

TESTITMONY OF GARY C. MEYER  
HOW I BECAME A CHRISTIAN

My first recollections of God came from my mother and father's stories about taking me to church as an infant. They had just sung a hymn which had the phrase "Fresh Fallen Snow" to which I replied, " I fall in snow too". They took me to Sunday School every Sunday and I earned the traditional set of medals for attendance. I was baptized in the Lutheran tradition, went through confirmation classes, was confirmed and knew about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. I grew up with loving parents that demonstrated their love for one another and their 4 children. During my high school days in Benson, MN, God continued working on me by way of meeting a girl from the Duluth, MN, area at a Red Cross Camp by the name of Janie. Janie was a born again Christian who conveyed that message to me as we became good pen-pals. After two years of college studying electrical engineering I was back in Benson for the summer. Janie was now part of a gospel team that came to the Benson First Baptist church in the summer of 1956 with a group to hold a week of special meetings. She invited me to attend. One evening the young speaker, Jim Peterson, was speaking about the apostle Peter forsaking Jesus the night He was betrayed and following Him afar off. The Holy Spirit impressed upon me that Jim was talking about me. Even though I was living what I would call a good moral life, Jesus was not at the center of it, and I asked the Lord into my life. It was not an outward emotional explosion but inwardly I was doing cart wheels and full of joy. Later on I received the believer's baptism in that church.

Perhaps the biggest outward change I saw in my life was an appreciation for gospel music. I grew up in a home where my mom played piano and organ for church services. Dad played violin and saxophone. We often played many of the old standards and Scandinavian music of my heritage. I followed dad by playing tenor saxophone in the high school band and taking piano lessons from 4<sup>th</sup> grad through junior high school. God was preparing me for a field of service to Him in music after playing in marching band and some dance bands in high school and college.

The Lord was also preparing another young lady named, Joyce Erickson, from Quamba, MN. She had grown up in the Quamba Baptist Church. Her mom and dad made sure she was at every service offered by the church including Worship services, Sunday School, Wednesday night prayer meeting, and youth groups. She received the Lord in a Sunday School class at the age of 8 when Pastor Harold Johnson talked to her Sunday School class and prayed with her individually one Sunday morning. She was baptized later at the church. Joyce graduated from high school in 1957. Pastor Johnson is also the one who married us.

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Here is where it gets interesting. The gospel team that had come to Benson was regrouping for the coming summer. They had sent invitations to Joyce and me (we had never met) to join a team of four to minister to youth in the Twin Cities during the summer of 1957. We met for the first time on Pleasant Avenue in Minneapolis with the other 2 group members who were non-other than my pen-pal, Janie, and another young man, Charlie KenKnight, from the Duluth area. When Joyce and I met for the first time she claims she said, "I'm going to marry that guy some day". After working with youth groups at Bethlehem Baptist and a Baptist Church in Forest Lake, singing and playing as a group for the summer our mission was accomplished. Joyce and I were engaged in October 1957 and married at Quamba Baptist Church in Jan 1958. This union resulted in 4 daughters who have all committed their lives to serving the Lord. By the way Charlie and Janie were married later on.

As our family grew, I was involved in teaching Sunday School working primarily with adult classes, directing a choir, and occasionally preaching a morning message at Bush Lake Baptist Church in Bloomington, MN. This church merged with Cross of Glory Baptist where I played piano, taught Sunday School, sang in choir and led several Bible studies as a member for 42 years. Six years invested in Bible Study Fellowship increased my knowledge of the Bible as I continued to work in the field of electronics from 1957 to the present (2018). In 1975 our family began a musical ministry as "The Meyer Singers" with the entire family ministering to churches around MN, WI, SD, and 14 concerts at Sandstone Federal Correctional Facility.

God has brought us through 60 years of joys and trials in our family. One child was still born after 9 months. Joyce has been through numerous hospital visits and suffers chronic leg and back pain with diabetes, complete loss of hearing in one ear, laser on both eyes, and balance problems. She now struggles with verbally describing things and words to express her-self. This is why I am sharing her testimony. We have weathered divorces and family stress due to relationships going astray but God is good and has used all of these to prepare us for service in His kingdom when it comes whatever that service might be.

My goal on this earth is twofold:

1. To encourage and build up the family of God
2. To bring those who are following Christ "afar off" (as I was) into a "close-in" relationship with Him.

God has given me much. I take seriously the scripture of Luke 12:48b:

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." All that I have has come from the Lord and I give Him the praise, the honor, and return the glory to Him.