

The Jim Tingen Story

I've told this story so many times. It takes more out of me than anything else I could ever tell. It leaves me completely wrung out. It is difficult to relate. I'll try to do it quickly.

Jim was a boy who was not too bright. You'd perhaps say he had his marbles, but his shooter was missing.

One of his eyes was damaged. As a little boy he had played with scissors, with his brother and sister. The pupil of his eye was cut -- it left scar tissue there.

He didn't have any clothes. His folks were very poor; his mother was an alcoholic, and his home was in North Carolina. His father was about as near nothing as, I guess, you can get.

No girl wanted to date him, because he didn't look very well. The clothes that he got were usually my hand-me-downs, that I gave him. I wish I had bought him more, now. Anything I didn't want I'd let him have; but those were always a little bit too large.

He wanted people to love him so bad. He wanted a date with a girl so . . . He used to tell me, he'd say, "Ray, can't you, won't you try to fix me up with a date?" No girl would date him. He wasn't clean enough. Didn't have folks. didn't have a place, hardly, to stay.

He stayed with his brother -- but he'd try to witness to his brother, so his brother would beat him up. Many times he'd come, black and blue . . . He'd been witnessing to his brother.

The first time Jim Tingen came to Ranch, he accepted Christ as his Savior. The first time! When he heard, "God loved Jim Tingen . . ." This word "love" hit him so hard. "God loves me?" I remember talking to this boy. I'm glad God had that in my mind. "If God loves me, He cares . . . I didn't know God loved me; I didn't know anybody loved me!"

Then he said, "If God loved me, and has taken my sin and paid for it . . ." He was so grateful that he'd found someone who really loved him and would do something for him, that I never knew Jim to come to the Ranch, but that he didn't bring someone with him. How he did it, I don't know . . .

I know, some of you beautiful girls here, if you asked me to go to any meeting, and I was your age -- I don't care what the meeting would have been, I'd just say, "Lead me!"

I have seen Jim bring people you would never believe he could get out. He was never alone. He brought hoods. Yet he brought some from the highest society.

He brought two motorcyclists, one night. He'd told them about me, how I used to race motors, and so on. So they came over to see this wondrous thing. They came over that night, and both of them got saved, and their girl-friends with them.

One week later they were riding their motorcycles down 27th avenue, in front of the Screwball Bar, where the railroad tracks come across, in Miami. The gates started coming down -- the train was coming. "Let's beat it!" They tried. One boy did make it; the other didn't. It caught him across the head. It decapitated the girl, and

the boy skidded all the way down on the curb, and his head was worn, crushed down. The top of his head, his whole skull, was gone, and his brains lying in the street.

One week before, Jim Tingen had got him to the Ranch, and they had trusted Christ as their Savior.

I remember, one time, he brought a big, fat colored lady. Why, why, she was so big I couldn't reach around her. I didn't try, but . . .

You know, now, Jim, when he came to our house, he would never, ever bother anything. He was as meek as a mouse. But if he brought a lost person -- he would just take -- he wouldn't warn you -- he'd just come right in, go to the refrigerator. "Help yourself, all the food . . . why, these are Christians, they love you! Take all of it!" You never saw anything like it in your life! The guy was out of his mind.

He knew good and well that we loved souls. And he just wanted them to see that we had a love for them.

Why, this dear lady trusted the Lord as her Savior. She said, "You know, he's been telling me this, and he said to come by here, and you could explain it."

Often he'd get people to come, and never tell them what it was. He'd tell them it was a party. He'd get them out, though.

He'd hitch-hike -- with his dog! He had a great big dog, King, that was his name. A police dog. He loved that dog.

He hitch-hiked to California several times. He said, "Ray, I do it just because I can lead people to the Lord. They pick me up, and I talk to them about the Lord. They can't leave!"

One time, I hadn't seen Jim for a couple months, and he came in from California. I

saw this . . . this . . . to describe it is very difficult. It was a trailer, and yet it wasn't a trailer. It was the biggest bunch of junk you've ever seen. On the top were mattresses tied on, and chairs, and everything else, just, just UP THERE. And, well, you never saw such a crumby mess in all your life.

An old auto, "CHUNG, CHUNG, CHUNG . . ." I say, "Great Scot, what in the world is happening out here!"

All of a sudden the door flies open, and I see Jim Tingen, running. "Hey! Hey, Ray! Glad to see you!" And so on, but then . . .

"Where you been, Jim?"

"I was in California. Ray -- these people aren't saved. I met them in Oklahoma." And I find out later he'd taken what little money he had, and put gas in there to get them all the way to Miami. He'd kept witnessing to them, and they wouldn't trust the lord. These people didn't know where to go. He'd helped them to work on the car, and bought them gas. he got them all the way down to Miami, because he knew that I'd witness to them, and lead them to Christ. He couldn't lead them to the Lord. From Oklahoma!

"Hey, Ray, where can they park their trailer, so . . ."

I say, "Jim, now listen. It's against the law to park a trailer in the city of Miami unless you have sanitary facilities, and a light hook-up. You have to have a license to park them. You can't do these things I pictured my elders in church, Sunday, coming in and seeing this great big junk heap: "WHAT in the world?" I said, "Jim, we just can't do it."

"They're not saved, Ray . . . brought them from Oklahoma . . ." All the way from Oklahoma! What are you going to do?

Goodness sakes! That boy gave me more trouble! I'll have to be honest -- he was a pest. He'd just follow you around everywhere.

He bought a Bible just like mine. It had to be *just like mine*. Thirty-five dollars, and loose-leaf. This one is about ten years old or so, maybe a little older than that. But loose-leaf, and back then it was thirty-five dollars. He bought one just like mine. He didn't know why, but he'd underline everything in his Bible, just like I

had it. He'd get my Bible; he'd say, "Ray, can I have your Bible?"

"Why? What are you going to do with it?"

"I want to underline some things you've got."

"OK." And he'd take, and I watched him. Page by page. If I had it circled, he'd circle it. If I had it underlined, he'd underline it. If I had a note there, he'd write that note. I can't even read my own notes! I know good and well he couldn't! he just knew, if Ray had it underlined, it ought to be underlined. If Ray had it, that's what it was. He'd come in, by the hour. I had instructed my wife, "Don't let anyone have my Bible." I've got private notes in there, too, that I'd like to keep to myself, privately. Of course, all my jokes are public property. If you've been to a Ranch, you know where they stole them! But that's beside the point. Steal anything I've got; use anything I've got.

But I told my wife, "If Jim wants my Bible, you let him use it." And he'd come and sit, week after week, hour after hour.

"Jim, you've got to get these people to leave!" But no, no. So I say, "All right, tell them to park that junk heap over there, kind of in those oak trees. you know, back where no one can see it, back in the back..."

I went out and witnessed to them. they wouldn't trust the Lord. Mmmmmmm.

Well, I got old Jim, and I said, "Jim, you've got to tell them to leave."

"Ray -- they're not saved!"

Boy, I got down on both knees. That was a double-knee job! "Lord, let me lead these people to the Lord!" I got my Bible, and I went and spent a couple hours with them -- and they finally trusted the Lord as their Savior. It was fine!

Later on that day Jim came running. "Hey, Ray! Hey, Ray! You can tell them to leave -- they are saved now!"

Friends, I could give you some more stories. I guess I should cut it short.

I remember one time, a truck driver came up in front of our place. It was one of those big fifty-foot tractor trailer jobs, with the air brakes going FSSSSHHH. Squealing, coming up, parking on the wrong side. I said, "I wonder what my wife has ordered now?" But the door flies open, and here comes Jim.

"Hey, Ray! Hurry, Ray, come quick, he's. . . " This great big guy, smoking a big cigar, driving this great big truck. Scared me to death.

"I've been hitch-hiking, got a ride, and told him about Jesus."

Oh, brother. I go out there with fear and trembling. What are you going to say? "No, Jim, I'm not going to do it?" Jim knows Ray loves souls.

I go out there. "How do, Sir?"

"Howdy. I want you to forgive me for coming by here. I hope I'm not troubling you. But see, I give this boy here a ride, and he started telling me about Jesus. He said -- I don't know -- he can't quite . . . But he said if I came by here you could explain it."

"Oh, yes, Sir. I certainly can. I'm glad you did. **Let this hand represent you and me, and this sin. God loves you -- but He hates your sin. Here's Christ, who is sinless. He took all your sin and paid for it. He'll give you eternal life, never cast you out, never lose you. You can know you have eternal life.**" Boy, I went through this. He trusted Christ as his Savior.

He tells me this story, and he had tears coming down from his eyes. Big, hard truck driver. You never know what's in a man's mind, or heart. "You know," he said, "I've seen many accidents on the highway. Many times I've dropped off to sleep, or run off the road. And I know someday I could perhaps have an accident and be killed. I've got a wife and family. It has often bothered me. I haven't been able to

sleep well, thinking about it. I saw a bad accident this summer . . ." And all these things. "I've often wondered where I was going to go when I died, and I was thinking about that, and this boy . . ." and he points inside the cab, "there's a sign here, 'NO RIDERS ALLOWED', I never get riders, we're always afraid to . . . But I saw this boy, and I just had to pick him up. I just had to."

You know, that man rebuked me. Because when he started to leave, I said, "Sir, I may never see you again, but God bless you!"

"Oh," he says, "I'll see you in Heaven!"

I learned a lesson there. I often use that. If I'm not going to see someone any more, I'll say, "I'll see you!"

"Yeah?"

"In Heaven!" Many people in the hospital, I'll visit for the last time, and know that they're dying, know that it's the last time I'll ever see them here, I'll use that.

One time, a Sunday School teacher came by, a nicely dressed man. He knocked on my door, at about dinner time. He said, "Sir, you don't know me. I hope I'm not intruding."

"No, sir, not at all."

"I feel rather foolish. I picked up a boy. I'm a Sunday School teacher at such-and-such church. I picked up a boy hitch-hiking the other day, and he said something about salvation, and knowing it. I've always taught you could lose it. He said if I'd come by here you could explain it. Now, I'm sorry, but I'll come back later. I don't even remember the name of the boy."

I said, "I do. It'd Jim Tingen!"

"How did you know?"

I led this Sunday School teacher to the Lord. I think it's good to have saved Sunday School teachers.

He brought all kinds. He never showed up at a Ranch meeting without someone. One time, the Bible Study had already started, the music was over, the kids were all sitting there, with their Bibles out, and I was sitting on this big red hassock, and the door opened. I see these two sharp looking college aged young men, and Jim behind them. And the minute they opened the door, and saw the Bibles, they started to back out. I knew he'd tricked them. So while they were just standing in the doorway, with their mouths hanging open, and everyone looking at them, I said, "Sit right there." And they sat right there. Quite often people just don't know what to do. just tell them, and they do it.

At the end of the message, one of them raised his hand for salvation. And then I got the story. I went to the other one, hoping to maybe lead him to the Lord, and he says, "Sir, I know the Lord as my Savior already. I know what you're talking about!"

We got his friend, and we were talking to them together, and he says, "You already knew Christ as your Savior? WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?"

Between the two of them, and Jim, I get the story. Jim had done his best -- you remember, he wouldn't come to a Ranch meeting unless he could bring somebody. He'd say, "Ray, I already know it. I want to bring others." And, boy, when he brought them, if I didn't give the **hand gesture**, boy, would he get mad! Here, though, was the story: Jim had tried everyone. he had called everyone on the phone. They wouldn't come. Many people came just to get him out of their hair. Sometimes he would ask them for a whole year, before they'd come. But they'd finally come.

They'd say, "Will you stop asking me? Will you leave me alone, if I come?" They'd come once, just to get him to stop.

He'd called every girl he knew, every boy. No one would come. Finally, he got on his bicycle, and went out to the park, down here, where they play softball in the

evenings during the summer. He tried everything. He'd go down the stands,
"Anyone want to go to a party? Want to go to a party?"

They'd look at him, and say, "Boy, your kind of party we don't want!"

Brokenhearted, riding his bicycle, down in front of the Seventy-ninth Street Art Theater. He sees these two good looking guys come out of the Art Theater. Skids his tires, "Hey -- you men want to go to a party?"

"Why, any girls over there?"

"Beauties!"

"Lead the way!"

Jim holds on to the side of the car, all the way to the house. And that's when they popped in the front door! This one guy said, "I'm so ashamed -- I'm so ashamed ..."
Isn't that a tragedy -- he never told his friend. Isn't that something.?

I remember one time, I came down stairs in the morning. Now, I never do what I did this morning. I never get the morning paper. I always, when I wake up, three o'clock or four in the morning, I just read my Bible, or read a book, enjoy it. And I get many good ideas at that time, because the phone's not ringing. But this morning, I tried, and none of that seemed good at all. I finally got up, "Well, I'll go get the paper for a change." I went down there, and outside -- it's just turning gray, just breaking day. No cars were coming. Now, I have to confess something, here, and I don't like to -- but -- I sleep in my underwear. And, well, you don't put any clothes on just to run out and get the paper! So I go to the front door. There's no cars coming by. The paper is just right there. I open the door, look around. No cars, so I step out . . .

"THERE HE IS!"

I'll tell you, Jim Tingen was sitting there! I ran back into the house. He said, "Wait a minute, Ray! Wait a minute! I've got a boy I want you to talk to!"

I said, "Well, let me get my pants on!" I went upstairs, and my wife said, "Ray, what's all the commotion down there?"

I said, "Jim's down there with one of his friends."

She said, "That figures!"

I put on my pants -- didn't even bother to put on a shirt -- I just went down barefoot, with a tee-shirt. Talked to that boy a good while, and he trusted the Lord as his Savior. Do you want to know the story behind it? He was a Roman Catholic. Jim, for over a year, had been trying to get him out. Over a year! He wouldn't come. Jim got him to this point -- he said, "How can I get him out? Hmmm. He's got a paper route! I'll help him with his paper route, and then he'll come out, I'm sure!"

He went to this guy, and said, "Look, if I help you deliver your papers, fold, and help throw," --- and you that have delivered papers know that is such a help -- "will you go with me and speak to that man I've been telling you about?"

"Are you kidding? Will you really help me with my paper route?"

"Sure!"

"Okay - you help me, I'll go!"

They got up, delivered the papers, came over, and were sitting on that little red brick thing down in front of the old Ranch building. they sat down, and he said, "How's this man going to know we're here?"

Jim says, "Let's pray!" he said, "Lord, send down Ray . . ." -- and then I pop out the door in my underwear. "THERE HE IS!"

It shook that boy up so bad, that the Lord could answer Jim's prayer!

The Lord can send you somewhere in your underwear, too! You'd better be careful. Some of you would be more modestly dressed in your underwear than you are in your bathing suits!

Jim wanted to lead his brother to the Lord. but the more he'd tell his brother about the Lord, the more his brother would beat him up. Many times Jim would say, "Ray, I'd give my very life. Ray, I don't care if I die. I'd give my life if I could see my brother trust the Lord as his Savior." He'd go, and come back, sometimes, with a black eye.

"Jim, what happened to you?" No answer. "Your brother beat you again?"

"Uh huh." Always telling him about the Lord. He finally came up with a scheme. He says, "Ray, if we lead his best friend to the Lord -- he won't beat up his best friend! His best friend could tell him about the Lord!"

"How we going to do that?"

"Don't worry -- I'll bring him out!"

Another time he brought out a fellow by the name of Jim Peacock. First time I saw Peacock, he had on a pair of pants that came right down to here, and that's all. No shirt, no shoes, no nothing. Brown as a berry, with one brass earring -- and that's before it was popular! Muscles? He looked like Li'l Abner. I'll never forget, trying to talk with him about the Lord, he comes in . . . Dark, beady eyes -- I just knew the guy was a criminal. You could see it written all over him. While I was talking to him, he reaches down, and grabs onto a Coke case. Grabs a bottle in each hand, and sticks his feet straight up in the air. I bend down there, saying, "**Here, look, here's God, He loves you, He took your sin and paid for it . . .**"

Finally, after I explained it to him -- I wasn't about to ask him if he would trust the Lord -- I said to him, "Does that make sense to you?"

He said, "Yeah -- I'll do dat." That's how he said it. Pretty soon they left. I was glad when he was gone.

About a week later, up drives into the front of our driveway, a bucket of bolts.

I mean it was a . . . a jalopy. It was loaded with kids. You ever see a little car come into the circus, and little doors open, and little clowns begin to come out? It was like that. They all pile out of that car. You ought to have seen how they were dressed. One girl's slacks were so tight -- I didn't know if she was outside getting in, or inside getting out!

They pull in there -- I see them coming. I told my wife, "I'm going out there! Lock all the doors!" I took my Bible and met them outside. I wasn't about to let them in.

We had an old ping-pong table we'd made, there, of two-by-fours and a piece of plywood, so it would hold up. And when they came up, Peacock said, "Hi, Ray."

"Hi."

I was afraid to just stand there. You talk about your toughs? These were toughs. He turned around to them and said, "Sit on that table." They sat on the table, right down the line.

He turned to me and said, "Ray, give them your religious talk."

"Oh, yeah, sure will. **Here you are. You know, we're all sinners. You know Peacock is!**"

"Oh, yeah, he sure is, all right, yeah!"

"God loves you, brother. He paid for sin. Here's Christ, sinless. He paid for sin . . . " I went through the plan of salvation, got through.

Peacock looks at this one on the end, a guy who looks tough enough to eat nails, and says, "You accept Christ as your Savior!"

He says, "Okay, Jim, if you say so!"

"Okay, you do it." Right down the line. Just like that. "Okay!"

After he'd got to them all, and they'd all said they'd trust the Lord, he said, "Get in!" They all got back in. How they all got in, I don't know. But they did, and rattled away.

A few days later, Peacock came back in again, and he had a horse bridle, and a couple stirrups in his hand, and he says, "Ray, I want to give you these to remember me by."

I says, "Why, what's happening? Where are you going?"

"I'm going to give myself up."

"Why, what you been doing?"

"Oh, not much . . ."

"Well, what have you done?" See, hoping I could get him out of the trouble, since he'd trusted the Lord.

"Oh, dodged the draft, stolen a few cars . . ."

He gave himself up, and he went to Raiford, for three years. Voluntarily gave himself up. I didn't say, "Peacock, you're a bad boy." All I did was say, "**Peacock, God loves bad boys, and made a payment for sin, and will give you eternal life.**" That's all I said.

Friend, Jim got his brother's best friend out. Do you know how he did it? He drove a cab. Jim went around town until he saw his brother's best friend driving the cab, and got in.

Jim come's running up the driveway, "Hey, Ray! He's here! He's here!"

I said, "Who in the world's here?"

"My brother's best friend! I got him! Heh, heh . . ."

I could sense something was wrong. I said, "Jim, does he know why he's here? Did you tell him about the Lord?"

"No . . ."

I go out there with my Bible, and the meter's still running! Jim's paying waiting time! I discover, he had not brought Jim over as just a friendly gesture. Jim, all he did was hail the taxi, and say, "Hey, surprise meeting you here!" and tell him to bring him out to the house. And when they got here, "You wait, I'll pay you, just wait." That's all he told him. I go out there and try to start telling him about the Lord. You never saw one so hard in your life . . .

Until I got to the point, **I pulled out my wallet, and said, "Sir, God loves us, but he hates our sins . . ."**

He says, "Wait a minute! I've been in Raiford, and a fellow up in Raiford was showing me that!"

I says, "Yeah, his name was Jim Peacock."

"How did you know?"

"Jim Peacock trusted Christ as his Savior right here, and gave himself up."

And I hadn't believed Jim Peacock had trusted the Lord. It was through him that this man trusted Christ as his Savior!

Did he lead Jim's brother to the Lord? No. I'd like to say he did . . .

Jim said, "Ray, my mamma -- I want to have you come talk to her. She's an alcoholic." Did you ever talk to an alcoholic? Oh, brother! They are rough. "Ray, won't you come?" I said I would, someday . . .

Jim came over one night -- right at dinnertime. I hadn't had anything to eat that day, nothing for breakfast or lunch, too busy all day. My wife, I remember so well, had fried some pork chops. I love them so well, good old well done pork chops. All set. Man, my mouth was watering. I could just taste them -- you know?

In comes Jim. "Ray, Momma's sick. Feels real bad. Won't you come talk to her?"

I could've turned around and said, "Jim, I've had a busy, real busy day. I just can't do it. I'm sorry, but you can't bother me at dinner." I'm so glad I didn't. I couldn't live with myself if I'd done that. I wouldn't be able to stand myself.

I looked over at my wife, and she looks back at me, and I said, "Put 'em in the oven. I'll be back in a little bit."

Jim and I got on my motorcycle, drove over to the crummy side of town, over near the Coca-Cola plant. We call it the ghetto, now. Then, just the low-cost housing project. We went up to the front door. I could look in, right across one room, see the little bedroom with the light coming out.

Jim goes up to the front door, hollers out, "Momma! Ray's here! Guess what? Ray's here, Momma!" Just like I was the angel Gabriel or someone..."

"Tell him to go away -- I'm sick."

Old Jim was sick, too. he jumped down, ran around to the back door, went in, and was talking with her, "Momma, please let him come in!"

"No, the house is a mess. I'm not going to let anyone come in this house. And I'm sick, and -- you ought to have better sense than to bring anybody around here . . ."

Man, I wasn't about to let that pork chop burn for nothing. I said, "Mrs. Tingen, if you think your room is dirty, you ought to see mine! I've heard you're not feeling well, and I'm just, well, I'm here, and I like to just come in and have a word of prayer with you, and we won't stay long."

"Well, if you can put up with the mess, you might as well come in."

I went in, to her bedside, and talked to her a few moments. Began to explain to

them the plan of salvation. We found out later that the woman had cancer. They didn't know it then. In a little bit I led her to the Lord. You ask, "How do you know you led her to the Lord?" Well, for two weeks, our phone rang three or four times a day. She was driving us crazy with questions, about the rapture, about prophecy, about how she could know she was saved . . ."

She said, "You know, I don't even want a drop of whiskey. My life -- I just can't thank you enough. No one's ever taken time to explain salvation to me before."

Two weeks later, Jim's mother was walking across Seventh Avenue, at the Seaboard Line Railway. She was hit by a car, and killed instantly. What a merciful death! She was sure to die, with her cancer.

But Jim didn't know it. They began to look for Jim. They called me, "Where's Jim? His mother's been killed!" I told them some places they'd perhaps find him.

Pretty soon, I see the cab. Same one, his brother's best friend, driving up. And Jim in it, sobbing like his heart would break. He came up to me, sobbing. He grabbed me, and says, "Ray, Momma's dead! Momma's dead -- she's killed." I took him in my arms just like a little boy. He sobbed there, just like a baby. "Ray, Momma's gone."

I tried to comfort him. I said, "Jim, she's stolen a march on us, son. She's gone to see Jesus before us. She's happy now."

"I know, Ray, but I'll miss her." This hard mother had given her boy so little. "I love her so much, Ray; I'll miss her so bad."

What if I'd told Jim, "We can't go tonight. I'm going to eat my supper." I've found, sometimes, when under the hardest circumstances, we've led people to the Lord, it's brought the greatest blessings.

Don't let anyone tell you, "It's the wrong time, the wrong place," the wrong anything. When you lead a soul to the Lord, it's never the wrong time or the wrong place. That's Satan talking to you.

Jim says, "Ray, will you have the funeral service for Momma?"

"I'd consider it a real honor."

He said, "I betcha we can lead my brother to the Lord -- we can get my brother to know the Lord as his Savior!"

Well, at that funeral service, I told some of the same things, here, about Jim's mother. How she's received Christ as her Savior, and she knew she had eternal life, and how she'd called us up. It's a great comfort to people.

But Jim's brother, Bob, sat there fuming. MAD -- he would have killed, if he'd had a gun! We gave an invitation -- quite a few people trusted Christ as their Savior. Best time I know to preach the gospel, give an invitation, is at a funeral. Because people listen. They listen. "This dead person up here -- someday you're going to be just like him. If you don't trust Christ as your Savior, you'll never see them again." If that person is saved, you can sure say that! "You can see your loved one again." What a wonderful thing. "This is just the old shell they were living in. The real nut's gone." I preached the gospel just as clear and plain as I could. Many people trusted the Lord, many, yes. But Bob didn't.

What a great tragedy, friend. After the funeral service, I thought I'd see Jim. I thought he might come, like he always did, and say, "Ray, i want to thank you," and all those things. But I didn't see him for almost a week. When I do see him for the first time, his face is actually black, blue, and yellow. His brother had beaten him, almost to the point of death.

"jim, what's wrong?"

He starts sobbing, "Ray, I thought sure my brother would trust the Lord." I find out his brother's been cursing me for everything you could think of.

"That pseudo, foul evangelist. he made a mockery of my mother's funeral>" Such things Jim's brother said.

Jim said, "Ray, I don't care if he kills me, if he'd just trust Christ. I don't care if I die."

How many got a burden like that? Friend, how many ties have you gone to the Ranch, night after night after night, and never take a lost person. You just go for

the fun of it. Or maybe someone has to ask you to come! You might even have to be begged, yourself! "Who's going to be there? Oh, I don't think I'll go if he's not coming. Oh, I might come. I might."

How much do you really, really want to see souls saved?

"Well, I don't witness like that." What a tragedy.

Let me tell you this. Joseph Springs, a good friend of mine during the war, an old fly-boy from North Carolina -- he was my inspiration in World War Two. He was in the Air Force -- and he was *so* discombobulated. He actually - I never saw a man so - he couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time. He just was not coordinated, that's all. But, you know, somehow he could fly a plane. And every time he'd take a check ride, he'd come out and wave his "PASS" slip. I'd say, "Springs, if you made it, I know I can!" How many times . . .

You've heard people talk, "He's doing it the wrong way!" "I would never do it that way!" Well, you have the brains -- why don't you do it, then.

I'll say this -- if Jim Tingen could get people out like that, you could get them out much better. Much quicker, much easier, too. I assure you.

It's difficult for me to say these things. Jim came back one time from North Carolina. He had gone up for cortisone shots; that's where his family residence was, and he got the medication free up there. His eye would get inflamed, infected. And so near his brain, that they gave him heavy doses of cortisone.

He came to the Ranch -- brought two people. Both trusted the Lord as their Savior. I've often wondered who they were, those last two he brought.

That night, there was a little girl there, just a baby. She had chicken pox. She didn't know. Jim picked up this little girl. He loved kids. And he caught the

chicken pox.

Some days later, the hospital called me, and said, "Do you know a Jim Tingen?"

"Yes, I do."

They said, "He's here, in isolation, and wants to see you."

I said, "I sure will be over . . ."

The nurse said, "Well, now, you'll have to put on a gown, and cap, and mask. He's critically ill. Critically ill."

She said he had the chicken pox. I couldn't believe it was so critical. But the chicken pox had reacted with the cortisone, some way.

I ran over there, put on a mask, hat and gown. I'll never forget that black nurse, such a nice person. She let me in -- she had this apprehensive look on her face.

We went in -- you couldn't touch Jim's body anywhere, without touching a pock-mark. Purple, great big marks, all over his body.

And we talked. "Jim, what can I do for you?"

He said, "Ray, I'm ashamed, so ashamed, to have you see me like this."

I said, "Oh, that's all right, that's all right. Is there anything I can do for you, Jim?"

He said, "Just one thing."

"What's that?"

"You ask my brother to come see me."

Jim had become violently ill with these chicken pox, and the reaction -- vomiting, and so sick -- and he had pled with his brother to get him to the hospital, and his brother wouldn't do it! Jim was going down the stairs, trying to get to the phone. He tripped, and fell, and just got to the phone, got it off the hook, got the operator,

and said, "Please send an ambulance or something for me..." They sent the police, and they saw his condition, and got him to the hospital.

I called his brother. "Oh, it serves him right, \$&%*^#\$(%)%*^&*&!"

"I just called to tell you -- he loves you so much!"

We went to see him, of course, more. They called me on the phone, one day, and said, "You know, if you want to see Jim alive, you'd better come."

I raced over to the hospital, put on the cap, mask, gown. The nurse, this time, she had a thing on his arm, taking his blood pressure, and when I came in, she looked up, smiled, and just shook her head. Jim's in a coma -- doesn't know anything. Blood pressure, next to nothing.

I go over to the bedside, took his hand. He was breathing very little. About like this: huh . . . [great interval] . . . huh . . . Didn't know if he was going to die or not, right then and there. I picked up his hand, and said, "Jim, this is Ray."

Immediately he starts breathing normally. This nurse, here eyes got so big. She runs out of the room, comes back in with the doctor, and they watch this.

Now, I've mentioned before to them about Christ, left a tract. Nothing in great detail. They seemed busy, they'd come and go, didn't want to listen too much. But now, they are standing there, amazed.

And I played a game with Jim that I'd played many, many times before. You see, Jim would bring people over, and never tell them why he'd brought them. So, to get a conversation opened, Jim would just sit down, and right out of a clear blue sky, say, "Ray, you study the Bible -- can you really know you have eternal life?" Now, Jim knew it so well. We'd go along, and wouldn't even pay any attention to the other person.

"Yes, Jim, you can really know it. I've got my Bible laying here -- look here at First

John five thirteen -- you can know you have eternal life. 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.' That doesn't say, 'Hope.'" Talking to Jim, with Big Ears over there, taking it all in. What a way to open a conversation. Just playing a game.

"Well, Ray, even if I just BELIEVE it?"

"Yes."

"Well, it sure does make sense, doesn't it, Ray?"

Now, of course, Jim was in a coma. Coma? He never opened his eyes -- but I know Jim heard me. I know it! When I held his hand, and said, "Jim, this is Ray..."

I said, Jim, you're stealing a march on me, son. You're going to see Jesus before I do. jim, you'll see your Mamma." And that's when he began breathing hard, and the nurse ran out of the room, and got the doctor. And I played the game with Jim one more time.

"Jim, you don't have to worry, son. You know you have eternal life, because Christ paid for all your sins." I couldn't use the **hand gesture** -- I wanted to so bad, but I couldn't, because the doctor would have known . . .

I go over the whole plan of salvation, the best I can without the **hand-gesture**. The whole thing. That doctor and nurse trusted the Lord as their Savior. And while we were there, Jim died. He just waited. I know he just waited until I got there.

Jim's brother was a little bit shook over that. He called me, and said, "Ray, would you do the funeral?"

We had the funeral, same place we'd had his mother's funeral. His brother, this time, sitting there, sobbing as if his heart would break. When I got down on my knees before that funeral, I said, "Lord, if you'll give me the strength, I'll preach the message. Jim's brother is going to trust the Lord. Or I'll just give up."

I'd heard Jim say, too many times, "I'd give my life, if my brother would trust the Lord."

I went down there, and I told some of the same stories I've told just now. People actually smiled at a funeral. His brother sobbing his heart out. And I told how his brother had beat him up, when Jim would witness to him. I didn't know if he was going to come up to that rostrum, and try to whip me, or not. I didn't care. If he had, he would have had a tiger by the tail, I'll tell you. But he sits there sobbing like a baby. I tell the whole story. I didn't spare anything. Now, when I get through, I mention, "At Jim's mother's funeral, Jim told me, 'Ray, my brother now perhaps will trust the Lord as his Savior.'" I told how Jim didn't show up for another week -- his brother had beaten him to a pulp. And his brother's sitting right there! Everybody knows it. Sobbing like a baby.

When I give the invitation to receive Christ as Savior, the first hand to go straight up in the air was Bob Tingen's.

We went out, and buried Jim.

"**H**ow do you know, Ray, that his brother trusted the Lord?" We, he thought for a while that he ought to go into the ministry. He came by, and brought me Jim's Bible. He says, Ray, we don't have much money; I want to give you Jim's Bible."

Now, there's nothing more that I'd rather have; but I tried to refuse. I said, "No, that's not right . . ."

He said, "No, I want you to have it . . ." Just like mine -- mine's wearing out -- here was a brand new Bible, just underlined the right way, where I had underlined. I could substitute -- boy, it would be great . . .

I kept it for about three days, but I couldn't keep it. I called. "Bob, when you were here before, you made me a promise -- you told me if you could ever do me a favor, you would." He agreed. "Would you come by my office?" He came by.

"Bob, you've got to take Jim's Bible back. You've got four children, there. They'll never know their uncle Jim. The only contact they'll have will be through this Bible. Now, I want you to promise me -- you said you would promise me, if it was something you could do -- here it is . . . "

"Every day, I want you to open this Bible, and I want you to read a few verses Jim's got underlined, here. These meant a lot to Jim, or he wouldn't have underlined them. I want you to read everything that's underlined." He promised me that he would.

I'm afraid he didn't live up to it. A couple years ago, a knock came at the door, and two young men -- I knew who they were, because one of them looked just like Jim Tingen -- they came to the door, and said, "You don't know us . . ."

I said, "Yes I do -- you're Jim Tingen's nephews."

"How did you know?"

We talked to them -- they trusted the Lord. One of them, perhaps, already knew the Lord. But the other one trusted the Lord as Savior. I couldn't help but think: One more, Jim, one more . . .

You know, in Christian work, I never get weary of the work. Sometimes I get weary **IN** the work. I've found that some things can help me a great deal. I've been out to that cemetery, different times. I go over to Jim's grave, and just sit down for a while. With conflicts, problems -- and yet, a lot of people getting saved. Talk about an inspiration! I'd rather be Jim Tingen, with his body moldering away with those pock marks, in that grave, than I would be any one sitting here. You're going to die. Trouble is, you're wasting your life. You're not letting your life be used by God. I'd rather be in that grave, with those old purple marks on my moldering body,

than any one in this room -- if you are not going to serve the Lord.

I've often wondered why God would take that boy home -- but I know the answer. He was so lonely, so lonesome. How many times he would plead for a girlfriend. he wanted companionship so bad. he just didn't have the brains. he'd over-do things. He'd try to be too friendly. Any time a work-party was going, Jim would be there. But he was accident prone. If there was a bucket there, he would put his foot in it. He was always there to help.

Friend, if you say you can't lead people to the Lord -- don't tell me that. Don't tell me that. There is not a person in this room that doesn't have greater brains, greater ability than Jim Tingen. it's not a question of CAN YOU -- it's a question of WILL YOU?

Oh, I know why God took him home. The Lord was so tired of seeing Jim so lonesome. "This is my boy. He doesn't have much talent. What he has, he has used well. I'm going to bring him home." And through that, his brother came to know the Lord. His prayer was answered.

Let's pray . . .

Address delivered by A. Ray Stanford at Hollywood 72 Youth Conference. Recorded and transcribed by Bob Gilbert, FBC 1975.

"Ranch" is a week-night evangelistic meeting for teenagers, developed by Ray Stanford in south Miami, Florida, in the 1950's. The "Hand Gesture" is an illustration of the gospel truths of Christ's substitutionary death for sin, and imputing of His righteousness to the believer, ORIGINALLY described by R. A. Torrey (Personal Work, chapter 5), but so faithfully used by Ray Stanford that it has come to be identified with him, the Ranch, and Florida Bible College graduates.