



By Faith Alone: One Family's Epic Journey Through 400 Years of American Protestantism

Bill Griffeth

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"The first photo I took of St. Nicholas Church [in Great Yarmouth, England] . . . is still my favorite of all the pictures I took. It is difficult to describe adequately what I felt standing before the church my ancestors had called home four hundred years ago. This was where it had all begun for my family ten generations ago, and I was in awe."

Bill Griffeth had been a TV journalist covering Wall Street and the world of high finance for a quarter of a century. But when he made the startling discovery that his eight-times great-grandmother was convicted and executed during the Salem witch trials of 1692, he began to research the biggest story of his life: the four-hundred-year history of his family and of our country's Protestant roots. It was a history that dated back to the seventeenth century and the English Puritans and Separatists who fled to North America for an uncertain future.

His travels took him to the fishing village in England where his earliest ancestors lived and worshipped; to the Netherlands where they sought refuge from persecution; and to the sites in New England and New York where they were members of colonial villages with legendary names: Salem, Plymouth, and New Amsterdam. They were Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Methodists, and they had a surprising connection to the founder of the Mormon Church.

Griffeth's account includes not only the stories of his long-forgotten relatives but also of some of their neighbors and colleagues whom history still remembers, including Plymouth's great governor William Bradford, New Amsterdam's swashbuckling director general Peter Stuyvesant, the infamous Salem witch trial judge Colonel John Hathorne, and the stouthearted Methodist bishop Francis Asbury.

By Faith Alone is a rich history of our country's Protestant heritage. It is also one man's journey of more than ten thousand miles and four centuries, and it captures his personal desire to understand the courage and faith of his distant family members and to better appreciate how religion and the context of history shape his own life even today.

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