

From Independent Fundamental Baptist to Catholic
(by Lucinda McCollar)

I was raised in a strict Fundamental Baptist Church and I went to a Baptist school until after my sophomore year. I attended a public school for 11 & 12th grade. I remember being drawn to the Catholic faith as a child. However, my mother told me that we were to have nothing to do with the Catholics because they crucified Jesus. Not true, the Romans crucified Jesus with the encouragement from the Jews. The ancient Romans were pagan and didn't follow Christianity. We were told awful things about the Catholics and how they were all going to hell and they were leading millions of people down the path of destruction. Our preachers and teachers were graduates of Bob Jones University, Hyles-Anderson College, and PCC to name a few. I remember sitting through church sermons and thinking, "how can we truly call ourselves Christians when we spew hate against the Catholics or for that matter anyone who wasn't white?"

My father did manual labor his entire life and we didn't have the wealth of a lot of the other church members. Therefore, my family was considered to be non-spiritual and not following God. A person's Christianity worth appeared to be based on money and not actions.

I can't believe how the men in the church treated their wives and children. I have seen people talk better to their dogs than they do their own family. Doesn't Eph. 5:25 say, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"? I highly doubt Christ would do such unspeakable things to women and use Eph. 5:22 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband" as the basis for treating women like filth. What about Eph. 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God?"

My Catholic friends that I had were better followers of Christ than the kids at the Baptist School. My Catholic friends were kind and demonstrated Christ's love to others. The kids at the Baptist School ridiculed and tormented kids who didn't have as much money as they did. Let's not overlook the "holier than thou" attitude of a lot of the church members. I also thought that the preachers who spoke of unrealistic dating standards (don't hold hands, don't sit too close, keep the Bible between you) were living in immorality and using their preaching to ease their own guilt. Guess what? I was right. How is it that I knew that as a teenager but the whole church felt that these were excellent men of God and above reproach?

I must admit that I was pretty much put off by different things we were taught to believe about what was right and what was wrong. It appeared that a lot of people sat in judgment of everyone else's salvation. And if you weren't as pious or if you didn't believe going to movies a sin, then you weren't really a Christian. I never did believe that was what Christ had taught.

Sure I believed that Jesus died for my sins, but I basically felt that once saved, always saved, didn't really matter what I did because God would eventually forgive me. How could I have made a mockery of what Christ did for me by believing that? What did

following after my own paths and not God's grant me? Well, I did not seek after the will of the Father for my life. I wanted to have two children and I wanted to have them in my early to mid-twenties. I was impatient in waiting for the man that God had chosen for me, so I hooked up with an abusive man. I was never meant to marry him, and it certainly wasn't a Sacred Marriage before God. Due to my own sin of rebelliousness, I had to live with the consequences of my actions. God gave me two wonderful children, but I also had to endure punishment for my sins.

I was an occasional Sunday Christian. I felt that as long as I occasionally made an appearance at church then I was alright because hey, I had asked the Lord to forgive me of my sins.

In April 1998, I met and married a wonderful man. I gasped when I found out that he had a "Catholic Bible."

For the 2003-2004 school year, I enrolled my daughter (7th grade) and my son (3rd) in a Catholic School. I really did not want my daughter going to a public junior high school. I thought that I should research the Catholic religion, so I would know what my kids were being taught.

Guess what? The religion is not at all like what I was told over the years. The Catholics don't pray to idols, the Catholics don't think Mary saves them, the Catholics believe in the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ Our Lord and Savior. It sounds like what the Baptist claim to believe in.

My mother was livid that my husband and I were in the process of reconciling to the Catholic Church. She started to lecture me on why I am hardening my heart to God's Will and I am being led astray by the devil. She was trying to tell me that she knew the truth about the Catholic religion (although she has not studied it for herself) and that everything I was reading was nothing but lies meant to deceive the unsuspecting.

I had thoroughly researched the Catholic Faith before I started to reconcile to the church. Through my research and several books that I have read, the Holy Spirit led me to my decision. I have always prayed and asked for guidance before I have made any decision.

Yes, we were taught that the Catholics were evil. I truly felt that I had been misled my entire life. How can the council of Catholic Churches be responsible for providing us with the Bible, but we don't believe in their teachings? We were taught the Catholics worship idols, they don't believe in the Trinity, and they don't believe Jesus is risen, and that you are saved by works. Well, during my research I have found out that these statements are not true. How can I believe or agree with a religion that teaches lies?

Before I joined RCIA class in September 2003, I prayed and asked God to give me peace that I was making the right decision to reconcile to the Catholic Faith. That night, I dreamt of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was standing in front of me with her arms

outstretched. Although she didn't speak to me, I could sense that she was saying, "Come my child."

During the 2004 Easter Vigil, my wonderful husband and I were joined to the Holy Catholic Church. For the first time in my life, I am fulfilled in my vocation as a Christian wife and mother. I praise God for leading me home!