

MY GOD STORY

I believe the local church has been my starting place for spiritual transformation. I have been baptized, confirmed and married in the church. My Native American mother Alice Bigpond Roach insisted we attend church while I lived at home. And when our daughter Melissa was born she was baptized in the same church. Unfortunately for me and my family it is about this same time that my prodigal journey away from God began and lasted for the next 10 years. During this time I searched for spiritual meaning for my life in several different areas, all of which I found unfulfilling. In 1981 after a home visit from a pastor from Alamo Heights UMC I began to seriously consider the depth of my faith. During our home visit I was asked about my spiritual journey and after I had shared my story and answered a few questions he pronounced his assessment and it wasn't good. I felt confronted when he remarked that I was walking on pretty thin shoe leather. I knew he was correct in his assessment and I believe it was part of God's perfect timing for our family. We had moved from Nebraska to continue the 2nd year of a difficult Physician Assistant program at Ft. Sam Houston. Like most students I was already in serious prayer and pleading with the Lord but we did not have a church family. Alamo Heights was to become our first church family along with my introduction to adult Sunday school. We continue to be in contact with a member of that first class 27 years later, our dentist Dr. Stephen Paine. After moving to Northwest San Antonio we began to attend Northwest Hills only for Worship on Sundays and I had not committed to myself to a deeper understanding of God's love for me. Consequently, I hit a spiritual bottom as I realized that I had achieved many of my goals for my life but continued to be unfulfilled. I sensed that if I signed up for Discipleship 1 Bible Study that my life would change so in typical fashion I procrastinated for another year until 1992. That year was a turning point in my life as I also attended the Walk to Emmaus in October. The value of God's word and His Agape love became real to me for the first time that year. The love of his people for me and his overwhelming presence suddenly became very real. I was then at the beginning of a new relationship with God and His people. This new beginning would include participation in a new ministry in an arena I would never have imagined. I would now become witness to God's transforming love in the lives of others. The ability of God to transform lives in front of my eyes would occur in 1993 when Susan and I became a part of Kairos Prison Ministry. I know men who have done terrible things that have been changed by God's agape love. Many of them will never leave prison and have lost status and power in the prison by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I wonder if I could do the same given their circumstance. Obviously they are convinced that the trappings of this life are temporary and Christ promise is eternal. I ever grateful that Christ is in my life because of the hope and comfort he provides me every day. I don't understand how others face life without Jesus and His Holy spirit. Like everyone I have struggled with large losses in my life and each time God has been there for me even in my disappointments.

Currently I am serving as a facilitator in an Adult Sunday School class and as Evangelism Chair both of which are important to me. This involvement keeps me connected to this transforming experience I call the church of Jesus Christ. I do not believe I will drift away again because I really believe regular participation at NWHUMC helps draw me back to the foot of the cross. I pray that during our time of worship we all can regularly stand near that place of love and sacrifice, the cross. That during our time of

worship we are reminded that Jesus would rather have suffered and died on the cross than live eternally without us.

Chuck