

Spiritual Journey

R. Henry Migliore

Everyone who starts life goes on a journey. Some like me have the opportunity to be part of a Christian home. Baptized at birth like others, I did not have a choice, but thanks to my parents I started a journey. Finally at age 11 in Collinsville, Oklahoma, at the First Methodist Church I was confirmed. I can still remember that time today with vivid clarity. I could feel something in my spirit. I was given a Bible signed by the pastor. That Bible is still on my bed stand even today. My mother Mary Gladys Migliore played the piano and organ for all church services. My sister Mary Helen Migliore became an accomplished musician and also played in church. My father Roscoe Channing Migliore volunteered and was on various church committees. I mowed the small church lawn as a young boy.

Again as a teen I am being carried along by a spiritual culture. When I was 13 our pastor Cecil Bolding started working part time at my parents Western Auto store. This put me in daily contact with him as I worked there as a helper in a wide range of duties. It gave me a chance to learn from his wisdom. And we became friends for life. A few years ago we started seeing him on a regular basis, and he stayed in our home. That bond was always there. These influences continue to influence my spiritual journey.

Fast forward to 2010, and here we are in Israel, taking in the culture and seeing first hand all the places we had heard about all our lives. As the week progressed I prayed in my spirit for a closer connection.

A spiritual journey is marked by people who affect our lives and are a great influence. I was blessed with a very positive supportive culture growing up in Collinsville in the 50s. In junior high I had a keen interest in athletics, and the Lord sent people my way. My mother wanted me to be a musician. At about 5 or 6 years of age, I was taking piano lessons. Then there was a failed attempt to teach me tap dancing. Now in seventh grade the decision was made to have me join the band and not play football. Everyone I grew up with was on the football team. This left me on the outside looking in, and it was a very painful experience. Sadly, improper behavior got me kicked out of band. I didn't have a bad start in basketball and baseball. The summer going into the eighth grade, I mowed football coach H. L. Goob Arnold's lawn as part of my summer lawn business. I liked him. His dear wife Lucy would invite me on the porch for lemonade. "Boy, why are you not playing football?" My response was, "My parents do not feel it is best for me." He arranged a meeting in our home in our living room. Mr. Arnold was full blood Cherokee. He and Lucy were in church every Sunday and Sunday night and knew my parents well. Every week was Sunday School, church, and Wednesday night church again. My mother finally protested, "If he gets caught up in football and sports, he will quit going to church!" She was a mother looking out for her son. I still remember the next exchange. "If he misses church, he will not play in the game." I did get to play and loved it.

From then on a ritual began. Even when I was a senior and living my life's dream playing four varsity sports, I still waved and said hello to Mr. Arnold and was reminded that I was in church. Religious services during basic training at Lockland Air Force Base in 1957 gave high school friend Mike Doyle and I an escape from the 22nd Squadron's rigorous training and discipline.

In our family at home, it was 100 percent attendance. It was a spiritual journey for me to be there with my family and part of that wonderful church. And as the Lord would have it, my mother's dream came through as my sister Mary Helen had a magnificent career in music. She was in All State Band for four years and played two instruments. Later she played for the OSU Marching Band.

A major step in the journey came in 1970. We left a promising career at Continental Can Company in Chicago to go teach at Oral Roberts University. Simple logic would tell you not to take a 50 percent cut. I was comfortable and well trained in manufacturing and engineering and had no clue or training on how to teach in higher education. Coming into a ministry reinforced the power of prayer and how the Holy Spirit guides our lives. Somewhere in this time frame it became obvious I have the spiritual gift of prophecy. I had many discussions with ORU theology faculty members Howard Irvin and Chuck Farah. Here we are in late fall 2010 and no evidence my gift has helped anyone.

Now we journey ahead from high school to our recent trip to Israel. The long flight was not too bad as we managed our way. From door to door, it was about 28 hours. Once there the action began. We were with a group from The Inspiration Network. This is a ministry founded by former students David and Barbara Cerullo. I am privileged to be on their Board of Directors. We have stayed close to them all these years. How do you narrow down the highlights after visiting all the holy sites? And what is the impact on us spiritually?

We had so many experiences in one action-packed week. We were on a vintage boat on the Sea of Galilee, and one's spirit could get a sense of peace gliding the calm waters. It was easy to see Jesus and relive

those moments. As the tour bus went from spot to spot in air-conditioned comfort, it hit me how hard travel was in those days. A walk from Jerusalem to Capernaum would take nine days. We gained first-hand knowledge of the history of the region and the implications that Israel has on the future of the world.

Are there some hard knocks and unexpected turns in the road as we continue the journey? Yes. Here I am, age 70, and things are going fairly well. I recently returned from consultation and work in Canada. I went golfing, rafting on the Kananaskis River, and bike riding in the Canadian Rockies. But then, I had a simple medical procedure go wrong and ended up in the hospital with a sepsis infection of e coli bacteria. I was weak and very ill. Just a few weeks ago as my wife Mari and I were having our Bible study, we covered scripture on difficulties, struggles, and problems.

“We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

Romans 5:3-4

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be joy revealed in us.”

Romans 8:18

“That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

2 Corinthians 12:9-11

“But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”

1 Peter 3:13-15

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”

1 Peter 5:9-11

It was like the Lord was giving me a hint, “Henry, don’t get too comfortable with all the things around you.” I am now recovering slowly. I am getting back my strength. Our Asbury pastor Tom Harrison preached on this topic recently and gave the same key points. The lesson for me . . . got my attention, but I will have to figure this out.



Henry and Mari Migliore with former ORU students David and Barbara Cerullo (at left)

Finally, it’s fall of 2010 and in Israel I realize the journey is not over. According to Bob Bufford’s book *Half Time*, wife Mari and I are half way through the fourth quarter. Bufford describes life in the order of a football game. Mari and I want to live out the last quarter of the game as Bufford suggests “to play hard.” We will serve the Lord, be a blessing to others, and take our combined skills and resources and use them to serve the Kingdom. Bufford also says to spend time having fun. Yes, I am committed to what I like best—more fishing, hunting, going to athletic events, and travel. The scoreboard is running. Let’s enjoy the game!