

# Kenneth L. Jenkins, Minister and Elder of Pentecostal Church, USA (part 1 of 3)

**Description:** A once misguided boy finds his salvation through the Pentecostal Church and answers his call to ministry at the age of 20, later to become a Muslim. Part 1.

By Kenneth L. Jenkins

Published on 16 Jan 2006 - Last modified on 31 Jul 2006

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## Foreword

As a former minister and elder of the Christian church, it has become incumbent upon me to enlighten those that continue to walk in darkness. After embracing Islam, I felt a dire need to help those who have not yet been blessed to experience the light of Islam.

I thank Almighty God, for having mercy upon me, causing me to come to know the beauty of Islam as taught by Prophet Muhammad and his rightly guided followers. It is only by the mercy of God that we receive true guidance and the ability to follow the straight path, which leads to success in this life and the Hereafter.

Praise be to God for the kindness shown to me by Sheikh 'Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Baz upon my embracing Islam. I cherish and will pass on the knowledge gained from each meeting with him. There are many others who have helped me by means of encouragement and knowledge, but for fear of missing anyone, I will refrain from attempting to list them. Sufficient it is to say that I thank Almighty God, for each and every brother and sister that He has allowed to play a role in my growth and development as a Muslim.

I pray that this short work will be of benefit to all. I hope that Christians will find that there is yet hope for the wayward conditions that prevail over the bulk of Christendom. The answers to Christian problems are not to be found with the Christians themselves, for they are, in most instances, the root of their own problems. Rather, Islam is the solution to the problems plaguing the world of Christianity, as well as the problems facing the so-called world of religion as a whole. May God guide us all and reward us according to the very best of our deeds and intentions.

Abdullah Muhammad al-Faruque at-Ta'if, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## Beginnings

As a young boy I was raised with a deep fear of God. Having been partially raised by a grandmother who was a Pentecostal fundamentalist, the church became an integral part of my life at a very early age. By the time I had reached the age of six, I knew all too well the benefits awaiting me in Heaven for being a good little boy and the punishment awaiting in Hell for little boys who are naughty. I was taught by my grandmother that all

liars were doomed to go to the Hellfire, where they would burn forever and ever.

My mother worked two full-time jobs and continued to remind me of the teachings given to me by her mother. My younger brother and older sister did not seem to take our grandmother's warnings of the Hereafter as seriously as I did. I recall seeing the full moon when it would take on a deep reddish hue, and I would begin to weep because I was taught that one of the signs of the end of the world would be that the moon would become red like blood. As an eight year old child I began to develop such a fear at what I thought were signs in the heavens and on earth of Doomsday that I actually had nightmares of what the Day of Judgment would be like. Our house was close to a set of railroad tracks, and trains passed by on a frequent basis. I can remember being awakened out of sleep by the horrendous sound of the locomotive's horn and thinking that I had died and was being resurrected after hearing the sound of the trumpet. These teachings were ingrained in my young mind through a combination of oral teachings and the reading of a set of children's books known as the Bible Story.

Every Sunday we would go to church dressed in all of our finery. My grandfather was our means of transportation. Church would last for what seemed to me like hours. We would arrive at around eleven in the morning and not leave until sometimes three in the afternoon. I remember falling asleep in my grandmother's lap on many occasions. For a time my brother and I were permitted to leave church in between the conclusion of Sunday school and morning worship service to sit with our grandfather at the railway yard and watch the trains pass. He was not a churchgoer, but he saw to it that my family made it there every Sunday. Sometime later, he suffered a stroke which left him partially paralyzed, and as a result, we were unable to attend church on a regular basis. This period of time would be one of the most crucial stages of my development.

## Rededication

I was relieved, in a sense, at no longer being able to attend church, but I would feel the urge to go on my own every now and then. At age sixteen, I began attending the church of a friend whose father was the pastor. It was a small storefront building with only my friend's family, myself, and another schoolmate as members. This went on for only several months before -the church closed down. After graduating from high school and entering the university, I rediscovered my religious commitment and became fully immersed in Pentecostal teachings. I was baptized and "filled with the Holy Ghost," as the experience was then called. As a college student, I quickly became the pride of the church. Everyone had high hopes for me, and I was happy to once again be "on the road to salvation".

I attended church every time its doors would open. I studied the Bible for days and weeks at a time. I attended lectures given by the Christian scholars of my day, and I acknowledged my call to the ministry at the age of 20. I began preaching and became well known very quickly. I was extremely dogmatic and believed that no one could receive salvation unless they were of my church group. I categorically condemned everyone who had not come to know God the way I had come to know Him. I was taught

that Jesus Christ (may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him) and God Almighty were one and the same thing. I was taught that our church did not believe in the trinity, but that Jesus (may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him) was indeed the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I tried to make myself understand it even though I had to admit that I really did not fully understand it. As far as I was concerned, it was the only doctrine that made sense to me. I admired the holy dress of the women and the pious behavior of the men. I enjoyed practicing a doctrine where women were required to dress in garments covering themselves completely, not painting their faces with makeup, and carrying themselves as true ambassadors of Christ. I was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had finally found the true path to eternal bliss. I would debate with anyone from a different church with different beliefs and would totally silence them with my knowledge of the Bible. I memorized hundreds of Biblical passages, and this became a trademark of my preaching. Yet, even though I felt assured of being on the right path, a part of me was still searching. I felt that there was an even higher truth to be attained.

## Kenneth L. Jenkins, Minister and Elder of Pentecostal Church, USA (part 2 of 3)

**Description:** A once misguided boy finds his salvation through the Pentecostal Church and answers his call to ministry at the age of 20, later to become a Muslim. Part 2: "All that glitters is not gold."

By Kenneth L. Jenkins

Published on 16 Jan 2006 - Last modified on 02 Feb 2006

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I would meditate while alone and pray to God to lead me to the correct religion and to forgive me if what I was doing was wrong. I had never had any contact with Muslims. The only people I knew that claimed Islam as their religion were the followers of Elijah Muhammad, who were referred to by many as the "Black Muslims" or the "Lost-Found Nation." It was during this period in the late seventies that Minister Louis Farrakhan was well into rebuilding what was called "The Nation of Islam." I went to hear Minister Farrakhan speak at the invitation of a coworker and found it to be an experience that would change my life dramatically. I had never in my life heard another black man speak the way that he spoke. I immediately wanted to arrange a meeting with him to try to convert him to my religion. I enjoyed evangelizing, hoping to find lost souls to save from the Hellfire - no matter who they were.

After graduating from college I began to work on a full-time basis. As I was reaching the pinnacle of my ministry, the followers of Elijah Muhammad became more visible, and I appreciated their efforts in attempting to rid the black community of the evils that were destroying it from within. I began to support them, in a sense, by buying their literature and even meeting with them for dialogue. I attended their study circles to find out

exactly what they believed. As sincere as I knew many of them were, I could not buy the idea of God being a black man. I disagreed with their use of the Bible to support their position on certain issues. Here was a book that I knew very well, and I was deeply disturbed at what I deemed was their misinterpretation of it. I had attended locally supported Bible schools and had become quite knowledgeable in various fields of Bible study.

After about six years, I moved to Texas and became affiliated with two churches. The first church was led by a young pastor who was inexperienced and not very learned. My knowledge of the Christian scriptures had by this time developed into something abnormal. I was obsessed with Biblical teachings. I began to look deeper into the scriptures and realized that I knew more than the present leader. As a show of respect, I left and joined another church in a different city where I felt that I could learn more. The pastor of this particular church was very scholarly. He was an excellent teacher but had some ideas that were not the norm in our church organization. He held somewhat liberal views, but I still enjoyed his indoctrination. I was soon to learn the most valuable lesson of my Christian life, which was "all that glitters is not gold." Despite its outward appearance, there were evils taking place that I never thought were possible in the Church. These evils caused me to reflect deeply, and I began questioning the teaching to which I was so dedicated.

## **Welcome to the Real Church World**

I soon discovered that there was a great deal of jealousy prevalent in the ministerial hierarchy. Things had changed from that to which I was accustomed. Women wore clothing that I thought was shameful. People dressed in order to attract attention, usually from the opposite sex. I discovered just how great a part money and greed play in the operation of church activities. There were many small churches struggling, and they called upon us to hold meetings to help raise money for them. I was told that if a church did not have a certain number of members, then I was not to waste my time preaching there because I would not receive ample financial compensation. I then explained that I was not in it for the money and that I would preach even if there was only one member present... and I'd do it for free! This caused a disturbance. I started questioning those whom I thought had wisdom, only to find that they had been putting on a show. I learned that money, power and position were more important than teaching the truth about the Bible. As a Bible student, I knew full well that there were mistakes, contradictions and fabrications. I thought that people should be exposed to the truth about the Bible. The idea of exposing the people to such aspects of the Bible was a thought supposedly attributable to Satan. But I began to publicly ask my teachers questions during Bible classes, which none of them could answer. Not a single one could explain how Jesus was supposedly God, and how, at the same time, he was supposedly the Father, Son and Holy Ghost wrapped up into one and yet was not a part of the trinity. Several preachers finally had to concede that they did not understand it but that we were simply required to believe it.

Cases of adultery and fornication went unpunished. Some preachers were hooked on

drugs and had destroyed their lives and the lives of their families. Leaders of some churches were found to be homosexuals. There were pastors even guilty of committing adultery with the young daughters of other church members. All of this coupled with a failure to receive answers to what I thought were valid questions was enough to make me seek a change. That change came when I accepted a job in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## **Kenneth L. Jenkins, Minister and Elder of Pentecostal Church, USA (part 3 of 3)**

**Description:** A once misguided boy finds his salvation through the Pentecostal Church and answers his call to ministry at the age of 20, later to become a Muslim. Part 3: "A birth from darkness into light."

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### **A New Beginning**

It was not long after arriving in Saudi Arabia that I saw an immediate difference in the lifestyle of the Muslim people. They were different from the followers of Elijah Muhammad and Minister Louis Farrakhan in that they were of all nationalities, colors and languages. I immediately expressed a desire to learn more about this peculiar brand of religion. I was amazed with the life of Prophet Muhammad and wanted to know more. I requested books from one of the brothers who was active in calling people to Islam. I was supplied with all of the books that I could possibly want. I read each and every one. I was then given the Holy Quran and read it completely several times within four months. I asked question after question and received satisfactory answers. What appealed to me was that the brothers were not keen on impressing me with their knowledge. If a brother did not know how to answer a question, he would tell me that he simply did not know and would have to check with someone who did. The next day he would always bring the answer. I noticed how humility played such a great role in the lives of these mysterious people of the Middle East.

I was amazed to see the women covering themselves from face to foot. I did not see any religious hierarchy. No one was competing for any religious position. All of this was wonderful, but how could I entertain the thought of abandoning a teaching that had followed me since childhood? What about the Bible? I knew that there is some truth in it even though it had been changed and revised countless numbers of times. I was then given a video cassette of a debate between Sheikh Ahmed Deedat and Reverend Jimmy Swaggart. After seeing the debate I immediately became a Muslim.

I was taken to the office of Sheikh Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Baz to officially declare

my acceptance of Islam. It was there that I was given sound advice on how to prepare myself for the long journey ahead. It was truly a birth from darkness into light. I wondered what my peers from the Church would think when they heard that I had embraced Islam. It was not long before I found out. I went back to the United States for vacation and was severely criticized for my "lack of faith." I was stamped with many labels - from renegade to reprobate. People were told by so-called church leaders not to even remember me in prayer. As strange as it may seem, I was not bothered in the least. I was so happy that Almighty God, had chosen to guide me aright that nothing else mattered.

Now I only wanted to become as dedicated a Muslim as I was a Christian. This, of course, meant study. I realized that a person could grow as much as they wanted to in Islam. There is no monopoly of knowledge - it is free to all who wish to avail themselves of the opportunities to learn. I was given a set of Saheeh Muslim as a gift from my Quran teacher. It was then that I realized the need to learn about the life, sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. I read and studied as many of the hadeeth collections available in English as possible. I realized that my knowledge of the Bible was an asset that is now quite useful in dealing with those of Christian backgrounds. Life for me has taken on an entirely new meaning. One of the most profound attitude changes is a result of knowing that this life must actually be spent in preparation for life in the Hereafter. It was also a new experience to know that we are rewarded even for our intentions. If you intend to do good, then you are rewarded. It was quite different in the Church. The attitude was that "the path to Hell is paved with good intentions." There was no way to win. If you sinned, then you had to confess to the pastor, especially if the sin was a great sin, such as adultery. You were judged strictly by your actions.

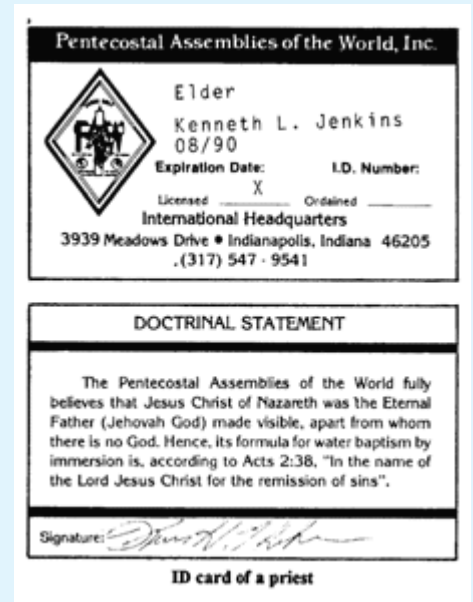
## **The Present and Future**

After an interview by the Al-Madinah newspaper I was asked about my present-day activities and plans for the future. At present, my goal is to learn Arabic and continue studying to gain greater knowledge about Islam. I am presently engaged in the field of dawah and am called upon to lecture to non-Muslims who come from Christian backgrounds. If God, Almighty, spares my life, I hope to write more on the subject of comparative religion.

It is the duty of Muslims throughout the world to work to spread the knowledge of Islam. As one who has spent such a long time as a Bible teacher, I feel a special sense of duty in educating people about the errors, contradictions and fabricated tales of a book believed in by millions of people. One of the greatest joys is knowing that I do not have to engage in a great deal of dispute with Christians, because I was a teacher who taught most of the dispute techniques used by them. I also learned how to argue using the Bible to defend Christianity. And at the same time I know the counter arguments for each argument which we, as ministers, were forbidden by our leaders to discuss or divulge.

It is my prayer that God will forgive us all of our ignorance and guide us to the path

leading to Paradise. All praise is due to God. May God praise His last messenger, Prophet Muhammad, his family, companions, and those following true guidance.



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