

J. Noah's Story: Ex-Mormon Parents, one a Baptist and one a Pentecostal Raise this Future Catholic

This story is certainly special because not only have I gone from a conservative Protestant to an Alternative Christian to Catholic, (which in itself is a highly unique religious history) but the fact that I did all of this before the age of 19 makes this story more remarkable. I was born to two Protestant Parents, both of them former Mormons. My Dad is a Baptist; my Mom is more of a Pentecostal. Growing up, my Parents would take me to a Pentecostal Church every Sunday for Sunday School. I had a wonderful teacher who made church fun and exciting, (if anyone reading this teaches religion to children, make sure you do a good job).

At home, my Mother would read me Bible stories every night. As a result, I had a great Love for Jesus. Some times, I would even end conversations with the word, "Amen" in regular conversations by mistake. I was always wondered, however, why there were so many churches in our town. I just assumed that we all liked to worship in different styles. When I was around the age of 8 I finally asked my Mother why there were so many churches. I was horrified! She told me that different denominations believed different things about Jesus and what he taught. I was absolutely appalled at this, I was even further appalled when my Mother brushed off these differences as insignificant because, "we all have Jesus and that's what matters."

I at once saw the problem with this. If we are in correct about a teaching of Jesus, we are missing out on one of God's gifts and on one of his messages to us and in today's world we need all of the divine help that we can get. So, I set out to find the Church that Jesus founded. Being raised a Protestant I of course began this search by reading the Bible. I was shocked when I actually read it. First I came across James 2: 21-24, which contradicted Sola fide, one of the five major beliefs about Protestantism.

Next, I came across Matthew 16:18 which said that Peter was the foundation of the Church and that Satan would not prevail against it. So I went to my Mother and I told her what I had read in the Bible. I then learned a little known fact about the Protestants. In the past 100 years, the Protestants have put together their own teaching authority called the World Council of Churches. So my Mother told me that these Protestant Leaders had gotten together and decided as a group that that isn't what the verses I read meant, and that I should just listen to what they said because they had studied the Bible and I hadn't. At this point, I officially stopped considering myself a Protestant.

So I began to read the Bible some more. At this time in my life, I began to become more and more Catholic in my religious beliefs, (I didn't realize it until later however.) I came to believe that Baptism could be performed on Children because In the Bible Jesus upholds children as the very model of faith and says that we should let the little children come to him Mark 10:13-16, I came to believe That Jesus was literally present in the Eucharist because God gives us what we ask for, (John 6:52-59 wouldn't hit me until later).

I came to believe in bishops, Priests, Deacons, Baptismal Regeneration (Romans 6:1-11), Sacraments, Liturgical worship, Masturbation was sinful, Confession John 20:22; I even had a belief that Mary would have had to have been the holiest person on Earth after Jesus!, (If someone has to fast and pray for three days just to hear God's voice how holy would one have to be to be the Mother of God? By the way Since Jesus is God, Mary is the Mother of God, it is simply calling a spade a spade.)

I remember my first time watching Mass on TV, my Dad who had always been an Anti-Catholic had said it was a dead ritual; I just loved it and wondered what on Earth he was talking about. I unfortunately, did not become a Catholic at this point; I just made a new version of the Mass and celebrated it on my own.

At this point in my life, I began becoming an alternative Christian. Two things set me on this path. One was my belief in Sola Scriptura, (I Corinthians 11:2 hadn't hit me yet) So I began rejecting the Creeds and began saying that a Christian was someone who believed in Jesus period John 3:16, (under this definition, Muslims could be considered Christians).

The Second thing that set me toward Alternative Christianity was the misconception that the Bible had been corrupted. I know now that most of the books of the so-called 'lost Bible' such as the Gospel of Judas and the Gospel of Thomas were written by Gnostics and schismatic cult leaders whose names we know. Gnosticism was actually founded by a man named Paul of Samosota who had fallen under Buddhist and Hindu influences while in India as a missionary. Further more, that Constantine corrupted Church teaching is absurd.

At the Council of Nicea, there were six books that were considered for canonical status, they were Revelation, James, Hebrews, Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas and Hermas. The latter three were not accepted as canonical not because they are impure but they contain more legalistic Rules rather than Revelation. The Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas however are still considered authoritative by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

Anyway, I began to research these heretical books at Libraries; in fact, the computer I am writing this on is one of the computers I used to study these ancient sects. I became an Iconoclast and began destroying as much religious imagery as I could manage, I would even walk by the Catholic Church in my town day dreaming about taking the statue of Mary inside and burning it! I rejected the writings of Paul because I felt that he corrupted the Jewish nature of the Church.

Actually, the only time in the Bible where Paul and Peter disagreed on Gentiles in the Church was when Peter stopped associating with Gentile Christian to please the Jewish Christians who felt that the Gentiles should be circumcised before being Baptized, Peter himself later condemned this at a council in Jerusalem.), I came to believe that God was hate, I abstained from Pork and shell fish, I stopped considering people of other faiths human and I would intimidate people who didn't follow my beliefs and I believed that I

had to earn my way into heaven.. So if anyone thinks that all follow the same God and that all religions are good, think again. My heretical one man sect of Christianity was legalistic, heartless and soul killing.

I did, however have a friend, who was oddly enough, Catholic. My friend has Down syndrome, but he played a minor yet significant role in my decision to convert, (I tried to convert him but somehow he converted me).

At this point in my life I reached an all time low. My research about what happened to the Early church was at a dead lock, I had no one who I felt could pray for me and my requests and I no longer felt like my prayers were reaching God. Well when Man has done all that he can do, God takes over. Believe it or not, God used a TV show that I liked and that most people think is obscene to start it off. That show was Desperate Housewives!!!! It was the episode when Carlos began looking into his faith that got me wondering about Catholicism and what it must be like to be a good Catholic.

So I began looking at Catholic Apologetic websites and the Patron Saint Index. Finally, for the first time in my life the Bible made sense to me, I also found the lives of the Saints to be inspiring. While all of this was going on I was beginning to watch Weekly Devotions to Mary on TV and I began Watching Mass again. With my lips, I was sneering at all of this, in my heart, I was longing for it. I wanted to be Catholic so that I could enjoy life again without worrying about going to Hell all of the time, (it is a common misconception that Catholics believe that they have to earn their way to Heaven, in fact they believe in a faith based salvation).

Eventually I told myself that I couldn't let emotions get in the way of facts, and the fact was that the early church had been destroyed and the early church needed to be rebuilt. So I abruptly stopped these Catholic Practices.

I was slowly slipping further and further into Apostasy and blasphemy. By this point I wasn't even sure which god to pray to! One of my last prayers as an alternative Christian was that Benny Hinn would reassure me that God existed. That request was never granted. When my prayer was unanswered, I went to walk in a near by park.

For days before hand I had foolishly been asking trees to pray for me so that God would revel himself. I felt that I couldn't even ask my Mother to pray for me because she would ask that I become a Pentecostal, not to find Jesus' Church. I had essentially lost my faith. I was already beginning to re order my plans and values according to my new Atheist life style. In it I had plans to enter into even greater depravity than ever before!

SATAN HAD CONQUORED! Then my friend with Down syndrome entered my mind. I knew that sometimes ask, what's her name, Mary to pray for him. Believe it or not, my last thought was that honoring Mary would be Idolatrous, but then I realized that that was ridiculous for someone who was planning on becoming an Atheist. I only got two words out of my mouth, "O Mary" And it was as if a trainload of Epiphany had just hit me.

Finally, my intense hatred disappeared; I had a relationship with God deeper than I have ever had in my life. I quickly went to the nearest available computer to look into the validity of the claims of the Protestants and Alternative Christians and found them to be uneducated and superficial at best. As I studied more and more about Catholicism, more and more questions about God and the Bible were made clear and they finally made sense.

I know of the Phenomenon of the Liberal Catholic. I almost became one. Then I began studying more about the history of the Church and through prayer, God told me his answer quickly and in a blunt way. After praying about this one night, I woke up early one morning and watched the news. On the news they announced that the Vatican has just released a document called, "one true Church." I also began reading Vatican II documents themselves and found that Ecumenism was not taken to anywhere near the extreme that it is by most people today.

Plus, I recently watched a Tridentine Mass on YouTube recently and I have fallen in Love with it because instead of focusing on what the Readings are, what the Priest is saying, or our own participation in the Liturgy, we are focused on only one thing, Jesus. I hope that if you are in the church that you will be stirred to action.

If you are a former Catholic or are thinking about leaving the Church, I can guarantee that there are many misconceptions about Catholicism and I urge you to look into what the faith and the Bible really say and on behalf of Jesus Christ I would like to invite you home and to remember that no one is perfect. If you are not a Catholic or even a Christian for that matter, I urge you to come into the Ark that Jesus died in order to make for you.

I would also like to send a special appeal to the followers of my former Religions. To the Protestants, honor Christ by entering his church that he promised would never be destroyed. To the Via Media, In Catholicism you will find Christianity in Perfection. To the Alternative Christians, remember that no one is perfect and hear the good news that God has not allowed his church to fall into ruin. And to the Atheists, Faith and Reason can't contradict each other and after reading the church Fathers, it would seem that they haven't.

Please pray for the young, who are on the front line in the war against Hell every second of every day. St. Nicholas of Myra Ora pro Nobis!