

Researcher Identity Memo Assignment

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Researcher Identity Memo Assignment

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Researcher Identity Memo Assignment

I grew up in central Alabama (Prattville and currently live in Wetumpka). I attended public schools and graduated from Prattville High School under great protest. I truly hated school as a youth and only graduated out of respect for my momma. I always loved being outdoors and doing manual labor. I initially did handyman work on my own and eventually helped with a larger building project that led me to an opportunity to get into the sand and gravel mining business. I loved that work, but unfortunately when the economy tanked in 2008, we tanked with it. I have held a Real Estate License since I was 19 years old and have passively sold properties over the years.

When our business crashed, this opened an opportunity for us to go work at a children's home we had been associated with through our church and had visited a few times. We had hoped to be there for many years, but some employee dynamics there made it untenable, so we returned home to Wetumpka, AL. I then went on to build a couple of houses. A couple of years later (after speaking at a church camp assembly) a friend asked if I had ever considered going to preaching school (many church groups would call this seminary). The program at the Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies in Knoxville, Tennessee was a two-year intensive course, squeezing four years of work into two years. This program was not nationally accredited, so I then went to Heritage Christian University in Florence, Alabama and received another Bible degree. Their regional accreditation allowed me to attend Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama where

Researcher Identity Memo Assignment

I received my Master of Science in Counseling. I am currently working on a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

I have worshipped with Churches of Christ since I was physically born. Around age 19 I began to question my faith and what to do next in life, so I met with a dear friend and the preacher man at our home church, Hunter Station Church of Christ. Paul Tarence had preached there since before my birth until I was about age 22. PT told me he could not tell me what to do specifically other than “to do the next right thing” and God would bless me in honoring Him (I jokingly say he wrote the line for the Frozen 2 Disney movie). I also read a book called “None of these diseases” that helped to affirm the Bible is legitimate and can withstand being questioned. This helped to shore up the foundation that the Bible is indeed real, true, and worthy of my attention. I began to truly develop my faith rather than simply inheriting the faith my momma had worked so hard to instill in my older brother (Jason) and myself. This eventually led to an interest in Biblical Apologetics.

When I was asked about attending preaching school, my wife (of 25 years) and I decided we would do this together. Amber has been such a valuable blessing to me and our four kids (Sidney, Hutson, Raegen, and Linden). I had (have) a strong desire to know why I believe what I believe and do my best to question all that I have been taught. I had a well-meaning lady (who was helping us with paper writing formatting) at the preaching school tell me I needed to stop reading “those people” and read the “right people”. I reject the premise that people who agree with me are the only ones who have value to add to the conversation. All that I have shared thus far has been to demonstrate that I with unwavering absoluteness seek to live my life and to

Researcher Identity Memo Assignment

inspire my family and others to live according to a Biblical/Christian Worldview. I will do my best to continue to question the things I think I know and seek evidence to affirm or point me towards a better and fuller understanding of life.

My research area that I am currently seeking to undertake is...What are the experiences of Protestant Christian married couples who would describe their sexual intimacy as mutually satisfying? I have been drawn to this through various situations and stories of people who have grown up in various churches where attempts to help teens to remain pure (virgins) has had some inadvertent effects of causing some to see sex as dirty. This has led to some problematic experiences once these people have married and the wedding night events lead to an expectation of sexual intimacy only to leave one party feeling rejected and the other bordering on feelings of abuse. This tragedy needs to be researched in a manner that will help eliminate (or reshape) the teachings that have caused such harm in the name of being helpful. One of the many hopes is that developing a discussion from a qualitative research stance will help provide information that spurs mutual satisfaction with sexual intimacy between most spouses that can flourish and help change the false dichotomy that sex is dirty rather than the blessing God intended. Indeed, within the Christian faith sex outside of marriage is sin and therefore dirty by implication. However, God has blessed the marriage bed (1 Corinthians 7:2-5, Hebrews 13:4 NET) and must be understood as such.

My hope is to begin with the Protestant Christian group I align with and hopefully find information that can lead me to research other religious groups and the nonreligious in hopes of

Researcher Identity Memo Assignment

helping married couples to be able to enjoy the gift of sexual intimacy that God clearly intended to be enjoyed by male and female alike.

Reference

McMillen, S.I. & Stern, D. (2000). None of these diseases: The Bible's health secrets for the 21st century (3rd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Revell. ISBN: 9780800757199.

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