

## TESTIMONY OF PETER B CUNNINGHAM, JULY 13, 2008

Helen & I live in Plaistow. We have been married for 42 years. We have two children and 5 grandchildren. We have a son Michael who lives near Concord, NH with his wife Heather and their 2 children Hannah and Paul; and our daughter Melissa Theberge who is married to Stephen and their 3 girls Emma, Claire, and Nora.

Helen has been a born again Christian for over 36 years. I vividly remember the night she came home rather late from a church meeting and said that she had found God that night. I said "that's nice" and rolled over and went back to sleep.

Over the years, I have always supported her church related activities and have generally attended church with her but not with any conviction. She always took Melissa and Michael to church until they were grown and sometimes I would go and sometimes not. Not an example of parenting that I am proud of. Fortunately, through the power of God, both Melissa and Michael have long been saved and baptized. I, however, have willfully disregarded many "notices" from God much as the Egyptian pharaoh did 10 times as described in the book of Exodus.

I have wrestled with what it would mean to be a Christian for many years and I could never bring myself to take the step. Partly, I think, out of ignorance of the Bible and an unwillingness to take the time to learn what is in it. And, partly out of fear of not being able to live up to the commitment once I made it. Of course now I know how easy it is to take the step of faith and how easy it is to follow Christ.

About a year ago, following a motivating sermon in a church in Florida, I asked Helen what kind of Bible I should buy. That caught her off guard to say the least! We stopped in the church bookstore and I took my first step toward today when I purchased my Bible. I read daily, following the Daily Bread booklet and some other suggested readings. Last fall, Helen and I attended a Bible study after the first service and we attended the Sunday evening study here at the church with others. The evening study was in the book of Romans. That was step 2 leading up to today.

Many things in the book of Romans caught my attention. But the following verse hit a sensitive nerve seeing that I/we are not getting any younger:

Romans 13:11&12

V11 This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.

None of us, young or old, know when our number is up. Read the scriptures and you will find it documented in several places that Jesus Christ died for our sins and to believe in Him will lead to everlasting life. Don't let time run out on you.

Also, last fall on Nov 25<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Thomas was preaching from the book of Acts. He ended his sermon with a summary that went something like this: "The book of Acts starts with a handful of believers and ends with thousands." And then he said, "don't **you** want to be one of the thousands?"

I was convinced that day that I wanted to be one of the thousands. If Pastor Thomas had extended an altar call, I would have gone forward then. But, it was not to be that way. Later that evening I told Helen at home that I would have gone forward. I told her that I believe that I am a Christian and at that time I professed my faith in Jesus Christ. It was a joyous experience sharing that moment **alone** with her. Helen and others prayed for my salvation for many years. Prayer sometimes requires patience; a lot of patience!

So, why be baptized today? Isn't professing my faith enough? Being baptized is commanded by God as **the** way of showing others that you are truly committed to God.

I'd like to conclude with these excerpts from Acts 2:36-41

v36 God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." v37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" v38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." v41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

I am ready today to, symbolically, be number 3001. Praise God!