be BY him, just even LOOK at him. And everywhere I went he haunted me in my mind like a ghost. He always would be there. And then when I wanted to put this man behind me from the hurts he caused me, he would call me. And if I didn't answer the phone, he wouldn't let me rest. He'd call ALL night. He'd tell me he NEEDED me. He HAD to come home. I'd hang up on him. I'd tell him, "I don't want to be bothered with you." He'd say, "Well, just could I come talk to you for an hour?" And if I would say, "Yes, TALK," the next thing I know, I'd be in his arms because I LOVED him so. And then it would be all the same thing again.

And from the hurt of it, I would get to hate him, and I would feel like if I could just get TO him, I would RIP him from limb to limb. I would actually kill him. I would shoot him down. And there was quite a few times I got in my car and drove to his nightclub. And I KNEW he would be there with a woman, somebody else. I would sit in my car outside that club and grit my teeth, and in my MIND I would plan how to KILL this man. And then all of a sudden there would be a warm GLOW just like someone would take a blanket and wrap you in it and hold you. And I KNOW it wasn't anything but the grace of the Love of God. And when that would come over me I would have to drive from there some distance and I would slump over that car wheel and cry. And I'd ask the Lord, "Forgive me, PLEASE forgive me. I didn't mean it." I said, "I will go on home. I will go on home." And I did that quite a few times.

But one time I went there actually to KILL that man. That's the time I totaled three or four cars. I know it wasn't anything but the Devil speaking to me. And I was just lucky the Lord was with me or I might have done a WHOLE lot more. But if there's any good in you that God can use someday, God will protect you, even though you are a sinner. He won't let you go but so far before He'll stop you and make you realize what you're doing is WRONG. Some things you just don't DO, and kill another person is one. And I was in church. I was pretty strong in church at this time, but I got into one of a number of crying spells. And one night I got so LONELY, and I tried to pray to God. And one side of me would feel just all the ANGELS in heaven around my feet. But within a few seconds the other side of me, the unrighteous side, would say, "Look how you've been

in church. Look how faithful you've been with God. And what have you accomplished? Your man has left you. He took everything from you. You go to church three times a week, sometimes five. This isn't the way God intends His children to be. God takes CARE of His own." This kind of talk starts going through my mind. So I'd grab my head, I'd hold myself and I'd rock myself a while. And it seemed like the more I prayed, the HEAVIER my heart got, the more water came out of my eyes. And I was COVERED with tears, all the way DOWN wet.

And all of sudden I jumped up. And I was READY to do something to that man. This was like after twelve o'clock and it was my birthday night. So I got dressed, got in my car, and took off to the nightclub. I'm thinking, "Lord, I don't understand WHY he's treated me so bad. He always told me that I that was the BEST thing ever happened to him." I said, "Lord, when I met this man he had NOTHING, he almost had lost his mind." I said, "I WORKED with this man, LOVED this man, CHERISHED him, brought him back to life." I said, "And now this man took EVERYTHING I own, all my money, everything I worked hard for. And he's gone." I said, "But I'm going down there this night. I'm going to see just WHAT he's up to. Why he had to treat me so low." I said, "I'm going to wait," I said, "and if I see him come out of that bar with a woman, I'm going to put this car and him right THROUGH that bar wall."

I got down to the club, and I sat in the car for a long time. Sitting there, I spoke wrong, praying to God to forgive me for what I'd said. And I had to stop and search myself because I was adding more to what I had already asked from God. Something said, "Don't go IN that bar." And Rev. Greer always teaches us, "Revenge belongs unto God. Stop trying to fight your own battle. Leave negative things alone and let God deal with them. You'll come out better, otherwise you'll get YOURSELF all messed up." All this was in my mind, but this night all I could SEE was how this man had taken EVERYTHING from me. So I got out of my car and I went, opened the door, and went in. Now who else do I see but my FINE man, sitting over there with his arm wrapped around this lady. And I frightened my own self, because I said to myself I was going to go over there and I was going to DO him. I said, "I'm going to CRACK through his ribs." And I walked up to him, but the first thing to come out of my mouth, I said, "God bless you." I was going to hit him, but when I opened my mouth I said, "God bless you." I said, "How you doing, Sweetheart?" He was so frightened he didn't know WHAT to do. He said, "What you doing out this late at night by yourself?" I said, "Always come the time I'm going to leave home and be at the RIGHT place at the RIGHT time." I said, "Tonight I am at the right place, right time." And the lady she stashed her arms around him. And I reached over there and kind of rapped her on the shoulder, and I said, "How you doing?" And she held her head down. Everybody in the bar knew who I was. They knew I was his woman. He told them I was his wife. He cherished me. The man cherished me like some kind of queen. But it came to this. I said, "OHHH, THIS is what you're doing. Tell me you're working." I said, "You're down here, loving to death, all HUGGED over." And even though I knew it before, to see it hurt me so BAD just to think of all the lonely NIGHTS I stayed up and waited for this man to come home from work. And if he came in and I'm in bed, one o'clock, he'd say, "Delia, I sure am hungry. You fix me a steak?" And I'd do that for him. Do anything. I did ANYTHING for this man, to please this man. I washed his hair. I did ANYTHING for my man. I LOVED him so. And now here he is with this woman LAYING all over him. But I had him scared because I caught him. He was so scared, he didn't know WHAT I might do. So I told him, I said, "What I have to

say to you, I don't want to say it in front of your friends. I'd like to say it to you outside." He said, "Knowing you, if I step out there, you're going to SHOOT me." I said, "My purse is over there in the car." I said, "I have nothing on me. I have no gun tucked away. I have no knives or anything." I said, "I'm CLEAN tonight." He said, "Yeah, you LOOKING good too." So I said, "Never mind all of this. Come on out here and let me talk to you."

So we went outside. I said, "You should have told me the truth. You didn't have to lie to me. You didn't have to run out on me and the children." I said, "If you found somebody that you loved better, you should have been a man to come to me and tell me. Not let me walk up on you." I said, "I will forgive you, what I've seen." And I said, "I won't do you any harm," I said, "but as LONG as you live, don't you approach me or my children, or my house," I said, "because I don't know WHAT I might do to you later on." I said, "If the Devil brings you in my face again, I may KILL you." He looked at me, and he said, "I KNOW you're dangerous. You're mean too." I said, "I've NEVER been mean to you." I said, "I picked you up out of the mud and cleaned you up." I said, "Why do you think you've got this business here?" I said, "I helped you earn the money you used to buy this business, and I did it because I LOVED you," I said, "but from now on out, as long as I LIVE, what I do is not because I love you, but because I HATE you."

I didn't mean to say all these things, but I had to get some anger out of my heart, to free myself within. And then I said, "How long did you know this woman?" He told me about three months. I said, "BACK up." I said, "I can tell you when you were so-and-so-and-so-and-so." When I get up to a certain point, my spiritual mind takes over for me. And I described certain things about him and this woman, and he thought somebody TOLD me this. So he said, "Wait right here. I'll be right back." And I was looking round on the ground. I said, "Lord, just give me an iron pipe in my HAND." I would have hurt him. I would have knocked his HEAD off. My heart was hurting, because he embarrassed me. I thought maybe he would find a FINE woman. I said, "Hey, if you're going to go for somebody, get somebody BETTER than me. She's not better than me."

So then he came back outside, he talked to me, and I said a word to him I didn't mean to say. God forgive me, but I CURSED him. And when I cursed, I turned and went back in the bar. I looked at that woman. And I wanted to BUST her WIDE open, but I just looked at her, and when I did say something, I said, "Nice knowing you, and God bless you, and I hope you all 're happy together," and I turned on my heel and left.

I got in my car and slammed the door shut because I still was MAD. I wasn't satisfied. So I started up the car and then what do I see but my man's FINE car across the street, all shining and new. And I saw MY money in that car with THAT woman hanging on MY man. And something just took me over. I didn't care WHAT happened to my car, because, like I say, I came to put him THROUGH the wall. But the Lord had kept me from that. He had shielded me from doing THAT wrong. But still I wasn't satisfied. So if I couldn't bust HIM, I said, at least I'll crash his shining NEW car. And I stepped on the gas and I headed right into the side of that Cadillac. I mean I SMACKED that car. And I backed up, hit it AGAIN. And when I backed up I hit ANOTHER car. And before I was through I just about totaled THREE cars.

Well, it was just a MESS of cars in that street by the time the cops came. But I felt GOOD, just to see my man's FACE when he looked at his car. So the cops took it all

down and when it was all over, and I said what I had to say in court to the judge, that judge looked over at David, my man, and he told him, "Pay it ALL." I was happy, but I also felt ashamed, too, because though I was RIGHT, I had DONE wrong. I shouldn't have taken the vengeance of God into my own hands, even just to damage my man's car. But I thank GOD, He stopped me from hurting any PERSON. Still I had a LONG way to go before I was a good Christian.

When I went and crashed all those cars, my mind was CONFUSED. I was BETWEEN love and hate for my man, and I didn't know WHAT way to go, and until God came and this love faded away, I couldn't even hold a conversation about David. If I'd talk about him, the hurt would come out of my voice, and I would change. My voice would get weak, and I'd get fidgety, and I couldn't sit still. And I always would turn my head in another direction because my eyes would be FULL of tears. And I wouldn't want people to see that because even with what this man had done to me, I still loved this man so MUCH in my heart.

But the more I became SERIOUS with God, the more easy life became living without this man. The more I went to Faith Deliverance, and the more Rev. Greer prayed FOR me and WITH me, the more God relieved my heart. It seemed God just came to me and gave me peace. And it got so if I wouldn't see David for weeks at a time, in all that length of time I was just HAPPY as the sun would be shining because God would give me peace in my MIND. And there was no way David could replace that. No man could replace this thing which God gave me. My STRENGTH was in the Lord, and every time I'd be in service with Rev. Greer, it seemed like the more strength I got. The Lord would give me MORE spiritual strength. And Rev. Greer, he would call my name out, and tell me just what God was going to DO for me. And just like he prophesized, that's the way God did it for me. The Lord just blessed me every day I woke up. I had a NEW meaning in life. And the more I would go to my church, the BETTER I felt about my life. I found my mind. And I found out I could sleep at night. I didn't have to stay up half the night crying. It was just like peace. Every day I looked forward to going to church, and EVERYTHING just got better. It seemed like the Lord just dug a hole and dropped the old Delia in there, and then He just RUSHED out and poured a NEW me. And I found out that I was a much BETTER person. And God took my cruel heart and gave me a righteous heart. It felt like God just took ALL the hate, ALL the bitterness out of my life, all the bad experience, it vanished like it was never there. And I could find myself talking about those times with David without shedding one tear. I'd end up smiling without feeling sorry for myself.

As I got STRONGER in the Lord, I got stronger in MYSELF, and I found out I could resist that man. He might call me twenty times in ONE day, trying to let him come to see me again, but I just had programmed my mind. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." I had just programmed my mind to forget about David ALTOGETHER. I'd focus my mind on my OWN life and righteous things concerning God, and David faded away. And even though he still lives, and I see him pass occasionally, and I know he does well, there's not that HOTNESS there, there's not that warmth there anymore. I CAN live without him, and I can look at him as a friend. I love him a godly love now, not a man to press in my arms.

The last time I saw David, I met him in court. I took him to court just this year. He wouldn't even give me a DIME for the kids, the two I had with him. So I took him to court to get it. I programmed myself with God, all the way driving to the courthouse. Even in the courtroom waiting for him, I watched his position so that I could see his face. But he sat there and he explained about us, me and him. And he said he would always love me. And then after the court session, I was talking to him, and he said, "Even though I got married, I didn't love the lady I married." He said, "But I've been catching pure hell." I said, "Well, there's nothing I can do for you. I cannot help you." I said, "But I have some blessing oil Rev. Greer gives us." I said, "Would you let me anoint you in the name of Jesus?" He says, "Anything you do is all right." So I grabbed his hand and I anointed his hand. And I smiled, and I talked about the Lord to him. And he said he STILL doesn't understand why I would throw away all the money that I had helped him gather. Why would I stand by and let him take it and give it to another woman, and not try to STOP him. And I said these words, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away." And I said, "I truly hope and pray in my heart that you will always be happy. And I pray for the Lord to bless you." I said, "I don't hate you anymore." And he went on to tell me about so much that had happened to him. I felt kind of sorry for him. But my sorrow could not help him because it didn't help me. What use was there feeling sorry for this type of man. He KNOWS how to scheme.

I was saved and filled with the Holy Ghost underneath Bishop Greer's ministry. But when I first set out in the house of God, I wasn't saved. There were times I would even drink a can of beer before I'd go to service. And I loved Taylor's Port wine. Sometimes I found myself running late, and I'd become nervous, so I'd run and pour me a little bit of wine. I wasn't strong, I was still weak. You have to GROW in grace. And it takes a LONG time to be on a real strong foundation of God. When you start out, you're on a shaky foundation.

It was about a good year and a half before I was filled with the Holy Ghost. I would go to Faith Deliverance, I would watch the elders of the church, and I'd wonder why they fell out. Some of them would shout as I'd seen shouting when I was a young girl in church. And I would hear people speaking in tongues. And one night I watched a lady get happy. She became so happy, and she carried like a FIRE with her, it was like a glow. And it was so marvelous, and it had such a SWEETNESS about it. I was just like AMAZED at what I saw. It just fascinated me. And I knew that it was good. And I said in my mind, I said, "This lady must LOVE God." And she would lean just like the wind would blow a tree. And her body was so flexible, and she would just speak in tongues. She would just glorify God. And I was so hypnotized in watching her speaking in tongues, and her waving, it just DREW me. It was about the most BEAUTIFUL thing I ever saw in my life. And when she was speaking in tongues, fire waves would burst from her body. And at one point I thought the lady was going to fall, so I reached for the lady, and she was so HOT, when I reached out for her, I was OUT. The Holy Ghost just FLIPPED me right out. It knocked me out COLD. And I stayed out the WHOLE service. All I could do was lay there. I couldn't use a PART of my body. I just lay there on my back and cried, holding on to that chair.

When I got up the service was over. But I felt so much BETTER, and this lady came to me and shook my hand. When she shook my hand, it wasn't like ANY other shaking of

the hand I have felt before. And she said, "God bless you, child." She said, "You have a good heart." And when she said that her eyes did a flip in her head, and she said, "God bless you," again. And that stayed in my mind for a LONG time. Even now, as soon as I get in church, I look for that lady. I look all over the church for that lady. When I see her, my face will light up like a light. I feel so happy. And I found out, this lady is SUPER Holy Ghost filled.

Being saved, being Holy Ghost filled, it's a MARVELOUS, BEAUTIFUL experience, a GREAT experience. When I was a sinner, I thought staying out all night partying, these big parties, I thought that was where it's at. But I have had some of the GREATEST times in church. They make party life look SICK. Being saved is like that.

### Gifts of the Spirit

After the Holy Ghost slayed me, there was a period of time the Lord would just deliver me from one sin after the other. And there were some pretty BAD' habits. Every time the Holy Ghost would slay me, I'd get up, and the Lord would throw me down again. But when I came up, I came up with strength and I came up a NEW person, within my heart and my mind. Even the beer. I ALWAYS was a beer fanatic, I LOVED the beer. I was seeking perfection but I hadn't gotten there. When God finished with my habits, God calmed me like He would clear the sky. You know, like a storm would come over and the sky would be just cloudy, and all of a sudden you look out and see the sky blue. That's the way the Lord just calmed me down. And after the Lord quieted me down, He dealt with me in a marvelous way. And He gave me more strength, He gave me more courage, He gave me more knowledge. And that's when the SPIRITUAL side started to really develop. God gave me such an ABUNDANCE of His Spirit, people are amazed.

By me being underneath Rev. Greer's ministry, God gave me spiritual gifts. I didn't ASK for them. God gave them to me. And Bishop Greer prophesied and told me that God was going to use me in a MIGHTY way, that God was going to ELEVATE me. And he told me I had healing in my hands. And I didn't pay Bishop when he prophesied to me. I just loved God. I never questioned Him. And I found out being truthful with God, being truthful with others, and loving people, God does wonders for you. He's done so MUCH for me.

Since I came into Faith Deliverance, I have PERSONALLY known the power of God many times. The greatest gift I have from God is the gift of knowledge. Sometimes I even will prophesize, and just like I will give it, that's EXACTLY the way it will come out. I can lie down and have a vision, and it will happen just like God showed it to me. And that FRIGHTENS me and scares me. Sometimes I say, "Well, God gives me so much, maybe it is time for me to leave this world." I even said this to one of the members. I said, "I must be getting ready to die." She said, "What? What's wrong with you?" I said, "Because I see so much." And it seems like anything I say or speak in the Spirit, God honors, and it's a BLESSING every time.

Like Saturday, I was out shopping. I took my children to buy a few toys for Christmas. And when I came back in, it's always a FEELING that I get when there's trouble. I didn't know it, but while I was out cousin Jack found out that his nephew was robbed and shot dead. So cousin Jack, he said, "Oh, I have such BAD news." I just kept walking past him, because I was trying to relate in my mind what he was thinking. And when I turned



around, and I sat down, I was already programmed. I programmed my mind toward God, and when I do that I stop long enough to focus my WHOLE mind on God, and I sit just as quiet, and when I get in a DEEP thinking about God, it feels like my eyes are going to JUMP out of my head. And then I can see in my mind. So when cousin Jack told me his nephew was killed, I told him just what went down. I went all over the city in my mind. I described the man that killed his nephew, and God even gave me his name just as PLAIN as daylight, "Johnnie." And I told cousin Jack just what this "Johnnie" looked like. I described him right down to his shoelaces, even his complexion, his hair, his height, and I never saw this boy in my life. I described him down just as I would one of my OWN children. This Johnnie was involved in this killing, and God just gave me a whole picture of this WHOLE thing. I described it to cousin Jack, and they hadn't told him much about how his nephew died. And when the police put it all together and they told cousin Jack, it was just the way I said it was.

Now this is a gift from God, and the only way you can do this is to be saved and have the Holy Ghost and live a righteous life and love God. God cannot give these things to you if you don't KNOW Him. You must be in a RIGHTEOUS frame of mind for God to reveal these things. And you have to BELIEVE. God reveals a lot to me. Not so much for myself, but for others. I try to help others, I pray for others, and I sit down and counsel a lot of my friends. I don't keep it wrapped up within me. I always try to SHARE it with somebody else, because anything God gives you, like knowledge, you're not supposed to keep that tight for yourself. You're supposed to help somebody ELSE when you can.

Under Rev. Greer's ministry, God also gave me the gift to pray for others. I go and pray for people. I ask favors concerning God, and God blesses in a MIGHTY way for others. I have seen with my own EYES what God can do. God can do ANYTHING if you have the faith in Him. I pray for my children. I pray for my friends, I pray for my neighbors, and God will just BLESS them. And it has amazed even ME that God would honor me in this way, and to do these MARVELOUS things through me.

A person has to be prayed up to do this. I mean REALLY prayed up, within your soul. You just can't leave out of your house and not program yourself. You have to PROGRAM yourself for God to work a miracle. You must pray within yourself, and you must let the Holy Ghost lead you in order to do a great work for God. Even Rev. Greer, when he comes in the door into his church, he has programmed himself with the Lord. That is why God can work so many GREAT miracles through this man, because he has programmed himself with God. His spirit is open, and when your spirit is open, God can't HELP but to bless. But if your spirit is shut up, God can't come in and work miracles.

Like I said, Rev. Greer said he saw healing in my hands, and he was right because God has given me that gift too, the gift of healing. I can go and pray a prayer of faith for people and the Lord will heal them INSTANTLY. I went and prayed one time for one of my neighbors who lives two doors down from here. His spinal column is crooked. And certain times, if he does a lot of bending, his hipbone pops out of its socket, and then he is in such misery, he lays on the floor. So my cousin asked me to go pray for this man. But at the time he asked me I wasn't programmed for it. My spirit was off, by a crisis in my OWN life. And if I don't program my mind on righteous things, I cannot do anything. I

have to sit down, concentrate and talk to God and pray a while until I become strong and I feel the presence of God back STRONG again.

So, when I got myself together, I went over to this man's house with my cousin and all THREE of us got caught up in the Spirit. When I got there, the man was stretched out on the floor. And after I finished praying, the Holy Ghost did such a thing on me, I thought I was going to tear his house up. And if I wouldn't have caught myself, I'd have landed across his coffee table, backwards. I was heading back across that man's table. But just as I took a deep dip, I raised RIGHT back up, and when I looked around, that man was RUNNING up the steps. And he was SHAKING just like a leaf on a tree. And the more I would touch him, the more he would shake. After the Lord dealt with the man, he felt brand NEW, running up and down the steps. And he was AMAZED. He said, "I know you are God GIFTED." He said, "This is something no one can take from you. God gave you this gift to heal." And that man said he hadn't felt that good in ten years. So we prayed to God and gave God the glory, because I didn't do it myself. I couldn't have done ANYTHING. It was just the faith in God we BOTH had.

### Personal Miracle of Healing

I think I must be a miracle person. I've seen God work more miracles for me in one WEEK than He's worked for most other people in ten years. None of these beautiful things happened to me when I was a sinner. All the miracles came after I met Rev. Greer. And if I hadn't met Bishop Greer, some of the experiences that I have had, as a young woman and as the mother of my children, I wouldn't be around to tell about them. I would be dead, or I would have been in jail.

There was one Tuesday night, I remember I came home from church with my friends. I felt fine, but that next morning I woke up, I got up off the bed, and I put my feet down, and my one leg was DEAD from the knee down. No feeling. You could take a pin and stick it in and punch it. There was NO feeling. Everybody that was with me the night before was trying to figure out what happened to me. And I said I didn't remember ANYTHING happening, didn't remember falling. There were about four of us, and no one saw me stumble or fall or strike that leg. I didn't hit it on anything, but it was completely dead, all the way down. So I said, "Lord, I don't know WHAT happened to my leg." I said, "But the Devil is a LIAR, Lord. I will NOT accept what happened to me." But it got worse and worse. And it was starting to swell so BAD my girlfriend said, "We're going to take you to the hospital." So we all went up to the hospital about three o'clock in the afternoon. I went in emergency. I talked to the nurse, and they put me in a wheelchair and they rolled me back into one of the rooms. The doctor came in and examined me. He said, "You sprained your ankle," and he asked me how I did it. I told him, "I don't know, doctor." He looked at me like, "Well, either this lady is drugged, or something is wrong with her." But I had programmed my mind. I was like caught up in the Spirit with God. I had talked to God, so I didn't know the leg was hurting. The pain left. I had programmed my mind not to think on the complications of this leg.

They took an X-ray, because they didn't know whether the leg was fractured or sprained. And they had the leg elevated way up. The doctor said, "I know you are in a great pain," he said, "but we're going to give you something for that pain." I said, "Great pain?" I said. I had such a bad sprain, it was almost like it was broken. The doctor told me I had to stay in bed four days. No pressure, I was on crutches. So he bandaged it

tight, and he said, "You have to stay in bed four days, and you must put a heating pad on it, and you must soak it." He said, "Whatever you do, DON'T put any pressure on that leg." While the doctor was talking, I was talking also, but I wasn't talking to the doctor. I said, within myself, "Lord, they think I am crazy," I said, "but Lord, I'm NOT crazy. I'm talking to You, Lord. I don't know what happened to my leg," I said, "but I REFUSE to believe what happened to me."

So we left the hospital. I went to two markets and did my shopping. I came home, I stood on this leg and I cooked, and it was swollen so big even my children said, "Momma broke her leg." I said, "Wait a minute. What did you say?" I said, "If I had broken my leg, it would be in a cast." But it was swelling more and more and more, and I began to feel it. So I finished cooking, and I went upstairs and I sat on the bed. I prayed, I said, "Lord, I know You can heal. I know You work miracles every day, every second." I said, "Lord, people tell me what You have done, and I have faith in You," I said, and I REFUSE to go to sleep tonight, I REFUSE to close my eyes, until my leg is healed." So I was sitting up on the bed. I had cried, and I had talked to God so much I was losing my voice. I couldn't speak anymore, but I would pray within my heart.

About three o'clock in the morning I felt myself drifting, falling asleep. So, to keep myself awake, I tried to rise out of the bed, and when I tried to rise, I thought my room was on fire. It was CONSUMED with fire. But my house WASN'T burning. It was the most PECULIAR feeling that I have ever had in my life. It scared me to DEATH. And in the midst of that fire, the Lord called my name three times. When I raised up in my bed and I slumped over, He called my name. And when He called my name the third time, I shook, every bone in my BODY shook. And I said, "Here I am. Here I am. Here I am, my Lord." I asked Him, "Why did this have to happen?" And He called me, "Oh, great and faithful servant. I come to heal thy leg. Be of good courage. Your faith had begun to weaken. This was only to strengthen your faith in Me." And when He said that, He groaned. He groaned in a voice I have NEVER heard in my lifetime. Then I felt Him grip my leg. And it seemed like all my flesh stripped off my leg. And it was like He would tie knots. My whole LEG was on fire, but my flesh wasn't burning. The Lord gave me a new leg. And He told me to walk. I even gripped His robe at the bottom. And when I came to the next morning, whatever I had gripped in my hand, there was a whole print of it in my hand.

I woke up, and my house was as hot as being inside a furnace. My house was so hot even my baby was caught up in it. My neighbor came from next door to see how my leg was. But my leg had no swelling at ALL. When she came into my house, she said, "I came to see about you. I couldn't sleep for worrying about you." And she came upstairs. I was in my bathroom washing in the sink. She said, "Oh, my God. Oh, my God, child, what HAPPENED to your leg?" But I was caught up so BAD in the Spirit of God, I couldn't talk. The house was so hot, even SHE couldn't touch my walls. The power just knocked my neighbor up and just SLAY her. She slid from my bathroom into the other room. And we both got caught up.

God gave me a SUPERNATURAL miracle. And when I went back to the hospital, the doctor asked me what happened. They couldn't believe what happened from Wednesday until that Friday I returned. They looked at me as though I had a double. "You look like the same lady. You act like the same lady," she said, "you have the same

lady's name." She said, "But what HAPPENED?" And the doctor he caught me by my hand and he looked at me. He looked me up and down. I said, "I AM the same lady." He said, "Well, I'll tell you one thing, lady, you know SOMEBODY and it isn't any doctor." And I said, "God bless you, doctor." And he looked at me and smiled. He was an elderly doctor. He looked at me and smiled, and he said, "HMMMMM." He said something to the other doctor. The other doctor looked at me and smiled. He still couldn't get this thing together. From Wednesday to Thursday my leg had COMPLETELY healed. Not even a BIT of swelling was in the leg, and I could walk on it perfectly without any pain. The leg looked just like the other leg. It was a MIRACLE that happened to this leg.

## House Blessing

Right now, I'm looking to move into MY house, my house that I got by FAITH. I said, "Lord, You know I NEED a house for my family." I said, "But right now I don't see any WAY for me to get the money, because I get social security, and I get income also for my children." I said, "Lord, where am I going to get money for me to buy a house?" I just didn't HAVE that type of money on hand. But I was in service and Rev. Greer called me out. He said, "Someone here needs a house, needs a house real bad." And two or three ladies raised their hands and I raised mine too. Rev. Greer says, "You, you're the one I want. You're the one the Lord's speaking to me about," and he pointed to me. And then he said, "I see you in a house, on a NICE street. NICE house on a street with trees. Name, seems I see a street name, like Lynwood or Leonard. Is that the name of a street near you?" I said, "Yes, Leonard is just a few blocks away." He said, "You go up and down Leonard Street, and whatever house you find, you claim it by faith. It is yours." And I just said, "Thank You, Lord, thank You LORD." And I accepted the prophecy even though I couldn't see ANY way for me to buy a house.

But I did just like Rev. Greer said. That next day my car wasn't running, it was broken down. So Sister June, she drove me. We went twice. The first day we went was a Wednesday, and we got caught in a bad storm. She drove up and down, up and down, up and down, up and down that street. And we found only one house, and it was burnt out. But the prophecy was given to me to go back and forth, back and forth. So the next day when we went again, we found two or three houses we had overlooked. We drove back and forth, and I got the old tingly feeling in my mind. I said, "Stop." I said, "Let's look at this house," because I was getting READY. I was so AMAZED that the Lord was giving me something that I had been praying and asking Him about for so long. There was even a time that I wouldn't pray anymore because it seemed like it took so LONG. I had prayed and asked God so long, "Please, Lord, give me a house, a decent house. I came from a decent house, I kept it up so WELL. And You KNOW I need a house." But it seemed like just when I had almost given up, the prophecy came. So, most of the houses we saw had no real estate name, but this house where I said, "STOP," it had a Century Twenty-One sign out front. I said, "Let me write this number quickly and I'm gonna call this gentleman." I said, "Where is this realty?" She said, "It isn't too far from where you're living now." She said, "I can drive you over there." So when I walked in the real estate office, I said, "Now, Lord, you know my financial situation. Lord, You know I don't have any money right now." And I said, "But You don't lie. You tell a person You would do something, and if they have FAITH, it will come through for them." So when I walked into the real estate office I asked about the property at 621 Leonard Street. He said, "The owner lives out in California, and it sells for nineteen thousand dollars." I said, "OK, could I see the property inside?" He said, "Yes, come on."

When I got in the house, I said, "Oh." I wasn't talking to the man, I was talking to the Lord. But the man started discussing the house. He was right behind me, listening to what I said. And Sister June said, "Don't mind her. She's all right." I forgot all ABOUT the man. When I got inside the house, I fell in LOVE with it. I said, "I'll TAKE it." He said, "Who's buying?" I said, "Just me." He said, "You married?" I said, "No, I'm a single woman. I have four children." I said, "I'm single, I'll take the house." He said, "What is your income?" I said, "Well, I have enough. I get such and such dollar income a month." And he said, "Well, maybe you can afford the house." And he kept talking to me. But I had tuned him out COMPLETELY. My mind was on God. I said, "I want to see ALL the bedrooms, just let me walk back and forth. Let me walk back and forth." And I said, "I want to go in the cellar." I was just talking. He and Sister June, just like little soldiers marching right behind me. I didn't pay them a bit of mind. I was just TALKING to the Lord about the house. When I turned around, the man looked at me, and I guess maybe he thought I had been drinking. I WAS high, but I was high from the Holy Spirit because I felt GOOD in my heart.

So then the man said, "Well, you have to leave a hundred dollars deposit on this house." And he explained through the procedure, he explained EVERYTHING to me. Still, I didn't have any down payment for the house. But the Lord worked that out TOO. And I thank God for my sister-in-law, because she went and lent me twenty-one hundred dollars for the down payment. Now I pay her back so much each month. I got that house by stepping OUT on faith. I didn't have the money, but God saw the way, and made fit for me to get the money I needed. He KNEW I would get it if I took that step of faith. I could have sat back, not even paid the prophecy any mind, disregarded it, said, "Well, I haven't got the money. Now, how can the Lord expect for me to go out here and get a house?" And if I had done like that, I would have no house. But the Lord said if you make one step, He will make two. If you TRY, and if you BELIEVE within your soul and have FAITH in the Lord, He MUST come unto you.

Now I'm waiting on this house. The deal went through beautifully. But then the inspectors found lead paint, and they changed the mortgage from FHA to conventional. And they're SLOW. And then after they corrected the paint, the inspectors found a wiring problem. Now the people have corrected that. But I don't even WORRY about the house. God gave it, JUST like Rev. Greer told. God did not lie. The arrangements were made for the house within the month. And if it's slow progress, it's all for my benefit, because God makes no errors. God doesn't want me in any house with my baby eating lead paint, and God doesn't want me in a house with bad wiring.

## Raising Her Children

I've heard the statement made so much on talk shows on television and radio that parents today should not control their children like their parents did. These experts say you cannot raise your children like your parents raised you, because children are much wiser today. But I disagree. Too many parents let their children have their way, and that's WRONG. They say, "Oh, I can't correct my child. I can't do this, I can't do that." And the attitude that their children have, it's DISGUSTING, and it's sickening. I don't believe in that. I try to teach my children as my parents did me, even though things have changed since I was a child. A parent still needs to have the obedience and respect

from the child. And I make my children have respect for THEMSELVES as well as for ME. I raise my children like my father raised me, but they don't have to work as hard as I did. Still they're going to have to work. They're going to have to help THEMSELVES go through college and they're going to have to help me. When they get grown there isn't going to be that talk, "I'm gonna dress my money, I'm going to put my money in a bank." No, sir, they're going to help me. Listen, I STRUGGLED for you, Honey. And I'm not going to kill myself for you without you having to reward me some way, or reward God one. You're not going to just have YOUR way.

Even when I wasn't saved, I always did right by my children. I didn't let my children do any and everything. I didn't let my children play with any and everybody. I always like kept them tucked underneath me. And I always taught them right from wrong. I never let them do a lot of foolish things. I kept a special eye out on them, to watch their moves, see if they have any of my temper in them. I sit down and watch their attitude, their moves when they come in. That way I see just what type of day they had. I can tell when the day's been good, when they've been working hard in school. And I watch their friends, what type of friends they have, because there's always an attitude that rubs off if your child's been with somebody that's not good for them. If there's but an inch, you can see it. A mother can see these things in her children. It's a move they'll do, if it isn't anything but a way they will sit. I watch ALL these things. I notice EVERYTHING.

Some parents are not interested in their children. When their kids come home from school, many of them are not home. They're out in bars themselves. So the children don't CARE whether they do their homework or not. Instead, they're probably out smoking pot, doing what they WANT to do. Then these do-nothing kids get around somebody else's child who wants to learn and they confuse that child's mind telling him what a good time they're having out there. And then maybe that child never gets his mind back on a level to achieve in school. They start failing this subject, failing that subject. Finally they drop out because their mind is programmed down so low.

I ALWAYS check my children. They don't even KNOW I check things. Now my oldest daughter, Judy, is an "A" student, all "A" student. She got an award for being the head of her class. She gets every award, she gets ALL of them. When school is out for the summer she brings so many awards home for this and that, I look at her, I said, "Now I never got a medal when I was your age." I said, "But God BLESS you." I said, "Keep GOING." But then you take Marsha, she's a smart child. She did better last year before she got mixed up with this one girlfriend. This girl was the type of person whose mother didn't make her do her homework. And the teacher wrote me and told me once that Marsha is a very smart child, but she's playing around, and she talks a little too much in class. So I went up to the school. I don't ever tell my kids WHEN I'm coming to school. I went up there and I watched the young girl and Marsha in the class. They were talking away. They carried on for a time and then this girl saw me at the door, and she goes, "There's your MOTHER." Marsha saw me and she jumped. I walked right in the class. I said, "I caught you talking." I said, "This is why so-and-so," and so on. Then the teacher, she just laughed. She said, "You caught her off-guard." She said, "I like for parents to do this once in a while because sometimes when we write letters home to the children's parents, they think we're exaggerating." I said, "I never tell my children when I'm coming to school, but I ALWAYS have checked up on ALL my children, unexpected." And I told Marsha, "The teacher knows you. What you have to do, you have to leave this young

girl alone because she doesn't want to learn." So when she cut that girlfriend loose, she got back to herself, and now she's doing better.

I'm much better with my kids now, since I'm saved in Faith Deliverance. I never was the type of mother that would leave her child and go out and party. My children and I, we get along like sisters. Sometimes they don't act like I'm their mother, more like I'm a sister to them. I always try to keep things this way. We get along BEAUTIFULLY. We play together, we clown together, we make jokes together. It keeps me going. It keeps my heart. And this way I can find out a lot of things about my kids, by being comical with them, keep the relationship open. I ask God to always make me this way so that I know my children.

I could not raise my children and teach them ANYTHING if God didn't guide me. If I would have taught them without God, it would have been destructive. They wouldn't have achieved ANYTHING. One thing, I have taught enough God in their ears since I've been saved in Faith Deliverance, if it would stick, they would turn out to be better Christians than I ever was. I try to always teach my children about God. I always tell them they must appreciate what they see with their eyes, because if it weren't for the sun and the rain, we wouldn't be here. We couldn't live without these things from God.

When I wasn't saved I didn't talk about my children to other people. I wouldn't hold a conversation concerning my background. And my children always were a little ashamed of this. But now I thank God that I DO have these children, and they're all a blessing to me. And I know God will forgive me for this error with the children's fathers. It's something that I have to live with for the rest of my life, and I just have to do my best.

### **Temptations and Disappointments**

Being a Christian is a good life, it's a BEAUTIFUL life. It's a good, glorious life. And then again it can be a lonely life. The last two years, it's strange, I can be a blessing to somebody else. People can come to me with a problem, and before they leave God will have given them a righteous mind and given them strength. But I'M the one drained, and when it comes to me, it seems like I cannot help MYSELF.

Even now if I get off to myself, my mind does things with me. It starts going fast, and sometimes I hear two voices speak. The Devil says, "Well, for the last four years you went to church Tuesdays, Fridays, Sundays, sometimes Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays. All this faith that you have in God. You can help others, but you cannot help YOURSELF." And the Devil does a number with me, especially if I get very lonely and I'm by myself, or if I didn't have a good week, my mind does a lot of wondering. I get lonely, and I get worried, and I feel sorry for myself. I say, "Lord, all the hard working I did for my children," I say, "Everybody I come in contact with, I help them. If they ask me to do anything, " I say, "I always did more." I say, "Now, I have children, but I cannot find any MAN to help me." I ask God, "Lord, WHY don't I have a husband? I work hard." I say, "I got a lot of brains upstairs." I say, "I'm not a bad person. I'm a good person. I believe in trying to have something." I say, "Now, I know how to stick with my man, to help my man accomplish whatever he wants." I say, "Lord, why is it I don't have a HUSBAND?" The Devil can really do a number on me this way. He's talking to me, "All this reading of the Bible, all this praying, what did it get you? You're lonely, you're broke, your mind is confused and look at all the time you've spent. What did you accomplish? You didn't gain anything."

And I have to hit myself and shake my head. "I didn't HEAR that voice. I really, honest to the Lord, I DIDN'T hear that." But when that negative voice gets to me, I don't give up. I don't lose my faith in God. I just pray even harder. I talk with God a little more. I'm DETERMINED to beat the Devil at his own game. I always figured the glory of God does NOT tear down, the glory of God builds you up. Only the Devil DESTROYS, God does not destroy ANYTHING.

If God says, "You must wait," then I just have to be a patient woman. A lot of people can't stand the waiting period, when they have to WAIT on the Lord. There's something in their life that they want God to really DO for them, and they've been praying for this, and when it doesn't come right away, a lot of people give up. They make a move on their own, without God, and that is a very unwise thing to do. God does not make errors, and sometimes God puts you on trial. God will try your faith. I am being tried now. I've been hurt, and I've been broken hearted, I've felt discouraged so many times, I've felt like giving it up. But then within my soul I go down DEEP and I remember what God brought me from. And then I see that my problems NOW, they don't compare to what they were BEFORE. I have to remind myself that just because I am saved doesn't mean that I'm going to live on a cloud and everything's going to be peaches and cream. That is not SO. There are always trials and tribulations in life. The difference is that the person who knows God doesn't face these trials alone. He has God WITH him to HELP him, just like I do.

### Blacks, Whites, and Black Christians Since Deliverance

A lot of Black people are taught to hate whites. They're told, "Don't trust the whites, all they want to do is use you." I have heard that said ALL my life. But that's NOT true. And right today I know if I need help, it's my white friends I can REALLY count on. With only a very FEW exceptions the Blacks that call me their friend, they may talk a lot of help, but I know where I have to go to REALLY get it. And that's the way it's worked out everywhere I've been, North or South. Whites are the ones that have been a blessing to me. There is little in my house that I didn't get from white people, that I worked for at one time or another. Clothes, furniture, dishes, pots, pans, appliances. Only a very few things in my house come from my family and I don't believe I can point out ANYTHING in my house that my Black man bought me. Whites may be prejudiced against Blacks, but it's my experience that if you work past that, there is something there for you. Blacks will smile all up in your face and call you all kinds of nice things, but when it comes to doing something REAL for you, they know how to disappear, FAST. I don't know which is worse, the prejudice or the phoniness.

A lot of Black church people claim to be Christians, claim to be saved. They say they love God and they're not supposed to have any bitterness in their hearts for their fellow man. But I have talked to Black Christians that claim they are washed in the blood of the Lamb and you can't hold a conversation with them without their hatred for the white man coming out. I talked to one older woman, she is an evangelist, and she had more hatred down in her heart against white people than anyone could EVER tell to look in her eyes.

There are a lot of people, Black and white, Christian and non-Christian, that will take their hatred to the grave with them. But I thank God how really blessed I am that I don't have this hatred. I'm not saying there haven't been white people I have disliked. There



certainly HAVE been those. But that is true for some Black people also. I never hated white people as a whole. In my family I was taught there is good and bad in all people, regardless of race. God made us all, and to me color makes NO difference.

Before I was saved, when I was out there running, I didn't have time to think, and I really didn't understand Black people too well. And I didn't care. Since I have been delivered and slowed my life down, and with my spiritual side developing, now I can really SEE Black people. Now I see most Blacks for what they really ARE. And it is PAINFUL to me. I ask myself, "What kind of people are Black people?" And from what I see and what I have experienced we are mostly AGAINST one another. I have some Black friends right today living in the middle class, and they have turned their backs on me, though at one time I had MUCH more than they have now. And when I had, I shared it. If I was going out and my girlfriend didn't have a dress, I'd say, "Come on, we'll go get you something," and I'd pay for a whole outfit. But these same people today, they won't even talk to me. That's what I find wrong in my race. They get a little more than others and they get very uppity and rude. They consider themselves better than you are, and they won't help you out. They are only out there for themselves.

A lot of Black women have caused their Black men to treat them wrong, and a lot of Black men have caused their Black women to treat THEM wrong. Many Black men have a low opinion of Black women. They consider most Black women to be rude, selfish, unfaithful and they say they don't appreciate anything. They say they're always grumbling about this, grumbling about that. Never satisfied. And it's true. There are a lot of Black women who treat their men pretty rough. There are a lot of Black men out here in the streets that have had BAD experiences with their Black women. Many Black women don't know how to appreciate their men. The women today, they tell their MEN what to do. They drive their men to distraction. They put them down, they call them ignorant, no good, lazy. And the men become something behind that that they wouldn't necessarily turn out to be.

The worst of all this happens when Black men fall into hard times. Then the Black man thinks, "I am Black. I won't survive as the white man can survive," and then his wife puts him down and loses confidence in him. Just when he needs the support from his wife, she tears him down and that casts a double shadow over the man's life and causes him to go into a state of confusion of mind that leads him away from his family and into the streets where he might not have gone otherwise.

Often too, it doesn't take the wife treating her man wrong for this to happen. There are a lot of Black men who when they lose their job, they walk away from their home, where a white man will stay. I have heard a lot of Black men say, "The white men have all the jobs so they can keep their families. Look at me, look at my family. We haven't got ANYTHING." Then they start letting themselves go down, and then they start mistreating their wives and their children. Finally, they just leave. When white men get laid off, they are still hopeful, but Black men are down and out and DRAGGING. This is how the white men survive. They don't give up. That's what I teach my children. "Don't EVER give up." That's how I have survived.

Black men could survive just as well as whites if they didn't give up and if they played their cards right when they have money. A lot of Black men get up and begin to make

some good money, and the first thing they want to do is buy a lot of cars, have a lot of Black women, and throw their money away trying to look GRAND. But the white man, he knows, he's smarter. He invests his money, he buys stocks, or real estate, or puts his money in certificates. He doesn't lose his head and run through his money.

There IS a difference between white men and Black men. It is not a difference in what they CAN be. It is a difference in what they ARE. It is a difference in how they act. All a woman wants from a man is his love, and his respect. In my case I gave my Black man all his due. I was there by him whatever he needed, and all I got was all I gave thrown back in my face. I talked to my Black man, I showed him how to start his own business so he could get out from under the numbers racket, and in three years he was rich. But I never saw any of it. What he didn't spend on fancy cars and clothes, he took and ran off and gave it to another woman. I tell my children, a white man in that same position wouldn't have done that. He would have appreciated what he had, and he would have stayed with me even if he DIDN'T love me. He would never let his children go to bed hungry while he's driving a fine car, buying fancy clothes and taking another woman to expensive clubs.

I should be a very BITTER woman the way my OWN race has treated me, the way Black men have treated me. The more I learn about my own race, the more I see where things aren't right. And there have been times I wished I was someplace where NO Blacks were. I know they're not all bad, but the few Black men I have experienced in my life have given me a shady deal. One way or another they have taken advantage of me, they have put me down. I haven't met a Black man in my life that I have loved that in some way he didn't try to destroy me inside. I have never wished I was white, but I don't deal with too many Black men anymore. It's not that I consider myself better than they are. I just don't want to deal with them. They are always trying to hurt you, always trying to use you. And now that I have spiritual gifts, I can see right through these Black men trying to manipulate me. I KNOW when they're lying, though I don't tell them I know, most of the time. But because I know, I know I can't take them seriously. This is what makes me very SKEPTICAL of Black men now. They don't tell you the truth, they're just holding a conversation to get where they want to go.

A lot of Black women deal with white men because they know that white men treat them better than Black men. Black men don't trust their women, and they manipulate too much. Black men put their women down something awful, and a lot of them like to start arguments and confusion for NOTHING. They like to criticize. They are ALWAYS suspicious, they always want to put their women on a bench and TRY them. They want to know everything that you did and how you did it and who you did it with. White men don't do that, and most Black women who have had dealings with white men will say the same thing. I don't hate Black men, but I prefer in my heart not to date them. In fact, there was a time in my life that I would NOT date Black men. I would only date white men. These white men treated me good. They showed me good times, always respected me, and never acted violent. They treated me good.

All my life I have observed the character, the behavior of white couples, the way white men act with their women. And now I tell my children point blank, "I'm not going to deal anymore with Black men. I'm going to marry a white man if I have the chance." They say, "Why?" and I say, "Because there's no difference in the eyesight of God and they

know how to treat you." If there was a white man I could love and if he would accept me as a Black woman with my children, I would marry him without a question.

There are a lot of Blacks that claim that their being down is the white man's fault, but most of the time it's BLACK people that destroy other Black people. They eat each other up trying to use one another. I knew people in the street could be cruel from when I was a sinner and out there with them. I saw what they did and how they did it and who they did it to, but I never realized how deadly Black CHRISTIAN people could be until I became saved. I found out that there are a lot of Black people who profess to be Christians who are some of the WORST people in the world. In some ways they are worse than the sinners in the streets. At least the street person is out front with who he is. You know he's going to try to use you if you are fool enough to play his game. But a Christian is not supposed to be playing with his fellow man. But I have discovered that there are many Christians who hide behind layers of quotes from the Bible and use you WORSE than a street person would. There are some Black Christians who are more lying, cheating and conniving than Black sinners are. They want to look like they are something they are not, and they build up walls to make it seem like they are what they want you to think they are.

My mother used to say the Bible can be anything a person wants it to be. It can save you or condemn you depending on how you USE it. And it's the truth. A lot of Black people use the Bible and religion to hurt and to destroy one another. These people claim to be ministers but they use the word of God to break people down and enslave them in their own way. They discover the person's weakest point and then they control that Black person's mind and take advantage of him. What I have seen in so many Black Christian churches is a minister looking to manipulate his members. The way they do, it's no more than a slick hustle. They will say the Lord told them this or that but they're just whispering sweet nothings in the person's ears to work on his mind to get what's in his pocketbook. A whole LOT of Black people have gone down in life giving to Black ministers in these kinds of Black churches.

Most of these slick Black ministers don't care about the poor. They only care about getting the money for themselves. They take but they don't give back to the Black community. Black people put so MUCH money in their churches, but when these same Black people get down and out there is none of that money that comes back to them from these SAME churches. It's a real shame the way many of these churches do their members. And this is another place that Blacks fall down. I see where white churches prosper and how they are organized to help their members. And in most of these white churches the ministers are sincere. From what I see they live a Christian life and they don't spend all the money on themselves. Black churches are not organized as they should be. That's why we lose out on a lot of good things in life, because as a people we aren't organized. And we are too much only looking out for SELF.

A person has to be as careful out here with churches and ministers as he does with people in the street. It is not easy to find an HONEST church with a real deliverance message. This is one of the great failings of Black people, that we don't have sincere ministers with a Christian message that can really HELP people. And we don't have enough of these ministers in churches that are really organized that DO look to help their members and the Black community.

## Rev. Greer, Faith Deliverance, and the Future

A lot of people that love God, whether they be Holiness or Methodist or Baptist, they have religion SHUT up within. These people shout all the time, and glorify God, but they don't see the gifts of the Spirit in ACTION. What they need is somebody to take time with them, to talk to them about God and to explain how the gifts of the Spirit of God in action can set them free. People in Faith Deliverance get set FREE. Faith Deliverance has it ALL, because Rev. Greer preaches all of it wrapped up in ONE. It's very important that a person see ALL that there is to see concerning God. A lot of people are dead and buried today who don't even know what it all was about. They got portions of it, but they didn't get all of it, and they really didn't know what to do with the pieces they had. It's ALL there at Faith Deliverance.

I've NEVER seen a man like Rev. Greer before in my lifetime. I like what Rev. Greer stands for, and I like the things that he teaches us concerning God. He is a GIANT in my eyesight. There is always something that I can learn from this man. It is like going to college, and having your mind opened. If you just go underneath Rev. Greer's ministry and listen to the words that God gives to him, this man can program your mind for ANYTHING that you want, so long as it is of God.

I don't understand HOW Rev. Greer knows so much and reveals the things he reveals. But I'm standing in the MIDST of this, and I have seen more miracles worked in THREE years at Faith Deliverance than my mother saw in SIXTY-EIGHT years in her church. Rev. Greer is like something you would read about in the Bible, like you would read about the miracles that Paul did. Just to look at this man and SEE these things, I KNOW this man is true because of what I have SEEN with my own eyes and what I have HEARD with my own ears. No ordinary person could do these things. And Rev. Greer is a man that God shows EVERYTHING. I mean not twenty-five percent, fifty percent, seventy, I mean ONE HUNDRED percent.

Rev. Greer has the gift of healing. He has the gift of seeing. He has three gifts of knowledge. There are nine gifts that only God can give a person, and Rev. Greer has ALL NINE of the gifts of the Spirit of God. He has ALL nine. And I have seen these nine gifts in ACTION. It is a MARVELOUS thing to see the gifts of the Spirit of God in action. I've read of these in the Bible, and I have long wondered in my mind what it would be like to walk into a church and see demons cast out, God healing people of heart trouble. Rev. Greer has given people new minds, and for some he sees a ministry. It seems like a FANTASY world, that you just DREAM this thing. But Rev. Greer is REAL. He is a marvelous, very HIGH man with God. This is a man whose faith God honors. And all he has to do is pray the prayer of faith, and God does the rest for you, if you BELIEVE.

I think about my mother's life when I think of what Faith Deliverance can do for people. My mother never saw the miracles that I have seen with my own eyes. And these miracles aren't fake. In the last three years I have PERSONALLY seen HUNDREDS of people that God has healed through the prayer of Rev. Greer. Some God gave houses, some couldn't get jobs, some were very sick, some had children run away, some had husbands leave home. But God gave Rev. Greer knowledge to PROPHECY to these people, and he tells them just what the Lord says, "I saw a vision. God's going to bring your children back home. The Lord is gonna give you a miracle in the next seven days.

Watch for it." And before seven days, they are back, and the people bring their children to church to testify. I have seen sugar diabetes healed. I have seen demons cast out. I have seen people actually HEALED from cancer. That's the greatest THRILL of my life, to see with my OWN eyes God bless somebody. And I KNOW God is doing it, because I can FEEL every person being healed, in my own body. I can FEEL the virtue when God heals somebody. I have watched these things longer than anybody in the church, because I have been with Rev. Greer ever since he hit the city. I KNOW the man, and I know what he can DO.

Rev. Greer is really a God SENT man. But he had some time trying to GET his church because a lot of other preachers in town fought him. Wherever he went to do a great thing for God, it seemed like other people would get the Devil in them. True Christians are supposed to be all of the same Father, the same blood, but I learned another thing. There's a lot of preachers who have driven goodhearted people OUT of the church. They SAY one thing, and you will watch them, they will DO something else. But this isn't of God, because there is no CROOKEDNESS with God. With true religion of God, what I have experienced with Rev. Greer, there's NOTHING crooked about it. I watch Rev. Greer in action concerning God, what he preaches, and you see him out of church, even in your own house, and he STILL carries that aura of God with him. He doesn't change. And that's what made me STAY in Faith Deliverance. I have been in Rev. Greer's presence MANY times other than in church. He's always the SAME with God. He's always TALKING about God, and what God would DO for a person. He says, "If you BELIEVE, if you hang in there with God, God will do WONDERS with you." Rev. Greer is just ALWAYS a good encouragement from God.

I thank GOD for my church. I MUST go to church to get my strength, because even though I'm prayed up within, I cannot get it ALL at home. I have to go out to be preached to in a MIGHTY way, to where deliverance is DEMONSTRATED, to Faith Deliverance and Rev. Greer. I get my strength from there. And I ALWAYS, to my last dying BREATH, I will always be grateful unto Rev. Greer, because he taught me the great things of God. I have a great teacher. I feel like I'll ALWAYS be indebted to Rev. Greer. God WALKS with the man, TALKS with the man, teaches this man ALL things.

God is ALL my life. He IS my life, He IS my joy. If I wake up in the morning, and I don't feel the PRESENCE of God, if somehow I don't really RECOGNIZE God, I'm no good. I feel like I'm just LOST. I have to tune in my mind. So I always start out a morning by humming a song. I hum a song that I have heard, but most of the time I make up my own song about my own life, what great MIRACLES God gave me. The words I put into a song, I sing it, and I hum it. And then God begins to just give me strength. I go to sleep talking to God. I wake up through the night talking to God. When I go to lay down, I always program my mind that I want my Father somewhere close so I always can reach Him. I always like to lay down with a good mind, with a righteous mind. And I will follow through with the ideas that I program in my own mind. And for twenty minutes my mind is DEEP into God. I am in the Spirit, but I am laying back in my bed. And maybe all of a sudden I come out of this thing. And my mind starts running. But then if I feel that I can't think about God, if I get a funny, different vibration, I program myself and I go on back into the grace of God. And I drift off.

For the last four years of my life I've been LIVING Christianity. And it's a BEAUTIFUL thing. I wouldn't have it ANY other way. And I know one thing, you may not get all the money in the world that you would LIKE, a lot of MATERIAL things, but I'd rather have the LOVE of God any day than to have a lot of materials things, because the material things don't matter so much to me any more. Serving God, being a Christian, and living a Christian life, THIS is my life. And if God was to destroy the Grace He's given me, the knowledge He's given me, if He just took ALL of this from me, I believe in my mind that I would fade away and die. Ninety-five percent of my life now I live in the Spirit anyway. My mind is ALWAYS on God. Wherever I go, I take God in my mind with me. I MUST do this, it's the only way I can SURVIVE this world, and it is the only way I can get where I want to go IN this world.

I intend to serve God until I die. And I intend to be a BETTER Christian than I am now, because this is new with me. I intend to grow with Grace. I don't know what future the Lord has in store for me. I can't predict that, but I intend, by the grace of God, to be wiser in knowledge with the Lord. I don't know my days or my time. But I can guarantee this, I couldn't live out my DAYS to thank God for what He's done for me ALREADY. I will always be in His debt.

I'm PROUD to be a child of God. I'm PROUD of knowing the Lord. And I don't think there is ANYTHING that could really separate me from God. This is the ONLY life I know. This is my PEACE. This is ALL my happiness.

## Epilogue

Since I met with Delia and took her life testimony two and a half years ago, I have seen her often in church and talked with her occasionally. I have known generally about the events in her life since that time, but the recent occasion of discussing the edited version of her testimony gave us an opportunity to get caught up in detail.

Though she has had one opportunity for marriage to an older man in the past year, Delia remains a single woman living with her children. Delia says her children are thriving and doing well in school, but that she must exercise a watchful eye in their behalf. Delia says her children are continually amazed by her ability to know exactly what they have done. Using her gift of discernment, Delia says her children cannot get away with anything. If they tell her one thing, she says she knows immediately if it is wrong, and the image and words of what really happened will flash in her mind, and she will tell them just how it was. As a mother living alone in the north Baltimore Black community, Delia says her spiritual abilities are truly a blessing to her.

Delia and her children have been in their new house for about a year, but the house is not the one she spoke of in her testimony. The owner of that house died, and the relatives decided not to sell. Thereafter, three more negotiations for houses fell through for various reasons before Delia finally purchased and moved into her present home. Delia says she is pleased to be in her own place at last, but the house is not the one she really wants. Already Delia has her sights on a better house in a better neighborhood with more yard space.

Financially Delia is presently being squeezed. She says her former boyfriend, David, is no longer able to meet the support payments to her and the children since he was caught by the Internal Revenue Service and strapped with fines for unclaimed income from the gambling and numbers rackets he had been running out of his nightclub. Everything David owns, his club, cars, and house, he has had to put up for sale to pay his fines so he can avoid imprisonment. With David's support gone, Delia says she has had to rely on her own savings, what she gets from social security each month, and income from her own employment.

Delia reports that she has had two jobs in the time since I took her testimony. One job she had to quit after a few months because she was being pursued by her employer for sexual reasons. The second job she held for most of a year, but again she says she had to leave when those around her could not understand her spiritual life. Delia says she has grown so strong in her spiritual abilities that she now virtually lives in the Spirit. Her problem is that her exchanges with the Spirit are so frequent that others misunderstand and tend to think she is disturbed or crazy. Delia says she also finds it difficult to say nothing to others on the job when so much is given to her spiritually about these people. She wants to see her knowledge used and often ends up counseling those around her. Delia says she finds herself torn between her desire to share her knowledge and her recognition that to do so invites misunderstanding and problems for her on her job.

Delia finds herself at a crossroad in her life. She needs money to support herself and her family, so she needs a job. But at the same time she is devoted to her faith and her own spiritual advancement so that she does not want to have to repress her spiritual life to hold a job and make money. Although Delia has been carrying on a counseling and prayer ministry privately for two years now, she is not sure if she is ready or wants to rely on this area for an income. Her problem is that she regards her spiritual abilities as gifts from God, the benefits of which she feels should be shared freely with others. So Delia does not charge for any of her counseling. She does, however, accept contributions if those whom she helps are led to offer her something after they discover that what she has told them is true. Delia says she has received gifts of as much as \$1,100, but such gifts are few and far between, and she reports that most people offer her nothing. A ministry of spiritual counseling and prayer is what Delia wants for herself, but she has not yet resolved her dilemma about its financial side.

Through meditation and prayer, Delia's spiritual awareness has become so acute that it even bothers her. Delia says she will often lie down and be unable to go to sleep because in her mind she will be picking up on all kinds of events that are happening or are about to happen in and around Baltimore. A day or two later she will read about some of these events in the newspapers or hear them reported on radio or television. In part to quiet her spiritual faculty, Delia smokes cigarettes. But Delia believes that her smoking is incorrect and does not want to begin a full time counseling ministry until she can eliminate this activity from her life. It appears that when Delia resolves the financial side of a spiritual ministry for herself and when she develops the ability to control her spiritual activity without smoking, no further blocks will remain to her following the career she says she really wants for herself. Facing imminent need for employment, Delia may well discover the solution in the near future.

## Commentary

By  
Delia Adams

In reference to the book Professor Burns is writing on Faith Deliverance, I am grateful God sent Professor Burns our way. I thank God for Professor Burns. I am happy that I met him, and I am pleased to have had the chance to work with him regarding my testimony for the book. I think my testimony as Professor Burns has put it together is beautiful. It is truthful about myself and it is true to what I said in our talks. It is also true to what I wanted to say about my life, my church, my faith, and my pastor. In fact, my testimony is so true I had to read it a few sections at a time. The testimony brought back such powerful memories, both good and bad, so I was myself overwhelmed, and I had to set it aside for a time. I only wish there were more pastors like Bishop Greer to help women overcome by the world and without God like I was.

I enjoyed being in Professor Burns' presence during our conversations. Professor Burns is a beautiful person, and it doesn't matter to me that he is a white man. I am not a prejudiced person. I have always had many white friends, and I thank God for them. Many of the material things that I have in my home were given to me by my white friends. In the sight of God we are all the same. I know that Professor Burns will always be with us in Faith Deliverance in spirit, and I hope he will always be with us in the flesh. Professor Burns has truly been an inspiration to Faith Deliverance. I know my pastor, Bishop Joe Greer, is grateful to him, and I know my sisters and brothers in Christ always look forward to having Professor Burns in our great meetings in our beautiful sanctuary of God.

In closing, I thank God Professor Burns chose Faith Deliverance Church to write about, and I hope that God will keep Professor Burns and bless him all the days of his life.



## V MARK SCOTT DELIVERANCE FOR THE HUSTLER

### Introduction

Mark Scott led the life of a hustler prior to coming to Faith Deliverance three years ago. His testimony is especially valuable because it presents the viewpoint of the hustler toward marriage and the family, complementing in this respect the testimony of Delia Adams from the woman's perspective. Delia's David was a hustler much like Mark, and Delia was a hustler's wife much like Mark's Edie. Of course many of the specifics are different, but the overall pattern of Mark's relationship with Edie and Delia's relationship with David are similar. It is interesting in this regard to think of David's viewpoint in his relationship with Delia in terms of Mark's outlook, and to think of Edie's perspective in her relationship with Mark in terms of Delia's point of view. In this way, I think we get perhaps a more well rounded picture of a relatively common marital situation in the Faith Deliverance community.

Mark's description of his first marriage to Edie is all the more valuable because it is presented as a defense of the hustler's outlook until the very end. I posed several questions which asked Mark to evaluate the overall effect of his hustling life on his marriage, but these questions only produced additional defenses of the hustler. I then shifted the point of view away from Mark and asked what problems in general he would foresee for the marriage of a hustler in light of his experience. With this less direct entry, Mark immediately shifted to a viewpoint critical of the hustler, and he did so while continuing to speak of himself and his own marriage to Edie. So, what we are privileged to get, in effect, is first a defense of the hustler in marriage, followed by a very astute, self-reflective and critical evaluation of Mark's own behavior as a husband on the hustle. But Mark does not stop there. He continues, relating his involvement in hustling to the influences of his own childhood in a way that makes him appear to be a rather accomplished student of personality, in this case his own.

This pattern of perspective shift from involved insider to critical, astute outsider is generally characteristic of Mark's testimony, and reveals his genuine underlying ambivalence about his present commitment to the religious life. While Mark wants to feel that he is completely committed to his new life, he clearly is not there yet. He remains strongly drawn by the world of the street, especially its women and nightlife. Mark's ambivalence is not helped by the fact that the major apparent difficulty that has confronted him since he came to Faith Deliverance, his alcoholic wife, Caroline, remains unresolved. But as Mark himself suggests, the most significant benefit to him of his experience in Deliverance lies in changes that have taken place within himself rather than in his external situation. Indeed, Mark seems to be aware that however frustrating it has been to put up with Caroline's continued presence, this presence has meant that Mark has had to confront himself all the more deeply in order to tolerate it. In the process Mark says that the discoveries he has made about himself have been fundamental, and ultimately much more important than Caroline's presence or absence.

In this respect Mark's testimony is itself revealing of the relationship between the pursuit of the spiritual and the discovery of self. Prior to Faith Deliverance, Mark was by his own

account a hard working man of physical action who pursued material well-being, pleasurable physical sensation, and social recognition. Apart from his periodic concern for his children's welfare, Mark's only time outs were devoted to developing strategies of manipulation to assure reaching his own personal goals. The contemplative, self-reflective side of Mark which we see emerge at evaluative points in his testimony is part of the new Mark that Deliverance has helped to foster. Viewed in this way, Mark's ambivalence, which lends variety of perspective to his testimony, is itself indicative of how far Mark has come after three years in Faith Deliverance. Moreover, the depth of Mark's intellectual understanding of his faith and the quality of his self-reflection to date suggest that he may well realize the religious commitment he claims for himself. Such a consequence would itself affirm the Deliverance faith, which asserts that what a person thinks he is, he becomes. For in Deliverance, a person's innermost ideas and images are the creators of his tomorrows.

### Background Summary

In his later forties, Mark Scott was born and raised in South Bend, Indiana. Up until he was about three, Mark's parents remained together with their three children: Mark's older brother, Mark, and his younger sister. Mark, who had had some problems with a draining ear as a baby, says he was the favorite on his mother's side of the family and received a great deal of attention from these relatives. At three, when Mark's parents separated permanently, Mark says the situation changed dramatically. His mother departed, and the children remained with their father, to be raised in the home of Mark's paternal grandparents. But Mark says both his father and his grandmother were prejudiced against him, in part because the grandmother had accused his mother of becoming pregnant with Mark out of wedlock and by a white man. Mark says this was a lie, manufactured by his grandmother out of his light skinned appearance, to cover up for the proven infidelity of her favorite son, Mark's father. In any event, at age three Mark says he found himself in the role of the black sheep in the family. With his brother and sister favored by his grandmother and father respectively, the blame and beatings for anything that went wrong fell to Mark. The grandfather, a minister and a truly spiritual man, was Mark's sole refuge. In his grandfather, Mark says he found the only person in the family who would speak up for him.

Mark's father continued to live with his children in the home of his parents, something Mark holds largely to blame for both the disadvantages he felt growing up and the failure of his parents to get back together and make a complete family. Mark says that while he admired his father for his physical size and strength, his father lacked the inner fortitude to pull away from the grip that Mark's grandmother had on him as her favorite. As Mark grew up, he says he would often say to himself that if he ever married and had a family, he would never leave his children, afraid they might suffer as he had.

Being a black sheep, Mark says he learned to be quick witted and to maneuver to get what he wanted for himself. By contrast, Mark reports that his brother and sister had the way made easy for them. When Mark's father, a former wrestling champion, took Mark's favored older brother to a wrestling club to train, Mark sought out a different club on his own where he also could train. Though much smaller than his brother, Mark says that in his weight class he far excelled the accomplishments of his brother, becoming division champion, being written up in all the newspapers, and embarrassing his father whose attention had been focused exclusively on his oldest son. In a myriad of similar ways,

Mark managed to succeed in spite of his position as the underdog, exceeding his brother and sister, and later even putting his father in a position where he was dependent on Mark financially. Mark says he succeeded because he refused to be denied by his family, and because he struggled and worked in all kinds of ways to make things happen for himself.

Whatever the shortcomings of Mark's grandmother, Mark says she demanded that all the children do well in school, and tried to instill in each one the attitude that they should do their best at whatever tasks they undertook. In high school Mark says he did very well, graduating with a B+/A- average. But his real love, besides sports, was art class. Here Mark really excelled, winning city contests and having one of his sculptures selected to be part of the permanent collection in the city art institute. Mark says that even today this sculpture remains on display.

Following high school, Mark entered the local college because unlike his brother he could not afford to be sent away to school. Mark worked full time in a canning factory and took a full schedule of classes in night school. While he did well at first, Mark says the round the clock program began to get to him, after the first semester. But more importantly, he says he got fed up with his grandmother taking his money and giving it to his brother so his brother could go away to school and only have to work part time. Facing this situation, which often left Mark strapped for his own expenses, Mark says he welcomed seeing his draft papers arrive, requiring him to report for service.

To this point in his life, Mark says he had been regularly involved in the church through his grandfather's ministry. Sunday was church all day, and Mark had become a Sunday school teacher and eventually Sunday school superintendent before he left for the service. As he looks back on it now, Mark says that his grandfather's church was not a church where the gifts of the Spirit were in evidence, nor was it a church where faith was taught as an integral part of living this life. Still Mark says he knew there was something there. He suspected that there was something more to it, but he did not know what it was. From his present vantage point, Mark is embarrassed to think of his ignorance in teaching Sunday school where he found himself unable to answer the children's central questions about what all the facts he was teaching them meant for their lives. He says he was also unable to tell the children why Christ was important for dealing with the problems and needs of their world.

Mark says his two years of active service were largely uneventful since by the time he got to Korea the war was essentially over. The only memorable event was receiving a letter from his father in which his father finally recognized Mark as his son. After all he had been through, Mark describes his response as a combination of relief and bitterness, but he says his letter back to his father was accepting of his father's attempt to apologize, under the gun, so to speak.

Mark says that his experience with racial matters while growing up was mostly non-problematic. His neighborhood and school were integrated, and he indicates that where he lived there were no racial or ethnic gangs. His friends were Irish and Italian as well as Black, and while Mark says few of his Black friends dated white girls, he did occasionally. According to Mark he encountered more prejudice in his own family than he did outside of it. Mark's grandmother, who was light skinned, was very color

conscious and favored her lighter skinned grandchildren. Mark says she would inquire about the color of the children's friends and would definitely shun and deprecate any playmates or girlfriends that were "too dark." On the other hand Mark could bring a white girl home any time. Mark indicates that he never understood his grandmother's preferences and that while he associated in a color range that excluded very dark skinned people, he always related to the features and general attractiveness and personality of the person rather than his or her skin color.

Not until Mark was in the army did he run into a real confrontation with white prejudice. While on route to a training base in the South, Mark says his troop train stopped at a station in one of the Border States. With a white friend Mark headed for the bathroom where he was directed away from the toilets for whites to those for "colored" men. Mark disputed the instruction, told the man what he could do with his "colored" toilets, and went in and used the white facilities. When Mark reappeared a crowd of local whites had gathered. Before anything could transpire, military officers from Mark's regiment stepped in and separated the troops from the civilians. As Mark says, there was nothing the civilians could have done anyway, because there were nearly 2,000 soldiers at the station. But after Mark challenged the color barrier and was successful, Black and white troops alike used the white restroom. More than anything, Mark says he found the episode perplexing. He had not encountered this type of racial thinking before, and he could not understand how people could be so ignorant. Mark's brazen behavior in challenging the barrier was certainly in line with an instruction he recalls from his grandmother in childhood. Mark says his grandmother had told all of her grandchildren that if they ran into white people who called them "niggers" to grab a brick and knock their brains out.

When Mark was about twenty, he returned home from the service and immediately began working in the canning factory again. At this time, Mark indicates that he had a white girlfriend, Theresa. His friends had told Mark that he should not get involved with Theresa if he expected to stay healthy because her parents would not approve of their daughter getting seriously involved with a Black man, but Mark paid no attention. Mark grew to really like Theresa and she him, but when the relationship began to look serious, Mark says Theresa's father took him aside and told him that he thought Mark ought to find a girl "of his own kind." Mark was outraged but kept cool at the time. Theresa wanted to elope but Mark says he knew that without her parents' support, there would only be problems. Knowing at that point that the relationship with Theresa was impossible, Mark determined to get back at her father by using Theresa. Mark says he continued to see Theresa when he wanted to despite the father's disapproval. Moreover, when Mark decided to give her up, he told her father that he no longer needed his "garbage." Looking back on the situation, Mark now realizes that what had been a beautiful relationship became infused with his resentment of Theresa's father, and once this happened Theresa became a tool for Mark's retaliation. In the end Mark could claim that he was the winner in the contest, but in a deeper sense he now realizes that he was reacting in an abusive way to encountering the racial barrier and being denied something he valued and wanted.

During and following the time Mark was involved with Theresa and was working in the canning factory, Mark says he took after his father and became more and more involved in the street life, the life of the hustler dealing in the world of women, gambling and

liquor. As Mark says, the only way to make it was to be in the street, and being a go-getter, Mark knew his factory job would not be enough to support the kind of life he was determined to have for himself. About a year after his return from Korea, and after several months of going with an old high school girlfriend named Edie, Mark discovered that Edie had become pregnant and married her. With Edie, Mark had three children over the next five years. During this time Mark also went to court and got a fourth child returned, Edie's first child by another man. Early in his marriage to Edie, Mark suffered through the tragic death of his father who was killed in a saloon as a result of an argument about a woman. For months after that killing, Mark says he carried a gun, just hoping to encounter the man who had shot his father. Hustling as always, he worked his factory job, made illicit liquor, and bought a nightclub with his father-in-law. All together he was doing very well financially and was able to buy a home for his family, nice clothes and new cars. But as Mark describes it, the center of his attention was his children, upon whom he bestowed all kinds of gifts and virtually all of his attention when he was home.

But with the factory job in the day time, managing the night club in the evenings, and hustling his liquor at odd hours, Mark would often not make it home at all. As he says, that is the way the hustler's life is, and Edie knew he was a hustler when they were married. Still, Mark admits that he became too involved with liquor and women, and neglected Edie's needs as a person. When Edie subsequently began fooling around, and Mark caught her with a man in his own home, that was it. Mark shot a shotgun up the stairs, not hurting anyone, but the marriage relationship had deteriorated enough by that time, so that Mark's action was enough to precipitate Edie's filing for divorce. The settlement that followed gave the house and property to Edie, and Mark was hit with substantial support payments. There were no problems in meeting these payments until the illicit liquor business had to be shut down because the police became more active in enforcing the law. Mark suspects that his in-laws were at the center of the crackdown because they were after his share of the nightclub. With no liquor sales, Mark got behind in his support payments, at which point his father-in-law told Mark to get out of the nightclub until he paid up. That was the last straw. Mark blew up, telling his father-in-law where to go, and leaving town for Baltimore where his mother and an uncle lived.

Once in Baltimore, Mark found a job and got some street action going with his uncle so that he was again able to send support payments to his children who were the greatest source of Mark's concern. In fact, according to Mark, all of his efforts went into trying to get himself back into shape financially so that he could go into South Bend and take his kids away from Edie. Mark's plan was to then bring the children to Baltimore to live with him and his mother. Meanwhile Edie tried to have Mark arrested in Baltimore for non-support, despite the fact, Mark says, that she was receiving payments regularly.

Financially solvent again, Mark returned to South Bend to take his children, but when he arrived on the doorstep of his house, he was greeted by several policemen. Edie had called the police and told them that Mark had phoned and had threatened to kill her. Mark says the phone call only involved him telling Edie he was in town and asking her to get the children up because he was coming by to see them. Not knowing why all the police were grabbing him, a brawl ensued, after which Mark says he was served with a peace warrant, not allowing him to go near Edie or his children. Incensed by not being able to even see his children, Mark went after his in-laws with a shotgun. Only Mark's

grandfather could finally persuade Mark to give up this pursuit. In the lull that followed, Mark reports that his in-laws quietly moved Edie and the children out of town so Mark did not even know where his children were. Mark was furious and again sought out his father-in-law to "tighten him up." But fortunately for Mark, he did not run into the man before he once again settled down.

Frustrated in his repeated attempts to find out subsequently where his children were, Mark finally decided to leave South Bend and return to Baltimore before he got himself into serious trouble. In Baltimore, Mark once again got a job, worked the streets, and for several years lived the high and wild life of a bachelor. Dancing, liquor, cars, women, and parties that never ended is the life Mark describes for himself during this time. Occasionally this routine was punctuated by attempts to discover the whereabouts of his children, whose welfare troubled him.

In the context of his partying life, Mark met Sylvia and after an hour of talk sped off with her in his new maroon Cadillac headed for Atlantic City. As Mark describes her, Sylvia was a girl for show. She loved to dance, she knew how to "show off the whole mink," and she would mix drinks to keep him high whenever they were together. Four or five months later, Mark and Sylvia were married, but, according to Mark, after a couple of years the marriage was in trouble. Marks says that Sylvia became obsessed with growing old, and from this and the fact that she was unable to hold a pregnancy, she became excessively depressed. Also, she reversed her position on Mark's own children, whose return she had welcomed before marriage but rejected afterwards. Finally when Sylvia went off to Atlantic City for the second time and was gone over a month without Mark knowing where she was, Mark threw her out of the house when she returned, and a divorce soon followed.

Not long after Sylvia's departure, Mark decided to return to South Bend to see if after nine years he could find anything out about his children. In his two-tone green Cadillac convertible and his matching two-tone green outfit, he arrived at his mother-in-law's door to discover a courteous welcome. After some talk and a meal, his mother-in-law said she would take Mark to where his children were that evening. Mark was delighted, and the two of them drove in his car to a nearby city where Edie was living, now re-married. Mark describes at last seeing his children as simply fabulous. But he was intensely bitter that Edie had not even kept a picture of him, so that his children could at least recognize him when they saw him. Instead they were complete strangers. But Mark talked with them and tried to gain some rapport, and when he left he gave them each some money and told them to write or call him if there was something they needed or if they just wanted to talk.

Mark returned to Baltimore to find a court summons on his doorstep for non-support of his children over the years. Mark could not believe it, since he could not possibly send money if Edie and his in-laws constantly refused to reveal where his children were. So Mark went to court, and the judge decided that Mark should begin supporting his children again, which Mark was willing to do. But, now Mark says he also wanted his rights. He wanted access to his children regularly, and most importantly he wanted to know if what he had heard was correct, that the children had been legally adopted by Edie's husband. If so, then there was no legal basis for Edie's support action, and she was just out to get what she could from Mark.

It has been five years since Mark raised these issues, and the only word he has received has been a typewritten letter, supposedly from his children, which essentially disowns Mark as the children's father. Today Mark says his children are grown, and his only hope is that at least one among them will be curious enough to seek him out and learn the truth about him. In the meantime Mark says that Faith Deliverance has given him the means to deal with his long-standing and deep disappointment over being separated from his children.

With his second marriage dissolved, Mark returned to the partying life. However, after about two years of wild partying, Mark says he became tired of having no permanent address, frustrated by all the robberies of his place, and concerned over his own welfare when he was knifed in an encounter with two would-be thieves. At that point, Mark says he again began to think about settling down and so turned to one of his girlfriends, Caroline, and they decided to get married. What Mark did not know about Caroline was that she was an alcoholic. He discovered this when his in-laws, without telling Mark or Caroline, took Caroline's paraplegic, retarded son out of the institution where he was staying, and brought him to live with Caroline and Mark. The boy's presence proved to be more than Caroline could take, and Mark says after a year her alcoholism was in full swing. During this time, Mark reports doing everything he could for the boy, arranging for several operations and getting him enrolled in a special school. But with Caroline's deterioration, Mark felt it was unsafe to leave the boy with her since he required an attentive adult. So the boy had to be re-institutionalized.

With her boy gone, Caroline got worse rather than better. Now she had nothing to do but drink, and Mark says her family only encouraged her habit by supplying her money and coming over afternoons to drink with her. Mark says Caroline's state became so stuporous that she seemed not to be even phased by the tragic death of her other son who was normal and very talented musically. Mark's frustration with Caroline and her family only increased when they repeatedly refused to make use of Mark's insurance to have her go to an institution where she could be treated for her alcoholism. Mark's view of Caroline's parents is that they are just using her and that her mother in particular is jealous of her daughter because materially Caroline is better off with Mark than she is with her husband. On one occasion Mark had to throw his in-laws out of the house at gunpoint when his father-in-law drew a knife on him and in a wild chase repeatedly tried to stab him. Unable to reason with Caroline, frustrated by his in-laws, and unable to physically shake sense into Caroline, Mark threw Caroline out of the house at one point. A short while later, however, she was back and as stuporous as ever.

It is at this point that we pick up Mark's testimony in his own words. He begins with a few brief comments on the role religion played through his three marriages to the point indicated above. Then we move to his description of how he first came to Faith Deliverance, and his subsequent life.

### Religion Through Marriages and Partying

It was just all an experience, marriage, partying, and then marriage again. And all through it I would go to church occasionally, but church was still in a passive situation, something to do on Sundays. And by being in church on Sundays, you had a better social life. You had more people to meet and to talk to. And it was like you had an

agreement whereby you didn't bring your troubles with you. And once you change your trend of thought it changes EVERYTHING, so at church you were able to change your thought, and that would be a help. It would be like, "Well, I'm here again, Lord, and I've told you my problems. I feel better because I've told You. Now, it is up to You to answer me or tell me something, or give me SOMETHING." And you would be receiving something, just by the power of those depressing thoughts leaving your mind. But it wasn't an ACTIVE faith.

Still, church has always done SOMETHING for me, even though I wasn't aware of what it was doing. And I've always known and believed that there was a God somewhere. And I've known all my life there is SOMETHING beyond just the human physical thing. I've KNOWN that I've always believed there is more to life than just the reproductivity of a human being. When I was a kid I used to read in the Bible where it says that these signs would appear and these wonders would take place. And I've always looked for them. I'd say to my grandfather, "What about the signs and wonders?" He'd say, "You can't see them?" I'd say, "NO!" And he would tell me, "In the right time," he said, "if you are looking for something, you'll find it." He said, "What you think is right, keep looking." And he never discouraged me. He said, "Keep looking." And after the service he'd say, "Did you see it today?" I'd say, "No." He said, "Keep looking." I said, "Why don't you show it to me, if you see it?" I was that type, I'd ask him. He said, "Well, when the time comes for you to see things, you'll see 'em!" He said, "It might be today, it might not be ever." He said, "But if you're supposed to see them, you'll see them." He said, "At the right time you'll meet the right people, do the right thing." That's what he used to tell me.

And I always felt that if I would BE in a church, I felt that maybe somewhere, somehow, I didn't know WHEN, I would discover God. And through all the partying and searching for my kids and the marriage problems, I would every so often get a LONGING to be in church. If I wasn't in church, I would get a LONGING, that I would say, "I got to go to church. I've got to go to church." Whether I WENT or not, I would get that longing. I always felt that somewhere, somehow, someplace, I'd find out who God is and how He really works. I'd find out whether this is a for real thing, or is it just a fantasy.

All through the time since I'd come to Baltimore, I was going to different churches every so often. Usually I'd go one or two times and then I'd had it, because it wasn't offering anything that could satisfy me. It was just a social gathering. You'd pay your dues, and then you go to all the functions - picnics, parties, dancing, the whole thing. I think a lot of churches exist strictly for people to be SEEN. Most people are just basically concerned about what somebody else is saying or what somebody else thinks. "Well, she went to church," or "That's a church going family," or this and that. Just people conforming to what other people THINK. And a lot of churches here in Baltimore have their cliques, they're just so social, and I can't stand cliques. You go to a church and you're going with this clique or that clique, and at different churches I've been to even the MINISTER was involved in some type of clique. I never liked cliques because I think a clique destroys the divine value of a church. When you got a clique-like atmosphere, then each group is trying to corner the divine spirit of the total church, and you're killing the church.

It got to the place where I'd make sure I'd AVOID the obligation and the commitment of belonging, because nothing was in it for me anyway. There wasn't any GROWTH there, and if you don't see spiritual development, you're wasting your time. And so I wouldn't



let myself become too involved because it had always been up a BLIND alley. None of these churches ever taught you where Christ truly is. I didn't know WHERE Christ was. But in Faith Deliverance it's not like these other churches. It's TOTALLY different. You look FORWARD to being in church. You KNOW where Christ is. He's in YOU. And in this church, and around Rev. Greer especially, what I like is there is NO clique. You go there to do a service for the Lord and you DO it. You go there to receive, and you receive the blessings of the Spirit. And if you don't GET anything, it's nobody's fault but your own because the table has been spread and the feast is going on. If you walk AROUND the feast and don't pick up any bread to eat, that's your own fault. Rev. Greer is not partial to ANY clique. When he comes out there with the Word to deliver and the prophecies, THERE THEY ARE, if the shoe fits, WEAR it. It's the same for everybody.

### First Experiences in Faith Deliverance

How I first came to Faith Deliverance, I was working part-time, I had two jobs, and I was working part-time in this garage, the midnight shift. So toward the end of the evening I had to set the cars up and leave them for the next morning, the cars that would go out earlier and those that would go out later. So every night I would be setting up these cars and about 11:40 I would be finishing up. And I'd have time to listen to the radio, and there was always a Black station where they had all the jazz, the music, dancing, latest sounds, and later on in the evening they would play spirituals and have these different ministers' programs. So, I was listening to different ministers on the radio, and I was waiting on something in my mind to click, to pick one out. I even tried eeny-meeny-miny-mo, catch the devil by his toe, if he hollers let him go, y-o-u. But that didn't work.

So Rev. Greer, he's the last one to come on, 11:45 every night. He was new in town, and I never heard of him. I had heard of all the rest of them, and a lot of others, but I didn't know him. So I heard him, and it just became impressed on my mind that I ought to go see this Rev. Greer guy. So I became curious because there was just something about him, and it just kept hanging on my mind, to go see him. So a couple of Sundays I had missed, I didn't go. I could have made it, I knew what time the service was, but I said, "Well, he's probably gone." So, my mind just kept telling me, "Go see this man, go see this man. You won't know about him unless you go see."

So, this particular Sunday, I had been out that Saturday night, we had been partying, and I was laced up. Man, I left the job and went dancing and didn't get home till early Sunday morning. I was LIT, I was SMOKING, I was bombed OUT. So I woke up that morning, I said, "OHH, Lord," and I don't even know why I woke up, but I had it in my mind so strong, even in my alcoholic state, my mind kept saying, "Go see this guy at the Sky Palace. Go SEE this man." It just kept worrying me. "Go SEE this man," and I kept saying, "What's so fabulous about him?" So I got dressed, jumped in the car and went to the place, but he wasn't there, so I went back down the avenue. I'd hang out at Tony's Lounge, and the pool hall and everything around. So I got to shooting pool for a beer. So I'm a pretty good pool shooter. Everybody there is half drunk anyway, but I was SHOOTING that morning. I was HOT that morning. But after a while I said, "Look, fellas, I'll be back." So I went back to the Sky Palace to see Rev. Greer again, and he STILL wasn't there.

So I said, "Later. I'm going back to Tony's. So I jumped in the car, went back, and I was there shooting more pool and drinking. And by the time I got back, they had anteed it up

from a beer to a beer and a double whiskey. So I came back and they jumped on me. Well, I'm still on the beer kick, even though I'm a little high from the night before. I'm just floating, but they're too tanked up to see how to shoot! So, I was really REELING the drinks in. But a few rounds of that, and I said, "Well, I'm going to tighten this last game up here, and then I'm going to go back up to church to see what's happening." So I won, and I got a glass of whiskey and DOWNED it, ZEROOM, shook my head, I said, "I'll be back." I threw my coat over my shoulders and took off, went back to the Sky Palace.

When I got there Rev. Greer was there and he was preaching. I was standing outside the door, and I could see him and hear him, and I said to myself, "Who IS this dude?" That was my expression, because he looked like a YOUNG guy. But the thought kept registering, "He knows what's happening, he's together, take a seat," like someone was talking to me. "Take a seat, ease down, everything is going to be OK, just sit down and relax yourself." And so I went to step in the door and I stumbled; that's when I said, "OHHHH, I had too many." Now, I'm thinking, should I go in there or should I not? Because I've always had a high respect for churches no matter what they were doing. And so I looked around and I staggered and my shirt had come loose and I had my collar open, and I said, "God, I must be higher than I THINK I am when I don't even realize I'm not together."

So, anyway, I got myself together, and I went in and I found a place to sit behind this lady, over in the corner. Rev. Greer was preaching and I was getting a good VIBRATION from him, a good mental rapport with him. I said, "This guy's all right. I'm even relaxed. This guy is really SOMETHING. Something that he's doing is really working out." I even got really intrigued, and so I forgot myself being high, because he was really working out there. I said, "He's really TOGETHER." So I said, "I'm going to get myself together and come back and see him AGAIN." All this is in my mind, and I'm relaxing, I have my head laid back against the wall in the back where I'm sitting. I was getting relaxed, and Rev. Greer was just walking up there and preaching, and all of a sudden he stopped and turned towards ME, just like that, BOOM. I'm looking around. I, I, I, I don't know what the guy is DOING. But now he has ALL my attention, he said, "You!" The people all looked my way, and I'm still looking at him. "Hey, what's he talking about?" He said, "The young man with the brown suit on there." I said, "That's me, THAT'S ME." He said, "Usher, get him out of the back there and bring him down here." So, I'm beginning to think, "Now, what's going ON here?" I said, "Oh, I hope this guy has the right thing in mind. I don't know where he's coming from. I don't even KNOW him." I said, "One thing is for sure, he can't beat me up." I'm beginning to go through a whole LOT of changes now. I said, "Out of all these people, why would he turn around and point at ME?"

And so, I said, "I'm going to go see what this guy wants." So the usher came and I said, "I don't need any help." I didn't know WHAT he was going to say, I thought maybe he was going to say, "What do you mean, coming in here drunk," and I had prepared myself to say, "Well, I'm sorry for coming into the service drunk," or something along these lines, and "it won't happen again," and I'd get out of the church and wouldn't go back at ALL. I was really trying to figure him OUT because there was something about him that was so different, TOTALLY different. It was something that I could register with, but I couldn't figure what it WAS. So I was going through these mental changes.

So I got up there in front, and he didn't do anything like that. He was telling me all about myself, about my drinking habit, and about different problems I was going through. As I was standing up there he was saying, "Right now, you got a problem in your home and you're thinking about clearing it up and you're not looking at it the right way. You're planning to go home and THROW some people out of your house." He said, "I see you throwing a person OUT of your house, and I see clothes going out the door." And I had that in my mind that when I came back home I was going to go clean this house out. I was going to throw Caroline OUT, and her clothes too. And, he said, "You've been drinking, you're a real REGULAR drinker, in fact you drink ALL the time." And, of course he was right on that one too.

So I began to think, who TOLD this man all this about me? My mind is really WORKING now. I'm listening but I'm thinking like somebody brought a paper in there on me, and this man's READING it, he's reading the BOOK on me. I said, "Wow, oh WOW!" Now I'm TRULY amazed. I'm going through a total EXPERIENCE here, all of a sudden. "How can this man that doesn't know me, tell me about my PERSONAL life and what I'm planning on doing?"

Then he told me that I had a good mind toward serving God. I had a good mind for reaching out for God's help in decisions and he told me God had not FORGOT about me. He told me God had some work for me to do, and he told me that today was my DAY. He said, "You have run to the LIMIT looking for the right place to go." He even told me that I had been to MANY different churches and listened to MANY different ministers and that they weren't registering with me, he said, because I could see BEYOND what they were telling me and that I could see some of the places weren't right. He said, "You go one or two times and you don't go back," and that was EXACTLY what it was. And he told me, "Faith Deliverance is the type of church you need, this is YOUR type of church. If a church isn't working for you, you won't be around another time." And that's right because I'm the type of person, you have to SHOW me. Don't TELL me anything, SHOW me. I have to see it happen, I have to KNOW it's happening.

So then he said that what I'd been looking for was going to start WORKING for me. Prayer was going to ACTIVATE the source and it was going to start working for me. And he said, "The Lord is going to take that drinking habit away from you and some of the OTHER bad habits you've got!" I'm glad he didn't NAME them. So, he laid a hand on my head and prayed for me. And that was IT. I hit the floor like a TON of bricks. I went out, BOOM, and I NEVER had that happen before, that was my first time. And I'd never seen a minister or a prophet really TELL you anything. I used to go up and mess around with these gypsies at the boardwalk, ask them to give me a good number or some jive, but nothing THIS heavy.

So, anyway, when I got up I didn't know WHERE I was. I thought that cat must have HIT me. He said, "Come on back with me." I said, "You'll have to lead me around. I don't know what's HAPPENING." I was more confused than anything else. I was in a different world because I was COMPLETELY sober. I was HIGHLY intoxicated when I went down, but when I got up I was COMPLETELY sober, and I was only out two or three minutes. I said to myself, "Wow, what KIND of church is THIS? Holy Moses, this is HEAVY." And that was about that for that first Sunday.

So that whole week the drinking habit left. And I haven't had anything alcoholic to drink since. I haven't had a drink in almost three years now. And I don't smoke either. I used to chain smoke. Now, my wife has cigarettes all OVER this house, but I don't smoke. It doesn't even bother me any more, doesn't even phase me. But in spite of the fact that I felt good for that whole week, the wheels of my mind really began to start turning, visualizing, picturing things, because I'd been drinking some BOOZE, man, I'd been laced up that first Sunday. And after that happened to me I saw other people fall out, and I got suspicious. I got a whole new PICTURE of something taking place here. I'm questioning in my mind, everything, how did this actually happen. And I felt like I had to check and recheck the situation. So the next Sunday I got dressed and I went back, and this time I'm STONE COLD SOBER, man. And I listened and listened and I LIKED what I heard and I LIKED what I saw, and I was satisfied that what was taking place was REAL, it was legitimate.

In the weeks after that first Sunday, I just kept on feeling good. I felt an elevated consciousness, I'd feel like I was just floating around. I had just the feeling of an internal happiness, a PEACE, a contentment. Rev. Greer told me that the old temper was gone, and that things were changing for me. And I think a lot of things WERE changing that I wasn't even aware of. And during that first year I became so ENTHUSED, so motivated in Rev. Greer's ministry, in knowing that this is the CORRECT ministry, in knowing I mean beyond a SHADOW of a doubt. I'm not thinking this, no, it's just like putting a new battery in your car, I KNOW this car is going to start. I KNOW this is the correct ministry. And I never thought in my life anybody could PAY me to pass out anything to ANYBODY on a street corner, but when the church left the Sky Palace I went out with the ushers and we had flyers made, and we were out there on the street corners every Saturday and any other time passing out flyers that we had left the Sky Palace, and the new location of where the church was. And I did this EVERY week for quite a few weeks. I'm getting ready on SATURDAY morning, man. I'd be up early, going around getting other ushers, and we'd pass out the flyers for the service.

I'll NEVER know how I did that because that is NOT my style. Really, that is NOT my style. Or I didn't THINK it was. But I was that enthused with Rev. Greer's ministry. Never in my life of pursuing religion of ANY kind did I get to the point of WANTING to do something like that for the church. But that was because I never found a church before Faith Deliverance that was REALLY real. Most churches don't do ANYTHING and some of the places, I know they're ripping the people off. But at Faith Deliverance it's all REAL. I KNOW Faith Deliverance is different. And when you find a REAL church, it gives you an incentive to want to DO for it.

### Changes Since Faith Deliverance

I KNOW things have changed for me in the three years since I've been in Faith Deliverance. And like I say, the first change was I turned away from liquor and partying. And it was many years that my life revolved around partying. But the longer I was in it, the more often I began to think, "What am I doing? Where am I going? What IS this? I'm working every day, sinking my money in the booze, playing with the women. I could get KILLED with all that's coming down." But after Faith Deliverance and where I am now, I KNOW partying is not really what I thought it was. At the time I was in it I thought it was fun. To me, now, it's just foolishness, it's not really ANYTHING. I think it's stupid. To look back at it, it's something to laugh at. It was a party of living, but like they say, "The

worst fool in the world's an old fool." And NOW, that kind of partying, it's not heavy enough for me. I mean the mental value of it. Where I want to go or what I want to do, partying wouldn't even touch the OUTSIDE of it. It wouldn't TOUCH what I think the value of life is now.

I still go to parties, but I don't drink anything and I don't smoke anything. But I'm not trying to convert anybody, because I don't feel BETTER than anybody. But sometimes when I get to a party now, I feel like I'm in a place where I'm not supposed to be. I feel like, "Hey, what am I doing, going BACK to where I've been?" Now, the people are still people, and I don't feel I'm better than anybody else, just because I have a new insight on life and I'm looking forward to something super to happen for ME. But the party people just don't turn me on like they used to. There is something about the people that just doesn't seem to ring a bell. And I feel like if I could just sit down with these people and really tell them my experience and what I KNOW can happen for them, it could really change their lives. But when they see me, it must be something about me that they pick up, because I see them sort of draw back, like, "Don't throw ME that religious stuff."

Now, I think that when we are born there's an emptiness in us, and it gives us that never dying urge to find something, to seek something. There is something inside us that keeps us dissatisfied. And I think that everybody has that emptiness because there's some kind of something we're looking for. And the party people, they're searching for something to fill that emptiness. They're not at peace with themselves, they are still seeking and searching for something to pacify the time. But they're looking for that something OUTSIDE of themselves in booze and sex and good times. THAT'S the mistake, because the answer is INSIDE each person, just waiting to be discovered. But even inside, I don't think you ever find the complete answer, because there's always more and deeper experiences, so I know I will NEVER be satisfied. But since I'm going to Faith Deliverance, I'm more contented. I'm more relaxed and I think I'm on the right track because now I'm looking within myself to the TOTAL me.

I would hope for the party person that he or she would take the time out to check into himself and see if partying is where he wants to go, what he wants to be. I'd ask him to evaluate his life, check it out, and see if this is REALLY what he wants to do the rest of his life. I wouldn't approach that person to TELL him something, but I would put it in a nice way, I'd say, "Listen, I can't tell you what to do. But I've been where you are, and if I was you, I would evaluate my life periodically. And if you do that, then you may begin to wonder how long this is going to last, and whether what you're doing will better your life, because maybe you can move up a step higher in life." And I'd try to say to be careful in what you're doing because you can destroy something mentally that you might need later on. And I'd say that I know he's going to have some ambitions with the girls, and go through these changes, what they call fun. There's going to be this, "Hey, man, look at that behind, look at that behind." Everybody's BEHIND checking. Or they say, "Hey man, that broad got a PAIR on her Hey." That's all the conversation's about. But they're not checking the REAL things because behind wears out, if that's ALL you're looking at. So what happens when that's finished? Are you finished? So, I would say to HAVE fun, but also try to get your mind together and know where you're GOING. I'd try and explain that there's more to life than just a sexual orgy. There's more to being a human being than just the physical. There's the spiritual side, the divine oneness, the elevated side,

the elevation of consciousness. And I know you can find MORE peace, more CONTENTMENT there than you can ever find in a party. And I'd try to show in my own self that through Faith Deliverance and the Deliverance faith, I've learned to be at peace with MYSELF. And if you're out there, not at peace with yourself, you've got a PROBLEM.

Since Faith Deliverance, there's also been a change in how I see people, because I know my philosophy of people used to be kind of rough. I was carrying YEARS of resentment toward people around with me. Now, I know it's still THERE, but it's not so much, and I can control it better. Before if people didn't agree with me, I didn't want to be bothered with them, I didn't care. If they didn't see things my way, too bad for them. I felt after I had thought it out in my mind that was the way it HAD to be. And if it couldn't be that way, check out. But like now, I'm able to sit down and talk to people. I don't necessarily have to agree with them, but I will listen to what they have to say. Before I wouldn't even LISTEN. I used to have an ATTITUDE. I had an attitude I would take, but I don't have any attitude any more toward people. I'm just so relaxed now until I'm getting lazy. I'm feeling a total PEACE, and I can relax on down, I can relax. Before if I wasn't asleep, I'd be doing something. I'd come and sit down, and I'd IMMEDIATELY get restless, BOOM, I couldn't be still. I always had to be DOING something. Get out of the chair, I'm going somewhere. I was out doing my yard, and I did that whole yard before I quit. If I didn't do it all, I thought I might not get back to it. But now I can do a little bit at a time and go back and do more. Now I still love to get a thing done if I start something, but before I was just tight, tight, TIGHT all of the time. Tension, tension, TENSION. But I can just RELAX with it now.

When I was a child I had to maneuver my way, outwit, to avoid what people might do to me. After I got to be a man on my own, I didn't HAVE to avoid people. I could just take physical action and straighten it out one way or another. And I would take any action, ANY course of action that was necessary to straighten it out. I never believed in things hanging on that weren't of value. If I got a car, and it wasn't running, no service, I didn't need it. That's just the way my make-up was. Either you had a service or a function to perform, and if you didn't do it correctly, then no point. I'd get right on top of it. And if I went through some physical action to eliminate the situation, I'd risk getting locked up. I didn't care, because I had a CONVICTION, and it had to be fulfilled. If something wasn't going right, then I would MAKE something happen. I didn't care WHAT it was, just get it out of my way. If I couldn't go around it or under it, I'd try to go THROUGH it. And most of the time I was able to eliminate or get rid of it some kind of way. But there were many times I could have been in DEEP trouble behind that attitude and that action. The track I'm on now, I'm able to relax when things are happening where ordinarily I would be in the midst, in the DEEP, man, I'd have my sleeves rolled up, and be off down there with it, some kind of way.

I laugh at the things now that before used to BURN my temperament. Now I take the things that irritate me on the INSIDE, I take them to the inside and let them go on the spinning wheel of thought, and see what happens. When I'm by myself, I'm very good at this now, I can just relax TOTALLY and say, "Now, what should I do about this?" And if I just relax totally and wait a while, then my mind will say, like, "Wait on this. Don't do that," or, "If this takes place, that could happen behind, so ride it out." So maybe I'll decide, "Well, maybe I'll ride this out." Sometimes in trying to force a situation out you

make it more complicated and mix it up MORE than you would if you just left it alone. You know, time works some things out. But before I didn't feel a decision was made unless I could DO something about it.

To show you how I have changed on this, take what happened to my car this past year. Before, if somebody would bend my car, they'd better have some money to pay for it, or get ready to get punched out. There'd have to be some physical attention there, because I don't like ANYBODY to mess with ANYTHING that belongs to me. Now, if something belongs to you, it could be there all day LONG, and I'd never touch it. And if it's there, I see it, I make sure it stays there where you left it. So, anyway, I had my car parked outside the church and somebody threw an egg from an apartment window above, and it landed on top of the hood, and it left the print. Now, if that had been me BEFORE, and if I'd seen who did it, I'd have beat him almost to death. I would have done a JOB on him. I KNOW I would have. Now this particular time I didn't see who did it, so I would have found out what apartment that egg came from, and I'd have gone to that apartment, and somebody would have told me something, or made some arrangements to pay for my car getting repainted. Something would have happened, something UNCOMFORTABLE would have happened to somebody. And the type of language that would have been used would have been very brutal. I'd have said a few unclean words to somebody. I would have said some words those people would never FORGET. And if there was something said back, we'd just go to war, we'd just lock HORNS. But what I actually did, now that I'm in Faith Deliverance, as soon as it happened, somebody told me, and I went and rinsed it off, and I laughed. I said, "OH, my God, what's happening NEXT!" Just like that. I just threw it off. I wasn't pleased. I'm STILL not pleased, and if I'd seen who did it, I'm sure I still would have had some words with their parents about repainting, but I wouldn't have gone on the rampage, just cursing and punching. I'd have tried to go about it in a reasonable way. So there's a BIG change.

Now, the real test of my change has been in this situation with Caroline. Like I said, I was ready to throw her out before I ever CAME to Faith Deliverance. In fact I HAD thrown her out once, and like I say, I was planning to do it again for GOOD when I met Rev. Greer. Now the situation is still the same, she's still here. As far as I'm concerned the relationship is finished, and I still want her out of here, same as the day I walked into Faith Deliverance, but she's still here. So there's been a change, because I'll say, prior to becoming involved with this ministry, I would have been cleaning this up a LONG time ago. My attitude would have been, "You just have to GO! Hey, you're destroying me, and I'm important to me," and any means or any way of getting her out of my way, that would be it. I could care less about her as an individual. Whether she's a human being or not, she'd have to go. I would have taken her and thrown her to the dogs, whatever the price is that has to be paid, it's just GOT to be paid, because she's interfering with my wheels of life turning.

Well, she's still here. Those are her clothes still in the closet, so I haven't thrown her out yet. But I want HER to leave. It's not just going to be MY decision. Now this brings up what some people say about marriage. There are ministers that say, "Hang in there until the end," you know, "till death do us part." But I think that's an absurd philosophy. To me, the end is when two people are no longer reaching each other mentally. That's the end, that is the death right there. It doesn't have to be a physical death all the time.

I think like this, if I'm WITH someone, my wife or whatever, I wouldn't be with that person unless I had some good feelings for her. So I feel like I know who I am to you, I know what you are to me. You belong to me, and I know what my job is. I know what to do and how far to go. In other words, I have somebody I can depend upon. I know that I'm with somebody that I care for, and I'm for that person one hundred percent. There is nothing, come hell or high water, that can come between me and that person. I can't stand ANYBODY coming between me and that person. But I expect you to hold your part of the bargain. You're not supposed to back off. If the world falls down, you hang in there with what you believe in. Now the moment you get shaky, I can't use you. I'll try to discover the problem and get it straightened out, but like with Caroline, if you don't have some constructive response, then you're no good to me, no way. After I've done what I think is my reasonable part in trying to see the marriage go right, then what can I do? I can't make my own life miserable because somebody else won't do their part. Even Rev. Greer will talk about how sometimes you've got to put the past behind you. You can't let the past overtake you and keep you down. And I think that's a part of your divine sense, being able to know when to leave well enough alone and make decisions and abide by them.

So, now instead of throwing Caroline out, I was so inspired by Rev. Greer, he just performed a complete TURN-ABOUT of my philosophy. He's helped me to see the value in letting things down EASY, and getting the same results. In the first while of being in Faith Deliverance I explained to Rev. Greer what I had in mind, and what I was going to DO about the marriage. I said I was going to get the personal situation straightened out, really get it together, right QUICK. I was going to do it MY WAY. But after talking to Rev. Greer, he convinced me to do it HIS way. He told me, "Just let it go, leave it alone, let the Lord work it out."

You see, Caroline's family, they're the type people, they don't want to see anybody doing better than they. Now they're going downhill, what with Lewis dead and Caroline an alcoholic. So they're the type of people will say, "Well, if we're going down, we're gonna take somebody WITH us." I mean they're the kind of people, they'll go to the police department and set up a trap for me to do something, because from before, they knew if something was coming off, I'd take some physical action. So if I did that I'd get arrested for assault or something. And the job I'm on now, if you get arrested, you're in trouble. You're not allowed to get arrested. So, it wouldn't be just hassles with the law.

Even if they didn't set any traps, I could have wound up in a fair amount of anguish or trouble. Because I used to raise some HELL around this place behind her not doing anything but drink. I can't live in a pigpen, and I used to raise hell. "You're sitting on your case all day, and the carpet's not swept, the floor's not scrubbed, the sink is full of dishes, the curtains are dirty, there's no dinner being made, no food being bought. WHY?" And I would grab hold of that couch and almost shake her sober sometimes. I tell you, that's a good wall over there and she's been on it once or twice. So, I think it's better Bishop's way, because you'd be surprised, when you get to the place where you're no longer having physical contact with someone, and they're not moving AT ALL, you'd be surprised at the extra amount of energy that goes into that shaking. You could actually KILL somebody, and not even be AWARE of it. It gets heavier and heavier as that anger really grows, and you just explode, very rapid, boom, boom, boom, BOOM.



And if something would have happened there, it would have been self-defeating. I'd clean up something, but I would dig a big hole for myself and mess myself up at the same time.

So, in following Rev. Greer's advice, I'm sitting here and I haven't got myself in any trouble. I'm still working every day. I'm not as comfortable as I would LIKE to be at this particular time, but, hey, I'm alive, I'm in good health. And Caroline, she's got herself a little job, so she's more independent and I think this is the first stage in letting HER work it out. And by being involved in Faith Deliverance, now I'm not even fazed about the situation. I'm sort of elevated ABOVE it until it's trivial. My divine oneness has got me so elevated until all this stuff moves around me. It's trash, the total picture of garbage, but I don't let it get TO me. And, you know, sometimes blessings come in disguise. Like now, in spite of the marriage situation, I am more relaxed and more contented than I have been in a LONG time, and I've learned to DEAL with this particular situation.

Bishop Greer said, "Let the Lord work it out," and I took my hands off of it. I let the problem GO totally. I don't even worry about it. I look out for myself and work around it. I didn't really think I could last under duress this long. But now I've become aware that things are only what you label them to be. Once you label something as a PROBLEM, once you accept it as a problem, then it BECOMES a problem. But until you lay a value on something, there's nothing there at all. Whatever you lay a value on and accept as reality, that's what it becomes. Now, at one time I was ready to MOVE to get this mess over. Well, I hadn't RELEASED the problem. I was still holding some value on it. But as soon as I said, "Well, look, this is not really where it's at," and I gave up the value on it, then it was nothing. Then I was able to say, "I don't have this, so I've got to replace this with something that's more constructive." So now I'm taking care of myself, not depending on anybody to cook for me, doing my own housework. I make my OWN life comfortable. After all, nobody else can make you happy, you've got to make YOURSELF happy! Because I AM what's happening.

So, since I've been going to Faith Deliverance I've learned to lean on divine action, and divine action IS working. And I know things will work themselves out. EVEN NOW I'm aware that something is moving. I KNOW something's moving, I know that I KNOW that I know that there's something moving. I'm not able to really put my finger on what it is, but I know that there's movement that's positive, that's REAL. Something GOOD is moving. I know it is.

But the change for me, it's not just that I have more control of myself, I also have more compassion for others. I just love people now. I love the TOTAL picture of human life. I have a positive attitude towards people, strictly positive. Like just the other day I was downtown, and I stopped to talk with this prostitute. I don't even consider her a prostitute. I just call her a Lady of the Evening. She's a HUMAN BEING! And who am I to label her. We don't know WHAT these people have come through, we don't know WHAT has happened in their lives; so who am I to put my foot on somebody? I said, "Hey, Sweetie, let's go have something to eat. Come on, I'm hungry." I love people! I'm not better than they are. It could be ME! It just so happens I'm blessed because I didn't fall under the pressure. I was tossed and driven enough, but I just refused to go down, that's all. I refused to STAY down, but there may come a day when I can't GET up, and that same person might be the one to come and say, "Hey, old man, I knew you some

time ago. Let's have a hamburger together." So when I am downtown, anywhere, I love people.

The other morning I was SO disturbed. I got off the train and there was a young fellow that's a dope addict, and he was laying there on the ground. Now it's the winter season, and that morning it was COLD. He had one shoe off, and he was laying there on the sidewalk all sprawled out. I STOPPED, and the cops were sitting right next to him. They were sitting right THERE, and I stopped and I went and got the guy's shoe to put on his foot. "Hey, what're you doing?" I said, I'm putting the man's shoe on " I said, "It's cold out here." I mean, this guy is not DEAD. I was standing there, a couple of ladies were standing there. But what can WE do, when you have the proper authorities sitting there, just LOOKING at this guy. He could FREEZE to death, he doesn't even know he's out there. And they didn't even act like he was a human being down there. You know, that kid that was laying there on that ground, eighteen or nineteen that years ago was somebody's blessing in this world, that was a golden child. Once he was a bouncing baby, and he's STILL a human being, no matter WHAT circumstance he's in now.

## Meditation

Since I've been in Faith Deliverance, I've learned HOW to relax. I just try to picture Christ in my mind. I try to form a picture of Him, and just meditate on the WORD Jesus, or I hum "Jesus Loves Me," and for me, that's quietness. Because when I do that, the rest of the world FLOWS away. It's still there, I know it's there, but I can just like float through the walls, and I'll be in a TOTALLY different consciousness. Sometimes the same thing happens if the right song hits my mind, like "Through It All." That's a DYNAMIC song, it really has a lot of good vibes to it. I think that everyone's gone through SOME tribulations that have made them wonder about life. And then like "Because He Lives, I Can Face Tomorrow," that's another song that will do it for me.

Even going to work, I just try to meditate on the Lord. And I try to keep that high meditation going so even when I'm working I'm just doing the work unconsciously because my mind isn't even ON what I'm doing. My mind is there, but it's not. I'll be going through my job like it's not even there. No physical effort. End of the day comes, I'm just as FRESH as I was when I got up!

Even on the subway, sometimes when I get into my own meditation, I can feel something just TOUCHING my face, a nice breeze, and it makes me feel REAL good. I can picture myself dynamic, victorious, and that breeze just massages me SOFTLY AND TENDERLY, and man, it's out of SIGHT! The people on the subway may be fussing and fighting for seats, but I'll be sitting and just relaxing. And sometimes somebody will say, "You SURE are happy." Because I'll be humming a tune. They don't know that I'm in a different consciousness. I'm TOTALLY relaxed and I just feel so good that what they're doing doesn't even BOTHER me! And, you can't MEASURE what it's meant to me to be able to relax like that in the Spirit.

## Song

I've always liked rhythmic music, I've ALWAYS had a good feeling about music, a song that has a good beat to it or the words have a lot of meaning. I would always have some song to sing. Like I used to have a song, "Jesus Be a Fence All Around Me," every, every, every, every, every day. Now, I like the beat in that song, but I think the WORDS of the

song have a lot of meaning to me, and with that song I felt that I was projecting something to the people around me and they would some way, form, or fashion make things move for me. Another song I've always liked is "The Mean Things You Say Don't Make Me Feel Bad, I Can't Miss a Friend I Never Had." I like that song because it will give somebody a message, like, "Hey, say what you want to say, it doesn't affect me." Now, that thought, it even goes back to when I was younger, with my grandmother and my father. I couldn't let what they said make any difference to me. As long as I knew what was happening, I could care less about what THEY thought. I don't know whether the song would make me more arrogant or whether the song would give me a more creative outlook on the situation, but I KNOW it helped me deal with the problem.

I can remember in my back yard where I was raised as a kid, when I would sing, I would just feel like I was FLOATING. I would feel GOOD. I'd feel light. It was like I would even change attitude. If I was depressed or under the weather, if I could just get a song going for myself, then I'd begin to get more into the rhythm of everything. It was like an inspiration or an uplifting. The situation or circumstances surrounding me could still be THERE, but within myself I would feel like I was floating somewhere else. I would feel better, and I could say, "So what for that. I'll get back to it." As long as I was singing I was happy. No matter what I was doing, how bad it got, or how hard it was, if I started singing a song, I felt like I would always be able to OVERCOME this thing.

Before, I wasn't aware of what my singing was actually doing for me. Now I know the song is enhancing the JOY of my life. It gives me STRENGTH, no matter what I'm doing, because once you're in any state of praise that's joy, you begin to become strong. Even if your physical body doesn't get it, you have a SPIRITUAL self that receives it.

## Spiritual Goals

Now that I'm in Faith Deliverance, I know I can do ANYTHING I want to do. For me the limitations, the cork is OFF the bottle. I used to figure like, you're in a small space and you are channeled there and you're tied up and can't go anywhere. You're in a garage with the door closed. But now I know, you may be in a cage, but you can open the cage door, and then there's NO limit. Before I always seemed to think that there was something holding me back. I didn't know what it was, maybe I wasn't oriented correctly or maybe there were too many people around me who'd say I can't do this, I can't do that. I've always been uncomfortable around the "can't do" kind of people. You hear them saying, "Man, all those white folks are rich and we're poor. They AUTOMATICALLY label themselves as being poor. Well, I say, if you ACCEPT that, then you ARE that. Don't put ME in that bag. I may have felt limited before, but I've NEVER believed in that mess. But now I know I'm me, and I am RICH. All I have to do is believe that good things are made to happen for me, where I don't know and where I don't care. "I don't ask why a black cow gives white milk. I just drink the milk." That's one of my grandmother's sayings. And this is the way I feel about Faith Deliverance. I don't ask why or who or where this awareness comes from, I just USE the knowledge. And now I just try to have DYNAMIC people around me, because association brings on assimilation. You'd be surprised what just being in the right atmosphere with the right people can do for you. And Faith Deliverance is the RIGHT place with the RIGHT atmosphere and the RIGHT pastor.

At this point in my life I got the picture, I got the word, but I wonder what is the REST of this spiritual thing. I can begin to see, but I STILL don't know how to figure it OUT. But I'm always searching. I don't care what sort of answer I get if I just get some area of this thing that I can deal with, really DEAL with it, and KNOW that I'm dealing with it. If I knew I was dealing with God and He's dealing with me, that's what I'm looking forward to, some type of really DYNAMIC action. Beyond that I'm looking for the ULTIMATE! I just want to see what it's ALL about, the total Christ. I'd like to be so elevated in this thing till I can begin to see through all the darkness. We're in darkness, and we don't even KNOW it. That's really heavy. But I don't believe in being elevated just to HAVE it, just to say that you have the divine Spirit of God. I believe if you have those gifts, you must DO something constructive with them.

I would love to get a bunch of children while they're growing up and teach them about the DIVINE part of themselves, show them how the Spirit works in them, for them. I'd like to really see this spiritual knowledge used correctly. It's so limited, the way it's available now. If we could get the children when they first start fifth or sixth grade, training the SPIRITUAL part of the human being could be like a part of their classroom study. The children's minds are open at that age, and they have the child's faith. The mind is so wide open that you can drop an airplane in it. And if you help the spiritual part of that mind come forth, it's going to last FOREVER. Once these children become AWARE that Christ is in them, that He's PART of them, they can begin to grow. With spiritual training the children would HAVE to grow up developing their divine self. And as they're growing there's going to come a time when they're going to have to really put it to work. And when they test this, and they become aware it's really THERE, that's when they're really going to be SOMETHING. I know if there was training like this, it would change a lot of the children being on the street, doing destructive things.

### View of Race Since Deliverance

All my life growing up I was told by my grandmother that I was somebody special, that I was better than the rest. But in my family I had to fight for the recognition and I have fought ever since to BE somebody. I knew I was somebody. Intellectually I knew it, and I've always been successful. But before deliverance there was always that doubt underneath. I felt like I had to keep proving it to myself and other people. But now, I KNOW. I have SPIRITUAL knowledge that I AM a child of God. I am a DIVINE creation. At my essence I KNOW I really am special. So I don't wonder anymore who I am and I don't HAVE to prove I am somebody to anyone.

I think I have always had a spiritual love for people, but before I would turn it off quicker and beat the daylights out of a person. I was a hot-headed man. I thought I had to let the other person know who I was. "I'm Mark Scott, don't mess with ME." But if a pressure situation comes up now, I know I don't have to get alarmed. I don't have to project who I am or what I am to solve the problem. Now, it doesn't matter whether the other person knows who I am, because now I know who I am. I'm more relaxed and I'm more analytic now. I think about things more than I did before. I'm just in a different realm of consciousness now.

Before deliverance I looked to the things around me to say who I was. These outside things were very important to me. I thought they made me somebody. I HAD to be in the

right clothes, in a fine car with a woman that made me look good, and I had to be with the right people. My car was SPECIAL, and if someone touched my car or damaged it, they'd better be ready for some action. Now, I still like a fine automobile and I still enjoy good-looking women, because as a child of God I feel I deserve the best. But now that I have gone within myself to discover who I am, I know who I am inside AND out, so I don't NEED to have anyTHING. I don't have to worship anyBODY. I don't have to be WITH anybody. I don't have to be SEEN with this person or that person. I don't have to have a lot of women chasing me to prove I'm a man. Now I KNOW I'm a man. I know I am equal to any man. I know that I am that I am. Of course when I say I don't NEED these things, that doesn't mean that I'm not human. I still love attention and applause. But it doesn't mean the same thing to me as it did before. Now it just confirms what I ALREADY know.

I never felt that my being a Black person was much of a problem for me because I never accepted the idea of being inferior into myself. But now, when I go DEEP inside myself I can see where I felt the pressure of being Black and I can see where I have always fought AGAINST it. I felt the need to challenge, the need to take on the world because of my race, to prove myself just as good as the white man. If I ran up against a racial situation I would challenge it. Depending on the situation I would work through it, or bust through it. And if I couldn't do either, I would manipulate it and turn it around in my mind to where I felt I controlled it so I was the one on top, making the decisions. And because I nearly always won, I never saw myself as having a problem with my race. But now I see there was a lot of energy being expended there to defend myself against the constant suggestion of inferiority out there in the world. I guess my being Black has been part of that challenging attitude it seems like I have always had.

But with deliverance and having grown in deliverance, I feel I really KNOW who I am. I think I am much more solid INSIDE. And because I am more at peace with who I am on the inside, I am more relaxed on the outside. I still feel the challenge out there and I know I have to respond to it, but now I don't feel like I have to challenge the challenge. Whatever the doubts were, whether they came from my family or because I am a Black person, those doubts have faded into the background with the knowledge of the divine in me as the REAL me. I'm secure in who I am. I don't even think of myself as being Black anymore because now I KNOW race just isn't important. I think of race now as a category, a negative limitation that isn't with me anymore. I'm past that now. Now I know I don't have to prove myself to ANYBODY. The only person I have to be as good as is ME. I'm into being ME and I'm into becoming who I can become as a human being. I make the challenge for MYSELF now. I can't be shaken by racial or other categories that people use. Whiteness, blackness, yellowness, redness, they're just irrelevant. The only challenge now is becoming MORE of who I AM.

In the Black community there is a lot of in-fighting that I feel limits growth. All the emphasis on lightness of skin color is part of this. People with dark skin are said to be less valuable and other Blacks will rationalize taking advantage of them for this reason. People who are light skinned form their own cliques - even to the point where a person must be a certain lightness of color to belong to certain churches. Even TODAY, dark skinned people need not apply. Now, it's really BAD when concern for color gets in the way of CHURCH people seeing the individual for what he is truly worth as a human being. It's a shame, but it's true that Black people have as much or more to overcome in

color prejudice as white people. They are doing it to themselves, labeling themselves, limiting themselves.

Personally I think making color the focus of the "Black" power struggle was a mistake. Blackness isn't a positive issue for solidarity. It's just a color, and color doesn't mean anything. It is not something to help the people grow, to elevate their minds. I think it's a waste of time, blackness. I don't even like the word "Black." It's a label and a person is not free as long as he is labeled. To me, it's just a bunch of ignorant people hollering, "I'm Black." And the label doesn't make sense. I'm brown, the next person is more yellow. Why go with the term "Black" to begin with, with its negative associations. I think the focus should be on something more constructive that would help the people grow and develop. I don't need anyone to tell me I'm Black. I've been "Black" all my life. What good does it do me to make my color important to who I am. To me, it just emphasizes a basis for limitation. I came here this way. I'm aware of this. Tell me something I don't know. Tell me how to make some money, tell me how to develop my mind, tell me how to reach plateaus in life I want to reach. Then you are TELLING me something. Out of all the marching, all that came out of it is, now I'm Black? Was THAT all the marching was for? Before the march I was colored. After the march I'm Black. What's the difference? Nothing, just a different label. And any label is a limitation on me, and I don't accept limitations. So the term "Black" has nothing for me, and these Black solidarity days don't mean anything to me. I relate to a harmonious day with everybody. That's my style of doing things. I don't go for labels that only serve to separate one group from another. I identify with being a human being, PERIOD.

On my job I hear a lot of the Black people that work with me cry about the Black-white thing. For the most part I'm just puzzled by all the talk, because I find I can go in the same places they're complaining about, and everybody treats me beautifully. I treat the people there like human beings and they treat me the same. There have been a lot of these situations. One recent one, this Black guy used to cover the service contract with a big camera company, and the person in charge was a woman named Rita. This Black guy had the hardest time there. He just had ALL these problems. He'd come back and tell us about it and he'd say, "Man, that lady's PREJUDICED." So they put this woman on my route. I went there, I sat down, talked with Rita. She brought me tea and cookies. She told me her needs. She said sometimes she needed the repairs done quickly because her production was held up otherwise. So I said, "Fine, no problem. Just let me know and I'll arrange my schedule on an emergency basis." And that was all it took, and that camera company turned out to be one of the best contracts I ever had. I got along terrific with Rita to the point where she was trying to give ME money.

Some Blacks are so convinced they're going to fail because of the white man that they MAKE themselves fail. And then all you hear about is how prejudiced the Man is. Others are so sensitive about race that they see a racial issue in everything and want to make a contest out of it. They go LOOKING for a racial situation. I've seen this so often, where a Black person makes a race problem out of something that's just a human issue. That's what the thing with Rita was. She needs a little special consideration, but the Black guy, instead of taking that extra minute to find out the real reason Rita needs what she needs, he hears her request and then her complaints and sees a racial issue. "She's trying to get to me, or take advantage of me because I'm Black," that kind of thinking. Then he gets his hair all up about it and the situation gets out of hand. But me,

I don't relate to myself or other people in terms of Black and white. I don't think I EVER thought that way much, and I know I don't now. I go looking to understand people, to relate TO people. I don't go smiling all up in their face, and I won't tolerate being treated as less than a person, if the other party IS dealing out of a racial bag. But I find a real racial thing VERY seldom. I just come across to people straight forward, "I understand there's been a bit of a problem here. Let's find out what it is and see if we can straighten it out and get things rolling again." And when I do that, I RARELY find that race is the thing at the bottom of the difficulty.

There have only been maybe half a dozen times in my life that I have personally run into racial situations. The last one was maybe fifteen years ago, before I got involved in deliverance. I was working as a superintendent in an apartment house downtown and I knew everyone in the area because I was hustling whatever I could. When I wasn't on the job as the super, I worked the parking garage on the block or I served as the porter for the bar on the corner that was owned by one of the city detectives. So, there was a diner across from the apartment house where I worked, and this one afternoon I was sitting up in there, having a cup of coffee and talking to this white girl I knew from my building. We were talking about nothing in general, the weather, the job, the people in the street, la-de-da. Someone must have seen me with her and went and got these three white guys, because the next thing I know these three guys came up to the table where we're sitting. This one guy taps me on the shoulder and I turned around and I saw the situation with these three white guys and automatically the adrenalin began to flow. I could see they weren't there to present me with any prize, just by the way they looked and the way they were standing there. I said, "What's going on?" and this guy says, "What are you doing talking to my girlfriend, nigger?" When he said THAT, when he said, "Nigger," that AUTOMATICALLY set the table. That told me immediately that the problem was more than just the woman. There's a racial thing in this now, and he's here to try to show he's superior to me. But when he labeled me like that, he used a word I detest. That word ALONE can trigger a hate that can destroy somebody. So the table is set and I am READY. I'm ready to make them eat that word and show them just who is who. It doesn't MATTER that there are three of them. So, the girl says, "What's WRONG with you guys?" but it's too late because I've already shot back, "How am I supposed to know who your girl is, honky?" Next thing I know all three of them grabbed for me and we went to war. One of them hit me and I grabbed the napkin holder off the counter and smashed one guy across the head with it. The girl was scared senseless and ran out, and we proceeded to tear up the place.

The guy that owned the diner went and called the cops, and with my detective friend just across the street, the cops came from EVERYWHERE. The cops came in there and found these guys beating on me, and one had kicked me in the eye. So, those cops just tore into those three white guys. I mean they let them HAVE it. When they finished with them they could barely stand up, and they told them, "Don't you EVER come around here and touch Mark again." And they told them so there wasn't ANY doubt.

And every last ONE of those cops was white. These were WHITE cops in there beating on these other white guys, protecting me. But that's the way it was. They knew me. They were my friends. I worked for everyone in the area and they knew me to be fair. They were just people and I was just people, and there was no place for the racial stuff these three white guys were trying to pull. So when it was over, I walked across to the

bar with my detective friend and had a few beers and we joked about my puffed-up eye. In my life I just don't project on the matter of race much at all, because I feel that if you start looking for something, you're going to find it. And now, I don't have the time to work on negative things like that. I prefer to work into something more harmonious, something more positive and productive.

## Race and the Deliverance Ministry

I think a good ministry should DO something for the people, not just be a high for a week and then skip town and let those same people go back down to what they were. There are some dynamic, real white ministers that appeal to Black people. They are for real, and real things are being accomplished through them for Black people. But most of the white ministers working the Black community are NOT for real. Instead of really helping Black people to get out of their negative sense of who they are and get away from their religion of perpetual tomorrow, these white evangelists prey upon the Black person's sense of limitation and inferiority and his inclination to look to the white man to save him. These white ministers are aware that Black people are religiously programmed to pray night and day, and then to hope that the Lord will come out of the sky by and by and take them to the happy hunting ground.

There are a lot of white ministers that are using this preprogrammed perspective in Black religion to attack the few Black ministers that are really trying to help the people to better themselves and their situation in life. They point their fingers at the Black deliverance minister who is rich and successful and who tries to set an example for others in his wealthy appearance. They say this is just materialism in a religious guise. But these same white ministers are doing the same thing, driving fine cars, living in fine homes, only they're doing it in the white suburbs where Black people can't go and can't see them. While they are crying "materialism" to poison the people's minds against the Black minister who is supposed to be so bad, they take the money and run to the suburbs. It's nothing more than a rip-off of the Black community and the Black religious organization. They dip in, do their number, get the money and they're gone with no way to track them down to know if they're using the money to help themselves or the people.

Most Black churches and their ministers are tied to the community they serve, so more of them are legitimate. The ministers have to live with Black people and be accountable to them from day to day. But the ignorance of these legitimate ministers with their old "deny the world" and "get ready to die" message is what sets the stage for the white evangelists to come in. And then TOGETHER these white and Black ministers attack the new Black deliverance ministry that is trying to show the people how to better themselves and their lives by applying the Spirit in THIS life, not just suffering through this life, waiting on the next. So between the ignorance of the old Black ministry and the jump on the bandwagon, rip-off white evangelists, Black deliverance ministers have a hard time gaining the recognition among Black people they deserve. Then too, there are all the rip and run white deliverance ministers who may have a worthy message, but just like the white evangelists they are here today, gone tomorrow. And after they're gone and the people come down off their spiritual high, there is no more guidance to help people really follow through with the message. So the message gets lost and then there is suspicion and resentment. These white deliverance ministers give the new Black deliverance ministers a bad name and they siphon off a lot of the money that could help to support the new ministry IN the Black community. When you really look at the



situation it's a wonder any Black deliverance minister makes it at all. It's such a time to break past the white rip-off and into the Black RELIGIOUS community, that there's little time or energy left to go after the REAL challenge, the Black man in the streets.

The biggest problem Black people face is the negative way they look at themselves. This way of thinking starts in the home with the attitude of the parents. So many of them raise their children and paint false pictures in their minds. Directly or indirectly it's always "You can't do this because you're Black. You can't do that because you're Black." This "can't do" attitude comes up from the roots. It's taught in the home. The children start out in a defeated atmosphere. They're defeated mentally before they leave home and they go out in the world and naturally they self-destruct. They are little time bombs just waiting to explode into failure. And sure enough, they run into something, ANYTHING, and they fall, and because they expect to fall, all they can say is, "I knew it would happen." They can't run into that same "something" and come back to say, "I know I CAN do it. If I just keep trying and keep at it, I'll get it." Most Black people cannot come back after they fall because they have been taught inferiority long before they really encounter whites. And when that is what has been taught, the Black person is going to believe he is inferior and whatever he gets in his mind and accepts as fact is going to become reality.

The Black deliverance ministry is trying to help Black people see past this false teaching, regardless of where it comes from. Deliverance says to the Black person, identify with who you really are, identify with the God in you. Deliverance is about stopping Black people from identifying with themselves as inferior, and it's about stopping Black people from identifying with white people as superior. Look to yourself. Be who YOU can be. Forget the labels, because when you accept the labels you become what you accept. Forget the white man as master and get up and get going to become YOU. Freedom from every limiting thought - whatEVER it is, that's what deliverance is about. Black people must come into the realm of "I can do all things through the Christ that is in me." The ministry should loose all the shackles, including the feelings of inferiority. The recognition of Christ within should mean there is no door closed on me. I am a child of God, a divine creation. I have within me the ability to be the equal of any other child of God.

Unfortunately, the way it's now, only five or ten percent of the Black people who ever ATTEND deliverance services really FULLY use what is there for them. Some people go to deliverance churches just to see the show. To them it's an outing, it is a man with a large vocabulary. These people are looking for entertainment, not a serious message. So they don't really listen much at all. Other people go through the service and they listen, but when they go outside they have been brain washed so long in the pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by churches until they can't penetrate to the new message they are hearing. But probably the biggest group in the service don't have their minds on what the preacher is saying at all. They're just there looking for an emotional release. They are not looking for the mental door to open to receive. They are looking to feel better by going to church. They don't use the sermon or message to move on. They have just been pacified. This is the largest group in the service, and they seem to be the most involved, but they are the hardest to reach.

These people have been raised in the Black church and they believe they have to be moved inside by their feelings before they can accept that the message is divinely inspired and true. The problem is that so many get so caught up in the feeling itself that they settle for that alone and don't look to receive a message mentally. These are the same people that don't think a man is preaching unless he's almost foaming at the mouth. After the service is over they'll say, "Didn't he preach!" and I'll say, "What did he preach about?" "I don't know, but boy did he preach." They haven't received anything. They're just releasing their emotions so they can make it another week. The real shame is that many Black ministers know that the people are only looking for an emotional experience and they make no effort to provide a real message to stimulate the people mentally. They bow to what the people want because they know as long as the people are hearing what they want to hear, they'll pay for it. There are a lot of Black ministers that know better themselves, who are just giving the people what they want, not what they know they SHOULD give. There is nothing WRONG with emotion, and I'd be the last one to say a sermon should be a lecture. But a true Black deliverance minister isn't satisfied with pacifying the people. He wants to show them how to move with the Spirit to new heights in knowing themselves and living their lives. And to point that direction he has to get a mental message across. He has to make a stimulating mental message the REAL center of his sermon and that is very difficult when the most active ones in the congregation are pulling to just "have a good time in the Lord."

The white deliverance ministry is not so emotional and I think because the congregation is taught to listen better, they are more likely to take the message in and act on it. But there is another reason whites can act more readily on the message. The delivered white person doesn't have to use the message to first get past his feelings of his own inferiority. He doesn't have this step to deal with. The white person will listen to the message and receive it intellectually and spiritually. Then he can go home and meditate on what the message means to him. He discovers by doing this what direction divine guidance suggests he should take in accord with the message. Finally he can apply the Spirit to some positive pursuit, he can apply the message directly to getting ahead.

But the Black person, if he WAS listening, usually can't meditate and apply the message directly. He has to first use his faith to deal with his fear of failure, and that fear usually shows up in his obsession with Mr. Charlie being in his way. The Black person will probably feel that he not only has to pick up the ball and go, but he also has to go out there and fight the white man to get the ball to begin with. So the Black person will take the message home and the first thing he'll think of is Mr. Charlie. He'll say, "God, you have to help me deal with Mr. Charlie. God, you know I have to move this white man to get anywhere." And as often as not he'll get so wrapped up in using God to work on Mr. Charlie that he forgets where he wants to go once he's past him. So by the time he gets out there he is using the message in a totally different way than he was supposed to. So of course he DOES fail, and then he thinks he's justified. "I knew it, if Mr. Charlie just hadn't been there, I'd have been OK." There is always the underlying thought, "If I was white, I could have done this." The Black person gets so caught up in the problem of Mr. Charlie that Mr. Charlie gets bigger and bigger in his consciousness and he actually gives Mr. Charlie MORE power.

If the Black person was truly delivered, he would stop focusing on Mr. Charlie. Mr. Charlie would disappear, because Mr. Charlie is just a negative, limiting idea in the Black person's mind and divine guidance can't work on an idea that is negative. But the Black person's difficulty is that his belief in who he is as a child of God isn't strong enough so he can keep his mind on his goal and forget Mr. Charlie as being in the way. This is a problem the white person doesn't have to deal with, and it's one reason it takes most Black people longer before they are able to act creatively with the deliverance message.

## False Versus True Men of God

I've seen a lot of people who CALL themselves healers and prophets, but people have to be careful, VERY careful. A lot of these supposed men of God can quote the Bible, but you have to be careful they don't turn it around for their own PERSONAL gain. They'll use different scriptures to make the people think that God said some particular thing, but in the context of the scriptures, if you read it yourself, you'll more than likely get a different picture. I've seen a whole lot of these people put on shows. But I've always had that SOMETHING inside that tells me, "This guy's a phony. He's just going through a ritual, an act." I could sense it in some kind of way. It wouldn't do anything for me, I wouldn't feel any contact myself. I just wouldn't get that feeling of divine oneness with him. If I had all the gifts from God, I would like to walk into these phony meetings where these fakes are fooling the people and expose them. Rather than to mislead a bunch of people, LEAVE THEM ALONE, let them find something that's GOOD for them. You'd be surprised at the number of churches that are making a BUSINESS out of healings and blessings, but they're nothing but a rip-off!

I was at a particular meeting, and this phony healer had a lady come down to him. He put a stool in front of her, and he put her feet up so if you move the legs in a certain way, one is going to seem longer than the other one. So, then, with this action, he asked another person that was there to come and check these legs. So this person says, "One is longer than the other one." So then he says, "This lady's legs are gonna be the same length when I get through praying for her." Now, all he has to do is move them back the other way, and then he says, "Now, check them." The person says, "They're the SAME length!" Now, people are believing that this leg has grown two inches, when they haven't done anything. He just MOVED them. And people are under the impression that this person's a healer, or in a divine status with God. But really he's just a fake and taking the people's money.

I was in another place, and this minister said, "God has ENOUGH prophets. He just needs to get some of the preachers straightened out that He ALREADY has." I said, "Who is HE to decide what God needs and what God has. That's not his business." Then he got to asking for money, and a lot of people are very gullible because they think church is ALWAYS right. So, this guy said that there were seventy-five people that the Lord told him had twenty dollars for him, and that if the seventy-five didn't give him the twenty dollars, they were going to be CURSED. Their mind's already boggled, and maybe all they HAVE is twenty dollars. Maybe they're on welfare, social security, or old age pension. And they feel like, "Well, if I don't give the Lord my twenty dollars, then I'm going to have a curse on me." So they'll get up and give their last little bit of money. Now I feel this is VERY wrong, because the Lord's going to bless you whether you GIVE

or not, if your heart is correct. If you're moving in the right direction, He'll make something work for you. But these phony ministers, they prey on people's fears. And after these high-pressure ministers get their money and scoot out the door, these people are in worse shape than they were before service started, because at LEAST they had twenty dollars before service started.

A lot of these fakes won't pray for the people UNLESS they get money. A lot of them don't want you in church unless you have some money for them. But this is WRONG because prayer is free. At Faith Deliverance Rev. Greer has prayer no matter whether you have any money or not. And Rev. Greer will tell you in a minute, "When you get broke you're SUPPOSED to be in church." That's the place to be, where you can get blessed, because when you get your consciousness correctly together, then things will start working for you. If you want to see Rev. Greer get upset, let some member say, "Well, I didn't come to church because I didn't have any money." That's when Rev. Greer REALLY gets upset, that really shakes his top. He says, "When you DON'T have any money, that's when I WANT you here." Because often it's when a person is in an extreme situation that the minister can REACH the person's spiritual side and begin to show him that the power DOES work.

Many people are DESPERATELY trying to find the answers to life, and they're trying to find the answers not just for their physical self, they're trying to find the answers to, "What is KEEPING me from being prosperous? I work every day. I'm a good Christian." And there's no PRICE that people won't pay to get themselves out of the misery of poverty or get their MINDS together so they have some direction. They have been here, they have been there, and nothing is happening in so MANY churches. Then some fake takes their money and they're even MORE confused than they were before they started out. No wonder they say, "Well, if THIS is religion, I don't need it."

The first thing people that are looking for a blessing should do is quit running so fast AT things, just try to relax and ask for divine INNER guidance. A lot of people are TOO determined. "Well, I've GOT to go here and get me a blessing, cause I need it NOW." But it doesn't work like that. They should relax themselves, and look for the Christ within THEMSELVES. Move slow, don't be rampant. Slow down and take your time. Listen to the radio broadcasts, and go to an ESTABLISHED place. Go where you can see the minister, where he isn't going to be running. Sit down and get a chance to talk with him personally. See what kind of relationship you can get with the ministry. A lot of these places, all you do is go in and hear a lot of fancy talk, and the guy's GONE, and you don't see him again till next year. Now I'm not against evangelism. No kind of way. I think evangelists are beautiful. But the only thing is, you may want to TALK with this minister, and he may be in California, and your problem won't hang until he gets back. Sometimes your problem is so pressing that you need to be able to talk right NOW to somebody that you really have confidence in, and you need a REAL man of God.

And that's the OTHER part of it. You've got to KNOW that the minister is TRULY a man of God, not some phony. And you'll know because the man of God, he's totally different. The really DIVINE ministers, like Bishop Greer, these are special people, different TOTALLY, maybe because they have grown more IN the ministry than the other ministers. But they're just different People, so different that upon seeing this person you would say, "There is something EXTRAORDINARY about this man." There is some

type of RADIATION there. As you're standing up talking to one of these men, you feel some type of vibration and you think something's coming out of this man AT you. You feel something like a magnet, some type of magnetic force that is moving somewhere around you when you're with this kind of person. And you don't get that with most ministers, and you never get it with the phonies. I think that aura comes from being really ELEVATED spiritually. There's something about these special people that, as they're talking to you, you can just feel them SEARCHING you. You feel them even searching into time and space on you. They're looking at you, and just talking slow and easy, but you can feel like something is going through your WHOLE, TOTAL experience in life. And they are. They're reading a script on you. They've got you on camera. And while they're reading you, they're sitting there, they're talking to you, they're just relaxing you down. That's when you open up, and at that particular time he gets a picture on you. He gets the handwriting on the wall on you. And that's how he's able to help you. He can be sitting beside you, and you don't know WHO this man is, but he can read you from the day you were born till you walk in the room. They are FANTASTIC people. And Rev. Greer is one of these TRUE men of God.

And you feel this same thing when you're in the service with a true man of God like Rev. Greer. You feel some kind of elevation or something. Like sometimes when Rev. Greer prays for a person and lays his hand on him, and the healing virtue of Christ begins to move, you can feel something just go right OVER you like an electric shock. You can FEEL that. I can feel it. There's some form of reaction I get, and I know SOMETHING is moving. Sometimes I feel like I'm hollow all over when he's praying for somebody and something good is happening for them. I'll get like a vibration of some type, and I KNOW that something's moving SOMEWHERE. Now when you feel these things, you are in the presence of a man of God, and you know THAT man can help you find the divine contact within you that can take you to where you want to go.

### Rev. Greer and the Gift of Discernment

Rev. Greer definitely HAS the gift of discernment. I KNOW that. It's happened many times to me where he'll describe something someone has done and it will be something I JUST did. I mean VERBATIM, word for word. He'll say, "This person has so much money, and I'm going to tell you where you have it," and he'll tell you what you're planning on doing with it. And one time, I had a problem with the basement in my place, and Rev. Greer said, "There's somebody here with some money, and they have leaks in the basement of their house, in the front end and in the back part of the house. You've got some money. He said, "And you're sitting right in that area there," and he'd be pointing to where I was. He said, "Somebody's planning on having some work done on this basement because you got a leak that's coming in and the water's about to cause you furnace trouble." And he was talking about the leaks in my place. So he's saying all this, and my mind is saying, "Wait for the prophecy." And I'll sit there and then maybe he'll say the Lord says, "If you'll sacrifice this amount of money, then within a month this or that will take place." He'll give you the prophecy on it. And the way he says it, that's the way it will work out.

I think the Lord has different ways of talking to each individual. With Bishop He talks to him in the ear. He talks to him. And I've tried a lot of things with Bishop, because I love to see how far this discernment thing will go. At times if I would have a sacrifice to give, I would fold this one hundred dollar bill up and put it in a different wallet, in a SECRET

compartment. Now there is no way in the world he would know I'm HERE, at home, sitting down, doing this purposely, with the intent to see what would happen. I'd do it just to see what this is, and then I would wait for a prophecy on the money, to see if there's anything laying on it. I would sit back and wait, and he'd say, "Somebody here has a hundred dollar bill, and you came here to give it, but you're just sitting back waiting to see what the prophecy is on it." And he would describe just how I had it in there, he would describe exactly how I had folded it and put it in there, and he'd say it was an old bill. And he'd say it was behind some tens and twenties, and he'd describe the color and the type of wallet. And it would all be MY wallet, JUST like he said. So, Rev. Greer's thing is TOGETHER, he's got his thing together. I've tested it, and I KNOW. There's just no way you can explain what he does except he has the gift of discernment.

### Faith Deliverance Viewpoint

The way I see it now, each person is a part of the TOTAL picture of this world. We are part of the total UNIVERSE. We're a part of the sky, we're a part of the animals, we're part of the ground. We're part of EVERYTHING. We have to be a part of everything in order to know it, relate to it, and use it.

Divine power is EVERYWHERE, it's all over. We live in it, we breathe it, we're totally ENGULFED in this thing. Each and every individual in this world is engulfed in this thing, but most are not AWARE of it. I believe that once we become aware of WHO we are and WHAT we are, and that we have a RIGHT to supernatural guidance, divine guidance, and the more we BELIEVE in this divine guidance, the more we grow, until it actually takes over. I believe it takes over, but it doesn't hinder the body from movement because any work that's done by God in man is done by man also.

If a person takes his time and receives the divine guidance, he can account for EACH of his moves, rather than just making tracks and getting nowhere. If a person will just sit down and relax himself and give his divine faculties time to work FOR him, he won't WASTE so much energy. He'll probably make one step and clean up the WHOLE thing. But, by the person just using the carnal mind, telling him, "This should be done THIS way," la-de-da, he's actually blowing his whole self, and not getting anywhere.

I think the more we believe and the more we become aware and let this power take control, the more it begins to move us, make us bump into the RIGHT things, at the RIGHT time. Like, I might say, "I want to get this or get that." Well, maybe instead of going a way that I ordinarily would go down the street, divine guidance would lead me to go a DIFFERENT way, and maybe the person that's trying to sell this particular thing I'm looking for, he and I might bump together in some way, form or fashion, and I get what I want.

Most of the people who go to church, they don't know that God works FOR them. And if you don't know WHO's working for you or that there is ANYBODY working for you, you're going to struggle forever. A lot of churches say, "God's in the sky and He's going to come down by and by and do something." They are not teaching you that the actuality of God is His presence within YOU. He's WITHIN you and He GROWS within you and He WORKS through you, FOR you, AROUND you and AS you. As soon as you KNOW from experience that the God in you IS you, then the super elements of

knowledge that are transferred on time and space are available to you. This is what GUIDES you, TEACHES you how to think, shows you WHAT to do, WHAT to steer clear of, WHAT to stand back and watch. And it teaches you also not to fear anything because you ARE everything. And if you are divine, correct, and right, you don't have to fear ANYTHING, and anything that's the opposite of you HAS to get out of your way. When this element of the Christ in you is APPLIED, your obstacles are removed.

The most important thing is being able to recognize and know that there IS a Christ and He IS truly the Son of God. Now everyone has heard this many times. You hear that in every church, you hear it in the rip-off places, and you hear it in Faith Deliverance, but in the other churches you aren't taught that Christ is the divine in YOU, and you aren't taught that the Christ in you can help you LIVE. In those other churches they say you must recognize Christ as the Son of God, but it's rhetoric that they teach you or it's just a philosophy. But in Faith Deliverance it's taught so you can USE it. It's ACTIVATED, in other words. It's not just a philosophy on a string, it's an ACTIVATION for your everyday life. The other churches are not really teaching the people this understanding.

Most of the people who go to church, they're STILL bound because they're more or less believing in what a MAN says. They're not opening their OWN selves up. They're just accepting what some man told them. But at Faith Deliverance Rev. Greer tries to get you to open your OWN self up and discover the divine guide within, and I think that that's the secret. Reach and search, reach and search and with the divine guide the things that you're entitled to will come to you.

I have been to some Holiness churches, and the clothes the people wear are dead. And some of them, they're trying to look like Christ or something. Now I'd be a fanatic for the fact that I know Christ lived and He died, and He lives on in ME, but I wouldn't be a fanatic for clothes like the man wore. His clothes don't make ME anybody, it's my inner BEING that makes me. Holiness people seem to think when a person recognizes Christ as his savior, he comes out from among everybody and goes to a secret place among a little clique group. I don't feel that way about it. The Holiness churches act like they can keep the Spirit tied up in their own grasp. But I don't feel that the spiritual thing of divine help to all people should be confined. I feel it should be taught and used because it is here for EVERYONE's use.

Any religion that teaches you how NOT to be happy, I don't need that. You don't have to SUFFER to know God. I don't think you're supposed to be here just to sit and freeze and starve. When God put that animal out there in that field, He put the grass out there for him to eat. The same way, He put you here with a mind to feed yourself, and you're supposed to USE the head He gave you to keep your stomach full to make you happy. I think you're supposed to have a HAPPY life. And, personally, I'm SURE not going to be desiring poverty. I'm not going to sit here and DECIDE to be hungry. I'm not going to sit here and DECIDE to have bad health.

Here in Faith Deliverance the cap is taken OFF your mind. Here you're taught that you're UNLIMITED. We take the cap off of your mind and let your mind expand, let your mind grow, let your mind open up to EVERYTHING. Then you get a better picture of life and of what you want OUT of life and what you want to do IN life. You learn that you're not worshipping something that is outside you. You're worshipping something that is

everywhere, and because it's in YOU, you can use it to make heaven HERE, and not just after you're dead.

To me, Deliverance is about having a TOTAL life. Deliverance is the faith of the TOTAL person. We are born as total beings. We are not born half, fifty percent, we're born as total beings. Everything we need already is. We need air, air is here. We need clothes, manufacturers are here. Whatever we need already is. It's already here for us. So I just believe this world is a PORTION of the stars of abundance. And I believe that we are here to enjoy this life, we are here to enjoy this world. I don't think God would want us to be miserable.

I think a portion of your salvation is now because you are here and you are a human being and you've got to have some salvation now in order to project that there IS a Christ. If I'm somewhere starving to death with no clothes on, I'm not projecting Christ. I think in projecting CHRIST I am reasonably happy, and I can advertise my health and my strength, my being. And I can try to help somebody ELSE or do some divine work in order to create some inspiration in somebody ELSE's life. I can also look forward to the life AFTER this life, but I think in preparing for whatever is to come afterward, we shouldn't overlook our opportunity to live THIS life. We have to be prepared NOW to live NOW.

In Rev. Greer's messages he talks about events that happen everyday to people, and he illuminates these things with divine truth. So, if you're seeing the truth and you're constantly hearing the truth, it's like a magnet, it draws it's own. Birds of the same feather are going to fly together. You keep your head with the divine truth and you begin to see things move for you. Any preacher can talk, but the real question is, is there any divine ACTION taking place? Is there any action that's curbing ill effects, bad tempers, crippled people? Is there any constructive action that's in the direction of HELPING people? Is there any action to enlighten people's MINDS? Is there anyone to tell you to get up off your behind and TRY to work, TRY to walk, if you have a walking problem? There are a lot of people who have ailments because their MIND tells them they have it. It's a cop-out if I say my leg hurts, and then I take the attitude I don't have to get up and work. There's a lot of people who let themselves come through negative ideas and negative thinking, and these people think they're getting away with something or getting over. But the divine right action tells you to do the opposite, and divine right action is what Rev. Greer preaches. Divine right action tells you to accept yourself at your full value, what you truly are. You are more than just flesh, you are a human being with a divine spirit and your spirit is your source of divine right action. But you have to DISCOVER your divinity and you have to MOVE for that spirit to work for you. If you sit down with your spirit, you aren't going ANYWHERE. But as soon as you ACTIVATE that spiritual part of yourself in the correct consciousness, it begins to work, and it results in POSITIVE action.

When you first activate your spiritual side, maybe you're not doing any physical action. But if you get your mind in tune with correct thoughts, something good is BOUND to happen. It may not happen today, but once the seed of thought is planted correctly, in the right place, and every now and then you cultivate that thought, eventually that thought is going to grow and from that seed being planted the divine right action starts. And as that thought begins to grow you begin to move on it. When the thought gets big



and becomes a REALITY in your mind, you accept it as FACT, then you begin to move in the world through different channels, and what you are looking for, you begin to magnetize it and it begins to magnetize you, and eventually, BOOM, you come together.

It's like when you buy an automobile. You must really PICTURE that car first, you visualize that car in your mind. "Oh, I like that." Then you go by and look at it. And you may look at it three or four times before something starts happening, and then you begin visualizing this car being YOURS. Once you accept that the car IS yours, then your mind begins to work the deal, to make arrangements to get that car into your reality. This is the way Rev. Greer preaches: ACTION, and if you set your mind on this divine right action, it works. All you have to do is ACCEPT it, and then it works.

Rev. Greer is an EXAMPLE that it works. He has said many times that he used to go to school with holes in his shoes. There were seven of them and his father died when he was young. And he just prayed to the Lord, he asked God to work for him, to work with him. He challenged the divine action in himself, he CHALLENGED it. He says, "Bible is what it says it is, then let me see it work for me. Put me in the right path and move me in the right direction." And BOOM, he found out it works. So now in the service he preaches and he stands for what he is. He's the divine right action man. He represents life. He's a young man, and he's out here showing others what the divine oneness with Christ can do for you and what can happen for you by knowing you're divine in God's sight. Rev. Greer shows by who he is that God is REAL, that His promises are real. If you hold to YOUR commitment to Him, to the Christ within you, then you can succeed in this life and the next. Rev. Greer IS what's happening and I think that his clothes, the flowers he wears, the man himself are strictly a portrait of divine light. The flowers grow beautifully across the plains, and you CAN be a Christian and have fine clothes. How am I going to represent Christ if I'm half dead? If you go out somewhere looking like you're half dead, or ready to be buried, you're going to wear black. I say, get out of the way with that. I like color. I like flash, too, because I like LIFE. If you don't want to live your life to its divine FULLEST, then Faith Deliverance isn't for you, and Rev. Greer isn't for you.

In some of the churches the people are under the impression that they go into the sanctuary and the church is right THERE in the building, and when they leave they LEAVE it there. Then they go back home and they drop. This happens because they aren't taught correctly. There is such an EMPHASIS in these churches that the message has to be CORRECT that the preacher doesn't inspire the people to want to grow. The message should inspire you to reach BEYOND your physical boundaries, your present situation. But if everybody's going to lay it out on paper and say the logical thing I should do because I have X amount of dollars, then I'll NEVER get out of my rut. LOGICALLY I don't have any money to put down on a car. LOGICALLY, hey, I can't go to the First Maryland Bank and write down I want to buy this house for thirty-five thousand dollars. But my spiritual mind is a storehouse which is UNLIMITED. So I AM going to go see this guy, because I WANT this house, I NEED this house, it's MY style of house. Now, he just might say, "Well, let's see, maybe we can work this out." That's the storehouse of CHRIST. That's the difference between a logical storehouse of knowledge and the DIVINE storehouse of abundance.

As a matter of fact I've even picked a house out for myself already. I'm looking at two or three houses now to see the style. I'm picking out the style of how it's got to be. I'm deciding what it should be because what you VISUALIZE you tend to MATERIALIZE. When I visualize it, now I begin to work on it. I have these other things to do here and I still keep doing them, but all in the meantime I'm wondering what I can manipulate to start this thing working, what can I do to start the wheel of this house turning. It's not what can I do, but what the divine mind instills in me TO DO, how can it work WITH me in the plan. And then I find myself doing this INVOLUNTARILY. So, I just KNOW it's going to happen. I'm elated, I'm happy already, I just know it's going to HAPPEN.

I've put a lot into my experience in Faith Deliverance. I've put my whole SELF into it, because I believe that if you put yourself into something in the CORRECT way, if you go at it, don't be afraid, don't wait for it, just keep plugging away with divine right action in the plan, something's GOT to break for you.

### Advice to a Young Man

When I look back on my life I think of the young people, especially the young Black men coming up. And I think about what I'd say to that young man that's maybe like I was. It's not easy, but I think I'd tell him to seek God through himself. That's FIRST. It may take you five years, but first of all, SEEK until you find your super INNER being. Only when you have contacted this DIVINE aspect of yourself will you really find out WHO you are, and until you REALLY find out who you are and what you are, you don't know WHERE you're going, and if you don't know where you're going, you can't know what you want or what's BEST for you. Until you find out WHO you are and what you are in the DIVINE sense, you're just like a grain of sand in the wind. You're blown here, you're blown there! You're LOST! But once you begin to become aware of WHO you are and WHAT you are, then you're able to make a stand for what you want and what you need. You're able to choose what's correct for you because you have DIVINE guidance. You can't THINK you want something. You've got to KNOW what you want, because you KNOW who you are, and what you can do. And you've got to know that there is NO limitation on you. The only limitation on you is what YOU place on yourself, by minimizing your belief, "Well, I believe I'll take this little bit." Not ME. Give me the LOT!

Now, once you know WHO you are, you can maintain yourself. You can keep your mind together. Then you must KNOW that life is the most important thing. Life, life, being ALIVE is the most important thing in this whole situation. Being here. Now, in order that you be alive, you must maintain a reasonable amount of control over yourself, over whatever you do. You can't violate the laws of life and expect to live. If you lose control, if you let the situation dictate to you and you go on ahead and get all drunk to kill somebody, create a problem, hurt somebody, that TEARS the world down, and you tear YOURSELF down with it. Now I was blessed that my situations in DEFIANCE of what was going on around me, in DEFIANCE of self-control, didn't reach the point of destroying me. I was fortunate because my wrong intentions were cut off, they didn't ever materialize to their full extent, because if they had, I'd have probably been in and out of jail or even DEAD. And there ARE many who ARE in jail and who ARE dead behind situations like I've been in.

But with divine guidance and self-control, you won't grow in the WRONG direction, you won't grow into something that's DESTRUCTIVE. Some people grow in destructive directions. Like a person can grow in gossip. That's destructive. They can grow in things that are not conducive to a good home life, and MOST of what goes on in the street is destructive like that. Other people grow in things that are going to destroy them physically like alcohol and drugs. You must know that you are a divine ENTITY, and what you do to your PHYSICAL self affects the rest of you as a human being, and I'm not just talking about some HEADACHE. Now, I don't tell anybody, "Don't drink, don't smoke, don't this or that." I just say, "Don't let what you DO do destroy something beautiful you HAVE." So grow in a constructive direction under divine control, and when you're very young you don't even have to know what you're looking for, just look for something GOOD. Just project your mind and look for something GOOD. Eventually you'll run into something. You can't tell WHAT it might be, but it will be positive.

Then, once you find a constructive, positive direction, and have faith in God, you will KNOW that whatever the trials may be, with divine guidance it is going to eventually work out. Always BELIEVE and always look for the BEST! If you're walking in crap up to your knees, look for the BEST, because the bad times are NOT going to last. I KNOW. I went from one struggle to the next struggle. But I'm not tired yet; I'm ALIVE! I can struggle on. I'm not immobile. I'm able to GO, no matter WHAT situation I'm faced with. And now I am UNLIMITED, because I have God WITH me. So BELIEVE in God, because God is in YOU, and when you hit the rough spots, look at it and laugh, and keep walking.

Now with divine guidance, when the time comes to make a choice, you'll make the RIGHT choice for the RIGHT reasons. Like choosing a wife, most of the time people don't select wives with divine guidance. They select a girl on how beautiful she looks, or how she dances, or how she humps. Let's face it, it's the truth. Maybe she's a girl for show. That's how I selected Sylvia. Sylvia was a party girl. She was a girl for show. She knew how to show the WHOLE mink, knew how to make you look TOUGH. That's what I married her for. But that's not where it's at. What happens when the show ends, when the drinks are finished, when the dance stops, when the sex is over, and the other eighty or ninety percent of everyday of your life has to be lived. You're stuck with the WHOLE woman then, and the rest of it may not mean you any good. After three mistakes, I KNOW, and I say just as you look within to find YOURSELF, look to the INNER woman to find a wife. Don't look to the OUTER woman only. Don't be caught up in the GLITTER. Know the REAL woman behind the dance, and ask the Supreme Being to send you what you NEED. Don't ask Him to send you what you LIKE, because He knows what you need AND like! So in due time, if you're seeking and searching and being still and listening within, I believe that what you NEED you will FIND, and what you FIND will be something you LIKE. I definitely BELIEVE that. I believe that.

Now, most people need help to discover their inner, SPIRITUAL self so they can begin the journey. They need assistance to contact the Christ within them. And then they need support and guidance once they make that contact. So I would say to this young person, if you are lucky enough to live where you can get to one of the Faith Deliverance churches, and benefit from the prophecies and the word as Rev. Greer gives it, then you already have the BEST available to you. But if you live far away, then I

say seek out a church and a minister LIKE Rev. Greer and like the Deliverance faith that can really HELP you. But don't settle for anything less than the REAL thing. And if you can't find it, or you need help to find it, or you've looked and there isn't anything THERE, then at least write to Rev. Greer and let him meet with you in prayer, and if you do that, and if you follow Rev. Greer's teaching, I know you can make a start toward discovering who you REALLY are, and toward making a new, more POSITIVE direction in your life.

## Epilogue

I saw Mark in services regularly for six months after I met with him to take his life testimony. Then, for over a year I did not see him at all, and I was told he had left the church. When I called him with a draft of his testimony to read, I was afraid he might have left religion altogether and no longer be interested in his testimony. I was wrong. During our meeting to discuss his responses to the testimony draft, I had a chance to catch up on events in Mark's life.

Mark says he left Faith Deliverance because he was frustrated by the lack of organization in the church. With no clear lines of responsibility beneath Rev. Greer, Mark says the same position and duties were too often given to more than one person, causing conflicts that reached into and affected the services. Other responsibilities that needed to be assigned were overlooked, leaving essential matters without the necessary attention. Mark also says that the finances of the church were too fluid to suit him. It was not that the money was used in any unworthy fashion, but rather that it moved from here to there in response to immediate needs, instead of being identified for use by some system of budgeting. Most importantly, Mark reached the point where he no longer felt he was growing spiritually. He enjoyed the services, but he was searching for more. Mark indicates that as busy as Rev. Greer was, he did not have the time to set up or conduct sessions to guide those in the congregation who wanted to go a step higher. Without rancor or any falling out, Mark felt it was time to look elsewhere for what he needed, so he left. Mark recognizes that Rev. Greer and Faith Deliverance turned his life around and started him on his spiritual quest, and for that, Mark remains forever grateful.

Since leaving Faith Deliverance, Mark says he has moved forward in both the personal and spiritual aspects of his life. The only area of his personal life that is unchanged is the situation with his children. Mark says he has heard nothing from his children since his testimony. He has twice planned trips to go to see them, but both times his vacations were consumed with ministerial duties. Mark remains interested in seeing his children, but he says he feels no real anticipation that they will get together soon. In the Spirit, Mark says he has seen that his oldest daughter is married and that she has a child. Mark says he feels somewhat anxious for her happiness.

In contrast to his situation with his children, Mark says he has moved forward with respect to his marriage. Mark reports that Caroline has continued to deteriorate as an alcoholic, now weighing only seventy or eighty pounds. It is Mark's view that he gave Caroline every opportunity and encouragement to become a complete person again. He waited, and he held out hope for Caroline. But Mark says he could not be expected to wait forever. As Mark says, he had to also consider himself, and he was aware that he would be the one to suffer from a lawsuit if Caroline injured someone while she was out driving in her perpetual stupor. Because he wanted to get on with his own life, three

months ago Mark filed for a no contest divorce, and as of this writing the divorce has just been finalized. Mark says he is disappointed about what happened in the marriage, and while he assumes responsibility for his part in it, he says he could not allow himself to be pulled under by Caroline and her family's refusal to face Caroline's alcoholism and move with him to correct it.

Living as a single man, as he has for the past year, Mark says he has continued to stay away from alcohol and cigarettes. In fact, Mark says that the street life as a whole does not attract him much any more. He goes to fewer parties now, because he says there is nothing there. Occasionally he reports that he will feel the urge and stop in a club, or a pool hall, but he says after a short time he gets bored with the banter and leaves. According to Mark, most of his social life now develops out of his church work, and when he is not busy, Mark says he enjoys the evenings he has alone with his tapes, records, and books.

After departing Faith Deliverance, Mark indicates that he tried two other Deliverance churches before he settled into one which it turns out is led by the same man who trained Rev. Greer in California. Mark says he rapidly advanced in this organization and was ordained as a Deliverance minister in this church. As a member of the ministerial board of the church, Mark says he has preached many times in the services of the church and in services in other churches. In fact, Mark was the guest preacher in a service in one of the largest Deliverance churches in the city where he spoke before more than two thousand people. Mark says he has been surprised himself at how well his ministry has been received. At the present time Mark's only reservation about his ministry is that he has not yet really dealt with or developed the gifts of discernment and prophecy. However, Mark expects that these gifts will come as his ministry further progresses.

Mark's plans for the future focus on his own ministry. Mark wants to see Deliverance made available to everyone, and more rapidly than most churches are revealing the good news. Mark thinks that the elaborate physical and social structures of many Deliverance churches force the ministers of these churches to move the people slowly to the truth because these churches need the people's money. Mark's solution is to eliminate the expensive overhead, get out in the open air and the sunshine, speak the truth, and help people discover their divine inner selves. True to his faith, Mark is not just talking about doing it. He is saving his money to purchase the bus and the sound equipment he has already selected. With his sound equipment and transportation, Mark says he will be able to easily move from his home to various points in the city to reach the people. "Keep it simple," is Mark's attitude. In this way he says nothing can get in the way of the truth. Mark plans to begin his open-air ministry using his spare time on weekends. If his ministry is successful, nothing would please Mark more than to be able to devote himself full time to a simple but effective and efficient Deliverance ministry.

## Commentary

By  
Mark Scott

I am very well pleased with my testimony. In fact I'm really excited about it. I am truly amazed how Dr. Burns has been able to take all of the information from our talks and

put it together and develop it into something that makes sense. I recall the statements that appear in the testimony and I know sometimes they were made at different points in our conversations, and I am really impressed with Dr. Burns' ability to put the pieces together so the testimony is complete and accurate. There is no doubt about it, that's me in the testimony. I can even hear myself talking. As far as I'm concerned, all the things that are important are there. I wouldn't change anything. It is right the way it is. In fact, as I read the testimony I was really fascinated with it, intrigued over it. I said to myself, "This is heavy." The testimony is more than I ever anticipated.

I enjoyed the sessions with Dr. Burns. It's the first time I have ever talked so much to anyone about my life and my past. I look back on my life now through the testimony, and I see I have really been through some times, some changes. But with Deliverance in my life I am a different person now. I can see the bigger picture of life around me, and I hope my testimony can help someone else find his real self, maybe some young man out there going through all these changes like I was.

Dr. Burns has asked me to comment on any effect his being white and my being Black had on our talks or my testimony. I really don't think the racial issue entered in. Dr. Burns' style is white. My style is Black. But our talks weren't about style. Our talks were about what Deliverance has meant in my life. Even before Deliverance I wasn't into that racial mess. I always believed a person is a person first and if he makes it or not it is as a person, not because he's Black or white. I see too many Black people hide behind their Black skin to excuse their failures. I never bought that mess. I always figured if I make it, I make it as me. I never looked for excuses for myself because of the color of my skin, and at the same time I've never allowed any other man to put me down just because I was Black. I've had a few run-ins on account of the ignorance of some white people, but being who I am, I've never backed off from that, and I've always come out the winner. But I've never accepted the idea that the white man - as a category - is evil which is what some Black people think and what a lot of Blacks hide behind. With Deliverance in my life, race is even less important to me than it ever was. The human being is what is important. Each human being's potential to become a complete, dynamic individual is what counts. Whether a person is Black or white is just irrelevant.

Dr. Burns came to me as a human being, and I met with him and talked with him at that level. It was obvious that Dr. Burns was sincere in what he was doing, and I know I was sincere in wanting to give my testimony so it might help others. I enjoyed the sessions with Dr. Burns. I feel like I gained from talking about my life and from the exchange of ideas we had. I am really excited about my testimony. I like it the way it is, and I look forward to seeing it in the book.

## VI FLORA LINCOLN OVERCOMING ALCOHOL, JEALOUSY AND FIGHTING IN A MARRIAGE

### Introduction

Flora Lincoln's testimony reveals a pattern that is common to the testimonies of so many Faith Deliverance women that it deserves comment. Raised in a family where Flora describes herself being beaten frequently and severely by her mother, Flora repeatedly witnessed her parents' loud arguments and destructive fights, fueled by her father's drunken jealousy. Flora says that as a young child she was terrified by her parents' fights, yet she would taunt her mother during her own beatings and refused to cry, responses which Flora admits only made the beatings worse. In both of her own marriages, Flora encountered the same abusive behavior from her husbands as her mother had received from Flora's father. Jealousy was at the root of nearly all the arguments, and alcohol virtually assured that an argument would erupt. In these arguments Flora would be an active verbal participant, but would suffer physically when the arguments became fights.

Lack of trust and insecurity seem to underlie what women like Flora describe as the irrational jealousy of their husbands, who are said to start an argument at the least hint of another man. Of course some wives and girlfriends do take advantage of their husbands, and husbands are well aware, often from personal experience in the hustle of the street life, that younger women, whether married or not, are the subjects of active pursuit by men "on the avenue." It is also true that common law relationships outside legal marriage represent a lesser level of commitment to the relationship and allow for changes to be more easily achieved. So there is reason for the caution of men, but the level of suspicion that so many women report suggests that between spouses, and especially for men, there is little belief in the commitment of one person for the other. In marriages and relationships which are so often described as largely oriented to material and physical satisfaction, the husbands seem to always fear that other men on the hustle will take away their women by offering more materially or physically.

Flora's testimony reveals the effect the deliverance experience can have on this cycle of distrust, suspicion, jealousy, arguments, and fights. Jim, Flora's husband, is described as the first to be delivered in their relationship, and once delivered, he never questions or distrusts Flora's commitment again. Thereafter, arguments and fights disappear. Flora says there are still disagreements, of course, but these never concern Flora's fidelity and they never escalate to arguments or physical confrontations. Before Flora was delivered but after Jim was delivered, she says that even her taunts could not provoke Jim, who previously would erupt over so much as a phone call to the house from a man.

One explanation for the change that Deliverance fosters may lie in the born again experience which is the foundation for Deliverance. From the Faith Deliverance viewpoint, this experience opens the channels to the person's spiritual or divine side, one consequence of which is the person's expanded awareness of and sensitivity to the

totality of other individuals, including his or her spouse. Instead of regarding the other person only in physical and social terms, the born again individual sees the person emotionally, mentally, and spiritually as well. In light of this broader picture and a response within the marriage relationship in terms of it, the born again spouse comes to realize that a good relationship is not likely to be threatened by material and physical challenges alone.

Complementing the effects of increased sensitivity toward others, the Deliverance faith views the opening of the spiritual faculty as making the person aware of his or her place in a divine scheme of things, whose ruling principle is harmony and love among all things. Within this spiritual perspective, discord is the antithesis of the divine, and all those behaviors that lead to discord or manifest it are abhorrent. Putting together the born again spouse's new sensitivity to other individuals and his or her new awareness of the divine scheme of things, the groundwork has been laid for a solid marriage relationship based on commitment, trust, mature love, and the rejection of discord and the behaviors that promote it.

Beyond the positive effects of the sustained breakthrough to the spiritual, the Deliverance faith encourages the individual to grow in his newly opened spiritual channel, thinking of the discovery of this channel not just in terms of a life after death, but as a resource to be used in living this life more effectively. In the Deliverance faith the new awareness begun in the born again experience is sustained and applied to living now, so that the individual emerges with a new perspective on life and others, and with a new sense of direction and motivation in pursuing goals in living. No doubt this new sense of control over one's worldly as well as spiritual destiny, which Deliverance provides, serves to counter the personal frustration and general insecurity that seem to underlie the jealousy-physical abuse syndrome in so many marriages.

Something like the thoughts expressed above represent the explanation from the Faith Deliverance point of view for what happened in the transformation of the marriage of Flora and Jim Lincoln. Unfortunately most marriages are not so rapidly changed as Flora and Jim's, since typically it is only the woman who seeks the religious experience and is delivered. As a delivered wife, the woman continues to be subject to the husband's jealousy and abuse which now have a new source for suspicion: the woman's attendance at the frequent and long church services which often run late into the night. Still, delivered women in this situation report that they are better off than before because they are in far better control of themselves. And because they are in better control of themselves, they are better able to both deal effectively with their children and refrain from participating in arguments with their husbands and boyfriends. The ability to avoid altercations in turn means fewer fights. Moreover, if the marriage relationship seems irredeemable, the women report being able to deal more creatively with extricating themselves from it.

Flora Lincoln is one of the fortunate ones because she and her husband were both converted to Deliverance. As such, her testimony indicates the potential of Deliverance to dramatically alter marriage and family situations when both spouses are affected. But it remains one of the greatest challenges to the Deliverance church to reach beyond the women to include the men, who so often are reported as the source of troubled relationships and families.



## Background Summary

Flora Lincoln, a woman in her early forties, was born and raised in a small town not far from Baltimore. Flora was the middle child among five children, and the one who was the lightest in color, resembling her father in this respect. Up until Flora was nine or ten years old, her parents remained together, though her father was home irregularly. When he did come home, usually drunk, Flora's memory of her father is vivid. Typically the mother and father would argue and then fight. The furniture would be broken and Flora's mother would end up with at least one black eye. Flora recalls how she would automatically "hit the floor" and scoot under her brother's crib to hide from her father as soon as she heard the first crash. According to Flora there was reason to hide, because if her mother was not at home, her drunken father would come looking for his older daughters. If he caught them, which he sometimes did, he would try to rape them. When her second sister was caught and raped, Flora was old enough to hear the screaming and crying, and to know what was happening. Flora says the memory is still so horrid she does not want to relate it. Flora escaped her father's searches, but neither of her older sisters was so fortunate. At about age ten, Flora's parents separated permanently.

With her mother working full time to support the family, the children were often left locked in the house to keep them out of trouble. Flora says her mother was determined that her children would not make the same mistakes as she had: pregnancy in the early teens, dropping out of high school, and marrying unsatisfactorily. Flora, however, proved the most rebellious among her brothers and sisters, in part, she says, because she felt her family excluded her and discriminated against her. Flora says she was always negatively identified with her father because of her appearance and was made to feel like she was the "black sheep" of the family. In this respect Flora describes her mother's beatings of her as severe, in which her mother would use about anything handy. Yet, Flora refused to cry, sometimes even taunting her mother with her refusals, which only made the beatings worse. As the "black sheep" Flora describes often retreating to her bedroom where she would lie across the bed and contemplate the time when she would leave the family never to see them again.

Until ninth grade when Flora came into womanhood, she says she enjoyed school. It was her retreat from her home and family. In school Flora could excel academically and socially, and she was rewarded for her achievements. Flora says she loved to read, especially poetry, and she describes writing poetry herself as a young girl. In general Flora indicates she was attracted to the arts. Perhaps her favorite activity, Flora says, was being a pen pal. Flora relates that she would seek out pen pals who had problems like her own, and that it would give her comfort to know that others had to live like she did. Among her childhood friends, Flora says she was the tough one, the one who was good at sports and could beat up the boys. It was in school and with her friends that Flora says she learned that if she tried she could succeed and be superior academically and socially. But at home there was little encouragement, mostly criticism.

The Church of the Living God that was across from her house, Flora says was the constant companion of the family through her childhood. Flora's mother was strict about the children attending church, and as a Holiness group there were activities through the week with choir rehearsals, gleaning days, young people's services, and events all day Sunday. Flora says she was raised in church and that in her small town most of the

children she knew were also. It was not until she was a teenager that she resented having to go to church. Before that, church was a place to go and be with her friends and other people. At thirteen, Flora says her mother took a different job, which required her to be away more when the children were home. After that Flora was less in church and more with her friends in the street. Still Flora says that she knew there was a God. She would pray to Him in her down moments, but she says she lacked the understanding to really act on her faith. Her experience of God was limited to times when she would be by herself and sing a song or star-gaze and lose herself in something beyond herself. Flora says these experiences were never truly constructive, only ways to find relief from her problems.

Rebellion in her early teens culminated in Flora running away from home several times to be with her friends, only to return to a severe beating after a week or so. But Flora says her desire to be recognized among her friends, some of whom were older, was very strong, and it was this desire to be accepted that led to her disinterest in school and her own early pregnancy. To be recognized in her group, Flora says she had to have intercourse with a boy, something Flora did at age fourteen. At fifteen when she ran away for two weeks to be with her boyfriend, Jeffrey, she returned home pregnant. Flora says her mother had Jeffrey jailed. When she was eight months pregnant and just recently turned sixteen years old, Flora quit school and was forced to marry Jeffrey.

Flora lived with Jeffrey for a year of what she says was "pure torture." Jeffrey treated Flora like a child, keeping her in the bedroom when friends would come over, not allowing her to sit outside after seven in the evening, and beating her severely if she was a few minutes late returning from an errand. After suffering Jeffrey's "insane" jealousy and abuse for a year, Flora left him and went to live with her mother, who had moved to Baltimore. Flora got a job and lived in an apartment in the same building where her mother lived. Flora says it was not long before she met another man and became pregnant with her second child. With the birth of this second child, Flora discovered welfare, got enrolled, and then had enough money to find a place of her own away from her mother.

For the next four or five years Flora worked some, but mostly reports that she drifted along on welfare. During this time, Flora had one regular boyfriend whom she planned to marry, and many social friends, most of whom were men. As Flora says, this was the party time, the wild time of her life. But in spite of her partying, Flora says she never neglected her children. She always saw to it that they were well cared for. When a relationship went sour or she got depressed, Flora says she would lose herself stargazing or playing with her many cats. If the situation got especially bad, she would go with her mother to The Christian Palace, a large, evangelical, Deliverance type of church. In this church Flora says she first came to realize that God was in herself, and that with God in her, she could use prayer to actively accomplish her desires. Flora also discovered at this time the extent of God's power when her daughter became ill with an eye disease. Flora says the doctors at the Eye Institute told her that her daughter's disease would lead to total blindness in about twenty years, perhaps much less. Facing this tragedy, Flora wrote to A.A. Allen, and following the instructions he sent her for the use of a prayer cloth, Flora says she prayed actively, for the first time really believing that her daughter would be healed. In the morning her daughter's sight was markedly better. Holding solidly to her belief, Flora took her daughter, who had continued to

improve, to her next appointment. Flora reports that the doctor was amazed to find no sign of the disease, but insisted on seeing the daughter a month later to check again. At that time the doctor pronounced the daughter completely cured, though he did not understand how it could have happened.

Following this healing experience, Flora says she knew God's power, but she continued partying in her own life. Her only constant prayer was for the Lord to send her a good man, because she was tired of all the "poor excuses" for real men with whom she had been associated. In the meantime, however, Flora and her boyfriend had Flora's third child.

We begin Flora's testimony when she meets Jim, who is Flora's husband today. Flora describes her initial attraction to Jim, the change that occurred in him after they began living together, her subsequent torment in living with him, and the problem both of them had with alcohol before Jim was first transformed at the Palace and Flora was later delivered at Faith Deliverance.

### Jim - Alcohol, Jealousy, and Fights

I drifted along until I met Jim, the last man in my life. I didn't like him at first, but eventually we got together. I remember him coming to see me, and he was always a very mild mannered type of fellow. I had never met a QUIET type man before, but I somehow became attracted to him because he kind of slowed my life down. He didn't drink, and he didn't smoke, and he would always tell me to come by his apartment, that he was cooking something. And I said, "Where is this man COMING from?" I had never met anyone like that. Usually they tell you to come by and have a drink, or "Let's go out." But he wasn't that type. And when I would come by his job he was ALWAYS working, and I found myself just sitting there at his job, talking with him about things, down to earth, and not things that are way up in the sky somewhere where you can't reach. And somehow I became more and more attracted to him. But we didn't get married right away; we lived together. And I thought at that time that was the end of my FRANTIC life, but it wasn't. It was JUST the beginning.

It was unbelievable how Jim changed. We got together and he just CHANGED. I don't know whether it was the mating part where he was trying to get me to like him, but I know what he turned out to be was a different person. And I fell in love with that OTHER person.

My life became a PURE hell. I found myself going through another torment, even worse than my first marriage. And he took me through some CHANGES, I mean, REALLY. I thought sometimes that I was really going out of my MIND. I'd find myself sitting and just thinking, "Well, what am I HERE for?" Or, "Why am I LIVING?" because the things that he took me through, it's a miracle, really, I'm here. I've been stabbed, I've been shot at, I've been beaten, I've been dragged from the car, I've suffered through MANY things with this man.

When we first got together, Jim wasn't drinking. He always said I started him drinking, because when we started living together then he picked up the drinking habit. I always drank but it didn't bother me. I could hold MINE, but he couldn't hold HIS because he wasn't used to drinking, and when he WOULD drink, he would go off and his arms and

legs would be warm, and he would foam at the mouth, and he didn't know WHAT he was doing. I call it the rams. It was like Dr. Jekyll and then Mr. Hyde would come out of him. He would be LOVELY, he would be a beautiful person, and the FEAR in me would take me when I saw him take that drink. It would grip me because I KNEW then that the other man was going to come out of him, and I would say, "Hon, you've had enough," and he'd say, "Don't tell ME what I had. "And I would begin visibly shaking. This is why I would always watch what I had, in order to get away from him. I had to keep MY sanity because I knew he was going to act crazy. So it would be like a balancing act with me.

Jim went off from drinking one time, but fortunately my sister was there. If it hadn't been for her, he'd have gotten me, he'd have caught me with a knife in the chest. What happened that time, we were sitting in the kitchen playing cards, and Jeffrey, my first husband, he called, and he wanted to speak to my oldest daughter, who is his child. So I don't know what happened, but Jim automatically got it into his mind that I was seeing Jeffrey. That call touched something off, and he yanked the phone off the wall, and he began to BEAT me with the phone. And I don't know HOW the thing happened, but I remember RUNNING around the room and Jim was CHASING me, and he had consumed enough in him to go really CRAZY that particular time. And my sister was there. I remember him coming at me with a knife, a butcher knife, and I was SHOCKED. I couldn't move, but my sister, she HIT me to push me away. If she hadn't pushed me, he'd have gotten me because he came down with that arm, and instantly I felt the wind of it. And when he did that my sister reached and got a pot and came up on him and hit him, and that stunned him for a while. She pushed me out the back door. She said, "Go, go, go, GO! I'll take care of it." And when the police came, the house was a shambles because he went through EVERYTHING. He was like a MADMAN, he was having the rams. So they picked him up and they put him in jail, and he stayed there overnight, let him sleep it off. Then, when he came to court, they gave him sixty days for what he had done to me.

But the going to jail didn't stop it. NOTHING stopped it. And at one point in my life it became so HORRIBLE, I remember I wrote Rev. Bob Arnold, because I was ready to get RID of myself. So I wrote him and he wrote me back, and he gave me a prayer cloth, and he told me what to do with it. And I took that prayer cloth and I wore it. And then somehow things began to settle down. But then again the same problems came back up again, and I found myself going through even MORE changes. It just looked like everything just broke loose in that house. EVERYTHING just broke LOOSE.

And it was while things were bad like that, I used to read True Confessions most avidly, and magazines like that. I read ALL of them because I think I was trying to find out if there was someone else in the world living like me. The True Stories and the True Confessions told about people who lived together and went through situations, and then in the end everything worked out all right. And if I read that, I felt like things were going to get better or something. I lived THEIR life, and I tried to project it into mine. If the woman LEFT her husband, in my mind I contemplated the same thing. I got so engrossed in it, I would plan MY relationship with theirs and say, "Well, mine's gonna work out." But then I'd read another story, and this lady DIDN'T leave her husband. She arranged it so it worked out beautifully. So then I'd think in my mind, I'd say, "Yeah, that's what I'm gonna do too!" So I stopped reading those magazines, because it made me feel up and down all the time. People were just going through things and GOING

through more things, and some winning and some losing. And it didn't do anything for me, it just left me feeling blue All the time.

Then Jim and I moved to another part of town, a better section, and AGAIN I thought things were going to get better. But instead they got worse. Every day they got worse and worse, and it looked like EVERYTHING was going down the drain. It seemed like one day was just like the NEXT because I was trying to DRINK my life away. I guess I was an alcoholic, because if I didn't have the Manischewitz white wine, I couldn't SURVIVE, and I would tell Jim to BRING it to me, and he would say, "But Flora," he said, "you're turning out to be a LUSH." And then all these things would come out of my mouth, cursings and things, and finally he'd go to the store and he would get it. And when I would get that wine, I could function. During the daytime I would RELEASE myself and just - drink, and try to relax myself. I had a couple girlfriends and we used to sit and tell each other how MISERABLE life was, and each one crying on the other one's shoulder, because we had similar lives. Their husbands were doing them the same way.

Through the week to make it, I HAD to have that Manischewitz white wine. And I would drink that. I'd get my work done, and I would start drinking about twelve. The girls would come over around twelve, and we'd sit around and cry and drink until about 2:30. And then I'd tell them, "Now, it's 2:30, you all got to go. The kids are coming home." And I'd shimmy around, get everything taken care of, and straighten up before the kids came. I'd get myself together. It was something with me where I would never drink to where I didn't know what I was doing. It seemed like I was trying to hold on to SOMETHING. I knew if I went over the brink it would look like I would lose TOTAL control of myself. And what I was doing, I was trying to hold myself in, from either a nervous breakdown or just blowing up, just BLOWING apart. The drinking, it never solved anything, but I felt I was RELIEVING myself of some of the pressures, of what was building up in my mind.

I could ALWAYS look for a fight on the weekends, there was always a fight. And this went on for a couple of years: the parties, the weekends, the drinking, the fights, and everything just went on that way. I remember seeing my kids just LOOKING at me sometimes and wondering just what is going on or what is the PROBLEM between Jim and I because on days when we were all right, then we'd act like humans toward each other. But days when we weren't, we were like ANIMALS and they would wonder just what was going on. I remember the three little ones most vividly, telling Daddy and telling Mommy, "Stop FIGHTING!" Because when Jim would really fight me and hurt me, I would retaliate. And it got so that my little son knew this. Jim and I would get to arguing, I would get very HYPER, and I'd come downstairs and I'd go RIGHT to the kitchen, and I'd begin to TEAR things up in the kitchen, throw glasses and dishes and anything. And I was KNOWN for the knife. I'd go right to the cutlery, and I'd get the knife, and Jim would try to stop me, and there would be like a tug-of-war with the knife. My little son, he would go to Jim, and he'd say, "DADDY, DADDY, if you just don't SAY anything to her, she'll be all right," and he would like get in-between us and he would push his daddy off. "Go in the other room, Daddy. Go in the other ROOM!" And Jim NEVER beat the kids. He has never TOUCHED the kids, never put his hands on them. And they KNEW that. So my son was taking advantage because he KNEW Jim wasn't going to hit him. So the kids were struggling trying to adjust to that type of life.

But I remember one Friday Jim had tormented me ALL that day. He had a THING, because if I got up in the morning, I'd take the rollers out of my hair and I'd wash myself up and I'd put clothes on, instead of walking around the house in a robe. I'm weird that way. But he could never UNDERSTAND it. And I remember he was TORMENTING me, asking me where I was GOING, and I told him I wasn't going anywhere. He said, "No, you got somebody. You're gonna go see SOMEBODY!" And then he was calling me names, and I remember him slapping me, and one earring going on one side of the kitchen floor, and I'm going on the other side of the floor. And he was pulling and yanking at my hair like somebody CRAZY, pulling my clothes off, telling me, "There IS somebody." But there wasn't anyone.

So when he left I was sitting at the dining room table there, and I was just looking around. And I said, "Lord," and I started crying. I said, "Lord, what is the matter? What is the PROBLEM?" When I said that, a voice came from up in the ceiling, and it said, "Clean your house." So immediately I went and got a broom and I started sweeping. And I said, "My house is not dirty!" But I went and got a broom and I started sweeping it. And the voice said, "No!" And I said, "But I don't understand what it MEANS!" It said it three times, and the third time I set the broom up against the wall, and I said, "I got to find out what this voice IS." So I called my mother and I told her, I said, "A voice said something to me today in the house." I said, "It told me to CLEAN my house." And then she started crying. She said, "Oh, Flo!" She said, "Flo, child." She said, "That was the Lord talking to you, telling you to get your house in order, to commit your life to Him and things wouldn't be like they are. God is trying to tell you something." She said, "That's not your PHYSICAL house," she said, "It's your inner house, your SELF, it means get YOURSELF together."

### Flora Tries Her Mother's Church

So I took my mother's advice, and I started going to her church. It was a Methodist church at that time, and I would go every Sunday. I sold my record collection, and I said, "I'm gonna clean up. I'm gonna clean UP." I even got rid of the liquor. I had a bar and I just got rid of everything in my house, and I began to straighten up the physical house, not realizing again it was my SPIRITUAL house. Jim would run us to church, but he would never go in. And I would tell him, I said, "Come on, go to church," but he said, "NO, not for me," he said, "You go on." He said, "I'm washing my car. I'm busy." So I went for a while, but I wasn't getting anything out of that church. It was like a programmed thing, and I'd come home and I'd find myself even more miserable because I didn't get ANYTHING out of going there. I said, "Well, I'm not going back." And then when I stopped, things got even MORE terrible. It went on like that, off and on, just off and on. At the rate Jim was going, I knew either I'd be killed or HE'D be killed, or we'd BOTH be killed together, because his drinking, he couldn't control himself. He couldn't hold it and then he would get in the car, and he would race at 100 Greer an hour going around curves and everything. I know God kept THAT man. I KNOW it. I KNOW it, I KNOW it. I KNEW somebody was praying for him.

### Jim and Flora Discover a Man of God

Palm Sunday, my mother called as usual. She said, "Flora, come on and go to church with me today." And I was SOOOO high. I said, "Honey, not TODAY." I said, "I'm trying to get myself TOGETHER!" And she said, "Well, I don't have anybody to go to church with." So then Jim said, "Wait a minute. Who is it?" And I said, "Granny's on the phone."

And he said, "Let me talk to her." And he said, "Granny, what'd you want?" And she said, "I want somebody to go to church with me today," she said, "I don't want to go by myself. So he said, "I'll go with you." And I looked at him, I said, "You'll do WHAT?" He said, "I'll go." That kind of shocked me. And I said, "You're gonna leave ME and you're gonna go to CHURCH?" So he said, "Yeah, I'll go." So I hem-hawed and I did everything I could to keep him home, but he was DETERMINED he was going. He got dressed and he left.

Rev. Louis Watson was at the Christian Palace that Sunday, and when Jim came home from church he said, "Flora," he said, "I'm putting EVERYTHING down." He said, "I'm changing." He said, "From what I saw, those miracles," he said, "I can't LIVE this kind of life." So I said, "What kind of life, what do you MEAN?" So he said, "From what I saw there has to be more to life than what we're living." So he had come into reality and I'm flittering and flighting. He said, "Well, just go to church with me tonight." And I said, "I'm not going ANYWHERE tonight. I said, "I'm going to BED." But he was going, and I said, "You leaving me AGAIN?" And he said, "Yeah, I'm going tonight." So then I tossed and turned and I couldn't BELIEVE it. So he came back again that night and he was STILL talking about these miracles. I said, "I don't want to hear about any MIRACLES!" So he said, "Well, go with me tomorrow night." I said, "I might go tomorrow night. I don't know."

So Monday night came, and I went to church with him, and I saw this man, this most unusual man, MOST unusual, with those EYES. I thought Louis Watson was the strangest man. And he called me out the first night. I had a green dress on, and he said, "Lady in the green dress, come down here!" And I came down there and he asked the Holy Ghost to touch me from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and after he said that, all I can remember was picking myself up off the floor and trying to get back to my seat with the help of the ushers. I couldn't BELIEVE it, I really couldn't BELIEVE it. That was the very first time that I really FELT the presence of God, really touching my body, touching my heart. I could feel goose bumps all over my body. I knew SOMETHING was going on, but I was like a child, awakening to something. I was sitting up, and I remember seeing how the people were being slain in the Spirit, and how this man was moving like FIRE. I could FEEL this man. And in two weeks he GAVE us something. I had NEVER seen miracles and prophecies speaking through someone like that. It was a TOTALLY new outlook on religion for me, to know that God USES people like that. He speaks to people like that. So there was a new thing for me, and Louis Watson, he opened up a new channel for me. I said, "Well, if God can do THAT, it's time for me to get myself TOGETHER." My life was going down the drain, and I could see that there was no peace in a bottle. So I made a commitment to the Lord in those two weeks that I wasn't going to drink or smoke, and I was going to turn my life over to the Lord.

And those two weeks I just JUMPED for joy, I was so happy. I can remember toting my Bible and witnessing to my neighbors. And they couldn't accept it, and I was wondering WHY they couldn't feel what I felt. But as it turned out my change was only on the outside, for a season. It wasn't REALLY in my heart. I knew that if Watson stayed there, I'd be all right. But I had my eyes on the man, and as soon as he left, my faith dropped again. And then I was right back where I started from, AGAIN!

## Flora Resents Jim's Commitment

Jim had resolved. He used to smoke these little cigars some, and he used to drink this Budweiser, and he gave up the Budweiser after he saw the miracles Palm Sunday. And Monday he gave up the cigars. And I said, "Man, it just can't be DONE." And I remember it was in the summertime, it was quite warm, and I said, "You gonna PERISH!" because he LOVED those Budweisers. And he said, "Flora," he said, "I can DO it." I said, "OH?" Well, he DID it. And he held on and he kept on, and I was so MAD, because I COULDN'T! I couldn't give up my things. And so it became a turning point, and I was on HIM. HE had stopped. No more arguing, no more nothing. But here I'M the one, I began to fight with him MYSELF. Jim committed his life to the Lord, and he was IMMEDIATELY transformed. He was no longer the same person, and I couldn't accept that, because now I felt as though I was alone. It was as if we were being separated, because what I was still doing, he wasn't DOING any more. And I couldn't find a partner to ARGUE with, because he wasn't arguing anymore. And I really think I was JEALOUS of God in his life, even though I KNEW God, but I was jealous of Him because He had taken Jim from me. This is the way I felt, like God had taken Jim from me, because there were times when Jim had time on his hands, and he would study the Bible, or he wanted to meditate. And I felt as if that was coming in on our relationship. It seemed like there wasn't any time for US.

But I still had my friends, and that's the life I knew, to party and enjoy. Life was a party to me. And I would THROW it in Jim's face. When he would come in and the house would be FULL of people, he would go upstairs, and I'd say, "Go on, help yourself, Honey, go on upstairs," and I would taunt him. I don't know exactly what turned me, but I think it was really seeing the transformation of him, and then I became jealous. I became jealous of what he had. But it got to where if I would drink or have drinks or something in the house, I would get kind of embarrassed or I'd HIDE it or something. It was like a respect had come in, and I'd find myself sitting there, and I'd hear a car and I'd run to a window, and I'd say, "Here comes Jim," I said! "Quick, y'all got to go, y'all got to GO." It was the respect that had come in for him, and I think that was what began to change me.

It wasn't a GREAT change. It was just seeing HIM transformed. He had COMPASSION, he had like a PURE love or something for me. It wasn't any longer that "Come here, kiss me," or grab kind of thing. It was like he would touch my hand, and I could feel something in his hand, a LOVE in his touch. And it would make me look up at him. And when he would ask me to go to church with him, I wouldn't fight him any more. I said, "OK," and I'd go. We would sit in church holding hands at the Palace, and he had NEVER done that with me, in all the years that we were together. He would sit there and he'd rub my hand, and I'd look down and I'd look up at him, and he was just CHANGED. But it seemed like EVERY time I'd say, "Well, I'm gonna CHANGE myself, I am," friends would come from out of the corners that I hadn't seen in years, and the house would be filled again. I'd get up the next morning and I'd look around at the stale glasses and cigarette butts, and Jim would say, "Flora, this has got to go, this has to GO." I said, "Yeah," I said, "cause I'm getting sick of this life, anyway." But still I'd always write it off. During the week I'd say, "Well, I'm gonna change. I'm NOT gonna do this any more," and every time I'd say, "I'm gonna do it this time," the people would come again, and there would be the SAME pattern, over and over. And it actually got to



where I was afraid that Jim was going to LEAVE me. This is what it was. I was afraid that he was really going to get upset, and he was going to just LEAVE, and I found myself drawing more and more to him, and then when I met Bishop Greer, I MYSELF changed.

I look back NOW, to the time before I met Rev. Greer, and my life was a miserable life, MISERABLE life. I really thank the Lord for my sanity. I look back sometimes to where God has brought me from, and when I see other people NOT being able to calm situations similar to mine, and it lets me know that God has been on my side all the TIME, looking down on me all the time. It was just up to ME to find myself, because I was trying to lose myself. But I had to FIND myself for God to come into my life. And when Prophet Greer came into my life, THAT'S when I found myself and that's when the total OUTLOOK on religion, on faith in God or Jesus, became a NEW outlook, a new change in my life, totally.

### Faith Deliverance Experience

One particular Sunday we left the Palace and drove past the Sky Palace. Rev. Greer was there, and I said, "Who's this one?" Jim said, "I don't know," he said, "I heard him on the radio." He said, "Maybe he's all right." So we circled back, and it was a three or four o'clock service and we went in. And it's the honest to God truth, I ABSOLUTELY didn't like Rev. Greer at all. I just couldn't STAND him. He just touched me WRONG, and I didn't like it. But we went back a second time, and I would find myself just watching him. I don't know if it was because he was a Black minister, because I've been raised under white ministers, but there was something that wasn't clicking with me. And I think I didn't like him because I had seen miracles through Louis Watson and the other ministers, but I'd never seen anyone really GRAND like Bishop. And then again maybe I resented him, because instantly he saw Jim and I weren't married. I didn't know that until two years later, and Bishop said that he saw it when Jim and I came in the church together. As close as we were, he said, he saw that. I don't know, maybe I felt that in him. But probably the BIGGEST reason I didn't like Rev. Greer was because he was stirring up what was IN me, and what was IN me didn't like it, and was causing me to resent who HE was. Who did he think he is, touching on me! He was pulling at me, and I didn't like that. Where the other ministers, they pat you on the head, they say, "You're all right," Rev. Greer, he was telling it like it IS. And I'm a hard person. I don't just GO the way the minister goes. I have to search you and see if you're all right first. And you've got to DO something. I have to FEEL into you before I try this thing, because I'm a very skeptical person because I've known MANY ministers.

Anyway, I know I didn't like him, but in that first service Rev. Greer called Jim out, and he told him about this store he was buying. He said he saw Jim getting the store, but he said, "You're going to have to fight a battle before you get it." Now Jim had already gone to see about this store, and he had papers and everything signed. And all he needed was a certain amount of money at that time. And I just knew he was going to get it. So when Bishop said, "I see you purchasing a store," he said, "but you gonna have to fight a battle first before you get it," I said to Jim going home, "That man's CRAZY," I said, "You've GOT the store." But Jim kept saying, "But Flora," he said, "We're gonna have to fight a battle." "I don't care what HE said," I said, "You've GOT the store. I'm not thinking about what that man said." But what happened with this store is what changed my feelings about Rev. Greer. He was RIGHT. The real estate man told us, "Don't worry

about it," he said, "I'm gonna put it down that you got the money," he said, "but in the meantime," he said, "in the meantime you go out and get the money."

Well, Jim went through EVERYWHERE. We didn't have any savings or anything, and I went to everybody, just begging and everything. Jim sold refrigerators and other stuff, and we were STILL lacking \$500, and I couldn't see WHERE we were going to get this money from. And THAT was the battle. The last day, the settlement was like the next day, and that NIGHT we got the money. But before we got the money, I was asking the Lord to forgive me for what I said about Prophet Greer. I got down on my knees and said, "Lord, forgive me," I said, "If You just make it so that Jim can get this money," I said, "I won't say anything else about this man AGAIN!" Well, we finally got the money from one of the banks, and I said, "Oh LORD, Jim GOT the money." So Jim went and met this settlement and he got the store. But we were running for a WEEK fighting that battle.

So, Prophet had to grow on me before I accepted him, and when we went back to him he DID grow on me. Faith Deliverance wasn't mainly based on miracles. And, going to Bishop's church, what inspired me was his PREACHING. It took me back to my childhood and the "Back-Woods Preacher," getting down PREACHING, down-home preaching. I heard ministers preach, but never preach like him, since my childhood. And that's what really inspired me. But like I say, what he preached also troubled my spirit, because Rev. Greer was TOUCHING on me, he was pulling at something WITHIN me. But then I began to accept it more and more, and I felt where Rev. Greer was coming from, because I was right THERE where he was talking about. I was IT, the IT. And he was saying I didn't have to live a miserable life of sin, live that way, and hate for tomorrow to come. He was showing me about God. And he was showing me in a way where by serving God and committing my life to Him, God would transform me. I don't HAVE to live like I live. I don't HAVE to do what I'm doing, living in sin and misery all the time.

And it had an impact on me. I didn't immediately go into it. It took me a while because I have never known a minister to really lay it OUT like that. But he was getting next to me, and each time I'd come from his service I'd find myself thinking about what he said. And, it was beginning to sink in, beginning to clear up some of the COBWEBS that had been in my mind. And what he said began to dwell on my mind. "I don't HAVE to live like this. I CAN be what I WANT to be, do what I WANT to do, serve God and live a clean life." Rev. Greer showed me the POSITIVENESS of life, because I was SURROUNDED with negation. I was surrounded with every NEGATIVE force there was. What he was talking about, I was IN. But he turned me into thinking and walking in a POSITIVE frame of mind. I was sick and tired of being the way I was, up one day and down the next, the merry-go-round. I was TIRED of it, and I knew that there was something better for me.

And listening to Rev. Greer and seeing and hearing the way God used him really turned me on, really transformed me. And WEIGHTS began to come off of me. I began to feel a little light, and it got to the point where I just couldn't WAIT until service. I'd find myself getting ready WAY ahead of time. I didn't know what was on the agenda, but I was READY to hear it. I was going to BE THERE! I just couldn't WAIT because he had something to offer me, and believe me, I was there ready to take it and use it. And I began to USE what he was talking about.

I remember one Tuesday, I hadn't been going to Faith Deliverance long, I was sitting in the church there, quite depressed when I first came, but no one knew this but me and God. And I sat there, and as Rev. Greer began to preach, some things he was saying gave me some insight on WHY I was going through these things and what I could do to help myself and what God could do for me. And as I sat there and LISTENED to him I was like in a trance. And then I felt something, I can't describe it. It started with my feet and came up to the middle part of my body, and it was something going THROUGH me, and I was wondering what it was, and I sat there, and the tears were coming down, UNCONTROLLABLE tears, but I wasn't crying out. Something was touching me, all IN me, and I didn't know WHAT to say. That was the first time I ever had a sensation like that in my LIFE, and I didn't know WHAT was taking place. I was looking down at my feet, and I felt this and I was wondering how FAR was it going up on me. I GRASPED both sides of the chair, and I held on, because I didn't know what was going to take place. And as it came further up on me I said, "No, Lord, no, no, no, no, NO!" And as I said that, it went right BACK the way it came in, it went right back down and out again. And I said, "Oh, I don't know WHAT that was! Don't know WHAT it was." That was the first time the Spirit really came upon me. And it SCARED me. I had been SLAIN by the Spirit before, but this was the first time it came UPON me. Later, when I was Holy Ghost filled, I KNEW what it was. It was the Holy Ghost trying to come in and take over my life, change my heart COMPLETELY. But I didn't KNOW then, and in my FRIGHT I pushed it out.

After about six months the thing with me was to join Faith Deliverance, and that was a tug-of-war with Jim and I. Jim said, "I'm NOT joining," he said, "We belong to the Palace." I said, "Yeah, we belong to the Palace." He said, "Well," he said, "You got to honor your church, Flora." I said, "I AM," I said, "but it's something about this Rev. Greer and Faith Deliverance," I said, "I have to be over HERE." So, I joined Faith Deliverance one Sunday. Jim, he stayed at the Palace. I worked on him to switch, and he comes to services at Faith Deliverance, but he's still loyal to the Palace where he first found the Lord. And that's all right. That's his choice and I respect it. But I think it won't be long before he makes the change to Faith Deliverance. I'm expecting it, but as a Christian I must respect his church.

## Changed Marriage

It's just hard to describe the difference Faith Deliverance has made in me and my marriage. It's just a whole different marriage, because now Jim and I see each other as being SOMEBODY, as worthwhile human beings. I'm not saying we don't have disagreements, but there are no ARGUMENTS and there are no FIGHTS. And Jim hasn't even lifted a finger to me these past five years. And all my taunting from jealousy of God, that's gone, and the jealousy in Jim, thinking I'm with other men, that's gone, and trust came in its place. And Jim told me on several occasions, he said he asked the Lord to forgive him for the way he treated me. Now, there is more effort MADE to understand, and there's more understanding FOR one another. Before we talked AT each other, and the talk would lead to fights. Now we talk WITH each other, and we understand better. I still desire more of this with Jim, and I'm asking the Lord to give us more and more understanding. What I would really like is moments of really SITTING down and REALLY talking, take time out, every day, to reach a BETTER understanding

of one another. But at least now we're on one accord. It could be better, and I'm asking the Lord to make it better, and I expect it will BE better.

And then with Jim and me there's a more mature love now, there's not a lust love. Whereas before it was a lust love, God has taken that, and there is a more controlled love relationship. Mentally, sexually, there is more respect for each other's bodies. Again, it could be better, and again I'm asking God for help to make it better, because I don't think God means for a man and wife to turn so much away from the physical. I think God wants us to know Him spiritually, but I think He expects us to live THIS life, and to live it to the fullest, in ALL aspects, the physical too. But whereas before it was a kind of lust and hate and there was nothing spiritual at all in our relationship, now since I've been at Faith Deliverance, we have grown together spiritually, to where we pray together, to where there's such harmony and peace in our spiritual search, that the physical naturally is less important. I just don't think it's as MUCH less important as Jim, but still what we have now is a THOUSAND times better than what it was before. But I believe in striving for perfection.

### New Relationship With Children

When the marriage became more level, less up and down, there was just a whole new picture of what God did in the home. Before, the children were shouting names at one another, and fighting. The house was in an uproar, and they didn't have any love for each other. With Jim and I fighting, naturally there was a lot of tension, and all that was visited on the children. But now I find there's more peace among them, and they're able to sit down and talk and converse with each other. And now I'm able to UNDERSTAND them more. Before there was no communication. There was division in the home. There was "my way" and never "their way," or "their way" and never "my way." There was no understanding, we didn't get along. But now I can LISTEN to "their way" and they can HEAR "my way," and we can usually come to some understanding, because we can communicate, and we can compromise. I'm just a different person as a mother, and they RESPECT me for who I live for, and in respecting me, they are more in control. But God has also given me more control of MYSELF so I can respect THEM too. God has just brought the gift to LISTEN into the home, and now there's more respect and more peace.

Now, my older children, they were raised mostly during the time before Jim and I were delivered, and they've had a LOT of problems. They've been in trouble with the law from getting involved in the streets. And they've been a worry to me because I always used to just take their problems on ME. But since I've been in Faith Deliverance, they're not children anymore, and I've come to realize they're old enough to be adults to themselves. And Bishop has told me, "Leave your older children alone. God has His hands on their lives. Leave them ALONE!" He said, "In time God is going to bring them to Him." And so, that's what I've done. I've left them to God. I help them and I'm here if they really need me, but in leaving them to God I don't WORRY over them like I used to, and that is a burden off MY mind.

But Bishop also said to keep the younger ones in church. He told me that they were spiritual children, very spiritual, which they are. Michael is something like me, and I recall a couple of years ago, there was someone standing at the door, but we were in the kitchen. We had just come in from service, and we were having coffee before we

went out again for something to eat. Michael got up from the table, and he said, "Mom, somebody's at the door. I feel somebody's at the door." And it was raining, and I said, "Who?" I said, "There's nobody at the door." I said, "In this rain, there's nobody THERE!" And he said, "MOM, somebody's at that DOOR," he said, "I feel somebody's at that DOOR." And Jim said, "Michael, you're just tired, there's nobody at the door, but Michael kept saying, "Somebody's at the door, I'm telling you!" And we opened the door, and sure enough there was a man standing like in the shadows by the door, and it SHOCKED me. And I hollered, "What do you want?" and he ran off. But I marveled at the way God had used that boy, at his age, to show him things like that for us.

Like I say, Bishop said they were very spiritual children, very spiritual. So I believe at their young age, and being in the Deliverance church at the Palace, I believe that God will use them at an early age. And I know that in time as they grow up, God will have His hands upon their lives, and the Word of God will be more established in THEIR hearts, because they are aware of Christ in my life. So my life is an example to them, and by them watching me and looking at me they're going to be drawn closer to the Lord. I desire for God to be in their lives and to be the stronghold in their lives. I want them to recognize God first in their lives and then let them direct their prayers TOWARDS the Lord, let them know that God can cause what they desire in life to HAPPEN, to come alive in their lives.

After knowing God, my deepest desire is for the children to finish school, to complete their education and to go on and pursue their career, whatever they want to be. Because with me, I know where I stopped, and I pleaded with my older ones to go ahead on. But one stopped in the 11th grade and the other in the 8th grade, due to her pregnancy, but she's going back now. These things I've said, "Lord, let them FINISH school! Then let them pursue the job or the career that they want." That is a goal that I set, before Deliverance, with my children, that they have an education, and to have a goal towards a career. I have set before the kids not to follow in my footsteps, but to be better, to be SOMEBODY. Had I not found Deliverance, I would still have the same goals FOR them, but it would probably be at a more limited level, whereas NOW I know what I can have and I KNOW what they can be. And I know that whoever they WANT to be, they can become. And being in Faith Deliverance, I can support their desires by my prayers and with the prayers of my pastor and my sisters and brothers in Christ.

## Health and Healing

I suffered with asthma from the time I was a little girl on up. My mother never knew what it was. Nobody in my family knew what it was, so I always assumed that I had a bad, bad cold. But whatever it was I know I had it BAD. I couldn't lay down at night. My mother had to prop me up with pillows, and I had to sit to an open window because the room would be so stuffy. They called me Wheezel because if I talked too long I'd wheeze. I always had to be careful of what I would do. I couldn't get up early in the morning and go out and walk barefoot in the wet grass. I couldn't do that, or I was sure to get asthma. And I knew that when snow came I would get an attack. But in the summer it was more the excitement that would cause it. And if I got asthma I knew I was BOUND to get a cold, and I knew it was going to go RIGHT in my chest. So I had to be very careful. It seemed like I ALWAYS had colds. In fact I had pneumonia three times when I was a baby. If somebody sneezed, I'd pick it up. That's how I was from the asthma.

I think I was eleven or twelve when I first remember having a bad attack. I was walking home, just going from one home to another at night. I had such an attack, I remember being so weak and not being able to get my breath and my eyes felt like they were popping out. But they never sent me to the hospital or anything. They would put Vicks on me. But I just recall I felt like I was always out of breath.

As I got older, into my teens, I'd only get the asthma occasionally. But then it was really bad again when I moved into Baltimore after I left my first husband. I don't know if it was the climate or the closeness or what, but between the asthma and the tonsillitis at that time, I had a doctor bill that was ninety-nine feet long. I had tonsillitis until I would have to go to the doctor and the doctor would have to lance them, and then put a heat lamp on my throat. And that was about every WEEK. The doctor told me, he said, "I really don't see how anybody can carry those things around, they're so raggedy down there." But by then I was nineteen or twenty, and I guess I was too old to get them out. I remember sitting up to the windows in Baltimore with the asthma and tonsillitis TOO. And still I would try to smoke. That was REALLY ridiculous, because the tonsils would be so BAD, if I swallowed it felt like my HEAD was coming off. But still I would try to smoke a cigarette. I would sit there and I remember my mother and my cousin telling me how crazy I was. They said, "Your tonsils are nearly BURSTING at the seams, and you can't get your breath, and here you are trying to take a couple of puffs off a cigarette." But it was something I HAD to have. Regardless of how I felt, I was DETERMINED to get those drags.

After I married Jim, I would still get asthma attacks, but they were less often. It seemed like the arguments would bring them on. I remember I had it so bad one night, Jim had to rush me to the hospital and they gave me oxygen. Jim and I were having this argument and I could feel this attack coming on. It was more so him that was arguing, and I was DETERMINED I was going to get some words in too. I was just pouring all this Vicks all over my chest, and I was DETERMINED I was going to keep on arguing with him, and this argument went on until all of a sudden I couldn't get my breath. And he kept telling me, "You aren't doing anything but PLAYING," and I kept saying, "I can't BREATHE," and I was waiting for him to take me to the hospital and he said, "I'm not taking you ANYWHERE." But then he did get concerned and he did take me to the hospital. I had it so bad when he brought me in I couldn't talk, and he was saying, "Something's wrong," and they said, "Sounds like she's having an asthma attack." And they were talking to me but Jim had to talk for me. My eyes felt like they were coming out of my head, and I couldn't get my breath. So they gave me oxygen. But right after the attack was over, I grabbed a cigarette. I was WAITING for this attack to leave so I could get a cigarette. I was that bad.

I don't know when the Lord took the asthma, I really don't. And my tonsils too. I fully believe that God has given me NEW tonsils. All that sickness began to quiet down when I was going to the Palace. But it really left me in the first year after I transferred over to Rev. Greer's church. The Lord cleared up ALL that sickness since I've been going to Faith Deliverance. It's really gone. I haven't had asthma or sore throats in four YEARS now. And I can go barefooted in the summer if I want to, and play in the snow with the kids in the winter. Before, if I exercised myself I could COUNT on trouble. But now I work like a horse. I work until I realize that I HAVE to sit down, and its only that my

MUSCLES are tired. I have to catch myself, because I can go all day till I just literally fall into bed. I just don't have ANY problem, no asthma, no tonsillitis AT ALL.

The Lord took away my cigarette habit too, but THAT was a battle. I was smoking strong cigarettes like Pall Mall, so naturally that created more of a desire to smoke. I was smoking one pack, and then I started on two packs a day. I would have a pack in the morning and I would make sure I would have a pack at night. Just smoke ALL day. I would smoke even more if I had company or if I was drinking, that would cause me to smoke like THREE packs a day. I would put out a cigarette and I would light right up. Sometimes there would be TWO cigarettes burning. It got to the point where I would get up in the morning, I would have a cigarette, and I would have to have a cigarette before I went to bed. And in between, I would be smoking all day LONG. I was honest and truly HOOKED. I stayed on those non-filters until they got to me with the cough and all. I would just cough all THROUGH the day. Still, it was something that was a desire and it was satisfying and it was enjoyable in spite of the cough. I believed in my heart, even when I came into the church, I said, "I'm gonna surely die with a cigarette in my hand."

It went on like that until my husband and I joined the Palace, but in that church I didn't feel convicted, at least in the beginning. I would go to church on Sundays and get out of church, and I would smoke my cigarettes. I think it was after being in that church about a year I began to try to cut down on those cigarettes. I would buy like two packs for the week. Then I would count the cigarettes I would smoke a day. But then if I had company I would always have to double up for the week. And it was like that, it was a HASSLE with those cigarettes. I would look at them and I would hate them, I would HATE them. And after Jim quit cigars, if I got around my husband and smoked around him, I would look at him and he would say, "Oh, HERE we go again." I would always have something smart to say to him. I had years of smoking behind me, and I HAD to have that cigarette.

My little son, he would always say, "Mom, you're going to church and you're smoking those cigarettes, don't you feel bad? You're blowing all that smoke all around us, and it stinks." And I'd say, "Shut up and leave me alone. You all don't know, you all just don't KNOW what these cigarettes are DOING to me. I would always say, "Why don't you all just pray for me?" And my little son, he would say, "Mom, I pray and I PRAY, but you haven't given those cigarettes up yet. What's WRONG, you don't want to give them up?" I said, "Michael, I WANT to give them up, but I CAN'T give them up." It seemed like everybody in the house was looking at me, so I would have to SNEAK a cigarette. If they were talking or watching TV, and if something was quite interesting, I would sneak and try to smoke a cigarette. I would go in the bathroom or I would go outside and take a cigarette with me. I knew that I HAD to have it. And it looked like EVERYBODY knew what I was doing and I would feel like I was a CRIMINAL or something.

One time I gave them up. I was in Faith Deliverance, and I gave them up. I think it was two years after I had joined the church. I said, "I'm gonna give up smoking. I'm just not gonna buy any more cigarettes." I made a commitment. I talked to the Lord. I said, "Lord, You've got to DO something. You've got to TAKE these cigarettes from me." I was TIRED of hiding. I was professing to be a Christian, and I knew it was wrong, because the Bible tells us our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and I didn't want to be defiling that temple. And I kept thinking, "I'm gonna DIE with a cigarette in my hand."

I could see me with a pack of cigarettes in my casket. And these things would go on in my mind. So I stopped for about two months. I did good, and I was so PROUD of myself. I really was.

Then I got that challenge. Someone had come in the house, and they were smoking and they offered me a cigarette. And I said, "No, I gave it up. I stopped smoking." And they could just NOT believe it. They said, "Come on, come on, take one, take one." And I said, "No, you're the Devil. I don't want a cigarette." And then they would tell me they had stopped smoking too, "But once you stop it, you've GOT to get right back." I said, "It won't be like that with me, I've stopped." And they said, "Well, I bet you can't." And I said, "I don't bet. I gave it up." I lasted for about TWO days after they left, and then I went for those cigarettes, and I began smoking VERY heavy again. I had the SAME habit right back. And I had the same ACCUSING eyes from my family, and again I would say, "Oh, Lord, DO something."

It got to the point where coming to Faith Deliverance I began to get ASHAMED of myself. After NOT smoking for a while, and then going back to the cigarettes, I could smell the nicotine odor on other people, and I said, "WOW, this is the way I smell TOO." So on Sundays I wouldn't smoke until AFTER I was on the way home, but then I would just TEAR up that pack of cigarettes. But my husband and I usually drove to church together, and then he'd go on to the Palace, and he said, "I don't want those things in my car. If you want to smoke you're just going to have to get out of the car to smoke." So, what I would do, I would take two cigarettes with me, and I would hide them under the seat. I'd say, "They will be right there when I go home. Maybe if he stops at the store, I can get out of the car and I'll smoke." But something within me would say, "If Rev. Greer comes over to that car, that cigarette is going to roll out from under that seat, and he's gonna SEE that cigarette." And I'd say, "Oh, Lord, DON'T let him see that cigarette." That would go through my mind. It was like a fairy tale, the life that I lived with that cigarette. I was asking the Lord to help me, but I was not making any COMMITMENT. Within myself I really didn't WANT to give them up.

So, I continued smoking in SPITE of the fear of Rev. Greer knowing this, and the battle with it at home. I continued smoking until just before I became an usher. At that point I said, "Lord, You are just going to have to do something, cause I can't be smoking any more. I can't be out here helping other people and doing WRONG myself." I said, "Now, if You don't take them from me, I'm gonna die with one in my hand." So I bought a pack of cigarettes and I said, "Lord, I'm gonna become a member of the usher board, and I give it to You," I said, "But before I give it to You, I'm gonna smoke this WHOLE pack of cigarettes." And I said, "Lord, at the hour of twelve o'clock, I give it to You." I tell you, I smoked that whole PACK of cigarettes. I sat in the bathroom and I smoked those cigarettes, one after the other, till they were all gone. And when the hour of twelve o'clock came, I was on time. Next day I was made a member of the usher board, and the Lord put me on a four day fast. I had no desire to eat or to drink. And after those four days the desire for a cigarette just left me. And when I came around cigarette smoke it made me sick.

Only once in the nearly three years since I gave them up have cigarettes caused me a problem. I got mad one Saturday because things just weren't going right in the home. I went out and I bought a pack of cigarettes, and I bought a six-pack of beer. I was so



MAD, I can't remember what it was, but I was FUMING. I got to the point where I was saying, "The HECK with everything." The desire for the cigarettes and beer was not there, but I was going to MAKE the desire come. So I went and got these things, and I sat in my bedroom. I got on the telephone, and I called my mother, and I talked to her long distance from two o'clock till five. I got on that phone, I was determined I was going to run that bill up. I was DETERMINED I was going to get really high by the time Jim got home. But, you know, in those three hours I could only drink TWO cans of beer, and THAT made me sick. Still, it was the CIGARETTES I wanted to attack. I said, "I gave it up, but I'm gonna SMOKE today." Well, I smoked about three cigarettes, and I couldn't finish them. I tried one cigarette, and I said, "No, this can't BE." And I lit up another one, and it tasted TERRIBLE. And I said, "Oh, no, maybe I'll take another one." And I went to the third one and I just couldn't TAKE any more. I took them and I opened the pack and I just crushed them and I broke them in half, and I flushed them down the hopper. And I said, "I don't BELIEVE this. I can't smoke cigarettes and I can't drink the beer." The Lord had TOTALLY taken it from me.

Since I gave up smoking, I feel MAGNIFICENT. And the Lord took the cough and the heaviness in my chest too. He just gave me a NEW set of lungs to go with my not smoking. But now, even though I've stopped, I'm careful. I'm very careful about cigarettes. I know that we're only strong through Grace. And I won't say that I'm so perfect that I KNOW that I won't stumble, but what I AM saying is, if I keep my hand in God's hand the deliverance is already there. But I know that if I let down and forget God, the smoking will come back. The thought has entered, the thought that says, "a cigarette." But when Satan has given me that thought, I immediately rebuke it. I will say, "Devil, you're a LIAR," and immediately it goes. The thought just DISAPPEARS, and I laugh.

### Witchcraft in the Family

Up until I was in Faith Deliverance I was hanging on to my natural parents. I thought they were all I had. If I gave them up, I thought I didn't have ANYONE. But once I was saved and filled with the Holy Ghost, God spoke to me and He told me one day, He said, "Now I am your heavenly Father, and I am your heavenly Mother, I am your heavenly sister and brother." And He told me to turn loose and let my natural family go. God let me know that He's in my heart. I live for Him, and He lives for me. And when I turned them loose, it was like a load that had left me, because I was hanging on to them for my identity. They were like weights, natural weights around my life. And it's an AWFUL situation when you live around someone but they're not for you. It's a BAD situation, and yet I felt like I couldn't shake them. And the way it was, my family they BROUGHT trouble, they WERE trouble.

Rev. Greer didn't tell me I had witchcraft on me from my family until this last year. I know for a fact that I HAD witchcraft on me. My sister had done it to me. She did this to me when my baby son wasn't even born yet. And the witchcraft was on my son also. I knew that because I had no real love for my baby son. I don't know what my sister did to me when I was carrying this child, besides the food, but she had been to my house MANY times. And she had put witchcraft on me because she wanted Jim. I knew I had it on me because of some things that I went through. One time I had to be rushed to the emergency room, so I asked my sister to go with me. I called her to my bed at home because I couldn't get up out of bed. The witchcraft was in my stomach, she had me in

the stomach. I think I had eaten something she had worked on and it had blown me up so I couldn't move. She took me to the hospital and I laid there on the emergency table and I KNEW I had witchcraft, and I asked the doctors what it was. They got together to the side, talking among themselves, and they couldn't find any medication that could help me. They couldn't do ANYTHING, so they told me to lay there and rest for a while, and they told me if I could get up, I could leave. I asked them, I said, "Well, what is the MATTER with me?" But they didn't know and they couldn't do anything for me, so they sent me home.

I went home, but I could always see things. Things were shown to me, and I saw where my sister had tricked me and was home here with Jim because she wanted Jim. She tricked me that way. Anyway, this spirit of witchcraft had never left me from that time. So in this one service, Rev. Greer called me out and he said, "I see your son being delivered and set free from demon power." After he said THAT, I went OUT in the Spirit, but I heard him say, "Tell her there's a spirit of witchcraft that's been on her for seven years," he said, "and tell her, when she comes through, that when she starts doing what God tells her to do, God is going to lift that spirit of witchcraft off her." Well, while I was down in the Spirit I claimed my freedom from that witchcraft, and when I got up I was light as a feather, my head was just light as a feather. It had left, because I FELT it. It lifted up, it felt like something lifted off the TOP of my head. And all that week and ever since then I've been feeling good. And a great love for my little son came to me after I was ministered to that night, a GREAT love. I found myself really coming to him, touching him, really wanting to be around him. And there had been a BLOCK there before and I never could do that. But when the witchcraft was lifted from me, that block was just COMPLETELY gone, TOTALLY gone.

### Calling to the Ministry

It was Sunday morning a few weeks ago, I was up early. I always get up before the family gets up. I read my Bible and I was on my knees praying over on a chair, and something happened to me that was just so DIFFERENT. I already had the baptism of the Holy Spirit four years before, so I had the speaking of tongues as evidence, but THIS time, the Spirit took me to a DEPTHS of tongues. And as I began to speak in a depths of tongues this mist came down on me and it overshadowed me and I was aware of a presence of someone, but I couldn't look up. And the whole room LIT UP like sunshine. And something went into my HEART. I'll never IN MY LIFE put it into words what I FELT. It was something that took my heart and did an operation on my heart and put in something else, like it put ANOTHER heart in, like somebody was pouring honey in there. The Bible tells us that we all have a heart of stone, but when we come to God we find a heart of flesh. And this is what happened to me, God gave me a heart of flesh. And all I could do was cry. I cried and I spoke in tongues and I cried. I couldn't open my eyes because the presence was there. And when I got up I stumbled into the bathroom and I was saying, "Yes, Lord, yes, Lord, YES LORD!" And I fell to my knees and I thought I had passed out, but I came back up again, because it was steeling my heart. And the presence was still here, and I kept saying, "YES, Lord!" And I was stumbling and the room was lit up. It was just lit UP! Every time I tried to get up, I'd fall back down again, and the presence was just there. It was such a TALLNESS, a BIGNESS. But I couldn't LOOK at it, but I knew it was THERE. I knew it was on the right of me. And then I don't know how long the Spirit had me, but after a while it went back up, it disappeared. And I just sat there, but I had a LOVE, if that door had moved and come to

me, I could have HUGGED that door. This is what I had within my heart. I had such a compassion and LOVE, I can't DESCRIBE just what it was, but it was SUCH an experience.

So then in the service that next Friday, Bishop Greer said, "Somebody has had an unusual visitation from the Lord." And he said, "If you raise your hand," he said, "God has prepared that person for a work." He said, "It was a most unusual visitation." Well, it was me he meant, but I didn't raise my hand because I wasn't sure. I thought maybe he meant somebody else. Afterwards I wrote Rev. Greer a note and I gave it to him, and then that Sunday he said it WAS me, and he said, "Something happened to you," he said. "There's a brightness in your face." He said, "Something happened to you," he said. "It's your calling. God is getting you ready for your calling." I said, "I know." And that's EXACTLY what was happening.

## Blessings

I have learned from Rev. Greer's teaching how to petition God for certain things. And then I turn it loose, and I just look up, begin to thank Him and praise Him FOR it, and it begins to come into my life. I KNOW it works, because not long ago I needed a car. The car I used to have just died, and I can't be without a car. I have to have a car to get along. I went without a car for a time and finally I just said, "Lord, You got to do something about this." I said, "Lord, You know I need a car." So I petitioned the Lord for a car. Now, when you want something from God, you must know EXACTLY what you want, and I didn't want just ANY car. I called out the car that I wanted, the specific car, and then I just went around all day saying, "Thank You, Lord, for my car." I just believed within myself that I was going to GET that car. And that triggered something in me. That turned loose I'd say a faith in me that I didn't know I had, because I BELIEVED without a DOUBT that I was going to get that car. I wanted that car so bad, and I BELIEVED that God was going to give it to me, and He did. God honored my faith, and He made the way. I put down some of Bishop's anointing oil as a point of contact with God, and I walked through that oil, and I said, "Tomorrow I am getting up." I meant it. "I'm gonna find a car!" Next day I put on those shoes that I walked through the oil, they were white shoes. And the first dealer I went to didn't do right, and I said, "That's all right." I went to another one. He didn't sound right. I went to a third one, and THERE it was. And I got that car.

It should have been impossible. I put no money down, NOTHING. But the man cleaned the car up, polished it, put gas in the car for me to ride around for a day, and then had somebody to follow him to bring the car to the house and PARKED it in front of the house. I have NEVER had anything like that happen to me before. But like the Bible says, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Where man says you can't, God says you CAN. So who am I serving, man or God? This is my frame of mind when I go. Like when the dealer says, "You can't have this car, that car is beyond your income," I might keep on pursuing it with him and try to find a way. But if he keeps talking negative, I keep saying, "Lord, You show me if this is the right one. If it's not, Lord, I'm wasting my time." And if the Lord says it isn't right, then I KNOW where I'm looking is not in the right place, and God is going to send me somewhere else. So I keep on pursuing it, and I don't give in. The MOMENT you give up, the very MOMENT that you say, "Lord, I went all day LONG with my faith. Oh, I had so MUCH faith," but then the next day you're saying, "I just can't face those people tomorrow, Lord," then you're doubting yourself, and you're

doubting God. So what you must do, you keep ON trying. If you go all day LONG and still don't get it, go tomorrow with the SAME frame of mind. "I'm GONNA get that car, if it takes me a week." Many people limit themselves in their living, they limit themselves by the frame of mind that they are in because what you say you are, you ARE, and what you think you are, you BECOME. And what you KNOW you want, you will GET, but what you just HOPE for, that will NEVER come to pass.

## Race and Deliverance

In my case, I was immersed in the spiritual aspect of deliverance. My receiving the Holy Ghost under Rev. Greer's ministry was a spiritual matter and for peace of mind, not because of any racial issue. Where I grew up I was never in the type of environment that was geared to separate along Black and white lines, to where you could see it, or talk about. Naturally it was there, but not that much. I knew it was there, but I was more a private person. I never paid it any attention. I've always looked at it in such a way as to ignore it, to totally ignore it and not to take an attitude.

Where I grew up, everybody knew one another. The Blacks and the whites lived together. They were in each other's houses. The schools were integrated. The teachers were Black and white, and I had more WHITE girlfriends in school than Black. I suppose the racial issue was there, in the town, but as a child I never felt it. In the junior high and the high school Blacks and whites mingled together. There was never a stigma of race. I didn't run into race as an issue until I was grown and out in the world on my own. Then I noticed at the unemployment agencies, the white girls were favored over the Blacks. I would go and sit all morning waiting for a job to come in, and by the time noon came around, it seemed like most of the white girls were gone, but most of the Black girls were still waiting. We were all waiting for the same kind of jobs, but the white girls would get the jobs first. And I would think, "Now, why is it they have all got JOBS and the Blacks are still sitting here?" I would wonder, but I never would let it bother me. I just ignored it. I guess I was more involved with my own life and trying to get it together to pay these situations too much attention.

Since I have become a parent and have had to deal with my children's experiences, I guess I have become more aware of racism out there in the world. Where we live, it's a mixed Black and white neighborhood and people accept it. The whites don't pack up their bags and move out, but neighbors both Black and white hold pretty much to themselves. There isn't a lot of socializing among neighbors. The women will get together once in a while, mostly because of the children, but the adults stay pretty much to themselves. And it's rare to see Black men talking to white neighbors.

It seems like things are all right in the daytime, but when it gets dark, it's like all the demons in people come out. My son has a lot of white friends and they'll come around and they'll ride around together, but you don't know who is who, and at night some of the white kids are out here throwing eggs. And some of the Black kids are out there doing the same thing to the white kids. So there is that tension there, especially at night. But reading in the paper, it is mostly the juvenile white kids that get caught yelling "Nigger, Nigger" at the Black kids at night and then running to get away. Most of the time when this happens to us we just laugh, but I do watch myself when I go out at night because I know it's there. And they WILL hurt you if they catch you.

In one incident, my son was walking home after dark and there were a bunch of white kids riding around in a car and they tried to run him over. They hit him and he fell over in the bushes. He only got bruised and shook up, but he got the license plate number. The police caught the guys that same night and they were all white. But with these kinds of things going on, a Black person has to be on guard at all times. When these things happen I have the feelings of pain and hurt, and I have those moments when I am angry, but not to the point where I would do something to actually HURT somebody, or do something to get even. I have all these feelings and emotions because I am human. But I put these things before the Lord and I am constantly praying and asking God to help these people who don't understand. That is one of the IMPORTANT prayers that I put before the Lord, to watch over my children and protect them and give them divine guidance.

Besides the children getting into their racial thing, the place where we really have the most problem around here is in the school system. The teachers will NOT let it lie. And there are some of them that will pick on the children for racial reasons. And it is not just the children coming home and SAYING it. I have confronted some teachers about it and there have been meetings in the community regarding it, and some of the teachers have been ousted. These are older white teachers and they have these embedded attitudes and they will not allow life to move on. They are still thinking, "I don't care who you are, you'll always be a Nigger." It is always a putting down thing.

In the junior high school I had to deal with this with my daughter. The teacher was VERY prejudiced. She would call my daughter "Nigger," and then afterwards she would say she was only playing with her. So my daughter came home and she told me that the teacher was doing this. I'm not the type to just get up and run, so I told her to let me know if it happened again. I told my daughter, "Stay out of the teacher's way. Do your work, and if it gets too bad, let me know, and I'll confront that teacher with the principal." Then I deal one on one with my daughter. I tell her that the teacher herself is VERY ignorant. I tell her, "You know you're Black, you know the teacher is white. But we know who we are in Christ." I deal with it in a spiritual way, and I let the child know it's no fault of hers for her color, and that God loves her JUST as well as he loves that teacher, although that teacher does not understand this. I tell her, "The teacher is looking at the skin, but God doesn't look at the skin, He looks at the heart." So I deal with it like that and that way my daughter is all right. I present it so it's the TEACHER that needs help. The teacher's ignorance makes her inferior, it's not my daughter who is inferior because of her skin color.

When the teacher gets into a racial thing again, I go to the principal and the principal at the school is Black. So he deals with it, but his position is awkward. If he swings my way, then he will have the school board down on him. So he confronts the teacher with it and she is there in the office with me. And the teacher will say she slipped and apologize. And then the principal will let it go. He'll say it was something that was said, "Don't carry it on your shoulder and make it an issue or it may spread." So he does not get deep into it. But the teacher is aware that she has done something wrong and the meeting goes on the record. Then the principal will call my daughter in and he will tell her she is a total person. "You're somebody, and I don't want you to feel that the teacher dislikes you. Just put it behind you." But this is something that happens all the TIME in the school system. So I have to just keep at it, handling it the best way I know

how so that what happens will not have a lasting effect on the children. But being born again and knowing that I have access to the God within that can help me to fight the battles is an assurance that keeps me. With God in the picture I don't get hyper about it. But the God in me doesn't let me just back away from it either. I have to act and with divine guidance I can be sure my actions will be CONSTRUCTIVE.

Most Black people come from a heritage of DEEP feelings, the agony their ancestors knew all their lives, and they passed this on to each generation. Pain, agony, doing things that you were made to do. And from this, mothers prepared their children for life by teaching them that they don't do this, they don't do that, they can't have this or that. In the old Black family the child was taught that he could only go so far. And there are still some Black families where this attitude is taught to Black children, that they can't do what the white man does. This is because of the heritage of the parents' ancestors who themselves could not reach any higher. But now as the years pass, there has been change, things are different. The younger Blacks and whites are doing better about coming together. They are different from the ancestors way back. Blacks and whites are doing more hanging together and there is more intermarriage. Things begin to open up. More Blacks are being educated, more prospects are opening up for Blacks, and the Blacks are now competing in the WHITE world. So there can be a different outlook.

But racism dies hard. It's still there. It's different, but it's still THERE. It's no longer fighting, but it's still a constant thing. It's not often big things, but little things everyday that tell you, "Stay in your place. You're inferior." And from that most Blacks deep down have hurt and pain. There is that undercurrent of a race issue, due to where they've lived, or from being in the gangs, or from the name-calling, or from where they've worked and had to take second place.

Most Black people don't want to openly admit that racism is an issue in their lives. They'd rather focus on anything ELSE but race. And with some, it's a very deep hurt that HANGS there. Black people respond to this pain in different ways, not just in fighting whites. Everybody has their own way of taking it out, getting it off of them. Many Blacks have been on the defensive side for years and from that they either overreacted or under-reacted, due to not understanding and just thinking and saying negative things to add to the negative situation. And in that they get into a deeper and DEEPER rut. The young Black man without Christ in his life is often tense and embittered. And he takes it out not only on the whites, but on other Blacks and on HIMSELF. He thinks, "I'm Black and that means I can't have, I can't do. What's the point of living." And that's a very NEGATIVE person.

Mostly the young men try to escape it. They hide behind peers or alcohol or drugs to say "I can't make it," or "I can't cut it," or whatever. They don't really reach manhood until most of them are in their late twenties or early thirties. Then they realize they are on their own. They can't depend on their mother and father anymore. They begin to wake up and realize that there IS no escape. Life is what it is. It is basically a WHITE world and the only way out is to face yourself and find out who YOU are.

For some, church is more of an escape than it is a help in discovering self. These young people have been hurt and can't fight it off. So they run to the church to satisfy mind. They can't cope at work or whatever, and they go to church to find peace of mind. You

don't have to be spiritual to know there is a supreme something that knows and sees all. This is something in every Black person's mind. "There has GOT to be a God that knows what I am going through, and that God HAS to know who is responsible." "The last will be first and the first will be last," is a scripture that really appeals to many Blacks because it turns the tables on those with the wealth and power, the whites. The problem is that focusing all the attention on a time of atonement only eases the pain for the moment. There is nothing in the program that helps to CHANGE the situation. The beliefs are correct, but the person is missing the rest of the picture, the Christ in action part. The Black person is still in the same hole because he still sees himself as down and out. There is nothing here to help that Black person get up and out of that rut.

Young Black people today need an active faith, not an escape. But Black people have to be careful because some of these faiths that APPEAR active are active for the WRONG reasons. The Black Muslims are like this. It's the action that makes the Black Muslims attractive to younger Blacks, especially the men. But the Black Muslim's way of dealing with racism is to segregate themselves and replay history in terms of the white man as the devil. They turn racism around and teach HATRED of the whites. Young Black men listen to the Black Muslims, but those that can see through it discover the Black Muslim's interpretation of their religion is for every other reason but the RIGHT reason. The Black Muslims think they are freed from limitations, but really they are BOUND by their own racial hatred. And that negativism blocks their ability to become complete human beings, just as much as the discrimination of the white man.

For all Black people the experience of being Black is there. The suggestions of inferiority are there, they are constant, however the person has successfully fought them off. Rev. Greer, through his teachings in Faith Deliverance, has truly helped Black people to deal with these racial problems. It seems like the Black person that is education oriented and is trying to get ahead is often the one that runs into racism. He comes directly up against the whites first, Blacks second rule. And he becomes embittered because he is up against a stonewall and he feels like he can't move it. He ends up fighting within himself and hating EVERYBODY. It becomes a mental thing, an emotional thing. The only real way out for this person is to discover who he is in God. When this person comes into deliverance beneath Rev. Greer's ministry, he is able to put the matter of being Black in the right perspective. The experience of being born again and being filled with the Spirit helps the person to see that being Black doesn't HAVE to mean being limited. He realizes that he no longer has to FIGHT his Black skin. He can release the problem and give it to God, and by doing that and by accepting divine guidance, God begins to channel his life and his mind into a constructive path. He can release his racial tensions and embitterments and become a better person.

In the services Rev. Greer deals with the total person. He says, "You are somebody," but he doesn't say you are somebody BECAUSE you are Black. He says you are somebody because you are a child of God, a divine creation. You have the divine within you. You are the equal of any man. You just have to stop accepting the limitations that others try to force on you and stop spending all your energy fighting against these limitations. Just let things go, knowing you are whoever you truly want to become. With God in the plan you will reach for the right thing for you and with divine guidance you will overcome ALL obstacles, racial or otherwise. What you truly are you are in spirit and the Spirit overcomes all things. So Rev. Greer gives the person the FOUNDATION of

self. And in that divine foundation there is no race. There is only man and the Spirit. Race itself is insignificant. Only when the people take it into their minds does race become an issue. Rev. Greer shows the people how to clear their mind of all thoughts of limitation, including race, and how to use their divine self to get on with their lives.

Rev. Greer is the example. He is a Black man, and he was raised in a family that was poor and lived in the ghetto. He has come from a situation where Black was considered inferior. But by his own deliverance and by really LIVING his deliverance he has been able to truly succeed. He is himself proof that a Black person CAN get ahead.

### Rev. Greer, the Viewpoint of Faith Deliverance, and the Future

A lot of people are programmed and think just one way. They're RELIGIOUS minded, and I don't want to be religious minded. I want to be SPIRITUAL minded. Prophet Greer is not religious minded, he doesn't preach RELIGION. He doesn't go around saying, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus," all the time or go around saying, "Praise the Lord." Now, that's a beautiful thing to say, but I don't find myself saying it every time I turn around, because I AM what God says I am, and He lives in me, so therefore I don't have to present myself AS a Christian. I want my light to shine before men so that men may see my WORKS. I don't want to be first with the WORD so people say, "Oh, she's a Christian." I want somebody to see Christ in ME, and say, "It's something about you, and I LIKE that." In the same way, I don't have to tote a Bible if I don't want to, because it's in my heart. After a while, the Bible's going to be done away with, anyway. God said, "Establish the word upon the tables of your hearts, and let the Holy Ghost bring it back to you." So I am learning to take the Word in my heart and establish it there. This is how Bishop is teaching us to be spiritual minded, not religious minded.

It's a TOTAL difference to know that Christ lives IN me. If He's living in me, He's become a PART of me, I'm no longer by myself. As Paul says, "It's not I, but the Christ that lives within me." Before, I was taught that there was a God on high, that God was too high for me, and I was too small for Him, and I thought He couldn't see me or reach me. So, I would pray to Him, but it would be prayers, hoping that they would go SOMEWHERE, but not really BELIEVING that they went anywhere. But now, I know that God is IN me, and I can reach Him BECAUSE He lives in me. There's a TOTAL difference. My prayers are more FIRM because I know I can talk to God in me. And I don't have to go and shut myself off, and pray real LOUD to get God to hear me. Now I can just walk around and talk to God in me all day long, and He hears me, even the simplest prayer, He hears me. He's living in me, and He's embracing me, and I'm embracing Him, and He's close to me, so He's a PERSONAL thing to me now. And being POSITIVE like this, I KNOW that God will hear and answer my prayer because I MEAN it, and it's more DIRECT to God.

Rev. Greer helps you to build your faith. He tells you if you don't reach OUT to do, or to WANT something, you'll never get it. And he shows you HOW to reach out by faith and claim hold to these things you desire. His ministry is on an illustrated basis, showing you and telling you how to USE the things that he gives you, to GET the things you want. He preaches the message, and he illustrates and shows you, and that opens it UP for you. And he teaches you that God is REAL and that He lives IN you. We're servants of a LIVING God, not of a dead God. Give me something that is true, and that's real, that's living. I can identify with that. I can identify with trying to put THAT into my life. Rev.



Greer's ministry is a TEACHING ministry. You can put it into OPERATION in your life and it will work for you. I KNOW that it's true because I've done it many times.

Some people don't understand why Prophet dresses in FINE clothes and all those BRIGHT colors. But there's POSITIVENESS in that, because when you see that you say, "WOW." If you can go beyond the man, stop looking at the man, then you can realize after he preaches where he's coming from. He IS a man of God. And, the way he dresses, he's showing the people that "this is what you CAN be and STILL serve God." I like that because a lot of people, they like to dress. I like to look good. I don't want to go and put on a black dress or something because I go to church. We're serving a LIVING God, and Prophet, he's in LIVING color to me! That turns ON my mind, that I CAN have these things, AND serve God.

Rev. Greer likes things to the point, that's being SURE of yourself, knowing what you want, reaching out. When you see him snap his fingers rapidly because he needs something, this is knowing what you want and being on the ball and going forward. A lot of people don't understand. They see him as being rough and having no patience. But if they look at it, they see that he's enforcing a lesson in the people. When you lag around you can't function. You have to KNOW what you want and SNAP to it, get it done, and get it over with. Delaying it will allow the idleness of the mind to come in to CONFUSE you. Rev. Greer is showing the people and telling the people, "Your mind is powerful, your thoughts can be quick and sure. Get on the ball with your mind. Your mind will work for you if you put it to work." But if you don't THINK, you can't ACT. Getting things done, to the point, knowing what you want, get it done, and let it go. When I see him just snapping his fingers, it's really VERY educative.

Rev. Greer teaches that when you know the power of your mind and spirit there are no limits in life. Even intellectually you can become what you WANT to become if you ELEVATE your thoughts and your mind. Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, these great men of our times, when you look back you see what they did. They had a goal in mind, they WANTED something! They KNEW there had to be a way, and they kept AT it till they succeeded. It's the same way today. Where there's a will, there's a way. They say it is only a portion of a man's brain that he really uses. All the rest of the brain, it goes to waste. It goes to waste in negative thoughts that really don't MEAN anything. But the rest of that brain COULD be functioning on how to get ahead, how to have, how to improve yourself, how to help others. But we don't USE the brain we have. I've been in on many intellectual talks with Prophet, and he is VERY deep. Bishop is so deep that you really can't even TOUCH that man's mind. The POWER of the mind, this is what he is trying to give the people little by little, and having us USE our faith and step out on faith and BELIEVE, and not to let negativism get in our way, but pursue whatever we want to become, our dream, by FAITH. But you must FIRST find yourself, know who YOU are, and then know what you want to become, and BELIEVE in yourself, and KNOW the God in you WILL make a way for it to happen.

It's something to see Bishop and to realize that he is LIVING the life that he is talking about. I can say I've seen him as himself, and what he privately talks, in front of the congregation, he is the SAME man when you're with him privately. I've seen Rev. Greer many times in a relaxed frame of mind where he's not up in the Spirit, and he's still talking the SAME thing. If I slip and say something in a negative manner, he'll look over

at me, just a look to remind me to be POSITIVE. The man LIVES the life he preaches, and you have to respect him for that. This is not what he's just DOING for the people. He's going through this HIMSELF. And knowing Bishop the way I do makes me MORE aware that you don't have to live this life ONLY in church, then go home and be something else. You CAN really live with God in your life ALL the time, and if you do that, you can really claim hold to what God HAS for you. But you MUST hold on.

I have only the GREATEST respect for Rev. Greer and his ministry, because of what it has done for me. I have no words to use, to say how Bishop, through God, has transformed my life. I really can't find the words to describe the way that I FEEL about myself. Faith Deliverance has made me realize where my REAL family is. I am now in the family of God. And it has made me know that I AM somebody, whereas before I thought I was a nobody. I was trying to identify with these things around me, all negativeness, family negativeness, friends negativeness. I was trying to FIND myself through these people, and it was only just pulling me downhill. I was prospering materially, but I was dying in the rest of my life, as a wife, a mother, a friend, as a HUMAN BEING. And I would get despondent many times, I would have crying spells, and many times I couldn't understand myself. I was just somebody breathing in this world, WAITING, really, just waiting. "Lord, how long do I have to LIVE like this? Why don't You go on and take me away from this world?" This is the way I was, and I used to say that ALL the time. I'd think, "Well what do you have me here FOR? I have NO HAPPINESS outside the bottle and the cigarettes. I'll be glad when You take me away from here."

But NOW I'm living to LIVE. I can grasp hold to the family of God because I AM somebody. I'm no longer a part of the negativeness going around. I look at the life I lived before, and I pray for those who are in that situation where I came from. I look back and I say, "Lord, I THANK You for what You've DONE for me and what You're GONNA do for me." Looking back at myself, just seeing some of the things that I went through trying to find peace, trying to find happiness, OH MY. Buying THINGS for satisfaction, and only lasting for a season. The drinking, the smoking, the partying, but then the stale glasses, the stained fingers, the hangovers. What I had then is NOTHING compared to what I have now. I've given up some material things, but I've gained something which makes up for it, a hundred-fold. Within me, what I feel WITHIN me, right NOW is INDESCRIBABLE. And it only gets BETTER. No hangovers, just JOY.

## Epilogue

As the manuscript for this book was in its final stages of preparation, it was over two years since Flora and I met in behalf of her life testimony. Since that time I have seen her frequently in service and kept up with the major developments in her life. Working on the final version of her testimony gave us time to talk at greater length and to bring me up to date.

Still without any asthma or tonsillitis, and still a confirmed non-smoker, Flora reports that her home life has improved considerably. Although her older children remain a source of problems for her, Flora says that her home is calm, if busy. Effective communication and respect continue to characterize relationships with the children. Flora is especially pleased with the openness that has developed in her relationship with Jim. As Flora says, Jim is back to his former self, laughing and exhibiting a good sense of humor.

According to Flora, Jim seems to have become confident enough in his spirituality so he can relax and be himself in other respects. This development has meant better communication with Flora, more respect for her, more attention to her, and more love shown for her in their relationship. Jim has emerged from spiritual isolation, and Flora says they now have a complete marriage, good in all respects.

Two years ago Flora was uncertain whether to pursue her ministerial calling or go back to school and become trained as an elementary school counselor. Flora says her initial decision was to go back to school since counseling would provide her an opportunity to reach children with the view of Deliverance at the same time she could add significantly to the family's income and security. Accordingly she obtained the study materials to take her G.E.D. test. Flora subsequently took the test, passed, and received her high school diploma. Flora then applied to, was accepted by, and entered a local college. Three months into her studies, Flora was enjoying her new academic life when Rev. Greer told her that she was on the wrong track. He said she was listening to her carnal mind, not her spiritual mind, and that if she followed the lead of her Divine Guide she would pursue her ministerial calling. Flora says Rev. Greer indicated that if she wanted to go to school, she should go to a good Bible college.

Flora followed Rev. Greer's advice and withdrew from college to devote her time to a spiritual career. In the past year, Flora has been preaching in services and meetings in various churches. Flora says that she sees her ministry as one of preaching, praying, and healing. In a dream Flora reports that she has seen herself and Jim in their own church. Flora accepts that this will eventually happen, but she is waiting for events to confirm her dream so that she knows it is right. When the confirmation comes, Flora indicates the opportunity will follow, and Divine Guidance will give her the specific direction she needs for her ministry. Until these developments occur, Flora is devoted to preaching as she has the opportunity, to carrying on her telephone prayer ministry from her home, and to performing her role well as a member of the Nurses' Board of Faith Deliverance. Flora is using and developing her ministerial skills while she waits for her confirmation. She says her life is now busy but happy because her home and marriage are in order and her ministry is progressing.

## Commentary

By

Flora Lincoln

I feel that the testimony I gave on behalf of myself and that Dr. Burns has put together with me, is accurate and does in fact, capture the reality of my past, present and future. After we made a few slight changes in the draft manuscript, I found the testimony satisfying to say the least! The sections on Faith Deliverance and Rev. Greer I feel are especially complete and accurate. I know that Divine Guidance was with Dr. Burns every step of the way. As I began to relive my experiences in our talks and as I began to explain my most personal circumstances and to relate my feelings about Faith Deliverance and Rev. Greer, I felt good about the experience of giving my testimony from the very beginning. I believe that in order for Dr. Burns to capture my emotions and my spirit the way he has, Divine Guidance had to be leading him all the way.

Seeing Dr. Burns in Faith Deliverance and chatting with him occasionally, I have found him to be a very warm and sincere person, one whose personality never changes. The fact that Dr. Burns is white has never entered my mind. However, I hope that Dr. Burns' joining our church and writing this book will help people of other races to become more fully aware that we, in the body of Christ, are exemplifying love.

The stigma of the white man's prejudice against the Black man runs deep. The fervor of antagonism between the two races goes far beyond the teachings of Christ. The heritage of the Black race leans strongly on our ancestors and their bitter experiences of slavery, poverty, and mere physical survival in the white man's world. There are deep wounds, intimidation of the job world, and just plain denial of freedom in a country where freedom supposedly reigns. There has never been equality for the Black man unless he fought for it. There is also a place in the Black man called "soul" where feelings and emotions of what the Black man has been through run deep. However, I believe that any man can reach out and explore the heritage of someone different, and in viewing that heritage, he can, through Divine Guidance, get a picture of how it must feel and what it must be like to live such an experience. But for a man to be successful, he must be led by Divine Guidance. I feel that Dr. Burns has been divinely led, and that he captured in my testimony what my life has been like, and what my deliverance faith has meant to me as a Black woman.

I am proud of Dr. Burns for my experience in giving my testimony, not only for Faith Deliverance but for myself as well. I was pleased to have the opportunity to give my testimony and through Dr. Burns' serious consideration to be able to share this testimony with others. It was very important to me to have someone like Dr. Burns to confide in, knowing all along that he cared. Dr. Burns' feelings were expressed throughout the experience of creating my testimony, and if he had not been led by God, I would have known. I felt God's presence. I knew spiritually that what was happening was right. I thank Dr. Burns and know God will wonderfully bless him.

## VII WENDY JACKSON MAKING IT ALONE THROUGH FAMILY BURDENS AND WITCHCRAFT

### Introduction

Wendy Jackson describes a fairly full involvement for herself with the practitioners of "witchcraft." In Flora Lincoln's testimony, Flora briefly touches on this phenomenon, but in one form or another witchcraft is so prevalent in the background experiences of those attending Faith Deliverance that it deserves attention.

Within the Faith Deliverance community the area of witchcraft is referred to as voodoo, hoodoo, root work, conjuring or witchcraft. The general attitude is that practitioners of these arts have sold out to the Devil, and are capable only of perpetrating evil. While practitioners claim to benefit those who contact them, Faith Deliverance members see these "witches" as primarily interested in extorting money. Though their interest is seen as personal gain, people in Faith Deliverance do not regard these practitioners merely as fakes. They are respected as possessing real power, sometimes characterized in psychological, sometimes paranormal, and sometimes supernatural terms. In this respect, Rev. Greer himself indicates that while most witchcraft cases are of a psychological nature, there are practitioners who do possess the power to manipulate others through what are called supernatural means. The problem of course is that virtually no "witch" claims this title. It is bestowed by others. And many who are witches to some are gifts from God to others. Indeed many practitioners are ministers in churches that claim to be Christian.

For some outsiders, the distinction between Rev. Greer's prayer cloths, crosses, and anointing oil and the "witches'" herbs, dust, and candles may seem too slight to be significant. But the distinction is carefully drawn within Faith Deliverance for any who listen carefully. From the Faith Deliverance perspective, there are in fact several features that distinguish the "true" minister from the "witchcraft" practitioner. "True" ministers, as Rev. Greer is regarded in the Faith Deliverance community, view the objects they give out as "points of contact." While this terminology sounds magical, these objects - the prayer cloths or oil - are said to have no power in themselves. As points of contact they are only devices to assist the individual in making his own personal connection with the divine. They are facilitators or catalysts, not active agents, as they are regarded in the witchcraft domain. For "true" ministers, power rests with the divine, not in artifacts. Ministers and artifacts can assist by providing a person with an example or a point of focus for faith and belief. These examples and objects can encourage breaking through to the divine, which in turn can have both dramatic immediate consequences, and positive long-term effects.

Another difference between true ministers and witchcraft practitioners is that true ministers of God do not sell artifacts. Rather they solicit offerings as demonstrations of faith. And large offerings are sought and justified because it is recognized that a material [or financial] sacrifice sets up expectations and the kind of openness that is necessary if a person is to break through to the spiritual realm and benefit from its positive effects. It is in behalf of this breakthrough that true ministers request substantial

offerings. But true ministers are aware that material or financial sacrifices come in different amounts for different people, and they recognize that all have a right to access the divine, regardless of their means. Faith and belief are the keys, not the amount of money given. The central concern of true ministers is helping others to help themselves, not seeing their own personal wealth grow. Accordingly in the organizations of true ministers, the money collected is pumped back into the system to maintain itself and to reach more and more people with the message. Typically, a true minister's church may have considerable assets, but the minister's personal wealth is limited. Much of what the public may interpret as belonging to the minister, in fact belongs to the church, and is part of the minister's necessary display of an image of success. Only with such a display can the minister's claim to be able to assist others appear credible.

Several other features distinguish true ministers from "witchcraft" practitioners for Faith Deliverance members. True ministers never threaten those who come to them with negative consequences if they do not follow the minister's recommendations. And they will never assist a person to accomplish negative or evil effects to himself or anyone else. True ministers also never claim that divine power as something they uniquely possess or that they can give to others. True ministers are developed in their own divine contact and in this sense they are more powerful or gifted than those who are spiritually undeveloped. Moreover these gifts can be used to assist others directly, but a true minister looks for the individual's own spiritual breakthrough and development, not his continued dependence on the minister's own abilities. A true minister is a spiritually, ethically, and socially developed person who does not take advantage of his followers in any way - materially, sexually, socially, or psychologically. Neither does he set himself apart from his followers, but rather he puts himself forward as an example of what his followers can become, and encourages them to develop in a similar direction.

From the point of view of the Faith Deliverance community, a witch is the opposite of all the features just cited for the true minister. The problem is that in reality, few practitioners are all bad, and few ministers are all good. Moreover, those who are more bad than good tend to be very skillful in managing their appearance so as to seem legitimate. Thus, as Mark Scott says in his testimony, it is no easy task to distinguish the true minister from the fake or the "witch." This is especially true since few of those searching for help have the Faith Deliverance criteria to use in judging how "true" a minister is until after they discover Faith Deliverance itself. Largely uninformed about what to look for, and often desperate for help, most people make several wrong choices before they discover a group that can really help them. Wendy's search is typical in this respect.

Wendy first tried different Protestant churches of the standard denominations, but discovered that whatever they were spiritually, their inside management was ethically unsound. So she next tried Catholicism in her own personal way and was satisfied until the dregs of the Catholic priesthood came to dominate her inner city parish. When priests and nuns began to display an intolerable combination of racial prejudice and ethical hypocrisy, Wendy quit the Catholic Church. But it was at this point that the pressures of Wendy's own life were greatest due to the problems created by her brother, daughter, and grandchildren. So Wendy found herself without a religious group at exactly the time when she was in the greatest need. Physically she was miserable both because she was going through menopause and because she was suffering from

insomnia and throat spasms of an undetermined origin. Wendy next tried medical doctors, but they did not help.

Reluctantly at first, Wendy says she turned as a last resort to the practitioners of what she now calls "witchcraft." In the hands of different ones of these people, including her sister, Wendy spent a considerable sum of money for all kinds of candles and potions, but she got no better. By Wendy's account, if it had not been for her own good sense, the "inner" voice which frequently speaks to Wendy in times of distress, and her good fortune in being taken to Faith Deliverance by a client-friend, Wendy might have remained under the influence of these practitioners. The extent of the real influence of these practitioners on Wendy can be seen in the fact that it was nearly a year from the time she became involved in Faith Deliverance before Wendy was sure enough about herself to return all the artifacts she had bought from her sister.

For a woman who is resourceful and intelligent, and who says she was neither raised to believe in "witchcraft," nor did in fact believe in it, Wendy certainly now regards herself as having become deeply enmeshed in its practice when there seemed to be no other remedy for her troubles at the time. But according to Wendy's testimony, it was not until she discovered Faith Deliverance that she found both a cure for her tormenting physical problems and something that can sustain her through her everyday difficulties and into a positive future. But perhaps most significantly, Wendy has developed a sense of herself that is independent and strong enough so she is now able to begin to free herself from the binding sense of responsibility she has felt since early childhood for her family. In living her life first for her mother and siblings, then for her daughter, Kitty, and finally for her grandchildren, Wendy tied her own identity so completely to those close to her that it was easy for her to be used.

Wendy's testimony suggests that since her breakthrough to the divine, the consequent process of self-realization has clearly begun to touch on the essential issue of her over commitment to her family. But the tendency also evident in Wendy's testimony to replay her life within a martyr framework indicates that she still has a way to go before the question of the appropriate place for her family in her life is adequately resolved. Still, it has to be appreciated how difficult it must be for Wendy to let go of her overwhelming desire for her family to be united, since to do so requires her to risk her family relationships entirely. The loss of her family ties would create a social vacuum for Wendy who already lives alone in a Baltimore neighborhood that she has seen deteriorate steadily over the years. Only since she discovered a spiritual family in the Holy Ghost has Wendy been strong enough in herself to withdraw from her ungrateful family. The stronger she becomes in this spiritual family, the more independent Wendy can become from her natural family. And in declaring her own independence, she may gain the respect of her family, and ultimately achieve the unity she desires.

## Background Summary

At the time Wendy Jackson's testimony was taken, she was living above her tailor shop, waiting to be blessed with a Holy Ghost filled husband. In her mid-fifties, she was working regularly, living comfortably, and attending Faith Deliverance services frequently. Wendy had withdrawn somewhat from her family, and was more at peace with herself than she reports having been for many years.

Wendy was born in the rural south, but moved north to the suburbs of Baltimore with her parents before she was three. As the oldest of her mother's four children, Wendy recalls her childhood in terms of the responsibility she felt to help her mother and sisters and brother make it through the depression years. Wendy describes her father as a playboy, a man with a good job and a long grocery list in his pocket who would blow his money playing the big shot in the local bars. With a husband she could never rely upon, the mother did days work to try to keep her family intact. From age eleven Wendy says she worked at all kinds of jobs after school, on weekends, and during vacations to make a dollar or two to help out. Even the money her mother refused to take, Wendy says she would save and use to surprise her mother by paying a bill or buying groceries. Wendy describes herself as someone who has always been committed to the idea that a family should be united and stick together.

Wendy indicates she was raised in a Christian environment. When the Baptist church was near enough, the family attended church services regularly on Sunday. And when they lived too far away to get to church, Wendy's mother would conduct services in the home for herself and her children. Through the week, the mother always opened and closed each day with prayer. From her Christian upbringing, Wendy says she came away with a strong belief in God and the recognition that she must be thankful for what she has while always striving for something better.

According to Wendy it had always been her ambition to work hard and get ahead in life. In this regard, Wendy says that in spite of all the work she did outside of school, she always managed to do very well in her studies, often falling asleep at night over her books. From her efforts Wendy indicates that she was able to remain on the honor roll of her suburban high school throughout the time she was there. Moreover, Wendy says she was the only Black student to be on the honor roll during that time. While she was in junior high school and high school Wendy worked for a physician's family, and she decided she wanted to be a doctor. Wendy feels if it had not been for her mother's unfortunate decision to return to the rural south when Wendy was about sixteen, she might have received the help she needed from the local people to go on in school and actually become a doctor.

Besides the move south, Wendy's goals were shaken by her first significant encounter with the prejudice of whites. Up to her eighth grade year, Wendy indicates that nearly all of her girlfriends were white. In these white friends she found not only companionship but also a shared vision of life that included success in school and the expectations to continue into higher education. According to Wendy, neither her family nor her Black acquaintances supported or shared these goals. In eighth grade Wendy reports that her life-long white girlfriends suddenly began to ignore and exclude her. If Wendy tried to approach them, she found herself snubbed. Wendy says she could not understand what was wrong and could only suspect that her former friends had been told by their parents not to associate with her anymore. The withdrawal of her friends deeply hurt Wendy because she lost not only her companions but also those who supported her ambitions in life. Wendy indicates that she felt terribly alone and betrayed for a long time. She says she took the experience inside and that she cried a great deal and that this was probably one of the reasons why she became such a nervous teenager. According to Wendy the experience made her cautious about putting too much trust in white people.



Although Wendy continued to do well in school, she says that she lost something important to her in the retreat of her white friends.

Toward the middle of her sophomore year in high school Wendy says that her mother was persuaded by relatives to give everything up to move back to North Carolina where the family members were going to all build houses and settle. Once in the south, Wendy discovered poor schools and much pressure from her family and her peers to stop studying and become involved with men. Wendy's concession was to go with a boy for three years, but to have no sexual relations with him. Finally Wendy says she gave in to the constant pressure of her girlfriends and had intercourse with a boy, but not with her boyfriend. Wendy says she unfortunately became pregnant immediately. It was not until Wendy was eight months pregnant that her mother found out and ordered Wendy to get out of the house. For the last month of her pregnancy, Wendy went to live with a woman who was to adopt the baby when it was born.

But after the child arrived, Wendy decided to keep it, even though it meant she would have to quit school, go to work, and live apart from her mother, who would not allow "bastards" in her home. When Wendy's boyfriend of three years returned from the service to discover Wendy with a child, that was the end of their relationship, and Wendy was truly on her own. The family she had helped so much scorned her and treated her with such disdain that Wendy says she even had to pay her sister to borrow her own clothes to wear. However, after about two months of being shunned, Wendy says her mother relented when she discovered that her house was becoming a complete mess without Wendy there to look after things.

Like her mother, Wendy was too proud to go on relief, and instead worked two jobs to earn enough to support herself and her child, Kitty. By the end of World War II the family had moved back to Baltimore, and Wendy paid her mother to look after Kitty instead of paying unreliable babysitters. After various factory jobs, Wendy had a chance to work for a woman in New York City taking care of the woman's apartment on Park Avenue and watching over her sons. The pay was excellent, but Wendy could only visit her daughter for three days every two weeks. On this schedule Wendy discovered that she had no time for herself as a young, unmarried woman. After three and a half years Wendy says she had to give up the job, prompted by a voice within her that frequently speaks to her when she is in problematic situations.

The woman Wendy had worked for in New York was a clothing designer, and Wendy says she had become interested in the clothing trade while with her. So when Wendy returned to Baltimore, she describes having a vision that led her to return to school to become a designer-seamstress. Wendy did days work again in order to go to school full time. In spite of taking her daughter to and from school, which caused Wendy to be late for class most days, Wendy says she graduated at the top of her class. After two years working for others in establishments on Grand Street in Baltimore, Wendy decided to open her own shop, which she managed to finance by hitting the numbers several times in a row. It is this same shop that Wendy operates today, with her home upstairs.

Remaining unmarried throughout her life to the present, Wendy put her time and energy into her family and making her own life productive. Considering all the effort and money Wendy says she has expended, especially for her brother, her daughter Kitty, and

Kitty's three children, Wendy now feels there is virtually nothing to show for it. In the case of her brother, Wendy says she has helped him on numerous occasions, especially when he has been in trouble with the law. She indicates that she has always been the one in the family called upon to run to the station house to help. Wendy was the one to mortgage her house to the tune of over \$3,000 to hire lawyers to rescue her brother from a long potential prison sentence for manslaughter. But Wendy says she has yet to see a penny in repayment. Wendy was also the one to pay for her brother's three-year Bible Study course while he was in prison. Wendy says her brother has neither repaid her nor since used what he learned to any good purpose. Finally, Wendy was the one to arrange her brother's early parole from prison another time, only to have him try in turn to set fire to her home on one occasion and to have her business shut down by the board of health on another occasion. Wendy feels that her kindness was taken for granted, and instead of being appreciated she was used.

Wendy's difficulties with her daughter have been even more disheartening to her. Repeatedly Wendy says she has tried to help Kitty, but Kitty has wasted her life. Wendy says she sacrificed to send Kitty to summer camps and to dancing school, only to discover that Kitty was hanging around with the wrong crowd and partying on her lesson money. As many times as Wendy went with Kitty to school and talked with her teachers, Wendy says there was nothing she could do to keep Kitty away from the unsavory types. At sixteen Kitty became pregnant, quit school, and married her high school dropout boyfriend. With her husband, Kitty had three children, but seven pregnancies. For all seven of Kitty's pregnancies, Wendy has paid the bills for the hospital, the doctor, and the specialist, who was necessary because Kitty's pregnancies involved complications.

As a young woman, Kitty refused to stay home and tend to her children. Instead, Wendy says, Kitty was always out in the streets. Eventually Wendy indicates Kitty's husband got tired of the situation and finally left her. Since Kitty would not take care of her children, Wendy felt she had to be a mother to them. So Wendy legally assumed responsibility for the children and raised them for nearly ten years. During that time Kitty was gone for long periods or was in and out of Wendy's home with various boyfriends. Always in the streets doing her own thing, Wendy says that Kitty never involved herself in so much as making a dinner for her children. But when Kitty had her nervous breakdown, again it was Wendy who nursed her over the long road back to health. Once she was healthy, however, Wendy says Kitty returned again to the same street behavior. Finally Wendy threw Kitty out of the house when she repeatedly broke Wendy's rule about bringing undesirable men in the house, just to use the bedroom.

Out on her own, Wendy says Kitty discovered how little her welfare check would buy. For the money in it and to get back at Wendy, Kitty went to court to take back her children, who were teenagers by now. Wendy says Kitty also tempted the children by promising them they could do whatever they pleased if they came to live with her. Kitty told her children that as far as she was concerned they were grown at thirteen and fifteen. Wendy says she wanted Kitty to have her children, but she wanted Kitty to want them for the right reasons and to do well for them. Wendy regrets that since the children have left her and gone to live with Kitty, all the advantages she tried to give them in private Catholic schooling and attention to all their needs have been virtually destroyed by Kitty. According to Wendy, the children are now adrift and out in the street like their

mother. Having put ten years into raising Kitty's children, Wendy has been more affected by their departure and downhill slide than by any other of her disappointments.

We begin Wendy's testimony in her own words with her description of her last session in court with Kitty. The school asked the state to instigate a custody investigation of Kitty, and without consulting Wendy the state had gone to court to reverse its former ruling and return the children to Wendy. But Wendy at this point had had enough. As far as Wendy was concerned the court had settled it, and the children had chosen where they wanted to be, and she was not going to be torn any further.

Wendy's testimony continues with her account of her search for help through her years in Baltimore, which reveals her experiences in various institutions of faith. Then Wendy relates her experience in and feelings about Faith Deliverance.

### Meeting Kitty and the Children in Court

The second time the authorities sent for me I had been in Faith Deliverance not quite a year. I was going through the prayer line one night in service, when Bishop Greer handed me a prayer cloth and said, "Next time you go to court, take this with you." I said to myself, "You must be talking to the lady in FRONT of me. I just LEFT the court." Well, it wasn't but a few weeks before I got the subpoena. I said, "Lord, that WAS me, wasn't it." So I took the prayer cloth and I was really ANGRY because they were causing me to miss most of a day's work, and I didn't know what for. I got to the courthouse, and the children didn't even SPEAK to me when they walked in through the door, and that hurt me to my HEART. I said, "WELL!" And I just said right out loud, I said, "Listen, I know that you children aren't going to walk in here and not speak to me this morning." So one of them mumbled "good morning."

So, anyway, Kitty was down there, and she had a lawyer there, and her husband was there. And they started in, and I was just standing there. Well, they carried on and they taunted me, and they were treating me just like I was SCUM, and I said, "I can't TAKE this." And here I took a big old FRIDAY off, too. I said, "Somebody's going to talk to me TODAY, Judge." He told me to sit down, "I said, "When I finish I WILL sit down but for now I have the floor, and I have no business to be here in the FIRST place." I told them that I felt that they had taken undue advantage of me, because here I was someone who had kept herself and her grandchildren off of the welfare state for fifteen YEARS, and here I was being PESTERED and SLANDERED around in the court room and never knowing WHY I was there. I said, "In the first place I only KEPT my daughter's children until it was time she was mature enough to take them or really WANTED them herself," I said, "In MY house, those children SLEPT good, they ATE good, they went to the BEST of schools. I kept them CLEAN, and any activity that they joined I was right THERE with them. I went to ALL the PTA meetings, and I helped them with their homework. I sat up with them all NIGHT when they were sick. In fact there was a time when my granddaughter used to be so sick that I had to hold her on my stomach all night and keep her wrapped up in a great big quilt because she was like delirious. And to keep her from catching cold I wrapped her up and lay her on me, and like that I didn't sleep." And I looked over at Kitty, and I was FUMING. I said, "Here is a woman who was TAUGHT better and was raised around a mother who DID look after her, and did the BEST she could for her, and she just LEAVES her children." I said, "A CAT wouldn't

even do that." And I said, "When I'd call on her to do for her children, she never had any time."

When I finished with them, the judge and all the rest of them apologized to me, and they ran and opened the door for me. I was so MAD and I was SO angry when I left, I left STEAMING. I walked out of there, me and that prayer cloth. And they didn't do anything to me and I haven't heard anything from the court since.

### Wendy's Voices Lead Her from Church to Church

I've ALWAYS had a firm belief in God from the Christian upbringing of my mother. When my daughter was about a year and a half old, I had this desire or this urge to go to church. I was in Baltimore then, and the Lord sent me to the same church my baby's grandfather would go to. He was a big clerk or something in the church. So I went and soon the Lord told me that He wanted me to join the church. I tried to get out of joining because I only had a couple of dresses, but when I got home, I couldn't rest. Everywhere I went I was just TROUBLED by this voice that kept saying, "You don't have any religion." Oh, I was just TROUBLED because when I don't do what these voices tell me, I just get so troubled that I feel like I'm going out of my MIND. So I tried to lie down to rest, but I couldn't. And it wasn't too long after that, that the pastor must have sensed it, because he came to my apartment and he said, "I want you to come and join the church, because the Spirit of God is troubling your mind. And that's when I joined the church. But then, right away I got a discouragement, because as soon as I got in there the pastor told me I had to apologize to the congregation for having a baby and not marrying. Well, that irritated me, because if I apologize to someone, I apologize to GOD, not to man, and those people didn't know me anyway.

So it wasn't long before I left that church. And then I joined Joshua Baptist Church, but THEY weren't right spiritually. The Spirit there wasn't the RIGHT spirit. And they had a lot of confusion, OUTRIGHT confusion, with police and all that stuff. I don't think that belongs in church. So that church split, and they started this Greater Joshua Church. And I became secretary of that church, and I stayed there about eight months. But I found out the pastor wasn't right, cause he wanted ME to help him steal the money.

So the Lord told me He didn't want me to go to that church. He told me He wanted me to go to Full Faith Baptist Church, and He worried me till I went down there. And I was there for six years, I worked as a Sunday school teacher, but I never would become involved too deeply in church society because I don't like gossip. But again, I left there because I found out that the folks just weren't right there. I lost my faith in the pastor, because I felt like what he was PREACHING, he wasn't LIVING. I wasn't trying to run his life or his business, but I do feel if a person is TEACHING the gospel, that he should LIVE it too, and to the fullest extent. I'm not going to give him ANY leeway, because there's only ONE way, and that's the RIGHT way.

I was always a realist. I believed in the church, but I believed mostly in the Spirit WITHIN the church. I felt like God's Spirit should always be in church if you're going there. And I would go there to try to feel the Spirit myself, to get some of it. And when things were right I really ENJOYED myself, because I always put myself into the service, not for show, but humbly. When I enter any service I always ask God to instill in my heart His Holy Spirit, and let me enjoy the service and gain from it what "thus saith

the Lord." And if the pastor doesn't preach that, then I am ready to leave, because I KNOW about current events myself. I want to hear about something that I DON'T know too much about, to enlighten myself.

In most cases, I was very disappointed. That's why I jumped from church to church. Pastors were up there PREACHING one thing and DOING the other. And so I felt like I would be a hypocrite to sit there, under such leadership or so-called leadership. I would be just as wrong, or more wrong than they. So, I would always leave and go someplace else. In fact, one minister asked me if I believed that he could save souls but go to Hell himself. I said, "Yes, and God will have to make ANOTHER Hell for you ministers, so there'll be room for the ordinary people." Because so MANY of the ministers weren't sincere. I don't know whether they took for granted what they were doing was something grand, because at ONE time Black folks thought that a minister was something that should be held in HIGH esteem. But I think the way the ministers have conducted themselves, in the minds of a lot of people, it has brought them down. And I think they do that to THEMSELVES, because of their actions and the way of life that they lead.

### Catholic Church Experience

So after six years in Full Faith, I was so disappointed I said I wasn't going to church. I guess I stayed home about two years, and when I did go back to church it was to the Catholic Church. And I think the main reason I went was because I wanted to get my grandkids in Catholic schools. But I attended Mass with my grandchildren every Sunday, and it wasn't just because I was supposed to, because I DID enjoy it. I don't know why I always wanted to go to the Catholics. I know I couldn't go myself when I was a child. I used to see the children in their nice uniforms, and they were so well-behaved, when I was living in Whitemarsh. But I knew that I couldn't afford to go. And I DID enjoy going with the children, but I don't think too much of kneeling to the objects in there, the different saints and things. I thought it was grand to bow your head for the name of Jesus, but I never really did care for this getting on my knees to these graven images, although I did very WELL in there, with my prayers and my faith. Anything that I wanted, I just asked the Lord for it, and I got it. I would talk to Jesus and I would talk to Mary too, because I felt like Mary was a part of Jesus, but I never felt like she was as GREAT as Jesus was. And I got to be president of one of the missionary groups. So I had all these prayers to say, and all these rosaries and everything to do.

I enjoyed the Catholic Church, during the time that I was there, and I still have nothing against it. In fact, at one time I thought that I was to be a nun. That never developed, but I DID get the grandchildren in school. It wasn't easy, and that was one of the things that made me draw back some, because they were VERY prejudiced. There were some schools they didn't allow Blacks to get in. I wanted my granddaughter to go to Catholic school over at St. Mary's and I went over there and that Mother Superior talked to me like I was a DOG. She did everything but SPIT in my face. And the Italian lady who lived next door to me told me that was going to happen. She said, "You can go over there, but she's going to practically spit in your face."

The school I DID get my granddaughter into was a good school, at least in the beginning. There was a young priest there who had just become a priest, and he took a liking to us, and helped an awful lot. In fact, all the priests were very kind to us, and also

the teachers, for a certain length of time, until the school became predominantly Black. Then the administrators started giving us the teachers they didn't want in the good schools. After that we had teachers drinking and sisters that stayed high all the time, and the nuns and priests courted just like people outside. But when they started CURSING the children and calling them Black BASTARDS and things like that, I very HIGHLY resented that. And when the Black mothers came in, and they said that that was the only way to relate to Black children, I REALLY resented that.

I quit going to the Catholic Church about five years ago because of the fact that we were getting different priests standing up there so DRUNK that they were about to knock the rostrum over. It was too MUCH. And I used to see them in the State Liquor Store, and then one of the parishioners had a saloon around the corner, and they were seen coming out of there. And some of them were smoking, and that wasn't proper. So I said, "Well, I'm in the Catholic Church, and now THEY'RE messing up." So I quit.

But even when I was IN the Catholic church I always had this yearning for something I wasn't getting. I always felt that I still had this space that hadn't been filled. And I didn't know what it was, whether I wanted more of Jesus, or of His Spirit, but I wasn't GETTING it anywhere. I wasn't even being TAUGHT it. In the Catholic Church we were taught there was a Holy Ghost, but that it was in the form of the saints. But the Holy Ghost isn't DEAD, and I felt like I should have some of Him too. And I don't know whether they didn't understand or didn't know, but they taught me nothing of how to firmly BELIEVE in God, and know your change would come.

In that last year I was going to Catholic Church, I was steadily losing interest. And each time that I would go, the voice in me would say, "I want you to go to THAT church over there and see what they're DOING in there." And that church was Faith Deliverance. But I didn't listen, I said, "I'm not going in there, because they hold services too LONG." Then one night I drove past and saw all these Cadillacs, and I said, "I don't think I'd better go in there." Then I thought, "All those Cadillacs," and I said, "Maybe that's where I NEED to go." But I never DID go. In fact, some lady was telling me that I SHOULDN'T go in there because the pastor had been run out of Chicago. Come to find out later, Rev. Greer never even HAD a church in Chicago. But I said, "There must be SOMETHING going on in there, because this voice keeps telling me to go." Then one afternoon I was upstairs making up my bed, and I was listening to the radio, and I heard Rev. Greer's program, and I said, "What is that? Is this Rev. Greer the man that the voice keeps telling me to go see?" And I said, "It SOUNDS pretty good. Someday I'm going up there." But I never did go on my own.

At that time I was going through so MANY changes. Kitty was in and out or she was telling lies on me to the judge, or my brother needed money, or it was Kitty working on stealing the kids, or it was my mother expecting me to take care of something. Sometimes it was ALL of them. And it got to where I couldn't even sleep, because something would CHOKe me, all night long. You could see it all in my throat, like a throbbing, anybody could see it. It was a twitching, and then if I touched it, it would fall in my chest and then it would fall down over on one side like a big lump. I was VERY miserable. There were times when it would even go down into my pelvic area, and I would feel like I was having a baby. I was just MISERABLE at that worktable, and it just happened so OFTEN. Then, oh murder, I would get these flashes and I would just burn

up. I said, "Well, I know that I should be changing life, but not every hour on the hour, or every half an hour, and every fifteen minutes, every FIVE minutes." I was being just worn OUT. There were times when I just had to pray all night long and read my Bible, but I STILL was missing something. It felt like I couldn't get THROUGH to God. I felt like He was still KEEPING me, but I couldn't get through to Him like I used to. And I couldn't understand WHY. I was going to the doctor's and the doctor was giving me some sort of needle, but it didn't help. So I didn't know WHAT was making me miserable. But I know now, it was all this WITCHCRAFT stuff, because people can DO that to you, they can cut you off from God.

### Prophet or Witch?

While I was having all this troubles one of my customers told me I should go to this woman, she called herself a prophet. And I was pondering that in my mind, because I had never gone to anyone like that, and it wasn't my custom to go to people like that. But I was going through such a THING, I said, "There must be SOMEBODY that can help me," because I knew that God had prophets and people like that to help folks. So this was on a Monday, and I made an appointment with this prophet lady. But my mind said, "You go downtown, pay your bills, and come on back home. Don't GO to that lady." And so, I was down there, standing on the platform waiting for the bus. I said, "My MIND told me not to go to this woman, but I made the appointment with her, and I don't think it's nice for me not to go. I'll go see what she's doing."

She was waiting for me. I was a whole hour and a half late, and she said, "You weren't going to come," she said, "but I knew you WOULD come anyway, even though the Devil told you NOT to come." She said, "So I decided I was gonna sit right here and wait for you till you DID come."

So, I went to that lady. She looked like a bag of rags. The place looked like I don't KNOW what. It was clean, but it wasn't up to par. But somehow she got me all engulfed, and I guess maybe she sold me SOME truth, or I wanted to BELIEVE that she could do something for me. But I got myself in the worst mess with that woman. Whenever I went around her, I would feel so SICK and so DESPONDENT and so DEPRESSED. Yet when I felt bad, I would call her and tell her that I wasn't feeling well at all, and she would laugh and say, "Well, that's the Holy Ghost, Honey, that's making you feel like that." And she said I had to go through the same thing she had. So I decided, "I don't want the Holy Ghost if He's going to make me feel like THIS." And she would laugh at me. Then she'd come and bring me all KINDS of dumb stuff. I said, "How much do you want for this?" She'd tell me how much she wanted, and I said, O.K." I didn't know WHAT that stuff was, but most often I'd walk out behind her and put the things she sold me RIGHT in the sewer.

She had me doing things like cleaning up early in the morning, like four in the morning, go outside and wash everything off with salt and pepper and oil. Just working me to DEATH for nothing. And burning sugar and burning stuff. And all that dumb stuff would just put evil spirits in my house, that's all it was. And then she would ride past graveyards with me and SCARE me to death. She would put this FEAR in me that this and that was going to happen. And my mind was all messed up anyway. So I said, "Oh, well, I'll try it." And then I'd try it, and it wouldn't work, and I'd say, "Well, she's just a dirty liar."

I had doubts some times, but she would call me and like put FEARS in me. She'd say, "If you don't do what I say, then this and that is going to happen to you, and it's going to be even WORSE." And I was already deep enough in a mess, I didn't want it to get any worse. I never delved deeply into HOW she did what she did, but I know that she COULD do it. She could make disturbances between me and other people I was friendly with. She told me that she could just drive past my house and cause a disturbance in it, and I KNOW that she has done that. She would come to my house, she and her daughter, and go all OVER, and I wouldn't be able to STAY in my own house, I'd be so miserable. I wouldn't know WHAT was wrong with me, but I was just MISERABLE in my own house. I'd get this heavy feeling, depressed, or sometimes I'd think, "Am I losing my MIND?" I just felt MISERABLE.

I went to Haiti one time and this woman asked me to bring back some dolls for her, which I did. She said, "I can REALLY do something with these. I can make a person do anything I WANT with these." She taught her daughter how to use these things, and one time she brought me three dolls. One she had tied up, one she had pins stuck in, and one was blindfolded and had two-tone hair. And she said, "Who do they resemble?" I said, "I couldn't tell you, cause I don't know." But I think one of them was my daughter, and that was during the time that my daughter was acting up with the children. She had made up those dolls as expressions of what she wanted to happen. She wanted my family NOT to be enlightened and she wanted them to continue doing the wrong that they were doing. She was trying to CONTROL my daughter and my grandchildren with those dolls. So she was ADDING to my problems.

I don't know what the Devil looks like, but people picture the Devil as something ugly, but he must have a SHINING face in order to gather up so many folks. I don't know why I went to that woman. I think I was just confused. But even during that time I'd say, "Now WHY did you waste time going to that woman when the Lord told you not to go, and you always believed in God, and always depended on Him. Why did you go to this woman? And each time you go you feel so bad, and you're just so upset when you walk out of the place."

So I was standing in the shop one Saturday, and I said to myself, "I'm going to cancel HALF of my appointments, take them on another day." And I put my coat on, and I went to this lady's SO-CALLED church. She had a service on Saturday. I walked right up front. The place was kind of crowded that Saturday. And I sat there, and she said, "Here's Sister Wendy. We've all had our testimony." And she said, "It's time for you to testify, Sister Wendy" I said, "It CERTAINLY is." And I got up, and I said, "This is my working day, and I cancelled some of my customers to come down here to let you know how I FEEL about you." And I looked her right in her eye, and she wasn't ten feet from me. "And I want to let you know that I don't know what it is, but there's something about you that's not RIGHT. And I came down here to let you know that. And I'm not allowing anybody else to tell you but me. What it is, I can't put my finger on, but you're just not right." She turned I don't know HOW many different colors, and when I sat down she said, "I don't know WHAT you're talking about, Ms Jackson, because I was holy when I dropped from my mother's womb." And I just looked at her.



Even after I went to that woman's place and told her off like that she wouldn't leave me alone. She would call me every once in a while because she didn't want to let a good thing go. My money was as regular as if she was on my PAYROLL, and she didn't want to lose that. So she worked hard on me to keep me from Faith Deliverance. Part of what she did had to do with how she could use fish heads. This woman and her daughter never throw away fish heads, and there are certain fish heads she says she knows how to use to even KILL people. What she does with them I don't know. All I know is that she puts fish heads and other things in jars, and puts them in the Chesapeake Bay. And she told me she could take fish heads and stop people from walking, cripple them. And the things that she SAID she could do, she could DO. She wasn't reading my mind, she could actually DO these things with the fish heads and the dust and all that. I had the experience of it when Faith Deliverance first moved on Grand Street, and I was going to church at night. Like I say, she didn't want me to go to Faith Deliverance, and she told me if I tried to go there, she would make it so I couldn't walk. And she did, because whenever I got ready to go to church, my left leg would feel like it was going to shrink. It hurt me SO BAD, going down the street. But I'd say, "Oh, Lord, I'm going ANYWAY. I'm going to DEFY the devil." And when I'd get to church, the pain would go away.

The last time I heard from that woman was nine or ten months after I came to Faith Deliverance. Bishop was going to the Holy Land and I was DETERMINED I was going to go with the group. So somehow this woman knew that I was planning on taking this trip, and she could tell you in advance what was going to happen to you. So she had told someone that I would be KILLED over there. In the meantime this other person came to my house and looked up my insurance policies to see how much money I had and this and that. So I was led to believe that I wasn't going to come back. But I didn't have that feeling, so I went on the trip.

But I did have a heavy feeling that SOMETHING was going to happen to me that wasn't right and I was trying to avoid it. So, we were on the tour, and we went to the top of Mt. Carmel to the church where they had buried the prophet Eli shah. It was a Catholic church, and it was the first type of church we had entered. But when I went in there and went to dip my fingers in the holy water, it just SPLASHED all over me. After that I was feeling very funny, very PECULIAR. It was like the devil was JUMPING in front of me. We came out of the church to the narrow road on the top of the mountain, and I started to tell the tour guide that I wanted to stand under a tree for a minute to get myself together. But before I could say anything, I was like SHOVED into the street. I didn't stumble or anything, I went down like I had passed out just for a second or something. And I fell RIGHT in front of a Mac truck coming in one direction and two cars coming in the other, and for some reason I COULDN'T get up. It was a good thing that I was friendly with the tour guide, because if he hadn't been walking with me, I MIGHT have gotten killed. The roads were so narrow the traffic couldn't pass or swerve or anything. But he JUMPED out into the road and stopped the traffic and I got up.

Now when I returned home, this same lady called me and told me EVERYTHING that had happened to the group overseas, including that near accident. She told me about how the people behaved on the trip, and the things that happened. She told me how I never slept the whole time I was there, and how I had fasted and prayed to get this witchcraft thing off me the WHOLE twelve days. And she was right because the only

time I ate was when I was on the plane. So I learned there ARE such things as people sending evil spirits as far as 4,000 Greer away, because the reason she knew so much was because it was SHE that was doing it. As it happened, I didn't see or hear from her after that. I found out later that since then she had a TERRIBLE stroke, and it twisted her WHOLE face. What God can't do for me, it won't be done, because am NOT bothering with her anymore.

I don't know what passage it is in the Bible, but it tells you to seek the truth, and to discern the truth from that that's NOT true. So when I hear these voices, I have to make sure I know which ONE it is. And I don't know whether people like that woman are listening to the WRONG voices, or they KNOW what it is, or that's the way they WANT to be, but they become so MERCENARY. And then it seems like they feel that because they can do a few little things which they think are powerful, perhaps they think they are Jesus Christ themselves. That's what I think they think sometimes. But I got AWAY from that woman.

### From One Witch to Another

I left out of that woman's company, and I was still an AWFUL mess. I was in worse shape than when I went. I was looking like I was DYING. I was all BLOATED up, I mean ALL over. My ankles used to swell so I couldn't bend them. And my feet, they looked like they were just going to pop open. And I still had this choking in my throat. It was like things crawling all around in my throat. And at night, if I ever dozed off, and I found myself on my back, when I woke up it was like a big lump in my throat that was choking me. I could never wear a collar or even put a necklace on, because it would just be so uncomfortable, like I was being choked. And my skin was all blotched up and dry and scaly. I was just a WRECK. My nerves - sometimes I'd just have to quit my work and go somewhere and feel like SCREAMING.

It was at this point I got tangled up with my sister. She was talking to me on the phone, and she said, "You know, you don't know anything about my work, but I can help you," and so she was telling me the conditions I was in, how my feet were swollen, and how this thing was running up and down in my throat, and how I was actually feeling physically, and how I was going to the doctor to lose weight, and I couldn't lose over six pounds, and all this was on such strenuous diets, and she told me that this woman and that woman was working on me. Well, when she was telling me all that, I said, "Well, how does SHE know," when I hadn't told her. And then she said, "You know you're getting ready to die," and this and that. I said, "Now how do YOU know?" I didn't think ANYBODY knew when a person was going to die. She said, "Well, I have to work on you right NOW."

I found out later, she was the main one who was DOING all these things. But the Lord had shown her to me four times, and told me to get in touch with her, and I did call her once, but I didn't tell her what I wanted. And the next time I just talked at random, and she said, "I think I'll come down there to see you." She said, "I'd better work on you right away." So, she came to my house with this black candle and some incense. And she was powerful enough to maneuver that candle. That candle wouldn't burn, there was so much evil in it. The candle was sick-like. Every time she put it in a bucket that candle was ebbing, wouldn't burn up at all. Then she put her hand on that bucket and the flame came right up with her hand. Put it down, and it would go back down again. She did that

three times, and I said, "HMMMM." After that she had me doing EVERYTHING, but right away she charged me \$500. She had me burning candles and paying for them, oh, all KINDS of candles, just kept a candle going. She'd bring them to me by the CASE, and charge me so much for them. And then if she said she'd DRESSED a candle, she'd charge me fifty or sixty dollars for that.

She said she was helping me, but what she was really doing, she had put an evil spirit in the house. Sometimes she even sent her daughter to blow some dust around. And I didn't think that was nice, because she always worked on my kitchen. And she taught her daughter how to make voodoo dolls in the image of a person and she knows how to work with them. She can make your joints hurt, or any part of your body that she wants to hurt. And she can control your mind with the same thing. Later, after I found out what she was DOING, she was even bragging on it, she said, "Oh, I fixed it so that your hired help had to leave." She said, "Now, I had a tough time trying to get Barbara out of there, because she's very hard to move." She said, "But the last time I was there, I slipped her a bottle of oil, and she'll be leaving soon." And she said, "She's gonna be VERY sick, and she might even die." And this is a girl who hasn't even BOTHERED her. Well, I did see her slip that little bottle of oil on the girl, and all that she said was going to happen to the girl, happened to her, because she almost DID die, and she WAS very sick.

There was such evilness in my house, it was nothing but a fighting spirit. I just had a FIGHTING spirit all the time. It seemed like people would come in just to PICK fights with me. And how I found out she was doing this; I had gone to see this English minister. I went to him four or five times, and each time I went to him he would just cry like a baby whenever he mentioned my sister. Every time he thought about my sister, he said, "Oh, your sister ought to be ASHAMED. In fact the whole FAMILY should be ashamed of themselves."

This one time I went to him with my throat, I was just MISERABLE. It was just like a cloud was hanging on me all the time, and I didn't have ANYWHERE to turn, so I went to him. He put his hands on my throat while he was praying for me, and something KNOCKED me off the chair, right on the floor. And I heard him run in another room, and he was running water. And when he came back, he had a round circle on his hand that was just BLOOD red. He said his hand had caught on fire. Then he took me in there, and was running that cold water on my hands, and he cried about my sister, and he told me, "I'm so SORRY for you, but I'll tell you what, you're gonna find this church that believes in the Holy Ghost. You're gonna get the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is the ONLY thing that's going to heal you and deliver you, because I can't do a THING more for you." He was for real, but he couldn't really help me because he was trying to ward off an evil spirit some woman had put on HIM in Trenton.

I had the confirmation it was my sister that was working on me one Monday morning. I was painting, and this little man came to the door. He said, "Don't be frightened of me, open the door. The spirit of the living God sent me here to speak to you." He was a little TINY man, a BEAUTIFUL little man. He had this little bag, a little medicine bag. And so he came in and he sat on the radiator. And he was telling me all these things that people were doing to me. And he kept saying, "Your sister ought to be ASHAMED of herself. Your sister ought to be ASHAMED of herself." And I didn't pay it any mind.

But then he started telling me things. He told me what time I would awaken in the morning, and how I felt, and everything. He told me all the things that were happening to me, and how I would get up in the morning, and how I would just see a vision of this big silver snake just crawling all over me. And how most of the time I didn't sleep, and how I hadn't been able to sleep good for about three years, and how I couldn't eat, but when I started to eat I'd just like fill up, but how I was STILL getting bigger, and if I ever decided to go out on a special occasion I'd swell up, I'd have fluid all up my back, EVERYWHERE, and how my feet would swell up so that they would look like elephant feet. And I had never SEEN the man before. Then he said, "You don't believe a thing I'm saying to you," he said, "but if I'm telling you the truth, when you get out of that chair, it's gonna fall apart." So I got out of the chair, and when I got up, the back FELL OFF. It DID. So that kind of FRIGHTENED me. He said, "Now, I'm not charging you one thing. All I want you to do is give me one dollar for this incense and when you light them, if they catch afire, you'll know I'm telling the truth." So I paid him his dollar, and he left. And I had just laid the incense on the paint top. I didn't light them or anything. I walked in the kitchen, and I looked back and WHOOOSH! the house was on fire. The flames had jumped from that incense right out on the floor. Well, I got water and put that fire out fast, but that was a confirmation, because he SAID it was my sister that was the main one making me miserable.

### First Experiences in Faith Deliverance

I never believed in witchcraft, but when I moved to this house, things started happening to me so I didn't know WHAT was going on, and like I say, I suffered. And now I know there IS such a thing as witchcraft. It really WORKS and I never believed that it did, but I really WAS a victim of it myself. It seems I have to get everything the hard way. And I think the Lord let that happen to me so that I would really, REALLY be convinced that it could happen and it would happen. And I can say that Baltimore is a HEADQUARTERS for this witchcraft stuff. And I learned that the people you LEAST suspect are the ones that are doing it to you.

It was what was happening to me BECAUSE of witchcraft that finally prompted me to go to Faith Deliverance. I was just going through so MANY different changes and not knowing WHY they were happening. But each time I entrusted in one of those people to help me, I was steadily getting worse and worse, and FEELING worse. The Lord always kept me, but there were TIMES I felt like I was going to have a nervous breakdown. One time I started to stand in the middle of Broad Street because I wanted to get run over by a car. This was when Kitty was doing all these dumb things to me with the grandchildren, and I knew that nobody in my family really cared. I was just a good provider for them and a good TOOL. The Devil told me to walk out in that street, because he was trying to get possession of my soul, but the Lord just SHOVED me out of the way and the idea completely left my mind. I think that all the times the Lord shielded me like that was because of the fact that I always felt like I should share my life with others; you know, give of myself. I've always asked God to have me share my life like that, and let me be an instrument of His love. And so, I think as a reward for my good thinking, He's always protected me and guided me.

I went to Faith Deliverance looking for a blessing. It was the Lord that guided me there. He sent me there for a blessing, and He knew that Rev. Greer COULD do something for me, because I had been seeing Bishop Greer in different visions since 1956. I kept

dreaming about the SAME man since 1956. I felt he was so FAR away when I first had those visions, but I sensed he was some type of a minister. And I KNEW he was the one that was going to help me to get out of this thing. The Lord at different intervals was telling me things about him. In 1968 the Lord told me He was going to uplift me. He also told me, He said, "Because you have been so obedient, you've been kind to everyone that you could be kind to, even those who mistreated you, and since you have no malice and no hate in your heart, your later life is going to be beautiful." And the Lord said He was going to send me a Holy Ghost man who was going to give me the help I needed. And He also told me his name. His name was Joseph. And I got a little worried about that because I didn't KNOW anybody named Joseph, or Joe. And He told me, "The man," He said, "he is my HIGH priest." But at that time I was in the Catholic Church, and I was looking for a priest, and I said, "I wonder who it IS?"

I found Faith Deliverance something over three years ago. It was one Friday evening and I was at home, and I was SO despondent. This lady called me and said I should go to church with her, that she knew a church that would make me feel better. So she finally convinced me I should go, and when I walked in Faith Deliverance that night I was looking a WRECK. I was ragged and feeling just SO bad. I walked in there, and it was about quarter of eleven, and they were taking up the offering. I sat down WAY in the back with this lady, because we were late, and the prayer line was back that far.

The place was full that night. But as I walked in there, he was talking about me, all the situations that had happened to me, he was talking about ME. Now, I sat down, and I said, "I've never been IN this place. How does he know that? There must be somebody in here in the same shape I'm in." But then he said, "There's three persons in here, and the Lord wants you to sacrifice a ten dollar faith offering for your blessing tonight," he said, "and one of you just came in here, and you can't afford it." Now this was on a Friday night, and my sister had discouraged a lot of my customers through brain waves to not come to my shop. I was down to NOTHING for a Friday night, with only sixty dollars in my bosom. I was on "E," empty. I was REALLY depleted and discouraged. So I had fifty dollars in one lump, and I just put this friend's ten dollars in my purse, because I had given her change. So I had two dollars I was going to put in the church offering. But then when he was asking for ten, I said I was going to put THREE dollars in. But then he said the ten dollars again, and I just JUMPED up, and when I went to stand in line, I almost fell down myself. The Spirit just SHOOK me up, but I didn't know what it WAS. I said, "Gee, I must hold myself together," and I was hoping nobody saw me, because I didn't know WHAT was happening to me.

By the time I got down to the end of the line, well, it just seemed like it was so MUCH confusion down there with people falling on the floor, I didn't know WHAT was going on. But Bishop whispered in my ear, "Keep your peace and let God fight your battle." And he reached out and touched me and I went up in the air like a balloon, WHOOSH. That's the way I felt. I don't know HOW long I was out. But I had on this old fluke wig and this hat, a makeshift hat I had made, and that was off when I got up, and I was ALL shaken up. I didn't know WHAT had happened to me. I just felt so STRANGE, but I felt so DIFFERENT. I said, "Gee, what am I DOING in this place," and to get THIS confused and shook up. I was so confused I went back to where I was sitting, and I missed my seat and sat down in another lady's LAP. Yet I felt so uplifted and purified. So I obeyed what Bishop had said, and that's when things started opening up for me.

I felt WONDERFUL but I still didn't BELIEVE it. And as I came back home, I was going over in my mind what was happening to me, and then it struck me, "That's the man that the Lord said I was supposed to meet - oh, my GOODNESS!" And that made me kind of frightened too. I was nervous. And then the Devil tried to keep me from going back to that church. I didn't know the order of services but I said, "I'm going to stay in bed and I'm going to church tonight." But I couldn't rest that morning. I was in bed, but I wasn't resting. It was like something just nagging me and tossing me around, and I said, "Lord, what IS it? What am I doing wrong now?" And this voice said, "I want you to go back to Faith Deliverance and be a part of that church." But it seemed like in the beginning each time I got ready to go, something would just try and BLOCK me.

The Devil would have me think, "The man comes in looking so FLASHY and everything. Now he can't REALLY do nothing. Look, are you SURE this is the right man?" The Devil wanted me to think all those dumb things about Bishop when I first went there, and I DID have those thoughts in my mind. I thought about his clothes because this one night he jumped in there with a red velvet suit on. I said, "What is THIS? A RED velvet suit!" But Bishop KNEW there were people having those thoughts and he'd say in service, he said, "I want you to stop having those negative thoughts about me, and all this skepticism," and I knew he was talking to ME. So I would try. And he knew very well when I would think that way, because he'd come, just walking past, and say, "I want you to stop doing that."

And another thing Bishop would do, I would get in the prayer line, and this thing would start CHOKING me. So I'd just try to get my collar down, but my neck would begin to swell. So Bishop would just come and step beside me, and it would go away. "Well," I said, "I have to believe what my eyes SEE. Because I had never BEEN in a service like that, NEVER. I had never been in a healing service. I had been in a Holy Ghost supposed-to-be service and it was nice, but NOTHING like Faith Deliverance. I had visited different churches, and they were very nice, but nothing like Faith Deliverance. And now, I don't have ANY of those negative thoughts anymore, because God told me that Bishop has been anointed by God, and he's God's high priest.

Each time I went to service something different happened to me. I went one time and Bishop divided the line up. Instead of having the line go straight down the center, he had it going this side and that side. So I got in the line going to my left, and when he touched me, this thing fell OUT of my throat, DOWN to my stomach, and then I felt it lifting right OFF me. And I was OUT on the floor, and I couldn't get up. But when I DID get up, it was really GONE, and I haven't had any of that choking since. Now, THAT was a blessing because I'd been miserable with that for three YEARS. But after he touched me and that evil spirit lifted OFF me, I could sleep again, and I just can't TELL you what a relief that was. It was just the beginning of living a BRAND new life for me.

### Receiving the Holy Ghost

Some people NEVER get the Holy Ghost, but if you really want it and if you have the Spirit of God in you, then you use that until you DO get the Holy Ghost. Some people have never asked for it, that's why they don't get it. Now the reason why I got it, I ASKED God for it. I was on my bed, and I said, "Lord, I want you to give me the Holy Ghost. Before I do anything ELSE, I want the Holy Ghost." And I got it.

The night that I got the Holy Ghost was the night that Bishop said he was going to have us get in touch with God. We were going to ring God up on the telephone. Well, I got up there and Bishop put in a call for me, and the Lord answered in a MIGHTY way. I had never had that feeling before. I got what you call FULFILLED. That feeling that I had before that I was missing something, well I got my fulfillment, and I feel VERY good about it. Now, when the Holy Ghost comes on me, sometimes I feel so ecstatic and so JUBILANT that I just feel like I'm going to be taken UP in the air. I feel very LIGHT. And sometimes I shout. I didn't think that was POSSIBLE. I said, "Well, these folks are putting on and just pretending." But I felt myself shouting one night, and I said, "Oh, my GOODNESS." I didn't KNOW I was going to do it, but I feel very light when I'm doing it, and I just feel like for that moment I'm almost floating OUTSIDE myself, until it gets off of me. And afterwards I feel very uplifted, just like I've been bathed INSIDE and OUT. I just feel CLEAN and wholesome. I feel so Good, and no aches and pains, no worries, no NOTHING.

I felt better every time I went to service after I got the Holy Ghost. I was being elevated because the Lord showed me how He was going to elevate me, just like the rungs on a ladder, and He's STILL doing it, and I'm not rushing Him either. So now, if I have a burden, I pray and then the Lord shakes it right off me.

### Rejecting the Sources of Witchcraft

I used to fall out quite often in service, and my sister would get on the phone and tell my daughter what I was doing there at the church. "Your mother was falling out tonight. And doing this, and doing that." So I found out that Faith Deliverance was the church that my sister MOST wanted to keep me away from. I didn't believe people HAD such low-cast minds. I don't know whether they believe that voodoo is something that they're SUPPOSED to do, and that God has given them power to do, but to me witchcraft is of the DEVIL. And my sister has told me, sitting RIGHT here, last year she told me that she was scorning me about going to this church. Even now, she's bent and BOUND, she works night and DAY on trying to destroy Faith Deliverance. I KNOW this for myself, so I continually stay in prayer for the church and for Bishop. She STILL tries to work on me. She wants to cut off ALL my sources of income, and Bishop says this too. She doesn't want me to prosper in any way. She wants me to be subjected to HER. Just the other day she called me to ask me to buy two more burial plots. And she can call you on the phone, and if you're not careful, she can take your mind and force your mind to do what she wants it to do. So I stay prayerful ALL the time.

The reason my sister is so ANGRY with me is because I stopped the ways of the Devil and cut off some of her weekly income. I did that not long after I was in Faith Deliverance. I came home after one service and I pondered back on what the Bishop had said in his message about the ways of the Devil, and I had all this JUNK in my house. So I went and found all this oil and all these pictures and these candles and incenses and potions, and I put them all in the same trashcan. All these dolls, EVERYTHING that I had, I got every BIT of it, and I put it all in the trashcan. I said, "Now, I don't know what to DO with it all." I didn't want the Bishop to touch it. But he told me to bring it to church and give it to one of the nurses. But I didn't want them to have it. I didn't want it in ANYBODY'S hands.

I took that junk up to church TWICE, but in route one of the potion bottles exploded and the Spirit said, "Take it back home." So I brought it back home, and I said, "Lord, YOU tell me what to do with it." He said, "I want you to take all this stuff and give it BACK to your sister." I said, "Well, I'll leave it at my mother's house because I'm not going BACK to my sister's house." But He said, "You didn't GET it from your mother's house, so take it back to your SISTER." So I got a big garbage bag, and I got on the bus, and I went up there to where she lives, and when I turned the corner I was still meditating, and I said, "Lord, if it's the right thing, You give me a sign that I'm doing right." And when I turned the corner the Spirit hit me, and revealed that she wasn't going to be home. And He wanted it that way, to frighten her. I wrote her a note and I said, "I'm returning these articles, because I didn't know what to do with them. God bless you." So she called me, and I DID tell her that I knew what she was doing to me. I said, "I know everything you ever DID to me." She said, "Well, I know that SOMEDAY you're gonna tell me." I said, "No, I'm not." I said, "You will never KNOW what I know you have done to me." And that's slowly driving her insane, because now I don't bother with her.

So my sister feels to this day that the Bishop and I have put something on her because SHE'S catching it now. The Devil has SURE got her, and unless she changes her ways, he's going to KEEP her. I pray each day, instead of being ANGRY with her, I pray to the Lord to deliver her from this evil in her heart, because it's deep seated. She may be wealthy and all, but she's NOT happy. I'm not wealthy, but now I'm HAPPY. I got my happiness through the deliverance of Faith Deliverance. And I APPRECIATE Faith Deliverance because I was delivered from all of this witchcraft, and I was enlightened ABOUT it.

I think it's important for people to KNOW about witchcraft for the simple reason that it is as REAL as daily living. Some people do live DAILY by witchcraft. And these people who practice it KNOW what they are doing, in many cases. Some of them really believe they're doing the right thing. But from my experience they do more evil than good. I never really wanted to be in cahoots with ANYONE that practiced witchcraft, because I never liked it. I don't like evil, PERIOD. It was just one of those things. They came to me in sheep's clothing, and I guess they saw I was in DIRE need, and they felt like I was goodhearted and an easy pushover. But I really wanted to get out of it after I discovered I was IN it.

I've found out since I've been in Faith Deliverance beneath Rev. Greer's ministry that the only way a person can FREE himself from witchcraft is with the Spirit of the Holy Ghost because the Spirit of God keeps you. There was one point where I KNEW that there were at least six people working on me with witchcraft. I had some of my so-called friends sit in my shop and TELL me that they had gone to these different places to do these different things to me. And just KNOWING that would trouble my mind. But now that I'm delivered and have the Holy Ghost, I KNOW the Spirit is WITH me. And I know so long as I KEEP the Spirit with me, if things get TOO bad I can just call on Jesus, use His name, "Jesus," because they say, "At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He is almighty." So the devil HATES the name Jesus, and when the devil is doing his work, if you mention the name Jesus, the devil will flee from you. It's a form of prayer, and you don't have to say it out loud. Just for a second you can call on Jesus, and He will answer. Once you have done that, that awful feeling



leaves you, and you are able to act as normal. When you have been delivered and have the Holy Ghost, you can USE it to keep yourself free of the devil and his works.

I've overcome all of the efforts of the devil to bind me. No one out there that's doing the devil's work has any control WHATSOEVER over me now. The Spirit of the Lord that dwells IN me KEEPS me, and there's nothing the devil can do TO me. And if it happens now that I feel an evil spirit of the devil trying to come over me, especially if I'm in bed at night, I just call on the Holy Ghost to lead me out, and the Holy Ghost will come and sometimes just quicken my WHOLE body, and shake it right off me. Then I go right on to sleep and I sleep ALL night.

### New View of the Family

Since I have been with Faith Deliverance I have been weaning myself completely AWAY from the whole family, from ALL of them. And it was about time. I just wipe my hands of them and I put them at the foot of the cross, and I say, "Lord, take this burden that I have been accepting myself," because a lot of the time we make our OWN way hard by minding other people's business. And I say, "My heart has reached out for them and I have tried to help them, and they didn't accept it in the right way. Now I'm giving them to YOU." And that INCLUDES my daughter, although I still help her whenever she REALLY needs help. I've overcome all the burdens of family since I've been at Faith Deliverance. I still have the family around, and I still listen to their needs, but I don't JUMP now, and I don't worry with them like I used to. And if they DO burden me, I have someone who can take that burden FROM me.

### Blessings and Giving

I've had EVERY kind of blessing since I've been at Faith Deliverance, but the greatest PERSONAL blessing of all has been the blessing of a peaceful spirit, peaceful MIND, and the feeling of a glow in your body when you're blessed by God and you get that good FEELING. No one else can give it to you. That's a blessing that you CAN'T buy. I'm not saying I haven't had an ache or a pain, but I've never been down sick since I've been to Faith Deliverance. And I haven't had to take ONE nerve pill. And I was one SICK woman before I went to Faith Deliverance. But I haven't been to a doctor since I've been going there. In fact, last February my doctor moved out of town, and I didn't even CARE.

What I give in the service is a sacrifice because I could USE that money elsewhere, but I think of the goodness that I've gotten out of the service, and the fulfillment that I've gotten. Because some of the things that Bishop does for people, those other so-called ministers out there charge THOUSANDS and THOUSANDS of dollars for, and you get NO results. What I give is a real sacrifice in exchange for my GOOD health, and my GOOD mentality and my PEACE of mind, AND this Holy Ghost Spirit. It's something that is BEAUTIFUL. And those folks who don't have it should try to get it, because it is a sword and shield for you, and it's your comforter, it's EVERYTHING to you, REALLY.

### Future Expectations

Now I'm waiting on my marriage blessing. I KNOW I'm going to get married. I have never asked God for this, but He told me I was going to get married. I still haven't ASKED Him for it, but I believe that I'm going to get it, so I haven't worried Him about it at all. No one has asked me yet, but when the time is right I WILL get it. You see, to

receive a blessing you first have to BELIEVE that you're going to get it. And you have to believe in prayer, and have the faith that even though it doesn't happen that very moment, that it's GOING to happen to you. You thank the Lord it's yours, it's already mine. To me a prayer doesn't even have to be an open suggestion of what you want. It's your heart's desire. That's what I think a prayer is and you're asking God for it.

So I have put it in my mind what I want in a husband. And I will GET it. I told some ladies what I wanted, and they said, "That's IMPOSSIBLE." I said, "I will continue staying here, listening to my records and things, until the good Lord sends me such a man." And I told them the man doesn't have to be rich, but I want him to have substantial funds to take care of me so in case I do NOT want to sit to my work table, I won't HAVE to. And the next thing, I want him to have the Holy Ghost. I want him to be a man that has some God WITHIN. And I said, "I don't want any UGLY man, because I can't take ugliness." Well, they said, "You can't GET that," but I say, "NOTHING is impossible when you ask the Lord for it. And the man that I get, the Lord is going to give him to me." And I still BELIEVE that.

### View of Race and Race Relations Since Deliverance

I have no hate in my heart for ANYBODY. I never had a racial problem as far as I was concerned. But I know there IS a race problem. I know there is prejudice everywhere against Black people: here, in Africa, in the islands. It is the result of a superiority thing that has been taught on the white side for so many years that now, it just filters down from one generation to another. I know there is no truth to it, but for myself, I try not to go anywhere that I know whites don't want me, unless it's a store or public place or something. But personally, I have no qualms about Black and white. We're all just people, good and bad of all types. And I think it is encouraging that today many younger white people seem to be rebelling against the old prejudice. They see that most Black folks are good folks. They are seeing through the old ideas about Black people being dirty and stupid. They are finding out that most Black people are clean and intelligent and capable, like most white folks. That's good and I hope it means something for the future.

I always use white people as the EXAMPLE for progress. I watch what they are doing, even when I am shopping. I'll go to the counter where I see mostly white people, because I know there must be something of interest or of value there. And in my own life, especially later in life, white people have been very GOOD to me. I learned to cook and design and sew clothes through white people. I can't make ENEMIES of people who have helped me so much in life.

I have had good experiences with white people and I have had bad experiences with white people. I will never forget the white girlfriends of my ENTIRE childhood, when they suddenly pulled back from me in junior high school. I had set HIGH goals for myself and it was with these white friends that I SHARED my goals. Most Black kids I knew weren't headed to where I wanted to go. So, when these so-called friends deserted me, I lost more than just friends. I lost the people who shared my vision in life. I was TERRIBLY hurt for a long time, a LONG time. That experience made me cautious about white people who LOOKED like they wanted to be friends.

Another experience I will never forget was sleeping on the floor with my mother in the unheated attic of this one white woman's house. I DETESTED her because she had many beds and heated rooms in her house and my mother and I stayed late MANY nights to serve dinner to her guests. My mother worked for that woman, but to this day I won't permit that woman's NAME to be said in my house. She treated us like SLAVES.

I ran into prejudice from whites and it hurt, but I never could just hate ALL white people, because there were also times in my life that white people encouraged me and helped my family out when we were in need. There was a doctor and his wife I worked for as a young teenager, and they encouraged me in my studies and they paid me extra because they knew the troubles my family faced. When I got older, I worked for a white woman who ran her own dressmaking shop. She was free with her knowledge to me and she taught me a great deal. She also stood UP for me as a Black person. She wouldn't tolerate her other employees trying to slight me, and she would show customers to the door and have a few WORDS with them if they objected to me taking care of what they wanted made or altered, just because I was Black.

There are some good things in the Black race. In fact, some people say Black Africa is the source of WHITE civilization. I think Black people have a lot to offer America today and I know they have already given a LOT. To me Black people are more sensitive to the spiritual in life than most white people are. I think that is important, and I believe white America can learn a great DEAL from Blacks in this area. I also enjoy almost ALL of the art of Black people because I think it's livelier and more real than most white art. To me, there is more vitality there, there is more color and life. It is not so tied down as I think most white art is. In music and song and dress and dance, white people have taken so much from Black people for so LONG, they don't even know HOW much they have taken.

As far as the relations between whites and Blacks go, I don't think that white people owe us anything, nothing so grand that we have to FIGHT over it. All white people owe Black people is respect as human beings. That's the minimal thing you can ask of ANYBODY. Beyond that, I think that Black people should try to get a few things for themselves. I think Black people cry too much about what "whitey" is NOT doing for us, when we need to get up and do something for ourSELVES. We must have some togetherness and forget all this envy and jealousy. People will say otherwise, but I really feel that white people are NOT our worst enemy. I think the worst enemy we have is ourselves, the way we ACT toward one another. Right now as a Black race, I see us at a standstill, or even going backwards. I don't think people really listened to what King advocated. Even the buildings that have his name on them are all marked up and written over. There is no sense of pride.

It really galls me about my people that everywhere we go, we seem to TEAR it up. Baltimore looks like it's moth eaten all OVER. Black people just don't relish anything. Anything old is just trash to them - even antiques. They just want things that are modern and LOOK good. But these things often are trash beneath the surface. They're just interested in the flash, how they look and how these things make them look NOW. If Black people would just use what they have to good advantage they might get

somewhere, rather than just wasting what they have or tearing it up or throwing it away on flashy things that don't last.

Now the government has all these organizations to help the parents to raise their children. But I think that's a household issue. That's for the parents to take the responsibility and do. I don't think they should bring in a bunch of assistants and centers to substitute for parents who don't want to do their part. As it is, these parents are getting everything so FREE with these assistance checks and things, they just don't CARE anymore. If their kids choose to tear up another person's property, it's all right, they didn't see it. When I grew up, we were taught not to touch other people's things and I could take my children ANYWHERE. And I wasn't cruel to them either. I really don't think we need all these programs to help you with your husband, to help you with the children, to help you with food, to help you with housing, to help you with medical care. It makes it so a person doesn't HAVE to do anything for themselves. It keeps a person at a standstill, mentally and otherwise.

Rev. Greer talks to us about the problems that confront Black people, because these are the problems that are on his heart. He teaches us positive thinking, and he is trying to get the people together. He is trying to let Black people see the LIGHT. He wants Blacks to get a positive idea of life. He wants them to elevate themSELVES and get some love in their hearts for themselves and for each other. Then we can cooperate and move ahead.

### The Faith Deliverance View of the Spiritual and the Material

I enjoy the presence of the Lord in Faith Deliverance, and it IS there. And I enjoy the good FEELING I get, and I enjoy the doctrine that's being taught. Faith Deliverance has taught me the TRUTH. Most of the folks aren't taught the truth. I don't know whether their ministers don't have the KNOWLEDGE of the truth, or don't want the folks to really know the truth because they want to do what they're doing. They don't WANT their life style to change in most cases, because they're adulterers and fornicators and some of EVERYTHING. But I feel like in Faith Deliverance we're taught the truth, and we're taught how to CHANGE our lives for the better. Faith Deliverance differs from other churches that I've been in by the way God is manifested, through His Holy Ghost powers. And we are taught to RELY on the Holy Ghost powers rather than just on a man, although we have a man in Rev. Greer, and the Holy Ghost powers are extended TO us through him. But he has shown us how to OBTAIN them, and given us the truth and the knowledge of what these powers really ARE. I think that the basic concept of the church, in the Bishop's mind, is to teach the folks how to LIVE holy and how to STAY holy, but also how to RECEIVE the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The things that have been taught to me in Faith Deliverance, I never learned them before. I never learned about the true meaning of the Holy Ghost. I never knew the joys of the FRUITS of the Spirit. I never knew of the SPIRITUAL joy, because I wasn't taught that. And the doctrine of Faith Deliverance very seldom sways away from the text.

Rev. Greer teaches us we're supposed to ENJOY life. I think that we're SUPPOSED to have a little bit of heaven here because the Lord put the bounty on the earth FOR us to enjoy, and everything was put here for a good purpose. It is WE who misuse it. But I think Faith Deliverance is more concerned with the SPIRITUAL life than the physical life, although we are taught to enjoy the finer things in life. And I think that if you have a

fine SPIRITUAL life and a good physical life, that your spiritual life will make demands on what the other part of your life will be, sway it in the right DIRECTION if you get off course. Most people waste most of their lives, just GRABBING at worldly things, because these things SEEM so delightful, and they feel like they're getting such a GRANDEUR out of it. But if you have a spiritual balance, a fine SPIRITUAL life, you can see the mistake of that material way. Still, you don't have to DENY it, you just have to see it as one PART of life, and NOT the most important part.

Some people get UPSET because Bishop dresses fancy and looks good. And like I say, I was that way in the beginning. But if you're going to preach to me about God, anything that God has IS beautiful. In biblical days they were arrayed in FABULOUS robes. So Bishop is depicting what the God within you SHOULD look like. Something BEAUTIFUL. That's the way I feel about it, and I think he's entitled to it. Bishop is SUPPOSED to look good, he's SUPPOSED to have all the things that God put here for us to enjoy. He's supposed to enjoy some of the things of life, the riches of the Lord. The way I see it, if Bishop SAYS he can help me, and then he stands up there like a bag of rags, how could I respect that? I think that Bishop dresses and carries himself nice because his soul is SATISFIED, so he doesn't have to put on a FRONT with the collar turned backwards. It's the LOVE of these riches that makes them evil. It's not just HAVING them and knowing how to appreciate them, it's the LOVE of them and LUST for them so greatly that you will do anything to get them, that's evil. And I don't believe that Bishop is that way at ALL. He teaches people to have and desire things for themselves, but he always teaches that the LORD is first. He always teaches that material things are empty without the Spirit to guide you how to appreciate them and how to USE them.

### Current View of Self

I love Faith Deliverance, and I love my pastor because I know that God loves him, and the Lord is truly blessing me right NOW. There's Blessings for All right here in THIS world, and in THIS church, because every time I go to Faith Deliverance I have a different experience and I feel better and BETTER. And I think that the reason why I get so many blessings is that God is preparing me for something GREATER than what I'm doing now, something in the spiritual area. I don't know what it is exactly, but WHATEVER it is, I know with Rev. Greer's help, the Lord is preparing me for it. He's increasing my spiritual power and understanding, and I say, "Lord, I thank You for WHATEVER You have in store for me."

In a way I am the POOREST one in my family, though I'm not doing bad. But in another way I am the RICHEST because of my beliefs and the way I feel WITHIN myself, because I have PEACE within myself, and I'm very HAPPY the way I am. I wouldn't want to be any OTHER way, because I am at PEACE with the universe.

### Epilogue

Over the past two and a half years since Wendy and I talked for the purpose of taking her life testimony, I have seen her often and regularly in service. I have talked with her briefly on many occasions after service, and she has told me about how things are with herself and her family. Our meeting to discuss her responses to the draft of her testimony provided us a chance to fill in the details.

In almost every respect Wendy says her situation has improved since the time of her testimony. She says that she has continued to insist on her independence from her family. She lives her own life now and her money belongs only to herself. Still Wendy says she does help out, as in the case of her grandchildren, whose parochial school tuition Wendy has continued to pay. But now Wendy does not make herself available to her family for any and everything. Holding to her independence, Wendy's relationships within her family have improved dramatically. Now, instead of fighting Wendy's commitment to Faith Deliverance, all of her family except her one troublesome sister have either joined Faith Deliverance or are attending services there regularly. Wendy's mother has come to respect and admire Rev. Greer, and is now considering switching her membership from the church where she has belonged for over twenty years. Wendy says her mother now realizes how much her one daughter tried to influence her against Wendy, and according to Wendy her mother is ashamed for her wayward daughter and what she has tried to do to Wendy. Besides her mother, Wendy's brother has been a member of Faith Deliverance for nearly a year, though Wendy reports that he frequently falters in his pursuit of the faith.

Even Kitty, Wendy's daughter, has come around so that she is no longer critical of Faith Deliverance or Rev. Greer, though she does not yet attend church. However, Wendy does take her younger grandchildren to church occasionally. Most remarkable, Wendy reports that in the past few months Kitty has come to work with Wendy in her shop, and the two have been getting along very well. In their talks during work, Wendy says it seems that Kitty has finally realized that the street has nothing real to offer, and she has decided to apply herself and try to make a life for herself. Wendy is very pleased with the change in Kitty and the prospects for a new and productive relationship with her daughter. Wendy says she was amazed when one day Kitty arrived for work with a big bag of groceries for Wendy and no bill and no ulterior motives. As Wendy says, Kitty has never done anything like that before. So Wendy is hopeful, but cautious. With Kitty around during working hours, Wendy also sees more now of her grandchildren, and she feels that they have come back around to her as well. With Wendy's financial support, the children have remained in private schools where they have done well. The oldest is now in Business College in accounting.

According to Wendy only her one sister remains unapproachable, continuing to practice witchcraft and pursue her mercenary goals. But now Wendy says she does not bother with her and is able to keep from getting in arguments with her. Eventually Wendy expects that even this sister will find Faith Deliverance, or die. Wendy is amazed with the change in her family situation. She says Rev. Greer prophesied when she was new in the church that her family would realize its evil ways and eventually return to her. But at that time the situation was so poor, Wendy says she could see no way for it to happen. Yet, Wendy says as Rev. Greer told it, it is happening.

Besides the overall change in Wendy's relationships within her family, she says she has grown steadily in the spiritual and mental dimensions of her life. As she has learned how to pray, Wendy says she has become more and better able to satisfy her mental and spiritual needs for herself. She says that one sign of this is the fact that she is falling out much less often in the prayer line during service. Because she can do more for herself, Wendy reports that she has better control of herself and more peace of mind. Now Wendy says that she can call on her Holy Ghost at any time when

something or someone is troubling her, and the result is that the situation will not be able to upset her as it would before. Besides greater self-control, Wendy says her spiritual development through prayer and meditation has meant that she is now better able to follow and utilize Divine Guidance than she was when we first talked. By trying to keep the Holy Ghost with her at all times, Wendy says she has learned regularly to include in her decisions the insights that come to her from Divine Guidance. Using Divine Guidance, Wendy says she can avoid trouble and obtain what she needs with less wheel spinning, less wasted energy, less anxiety.

As Wendy looks to the future, she is still waiting for a husband. But as Wendy says, though she is waiting, she is not looking for a husband because she is happy the way things are now. Wendy says her only personal hindrance at the present time is her weight, which she regards as the first effect to her of witchcraft and the last burden yet to be shaken off. Although she enjoys running her tailor shop and has no plans to change her career, Wendy says she does wonder if a ministry lies before her. As in the case of a husband, Wendy is not seeking a ministry, but she says she has been told by God that a ministry of preaching is in her future. Husband or not, ministry or not, it is a positive future that Wendy expects for herself: "Everything in every way, better and better."

## Commentary

By

Wendy Jackson

I remember the evening two Caucasian men walked into the service at the Sky Palace Auditorium, where Rev. Greer was temporarily having meetings at the time. I discerned to myself that they came as investigators of fraudulent activities and expected to find the members of the congregation to be stupid, gullible followers. I further surmised to myself that they would not find anything other than Divine Truth. I also saw that the shorter of the two would flee in fear and lack of understanding, but that the taller gentleman was destined to receive some of the Holy Goodness we were privileged to enjoy at Faith Deliverance.

My initial feelings that first evening have turned out to be true. The taller gentleman, Brother Burns, has in my opinion learned to love us as we have him. It is a pleasure to fellowship with him in Christian love. I find a very reserved, humble, sincere, warm spirited, unbiased person in Brother Burns. We at Faith Deliverance love him as one of us and feel he attends our services now NOT merely for the benefit of his books, but because he fully enjoys and participates in the service, benefiting from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I have attended many different types of churches, but I have yet to experience the Holy Spirit manifested the way it is in Faith Deliverance.

I am inclined to believe without any reservations that whatever Brother Burns does or has in mind to do for the uplifting of Faith Deliverance, will definitely be done from the heart and with true meaning. Brother Burns' book reflects the truthful doctrine of Deliverance and reveals earnest testimonies of positive deliverances from all types of diverse problems, diseases, and powers of evil, which I believe are more prevalent today than in any period I have known. I am very satisfied with the accuracy and

truthfulness of my own testimony which Brother Burns has written from my talks with him, and it is my hope that this testimony will be a help to many who read it.

I think that in the three years that Brother Burns has been with us in Faith Deliverance, he has gained a wealth of knowledge and understanding of Black folks, which can be seen in the book he has ventured to write about us. It takes knowledge and understanding, but it also takes a good heart before a person from the outside can learn to love and respect Black people like they desire and deserve. Brother Burns has a good heart, and we at Faith Deliverance know that besides understanding us, he loves and respects us.

It is my conviction that if people will read and study Brother Burns' book about Faith Deliverance they will become more aware spiritually, mentally and in ways difficult to believe.

God bless Brother Burns, and Blessings for All,

Wendy Jackson



## VIII

# THE FAITH DELIVERANCE WORLDVIEW

### Introduction

The worldview of Faith Deliverance is not independent of its cultural surroundings. Faith Deliverance is a Black church community in urban Black subculture, and neither Faith Deliverance nor urban Black subculture is isolation oriented. Both are open and look outward across their own boundaries to contingent subcultures and to mainstream American culture. The perspective of Faith Deliverance looks through urban Black culture to mainstream American culture and ultimately beyond national boundaries to make a universal statement about what Rev. Greer sees as the fundamental nature of individual and social man. The testimonies in this book report the value of this universalistic perspective of Faith Deliverance to individuals living their lives mostly within urban Black culture. Where the testimonies relate the deliverance faith to events in the educational, military, occupational, health and social service, and legal and law enforcement spheres, the influence of other subcultures and of mainstream culture is apparent. Comments on racial experience and feelings always invoke this larger context, except where color prejudice within Black culture itself is the issue.

Understanding the worldview of Faith Deliverance requires a sense of the incremental cultural contexts to which it applies. In his Foreword to the book, Rev. Greer suggests the applicability of the deliverance faith to those in the larger culture. And I will expand upon the place and relevance of the Faith Deliverance perspective in this "American" context in the next chapter. In this chapter I have edited from interviews and discussion with Rev. Greer his views on the significance of the deliverance perspective to the Black church and for the Black person. Rev. Greer's statements outlining the basic tenets of the deliverance faith are also found here. In contrast to his remarks on the Black church and the Black person, Rev. Greer states the deliverance view in universalistic terms without reference to Black culture. In so doing he suggest the challenge of deliverance in the most comprehensive terms. In the last section of the chapter, I suggest the urban Black cultural context for the faith. This is the context from which most of the members of the church come when they first discover deliverance, and this is the most immediate context within which most must practice their faith. The testimonies in this book relate primarily to this urban Black context and they reveal collectively how delivered individuals conceive of their subculture of most immediate reference.

### Black Issues in Deliverance – By Rev. Greer

#### Black Church History, and the Black Person and Deliverance

I'm going to say some things about the Black church and about Black people, and what I'm saying doesn't come from someone that only knows from what he's read in books in the library. I'm BLACK. I was RAISED in the ghetto of north Baltimore, and I was raised in a family that was POOR, at least economically. And I was raised in the Black church in Baltimore. I KNOW the Black experience here, and I have personally counseled and ministered to Blacks and whites alike here and in California, Texas, and Philadelphia, where I have or have had churches - other than here in Baltimore. I am COMMITTED to

seeing Black people advance, that's why Faith Deliverance in Baltimore is located in the north Baltimore area. But I am also committed to the TRUTH, and some Black people don't like to HEAR the truth about themselves. But I'm going to tell it like it IS.

Black religion, especially Holiness, developed in the period when Blacks were not really educated. They had access to the Bible but not to the background material, the research material. So, they took the Bible in a LITERAL sense. Now, for the lack of education, the lack of awareness, the lack of development, they SEIZED upon what they saw written and FORGOT that much of it was written for Biblical times and applied to those circumstances. If the Bible had been written in the twentieth century under MODERN circumstances, it would be very different. So, Holiness developed when Blacks were uneducated. They really didn't know WHAT they were reading, and they didn't have the education to really develop a proper doctrine. This was a problem not just for Blacks but for whites as well, who developed a lot of the Holiness doctrine.

Now, much of this fundamentalist doctrine was developed out of a DESIRE for comfort in the people's situation which was one of lack of material well-being. Religion was a substitute. It was to take the place of the things that men really, REALLY wanted but they really THOUGHT they could never achieve or accomplish. So, to make themselves feel good, they developed this doctrine of poverty, of RESIGNING themselves that they would not be able to enjoy the pleasures of the world. To me, it was really a doctrine of frustration and a doctrine of learning how to love and accept frustration. But, especially in the past twenty years, times have CHANGED, economy has changed. Blacks and whites both are exposed to better education, and education is easier to come by. So in this modern situation, the church is faced with a problem. Black people have more money, they have access to better jobs, better schools, better homes, better everything. There has been a definite mood of prosperity, of material and economic growth for the people, and from that emerged Deliverance. From that emerged the Pentecostal faiths that are now saying, "Wow! You don't HAVE to be sick. You've got something to LIVE for." Before that happened, there wasn't the preaching of healing and the gifts of the Spirit in the Black church. There was not the type of FAITH to acquire and to achieve. That was TOTALLY absent as a doctrine and as a tenet in the church. It was strictly a SALVATION doctrine, which derives from the Pauline doctrine of self-denial and strict adherence to the church principles.

Because of the advantages that the times afforded, a new theology of Deliverance emerged apart from Holiness. And in Deliverance you can be saved, you can live holy, but NOW you can drive a Cadillac. You don't have to wear a LONG dress. You can wear a short dress and be stylish. You can wear a ring, you can have a television. In the Holiness church you couldn't have a television. So the times more or less made the Deliverance and Pentecostal faiths possible for Black people. As the times have changed, a lot of the self-help, self-realization doctrines have come on the scene.

Now the problem is that Black people don't SEIZE upon the opportunity that is there. They are still being taught that either God's going to bring it to them, or forget it and wait for the glory of the next world. They're not taught, you got to GET OUT and get it YOURSELF, or make it yourself. But THAT'S what America is all about. Those who have taken the opportunities and have not sat back passively waiting for it to knock at their door, they have made it. But when I tell people about self-awareness and self-

realization, the first thing they say is, "Ahh, man, you don't KNOW. You haven't been OUT there!" Well, I HAVE been out there. I AM out there, and all I see are INHIBITIONS. And because these inhibitions are STILL there, they are real stumbling blocks and drawbacks to the Black individual.

Nine out of ten times if a Black person DOESN'T succeed, it's because of the inhibitions in his personality. When the Black individual goes seeking after opportunity, he goes with that NEGATIVE attitude. Now, a positive white person doesn't have time to deal with that, because to him that negative attitude suggests that the Black person is probably going to turn on him one day. The white interprets that attitude as a negative force that he cannot trust. So, even though the Black is educated, and the Black may be TOTALLY qualified, there's still that negative self-image that the white will detect automatically, especially an employer who has dealt with the public. And this is where whites differ from Blacks. The Black experience makes the Black person's vibrations, his aura, very NEGATIVE, very cloudy, very suspicious.

When a Black person has a BLACK personal image, it's almost inevitably one of negativeness. It is one of limitation. It is one of,

"Really I don't believe, when it comes down to the reality of it, I don't believe I'm really going to get that job in that white corporation that I've trained myself for, that I've dreamed of. All of a sudden when it comes time to walk out there and knock on that door, I get nervous. This Black image comes over, and I stand like a frightened child in front of a colossal ruler or judge. And many times all that the white man has meant to me comes out rather than ME coming out."

And, unfortunately, the educated Black, he's often even WORSE, because he has STUDIED history. So he goes around with an attitude, something like, "I don't know what you did, but I know it was bad, and I'm GONNA resent you for it, and I'm going to be BITTER."

Now I read an article in the Baltimore News where it says that the Black civil rights movements are dwindling all over for lack of interest. And this article was saying there's a lack of a viable Black voice that can instill motivation in the Black community. My response is that the NEXT set of values and the NEXT voice for the Black community must speak to that sense of self-realization and self-esteem that relates to the DIVINE image of ALL men, as opposed to the PERSONAL BLACK image which means very little to the vast majority of Blacks. This is why it's so important to reach Blacks with this universal knowledge, and help the Black person RELEASE himself from these negative, limited views of self, these pent up emotions and feelings, and make him realize that there's a UNIVERSAL realm of opportunities at his disposal. It's really important that Blacks, ESPECIALLY Blacks, receive the type of exposure that Deliverance affords.

I'm SURE that my people in Faith Deliverance are less bound by that negative Black image, and I KNOW they can communicate and deal better with whites. I am reminded of this one lady that testified she went down to the bank dressed as Queen Esther. She and her husband came to church one night, and the lady said that before she was coming to me, she could only put a dollar or two in the offering until she started putting twenty dollars in the offering. And now she can put a HUNDRED dollars in the offering. And since she has started making those sacrifices she has bought a duplex next door to her, and she has bought her daughter a home. So she said, one day her daughter

called up and said that the bank was going to foreclose on the daughter's house because she hadn't paid any money for months on end. So the woman said that she was praying, and the Spirit told her to go to the bank and talk to Mr. Simpson, but she was to dress as Queen Esther. So she went to the bank dressed as Queen Esther, and she said that the MAN let her have \$3500, and they bought the house. Then after they did that another man came from someplace else and brought a record of where the daughter had made all the payments on her house. So it was all cleared up, and the woman came out ahead. So here's the lady going to the white man, to the bank, and this is basically what you could feel she was saying. But she had put on this Queen Esther ATTITUDE which meant she had to COMPLETELY get out of the Black experience. And it worked for her. It took that frame of mind to make her DEAL with the situation. And REACHING for that frame of mind developed as the result of being in Deliverance. Now, that's just one example and a kind of amusing one, but MANY of the Blacks in Faith Deliverance, they go out from this church with a frame of mind that is TOTALLY foreign to their Black experience, to their Black PERSONAL experience. They take on a NEW identity. They become less hostile, less negative, less FRUSTRATED, and more OPEN for communication. And it's really wonderful for me to watch that happen for Black people.

### Deliverance and the Urban Situation

I want to see the church involve itself in a two or three fold type program in urban areas where there would first be a personal AWARENESS change, which would bring about a social and economic change. I want to see the Black person realize his PERSONAL worth, realize that he IS somebody, that he has a POWER within. And with THAT, we can pull ourselves together as a people, as a community, and go downtown and GET some money so we can go next door and fix up that old dilapidated house. Now, the individual Black that is in that run down place, don't tell me he likes it. He doesn't like to be in there, but he feels he can't DO anything about it. No Black likes living with the rats and the roaches, unless he's definitely wasted. The young people don't like it, but they feel like they're trapped, and they need someone to come in and show them that there is a way to SNAP the trap. Then religion becomes something appealing to young people. THEN you can use the other tenets of the faith which appeal to the people's common sense, because my brand of Deliverance is a PRACTICAL theology which is so simple that even the youngest child can understand it.

With that foundation stone of a new recognition of PERSONAL value, we want to create a new FACE in the community to go along with that new self, our new identity. I want to go into the urban areas, the ghetto in particular, and say, "We are a NEW people, we have a NEW image of ourselves, a NEW identity, a new awareness that's UNIVERSAL, and with this force for good within us, this divine INTELLIGENCE within us, let's take this power and utilize it for TRANSFORMING our environment, WHEREVER we live." This is what I really want to do in the Black community. I'm THERE, I'm in it, and I realize that I MUST do something about it.

Now, I know there are those who would say you can never succeed in changing self-image until you change the environment. Well, that has DEFINITELY proven wrong. The basic problem is that the Black man is not at one with himself, and he MUST find atonement, he must find harmony within. Money cannot do this. Material gain and comforts cannot accomplish this. In fact the more material comforts Blacks surround

themselves with, the more FRUSTRATED they become. The more one gets, the more one wants and the greater his frustration between wanting and acquiring, unless he has that true, INNER sense of self. With a person's inner being unified, he has the ability for self-realization, and the ability to materialize his wants. But he also has the ability to recognize what he really NEEDS, not just what he THINKS he wants.

Most cities have put out MILLIONS of dollars in building new homes, refurbishing old houses, but the Blacks with that SAME negative attitude, the SAME negative self-image have gone into those new homes and totally DESTROYED them, brought those homes and those areas right back down to an ugly ghetto. Now, by the same token, the Black who has found a NEW image of himself has gone out and bought that dilapidated house, and he has put down carpet, has put on wallpaper. Many of my members in Faith Deliverance, for example, just looking at me, being AROUND me, they go back to THEIR homes, and they're looking for carpet to put down. And you can definitely see that the change in THEM has affected their environment. But we need to accomplish this change on the larger scale, as a community. What is lacking is that VOICE that's speaking the right language. And that voice has to come from WITHIN the Black community, from a Black person. It can't be a white. He'd be seen as an outsider.

### Deliverance in Black and White

I may talk about Deliverance in terms of the Black person and the Black community, but there is NOTHING specifically Black about my brand of Deliverance. From a scientific standpoint, I'm dealing with a principle, a UNIVERSAL principle, at all times. A change, whether it's financial, being healed, getting a husband, or being delivered from witchcraft, the principle that brings ABOUT the change is the same. Looking for fulfillment in life, that DESIRE for advancement is universal whether you are Black, white, green, or blue. The search and the principle are the same in Blacks as they are in whites. I've counseled whites who have had marital problems, whites who have been sick, whites who have had the fear of death, whites with the fear of evil and the fear of witchcraft, and the parallel is identical. When we wrestle with the SUBJECTIVE forces, there is no difference in color AT ALL.

The main difference between Black and white with respect to Deliverance is the degree of their ECONOMIC advancement. A white who is middle class is well off and is more apt to be looking for the healing aspects of Deliverance as evidenced by all of your major white Pentecostal Deliverance ministers. Or they're looking for help with home or family situations. Nine out of ten times, financially they're all right. Few of them have job problems or difficulties getting a better house. But the Black person, his needs include everything, but he's more often concerned about material things: job, house, car, money.

The other MAJOR difference between white and Black Deliverance is that the Black quest for the Spirit is much more emotional. That is why, in my presentation in service, I deal on the Black experience level in the preaching. Blacks are used to an intense experience, to MOVING sound and action, and a sense of exchange and involvement. Whites aren't used to so much of that. But to reach most Black people, I have to penetrate into the CORE of their being. I've got to DIG deep down to the gut of emotion. I've got to be able to hit the Black where he feels it WORST. That is why I keep pounding at a certain point, until I get that person right where he feels that pain the

most, whether it is a broken marriage, the loss of a job, a sick body, a frustrated mind, or a disturbed spirit. I keep on until I get him, and at that point I can come around and start talking.

## Basic Tenets of the Faith Deliverance Perspective – by Rev. Greer

### Deliverance and the Aquarian Age

We are coming into what is called the millennium age or the Aquarian age. By the very LAW of the universe, the age itself sets a pattern for the individual born into it. We can see this when we look at a person born into the age that is now coming to a close, the age of enlightenment, as compared to the person that was born in the dark ages. So the very introduction by birth into an age affords an individual a certain LEVEL of consciousness to start with. Now the Aquarian age is the age of SPIRITUAL awareness, the age in which man realizes that he is MORE than just a limited PHYSICAL individual. It is the age when man learns there's something within HIM that is DIVINE, UNIVERSAL, SUBJECTIVE, UNLIMITED. A child born now, in the age of spiritual awareness, is more AWARE than the child who was born twenty years ago. In the past twenty years, ten years, there's been an open acceptance of psychic phenomena and the spiritual sciences that heretofore were NEVER accepted. And that is only because of the law of the times that we're living in. And by the law of the age, man is pressing out, pushing out of that old mold that he was put into, to seek and to find his true self and his true identity. So, based on the principle of the emerging Age of Aquarius, there must and there will eventually be an OPEN communication between man and God. And eventually man will be brought into the millennium period of ABSOLUTE, DIVINE rule. Now how long will it take? No one knows. But I am working with the principle of the times. And this is where I want to start; I want to give OUR age its just REWARDS.

It is because we are entering the Age of Aquarius that so many unscrupulous ministers have become popular and have been able to get over on people. They have been able to CAPITALIZE on this age, because people, by the law of the age, are AUTOMATICALLY aware that there is something more to life than what Mama and Grandmama and Great Grandmama told them. By the law of this age the mind cannot go back. We are open to something new, and many ministers have PREYED upon that openness in the past fifty years. When Father Divine was preaching Deliverance, for example, it was a totally foreign thing to the people. And what he did, he exploited it. He tapped upon a truth and made it personal, just for himself. It was so new, so different, and yet so APPEALING. But the way he set it up, it lacked a formal course of study which would have made the truth accessible to ALL, because that would have diminished Father Divine's image as the only ONE.

What I am trying to do in Faith Deliverance is to create a church which assists people to realize THEIR potential in the new age. I do NOT want to exploit people, and that is why I have been cautious in expanding the teaching of the church too soon, because if I take advantage of those avenues of expansion without setting that REAL foundation, then I too will be guilty of exploitation. I would be responsible, not for DEFEATING man, because man could NOT be defeated, but for robbing him of his POTENTIAL for individual growth and self-awareness.

## The Deliverance Perspective

As I was growing up, my religion was Deliverance, but really it was as much Holiness as it was Deliverance. Then when I was about seventeen, I went out of Deliverance and into what I will call metaphysics. That entailed a LOT of things, studies into parapsychology, into esoteric development, and into the spiritual sciences. I went through ALL of those in a short span of time. And I took from each one what I PERSONALLY needed to enhance my OWN awareness of my divine image and my interpretation of the divine. Then I went BACK into Deliverance with what I call TRUE Deliverance. The difference between that old Holiness-Deliverance and MY brand of Deliverance is in the APPLICATION. In the Deliverance I teach and preach the application is SCIENTIFIC. It is designed to bring about deliverance from a scientific standpoint, working with a scientific principle.

The Deliverance I teach is opposed to the view that the Lord in the SKY will do it by and by. Most other churches, including many Deliverance churches, are STILL elaborating and projecting the fundamental Jesus-as-a-person notion. They wouldn't take the chance on elaborating upon Christ as a universal PRINCIPLE. They say you must accept Jesus as a MAN, and repent of your sins. But in the process you deny YOURSELF. My application is the reverse. You accept the Christ that's already WITHIN you and in the process you discover YOURSELF. Then the Christ within you gives YOU the power to be what you really WANT to be in life. He gives you the power to expand yourself and to break every limitation, but YOU must discover the divine within YOURSELF, and YOU must use it.

I have NEVER limited myself to the notion that there is only ONE true religion and that Christianity is that religion. Personally I don't share that idea, never have. In fact it is the SUPERNATURAL that always intrigued me. Since I was a child I've always thought in terms of spirits, in terms of angels, in terms of higher powers, in terms of a supreme being, in terms of divine order. I ALWAYS thought in terms of God as something that is behind the sun shining and behind the stars twinkling, in the flowers blooming, in the birds singing, in the baby crying. I've always had this FEELING that God was life about me, life all AROUND me. I never could interpret God as a MAN, Jesus. And whenever I heard about Jesus, even as a child, I thought He was somebody who FOUND God and was able to use His God powers. In fact it wasn't until I was sixteen or seventeen years of age that I really began to realize that people actually worshipped Jesus as a MAN. Even to this DAY I cannot grasp that awareness.

In Faith Deliverance I must appeal to the frequency that is right for the people I want to reach if I expect to arrive at what I want to accomplish. I've got to be on that person's mental WAVELENGTH. So, for the people I want to reach, Christianity is the wavelength, and Christianity is the means of REACHING the individual. I must use Christianity as Jesus did when He used the law to reach the Jews. Jesus said essentially, "I'm not bringing you something new. I'm just bringing you a new AWARENESS of the law. I'm bringing you a new outlook on the law. I'm making the law APPLICABLE."

Christ knew He had no monopoly on the divine. He knew He was only a supreme EXPRESSION of the divine. Why else would He say, "And even greater things shall ye

do," about those to follow Him. It is the Christ principle or the DIVINE principle that is important, and the divine principle as a principle is universal whether it is interpreted in other religions under other names or not. We must understand mentally, subjectively, what the principle MEANS, because subjectively it does not HAVE a name. It's an AWARENESS that we all share on the subjective level.

To me, Christ, as Buddha, as Mohammed, as any of the other great mystics, was an individual who tapped upon that universal knowledge, that divine PRINCIPLE, and was able therefore to achieve what ordinary men without spiritual awareness saw as supernatural. It is my belief that we should not LIMIT ourselves strictly to the realm of the Christ image. I feel that WHATEVER image the individual has of divine awareness, the individual should really capitalize on his OWN image. The CHRIST principle or the DIVINE principle, or the SUBJECTIVE universal factor becomes the CORE, the CENTER, the ESSENCE of what the true individual is all about. The individual should strive to evolve himself around that principle. He should not try to fit HIS personality to the image of ANYONE else, not even of the great mystics. Yet, this is what most churches try to get you to do. They would have you project yourself INTO this man, Jesus. And then from THAT idea you're supposed to try to evolve and expand. But it's totally impossible unless you LOSE your identity, LOSE your personality and become something else. And this is the great MISTAKE of the establishment church.

When Jesus lived, He PERFORMED more than He talked. His teachings were very simple, practical, and applicable, not the involved doctrines that we find in the Pauline writings. His teachings were very basic, and one can ascertain from the teachings of Christ that His BASIC message was one of love and acceptance of the TOTALITY of self. When it is made more involved than that, then one loses the central notion of the Divine Self. That is why I avoid the doctrines of the Bible and emphasize the miracles of Christ. I want to make those miracles practical and applicable to the individual. I'm concerned with the practical APPLICATION of the Christ principle, and I seek passages in the Bible which DEMONSTRATE that principle at work.

When the Bible speaks of the Father, it speaks of the SUBJECTIVE or the universal. When it speaks of the Son it speaks of the OBJECTIVE or the personal. And we cannot come to the SUBJECTIVE awareness of God unless we accept the OBJECTIVE awareness of God. The individual must have a point of contact, an object of concentration to come INTO the universal, because he IS individual and in his everyday life he lives on the objective level. Yet the individual is universal on the subjective level, and the problem is to CONNECT these two dimensions of being. So, to come to the Father, to get BACK to the universal, the person must have that point of orientation, that point of CONTACT which in Christianity is the CHRIST or the Christoffs. When man individually accepts Christ as his point of entry, then he comes BACK to his universal self. If man were not living on the objective or individual level of expression, there would be no need for him to accept the Son to reach the Father because he would already be WITH the Father. But the person on the objective level who has access to the universal or divine aspect of himself UNDERSTANDS what Jesus meant when He said, "I and my Father are one," because at the universal level of expression all things ARE one. Only at the objective level are they separate.



The problem with most of the eastern mystical religions, which have no equivalent of the objective Son, is that the individual achieves a universal level of consciousness, but that awareness does not have a PERSONAL level of expression. Without an example of the universal at work in MAN, these religions lack the precedent for tapping the universal for CREATIVE use at the objective or personal level of living. They set apart from life the universal or divine and the experience of it, which makes it MEANINGLESS on this level of life expression. It is through the Christoffs, through the acceptance of the Christ STATE of consciousness that the individual can tap the universal source and make his life HEAVY at the personal level, at the level of ACTION in everyday living, and not just in the sense of an ELEVATED consciousness.

This is the crowning ability of a GOD-MAN, and the potential of ALL men. As an objective individual, man has the opportunity to express his godship, his divinity. Once he goes back to the Father, once he becomes one with the Father, one with the source, he loses that individuality, he loses that OPPORTUNITY of expression. God in His loving kindness and His marvelous, magnificent LOVE for His creation, His children, wanted to let man do his OWN thing. Man can know the joy of being creator, being MASTER of his destiny. And then when your life on earth is over, you come back to the Father, the universal. This is the BEAUTY of living, the beauty of LIFE. And this is the PURPOSE of life, to DISCOVER self-MASTERY, self-REALIZATION and individual CREATIVITY. Once we know it individually, then in our transformation at death we have the JOY and the PRIDE of being one with the Father again.

### The Personal Image of the Pastor

I very CONSCIOUSLY try to project in my appearance, my talk, and the way I act the Deliverance faith I believe in. I try to present a person who is SPIRITUALLY in tune, one who IS religious. But, though I'm religious - that is, I'm saved, I'm sanctified, I'm filled with the Holy Ghost - I also show that you can be attractively dressed and you can be down to earth. You don't have to go through changes, you don't have to go through that school of do's and don'ts. You can really get out there and GET what you want and HAVE what you want and BE what you want, yet be spiritual, yet still be in TUNE with God. And my total projection is meant to say, "LOOK, you don't have to BE in that rut you're in, whether it is religious or material. You can be a TOTALLY liberated individual, an individual in control of yourself and your destiny. And yet in that control, in that self-mastery, you don't have to be afraid of losing your spirituality or your contact with God." That is why I will joke, play, say things totally out of the context of religion in church, and then jump right back into an application of the gifts that are undeniably and indisputably authentic and direct from God. I do that just to SHOW people that religion or spirituality is NOT cut off from life.

If I were to use the old method of appearing religious, firm, solemn, somber, and THEN get into the application of the gifts of the Spirit, I would totally set myself apart from the individual in the audience. He would say, "Wow, this is a MYSTIC man, a HOLY man, a SPIRITUAL man." But I would never BE that way because that would create an illusion that I'm unique, that other people can't achieve what I have achieved. That's one of the problems with most of the really spiritually in-tuned individuals, the mystics, the founders of other religious organizations. They have taken on that very somber type image and have CULTIVATED the idea of their uniqueness. Then they have made the

course of study rigid and have made the initiate, the follower, LOSE a certain part of his identity and personality. And they have separated the follower from his society, from his family, from his home, and from his community. But this is NOT my idea of how it should be. That's why I have shunned that type image and that type set-up. I want to develop a program where the orientation is strictly universal, practical, and acceptable on ALL levels of society and where every individual becomes his own DEVELOPED, UNIQUE, and INDEPENDENT self.

### The Individual's Growth in Deliverance

Christ knew that man is what he is on the INSIDE and that man is an expression outwardly of what he is inwardly. Therefore, if man develops mental purity, if man aligns himself with the divine MENTALLY, his expression outwardly AUTOMATICALLY becomes divine. My interpretation of the Bible is old, but with a modern PRACTICAL application. I seek to have each individual identify himself with the Bible characters from a realistic, PRACTICAL standpoint, so he sees that what God did for THIS person, God can do the SAME thing for him. There's no difference. The interpretation is in terms of ABSOLUTE knowledge as opposed to FUNDAMENTAL knowledge. The law of that absolute knowledge AUTOMATICALLY, SPONTANEOUSLY, SCIENTIFICALLY, UNIVERSALLY brings growth, just as nature brings growth of a newborn baby into a mature adult. The process is subjective, not objective. It doesn't depend on the teacher-student type relationship. It depends upon the student as a babe in Christ, having a basic understanding of truth, of that absolute knowledge. Then with periodic sermons, with study in Bible interpretation, with the exposure to the subjective in APPLICATION, in OPERATION - termed Gifts of the Spirit - the person's own PERSONAL application of the Lord's Spirit will develop a matured, truly spiritual, divine individual. And that individual will express the TRUE character, nature and principle of Christ, because the divine principle will be working scientifically, automatically, and universally with the individual, apart from his own physical and personal attributes.

The individual who is best ready to benefit from Faith Deliverance is the person who has come through hard times and really WANTS to break away. This person is not in the same situation as the person who has come through the hard times, has found an ordinary religious faith and is not really looking for a change. CHANGE is the key; the person has to DESIRE change. The person who is into the street life and who THINKS he's satisfied, he doesn't want change. The woman on welfare who has resigned herself to nothing better, she's not looking for change. But the person who is discontented, the person who wants to make MORE out of his life and is willing to MOVE to get it, but who has been frustrated in the past, is READY for Deliverance. He or she is looking for an outlet, LOOKING for help.

Many people want their change overnight. They are not willing to wait on the Lord, to persist until their change comes. It was the same in Jesus' day. That's why Jesus told Nicodemus, "You MUST be born again. That which is born of Spirit is Spirit, that which is born of flesh is flesh." Nicodemus was after the divine understanding and ability that Christ had without going through the steps of initiation and development. He thought there was some key word or some key idea he could grab right away and POP into maturity. But Jesus said, "No, you MUST be BORN again." That is, you have to come from the ground up, you must GROW into it.

Growth is not just physical. A child may grow to be physically matured, but physical height is not a measure of an individual's maturity. Rather it is his spiritual, mental, and social development that gives him TRUE maturity and true height. So it is in recognition of this truth that there must be courses laid out for this growth and development, and they must be laid out properly. But when it comes to the SPIRITUAL part of this growth, it is not so much TEACHING ideas and concepts as it is GUIDING people in the use of certain techniques for contacting and utilizing the divine. The knowledge will come as the techniques are utilized in ever-greater depth, until finally the techniques themselves are no longer needed. But for the beginner the techniques of prayer and meditation must be set forth, and they must be set forth in accordance with RECOGNIZED standards of learning and training. That is the PSYCHOLOGY of it, but we must never exploit the training situation. Once the individual knows the SECRET of prayer, the SECRET of meditation which is the secret of SELF-realization, the secret of self-materialization, once he gets that fundamental technique down, and once he has made the contact with the divine in himself, then he is relatively independent. The wording of the instructions MUST be correct, and it must be put down by a person who has received the key because he KNOWS the key words. And in those words is the LIFE, is the POWER, is the MAGIC, so to speak, to make it work. But it is really very SIMPLE. It is not as intricate, not as involved, not as deep as one would suspect, partly because of the age in which we are living. The Bible says that the truth is so simple that even a child or a fool can reach it.

The moment we get the pursuit of the Spirit so BOGGED down in elaborate, formal stages, we risk defeating our purpose. We must remember that Christ said that the Holy Ghost would come and would be our teacher, our comforter, our guide. And the early church that had Paul and the apostles did not have ANY formal course of study. They were just given a promise that the Holy Spirit would come and would teach them. And that IS the way it is, because once a person contacts the universal in himself, his course of understanding is one with the PATTERN of the universal or absolute itself. His course of development will depend only on where he plugs INTO that pattern and what he pursues in it, but ultimately all points in the pattern lead to all other points. It is in this sense that the quest for the spiritual is SELF-realizing. And it is for this reason that I have not allowed myself to create formal courses of study for development, because I didn't want to capitalize on or limit the individual's growth. I will ALWAYS believe that truth is so universal, so COLLOSSAL, that once a mind taps upon it, the potential of that mind becomes infinite. So once I have more or less INTRODUCED the individual to a SELF- awareness experience, an experience of his DIVINE self, I leave it up to God and the individual to grow from there. The minute I say, you go through first, second, third grade, then I suggest a PATH and I suggest that you should take it. But there IS no path. There only is MORE and LESS understanding. Also a path suggests a line and an end, a point where the individual becomes FULLY developed. But there is no END to development. You NEVER graduate. You never totally mature spiritually because you can never know in the objective state the WHOLE pattern. Your graduation is in your TRANSFORMATION, when you release your hold on the physical, which man calls death, and you go back to your original form, your original SUBJECTIVE identity and become one with the universal. That is the ONLY sense in which you graduate.

## Prayer and Meditation

There are many forms of meditation, many forms of prayer, some more INTENSE than others. I believe that prayer and meditation are not so much forms of PREPARING oneself to talk with God or to deal with God, as they are a PERSONAL, very REALISTIC, very PRACTICAL, day-to-day communication WITH God. The form of prayer that is MOST effective is the prayer of affirmation, not waiting selfishly for God to GIVE me something, but affirming, believing that I HAVE it. This is what I mean by applying the FAITH principle in prayer and meditation. And this IS the age of grace, presently, that really IS put into effect by faith. This is the way I deal with meditation and prayer now.

There was a time when I would wake up in the morning, every morning at six o'clock. I would have formal meditation with my hands on my knees, and I would be receiving influx of divine thought, divine inspiration, and divine knowledge. There was that formal SEGREGATED experience, to receive these things. But now I feel that meditation and prayer should be a SUSTAINED relationship of awareness where the divine mind is with you ALL day and ALL night. We can be in touch with God, with the Divine, while at play, while at work, even while asleep. There should be that SUSTAINED presence, that ability to relate to God, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME. In so being, one receives at ANY given moment what he needs whether it's protection, whether guidance, whether strength, whether inspiration, whatever he needs, because through this OPEN relationship it comes automatically. He is in TUNE at all times.

My prayer, my communication, though it might be advanced to the layperson in Faith Deliverance, many young people are in tune to this. When I'm speaking, when I'm preaching, when the gifts are in operation, they can SEE there an open relationship between God and man. And with the HUMOR involved, it's not a formal setting. So, a person can walk the street and with a BURST of inspiration say, "THANK You, Lord," because he just received something, some insight, some bit of information that he was needing.

## Blessings

How a person goes about RECEIVING blessings depends on the individual, it depends on his circumstances, it depends on his environment, it depends on what he has GOING for him. If a person has nothing going for himself, then nothing short of a MIRACLE will do. And while miracles are not frequent, the individual IS programmed for miracles. He is programmed for opportunities, and when he is conditioned through prayer and through exercises which help to open him TO these opportunities, these miracles DO happen, surprisingly enough, they DO happen. Now if a person is qualified for what he is seeking, then it becomes a matter of time and being able to adjust to a DIVINE plan for reaching the goal. The divine plan, or the course of action inspired by the divine self, arises when the person conditions himself mentally and spiritually to be MOTIVATED toward a particular end by divine guidance. Of course there can BE no divine guidance unless the individual has first made contact with his divine self. He must be aware of himself as PART of God's plan, and he must establish an OPEN relationship with the universal. Once he does this, he will ALSO become aware of whether his goal is in harmony with God's plan. But with contact, openness, harmony, and conditioning, the divine plan and divine guidance will emerge to set the individual on a path toward his goal. The individual then AFFIRMS his relationship to God, and

DENIES anything that is contrary to that relationship or to the divine plan for reaching that goal. Through the DAILY, CONTINUOUS, ACTIVE affirmation of this goal within the true principles of the divine self, a pattern of RIGHT action comes forward that will lead to success almost all the time.

When the individual recognizes his divine plan, it does not JUST set in motion a pattern of divine right action for the individual traveling towards what he wants. When a person is REALLY in tune, other things begin to open up, like a field mushrooming. But there must be that divine plan, and working with it, daily, actively, continuously, and there must be COMMITMENT to the divine right action. The individual more or less STARTS the momentum, he sets the process in MOTION. And then what happens, he puts into effect a POWER, a FORCE, a LAW that is working apart from and within himself, that works as SCIENTIFICALLY and as SYSTEMATICALLY as any law in the universe.

The confirmation that that power has been tapped is in a sense of elation. One should be elated, one should wake up in the morning and there should be a sense of a COMPLETE relaxation. If the individual feels tense or begins to feel the PRESSURE of his actions, THAT is an indication that something has gone wrong. The person has strayed from the divine plan, and this pressure, this tension usually sets up a pattern of REVERSE action that is self-defeating. Now this is the situation that so MANY middle and upper middle class people find themselves in. They have trained themselves well INTELLECTUALLY, but very often they don't have the spiritual guidance. They're totally RATIONAL, totally committed to a wholly MENTAL program. And so often they end up pursuing an occupation or a goal that really is not fulfilling or not rewarding for them. That's why you have so many FRUSTRATED middle class and professional people. They lack that divine guidance, that DIVINE plan. Recognizing the existence and the value of the divine in the individual is what is absent, particularly among the educated in the world today. To be TRULY happy, people must DISCOVER and RELEASE the God in THEMSELVES. And when they RELEASE and let go and ACCEPT as a FACT, as an ACTUALITY, as a REALITY, that divine GOOD that is within them, and affirm it DAILY, then that FORCE, that ACTION, starts working FOR them, and there is almost NOTHING they cannot accomplish.

As a minister dealing with the individual, I cannot speak from outside of the experience of the spiritual. But I feel I can GUARANTEE that once the Christ within you is accepted and so long as you remain WITHIN that experience, you will be successful, because it is MORE than just accepting a person. It's the universal principle of CREATIVITY that you activate. All creation is sustained by that Christ principle. So you're dealing with the greatest POWER or POTENTIALITY in the universe. When you tap that Christ, that Christoff, it's a LAW, it's a POWER.

The entire concept is that once we ACCEPT that divine aspect of ourselves, once we accept the Christ PRINCIPLE, it becomes a LAW of spirit, a LAW of mind that AUTOMATICALLY executes itself, systematically and scientifically, apart from our own independent action. It is just like the baby. Once the babe is HERE, it doesn't have to be TAUGHT how to breathe, it becomes a natural instinct. Once a baby is here, it's not taught how to see, it automatically sees, it automatically tastes. And whatever he needs is already here for him. And with parents to guide him, DIRECT him, he develops and matures into a HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE, CREATIVE individual.

Spiritual growth is similar. When you are BORN again and you accept Christ, accept God's expression as your way of living, as YOUR way of coming into spiritual existence, then God, the universal, the subjective, AUTOMATICALLY becomes the father of your course of expression. You AUTOMATICALLY come under the domain of divine providence, but in a personal relationship, in an individual relationship. Now, just as natural as a natural mother and father would watch out for their child, the Spirit of God, the HOLY SPIRIT - which would appear SUPERNatural to the individual - NATURALLY begins to undertake to guide that individual into maturity, into a creative expression APART from his own INDIVIDUAL and INTELLECTUAL ideas of what he should do or of what HE thinks is right or wrong.

Because the person is in touch with his divine nature, he does not work AGAINST the divine principle working through him. The relationship at this point is HARMONIOUS. The Holy Ghost or the Christ principle becomes one's comforter, one's mother, one's father, one's brother, one's sister, one's teacher, one's guide. So, when one accepts the Christ WITHIN him, he automatically brings himself under the domain of divine providence individually and personally. Then, the divine plan is set up, it's put into MOTION. And when the person becomes precise, EXACT in what he wants, THEN he discovers that same divine intelligence saying, "I KNOW what you have need of before you even ASK. It's GOOD that you know what you want and where you want to go. Now, I am putting you in direction of that good, and you must BELIEVE that I AM projecting you toward that good." BELIEF is the power to keep that right action going. As Christ says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, BELIEVING, ye SHALL receive." This is where belief comes in.

After the initial acceptance of Christ, when the Christ principle is ACTIVATED in the individual and the divine plan is in operation, then the person can REALLY identify specifically what he wants, what he needs, and he can set the RIGHT forces in motion to get it. Let's say, for example, you need a job. You don't have a job. All you have is a little check coming in, maybe it's social security or welfare or unemployment. Now the first thing you must do after you have activated the divine within you is to visualize EXACTLY what you want. See it in your MIND'S eye, and keep the image BEFORE you. Always DRAW upon it. Because what you vividly VISUALIZE, you tend to MATERIALIZE.

Once you have a CLEAR picture of what you want, a picture inspired by the Christ principle in operation in you, then rather than sitting back and not moving those vibrations out there, you have to set up right action to begin CHANGING something. You can't just WISH for it, you've got to actually ACT upon your faith, act upon your belief, act upon your CONVICTION. You are the one that must get it GOING. You are the one that FIRST must initiate the action. Apart from a MIRACLE, it never comes TO you. But when you initiate the action, you CREATE the miracle. YOU set the miracle in motion.

So, if it's a job you want, you look in the newspaper, you give an offering, you go to the hospital and you pray for somebody, you do SOMETHING out of the ordinary to get things moving. You must get out of that old mold that you are in, that STANDSTILL position, and when YOU make a move, life moves BACK at you. If you move in the right direction according to the divine plan, something MUST come back to you. This is the

way a blessing is set in motion, that divine right ACTION moving with a particular divine PLAN.

When I talk about blessings I often use the phrase, "Use what you've GOT to get what you WANT." Most people don't realize that even when they seem to have NOTHING, they are still RICH in opportunities if the Christ principle is operating within them. That's the general idea I have in mind when I refer to the story in the Second Book of Kings about the widow woman who had nothing. The bills were due, the children were about to be taken and bound over to compensate for her indebtedness. And Elijah asked the woman, "What do you have?" She said, "I have nothing, SAVE a pot of oil." The pot of oil, in this instance, stood for the woman's SPIRITUAL awareness. We see that this IS the significance of the oil from the first chapter where it is said that her husband was a spiritual man and that he was one of the students in the school of the prophets, which suggests that this was a household dedicated to God. So here is a family that has divine awareness. But they hit a low tide, the husband dies, the mother has two children, she is broke and nothing is coming in. Everything is piling up. So now what is the widow woman going to DO? Sit back and just let her children be taken away to defray the debt, and languish into self-pity, become a bum and do NOTHING for herself. No. She said, "SAVE a pot of oil," meaning, "WAIT a minute, I may not have any MATERIAL possessions at this time, but I have a rich SPIRITUAL heritage." So Elijah could see this, and he said in essence, "Take that awareness and go one step beyond and CHALLENGE your faith. You have NOTHING, but go to your neighbor's house and borrow some empty vessels," meaning just do something. It might seem simple. It may appear as nothing, but do SOMETHING. Take a walk, do a money grab, go downtown and window shop, go and admire a car. But do SOMETHING. Don't just SIT there. Get up, DO something. Motivate the forces in the universe by the MOVING of your mind.

And this is what the widow woman did. She was able to use what she DID have, that pot of oil, that DIVINE awareness, that SPIRITUAL heritage, that BELONGING to the absolute, that ONENESS with God. She was able to fall back on THAT and draw from it in times of hardship and leanness and poverty and fear. And having utilized this power within, having utilized that SAVED pot of oil, she went out and got those empty baskets, and then opportunities began to unfold, and things began to materialize for her, and she began to LIVE and get herself back together again.

Divine right action for the widow woman was going to the neighbors' houses and taking the empty vessels. This was the application of her natural abilities and her natural talents. For someone else, their natural ability may rest in a singing voice, and divine right action for them might be to go and get on a talent show, sing a song and BELIEVE someone is going to discover them. Someone else may have ability as a mechanic, but he needs a car. Well, rather than going down and just STANDING at the showroom window LOOKING at the car, saying, "I'm going to get that car," maybe divine right action would lead that person to knock on the dealer's door and say, "Look, I'm a mechanic. Can I have a job? If need be I'll work for less than scale, or if I got to work for nothing to prove myself, I'll do that." And maybe by following out that plan, the man WOULD get his car. A lot of people say, "Well, I got a DEGREE," or "I'm a singer. If I can't sing at the Academy of Music I'm not going to sing at ALL." That's not using what you HAVE to get what you WANT. That's going in REVERSE. That's NOT using what you have so you're sure NOT to get what you want. So whatever you have, you USE it,

in whatever area you CAN, but in accordance with the divine plan, to achieve what you want. And so long as the plan is divinely inspired and the Christ principle is in operation, what you WANT will be RIGHT for you and RIGHT for others, and you WILL achieve the desires of your heart.

### Social Commitment

Apart from what Deliverance means to the individual in terms of developing HIMSELF, there's also the area where we seek to serve and assist OTHERS to develop. I'm trying to make people realize that there's ALSO fulfillment in reaching out and being a part of others, in being able to be a part of those who need YOU the most, not just seeking to identify with those who are on your level and above. My brand of Deliverance is not a religion of self-satisfaction, which most of the positive mind religions ARE. They are strictly doctrines of doing for "MYSELF" only. It's me, me, me, me, and these doctrines don't have that return value built into them which makes them SOCIAL. The Deliverance I preach is a religion of self-awareness, NOT self-satisfaction, and self-awareness includes being able to recognize that as a divine creation you have an OBLIGATION as an individual to elevate your fellow man. In so doing you fulfill the law of Christ by achieving brotherhood. I think in essence this is what Faith Deliverance is about: INDIVIDUAL HELP through SPIRITUAL SELF-AWARENESS, PERSONAL DELIVERANCE and ACHIEVEMENT through SELF-REALIZATION and DIVINE RIGHT ACTION, and SOCIAL FULFILLMENT through ASSISTING one's fellow man to OVERCOME suffering and REALIZE HIS POTENTIAL. There must be that LAST part, that return value within the individual who has achieved self-awareness through contact with the Divine. There MUST be a commitment to assisting others to achieve fulfillment. One cannot take it all for himself. There must be a giving and a taking, and then a SHARING process.

### Evil and Witchcraft

Satan is by definition the negative, evil force, SEPARATED from God, and sin is that which separates us, alienates us from God, from the source of our all, our divinity. That's what sin IS. Now, once we become separated, alienated, set apart, then we are no longer part of the whole. We no longer have the divine, the absolute to sustain us. In a sense, we're on our OWN. We are UNDER the law of another power, the power of the earth. This is evidenced by the fact that at the objective level we are subject to the law of gravity, subject to the laws of nature, subject to the laws of THIS planet, Earth. But once BEYOND Earth, those laws are not relevant. When as individuals we allow ourselves to become alienated, separated from the source of our inner being, our TRUE selves, we become completely subject to the laws of the earth which is controlled by the lower, material elements or forces. The sinful man is the man who is separated from his true DIVINE self, and is subject to the intelligence of these lower, MATERIAL forces. History attests to the atrocities that man can commit under the influence of this lower intelligence.

Satan or evil is the intelligence that is in control of the earth plane. And man, in his alienated state of consciousness, taps upon that source, is controlled BY that force, is dictated to BY that force. Governments worldwide are in trouble because they have DENIED the Christ, the Divine, the universal, which is love. Having turned their backs on their TRUE selves, they are out there, trying to make it on their own. But they cannot bring about the good that man desires because they are controlled by the lower



intelligence, that earthbound intelligence which is a very SELFISH force, and dictates only to the SELFISH desires of the alienated man.

When we accept our DIVINE identity, we are no longer limited by the law of flesh, the law of the material, earth plane. We are liberated from that law, and we dwell within the universal, the divine order, where the law of God is the law of love. Once we accept the CHRIST nature, the UNIVERSAL nature, then we become ONE with the whole again. This is the ONLY way we can overcome the limitations of the earth plane intelligence. Because man is an objective expression of the subjective, he has the ability to decide for himself whether he will live totally in the objective, material, earth plane of the lower intelligence, or whether he will draw upon the subjective, divine connection to live a life inspired by the higher intelligence of the universal plane. God does not say to man, "Listen, you MUST use your energy and power, your will and your volition to do good." No, He says, "You are now an INDIVIDUAL. You can do GOOD or you can do BAD. You ARE an individual and you are here so you can EXPRESS your creativity. It's up to YOU to determine the experience."

Because we ARE under the earth bound or the earth prone forces, our natural, limited instinct is in tune with the lower intelligence, the lower power. That's why we are subject to death, disease, decay, crime, war, etc. What happens is that the mind tunes into that intelligence that has ALWAYS been here. Now there are certain people who have tuned into that lower intelligence, that negative force so deeply that they are able to affect OTHERS by it. I have dealt with cases where people were deformed by this evil power. The lives of these people were in total disarray, and you can SEE the effects in them physically. When it's really a case of spiritual malpractice, the face appears to be distorted, the eyes appear withdrawn. The vibration that I pick up is withdrawn, diminished, as of a person who's only HALF himself. Most often the person KNOWS he has changed, and he will tell you, "LOOK, I was one way before, but NOW I look like something different."

Now this person's condition was created by people who deal in what I call spiritual malpractice. These are people who have actually sold out TO this lower power. These are NOT the quacks who just burn a little candle and spread a little hoofa dust and call that witchcraft. But there are people who have tuned their mind so deeply into the negative, who have opened up to that lower intelligence, that they have accepted it as a motivating force to DO evil. And these people DWELL upon that force until they MATERIALIZE it. It's the law of the mind. What you vividly VISUALIZE, you tend to MATERIALIZE. If you're in that negative environment and you WORK with that force, it materializes itself. It HAS to. But in the end, it's a self-destructive type materialization because the person who practices it, destroys himself.

The cure for such spiritual malpractice is to reassert the DIVINE self in the person, to bring the universal self back into control of the person's life. I accomplish this in different ways with different people. If it's a person who has STRONG beliefs in prayer, I can appeal to their INNER sense and bring them out of it slowly or instantly through prayer. But most of the time I have to tap back to discover what TRIGGERED the negative within them. So, I talk with the person until the Spirit brings me the key situation. While we're talking, an incident will come up in the person's life that I'll see before me, or I'll receive a name that will represent a period in his life, when he was going through

something. And nine out of ten times I can take him back to HOW it happened, and WHY it happened. And then from THAT point I can bring him back to his former self. And once we locate the KEY situation, you can IMMEDIATELY see a relief. The way you know that you've effectively worked with an individual who is under that type condition of witchcraft or spiritual malpractice is that you can always tell him to go back and look at himself in the mirror, and when he comes back to you it's, "Oh, MY! I look like my old SELF again," and it's a TOTALLY new individual.

## The Urban Black Cultural Context of Faith Deliverance

The testimonies in this book indicate the many different areas of life where members of Faith Deliverance employ the deliverance approach that Rev. Greer has just outlined. As Rev. Greer suggests, the optimum condition for the delivered individual is one where everything the individual does is informed by both objective and subjective inputs, rational and spiritual awareness. Short of such a developed state of being, the testimonies reveal individuals first discovering and then seeking to utilize spiritual or universal awareness in meeting the various problems they confront in living.

In all of the testimonies, the six that appear here and the other twenty-five that I collected, the delivered person utilizes a basic conceptual framework within which he sees his life and actions. His life prior to deliverance is contained within this framework, and it is to life so conceived that he sees himself as applying his new deliverance perspective after being delivered. The framework refers to urban Black culture and rests on a fundamental opposition between the church on one side and the street on the other. As portrayed, most of life is engaged on the continuum between these extremes, with the school leaning in the direction of the church and the work world often economically allied to the street. The home is most often located squarely in the middle between these polar influences.

The worldly, secular, material street world is opposed by the otherworldly, sacred, spiritual world of the Black church. In the testimonies, individuals report lives that center on different ones of these "institutions" on the continuum, and that move across at least some range of these cultural centers at any one time. Typically, the testifiers shift between a fairly exclusive street focus and a comparably intense church focus at least once in their lives, more often for women, less often for men. As the testifiers report, neither the street nor the traditional church provide a way to approach life that satisfies or sustains for very long, and each perspective is fundamentally suspicious of and antagonistic toward the other.

With the home often situated between the influence of the church and the street, the testifiers report that as children and adults they are caught in the antagonism and tension between a church oriented wife, mother or grandmother and a street oriented husband, father, boyfriend, or sibling. To the extent that men tend to orient to and control the street world and women orient to and support the world of the church, the sexes themselves are polarized, coming together but frequently clashing in marriage, home and family.

It is usually this cultural milieu in which the testifiers describe themselves as being immersed - often with great mental consternation or physical pain or illness - when they first encounter Faith Deliverance and the deliverance faith. Although the perspective of Faith Deliverance is more "of the church" than "of the street," it nevertheless proposes itself as successfully mediating between the street and the church positions, making it possible for people to unify their lives instead of swinging from one extreme to the other. In this respect, the deliverance faith recognizes the legitimate desires of the individual for success and achievement in living this life. Also, the Deliverance position includes the physical and the material realms as important in the individual's present life, and considers these dimensions of life to be the relevant concerns of religious faith. By so doing, Deliverance accommodates the street perspective. But the Deliverance faith insists that personal goals in this life must be informed by spiritual and social awareness. The individual must discover and develop his divine self so he can come to comprehend himself 1) as an individual, 2) as a responsible part of various social groups, 3) as a material expression on the finite earth plane of existence, and 4) as a spiritual expression at the infinite, universal level of expression.

In its social and spiritual emphasis, the Deliverance viewpoint accommodates the church viewpoint. In effect, Deliverance admits the personal, physical and material side of the street while rejecting its ego-centricism and social irresponsibility, and it admits the spiritual and social side of the church while rejecting its exclusive focus on sanctification and salvation. From the Deliverance viewpoint man is both flesh and spirit, and man goes astray when he designs and conducts his earthly life too much in terms of either one of these complementary aspects. For Deliverance, the challenge to man is not to deny either part of his nature, but rather to forge a creative unity and balance within his complementary aspects. It is the emergence in their lives of this more creative balance that the testifiers report in their testimonies.

The ability of the deliverance faith to assist the testifiers in bringing about specific changes in their lives is what is most apparent in the various testimonies. In the duration of the individual's commitment to the faith, there is support for the contention of deliverance itself that something has emerged in the testifiers' lives that has the ability to unify their outlook on their world and to stop the tendency to oscillate between extremes. Most speak of a new found sense of themselves and of the peace of mind that accompanies it. Perhaps in experiencing a universal awareness of self and in recognizing the universal reality base for brotherhood, the delivered person finds what he needs to overcome the negative or defensive self image that Rev. Greer refers to and that accompanies the racial pressure from the larger society. With a firmer sense of self identity, it may no longer be necessary to either deny one's self along with everyday reality from the perspective of the church world or to seek total satisfaction and identity in the external, physical, material world of the street. With inward self-assurance and a theology that relates the spiritual to the material, it is possible for new options for success and personal achievement to arise. The white man and his culture that may have seemed impenetrable barriers previously, may diminish in stature and be approached more creatively. The awareness of brotherhood at the universal level encourages a greater sense of social responsibility among all people, across racial, ethnic, and sexual divisions. In the universal security of self, ego-centrism can diminish. The individual is "somebody" with the potential for success in life, but personal aggrandizement can no longer be pursued at the cost of trampling one's fellow man.

Nearly all of the testimonies describe personal and social changes of the kinds just mentioned. But while the delivered person sees himself as changing significantly, the external world he lives in continues to exert the same old pressures upon him. His immediate Black cultural world remains tense with its unresolved oppositions. Indeed in his or her most immediate environment, the home and family, the delivered person usually continues to experience the symptoms of this tension. In few marriages are both spouses delivered, and in yet fewer families are all the members of the deliverance persuasion. Indeed, it is not unusual for the delivered person to experience isolation even in his or her own family, being made the target of hostile commentary and action by those closest to him or her.

Delivered mothers try to guide their children into an awareness of deliverance, but young peers in the streets are a powerful distraction, especially for males. Families with a street oriented father or boyfriend and a delivered mother are most common. With her deliverance faith, the mother is better able to deal creatively with her children's material and physical desires than a typical other-worldly church mother, but the adult male's street orientation constantly undercuts the mother's social and spiritual emphasis. Frequently children do not understand or appreciate their mother's newfound spirituality and change of behavior. Adolescent children especially are confused, and often their mothers are not able to explain their new awareness in terms that do not suggest the traditional, other-worldly church position. Such mothers are typically young in the faith and themselves remain drawn to the streets where they may periodically accommodate its demands to satisfy their own needs. New in their spirituality, they are themselves confused about just what deliverance is and what it means. They need support, but deliverance churches like Faith Deliverance emphasize self-reliance and look outward to the stranger, not inward to a strong sense of community. Some close friendships do develop among church members, but often the telephone is the only means to sustain these relationships outside of the church due to the geographic dispersal of the membership.

Ritual schedules are demanding, but with the focus of this ritual on the breakthrough and commitment experience, guidance in further spiritual growth is left largely to the individual and the assumption that divine guidance will provide. If interested, the newly delivered person may attend Bible Study or adult Sunday school classes, but with little emphasis placed on such study, these classes reach few except those seeking a religious ministry. The result is that growth out of initial delivered status is not readily facilitated, and many people never reach beyond the initial phase of understanding and application of the faith.

This situation of weak social support and unguided personal growth does not make coping with the situation in the home easier. The Lack of substantial programs in churches like Faith Deliverance to appeal to young people and to assist delivered parents in presenting deliverance to their children makes the task of the delivered adult that much more difficult in the home.

The delivered person's new delivered awareness is very valuable to him or her, as the testimonies indicate, but the reality is that church communities like Faith Deliverance do not offer strong social support for the individual's efforts to deal with the problems of

living in urban Black culture. There is much encouragement for change and many statements of the deliverance ideal but little to facilitate actual change or advancement. The result is that while the delivered person feels personally transformed and highly motivated, his or her road to substantial change is often both difficult and lonely. This situation is only aggravated by the fact that within the Black community, churches like Faith Deliverance - with flamboyant prophets like Rev. Greer - are regarded with suspicion, leaving its members open to ridicule and isolation even within the church oriented dimension of the community.

Under these general circumstances often the best the delivered person can do is to cope more creatively with a contrary situation within Black marriage, family and neighborhood. Personal spiritual development is possible, stimulated by the time devoted to services, but the time and energy to pursue advancement in the occupational or professional sense may be extremely difficult to find for all but the few late teenagers and younger adults the church is able to reach. Success measured internally is often significant, as the testimonies report, but the evidence of external success tends to be exhibited by relatively few.

The opportunity to achieve success in external terms is more available to the children of delivered parents than to the parents themselves. Children who are raised from a young age in families where the parents are unified in deliverance or where a single delivered parent's effect is consistent and undiluted by contrary influences, often do well in school, graduate from high school and go on to do additional work in higher education. Even when these children do not attend the church or understand the spiritual basis of their parent's or parents' faith, they benefit from a more stable home life and from the social levels of the message brought into the home in terms of setting high goals for personal achievement, persisting through obstacles, and thinking positively about one's self and one's possibilities.

By no means all children, even among those raised in the more harmonious delivered home situations, make it past the lure of the surrounding streets. Even with a long term supportive home environment and a breakthrough at a young age to a sense of personal spirituality, it takes a young person willing to run against the powerful alternate tides of urban Black culture to achieve within legitimate channels the external conditions of success. When this does occur, the largely internal and personal deliverance of one generation can be said to have contributed to the external deliverance of the next. Whether the members of this next generation recognize and sustain the inward spiritual basis for complete deliverance is the ultimate challenge for them.

The testimonies in this book are those of the first generation. They reveal deep inward change, and they express great expectations for total success. Some will achieve this success. But most first generation delivered people seem to live on the promise and the hope that their inward change will be matched someday by dramatic improvement in their outward condition. With greater inner peace and stability, but often suffering a sense of social isolation, reality finds most delivered people continuing to live lives contained by the tensions within urban Black culture and by the larger set of stresses that exist between urban Black culture and mainstream American culture. This latter relationship and the place of the Faith Deliverance proposition within it are the subjects of the next chapter.

## IX

# EVALUATING THE FAITH DELIVERANCE ORGANIZATION AND MESSAGE: INTELLECT AND INTUITION IN BLACK CULTURE AND MAINSTREAM AMERICAN CULTURE

The celebratory life testimony form avoids any discussion of the weaknesses and problems of Faith Deliverance. But all of the individuals testifying in this book are able to view their church from alternative rhetorical perspectives. All are capable of expressing their complaints and frustrations with Faith Deliverance. Such complaints almost always refer to the organizational and financial aspects of the church, not to the deliverance faith and message that Rev. Greer espouses. Typically it is only after delivered people have broken through to their spiritual faculty and discovered how significant their spirituality can be in stabilizing and improving their mental and physical selves that Faith Deliverance members begin to discover the problems with the new church to which they have committed themselves. Most encounter these problems after they join one or another of the boards, auxiliaries, or choirs of the church.

Eager to contribute to the successful outreach of their church, members are frustrated by the cliques that they discover existing in the various church organizations and the lack of clear and consistent directions to these groups from Rev. Greer. Initially members feel they can assist in overcoming these difficulties, but over time continued frustration with these problems builds until the point is reached, usually between the second and fourth years, when despite advancement to or toward ministerial status, many individuals withdraw from the church. Such withdrawals are temporary and periodic at first, but as the cycle of frustration compounds, it is with a perplexing combination of resentment and guilt that the separation becomes more or less permanent. Grateful to the minister whose message has meant so much to them, members feel guilty in abandoning their church. But frustrated and sometimes abused by the church organization these same members resent what seem to be their wasted time, effort and money. Some dissatisfied members find another church, often another deliverance church, but others may drift for quite a time unable to give up Faith Deliverance as their church, even though they are not attending its services, or attending very infrequently. [1]

While the above historical sequence is typical, not all church members undergo it. There are fifty or so hard-core members who have persevered through the frustrations, refusing to give up, and hoping the problems will eventually be remedied. Other long-term members restrict their participation to attending services and since they avoid the church organizations, they escape most of the frustrations. While it is possible to develop spiritually under the conditions of such limited participation, the individual is very much on his own to do so. It is fair to say that most such members reveal little growth beyond their initial spiritual breakthrough with its mentally and physically stabilizing effects. Continued spiritual growth most often occurs among those who strive to be more closely involved with Rev. Greer's ministry. But since participation in the church organization is the only avenue to such involvement and contact, those who pursue growth through such participation face and often go through the frustration sequence just mentioned.

In the book's "Introduction" and in the final section of the preceding chapter, I have suggested some of the impediments Faith Deliverance members face as they try to achieve full deliverance. Collectively these difficulties block the progress of many converts in realizing the deliverance worldview of Rev. Greer for themselves. Until the community effectively delegates responsibility, competently manages the resulting organizational structures, and provides the guidance and support for the individual member's development as a delivered individual, the necessary organization and program will not be in place to sustain the commitment of its membership and to successfully address the expansive goals of Rev. Greer for the community.

Within an effective organizational structure, it may be possible to attack some of the current stumbling blocks to full deliverance for the membership. Programs can be developed 1) to guide and promote the individual's spiritual growth into maturity, 2) to reach the children and spouses of delivered members - if not with the faith, at least with an understanding of the nature and importance of the delivered person's new perspective, and 3) to counsel and support the delivered individual's efforts a) to resist the physical and material lures of the street, b) to discover satisfactory social life and companionship apart from street contexts, and c) to reach out for educational and occupational success.

Without effective organization and programs to at least address these major difficulties, the breakthrough to spiritual awareness promoted by the deliverance faith of Faith Deliverance is likely to stall after stabilizing the personalities of the members, promoting their personal mental and physical health, and helping them to cope more creatively with their familial and urban Black cultural surroundings. Substantial improvement in the social and economic circumstances of members is unlikely for most members under current conditions, though these changes may be secondarily achieved by some of the delivered person's children. [2] Faith Deliverance is a young church, but until it rectifies its own internal problems, its success in challenging the surrounding urban Black culture will probably not prove very noteworthy or impressive. Revolutions that must wait until the next generation to take full effect may be important, but they are barely recognizable.

Were the message and faith of Faith Deliverance contained within a competent organization with the requisite support programs, then the challenge to urban Black culture from deliverance churches like Faith Deliverance could be more substantial and serious. As the church is presently constituted, it is only the **promise** of this challenge that I can try to assess. Considered in terms of its potential, much can be said on behalf of the deliverance message within urban Black culture. Though it may not be easy for some to grasp, there is a considerable difference between the faith promoted in Faith Deliverance and that of most other Black churches. It is in this difference that the voice of deliverance has a contribution to make.

The major difference between Faith Deliverance and other Black churches is that the faith of Faith Deliverance is at root mystical. As such, Faith Deliverance houses the significance of the divine within the concept of the self. Like mysticism, deliverance is a religion of self-realization through the transformation of the self. Rev. Greer continually encourages his congregation to understand their faith less literally and more metaphorically or symbolically. God is not important as a figure or a character to

worship apart from self, but as a divine principle that permeates all life and is, as a result, part of the self of all persons. Christ is not a man to worship as a savior, but an exemplar of the fulfilled human condition, a condition achieved when the divine self is fully activated and developed. The miracles of Christ demonstrate the practical power of the individual who is developed spiritually to overcome problems and realize his needs in living. The born again experience is the moment of activating the divine principle in the self, the starting point for further development of the non-rational, intuitive faculty in man through visualization exercises, meditation and prayer. Salvation is achieved through spiritual maturity, which makes the individual aware of his unity with the divine or universal level of reality at all times.

"God in you," as an active principle within, not God as an entity apart, is the focus of faith in Faith Deliverance. Believers are encouraged not to pray to God or Jesus as distant spiritual entities in heaven, but through the divine or Christ principle in themselves. Such prayer activates the intuitive or spiritual faculty in man and calls this faculty into service to assist in guiding the individual to his goals. Deliverance, properly understood, is not the worship of external gods, but the realization and maturation of the divine or universal within the self. Faith Deliverance is not a religion of external appeal, but of internal self-realization. Through a revitalized, expanded concept of self, the deliverance faith asserts that all things are possible for the individual, even events as radical as the miracles of Christ.

The implications are far reaching in locating the divine within the individual and understanding it as an empowering agency which the individual can learn to channel in the pursuit of his own needs. Within this perspective, growth in spiritual awareness is one with the emergence of a more complete self and greater power in and control over one's life. Power is not external to self, but is realized in and through the self, and the effects of this power are in the here and now, not just in a life after death. In this framework, emergence into spiritual awareness completes, confirms and empowers self. The concept of self itself, is transformed, not just redirected or shielded by external divine agency.

So long as power is seen as apart from self and subject to solicitation before it manifests itself in the world, religion remains the perpetual promise of a potential benefactor. The individual remains subject to the whims of this external, supernatural agency. The individual is stronger psychologically because he has an additional source of appeal, but he remains dependent. In completing and empowering the self by locating the divine within the person, the deliverance faith promotes self-assurance, self-reliance, self-control, and self-determination. It also permits the religious experience to have the deepest, most transformative and potentially permanent effects.

Because most Black religion remains committed to literal Christian belief and locates spiritual power in agents apart from the self (God, Jesus, the Holy Ghost), it does not have the capacity of the deliverance faith to be so deeply and permanently transformative. It is this difference that the people testifying in this book are trying to describe, particularly in the sections of their testimonies where they discuss their church and their beliefs. All of these people grew up in the Black church, and all of them think there is a significant difference between the faith of the Black churches they have known and that of Faith Deliverance. Keith and Mark, for example, were raised in the



Black holiness and Baptist churches respectively. Mark grew up under the wing of his grandfather who was a Baptist minister. Both men describe themselves as periodically seeking out the church as a source for potential direction and redirection during their lives. But both indicate that the traditional Black religion of these churches did not provide them with something that could hold them. After uplifting experiences in services, they would drift back into their respective street oriented enterprises. But in Faith Deliverance, Keith and Mark indicate they found something that could sustain them and that they could "go with." Six years after I took their testimonies, they are each still "with it," not necessarily with Faith Deliverance, but with the faith of Faith Deliverance. During that time, neither of them has returned to the perspective that guided their lives before. Keith and Mark have not been "saved for the moment." Their change has persisted to become the way they are. What is true for the men is equally true for the women. Despite some trying circumstances over the past six years, none of the women testifying in the book has released the deliverance perspective from centrality in her view of life. Certainly not all who pass through Faith Deliverance are so durable in their faith. However, those who stay long enough to experience the spirit in themselves and to recognize the core of the message on the significance and utility of the universal aspect of self, seem to incorporate their faith rather readily into their lives. Their commitment to deliverance does not display on the one hand the kind of personal uncertainty (the need to be "saved" over and over again) or on the other hand the religious intolerance (the view that they have discovered the one and only true faith) that is so characteristic of fundamentalist (literal) Christians.

The testimonies of Keith and Mark, especially, reveal this tolerance of others within their commitment to deliverance. For both men, the truth they have discovered lies in a principle they have enlivened in themselves. This truth is illuminated by the Bible, but for them there is no need for dogmatic commitment to the Bible as the one and only Truth, because for them the truth is not external to who they are. As such, as Keith and Mark discuss how they might attempt to reach young Black men with backgrounds like themselves, both stress that each individual is responsible to find his own path to awareness. They do not recommend one way, one view of the Bible or one church. What counts so far as they are concerned is for the individual to discover and develop the divine self within, whatever the path may be to this realization. When Keith teaches Sunday school and when Mark preaches in a service, each indicates that he reaches through the Bible to promote spiritual awareness, which both see as the essential issue in deliverance. As a young man, Mark says he taught the Bible in Sunday school as history (literally) and really had no idea what he was doing. Now with his deliverance point of view, Mark can preach to the spiritual principle that he sees as the foundation for the events of the Bible, and that he views as giving poignancy to all of the biblical events. The Bible comes alive now for Mark, not so much for its historical events per se, as for the power of spiritual awareness these events reveal, a power modern man has access to and can utilize in the events of his present life.

While the testimonies of Keith and Mark are particularly explicit on the issue of tolerance for the paths of others, the women's testimonies are equally impressive for the absence in them of the language of the proselytizer for literal belief. Saving souls for Jesus, or rescuing souls from false belief and perpetual damnation are not the focus of any of their testimonies. Deliverance does not mean binding people to absolute belief, but as Flora says, freeing them from all sense of limitation, including religiously engendered

limitations. As Rev. Greer himself says, what counts is the spirituality of the individual, not his religiosity. Such a viewpoint expressed by the leader of the Faith Deliverance community promotes tolerance and fosters a secure sense of self based on individual spiritual awareness.

Following from its mystical roots, is the second major feature which differentiates Faith Deliverance from most other Black churches: the deliverance faith of Rev. Greer seeks to integrate the material and the spiritual. Individual aspiration for physical and material well-being is allowed and encouraged within deliverance. Faith Deliverance does not recommend denial or withdrawal from the material world as many more fundamentalist Black churches do. [3] Neither does Faith Deliverance, as do many standard Black denominations, back away from the born again experience as the ecstatic expression of contact with the Spirit [4], while espousing middle class values and permitting material pursuits to enter silently through the side door. [5] Faith Deliverance speaks largely in the idiom of literal Black Pentecostal belief, but at its root, and beneath its fundamentalist facade, the message of Faith Deliverance is applied Christian mysticism. This message emphasizes the usefulness of the spiritual self for discovering what one really wants in life and for guiding the individual to the fulfillment of these needs, whether these wants be material, physical, economic, social or spiritual in nature. Such a "this worldly" message, which focuses largely on spiritual means and which integrates the material and the spiritual, is not the message of most Black churches. The message of Faith Deliverance is not a passive placating message about waiting for the life to come, [6] or some psychological gimmick to make accommodation to inferior status acceptable, [7] or simply some religious agenda to support aspiration to a white middle class lifestyle. [8] To the extent most Black religion is not applied Christian mysticism, Faith Deliverance and other churches like it offer a different, if not a new, voice in urban Black culture. [9]

Of what value is this applied integrative mystical voice of deliverance within the Black subculture to which it primarily orients? I have already suggested that the testimonies reveal a basic street-church opposition in urban Black culture. [10] Particularly in the testimonies of Keith and Mark, who were heavily street involved when they came to Faith Deliverance, we see the tempering effect on this orientation after they commit themselves to deliverance. According to their own accounts, the effect of the deliverance faith was to unify and make whole their sense of self. With this "complete" self, each has been able to withdraw from what they both recognize as the excessive materialism of the street scene. [11]

Because of their deliverance faith, however, the withdrawals of Keith and Mark do not result in their isolating themselves from the physical and material aspects of life. Mark can still take pride in his Cadillac and his fine clothes, and he can appreciate a "fine" looking woman and anticipate a new house, but he is no longer defined by these nice "things" around him. He no longer feels compulsive about the shine of his car's finish, and he can drive a three or four year old car and avoid overextending himself financially just to keep himself in new luxury automobiles. Keith can remain proud of his handsome physical appearance and can expect a better apartment and a fancier automobile, but he can postpone having them until he gets the education he needs to get the job he wants. He no longer is willing to steal the material things of others and to thereby take the short cut to the things he wants.

As with the two men, the deliverance of the women testifying in the book does not result in their rejection of the material or physical. Wendy indicates that following the lead of her spiritual self she has treated herself to a diamond ring and looks forward to owning a new car. Flora describes how when her old automobile "died," she anointed her shoes and put her faith in motion to get exactly the car she saw herself having in the spirit. And Delia's testimony reveals her active use of her faith to first locate a house for sale in the neighborhood she thought desirable and then engage the real estate agent, and to finally work out the financing. In the case of each of these women, we see the integration of the spiritual into the process of realizing this-worldly goals. And under these conditions of integration, it is noteworthy that in no case are the material goals pursued excessive.

The attainment of physical goals following deliverance is as well represented in the testimonies of the women as the achievement of material objectives. Loretta and Flora both indicate that their deliverance resulted in cures for their long histories of severe asthma. Flora also reports that her long term, recurrent tonsillitis disappeared. Wendy testifies that her inexplicable choking and itching ceased with her commitment to deliverance. Following Delia's deliverance and growth in the faith, she indicates that she discovered that her spiritual abilities included the gift of healing. Delia testifies to healings for others as a result of her praying with them, and she describes her own dramatic recovery from a severely sprained ankle following most of a night spent in insistent prayer in her own behalf.

Health is an important area of deliverance for the women, but it is not the only physical goal to which the women report applying their spirituality. All of the women indicate they are desirous of physical satisfaction in their relations with men. Rather than their religion excluding this concern from their lives, the deliverance faith encourages these women to employ their spirituality to reach for improvement in their heterosexual relations. Loretta indicates that by invoking her faith she has been able to reach agreement with her teenage boyfriend to restrict the extent of their sexual involvement. Wendy and Delia are in the difficult situation of being single women with families that depend upon them. Both women indicate that they desire male companionship, but neither is willing to accommodate the street viewpoint to get it. What they want is physical satisfaction within a commitment to love and respect. And both Wendy and Delia believe that their faith will eventually lead them to the men they seek. Until these men appear, the spirituality of the two women restrains them from resorting to physical gratification alone, though as a younger woman, Delia admits to the temptation of the street in her loneliness. Flora, the only married woman among the testifiers, alludes to some sexual dissatisfaction in her relationship with Jim since they were both delivered. Jim's zeal for the spiritual seems to have left him with less interest in the physical. Rev. Greer has told Flora that Jim's condition is temporary, and interestingly, in the epilogue to her testimony two years later, Flora reports the physical situation with Jim to be much improved. She says she and Jim are communicating well at all levels. Rather than constituting an impediment to the physical, the maturing of Jim and Flora's spirituality under deliverance has led to an increase in their physical interest in one another and the quality of this level of interaction.

In the testimonies of the men and the women, we see that physical and material pursuits are encouraged by their deliverance faith, so long as these pursuits are confirmed at the spiritual level. Besides confirmation, the testimonies indicate that for delivered people spirituality is both an asset in identifying what material and physical things are truly wanted, and a guide to appropriate action to attain them. From the deliverance perspective, the material and physical focus of the street and the spirituality of the church need not be antagonists. Through its concept of an attainable and usable universal principle in self and all reality, the deliverance faith draws the spiritual and material-physical into a unified view of the world. This greater unity appears in all the testimonies but is especially apparent in the testimonies of the men, Mark and Keith.

In testimonies for a faith that circumscribes the material as well as the spiritual, the failings of the Black church receive as much comment as the weaknesses of the street. All of those testifying except Flora, who was raised in a type of holiness-deliverance, indicate how the beliefs of the churches they experienced were vague, and remote, and failed to apply to their lives outside of church. [12] Nearly all speak about feeling and recognizing a spiritual essence in reality, but the only use for this spiritual awareness outside of church was to escape into the spirit as reprieve from the problems of the world. Mark says he found this escape in singing church songs. Flora indicates that she discovered it in a kind of spiritual stargazing reverie. Keith seems to have touched on it in his extensive mythology reading. Delia says she saw it in her mother, and felt it as she related to animals. Wendy reveals that she felt it most in prayers, both her own and those with her family. Loretta at fourteen is the only one to say that she never felt much of anything spiritual, in or out of church, prior to Faith Deliverance.

The major criticism that all of those testifying express about their Black churches was the failure of these churches to relate the spiritual to issues other than their salvation. All relate being taught the content of the Bible as history in Sunday school. All speak about the sermons exhorting them to be good and relating bad behavior to evil, sin and damnation. Literal belief, acceptance of Biblical "facts" on faith, and a moral imperative based on fear of damnation were the norm. [13] Mostly in song and music in church and at special, isolated times of escape outside of church, they sensed something spiritual, but they were not encouraged to develop this spiritual "something" as a useful faculty of self, until they came to Faith Deliverance.

As those testifying tell it, the Black church is overburdened with literal dogma and belief and is unable to address the secular, urban world other than to deny it wholesale, or accommodate it with some embarrassment through the back door. Social protest, racial equality, civil rights and Black liberation have emerged as direct concerns for some Black churches, but most of these churches ground their positions in specific Biblical texts and Christian philosophy, not in the universality of human spirituality. [14] In deliverance, brotherhood is the social imperative of experiencing the connectedness of reality at the universal or spiritual level. It is a requirement of reality (when understood from this perspective), not some "good" idea espoused by a religious messiah, reported in a sacred text, and related ultimately to consequences in a life after death.

At a universal level of experiencing reality, race, like all other criteria of differentiation, disappears and is irrelevant. Race simply vanishes as a defining aspect of self and

others. In deliverance, the breakthrough to spiritual awareness is one with freeing the self from the limitations of racial identity. Delivered individuals do not escape from racial stigma because they believe in a savior who can liberate him or her. Rather they experience themselves at a level of reality where race has absolutely no significance. Whatever others may say or do in the world of the everyday, they have confirmation that in reality race is a non-issue in their self-identity.

Because the deliverance of Rev. Greer focuses on the individual Black person's pursuit of his or her own spiritual growth as the means to transform him or herself out of a limited view of self - of which racial stigma is a significant part, it may appear that Rev. Greer locates the problem of race and its solution in the Black person rather than in the surrounding white society. In seeking to assist Black individuals to overcome their limited sense of self, Rev. Greer is not unaware of either the role a prejudiced, discriminatory surrounding culture plays in generating the racially stigmatized individual to begin with or the need for that surrounding society to change. As he says in the previous chapter, Rev. Greer feels that greater opportunity has arisen for Black people in recent years than they have been prepared to take advantage of, and he is committed to the idea that the current situation is open enough that a determined person can succeed in spite of the discrimination that continues to exist. Rev. Greer attacks the racial problem where he finds it - as it manifests itself in Black individuals, and he tries to help these persons to discover a more comprehensive, positive and secure sense of self so they can engage life more actively and successfully. From this perspective, the more Blacks who succeed, the more the inferiority stereotype of Blacks by white society is undercut.

Rev. Greer's avenue to change is the transformation of the Black individual, not social protest to force change in the surrounding culture. If white society is viewed as the sole locus of the racial problem, then that society is responsible and no change can occur until it changes. If the sense of self of the Black individual is seen as the locus of the problem, then that individual is responsible for himself and no meaningful change can occur until he or she changes. In practice, Rev. Greer is closer to the latter position, but conceptually he is fully aware of the part white society plays in the situation.

The reality is that the racial problem is expressed in the dynamic relationship between white society and Black culture, between white individuals and Black individuals. The problem is not located one place or the other; it is in both places simultaneously. In the ideal sense, the solution requires eliminating both the prejudice and the stigma at the same time. In the practical sense, concerned people start at the point in the dynamic where they have vision and access, and work from there. Rev. Greer's vision is one of self-realization and his access is to Black individuals who come to attend services at Faith Deliverance church. So, it is Black individuals like those testifying in this book that Rev. Greer attempts to reach and affect. Others may see the arena of social reform as their essential domain within which to carry on the struggle against racism. In the broadest sense, comprehensive efforts at both levels are necessary, neither being sufficient alone. Akin to the PUSH movement of Rev. Jessie Jackson in its focus on individual achievement, Rev. Greer's approach can be seen as playing a legitimate part in countering the dynamic that is racism in America.

Those testifying in this book do report changes in their racial attitudes and behavior following their growth in deliverance. Except for Keith, race is not a subject that any of those testifying indicates or regards on the surface as being problematic or as being touched by their faith. It is probably more accurate to say that before deliverance, each has developed a stable set of protective devices to keep the stigma of racial inferiority distant from them. Once the topic of race is broached and pursued, however, it becomes apparent that underlying racial issues are involved in the deliverance transformation. In fact, this change may be so fundamental that all other changes depend upon it. Certainly in the previous chapter Rev. Greer focuses on the transformation of the person's Black identity as essential in his deliverance.

Mark's testimony reveals the storm beneath the calm surface. He refuses to assume that problematic situations involving whites and Blacks are racially motivated, but when he is confronted directly with racial prejudice, he instantly bristles and explodes into physical confrontation. The women, like Flora, report having the same negative feelings but tend to adopt avoidance strategies for dealing with the situation. Delia and Wendy overcome by manipulating their prejudiced opponents into positions where they must at least admit that their opinions do not apply to either of them.

After deliverance, the men's positions show the greatest change. Mark is less immediately reactive and more inclined to focus on the ignorance of the prejudiced person. Following deliverance, Keith seeks out social contact with his white coworkers - where he previously tended to avoid them. Mark and Keith's less combative and more exploratory orientation across racial lines correlates with their more stable, solid perception of themselves, as well as their greater sense of control over their own destinies in life. Where the men report being in better command of themselves, particularly on their jobs, the women indicate they are in better control of themselves in their homes as they deal more assuredly and creatively with their children and grandchildren's confrontations with racial prejudice.

The effects show up in different places, but the testimonies strongly suggest that as deliverance penetrates to the center of the individual's self concept, it attacks the core as well as the symptoms of racial inferiority. I think the contention can be made, as indeed it has been by interpreters of the Black church, that most Black churches provide their believers with ways to reject assertions of racial inferiority and to release frustrations that arise due to racial confrontations, but that they do not dispel the issue itself. [15] They do not emphasize the experience of self in the universal as the reality of self. Nor do they assert the utility of this spiritual self to guide and sustain actual achievement and so to overcome the social and economic position associated with inferior status. Brotherhood, equality and liberation are inherent in the more comprehensive reality and sense of self that the delivered person comes to know. Most Black churches are obscured from this more comprehensive reality and the active spiritual principle within it by the their literal beliefs and/or the restraint of their ritual. [16]

Were the urban Black church to listen to the deliverance voice, it might deal more effectively with the forces of secularism and materialism and with the problems of racial prejudice. It might also be able to assist its followers in penetrating the spiritual

metaphors of religion, rather than perpetuating the limiting condition of literal belief and a religion remote from or only vaguely related to self and reality.

Instead of rejecting or being embarrassed by the physical and material dimensions of reality, the deliverance perspective regards the objective world as being infused with spirituality. The spirit or universal is in all "things," and all physical and material entities participate in the universal, spiritual principle. Through this principle all things are interconnected and in the ultimate sense share in one common identity. From this perspective, the violence and exploitation of the street [17], which seems to result in benefit to the "winners," are in the broader spiritual sense self-destructive. Only a limited, materialistic view of reality creates the illusion of separateness and of personal gain at the expense of others. When a spiritual perspective emerges to balance the materialistic view, the relatedness of "things" restrains the exploitative impulse.

The universal perspective requires responsibility in all relations, in the social as well as the natural world. Excessive egotistical pursuits of all kinds lie outside this requirement of responsibility. For the delivered person, responsible social relations are necessitated by the broadening of his view of reality to include the spiritual point of view.

The testimonies of Mark and Keith reveal most clearly the withdrawal from the abusive social relations of the street following their deliverance. Both men move away from reliance on drugs, alcohol for Mark, and marijuana and various "uppers" for Keith. This move is made not in order to comply with some religious dictate, but because they report no longer feeling the need to escape into the artificial high of drugs, having experienced the "high" of spiritual self-awareness. Diminished self-control, with its concomitant increase in impulsive behavior, is no longer desirable. This move away from drug dependence is itself a decision that favors greater social sensitivity. Mark, whose life before deliverance revolved around the material show of the street, identified himself with material "things" which he felt made him somebody. If something he owned was damaged by someone, he was likely to respond abruptly and even violently. With deliverance Mark is somebody independent of the things he owns. More relaxed in his relations with the material world, Mark can laugh at, rather than storm over the little threats to his possessions. "That's life," "Accidents will happen," "Kids will be kids," are positions Mark now finds himself assuming, positions that restrain problems in the material sphere from spilling over into anti-social behavior. Mark's movement to a less aggressively reactive posture is only part of his increased social sensitivity since deliverance. Mark is still a hustler, but with deliverance he is more selective about what he will engage in. Now, he will not participate in deals where he will profit at a loss to someone else. More concerned for the welfare of others, Mark will stop to help a drunk passed out in the cold on the street, or he will offer a prostitute an opportunity to get off the street for a cup of coffee.

As Mark withdraws, among other things, from the unethical in hustling, Keith removes himself entirely from criminal behavior where he has preyed upon others through robbery and theft. Keith has stolen from others and sometimes hurt them physically in the process. His behavior has gone against the moral teachings of his parents, but neither their "country" viewpoint nor the holiness religion of his mother was enough to keep him straight and committed to their morality. The best Keith could do was to refrain from the con-game whose consequences he saw as worse than an economic loss or a

physical beating, because the successful con-man could beat you down and keep you down. With deliverance, Keith's behavior aligns with his parents' morality, and he becomes an advocate of this socially responsible perspective as a Sunday school teacher working with teenagers.

The requirement of responsibility in social relations that emanates from the deliverance conception of reality impacts not just on the individual's behavior in the larger social sphere. By encompassing all natural and social relationships, this perspective applies with significance to the urban Black home, and the relations of marriage and the family. All of the testimonies in the book describe the tension that exists in male-female relations in urban Black culture. [18] These testimonies also reveal that this tension is ubiquitous and that it is typically a reflection of the surrounding street-church opposition. The street is the world of men to which women are often attracted and serve as ornaments and prizes. [19] The church is the world of women to which men may be attracted, serving as both leaders and prizes. [20] The physical and material focus and economic power of the street are that to which men orient most strongly, while the religious and social focus and moral authority of the church are that to which women orient most decidedly. As I have said previously, between these two extremes, the home is often caught in the middle of the conflict. [21]

Delia's conflict with David is a good example of this tense home and marriage situation. Each of the two is drawn to the world of the other, Delia to the glitter and the fast life of the street and David to the security of the home. But David sacrifices home, family and marriage for the stronger pull of the street, while Delia withdraws from the street to her primary home responsibilities and then to the church. Mark's testimony reveals the same polarity of orientation as he describes the disintegration of his relationship with Eddie. Mark's account also displays the pattern of oscillation across and within relationships between a periodic but secondary desire for home and family, offset by his primary orientation to the street world. In Wendy's testimony, she describes the negative effects to her childhood family of a father with a good job and a long grocery list, but with a stronger need to play the big shot in the local bars. Flora reports the "drop down" fear that she and her sisters had of their drunken father and that pervaded her childhood. Flora's testimony also reveals the effect to marriage and family of a husband whose potential for violence arises out of his excessive suspicion that his wife is behaving in a manipulative, dishonest, street-oriented manner. Loretta's testimony parallels Flora's, describing the effects to the family of the abusive behavior of her mother's street oriented boyfriend, and of her own street involved older brother.

The testimonies in this book report the difference deliverance makes in male-female and familial relationships. For Wendy who has been bound by her sense of obligation to her family, deliverance brings a new sense of independence, the ability to step back from total immersion in these relationships and to demand reasonable respect from her mother, sister, brother, daughter and grandchildren. By so doing, Wendy creates a responsible balance in her relations and establishes the limits of her good will. With deliverance, both Flora and Delia report being able to be more stable, creative and consistent in their relations with their children. Once delivered, Mark is able to approach the loss of his children more philosophically and with the inner assurance that if he pursues contact with them in an even mannered, positive way and without unreasonable expectations, what he desires will eventually come to pass. Even the



teenager, Loretta, reports a change since deliverance in her ability to operate within her crowded and often tense family situation. Rather than reacting to and so encouraging the provocations of her older brother and the lethargy of her married sister, Loretta indicates she can manipulate the situation more creatively and so minimize conflict and confrontations.

Changes in the quality of marital relationships are the direct test of deliverance in male-female relationships. Among those testifying, Flora's relationship with Jim demonstrates the most dramatic change. With both husband and wife delivered, as is the case for Flora and Jim, the optimum condition exists for transformation. When Jim, in the course of one weekend, gives up both smoking and drinking and becomes consistently even-tempered, the alteration so shocks Flora that she first taunts him, then stops her baiting, then comes to respect Jim, and finally to follow him into commitment to deliverance. In a few months time, Flora and Jim's home changes from being unpredictable, tense, and sometimes violent, to being calm, respectful and caring. The transformation of the home is so great and so abrupt that Flora and Jim confront the secondary problem of having to help their befuddled children to adjust to the new conditions.

None of the other testimonies report the deliverance of both spouses. As a result their marital relations do not display the same degree of change following deliverance. In Mark's testimony, we observe the change in how he approaches his problematic relationship with Caroline. Mark wants to extricate himself from this relationship because he feels he has tried everything he can think of to help Caroline overcome her alcoholism without success. But, whereas he says before deliverance he would have probably taken precipitous action by now and physically thrown her out of the house, his approach after deliverance is more tolerant and respectful. He is acting more responsibly toward a woman he recognizes as having problems. Mark is perhaps shortsighted about the role he has played in the development of these problems, but at least in the present he is not thinking only about himself. Moreover in Mark's general remarks about women since he has been delivered, a radical change appears. In the past he oriented to women primarily in physical terms and viewed them as ornaments to show off in the social arena. But since deliverance he has come to regard the inner being of the woman to be most important. As if speaking to his own past, he warns young men against exclusive "behind checking" and selecting a woman primarily for her ability to make the man look good.

Similar to Mark's report of his experience, the testimonies of Keith and Delia both reveal the socially restraining influence of emerging spiritual sensitivity in highly stressful marital situations. After only the first few months of being delivered, Keith confronts his wife's adultery in his own home. All he can see is the "guy's head rolling." But having collected his daughter to him, Keith seeks the alternative his church can offer and is able to distance himself from the event and avoid the ultimate expression of human irresponsibility - murder. Delia, as a newly delivered person, harbors tremendous resentment against her negligent husband, David. Caught between love and hate, Delia sets out on several occasions to find David at his tavern and "rip him from limb to limb." But once she arrives outside in her car, she is overcome by the "warm glow" of the Spirit and cannot follow through with her violent intentions. On one occasion, however, the night of her birthday, she does make it to the actual confrontation, but even in the heat of the encounter when she wants to be violent, she finds herself mostly speaking

and doing the opposite. In the end, her intentions to murder David are expressed in the ramming and destruction of his new Cadillac. At every point, Delia testifies to the restraining influence of her new-found spirituality.

If a more secure sense of self and the ability to better balance the opposed material-spiritual perspectives and the associated male-female points of view are desirable in urban Black culture, then the testimonies in this book suggest that the deliverance faith of Faith Deliverance may have something valuable to contribute. The fact that this faith proposes these conditions of better balance without denying the importance of life or self at either pole, and that it does this, not by appealing to religious dogma or social philosophy, but by recognizing a broadened concept of reality and an active spiritual principle within it, sets the deliverance voice apart from the voice of most Black churches. It is this message that Faith Deliverance is trying to promulgate, however awkward the efforts of this young church may be.

Although Rev. Greer's own ministry is oriented primarily to the urban Black communities in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and by radio broadcasts to the Black constituencies in several other cities from Fort Worth to Boston, he proposes universal significance for his spiritual message. Is the Faith Deliverance message meaningful in the larger American cultural context, as Rev. Greer suggests in his "Foreword"? Recognizing the fact that no one culture or subculture resolves the full array of human problems with anything even approaching complete adequacy, I think, nevertheless, that mainstream American culture could benefit by listening to the small deliverance voice "within." At least in some major respects the strengths of the Faith Deliverance community are the weaknesses of mainstream American culture, and vice-versa. Perhaps each can identify for the other some avenues to better balance.

What do I mean by mainstream American culture? I refer to the array of dominant values, themes, principles or tendencies in American culture. American culture includes this mainstream or main channel at the same time it encompasses diverse sub-cultural alternatives that are in a dynamic relationship with the mainstream. In American culture these alternatives are many and collectively they represent a powerful force, often countering the influence of mainstream culture. However, because these alternative groups are fragmented, they lack the pervasive power of the mainstream and so remain secondary. Faith Deliverance is one community speaking to mainstream culture through the Black American sub-cultural alternative.

Mainstream American culture is the sphere where most Americans are encouraged to take themselves most seriously. It is the domain of work, job, occupation, or profession. Since personal economy depends on occupational involvement, the mainstream is the domain of serious business, the domain upon which the rest of life is understood as "depending." Particularly in the idealized upper middle class, success in life is often equated with occupational achievement, with its incremental monetary rewards and its corresponding levels of material well-being. Time spent away from the job is "time off," time during which behavior is somehow less serious, less productive, less important. "Break" time punctuates "time on" the job. Even the essential biological functions of eating, sleeping, and reproducing are assigned to the time-off frame. Most social events, including family functions, occur in this "after" or "before" work or school frame. What time remains after biological and familial functions have been attended to

becomes "leisure" time. The events of leisure, the events of recreation and entertainment, are regarded as least serious. Sacred or religious time occupies a special place. It is serious time, but it is isolated from ordinary time. Following from the foundation principle of the separation of church and state in American culture, sacred time and religious events are set apart from the rest of life and rendered less significant because of this exclusion.

Mainstream American culture is the culture of serious time, the culture of economic involvement, the culture of industry, finance, commerce, labor, government, education, technical information, and scientific pursuit. It is the culture of product, money and service, and the preparation for it, and the analysis, planning and communication of it and for it. Centered in the material product and the services and controls that surround it, it is the culture that focuses on the relationship between intellect and material and physical consequences. It is the culture of rational, logical, analytical process and the technologically achieved products thereof. It is the culture of reason linked to manual or mechanical manipulation. It is the culture of doing, competing, and achieving.

The lives of nearly all Americans oscillate between mainstream culture and one or more of the many alternative cultural frames that define "time off." Whether further specified by ethnicity, race or class, these "time-off" alternative cultural settings emphasize the social, natural, artistic or religious values to degrees or in ways very different from mainstream culture. In family, friendship, club and community events, the social values are ascendant, often expressed through the sharing of resources which fulfill biological needs (food, shelter, rest, etc.). In recreation, the physical self or the physical world becomes the center through which social, natural or spiritual values are explored. The arts and entertainments selectively recreate the world and, through focal aesthetic values, promote sensitivity to social, natural and spiritual relations. Grounded in the transcendent perspective, religion should infuse natural and social relations with sensitivity to holistic interrelationships. Short of accomplishing this, religious institutions at least support social values by appealing to religious dogma. While the material, intellectual and individual values of mainstream culture may, and often do, enter into these "time off" cultural frames, their role is usually secondary. Only in extreme cases are these material and individual values so strong that they predominate in these alternative cultural settings.

Most Americans accommodate to the social, natural, aesthetic and religious values and perspectives in their time-off, in their less "serious" time. Within this domain of less-serious-time culture, the association of artistic values with leisure time and of spiritual values with isolated sacred time further removes artistic and religious activities from serious or "meaningful" time. From the perspective of dominant mainstream culture, these events are mostly superfluous and unproductive. Thus, the bias of mainstream American culture is two fold. First it separates the individual and material world from the social and spiritual world, and then within the lesser domain of the social and spiritual, it isolates entertainment (art) and religion as being the least important.

As should be expected of an alternative cultural perspective centered in the spiritual, the deliverance faith speaks against this double bias of the mainstream viewpoint. In the secularization of American life - led by mainstream cultural influence, many Americans, and especially those better-educated ones in positions to lead and influence others,

have lost acquaintance with and experience in the universal or transcendent perspective that supports spiritual values. Having lost or explained away (rationalized) the universal perspective, they have either abandoned religion or transformed their religions into Sunday morning institutions of social philosophy and religious [mostly Christian] ethics. Notwithstanding the rise of the drug, charismatic and eastern religious movements in recent years, I think it is fair to say that the normative position of the major dominations remains literal belief in Christian doctrine and commitment to Christian ethics. Without the religious experience of transcendence at their center, these religions have become more social than truly spiritual or universal. Unfortunately, the rise of fundamentalist Christianity to prominence with the emergent conservative movement serves to bind to, rather than free the understanding of the religious experience from literal Christian belief.

Considering all of those who have no religious orientation at all, the absence of spiritual experience and values among most of those who subscribe to the major religions, the failure of those who have broken through to the spiritual self to extricate themselves from the literalism of their fundamentalist dogmas, and the bias of non-seriousness that accrues to those who concern themselves with the sacred world view to begin with, the weakness of the universal perspective in the life of most Americans is understandable. From the viewpoint of the deliverance faith this situation leaves many of the most important individuals, who are in the vanguard of the culture, out of touch with the fullness of self and reality and unaware of the basis in reality for social and aesthetic values. Such a situation places the entire alternative cultural fabric in a position to be further minimized.

Until the universal or spiritual perspective is strengthened within the American alternative cultural setting, the deliverance viewpoint suggests there can be no meaningful challenge to the larger division between mainstream and alternative culture itself. Only when the strong material-individual-intellectual pole of mainstream culture is countered by an equally strong spiritual-social-intuitive pole can the foundation be laid for stopping the major-minor, mainstream-alternative cultural oscillation that characterizes the current oppositional state of the culture. Only with a strong universal or transcendent perspective can the conditions arise for better balance. When these conditions are met, each pole will permeate the other. The material, rationocentric world will also be viewable from a universal perspective with the result that restraint will emerge for the excesses of the individualistic, intellectual, materialist viewpoint. Likewise, the spiritual, intuitive world will permit the use of intellectual, analytic tools in probing for understanding and conceptualization, with the result that restraint will emerge for the excesses of the universal viewpoint: fatalism, asceticism and passivism. Dual awareness, both the intellectual and intuitive, the objective and the subjective, the material and the spiritual, in all facets of life is the ideal. For deliverance, true human sophistication resides in ready access to developed mental faculties at both poles of the complement.

Without a strong intellectual-individualistic-empirical-material perspective in operation, both culture and the individual lack the necessary tools for self-reflection and objective evaluation. Such reflection and evaluation is in turn essential before the external state of affairs can be debated, the opportunities for change assessed, and plans for the future developed. The rational pole, which encourages constant reassessment, promotes

flexibility in cultural conceptualization at the same time it insists on the distinction between verifiable fact and impressionistic opinion. Logic in argument is mirrored as order and hierarchy in social organization. Unrestrained by such an active rational pole, culture runs the risk of a dominating universalism devolving unchecked, through literalization of belief and politicization of access to ritual and spiritual power, into dogmatism, spiritism and theocracy.

On the other hand, without a strong intuitive-social-universal-spiritual perspective in operation, both culture and the individual lack the awareness of the fullness of reality and self. Without this awareness of the underlying connectedness of all things, the basis for recognizing the limits of ego aggrandizement is obscured. Responsibility in natural and social relations becomes a matter of philosophy and conscience rather than an obligation of reality. The spiritual pole stresses the synthetic mode of knowing and appeals to the internal, subjective and emotive faculties as sources of both information and insight. Without this active intuitive pole, culture runs the risk of a dominating materialism, individualism, and empiricism devolving, through secularization and technocracy, into social, economic and natural exploitation, political authoritarianism, and international contest and conflict.

The excesses of each pole are addressed and restrained by the strengths of the other. Put simply, Deliverance speaks to the need for a stronger spiritual or universal pole in American culture so a better balance can be achieved between the material and spiritual perspectives in American life. In this recommendation, the voice of Faith Deliverance is, in my estimation, a valuable one worthy of serious consideration.

But recommendations flow in both directions, and Faith Deliverance could gain by attending more carefully to the voice of the rational pole in mainstream culture. The organizational weaknesses of Faith Deliverance, and many religious and artistic groups, are symptomatic of a lack of adequate self-reflection, objective evaluation and systematic planning. The ordering of priorities, the building of developmental and support programs, the instituting of effective fiscal procedures, and the establishing of an adequate social organization to carry out the goals of the community all require appealing to the rational, intellectual perspective. Until Faith Deliverance recognizes its own need to rely more substantially on the rational and logical viewpoint, it will probably continue to be stymied in its efforts to promote its spiritual goals on a larger community-wide scale.

Beyond the issues of effective programs and organizations, the deliverance perspective of Rev. Greer would do well to give a more substantial place to reason and intellect in reaching for answers in life. While Rev. Greer is certainly not anti-intellectual, he does stress to his congregation the almost exclusive use of spiritual or universal sources for guidance in decisions and for achieving power to pursue one's goals. While the breakthrough to the spiritual source may be essential, its exclusive exploration and use is likely to be as lopsided in its results as the exclusive use of the intellect. Rev. Greer indicates that appeal to the spiritual is his only resort given the lack of intellectual development of his congregation and the relatively desperate state of most individuals when they first come to him for help. While this contention may substantiate an initial focus on the spiritual, it does not justify the continued exclusive appeal to the spiritual after the individual has made his or her breakthrough and achieved stability. Certainly,

the testimonies in this book, from people in all but one case past the initial stages of deliverance, reveal individuals with moderate to strong intellectual abilities. There is no reason these people can not be encouraged to use their intellect and analytical abilities as well as their intuitive and synthetic talents in learning to handle the challenges of life more adequately. Different questions may be better addressed with one mode rather than the other, but nearly all queries should benefit from the input of both.

As the Faith Deliverance organization would benefit from greater resort to the intellectual perspective, so the deliverance viewpoint itself would achieve greater balance if it more consistently recognized and encouraged the positive use of reason and analytical assessment.

In final fairness, what mainstream American culture has in overabundance, Faith Deliverance could use to advantage, and what Faith Deliverance as an American alternative culture, has in abundance, other alternative cultures and mainstream American culture could use to considerable advantage. Each needs what the other has. The difference is that Faith Deliverance cannot miss the loud, strident voice of mainstream culture, while mainstream culture does not know and probably does not care that Faith Deliverance has a voice at all.

This book is an effort to call attention to this voice, to understand its message as expressed in the testimonies of the community's members, and to suggest the relevance of this message both within and outside of urban Black culture.

## Notes

1. One of the major criticisms of the Black church has been its organizational weaknesses at all levels. See: DuBois, 1903; Mays and Nicholson, 1933; Myrdal, 1944 a and b; Richardson, 1947; Felton, 1950; Frazier, 1964; Hamilton, 1972.
2. Secondary benefit to the children of Black church goers is discussed in: Bartlett, 1970; B. Johnson, 1961; Neibuhr, 1954; Clark, 1949; Drake and Cayton, 1962.
3. Withdrawal from the material world as a position taken by Black churches is considered in: Mays and Nicholson, 1933; Clark, 1949; Frazier, 1964; Glenn, 1964; Muelder, 1964; Washington, 1964; Cone, 1969; Johnstone, 1969; Marx, 1969; Mays, 1969; Wilmore, 1969; Grier and Cobbs, 1971; Cleage, 1972; Hamilton, 1972; Lincoln, 1974 b; M. Williams, 1974; Nelson and Nelson, 1975.
4. The withdrawal of many Black churches from the emotional expression of the spirit in ecstatic born again experience is considered in: Odum, 1910; Parker, 1937; Frazier, 1940; Richardson, 1947; Johnston, 1954; Washington, 1964.
5. The "rear door" materialism of many Black churches is recognized in: Watson, 1912; Frazier, 1964; Kunkle and Kennard, 1971; Hamilton, 1972.
6. The other worldly focus of many Black churches is recognized in: Woodson, 1921; Myrdal, 1944 a and b; Dollard, 1949; Baldwin, 1953; Ashanin, 1959; Clark, 1959; Frazier, 1964; Glenn, 1964; Hargraves, 1964; Washington, 1964; Fichter, 1966; Cone, 1969; Johnstone, 1969; Marx, 1969; Thomas, 1970; Grier and Cobbs, 1971; Hamilton, 1972; Lincoln, 1974 a; Paris, 1982; Mukenge, 1983.
7. The Black church as accommodating inferior status is suggested by: Myrdal, 1944; Muelder, 1964; Washington, 1964; Cone, 1969; Cleage, 1972; Lincoln, 1974 b.

8. The relationship between the Black church and middle class values and aspirations is discussed in: Drake and Cayton, 1962; Kleiner and Parker, 1962; Jeffers, 1967; Hannerz, 1969; Valentine and Valentine, 1970; Nelson, Yokley, and Nelson, 1971; Valentine, 1978.
9. Black churches with views related to those of Faith Deliverance are described in: Howell, 1936; Cantril and Sherif, 1933; Faucet, 1944; Harris, 1954; Johnston, 1954; M. Jones, 1971; Hamilton, 1972; Morris, 1973; Washington, 1973; Campbell, 1974; Martin, 1974; Riley, 1975; Quebedeaux, 1976; Forbes, 1977; Turner and Edgley, 1977; Burnham, 1979; Baer, 1984.
10. Discussion of the street-church opposition in Black culture can be found in: DuBois, 1899; Schermerhorn, 1949; Williams, 1952; Drake and Cayton, 1962; Hannerz, 1969; McCord et.al., 1969; Rainwater, 1970; Williams, 1974.
11. The materialistic focus of the street scene is considered in: Keil, 1966; Bernard, 1966; Liebow, 1967; Horton, 1967; McCord, et.al., 1969; Rainwater, 1970; Kunkle and Kennard, 1971; King, 1972; Milner and Milner, 1972; Sutter, 1972; Ley, 1974; Martin and Martin, 1978.
12. A number of assessments of the Black church have held it to relate poorly to the problems of modern life, especially urban life. These include: Washington, 1905; C. Johnson, 1941; Ackiss, 1944; McKinney, 1945; Richardson, 1947; Williams, 1952; Mitchell, 1960; Hargraves, 1964; Muelder, 1964; Labrie, 1968; Wilmore, 1969; Jones, 1971; Mukenge, 1983.
13. See note # 6.
14. The debate over the role of the Black church in social advancement includes:  
 Those who see the church taking an active role: Fisher, 1937; Johnson, 1961; Green, 1962; Fichter, 1966; L. Jones, 1971; Owens, 1971; Davis, 1972; Genovese, 1972; Washington, 1973; Lincoln, 1974a; Daughy, 1979; Moyd, 1979; Tinney, 1979.  
 Those who see the church as too conservative and needing to take a more active role: Richardson, 1947; Licorish, 1956; Weatherford, 1957; Ashanin, 1963; Hargraves, 1964; Washington, 1967; Cone, 1969; Marshall, 1970; Drake, 1970; M. Jones, 1971; Nelsen et.al., 1971; Nelsen and Nelsen, 1975; Young, 1979.  
 Those who recommend a Christian revolutionary stance for the Black church: Coleman, 1969; Cone, 1970; Gardiner and Roberts, 1971; Roberts, 1971; Cleage, 1972; Wilmore, 1972; Goodwin, 1977.
15. The relationship of the Black church and religious belief to the problem of race is discussed in: the Christian revolutionary proposals cited in note # 14, and in: Kovarsky and Albrecht, 1970; Rainwater, 1970; Grier and Cobbs, 1971; Lincoln, 1974.
16. Major criticism of the conservatism of the Black church are cited in notes # 6, 12, 14.
17. The violence and exploitation of the street scene are considered in: Cooper, 1963; Malcolm X, 1964; Williamson, 1965; Brown, 1965; Beck, 1967 and 1969; Keiser, 1969; Hannerz, 1969; Watkins and David, 1970; Milner and Milner, 1972; Hudson, 1972; Anderson, 1978.
18. The tension between men and women in urban Black culture is revealed in: Hurston, 1942; Clark, 1965; Keil, 1966; Liebow, 1967; Hannerz, 1969; Schulz, 1969; Watkins and David, 1970; Kunkle and Kennard, 1971; Milner and Milner, 1972; Wellman, 1973; Hippler, 1974; Wallace, 1979.

The ethnic model for looking at male-female relationships as a positive alternative to the mainstream model is the position taken in: Valentine, 1968; Baratz, 1970; Baratz and Baratz, 1972.

Male-female relations as different from but related to mainstream culture is the view of: Rainwater, 1970; Franklin and Resnik, 1973; Ley, 1974; Stack, 1974.

19. The street as the domain of the Black male is considered in: see notes # 10, 11, and 17.

The relationship between men in the street and their economic position is described in: Drake and Cayton, 1962; Bernard, 1966; Osofsky, 1966; Liebow, 1967; Hannerz, 1969; Stack, 1974; Wallace, 1979.

20. The association of the street with men and the church with women is described in: Brown, 1965; Hannerz, 1969.

Women orienting to the church in midlife is described in: Brown, 1965; Rainwater, 1970; Valentine, 1978.

Several commentators see the female-spiritual pole as waning in Black culture: Johnson, 1941; Ackiss, 1944; McKinney, 1945; Lee and Roy, 1957; Frazier, 1964; Muelder, 1964; Labrie, 1968.

Others stress the spiritual side of the individual in Black culture as a general feature: Bennett, 1964; Jones, 1966; Keil, 1966; Levine, 1977.

Within the male-street culture, the appearance of the spiritual orientation has been most often considered under the rubric of "soul." Major commentators include: Bennett, 1964; Keil, 1966; Hannerz, 1969; Szwed, 1970; Haralambos, 1970; Cole, 1970; Hannerz, 1973; Rainwater, 1973.

In line with this point of view, a spiritual consequence within secular art forms has been suggested by: Szwed, 1970; Mitchell, 1975.

21. Children caught between opposed male-street and female-church perspectives is recognized in: Drake and Cayton, 1945; Schermerhorn, 1949; Bernard, 1966, Rainwater, 1970.



# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### The Field Experience

#### **Comments on the Testimonies and the Researcher by Rev. Greer**

For the benefit of the readers, Dr. Burns has asked me to comment on the authenticity of the book's testimonies and on the experience of having him with us at Faith Deliverance. As to the validity of the testimonies, I can say without reservation that knowing my people and knowing extensively the persons who have consented to give their testimonies, knowing where they come from and where they are now, I know that the testimonies as collected by Dr. Burns and as given in this book are accurate to the lives of these persons. In fact, and this has been a surprise to me, I believe Dr. Burns as a white researcher has gotten more of the truth out of the people than I have as their Black minister. In reading the testimonies I can see where these people have told everything, things that are very personal, very intimate things which reveal their weaknesses, their frustrations, even their embarrassments. And whereas they express little reservation in revealing the total scope of their past experiences to Dr. Burns, when they come to me they are inclined to express the good and to minimize the bad. Once people reach a certain level of self-realization, it seems that there is a tendency in their relationship with me to try to forget the past. But with Dr. Burns, that has not been the case, and I think this difference is itself a witness to the truth of the testimonies.

Apart from Dr. Burns' different position with the people, I think there are other important reasons for the depth of the personal information in the people's accounts. Not the least of these is that Dr. Burns has what I call a true "gift of listening." When people find someone who will really listen, it is a therapy. It's a way of unwinding and of restarting. Without this gift of listening, the testimonies would be very different and not nearly so close to the truth. Another reason the people were able to go into such personal depths with their past lives is because these people appreciate the position they have now, the awareness they have of themselves. The testimonies reveal that there is something of a pride these people have in the accomplishment of having overcome the past, a pride in having come from a lower position to a higher position. They have taken on a new sense of identity, a new sense of self-importance which makes them a part of God's universe, a part of his people, and they want to indicate that to others by highlighting how different their present is from their past.

When Dr. Burns first came to Faith Deliverance there was apprehension among the people. "Who is this white man in our church?" "He's from the FBI." "He is from the Internal Revenue Service." "He wants to get into your business because you are driving a Rolls Royce." So, I had to personally assure them that this was not the case. That was an initial misconception, and I had to take care of that. Other difficulties Dr. Burns had to overcome himself. When he first came to us there was a stiffness; there was an intellectual superiority that was there. Being a doctor of philosophy, being an educated man from the university, my expectations were that many of the people would avoid Dr. Burns, that they would be afraid to talk to a man with so much formal education. Yet, as it turned out, it was that same education, that intelligence, that professionalism, that genuine desire to learn that made Dr. Burns appear not TOO obnoxious.

And then, I think Dr. Burns knew that in order to get what he wanted, he had to get in tune with us. So, as Dr. Burns adjusted and as people began to come to know him, certain ones could see that there was a quality of spirit that Dr. Burns possesses, a light there which generates energy and moves those around him into a higher life. And that quality, that light was enhanced by his being in the environment of Faith Deliverance. Because this quality was real and by the people seeing it in Dr. Burns and seeing it grow in him, it touched people to a degree and extent that they were able to look beyond who he is and what he is when he lives his life apart from the church.

In time the people came to look beyond color, to look beyond Dr. Burns' successful appearance as a white man. They even, surprisingly, looked beyond his professionalism, and these people, like myself, came to recognize Dr. Burns as part of the struggle. They came to identify with him as a brother, in some instances as a big brother, all in the family of God, and as children in search of the abundant life as promised by the Father. It came to the point where, when Dr. Burns was in the service or in the interview sessions, it was Brother Burns, not Dr. Burns. It was a brother who, though he did not come from the same background, and though he did not experience the same pain, yet a brother who was in search for the same horizons of truth, a brother who had a glimpse of divine reality. That was the common factor that we all shared with this man, until even in his absence he was and he remains a part of us, because this was a living experience, not just an academic or intellectual exercise.

So, Dr. Burns grew WITH us. The reality of the experience made him part of us, and that will never change. No one could ever convince me that this was not the case, and I'm looking at it spiritually as well as intellectually. Moreover, I know that if I know it to be the truth, our people feel the same way, and will always feel that way about him. Light shines upon this man's intellect, and I feel that he will ever be influenced by divine knowledge. There will never be a time that he will be apart from it, for it has made him a broader person.

Dr. Burns' being with us at Faith Deliverance has been a challenge not only for him, but also for me, I knew that to deal with the reality of his person I had to deal with the intellectual aspects of his being here. I had to reach out into divine mind to reach him intellectually. Over the years Dr. Burns has been with us, I think the results have been beneficial for everyone. Certainly at this point Dr. Burns, in what he says and what he has written, clearly understands intellectually what Faith Deliverance stands for and what we are trying to accomplish. If I have any reservation, it is that I have not had the time to intellectually explain to Dr. Burns how the way we are proceeding will lead to our goals; that is to explain why we must proceed the way we are. Because of his strongly developed intellect, the best way to approach Dr. Burns is intellectually. This is where he is coming from. But the people I must deal with I must approach in terms of where they come from: intellectually, socially, economically, emotionally and physically. Very often I must deal with a person who has come from a corner of life that Dr. Burns has never really experienced. This person is frequently desperate. He is under stress and he is not concerned about the science or rationale of any answer presented to him. He is only concerned about the relief or the promise of relief that is being offered.

This person I cannot approach intellectually. To get him out of that bound-in corner of life into the center of reality, the center of activity, the center of change, many times I must deal with the illusions that he has dealt with: the illusions of religion, the illusions of reality. Much of the time I must deal with a person who has been strongly influenced by tradition. In some cases he has been so influenced by illusions that such have become the sum total of his life. To bring people like this out of an illusion, I must present an illusion. To bring them to a point of transition or transformation, I have to dangle in their eyes tradition and illusion, so I can bring them to a place where they can see reality and escape illusion. This is a part of the problem of spiritual education, and as the instructor I must know how to work with it.

It is not easy to design and carry out a program to accomplish the consequences we desire, especially with different people at different levels of awareness. It is part of my frustration that it is so difficult to get my people to give up the illusions of their traditions, even those people who have broken through to their divine self and have begun the journey of self-realization. I know I share this frustration with Dr. Burns who would also like to see the people in Faith Deliverance make more rapid development. But ultimately I have confidence in the law of Spirit, in the universal mind to guide the true seeker in his development and toward his own personal goals in life. Because of this confidence, I try to avoid taking the place of the universal teacher and director. It is my conviction that if a person remains steadfast in his quest for truth, then by the power of the law of mind, the Spirit of truth will lead and guide him into all knowledge. He has only to relax and to trust in the teacher within, the God within, for deeper awakening of his soul. I can help people to discover the door to their spiritual self, and I can encourage people to go through that door and to use what they find there to know themselves better and to make a better life for themselves. But I cannot tell them how to proceed or where they should go, or how far they should go. That is up to them. That is between themselves and the divine intelligence, the source, as they come to know it. Like the choice for divine intelligence itself, the choice for developing with it is open to each person.

It is my hope that the readers of this book of testimonies not only will come to know a particular group of people better, but also will find cause to first seek and then develop the universal intelligence within themselves

## The Researcher's Personal Journey into Understanding: The Challenge of the Religious Phenomenon and the Field Experience Close to Home

In seeking to understand the deliverance faith and the Faith Deliverance community, my view is that I have been forced to comprehend more generally the underlying human motivation for both religion and art. At both the personal and professional levels I am grateful to Rev. Greer, Rev. Stokes, and the Faith Deliverance community for the gift of religious understanding that they have helped to nurture in me.

When I first came to Faith Deliverance I was certainly a long way from this understanding. In fact, I was mired in misconception to the point where initially I thought I might be doing a short study and an essay on the artistry of the rip-off preacher. My misunderstanding began with the graduate student in Communications who aroused my interest in the phenomenon of Deliverance and Faith Deliverance in particular. In behalf

of her dissertation, this student had worked for a year on the pattern of local religious broadcasts in the Baltimore area, and she clearly conveyed to me her impression that many of the Deliverance organizations involved were not legitimate. In retrospect I should have been much more cautious in assessing this student's impressions since her opinions were based almost entirely on her broadcast data, not on fieldwork with the groups or ministers producing these radio programs. But this student was otherwise a very fine scholar, and her impressions did have an impact on my initial expectations.

It might be thought that my previous research with a Black Holiness church community in north Baltimore would have made me reluctant to prejudge another Black religious group. But the fact is that in the beginning I did not think I would be dealing with a Black church community because most of the Deliverance ministers, who produced the radio programs I was listening to in the beginning, were white. As I began my research, I was not aware of the number of Black Deliverance churches in Baltimore, and it was almost too easy to regard white Deliverance ministers, mostly with southern backgrounds and mostly with Black audiences, as being engaged in a rip-off of the urban Black ghetto. But even when I came to think of the Deliverance research in terms of a Black church group, my previous research with a Black Holiness church did not work against my misconceptions.

Instead, it served as one of the cornerstones of my preconceptions, because the view of Deliverance as fraudulent is prevalent and public among Holiness communities like the one I had studied. Though I probably should have suspected it, I was not aware as I began my work of the misunderstandings, rivalries, and antagonisms that exist among the independent churches, and between these churches and the churches belonging to holiness and Pentecostal sects, and among all of these churches and the standard denomination churches in the Black community.

Rather than shattering my misconceptions, several aspects of my initial period of fieldwork among Baltimore Deliverance churches seemed to support my preconceptions. In many cases I discovered ministers whose temporary locations in either public rental halls or evangelical centers emphasized to me their transient position in the community and made me suspect that they had good reason not to remain too long in town. The use of radio to attract an audience suggested to me rapid turnover in the population of the "congregation" as people were used and discarded. The emphasis in the radio broadcasts on dramatic claims of success for people who came under the preacher's ministry appeared to be an obvious form of advertisement in line with a commercial enterprise. In following up, first on those ministers whose radio programs emphasized prosperity, I did indeed encounter some ministers whose blatant materialism and hit-and-run tactics certainly seemed to border on being a scam. And in the beginning it was difficult to separate these questionable ministers and their organizations from the others, and I was tempted to suspect that those that were less obvious were not more legitimate, but simply more skilled in hiding their duplicity. Deliverance ministers who drew very selectively on the Bible to preach prosperity and who made a show of their material claims in terms of their own fancy clothes and fine automobiles seemed to be in conflict with what I thought to be the spiritual basis of the Christian religion. Likewise, the emphasis in the services of these ministers on the individual and personal benefit and material and physical gain in the name of Christianity seemed to be in conflict with what I understood to be the Christian social

ethic of charity and brotherhood. It was very easy to think that the selective use of the Bible and the personal and material focus of the meaning of faith was a cover for a false minister's own pursuit of wealth.

Also contributing to my suspicions was the emphasis put on money, as well as the amount of money asked for in Deliverance services. I had experienced the frank discussion of money and the adequacy or inadequacy of offerings in Black Holiness services, but I was not prepared for explicit requests for "sacrifices" of a hundred or fifty or twenty dollars from people who seemed at best able to afford a dollar or two. More startling yet was the ordering of the prayer line in terms of the amount of money a person was giving. This situation suggested to me that prayer and the benefit of prayer was something that could be bought, with the most attention by the minister and the best consequences going to the persons giving the most money. It was again very simple to tie the explicit concern with money in the service to a mercenary goal for the minister, who was often transient. Already suspicious of the minister's motives, and lacking any background for understanding the spiritual gifts of discernment and prophecy, it was also easy to regard the minister's use of these "gifts" as tricks to convince the gullible that he really could do something for them and that what he could do was worth a high price.

In my initial exposure to Deliverance, the several issues mentioned above were outstanding in my mind and seemed to lend support to my preconception of deliverance ministers being con artists. After a month and a half of attending Deliverance services at some of Baltimore's more prominent Deliverance churches, I shudder to think what kind of essay I might have written had I been a journalist operating within a time frame that made this period of time the extent of my exposure.

Understanding is something that must be negotiated, and these negotiations take time, even for the trained field researcher. Perhaps the greatest challenge to the fieldworker is not a situation in a culture so remote geographically or so different culturally that open-mindedness is his only reasonable stance. Perhaps the greatest challenge is a situation in a subculture of the fieldworker's own culture where a conglomeration of partial exposure, superficial experience, and acceptance of the unrecognized prejudices against a group conspire to lead the researcher to think he has some knowledge and a point of view from the outset. Under these circumstances, the fieldworker needs considerable time before he can break through the conspiracy of his prior experience and achieve a truly unbiased perspective. Fortunately good fieldwork takes a great deal of time, and in the face of continued exposure to the real behaviors and actual statements of real people in a real community, it is difficult to sustain basic misconceptions. What is surprising is how much time the process does take. Moreover, once the misconceptions are discarded, true understanding can be very slow in coming, especially when this understanding can only be reached after the researcher has resolved challenges by his data to his own basic cultural assumptions. I think the investigation of most religious phenomena represent this kind of challenge to most academic social scientists.

More time in the Deliverance world resulted in many events, people, and experiences affecting my thinking. Collectively these influences forced me to abandon my initial suspicions of fraud, at least for the great majority of the churches and their ministers.

Once my survey of Deliverance churches in Baltimore reached out beyond the larger establishments to the smaller churches and storefronts, I discovered the substantial breadth of the deliverance church phenomenon. In most of these churches I found stable religious groups without a public orientation, groups that were led by ministers who were respected and admired by their congregations of many years' standing. I also discovered that the Deliverance faith expressed in these churches was basically the same as that proclaimed in the larger churches. Facing these facts, it was no longer possible to see the Deliverance faith as necessarily associated with exploitation, whether by whites of Blacks or by Blacks of Blacks. Because the smaller churches tend to be more personal environments, I also had many chances to meet and talk with a number of ministers, evangelists, and church members. The belief of the members and the commitment of the ministers were unavoidable and impressive. It was clear that there was no sham in these churches, no minister on the run, no possibility of people being paid off for their testimonies or even being paid adequately for their services.

As I reached out to the full range of Deliverance churches in Baltimore, I attended a great many services and listened to an equal number of sermons. When I stopped selecting services to attend by my preconceived notion of a religion of prosperity, I became aware that material and financial concerns were two among many issues that the Deliverance faith addressed, including health, peace of mind, family and marital problems, witchcraft, and educational and occupational success. The material aspect of the faith became less central and overwhelming as I became aware that Deliverance was a faith that applied to the full range of problems men and women face in living their lives.

At the end of three full time months, I had concluded my survey of Baltimore's Deliverance churches, and it was time to look for one church to work with in depth. It was clear to me at this point that Deliverance was a legitimate religious faith with real church communities, and that the larger, more publicly oriented churches were no less legitimate than the smaller ones. I talked with three pastors about the possibility of doing research within their church communities. All were receptive, but I decided on Faith Deliverance because Rev. Greer was an especially dynamic preacher, and at that time it was the service that was to be the focus of my work. I also chose Faith Deliverance because it presented me with the greatest challenges for understanding since it displayed most of the features that initially seemed to justify my preconceptions. It was publicly oriented, it had a flamboyant prophet in Rev. Greer as its pastor, it had in Rev. Greer a minister who was not at all bashful about addressing the subject of prosperity, it had a daily radio broadcast that focused on people's testimonies of how they had been blessed under Rev. Greer's ministry, and its prayer line was structured in terms of the amount of money the people intended to give as an offering. I knew that if I could understand Faith Deliverance, I could understand any other Deliverance church.

I had attended several services at Faith Deliverance and talked after services with a few people, but I still felt quite uncertain about the community when I first entered it to begin my case study work. Rev. Greer introduced me in service and encouraged the membership to talk with me. From that first introduction I was graciously welcomed by the membership. Some were skeptical and more reserved toward me, but all were intrigued by my presence. After three months of fieldwork within the Faith Deliverance community, I was convinced of the integrity of the church itself. I could talk to anyone,

and anyone could talk to me. Our discussions did not exclude any topic, and I could go to any and all church functions including all special group meetings. Everywhere I went I found people only concerned with promoting the Deliverance faith and Faith Deliverance Church. Among the leadership and members of the various organizations where I thought I might find people being paid, I found virtually all volunteers. No one was being paid to hoodwink. I found only people who believed in their pastor and their church because of their own personal transformations under Rev. Greer's ministry. Mostly I found people who, over time, became eager to share their testimonies and talk to me about their faith.

Since the church was interested in a book of testimonies, since testimony was the form the membership used to make personal statements of faith to the public, and since life history data clearly was valuable ethnographically, I began collecting life testimonies. Interestingly, one of my first discoveries in this testimony data was that many members of Faith Deliverance had traveled the same road in confronting their church and the Deliverance faith that I had, going from caution and suspicion to being finally satisfied with the legitimacy of the faith, the church and its pastor. As it turned out it was not only researchers who had to discard their misconceptions as they approached Deliverance. I was not alone.

At the end of my first six months in Faith Deliverance, I could clearly relate what was happening in the services to sociological concepts of upward mobility, anthropological notions of social symbolism, and psychological theories of release and positive thinking. But while this range of ideas was important, there remained many significant features of the testimonies and the services that were unexplained. Spiritual experiences that members reported in their testimonies, the relationship of prayer to blessings in the Deliverance faith, the centrality of the born again experience, the expressions of spiritual ecstasy in the service, the discernment and prophetic capabilities of Rev. Greer, and the reported and observed consequences to people of their being blessed in the prayer line were phenomena that lay outside my understanding. They were phenomena that the standard range of theory I was acquainted with in the social sciences would be pressed to the point of absurdity to explain. I could make use of these theories productively with the Deliverance data, but it was clear that even collectively they were not able to explain the core of what was happening.

I remained in this frustrating state of being aware of the partial nature of my understanding for some time. As might be expected, the concept I was missing was extremely simple. The difficulty lay not in the concept but in breaking through my own assumptions about the nature of reality and the capacities of man so I could recognize it. For me, the key was eventually supplied by the affirmations which are said early in every service and whose central thought is reiterated in one form or another throughout the service. The central idea expressed in these affirmations is that God resides in the individual, referred to in statements such as: "The Presence of God in ME is perfect health, ... is love, ... is happiness," etc., or "I am a child of God," or "The Christ that dwells in me keeps me, guides me, teaches me." Once I accepted the overall idea expressed in these statements literally rather than metaphorically and once I understood God and Christ as ways to specify the Divine Spirit rather than literally as personality or man, the door to understanding was opened and slowly all of the former anomalies settled into a pattern of supporting evidence.

The Deliverance faith begins with the basic notion that every person has a divine aspect, a Divine Self. The rest of the belief system depends on this core concept and is a ramification of it. Most people do not realize that they have a divine or spiritual dimension of self and have only superficially contacted it, used it, or developed themselves in terms of it. In Deliverance, this contact is made in the Born Again Experience. To be born again in the Spirit is to discover the Divine Self. Through fasting and prayer (meditation), the individual develops his spiritual side and learns to use it effectively. As the rational mind is a guide when developed, so the spiritual mind is a guide when the individual trains him or herself in its use. The Divine Self is also the Divine Guide, the Source of all Good, and it can lead the individual to what is good for him or her. It is the individual's contact with the universal level of experience, and the channel through which what are called the gifts of the Spirit (discernment, prophecy, etc.) are manifested.

To be born again in the Spirit is the prerequisite for spiritual growth. It is the breakthrough experience for the individual. Ecstatic behavior in its many forms is the expression of release and renewal by the person that occurs when the person contacts his spiritual side and experiences existence at the universal level. Miracles occur when, in the context of focused belief, the individual contacts his Spiritual Self and resolves his needs at the universal level of existence with dramatic results. Blessings result when, in the context of focused belief, the individual makes use of his Spiritual Self to guide him in a direction that satisfies his needs. Because God is the universal or sacred principle that pervades all things, recognition of the unity of all things in the principle they share is a necessary result of the realization of the spiritual or transcendent in man. In turn brotherhood is the necessary expression of God in human relations. It is in this way that self-realization in the Deliverance faith leads to the individual's commitment to the Christian social ethic of peace and brotherhood. The expression of love among men is the expression of God, or the universal principle at work in all humankind.

It took a full year of work in Faith Deliverance before the central idea of the faith with its ramifications emerged for me as I have outlined above. Why had it been so difficult? Because I had to recognize that the Deliverance faith is founded on the assumption of a transcendent or a spiritual dimension of reality in which humankind participates. In Deliverance this spiritual dimension of reality is as constant and as real as the physical reality that most of us associate with everyday life. Yet this spiritual reality is not separate from the reality of everyday life, not a reality achieved only after death, as is suggested in the Heaven and Earth dichotomy in most religions. Rather the spiritual reality is a dimension of the everyday reality, which man commonly recognizes. But before the individual can perceive this spiritual dimension of reality, he must access an alternative perspective. This alternative perspective is the spiritual channel by means of which man can know and participate in life on the universal level. As an academic trained to "believe" that man's rational faculty is the exclusive means to know and understand reality, it was not easy for me to penetrate the literal surface of the Christian Deliverance faith to recognize its underlying cornerstones, a universal perspective, an intuitive or spiritual faculty in humankind, and use of this faculty to practical effect in everyday life.



Two other factors, apart from my research with Faith Deliverance, contributed substantially to my breakthrough in understanding the Deliverance faith. During the first year of my work, I had the opportunity twice to teach a university level course which explored the implications of modern research in parapsychology for the study of religion. The teaching of this course forced me first to consider an expanded view of human mental capability and second to examine more carefully the natural-supernatural dichotomy, which is so fundamental in western man's conception of reality. Influential as well was my participation, toward the end of my first year in Faith Deliverance, in a two week convention of a Tibetan oriented Christian mystical group. I was particularly interested in this group since it was the one in which the assistant Pastor of Faith Deliverance had received his training. While with this group I had a chance to think more deeply about a possible mystical foundation for the Deliverance faith, a point of view which turned out to be very productive. I also experienced alternative states of consciousness while participating in the group's training sessions. I think such an experience is valuable for anyone studying religion. Experiencing these mental states independent of drugs suggested that the perspectives on reality that emerge in these states are natural and must be included in any comprehensive understanding of man and his culture.

After a year and a half of researching Deliverance and over a year spent in Faith Deliverance I had pieced together in my mind what I thought were the underlying principles of the Faith Deliverance faith, principles that are only indirectly expressed through the standard rhetoric of Christian Pentecostal beliefs. At this point Rev. Greer and I met for our long formal interview. In this session Rev. Greer outlined the faith as he is trying to present it, and his description confirmed in nearly every detail what had taken me a year and a half to decipher. Christian, yes, Mystical, yes, Pentecostal, yes. The Deliverance of Faith Deliverance is a fusion of all of these viewpoints. Up to the time of our formal interview, I had not been certain of the extent of the mystical element in Rev. Greer's own thinking. And the message presented in the services suggested a potential mystical basis but it nevertheless seemed to remain explicitly committed to literal Christianity. For my understanding to be correct, this mystical element had to be strongly represented, and our discussions revealed that it was.

From the time of this interview, my progress involved refining my understanding of specific points of the deliverance belief system. I was no longer perplexed by the literal Christian beliefs in which the services and the testimonies were couched. Rev. Greer had affirmed that it was the underlying intuitive and spiritual principles that he was attempting to activate and inculcate in his congregation – using the Christian Pentecostal faith as the means. Following this interview, I no longer felt like an outsider at the intellectual level. I could now anticipate and participate in explanations of events in the church in terms of the underlying principles of the faith, freed from any need to credit the vehicle of expression – literal Christian belief.

In order to understand the faith of Faith Deliverance I had to confront the much larger issues of the nature of reality, the capacity of the human mind, and the ability of man to participate in reality in ways that lie outside the purview of western man's exclusive intellectual focus. Resolving these larger issues and recognizing how the new perspective that emerged could illuminate the specific religious faith of Deliverance took

time. Now, I am aware that the importance of this new perspective to me both professionally and personally extends far beyond the specific goal that fostered it - understanding Faith Deliverance. It is for this new perspective on reality, man, religion and art that I feel a personal debt of gratitude to Faith Deliverance.

My personal debt and new perspective do not mean that I have become a convert to a particular religious group. I am an honorary member of the Faith Deliverance community, not an official member. I am neither a convert to the Faith Deliverance faith nor a born again Christian. I have not been through any type of emotional or ecstatic religious experience. Neither have I had any dramatic personal miracle of healing or any other blessing. When I say I have been changed personally I mean only that I have had my intellectual understanding of the foundation of religion and of the religious experience dramatically altered during my research with Faith Deliverance.

The emergence of a new perspective on religion and art has not meant the discarding of any previous view or approach to the study of religion. I simply now see these previous approaches as incomplete. Religion is a psychological phenomenon, and it is a social phenomenon, and it is a cultural phenomenon, and I am committed to the fact that it must be understood in these terms. But religion is also a numinous or spiritual phenomenon, and I now understand that the references in religion to this numinous realm cannot be explained away in terms of psychological, social and cultural variables. As I now see the situation, the personality and state of mind of the individual motivates and predisposes him or her towards or away from the religious experience. Society structures religious events and shapes religious doctrine in its own image. Culture supplies the expressive forms and symbolism for discussing and seeking the spiritual. But neither personality, nor mind, nor society, nor culture is the source of the religious experience itself. However much psyche, society and culture frame and embellish it, the religious experience is the experience of a numinous or spiritual perspective on reality which is only realized when man permits himself to engage alternative states of consciousness. Using verbal, visual, and kinetic metaphors in myth and ritual, social man struggles to refer to this spiritual dimension of reality and to encourage individuals to achieve the states of mind where they can experience it.

Most religious metaphorical reference systems have been carefully encased in social frames such that each society can claim that the spiritual reality justifies its social framework. By providing the individual a set of socially and culturally derived doctrinal concepts for approaching, engaging, and interpreting his experience with the numinous, society tries to corral and reduce the meaning of that experience so that it conforms to and supports a particular social order. But the religious experience that is at the center of this reference and ritual system refers to a numinous view of reality that by its nature transcends the peculiarities of particular societies, personalities, or cultural systems of symbols. It is exactly this transcendental quality of the spiritual perspective on reality that makes the religious experience so potentially dangerous to society. So elaborate are most societies' efforts to contain the numinous in their behalf that many scholars have been led to mistake the container for what it contains. But the spiritual reality or the divine is no more society than salt is the salt shaker. The appropriate statement is not that God is society, but that religious doctrine and ritual are the salt shaker through which, hopefully, man experiences the salt, or the numinous. In this respect some salt shakers are better than others. Some are so complex and encumbered by society that

the salt is rarely tasted, and then only by a select few. Others lead directly to the salt but encourage unproductive social uses of it. One of the reasons I am impressed with the Deliverance faith is that it is a simple, direct, and productive salt shaker, at least as it is pursued in Faith Deliverance.

After five years with Faith Deliverance, it is now my view that in the study of religion, phenomenology is not enough. It is merely the last ditch effort by social scientists, in the face of their hypothetical commitment to relativism, to salvage their reification of man's rational faculty and their commitment to an exclusively empirical approach to knowing. To penetrate to the core of religion and art is to recognize the subjective dimension of man where the distinction between "as if" and "is" is pure folly. Subjective, universal, transcendent, divine, spiritual, numinous - these all refer to the same thing. They are the flip side of the coin - the complement to the objective, particular, physical, material, analytical, and empirical.

Complementarity is the key to understanding man, culture, and reality. The theoretical sciences have been forced to accept this position with respect to the physical realm in recent years as they have confronted the principles that underlie the micro and macro worlds. The social sciences linger, as usual, committed to trying to understand the religious and artistic experiences in terms of one side of the complement - that part revealed by pursuing the approach of the positivist. But, to confuse the legitimate discoveries that have resulted from studying religious and artistic phenomena from this one side with complete understanding is to say a soufflé is understood after it is photographed, weighed, and chemically and structurally analyzed. It is painfully obvious that until the subjective point of view of the human being reveling in the sensual experience of eating that soufflé is respected and included as part of the reality of that phenomenon, the soufflé can never be fully understood.

As I now view the situation, religion and art are the cultural reservoirs of the subjective in man. They are the cultural phenomena among all phenomena that have their essence least well understood from the objective perspective of the outside observer. Weighed, measured, and structurally analyzed, religion and art are dealt with as if they were machines fulfilling a positivist's dream. But if a view from the inside is essential for "knowing" a soufflé, the same is true for religion and art. The humanities have always felt this to be the case, though they seem never to have really been able to justify their feeling. It is not that the researcher must experience the inside himself. It is only that he must include the view from the inside as part of the reality of the religious and artistic phenomena he attempts to comprehend.

But religion and art are more challenging to the positivist than the soufflé because accepting the inside, subjective perspective of these phenomena as real requires the researcher to allow that reality is not the exclusive property of the rational, conscious state of mind. In fact, the religious and artistic experiences result only when this rational state is suspended or at least relaxed. Rather than accept the perceptions of the world under these altered circumstances as real, if complementary to the perceptions in the rational state, most researchers have chosen to deny reality to these experiences and explain them away as either tricks of the mind or reflections of social categories. The alternative is to accept the complementary nature of reality for man and his culture as well as for the world of micro particles and the macro cosmos. From this view, man's

alternative states of consciousness are different windows on reality. Reality itself is larger than any one view from any one window can reveal. Also, according to this perspective the seemingly contradictory nature of what is discovered from these different windows should not be disconcerting, but expected as a feature of complementaries. In this framework, religion and art are man's cultural institutions, often fused, through which man experiences the spiritual or the numinous perspective on reality, which is one among the complement of perspectives, that together reveal the fullness of reality. In the religious and artistic experiences, which the institutions of religion and art surround, man has an opportunity to become more aware of his place in a scheme of reality larger than that which he comprehends from his everyday rational state.

It is the legitimacy of this latter view of religion and art that has emerged during my five years with Faith Deliverance. Having said this, the reader should now be aware that my professional decision to present the Deliverance faith and interpret the testimonies of Faith Deliverance members from a perspective within this faith is in harmony with my intellectual commitment to respect the spiritual or universal or transcendent view of reality as part of the complement of being and knowing.

## Appendix B

### Formal and Editorial Aspects of the Testimonies

#### **Life Testimony as a Narrative Form**

A traditional narrative is a description of events located with respect to one another in time, with a consistent focus on the characters, and with a constant narrator perspective. A life history narrative is a particular type of narrative; and "life" testimony is a particular type of testimony. The term "life testimony" is my own which I use in the title of this book to refer to the kind of life history accounts that make up the central chapters of this book. Faith Deliverance members distinguish between four different types of testimonies, including what I call the life testimony, but they use the term testimony to refer to all four.

Three of these testimony accounts are oral, and one is written. The first type of oral account occurs within the first part of some religious services and refers to the most specific and recent events in the person's life. This form of testimony is delivered in a personal but short and highly stylized fashion. In his account the individual describes to his own community the success or failure of his faith in overcoming difficulties and challenges in his life. At the conclusion the testifier solicits the help of the community to encourage his further progress. A second type of oral testimony also occurs in some services, but toward the service's conclusion. This form of testimony is solicited by the pastor and delivered to him before the congregation. In these accounts individuals relate the outstanding recent events (miracles) that have occurred in their lives, events which they attribute to God through their joining in prayer with the pastor. The proselytizing context is the third occasion for oral testimony. In this situation, the testifier relates what is usually a longer, more personal, and less formal account that draws selectively upon the historical experience of the believer to demonstrate to a potential

convert that problems similar to the convert's have been overcome by the believer as a result of following the faith. 'Witnessing is a term applied to this form of testimony when proselytizing is the central reason for the interaction and the potential convert is not previously known to the testifier.

The testimonies in this book are closest to the fourth type. These testimonies are longer, they span the life of the individual, they focus on the growth of faith in the person's life to the present, and they are written. Besides their greater length and scope and their written form, this fourth type of testimony, which I call "life" testimony, is distinguished by the perspective of the narrator. In the life testimony the narrator's position is a rhetorical one from within his commitment to his present religious faith. From this perspective the narrator attempts to justify his commitment, prove the solidarity of that commitment, and argue that persons like himself should make and would benefit from a commitment similar to his. The longer, written form of the life testimony is motivated by the person's feeling that a written description of his life as a whole can reach and affect many more people than is possible for his or her shorter, oral testimony. With justification and recommendation of the faith as central to the narrator's perspective, the dramatic climax of the life testimony is the description of the experiences from the time of the person's discovery of the faith through the period of dramatic personal change which follows commitment to that faith. The person's life prior to this discovery is regarded as "before," or "the way I was," and all that comes after the point of commitment is seen as "the way I am now." Because of the rhetorical bias of the life testimony, the evaluative stance of the narrator tends to be emphatic, placing many events in the "before" period in a negative light, while most events in the "after" period are judged positively. It is within this particular rhetorical and evaluative perspective of the narrator that events are selected, related with emphasis, and judged for their value in the life testimony.

It is essential to recognize that the participants in this book are capable of different narrative perspectives, appropriate to other types of life history statements. From these other perspectives different events may be chosen, or the same events may be given different emphasis or evaluation. From these other perspectives, events of the past that are devalued in the accounts in this book may be more positively evaluated. Likewise the very positive picture of the present that emerges in the life testimony accounts in this book may be more clouded or doubtful. I personally know this to be the case because I have talked with the people whose testimonies appear in this book on many occasions apart from the interviews, and on some of these occasions other perspectives toward the events in their lives prevailed. Following from these alternative perspectives, very different pictures developed, sometimes indicating the person's frustration with his or her present religious course in life, and sometimes even revealing a longing for the past life style with its rewards.

Alternative narrator perspectives even emerge occasionally within the life testimonies in this book. Under the influence of these perspectives, the partying life of the past, for example, may be rendered with great enthusiasm and be given positive initial evaluation. Almost always when this occurs, final evaluation withdraws from the initial assessment as the dominant life testimony perspective asserts itself. Less demonstrative fluctuations of perspective within the life testimony form are typical, especially when earlier events that were regarded very positively in their time become

the focus of considerable description. If the testifier is at all ambivalent about his present religious commitment, it is very often at these points that he or she will briefly abandon the life testimony perspective and assume a point of view from within commitment to these earlier events.

In a sense, the autobiographical "truth" as it is revealed in narrative, lies in the balance among all the life history accounts that an individual produces on different occasions and from different perspectives. The life testimonies in this book have a single dominant narrative perspective appropriate to their form, and these accounts must be understood as such.

My work in the Faith Deliverance community uncovered many intentions to write a life testimony, but I encountered only three outlines or partial drafts. While the life testimony is clearly a well-recognized form in the community, it is rarely produced. Those that are started are not finished because the individuals are discouraged either by their inability to express in writing what they want to say, or by their discovery that they do not have the time to produce the statement they mean to make.

With no finished life testimonies available in the Faith Deliverance community and with no realistic possibility of soliciting these accounts from what would adequately represent the membership of the church, my only choice was to produce a written account myself in behalf of selected members of the community. While the situation required my role as a collaborator, I was torn between necessity on the one hand and the dictates of my discipline on the other. As a folklorist, I am allied with a discipline that measures its progress largely in terms of the researcher's increasing sensitivity to the quest for authentic oral texts of narrative performance and their accurate presentation in published form. From within this approach, the alteration of the oral text in any way by the researcher is tantamount to a heretical act. The folklorist is to report, not create. In the framework of such restrictions, the notion of collaboration is extremely suspect, offering too great a license to the folklorist to "interfere." But without collaboration there would be no life testimonies, and the church itself wanted these testimonies. Impasse! In the end, necessity overcame disciplinary fiat.

In light of my dilemma, I think an observation by Henry Glassie is valuable. Glassie suggests that forms like the life testimony have their source in the written works of the larger surrounding culture. Members of this larger culture are paid to produce such forms or are in some way subsidized so that they can afford the time production takes. Members of literate subcultures read these works and conceptually incorporate the forms, including sometimes the desire to produce them. But rarely are members of these subcultures actually in a position to create works of these types. Glassie suggests that while the forms are thus native, collaboration in their realization is nearly always a necessity. One of the functions the folklorist can perform in this context, Glassie suggests, is to assist in bringing these forms into being. In this respect it is noteworthy that the collaboration of individuals with authors has well recognized precedence in the testimony works that Faith Deliverance members have read. From this perspective, the creative role of the writer in this situation is an inherent part of the native form itself, or at least a feature of a natively recognized subset of the form.

I think the above way of looking at my collaboration dilemma is both accurate and productive. But even with a justification for my role as a facilitator in the creative process, there remained secondary perplexities, again reflecting the creed of my discipline. To produce a collaborative written account of the life testimony type, I had two choices on how to proceed. I could produce a set of testimonies in my own written style, based on life history interviews with Faith Deliverance members, or I could draw upon the transcriptions of the tapes of my interviews and edit into being a written version of their oral accounts. My decision was in favor of my role as editor, thereby trying to preserve each person's account in his own words. As a folklorist, my discipline encouraged me to render the interview transcriptions accurate to the oral style of those testifying. If I had to collaborate, at least I should keep my intrusion to a minimum and render the accounts in the exact words of the persons giving their life testimonies.

But, among the testifiers, the life testimony is conceived as a written form in written style with the polish of written prose. Again I had to adjust away from the dictates of my profession and in the direction that the testifiers indicated to be appropriate form. My initial drafts of the testimonies reflected the dictates of my discipline and were too "oral." The testifiers felt the picture projected through this style on the written page was too unsophisticated. In two further drafts, I eliminated false starts, incompletions, most repetitions, and most ungrammaticality in the narrator's descriptive and quoted statements. I also added linking phrases in the style exhibited by the person elsewhere when these were necessary to maintain a sense of narrative flow, and I rearranged, combined and condensed some of the narrative statements to provide both detailing and narrative unity. Having made these accommodations, I reached a compromise with the testifiers that satisfied their desire for a more polished, formal statement, while it retained a sense of oral phraseology, rhythm, lexicon, conjunction and individual narrative style.

As a collaborator I am well aware that as an interviewer and an editor I have had a very large part in creating the testimonies that appear in this book. I have included the assessment of each participant on the result of our collaboration at the conclusion of each testimony. Certainly if collaboration is to be permitted within certain forms, such remarks are particularly useful, even essential. Clearly great restraint must be exercised to insure that such a "creative" role for the folklorist is limited to forms for which there is native precedence and no other more desirable option.

Whatever the status may be of the life testimonies in this book as texts, it must be recognized that the purpose of this work is not to study the life testimony form but rather to present the Faith Deliverance community and the Deliverance faith through the accounts of selected church members' experiences. Collaboration in behalf of producing life testimonies to fulfill this primary purpose was how the people I worked with and I understood what we were doing from the outset.

### **Testimony Selection and Editorial Decisions**

As editor, my first task was to select the six testimonies for the book from among the thirty-one I had recorded on tape. This selection took into consideration several factors. General ability to communicate verbally was one of them. The testimonies chosen are from people who are regarded as at least moderately good talkers since only their

accounts reduce well to the written page. Behind the testimonies of the six verbalizers chosen for this book are many in Faith Deliverance who are equally perceptive and intelligent, but who are given more to acute observation or action than to excellence in conversation. Apart from verbal ability, there were no other significant differences in the testimonies of the verbalizers, the visualizers, and the kinetically oriented. Another criteria that influenced selection was recognized narrative ability. Generally the talkers were known also as good narrators who had a feel for overall structure, detail, and dialogue. But some good talkers lost themselves in detail while others were known for telling "scattered" stories, that is, stories whose structure tended to be convoluted, difficult, and often incomplete. As editor, I did not want to engage in large-scale narrative reconstruction. In this work there is little narrative restructuring except for the testimony of Delia Adams, which was moderately scattered but important enough, I felt, to warrant more editing on my part so it could be included.

Besides verbal and narrative ability, social criteria were essential considerations in the selection of testimonies. Age and sex had to be considered since they are significant aspects of the population of the Faith Deliverance community. Close to ninety percent of the church membership is women, thirty years of age or older. As an evangelistic church, the appeal of Faith Deliverance is primarily to adults. While some children of adults attend services, and while the organization in theory recognizes the need to reach children, the children's programs in the church - including Sunday school - are neither focal nor well attended considering the size of the congregation. If the testimonies chosen for the book were to accurately represent the community, they might all be the testimonies of women over thirty. In fact I have included the testimonies of one young teenage woman and two men, one of these men in his late forties and one in his mid-twenties - a very rare age to find committed males in the church. I decided to include the testimonies of these two men because they serve as a counterpoint to the testimonies of the women, particularly with respect to the street life, and because these two testimonies indicate the potential of Deliverance to apply to men. The two men actually selected represent not just the young and middle-aged categories, but also the backgrounds of the street criminal and the hustler. The ages of the three women, besides the teenager, whose testimonies are included, range from early thirties to later fifties. There is little distinction between the lives of women members in their fifties and seventies, except that physical problems are more likely to be a factor for the older women. Among the four women chosen there are in fact several examples of how Deliverance applies to health difficulties.

There is quite a diversity of background experiences represented among the four women's testimonies. One was born and raised in the rural south, one was born in the rural south and raised in the suburban north, and two were born and raised in the urban north. With respect to marital and family status, one woman is a single teenager with no children, one is a divorced woman with a young family, one is an unmarried woman with a grown child and grandchildren, and one is a married woman with older and younger children. Besides the varied marital and family problems which these women bring to the Deliverance situation, there are also among these four, those who have been delivered from witchcraft, from various material needs, from drugs, from marital problems, and, as indicated, from several different health challenges.



The testimonies of the two men are important beyond their indication of the potential of deliverance for men. They serve as a complement to the testimonies of the women, presenting the male perspective on school, work, and male-female relations. In this last respect, the testimony of Mark Scott, a hustler "on the avenue", is especially revealing when contrasted with the testimony of Delia Adams, the wife of a hustler. Between these two testimonies emerge the pressures on and the conflicts in marriage and the family due to the different perspectives on life of men and women. In the testimony of Flora Lincoln the potential for deliverance to resolve this basic problem appears. The testimonies of all of the women reveal the influence of the male dominated street world. It is reaching men who orient to varying degrees to this street culture that constitutes the greatest challenge to the Deliverance faith and to Faith Deliverance in the Black community. There is no way to comprehend Faith Deliverance or the position of the Deliverance faith in the dynamic of the Black community around the church without understanding the domain to which most of the men in the community orient - the streets.

I am reasonably well satisfied that the six testimonies selected for this book reveal in a broad way the range of backgrounds and problems that are typical of people who come to and are helped by Rev. Greer and Faith Deliverance through the Deliverance faith. But no limited selection can be fully adequate, and two important aspects of the group are not present in this group of six. First, only one in the group, Keith Jones, displays the orientation to education and sometimes professionalism that often follows experience in Faith Deliverance. The epilogue for Flora Lincoln reveals this tendency, but the move to education is not an integral part of her own statement. The second feature that is under represented here is the phenomenon of the healing of organic disease. While there are several healings from various nervous disabilities like asthma and muscular contractions included in this book, Delia Adams' description of her miraculous healing from a severe ankle injury is as close as the examples come to healings from disorders that are regarded as strictly organic in nature. Unfortunately nowhere in this group of six is there an example of a reported healing from such major organic diseases as cancer, diabetes, or heart disease. Among the testimonies of others I have interviewed are many descriptions of healings of such organic diseases. It is one of the shortcomings of the selection of testimonies that only second hand descriptions of such healings are to be found in this book.

The six testimonies in this book appear in abridged form. The full testimonies run to over one hundred pages and are prohibitive to publish as a set. I decided it was more important to display the variety of the testimonies than to include only two or three in their full length. Since the focus of the life testimony is on the individual's circumstances at the time of deliverance and since that time, I have included this part of the testimonies in full. The life of each individual prior to that time and the role of religion in it I have summarized in a "Background Summary" section preceding the beginning of each testimony.

With respect to specific editorial procedures in shaping the testimonies, I worked throughout with what I knew to be the general shape of a religious testimony. There are several characteristics of such a testimony, some of which I have already mentioned in the section on testimony form. First, the religious experience of the person is central.

Second, surrounding experiences that influence or lead to changes in the person's religious viewpoint are important. Third, the life since discovering the testifier's current faith is emphasized proportionately and accentuated positively. Fourth, life prior to the discovery of the faith is represented graphically and usually negatively in opposition to the present. Fifth, experience since discovery emphasizes changes for the better in the person's life, and minimizes the remaining problems. Sixth, testimonies dwell on specific events that demonstrate the value of faith for the person or illustrate changes in character or behavior. Seventh, testimonies contrast the current faith with the adequacy of prior faiths or alternative faiths known to the person. Eighth, testimonies applaud the leader of the religious group for his or her qualities and abilities and detail these abilities in personal accounts. Ninth, testimonies are rhetorically intended first to demonstrate the misery of life without the faith, second to illustrate personal transformation through the faith, third to record the person's growth in the faith, and fourth to recommend the faith to others. Tenth, testimonies conclude with either the recommendation of the faith and its leader to others, or the projection of the person's personal life into a positive future under the faith, or both.

The above features of a religious life testimony were what influenced all of my decisions as an editor collaborating with the persons who were giving their testimonies. In saying this it must be realized that the testimonies that are the result of my editorial decisions remain an accurate reflection of the data collected in the interviews because the interviews themselves were conducted with the understanding that a religious testimony would be the result. Thus the features of a religious testimony were the features of the interviews as well.

As an editor I worked from detailed logs of the interview tapes to select the portions of the interviews to be transcribed. Once transcribed, I selected and arranged the subsequent material in terms of the testimony criteria cited above. In rendering the oral statements into written form, I abided by the indications of the testifiers that I should create narratives that adjusted the oral record more in the direction of a polished written form, as I have indicated above. To protect the testifiers' right to anonymity, I changed all names, places, and dates, substituting equivalents where needed. Where required, I also substituted close equivalents for social relationships and occupations.

Following the dictates of the life testimony form itself, which were evident in the interviews, and making the required adjustments in the direction of a more polished written statement, I put together what I thought to be a reasonable draft of a testimony for each person. I then gave each testifier the draft of his testimony and asked for any and all suggestions and revisions. The testifiers were encouraged to alter the text as they felt necessary and to identify overall problem areas. I then met with each person and we went over the draft page by page, making needed adjustments, most of which were in behalf of protecting the person's anonymity. Some statements were corrected where transcriptions were incorrect. Some Bible quotes were made exact. Some statements, words and phrases that were felt to be inadequate as given orally were made more precise. Each person was asked whether the testimony as edited captured the essence and spirit of what they felt they wanted to say in their testimony. Was anything left out that they felt was important? Was anything stressed out of proportion? If they were to have written it on their own, how would their own version have been different?

Five of the six people indicated that they felt the testimony with the adjustments said what they wanted to say. The sixth person, Keith Jones, was less enthusiastic. He still had reservations about the informal nature of the edited oral style, and he felt that the testimony was good as far as it went but that it was missing an important part of what he wanted to say. After some conversation skirting around the issue, it turned out that Keith felt the testimony failed to deal with the racial issue and the importance of deliverance to him in this respect. I had not pursued this matter with Keith or the other people because at the level of doctrine, the deliverance faith of Rev. Greer considers race to be irrelevant. I had overlooked the fact that though race is discounted as important to a delivered child of God, racial problems may nevertheless be an important aspect of what the deliverance faith assists the individual in overcoming. Keith's statement of his reservations luckily brought this oversight to light. Initially Keith was the only one that felt that racial matters were important in his testimony. But after talking with Keith about his experiences and the role of deliverance in changing his attitudes about race, I decided I needed to talk to each of the other testifiers to be sure this area was not more important than the others or I might think. While none of the others revealed so prominent or major a shift in racial attitudes and feelings as Keith, ensuing conversations revealed that race was more important than most realized and that deliverance had made a difference, though in different directions for different individuals. For each person I transcribed and edited this new material, added it into the testimony and submitted the new whole to each person to evaluate. All approved the new material and felt its inclusion improved their testimony.

In retrospect, while I am embarrassed by the oversight of this racial material, I think it may have been fortuitous. Had I tried to probe into this area in the initial interviews, I wonder whether the results would have been so fruitful. Despite the rapport that rapidly developed during these interviews, I did not have a long term, close relationship established with these people at that point. In the two-year period of interviewing, transcribing, editing, revising, reviewing and correcting the testimonies with these people, I came to know them very personally inside and outside of church functions. With some solid time depth in our relationship I was in a different position when it did come time to talk about race. Even though some of the individuals did not think the subject relevant, they were willing to meet for another interview to explore the area, if only in my behalf. And individuals who were even at this point hesitant to reach into themselves in terms of race allowed me to poke and probe and sometimes make them feel a bit uncomfortable as we went into what lay beneath the repeated opening pronouncement, "I don't have any problem with race, never did." I was white. They were Black. But they knew me, and they were willing to work through their experiences with me. I do not know whether they or I would have been in a position to do this earlier, had I recognized the importance of this realm of experience from the outset.

With approval given to the added material on race, each of the six participants agreed that the resulting testimony achieved the statement they felt their testimony should make. At this point our collaboration was complete, and I felt that I had a set of testimonies that adequately satisfied the life testimony form. I asked each participant to write a paragraph or two to comment in their own words on their testimony and the experience of our collaboration. These commentaries appear at the end of each

testimony. I think the supportive nature of these commentaries speak directly to the matter of the validity of the editorial process I employed as a collaborator.

### **Pattern in the Deliverance Life Testimony**

After collecting thirty-one life testimonies from Faith Deliverance members and as a result coming to know about the lives of many other members through less formal talks, it has become clear to me that there is a general pattern to the delivered individual's life as he portrays it in the life testimony. Generally, people who stick with and benefit from Faith Deliverance report being active and highly motivated from childhood. Many of these active people indicate that they take after their industrious parents or grandparents who raised them and who instilled in them a desire to succeed and a sense of pride in a job well done. On the other hand a considerable number reveal that they came to be determined to do their best and succeed, not from positive encouragement, but rather out of "black sheep" childhoods. The reasons given for feeling like black sheep in their families vary, but the result is the same - a long-term sense of being left out, excluded, or discriminated against by their parents and often by their siblings as well. The response to the black sheep situation these people describe for themselves is not resignation, but resentment coupled with determination to make it in spite of their disadvantages. Frequently their determination is rewarded with recognition in school and among their peers, though their accomplishments may be mostly overlooked at home. For black sheep, early life is a struggle to prove to the family or some part of it that they are wrong in their assessment of the person. A strong orientation to peer recognition taken together with their resentment emerges as rebellion in the early teens for most black sheep. Peer pressure to become involved in the street draws the black sheep easily. Children raised under more positive family encouragement describe themselves as surviving the peer pressure longer, usually until they are sixteen or seventeen. But finally they too give in.

The rebellious journeys of black sheep into the street and the brief forays into street life by the others lead to the same consequences. In the pursuit of peer recognition girls become pregnant and boys become delinquent with the result that earlier ambitions are foregone. The person drops out of school and sometimes gets married. Women have their first child and keep it despite pressure to give it up. Some women go on welfare, but most enter the unskilled labor market. Men enter the same market and either give up in frustration to become heavily involved in illicit aspects of the street world, or they supplement their income from work with some form of street hustle.

Most first marriages break up before the couple is out of their teens. Often a period ensues of very active partying and the pursuit of material things. By their mid-twenties women usually have two or three children as a result of different relationships. Some take on second jobs, leaving the children with babysitters or relatives, while others go on welfare to be able to raise their children. Life apart from work remains hectic, mainly in pursuit of the material and physical. Personal relationships tend to be based on physical qualities, social status, and material assets. Between spouses suspicion and mistrust are common, and jealousy frequently leads to intense arguments. Alcohol often fuels the flames of an argument into a fight. By the middle thirties the number of children has grown, and disillusionment often settles in about the value of the partying street life. Family, marriage, and personal situations seem more confining and desperate. Many

continue this life on into the forties and fifties, especially men, who have left their women and children or been left by them.

In the face of thinking about their earlier ambitions, looking at where they are now, and seeing a future ahead that seems to harbor more of the disappointing present, the women especially turn back to the religion of their childhoods and try to discover in church something that can help them. Several different church groups are usually tried over a period of years as the move to religion oscillates with a continuing try to find satisfaction in the world of the street. Disappointed in what they find in many standard churches, some turn to root work or voodoo and hoodoo practitioners to get help.

At some point each person in their search for assistance discovers Faith Deliverance and the Deliverance faith practiced there. Sometimes the radio broadcasts of Rev. Greer attract them. More often it is some friend, relative, or neighbor that encourages them to try Faith Deliverance. Once in Faith Deliverance each person says he finds the help he or she has sought for so long. Frequently these people report that their attention is caught by the fact that the minister is talking about how faith can be important for their everyday living, not just for getting to heaven or for being good in the ethical sense.

Once drawn into the church, the testimonies reveal that several changes occur, at different paces for different people but often in the following sequence:

First, all undergo the experience of being born again, which puts them in contact with the spiritual dimension of themselves, a dimension which slowly matures with prayer, meditation, and fasting.

Second, as the spiritual or divine self emerges, all the testifiers develop a more balanced and complete sense of themselves and their place in and relationship to the world around him. Black sheep are set free from their resentment of their families, while others who have worried excessively in behalf of relatives and children learn to let go of these binding ties. Individuals harboring racial resentment or negative feelings about themselves due to race discover a larger sense of identity that discredits race as a relevant defining criteria. Ambition and industry are liberated to be applied constructively instead of defensively in the person's life.

Third, the familial, marital, health, or financial problems of the testifiers are brought into perspective. Instead of being tolerated on the one hand or fought on the other hand, these problems are approached with greater calm, design, and resolve. The spiritual side of the testifiers, not just the rational and emotional sides, is called upon to assist in solving the difficulties. Even when progress in resolving the problems is slow, the testifiers indicate they have a sense of control, of quietude within the storm that was absent before. The effect of this change is often felt most dramatically in the testifiers' relationships with their children. A personal commitment and love is felt toward the children that may not have been present before. In addition there develops a decisive sense of how to guide each child in a positive direction so they can reach their worldly goals while doing so within a framework of spirituality. Both the parent and the child can expect to harmonize these two dimensions, because in Deliverance the physical and material world is not denied by the spiritual realm.

Fourth, because Deliverance is a faith of self-realization in the present life, and not just in a world to come after death, the testifiers are encouraged from within the faith to pursue their worldly goals for themselves and their families. But now they do this with the balanced perspective of someone who is in tune to his or her spiritual side. Often

with such balance, previous goals that were often exclusively physical or material are given less weight while the pursuit of mental, spiritual, and social goals acquire a more important place. With this new sense of balance and direction, many delivered people return to school to further the education they discarded in their teens. Often they have an eye on a job that is more rewarding, not only financially but also mentally and socially. Others pursue the new-found spiritual realm in social terms, becoming evangelists with various special ministries both within Faith Deliverance and outside of it. For those who remain in their former roles there is a new peace of mind and there are expectations that they will be blessed in some new way or that their life will improve dramatically in the near future.

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