

= Frank Jenner =

Frank Arthur " Bones " Jenner (surname often misspelled Genor ; 2 November 1903 ? 8 May 1977) was an Australian evangelist . His signature approach to evangelism was to ask people on George Street , Sydney , " If you died within 24 hours , where would you be in eternity ? Heaven or hell ? " Born and raised in England , he contracted African trypanosomiasis at the age of twelve and suffered from narcolepsy for the rest of his life . After some time , he joined the Royal Navy , but deserted in New York and joined the United States Navy . When he was 24 , he deserted again while in Australia . He subsequently worked for the Royal Australian Navy until he bought his way out in 1937 .

That year , Jenner encountered a group of men from the Glanton Exclusive Brethren who were engaging in open @-@ air preaching , and he converted to Christianity . For 28 years , from his initial conversion until his debility from Parkinson 's disease , Jenner engaged in personal evangelism , probably speaking with more than 100 @,@ 000 people in total . One person who became a Christian after encountering Jenner 's question was Noel Stanton , who went on to found the Jesus Army in 1969 .

In 1952 , the Reverend Francis Dixon of Lansdowne Baptist Church in Bournemouth , England , began hearing several testimonies from people who became Christians after Jenner accosted them on George Street , Sydney . The following year , Dixon met with Jenner in Australia and told him about the people he had met who had become Christians as a result of Jenner 's evangelism , and Jenner , then fifty years old , cried because he had not previously known that even one of the people he had talked to had remained a Christian beyond their initial profession of faith .

Jenner died from colorectal cancer in 1977 . While he was alive , very few people knew of him , but after he died , stories of his evangelistic activities circulated widely , and elements of some of these stories contradicted others . In 2000 , Raymond Wilson published Jenner of George Street : Sydney 's Soul @-@ Winning Sailor in an attempt to tell the story of Jenner 's life accurately . Nonetheless , conflicting accounts of Jenner 's life have continued to propagate , including accounts from Ray Comfort and Ché Ahn in which Jenner is referred to as " Mr. Genor " .

= = Early life = =

Frank Arthur Jenner was born on 2 November 1903 in Southampton , Hampshire , England . His father was a hotel pub owner and former sea captain . Jenner had four brothers . According to his posthumous biographer Raymond Wilson , Jenner was anti @-@ authoritarian as a boy and , at the age of twelve , during World War I , he was sent to work aboard a training ship for misbehaving boys . When he was fourteen , the ship sailed from Southampton to Cape Town , South Africa . On the way , while the ship was docked at a port in West Africa , a tsetse fly bit Jenner and infected him with Trypanosoma ; he therefore contracted African trypanosomiasis , which is also called " sleeping sickness " . He subsequently entered a 15 @-@ day coma , but eventually recovered . From this point on , he suffered from excessive daytime sleepiness and was eventually diagnosed with narcolepsy , which prevented him from ever being able to drive a car . When the war ended , he returned to England .

= = Navy career = =

After some time , Jenner joined the Royal Navy , but deserted in New York City , United States . He soon joined the United States Navy . Jenner 's daughter stated in an interview after his death that he learned how to gamble during this time and he soon developed the impulse control disorder of problem gambling . He became particularly attached to the game craps , which was popular in the United States at the time . He started to keep a rabbit 's foot in the left upper pocket of his shirt , and would rub it with his left hand while he rolled the dice with his right . His shipmates therefore began calling him " Bones " , a nickname that he retained for the rest of his navy career .

When he was 24 , his work with the United States Navy involved going to Australia and he deserted

again , this time in Melbourne . There , he met Charlie Peters , who invited him to his home to have a meal with his family including Jessie , Peters ' 23 @-@ year @-@ old daughter . Jessie and Jenner married a year later , on 6 July 1929 , at HMAS Cerberus . They continued to live in Melbourne after their wedding and Jenner joined the Royal Australian Navy . He soon became one of the sailors assigned to travel to England to retrieve HMAS Canberra . He was serving on HMAS Australia in 1937 when he was legally discharged from the navy , buying his way out but not receiving a pension .

In 1939 , with the onset of World War II , Jenner was recalled to active duty . Because of his narcolepsy , he was given shore duties in Sydney . In this capacity , he participated in undercover operations and delivered sealed orders . After the war , he left the navy and became a janitor for IBM , a technology and consulting corporation .

= = Conversion to Christianity = =

In 1937 , Jenner encountered a group of men from the Glanton Open Brethren standing in front of the National Australia Bank on Collins Street . One of the men was engaging in open @-@ air preaching . Jenner interrupted the man to say that he would listen to the man 's good news provided that he was allowed to share some good news first . The man agreed , so Jenner taught the group of Brethren how to play craps there on the pavement . One of the Brethren invited Jenner into his home for tea and told him about the gospel . Jenner converted to Christianity and , when he went home , told Jessie that she was a sinner bound for hell and therefore in need of salvation . According to Wilson 's biography of Jenner , Jessie thought that Jenner had become manic or insane . They had a young daughter named Ann by this point and Jenner was gambling so much that he was not providing for his family . For both of these reasons , Jessie left Jenner and moved to Corowa to work on a farm , taking Ann with her . She said that she would return only when Jenner regained his sanity . On several occasions , he aggressively told Jessie 's brothers that they needed to become Christians , which angered them . On one of these occasions , their conversation became physical and they began punching each other . The brothers rejected Jenner and were never reconciled to him . He wrote to his family back in England informing them of his conversion and asking them to become Christians too , but he received no reply .

Later in 1937 , Jessie became seriously infected with boils and , while under the care of a Glanton Brethren family , became a Christian . Before the end of the year , Jenner and Jessie began living together again . Although Jenner gave up gambling , he was often unemployed because he would evangelise at his workplace and then be fired . In 1939 , Jessie developed a peptic ulcer . At the time , it was believed that such ulcers were caused by stress , and Jessie 's ulcer was therefore attributed to the stress induced by the family 's lack of money . Consequently , she and Ann moved to India to live with Jenner 's aunt Emily McKenzie , who ran the Kotagiri Keswick Missionary Home . Ann subsequently attended Hebron School in Ooty , Tamil Nadu , until she was ten years old . Once Jessie had recovered from her illness , they returned to Sydney on SS Oronsay .

Jenner would normally wake up to pray at 5 am each day . In the 1940s , Jenner left the Glanton Brethren and joined the Open Brethren . For the rest of his life , Jenner attended Open Brethren churches : one on Goulburn Street in Sydney and the other in Bexley , New South Wales . At these churches , people did not understand what narcolepsy was and thought that Jenner was consistently falling asleep during services because he lacked respect for God . The church on Goulburn Street also disapproved of his partnership with other Christian organisations and churches ; Jenner actively partnered with The Navigators , Campaigners for Christ , Baptists , Anglicans , and Methodists .

= = Evangelism = =

Out of gratitude to God for giving him salvation , Jenner committed to consistently engaging in personal evangelism , and aimed to talk with ten different people every day thenceforward . For 28 years , from his initial conversion until his debility from Parkinson 's disease , Jenner engaged in this

form of evangelism . He probably spoke with more than 100 @, @ 000 people in total , hundreds of whom made initial professions of commitment to Christianity . He kept religious tracts in his shirt pocket where he had previously kept his rabbit 's foot , and he often gave these tracts to people he met . He also kept a card in his pocket with Philippians 4 : 13 on it in order to give himself courage in evangelising . This verse reads , " I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me . " [Phil.4 : 13] While engaging in these activities , Jenner would normally wear a white shirt , black shoes , and trousers , and sometimes a navy greatcoat . Usually evangelising on George Street , Sydney , Jenner asked many people the same question : " If you died within 24 hours , where would you be in eternity ? Heaven or hell ? " If they were willing to engage in conversation with him , he would invite them either to his home or to a local church . The question became known as " the Frank Jenner question " . Jenner was most active in evangelism during World War II . On Saturday nights during the war , Jenner would invite groups of sailors to his home for a service consisting of some hymns and a short sermon .

One of the people to whom Jenner posed his question was Noel Stanton , a man from Bedfordshire , England , who was serving in Sydney with the Royal Navy at the time . Stanton became preoccupied with the memory of this meeting for several months afterwards and , the next year , became a committed Christian . Stanton went on to found the Jesus Army in Northampton , England , in 1969 . In 1945 , Jenner approached Norrie Jeffs , who had just returned from participating in Operation Meridian at Palembang on Sumatra , and , having asked Jeffs his question , Jeffs responded that he was already a Christian . Jenner then invited Jeffs over to his house , where Jeffs met several other visitors , including the woman who would later become his wife . In 1952 , another person Jenner accosted with his question on George Street was Ian Boyden , a man from Roseville who was serving in the Royal Australian Air Force . After having a brief conversation with Jenner , Boyden accepted Jenner 's invitation to attend a church service at Renwick Gospel Hall , where he responded to the sermon by committing to living as a Christian thenceforward , which he did for at least fifty years . Many other people who had a brief encounter with Jenner on the street in Sydney also became Christians , but Jenner did not realise that any of the people he accosted had remained a Christian beyond their initial profession of faith until 1953 , when Francis Dixon told him the stories of several such people .

When Dave Rosten , another Sydney evangelist , attempted to imitate Jenner 's method of evangelism , he was punched in the midriff by the first person he spoke to , so he decided that Jenner 's approach to evangelism was not for others to emulate . In 1947 , Jenner asked his question to a man named Angus Carruthers , who responded that he was a Christian and going to heaven . Jenner invited Carruthers back to his home , where Carruthers met Jenner 's daughter , Ann . Carruthers and Ann married three years later .

= = Discovery by Francis Dixon = =

The Reverend Francis Willmore Dixon was the head pastor of Lansdowne Baptist Church in Bournemouth , England , and his youth pastor , Peter Culver , had become a Christian as a result of meeting Jenner on George Street on 2 September 1945 . In 1952 , at an All Nations Bible College event , Dixon and Culver heard Noel Stanton 's Christian testimony , which included the episode in which Stanton had met Jenner . Dixon then realised that Culver and Stanton must have become Christians as a result of the same man . The following year , Dixon heard two different British sailors who did not know each other tell their testimonies at Lansdowne Baptist Church , and both had told very similar stories to Culver and Stanton ; both had been walking down George Street and had been asked Jenner 's question .

Dixon then travelled to Australia with his wife to engage in itinerant preaching there . Dixon hoped to find Jenner there , although Dixon did not yet know the name of the man he was looking for . In Adelaide , Dixon told the stories of Culver and Stanton while preaching . Murray Wilkes then approached Dixon and said that he had also become a Christian after having been asked Jenner 's question on George Street . At a Methodist church in Perth , Dixon told Culver 's , Stanton 's , and Wilkes ' stories again , and met yet another person who had become a Christian after an encounter

with Jenner . Finally arriving in Sydney , Dixon asked Alec Gilchrist of Campaigners for Christ if he knew a man who asked strangers on George Street whether or not they were headed for heaven or hell . Gilchrist was familiar with Jenner and informed Dixon about how to contact Jenner . Dixon visited Jenner at his house and told him about all the people he had met who had become Christians because of Jenner 's evangelism . Jenner , now fifty years old , had never before heard of even one person living their lives as Christians as a result of his evangelism , and he cried upon hearing that there were several .

After returning from Australia , Dixon went on to discover more people who had become Christians because of Jenner in Bournemouth , Cumbria , India , and Jamaica . By 1979 , Dixon had discovered ten people who had become Christians as a result of Jenner 's evangelism . It is because of Dixon that the story of Jenner 's evangelism began to be told . Dixon 's wife Nancy wrote an account of Jenner 's evangelism , which she called " The Jenner Story " .

= = Later life = =

In later years , Jenner developed Parkinson 's disease and therefore retired from IBM . With money that Jessie had inherited , the couple moved to Bexley in 1953 , where they began attending Bexley Gospel Hall . Towards the end of his life , Jenner developed dementia and his narcolepsy worsened . For six months , he was confined to a bed and was treated with amphetamine . He was then diagnosed with colorectal cancer and spent a subsequent ten days at Calvary Hospital , Kogarah , New South Wales , where he died at 11 : 45 pm on 8 May 1977 at the age of 73 . Because he had befriended so many police officers towards the end of his life , his body was given a police escort to the burial , which took place at Woronora Lawn Cemetery . His wife died two years later .

= = Legacy = =

While Jenner was alive , very few people knew of him , and the effects of his evangelism were largely unrecognised . After his death , however , stories about his evangelism circulated widely . Stories of his evangelistic activities generated a largely oral tradition , and elements of some stories contradicted others . Many storytellers said that Jenner was small in stature and that he had white hair ; this description is contradicted by interviews with family members .

In 2000 , Raymond Wilson published a book called Jenner of George Street : Sydney 's Soul @-@ Winning Sailor in an attempt to tell the story of Jenner 's life accurately . Jenner 's family had been finding it painful to have alternate accounts of Jenner 's life circulating around the world , so they gave Wilson all the information he desired . Wilson wrote that Jenner was " eccentric ... the very antithesis of the ' wise ' , ' mighty ' , and ' noble ' , " but that his life was therefore a good demonstration of 2 Corinthians 12 : 9 , which states that God 's " power is made perfect in weakness . " [2Cor.12 : 9] Wilson wrote that Jenner 's question of " heaven or hell " was very similar to that of Arthur Stace , another Australian street evangelist who wrote the word " Eternity " on the sidewalks so people would consider where they would be in eternity . Wilson called Jenner a battler and did not recommend that his readers emulate Jenner 's evangelistic activities " unless Divinely fitted in a similar way . " Wilson wrote that he " travelled and corresponded widely to ascertain the facts of the story " and that he personally verified the accuracy of the information by retrieving first @-@ hand accounts from all of the major figures in Jenner 's life . The people Wilson interviewed included Nancy Dixon ; Ann and Angus Carruthers , Jenner 's daughter and son @-@ in @-@ law ; Murray Wilkes ; Ian Boyden ; Tas McCarthy ; Peter Culver ; Noel Stanton ; and Mary Stares .

Nonetheless , conflicting accounts of Jenner 's life continued to propagate at least as late as 2006 . In some accounts of Jenner 's evangelism , Jenner is referred to as " Mr. Genor " . One such account was recorded by Ray Comfort on the Living Waters website and then repeated in the 2006 book Spirit @-@ led Evangelism : Reaching the Lost through Love and Power by Ché Ahn . Ahn is one of the storytellers who refers to Jenner as a " little white @-@ haired man " , and Ahn concludes his story by writing that Jenner died two weeks after encountering Dixon , who is not named . These details contradict the information provided by Wilson , who writes in his biography that Jenner died

more than twenty years after Dixon told him about the people who had become Christians as a result of his evangelism .

In 2013 , Gary Wilkinson produced and directed The Frank Jenner Question , a documentary film featuring interviews with Jenner 's daughter and people who had become Christians because of Jenner 's evangelism . Claire Goodwin encouraged people to emulate Jenner by including an account of his evangelism in her 2013 book Compelled to Tell : A Fascinating Journey from a New York Dead @-@ End Street to a Lifetime of Ministry and Soul @-@ Winning .