

Chapter 00 — Introduction to Spiritual Stories Library

These stories are the spiritual experiences that have occurred in my life. When I began listing the topics, the number of experiences was much greater than I expected.

I spent my working career as an engineering technician performing design and test work on large farm equipment. I wrote many technical reports. The format for that work was reporting information and conclusions in a very factual manner and in a specific order. Learning to write stories has been an adventure and a learning experience. I have attempted to tell you my experiences as interesting stories rather than reporting cold facts. However, you will see some of the old “just the facts” creep into my stories.

The Holy Spirit has been at work in me during my entire life. I first began to recognize that in 1975. My visit to Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks in 1993 put focus on the great impact the Holy Spirit had on the life of Maxine and I. After the death of daughter Kim in 2000 and wife Maxine in 2005 there were even more experiences of the Holy Spirit in my life.

In 2006 I was working to find my way in a world without my beloved Maxine. I had arranged a meeting with Pastor Diane to discuss transferring to a new church. I told Pastor Diane about the death of Kim and Maxine and the reasons I wanted a new church home. She said we needed to get the Holy Spirit active in my life. I told her the Holy Spirit was already active in my life and she encouraged me to tell her about it. After the first story she encouraged me for more and then more again. I spent the next hour and a half telling her some of my stories. I had been asking God for a sign about what my direction in life should be. On April 20 of 2006 Pastor Diane delivered that sign. As I concluded telling a story, Pastor Diane leaned forward in her office chair, looked me straight in the eye, and said, “My friend you have a calling to tell your stories.” We ended our meeting with a prayer.

I was dazed and overwhelmed as I walked out of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa. It took me a few weeks to absorb being told I had a calling to tell and share my stories. Even a stubborn Dane can recognize that God had delivered a sign via Pastor Diane. I commenced work to learn how to write and share my stories. As I began writing, I realized I would bare my soul in these stories. This was a challenge because I am a very private person. A trait, right or wrong, that I inherited from my father. I paused my writing to reflect on baring my soul as I pondered the stories. I decided to continue. I firmly believe we improve our lives and the lives of others by sharing. I believe I have a calling to tell and share my stories. I know not for whom or why I am to do this but these are the stories about my spiritual experiences.

As you read these stories, I am working to write other stories about experiences in my life and the life of the extended Stratton family. My hope is these stories will help you in your spiritual journey on this earth.

Gary