

Rick H's Story

I was Born in Newfoundland, Canada. A small town called Baie Verte. My mother was raised in the Salvation Army Church and my father was Anglican (his mother was Anglican, but his father was Catholic). When I was just a child they had been not attending any church, so they began attending a little Pentecostal Church which was joined to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland which incidentally is a part of the larger organization across Canada : the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and a sister organization of the Assemblies of God. They got 'saved' here and that is where my development in church began.

I got 'saved' when I was just a young boy, maybe 4 or 5 and was baptized in water at the age of 10 (somewhere in there...I was so young and the church did not keep records then. I was baptized in the name of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. I really was a model kid. I mean I went to Sunday School, any youth programs and worked my way into leadership positions in these groups. I believed strongly in the importance of being born again. For me this meant 'asking the Lord into your heart as your own personal Saviour'. I was taught early on about Romans 3 and John 3. I was saved by faith.

As I became a teenager I 'fell back'. That was the term used for all my friends as we experimented with, drugs, sex and rock 'n' roll. I remember being on a roller coaster ride, wondering about the endtimes and if Jesus came back, would I be lost? Then I came back to my Christian upbringing in my later teens. I became a proponent of evangelizing the lost. I sought converts to Christ from any churches that did not believe in being 'born again' as I understood it, and some did come. Roman Catholics were seen by my church as a degenerative people, I mean, "even the priest drinks and smokes" (sure signs of a sinner). This was the view of my church back then.

I went to University in St. John's, Newfoundland in 1982, where I studied Physical Education. I attained a 4th year status toward this degree and while I attended university, I had my spiritual ups and downs, women and wine. However in my 4th year there, I was connected to a friend of mine who I had helped bring to the Pentecostal Faith, incidentally he is still a minister there. He was at the Pentecostal Bible College in Ontario, Canada and through a renewed friendship with him, my heart began to be drawn to a deeper relationship with God and I felt that I should go. Many folks had told me as a young person that 'the call of God was on my life'. I think those comments had a bigger impact on me than I realized. I went the to College in 1985 and graduated in 1988 with an Honours Degree in Theology.

During the next four years, I married Carla, my College sweetheart and we pastored a youth group for several years and then I went to be the Senior Pastor of a little church in Nova Scotia. I preached fervently the message of the importance of being born again, the way I understood,

which in my research turned out to be inconsistent with early church writers, and of being filled with the Holy Spirit, evidenced with speaking in other tongues (although I was often unconvinced of this doctrine). Over time doubts grew and personal struggles mounted and I knew that I was not being true to the church. I began to search other avenues for a career, with my wife's support.

It was at this time that I applied for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The process took so long, so in the interim I took a job teaching in a Christian School in Stouffville, Ontario, Canada. This was my first real exposure to other denominations, Lutherans, Dutch Reformed, Baptists, Missionary Alliance, Methodists, charismatics, etc. I was really sheltered before. I began to hear of the other doctrinal views. I remained here for 2 years until I was called to join the Canadian Mounties (which is where I still am now...10 years).

After I graduated, I moved with my family to Chester, Nova Scotia. By now I was convinced that I could not go back to the legalistic beliefs of the Pentecostal Church, so I took my family to a Baptist Church. I then was transferred to Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where I was truly introduced to Roman Catholicism. My wife had met a lady who was hungry for spiritual growth, and she began to discuss Church and doctrinal issues. I did not take it too seriously, but she began to give my wife information on Mary and apparitions. I found it interesting, but only from a distance.

Then God sent along a committed Catholic for me to work with; Constable Robert Campbell. He was a fine man, with a deep conviction of spiritual truths. He and I would discuss topics on the Eucharist, Mary and the usual things that Protestants find unbelievable. I remember him saying to me...just pray and ask the Holy Spirit and he will guide you to the truth. That was my line...how dare he use it!

Anyhow by this time music had become an important part of my life. Sometimes I think that it was the only thread that held me in God's arms. I felt so distant from him, yet in music, I could sense his presence. I was then transferred to Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, where I attended a Baptist Church, but I started an interdenominational music group, and one of the members was Catholic, although she never pushed her beliefs on me. What happened over the next 3 years was unbelievable. As our group went from Church to Church, I met some amazing Priests. One in particular was Father James Mallon. He was so filled with God's love and spirit that I was drawn to him somehow. I began to read books, and to listen to tapes. Surprised by Truth was one of the first. I remember reading Tim Staples story, and it had a huge effect on me and my wife...Here was a Pentecostal who felt what I was feeling. I read Keating, Schreck and as much of the early Church Fathers as I could find. I went to my wife on each issue and we discussed things openly. She was encouraging and was only too happy to see a conversion occurring in my life. I remember sitting back one night on my chair in front of the letters of Ignatius and crying. I felt a call to this same faith. For so long I had been confused from the voices of different preachers.

As I studied and spoke to Catholic friends, my eyes were opened more and more to the truths of the Faith. I became convinced that the Roman Catholic Church was and still is the one, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. Then became the difficult process of telling my family. God somehow in his providence arranged a transfer for me this summer back to the very town where my folks lived. I began to attend the Catholic Church as soon as my family arrived, but my folks did not like it. They still are struggling with it. I believe that God brought me near them to go through this process. Maybe at a distance my decision to become Catholic would not have been real to them.

Easter Vigil, 2003, my wife and I joined the Church. It has given me a security I never experienced before. I am now linked to the apostolic church. This is the same Church that Christ founded 2000 years ago. It was visible and one. I stood convinced of this truth. History proves it and the scriptures, studied in this context, as it should be, along with the development of doctrine in the Early Church, have proven that my choice was the right one.

Thanks be to God, for bringing me to the full truth.

God Bless,
Rick Head