

## **White Supremacy, Black Power, and the Road to Damascus: My Journey into the Fullness of the Christian Faith**

Maybe you're like me (aside from being born with Cerebral Palsy and defying doctors' pronouncements, by the grace of God, that I would be confined to a wheelchair and relegated to a vegetative state). Maybe you grew up in North America and lived a sheltered, comfortable life, and God was—although you would never say it, or consciously think it—there to do your bidding. You want a new pair of shoes? Ask God. Scared of an impending summer storm that could possibly turn into a tornado? Pray to God. Promise Him that, if this storm passes, and you and your family remain unscathed, you will try harder to be a "good person," get to know Him more intimately, and go to church more often.

Well, those shoes you wanted? You got them. That storm you were afraid of, that could have destroyed your house and taken your family? It passed. Out of thankfulness, you kiss the gold cross around your neck. You go to church on holy days. And you even listen to your grandmother tell you about how Jesus has changed her life, and she couldn't do life without Him, without His word. It sounds so foreign. If you were around other family members—much less friends—while she would bear witness to Jesus, you just . . . smiled . . . nervously, and tried not to be embarrassed. When I was a child, I reasoned as a child.

Maybe you're like me. Maybe, when you entered college or university, a couple things happened: One, you were old enough to drink and go to bars with your buddies. Awesome. Two, the things you were taught about, well, *everything*, growing up—the things you took for granted about religion, history, life itself—began to be challenged. It was at this stage that I began to notice something: I was raised a "Christian." North America was a "Christian" civilization.

How was it, that I, a Christian in a Christian county (Canada), could go to bars, even strip clubs, with a cross around my neck, with the aim of getting smashed, talking crudely about women, all while having no qualms about bragging that I had been saved. I was heaven-bound because Jesus died for me. I believed that. And *that* . . . was enough. (Or was it?)

The greatest history lesson I ever received, which literally, single-handedly sparked years of spiritual journeying, didn't come from a university classroom. It came from a hip-hop artist, Killah Priest. In Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth, KP explained to me how the first Hebrews were not white-skinned Europeans. The blonde-haired, blue eyed Jesus was really Caesar Borgia. The original people of the planet Earth were black. Africa was (and is) the cradle of civilization. Those in power knew the truth. In order to destroy a people's history, and plunder, pillage, and oppress them, an image (white Jesus) and a religion (Christianity, a white man's religion), were forced upon them.

This was literally the greatest story never told. It explained why Africa was so poor, why school textbooks taught impressionable, young minds that black history started with slavery, and why Jesus, the Savior, looked like He did. It wasn't just that blacks so happened to worship a white God; they were actually worshipping their oppressors as

God, in and through this image. This was the most subtle, yet most penetrating and far reaching form of mind control I had ever seen, and it spanned generations! "If only black people knew the truth," I thought, "they could finally change their condition." I felt like I discovered the Holy Grail. How could I get the message out as fast as possible, to as many people as possible? I had to seek more knowledge. It was at this point the reality of global racism and white supremacy had hit me right where I lived: I had a feeling that more people would find this credible if it came from a Caucasian. People could easily dismiss this if it came from "the source," as reverse racism, akin to popular caricatures of Louis Farrakhan or the Black Panther Party. But surely—and sadly—people would listen to a white man. Anyone brave enough to expose his own people's grand conspiracy, and lift up the "other" in the process, couldn't be "making this stuff up." That would be insane.

I knew who the first people who walked the Earth were. But that begged the question, "Did they have a religion?"

From the moment this question entered my mind, I had an insatiable hunger and thirst to discover the true God and His true religion (if it even existed). I wanted to align myself to the original people God created, not just in some political-socio-economonic "activist" kind of way, but in a much deeper way. If they were the first humans to walk with God and have a revelation of Him, they must have the first, pure conception of Him—and path to Him; and if I could have that, I could have . . . Him, in all His fullness. I had to know. Whatever the cost. There was no looking back.

I started doing online research. My pro-black outlook led me to a Malcolm X website, which had an audio section. I saw a lecture on the meaning of Islam by Malcolm X and Warith Deen Mohammed, the son of Elijah Muhammad, who was the head of the Nation of Islam (NOI) after the departure of the movement's founder, Wallace Fard Muhammad. The lecture was from the 1950s—maybe '59—and in one word, it "captivated" me. Prior to this lecture, I believed the God of the Muslims was the Satan of the Bible. I hated Islam, but admittedly, I knew nothing of it, other than it was the "enemy," and that wasn't to be questioned. "Islam," I learned, meant surrender to the will of God. It was much more than a religion for human beings. Not only did all of God's chosen ones, from Adam to Muhammad, submit to God, but so did all of God's creation in the natural and supernatural orders.

What's more, God's prophets, raised up in the Ancient Near East, were dark! This was celebrated, at least by this particular Islamic group. Not only was Islam logical—one God, one "religion" for all of creation—it was consistent with the historical record: I no longer had to contend with the "white Jesus" issue. There were a couple of issues, however, and they were kind of a big deal. First, the Nation of Islam barred white membership. Whites were the devil. I couldn't join. I wouldn't be accepted. Second, the Nation of Islam, contra mainstream Islam, held to a doctrine that seemed very "Christian"; namely, God came in the person of a man (Fard Muhammad) to Detroit in 1930. I had to settle for Islamic "Orthodoxy." I figured that I would keep my sympathies toward the NOI and "black religion" to myself for a while and sweep them under the

proverbial rug. (The Nation of Islam factors into my story in a very unexpected, redemptive way later on.)

There was something else I had to sweep under the proverbial rug: the divinity of Jesus. After meeting with an ex-Catholic, Romanian convert to Islam (who is now a prominent Muslim apologist), I remember thinking how I agreed with everything he put forth concerning why Islam is the truth—except for the Jesus issue. How was it possible that the very first Christians were wrong about Jesus actually being crucified? What about Paul's proclamation that the Lord was seen by 500 witnesses? The Muslim claim goes something like this: Jesus' message was simple Islamic monotheism. The New Testament authors, especially Paul (whom they consider the arch-heretic), influenced as they were by Greco-Roman paganism, made Jesus into a divine "dying and rising saviour," just like Mithra. The true Christians were stamped out.

At the Council of Nicea, the "true" books of the Bible—that presented Jesus as a mortal prophet and the long-awaited, purely human Messiah—were suppressed, burned, or lost. The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad to put humanity back on the straight path; he was sent as the last prophet and messenger who would restore the true essence of Judaism and Christianity—and indeed all other world religions, which were deviations from Islam. As a witness to the Jews that Jesus is their Messiah, Jesus would be sent to kill the anti-Christ, whose army was largely comprised of Jews, before the Day of Judgment. As a witness to Christians, according to Islamic tradition (*ahadith*, sayings and approved actions of Muhammad, related through his companions), Jesus would "break the cross, kill the pig, and abolish the *jizya*," the tax non-Muslims living in Muslim lands had to pay.

Christians living at the time of the return of Jesus would realize that Jesus really never was crucified or killed; as the Qur'an says, it only appeared that way. (The meaning of this is not very clear; some claim that another, perhaps Judas, was made to look like Jesus, and Judas was killed instead, while others have advocated the "Swoon Theory." Others maintain that Jesus' body died, but his spirit was raised to God. Whatever the interpretation, it was made plain to me that his "death" was in no way salvific.) The Christians would also come to realize they were in error regarding the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus, and would subsequently be called to embrace Islam, which Jesus would both practice and preach, as the universal leader of Islam (*khalif*), until He would be buried next to the prophet Muhammad—but not before, according to tradition, getting married and having children.

How was I able to justify all of this? Well, I agreed with so much of what Islam taught. The Qur'an mentions the same characters as the Bible, even the same episodes, albeit not completely; there are some variant details. The Qur'an even has a chapter named after the Mother of Jesus, in which is mentioned his miraculous virgin birth. He is called a word from God and a spirit from God, but a created being nonetheless. Islam has so much in common with Biblical tradition. The Bible teaches set, regular prayer. It exhorts the faithful to fast. Almsgiving and religious pilgrimages are important. Most of all, the Old and New Testaments—the "un-corrupted" parts, anyway—clearly affirm the Unity of God, just like the Islamic profession of faith! I remember saying to myself, "Well if

Christianity was allowed to become what it is today, live how you want and go to heaven; and the whole oppressive 'white religion' thing,' maybe I can't trust the Bible or Christianity fully. What is true of these is only true because it has been confirmed in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition. The other stuff? Christians must have gone too far."

I took the plunge and confessed to believing in the absolute unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad. My parents were devastated. Things were especially tense with my father, whom I always looked to for validation and approval. If I was to continue living under my parents' roof and practicing my faith, I had one stipulation: I had to attend a Presbyterian church with them. When I couldn't find a way to get out of it, and had to go, I hated it. I hated the singing. When I would hear references to the divinity of Jesus, I would replace the word "Jesus" with "God/Allah." When references were made to the atonement, I would say to myself, "*Aoodu billahi minash Shaytannir rajeem*" ("I seek refuge with God from Satan, the accursed").

One Easter Sunday, after Church, a visiting pastor said he had a word from the Lord for me. He didn't know me from Adam, but proceeded to tell me I'm not supposed to be here today, meaning I should have died at birth, due to being born premature and having a disability. He also warned me of the company I was keeping, telling me they weren't good for me and to pray on it. Deep down, I knew what he meant; consciously, I told myself it was the devil trying to take me away from Islam. When I got home, I lay down on the couch feeling sick, like I had suddenly gotten the flu. I remember watching the passion of the Christ with my family.

As I watched our Lord being whipped and carrying his cross, all I remember was seeing tears in my mom's eyes. Her voice would break through her tears, "I can't believe you think this didn't happen!" On the outside, I tried to keep a poker face; on the inside, I felt like a complete wreck. This was probably the first time, in my approximately seven years as a Muslim, that I felt the Holy Spirit pierce my heart of stone and rebellion. After the movie, I went up to my room, where I did my *salah* (Islamic prayer). As I lay there in prostration, I cried out to the Lord, "Why do I feel this way?! What are You doing to me? Is Satan confusing me, after You've shown me Your truth, Islam?" I felt like I lost all my energy, like I had the wind knocked out of me.

I ignored that feeling, however, and continued to immerse myself in Islamic apologetics. I was the go-to-guy if anyone was interested in the faith, especially if they were from Christian backgrounds. I suppose I was heralded as the expert on Christianity, even though I knew nothing about the Bible or Christian history other than how to shamelessly proof-text the Bible to fit Islamic theology; and where the Bible just couldn't be twisted fancifully enough, it was chocked up to the errors of Constantine, or Paul, or both. I learned what I knew of both Islamic and Christian history (and the historical development of the respective theologies) from Muslims.

I was always fascinated with the study of history since a child—it always spoke to me and stimulated my very active imagination. God put that into me for a reason. When it came to Christian-Muslim dialogue and apologetics, for me, there were a couple of foundational lynchpins. First of all, the Muslim concept of God, in direct opposition to

Christianity, has never, ever, in the history of Islam, been in any way anthropomorphic or corporeal. Second, if one objectively studies the earliest expressions of Christianity, he or she will discover that the testimony of the first Christians agrees with the Islamic perspective on Jesus being exclusively human, and the nature of God being so transcendent, that He could never lower Himself to the status of a man, who eats, sleeps, goes to the bathroom, etc. I decided to look into these issues for myself. Surely, my search would only confirm what Muslims had been telling me. This would only give me a bigger stick with which to beat Christianity, with its abhorrent doctrines and bring more people into the light of truth. In hindsight, I can clearly see why the Lord had me fall in love with the Nation of Islam, a sect deemed anathema by the rest of the Muslim world.

Around 2008, I developed a friendship with Dr. Wesley Williams (aka Wesley Muhammad), who was then completing and defending his doctoral dissertation at the University of Michigan. His premise was that, much like the anthropomorphic theophanies in the Hebrew Bible, early Islam had a similar tradition, where God was believed to appear to Muhammad in the form of a *shabb*, or young man. What's more, the champions of early Islamic orthodoxy maintained that God was both transcendent and immanent; He had a form, after which Adam was fashioned, just like the writers of the Bible and the ancient Israelites believed.

As a historian in training—and as a Muslim seeking to be faithful to the most pristine, earliest form of Islam (which should be a continuation of the Biblical religion)—I came to accept this view of God and these Islamic traditions. Pieces were starting to fit together in ways I never could have imagined. However, Dr. Muhammad, a member of the Nation of Islam himself, had made it his life's work, to vindicate the theology of Elijah Muhammad academically. God appearing as a man, and man being "god" on Earth (through *theosis*, participation in the divine nature of the Most High)? I could understand why he would want to advocate such a perspective. But what did that have to do with *my* Islam? I couldn't bring myself to accept Fard Muhammad as the long-awaited Messiah, even though, like the Christian Jesus, He was said to be both God and man; and I also couldn't accept that there was no life after death, which the NOI holds.

Furthermore, even if I assented to the teachings, I couldn't join the Nation and enjoy equal status as a member, as would a non-white Muslim. I came to grips with the fact that, when it came to the mainstream Muslim view of not only Biblical history, but their own history, they were very selective and revisionist on the question of the Personhood of God. I begin to seriously ponder the question, "Just who is this God-Man, who appeared to the prophets?" And it was then that God, in his mercy, sent me yet another messenger.

Through God's providence, through my connection with Dr. Muhammad, I met a friend of his online, Al-Amin (Edwin) Toledo. We started chatting online, and our conversations were rich. We would build on the reality of God, the truth of God in the Bible and the Qur'an—specifically this question of God's self-disclosure as a man. Something was different about him. He was very generous to the New Testament, which didn't really sit well with me. I'll never forget the day when we were talking about God as an exalted, perfect, glorified man. "Bro, can you believe the Christians think that's

JESUS?" I scoffed. What I heard next destroyed me. I wasn't prepared for him to concede that he believed it was Jesus. Not only that, but this Jesus was the self-same who came to Earth as the second person of the Trinity, in the form of a servant, who died for the sins of mankind, and who was raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand! That day, I felt, again, as if I had the wind knocked out of me. I lay on my bedroom floor weeping in the fetal position.

I cried out to God, asking why He would reveal Jesus to me like this. It wasn't fair. How could I accept the very One I hated, the one who I mocked—the One who I steered people away from, so they'd find the "true" Muslim Jesus? My friend took me under his wing. Over the next couple of years, although he was in New Jersey and I, in Canada, we kept in contact daily via text, Facebook, and phone. My fondest memory is our phone conversations. We would get big cups of coffee at the same time, and do what we called "building" (dissecting and expounding upon deep theological truths) for sometimes upwards of four and five hours. It was not just his mission, or my mission . . . it was our mission to teach mainstream Muslims that they were wrong about the Qur'an's critique of the Bible and Jesus and the Trinity.

Islam did indeed affirm the Bible and its Christ. And it was our mission to teach Christians that they should become Muslims, since the Qur'an and Muhammad confirmed what they already had as truth—with one caveat: because Muhammad is the last prophet, his *Sharia* (religious jurisprudence) is binding. Even though it is redemption through Jesus that saves, obedience to Muhammad is obedience to God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), because God sent and validated the mission of Muhammad.

Extreme heterodoxy aside, I knew one thing for sure: I had a real conversion to Jesus Christ. I was truly conscious and heartbroken over my sin. I was so in love with the One who died for me, I couldn't—literally—go five minutes without thinking about the Lord. In my heart, I felt God's constant presence, no matter who I was with or what I was doing. I was introduced to the writings and sermons of Francis Chan, A.W. Tozer, Charles Stanley, and others. I was especially drawn to Tozer and Paul Washer; in these men, you couldn't help but know for certain that God killed the old man and raised up the new man in Christ Jesus.

Not only did I read about this type of dramatic conversion, I was undergoing one personally, by the grace of God. For the first time in my life, I knew what real "Christianity" was. It wasn't TV preachers. It wasn't the prosperity gospel. It wasn't even "once saved, always saved"—at least not in the North American "cheap grace" kind of way. If you were saved, you would know it. Your life would bear witness. As Paul Washer would put it (I'm paraphrasing): "If you don't have a new relationship with sin, you don't have a new relationship (i.e., one of true conversion) with God."

After a meeting with my pastor, in which I explained both my position on the Qur'an and Bible, and most importantly, my true conversion to Christ, he agreed to have my baptism re-affirmed in 2012. Since I was baptized Catholic as an infant, my original baptism was valid. In brief, I was able to justify blending Islam and Christianity in the following ways: First, whereas the entire Muslim world condemned the Christian Trinity, I was quick to

point out that the Qur'an itself only condemned a certain, specific—very non-Christian—heresy, namely the worship of three gods: God, Mary, and Jesus. It seemed as though the Qur'an presented a view that espoused Jesus was produced via a sexual union between Mary and the Most High. This, I contended, is certainly NOT the Trinity of the New Testament and Christian orthodoxy, which, at that time, for me, was normative Protestantism. Second, the Muslim world categorically denied the crucifixion of Jesus. Again, I had an answer.

What the Qur'an condemned was the Jews' boasting that they—not God in His providential plan of salvation—killed Jesus, and in so doing, could reject Jesus as their Messiah. I could, with relative ease and confidence, suggest that Muslims had no basis for rejecting the Bible or the Jesus of the Bible; and further, they should understand that it was this Jesus (and the Bible) that the Qur'an upheld as mandatory to believe in for salvation. Since this was Muhammad's call, Christians should then accept him as a true prophet. It was 1400 years of Islamic interpretation that was flat out wrong, not the Qur'an itself—looking back, it was an outrageous claim. In fact, it was no different than the popular myth that the early Church went off the rails as soon as the last apostle died. I had constructed my own Islamic "Great Apostasy" theory. One issue, it would turn out, would ultimately knock my house of cards down: "the works of the law" as they related to God's covenant promises.

I was now active in my church. I volunteered weekly, sometimes more than one day a week. The leadership decided that I could lead a home Bible study for people who wanted to take our Sunday sermons as a springboard to go deeper. I felt myself distancing more and more from Islam during this time. Even though I only viewed Communion as a symbol, I couldn't reconcile Islam's absolute prohibition against wine with Christ's command to observe the Lord's Supper perpetually. How could Muhammad, if he really confirmed the Biblical Jesus, come with a law that not only prohibited wine, but viewed it as a grave sin? Not only was observing Christ's command abrogated—it would be . . . *sinful*.

Calling something holy, unholy, started to dawn on me as not something the Holy Spirit would do, it was something another spirit would do—a spirit that would delight in mocking the truth of God and turning Christ's solemn command, something good, righteous, and holy, into a sin. In order to now push this under the rug, so it wouldn't bother my conscience, I insisted that observing the externals of Islamic law, was, for want of a better term, optional. Of course, I relied heavily on Romans 14: if someone wanted to observe Islamic prayers, and not participate in Communion, they had to follow their conscience. Conversely, a believer, who was "free in Christ from the law" (which was me; I hated ritual and organized religion), could not be looked down upon or persuaded by a fellow believer to observe Islamic precepts against his or her conscience. My friend and I got in heated debates over this. I'll never forget when he told me that this "Christian" understanding of Islam is foreign to the religion's entire history—no one has ever advocated such a view.

What right did I have to tell Muslims that for 1400 years, their interpretations of their own primary sources, was wrong? I couldn't rely on the witness of Islamic history to

prove my case. Islamic history was against me. All I had was quite literally my very own Sola Scriptura reading of the Bible and Qur'an. I had created my own religion, my own brand new religion, over which I was my own pope. My last straw was God's covenants, old and new. I reasoned that if Christ truly advocated some kind of covenant renewal—a change or revision of the laws of God—then we would expect to see it prophesied or pointed to in the New Testament writings, much like the Old Testament is filled with shadows and prophecies concerning the New Covenant of the Messiah.

When I realized that anything of the sort was completely absent from the New Testament, that Christ truly is the fulfillment of the law and the eternal purposes of God, my break with Islam was dramatic and complete. I tried to get my friend to see this. In hindsight, I was too forceful and not prayerful enough. I tried to assume the role of the Holy Spirit in his life. As a consequence, I lost the most meaningful friendship I ever had up to that point. I pray for him to this day. My heart still goes out to him.

I immersed myself in the five points of Calvinism. I detested the idea that man had free will. I believed strongly in double predestination. Disenchanted by the state of American Christianity, with its easy-believism, I felt that most people, who called themselves Christians, were not. Despite the fact that my church was Presbyterian in name, I never heard faithful "Calvinist" doctrines being proclaimed boldly from the pulpit. I told my wife that I was burdened, and that we should search for another church. I met with a pastor of a Baptist church.

Throughout our four-hour meeting, I can only describe my state as one of elation, in hearing that he taught TULIP, that he loved Paul Washer and John McArthur. I got the inkling to ask him about some doctrines of the Early Church Fathers, which seem to go against Reformed Christianity. His response? If it wasn't in the Bible—or, the Reformed reading of the Bible—it simply wasn't true; such are the traditions of men, no matter how close in time to the apostles these men might have been, they were off. That satisfied me . . . for a short time. I never did end up attending a service at that Baptist church, which I thought was going to be our new home. I got the same response when I corresponded with another Calvinist pastor via e-mail. What happened next would change my life forever.

One night, in October of 2014, I was working a midnight shift. Things were quite slow that particular night. I received a text message from my friend, Sam. Sam was raised a Catholic, but he had found a renewed relationship with Christ through Protestant Christianity. His text was something to the effect of, "Over the past little while, I've been looking into the claims of the Catholic Church and Church history. I think I'm coming back to the Church. Maybe you'd like to take a look at this website, Catholic Answers. It's great stuff." Over the next two hours, in a flurry of text messages, I berated him. "How can you be deceived by the devil? After I've truly been saved, you're telling me I need the traditions of men? Haven't you read Paul's letter to the Galatians?" At this time, my anti-Catholicism revolved not just around the fact Catholics weren't Christians, they were demon worshippers.

The evil popes and Vatican cult were behind the genetic modification of food; they were responsible for man-made "natural" disasters; they were the authors of every false religion on the planet; and they sacrificed babies to Lucifer in the Catacombs. Our discussion ended with Sam encouraging me to watch a debate between James White, a hero of mine, and some guy named Tim Staples. Tim Staples—this guy was a Catholic. He loved Jesus. He . . . "knew his Bible," something I thought Catholics didn't read. He was comprehensively speaking on the Early Church and claimed that the ancient Catholic Church was in continuity with the Catholic Church of today. My pride wouldn't let me admit that he had James White beat. Even though I was fist-pumping triumphantly as I watched James try to discredit the Church, and I yelled, "Aw! Come on, man!" at Tim Staples, I knew, in my heart, that I could never view Church history, or the Catholic Church, in the same way again.

I couldn't sleep at night. This went on for months. I'd be up all night desperately researching the Church Fathers, in hopes of finding some sort of proto-Calvinism. I wondered why Protestants loved St. Augustine so much. Selective quoting. Not only was the early Church not Protestant, it was sacramental; it was hierarchical; it was authoritative. Communion wasn't a symbol: it was the body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism wasn't purely symbolic. It was regenerative; it imparted real grace. It removed the stain of original sin. The saints were not worshipped.

Their intercession was sought and only meritorious through their participation in the life of God and the beatific vision—all in and through the merits and grace and pleasure of the Lord. If I asked friends to pray for me, why not my brothers and sisters in glory, who were, in spirit, present with the Lord—and much more "alive" than me? Mary was not only the Mother of the whole person of Jesus Christ, she is the mother of all Christians—she is the Ark of the New Covenant, who bore the real presence of God and gave Him to us in the flesh. She intercedes before the Davidic throne on behalf of the people of God in an even more glorious way than the Queen Mother in the Old Covenant, who pleaded with the kings of Judah, their sons, on behalf of the Jews. Mary, said the Early Fathers, is the New Eve, who, by the grace of the New Adam, participates with Him in the redemption of fallen humanity, just as the first Adam and Eve cooperated in our fall.

I began to read the Bible typologically, within the living, unbroken tradition of the Church, not as a theological tome of disjointed prooftexts. I once believed Papal infallibility meant that the Pope was worshipped as some sort of demigod, and that every word out of his mouth was the "Gospel truth." I came to understand that it was the Holy Spirit—not the fallible man—who would protect the office of the Bishop of Rome, in communion with the other Bishops, from teaching formal heresy as binding truth for the Universal Church. And the circumstances for the Pope speaking infallibly (i.e., free from error) were very specific: ecumenical councils and *ex-Cathedra* ("From the Chair [of Peter]) statements.

Not one Pope, over the last 2,000 years, has proclaimed heresy as solemn truth for the faithful in these contexts. Their personal opinions are certainly not revelation, or even necessarily correct. And the Bishop of Rome does not wake up one day and just decide to proclaim a new truth because he heard a voice or had a vision. Not even the scoundrel

Popes, living in open sin in the Middle Ages, could change official Church dogma on matters of faith and morals. That not even the worst of sinners could destroy the Church's impeccability and perpetuity, was a testament to the Church's supernatural life and origin. If this was merely a human institution, it would have collapsed long ago. I came to see just what Jesus meant when He said to Peter: "You are Rock, and on this Rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."

Everything boiled down to one question, "Did Jesus tell the truth?" Jesus promised One Church, not 30,000 plus denominations, which aren't even united on essentials such as the Eucharist and the nature of Baptism. After 2,000 years, we can say with confidence that Jesus kept His promise; and because of that, we can say that He was exactly who He claimed to be. I trust the Church because I trust Jesus. I trust the Bible is the Word of God because I trust the Church Jesus inspired to protect, preserve, and proliferate the Bible.

My beautiful wife, Tanya, my "Proverbs 31 woman," and I were received into the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church on Easter Vigil 2015. Many might think, because I've bounced around religions so much, that this is yet another stage. While I understand their skepticism, it must be remembered that I was baptized as a baby into the Church. My journey truly shows the grace of the Holy Spirit at work through Baptism, because I'm literally right back where I started.

I'm finally . . . home—in the fullness of the Christian faith. I now understand and appreciate why God has given me the gift of a love of history and a heart to sacrifice and follow hard after Him, no matter what the cost. I pray I grow more into the image of Christ with each passing day, as, by His grace alone, I strive to lay down my life for my wife even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for Her; nothing matters in my life more than dying to self, so that the glory of Christ may be evident to all who cross my path. My heart longs to hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord."

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In the grace and peace of the Most Holy Trinity, the One True God,

Dustin Quick

*“Our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.” – St. Augustine*