



The PickWIC Papers

Westminster Presbyterian Church, PCA
Volume 6 Issue 1



April 2018

My Journey into Calvinism

By Amber

I grew up in a Christian home where the Bible was read daily, and prayer was important. My father often told us children the story of his faith. I honestly cannot remember a time I didn't know Jesus. As a child when I would lie awake at night afraid, I would run to the living room and grab Daddy's Bible to take it back to bed with me. When I would get sick, I would ask Daddy to pray for me, believing that Jesus *always* answered his prayers. God was always a focal point of our home and anyone who entered would know what we believed. The funny thing about our family's Christianity was that we never attended church regularly. Not that we never did, it just wasn't every Sunday. There were periods of time that we didn't go at all. We always attended a nondenominational church, a charismatic church. I didn't know what that meant as a child, but I just knew that's what we were.

I don't ever remember a time that I doubted the Bible was true. I remember always wanting to know more about the Bible and God. As an adult I began reading Christian authors that my parents and grandparents read, such as Kenneth Copeland, Jesse Duplantis, and Joyce Meyer, to name a few. I was totally immersed in the Word of Faith movement. I didn't always understand the way these "pastors" explained the Scriptures, but I thought they just knew more than I did, and I went with it.

I spent years accepting and not understanding what was being taught. A few years ago my brother Brian began talking about Calvinism, and a different way of understanding the Scriptures. Let's just say I didn't embrace the doctrines of grace right away. Let's actually say I was hostile to it. Everything that I was hearing was completely opposite of what I had learned growing up. How could any of these things be true? God chooses who is saved? We are completely dead in sin? You can't lose your faith? God doesn't always answer your prayers

the way you want? As my brother began to share his faith with my husband Mike, and he began to accept Calvinism as truth, I had to really start examining what my husband and brother were saying.

T.U.L.I.P. was what Mike first used to walk me into Calvinism, showing me in Scripture exactly what it was that Calvinists believe. He began sharing teachings from Charles Spurgeon, A.W. Pink, James White, and Mark Driscoll. I marvel at the way God began changing my heart. As I listened, God slowly began to open my eyes to things I hadn't seen in Scripture before. I came to realize the teachings that I had accepted for years in the Word of Faith movement fell short of accurately representing the Word of God. When I read the book of Romans now I can't believe I ever doubted the doctrines of Grace! Words like justification and sanctification are now in my vocabulary, and they are good! I see the term Calvinist now as a label I am okay to take on, and find nothing derogatory about it. I am a Calvinist.

I see life in a completely different way now that I am a Calvinist. I see God in control of everything. I can rest easier knowing that the Creator of the universe holds me in His hands, and His plan is perfect and I can't screw it up. I look back on my journey and see how God was working all along. I see how this journey was bringing me closer to God, but also to our church at Westminster. I am so grateful that God has a reformed, Calvinistic church planted right in my backyard. *Sola Reformada!*

LINCS~ Ladies Intent on
Nurturing, Connecting
and Serving



A Winter Vacation

By Cynthia



When you plan a winter vacation, you think Florida or Arizona-not Canada. But when my ski club announced a trip to the Quebec ski areas with hotels in the city, I thought, “Why not go along? Let someone else make the travel arrangements.” As it turned out, about half the group shared my thoughts. “In a city which was founded in 1608 by the French, and located right here in North America, there must be lots to see.”

The guide books recommend walking to see the historic building and the parks. Actually the weather is quite mild in February, but Quebec has a “survival” attitude toward cleaning its sidewalks. They may not clear them all the time. One of the sights on our city tour was the snow dump area—several football-size areas where the city dumps snow all winter long.

Out in the St. Laurence River which flows by the city is Ilse d’ Orleans which the First Nations people (that is the term in Canada for Early Americans) settled first and raised food for the city. Now it looks like a beautiful area for vacation homes. The U.S. city, New Orleans, got its name from this spot. Another sight along the River is Montmorency Falls. These falls are higher than Niagara and in the summer a cable car travels over them. Touring in the winter, we just viewed them from the top and the bottom.

Another sight is the Ice Hotel. There are other Ice Hotels, but they are only in northern cities. Visitors can tour the hotel during the day and sleep there at night. The rooms have beautiful carvings by “ice artists”. When the weather gets warm, the hotel closes and it is rebuilt in the fall.

A good place to visit on a snowy day is the Museum of Civilization, a beautiful building which tells the history of the First Nations people then and now. It also explains why so many people in Quebec still speak French. The skiers in the group reported that the snow wasn’t great and by the fifth day only one guy was left going to the slopes.

I would recommend off-season travel but don’t plan on doing everything the travel guides suggest!

Return to Avonlea

By Dusty

I have always been in love with Prince Edward Island and the world of Anne Shirley. *Anne of Green Gables* is an all-time favorite and I read it every 1-2 years! In fact, I’m hoping to go to PEI someday in the far away future. Avonlea is a real place in my eyes!

I’ve learned much from the writings of L. M. Montgomery about description and painting pictures with words. Floral beauty, smells wafting off the pages, quotes galore!

Anne is a delightful, yet unexpected heroine. She gets into scrapes, but through them she learns humility and friendship. She is positive and sees the good in others first. Anne is genuine in most every way.

Anne of Green Gables is definitely a must read for young girls as well as the young at heart. I am transported back in time with even the name Avonlea. I would encourage everyone to jump into the pages of this beloved classic. ‘Don’t you feel you just loved the world on a morning like this?’ –Anne

Hope By Jane

Clouds, Clouds, Clouds.
More clouds.
Dark clouds.
Thick clouds.
Gray and white clouds,
Day after day,
Blocking out the sun,
Hanging there,
Bringing no sustenance,
Bringing only sadness.



The sun shines brightly
Above those clouds,
Gilding the heavens,
Reminiscent of
Bright Autumn days,
Full of Color and Warmth,
Of Gentleness and Promise.
Memories, to encourage us,
Until Spring sunshine
Brings new Life and Hope,
Warmth and Gratitude.

My marriage or God's marriage...

By Stephanie

I was 16 when I met my husband to be. I was hooked instantly on those eyes and his smile. He was pretty darn cute. He was 18, and one of my brother's good friends. We didn't officially start dating until I was 17, after he kind of stood me up for my Junior prom. He told me he couldn't make it because he had to work. He lived down in southern Illinois at the time. Then here comes prom night and there he sat, on my parents' couch, in the basement, hanging out with my brother. Oh well, high school was a long time ago...right?

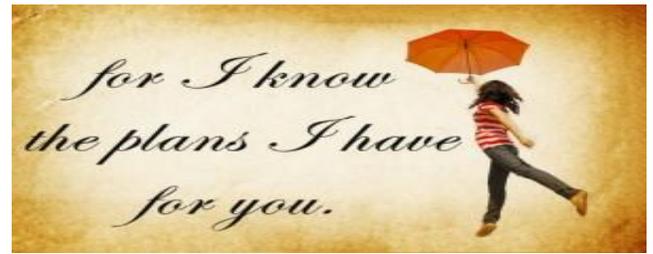
Anyways, my mother knew he was the one for me maybe even before I did. She always said I had a look in my eyes when he was around. She told me he was the one I was going to marry, and here we are, almost 15 years into marriage. She was right, but of course she would be, she's my mom after all. So I did as she predicted and fell head over heels for that man. I still feel the same to this day, but married life isn't just between a man and a woman, God's in there too.

It's funny how God works. See, Derek (my husband), isn't a believer. He never was and I knew that. I also knew God said not to be unequally yoked, but I assumed it wasn't an actual command. I mean it wasn't in the Ten Commandments or anything. Boy, was I naive! And so very young in my faith.

Regardless of our religious differences, I thought somehow I could convince him or change him. I could make him believe in Jesus. I could make him see the truth. I could give him salvation. I couldn't have been more wrong.

I was young. I loved Christ, but I didn't always seek Him first. I sought my heart, my feelings, my emotions when it came to so many things. However, God, being the merciful loving Father He is, used my bad judgment and bad decisions to grow me and mold me into being more like Him. That's not to say there haven't been many failings in my walk, some I wish I never had to admit even to God, as if He doesn't already know the deepest darkest corners of my heart and mind already.

Still, I find myself lying awake at night thinking about some of those sins, regretting and praying for God to take the guilt I feel away. I pray for Him to erase them completely from my memory. But alas, that's not quite how He works, is it?



Even though I proved to be a less than stellar wife at times, God has never given up on me or my marriage, maybe because it isn't just my marriage. It's God's too.

One night, I was praying for Derek's salvation, and I was challenged to think, "Would I still love God if Derek was never saved?" Cue the waterworks! Tears flowed down my face that night, as I silently cried next to the man I loved and had pledged my life to. I was probably around 23 years old at the time, just learning about being a first time Mommy and realizing God is demanding me to love Him more than the tangible man lying next to me.

Let's be real, it's not like this was a new concept to me. I knew like every Christian, that God comes first, but sometimes in life we don't realize when our devotion starts slipping from Christ and over to something or someone else. Hmmm, maybe that's why God says not to have idols before Him. However, still being fairly young and having had my life recently changed in becoming a mom, it was a hard question to be faced with, and to be quite honest, I didn't want to face it.

I felt as if God was asking me to wrap my head around the possibility of living in an eternity without this man I was to grow old with and just had a child with. "But Lord, this is the love of my life!!" I felt like I screamed inside my head. "How can you expect me to spend eternity without him?" Oops! Did I just admit to placing a man above God? In that moment I was reminded of what Christ bore on the cross that day for me.

My sins put Him on that tree. He bore them willingly, in order to spare me. I knew in that moment that I needed to correct my thinking. I had to have faith and trust in my God more than I trusted anything else. God had to be above my marriage, and yet, all throughout my marriage as well. He could not and should not ever be beneath it. I am nothing without God. And I never want to imagine living an eternity outside of God's presence.

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I know Derek is in God's hands, not my own, thankfully! God has a perfect plan. I have to be obedient in loving Him, following His Word and raising my kids to know the Word. I can't create salvation or give salvation. But my perfect wonderful Lord already has, and it is for Him to give and Him alone.

I'd love to say that after that moment I fully trusted in the Lord over myself and marriage and never sinned again, but that would be lying. I have fallen so far in my marriage at times, but God has pulled me back up and out of the pit even when I felt like it was hopeless. God is faithful and righteous and that I will never doubt!

Please join me in prayer for my husband's salvation, and please join me in prayer for my boys and myself, that we might seek Him with all our hearts.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

Russian Teacakes

Recipe submitted by Jane

1 c. butter, softened
1/2 c. sifted powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
2 1/4 c. flour
1/4 tsp. salt
3/4 c. finely chopped walnuts



Mix butter, sugar and vanilla thoroughly. Sift flour and salt together, mix into butter mixture. Blend in nuts. Chill at least one hour. Roll dough into 1" balls. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet. Cookies do not spread. Bake 10 minutes at 400 degrees, until set but not brown. While still warm, roll in confectioners' sugar. Cool. Roll in sugar again. Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

The Andersons

By Gerry

Lane and I have been worshipping at Westminster over 20 years. We transferred our membership from a PCA church in Delray Beach, Florida. We enjoyed the Florida sunshine for 8 years, but were both born and raised in Chicago and are happy to be back in the Midwest.

We have two kids, both adopted as babies. Our son, Erik, is married to Susan and they have blessed us with two grandkids, "Kat" 24, and Lane, 18. Lane is currently in the Air Force training to be a load master for a C5 aircraft. Susan, also Air Force, is deployed to Kuwait until July. Chief Erik is Air Force retired after 26 years and with some of his time he enjoys playing the bass for his church and youth services.

Our daughter, Dina, got married April 21 and we are very excited and happy for her. She met her new husband, Carey, at a party given by a high school friend and her husband. They discovered that both of their careers involved finance, statistical analysis and stuff that is way over my head. Their marriage ceremony was at the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago and the celebration followed at Theatre on the Lake, almost in Lake Michigan. We've been absent from worship because of various wedding planning, dress fittings, ordering a tux, a wonderful engagement party, and the wedding. Most important is that both Dina and Carey are walking with the Lord and attend Moody Church in Chicago.

God has blessed us with 58 years of wedded bliss and we hope to celebrate 60 with our church family in 2019.

Women need women,
to think biblically,
live covenantally, and
pass the legacy on to
the next generation.

An interview with Sally, Part 1



Sally, you have a beautiful farm! What is your favorite part of living in the country?

My favorite part would be the privacy and the open country, where you can see for miles. Also the beautiful sunrises out my kitchen window and sunsets when I get outside on an evening! Also, to be able to have space for kids to run and gardens to plant.

Have you always lived out away from town?

For the most part, I grew up here where we are at now. I was a 1 year old when I was brought here. We married when I was age 19 and moved to Fairbury then, stayed not too long there and ended up moving quite a few times after that, but ended up back here in 2002 and have been home since.

Did you come from a large family?

Yes. I had quite a few siblings, there were 8 total, but I never got to meet my oldest sister because she died at birth. Mom and dad had adopted a girl at the time, then went on to have all of the rest of us after that. So as of now I have 3 older sisters, 1 older brother and 1 younger brother. We had some tragedy in our family when I was 4. My brother who was 6 at the time was killed on a farming accident, and in 2005 my other older brother who was 39 was killed at his farm when a round bail fell on him.

What life experiences have had the most influence on the woman you have become?

I guess I would say times of losing my brothers and my mom when I was only 19. And of course losing our 8 year old son, all the deaths in my family have made me see life is so fragile and this life is so short. Just like the Bible says life is a vapor. It has made me more compassionate towards those who are hurting and suffering from a loss. Knowing we have to go on even when we don't want to, also at times feeling like the Apostle Paul, wanting to die too and be with Christ which is far better, but knowing to stay is what we are called to do at the moment.

Tell us about your family! You recently got a new daughter-in-law, how has she brought beauty/joy/gifts into your family?

Of course we can see the benefits of Wade being blessed by a beautiful woman who loves him and the Lord, what a blessing for sure. She is a very organized woman and caring and compassionate. She grew up with divorced parents and she has been so grateful for us to be still married. She is so thankful to have found a wonderful husband too.

Is Tanya glad to have another girl around at family gatherings?

For sure, she doesn't like always being the only girl, but there are blessings in that too; 02154851she and I have been able to be closer I am sure, since there isn't another daughter to have to share mom with. 😊

Look for Part 2 of Sally's interview in the next *PickWic Papers* edition!

The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (also known as **The Pickwick Papers**) was the first novel by Charles Dickens.

Written for publication as a serial, *The Pickwick Papers* is a sequence of loosely-related adventures set in 19th-century England.

In her famous novel ***Little Women***, Louisa May Alcott uses these "papers" as the basis for a Pickwick Club started by the March sisters. Each girl submits a story, a theatrical excerpt, or a recipe for each edition of their very own "Pickwick Papers," read aloud together in their family attic.

The ladies of WIC have decided to borrow this clever title (slightly altered) as we publish our very own WIC newsletter—you will recognize the similarities.

WIC Leadership Team and prayer meetings are held each month the last Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

All ladies and youth girls are welcome and encouraged to attend!