

**Articles and Sermons :: "Hey, Peachey!"**

**"Hey, Peachey!" - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/8/25 6:37**

Last week I found this article on the web as a result of clicking on a link that was posted here on SI.

I read this and was profoundly blessed. Since it sounded familiar, I called my brother-in-law, Dean Giesbrecht, to ask for verification, he had worked at the same place as this writer. He said the story is true, and that he had met the man himself and spoke with him.

This story is not about a man but about God, how God can shoot so straight with a crooked stick!

Now, I would like to define some terms used in this article to ease the comprehension of the story:

CO - conscienceous objector - someone who will refuse to serve in the military for conscience reasons

Unit house: a place where the COs stayed during their term of alternative work while employed in the city.

1-W service: origin unknown to me, but this refers to the alternative service performed by COs. They worked in humanitarian service jobs that were approved by the Selective Service; many of these places were hospitals.

This story is quite long so I have divided it into smaller segments for ease in reading. I found no copyright to this story. The authors' name is not listed on the web - I got it from my BIL.

ginnyrose

**"Hey, Peachey!"**

The summer of 1967 Uncle Dan Swareys were remodeling their cow stable. Uncle Ben, who was the contractor, needed help. I was chosen, little realizing Ben was preparing me for 1-W Service. Ben was very particular. Things had to be done right. Not just almost, but right! If not right it had to be done over. Sometimes it was very frustrating, but later it proved to be very beneficial.

Later on in the summer, come harvest time, I had to go home and shock wheat and oats. I remember standing under the locust trees in the shade in the field straight out from the house along the Waynesburg Road. I was looking over the farm, watching Dad run the binder around the field, realizing this would be my last summer at home. In October I would be turning twenty-one and be on my own. In one way I was anxious and yet wondering what lay ahead.

The Vietnam war was going strong and many boys my age were already coming home from 1-W Service. I was still home on farm deferment and I expected I would have to go as soon as the deferment ran out.

October ninth came and went but on the first of November I received notice to go for a physical, which I passed. Then I wondered how long I would yet be home. The week between Christmas and the New Year I received notice to report for 1-W Service on the first of February, 1968. That only gave me about four weeks to find a place to go. After calling around to many hospitals, Kansas City was about the only place that still had openings.

I remember the morning I left, after not sleeping much the night before. I packed my few earthly possessions, got in the car, started out the lane, and there stood Mom at the door crying. That made it kind of hard to leave.

I went to Burns, Kansas, the first weekend and met one of the CPS board members. He gave me directions on how to find the unit house in Kansas City. When I got there I met some married couples and a few single boys. They all told me to go to the Kansas University Medical Center and try to get a job there.

The next morning I went to K.U. Medical Center and a lady took me down to the kitchen. When I got in there and looked around my heart started sinking. It was hot and steamy, all stainless steel and ceramic tile with a row of small windows about ten feet up. The lady was telling me I would be working nights with only one weekend off a month. My heart sank a little more and I thought, this farmer boy working in this hot steamy dungeon for two years -- no way! About that time I realized this place was all black. Big black mamas. And one black mama was giving me the evil eye. There was fire in her eyes as she was throwing pots and pans from the sink to the counter, then back to the sink. All this time she was glaring

at me. I could imagine she was thinking that there's no white trash going to work here if I can help it! Coming from the country I knew very little about racial tensions. The lady that took me down there must have noticed my apprehension. She quickly told me I wouldn't be working with her, that she worked days and I would be working nights.

About a year later I found out about racial tensions. There were major riots not too far from where we lived. You could hear the shooting and see the glow in the sky from the buildings burning. The National Guard was called out to patrol the streets and enforce curfew at 10:00 every night for about two weeks.

I finally asked the lady if there was any other place that I could work. She didn't know and said there were a lot of boys coming to look for jobs but I could go back to the head office and find out. So back I went. The administrator told me to come back on Monday. When I went back to the uni house everyone wanted to know if I had a job. I said, "Not yet." And I told them about the kitchen job. Then they all told me to get a job in the engineering department -- that was the place to work.

Monday morning I went back to K.U. to the head office. The administrator asked, "What have you done and what are you experienced in?"

I told him I was a mason's helper for most of the summer. He immediately got on the phone and talked a little, then hung up, turned to me and said they could use me down at the engineering department. The hospital was large, around three hundred beds, plus it was a university for doctors and nurses doing their studies and training. I couldn't find my way around so someone took me down to the engineering department. There I met Mr. Shaw, the superintendent, and Mr. Reed, the supervisor. The supervisor said to follow him. We walked down hallways, went up elevators, and I didn't know where we were going. The engineering department consisted of the plumbers, electricians, painters, carpenters, tile layers, plasterers, grounds keepers, masons.

Well, we finally got off the elevator and there I met the man I would be working with for the next two years. He was a short, stocky, bald headed, heavily muscled German named Marko Djiko pronounced Jeeko.

I heard the supervisor tell him he had a boy here that says he has experience in mason work. Marko put me right to work. He spoke very broken English. His German, though, was easy to understand. Many of his words were similar to Pennsylvania Dutch.

He told me to mix cement and I noticed him watching me very closely out of the corner of his eye. I guess this is where Uncle Ben's training came in handy. The cement turned out perfect. I shoveled some up on the scaffold. He ran his trowel through it several times, never saying anything. Finally he said to come up and lay block, which I did, and all this time he still watched me very closely. Several days later I heard him tell the supervisor that that boy knows what he's doing.

The first day I got home from work the other boys wanted to know what kind of job I got. I told them and also that my boss was Marko. Right away everybody got quiet.

~Continued~

**Re: "Hey, Peachey!" Part 2 - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/8/25 6:41**

~Continued~

I asked, "What's wrong?"

They said, "You're not working for Marko, are you?"

I said, "Sure. What's the matter with that? Then the boys started telling me horrible stories of how obnoxious, belligerent, hot-headed he was and no one had ever worked with him for very long. It just wasn't possible. No one could get along with him. Well, so far so good. I hadn't noticed anything the first day. He seemed okay to me.

Well, I went to work the next day and that afternoon one of the men in the department asked, "Are you working for Marko?"

I said, "Sure."

He said, "Well, you'll never make it. I bet you money you won't last two weeks. It's not possible."

Then he also told me about Marko's hot temper and that he had six helpers in the last six months. The last helper only lasted two weeks and he said I wouldn't last any longer than that either.

The next several days more men told me the same thing, and there were a lot of wagers made in the department that I would not last for more than two weeks.

The second week the supervisor himself came to me and asked how it was going. I said, "Fine. No problem."

He said, "If you can't make it, don't be afraid to come and tell me. We'll place you somewhere else and you don't have to feel bad either."

All this time the other men in my department were telling me that I would never work with Marko for very long. Well, two weeks came and went and I was still working with Marko.

It was also around the second week that we were working outside repairing some steps, replacing a few bricks, when Marko asked me, "Are you a Mennonite?" I told him I was.

"Well," he said, "I'm an atheist. I don't believe in a God. There is no God and I can prove it to you, but you can't prove to me there is a God."

Whoa! What was coming off here? The kitchen started looking better, and I wondered if I had made a mistake by not working there after all.

"Well," I told him, "The Bible says..."

He didn't let me finish, saying, "Listen, Peachey, every major religion has its own book. The Moslem, Buddha, Hindu, Christian, and everyone will tell you my book is true and yours is wrong and everyone will say our prophet talked straight to God. So how do you prove yours is true and theirs is wrong? Does your grandfather, great-grandfather, or great-great grandfather know of someone who knows or has seen the man that wrote your book? I can write a book or you can write a book and say it's true and get people to believe in it. Just because you read something doesn't make it true. It doesn't prove a thing."

What would you have said? Well, I told him the Bible says a man can have his sins forgiven and have peace in his heart.

He then said, "Listen, whatever religion you have and you believe your book, and you have faith in your book, and you do just what your book says, and you really believe in your book, like the Moslem whose book tells him to pray four times a day and he does that, it makes him feel good in his heart, does it not?"

I didn't say anything because he had a point there and it was true in some respects.

As the weeks went by I began to enjoy my work. One month, then two months went by, and the men in my department could not believe I was still working for Marko. They kept asking me if he'd gotten mad yet. Again they would tell me about his explosive temper or his obnoxious, belligerent behavior. I began to think these men were just telling me stories until one day it happened. Marko was up on the scaffold, laying the last row of cement blocks up against the concrete beam. The cement kept falling off the top of the block. He tried it about three times and the cement kept falling off. Every time he got madder and cursed and swore and all of a sudden he exploded. Things started flying. He was hollering, cursing and swearing. Blocks came flying off the scaffold, also cement, trowels, and cement trays. He completely cleaned off the scaffold. Then he grabbed his hat and gave it a pitch, climbed off, and marched down the hall, arms swinging, hollering and cursing. About every sixth or seventh step he'd stop cursing long enough to vehemently spit on the floor and then go on. I just about burst out laughing, it looked so funny.

Well, I started cleaning up the mess. I put new blocks, his tools, and more cement back on the scaffold. I took his hat, dusted it off, put all the broken blocks in the wheel barrow and had the floor all swept up when here he comes, all bristled up like a banty rooster ready for a good fight, with his arms hanging way out like he was ready for something. I acted like nothing had happened. I just said, Marko, I hung your hat on the scaffold."

He surveyed the whole situation and was waiting for me to say something but I never did. He finally crawled back up and finished the job.

Two weeks later the same thing happened. The cement kept falling off the block, he started cursing and swearing and hollering. He started kicking the blocks off the scaffold, throwing cement, his tools, and his hat. The only thing he left on the scaffold was the cement board stand and down the hall he went cursing' and spitting. This time I couldn't keep from laughing. It looked so stupid.

Well, I did the same thing again. Put everything back up on the scaffold, dusted his hat off, hung it back up, and was just starting to sweep up the floor when here he comes again. I acted like nothing had happened, but told him, "Marko, I hung your hat on the scaffold."

He looked everything over and all of a sudden he started to wilt and started looking terribly cheap. I was sweeping the floor and he said, "Leave it! Leave it!"

I told him, -Come quitting time I'd have to clean up anyway, so it's no problem. And I never saw a man look so cheap and humiliated. That man was looking for a hole to crawl through, he looked so whipped.

That ended it. From that point on he never ever cleaned off the scaffold again. He still had his temper, and if a brick or a block wouldn't break right he would swear and give it a pitch, throw the trowel full of cement after it and curse and swear for awhile. Then he'd calm down and keep working.

I guess the reason I got along with Marko when others weren't able to was because I tried to practice what Mom always told me. "When you work for someone and he tells you to dig a hole with a shovel and wheel barrow the dirt ten feet away, then comes back and tells you to fill it back up again, you do it his way and never say a word because he's your boss and he's paying your wages. Even if there's a backhoe sitting close by, you don't tell him to use it. If he asked for your suggestion on how you would do it, then you only suggest and don't tell him how you would do it."

Another reason was that Uncle Ben taught me well enough I knew what Marko needed before he had to ask for it. I knew how to mix cement concrete and lay block. Marko knew he could take a day off now and then and the work would continue. He liked that. Probably one of the biggest reasons I got along with him so well was because I could understand his German and speak it. From the very first day there was a certain bonding. I was one of his kind, two German people working together.

One day right at quitting time Marko had me mix a wheel barrow load of cement and then he dumped the whole load in the block wall, threw his tools on the floor and said, "Clean up. I'm going home."

Well, I didn't think too much of it because Uncle Ben would put cement in the block walls, too, especially in corners and where beams would set on. Several weeks later he did the same thing right at quitting time. I wondered, why, right at quitting time? He threw all his tools on the floor and told me to clean up. Since there was no water there I had to take everything outside to clean up and about a half hour later I went home. Well, it happened the third time a month later. I began to wonder what he was trying to prove, why he waited till 5:00 to make me mix up that cement and then just dump it in the wall. I never said anything. I was always afraid that somehow I might goof up and make him furious.

It was quite some time later, maybe several months when one day he asked me, "Do you remember when I made you mix cement right at quitting time?"

I said, "Sure do!"

He said, "I did it to you three times, remember?"

I told him I remembered.

He said, "Do you know what I was doing?"

I said, "No."

"Well, I did that on purpose to test you, to see what kind of boy you were and every time you never said a word. You went right ahead and did it. And when I came to work the next morning you had everything cleaned up and put away. Now I know you are a very good boy. Your mom and dad taught you well. They taught you how to work and not complain. You have very good parents. I would like to meet them some day." Well, I guess I passed that test and it seemed from that point

oint on he took a real liking to me.

After I had been working there for about six months, the men in my department were no longer betting that I wouldn't be working with Marko. Instead they were asking me how in the world I was able to work with him. Didn't he get mad at me? I would tell them no and they would shake their heads. They said they didn't see how I did it because no one had ever worked for him this long. As the weeks and months went by more men would ask me how I was able to work with him and I would just shrug my shoulders and tell them I had no problem. They just couldn't believe it.

All the two years I was there I was only known as Peachey. For a long time most of the men thought it was my nickname and there weren't too many who knew my first name. It was, "Hey, Peachey! Come here." "Hey, Peachey! I want to talk to you." "Hey, Peachey! How do you get along with Marko every day?" Marko was the one who started it. Every time he wanted something it was, "Hey, Peachey!"

Marko had been a Nazi soldier in the German army in World War II. He had been one of Hitler's field marshals and a military FBI. He had been on the front lines, wounded, recovered, and back out on the front lines. He had experienced heavy fighting. He told me when the Allies started shelling it was like a giant mowing machine mowing down trees, buildings, everything, and it completely devastated the countryside. There was no place to hide except in the trenches or foxholes. There they were on the front lines, starving. The supply lines had been cut off. It got so bad they ate anything that moved. They paid no attention to what it was, as long as it moved they ate it. One time Marko found a nest of fat pink mice, five of them. He stuck them in his coat pocket.

He said, "I didn't dare tell my buddies what I had because there would have been a fight, the mice would have been smashed and no one would have had anything. I waited till after dark, crawled out of the trench and went and hid. I put a little water in my helmet and cooked them." That was all he had to eat for weeks.

It was in the front lines where Marko became disillusioned with the war. He realized the Generals, or big shots as he called them, had their nice, fine, meals and warm places to sleep, and here they were in the heat and cold, and starving.

Marko told me of the time the Allies overran the front lines. The bombing, shelling, explosions and fighting were horrible. It was every man for himself. You didn't dare turn around and help your fallen comrade. Many did and that was as far as they got. Marko dove into a foxhole with water up to his neck, pulled a dead body over top of him and there he spent a week. That's how he escaped.

Another time Marko was in some heavy fighting. One shell exploded close by him and blew a hole in the side of his head. They left him lay out in the battle field for a week. They thought he was dead. They finally brought him in and took him straight to the morgue in the hospital. He was in the morgue, lying on a stretcher when he came to. Then he chuckled as he said, "It's kinda funny, yet it's not. A nurse wheeled another body into the morgue and I sat up and asked her where I was. You should have seen her screaming and running. Of course, the doctors came running and started working on me." For the rest of his life he carried a stainless steel plate underneath his skin to cover the hole that was blown in his head.

Another time he told me of the bombings he was in. They dropped one huge bomb and the explosion was tremendous. People and pieces of people were flying like match sticks. One time he was in a building and a bomb hit the building he was in. It blew him through a set of double glass doors and out on the street. He got up and started walking away and a sniper was shooting at him, but he escaped. Another time bombs dropped on both sides of him and it completely covered him with dirt and mud. He dug himself out and walked away.

One day he told me, "Peachey, they tell you that there are things in this world that are fire proof, but I tell you there is nothing in this world that is fire proof. I saw solid concrete and steel burn like dry kindling."

I told him, "There must have been some wood or a ruptured gas line feeding that fire."  
He said, "Absolutely not. I saw it with my own eyes. When the fire gets hot enough anything will burn."

Marko only volunteered information on the war in his own time. Every time I would ask him a question he would immediately clam up and not say another word. I finally learned not to ask questions.

~Continues~

**Re: "Hey, Peachey" Part 3 - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/8/25 6:43**

~Continues~

One day he pulled up his pant leg and showed me an ugly scar on the calf of his leg. I asked him, "What happened there?"

He said, "Another soldier and I were fighting. I knocked him down. He grabbed the hatchet out of my belt, took a swing and missed, but got me in the leg."

Then I made a very serious mistake. I asked him, "Did you kill him?" Marko immediately exploded. I thought he was going to give me a whipping right there. It was the only time Marko really got mad at me. I knew right away I shouldn't have asked that question.

Another day he loosened his belt and told me to pull up his shirt. I couldn't figure out what he was trying to do. He kept saying to pull up his shirt, so I did. I couldn't believe what I was looking at. I asked him, "What's that?"

He said, "Shrapnel. They took out the biggest pieces but the rest they just left." His back was still loaded with shrapnel about the size of a lead pencil and slightly bigger.

Marko couldn't stand the sight or sound of a gun. We had a nail gun that would shoot nails into concrete. You would put the nail in one end and use a .22 shell for the charge, then hold the gun against the wall and pull the trigger. Another one we had you would just hit it with a hammer. Marko never touched them. He would make me shoot all the nails. He would not allow me to shoot any until he had left the room and was a long ways down the hall. He could not stand the sound of a .22 shell going off. One time I went to a pawn shop and bought a rifle, a .30-.30. When he found out I had bought a rifle, he really worked me over. -That was a stupid thing to do! You don't need a gun! All they do is kill. You need to get rid of it."

For years Marko couldn't sleep at night with a fan or air conditioner running, even on hot summer nights. If he would wake up in a semi-conscious state and hear the fans beating the air he would think he was in the war, scream and dive for cover only to realize he was in America in his own home.

"Peachey, do you know why I'm atheist?"

I said, "No."

He told me, "I turned atheist in the war. The thing that turned me to atheism was the priest. Before the boys would go to the front lines the priest would come out and pray God to bless the guns that they shoot to kill. Peachey, when I saw that I thought to myself if that man was praying to what he thought was God, then I knew there was no God. For a man to pray for something like that! Tell me, Peachey, what was that man praying to anyway?"

To tell the truth I didn't know what to say. I thought if I tell him the priest was praying to the devil he for sure would say there is no God, and yet I couldn't really say he was praying to God either. So I didn't say anything.

"Peachey, I know you believe in hell but do you know that war is worse than hell?"

I started to say something about what the Bible says but he cut me off and said, "YOU JUST DON'T KNOW! The animals kill only for food or to protect themselves or their little ones. But people have a mind to think. You cannot believe how bad they can torture and mutilate the human body and yet not die. The concentration camps...'" And he stopped for a bit. "Peachey, I went through hell in the war. When I got to this camp I could not believe half of what I was looking at, it was so bad. Peachey, if you stood where I stood and saw what I saw you wouldn't believe any of it. Your mind would not be capable of absorbing it. You could think the worst that you could think and you wouldn't even come close to what it was like. It was that bad. The stench was nauseating. Flies and maggots crawling all over the people. Their flesh was rotting and falling off their bodies as they were walking around. They had their bellies cut open and their guts hanging out and then they made them march. They had to hang onto their guts with their hands. Otherwise they would fall out and they would stumble and fall, tripping over their own guts. Some got so tired and weak that they could no longer hang on to their insides. They would trip and fall and the minute they fell they would get shot. The next man behind him didn't dare slow up. He had to march right over the dead body even if he had to step on it or he'd get shot. Peachey, it was so bad I could hardly take it."

I wanted to ask him some questions but didn't know if I dared. I decided to risk it, so I asked him, "What else happened there?"

"Peachey, if I told you more you would think I was lying."

I told him, "No, Marko, I believe you'll be telling the truth."

"No, Peachey, I can't tell you any more. You wouldn't believe it anyway. You just couldn't. I only told you what I thought you would believe. The minor stuff. The rest of it your mind wouldn't grasp. The torture and mutilation was so bad. Peachey, there was so much screaming and crying and suffering and praying. Peachey, you have never seen people praying as hard as they did in that camp. They prayed, they prayed like everything. And you say your God answers prayer, Peachey? WHERE WAS HE?"

Needless to say, I had nothing to say. I, too, wondered where God was in such situations. All this time Marko had his back turned to me. As he was talking, he would not look at me. I started to move around to face him and he immediately said, "Peachey, don't look at me, please!" Then Marko continued talking. "Peachey, I saw blood run like water in a river and I don't mean a little trickle. It was deep and wide and it was pure blood. There was so much heavy fighting in the war. The boys in the front lines thought they were big and tough and macho until the bombs hit and the shells started exploding. Those boys were on their knees crying, 'Mama! Mama!' and they bawled like babies. I mean bawled like babies. They prayed like everything to their God. And they were still killed. And you say you believe in a God?"

Well, I didn't know what to say. I knew in his mind he had proven to me there was no God. So to change the subject I went back to the concentration camp. I said, "Marko, I have read some books on the concentration camps."

He cut me off and said, "You have NEVER read about this camp and you NEVER will." I asked him why and he continued talking. "The world will never know about this camp because no one ever came out of this camp alive. No one EVER!"

I had been mixing a wheel barrow full of cement and when the reality of that last word 'ever' hit me. I remember standing there with my hoe in midair, chills running up and down my spine, and the hair standing up on the back of my neck. I stood there thinking I didn't blame him for being an atheist. I tried to place myself in his shoes. If I would have experienced what he told me and saw what he saw, I thought to myself that I probably would have come out of the war an atheist myself. But I did say something to the effect we don't always know why God allows things like this to happen.

Marko said, "That's the trouble with religion. People say God does this and God does that. They are so positive until they can't explain something. Then they make some feeble excuse and have nothing to say." Marko still had his back turned to me for quite awhile after that.

Occasionally Marko would talk about Hitler. He would always talk about the good points of Hitler, how the German economy was booming and how he completely eliminated crime. But sometimes he would admit to some of Hitler's bad points, especially the concentration camps. One day he told me, "History will tell you Hitler committed suicide but I don't believe it. I think he had a stand in, somebody that looked just like him. They killed him and Hitler escaped."

By this time approximately one year had gone by and there were four or five of us bachelors still living in the unit house. I guess you could say we had become careless. We were all expelled. Some of the boys bought a television set, stereo and such like. We thought we were enjoying life until one day we came home from work and there sat Clifford Mastre in the living room. We didn't know he was coming so we didn't have time to clean house. There sat the TV set and stereo. There was no use hiding them anymore so we just left them set, feeling guilty and embarrassed. Well, Clifford was a man after God's own heart. He visited all evening and acted like he never noticed anything. I thought surely he was going to reprove us and tell us how wrong we were and how we should straighten out our lives but he never did. We had a very nice visit. I thought he was going to a motel for the night but he didn't. He said he wanted to spend the night with us. I could hardly believe a preacher would spend a night with a house full of expelled boys. Well, it came time to go to bed and Clifford got up and made as though he was going to bed. Immediately something told me, "You can't do that. Ask him to have devotions." So I asked him, "Clifford, would you have devotions with us?"

"Why sure," was his answer. So we all sat back down. Then I thought, now we're going to get it. He's going to find some scripture to condemn us and really set us straight. I do not remember what scripture he read for sure. It was in the Old Testament and it was something very similar to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Talk about the Holy Spirit condemning and convicting us! That kindly old gentleman had every opportunity to set us straight but instead he presented the gospel of forgiveness and salvation. He spent the night with us and left the next morning. I will never forget that visit.

The atmosphere at the hospital was becoming very hostile toward the conscientious objectors. The Vietnam war was in t

he headlines every day. Some of the men in my department had been giving me a bad time for quite awhile already. Especially the plumbers. They would curse me and call me a yellow belly. It seemed I was picked on more than the rest of the CO's and I don't know why. I tried to avoid the electricians, painters and plumbers as much as possible. I would take the long way or go in the back ways just so I wouldn't have to meet them. I remember the first time one of them hollered at me, "What's that yellow streak doing down your back?"

At first I thought I did have something on the back of my shirt. I whipped around and tried to see what was on my shirt. Then I realized what he was meaning.

The CO's were being closely watched by the FBI. I didn't realize this until one day Marko and I were walking down the hall when all of a sudden he poked me in the ribs and said, "There comes a couple FBI agents. Just keep on walking, mind your own business, don't look around. They're checking on you CO's." After we got past I asked him how he knew they were FBI's.

He said, "Peachey, believe me, I know!" There for awhile about every week or so Marko would poke me in the ribs and say, "There come some FBI's." One day I asked him how he knew they were FBI and maybe not some businessmen. He told me, "Just watch their eyes. A businessman will come down the hall not paying much attention and maybe with his head down a little. The FBI is always well dressed. He has his head up and he acts like he's minding his own business. But watch his eyes. They are taking everything in. His eyes may not always move but he sees everything." After awhile I was also able to spot them. It wasn't all that hard and if I would see them soon enough I would duck into an elevator or down some steps. I didn't want them looking me over.

One day I was over in the one wing of the hospital where they kept all the animals -- the dogs, cats, rats, mice, rabbits, and monkeys. These animals were used for medical experiments. There were five floors of animals. I was on the ground floor and I don't remember what I was doing there but I was walking down the hall and there I met a man in a white uniform. He claimed to be a CO but I couldn't figure out what he was doing there because no CO's worked in that part of the hospital. According to his uniform he didn't belong there either. Of all the CO's that worked in the hospital, it didn't matter what religion they were, there was a certain air of meekness and quietness about them. This man didn't have that air of meekness. He asked me, "Are you a CO?"

I told him I was. He said, "Well, I am, too, but what I want to talk to you about is that we're being taken advantage of. The hospital is only paying us minimum wages and then getting a lot of good help. They know we have to be here for two years. We need to band together and demand better wages just like everybody else is getting."

Immediately a red flag of warning went up in my mind. This man had an attitude that was too aggressive. Plus his age was against him. I guessed him to be in his mid thirties which is too old to be drafted. He didn't possess that air of meekness. He asked, "Don't you think we're taken advantage of?"

Well, I told him, "I am not too concerned about the wages. We could be in Vietnam, you know, and to me minimum wage is a whole lot better than going to war."

He tried to get me to see his side of the issue but I wasn't too interested. Besides his attitude was not that of a genuine CO.

Then he said, I talked to a bunch of other CO's and they feel the same way I do and we're going to get together and have a meeting some evening. I'll let you know and I want you to come to that meeting."

As I suspected he wasn't a CO because I looked for him every day for a couple weeks. I even went back to the same wing of the hospital several times but I never saw him. I didn't want to have that meeting with him but just wanted to satisfy my suspicion that he was an FBI agent or maybe an informer.

The plumbers, electricians, and painters were constantly on my case for not defending my country. They kept calling me yellow belly, draft dodger, and of course names that are not printable. Sometimes Marko would tell them to shut up and mind their own business and then they would quit.

Every morning when I went to work I always went ten to fifteen minutes early to beat rush hour traffic and find a good parking place. The hospital entrance into the engineering department had a large foyer facing the street. I would always sit down and visit with the other men that were there. It was usually the draftsmen, electrician foreman, my department boss



s and maybe a couple other men and a few CO's. We would watch the traffic and people come and go till it was time to go to work.

This one morning I came to work as usual and there was nobody sitting in the foyer which was very unusual. I figured I must be late for work but a look at the clock said I was ten minutes early. I went in the office and there was no one there. I went past the electricians' lunch room, down through the boiler room, past the plumbers' lunch room to where our break room was and I didn't see one person. This was very unusual. I retraced my steps back up to the office and never saw anybody. It was five minutes till 8:00 and the secretaries were not there yet. I could not figure out what was going on. Finally I saw one man so I asked him where everybody was. He just mumbled something and kept on walking to his office. I couldn't even find Marko. I decided I would just go up to the floor where we had been working and get things ready. Maybe by then Marko would be there.

I got up to that floor and walked into the room where we had been working and there they were - the plumbers, painters and electricians, and they were all standing over by the windows talking in low tones. The minute I walked into the room they stopped talking and they all turned at the same time and looked at me. My heart immediately jumped to my throat. I knew something was wrong. One of the plumbers, Al Schmidt, was a huge giant of a man, six feet six inches tall and weighing well over three hundred pounds. His weight was not in his mid section. His arms were bigger than my legs, his fists were huge. They looked like the bottom of elephants' feet when stuck in front of your nose. He cursed and swore and came walking over to where I was and said, "Just what are you doing here?"

I started backing up against the concrete wall. The only thing between me and that giant was my tool box which was only waist high and not much protection. Again he asked me, "Just what are you doing here?"

There were about six or seven men and they all stood around me in a semi circle. They were all cursing at me. I said, "I just came to work like always."

He asked, "Why aren't you in Vietnam where you belong? Why aren't you defending your country?"

I told him my parents taught me it was wrong to go to war and the church I go to also teaches it's wrong to kill. That plumber's rage was increasing by the minute. He said, 'I don't care what your parents taught or what your church believes. I want to know why you're here.'

The more I tried to explain to him my position the more angry he got. Then he said, "We're going to take you to the recruiter's office this morning and we're going to see to it that you go to Vietnam. I bet if you were in a foxhole in Vietnam with a rifle in your hands and the Viet Cong would start coming at you, you would shoot just as hard and fast as anybody else. You wouldn't be a CO then."

The whole room had exploded in a rage. There was so much cursing and swearing. They called me every name in the book and then some. That plumber was standing in front of me, his huge arms swinging back and forth, opening and closing his huge fists and hollering at me for all he was worth.

Finally I asked him, "Wha... What did I do? Is there something I did wrong?"

He said, "Didn't you see the news this morning or read the paper?"

I said, "No."

He said, "There were five boys from the Kansas City area that were killed last night."

I thought those men were mad before. Now they were completely beside themselves with rage. He said, "Have you had a good night's sleep in a nice warm bed? You got up to a nice hot breakfast, got in your car and drove to work and nobody bothered you. Those poor boys spent the night in a foxhole in the swamps with the snakes, mosquitoes, alligators, and all kinds of bugs. They were wet and cold. Only to get killed, just so you could have your freedom."

I heard one of the electricians hollering, "Hit him! Hit him! Hit the bastard!"

Another one was hollering, "Get him out of here! Let's take him to the recruiter's office!"

I looked at the door. Under normal conditions it would be five jumps to get to the door, but by this time I was so scared I knew I could make it in three jumps. I also was watching those huge fists. I knew there was well over six hundred pound

s of torque behind that fist and if it ever connected my lights would immediately go out besides getting a broken nose and busted teeth.

About this time Marko walked in and stood right beside me. He swore and said, "What's going on here?"

Then the plumber turned to Marko and said, 'Why do you have this dirty \*@#!!' CO working for you? He needs to be in Vietnam. He's nothing but a yellow bellied draft dodger!' The plumber was still hollering at the top of his voice. And we're going to take him to the recruiter's office and get him out of here. He needs to defend his country. Marko, you were in the war, you about gave your life. They left you out in the battle field thinking you were dead. You were in the front lines and foxholes. You were wounded for your country. You fought for what you thought was right. Even though you fought in the German army you fought for what you thought was right and we highly respect you for that. We don't hold it against you even though you were in the German army. But this dirty draft dodger has no respect for his country."

I looked at Marko and I noticed his neck turning bright red starting at his shoulders and slowly moving up towards his ears. All this time Marko never said a word. The whole room was still wild with rage. I was getting more scared by the second. I thought if Marko turned against me I would have to leave. And leave in a hurry. I looked at the door and I thought I would have to make it in two jumps. Marko had blocked my exit. I would have to cartwheel over the tool box if possible and out the door. My heart was pounding hard. My adrenaline was really flowing. My legs felt like spring steel and they were surging. The thought crossed my mind not to jump my hardest. I might tear my tendons or rip my leg muscles. All this time I had one eye on those fists and one eye on Marko. Would he turn against me?

The red line on Marko's neck kept moving up. About the time it reached his ear lobe he exploded. "Will all you men shut up! If we were all Mennonites there would be no war!" As soon as Marko began speaking I heard a loud crash. There was nothing in the room that fell. It was a supernatural noise. The room was immediately charged with a Presence. I didn't know what it was. The men were stunned to a shocked silence. That plumber still stood in front of me. His arms went limp by his side. His fists opened up and he stood there speechless. There wasn't a sound from anybody. The plumber was trying to speak. His mouth was opening and closing. His lips were trying to form words but he couldn't speak, not a sound, not even a grunt. I can't put into words the relief and gratitude that flooded my soul towards Marko for having stood for my cause. That plumber knew if he would have lifted one finger and touched me, Marko would have lit right in the middle of him and decked him. There we all stood. No one spoke. It seemed like a long time but it was probably only a few seconds.

Finally I heard some feet shuffle and the plumbing foreman in a very quiet and subdued voice just above a whisper said, "Marko, you're right. You're probably right. Men, let's go to work." Still no one spoke. All I heard was shuffling of feet and the jingling of tools and tool carts. No one said a word until they went over the threshold of the door and out in the hall, and then all I heard was mumbling. Finally it was just Marko and me standing there. He turned to me and said, "Peachey, let's go to work."

That ended the harassment. From that point on no one, absolutely no one ever ripped or railed or spoke in a derogatory way on my CO stand. No one ever cursed me or called me a draft dodger again.

I looked at Marko and he had a very troubled expression on his face. All day I wanted to ask him why he stood for my cause but he was very unusually quiet and from the look on his face I couldn't bring myself to ask him. All day he hardly spoke. About 4:00 p.m. he said, "I'm going home."

!Continues~

**Re: "Hey, Peachey" Part 4 - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/8/25 6:45**

~Continued~

The next morning he came to work late and still had that expression on his face and was very quiet. I still wanted to ask him why he had stood for my cause but I just couldn't bring myself to do it. It began to worry me that Marko was wishing he would never have said what he did and that maybe he was thinking he turned traitor to his country and what he had fought for. It wasn't until twenty years later that I asked him and the answer he gave surprised me. I'll get to that later.

As you can imagine Marko was my hero. I stuck to him like a cocklebur on a pair of wool pants. And I made doubly sure to avoid that plumber because I knew he would be out for revenge. I realized he had been terribly humiliated in front of his peers and I expected him to dish out his revenge before my term was up. If I would see any of the painters, electrician

s, or plumbers in the parking lot I would duck behind something or take off in another direction.

Of course, I couldn't always avoid them. Many times they were working on the same floor Marko and I were and as long as Marko was present they seldom said anything about me being a CO. If they did it was always in a joking or teasing way. Mostly they would try to make a filthy joke and then laugh. Marko would come to my rescue and tell them to shut up.

One day I was talking to my department boss, Larry Lyle. He was talking about Marko. He told me that I was the only one that had ever worked for Marko this long. I was the last one they were going to hire to work with him and if I wouldn't have gotten along with him they had planned to fire him. Then he said, "You know, Peachey, we never challenged Marko to a fight. I realized he was talking about that morning when he told those six men to shut up and that if we were all Menonites there would be no war.

"You mean even if there were six against one?" I asked.

He said, Never! Marko is so strong and he knows his moves. Peachey, Marko could have a man on the floor with a broken back so fast you wouldn't know what happened. And he could break your neck so fast you would be dead before you hit the floor." I didn't know if I could believe that or not. Then one day Marko told me that himself. I asked him to kind of demonstrate how he would do it but he wouldn't.

As time went on the hostilities at the hospital started to ease up. I became more relaxed and it seemed the plumbers had forgotten their revenge. But I still avoided any direct confrontation with them.

About two months had gone by since that plumber had me backed up against the concrete wall, when Marko got the flu and was off work for about two weeks. He had been terribly sick and gone to the doctor several times. He just couldn't get over it so I was working by myself. With Marko not being there as my protector I again would go in the back way or take the long way around just so I wouldn't have to meet the plumbers. I would cut my lunch hour about ten minutes short and be back on the job so I was sure not to meet them in the hallways.

One day I was walking down the hall ten minutes before lunch hour was over and was planning to take this certain elevator. As I got closer I heard the door open and I saw a tool cart start coming out. My heart froze. It was the plumbers' tool cart! I wondered if I should run or not. Al Schmidt, the giant, saw me and hollered, "Hey, Peachey! Come here! I want to talk to you. I want to ask you something."

Well, I was nervous. I quickly sighed a prayer to the Almighty to say and do the right thing because Marko was not with me and this plumber now had his opportunity to dish out his revenge. I was expecting the worst cursing that I could imagine. As I walked over to the plumbers I kept my eyes on the floor. I didn't want to look at them.

When God melts a heart of stone he does a perfect job. This time it was my turn to stand there in total shocked, stunned, speechlessness. Al Schmidt said, "What did you do to Marko?" Immediately the thought crossed my mind that Marko had cancer or a heart attack. That's why he wasn't getting better. I looked up at that giant and there he stood with tears in his eyes and he said, "Marko's converted, isn't he? You converted him, didn't you? How did you ever do it?"

I was in shock. I had expected a horrible cursing. But this? I thought this was a trick, but no, can't be. I stood there with my mouth open and all I could say was, "Huh?" As he was talking I wondered, what does this man know about conversion? Does he even know what the word means?

He said, We've known Marko for seventeen years and he's been the most obnoxious, belligerent, bullheaded man we've ever known. No one could ever get along with him. Now that's all changed. His attitude has completely changed. He can smile and he doesn't get mad anymore. We used to tease him and we could make him so mad just in a flash. Now we can tease him like we always did and even more, yet he doesn't get mad. We just can't make him mad. He'll just walk off and smile. Peachey, that's so unusual. That's not like him at all. You converted him, didn't you?"

I was in a daze. I didn't know what to think. I still thought the plumber didn't know what being converted meant. I finally got my wits together and so I asked, "What do you mean or how do you mean Marko's converted?"

"Peachey, there's nothing in this world that is positive and sure that I can use as a comparison to really tell you what I see in Marko except night and day. These two opposites are positive and sure but that doesn't really explain what we see in Marko. It's as close as I can come to use as a comparison to describe the change we see in Marko. He's as different as a night and day. He's converted and you converted him. Just what did you do?"

Well, I just shrugged my shoulders and said that I didn't do anything, but the plumbers insisted I had done something. I went back to work and all afternoon I was wondering if this was some kind of a trick. Yet it couldn't be because the plumbers' attitude was also different. Marko finally came back to work a day or so later and things got back to normal.

About a week later I was walking down the hall and again I heard, Hey, Peachey, come here! I want to ask you a question. What happened to Marko?"

I said, "What do you mean?"

"He's converted. The man is changed. He's so different. He's so pleasant. How did you convert him?"

Well, I just kind of shrugged my shoulders and said, "I didn't do anything. It seemed from that point on there was hardly a day went by that someone didn't ask me about Marko's conversion. There were about forty or fifty men working in the engineering department and there was only one man that didn't ask me about Marko. There were men I had very little to do with, and they would come up to me and ask me about Marko's conversion. They would tell me how changed he was, how he was so pleasant, and so easy to get along with.

I remember walking down the hall one day and an arm shot out of a door and grabbed my shoulder. It was Charlie Kerbo, a veteran of World War II in the American army. His speech was so bad from being shell-shocked you could hardly understand him. He had this pleading look in his eyes and I heard him say, "Marko." I knew right away what he wanted to know. He, too, asked me about Marko's conversion. I pleaded to the Lord for an answer like I had many times before and many times after, but I always drew a blank. I would just have to shrug my shoulders and say I didn't do anything. Charlie worked in a completely different part of the hospital in a different department, yet he also noticed a complete change in Marko.

One day Marko sent me over to the carpenter shop for something. As I stepped inside the door Alvin Northcut, the foreman, immediately took off his nail apron and laid it down on the workbench. The rest of the men shut off their saws and whatever they were doing, and they came and stood around me. Then Alvin said, "Peachey, we want to know something. Just what did you do to Marko?"

Again I just shrugged my shoulders and said, "What do you mean?"

"Peachey, in all the seventeen years I've known Marko I have never seen him like he is now. I just hated to see him come over here. He used to be so belligerent and hotheaded. Every time he would come over here he would expect me to drop everything I was doing just for him. It didn't matter if I had other projects that were more important, he still insisted I do his first. But now that's all changed. He'll walk in here with a smile on his face and he'll sit down and visit for awhile. Then finally he'll tell me what he wants. Then I'll tell him, 'Marko, I can't get at it right away. Maybe tomorrow.' And Marko will say, 'That's okay. Just whenever you can.' Then he'll walk out the door and he'll whistle. A day or so later he'll come back and I'll tell him, 'Marko, this other job took me longer than I thought so I didn't get started on yours as soon as I thought I would.' It used to be that Marko would explode. He would curse and swear and just plain throw a fit. But now that's all changed. He'll say, 'That's okay. We'll get it later.' Then he'll sit down and visit for awhile and his attitude is so pleasant. I'll tell him, 'Come back tomorrow and I'll have it done.' So he'll come back. It used to be, Peachey, I could never do anything good enough for him. I could do the best I knew how and he would always say it was junk. I could never satisfy him. But now I can do a sloppy job and I tell him, 'Marko, this probably isn't just the way you wanted it. I cut a few corners here to make the material come out right.' And he'll say, 'That's just perfect. Just what I wanted.' He'll have a smile on his face and he'll walk out the door whistling. Peachey, I have never in my life seen a man change as much as Marko. The man is converted. Just what did you do? How did you do it?"

The other men all chimed in and said how pleasant and easygoing Marko now was, how they now enjoyed him. All this time I was pleading to the Lord for an answer but I drew a blank. Finally I just shrugged my shoulders and said, "I didn't do anything."

**Re: Hey, Peachey" Part 5 - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/8/25 6:50**

~Continues~

I walked out of the carpenter shop with mixed feelings. Everybody was telling me about Marko's conversion, wanting to know how it happened and I couldn't tell them anything. For some reason the Lord wouldn't allow it.

The second year of my 1-W Service I got a second job working at a department store as a custodian. I would get off work from the hospital at 5:00, go home and change clothes, get something to eat, then try to be at the store by 6:30. The store would close at 10:30 and by 11:00 I had my work finished. Then I would go to a drive-in and get a hamburger before going home.

Well, this one time I went to a Pizza Hut. I was sitting at the counter waiting for my pizza, having a glass of beer, thinking no one would know I was a Mennonite or a CO. I thought I looked about like the general public. A man walked in and sat down right beside me. I could smell he had been drinking and I soon realized he was drunk. Right away he started asking me questions about the Mennonites and Amish. He said, "Most Mennonites are farmers, aren't they? And most of them have plenty of money?"

I tried to remove myself as a Mennonite and I would say, "Well, from what I've read and heard they are good farmers, and yes, most have money."

"And they have large families, don't they?"

I still acted like I didn't know much about Mennonites. Then he said, "Well, you're a Mennonite, aren't you?"

I stuttered and stammered, and sputtered, "Yeah... yeah, ah, yeah, I guess."

"Well, I thought so." Then he left. I had never seen the man before or after. I didn't even get his name. And, of course, it really humiliated me and made me feel really cheap. Well, so much for thinking I could hide my identity in a city of two million people.

One other night I was leaving the drive-in when a man flagged me down. He said he couldn't get his car started and he asked me if I would give him a push. Well, I gave him a push but his car wouldn't start. Then he came and said, "I have a passenger. I wonder if you could take him home." I didn't know if I should or not, but coming from the country and being taught to be helpful and kind to strangers, I told him I probably could. Then out of his car crawled a black boy. Since there had been some race riots I didn't know how this was going to work, but he was well dressed in a suit, necktie and a little black hat. He told me he was a school teacher. I told him to get in and I would take him home. So I drove him home and the farther we went I realized I was getting into the black section of the city. I asked him how much farther and he said, "Not much. We're about there." But we just kept going and going, deeper into the black section of town. I was glad it was late because there weren't any people on the streets watching this white boy come into their section. I finally got to his place and he insisted I come in. He wanted to pay me. He wanted to show me his library and his photo albums. I went in and figured he could at least pay me. He showed me his photo albums and all his other things. Every time he sat down he would sit smack dab beside me. And every time he would get up he would turn out another light. He had a nice apartment. He wanted me to come back to his den and he would show me some of his other things. It was dark back there. I thought there might be some more black boys back there and I was getting kind of nervous. Then he turned out all the lights. I jumped up and hollered, "Get those lights on!" When he turned on the lights again I saw what was going on. This boy was gay. I made one mad dash for the door. As I was heading for the door all the warnings that the men in the hospital had given me about gays came flashing back. They had said that if you go along with a gay for awhile and then dump him sometimes he will stab you. In my mind I could feel the hot pain of a knife blade in my back. As I was dashing for the door the thought struck me, "The door is locked!" I saw a chair close to the door and if the door was locked I was going to grab the chair and smash the window. Thank goodness the door wasn't locked and out I went. Sometimes you hear the saying "Ignorance is bliss" but in this case it was a rude awakening. From that point on my home training on being helpful to strangers went out the door, at least in that city.

As the summer of 1969 wore on, people were taking vacations to different parks and places of interest. I told Marko that I had been to Yellowstone Park, Pikes Peak, and Grand Canyon. He had never been to those places. I don't remember if I offered to take him or if he asked me. Anyway we decided to take a trip, just Marko and me. The men in my department could not believe I would take my vacation time just to haul him around. I think it was Labor Day weekend that we took off. We went to Pikes Peak, Yellowstone, several parks in Utah, Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest and back home. It too

k us about a week and a half. After we got back the men in my department kept talking about me taking Marko on that trip. It had made a real impression on them, more than I realized. About twelve or fourteen years later on one of our visits to Marko's I went to see my former supervisor. Marko asked him, "Do you remember this boy Peachey?"

My former supervisor looked at me and then asked me, "Are you the one who took Marko on a trip one time?" I told him that I was. "Yes," he said, "I remember you, I sure do. You took Marko on a trip. I remember that."

One day the news media, a TV station, came to interview the CO's. They interviewed some of the Jehovah Witness boys, and they made some anti-government remarks. It was something about not paying taxes because it helped support the war. The next morning I sure heard about it. There was quite some dissatisfaction over what those J.W. boys had said. The plumbers asked me, Is that how you feel about it? So I had to do a lot of explaining again. I told them that I paid taxes and supported the government in all aspects as long as it didn't conflict with my teaching. That seemed to calm them down a bit.

Well, my time of service was coming to a close. There were about ten other CO's working in my department. One by one their time was up and they left. My time was up the first of February, 1970, but for some reason I decided to stay on for a while. Since it was the middle of winter I saw no reason to go home, and I had planned to go to Idaho, also. I figured it would be harder to find a job in the middle of winter so I stayed for seven more weeks. In one way I almost hated to see my time almost up. I was enjoying my work and I got along quite well with the men in my department. I could even sit in the plumbers' lunch room and visit with them.

It was around the second week of March and one of the J.W. boy's term was up. He worked for one of the plasterers. On his last day of work, about an hour or so before quitting time, he went and charged a whole bunch of new tools to his job, took them out, and stuck them in his pickup. Of course, he got caught and that really caused a ruckus. Those dirty CO's and draft dodgers were the talk again.

Well, two weeks before I had decided to quit I was walking down the hall, and I met the plumbers. They hollered, "Hey, Peachey! Come here. We want to talk to you." I expected they were going to talk about that J.W. boy who tried to steal those tools. But they didn't.

The one plumber started talking, You know, Peachey, there are a lot of boys who have come through here in the last number of years and most of them are draft dodgers. The minute their time is up they're gone. Right to the very split second their time is up. Some save up their vacation time and they leave two weeks early. They're supposed to be here two years and they're not. But, Peachey, your time's already been up for over a month and you're still here. You're no draft dodger. You're here for a reason And we know what that reason is. You don't have to tell us."

As you can imagine I was shocked. I never expected to hear this from the plumbers. But I knew they were apologizing and they were apologizing from the bottom of their hearts. They were telling me how much good I had done, how they appreciated what I had done. And then came the real shocker. Al Schmidt, the giant, the one who had me backed up against the concrete wall, and would have given anything to see me in a foxhole in Vietnam with a rifle in my hands, spoke up, "Peachey, if all the CO's were like you, I'd be behind them one hundred percent." I felt so humbled I didn't know what to say.

The next day or so Marko and I were working and here came the plumbers. There were a bunch of other men around when Al Schmidt hollered out, "Hey, Marko! Peachey did more good here than he could have ever done in Vietnam, isn't that right?" Marko agreed. And it wasn't just the plumbers. There were quite a few other men, even my supervisor, who came and told me that I had done more good there than in Vietnam.

Well, the last day finally came. About three o'clock in the afternoon I had to go to the office, turn in my uniforms, and sign a release. As I walked into the office there stood the plumbing foreman, electrician foreman, the draftsman supervisor, superintendent, and storeroom keeper. They all wanted to know where I was going and what I was planning to do when I left, so we talked for awhile. Of course the conversation turned to Marko. They all wondered what in the world I had ever done to change Marko. Then the plumbing foreman spoke up and I was surprised at what he said. "You know, Peachey, Marko's so different. He's so changed. He's just like a lamb." He repeated it the second time, "Marko's just like a lamb."

All the men agreed. They couldn't get over how Marko was so different. The supervisor was standing right beside me, looking at me and he asked, "Just what did you do?"

Well, I just kind of shrugged my shoulders and said, "I don't know. I didn't do much. I just always did what Marko wanted, never argued with him, always did things his way."

We talked some more and just as I was about to leave, the superintendent said, "Just a minute. I've got something for you." He reached in his drawer and handed me an envelope. I felt very small and unworthy because I realized I was probably the only CO that ever walked out of those hospital doors with a letter of recommendation. I was a certified mason in the state of Kansas. As those steel doors slammed behind me, I almost turned around and went back in because I felt so unworthy of such recognition. What had I done?

The last week that I was in service Arnold and Naomi, and Clayton and Phyllis Koehn from Burns, Kansas, came to Kansas City to take me out for supper. I wondered how this was going to work since I was expelled, and no one was supposed to eat with the expelled. I decided to go to a smorgasbord restaurant instead of a regular one. That way it wouldn't be so obvious. I would just go through the line, fill my plate, and go sit down somewhere next to another table, which I did. But Arnold said, "No, we're not going to do that. You're going to sit with us right at the head of the table because we want to visit with YOU."

I could feel the love and compassion they had towards me, how they wanted to include me with them, but I was still a little uneasy. Well, we all sat down and we bowed our heads for prayer. Right there all the bitter feelings I had towards the church and different ones, vanished completely. For the life of me I could not recall or think what I had had against the church. It was gone. It was there, as we were praying, that I made a commitment to God to return. The love and compassion went beyond the letter of the law. We had an enjoyable evening together. What I thought was going to be a little awkward turned out to be just what I needed.

I kept in contact with Marko all through the years. I would call him at least a couple times a year. We, as a family, went to see him several times. I could never bring myself to ask him why he stood for my cause that morning that plumber had me up against the wall. Twenty years had gone by when Marko came to see me and this time I was determined to ask him.

We were sitting in the kitchen visiting when I asked him, "Marko, do you remember that morning the plumbers gave me a bad time and you took my place and told them to shut up? And if we were all Mennonites there would be no war?" Why did you do that?"

My boys were sitting around the table listening and I wanted them to hear what he would say because I expected him to say, "The reason I took your place was because you were such a good worker. You never argued. You always did things just like I wanted. I had been trying to teach my boys the same thing Mom had always taught us about working for someone."

Marko thought for awhile, then said, "If I said that..." Then he stopped and said, "No, I never said that." I was just about ready to tell him more details of that morning when he said, "Peachey, that was God talking. I never said a word. Sure, you heard my voice, but that wasn't me. God used my mouth, He used my lips, but it was God speaking, not me." Then it all came clear. That crash I heard that morning was Marko's atheism destroyed. And that heavy charge that was in the room was God's presence. God himself had come on the scene. That's why those men were so quiet, the plumber couldn't say a word, and Marko wore a troubled expression. Up to this point he had claimed to be an atheist, but when he started to speak, and he had no control over what he was saying, he knew there was a God. It was from that point on that his life changed.

Then Marko said, "Peachey, I gave my heart to the Lord and my life to Jesus. I pray to him every day." Then he told me, "Peachey, don't ever be ashamed of Jesus. He's nothing to be ashamed of. Peachey, when I look over my life and see what all I went through in the war, the bombings and heavy fighting ..... Peachey, they dropped a huge bomb as big as this house, the explosion was horrible, and I got up and walked away. I was in a building when a bomb hit it and I was blown out into the street. I got up and walked away. I believe God had his hand over me. He spared me for a reason. I'm already seventy-seven years old, and maybe he has something for me to do yet. I don't know." I told him, "Marko, I believe you have already fulfilled what God wanted you to do. All those men in the hospital saw the tremendous change that came over your life, and they all told me you were a converted man." Well, he didn't know. He still thought maybe God had something for him to do.

One day about a year and a half later the phone rang. It was Marko's daughter and she said Marko was in the hospital. He had had a massive heart attack and was not in good shape. A day or so later I called his daughter to see how he was. He was still in intensive care, but she told me he had a phone by his bed and I could call him, which I did. I could tell right away he was not very good. His voice was very raspy and he could hardly speak. He tried hard to tell me something, but he couldn't get it out. I could tell he was getting weaker, so I told him, "Marko, don't say anything. Just look to the Lord."

d. He'll take care of you.

Then he said, "Oh, Peachey. My Heavenly Father... " He repeated it three times. He started on the fourth time. I could tell it was wearing him down so I told him to just let me talk. I think it was a day or so later that he passed away. "Oh, Peachey. My Heavenly Father... "were the last words Marko spoke to me before he died. They were a tremendous contrast to what he said when I first met him, "Peachey, I'm an atheist. I don't believe in a God. There is no God and I can prove it."

Do I believe in miracles? Yes. But it amazes me what God can do with so little. As I look back I realize why I could never say anything about Marko's conversion. It was withheld because if I would have said anything, everyone would have said it was me. I believe every one of those men in the hospital knew it was of God. I believe Marko died a saved man.

Thus were my two years of 1-W Service.

Willie Peachey

~THE END~