

de Stolfe Journal

12.SPECIAL 2023



TWENTY YEARS!

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12.SPECIAL 2023

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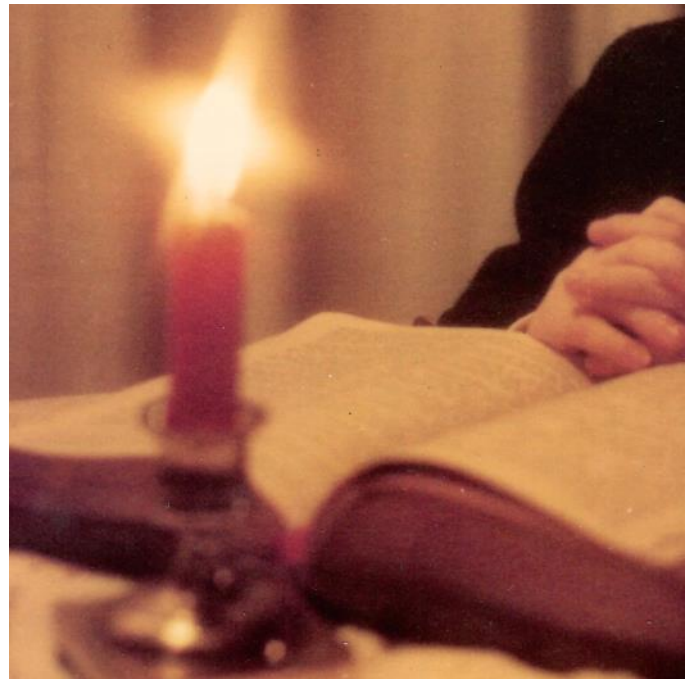
The purpose of this special issue of the de Stolfe Journal is to explain my salvation journey over the past 20 years, and really even during my life. This is not a testimony, but rather an explanation of the many experiences and situations I had in the various places where I lived. God obviously had His hand of protection on me even though I didn't exactly know Him my first 30 years in the way that I know Him now.

This is a long issue with a lot of text and not as many photos. But if you care about reading these journals, read this one, even over several days if you need to.

This is probably the most important and the most personal journal I have put together.

Enjoy!

ON THE COVER



Dad set up this photo (he is a professional photographer) and tried to get some good shots.

From what I understand, although I don't remember it, I apparently put myself in this position and dad quickly snapped the photo!

We live in the 21st century! Wherever there is a web link like below, click it to go to the webpage it references! (Click it now!)

www.destolfe.com



WHERE IT STARTED

I was sitting on the bleachers at one end of the indoor arena among a good sized crowd on a cool Saturday morning in Odessa, Texas. The guy started out with some singing and went on with some musical skits. After that, he talked for a little while. Just a few days before, I was debating about whether or not to go to this rodeo in Odessa, which I figured was mostly to watch the activities but also to help if needed. I thought I would be dead weight to the rodeo coach, whose name was Chris, to come along because I did not compete, basically had no money, and still had to study for my classes. But he assured me that I would not at all be a drag to him. And besides, he'd like to have the company of someone closer to his age. (He was about 10 years older than me, while the students were over 20 years younger than him!) I had been to the rodeos that Texas Tech hosted in Lubbock in the fall of 2001 and 2002, but I had not been to any of the away rodeos, and I wanted to go just to see what they were like at the other locations. The college rodeos were Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, with

two regular rounds of slacks and perms with the short go on Saturday evening. Ultimately, I did go, and we left sometime midday on Thursday as I recall. The coach drove, and I stayed with him in the motel. I spent my time during the days doing homework at the motel or watching the slacks or going wherever the coach needed to go, while I spent the evenings watching the perms. ("Homework" is really the wrong word for master degree level classes, but whatever.) While in Odessa, I heard about a rodeo church service on Saturday morning, and I thought I would go just to see what it was all about. All of the college rodeos have a rodeo church service, but somehow, I never noticed them before. There I was sitting on the bleachers that slightly cool Saturday morning of March 22, 2003 listening to what the preacher, specifically an evangelist, was talking about. His name was Corey Ross. As he was talking, I recognized some of what he was said (from what I remembered from my old church days growing up), but I did not understand everything he said.

Now, to understand my mood at the time, which is important, I was in my last term of regular classes before I needed to start an internship to finish the last requirements for my degree. However, I was having a heck of a time trying to get an internship and was running out of time fast. I knew that I would graduate at the end of the year, to which I would be then thrust into the real world of life no longer having the safety net of school loans. I knew that I could not afford to be jobless after graduating. I knew that my school

life would end by the end of the year, and that real world responsibility would immediately follow. This would be the first time since graduating high school in 1991, twelve years later, that I would no longer be in school. And quite frankly, I was an absolute wreck planning for it with little success. That ultimate responsibility already weighed extremely heavy on me even nine months before graduating because I wanted to be a responsible person instead of being a careless person. So while I physically felt



"Sir, you're only outta patience, I'm outta grass, outta feed, outta water, and outta money!"

I included this comic with one of my reports to my committee. It perfectly represented my utter frustration of trying to get an internship!

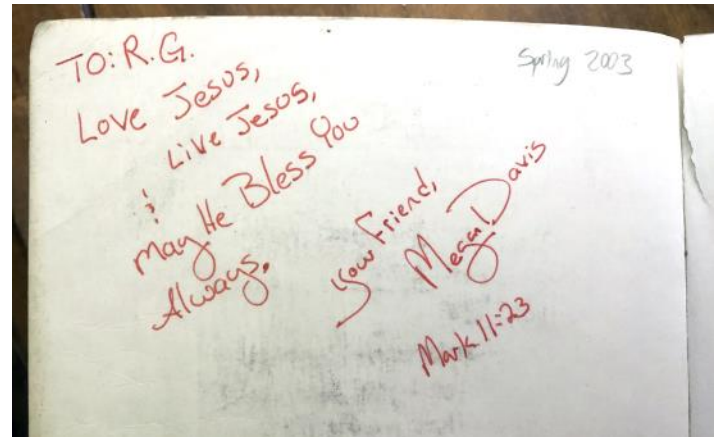
WHERE IT STARTED

okay, my mind was miserable. What should be a happy time with completing classes and graduating college was furthest from my mind. This was my general mindset while listening to Corey give his message. After he was done, he then told everyone to close their eyes and asked if anyone wanted to receive as Savior and Lord this Jesus he was talking about. At that point, I was thinking about the many things he said and with how wonderfully he explained who Jesus was and of how He freely gave us salvation. Well, I certainly needed undefinable help at a time when I had no idea how to deal with the internship and eventual job and life survival needs. I then raised my hand. The coach Chris was sitting next to me for the service. Corey told us to repeat a prayer, which we did, and the service was over. I could say that suddenly a bright cloud of light opened up and immediately gave me enlightenment to solve my problems. But, that did not happen, and I frankly did not feel any different. Before Chris and I left to get lunch, I

got one of the New Testament Bibles they had, and I specifically recall Corey coming over to me and shaking my hand and telling me that if there was anything he could do for me or if he could help me in some way to let him know. I thank him, and Chris and I left for lunch. I never met Corey before and knew nothing about him, but more about that later.

We left Odessa on Sunday to go back to Lubbock, and by then I felt rather good and at peace. Chris and I talked on the way home about the things from that service, among other things. I recall very clearly and specifically asking him, "What is love?" to which he very quickly replied, "God is Love". Well, that made no dang sense to me at all! I had no idea what that meant!

Sometime during the next month, I was at the Dub Parks Memorial Arena, the place where we had practices and where I often hung out when not in a class or at home, along with the coach when one of the girls from the womens rodeo team named Megan Davis came by.



Mark 11:23

For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

While she was there, she gave me a full study Bible, somehow having seen that I only had the plain paperback New Testament Bible. She was a very nice person and friendly to most everyone. I thanked her for that gift. I still use that Bible today despite it now coming apart. However, I did get a newer color version of that same study Bible in 2019. I don't recall that I ever saw her again after she graduated that spring.

By this point in April 2003, I knew that if this salvation thing was real, I should get associated with a church or a Bible study group or something. I had heard from the coach that Lubbock had a cowboy

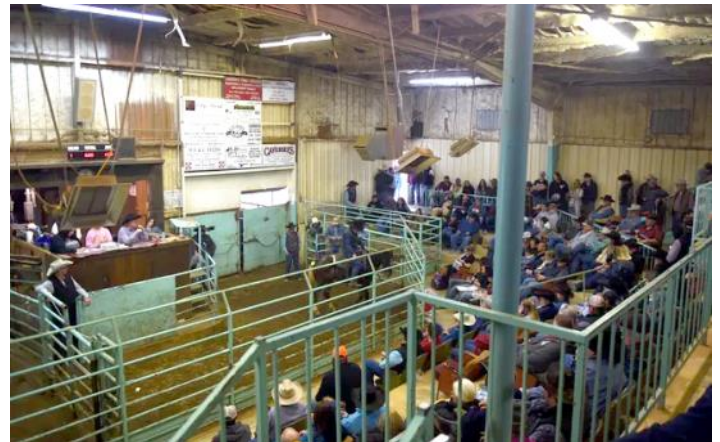
church. I knew nothing about it but asked where it was and when they met. They met on Monday nights at 7:30 PM (as I recall) at the Lubbock Stockyards building located on south University Avenue near FM 1585. This was a little less than four miles straight south from my apartment. It took a couple of weeks, but I finally went on April 21, 2003. This happened to be the Monday after Easter, and so the service was oriented to talking about the Easter story. I recall very clearly that there was a wood cedar post cross, about four feet high, sitting in the front. The preacher was Ted Currington and his wife, Jan. Quite frankly, I felt

WHERE IT STARTED

rather awkward and very uncomfortable. While I had been in regular churches many times before, I had never been in a church located in a cattle auction barn! The place was old and was a regular dusty, dirty mess of a building, but of course its purpose was a sale barn not a church! I think I continued going every Monday night after that, and I eventually went to their Bible study they had Thursday nights at a place next to Rudd's Feed Store located on FM 1585 to the east. This was owned by some people who went to the church, and they

had an empty commercial storefront next to the feed store where they had folding tables and chairs and bathrooms in the back. I have no idea what business used to be there.

The story of going to that church group over the next couple of years is full of stories and activities we did until the church gained a permanent building in 2005. After a few more weeks, school ended, and summer break came. I did manage to find an internship, which ended up being at the same museum where I was already working,



This is not my photo. This is a 2022 photo during a horse auction at the Lubbock Stockyards. The business closed in late 2022 after 54 years.



Overhead view of the Lubbock Stockyards as it looked in 2009. (Vintage Google Maps, 2009.)



This strange 3D rendering from Google Earth shows the Rudd's building with a gas station, feed store, and an empty space where we had Bible studies. The building was recently torn down for road expansion.



This is the Lubbock Stockyards as it looked in 2011.



This is the Lubbock Stockyards as it looked in 2022.

WHERE IT STARTED

not the most ideal option but my committee agreed to it. The museum arranged for me to do a special project of creating an exhibition by doing the research, planning, and partial construction of the exhibition, along with including an educational component. Through the summer, we continued having church and Bible studies, sometimes at Rudd's and sometimes at a church member's house near Post, Texas. After a while, it was my regular pattern. Eventually, I would show up early to the sale barn to help clean off the dust, remove the spit cans, and set up the AV equipment and instruments. I would also stay after to do the reverse, to tear down the equipment and load it into a trailer. In the middle of the summers, the flies were so bad that after we use fly spray, we literally scooped up dust trays full of dead flies! In the winter, we would try to heat the place as best as we could prior to church starting, and often times, we were still shivering cold unless we were sitting right under the gas heat lamps! Very often after church

most Monday nights, a bunch of us would run over to the Rosa's Café over on 82nd Street and Slide Road for a late dinner, often staying until the restaurant closed around 11:00 PM. For me, this was definitely a time of foundational growth, not only in learning about the Word of God, but also in learning about what a church family is supposed to be like!

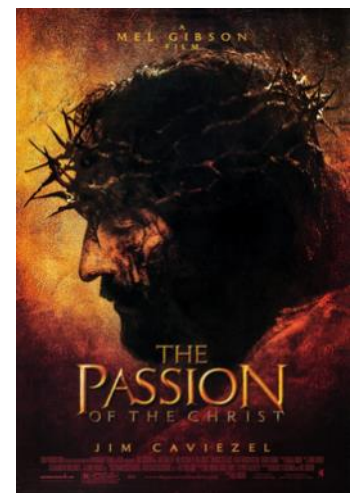
By the middle of summer 2003, my apartment lease was up for renewal, and I was looking for another possible place to live as an upgrade. In learning about the Word of God and about how God is the Blessor to those who faithfully follow Him, I took a more open attitude about things. The only problem was that I was also still spiritually immature having only been saved for a few months! But I decided to look around and see about either buying a house or changing to a more upgraded apartment. I looked around for a few weeks, but I ultimately had to become more realistic in my expectations. I ended up moving from the



*After church Monday nights, we often went to this Rosa's Café on 82nd Street.
(Google Street View)*

apartment to a trailer house near Slaton, Texas where another guy from church was living. Oddly enough, it was the same trailer I had looked at many weeks earlier but decided not to move into! Unfortunately, the guy I roommated with had some of his own financial issues and ultimately moved out by the end of 2003. I stayed there by myself the rest of the time. I graduated from Texas Tech University that December and my dad and mom drove from Florida to come to my graduation. We had a graduation party in the trailer along with a bunch of people from church and plenty of food! This was a couple of weeks before Christmas.

In early 2004, late February or early March, the church body went to watch the film, *The Passion of the Christ*. This film came out the next year after the film *Bruce Almighty* and the film *The Gospel of John*. However, of these three films that came out within a 12 month period, *The Passion of the Christ* was the most impactful for Christians!



The Passion of the Christ

WHERE IT STARTED

While I knew that the movie would be cinemagraphic enough to bring people to tears even bawling, I specifically decided that I did NOT want to cry, explicitly because I knew how the story ended! And there is nothing to cry about how the story of the crucifixion of Jesus resulted! (Think Easter morning!)

During the summer of 2004, I went to a weekend event in Amherst, Texas called Encounter The Cross. This was a type of retreat to learn more about what the Cross is and what that event did for the life of a Christian. We slept and ate at the center along with having sessions of teaching. I remember

that event being enjoyable and learning much about Christianity that is rarely taught in a Sunday sermon! There was a guy there who started the weekend getaways name Royce. Being a pastor, he held Bible studies at his home I think it was Tuesday nights. There were a couple of others from my church who also went. I recall going there for at least two years. Also around this period, I recall a time when another couple from our church had started their own church in a town called Littlefield, between Lubbock and Amherst. They planned an evening at their church specifically for me to pray for me and to help me with my sadness and almost depression I was

facing at the time.

Through 2004, the church group transitioned a couple of times with where Bible studies were held, who played and sang the music, along with where the church would go. The church body acquired land for a new building completely across the opposite end of town catty corner, and construction of the new building started in early 2005. For me, I was in a severe place of financial hardship that just was not getting any better. My job at the museum where I did my internship ended suddenly at the end of the summer 2004, and I chose to voluntarily move out of the trailer near Slaton out of moral obligation because I

could no longer afford to pay the rent. For about five months, I was basically homeless, having my stuff in storage. By invitation, I stayed with some younger members of the church, but I look back at that time as being strange and not necessarily hopeful. Before Christmas, I did start a part time job at a western wear store. By late January 2005, I somehow managed to rent a duplex that I really could not afford with only a part time job. I recall one time in the early evening going to the construction site of the new church building while it was still just a steel frame to think and to pray almost to the point of sobbing because things were just so rough and were not



The new church land was in NW Lubbock, outlined in yellow. It was an old cotton field. Here, you can see the steel trusses in place.

(Vintage Google Maps, 2007.)



Construction of the new church building started in January and completed in time for the Fourth of July in 2005. A little later, a pipe entrance framed the front of the property.

WHERE IT STARTED



This is the finished interior of the original church building from 2005 to 2008. The auditorium could hold about 250 people.

changing for the better. I was not in a very happy place. But yet, I had no real reason to complain knowing that I could be much worse off and almost was.

The church building was basically done in time to celebrate the Fourth of July in 2005. We had about 60 members that went from the sale barn to the new building. The building had a main sanctuary/auditorium, foyer, offices, bathrooms, storage, several children's church rooms, and a fellowship hall with a kitchen. This was on a plot of land of about 40 acres on Erskine Avenue near FM 179. Later, they built a large roping arena behind the main

building. That summer, I ended up changing jobs unexpectedly. The new job working at a boot repair shop, which was meant to be a second job, was not liked by the first job at the western wear store and gave me an ultimatum of which job I was to keep. I ended up deciding on the new job, which made the owner of the western wear store extremely furious, even to the point of being hostile with me, for no explainable reason even to this day. Later in the summer, I also changed residences from a large duplex to a small quadplex further down the block of the street. But by that point, it was really too little, too late and I ended up moving

out in early September. However, this partly worked out okay because the owner of the boot repair shop wanted me to go to Branson, Missouri for a few weeks to help with sales at their booth in Silver Dollar City during the fall festival. The owner helped me move my stuff on a flatbed trailer to his house where he stored it in a large old chicken coop he had while I was in Branson. Those several weeks in Branson were peaceful, basically living there in a fifth wheel trailer at an RV park. I had a few minor issues with the guy I worked with and lived with there, but he was tolerable. We packed up and came back to Lubbock in

early October. For a couple more weeks, I lived in the same fifth wheel at the owner's house. We left again with a modified booth in a large covered trailer late October to Las Vegas for the PBR convention. We were there for just under two weeks. After getting back from Las Vegas, I personally did not travel anywhere else for them, but I did keep working at the boot shop. Some friends from church, one of which was the same one from late 2004 but was now married, let me stay with them in a spare bedroom. I put my stuff in storage, except for what few things I needed.

This time from late 2005 through spring



At one point during my time in Branson, I walked this peaceful path through the forest of the White River Balds Natural Area.

WHERE IT STARTED

2006 was a holding pattern. It was basically stable, but it was still quite lean. All the while, I became the visuals guy in 2005 for the church using my own laptop and connecting it to a projector in the sound booth at the back of the auditorium. I used PowerPoint and weekly created the slides for the music and for the announcements that played before church. This was the one thing I spent hours on every week putting together and regularly improving. And it was about the only thing I thought I was actually appreciated for doing despite the crap of most other things! The church eventually moved services from Monday nights to Sunday mornings and restarted Bible studies on Wednesday nights, eventually turning them into Wednesday night services. By May of 2006, I started a full time job at the National Ranching Heritage Center. I was already associated with them as a volunteer of about five years. Even from when I started volunteering in 2001, I had a suspicion that I would one day work at that museum, not just being a

volunteer. By that summer, I moved into an apartment that worked rather well for me, even though it was a little small, for several years.

One thing we were learning about in the late 2000s really transformed our understanding of the Bible. That thing was learning about Christian's Jewish roots. When the church started teaching about these things, there was, of course, some push back from people who thought the topic was irrelevant and even dangerous to compare Christians with Jews! While I did not have that specific viewpoint, I will admit that it seemed really weird for a while until we got a better understanding of just how integrated the Jewish ways are in Christianity! Around this time, I remember going to a store in the mall that sold Christian and Jewish goods, about an even mix of them. I recall that it felt so strange to see such a mix of Christian and Jewish things as if they just "naturally" went together! We would later discover that they indeed did naturally go



Above: This shows the progress of the additions to the church building that expand on all four sides. Below: The finished additions with the new entrance. The things sticking up above the roof are light poles in the rodeo arena behind the building.



Our church, along with some other churches in Lubbock, sponsored A Night To Honor Israel, which is a program established by John Hagee. We were sponsors for several years. I went to this one in October 2010.

WHERE IT STARTED

together, as Christianity is an extension and completion of Judaism.

The late 2000s proved to be rather stable with where I was living, with my job at the museum, and with church life. It was a reasonably good time of growth and stability which I greatly needed after the various upheavals from the summer of 2004 through the summer of 2006. Of course, it was not all smooth sailing in that I still had some financial shortages and some other minor conflicts to deal with. But overall, I was mostly content. My 1992 GMC truck I got in 1999 when I was in Flagstaff, Arizona was showing its age and having various chronic issues. Ultimately, I had to let it go, and I was vehicleless for about six months. I would take the city bus to work, even when there was major snow that winter. By no means did I like it, but I did have a job and still needed to get to work. People from church would pick me up to go to church Sunday mornings. I would eventually get in 2007 a smaller 1997 GMC truck from a dealership in Lubbock,

and it was an okay truck that got me around. But I kept feeling like I was only having sub standard blessings from God. After a couple of years in 2009, I traded the truck for a 2008 GMC. I felt like this truck was more in line as a blessing from God! Indeed, even the standard features of it was an upgrade as compared to the features of the 1992 and 1997 trucks! I was very pleased and content to have a vehicle that I no longer had to stress over if something broke or needed to be fixed!

In 2008, the church expanded its building, basically doubling its overall size in all four directions, and expanded the parking lot, along with a few other upgrades. The first time we saw the expanded sanctuary, we thought it was so large that it would take an hour to walk from one end to the other! Ha ha... But seriously, the new sanctuary, along with the rest of the expanded building, was impressive to us compared to what we had before. And we were grateful for what we had before! The church was preparing

for future growth. (Prior to covid, the sanctuary was quite full, perhaps 300 people out of a capacity of maybe 400.)

The start of the new decade in 2010 quickly turned to my disappointment when the job I was doing at the museum in an

interim status was transferred to another person, even though I applied for the same exact job I was already doing! The director was nice enough though to give me a severance to last for three months to help until I could find another job. I took that opportunity to go to the



1992 GMC Sierra extended cab, gray



1997 GMC Sierra regular cab, green (never liked color!)



2008 GMC Sierra regular cab, white

WHERE IT STARTED

Texas Association of Museums annual meeting that March to network and for a sort of mini vacation as the convention was in Waco. While I did not get a job out of it, I did get a call not long after from a former employer, the one who owned the boot shop, needing someone to help with his newest venture. I did graphic design work for a print marketing company. There was stress with short deadlines and high productivity, but I did meet someone there, a coowner, who would help with employment later in the decade. In December 2010, I had moved from my apartment and upgraded to a duplex about a mile away, actually the next street over from the previous duplex I had in 2005. I still had my nice newish truck... for now. However, after only a year, the business was sold to another much larger marketing company, and I found myself once again unemployed. It was June 2011, and in the aftermath, I created my own graphic design company, a sole proprietorship called Top Hand Graphics. However, that did not



After I got my severance check, I went straight to the bank to cash it! I think this was the most money I ever had in my hand at one time.

just suddenly create a flood of income, of course. By the end of 2011, I was struggling with what to do, especially with the lease up for renewal, as well as regular bills. I ended up cashing in my retirement I gained from working at the museum (Texas Tech) just to pay rent.

Mom had suggested to move back “home”, either to go back to Florida to live with her or to go to Colorado to live with dad. I did not particularly like either idea, especially with the extensive nature of having to pack and move such long distances, but dad was closer and easier to get

to as compared to going back to Florida.

However, I nixed the idea a short time later as a stupid idea that would not result in any benefit. I barely held on for another six months until I had to take some sort of action. I was really hoping God would do something and give direction to help my hopeless situation. I ended up moving out of the duplex putting most everything into storage for the short term and the rest in the truck until I could figure out how physically move up to Colorado with no money. I did spend a weekend in central and east Texas with some friends I first met from church in 2005 and who

had moved in 2006 to Cisco, Texas. It was a short weekend that was sort of like a farewell to Texas before moving to Colorado. Once I got back to Lubbock, I was literally homeless until I could figure out how to move my stuff. I ended up being in Lubbock for two weeks. I would park somewhere and sleep in the truck. I did try to sell some things on Craig’s List. For a few days, I would park for the night at the equestrian center and use the shower they had in the barn to get clean every day, until the manager there kicked me out. The guy I mentioned earlier who I worked for at the marketing company must have felt sorry for me. He ultimately paid for me to rent a U-Haul trailer that my truck could pull to go up to Colorado. He also helped me load up my stuff from the storage unit. In early June, I left Lubbock and Texas to face a quite uncertain future in Colorado living at dad’s house. I got as far as a rest stop near Des Moines, New Mexico before sleeping a few hours in the truck. I continued the next morning having breakfast at Denny’s in

WHERE IT STARTED



Early morning Monday, June 4, 2012 near Des Moines, New Mexico. I left Lubbock late afternoon on Sunday and could not drive any further! This is a rather nice rest stop along Highway 87.

Raton and getting to dad's house by early afternoon. The best that I can explain about this move was that it was a trust in God to see what happens. I literally had no other plans for the short term nor for the long term!

There was some aspect of stability that summer. I worked with a neighbor working for a construction guy who did odd job repairs and remodeling. I did go back to Lubbock in July to teach for the Summer Youth Classes at the ranch museum where I worked. It was also at that time when I turned 40. After I got back, the work suddenly ended in August. I did not particularly work again in any meaningful way for a while after that. I

did sell things on eBay to try to make a little money. For the most part, dad paid the bills as he usually did for himself, but me living there did increase some of the bills. The rest of 2012 was okay and I did not do much. It was also during the summer of 2012 when I restarted my de Stolfe Journal, but with the Candid variety. Dad turned 70 that December. Going into 2013, I really did not have any plans for anything and really did not know what to do. By July of 2014, specifically the day after Independence Day, I was forced to voluntarily give my good truck back to the bank, thus losing my independence but also removing a debt I could not repay. I did end up

getting a few hundred dollars back after all of the debts were settled. I did still go back to Lubbock for a week to teach classes again, but not having the truck meant that I had to figure some other way to get there. I ended up selling a pair of ostrich boots I had to pay for the greyhound fare. I was at a point in my spiritual walk where I was certain that God really did not care about me nor my problems, that He only cared about being glorified at my expense. Needless to say, the rest of 2013 and part of 2014 were just crappy. I had zero happiness, zero joy, and zero hope.

In April 2014, I was looking through a job board just to see what was there and came across an interesting job post about needing a person to work for a museum that was once a Jewish synagogue and was restored. It was in a place called Leadville in Colorado. I recalled that dad and I went to Leadville in 2006 as part of a Colorado vacation. I did not expect much, but I went ahead and applied for the job. Then the director wanted to interview me. So dad and I drove to Leadville to look at the place and talk with the director. Less than a week later, he offered me the job!



Temple Israel Museum in Leadville, Colorado. 2014.

WHERE IT STARTED

I sort of “moved” there in late May and would work there until the end of September with the possibility of continuing through October, which I did. It was a wonderful experience that got me away from dad while living in an alpine tundra climate at ten thousand feet! That July, I continued the trek back to Lubbock to teach the classes, but this time having a rental car. When the job was over I went back to dad’s house not expecting to ever have that opportunity again. By the end of the year in 2014, dad finally got irate enough about me not having a job and gave me an ultimatum to get a job. I took that as a direct threat, but instead of arguing with him, after New Year’s for a week, I walked around to every place I could to inquire about work. Despite checking with dozens of places, I could not find a job. That whole week, I completely ignored dad and did not say a word to him for the entire week. I think he eventually got he message that I was extremely angry at him. By the end of the week, I broke the silence, but job hunting was

fruitless. By the spring, it became obvious that I would be going back to Leadville to work for another summer. This time, I went in early May and stayed a few days into November. Also, even before I started, I was determined to get enough money gathered together to move back to Lubbock. Quire frankly, I was done with Colorado. (Don’t misunderstand me, Colorado is a beautiful place to visit, but sometimes bad circumstances pollute nice places.) That July, I once again went to Lubbock to teach classes, also renting a car. After the job ended, I went back to dad’s house. After a day, we both drove down to Lubbock to scout out a place to live. We stayed at a motel and looked around for an apartment, settling with the apartment complex I first lived in when I moved to Lubbock in 2001. Now during that summer, I kept in contact with the coowner of the marketing company I worked for in 2010-2011. He had just started a new job and was trying to convince the owner to hire me or



I loaded up this U-Haul from dad’s house and drove back to Lubbock on November 13, 2015.

to at least try me out on a trial basis doing graphic work. So with the job and the housing secured, we went back to Colorado Springs, and I rented a U-Haul truck, loaded up, and left about a week later. For once in several years, I was hopeful enough to think that things were getting better. In certain aspects, they were. But in other aspects, they weren’t. I put my stuff in storage. It turned out that there was a technicality with my

housing option, and I ended up having to find somewhere else to live. I stayed with this guy and his family for about two weeks until I could find another apartment. I ended up going with the apartment complex I had before in the late 2000s. I still did not have transportation, so he also would pick me up every work day and take me home for several months. One day at work, I got a call out of the blue from the dealership where I got the two previous trucks



2006 Chevy Impala, white

WHERE IT STARTED

saying that he wanted to meet with me to see about getting me a vehicle. Apparently, the guy had just started there and was going through some paperwork. After work, I went there and looked at some options after getting some information from me. Within a day or two, I had signed for a 2006 Chevy Impala. They even delivered the car to me at work, and I drove myself home much to the relief of the guy who had been driving me to work for those months. When I went back to the dealership a few weeks later to get my plates, the guy who sold me the car no longer worked there. I even texted him, but never got a reply. The car was fine. It had a few problems and did not have air conditioning, but it worked fine for me.

In the spring of 2016, dad finally convinced mom to come “out west” to go with him to his convention in Las Vegas. I decided to come along to surprise mom when we would pick her up from the airport in Las Vegas. I drove up to Santa Fe while dad drove down from Colorado Springs.

I left my car in Santa Fe, and dad and I drove to Las Vegas. This was the first time since my graduation in 2003 that all three of us were together (but it would also be the last time that all three of us would be together). We all stayed in the same hotel room at Circus Circus. The convention itself was at Caesar’s Palace. The family dynamic was strained, and that is all I’ll say about the topic. Also, dad was having a few issues while we were there. Afterwards, mom went home, and we went back to Santa Fe where I went home and dad went home. I would find out a couple of days later that dad went to the VA hospital in Denver and ended up having 4x bypass surgery. Now it ended up through all of this that dad was able to get 100% disability through the VA giving him some “options” for the rest of his life.

I continued working as a graphic artist doing various projects for the AV company where my previous employer had gotten new employment. As the months went by, however, it was increasingly clear that

the owner of this company really did not want me even though he felt obligated to officially hire me in January of 2016 when he hired another graphic artist. While the owner was always calm, I did not particularly get along with him. By the end of September 2016 in a strange turn of events, they quietly let me go. At that moment, I was internally screaming hallelujah because I had not wanted to continue working there, but I also knew that I could not afford to cut off any stream of income. Basically, I kept quiet for many months, but I was getting increasingly angry. I was once again unemployed for the rest of the year and well into 2017. I went with dad again to Las Vegas in the spring of 2017. Dad was certainly doing much better than he was the previous year. I talked with the director of the Temple Israel museum, and he let me work there for a third summer season. I got there in early May and continued through October. I did go back to Lubbock for a week in July to check on my apartment, mail, and other things. I was in



I took this photo of me about a week before my job ended at the AV company.

relative peace for the summer thankful to finally be making a steady income to take care of current and a few outstanding debts. The rest of 2017 into 2018, I was once again unemployed, but I did continue doing remote work for the museum. This remote work started in the summer of 2016 and continued since then giving me a small steady stream of income. Also, Dad and mom helped where they could.

In February 2018, I came across a sign a couple of blocks away from my apartment by a building being constructed. It was for a Duluth Trading Company store. I had

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The sign I saw for hiring to work at Duluth Trading Company.



Opening day of the first Texas store of Duluth Trading Company on May 10, 2018.

never heard of them, and just for the heck of it, I inquired, applied, and went in for an interview. The interview was informal and casual, and they hired me on the spot after some conversation! With all of the previous failures of employment, I thought this was finally an opportunity for a different direction doing something different from most

previous jobs I've had. A month later, we and a large group of others they hired started six weeks of daily paid training. It turned out that we were the first store in Texas as part of an aggressive expansion program. The training was awesome, and we really had a great time. I was having hope for a new direction of work. The store finally opened on May 10, 2018 with a

public ribbon cutting ceremony. Now, even by that point, I was seeing signs that something seemed a little off, but I could not quite figure out what it was. I was hired to work part time, and I figured that I would be working 20-30 hours a week. I was scheduled to work three days a week, then it went down to two days a week later in the summer, and eventually down to one day a week. At one point, they scheduled me to work the close shift on my birthday, but they did not know it was my birthday. Obviously, the income was not enough even though I was glad to have a job. I looked around for a second job to make up for the void of the work I thought I'd be doing at Duluth. I came across this interesting job for a curator at the Scurry County Museum in Snyder, which is about 1.5 hours away from Lubbock to the southeast. Interestingly, I had applied for this same curator job four other times over a decade as the position came available those several times. I applied, went down for an interview, and found out a few days later that

they wanted to hire me! Now, the museum had just gotten a new director a couple of months prior, and I think that is what made the difference.

In October, I worked both jobs for a couple of weeks, Duluth in Lubbock and the museum in Snyder on other days driving from Lubbock to Snyder and back home. It was a lot of driving and a lot of hours driving! I finally got fully moved into an apartment before Veteran's day. The museum job was pretty much a hit the ground running start. I felt like I was finally in my element doing the very work I spent all of those years in museum classes learning how to do. Through the rest of 2018 and into 2019, I managed the museum's collection, created exhibitions, and did various improvements throughout the museum, as the director was quite hands off to let me do most anything I wanted. In March of 2019, I went again to the Texas Association of Museums convention that was in El Paso with the museum paying for everything! This was the first time I was able

WHERE IT STARTED



The U-Haul I used to move from Lubbock to Snyder in November 2018.

to go since 2010 despite previous failed attempts to go other years. In May, I made a casual inquiry about some vehicles. The car I had, the Impala, was having some issues including the heat that went out, and I was wondering if I had any options. After a couple of days, I drove down to San Angelo with the 2006 Impala and drove back to Snyder with a 2011 Buick La Crosse! The car had some better

features and had heat and air conditioning that worked!

Later in the year, I would find out about a little secret that sprung up on me the next week after the Fourth of July. In short, the museum's finances imploded, and the director and the board let go of half of the staff and closed some external parts of the museum. It was an absolute devastating blow that felt more like



2011 Buick La Crosse, white

a sucker punch to the back (or a rug yanked out from under me) because it was literally sprung up on us at the last minute without warning. There were a few other things going on that I found greatly disturbing, but I will not discuss them here. They did give me extended pay for a couple of weeks, but I once again found myself unemployed from zero fault of mine. The director specifically stated that my performance had nothing to do with the decision.

I was not in a position to move anywhere, so I checked around to see what I could find for work in the small town of Snyder. It turned out that I was able to get a very insignificant job at the library of Western Texas College. The museum was in a building on the campus, so I was already very familiar with the campus. I was simply a warm body with a key to keep the library open in the evenings and lock up at closing. I worked several days a week, and it was simple pay but it did have a retirement plan. Of the many jobs I have ever

had, this was the most boring, even the most insulting, but I was glad at least to still have some income, even though it really was not enough. I also continued doing the remote work for the museum in Leadville. Going into 2020, I became hopeful of some positive change and for some sort of opportunity as the year went on. I was trusting God to bring that change. Also to note, for the time I had been in Snyder, many Sundays I drove from Snyder to Lubbock for the day to go to church and do various errands before driving back to Snyder in the evenings. I probably drove that road literally a hundred times while I lived in Snyder. There was one time I was driving back to Snyder when I could see a very nasty storm range in the direction I was going. I thought maybe the road would go around it, but no, I was headed straight into it! The area was dark as can be, and the frog strangling rain pelted down on everything along with heavy hail. The rain was so angry and dense that I could not see the road and had no idea what lane I was in or if I was even on

WHERE IT STARTED

the road! This continued for miles past Post and into Scurry County. I wasn't scared, but I was greatly cautious driving a max of 30 mph! The rain was loud with the banging of hail and lightning flashing everywhere. I don't think it was tornadic, but it must have been on the edge of it being so. Once I got closer to Snyder, it all eased up. After getting back to the house, I saw where the storm came through the area with large hail still on the ground. I certainly thanked God for getting me home safely, without fear or harm. Also, the car and the apartment were fine.

2020 started out okay as I was expecting and worked at the library and making my weekly

treks to Lubbock most weeks. By the start of March, things were getting really weird. People kept talking about regularly washing hands and to excessively clean everything. I got emails every day from restaurants about enhanced cleaning practices, etc. My first thought is why weren't they doing this regularly anyway?! Then, we were hearing about some sort of serious virus that was causing people to panic. The grocery stores were being cleaned out of products, especially toilet paper for some reason, as people were reacting to what they heard. Just to be safe and prepared, I stocked up on a few of my favorite staple goods,

but I did not go crazy about it. Then right around spring break in mid March, I vaguely heard about a country wide shelter in place order. I really did not understand what was going on, but it felt like the world had gone completely mad! I talked with mom about it, and she was very scared and absolutely did not like what was happening and the way people were freaked out. I was stable in it, but I did not like it either. It turned out that the college was considered an "essential business" and so I was able to keep working in the library. This was especially important because my immediate boss went out of town for spring break and could not return to work for a few weeks as she self isolated out of caution. The students most all disappeared or did not come back after spring break, so the library was mostly quiet. Needless to say, this was a very dark time in the history of the United States and indeed the world. I kept up with my prayers to keep people safe and especially for people to keep calm.

By early April, I got news that I would have never guessed I would get. The news was that mom had died. For a short while, I had little more news than that. Now this was at a time where many people were suddenly dying, some from the virus, and some from other causes. What I do know is that mom was terribly upset by what was going on in the world! We were going to leave the next day, but until we got more information, we held off. I went over to Whataburger to get some food and sat in a park at a picnic table eating it and thinking a lot. I stayed in Snyder for about three weeks before going up to Colorado Springs. From there dad and I would make the trek to Florida. We took three days to get there and spent about four days in Jacksonville. We realized very quickly that there was a lot of work we had to do with the estate. We got the house in the evening around dark. Then we went to the house the next morning. For reasons I will not go into, we stayed at a hotel rather than staying in the house. One particular thing that was



No toilet paper to be found!

WHERE IT STARTED



Mom's house when we were there early May 2020.

strange, even haunting, was how the house looked basically how it always looked, beside little differences, that everything was just how mom had it arranged, but mom was not there.

Ultimately, we left the house alone, and travelled back tot Colorado Springs, again taking several days. I stayed in Colorado Springs for about tow or three weeks before dad and I left again to go back to Florida taking a similar route as before. This time, we went to go pack up the house to prep it to sell. We spent over two weeks going room by room and doing various other things. By this point, the stay at home order was easing, but various restrictions and requirements were happening all over the

country. This was also at a time where some riots and violent protests were happening in various places across the country and many cities issued curfews, including Jacksonville where we were. Other than these things, we went about our business. I went to the river, we ate at restaurants, we went to stores as we needed things. What stuff from the house we kept, we put into storage to claim at some unknown point later. We left Florida again and went back to Colorado Springs. After a couple of days, I drove back to Snyder.

What happened after this, both with me personally and with what was going on with the country generally, was a low much like five years earlier when I

was living in Colorado Springs. Generally, the country was in a state of friction and polarization, and the election process of 2020 was like a match to a powder keg that fractured and polarized people's opinions and actions. No matter a person's political leanings, the election process was rather strange and resulted in strong opinions about the process. As for me personally, I was flat out angry with God, and I was not ashamed about it! After the inauguration, I pretty much gave up hope that God even cared about the country, but also about caring for me personally. But I also knew that staying angry at God for any length of time would not result well for me, and it would have no effect on Him. I decided that I would put God on probation if I was ever going to be able to trust Him again. The personal lows had much to do with prolonged extremely lean finances since I was yet once again unemployed, but it was also because the settling of mom's estate dragged on and on when it should have never needed to happen in the

first place. Mom took care of her estate planning about ten years earlier as a direct result of another family member who died several years before that. It took a full year for that estate to be resolved, and mom absolutely did not want that to happen in her case. She took care to do the proper paperwork and have it all squared away. However, some sort of change in Florida laws indeed caused the process to happen and to take nearly a year out of spite. As for me, dad helped with some of the bills while I still had the small monthly income from the remote museum work.

In mid February 2021, Texas and many parts of the south plunged into a deep freeze that lasted for about ten days straight! However, despite the freeze, we did get the news that the estate was finally settled, and we were able to list the house for sale. The housing market in early 2021 was going absolutely crazy! We were able to list the house, get offers, and sell it in a matter of days. We also got much more for it than what mom thought the house

WHERE IT STARTED



The polar vortex that hit as far as the Gulf of Mexico plunged Texas into an extended deep freeze for 10 days causing power outages all over the state. Fortunately, I did not have that problem in my area.

was worth, based on her annual property tax reports. The closing took several weeks, but by mid March, the process was done.

We had one last trip to make to Florida, and this time, dad came down to Texas. This trip was much easier and was more focused as a vacation besides finishing up a few last things with the house. We stayed about a week and loaded a U-Haul trailer with the stuff we put into storage a year before, some plants, and some other misc stuff. We got back to my apartment in Snyder by late March. By this point, I was much more agreeable with God for having finally finished

the estate issues. I was also finally at a point where finances were no longer an issue for a while. This one thing alone removed more of the problems than I could count just by having some money. I got all of the bills paid up, paid off the car, and had a preplanned budget where I gave money away to specific people, charities, and some very old debts that I said that if I ever had the money I would pay off those old debts, no matter if they were “written off” by those I owed. Needless to say, most of them were shocked that ANYONE had enough integrity to do that despite so many years that passed! For once in my life, I felt like I had

done something right despite the many unintentional mistakes I had made in the past. That is where I really thought that honoring God with my money was the first and most important thing to do, even if I had no real benefit for doing it.

Dad stayed the night at the apartment, and the next day, we took the trailer to Lubbock to put the stuff in storage, knowing that I was moving back to Lubbock after the failure that was living in Snyder. Dad stayed the night in Lubbock at a hotel, while I went back home in Snyder. Now, the next day was utterly unexpected and rather put me into a tizzy. Dad could not sleep that

night and ended up leaving to drive back to Colorado Springs stupidly early in the morning. He was about an hour away from home and just south of Pueblo when he got into a solo accident on the interstate. Dad had called me to say that he needed me to come pick him up to take him home. Well, the issue was a whole lot more than that! He was taken to a hospital in south Pueblo. A nurse also called me to let me know what was going on and that she would arrange for me to stay in the hospital room for that night once I got there. I left when I could barely unpacked from the trip to Florida. I finally got the hospital somewhere around 3:00



While dad’s car might not look bad, the underside was all torn up and too expensive for the insurance to fix.

WHERE IT STARTED

in the morning and being extremely tired. I slept in a chair in the hospital room. For several days, I stayed in Pueblo in a motel until dad was released to go home, which was on Easter Sunday. This was also about one year later from when mom died. Dad's car, the one we drove three trip to Florida in, was deemed a total loss. I stayed in Colorado Springs for about a month until dad was at a point to live by himself again. Near the end of the time there, I went to Leadville for a few days to do some work since I was nearby. I left to go home in early May. Once I got back to Lubbock, I was amazed at how the Knock Out roses all over town were in fantastic bloom! The freeze must have done something to cause them to have the most flourished blooming year I have ever seen!

Once I was back in Snyder, the travel all finished, and dad's accident settled, I could then refocus on what to do next. The main focus was to find a place to live in Lubbock so I could move back. The story about that is just as twisted as getting

mom's estate settled. My original plan was to use a large part of the house sale to build a semi custom house through a particular large builder here in Lubbock. They design and build decent quality houses through template plans and cost savings systems that make the building affordable without sacrificing quality. I had first inquired about the option in August 2020 and settled on a plan I wanted. However, by May 2021, the base price of that plan increased by 40 thousand dollars in only nine months. They told me that it was because of materials costs. This plan was already at the lowest end of the options. Once I determined that building a house and paying for it in full was no longer an option—and understand that if I could not pay for it in full up front, I was not going to do it at all—I needed to see what other options in Lubbock I could find. This option was likely going to be renting again. However, in searching for a place to rent, I was shocked at just how much more expensive that rentals were, apartments and

houses. Several times a week, I would drive to Lubbock and look around at what was available, as well as searching online. Most of the places were okay, but were typically small even for two bedrooms. Considering that I gained the stuff from mom's house along with the stuff I already had, I needed to find something appropriately sized.

One day in early June, I was looking around at some apartments and remembered a duplex I saw online. I had dismissed it before since it was not in my price range. There was something interesting about it in that it was fully remodeled. Just for fun, I inquired about it and went to look at it. It

was nice and certainly clean. After I left and went to look at another apartment, I called the owner to see if perhaps I could get it at a slightly lower rate. After talking to him and finding out that there were several applications, I knew that idea was stupid. But I did know that I had another good idea that he might like. I offered to pay the list price, but to pay for the entire year up front. Apparently, that did it, and he chose me to live there. I knew that it was more than I wanted to pay, but totaling up other factors from living somewhere else would only be slightly less than what this place cost. In mid June, I hired a moving service and got the stuff moved to the new duplex along with the



This was the duplex I found that was fully remodeled.

WHERE IT STARTED

stuff moved from the storage unit. After a few more days of cleaning the old apartment, I was officially all moved back to Lubbock. Now, I had certainly considered moving to other places in Texas and seeing what housing options there I could buy. But very few things made any sense to consider them along with the prices not being much cheaper.

Undoubtedly, I thanked God many times over for finding a good place to live even though I do not actually own it. With the place being remodeled, it felt much like moving into a new house, but still with some older features, particularly with the cabinets. Also, being back in Lubbock gives me so many more options than living in the small town where I was. Snyder was a neat

place to live with its own charm and lifestyle, but after the museum job ended, there was no real reason for me to say there. After about six months, I went ahead and paid for another year of rent while I was able to do it. Since moving in, I have finally had some stability and peace for a while instead of the constant distress of how to pay bills and the continual threat of being

evicted. Now almost two years later, I've been standing by faith on God's promises with how He will provide for me to stay in this house and for some employment options. Will you stand in agreement with me?



TEXAS TECH RODEO

I can not understate just how important being involved with the Texas Tech Rodeo Association was to my salvation! It was directly because of my involvement with the team, and later to travel to some of the away rodeos, that I found salvation! That also directly led to me finding a church I had been with for most of the last 20 years.



These were photos taken in September 2007 while getting official Texas Tech Rodeo portraits. Here I am with the rodeo coach Chris.



This was a portrait taken by Olan Mills when they came to our church to make a church directory. This was the only time we did a directory as their photos were not exactly very good! (Although this photo of me turned out rather well.)



CHRISTENING

Sometime when I was between age one and two (I guess), I had a christening at the church where we went. I think it was the United Methodist Church of

Coral Gables. Most of dad's family, except for his parents, were present, as seen in these photos. Unfortunately, I do not know the name of the reverend.



In this photo, I am with mom and dad in the middle while my godmother and godfather are on the outside.



During the christening.



My family members, on my dad's side, in attendance.



The minister and me.



Dad, mom, me, and the pastor.



Mom, me, and dad.

CORAL GABLES MYF

I was born in Miami, Florida and lived there in the same place for the first 16 years of my life. My parents in the 1970s worked in Coral Gables located several miles away. Even with my earliest recollection, we went to the Coral Gables United Methodist Church located next to downtown Coral Gables. (The church is right behind the Coral Gables City Hall that sits at one end of a road called Miracle Mile, also generally referred to as Coral Way.) The church was part of the more broad United Methodist organization. Mom was raised Methodist, and I am not sure if dad went to any churches before getting married. I can recall that while we did not usually attend church on Sunday mornings all that often, we did participate in the church dinners and other special seasonal events. I do vaguely recall various events that had crafts or dinners with programs. Through the 80s, I always looked forward to the Christmas Eve candlelight services held at 11:00 PM. I can recall several years wondering if the clock would hurry

up so we could go and get there! Those three or four hours of waiting might as well have been weeks! The church would also have services in the morning on Christmas day, but I don't recall going to those services very often if more than one or two times. I also recall around this time liking to go to vacation Bible schools. Some summers, not only did I go to the one in Coral Gables, but I also would go to two or three other churches of different types to go to their week long vacation Bible schools! I think I like them more for the crafts and activities than I did about learning "religious" things. As a creative person, those type of things suited me better than sports or music camp or various other things that parents make their children do.

By the time I got to my teen years, the church had more options for me. I turned 13 in the summer of 1985. I think it was around this time that I started going to their youth group called MYF, or more formally, United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF). I do recall that the first time I went, I was really



Coral Gables United Methodist Church



nervous considering that I have always been more of a loner than one to be around people or other kids. But at the same time, I did want to feel like I belonged somewhere. I want to say that they were kind and friendly as my first time there. The youth pastor at the time was Allan Todd. I want to say that there was an older youth group and a younger youth group, but I don't remember. I could be thinking this because not everyone was there every week, making it seem like there were different



Allan Todd

groups. Anyway, MYF was extremely important for me in my early teen years as it gave me a safe belonging somewhere. I was not a popular kid in elementary school

CORAL GABLES MYF

having been often picked on because I did not look like many of the other people in south Florida. (South Florida has a high Cuban population of people with darker skin and black hair. I was lily white with flaming orange hair!) Being involved in that youth group I know helped keep me connected to a church and especially with fellowship to others of my age range. I think I would have been much more lost in some way had I not been involved with this youth group. Every Sunday evening with rare exceptions, the youth group met at the fellowship hall for a Bible study and discussion and a meal. We usually met in a room upstairs that had chairs and couches. Sometimes, parents would get together and prepare the meal some weeks, especially during the summers. I know that my mom one time made a meal of spaghetti with sauce, salad, and those breadsticks that come in a can that you whack on the counter and bake. Interestingly, I wanted to stay and help mom, along with another parent, get the food

together instead of going to the Bible study. That was just how my brain worked. I thought it was more important for me to help get the meal together than to go to the youth Bible study. (I am no Martha!)

The youth group usually did some sort of summer activity travelling to some part of Florida. The summer of 1986 and the summer of 1987, I went to the Florida United Methodist Camp in Leesburg, Florida. This was a week long camp very typical and similar to camp movies from the 1980s except that this was solidly Methodist based and very Bible centric. I found out recently that mom went to this same camp in the late 50s or early 60s. I also understand that dad might have gone to the same camp sometime during the same years, but I do not know if they were both there the same summer. There were cabins scattered on the grounds and a separate building for toilets and showers. The boys were on one side of the grounds and the girls were on the other side of the grounds, but everyone interacted

together. There was a canteen that had snacks and each student had an “account” of whatever cash they brought to spend on whatever. Every day from that Tuesday through that Saturday, we had a fairly rigid schedule from rising to sleep, 7:30 AM to 11:00 PM. The schedule included devotions, meals, meetings, canteens, small groups, crafts, rest times, recreational activities, and evening presentations. The times were very precise and even short. The camp was next to a lake, Lake Griffin, and near the lake outside were some chairs and a podium while out on the lake was a large Cross. I remember both

summers being a lot of fun!

Somewhere around this time, Allan left Florida to go to pastoring school (whatever it is actually called) and some new leaders came in. Before Allan left though, he was a guest pastor one Sunday morning where he gave a good sermon about “united” or “untied” noting that the word was the same but with flipped letters. There was a church wide dinner after the service, which was well attended. The youth group specifically led by the new leaders held a secret “roast, toast, and dunk” party. The first two are obvious, but the dunk part was a special “gift” of pushing



This is the church fellowship hall that was multi use for games, meetings, and church dinners. The upstairs area had rooms where youth met for Bible studies. Here, this game is called Box Ball.

CORAL GABLES MYF

Allan into the pool! The next pastors were actually two married couples that started maybe a year before Allan left. I think the one couple were the official pastors while the other one were more assistant pastors. The leading couple was Ottmar and Lisa Olson, while the helper couple was Guy and Mary Lou Godfrey. The youth group continued on with different leadership, and I kept going. During this time, we got a new youth bus, actually a modified conversion van that you can stand up in. Whether the old vans or the new van, we did go on trips to Disney World or to some other attraction. By the summer of 1988, we had another youth director named Ruth Quillian. Now, I don't recall if she was another youth pastor or if she filled in a gap between youth pastors, but it was with her when a small group of us went to Key West as part of a weekend youth trip. There were five of us and Ruth that went down to Key West the last three days of July in 1988. (Read more about that trip elsewhere in this journal.)



Ottmar and Lisa Olson



Guy and Mary Lou Godfrey



Ruth Quillian

My time of living in south Florida was soon to come to an end, and with that, my time with the Coral Gables MYF group. In mid February of 1989, mom and I moved from Miami to Jacksonville, Florida. I won't go into the reasons here, but an urgent change was needed not only for mom, but also for me. Dad stayed in Miami. (And no, there was not a divorce just to clear up that wrong assumption.) By the summer of 1989, I had decided, or perhaps dad had suggested, that I come down to Miami for the summer or however long. So I did. While I was there, I went back to the MYF group. At this time, Guy and Mary Lou were the youth pastors and another guy was a helper. Some of the students had moved on within those five months and there were a few new students. I would find out that another guy in the group a year or two younger who was there before I moved started wearing tie dyed shirts because he had seen me wearing them! I thought that was interesting. I ended up leaving Miami earlier in the summer because I just wanted to go back

CORAL GABLES MYF



The church had these vans (above) we used for youth trips. Later, we got this conversion van (below). It was a lot nicer, but it was different from what we thought we were getting as a replacement.



This was our youth group in 1987 or 1988.



CORAL GABLES MYF

home, or rather back to the new home. I took an Amtrak train from Miami back to Jacksonville. (In an unrelated note, taking an Amtrak train would become important in the summers of 1995 and

1996.) After that summer in 1989, I lost touch with the group and never did again be part of that or any MYF group as I had a different life living in Jacksonville.



When I went back to Miami in the summer of 1989, I went back to doing things with the youth group again. Here are some of the youth from that summer.



We were at a restaurant (I think) when we arrived and saw this beautiful convertible!

I was looking through my old de Stofle Journals from the 80s and found this interesting article. It was in the #10 August-September 1988 issue on page 3. This exercise called Crisis In The Sky was presented in one of the MYF group sessions probably earlier in 1988. The youth director gave us these handouts to read, then we discussed

how we would choose the results. There were no right or wrong answers, but it really exposes biases and unknown thought patterns. Quite frankly, it is a mean exercise because it leaves a person feeling judgmental and gut wrenched! For your own interest, how would you choose to solve the problem presented here?

CRISIS IN THE SKY

YOU ARE ALL MEMBERS OF THE CREW OF FLIGHT 723, ENROUTE TO CHICAGO, ILL., THERE ARE ONLY 11 PASSENGERS ABOARD SINCE THIS IS A NIGHT FLIGHT. SOME OF THEM ARE SLEEPING WHILE OTHERS STARE BLANKLY INTO THE DARKNESS BEYOND THE WINDOWS. AS YOU WATCH THEM YOU WONDER WHAT THEY MIGHT BE THINKING FOR SOME OF THEM APPEAR TO BE QUITE DEEP IN THOUGHT. YOU HEAR THE INTERCOM CLICK ON AND THE CAPTAIN'S VOICE INFORMS EVERYONE THAT THE PLANE IS APPROACHING A STORM FRONT AND EVERYONE MUST THEREFORE FASTEN THEIR SEAT BELTS. AS YOU BEGIN TO WALK DOWN THE AISLE TO CHECK ON THE PASSENGERS, THERE IS SUDDENLY A LOUD EXPLOSION AND THE PLANE GOES INTO A DIVE. AS THE PLANE LEVELS OUT AGAIN YOU HEAR THE CO-PILOT ASKING ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CREW TO COME INTO THE COCKPIT. THERE YOU SEE THE PILOT KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS; THE CO-PILOT INFORMS YOU THAT THE PLANE CANNOT MAKE IT TO SAFETY. CHECKING THE PARACHUTE CABINET IT IS FOUND THAT THERE ARE ONLY 6 CHUTES AND A DECISION WILL HAVE TO BE MADE AS TO WHO WILL BE SAVED. AS THE CREW, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO THE PASSENGERS-- BUT WHICH ONES SHOULD YOU ALLOW TO LIVE? A PROFILE OF THE PASSENGERS IS FOUND YOU ARE EACH ASKED TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION.

- 1 AN ITALIAN CATHOLIC PRIEST--AGE 65.
- 2 A BLACK ALL-STAR PRO FOOTBALL PLAYER--AGE 26
- 3 AN AMERICAN INDIAN, FATHER OF SIX KIDS--AGE 37.
- 4 THE AMERICAN INDIAN'S WIFE WHO IS PREGNANT--AGE 35.
- 5 A FAMOUS MALE ENGLISH ROCK BAND GUITARIST--AGE 22.
- 6 THE GUITARIST'S GIRLFRIEND, WHO IS REALLY INTO SPEED--18.
- 7 A GERMAN RESEARCH SCIENTIST WHO KNOWS OF A POSSIBLE CURE FOR CANCER--AGE 50 .
- 8 A CHINESE GIRL ON HER WAY TO VISIT HER DYING MOTHER--AGE 14
- 9 A SPANISH BOY WHO WILL DIE IN THREE OR FOUR YEARS FROM LEUKEMIA--AGE 8.
- 10 A SPANISH, MALE FBI AGENT WHO IS A WIDOWER AND IS SUPPORTING 3 KIDS, ALL UNDER THE AGE OF 8--AGE 27.
- 11 THE FBI AGENT'S SPANISH MALE SUSPECT, WHO IS GOING ON TRIAL FOR RAPE AND MURDER, BUT CLAIMS HE'S INNOCENT--AGE 18.

PUT AN X IN FRONT OF THE 6 PASSENGERS THAT YOU FEEL SHOULD PARACHUTE TO SAFETY. REMEMBER THAT YOU, THE REST OF THE CREW, AND THE 5 PASSENGERS THAT YOU DO NOT CHOOSE WILL MOST LIKELY DIE IN THE CRASH

METHODIST YOUTH CAMP

In the summer of 1986, I had just finished seventh grade and would start eighth grade in the fall. The first time I had ever gone to a camp was the previous year in 1985. But for this summer, likely June or July, I went to the United Methodist Youth Camp in Leesburg, Florida. I had never been to this camp before. I went with my youth group leader, Allan Todd, of the Coral Gables United Methodist Church since I was a part of the youth group. More than likely, he was the reason why I was able to go to the camp.

This week long camp started on a Tuesday and continued through Saturday. The Monday before and the Sunday after were the drop off and pick up days, respectively. The schedule of the camp was very specific and was timed out from waking up at 7:30 AM through to bed time at 11:00 PM. This made for a long day and a full week indeed! The schedule of activities was varied, and there were two similar schedules, with only minor differences, between the Rising 7s

and the Junior High students. (At that time in Florida, sixth grade was in elementary school, and junior high consisted of seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. So rising 7s were students who just finished sixth grade in elementary school and would start seventh grade in junior high in the fall.) I was with the junior high students. I do not know if there were camps other weeks of the summer, or if it was just this one. I suspect that the camps went many weeks through the summer as Florida is a large state.

As I recall, my favorite parts of the camp were the crafts, canteen, and of course, the meals! I also liked the rest times and free times to do whatever. But of course, the main purpose of the camp besides a summer retreat of sorts was to learn more about God, Jesus, and salvation. Now, I am thinking that for most of the kids there, the camp was more about having fun. We were kids after all, and so that was obvious. That is just how kids are. But being a United Methodist camp, the focus was to integrate “church” into the daily

JR. HIGHS		RISING 7's	
<i>My Schedule</i>			
7:30	Rise and Shine	7:30	Rise and Shine
8:00	Morning Devotions	8:00	Morning Devotions
8:15	Breakfast	8:15	Breakfast
8:45	Cabin Clean Up	8:45	Cabin Clean Up
9:00	General Meeting	9:00	Orientation Class
10:00	Swimming & Stuff	10:00	Swimming & Stuff
10:30	Canteen	10:30	Canteen
11:00	Small Group	11:00	General Meeting
12:15	Lunch	12:15	Lunch
1:15	Rest Hour	1:15	Rest Hour
2:15	Crafts	2:15	Skill Time
3:30	Skills	3:30	Crafts
4:45	Free Time	4:45	Free Time
5:30	Supper	5:30	Supper
6:45	Small Group	6:45	Nature Lore
7:45	Evening Presentation	7:45	Evening Presentation
8:30	Evening Recreation	8:30	Evening Recreation
9:30	Canteen	9:30	Canteen
9:45	Worship Celebration	9:45	Worship Celebration
10:30	Call to Cabins	10:30	Call to Cabins
10:45	Sharing & Prayer Groups	10:45	Sharing & Prayer Groups
11:00	Taps and Lights Out	11:00	Taps and Lights Out

Bring your Bible to morning devotions

3

The schedule every day for the week.

activities, something more distinct from regular summer camps. Every day, the church activities included morning devotions, small groups, evening presentations, evening worship, and sharing/prayer group time within each cabin before bed.

The camp was situated next to a lake and had a main building near the lake. (To note, I am using past tense in this writing, but the camp still exists today still with many of the same buildings.) I recall one specific time, perhaps at the end of the week there, we were in the evening worship in the

METHODIST YOUTH CAMP

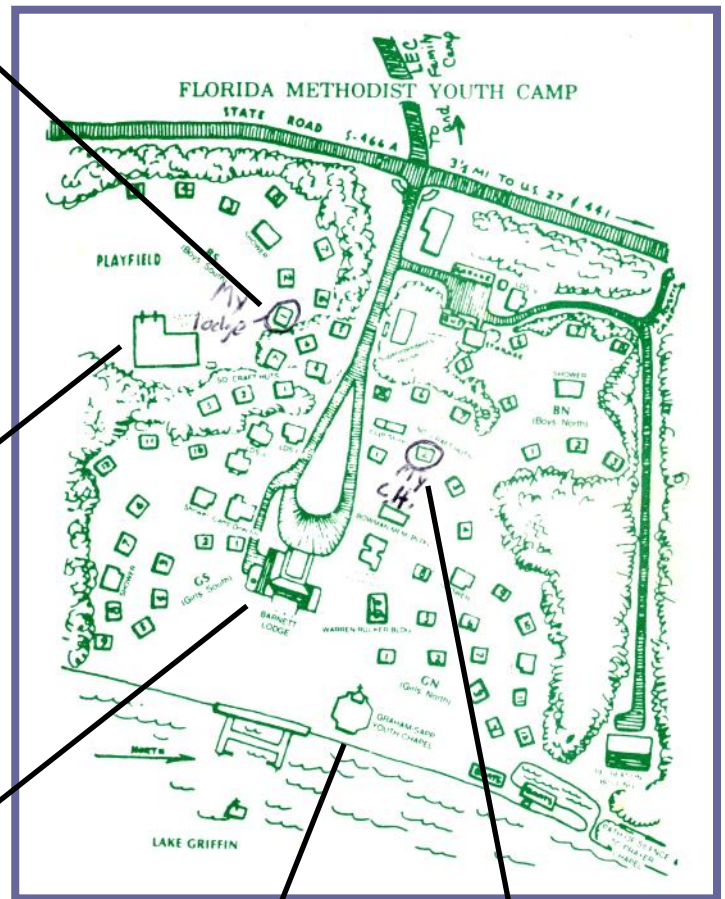
chapel when during the service, the curtains in the back of the stage opened up to reveal a wall of windows facing the lake where there was a large Cross out a little ways on the water.



My cabin and my bed. (I slept on top, but no one was on the bottom.)

While I went to this camp in the summer of 1986 and again in the summer of 1987, I only have photos of the 1986 camp for some reason.

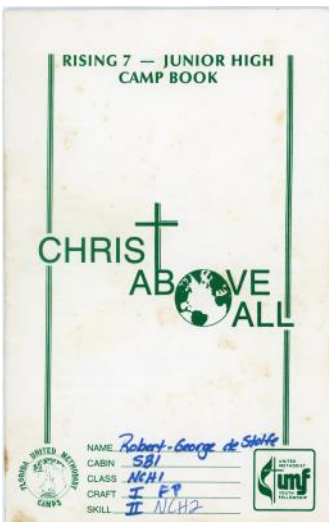
My Cabin, SB1



Pool



Lodge with Canteen



This booklet had everything we needed to know for the week.

Chapel

My craft hut

The chapel was where we had the worship time.

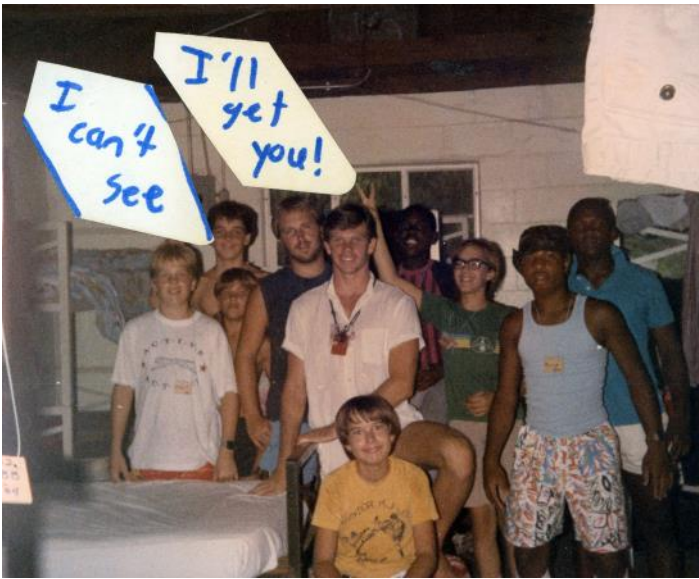


The craft we did was pottery where we made these name tags among other things.

One of the things we could buy from the canteen.



METHODIST YOUTH CAMP



These are the others in my cabin.



The chapel near the lake.



Archery practice.



Some benches also near the lake.



Playing box ball.



Path of Silence. A trail through some woods.

METHODIST YOUTH CAMP



The main lodge.



"I say a boom chicka boom..."



We had presentations every night. A whole lot of fun!



Right at the chorus of a song, I turned and snapped a photo, much to their surprise!



"An Austrian went yodeling..."



Everyone always had fun in the evening.

MYF KEY WEST TRIP

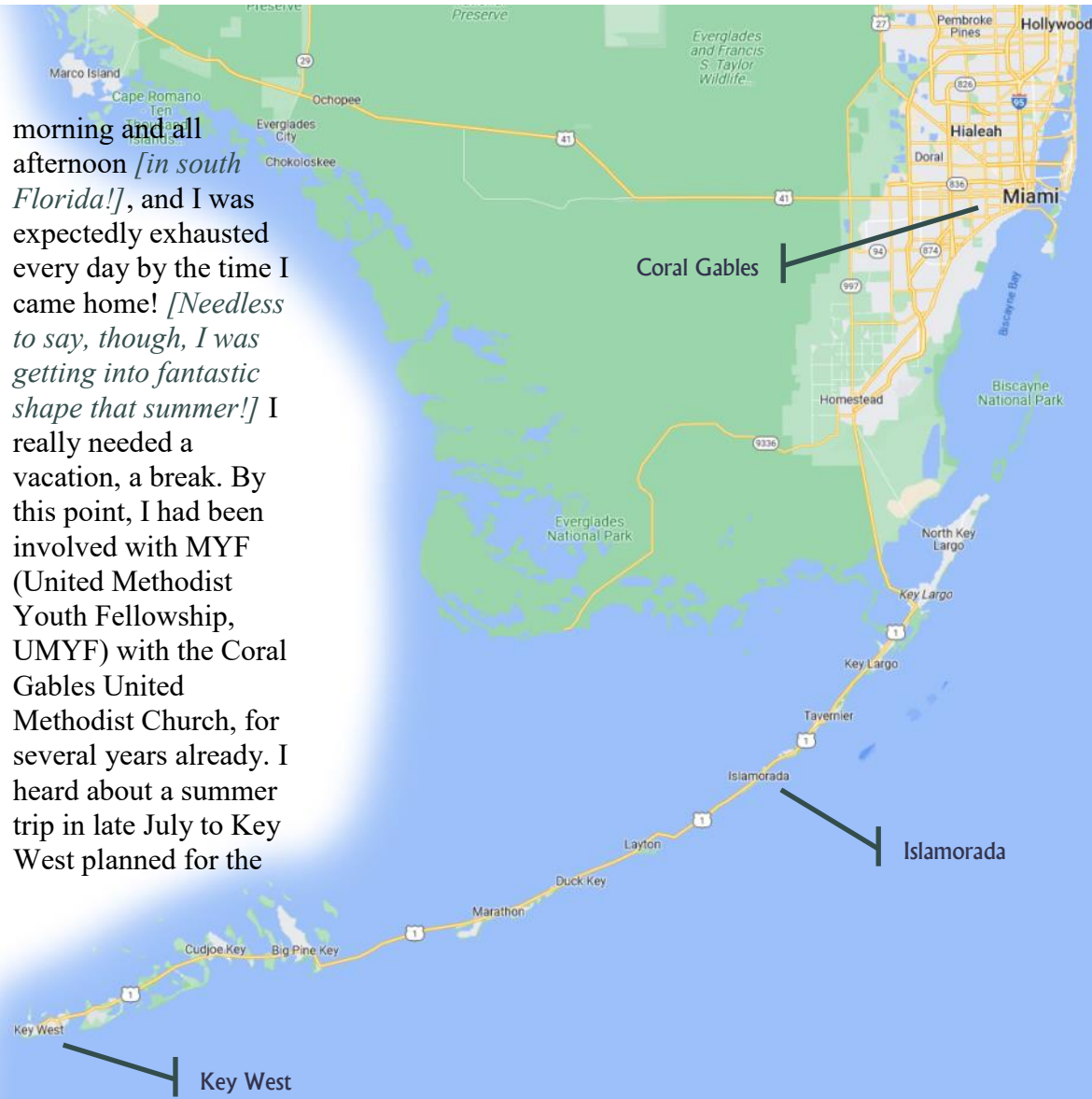
I first included a report about my MYF Key West trip in 1988 in my October-November 1988 issue. It was a short and rather rough writing reporting the basics of the trip. Fast forward to February 1992, I wrote a more formal and expanded writing in essay form about the trip for my Composition II class while I was at Florida Community College in Jacksonville (FCCJ). It was with these two composition classes, Composition I and Composition II, where I gained a better foundation for writing with structure. That essay about my Key West trip was good, for a college class, but it was rather cold and clinical, which is to be expected with academic writing! I also had to

write the details of the trip in a different order, instead of in time order, for the writing to make sense for the thesis of the essay. I first included this 1992 essay about six months later in the Summer-Fall 1992 issue. Then, I included the writing again in the September 2013 issue of the journal adding some pretext and some callout comments. Now about ten years later, I am including this topic again. But now, I rewrote this essay to be in time order and added comments or explanations where needed. I had just turned 16 when I went on the trip, and the summer of 1988 was a transitional time as you will see. Enjoy!

My Key West Trip

The summer of 1988 for me was a very busy, transitional time. I graduated 9th grade from South Miami Junior High in early June and was about to start a new program in 10th grade at Coral Gables Senior High that fall. The high school was much bigger and of course had older students. I had decided that I wanted to take summer classes to get some specific subjects out of the way, specifically, personal fitness and team sports. I was not about to take those classes during the regular school year! That was a personal issue for me, and I was just not going to have it! That June, July, and part of August, I had those physical classes all

morning and all afternoon [in south Florida!], and I was expectedly exhausted every day by the time I came home! [Needless to say, though, I was getting into fantastic shape that summer!] I really needed a vacation, a break. By this point, I had been involved with MYF (United Methodist Youth Fellowship, UMYF) with the Coral Gables United Methodist Church, for several years already. I heard about a summer trip in late July to Key West planned for the



MYF KEY WEST TRIP

younger youth, an extended weekend getaway to Key West, Florida. I had never been to Key West, and so I wanted to go. We were to leave on Friday, July 29 and come back on Sunday, July 31.

On that Friday, we met at the church parking lot. Our youth director was Ruth Quillian, and Justin, Susanna, Maria, Megan, and I packed up a station wagon, loaded ourselves up, and left at about 2:00 PM. We went on our way from Coral Gables to Key West, about a three hour drive island hopping on US 1. We had one planned stop along the way to a key called Islamorada. *[This name is Spanish of two words, isla morada, and translates as purple island. There must have*

been purple flowers or purple shaded growth for this name.] We visited an attraction called Theater of the Sea. We saw several shows that included dolphins and sea lions. *[This was a very casual, local, low key place. Nothing like a Sea World attraction!]* There were some other “non shows” that involved fish, a lot of cats, and pelicans! *[Just to note, these were the moochers of the attraction!]* We watched a show from some stands of very talented dolphins showing off their skills by jumping through hoops and jumping upwards for fish out of the announcer’s hand. In another show, we were in a boat that was open to the water in the middle, sort of like a



One show was the dolphin show.



Another show was closer to the dolphin.



The crew at Theater of the Sea: Maria, Justin, Megan, Susanna, and myself.

MYF KEY WEST TRIP

rectangle, with a hoop above the water where a dolphin jumped through the hoop in the narrow space. The moochers, the cats and pelicans, did their own tricks by trying to make the dolphins' fish food disappear! Equally as entertaining to the dolphins was a show of two sea lions, named Sassy and Classy, who did tricks and was friendly to audience participation. In fact, our director was selected to go down and get a hand-fin shake and a wet hug as a greeting!

After some time at the attraction, we finally left and made our way to Key West. We stayed at a Hampton Inn, which was a good motel to stay in. *[At age 16, just about any motel was a good motel to stay in!]* We had two rooms, one for Justin and me, the boys, and one for the girls. The rooms were next to each other with an adjoining door. *[No hanky panky of course! After all, this was a church group trip!]* Our room keys were rectangular pieces of plastic with a series of holes, which was newish technology for the time, and a precursor to the

magnetic key cards of today. After we got settled, we went to a place called Mallory Square that was located by the water as a dock. All along the dock were merchants, street artists, and street performers, as well as plenty of pickpockets. The dock experience was almost circus like or fair like in its overall vibe. This was apparently a thing they did there regularly, especially to watch the sun set. *[Understand that Key West can be a weird place, even in 1988! Think similar to Austin, Texas.]*

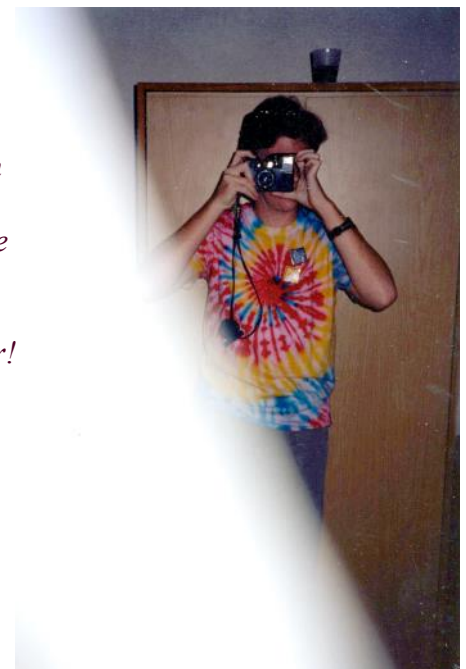
While we were there, we played a game called How To Host A Murder. *[Now granted, this seemed like a*



Sassy and Classy, two sea lions, giving Ruth a hand-fin shake and a wet hug!



Here, Ruth is taking a photo of me while I am taking a photo of her!



MYF KEY WEST TRIP

strange game for a church group to play, but I recall that it was fun.] How this game worked was that each person had a water gun and one designated person to “kill”. I had to kill Megan, Maria had to kill me, Susanna had to kill Justin, Justin had to kill Maria, and Megan had to kill Susanna. The director Ruth was not part of the game. When the game ended, only Susanna and I were left “alive” while the others were “dead”. *[Knowing this information, you can almost determine what order everyone was killed!]*

Afterwards, we had some dinner and went back to the hotel. By this point, it was dark and probably after 9:00 PM or 10:00 PM. We went to a place on one side of the motel that had some grass, and we laid in the grass looking up into the dark sky seeing the stars. While looking, we listened to Star Hustler, a short program on cassette that explained the stars and constellations. *[This was a South Florida specific astronomy program on local PBS hosted by Jack Horkheimer, who was*

the executive director of the Miami Space Transit Planetarium.] We could also hear the wind blowing, the crickets clicking, and the building lights humming.

The next day Saturday was fun and packed full of activities. After we had breakfast, we drove all around the island. We stopped to visit an exhibition called the Lost Treasure of the Atocha. There were cups, plates, decorative pieces, jewelry, coins, and large bars all of solid gold. I don’t think I had ever seen that much old gold in one place before! From there, we went to Duval Street where we started at one end and slowly walked our way down the street. While we mostly stayed together, we did break off a few times as we each saw something we wanted to see. *[This was still at a time where it was relatively safe to walk around by yourself.]* I went to several art galleries and looked at the prints and paintings. Then, I stopped at the Greenpeace store and bought some peace buttons. After that, I went to a clothing store and bought a tie dyed t-

shirt. *[This store apparently went out of business a few years later. Also, the late 80s was a time of “remember the 60s” and I was really into peacey things and tie dyed shirts.]* At one point during our walk after we were all back together, we stopped at Baskin Robbins for some ice cream, a welcome treat for a very hot July day!

Later in the afternoon, we went to a theater and watched a movie during the hottest part of the day. We watched Caddyshack 2. For dinner, we went to a place called Angler’s Seafood House (also called Angler’s Seafood And Steak). Most everyone got seafood, but I got the “land lubber” special, which was a burger! However, for dessert, we all got some Key Lime pie! After dinner, we went to a place to play miniature golf. Besides playing, we had lots of fun taking plenty of photos around the many themed holes. It was dark by this point. We went back to the motel, and while this was already a full day, we did a couple more things. At the motel, we

watched a movie on the TV. Then several of us wanted to go to the pool. It was already near midnight, but so what! The Hampton Inn also had a hot tub next to the pool. So, Maria, Justin, Megan, and I went to the pool and the hot tub for a midnight soak. Susanna and Ruth stayed in their room. Even for late July, the pool was very cold, while the hot tub was, well, hot. We would go back and forth between them which was like going from winter to summer. Once we had enough, we quickly went back to our rooms to escape the cool of the evening and go to sleep in a warm bed.

Sunday was the last day, and only a part day was for any activities, besides the drive back to the church. We packed up and headed to Key Largo. The plan was to go scuba diving or snorkeling there, but the weather turned very unfavorable for outside activities, let alone for any in water. Frankly, I was relieved simply because I never much liked swimming or anything involved being in a lot of water! We kept driving until we got back to the Miami area

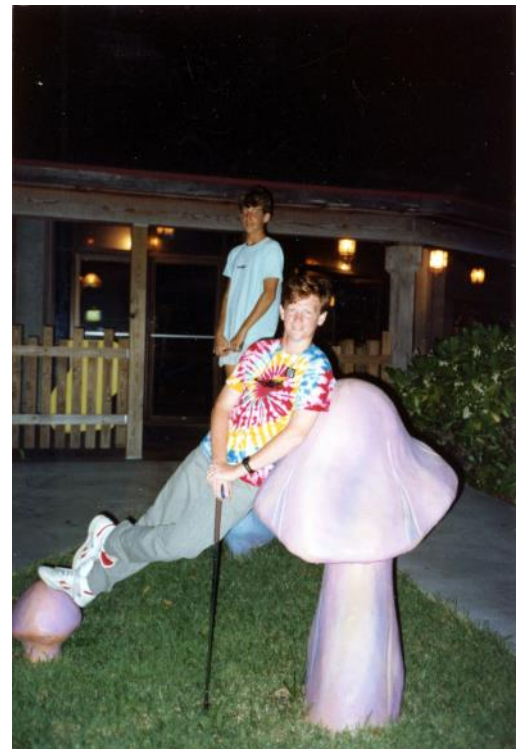
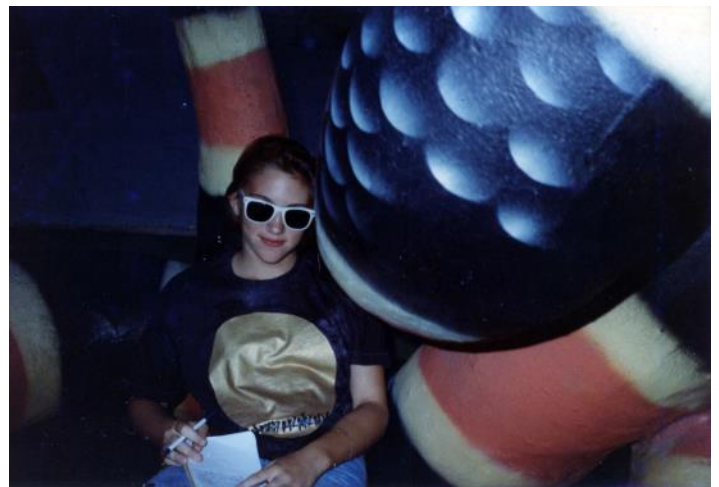
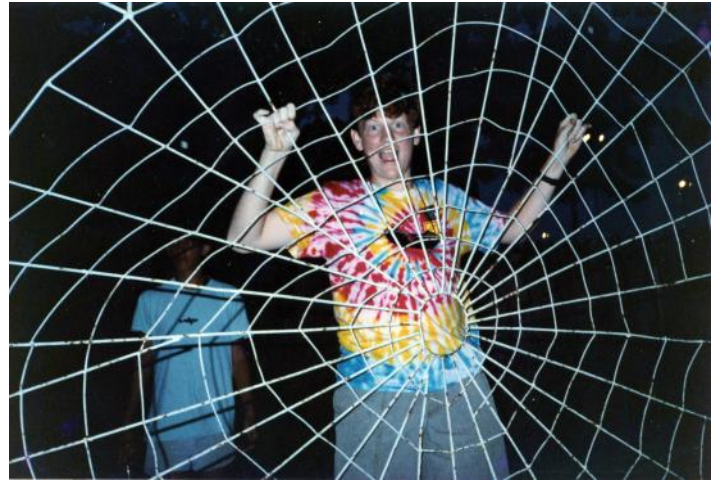
MYF KEY WEST TRIP

and stopped at the Cutler Ridge Mall. As an alternate activity, we went to a theater there and watched another movie, this time Arthur 2: On The Rocks. [Sort of an odd movie for a church youth group to watch, but whatever movies we watched as a group did need to be PG! I guess that is all that was available at the time.] After a couple of hours for the movie, we headed back to the church, which by this point, the weather was really dark and storming.

The trip was short and quick, but it was packed full of activities. It was certainly the mini vacation I needed after a long strenuous summer of outdoor activity for weeks on end. I definitely recommend that everyone go to Key West at least once. I had only been there once and would definitely go again. However, I never did get back for a revisit. Now almost 35 years later, I don't think any of the places we visited then would be remotely similar to what I remember.

One thing you might have noticed about this trip was how few

“churchy” or “religious” activities we did. Now, that is not to say that we did not have God related discussions, we probably did since it was a church youth group after all. But it was obvious that I did not remember any of those discussions by the time I wrote originally about the Key West trip a few years later. But also note that this was a summer youth trip, a different activity from the weekly Sunday evening gatherings of the youth group where a Bible discussion and a meal were specifically designed as the activities. Every summer, the youth group had somewhere planned to go.



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Billy Graham Crusade

In thinking back to put together this special issue, I recalled that sometime in the early 80s I had gone to a crusade by Billy Graham. I also recall that it was not my idea but rather a suggestion to go by someone dad knew. In looking at the list of crusades, most likely one was in Fort Lauderdale held at the Lockhart Stadium for an eight day crusade starting on Feb 17, 1985. The *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* described the first day: "In his first crusade in South Florida since 1961, the charismatic evangelist delivered a ringing, 40 minute sermon on the unchanging nature of God and Christianity, exhorting his followers

to 'come to grips with a personal relationship with Christ.' "

I have no idea what day of the eight days we went, but it was me, dad, and a mother and daughter dad knew who went. To be honest, I don't remember much about it only being 13 years old, but I do remember that we were in bleachers way up in the nosebleed section where to really hear anything was doing good! I also found a pamphlet of a crusade mom went to in Jacksonville in 1961. She would have been probably 15 years old. The crusade was in the old First Baptist Church building held on January 12, 1961.



FILE/The Times-Union--1/12/61--Evangelist Billy Graham preaching to an audience inside the old First Baptist Church building in Jacksonville, Florida on January 12, 1961.

I found this newspaper photo of the sermon in Jacksonville. I looked, but I could not see where my grandfather, grandmother, mom, and her sister would have been sitting if in fact they are shown in this photo.

Church While in High School

After we moved to Jacksonville in 1989, we got settled in the house and me in high school. Eventually, we would occasionally go to church. The only church that made any sense to go to was a Methodist church. We would go to the Riverside Park United Methodist Church, which was about three miles away from the house. This was also the same church where mom and her family went to growing up as well as where my parents got married. So that was obvious that we would go there. We were not regular members. We just went when we wanted to. We also went to the church dinners fairly often on Wednesday nights. I was not involved with any youth groups and was not particularly involved any more than mom was.

I do recall one time in the early 90s when we went to a Maundy Thursday service. It was the only time I had ever been to one, but it did leave an interesting impression on me. It was short service that remembered the death

of Jesus on the Cross. While Jesus was crucified on a Friday, this service was Thursday evening, perhaps in reference to His arrest that would lead to His death. The service was sparsely attended, but the somberness of the service was the most striking. The reverend spoke for a little while about what Jesus did that led to the Cross. Then, in mostly silence, the reverend piece by piece stripped the front of the church bare of its decoration and utensils only leaving a Cross sitting in the back. It was almost hair raising to hear the rip of the Velcro as the religious decorations were removed. As a last thing, the Cross was covered with a sheer black veil. (I get chills just writing this!) As everyone got up to leave, people were weeping and crying! (I can only imagine that this is similar to how the people in Jerusalem felt after Jesus gave up His spirit and died on the Cross! The rest of that Friday and that Saturday must have felt hopeless! BUT, Jesus was risen by Sunday!)

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

CNFR in 2009

While I attended the Texas Tech rodeos when I was in college and even went to some other in the region, I had never been to the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming. In June 2009, the coach Chris, myself, and two others drove north from Lubbock to Casper, Wyoming staying the night I think it was in Cheyenne or somewhere near there in Wyoming. A long drive! We did

stop in Colorado Springs to visit with dad and get some pizza for a couple of hours. We were gone for about a week. The activities were fun, and I did many things on my own as well as attended the rodeos. But just as with the regional rodeos, the finals also had a rodeo church service. It was held in a big tent near the arena, and the preacher was none other than Corey Ross! It was good to see him again!



This was the start of one of the evening rounds with the flags at the College National Finals Rodeo.

Corey Ross, who I met at the rodeo in Odessa in 2003 when I was saved, conducted the rodeo church service at the CNFR.

Brother Duplantis Visiting in 2009

In November 2009, I went to a church in Levelland, about 25 miles west of Lubbock, with some others from my church to go to see the special guest preacher, Jesse Duplantis of New Orleans! In his usual manner, he was funny and entertaining and very enjoyable to listen to with his stories, but also with his solid

explanations of the Word of God. I first heard about him and watched some of his preaching tapes during the summer of 2003 at those home Bible studies near Post, Texas. If you ever get to see him or get any of his videos (or watch them online), I recommend it highly! You will learn much from his unique ways of teaching!



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Church in Colorado Springs

After moving to Colorado Springs in June 2012, I wanted to find some church I could go to. Indeed, I wanted to keep up with a church body so I would not fall away but still be connected somewhere. I did some research to see what church seemed close to what I already knew and would live up to the unwavering Word of God. At this point, I had been saved and was a member of my church for nine years. I was hoping to find a friendly and loving church. I found a nondenominational church several miles away from dad's house and tried them out one Sunday in later June. The service was a little different but had some similarities to what I was used to. So I went there for the summer. The size of the group was similar to my church, and they did modern Christian music as I was used to. The people were friendly, but not overly so. I did try to be friendly and to make friends, but

nothing really meshed. By the end of the summer before school started, I was realizing that every time I went, it felt like my first time visiting there even though I had gone for at least two months. It did not seem like anyone noticed that I had been there many times before. Around that time, I wanted to give the pastor a small gift I made to thank him for his messages. But he seemed continually distracted and rather impartial to receiving the gift. I decided that I would try going to some different churches and see if another one would be better suited for me. But, it turned out that I just stopped going to church altogether, especially after I lost my truck the next summer which made it difficult to go anywhere that was not in short walking distance. Now, to be clear, I stopped going to a church, but I did not stop reading the Word, reading my devotional, and praying, among other things.

Blog Post In 2010

In 2009 and 2010, I did a weekly blog post showing a weekly scripture. Here is what I found for this week in 2010.

Monday, March 22, 2010

Weekly Scripture: March 15-28, 2010

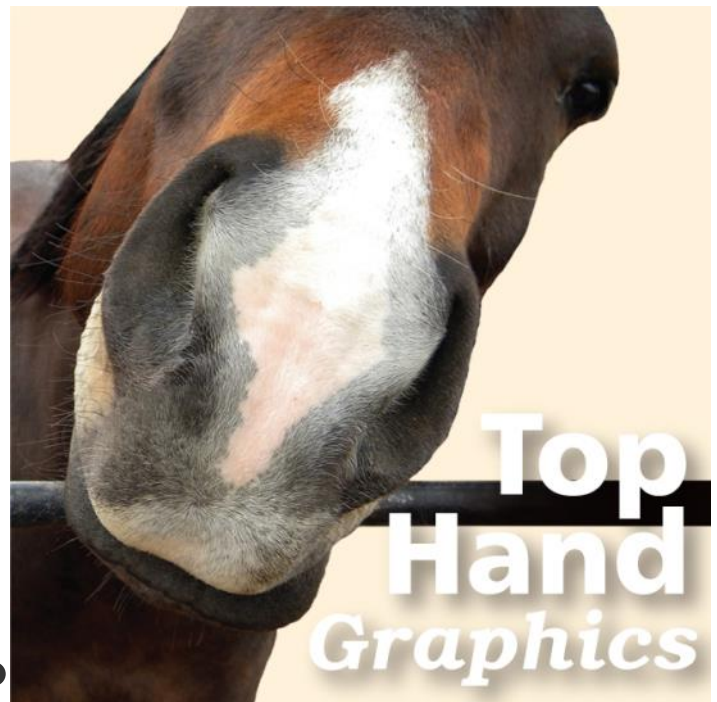
Psalm 31:23-24

23 Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints!
For the LORD preserves the faithful,
And fully repays the proud person.

24 Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart,
All you who hope in the LORD.

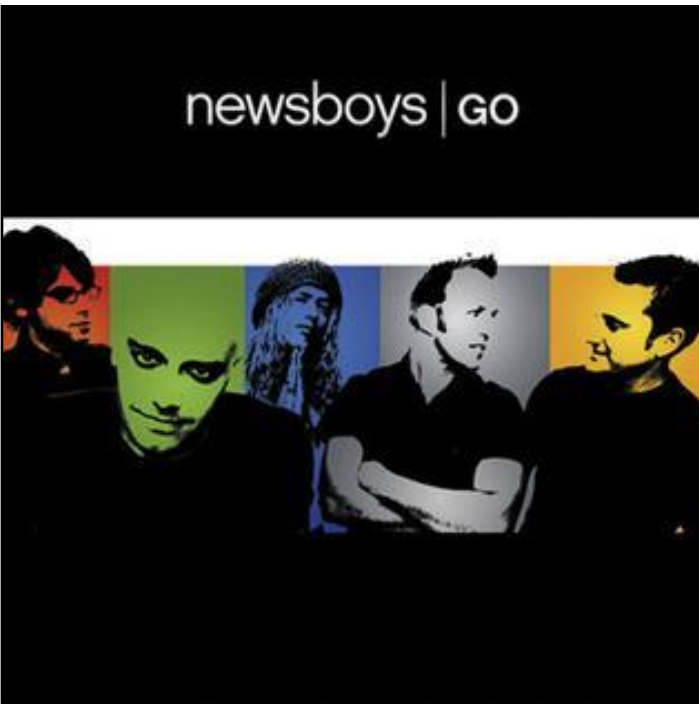
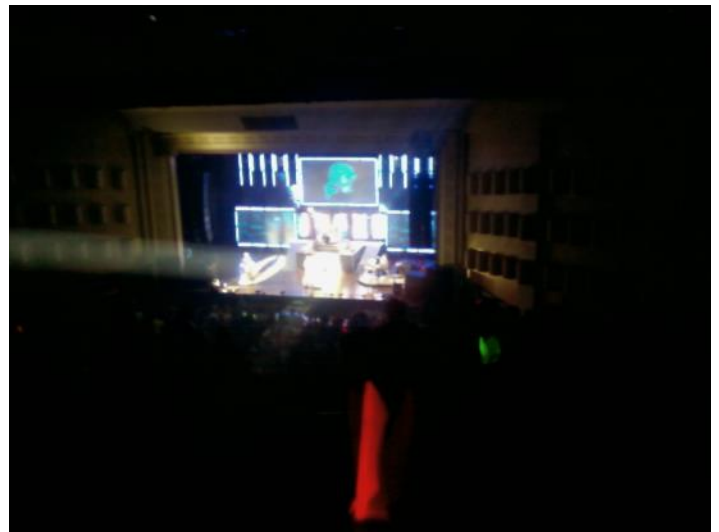
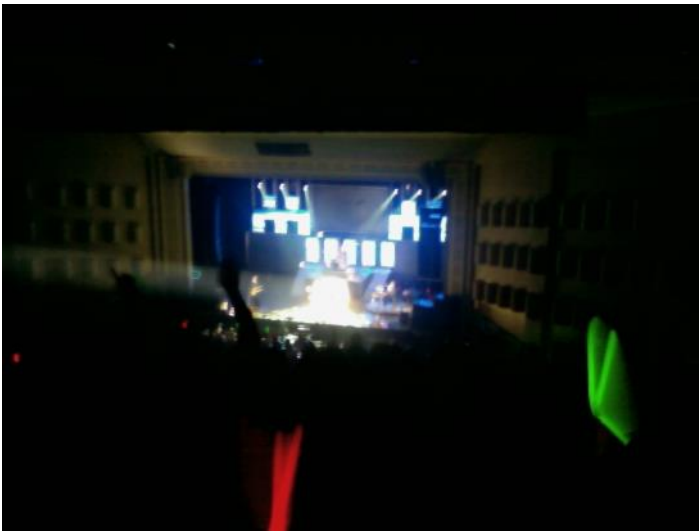
Top Hand Graphics

In June 2011, I started a business called Top Hand Graphics out of the breakup of the mail marketing company I was with after the museum job ended earlier in 2010. While the business was never meant to be a main source of income, I have had miscellaneous work since then and still have the business after almost 12 years!



NEWSBOYS CONCERT 2008

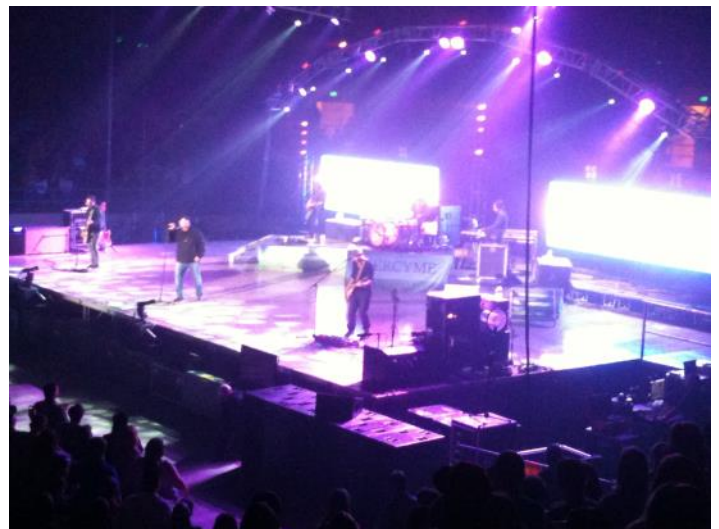
I attended, along with some others from church, the Newsboys Go tour concert at the City Bank Auditorium on March 3, 2008. The building has since been torn down. The makeup of Newsboys at the time included Peter Furler, Phil Joel, Duncan Phillips, Jeff Frankenstein, and Paul Colman. These photos are not that great since I took them with my RAZR flip phone!



Shown here on the cover of the Go album is Jeff Frankenstein, Peter Furler, Phil Joel, Paul Colman, and Duncan Phillips.

KLOVE CONCERT 2011

I attended a KLOVE concert held at the coliseum on the campus of Texas Tech University on February 26, 2011. The concert only cost \$10 to attend!



Unfortunately, I do not recall the artists who played.

KLOVE CONCERT 2012

I went to another KLOVE concert the next year in 2012 held at the United Spirit Arena on the campus of Texas Tech University. I think it was even better than last year!



Moriah Peters

Rend Collective



Hawk Nelson



Lecrae



Tenth Avenue North



Sidewalk Prophets



Mercy Me



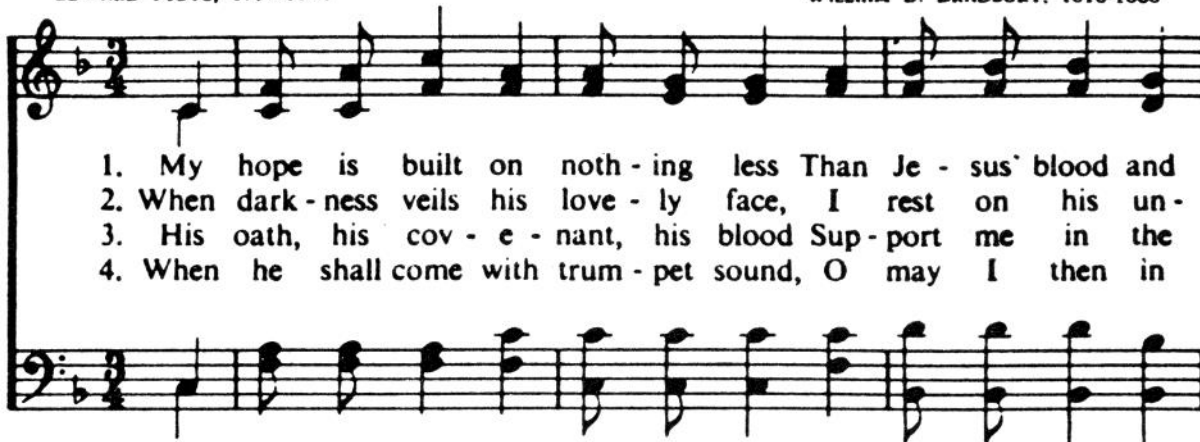
Disciple

MY HOPE IS BUILT

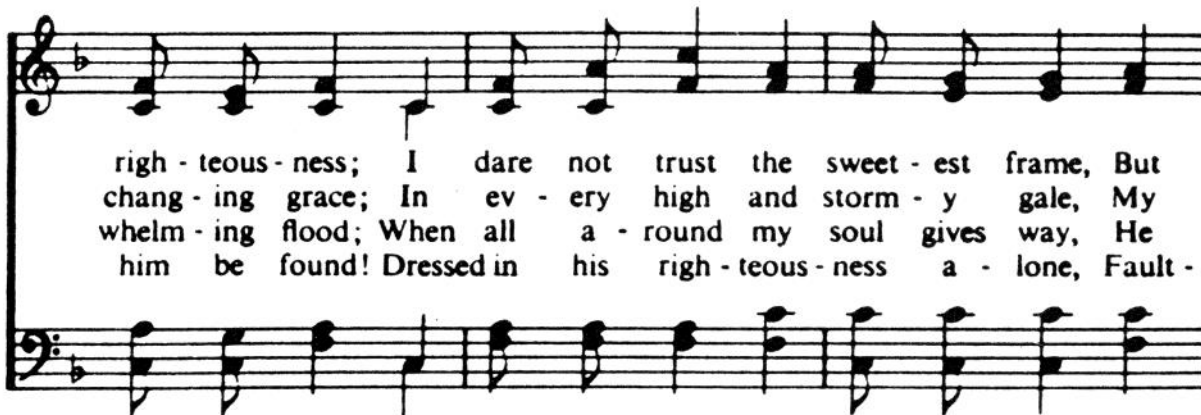
My Hope Is Built

EDWARD MOTE, 1797-1874

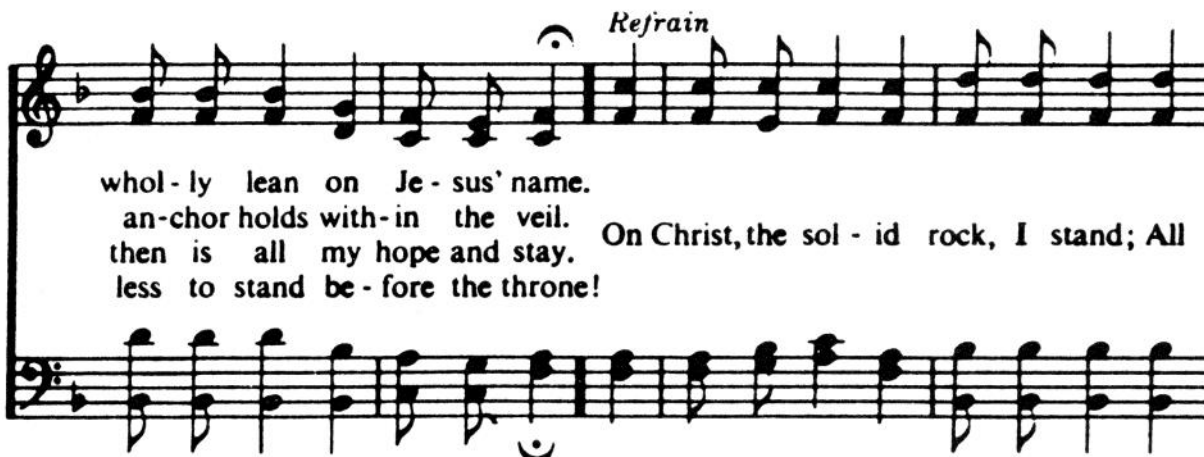
THE SOLID ROCK LM with Refrain
WILLIAM B. BRADBURY, 1816-1868




1. My hope is built on noth - ing less Than Je - sus' blood and
2. When dark - ness veils his love - ly face, I rest on his un -
3. His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood Sup - port me in the
4. When he shall come with trum - pet sound, O may I then in



right - teous - ness; I dare not trust the sweet - est frame, But
chang - ing grace; In ev - ery high and storm - y gale, My
whelm - ing flood; When all a - round my soul gives way, He
him be found! Dressed in his right - teous - ness a - lone, Fault -



Refrain
whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
an - chor holds with - in the veil. On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; All
then is all my hope and stay. less to stand be - fore the throne!

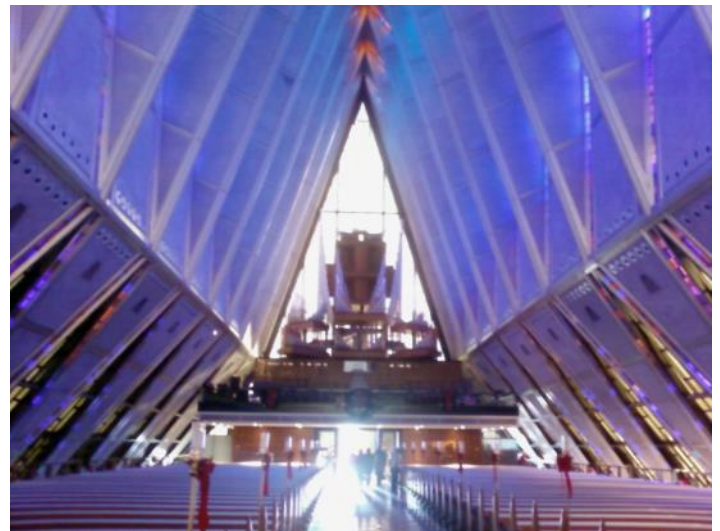


oth - er ground is sink - ing sand, All oth - er ground is sink - ing sand. A - men.

AF CADET CHAPEL

This is the United States Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I never went to a service there, but I visited the chapel in December of 2008 while the academy was on Christmas break. There are technically four areas for worship, not just the one sanctuary seen in photos. The main sanctuary with the high interior is for protestant services, which is the bulk of the cadets who are “religious”, while a lower level under the main sanctuary has

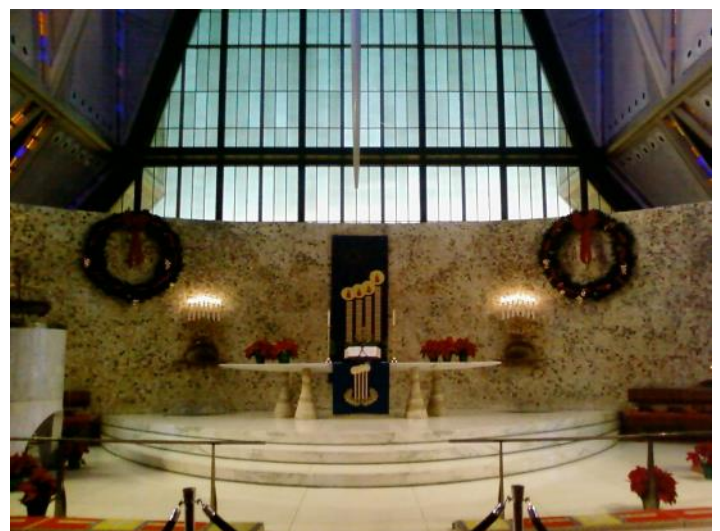
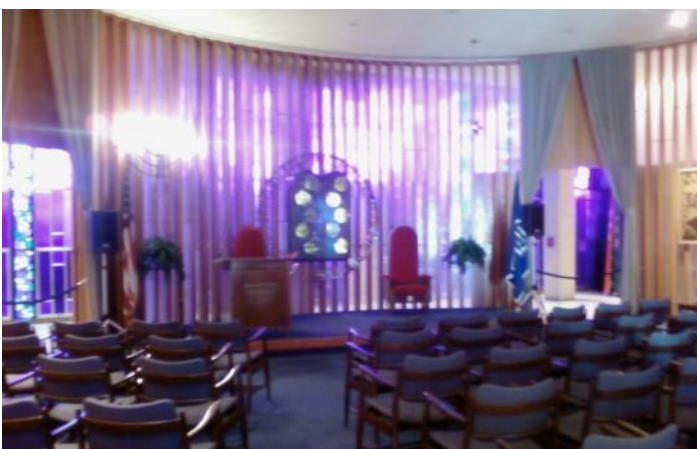
spaces for catholic services, Jewish services, and a small room to the side for “alternative” type of religious services. The colors of the stained glass of the windows are quite beautiful when the sun shines through them onto the floor, pews, etc. As I understand it, the chapel is currently under heavy renovation that started in September 2019, especially to remove the asbestos found in it. Apparently, the completion date to be open to the public is estimated to be in 2027!



The interior of the main sanctuary set for Christmas.

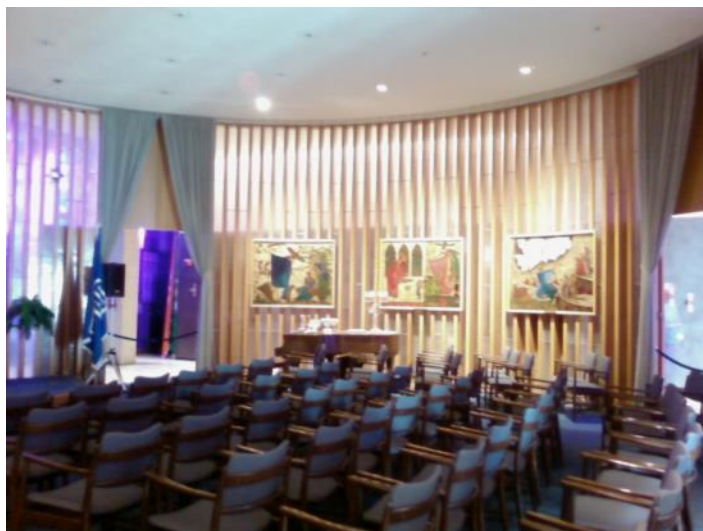
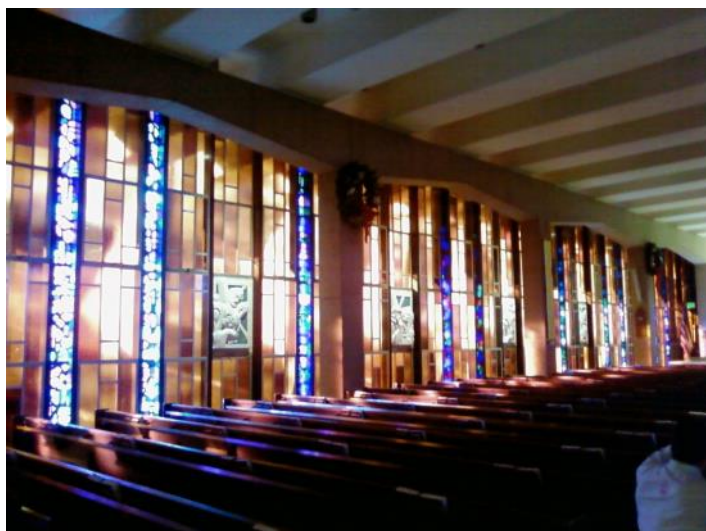
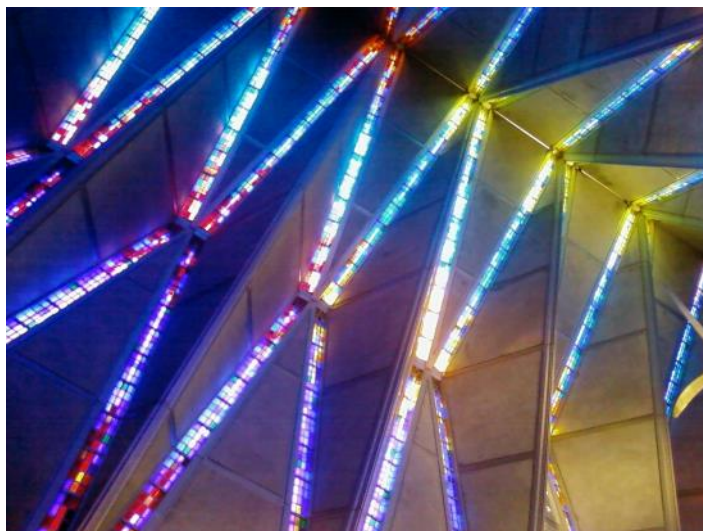
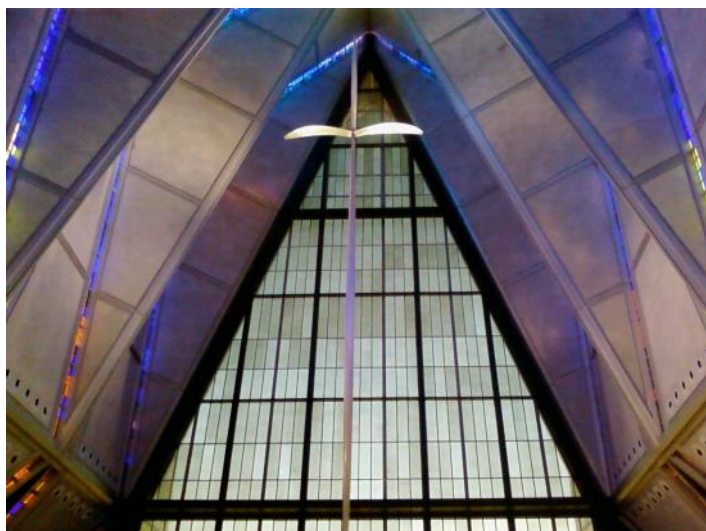


The sanctuary for Catholic services.



A room designated for Jewish services.

AF CADET CHAPEL



FINAL THOUGHT

Spiritual health is just as important—if not more important—as physical and mental health. Every person in this world puts faith in something. Usually it is in something like a job, money, status, spouse or child, role model, habit, some means of “deserved” escape from “reality”, education, angelic forces, or in a person’s own ability or ideals. Sadly, these will all fail for they are imitational substitutes for the real placement of faith. That placement is to have faith in God, and God alone. Many, many, many people are deceived by the lie that being a “good” person gives them the right to go to Heaven when they die.

Being a good person NEVER equates with or substitutes for being saved! Romans 3:23 states, “... all have sinned and are falling short of the honor and glory which God bestows and receives.”

However, there is hope! Romans 3:24 states, “[All] are justified and made upright and in right standing with God, freely and gratuitously by His grace (His unmerited favor and mercy), through the redemption which is [provided] in Christ Jesus...” (Amplified)

Furthermore, Acts 4:12 states, “And there is salvation in and through no one else, for there is no other Name under Heaven given among men by and in which we must be saved.” (Amplified)

The Bible also states in Romans 10:9, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

To be saved means you become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Jesus paid the entire debt caused by the sins of the world for all time! That means God will forgive you of your sins. But you have to claim it! It is not automatic!

Ephesians 2:8 states, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”!

Choose to accept God’s gift by making Jesus your Savior and Lord of your life.

Pray,

Heavenly Father,

I recognize and admit that I am a sinner and that I need Your salvation. You said that my sins have made me fall short of Your glory. I recognize that Jesus came to the earth to suffer and shed blood for my sake to redeem me of my sins. He suffered and died upon the Cross and was buried. I believe that You raised Jesus from the dead on the third day and He ascended to Your right hand. Lord Jesus, I ask you now to come into my heart as my personal Savior and Lord. Please forgive me of my sins and forever wash me clean with Your Blood white as snow. Thank you Jesus for saving me and making me a new creation in You. I now rejoice in my salvation and my new citizenship of Heaven, for my destination has now changed from Hell to Heaven. I pray this in the Name of Jesus! Amen.

All of God’s people and the angels in Heaven rejoice with you in your new salvation!



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