

Testimony

Roy Hiebert Tells His Story

A Good Heritage from Grandfather



I was raised in a home where there were only brief forays into any church. I will say, though, that my mother often had radio stations playing in our home that sometimes played country gospel music and even had some preachers give their messages. I had not paid much attention to this when I was young.

In my teenage years, I began seeking independence. I quit school at age 16 (just after completing my Driver Education classes). I worked in factories and found myself in an adult world. I began drinking and partying quite heavily (especially on weekends. I was always able to maintain some kind of work ethic and was never dismissed for jobs due to my lifestyle (though there were times when I had no right to be at work). I never thought this life to be problematic. Most people I know lived that way and I was no different. Rock'n'Roll music became my god and its singers my prophets and/or gurus.

Due to poor manual dexterity and eye-to-hand co-ordination, I tried to go back to school several times so I could get away from factory work. I felt I was a danger to myself and my co-workers. Finally, at 19 years of age I succeeded in entering adult education and by 21 had graduated from Business Accountancy at the Community College level. I found work with the Taxation department of the Federal Government.

My drinking had not slowed down, and by now I had added Marijuana.

I saw that my life was going nowhere and was not fulfilled. I read self help books and enrolled in a Psychiatry class at a University with hopes of solving all my problems. This, of course did not work.

It was while I was on a trip to the Rocky Mountains with my Dad, that I saw the beauty of creation like never before. On a mountain top, I asked the question, "God, if you created all this beauty, please show me how to have peace with You."

In the fall of '82 my Dad and I went to visit my grandfather. While in his apartment, he began preaching about Jesus Christ. I was interested, for the first time in my life, in what he had to say. As we left, Grandpa gave me a booklet called *Steps to Peace with God*.

At home that night I read through that booklet. I realized that I was a sinner and that the penalty for that sin had been paid by the shed blood of Jesus Christ (to cover the sins of the whole world). I needed to put Him on the throne of my life. I still did not understand all this, but felt that I needed to pray the prayer at the end of that booklet. I knelt at the foot of my bed and asked Jesus to forgive my sins and to be the Saviour and Lord of my life.

The only Christian I knew was my grandfather and he was over 70 miles away. Two separate groups of people started knocking on the door and talking to me about God. They called themselves Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. I also began receiving the Plain Truth magazine. I read an old King James version of the Bible that I received as a gift when I was quite young. As I read I saw some discrepancies between what these groups said and what the Bible said. I decided not to get involved with any group until I had read the Bible from cover to cover at least once.

Two years later, I realized that I needed to be meeting with others who believe the Bible, but where? I remembered a Church that we went to when I was quite young, and that they preached the same thing I was reading in the Bible. I started attending there, but it was at the other end of town. They told me of a church that was closer (in fact, across the street from where I lived). At this Baptist Church I attended Church Services,

Sunday School and Seniors midweek Bible study. The Seniors Study proved to be just what I needed (even though I was now only 25 years old).

Other opportunities came in the youth Choir and at a Bible Camp. I was far from qualified for either of these ministries but the leaders were confident that God wanted me there. In the cabins, the young campers taught me a lot more about the Bible than I ever had hoped to teach them. I realized that these children had the advantage of weekly Sunday School classes in their churches. I decided that I needed to get some advanced training if I was going to catch up with these children, let alone my new peers.

I sought out Bible Colleges with the Church leadership, and finally decided on Winnipeg Bible College. While at College, I was most impressed with those who had been in the Missions program. After my first year, I decided on the Missions major and internship that this allowed. Since my old life involved drinking and drugs, I asked my Missions Professor if I could do my one year's internship at an inner city rescue mission called Union Gospel Mission. He agreed.

During that internship, the Executive Director (Bill McNairn) emphasized B & B ministries. He said that in this work my most important tools would be the Broom and the Bible. For the next years of involvement in ministry opportunities I found that advice to be the most accurate depiction of ministry. Bill proved to be a great mentor and friend.

At Bible College my field service was prison chaplaincy visitation. We went as a chaplaincy team every Monday to sing songs, study God's word and make friends with a captive audience. Between Semesters at College I moved to Winnipeg and was involved at an inner city church, a Christian Health Centre, and volunteered at Union Gospel Mission (UGM). After graduation, I moved into the inner city and became active at New Life Ministries. Eventually, I bought a 90 year old four bedroom house where I was able to host international students and even take on some boarders.

After a couple of years, a full time opportunity arose at UGM as a night Watchman. After 6 months at that position another opening came up as Manager of their 24 bed addictions rehabilitation program. In this position I was able to put to use more of my Bible College training through teaching Bible, Life Skills and Overcomers' meeting as well as discipling and counseling residents. Since much of the work I was doing overlapped chaplaincy, they added Associate Chaplain to the job description.

In 1999, my grandfather entered a Personal Care Home (at age 101). He was a very big part of my Christian life, and without his prayers and moral support, I'd hate to think where I would be. Though I loved my work at Union Gospel Mission I felt a pull to spend more time with Grandpa. A passage Paul wrote to Timothy says, "He who does not look after the needs of his own family is worse than an unbeliever." After much contemplation, I took this to heart and moved to Winkler, resigning from my position at UGM.

During my time in Winkler there were great opportunities. Though I was not working in full time ministry, there were opportunities to be involved first as a student then as a co-ordinator for the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement Course. I also helped out with Power to Change and Encounter Christ 2001. They invited me on as a board Member.

Though I had no full time ministry position in these past five years, I learned much from working in what the Christian world often considers secular work. My Grandpa passed away on Good Friday of this year and I shall never regret the years I was able to spend with him before he died. I can say what David said in Psalm 16:6, *The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; yeah I have a goodly heritage.*

I anticipate with excitement what the Lord now has for the life I have chosen to dedicate to Him.

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