

Spiritual Biography

I was raised at a PCUSA church as the grandchild of the lead pastor and my mother who was the secretary. I was baptized in this church and attended for most of my teenage years. As a young child being a pastor's grandchild and son of the secretary, all the skits and church plays were something that I always participated in. I would often champion the Bible drills during Sunday School not only winning my age group but also when the adult Sunday School joined us. I was at church 3 to 4 days a week. It felt like an extension of home and the community of that church was formative in my early years. Church and Faith were incarnational with my childhood. It was not until my teenage years that I saw faith as something that I had autonomy in. From 2nd grade till 12th grade I attended a residential Presbyterian summer camp in the Poconos. It was Camp Brainerd (this camp has since been shut down). Going to camp allowed me to form a relationship in a faith community that was separate from my family and church. It was at this camp that I found my roommate in college and part of a wedding party. Through my engagement with camp and church, I was encouraged by my Youth Director and found that I had gifts in ministry which led me to Messiah University to study Christian Ministries.

In College I began to engage in academic theological education which had me reevaluate my embedded beliefs and begin developing tools in critical evaluation regarding the Bible and my beliefs. While uncomfortable at first, this made me realize the enormity of God as well as my limitations. I began to focus on the fruits of a faith-based community and wanted to understand how best to facilitate this as I had such a positive and formative experience by those I was a part of as well as being affirmed in some gifts that I might offer a faith-based community. My goal at the end of college was to work in youth ministry in either a church or a camp. I did this for nearly 10 years and even though I did not have intentions of pursuing a seminary education and furthermore an ordination, the more I worked within the church, the larger my desire became to be a part of conversations in how to make the divine grace and love that I experience accessible for all. It created an urge that only grew with time to continue my training and education. The more people I met, the more I saw the image of God and realized there was so much I did not know. This led me to a seminary where I really enjoyed and found success in an academic environment to be curious and ask questions that led to more evaluation and a new depth in spirituality. The more I attempt to look at all of what and who the triune-God is, the more I am left in awe, amazement, and mystery. However, with this mystery comes the belief that God is capable, good, loving, and desires for us to love others and by loving others we worship God.

Seminary gave me time to do self-work and make sure I was ready to be a good steward for the spiritual care of others, it also gave me a larger scope of knowledge regarding the different traditions. I realized quickly that it was the PCUSA tradition that resonated with my understanding of God and God's mission in the world. I am encouraged by my own anecdotal experience having been on staff in three PCUSA summer camps, in three different presbyteries that good work is happening and God's grace and love are evident in these places. When exploring the reformed tradition, I find resonance in the mystery that is God and the vastness of God. I am comforted that God chooses us. On a practical level, the work of peace and justice is something that I admire and hope to be a part of and see many avenues to pursue this in the PCUSA tradition. I now find myself at the next part of my journey looking for God's guidance and attempting to move with Christ's grace while acting in love.