

## TESTIMONY

Gale W. TeSelle

- Born 1943 and raised on a farm in Nebraska, two older sisters.
- Single ... married in 1965 to Joan and divorced in 2000.
- Two sons, Greg and Darrin, who are married; seven grandchildren; one daughter Cynthia.
- Masters degree in Geography from the University of Nebraska in 1968.
- Worked for 31 years with the Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, most of which was in National Headquarters office in Washington DC serving as the Director of the Cartography and Geographic Information Systems Division.
- Retired from USDA in 1999 and began to volunteer more in Christian ministry.
- In 2004, formed a lighthouse ministry of prayer-care-share called Turn ON the Light-Bowie and became the Executive Director of the organization.
- Became a realtor and co-owner of a real estate company called Heritage Realty, Inc. in 2006.
- Formed a non-profit organization called Light of the World Foundation in 2007 and act as President of the organization.
- Member of Mt. Oak United Methodist Church since 1981.
- Became a born-again believer October 10, 1988.

My testimony is not one of a life of rebellion, of lawlessness, of drugs or alcohol, of hitting bottom and then looking to God for help. I was raised in a Christian home, in a small farming community in Nebraska. We went to church three times on Sunday, on Wednesday night we went to prayer meeting, and on Saturday morning we went to Bible classes, and on Saturday evening, we went to choir. I attended confirmation class and joined the church by profession of faith at age 14. Unfortunately, it didn't mean that much to me. **I was just a pretend Christian.** I taught Sunday school and regularly sang in a gospel quartet. But, I didn't have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

After getting married, having children and moving to Bowie, Maryland in 1971, I just drifted away from the church. Satan had me convinced I was a pretty good guy. I thought my job was good, my family was doing fine ... What did I need Jesus for? But, nonetheless, there was a hollow spot inside, a nagging feeling of having no real anchor in my life, no real purpose.

In 1979 we moved from Bowie to Mitchellville and my wife and I started checking out various churches that were nearby. We thought the kids should be involved in a Sunday school or youth program. We joined Mt. Oak United Methodist in 1981. Everyone was warm and friendly to us. Pastor George Anderson was preaching a clear message from the gospel about a relationship with Jesus Christ. It made me feel uncomfortable. I wasn't ready for commitment to God. I did not want to accept the fact that I needed Jesus.

For years, I wrestled with the Holy Spirit at least on a weekly basis. The Holy Spirit kept pulling me closer and convicting me of the sins in my life. Finally, on Monday, October 10, 1988 at 1:00 a.m. in the morning, at age 45, praise-be-to-God, I got down on my knees and prayed this pray. "Father forgive me. I am a sinner, you know my sins, please forgive me. Make me a child of yours. Jesus, be the center and focus of my life. I accept you into my heart". At that moment, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said ... You are forgiven. Go downstairs and get your Bible and read John chapter 3. So I did. A great weight of anxiety was lifted from my shoulders, as I clearly knew I was now a child of God.

Well of course, John chapter 3 is a wonderful confirmation when Jesus declared to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again". I had a great peace about this and calm came over me. I knew for sure I was a child of the King. From that moment on, I stopped having wrestling matches with the Holy Spirit and He came to live in me.

I confessed my sins to God and my family. I didn't have to hide anything in my life anymore and I didn't have to pretend anymore. I experienced real freedom, but life didn't just become a bed of roses. Since becoming a believer, I have gone through many trials in my life ... my daughter went through a time of rebellion; my father passed away; my wife told me I was a different person and filed for divorce; my mother passed away; and two serious schisms occurred in my church resulting in many broken relationships. Only by the grace of God have I been able to persevere and grow stronger in my spiritual walk. I still slip and slide from time-to-time, but I find for the most part ... it's all about trusting and obeying God's Word. It is comforting and powerful to know I have eternal assurance of being in heaven with my Lord.