

## Healing of the Hearts

### Chapter 10: A Step of Faith

*Carl Townsend*

**[Temporary Editor Notes:** The Gloria Otis character, the singer here, is inspired by a real person – not named here. A famous interviewer, on interviewing the real singer, said she is “genuinely one of the nicest people I’ve met in the often self-obsessed music industry: a sweet, polite, touchingly naive, unaffected girl...who happens to have one of the greatest voices in the world.” There is no roleplaying, no diva. She is a humble Christian, a multi-millionaire. She is also prodigiously beautiful, outside and in. Reviewers and others describe her voice as heavenly or angelic. The real singer can shatter a crystal chandelier or put a crying baby to sleep with her voice.

*“More amazing than her voice is the intensity of the light that seems to come from her. What an aura and her eyes simply project warmth and light.”*

(Comment from someone at one of her concerts.)

Although the “Gloria” fictional character here is a mashup of several real people, she is primarily inspired by this real single lady. Remember, though, Gloria in this chapter is still a fictional character.

The soldier in this story on life support is a projection of the author, Carl. In 1989, doing ministry work in London, I contracted GBS, an autoimmune disease that attacks the myelin sheath that protects the nerves, and can go in (as it did with me) to physically destroy even the nerves of the peripheral neural system. I was paralyzed from the shoulders down. It can kill. In my case, the doctors said I would never walk again. The nerves in my legs were physically destroyed. I walk today by God’s grace. The doctors don’t know how I walk.

Additionally, the soldier here is also a symbol of most of the American church. As the story progresses, see if you can identify the real Church- the Called Out, the *Ekklesia*, the Body of Christ.

As the chapter opens, it's 2033. Gloria is with her husband, Michael, and they have been married almost 20 years. That is unusual for a singer who travels internationally doing 70 concerts a year. Most of those singers end up divorcing. Gloria and Michael’s home is London. Gloria does a flashback here to 2014 when she met her future husband, who is with her at their New York condo now in 2033. Michael has a studio in the condo. Gloria is narrating the story of how they met from her manuscript, planning to create an eventual movie from it. The story in this chapter is told in the first person to engender intimacy, and Gloria has quickly shifted back to 2014 in

our story to the circumstances when she first met Michael, the man in 2014 to which she now married.

The pictures include here will NOT be in the final book.]

## *A Step of Faith*

### **March 2033, Gloria sharing a 2014 event.**

Michael and I first met at a conference in New York around 2014. I was about 25 years old at the time. He says he had seen me before and had even heard my singing, but this was the first encounter I remember. I was a speaker at the conference for aspiring singers. My speech topic was supposed to be about what was the most important thing for a singer to remember: voice, enunciation, posture, the smile, breath control, hands placement, or wardrobe? They asked me to come and speak about some of these. As I sat waiting my turn to speak, I suddenly noticed I didn't have any of my notes. Nothing. There was no time to recover them from my hotel room. I panicked. All I could do was pray, "Please Lord send your Spirit. If I don't have that, then my trip here is in vain. Please speak."

The Holy Spirit did anoint me. I felt the speech I gave there was one of the best I have ever given anywhere. The most important thing to remember, I told them, was to aim for the heart of your audience and sing from your own heart. I shared this and gave examples. When I finished, we adjourned for the evening. Several thanked me, and I chatted a bit with some.

After that, I left for a restaurant in the hotel. Earlier, I received a message for me at the hotel desk that a "Michael" wanted to meet me in the restaurant regarding a new project after this session. There was a man from the conference who seemed to be following me, but I paid little attention. At the restaurant, I asked for a quiet booth at the back. The maître d' led me to a back booth and handed me a menu. I bowed my head and silently prayed, thanking God for helping me that evening. Well, maybe not silently--but at least quietly. When I looked up again, the guy who followed me from the conference was standing there staring at me, nervous, with a confused look on his face.

"I...I was praying for you t...today as you spoke," he finally stammered.

"Thank you. I was very aware someone was praying for me. God answered that prayer."

"I...I know." He stammered. "Your speech was inspiring and u...unbelievable. I'm sorry, I'm getting my tang all tangled up. You are a prodigiously beautiful lady."

"Thank you. Relax. I won't bite."

I gave him one of my famous giggles. He returned the giggle. Then we both laughed. The man was well dressed, what I would call business casual. Tie, sport jacket. He had a shadow of a mustache and a tiny pony tail in his dark, black hair. Big-boned. Blue eyes. Cute. He continued with a bit of a stammer.

“I have b...been given a message I’m supposed to g...give you. A request. May I buy your dinner?”

I thought that line was an interesting strategy to have dinner with me; but the truth was, I was lonely. Not tired, lonely. A night in this city and hotel to sing a concert, then another city and hotel. Then another city. I had come to this conference after doing a concert in China, and then Los Angeles before that. Touching people on the surface. I was hurting inside. At the same time, I saw the confusion on his face was real – he wasn’t gaming me. It was a burden he had. No roles. He was real with me. Authentic.

“Sure,” I told him. “It would be lovely. You may join me.”



He sat quickly. He introduced himself as Michael Crafton. He said he is an artist – painter, sculptor, and teacher. He also is an actor and movie director. Probably in his late twenties. He travels extensively much like me, with no wife or much sense of home. About that time the waiter came. We both ordered light meals. I think I asked for a salad and small soup. The waiter left, and we continued with our discussion. I could tell he was struggling in trying to share something with me. He became more comfortable as we talked. There was a deep trust between us, even

though we had just met. Michael was drawing deep things out of me, feelings that were deeply buried.

Eventually, Michael began sharing the message he had for me. He had been sent by a prominent and wealthy businessman to contact me. The businessman’s oldest son, a soldier in the Middle East, had been brought back from the war and lay in an ICU ward at Walter Reed Hospital on life support. The soldier was also a long-time friend of Michael. The businessman had sent Michael asking me to visit his son and see what I could do.

“Can you connect me to this businessman and let me ask him some questions?”

“Sure, Gloria.” Michael took his phone and punched a number. A lady answered.

“This is Michael. Is the Dreamer available?”

A deep, male voice quickly replied. “Michael! How’s our project going?”

“I’m with Gloria now. I’ll put her on.”

Michael handed me his phone.

“Michael says you have a son on life support at Walter Reed.”

“Yes. I’m sorry and can’t give you my name at the moment. If this story got to the media, they would have a field day with all of us, including you. My son is at Walter Reed under an assumed name. The doctors aren’t able to do much and don’t even know what it is he has. It is not PTSD or Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS). He’s like a vegetable and on Life Support and dying. There is no voluntary movement. I want you to spend two weeks working with him. If you can bring him out of it, I will pay you anything you wish. If not, I pay you nothing. You are an incredibly gifted singer. The Lord has blessed you with a very special voice. Your singing has healing power. My prayer warriors with me believe you, with the help of the Lord, can bring him out of it. We are praying to claim that in faith.”

I stumbled a bit in trying to reply without his name, but Michael leaned over. “Gloria, use his code name of ‘Dreamer.’”

I giggled a bit.

“OK, Dreamer. I am highly honored and humbled that you perceive that gifting in me. I will talk more with Michael on this and should have an answer for you in a few days. Let’s pray on both ends. I have a prayer team here as well.

The Dreamer broke quickly into a beautiful prayer. Then he expressed his deep desire to meet in person, perhaps even with his son, later. Then we hung up.

Michael and I were there until the restaurant closed - talking, laughing, sharing. As we left, we both realized this was the beginning of something, not the end.

“Michael, what you shared tonight meant very much to me. I haven’t been home in two months.”

“Gloria, home is not where you are from, but where you belong. Some travel the entire world to find it. Others find it in a person. Evening dinner again tomorrow?”

“Yes. I do want to hear more about this ‘project’.”

“Fine. What time should I pick you up here Gloria? Six in the evening? ”

“Would noon work for you, Michael?”

Michael choked, then spoke, “Fine, f...fine.”

We agreed. Michael was trying to be gallant in telling me good night. I skipped his nervous attempt and gave him a hug he’ll never forget.

The next day he met me at noon at the same hotel restaurant. We took a quick lunch. Soon we were out the front of the hotel, and Michael called up a taxi. As we got in, I heard Michael tell the driver '109 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street'. The taxi shot off down the street to our mystery destination.

"Michael, why were you at the conference yesterday? I gather from what I've learned since we've met that you weren't there as a student."

"No. Like you, I was there as a speaker."

"What were you speaking about?"

"Same basic topic you were on. I work with all types of artists – painters, sculptures, writers, singers, even actors, and actresses."

"Movie work?"

"Yes, I work on the production or directing end, helping them select the cast, sometimes acting. So often they want a well-known name for a part. I prefer someone who carries the heart of the message. They pay me well for that. Sometimes I am an actor."

"Then why were you there in my session for my talk? Was it related to the businessman's project?"

"I think you'll know the answer by the end of the day."

I was fascinated by the mysterious web Michael was weaving.

The taxi soon pulled up at our destination - a very famous location – Steinway Hall. He opened the taxi door, paid the driver and turned for our short walk to what the sign said was *Steinway Hall*. On the building exterior was a bas-relief of Apollo with a musical muse above a grand window. Carnegie Hall was across the street.

"Michael, we're not buying a piano, are we? I have a Steinway Hall in London."

“Nope.”



The rotunda of the Steinway Hall on 57th Street in New York City with artist Mia LaBerge's *Madison Bluestone* art case piano in the foreground. (Wikipedia)

“What are we doing here, then?”

“This is their ‘mother lode’ store. There are over 150 pianos here, many of them famous. As to your question, let’s see what happens.”

Inside the store, I found myself in a piano fantasyland. Beautiful, famous pianos. A salesman approached and greeted me by my name. He introduced himself as Alex Thompson and was wearing a distinguished business suit. Alex recognized who I was, and Michael introduced himself to Alex. Alex asked how he could help us. I just stood there, frozen, and stared at a piano almost at my fingertips. Alex smiled.

“That piano which you are looking at, Gloria, is the famous Mia LaBerge Madison Bluestone art case piano. It was commissioned to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of James Madison University. LaBerge hand-painted the piano herself, probably one of the last she did. The piano images show the peaceful campus at dusk, surrounded by the Shenandoah Valley’s Blue Ridge Mountains.

I continued to stare at the beautiful piano, saying nothing.

Michael turned to Alex.

“I think she wants the grand tour. Is that possible?”

“For you – certainly. Follow. This room is the rotunda and embraces two floors. The chandelier is a Swarovski Chandelier. The high domed ceiling was hand-painted by Paul Arndt. The valuable paintings on the walls are by renowned artists like Rockwell, Wyeth, Leopold Seyffert, and Charles Chambers. Portraits of composers and concert artists line the walls. Both Vladimir Horowitz and Sergei Rachmaninoff have performed concerts here. We use the main rotunda as a concert hall, and it can seat 300 guests and a small symphony orchestra. You will also find displays of memorabilia and our various inventions for the piano scattered about the building.”

After some exploring, we were back in the rotunda. Alex asked the obvious question.

“Gloria, would you like to play one of the pianos?”

I looked around. Several other people were wandering about enjoying the pianos and art.

“Oh, no. I couldn’t do that.”

Alex and Michael smiled. I think they wanted me to sing and were trying to draw me out.

“Roberto is here today,” Alex said.

“The Great Roberto?”

“Yes indeed.”

Alex picked up his cell phone, punched a few buttons.

“Is Roberto there?”

“OK. Tell him I have someone in the rotunda he would want to meet.”

Alex dropped the line. A few minutes later Roberto himself stood before me, bowing deeply and speaking with his beautiful accent.

“Mz. Otis. How divine. How blessed I am. May I play a piano for you?”

I was returning his bow, and for a few minutes I was too stunned to say anything. Before I could speak, Roberto looked at Alex. Alex pointed at the *Madison Bluestone* piano. Roberto moved to it, sat, and his hands hit the keys. The music of the Master flooded the exhibition hall. He was playing Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. Visitors looking at the pianos and artwork drifted to us at the beautiful piano. People started pouring into to the hall from all areas of the building. Someone opened the front door, and people passing the store heard the music and wandered into the store to see what was happening.

As Roberto played, I thought back to when Beethoven wrote this. The greatest composer in the world, deaf, struggling to hear his music. I could see Beethoven's hands on the keyboard of the new pianoforte and one of his ears against the piano wood, weirdly contorted. Beethoven is desperately trying to hear his music. I was no longer at the store. I was with Beethoven watching as he played.<sup>1</sup> Then Roberto reached the end of the sonata.

I faintly heard Roberto's voice through the noise of hand clapping calling me back to the concert hall with his delightful accent.

“Gloria, what do you wish me to play?”

“*Amazing Grace*, Roberto, *Amazing Grace*. I will start *A Capella*. Hold off on the piano until about midway on the first verse, and then breathe the piano in to join me.

I stepped up near the piano with the audience silent. I began to draw my first note as an archer pulling back on the bow, creating tension and releasing the note as it tore into the silence of the audience in perfect pitch, striking the very heart of the enemy. I continued to launch the words from my piercing the hearts of the audience, and soon Roberto's piano joined me, floating in with me. I couldn't help what happened.

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.*

The song of the piano, the words, and the breaking of what was happening in my own heart crashed within me like a tsunami.

*T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.  
And Grace, my fears relieved.  
How precious did that Grace appear  
The hour I first believed.*

Something burst within me with the joy I felt. Michael told me later as I began to sing my posture changed, the voice became angelic and pure, my face radiant as the words moved as fire to the audience. I enunciated each word clearly. Michael dropped to the floor near the piano, sitting near me, his legs crossed and his hands out-stretched in worship. His eyes were closed.

*Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far  
and Grace will lead me home.*

*The Lord has promised good to me.  
His word my hope secures.  
He will my shield and portion be,  
As long as life endures.<sup>2</sup>*

When I finished, the room dropped again to silence. Then I heard one or two clapping. Then they erupted into a loud applause. I bowed to the crowd then blew them a kiss. Michael was on the floor but began to stand. He pulled a piece of music from a notebook he had and showed it me and whispered, “Will you sing this for me? Please?”

I squeezed his hand, “Sure, Michael. I know the words.” He took music to Roberto. Roberto looked at it smiled, nodding to Michael. It looked like Roberto was going to play again. Roberto's hands touched the keys again, and they began moving. Then my words rang out:

*The love of God is greater far  
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
It goes beyond the highest star,  
And reaches to the lowest hell;  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,  
God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled,  
And pardoned from his sin.*

*Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!*

*It shall forevermore endure—  
The saints' and angels' song.*<sup>3</sup>

I looked at Michael, who was back on the floor with eyes closed, hands raised.

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.!*

*Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure—  
The saints' and angels' song.*

Looking out, I saw the room was packed. I saw one girl start dancing between the crowd and the piano. People moved back to give her room. Then a young man who was with her came out and joined her in the dance. In the next moment, with beautiful choreography, she cartwheeled up and with his help stood on his shoulders in the tall exhibition hall with her hands stretched skyward. The crowd screamed.

I reached down to Michael, touched his shoulder, and lifted him up to face the dancers, and then me. I held both of his hands in mine, and we sang together as Roberto played to a crescendo on the piano.

As the song ended and the piano stopped, Michael fell on my shoulders, hugging me. I turned to him, and we faced the audience. The applause erupted again, I acknowledged and thanked them. Then I turned to Roberto, thanking him as he stood, then led the audience in thanking the dancers. Roberto and I started chatting with each other. Michael turned to Alex asking how we could get out of the store as there was a mob between us and the door.

“Follow!” Alex said. “Quickly.” Alex led the four of us down the hallway to a small room as many of the crowd tried to follow. I continued talking with Roberto as we went to the room.

Once inside, Alex closed the door and turned to Michael asking our plans. Michael told him we should be leaving.

“How did you get here,” Alex asked.

“Taxi.”

“Michael, where is your next stop?”

Michael mentioned an address, but I missed what his planned destination for us was. Roberto was still keeping me busy.

Alex offered for someone from there to drive us to that destination. Soon a young man entered Alex introduced as Fred. Michael and I extended deep appreciation to Roberto and Alex. They insisted we were the ones who blessed them. Then we were out the side door with Fred to a nearby parking lot where a company car awaited. Soon we were on our way. To where? Carnegie Hall was across the street. MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) was only a few blocks away.

I relaxed in the back seat with Fred dodging through New York traffic. I turned to Michael and teased him a bit with an edgy voice.

“We’ll be in the newspaper tomorrow and probably on television tonight with your stunt today.”

“Huh? I did nothing. Their marketing people phoned our visit to the media. Several reporters showed up in the crowd a few minutes later. I’m sorry. It was not my intention to hurt you in any way.”

I squeezed Michael’s hand.

“You didn’t Michael. It’s been a great day.”

We soon pulled up at our destination, which appeared to be a small, nondescript art gallery. Michael helped me out and pressed a fiver into Fred’s hand.

“Thanks, Fred.”

We entered the gallery, but it seemed empty except for a security guard at the front desk. He stood as we entered.

"Hi, Michael. It looks like you hit the jackpot today. Is she buying a painting?"

“This isn’t business.”

“Lucky you.”

Michael introduced me to Paul. Paul already knew who I was, and gallantly bowed as he welcomed me to the gallery.

“Paul, no interruptions today.”

Michael led me down a corridor past several paintings that looked interesting. We finally turned into a small tea shop in the gallery.

“Need any coffee, tea, pastry?”

The shop was empty except for us. I said “Yes” to coffee, and Michael got it while I browsed the pastry. We drifted to a table and sat.

“What’s so special about this gallery, Michael?”

“Look at that picture over there on the wall. What do you see?”

"I see what looks like a scene in a park. There is a dancer there, red hair, maybe about 20 years old. She must be Native American by her dress. She has long hair that spins out as she dances, and the red hair blurs a bit from her motion. She is reaching out to what must be a teenage girl in a wheelchair. The picture catches the moment when the dancer's finger touches the girl."

"Gloria, two minutes later the girl was up and dancing with the dancer. The lady standing behind the wheelchair, probably her mother, was on the ground weeping."

"An hour or so later the mother left the park, with her daughter walking and pushing the empty wheelchair. I talked with the dancer some. Her name was FireDancer, and she called her dance a Fire Dance. It was an ancient dance her deeply spiritual Cherokee mother and grandmother had taught her. She told me Jesus did the healing – it wasn't her. Much of what these First Nation people had learned about healing was lost at the hands of the white people. With the Trail of Tears, most of the Cherokee people were moved to Oklahoma and raped, murdered, and abused. Over 25% of them died on that march, and most of what the Cherokees knew about healing is lost today. My mother and grandmother had to first learn to forgive before learning to heal."

Michael paused a moment.

"About a year later I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer..."

"Michael, you don't get healed of that, you die."

"The doctors told me that. I tried to find that FireDancer again, but to no avail. A Christian friend told me to listen to what FireDancer had said – she didn't heal the girl, Jesus did. I was a Jew, but my friend showed me the prophecies in the Old Testament that promised the coming of this Jesus, what He would look like, and the healing He would do when He came. My friend showed me this Jesus had already come. We live on a visited planet. I accepted the Lord., and am now a Messianic Jew and a Christian. I no longer have cancer and don't take insulin."

"Michael, that's wonderful. You can see that in your picture. The picture is so dynamic. It's not a static thing hanging on the wall. The picture jumps out at you. Dynamic. It thrusts the story at you. Did you draw it?"

"Yes. There's not much of my work here. Most of it sells quickly. There is, however, a lot of work here in the gallery is done by my students."

"You are a fascinating man, Michael."

"And you, Madam, are fascinating, an epic beauty, mysterious, enchanting, and more. When you sang that *Amazing Grace* at that piano store and paralyzed the audience, it was beyond anything I have ever heard sung by anyone else. Your enunciation of each word was perfect. Your breath control was impeccable. Your posture communicated authority and strength. Your face had a moving smile that with your eyes constantly radiated an intense, warm light. I have never seen anything like that before. There was an aura there from your dancing eyes that stunned the audience. Was there a reason for that?"

“Yes. The woman you see today came from a very dark place. I am not proud of what I did during that time in my life. It wasn’t that long ago I was running around with the wrong people. I was on drugs: ecstasy, cocaine, and more. It was the most tragic time of my life. Eventually, as with your story, a friend introduced me to a personal Jesus. Today I sang that way in the store because of what Jesus did for me. Jesus took all of that and made a new woman out of that pain, much as a potter works the clay to make a beautiful vase.”

Michael was shaking his head and tearing up. I put my arms around him, and we just held on to each other for a while.

We waited in silence, and then I continued, “It is an issue of the heart. There is a war going on. God is after my heart. Satan is after my heart. My desire is to see my heart shattered before God, much as my voice can shatter a crystal chandelier. That crystal can only break if the voice is pure; that is, a single pitch. And the crystal must be in resonance with my voice pitch. “You will find me,” God said to Jeremiah, “when you seek me with *all* your heart (Jeremiah 29:13). God and Satan are also after the hearts of the audience. My job is to sing, with a pure heart, into the hearts of the audience. Only then will the shielding to their hearts be shattered and Jesus can get in to the unbound heart. The best songs composed and sung always come from a real and honest place.”

Finally, Michael spoke again. “Thank you. I wasn’t exactly honest in speaking to Paul as we came into the gallery. There is this challenging project a leading businessman asked me to bring to you.”

“Michael, I want to know more of this project and appreciate your openness about your purpose. Relax. I expect the gallery closes soon. Let’s do the tour here for now, then go back to the project and this businessman over dinner.”

“Great idea. Gloria, follow me.”

Michael cleared the table then led me on down the corridor. The paintings on the wall and then the side rooms were unbelievable. Brilliant colors, often iridescent with a special paint. They spoke stories of joy, healing, many of dancers, musical instruments, and smiling faces. Michael drew stories about the pictures and their painters out for me as we walked.

He finally led me to another side room. There were no windows here; black burlap covered the walls. The pictures, many of dancers and musicians, projected people of purpose, joy, authority, and love. The only lighting in the room was track lighting, with small, focused beams of light on each picture. Against the dark walls, this gave the illusion that the pictures were all suspended in space.

I froze before one of the pictures, staring at it. It was a desert scene, the entire picture echoing with a reddish-brown cast. At the bottom, you could dimly see the desert floor in the moonlight. At the far left a large, reddish-brown moon hung low on the horizon casting a dim, dusty light over the desert scene. The large moon was over half the height of the picture, drawing the viewer to it. The moon silhouetted a small desert bush. To the far right, the morning sun was starting to break on the horizon. It was casting its morning light leftward onto a lone figure of a man about a

third from the left edge walking toward the light of the rising sun and facing it. His posture was strong, determined, committed. The man's face could be clearly seen facing the rising sun, lit from the breaking light. The face was rugged with the stubble of a mustache. The ruggedness teased the light, causing the facial shadows to give a three-dimensional appearance of the face, drawing the man's face out from the darker background. There were long shadows stretching leftward behind the man from the light of the dawn."

"What do you see in the man?" asked Michael.

"I look at his face. He is not thirsty, and he even has a canteen. I don't see hunger. He has a backpack. His posture shows strength, not any tiredness."

"Read aloud the quote in the lower right."

*"Yes, I am a dreamer.  
For a dreamer is one  
who can find his way  
by moonlight,  
and see the dawn  
before the rest of the world."  
Oscar Wilde<sup>4</sup>*

"Yes, yes. I can see the man's face better now. His expression and even his posture, they all seem to say 'Confidence', or 'Hope', maybe even 'Faith.'"

"Princess, you just said the title of the painting."

In the lower right, above the poem, was the title, 'Faith'.

Michael moved behind me and put his arms around my waist.

"And who, may I ask, painted this incredible picture?" I queried.

"He's got his arms around you."

"You painted it?" as I abruptly turned to see his face.

"Yours truly. Now let's head back to the hotel and dinner."

Michael tried to pull me away from the painting to leave, but I could not move. I just stood there in shock.

"This is unbelievable. Will I see this painting again?"

"I doubt it. I sold it at an auction a few days ago for almost \$100,000. Some lady. I don't know her name. I never met her."

As we left the gallery, I felt a flood of emotions. Using his cell phone, Michael soon had a taxi, and we were on the way back to the hotel. As the driver dodged traffic, Michael asked, "Gloria, too tired to discuss that project over dinner?"

“I’m tired, sure, but it’s a happy tired. Give me a chance to freshen up a bit at the hotel and then I can do dinner. Have the taxi stop at the side door of the hotel to avoid a public entrance. They gave me an electronic key for that.”

With that, I curled up for the drive back with my head on Michael’s shoulder and his arm around me.

At the hotel, Michael gently woke me up, paid the driver, then escorted me to the door. I already felt more rested. Inside the hotel, we wound our way through the corridors to reach the elevators.

“Michael, it will take me thirty to forty-five minutes to freshen up. Is that a problem for you?”

“No. Suppose I get a reservation for forty-five minutes away. I will work in the lobby with my phone and tablet until then.”

“Fine. I’ll meet you in the lobby.”

Then Michael raised one eyebrow, much like Spock use to do.

“Would you rather do dinner at *The Golden Harvest*?”

He caught my surprise at hearing the name of my favorite New York restaurant.

“No, that would be a little too public for our discussion. The word would get out, and we would have interruptions. I just want you this evening. No interruptions.”

And as the elevator door closed to take me up I winked and spoke again, “You’ll find it worth the wait.”

“Oh, Lord.”

I showed up again a little before the forty-five minutes. Michael was more than shocked as I saw him stutter.

“It...it was definitely worth the wait. You are gorgeous. Is that one of your concert dresses?”

“Yes. It’s a designer dress.”

Michael led me to the restaurant. Once there, however, the maître d’ did not lead us *into* the restaurant. Instead, he led us to a small side room with a single table set for two. There was a white tablecloth and flowers. Glowing candles flickered on the table. Soft music came from overhead speakers.

“I took advantage of my wait and had this set up,” Michael smiled.

The maître d’ turned to me, “And I may say, Ms. Otis, it is an honor to have you and Mr. Crafton with us this evening. Will this work for you?”

“Oh, my. Yes, certainly,” I gasped.

The maître d' seated us, left our menus as well as a remote unit for emergency waiter access. Michael slipped some bills to him as he left and closed the doors. Michael knows how to work New York.

As soon as the waiter had our orders, my cell phone rang. Checking who called, I saw it was Phyllis, my American agent in New York. I told Michael who it was, then put my speaker on as a courtesy to him. No one else was in the room. Phyllis was screaming.

"Gloria, what happened at that piano place today? My phone is constantly ringing. I haven't even had supper yet. You were on the news tonight. The video of what happened at the piano store is going viral on the Internet. And who is the guy you were with?"

Michael took the phone and answered in his bold, deep voice. "Michael Clayton, Phyllis. We're working over dinner now on a project without much time before she flies home. I think she flies back over the pond early Tuesday, tomorrow."

Michael handed the phone back to me.

"He's right Phyllis. I'll set up a conference back home to debrief on Wednesday. We'll bring you into the meeting on Internet video if that works for you. I will tell you more then."

"OK, Gloria. And whatever you do, don't let Michael get away. Your product sales have skyrocketed this evening. The local stores are out of everything."

"I have no intention of letting Michael get away. Bye for now. God bless."

"And you, too, Gloria and Michael."

Soon our dinners arrived, and I put my phone away. After a prayer of thanksgiving, we started on our dinners.

"Now, Michael, what's this project you mentioned?"

"You do a lot of entertainment work with the British soldiers. Right?"

"Yes. I enjoy it very much. When I'm sharing my music like that, there is also a healing that I experience. I go to base camps. It is dangerous. The enemy shoots missiles at my helicopter as I go in. Once there the soldiers set up a stage, and I do a concert."

"What about the soldiers that are not physically or mentally able to attend the concerts, even with a wheelchair or mobile bed?"

"I visit those soldiers one on one. I sing them a personal song. Pray with them. Often a touch, a bit of massage. Sometimes a hug or kiss. Sometimes there is a major injury. Some will not go home alive. They will not see their wife, kids, or girlfriend again. I often weep with them. One time a soldier there died in my arms."

"Do you compose songs with them, Gloria?"

“No, I’m not a composer.”

"That's not true. As a kid, you ran around your house composing music for nursery rhymes and fairy tales. You made up stories and sang them."

“You got me, Michael. That is true. Where did you learn that?”

“Some late night host was interviewing you.”

I gave Michael a puzzled look. “So you want me to compose music for the soldiers?”

“Not exactly. Much bolder than that. To illustrate what I am saying. In some of the teaching work I do, I take a student and connect their brain to special equipment so that the screen is displaying their brain activity. I start the student quietly reading a book without speaking aloud. You see a little brain activity, but not much. Then I ask the student to read out loud. Now you see more activity as they begin using the mouth, tongue and various facial expressions. Finally, I ask them to sing a song, out loud. I encourage them to take real ownership of the song. On the monitor, the brain activity becomes very, very high. They may even dance. Music is one of the very few things that uses almost all the brain cells, and you can see it with this setup. Gloria, when you are drawing vision out of that wounded soldier using music, you will see healing. You should try to draw from the soldier’s dreams and passions. Heart drawing. The immune system becomes stronger. It is no accident that Psalms is the longest book in the Bible. Those Israelites knew a lot about music and healing. Music also has a healing effect on the circulatory system, the heart, the immune system as well as, when dancing, the nerves, muscles, and joints. Gloria, you have a very gifted voice. What you do with that voice God gives you is unbelievable. How many concerts do you do a year?”

“I do about 70.”

Michael looked into my eyes intently. I could tell he was hurting as he shared.

“What I’m asking for is two weeks with us working one-on-one with an American soldier who is dying. He is critical and on life support in an ICU. You can name your price. As this businessman who sent me to you tells me, no one else can do what you do with those soldiers. The businessman will be paying and praying for you to come. You name your price.”

“You know the soldier?”

“I grew up with him.”

“Would this be done In America or near me in England?”

“Walter Reed in Washington, D.C. That is where the soldier is now.”

“You’d come to the hospital with me for this?”

“Yes. I’ve known the soldier since childhood. The soldier is the son of the businessman. The soldier is conscious but in a paralyzed state. He doesn’t respond to any external stimuli. Catatonic.”

“Michael, have you any idea of how busy my schedule is and the cost of my doing that?”

“I don’t believe those are your key questions in making this decision. Am I right?”

“You are very perceptive.”

“No, this businessman is the perceptive one. He is the dreamer, the desperate one, a man with deep faith who calls others out to risk with him.”

“Who is the businessman?”

“I can’t tell you that. Only that he is a Christian and highly loved by all who know him and very wealthy.

“When would this start, Michael?”

“I can be ready in two weeks. How about you?”

“I need to pray and check with my advisory team and managers. I fly back to England tomorrow. I meet with them Wednesday. I should have the answer late Wednesday.”

“That will work for me. You are paid only if you can wake the soldier again. Make him alive again. I can attend the debriefing when you get back by video if you wish.

“Who else is involved?”

“In the project itself? The businessman is trying to keep things secret for the moment. It’s very personal. Only two others are involved. One of those is Dr. Luke in Switzerland and his Institute.”

“Oh my God, Michael. He’s helping us?”

“This businessman has the vision of seeing a group of spiritual healers, moving across this land and bringing real peace, love, reconciliation, and healing at a transformatinal level that affects everyone and every system: political, educational, medical, financial, and more. After this soldier, the businessman wants you to visit Dr. Luke. Dr. Luke will be training this group. The other person working with us is Russo. He does piano, singing and interactive healing concerts all over but also does one-on-one healing with his music, sometimes even in mental hospitals. He and Dr. Luke will not be with us those first two weeks with this soldier. After that, if you're serious about this, we visit the doctor and Russo in Switzerland. The businessman will not be directly involved, as he wants to give us complete freedom and not load us with any agenda. This businessman is trying to put together a core group of healers to lead in restoring America. He sees you in that group.”

“That is bold. But we need to see first see this soldier healed. Michael, how did you meet Dr. Luke?”

“Gloria, you’re not the only one he’s helped. His work is unbelievable. The businessman says you will find that what you learn with Dr. Luke can be used even with your large concerts and will draw in even more people to those concerts. You are already very relational with the audience whether one-on-one or in a large concert hall. That’s in part why the businessman asked me to find you. This training will help you even more with that. At the moment he is only asking for the two weeks, for which you will be well paid if successful, nothing if unsuccessful.

“Michael, I live at a constant dichotomy. I love the concerts, the praise, the financial rewards, and above all carrying my spiritual witness and values internationally through my artistic expression. I can do things with this voice God has given me that few singers can do. I can shatter a crystal chandelier or sing a baby that is crying to sleep with my voice. I am paid more than well for doing this. I am just returning from a concert in China. A lot of the money that comes in from this is channeled to multiple foundations. At the same time, the Call of Christ on my life is a heart call. I have to balance that artistic and financial path with the one-on-one ministry and healing, which at times seems to pull me away from the artistic, visible, financially tangible part of my life.”

I paused a moment.

“Michael, I do feel led to do this project with the risk I financially may get nothing, subject to my managers and advisors approval. I feel highly honored for the faith you and this businessman have in me. What are the action steps I need to take?”

We both took out our tablets to define the next steps.

“First, Gloria, the store recorded your performance at Steinway this morning.”

“What?”

“What was on the television was from reporters who were called in by the store. They recorded it. In addition to the media reporters, the store also had a mike in the piano, mikes and a camera in the ceiling, and another camera with mike hidden in the floral arrangement near us. Alex told me this while you were talking with Roberto. Also, Alex knew the dancers. They were both professional. It was a setup, but I didn’t do it. The store began that when you walked in the door and recognized you. The setup was done while we toured the place. You want the raw footage from each source from this morning, including from the reporters. We will mix it. Have Phyllis work with getting that and licenses, getting the best deal we can. We’ll also need Roberto, the dancers, and the store’s releases on it. You can get that.”

“Why is that important?”

“Study it closely and see why Phyllis said what she said. Why did it have such an effect on people? Why did it go viral on the Internet? Why did I fall in worship at the piano?”

“Second, once you clear the two weeks we need for this initial project; the project will be with the soldier at Walter Reed. The businessman will set that up. As I mentioned, the soldier who lies there now is in a trance, completely oblivious and unresponsive to any external stimuli. I’ll join you at Walter Reed and help you in whatever way you need me. All of this must be kept secret.

“Three, be sure to define your price for these two weeks as soon as you can.”

And Gloria – a fourth. If possible, have your friend in London that sets up the debriefing when you get back home bring me into the initial meeting with video if possible. I can help explain the project more if they have questions. Here is my card. Email her my phone number so she can work with me on scheduling.

“Got it, Michael. I want to thank you very deeply for the two days.”

Together we said a prayer thanking God for the meeting and His blessing on the path ahead.

I reached out and touched Michael’s heart with my hand. “All healing, Michael, is first a healing of the heart. To heal your friend, I must reach his heart.”

Finally, we began to stand up.

“Michael, how much did you tip that maître d’ for this private table?”

“\$500. The meal and the rest of the day were on my expense account. That tip to him was from me, not my expense account. Why?”

“Thank you for the private table. It meant I could express to you some private things tonight, both verbally and non-verbally, that I could not have done in the open restaurant.”

“That’s why I did it. I wanted you to have complete freedom to be Gloria without worrying if someone was looking or watching, or interrupting us. Incidentally, the maître d’ returned the \$500 to me through the waiter. You didn’t see that. There was a short note with it that said he heard you sing in a concert here a few months ago. The private table here tonight was a gift from him as well as the meals.”

As we left, I went to the maître d’ and thanked him.

“It was an honor to have you here, Gloria. I have been richly blessed by you again. Michael is a very fortunate guy.”

Reading his nametag, I gave him a big smile, then kissed him on the cheek.

“Tonight, Eddie, I’ve been the fortunate one.”

I turned to find Michael, who was tipping the waiter.

Michael and I ambled slowly down the corridor to my elevator and soon passed a large, empty banquet room. Chairs and tables were waiting around the edges of the room so they could be moved back to the clean floor. For now, the large floor was empty. Soft music drifted in from overhead speakers. Michael pulled me in, embraced me; and we were soon dancing with my tired head on his shoulder. Soon Michael heard some quiet sobs from me as we drifted about the floor.

“You OK, Gloria?”

“Never better. The joy of becoming a whole person is always accompanied by tears. Every step toward a healthy body, mind and soul means we say goodbye to something with which we are comfortable. That is what Dr. Luke taught me. There is both risk as we move forward and a grieving as we leave the old.”

We danced on from the banquet room to the elevator. There was a kiss – a long one and on the lips, but we both knew the parting would be only for a short time. I stepped into the elevator and on to my room for rest.

Michael, had indeed, captured my heart. But who is this famous businessman? And I doubt if the soldier's problem is PTSD or GBS. But what is it?

The next morning Phyllis had arranged for an early van to pick me up with all my luggage and get me to the airport. Once checked in for my flight, I went to the VIP lounge to wait and called Jackie, my assistant in London, to let her know I was on my way.

"Gloria, your mom plans to meet you at the airport. Rory is driving and will help with your luggage."

"Oh, no..."

"Your mom's heard what happened at the piano store and wants to know who the guy is."

"Jackie, we'll meet to debrief on Wednesday. Set it up with all hands on deck. Include Phyllis from New York on video. Also include Michael on video. I sent you his email. Contact all the advisory team."

Soon the plane started loading, and I was on the way home. As the plane reached cruising altitude, I had breakfast. After that, I was soon asleep again for the rest of the long trip.

The van was waiting for me at the London airport. Rory helped me loading it. My Mom started plying me with questions as we loaded the van, but I held her back until we drove out of the airport. She had seen the video of me in the piano store.

"Gloria, are you in love with this guy?"

"Mom, he's just a friend."

I looked at Mother. "Rory, why are mothers so good at reading between the lines?"

"I have the same problem with my Mother," Rory said.

"Are you going to see him again?" Mom asked.

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I gave him a long kiss before I left."

Rory was cracking up.

"So when will you see him again?" Mom asked.

“He will be with me in Washington in about two weeks.”

“Oh Lord. He won’t have any sleep for two weeks,” howled Rory. “Poor guy.”

“Hush up, Rory,” Mom said. “That’s how I captured and married Gloria’s dad.”

“Must be a genetic thing then,” Rory retorted.

This went on all the way back to my place. I took my suitcase from the van and a few things, but let them drive off to the office while I went in and crashed.

### Notes:

1. The scene here of the deaf Beethoven playing the pianoforte can be seen in the marvelous movie *The Immortal Beloved*. The movie is about a mystery romance in the life of Beethoven. After he died, a romantic letter Beethoven wrote to a lady is found in Beethoven’s possessions that had been returned to Beethoven after he mailed it. The mystery involves his lawyer researching among the several women Beethoven knew to find the woman to whom he wrote the letter and giving the letter to her. In this movie scene of Beethoven, there is no stunt player at the pianoforte. Gary Oldman, playing Beethoven, had to learn how to play this sonata in the contorted position you see. Gloria, at the piano store, uses that scene to escape the stress before she sings, mentally shifting from her audience at the store to the lonely room with Beethoven.
2. *Amazing Grace*, lyrics public domain As sung by Katherine Jenkins:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1CGnihFyOE>
3. *The Love of God* is public domain in the United States. These words are part of a very old Jewish poem. Once they were found on the wall of a patient’s room in an insane asylum. Frederick M. Lehman was so moved by the poem that he desired to expand on it. In 1917, while seated on a lemon box during his lunch break from his job as a laborer, he added the words of the first two stanzas and the chorus, completing the song.
4. The poem by Oscar Wilde is now in the public domain. As a result, there are various versions on the Internet.

### Next chapters:

For two days of Gloria and Michael will try to wake Nathan. Nathan is critical, in an ICU, and on life support. This prodigiously beautiful woman stands next to his bed and sings in her angelic voice. She prays with others there and reads him scripture. He has no voluntary movement and remains staring at the ceiling. He gives no indication that he even knows Gloria

is there. Gloria's only hope for waking Nathan lies in a nearby room. Near Nathan's room lies another soldier (Dale) with his face blown away by an IED and now physically blind. And Dale is angry and bitter as he deals with it, bellowing out from this anger, and needing healing himself. And Gloria has only two weeks to rescue Nathan. What Gloria does in this short time will dramatically affect the history of America and the world. Much of what Gloria does is based on the healing strategy I used in 1989 when I was paralyzed in 24 hours from the shoulders down with Guillain-Barre Syndrome. The doctors said I would never walk again. I proved, in God's mercy, they were wrong. Healing here would be a miracle, even as mine was. Gloria does much of what I did in my own healing in bringing the soldier back to the real world.