



A BITE-SIZE BIO

BEGINNINGS: I was born on October 11, 1950 in the small Canadian mining town of Sudbury, Ontario. I am the oldest of three children. My brother David and sister Miriam are 9 and 11 years my junior. Sudbury has since come into its' own, and is now regarded in Ontario as the *hub of the north*; plus it has borne the prestigious honor of being the *Nickel Capital of the World*. Our distinctive landmarks include the *Super Stack* (one of the highest free standing structures in the world), plus the *Big Nickel* (easily the biggest nickel in the world). Just to put it into geographical perspective, Sudbury is about 250 miles north of Toronto, and somewhat northeast of Lake Huron (if you don't take Georgian Bay into account). Also, for those who might relegate it to the hapless, barren wastelands of the north, Sudbury, with respect to latitude, is just slightly north of Portland Oregon, and significantly south of Seattle Washington. Most of North Dakota, Montana and Washington State are north of Sudbury.

FAMILY: My father, Ernie Chevrier, was born in Timmins, Ontario, to Arthur and Albina Chevrier. He was the eighth of nine children. The family lost their two oldest boys and youngest daughter to the infamous cholera epidemic just a few years before Dad was born. Dad moved to Sudbury as a young man and hired on as a hard-rock miner for INCO Limited, one of the largest nickel producers in the world. It would be highly unlikely that you don't have something in your home that has INCO nickel in it.

My mother, Aini, was born in Sudbury, about a year after her parents, George and Evelina Kari emigrated from Finland. She was the oldest of four children, and as most mothers of this time, she was a stay-at-home mom.

My parents and grandparents, as countless others during these times, contributed to the building of this great nation. They were proud, hardworking, honorable and unassuming. I am both proud and thankful for my heritage.

RELIGIOUS ROOTS: My father was of French-Canadian descent, and was raised in a strict Roman Catholic environment. My mother was raised in the Finnish Lutheran Church. Mixed marriages were frowned upon then, so, probably being somewhat disillusioned with the intolerance, they decided not to attend church. This actually proved

to be an advantage for me, because I didn't have any false denominational loyalties to hinder me in my pursuit of truth. In another respect, being baptized Catholic and confirmed Lutheran, I had all the bases covered.

CAREER: Being a child of the sixties, I fell victim to the drug culture of the day. Consequently, as many young men in our community, I took the path of least resistance and hired on with INCO. I spent the first few years of my tenure both underground and at the Copper Refinery during which time I was introduced to hard work and challenging environments. In the early seventies I transferred to a new chemical plant that was just coming on line, the IPC (INCO Pressure Carbonyl) Plant. The process involved the chemical extraction of nickel from nickel bearing feed materials using the carbonyl process. I worked as an operator in the plant for almost 20 years. In 1990 I entered the Training Department.

CONVERSION: At the age of 22, I was largely disillusioned with life. Granted, I was gainfully employed and responsible, but I was far from being fulfilled and happy. Due to my drug and alcohol abuse, my life was at a standstill with no meaningful hope or prospects. Being largely influenced by the scepticism of the day, I denied the existence of God, but was not completely satisfied with my atheistic stand. During this time, a good friend became a Christian and began attending an evangelical church in town. She took the opportunity to witness to me, and asked if I would attend church with her. I respectfully declined. Over the next few weeks, God gradually watered the seed that had been planted. Realizing that there had to be something more, I took her up on her offer and attended a church service with her one late fall evening. The preaching was evangelical and passionate, but, due to my withered attention span, it didn't really take hold. God did not hold that against me though. As I lay in bed that night, try as I might, I couldn't sleep. One verse that my friend had reiterated again and again stuck in my mind like a sliver. "If you seek me with all your heart you will find me." At 4:00 a.m. I finally knelt by my bedside, and in an awkward, hesitant manner, called out to Him. I wasn't disappointed. God met me that night, in my room, by my bedside. God met me in a powerful way, and I knew it! With tears of repentance and joy, I poured out my heart to Him for well over an hour. The encounter changed my life! My loves, hates, desires, aspirations, at that moment underwent a radical transformation that has defined my life and priorities for the last 36 years. Have I gone through periods where I've questioned the legitimacy of what happened to me that night? Have I subjected my faith to the close eye of objective scrutiny? Of course I have! What thinking person hasn't! But each time I've challenged elements of the faith that transformed my life that night - I've come away stronger and more convinced than ever. The Christian religion is true. The God of Holy Scripture is indeed God, and Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour of the World! I am more convinced of these verities than I am of my own existence. And the basis for my conviction and confidence, though not exclusively, is fundamentally intellectual. Channing, I believe, profoundly brings it all together: *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it is true... and I say this not lightly, but after deliberate examination... I appear as the advocate of Christianity, solely because it approves itself to my calmest reason as a revelation from God, and as the purest, brightest light, which he has shed on the human mind. I disclaim all other motives... However the human mind may have advanced, it must still look upward if it would see and understand Christ. He is still*

above it. Nothing purer, nobler, has yet dawned on human thoughts. Then Christianity is true... I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It has an immortal life, and will gather strength from the violence of its foes. It is equal to all the wants of men. The greatest minds have found in it the light, which they most anxiously desired. The most sorrowful and broken spirits have found in it a healing balm for their woes. It has inspired the sublimest virtues and the loftiest hopes. For the corruptions of such a religion, I weep, and I should blush to be their advocate; but of the Gospel itself I can never be ashamed.”
W.E. Channing

MY GREATEST BLESSINGS: Shortly after my conversion I began attending church. It was here where I met the love of my life. From the first time I met Connie, I fell deeply and profoundly in love with her. She was intelligent, beautiful and mature beyond her years; and no doubt could have done much better than me. Thankfully no one told her that at the time. We were married on December 21, 1974. God has since blessed us with three precious daughters: Sarah, Rebecca and Leah. They are all strong, virtuous, beautiful young women, and I thank God for them every day of my life. Sarah and her husband Brett live in Ridgetown and have blessed us with three beautiful grandchildren: Malachi, Isaac and Hannah. Brett has a Chiropractic practice in the community, while Sarah is a stay-at-home mom and coordinator of their church’s MOPs group (Mothers of Preschoolers). Rebecca has achieved a degree in psychology plus a Bachelor of Education, and is now living in Brampton. Leah too has recently attained a degree in psychology. Once the children were in school all day, Connie resumed her studies and has completed her Honors BA in English, plus her Bachelor of Education, and is now teaching at a private Christian school in town. During her spare time she has worked feverishly and attained her Masters in Christian Counseling. No amount of money or recognition could ever surpass the family blessings I have enjoyed and cherish more deeply than life itself.

ROCKY ROAD OF TRUTH: During the early years, I began perusing the ministry through correspondence. Coincidental with my formal studies, I read extensively and sought truth wherever I could find it. This eventually got me into trouble, as I began questioning certain defining tenants of the church and denomination I was tied to. This experience was a crossroads and defining moment for me. Of course I had the option to keep my questions and differences to myself. No doubt there were others who faced the same dilemmas, yet kept quiet and enjoyed successful ministries in spite of it. I couldn’t bring myself to doing it though. Even at that point, I fully realized the solemn right, responsibility and privilege associated with independent thought and private judgment, and I determined that I wasn’t going to compromise myself, regardless of the cost. Because of my doctrinal disqualification and the dead end resulting from it, I felt bound to leave and begin attending another evangelical church in the community, one with which I was more theologically compatible. It was a difficult transition for Connie, but she loved me and trusted me; most importantly, she listened and reasoned through the Scriptures with me. Within a short time I was selected as one of three ruling and teaching elders. Again, it was just a matter of time before free thought and private judgment contributed to my demise.

AN UNFORTUNATE, THOUGH NECESSARY QUALIFICATION: Free thinkers, tragically, are often painted in a negative light, and are generally characterized as being difficult and stubborn by those with whom they differ. How much easier it is to question the character than address the question. Please let me assure you that these characteristics neither describe nor define me. I am naturally of a gentle, sensitive demeanor and am neither confrontational nor aggressive. The differing views and doctrines I've prayerfully and painstakingly researched and subsequently embraced, for the most part, I've kept to my self. The only ones I would talk to would be the pastors and leaders, the knowledgeable and mature members of the congregation; and this, only after establishing a friendship and rapport. I have never been ambitious. I have never sought to undermine a pastor's authority or sew the seeds of sedition. Any discussions I've had have been calm and respectful, motivated solely by a love of truth and a desire to share it with others. Plus I've always sought to be open and listen, allowing others the opportunity to challenge and correct me where I was wrong. I don't have a prophet-complex. I don't believe I'm God's special conduit of truth. I've always sought to be open and honest, humbly recognizing my fallibility and limitations, and holding nothing sacred but the Holy Scriptures themselves. Intellectual freedom is, and always has been supremely sacred to me, and I have cherished and guarded it most jealously. In my estimation, religious tyranny in all its subtle manifestations and forms is the most blighting, debilitating curse affecting the church today. How many guileless, passionate pilgrims on the quest for light and truth have been intimidated and silenced, enslaved and bound by the fear of man, by the dread of overstepping the sacred traditions, the bleak and blighting doctrines of dark ages past; because to doubt is to expose yourself to the wiles of the devil; to deny a fundamental tenant of orthodoxy is to fall from grace and possibly expose yourself to the wrath of God forever; to even think out loud beyond the box is to expose yourself to the suspicion and exclusion of friends and family and peers. No wonder many flee from the outspoken seekers of truth as if they were an infectious plague. No wonder the world looks on and ridicules.

I truly believed that if I was to be God's free man, I had to demonstrate a resolute courage, regardless of the consequences – and there were consequences. But what price can you place on a clear conscience and the precious light of truth! The profound reality is: the church doesn't need more sheep. It has enough of those. What it needs more desperately than anything else are courageous lovers of God and truth!

A CHALLENGING TIME: The nineties was an extremely trying time for me. In addition to suffering an almost debilitating eye condition, my father died suddenly from pancreatic and liver cancer. He had been disillusioned in his youth, and could not differentiate between the "*good news*" I attempted to share, with the soul-numbing dogma he had rejected years before. He was apparently more insightful than I initially gave him credit for. As I watched him slip away into a lost eternity, my own safety did nothing but strike a hollow chord in my soul. To deal with it I had to harden my heart to his suffering, which I believed would be endless. Though I tried to drive it out of my mind and rationalize that he was a big boy, fully responsible for his own decisions, it still plagued and tormented me so. "*Joy unspeakable and full of glory*" was far from being my portion. Though I loved my father dearly, the love I had for my precious daughters far exceeded this. The thought of one of them rejecting the gospel and finally perishing, drove a knife into my heart that would twist and torment me so. Some would say: "*Leave*

it with God!" But I had left my father with God, and he was in hell. I knew that heaven for me would be nothing more than a five-star hell if one of my daughters were to perish.

CLOSET ANNIHILATIONIST: As I diligently studied the Scriptures and read solid books that challenged the popular interpretations of the day, the first century audience relevance of passage after passage after passage began to dawn upon my mind. I slowly came to the realization that many, if not most of the traditional *hell* proof-texts, which are commonly used to support the doctrine of eternal punishment, applied directly to the first century judgment and rejection of Israel, the fiery transition of the Old Covenant to the New. Passage after passage spoke of "*the cleansing of his threshing floor . . . separating the wheat from the chaff . . . the axe (poised and ready) at the root of the tree . . . the weeping and gnashing of teeth . . . the Gehenna of fire . . . the outer darkness . . .*" The context of these verses, all teeming with eastern imagery, pointed directly to the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome. It was during this time that I suffered my eye condition and my reading and study time were greatly reduced. Based upon the solid audience relevant light cast upon these passages, plus the sudden passing of my father, I found myself becoming largely skeptical of the doctrine of eternal torment, and I gradually became a closet Annihilationist.

THE GLORY OF GOD UNVIELED! For the entire decade of the nineties, my studies lay largely dormant due to my eye condition. Though I neither saw nor appreciated it at the time, I now believe that God gave me the opportunity to do less reading and more thinking. God in His mercy eventually led me to an eye therapy regiment consisting of a series of eye exercises. Though this did not totally alleviate the condition, it did give me sufficient relief, allowing me to read again with tolerable discomfort and strain. One day in mid January 2000, I decided to take on the traditional doctrine of eternal torment. To begin the exercise, I went to the Internet and typed in "*hell*", just to see what it would yield. There were a number of sites available, but the one that caught my eye was Gary Amirault's *Tentmaker Site*. The first link I opened was: *The Bible Hell* by A. W. Hanson, D.D. Hanson powerfully confirmed many of my previous suspicions, and cast a much appreciated light on many of the gray areas yet in question. I confirmed the etymology and origin of the infamous word that I had blindly accepted and taken for granted for so many years. As I proceeded through Hanson's book, he made reference to the final holiness and happiness of all. This was the first time that I had given any serious thought to the possibility of universal reconciliation. My heart leapt within me as verse after verse after verse passed through my mind. Being locked in the *eternal torment* paradigm, I had not previously considered the clear and obvious sense of the numerous Bible passages that had suddenly burst upon my soul. Many of them I had embraced as powerful proof-texts and demonstrations of the spirit of Post-Millennialism, but I failed to see their full significance. When I did, a massive burden and weight fell from off my shoulders, and I wept openly. In my thirty-year quest for truth, I had finally found much more than just truth - I found God! It's not that I hadn't know Him previously, but in that instant, the dark, foreboding veil had been torn away, and I beheld for the first time His true glory. It was a revelation, an epiphany of the highest order!

It can be compared to spending years and decades laboring to break free from a dark, dreary dungeon, without consciously knowing that it is a dungeon, or that you were striving to break free. In your estimation you were resigned to your dismal abode, and in the process of only examining its design and construction, wondering if some further light lay beyond the door. Hour after hour, day after day, year after year, you desperately work, endeavoring to unlock the door, yet all the while using the wrong key. With dark clouds and inclement weather continually hampering your efforts, you file the key, again and again, trying to match it with the internal configuration of the lock, but it never fits, it never opens. You think it does, you convince yourself it works, but deep down in your spirit, you know there's something wrong. It doesn't fit, and no amount of filing or forcing will make it fit. Again and again and again you twist and turn and fiddle, but to no avail. And then, almost miraculously, the right key, the key that was originally made for the lock, suddenly appears to you - yet ironically, it's been sitting right under your nose the entire time. And you look at it, and take it in your hand. You place it in the keyhole and turn - and wonder of wonders, the lock opens, so easily and effortlessly, that it shocks you. Then you hesitantly swing the door open - and to your amazement, the light is so intensely bright that it momentarily blinds you. After several minutes, your eyes begin to adjust, and you behold a world so amazing, so strikingly beautiful and brilliant, that it overwhelms you! Deep, rich hues and colors, the likes of which you could never have even imagined, radiate and gleam in the astounding, sparkling luminance. As you gaze in wonder, you notice that the clouds have totally disappeared, and more than that: not only are there no clouds, there are no shadows to be found anywhere - only light - unfettered, uneclipsed, unencumbered light, without the faintest hint of gloom or shade. For the first time you behold the universe through God's eyes, and you know beyond every shadow of doubt, that all is well, and will finally end well for all. For Love, most omnipotent and wise, most boundless, eternal and free, must finally prevail! It cannot be otherwise! Christ is now supreme, and will finally reconcile to himself each one. He is Lord, to whom every knee will finally bow and every tongue, in faith, confess that He is indeed Lord, to the glory of God the Father! The Scriptures declare it, the love of God demands it, and sanctified reason and an enlightened moral consciousness cannot rest without it.

AN EXCITING TIME OF DISCOVERY: With my theological apple cart completely overturned, I now had before me the two-fold mission of verifying its validity, and working through its many Biblical implications and applications. With respect to verification, I couldn't make a shift so far reaching and radical without close, precise substantiation and confirmation. In addition to prayerfully examining the Scriptures, I acquired several 19th century books containing debates between the best orthodox debaters of the day and their Christian Universalist counterparts. The books include: 1). Carlton verses Moore 1881. 2). Doolittle verses Power 1846. 3). Foster verses Lozier 1867. 4). King verses Hobbs 1868. 5). Manford verses Sweeny 1870. 6). Thomas verses Stiles 1851. Though the participants and discussions varied somewhat with respect to strength and emphasis, there was an outcome common to them all. The Christian Universalists prevailed! The Thomas verses Stiles debate, unlike the others, was a written exchange. Dr. Stiles, the orthodox debater dropped out half way with some questionable excuse. Now if the orthodox couldn't win contests against Christian Universalist debaters during the theological elite days of the 19th century, I don't imagine they'd fair too well now. During this time of close study I considered every conceivable issue associated with

these doctrines, and came away stronger and more profoundly convinced than ever. With respect to working out the Biblical and moral implications and applications of this doctrine, the harmonizing came easy, and rightly so. I finally had the master key.

WHATEVER BECAME OF MELANIE? Realizing the prevailing tendency of compartmentalizing theology, and separating it from real life, I determined to bring them together in a theological novel. To see the issues clearly, the rubber, essentially had to meet the road; people had to be brought to see the dark, disturbing implications and demoralizing moral tendency of their belief system. “Whatever Became of Melanie?” took 20 months to complete - 10 weeks to write the first draft and almost 18 months of editing and filling in the cracks. I believe it to be an important contribution to the cause of God and truth – a priceless legacy that I will delight in passing to my children. I believe that the precious truths contained therein to be much more valuable than any material inheritance I could ever give them. The prospect of my children being able to build their lives upon the solid foundation of the infinite, eternal and immutable love of God brings immeasurable delight and serenity to my soul. What more can I ask than this?

And what I wouldn't have given to have such a book in my possession when I was first converted! Oh the blighting years and decades of debilitating gloom and uncertainty, of demoralizing thunder clouds of foreboding and fear! How much happier, how much more useful could I have been! How much further could I now be along the path of Scriptural knowledge and truth! It is my deep desire and wish that my Heavenly Father will light the flame of truth in the heart of a grandchild, a great grandchild, and so on - that they may take the torch I have passed down to them and proceed with humility and boldness much further down the path than I have been able to accomplish. I pray that they, standing on my shoulders, may be able to see and behold God's most precious light and truth with increased clarity and distinctness - precious truth and light of which I only saw the shadow.

Allan E. Chevrier