

My Testimony!

by
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My name is Bob Schoenle and this is how I became a fundamental, Bible believing, born-again, Christian. Having very little money, I opened a real estate office as an agent of United Farm Agency in a small town in central Michigan. This was in January, 1972. There were days when I would actually leave the house with a dime in my pocket so I could call my wife and let her know where I was and what I was doing. I didn't know it at the time, but there was no way that this new venture of mine should have been successful. I made my first sale on April 1, 1972, and had two more sales the next day. These were the first of the sales that caused my office to be number one in the northern Michigan district for 1972, and for my becoming the "Rookie of the Year."

I attained everything I ever wanted from January, 1972, to December, 1973, and became a huge fish in a small pond. My success enabled me to acquire a large amount of money, a number of real estate holdings and a new car. I had our house remodeled in 1973, with a showcase kitchen. Our house sat on a site of two thirds of an acre, and was like Old MacDonald's farm. The garage was converted into a barn for our three horses and pony, two hogs, two ducks and a dozen rabbits. Our busy household consisted of my loving wife and three beautiful kids, Thorpe, Laurie and Christine, our German Shepherd, Vegas, and two cats, Misty and Tippy. This was the happiest and greatest time of my life. It was also the most financially rewarding years I would ever enjoy.

I ate, drank and slept real estate. Afterward, I realized that real estate had become like a "god" to me which is why I left the business after my conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ. I never gave God any credit for being so successful or even thought of Him. I was the reason for my success, because I was great at what I did! It was a book, given to me by a client in December, 1973, that changed my outlook about the future and caused my eighteen month journey with fear to begin.

This book answered questions about runaway inflation that had lingered with me from when I was a young boy. For example, until I read that book I could never understand how a runaway inflation could cause the loss of real estate holdings. This book introduced the word "devaluation" to me. It also made clear how a runaway inflation can cause the "devaluation" of a currency and bankruptcy for a nation. I became convinced that a financial collapse was inevitable for America, because of her excessive debt and having a currency backed by nothing of substance like gold or silver. Thus, I would lose all that I had recently attained, through no fault of my own. I became extremely frightened and determined to protect my wife and kids by becoming one of the few who would profit from what I was convinced was going to take place in the near future.

I began an extensive and intensive study of economics, politics, history and current events by way of many books, magazines, newsletters, tapes and seminars. All of which caused me to

conclude that not only was a financial collapse inevitable, but so was a nuclear war and a world dictatorship. My conclusion was based on being a realist and not as a pessimist or an optimist. The majority of people I came into contact with, however, seemed to be unaware of how bad conditions in the world were at that time. I think that the everyday activities of life is the reason why most of us tend to ignore much of what does take place throughout the world.

I suppose if one seriously considered subjects such as the spreading of infectious diseases, failing national economies, unstable political regimes, ecological disasters, nuclear and weapons proliferation, energy shortcomings, population growth, changing weather patterns, inadequate food and water supplies, one would have to conclude that there is little hope for the future. Maybe that was the reason why I did not meet many people who were willing to discuss those issues. However, when I would share some of what I was learning with others, I was ridiculed. It was like I could see a tornado coming towards our little town of Six Lakes, but it was invisible to everyone else. This is when I learned that most people will always reject a message of warning!

In the course of my studies I learned that those who control the currency of a nation, also control its political and financial policies. This is done by having all political parties subservient to their financial masters, who in America are the “unknown” owners of the Federal Reserve. Thus, political elections are like having all of the horses in a race owned by the same person. I came to view the two political parties in America like a snake with two heads. Thus, it made no difference which political party won an election! The agenda of their owners would be followed either way.

In the spring of 1974, I learned of a cashless and checkless medium of exchange for all goods and services that was planned by the financial masters of the world. I obtained a 16 mm copy of a film produced by Cuna Mutual Insurance Company, that showed how this system would work by use of a plastic card. This movie was obsolete upon its completion since losing or having this plastic card stolen could cause the financial ruin of its owner. In the fall of 1974, I read an article in a trade magazine for the banking industry, where it was advocated that a microchip be used instead of a plastic card. It would be placed into the body of its user. This would eliminate the possibility of loss or theft. All financial accounts would be electronically posted, and updated instantly by computers using the personal information initially programmed into each microchip.

Of course, for this new cashless and checkless medium of exchange to be accepted, all paper money or currency will have to first be “devalued” and discredited. This will lead to economic chaos on a worldwide scale, and cause this new medium of exchange to be accepted by people willing to have a microchip implanted into their body. There will be many advantages to this new system of world commerce. It will prevent the loss of money and assets due to accident, theft, bad checks or stolen credit cards. It will stop illegal aliens from entering a country and criminals from leaving. False identification will become a thing of the past, along with identity theft. Fraudulent use of government programs such as medicare, welfare and food stamps will end along with income tax evasion, the illegal sale of drugs and secret bank accounts. The “underground economy” will cease to be a viable method of exchange. It will also lead to worldwide bondage!

I learned afterward, that the Holy Bible had prophesied of such a system of doing business more than 1900 years ago (Rev. 13:16-17). It also told of the penalty for those who had this computer chip be implanted in their body so they could buy, or sell, goods and services (Rev. 14:9-11). The Holy Bible calls this microchip the "...mark of the beast..." (Rev. 16:2). The "beast" is a man from the nation of Italy and he will be the President of the European Union! This man will rule over all of the nations of the world through the use of this new medium of exchange during the seven years, or 2520 days, that precede the "Second Coming" of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth.

By the spring of 1975, I had become a fatalist. There was nothing that I or anyone else could do to prevent what I knew was eventually going to take place. I did those things necessary to survive a runaway inflation and economic collapse by divesting myself of illiquid investments like real estate. I became a "survivalist" like many others during that time. I bought gold, silver, guns, ammunition and dehydrated food to help protect and provide for my family. But I was not hopeful of my family and I being able to live for long after a financial collapse, followed by a war and being under a dictatorship. Also, living without freedom, and being in fear of somebody taking what I had, held little appeal for me and added to my hopeless state of mind.

It was in May, 1975, while on our weekly Friday trip for groceries at Meijer's Thrifty Acres in Greenville, Michigan, that my wife and I followed our regular routine. She went with the kids for groceries and I went to the book section. It was there that a book entitled "There's a New World Coming," a "prophetic odyssey" by a guy named Hal Lindsey caught my eye. I can remember, as if it were yesterday, the words that went through my mind as I held this book in my hand. Those words were, "What has this clown got to say about the future? There is no future!" I bought the book and read it that night while my family slept.

This book was an exposition of the "Book of Revelation." I was raised as a Roman Catholic, therefore, I knew nothing about the Holy Bible or of Bible Prophecy. As I read of the prophecies that had been fulfilled and those yet to be, I learned that what I had determined about the future had been prophesied in the Holy Bible along with much more. Knowing he was right in my subjects of study and interest, which were economics and politics, I had to conclude that Lindsey must also be right in his subject of study and interest, which was Bible Prophecy. He believed that our generation would see the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and I was convinced that he was right! After eighteen months of fearing what was to happen in the future, I now had a new hope.

The next day I loaded my wife and kids into our car and drove sixty miles to Grand Rapids where Zondervan Publishers had an outlet book store. It was there I purchased, "Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth," "The Late Great Planet Earth," and "The Liberation of Planet Earth," all of which were authored by Hal Lindsey. I read each of these books on succeeding nights while my family was sleeping. I thought "The Liberation of Planet Earth" would be the least interesting so it was the last one I read. How ironic that it was the book that brought me to my knees. In this book, Lindsey clearly and simply explained the "Person" and "Work" of the Lord Jesus Christ, which I had never understood as a Roman Catholic. It was while reading this book, that I came to

understand and appreciate just how much God loves me! It was His love for me that caused the Lord Jesus Christ to come and pay the penalty that I deserved for all of my transgressions against a holy God. If everyone else in the world was perfect and sinless, the Lord Jesus Christ would have still done everything the same - just for me. I found that to be absolutely amazing.

It was the love of God for me that broke my heart and caused me to kneel by my coffee table in the middle of the night, while my family was sleeping, and asked the Lord Jesus Christ to be my personal Savior. It was then that I accepted His free gift of salvation, for the forgiveness of “all” my sins by simply believing and trusting that what He had done, was for me personally and was sufficient to save me. I was spiritually “reborn” that night and became a new creation in Christ. The fear that I had lived with during the previous eighteen months left me. I had peace of mind with hope and excitement for the future instead. I would not see all that I knew was to happen!

The next night I read the “Gospel of Matthew” for the first time and I became a student of the Holy Bible. I ordered a number of audio books by Hal Lindsey, Walter Martin and Chuck Smith. They were my first Bible teachers by way of those tape recordings. Several weeks later I prayed to God that He use me and what I had accumulated in whatever way He desired, and to allow me to be a “disciple” of the Lord Jesus Christ. God honored my request! My family and I began to attend a small independent fundamental Bible church, where I learned of the “Scofield Study Bible” and the “Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music.” I left my real estate agency and enrolled in this school in August, 1975, three months after my conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ. My reasons for doing so was that I simply “knew” God wanted me to go to Bible school, I needed to learn from the Holy Bible, and I had to turn away from my “idolatry” of real estate.

The decision I made to leave my real estate agency caused my family and I to suffer financial hardship and humiliation for many years. As a result of being unable to find stable employment, I lost all that I had gained and been so intent on retaining. It was ironic that my great success in rural real estate proved to be a handicap when job hunting. My reasons for leaving an extremely successful business was difficult for potential employers to comprehend. My family and I left Michigan, and moved back to Chicago in December, 1977. The consistent rejection from employers during the next six years caused me to lose my own self respect and the respect of my wife, who filed for divorce in August, 1984. I never blamed her for doing that since I was responsible for all that we had lost and suffered. My loss of position, possessions, and sense of purpose had been heartbreaking, but nothing crushed me like when I lost my wife and my kids!

Though at times I gave up on God, He never gave up on me and would call me back to Him. I am so thankful to God for His love, mercy and faithfulness. I believe that God gave me a job by way of a packaging and shipping store I opened in 1986, and managed until 1998. Through the “I’m sorry” years, I would remind myself that God never stopped loving me, and relate to Lazarus the beggar. Also, the hope of the “Rapture,” has been a constant encouragement to me. The way God worked in my life to get my attention was a miracle. Otherwise, like most people, I would never have paid any heed to the “Good News” of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amazing grace? Indeed it is!