



“I Am Second.”

by Sue Wright

Ron and Becky Whited

RON WHITED

Most of you who read *The Weekly* from start to finish are probably friends or have at least a smiling acquaintance with Ron Whited, the focus of this week's I AM SECOND. That should make it extra fun for you then, visualizing this deacon in our church from his boyhood to the Ron we know today. He's the Ron we see singing in the middle of the choir on Sunday mornings; the familiar Ron we picture surrounded as he often is by a halo of visiting Jewell students; the Ron who on welcome occasions reads scripture during our services in tandem with his wife Becky . . . something which leads me to this further bit of muse and introduction.

Recently, I heard Ron explain to a group, chuckling as he spoke, that he has learned through both experience and faith that life's biggest questions are usually best answered in shades of the same hue as his hair these days—that is, in shades of gray—silver locks matured from youth when everything seemed to him just two colors: black and white. Listen to Ron and Becky when they partner on a passage from the Bible, however, and you may conclude as I have, these two have insights much more rainbow than gray, their individual histories and shared seasons of living in Christ giving them a Technicolor appreciation for all the Bible has to say.

My Mom, Mary Meyer, was always “high” on Ron, though frankly, I was never sure how they made their connection at Second Baptist. They certainly weren't of the same generation. Mom and Dad were older adults and Ron was born the same year as my sister.

I wish I could ask Mom, and by way of her input, enlarge Ron's story with her personal asides and good feelings. But she's gone now so unless Ron knows how he came to make such a positive impression on my mother, it will remain a mystery. All I know is that every time a ministerial position came open at Second Baptist Church, Mom would say to me, “I don't know why they don't just call Ron Whited!” But enough of mine and my mother's observations. It's time we traveled Ron's story as he has so kindly, and I might add, so modestly sketched it out for us. Who knows, by the end, you may recognize if you haven't already, what Mom saw through Ron's quiet exterior for the warm and talented person he is.

“In the winter of 1947,” Ron begins, “A couple of weeks before Christmas, a new life came into the Whited household. Ronald E. Whited was born, the last of four children, all about four years apart. I suppose that Delmar and Dora were proud parents even at 44 and 41 years of age

respectively. That new life, of course, was me.

“I experienced a vibrant childhood nestled as we were in our small bungalow home in North Kansas City. In those days I walked to school and everywhere else. It was that or ride my bicycle throughout the area. You see, we did not own a car. Sometimes I wish life could be that simple again. “I attended Norclay Elementary, Northgate Junior High, and North Kansas City High School. Our family were members of First Christian Church and very active in Kansas City Youth for Christ. Ronnie to my family, I was very independent, partly due to the generation gap between me and my parents, and partly a result of my mother's genetics.

“Early on I began to play the piano and become musical. My mother was a piano teacher and that sort of thing was naturally expected around our house. In late adolescence I began to take organ lessons at Jenkins Music Company. All through junior and senior high, I played the organ for Saturday night rallies of KCYFC, not missing a single night. At 16, I became the organist for Temple Baptist Church in downtown Kansas City and shortly assumed the duties of Minister of Music on a part-time basis. This activity continued for me into my late forties at various

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churches in the Kansas City area and in California, Georgia, Germany, and Vietnam.

“My first wife, June, was the lead soprano at Temple. We wed in 1967 following my freshman year at William Jewell College. Various highlights in my life after that include my entry into the U.S. Army; the birth of our two children, Susan and Troy; my completion of a Bachelor’s degree at William Jewell in 1988; a career with AT&T; hosting international students from Paraguay, Japan, Russia

and Ghana; joining Second Baptist Church in 1990; and the inception of my software development company, ObjectSense in 1994. ObjectSense instructs classes and writes programs in high-level soft ware areas including UNIX, Oracle, and in advanced languages such as Java.

“God blessed me with my incredible wife Becky in 2000 after we met when she took up residence in our church’s mission home in 1998. We have found renewed strength from each other following our separate losses of a spouse, mine by divorce and hers by death on the mission field. Becky teaches English language learners in the North Kansas City District and is the mother of two children, Aaron and Dawn.



Ron with Doris Howell and Kent Yohe.

“So, what do I make of all of this?” Ron asks, paused from looking back to sum things up for us. “I am reminded of the constant presence of God throughout the years, in good and bad times; the growing grace He has blessed my life with; and the assurance that on this side of heaven, there is no better place than Second Baptist Church. To God be the glory!”

Amen! And thanks, Ron. You’ve caught the crystal clear colors of our Lord’s abiding love and become a sparkling prism yourself. Others at Second! Create your own reflections, hit Send, and see your words do a dance in the light of these pages. Suewrights@att.net