

## MY TESTIMONY

In 1983 I petitioned to join Daylight Lodge #232 of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington. I joined for this reason: *the three men I admired most were Masons, and I wanted to be like them.*

The first was Frank Viegas, a Seattle Police Officer, who was the kindest man I had ever met. He was loved and respected and a friend to everyone as he walked his beat in the University District. I was proud to be present and perform at his installation as the Master of Doric Lodge in the Fremont District.

The second was George Wilkinson, the owner of a small music store in Des Moines, Iowa, and a benefactor to all who worked on the road as professional entertainers. George did so many favors for all of us that I was one of hundreds of musicians from all over the USA who, even ten years later, would not purchase so much as a guitar pick from anyone else. Ironically, I did not find out George was a Freemason until a year after he passed away.

The third was my father, John Julian, who I admired because of his military-style discipline and his huge heart for hospitality. When he was in the Air Force stationed overseas, our house was the place during the holidays and other special times where the servicemen could come for a great home-cooked meal and a few beers to help them get over the loneliness of being away from their families and loved ones. Later, as Master of Manitou Lodge #68 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, that spirit of hospitality extended to his Lodge as he, with my mother's help, often fed hundreds of people at Masonic charity fundraising events.

Six years later I became the Master of Daylight Lodge, took the 29 Degrees of the Scottish Rite, and joined the Shrine. Then in 1991 I was appointed Grand Organist for the state Grand Lodge, went on the Public Relations Committee in 1993, Grand Organist again in 1996, and Grand Bible Bearer in 1997.

### *How Freemasonry led me to the Bible*

Taking the office of Grand Bible Bearer most seriously, I began a voracious study of the Bible. Even though at the time I was not a Christian (I was a Deist), it was at this time when I completed my first self-published book *David vs. Goliath?* an apologetic coming to the defense of Christian Freemasons who were being ruthlessly and falsely accused by some misguided separatist, neofundamentalist Christians on the Internet. After it received rave reviews from some national Masonic periodicals and newsletters, I began getting requests for copies in the USA and Europe, and I made several appearances giving lectures to Masons and non-Masons alike. In 1998 I became Deputy of the Grand Master in District 5 (one of three districts encompassing downtown Seattle) and the highest ranking officer in the District, in the absence of the state Grand Master, for my two year term.

### *How the study of the Bible led me to my Pastor*

In 2000, my wife Beverly and I, along with my partner, Bill Bissell, opened our Data Recovery business. That freed me up to go with Bev to a Wednesday morning Bible study group that has been headed up by some of the most knowledgeable Pastors and Ministers of south suburban Seattle churches. I am so thankful to them, Especially Pastors John Egerdahl, John Kennington (now residing in Chicago), and Dennis Sawyer for being so patient with me and taking the time to answer my myriad of questions about the Bible and various Christian doctrines.

### *How my Pastor led me to the church*

Pastor Sawyer invited Bev and I to attend his Church, appropriately named The Church by the Side of the Road (or CBSR, for short) which turned out to be very close to where we live. CBSR is nondenominational (by its Constitution), has a great program of youth and adult education classes, supports a number of recovery group programs, and accepts everyone “as you are,” with a widely diverse congregation in age, economic background, and ethnicity.

Bev and I had been looking for a church where we both could participate in doing good for and with others, sharing our talents and lives, and basically feeling like we were part of the greater Family of Man. We sought a congregation that would meet Bev’s requirements that it would be a give and take arrangement, where we could help ourselves and others to grow physically, spiritually, and mentally, and where we could ask hard questions about denomination-specific doctrines and creeds and get real answers — not shrugged shoulders, the brush-off, or ridiculous and simplistic rejoinders.

At first I was hesitant to go because I have not been very happy with the churches I have attended in my past. As an infant I was christened in the Episcopal Church, and I was submersion baptized in a Southern Baptist church in Alexandria, Virginia as a preteen after attending Vacation Bible School for a summer. At varying times I have attended churches of several different denominations. All of them were anxious to accept my time, talent and money, but none of them appeared to be the least bit concerned about the ultimate destination of my soul.

My wife, Beverly, already a devout, born-again Christian, had been involved in several contemporary evangelical, charismatic, and fundamentalist Christian churches, until she became disillusioned with their pandering to ulterior profit motives, personal aggrandizement, and their blatantly unchristian attitudes toward others along sectarian, racial, and economic lines.

My requirements were much steeper than Bev’s. I needed to be shown that a church could be more than just an eclectic gathering of people that need an easy escape from personal responsibility for their past (or current) bad behavior. I needed to know the

congregation would follow the path and guidance of a strong leader, and, through his example, we would all share the mysteries of God through the study of the Bible and other related evidence toward the ultimate truth, wherever it might lead. And if there was a way of bridging the gap between my confused, juxtaposed perceptions of Jesus the man and Jesus the God, hopefully, he and they, would help me to find it.

### ***How the church led me to the Lord***

Early in 2001 I had a life changing experience. At the end of one of Pastor Sawyer's sermons, he asked if anyone would like to know the Lord better, they should come forward. I heard a clearly audible voice in the aisle next to me ask, "Will you go with me?" And I replied, "Yes, I'll go with you." I soon found myself on my knees at the foot of the altar.

Since that defining moment, I have come to see the deity of Jesus, not as a provable fact in the material world, but strictly as a matter of faith in the spiritual. So directly due to Christ's intervention, I moved from a Deist with objections to a Christian with questions. Hard questions, like: Where do you draw the line between theology and relationship? Why are some Christians afraid to answer for their beliefs? Why are there hundreds of Christian denominations arguing and fighting (sometimes to the death, literally) over trivial details like which Greek or Hebrew text is more representative of the original? Should the Bible be taken literally? Are Paul's words the words of man, or the words of God? And many, many other questions that eventually turned out to be completely unimportant.

I have always been aware of the immense power of faith. But for me, that faith had to be based on reality and truth, not on vain repetitions, dogmatic credos, or even wishful thinking. My greatest spiritual thorn is my analytical mind, and the outspokenness that goes along with it. At the same time, my most tragic worldly flaw is my bulldog-like tenacity for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God. And that's why I find myself searching, researching, and studying the Bible and Christian dogma every day. In May of 2001 Bev and I officially joined the membership of CBSR and are now regularly attending CBSR.

### ***How the Lord changed my life forever***

The clear spiritual message that came along with that audible message was: *I need your help to feed my sheep*. How could I turn Him down after I made the startling revelation that Jesus sacrificed himself so that He might take on my sins and my sinful nature, and that He was resurrected that I might receive the promise of eternal life.

I have been very active at CBSR. I participated in the music ministry, either in the Praise & Worship Team or the Festival Choir, have shared my testimony, led, and participated regularly with the monthly Men's Fellowship meeting; regularly attended and taught Adult Education Classes (where I was often my most attentive student), and I have been blessed by being able to accompany Pastor Sawyer on some special services and

visitations outside the Church. For the past five years I have been active in prison ministry with my singing partner, Alan Clark, in a duo called Emmaus Road as a volunteer under the umbrella of Prisoners for Christ (pfcom.org).

Masonically I'm a member of Walter F. Meier Lodge of Research #281, an Honorary Past Master of Century Lodge #208, Past Master and Musician for Daylight Lodge #232 (Seattle's Premier Lodge of the Fine Arts), and Past Musician for St. Johns Lodge #9. St. Johns is one of the oldest and most influential Lodges in the state with a philanthropic budget of close to \$300,000 a year. St. Johns Past Masters include such famous Seattle names as Denny, Yesler, Maynard, and Meany. In 2003 I was awarded the Grand Master's Achievement Award, given each year to only one Mason in each district. Currently (2009-2010) I'm the Grand Musician again, but after this term it is my intention to retire from performing.

I thank God every day for my Church, my wife, my business, my Lodges, and my life - and especially for the way God worked in His mysterious ways to lead me from the Masonic Lodge, to the Bible, to my Pastor, to my Church, and ultimately to the assurance of my salvation through Christ Jesus.

*John 3:19-21: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

-- from the Great Light of Freemasonry, *The Holy Bible, King James Version*

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Past Grand Organist  
Past Grand Bible Bearer  
Past Deputy of the Grand Master in District #5  
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