

# ***Jay & Roseann's Testimony***

## **THE EARLY YEARS — ANCHORAGE, AK**

Roseann and I were “born-again” during the early 70’s in an era called the “Jesus Movement.” We met in Anchorage, Alaska where I had been stationed in the Air Force. We both attended a church called Abbott Loop Community Chapel (ALCC) and were married there in May of ‘74. ALCC was a vibrant, growing, charismatic church. ALCC had a vision to replicate the activities of the early church in the book of Acts and did it. Such a place of miracles and healing and the gifts of the Spirit manifested.

## **FORT WALTON BEACH, FL**

Team-after-team of young pastors was sent out of ALCC, each with their own vision to plant a new church in the states and other parts of the world. Roseann and I were sent out as the twenty-fourth team in January of ‘76. I was twenty-four, she was twenty, and our daughter, Angie, was only four months old. We pioneered our first church in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, the same place I was saved, four years earlier. We stayed there for seven-and-a-half years. During that time—and I must say “by a divine manifestation of God’s sense of humor”—we grew to 350 people and planted four other churches.

## **SPRINGFIELD, OR**

In 1983, I felt my assignment was complete in Fort Walton Beach, so I turned the reigns over to my successor and moved to Springfield, Oregon to join one of our fastest growing sister churches in the ALCC network. God sent us there to fill a desperate need they had for a part-time Bible School. They needed a teacher, so I pioneered and developed a curriculum for them over the next three years. The school grew to 250 students. It was in that church where we met Kris & Lori who were still single and in my Bible College. We were their elders during that time.

## **MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

When our assignment in Oregon was done, God sent us to pastor a small struggling church in South Minneapolis, MN. After three months we moved the team of members to a more thriving location in Eagan, MN, and grew over the next four years to 600 people. We pastored that church for eight-and-a-half years and then moved to Atlanta in 1994 for a much needed sabbatical.

## **ATLANTA, GA**

During our time in Atlanta I wrote and published a novel, painted for an art publishing company as my tent-making job, and finished my Doctorate of Ministry (D.Min). Roseann began a new career in real estate, and our children, Angie and Aaron, grew into their adult years, leaving us behind with an empty nest.

## **LAKE NORMAN, NC**

God has worked mercifully in our lives through many mistakes and failures, as well as successes. Roseann and I had learned much during our first eighteen years of ministry, but, in 1994 we needed a break—three-plus years worth. But in October of 1997, the Lord confirmed (after an extended period of prayer) that He was returning us again to plant a new church in a new location—Charlotte, NC. It was at this time that the Lord gave me the name “River’s Edge Church.”

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1998, Roseann and I arrived with our truck full of furniture and belongings at 19625 Shevington Drive in Cornelius, NC. We came in faith and obedience to fulfill God’s plan for our lives; but we had no jobs, no team, and no one was waiting for us to be their pastor—we simply had an assignment to repeat what God had called us to do twice before. Of course Roseann made me promise we stay here and she demanded that we buy cemetery plots. Something I haven’t attempted to do, yet (smile).

We took our time settling in and then found jobs for immediate income. To get to know the area and pray over the lake's surrounding communities, I delivered pizzas for Dominos for six weeks and worked in graphic arts with a Sign Company. I then took on a remodeling job for nine months in Charlotte until the Lord released me to concentrate full-time on the church. Roseann found employment at Lake Norman Ford as a receptionist until she passed her NC Real Estate license test and went to work for Lake Norman Realty.

During this time we began to meet people and trusted God to connect us with those he had called us to love in Christ. I also concentrated on the Davidson College and met kids on campus. Once several relationships began to emerge we decided in May of 1998 to meet weekly in our home on Tuesday evenings. We focused on building strong relationships with our new friends and fed them foundational teachings from the Bible.

When we grew to eight adults (we weren't in a hurry) we decided to move toward the next phase of our church planting and launched a Sunday morning service on January 24, 1998. I chose this date because Roseann and I started our first church in Florida on that same weekend in 1976. It also happens to be my birth date and we were the 24<sup>th</sup> team to be sent out of ALCC. Is it any wonder my Bible number is 24? It happens to be the number of "priesthood" and "intercession."

It was difficult to find a public location for our Sunday Morning meetings. We needed an affordable place to grow for an extended period of time. So we searched and searched, but found nothing available. It seemed that Cornelius and Davidson were locked up. We felt so strongly, however, that we should stay in a central area to the I-77 corridor communities, that we continued our search. Finally, through much prayer and God's providence, we acquired the use of Davidson Elementary School on South Street. In the first year there, Kris & Lori Kawulok came to team up with us which has been such a blessing. We met there a total of four years, building our team until the Lord opened the door for us to meet in Davidson Day School that leased the facility we meet in now. Davidson Day moved out into their new facility and the Lord gave us a permanent location to lease where we are and grow in Davidson.

There isn't enough space to tell you of all the miracles the Lord has done to get us this far. The rest of our story, however, is "...*to be continued*..."

A story that might include *you*.

## **PRAYER**

Let me leave you with a prayer I wrote in my journal when God began to nudge me back into pastoring and considering a move to Charlotte. It plays a significant part in the birth of the vision for River's Edge.

"...Today I stand convinced of God's call on my life...I lay my life at your feet, Lord...my gifts, my aspirations, my agendas, my dreams. You take it from here. I cannot do it in my own strength. Obstacles abound that would hinder me from this course, but you, O God, are an awesome God, with whom nothing is impossible. This journal will reveal a journey into the demonstration of Your power. I await with great anticipation!..."



October 9, 1997