

Testimony

Why Jesus? born in Marion in 1943, raised in a Christian family, with Christian grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, baptized and a member of Marion Baptist Church at age 16, tho having been raised in that church since the age of 7, I can't say just when, what day or hour, I became a Christian... In my view I have always been a Christian.

Why Lutheran? Well, that is just the fault of all you Lutherans. Starting with the then Marion Junior College, a Lutheran college. For in 1963 after attending ALL of Marion's then FOUR schools, graduating in 1962, and starting college in 1963 and finding out that there was something different that was not Baptist or Methodist, but a different kind faith, and a way of doing church and worshiping, I was hooked to some degree,, tho that would not show up for another 10 yrs. The Thursday Morning Chapel Services at 11 am, which every one had to attend, OPENED a new door for me. Even coming over here on occasions with other Lutheran students, was by and large a different kind of experience.

After two yrs., a Liberal Arts education & degree, it's off to the University of Richmond for two more years and then to Seminary to become a Baptist minister which one of my grandmothers wanted for one of her grandsons. Well when my mother told me one day that a letter from my Uncle SAM was waiting here for me, she had opened it and said it said I had an invitation to the US Army and probably the jungles of Vietnam. Well, no sir not for me, that day I left school, signed up with the U.S. Air Force and a week later I'm in Texas in Basic Training.... that begins my Air Force career. Stationed at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter, SC, I get to travel the Pacific, making sure our Recon jets could fly over North & South Vietnam. I never quite made IT into the JUNGLES of Vietnam. Getting married and divorced during that same timeframe, in 1973 I'm out and living in Columbia, SC, where I have a job with SC ETV.....

That let me meet a young lady who also worked there, who had German grandparents who had their own private family estate jjust outside of Columbia and who I over time I got to meet. Her grandfather had been in construction, had built a house similar to what one finds in West Palm Beach, FL., a grandmother from Austria who loved having European style gardens, and having a separate apt. building on the estate, I guess, I got sort of adopted as the grandson that they never hsd, and being members of Ebenezer Lutheran Church in downtown Columbia, it was only natural that I would go there too. After living there for 10 yrs., while working in local television, going to the University of SC, getting a BA in Broadcast Television with a minor in Advertising and Public Relations, I finally bought my own home in N. Columbia, very near LTSS, I could easily walk there, to the Seminary. And so its students, teachers and professors become a part of my life. Having moved out to the edge of the city I left Ebenezer Lutheran Church downtown and joined Ascension Lutheran Church which sat across from the campus.

(Here is a short commercial.... IF you ever travel South and thru Columbia, SC, do it so that you are there on a Thursday Evening, go to LTSS and go to the 7 pm Vespers Service in Christ Chapel... the atmosphere and the organ will give you chill bumps, I guarantee it.....)

But of course in the mid to late 1980's there was no place in ELCA for some one like me, living a different lifestyle, with a partner, so it was still the Corporate World for me. Moving to Augusta, GA, I built and managed a new TV station there for a group of investors, later moving back to Columbia, getting into the Banking world, and in the mid 1990's going into Public Relations for the state of SC and from which I would retire in 2009.

Having the good fortune of coming into possession (also in 2009) of the now closed up "old" family estate of my youth, we restore the house and the gardens for five years. (to some of their former beauty and glory). But I lose my partner to an illness in 2013, and what with now having two houses, one here in Marion (that inherited from my parents in 2006) and one in SC, and having a sister (recently retired from Nursing here) and having her own health issues, I sell out in SC, move back to Marion and guess what! JOIN another Ebenezer Lutheran Church....

So you see my life has been bookended by two Ebenezer's and a lot of very nice and kind Lutherans in between.... So YES, it is your fault that a Baptist turned Lutheran, so I guess you are stuck with me now !!!.....