

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

October 6, 2019

“The Alêtheia of Alêtheia”

8:00 ~ Service - Communion is for all Christians

9:30 ~ Fellowship & Adult Sunday school

10:30 ~ Service with the King's Kid's - Communion is for all Christians

NEWS

Chili Cookoff and Pumpkin Palooza, Saturday, October 19, at 6:00pm

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at

aletheiachristianfellowship.podomatic.com

Like us on Facebook ([aletheiachristianfellowship](https://www.facebook.com/aletheiachristianfellowship))

Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, secretary@myaletheia.com, kids@myaletheia.com

Easter 1999 surrender to pastoral ministry

Fall 2003 surrender to full-time ministry and starting the church

December 2003 Alêtheia is officially born

January 18, 2004 Alêtheia's first service

October 31, 2010 Alethia has a home

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

John 13:34&35 ~ 34“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 15:12-17 ~ 12“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14“You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 17“This I command you, that you love one another.

Romans 12:10 ~ 10Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Ephesians 4:1-6 ~ 1Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

I Peter 1:22 ~ 22Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

II John 5 ~ 5Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Testimony Part 2 ~ 100619



Last week, we closed with my encounter with Jesus in 1992. Today we are supposed to talk about the church and its inception in 2003. I was asked by more than one person to fill in the gap between the two events. I'll quickly do that for context and continuity.

After the events I described last week, I was truly transformed in a dramatically obvious way. Right away, people knew that I was different. God instantly delivered me from my blasphemous attitude, from my constant rage, from my horrible tobacco addiction, and from my womanizing ways.

Other things took time, and some things are still a work in progress. I often say, I'm not only not perfect Christian, I'm not even the best Christian in our church. Typically, someone will take that the wrong way. I just mean that there are a lot of folks, right here, who do a better job of living what most folks would consider a good Christian lifestyle, than I do. At least in some facet, or respect. God's still got a big job ahead of Him, when it comes to me, but He's already done so much, we should give Him honor and praise – He's brought me a very long way.



As I mentioned, one of the first things I did after meeting Jesus was to marry Mariah. The Fourth of July

1992. She had proven her love, devotion and commitment through thick and thin. She had demonstrated tremendous loyalty, which is a character trait that I personally value above most. Loyalty is huge to me. Personally, I find disloyalty, repugnant – common, but repugnant.

Mariah came from a non-Christian home. Her parents didn't teach her about God, they didn't go to church and they still don't... Pray for them. They did allow her to attend church with her friends though, so she was open.

When I told Mariah that I met Jesus and that I was going to be a Christian fanatic from here on out, I didn't know how she'd take it. She was like, okay, good, let's be fanatical Christians. Well, that was easy.



I got everything square with the Air Force but knew that it was no longer where I belonged. Through a few more miraculous events, I survived some things and was able to transfer to the Air Force Reserve. It was the Ready Reserves, where I didn't do much, but for the next 27 years, I was on the hook to be recalled to active duty. All together about 40 years of military service, in one form or another.

My dad was offered a job flying a corporate airplane based in the Flathead. He was already 74 years old at the time, so the stipulation was that he would groom a younger pilot to take over for him.

I was that younger pilot he chose and so we flew together for more than four years until a pulmonary embolism sidelined him in 1996. He was a great pilot and I learned a lot.

Getting that gig with my dad was a real dream come true and although it wasn't all roses – I am grateful for our time together.

So that meant that Mariah was adjusting to the Valley as a brand new 22-year-old bride. It seemed good, the problem was, the job had me gone from home days and sometimes weeks at a time. On one occasion, I was home one day, in an entire calendar month.

Initially, Mariah didn't know anyone in the Valley, except my dad's wife, who treated Mariah horribly. She was a young woman, mostly alone, in a foreign place and quickly with child. It was a tough start for her. I'm sorry.



After I took the reins as chief pilot, I hired an old squadron mate – callsign “Walt,” as my copilot. He wouldn’t even consider the job until our mutual friend Smokey told him it was okay – Scott has changed. He’s a Christian now. Walt came up and flew with me for a week and was so amazed at my transformation he resigned from the Air Force and took the job. It was remarkable to me, because by then Walt was flying the F-117 Stealth Fighter.



After about a year, I sent Walt to school to get his type rating in the jet we were flying. It's a required certification to act as the pilot-in-command. His first flight back was as the Captain flying without me - another pilot was in his right seat. Walt got into trouble when a storm front passed the destination airport as he was landing. The winds shifted dramatically on him and it ended up being an ugly arrival and landing. Unfortunately, the company CEO, a nervous flyer anyway, was onboard and was terrified, even traumatized by the whole thing. He called me at home and insisted that I fire Walt. I pushed back as far as I could, but there was no reasoning with him.



Walt was a good man and had become a very good Christian friend. He and his wife had just had their third child and they had just moved into a home they bought in Kalispell. It was unpleasant business to say the least. It bothered me a lot and made me reevaluate my position. Shortly afterward, in the fall of 1997, I resigned from the company and became a pilot for Continental Airlines.

They based me in Houston, Texas. My dad had commuted to work as an airline pilot, and I thought it would be no big deal. I was wrong. My commute was twice as far, I had a tenth of the seniority, it was always at least two legs and the first one was always begging

for a ride in the cockpit of a rival airline – typically Northwest, or Delta.

I did it for a while, but it just became too difficult and so we very reluctantly, moved to the Houston area in March of 1998. We moved in the middle of a fierce blizzard – Me driving the U-Haul, Mariah completely freaked out driving a pickup behind me loaded with boxes and kids.

In our 5 plus years together in the Flathead, Mariah and I, had become the parents of Scotty, Katie and Cari, all born in Kalispell in 93', 95', and 97' respectively. We had also become very serious Christians serving at Big Fork Chapel.



You may know it; it is an Assembly of God church, still going today, just north of Bigfork. I was a Deacon, the adult Sunday school teacher and the Youth Group Leader. Mariah was helping me with all of that and also teaching Bible studies in our home. Even with all of that, I never felt like it was enough.

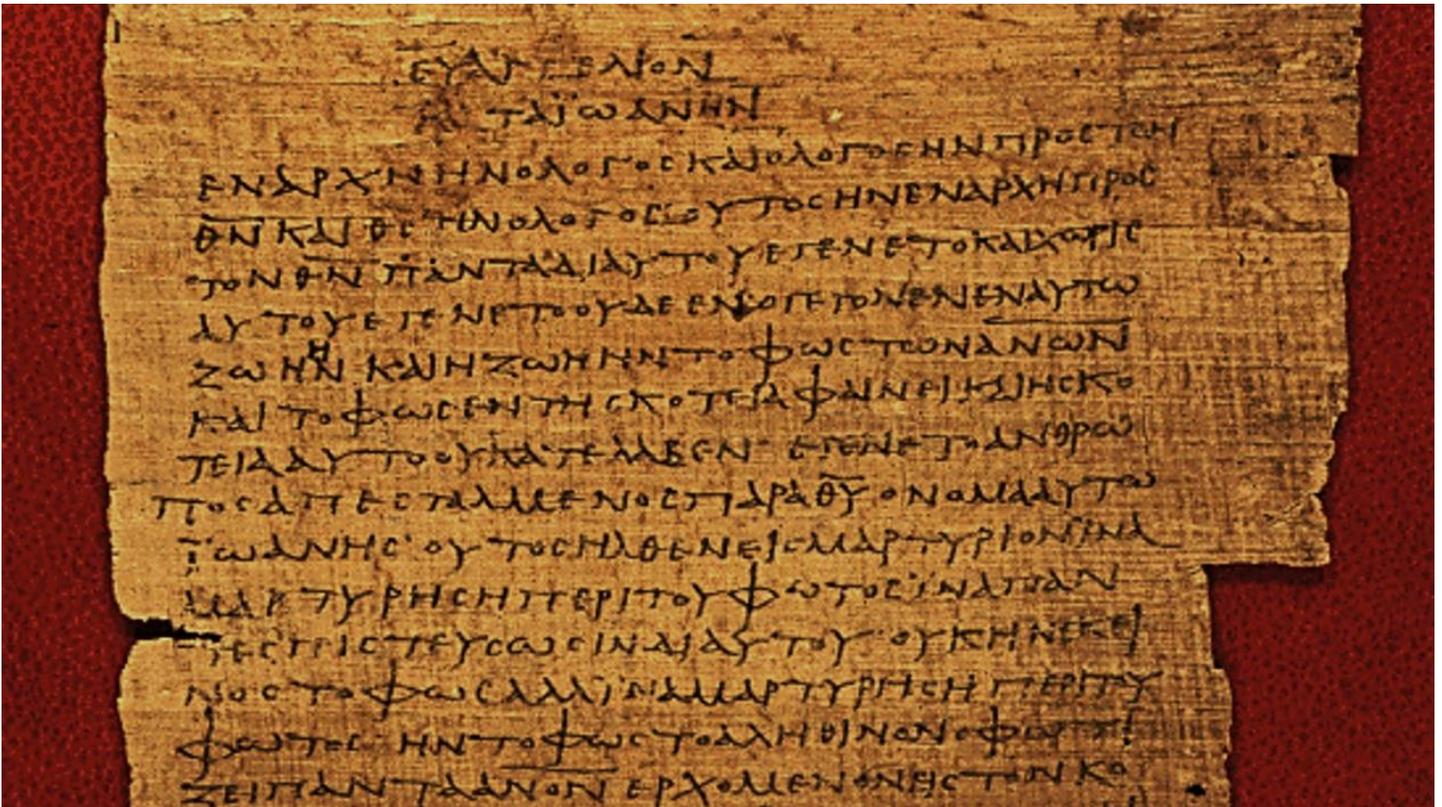
I knew God wanted a bigger commitment, mainly because He let me know that's what He wanted on a daily basis. Every time that I would pray, I would feel certain that I was supposed to be a pastor.

But, as soon as I stopped praying, I'd come to my senses. I can't be a pastor. If you heard even part of

what I said last week, you would agree. Anyone... Other than me, could be a pastor – I would be the last resort and I didn't think God was that desperate.

I was still 100% willing to serve God for the rest of my life – just like I promised, but surely not in any kind of pastoral leadership role. I felt like I was permanently disqualified from that, because of my past. Plenty of Christians then and now would heartily agree. Believe me I've heard it.

I finally mentioned the nagging feeling to our pastor at the time, and he didn't offer much insight either way. He probably would have agreed that I was not a good candidate, but diplomatically recommended taking some classes towards ordination while I figured it out. My first course was Greek 101.



It was perfect for me. I loved the whole idea of removing the English translators that stood between me and the original writings of the Bible. To see a photograph of a 1,800 year old Papyrus copy of the Bible and read it – well I thought it was cool.

It wasn't just that though... Learning to understand the Bible at a more basic level was very appealing to me, because of what I mentioned last week.

All of my life, people, human beings, so-called experts and self-appointed prophets, told me what Christianity was about. The Catholic church, and then the Mormon church, and then a whole host of Charismatic

Pentecostal groups, and then a cult and then various mainstream Christians, all had not only said they had the correct Christianity – they had the only Christianity.

Man-made interpretation, full of man-made rules makes for nothing more than man-made religiosity. I didn't want anything to do with it before I met Jesus in my office, I didn't want anything to do with it as a new Christian and I don't want anything to do with it today.

At the end of the day, every person on the planet decides to what authority they will submit. I have preached a whole sermon on the subject before, but suffice it to say, everyone must trust something.

It might be a hodge-podge of ideas that you pick and choose like a philosophical smorgasbord. It might be science, or some wiseman, guru or charismatic life coach. It could be a religious institution, or denomination... For me it must be God. God Himself. If God were unknowable, I could live with that far better than I could with someone else's theories on the matter. I could be okay with agnosticism, if God were unknowable.

Fortunately, He is not unknowable, because He has revealed to us everything that He wants us to know about Him in this life. He has given us His Holy Word through the prophets of old, through the manifestation of the Word in the flesh and through the Divinely Inspired Writings of the Apostles and their proxies.

We have the Bible. The only reason anyone would disregard clear Biblical teaching to do something else is because they don't trust the Bible as God's Word created and preserved for us through time.

It must be the Bible and the Bible alone. I love church history and from it, we have a rich heritage that is of tremendous benefit to us, but none of it rises to the same level of the actual Words relayed, recorded and protected through millennia by Almighty God.

The better we are able to understand what the Bible actually says, the better we know God and what He wants from us.

It is no accident that the name of this church family is Alêtheia – Truth. While I loved the people at Bigfork Chapel, I had become more and more aware of the various errors in the denomination's doctrine. Bad

doctrine either comes from, or leads to, bad theology. In other words, if your position concerning Christian belief and practice is faulty, it will show up in your thinking about God.



Anyway, we said goodbye to great friends and moved to The Woodlands, Texas. Once there, we hit every church in the area – it was a lot of churches. They call it the Bible Belt for a reason. Down there if a church is small enough for a family atmosphere and some accountability, it's because there's something seriously wrong with it. The doctrine is off, or the pastor can't preach, or the people are scary, something... Otherwise the churches are 1,000 people plus.

We eventually found a small church that was very good – the reason? It was brand-new and hadn't grown yet. It was a church plant of the Southern Baptist denomination. We liked it and the people. Within a couple of years, it grew from about 100 to about 1,000.

Baptist's love testimonies. We weren't at the church more than about five minutes before the pastor was sitting at our kitchen table asking us how we had become Christians.

I gave him the same testimony I gave you last week. Well, praise the Lord, that's wonderful, he said. The next thing I knew I was giving my testimony all over the place. To the church leadership, to other Baptist pastors, to men's groups and then to youth groups. It was insane, but by going through it so many times publicly, it really helped me come to terms with a lot of my past. It was both cleansing for me and glorifying for the Lord.

While working through things and trying to really accept God's grace fully, my certainty about God calling me as a pastor was getting stronger. Every time I prayed it was worse, or better, I guess depending on how you

look at it. I knew God wanted me to be a pastor, but it made no sense, so as soon as I would step out of my prayer closet, I would, as ever, rationally come to my senses.

Even so, I figured I should talk to our Baptist Pastor, just to get his take on the phenomenon. He knew about me, what you all know – so the topic I was there to discuss was awkward. I sat with him in his office and hemmed and hawed for a while, not really knowing how to begin and so, I finally said just that... “I don’t really know where to begin.” He said, “Why don’t you just tell me that God is calling you to pastoral ministry?”



What? Why would you say that? He said, “Scott it is crystal clear to me, all the pastoral staff here, and the other people who have heard your testimony, that you are called – we’ve just been waiting for you to figure it out.”

I’m not sure I wanted his enthusiastic support on this thing. I think I would have been far happier if he’d have said, with your past, it’s a non-starter. Why didn’t he say, look you continue to fly airplanes, keep making a lot of money, keep giving generous amounts of it to the church, and leave the pastoring to good people.

I wasn't convinced and told him I needed more time. He was a good pastor and knew that you can only push people as far and as fast as they are capable.

He told me to keep praying and that he wanted to start meeting with me weekly. Mariah and I prayed and talked. The pastor and I started spending a lot of time together discussing all manner of things pertaining to ministry. I was allowed to do more at the church – lead classes, teach groups and do a little preaching at smaller, peripheral gatherings like at a Bible study, a special Sunday school event, or a Wednesday evening thing.

This went on for a while and we all seemed to come to terms with everything. It was time to take the plunge, we we're all on the same sheet of music, or so we thought. At the main Easter service in 1999, I was ordained. The next day the Senior pastor and I met as had become our custom. He asked when I planned to resign and come on board.

I said, "What?" Resign as a pilot for a global airline – "Are you crazy?" I can do both. I only fly 15 days a month – I can pastor the other 15 days. That morning

we discovered that we were not on the same sheet of music.

He was gracious about it. Patient with me. As I said, he knew that God moves people at His pace, not ours. He said it would be fine. He would still be happy to mentor me under those conditions and that it might be a good idea to get more Seminary classes under my belt and more experience preaching, before I transitioned to full-time ministry.

I had pretty much gotten over my past being a disqualifier for life, but now found that the idea of full-time ministry terrified me. So, while I had finally been able to wrap my head around being a pastor of some kind, I hadn't even begun to wrap my head around not being a pilot anymore.



I must tell you that I loved being a pilot. I loved the everything about the actual flying, the combination of technical expertise and hand-eye coordination was and is very appealing to me. I also love the prestige. I know people who don't think much of pilots, but from my personal perspective the only thing better than being a pilot was being an astronaut. I was proud to be a pilot. For me it was such a cool profession that when people would ask me what I did for a living, I was embarrassed to say because I felt like I was bragging. Beyond that, the lifestyle was amazing. I had so much time off, my neighbors thought I was unemployed. There is no better view on the planet than the view from a pilot's office window. Finally, the money and the benefits were

outrageous for the amount of work you did. I still keep in touch with several of my pilot buddies. They are all barely working, 6-7 weeks of paid vacation a year, not to mention ample sick leave, travel and other benefits, making \$250,000 – 300,000 per year, and getting ready to retire on 2-4 million dollars.

So, it was a terrifying idea – full-time ministry, as in, no longer a pilot.



The pastor continued to mentor me weekly, I took classes towards a Master of Divinity degree and I started preaching Sunday sermons occasionally.

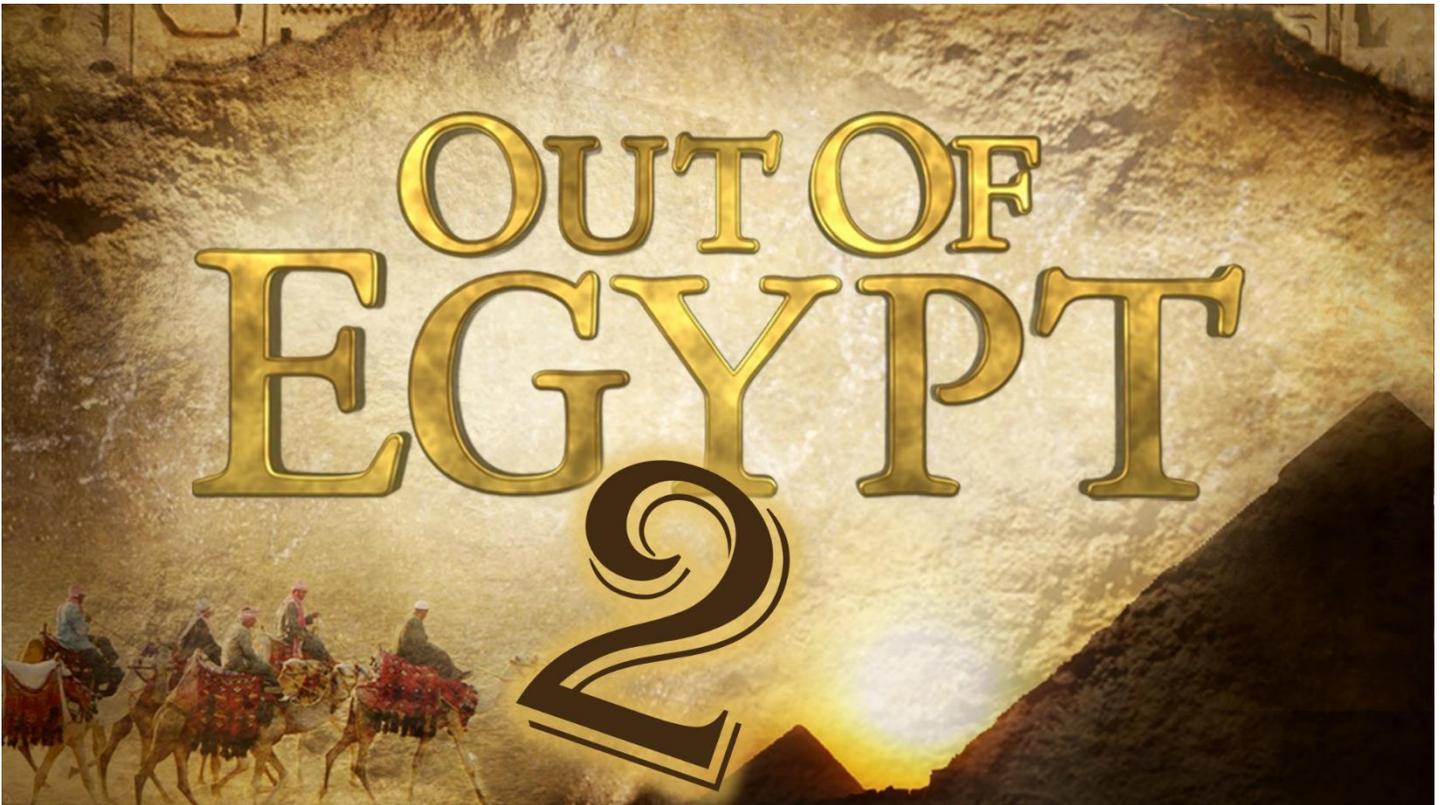
At one point, a small church a few miles up the road temporarily lost their pastor. I filled in for him for a month. It was my first experience actually pastoring and while it didn't start off all that well, by the end of the month, they asked me to stay on as the associate pastor. That's more significant than you might think, because we were the only white people in that church. Mariah and I loved those folks and we thoroughly enjoyed the experience, but, by then it was time to get back to Kalispell.

Continental had been growing dramatically – it was the reason I went to work for them in the first place. In a little less than four-years, there were 800 pilots who were junior to me, which allowed me to have a much better schedule and made it seem like commuting would be doable.



We moved back in the spring of 2001. We had a great summer. I was teaching a Bible study for adults and continuing my education. That fall we got the older kids settled into school down in Lakeside and then September 11th.

Within a few months Continental furloughed 600 pilots. While I was grateful to still be working, I had lost all my seniority and we were forced to move back to Texas.



Over the next year, or so, things started to improve, and we moved back to Montana, again in the spring of 2003. I call it “Out of Egypt 2.”

Throughout that summer I resumed teaching an adult Bible study. My mom and Jerry, Rob and Nora, Jerry and Leola, were all part of that group.

The intensity of God’s call to ministry was continuing to increase. It had become quite a dramatic thing. I would pray and absolutely know without any doubt at all that I was supposed to trust God, walk away from all security and start a church as the founding pastor. I would finish praying and immediately be overwhelmed with a flood

of reasonable, rational, reality. Walking away from my career and starting a church made no sense at all. Really, the problem was that trusting God that much made no sense at all.

I don't want to belabor the point, or sound like a braggart, but I was already making a lot of money and we were on the cusp of a new contract that would pay me even more. In addition, I had amazing benefits, health, dental, retirement, etc.



My family was set financially. With a wife and three small kids, the idea of walking away with zero support, zero protection, zero security, just seemed dumb.

In the fall of 2003, I was running around the indoor track at the Summit, talking to God. I could almost audibly hear Him ask me, “How long are we going to go around and around on this thing?”

I was finally broken, and I said, “Okay Lord, you’ve got me, but now You have to convince Mariah.”

Mariah was like any mother of small kids – she was all about the nest. Security, safety, stability, a sure and reasonable future for her children.

She signed up to be a pilot’s wife, not a pastor’s wife. She accepted my wedding proposal before I was even a Christian, let alone a fanatical one.

I walked into our home and Mariah, straight away, without me saying a word, said, “I was praying, and I think we are supposed to start the church.”

God really does do some very impressive work.

Through my mom we were able to find a worship guy and he along with my brother Rob and Jerry Wabschall were the original Elders.



ALËTHEIA FELLOWSHIP

"TRUTH IN LOVE"



JANUARY 18,
2004

I wrote the bylaws, set up the website, booked the Outlaw Inn as a venue, and we had our first service on January 18, 2004.

In my mind, Mariah and I had really put ourselves out on a limb, trusting in God, and so I expected hundreds of people to be there in a standing room only kind of situation.

The only non-family members there was the musician, his sister and her husband who came to support him, and Miss Leola who only came because she is so nice.

I was slightly disappointed.

Both Leola and Jerry came to the second service and never left. Jerry was our next Elder on the Board.

We started the church without any money saved up, without any income, without any support of any kind from any denomination, Christian group or anything else – we didn't have a clue what we were doing, and it showed.

For months, I paid from our personal savings for places to get together. We kept getting bounced from venue to venue and from room to room. One time we had to meet in an actual motel guest room with the bed removed.

I have never counted the people – it's a thing with me. Baptists are always talking about the numbers and it bugs me – so I refuse. But it's hard not to have a pretty good idea of the attendance, when less than 20 people show up each week.

Many of them were homeless and came for some company, a chance to get warm, and to fill up on the

free refreshments we provided. Mariah used to go out and pick them up – alone.

There was nothing encouraging about what was happening and any reasonable person would recognize that this was a failing venture. I resigned from the airline anyway.

Mariah and I, without any sign of future success trusted God fully... And things didn't get much better.

After a couple of months of bouncing around we finally, we settled into the Fireside Lounge at the Center Mall. It was bizarre. We were holding church services in a room that I had unabashedly partied in a few years earlier. God has a sense of humor.

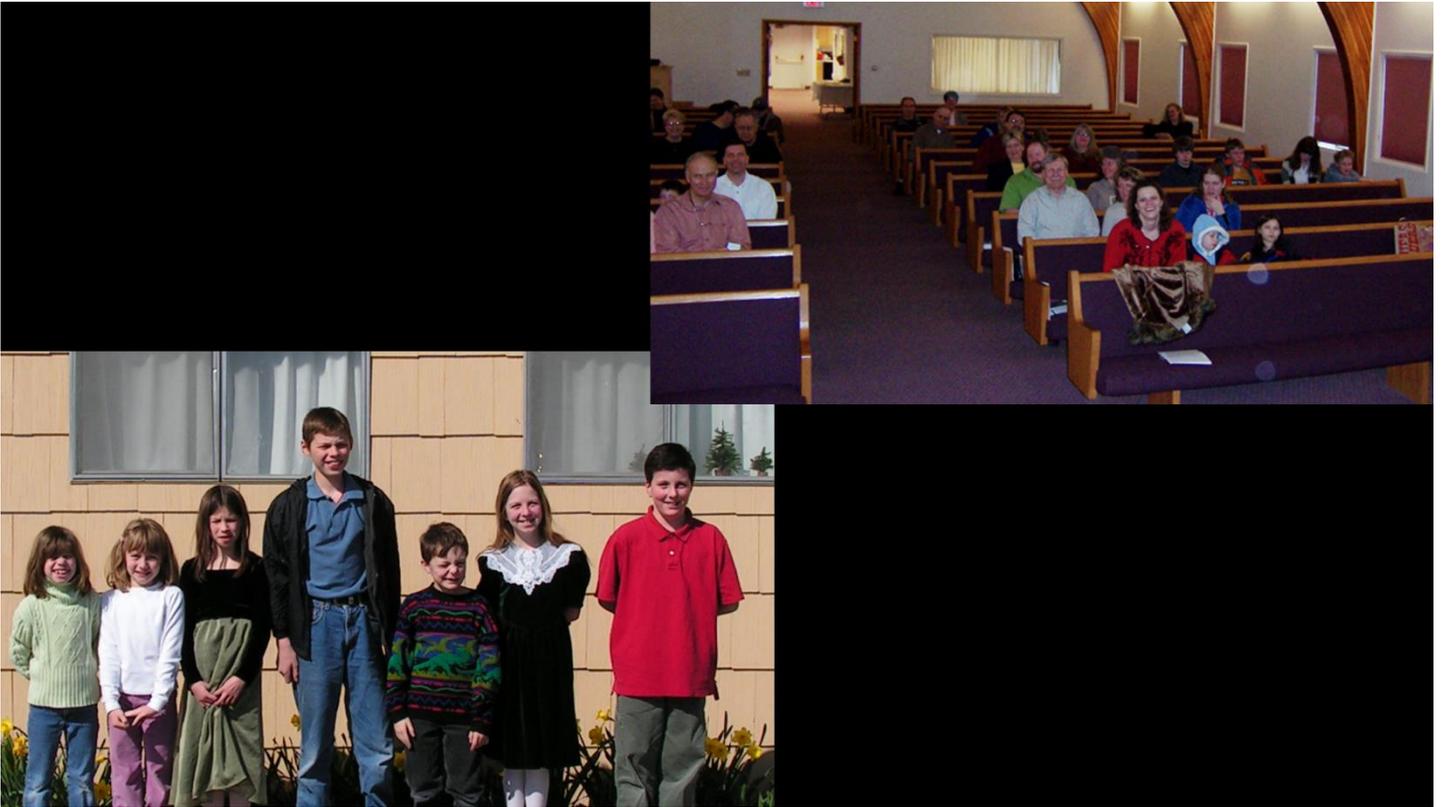
Six months in and there was very little money coming in and it was far less than the money going out. Not just the money we were spending trying to keep the church going, but the money needed to keep a family of five rolling.

Mariah and I had a serious meeting. We had run through all our savings and we were broke. I said, we must have gotten this thing wrong. We misunderstood

God. I don't know how we can keep going. She said, Mariah, the mother of three little kids said, we can go into debt a little – let's give it one more month.

We were able to move to the Russell School Gym. It gave us a little more space and it wasn't a dance hall and bar. It was better. Our financial situation was worse. We were at the end of it and I couldn't understand what God was doing.

I get it now, but then it was hard. At the last possible moment things started to turn around. A few new people, a little more giving and slowly over time the church grew.



After one year, Aletheia moved into the Seventh Day Adventist building on Buffalo Hill. We were able to sign a lease, giving us a more permanent spot in an actual church facility with a real sanctuary, baptismal, kitchen and a classroom.

Looking back, I know that we made every mistake passible. We left no stone unturned in finding a new way to make a mistake. Yet, God was faithful.

A rational person would say that the church floundered in the beginning because I made so many mistakes, but the truth is God knew that I would do what I did.

God perfectly orchestrated events for His purposes. If the church would have been as successful as say Fresh Life, I would have thought it was because of me. The way God has grown Aletheia and has grown me, I know to the core of my being that it was all Him.

I don't care how well I would have done things – how few mistakes I would have made – it wasn't ever about me. God makes the increase in His timing for His purposes if it is His thing. This has always, first and foremost, been His thing.

It can never be about what I want and since that is true, it can never be what anyone else wants either. We are only interested in what God wants here. This has been and as long as I'm here, will always be His church, His people.

The Elders of this church are the perfect Elders for this church, because none of them pushes their personal agenda. Every Elder will gladly give their input, will gladly argue the merits of a decision, none of the Elders gives me carte blanche. The board is far from a rubber stamp, but neither will any of them try to impose their will on me or the others. They will all gladly pray

and think and discuss and patiently wait to see how God reveals His Will.

Most pastors dread board meetings – I look forward to ours and we meet a lot. Nearly every week. What a commitment from them.

It wasn't always that way. We've had some bad apples in the past who were pushing their agenda. I opposed one of those guys years ago and he actively worked behind the scenes to get the other Elders on his side in a coup attempt.

Humanly, it might have worked, but God evidently wasn't ready for me to go. Later another wolf in sheep's clothing came in and tried to wrestle the church from me. God enabled the Elders to see through it immediately.

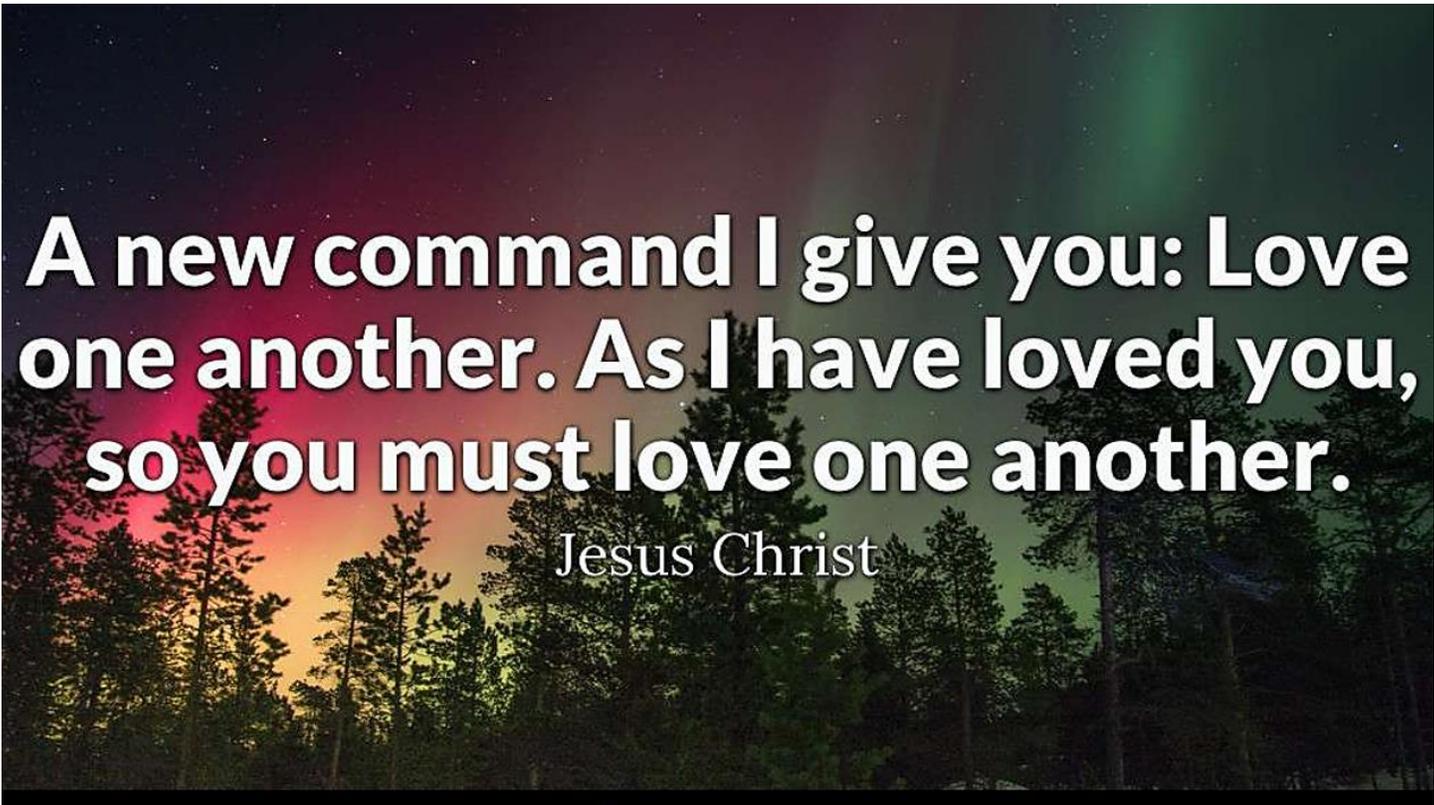
There are always threats to the church – always. We must recognize that we are in a war, we must be vigilant, sure. We must be prepared and willing to do the hard things, sure. But the way God wins is when we put ourselves, our interests, our preferences, our egos and our feelings aside in an active sacrifice of service to get along in the love only God provides.

Pray fervently for this church, which is to say pray fervently for one another. Encourage, build up and love one another because that's precisely what Jesus has commanded us to do.

When we exhibit the unity of the Holy Spirit, we bless God, we bless each other, and we bless our community. Only in that divine unity, can God properly use this church family to reach the lost all around us.

How you treated others will be a far bigger deal when we see Jesus, than most people realize.

We get so wrapped around the axle about so many things and blatantly ignore the fact that Jesus said



A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Jesus Christ

John 13:34&35 ~ 34“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”