

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.

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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.

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