

My Faith Story

I am Bill and I want to share with you my walk with Jesus Christ.

In 1975, I was “flying high,” at least as far as the standards of the secular world were concerned. I worked for the grandson of R. J. Reynolds in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and was able to buy a nice lakefront house for my family to enjoy. I attended church with my wife Connie and our three daughters on a semi-regular basis but I must admit that I did not get too much out of going. I identified my religious affiliation as an *agnostic*.

A funny thing happened at a **Lay Witness Mission** at our church. The weekend was filled with testimonies of how God was working in the lives of the visiting mission team, and there was a significant emphasis on having Small Groups help participants get a closer walk with God. I surprised myself and Connie by going to the altar with her on the Sunday of the Mission, but I had a lot of learning to do.

The first thing Connie and I did was to join a Small Group. Uncertain what to do, we all decided to get out our Bible, read and study the Book of John because we were told that would be a good place to start. That was good advice. We learned much about the Bible and enjoyed the company of those who were in our Small Group.

This process was repeated as we moved quite a few times over the next 20+ years. We continued to go on Lay Witness Missions and join Small Groups in each of the churches. We came to realize that the **Small Group experience** could be best defined by 4Fs – Food, Fun, Faith, and Fellowship – not necessarily in that order. When all was said and done, we went on twenty-five Lay Witness Missions in seven different states and participated in Small Groups in seven different churches.

Over the years, both Connie and I obtained our Christ Servant Minister certifications and filled the Pulpit for many different churches when their Pastor could not be there. I also felt a **calling from God** to do more for Him, so I studied to become a Licensed Local Pastor and started my pastoral ministry on July 1, 2011. I absolutely enjoy doing what I am doing, and I hope to continue for as long as I can.

I keep thinking of the song “If My Friends Could See Me Now.” I know the friends I had when I was growing up and my fraternity brothers in college would not believe that I was the same person they knew. I am not. I am a new creature, and I consider it a privilege to be able to tell others how their lives can be changed by confessing their sin and giving control of their lives to Jesus right now. As Paul tells us in **Romans 10:9 (NRSV): “because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”**