

The tower radioed that our 70-ton airliner had one of its main gear tires missing!



Intervention Of Another Kind

“Captain, one of your main tires is lying back on the runway.” My copilot and I exchanged glances. His eyes were wide and his mouth was open, and I knew my own expression was one of disbelief.

**“My God,” he muttered,
“what do we do now?”**

My thoughts repeated it: “My God, what do we do now?” – but my question was more of a prayer. I was a good Catholic and I attended church religiously but I still did what I wanted. It seemed the only time I ever talked to God was when my life literally depended on it. For many years this was the pattern and extent of my religious life: If I needed something in a hurry, I cried out to God.

Now I had command of a 70-ton airliner with only three out of four main tires – not a good percentage – no spare, and not a tow truck in sight.

That this should happen to an airline with the best safety record in the world was inconceivable.

As He had numerous times before, the Lord God was about to intervene and avert a near tragedy.

My first life-and-death prayer came when I was in college. One day I was skydiving over the Arizona desert when my parachute malfunctioned. I threw out the emergency chute, but it tangled with the main parachute. With 1,000 feet to go at 120 miles per hour, I didn't need a calculator to know I'd be eating sand very shortly. But I had just enough composure to yell, "God, help me!" Immediately a peace came over me that was unexplainable to a man about to die. I looked up and watched the parachute unspool, then quickly open.

When I hit the ground I said a quick "Thanks, God," and went on with my life.

After college I joined the Navy and flew gunships in Vietnam. My lifestyle kept me as far away from God as a person can be. I tried to fill my emptiness with all the things of the world, but satisfaction was always short-lived.

One day while on patrol I heard an explosive noise from the engine, and the little fellow on the ground got the better of me in the air. The next thing I knew we were hurtling toward the

rice paddy below. On the way down I yelled out to God. Later my copilot remarked that he didn't know I was the religious sort. I wasn't – but that same peace came over me again. That assurance that I was going to be alright. We hit the ground with a roar. We could have been dead, but we crawled out of the wreckage without a scratch between us. I said, "Thanks, God," and kept on running as I had before.

After active duty I joined the Naval Air Reserve, and one afternoon after taking off from San Diego in a P2V Neptune with full tanks of fuel and 15 passengers, my right engine caught fire. Unable to extinguish it, I knew I'd have to land within minutes before the fire spread through the wing to the tanks. It was totally overcast below me, and to compound the situation my radios went dead. At that point I didn't know if we were over land, sea or mountains.

Again I called out, "**Lord, help me!**" Amazingly, peace came over me as it had before. Closing the throttles, I pushed the nose through the clouds. Miraculously, as we broke through the cloud layer I saw a runway directly ahead – the same runway I'd taken off from a few minutes before. Thirty seconds later we were on the ground. I said my thanks and thought, "See You next time, God."

While I was serving on Naval Reserve duty in Memphis in 1979, two persistent Christian friends kept asking me to church and prayer meetings. I had my religion – parties and the

pursuit of the good life – so I declined Greg and Vicky Smith's invitations. But one day, after inviting me to dinner, Vicky gave me a plate of chocolate-chip cookies, my favorites. Hidden under the cookies was a *VOICE* magazine. When I saw that I thought, "Well, here's one thing I'm not going to swallow." But I didn't have much to do that day so I took the bait.

Reading about men who talked as though Jesus were a personal friend, who said He had healed them of physical, emotional and spiritual sickness, I was absolutely astounded. I decided this was either the phoniest PR job in the world or maybe it was for real. And if it was for real I couldn't take a chance on missing out.

As weeks passed I looked more into the phenomenon called the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." I read *They Speak With Other Tongues*, and more copies of *VOICE* magazine. I was fascinated, but still I put off attending a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) meeting.

Then the Lord came into the cockpit of the B727 that day, and I made a decision.

"Okay, Lord," I said in my best bargaining voice, "I know I've been putting it off. Get us on the ground safely with no injuries and I promise I'll go next month."

During radio communications with Dallas-Fort Worth (where we were going to land), a feeling of concern had been manifested from the ground that the remaining tire would not fully

support the weight of the aircraft because of its suspected structural condition. On our final approach at 800 feet, I felt the yoke start to move in my hand. I wasn't putting any pressure on it; it just seemed to move by itself. As we neared the ground the yoke came back and gently flaired the aircraft. That day an unseen hand was at the controls, guiding them in my hands to touchdown. It was the ***softest landing I never made*** in my entire life. Jesus was in the cockpit that day.

Jumping off the plane, I said, "Thank You, Lord," but this time instead of going on my way, I found out where the nearest FGBMFI chapter was, after calling Bill Norwood, an international director in Kansas City.

I was finally starting to catch on.

My wife, Barbara, and I attended our first FGBMFI meeting at St. Joseph, Missouri. I wasn't entirely ready for what happened. First, two men tried to hug me and one of them succeeded. Then a gentleman next to me started praying in tongues. I was halfway out of my chair but Barbara said, "We came for a reason. Let's stay." I said, "Okay, but you keep your eyes on the fellow beside me while I watch the speaker."

After Carl Milbrandt, an international director, gave his miracle testimony, Chuck Sutton, the president, got up and started talking about Jesus as though he knew Him on a first-name basis. When Chuck gave the altar call, I was down there like a shot. I accepted Jesus with my whole

heart that night, but when people began speaking about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, I said, “Not right now. Let me read up on it a bit more.”

Although I was really sincere in my commitment, I have to admit my life didn't change that much. The Bible just wasn't real to me, and I couldn't read it for more than two seconds. I still kept my *Playboy* and other pornographic magazines – I had them dating back to 1964, and my wife and I had many battles over them. I was under bondage to these things. And I still participated in the party life. But for the first time in my life I didn't enjoy it any longer.

The next month I attended an FGBMFI regional convention at Kansas City and asked Chuck Sutton to pray with me for the Baptism. Chuck asked me to stand up and give my testimony to Jesus. Then a group of Full Gospel business men came to gather around me right on stage and prayed for me to be baptized in the Holy Ghost. The next thing I knew, there was a glorious language flowing from my mouth. For the first time in my life, I felt the love and joy of Jesus pour over me.

That night completely changed my life. My wife said she thought if a truck drove through our house I would have just said, “No problem. We'll build another one.” The cares and burdens I'd always carried rolled off my back. I threw out my once precious collection of *Playboy* and many other magazines, and suddenly, as if

a blindfold were removed, I noticed that I had a beautiful, intelligent wife and two delightful daughters, all **Christians**. Now the Bible came alive to me and when I found out it was printed in English, I couldn't put it down.

Since having had this life-changing experience, God has given me countless opportunities to glorify Him in word and deed. That is what the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is all about: it causes our lives so to overflow with “springs of living water” that other people can't help but get wet and gives evidence of a boldness for Jesus and the Word of God.”

All my old friends saw the change in me right away. A fellow pilot, Eddie, came up to me in a roomful of other pilots and said, “Chuck, what's this I hear about your becoming a born-again Christian?” All of a sudden the room was dead silent. I told him, “Yes, you heard the truth, Jesus is now my Lord and Saviour.” “I want to talk to you,” he said. This man had so many questions about my experience. God allowed me to start sharing the fullness of God's Love.

I could go on and on about the people God sends across my flight path every day. This Spirit-filled life is the most surprising, exciting life imaginable. Sometimes when I see the Lord doing such wonderful things, I just want to reach out and grab Jesus and yell, “I love You!” and give Him a hug. Today when I say “Thanks, Lord,” I really mean it.

Don't delay as I did, ask the Lord to change your life **NOW:**

Lord Jesus, I believe You died for me, a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I ask You to come into my heart and I receive You now as my personal Lord and Saviour. Please guide my life from this day forward. Father, I ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Thank You.

Charles Carney retired with thirty years as a naval aviator from active duty and Naval Reserves. He was one of the first pilots to fly Attack Helo Gunships in Vietnam. He flew for Braniff Airlines, Ryan Airlines and retired from United Airlines after 35 years in 2001. His "retirement flying" even today is with Air Methods Corporation as a relief EMS Lifelight Helo pilot in the eastern half of the U.S.. While at Braniff the Lord led him into a public speaking ministry at FGBMFI conventions, rallies, chapter meetings, radio and TV. His testimony has been heard on the radio show, "Unshackled" and television program in K.C., "Something Beautiful," and nationwide on the "700 Club." He continues to speak and preach as the Lord directs. He and his wife, Barbara, attend Grace Christian Fellowship in Kansas City.



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