

R. STEVE REMBERT
Faith Journey

1953 I was born and baptized into a Presbyterian family and church in Dallas, Texas. I was nurtured and fed in Sunday School and Church. And yet, there came a time in my later high school days when I began to question and doubt the Christian faith. That continued as a pre-med student in college. Unfortunately, I did not receive answers in the church, only puzzled looks that said, "You're not supposed to question like that." I did not run away like a wild, prodigal son. I more drifted away in my head and heart.

That summer after college I went to travel around Europe for 2 months by train with my best friend. At the end of that trip in the fall, I spent 4 months at L'Abri, a Christian community and study center in Switzerland begun by a Presbyterian minister, Dr. Frances Schaeffer. I was able to ask questions there and find answers. It was there at the age of 21 that I committed my life to Christ. From that experience I think I have learned to be sensitive to those who are struggling with faith questions.

On returning to the U.S., I worked at Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas (since I had wanted to be a doctor). But, as I began working as a volunteer with the Senior High youth in my home church, I sensed God moving in my life in a different direction from medicine. I wanted to help people in a different way. I traveled 10,000 miles on a Greyhound bus pass to visit seminaries (and friends). I worked another year and a half in Dallas in a business office before finally moving to Chicago to attend Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. During that time I also ministered as an intern for 2 1/2 years in a local Presbyterian Church. I still hear from some of the young people I worked with there, which has given me a deep appreciation of the value of working with youth who are at such a critical time in their development. After receiving a Master of Divinity degree (with emphasis in Christian Education) in 1980, I moved to a town just south of Atlanta, Georgia, where I was ordained as an associate minister of education and youth. My first year there I also took some extra classes at Columbia Theological Seminary (since I had not graduated from a Presbyterian seminary). This was a church in a town of phenomenal growth. People came if you just kept the doors open and had decent worship and education.

While there I met Betsy Pope. We were married in 1984. Seven weeks later we adopted 2 brothers from El Salvador, Michael and Jonathan. A year later we birthed Susan. And 2 1/2 years after that we had Jennifer. But that is running ahead in the story! In 1986 we moved to 2 small yoked churches in northwest Louisiana cotton farming area. These were small, family oriented churches in an area of declining growth where we felt like we had to work hard just to hold our own.

Both Betsy and I had an interest in World Missions (she had even taught missionary children in Korea). We applied to our PCUSA Board of World Missions and were accepted to serve in Kinshasa, Zaire (Congo) running a hostel for overseas visitors and for 16 teenage children of missionaries. In the fall of 1991 we were evacuated after an uprising. Africa was an entirely different level of learning to trust God, but we loved our years there and they certainly expanded our vision of the world. For the next 8 months after returning, we lived in missionary housing next to Columbia Seminary, speaking to churches across the South about missions. This was exciting to get to taste so many different flavors of churches (not to mention tasting so many different pot-lock suppers!). In June of 1992 we went back into the pastoral ministry in Arkansas. We saw some very positive growth, both numerically and spiritually in a church that was good, but needed some revitalizing.

After 9 years in Arkansas, we moved to Erwin, Tennessee, in 2001. We have enjoyed our years here in a small town on the Appalachian Trail, just north of Asheville, NC.

Five years ago we also adopted Alex, a teenage boy from an orphanage in Ukraine.

Our 2 other sons now work as a lifeguard at a YMCA and as a nurse in a nursing home.

Our 2 daughters are both teachers, one near Fayetteville, NC, and the other in Columbia, SC.

Faith Statement

I believe in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I enjoy the Father and this world He created and put us in. I am amazed by the Son who would come to earth as the baby Jesus, show us how to live and love, and be willing to die for our sins as the Christ, the Messiah, then be raised from the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit who blows as the wind if we will must put up the sails of our life's boat and allow the Spirit to blow our lives in whatever direction God chooses. That is part of the excitement of living the Christian life and trying to make Jesus the Lord of all that we do, say, and think.

I believe in the Bible as the written Word of God. I need to read it more like I believe.

I believe in prayer as communication with our loving God who cares about each one of us personally. I need to take more time to be nurtured in that relationship.

I believe in evangelism and missions and the need for each individual to share their faith with those they come in contact with as well as helping others go share where we cannot. And thus may God use us to draw other people to Himself.