

# TESTIMONIES

"Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you..."

I Peter 3:15

SOME WORDS FROM ONES WHO WORSHIP AT BROADMAN



**ANTHONY TONY PARKS** (born 1968) During the late 60's and early 70's, my childhood was upset by my mother's divorce. She had married young, and unfortunately separated early. She was raised Catholic, by her parents, and had even briefly attended a Catholic University. My life centered around my grandparents, until my mother remarried. My brother and I, as well as my infant sister, spent many sleep-overs at my grandparent's house. The drawback to this was having to attend church every Sunday with them. Since my stepfather was not very religious, the extent of our practice was limited to weddings, funerals, and the holidays of Christmas and Easter. During the fall of 1988, after my sister's life ended abruptly, the entire family questioned God as an entity, but not as anything more than that.

Over the course of the next several years, my brother married, began raising a family, my parents struggled with a difficult separation, and my stepfather eventually died a few years after the divorce. At my stepfather's funeral, I learned that my brother was attending a Baptist church in Medina, and invited me to visit. I chose to attend for a few months, and became confused when the pastor was not able to answer questions that arose within me. I drifted away due to what I perceived as his disinterest. I met the woman who would become my wife in the

Spring of 2004, and we dated for 14 months prior to tying the knot. When I originally met with her family, I had been forewarned that her father was a strict Southern Baptist man, but found that I agreed with his values. I'd attended a handful of services with my wife's family, prior to our wedding, and except for the pastor droning on at times, I found I understood. We were married in the only church my wife had ever known, and as it was, the same church her family had either helped build, or had all previously been wed/birthed in. I spent 18 months of marriage without ever having attended church, but when my wife lost her job in December of 2006 she felt that a sign from above. We agreed to attend the church she'd located in the Southern Baptist Convention.

I'd been faithfully attending regular church services for a few weeks, and witnessed my wife become a member of this church. During the final altar call of 2006, something inside clicked, and I felt myself striding up the aisle. I cannot begin to describe the feeling of awe I received upon asking Christ to be my savior. The old me "died" on December 31, 2006, but I was reborn again spiritually prior to the tolling of the new year.

I'd begun my journey with Christ, and had my own mantra, "A new me, for a new year". As a relatively "new" Christian, I've discovered a yearning for knowledge as a means to "catch up". I've found I enjoy the fellowship that I share with other members of the Body of Christ, and strive to do all that I can to better my life. My relationship with my wife and even her family is stronger, and I believe that when my mother's third husband died early this year [2008], my Christianity has helped me to help her overcome her loss. During a normal phone call a few weeks ago with a coworker, I was startled to learn of his joy after "witnessing" to him. As he explained it, he had hoped that I would find my way to Christ eventually, and proceeded to tell me of others who shared our beliefs. I look forward to my journey ahead of me, and know that through Him and with Him will I accomplish that which He has put forth in front of me.