

A Hand in The Crowd

... a quest for truth and love

The Book

There is a Book that many know about,
but its words are known by few.

There is a Book that many fear,
who've never read it through.

There is a Book that many have
just sitting on a shelf.

There is a Book that all must read
for truth about the self.

...

This is a true story.

Some names have been changed to protect the guilty.

“You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.”
John 8:32

To those who have never read the Bible

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A Hand in The Crowd

Ron Decuir 2001

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1

Possession

The Washington monument was tall with tiny windows in the top. All of the buildings in D.C. were huge. Neo-Nazis paraded by the fence of the Capitol building as I jumped in a taxi with the other guys and headed to the airport for our flight home. We had been in meetings with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission applying for a license to build a nuclear power plant in Texas. Now, with the red tape and bureaucratic games behind us, we were ready to kick back and relax.

Since drinks were free in first class, we would see how many we could down between take off from Dulles and touchdown at DFW. We were obnoxious and loud and kept the stewardess busy. Our boss, Bob, sat quietly reading as we cracked jokes and made fools of ourselves. Toward the end of the flight, the stewardess leaned over to Bob and asked him, "Sir, you've been sitting there for the entire flight reading that book while your traveling companions have been wild. It must be a really interesting book. What is it?" He held it up to show her, "The Bible," he said.

Bob was a real Jesus Freak. We all mocked him. He was always talking about Jesus, having prayer meetings at lunch - time, and was always smiling. The man was weird.

The year before, I was thirty-three years old, draft status 1-A, and worried about the U.S. entering the Yom Kippur War in the Mid-east. In the war, Egypt and Syria were allied against Israel. I asked Bob what he thought was going to happen in the war. He said, "Don't you know what's going on? It's all prophesied in the Bible. Get one and read it." So I went to the bookstore and bought a nice leather-bound Bible and looked through it, but didn't make much of an effort to read it.

The Bible is about the hopeless condition of man without God, and about the hope man has in Jesus, but I didn't know that. All I knew about was the hopelessness of trying to be perfect, trying to keep a bunch of religious rules, and going to church. I had been through enough of that in my childhood and youth, had a real bad taste in my mouth from all of it, and wasn't interested in trying to digest any more of it.

I hated Christians and anything that resembled Christianity. I couldn't believe that all the other religions could be wrong. Why would a Loving God make it so that only one religion was right, and all the Moslems, Hindus, Atheists and Agnostics would go to Hell because they didn't believe in Jesus Christ?

Bob was talking to me about having a relationship with Jesus, not about religion. I didn't know the difference, and at the time I didn't care to find out. "ONE WAY JESUS" signs were on back of old busses and on telephone poles; cars carried bumper stickers saying "HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS," and "IN CASE OF RAPTURE THIS CAR WILL BE UNMANNED." Fanatics at work talked about being "Born Again," but I didn't know what those buzz words meant. I didn't want to take the time to listen to that crazy stuff, or study the Bible, or have anything to do with God. I was too busy trying to earn a living and keep my marriage together. Anyway, the Mid-east war ended, so my crisis was over and I dismissed the whole thing.

I was born in a quiet little farming town in Louisiana, where cotton and sugar cane fell off carts onto the road, women burned candles and said their beads, Whites bowed to the Priests, and Negroes bowed to the Whites. My parents were French Catholic so I was raised in the Catholic Church. The Priests told us what we had to believe. To question any of the things they taught us, or to wonder if what they taught us was true or not, was a Mortal Sin that would send us to Hell. We were told that The Bible was the Word of God, but we were also told that we were not able to understand it ourselves. We just had to go along with whatever we were told to believe. When you think about it, that's quite a dilemma to be in.

I was a very religious child and did my best to keep all the commandments. I was proud of myself because I didn't cause too much trouble at home or at school. I hid behind my image of a good little boy, trying to prove my sainthood by pointing at other people who

did “worse” things than me.

My childhood was rather ordinary. Santa Claus, Superman, The Pope, and Mary were my idols. Santa Claus was like God: all-seeing, all-knowing, and omnipresent, watching and judging everything I did. Superman flew through the air and was all - powerful. The Pope was the “Holy Father” infallible and unquestionably right on all religious matters, and Mary was my standard of perfection and my go-between to Jesus.

Back then, I was a dreamer who led three lives. The first was enjoying the company of my family and friends. The second was a road of darkness, paved with vain attempts to gain approval from God. It was a road colored with stained glass, Holy Pictures, Holy Water, grand pageantry, incense, and chants to God. He was a distant god, inaccessible and unapproachable, surrounded with an immense pit of fire called Purgatory. To reach him I would eventually have to go through the fires of Purgatory after death. That’s what I had to look forward to. I had no peace, no joy, only fear. On the surface I smiled, but I wasn’t really happy, because a deep sense of dread covered everything. My third life was a life of fantasy, in which I dreamed of the love and acceptance I couldn’t get from God. I was still living that life.

By the time the airplane touched down in Dallas, I had managed to down at least ten drinks. We got our luggage, said our good byes and I stumbled into the parking garage to try to find my car. After I got home, I pulled into the driveway, walked in the back door and went inside to see my family. My wife, Barbara, saw me first and asked “Did you have a good trip? The boys missed you.” Our sons Jeff and Gavin came running in to see me and I told them a few things about my trip to Washington.

Barbara and I had grown far apart. We pretty much did our own thing. She had her friends and I had mine. One of my friends was Cynthia, a free thinker and “seeker of truth” like me. We talked about the meaning of life, who we really were, if there really was a God, and all the usual stuff like that.

It was October 1974, the night before the annual football game between the arch - rivals Texas University and Oklahoma University. There were many parties that night and I was going to one with Cynthia. I changed clothes and drove over to Cynthia’s house, picked her up and we went to the party together. I was already bombed when we got there. The party was rather dull and anticlimactic after my drinking bout on the plane. We met two of our friends, Elvira and Paul, at the party. The four of us were bored, so we decided to leave. Cynthia said, “My brother-in-law, Anton, sent me a joint he called “Primo.” Let’s go to my house and smoke it.” We left the party and drove to Cynthia’s

house.

*Roll up, roll up for the magical mystery tour...The magical mystery tour is hoping to take you away, Hoping to take you away. Roll up, roll up for the magical mystery tour.*¹

I had rolled up some of Cynthia's Marijuana once before, but it didn't do anything for me so I didn't expect much to happen this time. The four of us sat on the floor, Cynthia lit up the joint and passed it around.

I had drunk about 15 mixed drinks since leaving D.C. The joint was dusted with angel dust (PCP). It hit us like a freight train. We were all overcome. Time slowed to a stop. The room filled with a heavy smoky fog. We couldn't stand up when the fog came. We would curse it and fall to the floor until the fog left. This happened over and over again.

*I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together...*²

I looked at Cynthia and Elvira. Parts of their bodies were switching from one person to the other. I would touch Elvira's arm and it would turn into Cynthia's. We couldn't believe this was happening. We started a tape recorder to record the experience. The recorder appeared to run backwards. Paul and I played a chess game on the floor with our bodies. I struggled to my feet and looked at my body. It looked like a car radiator with arms and legs sticking out of it.

*The magical mystery tour is coming to take you away, Coming to take you away.*³

My head was full of rainbows. Voices of dark angels told me, "Let go and relax. We want to come into your head." I felt that my head would explode and expand into the stars.

*The magical mystery tour is dying to take you away.*⁴

I thought I was going to die, and I was worried about who would take care of my boys. I picked up the phone, called Anton, and asked him, "What's in this joint you sent Cynthia?" He laughed and said "You are just going through 'Ego death.' Relax and enjoy it." I cursed him out and slammed the phone down. I was terrified. I didn't want to pass out because I knew the dark angels would get me. I fought them off as long as I could. Elvira held my hand and giggled, trying to get me through it. We all finally passed out.

The Magical Mystery Tour had taken me away. I became demon-possessed and mad. When I woke up, everything was “peace, oneness, and love.”

That night was the beginning of a tour that would lead me farther on into the darkness through adultery, magic, and mystery.

It was a strange sort of tour. It was a journey from reality to insanity, and eventually to a mental hospital. The advertisements were grand, the adventures were alluring, the sting was numbing, and the trip was long. While I was traveling, I didn't notice things were changing. The scenery seemed somewhat dim and the illusions were strong. The godhood I was promised turned out to be confusion and despair. Such are the lies of the serpent.

2 False Expectations

I blamed my lack of love and my misfortunes on Barbara, society, and fate. Truth and God were vague concepts that probably didn't exist. My food was bitterness and spite. My countenance was painted on with pride and deceit. In short, I was the exact likeness of my ancestors from Eden. Nothing had changed during the six thousand years since they were thrown out of the garden. People were born year after year, day after day, second after second. I was just one of them.

Barbara and I had gone to college together. I had gone to college to get an engineering degree because I was told that engineers made good money. We were married in June of 1963, a week after graduation. Marriage was supposed to make people happy, but my false expectations of marriage creating happiness didn't come true. Neither did my expectations of money making me happy. We had some fun times through the years. We tried to be happy, but didn't have peace or joy. Both of our families were good to us and encouraged us in whatever we did, but we weren't content. We were constantly looking for some new entertainment to stimulate us and make us happy.

Parties with our friends in the night club circuit were our thing, but all of the dancing, drinking, and partying didn't make us happy. I always wondered why some other couples seemed happy but we weren't. We didn't agree on very much and didn't have a clue about life or truth. When problems came in our marriage we didn't know where to turn, so we argued and fought. Barbara wanted us to go to a marriage counselor but I was too proud to believe that there could be anything wrong with me.

Our parties had become a rut. We would dance, sweat, and get drunk to the music of the popular songs of the day. The music led me on like the pied piper as I listened more and more deeply to the prophetic lyrics of the modern troubadours, trying to understand the message they had for me. I wondered why these poet musicians were different from those of us who just danced to the music. I wondered where they got their words.

Masses of slumbering humanity went through their daily motions that ran to cold, dark graves. I was one of them, working, eating, partying, and sleeping. My life had no direction, no purpose other than just perpetuating the human race in the same mold that it had been running since the beginning of time. Self-reliance, pleasure, and survival couldn't be all there was. There had to be meaning to life.

The war in Vietnam was over. I was tired of the night shift and long road trips so I had quit my job at the aircraft plant and gone to work for Dallas Power and Light Company.

There had been no sigh of relief like there usually was after a war. There was change in the air. Winds of disillusionment, unrest, and uncertainty were blowing strong, and I set my sails to catch them. I decided to find out the truth about God for my boys' sake, so I began my search for truth and set off on a quest to find the promised land. I wasn't satisfied with anything I had ever heard or felt in religion, relationships, or technological civilization. I no longer held any belief or doctrine sacred and studied everything that I could get my hands on, looking for something that really worked. I dug and sifted through all sorts of ideas, trying to put the puzzle together. Most everything I had read said that man was perfectly good and his problem was merely ignorance of his condition, ignorant of how wonderful he was. Man has just forgotten that he is god.

*Facing a dying nation...Listening for the new told lies with supreme visions of lovely tunes...Let the sun shine, the sun shine in.*¹

The music from the musical "Hair" had sparked my interest in the New Age. It made a promise of freedom so I followed it. Others like The Beatles, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thoreau, Herman Hesse, Lao Tse and Meher Baba were all describing the same journey of transcendental transformation of consciousness into godhood. They were travel agents booking flights of the mind and soul. I followed them because I was looking for another realm of reality. I wanted the transformation of consciousness that The New Age promised. I wanted it because I was troubled in ordinary reality and had no love. I was looking for signs and wonders, and I thought the answer was to escape. The New Age prophets had done their job well and their influences were heavy on me. I went along eagerly taking my first steps into mysticism and the New Age.

It had begun with yoga, meditating on candles, and chanting. It didn't seem to be having

any affect, but the change was very subtle so I didn't notice it. I was slowly getting drawn deeper and deeper into the occult. I learned how to cast Horoscopes and I did them for my friends, but it had become more than a parlour game to me. I didn't know I was playing with fire, and at that time I didn't care. I was impatient for change so I turned to drugs, and that had led me to the Angel dust experience.

3

Adultery

The day after the Angel Dust experience, Elvira, Paul, Cynthia, and I went to Ola Podrida, a craft mall in Dallas. The month before, I had done some photography for Elvira and Paul and they wanted to have the photos framed.

We had lunch together and talked about the drug trip of the night before. Paul was still in disbelief. He said, “I’ve tried a lot of stuff before, but that was something else.” Elvira sat close to me, watching me. I was still very stoned and full of “Peace, Oneness, and Love.”

Elvira and Paul were open-marriage advocates, and very open about it. They both had extra-marital sexual affairs with other people and thought it was healthy for their marriage. They believed that married people couldn’t meet all of the needs of their marriage partner.

There was nothing new about open marriage. The troubadours had sung of it as courtly love. Camelot and chivalry had glorified it. It had been called by many names through the years, but it was really just another name for adultery and unfaithfulness.¹

The following Saturday, Elvira called me and asked, “Why don’t you and Cynthia come over to our house tonight? Paul has some music he wants you to hear.” I called Cynthia and she said, “Fine,” so I picked her up and we went to their house. We smoked some more grass to the music of Shawn Philips. Cynthia and Paul were sitting on the floor talking. Elvira and I lay on the floor kissing. The loud music had awakened Elvira’s youngest daughter who walked up to us and asked, “Mommy, why are your kissing Ron?”

As we were leaving, Elvira told me, “Next week, Paul is going out of town on a business trip, why don’t you come over Tuesday morning?” In affairs, who knows who is seducing who? Both are on the make; both fall in the pit together. Actually evil spirits were seducing both of us.

The following Tuesday morning I went to work as usual. At 8:30 I told my secretary, “I’ve got a doctor’s appointment, so I will be gone for a while.” I left the building, drove over to Elvira’s neighborhood, and parked in a hospital parking lot so her neighbors would not see me. I walked over to her house where she met me in her nightgown. She had prepared a lavish meal with artichokes and wine. We smoked some more marijuana and started our sexual adulterous fling. I returned to work stoned and reeking of wine, but I didn’t think any one noticed my absence or my drunken condition. This began an affair that would last four years, drawing me away from my family and friends.

*Fountain of Sorrow, fountain of life, you’ve heard the hollow sound of your own steps in flight.*²

Every year, Barbara and I had a New Year Party with our old crowd. For New Year 1975, the party was at a Ginger and Alan’s house. They lived two doors down from us. Elvira and Paul came to the party with Larry and Evelyn, a couple they had an Open Marriage relationship with. Elvira told me she wanted to break off our affair. I took her over to my house and said, “We were too much in love to break this off.” Looking back, I see that God was giving me an opportunity to repent, but I didn’t take it. The people at the party were scandalized at our behavior, but we didn’t care. We just got stoned, and danced to *Fountain of Sorrow* by Jackson Browne. It was “our song.”

Have You Ever Been Mellow

Mandy

Laughter in the Rain

Best of my Love

*My eyes adored you*³

I adored Elvira, and lived on the fantasy that she was my soul mate, that we would eventually get married, and we would live happily ever after. I stayed stoned all the time, and lived in a world of magic, sex, and sorcery, soaring on my euphoric flight of marijuana. I would leave my office building to smoke a joint before business meetings, thinking it was the only way that I could “relate to the establishment.” I would visit with Bob in his office and he would tell me, “Jesus loves you.” He would pray for me with tears in his eyes. I thought to myself, “He has Jesus and I have my drugs. We both have peace so what’s the difference?” The difference was that Bob really cared for me, and I knew it.

Elvira and I preached open marriage and drugs as the way to bliss as we had our unabashed romance through countryside and city. Our scene was a romantic fantasy. I was intoxicated with the affair. We were shamelessly bold and crude. We flaunted our affair in front of our mates, and thought we were noble, high consciousness people. We weren’t hypocrites like the “straights” who had their affairs on the side, and hid them from their spouses. We had our affair in the open, but we still tried to hide the depths of our debauchery from our children.

I suppose I believed my kids didn’t know what was going on. They probably did, because the music was loud and so was the talk, and the smell of marijuana and alcohol filled the air. I set a terrible example for them. I instilled the idea in them that sex outside of marriage was all right. I gave them a poor example about what marriage was really about, and what being a good dad was about, because I didn’t know myself.

One of the philosophies of Open Marriage was that it was a goal free relationship. The theory was that marriage and commitment brought the end of lightheartedness and fun. Elvira didn’t want commitment but I wanted commitment from her. It wasn’t goal free for me. I really wanted conquest. Open marriage was a farce. We were playing mind games trying to hide from the guilt and shame of our adultery, and trying to hide from the brokenheartedness we felt because our marriages were broken up.

The Open Marriage adultery scene was really tragic. We were looking to our affair for satisfaction, while trying to maintain a good relationship with our spouses. We were living a cruel joke.

I thought I was in love with Elvira. What a mockery to say our affair was love. It wasn’t love, it was selfishness, pride, romance, and lust. Romance isn’t love, it is giving to get, “loving to be loved.” That’s why marriages based on romance suffer so much, because the relationship is built on selfish love, and selfish love never satisfies.

4 Sorcery

Drugs had given me a taste of the transformation of consciousness promised by the New Age, but it didn't last. When I first encountered the demonic world, I was terrified. Now I sought after the same dark world, which had terrified me. My drug experiences were never as powerful as the first time, when I encountered the Dark Angels of smoke. Satan's promises were always empty and fleeting. He never delivered the utopia that I always thought I'd find right around the corner. He offered me peace and love, but I didn't have peace. I just had unconsciousness, unhappiness, and frenzy. Drugs promised an expanded consciousness, but delivered the opposite. Vision on drugs was like looking at the world through a knothole in a fence, or like the vision of a horse wearing blinders. I thought I was seeing things more clearly, but my perception was being restricted. The drugs blocked out the "annoying impediments" of morality and common sense.

My false expectations of self-reliance, romance, drugs, and adultery had not served me well. I lived in fog of illusion. I journeyed deeper into Occultism and magic, trying to escape my mind with its thoughts, frustrations, memories, and guilt.

In Occultism and the New Age all that appeared was illusion, false creations of ego and thought. The path was not evolution, it was devolution; journeying backwards into thoughtlessness, nothingness, and non-existence. It was becoming one with the unmanifested spirit, the impersonal god. Freedom from the concept of self was the goal, escaping the apparent world of forms. God was only ego holding on to individuality and life. Self-realization was created by desire. The goal was to have no desires, so I wanted to burn the bridge of logic that connected me to the past, to the world around me, and to the future that eluded me. Satan's promise was called the light within, but it was really darkness. It was a false promise based on rejection of God and the rejection of self. It was a journey through the world of demons, and into the void of nothingness and Nirvana.

My goal was to lead the life of a zombie, a walking dead man. What a deception I was in. Satan offered me power in the form of sorcery. Through emptying my mind, I could be all- powerful. That was a lie. It was just making room for more demons to come in and work through me. I thought I had power, but I was a puppet of the devil. Satan was holding out death as the ultimate reality. Sorcery was the worship of death.

*Dust in the Wind, everything is dust in the wind*¹

I wanted to drift wherever the winds of fate would blow me, leaving behind common society, with all of its arrangements of substance, time, space, and energy. What was my goal? Nothing, literally nothing. I didn't know the answer, so I figured that the answer was that there was no question.

I studied witchcraft in books like *Jeannie Rose's Herbal*, and *Carlos Castaneda's* tales of Yaqui sorcery, coupled with the music of *The Eagles*.

I knew two witches. One was Alda, who read the crystal ball and tarot cards. She was the wife of one of my co-workers. The other was Margaret. Margaret hung around the outskirts of our crowd. She was into casting spells. I'd see them both from time to time at parties.

New Year's eve was coming up again. I read that if I burned the herb, *Dragon's Blood*, in a window from St. John's Eve through New Year's Eve, my lover would come and stay with me. I called herb shops in search of Dragon's Blood. I finally located it at a psychic shop in South Dallas. I drove out to the shop to get some. There was a gold Cadillac parked in front, and bars on the windows of the shop. I walked in the door and asked, "Do you have any Dragon's Blood?" I saw a man burning some herbs and I asked him, "What are you burning?" He held up a red cardboard box and said, "POWER." The spirit in his voice threw me back. I asked him again, "What did you say?" This time, a young woman came in from behind a curtain, and they both said in unison, "POWER!" I asked again and Lucea, a tall dark woman with a crescent around her neck came out and the three of them chanted "POWER !!!" I could tell they were a coven of witches, and that I was courting some heavy power. I made a quick exit from their store without getting my Dragon's Blood.

Barbara and I had our last New Year's Party together at our house December 31, 1975. I had made up some invitations that had a Yin-Yang world with an Eagle on the top, and it said, "Welcome to the Split, BYOB or whatever." I was talking about the split between the years, but I was foretelling the split-up of our marriage.

The Christmas tree in the house was a dead mesquite branch with mirrors hanging on it. In the garage I had a fresh-cut cedar tree in a pot of dirt. I expected it to stay alive. I had all natural stuff in the garage. That was my domain. The garage was dark except for the flame in a gas heater and the glow of joints as I smoked Marijuana with some friends.

I hung mistletoe on the doors to keep the witches out, but Margaret was already there. I was wearing a gold and sapphire ring because it was supposed to give protection against witchcraft. Margaret said, "I know that you are under some heavy spell. Let me wear your sapphire ring, and I will put some power in it for you." I was afraid of her but I was stoned so I gave it to her to wear.

The morning after the party, I sold all my guns. It was probably a good thing that I did, because I was getting dangerous.

Barbara was having bad pain and bleeding from an ovarian cyst. While Barbara was out, I received a phone call from someone who said he was her doctor. I told him how much she was bleeding and he said it's nothing to be concerned with. I believed that the sickness was being caused by a witch's spell, and that the witches were trying to kill her. Barbara went to the hospital and had the cyst removed.

I went back to talk to Lucea at her psychic shop. She remembered me and asked, "Do you want me to do a reading for you?" I said, "Sure." Then she did a Tarot reading for me and she advised me, "You need to stay in control." I bought some I-Ching Cards and coins for guidance. She said, "Your lover wants to know how serious you are about wanting to live with her. If you want her to move out from her husband and live with you. You will have to move out of your home first, away from your wife and kids and show her that you mean business."

After Barbara recovered from her illness, we discussed splitting up. We were sad about what had happened to our lives, but we were both believed that breaking up was inevitable. We really didn't know each other anymore. Perhaps we never did. Barbara said, "*The Best of My Love*", by the Eagles is my song to you, Ron. Maybe some day we'll sit in our rocking chairs when we get old and reflect back on these times."

5 Insanity

“When one takes part in the battle between good and evil, if one side is destroyed, the other also perishes.”¹

Insanity wasn't something that “happened” to me. I didn't just become insane. I sought insanity. I worked hard to get there. It had been my goal.

I was beginning to read the Bible, but I was trying to have it confirm my fantasies. I read about the prophet, Ezekiel, and believed that I should imitate his actions, because I had a destiny like his.

I believed that I was a prophet who would save the Jews and the Catholics. I didn't know from what. I believed that Bob Dylan, Pure Prairie League, Michael Murphy, The Eagles, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, and other musicians were all prophets who were farther along on the same spiritual journey I was on, and they were giving me prophetic messages to help me on my quest. I picked up a pamphlet called *The Ultimate Trip* published by *The Children of God*. I thought it was foretelling my life of romance. I wore a mood ring and believed that I could keep the perfect mood of “Royal Blue” by

eating certain foods.

I heard that topaz was a good gem to have for psychic power. I called around and located a large stone in a jewelry store in downtown Dallas. The store wasn't far away, so I walked there during lunch hour one day. The door hit little bell as I walked in, and an old Jewish man came in from the back room. He took the stone out of the case and set it on the counter for me to see. It was really beautiful. He looked up at me and said, "It is a very special stone." I believed he was secretly telling me that he knew about my deliverance mission, and that the stone had very special powers that I would need for my mission. I paid for the stone, thanked him and returned to work, staring at the sun through the facets of the stone trying to absorb power.

The next week, I took a business trip to Atlanta with some of the guys from the office. At the Atlanta airport, I saw a display of rings and noticed a particular ring that had a broken topaz stone in it. The stone was exactly the same size as my topaz. I considered it an omen that I found the ring.

The man I bought it from was also Jewish, and I felt the same way about him as I did about the man in the jewelry store in Dallas. It excited me. It was as if people were planted along my path, waiting for me, to help me along in my quest. I bought the ring, put my stone in it, and we got the rent car and headed for a factory that was building some cabinets for our Nuclear Power Plant controls.

We completed our work, and went back to the airport. On the flight back to Dallas from Atlanta, the flight stewardess gave me a napkin with a small anchor printed on it. I knew that the anchor represented hope so I took it as a sign. My ego and feeling of self-importance was becoming so inflated that I thought everyone was giving me messages and clues about my destiny.

I didn't go home after we landed in Dallas. I drove around aimlessly looking for more clues. As I drove down Harry Hines Blvd., I came across a motel named *The Anchor Inn*. I drove into the parking lot and turned off the engine of my Triumph TR4 sports car. I just sat there staring at the large "Anchor" sign, believing it was confirmation that I was on track for my special mission.

I believed there were energy centers around the world, and that there was a balance of power and flows of power from these energy centers. I thought these energy centers controlled people's moods. The huge granite mass at Stone Mountain Georgia was a polar opposite of the subway system of New York City because of all the rock that had been removed from the New York underground. I thought that was why the people in Georgia were happy and the people in New York City seemed depressed. I also thought that there was mood power in the bricks of buildings and a large concentration of power at White Rock Lake. I thought maybe it could be detected with a Geiger counter, so I borrowed one from work the next day to check it out.

I was on an insatiable search for power. In January 1976 I decided to go on a two-week fast of brown rice, ginseng and Fo Ti Ting herbs. Along with this, I was drinking alcohol heavily. I drank stronger and stronger drinks to the point that I was drinking Everclear straight. I thought that if I would lose weight back to the point I was before I got married, things would be the way they were back then. I wanted to start all over again and re-live my life, but didn't know how.

*Take my hand and lead me to the hole in your garden wall and pull me through.*²

I wanted to return to Edenic simplicity and freedom of thought. I was driven by movies and songs. I was trying to dig my way back through the garden wall past the angel with the flaming sword, and start again in Eden. I thought there was a secret somewhere, and I was bound and determined to discover it.

*It's such a clever innocence with which you do your sorcery.*³

I wanted the story of my life to change so badly that I crossed over from reality to the isle of fantasy. The magic was so heavy that I constantly guided my life through omens. It reached the point that I believed that the entire system of television, radio, and billboards were composed for my benefit. I interpreted what they said as messages to me telling me what I should do. I was convinced that the writers of songs and the announcers on radio and TV were directing their comments to me personally. The whole media was set up to guide and enlighten people and it was my turn.

It was backwards from the movies. In movies, unseen orchestras played music that injected additional depth. They added meaning and mood to the plot, animating the otherwise ordinary pictures of life. I took the musicians and media people to be the script - writers of my life, and I followed their lead. The drugs I was using, and the spirits I was following fabricated this type of sorcery.

Shanda was a Tai Chi dancer. She was the most mysterious person I have ever known. We were just friends, and never had a sexual relationship even though we were strongly attracted to each other. We were both on the higher consciousness spiritual power trip, and spent a lot of time together talking about the establishment and about power.

One night we went to see some of her friends, a motorcycle gang. They were sitting around the kitchen table overhauling a Harley engine. I was talking to the leader of the gang who they called "Doc." I noticed my topaz had come loose in its setting. One of the guys there set the stone in the ring for me. I talked to them about Barbara, smoked something with them, sat on a step and cried, and cried, and cried.

6

Antichrist

Shanda and I left the motorcycle gang and I took her home. I went in her house, had a drink with her dad, and then I drove over to the Cathedral de Guadeloupe in downtown Dallas. I parked my car, and went inside.

It was very much like the churches I had gone to as a child. Light filtered down into its dark interior through colorful images of stained glass. The church was populated with painted statues of dead saints, and a crucifix of Jesus hanging dead on a cross above the altar. A candle continually flickered inside a ruby red glass fixture that hung from the ceiling. The smell of candle smoke and incense lingered in the air from the last Mass.

I recalled entering churches like this as a child. I would walk in, dip my hand in holy water, make the sign of the cross, go to a statue of Mary, and kneel on a cushioned kneeler that was covered in purple velvet. Before me would be a wrought iron rack filled with votive candles in little glass candle - holders. Some of the candles would be almost burned out, their wicks barely glowing in the melted wax, and their glass holders charred with soot. Some of the candles had recently been lit. Some were unused. I would light a new candle and drop a coin in the gray metal box, then look up to the statue and begin to pray.

The face on the statue would look down at me with an unchanging cold gaze. I'd pray

about all my problems and concerns, but her face did not change. I hoped that somehow, Mary would make my request known to Jesus before the candle burned away. But my prayers never gave me relief. I was always left with a feeling of uncertainty.

That was many years ago. Now I walked up to a statue of a Pieta, a statue of Mary holding the dead body of Jesus. I looked up into the stone-cold alabaster face and said, "I'm being crucified like Jesus."

I turned, walked out of the church, my footsteps echoing off the high, domed ceilings as I made my way to the exit. Then I pushed open the heavy wood door and walked out into the still night.

After leaving the Cathedral, I stopped at a pay phone and called my mother, who lived on the outskirts of New Orleans. I told her, "I am Jesus Christ." She said, "No, you're not Jesus Christ." I was an Antichrist.

I drove around half the night, following lights and colors, until I found an apartment sign with rainbows. It was on the north shore of Bachman Lake. I went to the manager's office. He was still up, so I rented an apartment.

*Cats in the Cradle*¹

The next day, I went to see Jeff and Gavin. I told them I was moving out of the house. Jeff was lying on his bed, and I sat next to him. He cried, and cried and said, "You can't leave, you can't leave us." I was blind and heartless. I got up, gathered up some of my things, and walked out leaving Jeff and Gavin behind.

On the way to my apartment, I stopped at a convenience store. There was a man leaning up against his car in the parking lot. I walked up to him and gave him a marijuana plant I had grown in a pot with a sun on it. I also gave him a loaf of bread I had made from a recipe in the book of Ezekiel in the Bible. Then I asked him if he wanted my car. He said "You'd better keep it, you may need it."

I went to a pay phone and called Elvira. I told her that I had moved out. I told her where my apartment was. She was shocked in disbelief. She liked the arrangement of us both being married. She found safety in her "goal free" arrangement. "The best of both worlds", "a taste of honey", she would say, and she didn't want that to change.²

After I got to the apartment, I brought my things upstairs then walked around meeting my neighbors and talking with some of them until it started getting dark.

I went to my car and hit the streets again. After driving for a few hours following omens, I stopped to get some barbecue. This was unusual for me, since I was a vegetarian. Something strange happened to me. I thought there was voodoo magic in the barbecue

ribs I had eaten.

For many years, I had a premonition that I would die at thirty-six years old. Now I believed I had to magically cut a year out of my life or I would die. I was smoking *Kool* cigarettes. I looked down at my gas gauge. It was on empty, but the car was still running. I was convinced that the power from the *Kool* cigarettes was what was keeping the car going. I believed that if I could get to my apartment by a predetermined time and before the car stopped, I would beat my appointment with death. My cigarettes ran out, and my car stopped running on Northwest Highway by the Frenchman's Creek apartments. I got out of the car and began pushing it down the road. I thought I had died, and now I was invisible because the police would drive by and didn't stop to help me.

A Jesus Freak in a pick-up truck stopped to offer me assistance. He kept telling me about Jesus, which was strange to me, because I thought I was Jesus. He drove me to a gas station. They didn't have a container to put gas in, so he brought me back to my apartment. I had a bottle of Everclear but he said, "They wouldn't put gas in that." I asked him to take me back to my car and I poured the Everclear into the gas tank. The car started and I drove back to the apartment. The car ran out of juice about a block from the apartment, so I poured a small bottle of bourbon in the tank and went on. It made it to the driveway of the apartment and a policeman helped me push my car back into the parking lot. I thought that I had re-incarnated and was alive again because a policeman had stopped to help me.

I went up the stairs and sat on the floor, ready for transformation. I spent the night doing an "I Ching" mandala using pictures from the book "Seed," an occult book made for the purpose of doing mandalas. I arranged the pictures on the floor, fitting them together as puzzle pieces representing the events of my life. I put a picture of the "Sacred heart of Jesus" in the center and I wept bitterly thinking about my children and my shattered family.³

I made I-Ching Hexagrams until I arrived at the number "8." Then I got up, opened the door, nailed the Tarot card *Temperance* onto the outside of the door as a reminder to me of my unfinished Karma, then I came back inside and fell asleep.

7

The Asylum

When I awoke I was “Enlightened.” A voice within me said, “You will never die. You are an eternal being who has finally joined the human race.” This was the full realization of my human spirit. I thought that I was beyond destruction. I had achieved my goal. The search was over. I had become totally insane. I had the power, but where was Love?

The sun was bright, the plants waved in the breeze, and the birds soared. I felt alive and fresh for the first time that I could remember. The streets were like ribbons flowing through a fantasy - land. I would close my eyes and drive through street intersections believing that it was all in control of fate and if it wasn't my time to transcend this life, there would be no accidents. I was euphoric, having delusions of grandeur, and thought I was immortal and invincible.

I drove over to see Barbara. I had a portable cassette player hanging from my shoulder. I'd play tapes and use them as an instrument of hypnotism and sorcery. I'd play a tape, stare at someone, and think about how I thought the words of the song applied to them. They would think the thoughts I was projecting and freak out. I was playing a Dylan Song or Eagles song, maybe *Lying Eyes*, and stood before Barbara sending her a thought about a person she knew. She was shocked and cried out “How did you know?”

I walked out the house and went down the street to see Ginger. She looked at me with concern in her eyes and said, “You have a death wish.” She gave me a diamond ring to

wear. I put it on my finger wearing it like a knight flying his lady's colors.

I jumped into my car and went to Elvira's house. I felt faint and lay down on her bed. Velvet tunnels of darkness engulfed me. The song *Amy* drifted through my mind. I felt I was melting and merging with the infinite. Shells of consciousness peeled off one after another until nothing was left but the void. I thought I had died and attained Nirvana, which Buddhists believe is beyond the circle of birth and death. But I came back and regained consciousness. I thought it was because I had some more Karma to work off.

Elvira called Barbara and told her what was happening. As she talked to Barbara, Paul sat on the side of the bed, buttoning the sleeve of his denim shirt. The shirt had an embroidered star on the cuff. I thought Paul had already died too and was on another life, burning off Karma. I thought he was giving me a signal telling me that he understood what had happened to me.

Barbara came over, and she and Elvira told me I needed to go and have a psychiatric examination. I went along with their idea, I thought it might be fun. The weather was nice and sunny as we drove to Parkland Hospital. We went to the psychiatric ward. I talked with the shrink while Barbara was nervously telling him that I was always taking notes. She went down the hall to use the phone.

Paul, Elvira, and I went into a room called the "Family Room." I thought that meant that Elvira and I were going to be Family. Paul was grinning and laughing and I was bumming cigarettes off of him. I thought that he knew that it was time for Elvira to leave him and come live with me and was laughing because Elvira didn't know what was going on because she hadn't died yet.

From there we went to Presbyterian Hospital where I signed a form agreeing to a two-week evaluation. The form asked me what my religion was. I put Taoist. I thought it was a game to get Barbara committed because I thought she was the one who was really crazy.

Elvira, Paul, and Barbara left and the nurse gave me some medication. I walked the halls trying to pick up some psychic sign on how to get out of the building. The nurse smiled at me and said, "your psychic stuff doesn't work here, the doors are locked."

The shrink assigned to me was a very large, bearded man with graying hair. I called him King Tut. I sat next to him looking at his face and glasses. He asked me, "How do you feel?" My vision started changing, there was a foggy glow about his face and I started to feel withdrawn. I asked him, "Are you trying to hypnotize me?" He said, "No, that wouldn't be fair." I was convinced that it was just a big game.

He had my mother and dad come from New Orleans so he could interview them in the hospital. He blamed my mother for my condition. That upset her a lot and made her feel guilty and bad. He told her he didn't know if I would recover. He said I would be either

a lot better, or a lot worse.

My parents were not to blame. Tut was just pushing impersonal, heartless, psychological theories. He asked me questions about my past, and when I would answer he'd respond with comments like "Dealing with Barbara is like dealing with the whole Catholic Church, isn't it." I wasn't sure what he meant by that. Nothing he said had meaning in it at all. He was just trying to be a psychic mirror. He treated me in a godless manner with psychotherapy, mind games, guided imagery, and associative thinking.

Elvira visited me every day in the hospital. Some of my other friends and some of my associates from work came to see me a couple of times. I didn't want to see Barbara.

I agreed with the other patients that it was good for us to be locked up as scapegoats for the sake of our friends and families. We could take it. Those outside could believe that because we were locked up, we were crazy, so they must be sane. Then after we were released, they would believe that everyone was sane. We knew that everyone outside was crazy, we were the sane ones. We just humored everyone else. Tut had me on Thorazine and Stellazine. These anti-psychotic drugs pretty well ripped out all of the mission, vision, and emotion from me, and from the others that were taking it. Some of the "guests" were given shock therapy. One lady kept raising her arms into the air saying, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" over and over again. I wondered why she did that. Now I know.

We would pick our menu each day. I thought they were even evaluating me by what I was eating or not eating. I was a vegetarian and so didn't want to eat the meat because I believed it would take me down off my high mission. Some of the items on the tray were covered in plastic. I took that as a sign that I wasn't supposed to eat them.

An orderly would shine a flashlight in my face at night to see if I was sleeping. I couldn't stay in my room during the daytime. I had to be in the community room with the rest of the guests of the zoo.

An orderly took me to another building for some dental work. I spotted a coleus plant at the dentist's office so I took some leaves off a plant and kept it later to smoke because I had read that coleus was a mild hallucinogen.

I made friends with a patient, Diana, who said she was a bastard daughter of Mussolini. She said Mussolini was still alive, and so were JFK and LBJ. She said she and her friend El Capitan, the head of her organization, dined with them from time to time. She said that I was a reincarnation of Robert E. Lee.

My roommate Tim was very depressed. He hanged himself in our room with his belt. King Tut asked me how I felt about Tim's death. I said, "At least he got out."

King Tut used autosuggestion, dream interpretation, and Freudian analysis to try to

reprogram me to where I was before all the crazy stuff happened. I didn't want to go back. I wanted to enjoy the consciousness that I had achieved. That wasn't in the cards. Tut didn't want to be a person to me. He wanted to bounce back my thoughts at me with his twist and aberration on them. He didn't want to talk about himself, only about me. No matter how hard I tried, I could never get him to be a person. After the two-week period was over. I wrote a letter saying that I wanted out. They took my razor away from me. I had to ask for it and they would watch me as I shaved. They said I was suicidal and they were afraid that I would kill myself. They were probably afraid I might take the blade, hide it, and cut someone up. They said that if I insisted on being released, Barbara would have me court committed to the State Hospital for the insane at Terrill. I knew I didn't want that, so I cooperated and let them do their stuff and drain me dry so they could consider me sane enough to be released to the world again.

I stayed there three months, thinking each day that I would get out and resume my journey and mission. I stood at the window waiting to get out, looking at the birds flying, and the grass growing as spring came along.

8

Life after Thorazine

When I finally got out, I was never the same. The powerful drugs they had used on me gave me a chemical lobotomy and stripped me of both reality and unreality. I could not think.

My delusions of grandeur were gone. Before the Thorazine, I had experienced a taste of Satan's power. New Age and Eastern Religion books described that experience. I had experienced it, but now it was gone!

Everything was so depressing. I tried to get back to where I was before Thorazine, but couldn't do it. When I entered the Funny Farm, I didn't care what anybody said. I "knew" their opinions were useless and that fate was in control of all of us. I had laughed at the people who were concerned about me. I just thought about how small and shallow their world was, and how much higher mine was. I was so proud, so full of the devil, so exalted in my mind and spirit. But now I was back in their lowly, boring world, crawling like a worm. Fate had played a trick on me.

I hated Barbara and Tut for busting my bubble and taking me down. I resented them for years. Looking back now, I see that I was very dangerous, and was walking the same path that Charles Manson did. Manson thought the Beatles were giving him instructions through their music. If Barbara and Tut had not intervened, I probably would have ended

up like Manson. ¹

I moved back into my apartment, but Tut insisted that I go back home, so I did. I was depressed all the time, and didn't have a place to meet Elvira. After a couple of weeks, I moved to another apartment. I was still on Thorazine, and I went to see Tut once a week as an outpatient. He said that the medication was my only insurance to stay out of the hospital. I went along with his game because I surely didn't want to go back and be locked up again.

After the Thrill is Gone ²

I kept pressuring Elvira to leave Paul and live with me. She said, "Give me time, my girls still need me." I was consumed with hatred because things didn't work out like I planned. I was angry because she had told Tut that she would never leave Paul. So in the back of my mind, I knew there was no future with her, but my fantasy kept me going on with her. The thrill was gone. My affair with Elvira had no more excitement. The fantasy was only a memory. I continued going through the motions with her, hoping the feelings would return to what they had been before my chemical lobotomy.

My impatience with Elvira grew as I tired of waiting for her to "be mine." I started drifting away from her and started looking for the fulfillment of my fantasy in other women.

That had really started before the funny farm. I expected Elvira to move in with me right away when I had moved out and had gotten an apartment. That's what the fortune - teller had said would happen, but it hadn't. I started wondering if there was going to be another soul mate to fulfil my fantasy, I thought it may be Shanda, but she didn't care about me, she was aloof and never visited me when I was in the asylum.

One day on the way to see King Tut, my car broke down. The ignition coil had gone bad. Jim, the leader of a singles' group at a church in Dallas, stopped to help me. He gave me a ride to the parts house and took me back to my car. He replaced the coil for me and I followed him to his apartment.

He was telling me about his church and how he was living with his girlfriend. That reminded me of a guy I had met in college. The guy was always bragging about having sex with many girls on campus. I had told him, "That's fornication, and it is a sin." He said, "Yea, I know it is a sin, but it doesn't matter if I sin, because I'm Saved." I didn't want to have anything to do with that guy's religion. Jim's actions were saying the same thing. I knew deep inside that I was committing sin with my adultery; but I wasn't trying to justify it in the name of some religious belief.

Jim invited me to go to his singles' group at his church. After what he told me about his sex life, I didn't want to have anything to do with his religion or his church, but I thought

the single's group might be interesting. Maybe I would meet someone there. I went to the group the next Sunday morning. The girl who led the group with Jim was wearing a see-through blouse with no bra. The place was just a "meat market," a place to pick someone up, and all in the name of religion. They told me I couldn't join their group because I was still married. I was still officially married to Barbara, but we had been living a divorced life for many years before that. We had estranged ourselves from each other. I had tried to find happiness in other relationships, but never found it. I was just living a life of desperation.

I went to a Halloween party at Jim's church. I wore a satin gold star and crescent on a black velvet cape and carried Sake to drink. There I met Julie. I told Julie that she may become my wife. I told her about my mental problems. She knew about Thorazine and said that she better beware of me. The next week, I went over to her apartment and took her out on a picnic. As I was trying to put the make on her, she asked me about my children and how often I saw them. She would have been a good friend, but I was not interested in friendships. I wasn't interested in my family. I was still searching for the pot of gold at the end of my romance fantasy rainbow.

The church group was going to New Braunfelds to the Oktoberfest beer bust. While I was waiting to get on the bus, I spotted a girl looking at me from across the parking lot. She was Joan. We introduced ourselves and rode together to New Braunfelds. The bus was stocked with beer and we were all drunk when we got there.

After we returned, we began dating. Someone had given Joan a Bible tract about Eternal Life. She gave the tract to me. I looked through it and decided I already had eternal life because I was an occult master. I threw the tract away. Joan and I talked of getting married and were going to go to New Orleans to meet my Mom and Dad for Thanksgiving holiday. Her mother was suspicious of me and told Joan, "Don't get serious with Ron. He's going to go back to Elvira." The week before our trip, Joan and I smoked some dope. As I looked at Joan's face, it changed into my face. I had a flashback to the Elvira affair and broke up with Joan. I told her I wanted to date other people. Joan's mother was right.

I went to New Orleans to visit my parents. My mother saw that I was miserable. She tried to cheer me up, but I told her, "I'll never be happy again."

After that, I had a fling for a couple of weeks with a disco girl who lived in my apartment complex fantasizing that she might be my deliverer. Nothing satisfied me.

Here come those tears again just when I was getting over you, just when I was going to make it through another night without missing you

I would be relieved every time I broke away from Elvira, but it never lasted. I went from one affair to another trying to get free from her, but I kept having flashbacks into my

fantasy world and we would get back together again.

I was so messed up on drugs, legal and otherwise, that I could not concentrate enough to be a responsible worker. And the depression! The thought of a simple task such as changing the fuse in a car was overwhelming to me. I tried to think of what kind of job I could do. I figured that maybe I could handle trimming shrubs. That was about it. I knew that I wasn't pulling my weight in the job I had. The company was just keeping me on until I got better. I will always be grateful to them for their great patience with me as I recovered.

Early in 1977, I started listening to preachers on the radio. Burt Albritton was teaching out of the book of Job. I could identify with Job. He had lost everything. I had lost everything, including my mind.

A radio preacher, Virgil Barnes, got my attention. After talking with him on the phone, I went his church, *The Spirit Filled Baptist Church* in Grand Prairie. He and his church family were very nice to me. His daughters were beautiful and happy. His son-in-law had stopped using Marijuana. I wanted to stop, too. I was impressed with these people. I wanted a wife like his daughter. I asked God to give me a wife who was filled with the Holy Spirit.

One Sunday, Virgil asked me if I would give a preacher from India a ride to Word of Faith Church. As I gave him the ride, I told him about my spiritual experiences and visions. He smiled and said, "What you experienced was a false heaven. The real heaven will be permanent. Jesus is coming back to take His believers to be with Him there and it will be much grander than anything you have experienced." He said, "Jesus Loves you and shed His Blood for you. He wants to change your life."

I went to Word of Faith for a while, listened to Bob Tilton teach. He was teaching out of Deuteronomy:

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of The LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.⁴

I was reaping the consequences for my actions. I didn't like the way my life was going, and wanted to know why it was so messed up. The occult and New Age books didn't have the answer. They taught sowing and reaping, but it was all in control of Karma and Fate. The only escape was the permanent death of Nirvana.

God was starting to speak to me through the Bible but Satan didn't want to let me go. The war was on. I had been really into *The Eagles* music group. I heard *New Kid in*

Town, a cut from their new album *Hotel California* on the radio in February 1997. In my inflated ego and insanity, I thought the song was it was about me and took the message to mean that I should continue my affair with Elvira.

I went to a prayer and praise group at a Lutheran church that Barbara and I used to attend. Ray, the leader of the group, said he had been praying for me for seven years. I was impressed with that, but I wasn't ready to come to God.

I was reading the Bible, looking for relief from my depression. As I read more and more, the Bible started speaking to me about my affairs, but I kept on doing them. I went to a nearby Baptist Church for some Bible study. A Christian man named Dwayne Weaver called on me from a visitor's card I had filled out. We became friends. He kept telling me of his personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He told me how he and Jesus loved me. I didn't know what he meant, but I was sure that he believed it. His devotion to Jesus and his honest love for me made a great impression on me so I went to church with him for a while.

Elvira wanted to go to church with me. I asked Pastor Barnes what he thought and he said "Don't be fooled, Elvira is not interested in church, she's just using that as an excuse to be with you again." I didn't believe him and it made me mad, but it turned out that he was right.

I was back with Elvira. Dwayne kept telling me I should break up with her, because what I was doing was wrong. He said it in such a loving way that I knew he cared for me. Things he said to me didn't offend me. In the back of my mind, I began to wonder if he was right about my affairs, but I didn't want to stop because I was still reaching for the golden ring of fantasy.

I met Dwayne's friend, Carol, who did paintings of cats and tigers. She was in the Bahai religion. Carol knew some martial arts fanatics. I hung around them for a while. They were expecting a space ship to come and get them. I bought a .45 automatic pistol, filed it to a hair trigger and kept it stuck inside my belt loaded with silver hollow points in case I ran across a vampire some night.

Finally King Tut transferred me to the Dallas Mental Health and Retardation Center. It was a free service. The shrink there said, "I know what's wrong with you; someone slipped you some acid. You are a manic-depressive. I'm putting you on Lithium." Like all shrinks, he dealt in the chemical and the psychological, and not in the spiritual. The spiritual was where my problems were and they had to be dealt with spiritually.

I nearly had a heart attack from improperly administered lithium mood stabilizers. On one visit to the shrink, his nurse took my blood pressure. She said I had heart problems and needed to see a cardiologist. I read up on Lithium in a drug book. The book said the effective dose was very close to the lethal dose. My blood level had to be monitored.

The shrink had almost killed me because he did not check my blood level. I confronted him. I said “You are killing me with this drug. Read here what the book says about Lithium.” He laughed at me and said, “I know what the books say, I can tell your mental condition by looking at you.” I said “Maybe, but not my physical condition.” It made me wonder who really was crazy. His receptionist told me, “Get off the Lithium and take herbs.” I left the place.

I got a card in the mail from *The Church of Scientology* asking, “Do you think you can change?” I wanted to change so I went to one of their introductory meetings. They said they couldn’t treat me as long as I was on psychiatric medication. I wanted to know what meaning my life had, even as crazy as it was. I wasn’t going to find it on Thorazine or Lithium, or in Scientology. I asked God to help me and threw away all the drugs and went cold turkey off the stuff.

*Now there’s a world of illusion and fantasy, in the place where the real world belongs. Now I look for the beauty in songs to fill my head and lead me on, though my dreams have come up torn and empty as many times as love has come and gone.*⁵

I was a miserable human being, trying to work out a deal with Elvira that she would live with me for a few months, and live with Paul for a few months.

One day, in February 1977, I sat on the steps of my apartment thinking of the utterly hopeless mess I had made of my life, and the bondage I was in. I was a kept man. Elvira had another life. She didn’t want to share life with me. I thought, “For the past four years, I’ve been running wild, my marriage, my career, and my family are all ruined. It was all because of my fantasy over Elvira. It’s all over. I’ll never have a life again, never be happy again.” I was a slave to adultery, to my affair with Elvira, a slave to sin. Adultery had not made me happy. I was sick and perverted and asked God to kill me.

Then I met Hank. He was from Chicago, and lived two doors down from me. He introduced me to a girl who called herself Gypsy. She lived in the apartment below Hank. Gypsy was a histologist at Methodist hospital in Oak Cliff. Hank was trying to put the make on her, but she wasn’t interested. I spent the winter doing things with them. Hank and I hung out together and smoked hashish, but it didn’t get me high. I began to talk more to Gypsy. After witnessing a scene I had with Elvira, Gypsy said she’d help me forget Elvira. Gypsy was different, a quiet, pensive lady with deep, simple thoughts. She longed to get back to South Dakota and be with her daughter, Holly. I never asked about her past. We enjoyed sitting around drinking coffee or tequila, or smoking a joint, or reading tea leaves.

She moved to a room in Oak Cliff to be closer to her work. After getting off work in downtown Dallas, I’d go to her apartment, spend the night with her, and go to work from there in the morning.

We went to Mardi Gras in the spring of “78.” On the way, I went to my grandmother’s funeral. We drove through the back roads of the swamplands to get to New Orleans. On the way back, we went to Avery Island and the Japanese gardens that were there. We walked along listening to the wind whispering through the bamboo. Gypsy wasn’t entertainment oriented like the women I dated before. She was natural. She was nice being with.

Someone gave me a paperback book called *The Jesus-Person Promises Book*. It made sense to me. On the advice of my boss, Bob, I went to a Christian Counselor for help. The counselor said that I was abandoned as a child because my parents made me go to my room when I was bad. That made me cry. He asked me what I wanted from him. I explained that I was having an affair with Elvira and couldn’t decide what I should do, continue my affair or try to go back to Barbara. I expected him to give me a straight answer from the Bible, but instead, he just said that I had deep problems and it would take a lot of treatment for me to get well. He wouldn’t answer my question.

I told Gypsy that we should stop having sex. She was ready to go back to South Dakota so we said our goodbyes and separated as friends.

Hank was furious with me for taking Gypsy away from him, so I moved to another apartment complex where Carol lived. She taught me to paint. I went to the Irving art association meetings with her and Dwayne. She was a lot of fun. We never got involved romantically. She was very serious about the Bahai religion. I studied it with her for a while. I was still into my religion of Voodoo, colors, omens and mind control, trying to work my way back to insanity.

Meanwhile, Barbara was trying to raise Jeff and Gavin amidst the turmoil we had created. Jeff and Gavin said that one thing they were glad about was that Barbara and I weren’t battling anymore. They were so sweet to me, always trying to cheer me up. They were both more mature than I was at the time. I was a real basket case.

About that time, Bob left the utility company and went to work at a company north of Dallas. I was sorry to see him go. He had cared for me so much and stuck with me through all my problems. Shortly after he left, I was laid off from my job.

I tried to get a job in photography, took my portfolio around to a few places, but people wanted me to shoot weddings and ballet recitals. I decided that wasn’t for me. I wanted to do artistic work. My brother-in-law suggested I look into a sales job, so I answered an ad in the newspaper for a medical equipment salesman. That job had already been taken, so the employment agency sent me to interview for a job at the same company where Bob had gone to work. It’s a small world.

After I interviewed his company, they gave me a job. I told them everything that had happened to me and the employment director said, “Since you are so comfortable talking

about your problems, we believe you are over them.” That built my confidence.

Pearl was a motorcycle mama, and lived in the same apartment complex as I did. I had been interested in getting a motorcycle for a while, so I bought one and we rode together. We dated for a while, trying to keep it clean. We were engaged, and planned to marry. By that time, I wanted to stop my fornication and adultery. We went on a camping trip. Pearl had brought a joint. We smoked it and had sex. I was angry, disappointed, and disgusted with myself.

*You're still the same, caught up with you yesterday*⁶

I agonized over my messed up mind. Why did I keep on this destructive pattern? I was powerless against it. I was such a slave to my emotions and my deranged thoughts. I went into a field and picked up a dirt clod. I screamed out, “Reality is a mouthful of dirt.” Then I ate the dirt clod. Pearl sensed my distance and started putting me down.

I moved to across town to get away from Elvira. I didn't tell her where I had moved. I broke the engagement with Pearl. She figured it was coming.

I started hanging around with Mike and Shanda again. One day, we were philosophizing about the atomic structure of our bodies. Mike said some people can walk through walls because they know how to align the vibrations. I said I could pass my hand through the table. Mike said try it. I was afraid my hand would get stuck halfway through. Our life was a huge joke. We said love was the answer, but we were more concerned about convincing ourselves that we had a higher consciousness than most other people, so that we could believe we were on the road to enlightenment and godhood. We didn't care about anyone but ourselves. We were proud and knew nothing about love.

Before Gypsy left for South Dakota, she had given me a book about Theosophy, an occult religious group that followed the Ancient Mysteries of Isis and other Egyptian religions along with Buddhism. The core teaching of their group was evolution. I went to *The Constellation*, an Occult book store, in Dallas, and took some courses in *The Kabala*, Magnetic Healing, Self Hypnosis, and Esoteric Astrology. A girl in one of my classes introduced me to the Theosophy Society and I studied under them and other occult metaphysical groups trying to find out what had happened to me, but the answer was not there. The people in these organizations were religious fools who had academic knowledge of the Occult but were not Occult Masters like I was.

They were trying to reach occult experiences through their intellectual pursuits. They were simply documenting the experiences that had happened to other people

I saw though the double talk and contradictions in their teachings. They said that all Holy Books such as the Bible, the Koran, The Hindu and Buddhist scriptures all had the same message in them. I was told that I should pick a master, or a couple of masters to entreat for spiritual power. I ordered a couple of portraits for my apartment; one was Conte de St. Germain and one was The Master Jesus. They said Jesus was part of the hierarchy but no longer as the Christ. I read in the Bible that no man can serve two masters, so I canceled my order and left the organization. God was beginning to open my eyes to the Truth of the Bible.⁷

Gems were some of the things I used in my sorcery. I carried 50 carats of amethyst crystals in a bag to keep me connected to the violet ray of ceremonial magic. One of the books I studied the Occult called *The Science of the Sacraments*. It was a teaching on the spiritual powers and thought forms generated by the gems and relics used in Catholicism. That led me to look into the Catholic Church again. I went to a priest, made a general confession, took communion, and began attending their study group.

While I listened to the teacher of the group, I thought about why I had left the Catholic Church. It was over the Catholic doctrine that prohibited eating of meat on Friday. According to the doctrine, eating meat on Friday was a “Mortal Sin” that would send me to Hell. But the parish priest at the college told me that there was an exception to this rule for football players. They were allowed to eat meat on Friday because they needed it for their strength. I didn’t play on the football team, so I’d go to Hell for that if I died before I made it to a priest to confess the terrible sin of eating meat on Friday and not being on the football team.

To that point, I had tried hard to do all that the Catholic Church told me to do. I took everything they said seriously and I had trusted them. But when I saw they had made going to Hell a sports issue and not a moral issue, I had been crushed. So much for The Pope and the Catholic Church being infallible, unquestionably right on all religious matters. I didn’t want to have anything more to do with an organization that boasted of being the champions of truth, unchangeable and divinely inspired, but would be so arbitrary about what would send a person to Hell.

That had destroyed my trust in religion. So I had trashed my belief in the church, Satan, Jesus, and God the Father, along with Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. I had thrown the baby out with the bath water. I saw the double-talk and lies, but I didn’t see the truth because I had no point of reference to know truth. I just had bitterness and confusion.

I heard the teacher ask, “Does anyone have any questions?” I raised my hand and asked,

“Why doesn’t the Catholic Church teach that people will go to Hell for eating meat on Friday any more?” He smiled and explained, “There are liberal and conservative theological camps within the church, and that one in control at the time determines the teaching. So the rules keep changing depending on which group is in power. What you would go to Hell for as a kid may not apply to you when as an adult.”

What he said, just confirmed the double-talk I had seen in college.

I went home and studied the Bible some more. I came across the Ten Commandments in Exodus. I didn’t know that the Ten Commandments were in the Bible, and I had never even wondered how Catholic teachings compared to what was in the Bible. I thought about the Ten Commandments I had been taught. When I compared them with the Ten Commandments in the Bible, I found that Catholicism only teaches nine of the Ten Commandments. They omitted the second commandment that forbids people to make and bow down to statues. Every time I had knelt and prayed before a statue of Mary or some other saint I had unknowingly broken that commandment, but I didn’t know that, because I was not taught the Bible.⁸

But even being taught the Ten Commandments incorrectly was not really the problem. I couldn’t have gained the love of God by keeping all of the commandments even if I had known what they were. Keeping the commandments couldn’t change my wayward heart.

I saw that the Catholic Church did not use the Bible as the basis for all their teachings, so I left the Catholic Church and never went back to it.

I was still very depressed. I wanted to die and leave this world. I thought about suicide a lot. Sometimes I would hypnotize myself and stand in front of the bathroom mirror in my apartment staring at myself trying to disappear. Sometimes I tried to transform myself into what I would be like when I was older. Once I stood staring at my reflection the mirror with my loaded and cocked .45 automatic pistol held to my head, wondering what kind of mess it would make if I would pull the trigger. I didn’t do it because I didn’t want my family to have to clean up the mess. Satan wanted to kill me before I found Jesus, but God had his hand on me.

I broke down and brought Elvira to my new apartment. The tension between us was too strong. Elvira said, “We don’t have to have sex, I just want to be near you.” We tried to just be friends but we were soon in bed again.

Toward the end of our romance, Elvira tried to make me see that she wasn’t the fantasy-princess I wanted to believe she was. She identified herself as a wench wanting to have a good time with everyone. It was like I was Don Quixote and she was Dulcinea from *The Man of La Mancha*.⁹

I wrote my first book *La Morte du Fantaisie*, the death of fantasy. It was the story of my affair with Elvira. In the story, I turned cold against her and wanted her out of my life. I gave Elvira a copy. She got the message but didn't like it. I let my mother read my copy, then I destroyed it.

I blamed a lot of my problems on Elvira, making her out to be the villain, but I was still trying to justify my innocence and goodness. I was still proud. I wasn't looking for truth. I was looking for pleasure. I received the delusion because I did not have love of the Truth and didn't want to turn from my sin and pride.¹⁰

9

A Hand in the Crowd

My life in the fast lane hit a brick wall at Mardi Gras. I was there with Elvira in New Orleans in the spring of 1979. I had promised to take her because I had taken Gypsy the year before. We went to a Voodoo museum. To the tourists, it was only a museum, but it was much more than that. There were red candles burning, a head of a goat mounted on a wall above a kneeler, and a large snake in a cage. As we looked at the candles and tourist trinkets they had for sale, a black-robed voodoo priest came from the back room. He walked up to me and we exchanged glances of dark spiritual recognition. I knew then that it was not just a museum. It was a place of satanic worship. I bought some candles, and a voodoo doll that I used later to cast a spell on Elvira, and we went on our way.

We had just left a female impersonator bar and were walking down Bourbon Street when I received a Gospel tract from an unseen hand in the crowd.

I stopped and read it. It said, "If you died right now, while you were reading this, would you go to Heaven or Hell?" The tract said something about the blood of Jesus paying the price for my sins. I laughed because I didn't believe in sin, death, Heaven, or Hell. I thought I had experienced death and was an enlightened master in the occult. I laughed, but I didn't throw the tract away.

We drove back to Dallas the next day. The words of the tract were burning in my mind. I had to find out where I stood with this God I didn't believe in. I asked my friends about

the tract. They said it was something about the Bible.

Up to this point I was just casually reading the Bible. Now I started reading it more seriously. As I studied the Bible and prayed, God began to speak to me from the Bible. It was like the words jumped off the page. The words were directed to me, pointing out my problems, and giving me solutions.

I had tasted the leading of messages from spirits before when I followed words, signs, and songs that I thought were directed to me. I was a son of the devil, and had been following lying spirits, but now I was beginning to hear from the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, instead of from the lying spirits of devils.

Throughout the Bible, Jesus says, “Let those who have ears hear.” He said, “hearing, some might not understand.” I had been deaf and blind. I had eyes that did not see and ears that did not hear what God had been trying to tell me. But now, God, through His grace, was beginning to open my eyes and ears.¹

I read out of the book of Proverbs:

“My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.”²

It was plain to me that I needed to sober up, and watch what I was doing. I had been drifting, following omens, but now I was sensing God’s direction. I read on:

“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.”³

That was speaking to the heart of the matter. It was obvious that I had no understanding. I was a fool and I knew it. Then I read something that portrayed exactly what had happened to me. It made me shudder:

“That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart. She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner. So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, ‘I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.’ With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.⁴

This really grabbed me. The scene was just like the first time I went to Elvira’s house and started our adultery. The setting was exact. The words were true and spoke to my heart. The consequences were exactly what had happened to me. God was talking to me specifically about Elvira and me.

The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, cut through my clouded mind and into my heart. It was like a small spark of light had begun to shine deep inside my mind. I was convinced that I had to break up with Elvira for good, and clean up my life so I would go to Heaven and not to Hell.

I was still heavily into witchcraft. I took the voodoo doll, pronounced it to be Elvira and pushed the a pin through it’s heart.

Elvira took the breakup hard and tried to kill herself by sitting in a running car closed up in her garage. Her suicide attempt frightened me. I burned the voodoo doll.

Elvira and I were living a “Romeo and Juliet” relationship that was based on our selves, and on our selfish desires. I didn’t want love from Elvira, from God, or from anyone. I was just full of hate. I thought that I was more evil than the devil himself could be.

I had a friend at work named Ray. He was the one who had invited me to the prayer and praise group at the Lutheran church. He was like Bob, always talking about Jesus. This guy had Bible games on his computer and would invite me to play them to test my

knowledge of the scriptures. It embarrassed me and I thought it was silly, but at the same time, I was interested in knowing more about what the Bible said.

One day, I stayed late after work. I was standing alone on the second floor, looking out the window. It reminded me of the time I stood looking out of the window of the mental hospital, waiting to be set free. I had been released from the hospital, but I was not free. I was still in bondage to sin.

I pondered my spiritual beliefs. I had studied a lot of religions and “Holy Books;” Buddhism, Zen, Yoga, Hinduism, Sufism, Taoism, Bahaiism, Theosophy, Esoteric Astrology, Masonism, and the New Age Secret doctrines. They all had something in common. They said my problem was that I was ignorant of my innate goodness and godhood. They said I had not done enough good things yet or suffered enough yet to make me holy. These religions said that I was inherently perfect but just blew it from time to time. They said that I was really getting better and better but just didn’t realize it. From what I saw of my life, that wasn’t true. My life was getting worse. These religions talked a good talk, but had no power to change lives. I had waited for the promise they offered, but it never came. These religions used the word “God,” but they are referring to either an impersonal God of forces, to feelings within, or to a distorted picture of the true God of the Bible.

I had accepted what other people said about the Bible, but now that I was reading it for myself, I saw what God was really saying. It sure was different from what I had been told it said. I had been told that God was after me to make me suffer. I found that he was after me, but He was after me to love me and to save me. I was desperate for answers. I knew I wasn’t holy and I finally wanted to do something about it.

The Holy Bible stood alone, different from all the rest of the books I had read, and declared a different and unique message. The picture the Bible painted about the nature of man seemed to me to be really accurate. It said that all people are sinners, slaves to sin, bearing fruit of a bad sinful seed, and that there was nothing man could do himself to change that situation. It really told the truth about man. All the other religions painted a false picture of what mankind was like. I thought, “If the Bible was true about what it said about man, it could be true about what it said about God.”

I believed in reincarnation. If I was right, nothing really mattered. We’d all go on the path of reincarnation and evolution. But if I was wrong, and the Christians were right, I’d split Hell.

I decided to give God a chance to show me if what the Bible said about Him was true. What was the gamble if I tried Christianity? If the Christian thing was false, I wouldn’t really be wasting anything; it was all preordained anyway.

I said: “God, you know I don’t believe in you, but if you are really there, I believe that you could show that to me.”⁵

I tried turning over a new leaf. I stopped my sexual affairs, and grew a beard taking a vow not to return to my life of sexual sin. I wanted to change and have a new identity. I thought that being a Christian was cleaning up my life, trying to be good enough to go to heaven. I was trying to get away from my sins, but didn't know where to go. I was dealing with the symptoms of something deeper, my hardened heart. My sinful actions were just evidence of my heart condition; a condition I had tried to change through religion, drugs, witchcraft, fantasy, romance, and denial of the idea of existence itself.

The Pharisees were religious people who prided themselves for being so good. Jesus told them: "The tax collectors and whores will go into the kingdom of God before you." The tax collectors and whores knew they were sinners and saw their need to repent, but the Pharisees thought they were holy and good and didn't think they needed to repent. I was like the Pharisees. I would condemn the "bad" people that I knew. I thought that if I just stopped the "Big" sins, I'd be fine, as long as I wasn't worse than most people.

I told God that I was making a great sacrifice to Him by giving up my adultery with Elvira. I still thought I was giving up something good. It wouldn't be till later that I would see the ugliness of my sins. I still didn't see myself as a sinner. I was just running from being wounded.

Margaret popped up again in my life. I went to her apartment to talk with her and do some drugs. She was lying in bed. I leaned over and kissed her. Her face changed into Elvira's face as I was kissing her. She laughed and asked me, "Who were you kissing? Elvira?"

I walked out. As I sat in the car in front of her house, getting ready to drive off, she came up, leaned in the car window and looked at me. Her eyes were hypnotic, her hair was writhing snakes like the goddess Medusa. I asked her, "Who are you?" She said, "I'll be back for you, I am your death." I drove off and never saw her again.

I had been praying along with my magic. One day I heard someone on the radio preaching that Jesus was the Son of God, and that he led a sinless life and died on the cross to pay for our sins. Then he said "When you pray, pray "In Jesus Name." I thought that was just a different mantra so I decided to try it. To my amazement, I could hardly get the word Jesus out of my mouth. Satan hates the name of Jesus because it is the Name above all Names. Satan had a hold on me and didn't want to let go. He had such a hold on me, that I could not utter the name of Jesus. My tongue was tied. I tried and tried and tried until finally I was gradually able to call on the name of Jesus. Jesus began to set me free.

I was studying Christian Science, an occult metaphysical organization. Since it had a Christian name, I thought it might explain Christianity to me. I had been telling Elvira

what I had read in the tract I got at Mardi Gras about the Blood of Jesus paying for our sins. Christian Science despised the idea of Jesus shedding his blood for our sins because they did not believe in sin, so Elvira liked Christian Science because she didn't want to believe in sin either.

Charles, a friend of mine at work, saw me reading Science and Health and Keys to the Scriptures, the main book of Christian Science. He said, "You shouldn't be studying that. That stuff isn't true. Christian Science is a false religion. There is nothing Christian about it." For some reason, I believed him.

He invited me to go to Word of Faith with him. I had been there before with the preacher from India. I wanted to know more about being a Christian, so I went with Charles. I decided I wanted to be a Christian. One night, when I was there with Charles, Pastor Robert Tilton prayed for me and cast demons out of me.

*I can't feel you any more, I can't even touch the books you've read. Every time I crawl past your door, I've been wishing I've been someone else instead.*⁶

Elvira kept trying to get me to come back to her. I was in a tremendous spiritual battle. It was like trying to get out of the Mafia. I just kept on standing on what I had read in the Bible. Elvira said, "You see me as the serpent, but it's you that's the serpent!" My way of breaking up was to put all the blame on her. I'd always put all the blame on others.

Elvira still wanted to be friends. She told me, "Bob Dylan has become a Christian. He has a new record, *Slow Train Coming*." I bought the record. She gave me a silver cross. I threw it away because I didn't want anything associated with her.

We were tired of hurting each other and so we prayed together that Jesus would either put us together or break us apart. He separated us, and we never got back together again.

10

The Mirror of Truth

One morning at dawn I was riding my motorcycle down a winding road by a lake enjoying the crisp morning air. As I pulled back on to the highway, words of a song by Jackson Browne hit me:

“I’ve been up and down this highway, far as my eyes can see. No matter how fast I run, I can never seem to get away from me. No matter where I am, I can’t help feeling I’m just a day away from where I want to be.”¹

Like the rest of my friends, I talked about finding myself, but I didn’t really want to find myself. I was hiding from myself, living a masquerade. I said that I was on the quest for truth, but I didn’t want truth. I was running from the truth, and from the guilt that plagued me.

Deep inside my heart was a yearning, a craving, an insatiable drive to find happiness. I had spent all my time and substance searching for it, but all I had ever found was fleeting shadows of happiness. Happiness always seemed to be right around the corner, one day away, just out of reach. Life had no meaning, because it really wasn’t life at all.

I rode out to the woods, parked my motorcycle, and walked down a trail, carrying my Bible until I came to a secluded spot where I could be alone and reflect on the thoughts that were flowing through my mind.

I sat on the ground in the middle of the trail, opened my Bible and began to read. I don't remember what I read, but the Holy Spirit of God fell on me. I looked around. His presence was so strong that the ground seemed to tremble and I thought Jesus was standing behind a nearby tree in front of me. I was afraid to move, afraid that Jesus might step out from behind that tree.

Then I turned to the Book of Malachi, which said:

“The lord is witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have broken faith though she is your betrothed wife. Did he not make one being, with flesh and spirit... for I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel.”²

I knew without a doubt that God was calling my attention to these words. Just thinking of Barbara made me angry. I hated her. My heart sank within me. Conviction of my lack of love broke me. I was caught in a vise. One side was my hatred, and the other side was the Word of God telling me to love Barbara.

*The wicked have no peace and you just can't fake it. There's only one road, and it leads to Calvary.*³

The Knight of Mirrors in the story *Man of La Mancha* confronted don Quixote with his fantasy and foolishness, but did not present him the truth. But like a mirror, the Bible was shining truth into my soul, breaking through my masks of graciousness, pleasant smiles and false humility.⁴

My search for truth and my quest for the promised land had brought me to the mirror of truth. There was no getting around it, over it, or under it. I sat naked before God. My sins paraded before me; selfishness, lying, stealing, cursing, hatred, adultery, sorcery. They were ugly, I was ugly, full of darkness and death. I had to fall hard to see my fallen state. Some don't have to fall that hard to see they are sinners.

The tract I received at Mardi Gras asked if I was going to Heaven or to Hell. Now I knew the answer to that question. I was headed for Hell. I had stopped my adultery, but my hatred of Barbara was enough to keep me from standing in the presence of a Holy God.

My notion of love had been backwards. What I had pursued as love wasn't true love. It was self-gratification. Love was not grasping, it was giving, but I always took. There was no love in me to give. I had finally found myself. I was a selfish corrupt sinner, a liar, a child of the devil, the Father of lies. The devil had no life or love to give. All the devil could do was to steal, kill, and destroy, and I was just like him.⁵

I could only love if love was in my nature. I needed a new nature, a new father who loved. The love I was looking for could only be found in God. Only God had love to give. I needed to be adopted by Him, to be his child. I needed to be born again, born of

his spirit. I needed to repent. My life had to change. No matter how hard I tried, I could never clean up my life enough to go to Heaven. I wanted to change. I saw then that I needed to have Jesus as my Savior. He had been offered as a sacrifice in my place to pay for my sins and reconcile me to God. I'd never make it any other way. ⁶

I asked Jesus to forgive me for all my sins and be Lord of my life. I bowed my head and asked Him to change me into the person He wanted me to be. Jesus forgave me and poured His love into my heart. He cracked my heart of stone. He gave me a new heart that wanted to please Him. I was no longer angry. My hate was gone. I forgave Barbara for all the things she had done to me. Grace and relief came upon me. My guilt vanished, as I knew without a doubt that my sins had been forgiven. ⁷

Eight years and many fools had passed through my life since I had begun my search for the truth. Now, I knelt on the ground crying before God with a Bible in my hand.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:16,17.

I used to try to imitate Jesus, thinking that would make me become like Him. I had tried to keep God's commandments because I was afraid of Him. The law of the Ten Commandments could never give life, the law only brought death. It was a mirror of my lost condition. ⁸

Jesus said to love my enemies, to love the unlovable, to turn the other cheek, and forgive those who mistreated me. Jesus said that in doing these things I would be like my Father in Heaven. Jesus wasn't trying to explain a code of conduct of works. He was revealing the nature of God, the Love of God. The love of God could not be imitated. Love is a person, Life is a person, that person is Jesus Christ. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Life only exists in Jesus because He is God, and God is Love. ⁹

Cynthia and I used to sit around and wonder what the meaning of life was. I had found the answer. The meaning of life was having Jesus living in me, having the Love of God in me, and loving others with that love.

There was only one commandment to follow now. To Love God and to love one another. This fulfilled all the law and all the commandments. Jesus had begun a work in me and He would finish it. ¹⁰

I stood to my feet and walked on down the trail to the river. As I stood there, leaning

against a tree, watching the ripples in the water, I wondered why it had taken God so long to get through to me? I remembered how many times God had sent someone to me to tell me the Truth, to tell me about Jesus. There was my boss Bob who prayed for me with tears in his eyes. Then there was the Jesus freak who stopped and helped me on the road. God had given Joan a tract to give me, but I had thrown it away. He sent Dwayne to tell me He loved me. He put Virgil on the radio to reach out to me. He sent the preacher from India to tell me about true heaven. There was the hand in the crowd, Ray, Charles, and others.

He used many people to plant seeds of truth in my mind and some to water them. I resisted repentance because I thought my sins were so precious, and didn't realize they were destroying me. I didn't want to give them up so I suffered in them. The problem was that I wanted to be saved in my sins, not from them. I had really played the fool. The rainbows I had been riding were delusions of grandeur, the vanity of my imagination, following the spirits of the devil. I had been full of hate. I had to be broken and humbled to receive Truth and The Love of God. ¹¹

How ironic it was that I had found happiness in the one place I least expected to find it, In Jesus Christ. I could hardly believe it. I had mocked Bob and the Jesus Freaks who talked about Jesus, and being born again. Now I was born again.

It was noon now. I slowly walked back down the trail, put my Bible in my backpack, and just sat on the motorcycle looking at my hands on the handlebars. For a precious moment, I drank in what had happened. I was a new person. Things were going to be different from now on. I hit the starter button, circled back to the main road and headed back to my apartment. ¹²

My apartment was like a cave. Black velvet drapes hung on the walls. On my Voodoo altar were candles and two chalices that Gypsy had bought me at Mayfest the year before. Above my altar hung a macrame implanted with a painted cow skull crowned with wings from an owl. My bookcases were filled with books of witchcraft and the occult. These things had meant a lot to me. They seemed dead and different now.

I went outside and walked over to see Darlene, a friend who lived two doors down from me. We'd cook dinner for each other and listen to music. Sometimes we would go out to the lake and just talk. I told her about my experience with Jesus. She didn't understand, but she was happy for me.

Later that evening, I went to see Shanda to share my experience with her. She was sitting at her kitchen table smoking a joint with one of her friends. She offered me a hit and I told her, "Thanks, but I don't need it." I talked to her about Jesus. She said, "You're copping out. Whatever it takes to get rid of guilt was all the same. Forgiveness of sins and release from guilt are just another head- trip. You just have to be true to yourself." I talked with her and her friend for a while then left and drove out to the country to see Mike. He was standing by a fire he had made in his back yard. The smoke was getting in

my eyes. He said, “The smoke likes you.” I walked around to the upwind side of the fire and began to tell him how I had been born again, and how Jesus had set me free from my hate. He just laughed at me. It was dark now. Mike just stood there staring at the flames and grinning. He didn’t want to talk. I said, “I have to be going, Mike, see you around.” I walked around to the front of his house, then I got in my car and drove home.

It had been a special day. I wasn’t ready for it to end just yet. I walked over to the bank of the creek behind my apartment. The bright moon cast a silver shimmer into the water that wove its way through the rocks, cascading into a silent pool. As I sat there thinking about the day, it made me sad that Darlene, Shanda, and Mike didn’t understand what Jesus had done in my life. They just thought I was on another head - trip.

That’s exactly what I had thought about my boss Bob, and the other Christians five years before. Now I knew why he and the others were so excited about Jesus. Now I knew why they had been sad for me because I hadn’t been interested. They knew I had a rocky road ahead and I was going to have to learn the hard way

The next day, I returned to work and told Bob my exciting news. His jaw dropped. When he got over his surprise, he said, “Well Ron, I’ve sure learned something from this. I’ve learned never to give up on anyone. I thought you would never get saved.”

11

Sentimental Journey

*Gonna take a sentimental journey, Gonna set my heart at ease,
Gonna make a sentimental journey, to renew old memories.¹*

I took a vacation and set out on a sentimental journey to Louisiana, to retrace my roots and visit my relatives on the farm. Darlene packed some sandwiches for me to take on my trip. It would be good to get away for a while. I went in a VW van, a camper, with a table and a fold-down bed in it. I had traded my sports car for it, had rebuild the engine, and done a brake job on it before I left on the trip.

When I got to Shreveport, I went to visit my old friend Dwayne Weaver. It was nice to see him again. I spent the night at his house. We stayed up late, talking and laughing about old times and how great it was that God had saved me.

Early the next morning, I drove to see the house where I lived during my school days. The house was gone, and in its place was a parking lot. I got out of the van and walked to the back of the lot. The alley was still there, and the periwinkles were blooming along a fence just like they did when I was a kid. I looked across the alley and saw the house of my childhood friend, Butch. It was still there. We used to have great times together, we'd play in the creek, built forts, and spend a lot of time in our tree house. There were times when we didn't get along well. Sometimes it would be his fault, and sometimes it was mine. We'd get angry, say some ugly things, and then wouldn't speak to each other for a while. During these angry times, we'd play with other kids and count each other as an enemy.

The times that it was my fault, I'd try to make up with Butch. I'd say, "I'm sorry for what I did. Will you be my friend?" But he wouldn't accept my apology right away. Then I'd say, "I'll give you my favorite Comic Book if you'll be my friend." He'd accept my gift, the offence would be forgotten, we would be reconciled, and enjoyed our friendship again.

A barking dog interrupted my reflections. I walked down the alley to the creek. It wasn't nearly as long a walk as I remembered. It seems like growing older and traveling makes a lot of things seem smaller and less significant. I remembered building dams in the creek, and navigating the creek in homemade boats that always sank. I walked back up the hill to my van, and headed for the Catholic high school I had attended.

The school was in the middle of downtown Shreveport. It took me a while to find it. I used to ride to school on my bicycle, but after I moved away, a lot of new roads had been added, and the buildings had changed, so I didn't recognize the route. Finally, I found the school, and parked across the street from it. I just sat there, looking at the school building and the church. There were a lot of memories there, but most of them had not been pleasant, so I hadn't missed them. I got out of the van, and walked across the street.

Ave Maria

The school and the grounds were run down. The statue of Mary in the grotto where my classmates and I used to pose for pictures had an arm broken off. I walked down the sidewalk, across the grass, until I stood before the statue. I remembered kneeling before this statue, praying to Mary. I also remembered placing garlands of flowers on another statues of Mary, crowing her "Queen of the Roses, Queen of the May." I had been very devoted to Mary, and had worn her Scapular, which was a couple of scratchy piece of cloth connected by ribbons. I wore it under my clothes. It was supposed to insure my salvation.

Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus. She was an humble servant of God. He had greatly honored her by choosing her to be the mother of Jesus, however the Catholic Church had added many things to what the Bible had said about her. They elevated her to a position that belonged only to Jesus.

My Catholic teachers said Mary was sinless, and that she was my life, my advocate and my hope. They said Jesus was my savior, but I was supposed to pray to Mary and ask her to convince Jesus to hear my prayers. This caused me a lot of confusion for a long time.²

The Bible said that only Jesus was sinless. He had ascended to Heaven and is there, standing before God the Father as my only advocate, constantly making intercession for me. The name of Jesus was the only name I must call on to be saved. Life and hope is

only in Him, and I didn't need any mediator to intercede to Jesus for me, because He wanted me to boldly come to Him. He loved me and wanted to help me. Jesus alone was worthy of my devotion.³

I retraced my steps back to the driveway, looked at the house where the priests lived, kicked a rock across the driveway, then walked over to the church. I went inside, sat on a pew near the back of the church, and looked around. I had been there many times before.

Agnus Dei

The walls were lined with the Stations of the Cross. They depicted the suffering and death of Jesus. My eyes came to rest on the Crucifix above the altar. When I was a child, I would say in *The Apostles Creed*, "He suffered, died and was buried, He descended into Hell, and on the third day, He rose again from the dead from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead." I never knew why Jesus had to come down to Earth and die on the cross. Jesus as the judge is all I knew. I didn't know Him as Savior because I wasn't taught that He had saved me. I was taught that I had to save myself.

Another prayer came to mind, the Agnus Dei: "Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us." I used to kneel before the Crucifix, saying that prayer. But according to what I had been taught, Jesus had not taken away my sins. My sins were always still there.

Catholicism was a religion of good works for salvation. It taught me that I had to pay for and atone for my own sins by adding penances, earning indulgences, and finally, finishing the job by burning in the fire of Purgatory. This would complete the payment for sin and balance the scales on my behalf so God would let me in Heaven.

The God I served as a Catholic was a blindfolded judge, who held a sword in one hand and a pair of scales in the other. He showed no mercy. On one side of the scales were all my sins that had offended him; all of his commandments I had broken, all the religious rules I had not kept, and all bad things I had done to people. I had to pay for my sins. I had to patch up things with God, just like I always had to patch things up with my friend, Butch.

He paid a debt He did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand new song "Amazing Grace" All day long Christ Jesus paid a debt, that I could never pay⁴

The Truth was that Salvation is complete in what Jesus did. He had come to the Earth to be offered as a sacrifice, to be slain for my sins as the spotless Lamb of God. Jesus was offered one time for my sins and said, "It is finished," when He died on the cross. As the Mediator, he had purged all my sins with His blood. Through the merits of Jesus alone,

my salvation was paid for in full and it was a “Free Gift,” available to me, and to anyone else who would reach out and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. God would be merciful to my iniquities and He would not remember my sins any more. All who trusted in Jesus were acquitted and declared not guilty. There was no more earthly priesthood offering sacrifice to God. That was the New Testament.⁵

The Catholic Church didn’t teach the New Testament. They didn’t believe that Jesus had finished the work of salvation on the cross, instead, they kept offering Jesus over and over again in the Mass. They said His sufferings and death added a lot of merit to the “Treasury of Grace” but He had not gained enough for my salvation. Additional merit had to be added to this “Treasury of Grace;” merit gained by the sufferings and good works of Mary, the “Saints,” and merit earned by my own good works and sufferings. Their teachings were all of human origin, and opposed what God says in the Bible.

They had a zeal for good works, but for the wrong reason. It’s not that good works were not important. Good works are important. Good works are the fruit and result of Salvation, but they are not the means of salvation.

God’s ways were different. I had offended Him, yet He is the one who offered the gift of reconciliation to me. Nothing I could offer him could buy his forgiveness. I didn’t have anything of value to offer Him so he provided the offering of His Son Jesus. Jesus paid the price of reconciliation. I was on good terms with God again. We were friends. Mercy triumphed over Justice. That was the Gospel, the good news.

I had been trying to earn something that God had already given to me, and anything I would try to offer him as payment was like holding out my hand to him, offering Him an old filthy rag. It would take a lot more than a comic book or a bunch of ritualistic prayers to do the job. Nothing could be added to what Jesus did on the cross 2000 years ago. Two thousand rosaries, five thousand Masses, and ten thousand years burning in purgatory would not even be a grain of sand on the beach of grace. All Jesus wanted from me was my heart and all there was for me to do was to rest in his love.

I got out of the pew and walked out the door, down the steps to the street. I turned and took one last look, crossed the street, got back in the van, and headed south.

It was about mid afternoon when I was driving along a stretch of road about halfway from Shreveport and my grandparents’ house. This stretch of road had a memory for me.

When I was a kid, our family would drive down to central Louisiana to visit my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. It was great fun. My mother’s family lived along the bank of a bayou and I’d play with my cousins. My dad’s family lived on a farm. I used to love walking out in the field with my dad’s father. He would tell me stories of Indians that used to live on his land and he’d show me civil war bullets and arrowheads he had

found in the fields. He showed me how to make a pitcher out of gourds that grew along the fence in the pasture. He had a blacksmith shop and he'd let me crank the blower on the forge. I'd feed the chickens and milk the cow. It was such a nice change from the city life I lived.

Alongside this same stretch of road to my Grandparents' farm there was an old wooden sign that said Jesus Saves! I'd see it every time we went to see my Grandparents. I can still picture it now after all these years. As we'd drive by, I'd ask what it meant. No one knew what "Jesus Saves" meant. We concluded it must be some strange religion.

Now I know that Jesus Saves! I lift up my voice in praise to Him, looking forward to the day in that land far away when in the company of the saved, He will extend to me a nail scarred hand in a crowd.

Three hours later, I drove up the long driveway to my Grandparents' house. My Uncle Tom and his wife lived there now. I walked up the steps and called out. My aunt said, "Come on in Ronald and have something to eat." It was like I had been there yesterday, yet it had been sixteen years since I had seen them. The food was good and I asked, "What is it?" They laughed and said, "Don't ask until you have finished." Then they told me it was garfish balls. It was scrumptious.

I went with my uncle and cousins back into the fields where they were farming 600 acres of soybeans. We went to the woods, gathered some muscadines and came back to the house. I took a ride on their old Harley Super-glide. We talked of old times and I told them about what Jesus had done for me.

The next day, I returned to Dallas, refreshed.

When I returned, I went into hermitage. All my life, I had tried to change my ways to be the way women wanted me. I'd go shopping for clothes with Barbara because she liked to shop. I'd go to art shops and quaint bars because Elvira liked them. I tried to dress like I thought girls wanted me to dress. I tried to adopt other people's values to get along with them. I was tired of it. I told God that if He wanted a wife for me, He'd have to drop her through the ceiling of my apartment because I wasn't looking for one anymore. I had enough with fantasy, dating, and sorcery.

The light I had been following was darkness. I saw how vain and ridiculous all of my "secret knowledge" Mystery Religion beliefs really were. Jesus had drawn me out of it.

I stood outside my apartment and thought, "I'm going to walk in there as if I had died and I was a stranger deciding what to keep and what to get rid of."

I threw all my sentimental things that were associated with Elvira into the creek along with my wedding ring from Barbara and the wedding ring that Pearl had bought me for

our marriage that never happened.

I gave my sons the family pictures I thought they may want, then I burned all my pictures, poetry, writings, occult and magic books, and records in a whiskey barrel on the back porch of my apartment. I'm still amazed the fire department didn't come. They probably thought it was a big cookout.

I told Darlene what I had done and she was sad. She had liked my poetry and writings, but I wanted to go on to a new life. I bought a piano keyboard and started piano lessons at Brookhaven College. I played along with my new records of Bob Dylan praising God for saving me.

Three weeks later a friend of mine, Susan Cox, called me. We had worked at the same engineering company for a year then she left. She was experiencing a lot of problems and her brother told her, "The answers are in the Bible." Susan knew that I was always studying some kind of religion so she called me and I went over and visited her. I shared what Jesus had done in my life and we studied the Bible together. She repented of her sins, received forgiveness, and became born again on October 24, 1979.

We were married a month later.

...but that's another story.

12

Apology

I'm sorry for all the people in this story I used and condemned. I want all those who were involved in my life to know that I love them.

Jeff, forgive me for deserting you and for being so selfish and insensitive to your plea for me to stay with you, Gavin, and Barbara, and for flaunting my adulterous affair with Elvira in your face.

Gavin, forgive me for deserting you so early in your life, and for giving you such a poor example of what a Daddy is and what a family is.

Barbara, forgive me for using you to build my self-esteem, for dragging you into marriage, for my selfishness, and for ignoring your needs.

Elvira, forgive me for using you to satisfy my wounded pride, and for the hurt I caused you. I also ask forgiveness of your two daughters for parading our affair before them.

Paul, forgive me for adultery against your wife.

Shannon, forgive me for rejecting your love for me for so long.

Jerry, forgive me for resenting you and tormenting you when you were a child and for not being a good brother to you when you were always so good to me.

Margaret, forgive me for hating you.

Mamay, forgive me for causing you such sadness.

Daddy, forgive me for not appreciating you more.

Mark, forgive me for pushing you away instead of loving you more.

Susan, forgive me for being so legalistic during the first years of our marriage and for trying to mold you into an image of what I wanted you to be.

I forgive those who have hurt me and deceived me, and pray that they will repent and be released from their sins and guilt by the Blood of Jesus.

I pray that all of you have found the Love of God in Jesus Christ. If you have not already, ask Jesus into your heart. He wants to change your life into a better life that you can ever imagine or dream.

“Love one another as I have Loved you.”¹

“Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for a friend”²

“Love one another. By this will men know that you are my disciples”³

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity,
I am become a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though
I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries,
and all knowledge; and though I have all faith,
so that I could remove mountains,
and have not charity,
I am nothing.”⁴

Thus is it written in The Book

13

Epilogue

I've told my story. What's yours? How are you doing in your search for happiness?

If you died right now, while you
were reading this, would you go
to Heaven, or to Hell?

... from a hand in the crowd

Jesus Christ died to save you from your sins.

Give him a call.

References:

1. Possession

1. *The Magical Mystery Tour* - by The Beatles- Magical Mystery Tour album.
2. *I am a Walrus* - by the Beatles - Magical Mystery Tour album.
3. *The Magical Mystery Tour* - by the Beatles.
4. *ibid.*

2. False Expectations

1. *Let the Sunshine in* - From The Musical Hair.

3. Adultery

- 1.1 The philosophy of the Troubadours was that “marriage...had no connection with love; it was a matter of status, and the continuing of the family...true love could only exist between unmarried persons. ... Love is a never-satisfied searching and longing for a good that is not yet possessed... Love is seen above all as a quest in which all the comforts and conventions of settled life are discarded.” pp 217, 218 of *The Troubadours and their World* - by Jack Lindsay.
2. *Fountain of Sorrow* - by Jackson Browne- from album Late for the sky.
3. *Have You Ever Been Mellow* - by Olivia Newton John.
Mandy - by Barry Manilow.
Laughter in the Rain - by Neil Sedaka.
Best of my Love - by The Eagles.
My eyes adored you - by Frankie Valle.

4. Sorcery

1. *Dust in the Wind* - by Kansas - Eden album.

5. Insanity

1. A Saying of a false prophet and Zen Master.
2. *Your Bright Baby Blues*- by Jackson Browne- The Pretender album
3. *I thought I was a Child*- by Jackson Browne- Everyman album.

6. Antichrist

1. *Cats in the Cradle* - by Harry Chapman and Sandra Chapman.
2. “A foolish woman...says to him Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant, he knows not that the dead are there and her guests are in the depths of Hell”- Proverbs 9:13-18.
3. *Mandala*- A diagram used in witchcraft.

7. The Asylum

8. Life After Thorazine

1. *Child of Satan, Child of God* - by Susan Atkins, Chapter 11 Helter Skelter, Page 112.
2. *After the Thrill is Gone* - The Eagles
3. *Here Come those Tears Again*- by Jackson Browne- The Pretender.
4. The Holy Bible- Deuteronomy 11:26-28.
5. *Fountain of Sorrow*, by Jackson Browne- Late for the Sky album.
6. *Still the Same* - by Bob Seger Silver Bullet Band- Stranger in Town Album.
7. "No man can serve two masters" - Matthew 6:24
8. Catholicism left the second Commandment out and split the last commandment against coveting into two commandments to make ten commandments.

Catholic 10 Commandments	Bible's 10 Commandments
1. I am the LORD your God, You shall have no other gods before me.	1. I am the LORD thy God. . . . Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. (Exodus 20:2-3)
	2. "Thou shalt not make to thee a graven thing (image), nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that in the waters under the earth: Thou shalt not adore (bow down to) them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exodus 20:4-5)
2 Thou shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.	3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain." (Exodus 20:7)
3.Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day.	4. "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day." (Exodus 20:8)
4.Honor thy father and thy mother.	5. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thou mayest be long lived upon the land which the LORD thy God will give thee." (Exodus 20:12)

Catholic 10 Commandments	Bible's 10 Commandments
5. Thou shalt not kill.	6. "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13)
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery	7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:13)
7. Thou shalt not steal.	8. "Thou shalt not steal." (Exodus 20:15)
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.	9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (Exodus 20:16)
9. Thy shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.	10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house: neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his."(Exodus 20:17)
10. Thy shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.	

9. Man of La Mancha is a book, play and Movie by Dale Wasserman, based on The Adventures of don Quixote by Cervantes.
10. " God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (wrongfulness of character)"- I Thessalonians 2:11-12.

9. A Hand in the Crowd

1. Jesus said some people hear but don't understand - Matthew 13:14, 13:43.
2. Proverbs 4:20-27.
3. Proverbs 6:23- 33.
4. Proverbs 7:5-27.
5. We must come to God in Faith, believing he will hear us - Hebrews 11:6.
6. *Idiot Wind* - Bob Dylan - Blood on the Tracks album.

10. The Mirror of Truth

1. *Your Bright Baby Blues*- by Jackson Browne- The Pretender album.
2. Malachi 2:14-16.
3. *Saving Grace*- by Bob Dylan-, from the "Saved" album.
4. Opt Cit -Man of La Mancha.
5. Jesus said those who do the works of the devil are his children - John 8:44.
6. God and his love dwells in Christians -1 John 4:15,16
Jesus says we must be born again to enter the kingdom of God- John 3:5-7, Matthew 18:3.

- God chose to make us his children , to set us free by the Blood of Jesus and forgive our sins - Ephesians 1:4-7.
 After we are born again, our minds will be renewed by the Holy Spirit to be like Jesus as we study his word. We will walk in his love - 4:17 - 5:19.
 Through faith we are adopted and have received the Holy Spirit who tells us we are god's children- Romans 8:15,16, Titus 3:3-7.
7. If we confess our sins, Jesus will forgive us and cleanse us -1 John 1:9.
 Jesus translated us and forgave us- Colossians 1:13,14.
 God promised to give us new hearts that would want to walk in God's ways and keep his commandments- Ezekiel 11:19,20.
 8. The law was our teacher to show us our need for Jesus to save us - Galatians 3:24
 9. We know we have been born again and that God is in us and we are in him because we are like him. If we say we are saved and love God but hate people we are liars - 1-John 4:7 - 21.
 Love your neighbor as yourself - Leviticus 19:18.
 Be like God your Father, love your enemies - Matthew 5:43-48.
 10. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, mind and strength, and love our neighbor as ourself- all the commandments and laws hang on this - Matthew 22:36-40.
 11. I ran from the light because my deeds were evil - John 3_16-21.
 God had brought me down like he brought Lucifer down. I had said like Lucifer I will exalt my throne above the stars of God -Isaiah 14:13
 I had to become as a little child to be converted and enter the kingdom of heaven - Matthew 18:3,4.
 God had given me the power to become his son because I had believed in the name of Jesus - John 1:12,13.
 Jesus said " I am the resurrection and the life Whoever lives and believes in me will never die" - John 11:25,26.
 12. I was a new person. Old things had passed away, all things had become new, I had been reconciled to God - 2 Corinthians 5:15-17.
 I had been translated into the Kingdom of Jesus, which is not of this world, my sins were forgiven , Colossians 1:12-14.
 Who the son makes free is free indeed - John 8:35.

11. Sentimental Journey

1. Sentimental Journey- Sung by Sinatra-Writer(s): Brown/Homer/Green .
2. Catholicism presents Mary as being the sinless mediator to Jesus.
 Ref: in the " Hail Mary" prayer: "Holy Mary, Mother of God pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."
 Ref: in the "Hail Holy Queen" prayer: She is presented as our life, our hope and our advocate: "Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, our sweetness and our Hope...turn most gracious advocate thy eyes of mercy towards us...pray for us O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ".
3. All have sinned (except Jesus): Romans 3:23.
 Jesus alone was perfectly obedient and sinless: Hebrews 4:15,16; Romans 5:18,19.
 Jesus alone is our advocate to God: 1 John 2:1.
 Jesus is our only Mediator: 1 Timothy 2:5.
 The name of Jesus is the only name by which we must be saved: Acts 4:10-12.
 We don't need a mediator to Jesus, he is wants us to come to Him: Hebrews

- 4:15,16.
God gives his glory to no other: Isaiah 42: 8.
4. He Paid a Debt- Author Unknown.
 5. Jesus was offered one time for our sins: Hebrews 7:27; Hebrews 10:12-18.
Jesus said "It is finished" when He died for our sins: John 19:30.
Our sins are not purged in Purgatory. Jesus purged our sins with His Blood: Hebrews 1:3; and Hebrews 9:14,15.
Salvation is a Free Gift. It cannot be merited by our works: Romans 5:15; Romans 6:23; and Ephesians 2:8,9.
Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved: Romans 10:12,13.
 6. Jesus finished the work of salvation on the cross, there is no priests on earth, no more altars on earth, no more sacrifices on earth. Jesus is gone into Heaven. He is not offered any more: Hebrews 9:11; Hebrews 9:24-28; Hebrews 10:10.

12 Apology

1. John 15:12,13.
2. 1 John 3:16.
3. John 13:34.
4. 1 Cor 13:1,2.

visit:
Goodnuz.com
Email seeker@goodnuz.com