

GEORGE RECORDS-BIOGRAPHY

My story has a unique beginning. It also contains a winding journey of God calling me into the ministry. In retrospect, I was acting a little like Moses....and Jonah. Being “tapped” on the shoulder and hearing the call, but questioning how it would come to fruition. So, I now invite you on my journey.....

I was born and raised in the southwestern Kansas town of Liberal and am the 9th of 9, and yet an only child. While I was the only child from my parent’s union, my father had 6 children from his 1st marriage and my mother had 2 from hers. My father was 64 at my birth and my siblings ranged from 7 to 38 years older than me. Quite the gap! When I made my arrival, my parents were separated. Later, they divorced. Until the age of 12, I saw my father once a year. At the age of 28, I learned he had died the previous year. I was raised with my two youngest siblings by a single mother who worked as a nurse on the night shift at our local hospital. She worked hard to provide for her 3 children, working nights and sleeping days, thus absent from my school activities. As my youngest sibling was 7 years older than me, I was practically raising myself by the age of 5. We lived in a home devoid of God. I was a mischievous kid, but God’s hand was always upon me. At the age of 12, my youngest brother led me to Christ, and thus began my journey of growing as a disciple of Christ.

Before and during college, I was very involved in Youth for Christ and my local church. I co-started a community coffee house; led a Jr. High Youth For Christ Club; was active in the church puppet ministry; co-organized a street evangelism outreach; planned/organized/led an intergenerational mission trip to Juarez, Mexico; started a college campus Bible study; organized and led the youth ministry for the Gideon’s Kansas State Convention; was a church youth Intern; organized and distributed Bibles to every home in Liberal; taught various Sunday school ages; and served as guest “Preacher in training”. I encountered my first “God tapping” by my pastor to consider going into full-time ministry.....

So, off I went to Sterling College in Sterling, KS with drama and vocal music scholarships in hand. I met my “wife-to-be” while we were both Youth Ministry majors. We worked side-by-side co-leading Jr. & Sr. High Youth groups in a nearby rural church. Unbeknown to us, that was the start of our joint ministry. Then things took an abrupt change of course!

In the summer of my Jr. Year, my mother moved 5 miles from town, crossing into Oklahoma. Out-of-state tuition was almost triple that of in-state.... I could not afford to return to Sterling. I felt God’s second “tapping” leading me to continue ministry work with Youth with a Mission (YWAM) of Pasadena, California. I began as a student in their Discipleship Training School (DTS), taking part in the dramatic dance presentation, “Toymaker & Son”, which traveled throughout California, Arizona, and Mexico. Following DTS, I joined YWAM’s staff and became active in various outreach venues for the Los Angeles Olympics: Manning a 24-hr Crisis Hotline; staffing a men’s homeless/crisis shelter; and assisted Olympic spectators with food, water and various other needs. Post Olympics, I joined the YWAM staff at Centrum of Hollywood where I conducted individual counseling and transported food from donors to the shelter. While in Hollywood, I was asked to assist in developing and starting a Centrum of Las Vegas. There I worked at the Men’s Shelter, assisted with fund raising, and trained and staffed a 24-hr Crisis Hotline. Although these experiences did not lead to the possession of a college degree, they did afford me the unique opportunity to witness and grow in my walk.....to put feet to my faith in active daily ministry.

While I was involved with YWAM, I had lost contact with Joyce. She had transferred to another college and finished her undergraduate and graduate degrees. Ironically, while I was involved with ministry work in Liberal and with YWAM, Joyce was continuing ministry in her home church as the Youth Director. Time passed, I returned to Liberal, and we reconnected during a Sterling College Homecoming. Over time, our friendship rekindled, grew into a flame, we became engaged, I moved to her home town of Ottawa, KS, and we were married in her home church (Westminster Presbyterian). As I grew to know her long time pastor, Henry, I

encountered my third God “tapping” experience. Henry also felt God was calling me into full time ministry. I, on the other hand, continued to mimic Moses and Jonah for the next five years.

As newlyweds, Joyce and I worked hard to pay off our student loans, tried to start a family, and I considered and attempted nursing school (following my mother and youngest sibling’s careers). We remained extremely active in church: Chancel choir; handbell choir; co-taught adult couple’s Sunday school class; developed a couple’s ministry; served as Elders and Deacons; attended and led simultaneous Bible studies; co-lead marriage workshops; I worked as part time Youth Director; and was invited to guest preach on several occasions at two churches. The “tapping” continued.....

After a complicated pregnancy, our first daughter, Kaitlyn, was born 2 weeks prematurely. Our second daughter, Ashley, was born 12 ½ months later. Joyce gave up her job as a Kansas Probation Officer when the girls were born, and returned to work when the girls were 1 & 2. Life went forward, we focused on raising our children, we continued to volunteer in the church in various capacities, and I continued to guest preach. During their elementary school years, we were convicted to have Joyce quit working and homeschool the girls through High School. God’s “tapping” in my life grew in intensity, yet I remained unsure how to answer....

In 2002, Joyce shared she felt it was time we headed the “tapping”. First on the agenda was to complete my Bachelor’s degree. After researching options, talking to Presbytery personnel and our pastor, and praying for discernment in meeting the required steps ahead, I successfully completed my degree in 2004. Simultaneously, researching seminary options began and doors started to open!

First, I opted to ease into seminary by taking on-line classes offered through The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS) in Dubuque, IA in 2005. Shortly thereafter, I was approached by my pastor with the invitational opportunity to fill the pulpit for a nearby rural church seeking a seminary student. The arrangement was mutually advantageous--they had a need met and I was being given a great opportunity to grow in my preaching and ministry skills while attending seminary. With the support and covering of our Presbytery, the Executive Presbyter, COM and CPM, I began my relationship with Rantoul Community Presbyterian Church. Classes went well, I continued to work full time as a semi-driver, preached and ministered at Rantoul, remained active in my local church, and made time for our family. In 2008, I added the full time 5 year distance program at UDTS with the support of my family, the backing of Westminster’s session, and Rantoul’s congregation. I was one busy man! Joyfully and gratefully, I graduated with my MDiv from UDTS in May, 2013. Since then, I have been completing ordination exams and other required process steps. This summer will mark the 11th year I have had the privilege of preaching and ministering to the Rantoul congregation through weekly worship, hospital/home visits, bereavement work, fellowship, and conducting funerals. Joyce has been very active with me in this ministry, and we will continue this work until God calls us to another church.

Our daughters are now young adults. One has graduated from college, and our second is due to graduate December 2015. Last summer we gained a “Son-in-Love”. We have both remained active at Westminster throughout our years with Rantoul. Joyce has served as clerk of session, on the Pre-school Board and Prayer Ministry Team, and co-taught adult Sunday school. As an Elder, she felt lead to use her Master’s degree in counseling to begin a helping ministry at Westminster as a Volunteer Lay Counselor and Small Group Coordinator. She successfully held that position for 2 ½ years. I have assisted in filling the pulpit when requested, participated in a men’s weekly Bible Study, and currently lead a small group Bible Study in our home.

I share all the above to bear testimony of God’s weaving of circumstances in my life. Not only to mold me into a better man, but to mold me and prepare me to teach....lead.....mentor....work with....encourage.....and walk beside a congregation full time in living forth God’s word in action.