

**Dr. Ron Walborn, SF 505**

**David A. Ostrander  
Grief Journal**

I was born in El Paso, Texas on April 20, 1962. My father had served his time in the Air Force and was introduced to my mother Beverly by his mother. They immediately hit it off and my grandmother told me they wanted to get married a few weeks later after meeting. I loved my grandmother. She was like a second mother to me and when my grandfather died she paid for me to go to Bible college. My parents' marriage didn't last long until they began to fight. One of my earliest memories is of my mother breaking my father's globe. She had broken it many times and resented him studying all the time. He liked to spend time studying in his office he built with my grandfather under the house. I remember doing what I could to help them dig out the basement as a toddler! The fights were pretty intense. One time my mother chased my father with a knife. My father took off one time and didn't come back for several days. I remember meeting him at the door and asking him why he left. He said it was because of my mother. My mother tried the best she could, but she had at least one affair that I'm aware of and got pregnant. My father thought it was his but after the baby was born my mother told him the baby wasn't his and she wanted a divorce. I think I might have been 3 or 4 at the time. I remember living with my father but my grandmother didn't think my father could take care of me properly so she had my grandfather drive me to Pennsylvania to live with my aunt.

I actually had a lot of fun at my aunt Nancy's house. I thought I was there for a year but I really lost track of time. I had three cousins but we really did not spend much time together. They were teenagers and I was five or less. I liked to spend time in the woods. One time I found a bunch of baby snakes and put them in a jar. When I showed them to my uncle, he thought they would be better off free so when I was not looking, he let them go. He told me they twisted off the lid and I believed him. One day he showed me a young cow in the barn. We named it David after me. Each day I would love to go visit him. One day, the cow was gone! I asked my uncle what happened to the cow and he showed me the inside of the barn. There I saw what remained of my cow. He has been skinned and the meat sold!

I even went to Kindergarten there. I was learning my ABCs and was doing pretty good, but one day, my aunt told me that my father was coming to get me. I was so happy and told the kids that I was moving back to live with my father. When my father came, I was so happy to see him, but then my glass piggy bank broke on the floor. He yelled at me not to pick it up. I guess he was worried about the glass, but it scared me. Once we were home, he took me to live with my mother. I remember my mother saying "Aren't we going to put him in school? But my father did not think I needed Kindergarten.

From that time on I always felt I was behind the other kids. My father brought me to live with him and put me in first grade. I guess it would have worked but I didn't know my alphabet and caused trouble in class. I remember the teacher standing right in front of

my father saying I didn't even know how to read a ruler and she asked me to say my abc's. I couldn't do either one. I left at the last letter I learnt at my aunt's. I think it was G, and I felt stupid. At that time, there was no public daycare that we knew about. The Kindergarten teacher allowed me to do double Kindergarten. It was fun in some ways. I was allowed to play with the blocks in the afternoon session.

My grandparents would stay with us during the summer. They lived in Florida during the winter. They would take me on road trips to visit their friends and relatives in Boston and Upstate New York. I even remember having some fun staying on an island on the Saint Lawrence River in Canada. I always wondered why my brother never came with us, but now that I think about it, he was three and a half years younger than me, and I started these trips when I was five. He was too young for my grandparents to have taken care of him. My brother Chris lived with my mother anyway. He came and visited us sometimes, and my father and me would visit them most Saturdays.

We lived in a summer community built near the beach along the bluffs. We had our own private stairway to the beach. My grandmother tried to teach me to swim but I was afraid of the water. One summer, she took me for lessons at the public beach with the Red Cross. I was so excited that finally I was going to learn to swim, but the next year, my father made me move to my mother's.

I loved my mother but she had a lot of problems. She heard voices in her head. My brother never seemed to really want to play with me either. Now that I look at it, I was eight or nine and he would have been four or five. We didn't really have that much in common, He also had the advantage of knowing people in the neighborhood as he lived there before me. I would play in the back and made a sand fort in the ground. One day my fort was destroyed. Years later my brother said it was him and his friends, I really didn't fit in.

My mother tried to get me involved with things. I remember joining the Boy Scouts that met at the Lutheran church down the block. I even went on a camp out once. She also took me to a Baptist church. Pastor Brooks was great. He took me in to take care of me when I had chicken pox so my mother could work! He brought me into his office and tried to teach me about Jesus. One time he showed me the story in Luke about the thief on the cross. He told me that I should be like the thief that repented and ask Jesus to remember him when He came into His Kingdom.

He asked me if I was ready to ask Jesus to be my Lord and Savior, I said yes, and he set up a time for me to be baptized. I remember that I decided that I would accept Jesus when I went into the water and I did. I felt great! I remember my brother saying that I got baptized and I got angry at him. Where were these feelings coming from? I thought everything would change when I accepted Jesus but some things got worse.

One time my brother and I were playing in the backyard and a branch poked my brother's eye out. I remember it hanging by veins. I felt a great peace and I told him it was going to be ok. I took his eye with my fingers and I put it back in his eye socket! Then we continued playing for another hour! Later I told my father and he took my brother to the doctor, but he was healed. Years later, my brother asked me if I remembered when I put his eye back in his head! I remembered. We had some good times. My father took us to an amusement park, and sometimes to the zoo. We went to visit his grandfather's cousins a few times in Hudson. Two sisters, Elsa and Ida, lived there and never married. I remember that one was very friendly and talked to me, and gave me cookies. This house was in West Ghent and was built around 1800. My fifth grandfather, Peter Ostrander, lived there with his brothers. His father Hendrixus was a captain in the Revolutionary war.

The Ostrandors were Dutch and had sailed from Holland in 1670 and landed at Station Island. Peter Peterson had come with his sister and step father. Later as was the Dutch custom, they changed their name to remember where they came from.

Ostrander means "From the east bank" of a river. My grandfather's mother came from another Dutch family that lived in the surrounding area of Kinderhook and their name was Van Buren. A Van Buren had moved to the area because it was a new town that needed a church and established the local Dutch Reformed Church. President Van Buren is a distant relative of mine.

On my mother's side, I never had the opportunity to get to know much of her family. My half brother Andrew had gone to live with her aunt in Greenport where my mother was born. But I wasn't supposed to know about that. My mother was living in Florida when her mother got sick with cancer before she met my father. My mother came back to Long Island to take care of her mother. Her father had died before that so I never knew my mother's parents.

In looking over some of my childhood experiences, some positive and some negative, I can see that my parents greatly affected who I am today. They are both long gone now, My father passed away in 2007 and my mother in 2005. I'm now married to my beautiful wife who helps me in many ways. Together we are raising a beautiful daughter who will be turning ten in September. My relationship with Jesus is more important to me than ever. He heals me from my past hurts. 2nd Corinthians 1:3-4 says "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (RSV).