

About the Author

The Testimony of Eric J. Ellis...the short story

I grew up attending the Episcopal church. I have since been active in Baptist, Pentecostal, non-denominational, and “wilderness-community churches”. I was also active in Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship during its heyday. I am born-again, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and pressing into maturity in Christ as we are called to in **Ephesians 4:13**.

My record of romance is a tale of being once divorced, and twice widowed, but presently very happily married. There are no children.

The career path I walked includes surveying, teaching, carpentry, management, forestry, and engineering. I am currently retired.

We are not attending any church at this time, however we recognize “church” as often being a vital part of one’s growth in the Lord. A major focus of our present calling is to write about Bible concepts & patterns to share with others. These writings are meant to especially encourage those who have a “knowing” that there is more to a walk with God than a walk with the institution called “church”.

The Testimony of Eric J. Ellis...the long story...a good part of it anyway

I was born in 1951 in Lewiston, Maine to a carpenter and housewife. I grew up a country boy in a happy home in the Lewiston area, the middle of three sons, along with one sister, (who is about a year younger than me). We attended the Episcopal church. It was here that I made a public profession of my faith in Jesus when I stood before the congregation in my early teens and recited the Nicene Creed. It was something we did called “confirmation”, but for me it was more than a ritual, I meant it. My father stopped going to church once we children were all in High School. He said that the church was dead and so was the Bible. I had to agree about church, but I knew that answers to life were to be found in the Bible. I tried to read it but could not understand much of it at all.

Meanwhile my mother continued to take us to church. Not much changed until after I graduated from High School in 1969. At this time there was a mighty move of the Holy Spirit in our area. My mother noticed something unusual about a substitute priest. She noticed something different about this man. He had a deep peace and love of the Lord. He had some type of connection with God. She found out that he had a Bible study in the basement of a Catholic monastery and so she went to it. It was at one of these studies that she learned about the Holy Spirit. And it was there that she was baptized in the Holy Spirit. She became a different woman.

She soon had my father at one of these meetings. He too received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That night he also received a miraculous healing from whooping cough. He was a very changed man which everybody noticed. No longer was he the somber quiet man who had survived Iwo Jima as a marine in WWII. He was now a bundle of life and joy. All of us children soon followed to these meetings and experiences, except for me. That summer I was working, (between my early college years), in the Rocky Mountains for a mining exploration company. My mother wrote to me about what was going on. Her letters were disturbing. Hadn't we always gone to church? Had she fallen into a cult? But cynical dad would not have been so easily taken in by anything religious. If he was on board there must be something to it. This prompted me to study all that the Bible had to say on the Holy Spirit.

I found the Bible to say that the Holy Spirit leads us into truth, comforts us, tells us of things to come, and empowers us to draw closer to God. Also, the Holy Spirit was freely given to any who would seek and ask. I wanted this. So one night I left the tent and walked out into the mountains and talked out loud to God, asking Him to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. I did not experience anything as my parents had, but I did believe that I had received it because the Bible said that "ask and you shall receive". I expected to be drawn into greater understanding of God.

In retrospect the first thing that I noticed was my hunger to read the Bible. But this time it read differently. I was understanding it as never before!

Upon arriving home at the end of the summer I went immediately to the University of Maine, so I missed out on the meetings that my family was attending. The University was a place swimming in drugs, alcohol, and great immorality. This was disturbing to me but I thought that it was still a better place to be than Vietnam. Without the University exemption I would have been drafted. I am a very slow reader but I survived college and graduated with a science degree (Biology). I then went on to obtain an education degree.

I wanted to share my fascination with creation and so I taught elementary school for a few years. I had married a Canadian gal, in direct disobedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaching I had at that time was that you can never fully obey anyway so do pretty much whatever you want to and God will forgive you because He loves you so much. I paid bitterly for that disobedience. After one week of marriage I cried out to the Lord. He told me that the situation would be resolved in four and one-half years. Meanwhile I was to love my wife as Christ loves the church. This caused me to draw near to God since I needed Him to do this through me. I know that He did because people did not suspect that anything was wrong. We were even asked to do marriage counseling, which we declined. We had attended a small, country Pentecostal church during our marriage. The people and the worship times were wonderful.

At the end of the time I expected things to get better, but instead she left me. So in the summer of 1978 I left my teaching job in Nova Scotia and returned to Maine as we divorced. Her name was Grace. I had learned about God's grace (as mentioned in **Titus 2:11**) the hard way. There is an element of God's grace where He gives us enough rope to go our own way and then taste the fruit of it. It is part of learning discernment.

I left teaching a year after returning to Maine. As for being single again, I had learned to have the fear of the Lord about choosing a mate. It was about a year after my return that I went to visit some new friends. I knocked on the door and a friend of theirs opened it. When I saw her the Lord spoke to me and said “This is the woman that I have chosen to be your wife.” I had not sought a wife or asked for one so I was shocked. I moved cautiously. It wasn’t until it was confirmed in many ways, (including dreams & visions), that I married Beth. She was 4 or 5 years older than me, had a chronic disease, (juvenile diabetes), and had only been a Christian a year. Certainly not one to be on my radar screen, but this union had the clear direction of the Lord. This time I trusted God and went His way.

The first year with Beth was a wonderful adventure. The Baptist neighbor who had brought Beth to the Lord gave us two-acres of land for a wedding present. We built a workshop there using trees from the land for the lumber. It would later be converted into a home for us. We married in the Baptist church which was within walking distance. The Baptist Pastor was our other neighbor. We lived one-mile back in the forest behind the workshop down a discontinued dirt road. Our home was a one-room log cabin. We had a hand pump for water and an outhouse for a bathroom. There was no electricity. We grew most of our own food, all organic. I built a root cellar and sap shed and food drying racks. The following 21 years however the dream life quickly evaporated as they became filled with trips to the hospital and caring for Beth through her transplants, dialysis, a partial leg amputation, strokes, and a variety of other medical horrors.

When Beth and I first married I had a dream to start a business designing and building furniture. It seemed like a joke because although I had learned roofing from my dad, I had no tools, no shop, and did not even take shop classes in high school. I knew nothing about how to build furniture. But I knew it was God. I made a sign in my driveway that quotes part of Psalm 127, “Unless the Lord builds the house the labor is in vain.” It was the Lord so He would build it and He would get the glory. Initially He taught me in dreams how to design the furniture. I would sketch the details out as soon as I woke up. As I was faithful and diligent the business expanded until I was designing and building houses and hiring others too. He also built our marriage and directed us in building a house that was to become our new home.

About a decade after we married I was prepared by God to make a career change. He said that it would be in “middle-management”. He would put me in a fire between labor and upper manager, where their problems would slide downhill both ways to me. He said that I had learned (in terms of character) what He intended through my self-employment and now it was time to flip me over and cook the other side!

Soon after a phone call came from a Vice President of a large sign company. He needed a purchasing agent and production manager. Wally needed an honest man for the job. He woke up one night with the words, “Hire Eric Ellis”. It was at Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship that he had met me. My Father was President of the Southern Maine Chapter and after he passed on I was President for awhile.

I worked at the sign company as I had everywhere...unto the Lord. After a couple years or so I told the President that if he got me a computer with certain software and specs I could organize

things so efficiently that he could eliminate my job. And so he did. Within a few months my job was over. That was the fall of 1993. The job had been stressful, but I had enjoyed both it and the people. The President took me out to supper and personally thanked me. I knew that I had learned through that job all that the Lord intended. It was time for the next chapter.

Soon after Beth would be in a wheelchair. She would be confined to a wheelchair the last seven years of her life. We continued to grow closer to each other and the Lord through it all. I built a handicapped-accessible house attached to our home so that I could keep Beth at home. The original home we then rented out as a Bed & Breakfast called “Cornerstone Cottage”. That helped pay for nurse care.

In this marriage with Beth I had learned all about the faithfulness, a fruit of the Spirit and how it is cultivated. I knew that she was His choice for me, I knew that this was part of His plan for me and so I had stayed in the fire. His highest choice is always the cross. I had drawn very close to the Lord through this marriage, for it was only in Him that I could gather strength and peace to deal with life.

Within a day or so of leaving the sign company I received a call from a friend of years back. Stephen was a plumber with a large family. His hands could no longer do the work so I had tutored him nights until he obtained a college degree. He had moved, then gone on to get a job with the State Fire Marshal’s office. He called for carpentry help, but when he found out that I was recently unemployed he insisted that I apply for a job in his office to regulate the fire sprinkler industry of Maine. At first that seemed ludicrous to me but then in everything that I’d ever done I knew nothing about it when entering! God had always kept me in a position of desperately calling out to Him for help and this would be no different.

The next 20 years were spent at this job. As all other jobs it was challenging to do it as unto the Lord, but it certainly was a blessing in many ways.

During the first seven years of this time Beth’s life was clearly fading away. Toward the end of her life I was starting to understand many scriptures that previously were a mystery. They were the ones regarding “sonship”, “the Feast of Tabernacles”, (the third feast), and prophetic types in the Old Testament that pointed to this. I had been taught that this was all relegated to the time after the resurrection of the saints. I was taught that Jesus did it all, so don’t look for anything more. Yet some Bible verses indicated otherwise. Looking back, I had found that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a very scriptural and important step beyond initial salvation...in fact made possible because of salvation. This second major step has helped me to grasp the scriptures not only with my natural mind but also in Spirit...both Word & Spirit as essential parts of my walk with Jesus. And now, was there another very scriptural and important step in our growth in our relationship with God that was beyond the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Yes!

I searched and found a group that included this “sonship” in their teaching & preaching, but it was two hours away...too far to travel when Beth needed me at home. I did not attend this group until Beth passed away peacefully at home in December of 2001. At her funeral I finished presenting her

eulogy when by the Spirit I noticed something strange in the eyes of those packed into the pews. It was as though a groaning creation was at last beholding a son. It was then that I realized by God's grace I had passed a test that I didn't know that I was taking. I had just been trying to hold onto Him and do the right thing through the fire. My peace had come not through my circumstances but by knowing where I was supposed to be and staying there.

There had been no physical union with Beth during the last eight or so years of her life due to her medical conditions. I was faithful to her but the real test came when I was single once again. This was my next fiery trial. At different times several beautiful young married women let me know how unhappy they were in their marriages. They wanted to have regular communication with me, which I turned away from. I was desperate for a woman but had the fear of God about touching a married woman. I thought of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

Without God's help I would gravitate to the tares in my heart, the natural first Adam man. I needed Christ more than ever. I lived one day at a time, working long hours, jogging, splitting wood by hand, and calling out for God to help me through that time, and He did.

I had a spiritual hunger as well. At that time, early in 2002 I started traveling to attend this "sonship" group that met in a barn in the small country town of Bradford. Their annual Bible convention was March. It was there that a widow named Mary happened to sit next to me. She had helped pioneer a wilderness Christian community farm in Alaska. She was back visiting relatives in Maine. We ended up together, again knowing that this was orchestrated by God. Those next couple of years were the happiest in my life. It was also through Mary that the Lord taught me much about Bible verses that formerly had been a mystery to me. The Word was opening up in a new way, just as it had when I was baptized in the Holy Spirit.

It was during this glorious time with Mary, (when there were no storms in my life), that I followed the Lord's leading to study and become a licensed Professional Engineer. It was another miracle achievement that only God could have done. And then the next storm cloud gathered. Mary had breast cancer. The doctor gave her a year at best. When nearing her death bed we moved to her wilderness farm, (Whitestone), in Delta Junction, Alaska where her two boys were with their families. I didn't expect to be gone long but she decided to do a nutritional approach which brought a turn-about. She recovered significantly but the pain meds had already destroyed her liver. She lasted a year beyond expectations before passing. I held my job down by remote computer during this time.

I returned shattered. For months I would wake up at night finding myself crying or in a sweat. Nothing in life seemed to matter any more. The Lord reminded of what Mary had said when I asked her how she coped when she found that her husband and oldest son had just died in a plane crash. She said, "All I knew was that I had to go forward." I knew what she meant. We cannot change what has been, but in Christ we can get up and keep moving, trusting that He will work all things to the best. And by His grace that is what I did. I was quickly losing interest in the things of this world.

After a year or so I was led to visit a friend in Florida to help him with his wife as he had helped me with Beth. We went from there to visit a Christian community farm in Naples, Florida. But instead of ministering to Myrl Allinder, he and his wife imparted life to me. He had always encouraged me on in the Lord. I started to come out of a fog and a smile was coming back to my face. It was there at the farm, (not looking for a wife), that I saw another Mary...Mary Elizabeth. When I first saw her the Lord quickened me that she was to be my wife. She was eight years older than me, but I knew this was God. She had never been married and not even dated since she came to Lord in her 20s. Later that year we married.

Then Mary Elizabeth had a dream from the Lord to sell the 180 acres of forest land that I had acquired bit by bit over the years. In the dream a buyer was to come the following week and we were to sell it for a certain price. All of that happened. Then she had another word from the Lord. This time to sell our home with its attached seven acres. Within three days of the Realtor posting a sign we had a buyer. We didn't know where to go. Then I awoke one night and knew where to go. It was a new rental attached to an home by a lake close to work. I had inspected it during construction at the owner's request many months prior. When I had done the inspection I remembered seeing just studded walls with insulation going up. Yet at the time I felt in the Spirit that it was "home". At the time I had no thought of selling the house that I had built.

The apartment was available and we were there for two years or so. I did work on the orchard, garden and property for our elderly widow landlady. I also cut and split her firewood. We worked together. The neighbors joined in too. It was all led of the Lord. The Lord was showing me that the best way to hear His voice and feel His presence was to pour out ourselves in love so that there is room for His life to flow. It was a wonderful chapter in our happy marriage. This time was also spent downsizing, getting ready for the next chapter.

I was directed to retire. That was the fall of 2012. We then were led to the area where we fellowshiped, which was Bradford. We thought that we would rent from someone in the church but door after door kept closing.

Then I took Mary Elizabeth to see a beautiful log home from the end of its long driveway, even though the home was not for sale. The owners however were in the driveway and they invited us to see the home. When we walked in I had the same familiar feeling from the Holy Spirit that this was "home" as I had before. It was not for sale or rent, but we knew we were to be there. A few months later they contacted us and asked if we would be interested in renting. He would be away for some time and they needed someone to stoke the wood boiler and plow the driveway in the interim. We know that we are to help his wife until he returns.

To shorten the story we designed and built an apartment in their daylight basement. We have been here since the spring of 2013.

In the fall of 2013 Mary Elizabeth was diagnosed with both melanoma and squamous cell carcinoma on her face. Through a dream from the Lord that I had, (confirmed with a word that

Mary Elizabeth received), we have been led to do a very rigid nutritional therapy. We knew that we were to do this therapy and to care for our new landlady and her property. God had made that very clear to us.

There was no time for church services. Between making juices however, we did have time in the Word as never before. The melanoma went away and the other cancer faded. And the time in the Word grew into Bible lessons to share with others. We learned more so the distinction between being part of a church organization as opposed to an abiding relationship with the Lord apart from that. We are part of a bigger “church”, made up of like believers everywhere, who we continue to meet. The Bible calls it the “*General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn*” in **Hebrews 12:23**.

At first it was startling for we came to that area thinking that the Lord wanted us to be active in the church group, but then discovered that it was to help a couple, (who were not part of that church), and to be in the Word. He used all of this to do a continuing work in us. We still saw other believers, and we still are very fond of them, but we were no longer a part of the church organizational routine. We were content in our basement apartment and very happy with our landlady.

But then on May 9th, 2015 the Lord spoke to us. I was in the wood yard and Mary Elizabeth was in the kitchen. At the same time we heard the Lord speak. He said the same thing to each of us. The gist of it was that we were to move. He would tell us on June 4th where we were to go. Needless to say we anticipated June 4th. We would really need to hear the Lord clearly. The day finally came.

Then on June 4th three significant things happened.

First...We received a letter that our primary care doctor had moved. It spoke of a door closing where we were. One less reason to stay put.

Secondly...It happened when I was reading a recent prophetic word by Maxine Hedlund. The part that leaped out at me was the part of why John the Baptist heard so clearly from the Lord. He was distinct from most others in his day in three ways. He was separate from the traditional religious system, (thus depending upon hearing the Father directly for spiritual direction). He lived in the wilderness, (not distracted by the cares of the world system). He lived a simple lifestyle, (not caught up in the pleasures & cares that pamper and distract). We were already separate from church services, studies, programs, conventions, , etc. So, I asked the Lord, “Where is the wilderness for us?”. He said “Aroostook County”. This is the northernmost (& largest) county in Maine. I asked what the simple lifestyle was. He said, “the Amish”. There are 3 or 4 Amish settlements in Aroostook County.

Thirdly...as I was going to bed the septic system stopped working! The leach field was full. That was the final nudge. We had to move on in faith.

Then I had a dream where the Lord showed to me the storage building of the property that we were to buy. I remember saying in the dream...”Oh, Lord...this is more than enough space!” The building had red on it. After several long trips to “the county” near the Amish settlements, we came across our present home. I recognized it as the spacious, red-metal roof storage building of

my dream. And the price was right. It took all we had, but we could afford it. The price had just been drastically reduced.

We spent our first night here July 31st, 2015. The home is a 28-year old mobile home that needed lots of work before the brutal winters set in. And the Lord has gave us an extended warm fall season and the mildest winter on record so far...giving us time to button up and get organized.

As a former builder of homes it would not have been in my top-10 great homes list. But His peace is found in being on the path that He has for you. We knew this was to be our home. It is special because His Spirit is upon it. And the land is a beautiful 4-acre parcel in the middle of an area of over 30 Amish farms...very rural and peaceful. We love it here and see it as a place of fruitfulness in many ways. And what a joy to see the transformation of the land & our hearts & His people.

We received three words from the Holy Spirit:

“I have prepared a place for you”,
“I will carry you there on eagle’s wings”,
and “I will establish you in the land”.

Since being here we can truly say that this home & location has been uniquely prepared for us in many ways. He made a way for us to find the place and a way to get here. Since our arrival we have been networking with the Amish, Mennonites and “English” neighbors. Regardless of varying backgrounds we are working together using principles of the Kingdom (without religious programs) in a flowing of His love. We each know our part, and we are happy to do it. There is no one leader. We each hear *THE* leader for our part. Living in the life of Jesus Christ is an adventure that one would not want to miss! He has networked us also with prayer groups. It is from the soil of this new lifestyle that the Bible Concepts lessons has emerged.