

Faith Journey - Robert (Bob) Henry

I was born and raised in northern New Jersey. Born a twin, I was the sixth of my mother's seven children. My father was a police officer. He was an abusive man to both my mother and we children. He would eventually beat my mother with the seven of us children watching and leaving her for dead at the bottom of the stairs. I was five years old at the time and remember it to this day. Now, why would I mention this in a statement of faith? I suppose it was because of this that my grandparents became so involved in our lives. Both of them religious, my grandmother would make sure that we would go to Church on Sunday, and my grandfather would often read the Bible to us. I think they felt bad for us children and decided to look out for us more than most grandparents do. Wherever grandma went so did we. If she moved from a town, it wasn't long we would make the move right after her.

We always attended the closest Presbyterian Church there was. It was this way until my teen years. My grandparents would split up and I would end up going to live with my grandfather when I was 14 years old. He got me involved in the Methodist Church across the street from our home. I would attend Sunday school, Church services, even joined their Boy Scout Troop. Scouting was a plus to my religious life. We were always doing projects for the Church and with the Church. Scout Sunday was always one of my favorite times. I would see the amazement in some boy's eyes as they entered our grand sanctuary. You see it was then that I realized there are many that never even stepped foot in a Church, let alone attended a service.

I would eventually not make time for Church in my young adult life. Always working, it just was not a priority of mine. I did not join another Church until moving to Marion, SC. Church life was very prominent here. So, yes I will admit originally I probably did not join so much to be part of a Church, but because of how people would look upon me if I didn't go. I visited various Churches in Marion, the Baptist, the Methodist, Church of God, and yes the Presbyterian. I have to admit, I was a bit taken back at first what I saw. Now, keep in mind this was 30 years ago now. Here I was living in a community with a large African American population, and yet there were none of them in all but ONE of these Churches. Even in my primarily white neighborhood in the north, there were more than that attending the Presbyterian Church I went to there. I could not believe that the Churches still were, well, segregated. Only now it was by choice. Having not grown up here, I just did not understand it. There was as I stated ONE that had two African American ladies attending. It was the Presbyterian Church, and two sweet sisters were members there. I would sit in the empty pew directly behind them, we would become friends. I found out they too were from the north and were members of the Presbyterian Church there as well, and were quite used to attending a Church with a congregation of primarily white people. I can still be found in that same pew on almost any given Sunday.

I did not really get involved with the Church itself, until after I had my heart attack and my "come to Jesus" moment as they call it. It was then that I was asked to help teach the octogenarian class, and eventually to become a member of the session. This invitation came just seven years ago. I would by chance be doing some visits as the session member on call one month to some of our elderly folks. I would end up taking this on as more of a duty all the time rather than just when I was on call. I headed up the Mission committee which involved feeding the poor hungry folk and other various mission projects. I know this was a long way around things to get to this, but we are here now: I believe it is our DUTY as Christians to look out for those less fortunate. Sort of like it says in James 1:27 (NIRV), "Here are the beliefs and way of life that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows are in trouble, take care of them. Do the same for children who have no parents. And don't let the world make you

impure." My work with the elderly, and teaching in our local schools, even on occasion taking every advantage to bring the gospel to the children, is in direct correlation with what I believe.

I was called to the ministry late in life, much of this in guidance of Holton Siegling who is the current Head Pastor at First Scots in Charleston. If I can preach the Word half as well as he does, I will truly be a fine pastor for any church. Wife: Donna Henry – married for 35 years and counting Son: Jestin Henry – Graduate of SCAD, Merchandiser for Frito-Lay Corporation Daughter: Casey Henry – Police officer for Marion PD for 5 years, currently with North Myrtle Beach PD as a public safety officer (certified police, fire, and EMT) Home: lives in Marion home for the past 30 plus years. Work: I currently long-term substitute teach for schools in the City of Marion when requested by various Principals of the schools. I have worked with children all of my life, and NO I do not leave God out of the classroom, regardless if we are supposed to separate Church and State.