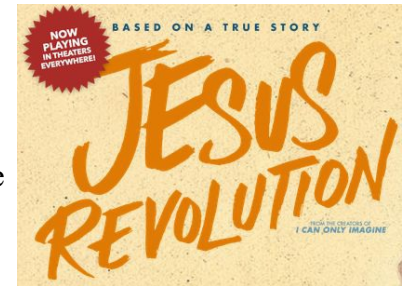


## Living Water

In the New Testament part of the Bible, John chapter 4 has the story of Jesus talking to a woman at a well. Part of the dialog (verses 10-11, 13-15): Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?”.... Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” Jesus was referring to a person’s spiritual hunger and thirst for God, that can only be satisfied by inviting Jesus into one’s life through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

I am writing this report after my wife, Gail, and I viewed the new, 2023, movie “Jesus Revolution”. It is a docudrama showing some aspects of a spiritual awakening that happened in the 1960s and 1970s. Though it limited its scope to happenings related to Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, California, and its ministry to people of the hippy culture, there were other groups around the country and the world that were participants in the spiritual awakening within their own situations. I will review from our own lives what we saw and were aware of as God was enhancing the faith of many people globally.



I grew up in the liberal part of the Lutheran church, participating in Sunday school and worship services and eventually the confirmation program. My faith was inspired by the life of a grand-aunt, Lillie Carlson, who served as a Lutheran deaconess at a home for the elderly. By the end of the confirmation program, an overview of the Bible and of basic Christian teachings, I declared that I would follow Jesus for the rest of my life, and I really meant it. I did, however, wish that God would make himself real to me at some future time. Thereafter, during high

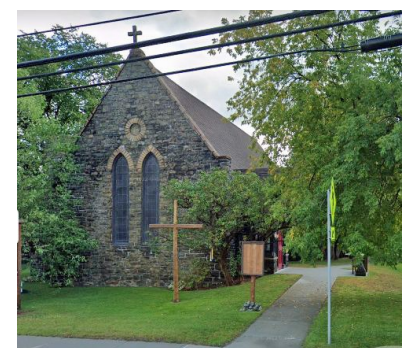


school years, I read through the entire Bible at about a chapter per day, in partial fulfillment for the Boy Scout’s Lutheran Pro Deo et Patria (For God and Country) award. And I was a regular participant in church activities including choir and adult studies.



Ed at confirmation time, Carlson sisters: Effie Holroyd (grandmother), Margaret Larson, Lillie Carlson

During later high school years I gradually drifted away from my peer group of other boys, who did not appear as devoted to Jesus. In college my studies were intense and I did not have time for other people apart from family. I developed loner tendencies. In the Summer of 1964 while doing nature studies at Whiteface Mountain in New York’s Adirondack Mountains, I attended an Episcopal church in a neighboring village. There was a substitute priest for four weeks while the regular priest was on vacation. He was Father Pugh from a church in Schenectady. For three Sundays, as he talked about the First Great Commandment (love God with your whole self) I was mentally checking off that I did love God as best I could. Then on 23 August his sermon was on the Second Great Commandment, to love your neighbor as yourself. The Holy Spirit drilled into my mind that as a loner I was not loving others by ignoring them. I agonized on that idea for several weeks as I went back to college, realizing that I could not change myself.



St. James Episcopal Church, Ausable Forks, NY

I generally walk faster than normal people, so in a crowd the people become an impersonal obstacle course. One

day, likely in September, as I was returning to the campus library after lunch, God “zapped” me with a sudden feeling of his love for me and for the people on the sidewalks. It was a spiritual high that eventually faded over a week. However, God became real to me, in answer to my previous prayer. He also healed me of the bad parts of my loner tendency. He started me wondering if my studies, which had been aimed at weather research in graduate school, should be redirected to pastor or mission studies. As it turned out, a career change was not part of God’s plan for me. About a half year later God directed me to start teaching Sunday school and eventually help in the congregation’s youth group (but that is another story). I became more eager to participate in congregational activities and service. That was the start of my spiritual awakening, but I knew nothing about the Jesus Revolution happening elsewhere.



Univ. of Rochester campus, library in rear

Through high school and mid-college years I had no friends who were girls. Then I supposed that at my increasing age I should be getting to know some. I cautiously expressed interest in a girl from that church in the mountains. But after about 1.5 years we broke up, influenced by a bad experience and a series of dreams that God was using to warn me against that girl. For the next three years or so I had no further interest in any girl. Eventually Gail came to work as a data clerk in our department in graduate school. (This photo was staged by the photographer when I had only minor curiosity about Gail.) As we got to know each other, Gail was wondering why a future scientist would be a follower of Jesus. Gail had dropped out of church and any faith when she went to college. We had many discussions about the faith. As our interest in each other became stronger I was aware of God’s recommendation that a Christian should not marry a non-Christian. Gail came to a genuine faith in Jesus by Easter 1969. Then God gave me a final episode of that former dream



sequence but with an opposite impact. I interpreted it as approval of marriage now that Gail was a follower of Jesus. I view Gail as a gift from God because I had not been capable of choosing a good wife in a normal manner. More than a week after our 21 December 1969 marriage I had to go to northern Japan for two months of snowstorm studies. We added our own money and Gail came along. Then we went home the long way, visiting weather groups and Lutheran missions in Asian and African countries, including five days in Israel. That was also a 95-day round-the-world honeymoon. I was still wondering if I should be involved in international missions, which is why we visited some.

Back home I resumed my several congregational and regional church activities. However, God sent another dream series indicating that even though I was busy in church things, I was backsliding from the spiritual high that I had several years previously. I was healed from that by listening to a new Christian radio station network while doing weather studies for my thesis. The stations had previously been for classical music, which I liked. But they got purchased by the ministry of Pat Robinson. That exposed me to modern Christian music from the Jesus Revolution and theologies (much charismatic) that had some differences from my Lutheran understandings. So I grew in my faith as I used the Bible to sort out those differences. That pulled me out of my backsliding and interested me in how I might share my faith, though there was no one to teach me how to do so. There was one radio broadcast that exposed me to Biblical creation evidences as opposed to the theistic-evolution with which I had been raised. As I was finishing my Ph.D. work, I applied to give a research paper at a weather conference in Australia. That led to being accepted for work in Australia for my first job, 1971-1974. (A recession blocked work in America.)



In Epping, a suburb of Sydney, Australia, we immediately joined St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, teaching Sunday



school and working with the youth group. Later I served on the church council. I soon joined two youth organizations that were expressions of the Jesus Revolution in Australia. They were expressing a real, rather than nominal, faith in Jesus and actively sharing it with others. So I was exposed to street and concert witnessing styles.



Outdoor concert at Vision Valley



Indoor concert at Vision Valley

Later we attended youth concerts at a new interdenominational retreat center, Vision Valley, near



some land we had purchased. We were part of an audience in the Sydney Opera House during a recording session of several Jesus Revolution musical groups, as we sang with them. Towards the end our Australian stay we helped with the organization of a national Lutheran youth gathering which invited two of those musical groups.

At our local Lutheran church the pastor had the youth group evening consist of a Biblical study for most of the first hour and then fun activities for the rest of the evening. The youth tended to skip the first part. As it turned out we had to let the youth group die. We later got a new pastor. During our final half year there the youth group came back together with different youth, and they considered their most important part of the evening was their Bible study and prayer time. The Holy Spirit leading had spread to them as well. While we rejoiced in the wonderful change, we were a bit saddened that we had to go back home to America and could not enjoy the new spiritual orientation of this refreshed youth group.



Our Jesus Revolution sticker after 50 years of wear on my clipboard.

Soon after our arrival in Australia we bought 5 acres of virgin forest land northwest of Sydney and visited it often, later making plans to build a home there. Along the road to our land we passed the national headquarters of Christian Literature Crusade (a worldwide organization). We stopped often in their book store to get books to read, especially for the boring days when I was waiting for cloud developments to study in central Queensland. One day the president of CLC suggested that I take with me an extra suitcase filled with their modern Christian literature and make it available in the outback towns there. Sensing God's leading, I accepted, though I had no sales experience or interest, and visited churches on Sunday, making the books available for sale. The rules were to bring back the unsold books or the money. I got to read most of them during the idle times. I typically sold a third of my inventory on each trip. That created such a hunger for such Christian literature that the local Lutheran pastor in Emerald invited the Lutheran Publishing house of Australia to tour the entire region with a large truck filled with such books. They also sold a third of their inventory. The spiritual awakening was happening there. One Sunday I gave an Evangelism Explosion book to the local Anglican priest who was somewhat discouraged in his ministry. The next year he was a very enthusiastic pastor, having been inspired in his own faith by the stories and content of that book.

Reading all of those books at home and in Emerald Queensland exposed me to important conservative theology. To satisfy my growing interest in witnessing (as a loner I had not developed my verbal skills and needed to learn

some good words) the Evangelism Explosion book by D. James Kennedy was best, giving me a Gospel outline with appropriate words. I just lacked someone trained in that program to take me with them on visits. The books by Francis Schaeffer were difficult for me to read, but their concepts were important in upgrading my theological understandings. Scientifically, I got to read books by young-earth creation scientists. The Genesis Flood, by Whitcomb and Morris, had the science and the theology in the same book. Though I initially did not like its rejection of evolution, I had to face their valid scientific and theological arguments. That started a ten-year switch in my understandings leading to total trust in the Genesis version of Creation and its Biblical justifications. The death-before-Adam issue was very important in my adjustment.

For the second and third of three Easters in Australia I joined one of the youth organizations (mostly high school, some dropouts, a few college kids, and a few older adult leaders) as they went to the outback town of Bathurst, NSW, to witness to participants of the motorcycle races there. Some of the riders were similar to Hells Angels gangs. The Methodist church in town let us use their side building as “The Den” to provide a coffee house with live entertainment for the racing guests. We decorated the building inside and out.



Methodist Church, Bathurst, NSW



Decorated as The Den



Preparing signs for The Den

During the daytimes our teams passed out invitations to The Den throughout the town and racing facilities. During the evenings we had our team active in three groups: the musicians, the waitresses, and the table hosts. While the musicians were playing the waitresses were in a back room with specific prayers for what was going on. I was at the tables talking to our guests between the performances of different musical groups. While some cycle gangs were doing damage in the Bathurst area, the local police knew from past years experience that they had few worries about the activities at The Den, even though some of the guests had guns in their vehicles.



Musicians practicing



Street and bikes outside The Den



View of tables from stage



After morning's debriefing

After breakfast the next days our entire team had debriefing sessions, as team members explained what they were experiencing the previous evening. What impressed me was that the prayer team described their specific prayer contents. For my first Easter at Bathurst they had been praying for me that my special backgrounds (including Ph.D. scientist) would become involved in my conversations with table guests. Then I recalled that my three dialogs that evening were indeed specific, including a guest that brought up astrophysics topics (as in my B.S. in astrophysics). In my growing up in the traditional Lutheran environment I was used to general prayers, not specific ones that got immediate and

identifiable results. So I witnessed the power of prayer by the youth team at Bathurst.

God sent me to Australia to change me to a conservative Bible-trusting theology, a new variety of service styles, and into a more effective witness, well beyond ordinary congregational activities. There were some people, upon discovering my witness to Jesus, who said that I should become a minister. I responded that it appeared that I should remain a scientist. I am more of a threat to nominal and unbelievers by not being paid to promote Jesus. In a statement for the local newspaper in Emerald, QLD, I wrote that God has given me two tasks: to help make clouds rain (by cloud seeding) and to help make Christ reign. He uses my career to place me where I can serve Jesus. So I was being groomed by the Holy Spirit during those years that the Jesus Revolution was happening around the world in many places, enhancing the faith of many with the “living water” promised by Jesus.



Sydney Harbour, 1971

By Dr. Ed Holroyd, 4 March 2023

Photo from September 2022

