

# Yusuf Estes, Former Christian and Federal Prison Chaplain (part 1 of 5)

**Description:** Yusuf Estes, now an active preacher of Islam, humorously tells his story about entering Islam. Part 1: Background.

By Yusuf Estes

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Many people ask me how a preacher or priest in Christianity can ever go to Islam, especially considering all the negative things that we hear about Islam and Muslims everyday. Some people are simply curious, while others take a profound exception to my "conversion" to Islam. Some have asked how I could have turned my back on Jesus, or if I truly understood the Holy Ghost, and some even questioned whether or not I considered myself as "born again" or had ever really been saved at all. These are good questions to which I will offer answers to at the end of this writing. I would like to thank everyone for their interest and offer my humble story, God Willing.

One very nice Christian gentleman asked me in email why and how I left Christianity for Islam. This is more or less a copy of the letter I sent to him.

## Introduction

My name is Yusuf Estes now, but in years past my friends used to call me Skip. I have preached Christianity and worked in the entertainment and music industry since I was a boy in the 1950's. My father and I have established music stores, TV and radio programs and outdoor entertainment for fun (and profit). I was a music minister and even used a pony ride and entertained the children as "Skippy the Clown."

Once, I have served as Delegate to the United Nations Peace Conference for Religious Leaders. Now I am a retired former Muslim Chaplain for United States Bureau of Prisons, Washington, DC. and I join alongside many American Muslims, working with Muslim students and youth organizations as well as schools for Muslim children. As such, I travel around the entire world lecturing and sharing the message of the Christ of the Quran in Islam. We hold dialogs and discussion groups with all faiths and enjoy the opportunity to work alongside rabbis, ministers, preachers and priests everywhere. Some of our work is in the institutional area, military, universities and prisons. Primarily our goal is to educate and communicate the correct message of Islam and who the Muslims really are. Although Islam has grown now to nearly tie Christianity as the largest of religions on earth, we see many of those who claim Islam as Muslims that do not correctly understand nor properly represent the message of "Peace, Surrender and Obedience to God" [Arabic = 'Islam']

Dear me, I am afraid that I got a bit ahead of myself. I was trying to give a bit of

background of our work perhaps to see if it would in anyway benefit those who may be going through what I experienced while trying to resolve some of the issues of Christianity.

## **How It Happened**

This may seem quite strange, while we perhaps may share a few different perspectives and concepts of God, Jesus, prophethood, sin and salvation. But you see, at one time I was in the same boat as many folks are today. Really, I was. Let me explain.

## **Born a Strong Christian**

I was born into a very strong Christian family in the Midwest. Our family and their ancestors not only built the churches and schools across this land, but actually were the same ones who came here in the first place. While I was still in elementary we relocated in Houston, Texas in 1949 (I'm old). We attended church regularly, and I was baptized at the age of 12 in Pasadena, Texas. As a teenager, I wanted to visit other churches to learn more of their teachings and beliefs. The Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Charismatic movements, Nazarene, Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Full Gospel, Agape, Catholic, Presbyterian and many more. I developed quite a thirst for the "Gospel" or as we say; "Good News." My research into religion did not stop with Christianity. Not at all. Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Metaphysics, native American beliefs were all a part of my studies. Just about the only one that I did not look into seriously was "Islam". Why? Good question.

## **Music Minister**

Anyway, I became very interested in different types of music, especially Gospel and Classical. Because my whole family was religious and musical, it followed that I too would begin my studies in both areas. All this set me for the logical position of Music Minister in many of the churches that I became affiliated with over the years. I started teaching keyboard instruments in 1960 and by 1963 owned my own studios in Laurel, Maryland, called "Estes Music Studios."

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