

Jack the Evangelist

My father would witness to everyone he met, and when he was driving the cab, he had a captive audience. The “singing cab driver” would sing to his customers in his resonant baritone voice and then make every effort to save their souls. After a day driving the cab, he would sometimes arrive home with a running total of how many souls he had saved on that day alone. There wasn't much money in this, though he occasionally got good tips. My mother used to say that we paid the cab company to allow him to drive around singing to people.



Toward the end of his life, as he continued to struggle with Bipolar Disorder and also developed Alzheimer's and Dementia, he told me that he was very sad because he felt he had let everybody down and that his life had not been a success. He said he was even afraid that he might even have lost his salvation.

So, I told him about Phil Kelley. Phil had been a cast member with me and Dad in the outdoor drama *Horn in the West* when we were first part of that show in the mid-1960's. This long-running summer theatre production still plays in Boone, NC for 52 nights during the season, and Dad was part of it for 25 years. In 1982, I was a graduate student in Tallahassee, Florida, and I worked part-time in a sheet music store. One day, Phil Kelley, a church choir director from Alabama came in the store, and I recognized the name on his credit card and asked him about *Horn* in the 60's. It was the same Phil Kelley, and I told him who I was. He remembered me, and especially my father, and he made a point to tell me that it was Jack Prescott who started him on a path to salvation, resulting in a changed life.

I asked my father, "considering the number of people you witnessed to, how many more Phil Kelleys must there be—people for whom you made a difference?" I told him I did not consider it possible for him to lose his salvation, and that a successful life should not be measured in dollars, but in the number of people one has helped along the way. In this regard, Jack was clearly an overachiever.