

BILLABONG OR RIVER

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EGIL'S SAGA

THE SLAYING OF BERGONUND AND ROGNVALD THE KING'S SON.

Green (1893, chapter 60)

'Forest-foe, fiercely blowing,
Flogs hard and unceasing
With sharp storm the sea-way
That ship's stern doth plow.
The wind, willow-render,
With icy gust ruthless
Our sea-swan doth buffet
O'er bowsprit and beak.'

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Throughout life I have experienced times where my spirituality seemed like a torrent. I have also experienced times where I felt like I was cut off from the the Headwaters and forming a Billabong, or worse, a dry river bed. I am still learning how to seek God and my own spirituality. Above concerns for myself, I am a father now and have children I must help guide in this river of life. This notion makes my search all the more critical.

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1 HEADWATERS

As a child I was blessed with two parents who valued their relationship with God and put him first. I was able to read at a very early age due to Bible studies and associated reading. My brother, sister and I would study from the bible at least two times a week if not more. We also attended what the Jehovah's Witness call the Kingdom Hall for additional reading and studies. I can honestly say that my parents did everything they could to ensure I understood the importance of God's word. Acknowledging this, I would have to say my parents were a huge factor in my spiritual growth. I did not stray from the faith I was raised in until I was a young adult. Specifically, I remained a Jehovah's Witness and could not imagine living any other way. After a series of family tragedies and life changes I felt isolated from my original teachings and lifestyle of the Jehovah's Witnesses. I began to unknowingly remove myself from my faith. I recalled later the first scripture my father had me memorize was 1 John 5:19. I feel that I am guilty alone for my division from God but in this particular case I also feel my environment was a helpful contributor. 1 John 5:19 (Jr. and Garrett, 2005) gives a pretty clear warning:

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

A pretty chilling thought. At this point in my life I was no longer under the protective umbrella of my parents and I began questioning my beliefs.

2 BILLABONG

After years of living in Maine and halfheartedly remaining there I was tired of the partying lifestyle I had been submerged in. I moved to the Outer Banks of North Carolina and left the college town of Orono in Maine. I had not been applying myself in Orono anyway so this move was a wise one. Incredibly, with all the horrible choices I had made in the past few years my move to the Carolinas was a good one. I did not begin seeking God again but this move took me out of the bad lifestyle I was living and got me back on my feet. While my river of life was dried up there was still a Billabong of water inside of me which retained hope. The days when I would go surfing I appreciated God's beautiful creations. Later I joined the Navy which did not enhance my spiritual relationship with God but helped me form a career. Once I had formed a stable foundation I was free to consider bigger things in life beyond food and shelter. I began reading books while underway such as the Quran and The Sagas of the Icelanders. (Attwood et al., 2000). While these books were very different they were a product of my spiritual search which was beginning to emit sparks. The Quran a wonderful and holy book used by Muslims gave me incite to the culture I was surrounded by while in the Persian Gulf. The Sagas of Icelanders is an enjoyable book full of stories from early Norsemen, this book forced me to ponder what it must have been like for men who had never even heard of Jesus or YAHWEH. I still could not bring myself to open an Old or New Testament even when the chaplains would hand them out constantly. To some degree I was terrified to look at the Bible and face the mistakes of my lifestyle.

One night I said a silent prayer to God. I had successfully left the Navy with all limbs in tact and was blessed with the GI Bill which was allowing me to go back to school. I finally had reached a point in my life where I felt grounded and focused, except I still felt empty. The major problem I experienced was my inability to even imagine God let alone give a proper prayer. That night I prayed to God for someone in my life who loved him, someone with more direction than I. The next day I met my future wife who is a Pastors daughter. My wife was struggling with her own doubts. Although we are both in dept to our Parents and their excellent upbringing and biblical teachings we needed our own path. After our first year of marriage and attending a large variety of churches we were losing hope. My friend James Kelly invited us to a Methodist Church about 30 minuets from where we lived. Although, we have a large portion of churches with a few miles from us we gladly attended this church furthur away. We were glad we did, the Trinity United Methodist Church was without question our home. Although I still have a long way to go spiritually; I am thankful to God to finally have good people to worship with and a direction in life. I pray that someday my falling down can be a lesson learned that will assist me in understanding an assisting others who need what I needed to stand back up. I feel that I have slowly begun my journey down the river of life again and for this I am eternally thankful.

- 1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life,
as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and
of the Lamb
- 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each
side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve
crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the
leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
- 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God
and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants
will serve him.
- 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their
foreheads.
- 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light
of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will
give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

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