



Erik Schmidtbleicher

November 14, 1978 - July 6, 2023

Erik Paul Schmidtbleicher

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Erik was born on a Tuesday the 14th day of November, 1978 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He was to be the final child into our household.

He had a rather difficult and emergency birth in that Erik was a large baby in the breach position. There was an emergency C-Section performed and Erik entered this world. He was the second of two children.

Erik grew up for the first 11 Years of his life in the wonderful small Iowa town of Belle Plaine. His father was Pastor of a fledgling church, Grace Believers Church in Toledo, Iowa. His mother was a home maker. Apart from early colic and his strong impatience when he was hungry, Erik was a sweet and obedient child. In those early years, he and his 3 year older sister were inseparable. Together they would enjoy all the blessings of small town country life, roaming fields, playing in the creek, and making up games and adventures while playing with their friends. Marion and I would enjoy his sense of humor, his personality, and even his fears as on an occasional storm the clap of thunder would conclude with a slamming open of his bedroom door then our door and a jump into bed with us.

At 4-1/2 in March of 1983 Erik trusted in Jesus as His Savior. He was with his mom who was doing a beauty treatment while watching a Christian Television

Program. Erik came into the room to hear them praying a salvation prayer. Erik asked if Holly had done that and was told yes. He said he wanted Jesus in his life as well. When Mom told him to wait until she was done, Erik immediately started to cry. His mom dropped what she was doing and began to explain salvation to Erik. She asked questions to see if he understood. The answers he gave showed that he did understand. Erik and Mom dropped to their knees and she led him in a detailed salvation prayer. He was now part of the family of God and he would take his young faith serious. At 9 years old Erik wanted to be baptized. He understood his salvation and the meaning of Believer Baptism. He was baptized in Hindgardner Lake in Montour, Iowa August 30th, 1987.

Back at Erik's fourth year, He began a home school pre-kindergarten course taught by both his parents. He was learning letters and numbers, even the sounds of the letters. He gravitated towards the action subjects I added for his interest. I added a shooting subject. He particularly loved the dart-gun target shooting and was doing great for a 4 year old.

At 5 years a local Baptist Church started a Christian School using the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum. He was enrolled in the kindergarten as the only child at the time. The one on one teaching proved to be invaluable in that he progressed that year through the kindergarten curriculum and half of the 1st Grade curriculum. We were told that Erik was also ranked in the 99th national percentile for National Kindergarten. The ACE curriculum issued us as parents a book entitled "School Years" that conveyed information as to how Erik was progressing. In academics he continued to have the second highest grade point average in the school. By the time he was to enter 2nd grade, he was already in 3rd grade. By 1988, at 10 years old, he was in the 5th grade in all of his subjects. At the end of 3rd grade subjects he was already signing his name in cursive script. Erik's Outward Sweet Gentle Spirit appeared during these early years. He

once went to a fellow student's house to play and found poverty. The friend hardly had any toys. Erik was deeply affected. He wanted to go through his toys and give several of them to his friend.

An accident at school would also have an impact on his life. In horsing around he was picked him up and dropped to hit his face on the cement breaking 2 front teeth. These were his permanent teeth, but too early for permanent caps on growing teeth. The Dentist configured heavy thickened caps for current use that were to be replaced by permanent caps in the future. For several years Erik was bothered by their look.

In that 1989 final year in Belle Plaine Erik was on the honor roll several times in his ACE school. He was also Learning Piano and had a recital in Belle Plaine at which he did very well. However, his piano would not continue in the move to the Seattle area.

Erik completed the 5th grade ahead of time at Belle Plaine's Christian School before we moved to the Seattle area. He would finish his High School education through 10th grade at the Snohomish County Christian School until asked to leave prior to 11 Grade. He would be educated through 11th grade in a Home School ACE Home School program and through the 12th grade at Family Academy graduating High School in April 2000. Bad choices in High School caused these disruptions in his teen-age life.

Erik was introduced to skateboarding in his last year in Iowa. By moving to the Seattle area he found himself surrounded by the sport. Erik found joy in "Skateboarding" and learning each new maneuver. He worked at it and would have many achievements. He was really getting good. He practiced all the time. If there was ever a time of achievement this was it - conquering the sport of skate boarding.

However, along with it came the overtones of the skateboarder lifestyle: smoking, swearing, a bit of rebellion. He hid his nicotine habit for quite a while.

This bad habit was part of his being asked to leave school for the 11th grade.

Erik held several entry level jobs during his late teen years and early twenties. In 1996 at 17 he got his first job landscaping digging for sprinklers. He then built pizzas at pizza hut. There were jobs in construction and "moving," Connally Skis warehouse, a very good job at Costco, and later piecemeal jobs remodeling rich homes in Belevue, WA.

During his late teen years Erik also had the time and interest to be mixing with girls. During this time Erik and the young lady, Emily Harding, who would become Autumn's mother, would come together with the result of a pregnancy. A wonderful blessing would proceed from this in that the birth would bring forth a daughter, a beautiful baby girl (who would grow to be a wonderful woman, now wife, becoming a Medical Doctor, and soon to be mother herself) they named her Autumn Faith.

The couple would try for the next few years to live together and rear up little Autumn, but Erik's growing mental issues and his drinking to blunt them saw this new little family break up. He was just not ready for the responsibilities.

At this point I must address Erik's Early and Growing Mental Issues

Erik suffered having underlying mental issues which he generally controlled well in public. His Mom, Dad, and Sister got the greater burden of these. He would be diagnosed "increasingly" by several practitioners over several years. It started with Obsessive-Compulsive reoccurring thoughts over facial issues, expanding to "Body- Dismorphic Dysfunction," then on to "Panic Attacks" and "Bipolar" that finally got grouped together as "Schizoaffective Disorder." These diagnosis were made by counselors, a Medical Doctor Psychiatrist who dealt with Erik in detail, and finally the result of two three week stays in the psychiatric ward of Stevens Hospital in Edmonds, WA (Now Swedish) followed by a couple more mental practitioners.

Each of these mental-health persons offered different prescription drugs,

some with long lead-in times and longer lead-out times if they did not work. Erik found these drugs did not work for him. He was hearing voices, the voices were accusing him, he was talking back to them, having constant repeating thoughts, and a level of panic that others were after him all the time.

Early on in his mid-teens, Erik had discovered alcohol. His early drinking was encouraged by a skateboarder friend. He soon discovered two things: (1) He was easily hooked, and it became an addiction, and (2) The alcohol helped mask his mental issues and blunted the voices and reoccurring thoughts. On the negative side the drinking to self-medicate was driving away family and friends.

Along with some of his friends Erik was also trying other available drugs as well: Marijuana, Mushrooms, and some of the harder stuff. Whether this stuff helped or not they did not help his mental illness.

Once, in a session with his MD Psychiatrist, Erik came in after having served 30 days jail time for a second DUI in 2002 @ 24 yrs. He was at least 30-40 or more days sober. At this time his Psychiatrist determined he truly had a mental illness independent of any drugs (Chronic & Acute). I also observed this during Erik's times that he was drug and alcohol free. He was truly tortured with real mental conditions independent of any drugs.

As a Pastor of 56 years . . .

My study of the Scriptures has led to the solid conclusion that the Lord has a Sovereign plan for every believer and for every soul whom the Lord foreknows will become a believer in His foreknowledge. (Jeremiah being such an example being foreknown in the womb - Jer 1:5).

The Scriptures give two other examples:

(1) John 9 - the man born blind from youth. He had to be at least in his twenties or thirties and God had DESIGNED him blind for Jesus the Messiah to heal him. What was God's Plan for those 20-30 years? His plan centered

on the one healing event for the Glory of God and proof of Jesus' Divinity.
(2) The second is the man born lame from the womb in Acts 3. We later learn he was lame for over 40 years (4:22). He was designed lame for over forty years so that the Peter and John would have the him for the healing power of his asking from ALMS: "take up your bed and walk."
In both cases, their former lives (20-30 & over 40 yrs) were eclipsed by their witness at their miracle, their praise of God, and their example to bring others to the Savior.

In studying the possible reasons for Erik's Schizoaffective Disorder I looked at the information that NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) gave me. They present 4 causes:

Genetics - I know of no issues on my or Marion's side

Brain Chemistry & Structure - This is where God Designs

Stress - Erik had his problems here some by his own choices

Drug Use - Self-medicating, BUT Psychiatrist Discounted

This leads me to believe Brain Chemistry and Structure is where I see God having designed Erik for His Plan. Erik would ask me "My friends do what I do and nothing happens to them. Why?" My first answer was, "As a Pastor's Kid, God holds you to a higher standard." Further thought has led me to the conclusion that foreknowing Erik's choices this was God's design in Erik's unique brain chemistry.

Both my daughter and I have concluded that Erik was a "Samson Figure."
The Bible gives 4 chapters to Samson (Judges 13-16). It is important for many reasons. Everything Samson accomplished for the Lord was accomplished by the WRONG CHOICES Samson made. The Lord used the wrong choices of Samson for His glory and victory over the Philistines.
Samson is born out of an angelic visitation to Manoah (his father). Samson

was to be set apart as holy, a Nazarite (Kind-of a preachers kid). His early life was probably a real blessing to him and to his parents. It is not until he wants the Philistine woman from Timnath. On four occasions the Holy Spirit comes upon Samson to accomplish the Lord's Will. BUT, from Samson's viewpoint he has made a bad choice. However God would use the bad choice to accomplish His Will.

Erik lived at home with us for forty of his 44-3/4 years - the first 16/18yrs were a delight. We had fun. He had fun. He had his own car. Later a Toyota pickup. His own room, a Stereo, a TV when I found one at a swap meet. He was a vital part of our family providing lots of entertainment. He enjoyed his life, his friends, his camping trips - a personality that was unlike mine. He loved being known as the "Master of Disaster" - not the "Golden Child" he often teased to Holly.

At my retirement & selling our house we found a room for Erik. When he was voted out of this room: He was Done with the Rehabs; Done with prescription pills; Done with Psych Doctors. He opted for the freedom of his vehicle and then the streets.

AND IT WAS THERE FOR A PORTION OF THE 4 YEARS THAT THE LORD USED HIM.

His Gentle sweet spirit returned. He helped people. He gave them money from his SSI Allowance. He gave needy persons food from his food card. More importantly he spoke to them about the Lord incessantly.

AND he was relatively happy with his life. The most he wanted was Bluetooth speakers to listen to his "wacco" music from his phone.

Through it all he stuck with the Lord. When I was saying, "Erik these voices are in your mind," He was responding "NO, God knows, They are real. You will see when you get to heaven." He stuck to his faith in spite of all that

happened. He needed friends. He made them on the streets. He spoke to them about the Lord.

When his work was done, as determined by the Lord, the Lord permitted a drug (dosage unknown) that Erik chose to smoke, to ultimately slow his heart, then his breathing, and silently that July day the Luke 16 angels carried him into the presence of the Lord.

Erik died (According to the M-E) As an accidental overdose of Fentanyl with some traces of Meth.

Erik was preceded in the Presence of the Lord by both sets of Grandparents, and his Mother Marion Schmidtbleicher

He survived by;

Father, Rev. Paul R. Schmidtbleicher Brewster WA

Sister, Holly L. Thorn (Husband Greg) Brewster WA

Daughter, Autumn Welker (Husband Jack) & Grand Baby Lilly Welker soon to come of Cheney, Wa

Nephew, Elijah Thorn Brewster, WA

5 Nieces, Madelyn, Aubrey, Keira, Isabelle, & Elsie of Brewster WA

Erik is now in heaven, finally whole, with believing family and relatives.

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JUL **21.** 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

Locust Grove Cemetery
70 Locust Way
Brewster, WA

Service

AUG **27.** 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM (PT)

Evergreen Baptist Church
19010 5th Ave NE
Shoreline, WA 98155

Tribute Wall



“ *Precht Rose Chapel and Barnes Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Erik Schmidtbleicher*



Precht Rose Chapel and Barnes Chapel - August 17, 2023 at 02:07 PM

MH

The video was a very very loving & touching overview of Erik's life. Thank you for sharing. Bill & I love you all. We have 30 years of loving wonderful memories with your family. 30 years of faithful teaching God's Word. Thank you ❤️❤️❤️❤️

Marcia Hancock - August 30, 2023 at 04:45 PM

JW

What a beautiful tribute to Erik's life. I have many wonderful memories of times Erik spent with us. He is missed but I am thankful he is finally at peace. Praying God's peace will surround you all as you mourn the loss. Know you are in our prayers.

julie Wiebusch-Wells - August 31, 2023 at 08:41 AM

AS

What a lovely tribute to Erik. We knew him through many of his struggle years, so I really appreciated seeing so many of your happy, fond, and proud moments. Thinking of your family and glad Erik is at peace.

Angela Schaffer - August 31, 2023 at 07:49 PM