

Gifts

One of the greatest gifts that I ever received was an angel pin from my grandmother. It was the Christmas of 1993 when she gave it to me, twelve months after my aunt had died. To me, the pin represented my aunt watching over me and my family. I have always thought of her as an angel because of her angelic voice. My grandmother died seven months after that Christmas, and then the pin meant even more to me. Now I felt as if I had two angels watching over me.

During my ninth grade year, I put the pin on my Fremont cheerleading jacket. Sadly, during the middle of the year, I lost the pin. I was very angry at myself for losing the pin. Every time I looked at it, it was a reminder of my aunt and grandmother. I almost felt as if I lost them all over again.

This year for Christmas, I received a gift-certificate from my other grandmother to the Bible Book Center. With the gift certificate, I bought a new Bible. It has detailed maps, and other inspirational sayings in it. I got to pick out the best one for my needs as a Christian. I name is inscripted on it along with a little dove. I liked this gift because my grandmother was giving me the opportunity to grow spiritually and to know Christ better.

Non-Conformity

When I was a little girl, my parents would take me to church every Sunday in my prettiest little lacey dresses. I have been a member of the First United Methodist Church for over sixteen years. My mother has been a member of the same church for over forty years, and my grandmother for even longer. I started to want to go to church and learn about God when I was about twelve years old. I had really grown up around the

people

of my church and they had become a second family. For many years, I would walk into the same Sunday School classroom and see the bright smiling faces of Jennifer, Angie, David, James, Elsa, Gretchen, Ryan, Jay, and Amy. We were a small group, but we had fun.

As our little group got older, many people dropped out. One became a drug addict

and dropped out of school. Nice. Our group was led by the mother of two of the students.

James, the son, would constantly make fun of his mother. It seemed as if our group only

talked about service projects, which need to be done and are great, but never God. I really

wanted to grow spiritually and know more about God. I was not receiving that knowledge

at that church.

I met some really great people last year who went to Redeemer's. I was invited to

one of their youth group meetings, and I was amazed that thirty high-school kids were

there. We talked in-depth about Jesus and chapters of the Bible. I really enjoyed it. I

talked to my parents about switching churches. They knew that Redeemer's was right for

me, but at the same time, they wanted me to stay with my old church. I tried to do both

for a while, but my old church kept wanting me to commit myself to them. I found myself

wanting to be a part of Redeemer's and commit myself to them. My parents now fully understand, even though some people at my old church do not understand.

I was a non-conformist by going to a new church, after attending First United Methodist Church for more than sixty-five years as a family.

A mistake I would never repeat

When I was in fifth grade, now that I look back on it, I would have to say that I

was probably a bad kid. My parents didn't realize, or my teachers. My friends and I

thought that it was really cool to swear and say bad words. This shows you how much television and other types of media can influence kids. We would go around the

playground and say bad things. I am surprised now that none of the teachers ever heard

what we were saying. Sometimes, my friends and I would pass notes back and forth in class. They contained some naughty words. I really don't think that we realized how

awful we were. One day on the playground, my friend had some of the notes in her pockets. They fell out, and a teacher saw them, picked them up and read them. Naturally, we

were called down to the principal's office. He was quite angry and I had to write an

apology letter to my teacher. My parents and other parents were there to "scold" us.

To this day, I have always felt guilty about that. I wonder why I was so stupid to

say things like that or to even write them down. I don't like telling people that story, and

when I do, they are surprised that I, Elizabeth Nelson, have been to the principal's office. I

remember how angry my parents were, and I never want them to be like that again. I

think

that they were very concerned for me.

Well, I definitely don't do things like that any more, but that is one thing that I totally regret. So, if I ever run for public office, Mrs. Spicer, you can easily blackmail me!

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