

Testimony of Michael F. McGowan

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1 Peter 5:6 - *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time ...*” A testimony can afford us the opportunity to be prideful in our salvation. As my wife (Leslie) has been apt to say in the past – We preach Christ; this is Jesus’ Testimony delivered through us. So it is not my testimony that I give today but Christ’s who lives in me (Gal 2:20) and who gives it through me. 1 Peter 1:12-13. This salvation that I possess is given to me by and through Christ and through no work of my own. I have a relationship with the creator of the universe that (although it is up and down at times) is vital and desirable for both of us.

Before knowing Christ and how I came to know Christ

I was raised in a home that **taught** Christ but did not necessarily **live** Christ. As an example - we prayed as a family but I do not remember Dad following up by saying, “Did you see what God did?” Christ was not real in my life. I understood who Christ **is**, that He **is** God and all that He had done on earth but as it is in so many denominations that preach Christ; the spectators do not have a relationship with the living Christ. I obeyed my father and mother through high school, attending church regularly and adhering to legalisms of the church (for the most part). I will dispense with the specifics of the “after high school” life except to say that I, as others often do, experienced a “college fallout.” Life was good, more exciting and now affordable. But in December 1979, there was an emotional crash in fast lane of life in Tulsa. Through the wreckage came a man named Paul Mayes, my manager at work, God’s messenger. He prayed with me and shared the Christ he knew with me, and most importantly by the way he and his family lived. Those basic teachings of my childhood were re-kindled but now I began to understand that I had been saved by grace through faith and that not of myself. It is the gift of God not of works that I should not boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 (paraphrased)

Life after Christ

My language abruptly changed overnight. Many life style habits were completely wiped out or altered substantially. I began studying the Word and attending church. A key verse to understanding my walk after Christ came to live with me is 2 Peter 1:5-7 (*It’s that long one on progressive sanctification*). Perhaps my progression in sanctification might have sped up had I opened up more and/or more people had come alongside to get involved in my life, to hold me accountable and to disciple me. However, my profession and the economy kept Leslie and I moving around. We stayed in churches only briefly, the impacts were tremendous but not conclusive. Had we settled for even longer periods of time and developed stronger relationships, then it may not have taken until 1984 for me to realize that I needed to quit drinking alcohol (a major step) and in 1992 to be baptized.

My life Psalm is 112 that contains a key verse 2: *“His descendants will be mighty on earth, the generation of the upright will be blessed.”* This verse reminds me of what the Lord has done in providing and making a family of Leslie, Joshua, Shannon, Andrew and myself. The Psalm reminds me of how He has set about the McGowan family and broken the generational chain of unbelief. My life Proverb is 16 that contains a key verse 2 – *“Commit my works to Lord and my plans will be established”*. This verse summarizes my journey toward learning to trust the Lord for all of my work situations. He has led me on interesting roller coaster ride of various jobs in various places, providing all along. He has demonstrated that He is Jehovah Jireh. Overall, I have taken to heart the verse - 1 Peter 5:7 *“Casting all my anxiety upon Him because He cares for me.”*

In light of the Apostle Paul’s listing of his credentials in Philippians 3 (but not to boast), I mention that I have served in many assemblies as a Sunday school teacher, an AWANA leader and as a Deacon. At TBC, I have now served as Ambassador Flock Leader for a number of years, served in AWANA and served on the former Adult Council as a ministry leader and finally as deacon here at TBC. Concerning the latter, I stepped down as an “elected” deacon for a variety of reasons, which I shall not go into here. However I am invigorated and encouraged by our current leadership and wish to step up to say I am with them and you all in this public way. I have looked forward to continuing to serve the Body at TBC in whatever capacity the Lord would have.

We want to know you as well as we know Christ. That’s a tall order and should be easier obviously; we live with you - bodily. But **it is easier** to know Christ than it is to know fellow humans because **He has** a strong desire for us to know Him. Beyond knowing God, our heart’s desire is for the increasing fellowship of the saints. Now paraphrasing Paul from 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 - *Our mouths have spoken freely to you O TBC, our hearts are opened wide ...*