

Believer Poet

The Mission and Early Life of Ahrend R. Walters



Thomas M. Gilbert

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Dedication

To Annette, my wife and friend, and my children, Kristen and Eric, for the light you shine in my life.

Foreword

“It’s up to my readers and viewers to decide what is imperfect in my works and life and what is not. Through that they’ll discover the truth that is to be heard from Jesus Christ, our King.”

-- Ahrend R. Walters

The Universe is ordered and there is a purpose to it. I truly believe this. My belief is my own, but it is shared by countless others. From a Divine Order comes purpose and direction.

Perhaps the greatest purpose for any of us is to discover who we already are, the unique and special person God has created. This discovering is our life journey and our life’s work. When we accept this reality our job is then to grow towards what our Creator will have us be.

Ahrend Walters is a young man and a poet with an incredible gift and a strong faith. He will tell anyone who listens that God has called him to a life dedicated to Jesus Christ and the main purpose of this book is to share with others what this means. His writing is not his only gift. He is also a musician, singer and painter and he uses all of his gifts for the purpose he believes he has been called. But it is specifically through his poetry that he expresses the beauty and harmony of life. This he finds not only in the good, but also in the struggle. He is not so naïve

as to believe that all things are sweet and wonderful. But all things are created by a loving God and therefore all things are used for a universal goodness.

I came to know Ahrend Walters through a series of events that anyone might consider typical. If these events seem more unusual than typical you might consider them coincidental. I choose to believe that our acquaintance, which has grown into friendship, has been for a purpose. This purpose is more special than ordinary. God, in my opinion, often chooses to participate in creation through coincidence. Some have said that coincidence is merely God choosing to remain anonymous and that works for me.

If Ahrend Walters did not live there would be none of his works – works he attributes to a God-given talent. If I did not live there would not be our association. And if there were not this association there would not be this book you are now reading.

I am a writer and I've always suspected I was a writer, but for many years I did not develop this gift. I sometimes regret not doing so, but that is in the past and I must live for today. These days much of what I write is life stories. All people, famous or not, are special and everyone has a story to tell.

A personal historian, someone who records and preserves the stories of a person's life and history, must market themselves to the world in order to find those willing to tell the journey of their life. Through my website, Your-Life-Your-Story.com, Ahrend Walters found me. He sent an email describing a bit about himself and expressed an

interest in finding someone willing to write about him, to tell his story so that others would understand who he is and to know his mission. I often get approached by people interested in exploring the writing of their life story. Something told me that Ahrend's situation was special. I did not know immediately just how special it would be, but I sensed something extraordinary.

Because he is a writer you might wonder why he would not write this book himself. To understand why he searched for another to write it and why he chose me you must discover that his writing is different. His poetry is not traditional. It is often complex, confusing and difficult to grasp meaning from. His writing is exceptional and brilliant. He writes about many things, but all his poems have a common thread. They all point to something wonderful, yet illusive. They point to perfection, which he believes can only be found in the love that flows from Jesus Christ. His theme is that all other creative works, no matter how brilliant, are still incomplete, flawed and imperfect unless they are inspired and guided by this great Divine love.

As a result of discovering Ahrend Walters' writing, his talent and his purpose I've come to refer to him as Believer Poet. I don't call him the Believer Poet for there are others. I don't refer to him as a believer poet, for he is the only one I've personally met. He is, to me and hopefully will be for you, Believer Poet.

I think poetry is an acquired taste. I don't recall liking poetry as a child. There were the times when Mom would let my sister, brother and I climb in

bed with her and she would read to us. I did enjoy these occasions and I know she read us some poetry. I have some vague recollections of an old lady that swallowed a fly, the charge of the night brigade and various nursery rhymes. But I didn't develop a deep appreciation of poetry as an art form. Maybe I enjoyed the experience of being read to as a young child more than hearing rhyming words.

That changed over time. As a spiritual seeker I discovered what others who are looking for God find. God's beauty is in art as much as in nature. Indeed, art is a reflection of this beauty revealed in the creation all around us.

The depth of emotion and spirituality certain poets achieve with a few lines can be intense. Often there is a mystery in the poetry that causes me to ponder meaning within meaning and to read between the lines. Sometimes poetry achieves something mystical – a true form of prayer.

I first met Ahrend Walters in person when he and his wife at the time stopped over in Albuquerque, New Mexico on a trip they were making to California to visit her family.

When I arrived at the hotel and entered with my laptop and recording equipment Ahrend met me in the lobby. Here was the earnest young man that I had spoken to many times on the phone. We'd exchanged numerous emails. I intuitively sensed this would be an interesting time together. But I was a bit nervous and I'm sure he was, too.

We found a small room off from the lobby that the hotel graciously allowed us to use for the

interviews. Once we began talking Ahrend flowed with ideas. He is highly motivated, particularly for someone so young. We talked for a couple of hours and I agreed to return the next day for more interviews. I interviewed him about his childhood, his writing, his relationships and his journey to discovering who he is in God and what he hopes to accomplish in life. I discovered in our meeting a man with deep spiritual convictions and a driving ambition. This time together gave me the basis for information that was included in a short biography in his book of poetry, *The Intrigue of an Imperfect Beauty*.

After some time, Ahrend decided he wanted a more extensive book written about him. He recognizes that his style of writing is different and often difficult to understand, but he is fervently dedicated to writing. Through his poetry he expresses the importance of his relationship with God and how Jesus Christ is using him and his talents. He continually strives to do his best, fully recognizing that he will never be perfect. The progress he makes on the journey is what is important, along with the acknowledgment that all he does and all he creates are in some way imperfect. No one is perfect in this world. Ahrend's strongly held convictions are that perfection is found in the One who came to this world, Jesus Christ. When he joins together with his Lord then his works, his poetry and art, contain the seeds of perfection. They are signposts pointing to this illusive perfection that we humans are incapable of achieving on our own.

He makes no bones about the gift of creativity he has been blessed with. He considers it a kind of “creative genius”, a theme we will explore more fully later in this book. He has a powerful need to express himself, but he correctly perceives that his poetry books alone are not enough to communicate the message God has placed in his heart.

Many people find when they first meet Ahrend that he is a bit too intense. He pulsates strongly with creative thoughts and desires for others to discover what has been revealed to him. At the same time he is also somewhat shy. Maybe he compensates for his shyness with this intensity, particularly when he finds a potential audience. He’s also young, so I think the intensity will eventually moderate with age and maturity. Still, it is not unusual for artists like him to be introverted. Creative types spend a lot of time looking inward, finding inspiration and discovering revelations they then feel compelled to express through their art. I know this to be true of myself.

Not everyone matures, of course, but there is no doubt to me that the Believer Poet is growing up and discovering more and more who he is, what talents God has gifted him with, and why he needs to stay focused and dedicated to his path. All the while he is evolving in his understanding and appreciation of the journey. Over the past couple of years he and I have had many talks. Some of these are by phone and some have been in person. A great deal of our communication has been through email and voice mail. It is not uncommon for me to get up in the morning, turn on my cell phone and discover one,

two, and sometimes even three voice mails waiting for me. The first message might be him just checking in and sharing some of the thoughts he is having about writing and life. Or he might want to leave word for something related to the website I created for him (www.believerpoet.com). The second or third messages are frequently him reading a new poem he'd just composed. There is a need for poets to speak their work. His reading of poems to me often provides perspectives that neither of us would get by just reading it to ourselves. Keep that in mind when you explore some of his poetry. I encourage you to read his works out loud.

Over time we've both challenged each other about subjects, beliefs and our interpretations of things. Sometimes I'm the teacher, sometimes the student. Mostly we are just fellow pilgrims on the journey and sorting it out day by day.

Chapter 1

Known in the Womb

Ahrend's mother, Ramsay, was a frightened teenager grappling with all the conflicting feelings of an unwed and pregnant girl. It is hard for anyone to bear a child, let alone take on the responsibility of raising a newborn. She wasn't ready to handle this on her own and her loving parents were concerned and wanted what was best.

Picture the situation. Ramsay was very young, just fourteen, still in High School and living at home. She was not married and unable to support herself, much less raise a child. Most families would be embarrassed and concerned about this, but it was especially true in her small town Mississippi life. The family members were in distress. They all wrestled over the options. Even the unthinkable – abortion – became a consideration. Although it was not what they wanted they reasoned it might be the way to deal with the situation. Plans were made and this young girl and her family traveled to New Orleans where the procedure could be performed. They just wanted what was best for their daughter, but everyone was conflicted about it.

Family members tell of a dream by Ramsay's grandmother, Jane Martiniere. In a phone interview she told me the story.

“It broke our hearts when we found out about the pregnancy. His grandfather, Allen, was a good Christian man. They left and went to New Orleans to have the abortion. And that night I couldn't sleep and my husband told me, ‘Let them do what they think is right and we'll stand behind them.’ But I couldn't sleep and I wanted to call them. I just felt like the Lord was talking to me. I couldn't lie down, I

couldn't sit down, I couldn't cry – I was just walking the floors, that's all. The next morning I called Allen and said 'Y'all come home. We can live with this, but we can't live with murder.' I told him what had happened to me and he told me he had the same feelings that night. He said they'd be home."

Allen Torrey confirmed Jane Martinieri's remembrance and his similar experience. "Yeah, we really didn't know what to do. Ramsay was quite young. We prayed a lot about it and tried to figure out what to do. We'd even gone as far as to travel to another state considering an abortion option for my daughter. She was still much under age and needed our guidance. We prayed hard, even scheduled an abortion. We prayed and prayed and prayed the night before as to what we really needed to do. I don't know how most folks feel, but I personally feel the Lord Jesus Christ has a lot to do with my life everyday and I was looking for an answer from Him."

At this point Mr. Torrey paused, visibly affected by the memory of the experience. "About two o'clock in the morning I woke up, I don't know what woke me, but the answer was there. That we would have a little baby and he was going to be special. So we called off the abortion and headed back home. My first wife and I, the church family, her mother and dad, we all agreed that we'd work together and we'd get through this. And lo and behold, look what we have, one of the greatest people in all the world. So, it was strictly a prayer answered as to what to do."



Mam, Ramsay, greatgrandfather and baby Ahrend

Every family member I spoke with has a lot of emotion tied up in their memories surrounding the choice to keep the child. Decisions regarding life and death can be the most challenging any of us will ever make. It is very apparent how grateful they all are that God inspired them to make the right choice.

In February of 2007 I interviewed Ramsay, Ahrend's mother, at her home in Mississippi and she revealed to me just how stressful the situation had been. I mentioned how I'd heard an abortion was seriously considered and I could see the pain in her face as she recalled the event. "My grandmother, Nanny, was influential in the decision to not go through with the abortion", she told me.

I asked her what was on her heart at the time.

"At that age I was scared and didn't know what to do; I didn't have a clue. My grandmother called and said 'the Lord has answered my prayers

and you all need to come home and have that child.’
We jumped in the car and took off.”

Ramsay’s mother vividly recalls that night. “Ahrend was born at midnight on March 29, 1985. It was about 50 miles away from where we lived, in Hattiesburg. I guess about two days after Ahrend was born Ramsay really had a problem. The OB-GYN had a patient’s relations person. She came into visit Ramsay, as Ramsay was crying up a storm. The lady asked her what’s wrong. I was sitting there. Ramsay said, ‘I’m 14 years old and I just had a baby.’ And that lady said to her, ‘Ramsay, let me ask you something. What time was Ahrend born?’ And she said, ‘Midnight.’ ‘How far away do you live away from here?’ ‘50, 60 miles.’ ‘And how many people were here at midnight when Ahrend was born?’ And she counted them up. There were twenty-one people there supporting her, including Bo (Ahrend’s biological father) and his family. And the PR person said, ‘Ramsay, let me tell you something. With twenty-one people supporting you, your mother staying with you, you have nothing to be depressed or crying about. We had a little girl whose mother brought her in. She was seventeen years old and they just dropped her off at the emergency room, in labor. She had a baby and her momma hasn’t been back since.’”

“Ramsay has always been, I think, bothered by that. Not being married and being 14. That’s part of life. God gave her Ahrend at such a young age for a purpose. I see it more every day. Ramsay can’t take kids. God knew what He was doing when He gave her one at 14!”

We are all here for a reason. We are all created for a purpose. What a tragedy if Ahrend Walters had never been born, for he truly is here for a purpose, one that could only be discovered and revealed after his birth. This eleventh hour reprieve was the first of many instances where the hand of God appeared to be on Ahrend Walters.

The decision to not proceed with the abortion meant plans had to be made and carried out to provide for this new infant. Ramsay's mother and father recognized the unrealistic burden of a young teen suddenly thrust into the role of motherhood. Plus, the biological father, Bo Miller, was also still a high school student. Neither was ready for this big responsibility. Ramsay's parents made a personal sacrifice and chose to adopt the baby boy. When they made this decision they assured their daughter they were not taking the child away. Ahrend would legally be adopted by his grandparents, but when the time came that his mother could provide for her son then she would be given that responsibility.

There were sound legal reasons, too, for this adoption.

"That's exactly right", said Allen Torrey. "It was not to take Ahrend away from Ramsay at all. It was strictly for Ahrend's protection, and Ramsay's protection. That was it, bottom line. We were going to be responsible, one hundred percent, for whatever financial or medical needs he or she needed. We needed to be in control until Ramsay was ready to take over raising him. And that's exactly what we did. When she was ready she did a super job".



Ramsay (Ahrend's mother) with Bo Miller (father) and Ahrend



Baby Ahrend with Allen Torrey (Paw)

By the way, this did not get Ramsay off the hook for helping care for the child in his infancy. Although still in High School, Ramsay shared in the responsibilities of caring for Ahrend.

“I wasn’t like everyone else” related Ramsay. “I couldn’t go out all the time and do what I wanted to do. My parents said, ‘No, you have a child and you’re going to raise your child.’ It was not easy, it

was different, but it was fine. When my sister was dating I was bothered that she could go out more than I could. I had a child to take care of. Still, it was a good thing.”