



voice  
to empower  
men for life



questioning **life?**

Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International

# Building a Firm Foundation



## Martin Sewell, Fontwell, West Sussex

**I am 46 years old, I live with my wife Caroline, two step children and have two children from my first marriage, all between 16 and 19 years old.**

I have run my own building company for the last eighteen years and have seen good times as well as bad. I am President of the Chichester Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International and attend our local Church, St Mary's, Walberton.

I will set the scene ten years ago. I was not a bad person, I bent the rules a little to suit myself, but we all do that, don't we? I was struggling in my own strength to run a business. Recession and divorce had taken their toll. I had just undergone

surgery for a slipped disc, which had not proved that successful, except it moved the site of the pain. I could tolerate the pain through the day – just – but was left with no energy for family or anything else. Weekends and evenings would often find me lying on the floor near to tears. The standard greeting for those that knew me was "How's your back today, Martin?"

I knew there had to be a better way of running my business. Although we had a good reputation as building contractors, it took every ounce of my ability. I was looking for some personal training or employing an experienced person. Someone that could make the difference! My

business was growing, but so was the pressure, employing professional people did not bring the results. Solving one problem seemed to create two new ones.

I was very aware of the damage my divorce could have on my children, so I made time every Wednesday afternoon to collect them from school and on many weekends would have them to stay. Home life brought new challenges of living in a step family and I realised that this was also going to demand 100% effort if I did not want to leave another trail of disaster behind me.

To fill in a gap here, I was not brought up a 'Church Goer'. In my opinion these were hypocritical people, who thought they were better than everyone else. My mother (who died when I was 23 years old) was a 'Christian Spiritualist' (there's a contradiction in terms for you) as was my father's mother. I had not actively participated in this regularly, but was quite interested to get a 'Reading' occasionally, so we could see around the corner.

Interestingly I remember being at a meeting at mum's house, that she had put on just for family. A Psychic Artist had just drawn a picture of my Grandad (deceased) which was an amazing likeness. The Medium told me that I would be married twice and have four children! Not the most

encouraging thing when you have just got married.

Anyway, back to 1994. My back was getting worse, I had tried all the alternative therapies and the doctors did a further MRI scan. Great news! I now had three collapsed discs, and

if they operated again the chances were that I could end up in a wheelchair.

As a committed workaholic I knew I needed some distraction to get me away from work. So over the

last five years I had been spending time sailing with my friend Andy as crew on his yacht, but felt very restricted with back pain and knew I would never be strong enough to skipper my own boat or be able to afford one.

Well it's a funny thing, that just as I was going through life, stooping physically with a failing back, stooping spiritually coping with the mess I had made of my family life, stooping under the burden of a stressful business (was it me in my twenties that could not understand why people gave in to stress!), my wife asked me if I minded her attending an Alpha Course (which was something to do with Christianity) and could they hold it at our house too.

Wednesday came, I got home from work about seven and sat in my comfortable leather sofa, waiting

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for dinner and a beer to appear on a tray while I watched EastEnders. This was not to be, I was told to hurry up with my dinner, the TV was turned off, the Alpha people were due.

Well I didn't see why I should move, so I crossed my arms and sat through "Why Jesus" tape 1, and guess who was asking all the stupid questions. Over the next ten weeks I did not miss one. I did fall asleep and snore loudly a few times, but Caroline kindly poked me in the ribs to wake me.

Caroline had by this time firmly accepted Jesus and was asked to be a helper on the next Alpha. I asked her if she wanted me to come for moral support but she said, "No, that was OK". Her friend, Sally, suggested the next day that perhaps this would be a good idea as it would

mean that I did the course again. So I ended up doing Alpha twice and answering everyone else's questions before the vicar had a chance. Caroline was surprised to hear me telling them how great Jesus was!

At this time Caroline wanted to go to church regularly, I really could not see the point. So I condescended to go once a month, selected a seat behind a large stone pillar so I could not be seen (God can see through pillars). What was all this mumbo jumbo

they talked about? Why do they have to wear fancy dress? Why do they talk like Shakespeare? They did seem like lovely people though.

As I was not keen on this Anglican service we thought we would try a Free Church, more modern normal

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people, I thought. Ahhh!! I Left after half an hour and walked in the park, until the never-ending service finished. This lot were head cases, jumping up and down singing in a strange language.

Martin, our Vicar, invited us to a dinner put on by the FGBMFI and I heard Paul Hickman give his testimony. I saw so many similarities between his experiences of life and mine, I could really relate to him. I was taken to a Christian Viewpoint for Men's breakfast and saw fifty other local men all wanting to know more about Jesus.

I could go on telling what happened. Over a period of two years I was slowly convinced that the message

was in fact reality. The people were just like you and I – not perfect, but with a direction. I was learning to pray and this burden of life was lifting. Now it was not me at the top of the tree, responsible for everything but I could now ask for help from a loving Father in heaven, who answered prayers. Yes really! My relationships were improving, but I still had a back!

Caroline, probably more tired of my back than I was, saw an advert in a Christian magazine one day for a weekend called "Freedom from back pain" at Ellel Ministries, Farnham. We decided to go together. We arrived in this wonderful old country house and settled in. Oh no, what have I done, a whole weekend with



Christians, let me out. The result of this was that they pointed out that there were things that I still believed that could be damaging to me, namely Spiritualism; I hadn't quite seen the problem, even after many long discussions with Wendy (vicar's wife). I eventually saw what Jesus taught. Yes the power of spiritualism is there, but the source of that power is not good but based on deception. Jesus warned about the danger of meddling with these dark forces.

I decided at that point to renounce any connection to spiritualism; I later went home and burnt all mums' old books on the subject.

Sunday morning was Ellel testimony time. I sat and listened to people telling of amazing healings, I could take it no longer, I walked out with tears in my eyes, with intense back pain and the disappointment of this last resort failing.

I understand now that God can heal in two ways: a miracle – the instant cure, or healing – a process that is ongoing over time. Well that's what happened to me. I didn't like to say at first, not wanting to look silly if it came back again, but my back was healed.

Life now is not necessarily a bed of

roses; we still get challenges in business or family life. What is different is how we react to them; there is not the same fear, inadequacy, not knowing what to do. Jesus left us with his word to guide us, so relevant in today's directionless and selfish society. He gave us a new family with brothers and sisters in

Christ to encourage us, laugh with us or just sit and hold our hand and cry.

You may have noticed emotions coming out in this story... God gave them to us, they are our release valves, not signs of weakness.

But so much has changed. It's not what others think that drives me any more, because if I get it right in God's eyes, I know that is also best for everyone else too. He has blessed me with the boat I never thought I would have and a wonderful home.

I thank God every day for the work he is doing in the lives of myself and my family. I thank him for continual second chances, because I often get it wrong. I thank him for my loving wife Caroline who sticks by me and led us to Jesus. I thank him for the joy and excitement that I never knew existed in living life to the full with Jesus at my side. I thank him for the enormous privilege in being able to share my story, just as Jesus told his disciples to do.

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*Martin and Caroline live in Fontwell, West Sussex. Martin is President of the Chichester Chapter of the FGBMFI.*

# From Religion to Faith - A Solicitor's Tale



## Peter Spreckley, West Sussex

Peter Spreckley was until recently the senior partner of a West Sussex firm of solicitors. For years he went to church without really knowing what he believed, but one day, when he was already a churchwarden in his local church, he asked himself the question "Is God real?"

What happened after that, as he went in search of God, is an amazing story. God revealed his reality in many and powerful ways, which Peter will be recounting. His life was never the same again. The story includes experiencing the physical power of God and miracles amongst his clients.

**I**t is fair to say that life dealt me a very fair hand. I was born into a stable home, my father was a schoolmaster at a leading public school, I received the best education that money can buy, and after public school I spent a year at a Swiss university before going on to Cambridge University. I then qualified as a solicitor in London before accepting a position with a firm in Hampshire.

At the age of 23 I married Mary, and we soon had three children. When I became a partner in the firm, we moved to a sixteenth century farmhouse in West Sussex, where we continue to live.

My spiritual education was as one would expect with my background. My parents were not believers, but I was baptised as a baby, and confirmed at the age of fourteen. All I remember about that is that I felt very 'good' about it. Yes, it was the

thing to do, and we were given presents, but I definitely was drawn to the church. The problem was that I had little idea of what it was all about! This resulted in a near disaster for my family, others and myself.

The solicitors practice had thrived, we had farmed our smallholding, I had hunted with the local foxhounds, and been chairman of the village hall committee, and was regarded as a 'pillar of society'. I was also active in our church, regularly attending services, serving on the PCC, mowing the churchyard, and I might also have been described as a 'pillar of the church'. In my legal work I was, I believe, well thought of, and as I wore a smart suit I was regarded as a respected member of society, and so I was outwardly; but inwardly it was another story.

After some time I had started to look for comfort outside my marriage, and matters reached a stage when Mary should have divorced me. I thank God that rather than do that she started to pray, and got others praying. The result was not a divorce, but reconciliation. It was not easy, but we learned that if both partners genuinely want reconciliation and are prepared to work at it then it is possible, especially when God is involved. Life together became good again, and I went back to our church, and even became a churchwarden. Then it happened!

I was mowing the churchyard one day when the question came into my mind "Is God real?" I was by then aged 45, but I could not remember anyone ever talking to me about the reality of God. I had heard innumerable sermons, shaken hundreds of vicars by the hand, said "amen" to even more prayers, yet I could not think of anyone to ask about the reality of God. So I went to the public library!

I found amongst the paperbacks stories of men and women alive today who had met Jesus, whose lives had been wonderfully changed, and I read of some miraculous healings. In other words I was reading about the reality of God. These books

also pointed to passages from the bible which supported what was happening, so I started to read my bible, which had remained unopened for many years, because it was boring, irrelevant or incomprehensible.

For the first time in my life I began to understand what I was reading, and the first lesson I learned was that I needed to be 'born again' if I was to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I wanted this more than anything else, so knelt on our sitting room floor and asked Jesus to forgive me for very many things, and to put His Spirit in me so that I could follow him for the rest of my life. He did, and I was born again!

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Some time later I experienced the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' when the power of God throbbed through me for over half an hour, after which I was unable to stand for a while.

After that God started to teach me the reality of His power through my clients. For instance, a woman, who came to see me for a divorce, was reconciled to her husband after both she and her husband had received Jesus into their lives, and a client whose arm had been broken received a miraculous healing after prayer. There were many other instances when God manifested His reality in love and power to transform lives. Since meeting Jesus and surrendering my

life into his control so many things changed. I used to have a filthy temper, but that disappeared. I had a minor problem with alcohol, but that

was sorted, but the greatest and most wonderful change was in my marriage and family life. Our marriage has been enriched beyond words, and our family drawn closer together.

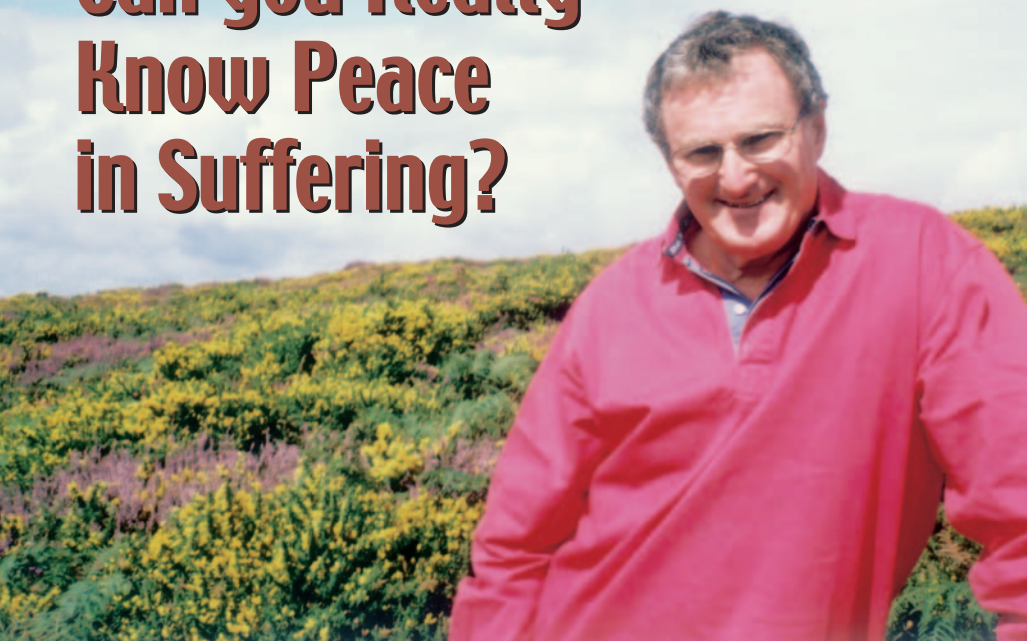
Soon after my conversion I came across the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. I joined at once and since then I have had the privilege of travelling around the UK and Europe and Africa seeing the reality of God's love, power, mercy and grace at work. How did I ever doubt it?

**Our marriage has been enriched beyond words, and our family drawn closer together.**

*Peter Spreckley is a Lay Reader in the Church of England and the National Director for the Wessex region of the FGBMFI.*



# Can you Really Know Peace in Suffering?



## Terry Waters, Cornwall

**B**orn in Cornwall, with three sisters and two brothers, in a loving family, my earliest memories of my father who was serving in the 1939/1945 war, was after the war in 1945. We were not a well off family; I never remember having anything really new until I started work at 15.

Over the years I had a number of positions, mainly in Bedfordshire, until 1967 when I found myself back in Cornwall by then married to Eileen. We have three children. I joined a firm of Builders Merchants in 1974 where I remained until I retired in 2000, eventually becoming

Purchasing Director and being a member of the main Board.

Additionally, I had been a District Councillor, a member of Callington Town Council and served as Portreeve of Callington (that is equal to Town Mayor). I was also active in my Church.

I had come to faith in November 1953 at our local Methodist Church in Grampound Road. This was a very real experience of the presence of Jesus in my life. Sadly, as so often is the case, the immediate excitement slowly wore off and I lost the personal and intimate relationship with Jesus and began an impersonal walk with God, simply seeking to serve him.

One night, at an all night prayer meeting, much to my surprise, God spoke into my heart, "You need to rededicate your life to me". I told those present what had happened and asked them to pray for me before they went home. We stayed on for an hour experiencing the incredible presence of God in the room, with many in tears. An ordinary housewife then spoke some prophetic words over me, all of which have been fulfilled in every detail since. That evening changed my life and my ministry.

There have been so many occasions when God intervened in my life, often having to make business decisions God would wake me during the night and prompt me. Many times he caused me to ask challenging questions at our Directors' meetings which were prompted by the Holy Spirit and beyond my natural ability.

Remarkable things also began to happen after I became President of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International in Plymouth in

1980. From the very first meeting in July of that year we saw hundreds of people come to our Breakfast Meetings and Dinners and every month men and women became Christians and were baptised in the Holy Spirit's power.

**We stayed on for an hour experiencing the incredible presence of God in the room, with many in tears.**



*Terry and Eileen when Terry was Portreeve of Callington.*

I remember particularly, a friend who had been involved in spiritualism coming to faith, followed by all his family. At an outreach dinner in Looe, a man who worked in our company and who had been off sick with tuberculosis with a scar on his lung the size of a fist, was prayed for and when he went for his next check-up amazed the doctors because every trace of TB had gone and the scar had completely disappeared. At an outreach at Kingsbridge, a woman with cancer was completely healed and at a meeting

at Callington a personal friend, who had a severe problem with 'Farmer's Lung' was completely healed and able to take a full part in running his farm during the winter months without any discomfort. These are just a few examples of the supernatural work of

the Holy Spirit working through our Fellowship.

Throughout our marriage my wife Eileen ministered with me and in her own right, but little did I know what God had in store for us.

Eileen loved Jesus and was always ready to share her faith. She cared for, prayed for and welcomed many into our home, and through her, many came to faith.

Eileen developed a circulation problem in her right leg and after a

number of operations she had her right foot removed and in April 2002 she went home to Jesus, but in the previous months we had a wonderful time together.

We loved God together, prayed together, studied the Bible together as we sought to bathe in the increasingly deep

love relationship we had with Jesus who brought us His peace during those months of suffering and pain. In short, we discovered that “when grace was needed, grace was available”.

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*Terry Waters has subsequently been appointed Executive Officer of the Fellowship with the challenge of encouraging and assisting the Chapters in the UK to follow the vision of the Fellowship and to see men trained and equipped for reaching out to men and women for Christ.*





# From Darkness to Light

Claude Sammuller, Hampshire

**My name is Claude Sammuller and I was born in France in 1951. By the age of 17 I qualified as a Motor Technician. I am the eldest of a family of thirteen children and my mother has a gold medal from the French Government for it.**

In 1969, when my mother was pregnant with her last baby, we all emigrated to South Africa. We settled in the Transvaal and my Dad, myself and my brother, Jean-Jacques, found work together. At times on Sundays we would attend the local Catholic church. We had a good start and people were very friendly and helpful.

Not long after that my little brother Patrick was struck by a car on his fourth birthday. As he was laying on the road unconscious, feeling that I will never see him again, I kissed him goodbye. He died on the way to hospital.

As my parents made arrangements to go back to France another tragedy took place. A few months after Patrick's death my fifteen year old brother Francois drowned in a dam a few miles from home. It took a few days for his body to be found; my

parents and all of us were devastated. Now that I had two brothers in the Vaal Triangle cemetery my parents decided not to leave South Africa any more.

I left home and found work with a construction company and for the first time in my life I began to drink and smoke; I was about 21 years of age. I got involved in smoking cannabis and meddled in the occult playing the ouija-board. Pretty quickly I ended up being full of fears and confusion. Because I couldn't read industrial drawings any more I was dismissed from my job.

I went back to my mother's house and slept in the lounge on the sofa with the radio and the lights on all night. I also needed sleeping tablets to fall asleep. This went on for quite a while. One day I prayed and said: "If there is a God please help me to get my car fixed and to get a job!" This prayer was answered miraculously within a few months.

When I got a job in 1973 with General Erection, a fellow worker called Dominique Chaduc spoke to me about Jesus Christ the Living Saviour. He was a Frenchman and told me that Jesus Christ changed his life altogether and he encouraged me

to put my faith in Him as well. He told me that I should repent for having left God out of my life and for having been a shepherdless sheep. I had heard this message a few times in the past but had dismissed it; but this time I believed it. I went home one night and knelt down and prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ wash me in your blood from my sinful past and come into my life and make all things new". That happened that very night. I didn't need the radio and the light on, or sleeping tablets. I fell asleep like a baby: I was born again.

When I saw Dominique again he gave me a Bible in my own mother tongue. Jesus said: "If you love me be a doer of my word". I decided to live by the book and to let the word of God become a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I shared the name of the Saviour and what he did for me to my brother Jean-Jacques and he has had a new life since 1973

as well. My mother also accepted Christ and my younger brother David.

There is a scripture which says: "Those who sit in darkness have seen a great light". This applies to Dominique, myself, my mother and some of my brothers. It can apply to any who only believe in the message which is known as the Gospel. This great light is still shining today! Jesus said: "I am the light of the world".

Since that day, 30 years ago, I have served God in Durban, South Africa, where I met my wife Carol (we now are blessed with three children), Namibia and, since 1993, in England. During this time we have seen many who were, like me, without hope, come through faith in Jesus Christ to a new place of hope instead of despair, light instead of darkness, as they found that, despite everything, God had a plan for them after all.

*Claude Sammuller lives in Hampshire with his wife Carol and three children.*

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**THE FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL IS AN INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN MEN WHOSE PURPOSE IS:**

1. To call men to God and into the church by witnessing to God's presence and power in the world today.
2. To provide a basis for Christian fellowship among men everywhere under the single banner of their experiences in Jesus Christ and to strengthen them so that they can go back to their respective churches refreshed and renewed. The FGBMFI is not a church nor a sect. It has no priests nor pastors, and does not start churches.
3. To bring about a greater measure of unity amongst all Christians.

## If you have been challenged by the stories in VOICE you may be asking, “How can I become a Christian?”

**A Christian is a person who has a personal and living relationship with God through inviting Jesus to become their Lord and Saviour.**

To become a Christian there are 3 simple steps you need to take as you recognise that God loves you and wants space in your life to help you live life to the full.

**Step 1** **Accept** the love God offers. Acknowledge that Jesus is the only Son of God, that you need His help in your life. Invite Him to help you have the living relationship that God offers you.

**Step 2** **Believe** that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to pay the price for your sin to enable you to have a relationship with Him as your Lord and Saviour.

**Step 3** **Confess** by saying sorry for all the sin and wrong things in your life. Tell Jesus you want to get rid of those things so that you can have a fresh start and receive His forgiveness.

### **Why not pray this simple prayer to invite Jesus into your life:**

Lord Jesus, I want to thank you for showing me that God loves me, that you want me to know you personally, that you care about me and right now I say yes to your offer of friendship, forgiveness, and a fresh start. Please make yourself known to me as I invite you into my life.

I am sorry for the times I have hurt you and others, please forgive me and help me to change. Help me to forgive those who have hurt me and to become the person you want me to be. Let me know you as my special friend who is always with me, please give me the strength to follow this decision through. Amen.

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**Please let us know of your decision so that we can send you helpful information to “empower you for life”.**

- ☐ Please send me details of “**empower men for life**” meetings in my area.
- ☐ Please send me “Now that you’ve received Christ” booklet.

First Name: ..... Surname: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Postcode: .....

Tel: ..... E-mail: .....

Data information will only be used to send you details of Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International and “empower men for life”. (Full address details overleaf.)

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