

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."

By Kenneth L. Jenkins

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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.

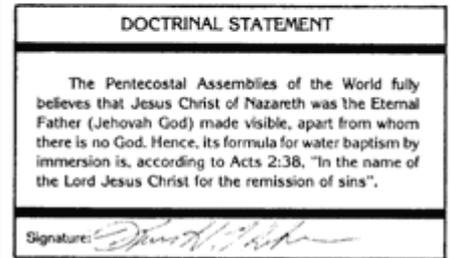
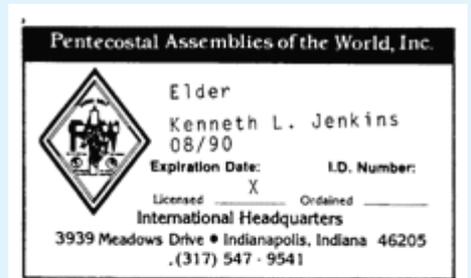
Now I only wanted to become as dedicated a Muslim as I was a Christian. This, of course, meant study. I realized that a person could grow as much as they wanted to in Islam. There is no monopoly of knowledge - it is free to all who wish to avail themselves of the opportunities to learn. I was given a 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 the mercy and blessings of God be upon last messenger, Prophet Muhammad, his family, companions, and those following true guidance.



ID card of a priest

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