

A LINK IN THE CHAIN

as told by Jack Griffin

In many of our lives there were many links in the chain leading to our conversion. There was the prayerful mother, the wonderful Sunday school teacher, and the friend. This was true in my own conversion. There was a praying daughter, a faithful pastor and many others praying around the world.

In 1966 and 1967 my wife, May, and I traveled around the world for eight months. Everywhere we went we told a true story about a link in the chain. It made a great impact in the hearts of many. It is about a pastor from Bournemouth, England named Francis Dixon and a layman in Sydney, Australia called Mr. Jenner.

One night in 1950 Rev. Dixon asked a youth leader in his church named Peter to give his testimony. Peter began, "During the Second World War in 1945 I was stationed in Sydney, Australia and one day as I was walking down George Street a middle-aged man walked up to me and said, "Excuse me sir, could I just ask you one question. Please don't be offended, but if you were to die tonight where would you spend eternity? Would it be in heaven or would it be in hell? For the Bible says it is going to be one place or the other. Good-bye and God bless you."

Peter continued, "Well, that really stirred me up, because I had never given consideration as to where I was going to spend eternity. When I returned to England I started to attend church and it was not long before I came to know Christ."

In 1953 Rev. Dixon conducted a mission in his church in Bournemouth and six young men were asked to give their personal testimonies. One of them, Norwell, said, "during the Second World War, I was in the Royal Navy and one day I was walking down George Street, Sydney, when a middle-aged man walked up to me and said, 'Excuse me sir, please don't be offended, but if you were to die tonight where would you spend eternity? Would it be in heaven or would it be in hell? For the Bible says it is going to be one place or the other. Good-bye.' Well now, this really moved me. I sought counsel from the minister and not long after I received Christ."

After the meeting Peter caught hold of Norwell and said, "Norwell, you have my testimony." Norwell said, "What do you mean?" So they compared notes and there was the same man the same place, the same question, and they made the same response.

Later that year, Rev. Dixon was speaking on personal evangelism in Adelaide, Australia and he told the story of Peter and Norwell. Before he could finish a man stood up and said, "Sir, I am another. I was like Peter and Norwell. I was in the service stationed in Sydney and one day I was walking down George Street when a middle-aged man walked up to me and said, 'Excuse me sir, could I just ask you a question. Please don't be offended, but if you were to die tonight where would you spend eternity? Would it be in heaven or would it be in hell? For the Bible says it is going to be one place or the other.'

When he got home he got down on his knees and gave his heart to Jesus. He had been attending church, but had never made a personal commitment to Christ. Now this man, Mervyn George, became one of South Australia's leading Christians.

Next Rev. Dixon went to Perth to hold some meetings and one night he told the story of Peter, Norwell and Mervyn. After that meeting a deacon in the Fremantle Baptist Church came up and said, "Rev. Dixon, I am another. I was also in the Navy during the Second World War and was stationed in Sydney. One day I was walking down George Street when a middle-aged man walked up to me and asked me the same question.

"Where are you going to spend eternity? Would it be in heaven or would it be in hell?"

For the Bible says it is going to be one place or the other.' I went away and considered these facts. Not long after I received Christ into my life."

Rev. Dixon returned to England and one Sunday morning in his church told the story about Peter, Norwell, Mervyn and the Baptist deacon. After the service a young lady came up to him and said, "Rev. Dixon, I am another. During the Second World War, I was in the Wrens. I was walking down George Street, Sydney one day and a gracious middle-aged man walked up to me and said, 'Excuse me dear. Please don't be offended. I would just like to ask you one question. If you were to die tonight where would you spend eternity? Would it be in heaven or in hell? For the Bible says it is going to be one place or the other.' That really stirred me up. I sought the counsel of the minister and he led me to Jesus Christ."

In a Methodist Church in Keswick, England Rev. Dixon told the story of these five people. After the meeting he met another.

In 1957 in India, Rev. Dixon was asked to minister to a group of missionaries. He felt led to tell the story about the middle-aged man in Sydney and the six people who had come to Christ through his witness.

After the meeting a middle-aged woman came up to him and said, "I am another. Like the girl in the Wrens, I was stationed in Sydney during the Second World War. One day I was walking down George Street and a very gracious middle-aged man came up to me and said, 'Excuse me dear, please don't be offended. I would just like to ask you one question. If you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity. Would it be in heaven or would it be in hell? For the Bible says it is going to be one place or the other. Good-bye.' My, I had never given consideration to these things at all. I started attending church and one night I heard a gospel message went forward and gave my heart to Christ."

Later, on a trip to Jamaica, Rev. Dixon met an eighth person who had been converted in the same way.

On his next trip to Sydney he happened to ask friend, Alex McGilchrist, if he knew about a man who approached people on George Street during the Second World War and challenged them to think about eternity. McGilchrist said he knew him well and his name was Jenner.

They went to meet Mr. Jenner, now an old man who was dying of Parkinson's disease. He was a humble man filled with the love of Christ. He told them, "for about twenty-five years I have been speaking to at least ten people a day. I have only one line of approach. I have spoken to hundreds a year. I have spoken to thousands over the years."

With tears in his eyes he said, "Do you know what? I have never led anyone to Christ."

But God had used Mr. Jenner to be the first link in a chain leading to the conversion of eight known men and women and perhaps scores of others.

Rev. Dixon tells about a woman who went to an exhibition in England. As she was about to go through the turnstile two young ragamuffins ran up to her and said, "Lady, lady, would you please help us get in?" So just for "please" sake she picked out two coins and put them into the turnstile and the two boys walked in. An hour later as she was walking through one of the pavilions she heard a little voice in the distance saying, "I say, George, look there's the one who helped us get in."

Wouldn't it be wonderful in the day of glory, in the day of heaven and sunshine, when we meet the Lord face-to-face, we might hear in the distance somebody saying, "Hey George, that's the one who helped us get in?"



Let me give you some verses of Scripture that will encourage you to be a link in the chain. You might be the first link. You might be the second link. You might have the privilege of being the last link, but my dear friend, make sure you are not the missing link.

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." 1 Cor. 15:58

"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him." Psalm 126:5-6

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Gal. 6:9



Jack and May Griffin were converted at a Billy Graham crusade in Sydney when they were in their 50s. They decided to leave their business of manufacturing automobile repair parts and travel around the world visiting Navigator ministries.

On that trip they passed through South Carolina where I was getting training from Skip Gray. Skip asked me to chauffeur the Griffins for three weeks and I heard Jack tell the story over and over again. They returned to Sydney where Jack launched the Navigator ministry

A few years later, in 1976, I saw Jack and May again at a Navigator staff conference in Malaysia. I asked Jack if he would tell me the story again to make sure I got it right. They returned to Sydney and Jack made a tape for me. This article is a transcription of that tape.

Paul Hensley