

THE TOM STIMUS STORY

In the early 1980's I moved from NY state to Bradenton, Florida to attend a 10 week, 250 hour Institute of Ministry course at Christian Retreat. I had been involved in some charismatic meetings at home and done lots of reading about the Holy Spirit but being at the Retreat was a unique opportunity to be totally away from the world and news etc. and to be exposed to many different teachers/ pastors from different charismatic streams and backgrounds such as Mennonite, Southern Baptist and a few Word of Faith . The course provided me with guidelines and balance in Life in the Spirit. It turned into over another year of study in a Pastor's course and an internship in street ministry and later involvement in jail ministry. The gift of evangelism was very strong in my life at that time and I loved giving out tracts/literature. I headed up a street ministry out of a coffee house called the Fig Tree in downtown Bradenton. Every Friday night we met for some teaching on evangelism and prayer, then we dispersed in teams to the streets and bars. Two different times I bought a box of 10,000 tracts to give out. Before the days of the Internet, I wrote every ministry that printed out tracts so that I could select the ones I thought would be the most effective. Some of my favorites were the small ones with a marijuana leaf on the outside which had testimonies of persons who had been set free from drugs. At some point we will have a section on evangelism on our website and I will share many of our teachings and experiences. I have found that whatever I teach on, it tends to make me more diligent about practicing what I am teaching. In the coming days I expect God to stir up the evangelism anointing again. As you may surmise, teaching is my main spiritual gifting.

During this time I would often see this flamboyant car dealer on TV. He pounded the hoods of cars, put farm animals in his car lot, dangled a van 100 feet in the air with a crane and threw an actor through a windshield on TV commercials. He put full page ads in the newspaper and posters on telephone poles with the headline: **Wanted...Dead or Alive**. His targets were such Mideast despots such Khomeni of Iran and Kadaffi of Libya. He also had a full page about corrupt President Marcos and his wife of the Philippines with the headline, **Give the Money Back You Scoundrels !!** Stimus concluded all his commercials with his phrase.....Tom Stimus #1. The logo on his cars in the lot had these words: Tom St#1mus. His bold antics even got him on the Phil Donahue national TV talk show. During the program....a plane was seen flying over the outdoor set in Miami with a banner displaying his logo.

Plane.....Tom...Stimus..#1.....

One day at the dinner table, I remarked to my mother that somebody should talk to Tom Stimus about the Lord. She responded to me with these challenging words.....'why don't you?'. As sometimes happens, mothers or wives can utter intuitive words to us men that inspire us to do things greater than ourselves. I pondered her words and began to pray for Tom Stimus. Someone once said : 'Before we talk to a person about the Lord, it is good to talk to the Lord about the person'. This is often the case in warfare. The Air Force goes into operation before the ground forces. In a spiritual sense....the Prayer Force goes before the messengers on the ground. Prayer paves the way for the victory. I never spoke Tom in person but God led me to write him a short letter.

Tom Stimus,

April 1986

You are a unique man with great vision and talents. In reading about you several weeks ago, I was surprised and saddened to hear that you were lonely at times. You are number one on my * (prayer) list. Since letting Jesus Christ be first in my life I have lived a life of real peace, contentment, fulfillment and joy. I know that God desires the same for you. In fact, He has great plans to use you spreading the good news of Christ's kingdom around the world if you will yield yourself totally to him. May God protect you and fill you.

Sincerely,
John Beckerink

At the top of the letter that I sent to him, I had a banner with an asterisk next to it that said:

*** TOM STIMUS NUMBER ONE !!!!!!!!!!!!!**

The asterisk was meant let him know that he was number one on my prayer list. A short while later I spoke at a church in Ellenton, Florida (Word of Life with Pastor Barry Woods) about my upcoming mission to England to work as a missionary. At the end of my message God moved upon me in a bold anointing of faith as I declared to them, Tom Stimus will come to Lord by the time I return from the mission field!

Time passed, and I returned to Florida in 1990. A prayer supporter was excited to give me a copy of the Bradenton paper that had a full page picture of Tom Stimus on the front of the business extra section with the headline: A kinder, gentler Tom Stimus. Inside, the paper had two full pages on his life and told of his story of how he came to Christ. What really caught my attention was where he had found the Lord. It was the same church building where I had previously **decreed** that he would come to Christ.

(The Word of Life pastor had disbanded his church and moved to Georgia but Tad Matthews had moved his Church on the Rock to the same building where I had given the prophetic word re: Stimus) He had led Tom to the Lord and Tom's words in the paper read like this.....

"We come to a point in life where we've done a lot of things, but there's something missing".
- Tom Stimus

There are times when God places someone on our heart to believe for their salvation. Our obedience can be part of the answer in the ultimate spiritual victory. I have the paper with me right now as a cherished reminder of how God can use an inspiring word from a mother which set into motion a life changing encounter with Jesus Christ. Don't get me wrong. I am sure that many others had a part in seeing Tom Stimus come to Christ, but I have great joy in knowing that I at least did my part in following the leading of his Holy Spirit.

In the end, we can all agree, including Tom Stimus, that

JESUS IS NUMBER ONE!!!!!!!!!!!!

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