

My Testimony



Vietnam May 1969



2006

I grew up in a staunch Lutheran home in Wisconsin and later in mid-youth we moved to Ohio. I entered the Army at age 17 and at 18 volunteered for Vietnam where I served as a combat medic in a tank unit 1968-1969. I was blown up twice by an RPG Anti-tank rocket and later a 250 pound anti-tank landmine. I came home pretty well traumatized, confused, and angry. I became a police officer and served for seven years. I reentered the Army and served 3 more years (total of 7) trying to find my place in the world. I drifted in and out of police work and the military and several marriages as well. In 1978 I heard the Gospel for the first time at an Assembly of God Church in Lawton, Oklahoma. My then wife left me shortly thereafter taking my 8 year-old son with her back to Ohio. I blamed God and wanted no more to do with Him. I later tired of police work and became a Registered Nurse working in Cardiovascular Intensive & Critical Care. Among other things I never got my anger or past trauma under control and eventually in July 1986, during a domestic confrontation with my wife, discharged a firearm killing her.

I was arrested and tried for murder and convicted in 1987 and received a sentence of 18 years to life in Ohio prisons. However my conviction was overturned in 1990 for prosecutorial misconduct. I pled guilty to a lowered charge of Involuntary Manslaughter that year. At that time I received a sentence of 13 to 28 years and returned to prison from the county jail. I believed that because I had turned my back on God and because of my crime that He had turned His back on me desiring nothing to do with me. I waited fearfully for God to punish and then eventually take my life. I believed this torturous conclusion to my life for 8 years until February 28, 1994. At 7PM on that day while watching TV in my cell at the Allen Correctional Institution, Lima, Ohio, I saw Billy Graham and Chuck Colson come on TV talking about God's love. I began to shed tears as I reached over to turn the channel. I had no idea why I was crying and the thought came to me that it was actually not me crying but the Holy Spirit as He was grieved at

my unbelief and actions to turn off the television program. I realized then that He had never left me and perhaps was not done with me. I listened to the crusade and heard afresh and anew from Chuck Colson how God had loved him and every prisoner. I began to sob and fell to my knees. I confessed my crime, my entire catalogue of sins which were many and my having turned away from God. As I did so I felt a tangible release physically from the burden of sin and knew that I was forgiven, loved, and totally cleansed of everything!

That night while sleeping I had a dream and saw Jesus Christ in a robe standing in front of me, from the neck down. I knew it was the Lord. He said in a commanding voice, "Come out of Him!" and at that I woke up and my mouth was twisted and a horrified otherworldly voice was screaming as something left me. I looked around in the darkened cell and saw Jerry my cellmate in the corner crying and afraid. I asked him what was wrong and he said the horrible screams and noises coming from me awakened him and scared him. I told him it was just a nightmare and to go back to sleep. I knew however that I had been delivered from a demonic presence and spirit by Jesus Himself. The next morning while in the shower and praying I felt the presence of the Lord like never before, His very Holiness. I exclaimed spontaneously, "Gee, you're holy!" An understatement to say the least. The Lord asked me clearly, "Who will go for us?" I said "Me, Lord send me!" Not really having a clue as to what I was being asked.

I asked myself what I had volunteered for as I dressed after my shower. The Lord spoke again and told me that He "Was making me a vessel of His Compassion through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ to a people that are lost and dying without hope." I served until February 9, 2004 in prison, a total of 17 years, 5 months, and 9 days. While in prison I studied the Bible, read all that I could find on Christian Living and completed many Bible Correspondence courses most notably, the RHEMA Correspondence School of the Bible, from Kenneth Hagin Ministries in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This was a three year course I finished in 15 months. I also obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biblical Studies from American Christian College & Seminary as well as an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Business Management. I led a Bible Study/Prayer meeting weekly in my cell for three years and had opportunity to minister to many other inmates and to see many come to salvation and deliverance.

Following my release I could not obtain a job as a Registered Nurse but worked at a gasoline station for a short time. I experienced homelessness as well however I successfully completed a year of parole and obtained funding from the Department of Veteran Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Program to attend seminary. On May 9, 2008 I graduated from the Cincinnati Christian University with a Master of Divinity Degree in Pastoral Leadership & Counseling with an overall GPA of 3.792. I have since applied to a Doctoral Program in Ministry. I have also started my own prison ministry outreach in 2006 and with my wife whom I met and married in 2005 through the Lord and two other ministers are serving prisoners throughout Ohio and halfway houses. In 2006 I was also licensed as a Minister of the Gospel through the Calvary Ministries International Inc. The Lord has since called me to preach and teach churches and Christian organizations how to start and improve jail/prison/reentry outreaches and to teach His people how to treat the oppressed, hungry, and imprisoned.