



# WHY THE BOY CRIED WOLF

JOURNEY INTO THE INDWELLING LIFE OF CHRIST  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**STEPHEN R. PHINNEY**

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# WHY THE BOY CRIED WOLF

*A Personal Journey Into The Exchanged Life*

DR. STEPHEN R. PHINNEY  
**AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Dedicated To:  
My Family



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## **THE HOLY WORD OF GOD**

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### **Why The Boy Cried Wolf:**

#### **A Personal Journey Into The Exchanged Life**

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# FORWARD

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**Dr. John Woodward**  
Grace Fellowship International

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Some special thanks need to be offered to two of my mentors. First, David Ritzenthaler, for allowing me to make use of some of his teachings/diagrams (Victorious Christian Living Conference) through the adaptations applied within this book. We also thank Dr. Charles Solomon for allowing us to make use of his teachings/diagrams on rejection and identity. (please see notations on diagrams for proper credit)

### **David Ritzenthaler**

*I applaud Dr. Phinney for his adaption of the Victorious Christian Living Conference for his use and for it is in accordance with my 'open content license' agreement. This book will help more believers learn how to live in the abiding Life of Christ and the advancement of the Kingdom of God.*

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# **AUTHOR APPRECIATION**

## *What Others Are Saying About The Author*

*Your unwavering faith and support sustain and inspire me in my efforts to strengthen and protect our Nation.*

**President Donald Trump**

*Dr. Phinney is gifted in his ability to see through the disguises the enemy puts before the believer. In Christ, he truly gets to the heart of the matter in people's lives. A true prophet of the 21st century.*

**Angie Brooks, Arizona**

*Like Paul, who witnessed Christ to the world during Christianity's formative years, Steve Phinney is a gifted writer and a student of God's Word. He presents Biblical Truth with clarity and passion sculpted from his personal trials and the blessings born through those trials.*

**Gale Ethridge, Kansas**

*With my Dad's writings, you never have to fear lukewarm teachings. You will receive a bold message of your inadequacy apart from Christ. No matter the subject, he clearly spells out co-crucifixion is the pathway to freedom from living in bondage to our crucified old man. What blessed assurance that as an indwelt believer we don't have to strive, but allow His Spirit to release His work in and through us.*

**Jess Phinney, Kansas**



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*The Life of Christ in Steve's life is the real deal. I am so blessed to know him personally and learn from him. I can't count the number of times I mention my friend Steve Phinney, CEO, of IOM America, then proceed to explain the ministry, books, website, etc. & "how it can help you in your spiritual walk, my friend." Another great Christian teacher, Dr. Del Tackett, of whom I have great respect starts his class with, "Do you really believe that what you believe is really real?" Dr. Steve Phinney BELIEVES IT and PRACTICES IT!!*

**Wendell Smock, Arizona**

*Steve provides profound insight into the historical perspective of our Lord's Word and how it applies to the current and future times. His use of Hebrew imagery allows the reader to form a vivid and lasting image that is rarely seen in today's writings.*

**Jeff Brugman, Arizona**

*Dr. Phinney is not just a gifted writer and teacher, he is my, and many others, a spiritual father. My life has been altered by his willingness to write and live the Truth of the Scriptures – uncompromised. The Spirit breathed wisdom he shares has come through much pain and trial – as this book will unfold. I pray that his writing is used to bring you the freedom and renewed understanding of how God views you, as it has me.*

**Kris Cornelius, Florida**

*Dr. Phinney's writings are applicable, Biblical, and speaks powerfully to one who truly wants to live the indwelt Christian life in victory and freedom.*

**Donna Kratz, Arizona**

*Dr. Stephen Phinney clearly articulates the Life of Christ within the indwelt believer and keeps that focus in all of his teachings.*

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*He uses humor to engage his readers while challenging them through Scriptures to consider a different perspective on living out the Life of Christ within.*

**Loida Leone, Kansas**

*Our relationship with Steve & Jane Phinney encompasses the deepest of friendships spanning almost 40 years. It certainly included our parallel patterns of marriage, raising our families, vacations together, & incredibly wonderful times of laughter & joy. For me, however, Steve was so much more. As an impactful role model, teacher & prayer warrior, I watched, listened & learned. I matured in my Christian walk. For Steve, every struggle or challenge would become an opportunity to pray for God's Provision. As a strategic visionary, I saw God reflected thru him, as many Kingdom ventures took shape & developed as the years progressed. In the depth of his knowledge & instruction, I was never left confused or intimidated in my curiosity. In fact, I was lovingly introduced to Biblical truths much deeper than what I would have imagined. Steve's ability to bring clarity to the Word, structuring his messages with testimony & instructional diagrams, left me longing for the next encounter. This pattern of discernment & unfolding revelation continued thru out the decades. I have been honored to walk alongside with him & am excited that he is now sharing his journey for us all. It is to God that I give all the praise, for this humble & faithful servant.*

**Art Smit, Illinois**

*Since Dr. Phinney is an astute student of the exchanged life and the importance of the current impetus in the developing Reformation, it is fitting that he be used of God to chronicle and interpret events of the past half-century. God has been quietly bringing to pass, without fanfare, revival in individual lives.*

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*As these events unfold, it is fitting that a servant of God interpret them to those not present near the eye of the brewing storm! It is also noteworthy that Dr. Phinney is a product of the early waves of teaching, dating back to 1979 in Denver, Colorado, the site God chose to place the roots of the modern Reformation movement.*

*From that perspective, Dr. Phinney's involvement is not as a spectator but is an involved participant in a significant movement of God in Church history. It is my prayer that the interpretation permitted by his being 'on the ground', as the events unfolded, will allow those in a spectator role to awaken to the significance of current events as they relate to Church history.*

**Dr. Charles R. Solomon, Tennessee**

*Dr. Phinney and the Institute of Ministry deserves my thanks - particularly for the Exchanged Life Biblical worldview you gave me. It reminded me of the discussions that I used to initiate with my professor while I was a student at St. John's College, Agra. He was a very intelligent teacher. But he was sold to all sorts of negative philosophies. God gave me the courage to face him with biblical thoughts. Finally, a time came when he stopped imposing his views on the class, as the discussion took so much of time.*

**Professor P.P. Thomas, India**

*Dr. Phinney's teachings and guidance on Biblical worldview and Identity in Christ have had a major impact on my life over the past 8 years. His unrelenting commitment to not be swayed by the spirit of the age is a breath of fresh air in this increasingly post-Christian culture. God has used Steve repeatedly in my life to direct me to truth and I am grateful for his faithfulness.*

**Rob Cornelius | Florida**

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# INTRODUCTION

## *Wolf, Wolf – Where Is The Wolf?*

*There once was a shepherd boy who was bored as he sat on the hillside watching the village sheep. To amuse himself he took a great breath and sang out, "Wolf! Wolf! The Wolf is chasing the sheep!"*

*The villagers came running up the hill to help the boy drive the wolf away. But when they arrived at the top of the hill, they found no wolf. The boy laughed at the sight of their angry faces.*

*"Don't cry 'wolf', shepherd boy," said the villagers, "when there's no wolf!" They went grumbling back down the hill.*

*Later, the boy sang out again, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!" To his naughty delight, he watched the villagers run up the hill to help him drive the wolf away.*

*When the villagers saw no wolf they sternly said, "Save your frightened song for when there is really something wrong! Don't cry 'wolf' when there is NO wolf!"*

*But the boy just grinned and watched them go grumbling down the hill once more.*

*Later, he saw a REAL wolf prowling about his flock. Alarmed, he leaped to his feet and sang out as loudly as he could, "Wolf! Wolf!"*

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*But the villagers thought he was trying to fool them again, and so they didn't come.*

*At sunset, everyone wondered why the shepherd boy hadn't returned to the village with their sheep. They went up the hill to find the boy. They found him weeping.*

*"There really was a wolf here! The flock has scattered! I cried out, "Wolf!" Why didn't you come?"*

*An old man tried to comfort the boy as they walked back to the village.*

*"We'll help you look for the lost sheep in the morning," he said, putting his arm around the youth, "Nobody believes a liar...even when he is telling the truth!"*

This Greek fable communicates a very powerful principle regarding "nobody believes a liar...even when he is telling the truth." One of the key ways that Satan diminishes future prophets of Truth is through messing with their childhood – particularly forming a fleshly pattern of the child *crying wolf*. Permit me to share this story one more time but this time in a paraphrase I believe the Lord gave me.

*There once was a boy who was called to be a prophet of the Living God who was restless, lacking love and acceptance. The boy had no idea of his calling by the great Shepherd. The Shepherd wanted to train the boy in taking care of His sheep but the boy was constantly distracted by rejection. Then one day while the great Shepherd was training the boy he realized that the only time the people paid attention to him was when he was*

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*in trouble so he cried out “Help, I’m in trouble! I’m in trouble, I need help! The wolf (enemy) is chasing me!”*

*The people came running to help the boy drive the enemy away. But when they arrived at the place of the boy, they found no enemy. The boy found great pleasure in the urgency he saw on their faces.*

*“Don’t exaggerate little boy,” said the people, “When there is no trouble!” The people walked away from the boy labeling him a ‘little liar.’*

*Later, the boy cried out again, “Help, I’m in trouble! I’m in trouble, I need help! The wolf (enemy) is chasing me!” To his excitement, he watched the people come to his rescue to help him in his time of trouble.*

*When the people saw no trouble they sternly said, “Save your call for help when there is really something wrong! Don’t cry out for help when you do not need it!”*

*But the boy found great comfort in their coming to his rescue and watched the people retreat in disappointment and frustration.*

*Later, the boy had real trouble, for he saw the enemy (Satan) of the great Shepherd prowling around seeking whom he may devour. Alarmed, he leaped to his feet and cried out, “Help, I’m in trouble! I’m in trouble, I need help! The wolf (enemy) is chasing me!”*

*But this time, the people thought the boy was just trying to get attention, and so they didn’t come. The boy not knowing what to do, knowing he couldn’t count on the people – he cried out to*

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*the great Shepherd. The Shepherd saved the boy and chase the wolf (enemy) away.*

*As time passed, the people wondered why the shepherd boy in training hadn't cried out for help anymore. They all went to check on him and found that the boy was content and filled with joy. The people being curious they asked, "Why the change little boy?" With great excitement, the boy said, "I found the great Shepherd, He rescued me! "We don't believe you boy!" With that, the people walked away in disbelief of what the boy had said.*

*Later that night the boy went to the great Shepherd and asked, "Why didn't the people believe me when I told them about You?" Then the great Shepherd gracefully said, "Nobody believes a liar...even now that you are telling the Truth!"*

This was my life story for many years. In this book, I will be sharing my heart as to why I did cry "wolf."

This Greek fable was written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and history tells us that it was a child's story to communicate what happens when a boy grows up lying and once converted to Christianity, no one believes what he had to say about the Shepherd who saves and the fact that the enemy is chasing the sheep of the Shepherd.

We do not know if the original author was gaining his insight from the original teaching that was given to us through the prophet Isaiah but here is the passage:

*Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the*

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*LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also, righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist. And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also, the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. (Isa 11:1-9 NASB)*

This passage is clearly communicating the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, what He will accomplish regarding the Wolf and what Heaven will be like after He has righteously judged the entire human race and the demonic realm.



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# MY FAMILY STORY

## My Father: Charles L. Phinney



My father was born in Wakefield, Nebraska in 1923 to Lauren and Bertha (McCargar/Chase) Phinney. The bloodline lineage on my father's side runs back to Plymouth & Newberry, Mass. and Cape Cod, Maryland. In fact, my direct grandfather on my grandmother's side, Aquila Chase is listed on the town monument of

Newberry as one of the founders. The Chase family was considered one of the key families that helped establish America.

The name Phinney originally appeared in Gaelic (Celtic Highlands of Scotland) as "O Fiannaidhe." The name is an Irish descriptive of "a strong soldier." When the clan moved into northern Ulster, the clan changed their name to "Finney," which slowly evolved into "Phinney" due to the English grammatical language changes. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Finney clan moved its way to Nottinghamshire, England, which is where our family tree is documented starting with Jeffery Finney, who came over on the Mayflower in 1620. Robert



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Finney, his son Jeffery, and their families resided in Plymouth, Mass. It was Robert's grandson, John Phinney Jr., that had the name changed to match the English phonetic spelling Phinney in 1638. The Phinney's were noted by John Quincy Adams in a historically documented letter as *key founders of Cape Cod, Massachusetts*.

Some of these descendants ended up founding and established several communities in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maryland, Ohio, and Iowa, which is where my immediate family is from.



Early on, one of the Phinney's married into the Chase family, which became our other primary bloodline. Recently, Jane (my wife) and I visited a community (Wear, New Hampshire) founded by one of our direct grandfathers, Amos Chase. We were welcomed by the towns historical society and provided local documentation of much-needed connections for our family tree.

Adrian L. Phinney, my grandfather, was from a rich heritage of church reformers. The Phinney roots are lodged in the Quaker faith. My grandfather and his brothers were some of the active reformers of the Friends/Brethren branch of the Quakers. He was born in Orange, Ohio, which is where most of my relatives ended up settling.

Since my father suffered severe pressure to live up under the expectations of family and church members, he decided to enlist in the military at 17 years of age. Five years later he found himself in the midst of a world war.

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During the war, he was assigned to a Special Forces battalion with the Paratroopers. It was during this time that he earned many of the honors we, his children, treasure today.



My father was an honored “war hero” from World War II, even though he didn’t acknowledge such honors. He spent 21 years in military service, which make up most of my childhood memories. He spent most of his military career in the Strategic Air Command, oftentimes on missions that were mysterious and never spoken of. During my lifetime he was stationed at Lackland (San Antonio, TX), Wethersfield (England), Dow (Bangor, Maine) and Forbes (Topeka, KS) Air Force Bases.

In 1951 while on one of his missions, he met & married my mother in St. John, Newfoundland. Together they were blessed with six children: Sheila (1952), Patrick and Michael (1953), me (1955), Donna (1961), and LuCinda (1968). After holding military residence in Utah, Texas, England, Maine, and Kansas, the Phinney family settled in Linn Grove, Iowa in 1968.



Due to the difficulties my father experienced growing up in the church as a *preacher’s kid*, he not only refuted Christianity but he did not allow it to be practiced in our home. As he himself joked, *whatever the church told me not to do – I did*. This mindset put into motion years of

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ungodly living and a lifestyle that was opposite of what the church expected of him. His lifestyle infected and affected each & every family member to one degree or another. One of the more significant forms of disregard was his abhorrence for Jews, Blacks, and Hippies. Odd enough, when I became a teenager I was saved by a Jew, dated a black woman and was certainly a Hippy.



I had a strange relationship with my father. Even though he was quick to reject me and others, I looked up to him with great honor. My mother would tell me that I would follow him around like a little puppy. She also told me of times I would sit by his side for

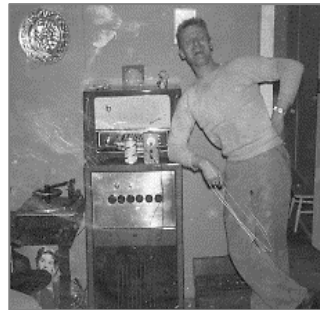
hours on end as he would be chatting with significant others. While other children would be out playing, I would faithfully stay at his side – whether it was in a discussion he was having or piddling in his electronics studio watching him invent things. In fact, rumor has it that my father invented the split needle for stereophonic music, which ultimately ended up with London Records. Needless to say, I developed a great love for military politics, electronics and inventing things – three of my favorite things to do to date.

I had this uncanny way of being able to withstand my father's unmannerly behavior – even to the point of caring for him even when it appeared others wouldn't. Throughout most of my life while at home, I would help him in any way that I could, somehow trying to win his approval and affection. Another unusual fact, even

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though most of the other siblings might not be able to say this, I have no memory of him hurting me outside of a handful of spankings. I do have a truck-load of memories of him hurting others, particularly my mother. You see, when my father would get drunk, he would become very abusive – oftentimes speaking to us in German or Japanese. Not knowing at the time but my father was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from all those “special missions.” Years later, while drunk, he confessed to me, through tears, just how many people he was required to “murder.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing! It broke my heart to realize how much pain and grief my father was carrying around inside him – day after day. I still weep over this!

After settling into the reality that my father was a *broken hero*, my father’s pain became my mission. I went into high gear to love on him any and every way that the Lord would reveal for me to do so – ultimately leading me to introduce him to the indwelling Life of Jesus Christ, his salvation.



*Dad With His Infamous Stereo*

In 2000, my father went on to be with the Lord. On his death bed, he requested that I be at his side when he passed from this life to the next – just like all those times when I was growing up. While I had my hand on his chest, the Lord gave me a vision of my father standing in front of Jesus, not wanting to let go of human life. I leaned over and whispered *its ok dad, you can let go, and the Lord*

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*will take care of us and I will keep my promise to reconcile the family, with that my father went to be with Jesus.*

While at his grave site, I jumped up, threw myself over his casket and wept uncontrollably, like I'm doing now. Flooded with memories of what I will miss and what I would not. With family members trying to comfort me, I knew that nobody really understood just how much I loved my father except for God. I grew up calling him "father," then "dad" and by the time he passed – I called him "friend." He will always be my hero, broken or not. He will forever be my father and dad. And it is without question that God used his pain and grief to set my entire adult ministry into motion.

If you came to visit my office today, you will find a framed letter from a president, the sword he was wounded by, his burial flag and other memorabilia being displayed to show my beloved honor and respect for him. Each & every time I look upon these treasures, it reminds me of the price he paid for my freedom, and his willingness to turn his heart back toward his roots – that of our beloved Jesus.



My most favored memory is when my mother and father were celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, my brother arranged for the Army and Air Force to represent each of his military citations, medals, and awards. In full military protocol and honor, they presented my father with his honors. My father responded to this surprise by standing at attention, receiving each metal, letter, and memorabilia

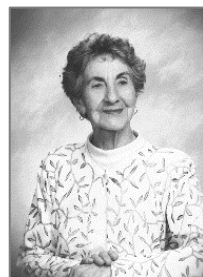
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of recognition saluted each officer and then began to weep. I knew it was on this day that my father finally accepted that he truly was a war hero and most significantly – that he was our hero.

In spite of all the painful stories this book will unfold, know this – only God knows how much I love & honor my father. I thank the Lord often for all the pain and struggles that came with his journey! For without them, I wouldn't be doing what I am doing today.

### **My Mother: Lelah M. Phinney (Lil)**

My mother lived to be the prime age of 83 and she resided in Linn Grove, Iowa up to a couple of years before her death (March 26, 2010), at which time she lived in an assisted care apartment in Sioux Rapids, Iowa.



*Lelah (Lil) Phinney*



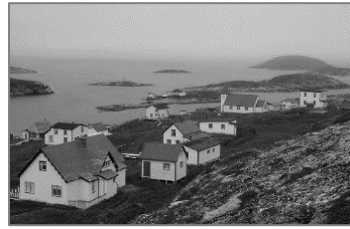
*Mom Phinney | England*

My mom was born in Battle Harbor, Labrador on January 29, 1927, to John and Abigail (Sutton) Rumbolt. She was from a split bloodline, Rumbolt, French and Sutton, Labradorean Inuit (Eskimo). In Canada, the term Eskimo is considered a bad expression of heritage. In America it is like calling African Americans “Negros,” thus she never used the term to describe her bloodline. The term Eskimo is basically the same title we use here in America as Native American.

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Her life was very difficult growing up living in a harsh remote part of Labrador/Newfoundland. Her father fished by summer and trapped by winter. She came from a large family of 13 brothers and sister, each required to “pull their weight” in providing for the family. Due to this intense lifestyle, my mother grew up to be a hard-working survivor. In fact, I cannot remember my mother ever complaining about hard times, which our family had plenty through the years.

Her childhood and lineage are a bit of a mystery to me and my siblings. She did not share details beyond where she grew up. In fact, I have not met any of my relatives on my mother’s side outside of a cousin who looked me up



*Battle Harbor, Newfoundland*

when they were in the states. From the stories she told me, my mother suffered a great deal of hardship. Even though this is an assumption, it was almost as if she married my father as a ticket out of her harsh environment to never look back. Although, much later in her life one of my sisters took her back to Newfoundland to visit her mother and relatives. These relatives, according to my cousin, treated mom’s visit as a “prodigal” returning home. They were kind and openly accepting of her but none the less, most of the family considered it odd that she would stay away so long. For whatever her reasons were, I am certain that her return visit brought a great deal of healing.

As I was growing up, I have loads of memories of my mother being under a great deal of stress with little



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complaining. Being the wife of a military man and being alone to raise six children must have been a major source of this stress. It appeared that her primary mode of dealing with life was through denial and being a survivor.

Once I arrived at the age of 12, for whatever reason, my mother began to “download” on me for hours at a time. I am certain this is where I gained many of my natural counseling skills but none the less, I sat and listen to her pain. Since I had this keen insight into my father at a very early age, I believe she considered me a safe place to “dump” all her pain inflicted by him.



*Mom and Dad Phinney*

My mother was forced to bear-up under a great deal of abuse once my father got drunk. If he wasn't drunk, he was the “life of the party” and the great guy that he was. Although once the drinking turned to unresolved conflict, boy, watch out – he was a man to be feared. The only time I actually feared my dad was when he began mistreating my mother, at which time I would hide in my secret hiding place – the roof of the house. My mother would joke about how *I spent more time sleeping on the roof of the house than I did in my own bed.* I think she was right. I then would wait until the fighting was over, I would quickly find my father and help him to bed, clean up the mess with my mother and organize his studio to make things easier for him to work the next time he was in his “sanctuary.” To this day when I am trapped by my emotions, I begin cleaning and

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putting things in order – hum, wonder where that comes from.

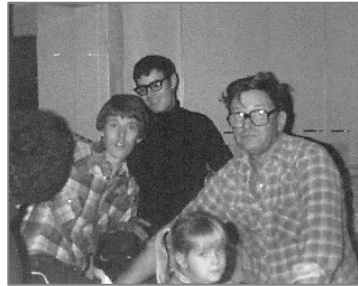
When I became a teenager, my pattern changed. Once he would start drinking, I would help him get extra drunk – hoping to suppress the behavior that came with his drunkenness but if it did surface, I would stand between him and my mother. I intuitively knew I was safe because I was for him and not against him. The fights in my teen years subsided – outside of a few unexpected traumatic ones. There was one night in particular that stands out to me. He got drunk, the unmanageable behavior surfaced and he began his normal violence. This time as I was standing between him and my mother, he went and got the shotgun. This event turned into a “cat and mouse” game, him the cat and me the mouse. This evening went from bad to worse. I knew I had to get this “cat and mouse” game to move to the outside. We both crawled around on our bellies for a couple of hours. Me hiding behind bushes and objects with him having the gun pointed in the direction he had thought I was, consistently calling me out in Japanese. At one point I was sneaking around a big lilac bush and found my face staring down the barrel of his gun. Thank God he was too drunk to see me, I backed out and he passed out and later woke up with his son helping him to his feet.

My mother was always baffled as to my compassion for my father. Honestly, I must say, I figured out early on that this was not my dad acting like this but rather some force that would take over him. I have a truckload of memories of looking through his drunk filled/raged eyes and seeing my real dad and I think my father knew this. My mother also knew that I would not run from the conflict and leave

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her hanging. Little did she realize that I learned this from her. I have zero memories of my mother ever cowering and backing down from any fight they had. She always stayed faithfully engaged until my father reached the “calm of the storm.” She would then rely on her “little Joseph” (me) to help her clean things up. I am certain that this is why today I can stare into the eyes of an enraged gangster, who might be threatening me, and not back down from the conflict. Thus, the Lord would send me these kinds of hurting men (men who think their men because they hurt people) to disciple them out of their fleshly habit of using threats to generate fear and fear to generate control.

On a lighter side, since I was a “mamma’s boy,” I made myself available to her any way I could. For example, I was Santa Clause at Christmas, staying up most of the night helping her wrap presents, decorate the house, shake reindeer bells on the roof of the house and assist in fixing those holiday meals for the family – and I might add that I make a pretty mean bowl of turkey gravy, just ask my family.



*Me, brother Mike, Donna & Dad*

I wish I could say that this “Leave It to Beaver” relationship was all good but it was not – it came with a price. The price was my siblings grew to reject me because of being a “mamma’s boy.” I am blessed to say that the Lord has reconciled each sibling relationship outside of two of my siblings. It’s my hope that the remaining two siblings will respond to the Lord’s reconciliation. Being in

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counseling my entire adult life, I know these kinds of sibling animosities usually take years to reconcile! Little did I realize growing up that this was God's method of healing – embracing pain without placing the blame onto others.



*Pat, Sheila, Mom, Me & Mike*

Due to the absence of my father, I functioned as a helper to my mother. One obvious being since my mother didn't drive, I became her chauffeur to any and all her events. This gave my mother and me hundreds of hours of talking, going out to eat together, working at the same factories, and me hanging with her friends. I found great delight in making my mother laugh – I always felt she needed more of that. This put me in a position of doing some pretty crazy things when we were out, like putting one straw into another until it reaches the ceiling of the restaurant. Things I do to this very day. The problem was, I became the “class clown” and my mother never supported the school when I would get in trouble for it and I believe that this kind of “mamma’s boy” overprotection developed a “spoiled child syndrome” or “the boy who cried wolf” lifestyle. Just as much as I protected my mother, she protected me. This method of madness pretty much stayed in my relationship

Due to the absence of my father, I functioned as a helper to my mother. One obvious being since my mother didn't drive, I became her chauffeur to any and all her events. This gave my mother and me hundreds of hours of talking, going out to eat together, working at the

*Steve Doing His Popularized “Robot”*



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with her until she died. I am now learning that my siblings don't know a fraction of these stories because my mother made me agree not to speak of them with the others but I think they figured it out anyway. I believe my mother loved all her children equally but her relationship with each had its own bent. The bent with me just happens to be the "mamma's boy" stuff. Denial, deceit, putting on your poker face and humor were all modes of survival taught to us growing up and my parents were the main teachers.

Here is a poem my mother wrote about me before she died  
– it will reveal much of what I am sharing:

*Steve was born in Texas, 1955  
A sweet little bundle, but ever so sick.  
Weeks slowly went by, as the doctors diagnosed  
Steve had allergies from his head to his toe's.*

*During the months ahead as he lay sick in his crib  
I was sometimes scared to go to bed.  
His illness followed him through the years  
There were Victories, Joys, and sometimes Tears.  
How doubtful of us as I recall,  
As God was there to take care of us all.*

*Steve had many favorite games I recall,  
Besides teasing girls and playing ball.  
One of his favorite pastimes you see,  
Was playing house high up in the trees.  
The kids made a tree house and were right on the ball,  
They made weird sounds like the Tarzan Call.*

*One evening as we had settled down for the day,*

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*The children decided to go out to play.  
To the tree house, Steve did run,  
He jumped on a rope that wasn't tied on.  
He ran to the house, I was much alarmed  
When he said, "Mom! I've broken both of my arms."  
Poor Steve was troubled and down in the dumps,  
As he had to wear casts for many months.*

*I remember another episode when Steve took a flight,  
You see, he and his friends made a glider kite.  
With material, patience, and very much care,  
The boy's found themselves way up in the air.  
A friend said to Steve you better jump,  
But Steve held on tight and went down with a thump.  
With an injured ankle and a very bruised pad,  
Steve waddled back home to tell his Mom & Dad.*

*Steve was honored to attend Boys State Camp that spring,  
We wrapped up his ankle, it was still blue and green.  
His tour was successful, he played quite a roll,  
He was selected to work with the Highway Patrol.*

*Other highlights were music and art.  
He took part in plays and played quite a good part.  
His talents were many, he toured with a band,  
He also became my right-hand man.  
He was always close by when I needed things done.  
These are memories treasured, I have of my son.*

*Steve's life was like Jacob's most of the time,  
It was like one step forward and three steps behind.  
Something wonderful happened to our son one day,  
As he was frantically trying to find his way.*

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*The Lord took him gently by the hand,  
And showed him the right way, to become a real man.*

*His searching was over, his life had begun,  
God sent Christ Jesus to lead our son.  
Christ picked up the pieces and put them in place,  
Today God be the Glory, our son was now safe.*

*Steve's call was to work at the Village in Sheldon.  
His talents were used to serve God's special Children.  
There he became acquainted with Jane,  
God's plan was to give her the Phinney name.  
Their love for each other, in Christ, grew as one.  
We're pleased to have Jane exchange vows with our son.*

*"Mom" | Lelah M. Phinney*

My mother had a 6<sup>th</sup>-grade education. One of my discoveries later in life was her ability to write. Like her illiterate son, she pressed forward to write despite her weakness. Before she passed, she gave me writings she had tucked away for years. As I read these entries, I had a self-discovery – again, I share in yet another similarity of my mother.

I received Jesus' indwelling Life, salvation, at 16 years of age. Shortly after my salvation, I was compelled to share my faith with all that would listen – the primary being my mother. With great delight, one sunny Saturday afternoon, my mother received Jesus as her indwelling savior. Through all my victories and awards in life, this was my highest honor, to see my mamma find His Indwelling Life.

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My mother's spiritual gifts include evangelism, exhortation, and service. Her outreach, through Christ, has covered some of the most remote parts of the earth through her quilting ministry. Her prayer ministry has blessed the lives of the broken hearted throughout the world, as well as her love and devotion to the ministries her children have been involved with.

My eldest daughter, Abby, and I had the privilege to travel to Kenya through Worldvision, to deliver one of her blankets to our adopted daughter, who lived in the "bush." As we watched our adopted daughter lay this blanket on a grouping of sticks (her bed), we were reminded of the impact my mother, my children's grandmother, was having in some of the remote parts of the world.

One of the things I miss the most about my mother is her devotion and support to the ministries of her children. She not only financially supported IOM America on a shoestring budget but she prayed daily for the success and outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all that we did.

Before she passed, she made me commit, which didn't take much arm twisting, to write the family's story through the eyes of my soul. **She is the primary reason and motive behind this book.** I have 12 advisers in my life today and three of them pretty much mandated me to keep my commitment to my mother and write our family story in and around the 12 principles of life I teach in the Identity Matters materials – thus the writing of this book.



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## Life Before My Life With Jane



*Base Hospital - San Antonio*

The Lord brought me into this world on June 13, 1955. Born in San Antonio, Texas into a family of three additional siblings; my eldest sister Sheila and my twin brothers, Patrick & Michael. My parents

were stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX at the time of my birth. When I entered into this world, I was plagued with allergies to the point of being allergic to all forms of milk/foods, human touch, textures and even the air itself. This is why I was placed in a “bubble” (oxygen tent) off and on for the first five years of my life. My first memories were seeing condensation on the inside of my “bubble” and as told by my mother, holding me through latex gloves that were attached to the walls of this tent. As I began to grow through the nurturing of soy milk, I have vivid memories of, what seems to be endless, prodding & probing of doctors and nurses. The remaining

*Steve In His “Bubble”*



memories I have of this time were closely related to seeing open festering wounds on my entire body, which I get to this very day. Due to the ramifications of starting life with such profound weaknesses, I have countless memories of

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rejection. From my perspective growing up, I was born rejected by life itself.



*Wethersfield, England*

In 1957 we moved from Texas to Wethersfield, England, which is where I learned to speak – with a British accent I might add, being able to speak that accent until I was 13 years of age. While in England I

developed fond memories of the sounds of fighter jets that I treasure to this day. My parents were popular socialites, hosting parties for friends and military acquaintances. Our home was filled with live music, alcohol and drunken laughter. Most of my memories of England are positive, even associating the parties as being fun and exciting.

In 1960 my father was transferred to Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka Kansas. It was during this time that I began to have rejective experiences I would rather forget. One memory is that my brothers and I climbed on top of a factory roof, with instructions by them to go to the other side and look over the edge, which I did, turned around and no brothers to be found. I ran back to the ladder to discover they had taken it down and took off. I remember crying out for help until someone came to take me from the roof. There was another time when my brothers and I came up with this plan to rob a candy truck. With brothers inside keeping the



*Steve At an Airshow | Topeka, Kansas*

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store attendant busy, I am rampaging the candy truck and of course, got caught. I remember crying and telling the truck driver that our family was poor and without food, with that, he gave me several bags of candy and told me to scoot.

Probably the most hurtful memory I have of Topeka was being rejected by a teacher while in Kindergarten. I remember being checked in, sitting at the little table and the teacher came and had me removed from the class saying I was not ready for school. A humiliating moment for sure. It was this moment that started my rejection pattern connected with education.



*Richland, Kansas*

I am not sure why my father decided to move us out of that community, but we soon found ourselves living in Richland, Ks (now under Clinton Lake). It was in Richland that I have memories of being in Kindergarten, but with this

memory comes a trauma that has stayed with me. I remember walking to school one day and the next thing I knew I was drawn into the woods to discover a teenager or adult, there in the woods. I'm not sure what happened to me in the woods that day since the trauma forced me into a blackout. The next memory I have is walking home alone. This event troubled my soul for years – not being able to file it away in my mind. I asked my brothers if they remembered this event but to no avail – they had no memories of such an event. Needless to say, this was a memory that I had to put in the hands of my Savior.

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My father was soon transferred to Dow Air Force Base in Bangor, Maine. My memories of Bangor are mixed but mostly disturbing. I recall living in two homes, one



being in base housing and the other being in a house on a hill. The first home comes with my first memories of my father being out of control when he got drunk. This outburst resulted in MP's at our home to calm my father down. Since I had never seen my dad act in such a way, I was perplexed as to what was going on. This evening started a long habit of my father having these post-traumatic war episodes after becoming intoxicated.

Children have unique ways of acting out trauma and one of the ways I attempted to deal with what I saw was by becoming bound by fear – I am talking about unfounded fears, which others learned to take advantage of. One night my mother was off babysitting in the neighborhood, in which time some neighbor kids made a dummy, stuck a knife in its chest, poured catchup around the knife and placed it in the field across the road. Then they came to me and said they found a “dead man” in the field – at which time we all went to see this body. When I saw the “bloody” mess, I took off into the community screaming for help, a reaction I don't think they expected. As I was running through the community calling out, the boys quickly took the dummy and hid it. Once the MP's were called, mother now present, no “body” was to be found. The conclusion of the evening was my parents had a child that “**cried wolf**” – the syndrome begins. I was disciplined

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by my father, which I can assure you was not pleasant, and life went on.

Another time that marked my life in Bangor, was when I was playing with my best friend next door. The house across the street was the home of another friend. We were playing “store” in his garage. I sent my best friend over to his house to get some “eggs.” With the driveways being steep, off he goes on his trike down one drive into his drive. Both his mother and I saw at the same time a car coming toward him. I ran out into the street to stop this horrific event but by the time I got to this friend, the car ran over him and “popped” his head right in front of me. With my friend’s blood all over me, I sat there in the street holding one of his tennis shoes – in a state of shock. The grief I saw unfold with his father and mother has marked my mind to this day. I recall a fireman picking me up off the street and putting me on the side of the road to sit on the curb. While sitting there, I can remember vividly saying to myself – *I killed my best friend*. I still believe I was responsible for his death but the Lord used this experience to teach me many life lessons throughout the years. One is when I was a teenager in art class, I painted a single tennis shoe – that actually won awards. My art teacher asked me what “inspired” me to do such a unique picture. With that, I told her the story and wept as she used the picture to help me resolve the grief and guilt. Before my art teacher passed, she told me this was her favorite moment in teaching me as an art student. Her family has this painting as a part of her teaching memorabilia.

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## MY SCHOOL YEARS | I SAW JESUS

Another significant memory was living in “the house on the hill.” As I mentioned before, my father and mother were known for hosting parties that were extravagant in liquor, food, and music. It was no wonder why most of us kids ended up with “addictions.” During these times I have vivid memories of the adults eating steak with all the trimmings while we kids were left with eating from the plates of the guests once they were inebriated. For those looking from the outside, we appeared to be a moderately affluent military family but the honest truth being said, we were living “hand to mouth.” My folks spent most of their funds holding up an external image but once you got beyond this facade, it was “crackers and catch-up.” One of our family jokes has been - my father was known for going out for a loaf of bread and coming back with a satellite dish. External image building became another of my nasty habits as an adult.

Probably one of the most hurtful experiences living in Bangor was being passed from one grade to another and being put back into the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade on the first day of school. I speak more of this experience in this book, but it was a horrific moment in my life that left its mark on my already established inferiority complex. Keeping in mind that I did not learn how to read and write until shortly after meeting my wife.

My father retired from the military while at Dow Air Force Base and this motivated my dad to move back to Kansas - Michigan Valley, although my father’s retirement did not come without a hitch. After 21 years of military service, my father was stripped of most of his rank – one of the

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worst things that could happen to a war vet who fought for his country and had earned some of the highest military citations. As the story was relayed to me by my mother, while at the NCO Club, while drunk, he got into a heated discussion with a superior officer who happened to be black. That “heated discussion” turned into a fist fight which resulted in my father assaulting him. You see, my father grew up in a Quaker/Friends church that believed that “black” people were the cursed generation and were not to be accepted by church members. Growing up, I have tons of memories of my father having a conflict with African American people but after this happened, the bitterness he expressed toward this race was horrid. This is a man that would refuse to be served by an African American. Personally, I believe this false teaching affected him in his adult years and certainly became one of the factors in being stripped of most of his military rank that he had earned over the 21 years. It is no wonder why he was bitter at the government. He remained bitter until his 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, which was the time when he was represented with his military honors by representatives of the Army and Air Force.

After moving to Michigan Valley, my father settled into a career of electronics, which he maintained most of his post-military years.

My life in Kansas also comes with mixed emotions. Still being in and out of this protective “bubble” due to my intense allergies, now 11 years of age, I decided that I was breaking out of this homebound prison. After announcing to my mother that I was not going to succumb to these allergies any longer, she said I will most likely die if I exposed myself the things I was highly allergic. Letting

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her words go “in one ear and out the other,” I began to do all those things that my allergies blocked me from doing and began playing freely. It was not long before I began to react to my environment and became quite sick. My mother got a neighbor to rush me to the hospital for an injection that would restart my frail body and within a few short moments of the shot, my world turned black – my heart stopped. I have vivid memories of being in one of the corners of the ceiling with a sensation of being pulled into a dark tunnel while watching as the doctor pushed on my chest and a nurse comforting my mother. The next thing I knew, I was staring at the face of the doctor. I had thought this to be a dream most of my life until I brought it up at my parents 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. My mother looked at me with this dead stare and then told me it was not a dream. She said I was certifiably dead and the doctor brought me back. Well after this death experience, you would think that I would have gone right back into that prison but I did not. I told my mother that I would rather have a short life “out there,” than to have a longer life “in here.” An allergist years later told me that self-proclaimed decision probably was the best decision I had ever made. Forcing myself to adjust to the outside world actually caused my immune system to increase.

It was after this experience that I started to attend school more on a regular basis.

It was a little late though, for I did not know how to read or write. In fact, I maintained that weakness until my wife taught me years later.



*Appanoose School*



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This lifetime weakness caused me to “fake it until I make it.”

One of several memories I have of those school years was when I was in fourth grade at Appanoose (Michigan Valley, KS) country school. Due to my allergies, I had a perpetual problem of diarrhea, which I have to this day, and when I had to go, I needed to go immediately. I raised my hand to be dismissed and the teacher told me to wait until school was out. I raised my hand again and again and finally, it happened – an explosion of odor filled the air. With that, I could see that the teacher was horrified and she dismissed me. I went to the locker room to clean myself up to the best I could. Hurried back to get on the bus. After settling into a seat on the bus, all the kids packed into the back of the bus – dishing out names and rejection the entire trip home. The driver smelling the obvious reason left the situation as is. Then one young lady got up, came to the front of the bus and sat with me and it happens to be the same young lady that smelled like urine each morning when she boarded the bus. We ended up saving seats for each other for the remainder of the year.

I wish I could say that the humiliation ended there but it didn't. My siblings continued to harass me when I got home and returning to school the next day was the worst yet. It took me years to bounce back from that one. I obviously don't speak of it much today but I continue to have these adjustments to food and the environment, sometimes with odor accidents, but I have learned to accept this weakness as a God-sized opportunity of Grace.



*A Replica of Steve's Vision*

The rejection I experienced during this period of my life left me with an overwhelming sense of despair. Such despair that the Lord showed Himself in a mighty way. While still at Appanoose School, it was during

recess one spring day that I was on my way to the ball-diamond when I sensed something in the sky. I looked up and saw a man dressed in a brilliant white robe, chest high, with His arms opened wide – with His face washed out from the light. I grabbed ahold of my friend (Brad) and asked him if he sees the man. He said no and off to the field we went to play ball. Throughout recess, I continued to look to the sky to see if this figure returned. Keep in mind that I had no idea who Jesus was. After the school bell rang and we were heading back to class, I sensed it again. I looked up and saw Him again, this time from the knees up with a smile on His face. I stopped and asked Brad if he could see the image this time and he said no. That day I remember looking out the classroom window expecting to see Him – but to no avail. Just a few years ago, I looked up this old friend to ask him a question. After a bit of a reunion, it had been 40+ years, I asked him if he remembered that day. To my surprise, he did and went on to tell me that God used that day to lead him to Christ once he became an adult. I was simply blown away. Not only did I nail down that it really happened, my dearest friend, at the time, found Christ because of it.

That event was used by God hundreds of times through the years to show me that He has always had His hand upon me. On the day of my salvation, 16 years of age, the

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Spirit reminded me of this experience to reassure me of His sovereign plan and that I was a part of it. So you see, Michigan Valley may have been a tough season in my life but it also was a time when God introduced Himself to me in order to set me up for my salvation years later. That my dear reader is GRACE.



## THE LOWS OF HIGH SCHOOL

After a few years, dad became restless again – it must have been those military years. He packed up his family, now six children, and moved to Linn Grove, Iowa – a territory that was pioneered & established by our relatives. We all pretty much guest this was the

final stop, dad's home.

Linn Grove is where I spent my junior high and high school years. During junior high, I was greeted with a new level of rejection. My junior high teacher pressured me to perform in school work that didn't exist in me. Not sure why but as I



*Lynn Grove Junior High School*

jumped from school to school, and believe me there were plenty of them, not one school communicated with another as to my inability to read or write. The result of this lack of communication resulted in me feeling like a failure every place I went to. By this time, extreme fears and phobias had developed in my soul. As this new teacher applied

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pressure, I pulled deeper and deeper into my little “bubble” and began to detach from humans in general. Her way of dealing with this was putting me in front of the class and using public embarrassment to motivate me. The results were obvious; I withdrew all the more. One particular time was during a classroom public spelling-bee. When it came to my turn, she announced the word I was to spell and great laughter broke out due to me not



knowing the first letter to spell the word. She verbally gave me word after word to spell with failure upon each request. Once the class shouted out *Steve is a dummy, Steve is a dummy* – she allowed me to sit down. My response to this was drawing her pictures, which was the only thing I did well. I figured that this might be a way to please her and gain her favor and acceptance.

Several years ago, I was asked to submit a story to be published in an alumni book. After much prayer, I decided to do this. I told my story openly and honestly. Keep in mind, this teacher was in her 90's at the time, reads my entry and writes me a letter of reconciliation – seeking my forgiveness. With that letter were all of the pictures that I drew for her during those traumatic times – all carefully marked and dated. This was one of the more healing times of my life. Six weeks later she died.

By the time I got to high school, I was fearful beyond words could describe. My twin brothers and eldest sister were seniors. Rejection continued by my classmates but this time, I had my siblings to protect me. In fact, I was

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accepted into a few senior activities on a regular basis, which was a “no-no” in this school. There was a sophomore, who we will call “Mr. G,” who took it upon himself to make my life miserable – keep in mind that each time that he did, my brothers would often come to my defense. Little did I realize at the time that my siblings would be graduating that year and I would have to fend for myself once they were gone. That is exactly what happened. The next year I was stuffed and locked in lockers, beat up more times than I can remember and teased relentlessly. One experience stands out above the rest – one afternoon I looked out the study hall window and watched the football team attempt to put my car on its roof. I went and got the principle and to that, he said *boys will be boys*.

Another moment that is hard to forget is on a particular Saturday night, I went cruising with my buddies (fellow rock band members) in “Mr. G’s town.” Sure enough, he and a couple of his cronies began following us as usual. I told my friend to stop the car, let me get out, take the beating, so we could enjoy the remainder of the evening. We stopped, I got out and yes Mr. G (drunk) began beating me. This time I immediately sensed it was different. He beat me so adversely, that his friends told him to stop because he was killing me. My mother taught me a principle regarding *facing your enemy, take the beating, turn the other cheek, ask them if they are done and never walk away from a fight*. Well, on this evening, as in all the previous beatings, I did exactly that but this time he had beat me so severely that I had become temporally blind & delusional. With major open wounds, being covered in blood, I searched for him in my blindness, following his abusive voice, I found him and asked him if he was

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finished. With that, he hit me one more time, his buddies pulled him off me and off they went. Today I bear a golf ball size tumor (scar tissue) in my ribcage reminding of this evening.

The next morning, I told my mother what happened. She was quick in her response, *"this is why I call you 'my little Joseph.'"*

After Mr. G graduates, my senior year was almost rejection free. After I graduated and found a job, I get a knock at my apartment door on a Sunday morning. I open the door and guess who was standing there? That's right, Mr. G and his best friend. Thinking this was the day he was going to finish me off, I did the right thing and invited him in. He proceeded by asking me *where I got such strength to face his fight after fight and have the gall to ask if I was finished.* I told him he wouldn't believe me even if I told him. He demanded that I tell him so I did. I told him that I had a born-again experience when I was 16 years of age and I learned through the Bible that born-again Christians are required to *turn the other cheek* and attempt to turn our *enemies into friends*. His reply? Well, it shocked me a bit – he said *you are more of a man than I will ever be*. He then took me to lunch and told me I was welcome in "his town" anytime. Since I had a hard time believing him, I did exactly that. The next weekend I drove over to "his town," walked into the bar that his family owned and ordered a drink. The entire bar began harassing me in a manner I had become quite accustomed. Mr. G got up on a table and announced loudly *if anyone ever lays a hand on Steve in the future, they will have me to deal with*. I still to this day am amazed, and weepy, this happened. That was the last day I have memories of being harassed by my school peers.

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Not long ago, one of Mr. G's friends told me that Mr. G gave his life to Christ shortly after that Sunday reconciliation. Today Mr. G is known in his community as a Christian leader. I am a bit emotional in saying this but if all those beatings were for his salvation – then every ounce of pain & suffering was worth it!

## **YOUR SON IS RETARDED**

During my junior year, the school counselor called for a meeting with my mother and me. During this meeting, he announced that I should never pursue higher education. You would have to know my mother but that did not sit well with her – AT ALL! She pretty much demanded the reasons for such a statement. He told us that I was “borderline retarded” and he had the test results to prove it. Even though my mother and I walked away from this meeting blowing off his recommendation, he continued to set a chain of events in motion to stop me from graduating. On the night of graduation (almost a year later), I was standing with my classmates, in cap & gown, to get our senior picture taken, when this counselor pulls me out of the group and tells me I am not graduating. With the principle standing close by watching this trauma unfold, steps up, pulls him aside and orders him to put me back in the group. I think I was the first “retarded” person to graduate from this school.

Several years later in a community miles away from my hometown, I held a position as Director of a handicapped residential care home. To my amazement, who was assigned to work for me as my cottage nurse, this counselor's wife – a registered nurse. She was an absolutely wonderful worker and person. I got along with

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her tremendously well. Not long after her employment with us, this counselor (her husband) seeks me out and reconciles with me. In fact, this man was the engagement photographer for my wife and me. This was yet another moment of healing for me.

I am convinced that nothing happens to us that God cannot turn into a ministry moment of healing. I cannot say that I have observed God doing this with all painful relationships, particularly family members but I have seen enough to believe.

*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Rom 8:28)*

Oddly enough, today I am a prolific writer and my email publications go out to a well over 48,000 readers on a weekly basis. With that said, out of 22 high school classmates, 16 of them are subscribers to my writings. That means, the very source of my rejection during those traumatic years, are reading the most powerful message known to the Christian world, that of the indwelling Life of Jesus Christ. Few things could please me more.

## **SEX, DRUGS & ROCK'N ROLL**

After graduating in 1974, I was blessed with a job in a nearby community at a



Tractor Supply store. I worked hard and became a faithful worker. The family that owned this chain adopted me into their family. I learned many things about family, business



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and product supply. Even though I worked at a factory throughout my high school years, this job taught me something different – the importance of hard work and family loyalty. While working this job, my private life was starting to get out of control. It was almost like I had two sides to me – one being a faithful worker who displayed a high level of responsibility and second being my private flesh-life. Due to the unresolved conflicts of my childhood, drugs, sex and rock-n-roll poured in and out of my life.

While in high school, I was a part of a rock band (more of a mascot) that earned a healthy degree of popularity in our state. We enjoyed our local fame but with this popularity came temptations of drinking, drugs, and sex. Coming from such a rejective (not wanted) background, having women readily available during or after concerts, I became “addicted” to the attention that came with this lifestyle. The years I spent being a part of this band, introduced me to a world that my flesh simply could not handle. This fake and deceptive world was carried over into my young adult years. While trying to be responsible in my work world, my “off time” hours turned into one flesh-party after another, living out a “wannabe” celebrity dream.

During the '70s, “streaking” (running around naked) became a fad. I took streaking to a new level by bringing it to the stage and integrated it into my act. To my surprise, it was a hit but I didn’t count the cost. In fact, this lead into the underworld of a mafia run strip circuit. I went from “having fun” to getting caught up as an entertainer in the underworld. I became the first male strippers in a local club. All starting with me convincing the owner of a club to allow me to get on stage and do a strip routine with a featured Vegas showgirl, which was the “unpardonable

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sin” in this industry. Promising him an increase of business, he took the dare, tried it and as the Devil would have it, it became this owner’s most popular show. This one show lead me down a path that I have suffered extreme regret. Here I was a “Christian” and living a lifestyle of debauchery.

One night after a show, my dance partner told me her “boss” (pimp) was here from Kansas City “to deal with me.” I won’t go into details but that night the Lord ended my “career” in the entertainment industry. God used this horrific night in the back alley of that club to spank me – plain and simple.

Needless to say, I lost my job at the local Tractor Supply store. My reputation didn’t match the family values of this respectable chain. Now unemployed and wandering in the wilderness, I found myself engaged to a wealthy Catholic girl. After enjoying the privileges of her wealth, I was faced with the reality of my demise. On the day her wedding dress arrived, I bolted like a thief in the night – supposedly devastating her life. Her brothers began hunting me down like a dog. With that, I left the state.

Upon returning from my “trip,” my mother encouraged me to apply for a job that my aunt set up for me. Being desperate for employment, I went to the interview. I speak more about this job later in the book, but the job ended up being a Federal position of directing a county for the underprivileged, OEO: Office of Equal Opportunity. To my surprise, I got the job and as



*OEO Head Office*

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suspected, I integrated my drug world into this position – using this job to traffic drugs. After about a year of holding this position, I got caught. Being told I would never work for the Federal government again, they sent me off without charges.



*Grandma Corrie*

Being unemployed again, disillusioned by life, my mother invites me to a local movie sponsored by Billy Graham – *The Hiding Place*, *The Corrie Ten Boom Story*. Determined not to go, my mother begged me, announcing my father was going with her. With that news, I wanted to see this with my own eyes. Upon arriving at the theater (early), I was attacked spiritually to the point of pacing like a wild animal in front of the theater. One of the attendants came out and asked me if I was “OK.” Moments away from going back to my apartment, my father and mother come around the corner. After our typical detached greetings, we go into the theater, sit down, the whole time continuing to be under this attack. The movie starts, captures my complete attention and peace filled my soul. After the movie was over, I expected someone to stand up and do an altar call. But no, everyone got up and left. I asked my parents if they wanted to come over to my apartment for coffee, but my father was quick to say he wanted to go home. I went back to my apartment, alone, and sure enough, the attack came on me in full force. I went into the closet in my bedroom and grabbed the preaching Bible of my grandfather, which was handed down to me, and threw it against the wall in anger. It bounced off the wall and

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landed opened faced on my bed to the book of Proverbs. With what little knowledge I had to read, God miraculously opened my illiterate mind and read a simple passage that brought me to brokenness.

*For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things; from those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil; whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways; to deliver you from the strange woman, from the adulteress who flatters with her words; that leaves the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; for her house sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead; none who go to her return again, nor do they reach the paths of life. (Proverbs 2:10-19)*

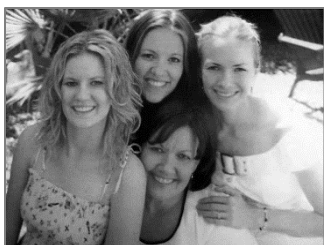
I got up from my knees, still sobbing uncontrollably, and flushed all my drugs down the toilet. I determined to never return to this lifestyle again – and I didn't. I will forever be grateful for Corrie, whom I call my *spiritual-grandmother!* She not only was like the grandmother I never had – God used her life & story to set mine free.

Within a week of this surrender, I joined my father on one of his cross-country trucking trips. This trip was during the week of the historically famous “trucking strike.” While in the Bronx in New York City, we were shot at. The bullet pierced the cab and missed my head by inches. This “wake-up call” re-settled and confirmed my new lease on life. When we got back home, there was a letter waiting for me – a letter from a young lady who is now my wife. In this letter, she invited me to apply for a job at a

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handicap care facility in Sheldon, Iowa. Needing a job and change of life, I applied for this position and honestly, surprised I got the job.

## My Life with Jane Marie



*Jess, Libby, Jane & Abby*

What you are about to read is a true love story!

The Lord has blessed me with many profound gifts and opportunities, but none compare to the woman of my youth. In Christ, Jane has been the *red-thread* between me & the practical aspects of the Indwelling Life of Jesus. This woman has a deep & rich understanding of the power of the Cross, the indwelling Life of Christ and the purpose of womanhood. For without Christ using her, God only knows where I would be.

I met Jane initially through my brother, who was “dating” her sister Mary. The first time I met her I was at the ripe age of 19, full of vigor and just about the peak of my rebellion, being filled with confusion regarding my identity in Christ. Her family was hosting a birthday party for my brother and invited our family to attend. Because my mother couldn’t drive, and since I was her designated driver, I ended up driving her to this event. Upon arriving, I couldn’t help but notice Mary’s sister – in fact, I thought she was the most beautiful woman I had ever cast my eyes upon. I immediately became *lovesick*! As the

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evening unfolded, I began to realize that this young lady was from a different “cut of cloth.” Seeing her as untouchable and too pure for me, I moved through the evening as best as I could, stealing second looks whenever I could. Even though I didn’t see her again for a couple of years, she never left my mind.

Jane is from a pure Dutch heritage. She was born June 26, 1954, to Carl and Drucilla VerSteeg. She grew up in Sioux Center, Iowa and lived in the same house her entire life,



*Dutch Festival | Orange City, Iowa*

something that was rather foreign to me coming from a family who moved 9 times before I had entered high school. Her Dutch background was deeply integrated into her hometown, family and lifestyle. Her parents were some of the sweetest people I had ever met. Her family was everything I had ever dreamed of having IN a family.

Two years after meeting Jane at my brothers’ birthday party, I found myself in a lifestyle of confusion and chaos. Hearing through my brother that I was unemployed and in need of a serious life-change, she decides to send me a letter encouraging me to apply for a job at a handicap care facility. Being desperate, I did and got a job. But the “kicker” was when I went to sign the contract, she was there signing her contract to work for the same organization. When I saw her standing there, I was mesmerized by her beauty. I knew that day I would marry this woman.

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Within a couple of weeks, I began to be overcome with a love for her that I had not experienced before – not with anyone. I was so smitten by her; I began to see her face in my dreams.

During training, I roomed with the company's psychologists. One night while sitting on the edge of my bed, he asked me if I was ok. I went on to tell him what was going on in my mind – obsessing over this woman. With that he said; *you're in love* (picture taken on this day). I am not joking when I say this,



*Steve | The Day of Love*

but I had no clue what love was or how it felt to be in love, so this man's words were foreign to me. If you asked me about *lust* at this point in my life, well, I could write a user's manual on that topic.

This revelation from my co-worker was shaking the foundation of my life. The next day in training, I saw Jane walk by as I was flirting with a *biker-chic* and I literally stopped in my conversation, caught up with Jane and asked her if I could walk her to class. Within the hour, we were sitting down sharing a cup of coffee. I must tell you, this was the first time in my life that I had a heart connection with another human outside of my mother. I truly loved this woman, Warren (the psychologist) was right. Without sounding too pompous, those thoughts and feelings have never subsided. There will NEVER be another woman who could fill her place in my heart! I knew this love-story was eternal.

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After returning from this training trip, my landlord said he needed a month's rent – in advance. Being cash broke, I set off to find my brother. I whipped by Jane's apartment to ask her if she knew where he was. She didn't but she said she would go with me to try to find him. That turned into 5 hours of driving in the rain to find him. Well, we never found my brother but we found each other.

One of the stops we made in attempting to find my brother was her parents. After arriving in their driveway, we began to talk, 3-hours' worth. Finally, we went inside, asked if they had seen my brother. Even though our mission was a failure, my future mother-in-law later said, *"it was that night she knew who was to marry their Janie."*

Well, on to our journey of finding my brother. We drove around for another several hours and then stopping at a stop sign, I looked over at her and asked her if I should be afraid to get involved. With a slight pause, which felt like an hour, she said no.

Within a short period of time, and I mean a short period of time, I made a trip over to speak to her father to gain permission to marry his daughter. With an affirmative "yes," I moved forward, bought a diamond and set the time to ask her to marry me.

On the night of the proposal, I attempted to read her scriptures on marriage (mostly fumbling), asked her to marry me and waited for the affirmative "yes." Her reply? *I cannot say yes but I can't say no.* Without one single doubt in my mind, I told her to keep the ring and put it on when she hears a *yes* from the Lord. It took her a few weeks to hear God (silly girl), little did she realize, I would have



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waited the rest of my life for that *yes*. Sure enough, one night I went to pick her up for a “date” and to my delight, she was wearing the ring. **This was one of the best days of my entire life.** That night was the turning point for the rest of my life. Having Janie in my life has infected and affected almost every decision I have made since that night. She truly is the heartbeat of my soul. As God as my witness, I can honestly tell you that I have never had a single doubt as to if she was the right person for me, nor a single thought, or temptation, of ever leaving her. Our love, commitment, and devotion to each other are beyond life itself – it is eternal. I became complete when God gave me her and as for her family, well – they were a benefit I did not expect.

We were married one year after she accepted my engagement. On June 24, 1977, the Lord bound us together as *one-flesh*. Our wedding day was a storybook event. Like most grooms, I believed I was the most blessed man on earth.

Mom and dad VerSteege adopted me as a true son. I learned more about love, acceptance, and family-life from them than from any book I have read or written. They have both gone on to be with the Lord but I got-a-tell-ya, I have had a hole in my heart since the day they died. I weep over missing them often, even now, particularly Carl, my father-in-law. This man was simply the kindest man I have ever met. He taught me most of what I know about being a faithful father, husband, and grandparent. God used him to be a father in ways that my own father was unable. His life has become my legacy.

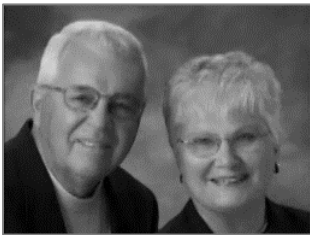
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*Off to Our Honeymoon*



Before we were married, we decided as a couple that Jane would be a “stay at home” mom. This decision was challenged by many of our friends at that time – trying to convince us that Janie could work outside the home while being a responsible mother. This push reaffirmed what we believed and we moved forward with our decision. In fact, we have carried this principled forward as grandparents.

Being in ministry our entire adult lives, we have been faced with many temptations of breaking that commitment due to the struggle of living off a single faith-based missionary salary, but we are pleased to announce that we kept to that decision to this very day.



*Bob & Ester Hoogeveen*

Our years together at Village Unlimited (Handicapped Village) were some of the most rewarding we have had to date. Bob Hoogeveen became my first mentor. He was the visionary and founder of this organization.

Jane and I are considered to be a part of the founding team, literally being a part of the brick and mortar of establishing this organization. In many respects, I owe my love for leadership and people helping this man. He hired me as a young arrogant *know it all*, starting me out cleaning toilets and promoted me from position to position until I became humble enough to responsibly manage people.

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Jane and I worked side by side in this organization serving those with physical, emotional and spiritual challenges. We have truckloads of memories loving and being loved by some of God's most precious people. We learned together what it really means to love and accept people who are less equipped with mental and physical resources. Watching my bride love on these people caused and confirmed God's greatest human blessing to me.

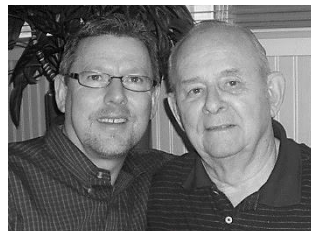
## **Our Time At Grace Fellowship International**



Within a couple of years of being married, the Lord led us to pack up our family and move to Denver to study under Dr. Charles Solomon at Grace Fellowship International. This became another turning point in our lives. It was through this mentorship that God revealed to me my identity in Christ. Dr. Solomon's focus was in the field of applying the power of the Cross to counseling.

After finishing my internship with Grace Fellowship, I was invited to come on staff to counsel and work alongside Dr. Solomon's son, Ron, in his newly developed program – Caraway Street, a drama and puppet ministry that teaches the

identity truths to children. For several years, I traveled to churches all over the United States – training workers how to use this unique program. The ministry became so popular, Ron and I were invited to move to California to integrate Caraway Street into the Hollywood scene. This was another turning point in our lives. Do I put my focus



*Steve with Dr. Solomon*

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on the theatrical world or that of Christ as Life discipleship and counseling? Through much prayer and counsel, we choose the route of discipleship.

Since we did not choose to go to California, I remained on staff at Grace Fellowship as a family & child counselor. It was during this time that Dr. Solomon encouraged me to attend Rockmont Christian College to get my undergraduate degree, which I did.

## **Christ Haven**

After serving on staff at GFI for several years, Jane and I were invited by close friends to move with them to a Christian resort (Christ Haven) in the Colorado Rockies. The goal was to integrate the Christ as Life message and tools into a resort environment – much like a Francis Shaffer L’Abri community in Switzerland. With objectives in place, the lodge was purchased and our two families moved in. It was during this period of our journey that I met my present editor and friend, Kathy Hill. She started out as a trainee and through the years our relationship grew into one of our most faithful friends and co-workers.



*Christ Haven*

After a couple of years of failed attempts to gain tax-exemption from the government, we were “forced” to find employment in the city – Colorado Springs. It was in this process that we were encouraged by Dr. Solomon to start our own non-profit and establish an Exchanged Life counseling and training center in the Springs, Release Ministries (named by Jane) was born. It was through this ministry that the Lord used us to counsel and train many

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of the leaders of Navigators and Compassion International. The fruit of this work is still bearing to this day.

## **Release Ministries**

Our years in Colorado Springs comes with bitter/sweet memories. On one hand, we have endless testimonies of the work of God in the lives of many famous, and not so famous, servants of the Lord. On the other hand, our family suffered extreme persecution from the New Age and Satanic communities. One of the outreach services of our ministry was a radio show (A Counselor's Point of View) that was focused on interviewing authors and teachers of the Word. It was through our radio broadcast that our ministry began seeing an emergent (new age) infiltration into "Christian" writings. Once we began to reveal this, we were requested to do seminars on the topic and it was through this outreach that gave us public exposure that aroused the interest of opposition. To make a long story short (plus it is not worth going into), our family came under such attack that we ended up needing bodyguards for myself and my family.

We received many referrals through "A Counselor's Point of View" but one particular case was the girlfriend of a very famous "rock-star." She was growing to such a degree that it was putting a wedge between her and her boyfriend. This particular rocker, & their band, was known for performing satanic rituals on stage. The group hit the peak of their popularity in the '70s and was about to go on a world-tour to revitalize their popularity. On a Friday afternoon, 5:15 pm, I was counseling a couple and while ministering, I became out of breath. Thinking

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immediately that this was a spiritual attack, I dismissed myself. As I was walking through our waiting room to get a drink, I saw a gentleman in the waiting room that looked quite familiar. After getting my drink and walking back through the waiting room, this man started speaking to me but his mouth was not moving. I knew then for sure that we had a situation on our hands that was beyond the human norm. I went into my office, dismissed the couple, and came out to greet this man and he was already making his way into my office. He sat down and asked *do you know who I am?* Which I replied, *you look familiar but it doesn't matter who you are – you have no right busting into our office with such demands.* Within the next few minutes, he attempted to put a curse on me by holding up the palm of his hand that had a tattoo of the pentagram. Finding no success in his attempt to curse me, he began to rebuke me for messing up his girlfriend with this *Christian crap*. To make a long story short, I began counseling this man weekly, which ultimately led to his salvation. When it came around to go on his world tour, I counseled him not to go and if he did, God would block his efforts to blend Satanism with Christ. Well, he didn't listen and as faith would have it, the first concert, opening night in Denver, he collapsed on stage doing his first song. About 3 in the morning, I got a call from the state mental hospital with this man on the other end of the line. He begged me to release him from this Christian conversion. I told him this was impossible and re-counseled him to drop the tour and continue in his discipleship. He did and God began to grow him into a man of God. We had the privilege to watch God transform this man into a man of faith, bearing testimony to his friends in the world of rock-n-roll. To my knowledge & trust, he continues in his growth as a

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believer. By the way, their world tour got canceled and the group has never made it back to the stage since.

Since we had a board member who worked for the Regan Administration as a “specialist” in global religions, our ministry became known for rightly dividing the Word of Truth when it came to churches and religious groups – particularly authors. One of these authors we revealed



*L'Engle*

was Madeleine L'Engle, the author of “A Wrinkle In Time.” This book was being used by Christian Schools and Public Schools alike. The book was filled with the occult, in fact, Madeleine was a certified witch. Our children were attending the Colorado Springs Christian School and one day, our eldest came home with a book stating that *something is very wrong with this book mommy*. After doing a bit of research and contacting our board member, we discovered that this woman was connected to a very evil culture. The success of the story is the Principle of the school openly took our research and immediately had it removed from the school. The not so good part of the story is that this public reveal set off a level of persecution from the local New Age community that ultimately battered our family with memories we would prefer to forget. It wasn't long after this very public reveal, the New Age community relabeled their movement – it is now known as the Emergent community, proactively serving their new Millennial Jesus – you might recognize their bumper sticker, “Coexist.”



Our ministry in Colorado Springs was successful by all ministry *standards*. Since the Springs had over 240 national

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and international ministries housed in their city, we had the privilege of disciplining many leaders.

We as a family have fond memories of Colorado. Outside of the conflict connected with our research department, our family enjoyed endless trips to the mountains for picnics, hikes, and camping.

## **Time at Oxford | Educating Retardation**

Another point of rejection came shortly after I was selected amongst 20 Christian Worldview teachers to join a new class of doctorate candidates at Oxford Graduate School. During my first week there as a student, the President of the school took these leaders out for lunch – at which time I was wearing an Oxford t-shirt under my sport jacket, given to me by a friend who visited Oxford University. In front of this class, staff, and professors, the President had me stand up to announce his disgust at me wearing an Oxford symbol before I had earned it, then encouraging the class *not to follow Phinney's disrespectful example*. If that wasn't bad enough, our Psychology professor gave us the assignment to write an essay, which was to integrate our Christian worldview into the topic of the psychology of abortion. With that, I wrote my paper integrating the truths of the indwelling Life of Christ into the unrighteous act of abortion. The premise is that if true Christians have the very mind of Christ in them, how could He support a demonic doctrine of killing the future pastors, prophets and teachers of tomorrow's church – unborn children. Not only did he refuse to have the paper read to the forum, but he also used it to publicly humiliate me – calling me *a narrow-minded conventional Christian worldview thinker*. From that day forward, this professor worked tirelessly to



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set the class against me and the worldview of the Exchanged Life. Sadly, a few years later, this professor was dismissed for a similar infraction.

Needless to say, my studies with Oxford were trying and stressful. Interesting as it is, my Oxford experience was used by God to remind me that the teachings of the Exchanged Life, Christ mind in the believer, was not going to be accepted in the world of education without a fight. Another known fact, several of the students from that class went on to become world known Exchanged Life leaders – one becoming a Chancellor of Oxford, who is now a dear friend who helped me through my heart-failure. Even though it is hard to accept at times, God truly does use all things for His good.

## **Our Time In Phoenix**

Toward the end of our time in Colorado Springs, a ministry in Huston, Texas offered to merge their ministry with ours – more like gobble-up our ministry into theirs. Since the founder of this Christian psychiatric care organization was discipled by a couple of my friends with the Exchanged Life, I was comfortable with a possible merger. After many meetings and times of negotiation, an agreement was made and the “gobbling” occurred, which required our family to move to Phoenix, Arizona.

This merge did not turn out like we had hoped and prayed. A couple of months after settling into Scottsdale, AZ – we began to socialize with our Director of the Sexual Addictions department and one of the worst possible circumstances began to unfold. This man ended up molesting one of our daughters. Due to the fact that this

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organization worked closely with the hospital industry, cover-ups ruled the day. The simple reality was; we were faced with an entire firm of attorneys vs. our single legal representative. Our request was nothing more than removing this man from his position and barring him from his license to practice in the mental health industry – that was it. No suite for money and/or selfish gain. Sad to say, we “lost” the battle and nothing was done outside of them removing him from his position, primarily due to complaints from several other clients.

With that, we found ourselves in a strange new place with no employment (more of this story in the book). After a couple of months of being unemployed, one of Dr. Solomon’s mentorees paid a visit to our home offering us discipleship for our family. Taking him up on his offer, our family went for counsel and received a great deal of healing. This resulted in coming on staff with his organization, which we maintained for over 10 years.

It was during our tenure with them that I was blessed with being a part of a team that developed some of the most practical tools available today regarding the application of the Exchanged Life. My Identity Matters Workbook, as well as this book, are based on these teachings. One of the primary tools was a discipleship manual that was designed to provide the discipler with teaching material for use in the “counseling” process. Diagrams used to communicate the freeing Truths of the believer’s identity in Christ. This manual was specifically intended for the use in applying God’s Truth to an individual’s life IN the seven areas of life; spiritual, psychological, social, physical, financial, marital and parental.

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Even though more is said about this story later in the book, during my internship at the beginning of my time with this organization, I became friends with a co-worker that ultimately ended up co-pastoring a church with me that focused on the believer's identity in Christ. Our little church grew from several families to be that of several hundred people. It was during the peak of our growth as a church that my friend and co-worker were killed in a "gun accident." After his death, we maintained the growth of this fellowship for another eight years – merging with several other fellowships along the way. During the tenth year of my stay with the church and the discipleship organization (my primary job), the new husband to the wife of my dead friend ended up in my office for counseling. While I was discipling this man, the Lord gave me a "word of knowledge" that shook my foundation a bit. The Lord said *ask him about the murder*. Not knowing at all what the Lord was talking about, I obeyed and asked. His reply was *you don't think I did it, do you?* Not knowing what he was talking about, I said *no*. With that, the story unfolded – a full confession came forth of his wife murdering my best friend.

This ordeal ended in being the most stressful set of events we have had to bear in our marriage & family. Since Jane and I were the key counselors in the confession, from public media attention to the rejection of friends of the ministry – our lives became battered by betrayal.

This all resulted in an 18-year prison sentence for the wife of my friend, full betrayal from the ministry we dedicated our lives to serve - resulting in a strong recommendation from my attorney to resign my position. With that, we

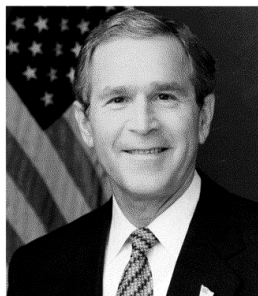
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found ourselves unemployed again wondering what the Lord had for us next.

## **My Stint in Politics**

Since I had been advising for a political team at the capitol for the past five years, serving two governors and Senator friend, I was invited to become the nation's first Faith-based Representative, which turned into becoming the President and CEO of the state's new non-profit, Arizona Alliance for Community & Faith-based Action (AACFA). This organization was the first of its kind to network and provide representation for faith organizations in Washington DC. Needless to say, my political career was now launched.

I spent the next five years serving in this position, commuting to DC every three weeks being a representative for the nation's first initiative to integrate faith and politics. After serving five years under President George W. Bush with his campaign "Faith-based Initiative," I became restless and disillusioned by national politics.



To Steve  
With Best Wishes, *George W. Bush*

The "back-stabbing," persecution and policy stealing ultimately moved me to resign my post in Washington, as well as my position with AACFA. It was during my final year with the White House team that a friend of mind, Director of Labor, recommended that I set up a separate non-profit that fit my spiritual beliefs – with that, IOM America was formed. Even though I was invited back into the Initiative under President Obama, due to this new kind

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of leadership, the department and the Initiative turned it to a “one world” faith movement focusing on Universalism. This was a confirmation to keep-on-keeping-on with our new founded IOM America.

Meantime back on the home front, Jane had become a “political widow.” I was so focused on this initiative and my newfound political influence, I left my precious wife in the dust of a murder trial, loss of no longer being a pastor/ministry wife, rejection from family/friends and on top of all that – a husband lost in the world of politics. It was certainly time for God to refocus me and the actual ministry He called me to function in.

I cannot tell you how arrogant and stuffy I became during those years of being in politics. Even though I had an agreement with the White House that my name is “silenced” as I worked for them, the influence I was given boasted my flesh like no other. I became friends, attended meetings and socialized with some of our nation’s most “powerful” influencers – both in the faith industry and politics, yes I said “faith industry.” I discovered that most American megachurches and ministries are into one thing – selling Jesus for the prosperity of self-indulgence. From my perspective, I arrived at my own measurement of success and power and as you might guess – I hated it.

One of my last trips to Washington, sitting in a meeting with the President, the Lord tapped me on my conscience and said *go back to your room*. I respectfully waited until the meeting was over and quickly told my co-worker I would not be attending our meeting with Senator Santorum, which I was to chair. With him thinking I was *crazy* for breaking protocol, I left. When I got to my room,

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I sat on the edge of the bed baffled and bewildered, not understanding why God would require such a thing of me. I immediately became overtaken by sleepiness. I fell back on the bed and found myself in a “dream/vision” that opened my spiritual eyes. The dream entailed me standing on the corner of a busy DC street watching thousands of hands come at me. This went on for several minutes and behold, one single hand (large hand) connected to a body in a draping white robe (exactly like the vision I had in fourth grade) appeared out of the center of all these little hands. With that, I woke up and spent the next 15 hours on my face before God begging Him to show me what this meant, resulting in silence from God.

The next day I decided to go to my previously scheduled meeting with the Director of Health and Human Services. Arriving at the complex and finishing my meeting – the Director invited me to his office. While standing in this man’s office, taken by the personal pictures of him and the President, I noticed one particular picture behind his desk. It was a picture of a boy sitting in the President’s chair in the Oval Office – a chair I too have sat in, the President standing behind him, pointing to the boy in the chair – as if to say; *our future President*. Standing there in a bit of a trance, the Director asked me *what I was thinking*. I told him that I believed I had an unction from the Lord. Hesitant to tell him, he almost demanded that I did. So, I told him that *the Lord had a special mission and commission on this boy’s life*. The boy turned out to be his son and he said I was the third person to tell him this. As he was standing there in tears, he shared with me his born-again experience with Christ. As expected, that opened the door for a deep and rich discussion as brothers in the Lord.

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After I left the building, flying high as a kite, I went to the street to secure a taxi and due to rush hour, I was not able to get a ride. Realizing I would have to walk back to the hotel (several miles away), a black limousine pulled up next to me and asked



*Steve's Limo Encounter*

me if I needed a ride. Thinking this was a pay-per-trip service, I said no thank you. He quickly told me *this is on me*. I got in and before we got a half a block away, he looks in the mirror and asks me if I was a born-again Christian. Thinking I had a “nut” on my hands, I played into it. After answering affirmatively, I asked him the same question, which he replied *you could say that*. Well, the next 40 minutes this man began speaking into my life, telling me things about myself that only God knew. I listened carefully knowing God was in charge of this trip. He spelled out exactly what God had called me to do the rest of my life and to *stop following the hands of man*. By the time we got to the hotel, I was sobbing uncontrollably. I asked him for his name and contact information in order to continue our discussion. He said *my name does not matter and you will be hearing from me soon*. Whether you believe me or not, after he opened my door and I gave him a hug, I walked to the hotel entrance and while the doorman was opening the door for me, I turned around to get one last look and there was no limousine to be found. Now either I had a time warp moment or something much more spiritual just happened.

I immediately went to my room and wept all the more, during which time the Lord said *I the Lord have spoken, resign your post and do what I have asked you to do*. Well, as

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soon as I got back to Arizona, I resigned my position with AACFA, all my chair positions with the Governor and began to develop the non-profit of IOM America, which is the ministry I serve today.

**An interesting note about the limo driver** – 2 months after resigning my post at the capitol, I received a call from the Governor's office. The secretary said there was a gentleman here who needed to talk to me, asking me to come downtown. Not being able to cancel a meeting I was about to attend, she put him on the phone. Guess who it was? You got it, the limo driver. He proceeded to tell me where I needed to start my ministry work and gave me ministry projections for the next 10 years. The crazy thing about these projections, all these years later, that is exactly what our ministry is doing throughout the continent of Africa. There still are a few mind-altering details that must unfold with the Lord's work between Israel and Ethiopia networking indwelt believers but I and here to tell you, Mr. Limo driver was/is spot on.

I still remain active in politics as an "armchair" advisor. My mission is simple, to encourage those who are in authority over us. This is accomplished through imparting the Life transforming elements of who the believer is in Christ.

## **IOM America**

The ministry of IOM has been refining our focus on unifying workers of the Cross since those political days. My political stint has given me many contacts, friends and open doors to accomplish our mission. I am thankful



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beyond words for God taken us through those difficult years.

Once returning to my life calling – uniting Exchanged Life workers, IOM America then became dedicated to Christ-centered counseling/discipleship, conferences & center development. Our entire focus is to help members of the body of Christ to experience, mature in, and communicate effectively the message of identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension in their various spheres of influence, just as my Limo driver suggested. This is accomplished by way of a 3-Fold Vision: Biblical Worldview, Discipleship & Training and the Exchanged Life Global Initiative. All three fold into the International Fellowship of Exchanged Life E-Community (IFEL).

## **IOM & The Global Initiative**

After years of ministering the Exchanged Life, God opened the door to kindle afresh my relationship with Dr. Solomon. God puts Chuck and me together to discuss the idea of "coming back to my roots." That being an obvious decision, our ministries immediately began to explore the idea of a "merge."

During my correspondence with Dr. Solomon, he shared with me that he believed God put it upon his heart that the two of us were to integrate our life services. We met and both of us began to pray. One year later, I was struck down with a virus that went to my heart, throwing me into heart failure, which resulted in a strong recommendation for me to move to a "cooler" environment – thus our move to Sterling, Kansas. Two years later, the cardiologist gave me such a positive report that it appeared I would be

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"bouncing back." This opened negotiation between Dr. Solomon and me once again. I was commissioned by the IOM & GFI boards to write a strategic ministry plan to unite Exchanged Life workers throughout the entire world. The plan came like a river of life and to my joy, the leadership of IOM & GFI embraced it - resulting in me accepting the challenge of working out the details of such an initiative. It was during this time, God reminded me that the plan He had given me for my doctorate thesis during my previous stint in politics was for His Church. Since June of 2011, I have actively been working on the Exchanged Life Global Initiative to unfold this strategic plan.

Even though both boards decided to keep IOM America as a separate outreach – to preserve the Initiative, both ministries continue to support each other in ministry and mission.

## **Our Family**

My beloved and I have been married now for over 40 years. Our lives have been filled with many joys, trials, and sorrows. Most of our marital conflict has been over my immaturity and my struggles with the insecurities of life. My precious wife has had to suffer along with me as I have slowly embraced who I am in Christ. Her consistent reminders and encouragements of my true identity have kept my footing in Christ strong.

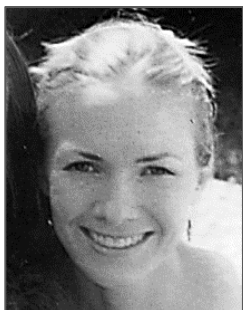
One of our values in life is in forming a legacy to the third & fourth generations of one's bloodline, as well as to the spiritual children formed through discipleship.

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*"For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."* (Genesis 18:19)

Jane and I consider the gift of children, and grandchildren, to be our greatest reward here on earth. Our second greatest blessing is the privilege of being *spiritual parents* to those who have adopted us as such (more about spiritual parenting later). First, allow me to introduce our precious children.

## **Our First Born: Abigail Grace**



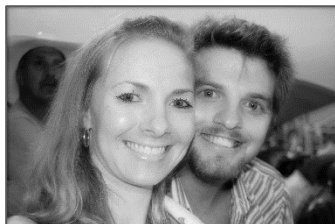
*Abigail Grace*

Abby was born to us on December 2, 1978, in Sioux Center, Iowa. From the Hebrew Abigail, which is derived from *Abigail* (father of exaltation, the father is rejoicing), clearly reveals the truth about our first born. It was also the name of one of the wives of King David. Her character has always been strong, immovable and full of life. She is much like her daddy when it comes to being "bull-headed" about what she believes, traits that have tested the boundaries of our parenting while stretching the limits of her middle name. Abby's greatest struggle through the years has been her bent toward living by the law – a pattern that I as her father certainly reinforced a bit too much before I understood the Exchanged Life. Her greatest strengths are endurance, steadfastness, and hope. No matter how the enemy has

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tried to condemn her, she is simply known for getting back up and taking the hill one more time.

Abby is married to Quintin Eason and has eight children (and counting). She is an awesome mother and wife. The heritage of her mother is written all over the fabric of her life. Before married, she graduated from culinary



*Abby with Husband Quintin*

school as a chef. Since she is following in the footsteps of her mother, she homeschools her children and is a worker at home. She and her husbands are experts in the field of organics and homespun gardening. Their children (more to come, we hope) are well grounded in the identity Truths in Christ. In fact, I have never met children that have such keen insight regarding the indwelling Life of Christ-like their little ones. Needless to say, they are a delight to Oma (Jane) and Opa (me).

## **Our Second Born: Elizabeth Marie**

Libby was born to us on November 23, 1981, in Sioux Center, Iowa and yes, she inherited her daddy's weird sense of humor. From the Hebrew *Elisheba*, means *oath of God*, or *God of satisfaction*, which is very fitting for our Libby. Her life growing up was filled with an interest in the little



*Elizabeth Marie*

things in life – flowers, sunsets, and anything that would catch her attention that most people would let fly by. She has a sense of humor that constantly keeps her daddy

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laughing. Libby and I were always getting in trouble due to our silliness. To this day, when you put us in the same room together, you will find us laughing about the smallest things. Her rosy round cheeks would steal the hearts of those around her. Like her father, her greatest weakness is being oversensitive and her greatest strength certainly comes from her mother – a woman of immovable character. Like her mother, she sees the positive in all things and people – sometimes to a fault. She feels pain deeply and rejoices on the highest places of her faith. She is a country girl who finds great delight in their residence in Estes Park, CO, with hopes of starting a retreat center for people in ministry.

Libby is married to Nathan Ford, a preacher's kid from the hot state of Arizona. Her father-in-law co-pastored a church with me in Phoenix, which is how they met. They have two wonderful children – Zion and Montana, both who are the fruit of their grandparent's eye.



*Libby with Husband Nathan*

As unique as she is in her light-hearted character, she is intense in her individualism of faith. Libby is not prone to believe or follow the beliefs of others just because others believe, she must war with her own journey of personal faith before securing her spiritual position in doctrines & personhood.

## **Our Third Born: Jessica Louise**

Jess was born to us on February 15, 1984, in Denver, Colorado. In Hebrew, the meaning of the name Jessica is *Rich, God beholds*. I know no other single (for now) young



*Jessica Louise*

woman who is richer in faith, outside of my favorite female – my beloved wife! It is for this reason that I dedicated one of my most favorite writing projects, the book, *Identity Matters – Advancing Life Within*.

Jess is a living expression of what it means to be married to Christ. Her personal walk with Him is immeasurably intimate and an example for married and unmarried women alike. Outside of her mother, her experiential grasp on the indwelling Life of Christ is second to none. Her ability to disciple women with the Truth is so rare, I have seen few that come close to her competence in Christ. Her strength reaches far beyond human resources and her daily lifestyle of caring for family is humbling.

A fun family story we tell often in our house is when Jess was in the incubator after being born. I was making over her to the point that the doctor said, *why don't you just get in the warmer with her*. The truth is, when Jess was born, I was going through one of the toughest times in my life. I had recently been diagnosed with a tumor on my adrenal gland, which was certain death for me. Having this new little life in front of me provided a God-sized blessing that helped me have hope for the future. Since that day, Jess has been a healing agent for the Lord each time I was faced with moments of despairing times. She is a huge “cuddle-bug” for her mother and me – caring for us today as she did that day in that tiny incubator.

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**A rarely known fact:** Due to the intensity of my childhood rejection and lack of trust with humans, I am, by the flesh, a detached person. Jess has been used by the Lord her entire life to keep me from sliding back into my “bubble.” As an infant, she had no clue how she was being used by the Lord to keep me attached, but now as an adult, she is consistently on a mission to keep her daddy’s heart close to the home-fires. I will be the first to admit it – she is *daddy’s little girl*.

She is also my Executive Assistant at our ministry. Her devotion and dedication to serving her father in this capacity are not only helpful but irreplaceable. She knows her father’s habits, routine, and mind in such a way that I barely can finish my sentences.

God gave her a life verse for me that I must share with you:

*True instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity. (Mal 2:6)*

Her role with her mother might not come with a professional title but I can tell you this – she is equally as valuable as a helper. Her love and devotion to her family are beyond words. As with my other daughters, when that day comes, the man the Lord has picked for her life-partner will be blessed with one of His best.

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## My Testimony

*“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the victor’s crown, the life God has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).*

I cannot tell you how much my soul fought this verse through the years! First of all, the word “trial” was something I worked throughout my entire life to avoid. Secondly, I have had a fear of being “tested” since I was old enough to understand just exactly what testing meant. Finally, the “victor’s crown” was a term that described a life that I believed I would never be able to attain here on earth – at least until I discovered what it truly meant to have the indwelling Life of Christ.

Even though I received the indwelling life of Christ at 16 years of age (salvation), I did not understand exactly what that meant to my daily living until many years later. Since the day of my salvation, I had a heart-hunger for the Word but was not able to embrace the Spirit of Truth/Word until my Lord took me on a journey that revealed the intimate details of advancing the Life of Christ from within.

I might have been born again without knowing much of the Word if any, but I certainly understood that in order to grow I must be bathed in the Word and the Spirit of Truth. But how could I do this – for I was functionally illiterate and could not read until my mid 20’s. Little did I realize at the time, this would become one of my greatest blessings in Life. Since I was unable to read, my early growth as a believer completely hinged upon the indwelling Life of



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Christ, being forced to be a student of the Spirit of Life from within.

Early on in my faith, I did not know the difference between “Christian” and being an indwelt Christian. I got caught up in the classic thinking that being a Christ follower was my only way to be progressive in obtaining victory as a Christian, therefore, I began by attempting to meet God’s *standard/laws* through following instead of releasing Christ within me to meet those *standards*. If someone would have only told me that in order to advance spiritually, I had to discover what and who I really was by the indwelling Life of Christ and not by trying to become who the Bible says I am. Needless to say, that never happened – nor could I reach such a goal no matter how earnest I was or how hard I strived to become something that I already was.

I can still remember how I felt when I heard for the first time that upon the day of my salvation, my old nature was crucified with Christ and that I was dead to the power of sin, buried with Him, resurrected and then placed at the right hand of the Father. For me, these were the most freeing truths I had ever heard.

To every indwelt believer there should come a time when we can say *“I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me.”* It doesn’t matter what God decides to bring our way, it is imperative that we are brought to the experiential reality of this statement. My experience is, the more rejection suffered, the longer and more difficult it is to embrace such profound truth. But know this, Christ is always seeking to

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make Himself known in us, but until we have been detached from all earthly pleasures and are ready to look inward to Him alone, we must still wait for His Indwelling Life to manifest in every thought and deed. For those of us who do experience a long delay of such a Life, it is critical that we understand that there is no delay on His part, the hard-core Truth is, all the waiting that is necessary to discover such freedom is totally due to our own flesh waging war against His Spirit from within.

I learned early on that going to Him inwardly is not the hard task but not yielding to the sin that remains in me, that is not me, is the toughest task for all believers. In fact, it takes Christ in me to master such warring. Once I learned that it takes my mind to be yielded to the mind of Christ within me – the task of “not I, but Christ” became as easy as the yoke He carries, which is lite. It was a stirring reality to know that I typically carry around more burdens than Christ does as being God. To rest my mind on such truth became the doorway to my freedom.

Due to my rejection patterns, I continue to find “resting in Christ” a huge challenge. For rest requires of me not to look at, think about, or worry over circumstances, my surroundings, my thoughts, and experiences. Breaking free from viewing life through my five senses has been the greatest obstacle in my life as a believer. Whereas looking through the eyes of Christ from within has become my daily process of working out my salvation in the midst of this harsh reality that surrounds me. Now I find myself looking at how Christ views these circumstances through me. How did I get here? That is what this book is all about.

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## WHY THIS BOOK

Identity in Christ truly does matter! An experiential embrace, and an understanding, of the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension - in daily living, is a requirement to live victoriously. This is what we call the Exchanged Life. When an individual has a born-again experience by faith, it means the Life of Christ comes and indwells the believer through the personhood of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Christ Jesus). The reality of this transformation allows for a true exchange of our old nature, or Adamic history, for that of the Nature of God through Christ. In knowing this, we become partakers of all that is true about Christ through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Now the believer is in a position to appropriate their true identity, in Christ, and begin to live out that he is literally the righteousness of Christ (Galatians 2:20).

Acceptance of the above Truth is critical. The true indwelt believer needs complete and unmerited favor offered in Christ through the forgiveness of sins – past, present, and future. Acceptance is the fluid act of Grace demonstrated by Jesus Christ. Most Christian books do not separate such victory in relationship and position, as Bridal members of Christ (Ephesians 1:13).

Believers need an active faith decision of taking what God says as Truth and bringing it into daily living. It is through appropriation that an indwelt believer begins to walk after the Spirit. This book will give you to “how” in such appropriations.

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The blood of Christ is the washing element of our redemption/Salvation. It is in, and through, the sacrifice Jesus Christ made on the Cross (by shedding His innocent blood) that we have redemption, forgiveness, and Salvation, which is made real to us by His everlasting Grace (Eph. 1:7). For blood to be redemptive and cleansing – it must be free of sin – as was the single case of Jesus. Man’s blood became defiled (filled with sin) as a result of the seed of Adam. It is through Christ, that all are made new (1 Cor. 15:22). Our journey will reveal the practical elements of Christ washing us of our old-identity.

It needs to be stated, brokenness is required! Brokenness is a term frequently used to describe the state of mind that a believer is in shortly before they embrace the Truths of being brought to the end of their self-life. Brokenness communicates a loss of will and identity in one’s own self – resulting in a dependence on Christ, from within, for life and identity. My encouragement is not to fight the Holy Spirit as you go through this journey – opening embrace it.

It is only after brokenness that the believer can understand the co-crucified Life. Crucifixion is the form of death thrown upon Jesus in His appointed time of death. It is described as nailing a person’s hands and feet to a cross and allowing the natural processes to occur to lead to death, i.e. suffocation. Romans 6:6 reveals a very powerful reality of freedom: “knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.” Galatians 2:20 also reveals a life-alliterating reality: “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by

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faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Both passages reveal the fact that those of us, who have the indwelling life of Christ, have experienced the believer’s co-crucifixion. What was crucified? The old man, old nature, Adamic nature, or old-self.

The experiential appropriation of the co-crucified Life brings authentic communion in Christ. This term is used to define the unity and unblocked fellowship with the Life of Christ from within. The word comes from “commune” or oneness, which is operative for any believer who walks after the Spirit and not after the flesh (self-life).

It is in His perfect communion that provides the environment and power to dying daily. It is clearly noted in the Scriptures that all believers must die daily (1 Cor. 15:31). This “dying daily” is for the strict purpose of considering ourselves dead to sin and alive to/in Christ. The enemy throws sins before us by appealing to our flesh (trash left behind by the Adamic nature). The dying daily is the process of appropriating the Truth that we are dead to this mortal flesh.

Those who resist to the blunt reality of dying daily, are confessing to being led by their emotions. Even though the Scriptures do not put much of an emphasis on “feelings,” this book will use this term to define the human soul’s response and/or reaction to Truth and lies. Physiologically, emotions are the hormonal part of the human body which alarm, awaken, or celebrate what the mind chooses to believe.

The only way to combat emotions (feelings) is by faith. Faith is often subjective and overused as an expression of

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the firmness of what someone believes. To have faith in Christ is much different (Rom. 4:14). Those who have faith in Christ separate themselves from all other forms of faith (Rom. 3:22). Any faith that is not in Christ is classically bound by the Law and no justification exists under those conditions. Those who believe in Christ Jesus are not only justified (just as if I never sinned), but they have a clear understanding, and belief, that what is in the eternal unseen world can be brought into their own lives through the indwelling faith of Christ from within (Gal. 2:16).

There are two “kinds” of indwelt Christians, those who release the Faith of Christ from within and those that make use of their self-life faith - flesh. There are two primary forms of flesh: the human body, where sin houses itself (Rom. 7:17), and flesh or fleshly self-life, which is the trash left behind by the old nature. Indwelt Christians have had their flesh (selfish passions) crucified (Gal. 5:24). But since sin remains in our human flesh (not the old nature), we are positioned to reckon ourselves dead to it (Rom. 6:11). We are called by our Savior not to continue presenting our bodies to sin as if we are slaves to it, for it will produce unrighteousness (Rom. 6:13).

The other primary tool used in this book is GRACE. The unmerited favor of Christ, without works, is the easiest way to define Grace. Grace is the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life of the indwelt through the mind (Life) of Christ inside the believer. People who appropriate grace have manifestations of forgiveness, acceptance, favor, liberty in the Spirit, and peace in all circumstances. People NOT of grace use the Law to change internal and external behavior.

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Once our readers understand true Grace, they can appropriate the believer's identification in Christ. This is one of the most commonly accepted terms used to describe the exchanged life. Since behavior comes from identity, what one believes to be their identity (Christ or self) makes a significant impact on daily living. It is of utmost importance that the indwelt believer places their identity in the message of identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

**This book is all about Identity in Christ!**

If our reader does not get this, they are confessing they do not know what it means to be IN CHRIST. When I use the term "in Christ," it should define the finality of the great exchange – "Not I, but Christ." Upon Salvation, the old nature is crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20) and a new nature (that of Christ) is placed in the new believer. Upon this exchange, the indwelt Christian is placed in Christ and then hidden in God (Col. 3:3).

Once a believer experientially inherits being IN CHRIST, they are granted the golden key of discernment between position and condition. The term "position" references the indwelt believer's new position in Christ by way of their new life/spirit seated at the right hand of God; placed in the Bride of Christ; made a holy child of God; and all the other identity statements given to us through Christ (Eph. 1). Condition is the soul's reflection of the measurement of appropriated belief of what is true about the new convert. Therefore, the soul must be sanctified and renewed by the Spirit (Phil. 1:6; Heb. 5:12-14).

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Condition and position are what determines behavior that is either fleshly self-control or Christ control. There are two forms of “self-control” – by flesh or by the indwelling Holy Spirit. In fact, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is self-control. But this kind of control is Christ’s control through the Holy Spirit in the believer. One puts an emphasis on “self” control and the other is a result of walking in, and after, the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

If you as the reader chooses to embrace the Truth written within these pages, the life of Christ Jesus from within will set you free. Keep in mind, while on the earth, Jesus too, was in the form of man, emptying Himself out as being equal to God (Phil. 2:6). After His resurrection, and the ascension, He gave to all those who accepted Him as Lord and Savior a special gift – His Life, by placing the Holy Spirit to indwell us (James 4:5). When we read about the life of Christ living within us (Gal. 2:20), be assured it is His actual Life, which is eternal Life. The term “Christ-as-Life” is used to explain believers walking after the Spirit, by allowing the Life of Christ to “do” the walking in, and through, them.

As a reader, I will walk you through the key points of deliverance by making use of 12 primary lessons – these are our chapter titles. My journey starts at my habit of trying to take the role of the Shepherd and finishes with bathing in the love-life of the indwelling Life of Jesus – the Great Shepherd. This book was and is my journey! The results, my discovery, and acceptance of who I am in Christ. Warning, these points of deliverance are painful yet go straight to the heart.



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As with most things, understanding the terms and definitions of proper communication is essential. I implore you to spend adequate time before you read this book in the *Definition of Terms* located in the back of the book – where you will find an extensive list of the most commonly used terms & definitions in communicating the message of the Cross - the Exchanged Life or the victorious abundant Life in Christ.

It is my prayer and hopes that our Lord Ministers to you as you take the journey of discovering who you are in Christ!

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# THE SHEPERD BOY SPEAKS

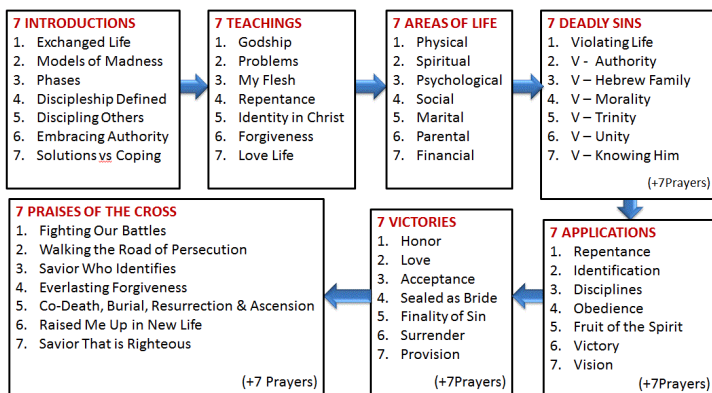


## THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF

Many years ago, I was introduced to the idea of man  
“*playing-god*” – a phrase that was not only new to me but  
became one of the most offensive truths my soul had to  
embrace...

Thank you for reading the Introduction to my autobiography. If you  
would like to view the full publication when available, contact me  
personally at [drphinney@iomamerica.org](mailto:drphinney@iomamerica.org)

### 77 TRUTHS FOR 7 AREAS OF LIFE



ChristAsLife@IOMAmerica.org