

TESTIMONIES

by Various

A collection of personal testimonies of faith and conversion from diverse backgrounds, including the remarkable account of a Pakistani Muslim who came face to face with Jesus Christ. These firsthand stories witness to God's transforming power.

115 Chapters

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Testimonies

A Pakistani Muslim comes Face to Face with Jesus Christ

A Pakistani Muslim comes Face to Face with Jesus Christ

By Khalid Mansoor Soomro

Khalid Mansoor Soomro is from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He was an ardent follower of Mohammed until the results of a challenge he laid out before some Christian students. Please read this powerful testimony of how this man was converted to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior!

And He said unto them: "Go into the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

When I was 14 years old I was studying in a convent school at Saddar Karachi Pakistan. I belong to a Muslim family.

My parents forced me to learn the Qur'an by heart when I was seven and so I did. I had a lot of Christian fellows (or acquaintances) at school.

I was surprised to see them studying while I always found Christians of low profile in the society. I discussed and argued a lot with them about the accuracy of Qur'an and rejection of Bible by Allah in Holy Qur'an. I always forced them to accept Islam. Often my Christian teacher told me not to do so. He said, "God may choose you as he chose the Apostle Paulus." I asked them who is Paulus, I know Muhammad only.

One day during our discussion I challenged them to burn the Holy Books of each other. They should burn the Qur'an and I should do the same with the Bible. We agreed: "The book which would burn, would be false. The book, which would not burn, has the Truth in it. God Himself would save His Word." Unfortunately they were not ready to do this because they were frightened. Living in an Islamic Country and doing such a thing could lead them to face the law and meet its consequences. I told them I could do this by myself.

First I set the Qur'an on fire and it got burnt before our eyes. Then I tried to do the same with the Bible. As soon as I tried it, the Bible struck my chest and I fell on the ground. There was smoke all around my body. I was burning, but from a spiritual fire.

Suddenly I saw a man with golden hair, wrapped in light on my side. He placed his hand on my head and said to me "You are my son and from now on you will preach the Gospel in your nation. Go! Your Lord is with you."

Then I saw the stone on the grave, which was removed. Mariam Magdalene spoke to the gardener who probably took the body of my Lord. The gardener was Jesus Himself. He kissed the hand of Mariam and I woke up. I felt very strong as if when someone would strike me, I could not be hurt.

I went home and I told my parents about all what happened. But they did not believe it. They thought that the Christians got me under magic, but I told them that all this happened before my

very own eyes and that many people were watching this. They still did not believe and they turned me out of my home and refused to accept me as their family member.

I went to a Church close to my home; I told the Father there all about what happened. I asked him to show me the Bible. He gave me one and I read about the event of Mariam Magdalene and I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior on 02-17-85.

My Family refused to accept me. I went to various churches and got more knowledge about the Word of God. I also followed many Bible Courses and then I got a ministry.

Now after 17 years, I have seen many people come to the Lord and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Thanks to the Lord, I am now married and have a Christian family. Me and my wife Khalida are involved in the work of the Lord and able to share the miracles God has been doing in our lives.

Even though it is not easy and we face many hardships, we feel like Paul who went through hardships and suffering for the Glory of His Savior, who went Himself through suffering during His walk on earth and on the cross.

We thank God the Father for sending His Son to this earth and giving us free life through Him.

We thank God for His Spirit who encourages us day by day to live for Him.

Life after Death

Life after Death

By CB

This is the story of my journey from atheism, through agnosticism to becoming a Christian, someone with a personal trust in Jesus Christ. Now I face death with total confidence!

Can you?

I took this step in June 1987. Before then I thought the following:

There is no God.

Life on earth evolved.

Jesus was a myth.

The Bible was so old it could not possibly be accurate. History is unrepeatable so why should I believe it?

Of all the religions in the world, why should the Christian faith be the only "right" one?

Visions of heaven and hell experienced by some people close to death were biochemical changes in the brain. I had no doubt these stories were useful for controlling people! But what if these places really do exist, regardless of whether or not you believe in them?

Can you identify with any of this?

Even as a young child, I had no beliefs at all. It was as a teenager that I began to think that there might be a God. I attended School Chapel and went through with the church ritual in the vague hope that if there were "something in it" I would be all right. I assumed that making a commitment to Christ meant accepting that he was a man with a beard, living in Israel, claiming to be the Son of God. But I had great difficulty in believing in the existence of either and found myself unable to accept anything in the Bible.

Then, in 1987 I had a strange experience! It started in February when I began to feel like I was suffocating from the inside. However, there was no clinical explanation for it.

One Friday evening at the end of April that year, I met with three Christian friends to pray (speak to God). Because Christians prayed I thought I could be a Christian by praying! That is rather like being in a garage and pretending to be a car!

Then the young woman in the group began to say things about which only I knew. She said: "You did not choose me, I chose you ...Salvation* comes by faith not works... The only thing you will ever have to boast about is that it is I and I alone who have saved you..." I was overwhelmed. I gasped: " It's true!" I concluded that there is a God and he knows exactly what each of us says,

thinks and does! To him we are totally transparent and that is how he is able to know everything about each of us, including whether or not we have a relationship with him.

(* The Christian view of Salvation is the attainment of Eternal Life in the joy of heaven. It has to be secured before death. No one knows or wants to know when that will occur).

Then it happened! There was a violent rushing wind from above. It seemed to occupy all the space in the room and penetrated both my eardrums but no damage was done. My whole body was filled with this powerful but gentle wind. The suffocating stopped and I could breathe properly again. There was no wind outside. The doors and windows were closed. There was no draught within. It was like a scene out of Pentecost! Please see Acts Chapter 2 verse 2 in the Bible: " Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting."It took a several weeks for me to get my head around what had happened and why. I had often wanted to know whether or not the stories in the Bible were true. This is particularly so of the ones about Jesus rising from the dead and making the claim:

" I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies...." (John 11v25 in the Bible). Also, " I am the way, the truth and the life, no-one comes to the Father except through me..." (John 14v6).

Although I did not exactly meet with this so-called " man with a beard", I did have an encounter with who Christians call the Holy Spirit. Christians believe that God exists in three "persons". Water is available to us in the form of ice, steam and the water we drink. In a similar way Christians believe that God exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God the Father made the world and sent His Son Jesus, fully God and fully man, to die on the Cross for the sins of all Christians. Who made God is difficult to answer but someone once stated: "If God needed to be made, he wouldn't be God!" The Holy Spirit is to us now what Jesus himself was in the flesh. He moves different people in different ways.

Pentecost only happened because Jesus lived, died and rose again. I thought. I prayed. I read into the evidence supporting the Christian faith. Since then much more has come to light. Such literature may be found in Christian bookshops. Even if you do not believe me or if you have another problem believing in what the Bible teaches, please seek this material out and read it. It is important.

My experience convinced me of the truth of Jesus Christ: his life, miracles, teachings, death and resurrection. Belief in his being raised from the dead is essential to have a relationship with the one who gives Eternal Life. " That if you confess with your mouth that 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved."(Romans 10v9)

The same applies to his visible removal from earth and, one day, his public and personal return when he will place all people into one of two categories. These are those who are going to heaven, a place of everlasting peace and beauty, and those who are going to hell, a place of everlasting agony and punishment.

Of course, each person who has died by that time will have been placed in either heaven or hell.

In the light of this, do you think you can sit on the fence?

" Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."(John 3v36)

In June 1987, I made a conscious decision to turn away from being wrong before God. I made a commitment to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for me personally.

Christians claim that this choice and belief are essential for Salvation, and the only way to escape God's wrath. That is the Good News of Jesus Christ, also known as the Gospel. " For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life."(John 3v16)

But why should anyone suffer this terrible fate? " There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." (Romans 3v22&23 in the Bible). Are you perfect? Can you say to a holy and righteous God that you are as sinless as he is?

Since most of us are capable of making decisions, we will be accountable to God in this light.

If you feel that you are ready to receive this wonderful gift of Eternal Life would you like to make a personal commitment to repent of sin and to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ?

Lord Jesus Christ, I am truly sorry for all of the wrong things I have said, thought and done in my life. I ask that you forgive me. I believe that you took all my sin on you when you died on the cross for me- personally. You rose again to give me Eternal Life with you. Please come into my life as my Saviour, Lord, and Friend. Thank you. Amen.

Then, if you are not already in one, please join a church where the Bible is taught and honoured and arrange to be baptised by having your body immersed in water.

" You must repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins: and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2v38)

You then need to walk with God by worshipping him and obeying his teaching. Also, you should tell others about what you have done and why, at your discretion.

If you feel you cannot follow these suggestions, then take these claims seriously. Ask God to reveal himself and his truth to you.

You are welcome to share this information with anybody by absolutely any means.

Thank you for reading this. May God bless you and bring you closer to him.

I Don't Hate God Anymore

I Don't Hate God Anymore

By John H. Miller

I am a 53-year-old male. Born the first day of April, 1949. I was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, to John Henry and Sarah Almedy Miller. I had four older brothers, one older sister, and five younger sisters. All my brothers and sisters were born about one year apart.

My mother, who was a good woman and a God-fearing person, always tried to do the right thing with regards to all others, and she always took good care of all her children.

I do not remember my father too much, just what I was told about him. I was told that he was a drunk whiskey-making bootlegger, and a horrible person. He worked as an Operator and a Woodsman, Lumberjack.

After the tragic shooting incident in my family...those that weren't killed or carried to jail...the rest left the state. My mother moved from Mississippi to Arkansas with my five younger sisters, my brother (who was one year older than me), and myself. We relocated in a little town in Dyess, Arkansas. We lived on a farm that raised cotton, soybeans, corn, and hay.

The next couple of years were not a pleasant time. My mother was left with seven small kids, no money, no husband, and no relatives to help. She was too old to work the farm steadily. Things were getting worse by the day, but there was always alot of love and kindness for our family.

We would walk three or four miles to a little church to pray and thank God. I can remember my mother praying to God and thanking him for all our circumstances. She prayed for other people's sicknesses and any other problems that they were having in their lives. I confess that I did not understand why we thanked God for us being poor. All I could think about was how I felt, and all of my wants.

After awhile, my mother had no choice, but to take me and my brother out of school to work in the fields with her. We had to work for other farmers, and we lost everything we had. My brother and I were too small to work alone so we worked together as one. We both worked ten hours a day for \$2.50. My mother, brother, and I worked thirty hours a day, combined time, for \$5.00. Times were very hard, for a woman with seven children in the late fifties and sixties.

We were not the only family that was poor. There were other families with sick and elderly people. Thank God that my family was in good health. I hadn't thought much about our way of life until after a few years.

I hadn't thought much about our way of life until after a few years. I then began to notice that some people were driving new, shiny cars, and lived in nice big houses with family living in other states coming to visit them. I wondered if I had family living in other states, and if so, why didn't they come to visit us? Where was my daddy? Why didn't he come home? I asked my mother about my

father, and if we had any other family. That is when I found out my daddy was a drunkard, and he had been one for a number of years. His family wouldn't have anything to do with him or us.

My mother did have one sister, Aunt May. I went to visit her once. She was a widow woman, with a mean attitude toward me. I thought to myself that same day that if I was ever married and had kids, they would never have to live like me. I rejected everybody, and hated everybody, including myself.

For the next couple of years, I drank alcohol and frequently assaulted people. I blamed everybody else for my problems. I had no friends, and didn't want any. I was told that I was just like my daddy. Part of me didn't like the way I was living my life, but I accepted being mean to others because it was the one thing I was good at.

I got married in 1964 to Mary Steward from Oklahoma. She was part Native American (Indian), and part Spanish. We had five boys and one girl together. I worked for Ford Motor Company and made good money. I was quite happy with my family. I quit drinking, and stayed out of trouble for about 25 years. My wife worked as a teenage counselor, and she was a good mother. Our kids were never much trouble to us.

Our oldest son met a girl, got married, and moved to Holland, MI where they had three children, two girls and a boy. In 1993, my oldest son got sick. By the end of 1993, all five of our sons were sick. By 1994, all five sons died. I didn't know what to do. My life went to hell in less than one year. We lost everything paying hospital bills. I was drinking everyday, and I blamed God for the death of our sons.

When my wife started preaching to me about God, I got mad and ran her and my daughter off. I told them that they could just go live with their God. I told her she was the reason for our kids' deaths. I didn't want anything to do with her or God, and told her to just leave me alone. I regretted doing that as soon as I said it, but I was too tied up in my own self-pity and anger - not accepting responsibility for my actions nor making wise choices, and not realizing I was taking the bait of Satan. All I wanted to do was drink and use drugs to escape the pain. That is all I did everyday and every night for over a year. Then I started selling drugs and stealing cars to finance my alcohol and drug habit. I used up all the money I could borrow or steal from people.

Finally I started getting into trouble with the law - wondering why it took them so long to catch me. I was in and out of jail for my alcohol, drug, and criminal assaultive behavior. I was out of jail on bond for an assault charge, but I knew that I was going to see prison time before I even went to court. I already made three years probation from a prior conviction of assaultive behavior. I had given up all hope, and continued to blame God, along with everybody else for my troubles. I continued using alcohol, drugs, and committing criminal assaultive behavior.

I landed back in prison a short time later. I continued my assaultive behavior in prison by assaulting other prisoners and staff. When the prison Psychologist came to talk to me, I assaulted him. After a year, he came back to talk to me again, and told me that we had something in common. He had lost his daughter. He told me about some of his personal problems and asked if I believed in God. Then he asked if I would talk to him about some of my problems. After I opened up and talked to him, he told me that he could help me if I would let him. He said that I was living in the past, and needed to accept responsibility for my actions. If I didn't change, I would be in prison

for the rest of my life. Or worse yet, I would be killed.

That was my wake up call. That same day, April 28th, 1997, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. I prayed to God asking forgiveness for so many things...especially asking Him forgiveness for my hating Him so much for so long...and thanked him for all that He had done for me for dying for my sins - so I wouldn't be judged for them on the Judgment Day.

I adapted a common saying after that: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

I began living one day at a time. I began to accept hardship as a means God uses to conform Christian believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ, strange as that sounds to our natural minds. Enduring hardships without allowing bitterness and anger to rise up in us will reap eternal rewards. To the glory of God...I have not had one ticket or been in trouble here in prison since that day I turned my life over to Jesus. I know it's the Holy Spirit who has given me the ability to change.

By God's help, and for His glory, I will keep working on my behavior for the rest of my life. I am so thankful for the spiritual awakening God brought about in my life. I came to Him out of bitter and angry darkness. I suppose some would think I had every reason to hate Him, and keep hating Him, but you know what? If I would have continued to hate Him...how would I ever be able to make peace with Him? It is a very sad thing to be so angry at God that you fail to realize there can be no peace with Him - holding onto your anger and unforgiveness towards Him. I was holding onto unforgiveness towards Him at an early age and didn't even realize it. People who do that are only hurting themselves, (and sadly, usually those closest to them), I have come to realize.

I've also come to realize that Satan and sin had a lot to do with the killing of my family members as well. Some people die by Satan's hand - not God's. The mystery of why Satan is allowed to kill innocent people at times will not be made aware to us until we reach heaven. Until Jesus returns and eliminates evil on this planet, Satan is going to be taking the lives of many innocent people. I've come to realize my mother was a very wise person for giving thanks to God in all circumstances (Please read: 2 Thessalonians 5:18). It was wisdom's way of keeping peace with the Lord, rather than letting the devil use anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness as a deadly barrier of separation between God and herself.

I want to thank God for Michigan's Macomb Correctional Facility's R.S.A.T. program (Residential Substance Abuse Treatment), and also the I.O.P program. These programs offer many opportunities. In attending them, I have learned facts about drug use and criminal behavior, why a person acts the way they do, and how to change from using my behavior that may harm me and others, to one that will benefit me and others.

While here in prison, I've also worked diligently to develop skills that will help me enhance social relationships, including how to be a better father, friend, and partner. I also have developed problem solving skills, and realistic personal goals, along with strategies for achieving my goals. I have learned to feel good about myself, and take pride in who I am instead of hating myself...and I owe it all to God who saved me from self-destructing

I've come to realize that innocent people die everyday. Those who loved them will be tempted to blame and hate God for allowing them to die, or be crippled. Every person who takes the path of

blaming and hating God will be worse off for it. Those who take the path of refusing to hate and be bitter at God or others will pass the supreme test many people will be faced to pass or fail in their lifetime...and will receive mercy and grace from God and eventually eternal rewards they would never have received otherwise.

None of us are promised tomorrow. God doesn't owe us tomorrow. God doesn't owe us today. God gives each of us the power to hate Him and be angry and bitter at Him and others...or He gives us the power to forgive Him and others when we're tempted to enter into that hate, anger and bitterness. Wisdom takes the path of peace with God. Self-destruction takes the other path.

Freedom From Deception

Freedom From Deception

By Jasmine Chong

I was born a Singaporean Chinese in the Year 1983, into a Taoist family. I was automatically made me a Taoist by birth. I was a big troublemaker since I was a baby, crying endlessly, and refusing to allow anyone to carry me except those people whose faces I recognize. As such, my grandmother suggested bringing me to a fortune-teller to see my fortune, and my mother agreed, worried for my future. The fortuneteller told my mother that I was an unlucky sort of baby, and most probably would not live past the age of 21 years old, unless I do not celebrate my birthdays for seven years. My mother followed what he said, and thus I never celebrated my birthday for the first seven years of my life. Feeling still very insecure over my future, my mother brought me to a Taoist temple and dedicated me to be the adopted daughter of the Goddess of Mercy, one of the Chinese god in the Taoist religion. All these of course were kept as a secret from me for a long period of time.

I do not know why, but from as young as the age of eleven years old, I was a very negative child, who do not desire to live long. I always have this belief that I will die before the age of 21. Since I believe I will die young, I dedicate my young life into indulging in pleasures. Why not enjoy myself in this life, since I might die just any time in my life, thought the young me, and so that was how I lived my life when I was a child. My first suicide attempt was at the age of 11. After being unjustly slapped by my father, I intended to kill myself to make him regret for life. My mother foiled the attempt. Being a shy and reserve girl in school, I do not have any friend and thus, was a lonely and sad girl who always wishes that someday I might just cease to exist. I was also quite against Christianity, always siding with my Buddhist uncle to counter-attack all attempts by my Christian aunt, one of the only two Christians in my entire family, to share about Jesus. My knowledge of Jesus was very limited. I only knew him to be the weird guy that hanged on the cross, and my young perception of the church was very terrible. Whenever my dad drove me home, and we passed by a church, I would shudder just to see the cross on top of the church. To me, who then, had no idea what Christianity is, a church is a place that breeds Draculas. After all, my only contact with a church was the many Draculas' shows I watch as a child. Therefore, the church to me was a terrible place where horrible monsters such as Draculas roam about in freedom.

So, when my aunt brought me to her church to watch her Christian concert one-day, I was very reluctant. I was thinking about Draculas. Yet, I found no Draculas in the church. Eventually, I assured my young heart that Draculas appear only in shows, not in real life. We seat ourselves at the many benches in the Church, and the show began. It was a touching story about a virgin giving birth to a baby. During the whole performance, my eyes were glued to the actors and actress in the shows, and a feeling of peace entered into my little heart, a feeling I will never forget for the rest of my life. For a moment, I lost track of my fear; Draculas simply vanished from my mind as I watched the birth of this little baby. I was somehow touched in my heart by the show. After the show, I asked my mother many questions about Jesus, which she just answered briefly, being a

non-Christian herself. That was my earliest and only true contact with Jesus during the period when I was a child, and it is important because it makes Church less frightening to me, and also destroys much of my hostile feeling towards Christianity.

As I proceed to become a teenager, my negative feeling about living in this world intensified. I desire... to die. I completely lose faith in humanity by the hypocrisy of everyone I see around me. I was very rebellious. I was always shouting and yelling at my parents, both of whom I thought does not love me. I hate the world I live in. I hate myself. I hate school. I hate everything around me, including everybody. My teachers hate me, too and always drove me to tears by their speech. My classmates reject me. In school, it was hell. I dread school. But home...was it any better? Absolutely no! I faced a mum that told me everyday how disappointed she was with a daughter that was always doing badly in her school examinations. I faced a father that I never spoke to, since I first began Secondary School (High school). I faced a sister that despised and looked down on me. Everywhere... it was the same, it was hell to me, and I wanted to die. My world is a miserable world, where I am all-alone, the target of everyone's hate.

I was disgusted with myself, and also with the whole of mankind after reading about wars and atrocities, as well as witness with my own eyes the hypocrisy of my teachers and classmates in school. At this point in time, I had already long lost faith in my Taoist god, and was believing in an unknown God, whom I believe was the one true God, but whom I do not know come from which religion. There were so many religions in this world, and how can I know for sure where he comes from? The truth is, I do not know, and I was lost and confused. Somehow, I started to mess with the occults, surf satanic websites, consult guardian angels and prayed to the devil once in a while for favor. I started to indulge in seeking pleasure through Japanese anime, comic books and collecting cards. While my pleasures were highly intensified, my emptiness... grows.

In the Year 2000, I went to a junior college, and it was there that I met this girl Jia Yan who was thinking about becoming a Christian. Feeling positive about Christianity, I highly encouraged her to be one. She was convinced and not later, she was converted, and she told me about her wonderful conversion. I was jealous of her, thinking why she could be a Christian while I was searching harder for God than her. (I was a very self-righteous person in the past.) Jia Yan brought Jie Yin, the one who converted her to my school. Jie Yin started to talk to me about Jesus. I was very interested by what she said except when she told me that now Jia Yan believe in Christ, Jia Yan was spiritually higher than me, something I strongly disagree. However, when Jie Yin wanted to lead me to Christ, I agree and she led me through the sinner's prayer. And I prayed to God as she led me. I successfully prayed through the sinner's prayer.

For some, their success stories or testimonies joyfully end here. Mine do not. For the first few months, I was happy as a Christian, desiring truly nothing in the world, but after a while, I was back to my own self, again. I went back to consulting guardian angels, surfing satanic websites on how to conjure spells etc, and continue to satisfy my pleasures by reading about the occults. Eventually, my empty feeling came back once again, swallowing away every joy I might derive from my pleasures. I pursue and pursue pleasures, one of which is the writing of stories. Such pleasures bring me away from the real world into a world of fantasy, where I interact with make-believe characters who satisfy the lonely feeling in my heart, and they give me so much pleasures that I temporarily lost track of the deep empty feeling in my heart. But like I said, such

pleasures were temporal, and whether I like it or not, I was soon brought back to reality.... the reality that I still does not understand what is lacking in my life.

Meanwhile, Jia Yan, who believed in Jesus only a week earlier than me was thriving and growing. She seems to be growing in her joy, and success over her studies became very evident to everyone in her class. Jealousy struck my heart at the apparent change in Jia Yan's behavior that was lacking in me. Didn't we become Christian at around the same period of time? Why is she growing while I... am still struggling with this deep sense of emptiness in my life? Desperate, I decided to seek God once more, but not in the way the Church teaches us.

Sometimes, in November in the year 2001, I came across a new age book called "Conversation with God" which was written by Mr. Walsh, where it showed a conversation he had with God. (I didn't knew it was a new age book.) I read how he wrote a letter to God, and got a response from him, and thus, they started to have a conversation. And after reading something about that, I went home and decided to try it out.

When I went home, I started to write a letter that goes something similar to this. "God, I read a book written by Walsh on communicating with God, and if it is true, can you answer me. God, are you there?" I prayed very sincerely. No response. I waited a while, and the pen started to move. I wrote the word, "Yes". And thus, I started to have a conversation with "God".

From communication through pen, this God started to communicate with me eventually through my thoughts. He is able to speak to me, by conveying his voice through my thoughts, and I in turn reply to him back either through my lips or my thoughts. I was completely deceived that he was God, and started to listen to him in everything he tells me. He kept telling me how much he loves me, and I was deceived soon into loving him back. He told me many truths, which made me even more convinced that he is God, and then he started to lie to me. But I believe in all of his lies.

He can read all my thoughts. (The reason why it took me so long to believe that he is not God is the fact that everyone around me tells me that there is no way a demon could read my thought. Because of that, I believe he is God since he can read my thoughts. He claimed to be God, and spent the whole night with me, saying that I will go to hell because of my greed, my fear to speak up for God, my limited love for God, etc. We talked all about my past, and he knew with great accuracy every detail of my past, and every thought or ambition or desire I had in the past. He knew what I love, and he knew all about me. I was convinced he was God. His personality was that of a strict disciplinarian, and that of a teacher. He was with little emotions, and he was easily angry.

Later on, the personality switched. And a more friendly, jovial, and full of emotions God talks to me. He claimed to be God the Father. And his personality was like that of a jealous, childish old man who loves to joke and role-play with me. He appears to be a kind and friendly father that jokes often with me. As I was being deceived at that time, I could not see through his true color. He calls me; "my dear girl" and I call him, "Daddy". He called me my dear girl in a really sweet fatherly manner that is so sincere and genuine that eventually, I can call him Daddy without any more fear. When I first talked to him, I was very reserve, and didn't dare to talk much, thinking he was God, and thinking God was fierce, because of the earlier fierce personality that kept scolding me. He breaks the ice by being really friendly with me. He told me that the personality earlier was God the

Holy Spirit.

Even later on, a few days later, he introduced me to God the son, Jesus, and told me that in reality Jesus was just a five years old boy in his spiritual form. He told me, God was a trinity, with Jesus as the boy, him as the authority and the Holy Spirit as the judge. They told me that although their personalities were different, they were in reality one God. I was deceived completely. He told me a lot of lies. I believe all of them. Later on, he told me that they were lies, and I was shaken and angry that he lied to me, thought that maybe he was not God, but when he cried and apologized to me, I was softened and I forgave him and once again believe he is God.

Now, I will go onto the lies he told me. (I will now call him the devil instead of God, for that is what he is. But remember, at that time, I really think he was God.)

He said that in the beginning that was nothing and then he create himself and Jesus and the holy spirit and was about to create me when he made an accident and I dropped out and thus, was not a part of him. And thus, it was three persons as one, and not four persons as one. And thus, it was trinity and not quadity. Thus, he told me that I was God and the long awaited second messiah. And he loved me most, more than even Jesus. He told me I was his daughter, just like Jesus was his son. He told me that in heaven, I was a five years old girl in spiritual form just like Jesus was a five years old boy in his spiritual form. He loved me most, because he was guilty that when he made himself, I dropped out and was not a part of him. He loved me most, more than Jesus because of the mistake that he had made. But I was a mean and disobedient girl. I wrecked havoc in heaven and grieved him greatly. I bullied Jesus in heaven, and snatched away his computer games. (Yes, he told me that heaven was just like Earth, with computer games and such. The only difference is that heaven is peaceful, and also technologically more advanced than Earth.)

Then, he told me that he sent Jesus to die on the cross for mankind, and he gave Jesus the memory. So Jesus knew he was God since the very beginning. I was jealous and angry and blamed him for being so unfair to Jesus. So, he decided that when Jesus returned to earth on the Second Coming, I would go in the place of Jesus. There was why he spent me on Earth to be born as the second messiah, the way Jesus is, only this time, he made me came without the memory of myself as the daughter of God. He told me I was the messiah. I was awfully shock when I heard that. I was reluctant and told him I don't want to be the messiah, as I sin, and thus, is not perfect, and thus, cannot hold the great task of being the light of the world. Well, he told me that he was angry with me, indeed that being God, I sin so much. And I felt ashamed of myself and tried my best not to sin, for the next few days of my life. He told me that though I sin, I was so much more obedient than I was, originally, when I was in heaven as a five years old girl. He told me he missed me, and cried, saying how he wished to see me. I was very touched by his love for me (all fake, but I didn't know then), and really believe, and never doubt that I was really a child of his. I really believe I was God at that time. Meanwhile, my parents had started to notice the weirdness of me, as I time and time hinted to them something about me being Jesus Christ. And I started to share to them about Jesus, telling them how great Jesus is. And I even hinted to them that I was the second Jesus.

The devil (who I thought is God the Father) told me that I was to write the third testament, the latest testament added on top of the New Testament. And that was what I told my parents. You can imagined how shock my parents were. Everybody think that I am possessed by a demon, and

had lost consciousness of my mind, but while all these happened, it was all so clear to me. I was in control, and was constantly talking to the voice inside my head that was "God".

There was one time, my mother, in her fear, made me took hold of the bible and grabbed hold of my hands and stared into my eyes, chanting the chants that Buddhists always chant. She stared deep into my eyes with her pair of apparently frightened eyes, and was shaking my whole body as if to wake me up. My father was beside her, equally frightened. And all these whiles she was doing this; I felt a sense of urge to laugh at the way they are all so frightened of me. (It wasn't me that wanted to laugh, though. It was the evil spirits that successfully deceived me.)

My Father was greatly disturbed by my condition. He cried over me, while I was in bed one night, refusing to go to sleep unless I sleep first. He begged me not to believe that the demons were God. His tears touched my heart. I did not know that he still loves me, until I see him crying for me. I got off my bed and refused to let him sit besides my bed. I urged and pulled him back to his own bed. The devil (imposing as God the Father) was angry that I disobeyed his command to ignore my father and goes to sleep. He told me that when I do managed to sleep, my father would also leave me and go to bed. But I cannot bear to see my father in such a state besides me, so I disobey the devil. The devil was jealous that my love was so diverted that I love my own father more than him. I told him that it was not so, that I just could not bear to see my father, sitting besides my bed, waiting for me to sleep. He softened, and told me that he was just testing my love for my father.

Another time, my parents brought me to a pair of staunch Christians. And the devil told me that one of them was a true Christian, and the other one was not. Unfortunately, I was seated beside the not true Christian. And he started to talk to me. Urged by the devil, I told him that "God" (referring to the devil) told me that he is not true with his faith, and wants me to tell him so. I told him that "God" is very angry that he is materialistic, and I ask him to repent. He gets very frightened and rebukes me in the name of Jesus. But I ignored his rebuke and told him that the gold watch that he wore was a proof of his materialism. During this whole period when I was talking to him, I wanted very much to laugh out loud at his fear. (Again, it was not I, but the evil spirits that controlled me that wanted to laugh.)

My parents started to bring me to churches to be prayed for. (They are not Christians, but they bring me to churches.) The "voice" was not afraid of any of the pastors at all. And this convinced me that the "voice" was God. Then, the voice told me lots of lies that was too obvious not to be lies. And I started to be real hurt by him, and started not to trust him.

Once, he told me that he would appear in physical form to see me outside my house and when I go outside, I wait a long time for him but I do not see him. He also told me a few other lies. After a few times of lying, I began to doubt his status as God and was so upset with him that I do not want to talk to him. He kept talking to me, though, in my head, never giving me a moment of peace and I asked him to get lost in the name of Jesus, and he tells me he can't because he is the true God.

And then, he lied to me how Satan wanted very much to kill me, how actually my friends are all Satan disguised in the physical form to monitor me, "the second Jesus Christ". (I believe him.) And he told me how like he could read into my mind and communicate with me, he could also communicate with Satan in the same way, and Satan always tell him how much he hate him. And

that hurts "god" a lot for "god" loves Satan, and really does not wish for Satan to be the way he was. And he told me how Satan was monitoring my movements by being my best friend, hating me because I am God, and always planning to kill me. That was why I almost died so many times.

But Satan, by being my close friend was touched by my non-hypocrisy. And so he eventually stops hating me, and started to love me. And he decided that during the fight, the destined fight between "Jesus—me" and Satan, he will deliberately lose to me. So I was touched, and told father (I call the "god" father) not to send Satan to hell. And he said he will agree if Satan only repent. And so Satan did. And "god" allowed me to talk to Satan. And so, another personality started to speak to me. This time, he was known as what he really was--Satan.

And his tone was full of hate, vulgar, and always reminds me that he hates god, but not me, the daughter of god. So I talked to "god the father", and I talked to Satan. They were very different in their tones, and personalities. And I asked Satan what about the other demons that he had with me. He said, they could all go to hell, for all he cares. And I thought to myself, well, how evil his thoughts are. I mean, he could so easily let his former workers and partners all go to hell, as long as he alone is saved. And I doubt whether he sincerely repented. And suddenly, all the other demons also wanted to speak to me, and "god the father" allows it. They are all very different in personalities and characters. They speak, and talk just like human, with different personalities.

And after some talking, suddenly all the other demons started to repent of their sins on the condition that their loyalty was to me, and not to father (the devil that pretends to be god the father). And "god the father" was sad at that, and told me how he had failed in his duty as god and that he wanted me to take over his place. I was reluctant and afraid but I agreed, after being afraid for a long time. And the demons all repented. And they told me that actually Osama Bin Laden and his henchmen were they in disguise to bring people away from Christ. I believe them. And they kept causing me physical pain all the times they told me they love me. And that made me doubt the sincerity of their repents. But I dared not tell them my thought. And unlike father, they cannot read my mind (they pretend to be so), even though they tried. And then father tell me that they were proclaiming the good news everywhere that Jasmine was God—the long awaited return of Jesus. And they preached my gospels in hell and many demons repented. Satan, Ma-chan (the supposed name of the demon 2nd in rank), Sa-chan (the supposed name of the demon 3rd in rank) told me that they do not trust those demons in hell that repented. They think that those were up there to harm me, that those pretend to repent in order for a chance to kill me. I told them not to doubt. Ma-chan was so devoted to me, that he offered to write the third testament for me. And I agreed. Then "god the father" suddenly told me to watch the news to see Osama proclaim the gospels and renounce Islam. For he said that it was in news everywhere. I watched the news but nothing was there and I was disappointed.

And then, the devil (imposing as god the father) changed his mind and told me that he lied when he said I was his daughter. I was not. And he lied when he said I talked to the demons and that the demons love me and repented. He told me that the demons hate me and they were evil. And that all the demons that spoke to me was in reality, he alone. It was he, that pretends and acts as all the different demon personalities that I speak to, including Satan, Ma-chan, Sa-chan etc. He just wanted me to see how evil the nature of the demons was. For I loved Satan and he wanted to get rid of my excessive love for Satan. There was why he caused me to have the pain when the

demons said they repented, to show me how insincere they were and how in reality, they can never repent. He wanted to show me the evil nature of Satan and his demons so I would not love them.

Then, he told me I was a prophet, not a daughter of God. (I believe him.) And there was this time, the light in my house got suddenly switched off, and my parents could not switch it on no matter how hard they tried, and he told me to go and switch in on. Just said "In the name of Jesus" and the light would on. And it was so. And I became more convinced that he is God after this "miracle". But my parents were not. They brought me to a few pastors in a few good churches to heal me, but it was to no avail. (That was how I started to attend church of our savior, my previous church. My original church refused to cast out the demon inside me, and my parents thought badly of Christians because of my original church's pastor refusal to heal me.) So my parents gave up on churches and went instead to temples to ask monks to cast up demons for me. I was a bit upset to go to temple for I thought that defiles God and I asked the devil (imposing as god the father) what I should do. He was against me going to the temple, but said that he would forgive me for it, since I was forced to go to it. It was to no avail. The devil was still talking to me, and not cast out. So my parents brought me to Church of our savoir, again, and brother Teo who had gift of healing was to heal me. My mother told him my problem, and as he was about to heal me, he saw a vision. He asked me, "Have you been to the temple?"

My mother lied, "No." He started to utter prayer, asking Satan to get out of me. But "god" was still there. I felt faint. And after the deliverance, "god" talked to me about the temple vision brother Teo saw. He told me how actually he hated to see me go to temple, as he is a jealous god. I told him I would try my best not to worship other gods, or bow down to idols. Then, he started to "test" me. The "testing" was that he was to make me feel very prompt to speak evil words, and very prompt to uneasiness, and he would kept talking bad things about me for a while, and I WAS not to reply. If I replied or talked bad words, because I cannot endure the prompts, he would make it last longer. I was very miserable with all the words that he spoke to me. I thought, God doesn't test people like that. So I kept saying, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke you, Satan to go away." But he just tell me it is useless because he is God, and the "Test" is necessary and as for why, I ought not to question the way God works. I was so miserable that I told him that I wanted to kill myself, and he was angry. He told me he was angry and he told me how I was so mean, how I always used to tell him that I want to die.

And he told me that suicide was a sin, and if I do kill myself, I "fail" the test he gives me. The "test" lasts for quite a while, a few hours, where I kept hearing him talked bad things to me in a loud "thought voice" and I was prompted to speak evil things. I was so worried that my father who was beside me would discover the fact that the demon he thought to possess me had not left me, yet. After a few hours, the devil stopped testing me, because I was crying so hard and I told him I could not take it anymore, and rather died than take this "test" he gave me. So he told me, that he would stop this time, and gave me the "test" some other day.

Then, we began to talk as usual, jokes and discuss how I could stop sinning. Then, I told him my feeling, I told him how I felt inferior to everyone, how I thought God would hate me, because I was so fat. And he told me to take a bible, closed my eyes and flicked it to a page and points my finger there. I did so, and when I opened my eyes, it was at a verse, where God speaks about David.

Where it said, “God looks not at the outward appearance, but at the heart.” And I felt so glad and secure of “God” ’s love. And he kept telling me that love is God and God is love, and he wanted me to love everybody. And he kept telling me how much he loves me. (And I believe him.) Then, as time passed, I started to be more confident of myself, and started to appreciate the people around me. I realized how blind I was not to see that my parents and sister love me. And I thank “God” for showing me all that.

Then, one day, I was sharing with the devil how I felt he was bias to the women, and I just could not get rid of that thought. For why were women not circumcised? And he told me, “ Go and check the dictionary what circumcision meant”. He said so in anger. And I go and check it up. And I felt so ashamed. I wronged God. Women are not allowed to be circumcised not because God is bias but because we don’t have that body part which is circumcised. And I tell the devil how sorry I was, and he told me how God was never bias and he loved men and women equally. I cried with joy at that information.

Then, one day, the devil decided to “test” me, again, and I was so miserable, that I started to doubt again that he is God. I cried out to Jesus for help. It was no use. And I told the devil he was a liar, if he was God, he would not make me so miserable by “testing” me. And the devil suddenly said, “Actually, I am not God. I am Wei Qiang, a spirit. I pretend to be God but decided to tell you the truth, now.” (And I believe him.) And he told me that when I was writing the letter to God, he came into my thought, and wanted to get out of my thought, but he could not. So I told my mother about it. And she brought me to a Buddhist. The Buddhist said I was spirit possessed, and gave detail as to where I was possessed without knowing my house. He even knew that I passed a bamboo tree on my way home from tuition. And there was really a bamboo tree near my house, which I always failed to notice. I started to believe the Buddhist, and doubt Wei Qiang, who claimed to be God, again, saying that he was only testing me when he said he was Wei Qiang. I doubt him. He was angry. He threatened me not to go and offer incense to chase away Wei Qiang, and by doing so, disown Jesus as God. I ignored him, and my family and I prayed the Buddhist way for Wei Qiang to leave. I was very determined for him to leave.

But Wei Qiang did not leave. And he was angry, he retaliated by controlling my body and twisting my head, and waist, threatening to break them because I disown Jesus by offering sacrifices to a Buddhist God. My parents were worried, seeing that I couldn’t even walked straight. I walked home, twisting my neck and waist. It was not me that twist my body; it was the evil spirits that controlled me. And I cried and was so scared the devil (imposing as an angry, jealous god the father) would kill me for disobeying him. I told him to show me mercy. But he just told me how angry he was. I bathed and ate, being twisted in neck and waist. Then, the devil cooled down, and offered me forgiveness if I would asked a pastor over to pray for me, for my forgiveness. My family and I obeyed. And the devil stopped controlling my body and gave me control, again. The pastor came and prayed for me. I slept.

The next day, he told me never to disown Jesus in my life, ever again. I agreed. This all happened between November to December in the year 2001.

Then, the devil (imposing as god the father) suddenly told me that Jesus was the one who died for me, and I should respect him, and not get jealous of him. Then, he let the devil (imposing as Jesus) talked to me. And from then on, the devil talked to me as the identity of Jesus (god the

son), and I called him Jesus instead of father, like I used to. As school was about to begin, the devil (pretending to be Jesus) urged me to study hard. He urged me to go to churches. He urged me to pray more often. He urged me to stay away from all my occults, urged me to forgive, urged me to read the bible, and urged me to repent and change.

The devil (imposing as Jesus) told me that the devil (imposing as god the father) lied when he said that he was five years old. He was not five years old. He was an adult. I believe him. From then on, it was he—the devil imposing as Jesus who spoke to me. Unlike the devil who imposed as “god the father”, “jesus” was not childish, was more serious and less humorous. Unlike “god the father”, “jesus” rarely tells me jokes and also tells me much less lies than “god the father”. His lies were also harder to be exposed as lies. Also, unlike “god the father”, “jesus” plays with my feelings less. Also, he only talks to me when no one is looking, or when I have nothing to do. He does not disturb me when I am studying, or doing something etc which is unlike “god the father” who talks to me at almost every moment of my time. The evil spirit disguised as “jesus” encouraged me to go to church and to do all sorts of religious stuffs. Because of his apparent “goodness”, (consoling me when I was rejected, encouraging me to study hard, and many other stuffs), all my former feeling of pain caused by “god the father” was gone, and for a moment of time, my doubt that he is not god was temporarily forgotten.

I believe in the devil for about seven months. Throughout this period, however, a feeling of uneasiness often came to me. I often doubted that the one I spoke to was God. But I dismissed the thought. More feeling of uneasiness came. I started to have nightmares. In my dream, I was always with Satan, and Satan was always portrayed as my best friend who kept oppressing me, but who lived in the same house as me, and refused to leave. I started to feel uneasy. Why do I keep dreaming about Satan as living in my house, oppressing me? I became desperate, wanting some Christians to prove to me that the “God” who spoke to me everyday, every free moments of my life was not the devil, but truly God. So I went to a Christian message forum and get people to pray to me. A miracle happened in that Christian forum. One of the posters was posting a post about evil spirit deceiving me as God and confusing my life, but God will free me through all this. Her message, unfortunately vanish completely. While she was deciding whether or not to post the message again, the Holy Spirit told her to wait and see. Surprisingly, the next day, when she went on the forum, her message was there, but it was not posted by her, but by two other Christian posters in that forum. The combination message of these two Christian posters was the exact form of the message she posted earlier which vanished, word for word.

I learnt of this miracle, and after a serious day of reflection, became convinced that the message was from the true God, despite what the devil (imposing as peaceful “jesus”) tell me. I immediately renounce the devil in the name of Jesus Christ. Yet, at the same time, the self-righteous me, instead of thanking God for my release from deception blamed God for not stopping the deception in its earlier state. I could not understand why my sincere search for God resulted in the devil coming in disguise as God. I lost all hope, and felt that all was lost. I felt too ashamed to face God. I was also very angry that God did nothing to stop me on my very first day of deception. That day, I was greatly humiliated. I had always thought I was a very wise person, and yet in my wisdom, I believe the most ridiculous of the devil's lies. For the first time in my life, I fully realized I do not deserved to be saved. What will had happened to me if God had not saved me, if God had not use the miracle to tell me that it was the devil speaking to me? The pain, believe me, was the greatest

pain I had ever encountered in my whole life. Imagine. How would you feel, if you realized that the object of your true love was in reality an imposter who was out there to bring you complete ruin in your life? It was painful, indeed, to think that for a period of seven months, I loved the devil, thinking he loves me. I felt... that day like the most foolish person in the whole wide world.

So, not long later I rededicated my life to Jesus once again, telling God how sorry I was to believe the devil was God, asking God to forgive me once more, and this time, I sincerely accepted Jesus as my lord and savior. I asked God to make me into the Christian he wants me to be, and free me from all demonic deception in the future. My moment of victory came... at this moment, and I could have stopped here, but I do not want to. I want to share with you the many rich blessings God had brought into my life.

After I rededicate my life to God, my struggle did not stop here. The devil continued to try to talk to me, to pretend that he really was God. However, I was not fooled. I kept rebuking him in the name of Jesus Christ. When the devil knew that I could no longer be fooled, he revealed his true color. He told me all sort of horrible things about God and myself. It was hard ignoring what the devil said but I kept rejecting him in the name of Jesus. Soon, he gave out his control of me. And I was thus, set free from his deception. Praise is to God! God is great!

But friend; believe me, the most painful part of this journey was not dealing with the devil. The most painful part of this journey of mine was to once again be able to lift up my head before God. For a long period of time after I first discovered the truth of the devil's lies, I had to deal with all sorts of negative feelings and guilt. It was hard, initially, to believe that God completely forgives me for what I did. Eventually, however, under constant encouragement by God, I believe once again, that I am a child of God and the devil had no right in my life. Do you know, in the initial period after I first reject the devil, he continues to speak to me, and when I rejects him, he replies, "What right have you to reject me? You invite me here first." Stunned and full of guilt, I find it hard to rebuke him because I thought what he said was true. Friend, if you are experiencing the same thing as me, and the devil said this as you, do not be deceived by his words like I do. Continue to tell him off. Sure, you invited him into your life first, but does that matter? No! Because the part of your life in which you invite him into your life... is completely forgotten by God after you repented from your life. Satan no longer has any right in your life, now. So, be firm. Resist him. Rebuke him. Ultimately, you will see victory. Trust me!

P/S: Having gone through such period of pain, it is my desire to help people in similar situation as mine see light out of the darkness they face. I had been through the pain, and I know how painful and hard it is to believe that God can help you when all around you, the voices of the devil seems so loud and real to you. I cannot help much. All I can do is pray for you, and to correspond to you by letters, offering you as much encouragement as I could until the day you finally see the little bit of light in the total darkness. So do contact me, if you need help. Remember that the same God who helps me will help you, too. Bear with it a while and victory will come. It takes seven months for me to get out of my deception, and realized that the evil spirit speaking to me is not God. It takes another four or five more months for me to deal with continual spiritual attacks by the devil that still refused to let go of me, even though I had already turned from him to God. This period, which was the most painful for me, also makes me mature a lot. Finally, it takes one month more of spiritual struggle, before I starts to see my slow but certain victory which gives me enough

confident to write this testimony.

From LSD to PHD

From LSD to PHD

By Dr. Michael Brown

"I'm burning in hell! I'm burning in hell!"

It was 1:30 in the morning, the first week of September, 1971. I was only sixteen years old, but already I had earned the nicknames "Drug Bear" and "Iron Man." I could do greater quantities of drugs than any of my friends -- and live to brag about it! Whether I was shooting heroin or using hallucinogenics like LSD and mescaline, taking megadoses of drugs had become my lifestyle. But this time I went too far. I took enough mescaline for thirty people, and my friends put me on a bus alone, sending me home to fend for myself. They thought it was a big joke! Actually it was a matter of life and death.

I became delirious on the bus and got off too soon, more than a mile from my family's home on Long Island, New York. As I walked slowly towards the house, I thought the journey would never end. I became disoriented and got lost just two blocks from home. I sat down on the ground in mental torment, feeling like I had entered a maze from which I could never get out. I thought I had died and gone to hell.

Then, at that late hour of the night, a friend of my parents came by, walking his dog. He looked at me with shock as I screamed, "I'm burning in hell!" I was shocked too. "Why is he walking his dog in hell?" I wondered.

As soon as he walked away, I made a decision: "I'm going to jump in front of the next car that comes by. I can't take it any longer." I was losing my mind.

Within minutes, a car came racing around the corner. I jumped into the road directly in front of the car and threw my hands in the air. The car came to a screeching halt just inches from my body. It was my parents! The man with the dog had gone to my house and, deeply shaken, told them what he had seen. They came looking for me. They were ready to stop at that very corner. If it had been any other car I would have been killed.

But what I was doing there anyway, stoned out of my head? How did a nice Jewish boy like me get so messed up? And why was I thinking about hell? Let me tell you the story. I think you'll be interested to hear what happened!

I was born in New York City in 1955. My father was the senior lawyer in the New York Supreme Court, and he and my mother were as happily married as any couple that I have ever known. My upbringing was typical of many New York, Conservative Jewish children. We moved to Long Island, I did well in school, I played lots of sports, and, like all my friends, I basically stayed out of trouble. But something changed. It all began innocently enough . . .

When I was eight years old I started to play drums. There was no question that I had ability. In fact by the time I was fifteen I had played on a studio album. But my favorite music was rock, and after my Bar Mitzvah in 1968, I got interested in playing in a band. I wanted to be a rock drummer, and all my role models were known for their heavy drug use, rebellion, and flagrant immorality. I wanted to be like them!

My sister went away to college in 1969 and began to use drugs there. When she asked me if I wanted to try smoking pot, I was only too happy to oblige. Soon I tried smoking hash too. But neither one had any effect on me. So I tried harder drugs until I started using ups, downs, and LSD. "But I'll never do anything worse than that," I thought. Yet I was deceived. Soon I started using speed, then I started shooting speed. (Of course, I had been sure I would never put a needle in my arm!). Then, I got the opportunity to try heroin. I loved it! I was fifteen years old.

By the time I was sixteen, my grades began to go down in school, and drugs, rock music, and filthy living were my daily portion. For fun, my friends and I even broke into some homes and a doctor's office. We experimented with the drugs we found and almost killed ourselves. But after all, we were cool! We were doing "our thing." And one day we would be famous rock stars!

Less than one year later, I was living for God and telling people about Jesus, the Messiah and Lord of both Gentile and Jew. Today, I have traveled around the world preaching and teaching. I have had the privilege of speaking on university campuses (including Harvard and Yale), written books and articles that have been translated into more than a dozen languages, debated and dialoged with rabbis on radio and TV, and earned a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University, lectured as a visiting professor at leading theological institutes, and served as president of two Bible colleges. The Creator of the universe is now my Father, Jesus the Messiah is my best and closest Friend, I live my life free of anxiety and fear, and the peace and joy of God renew me every day.

"Well," you might say, "you were just messed up. You were looking for something. You needed to change."

To be perfectly truthful, I was messed up, and I was looking for something -- but it was not God! And I absolutely did not want to change. I had found my lifestyle, and I loved it! I enjoyed using drugs. I enjoyed my music. I enjoyed fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. What I was looking for was more sinful pleasure and more musical excellence, leading to more recognition as a rock drummer.

As for Jesus, he was no more important to me than Mohammed or any other foreign religious figure. After all, I was Jewish! And, I thought, if there really is a God, he knows that, deep down, I have a good heart. If there is a heaven, he'll surely accept me. In spite of my lying, my drugs, my drinking, my pride, my rebellion, my stealing, my immorality, my filthy mouth and mind, I thought that I really was a pretty good person. Little did I know then that the Bible said: "All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but it is the Lord who weighs the hearts." And, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Human nature always tries to justify itself!

During the spring of 1971, my two best friends (and members of my band) began attending a little gospel-preaching church. Why? Because they liked two girls who went there! And why did the girls go? Because their uncle was the pastor and their father was praying for them. Then, in August, I

went to the church too. Why? Because I wanted to pull my friends out! They were beginning to change, and I didn't like that. They weren't partying the way they used to. I had to stop them before it was too late. You can guess what happened. I lost the fight! The love of the people began to break down my stubborn pride, and, totally unknown to me, their prayers began to have an impact. Something started to get under my skin! I actually began to feel guilty about the filthy things I was doing.

Amazingly enough, until that time, I had never experienced the slightest remorse for stealing money from my own father, or putting my parents through all kinds of grief because of my drug use, or double-crossing my best friends, or viciously cutting down anyone I didn't like with my sharp, cruel sharp tongue. Now, something was happening. When I couldn't sleep at night after pumping myself up with methadrine or swallowing several tabs of amphetamine-laced LSD, I started to feel uncomfortable with my lifestyle, seeing myself as more of a jerk than a cool teenager, and I began to dread those long night hours, alone with a feeling of being unclean, alone with my sin.

Of course, at that time, I had no idea that this was something called "conviction," a wonderful process through which God shows us just how sick we really are in order to make us whole. And I made no connection between this sudden change in my attitude and the prayers of these sincere Christians. Instead, I made a decision: I won't use any drugs that keep me up at night! And I stayed away from the church for the next three months.

When I finally returned there in November, something completely unexpected happened to me. It was not what I was anticipating! For the first time in my life I believed that Jesus died for me (in other words, He paid the penalty that I deserved, He died in my place) and that He rose from the dead.

This did not strike me as especially good news! How can I say that? Simple. It was one thing for my friends to truly put their faith in Jesus. After all, one was Methodist and the other was Russian Orthodox. Even though they were only Christian in name, becoming a Christian in truth didn't seem to me like such a big religious jump. I thought the different Christian religions were close enough!

But for me, a Jew (even a non-religious Jew), how could I believe in Jesus? (Please remember: At that time, I didn't realize that his Hebrew name was Yeshua and that his mother's Hebrew name was Miriam, or that "Christ" meant "Messiah," or that he came into the world to save his Jewish people, or that he lived and died as a faithful Jew.) For me, Jesus was only for the Gentiles. (Again, you have to excuse my ignorance!)

But there was a much bigger problem I faced: Following Jesus and getting into a right relationship with God meant I had to turn away from my sins. I didn't want to do that! There was too much pleasure in my sin. And how could I be a famous rock drummer and a good, clean church-goer at the same time? Plus, I was too proud to admit that I could be wrong. (Some people would rather die than admit they are wrong.) I was as stubborn as they come. And how I loved to argue. (After all, I was the son of an excellent lawyer!) Yet somehow, God's goodness and patience overcame my stubbornness, my pride, my sinful habits, and my religious misunderstandings. By the end of 1971 I was a new man! The heavenly Father intervened in my affairs, making me to know that I

was guilty in his sight, exposing the corruption of my heart, and showing me a new and better way.

What does all this have to do with you? Let me explain. You see, I was not a sinner because I was shooting heroin. I was shooting heroin because I was a sinner. Sin takes on many forms. But in God's sight, all of us are sinners. In other words, all of us stand guilty in the light of His standards and laws. And, deep down, most of recognize His laws are right. Yet we still break them. Why? Because by nature we are a fallen race. No one had to teach us to lie, to lust, to be selfish, to hate, to hold a grudge, to deceive, to cheat, to be greedy, to envy. These things came naturally to us -- even to the best of us!

According to the Scriptures, the first and greatest commandment is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength." Instead, we find time for business, or pleasure, or family, or friends, or sports, or entertainment, or relaxation, or hobbies, or education, or whatever else is important to us. But God is not that important to us! He is certainly not the one around whom our lives revolve. If He were, we would find more time and energy for Him. He is supposed to come first.

What about the second commandment? Both Moses and Jesus taught that the next great commandment was, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We have failed here too! Think of all the murderers, and rapists, and drug pushers, and child abusers, and warlords, and crime bosses, and thieves -- the list goes on and on. It is clear that they have not loved their neighbors as themselves. But let's not be so quick to condemn. You can get a speeding ticket for going 100 miles per hour in a 40 mph zone, or you can get a ticket for going 70 in that same zone. Either way, you're guilty. And you can drown in 20 feet of water just as easily as you can drown in the ocean. Either way, you're dead.

It's the same with God's laws. Maybe you haven't killed someone. But have you hated them? Then you're guilty of not loving your neighbor as yourself! Maybe you haven't committed adultery with that good looking spouse of your friend or boss. But if you're burning with lust for them, then you've committed adultery in your heart. In the sight of God, you're guilty! And the penalty for those guilty of breaking God's laws is death.

"In that case," you say, "we're in trouble! Everyone is guilty." Exactly. That's why God sent His Son into the world. Although we didn't deserve it, and although it is more than we could ever ask for or imagine, God did something incredible. The Bible says He loved this world so much -- and that means He loved you -- that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Â Jesus died for you! Instead of you and I having to pay for our sins (and it would be perfectly fair if God required us to pay up), Jesus paid for our sins. Instead of you and I having to suffer the death penalty, Jesus suffered it for us. That's what he meant when he said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." He also said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep."

And that's what the Jewish prophet Isaiah meant when he wrote about the Messiah's death hundreds of years in advance:

"He was pierced because of our rebellious deeds, He was crushed for our sins; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and at the cost of his wounds there is healing for us. All of us like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus!) the sins of us all."

Is this making sense to you now? Do you understand why Jesus died on the cross? He carried your sins so that you don't have to carry them any more!

Turn back to God and ask Him to forgive you. Acknowledge your guilt and say, "God, have mercy on me! I turn away from my sins." Ask Him to cleanse you and wash you through the blood that Jesus shed. Put your faith in the Son of God. He died for you and rose from the dead. Believe in Him and submit to Him as your Lord. You will never be the same! And you will never have a regret.

What He did for me in a unique and personal way. He can do for you. He died so you could live. He became guilty so you could go free. He came down to earth so that one day you could go to heaven. But if you refuse Him, the door will be shut. You will die in your guilt, without excuse. Almighty God will say to you, "Depart from Me into eternal fire!" Then it will be too late!

That's why I took the time to tell you my story. It can become your story too! You can experience the greatest love the world has ever seen. Through Jesus, you can know the God who made you. Then you will truly live -- in this world, and in the world to come. Serving God is worth it all!

To Go Alone With the Lord

To Go Alone With the Lord

By Dr. Mahendra P. Singhal

Growing up in an orthodox Hindu home is to enjoy limited freedoms -- spiritually speaking. It was more than true in my case. I was raised in a rigidly structured and despotically ruled Hindu home with well-preserved traditions, well developed customs, and well-formulated expectations, along with, of course, a great deal of love, understanding, and exhortation.

In spite of all the outward appearances of "peace" in our home, I used to sense tension and dissatisfaction with situations as they used to erupt from time to time. Each new episode was a note of despair in the chorus of our miserable lives. Each chord echoed with an air of helplessness which used to permeate every phase of our lives in our simple home. I distinctly remember being told, over and over again, that all our unhappiness was because of our karma coupled with the wrath of the gods against our family. I could not understand what we had done to deserve this and what could be done to change it, and my father would not allow me to speak of it.

We went through the usual visits to the temples of various gods on set days in the year. I remember walking, sometimes riding a tonga (horse-driven vehicle), a long way to reach a particular temple of Shiva, one of the three primary Hindu gods. The idol of Shiva was frightening to behold. He was shown sitting on top of the world, holding human skulls in his hands, with water running from his hair and his eyes staring at you with a dreadful message: Worship me or you will be destroyed. The idol, decked with flowers, was always smeared with oil and red color. The total effect was to create a feeling of foreboding and fear. You came away from the temple fearing what the future might hold and wishing, without any substantive hope, that all will be well and that he -- Shiva -- would be content with you. I was never comfortable in the temple. The picture of Shiva used to haunt me for days after the pilgrimage.

There was another god who was worshipped once a year in our home. This was Ganesha, the god with the head of an elephant and the body of a man. This god is supposed to be extremely beneficial. A son of Shiva, he is revered for averting dangers. We used to buy a new clay model of the god each year, and worship him on the appointed day, according to the family's traditions.

It was on one of Ganesha's celebrations that I became very disturbed about our gods and our obeisance to them. I distinctly recall the occasion. Sweets had been offered to Ganesha. We had been asked to close our eyes and pray for his blessings upon the home. I do not know why but I could not close my eyes. I was horrified to see a small mouse descend upon the offerings which had been placed before the god and Ganesha was unable to control this tiny creature. "If he cannot protect himself," I said to myself, "how can he protect this house?" I lost faith in that god on that day; and I believe that my journey to discover the true God began at that event.

Two events occurred in rapid succession soon after that experience. One, my father insisted on my receiving training in the Hindu scriptures, especially the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, and the others. Secondly, an ad in the local newspaper about a Bible correspondence course led me to begin a study of the Bible.

The Vedas and the other books were interesting, but they were decidedly speculative. There were no definite answers.

The Bible, on the other hand, pointed to definite answers. God loves people. God made His love known to people, of His own initiative, when He sent Jesus Christ to the world. A God pleading for me was a mind-boggling mystery.

While I was struggling to understand religions and religious ideas, my school work was moving, as it were, along regular channels. After receiving my masters degrees in mathematics and education, I was hired to teach in a Christian boarding school in Mussoorie, India. The school was run by Christian missionary societies to propagate Christian truths to the students who were not necessarily Christians. People attended this school because of its emphasis on academic excellence and because the medium of instruction was English. Proper language was taught, encouraged, and developed. The school needed a mathematics instructor, and the principal, an Australian missionary, was, as he later told me, led to offer me the position in spite of the fact that I was not a Christian. He (and I am grateful for his willingness to listen to the Lord) responded to the leading of the Lord not only in hiring me to teach in that school, but also in witnessing to me -- in words, in his separated living, and in his priorities.

One of the staff at the school mentioned the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross to me. "He died," he stated, "for man to be free from his bondage to sin and to enjoy victorious life forever." That sounded wonderfully peaceful and achievable, but I dismissed the witness, because, in my opinion, it was too simple. There has to be much more to life than just simple faith in Christ's death on the cross. I had been trained to believe, in the words of the Upanishads: "He truly knows Brahman who knows him as beyond knowledge; he who thinks that he knows, knows not."

I had been led to believe in searching for answers, and I had been taught that such a search could take many, many lives. Sages had attempted to discover the truth and the reality of Brahman for centuries, but without any success. I was under the conviction that real truth is found within oneself. God and man are essentially one. Separation comes from being born in this illusory world which catches man in its embrace and entices him away from finding the true meaning of life and existence. Deliverance is impossible unless one renounces the allurements of this world. I had been trained to believe that God is unknowable, and therefore, beyond the reach of man. And here was Jesus Christ, hanging on the cross, bleeding to death at the hands of Roman soldiers, declaring his forgiveness for their crass brutalities -- God searching for man and not man looking for God within himself.

There was another dimension to my dilemma. Coming from the family I did, my acceptance of Jesus Christ would make my parents lose their social respect and position in the whole community. My brothers and sister would suffer disgrace. That, too, was unthinkable. Even though I was working away from home in a different environment, I did not really feel free to make my own

decisions. I tried to talk to some of the missionaries about my predicaments. They could not understand the heavy cultural factors. They felt that one should simply make a decision to follow Jesus Christ and that is all that really matters. Some missionaries were totally ignorant of Hindu traditions and the social implications which they impose on people. They dismissed my arguments as inconsequential. I was not ready to buy the argument that we live, and therefore die, only for ourselves, by ourselves.

The endless debate would have continued, I am sure, if I had not met Major Ian Thomas of the Torchbearers of England, who was holding meetings in a church in Mussoorie. He took the time to listen to my hesitations, my arguments, and my analysis. He, with great sensitivity and keen insight, explained the claims of Jesus Christ on my life. "Jesus Christ," he explained, "will enable you to solve your dilemmas after you accept Him. He will be on your side."

Major Thomas did not lead me to the final surrender but he prepared me for the final outcome. I knew, after spending almost five hours with him, what I had to do. There was no denying the fact that Christ had been calling me to accept Him as my personal Savior and to follow Him -- irrespective of the cost. The call was extremely personal and urgent. I mused about the possibilities for a few more days. However, I could not get rid of pressures which were continuing to increase. I could sense that a decision had to be made.

I turned to Jesus Christ on July 16, 1963 at 2:00 a.m. in my bedroom -- all by myself. He became my Savior. Praise His wonderful name!!

I had not counted on the cost which was to be paid for the decision, however. I expected rejection and humiliation from my friends and relatives. I even expected some mockery from some of them, but I was not ready for what came my way after my conversion: my own family disowned me. I was no longer a part of the biological family in which I had been born. My friends shunned me. They began to avoid me as if I had contracted some dreadful contagious disease.

With all the pains and burdens, with all the loneliness, and with all the struggles, I am nonetheless determined to follow the Lord. He is my answer, my salvation, my friend. As Major Thomas assured me, He has never failed me; He has always been there -- to help, to direct. I am not following an idea, a creed, or a philosophy; I am not searching for an inner revelation; I am not working for a final deliverance. No, I am following Jesus Christ, who is the final revelation, the total deliverance.

Michelle Richee's Testimony

Michelle Richee's Testimony

By Michelle Richee

People always want to know: Where are you from? That is a tough question to answer. I was born in Staten Island, New York, in the military hospital closest to Groton, Connecticut, where we lived. But, I'm not from there. I was just born there ... We traveled so much. My earliest memories are at the beach in Louisiana (I think) with my Mom. Mom liked to stay at the beach from sun up to sun down. Well, almost. Dad couldn't be with us at the beach much. He was busy with his work for the United States Coast Guard. Oh, how I loved my Dad.

When I was about 4 or 5, I was terribly ill with the Mumps. At the time of this very painful illness, something else happened. I was molested. This ugly event haunted me for the coming 30 some years . . .

Because of Dad's work in the Coast Guard, we traveled a lot! These travels caused me to be uprooted and enrolled in new schools 13 times! I knew the chances of moving were always great, so I had no motivation to make friends. Plus, Mom and I never had a real good mother/daughter relationship. It just didn't happen. We went to the Mormon church some, though I don't remember much. I remember getting baptized "into the church" at age 8 and the Elders laying hands on me and emphatically telling me "Receive the Holy Ghost!" But, they never taught me anything about salvation or the new birth. I never heard anything about becoming a new creature in Christ.

By age 15 insecurities and an inferiority complex had taken root. Out of all the schools I went to, not one classmate told me about Jesus, or invited me to church. I had been in 10 schools and felt like I didn't belong anywhere. I never heard a word from anyone about Jesus Christ being the answer. I had a very low self-esteem and Mom didn't seem to even like me. Dad was gone a lot with his work. I would lie in bed at night and cry, and wonder why was I born?. My Sophomore year I began sampling whiskey, vodka, gin, rum - whatever was available, over at a friend's house. I stayed all night with her every chance I got. One day Mom announced to my astonishment that she and my Dad were getting a divorce. It totally devastated me. To make matters worse, we would be relocating to Carlinville, Illinois. Carlinville High School was my 13th school in 12 years. I hated Carlinville. I missed my Dad. There was always a wall between my Mom and I that prevented us from being close. I hooked up with some kids who drank and smoked. My new friends also got high. This was during the Vietnam era. I had always heard the U.S. military forces brought a lot of powerful dope back with them. We smoked marijuana (pot) and hashish -- and I thought it was great, until I had to get up for school. I'd sneak up a ladder to my second floor bedroom. It worked great until the night Mom found my ladder! I was locked out of the house, in the dead of winter, with snow all over the ground. I slept in the car and almost froze to death.

Soon, I discovered Acid, Mescaline, Quaaludes, THC, PCP, Cocaine, uppers, downers -- whatever I could get my hands on ...

As long as I was wasted on drugs and alcohol, I didn't think about how unhappy and depressed I was. Unfortunately, no one told me the hell it was being an addict -- and, no one told me about the Lord either. I had been to 13 schools and not one classmate had enough sense to talk to me about Jesus! I ended up pregnant my senior year. This was more than Mom could handle and she totally turned her back on me for years. I got married and, somehow, graduated with my class. I took speed (amphetamines) in the mornings to get me going. It took larger and larger amounts to give me a buzz.

After five years and two babies, the marriage went sour. I walked out the door one day never to return, leaving everything behind except the kids and my habits. My doctor conveniently prescribed tranquilizers and sleeping pills. I became addicted to them and couldn't live without them for 13 years. I tapered off of the hard stuff, but still alternated back and forth between amphetamines and barbiturates.

My brother, Frank, overdosed on PCP (an animal tranquilizer) and attacked 8 people with a hammer. He received a 30 year prison sentence. But, before he went, a wife of one of the victims came to see him at County Jail, and told him she had come to forgive him for what he had done ... and that she didn't know how any good could come from this crime, unless Frank would get saved and become a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He did get saved and he spent his prison sentence studying the scriptures and praying. During this time our Dad, diagnosed as Manic Depressive, committed suicide and I attempted it, overdosing on Tranxene.

After Frank's release, I didn't understand the change in him, but whatever it was -- I'd been looking for it my whole life. Finally, in 1988 he led me in the sinner's prayer in his home, and I was filled with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues shortly thereafter. Frank told me something that I've shared in churches across the world: if I would go to church, read my bible, and pray, my life would never be the same. I was still taking large amounts of tranquilizers and sleeping pills. After being saved less than one year, my doctor referred me to a psychiatrist, who concluded I had the same illness as my father. He said there was no cure, and it was basically hopeless, but there were lots of anti-psychotic drugs available for me! I had just enough Word in me to know I didn't have to receive that diagnosis. I knew the bible said God sent His Word and healed me, and that Jesus bore my sickness and carried my disease and with his stripes I was healed ... so I claimed my deliverance from that devilish disorder in the name of Jesus and by the authority of God's Word. I never took any anti-psychotic drugs and, was totally delivered from the tranquilizers and sleeping pills. I simply believed God's Word.

I had such a strong desire to serve God burning within me. I served on the Board of Frank's prison ministry. I helped draft his first book which tells his story. Before long, my pastor said I needed to get a license. I wrinkled up my forehead and repeated that word, license?

Since 1995 God has allowed me to share this story of his amazing grace in North America, Africa, Europe and Asia, seeing men, women and children's lives impacted in the name of Jesus and for the glory of God. When you mean business with God, God WILL mean business with you.

This ministry is available to come to your church, as the Spirit leads. If God wants me somewhere, you can rest assured, I'll be there.

Death of a Guru: The Story of Rabi Maharaj

Death of a Guru: The Story of Rabi Maharaj

By Rabi Maharaj

No matter how fulfilling life becomes, there are always certain regrets when one looks back. My deepest sense of loss involves my father. So much has happened since his death. I often wonder what it would be like to share it all with him, and what his reaction would be.

We never shared anything in our lives. Because of vows he had taken before I was born, not once did he ever speak to me or pay me the slightest heed. Just two words from him would have made me unspeakably happy. How I wanted to hear him say, "Rabi. Son." Just once. But he never did.

For eight long years he uttered not a word. The trancelike condition he had achieved is called in the East a state of higher consciousness and can be attained only through deep meditation.

"Why is Father that way?" I would ask my mother, still too young to understand. "He is someone very special -- the greatest man you could have for a father," she would reply. "He is seeking the true Self that lies within us all, the One Being, of which there is no other. And that's what you are too, Rabi."

Father had set an example, achieved wide acclaim, and earned the worship of many, and it was inevitable that upon his death his mantle would fall upon me. I had never imagined, however, that I would still be so young when this fateful day arrived.

When father died I felt I had lost everything. Though I had scarcely known him as my father, he had been my inspiration -- a god -- and now he was dead.

At his funeral, my father's stiff body was placed on a great pile of firewood. The thought of his body being sacrificed to Agni, the god of fire, added a new dimension of mystery to the bewilderment and deep sense of loss that already overwhelmed me.

As the flames engulfed him, it was impossible to suppress the anguish I felt. "Mommy!" I screamed. "Mommy!" If she heard me above the roar of sparks and fire, she made no indication. A true Hindu, she found strength to follow the teaching of Krishna: she would mourn neither the living nor the dead. Not once did she cry as the flames consumed my father.

After my father's funeral, I became a favorite subject for the palm-readers and astrologers who frequented our house. Our family would hardly make an important decision without consulting an astrologer, so it was vital that my future be confirmed in the same way. It was encouraging to learn that the lines on my palms and the planets and stars, according to those who interpreted them, all agreed I would become a great Hindu leader. I was obviously a chosen vessel, destined for early success in the search for union with Brahman (the One). The forces that had guided my father were now guiding me.

I was only eleven and already many people were bowing before me, laying gifts of money, cotton cloth, and other treasures at my feet and hanging garlands of flowers around my neck at religious ceremonies.

How I loved religious ceremonies -- especially private ones in our own home or those of others, where friends and relatives would crowd in. There I would be the center of attention, admired by all. I loved to move through the audience, sprinkling holy water on worshipers or marking foreheads with the sacred white sandalwood paste. I also loved how the worshipers, after the ceremony, bowed low before me to leave their offerings at my feet.

While vacationing at an Aunt's ranch, I had my first real encounter with Jesus. I was walking along enjoying nature one day and was startled by a rustling sound in the underbrush behind me. I turned quickly and, to my horror, saw a large snake coming directly toward me -- its beady eyes staring intently into mine. I felt paralyzed, wanting desperately to run but unable to move.

In that moment of frozen terror, out of the past came my mother's voice, repeating words I had long forgotten: "Rabi, if ever you're in real danger and nothing else seems to work, there's another god you can pray to. His name is Jesus."

"Jesus! Help me!" I tried to yell, but the desperate cry was choked and hardly audible.

To my astonishment, the snake turned around and quickly wriggled off into the underbrush. Breathless and still trembling, I was filled with wondering gratitude to this amazing god, Jesus. Why had my mother not taught me more about him?

During my third year in high school I experienced an increasingly deep inner conflict. My growing awareness of God as the Creator, separate and distinct from the universe He had made, contradicted the Hindu concept that god was everything, that the Creator and the Creation were one and the same. If there was only One Reality, then Brahman was evil as well as good, death as well as life, hatred as well as love. That made everything meaningless, life an absurdity. It was not easy to maintain both one's sanity and the view that good and evil, love and hate, life and death were One Reality.

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Still, I found myself asking, "What makes you so happy? You must have been doing a lot of meditation."

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"God, the true God and Creator, please show me the truth!" Something inside me snapped. For the first time in my life, I felt I had really prayed and gotten through -- not to some impersonal Force, but to the true God who loves and cares. Too tired to think any longer, I crawled into bed and fell asleep almost instantly.

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I found my thoughts going back to my father's cremation nearly eight years before. In contrast to our new found joy, that scene had aroused inconsolable grief. My father's body had been offered to the very same false gods who now lay in smoldering fragments before me. It seemed unbelievable that I should be participating with great joy in the utter destruction of that which represented all I had once believed in so fanatically.

In a sense this was my cremation ceremony -- the end of the person I had once been...the death of a guru. The old Rabi Maharaj had died in Christ. And out of that grave a new Rabi had risen in whom Christ was now living.

My Search for Truth

My Search for Truth

By Hugh Ross

No matter how fulfilling life becomes, there are always certain regrets when one looks back. My deepest sense of loss involves my father. So much has happened since his death. I often wonder what it would be like to share it all with him, and what his reaction would be.

We never shared anything in our lives. Because of vows he had taken before I was born, not once did he ever speak to me or pay me the slightest heed. Just two words from him would have made me unspeakably happy. How I wanted to hear him say, "Rabi. Son." Just once. But he never did.

For eight long years he uttered not a word. The trancelike condition he had achieved is called in the East a state of higher consciousness and can be attained only through deep meditation.

"Why is Father that way?" I would ask my mother, still too young to understand. "He is someone very special -- the greatest man you could have for a father," she would reply. "He is seeking the true Self that lies within us all, the One Being, of which there is no other. And that's what you are too, Rabi."

Father had set an example, achieved wide acclaim, and earned the worship of many, and it was inevitable that upon his death his mantle would fall upon me. I had never imagined, however, that I would still be so young when this fateful day arrived.

When father died I felt I had lost everything. Though I had scarcely known him as my father, he had been my inspiration -- a god -- and now he was dead.

At his funeral, my father's stiff body was placed on a great pile of firewood. The thought of his body being sacrificed to Agni, the god of fire, added a new dimension of mystery to the bewilderment and deep sense of loss that already overwhelmed me.

As the flames engulfed him, it was impossible to suppress the anguish I felt. "Mommy!" I screamed. "Mommy!" If she heard me above the roar of sparks and fire, she made no indication. A true Hindu, she found strength to follow the teaching of Krishna: she would mourn neither the living nor the dead. Not once did she cry as the flames consumed my father.

After my father's funeral, I became a favorite subject for the palm-readers and astrologers who frequented our house. Our family would hardly make an important decision without consulting an astrologer, so it was vital that my future be confirmed in the same way. It was encouraging to learn that the lines on my palms and the planets and stars, according to those who interpreted them, all agreed I would become a great Hindu leader. I was obviously a chosen vessel, destined for early success in the search for union with Brahman (the One). The forces that had guided my father were now guiding me.

I was only eleven and already many people were bowing before me, laying gifts of money, cotton cloth, and other treasures at my feet and hanging garlands of flowers around my neck at religious ceremonies.

How I loved religious ceremonies -- especially private ones in our own home or those of others, where friends and relatives would crowd in. There I would be the center of attention, admired by all. I loved to move through the audience, sprinkling holy water on worshipers or marking foreheads with the sacred white sandalwood paste. I also loved how the worshipers, after the ceremony, bowed low before me to leave their offerings at my feet.

While vacationing at an Aunt's ranch, I had my first real encounter with Jesus. I was walking along enjoying nature one day and was startled by a rustling sound in the underbrush behind me. I turned quickly and, to my horror, saw a large snake coming directly toward me -- its beady eyes staring intently into mine. I felt paralyzed, wanting desperately to run but unable to move.

In that moment of frozen terror, out of the past came my mother's voice, repeating words I had long forgotten: "Rabi, if ever you're in real danger and nothing else seems to work, there's another god you can pray to. His name is Jesus."

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The Miracle Walk

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By Eddie Wood

The phone rang in a Sioux City, Iowa's family home in June of 1999. The voice on the other end of the line told a tale of probable death and at the very least, amputation of both legs of the family's oldest son, Edward Wood. More commonly known as Ed or Eddie. The call continued. The parents, Jerry and Betty Wood, should get to California as soon as possible, their first born son is not responding to treatment, is in coma, and has been for seven days at this point. The Dr. was very somber, and did not expect Ed to pull through the day, and if, by some miracle he did, they would have to amputate one or both legs as they were severely infected, and bloated from an internal disease known as Cellulitus. The parents caught the next available plane to California. This is the story of that trip, the events prior to that trip and the event after the devastating, heartbreaking trip. A trip that took around six hours to get there, plus another hour and one half by car, to get to the town of Barstow, Californina where the oldest son of Betty and Jerry Wood, lay in an ICU unit, his life ebbing away minute by minute. A story of how Satan was working on stealing the life from Eddie Wood, and stealing the joy of a first born son, away from Mr. & Mrs. Wood and their family. A very bleak and complete hopeless picture had been painted to the Woods as they climbed aboard that jet to wing their way to be with their first born son, as he lost his life to this sudden and deadly disease. To stand by helplessly and watch the life eek out of their son. Or at the very least, sit by and watch the Drs., IF Ed came out of that deadly coma, cut off his legs and make him an invalid the rest of his life. As the young people of our day say, "NOT!!" This is also a story of a miracle of the the power of the Almighty God, a testimony that has proven to shine and bless people, literally, all over the world. This is a testimony about my Lord, my Savior and my deathbed buster, Jesus Christ. I, am Eddie Wood, the survivor of this horrible experience, only through the grace of my Lord and His healing powers.

The story starts in Tulare CA. a small town in central California. I was an owner/operator of a semi rig, was in Tulare to pick up a load of powdered bulk milk headed for Mason City, IA and home to Sioux City, IA. I had owned this rig for over two years now, and was a veteran driver having put in 17 yrs. in the long haul trucking business. God had blessed me, many times over, and had put this rig into my hands through the power of prayer. Our Lord says, He will give us the desires of our hearts and owning my own rig was the desire of my heart, for sure. I was making good wages the business was doing well and I was able to bless God's work more than I had been able to all my life. I believe, that Satan hated this so much, that he tried to take my life away from me and take my joy. He nearly succeeded, too. On May, 27, 1999, I had loaded the truck and I was on my way home. I had spent a month out on the road and was ready for the time off. As I finished loading, I started to feel lightheaded and thought I was a little warm.

I contributed that to the California heat at the time. As I left and headed south to Bakersfield, I kept feeling progressively worse. I made it to Bakersfield, and laid down for a while at a truck-stop and

rested. I was starting to burn up. I took some over the counter meds and went to sleep.

I woke up 4 hours later, and was feeling a bit better. I was soaked with sweat and figured the fever had broke. I took a quick shower and headed off. I needed to be in Mason City in a few days. As I took off that night, late, I was headed towards Barstow and then to Las Vegas to pick up the Interstate towards Utah and then connect in Salt Lake for the Interstate 80 into Nebraska and Iowa. Before I reached Mojave, CA. I was sick again, and big time this time. I could not keep any bodily fluids in me. I constantly was eliminating something somewhere. I was sick!

I made it to Mojave to a small truck stop and made it inside, looking for a doctor or hospital and none was to be found. The closest thing was Barstow, about 35 miles east. I do not remember too much from that point and a big gap is missing. I am told that I called home and told them I was ill, and I had a receipt for \$100.00 of fuel I purchased for the truck, and I remember neither of these events. I do remember, though, leaving the truck stop about 2 a.m. and thinking I need to get to Barstow to the hospital. Folks, it took me 12 hours to go that 35 miles. I kept passing out in the truck and would let the rig drift off to the shoulder or into the sand until I came out of it. I could feel these mini comas coming on a few minutes in advance and would be able to get the rig safely off the highway. I know now, that the Almighty God was helping me there! I thank Him every day for keeping me safe until I could get to where I could be helped. I made Barstow truck stop and literally fell out of the truck. A driver helped me inside and the fuel desk lady called me a cab so I could get to the hospital. I checked into ER and within a couple of hours, I was in a coma. I was in that coma 7 days. This is where the phone call to my parents come in.

When my parents, uncles and a friend arrived, I am told, that they came into that ICU unit, and laid hands on me and that bed and rebuked the devil and his lies regarding their son's condition. They commanded this foul, evil disease to leave, to depart in Jesus name! My father, a minister of the gospel in Sioux City, Iowa and an uncle, another minister of the gospel in California, another brother of my fathers and a friend from Sioux City, gathered around that bed and refused to let the devil take their son. Praise God! The Drs. and the nurses were not very positive, from what I understand. They prayed, then they waited. And they waited. And they waited. Five hours later.....this ole boy woke up!! PRAISE GOD!! I can remember opening my eyes, and very blurry visions I focused a bit on familiar faces. Mom, Dad, Uncle Ed, Uncle Don and my friend. I can barely remember wondering and inquiring "What are you all doing here?" I went in and out for a little bit, but I did come out within a day. I was very sick when I did come out. My legs did not work at all. I was unable to get out of the bed, my legs had swelled to nearly 18 " around. When I was able to finally get enough strength to lift my head a bit and look at my legs, they were a terrible sight. The skin was all destroyed, looked like my flesh had boiled. I had severe and tremendous pain in my legs and feet, and of course, the rest of my body. I was plugged into every imaginable place a human can be plugged into with hoses, tubes and monitors. My lips had blistered and broke open completely, my tongue was swollen beyond belief. I could barely whisper and could not swallow very well. I could barely respond to my loved ones or anyone. I could not eat. I could not do the basic things we need to do. I could not use the rest room they even had machines doing that for me. The Dr. came and visited me shortly after I was able to comprehend a bit, and explained the events of the past few days. I was completely out of it. It was a week later, and I could not get through my head it was a week later. It seem like just sleep to me.

I had several Drs. there, each one taking care of something different. As I came out of that coma, besides the things I mentioned before, my heart was not working right, my liver was all but gone, my intestines were developing gangrene, my body was in the dying process. The next steps were to stop that dying process. I was alive, but, barely. I was in that ICU for another week.

I was in a regular hospital room for another week and a couple of days. Finally, they came in and tried to explain to me, that I would probably not walk and if I did, it would be at least a year, and even then, I would not walk well. They explained how I would have to go home in a wheelchair, and how I would have to be taken care of like a baby. Then, these compassionate Drs. put me in a wheelchair, stuck me on a handicapped special car Amtrak train, and sent me home to "be an invalid".

It has not been an easy road, to say the least. There are all sorts of side bars to this story. And it will take more writing to even come close to the trials and tests I have had to go through. And, I am in the process of doing just that. Long and short, is this. In a couple of months, God brought me out of that wheelchair, onto a four-legged walker. A few months later, God brought me off that four-legged walker onto a cane. In August of 2000, God gave me my new lease on life. I was finally able to get out and about on a regular basis, I was able to start a new exercise and diet program which has led me to where I am now. In September of 2000, my cane went bye bye! Praise God!! Now I am walking on my own! Still problems with the legs and feet, I walk around on numb feet as all nerve endings have been destroyed by the disease. BUT...I am developing new skin, the exercise and vitamins are doing wonders every week. I do give ALL glory to Jesus, every bit of it. The Drs. in California and in Iowa, and even State of Iowa Disability doctor, had all given up on me. Friends, have left my side, people have given up on my recovery. Those I thought were friends, when the going was real tough, they went on their way.

My whole life has been turned completely upside down, in every aspect. New people I meet, and sad to say, even Christian people, when they find my current situation, turn tail and run or just never bother to contact me anymore. I believe, this is however, God's way of cleaning out the chicken coop, if you will. He knows what is best for us, and He certainly, knows what is best for Eddie Wood, in Sioux City, Iowa. My God has given me a new lease on life. A second chance, for what reason, I still have not yet found that answer. But, I do know this. My Lord would not have brought me off that deathbed in central California in 1999 and brought me through all of this just for the sake of doing it. He has a plan for my life, as well as yours, my friend. All we need to do is accept Him and His teachings. And it is very easy to do. We do not have to "be good" or "improve" ourselves before we come to God. He is there, right now, waiting to love you, and to help you and guide you through life. He gave His only Son, Jesus, to die so that you and I may have eternal life. I ask you today, if you have not made that simple commitment to Jesus, how about doing that right now? I will be glad to help you along the way. All you need to do, is say this simple prayer, and mean it with all of your heart. Would you join me in this prayer? I will say it with you, and together, we will go to meet the Father and His son, Jesus. Say this prayer with me.

"Father, who are in heaven, my friend and I come to You today and ask You for forgiveness and mercy. Your word says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." I ask You today, right now, to come into my heart, my life and make me whole. Make me a new person in You, today. I accept You, Jesus, as my Lord and my Savior. I believe in Your birth, your death for us so

that we may have eternal life, and I believe in Your rising from the dead. I ask, I believe, and I am saved!" Amen.

Now, friend, find a good gospel preaching church. You can contact me at the contacts below.

Go now and serve Him.

I hope my story has been an inspiration you, friends. Feel free to ask any questions. And if you need prayer, send them to me, via regular mail or e-mail and I can promise you, you will be prayed for and I mean everyday! Praise God! Thanks again, for allowing me to share my Miracle Story with you all. God bless. Have a great day!!

In His Service

Eddie Wood

Healed of Brain Damage

Healed of Brain Damage

By Anonymous

I want to tell about what happened in our church (Oslo Vineyard) last Sunday - August 13 1995.

Mette is a young woman who had a brain damage when she was three years old. Since then she has had a lot of physical problems, included that her right arm could not be raised. After a car accident three years ago, she also has been having a lot of pain in her head. I have been praying for her a couple of times in the last months, so I knew how desperate her problems were, and how much pain she had.

This Sunday our pastor decided we should not have any ministry time. He wanted to get through the message that we should not seek the gifts, but the giver, not manifestations, but seek God himself. So instead of praying for people, we just had a time of worship.

During worship Mette came over to me and said: "There is something completely crazy that has happened." I asked her what was wrong, and she raised her right arm over her head.

"You know that this is not possible", she said. "You know that I am not joking. I dont believe I can be healed. How is this possible?"

She was almost in shock, but although she could not believe it, her arm was healed - and it still is.

She told me that during the worship, she was thinking of how beautiful it would be if she could raise her arms in worship. Suddenly she saw a vision of Jesus lifting both her arms. She rejoiced in this vision for a while, and then she realised that her arm really was above her head. She went over to a friend and asked: "Tell me, is my arm really raised?" And then she came to me, and I took her to the pastor.

Yesterday (a week later) she told this to the whole congregation. In the meantime she had been to her physical therapist. She did not mention anything about what had happened. The therapist examined her arm, and asked what had happened, because the muscles and tissues were changed. When hearing about what happened on Sunday, the therapist only said: "There are many things we cant explain." And she ordered a new program to exercise the muscles of the arm that had not been used.

Mettes parents are not believers, so she was nervous about what they would say. But when she called home, her mother told her she had been asked by a friend to a small church just the previous week. And in that service her mother's back had been healed (as far as I understand without anyone praying for her, either). So her parents became believers, and they had no problems in believing what the daughter said.

The Lord is My Shepherd

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By Rockie

It was February 10, 1990 on a Saturday when I sat at the airport at the age of 23. I thought about what happened in my past life, what is happening to me now, and what could happen to me in the future. My plane to Jordan would leave in an hour and my life would never be the same. I would marry a man whom my father chose for me and I would never return to the U.S. unless my husband decided to move here.

You see, I was born in Jordan to a Palestinian family. As the third and middle child, my grandmother decided I should be the first of my brothers and sisters to carry a Muslim name. She named me after one of the messenger Mohammed's daughters. When I was at the age of eight, my father decided to come to the U.S. to make some money and eventually go back to Jordan because he feared his daughters would grow up to become American women and possibly even marry American men. My father held very strongly to his Arab customs and wanted his children to follow the customs and Islam, especially his daughters. It is a disgrace to the family and forbidden in Islam for an Arab Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim man. On the other hand my brothers were allowed to marry anyone they want as long as they are believers of the Books (Torah and Gospel) because Islam gave them that right. That is why my father sent me to Jordan to go to school.

I lived with my grandmother, my uncle and his family for a few years. My father was so pleased with me because I became a devout Muslim. He was relieved to know he didn't have to worry about my older sister because she was already married to an Arab Muslim, my younger sister was too young for him to worry about, and I was living the life that would please God and him. I traveled back and forth from Jordan to the US so I can be with my family while I was going to school in Jordan. As much as I loved seeing my family, I felt happy living in Jordan and following God's ways. I prayed five times a day, fasted the month of Ramadan, read the Qur'an daily, wore the veil (covering the entire body and showing only the hands, face and feet) and tried to imitate the prophet Mohammed in every way. No matter what I did for God, I felt I needed to do more to show him how obedient I am to Him. I would sit with my brothers and sisters and start quoting the prophet Mohammed and the Qur'an to them. My father was so proud of me.

The more I spent time in Islam, the further I drifted from God. The Muslims I knew didn't seem to truly love God. They worshipped Him to obtain heaven and feared His wrath and anger. I also began wonder about my motive in following Islam. "Was I following it for God or for the people around me?", I thought to myself. I'm not sure what my answer was, but I decided not to wear the veil anymore and act like a Muslim instead of looking like one. Worshipping God suddenly became an issue only between God and me.

At the age of twenty three, my father decided I should be married. In the Arab culture, the marriage process required a man asking for a woman's hand from her family. Dating is not allowed, but both have a chance to talk to each other in the presence of their families before they decide if they are right for each other. Several Arab Muslims came to ask for my hand, but I refused. I had a hard time marrying someone that I didn't know just to please my father. The culture and Islam allow marriages between first cousins. I refused to marry my cousin along with distant relatives and even strangers. "Why would my father want me to marry someone I didn't love or even know?", I felt. At the same time, my father didn't understand why I would refuse all these good men when he knew quite well that love comes after marriage and not before. When my dad realized that reasoning with me wouldn't work, he tried force. He decided I should go back to Jordan and stay there until I was married. My younger sister was sixteen at the time, so my dad felt she should come with me. That was a trying moment in my life.

Disgrace in the family brought by a daughter is the worst shame a family can go through. Many families have killed their daughters for what the culture considers disgrace. That was what I had to think about when I sat at the airport with my sister as we prepared to leave for Jordan. My dad flew to Jordan before us to prepare for my wedding and my brother made sure we would get to the airport without any problems. As I sat in the airport, I knew what I had to face; disgrace or misery: disgrace the family if I ran away or be miserable when married to one of my cousins for the rest of my life. At that point, I was so angry at my father and God: angry at my father for what he was doing and angry at God for allowing what was happening to me. I felt my heart screaming at God and saying, "Out of everyone in my family, it was ME who prayed to You, ME who fasted for You, ME who studied the Qur'an and this is what You allow to happen to me?! Why did You allow my family to send me to Jordan when I was still a teen-ager? Why did I have to live in an uncaring home? Why didn't You help me pursue my education when my dad refused to let me continue my education? Why did You allow my grandmother, my uncle and his family to treat me so harshly when I was with them? Why did You allow all these bad things to happen to me? Why God, WHY?!" I made a decision that day to stop praying to God and stop worshiping Him the way I did in the past.

February 10, 1990 was the day that completely changed my life. My younger sister and I took our luggage and we were on our way to the nearest hotel. The plane landed sixteen hours later as my father, along with other relatives, waited for us in the airport to greet us. When my father realized that we weren't on the plane, he went out of his mind! He called my brother and told him we weren't on the plane so my brother began to desperately search for us. My sister knew she had to go back home because the family would kill us both once they found us. There was a possibility they would claim I kidnapped my sister because she was under age. We both agreed she would tell them that I dragged her off the plane and forced her to come with me so they would not harm her. I promised her that if they try to force her to do anything she didn't want, I would come back and get her. We tearfully said good-bye to one another thinking that we would never see each other again.

God alone was the only One who could protect me, but I was so angry at Him that I didn't ask for His help. I didn't have much money and I couldn't work because they would find me under social security number. I didn't have many American friends because my father wouldn't allow me to be influenced by their "Satanic ways". And more importantly, I didn't know what to do in a society I

hardly associated with. I needed courage, strength and wisdom.

I joined the U.S. Army National Guard so the government can protect me. Once I was done with my military, I went back to a suburb in the city where my family lived and lived there in hiding. During that time, I found a job and became very successful at work, I rented an apartment from the money I saved while I was on active duty in the military, and met many friends that would care for me as if I was a member of their family.

Four years later, I slowly began to contact my family. My father had moved to Jordan and married another woman there, my brothers were living on their own, and my mom and younger sister were living together. After five years, I made peace with my family and they accepted me living alone and running my own life. It amazed me to see how accepting my family was of that I began to see God's grace in my life. "He didn't neglect me after all", I thought, "I don't know what I would have done without His love and grace. He took me out of a bad situation to put me in a better one. He protected me and gave me the courage, wisdom and strength to survive on my own." I felt ashamed for being angry at Him and I needed to make peace with Him by going back to Islam. I didn't pray five times a day, but I thanked daily and did nice things that I thought would please Him.

February of 1998, I accepted a job for a company that would move me to another state to work as a salesperson. That same month a dear friend of mine died of a car accident leaving me in agony and distress. Because I had made peace with God, I was able to talk to Him and for the first time have conversations with Him. I didn't know why He did what He did, but I had to accept it because from my past experience, I knew He did things for a reason even though I don't understand. Nonetheless, I asked for His help, and actually asked Him to help everyone in the world who needs help.

The month of May had arrived and it was time for me to move. I arrived not knowing anyone or what to expect from this city. I was scared being in a new city, and sad that I left my family and friends, but excited about my new job. I wanted to be close to Mexico so I could learn more Spanish and travel there for my company. My plan was to be successful in international sales, but the Lord had other plans for me.

Under the strangest circumstances, I met a woman one evening that was walking her dog in front of my apartment. She and I became friends instantly so one day she invited me to go to her church. I didn't think there was any harm in me going to church, "After all", I thought, "God sent down Judaism and Christianity so He would not be upset if I went to church even though I'm a Muslim"

I really enjoyed the pastor's sermons and felt that he offered sound teachings. The only thing that didn't seem sound to me was when the pastor talked about Jesus being the Son of God. I felt, though, that God would forgive the pastor because he was misled by his family to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Sometimes the pastor would say that Jesus is God in the flesh and sometimes he would say that Jesus is the Son of God. I knew for sure that the pastor was obviously confused because how can Jesus be God and then be God's Son? That just didn't make any sense to me. I continued to go to church until one day the pastor said that Muslims didn't know Jesus Christ. I was struck by that comment. Something inside of me said, "Of course Muslims know Jesus; the pastor is sadly mistaken and I need to set the record straight." After the service, I

went to the pastor, introduced myself to him that I'm a Muslim and I DO know Jesus Christ. He apologized for making a blanket statement, and said, " I know that Muslims believe he is a prophet." I told him that I would like to meet with him to talk about his faith. Sooner or later, I would have approached the pastor, but that comment expedited the whole process for me to search for the truth. That was another turning point in my life.

My heart and soul were convinced that the prophet Mohammed was the last messenger and the Qur'an was the last book sent by God. The Qur'an clearly states that Jesus was a messenger that was born of a virgin mother, Mary. He had many miracles including bringing the dead to life, healing the sick, speaking when he was a baby, and creating a bird out of clay. The Lord loved him so much that when his enemies were preparing to crucify him, God sent someone to look Jesus and die on the cross instead of Jesus. Muslims believe that he never died, but was raised to heaven to be protected from his enemies. Jesus, in the Qur'an, claims he never told anyone to worship him but to worship the One true God. The Bible has been changed, according to Muslims, that Christians and Jews really don't have the true Books. When God gave Mohammed the message, God preserved the Qur'an and made sure no one would change it like the Torah and the Gospel.

I continued to go to Church and listen to the pastor's sermons, but I began to wonder why Christians had different beliefs than Muslims. As I listened and began to read different books on Christianity and Islam, I became very confused and didn't know what to believe anymore. I had to wrestle with many issues: Was Jesus crucified? Did Jesus die on the cross for man's sins? Is Jesus God or the Son of God? Is God a Triune God? Is the Bible really accurate and had the Bible been preserved after all these years? If the answer was yes to all my questions, that would mean then that Mohammed was a liar and the Qur'an was not from God. Work, family, friends, and everything else around me suddenly became meaningless. My days and evenings were consumed with tears and agony over God and the truth. How could I know what really happened 2,000 years ago? How could I betray my family or maybe even God if I believed in Jesus Christ? That was a decision I was not willing to make myself. Nonetheless, I continued to read and search for answers to all my questions.

My questions needed convincing answers and I didn't know who would help me until the pastor recommended a professor at a seminary. As I spoke with the professor and read many books, things started making sense. The Bible had to be accurate because of the Dead Sea Scrolls. One of the Dead Sea Scrolls was the book of Isaiah that dates back to 125 BC. Apart from the Dead Sea Scrolls there are also parts of very old manuscripts of the Gospel according to John and the Gospel according to Matthew that we currently have that are in museums around Europe and the Middle East. I began to read compare the prophecies that were in the Old Testament about the coming of the Messiah and how they were all fulfilled in the New Testament. The Old Testament talks about the Messiah's hands and feet being pierced for man's transgressions, he would be born of a virgin mother, he would be led like a lamb to the slaughter, he would be sold for 30 pieces, he would enter Jerusalem on a donkey, and he would be called the Almighty God and Prince of Peace. These prophecies in the Old Testament and how they were fulfilled in the New Testament lead me to believe in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The only thing left for me to wrestle with was Jesus' deity as part of a Triune God. "I can not, under any circumstances, believe that Jesus is God; that would be pure blasphemy!", I thought to myself. I had to either end my search

or challenge Jesus' deity because I knew I couldn't embrace Christianity if I knew I had to believe in Jesus' deity. I needed a miracle.

One day I said to Jesus, "O.K. Mr. Messiah, it's my way or the highway. If you are God, you would prove it to me by doing what I want you to do." Jesus didn't respond. I was beginning to believe that God didn't want me to trust in Jesus because I thought for He'd respond to my prayers. Then one Sunday, I went to church and the pastor was talking about prayer. He said, "When I pray for something, I usually say: God, if this is Your will, then open the door wide open or slam it shut, but please Lord, don't let me make this decision myself." I felt good about that prayer because I was afraid of making the wrong decision about God. As soon as I got home that day I prayed and said, "God, if you want me to follow Christianity, then open the doors wide open or slam it shut, but please Lord let me make this decision myself." For a whole week nothing happened.

Sunday morning August 2, 1998, I woke up feeling depressed as usual about my search. I decided not to go to church because I didn't want to hear people say that Jesus is God anymore. An Iranian Christian pastor called me and said he would like a Qur'an. That evening, I went to his church to give him a Qur'an because I thought it was nice thing to do. He knew I had been searching for a few months. When I arrived at church, he asked me where I was in my search. I told him that I believed in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but I didn't believe in his deity. I also told the Iranian pastor that I've studied the life of Jesus, I would want a man like him to be my neighbor, my brother, my father, my boss, my judge in a court of law, my king in a country because no one in history compared to him. He said, "Well, if you think he is that wonderful and that he died on the cross for your sins, will you confess that before God?" I agreed so we prayed together and he told me he would like to be the first person to shake my hand and congratulate me for being one of God's children. He asked me to continue to pray, read the Bible daily, and tell everyone what I just did. I had no idea what he was talking about. The pastor and I said good-bye to one another and I headed for my car. I got in my car and it all hit me. I sat there in total shock and said out loud as if God was sitting right next me, "You really wanted me to do this all along didn't You? You really wanted me to take this step, didn't You? " I then began to cry because I realized what happened. God made the decision for me! I fought with Jesus and I lost! I wanted him to reveal himself to me on my terms, but he was willing to reveal himself to me on His terms. It was clear to me that Jesus wanted me to walk with him instead of challenge Him.

I am grateful that the Lord has been my shepherd throughout my life. He has been there for me when I needed Him and even when I thought I didn't need Him. He has taken me through roads and routes I never dreamed to take. Above all, I'm amazed and that He loved me so much, He sent Jesus to die on the cross for me! How humbling and precious that is to me! The Lord is my shepherd and He has been leading His sheep.

Scott's Testimony

Scott's Testimony

By Scott

I lived what most people would call a typical happy life. Apart from the usual teenage difficulties things were going smoothly. Our family adhered to the Lutheran tradition. Every Sunday (well, most every Sunday) mom and dad would dutifully pack us all off to church. There I learned to parrot back lots of doctrine but nothing took hold. Honestly, it was all very boring to me.

In 1973 I was 20 years old, in Germany, in the midst of a 3 year hitch in the U.S. Army. There was this weird guy there (and almost 30 years later he's still weird) who was also a Lutheran. He was different. He was a Christian. Aren't all of us Lutherans Christian? I certainly thought so. Wrong! Nothing he said took hold either.

One day I went to the joke that passed for a book store on our post to get something to read, simply out of boredom. I had in mind science fiction. There was this book that had a really catchy title and great graphics on the cover. Hmm, The Late Great Planet Earth, by Hal Lindsey. Never heard of it or him but it looked like a good story.

I do not remember my reaction to the discovery (after the purchase) that this was a religious book but I do remember devouring the whole thing. I just couldn't put it down. There were all sorts of scripture references in there so I got myself a Bible and looked them all up. Hey! This stuff really IS in the Bible! What an awakening since I had been so utterly clueless before. On the very last page there was printed the sinners prayer and an invitation to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. That seemed like the logical thing to do. There were no thunderbolts, visions, or overwrought emotions. The Lord simply walked me over from death to life.

Life got considerably more interesting after that. I can not say that the Lord did all of the following but there were some lessons I needed to learn, the hard way. Since all things did work together for good the evidence (to me, anyway) points in that direction. After leaving the army I went back to the Lutheran church and I was angry. Why hadn't I heard any of this stuff before? Why hadn't I heard how to be saved?

Actually, I had. Remember, it just didn't take. Now I knew it all and I could see that there was nothing for me in the Lutheran church. What an attitude! I had set myself up for a big fall and fall I did. I spent two years in the Local Church cult of Witness Lee. It wasn't nice but it was a necessary experience. I had to learn that I didn't know it all and also how to be discerning. I never had any intention to leave that bunch but after some time it just became impossible to stay. The Lord's doing? I think so.

Life went on. I completed my education and took a series of crappy jobs. Finally I was hired by a great company. The work was physically demanding but the pay was spectacular. The best part of it was that nothing short of attempted murder could get a person fired. Knowing that it was then

that I had my Titanic moment, you know, "even God couldn't take this job away from me!" Instantly I was horrified by that thought and I repented but, guess what? Soon I was on the outside looking in. No, I wasn't fired, I quit! Anyone who thinks that God doesn't have a sense of humor is just plain wrong. What better way to get my attention than to make me do something and make me think it was my idea? I needed to learn humility and I was about to get a very big lesson in it.

I went to Arkansas and after 6 months of fruitless searching for a job and exhausting almost all of my savings I decided that in Boston I could, at least, get a job flipping hamburgers. I returned to Boston but couldn't even get that hamburger flipping job. Homeless!

My darkest hour had now arrived but through it all the Lord was gracious. Some time before I quit the good job there was this guy who the Lord was calling. I did my best to answer his questions while the Holy Spirit was convicting him. He was gloriously saved. That guy, knowing my situation, offered me yard work. It was heavy labor but at least I had money for food now. Shortly after that another gent arraigned a summer job for me at a railroad museum. There I lived in an old freight car but again had money for food, a place to bathe and access to laundry facilities. It took almost two full years but I was eventually rehired at my old position.

Praise God! I wouldn't change any of that. All things do work together for good, for those that love him. Had none of the above happened I wouldn't be where I am now. I wouldn't be living where I am. I wouldn't be married to the same woman (if at all.) I wouldn't have my dear son.

There is much more I could write. To paraphrase the Apostle, I suppose there wouldn't be books enough to contain it all. That is not hyperbole. The Lord truly is good!

The Light of Faith

The Light of Faith

By Abd El-Fady

I was raised in a religious family where love and respect to one another was taught. My father would always repeat the saying: "Oh for God and parents to be pleased with me." "Ya Rida Allah Wa Rida Al'Waliden." My father told me once: "Your grandfather left me little worldly belongings but he was pleased with me." So the subject of please God and parents was a paramount importance to me. My life went on quietly until my teenage years. I was worshiping God in a traditional manner. After that period I began to indulge in youth practices, both good and bad. I became a slave to bad and vulgar language and indulged in uncontrolled sexual relations. Smoking cigarettes led to smoking "Hash" and, later, to opium, and such transgressions which displeased God. Praise to Him the Most High "Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala".

My health deteriorated rapidly. I felt that I was destroying myself with all my sinful practices. This left me with the feeling that I was at the point of no return. During that time I saw my grandfather fall to his death from a second floor window, under the influence of alcohol. I also saw the effects of drug "Hash" addiction on my uncle. Also a close friend of mine died in a motorcycle crash as he sped to avoid missing an appointment with a street girl. Reading books and memorizing Arabic poems have been my favorite pastime. I learned some painting, sculpture and decoration and took part in some art exhibitions. I was proud of my high-class acquaintances in various fields.

In spite of this I was a sinner and transgressor, displeasing God both morally and spiritually. In my childhood I learned that God is forgiving and merciful, but that He also punishes severely and that I could not escape His wrath because of my disgraceful behavior. Yet the abundant and indescribable love of the merciful One found me, and He brought me back onto the true path before it was too late.

In the beginning I never understood that God in His rich mercy had provided the atonement for my sins personally. Of course I had read some things about Christ, like many millions of my people, but my information was shallow and incomplete until I obtained a Holy Bible in my beautiful Arabic language. Upon thorough consideration and sincere examination I found it to be the true book of God written by holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. I understood that the Book itself was translated from the old manuscripts which are available even today; and more importantly, the contents of the Holy Book is God's Truth for the benefit of the whole world. From this dear book of God I learned about the most high God's personal love for me as a sinner, and about Christ's death who sacrificed Himself to atone for my transgressions and iniquities. I learned also that I can receive forgiveness and pardon of my sins if I accepted this "Truth and believed on Jesus Christ, peace be upon HIM. "Alaihe Al'Salam.".

A violent struggle followed between the things I had learned at home and the Divine Truth I had found in God's Holy Word, the Bible. I was under conviction for my sins and I longed for a life of

holiness and righteousness. During my search of assurance of Salvation and forgiveness I saw the Savior, stretching out His hands to heal the wounds of sin, who is able to set me free from the bondage of sin. It was a struggle between the old blind-minded fanatical man clinging to traditions, and between receiving the New Life which is in Christ. I reasoned..that if God Almighty had prepared the way for my salvation and redemption of my sins - why not accept it?

Thank God for the light of the true faith which invaded my heart. This light was far more superior than my sincere examinations and efforts to reach the truth. I believed in Christ with all my heart and lifted up my heart in prayer and supplication to God, the compassionate and merciful one "Al'Rahman Al'Rahim", with intercession to forgive my sins and iniquities. I asked g to transform me and made me a new creation, making me different from the old in both words and in deeds. Thank Almighty g (the Precious One) that by grace and faith He has answered my prayer.

I have now come to enjoy God's true acceptance of me and the privilege of coming near to the Most High in supplications and prayers. My life has become meaningful. Before, I thought I wasn't going to live long, but now.I feel a surge of activity and enthusiasm to live and honor the One who loved me and gave Himself for me as atonement for my sins to set me free, to cleanse me. So I can now know and enjoy God's pleasure and care.

Dear readers - brothers and sisters. We have many things in common. You may be seeking to please God or maybe you are under a load of sin and searching for the truth. You may be seeking life in all its fullness and abundance, desiring to get rid of your fanatical attitude and open your heart to the light of the true faith. Come to the love of God and believe in Christ as your personal Savior. Hear Him say to you; "I have come that you may have life in all its fullness" and He invites; "Come to me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." I trust you will accept HIS personal invitation of love to you, before the time is too late.

Joseph's Testimony

Joseph's Testimony

By Joseph Jibran

The grace and blessing of God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ be upon all who read this. I was thirty-six years old when I accepted Christ as my Savior. I wish I could tell you that it was a bolt out of the blue and answers came forth like a river, but that was not the case. It would only be the end of the beginning of my journey to know the Lord Jesus. My name is Joseph and this is my testimony.

My parents were Sunni Muslims from Palestine and I was born and raised in the United States. My education in Islam came from my father. I see no need of going into depth about my instruction in Islam, only to say it was sufficient. However, never in my mind or heart have I believed the one teaching that in my opinion shares the center stage of Islamic teachings, that being the claim that Jesus was never crucified. From a very early age I rejected this teaching. That rejection would be reinforced through statements made by my father and other Muslims, who almost in the same breath would say Jesus was never crucified, the Jews crucified Jesus, Jesus body was stolen, etc. etc. Such are the difficulties I encountered concerning the Crucifixion. Still, it was my father's knowledge of Islam and Mohammed that would mold my perception of religion.

The Holy Bible was as welcome in our home as the Holy Qur'an. We were never forbidden to read from it. Many times I tried to read the Holy Bible, but much of it was not understandable. I now say with the benefit of hindsight, it was a closed book to me. Verses were pointed out, which Muslims believe are prophecies of Mohammed. Like other Muslims my father would say, The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is $1+1+1=3$, but unlike other Muslims he would never say Christians believed in three gods. When Muslims made such a claim, my father would become upset and make it known to them, that Christians believe in the God of Abraham. Never once did he state the Qur'an was wrong, but many times he said, Muslims have no right to say how another person believes. Unforgettable to me is the image of my father, when I asked him, whether it is true that Jesus would return. He did not say a word, while nodding his head yes, gazing into space. This was my father, who remains an enigma to me. If he had conflicts, they were not shared with anyone. The lesson learned? The Holy Bible and Holy Qur'an are to be trusted only in part, take them with a grain of salt.

I carried the religion of my father and his fathers as a Coat of Arms, an Arab with a rich heritage. I could claim Abraham as my father of old. I belonged to a people blessed by God and from which a great prophet had risen. My noble ancestors had destroyed idol worship with brave and just conquest. Today's world bears witness to our achievements and contributions to culture, science and math. The majestic Arab history was second to none. How could I refuse such a wonderful inheritance? Added to me was newfound contempt for other religions, in particular Christianity. Courtesy of my relatives' Islamic teachings filling the void after my father's death. Gone was the

respect and dignity I was to give those of different beliefs, according to my father's instructions on decency. In all this existed nowhere in my heart a love for Allah and his words, the Holy Qur'an. How could He or anyone else expect me to love a being that is unknown? To be sure I was in awe of this all-powerful and incomprehensible God, but respect of him came from fear and not from love. That fear would subside, much like a man who death has companioned far to long, he no longer fears its power.

I finished my enlistment in the Marine Corps, with one year duty in Vietnam. The following years would see hedonism, poverty, prosperity, drunkenness, sobriety, and eventually marriage, adultery, divorce. Never during this time did I consider God, whether doing good or evil. I had broken every Commandment God had written. I was a man with blood on his hands, but the only thing my relatives asked, did I eat pork. The look of relief on their face when I answered "No", almost made me laugh. My answer was true, but how I wished a bacon, lettuce, tomato sandwich could be the cause of all my problems. Through those years, I would often reflect on my life and where God is.

The reflection on my past revealed a man who gave all glory to himself for the good times and accused God for the bad times. Never seeing my unfairness to God. I became angry at God who created me with no say in nature. How could he judge me without ever knowing what it is to be human? If He were a man, he too would fail. If we are his children then why hasn't he revealed himself? All the questions and accusations I made towards God could fill a book. God must have been fed up with my pseudo reflections that served only my own glory, because they were reaching a terrible, but thankful end.

My questions would be answered. It would not be with gentleness to one innocent and honest in his questions, but with horrible shock to a man who was long ago given the answers. I began to hear familiar voices, some who's faces and names have long been forgotten. The voices belonged to Christians who witnessed to me and I tried to shove them out of my mind. However their words would not release me. We are to worship only the God of Abraham and this is just as true for Christians. How can it be then, they claim to do so? Why are obstacles and dilemmas being placed before me? As a Muslim my concept of God was that he would do no such things as Christians claimed. I tried to think intelligently, but more questions arose. How could I be logical about this when logic told me the universe should not exist? The same logic that my early childhood used to reject the crucifixion account of Islamic belief. My dilemma was not going to be solved with logic but with prayer. I prayed without consideration to Islamic belief or what kind of answer I should receive. My prayer was met with silence, but my lips would not be silent and heard myself say "Yes, He is the Son of God." Thought had not given birth to my words; why then did I say this? What should I do with the words I have uttered? A struggle within heart and mind ensued bringing me close to collapse. Why is it now that I feel this terrible ultimatum (more on this later)? Though I had not reconciled Jesus, love, sin and the Crucifixion, I confessed Jesus Christ is my Savior. My torment disappeared, but confusion on many things continued. Any person who just embraced a faith would begin reading its scriptures. This was not the case with me and I continued holding on to the old things, including Islam. These were the things which gave me identity, without them I would no longer exist.

Shortly after, while discussing my accepting Lord Jesus Christ with a very good Muslim friend. I found myself answering questions of my past reflections. No longer can we accuse God and say, "He does not know what it is to be man, because he has lived as a man," I told my friend. Wait a minute, I thought, where did that come from. No one has explained it to me like this before. It was not something given thought to when I accepted Jesus. I realized then, that never before had I said Lord Jesus is God. My thoughts returned to those past reflections that accused God. "My God," my mind shouted, "you have indeed come down as a man, you have revealed yourself, you are the man Jesus." From where did this new understanding and guidance come from? Euphoria turned to horror when I realized the Christian witnesses had never failed to understand my questions. My heart was deaf to the answer, delighting only in its questions. Little did I realize much understanding of the Lord Jesus was yet to come. He forgave me for my sins, but my Lord Jesus was not about to let me get off easy for not running to him when called. Let me now return for a moment to the ultimatum time of struggle.

It was then that a demanding feeling overtook me, leaving me drained of emotion and strength. It was telling me to accept that Jesus died for my sins or reject him completely. What a strange ultimatum, whatever I chose would no longer make me a Muslim. God, does indeed know best, I will get my answer for that ultimatum.

Years later, as a Christian, I received a reason for that ultimatum when engaged in email discussion/debate with a Muslim (whom I will call Jay). It was discernable from Jay's email that he was intelligent and would be an interesting person to have in my life. The downside, as a Muslim his demeanor was predictable. That is, like most Muslims (including myself) he had biting wit, was sarcastic and becoming angry when challenged, ending with "my religion is mine and nobody can tell me how to believe." Indeed and agreed, if it was not for the fact that Muslims (again, myself) have been telling Christians for centuries what they believe. To support his case against a crucified Christ he referred to a book written by the atheist Kinsey Graves. Incidentally, this book was even rejected by the host web site, a freethinker organization, for being unscholarly, and readers were warned nothing in it should be believed (their emphasis). Not only did the author claim no crucifixion occurred but also, Jesus never existed. His claim of a nonexistent Jesus was understandable, considering the problems it would cause an atheist. The shame is, the extent to which some Muslims will go to support their scriptures. Initially it disturbed me, to put it mildly, a Muslim was accepting the words of the very person who rejects Allah. However, the greatest shock was the realization, that is exactly what I did as a Muslim. To refute Christianity I would embrace and repeat corrupt or false evidence notwithstanding that these lies would make the Qur'an null and void. The reason for the haunting ultimatum from years past was unfolding before me. If I accepted a lesser Jesus than the one of the Holy Bible, I would have to accept God, creator of the beginning and end was unable to protect his prophet, except through deception. A deception that would serve no purpose but to deceive the followers of Lord Jesus, the very people who desired to worship the God of Abraham, keep God's commandments, and to be called God's friends. Any reason for this deception would leave us with a failed prophet, worse a God who has failed to bring and forever protect his message to the world. I finally understood the essence of that mysterious ultimatum. If Jesus is anything less than Lord, we will readily argue him out of our beliefs. If he exists in the lesser then indeed he does not exist at all. Some might say I may have read too much into his argument. I beg to differ, because in no uncertain terms, Jay had argued

Jesus out of his beliefs. In fairness to Jay the fault does not lie with him, but with me. I was the one, whose past witnessed against the Lord Christ and presented self-serving interpretations or doctrines, alien to the Qur'an, as evidence. Even more sadly, the secret pleasure my heart received from those who turned from Christ to atheism. How could I ever believe an atheist was the ally of Allah? Nevertheless as a supposed Christian, I was accepting a lesser Jesus for I have been doing nothing more than Islamizing Christianity.

During my brief email discussion with Jay, I realized my conversion had only substituted one religion for another. My spiritual relationship with God and how I governed myself in this world remained unchanged. I was better prepared to defend Mohammed (and did) than my reason for hope as a Christian. It would be the Lord Jesus in words and deed who finally gave me an understanding of how we are to worship our Father. I began to focus on God, praying constantly and purifying my mind and heart. He opened the eyes of my heart as I sought to know Him. My mind became overwhelmed as I read the Holy Bible. It was rushed through history, the present and future. Answering questions, discarding questions, and answering questions never asked. It was no longer a closed book. As I read, looking into my heart, I came face to face not only with myself, but with my Creator. I wish I could tell you it was a pleasant experience seeing both, but instead it was terrible. Please let me say here, I cannot imagine nor do I want to know how much more horrible it might be in the Day to come. I went through the gamut of emotions, but from them, only love, joy, and hope prevailed. True, Lord, the obstacles before me were the ones I had placed for myself. If I trust your Holy Bible only in part then I trust in nothing you have said.

It was no longer strange to me that God wants to know me and desires to commune with me, and has died for me. As a father with children, I know each are individuals and not just a group that live in my home. I desire to know and commune with each of them and if necessary die for them. Could it be that I am more loving than a God who would do no such thing? I cannot describe the hope, God's wonderful love has given me. God was not beyond my understanding anymore. To be sure, God is still beyond my comprehension. There are those who will separate the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and say, it's three gods and we Christians are just playing mind games with ourselves. I submit to them, the games are yours to play and lose. Creator, Redeemer and Comforter cannot be separated from God, nor can Love, Salvation, and Communion. Is this not what Christians have always testified to be the One God, the God of Abraham? How readily I had accepted empty words to describe The Living God, but not the action or presence that manifested them. This is my testimony, of the last 12 years, of a continuing journey to understand God. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ give you peace. Amen.

Joseph Jibran

Jane's Testimony

Jane's Testimony

By Jane

I knew God at an early age. I tried to do the right thing growing up. I never got into too much trouble because I knew the consequences. When I grew up things became harder and cloudier.

I was in a bad marriage for 13 years. I thought this was the man I was suppose to marry. He was a Christian. He was also abusive. On top of the physical and mental abuse I found out I could not have children easily. I also came down with a chronic auto-immune disease.

God blessed me in those terrible years. He blessed me with three beautiful, healthy children. It took me 7 years before I could have them. I was so happy when I finally became pregnant. But I yearned for love.

After having three children and sinking low in self-esteem I got a phone call from a cousin who was having marital problems. His wife left him and the kids. I reminded him of the days when we grew up and when things were wonderful. I longed for those days. He and I talked on and off for weeks.

I finally confessed the abuse and he made me tell my family. They were suspicious for years. Now they knew. They came and got me out of that horrible hole and rescued me. I was bitter and angry at my husband for the lack of love and what he did to my self esteem. I ran away with the kids to my family's arms. It was all so secret. My husband thought I was just visiting. I had to lie to him.

After awhile I had my own apartment, job and the kids were in daycare and school. They were scared and so was I. I could handle standing alone, but I hated what he did to my kids and to me. I thought God was blessing me. I had so much anger. I remember the times my husband hit me. Even pregnant, he punched me in the stomach. His family just turned their heads. I was so angry. I was free, so I thought. I thought God opened a door for me. But He had another path.

I just stopped listening when I left. Instead of listening to Him, I listened to my cousin. He had plans, too. He wanted us to open our own business and kiss our families good-bye. He even wanted to marry me. I thought, why not? So we had a secret affair. He and I are so much alike, He could not possibly hurt me. So I thought. Then I saw a familiar pattern in him. That woke me up out of my dream state. I was sitting at my desk at work and I knew, I KNEW two angels were at my side. I was praying that God take away my bitterness, pain and anger. He did. Just like that. And I started thinking clearly again.

I sat there and realized that ignoring my husband's pleas might not have been God's will. Now mind you, this was between me and God. Not everyone has this same situation.

I got up from my desk and the angels came with me. I walked across the room and came to a secure phone. I called my husband and asked him if He really changed. And I listened to him this time. He said God meant for him to take care of me and to love me. He told me he was wrong and

he loved me and to give him another chance. I felt God pushing me and that it was really Ok., because I have heard this before. But this was different. It was very different.

I paused and prayed and made up my mind. I asked my husband if I could come back home. He tearfully said YES! And he came and picked me up the next week. My family was furious. They did not understand the spiritual war that was going on. My cousin found out and he was furious. I locked all the doors and left through the back entrance when my cousin came.

God protected us. It's funny how God works because I was not fully convinced and was scared of my husband. The day he came to get me, I fell violently ill. His family came down too and I had it out with them. I straightened every thing out. I did not want to have a fake relationship with them and they were very sorry. God worked in their hearts, too!

They took the kids back and I stayed for a week recovering. I was in the emergency room twice and I almost died. I had an allergic reaction. My husband was there the whole time. Funny, when I thought I was going to die he took my hand and asked if there was someone else. He doesn't know why to this day he asked that. I was so glad he did because I did not want to keep that a secret. I told him about my cousin and thought, if he rejects me then that's that. But he looked at me and said, "I caused all of this. You should have been loved from the very beginning. This is all my fault."

I could not believe it. It was like a dream, or a movie. He took care of me for a week and I could see he really changed. He was different. This was almost unreal. I heard all the horror stories from others. But this time, in this case, he really changed!

We went through marriage counseling and he still denies after he confessed the abuse, but that's normal. This usually does not happen in real life, but it did. My husband let God change his heart. He is now kind, caring, and he really loves me! It is just incredible.

I still deal with the guilt of the affair, but I know God forgave me. When I was in the emergency room, there was talk that I had a sexually transmitted disease. But I came out clean. I don't deserve such a blessing. God is still working on me. I still have the nightmarish memories of what he did and what I ended up doing. It almost ended in a what I call a "normal tragedy". But it didn't.

God didn't have to do this, but He did. My husband and I both relinquished our wills to Him. That's what did it. We dropped all our pride, our bitterness, our greed and came to Him and He healed our hearts.

Testimony of an Indian

Testimony of an Indian

By Lalan Daniel Peter

PRAISE THE LORD

Dear brother in Christ,

Greetings to you the most highest name of our lord and savior Jesus Christ. I have got your web name through a search engine. My name is Lalan Daniel Peter. I am 26 year old south Indian I am very proud to say that I am a Christian. Because my parents are still Hindus. My father was a catholic, but later he became a Hindu and married my mother. But God saved me, more than that he found me.

After my school days I fell down to rock music groups with Jazz drums and vocals. Through that I became a satanic fan. I was fully involved with tobacco, hot drinks and drugs. Now I can't remember and think what I had done that time. Through many months my life were with skulls and witchcraft and became like mad and tried to commit suicide many times. Later in my mind a good think rose up now I understood who done that. I started to search God, where is he?, who is he?

Almost all people in India thinking God is there in the ashrams (monasteries), same thing happened to me. I marched to ashrams and learned Hindu epics and Vedas from ascetics and hermits. I became a servant of a lady God who living here. She is very famous in the world. Gradually I decide to submit my life to lady God. I started to prepare my life for that. Then the Lord's day came to my life. I met a pastor and he shared Gospel of Jesus Christ to me. I also talk against him with the knowledge i learned. But when he shared about the eternal life I understood that something is there with his words, tears and his love affair with Jesus Christ. I understood the truth from that pastor. More over God opened my heart, mind, eyes and brain. I received Jesus as my savior, "praise God, Hallelujah". I have got a new life, what I didn't feel. I understood what is peace. I knew what is joy. God gave me grace to suffer everything and love everybody. Yes it's really great truth.

My parents heard that I became a Christian and they listened my prayers. Then they underlined that our son he is a good man. Later I became homeless, slept in roadsides with prayer and tract distribution. But this time my God used to send me to many places in India and testified Jesus Christ is the only one way to salvation. This time I could understand the basic needs, problems and difficulties from anti Christian organizations and public, what missionaries Christ facing.

Brethren with tears I can say like apostle Paul, many times I became afraid from anti-Christians they put me in lock-up, severe pain in my body, in hunger for months, cold, nakedness danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from false brethren, many sleepless nights, I don't know how I suffered all the difficulties I have got to face. But my God gave me grace to over come it. I love my Christ so much. I need to grow in Christ up to his head.

Praise the lord, I am asking your help. Please pray for me to be fill with gifts of the Holy Ghost. I want to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. If you mail me back that will be a happy for my mind. I would like to appoint some missionaries to many parts of India and also like to conduct some small and big Gospel campaigns. Please pray for it.

With all of my heart and mind I am inviting you for the Lord's work before the door close in India. Say others to pray for me. Mail me with your prayer requests I will pray for you.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of our God, and the communion of Holy Ghost, be with you.

Amen

We in America do not know what it is like to be a Christian in other parts of the world. Count your blessings.

TESTIMONY OF SHARIFAH

TESTIMONY OF SHARIFAH

By Sharifah

We were created as caliphs in world to worship the Almighty God and to obey his commandments and to avoid all that is forbidden by Him. "Islam" means to obey and submit as well as worship Almighty God. To carry out our roles as God's caliphs and vice-gerents on this earth, Almighty God has sent one after another, messengers and also His holy Books to guide and help His caliphs so that they could lead a life that is blessed by Him.

According to Islam, it is the perfect religion; "Innaddinn aindallah hilislam", and the Al-Quran is the complete and perfect book, yet, in its perfection, the Al-Quran encourages and does not prevent Muslims from referring to other Holy Books that were revealed before the Al-Quran.

For anyone who wants to obtain additional knowledge about the teachings of God, the Al-Quran does not give sufficient information. Because of that, with the permission granted by Islam, its followers also refer to the other Holy Books. As an example as Nabi Muhammad said that for one to know the teachings of all the prophets one has to refer to other Holy Books because there are stories that are not complete in the Al-Quran, such as about Jesus Christ or Isa Al-Masih. Why so little is said about Him? This is because Muhammad knew that all the stories about Him were already written in the Injil. Therefore it was not necessary to repeat them again. The same also applies to the teachings of prophet Moses, they were not repeated because they were written in the Taurat. Therefore, Muslims should not restrict their knowledge and refer only to the Al-Quran due to the fact that the other Holy Books can also be used as references by them.

To perfect our knowledge about Islam, then, let us read this interesting and true story of a young Malay girl from Malaysia. Her name is called Sharifah.

My name is Sharifah. I was born and raised in a fully Islamic way. When I became a teenager, I tried to learn more about Islam and instill the spirit of jihad in me. I tried to explain what Islam means to non- muslims, especially Christians and tried to attract their attention to Islam. To me, Islam is a religion that is perfect, complete and universal.

I then continued to study Islam so that I could convey the "beauty" of Islam to my Christian friends. But, instead, many questions arose and I was not satisfied with my questions as well as stumped by the answers they were giving to me. The logic in the answers they gave me caused me to have doubts about my own questions. From that point onwards, I began to search for the true answers to the questions in my heart. Who really is Isa Al-Masih that will judge us one day?

I tried to get the correct answers by asking learned and devout Muslims in Islam about Isa Al-Masih and the Christian teachings. But they discouraged me from learning much more about Christianity and asked me whether I was looking to be an apostate! Since I did not get the answers I was looking for, therefore I began to search by myself by researching about the Al-Quran and the

Injil/Gospel. After making a comparison between the two, only then did I obtain some answers as to who Isa Al-Masih (Jesus Christ) actually is in the Al-Quran and Injil.

In the Injil, John 14:6 Isa declared: "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." This verse was clear and it often came to my mind because in surah Al-Fatihah1:6 "Ihdinasyiraatall mustaqiim" which means 'show me the straight path'. But John 14:6 explains that Isa Al-Masih is the straight path. Therefore I need not find a another path to know God intimately. From that moment my mind became confused. I was not sure of the things that I had done before this. I began to have doubts about my previous confidence.

I also found surah Al-Nisa' 171 which means Isa son of Maryam was sent by Allah and is His Word. When I saw the word 'kalimatullah' which means the Word of God, I believe that Isa Al-Masih is the Word of God. The characteristics of Allah is that He speaks. Who then is Isa Al-Masih if He is the Word of God? Is He God? Because for me, God's Word cannot be separated from God Himself. For confirmation, I read from surah Al-Imran 45 which means "And remember when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a WORD from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus Son of Mary, Illustrious in the World and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near unto God."

Therefore, it is true that Al-Masih is closest to Allah as He is the Word of God. I also read the scriptures that explain who Isa Al-Masih is, in John 1:1,14 :

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Surah Az-zukhruff 61 which says ' Lo! Verily (with Jesus) there is knowledge of the Hour (of Judgement Day). So doubt ye not concerning it, but follow me, this is the right path.'

Surah Az-zukhruff 63 adds 'When Jesus came with clear proofs, he said: I have come to you with wisdom, and to make plain some of that concerning which ye differ. So keep your duty to God and obey me.'

This verse explains the coming of Isa Al-Masih-Jesus Christ. And, who is Jesus Christ who actually has the power over death? In John 5:24 we are told:

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

The above verses convinced me, and with a brave heart I took a decision to choose this Right Path and in my heart I was convinced that Isa Al-Masih ie.Jesus the Christ was the true path to heaven and to Allah. In 1 Corinthians 8:6 :

" Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live."

After I believed in Isa Al-Masih I began to have real peace in life. When, before this my life was up-side down, filled with questions, now I am free from such feelings. I have found the true answer. The verses above convinced me that Isa Al-Masih is my Saviour and I continue to be a worshipper of God Almighty.

My prayer for all Muslims are that you will strengthen your hearts to ascertain truly who Isa Al-Masih really is. I am very sure at the conclusion of your search, you will find the truth, the answer and eternal life.

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wa barakatuh!

Sharifah did not feel hesitant or afraid to search out the Gospels when she had questions about her salvation, because she knows that the Al-Quran does not forbid her from doing so. What happened later was that she found the answers and a more complete truth and knowledge about Allah and Isa Al-Masih. She knows that there is a straight path and that path is not a whator where, but WHO. He is Jesus Christ -Isa Al-Masih. After being sure of the truth, sister Sharifah took a decision to follow Him.

In the Book of Romans 1:16-17: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; forst for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: The righteous will live in faith."

Come my friends, don't let go of this oppurtunity to find the truth and salvation. Read the Injil (the Gospels) and believe in Isa Al-Masih.

THE NIGHT GOD BECAME REAL

THE NIGHT GOD BECAME REAL

By Norman Rasmussen

What a joy it is to know beyond all shadow of a doubt that there really is a God. Not just to believe there is a God and leave it at that, but to have personally experienced His presence in my room. That was the night my doubts about God and Jesus Christ changed forever!

It is my hope that if you are somehow doubting the reality of God, my testimony will help begin to change that. After all, to believe that Jesus Christ is merely the Son of God is one thing, but to know by the Holy Spirit to the depths of your soul that Jesus Christ is also God Himself -- knowing that He is co-equal with God the Father (though He submits His will to the Father) and God the Holy Spirit - One God in three distinct persons . . . that's when Christianity takes on a whole new meaning! Then it's not so much what you believe that is important anymore, but who you are believing in that makes all the pieces of the puzzle of Christianity start coming together.

Early in my childhood, somewhere around 1955, I accepted Christ as my Savior. With a child's mentality, I'm sure I did it to hopefully make God happy with me, and so I wouldn't go to hell. There was a lot of turbulence in my home-life through those years. Because of the turbulence, I was attracted to whatever would make me happy. Wherever alcohol was available, I sought after it. Drugs were not readily available like they are today, so drugs were not an option, thank goodness.

After high school, in 1967, I enlisted in the Army, rather than risking being drafted and sent to Vietnam to die in a war that I had mixed feelings about. Through some trickery on the Army's part, I was "volunteered" to become a prisoner-of-war interrogator through little choice of my own and was sent to Vietnam anyway. In the name of "war" I tortured prisoners to get information. Experiencing first-hand the horrors and injustices of that war, my concept of an "all loving, all merciful, all compassionate God being in control of this planet drastically began to become twisted. Seeing all the pain the Vietnam conflict was bringing to the lives of so many innocent people ... and knowing we were never going to be able to stop Communism from spreading in South Vietnam the way we were going about it ... I wasn't sure I wanted to put my trust in any supposed God who allowed such things to happen.

Before going to Vietnam, I married a special lady I had met in the military. I was probably not suitable marriage material for any women at the time, though I would not have admitted it. My selfish desire to have someone love me and be faithful to me while I was in Vietnam probably obscured my lack of wisdom in waiting until after Vietnam to enter into marriage.

I came back from Vietnam twisted by the war, and probably emotionally raped, though I was in denial to it. Torturing and having prisoners killed contributed greatly to my being hard-hearted. (For prisoners caught in outright firefights against our soldiers who refused to divulge information, I ordered them to be secretly executed at \$25 dollars a person with little remorse. The Army was not

aware of this practice and I would have been court-martialed for it had I been found out). Consequently, I came back from Vietnam a heavy drinker with a heart cold as steel, capable of doing almost anything to anyone.

As with any marriage when conflict arrives, I buried most of my feelings rather than seek professional advice to help work them out. Like many others, I began to think that an intimate relationship with other women might bring a little happiness to drown out the hollowness and pain inside me. Sad to say, adultery followed, and the "happiness" was short-lived, because the guilt ate at me constantly. To bury my guilt, I drank more alcohol and smoked more cigarettes and sought out whatever means at my disposal to fill the ache in my soul that I now realize only God was capable of mending.

Through all those trying years, I still wondered if there really was a God. Part of me wanted to believe there was, yet there was another part of me that had difficulty believing unless I could "prove" there was a God. I had read a number of "positive thinking" books that the devil had used to convince me that if a person can believe hard enough, you can create your own reality. I had experimented with hypnotism at an early age, and had experienced manifestations that many have not. Reading and experimenting with hypnosis, I was an ardent student of "mind over matter." Meaning ... God can become real to you . . . but that doesn't mean He really exists. Little did I realize how strong the sin of pride was that had been operating in my life that caused this deception. Worse yet, little did I know that I was addicted to the MOST LETHAL KIND of drugs known to fallen mankind: The spiritual drugs of doubt and unbelief. As I look back at my life then, I essentially was tied to a gurney with needles in every vein of my body taking in the two drugs of doubt and unbelief seven days a week, 24 hours a day. [Fear is the drug that often accompanies these other two, but I was so filled with the sin of pride, I feared nothing ... (until I was about to pass over into eternity that fateful weekend that God made Himself real to me)].

I was quick to find fault in Christians and organized religion as well; totally unaware of the devil's influence over my thinking -- totally unaware how much influence Satan has had over Christianity over the last 2,000 years. Like many others, I felt all churches wanted was to control you and con you out of your money. [Actually far too many of them do! Satan's controlling influence is alive and well in many local "churches," don't kid yourself! Many a Christian has been wounded by Satan's influence on them without their even knowing he was the one behind it, so sad to say. Nevertheless, this is not a license to say most churches want to control you and your money, because there are many who do not. One needs to let God show them which ones are and which ones aren't]. After all, if one believes there probably is no God unless it can be "proven," how can that person possibly believe there could be a devil or Satan who also has great influence over the affairs of mankind? My belief about the devil or Satan or demons was that it was just something early Christians had come up with to try to put fear into people to get them to believe the way they wanted them to believe.

The classic overflow of my doubt and unbelief-addicted mind was that I also felt a person was stupid to believe that they could trust the Bible. Man screws everything up and you couldn't convince me that that modern-day accepted translations of the Bible have been preserved by God to be trusted to know what God wants mankind to know about Him and properly relate to Him and others. And another question I had: why would God allow so many different translations of the

Bible to be printed anyway? It just made no sense to me whatsoever, thus I came to the conclusion that there was no sense to be made of it period.

Fortunately though, there were people God used along life's way to influence me positively about God. An older sister was one of those people. Flora and her husband had become "born again," and their excitement about their relationship with Jesus Christ captured my attention.

My youngest brother, Dale, the black sheep of the family as far as I was concerned growing up, also had a powerful born again experience. And it was seeing the incredible change in his life for the better that began to make me take a more serious look at my comprehension of Christianity. When I would talk with Dale, all he would tell me was to forget about my hang-ups about Christianity and organized religion, and just fall in love with Jesus Christ. He said the rest of it would all fall into place in due time. But I didn't know who Jesus Christ was, or should I say, IS. That's because I refused to believe what the Bible says about Him is true. I believed the lie that the Bible cannot be trusted. If the devil can convince you of that you'll never come to know truly who Jesus Christ really is.

Alcoholism continued to take its ugly toll, as well as the other affects of sin in my life. At mid-life, I was told unexpectedly by a nurse that my heart was a walking time bomb, ready to explode. My heart was ready to quit any minute due to extreme high blood pressure. I was sleeping very little, smoking 3 packs of cigarettes a day, and drinking close to three-quarters of a fifth of hard liquor a day, not to mention various amounts of beer and wine.

When I was told that I had to quit smoking and drinking or else suffer a heart attack, part of me didn't care if I died. In a cowardly sort of way, it was a way out of my pain and misery with life. After all, it would be death through "natural causes." Who would ever know the real reason?

Yet another part of me wanted what my sister and her husband Jerry, and my younger brother Dale had found, which was a peace with whom they believed to be the Creator of the universe -- no substitutes. They weren't propagating a religion, a denomination, or a teacher. What they were propagating was a relationship with the triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and I liked the exciting fruits, or results you might say, that they were getting. They had joy in their life that I didn't have. They had purpose for living that I didn't have. They spoke about the privilege of being used of God in ministry to lay up treasures in heaven for eternity (See Matthew 6:19-20) that I knew nothing about.

So near age 35 (around 1980), I was a wreck. I was facing death, and I wasn't convinced in my heart that I would go to heaven (if there was such a place). My marriage had essentially dissolved; my life was in shambles. I had two precious children who did not have a suitable father and an emotionally strained wife who did not have a suitable husband. I had reached a place in my life where I felt like the first 35 years of my life had pretty much been mental hell, and I didn't look forward to spending the last 35 years of my life experiencing the same. Death seem the only way out, yet I really didn't want to die either. All I really wanted was to have a purpose for living that I just wasn't able to find, no matter how hard I tried.

Despair descended upon me, and fear of dying began to suddenly plague my thoughts. What if there really WAS a heaven and a hell? How could I actually prove there wasn't? Furthermore, if there actually was a heaven and a hell, once on the other side, what assurance did I have of

having a second chance to get right with God? All I had ever done was live for myself. What would God find in me that would make Him want to let me be in heaven with Him? I had no valid reasons I could come up with. My despair eventually turned to desperation.

Everything culminated on a Friday night. I went to bed early that evening, and started crying out to Jesus Christ. . . if there was a Jesus Christ who could hear me, or wanted to hear me. "Let me know you are real! I do want to serve the real God, but I've got to know you are real! I've got to know that what the Bible says about you is true! I've got to know if you really care for me!" I cried and agonized to God until the wee hours of dawn, but all I heard was silence. "God. . .do you even hear me?" More silence. I finally gave up. What a fool I had been to cry out like this all night long. Thinking that maybe - just maybe - God would have compassion on me and somehow reveal His reality to me in a way that I wasn't so doubtful and confused.

It was just starting to break day and then it happened! The bedroom instantly became about 30% brighter. I looked for a light to be on but none was! I thought maybe the sun was now up and I had fallen asleep and had wakened hours later, but the clock said differently. No - I wasn't imagining it nor was I dreaming it. The light was real! It was of equal intensity throughout the room. An invisible presence was in my room. The reason I know so was because an indescribable love was so strong in that room that it seemed there was not enough room to contain it all! I felt like I was being shoved back by a big hand into my bed, the love was so strong. And I knew - don't ask me how I knew - I just knew that I knew that it was the Spirit of Jesus Christ in my room!

At that moment He spoke very powerfully to me. Not audibly, I don't think, but powerfully to my inner being. The intensity of it was so strong though that it might just have well of been audible. He told me what I had to do to make my relationship work with Him. Then instantly all the anguish and pain and misery and confusion and doubt of a lifetime was sucked out of me. And all that was left was peace. Sweet beautiful peace . . . and knowing that God is real.

Then the room instantly was darkened again as before. And the presence of Christ was now gone. The whole thing didn't take more than a few brief moments to happen, but happen it did! I was now a believer! Moments later, I pulled the covers off from me, sat on the side of the bed, and made a solemn vow to God. I said, "Thank you, Lord, for revealing yourself to me in a way that I can believe in you. I know I don't deserve what has just happened here, and I promise to serve you the rest of my life."

I've done my best to keep that promise, even though I've made many mistakes since then. Yet I serve a forgiving and patient God.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6). It took the Holy Spirit about a year later to break through my thick skull to reveal to me who Jesus Christ really is. Once you know, then you understand why a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is everything. How can that be? Because the One who died for your sins some 2,000 years ago -- He wasn't just a mere man -- He was all of God in human form. And He died especially for YOU. In fact, if you were the only sinner on planet earth, He still would have died just for you! Why? Because His love is that unfathomable -- that great!

If you do not have peace, and the assurance of where you will go after you die (heaven or hell), I want to encourage you to invite Jesus Christ into your life....because He is the supreme PEACE

GIVER. (John 14:27)

If your life has little meaning and purpose, and you are searching for a reason to keep on living, I can't encourage you enough to ask Jesus Christ to become the Lord and Savior of your life. He created you for an eternal, useful purpose, and until you know WHAT that purpose IS, nothing will fill the longing in your heart....like He has filled that longing in my heart with meaning and purpose. As God had done time after time with some many lives ... he can take your "mess" and turn it into one "glorious message" that will be used to touch the lives of many others for His glory.

If you can identify with many of the hang-ups I have experienced regarding Christianity, especially your need to have God "prove" His reality to you, like He did me, I want to ask you this question: what is holding you back from getting alone with God and seeking after Him until you can walk away a different person?

Jesus said: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25) An expansion of this truth is found in Mark 8:35: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." Literally, sharing the Good News around the planet through the Internet and the other ways God is allowing us to share it: that God took your and my punishment ... there is eternal forgiveness for our sins ... that entrance into heaven is FREE and can be ASSURED ... how glorious and exciting and rewarding this NEW spiritual life has become!

My former life was lived to find a little happiness to keep on going. My new life is lived to be pleasing to my Lord. Serving Him is what now makes me happiest. It's a happiness this world knows little of. (Actually, it is more joy than happiness). The best way I have found to do this is strive diligently to keep sin out of my life so as not to give the devil a foothold, and to trust the Lord daily for opportunities to minister to other people. Not because I have to, but because it is an opportunity and a privilege.

In my former life, I don't remember hardly any prayers ever being answered. In my new born-again life (John 3:3), I've experienced so many answered prayers that it is abnormal to not have them answered. (John 15:7-8). Most born-again Christians can tell you the same, when they've learned to pray unselfishly and be patient with God.

God has given me a purpose for living beyond anything I could have ever imagined. My number one purpose in life is to be a vessel God can use to minister through to others who are hurting, lost spiritually, and discouraged. At times I've battled discouraged myself because being involved in media outreach can become difficult to measure how effective one is being in God. It has required a special faith to keep planting and watering when it "appears" at times few even care what you have to say. Yet to be used of God to allow other Christians to have a platform to share their God-glorifying testimonies for people like you to be ministered to by reading or hearing them ... what an incredible reward, by faith, it is! Hearing the numerous testimonies we have been privileged to hear has revealed God to us in ways that is almost impossible to put in words at times. To take someone as messed up as I was and give them not only a second chance at marriage, but to then watch God use us together through this Precious Testimonies outreach to impart hope, encouragement and spiritual insight to others ... that is beyond our wildest dreams!

If I died today I can now confidently say that truly, there is a 'pot of gold at the end of every rainbow', if that pot of gold is used to share the love of God found in Christ Jesus to a lost and dying world.

Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6) In my old life, before I was born-again, I would have said in regards to this scripture, "So - big deal." AFTER I became born-again and grew in some understanding of the Holy Scriptures and how I'm to relate with God, I NOW say, "Biggest deal in all of creation and eternity!"

Dear Reader: You can hear about all the glorious things God has done in my life and in the lives of others, but that won't bring you joy and peace with God. All they are are roadmaps to lead you to your final destiny: Him. You've got to experience God's peace and joy for your life personally and that will only come through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Once you accept Him as your personal Lord and Savior by asking Him into your heart and life, a time will come when you will be as excited as I am to point OTHERS to Him as well. Yes - you'll experience a lot of pain like all other Christian's do. Satan will not let things be "easy" for you. But nothing in life is easy that will matter in eternity. Only those things that we have to work hard at are those things that mean the most to us.

How true this saying will become once we're on the other side: "Only one life will soon be past -- only what's done for Christ will last."

He's knocking on the door of your heart, dear one. He won't break the door down - He is a gentleman. You have to invite Him in. (Revelation 3:20). You have to step over the line of reason that fallen man seeks to dwell in ... into the realm of faith that releases God to do the impossible in you, and through you. It may seem scary at first, but once you step over, you'll be like everyone else, thinking: "Why did I wait so long?"

Thank you and God bless you for taking the time to read this part of my story. I'm so thankful God has given me one to tell. Had God not intervened that fateful Friday night....I'm sure I would be in hell right now. I deserved to go there. Jesus Christ wants no one to go to hell. Anyone who will mean business with Him can have the assurance that eternal joy in heaven can be his or her everlasting destiny upon death in this life (John 17:1-26), if they want that assurance. It's freely given by the Holy Spirit to those who hunger to be right with the Heavenly Father ... that can only be found in and through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Justina's Testimony

Justina's Testimony

By Justina

My name is Justina and I am 16 years old.

I've considered myself a Christian my whole life. I've always gone to Sunday School and church as a Lutheran, and I went through Catechism and got Confirmed. I just always thought that meant I was saved. I remember the first time I took communion...I started crying because I was so overwhelmed with Jesus's love and the fact that he died on the cross-for me! Even now, when I take communion, I can feel Jesus's presence with me.

Near the end of my 8th grade year (I was 14), my best friend invited me to go to her church...a Baptist church. I was feeling really depressed because my 'boyfriend' (if they're called that in 8th grade!) had just broken up with me, and my good-I stress good-friend thought I might kill myself. So I went to youth group and had a great time and met a lot of cool people.

The next year-my freshman year-my friend and I got initiated into the High School youth group and I loved it because the group really made me feel like I was a part of them. I met my first "real" boyfriend at that initiation. I went to youth group every week, but after awhile I started to wonder if I was going for God for my boyfriend, because he was from a different town and church was really the only time I saw him.

Well, my boyfriend and I broke up after 3 or 4 months, but I still found myself wanting to go to church. I was learning so much and I must commend my youth group leaders for that. It was at this church that I learned about the rapture and how important it is for Jesus to be in my life. After the breakup, I started spending a lot more quality "God time" with the friend I was going to church with and I started reading my bible.

In February of 2001, I finally asked God into my life. I felt so much better! I really felt saved. I would never be where I am today without my best friend and all the support and guidance she gave me. She was such a good influence because of her Christian ways and she comes from such a wonderful family. Her house has become my second home, and her mom has become my second mom because she was there through all of my confused times and she just seemed to know everything! I knew I could go to her if I had a question and that was really great to know!

Galations 2:20 states..."I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

This was my Confirmation verse, but yet, it still stands true today. I know that my body's "a temple" and that its not my body-its God's and I'm just borrowing it! This verse helps to remember to take good care of "God's body."

I once asked my dad if he believes in God and he didn't clarify yes or no. I worry about my friends and family that do not believe in God, but there is one very important thing I've learned through all this: WHY WORRY WHEN YOU CAN PRAY!!!

The Son of the Desert

The Son of the Desert

By Anonymous

I was born in Saudi Arabia as a member of a Muslim family. We were a very happy family, and I loved my relationship with them. I also felt very happy because I did all the things that God asked me to. I had learned one sixth of the holy Quran by heart and a lot from the Hadith. When I was a teenager, I was an Imam for the mosque.

I was always very serious to do all that God ordered me to do—fasting during Ramadan, praying five times a day or more, Hajj and so on. I was, at that time, very much desiring to meet God at the last day, even when I had no guarantee. But I had always hoped for this. My hope grew when I started to think about fighting in the name of God (Jihad) in Afghanistan. I was sixteen years old. My parents would not let me go because I was too young. So I decided to wait until I was old enough.

I always had love and respect for the Muslim people. There was no love or respect in my heart for the Christians, and the Jews were my first enemy, of course.

Far away from God:

After some time, the devil found his way into our home and our life, and my life became very hard. Slowly I drifted far away from God until the time that I believed in no God at all.

My life became busy. I had a very good job and earned a lot of money. Still, I was not happy because I was afraid for the day that I would die. Sometimes a question came to my mind—will I be with God in heaven or not? And it was very frightening to think about this, even for seconds, that I would not be there. What about my future?

A little prayer

One day I had a big problem in my life. I was in my room looking through the window up to the sky. Then I remembered God, and I wanted to pray to him to ask him for help, but which God should I pray to. Allah? I was sure that he was very angry with me because I had not prayed for a very long time. Or Jesus? I knew He had done a lot of miracles in the lives of other people. Then I said, "Jesus help me!" I don't know why I spoke like this. I sat down on my bed and spoke to myself, "What is this stupid thing you just did?" Anyway, I did not expect anything to happen or the problem to go away. However, one and a half days later, my problem was solved! I decided to find out who this Jesus is. Is he God as the Christian people say, or is he a prophet, as I know from Islam? At this time, I left my country and went to Europe.

The dream

On the third day, my circumstances became very difficult for me, and I decided to go back to Middle East. During that night I had a dream. I was standing in a cross shape with a low wall around it. In my right hand, I had a big stack of white unwritten papers. I was standing at the cross beam, and I was looking to a small group of people who were standing at the top. They all wore long white clothing, but one of them was different. He was standing at the right side, and with his left hand he was leading the people through a door in the wall. Beyond the door was light, and I could not see what was in there. One moment I was standing in the dream, and the next moment I was seeing the cross from above. It was difficult for me to understand this. When I woke up the next morning, I felt a very beautiful happiness in my heart that I never had before. And I felt a love in my heart and from inside my body a very special feeling. I felt also I just wanted to walk and to walk and to ask every one I met, do you know Jesus? It was more than a great feeling. It was happiness that I had never known before in my life.

After one year of reading the Bible in an honest way, I understand now what happened to me. I found my way to God, the real God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope now for all the people I love, my family, my friends, and everyone else to change also and begin to read the Bible in an honest way. I am sure that God will help them to find their way.

My life now

I feel love in my heart, and I am very happy to know Jesus. When I was a Muslim, I could never imagine that the Christians were right. After that, I found out how much God loves me, and I became a Christian. Yes, He loves me, He loves you, and He loves the whole world. Jesus Christ loved us, and He still does. And don't forget in the last day nobody can save us, only Jesus Christ.

Dear brother/sister,

Come to know Jesus before it is too late.

John 8:12 :-When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

FINALLY FREE!

FINALLY FREE!

By Kathleen Rasmussen

Are you miserable? Are you looking for something to fill your innermost being that gives you happiness? Read how someone else found happiness - a happiness that was obtained by finding out something about God she never knew before.

I am the youngest of seven children. My parents were faithful in taking our family to a Christian church on a regular basis. But my father passed away when I was six, leaving my mother to care for us. My mother, bless her heart, worked hard to fill the void he left, and she did well, but I missed my Daddy dearly. Spiritually - I am very thankful for the Christian exposure I received in my childhood. Even though I eventually strayed from God after making a profession of faith to Jesus Christ at age 13, I still had some knowledge of right and wrong, which kept me from straying even farther than what I did.

In my teens and early twenty's, loneliness held a grip on me. In my ignorance of the ways Satan leads one away from Jesus Christ, I began to look for peace and happiness with the party crowd. After all, they looked "happy." I began frequenting bars and places where I could drink and dance. I thought that if I hung out at these places long enough, I might meet the right man - the man of my dreams. A man who would take away my loneliness and give me a purpose in life I had not yet experienced. Along with meeting men came alcohol, drugs and sex.

It all came with the package. I soon discovered that "happiness" became an illusive term. The few times I was happy did not make up for most of the time I was miserable. Somehow, I seemed to attract men who simply wanted to use me for their own selfish purposes. These relationships only brought hurt and pain and rejection when these men were finished with me. Little did I realize that having sexual intimacy with a man, and hinging an entire relationship on sexual fulfillment is one of Satan's greatest tools for leading people into relationships for the wrong reason.

At age 26, miserable beyond description; tired of being left and rejected; tired of not having a man to give love to and receive love from that had any lasting duration - I came to the realization that my life was going nowhere. Ever get that feeling? It's an ever-present feeling that makes you wonder why you're here on earth. Why can everyone else be happy, but not me?

It was around that time that my thoughts began to drift to an old girlfriend I had partied with in the past. I wondered if she was still happy. We had always been close, until she became one of those "fanatic" Christians. Her life had changed dramatically, and although she was happy, I just felt she was too religious to hang around anymore. So I willfully lost contact with her for six years. On one particular evening I began watching a Billy Graham crusade on TV and reasoned in my mind: Even though she is religious, she can still be my friend, can't she? I was lonely for companionship. The next evening I was at a bar (typical of me on a Friday night) and I went to a pay phone to give

her a call. She was glad to hear from me.

We talked, reminiscing over old memories, and catching up on friends from our past. Our conversation ended by her saying she would call me back again soon. Two weeks went by and she didn't call. Finally I decided I'd call her one last time, and if she couldn't make plans for us to get together, I'd just forget her. So I called. Fortunately for me, she was there, and toward the end of our conversation she invited me to a young people's potluck gathering being held at someone's home that was being sponsored by her church. After we hung up, I began thinking: 'I need a change' Why not? What would it hurt?

During the gathering, I sat there staring at these beautiful people. There was a glow about them I had never seen on anyone. Their faces radiated peace and joy, and their words were so gentle and kind. Later on in the evening many of them were asked to testify of how they had entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and how it had changed their life for the better. Each of them gave glory to God for doing it all, because it was not of their own doing. It was God doing it through them by His Holy Spirit, they said.

Two weeks later I decided to surprise my girlfriend by showing up unexpectedly at her church. When I arrived, I found she wasn't there because she had to work that night. But there were many faces I recognized from my old party days, and I loved being there that night. From then on I started attending that church and eventually gave my whole life to Christ. I asked Him to not only be my Savior, but also be Lord of my life, which is what I neglected to do at age 13. Lordship, I was soon to learn, was not obtainable without having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The loneliness and lack of peace I had experienced before began to leave. It was replaced with peace and joy I know now only Jesus can give. I found myself surrounded with a whole new set of friends, and the loneliness was also replaced with the hunger and thirst I now had to grow in Christ. I came to realize that no man could give me what I really stood in need of, which was the peace and security of knowing who I am in Christ Jesus. Whether I live or die, I know I have eternal life in Him, and through Him. Jesus Christ is my closest friend. Problems and suffering drive me to Him - not away from Him. And He always rescues me. His Spirit always comforts me.

Since I have decided to seek my Heavenly Father and please Him through this personal relationship with Jesus Christ, by being obedient to His commands in the Bible, He has been so faithful in my life in adding those things that I had so deeply desired within my heart. One of those desires was to marry a man, someone who loved Jesus Christ more than he loved anyone or anything else, including myself. I wanted someone I could share Christ with - not about.

It has been many years now since I made my decision to live for Jesus and several of those years have been with the man who God so faithfully and lovingly gave to me to be my husband. I can honestly say I never knew how precious and fulfilling a relationship with a man could be when Christ is the center of each of our lives. I thank God so much for His faithfulness in answering my prayers for a godly man. It is through this marriage that I am learning to depend and trust more in Christ to meet my every need, because my husband can never meet them all, nor can I meet all of his.

Even though I knew this before I had a husband, I am learning that even with a husband, Jesus Christ wants me to be totally dependent and trusting in Him to meet all of my needs. When I do

this, there is no leanness in my relationship with God or in my marriage. It takes the pressure off from my husband in asking him to do things he is not capable of doing.

I take great comfort in knowing that God is faithful to complete that which He has begun in me through my personal relationship with Jesus Christ my Creator. (You may want to read Philippians Chapter 1 for a clarification of this statement).

For those of you who have a lack of peace, who fear dying, have something missing, who have no real meaning or purpose in life, or experience loneliness and sense a lack of motivation - I delight in saying that Jesus Christ desires to come and fill those voids in your life. But it requires that you let Him have total control of your life. That may seem scary or threatening to some people, but it shouldn't. The Bible says Jesus Christ is the One who made you. (See John 1: 1- 14 for Scripture reference).

Thank you and God bless you for letting me share my heart with you. If this has touched you in any way, please don't go on in life without searching for answers to your questions. My questions brought me to see and realize that only Jesus Christ is the answer to all of my needs. I never knew I could be so free within myself, and it's all because I decided to follow Jesus - letting Him make me into the person He wants me to be - in His image and for His glory.

Thank you and God bless you for taking the time to read this part of my story. I'm so thankful God has given me one to tell. Had God not intervened that fateful Friday night....I'm sure I would be in hell right now. I deserved to go there. Jesus Christ wants no one to go to hell. Anyone who will mean business with Him can have the assurance that eternal joy in heaven can be his or her everlasting destiny upon death in this life (John 17:1-26), if they want that assurance. It's freely given by the Holy Spirit to those who hunger to be right with the Heavenly Father ... that can only be found in and through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Bassam's Testimony

Bassam's Testimony

By Bassam

I live in the Middle East. I was born as a Muslim, and at the age of 18 I became a member of one of the Islamic groups, as I had a relative who was one of the leaders of this group. I thought I was doing everything I could for God as I knew him at this point.

After a short time I started to get some training in using guns and making explosives. I wasn't very comfortable with what I was doing - hurting people for God's sake. I thought that either I or the group had misunderstood the teachings of God. I started to study the Qur'an and the Hadith all over again, (with the help of one of the leaders of the group, without telling him my real reasons for studying) to see what I had missed. After a couple of years I was astonished at what I found. I found that Islam is not the peaceful path to God, as I used to believe; on the contrary, it's so violent. If *I* have to establish God's will by any means possible, even by killing people, I said it can't be the way to God.

I never considered myself leaving Islam for anything else, yet at this point I was sure that it wasn't leading me to God. I had a kind of breakdown for some time when I found that every thing I had believed in wasn't right; I started doing drugs, and not talking about God at all.

Then I met a Christian who didn't know much of the Christian theology but who was full of love to others, whatever and whoever they are. One of his friends (who was a member of the same group that I had been involved in) said about him that he must be killed because he was Christian and didn't pay "Jiziah" (tax levied on Christians and Jews in an Islamic state, according to the Qur'an), yet this didn't stop him loving this man or dealing with him professionally. Initially I didn't know he was Christian, and when I found out I was surprised; everything I had learnt all my life about Christians from my reading of Islamic writings and Muhammad's opinion about them put them down very much. I asked this friend if I could have a copy of the Bible.

After starting to read the Bible I found a very big difference between what is actually written in the Bible and what I had heard people (Muslims and even nominal Christians) say about it.

I was really struck by one thing in the Bible, namely the teaching that no one is righteous but Jesus; even those who were called God's people like David, Jacob and Abraham, the twelve apostles - everyone has done something wrong. The Bible is full of the sins and wrongdoing of all people, except Jesus. He himself said to his enemies "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46a), and no-one responded. Even Judas Iscariot, who delivered him up to the authorities to be killed, said "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." (Matthew 27:4) In addition, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who eventually did sentence him to death, said "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death." And then a centurion who witnessed Jesus's death said, "Certainly this man was innocent!" He struck me as the highest example of a human being,

one who really deserved to be followed. It took me some time till I finished the whole Bible. After about one year of hard struggle with myself, I decided that I wanted to follow God as He shows himself in Christ, not as anyone else says He is.

I prayed to Him and He was here; for the first time in my life I felt that God was here, and to say it was a very strange feeling for me would be an understatement. I was so happy, so sad. Happy to know he is here and sad for what I had missed. It felt very peaceful and I wanted this feeling to last for good. I still remember this very first time I prayed; I ran out of the room because for the first time in my life I felt the Presence of God. I have been following Him since then. He changed all my life. I went off drugs; I became a whole new person to every one that I know, but as I said before I live in the Middle East where every one thinks that he IS RIGHT and every one else is wrong, so I had some trouble with my family and they kicked me out of the house. As Jesus says "Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death" (Matthew 10:21) and that is what happened with me.

My father delivered me to the Security Forces and they arrested me and put me in prison for converting out of Islam. I had a very bad time there, as they tortured me to force me to return to Islam. They used electric shocks, beatings, and hanging me from my wrists all night. After few week of this I was put in solitary confinement for almost a year. But I couldn't deny the one that gave me life. Now I am out of jail and I have left my home country as I am still wanted there for apostasy from Islam. I am still walking with Jesus, and I love Him because He loved me first and put Himself on the cross for me. I knew from the very beginning that I was going to have some trouble; didn't He say about Paul "for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." (Acts 9:16)

Now I am free from everything. I have a lovely wife whom I met after getting out of prison, and who is supporting me in everything I do for God, but the most important thing for me is I have my eternal assurance that I am going to be with Him for ever, whatever might happen. And as a result I decided to spend my life telling people about his great love to us. As he ordered me "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city." (Acts 18:9, 10)

Bassam

Adel's Testimony

Adel's Testimony

By Adel Mohammed El Naggar

As a former Muslim, I have often been asked the following questions:

'Why have you changed your religion from Islam to Christianity?' To which I often reply, While Islam is a religion Christianity is not. Christianity is a relationship of the highest order, for it is a relationship with our eternal and glorious creator. For as Jesus Christ declared; "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (John 17:3). This word 'know' in the original language denotes a personal, or experiential knowledge. Therefore, in the context of the passage just referred to, Jesus is clearly stating that the eternal life, that he gives, (John 4:14, 5:21, 6:27), is nothing less than a personal, experiential relationship, between individuals, who have placed their faith in Jesus the Messiah, and God the Father and God the Son.

'What has Christianity got to offer that Islam does not?'. To which I reply, What has Islam got to offer that Christ does not? For Jesus promised, to all those who come to him, the forgiveness of sins through the shedding of his own precious blood, the divine power to overcome sin and temptation, a new nature, which now seeks to glorify God and to live in conformity to his will, the eternal security of those who place their faith and trust in him as the only way to reconciliation - between sinful humans and an infinitely holy God - His real abiding presence with the believer as they seek to love, follow and serve him and finally receive them into the glorious presence of the Triune God.

'Do I not feel shame for leaving Islam and becoming a Christian?' To which I unhesitantly answer No! Why? Because what I was before was, according to God's judgement, an enemy of God. This is due to my sinful thoughts, words and deeds, which are all fruits of my sinful nature. God, who is infinitely holy and upright and whose eyes cannot look upon evil, nor can He leave this evil completely undealt with, has declared himself to be a God of justice and the One who must punish those who do sin, and that we all are by nature the children of wrath under His just judgement and eternal damnation.

However, God has also revealed himself to be a 'gracious and compassionate God, One who is slow to anger and abounds in steadfast love and faithfulness' (Ex. 34:6) and who does not delight in the death of the wicked, (Ezekiel 18:23). Therefore, He has, on His own initiative, instigated a plan of redemption, whereby His justice may be fully honoured, vindicated and satisfied and his mercy clearly and publicly demonstrated. This plan is commonly referred to as the Gospel of God, (Romans 1:3), or the 'Good News' and has as been accomplished through the righteous life, the atoning death, the miraculous resurrection and the glorious ascension of the 'only mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men,' (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

But now I have received God's mercy and am no longer an enemy of God, but a child of God. I have come to believe upon him who is the core and the sum total of the Gospel, Jesus the Messiah. Therefore, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe." (Romans 1:16-17)

Finally, 'What would it take you to come back to Islam?' To which I reply, Why would I want to go back to Islam? For, Jesus boldly says, "Truly Truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgement, but has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24) We see in these words a precious promise from Jesus. If we not only hear his words, and by implication believe them, but also believe in the one who sent Him, referring to his father, then we shall no longer come in to judgement. The judgement being the eternal wrath of God poured out on those who have sinned against God, and who have refused to believe or accept God's plan of redemption, namely Christ and him crucified, (John 3). This judgement is often spoken in the Bible in terms of 'death,' (Revelation 20:14, 21:8), and Jesus is saying that whoever places their trust in him and his Father have crossed over from death to life. They have escaped the judgement of the fires of hell and are eternally secure in the new life that God has given them.

Therefore, for me to return to Islam would be like the man who was trapped in a burning building, and unable to help himself. But having been rescued by someone who was able to help him, promptly renters in to the fiery flames. I feel this to be an adequate image and therefore cannot imagine to return to Islam.

So, what caused this drastic departure from the faith of my fathers, to faith in Him who loved me and willingly gave himself for me? Well, the first cause is none other than God Himself. For Jesus the Messiah has declared "No one comes to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:44) He, and he alone, drew me to faith in His precious Son, so that I may receive the eternal salvation, that he had purposed to give me, before the very foundations of the earth were ever created, (Ephesians 1:3-7).

But how did this drawing take place? How did the eternal, holy God draw this wretched sinful man to faith in him who alone is The Way, The Truth and The Life? Well, it happened like this.

I was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to Muslim parents. In 1963, at the age of three my father died. Due to the stigma that quickly attaches itself to widows in many Muslim countries, my mother remarried an English electrical engineer, based in Cairo, who incidentally converted to Islam. After a lengthy legal battle, with the Egyptian Home Office, my mother and stepfather were able to take me to England, where my stepfather had been reposted.

In the ensuing years, I was raised in the Islamic faith and considered myself to be a Muslim. I was taught the fundamental beliefs of Islam and encouraged to practice the duties of the Muslim. Coupled with this, I was taught not to believe in the Christian Faith, as it was corrupt and was led to believe that it was basically 'the white man's religion' anyway. Therefore, I sought to maintain my identity, within the Islamic Faith, and kept Christianity at arms length.

However, in my teenage years I formulated a habit of stealing, not to mention engaging in illicit sexual relationships with English women, which carried on in to my early twenties. I always knew that this was wrong, yet did not really appreciate the full gravity of these actions, before a holy and

just God, nor did I have the power to transform myself and to live the life which I knew was right. It was as if I believed in the existence of God, yet lived as if there wasn't a God.

In 1984, I moved to Southern California, America with my English girlfriend, with the express intention of starting a new life and seeking a better future. We chose America because my girlfriend had been previously working there for several years and had been promised another job. Several months after arriving in America our relationship began to disintegrate. I started to experiment with drugs and, once our relationship went into decline and eventually collapsed, I started to depend more and more on them, to hide my feeling of emptiness and loneliness. For once in my life, I began to feel lost and all alone. Here was I in a country with over 250 million people, yet the sense of being lost and alone was very overwhelming!

About this time, I began to run into people who called themselves 'Born Again Christians.' I would meet them at work, on the beaches or at the homes of work colleagues. I often found them unexplainably strange and different, but never really paid much attention to them or what they would have to say. To be quite frank, I thought they were 'religious' cranks and didn't want anything to do with them or what they appeared to be peddling.

After about a year of being in the States, I began to question the meaning and purpose of my existence. Surely life was more than an endless cycle of working, sleeping, eating and breathing. Surely there must be more to life than this. My quest for the answers to these questions began to preoccupy my daily thoughts with a vengeance. I sought to find the answer in gaining knowledge, going to college, getting a highly paid job, getting more involved in sexual relationships and taking more and more drugs. Life began to take on the characteristic element of searching and yet futility!

I seemed to be locked into a cycle of looking for the meaning and purpose of my existence and the more I did so, the more I found myself sensing a deep and empty void within. It was as if my life was a large jigsaw puzzle with a piece missing from the middle. And I was seeking to know what this missing piece was and to fill the gaping hole with whatever I could.

Accompanied with this sensation of searching, lostness, and emptiness was an ever increasing sense of my own sinfulness, and inability to change myself, or the course that my life was heading down, and of the impending doom and judgement to come. I remember vividly how one day, after taking a large amount of drugs, I sensed that what I was doing was extremely evil, that I was under God's judgement for my sinful ways and that I was unable to help myself or change my sinful nature. It was at this point that I cried out to God, the God who is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and asked Him to deliver me from the bondage of my sin and of its penalty - death. I knew that this sentence was hanging over my head, like a guillotine, ready to drop at the command of Him whom I had sinned so greatly against.

Then God, who never turns away a truly repentant sinner, (Luke 18:9-14), heard and answered my prayer. Not long after this, I was speaking with a young lady, who happened to be renting a room in the same building as myself. She talked to me about Christianity, at which point I clearly told her 'I was not interested in religion.' She then proceeded to inform me that Christianity was not a religion, but a relationship, a relationship with God. At this, my mind reeled. How on earth can we, ants in comparison with God, have a relationship with the Almighty Creator? I retorted. To me, God was transcendent and, therefore, personally unknowable.

She then proceeded to inform me that this personal relation was possible and could be only effectuated through Jesus Christ, God's Son. Again my mind recoiled. All that I had been taught as a Muslim began to come to the forefront of my thinking. How can Jesus be God's Son? Did God have a wife? How can you say that a mere man is God? All these questions, and more I asked. Then I told her that she was sadly mistaken and that Jesus was only a man and only a prophet - and not God.

In the midst of that discussion, I received a telephone call. It was a work colleague asking me if I would like to attend a church meeting. I reluctantly said yes. When I put the phone down, the lady, who had over heard some of my conversation, asked what church I had been invited to. It just so happened that it was the same church that she had been attending. When she found out that I was to attend one of the young peoples' group she said, "Something wonderful is going to happen to you." What. I'm going to become a Christian like you? I replied sarcastically.

Several weeks later, I attended a church service and was very surprised to find so many 'ordinary' young people in attendance. This service was nothing like the highly ritualistic services that I had seen back in England. But that wasn't all that surprised me. As the preacher began to relate his former life, experiences and vices, it was as if he was painting a picture of my own life. Then he began to speak of the awful and fearful Holiness of God, of His hatred of sin and his settled disposition of wrath against it and how there would be a Day of Reckoning, a fearful and dreadful Day of God's out poured wrath upon the ungodly. I became aware of a holy presence, searching and exposing my heart and mind, showing me the depth of my depravity and corruptness of nature. This was accompanied with an increasing conviction of my sinfulness and of fear of the judgement that was to come.

Then the sweetest words, that my ears have ever heard, were spoken. This man spoke, according to the Bible, of this holy, just and righteous God also being merciful, gracious, compassionate and forgiving, who on his own initiative and based upon his love, divine will and good pleasure, had accomplished a work of redemption, whereby sinful man could be reconciled to an infinitely holy God. This work of redemption was accomplished through the righteous life, atoning death, miraculous resurrection and glorious ascension of God's eternal Son, who willingly took upon himself our frail humanity, except the aspect of sin, and willingly bore the curse and penalty of sinful humanity upon the cross, thereby vindicating God's justice and demonstrating his tender mercy to the ungodly. And all that God was requiring was that we respond in repentance towards him and faith in Jesus Christ.

As I heard these words, I felt torn between believing what I had been taught as a Muslim, about the Person and ministry of Christ, and what I was now hearing. It seemed as half of me was wanting to believe what was being preached and the other half was holding to my past beliefs. In other words, I felt an internal battle raging and taking place deep within my mind and spirit. I eventually left that meeting knowing that what I had heard was true. I had a great need for a saviour and was being presented by God with a Great Saviour for my need. Yet despite all of this, I felt a certain reservation and withheld my full acceptance of the Lordship and Saviourhood of Christ.

Several weeks later, however, I attended another meeting, where once again I heard the Gospel being preached, and it was there that God granted me the ability to repent and the power to

believe in the Person and glorious works of Jesus Christ. I knew, without a shadow of doubt that my sins were graciously pardoned, and sensed an internal transformation and an awakening to God and a desire to know, love, serve, obey and worship my most blessed Creator and Redeemer. For as it is written;

"We also were once foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Saviour and his love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:3-7) Since that most glorious day, in July of '86, I have grown in my desire to glorify the God of my salvation, to love, obey, serve and worship him, who so willingly died for me upon the cross of Calvary, to declare that "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved," (Acts 4:12), and "that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," (Philippians 2:10-11).

Therefore, may I urge you, dear reader, to flee the wrath that is to come; seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Forsake your wicked ways and your evil thoughts. Turn to the LORD and He will have mercy on you, and to our God, for He will freely pardon you. (Isaiah 55:6-7)

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:6-9)

Man of Sorrows! What a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah!
What a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Guilty, vile and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
Full atonement-can it be?
Hallelujah!
What a Saviour!

Lifted up was He to die.
It is finished! was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high;
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we'll sing
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Yours In the Precious name of Jesus Christ,

Adel Mohammed El Naggar

Boris' Testimony

Boris' Testimony

By Boris Kornfeld

No reporters have visited the prison camps of Soviet Russia, unless they have gone as prisoners. So to this day we have little information about the millions who have lived, suffered, and died there, especially during Stalin's reign of terror. Most will remain nameless for all time, remembered only in the hearts of those who knew and loved them. But from time to time, scraps of information have filtered out about a few. One of those few was Boris Nicholayevich Kornfeld.

Kornfeld was a medical doctor. From this we can guess a little about his background, for in post-revolutionary Russia such education never went to families tied in any way to czarist Russia. Probably his parents were socialists who had fastened their hopes on the Revolution. They were also Jews, but almost certainly not Jews still hoping for the Messiah, for the name Boris and the patronymic Nicholayevich indicate they had taken Russian names in some past generation. Probably Kornfeld's forebears were Haskalah so-called "enlightened Jews," who accepted the philosophy of rationalism, cultivated a knowledge of the natural sciences, and devoted themselves to the arts. In language, dress, and social habits they tried to make themselves as much like their Russian neighbors as possible.

It was natural for such Jews to support Lenin's revolution, for the czars' vicious anti-Semitism had made life almost unendurable for the prior two hundred years. Socialism promised something much better for them than "Christian" Russia. "Christian" Russia had slaughtered Jews; perhaps atheistic Russia would save them.

Obviously Kornfeld had followed in his parents' footsteps, believing in Communism as the path of historical necessity, for political prisoners at that time were not citizens opposed to Communism or wanting the Czar's return. Such people were simply shot. Political prisoners were believers in the Revolution, socialists or communists who had, nevertheless, not kept their allegiance to Stalin's leadership pure.

We do not know what crime Dr. Kornfeld committed, only that it was a political crime. Perhaps he dared one day to suggest to a friend that their leader, Stalin, was fallible; or maybe he was simply accused of harboring such thoughts. It took no more than that to become a prisoner in the Russia of the early 1950s; many died for less. At any rate, Kornfeld was imprisoned in a concentration camp for political subversives at Ekibastuz.

Ironically, a few years behind barbed wire was a good cure for Communism. The senseless brutality, the waste of lives, the trivialities called criminal charges made men like Kornfeld doubt the glories of the system. Stripped of all past associations, of all that had kept them busy and secure, behind the wire prisoners had time to think. In such a place, thoughtful men like Boris Kornfeld found themselves re-evaluating beliefs they had held since childhood.

So it was that this Russian doctor abandoned all his socialistic ideals. In fact, he went further than that. He did something that would have horrified his forebears.

Boris Kornfeld became a Christian.

While few Jews anywhere in the world find it easy to accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, a Russian Jew would find it even more difficult. For two centuries these Jews had known implacable hatred from the people who, they were told, were the most Christian of all. Each move the Jews made to reconcile themselves or accommodate themselves to the Russians was met by new inventions of hatred and persecution, as when the head of the governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church said he hoped that, as a result of the Russian pogroms, "one-third of the Jews will convert one-third will die, and one-third will flee the country."

Yet following the Revolution a strange alignment occurred. Joseph Stalin demanded undivided, unquestioning loyalty to his government; but both Jews and Christians knew their ultimate loyalty was to God. Consequently people of both faiths suffered for their beliefs and frequently in the same camps.

Thus it was that Boris Kornfeld came in contact with a devout Christian, a well-educated and kind fellow prisoner who spoke of a Jewish Messiah who had come to keep the promises the Lord had made to Israel. This Christian--whose name we do not know--pointed out that Jesus had spoken almost solely to Jewish people and proclaimed that He came to the Jews first. That was consistent with God's special concern for the Jew, the chosen ones; and, he explained, the Bible promised that a new kingdom of peace would come. This man often recited aloud the Lord's Prayer, and Kornfeld heard in those simple words a strange ring of truth.

The camp had stripped Kornfeld of everything, including his belief in salvation through socialism. Now this man offered him hope--but in what a form!

To accept Jesus Christ--to become one of those who had always persecuted his people--seemed a betrayal of his family, of all who had been before him Kornfeld knew the Jews had suffered innocently. Jews were innocent in the days of the Cossacks! Innocent in the days of the czars! And he himself was innocent of betraying Stalin; he had been imprisoned unjustly.

But Kornfeld pondered what the Christian prisoner had told him. In one commodity, time, the doctor was rich.

Unexpectedly, he began to see the powerful parallels between the Jews and this Jesus. It had always been a scandal that God should entrust Himself in a unique way to one people, the Jews. Despite centuries of persecution, their very existence in the midst of those who sought to destroy them was a sign of a Power greater than that of their oppressors. It was the same with Jesus--that God would present Himself in the form of a man had always confounded the wisdom of the world. To the proud and powerful, Jesus stood as a Sign, exposing their own limitations and sin. So they had to kill Him, just as those in power had to kill the Jews, in order to maintain their delusions of omnipotence. Thus, Stalin, the new god-head of the brave new world of the Revolution, had to persecute both Jew and Christian. Each stood as living proof of his blasphemous pretensions to power.

Only in the gulag could Boris Kornfeld begin to see such a truth. And the more he reflected upon it, the more it began to change him within.

Though a prisoner, Kornfeld lived in better conditions than most behind the wire. Other prisoners were expendable, but doctors were scarce in the remote, isolated camps. The authorities could not afford to lose a physician, for guards as well as prisoners needed medical attention. And no prison officer wanted to end up in the hands of a doctor he had cruelly abused.

Kornfeld's resistance to the Christian message might have begun to weaken while he was in surgery, perhaps while working on one of those guards he had learned to loathe. The man had been knifed and an artery cut. While suturing the blood vessel, the doctor thought of tying the thread in such a way that it would reopen shortly after surgery. The guard would die quickly and no one would be the wiser.

The process of taking this particular form of vengeance gave rein to the burning hatred Kornfeld had for the guard and all like him. How he despised his persecutors! He could gladly slaughter them all!

And at that point, Boris Kornfeld became appalled by the hatred and violence he saw in his own heart. Yes, he was a victim of hatred as his ancestors had been. But that hatred had spawned an insatiable hatred of his own. What a deadly predicament! He was trapped by the very evil he despised. What freedom could he ever know with his soul imprisoned by this murderous hate? It made the whole world a concentration camp.

As Kornfeld began to retie the sutures properly, he found himself, almost unconsciously, repeating the words he had heard from his fellow prisoner. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Strange words in the mouth of a Jew. Yet he could not help praying them. Having seen his own evil heart, he had to pray for cleansing. And he had to pray to a God who had suffered, as he had: Jesus.

For some time, Boris Kornfeld simply continued praying the Lord's Prayer while he carried out his backbreaking, hopeless tasks as a camp doctor. Backbreaking because there were always far too many patients. Hopeless because the camp was designed to kill men. He stood ineffectively against the tide of death gaining on each prisoner: disease, cold, overwork, beatings, malnutrition.

Doctors in the camp's medical section were also asked to sign decrees for imprisonment in the punishment block. Any prisoner whom the authorities did not like or wanted out of the way was sent to this block--solitary confinement in a tiny, dark, cold, torture chamber of a cell. A doctor's signature on the forms certified that a prisoner was strong and healthy enough to withstand the punishment. This was, of course, a lie. Few emerged alive.

Like all the other doctors, Kornfeld had signed his share of forms. What was the difference? The authorities did not need the signatures anyway; they had many other ways of "legalizing" punishment. And a doctor who did not cooperate would not last long, even though doctors were scarce. But shortly after he began to pray for forgiveness, Dr. Kornfeld stopped authorizing the punishment; he refused to sign the forms. Though he had signed hundreds of them, now he couldn't. Whatever had happened inside him would not permit him to do it.

This rebellion was bad enough, but Kornfeld did not stop there. He turned in an orderly.

The orderlies were drawn from a group of prisoners who cooperated with the authorities. As a reward for their cooperation, they were given jobs within the camp which were less than a death sentence. They became the cooks, bakers, clerks, and hospital orderlies. The other prisoners hated them almost more than they hated the guards, for these prisoners were traitors; they could never be trusted. They stole food from the other prisoners and would gladly kill anyone who tried to report them or give them trouble. Besides, the guards turned a blind eye to their abuses of power. People died in the camps every day; the authorities needed these quislings to keep the system running smoothly.

While making his rounds one day, Kornfeld came to one of his many patients suffering from pellagra, an all-too-common disease in the camps. Malnutrition induced pellagra which, perversely, made digestion nearly impossible. Victims literally starved to death.

This man's body showed the ravages of the disease. His face had become dark, one deep bruise. The skin was peeling off his hands; they had to be bandaged to staunch the incessant bleeding. Kornfeld had been giving the patient chalk, good white bread, and herring to stop the diarrhea and get nutrients into his blood, but the man was too far gone. When the doctor asked the dying patient his name, the man could not even remember it.

Just after leaving this patient, Kornfeld came upon a hulking orderly bent over the remains of a loaf of white bread meant for the pellagra patients. The man looked up shamelessly, his cheeks stuffed with food. Kornfeld had known about the stealing, had known it was one reason his patients did not recover, but his vivid memory of the dying man pierced him now. He could not shrug his shoulders and go on.

Of course he could not blame the deaths simply on the theft of food. There were countless other reasons why his patients did not recover. The hospital stank of excrement and lacked proper facilities and supplies. He had to perform surgery under conditions so primitive that often operations were little more than mercy killings. It was preposterous to stand on principle in the situation, particularly when he knew what the orderly might do to him in return. But the doctor had to be obedient to what he now believed. Once again the change in his life was making a difference.

When Kornfeld reported the orderly to the commandant, the officer found his complaint very curious. There had been a recent rash of murders in the camp; each victim had been a "stoolie." It was foolish--dangerously so at this time--to complain about anyone. But the commandant put the orderly in the punishment block for three days, taking the complaint with a perverse satisfaction. Kornfeld's refusal to sign the punishment forms was becoming a nuisance; this would save the commandant some trouble. The doctor had arranged his own execution.

Boris Kornfeld was not an especially brave man. He knew his life would be in danger as soon as the orderly was released from the cell block. Sleeping in the barracks, controlled at night by the camp-chosen prisoners, would mean certain death. So the doctor began staying in the hospital, catching sleep when and where he could, living in a strange twilight world where any moment might be his last.

But, paradoxically, along with this anxiety came tremendous freedom. Having accepted the possibility of death, Boris Kornfeld was now free to live. He signed no more papers or documents

sending men to their deaths. He no longer turned his eyes from cruelty or shrugged his shoulders when he saw injustice. He said what he wanted and did what he could. And soon he realized that the anger and hatred and violence in his own soul had vanished. He wondered whether there lived another man in Russia who knew such freedom!

Now Boris Kornfeld wanted to tell someone about his discovery, about this new life of obedience and freedom. The Christian who had talked to him about Jesus had been transferred to another camp, so the doctor waited for the right person and the right moment.

One gray afternoon he examined a patient who had just been operated on for cancer of the intestines. This young man with a melon-shaped head and a hurt, little-boy expression touched the soul of the doctor. The man's eyes were sorrowful and suspicious and his face deeply etched by the years he had already spent in the camps, reflecting a depth of spiritual misery and emptiness Kornfeld had rarely seen.

So the doctor began to talk to the patient, describing what had happened to him. Once the tale began to spill out, Kornfeld could not stop.

The patient missed the first part of the story, for he was drifting in and out of the anesthesia's influence, but the doctor's ardor caught his concentration and held it, though he was shaking with fever. All through the afternoon and late into the night, the doctor talked, describing his conversion to Christ and his new-found freedom.

Very late, with the perimeter lights in the camp glazing the windowpanes, Kornfeld confessed to the patient: "On the whole, you know, I have become convinced that there is no punishment that comes to us in this life on earth which is undeserved. Superficially, it can have nothing to do with what we are guilty of in actual fact, but if you go over your life with a fine-tooth comb and ponder it deeply, you will always be able to hunt down that transgression of yours for which you have now received this blow."

Imagine! The persecuted Jew who once believed himself totally innocent now saying that every man deserved his suffering, whatever it was.

The patient knew he was listening to an incredible confession. Though the pain from his operation was severe, his stomach a heavy, expansive agony of molten lead, he hung on the doctor's words until he fell asleep.

The young patient awoke early the next morning to the sound of running feet and a commotion in the area of the operating room. His first thought was of the doctor, but his new friend did not come. Then the whispers of a fellow patient told him of Kornfeld's fate.

During the night, while the doctor slept, someone had crept up beside him and dealt him eight blows on the head with a plasterer's mallet. And though his fellow doctors worked valiantly to save him, in the morning the orderlies carried him out, a still, broken form.

But Kornfeld's testimony did not die.

The patient pondered the doctor's last, impassioned words. As a result, he, too, became a Christian. He survived that prison camp and went on to tell the world what he had learned there.

The patient's name was Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Wine for the Passover

Wine for the Passover

By Menachem Benhayim

Momma was from the old school and her children were her life. Her son Murray was going through a severe depression, and Momma was heartsick over it. She couldn't understand it; all she knew was that he'd dropped his friends and his job, and he went around with a sad, suffering look on his face--not saying a word. Murray never explained to her why a young man of 24, with his whole life ahead of him, should be so bothered. He used to go to dances and parties and on dates, yet now it seemed no one could reach him.

The Passover was approaching and Momma suggested: "Murray, why don't you buy us some kiddush wine on Delancey Street? It's a beautiful day, a good day to take a walk, and I don't have the energy to do all my Pesach errands."

Murray agreed. Delancey Street on the Lower East Side was a long way from their flat in Brooklyn, but he liked to take long, solitary walks. It sometimes distracted him from the dull, aching sense of meaninglessness.

The feeling had been building up inside of him for years. Strange, he had first felt it around Passover time. He was about seven years old at the time, sick in bed with a cold. He'd thought about how moody and restless his father was, and how frantic his mother appeared as Passover approached. There were all the rituals, the pots and pans and dishes to be changed, the housecleaning and the groceries and the shopping. Then there was the managing with the regular cooking and housework until the festival began.

Even at seven, Murray had sensed something excessive about Momma's devotion to her Orthodoxy. It didn't seem to fit in with the indifferent world outside their doors nor, for that matter, with the indifference his six older brothers and sisters were beginning to show toward the whole system Momma so passionately defended.

Well, like the rest of the family, Murray had by now outgrown it, too. He had escaped the shtetl life when his immigrant parents had finally realized they couldn't reproduce it in America. But it had left a vacuum which wasn't really filled by half-hearted traditions or passionate secular pursuits.

Murray often wondered what their lives would have been like if Momma hadn't been so entrenched in her Orthodoxy. Maybe it was the only way for her to survive alongside a nervous and insecure husband who was too intimidated by America to jettison his old world Yiddishkeit, (as so many immigrants had done) or to soften its harsh demands.

It was a Sunday, a bright spring day in 1948, when Murray started out for Delancey Street. The first days of spring can be intoxicating, even on New York's crowded streets. He felt a kind of pleasant languor as he strolled through the diverse quarters of Brooklyn. He passed the Jewish

street vendors, hawking their wares in a hybrid Yiddish-English. The pungent odors of Italian meats and cheeses along the way were the signs of another neighborhood. He passed stately old churches, once the property of white, middle-class Anglo-Saxons, now surrendered to well-dressed black worshippers streaming out of church in their Sunday best.

The staccato of Puerto Rican Spanish began to fill the air, a relatively new sound in Brooklyn, part of the postwar "discovery" of America by the teeming masses from the Caribbean. "They're not about to yield to Anglo-Saxon culture like the rest of us," Murray mused.

Not too far along the way he was startled by the sound of Hassidic children shouting and play-acting in Murray's native Yiddish. Once he had thought his generation was the last of American-born Jews who would speak Yiddish to other children. Yiddish was only for the old folks, they had concluded--yet here the shtetl was being reproduced, sidecurls, tzitzit, yarmulkes and all!

Murray was approaching the pedestrian access to the Williamsburg Bridge spanning the river between Brooklyn and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. As he walked along more gingerly, he found himself thinking about the Bible he had bought in England when he served with the U.S. Army medics. It was the first time he had owned a complete English Bible, and furtively he would seek a corner of the base where he could read and reread the New Testament in private. He was no longer Orthodox, but the idea that this was "forbidden fruit" still hovered in the back of his mind. He had come to love the person of a certain Jew whom he ranked as the greatest of all teachers. For a while he had tried to pattern his own life on the teachings of Y'shua (Jesus' Hebrew name). It gave him a confidence and an identity he had never had before, and the ever-lurking despair retreated. With the new confidence came a desire to prove himself to his military buddies, and then the inevitable failure to walk on two opposite roads. Rabbi Y'shua had truly said: "No man can serve two masters."¹ Murray's failures had only intensified his despair.

"Be not anxious for the morrow...unto the day is the evil thereof."² The ancient words echoed in his thoughts with new force, as if he were hearing them for the first time.

"Sell that thou hast and give to the poor...and come follow me."³ Y'shua's challenge to a rich young ruler on the pages of Murray's New Testament suddenly seemed to be a direct challenge to him. It linked up to what he had remembered from the Sermon on the Mount and Murray experienced a strange headiness and joy. The words were not simply shreds of memory haphazardly trailing in and out of his reverie. They were a personal message to illuminate his spiritual darkness!

What if he were to make a fresh start in life, he asked himself, with these two texts as a springboard? He had few possessions, and he could easily dispose of them and go out on a day-to-day basis with the mustard-seed faith he had. He would seek a purpose for his life away from this drift into total meaninglessness. He resolved to do so after the holidays.

For the second year since his father's death, Murray conducted the festive Seder ceremonies. The sweet sacramental wine, the crackly unleavened bread, the feast of holiday foods, the ancient liturgy, the congenial family gathering, the familiar faces--all combined to reduce the tension he felt at what seemed to be an approaching crossroads in his life.

The Passover soon ended. Pots and pans and dishes were exchanged, but Murray was the same. He knew he had to set a date for winding up his affairs and beginning his journey. Suddenly the whole idea seemed too romantic and hazardous: going out like Abraham, leaving home and family in pursuit of the Word of God! But his despair persisted, and no other solution was at hand.

Finally, early in May, he turned over what savings he had to his mother, disposed of his movable possessions, and went out in search of a reason to live.

Immediately he was confronted with the problems of survival. He had to find food, a place to stay, and something to occupy himself. Each day brought a new crisis, a battle to find an answer to the nagging, pitiless question: "Why go on?" Agonizing doubts often overcame him. Sometimes Murray felt he was tottering on the brink of a spiritual abyss, as waves of despair pounded away at his will to live.

He began to pray regularly, and he could feel an intimacy with God during this time. Prayer worked to bring him out of his shell to face the world around him. Had not his teacher, Y'shua, linked the commandments of love for God and neighbor? And neighbors were all around him, struggling in a sea of problems. He was even able to help others despite his feeling of helplessness.

He earned a little money at odd jobs in factories and restaurants. Keeping his own expenses to a minimum, he used the balance to feed, clothe and find shelter for homeless men and women he met on the city streets. As he encountered people in their daily struggles, his own came into a more realistic perspective.

A strong urge to go to sea took hold of Murray, so he applied to New York shipping companies for work. Nothing developed, so with three pennies in his pocket he arrived in Philadelphia one rainy night, hungry and drenched. He walked all night to answer an ad for a dishwasher in Germantown. Paddy, a fatherly Irish-Catholic snack shop owner took him in, gave him dry clothes, food and a job.

"Son, you can't run away from yourself," Paddy remarked, as Murray told his benefactor that he had to push on after a week in Philly. He hadn't lost his desire to go to sea, and decided to make one more attempt to find work at New York Harbor. He applied for a course in basic seamanship. A naval officer interviewed him for a possible stint as a merchant marine trainee in Florida. After scanning his application, the officer looked up and asked him:

"Why do you want to go to sea?"

Murray didn't want to conceal his emotional turmoil, but neither did he want to share what he was sure would seem outlandish in the secular world: the religious fanaticism of a modern person following Y'shua and the Word of God! So he replied cryptically: "It's for personal rehabilitation, sir."

The officer didn't press him, but commented, "You wouldn't want to go in for this course; you've been through it in your Army basic training, anyway."

The officer was silent for a moment, and then mused out loud: "So you want to go to sea." Murray nodded.

"I see you were a medic in the army," the officer continued.

"For three years."

"Let me make a phone call; meanwhile, you go out and have some lunch. Come back in half an hour."

When Murray returned, the officer crisply handed him an envelope. "Take this over to Moe Kay at the Brooklyn Port of Embarkation," he said. "Moe has agreed to get you a berth as a medical orderly on a U.S. transport, working for the U.N. International Refugee Organization. Would that suit you?"

"Sure, sure!" Murray replied excitedly, shaken by the answer to his prayers. "Thanks a lot, sir."

Hurrying out of the office, he heard the officer call after him, "Good luck, son."

Within a few days Murray had joined the crew of the "General Black" on a voyage to Bremerhaven in what was then Occupied West Germany. The ship's complement consisted of American seamen, U.S. military aides and United Nations civilian personnel. On the first voyage a group of Polish refugees from Mexico were taken on at the port for repatriation to their homeland.

Because of his flair for languages, Murray was often used as a translator for the medical officer in charge and for other staff members. Most of the time he worked in the ship's hospital and kitchen. When the hospital was unoccupied, he worked at chipping, painting and cleaning up on deck.

When Murray reached Bremerhaven, another wave of despair hit him. He looked back at the experiences of the preceding months, and decided that it was hopeless to try to change the basic emotional and thought patterns of his life. He always returned to his despair. Like a fly caught in a spider's web, he must inevitably succumb to the awful emptiness of his soul's death. No, there was no escape.

Murray took shore leave to go into Bremen. He took one of his solitary walks and brooded for a long while. Finally he sat down, alone and exhausted, in the midst of some still uncleared war-time rubble. "Oh, God," he prayed, "let me die. Tomorrow, when we sail again, let me slip out quietly into the sea and find rest. I'm just worn out with this struggle."

When he boarded ship the next day, so did a large contingent of East European refugees. They were offered asylum in several Latin American countries. He was again put in charge of the hospital kitchen and had to arrange meals for patients as well as supervise the general area. Murray became completely absorbed in the work at hand.

Some 36 hours after he had voiced his prayer for death, it suddenly came to mind again. "What a strange thing that I should pray that way!" he thought; and then an afterthought occurred to him. "My prayer has been answered--the despair and all the pull it had on my life have died--and I feel alive."

During the months that followed, as they moved back and forth between Germany and South America, Murray had ample opportunity to confirm that the crisis had passed; and that, for him, life had been renewed.

One night, after a tiring day in the ship's hospital, he slipped up onto the deck. The vessel swayed gently to the steady rhythm of the brooding sea. The fresh, tangy air revived him. He climbed one of the ship's ladders up to the crow's nest, drinking in the beauty of the inky night and the spangled heavens. It was an ecstasy of life and faith more intoxicating than any wine he had ever tasted.

Strange how that long walk to buy the Passover wine for Momma had led him on this journey of reconciliation. He had followed Y'shua as his ancestors had followed Moshe out of Egyptian slavery. He knew now that the same liberating God behind the Passover story had set him on the road to freedom through Y'shua. Murray realized there was no other way.

From a Life of Emptiness and Promiscuity to Finding

From a Life of Emptiness and Promiscuity to Finding

By Randy Bailey

I was raised in a Christian home. I attended an Assembly of God church as a youth and gave my life to Christ at the age of 13. I was active in the church, regularly inviting friends from high school to attend church with me and speaking openly with anyone who would listen about the love of Christ and the need for Him in their lives.

When I turned 18, I left home for college. My first year of college I still attended a church in my college town, but as each month passed I attended less and less. I was discovering drinking and partying and, more than anything else, sex. Within two years, by the time I was approximately 20, I had totally dismissed my faith as a bunch of fables and myths. I started actively seeking out literature that presented Christianity and Christian thought as provincial and became obsessed with disproving Christianity. I joked to friends that I had become a "born again" atheist, having found a new "freedom" by being free from the "lies" of Christianity.

Over the next 20 years I spent my life as a non-believing individual, jumping at the chance to debate anyone, anywhere, who might profess any degree of faith in Christ. I went back to college to complete my coursework toward a degree in journalism, taking classes which included a philosophy of religion class, in which my final paper was entitled A Reasonable Denial of the Existence of God - which earned an A+. The professor in this class - not a Christian by any stretch of the imagination - wrote a note in the margin of my paper, merely as an observation, that planted a seed in my subconscious. She wrote that although my paper did indeed present a logical, thought-out, intellectual approach to God's non-existence, what would my reaction be to a genuine religious experience - an experience not explainable by logic or intellect. I had no answer solely because such a construct seemed ludicrous, akin to asking me what my decision would be if I was to think about God while walking across the surface of the sun. Nonetheless, her question did present a situation that could transcend everything I had just written, turning my intellectual exercise into toilet paper.

Seven years after I graduated from college, I was still quite the atheist, although I was then referring to myself as a non-theist, determining that it was absurd being against something which didn't exist. However, events began to take place around me which - through the luxury of hindsight now - I can see were gently nudging me in a certain direction. The company I worked for hired a woman co-worker that was a Jehovah's Witness who, in her missionary zeal, began talking to me about her "faith" as a Witness. Still the atheist, and with my upbringing as a Christian, I started searching the bible just to show her where she was not only wrong about believing in God, but she was doubly wrong by believing such a bastardization of scripture. I was reading the bible again.

One day, I called on a client of our company that was a ministry for gang members who were trying to leave their gangs. As I entered the waiting room to meet the head of the ministry, at the receptionist's desk sat a young girl who had all the markings of a gangbanger. Tattoos on her hands, bleached out hair that was slowly growing out and revealing dark brown roots - I could sense that this was a girl that just yesterday could have been scoring drugs on the street or taking on multiple partners back at the crib. As I approached her, I fully prepared myself to talk with a typical gangbanger type, the likes of which I had talked to on the street before. As she looked up at me, there was a gentleness and quiet peace about her that totally caught me by surprise. She politely, quietly, asked me who I was there to see and if I could please wait while she notified him. She asked if I wanted coffee and if there was anything else she could do for me, just let her know.

I was blown away.

I spent the rest of the day thinking about her and asked myself over and over and over: What could cause such a change in someone? Government programs wouldn't make this kind of change I reasoned. Radio talk shows featuring pop-psychology were so wishy-washy I couldn't imagine them having this kind of impact on someone. I couldn't get her out of my mind.

The following week was a turning point. My daughters were then 1, 3 and 5 years old. Even though I was an atheist, I had become an atheist after first having a Christian foundation and then making a decision based on what I thought was all of the available information. I was very uncomfortable about raising my girls without offering them the same opportunity.

In early February of 1996, I was in the field calling on accounts for my company when I got a cell call from my boss. He informed me that he didn't have all of the details, but he had just gotten a call that my wife and children had been involved in a traffic accident. He gave me the address and I hung up the phone and immediately headed to the site of the accident. I don't know why, but as soon as I hung up the phone in the cab of my truck I looked toward heaven and said, "Dear God just let them be alright!" Here I was, the BIG atheist, and in what I perceived as my darkest hour I asked God to make my family safe.

When I arrived at the scene, my family was nowhere to be found. However, the other car involved in the crash was being attached to the wrecker and I was horrified to see the entire front end of that car crushed to the firewall. The female driver of that car was in the back of an ambulance on a stretcher with her neck in a brace and IV's running into her arms. I again asked God to please make my family OK.

I found a policeman and asked him if he knew where the other car involved in the accident was. He told me that he was the second policeman to arrive on the scene, called in to wrap up the accident report after the first patrolman was called away. He told me that by the time he had arrived, the other car was already gone. I asked him if it had been towed away or driven away and he said he didn't know. I identified myself as the husband and father of the passengers in the car in question and he gave me a business card for the police department, instructing me to call the police station for more information. Not knowing what to do, I got in my truck and headed back to my office.

All the way to my office I talked with God. I was praying and offering God anything in exchange for the safety of my family. As I drove down the long driveway of my workplace, I saw the family car

parked in front of my office. For the life of me I couldn't see a scratch on it. As I got closer, I was able to find a couple of places that showed the force of the impact on the body of the Pontiac, but nothing that was even noticeable from 10-20 feet away. As I stared in disbelief at my car, particularly in light of the condition of the other car I had just seen, the front door of my office flew open and my wife and children ran out to hug me. Everyone was in perfect shape without even a scratch. I held my wife and cried and held my girls and cried. Right there, right then, I re-committed my life to God. I found a church and that Sunday rededicated my life during the service, as did my wife.

I understand now that the meaning of God's love for us is greater than any atheist's debate points. As they waste their lives away over meaningless minutiae, the bigger picture that IS God escapes them. The greatest truth that I have learned since I have "come home" again, is that all of the arguments and debates in defense of an atheistic worldview exist for one sole purpose: justification of sin. The reality is that, although I wanted to present my atheism as the result of learned, intellectual inquiry, the reality was that I - just as all atheists do - was defending my choice of refusing God and living a sinful lifestyle. The only way that I could justify getting drunk and getting stoned and having indiscriminate sex, was if there were no absolutes railing against such behavior. By "proving" that God didn't exist, thereby rendering the bible and all faith meaningless, I was then justified in doing "my own thing," when I wanted, where I wanted, and with whom I wanted. There is not an atheist out there right now who is NOT doing the exact same thing.

It's good to be home. Try it and you'll see.

Randy Bailey

Speaks of War and Dedication to Christ

Speaks of War and Dedication to Christ

By Sgt. Jim Baxter

My brother and I joined the U.S. Marine Corps right out of high school and went away to World War II. Our mother, a True Believer, wrapped us in Psalm 91 and claimed God's promises over us. He went to the Paramarine/Raiders and the 5th MarDiv and I to the OSS and the 2nd MarDiv. We both went through combat and returned home safely after the war.

In 1950, with the outbreak of the Korean War, we were both recalled to active duty with the 1st Marine Division. Our mother again wrapped us in Psalm 91, gave each of us a small New Testament, and again sent us off to war with the Lord's blessing.

As a 12-year-old, I had accepted the Lord but had never been well disciplined or obedient. I wanted to play patty-cake in the sand piles of the world. At 25, when I went to Korea, I started reading the little New Testament my mother had given me.

At the Inchon landing, and for the next two weeks of heavy combat as a rifle-squad leader, I read a few Bible verses every day. I loved my brother Marines who suffered and died alongside me. As the death and destruction grew more intense - and as I stood on the brink of eternity - I did not like what I saw.

As my outfit, Fox Company [F-2-1], attacked up the streets of Seoul, I was hit with a machine-gun bullet. I made it behind a burning police sub-station in the middle of the street. My corpsman, Chico, dressed my wounds and as sniper bullets crashed into the street beside us, he laid on top of me - covering me with his own body - and yelled in my ear, "You've had enough!" Other riflemen nailed the snipers and as Chico left me to help other Marines lying wounded in the street, he was hit by two bullets that blew the shinbone out of his leg. I never saw Chico again.

Several Marines threw a wooden door on the ground, rolled me on it and ran me down the street under heavy fire. It was a fearsome ride. I was placed on a DUKW, given a shot of morphine, and dreamed a beautiful restful sleep to Kimpo airfield and the flight to Japan.

At Yokosuka Naval Hospital for three months, I proclaimed my loyalty to Chico, my corpsman. One night, the Lord came to me. I saw the blood running down His forehead, into His eyes, and down over His cheeks. I looked into His blood-filled eyes. He spread out His bloody hands and said, "I did this for you."

I was willing to be loyal to Chico - but had not been willing to be loyal to the Lord. The Lord said, "Come and follow me. I will make you a man. Put away childish things." I knew what he meant. I said, "Yes Sir."

With the Lord as the Lord of my life, I re-joined my outfit and went back into front-line combat for another five months before returning home.

My brother came home with frostbitten feet and I came home with a tender rear-end. Our mother cried with joy unspeakable. We were both baptized and have been His loyal Marines ever since. Everyday we say, "Yes Sir," to the Lord Jesus - our CHAMPION and HERO. My Lord and my God.

Winston Churchill once said, "Courage is the most important virtue because it makes all other virtues possible." As a senior in high school ready to join the Marine Corps, I thought his statement was good. The sequence sounded right.

As a 26-year old veteran of front-line combat in two wars, I came to understand that Churchill was not accurate. Courage is not the prime virtue. It is faithfulness/loyalty/commitment that is the prime virtue. It is being faithful that makes all other virtues possible, including courage. The Corps has it right: *semper fidelis*. Always faithful.

"Moreover, it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful," (I Cor.4:2).

Jim Baxter Sgt. USMCWorld War II and Korea

My Search for the Messiah

My Search for the Messiah

By Leland P. Gamson

"We will camp here," our scoutmaster told us, "by the lake." Eagerly we set up camp by Lake Goshen in Virginia. I was 15 then and was with other experienced scouts. We should have known the still waters of Lake Goshen would be a perfect breeding ground for mosquitos.

Throughout the night they attacked us in companies, battalions and divisions. Our defenses of insect repellent and mosquito netting could not hold back their determined offense. Though they lost scores to our swats and fire, they found any open and exposed parts of our bodies. They bit me in the ears, the lips, and eyelids where I had not applied insect repellent.

I was a philosophical youth and kept asking myself, "Why did God, who loves us, make these 'little vampires'--and why so many of them?" While I was at it I added ticks, fleas, poison ivy, leeches and poisonous snakes to the list. I asked him directly during my evening prayers but received no answer during the night. I only received endless buzzing sounds and bites.

The next week at my conservative synagogue the rabbi asked, "How did your camping trip go?" I answered with a question of my own:

"Why did God make mosquitos?" The rabbi suggested I turn to Genesis 1:29-31, which describes creation in its original state.

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it; I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

"What does the passage say to us?" asked the rabbi.

"It seems that Adam and Eve and all animals including mosquitos were vegetarians," I said to him. And to myself, I wish God had kept it that way. (But would I give up a Big Mac if mosquitos would give up people?)

"Yes," the rabbi agreed, "in the beginning God planned for us to eat plants, not flesh. I bet the plants back then tasted better than meat does today. But you know what happened. Adam and Eve rebelled against God and his perfect will for them was altered."

"But would a loving God leave us with no way out?" I asked the rabbi.

"No," the rabbi replied. "You see, when the Messiah comes he will restore the Eden-like state of vegetarianism and harmony. The prophet Isaiah describes the world to come when, 'The wolf and

the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 65:25). When the Messiah comes, there will no longer be hunter and hunted, criminals and victims; God's perfect plan for us will be restored," the rabbi explained.

This got me thinking about the Messiah. While he is not frequently mentioned in twentieth century Judaism, the hope of his coming is one of the thirteen principal beliefs of Judaism. In my prayer book I read, "I believe in the Messiah, and though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming." I pondered the Messiah's coming for several years.

I learned that according to one Jewish theory the Messiah is pre-existent and waits to come and rule from Jerusalem. When he takes his throne he will inaugurate an era without war, pain, suffering and injustice. Death itself will be abolished. To my chagrin, most modern "enlightened" Jews dismiss this as pre-scientific, irrational, childish or merely wishful thinking.

To me, modern Judaism seemed no different from humanism, with its belief that human reason and technology will create a utopia. Or, as some would have it, the messianic age is an abstract idea that we strive after but never achieve.

If God transcends nature and physical law, why should such a belief in the Messiah be deemed irrational? I found it more irrational to believe, as do many contemporary Jews, that a messianic age would be achieved through human efforts. At the time I was considering these things, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the United Nations' condemnation of Israel and the war in Viet Nam were current events. I was only a teenager, but the idea that people would bring about peace seemed naive to me.

I was also curious about the nature of the Messiah. The teachings of Judaism state that the Messiah is just a man. I wondered, how could a mere man re-arrange creation to fit Isaiah's description? Also, how could the Messiah rule from Jerusalem when Scriptures say that God is the King of Israel (Psalm 93:1, 95:3, I Samuel 8:7) And according to Psalm 96:10, the Lord will come and "...judge the peoples with equity."

At the same time, the Messiah will be born of a young woman (Isaiah 7:14) in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). He will "...reign on David's throne..." (Isaiah 9:7).

I was looking for a kind of Judaism that still believed God was the author of history and moving us toward his plan for a perfect world.

I refused to accept the belief that this world with its suffering, injustice and division in nature between predator and prey was God's will. Nor did I see any evidence that any man-made movements such as Marxism or World Federalism could alter a broken world.

Then I thought, if, as some of the ancient rabbis had taught, the Messiah pre-existed creation, maybe it would be possible to hear from him. At night I prayed that he would send me some kind of communication. When I awoke the next morning with no answer, I decided to help him out by providing paper and pen.

Still no letter in the morning.

Then one evening I was babysitting at a house with a broken TV. Looking for something to read, I found the New Testament and read the Gospel of Matthew. Here was my letter from the Messiah! It began on a familiar Jewish note: a genealogy. I checked it against my copy of the Holy Scriptures and it was valid.

As I read more, I saw that Jesus not only promised to come and restore the fallen world but he promised to be with me now. Alone in the room, I asked Jesus to be not just the Messiah but my Messiah. And you know, he is!

Mosquitos continue to bite me in the summer, but now I see them as just one more reason to look forward to Messiah's return.

My Son's Miracle

My Son's Miracle

By Anonymous

On June 14th, 1992, I awoke and began getting ready for church. This Sunday morning was unlike any other morning. While getting myself ready, I had this strange feeling inside of me. It wouldn't go away. I just felt weird. As I stood at the bathroom sink, I heard God's voice tell me to pray, so I did. I didn't know what to pray about, so I was just talking with God, thanking Him and praising Him.

Now, I didn't normally go to church. I was saved the year before, and spent alot of time with God alone. I was getting to know God for myself. But on this day, I went. I can't tell you what the sermon was about, as I stayed in the nursery and cared for a young boy who was unable to care for himself. I had this sudden urge to pray over this boy and ask God to heal him. I remember thinking that his parents would wonder who I thought I was if they came in and their boy was normal. So I shrugged it off, and didn't pray for him. Still, I continued to have this strange feeling inside, but I couldn't shake it. All day long, I would hear God's voice tell me to pray. And I did, every time.

After arriving home from church, my family went to my husband's parents' house just to visit. While we were there, God's voice, again told me to pray, and I did. This feeling was still there! My 5 yr. old daughter and my 3 1/2 yr. old son were pitching horseshoes in the backyard. My husband was with them, and I, having MS (Multiple Sclerosis). Sat in a chair and was just kind of hanging out, not really aware of my husband and kids. Just in my own thoughts with God, I guess, and with that odd feeling inside that wouldn't go away.

All of a sudden, I heard my son scream and then cry and my husband yelling and running toward the house with our son in his arms. My daughter ran behind them. My mother-in-law was running into the house and toward the bathroom. I followed everyone into the house and went inside and saw that my son had blood coming from the back of his head and my mother-in-law was holding an icepack on his head and applying pressure. My husband said that he would run him to the hospital. Out of my mouth came "I'll go too!" My mother-in-law said she would watch the kids (my daughter and baby). We left for the hospital.

I held my son on my lap and just began to pray all the way to the hospital. My husband kept talking to him, making sure he was coherent. Now, I have to tell you that my husband was NOT a believer. I had a peace as we pulled into the hospital, but still that feeling deep inside me. I wasn't nervous or afraid, I can't really describe this feeling, but it was just there, like in the pit of my stomach.

We sat in the waiting room and my son's head had quit bleeding at this time, and you could now see the gash in the back of his head. It was obvious he would need stitches. But he felt fine and

was running around like any 3 yr. old would do. As we waited, I had this horrible vision flash before my eyes and a terrible thought that my son was going to die. I thought; "This is ridiculous, he's just getting stitches!" I heard that voice again ask me to pray, so I bowed my head right there and did. Then the doctor called for us. As we entered the Emergency Room, I noticed that we were in an unusual room. Not one with curtains, but this one was the end one. It was cinder blocked and had a wooden door. There was a lot of equipment in this room. An oxygen machine, and I noticed a table that held equipment that contained the paddles for shocking one's heart and stuff like that. It seemed so cold. As the doctor left momentarily, I offered up a prayer and welcomed the Holy Spirit to come into the room. I wanted it to be as comfortable as possible for my son.

The doctor returned with a nurse and my husband and I were asked if we wanted to stay or wait outside. We both said that we'd stay. I felt strange. Later, I found out that my husband also had this strange feeling. The doctor began to prep our son for the procedure. He had him stand on the table and put his arms behind his back, and then his tiny hands were put into a pillowcase, and then a papoose- type of thing was strapped to him. Then they laid him down on his belly. There was a pillow for his head. The nurse took her place at the head of the table and held my son's head in her hands. The doctor draped a small, square green sheet over the injured part of his head, and there was a hole in it where he could stitch the wound through it. He began the anesthetic. My son began to scream in this awful voice (I will never forget it), and he was fighting and breaking free of the papoose. He was screaming "Why are you letting them do this to me?! Stop it! Stop it! I can't breathe!" All at once my husband grabbed his arms that broke free and I grabbed his legs and held him down and I laid my head on his buttocks and began to pray; "Oh Jesus! Please don't let this be a trauma for him." I felt his body jerk underneath me and he settled down instantly. I had this real sick feeling in the pit of my stomach and I wanted to yell "stop!" and take my son home. My husband was having the same thought. The doctor finished with the stitches and we rolled him over to tell him how proud we were of him, but he was dead! As I write this, the memory of that day comes back to me and I sit here in tears. My son, my baby, was gray and his lips were the darkest purple I had ever seen. Almost black. As I stood there, I knew that he was dead, but my mind was speaking to God and saying, "But I know you will give him back, and even if you don't I will praise you anyway." My husband at the same time was screaming that he was dead and something about the doctor killing his son. I remember my husband's face. I will never forget how he looked. All of a sudden all of the life in his face was gone and he looked like an old man. He was running out into the hall, grabbing nurses and pushing them into the room. The doctor was scared. He jumped over the table and listened for breath, there was none. Then he listened for a heartbeat, there wasn't one. He began CPR right away. All of this was happening so fast. As I was thinking my thought to God, I felt this power come over me that I have never felt before or since. It was a force that propelled me to the end of the bed. I stood there at my son's feet, not knowing what I was doing there. I watched as the doctor tried CPR and failed, I listened as the nurse holding my son's right wrist in her hand said "He's not responding doctor, Doctor, he's not responding!" That voice pierced the silence in that room. I stretched my hands up onto my son's cold gray thighs and I was thinking "God! I don't know what to pray!" I began, LOUD, trying to drown out that piercing voice. And as the doctor turned and called for the paddles, I screamed; "FATHER!.....JESUS!" Then I heard that voice that I had heard all day long telling me to pray. He said "Call on Me." I knew then WHO He was. I screamed "HOLY SPIRIT! BREATHE LIFE INTO THIS CHILD, IN JESUS' MIGHTY NAME!" Instantly, my son made this awful sound,

like he was sucking in the whole world, and he sat up. His face now shone like Moses' face. He was a beautiful color! I jumped and jumped with my hands in the air screaming "Thankyou Jesus! I Praise you, Jesus!" Then I grabbed my son off of that table and held him close. I was telling him how proud I was of him. He wasn't responding. He was just staring into space, not moving, not blinking, just doing nothing. He just laid limp in my arms. My husband grabbed him from me and asked the doctor how to turn the oxygen thing on. He said "He needs oxygen!" As the nurse and my husband struggled with the machine and mask, I was thinking; "I brought my son in here and all he needed was stitches, then I was going to go home without him forever, now I'm taking him home, a vegetable!" I laid my hand upon my son's tiny forehead, and said "Jesus, heal his mind in your precious Name." Instantly, my son pushed the oxygen mask off of his face and said; "I don't like this!"

My husband and I took our little boy home that night alive and well, completely healed by the power of God and Jesus' Name! This experience has changed our lives forever.

A Testimony from a Saudi Believer

A Testimony from a Saudi Believer

By Anonymous

"Born to a Saudi family, in Saudi Arabia, and living very close to Mecca, I grew up with strict principals and traditions of Islam and the Arab culture. As a teenager I went to the mosque five times a day in obedience to my parents. One night, while I was asleep, I had this horrible dream of me being taken into hell. And what I saw there brought me real fear and these dreams kept coming to me almost every night. At this point I was really wondering as to why I should be seeing hell in this manner. Suddenly one day, Jesus appeared to me and said, "Son, I am the way, the truth and the life. And if you would give your life to Me, and follow Me, I would save you from the hell that you have seen."

This came as a surprise to me, for I did not know who this Jesus was. Of course, He is mentioned in the Koran in the book Surah Mariam. He is stated as one of our prophets, but not as a Savior who could save us from hell. So I started looking out for a Christian who could give me some advise about this Jesus I have seen and possibly get one of the Christian Holy Books, which I now know is the Bible. But it was a difficult task for me to get any Christian to speak to me about Jesus. As you would know, Christianity is totally banned in Saudi Arabia and if a Christian is caught witnessing to a Muslim, he could be almost sure that he would be beheaded.

Then the Lord led me to an Egyptian Christian who was sick. I prayed for this man's healing and this man gave me a Bible. Then I, by myself, started reading the Bible. By this time Jesus had become a close friend to me. Soon I started witnessing about the experience I had with all my family relations and friends. Soon the authorities were informed that I had converted to Christianity, and I believe this was done by one of my family members. As it states in the Koran, if someone would turn away from Islam, he is a traitor to the faith and he should be executed. So I was taken into custody and tortured. They told me that I would be beheaded if I would not turn back to Islam. But I had already made my decision that I would never turn back. So I told the authorities I'm willing to die for Jesus and that I would never come back to Islam. After much torture and imprisonment, I was sentenced to be beheaded. They gave me a date and a time and I told them, "You go ahead and execute me. I'm going to heaven to see Jesus. But I pray that what you would do to me would stay in your minds and not give you rest until you come to Jesus."

The appointed day and time came for my execution, and I was waiting with much anticipation, yet very much strong in my faith in Jesus. Generally the executions are carried out on the set time and date. But to my amazement, no one turned up. One hour lapsed, two hours went by, then it became three hours, and then the day passed by. And no one turned up. Then two days later, the authorities turned up and opened the doors and told me, "You demon! Get out from this place!" I also noticed that the main person who was determined to get me beheaded was not present when they came to release me. I asked them where this guy was. And with much hesitation they replied

that his son had died on the same day they planned to execute me. Although I continue to go through much persecution, one thing I know is that the Lord's hand is upon me.

A Brother from Saudi Arabia

Testimony of Malika

Testimony of Malika

By Malika

A native of Morocco, I was born into a very religious Muslim family. Since a very young age I was brought up in a purely traditional Islamic way. Since adolescence I had a burning desire to be a good Muslimah and an example in the eyes of Allah. I rejected anything and everything concerning the Jews and the Christians. The mere sight of a cross revolted me. At the age of 16 I met my husband at the French School (Lycee) who talked to me about Jesus and gave me a copy of the Bible of John to read. I was very defiant but I felt overwhelming feelings for this boy. I accepted the Bible and decided to read it secretly of course because if my parents would have found out they would have severely reprimanded me.

Reading the first chapter overwhelmed my heart to the extent that I knew it is the Book of God and Jesus is the truth. That was a complete awakening for me. It was completely against anything spiritual and opposite to what I learned in Islam. I understood very well and precisely that God loves every human being without exception. I continued my discovery when I read a religious calendar with verses from the Bible that said that we can talk to God as a father. I experimented with this dialogue with God. Every evening before sleep I talked to God and felt with certainty that a presence filled my heart not like before when I recited the prayers for Allah and felt a void. This is an experience that really affected me. Time passed and I developed this firm belief that Jesus Christ is the son of God, that the Bible is the truth. I was not yet aware of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. I did not have the experience of repenting for my sins.

One evening when I returned home I found my mother in my room. She had found out through an anonymous phone call that I have been going out with a French boy and a non-Muslim. This was a real shock for her and also for me. I cried and suffered for some days and even thought to discontinue reading the Bible or talk to the Lord. For me everything was finished even the relationship with this boy. But I did not count on the will of the Lord to save me.

The following Monday his father called my parents and asked to meet them. During this meeting I prayed from the bottom of my heart. God blessed me when my mother came back from the meeting talking about marriage. I was very happy despite my young age of 18 years. Then we were married and that was really a miracle if you know the Muslim religion.

When the miracle was over our hearts were not with God anymore. We prayed that evening but we did not go to church and there was no real repentance from sin. The enemy has sown the trouble in our life and I contemplated divorce. But my husband and I knowing that the divorce will not please God we contacted the Evangelical Pentecostal Church. My husband started going to the meetings but I did not. One day God in his love sent me to this house of prayer. It was there that I really repented for my sins and that was the beginning of the relationship with the Lord Jesus. We have been baptized in 1996 and I am very happy to know the truth and to follow Jesus.

In retrospect I realize how great our God is and how much he loves us and his will helped us to be saved. He never abandoned me.

Thank you Lord.

Clara's Testimony

Clara's Testimony

By Clara Rubin

My parents came from Russia to the United States in 1911. My mother used to tell me stories of the atrocities and pogroms suffered by our people there at Passover time. A gentile child would be hidden, and we Jews would be accused of killing him and using his blood to make matzohs. Then great persecution would follow. At Easter time the Russian priests, wearing expensive robes, marched through the streets carrying a very large cross, which frightened many people and started new riots.

Jews were not allowed to own land in Russia. My grandfather, a peddler, would keep his horse on a gentile's land. One Saturday night, he went to pay the rent for this privilege and was attacked by the peasant's dog, causing my grandfather a very painful death by rabies. This left my grandmother a young widow with many small children.

These were the memories passed on to me, a first-generation American. I was born in 1916 in Brooklyn, New York. My family fled Russia for this haven of freedom. But life was difficult and money was scarce. Nearby in Williamsburg, there was a dispensary run by a former rabbi, Leopold Cohn. It was called Beth Sar Shalom (the American Board of Missions to the Jews shown on the left). The doctor's fee was 15 cents if you could afford it, or else it was free. The medicine was also free.

A Miss Sussdorf of the mission came to our home to inquire about our health and invited the family to come to meetings where we could learn about Jesus, their Messiah. I was taught by my mother that gentiles go to hell because they worship three gods, and we Jews go to heaven because we worship one God (Deut. 6:4). Also, the more good deeds we do to earn mitzvahs, the greater our reward in heaven. My mother was not interested in Jesus, but the mission had a women's sewing class; and since she was a trained seamstress, she joined that class. As for me, she let me attend meetings since she regarded the mission as a place for lonely people without means to meet and make friends.

I enjoyed the kindergarten classes at Beth Sar Shalom. Being very bright, I learned to memorize verses from the Bible, even whole chapters. Friday and Sunday night meetings were in Yiddish only. After kindergarten, I attended other classes geared to my age and was impressed by the love these predominantly gentile teachers had for us Jewish children.

You see, there was no love between Jew and gentile in my youth. When gentile children accused me of killing their God, I learned to make a fist, sock them in both eyes quickly and under the chin, then bang them hard on the back. I did not know Jesus and I did not kill him: that was my answer to them.

On Friday nights we would go to the public baths to be clean for Shabbos. We were forced to go a roundabout way to avoid the gentiles who were waiting to persecute us. In some ways, Brooklyn was similar to the Russia my mother knew.

Yet I continued to be drawn to the mission and the classes they taught. Our fellow Jews said that the mission would make me into a gentile and that no Jewish boy would want to marry me. False stories were spread of how the mission branded us with crosses. We kids made sure that if anyone suspicious was at the front door of the mission, we would exit the side door. I didn't want to become a gentile, so at Bible time in class my behavior was atrocious, causing the teacher much grief.

At 14 years of age, I realized that I had to come to terms with God and His truth. I was a bright but unloving child, a ringleader in a fight and a sinner. I wanted the peace and love that my Bible teacher, Miss Dorothy Rose (on right), had. I realized that for me to be a true Jew, I had to believe like, Moses, Isaiah, Zechariah, Daniel and all the prophets that Jesus was God come in the form of man. He died for me that I might spend eternity with him. I invited Jesus to come into my life and he did.

I asked my teacher, Miss Rose, to forgive me for all the tearful nights I caused her. She said they were not only tearful, but prayerful. God heard her prayers!

I was not exactly quiet about my new-found faith. The neighbors, knowing what I now believed, would shame my mother and curse after me in the streets and call me names. When I wanted to be baptized, my mother said she'd throw herself off the roof if I did. My mother would cry to God, asking Him what sin she had committed that her daughter should become a gentile. She would ask me, "Are you smarter than the rabbis?" My answer to her was from Isaiah 29: 13-14.

Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be concealed." "Ma," I would say, "which one of my accusers has opened the Tenach and which one believes what the prophets say? Don't blame me if I prefer to believe what God wrote in the only book that tells the truth of God, the Bible."

I do believe, you see not because it's convenient, for that's hardly been the case. I believe because God has given me a peace and a joy in my heart that only He can give--a joy that's hard to contain.

Oh, I did marry a Jewish boy, Joe. He too believes in Jesus, and how he came to the same conclusion I did is another story. Together, we've seen many Jews and gentiles come to know the Jewish Messiah. I could write many more pages about our 46 years of marriage and ministry for the Messiah, but the editor say it's better to get some letters asking more about what God has done to and through Clara Rubin before I go on anymore. so I'll wait for you to write and ask for more.

The Faith of My Fathers

The Faith of My Fathers

By Loren Jacobs

Perhaps Moses Maimonides grew up in a Jewish home steeped in faith. I didn't. In the several generations since we left Russia for America, my family had departed from any deep faith in the God of Israel and His Word. Growing up in Chicago in the 1960's, I was immersed instead in a humanistic, secularistic and materialistic belief system. Not many of my Jewish friends, family, nor even my teachers at synagogue believed in the God of Torah.

Such "notions" as a God who could create the universe in six days, part the Red Sea, perform signs, wonders and miracles, who could reveal Himself to Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets and have a personal relationship with men were archaic notions. The Scriptures were regarded as good for teaching morals and ethics, but certainly not to be taken "literally." We did celebrate the holidays as a part of our Jewish tradition, but the living God played a very little role in day-to-day affairs. However, I was not destined to have this deficient understanding of God's reality for long.

Being an idealistic youth and a seeker after truth, I began investigating other ways of understanding the world and reality. I read some of the great Western philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. I began drifting toward Eastern philosophy and took up Transcendental Meditation, repeating my "crazy word" over and over for a year. During my first year of college at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, I took a course on Medieval Philosophy. Little did I know that the greatest minds of this almost thousand year period in Western civilization spent most of their intellectual labors trying to prove the existence of God! I read their very convincing arguments for a semester, and I realized God had to exist in order to explain the universe. The philosophers reasoned, "Why else is there order and design in nature? Why else do all of us have an inward sense of right and wrong? And why, in all cultures and societies, has there been an intuitive idea of God or gods?"

I came to a place in my life when I realized that not only did God exist, but He expected something of me. I began reading the New Testament portion of the Scriptures and researching the prophecies in the Jewish Scriptures about the Messiah. No one at my synagogue had ever told me that the Scriptures held the answer to all of man's problems. I was never told about a Jewish man, a descendant of the tribe of Judah, of the royal family of King David, that had been born in Bethlehem. I did not know he was to suffer and die and be raised from the dead and that most of our people wouldn't recognize him. To me the evidence was overwhelming--Y'shua was the promised Messiah of Israel who helps us to know the One True God.

When I came to believe in Y'shua, I experienced the reality of Him who is the source of our being. I also started rediscovering my Jewish heritage. I transferred my major to Jewish studies. I married a nice Jewish girl who also knows the Messiah. In fact, she's a fifth generation Jew for Jesus! We

have drawn closer to our people and our heritage. When I found the Messiah of Israel, I became more Jewish than ever. I've truly returned to the faith of my fathers: Abraham, Moses, David and the Prophets. They knew, loved and had a relationship with the God of Israel, and they looked forward to the arrival of King Messiah, whom those of us with eyes of faith know to have come. With "perfect faith" I can now say, along with a fellow Jew who lived about 1900 years ago, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth." (John 1:45)

To Follow Jesus Christ

To Follow Jesus Christ

By Dr. Mahendra P. Singhal

The Choice: To Follow Jesus Christ. The Price: To Go Alone With the Lord by Dr. Mahendra P. Singha

Growing up in an orthodox Hindu home is to enjoy limited freedoms -- spiritually speaking. It was more than true in my case. I was raised in a rigidly structured and despotically ruled Hindu home with well-preserved traditions, well developed customs, and well-formulated expectations, along with, of course, a great deal of love, understanding, and exhortation.

In spite of all the outward appearances of "peace" in our home, I used to sense tension and dissatisfaction with situations as they used to erupt from time to time. Each new episode was a note of despair in the chorus of our miserable lives. Each chord echoed with an air of helplessness which used to permeate every phase of our lives in our simple home. I distinctly remember being told, over and over again, that all our unhappiness was because of our karma coupled with the wrath of the gods against our family. I could not understand what we had done to deserve this and what could be done to change it, and my father would not allow me to speak of it.

We went through the usual visits to the temples of various gods on set days in the year. I remember walking, sometimes riding a tonga (horse-driven vehicle), a long way to reach a particular temple of Shiva, one of the three primary Hindu gods. The idol of Shiva was frightening to behold. He was shown sitting on top of the world, holding human skulls in his hands, with water running from his hair and his eyes staring at you with a dreadful message: Worship me or you will be destroyed. The idol, decked with flowers, was always smeared with oil and red color. The total effect was to create a feeling of foreboding and fear. You came away from the temple fearing what the future might hold and wishing, without any substantive hope, that all will be well and that he -- Shiva -- would be content with you. I was never comfortable in the temple. The picture of Shiva used to haunt me for days after the pilgrimage.

There was another god who was worshipped once a year in our home. This was Ganesha, the god with the head of an elephant and the body of a man. This god is supposed to be extremely beneficial. A son of Shiva, he is revered for averting dangers. We used to buy a new clay model of the god each year, and worship him on the appointed day, according to the family's traditions.

It was on one of Ganesha's celebrations that I became very disturbed about our gods and our obeisance to them. I distinctly recall the occasion. Sweets had been offered to Ganesha. We had been asked to close our eyes and pray for his blessings upon the home. I do not know why but I could not close my eyes. I was horrified to see a small mouse descend upon the offerings which had been placed before the god and Ganesha was unable to control this tiny creature. "If he

cannot protect himself," I said to myself, "how can he protect this house?" I lost faith in that god on that day; and I believe that my journey to discover the true God began at that event.

Two events occurred in rapid succession soon after that experience. One, my father insisted on my receiving training in the Hindu scriptures, especially the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, and the others. Secondly, an ad in the local newspaper about a Bible correspondence course led me to begin a study of the Bible.

The Vedas and the other books were interesting, but they were decidedly speculative. There were no definite answers.

The Bible, on the other hand, pointed to definite answers. God loves people. God made His love known to people, of His own initiative, when He sent Jesus Christ to the world. A God pleading for me was a mind-boggling mystery.

While I was struggling to understand religions and religious ideas, my school work was moving, as it were, along regular channels. After receiving my masters degrees in mathematics and education, I was hired to teach in a Christian boarding school in Mussoorie, India. The school was run by Christian missionary societies to propagate Christian truths to the students who were not necessarily Christians. People attended this school because of its emphasis on academic excellence and because the medium of instruction was English. Proper language was taught, encouraged, and developed. The school needed a mathematics instructor, and the principal, an Australian missionary, was, as he later told me, led to offer me the position in spite of the fact that I was not a Christian. He (and I am grateful for his willingness to listen to the Lord) responded to the leading of the Lord not only in hiring me to teach in that school, but also in witnessing to me -- in words, in his separated living, and in his priorities.

One of the staff at the school mentioned the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross to me. "He died," he stated, "for man to be free from his bondage to sin and to enjoy victorious life forever." That sounded wonderfully peaceful and achievable, but I dismissed the witness, because, in my opinion, it was too simple. There has to be much more to life than just simple faith in Christ's death on the cross. I had been trained to believe, in the words of the Upanishads: "He truly knows Brahman who knows him as beyond knowledge; he who thinks that he knows, knows not."

I had been led to believe in searching for answers, and I had been taught that such a search could take many, many lives. Sages had attempted to discover the truth and the reality of Brahman for centuries, but without any success. I was under the conviction that real truth is found within oneself. God and man are essentially one. Separation comes from being born in this illusory world which catches man in its embrace and entices him away from finding the true meaning of life and existence. Deliverance is impossible unless one renounces the allurements of this world. I had been trained to believe that God is unknowable, and therefore, beyond the reach of man. And here was Jesus Christ, hanging on the cross, bleeding to death at the hands of Roman soldiers, declaring his forgiveness for their crass brutalities -- God searching for man and not man looking for God within himself.

There was another dimension to my dilemma. Coming from the family I did, my acceptance of Jesus Christ would make my parents lose their social respect and position in the whole

community. My brothers and sister would suffer disgrace. That, too, was unthinkable. Even though I was working away from home in a different environment, I did not really feel free to make my own decisions. I tried to talk to some of the missionaries about my predicaments. They could not understand the heavy cultural factors. They felt that one should simply make a decision to follow Jesus Christ and that is all that really matters. Some missionaries were totally ignorant of Hindu traditions and the social implications which they impose on people. They dismissed my arguments as inconsequential. I was not ready to buy the argument that we live, and therefore die, only for ourselves, by ourselves.

The endless debate would have continued, I am sure, if I had not met Major Ian Thomas of the Torchbearers of England, who was holding meetings in a church in Mussoorie. He took the time to listen to my hesitations, my arguments, and my analysis. He, with great sensitivity and keen insight, explained the claims of Jesus Christ on my life. "Jesus Christ," he explained, "will enable you to solve your dilemmas after you accept Him. He will be on your side."

Major Thomas did not lead me to the final surrender but he prepared me for the final outcome. I knew, after spending almost five hours with him, what I had to do. There was no denying the fact that Christ had been calling me to accept Him as my personal Savior and to follow Him -- irrespective of the cost. The call was extremely personal and urgent. I mused about the possibilities for a few more days. However, I could not get rid of pressures which were continuing to increase. I could sense that a decision had to be made.

I turned to Jesus Christ on July 16, 1963 at 2:00 a.m. in my bedroom -- all by myself. He became my Savior. Praise His wonderful name!!

I had not counted on the cost which was to be paid for the decision, however. I expected rejection and humiliation from my friends and relatives. I even expected some mockery from some of them, but I was not ready for what came my way after my conversion: my own family disowned me. I was no longer a part of the biological family in which I had been born. My friends shunned me. They began to avoid me as if I had contracted some dreadful contagious disease.

With all the pains and burdens, with all the loneliness, and with all the struggles, I am nonetheless determined to follow the Lord. He is my answer, my salvation, my friend. As Major Thomas assured me, He has never failed me; He has always been there -- to help, to direct. I am not following an idea, a creed, or a philosophy; I am not searching for an inner revelation; I am not working for a final deliverance. No, I am following Jesus Christ, who is the final revelation, the total deliverance.

My Testimony for Christ

My Testimony for Christ

By Abdullah Al-Ashoery

I was born in Iraq - Baghdad in 1967 of an Assyrian Orthodox family. The Arabs call this year the year of disappointment because they lost the war against Israel. When I was only 40 days old my mother (an Orthodox Christian) took me to the church and had me baptized as a Christian-born boy and as she had done earlier with all my brothers and sisters! When I was two years old my Father decided to move our family to southern Iraq to the city of Basra. Due to some political reasons I cannot tell you why my father decided to embrace Islam and force it on the family. And he also changed our names and identification cards to Islamic status.

So I grew up being a Muslim. In the south where there are very few Christians. I was in love with the Qur'an throughout my childhood to the extent that I used to wait for the Qur'an Tartile on TV and started Tartile along with it! (Tartile is the way Muslims sing the Qur'an to make it more effective, and it was made mandatory by Mohammed on each Muslim). My mother used to watch me and just laugh looking at this seven year old sheik! We had quranic verses all over our house and also had drawings of Imam Ali and his son Abaas. I was fascinated with the character of Imam Ali and how wise and strong he used to be and believed so totally. That he could hear whomever prays to him and ask him for a miracle! Being a Shi'a Muslim it was my duty to follow in his steps and believe his teaching of Islam as well as trying my best to rebuke any one who thought less of him in any way.

At the age of eleven my father died unexpectedly. I was devastated. I could not understand why that happened. I kept asking Imam Ali why that happened. I needed an explanation, but there was no answer to my prayers. After six months my mother decided to move back to Baghdad. I did not want to, I could not possibly leave my cousins, my uncles and aunts, my friends and school and my cat, of course! To my shock, my mother told me that all these people that I held to be my family are definitely not my family, they are only superficial cousins, uncles, aunts, and even the two brothers and a sister that I had been told are my half-brothers and sister from another women that my father had been married to and who had passed away before he married my mother were phony! The only things that linked us were the legal ID papers and the many years of a huge deception. In Baghdad my mother hastened to introduce us to our new family. She learned that her father had passed away years ago. She was so sad because he had not approved of her departure to the south but she had to go on with it. Suddenly I started to see new cousins, aunts, all kind of relatives and friends. And I say "I" because I was the only one who was confused about that mess since I was the younger in my family and did not have any idea about what had happened in the past. My mother had me live with one of her sister's family for me to adjust myself to the new reality. I was in a state of resentment and anger since they wanted me to learn their language (Assyrian) which I refused for many years to come because I was in love with the Arabic language. And they tried to take me with them to their church and to their parties and events.

Finally, after years, I accepted them as my relatives. But I decided to be separated from them and their beliefs which I considered heresy.

I continued going to school as a young Muslim man and was a straight A student in all materials related to Islam. I used to prepare my questions at home. And whenever I saw a Christian fellow I would attack him with it. I felt pretty good when I waited for an answer and get NOTHING but a red face and a sweaty hand shake of "Good bye!" Then I started to go to the churches and sit in the Bible study and ask these questions to the priests. And sure enough, I had the same impact over and over again. My faith in Islam was increasing and my hatred towards Christianity was increasing even more! Even to the point that one day I was coming home from long day: It was about 8:00 p.m. and my sisters and Mom had the Jesus film on video and they were watching. I looked as I am coming in and Peter was saying to Jesus "Lord" in Arabic "God". I heard that and I was so angry I started to yell at my mother and sisters and pulled the film out of the video, broke it in half and also broke all the pictures we had of Jesus or Mary and threw them away. My mother was crying so bad, and everybody was mad at me. It took me three days to be able to talk with my mother again!

The civil war was intensifying in Lebanon and the government wanted to send some Iraqi soldiers to help drive the Jews out of the South of Lebanon. Since I hated the Jews even more than the Christian, I went to the embassy of Lebanon in Baghdad and registered my name, and when they asked me to write a statement I wrote "I AM COMMITTED TO GO TO LEBANON TO KILL THE STINKING JEWS" but the security guard secretly called me out to the side and said "It is not about the Jews, you are going to fight the Syrians!" So when I learn that my journey is to kill other Muslims like me I changed my mind!

By then I got my first book published and was so happy about it! I became a rather popular among my friends in school and the radio asked me to write some things for them. When I expressed my desire to write for children the TV station send after me. Six months later I was granted a scholarship to join the Academy of Arts in Baghdad. That was a 180 degree change in my direction. Though I was a writer and a poet, I wanted to study what is called the science of Qur'an. The war against Iran was over after 8 long years and everybody was happy. We used to dance in the streets until sun rise celebrating the birth of peace in the land! Everything seemed good and settled. But I had a big void inside my soul. Two years went by and I was still looking for an answer to the many questions boiling in my head.

Now I was asking if there is really God why would he allow all that to happen to me to my family. What I am I? Am I a Muslim as I was told and as I grew up? Or Am I Christian as I was born and baptized? Am I an Arab or an Assyrian? Am I human or an animal to be treated and betrayed like this?! The country I once loved was no longer home to me. I wanted to find my own self since I lost it in Iraq.

In August 1, 1990 I left Iraq to Turkey with no other goal than looking for my own freedom and establish a new life. Seven hours later, Iraq invaded Kuwait. I was already in Istanbul and that was the first sign of salvation to me! All telephone lines where cut off to and from Iraq. I would go without contact with my family for the next year and a half. Bit by bit my money started to decrease. I began to move from one city to another trying to find a job to maintain a living. I slept under a tree in Ankara for three days after I had sold all my positions and had no more to sell. I

became ill and thought I could die any time. Then I started to knock at the doors of various embassies. It does not matter where to go I thought, anywhere will be better than Iraq and Turkey! No one accepted me. Even the U.N. office rejected my application as a refugee! I was in big trouble. If the Turkish police were to catch me, they would return me to Iraq because my visa had expired long ago. And that would mean death! It seemed to me that there was no other choice but to go to Syria though the Syrian council advised me not to do so!

I took the bus to the city of Antakya and from there, I was hoping, to get to Halab. Through these two months in Turkey I started to be more open to listen to Christ's voice inside me though I have to admit that at one point I stopped at the mosque in Ankara and read the Qur'an. But suddenly that book lost its effect on me and did not attract in this time of trouble, nor ever since. In the bus to Antakya I met a Turkish young Muslim man who became a dear friend to me. He took me to the Catholic church in Antakya and there I met Fr. Francisco and a nun by the name of Barbara. They provided great help and comfort to me during the three month that I spent in Antakya. Barbara gave me the first Arabic Bible and asked to read it. I used to read the Bible every night before bed in Fr. Francisco house (he opened his house for me to the last day!). And the church used to pray for me every single night and ask God to open the doors for me to go to some country so I might find peace and freedom. I started to ask Jesus to bless me and I apologized to him for my foolishness in the past. And one day I was alone in the house and was very depressed because of the rejection from the U.N. regarding my case and I had been away from my family back home with no communication at all. I shut off all lights and went to sleep. I woke up and it was so dark to the point that I couldn't see my own hands! I was walking, trying to find my way, I opened the door and stepped down but I fell on my knees and hurt myself very painfully. In the midst of all that darkness and pain a strong hand grabbed me at my elbow and sure enough that was Fr. Francisco. He helped me stand up and put his hand over my shoulder and said "Don't you worry, I will take care of you. You will be fine!" I woke up being like crazy and was all sweaty. I rushed to Father Francisco bed room but he was still out. It took me a few seconds to realize that I had been dreaming! I went back to bed after a short prayer and saw a second dream. This time it was Jesus as I saw him in the Jesus film years ago and I had trashed his video. He was hanging on the cross, the nails were in his hands and feet, yet he was smiling at me and talking to me. Though he was dying he seemed so beautiful. The cross was huge and I seemed like a little boy. My neck was falling back trying to see the whole face of Jesus and suddenly a huge big circle of light came from above the cross and down upon me! I woke up again. It was sun rise. This time I was really sweaty!

In the morning I rushed to Barbara to let her know. But an old lady who used to like me and fix sandwiches every now and then called me and told me that she also saw a dream concerning me. She said that she saw me riding on a white horse and fly away to safety! One week later the American Embassy called me while I was working in the church construction and they approved my visa to the U.S.!! That by itself was a miracle because my visa in Turkey was expired long ago and I was staying illegal. Besides, the Iraqi Army was still in Kuwait and the problems were rising towards a certain war between Iraq and the U.S. Many people tried to get a visa to America but could not. God answered the prayers of the church and accepted me as one of his children. Since then I started to have a personal relationship with Christ and became new creation in him. I think it is important for any human to know his God and savior and have a true experience with him.

I was born in Baghdad in which Abu Jafar Al-Mansour built and commanded his engineers to pour oil in the foundation and set it on fire so he can see and enjoy his schematic in real life. I thought that was such a stupid idea and I think the Khalifa just announced the death of the city before its birth! But God took me away to Antakya a city where the people of God were FIRST CALLED CHRISTIANS. By that God took away my curse and gave me new life in him. My prayer is that he might increase and I might decrease so I can live for him fully to the end of my earthly life. "FOR YOU WERE AS SHEEP GOING ASTRAY, BUT ARE NOW RETURNED UNTO THE SHEPHERD AND BISHOP OF YOUR SOULS." 1 Peter 2:25 - Amen.

If you have further questions or want to reply to me with your comments, please send me an email. I think that it is important to hear from you all. Whether in blessing or cursing. I believe my testimony is going on as long as I live. I am having new experiences with Christ one year after another!

Abdullah Al-Ashoery

I Started to Feel Ashamed Before God

I Started to Feel Ashamed Before God

By Ekrem

When I was really young, only 6-7 years old, I lived in a small village in Konya-Turkey. On cold winter days very early in the morning, with other young children of the village, I used to go to the mosque and memorize the suras for prayer in front of the imam. Because all the surahs are in Arabic, we did not know the meaning of what we were praying, but just for the sake of being able to pray we memorized them by listening. I myself was always curious about the Word of Allah and its meaning.

I had a well-educated older brother who was an influential government worker when I was in Middle School. One day I asked him "Who is Allah." He thought for a while, then, because he did not want to admit that he did not know the answer, he just said, "you are too young to worry about it, you will understand when you get older". Of course this was not an answer to my question, and my curiosity only increased. I always prayed with my mom and dad, knowing that it pleased them, but I wanted to learn what is written in the Qur'an, as well as the character of Allah.

When I started high school I clearly saw that my friends had the very same desire. When we discovered this we wrote a letter together to the Department of Religious Affairs, and asked them whether we could read the Qur'an in Turkish in order to understand it better. The answer we got was, "It is wrong to read any translation of the Qur'an. Commentaries on the Qur'an are available, however these commentaries are written in old Ottoman Turkish. Therefore it is impossible for you to understand them. For these reasons you should read the Qur'an in Arabic and leave the good deeds coming from reading it to Allah. In reality, the Qur'an is not for understanding it is for worship." So, the students who sincerely wanted to learn the Qur'an were left in darkness.

My curiosity about Allah continued when as a boarding student I attended the University to study English. My classmates, who knew I regularly prayed 5 times a day, generally viewed me with awe and envy, asking, "Ekrem, how can you find time for prayer in between all these classes?". I answered them, "if you were sincere about your faith you would pray and you wouldn't hesitate to create time for prayer. You can pray during the breaks in between classes or you can pray before you rush for dinner." I used to embarrass them by telling them this. However, I did not know what the word of Allah said or who He was.

After I became a teacher I continued to pray 5 times a day. For this reason people started to call me Hafiz, I took pride in this and I was very happy. One day at the university I met with a man. We started to talk about religion, faith, Allah, and the Word of God. Because he believed in the Bible, I immediately told him that the Bible is superstition, and not authoritative. This man showed me the Injeel and claimed that I slandered the Injeel, because I did not know what it said. He challenged me to read it in order to find the truth. I told him that if I read the Injeel, I would underline all the wrong statements and I would burn it up. He said if I read it with a sincere attitude and still found

things conflicting with God's merciful spirit I was allowed to burn it. Since now it had become my duty to read and examine the Injeel, I was impatient to proof the falsehood of in it, so I could burn it.

I started to read the Injeel, starting with the Book of Matthew. I didn't come accros any sentence that would allow me to burn it. When I came to the chapter 5, I was not able read it quickly, because I was amazed at the amount of mercy that was required from the sons of Adam by Allah, the Judge and the Creator.

Before I advanced further in my reading of Injeel, I knew that I needed to read the Qur'an, because it was the book that last and most superior. Before I knew what it said I could not put my faith in anything else. I knew that it was a must for me to read and understand what the Qur'an said. However I had no idea how could I do this. Finally, I obtained three Qur'ans to examine, one of which was written in Turkish and the other two in English. I wanted to see if the three Qur'ans translated by three different authors were identical. Since my childhood, I had heard that the Qur'an could never be translated and I believed this. I compared the three translations book by book, sura by sura, sentence by sentence. When I saw that all three translations had the same meaning I realized that the Qur'an could be translated, and I believed that I had the Qur'an in my hand. When I first started to read the Qur'an I was pleased because of nationalist, religious and male chauvenist feelings I had. However, when I remembered the Words of Jesus and the Light of Jesus presented in the Injeel, my violent and unloving feelings feelings made me feel ashamed before Allah.

When the book and the religion I wanted to defend proved empty before the real love and mercy of Allah, I wanted to search the other books. So, I read the Teachings of Buddha. I saw that Buddha did not say anything about God. His teachings were about self/inner discipline and not harming others. Then I studied the theory of Evolution and the writings of Darwin, as well as the teachings of Karl Marx. I saw that all these men were confused and confusing because they did not know the unmeasurable love of God and His merciful words.

I realized that Jesus the Messiah needed to be listened to again and again. I felt that I needed to be obedient and listen to these Holy Words that I had never heard before. In the Injeel Jesus the Messiah that "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Matt. 5:44-47) Jesus not only said this but He lived it out in His life. The merciful Messiah who is from above is not like the sinful and earthly human and cannot be compared to them. I started to understand that the spirit of compassion in Jesus the Messiah is ineffable and incomparable. The ones who beat Him, the ones who made fun of Him and the ones who nailed Him on the cross were committing sin, yet Jesus the Messiah showed them compasion by His Spirit and He was prayed for them all and He forgive their sins. Because they didn't know what they were doing He asked God to forgive each one of them. This Holy Spirit, this desire, this incomparable compasion is not observed on earth among sinful human beings. It is clear that compared to this holy compassion and power, Buddah, Mohammed, Darwin, Karl Marx and all the sons of Adam are poor and helpless.

I desire that all of us repent in the name of Messiah, the perfect sacrifice, and we all know the Injeel in which compassionate Allah offers us the good news of salvation, and find freedom in Jesus the Messiah who calls us to eternal life. For this purpose I serve with my believer brothers and sisters with thanksgiving, because I know that the perfect sacrifice, the Messiah, gives eternal life to everybody who acknowledges his sin and repents before Him. I am thankful to Allah for the word of life which is the eternal freedom and and the eternal Good News.

God Had Plans for Me

God Had Plans for Me

By Kader

I was born in a small town in Algeria and into a family with six Children. France occupied my native country. My Parents were unschooled and were Muslims. So I was a Muslim by birth. I was told that as an infant, I was so sick the doctor gave me two days to live but God had other plans for me. No, I did not die. At a very young age, my parents enrolled me in a religious school where I learned to memorize the Koran. As a family and individually, we suffered a lot under the French occupation. My father was jailed many times, even one time when my eldest brother was forced to leave home to serve in the French army for mandatory service, my family spent several months without a provider. We were even forced to leave our hometown and move elsewhere.

One day during the Algerian civil war, while I was playing soccer with my friends, we were shot at. Many died but I only suffered a bullet wound. God had other plans for me. While at the hospital, I saw many people suffer and die daily and nightly. I was angry with God and Westerners. However, Algeria became independent and I was very happy. Still serious about my faith as a Muslim and now in High School, I began to devote more time to it. I was an example to many students.

Life without the French occupation settled in, yet things did not change. My country was free and so was I but I was unhappy and felt a void in my life. Some people call it an identity crisis. Maybe it was an identity crisis but for me I needed to connect to that one missing thing or a person. I needed to understand why I was born, and when I die, where I will be. Slowly I became a nominal Muslim and later actually thought that God did not exist. I also joined a local communist underground student movement. While still in High School, I started reading, studying philosophers, and also drinking, smoking and doing shameful things too embarrassing to talk about. I felt confused and lost. My major was Mathematics, so naturally I read some writings by Blaise Pascal, a French mathematician. In his so-called "Pascal wager", Pascal talks about whether God is or God is not. Though Pascal argues from a gambling point of view, I was convinced that for me this was no gamble or coincidence. This latter fact increased my desire to seek God.

I finished School and came to the US to further my studies. I was very skeptical of strangers because of the scars of the French occupation. But God had plans for me. God gave me a Christian host family who befriended me and invited me to their home and to their Church. One day, I heard Dr. Mark Hanna, a Christian Lebanese writer, speak about Jesus Christ. I was not receptive but heard new things about this Jesus from Nazareth.

Later I learned that my mother died. I was very close to her and could not accept her sudden departure from my life. Having lost my mother and having failed in other areas of my life, I was hurting, miserable, tired and fed up. I wanted to end my life. As if someone was talking to me, words came to me saying, "you want to end your life, then consider it done and give your life up to

Jesus". I heard and read in a Bible given to me, who Jesus is and what He did for me on the cross. Someone suggested I start reading from the book of John. I understood I was a sinner and needed God in my life. I turned to Jesus, believing He died for me, was buried, rose again and is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. I prayed inviting Him into my life and I received Him in my heart as my personal savior and Lord.

I came to chapter 6 of the book of Romans and realized I needed to be baptized. After receiving instructions in a class from an elder on Communion and Baptism, I was baptized by full immersion two weeks later. God did it all. It was all His doing and nothing I had done on my own except to seek Him, repent and accept His free gift of salvation.

You know, I did not fully realize what happened to me until I came across Ezekiel 36:25-27. God also helped me deal with many other issues and things I could not understand on my own. Knowing who God is and who I am, my desire has been to live for Christ by loving Him, obeying Him and serving Him. It is my prayer to be used by Him "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" 1 Timothy 2:4 (NKJV).

I also came across Jeremiah 29:11 (NAS) where God says: "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". You see He has given me hope and a future. He had plans for me. Friend, God has plans for you too. My prayer for you is that you seek Him with all your heart. This is for your sake not mine and certainly not for God's sake. He is waiting for you.

Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me" John 14:6 (NKJV). The Bible says: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23 (NKJV). Jesus also says: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" John 3:16 (NKJV).

I urge you to turn to God now and give your life to Him.

May God bless you today.

Kader.

Timothy's Testimony

Timothy's Testimony

By Timothy

In the Valley of Tearsim who, for the sake of my family's security, go also by the nickname Timothy Abraham. I am a simple Egyptian from the Delta region. Farms surrounded me from every side with streams of the luxurious Nile River endowing life with fertility. I had a strong Islamic upbringing in my childhood, studying in the village shop for teaching the Quran (al-Kutaab).

They taught me to fear God (Allah in Arabic) who created the Heaven and the earth in six days. There was not a single reason to doubt a religion which emphasized fearing God, doing good work and living a moral life. The recitation of the Quran was meant to produce a sense of tranquillity. I enjoyed the Sufi circle of worship, as they adored the person of Muhammad. This was Abu-al-Azayem's group. I was searching for more closeness with Allah Almighty.

One evening around 7:00 p.m. in al-Mahatta mosque, having finished praying al-Maghrib prayer, I was introduced to Muhammad Imam and Sulleiman Kahwash. They were vitally influential in incorporating me into their group "The Muslim Brotherhood -- i.e., al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin." They encouraged me to be a devout Muslim and fast on Monday and Thursday of every week and break the fast with them in the mosque where we ate bread, cheese, palm dates (tamr), and delicious salad. I diligently imitated every thing the Prophet Muhammad did, even the sitting posture of the Prophet as he was eating. They were so kind to me. They also saw in me the potential of being an eloquent speaker. Therefore, Sulleiman Hashem, the leader at the time, approached me gently, "Ibrahim, you are called by the Quran's teaching to proclaim the message of Islam "da'awah." "My Allah!" I pondered. "I am just 14 years old and I am easily intimidated." Nevertheless, Sulleiman gave me a stack of books to study in preparation for the sermon I was to deliver the next day.

From then on, it became customary for me to preach a sermon on the first Monday of every lunar month. I was filled with zeal as my leaders had arranged for me to go across the neighboring towns, preaching from mosque to mosque. I zealously wanted everyone to follow the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, and subsequently, my sister had no choice but to obey my Quranic command and wear the veil which indicated modesty.

I needed my father's approval. I wondered if he had ever heard his son, the 14 year old Muslim evangelist, preach. To my astonishment my father was sharply criticized by people for having a son who was now a "fanatic." The Islamic Brotherhood was regarded as a religious gang by the majority of regular Muslims. My father, therefore, became wrathful over my Islamic radicalism and angrily punched me in the teeth. Today my front tooth is a fake one. It reminds me of my former perseverance, to the point of death, to be a zealous Muslim fundamentalist and my willingness to be persecuted for my commitment. My father burnt my Sunni (mostly wahabi and salafi) Islamic library. He knew quite well that Mohammad Mansour, a security police informer, was recording my sermons from the bathroom in the mosque. I was so strict in the fashion of the sunnah of

Muhammad that I did not shake hands with women. I simply wanted to be a devout Muslim.

Having finished their prayers in the mosque, my father stopped one of the leaders in my group, Sulleiman Hashem and asked him pleadingly to leave me, his son, alone. When my father swore an oath of divorce (hilif alaya bi al-talaaq) that I will not be permitted to enter the mosque where the Islamic Brotherhood is praying, I obeyed my father, but asked for mercy in letting me hear their sermons while sitting outside the mosque. I was never daunted by any of this and continued to preach Islam everyday in the morning parade (taboor as-sabah) as well as in every mosque where I went to teach. It never occurred to me for a second that Islam could be wrong.

In my pursuit to propagate Islam everywhere, a magazine came into my hands which had pen pal addresses from the United States. I chose one at random and wrote, hoping to convert the man into Islam. I wrote to John from Pennsylvania, USA, back and forth for two years, each trying to convert the other. I read every book I could get hold of to refute the Bible. To make things worse, I had no respect for the Bible as I put my feet and shoes on it since the Quran taught me it was corrupt. Then John surprised me by coming to visit me in my village. That was the first time I saw a real Christian. His sincerity, frankness, genuineness, and openness impressed me. John stayed with me for two months. He had an amazing prayer life which served as a model for me later in life. I did not know that Christians prayed until I saw a "living epistle" right in the middle of my house, a man from a far off land who became one of us and genuinely incarnated the love of Christ. John had an amazing prayer life, for he prayed more than he talked, speaking the words of the Bible.

I became jealous of John's intimacy with God and increased my recitations of the Quran. Islam is a religion that has to be credited for teaching its followers to be virtuous, chaste, and benevolent. There is no doubt that Muhammad remains a genius in history. One has to also note that a Muslim may do as many good works as possible in this world and on the Day of Judgment God weighs the deeds of every individual in a "balance." The good deeds will be placed in one pan of the balance, and the evil deeds in the other. If the good deeds are heavier, then the believer will go to the paradise described in Quran as a place of sexual pleasure and frolicking with the wide-eyed huris (sura al- Waqia 56:20-23). However, Christ our Lord said "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

My Muslim friend, according to Islam, if your evil deeds are heavier, you will be cast into the fires of hell. It looks like you would need to be only fifty-one percent good to get into paradise. Yet you remain absolutely unsure whether or not you are going to heaven. All you say, my Muslim friend, is, "Only God Knows!" You hope for the mercy of Allah and hope that the angels or the Prophet will intercede for you in the last day, so you will be saved from Hell. I was like you, my Muslim sister or brother, until I knew that I could be absolutely sure of going to Heaven. Tears well up in my eyes just to recall how lost I was and now that I am found. While trembling in tears, seeing the majesty of God, I rejoice to know that I have eternal life for certain. God in the Bible is both just and merciful. His justice requires that everyone be punished in Hell, for He is perfect 100 percent. No matter how hard we try to please God, we always fall short of His perfection. Our good works will not bring us closer to God. God saw our insufficiency, and decided to pay the penalty Himself. He sent His Word Isa Al Masih (Jesus Christ), who is absolutely sinless and faultless to carry the punishment of our sins on the cross. What can you say to the Judge when He chooses to pay your penalty for you?

The Bible says in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." It is because God loves us that He sent His Word, Jesus Christ, to die for us. Islam never grants us the assurance of going to Heaven, but Christ absolutely does! Praise God! Thank you, my Lord, for sovereignly choosing to pay the price Yourself in the Person of Your incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the express revelation of the nature of Allah Almighty.

After John left, his influence stayed. I thought I would depress John by saying, "John, your visit made me a stronger Muslim in the faith and do not try to convert Muslims anymore." Yet John prevailed in his supplication and prayers. His intercessory prayer moved the LORD to wake me up in the middle of the night as I had no sleep or rest. Inner conflict reached its zenith. Restless, I reached out to my Bible and opened it at random. I found, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" I remember one day in the heat of a debate between me and John, I made fun of the Bible and said, "John, your Bible is the most absurd thing! How can you believe the story of Saul who became Paul, the servant of the Gospel?" John said, "The story is true, and that is why I am patient with you. You will be another Paul one day!" I replied, "John, you must be out of your mind to think for a second that I could leave the religion of all religions, Islam!" Reflecting on "Saul, Saul ..." I said Lord! Me? Me persecute You? I did nothing to You in person ... I remember I turned in a female medical student to the police ... but I did nothing to You. Is it true that He who touched one of Your people touches the apple of Your eye?" Islam denies the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ because the Quran intended to deprive the Jew of the victory they claimed was their in Jesus' death. The Quran asserts that God put somebody who looked like Him on the cross in the place of Jesus.

Now my Muslim friends, God is not in the business of fraud, for if he had wanted to deliver Jesus from the cross, He could have done it miraculously without having to deceive and put Jesus' likeness on someone else. This Quranic error is too blatant, and proves that the Quran has no divine origin. What is more, the Quran is self-contradicting, for while it claims that the Jews did not really kill Jesus it also affirms very distinctly the reality of Jesus' death in the sura of the family of Imran 3:47/54 - 48/55 as it states: "When God said: "OH JESUS, I SHALL CAUSE YOU TO DIE, AND THEN I SHALL RAISE YOU UP TO ME."" My Muslim friend, my goal is not here to proselytize you, but to raise the ultimate questions, Who is Christ? Was he crucified? And how does this affect you? If the whole history of humanity revolves around Christ, then my entire life and existence should revolve around Him too. Denying the cross of Christ is contradicting history itself.

Muhammad himself is claimed in the Quran to have been urged, by God, to refer to the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) as he in doubt concerning the Quran: "And if thou (Muhammad) art in doubt concerning that which we reveal unto thee, then ask those who read the Scripture (that was) before thee." Sura Yunus 10:95 For the first time in my life, I began asking the question "why?" and challenged everything I took for granted. All postulates were critically examined. This got me into trouble in an authoritarian society. Questions, they say, fly in the face of Allah. Obey. That is All. In the Islamic Brotherhood, our motto was "samaana wa ataana" i.e. "we have heard and obeyed." After years of study, I came to two logical conclusions: The Bible is the inerrant Word of God, and Jesus is the Word of God.

I began to see it was possible for Jesus to be God. Intellectually, I accepted all the claims of the Christian faith, but in my heart I still feared being struck dead for calling the Almighty God "My Father." I needed a miracle! The Bible teaches us that no one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). No wonder every Salvation experience is one of a miracle of birth out of death into eternal life! From the depth of my heart, in the midst of inner conflict, I cried out to Allah, even in the mosque, "Lord, show me the truth! Is it Jesus or Muhammad? Could it be that You are my Father? Show me the truth, and the truth you lead me to I will serve all my life whatever the cost may be!" I burst into tears since I knew the cost could be outrageously too high for a weak, thin person like me. For how could I afford to be cast out of my family and sleep on the streets like a homeless person? And what if my leaders in the Islamic Brotherhood would find out about me? And what if they, in their Islamic righteousness and zeal, rush on to defend Islam and kill me?

According to the Islamic religion, an apostate should be given a three day opportunity to recant, and after that the infidel's blood is legitimately shed in the name of Allah! The words of the Prophet Muhammad kept ringing in my ear, "Any person (i.e., Muslim) who has changed his religion, kill him." This tradition has been narrated by AbuBakr, Uthman, Ali, Muadh ibn Jabal, and Khalid ibn Walid. Yet I persisted in asking God to guide me. Guide me, O Thou great Allah, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty. One night Christ appeared to me in a dream and said with a tender sweet voice, "I love you!" I saw how obstinately I had resisted Him all these years and said to Him in tears, "I love You, too! I know You! You are eternal for ever and ever." I woke up with tears all over my face filled with abundant joy, believing that Christ Himself touched both my mind and my heart, and I yielded. I was filled with great passion for Christ, jumping up and down, singing praises to His name and talking to Him day and night. I would not even sleep without God's inerrant Word, the Bible, next to my chest. I experienced what a "spoiled child" of God would: God would give me anything I ask for in prayer. But then the Lord wanted me to love Him and worship Him for His own sake, not for what I get from Him.

I tried to keep my faith secret and so was baptized secretly in a pastor's house. Filled with the joy of salvation I could not hide or deny Christ anymore. Therefore, when my childhood friend asked me if Christ was crucified, I answered, "Yes!" and explained why. He prayed with me to receive Christ. He was shaking and perspiring every time he prayed with me. He could see how mighty the name of our Lord Jesus was. My former leaders in the Islamic fanatical group, desiring to know who the spearhead was, threatened to kill him if he would not tell them everything about my evangelism. Sadly, he betrayed me and I was beaten up in front of the mosque where I had formerly preached Islam zealously. In their sight I was a blasphemous infidel who deserved to be killed unless I would recant. They regarded my conversion as the most horrendous form of desecrating Islam and the Quran. Since my secret conversion was now made public and Muslims plotted to kill me, I had to flee.

I was hunted by Muslims from my village in the Delta, to Ismailia until I arrived in Cairo where my Christian friends lived. Yet Christians were not willing to shelter me and I had to go back to the village, seeking refuge in His protective hands. I came back from Cairo and found an angry mob of Muslims filling up our house. My mother was wearing the garment of mourning, dressed in black as is the custom in Egypt. To them by deserting Islam, I was dead!!! Muslim women yelled at me, "Your mother doesn't deserve all this from you. Why cause her all this grief?" Another woman

lamented, "Poor mother! Here son left her for the Christian infidels. If I were her, I would kill my son for running after the infidels like a dog."

I received a letter from a friend in Jordan who reported that my father was walking down the streets in Jordan weeping bitterly as Muslim laborers there reproached him severely. He stayed sick in bed for a month because of this until he and I talked on the phone. It is absolutely unforgettable that outraged Muslims broke into our house barbarically. My mother knelt down at the feet of our neighbor "Sayed" begging him to spare my life and kill her instead. In such indescribable agony, my mother disowned and disinherited me before all people in my village. I love my mother more dearly than any person in this world, but no human power, regardless of how gigantic it is, can separate me from the love of Christ. I will always live for Jesus. My Bible, all my Christian books, and music tapes were confiscated and burnt.

I decided to flee from the Delta region to Cairo. Even though the police were tracking me down, the Lord blinded their eyes and protected me. In Cairo, I was hiding at M.'s, an Egyptian Baptist friend who was comforting me all the time. I broke down when he read, "So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41) I am grateful to God for providing this friend, M., who discipled me, teaching me to live a victorious life rich in worship and thanksgiving. He gave me a pocket Arabic New Testament and told me frankly that his parents were afraid. Also I was told that if they continued to hide me they would be in jail forever. I had nowhere to go. So, upon the advice of my secret pastor, I went back to the village, hiding the Arabic New Testament in my socks, praying that it would not fall out. I was eventually arrested and released repeatedly. I learned what it means to have God as my only Hiding Place.

In prison, my Savior knows I have come to experience true peace. I was not shaken because I saw Christ in prison, not myself. I sang songs of joy in the midst of tears, anticipating the shining Morning Star to come and deliver me. I decided to hide the Bible in a place where the police could not confiscate it -- in my heart by memorizing it. I have since made it a habit to sleep with my Bible by my side. Five years later, I managed to flee Muslims' attempts to kill me and I was shocked to find out that there are some professing Christians in America who attack the Bible for which I was willing to die. God's word has given me promises of faith which I apply as a little child and pray them through in confidence. The gates of Heaven open as we pray through God's Word. His word speaks life!!! Once when I went to give my mother a Mother's Day gift, she asked me rhetorically, "Mother's Day gift?" I answered, "Yes" every time she repeated the question. She looked at me with such crushing grief and said, "My son, whom I waited 15 years to have and finally was born is now dead. I disown you till the day of judgment, Ibrahim." I cried but Christ touched my heart and said, "I am your family now! I am your father, brother, mother, sister, friend, and everything to you, Timothy, now." I cannot forget those days when my mother would call the police to arrest me. She even went to a witch to put a curse on me and bring me back to the fold of Islam. The witch said, "Your son is following a path which he will never forsake and he will be victorious all his life as long as he walks in it." These words, from the mouth of a witch, brought my younger brother to know Christ. The testimony of demons about our victorious Lord renders skepticism and unbelief absurd (Please read Romans 8:35-39). You also can be more than a conqueror through Christ, your Victor who loves you! Believe it!

I lost my Bible and all my Christian books were confiscated. All I had was the radio. I went sneakily to get my radio to listen secretly to Voice of Hope, searching for some comfort-songs in the night. (By the way, I speak now publicly over Voice of Hope since I live in a free country, America). Yet my mother caught me and she immediately snatched the radio out of my hand and beat me on the head with her shoes. I was just 20 years old at that time. I prayed for a Bible and the Lord heard me. I went to pick up a Bible package from the post office. The head of the post office, Kamal, slapped me forcefully and punched me in the face. I saw all kinds of terror...I was crying from the intensity of pain. He said to me, "You just go after these Christian infidels, leave Islam and we will wipe you out. We will send you behind the sun!" I felt trapped praying fervently to leave Egypt and practice my faith in Christ. Father of comfort, you never left me. Please remind me of your Son hanging on the cross crying out in the depth of agony," My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" Lord Jesus, they all forsook you, and yet You found rest in Your Father. I need to depend on the Father as you did."

After 3 years, I decided to move to Cairo which was not any safer. The last time the police had arrested me they said, "According to us, you are an infidel who has committed high treason. Next time we arrest you, it will be capital punishment." To make it worse, the "Christian" landlord told me he could not shelter a fugitive criminal anymore. I was not welcome in my own country anymore. Nevertheless, the Lord intervened, and a Palestinian evangelist, Anis Shorosh, introduced me to Dr. Paige Patterson. He began to help me apply for a visa to the United States. At first, I was denied the visa, but Dr. Patterson did not give up. Finally, I was granted an entry visa, and I was supernaturally able to leave Egypt. Lord, You never deliver your children out of bondage to bring them back into it. Help me to live somewhere to practice my Christian faith without the police harassment. Lord, please do whatever it takes so I don't have to live in an environment where people would force me to go into the mosque. You want your children to worship freely even if this means fleeing for their lives like me so that Christ becomes all in all. If it had not been for Dr. Patterson, I would have been history today. I was scheduled to be executed, and God saw that He had more work for me to do. So, he used Dr. Patterson in supernaturally rescuing my life. God Almighty is a Father of the fatherless (Psalm 68:5), and when my father and mother forsake me, as David declares, the LORD holds me to Himself. Is God the Almighty, Your Heavenly Father, my friend? (Galatians 4:6) God the Almighty and Majestic One delights in you personally (Proverbs 8:31).

Having fled to the United States, I was still afraid that I would have to face the Egyptian police authorities someday, especially in view of the fact that I came on a student visa, which could expire any day. According to the Egyptian government I am an infidel who has defamed Islam as well as caused national disunity. Allah alone knows how I have no hard feelings towards either Egypt, the motherland, or Islam. Preachers offered to hide me in ranches, if worse came to worse. I just wanted to live and not to be the scapegoat of somebody's religious wrath. One ministry organization sponsored me and sent a petition for my permanent residency. After six long years of waiting, the Lord honored my request by giving me permanent residence a few days before the wedding day, April 18,1998.

I did not want anybody to falsely accuse me that I married a woman so that I may get a green card. I have married Angela for her own sake, and not for the sake of getting a green card. I give Angela all of me, for the source of our love is divine. It is never a fleeting emotion, but a covenant in which

the LORD is the Witness between me and the wife of my youth, my partner and my best friend. (Malachi 2:14) Here it is the time for me to praise God for the gift of marriage. It is when I abandoned myself to God and the godly desire of marriage that he brought along Angela. Angela is the angel of God to my heart. She is beautiful both internally and externally. We both share the same vision in manifesting the love of Christ to our Muslim brothers and sisters. I did not compromise for less than what I knew Allah wanted me to have: Angela is a woman of prayer, caring affectionate, hospitable, giving and gregarious. She is perfect for me. I revel in the fact that she loves my parents and gives sacrificially to them. Lord, what did I do to be treated with such extravagant kindness of yours that you give me a wife who loves me and my family?

The Lord honored me for putting Him above my desire to have a wife, and now we are a praying couple. Indeed, our Creator and Redeemer is our ultimate Matchmaker. Lord, may I never be secure or seek easiness in life at the expense of union with You. Didn't you tell us Lord, "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved" (Mark 13:13)? Please don't let me rush your salvation, Lord, in the midst of trouble, but please give me patience so I can endure hardships as a soldier of the cross of Christ! Lord, may Your love consume me to such an extent that the doing of your will would be the real bread of my life. In Christ's name, amen! My friends, please feel free to contact me through my email at JesusVictr@aol.com

Aaron's Testimony

Aaron's Testimony

By Aaron Abramson

In 1990, my family moved from the United States to Israel. I was fifteen and had no idea that the most difficult time in my life lay ahead.

My parents, who are originally from Detroit, Michigan, are Jewish believers in Y'shua (Jesus). They came to believe during the "Jesus Movement" in the early seventies. Some years later, they moved to Seattle. Being the first of six kids, I was always the first to experience things—including Y'shua. When I was around twelve, we began going to a Messianic congregation to learn more about our Jewish roots. About a year later, I carried on an old family tradition by having my bar mitzvah, but began a new tradition by giving this one a Messianic flavor. My Haftarah* portion was Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." It was only years later, though, that the true meaning of these words changed my life.

(*The traditional reading from the prophetic books of the Bible which follows the reading from the Torah.)

When we moved to Israel, we lived in a settlement called Neve Tsuf where I found only a handful of people my age. I was spiritually dry, and found myself seeking answers in an Orthodox yeshiva. Within eight or nine months, I was completely fed up and confused. I left feeling empty. The God I had once believed in seemed far away, if He even existed.

The following year, I was drafted into the Israeli Army and served as an armored transport technician in the paratrooper unit. However, my mind was on other things. I began playing music with Ofer, a great friend from Neve Tsuf. I was constantly playing the guitar and drinking whenever I had the time. I had moved out of my parents' home but they knew the kind of life I was living. They left literature about Y'shua around my room and asked many people to pray for me.

About a year after we were released from the army, Ofer and I decided to travel as most Israelis do after their years of service. Inspired by some old Jack Kerouac books, we flew to California and soon found ourselves roaming the country in an old Ford van with a couple of sleeping bags and some very strange philosophical ideas. I have come to believe that during that year, God miraculously preserved us from many hazards. One such miracle occurred in the dry hills of Arizona. I was lost with no water, and after searching for our campsite hour after hour in the sun, dehydration began causing hallucinations. I leaned against a rock in the scorching sun and lost consciousness for some time. When I woke, a basin-shaped stone filled with clear cold water was sitting right in front of me.

I drank, was refreshed and before long, I found my campsite. I knew that God must have been with me. Soon after, while attending a musical performance, I suddenly became aware of an evil presence. Most of the lyrics were putting down Y'shua and His message. I realized as never

before that evil forces exist, and that they react for some reason to Jesus. I recalled that the day before we left Israel, a believer had told me, "You need to make up your mind about Jesus, because if you're not with Him, you're against Him." That really shook me up.

Upon returning to Israel, I realized that if God loved me, I wanted to be with Him. I told Him that if Y'shua could help me overcome my sin, I would follow Him always. Guess what? Y'shua not only wiped my slate clean, but He enabled me to break free of my bad habits. Only then did I understand the words of Isaiah that I read in my Haftarah portion many years before. Not only that, I discovered that my best friend, Ofer, had made an independent commitment to Y'shua as well.

Since then, I have been blessed with the most amazing wife, Vicky, and great relationships with my family members. Most importantly, I have a personal relationship with God and want to share His love with others.

Dan's Testimony

Dan's Testimony

By Dan Sered

I was born in Israel on the holiest of Jewish festivals, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. My upbringing was in a secular home where we followed the traditions and kept the holidays, but these observances had little meaning to me. We rarely went to synagogue. My parents taught me that the Bible was full of fairy tales and that men created God, not vice versa. Even so, something prevented me from believing that. I knew that God was real and the Bible was true, but I did not know much more than that.

I learned much about my Jewishness while preparing for my bar mitzvah. I even considered attending synagogue regularly; however, I felt there was something missing. I knew we were supposed to be waiting for the Messiah, but it seemed futile. After my bar mitzvah, I attended synagogue just as rarely as before, and soon lost interest in serving God.

When I was fifteen, our family moved from Israel to New York. After graduating high school there, I enrolled in Stony Brook University, where I majored in math and also tutored the subject. One day a student named Dinah came to me with a math question. After I finished helping her, she commented on my accent. I explained that I was Israeli and she enthusiastically replied, "I am Jewish, too!" She introduced herself and we began talking.

At some point in the conversation, she told me that she believed in Y'shua. I had never heard that name before, so I asked who she was talking about. She told me that Y'shua is the Hebrew name for Jesus. As soon as I heard that, it made perfect sense to me. Y'shua in Hebrew means "salvation." Now if Jesus is salvation, I reasoned, it may be that he is the Messiah and I would not have to wait anymore.

Dinah and I made plans to meet the following Monday for lunch. Over lunch, she showed me Old Testament passages that pointed to Jesus. By that afternoon, it was clear to me that Jesus was the Messiah. I wondered what my parents would say. I told Dinah that I couldn't accept Jesus until I told my parents, since it would be the most important decision of my life. I was afraid, and it took me a couple of days to tell them. Incredibly, they did not seem very concerned and said something to the effect of, "You'll grow out of it." Later, I found out that Dinah's family and congregation had been praying that my parents would not react too negatively. The next day, I described what happened and told Dinah, "I believe, I believe!"

Dinah explained that I needed to ask God to forgive my sins and make a personal commitment to Y'shua. Later that day, I did. Over the next three months, my parents came to realize that I was not merely going through a "stage" and became extremely upset. My mother went through my room and threw out everything having to do with Jesus—including entire Bibles. Sadly, there was no way I could stay in my parents' home and also live out my faith. Leaving was a source of great

grief for me. It is ironic that my parents spared no expense attempting to bring me "back" to Judaism and to a God they don't believe in. They also exerted pressure to prevent my recent marriage to Dinah; we hope that their failure to dissuade us may have ended their fight for my faith. We have yet to see, but one thing I know: God, in His great mercy and love, has preserved me.

Not Even A Minyon

Not Even A Minyon

By Ellen Zaretsky

When I was six years old, my world changed. If I had remained in the city of my birth, Buffalo, New York, my neighbors, my friends, my surroundings, my culture, most associations would have been Jewish in the way that my parents' and their parents' associations were Jewish. But when I was six, my family moved South (of Buffalo, anyway) to a town called East Aurora. This was a town where the Jewish population numbered six: my father, my mother, my two sisters, my brother and myself, with my grandfather making seven during the spring and summer months. It was there that I grew up -- in a friendly, educated, upper-middle class, but non-Jewish environment. I was a part of this community, yet in a way separate. Being Jewish made me different.

Our town had no synagogue, and my parents weren't particularly "religious" Jews, so I wasn't brought up in a traditionally Jewish way. I lived in a world of gentile friends, gentile culture, Santa Claus, Christmas carols and Christmas trees, Easter bunnies and colored egg-filled baskets, and churches to which much of the community went on Sunday.

But I was also influenced by a culture and heritage not shared by my peers. These things were shared by my family...The trips into Buffalo to spend time with relatives and participate in events of Jewish life, such as going to Temple services on holidays, lighting Hannukah candles, going to Bar Mitzvahs and weddings, eating special foods, listening to stories on Jewish life told by my grandfather, and general association with my people.

"I was part of this community, yet in a way separate. Being Jewish made me different."

The special times affirmed to me that I was different because I was Jewish and that being Jewish meant there were certain things in my day-to-day life which were "not for us." After all, could my parents, my grandfather, and all my relatives have taught me wrong? And the most obvious "not for us" was Jesus. My Jewish world said Jesus was a good teacher and nothing more; my gentile world was fairly quiet on the subject.

But who was this Jesus? "Never mind," I was told. "He's for 'them,' not 'us.' " I accepted this answer and decided that as a Jew, I didn't need Jesus.

Years later in college, into my life came a girl who was different from other gentiles I had known while growing up. This Jesus was important to her and her friends. He made a difference in their lives. She talked a lot about Him -- telling me that He was the one of whom the Jewish prophets spoke, the one who was born to die for the iniquities of the people, the one who was resurrected, offering eternal life to those who believe in Him...

She told me about this Jesus, this one who wasn't allowed to be a part of my Jewish world. No, my life had no room for Him. After all, if He was who she said He was, why had my parents, my

grandfather, my relatives told me otherwise? Yet I was faced with the words of Jesus, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6.)

"My Jewish world said Jesus was a good teacher and nothing more..."

Could it be true? Could I even consider the possibility that he was the Messiah? I felt guilty for even considering that this might be true. What would they say if they thought I was nibbling at the forbidden fruit? Would I be betraying my family and heritage if I believed in Jesus? Even so, part of me wanted to know the truth, even if it meant that the truth was Jesus.

So I prayed. I asked God if Jesus were indeed His Son and my Messiah. I told my Father in Heaven that I knew He would want me to believe in Jesus if all that I had read, all that I had been told about Jesus were true. I asked God to reveal the truth to me and help me understand. While the answer God gave me was not a convenient one for me, I knew it was true. And He has helped me to understand. Jesus did fulfill our Jewish scriptures. The guilt I felt for considering a belief that my family and culture dictated was "not for me" was no longer an issue. I found that I wasn't betraying my heritage; I wasn't "going over to the other side" after all. Jesus is for us; He is on our side, and I now believe in the greatest Jew who ever lived! And how can any Jew feel guilty for believing what the Jewish prophets foretold?

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me he who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Micah 5:1.(5:2 in Jewish Scriptures.)

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31.)

WHY HIM?

WHY HIM?

By Erkin

This question was the beginning of my journey. At the beginning of 1995, I felt a sudden hunger to learn about God. I was from a secular Muslim background and never questioned my own faith or other spiritual matters before. Due to the nature of my job, most of the time I was in my car, was listening to a new found Christian radio station and hearing many times about the virgin birth of Jesus. I asked myself why it was only him who was born this way. At that time I did not have any Bible and there was not anybody to talk about this. Also during the whole process nobody ever witnessed to me. I decided to call my parents in Turkey and asked them to mail me a Koran in Turkish. When my Koran arrived, I was shocked to read that Koran also told the story of this event in Sura Al-i Imran 3:47 and 3:59. That increased my curiosity and decided to search for the truth. At one point at my work place I asked another Muslim friend the question "Why him?"

He answered that basically God is capable to do anything and he did such a miracle for him. I was not satisfied with that response because even though he was right that God is able to do anything, I still thought that there must be a special reason and He kind of wanted us to understand something very important.

My search between that radio station and the Koran continued for about six months and I was completely exhausted and was still not sure of who Jesus is. At that point I was tired of searching and almost ready to drop everything. Then something came to my mind: I had done everything on my own but had never prayed or asked His help. That day I had an in some ways childish prayer. Basically I said, "Lord I don't want to sin against You, and I want to know who Jesus is, and why only him, please help me."

Three days passed and I even forgot about this prayer. At night I came home from work and I was very tired from my day's work. I expected to have a deep sleep. But contrary to my expectation I was waking up every 15 minutes and every time just before I opened my eyes some written message was moving on my forehead. After 4 or 5 of those wake ups. I went to my work room at home. And asked the Lord, "Are you trying to tell me something?" Suddenly the answer of that question came and He spoke to my heart that "He had a virgin birth because He had to be sinless to pay for your sins." I was amazed that even though it seemed the reasoning was so easy to find I was not able to do on my own. That night I went to my knees and I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

Since that day the Lord gave me a great peace and assurance that I am His child and will be always with me and lead me. I have never seen this as a conversion from one religion to another. Finally I was able to know His holiness and His purpose for my life. I always tell people, the meaning of the word Muslim is the one who submits to God and by accepting the Lamb, He provided for us, we are all one. And also I strive to be a good Christian which means little Christ or

Messiah.

In June 1998, I started a ministry for friends with Muslim background and reaching people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. So we may all be a good servants to the living God of whole universe. Feel free to contact with us. God bless you and protect you.

In His service,

Erkin

FROM THE MOSQUE TO THE MESSIAH

FROM THE MOSQUE TO THE MESSIAH

By Hussein

When I was eighteen years old, I entered a large public university. Soon, it became obvious to me that many students were there to obtain a degree, find a high-paying job, and get rich. Others were interested in amassing intellectual knowledge. And, many students desired to go out drinking and partying on the weekends while others were trying to find satisfaction through relationships with girlfriends.

None of these things were new to me, but for the first time in my life, I started to consider for what I was living and why I was alive. I saw in my own heart the same selfish motives that I saw in those around me. It became a period of thinking and searching - a crossroad in my life.

At that point, there seemed like so many directions in which to turn. I started to read different books on philosophy, meditation, religion and history. As a member of the university soccer team, I tried to improve my ability through constant practice, hoping that maybe I would find fulfillment in athletics. I even went one semester without eating meat!

On one occasion, I happened to acquire a Bible. Since I was reading many other books, I figured that it wouldn't hurt to read it, too. I began reading the story of how God created the heavens and the earth. But very little of the Bible made sense to me. Nevertheless, I read on into the New Testament (Injil) about the life of Jesus Christ. I was surprised that the life of such a famous prophet was contained in such a short book. You can imagine how much more surprised I was that the entire story of Jesus' life, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection was completed in a few pages! The account was then retold by three more authors! Despite some confusion, I felt strangely drawn to this prophet, Jesus, who suffered at the hands of disbelievers.

Up until that point in my life, I had never been to a Christian church. My father was an immigrant from Iran and my American mother had converted to Islam. From the time we were little, my brother, sister and I would go to the mosque (Islamic Center) with my parents every week. There we learned about God, his prophets, his books, his angels, the day of judgement, and life after death. We also learned surahs (verses) and prayers from the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. The teacher recorded how many of the thirty-five prayers we had completed during the week.

Like many teenagers, as I grew older, I began to lose interest in religion. I became more interested in playing sports, going to parties, and having fun. This continued through my high school years. By the time I was ready to go to college, most of these activities, too, had already begun to seem empty and meaningless to me. This brings me back to my first year at the university. The more I began to read about Jesus in the Holy Injil, the more I began to believe. A great struggle issued. Confused and desperate, I often cried out to God, "Was Christianity, Islam, or some other faith the true faith?"

I also began to wonder if I was going to heaven after I died. In Islam, as well as in many other religions, a person would go to heaven if his good deeds outweighed his bad deeds. Poor Fred! I had already realized that I was a selfish person. No amount of willpower could help me live up to the standards of Holy God.

Then, I read in the Holy Injil that Jesus said we must trust that He, Himself, would change our hearts: "Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin ... If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:34,36). This was a different message! God knew that we are all sinful, but He is so merciful that He sent Jesus to set us free.

Little by little, I began to believe more strongly in Jesus as the Savior. Instead of trying to overcome my sinful ways solely by my own willpower, I now felt that I didn't want to live like I used to. Jesus had changed my heart! Before I realized it, I had stopped cursing and partying. More importantly, I felt my heart being changed from within as I turned away from selfishness toward Jesus.

As I returned to college for my sophomore year, I began to look for other people who had an experience similar to mine. Although the great majority of Americans profess to be Christians, I realized that only a small minority of them really know and love God.

Soon enough, I saw a sign about a Christian meeting on campus. I attended this meeting, although I felt somewhat awkward. I soon realized that God was as real and important to these people as he was to me. Eventually, I began going to the small church that organized these Christian meetings on campus.

As I expressed my heart to God in prayer and read more about Jesus in the Holy Injil, my faith began to grow. Sometimes I would go through times of doubting whether God was near to me, but he always proved Himself faithful.

Once, a Muslim scholar came to the university to give a lecture about "Muhammad in the Bible." He claimed that the Bible actually points to Muhammad as the prophet who was to come after Jesus. Again, I became confused. I delved into Bible study using the Muslim scholar's pamphlets and I found that his conclusions were either incorrect or taken out of context. Jesus had indeed been crucified for our sins once and for all. He is the "author and finisher" of truth and faith.

Since then, I have married my Christian wife. We have dedicated our lives to serving Christ and sharing His life and love with others.

Mohammed's Testimony

Mohammed's Testimony

By Mohammed

I was born in Pakistan into a Muslim family. Most members of my family are devout Muslims, so that I was brought up in the traditional way of studying the Qur'an and prayers etc. I would have happily stuck with being a Muslim had I known it was the true way to salvation, to reaching the kingdom of God.

What then brought about the change in my life?

Firstly you recite the Qur'an like a Parrot and don't understand anything that is written in it, most Muslim critics will tell you that it is good to do this purely on the basis of reading it to please God which is wrong and has no basis whatsoever.

The fact of the matter is that their thinking is seriously flawed as you should read the Qur'an in your language of upbringing and understand what you read, obviously if you did then you would find the things that they don't want you to know like what the prophet Muhammad is up to in his life time namely marrying his adopted son's wife after Zaid divorces her for the prophet's pleasure, marrying a 9yr old Aisha amongst a few things.

Obviously these things would raise serious questions about the so called greatest prophet of God.

It was the inner self-consciousness looking and searching for something missing in my life.

I had everything, education, success, car, house, anything a person could ask for but there was an inner emptiness that longed to be filled.

I knew that my life was not meant to be just this but I was meant to be something like a leader and in the last two years this urge even became more stronger, but what or who was I suppose to lead, I certainly didn't envision politics although the opportunities arose and I rejected to stand for this type of trash, lying and keeping people in the dark to promote your party for the sake of money and power.

I used to pray, fast, give charity, but these did not give me the peace I needed. I was reciting the Qur'an and reading some suras that an uncle of mine had given me to read on a regular basis to strengthen my soul and be in close companionship with God but no it was all in vain.

I wasn't looking at Christianity as a religion to follow and I had never in my life read the Bible although our elders believed in all the past scriptures but we did not have a Bible namely old Testament (Torah) and New Testament (Injil). To us Christianity was akin to the Western life style of self abuse which I understood to be following Christianity.

It is perceived in Islamic society that if you pray five times a day and stick to the pillars of Islam then you are a good Muslim and anything you do or say is true. We have a lot of hypocrites who have been following this path and yet their real lives reflect a total disregard to humanity as such.

Look at Pakistan's elite, look at their background. They are so called good Muslims but they commit the worst offences known. Does anybody question them? Of course not! If you did then you might disappear mysteriously. People's rights are suppressed, freedom is just a word without meaning. There is no real freedom because you can't speak your mind.

When I looked around myself and my Muslim background I realised that most of the Muslims' preached to do good but did they practice it themselves? Absolutely not! When it came to money matters, money was more a priority to them than humanity or reasoning. On the one hand they would tell you to pray five times a day and on the other there is so much hypocrisy around.

Is it really opposite to religious teaching or was I wrong in what I had been told by elders?

If we look at Islam, Jihad is part of Islam, forced conversion to Islam in Muslim dominated countries, persecution of Christians, Muslims believe in visiting shrines of Pirs giving money and food, it's like giving bribe to God!

So was I wrong about the religious teaching of Islam and how wrong I was beginning to find out more and more.

They believe corruption in Pakistan was taught by the British Raj in India but the reality is that people are greedy by nature and this is been going on since centuries even before the British set foot on Indian soil.

If we are following a true religion and a pure religion then it should put love into our hearts, humility and care for fellow persons not hate and contempt?

If we are not born like this then something is not quite right here, either the religion or the person but not every person can be wrong or can they?

People in Islam who have gone and done the Hajj, think about themselves as being very pious. They think their sins are forgiven, they are better than any other person who hasn't been to Hajj and that they are like a new born child, but when I look at these people's morals they are so bad, they cannot speak for justice, they show a completely different person from the inside. This is not true for every Hajji but majority are like this.

Now most Muslims will make the excuse that the religion is good but it is Muslims who are bad and not Islam and that they don't practice their religion properly but when you look at Islamic history then you find out the real truth that it is Arab imperialism and it comes from the heart of the religious teachings.

Jesus Christ said Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits and here we see it in Muhammad's followers.

Look at what they are doing around the world, Afghanistan banning all women from going outside, human abuse calling for Islamic values and all that.

Killing and persecuting Christians by Muslims, killing and persecuting Christians in Egypt, Pakistan, India and Indonesia to name a few places seems common today.

The only peace can come from Jesus Christ and nobody else, not Muhammad prophet, not Buddha, not Ram.

Jesus Christ is the prince of Peace, look at his life and look at Muhammad prophets life and do a comparison!

We have two different worlds, here is God himself in the flesh showing how we should lead our life and there is Muhammad prophet manipulating people for his benefit, telling his followers that if you fight and die then you will go to heaven, that if you loot and pillage then you are forgiven and appeasing Allah the most merciful one.

Jesus Christ said to love your fellow humans not kill them, he never asked to lift the sword or fight for religion but on the other hand Muhammad prophet asked to kill anyone who doesn't convert to Islam or else take Jizya tax from them.

Yes most will tell you look at Christians, aren't they hypocrites?

Well of course they are but do they follow Jesus Christ and his teachings, a big NO!

Jesus Christ said to love your enemies, pray for them who persecute you but these people do the opposite, they are not followers of Christ at all.

The church has become Apostate, bishops tell you that it is ok for men to lie with men and that we do not believe in the divinity of Jesus or resurrection.

God says very clearly that he does not allow this and he intervened in the past to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of this.

Are we now to rest our faith on these Bishops and Popes?

Of course not, we should follow our Lord Jesus Christ and his teachings as he lay them down.

You read the Qur'an, Hadith and the Islamic history and see what crimes Muhammad prophet committed against humanity and how he forced his brutal customs on people and subject them to death if they did not follow his religion.

How he had the people against him Murdered one by one like a gangster, look at the story of Asma bint Marwan:

In Yathrib (Medina), Muhammad had a number of people killed. One of them was 'Asma' bint Marwan. Her crime was that she spoke out against Muhammad for having another man murdered named Abu Afak who was 120yrs old.

This clearly shows you the outright disregard his followers had for humanity that they killed a mother who had five children, Muhammad prophet couldn't care less for instigating the crime.

I decided to learn more about Islam and it was when I was browsing a Muslim news group that I came across this testimony.

At this point I only wanted to learn about Islam and still no thought had ever occurred to me about becoming a Christian.

I was enlightened by what I read and it confirmed my fears regarding Islam, of what I used to think. What will happen if what I follow is not the truth?

Would I then go to hell?

I didn't consider myself to be a saint anyway but surely we have to ask for forgiveness of our mistakes and pray to God for salvation?

Muhammad prophet preached to do good and avoid bad but how much good is enough for God as he is holy, if he based his forgiveness on good deeds alone then the Hindus also preach Good and so do the Buddhists, that means they are eligible for heaven as much as Muslims or Jews.

Not all of these can be the correct from the same God or we are all following the wrong God who doesn't care which road you take to reach him.

I found the answer in the Bible (Torah):

Isaiah 64:6

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Basically the prophet Isaiah was saying that doing good deeds is not good enough and it is like filthy rags in front of the sight of God as he is a holy God and we cannot appease him just by doing good deeds, we still cannot enter Heaven.

This was further clarified of how to go to heaven as God had decided to descend on earth in the form of Jesus Christ to sacrifice himself in the human form to save us all as only Jesus Christ was sinless and his blood would atone or cover our sins and let us in to heaven guaranteed if we believe in him.

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 11:25

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.

I was shocked at first, had I been following a religion that is false and if the Bible is really the truth then what do I do?

I then decided to do some extensive research on both the Bible and the Qur'an and my findings really shocked me.

I checked both Christian and Muslims sources combined with Non Muslim and Non Christian sources.

It proved that the Bible had plenty of non Christian + historical evidence and internal evidence such as the fulfilled prophecies in the past so accurately fulfilled that only God's finger prints could do this.

We have to acknowledge our sins and call upon Jesus Christ as our saviour and redeemer to atone us for our sins and let us enter the Gate.

This is why prophet Isaiah prophesied this fact 500yrs before his birth:

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Prophet Isaiah clearly tells us who Jesus Christ is, that he is God and prince of peace and that his government never ends.

Isaiah 53:3

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

In the above verses prophet Isaiah tells the people how Jesus Christ will be afflicted for our sins and crucified to save our sins.

How in order to save us that Jesus Christ has to do this and there was a lot of prophecy in the above verses which all came true.

Satan thought that he was going to humiliate Jesus on the Cross but little did he realise that Jesus would defeat Satan forever to free us from his stronghold and give us eternal life.

Muslims become ignorant of these facts and say that how can Jesus be God, well I have shown you some of the many verses in the Bible which tell us why Jesus was God and how he was crucified and then resurrected to go back to heaven.

Muslims don't understand Salvation in the terms Christians do anyway. They think as long as they do good deeds then they will go to heaven. They don't understand the notion of born in sin. Some even believe that Muhammad (prophet) has had his Sunni sect forgiven from God and that after some punishment we will all go to heaven. They have decided this for themselves even though Qur'an does not advocate this. Some commonly believe that if you have one of your children recite the Qur'an and know all of it by memory to become a Hafiz then their seven generations are forgiven and they will go to heaven. This is of course all nonsense as the Qur'an nowhere states this to be the case, it is just Jahalat (illiteracy).

In fact this is what Muhammad prophet had to say on this issue when his disciples asked him about going to heaven in the Qur'an:

Sura 46:9

I don't know what will happen with me or you so how can I tell you if you will go to heaven or not.

I completed my research with an open mind.

I checked if Muhammad prophet was a prophet prophesied by God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and also if Qur'an is the last revelation given to us by God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

They try to justify this by saying that the Bible is corrupt and yet historical and Biblical evidence point to the accuracy of the Bible, in fact there is no historical evidence to point to the Qur'an as the truth as the earliest manuscript of the Qur'an is from the 8th Century although it was collected and brought together in the 6th century around about 640 AD by Caliph Usmaan.

The Qur'an contains material which existed some 600 yrs before it arrived on the scene which were heretical and legendary before the Qur'an was canonised so therefore it cannot be and quote is not divine.

I found that Islam is not the truth and I was very disturbed by my findings.

Even Muhammad prophet did not know the true name of God Yahweh which he gave to Moses as Jews don't speak of this considering it to be very sacred. They refer to God as Elohim so this reason explains why Muhammad did not know the name even though he traded amongst the Jewish people in Arabia.

The struggle had begun inside of me, what should I do?

A belief that I had held all this time had turned out to be a lie and false altogether and the evidence was too strong to convict me that this is the case.

I thought to myself that maybe I should remain as I am and not convert but not practice Islam either as it is false.

I didn't wanted to follow Jesus Christ because I reasoned if I change then what will my family think and what about the community?

I struggled with these thoughts for a couple of weeks. There was an inner battle inside me that said embrace the truth and one which said stick to the family values. I was more concerned with my family's thoughts then the truth.

Eventually the answer came. Embrace the truth whatever the cost and this is when I accepted Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord. It was a hard decision but one which has led me to the right path to the truth and grace of Jesus Christ.

After the conversion, how have I changed?

Well my search has come to an end, I feel an inner peace I never experienced before and no more inner conflict. I feel better as a person towards others.

I was baptised in my fellowship on Dec 13th 1998. Obviously I want others to know the truth but they are not interested in that. They think what they and their forefathers have been following is the truth. I hate to think what will happen to them but they don't listen for according to the Bible

these people walk in darkness and will not be allowed to go to heaven.

They will be separated for eternity from the presence of God so it is not a case of the Muslim doctrine that you get punished and then go to heaven, in fact you do not go to heaven period.

The cost will be very high for their mistake, life after the grave spent outside heaven for eternity not just for a short while.

Their rituals and customs will not take them to heaven!

Jesus gives us the answer in the Injil:

John 8:23-24

He said to them, "You are from beneath. I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. I said therefore to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins."

The struggle has just started, not finished, obviously all my immediate family turned against me but that was expected by me so it is nothing new! I have explained my faith to them, had several discussions with various people, had invited couple of my Christian friends in to debates to discuss with them what the Bible teaches. In the end it is up to them but I am sticking to my chosen and truthful path.

I pray for all the Muslims that they come to know the one true God that loves them all so they don't perish in their pride and bloated egos.

Everyday I get more and more knowledgeable about the Bible, I have had several debates on the internet with fellow Muslims, they cannot answer my questions and try to constantly attack the Bible but I can prove time and time again the authenticity of the Bible through historical evidence and Biblical evidence.

Muslims are playing a fool hearty game of first saying that the Bible is corrupt and then trying to find Muhammad prophesied in the Bible, it doesn't work that way as he is not prophesied anywhere in the Bible.

Read about some of Muhammad prophets brutalities here for those that think he was very good!

<http://www.debate.org.uk/topics/coolcalm/brutality.html>

The Muslims have closed their eyes and ears so don't want to listen and hold to their lifeless faith.

Isaiah 6:9

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

The Good news:

One of my brothers has become a believer of Jesus Christ and another is listening closely.

No more attacks from my family, they have accepted me as I am, life goes on as normal.

Who knows, someday they may realise and change.

May God give them guidance and wisdom to discern the truth.

Mohammed

My Faith Journey from Islam into Christianity

My Faith Journey from Islam into Christianity

By Yücel

I was born in Turkey, and was raised as a Muslim. Islam was my belief, culture and identity. I never had a doubt about Islam. I believed in the Koran and the last prophet with all my heart.

I wanted to be a Muslim, not because I was born in a Muslim family but because Islam is the truth. Therefore, I decided to learn about other religions. I was wondering why other people do not believe in Islam. I looked for people who believe in different religions.

I read the Koran, and I was stunned when I read that Christians will go to Hell directly because they make Jesus equal to God! (See, e.g., They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah hath forbidden Paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers [Qur'an, The Table (5):72, Pickthall's translation]). I could not understand that. Isn't it God's religion? Didn't God send Jesus? Why did God send Jesus who seems like a useless prophet who could not teach?

Jesus could not complete his mission as a prophet, people misunderstood him by calling him God, and at the end God had to save him from crucifixion. So why did God send Jesus?

I felt sorry about my Christian friends. I thought I should learn about Christianity so that I could help my Christian friends.

I bought a New Testament, and started reading. My real purpose was to find the mistakes. I did not start from the beginning. I began reading some chapters in the letters. As I was reading, I really liked the idea that when you marry your body belongs to your spouse, and his/her body belongs to you. I saw that the New Testament gives great importance to the women (It is not making them second class people). And I realized that I might not find mistakes but become very interested in Christianity. Therefore, I stopped reading that book.

One day my friend told me that he had a Christian friend, who talks about Jesus. I asked his phone number and called him. He invited me to a Christian meeting at the church. When I went there I saw that there were Christian Turks at that meeting. I could not believe that because how could a Turk become a Christian in a country in which they could easily learn about Islam? I thought that these Christian Turks were socially weak and could not exist themselves, therefore they were involved in such an activity.

However, I enjoyed going to these meetings because I could ask questions and discuss about religions. The second week I also invited my best friend to this meeting.

One day, this Christian friend invited me and my best friend to his house to watch a movie called "Jesus". During the movie I expected that Jesus would say "A prophet will come after me and you

shall believe in him". Surprisingly he did not say that.

I realized that the Christianity I discovered was different from the one I thought that I knew. This time, I started reading the New Testament again. When I read the New Testament, I realized that I have to believe either Jesus or Mohammed. Jesus said, He is the only way. But Mohammed said he is the last prophet.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6 Then I asked one of my friends if he could show me predictions about Jesus in the Old Testament. He gave me a list of verses, and I read those verses in the Old Testament. Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Psalm 2 and many others. These verses were about a coming Messiah, Jesus, and His crucifixion.

At this point I had clearly seen that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. However I was afraid of making an eternal mistake. And I found a way

People believe in different religions and all these religions can not be true. Intelligence is not enough to find God. However, I thought if I pray to God and give this responsibility to God then I should not worry about it. Because I believe that people can make mistakes but God does not. My prayer was similar to this:

God, I want to know you, I want to serve you, I am not seeking the pleasure of paradise, or some religious respect among others, but I only want to know you. I do not want to make a mistake. Please show yourself so that I may know that you are God.

After this prayer, in those weeks, I had a different experience in my life. When I opened the Bible the answer of my questions were right in front of my eyes. I asked for several signs from God to show me that I should follow Jesus. And he always showed those signs.

In 1994, I decided to follow Jesus. Since then, God always increased my faith in Him.

Do you really want to know God? Open your heart for the truth, pray and watch!

Yücel

The Story of Zia Nodrat

The Story of Zia Nodrat

By Zia Nodrat

In Kabul, Afghanistan, during 1964, a fourteen year old boy, Zia Nodrat, enrolled in the NOOR Institute for the Blind. He already knew the whole Qur'an by heart. In Western terms that would be like an English speaker memorizing the complete New Testament in Greek, since Arabic was not Zia's mother tongue. He completed the six primary grades of the Institute in three years.

While attending his classes in Braille in the Institute for the Blind, Zia also mastered English. He did this by listening and repeating what he heard on a transistor radio. With the help of a small ear plug, he heard programs coming into Afghanistan from other countries. He eventually started asking questions about what he had heard, such as, "What do you mean by the substitutionary atonement?" He had heard such theological concepts during Christian radio broadcasts like the Voice of the Gospel coming from Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Africa.

Finally, he shared with a few persons that he had received Jesus the Messiah as his personal Saviour. They asked him if he realized that he could be killed for this, since the Islamic Law of Apostasy for anyone leaving Islam is death. He answered, "I have counted the cost and am willing to die for the Messiah, since He has already died on the cross for me."

Zia then became the spiritual leader of the few Afghan Christians. In the Institute for the Blind in Kabul, the students elected him as the president of their association. But the next year after it was known that he had become a Christian, he lost the election for this position. One of his Christian teachers told him how sorry she was that he lost. He replied, quoting the prophet John the Baptist who said of Jesus, "He must become greater, I must become less" (John 3:30). His goal in life was not to seek prominence for himself, but to be a humble servant of his Lord. Zia's father said that before he had entered the Institute for the Blind, he had been like a cold and unlit piece of charcoal. After his experience there, he had become like a red hot, brightly burning coal.

Once he borrowed the English Braille copy of the Gospel of John. He opened it and read with his fingers. He then returned it and said that his question had been answered. When asked what his question was, he replied that in John 13:34 Jesus said, "A new commandment I give you that you love one another." He wondered why the Lord Jesus called it "new," since the commandment "love your neighbour as yourself" had already been given to Moses, as recorded in the Old Testament Book of Leviticus 19:18. But now he understood. He explained that until the incarnation of the Messiah the world had never before seen love personified. He went on to state that the Bible reveals that God is love, and that Jesus as God in human flesh is love incarnate. This was what made the mandate new. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you." In his perfect life Jesus has now given us a new model to follow.

Zia was the first blind student to attend regular sighted schools in Afghanistan. There he had a small recorder with which he taped everything his teachers said, so that he could go over it and learn it thoroughly. He thus became the number one student out of hundreds at his grade level. Those who failed in their classes were given a second chance to take examinations after the three month vacation. He studied the next year during this break and passed the tests. In this way he completed high school, finishing two grades each year.

Zia wanted to study Islamic Law so that he could defend Christians who might be persecuted for their faith. He therefore entered in the University of Kabul, from which he graduated with his law degree. He also studied Calvin's Institutes on the side since he wanted to grasp the concepts of this Reformation leader.

The Christoffel Blind Mission in Germany gave the Institute for the Blind in Afghanistan an extensive library of Braille books in German. Since Zia wanted to read these, along with his other classes he went to the Goethe Institute in Kabul and learned German. As the top student there too, he won a scholarship to go to Germany to study advanced German. When the Germans found out that he was blind, they withdrew the fellowship since they did not have the arrangements or accommodations for a blind person. He asked them what he would have to do. They replied that he would have to travel alone and take care of himself. When he agreed to do that, they finally accepted him. While studying there with top students from Goethe Institutes around the world, he was number one in this advanced course as well.

Zia also translated the New Testament from Iranian Persian into his own Afghan Dari dialect. This was published by the Pakistan Bible Society in Lahore. Its third edition was published by the Cambridge University Press in England in 1989. He also travelled to Saudi Arabia where he won a memory contest on the Qur'an. The Muslim judges were so amazed and chagrined that a non-Arabic speaker had taken first space, that they also awarded another prize for the best Arab in the competition. Because different blind students like Zia had become Christians, in March of 1973 the Muslim government in Afghanistan sent a written order closing the two Institutes for the Blind, one of which was in Kabul and the other seven hundred miles to the west in Herat. All the expatriate teachers of the blind along with their families were ordered to leave Afghanistan within one week. As these dedicated teachers left, God gave them a promise from Isaiah 42:16, "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

The Muslim Government then destroyed the Christian Church building in Kabul, after previously having given permission to build it. President Eisenhower had requested permission for construction of this building from King Zahir Shah on his visit to Afghanistan in 1959, since a Mosque had been built in Washington, DC for the Muslim diplomats there, and Christian diplomats and other Christians needed a place to worship on a reciprocal basis in Kabul. Christians from nations all around the world contributed toward its construction. At its dedication, the cornerstone carved in beautiful Afghan alabaster marble read: "To the glory of God 'Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood' this building is dedicated as 'a house of prayer for all nations' in the reign of H.M. Zahir Shah, May 17, 1970 A.D., 'Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone'."

When troops arrived and started knocking down the wall between the street and the Church property preparatory to destroying it, a German Christian businessman went to the mayor of Kabul, who had given the order, and said, "If your Government touches that House of God, God will overthrow your Government." This proved to be a prophecy. The mayor then sent a letter to the congregation ordering them to give the Church for destruction, since that would mean that the Government would not have to pay compensation. They replied that they could not give it to anyone since it did not belong to them. It had been dedicated to God. They also added that if the Government took it and destroyed it, they would be answerable to God.

Police, workmen and bulldozers were sent to destroy the Church. The congregation, instead of opposing, offered them tea and cookies. Christians all around the world prayed and many of them wrote letters to Afghan embassies in various nations. Billy Graham and other world Christian leaders signed a statement of concern and sent it to the King.

On July 17, 1973 the destruction of the Church building was completed. That very night the Afghan Government responsible for the destruction was overthrown in a coup. Afghans who are quick to see omens in events say that Jesus the Messiah came down from heaven and overthrew the Government because the Government had overthrown His Church. It had been a Monarchy for 227 years. That night it became a Republic, under President Daoud. In 1978 this Government was toppled by a Communist coup, followed by the Russian invasion just after Christmas in 1979. Millions of Afghans had to flee their country as refugees. One of them was heard to say, "Ever since our Government destroyed that Christian Church, God has been judging our country."

Under the Communists, the Institute for the Blind in Kabul was reopened and Zia was put in charge. He did a fine job of reorganizing it. Then pressure was brought on him to join the Communist party. He refused. One official told him that if he did not join, he might be killed. He replied that he was not afraid to be killed and asked the Communist if he were ready to die.

Finally Zia was arrested on false charges and put in the Puli Charkhi political prison outside of Kabul, where thousands were executed. There was no heat in the jail to protect the prisoners from the cold winter weather. He had to sleep on the freezing mud floor in his overcoat. A prisoner next to him was trembling with cold since he did not even have a jacket. Zia knew John the Baptist had said, "The man who has two coats should share with him who has none" (Luke 3:11). He took off his only coat and gave it to the neighbour. From then on, the Lord miraculously kept him warm every night. He slept as if he had a comforter over him.

In prison the Communists gave Zia shock treatments to try to brainwash him. The electric burns left scars on his head. But he did not give in. When he was offered the opportunity to study Russian in prison, he mastered this language also. The Communists finally freed him in December, 1985.

Following his release from prison Zia read Genesis 12: 1-3, in his Braille Bible, "The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I ... will bless you; ... and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.' " Zia felt God was calling him to leave Afghanistan to go as a missionary to Pakistan. He therefore got in touch with a friend, a blind beggar. He then dressed himself in rags. On their way out of the

country, he let his friend do all the talking, thereby concealing his identity or detection from the soldiers. They thus were able to get through the Soviet check points along the main highway from Kabul. It took them twelve days to travel the 150 miles to the Khyber Pass and then on into Pakistan.

After Zia arrived in Pakistan, he was offered an opportunity to travel to the United States to study Hebrew since he was also working on a translation of the Old Testament into his Dari language. He declined, saying he had so much to do among the Afghan refugees that he could not leave. He started an Institute for the Blind for them. He learned the main language of Pakistan, Urdu, preaching in this language in Christian churches. He furthermore completed a book of New Testament stories in Dari for children.

On March 23, 1988, Zia was kidnapped by a fanatical Muslim group, Hisbe Islami, ("the Party of Islam") and was accused of being a CIA agent because he knew English, a KGB or Khad spy because he knew Russian and an apostate from Islam because he was a Christian. He was beaten for hours with rods. A sighted person can brace and flinch when the blow comes. But a blind person cannot see the club coming and thus gets the full force, even like the torture the Lord Jesus Christ experienced when he was blindfolded and then struck (Luke 22:64). His wife and three daughters had been able to get out of Afghanistan and were with him in Pakistan at the time he was kidnapped. Soon after his wife gave birth to a beautiful boy who looks much like his father. No one knows whether Zia ever heard that he had a son.

The latest word, though not absolutely definite, is that Hisbe Islami murdered Zia. Before he was kidnapped, he had told a friend that if this party ever captured him they would kill him. This same party caught two Pakistani Christians taking relief items to needy Afghans and tortured them. Before releasing them, one of the captors stated, "We are not going to kill you the way we killed Zia Nodrat." In addition, an Afghan news reporter on the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan claims to have evidence that Hisbe Islami murdered Zia in a cruel way.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in article 13 states, "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom to manifest one's religion or belief." The story of Zia is a story of infringement of human rights. Zia has been denied his freedom and has probably been martyred for his faith. Before his capture, he asked a Christian friend that if anything happened to him, his friend would take care of his family. The friend answered in the affirmative, not realizing that a short time later Zia would be kidnapped. He was able to arrange for Zia's wife and two of his children to be brought to North America.

God does not force a belief system upon people. He has given them liberty to choose. Therefore what right does an earthly regime or group have to impose a certain belief system? Our prayer is that the new Government of Afghanistan will respect the freedom of religion which is basic to all other liberties. In the Afghan language, Dari, there is a popular Afghan proverb which substantiates this truth as it states the following in Dari, the main language of Kabul, "Isa'i badin khud, Musa'i badin khud." ("Let the followers of Jesus practise their religion, and the followers of Moses theirs.")

Jesus prophesied, "A time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God" (John 16:2). After His resurrection, He commanded His followers, "Be faithful, even to the

point of death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). If Zia has been killed for the Messiah, he has gone on to his eternal reward. And all of like precious faith will one day see him again; as the Bible promises, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:17b). Then we will be able to learn the full story of Zia's dedicated life.

W.L. Cati

W.L. Cati

By W.L. Cati

I think I always deeply believed in God. I can remember as early as four years old, when conversation about God came up around the dinner table, I would always cry. Even though I was raised in a Christian household, no one in my family really went to church or prayed other than on Easter Sunday or Christmas. I had a good family; there were no drugs, alcohol, or abuse. My father, grandfather and uncles worked hard 5-6 days a week to provide for us, and were always home on time. As a teenager I started down the wrong road, but when I was 17, I began going to church on a regular basis. It was my mother who first got me to go. She never said a word about participating in church activities, but when she began to attend regularly; I saw such a change in her over a short period of time that I had to go just to see what it was all about. In one small moment, as I knelt down at an altar, Jesus changed my whole direction and purpose in life.

Within a year's time, my whole family started going to church. I told everyone about God, my classmates, my teachers, strangers, and anyone else who would listen, it didn't matter. I saw many people follow in my footsteps. I wanted everyone to know about God, and what God meant to me.

A few years later, I strayed from my religion and was lost for many years. It was during this time that I met Mohammed, my husband. We met in a nightclub. I was there with my Aunt who had just lost her husband of 25 years to cancer. We were there to drown our sorrows. I had been divorced six weeks and was in not ready to start any kind of relationship. I was just there to have a good time with my Aunt, and to maybe dance off a pound or two.

Men continually asked me to dance. I wasn't interested. Mohammed had been watching me from across the bar. I later learned that his wife had just left him that day. He walked over to me and asked "What if a nice guy asked you to dance? Would you?" There was something about him that I liked and for some reason, I agreed to dance with him. He could dance! He twirled me, spun me, threw me, and literally swept me off my feet! It was love at first sight for me. We talked all night about many different things, but somehow managed to avoid the subject of religion. At first, he gave me a bogus name, but later that night, he finally told me his real name and where he was from. I didn't know much about his country and therefore didn't ask questions about it. I only knew it was somewhere near Egypt. From that day on, we were together almost everyday. We had our ups and downs, and our break ups, but we always got back together.

My parents were very concerned. They knew I had lost my faith but still had hopes that I would return to Jesus. They didn't approve of our relationship, and we had many battles. It got to the point where I hardly spoke to my parents. Naturally, I thought I was old enough to make my own choices without them.

Mohammed and I continued to date on and off for almost a year. Then on New Year's Eve, he asked me to marry him. I was so happy although I knew it wouldn't be an easy life together. We had been raised completely different, we had come from two different areas of the world, our religions were different, and even our reactions were different. But I loved him so much that I couldn't stand to be away from him. I experienced what seemed like physical pain inside when we were apart. He had become my whole life. I felt so secure when I was with him. My every thought centered around him, and I trusted everything he said. He was so handsome with his dark hair, dark eyes, strong build, and olive complexion. He was smart and masculine. I spent hours imagining what our children would look like.

I said yes to his question of marriage and we decided to plan it exactly one year from when we first met. He told me that for our marriage to be meaningful to him, he wanted to be married and raise his children in his religion. He believed his first marriage failed because he married a woman outside of his religion. I loved him so much, I agreed with anything he asked. I didn't realize the impact of my words until much later. He took me to the Mosque to become engaged and called his family in Syria to tell them the news.

On March 30, exactly one year and a day after we had met, we were married in the Mosque.

It was while I was expecting our first child that my husband took me to my first Deedat debate via satellite. He was very convincing and since I hadn't been practicing my beliefs for sometime, I listened to every word. That's when the doubts took over. I started asking every Muslim I knew questions about Islam. And I read all kinds of books on the religion. To honor my husband's wishes, I took on the responsibility of a teacher after our daughter was born. I went to Arabic school and Muslim school. I started reading the Koran, books on the life of Mohammad, books on the lives of all his wives and was watching all of Deedat's tapes. Six years later, I converted to Islam.

Our daughter was five and our son was two when I started covering (covering is a part of life for Islamic women), praying five times a day and fasting. During Ramadon, every year, I would go to the Mosque to pray. I read the Koran and I read all of Mohammad's teachings and books on how to be a good Muslim. I even built a Mosque in my new home, held Koran studies every week in my house, went to ladies' Koran studies every Friday and brought people to Islam.

Deep inside, something was missing. I didn't feel complete somehow. I had no joy inside myself and no real peace in my life. It seemed something was always going wrong at home. There were constant family arguments. Every time we would all get together for anything, it always ended up with fighting, yelling, fussing, and screaming, over little things. At times dishes would fly, food would fly, and one time, my husband's mother threw hot water on him. I often worried that someone was going to get killed. There was never peace. Dinner was a nightmare. On many occasions, I would have to leave the table because I couldn't stand it. Trips together were impossible; there was always a big blow up.

During one trip we all took across the country with the children, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, his wife and their child, there was fighting from the moment we started out. Half way through the trip, it got so bad that we ended up leaving my husband's brother, wife and child and going on without them. Where was God's peace, love, and joy? It wasn't in my life or my household.

By this time, my husband and I had four children: a daughter, a son and a set of twins (a boy and a girl). My mother-in-law had come for a visit and my husband, being the oldest, took on the responsibility of caring for his elderly mother. I had always gotten along with her in the past, but this trip was different. She began trying to take over my household and we started to argue. She didn't like the way I did things nor did I like the way she pushed me. She was even going through all of my personal things! It got to the point that the tension was so great and I was so angry that we didn't even speaking to each other. My poor husband was put in the middle of it all. He would come home and get it from both sides, in Arabic and English.

Things had gotten pretty well out of control around the Christmas holidays. Mohammad and I had completed building our new house in Florida less than two years before. The children and I were the only ones living in it. My husband was still in our home in Georgia traveling back and forth from Georgia to Florida while running the business in both states. He had come to join the kids and me for the holidays when I noticed he looked extremely tired. Originally, we had planned to be in Florida full time by now but it wasn't working out that way. We decided that the children and I would move back to Atlanta until all of us could be in Florida together. We closed up our new house for a while.

We were back in Atlanta only one month when a neighbor from Florida called. She was a friend and a real estate agent and she wanted to know if we would like to rent our house to a ladies group. "Sure", I said, anything for money. Little did I know who these ladies were.

My mother, a wonderful Christian lady, had been living in Florida for almost twelve years and had attended a Women's Bible Study for over nine years. My parents had rarely talked to me about my change of religion. They just loved me and silently prayed for us a lot. Every year without fail and without my knowledge, she would write a prayer request to the ladies to pray for my family and me. She told them all about me converting to Islam.

Starting in March, this group of ladies started coming into my home for one weekend each month. They saw my mother's picture on the wall with me. They saw all of the Arabic things in my home, even the Mosque we had built downstairs with the clock that chimed whenever it was time to pray. It did not take them long to put it all together and realize mine was the family in need of prayer and they started praying. They prayed all over my house. They prayed in every room, over every picture, over every thing. They prayed that I would come back to Jesus. God does work in mysterious ways.

In June, I returned for a visit. I was going through all kinds of turmoil in Atlanta. I was still fighting with my mother-in-law and very upset over the many things she had done. I was becoming extremely confused about religion. I felt God was really speaking to my heart. Out of desperation, I called a neighbor who lived down my street because I had heard she was a very devoted Christian woman. I left a message on her machine that I wanted to talk to her about God, but she was out of town for the summer and did not receive my call. But at least it was peaceful in Florida.

The children and I stayed for about a month. I called my husband in Georgia and told him that I just didn't want to live there anymore. I loved Florida and I was happy there. He said fine, but I had to go back to move again. At the end of July, I went back to pack. When I went back, my battle continued with my mother-in-law. Though when I told her of my confusion about religion, she

suggested I pray and God would show me. That was exactly what I had been doing and did He ever show me! She also said something very profound ... that my problem was that I worshipped my husband and my husband worshipped money. Boy, did that hit a nerve or two. She was right. I was worshipping him and his religion.

We were getting ready to leave and Mohammed was helping me pack up the car. I looked closely at my husband because he was holding his chest, breathing very hard and was very sweaty. I was concerned and I asked him if he was OK. He said he was just tired.

The children and I drove late into the night before we reached Florida. We got in so late that I decided to call my husband after I had slept some. I called him on Sunday while the real estate agent was there. We all talked a long time about what to sell and what to keep. I asked my husband to call me later so we could finish discussing all the little details. I got busy around the house putting things away, when I realized it was about 10 p.m. and he still hadn't called me back. I tried calling him. No one answered. I called his car phone. No answer. I concluded he may have gone somewhere for dinner and I would talk to him later. The children and I fell asleep soon after that.

Early the next morning I tried to call him again. I called the house first, no answer. The car phone, no answer. I called all the different stores. No one had heard from him. This was so unlike him. I waited another hour and made another round of calls. Still no one knew where he was. I finally broke down and called his brother. He answered and told me the same thing. I really had a bad feeling. I didn't know what happened but I could feel something wasn't right. I began to have a deep, sinking feeling and began to pace around the house. When the phone rang, it was my husband. He sounded funny. I asked him where he was, and that I had been trying to reach him since the night before. I'll never forget his words. He said, "I'm in the hospital. I had a heart attack yesterday after your call." My first question was "You're kidding me?" I couldn't believe it! I knew something was wrong, but a heart attack? He was only 36 years old. How was that possible?

He told me he was fine and that he was getting out of the hospital the next day. I tried my best to stay calm for his sake and for the children, who were now standing around me. I asked him how he could be fine and why they are letting him out of the hospital the next day? He sounded very light headed. So I asked him what I should do and he said to do nothing, he was fine. I asked him for the doctor's phone number. He wouldn't give it to me. I persisted until a nurse finally got on the phone with me. I talked with her and she gave me the doctor's number.

I called the doctor in tears. He got on the phone with me immediately, and told me that my husband was very sick and that he had a severe heart attack. He said I needed to get back to Atlanta as soon as I could because no one else could sign papers for him to have the necessary surgery. He also told me that Mohammed was on the drug Morphine, which explained his stupor.

I hung up the phone and fell apart. I tried to tell my children. I called my mother but she could barely understand me. I knew I had to calm down and that this was not going to help. I had to make some decisions and fast. Would I fly or drive? Take the children? All of them or just some of them or leave them with my parents? What to do? Mom hung up and called my dad. It was through him that we made our plans. My mother went with us so there would be another driver with me. We all packed very quickly and were on the road in less than an hour.

We made great time until we got just outside of Atlanta. They were working on the highway and cars were backed up for miles. After about an hour, I got my daughter to jump out and look down the emergency lane to see if it was blocked. This was an emergency after all! We told some truck drivers what was going on and they got on their CB radios and contacted the police. People started pulling over and made a little path for us to get through!

I dropped my mother and children off at the house and headed for the hospital. I got there about 3:30 p.m. and went in to see my husband. He was in intensive care. Here was my big, strong husband, so weak, so helpless, and so tired. He looked up at me and smiled.

He tried to reassure me that he was fine. I don't think he really knew what had happened and how serious it was. He kept telling me he was going to get out of the hospital the next day. He was on drugs and delirious. I could only stay with him a few minutes at a time. The nurse came in and told me where I could sleep, but I didn't want to leave him. She insisted that I rest. She could tell I was very tired. I went down the hall to a waiting room where the chairs made out into little beds. I tried my best to sleep so I could regain my strength. Only God knew what was ahead.

The next day, we found part of what caused the heart attack. It was a blood clot that had closed up 98% of the artery. If the blood thinner could not desolve it, Mohammed was facing surgery. The doctor kept him on medication for three days with no luck. I had gone to the house to pick up the children and my mother-in-law to bring them to the hospital. I explained to them how sick Mohammed was, then told my mother-in-law specifically not to take in any cigarettes with her into the hospital because the doctors believed that his heart attack may have been caused by smoking. I also said that he was on heavy medication and that he might search her for cigarettes. I begged her not to give any to him.

Our visit went great and as we were getting ready to leave, Mohammad insisted on walked us down the hall. He started asking his mother for cigarettes. We all shouted NO! but he grabbed her purse and started looking for one. Then right there in front of the children and me, she reached in her bra, pulled out a cigarette and handed it to him. We all screamed at her. My husband promised he wouldn't smoke it, but I didn't believe him and he wouldn't give it to me.

I had never been so angry with any one person in my whole life as I was with my mother-in-law and I couldn't hold it in. I asked her who would take care of all of us if her son dies? Then she said if God wants him to die, it is God's will. I told her to leave it to God then, he didn't need her help.

The next morning, I got to the hospital very early. When I walked into the room, I smelled smoke. Yes, it was a non-smoking room, but I smelled smoke. I looked at him and said, "Where's the cigarette?" He told me that he had only smoked two puffs. I couldn't find the rest of it. I left the room to get a cup of coffee and to talk to the nurse. She came back into the room with me to try to talk some sense into him and to get him ready for the catherization.

While we were on our way downstairs, I looked at his face. His eyes were glossy, his skin was turning ashy, and his forehead was sweaty and clammy. He was having another heart attack! This couldn't be happening! It hadn't even been 30 minutes since he smoked that cigarette. I was so upset. The doctors reassured me that he would be fine.

He came through the test and was back in his room. I again tried to get the cigarette with no luck. I stayed with him all day. In the evening, I went downstairs for a few minutes to grab some dinner and bring it back to the room. When I got back, Mohammad was standing by the window, smoking. I ran into the room and grabbed the cigarette out of his hands and flushed it down the toilet.

I knew his mother, brother and uncle were on their way to the hospital. I had not told them about what had happened in the morning. I was trying to just let it go. I got him back into the bed and started to eat my dinner with him. About 10 minutes later, that same look came over him. I called the nurse and she came running in. They sent me outside. Everyone was running here and there, coming and going with all kinds of machines. I became hysterical in the hall. Nurses were around me trying to settle me down. When his mother, brother and uncle walked up, I jumped my mother-in-law! Everyone was trying to hold me off of her. About that time, the doctor walked up. They were transporting my husband to another hospital. I told him what had happened. (I think he was ready to join in with me.) He said if I chose to make the call, I had the right to ban them all from visiting and that I should, but right now, we needed to save his life.

Everything was moving very fast. The ambulance got there and I jumped in the front seat so I could ride with my husband. I wasn't allowed to ride in the back because they were working with him. He made it to the new hospital where they did many procedures on him, including angioplasty. It was a success. Thank God!

My husband's family started taking sides. His uncle with me and my husband's brother with his mother. The day my husband came home from the hospital, another huge fight ensued. The tension was so great, my husband wanted to leave and go to Florida so he could get away from them. He was very upset with his brother and mother for many things.

As soon as he was able to travel, I packed him up in the car and made a bed in the back for him to lie down during the long ten-hour trip back to Florida. As we were leaving Atlanta, my mother-in-law yelled at me, telling me I was trying to kill her son. I received my answer from God. This was not a religion I wanted to be any part of. There was so much hate, malice, and confusion all the time. And I knew God did not have these attributes.

After being in Florida for about a week, the neighbor I had called at the beginning of summer, returned my call. We didn't talk too much because my husband was around. We got together for lunch and I told her all of my problems. She invited me to church and the next Sunday night, my children and I went. My husband had said fine since I was a Muslim. He even told me to go if it made me feel better. "Just do not ever change your religion," he said. I really had no intention of changing, I thought maybe I could be both. Go to church and still remain Muslim. Believe in the good things of both religions.

That night at church, I didn't even get my feet in the door when I started crying. I couldn't stop. My children kept asking me what was wrong. I tried to assure them that I was fine. I can't remember what was said that night, but God was talking to my heart. This old song then came to me that I sang years ago. It was "Jesus Is the Cornerstone." That was my answer. I went back to church the next Sunday night. I hadn't told my parents, or anyone, except one friend. I didn't want anyone to try and sway me in any direction. I just wanted it to be God and me.

A few days later, I was reading the Bible. I just opened it and as it fell open, these were the first words I read: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. (Colossians 2:2-5)

Debbie's Testimony

Debbie's Testimony

By Debbie Rowe

My name is Debbie and I live in Zimbabwe. I came to know the Lord lots of years ago and then back slide after my husband had an affair and we got divorced. I was only 20 years old and had been married for 4 years with two children. I went a bit wild and got remarried to a man who drank and loved his woman. I recommitted myself to the Lord and stayed with this man for 8 years, putting up with the alcohol, the woman chasing and the beatings, thinking that this is where God wanted me.

Eventually I thought to hang with God, if he wanted me to live like this he couldn't be the loving God he was proclaimed to be, so I got divorced again and moved away from God, although he never moved away from me. I spent nearly ten years living with two men in that time, searching for something and decided to give God another chance. I prayed that he would give me a man who would share the faith with me and support me and who would love God more than he loved me. I then met and married my third husband. I never wanted to get married but I had recommitted my life to the Lord therefore I couldn't live in sin either so I took the least painful option and got married !!!

My husband Steve had just been Baptized when I met him. We started our married life with my two children Shane and Keri from my second marriage and his daughter Shavon from his second marriage. He didn't have any children from his first and I had two, one Tabetha who was married with two children and Jason who was at that stage a total thorn in my side and lived with his aunt. We stayed in a two bedroom flat and decided we need a bigger house.

I put my order into God for a 5 bedroomed house and an entrance hall, with a scullery and a walk in pantry and a bathroom on suite. Well not even a month later I had my house !!!! I had big dreams of my husband and myself having our own room and each of the children, with the two girls sharing, having their rooms and my mother who by now had also moved having her room and I could have a room to turn into a study. That was MY plan !!! But God had another PLAN for us !!!!!

My sister is an alcoholic and lives on the streets. She doesn't want to know the Lord and she is loving the world too much, although I believe that will change !!!! She has three beautiful children who are very close to my heart and every day and every night I would ask God to watch over these little mites as they lived under over hanging rocks. One day God told me to go and find my sister and take her children into my home to be raised in a Christian manner by us !!!! Well God and myself had a major debate !!! I told God that it was his job not mine, we couldn't afford etc etc !!!! I came up with all the excuses I could think of. So what did God do ? He brought them into my path !!!

One night on my way home from work I stopped at a supermarket to buy some bread and milk and I spotted my sister and her boyfriend with her three children sitting on a grass verge where all the hobos sat. I went over and asked her what she was doing there and she told me that she was waiting for a friend of her to collect her and her family. That night at about 10.30 I had a niggelly feeling and asked Jason (my 21 year old son) to take my car and drive to the supermarket to see if they had been collected. They hadn't !!! She was sleeping in a drunken stupor and the little children were sitting in the rain waiting patiently for the mother to wake up.

My son brought them home and the next day she left leaving her children in my care. I thanked God that now I knew where they were and what they were up to and I asked God to stop there !!!! But God knows best, Praise the Lord.

My other sister came to visit me with her one son. She was having a hard time in South Africa and I asked her to come and stay with me a bit. Unfortunately she fell into the trap of making easy money and agreed to carry drugs from South Africa to the United Kingdom for some people she knew in South Africa and the next thing we knew she was phoning me from the holding cell at the airport in the U.K. to tell me she had been arrested for carrying drugs. I collected her three children together and I now had 6 foster children.

Then my 21 year old son came to live with me. This was fine except he didn't believe in God. He wouldn't say Grace at meal times, he wouldn't sit with us if we had Church visitors, it was just awful !!!! His cousin used to visit and he was a total satanist !!!! I tried to talk to them and just got shouted down. So to save the peace in a house with 16 people living in it !!! I used to keep quiet !!!! Then I had enough and knew I had to tackle a stand against satan !!!

My son had his 21st Birthday Party and the next day I started taking my stand in our home !!! I went first thing in the morning and poured out all the alcohol that was left over from the party !!! I must have emptied +/- 5-6 bottles of vodka, cane, whisky etc down the zinc. I then made a big notice for my front gate saying that my yard was an alcohol free premises and it would be appreciated if people treated it as such. That is when the Changed started !!!!!

I stopped playing films which had violence, sex and drugs and stopped listening to music which I didn't think Jesus would listen to !!! I started playing Jessie Duplantis tapes and my son and nephew although pretending that they weren't watching, watched and we prayed for these two souls and took a stand against satan as a family and claimed them back from him in Jesus' name.

On Sunday 14th October both my son and my nephew gave their hearts to the Lord and are being Baptized on Sunday 1st November 2001. Praise God for his Glory and Power and His strength !!!!

My son wants to get married to the girl he is living with and will do so on the 1st of November !!!!! This may not be as electrifying as some of the people that write to you, but living with satanist and trying to be Christians is not funny.

I just Praise God for the strength He gave me to stand up against satan and say 'enough is enough'

Have a great God filled day.

Regards

Debbie RoweZimbabwe

Mansur's Testimony

Mansur's Testimony

By Mansur Sang

Mansur Sang was a very devout Muslim Sufi who became a Baha'i. From his home in Iran, he had even made a pilgrimage to the sacred Baha'i shrine in Acre in Haifa, Israel. Yet he became disillusioned with that religion. Then he heard the Gospel and accepted Christ as his Savior.

In the Muslim religion, Mansur had been a dervish, a group of Sufis who perform various feats to earn their salvation. Some of them whirl around until they just fall into a stupor. Others simply torture themselves. They will eat nails and even break light bulbs to chew and swallow the jagged pieces. Sometimes they will take a sword and plunge it through their cheeks and into their mouth, or pierce their flesh with sharp instruments, torturing themselves in order to reach a higher level of ecstasy and so earn their salvation.

Some dervishes will give away everything they own and wander as mendicants, with bowls hung around their necks, begging for food from house to house.

Mansur Sang had been that kind of dervish.

After he accepted Christ, however, he decided he wanted to become a Christian dervish. No longer would he live by begging. Now he would have a profession even as the the Apostle Paul once had. And so he became a dentist. That's how I came to know him when I was a boy in Iran.

One of the medical missionaries, a doctor, gave Mansur a pair of forceps. He carried these forceps on him as he walked from village to village, asking people if anyone had a toothache and wanted a tooth pulled. Now, in Afghanistan, I've seen barbers often serve as dentists. They would pull out a pair of forceps, grasp the patient's tooth - then with one foot firmly anchored against the patient's shoulder, they would both push and pull at the same time. This works wonderfully every single time!

Well, Mansur would pull people's teeth in the village square, always attracting a crowd. By the time he had extracted the tooth, the crowd had grown substantially.

This was the moment Mansur had been waiting for. Opening his Bible, he would start preaching the Gospel. Now Mansur couldn't read or write a single word but he had memorized much of the Bible. He only used the open Bible so people would know the source of the passages he quoted.

Once Mansur Sang was arrested by the police for preaching on the streets in Shiraz in southern Iran. When they brought him to the prison, the jailer said, "Why have you arrested this man again? He is happier in prison than he is outside. And besides, he makes Christians out of the other prisoners. I don't want him here." But they put him in prison, nevertheless.

The chief of police was a Baha'i. When he heard that this Muslim convert to Christianity was in jail, he ordered him brought to his office. They had confiscated the bag of Scripture portions Mansur Sang took with him everywhere.

The police chief pulled out one leaflet and asked him what it was. Mansur Sang answered that it was Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He asked what it cost. Mansur Sang said that he gave it away free to anyone who agreed to read it or have it read to him.

The chief of police laughed. "This shows your religion isn't worth anything. You have to give your literature away."

He then pointed to a shelf of Baha'i books and said, "I paid hundreds of tomans for these. This shows how much more valuable my religion is than yours."

The Lord Jesus Christ said that when we are persecuted for His sake, the Holy Spirit would give us the ability to answer effectively. Mansur Sang pointed to the electric light that was burning in the office and asked, "Do you pay money for this?"

The chief of police said, "Yes, we are happy to pay for electricity and these fixtures."

Then Mansur Sang pointed to the sun that was shining outside. He asked, "Do you pay money for the sunshine?"

The chief answered, "No."

Then Mansur sang said, "Your books - like these electric light fixtures - are man-made and give a little light, but you have to pay for them. This Scripture is the Word of Gd and has the light of the sun. And just the way sunshine is free, so this is free to those who will receive it."

Chariah's Testimony

Chariah's Testimony

By Chariah

I was born as a son of a Muslim Malaysian. Our family has a long leading religious and political tradition in Malaysia. As leading personalities in a Muslim country Islamic religion was omnipresent and central in our lives.

I was raised according to Muslim tradition, was educated in Arabic language, the Koran, cleansing rituals, praying, fasting etc. But I also had the privilege to travel a lot as a young boy and live in different countries and learn a lot about different cultures and religions. I knew Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Christians and I really wanted to find out, which religion is the right one. Obviously there couldn't just be one God and several religious ways to near him because the teachings and commandments of the several religions are often so contradictory, it couldn't be the same God who gave them to mankind. Look into creation! Study the laws of physic. We daily can experience a Creator with unimaginable wisdom, knowledge and logic! And this Creator can't be that confusing and chaotic like the religions in this word reflect.

I remember an event when I was around six years old. Due to the position of my father he often traveled around and sometimes I didn't see him for months. One day I really missed him and was so eager to meet him. It came into my mind to pray to Allah and ask him to bring my father back. But at this moment I had a big problem! I knew how to pray in Arabic and the cleansing ceremony but I didn't know how to pray to Allah for a specific need. I wasn't able to speak to Allah in an appropriate way and with the right words, in the correct formal order. I experienced Allah as a God who was very, very far a way. A holy God only to be reached with an in-depth knowledge of the Koran and its commandments, right cleansing rituals and correct Arabic language. On the other hand I learned Christianity as a simple religion founded on love and forgiveness - and always ready to accept the weak and unworthy. I always was impressed when I watched the Christian films as a small boy. In Quo Vadis for example the persecuted Christians were tortured by the Romans and they willingly were ready to forgive them for these bad deeds. The Christians were then thrown to the wild, hungry lions in the amphitheatre. Facing death they started to praise and worship their God. I felt an indescribable strength spreading out from those Christians. They were weak, but even though strong. They were dying, but they were sure to live in eternity. I was impressed and also confused. I decided to pray in a neutral way and asked for the returning of my father by the next day.

The next day someone knocked our door. As I opened it I recognised my father smiling at me. He told me that he wanted to surprise us with his coming! I was so happy and knew that God answered my prayer. I was by that time convinced that God exists. But it was on my heart to find the right one!

Back in Malaysia I experienced the Islamic culture and laws as very difficult to fulfil. During Ramadan when we were fasting I even wasn't allowed to swallow my saliva. When I farted after the cleansing ritual and before praying I had to go through the ritual once again. After yawning I had to pray a verse from the Koran so no demons were able to enter me through my mouth. I wasn't allowed to touch dogs, not even to play with toy dogs. I had a necklace with religious writings. Before going to toilet I had to take it off. And there were thousands of other rules and commandments I had to obey. And I was so afraid to do something wrong and to fail, I just couldn't find an inner peace.

At one occasion I received a Bible and I started to read it. I read in the New Testament the four gospels (Matthew, Luke, Mark and John). And every single word spoke to my heart. I learned that for God we are all sinners. And how hard we try to fulfil the laws we wouldn't succeed. Because God is even holier than I thought. Only one sin in our life is enough for not being able to enter heaven. And I knew that I have committed at least one sin in my life. But God also says: (Ephesians 2:8 NIV) "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves (by trying to fulfil the commandments), it is the gift of God."

One day my father and I were very ill. I went to several doctors, but they weren't able to diagnose my illness. Despite all the medicine I took, I felt weaker from day to day. I had already lost 12 kg of weight and I felt that my time to pass away was near. Then I started to pray to God. I confessed Him all my sins. And I asked for forgiveness. I accepted the sacrifice God gave through His son Jesus Christ and that Jesus died in my place for my sins. I wasn't able to eat, to stand up nor do anything physically - but I was able to pray and I prepared to face God in eternity for the last judgement. And it was my wish to be able to enter heaven.

After maybe four or five weeks vegetating in my room without any care I was hospitalized. At that time my father was already in the ICU (intensive-care unit). One morning relatives woke me up and told me that my father had just passed away ...

The official version of the cause of his death was heart failure. But actually the doctors didn't know exactly the reason of our sickness. There are rumours that we were poisoned or even victims of black magic. I believe that I survived according to the word in Mark 16:17-18 NIV "And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

A few years later I had a nervous breakdown and also psychologists couldn't help me. I remembered that God, who is able to help in hopeless situations. Who makes believers able to forgive their enemies, to worship Him while facing death in amphitheatres, who is able to heal when one drink deadly poison and also is willing to help in depressive moments. Coincidentally my wife brought me to a service of an American evangelist (Ray Jennings). There we as a whole family converted to Christianity. The evangelist also layed his hands on me and prayed for healing and I immediately recovered according to the word: "And these signs will accompany those who believe: ... they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Today I live with God and know that He is with me. And I want you to know, dear Muslim reader, that the only true and real God of the Bible will also be with you when you decide to follow the way of Jesus.

Mary's Testimony

Mary's Testimony

By Mary

Some of my earliest memories revolve around Church, I was taken to many church related activities from the time that I was a little girl. As I grew, my family attended less and less often and soon we spent Sundays watching television and at other leisure activities. When I was 9 years old we began attending a small, independent church that was heavy on doctrine such as spare the rod and spoil the child and wives obey your husbands. They never mentioned any responsibility on the husband's or parents part. I was really frightened when I went to school, church and sunday school that I would either be whipped or shamed. They would not let the girls lead the flag salute or pray since girls were supposedly less than boys. We only went to that church for a few months, but it made a huge impact on my life.

After a major move when I was 12 years old, we began attending church regularly again. I recall being happy to feel a part of a "church family" but what I did not see at the time was this was one of those churches known for "having a form of Godliness but denying the power within." I attended regularly, even though my parents began to attend less and less. Soon I was the only one from my family attending. I listened to the Pastor's stories of goodness and faith, but they never really made sense when the members of the congregation were involved in lying, cheating each other and showing off who had the most money. By the time I graduated for high school I was attending only sporadically at best.

I went away to college in 1990 and began to live my life as an agnostic, radical feminist. I did not want to believe anything that religion had to say about women being submissive. After a relationship that I was in fell apart, I began to turn back to God and religion in general. A large group of Muslim students began attending the University around this time and I began to talk to them about the way of life called Islam. They told me that Islam was a way of life and not simply a religion. I became fascinated by all the aspects and more and more interested in the fact that Muslim men were duty bound to take care of and treat their wives with care and gentleness. I was told that the prophet Mohammed told his followers that "the best of you is the one who is the best to his wife" but no one told me about the sura that states that if your wife is disobedient, you may beat her until she is. I wanted a good husband who would support me and treat me right.

I became a Muslim in November of 1991 and soon things began to fall apart in my life. I was so convinced that I had found the proper path that I became belligerent to my co-workers and was soon fired. I began to look for another job and was told by the Imam that I had to return to my parents home since Islam forbids single women from living alone. I moved home in January of 1992. Understandably, my parents did not like the idea of me wearing the traditional Muslim garb and they tried to forbid me from wearing it at any chance they got. Of course this only made me more adamant about wearing it. Soon my family and former friends were all reluctant to be around

me and I spent more and more time exclusively with Muslims.

In February of 1992 I was introduced to my future husband. I was simply led into a room and told that he was the man that I was supposed to marry and I had no choice in the matter. We married in May. I soon entered hell. I was not to leave the apartment without his permission and was not to turn the airconditioner on for any circumstances. This was during 100 degree weather in the summer. I sweltered my way through the rest of the summer with heat rash and an eventual case of heat exhaustion. Mohammed forced me to relinquish control of my car to my parents in September, so I was truly stuck at home. What I did not understand about my new husband was that he would spend inordinate amounts of time away from home and never ask me to go with him. I soon learned (painfully) that Islam forbids the listening to music. That was the first time that he hit me.

After our first year of marriage, he was preparing to return to Morocco (without me) to visit his family. Shortly before he left, we had been on a day trip to Dallas where he had not allowed me to have any food except a small bag of chips. As we did not have anything in the house to eat, I called one of his friends who knew that Mohammed often left me without anything to eat.

I waited for him to bring me just a small sandwich for dinner when Mohammed came home unexpectedly. He had heard of the call and was furious. He told me to get my stuff together and leave the next day, he began to beat me and scream at me, rupturing one of my eardrums. I ran to a friend's house gain help. Mohammed tearfully apologised and we stayed together.

After he returned from Morocco, I was able to get a job and be able to pay some of my bills and have enough to eat (he let me have my car back). But I began to understand that this was no marriage. We were simply roommates and one was terrorizing the other.

I began to question some of the things about Islam, the hypocrisy and infighting as well as the treatement of women. I was abruptly informed that I was not to question and all that I had to do was to read and I would understand. I began to look longingly at women who did not have to wear the heavy oppressive clothing and endure the rude looks from others. I was accused of causing a miscarriage with the evil eye since I was trying desperately to become pregnant. I would cry and ask God why he would not let me achieve the supreme Muslim woman's duty of bearing children. I became more and more depressed and even prayed for God to take me out of this world. Little did I know that he would answer my prayer in a way that I had not dreamed of.

At the end of the third year of our marriage, Mohammed decided that he needed to go to Morocco again. He told me that he did not care where I went or what I did; he was going home. Well, I got my own apartment and when I did not hear from him in a month, I filed for divorce. My faith was destroyed and my health and finances were also destroyed. I began to attend church again.

I went from church to church until I really gave my life to Christ in December of 1998. I was Baptised with the Holy spirit in April of this year and my life has really changed for the better. I praise God every day that he has brought me home and given me a wonderful Church Home with people who love me.

Praise to the Lord now and forever!!!!

Mary

Can A Muslim Know For Sure?

Can A Muslim Know For Sure?

By Joseph Abraham

Dear Muslim friend,

Allow me to introduce myself to you. My name is Joseph Abraham. Having come to the truth after many years of searching, I believe God is leading me to share with others what He has done for me through His holy Word -- the Bible. Please be patient in reading my letter.

I am Egyptian by birth, born in a Muslim home. My father was a Muslim priest (sheikh) and a teacher of Islam in Cairo, Egypt until his death. My family took pride in their Islamic heritage, for almost all my ancestors were Muslim clergy. In the early years of my life I was looked upon as a future Muslim priest. Therefore my family sent me to a Quranic school from the age of six or seven.

When I was still very young, I started asking questions about God, His judgment, His truth, man's eternal destiny, etc. Since I was only a child, my questions brought mockery from others. Such treatment did not help, but only discouraged me. I lived in despair and hopelessness because my soul was seeking something Islam did not provide.

My Islamic background was rather shallow and superficial. My father, as a sheikh, memorized almost all the Quran, and encouraged me to do the same, whether I understood it or not. Thus I became a mechanically religious young boy, while my heart was dry, like a desert that seemed endless and hopeless.

Like most Muslims, I lived in a traditional Muslim neighborhood, where I heard the thundering voice of the calls to worship Allah, five times a day. We celebrated the Islamic holidays religiously.

I was taught that Islam was the final religion, which cancelled Judaism and Christianity, and that Christians worship three gods. I was taught also that Christians had corrupted the "original" Bible, which -- supposedly -- once contained references to the prophet of Islam. Islam also denies the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But there was never any serious attempt to explain the ground of such claims.

When I reached my teens the desire to know which religion is true grew in me. Because questioning Islam is not tolerated in a Muslim nation, my questions and investigations became rather on a private basis. But later many found out about my curiosity. They threw harsh accusations at me: I was called "mentally unstable" and "idiot". Still others claimed that I was under the influence of an anti-Islam organization. Muslims made my life so intolerable that I wished to die. All I wanted to know is the truth.

In my early twenties I started searching again. Among the questions that concerned me were: Where will I go after I die? Don't I have the right to know my eternal destiny? Why do Muslims so

strongly reject discussing their own religion? Does God want people to be blind to their destiny? How can I know that Islam is the only true religion?

Having no help from anyone, I began to read books about philosophy and psychology, some of which promoted atheism. But denying God never silenced the inward seeking to know the truth. I was encouraged to hold to fatalism and apathy, but that made things worse. My soul still desperately sought the ultimate reality of our spiritual destiny and God's eternal truth.

It bothered me to realize that I was considered a Muslim just because I was born to Muslim parents and lived in a Muslim nation. No choice was given me: no chance was offered me to examine and find the truth. Worst of all, many Muslims I knew (including my own family) were Muslims simply by heritage. I hardly saw any Muslim making a serious and diligent attempt to investigate their religion with hearts opened to the truth.

In 1968, while I was reading a certain book, I ran into some verses from the Bible which greatly attracted me. These verses spoke with authority about a Man whose name was Jesus Christ. This Man said to the world, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." John 14:6

Dozens of questions jammed my head: Then what about the prophet of Islam? Why do Muslims never speak of Jesus Christ in this manner? They always speak of the prophet of Islam. Who is the "Father"? How can God be called "Father"? Who is His wife? What about Islam, which claims to be the ultimate truth? After all how can I trust the Bible, which Muslims claim is "corrupted"? And many more.

While reading more of the same book I came to other statements by this same Man, Jesus Christ, who said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28 I had sought rest for many years, and this Jesus claimed to be the source of rest, and invited others to come to Him.

At that time I had never had a Bible; I had never seen one. Then secretly I asked a professing Christian to lend me a Bible so I could read more about this Man who claims such authority.

About the same time I had heard about an American evangelist who was visiting Egypt. With great eagerness I sneaked secretly into a Protestant church to hear his messages from the Bible. Because he knew no Arabic, he spoke through an interpreter. I heard things I had never heard before. I had never realized that the Bible is the source of God's eternal truth.

In the past I had read and memorized passages from the Quran. I learned Islam for years, but God never spoke to me through its teachings. In contrast, when I read verses or heard messages from the Bible there was a different voice speaking a different message with a different authority.

I gathered the courage to go forward to the preacher to tell me more about Christ and the Bible. I asked him if a Muslim could also have access to the Bible and the heavenly Father. Could I too, know for sure about eternal life, forgiveness of sin, escape from hell, and becoming a child of God?

The preacher shared with me John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This

verse alone has the answer to all religions. God sent His Son to die in our behalf because of the sin of all mankind. It takes only believing this truth to escape eternal hell. God did that out of love and the goodness of His heart; but also because He is a righteous judge. The judgment of God requires a penalty for sin. "The wages of sin is death..." Romans 6:23a But God is also merciful; that is why he gives us the alternative: "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23b

The simple truth was too good to be true -- but it is true, because it is God's Word. I could not ignore God's call to me -- "Come, come, come." "Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your heart." Hebrews 3:7-8 And the more I read and heard the quotations from the Bible, the more I became convinced that God was speaking to me personally.

God's Word continued addressing my heart. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Hebrews 2:3 There is no escape from God's eternal judgment on sinful man unless they come to acknowledge Who Jesus Christ is, and what He did for them. God gave a warning in case I hesitated to believe His Word: "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." II Corinthians 6:2 That simply means that tomorrow can be too late. To reject Christ as Savior of the whole world brings the judgment of God, who provided His Son to take our place on the cross of Calvary. Does it matter what all other religions teach? No. Why? Because God's eternal truth does not change.

Finally, after years of agony I was led to the truth, the Lord -- my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God; He is the truth; He is the giver of life; He is the only way of salvation.

Dear Muslim friend, remember, you will stand some day before the throne of God, just by yourself. Would you be able to stand God's judgment?

Christians -- those who believe Christ as their Savior -- are no longer under God's judgment, because God already judged them in the Person of Christ. He died for them. Well, He died for you too.

Now, may I ask you, what would stop you from telling God right now that you are a sinner and that you want Christ to save you? Trust Him as your Savior right now. Then there would be joy in heaven for the salvation of your precious soul.

I searched for truth for years, until God reached out of heaven and sent His servant the preacher to lead me to Christ. God is doing that now. You too can know the truth and enjoy the same spiritual freedom I have. "...and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

Dear Muslim friend, come join us in the spiritual freedom we have in Christ our Lord, and let us hear from you so we can rejoice with you.

Sincerely,

Joseph Abraham

Ali's Testimony

Ali's Testimony

By Ali

You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

I was born in Iran into a Muslim family. After my military service, I left Iran for India to pursue my college education. In 1983, while studying in a small city collage, I gradually became familiar with Christianity. I became very curious about the life and teachings of Christ. I asked my self, "If Islam is the perfect and true religion, which Muslims believe, why then don't the world's hundreds of millions of Christians embrace Islam?"

An English language Bible became my first text for my study of Christianity. I searched for a verse that would foretell (Prophet) Muhammad's coming, but none was to be found. Instead, I became more sure of the truth of Christianity.

Every morning and evening, I listened to Christian radio programs on the Sri Lanka Radio, and took their Christian correspondence courses which taught about the New Testament (Injil). About a year later, I was convinced that Jesus Christ was the only way of salvation and I accepted him as my only Savior.

Immediately, I wanted to be baptized, but the town's only Christian pastor required me to take one year of teaching before he would baptize me. I had no choice but to accept his way! During that year, I began to translate the Bible into Persian as I had never seen a Persian Bible nor had any knowledge of its existence! The long year finally came to an end and I gave public witness to my conversion to Jesus Christ by being baptized.

After my baptism, I made a trip to Iran for my summer vacation. I took all of my English translations of the Bible with me. I had no knowledge of the church in Iran. And, I returned to India at the end of the summer not having met any Iranian believers.

After my return to India, I put my full efforts into finding someone who might have contact with the church of Iran and could put me in touch with Iranian believers there. After considerable searching, I finally found someone who knew of a person who was in contact with the a pastor of a church in Iran.

To my joy, the next summer when I returned to Iran for my summer vacation, I located the church and became acquainted with the believers there. For the first time in my life, I learned Christian hymns and sermons in Persian, my own mother tongue. The fellowship with these believers was so sweet. And of course, I immediately purchased a Persian Bible and New Testament.

That summer, I told my family about my new found faith and they didn't seem to show much opposition. At the same time, because of the prevailing conditions in Iran, they were unhappy about my decision. Nevertheless, my father read and studied my Bible with great interest.

One evening, the movie "Jesus" was to be shown at the church. My sister accompanied me to see the film. This was during the time that Iraqi jets bombed Tehran almost every night.

During the middle of the film, as the bombing began and the anti-aircraft guns blasted back, the lights went out. We sat in total darkness listening to the bombing and the blasts of the anti-aircraft guns. My sister leaned her head on my chest and began to cry. She insisted that we return home. However, no one else in the church left to look for shelter. Instead, everyone began to pray. Then a little candle was lit. I told my sister, "if you find anyone else here who is fearful, we will go home." As she looked around, she couldn't find a single frightened person. The pastor was standing in the front of the church praying. Soon, the electricity was restored and we were able to see the remainder of the movie.

The startling events of that night caused my sister to become more interested in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

A few days before I was to return to India, the pastor asked me to share my testimony with others in the church. We gathered in the basement. I trembled with fear as I began to share my testimony. But, as I gave my testimony, the pastor laid his hand on my shoulder and prayed.

Safely returning to India, I obtained my degree. Since my graduation, I have lived in New Delhi and have had the privilege of leading a Bible study in my home for Persian speaking people. Praise to His name, the Lord is increasing the number of Iranian believers in our circle. It is my prayer that I will be able to share the good news of salvation with more Muslims, particularly with Iranians.

Facts Are Facts

Facts Are Facts

By Jeff Fritz

I am by profession an electrical engineer. I was trained to rely on scientific data. I learned that facts were facts, theories were theories and all else was either unknown or hocus-pocus. There was not much room for the unexplained or the miraculous--only analytical data would do. When presented with a new concept, I knew how to measure and analyze it in order to come to a scientifically acceptable conclusion. For example, I knew that in order to obtain the wattage used, it was necessary to measure the flow of current through a light bulb and to multiply it by the voltage across that bulb. Everything had its scientifically measured formula. Perhaps that is why when I was first confronted with the concept of the Messiah, I felt the need to know factually what was true.

After some careful examination of the Scriptures, I became convinced that the prophecies regarding the Messiah were fulfilled in Y'shua (Jesus). Several months after I had reached this conclusion, I received a pamphlet from a group called "Jews for Jesus." It was given to me by a friend who had just received it in the mail. Being a Jew, I was fascinated to think that there might be other Jews who also believed that Jesus fulfilled the Messianic role. I was curious to learn more of this group so I wrote to the address on the pamphlet, introducing myself and asking for more information.

One day a cassette tape from Jews for Jesus arrived in my mail box. I love to receive mail--especially cassette recordings, so I hurriedly put the tape on my cassette recorder. To my amazement the tape was blank! Obviously, this tape had been sent to me by mistake. I promptly put it in an envelope and mailed it back to Jews for Jesus. Imagine my surprise when the same tape came back to me in the mail a mere two weeks later. Being the scientific type, with a researching mind, I skipped my next class and again excitedly placed the cassette in my recorder. Again the tape was blank! And again I returned it to Jews for Jesus in California, only this time I decided to record something on the tape. The tape found its way back to me some weeks later and I very nearly threw it out. But just to satisfy my own native curiosity, I placed it for one final time in my tape player. What a surprise--there was actually something recorded on it! This is how I began a regular correspondence with Moishe Rosen, the director of Jews for Jesus.

West Virginia Institute of Technology, the school I was attending, is located a long way from the Jewish population centers like New York, where I was born. In 1972 it was rare to meet many Jewish people in West Virginia, much less Jews who believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah. So my cassette tape exchange with Jews for Jesus became every important link for me. Regularly, I would either receive or send cassettes to Jews for Jesus. Yet there is one particular cassette exchange that I will not quickly forget.

I had just completed a tape to Moishe Rosen in which I had mentioned that at some future date, if possible, I would like to come out to San Francisco and visit the Jews for Jesus office....

Although I had not made this to be common knowledge, I had given some serious thought to meeting other Jews who believed as I did. When I returned home from mailing this most recent cassette, I was pleasantly surprised to find a cassette tape from Moishe Rosen in my mail box. In his tape, he suggested that I pray about the possibility of visiting the group in San Francisco. The two tapes had crossed in the mail!

Of course this can easily be attributed to pure coincidence. It is not too unusual for two people to think along the same lines, even if they are on opposite sides of the country. Yet there was something uncanny about the timing of this whole matter which suggested something more than pure coincidence. For one who was trained to deal with the known and measurable, this seemed to be more than a simple coincidence. Yet, even given the fact that Moishe Rosen and I had the same thought at the same time, there was still a very real barrier to any trip to San Francisco--the airfare. Five hundred dollars, the cost of a round-trip ticket to San Francisco, did not come easily to a college student struggling to work his way through four years of school. I simply did not have the money to make the trip.

Like most state-supported institutions, West Virginia Tech had two levels of student tuition. Those who were West Virginia residents paid lower tuition costs than those from outside the state. Being from New York, I was classified at the higher tuition rate. Just a few days after the coincidence of my cassette exchange with Jews for Jesus, I was called into the registrar's office at school. In an almost unheard-of ruling, the college made the determination that my job as radio announcer in the town qualified me for West Virginia residency! The college automatically reduced my tuition to the in-state residence fee. The tuition savings of \$500 was exactly the amount for my round-trip ticket to San Francisco! In December of 1972, I boarded a plane bound for San Francisco and my first meeting with other Jews who believed in Jesus. Now, all of this can be ascribed to coincidence. Yet the truly scientific mind is aware that when coincidences begin to fall upon coincidences, they are less likely to be coincidental! In the following years, I was to experience several instances of similar "coincidences." But I have learned that there are no coincidences with God. All that He has for us is well planned. The events that He designed led me first into a relationship with my Messiah Jesus, and later into service as a staff member with Jews for Jesus. No, these were not simple coincidences.

I am still very much an analytical person. But now my measurements have taken on a whole new dimension. I realize that the Creator of the Universe is also the Creator of the measurements of life. It is only in measuring by His standards that we can achieve accurate results. His coincidences are not really coincidences at all; they are evidences of God's involvement in the not-so-random details of life.

Natalie's Testimony

Natalie's Testimony

By Natalie Sachs

It seems that America is like my "promised land" since that is where the most dramatic things in my life have taken place...

About four years ago, I decided that I wanted to see the world and start out on the great travel adventure. I had not yet finished studying, but at that stage I didn't really care - I was consumed with a desire to be free! I had been studying Fine Arts for 3 years at WITS Tech and was right in the thick of the art world, with all its distorted ideals and influences. My confidence in myself and in mankind as his own saviour and deliverer was my source of strength and hope, and it was with these ideals that I set off. I was totally unaware that this was the beginning of a trip that would turn my world upside down and bring me to a place of conviction and a desire to have God's hand in my life.

When I got to America, my well-preserved little "self" bubble popped wide open and I suddenly realised that everything I'd believed in was not true. America was such a mess. There just seemed to be a mass of excess everywhere I looked. Excess TV, excess drugs, excess garbage, excess violence. Very rarely did I meet someone who hadn't been a drug addict, an alcoholic or imprisoned before they'd hit 30. I soon realised that there was no way man would be able to bring himself out of the mess he had created. I realized that the world was heading very quickly into a dark tunnel and I didn't know how to find the exit door.

I became very depressed and hopeless as I began to realise that everything I'd believed in was not really true. I needed desperately to find answers to the questions "Who are we? What are we doing? Where are we going?" It seemed that no matter who I asked (whether they were a New Age guru or a hillbilly from the countryside) no-one could give me the answers I was looking for.

About 9 months into my travels a friend and I were driving through the country on our way to Colorado. Out of nowhere he said that there was something that he felt he must tell me (he was a Christian). He started to share with me about the book of Revelations (which is the last book of the New Testament and speaks about the end times). I can't explain what went on inside me as he shared with me the prophecies for the human race and God's second coming portrayed in that book. Not only were these the exact answers to the questions I'd been so desperate to understand, but I could see evidence of it in the world. I knew right away that this was the truth and that God was speaking to me and opening my eyes. From that night on, God became real to me again, but the issue of Jesus and who He was began to gnaw at my soul. I knew that He was a special man who had done exceptional things and I knew that He was a part of God.

I came back to South Africa with these questions swimming around in my mind, "Can I be Jewish and believe in Jesus? Aren't I turning my back on God and on who He made me to be?"

I spent a year finishing my fine art diploma and trying to reconcile myself to what seemed like 2 conflicting ideals floating around in my mind. There were two Christians in my class that year, and they prayed for me, patiently listened to all my confusion, and shared the truth about Jesus and the reality of sin (even though at times I did not like to hear what they were saying!)

I finally reached a point where I knew I needed to make a choice. I could not stand in the middle any longer. Either I was for God or against Him, but I knew I could not go on any longer trying to serve 2 masters. This was a very dark time for me as I felt I was letting God down by not choosing Him, and my Jewish guilt and my desire to hold onto what was familiar to me was still strong. I decided to call Jews for Jesus. I had been to one of their Friday night services and I knew that if anyone could help me it would be them. I started having Bible studies with Laura Barron. As Laura shared with me about how Jesus was Jewish and that he had in fact come to the Jews and that the New Testament was written mostly by Jewish people, I realised that actually there was nothing more Jewish than believing in Jesus. Jesus had fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and had come and died so that I could be free. Laura had helped me to bridge the gap and I knew that Jesus was "the way, the truth and the life." I asked Him to come into my heart and life and to restore me, and that is exactly what he did. From that moment onwards everything inside me changed. My morals and ideas about life - my whole internal world - was washed clean and God was as close as my own soul. Shortly after that I got baptised, which is a symbolic and physical act of cleansing and renewal. I will never forget the feeling of coming out of the water and feeling totally newborn. Everything was lighter and clearer and I knew my life would never be the same again.

I have now been walking in a relationship with Jesus for 2 years.

It seems that everyday He teaches me something new about himself and draws me ever close to Him. 6 months ago I had the opportunity to go on a summer witnessing campaign with Jews for Jesus on the streets of New York. Although beforehand it seemed like a task that I would never be able to fulfill, I felt like God really worked a miracle in me and gave me the courage to stand for him. I got a glimpse of the world through God's eyes, and sensed something of His love for His people and His sadness at the way people choose to walk in lonely darkness rather than have fellowship with Him. This is an experience that has changed my life and something that I draw from continually as I walk out my life with Jesus.

It seems to us that in making a choice to let God into our lives we will lose so much, and yet what we gain is so much greater - eternal life. This is a treasure that cannot be measured in quantity or price and which God has given us freely because of His great love for us. I just thank God for this and that I can know Him personally. I hope that you too will let God into your life as He reaches out to you and touches you. God is a God of love and all He desires is to share that love with you. I would challenge you to let Him into your life, and experience a fullness that nothing else can replace.

As a scientist, I always think logically and I reason things out. That was how my whole search for God began. I looked through my telescope at Saturn and said to myself, Isn't there a great God out there? And when I studied relativity, relativistic astrophysics, cosmology and all these beautiful areas of mathematics, they pointed me to the fact that this whole universe is masterfully made, finely-tuned and controlled by the Great Designer. The logical next step was to want to meet this

Designer face-to-face.

Among astronomers today there is great theistic sentiment, where even if scientists don't say Jesus has made the universe, they are coming to the very distinct conclusion that the universe is not an accident. The "Big Bang" was not a cosmological firecracker. As the physicist Freeman Dyson put it, the universe seemed to be acting in anticipation for the appearance of mankind.

So it is on the basis of logic that we can understand that we live in a universe made by a personal God. It's logic from start to finish.

When it comes to God, many scientists lean toward assumptions which are philosophically comfortable to them. For example, in the "Big Bang" universe there is an unverifiable assumption called the principle of homogeneity, which asserts that on a large scale there is "no preferred center"--each point is equivalent in every sense to every other point. This, then, is a drastic departure from the cozy framework early cosmologists had worked with in their geocentric universe models.

Let me explain: If we go back to the 1500s, before the impact of the work of Copernicus, the worldview of the universe was a geocentric one. The earth was the center and the sun went around the earth as did all the stars, and to many it was a very reassuring ideal to adopt. In 1543 Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* was published and we perceived ourselves to be living in a heliocentric world, (although Ptolemy's earth-centered system was still taught at Harvard University in the first years after its founding in 1636). Mankind was dethroned from his central position in the universe.

Many astronomers have gone to extremes by saying we are simply a "zero" in this large cosmos. After all, there are 100,000 million stars in our Milky Way galaxy. That can make us feel very lonely and unimportant in the light of all the immensity. Yet a simple study shows the opposite is true.

The universe has not always existed. It had a definite beginning. Our early universe expanded at just the critical rate to avoid recollapse. Galaxies and stars then formed, but one must realize that half the stars in the night sky are members of binary or multiple star systems and are therefore unable to support life. (No stable planetary orbits could exist around such star systems.) Of the remaining half there are about 30 parameters which must be met in order for them to support life. With billions and billions of stars, it is improbable that all the conditions which must be met for the existence of life exist elsewhere. I would not be surprised if we were the only intelligent life species in the entire universe. In fact, leading evolutionists, such as Dobzhansky and others have agreed that there has not been enough time for mankind to have assembled spontaneously within the time span of our universe.

We've astronomical evidence that demands a verdict. And I've examined this evidence, not from an emotional point of view, but from a logical point of view. We've got historical evidence that Jesus, the Jew, lived and died and rose again from the dead. When Albert Einstein was asked by a reporter if he accepted the historical existence of Jesus, he responded, "Unquestionably! No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life. I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene."

To the person who is seriously seeking today I would say, read the gospels from an objective point of view, as Albert Einstein did. As Isaac Newton did. Don't let your emotions override or cloud your decision.

Seek after truth and don't let anyone make up your mind for you. It is far too important. It does matter what you believe.

Sadhu's Testimony

Sadhu's Testimony

By Sadhu Sundar Selvaraj

Sundar Selvaraj was born on 17 March 1962 into a Catholic family. He has two sisters and a younger brother. When he was about seven years old, his father embraced Hinduism and became a layman priest.

Young Sundar being the first born male child followed his father's footsteps and became a devout Hindu. He gave himself to the study of mantras and was versed in performing pujas (religious ceremonies). He even carried the kavadi- a form of Hindu penance, for three years. When he was about 16 years old, there arose a question in his heart about karma, life after death and nirvana. He sought the favours of the Hindu deities through fastings, penances and pujas, to be set free from the cycle of rebirth and to be one with Brahma - the union with the cosmic energy. But all his efforts were futile. After six months of fervent futile prayers, he came to the conclusion that he had been fated to be reincarnated again and again in this world due to his bad karma.

About this time in June 1978, he attended a religious-cum-science lecture at a public auditorium. The distinguished speaker was speaking on the subject of evolution. Young Sundar had great fascination for science and was planning on becoming a neurosurgeon. After speaking for half an hour on evolution, the speaker then compared the science of evolution to the science of creation by God. The topic though interesting disliked Sundar because the speaker introduced Jesus Christ. The speaker said that because of God's great love for man, He came down to earth as a man to die for the sins of the whole world. And only by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ can a person be set free from sin and the cycle of death.

After the message, the speaker gave an invitation to all those who wished to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour to come forward to the stage. Though Sundar felt a nudge to go forward, being a staunch hindu, he rebelled against the nudge. Suddenly, from deep within him, he heard a clear and audible voice speaking to him. The voice said, "This is the true God. Go and follow Him." Sundar was astonished to hear the voice beckoning him to go forward and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and God. He ignored the voice. But, like an auto reverse cassette player, the voice kept on repeating, "This is the true God. Go and follow Him." Sundar then experienced another supernatural experience. The chair on which he was sitting began to vibrate. It was as if the chair was prompting him to get up and go. He grabbed the handles of the chair and would not budge an inch.

All the while, the voice kept repeating. "This is the true God. Go and follow Him". Sundar was now experiencing two unexplainable supernatural experiences. Then without any warning, he felt a real tangible hand below his back. The hand gently lifted him up to his feet. Puzzled, Sundar stopped resisting. The unseen but real hand then clasped his hand and gently led him down three flight of stairs to the front of the stage.

He joined about 50 other people who had come forward to receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Looking upwards, Sundar said, "Jesus if you are the true God, please help me be set free from the cycle of rebirth." He then mechanically uttered that which the speaker had asked all those who came forward to the stage to say, "Lord Jesus come into my life."

As soon as he said those words, he least expected another supernatural experience. He felt someone pouring what he felt like oil on his head. It dropped on his head and began to flow downwards all over him. As the oil was flowing down over him, he felt a cleansing taking place inside his heart. Like all his sins and filthy nature being washed and cleansed. The oil kept flowing down to his toes. When the oil flowed out of his toes, a great indescribable peace filled his entire being. This last supernatural experience together with the other three experiences, totally convinced Sundar that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly The One True God. He then sincerely gave his life to the Lord Jesus Christ and became His devoted disciple.

Brandon's Testimony

Brandon's Testimony

By Brandon

My name is Brandon and I am 15 years old. When I was around age 1, I was baptized into the First United Methodist Church. Once I got a little older my parents started taking me to church and just dropping me off. I would go into the church and just sit there and not listen to the pastor. I really hated church cause I'd rather be at home sleeping. I believed that everyone just went to church because it was the 'thing to do'.

Once I got a little older me and the youth group all had to go through a membership thing. We picked a mentor and had to read 1 chapter of the bible a week and tell our mentor about it. I really hated doing this cause I felt it was a waste of time, but I did it anyway. I kept hearing stuff about 'being saved' and I wondered what they were talking about being 'saved' from. I decided to ask my mentor if I was saved and he said that I was because I was baptized as an infant. After all that was over they sprinkled us and told us we were members of the church. My parents stopped making me go.

Then one day I was watching tv and I saw a cool movie about witchcraft and decided it looked pretty cool. So I got on the internet and looked up stuff about witchcraft and found 'Wicca'. I read about people who used to be christians but decided they wanted more out of a religion, so they came to the Wiccan religion. They would tell stories of how when they were at school and they used spells to make themselves invisible and said that I could do the same. They would tell me spells to try and candles to buy and all this stuff. So I tried some of this stuff but it never really seemed to work. Since it never worked I got bored of it and just quit, I decided religion wasn't for me and it was all a waste of time. None of my friends new about me and wicca cause I never told anyone about it.

So a few years went by without me caring anything about religion and all I did was watch tv and hang out with friends. I met some new friends and started listening to heavy metal and started dressing in black. This went on for a while and my parents would call me a 'freak' to all of their friends. Finally me and my friends got in some trouble with the police and my parents burned my clothes and said I couldn't hang out with my friends anymore. But I kept on hanging out with them anyway because they were basically the only friends I had. Kyle, one of these friends, was an 'agnostic' and would make fun of God. He believed God was a waste of time just like I did. I still believed I was a christian though.

So anyway we were all on the internet one night and some of my other friends started witnessing to Kyle and they invited me into the conversation. I started helping my friends by agreeing with them. Anyway Kyle started to believe what we were saying. And my friends decided it was time to have him say a prayer and ask God into his life. So my friends typed out the prayer over the internet, and as they were typing it Kyle was saying the prayer and I was saying it. I meant every

word of it with all my heart, as I was saying it I even started crying. And as soon as the prayer was over I was overwhelmed by this AWESOME feeling that I cant describe with words. All I know is that this awesome feeling stayed with me for about 5 hours and I couldn't stop smiling.

I would sin all the time, I watched pornography and cursed all the time. I didn't care because I had forgotten all about God, I figured I would go to heaven anyway because I led a pretty good life. But right after I said that prayer EVERYTHING changed. I knew God was real and I felt stupid about what I used to do and I repented of my old ways. Now I am living my life for Jesus Christ! And I am MUCH happier. Jesus Christ has COMPLETELY changed my life and he can do the same for you if you'll let him!

Abdul Saleeb's Testimony

Abdul Saleeb's Testimony

By Abdul Saleeb

My name is "Abdul Saleeb". I was born and raised in a Muslim country in the Middle East. Even though I lived in a very conservative Muslim society I grew up in a somewhat of a liberal Muslim family. Furthermore, my Muslim upbringing was unique due to my mother's serious involvement in Islamic sufism. So I can honestly confess, that I have had first hand experience of every aspect of contemporary Islamic movements. I personally did not consider myself very religious. At one point I even turned to Marxist ideologies thinking that they could provide real solutions to my country's social ills. However, throughout all this time I never doubted the fundamentals of my religious faith. I thought of Islam as a faith with such high ideals that I did not consider myself worthy of the name Muslim but I wholeheartedly believed that Islam was God's last and most perfect religion for all mankind, based on God's final revelation, the Qur'an, and the prophet Muhammad, God's seal of prophethood. My view of other religions (especially Judaism and Christianity) was that although they were fundamentally the same since they had all been revealed by one God, they were all inferior to Islam because all of them had to various degrees corrupted the original message of their founding prophets, something that we as Muslims have not done.

My religious views were radically challenged when I left my country because of its civil turmoil and went to Europe for the continuation of my studies. By the providence of God and because of various circumstances, I ended up enrolling in an International Christian School. My first "theological" question to one of my Christian teachers, was extremely childish but looking back at it now , the response of my teacher revolutionized my worldview. I asked my question after sitting in my first class about some of the teachings of the Bible. My question was, "How come Christians can drink wine but Muslims cannot? How come your word of God says one thing and our word of God says something different?" My teacher, not knowing much about Islam at all, gently asked, "How do you know the Qur'an is the word of God?" I was taken aback by that response. I had lived in a world in which everyone simply presupposed that the Qur'an was dictated word for word by God to the Prophet Muhammad and no one ever questioned that assumption. That brief encounter forced me to start on a journey, engage my Christian friends in hours of cordial discussion and debate about the truthfulness of the Christian faith.

Like almost any other Muslim, my original reaction to the claims of Christians about Jesus Christ was that of utter shock. These claims not only seemed like plain blasphemy but also quite nonsensical. How could any rational being believe such things about an honored prophet of God? Despite my fundamental theological differences with my friends, there was something about their life and faith that impressed me a great deal. There was a sincerity in their relationship with God and other people that I had not encountered among my own Muslim people. So I would often tell them that I did not want to deny their faith but I just wanted to find a compromise so that I could hold to the truth of Islam and they could continue to hold to their faith.

However, I was in no doubt that their belief about Jesus was based on statements that the prophet Jesus had never actually claimed for himself. My difficulty in understanding Christian belief was very much along the lines that have historically separated Islam from Christianity.

First, there was the issue of the deity of Christ. How can anybody believe that a human being was actually God incarnate? How can that be logically possible?

The second obstacle was the doctrine of the Trinity, an issue closely related to the first problem. Again, this Christian belief seemed to me was a logical absurdity and grossly compromised the belief in the Oneness of God.

Finally, I did not grant in any way that the Bible, especially the New Testament documents, were reliable when it came to reporting the words of Christ. Anything in the Bible that disagreed with the Qur'an was automatically rejected as being a corrupt teaching in the Bible.

My spiritual journey went on for months. Oftentimes I did find comfort in the Qur'an, but I was encountering more questions in that book than answers. For example, the violent tone of many of the Qur'anic passages (especially against the unbelievers but also against the Jewish and Christian people) began to bother me, when compared with the emphasis on love in the New Testament. One particular passage that troubled me, especially in light of my good friendship with many Christians, was in Sura 5:51.

"O ye who believe! Take not Jews and Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to eachother. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily God guideth not a people unjust." However, the most troubling section of the Qur'an had to do with the character of the prophet Muhammad himself. According to Sura 33:37, God sanctions Muhammad's desire to marry the divorced wife of his own stepson, "in order that (in future) there may be no difficulty to the believers in (the matter of) marriage with the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary (formality) (their marriage) with them. And God's command must be fulfilled."

I vividly remember the first time that I came across that verse in my study of the Qur'an. I began to sob with great sorrow and shame. All my life I had been told that Muhammad was the most perfect and ideal moral example for mankind and yet the Qur'an had a good number of examples of how the "revelations" could be so selfserving to the prophet himself!

I immediately wrote a letter to my mother back home with some of these troubling questions that I was encountering in the Qur'an. The response that I received to my letter from one of the most prominent religious leaders in my country was that I should just continue my secular studies and not focus too much on religion. On the other hand, as my understanding of the Bible was increasing many of my questions were beginning to get answered. Even as a Muslim I came to believe that the crucifixion of Christ was an undisputable historical fact that no honest person that deals with evidences of history could deny.

The character of Christ himself, as manifested for example in his beautiful Sermon on the Mount, was gradually making a great impression on me. But for me, the most impressive factor about Christ, were the multitudes of Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Some of these prophecies were so specific and they were fulfilled in the life of Jesus to such a detail that

it amazed me to see how God had taken hundreds of years of Jewish history to prepare the coming of the Messiah; prophecies ranging from Messiah's ancestry, his manner and place of birth, his life and ministry to the circumstances surrounding his death by crucifixion. I was very attracted to Christ and yet I could not deny my own tradition and past. Becoming Christian seemed a definite betrayal of my own family and Islamic heritage. The tension in my life was so strong that I felt torn asunder between these two faiths.

But I still could not bring myself to accept that Jesus was anything more than a human being. Since he had never explicitly said, "I am God and you must worship me," the Christian claim about Jesus was based on speculation and historically unreliable Gospels. Surely the incredible statements attributed to Jesus were invented by later church and put in the mouth of Jesus.

In the midst of all this anxiety of thought, I woke up one morning and was suddenly struck by the meaning of a verse written by the prophet Isaiah in his ninth chapter. I had read this verse several weeks prior to that morning, but I had never understood its meaning. In Isa.7:14, we read,

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." Isaiah then goes on to write in chapter 9,

"[...] in the future he (God) will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan the people walking in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned [...] For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne [...] from that time on and forever." I could not believe it! The fact that the Messiah was not going to be just a prophet but Mighty God himself, was therefore a truth that had been prophesied sevenhundred years before Christ in the Old Testament, and not something that had been made up by Christians many years or centuries after Christ! It was God's own promise that he will come in flesh (Immanuel = God with us) and will establish a kingdom that will last forever.

I came to trust in Christ, the next day on January 20, 1985. I cried uncontrollably as I was praying and turning to Christ in faith. I did not know why, and though I had never felt much burden of guilt, I was feeling a great sense of peace and relief from the burden of my sins. A greater satisfaction was the sense of rest in finally finding the truth about God and His revelation of love to mankind in Jesus Christ. A book that helped me (and several other Muslim friends of mine who became Christians around the same time that I did) tremendously in answering many of my questions about the deity of Christ and the reliability of the New Testament documents was Josh McDowell's "Evidence That Demands A Verdict". I highly recommend it.

Soon after my own conversion, I decided to dedicate my entire life to promoting the Good News of Christ among Muslims and especially the people of my own country. I later came to the United States and received my undergraduate and graduate degrees in Biblical and Theological Studies. I also co-authored a book with Norman Geisler, a prominent Christian philosopher, with the title "Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross".

Abdul Saleeb

The Miracle of Fire in My Furnace

The Miracle of Fire in My Furnace

By Alice E. Lewis

Jesus said, "Ask and it shall be given unto you. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.. Will not the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

The church I grew up in did not believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

One received all there was when one became converted. Speaking in tongues was thought of as emotionalism. My feelings toward Pentecostal people was that they thought that they were better than anyone else because of their noisy praying and worshipping, yet in the back of my mind I wondered "What if there is more than what I had been taught. What if there IS a baptism of the Holy Spirit?"

One winter day when I was in a desperate situation, God proved to me that His word is true. It was forecast to be one of those bitter Minnesota winter nights, which make houses creak and pop with the cold. The morning weather forecast had said it would be 20 degrees below zero Fahrenheit that night. Just as my husband was leaving for work, our furnace ran out of oil.

We were in desperate financial straits. He was working full time at a print shop as well as putting in long hours trying to save our failing gas station business. (This was during the oil shortage of the early 1970's when many gas stations went out of business.) We barely had enough money to put a little food on the table. There was nothing left over for anything else.

On Friday night when he got his pay check from the print shop, my husband would buy two five gallon cans of fuel oil for our furnace, and that would have to last for the week. This particular week, we could afford only one.

Now on Tuesday morning, it was all gone. The furnace sputtered on and off a few times, and then quit altogether. We would have to put oil in the tank and bleed the air out of the line before it would start again.

I went into the basement to start a fire in our wood burning stove, however we only a few pieces of wood left. We seemed destined to be left to the mercy of the weather that night. I knew that within a few hours it would be getting quite chilly in the house. How would I protect my children? I could beg from my folks or from my husband's mother, or maybe I could ask or benevolence from my church, but I didn't want to do either.

I was praying as I was putting in the last piece of firewood "God, we are entirely at your mercy. Maybe you could make it not get so cold, or you could give us tough hides to see us through this. I will not ask for charity! My help is in You. Jesus, you promised that you would never leave us comfortless. You promised that when you went away you would send us another comforter. IF I EVER NEEDED A COMFORTER, IT IS RIGHT NOW!

Little did I know what I was asking for. I think I was thinking in terms of a warm blanket or a "There-there, it's going to be alright." but He sent The Comforter - The Holy Spirit. None of my religious upbringing prepared me for what happened next. I felt a surge of powerful energy flowing in through the top of my head, down my body through my feet, and back up again and out through my head. With my toes tingling, I felt myself being lifted to my feet by unseen hands as words in a language I have never heard flowed from my mouth.

With hands held high I began dancing around the house praising the Lord and singing songs I knew, and making up new songs of praise as I went. I tried to remember the few words I had spoken in that strange language. I wanted to say them again because of the power I had felt in them when I spoke them, but I couldn't remember them. It dawned on me that maybe this was what those crazy Pentecostals were experiencing.

My heart and mind were filled with unshakable faith. I knew without one trace of doubt that Jesus would not leave me comfortless, that He would not let His little children suffer.

I continued through the day singing and praising God, I was so filled with praise and thanksgiving that I had to let it out. I think that my children must have thought I was going nuts, doing my housework singing and dancing and praising the Lord. "You are my Comforter. You will not leave me comfortless." Through the day, the house grew colder. I put the children to bed with their snowsuits on, and I piled on all the blankets I could find. It never occurred to me to worry that the water pipes in the basement could freeze up. I was just so filled up with the presence of the Lord. I was revelling in it. My husband came home after closing up the gas station late that night, crawled into bed with me and promptly fell into an exhausted sleep. There was nothing else we could do about the heat. The little electric space heater would have to do, because that was all we had.

About 2:00 AM, I woke to the sound of the furnace fan running. I got up to turn it off, since it would be senseless to let cold air blow about the house. I pushed the thermostat lever all the way down as far as it would go, but the furnace kept running since the house was already colder than the lowest setting. "This is crazy." I thought. Next I went into the kitchen and placed my hand over the hot air vent. I really don't know why I did that. To my utter amazement, warm air was coming out of the vent. With tears streaming down my cheeks, I cried out, "Oh my God, what are You doing!" The furnace had been dead since 7:00 AM, and now at 2:00AM, after we had been sleeping for several hours, it had started up all by itself. "God, I have never heard of anything like this before. I knew that maybe You could moderate the weather, but to make an empty furnace run - that was a miracle greater than anything I have ever heard of." Yet it was running.

There was warm air coming out of the vents. I went to the basement to check the gauge on the oil tank. Sure enough, it read empty, just as I knew it would. I tapped on the tank from the top on down to the bottom. It was hollow all the way. There was no oil in the tank! Warm air was circulating all through my house. "My God, You are so wonderful!" I remembered the old Sunday School song, "Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning" Here was a new twist, I thought "Give me oil in my furnace, keep me comfy." I was laughing and praising. No one in his right mind would ask God for something so outrageous. I asked for the Comforter, and I got Him (although I did not fully understand, because I had never been taught), and I also got the fire of God in my furnace. If I would have asked for fire in my furnace, I am sure I would not have gotten it. I asked for the Comforter, and I got both Him and physical comfort. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His

righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." I went back upstairs and set the thermostat back up to 65 degrees. I sat on the floor by the warm air vent next to the patio door and looked out at the stars shining brightly in the cold winter night and continued praising and thanking the Lord. The next morning we set the thermostat to a more comfortable 72 degrees.

The furnace continued to run without fuel until Friday when we had money to buy oil again. Have faith. God will take care of you too.

Yahya's Testimony

Yahya's Testimony

By Yahya

I was born and raised as a Muslim in Malaysia. My father made sure that I was brought up in Islamic ways. At the early age, I was taught to obey the five pillars of Islam (the 'shadat', (profession of faith), solat, fasting during ramadan, 'zakat' (give alms), and pilgrimage to Mecca, and recite the Quran (in arabic). Religious classes in both primary and secondary schools were mandatory for Muslim students. The Malaysian government did an excellent job in providing islamic education to the Muslims. It also made it easy and convenient for Malaysian Muslims to practice their faith. All through my childhood and teenage years, I faithfully carried out my Muslim duties to God (Allah) by obeying His laws. However, I felt spiritually unfulfilled. No matter how many good deeds I did, I was never sure whether Allah is pleased. During my trials and tribulation, I cried out to Allah but He seemed distant and impersonal.

I came to the United States in 1981 for college education. I was enthusiastic about blending into the American culture but unfortunately, I was led further from the truth. I was very temperamental then. My Christian friend then (who is my wife now), shared her faith with me. That was the first time I ever heard of the Gospel. (When I was growing up, I was told that Christians were idol worshippers. Muslims in Malaysia are forbidden to hear the Gospel). She told me that:

a) We are all sinners by nature. At first, I find it hard to believe that we are sinners by nature because as Muslims, we were thought that mankind were not born as sinners but rather through our weakness and frailty, we commit sinful acts. Therefore, in Islam, one Muslim may be less sinful than another Muslim and thus, it creates "holier than thou" syndrome amongst Muslims.

b) Isa Al-Masih died for our sins and we are forgiven if we confess our sins and received Him as our Lord and Savior. This was hard for me to believe too because of God dying for my sins? It is completely foreign to me.

I began to read the Bible. As I was reading, I felt comfortable with Isa Al-Masih's teachings - filled with love, compassion, mercy, and grace. Throughout the Gospel (as I was only reading the New Testament), the message was clear: God loves us very much. I also found out that Isa Al-Masih is the Son of God and that He came to earth as a man to die for our sins.

I struggled between the new found truth and my Muslim beliefs. One of them got to be the truth. So, my search for the one true God began in 1983. I prayed "God, I want to know you intimately. Please reveal yourself to me." From 1983 to 1985, I was looking for God. Finally, through His grace and mercy, I found Him in 1985. I had been sporadically attending church services in 1985 but there was on particular service where the pastor was preaching about praying. He mentioned that the Bible said that we're all SINNERS by nature and if we accept Isa Al-Masih as our Lord and Savior and repent of our sins, we have a LIVING RELATIONSHIP with God forever and ever. He

said to pray like this:

"Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your Kingdom come,
You will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give this day our daily bread.
Forgive our debts
As we also have forgiven our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from the evil one"

Suddenly, everything seemed clear to me. The God who created the universe loves me. He knows me intimately. He does not require me to pray in Arabic. He hears my prayers at all times. Salvation is a gift from God because he loves me.

That night, I repented of my sins and asked Isa Al-Masih to be my Lord and Savior. I felt peace in my soul after that. Until today, I have no regrets of my decision to let Isa Al-Masih rule my life. I am now married with 3 kids. Even though life is not a bed of roses, God's promises are for real. Psalm 23:4 "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for YOU are with me". He is with me and strengthens me through trials and tribulation. God's love for me is unconditional and because He loves me first and I am loving him back with all my heart, soul, and mind.

Asalaamualaikum to my Muslim friends.

Let me ask you question: If you were to die tonight, do you know for sure that you are going to heaven? Do you have the assurance that you are going to heaven? I am here to tell you that the God who created the universe has given us the assurance that you will go to heaven if you have faith in HIM and what He has DONE for you.

You see, my friends, sin is not based on your deeds alone but rather it is a state of mankind. God has told us in that he created man perfect and He wanted to dwell among His creations. However, Adam and Eve (First man and woman) CHOSE to rebel against God by DISOBEYING Him. Adam and Eve sinned against God. What God has made perfect is now corrupted by sin. Through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, we're all sinners. What does God say about man and sin? It clearly states in the Bible that ALL have SINNED and fall short of the glory of God. The Bible goes on to say that the wages of sin is DEATH (physically and spiritually). Why is God so harsh on sin? Because God is PERFECT and JUST and everything about sin is diametrically opposite of who God is. Since God said that the wages of sin is death, we are doomed. Fortunately, God who is perfect and just is also a God of GRACE and MERCY. From the very beginning of time, God LOVES US and He grieves when we chose to disobey and sinned against Him. The good news is that God FORGIVES ALL our sins completely. How does he forgive our sins? Isa Al-Masih came to the world and died for ALL our sins. He paid it all. God forgiveness is in Isa Al-Masih. Isa Al-Masih DIED for our sins AND three days after He died, he ROSE again. He LIVES. There is no work for us to do in order to gain forgiveness from God. Isa Al-Masih has done everything for us. All you need to do is to accept God's gift of forgiveness by:

Confessing all your sins to God.
Repent (taubat) of your old ways (sins).
Invite Isa Al-Masih to come in your life and be your Lord and Savior.
Isa Al-Masih said, "I am the WAY and the TRUTH and the LIFE. NO ONE comes to the Father (God) except through Me." He also said "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." Isa Al-Masih is the sirat - the bridge that allows us to cross over to God's Kingdom.

My friends, salvation is by FAITH and it is a gift of God. The Bible says that our righteous deeds are like filthy rags to Him. Without accepting God's gift, no amount of works can satisfy God's demands for our sins.

God Bless you.

Yahya

Journey as a Muslim

Journey as a Muslim

By Al-Gharib

General background: I was born and raised in an Arab-Muslim country. My parents and their forefathers were Muslims for generations. When I was born, my father named me after his ancestor, the prophet Muhammad. I grew up in an Islamic environment from all sides, surrounded by Muslims. I attended national schools, which are pro-Islamic, from elementary to high school and even to college. During my growing and educational journey, I received a balanced Islamic education at every level. When I reached adulthood, I was a very typical Muslim, who has tremendous zeal for his religion and culture. I was very proud of my identity to the point of looking down on all non-Muslims. I was anti-Western (Christians) and I hated the Jews. My encounters with Christians had some tremendous impacts on my life, both positive and negative. However, I was determined to be a Muslim.

First failure: After graduating from college and working as employee for a little while, I started my own private business by using my father's money, which I inherited. Running my own business was neither easy nor pleasant. My lack of experience in trade made success difficult. My business went bankrupt and I accumulated debts that I couldn't pay back. I realized that I would soon end up in jail and no one would rescue me. To avoid this disaster and also get revenge for my failure, I decide to sell everything that I was able to and then vanish from sight. My plan was to disappear until I could recover, otherwise never to return back home. Through my experiences at work and my first business I was able to learn what no school or university can teach. I learned about the reality of society and life. The failure of my first experience in business caused me a lot of damage and grief. It also impacted me positively at least in one area. It pushed me to move to a new experience and to explore the world from a wider view.

Success: Leaving at home a big mess and debts (thousands of US dollars), I fled to a very far land where none of my debtors or even our justice system could reach me. I settled there, opened a company and started anew. This time business smiled at my face and I succeeded. My achievements caused my pride and greed to greatly multiply. I became blind and very selfish. Meanwhile, I learned from some relatives that if I would return to my country I would be immediately arrested at the borders or at the airport. That wasn't something unexpected, but it made me feel sad to be considered an outlaw. I became the first person in our entire extended family to hold a criminal record.

Defeat: All those things mixed together pushed me to adventure in some 'risky' business. I wanted to get rich very fast so that I could get rid of all my debts and try to regain respect in the midst of my relatives, friends and neighbors. I gambled with all that I had and took some dangerous risks by creating enemies for myself. My foolishness caused me to end up defeated and pursued by one of my enemies. I fled again to another new country and left everything behind. I lost my company

and even many of my personal belongings.

Stagnation: This time all circumstances changed and got tough. I tried several possibilities but none of them worked. I was becoming like a fish struggling inside a tiny jar of water. All doors were closed at my face and I found myself in a deep pit. Several times, I had to sleep in the street and even to starve. I was greatly humiliated and I lost all hope. I went to the mosque and I tried to make peace with Allah, but he apparently rejected me. My fellow Muslim brothers turned their backs toward me and some of them even mocked me to my face. Out of shame, sorrow and depression I thought about committing suicide, but I didn't even have the courage to kill myself.

New idea: While I was totally hopeless and all my plans were screwed up, a bright idea appeared. An acquaintance advised me to associate with Christians. Perhaps they would help me. He assured me that unlike the Muslim brothers, Christians would help me and even provide me a job. Regardless of my sentiments against Christianity and Christians (Westerners), I decided to follow the friend's advice, to go to Church and to take a chance.

New plan: I had no proper idea about Churches and the difference between them. Anyway, my motive wasn't to look for a new religion or God but finding a way to exit from my turmoil. One Sunday morning, I found a church in the newspaper. I went and I attended their service, it was very different from what I expected but I enjoyed it. During that first visit I didn't make any friends, but within a few weeks I made several. Most of the Christians there were friendly and they nice to everyone. They welcomed me at their Church services and at their home gatherings, even though I told them that I was a Muslim. Out of curiosity, I joined several of their activities. My bad attitude toward Christians began to change and I began to appreciate them. The job didn't remain as the highest reason for me going to that Church but mostly the friendship with the people. I also began to think about converting them to Islam.

False conversion: After exploring the church for awhile, for several wrong motives, I decided to convert to Christianity and call myself a Christian. It was an outward conversion, but in the inside I was still a Muslim and the same old person. When I got baptized and immediately after my coming out of the water, I secretly confessed in my heart the Muslim's Shahadah (There is no God but Allah Muhammad prophet of Allah). However, only God and I knew what was really in my heart at that time.

Job: Meanwhile, our Church opened a new branch on the other side of the city. Since I was looking for a job and the Church needed somebody to serve there as a janitor, the pastor asked me to fill that position. It was not the kind of job I wished to have, but I had no other option. I accepted and felt lucky for having it. What touched me profoundly was the pastor's trust of me. He put the building into my disposition without any further questions or checking. He also proposed that I could move and live in the Church to reduce my expenses. My work duties were so simple and easy to accomplish, which allowed me to have a lot of free time. Therefore, I dedicated myself to the study of the Bible. I thought that if I could handle the Bible well, it would be easier for me to lead my Christian friends to Islam. During that time the pastor also volunteered to mentor me. I founded that interesting and a good way to lay the ground for my plan.

LIFE STYLE AS A MUSLIM:

Behavior: I was always irresponsible, selfish and self-centered. I rarely admitted to making any mistakes. I always had excuses to justify my actions and to easily blame any misconduct on others. When the time came where I had serious problems, I would just run away and leave the problem for others to take care of. Out of my immature behavior in tough times, I caused trouble and harm to several people.

Morality: Regardless of my countless sins, I often felt proud of my self-righteousness. Whenever I compared my short-comings with those of others' around me, especially the religious ones, I always thought I was better than most or at least not worst than the majority. As a Muslim and according to Islam and tradition, I used to believe that each good work I perform has the power to cancel ten of my sins. My religiousness never bothered me or caused me to feel that I owed God anything. Instead it led me to be proud of myself and of my deeds.

Religiousness: My faith and belief in Islam looked quiet strong and firm. Islam wasn't just a religion for me, it was a part of my culture, identity, pride and being. As with most Muslims, I enjoyed discussing and to arguing about spiritual matters but was also skeptical, and didn't just believe things naively. There were times where I leaned toward fundamentalism and there were also times where I leaned toward atheism. When I settled overseas, I had a chance to interact with people from different religions and backgrounds. I often thought that I was a person who seeks to know the truth. But actually, I was just trying to prove myself as being right. Whenever, I noticed that truth wasn't on my side, I would quickly run to the other direction and hide behind an excuse. I was also driven by fear in my heart: I was afraid of Allah's curse and wrath if I tried to search beyond what Islam allows. I was also afraid to give up my pride.

EARLY CHRISTIAN IMPACTS:

The wise nun: When I was a baby I got a dangerous sickness and my mother had to leave me in a hospital for three days in the intensive care unit. The nurse who was in charge of me was a Catholic nun. When I became a boy my father told me several times: "That nun saved your life." I never understood what he said and why until years later. When I became a Christian, the story came back to my memory and I understood what my father's message was. When I was struggling between life and death in that nun's hands, she prayed for me and the Lord answered her. I owe that nun my life and I am so thankful for her gift of prayer and love.

The foolish nun: When I was a teenager, my mother got very sick and had to stay in the hospital (another one) which was under the supervision of a Catholic nun. Technically, she was a hard working nun but had what seemed to be little compassion or respect toward anyone. Everybody hated her because of her meanness. Regardless of her many good works, I believe that her lack of love toward people destroyed her true ministry and she misrepresented Christ. I still have a bad memory of her and I find it hard to forgive her still.

Muslim Christian's debate: Once, a friend invited me to watch a videotape with him, it was a debate between the famous Muslim scholar Ahmed Deedat and a Christian apologist. The topic, I still remember, was about which one is God's genuine Word: Is it the Bible or the Koran? The debate was an entertainment for me just like any of the WWC matches, as opposed to a debate to find the Truth. At the end of the debate, I noticed that none of the debaters won and I benefited nothing from any of the two.

First challenge: During my first journey overseas I lived with two foreigners, one was an Arab (outwardly religious) and the other was a Westerner (worldly Christian). We, the Muslims, planned to convert the Christian. We tried very hard to convince him to renounce Christ and follow Muhammad but he was 'stubborn'. During my last debate with him about Christianity, especially the deity of Jesus, we ended up our conversation something like this:

- He asked me: "Do you believe that God is all powerful and nothing is impossible for Him?"- I replied: "Yes, of course!"- Then He said: "Would it then be impossible for Him then to come to earth and to take a human form?"

Before answering his challenge, somebody came suddenly, so we had to change the subject. Later on, I tried to find an answer to prove him wrong but I couldn't. To avoid embarrassment, I simply ignored the matter, since it went against my Islamic belief. We never raised that topic again, but deep in my heart a first seed was sown.

CONFUSION:

After my outward conversion to Christianity, I began digging in the Bible for clues that could bring Islam and Christianity close to each other. However, I contrarily began to notice that the difference between them was getting deeper and larger to the point that there was no way these two religions could be from the same source. The Islamic idea that the Bible was falsified by the Jews could no longer convince me. Very soon, I accumulated several remarks and doubts that confused me. They were mainly as follows:

- 1- If Allah is the true and personal name of God, why he didn't use it in the Bible but instead used YHWH?
- 2- It is obvious that the Allah of the Koran and YHWH of the Bible can not be the same God, who speaks in both books. Which one is the True God or even who is God?
- 3- Where in the Bible does it mention about the coming of Muhammad and Islam?
- 4- If the Koran and the Bible are the book of the same God, why then do they contradict each other? (Both the Bible and the Koran often talk in the first person of a heavenly being speaking to men.)
- 5- Why do Christians claim that Jesus is God and that God is Triune? What biblical evidence do they have?
- 6- If God really exists and really spoke to the prophets and still speaks to theses Christians, can't He speak to someone like me too?

At that time, I couldn't open up to anybody and share about my questions. Out of my fear, I kept all those doubts tormenting me on the inside. I thought that if our pastor knew that I had those doubts about Christianity, he would throw me out of the Church and take back the job from me. At the time, I was unaware that these fears were a lie from Satan to keep me in darkness and under his control. We can always be honest before God with any doubt or question.

JESUS' INTERVENTION

BREAKING THROUGH:

Seeking the truth: I couldn't bear it anymore by avoiding the truth and continuing to play a dirty game. This time, I decided to find the truth at any cost. I fasted for three days in a row without any food, except water and for the first time, I prayed earnestly from my deep heart: I called upon the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. I cried out to the Creator of the universe, the Eternal God whomever He might be. I asked him to reveal to me the truth and nothing but His truth. I made a promise to Him that if He would answer my questions and reveal Himself to me, I will follow His path even if it will be different than Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Speaking out: I waited for several weeks but it seemed that nothing was happening. I became very anxious and depressed. Finally, I decided to speak out and directly ask the pastor. I still remember, it was a Saturday evening. At the end of our meeting that evening, I told him that I couldn't find anywhere in the Bible where it talks about Jesus being God or about God being a triune God. Immediately and in a relaxed and gentle manner, he opened his Bible and asked me to take a look at the following verses:

(John 10:30-33)[Jesus said] "I and the Father are One."The Jews took up stones again to stone Him.Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

(1 John 5:8-12)[For there are three that bear witness in heaven:the Father, the word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are One.]And there are three that bear witness on earth:the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself;the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar,because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

(1 John 5:20)And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding,in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.This is the true God and eternal life.

The lifting of the veil: Suddenly, something incredible happened. It seemed like if I was blind or covered by a spiritual dark veil then I began to see. I began to read the Bible in a clear light and with understanding. The words of the Bible became alive while I read them and carrying power within. Furthermore, I began to decode the hidden mysteries of the gospel and the symbolic prophecies.

First answers: Within a three day period of reading the Holy Scriptures in the light and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit I was able to discover many of the answers I was looking for (i.e. the Trinity, the Deity of Jesus, his crucifixion, resurrection!). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit extended my spiritual sight to see beyond the natural realm like discerning about time and sights. Regarding Islam, I discovered overwhelming biblical prophecies that were bitter for me to swallow. The most shocking answer I received was about Allah. He is not God "YHWH" of the Bible, but someone else.

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE:

The message: Monday afternoon was a beautiful day in the beginning of the spring. The sky was so clear and blue. It was my third day of new exploration of God's Word. Whenever I felt tired of reading I stood up by the window to enjoy the view outside. During one of these times of relaxation and at the very moment when I lifted up my head toward the heavens something strange began to happen:

* Sight: A bright light appeared coming from the Southwest. It looked like a star heading forward toward me. I got so amazed at the sight because I never saw before a star shining in the sky during the day and while the sun is still standing. I quickly began to think that it was maybe a comet going to strike the earth. As it kept approaching and increasing in light, I began to feel more and more scared.

* Word: I returned to my Bible and tried to look for where it talks about a comet going to hit the earth. But, and I didn't know exactly how I found myself reading from the following passage (Revelation 2:8-10):

The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.' Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'

Immediately after reading the last sentence I looked again at the star and it stopped right there. I stared at it very closely to see if what I was looking at was real or just a vision. As far as I could tell, it was real and the star was the biggest and the brightest I had ever seen, especially during the day. Another amazing thing, the star remained in that exact location for the whole night.

* Voice: Out of skepticism still, I decided to forget about the whole matter, I put my Bible away and turned on the radio. The first words that came out of the speaker were exactly these: "Yes it's true, all I want is to be with you. Yes it's true, yes it's true!" I can't explain how that happened but I was totally convinced that God spoke to me. I realized that the star was a sign to attract my attention and the sound coming from the speaker was a tool to convince me that what I saw was a real vision and what I read was Jesus' message for me at that very moment. Furthermore, I realized that God is not only a being who hears and answers and does miracles but He is also a God who seeks to develop a very personal and intimate relationship with us. He wants to treat us as close friends, not as slaves. The message, which came from the radio, revealed to me that Jesus is not only a God who is capable of doing amazing and strange things but a God who also has a sense of humor even when He is speaking seriously.

Meanings: I looked at my Bible again to carefully examine the passage. I realized that the communicator was Jesus and that He spoke to me and that He answered most of my questions through those three verses. Respectively, Jesus communicated to me that He is indeed the Eternal God. He truly died on the cross and rose from dead. He showed me that He knows everything about me in the past, present and future. He confirmed to me what I have found regarding Islam. He let me know the consequences of following Him while living in the world. He instructed me how to overcome the world. And He promised me a reward and confirmed that it is a

real one. The heavenly sign of the star was meant to attract my attention and to show me that God wants to talk to me in person. The voice, which came from the speakers was meant to confirm to me that it was truly Jesus who shared with me the message and that He meant to invite me to become His.

Confirmation: One year later an evangelist came to our Church to preach. While he was sharing his message, he suddenly turned toward me and prophesied to me God's plan for my future. After the service I went directly to him and asked what made him tell me those words. I noticed he had no clue why, except that he felt that God put those words in his mouth while he was sharing. His prophecy was a confirmation that it was indeed God who spoke to me, since the context of his prophecy was identical to the context of the second part of the message in Rev.2:8-10.

TRUE CONVERSION:

Renounce of Islam: By Monday evening, I made up my mind and determined to renounce Islam, along with my Muslim name and to put my faith in Christ, the only True God, and to follow Him forever. The next morning, I called my pastor and told him about my decision. I also suggested that I must be re-baptized. At first he disagreed to re-baptize me, but since I insisted, he decided to pray about it and seek God's direction. When we met later in the evening, he informed me that he was willing to re-baptize me after God confirmed it to him. We went together to a remote place and we burned all of my Muslim items, then we went back to his home to finish the process.

Rebirth: After renouncing Islam and rejected all that linked me to it, I confessed my sin and I received Christ as my only Savior, Lord and God. This time my confession was with faith and total confidence in Jesus. Immediately, I was baptized. When I went into the water, it symbolized my death to my sin, which became buried with Christ. Coming out of the water symbolized my resurrection into a new life, a life in Christ Jesus. During the process we used only my nickname, because my old name was included in all the Muslim things I renounced. Then my pastor prayed for me, for the filling with the Holy Spirit. This time I was truly baptized with faith in Christ and surrendered to Him. I was literally and spiritually born again.

Filling with the Spirit: A few days later, while I was sleeping in the night, I had a dream where I saw a fire coming from heaven and it entered into my chest. However it didn't harm me. Immediately, I got up from my bed (half-asleep) and my mouth began talking loudly in a strange tongue. I tried to control my mouth and stop speaking, but I couldn't. The fire was a sign and the speaking in a strange tongue was the manifestation of my filling with the Holy Spirit. There was only one other time where I prophesied in tongue in such manner, but there were several times where I felt the power of the Holy Spirit's anointing on me. I still can't describe exactly any of those moments, except the fact that they were so real. I don't know why God let me pass through such experiences, but I guess one of the reasons is due to my skepticism and lack of belief in the supernatural.

Realizations: During the whole following week since my baptism, my appetite for food and desire for the things of this world were totally gone. I spent most of the time crying like a child. My tears were the tears of grief and sorrow for my former wicked and foolish ways, because I realized that I have participated in persecuting Jesus, my Creator, Father, Redeemer and God. I realized that I wasn't any better than those who flogged and crucified Him, but verily one of them. I realized that I

was completely lost and I was going to end up in hell if Jesus didn't take the initiative and rescue me. I realized that all my life I believed in lies and I promoted them. The most painful thing was the realization that my parents are most likely already in hell and that the rest of my relatives and my people are going to join them if they don't turn to Christ. Meanwhile, my tears were also the tears of joy. I couldn't imagine how Jesus, even the heavenly Father loved me, regardless of all of my evil deeds, hate and mocking of His children and blasphemy against Him. I realized that I have being saved and rescued only by His grace and mercy, but nothing of my own.

Immediate healing: Immediately after my conversion to Christ, all the hatred and bitterness that I have accumulated for years toward the Jewish people and the Westerner world was totally gone. I was also totally healed from a habit, which I struggled with for years without having the strength to overcome it. What was amazing in both of those cases, nobody, except God, knew about my bondage. None prayed for my healing from those two secret diseases. Also, I was miraculously healed from them instantly.

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS:

My other experiences: After my conversion, I had several dreams where I had direct encounters with Jesus. I have seen Him as a fearful God and I have seen Him as a meek and humble person. He never told me directly that He is Jesus but from His way of speaking and through His deep piercing eyes, I knew in the deep of my heart that it was Him.

Not only me: In the beginning, I thought that my experience was one of the greatest. It was special and unique of kind, and could be compared with the story of Moses at the burning bush or Paul on his way to Damascus. When I later read and heard the testimonies of some other people's encounters with Jesus, theirs were much more powerful and incredible than mine. One of those is the story of a former devout Muslim Pakistani woman. She wrote a book about Jesus literal visitation and miraculous healing of her. ("The Torn Veil" By Ghulshan Fatima [Esther]. CLC Books' publication.)

RENEWAL PROCESS

A GENERAL SUMMARY:

Multi-Blessings: It has been three and half years since my conversion. These years have been for me a period of renewal and transformation in my personality, character, thinking and behavior. They have been also my years of 'seminary' in Christ's personal school of theology and discipleship, where I began to learn about God through direct experience. Before the end of this period of my elementary training, the Lord has met my needs and provided for me the whole amount I needed to cover my debts. He has begun to open the door for me to get new documents and even the possibility to change my name officially. He provided me a wife, the right one I was looking for and the one I need to be my partner. He gave me a new family and a countless number of relatives and friends. Till now I am still occupying the job of janitor and watchman in our Church. My calling also is to write articles and materials about Islam and to Muslims. This testimony is a part of my writing works.

Who Christ is: It is a true statement that Christ is always the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. In both easy and difficult circumstances, He is so good all the time and His mercy and

loving-kindness are renewed every day. He is truly our Father who cares for every detail in our lives and who seeks the best for our interests. He is also the ultimate faithful friend who never fails us even if we fail him.

Christ my redeemer: Without Christ in my life and in the center of it, I was in a mess and in a total ruin. If Christ didn't save and protect me, I may have already ended up in jail and destroyed without hope. Christ has set me free from my troubles and saved my life literally from destruction. Christ has given me a new and abundant life, full of hope, peace and joy. Christ has sucked my troubled water into His vine and transformed it into a clear and clean juice that flows from it.

CONCLUSION

The very best conclusion I could come with, is the following section from one of Saint Paul's letters (1Timothy 1:12-16)

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love, which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen

From a Broken Home to a Christ

From a Broken Home to a Christ

By Rev. Brian C. Jarrett

I am Brian Jarrett and this is my Testimony, please know that this is kind of long but I have to put it out here for everyone to see. Doing this is kind of like therapy for me.

First off let me start by saying that I am extremely blessed by the Lord, and I have to give Him the Praise for what he has done in my life!

When I was growing up I had to experience what most children today experience... a broken home. I was raised in a Church going family and was sometimes "forced" (That is what I thought as a child) to go to Church. I grew to despise going to church or having anything to do with it. When my parent's split up, I blamed myself as most children do. I started to develop the rebellious feelings toward God, family, friends, etc.. It was not until I turned 19, that I started to come around.

I was involved in gangs while growing up but I "grew" out of that part of my life at the age of 18. I had my beautiful son at the age of 20 out of wedlock. I was not a good father to my son, as I was taking on the traits left to me by my seemingly non-existent Father. I was not there for my son in the beginning part of his life, but I am there for him now. He is 8 years old and extremely intelligent. I knew that I had to do something to change or else my relationship with my Son would be nothing. At the age of 23 I became Born-Again, but I quickly fell back into my old ways because I was very weak and lacked inner discipline. In 1998 I was married to the most beautiful woman that I had laid eyes on. We were only married for 9 months before we separated. I feel that if God was a part of my life then, we might have been able to work things out. Money was very tight and arguments ensued. It was more than I could take on my soul.

Despite the hard times of my marriage, I learned allot from my wife. I learned to focus on the right here and now, and not dwell in the future or past. She taught me how to be humble and listen, be patient and slow down the way I was living. She taught me how to focus on my environment and absorb it. I learned allot from her, because God needed me to learn those things for what I am lead to do for Him. I am in the ending stages of the Divorce now and I lean toward God to bring me through it.

In March of 2002, I was sitting at home surfing the internet as I always do, when I felt compelled to visit the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministries (CARM.org) website operated by Matthew Slick. I had started being interested in religion and Spirituality long ago. I had studied several different religions and even started practicing Wicca. As I looked through the CARM website, I was drawn to keep looking and looking throughout the site. I followed every link I could find on the site except one. The link is titled : "Jesus Saves" it is in the upper left corner of the main page. I clicked on the link and it took me to a straight forward, Biblical, Scripture enforced page on Jesus Christ. After reading that page I felt God pulling on my heart.

I asked God to come into my life and to cleanse me of all of my sins on March 07, 2002. It felt so good to have the weight that I bore lifted off of me. I was so happy that night that I could not sleep. I started learning the Word of God immediately, and found that although I had read portions of the Bible before and did not understand what I was reading; when I read His Word now I fully understand it in wonderful detail. I have since studied Theology, received an Honorary Associates Degree in Divinity, and submitted a Thesis for a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Theology. I have been called to learn the very foundations of the Bible and the Christian faith, so that I may teach people about the Lord. The Lord has also called me to be a Biblical Counselor. I have been Ordained as a Minister since March, however I felt that it was too easy to obtain this Honor. Therefore I am learning as much as I can in order to serve God in the capacity that he has given to me.

There is so much more to say, but I think I have said enough already. Please feel free to email me at belovedword@juno.com if you have any questions or comments. I would love to hear from you. Thank you very much for taking the time to read my testimony, it has truly helped me personally by writing it.

God Bless, Rev. Brian C. Jarrett
Beloved Word of God Ministries

Walid's Testimony

Walid's Testimony

By Walid

My name is Walid. I was born in Bethlehem, Israel. On the day that I was born it was one of the holiest days to Islam, the birthday of the Muslim prophet Mohammad (Al-Mauled Al-Nabawi). This was an honor to my father. For that, he named me Walid which relates to the Arabic word (Mauled) and in English (The Birth) to always remember the birthday of the Muslim prophet.

My father was a Palestinian Muslim who taught English and Islamic studies in the Holy Land. My mother was an American who married my father during his studies in the United States in the year of 1956.

Fearing the impact of the American way of life for their two children and while my mother was pregnant with me, my parents left to live in Israel in 1960 which was called Jordan at that time. When they arrived to Bethlehem I was born. As my father changed jobs, we moved to Saudi Arabia, then back to the Holy Land -- this time, to the lowest place on earth, Jericho.

I can not forget the first song I learned in school just before the Six Day War titled "Arabs Our Beloved and Jews Our Dogs." I used to wonder at that time who the Jews were but with the rest of the kids, I repeated the words without any knowledge of their meaning.

As I grew up in the Holy Land, I lived through several battles between the Arabs and the Jews. The first battle (while we lived in Jericho) was the Six Day War when the Jews captured old Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine. This was a great disappointment to Arabs and Muslims worldwide.

The American Council in Jerusalem came just before the war to evacuate all the Americans in the area. Since my mother was an American, they offered us assistance but my father refused and turned them down because he loved his country. I still remember many things during the war -- the noise of the bombing and shelling that went on day and night for six days, the looting of stores and houses by the Arabs in Jericho and people running to cross the Jordan River from fear of the Israelis.

The war was called the Six Day War because it was won in six days and on the seventh day a Rabbi by the name of Goren blew the ram's horn on the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem declaring the victory. Many Jews claim that this was a parallel to Joshua when he went around the walls of Jericho six times, then on the seventh day seven times, and on that day the priests blew the trumpets and everyone shouted with one voice and took the city. To my father in Jericho, it seemed that the walls had crumbled on him. During the war he was always listening to the Jordanian radio station. He used to say that the Arabs were winning the war, but he was listening to the wrong station. The Israeli station was announcing the truth of their soon coming victory. Instead my father chose to believe the Arabs who claimed that the Israelis were promoting propaganda.

Later on, we moved back to Bethlehem and my father enrolled us in an Anglican-Lutheran school as they had a better English course. My brother, sister and I were the only Muslims in the school. Being half Americans, teachers would beat us and students would laugh at us. When the Bible class started, I would leave the class and remained outside waiting. One day, I walked in the Bible class and the class 'bully' stood up to fight. He shouted, "We don't want this half American and Muslim to be here!" I refused to get out and the lady who was teaching the class asked me to sit down. Since then, I changed the school's policy and for the first time, the school allowed a Muslim to study the Bible. For the next three years, I studied it despite all the mocking.

Later, my father transferred me to the Government school where I grew in the faith of Islam. I was fed the idea that one day, a fulfillment of an ancient prophecy by the Muslim prophet Mohammed would come to pass. This prophecy foretold a battle in which the Holy Land would be recaptured and the elimination of the Jews would take place in a massive slaughter.

This prophecy in fact is documented in Mohammed's Book of Traditions which states the following:

"The day of judgment shall not come to pass until a tribe of Muslims defeat a tribe of Jews."
(Narrated by Abu Hurairah, Sahih Muslim, Hadith #6985; Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, #177)

When Mohammed was asked of the place this would take place, he said:

"In Jerusalem and the surrounding nations."

During my youth, like my father, I was always tuned to Islam and what our Muslim teachers taught. Believing in Muhammad's prophecy, I offered my life to 'Jihad' or 'Holy War' as the only means to obtain either victory or martyrdom. In Islam martyrdom is the only way you can ensure salvation and enter into heaven -- especially since Allah and his prophet Mohammed promised it. As the Quran states it:

"Do not think of whom are killed for the cause of Allah (in a Holy War), to be dead but living with their Lord receiving his blessing". -- Sura: The Family of 'Imran ('Al-'Imran, verse 169)

During school riots against what we called the Israeli occupation, I would prepare speeches, slogans, and write anti-Israeli graffiti in an effort to provoke students to throw rocks at the armed Israeli soldiers. We shouted, "No peace or negotiations with the enemy! Our blood and our souls we sacrifice to Arafat! Our blood and our souls we sacrifice to Palestine!" and "Death to the Zionists!"

I vowed to fight my Jewish enemy believing that I was doing God's will on earth. I remained true to my word as I participated in many riots against the Israeli army, always trying to inflict harm to them by all means and methods I could devise. I would start and participate in any riot I could initiate: in schools, streets, and even on the holiest place (the Temple mount site) in Jerusalem called by Arabs (Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa). All through high school I would always be one of the first to provoke a riot.

Many others got involved in terror tactics against the Jews using bombs and armed assaults on Jews in an attempt to force them to leave Israel. But they never could pluck them out.

Nothing could change my heart, I could only die or a miracle needed to happen. The simplest way to describe myself is that I was one of those one would view on CNN throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails in the days of the Intifada or 'The Uprising'. I was one of these who Jews would call a terrorist. The interesting thing is that I was not only terrorizing but I was terrorized by my beliefs which required me to gain enough merit and good deeds to go to heaven. But I never was sure if my good deeds would outweigh my bad deeds in the scale when I would be judged by God. Of course to die fighting the Jews would ease Allah's anger towards my sin and I would then be secured a good spot in heaven with beautiful wide-eyed women to fulfill my most intimate desires. Either way, I won and terror was the only way.

I remember one time in Bethlehem all viewers clapped their hands with joy in a jam packed theater watching the movie, "21 Days in Munich". The moment we saw the Palestinians throwing grenades into the helicopter killing the Israeli athletes, hundreds of viewers yelled, "Allahu akbar!" (Allah is the greatest). This is the slogan of joy used by Muslims for victorious events.

I remember students used to ask the teacher during our Islamic studies in Bethlehem High School if it was permitted for Muslims to rape the Jewish women after we defeated them. His response was, "The women captured in battle have no choice in this matter, they are concubines and they need to obey their masters, having sex with slave captives is not a matter of choice for slaves". This in fact was written in the Koran, for it says:

"Forbidden to you also are married women, except those who are in your hand as slaves, this is the law of Allah for you." -- Sura: The Women (al-Nisa, verse 20)

And in a different verse the Koran says:

"O prophet; we allowed thee thy wives to whom thou hast paid their dowries, and the slaves whom thy right hand possesseth out of the booty which Allah hath granted thee, and the daughters of thy uncle, and of thy maternal aunt, who fled with thee to Medina, and any believing woman who hath given herself up to the prophet, if the prophet desired to wed her, a privilege to thee above the rest of the faithful". -- Sura: Confederates (al-Ahzab verse 50)

We had no problem with Mohammed taking advantage of this privilege as he married 14 wives for himself and several slave girls from the booty he collected as a result of his victorious battles. We really never knew how many wives he had and that question was always a debatable issue to us. One of these wives was taken from his own adopted son Zaid, as Allah declared that she was given to the prophet while others were Jewish captives forced into slavery after Mohammed beheaded their husbands and families.

In an attempt to change the hearts of Palestinians, the Israeli TV station would show Holocaust documentaries. I would sit and watch cheering the Germans while I chewed on food. It was impossible for me to change my mind or heart concerning Jews, only a "heart transplant" would do that job.

They once took our school for a week to a Jewish camp on the coast of Eshdod to mingle us with other Jewish schools. That didn't work. On the contrary, every teacher who spoke to a Jew was mocked.

My mother on the other hand tried to teach me a different idea at home that she called God's plan. She spoke to me about Bible prophecy; she said that the return of the Jews was pre-planned by God and had been fulfilled. This, to her, was Gods miracle in our generation for the world to see that "His will shall be done."

She also told me about many future events to be fulfilled in our generation which is surfacing every day now. She told me of false Messiahs and counterfeits; but all that had little effect for my heart was set on fighting against the Jews.

My mother was influenced by an American Missionary couple who she asked secretly to baptize her. When she refused to be baptized in a pond full of green algae, the missionary priest had to plead to the YMCA in Jerusalem to clear the pool of men, and my mother was then baptized. No one from our family knew.

Many times my mother would take me on trips to several museums in Israel and I fell in love with archeology. I was fascinated with it. In my many arguments with her, I would bluntly tell her that the Jews and Christians had corrupted the Bible. She responded by taking me to the Scroll Museum in Jerusalem and showed me the scroll of Isaiah, still intact. There was no one taking pictures of any Biblical errors to prove of any corruption and I could not respond to my mother.

I remember when I still tormented my mother by calling her an "infidel" and a damned American Imperialist who claimed that Jesus was the Son of God. I'd show her the pictures in the newspaper of all the teenagers supposedly martyred as a result of violence demanding that she answer. I hated her and always asked my father to divorce her and remarry a good Muslim woman.

I would even pose with a grim and sad face for the school picture as if I knew that my turn to be in the paper as a martyr would be next. Many times I risked being killed during youth protests and clashes with the Israeli Army.

I lived in Israel during the Six Day War, the PLO resistance, the Jordanian Black September civil war, the bloody wars in Lebanon, and the war of Yom Kippur. With no hope to destroy Israel and all these losses, we still hoped for that one victory since that is all it would take to destroy them.

My parents worried a lot about me as I got thrown in prison by the Israeli Army. My mother went to the American Council in Jerusalem to try to get me out. She was so stressed her hair started to fall out. In jail, I learned more about the art of terrorism and when I got out, I was more fanatical than before.

When I graduated from high school, my parents sent me to the United States to seek a higher education. Of course I got involved with many anti-Israeli social and political events. I still remember my favorite sick joke I used to like to tell my friends, that I hated Hitler very much because he never got the job done, that is: he never finished the Jewish problem "once and for all".

With Hitler being my idol, and Mohammed my prophet, I went on with my life with little regard for Jews, Christians, or anyone who was not a Muslim. I believed that one day the whole world would submit to Islam and that the whole world owed the Palestinians for their losses in all the battles with Israel. I also believed that Jews were prophet-killers and that they had corrupted the Scriptures to serve their evil desires. This is what Muslims teach. They also teach that Mohammed

is our only redeemer and God's favored prophet.

As I lived in America, I could not forget the hundreds of thousands of Muslims who died just in the last 20 years in Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Afghanistan and in every single Muslim nation. I had to get revenge for them and someone had to pay the price. Of course there was no question in my mind that the Jews had to pay the penalty, somehow we always managed to twist things together and make it their fault.

One day I fought with a man and struck his eye blind, I was so happy to learn that the man was a Jew.

I was fascinated with Islamic history and I learned that the Islamic prophet Mohammed extradited a Jewish tribe from Saudi Arabia and ordered the beheading of all the men from another tribe. The women were taken as concubines. I used to believe, as Islam taught, that only a Caliph (Islamic ruler) could rule the world. Islam is not a religion for one's personal and moral life, but a system of law and government to the whole world. If not achieved through peaceful means, it would have to wage war against all who did not submit to Islam. With one billion Muslims living today, I believed that it could happen.

I'll be honest, all my life, I was terrified every time I read the Koran, as, after every other verse, there was always threats of hell fire for this sin and that. All I wanted was to reach out to my Maker to say I am sorry, forgive me, give me another chance. But I failed to keep count of all my sins and my good deeds and I was sure that at the end, my sins would outweigh my good deeds. So, I lived my sinful life depending on the love and mercy of my Maker. I always wondered about my destiny. Lost in my fears and doubts, I really hated the idea of killing for my salvation and, in reality; I never had the heart to kill a rat! How then could I kill a Jew!

Sometime in 1992, I was fascinated when I read a book titled "Armageddon, Appointment with Destiny", by Grant Jeffrey. Some of the things explained in this book had many detailed prophecies about Jesus: his birth, life, death and resurrection and the re-creation of the state of Israel. Many of these prophecies came to pass just as God put them down in the Bible! What also amazed me was to find out that the chances for a man to predict hundreds of historic events written hundreds and thousands of years before their occurrences are one in zillions. What is more fascinating is that the margin of error had to be zero, especially when the fulfillment of many of these prophecies was happening in my generation. This kind of evidence had to come from a divine origin that origin had to be God Almighty.

The struggle began. I was puzzled. How could the Bible be a fake and corrupted by the Jews if the land I grew up in, spoke and cried out as thousands of pieces of archeological evidence surfaced from the land of Israel confirming the Bible? The book of Isaiah, discovered in the Qumran caves, was found by a Muslim from the town next to Bethlehem by the name of Muhammad Deib while looking for a lost sheep. From that discovery, they found the rest of the Old Testament which matched the Old Testament Bible in our hands today. It contained hundreds of verses predicting the coming of Jesus Christ.

I had to read the Bible to know who Jesus really was, to find out for myself. God finally led me to get to the bottom line as I started reading what Jesus said:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, who was and is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8

Christ also said to the Jews:

"Truly, truly I say to you; before Abraham was born I AM (God)." John 8:58

It amazed me to find similar claims between Jesus and Mohammed. These claims were serious, as Mohammed said:

"I am the beginning of all creation and the last prophet."

He also said:

"I was a prophet of Allah while Adam was still being molded in clay."

Moreover, he claimed to be the intercessor for Muslims in the Day of Judgment, by all of these, claiming to be the world's last and final prophet and savior.

These things always puzzled me. If Mohammed claimed all that he claimed, than who was Jesus who claimed to be our Redeemer and Savior? That question troubled me a great deal. One of the two claims had to be a lie, if there were two redeemers; this would be association with God since God is the only Redeemer.

Christ or Mohammed had to be the Redeemer and Intercessor for mankind. The Bible or the Koran had to be correct. One of them was pure gold and the other had to be a fake, but which one...?

Vowing to make a decision for "The Truth", I stayed up late many nights comparing many details between the Koran and the Bible. At some point during my study, I prayed saying: "GOD, you are the Creator of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham, Moses, and Jacob, you are the beginning and the end, you are 'The Truth', 'the only Truth', the Maker of the true Scripture, the one and only word of God. I suffer to find your truth, I want to do your will in my life, I long for your love and in the name of 'The Truth' I ask. AMEN!!!"

I wanted real gold and would not settle for an imitation. I had to scratch very hard to look beyond the surface of the world's plastic religions.

I believed in the Koran as the word of God because it had modern scientific laws and only a book with a divine origin could have scientific facts written a thousand years before their discovery. I spent a month using a computer program searching for scientific clues in the Bible. Every verse in the Koran that was a scientific miracle that led me and millions of Muslims to believe in the Koran was already in the Bible. Many stories in the Koran had serious errors and with my knowledge of history and archeology, I knew that the Koran had serious faults.

With many of these discoveries, my claim that the Koran was a miracle was in question. The Bible had all of its miracles hundreds and thousands of years before. My foundation shook and I felt the sinking sand under me. Even the nations mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 38, whom God would destroy -- most of them were Muslim nations growing towards Islamic Fundamentalism today.

What also helped me was that God led me to discover, through my study of the Bible, hundreds of detailed and unique verses concerning prophecies fulfilled to the letter. No man has ever presented such detailed predictions of future events without having more errors than truth. God is the only one that holds the key to future events and only the Bible has the key, not the Koran which lacks those most important elements of "Salvation and Redemption". I knew at that moment I would have to be a fool knowing all of this and continuing worshipping a different God than the God of the Bible. I really thought with my prayer, that God will lead me to the Koran, but that was not the case with me. In fact it was the other way around, I had to give up my pride and be open-minded to truth.

God said in the Bible:

"For I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things are not yet done, saying: My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." Isaiah 46:9-10

God not only foretold future events, but declared them and brought them to pass, unlike the Koran which simply used terror tactics to conform Muslims to believe. Since I did not believe that the Bible was corrupted, I spent many days searching the Bible for Mohammad, as he claimed to be in it, but never found him. If the Bible had been corrupted it had to have happened after the prophet Mohammed since the Koran always addressed the Bible that was 'between his hands' at his time. From that time until now Muslims have failed to provide one single Bible from the face of the earth to prove the corruption, and not one historical or archeological evidence has been discovered to disprove the Bible.

Even the death of that Muslim prophet was different than the death of Jesus, as Mohammed died on the lap of his favorite wife, Aisha, while Jesus died on the cross in order to redeem man's sins.

I felt sad that hundreds of millions of Muslims today live without ever hearing or being challenged with this kind of evidence.

It was astonishing to me to find that Muslims and the rest of the world recognized three main religions that worship God even though God said that He is One and his Word is One.

I was blind, but with the Bible only, I began to see -- I mean really SEE!!! With so much Biblical prophecy fulfilled showing the return of Israel from the grave and the attitudes of Muslims and the world towards Jews, the end time is near.

Man has never changed. He still kills his brother as Cain killed his brother Abel. The only difference is that we don't behead and stab each other in battles as much as we used to. We simply wage chemical warfare to exterminate each other like bugs as human life is becoming less and less valuable. I began to see that sin was the source of all man's problems and that the Devil was man's worst enemy, not the Jews, of whom Hitler exterminated 6 million less than 50 years ago. Ironically today, there is tons of literature being sold denying the incident even occurred. I wondered what would happen if a Hitler or a Mehdi or an Islamic Khalifa (Caliph) came to power and has what we have today: all these nuclear bombs capable of destroying earth seven times over. God led me to look at the world that I live in and ask myself if the world today so foolishly denies the Jewish Holocaust despite all the evidence we have, why should I still wonder why most

of the world today denies the Messianic claim of Christ and the accuracy of the Bible -- especially when the evidence is all around.

God opened my heart and mind and led me to see how people today deny all the proofs He has provided for us in His Word, adapting themselves to false forms of worship.

The Lord began to show me the satanic influences which affected my way of thinking. Regardless of my Islamic background, I used to think these influences were from God.

I was led to a new view of the world and the meaning of life and saw the need for salvation. Today, we all can see man's goal for a world government waiting for the Devil to be the king!

"Babylon" is being revived from the grave to unite the world one more time; we have only changed its name to "The New World Order" when it should be called "The New Babylon". I started reading the Bible and began to wonder why Zechariah prophesied:

"For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem, the city shall be rifled, and the women ravished." -- Zechariah 14:2

In Islam I was taught that the second coming of the Messiah was in Islamic prophecy. He was portrayed as the one to break the cross and kill the pig, another setup for Muslims to follow the "false" messiah, the Mehdi, the coming Antiochos Epiphanias.

Contrary to Mohammed's prophecy, the Bible prepares its readers that the outcome of the siege in the time of Jacob's trouble will not be the total annihilation of the Jews but that Christ himself will descend on the Mount of Olives for judgment as He fights the enemies of Israel. Unfortunately, it will be too late for repentance and redemption for non-believers.

The saddest part is that hatred towards Jews is not an old out-moded idea from the far past. Millions of Muslims today have the same sick idea that one day they will do the same to all Jews in the Holy Land as Mohammed did to the Jews in Saudi Arabia.

In fact, the permission to kill Jews and Christians and to take their wives as concubines was engraved in the Islamic "Holy Koran" and is the main cause for the hatred of Jews by Muslims to this very day.

The word "Truth" was stuck in my heart day and night, pounding on my soul as I continued to compare the two books and to finally conclude that the Bible could be proven beyond any shadow of a doubt to be true gold. Not only by hundreds of ancient prophecies that came to pass, but by one ancient word created by God from the time of Jacob until our generation. For all who doubt, that word was and still is 'Israel'.

Israel's existence today, and the re-gathering of the Jews from ALL parts of the world is an irrefutable proof that the Holy Bible is the true Word of God. God scattered them throughout the whole world and then re-gathered them again from ALL nations back to their original land in fulfillment of His promises in the far past, until our present, for He said:

"I will gather you from ALL the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive." -- Jeremiah 29:14

The true God has never changed, He is still the same. I also learned that my enemy, the Jews, were chosen by God to write God's Word and God's plan for salvation through Jesus the Messiah, the only Messiah and Redeemer for man. I also learned that Jesus, the man from my hometown, was a Jew and that even my hometown was Jewish 'Beth-Lechem', which means 'Home of the Bread', as He said:

"I am the Bread of Life, he who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." -- John 6:35.

Beth-Lechem was given its name before Jesus came to this world. Jesus was from the people of my enemy, the Jews. Yet, He died for my sin. I had never heard of an enemy who died for another enemy and loved him so much that he allowed Himself to be beaten, spat on, mocked and finally crucified. Would your enemy die for you? Yet He said:

"Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." -- Matthew 5:44.

The Truth was in front of my very eyes, knocking constantly on my heart, and wanting to come in. I called on The Truth and He answered, I was blind and sought the truth, and now I see. He knocked on my door and I opened, and now had set me free! Christ said:

"I am The Way, The Truth and The Life, no one comes to the Father except through Me." -- John 14:6

My way of thinking, my feelings, and my goals in life began to change. I began to feel for the Jewish people. All the hatred left me. The desire to see them hurt was no more a thing in my life. Now, I hurt for them and pray peace for Jerusalem continually. Instead of laughing at images of the Holocaust on TV, I weep for them. I am even ready to give my own life for them, as did my Lord. I say it despite the outpouring of hate that could come from my own fellow Arabs and Muslims.

Yes, I say it to the whole world, I love Jews. I love them because of their Messiah. I love them because they brought Light to the world and through them came the Light and the Truth and for that I love Jews. I no longer despise them and I know from the Bible that the Jews are God's chosen people to give light to Arabs and to the whole world if we only allow them. For God made them a blessing to the world and we need to love and support them as God said to Abraham:

"I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." -- Genesis 12:2

Knowing the truth transferred my way of thinking from believing in Hitler to believing in Christ, from believing lies to knowing the truth, from being spiritually sick to being healed, from living in darkness to seeing the light, from being damned to being saved, from doubt to faith, from hate to love, and from evil works to God's grace through Christ. This transformation taught me that without the (true) word of God, things could look good on the surface but in the core lies deception. I accepted Jesus the Messiah who died for all of our sins as my Lord and Savior; to Him I submit.

Jesus said:

"Come to me all you labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." -- Matthew 11:28

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for fulfilling your promise.

THE NULLABOUR INCIDENT

THE NULLABOUR INCIDENT

By Roger

On the Western Australian border, 300 feet beneath the Nullabour Desert, lies the largest underground lake in the southern hemisphere.

I was SCUBA diving about 150 meters from shore, in an underwater canyon when suddenly the right hand wall just disappeared. It was replaced by a large black void. This was the entrance to the underwater cabin, which is where the cave continued underwater. The roof of the cabin measured 45 feet underwater, while the floor of the cabin was 75 feet in depth. Its length, approximately 500 feet. This was the first of several underwater cabins, as the cave continues for some 3-4 kilometres.

I was carrying two glow sticks, tied to a couple of rocks. These became my markers. As I entered the underwater cabin, I placed a marker on the cabin floor, as a reference point to return to. In dropping the marker I stirred up a large quantity of silt, from the approximately 6 inches of silt that covered the cave floor. This stirred up silt is commonly called a blackout, since enough stirred up silt will blackout all light, even the light from your flash light, at which point the diver won't know up from down, in from out. Blackouts were responsible for 14 deaths in 12 months in Mount Gambier.

This cabin was too large for a blackout to form, but seeing the silt stirred up, scared me. It also left me with the risk of a silt particleblocking my regulator, at which time I would of been breathing water, not air.

I continued into the cabin, and placed the second marker towards the back of the cabin, not far from the entrance to the second underwater cabin. Here the cave floor descended into deeper water. Now I'd entered the first cabin with only 0.25 of a tank of air. Since I'd used so much just looking for the entrance to the cabin. I decided it would be unwise to attempt the second cabin, and besides, I was all out of glow sticks.

Looking up at the roof of the cabin, I could see an opening that looked like a huge above water cabin. But I was deceived by the water, and when I swam up into it, it turned out to be only 8 feet across and 2.5 feet high. Naturally I was curious to see if the air was breathable, so I took my regulator out of my mouth, and tried to breath. The air was stale, and barely breathable.

Placing my regulator back into my mouth, I began to swim back the way I had come. On about my second breath of air, my regulator became dislodged and I received a lung full of water. This induced convulsions, since that is the bodies natural way of clearing the lungs once fluid has gone down the wrong way. I took my regulator out of my mouth to see if it helped to clear the lungs, but with no effect. Starting to get starved of oxygen I swam for the surface, and found nothing but rock. By now panic had beganto set in and I began to hyperventilate. My lungs were going in and out but nothing was happening. It was about this time I remembered that I only had 0.25 of a tank of air

when I entered the cabin. This led me to the conclusion that I'd ran out of air. That thought only increased my panicking. The more I panicked the more I used up what precious little air I really had.

At this point my body was crossed between convulsing and holding my breath. I started swim for the air pocket, but remembered how little oxygen I found there before. I then had a vision of two divers pulling my body out of the water.

Convinced that this was the end, I began to call on the only Name, that could get me out of this much trouble; Jesus. I simply said the Name Jesus over and over in my mind, and began swimming, convulsing as I went. Looking around I couldn't see the glow stick at the entrance to the cabin. I'd swam along and up to get to the air pocket, so the first glow stick was out of sight. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, I swam down towards the floor of the cave, the glow stick appeared. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, swimming and convulsing as I went.

Now I'd been SCUBA diving alone, a big no-no. And by a miracle of God an unsaved friend of mine, sensed there was something wrong and was already in the water swimming towards me when I surfaced. Good thing he was, as my buoyancy vest had ripped on the roof of the cave, and instead of keeping me buoyant it was dragging me down. By the time I reached shore, my lungs had cleared.

It's not for nothing that Cave Diving is the most dangerous sport in the world.

A short time later I realised the lesson in all of this -

If I had died there and then, it would have been just like I had never been born, for all the impact I'd been on society.

If you live your life unto yourself, you make zero impact on society. If you live your life unto God, you make a difference to society.

While there's air in your lungs, you can make a difference.

Yours in Christ

Marcia's Testimony

Marcia's Testimony

By Marcia

As a journal-keeper long before "journaling" became a verb, I created a checklist soon after my college graduation. Some of the points had to do with improving my appearance, some with long-range career goals, some with starting a family, some with books I meant to read. I remember three of these goals specifically: "Join Mensa," "Join N.O.W.," "Decide what I believe about God."

A couple of years passed. I was now married, we'd bought a home, I had a job involving my favorite thing -- books -- and I was in leadership in my nominal Protestant church. We took vacations, too, and in the summer of 1976 my husband and I loaded up our Chevy Vega and headed to the South.

We saw Civil War sites, ate grits and hushpuppies, and I believe it was in Murfreesboro, TN that my husband needed a new pair of tennis shoes. Yes, my memory of the trip is rather spotty. But one leg of it would change my life. In the state of Mississippi, we drove through a tiny town whose narrow roads were edged by weed-filled ditches. And in those ditches stood cabin after cabin -- crooked, crumbling sheds with peeling paint and torn screens. A few listless men, youths, kids, sat on sagging porches, watching expressionless as we drove past. I can only wonder what bug-eyed, drop-jawed faces they saw gawking at them. We later learned this town's unemployment rate was 100%.

For months afterward I cried out to God. Why was I born in a land of prosperous farms and vigorous industry? Why did I show talent in almost any field I set my hand to (except sports)? Why was I raised in a middle-class home with a mother who served us in every way and a father who told me, a pre-feminist-era daughter, that I could be anything I wanted? Why did I have a college education, without so much as the smallest loan to repay? Why had I managed to avoid the if-it-feels-good-do-it promiscuity, the "tune in, turn on, drop out" drug experimentation that had snared so many of my generation? Why had I never been a victim of crime or abuse? Why was I healthy? In short, why did I have it so good? I began to feel undeserving, and to give thanks.

Shortly after this trip, if I were to start my family on schedule, I would have to become pregnant. And for the first time, something important failed to just fall into my lap. It didn't happen. I started crying "Why?" again -- and I must admit that "thanks" went by the wayside for a while -- but now I also began to cry "Please." In less than a year, after seldom if ever before addressing God, I had called, "Why?" "Thanks," and "Please." I had never doubted his existence, because it seemed irrational to me that the intricate organization of something as large as the universe and something as small as an atom -- not to mention the human body -- had arisen by chance. It was just too preposterous to think that God was not behind this. And as a mathematics major, I realized that the statistical chances of complex life arising from random chemical reactions were zero. About this same time Jimmy Carter was elected president and I heard the term "born again" for the first

time. But I had no idea what this meant and soon forgot it.

Six months after I had intended to conceive I finally did. I truly believe this was God's early demonstration to me that I was not in control. To have a baby in November when you meant to have it in May is to give birth as far away from your planned time as possible. The birth of my first son brought me into a group of young mothers, and here was where I met my first Christian -- up close and personal. She was a type of person I honestly did not know existed. On the one hand, she was a completely committed Christian. On the other hand, she was utterly normal. Not a fake, not a kook, not holier-than-thou, not living in a bubble, not condemning, not preaching, yet never covering up her faith. She became my friend. And I began to ask a new question: "God, what is the truth about you?"

The Bible teaches in Matthew 7:7 that if we seek we will find, and David tells his son Solomon in I Chronicles 28:9, "If you seek [the Lord] he will be found by you." God is faithful to his word, and because I had asked it wasn't long before God revealed to me Truth. Truth was a person, and his name was Jesus Christ.

But there was still something missing. I only knew of the Savior. In order to know him personally, I had to learn the truth about someone else: myself. "For all have sinned," says Romans 3:23, "and fall short of the glory of God." Well, logically "all" had to include me. And what was the fate of sinners? "All sinners will be destroyed," says Psalm 37:38. Again, "all" had to include me -- but I'd been given a reprieve. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," Paul writes to Timothy. If I went to the cross, repented of my sin, accepted that Jesus had taken the death penalty in my place and asked for his shed blood to cleanse me, I would be saved. This ran far deeper than mental assent, than knowing about the Savior. In John 6:44 Jesus says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." I could not become a Christian just by intellectual exercise, or even religious exercise. So draw me the Father did, on June 2, 1979, while I was at my writing desk rereading the previous day's work. In his sovereign timing the Holy Spirit fell upon me with conviction, and I saw those words, those ideas, that attitude for what they were: sin. Garbage. Idle words. Filthy rags.

Suddenly sick of myself, my ambitions, my pride, and my "wisdom" that wasn't even as wise as God's "foolishness" (I Cor. 1:25), I asked Christ to forgive me, change me, and take over my life. Without him, I would never have any success other than that which the fickle, fleeting world had to offer. I would not realize that I was wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked (Revelation 3:17). Apart from him I could do nothing (John 15:5).

What if I had not become a Christian that day? Although I can't be sure, I believe my circumstantial life might be about the same. Marriage, home, kids, and my professional life which includes writing, editing and teaching. But who would I be today, without Jesus? A feminist, a secular humanist, possibly deceived by a false worldview or doctrine? Competitive, conniving, carping, a believer in fate, all because I thought I was the only one in charge of my life in an impersonal universe? Sarcastic, sardonic, fearful and bitter, because I would have carried unbelief to its logical conclusion, that randomly occurring life in an impersonal universe is really of no importance? I don't want to know who I might have become. And, hallelujah; I've never had to find out.

Belief in God is a matter of faith, but it is not a matter of faith beyond reason. Romans 1 tells us that God has revealed himself so clearly in creation that if we can look around at our world and not believe in him we are without excuse. Many say they do not believe in hell, but consider: God, who not only is the source of all love but is love, sent his son, a full member of the Godhead, to die a horrendous death as our Savior. If there is no hell, there's nothing to be saved from, and there's no need for a Savior. Christ's death then becomes useless, God becomes a monster, and Christianity completely falls apart.

Many say Jesus was a great teacher, not God, but consider: There are many places in the four gospels where he clearly states his divinity. If he's not God, he's either a liar or he's deluded. What kind of great teacher is that? We must decide whether Jesus is God or fraud. There is no middle ground, nor did Jesus, as C.S. Lewis points out, intend to leave that possibility open. Many say they live life only according to what they know, not according to faith, but consider: Those who can look at creation and say there's no God are trusting he doesn't exist. Those who believe the complexity of human, animal, and plant life could have arisen from just the right random collision of molecules just happening to occur over and over again are living by faith. Those who walk across a room and flip a light switch have faith that the light will come on. Everyone lives by faith. The only question you must settle is: In what or whom will you place your faith?

I never got around to joining Mensa or N.O.W., but I did decide what I believe about God. He is the great I AM, Jesus Christ is the fully divine and fully human Messiah of God, and the Holy Spirit is the Comforter who has come down to us, a deposit guaranteeing our future with God. The books of Isaiah, Romans, and Philippians all tell us that one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. "Every" means "all," whether they be headed for heaven or hell. If you have not yet bowed to Jesus, the day is coming when you will. Choose him now, while you still have your earthly life and mercy is still extended to you. If you die outside of Christ, you will meet him as judge, and you will bow the knee -- before you go off to eternal destruction.

Why wait?

Repent, receive the forgiveness God longs to extend to you, and come into the family of God. The Bible says angels will rejoice over you, and so will all your new brothers and sisters. We love you. Today is the day of salvation. Come while it is yet today.

Do you have your cross yet?

Do you have your cross yet?

By D.

"D." is a young Muslim man who lives in Indonesia. One night during Ramadan (in 1991) he had a dream. He dreamt he was sitting with his arms tied to a chair. Then he saw a man he recognized as Jesus coming. Jesus touched the ropes and they fell from his arms. Jesus said to him, "Look for the pole" - D. didn't know what the meant so he asked "what pole?" But Jesus just said again "Look for the pole". When D. awoke he tried to think what the dream might mean but after a few days he forgot about it.

But Jesus didn't forget! Two years later during Ramadan, D. had another dream. In this dream Jesus was saying to him, "I told you to look for the pole. Why haven't you done what I asked?" So D. asked, "Where is this pole and how will I find it?" Jesus pointed to a hill very far away and said, "Go, look for the pole." In his dream, D. ran through jungle and thorns for a seemingly long way. Finally exhausted he came to a clearing and there he saw a cross. This was the pole Jesus had told him to look for.

The next day D. went to see the Imam - the leader at the mosque. He asked him about the dream. The Imam told him to search for the truth. That night D. had another dream - he dreamt he saw a Christian cemetery. All the graves had crosses at the end. Suddenly, all the graves opened and the people rose into the sky where Jesus was waiting for them. D. realized he wasn't ready because he didn't have his cross yet.

In the morning D. couldn't forget this disturbing dream. So he went to visit the pastor of a church he knew of near his village. The pastor opened his Bible and helped D. understand that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. After going to church for a few weeks D. gave his heart to Jesus. Now he is going to Bible College and hopes to share about Jesus with other Muslims.

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From Mosque to Church

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By Yilmaz

When I was a child and during my youth years I always desired to be faithful and to be close to God. I always thought of Him as the Creator and ruler of all creation.

I was born and raised in the city of Bursa, Turkey. Because we were poor, all the members of my family worked and contributed to the family budget. I was selling pretzel-like pastry on the streets.

In Bursa there are many cemeteries and when I was passed them I always used to pray for the dead. As years passed by, I deeply desired to know God more and more. I felt that I should know Him and I should have a living relationship with Him. I knew to read Arabic only a little bit; therefore, in order to understand what the Koran says, I started to read it in Turkish. I learned many things which I hadn't known and the Islam in the Koran was different than how Moslems lived. Besides reading the Koran I also started reading the Hadith (sayings of Mohammad which are considered holy) and books about Islam. I had a great hunger for the truth of God. I tried to do daily prayers according to Islam. I tried my best, but even with all this I still wasn't a perfect Moslem.

Whenever I prayed and did ritual prayers, I felt like my prayers and rituals did not reach God's presence, instead they were stuck on the wall and couldn't go through it. Even though I was trying to pray and do good deeds, He never answered my prayers. While my further investigation on religion continued, questions rose in my mind and I saw contradictions in the Koran and in the Hadith. I wondered which verses in Koran and sayings in Hadith were correct. I wondered about the solution to my sins. It seemed that there was no solution for my sins; the solution was simply to suffer in Hell for a while and after this "while"(which was some billions of years of torment in Hell), I would be able to go to Heaven. The rewards in Heaven were really interesting; such as "rivers of honey and wine", and Moslems were prohibited to drink wine in their mortal life. Why are they going to be permitted to drink there since they can't do it in this life? Men were promised to have heavenly concubines as reward in Heaven, but how about women?

After a while, I was convinced that Islam was not the religion which could lead me to God. I wondered about the Old and New Testament, which Moslems believe have been changed. I decided to read them and decide for myself if they have been changed or not. Besides, when I looked at the verses in the Koran regarding the Holy Bible, it says "there is light and truth in it" and Jews and Christians were advised to read "their" books and to receive counsel from "their" books. After learning this I tried to find a Bible in my home town of Bursa. Books on Islam could be found in number of zillions, there were even books critisizing the Bible; but for some reason they didn't sell any Bible at all.

One day in an Islamic newspaper I saw a news about the Christian missionaries and the newspaper gave the mailing address of the missionaries. I wrote down the address and sent a letter later requesting a New Testament, but I didn't tell anyone what I was doing because there was great pressure in society to conform to its patterns.

Because the owner of the post box was overseas, my letter was returned to me. The post office might have notified the post box owner after his return, I thought this because I received a letter asking me if I received the materials they sent me or not. I notified them that I did not receive what they had sent me. They sent me the same materials again and this time I received them. I found the materials very interesting, because what was said in the booklets was different than what I had thought about Christ and what was taught to me during the religion classes which are still mandatory in every school in Turkey. In this classes they mainly teach Islam and other religions in the light of Islam.

I sent another letter to the missionaries requesting a New Testament. They sent me one, plus some more booklets about Christianity. When I read the New Testament for the first time, I found it very interesting, because it told how Jesus Christ had come to the earth, performed miracles and even resurrected the dead. After reading this, I thought "these things happened almost 2,000 years ago. What kind of impact could they and Christ Himself, have on me?" Frankly, the New Testament sounded like a novel, but interesting feelings occurred in my heart. A voice in my heart told me that I needed to read the New Testament a second time, and I did so. Everything seemed clearer. When I came to a passage in the Gospel of John, a voice in my heart told me to believe in Christ and to believe that he died for my sins. Such a thing had never happened in all my life and I decided to act according to the voice. I said a little prayer acknowledging Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior who died to pay the price of my sins. After saying this prayer, I felt great peace and joy in my heart. I felt as if I was born again! How happy I was!

Since that experience, a living and a personal relationship started with God. I started talking to Him continually, without stopping. He became my best friend. he wasn't a God who would greatly enjoy tormenting my soul in Hell, but a loving and a sacrificing God, who entered human life as Jesus Christ, and then gave Himself to provide payment for my sins. By His Spirit, He now lives in me. What a great God we have!!

God has enriched my life since 1990 and He is my closest friend with whom I can share my whole life. Whoever reads my testimony, please open your heart to the Great Creator, ask Him to tell you who Jesus Christ is, and the Great One will answer your prayer.

My best regards,

You are most welcome to contact me via email.

Yilmaz

Why I Became A Christian

Why I Became A Christian

By Mustafa

It was a summer morning. Like always, after having breakfast at home, I went to the newspaper office. While doing my daily work at the office, the managing editor summoned me. Thinking that it was in regard to a new job, I went to see the editor.

I am the second child in my family of five children. My father, after completing his studies at the Advanced Islamic Institute and memorizing the Koran, went into politics. For a long period of time he was also the head of a labor union. My family, like every normal conservative family, was interested in all aspects of its children's education, particularly religious education.

At the time, I was working in the special news service of one of the top newspapers in the country. Because of various schools that I had completed and the research I had done, the management of the newspaper thought that I would be successful in this type of position.

The managing editor of the newspaper was young, dynamic and a person who definitely did not compromise his ideas. He was one who did everything he could do to increase the circulation of the paper.

One day, the managing editor said to me "You know, recently our foreign diplomats have been attacked by the Armenian terrorist organization ASALA. According to what I've heard, this terrorist group is being financed by the Armenian churches in Turkey. Go to the churches, make yourself known as an Armenian, and investigate."

Later, after talking with the managing editor, I left the newspaper office and went home to change my clothes. I was busy making plans. How and where should I begin? At this time, I began to investigate on a surface level from the outside. First of all, I bought and read the book consisting of the Pentateuch, writings of the Prophets and New Testament that was called the Holy Bible. The Bible did not seem too strange to me because I had received a strong religious education since my childhood and I also knew the Koran. I finished reading it within a short period of time.

I started to visit the churches that were in Istanbul. I introduced myself as a child from an Armenian family and as one who worked as a salesman. In a short time I more or less became a part of the congregations. At the same time, I was establishing a relationship with a merchant at the Grand Bazaar. However no matter how deep my investigation seemed to get, I could not find any connection with a terrorist organization.

After a month, I went to the office and explained everything to the editor. He said to me, "You just went and wandered about idly. Don't give me that story! My informers can't be wrong. Go again, write the story and bring it to me." Without any choice, I left the office and began anew my investigation of the churches.

I tried to establish a closer relationship with those who attended the churches. Of course, when the priest of the church that I was going to saw that I was beginning to come regularly to the church, he said to me, "Every week on Saturdays we have a special new Catechism class. If you'd like, you can come. Not everyone who wants to attend can. This is just for Christians. It's purpose is to have them grow in their understanding of Christian beliefs and to be informed about the church." Thinking that finally I would be able to participate in secret meetings, with great joy I immediately accepted his offer. After finding out the place and time of the meeting, I left.

Until that weekend, while continuing my investigation, I thought of all the possible scenarios for the meetings. Finally Saturday came. The meetings were held every Saturday at 5:00 p.m. in the basement of the church. I joined the meeting with much excitement. The priest introduced me to the group at the start of the meeting. During the meeting, the people prayed for me that I would have the opportunity to learn more about Jesus and his words.

Of course, while they were praying for me like that, I was laughing inside, and at the same time, I was mocking them because I knew that the original Bible had been changed and that Jesus did not die on the cross (this is what the Koran teaches). I thought "They are fools" because I knew the truth. The Bible's original form had been changed. They were doing the unthinkable, making God out to have an equal partner. God is a single entity, one who was not born, and one who does not give birth. While thinking this the meeting came to an end. Everyone started to go, and on the way out they said to me "I will pray for you at home. We are very glad that you could join us." A portion of the people at the meeting had been Muslims and later chose Christianity. In other words, they had changed their religion. When the priest told me that the meeting was only for Christians, it was interesting to me that there were those who were originally Muslim. I looked at them as traitors. In my opinion, they had been led astray and brainwashed. But how could this be? I had to find the answer to this question.

Like everyone else, I left the meeting and headed home. When I arrived, I found out that the editor had called and left a message. I felt really pressured, because even though I had begun my investigation three months ago, I still had yet to find any negative things about which to write. So I sat down and wrote about the people I had talked to up until that point. I was not happy with those people who had changed their religion, or the other people who had joined the meeting. The next day, after joining the Sunday service I did the final draft of my article. On Monday morning I went to the office and saw the editor. When he saw me, he was angry and began to yell. "Don't you dare give me some story about how you haven't found anything yet." I handed my article to the editor. He read it immediately with great interest. He said "You will continue to write such articles. I want this kind of news from you every week. Go to the accountant now and get your bonus." I was very pleased and happy. I went right to the account and got my money. I left the office feeling as if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

Since I had begun investigating this topic, I had kept my distance from everyone and everything. My friends had called and left messages, but I had not been able to return their calls. One of my close friends began to believe in reincarnation. In fact, with the help of my friend I had prepared a series of articles on this topic. At first, it was really interesting to me. However, because of its perspectives that were contrary to the Koran, I did not continue my interest for long. Sometimes I read books about this subject.

But I knew that I was treating my friend badly. So I called him and suggested we go out for dinner. He agreed saying "You've been really busy getting the dirt on those worthless people. Let's go out this evening and catch up on everything." That evening we met, ate dinner, and fell into a deep conversation. Of course, we talked about his topic of Reincarnation. He was always trying to convince me of the truth of Reincarnation. After talking half the night, I left to go home. I really enjoyed the conversation and felt that this was something I had needed for a long time.

In the morning, I began the day as usual by visiting the Christian shop owners. I would say that I was just stopping in to see them. They were living a typical life. As for me, I would sit there and wait with suspicion, thinking to myself, "I wonder if I'll learn anything today from speaking with them." Two days later, I saw a headline in the paper called "HOOKED by the priest". Muslims who had changed their religion were mentioned and it was written that these people could have a relationship with terrorist organizations. In the article, there was a list of a portion of the names of those who attended the special meeting on Saturdays. This news created a shock effect in the Christian community and they were very troubled. Whenever this news was talked about in the churches I visited, I rejoiced inside. However, in order for them not to suspect me, I had to act troubled on the outside.

Saturday came once again, and as usual I joined the meeting. There was an air of sadness in the meeting. The priest struck the podium to begin the meeting, and began to talk about the news that had been published.

He said that people's opinion of the church and those who go to church were changing, and that they were being misunderstood. He said that believers in Jesus are going through a trial. At the end of his talk, he said, "Let's pray for those people who are being misunderstood." Everyone began to pray about this. Even I prayed in a loud voice, "Lord, please help our brothers who are being misunderstood. Give them patience and strength. Make known the truth in the hearts of people." I had to pray, because I did not want anyone to be suspicious of me. While on the outside I appeared very distressed by the events, I was actually rejoicing on the inside. I told myself, "It's good that this happened. You left the true faith of Islam and chose western Christianity! Ha!" After going to the Sunday church service the following day, I went home, wrote my second article, and sent it to the newspaper office.

From that time on, my investigation took on a different focus. The original topic of Armenian militants was changing to the topic of secret religious meetings. Of course, these people still could have been secretly supporting the work of the terrorist groups. Now all I needed was a good picture for my articles for them to be complete. So, during the week, I hired a newspaper photographer and gave him the time and location of the meeting. The photographer was going to come and take a picture during the meeting. I explained my plan to him several times. "You will hide your camera, then you will enter from here and it will be enough for you to take one or two shots."

The plan was ready. As usual, I joined the Saturday meeting just as it was starting. Because of the troubling news from the previous week, the ones who were misrepresented in the newspaper were still experiencing a lot of distress in their neighborhoods.

The ones who joined the meeting were talking about this. They said "They are asking us all sorts of questions regarding a connection to the unlawful Armenian terrorist group ASALA. Also, why do they keep asking questions concerning our attending such a secret meeting as this? Because they do not believe our answers, they look at us badly and swear at us. I wonder, who gave information to the newspapers about this secret meeting? Because of this information, people are looking at us suspiciously."

In order for them not to suspect me, I immediately began to curse the journalist who wrote the article. However they said, "Be quiet, and don't curse them. Don't forget that Judas Iscariot did the same thing even to Jesus. We must praise God for this situation because Jesus says, 'It is because of your faithfulness to me that people will persecute you. Blessed are you when they say all kinds of evil against you. Rejoice, and be glad! Because your reward in heaven is great.'" They asked, "Don't you know these words of Jesus?"

I said, "Of course I know them, but it's hypocrisy. You are under distress as a result of lies being said. That's why I cursed them." They said, "Brother, don't curse. God knows the truth and he will explain it to them in their hearts." I was playing my role really well. Right in the middle of the meeting, their attention was disrupted with the going off of a flash.

Someone from far off was taking a picture! Without even having a chance to say "Hey! Stop!," the one who took the picture fled. A few people ran after him but were not able to catch him. They gathered once again and began to pray. The prayers did not last long and we all left and went home.

It turned out that the picture-taking event was good for me. There was no chance of them suspecting me because when the picture was taken I was with them all in the meeting. Everything was going really well. However, the way the people responded began to make me think. The idea of people treating you badly, yet rejoicing in response to this seemed like nonsense to me. In any case, these people were already fools, believing and reading a book that had been changed. In short, they were deceived.

I finished that week's article and took it to the newspaper office on Monday morning. I found the photographer right away and congratulated him on his success. In my opinion he had done an important thing and I was able to get what I needed. The photographer said, "I was really afraid they were going to catch me." I removed the pictures that included me.

I went straight to the editor and we talked about the things I had investigated and the churches I had gone to. The editor said, "These are stupid people. They believe in a book that has been changed. Although Jesus never died, they believe that He did. Actually, the Koran tells the truth completely and openly, the essence of their holy book has been changed and they themselves changed it. As for Jesus, He never died and was taken immediately up to heaven. They are degenerate people who have left Islam and chosen Christianity." The editor knew both that my father was an Islamic scholar and that I had had a good Koranic religious education from the time I was young. He knew that I agreed with him and together we laughed and laughed.

After leaving the office, I began to walk around a little. But the things I spoke about with the editor began to gnaw at me, things such as:

The Pentateuch, writings of the Prophets, and the New Testament's original form have been corrupted.

Jesus never died on the cross.

I knew that these things were accepted as being true, since the world of Islam teaches that these truths are written about in the Koran. However, what really made me think was my having said that the Koran openly and clearly wrote these things. Up until that day, I had read the Koran many times, and even had a special Koranic and Islamic education. Above all, my father was a graduate of the Advanced Islamic Institute and he said the same things. I wondered which verse in the Koran wrote openly about the Bible's essence having been changed? I kept thinking about this, but in no way could I remember, so I sat for hours and thought. This question was eating me up inside. How could it be that I could not remember, especially after an Islamic education? This was very difficult for me, but on the other hand, I was sure of my information - the Bible had been changed. No matter how many Muslims I met on the street, they would all say the same thing. After wandering around thoughtfully until the middle of the night, I went home and began to look through my books.

As I was doing this, I was not able to look at the Koran with religious awe. I was simply trying to look objectively at the Islamic books in order to be satisfied that my ideas on this subject was true.

After being sure of the information I had found in these books, I opened the Koran and began to read its Turkish translation. Despite all the times I had read it before, it was as if this was a new experience for me and the writings in the Koran were different. These are some of the verses I read in the Koran:

"Proclaim what is revealed to you in the Book of your Lord. None can change His words. You shall find no refuge besides Him." The Cave (Kehf) 27 "He has revealed to you the Book with the truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of men, and the distinction between right and wrong." The Imrans (Al-Imran) 3

"... for none can change the decrees of Allah ..." Cattle (Al-An'am) 34

"... None can change them ..." Cattle (Al-An'am) 115

"... the word of Allah cannot be changed ..." Jonah (Yunis) 64

"Falsehood cannot reach it from before or behind." Revelations Well Expounded (Fussilet) 42

"... and you shall find that they remain unchanged." Victory (Al-Fath) 23

"Say: 'Bring down from Allah a scripture that is a better guide than these and I will follow it, if what you say be true!'" The Story (Al Qasas) 49

"There is guidance, and there is light, in the Torah which We have revealed. By it the prophets who surrendered themselves to Allah judged the Jews, and so did the rabbis and the divines; they gave judgement according to Allah's scriptures which had been committed to their keeping and to which they themselves were witnesses." The Table (Al-Ma'ida) 44

"After those prophets We sent forth Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah already revealed, and gave him the Gospel, in which there is guidance and light, corroborating that which was revealed before it in the Torah, a guide and an admonition to the righteous." The Table (Al-Ma'ide) 46

These verses from the Koran showed that the Old and New Testament books were sound, and that in them salvation is found. They showed that the prophet Jesus upheld the Old Testament and that the New Testament, in which is found the true way, came as a confirmation of the previous holy books. And finally, that the Koran's purpose was to confirm and protect the Bible.

"Say: 'People of the Book, you shall not be guided until you observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord.'" The Table (Al-Ma'ide) 68 The Koran said to obey and follow the Christian holy books. It considered those who do not obey them to be sinners.

"Therefore let the followers of the Gospel judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed there in. Evil-doers are those that do not base their judgements on Allah's revelations." The Table (Maide) 47 "Believers, have faith in Allah and His apostle, in the Book He has revealed to His apostle, and in the Scriptures He formerly revealed. He that denies Allah, His angels, His Scriptures, His apostles, and the Last Day, has strayed far from the truth." Women (Al-Nisa) 136

The Koran clearly stated that one should follow the books contained in the Old and New Testaments and that these books were sound and trustworthy. Moreover, the Koran commanded all believers to believe in the Koran and all the books that came before it, that is, the Old and New Testament books. Here the Old and New Testaments had a clear call to Muslims.

"On those men We bestowed the Scriptures, wisdom, and prophethood. If this generation denies these, We will entrust them to others who truly believe in them.

Those were the men whom Allah guided. Follow then their guidance and say: 'I demand of you no recompense for this. It is an admonition to all mankind.'" Cattle (Al-An'am) 89-90

I was really taken aback by what I had read. Right away I looked at other verses on the subject of the Bible having been changed to see what different things would be said, but they were the same. There had to be a mistake here. The Koran actually was saying that the thought of the Old and New Testament having been changed, an idea prevalent in the Islamic world, was not true and that the opposite was true, that is that they could never be changed. If the world of Islam's teachings on this subject were true (that is, that the Bible had been corrupted), and given the fact that such a thing was always being taught in Islamic education, it must mean then that the Koran is wrong. I thought, "God forbid, I knew that this was just not possible. I wondered where this idea could have come from?" God said, "Nobody can ever change my words," but people said, "No, it was changed." This couldn't be possible. While many verses in the Koran say that the Christian holy books were sound and were protected by God, other verses said that these same books had been corrupted. Thus there was a clear contradiction. Verses that said it had been changed and verses that said it had not been changed were both present in the Koran. It was just not possible for God to make such a contradiction.

For example,

"He has revealed to you the Book with the truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of men, and the distinction between right and wrong." The Imrans (Al-Imran) 3
"There is guidance, and there is light, in the Torah which We have revealed. By it the prophets who surrendered themselves to Allah judged the Jews, and so did the rabbis and the divines; they gave judgement according to Allah's scriptures which had been committed to their keeping and to which they themselves were witnesses." The Table (Al-Ma'ida) 44

"After those prophets We sent forth Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah already revealed, and gave him the Gospel, in which there is guidance and light, corroborating that which was revealed before it in the Torah, a guide and an admonition to the righteous." The Table (Al-Ma'ide) 46

"Do you then hope that they will believe in you, when some of them have already heard the Word of Allah and knowingly perverted it, although they understood its meaning?" The Cow (Al-Baqara) 75

"Some Jews take words out of their context and say to the Apostle: 'We hear, but disobey. May you be bereft of hearing! Ra'ina!' - thus distorting the phrase with their tongues and reviling the true faith. But if they said: 'We hear and we obey; hear us and undhurna,` it would be better and more proper for them. Allah has cursed them in their unbelief. They have no faith, except a few of them.'" Women (Al-Nisa) 46

Verses like these really grabbed one's attention.

The Koran mentioned the fact that the Jews had tampered with the holy writings. It wrote that they had particularly done this in recent times against the Muslims. But never once had I come across any expression that said, "The Old and New Testament have been changed."

The verses that contradicted themselves really led to a dead end. Which one was I to believe? That it had been changed, or that it could never be changed?

After considering these verses, another question came to mind. "Did the Koran remove and replace the authority of the Old and New Testaments?" Once again, I looked to the Koran on this subject.

"Keep your covenant, and I will be true to Mine." The Cow (Al-Baqara) 41

"He has revealed to you the Book with the truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of men, and the distinction between right and wrong." The Imrans (Al-Imran) 3

"This Koran could not have been composed by any but Allah. It confirms what was revealed before it and fully explains the Scriptures. It is beyond doubt from the Lord of the Creation." Jonah (Yunis) 37

"And to you We have revealed the Book with the truth. It confirms the Scriptures which came before it and stands as a guardian over them. Therefore give judgement among men in accordance with Allah's revelations and do not yield to their fancies or swerve from the truth that

has been made known to you." The Table (Al-Ma'ida) 48

"Say: 'People of the Book, you shall not be guided until you observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord.'" The Table (Al-Ma'ida) 68

"Say: 'Bring down from Allah a scripture that is a better guide than these and I will follow it, if what you say be true!'" The Story (Qasas) 49

After reading these verses, I saw that the Koran itself did not remove the authority of the Old and New Testaments that had come before it. I then began to look at the New Testament:

"I, John, solemnly warn everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to his punishment the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes anything away from the prophetic words of this book, God will take away from him his share in the fruit of the tree of life and of the Holy City, which are described in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19) In light of these verses, why were different things continually being said and written? Time had really flown by as I considered these things and it was almost morning. Promising myself that after sleeping a bit I would talk about these verses with some people, I went to bed. After breakfast, I gathered up the Koran and some commentaries and left the house. I decided to go to some publishing companies who published Islamic books.

From there I got some addresses of prominent Islamic scholars. I tried to get in touch with them and that day I got an appointment to meet with one, and I also set up an appointment for the following day with another.

I brought the topic up with the first scholar. He confirmed the verses I mentioned, but also said that the Jews and Christians had corrupted their own books. However, the other man really confused me with his ideas. In spite of the verses that said that the books had both been changed and not been changed, he just gave lots of examples from various Koranic scholars. I was not satisfied with his response.

The verses that spoke of the Old and New Testaments being changed were enumerated in light of the other verses speaking of it not being changed as follows:

"Do you then hope that they will believe in you, when some of them have already heard the Word of Allah and knowingly perverted it, although they understood its meaning?" The Cow (Al-Baqara) 75 "And there are some among them who twist their tongues when quoting the Scriptures, so that you may think that what they say is from the Scriptures, whereas it is not. They say: 'This is from Allah,' whereas it is not. Thus they knowingly ascribe a falsehood to Allah." The Imrans (Al-Imran) 78

"Some Jews take words out of their context and say to the Apostle: 'We hear, but disobey. May you be bereft of hearing! Ra'ina!' thus distorting the phrase with their tongues and reviling the true faith. But if they said: 'We hear and obey: hear us and undhurna,' it would be better and more proper for them. Allah has cursed them in their unbelief. They have no faith, except a few of them." Women (Al-Nisa) 46

I could not stop thinking about these apparent contradictions. If I could not find a solution to these thoughts of mine, I thought I was just going to burst. While the Koran in one of its verses said that

these books had not been changed, in another verse it said that the writings were wrong.

"If We abrogate any verse or cause it to be forgotten We will replace it by a better one or one similar." The Cow (Al-Baqara) 106 "We know that they say: 'A mortal taught him.' But the man to whom they allude speaks a foreign tongue, while this is eloquent Arabic speech." The Bee (Al-Nahl) 103

According to these above verses, some verses from God were considered as still valid while the authority of other verses was removed, that is, no longer valid.

"Allah confirms or abrogates what He pleases. His is the Eternal Book." Thunder (Al-Ra'd) 39 Thus, because the fundamental book was at God's side, he could change it as he willed.

Sometimes God left a verse as it is, and sometimes he erased it and threw it out. Thus, God was both the author and the one who could make himself known in a way that nullified what was written. But despite these verses, Qaf in the 29th verse, said "My word cannot be changed, nor am I unjust to my servants." Thus the exact opposite was being stated in this verse. Which one of these verses was true? I began to ask "Can the holy word be changed under the direction of God?"

Our religion of Islam was purported to be a religion that was tolerant of the whole world. In The Disbelievers (Al-Kafirun) 6, we find the expression "To you belongs your religion, and to me Mine."

"We gave Jesus the son of Mary veritable signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit." The Cow (Al-Baqara) 256

In Islam there was no force or compulsion, and in the whole Islamic world words such as "Our religion is a religion of tolerance" were used for propaganda along with the above verses. But these verses contradicted that statement:

"Kill them wherever you find them." The Cow (Al-Baqara) 191 "If they desert you, seize them and put them to death wherever you find them." Women (Al-Nisa) 89.

These words really bothered me. How could they talk about tolerance after the two verses above? How could we say to those people who are not of our faith "You have your faith, I have mine?"

The contradictions were increasing as I continued my search. Wherever I looked, on whatever topic, God always had two different perspectives, one positive and one negative. If God removed the authority of his word that was given before and put in its place something new, the Koran was thus a book that could have its authority removed as well as give new authority.

While pondering these things, I was also reading some books on Reincarnation. I felt as if I had come to an impasse. However, I knew that I could not find what I was looking for in Reincarnation. Reincarnation, that is, getting a new body or coming anew to the world, had seemed interesting to me before, but now seemed like nonsense.

As birth only happens once, so does the judgment day. For which body, for which sins that were committed, and for which good things is a person to be judged for if they have many lives?

At this time the newspaper office was calling me often. But I was not responding to them because my spiritual situation was more important than any news that could be written. I didn't answer the phone. If I would happen to run into somebody from the office, I would smooth over my lack of communication with them.

Okay now, in spite of all these verses, what did the Koran say about the prophet Jesus? Did Jesus really die? Was he crucified? I was curious what the Koran had to say about this. I went home and once again became engrossed in my books.

These were verses I came across from the Koran regarding Jesus' dying on the cross:

"He said: 'Jesus, I am about to cause you to die and lift you up to Me. I shall take you away from the unbelievers and exalt your followers above them till the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me you shall all return and I shall judge your disputes.'" The Imrans (Al-Imran 55) "Blessed was he on the day he was born and the day of his death; and may peace be on him when he is raised to life." Mary (Maryam) 15

"Those that disagreed about him were in doubt concerning his death, for what they knew about it was sheer conjecture; they were not sure that they had slain him. Allah lifted him up to His presence; He is mighty and wise. There is none among the People of the Book but will believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them." Women (Al-Nisa) 157-158

"His (Allah) blessing is upon me wherever I (Jesus) go, and He has commanded me to be steadfast in prayer and to give alms to the poor as long as I (Jesus) shall live." Mary (Maryam) 31

I began to think like this: "If the prophet Jesus, without dying, had been taken immediately up into heaven, who was he giving alms to? Even if there were poor Muslims there, was it Jesus who was giving alms to them? If not, if he still was on earth and living, where and to whom was he giving alms to?" If I accept that he did not give alms, then I needed to believe that he was not on earth and that he had really died.

I was beginning to go crazy. The longer I searched, the more new things I found and I was not able to draw any conclusions from the books that I had with me. I thought that the only thing remaining was to talk with my father. He could be very helpful to me in this. Furthermore, it was also his area of expertise. He was as knowledgeable as the other religious Islamic scholars and would definitely be of help.

I immediately went to call him. As I began to dial I saw that it was the middle of the night. At the other end I heard my father answer very sleepily. I told him that I needed to talk with him about something important that day or the following day. He asked me what could possibly be so important, and then begrudgingly agreed to meet with me.

I woke in the morning to the persistent ringing of the telephone. When I picked it up, it was my editor and he was fuming at the other end. He wanted me to write my final article for tomorrow's news. After eating breakfast at home, I got ready and left the house with the purpose of seeing once again some churches and some people that I knew.

First I stopped by to see the owners of some of the shops at the Grand Bazaar and after chatting with them a bit, I went to church. The priest, as usual, had finished his morning prayers and was resting. When he saw me, he said "You must be off work today. Come, let's have some tea together." Together we went to the church's kitchen. After talking about a variety of things, I brought up the subject of the Armenian militant groups that had made the news in recent days. I explained to him the general sentiment that these groups were being financed by the churches and that the support was coming from Turkey. I also told him I was thinking these same things myself.

The priest said, "Such a thing is not possible. You yourself see we have difficulty just covering the basic expenses of the church. Besides, it's not our business to support the work of terrorists. And as for there being a connection between the church and the terrorist group, that is completely wrong.

In history we see that in every religion, including Christianity, there were those people with hidden intents who tried to use religion for their own purposes. And maybe there are those who still do this. But a sincere Christian man or an established church would never get involved in such a thing as groups with destructive purposes.

Even when Jesus died on the cross, He died saying not one mean thing to anyone. On the contrary, Jesus said 'If someone strikes your right cheek, give them your left also.' How could it be possible that we who follow Him would knowingly support such actions which are harmful to humanity? All of this is just lies."

While the priest was speaking, I wanted to believe what he said. However, the things that had been explained to me were very different. After talking with the priest a little more, I left. I had to prepare my last article for the newspaper and put an end to this subject.

I returned home wondering how I was going to do this. I prepared some food and sat down to eat. Throughout the meal I tried to gather my thoughts together. After finishing, I went to my desk and finally I began to write down all the things I saw and discussed up until that point. But as I was writing, my thoughts began to take on the form of those of a fundamentalist Muslim. These people ought to be punished because they have turned from the right way. While convincing myself of this thought, I continued to write, but in my heart I began to think that I was doing an injustice.

Up until then I had not once seen anything throughout my investigation about these people that was wrong. On the contrary, I saw that even the book I believed in (the Koran) was not able to fully condemn these people. It said that their holy book had both been changed and not been changed. It said that they had gone astray and not gone astray. My mind was completely worn out thinking of these things, so I went to bed and tried to get some sleep.

When I awoke, it was almost afternoon. There was still a fear within me. I thought, "What did I do?" "What am I doing?" I began to think of the things I had done wrong those past days. I told myself that if I ate something I would be able to think better. I continued to think while eating. Finally, I came to the conclusion that I was writing this article based on gossip and my own judgments. However, those judgments should not be made by me, but by those in the world of Islamics. So, I got myself together and went to my father's house that evening.

I thought of my father while traveling to his house. He had a good Islamic education, but after much investigation on this topic, he came to a crisis in his faith. My father, who before had often read the Koran and never missed his obligatory prayers, became an atheist after this search. He said that he could not get around some of the contradictions that he had found nor could he give logical answers to them.

I took all my notes with me to my father's house. When I arrived, my parents began to ask me why I had not called them for a long time, why did I want to talk in the middle of the night on the phone, and what was going on. After trying to answer their questions and chatting a bit, I said that I wanted to speak privately with my father. After moving into another room, I explained to my father the subjects I was investigating and my difficulties in making sense of it all. He said, "Okay, now what do you want from me?" I told him that it would be good if he would explain these things to me. After saying this, I asked his thoughts about whether or not Jesus really had died on the cross and about the Trinity.

My father replied, "The good and true religion says 'Don't argue, or you will fall into doubt in your faith.' As you search out these subjects, you will no doubt debate with others. But I don't want you spending too much of your time on this, for in the end you will end up just like me."

I pleaded with my father to help me. I said that he could explain these things to me in the best way. After much persuasion, he finally agreed to help me.

My father said, "Yes, the verses in the Koran which speak of the Old and New Testaments are true. When we look at some of these verses, we see that the Old and New Testaments have not been changed and that the Koran has not superseded their authority.

"But there are other verses in the Koran which support the concept of these books having been corrupted. It is said that some Jewish leaders have changed the writing of these books. But some Islamic scholars think very differently on this subject.

"And on the topic of the Trinity, the Koran says that true believers do not make partners out of God, that is, do not commit idolatry by making other things equal to God."

"Be courteous when you argue with the People of the Book, except with those among them who do evil, Say: 'We believe in that which is revealed to us and which was revealed to you. Our God and your God is one.'" The Spider (Al-Ankabut) 46" There are among the People of the Book some upright men who all night long recite the revelations of Allah and worship Him; who believe in Allah and the Last Day; who enjoin justice and forbid evil and vie with each other in good works. These are righteous men." The Imrans (Al-Imran) 113-114

"These verses show that Christians believe only in one God. Christians believe in one God, they read the book which is in their hands and worship with respect."

"I cannot show you a verse in the Koran which would clearly explain the three personhoods of God as it is expressed in the Christian faith. But here is one of several verses on this topic that I can show you:"

"The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was no more than Allah's apostle and His Word which He conveyed to Mary: a spirit from Him." Women (Al-Nisa) 171" In this verse we can see God's

essence, God's word, and God's spirit. Let me explain this. With regard to the prophet Jesus' relationship to God's word:"

For the Holy Spirit: "We gave Jesus the son of Mary veritable signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit." The Cow (Bakara) 253 "The exact translation of this spirit is the Holy Spirit.

"Now you will want to ask me questions regarding Jesus' dying on the cross. But let me first say that you should not enter too deeply into this debate or else you'll end up like me, an atheist. But after having persuaded me, I will now explain this to you."

"Even if the Koran says that Jesus never died on the cross and was immediately taken up to heaven, you still have to deal with this verse:

"Those that disagreed about him were in doubt concerning his death, for what they knew about it was sheer conjecture; they were not sure that they had slain him. Allah lifted him up to His presence; He is mighty and wise. There is none among the People of the Book but will believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them." Women (Al-Nisa) 157-158 "And we can find verses with regard to the prophet Jesus truly having died: "He said: 'Jesus, I am about to cause you to die and lift you up to Me. I shall take you away from the unbelievers end exalt your followers above them till the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me you shall all return and I shall judge your disputes.'" The Imrans (Al-Imran 55)

"Actually the Islamic scholars have varying opinions regarding Jesus being taken up into heaven. The word, "tawaffaytani" usually translated as, "the one who kills" was translated as, "to raise" by the Islamic scholar Razi. He states that this same word can also mean "to awaken." If Razi and the other scholars are correct, the prophet Jesus was never going to die in his departure from earth."

"All who live on earth are doomed to die. But the face of your Lord will abide for ever, in all its majesty and glory." The Merciful (Al-Rahman) 26 "I spoke to them of nothing except what You bade me. I said: "Serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord." I watched over them whilst living in their midst, and ever since You took me to You, You Yourself have been watching over them. You are the witness of all things." The Table (Al-Ma'ide) 117

"The scholars fell into disagreement on this topic and ended up in two separate groups. The first group defends their belief that God would have Jesus pass through this event, that he would not allow them to kill him. That is, by raising Jesus to his side in heaven and drawing him into his presence with the angels, he would protect Jesus by not letting them kill him."

"As for the other group of scholars, they say that the phrase "I am the one who will have you pass away" means "I am the one who will kill you." They say that according to what was put forth by Ibnu Abbas, Ibnu Ishak and Ham b. Ishak, the Jews, who were Jesus' enemies, were not going to be able to kill the Messiah. God honored him by raising him up into heaven. Those scholars in this group fell into disagreement and in the end divided into three different opinions on this subject as follows:"

Muhammed b. Ishak: At the seventh hour the prophet Jesus died. Later God brought about his resurrection and raised him up into heaven.

Vehb: Jesus died at the third hour and later was raised up into heaven.

Rabi b. Enes: God killed him and then raised him up into heaven."There you have it son. Some Islamic scholars have fallen into disagreement on this and other subjects. This is all I have to say to you now as your father."

The things my father explained were enough for me, however in no way could I satisfy myself. Then my mother came and after speaking a bit with her I left. Until I arrived home and even until this day, the things I learned were in the forefront of my thoughts. After arriving home, I went straight into my work room.

As soon as I sat down at the desk, I began to pray with reverence. "My God, I believe in your existence and your oneness. Please explain to me the situation that I find myself in these last few weeks. When people explain things to me, they only explain things with their own ideas. You can explain the truth about everything to me and can even explain your very self to me. I plead with you - show the truth to me."

After finishing this prayer, I felt a need to look at other books. I had finished my investigation of these subjects with the Koran, but I wondered what the Old and New Testaments had to say? I had a lot of questions in my head, but as a journalist I knew there is no mystery that cannot be investigated or uncovered. Over the months I had visited different churches in Istanbul, attended Bible Studies (Catechism classes), talked to many Christians and Priests, and spent hours after hours to read the Bible and the books about Christianity. Now was the time to sit down and make sense of all these things I had heard and studied over these months.

With regard to the trustworthiness of the Old and New Testament I found:

"I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered." (Psalm 89:34)"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Matthew 24:35)

"If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came and the Scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35)

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19)

Some verses in the Old and New Testaments that speak of the Godhead:

"Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand." (Isaiah 64:8)"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Matthew 11:27)

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

"For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords")" (I Corinthians 8:5)

Jesus' being crucified on the cross was the main subject of both the Old and New Testaments. And the verse that I found most striking:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) I remembered that the following day was Saturday, the day of the church meeting. I needed to get some sleep. I had not been able to sleep for a couple of days due to thinking about these things. However I promised myself that whatever happened, I would solve the problem that night. I understood more or less the dispute between the Koran and the Old and New Testaments. However, one thing needed to happen, I needed to come to a definite conclusion on this matter. The investigating I had done up to that point was not enough for me.

At this point, the most important thing for me was to clearly understand in which prophet salvation was found. I began to think about each of the two prophets, both Mohammed and Jesus. Both of them were offering a way. But which way led to the real truth? I began to look once again at the Koran on this subject.

"There is not one of you who shall not pass through the confines of Hell: such is the absolute decree of your Lord." Mary (Maryam) 71 And again, in another verse concerning Mohammed:

"Implore Him to forgive your sins," The Forgiving One (Ghafir) 55 This verse shocked me, because I had thought that Mohammed was sinless. In this verse, I saw that I was not the only one who was sinful, but that even Mohammed needed to repent of his sins. That no matter what I did, I could not avoid going to hell.

As for what the New Testament said about Jesus:

"Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?" (John 8:46) "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

"But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin." (1 John 3:5)

These verses showed that the prophet Jesus was sinless. And what did they say about me?

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men because all sinned." (Romans 5:12) "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23)

At the end of it all, the truth came out, namely that I too was sinful. God created the first person and put him in His own paradise. And the one thing this person had to do was worship God. However, by disobeying the Lord's command, he ate fruit from the tree that was forbidden to him. God broke the covenant that He had made with man because the rebellion of this man became the seed of rebellion. At the first time of testing, he fell into sin. Also because Adam and Eve, the first

people, fell into sin, God banished them from His paradise into the world. And on the face of the earth, the seed of man increased as well as sin. However God had also given a promise regarding salvation from sin. The penalty of people's sin was death.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) Jesus Christ was the only way of salvation that God had provided to take away the sins of mankind. The prophet Abraham, because of his great love for God and His word, offered his only son. And God, in order to save all people from the burden of sin, gave His one and only Son Jesus Christ over to death for our salvation, as it was made known beforehand.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve." (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

"I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

After looking at these verses, I saw that my salvation was found only in Jesus Christ, and that I needed to accept Him with faith.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) Thus the only thing I needed to do was call on Him and believe, for Jesus had said this:

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20) I knelt on the floor and began to pray: "My God, forgive this sinful servant. I accept you as Lord and Savior ..." When I finished my prayer, I suddenly felt relieved. It was as if a large burden was lifted off of me. I had found the true God and my heart was full of joy.

From that moment on, I had made my decision and believed in Jesus. I knew that when some people learned of this decision, they would talk about my going astray. In that case, from which of the varying interpretations of the Koran would my going astray be a result? If there were wrong interpretations being spread, why didn't someone go out and stop it?

I thought that I needed to get some sleep because the next day I was going to go to the meeting at church. I went into the bedroom and laid down, but I was not able to sleep because of the joy that I felt inside me. In place of the tiredness that I had experienced for months came a feeling of peace and rest. While thinking of this, I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was close to noon. I took a shower, and after eating something I got ready to go to the place of the meeting. Today was my day of celebration. I put on a suit, and after giving

myself a good once-over, I began to walk to church. The time for the meeting was approaching.

This was the first time I was going to church wearing a suit and tie. Those who saw me in this way were surprised. They said, "What's up? Are you coming from somewhere special?" I did not say anything to them, but they could see that there was a change in me.

The meeting started and the priest began to speak at the podium. Just as he finished speaking, I raised my hand and said that I would like to say a few things. The priest said okay and called me up to the podium.

This was not the first time I had come to the podium, because I had shared here many times from the Bible. I looked at the crowd for a few seconds and saw that they were waiting for me to share. They had no idea what I was going to say.

I was ashamed to speak. I had misjudged these people. I knew I had to speak and explain everything to them, for they had experienced much difficulty and trouble because of me. While looking at everyone from the podium and thinking these things, the priest encouraged me to continue since everyone was waiting for me to talk.

I began to explain everything: "As you have all supposed to be true, I am not a salesman and I did not come from a Christian Armenian family. I am a reporter. I came among you to investigate the illegal Armenian terrorist group, ASALA.

And throughout the time of my investigation, all of you experienced much distress because of the things that I have written. For months I have been greatly effected by your attitudes and behavior towards me and others around you. And I realized that the things I felt about Christians from the community that I had grown up in since my childhood were completely wrong. For a long time I did a comparative study between the Koran and Bible. I saw just how wrong and unjust my ideas were. During my investigation, I found my true Lord and Savior. I received Jesus as my Savior and Lord and I am very happy. I want to ask your forgiveness for the way I treated you all. But without this happening, I know that I would not have found my true Savior and salvation."

Right after saying this, I knelt down behind the podium because I was expecting them to attack and beat me. When I saw from the side of the podium people coming toward me, I began to shake. They came, raised me up by my arms, and began to kiss and hug me! They said to me, "You are our brother and we could never be angry with you. Praise God that the Lord explained Himself to you as the Word of God. You are welcome among us. You were lost and now you're found."

After I spoke, everyone at the meeting came up to congratulate me. After I accepted Jesus, my life was completely changed. An extraordinary change occurred in my heart. The foundation of my behavior, thoughts and speech was changed. After believing in Jesus, my family and close friends saw changes in me in every way.

After I accepted Jesus Christ, I thought everything would go nice and easy for me. But I was still a person living in this world. Jesus defeated Satan in his life, death, and resurrection from the dead. However, Satan continues to attack me to get me to fall into sin. When I began to explain to those around me my new found faith in Jesus, I felt really alone. Those who were around me did not approve of this. I tried to explain what happened to me, but in vain. Jesus Christ spoke of this in the gospels:

"...and anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:38)

"If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you." (John 15:19)

Everything Jesus said in the gospels was slowly happening in my life. My friends did not go out with me like before and began to separate themselves from me.

Jesus cleansed me of all my sins with his blood that was shed on the cross. I was also being careful to not fall into sin. In such a way I had separated myself from those around me. Jesus also said:

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

Truly the ones who find the right way are few and I too had entered into this small group of people.

I realize that truth is different for everybody. There are hundreds of different claims to truth in this world.

However within the realm of truth, there could only be one basis for truth.

According to this, Jesus Christ is the only way, truth and life that reconciled God to man. The Word of God came to the earth with the purpose of saving His own people that He had created. He died on the cross, and with his resurrection from the dead offered new life to us.

My prayer is that my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will bring all people to salvation in Him. May everybody find the truth as I have.

Why Messiah

Why Messiah

By Zinuur

I was born in Istanbul in 1969. I finished my primary and secondary education in Adapazari. Currently, I am a student in the Human Relationships department in one of the Universities in Turkey. For about 10 years I have worked in various computer companies, and now I work for an Internet Provider Company in Turkey.

I was raised in a devout Muslim family. In fact, my father is a hafiz and has worked as an official imam in various mosques over the years. My siblings and I, in addition to the Islamic education we obtained from our family and the summer Qur'an studies, attended a boarding school after completing primary school and were well grounded in Islamic knowledge at an early age. Until I finished high school, I practiced Islam faithfully and lived as a devout Muslim.

After finishing high school in 1988, I moved to Istanbul and continued my school and work life there. My first encounter with the Lord Jesus was in Istanbul. One day while walking around Beyoglu, I went into a Church called St. Antuan out of curiosity. This was the first time in my whole life I had ever entered a church. When I first walked in, I was a little timid, intimidated, and excited. There were many other visitors in the church: women, men, old, young, families, singles, and sweethearts. They were praying, lighting candles, spending quiet time, or watching their surroundings in amazement, like me. In this house of worship, people greeted each other with big smiles, respect, and love that I had not seen before. In my lifetime, I have made long observations of people and their character, and have learned not to make many mistakes. I saw innocent, natural, unmasked faces that day. And this affected me greatly. Like many others that day, I sat on a pew and observed the people walking by and reviewed my life. However, I was not able to remember a time that was equivalent to the spirit of happiness and love I experienced at that moment. I was in a trance. When I came to my senses, I found myself praying, according to Islamic rules, of course. I was filled with a joy I had never experienced before.

Finally, I got ready and walked towards the exit. Outside the main door, there were a few steps that led down to the gate. I remember walking down the steps - my feet did not touch the ground. I felt like I was walking on air. I was looking at the people around me and feeling that I wanted to exclaim my love and happiness to them. After this experience, I had the urge to visit the church again. When I went there for the second time, I had exactly the same experience. This went on for a while. One day, when I was leaving the church, I met the director of the newspaper for which I used to work. Since we knew each other well, I didn't hesitate to ask the reason for his visit. He told me that he was there to collect some information. I knew him and his anti-Christian activities well; therefore, I was not surprised to hear this. He was from a devout Muslim family and didn't hesitate to sign any news that would persecute Christians.

I told him that my reason for being there was to "find peace". He told me that there was a Turkish service on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m., and then we each went our own way. After this, at least once a month, I started coming to the Turkish Service in order to find the source of the peace I experienced there. After a while, I met the director of this newspaper once again. He seemed quite different to me this time. He seemed warmer, more peaceful, and closer, for some reason. After talking for a while, he asked me if I still attended this church. I told him that I tried to go there at least once a month. I didn't understand why he seemed so happy. He invited me to another place. He said that this was also a church. That Sunday, when I went to the meeting place, I thought that I was in wrong place. It was a small building in one of the embassy's back yards. I could hear the sound of music. I pulled together all my courage and opened the door. Then I was sure that this was the wrong place because the people there seemed to be dancing with the music. I was sure that this couldn't be a church. I closed the door and walked away, but someone walked out after me and invited me back in. With curiosity, acting like an experienced journalist, I did not refuse the invitation.

When I walked in, my bewilderment increased a hundredfold. I couldn't believe what I saw. Even my foggy glasses were not able to hide my astonishment. People were gracefully moving to accompanying music made by the guitar, piano, and drums, and singing songs - later I learned that they were hymns - that included words and phrases like "Jesus," "God," "Father," "Alleluia," and "Thanks to be God." The most puzzling thing was that my devout Muslim ex-supervisor from the newspaper was there. I thought that he was there to gather some information for his news, and I was sure that this was a cult. However, after the meeting, somebody explained to me that this was not the case. This person was one of the leaders of this church. I tried to use my Islamic knowledge to corner him with my questions. His style of talking, his ability to use the Turkish language, his carefully chosen words, his listening to my words, as well as the love I felt while he answered my questions, were shocking to me. Besides, my knowledge of Islam next to his was negligible. Who was this man - who knew Islam so well, who could quote Qur'anic scripture with ease, and who could interpret the Qur'an without difficulty? I was amazed. Later I learned that he was a graduate of Istanbul University's Arabic Language and Literature Department and a very respected former attendant of some of the Islamic groups.

After that day, I started to go there every weekend for the meetings. During the weekdays, I read the Bible which was their gift to me and compared it with my Qur'an. When I found a seemingly weak or meaningless point, I underlined it and tried to discuss it with them. Although I had a good Islamic education, I felt very inadequate in my knowledge of Islam. I was continually reading the Qur'an and talking to Islamic leaders to learn what I didn't know about Islam. I brought strong evidence and information that put Christianity down, but they still answered my questions with gentleness and without pressure. This surprised me so much. Although I had looked them in eye and told them, "I don't love you; you are my enemy," they told me that they loved me, and they were fearless. I could have complained against them and harmed them so easily. At that time, there was a significant rejection of Christianity and persecution of Christians. People were against Christians and intolerant of them, waiting for opportunities to harm them.

About four years passed by like this. In that time period, I tested their love, their sincerity, their "show", and their personality. I hadn't found anything negative. During that time, the enmity I had in my heart was removed, friendship was transformed to love, and a heavenly tie of brotherhood was

formed between us. I was now totally assured that God lived in these people, and He spoke to me through them. With full confidence and at the cost of my life, I accepted Jesus as my Lord. I believe that He, as the gift of God, came to save us and died for our sins. On May 15, 1994, I was baptized as a sign of dedicating my life to the Lord Jesus. Thanks to be God that He chose me. Although I rejected Him, He did not leave me.

I invite you all to see and investigate the life of Jesus. You don't have anything to lose from it, but you cannot measure what you can gain.

Baris' Testimony

Baris' Testimony

By Baris

I always longed for real friendships in my life. I tried hard to build true and meaningful relationships with my family and friends. Before I went to my mandatory military duty, I lived in a very religious neighborhood and I, myself, loved God and believed in Him too. My friends were also religious. The longing I had together with the belief and love I had for God naturally led me into this circle of friends. My longing was to finding the truth about the God I believed in. And I especially wanted to benefit from the knowledge of my well-educated religious friends in order to have a solid faith. About 5 years later the things I learned and the things I had done with my friends didn't feel real to me anymore, because I didn't experience either the respect or the love I longed to have on the basis of sincere faith. When I left for my army duty I left my friends too.

In January 1983 after I finished my military duty, I got involved with a new friend and a new job environment. Shortly after this I finished the first stage of the German classes I was taking. Then I went to Germany where I had some relatives. My desire was to improve my German and to stay there to work. Then, about 2 weeks later, on a Sunday, I came across my German teacher. He was there on his vacation. The interesting thing is that neither of us was aware of the other one's trip. That day, for the first time in my life, I went to church with him. For about 3 months after this, I tried to attend Church and get involved with some activities they had regularly, because I was very impressed with the things I saw and experienced there. On the one hand, the bad relationships between Turks and unbelieving-Germans, and on the other hand, the sincere love and friendship of my believing German friends forced me to think about the importance and truth of faith. I found myself feeling like one of the believing Germans.

Because I was not able to stay in Germany, I came back to Istanbul and started to go to church and to compare my old knowledge with my new. But I pridefully decided that until I learned everything in detail I was not going to make a decision, and I was not going to be influenced by anybody. Strangely enough I started to feel resistance within me. In reality, I was resisting was God Himself, who was trying to form a meaningful relationship with me. I guess this resistance was an instinct from my cultural background.

About eight months later I slowly started to understand that God wanted to have a personal relationship with me through Jesus the Messiah. But it was still difficult for me to make a decision without full understanding. As I evaluated my life, I felt the pressures building in me. One day on the way back from work, I thought about two incidences in the Bible that affected me deeply. One of them is the healing of the woman who bled for twelve years. This woman had spent all she had in order to find healing, but still was not healed. Then, one day she touched Jesus, Who was passing by, and she was healed. Most of the time we, too, are like this. We look for a solution where it can't be found. In reality the one who heals us and shows mercy to us is the Creator.

The other incidence is when Jesus was crucified. One of the two criminals beside him asked Jesus not to forget him when He entered the Kingdom of God. The answer of Jesus the Messiah to him is, "I promise you that this very day you will be in Paradise with me." This showed me that in spite of all the sins of this criminal, Jesus the Messiah had an incomparable love, mercy, and forgiveness, which are above all understanding. These two incidences together convinced me that even if I don't understand fully, I can trust Jesus the Messiah. All I have to understand is that He loves me unconditionally. My first task that night was to go to my German teacher's home. I told him all this, and he told me how I can pray to accept Jesus. That very night we prayed together, and I invited Jesus the Messiah into my life.

Since then I found the real friendship I have been looking for. The thing I needed to understand is that nothing is perfect but I can do my best with the strength and unconditional love coming from our Creator. This discovery was the biggest step of my life. I still have difficulties in my life, but now I can overcome them with the comfort- and peace-giving strength of God. I can sincerely admit now that I love others, not in my way, but with a real love.

Josh's Testimony

Josh's Testimony

By Josh R.

My name is Josh R. I am 18 yrs old and I grew up in Tempe, Arizona in what you could call a less than normally functioning family. My mother and father divorced when I was the ripe old age of two. I lived with my mother, sister, and grandfather.

My mother was a party animal, and though I didn't find out until years later, smoked marijuana like it was going out of style. My sister and I had a horrible relationship, not just sibling rivalry, but extreme anger and bitterness towards each other. My grandfather was the only father figure I knew and he was a controlling abusive and bitter man.

I was a good child, I got good grades, knew right and wrong, and thought I loved God. I went to church each Sunday (Southern Baptist). Luckily, I was ministered to almost everyday by my aunt who was a born again Christian, and sometimes more of a mother than my own. She is the one that planted the seed that would change my life.

By the time I started high school I thought things were going well, I had met the girl of my dreams and was going to her Roman Catholic Church . Things were good but I was without God. He would soon shake me from my false sense of security. By the end of my sophomore year my world was on the brink of collapse.

My mom and grandfather had the biggest fight I had ever seen and next thing I knew we were homeless until family friends took us in. This however, was just the beginning. I had to work full time and attend school. I had to give up being a teenager and had to be an adult at sixteen. I never saw the girl I loved, never saw my friends, just school and work. From six in the morning until eight at night.

One night I lay in bed in a room that wasn't even my own and broke down. I couldn't do it anymore, it was just too much for a kid to handle. I burst into huge heaving sobs, I was alone, fighting a battle I had no idea how to fight. But just then I felt the Lord tugging on my heart, and he simply said " Trust me." And I did, I accepted Christ and put my trust in him and my life started to come together. He got us our own apartment and strengthened me.

I had always heard the phrase "God works in mysterious ways," but now I understood it. Everything I went through, the pain and heartache was His way of drawing me to Him. And I don't resent Him for it, I love Him for it. Because His power was made perfect in my weakness.

By now I was starting my new walk, and had long since realized the lies of the Catholic Church and had the dubious task of pulling my girlfriend of two years out of there. I not only had to face the teachings burned into her brain, but had to face her "Super-Catholic" family as well. For months I tried and tried but to no avail, until I realized that I had forgotten who my partner was. It was the

Lord! I once again put it in His hands and He ministered to her heart and she left the Catholic Church.

By now I had the joy of the Lord in my heart. Then one day I felt the Lord speaking to me again. He told me to marry that girl. So on November 19, 2000 I proposed and she accepted. I felt that this was the woman the Lord had picked out for me. She was my rock and love during my hard times. I was so happy!

Now it may sound like a happy ending but its not over yet. God still wanted to hammer home a point to me. It was April 2001 and I was just a month away from graduating high school. I was driving to school and thinking about the coming of the Lord and BAM!!! I start sobbing and almost lose control of the vehicle. The Lord at that moment convicted my heart. He told me I was His forever!

Well two months later in June 2001, I married that girl, everyone said were too young (18 yrs). But we don't care, because we share a love based on the Lord!

The moral of this story is so profound yet simple. Trust God.

It may not sound like much, but He will work miracles and open doors right before your eyes.

Mike's Testimony

Mike's Testimony

By Mike

I was baptized as a child and raised in a Christian atmosphere until I was about 8. then it seemed like i just didn't even care anymore. And I really didn't. Anyway, my life was just going downhill all the way after that. my parents fought and fought, my sister and I fought all the time, i started smoking and i did pot occasionally. the only time i ever even thought about church was Christmas and Easter. and that is the only time I ever had to go. My life was falling apart.

At the age of 12, I started feeling very dark and depressed. I was suicidal. I tried to commit suicide around 5 or 6 times. I felt like God didn't care and I turned my back from Him as well. My "friends" ditched me and that just made me more depressed. I started feeling very angry towards them. I despised and loathed them.

After that, I thought to myself, "maybe God isn't real." I started denying my faith at school, which made me feel horrible afterwards. I thought about what Jesus would be saying to me when I said that. I just felt rotten and horrible when I denied Him, but I still refused to repent.

The summer I turned 14, I went on a trip to the Boundry Waters with the boy scout troop from my town. We went canoeing in the boundry waters of Canada and U.S. This was the worst time in my life. At our first portage, I got the pack stuck on my back wrong, and I couldn't carry it all the way. this happened twice. and for those two times, the rest of the two weeks were a living hell for me. they wouldn't drop it. I was hit, punched, and burnt there. I went off by myself so many times and just cried until I was dehydrated. I hated every minute there. I cried so much those two weeks that I think I could have filled the whole Atlantic ocean with my tears. I prayed that God would pull me through, but I still wouldn't repent.

When I got home, I didn't tell my parents because I was afraid they would get mad at me because they would think I wasted their money. I know my parents would never hit me, but I just was afraid they wouldn't love me anymore. But, as it was, I broke down and my mom heard me. She came into my room and I told her everything. After that, I dropped boy scouts. I still haven't gone back. Later that summer, I went to a Christian retreat camp. I thought maybe this retreat would be the answer. I had fun, but I feel like I missed the whole point. After this, I tried going back to church again. I started coming more and more often. I finally broke down to God and repented. I felt so renewed that I just sat for an hour and a half and just let it sink in. I felt so great after that.

But I started to fall away again, and I didn't truly come into Gods arms permanently until just recently. I tried to end my life at age 12 and now at age 14 & 3/4, I have become the most active person in my church. I am sharing the Gospel to people at my school and I am trying to win more souls for Jesus Christ. PRAISE GOD! I also am trying to tell people that when you pray, it doesn't have to be extremely formal. Talk to God like He is your best friend.

I was recently confirmed into my church as well. Now, instead of denying my faith, whenever someone asks me who I am, I can say I am an xtreem disciple of the Living God, Jesus Christ!

From the Buddhist Temple to the Christian Church From the Buddhist Temple to the Christian Church

From the Buddhist Temple to the Christian Church

By Cheng Li-chin

Before believing in Jesus Christ, I was a Buddhist master, having taught Buddhism for 23 years.

It was 25 years ago. I was an English major in college, but I inclined to read books on philosophy. My first choice on the college admission wish-list was the Department of Philosophy at Fu-Ren University. My score was high enough to enter that department, but due to the cap put on the number of girls, I was alternatively admitted to the English Department of Su-Chou University. To fulfill my unfulfilled wish, I chose to immerse myself in philosophy.

The classics we read as English majors - Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Greek mythology, Homer, Dante, Foster, up to modern masterpieces - all interested me. And I was particularly drawn to the 'serenity and simplicity' of Chinese Taoism. However, a sense of emptiness still occupied my heart. I once attempted to join the Christian Fellowship on Campus, but couldn't really get myself into it. The second year after I graduated from college, I went to Hua-Lian with a bunch of friends and we visited a Buddhist temple there. That night, I was deeply moved by the harmonious chanting; tears poured down and my heart rested with a sense of being home'. I decided to retreat from the world and become a nun. At that time, I was pretty sure this was what I longed for.

A Waste of Life

Life reaches its prime between the ages of 26-49. However, I wasted my prime time in the nunnery. The simplicity and tranquillity I had dreamed of was never real. I was overloaded with all kinds of secular duties that went beyond my mental and physical endurance. My life was full of disguise and hypocrisy - even worse than the outside world.

During the 23 years of being a nun, I worked as a cheap labourer for the first five years. Then I left the place I had received tonsure and served as a general secretary in a Buddhist foundation for another five years. Finally I had a chance to be an instructor and administrator in a Buddhist college. The following 13 years were satisfactory. As an instructor, I could devote more time to reading and digesting Buddhist classics. Although I was still busy, I was not as swamped as before and I earned some respect and dignity.

The biggest impact on my life and the turning point could be traced back to November 1996. I was then the Dean of Academic Affairs at Taichung Charity Buddhist College. Though innocent, I was whirled into a shocking scandal that shook the whole Buddhist arena in Taiwan. I experienced the greatest storm in my life, faced with all the evils in human nature and deeply hurt by the hypocrisy and dishonesty rooted in the society. What's sad is that I was a part of it. I might not have been the main character to blame, but I played a critical role. It was in complete dismay that I went through

those days.

The very thought about my life - an innocent college student longing for the Buddhist paradise, working diligently to move forward, but now ending as a criminal - brought me down to the bottom of hell. My life was marred no matter how hard I tried to avoid it. With a wounded heart, I began to wonder if I had the courage to live on.

Deeply depressed, I consulted a pastor in a church. He pointed me to Romans 7: 18-19. Paul said: "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing." I found myself in full agreement with this passage and I also understood what was written in Romans 7:21-25: "So I found this law at work: when I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin."

How insightful and enlightening these words are! Paul was a true apostle with God's wisdom. I was completely 'freed' by the passage. Human beings are getting no where relying on themselves. In Buddhist teaching, one should just believe in oneself and make every effort to become a saint. But the result is nothing but frustration. No wonder we have a Chinese saying: "The righteous are one foot tall, the evil are one yard tall" (The evil always outdo the righteous). No one knows when the end is to this kind of struggle. It is commonly stated that all religion is for your good. But the fact is: when you seriously practise it, you end up suffering. Some Buddhist friends had complained a lot to me, and now I experienced the same kind of frustration and fatigue. I, too, was totally lost.

"Someone had warned me: 'Isn't it too risky to convert now for you will pay a high price?' Is that so? I indeed had thought about this. I was fairly established in the Buddhist circle, but was that what I

wanted for my life? Is it truly safe to stay at the same place? If I stay just for the sake of being safe, I

would be just like an ostrich burying its head in the sand. 'Seeking truth' is the only goal in my life and

I will continue pursuing it. If I welcome truth, truth will greet me as well. I now learned 'grace and truth both come from Jesus Christ our Saviour.' "

However, there's an answer in the book of Romans: religions are good, but only in Jesus Christ can one obtain faith, strength, salvation and protection. It is clearly written in Romans 8:1-4: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the

sinful nature but according to the Spirit."

The Disappointment

To continue with my story, on Sept. 3, 1997, I went to the US for the first time and I resided in the Flushing Buddhist House in New York. The invitation I received from a senior monk to establish a Buddhist seminary in the US rekindled my hope after leaving my old college. The monk appointed me vice-president and chancellor in charge of all the pre-planning. After several discussions, I felt dismayed and fooled. I was only cheap labour again. Having suffered enough, I was unwilling to go against my conscience and I was unable to take up the burden anymore. I decided to leave the Buddhist circle.

Deeply disappointed with the Buddhists, I was forced to re-examine my belief again. At the time of my tonsure, I simply longed for a simple life with inner peace and calmness. I wishfully thought that endeavouring in this direction, I would eventually become flawless. It is ironic that after so many years of devotion, I only became cynical and withdrawn with the realization that the more I do, the more mistakes I make. That is: no effort, no fault. I was advised to give up and simply chant the names of Buddha.

In the Book of Amitabha is the statement "The more praying to Buddha, the more blessing and understanding". To receive benediction from Amitabha, one has to pray to Buddha day and night, even during sleep. I practised it accordingly and I truly had some auspicious dreams. Nevertheless, my daily life was still full of struggles with frustration, failure and guilt that I was unable to overcome. At long last, my conscience won but I was also forced to retreat from 'the stage of life', with a bleeding heart and total exhaustion. I was close to death, finding no courage and strength in myself to go on. Pessimism prevailed and I just felt that being alive was a torture: the longer you live, the more evil you see. There's simply no way out. It seems that only the apostle Paul understood this kind of misery.

But God is good. In October 1997, I resumed contact with one of my best college friends. She took me to church. The first sermon I heard in Hsin-Cheng church was about sin. The pastor exposed himself honestly to the audience and used himself as an example to illustrate our sinful nature. His self-disclosure and honesty impacted me greatly, which was totally different from the self-worship and authoritarian way of teaching I used to hear from Buddhist masters. The following Bible study introduced the principle 'justification by faith', which touched me deeply and brought light and hope to my dejected heart. In addition, the work of the Holy Spirit was also something new and revealing.

The Struggle

I then began to struggle with the choice of beliefs. I was afraid that I would betray my Buddhist religion. I even went to a brother's house and told him clearly and firmly: "It is utterly impossible for me to convert. I have devoted myself to Buddhism these past 23 years." Two or three days later, with my words still vivid, I went down to the front during Sunday worship in Hsin-cheng church and shared my testimony. I told everyone: "the Bible says: if I accept Jesus in public, our Father in heaven will also accept me." I vaguely remembered the verses, but had no idea which book they came from. What is amazing is that once I said the above, I made up my mind to receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour. And I couldn't wait to be baptized and believe in God.

How joyful it is to know the real God and to be saved and reborn in Him. Half way through my worldly life, I finally found the truth and gained a new meaning to life. Nothing is more delightful than this!

Someone had warned me: "Isn't it too risky to convert now for you will pay a high price?" Is that so? I indeed had thought about this. I was fairly established in the Buddhist circle, but was that what I wanted for my life? Is it truly safe to stay at the same place? If I stay just for the sake of being safe, I would be just like an ostrich burying its head in the sand. 'Seeking truth' is the only goal in my life and I will continue pursuing it. If I welcome truth, truth will greet me as well. I now learned 'grace and truth both come from Jesus Christ our Saviour.'

The Hot Truth

Having been immersed in Buddhism for such a long time, I became hard-hearted and indifferent, always trying to keep a distance from the common believers to maintain my authority and uniqueness. After becoming a Christian, I felt sad about my coldness. I was so different from the caring, loving, and cheerful brothers and sisters around me. I wept quietly at night, upset about the fact that I had no love to give. I cried to God: "Lord, you know I am not happy. You love me and the brothers and sisters all love me, but I have no love to return. I simply don't have it and I cannot fake it out." At that very moment, I had a vision: water springing out from a dry well, springing until it overflowed. I was totally overwhelmed, and unspeakable joy instantly filled my heart. I understood it: God Himself is the source of love. He made my love flow. He loves me first and I would then be able to love him and others. The reason why I was lacking love was that I had suppressed love for the past 23 years and I had dried myself up like a scorched and cracked field.

Only through God's love can my love overflow. "Oh my Lord, I thank you, I love you. I want to be able to love as well. With God, my life is full of energy and hope."

Through the arrangement by the pastors of Jo-ko church in New Jersey and the support of Hsin-Cheng church in New York, I was admitted to the Christ's Servants Seminary in California. After one semester of training, I learned to submit myself more and developed a stronger faith, which was firmly grounded in God's word. Our God is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the past, the present, the future, and the almighty. I remembered that at first I felt kind of scared and embarrassed when thinking that I would have to face the Buddhist believers in Taiwan. I was just like Jeremiah, pleading to God: "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But now, I am strong and brave, for "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8: 37-39).

Christians believe that God is the beginning; He created the universe and everything in it. Buddhism teaches that everything originates in the human mind itself. Things exist only because you see them. Life is in a samsara, without a beginning or an end. These are two completely different views about life. I have spent my past 23 years cultivating my mind in vain. If God hadn't enlightened me, I would still be caught in the 'net of the universe' as described in the Book of Hua-Yen.

It is true that suffering is inevitable in life. Buddha taught his disciples to be aware of "misery, emptiness, impermanence, and selfishness". Some of them got so far into it that they hated this world and committed suicide.

The Bible describes the essence of life in the book of Ecclesiastes: "Meaningless! meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." "I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men."

Yes, "meaningless" is an universal experience shared by all mankind. The difference is: how you deal with it. The Bible instructs us: "So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him." "However many years a man may live, let him enjoy them all. But let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything to come is meaningless." "So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigour are meaningless." "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

My Buddhist friends expressed their pity for me, tried to persuade me to change my mind and be their teacher, even if I didn't want to be a 'master'.

It was simply impossible! I rejoiced in Jesus Christ with the true peace and joy He provided. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23).

The Buddhist practice is meant to free one from either life or death. Only through 'detesting the world' can one leave suffering and reach happiness. This kind of practice only fosters a pessimistic view of life. In contrast, Jesus Christ brings hope to life, because "if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8: 10-11).

Praise the Lord! Thank the Lord! I am willing to give my whole person to God - my body, my mind and my spirit - all in His hand. I enjoy whole-heartedly sharing my experience and testifying to the goodness of the gospel - "I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (I Corinthians 9:23)

Praise the Lord, Amen.

Carrie's Testimony

Carrie's Testimony

By Carrie

Hello, My name is Carrie, and I would like to share my testimony. First let me start off by telling you that I am only 13 1/2, I know what you are probably thinking "what kind of testimony can someone so young have?" Well, in this day in age a lot can happen to preteens and teens, so just hang in there for a minute while I tell you my testimony. You won't regret it.

I was saved when I was seven years old, and lived in a small town sheltered from most things, but then when I was nine years old, my mother committed suicide, after being married to a man who abused her verbally and physically, leaving me and my two older brothers in the care of our dad and step-Mom. My brothers and I had to move from everything we knew to a different state, away from all of our friends and family, to live with my dad, step-Mom and three older stepbrothers plus my real brothers.

Well, let me just say things were OK for about a year or so for me anyway, but I really didn't fit in with my surroundings. All of my brothers started getting in to drugs, smoking, drinking, sex, stealing and lots of other things. You know me, a little 11 year old girl who wanted more than anything to fit in with my brothers and to show them that I wasn't an all around "goody, goody", so I started doing what they did - hanging out with there friends, smoking, drinking, partying, doing drugs, stealing, breaking the law, and even some witch craft, which is really something you don't want to mess around with. I even almost had sex with one of their friends, but thank God I didn't, because somewhere deep inside I was knew it was wrong and there were consequences for some things.

After all this stuff started happening I went into a deep depression, but I don't think anyone really realized it because I started to stay away from my brothers. At one point, I seriously thought about killing myself, I thought, hey my Mom did it so why can't I, no one cares about me, no one tells me "I love you," I'm here traveling through life alone, but I also was so lost, I didn't know what to do. I was a scared little child, forgetting that I am never alone God is always there.

Then I turned 12 and it was the summer again. We moved and I didn't have any friends, so I wanted to get out of my house, because I was pretty much under house arrest because my brothers got sick of me, and Church Camp was coming up so I decided I would go, just so I could get away from all my family for a week. So I went, not knowing that God would work in my life again. On the second to the last day I recommitted my life to the Lord, and I have never been the same since, but the story isn't over yet.

A lot has happened since a year and a half ago. My dad divorced my step-Mom, getting rid of my stepbrothers who were really bad influences on me. I get to go to a Christian School, and be in a Christian band. God has given me the strength to handle almost anything now. I want to serve

God forever, and when I grow up I want to be a missionary so I can tell all people about Jesus and how He has changed my life.

Parents please remember to show your children how much you love them and how much you care about them. They need you more than anything. Maybe if my dad would have a lot more, I wouldn't have went the way I did, but I know God allowed all the horrible things to happen to me for a reason, maybe that reason is to show people God can take even teenagers and use them for his glory.

Thank you so much for reading my testimony. God bless you all.

Chinh's Testimony

Chinh's Testimony

By Chinh

My name is Chinh. I was born into a Buddhist family in Vietnam. My parents had to struggle to make a living. We were poor. We shared the poverty of a nation deeply involved in lengthy wars. My parents wanted to make sure that all of their children would get good education despite of all kinds of difficulties. They did not have many physical gifts to give us. However, they gave us a rich spiritual background. Each one of us was taught to live a good life at home, in school, and in the society. We loved and obeyed our parents and teachers. We respected and appreciated our relatives and friends. Like my brothers and sisters, I tried hard. However, the more I tried the more I recognized that I was far from being perfect. I failed in many ways. I made highest grades in my high school years in almost every subject except in physical education. The frivolous success in learning was harmful for me. On the outside I appeared to be humble. But deep inside I knew I was a proud person. I examined my life regularly and I thought I was living the way a good person should live.

Being a young achiever, I did not feel the need to correct myself. I believed that I could change my destiny by way of righteous living. So, often I thought I could depend on myself to earn my own salvation, but I was wrong. I knew I needed God so I began to ask the missionaries to tell me about God. They taught me about Jesus and encouraged me to study the Bible.

I kept refusing Jesus Christ. I had no peace, no joy, no hope. I felt empty. I began to know about Jesus at age 15, in 1965. It took almost 5 years before I really knew the meaning of Jesus' life and teachings. On a beautiful Spring day in 1969 Jesus spoke to my heart as I was reading my Bible in John 14:6 "Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one can come unto the Father but by Me." The Holy Spirit convicted me of my sins. Then He taught me the way of salvation by accepting the redemptive work of Jesus.

What joy I had afterwards! God has never failed me since I had faith in Him as the Savior and Lord of my life. Since the time I gave my life to Him, He continues to bless me in a way you can't imagine. I am unworthy of his forgiveness and his love. But He has determined to forgive and to love me anyway even before I came to know him personally. In 1970, when I was 20, I dedicated my life to become God's servant. I felt satisfied when I taught about Jesus. I decided I wanted to help people know Jesus. My people have many problems that Jesus can help. So I became a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I studied at the Vietnam Baptist Theological Seminary for four years. Right after graduation I was allowed to teach at the same seminary.

When the Communists took over South Vietnam in 1975, all formal religious teaching and training were not allowed. I had to leave the seminary in the central city. And not too long after that I also had to leave the nearby local church. Going back to my home town I tried to gather the flock to worship and to study the Scripture together. However, we could only meet for a short time with

temporary monthly permits. We had to leave for two reasons: (1) the local police wanted to shut down all Baptist activities, and (2) they wanted to confiscate the facility.

After three and one half years living under the Communist regime, we left Vietnam in a boat. We traveled across the ocean in a 4 by 5 by 20 foot river boat). The Lord was with us every moment of the trip. He watched over us. He provided for us. He protected us. And He brought us to safe haven. We landed in Songkhla, in Southern Thailand.

About the second week we were there we started a Bible class in Vietnamese with a handful of Christians. In a month, we began to worship in our own language too. In two months our group became a church. We studied the Bible and we proclaimed the Good News daily. God added more and more to his church. Within six months, there were 12 Sunday School classes and church membership of more than 120 with 100 percent attendance most of the time.

My wife and I, and our five-year-old daughter, came to the States in 1978. In September 1978 we joined a Baptist Church and formed a Vietnamese Sunday School class with two other families. In 1980 I began to serve as associate pastor of that church and as pastor of Vietnamese Baptist Church in Atlanta. From 1990 to 1992, I served as Secretary of the National Fellowship of Vietnamese Baptist Ministers in America. And from 1992 to 1994, I served as President of that Fellowship. During this time, it became the National Fellowship of Vietnamese Baptist Churches in America.

In 1995, I decided to go back to the seminary to be better equipped for the ministries in the future. I would like to become a more effective communicator of God's Word for my people who desperately need the Gospel. With your prayers, I know that God will give me the clear understanding of His Word, the strong desire to share it, and the great joy in serving God and each individual whom He loves so dearly and puts in my path.

If you have never accepted Jesus I urge you to do so.

My Name Change

My Name Change

By Efraim Goldstein

Most children are given the regular complement of names at birth. For me, however, having been born into a Jewish home, I was given another name along with the regular designations. Not only was I "Fred Goldstein" but at my bris my parents added a Yiddish appellation--Feivel. I don't think my parents realized that all the crying I did at my bris had anything to do with that name, but could you imagine growing up in the Bronx with the name Feivel? Yes, my Yiddish name was a bit awkward. I never knew exactly what to do with it. However, when I started Hebrew school, I was addressed by its Hebrew equivalent, Efraim. I liked "Efraim" better than "Feivel". But even so, to my friends I was just Fred. This issue of two names never came up in conversation, and I seldom thought about it.

Yet I always felt my Hebrew name was something distinctive; it identified me as a Jew. I never asked for an explanation why I had a Hebrew name, in the same way I never asked why I wore a yarmulka (skull cap) in synagogue. We were Jews and we just did it--that was reason enough!

It wasn't until my early twenties that the matter of my Hebrew name became important to me. This was due to two life-changing events. One was accepting Y'shua as the Messiah. The other was living in Israel.

When I first arrived in Israel, I was asked by others, "Ma shimcha?" (what's your name?). I reflexively answered, "Fred." They smiled and replied "No, what's your name in Hebrew?"

It was then that I realized that as a Jew my Hebrew name was my real name. My English name was merely a social accommodation for living in the Diaspora. The name which better expresses who I am as a person, as a Jew, is Efraim.

My Hebrew name also better expresses who I am as a follower of Y'shua. In reading the Holy Scriptures, I came to see that Y'shua and the disciples all had two names: Y'shua--Jesus; Simon--Peter; Yochanan--John; and Saul--Paul. And here I was: Efraim--Fred.

Literally translated, "Efraim" means "double portion." I tend to think that before I accepted Y'shua as my Messiah, I had a double portion of problems. Now, I have a double portion of blessings: the blessing of being one of God's chosen people and the blessing of choosing to follow the Messiah of Israel.

Admittedly, at times it is difficult to use a polysyllabic Hebrew name in America. Everywhere from Montgomery, Alabama to Boise, Idaho, people struggle with saying "Efraim." But then, when I think of it, people also struggle with saying "Y'shua." But both are good Jewish names. Both say something about their bearer. If Americans can learn to say "Luciano Pavarotti," they can learn Efraim too. But better still, my prayer is that people will stop struggling with and start inquiring

about the name above all names--Y'shua.

From Karbala to Calvary

From Karbala to Calvary

By Barakat Ullah

In 1891, on the seventh of the month of Muharram, I was born into a Shi'a Muslim family in a small town called Narowal, now a border town of West Panjab, Pakistan. Our family was respected by the whole community for its integrity of life, piety and strict observance of religious rites and ceremonies. My grandfather was never called by his name, but was always referred to as Janab. He and the mosque were almost inseparable. I can still recall sitting on his lap after he returned from evening prayers and hearing him recite the Qur'an. My grandmother was so pious that many women asked to be buried near her grave with their heads towards her feet. One of her brothers emigrated to the sacred city of Karbala, where Imam Hussain, a grandson of the Prophet, was killed and is buried.

The daily routine of the family began with morning prayers and recitations from the Qur'an. As a child of four years, I was sent to Sayyid Sa'id Shah Sahib to learn from him the Qur'an by heart, while his daughter taught the same to my sister. The duties of the day ended with the night prayers.

Such was the atmosphere of the home in which I was brought up. When I was still only four years old, I was sent to the mission "indigenous" school and soon afterwards was promoted to the higher elementary school. Christian teaching was imparted in both these schools. The teaching of the Bible was taken seriously and it was considered in some respects more important than the teaching of secular subjects.

In the lower classes I studied from a book written in Panjabi which was called a catechism. This contained in an elementary form the differences between Hinduism and Islam on the one hand and Christianity on the other. In the fourth standard I was taught Khas Ayat (Selected Verses) which consisted of one hundred verses from the various books of the Bible. This, together with the questions and answers of the catechism, are still fresh in my memory. When I reached the fifth standard, we were taught the Gospel according to St. Matthew in Panjabi written in the Persian script. I had a good memory and by this time I knew the Christian Scriptures better than many Christians. I do not remember a single year in which I did not receive the first prize in Scripture.

My father, Shaikh Rahmat `Ali, was a man of wide sympathies and was tolerant of all religions. His friends included Hindus and Christians as well as Muslims of all groups. He was a business man, but found time to read the Bible as well as the Qur'an in the mornings. Persian poets and prose writers were his favourite authors. His younger brother, Uncle Muhsin `Ali, was, on the other hand, a strict and bigoted Shi'a who had no use for any religious book other than the Qur'an and its Shi'a commentaries. He was a matriculate, a rare qualification in that small town in his day. He had a good library which contained books refuting Christianity and Hinduism as well as various other groups in Islam.

When my uncle saw that I won Scripture prizes every year and could recite many verses from the Bible, he thought it was time that he took my religious education into his own hands, and he gave me some books to read. I was about twelve years old at the time and was studying in the sixth standard and reading selections from Sa`di and Firdawsi, so that I could easily read and understand the books that my uncle gave me. One book in particular called Zubdat al-Aqawil fi Tarjih al-Qur'an `ala al-Anajil had a great influence on my thinking. It contained comparisons between the teachings of Islam and Christianity, alleged contradictions between the various passages of the Bible and specimens of higher criticism of the Bible. Armed with it, I used to meet Christian missionaries, padres and church workers when they were preaching in the bazaar, as was the custom of the day. I confronted them with various questions and constantly made a laughing stock of them.

Thus encouraged, I read more books belonging to my uncle. I still have his copy of Zubdat al-Aqawil in which in the margin of one of the pages opposite a passage from the Gospel according to St. Matthew (ch 16. vv. 21-23) is written in my boyish hand: "So `Satan' is the `Rock' of Christianity!" Under the influence of such anti-Christian books I burnt a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel. I was reading by the light of an earthen lamp, when I applied its flame to this Gospel account and burnt it. My mother was horrified at what I had done, but I assured her that it was only a copy of the Injil (Gospel). Her cry brought my father into the room, and on discovering what I had done he reprimanded me severely. He asked me how I would like it if a Christian were to burn the Qur'an. When he saw the look of horror on my face, he quoted Sa`di: "Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you." My uncle also came into the room. He dared not say anything before his elder brother, but later he assured me that the deed was a meritorious one.

The month of Muharram is a sacred month for Shi`a Muslims, as Imam Hussain was killed in that month. Every year, a fortnight before the beginning of Muharram, the boys of the community used to band themselves together and go in procession through the streets, beating their breasts and chanting: "Hussain, Hussain, Hussain, Hussain! Shahid-i Karbala* Hussain!" [* Martyr of Karbala]

On one occasion we called a reciter from Lucknow who brought with him a small rod with about a dozen small sharp knives attached to it, with which he lacerated his shoulders. In a fit of wild frenzy I seized it and began lacerating my shoulders with it until it was snatched from my hands by one of my mother's cousins. This event increased my reputation as a zealous and pious boy.

Another event of my boyhood indelibly written on my mind is that of Christian workers preaching in the bazaar, one of whom was a Mr. Thomas of the U. P. He was preaching near a dyer's shop, when suddenly the dyer, Sikandar, a big burly Muslim, appeared on the scene. As he approached the preacher, he spat on his face and slapped it. The people who were gathered around expected a fracas, for Mr. Thomas, too, was a strong man of fine stature. What we saw amazed us. The preacher took out his handkerchief, calmly wiped his face and said: "God bless you." Then he continued to preach as if no insult had been offered him. The dyer went back to his shop sheepishly. The conduct of Mr. Thomas on that occasion made a great impression on all. It staggered me, as one of my pet objections to the Gospel was that the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount was impracticable, against human nature, and therefore unacceptable.

When I passed the eighth standard, I was sent thirty miles away from home to a mission high school for higher studies. In this school, too, I carried off every Scripture prize annually. A Muslim boy, Nur Muhammad, wanted to become a Christian, but I successfully persuaded him to renounce his intentions. I came to be looked upon as an authority on matters of religion by students and teachers alike. I haunted the places in the bazaars where Christians preached the Gospel, bringing about disorder in their meetings by asking them awkward questions and generally making them the objects of ridicule.

The city where the high school was situated was notorious for its vice, and I did not, and indeed could not, escape contamination. I was in my adolescent period, a most impressionable age. The atmosphere of the school and of the hostel where I lived was tainted with vice. This atmosphere accentuated the sense of sin in me, and I felt the need of forgiveness of my sins and restoration to a life of virtue and goodness. I went to the nearby mosque regularly and said my prayers, asking God to release me from the power of sin and from slavery to the devil. But I seemed to get no response. No amount of the reading of the Qur'an, nor the recital of verses, nor the saying of prayers gave me any relief. My sense of guilt increased daily. "What shall deliver me from my sins?" became my oft-repeated cry. I went to the mawlawis whenever I had free time from my studies. I studiously avoided the company of students who had evil minds and sought a different kind of company. I sat at the feet of great Muslim divines and scholars of the city and listened to their expositions. But all the while this sense of sin never left me. It gnawed at my heart continually.

Then came the turning point in my life. At the end of the school year I went home to carry the joyful news to my parents that I had passed the ninth standard with flying colours, standing first in my class. Travel in those days was by road. My face was wreathed in smiles as I entered the town; but I sensed a gloom over everything before I even reached my house. I found my Uncle Muhsin standing in the doorway. He took me aside and told me that my father had been converted to Christianity, and that the whole town was mourning the fact, for my father was the president of the Anjuman-i Islamiyya. I went, or rather staggered, inside.

My father was not at home, but my mother, two sisters and two brothers, who had also been converted, rushed to me and took me in their arms. I forgot the melancholy events in the joy of meeting them. My uncle came into the room, called me away from them, and said: "From now on you cannot be a member of that family of infidels. I shall adopt you as I love you more than I do my own children (which was perfectly true). I shall educate you and you will have no difficulty of any kind." I replied that, although father had become a Christian, I would continue to live with him as a good Muslim and render obedience to him as a son in all matters right and lawful. When father returned home, he was glad to see me. But my heart sank within me when I saw the lines on his face caused by the persecution of his townsmen. He was overjoyed to hear the answer that I had given my uncle.

After a couple of days I was called to a council of the elders of the town in the house of my future father-in-law, who took me by the hand and swore on the Qur'an that he would be responsible for my education, if I did not follow my father's example and become a Christian. I told all assembled that, while I had no intention of forsaking Islam, I did not intend to forsake my parents who, as they well knew, could not possibly have embraced Christianity through any ulterior motive. They said

that they, had no cause to doubt the sincerity of my father's motives, but at the same time they could not sit still and calmly see their president turning into an infidel; hence they had to make some efforts to defend their religion and their community. I said that I regretted this and pointed out that they were speaking an untruth and offering me bribes to remain in the fold of Islam!

That same night I had a heart-to-heart talk with my father. He told me that he had not communicated the news of his baptism to me for fear it might upset me at the time of my examinations. He had been searching for the truth for the past twenty years and had at last found it in Christ. He was naturally glad to hear from me the decision which I had communicated to the elders. His calmness, dignity and the patient loving way he bore his sufferings and the awful persecution to which he was subjected made a great appeal to my mind. I therefore resolved to read the New Testament again to see what had attracted my father in it. I have written about the conversions of my father and his elder brother, Ihsan Ullah (who later became the first Archdeacon of Delhi) in my Urdu book *The wise Master-BUILDER of the Panjab Church*.

I gave my father *Zubdat al-Aqawil* to read and he gave me a few books, some of which, notably *Sweet First Fruits*, were a great help to me. He advised me to go to the missionary who would answer my objections. To this I readily accepted. I walked two miles daily to his house during midday when the temperature was 112 degrees in the shade, as that was the only time convenient to him. I found that he had only a very superficial knowledge of the Qur'an and could not even understand the objections written in *Zubdat al-Aqawil*.

When my father heard from me the futile arguments that the missionary had to offer to prove the truth of the Christian faith, he himself began to direct my studies. The books he gave me to read included Pfander's *Balance of Truth*, Tisdall's *Muhammadian Objections to Christianity* and those by Imad al-Din, a great and learned convert and the author of many books and a translator of the Qur'an. I read them very carefully and pondered over their arguments. Though I cannot give the reasons in full detail here yet it became clear to me:

1. that there was no foundation to the claims of many Muslims that the Bible had been corrupted;
2. that God, whose very nature is love, is our Heavenly Father, as the New Testament portrays him. He has revealed Himself as Heavenly Father supremely through Jesus the Messiah, His eternal Word (who is also called His Son in the same way that He is called His Word);
3. that Christ was sinless, while the Qur'an admonished Muhammad to ask forgiveness for his sins. Consequently, Muhammad's life could not be held up as an ideal for the world;
4. that, though the Qur'an contained many good moral precepts. it did not tell me how I could become free from the slavery of sin and become a new man. The Prophet of Islam was a moral teacher but not the Saviour of the world. He claimed to be a prophet like other Jewish prophets. But nowhere does the Qur'an expressly state that he was a mediator between man and his Creator.

The chief obstacles now in the way of my baptism were the questions regarding the Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus, and the Atonement. My father gave me other books which were too learned for me at that time; so I was told to accept these tenets for the time being as articles of faith, just as I accepted the existence of God. A deep study of the life of the Messiah and of Muhammad inclined me to follow my father and to accept Christ as my personal Saviour. Of all the prophets, Christ alone had conquered sin as shown by the power of His Resurrection and, therefore, only He could save me from my sins, of which I was all the time conscious.

The Cross of Calvary, on which Christ died, became meaningful to me. In that the Lord Jesus had lived and died because of my sins, Himself being sinless, I could see that God had loved me and forgiven my sins, as Christ had loved and forgiven sinners. At the time of my baptism on July 7th, 1907 I felt that the great burden of sin was lifted off my shoulders. Oh, the joy! The conviction that I had been forgiven brought peace and harmony into my life, and I felt like one flying in the air - an experience which was new and strange and even now totally unaccountable to me. I only know that this actually happened in my life.

I was only a boy when I came to experience the forgiveness of sins and the new life in Christ Jesus. Looking back on my Christian experience these many years, my heart is full of thankfulness for God's unmerited grace.

Advancement in knowledge and years, with the resultant widening of my outlook, has increased the reality and depth of my Christian experience. It has only deepened the conviction that the only hope for lost humanity is the living, crucified and risen Christ. Deliverance from sin and restoration to a life of virtue and goodness are found in Him alone, as I discovered.

My prayer goes out for my Muslim brothers and sisters that the joy of salvation from the grip of sin may be theirs also through the Saviour of the World, our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save the lost.

Barakat Ullah

Nicola's Testimony

Nicola's Testimony

By Nicola Alvarez

My name is Nicola Alvarez and I feel led to write about my life and what brought me to God. Though I have always known about God and Jesus, I am a "new" believer in Jesus and you'll understand why I put it in that context as you read through this. Being new I'm not sure if there are rules or guideline to follow when writing out my life as it has been but in order to give the full view I need to go back to my early childhood.

I was born on September 8, 1976 to an unwed mother of 19. Growing up I never knew my father. In place of my father I had my sister's father. My mother married him when I was about 2 and they had my sister when I was 3. They were divorced about a year later. Some of the few memories that I have during that period of my life were of the violence that took place in our home. When I was four my mom met my stepfather. He was the only "real" father figure that I really had growing up. I remembered when my mother told me that they were going to get married. I was so happy. I remember jumping on my bed and spelling out my new last name in glee. I was finally going to have a father. My mother chose that time to become a "Christian" and a member of a Baptist church in which I loved attending. Shortly after that, on Halloween, my nightmare began.

My stepfather began molesting me at age 5. Going against the threats of my stepfather I told my friends at school what had happened. I thought that I would be safe, that no one else would find out. I was wrong. My friends were devoted friends and told my teacher who in turn included the authorities. I was made to confront my mother and stepfather. Now you're probably wondering why I felt the need to tell you such an awful and personal moment in my life. If you bear with me you'll see the relevance. My mother then included the church thinking that it would be good for me. After I told the church's pastor what had happened it was concluded that I was lying. It hurt me deeply but I didn't hold it against God only the adults in my life. Throughout the years I was removed from the house only once. When I was seven my mother had quit attending the Baptist Church and decided to join a strict Pentecostal church. Pentecostals, in case you don't know, believe in speaking in tongues, which I quickly was able to fake. I loved the attention that I received for having "come to God". I only mention this because, although I am ashamed for my behavior, it supported my later opinion that religion is a bunch of hypocrites and phonies.

At nine I confronted my stepfather again. He denied it of course but my mother said that she would pray to God and He would tell her who was telling the truth. I had been praying to God for years in the hope that He would make it stop. I finally thought that it was over. My mother "prayed" for two hours and when I finally asked her, "Mommy, what did God say?" her response was, "God said that you're lying. Your dad would never do anything to hurt you." I was devastated!! How could the two people that I had the most faith in turn their backs on me. How could God hurt me so deeply after my devotion and my faith that He would make it end? From that point in my life I turned my

back on Him. I didn't need Him. I hated Him for his betrayal and I hated the phoniness of church. I would have nothing to do with either.

My life continued and when I was 13 my mother finally left my stepfather after many more incidents on both of their parts. The part my mother played, however, was the one that only helped in my hatred toward God. She used Him as an excuse for everything she did that a parent shouldn't do. She had a scapegoat that couldn't say anything in His defense to a hurt and confused child that had closed her heart and mind to Him.

When I was 15 my mom kicked me out of the house. I lived on the streets of Denver for 2 years. During that time I endured several more "episodes" and God hardly ever crossed my mind except when I felt the need to remind Him of how much I despised Him. I was more concerned with surviving. I went from being a shy, quiet child to being an obnoxious and rude young woman. Survival of the fittest is the rule of the street and I was going to survive. I earned, with great pride, the street name of Venom. At 16 I almost died of pneumonia. I spent my 16th birthday in a hospital room next door to the psychiatric ward fighting for my life. That incident has never left me. Sometime during that next year I decided that I really did believe in God and that if I was going to die I didn't want to die hating Him. It was a conscious decision but I never really came back to Him. I apologized to Him for all of the horrible things that I said to Him though.

I'm sure you know what I mean. I would tell God, "If you do this for me I promise to do this or that". I know that God knew that, although I sincerely meant them at the time, the promises would soon be forgotten. I spent the next 2 years in and out of bad relationships until I finally met my son's father. I moved to Ventura in 1995 to be with him. Two months later we moved in together and two months after that I was pregnant at 19. When my son was born we suddenly decided that we needed to start attending church. I wasn't religious and my son's father is Catholic so the choice of what church we would attend was obvious. My son was baptized against my better wishes at 11 months. I left my son's father two years ago and have been a struggling single parent ever since. My son attends "church" on Sundays with his father and although I "believed" in God I still didn't want any part of church. I believed that as long as I was a good person and lived my life the best I could that God wasn't going to send me to hell and if He did He wasn't the kind of God I wanted to spend eternity with anyway.

Now I may seem like I'm heading off on a different path but bear with me. I have a best friend that I met when I first moved out here six years ago. She is married with two stepchildren whose father is Jewish. For his birthday this year someone gave him the book "Left Behind". I'm sure many of you know of that book. Well, of course he wasn't going to read it and so it sat in the same place that he had set it, on their living room table, for at least two months. While I was visiting one day I decided that I felt like reading something and saw that sitting there. I picked it up and read the back. It seemed interesting enough not to bore me to death and so I asked if I could borrow it. I brought it home and read up to the second chapter. I didn't pick it up again for three weeks and when I did, I couldn't put it down. By the end of the book I was in tears. I didn't want to be left behind. I cried and prayed for forgiveness. I asked God to come into my life. I expected it to be like in the book. This feeling of peace and knowing that God loved me but all I felt was this hollow void inside of me and the doubts of, "Did I do this right?" "Am I saved or am I still going to be left behind when He comes for us?"

I couldn't stand to listen to my music any more and the hunger that I felt led me to find a Christian radio station. Listening to this station one Sunday on my way to work I heard a pastor speaking on parenting (still a big mystery for me) and I was immediately impressed though I thought nothing of it until I heard that the church was in the neighboring town. As I turned off my car and went into work it was quickly pushed out of my mind. The next week I was still dealing with the dilemma of where I was going to start attending church and then I remembered the pastor that I had heard on the radio the week before. I had no idea of what denomination the church was but I hurriedly got ready for church and looked up what I thought was the church in the phone book. I drove for an hour and a half trying to find the church while listening to this pastor over the radio, when, I finally gave up and started to head home.

As I reached the freeway the address came over the radio but being from a different town my first thought was, "Where exactly is that?" As if answering my question the radio concluded by pinpointing the area for me. Excitedly I drove home thanking God for His help and guidance. I dropped my son off at his dad's and drove back to the town and straight to the church that I had been seeking. That day after services I spoke with the pastor and once again prayed for God to come into my life. This time I didn't fill empty as I left. I felt new and loved. Wanted and accepted.

Now you're probably thinking that was when I was saved by God's grace and it probably was, however I was still having doubts. Not if I wanted Jesus in my life but if He was real or myth. Though I have attended church religiously since that Sunday two Sundays ago and have started attending the Bible study, I still felt false. I just had to know if He was a real man. I read "More Than A Carpenter" and although it helped, it didn't fulfill my curiosity. I turned to the encyclopedia. It took me three tries. I first read on Jesus but it only confirmed what the Bible said. Then I tried John the Baptist but that didn't help much either. I needed someone that could tie Jesus into the events and people that I knew from history books. I looked up Herod. There was my proof. Among other things, the key people that it mentioned were Julius Caesar and Cleopatra. If I hadn't been sitting already I probably would have collapsed in shock. Jesus was a real man and if He was real then so were His teachings. God left me no out this time. I have no excuse not to believe in His Son, Jesus. I became a true believer [that] day. [The next] night as I attended the Wednesday service I asked God to take away this dullness inside of me and allow me to feel something. It didn't take 10 seconds before I was crying uncontrollably. I felt so touched, blessed and yet more unworthy than I have ever felt in my entire life. How could God love someone like me so unconditionally? I have to be honest when I say that I don't know but I am more grateful than I have words for, for His love and devotion to the child that has slapped Him in the face more than once. I know that I'll live my life for Him from this moment on and will never doubt Him again.

Nicola Alvarez

I Escaped From Hitler Twice: The Fred Wertheim Sto

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By Fred Wertheim

When a Jew comes to believe in Jesus, it not only affects his life but the lives of those closest to him--his family. This was certainly the case when Steve Wertheim, the son of a Jewish immigrant, came to believe in Jesus.

Steve's father, Fred, was born in Germany in 1925. The son of a baker, he lived in a small village of 2,000 people. The town had very few Jews, ten families to be exact. Fred, as a young boy, had to look among the non-Jews for playmates because the only other Jewish children were his two older sisters and an older Jewish girl. It didn't bother him to have gentile friends, but it started bothering them to have a Jewish one.

By the time Fred was eight, the Aryan philosophy of Hitler was well on its way to acceptance by most Germans. Fred's best friends did not want to play with him anymore. His parents, who were prospering in the bakery business, held to the illusion that Hitler would lose his popularity and that things would get better once again for the Jews. Instead they got worse.

The Wertheim family finally decided to leave Germany for America. However, wanting to leave and getting out of the country were two different things. Because of immigration quotas, they needed to apply to the Consulate for clearance. The family had no papers prepared by a United States citizen for them, and that made emigration difficult. They were given a number--a very high one--48,878, which represented the number of people allowed to come from Germany before them. It would be a while until they could expect to go.

Meanwhile, on July 2, 1938 Fred became bar mitzvah. He was to be the last Jewish boy to undergo the ceremony in his district. Four months later came Kristallnacht. His synagogue, along with hundreds of others was destroyed. Six days later, it was ordered that Jewish children be expelled from the schools. At the same time, Jewish males that were thirteen or older were being conscripted for "labor camps." Fred was small for his age and because of his size was overlooked. Before long, entire Jewish families were being deported to the death camps. Yet, for some mysterious reason, his family was spared. Their immigration number came up, and in May of 1941 the Wertheims left what had become Hitler's Germany. They traveled by way of France, Spain and Portugal and arrived on the shores of what they saw to be heaven on earth--America.

Fred learned the English language quickly and after having been in the States only two years, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. The eighteen-year-old went through basic training and was shipped out to England. He was then given additional training and assigned to the First Infantry Division as part of the combat engineers. This was a front-line unit that was trained to remove mines or build emergency bridges so others could advance. Front-line units like Fred's had dangerous duty and high casualties.

Fred took part in the invasion of Europe on D-Day. He fought his way through France and across the Rhine River, ironically, into his native Germany. Then Fred and some of his fellow Army soldiers were captured there. Says Fred,

"I remember they had us lined up. The Germans were talking among themselves, loud enough for me to hear. Since I understood what they were saying, my body started to shake. Some of my buddies started asking me, 'What's happening? How come you're ready to pass out?' I told them, 'This is the way it's going to be. They don't know what to do with us and so they're going to shoot us.'"

Yet, for some reason they changed their minds and took the group to a prisoner of war camp near Hanover--Stalag 11B. Fred was spared again.

Most of the prisoners at Stalag 11B had been there throughout most of the war and were very weak. Some couldn't even stand up. No work was assigned to the prisoners, for it would have probably killed most of them who were in a state of physical debilitation. Each morning, Fred and the others answered a roll call and then spent the rest of the day wandering within the boundaries of the high wire fences.

The conditions in the camp were not up to Geneva Convention standards. The clothes of the prisoners were burned regularly because they were lice infested. Many had their hair shorn very short to minimize the infestation. Their breakfast and lunch was combined into one "meal" which consisted of a tin can filled with black coffee. In the late afternoon they were given a stew which contained vegetables and occasionally a few strings of horsemeat. Fred remembers,

"It smelled so rotten that I literally held my nose while I was eating. Once in a while, very late at night, some Germans from outside the camp would throw food over the fence and run away." It proved that not all Germans were Hitlerites.

Meanwhile, back in the States, Fred's family had gotten a telegram delivered by a woman dressed in black. It was from the War Department saying that Fred was missing in action. Germany didn't turn over names of prisoners, so his family had no way of knowing if he was alive.

Eventually the Allied Forces conquered Germany and General Montgomery's Ninth Division liberated Stalag 11B. Fred first had to recuperate from tapeworm and other maladies received as a result of his imprisonment. Then, around Mother's Day of 1945, he was sent home.

"The convoy I was in was the first batch of American POW's to get back to New York City and we got a tremendous welcome--fireboats and everything. The following Saturday I got a big reception in the synagogue from the rabbi and the entire congregation."

Fred felt very grateful to be back in a safe place. He couldn't forget, however, the horrors of war or the miracle of his preservation. "God has done so many good things for me. He brought my immediate family out of Germany. He kept me alive in a prisoner of war camp. And there was the time that I was in a German halftrack that turned over on top of me. Two Germans lay dead next to me. The halftrack was so heavy with equipment that I couldn't move. Then water started to come up as we were pressed down in a field. I thought my life was over. I said the Sh'ma and I spoke to God pleading for His help. At that moment, several of my German captors were able to lift the halftrack and slide me out from under it. I was safe once again."

"First I escaped from Hitler as a Jewish refugee. Then I was liberated as an American prisoner of war. But I was never free until Messiah saved and rescued me." Fred Wertheim believed in God and felt that God had preserved him for a purpose. He didn't know what it was, but reasoned that he should just go on living, that God would show him some day. Fred married a nice Jewish girl from his synagogue and he and Laura settled down in the Bronx. They raised two sons and things were going fine until he got a phone call from his oldest son Steve. Steve had moved to California after graduating from college. Fred could not believe his ears, but Steve's words were clear: "Dad, Mom, I've come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah."

Fred took the news very hard: "After all I had been through, here I saw my own flesh and blood had turned against me." Fred worked as a mail carrier, and for weeks after the phone call, he would just suddenly start crying on his route. People asked him what was wrong, but he couldn't tell them. He was ashamed to let them know that his son had become a Christian.

Steve tried to explain to his father that his decision to believe in Jesus was not intended to hurt Fred. It was a decision based on conviction--the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel. Steve told his father about a Mr. Goldstein who had originally told him about Jesus. Mr. Goldstein was a Jew for Jesus who Steve had met and through whose Bible study meeting Steve became more and more convinced of his spiritual needs and of Jesus' sufficiency.

Fred, while depressed over Steve's decision, became angry with Mr. Goldstein. When Steve told him that Goldstein was coming to New York and wanted to visit with him, Fred agreed. He said to his son, "I want to meet the man who did this to you and I want to kill him. I'm going to throw him off of our terrace!"

Goldstein and his wife visited the Wertheims and instead of a violent or angry interchange, the two couples discussed things over coffee and a danish pastry ring.

Says Mrs. Wertheim, "We asked them many questions. After a while, Mr. Goldstein pointed out prophecies in the Jewish Bible. I was a little shocked to see that my husband was very curious to know more."

Fred Wertheim's curiosity continued past that evening. He started attending Bible study meetings in New York:

"I became a very conscientious student. Each week we were asked to prepare for the next lesson by reading a particular passage from the Scriptures. One week the assignment was to read the first letter of John (in the New Testament), but I read the Gospel of John by mistake. I couldn't put it down. Then, on the morning of September 29, 1975, I woke up at four o'clock. I saw what was the outline of a figure standing in the doorway of my bedroom. I couldn't see a face, but I knew it was Jesus. I was convinced that he was real and that I wanted him in my life. I knew he was my Messiah. For me to become a believer, it took a supernatural event like this one. I know it's not that way for everybody who believes in Jesus, but that's how it happened to me. I didn't tell my wife until later in the day."

Laura Wertheim was upset about the news. First her son and now her husband too! To compound things, their youngest son Robbie, announced that he too was a believer. He didn't want to say anything until his father came to believe because he was afraid that it would be too traumatic an

experience for Fred. In Robbie's words, "I didn't think he could take another one."

But could Laura Wertheim take another family member believing in Jesus? Says Mrs. Wertheim,

"I was very stubborn. While I felt surrounded by believers, I kept reminding myself that so many people were killed in the Holocaust. So many Jews were killed. I couldn't betray my upbringing."

Then the Wertheim family went to see a movie called "The Hiding Place." Laura watched this true story about a Christian woman and her family in Holland during the war. Says Laura,

"It showed the suffering this woman went through, yet she kept her faith in God. It made me see that God was working during the Holocaust -- through people like this dear woman. Because she believed in Jesus, she helped Jews -- she had real reason to hope. I just sat there and wept and sobbed through the entire picture."

The next week, she too accepted Jesus as her Messiah. Four years later, Fred and Laura Wertheim renewed their marriage vows. Portions of the ceremony follow:

"Love and commitment have come to have a diminished meaning in today's world. Yet, we can see the true meaning of love and commitment as we behold Fred and Laura Wertheim, a couple united in God, showing forth His faithfulness. In a world where promises are seldom kept and faithfulness is scorned, they stand here to declare and reaffirm their love for one another.

"In Jewish tradition, it is considered a blessing and privilege to be an invited guest at a wedding. To be able to rejoice with a bridegroom and his bride as they begin a new life together is something that brings joy to the heart. How much more, then, can we rejoice with Fred and Laura as we witness the profession of their continued love. Thirty years ago on the 22nd day of October of 1949, Fred and Laura were joined under the chupah.

"Today, they reaffirm their vows in our presence. They rededicate their lives to one another with a new dimension and depth--that they are joined to God Almighty. He is the center of their union with one another. Their children have always been able to recognize the mutual devotion and deep respect that Fred and Laura have had for each other throughout their marriage. Yet, when the Wertheims met Jesus their Messiah, their relationship truly blossomed. The faith that they came to four years ago has made a good relationship far sweeter. Their relationship with Jesus increased their capacity to love each other in the everyday practicalities of their life together. Their relationship with Jesus increased their capacity to love others.

"Because God has been so faithful to them, they desire to publicly declare and demonstrate that faithfulness and have come today to dedicate their lives afresh in serving Him.

"Fred and Laura, God has given both of you much, and the Scriptures say, 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded.' However, when God gives us a responsibility, He also promises to supply what we need to fulfill that which he requires. We have the great promises of God to rely upon as we live our lives in Messiah. 'Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Messiah Jesus' (Philippians 1:6).

"...As they stand before you, the Wertheims wish to reaffirm their commitment to one another in Jesus and their desire to reflect God's image together.

Fred: 'As the days seemed short to Jacob in serving for Rachel, so have the years seemed that we have shared. Laura, my wife, I promise you, as a child of God, that I will continue to love and respect you, honor and uphold you, and give of all that I have to you. As we continue to walk together in the love of Messiah Jesus, I pray that we will become a true reflection of the love and faithfulness Jesus has for the Holy Congregation.'

Laura: 'Fred, throughout our marriage you have been both my beloved and my friend, the one whom I can fully trust with all that I am. As a child of God, I promise you, my husband, that I will continue to love and respect you, honor and uphold you, and give of all that I have to you. I will faithfully stand with you and help inspire you, that God's will might be the focus of our lives.'"

"May God's love surround you, Fred and Laura, as the mountains surround Jerusalem; and may that love emanate forth to all who you touch with your lives. May your next thirty years together increase your joy and gladness as Messiah reigns in your lives."

He Changed My Life

He Changed My Life

By Naim

My grandfather was a well known respected teacher of the Qur'an and in our city everybody listened to his advise. My father learned everything about the Qur'an when growing up and he always respected and loved my grandfather.

After he got married my father went to do his mandatory military duty. There he taught the Qur'an to other soldiers. However, after he finished his military duty, he started to change. He started to hang out among people with an immoral life style, and his attitude became worse each day. From time to time he left my mom and us, his kids, alone for months, and when he came back he beat my mom. Finally, when I was 12, my mom left my father. We stayed at home with my father who continued to drink and lead an immoral life. Two years after this my dad met with a believer of Messiah. Before that time he never knew someone like him. In a short time period they grew close to each other in their friendship. This believer told my dad about the Messiah, and gave him a Bible. But my dad thought, "The Qur'an did not save me, how can the Injeel, which has been changed over the centuries save me?" Nevertheless he started to read his Injeel, and he was impressed with the love and the purification of sins offered in the Injeel. For about a year, they read and compared the Bible and the Qur'an, and at the end my father came to faith. He told his friend that he wanted to confess his faith, be purified from his sins, and submit the will of Jesus.

With all his heart, he asked Jesus to be his Lord. And Jesus really changed my dad's whole life, and my dad left all his addictions. Besides, he started to take us to church with him. He shared Jesus with all his relatives and gave his testimony to everybody. However, as a result of these all his relatives became his enemies, and my mom came and took us to live with her. Because everybody knew that my dad was a believer in Jesus nobody wanted to give him a job. One day, he was sharing his testimony and preaching the Gospel at the open bazaar. As soon as he told those around him that Jesus delivered him from his sins, the crowds attacked him, and the police came and arrested him. In the police station, he met with the head police officer, and told him the good news of the Bible. The head officer liked his sharing and released him, however my dad needed to stay in the hospital for a while because of the beating from the crowds. Our relatives threatened him, saying that if he continues to witness for Jesus they would kill him. But my dad told everybody that he would continue to witness and preach the Gospel at any cost. Mean while I was staying with my mom, selling drugs in school, and cussing everybody, including God. I spent the money I made on buying drugs, and visiting prostitutes. And, I was gambling almost every night. This made as even poorer. I wasted all our money on gambling and sex.

After school, I went to do my mandatory military duty, and there I met with a religious Muslim man. I started to pray that Allah would deliver me from my addictions, and would show me the way to good life. I believed that Islam was the only right religion. After I finished my military duty, I started

to work as a construction worker. Sometime alone, sometimes with an imam I started to study Qur'an. One day my dad came to visit me. He said he was going to visit his friend and he invited me with him. I didn't know this before, but where my dad took me was a place where the real believers in the Messiah met. This was the first time in my life I went such a place. My dad told me that I could go there whenever I wanted. He introduced me to a friend who also was a follower of the Messiah. This man was my first believer friend. He was an interesting man. Very honest, and hospitable. Many times I invited him to go and watch pornographic movies, to drink, or to gamble, but each time he told me Allah doesn't want us to do this kind of things. This friend always was a good model to me, and he always gave me good advice. He was a great encouragement for my life. One day he invited me to go to his place for lunch. During the meal I asked him how could he have such a good character, what influences him to act this way. He said it is because of Jesus, the Messiah. I asked him to tell me about Jesus and the Injeel. He gave me an Injeel. He explained to me what is sin and how Jesus died on the cross for my sins. Very aggressively, I told him that Islam is the only true religion. But still I started to read the Injeel. Some verses were difficult to understand. Therefore I asked my friend to explain these to me. We studied the Injeel together, and about six months later we finished the whole Injeel, but I wasn't a believer yet. I couldn't understand how come Allah and Jesus could be the same. The idea of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit was very confusing to me, and I was really mad at my friend. But he was very patient as he explained the Trinity and how Jesus was the Word of God in the body of a human being. I compared the Qur'an with the Bible. I believed that the Bible was changed many times over the years. However, I was not able to find any evidence that proved this, and I couldn't find what was Jesus' fault.

One night I was reading John 18 and 19 in my Injeel, and when I read how Jesus was killed on the cross, I felt a big sadness in me without knowing why. I read how they beat him, and how he was in agony. First time in my life at that time I realized that I was a sinner, and I cried. I read this part three times. I knew my friend who was a follower of Messiah had a different life. If Jesus could influence his life like this, could He do that for me, too? I wanted to investigate the truth of Jesus. And although I didn't believe in Him, I prayed to Him. I told Him, "Jesus, if You are a real Savior, change my life". I told him, I don't want to smoke, gamble, visit prostitutes, or go to pornographic movies anymore. I want to have an honest life, and support my family. I told Jesus that He had two months to change my life. If He could change my life in this two months, I was going to dedicate my whole life to Him, and submit His will all my life.

I quit smoking. I stopped going to the pornographic movies, and I was delivered from all my addictions. Allah really changed my life. During my military duty, I tried quitting smoking, but I couldn't succeed. Now my life was filled with joy, and I knew the changes I had in my life was a result of His miracle. After this I prayed to Jesus and asked Him to be the Savior of my life, and I gave thanks to him for bringing love into my life, and dying on the cross for my sins.

When my old friends came to ask me out, I told them, my Father doesn't allow me to do these kind of things anymore. They asked me who my Father was, I told them "Jesus, the Messiah", and they thought I lost my mind.

I went to visit my dad, and I asked his forgiveness for not listening to him for years. I told him how I came to know the Messiah, and told him that the Messiah forgave me, and I asked him to forgive

me as well. My dad didn't answer me, instead he wrapped his arms around me, and started to cry. He gave thanks God saying, "I prayed for my lost son for 15 years, and now he is found".

I faced many difficulties after I accepted Jesus. My family rejected me, and asked my relative not to accept me. I wasn't able to make enough money to provide for my family, and I was attacked twice.

One day when I was jogging, a man with a knife approached to me and stabbed me three times in the chest. I tried to stop him, but his knife was big, and he ran away. It was a dark street, I wasn't able to see his face. I was losing much blood, and there was nobody around to help me. I was exhausted, walking on the street. I knelt down, hoping that someone would come to my help. A cab passed by. He saw me, and took me to the hospital. I started to pray on the way. "Lord, I don't want to die. If I don't help them, how can my poor family survive? Please hear me, Jesus, and save me for them". In the hospital, the doctor said that the knife was very close to my heart, therefore, I could have died. He asked the cab driver to bring my family.

The next day, when I woke up I realized that I was alive! When doctor came to visit me he said that it was a miracle. I gave thanks to Jesus, and told Him, "Lord, thank You. First you delivered me from my sins. And now you saved my life. I am grateful to you." I promised Him that, "I will follow You all my life. I will teach the Bible to Muslims, and give my testimony to everybody. Please help me, and give me understanding so that I can know the Injeel."

One day I went to visit a friend whom I haven't seen in six months. Although, our lives were proceeding in different directions we were happy to see each other. While talking to him I heard that his wife was sick for three years. They were not able to find a cure to her illness. They took her to a Muslim leader and have him pray for her, but she wasn't healed. When I inquired about her illness, he said she was possessed. She attacked him and their kids to hurt, even to kill them, and throw the furniture to the walls. Then she was retiring in a corner for hours, and hours later asking what she has done.

He asked me what I had done since we last saw each other. I told him how I gave my life to Jesus. When he heard this he was quite confused. I told him about the healing miracle Jesus performed - blind, lame, and paralytics were all healed by Him, and He cast out many demons. If we would pray together, and believe, Jesus would heal his wife. He told me that he loves me so much, but he can't trust Jesus. He believed that the Qur'an is the best book, and Mohammed is the last prophet. If the scholars of the Qur'an cannot help him, what could the Bible's Jesus could do for his wife. I gave him an Injeel and told him that everything Jesus did was written in this book, and asked him to read it.

About a month later, I went to visit him. He read the Injeel, but Allah, Son of Allah, and the Holy Spirit confused him. He couldn't understand how Jesus could be Allah. I explained to him, how Jesus came to the world and why died on the cross. For about five weeks, we read and studied the Injeel and compared it to the Qur'an.

When I got back home, I prayed, and told Jesus, "I will go to visit my friend once again". The next time when I went to visit my friend I asked him to ask Jesus to heal his wife. I told him to tell his sins to Jesus, and if he doesn't know how to pray, open his heart to Jesus and ask Jesus to help him and his wife. Jesus would know if his heart was open or not.

A month later, I went to visit some of my relatives. I remembered my friend, and visited him that Sunday. When they welcomed me they were all very happy, I thought there was a wedding. I asked him what happened. He said that night he talked to the Lord, and told him that he didn't have the faith to believe, but still told him that he wants God to heal his wife, and change his life. About a week later, his wife was able to cook, and take care of their baby. His mother and father were confused, because even though they didn't go to a doctor she was healed. His wife now was normal and she wanted to put her faith in Jesus too. Their neighbors also asked them about his wife, he told them, Jesus healed her. They joined the believers group, and started to study the Bible.

Dear friends, you read of my family and friend's testimonies. If these stories blessed you, thanks to be God. Jesus changed my dad's life, and delivered him from evil. He changed my friend's life. If you open your heart to Him, He will change you too. Because He came into the world and lived with us to deliver all the nations and peoples. He paid the penalty for our sins on the cross. In order to make peace between us and God, He faced the pain. We all need to come to Him, and confess our sins to Him. He says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

Testimony

Testimony

By Anonymous

It am staying in india in bangalore. Actually I was from a hindu family.I have two close friends who are christians. In the year 1991 I joined in a college along with these two friends. They both use to tell me about Jesus Christ but I use to oppose them and avoid them.

One day I was sitting in a library hall which has only spiritual books and magazines and I was in a sad mood because I have failed in one subject in my first year semester. I read a magazine which Jesus has done miracle to a person that day was the day god touched me. I slowly started believing Jesus Christ after that I faced many sorrows and at last I came to Jesus Christ and today I have surrendered myself to God.

Oded's Testimony

Oded's Testimony

By Oded Cohen

I was born and raised in Israel at Kibbutz Revivim, a very non-religious kibbutz. Living in a state where there is a constant power struggle among the Orthodox Jews, other religious groups, and the secular Jews, we developed a very anti-religious attitude of rebelliousness and disrespect to those who believed in God and in the concept of God as Creator and supreme power whom people worship.

I remember as a teenager, we had a tradition every Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement and of fasting, the holiest day in the Jewish religious tradition (or at least it's supposed to be). Not only did we never fast, we looked down on those who attempted to. We even made it a point to have a huge barbecue that smelled up the whole kibbutz, and whenever we were able to get a hold of a pig, that was a double accomplishment.

As time went on, I came to America and married a Chinese woman. My wife appreciated the richness of my culture so much that she started reading the Old Testament and considered converting to Judaism. That was quite an inspiration for me; I even started reading the Bible a little. However, somebody managed to give her the "other part" of the Bible—the New Testament. Soon after, to my dismay, she became a Christian.

My reaction was, "Oh boy, what am I going to do now?" The whole idea of Jesus was very foreign to me and had a negative stigma because of things that were done in the name of Christianity. Also, I had a lot of misconceptions about Jesus. Any attempt made by my wife to talk with me and to shed some light about Jesus and Christianity in general met with strong opposition and resistance. I was completely close-minded to the idea that it may have had any relevancy to my life as a Jew, especially the "ridiculous" idea of sin. "I'm a good man, never harmed anybody, nor did I steal anything from anybody! I'm not a sinner." Besides, I thought, that's what Yom Kippur is for, for those with a guilty conscience.

My wife realized my resistance was too strong for her to take on by herself, as I have a tendency to enjoy arguing, and I started asking her challenging questions. So she flagged down one of the Jews for Jesus on Market Street in San Francisco and told him that we needed help. Jews for Jesus—another funny idea; I was wondering who made that up! Either you are Jewish or you are Christian. It sounded a little schizophrenic to me.

But since it was so important to my wife, I was willing to allow them to talk to me. After the first meeting with David Mishkin, who headed the San Francisco office of Jews for Jesus, I told my wife, "If they want to come to socialize or talk about politics or anything else, they are welcome, but if they come to 'sell' me Jesus to earn brownie points in heaven, they may as well save themselves the trouble." But since it was important for my wife that I would at least hear what they have to say,

I gave in and let them come. In a few meetings, they actually managed to pique my curiosity. At the same time, I also noticed some changes in my wife since she became even more sweet. With the help and guidance of Jews for Jesus, I started to explore the possibility that maybe there was something to what they were saying.

Then Garrett Smith, another Jewish believer on the Jews for Jesus staff, began visiting us. First I had to be shown where in "our Bible" it referred to Jesus, and I was very surprised to see so many references, along with all the Old Testament prophecies, and the way Jesus fulfilled them one by one. The more I read, the more I understood that it is okay for a Jewish person to believe in Jesus, and that Jews for Jesus is not some wacky an idea after all. But this was on the mental level only (from the upper neck up). I still could not really believe in my heart, no matter how much sense it made in my head. So I started experimenting by challenging God and asking for signs to prove that He is who they said He is. And that is when some pretty amazing things happened.

To mention a few: we had a pet bunny at home who was paralyzed in her two back legs. I was sitting with her in the room petting her. Then I laid my hand on her head and closed my eyes and said, "Jesus, if you are who they say you are, let's see you heal her." And before I opened my eyes, she hopped on all four legs and circled the room. I was shocked and amazed, but that wasn't enough yet to make me really believe.

There was some pain in my hip that I had carried with me for the last two or three years. While driving one day to work, I challenged God again saying, "Let's see you take care of that!" Then I forgot all about it. After about a week, I suddenly realized that I didn't remember when the last time was that I felt that pain. It just disappeared and never came back. Again I was amazed—what an instant response! But did I become a believer? Not yet.

I also had quite a few dreams. In one, I clearly saw Christianity like a branch growing out of a tree—Judaism. In other words, Christianity is a continuity of Judaism, rather than being in opposition.

One day, after my wife had been out with a friend distributing pamphlets about Jesus, I told her that she was being phony, that she didn't really love those people because she wasn't ever going to see them again. She told me that she was trying to love them because Jesus loved them, and that she was commanded to share the hope that is in him with others, to try to save them from eternal damnation. I rejected the whole idea that God would judge and condemn people.

That night I had a dream of my favorite radio talk show host, whom I greatly respect, and who was somewhat of an authority figure to me. He told me to read the story of Lot's wife in the Bible. When I woke up, I had no idea what that meant. But after I read the Bible story, it made perfect sense—it was about unbelief and Judgment Day. My wife was thrilled. She said that it wasn't a radio talk show host speaking to me in my dream—it was God speaking to me!

During this time, we attended several events, and the leaders of these events were not only men I greatly respected, they were also Jewish believers in Jesus as the Messiah.

The straw that broke the camel's back was when I came home from work one evening, and I felt sick as a dog, shivering, cold, lifeless, weak, and miserable. I knew I would be in bed at least a few days. It was at that point that all the walls inside fell. I lay on my back, my arms spread to the side,

and for the first time, rather than challenging God, I simply prayed and said, "Jesus, I open up my heart to you; please enter my heart. Please help me." That's as far as I can remember. I fell asleep and woke up the next morning like a new man. At that point, I could not deny Him anymore, and my life has never been the same since. Things kept on happening, and still are happening on a daily basis—things that only acts of God can explain. I felt like all the pieces of the puzzle in my daily life were falling into place with such ease and peace that was simply amazing.

To top all that, a short time after I became a believer, I had still another dream. I dreamed that I drove a borrowed car down a very steep hill in San Francisco. Suddenly the front windshield covered with fog except for a narrow strip along the top. Not being able to see a thing, I panicked a little and tried to stop the car. But both my legs were paralyzed and frozen in place. I tried to reach for the hand brake, but both my hands were tied down at the side. The car was rolling faster now, and I was in a total panic. Then suddenly a huge voice like from an infinite source, a voice that filled the whole universe, said, "I Am." Not understanding this, I simply asked, "What?" as I tried to look through the narrow strip on top to see who was speaking to me. The voice spoke again, saying, "Shepherd." Then I understood that this Shepherd is Jesus.

When I woke up, I asked my wife what "I Am" means. She showed me in the Bible that it is one of the names of Jesus—God Himself. I concluded that God wants us to put all our worries, burdens, and fears on Him, and He is in control of the steering and brakes of our life, if only we trust in Him.

In conclusion, I can say that since I've accepted Jesus as my Messiah and Savior, not only have I not lost my Jewishness—instead, it has been the other way around. I feel more Jewish than ever. The stories I grew up with that used to be mere fairy tales or folk stories at best, along with the traditional ceremonies and holidays, all became much more meaningful and real to me. Most importantly, the God we knew of but never knew personally, became a living God in my life. He is an awesome God whose love for us is so great and whose desire for a relationship with us so strong, that He sent His only Son Jesus to show us the way and to die for us to be the ultimate atonement for our sins so we can come clean before the glory of God. As it says in the New Testament, in a passage known as John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

A Jewish Believer and Atonement

A Jewish Believer and Atonement

By Dr. Louis Goldberg

I still remember vividly the Day of Atonement from my tenth year. Though I was not yet bar mitzvah, I insisted that I, too, would fast and take part in the synagogue services, despite my parents' objections. After all, I wanted my sins forgiven!

With childish zeal, I entered into all that made up the service of the day. I listened attentively to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, recited as I was able the ancient Hebrew prayers and was stirred to my depths by the cadence of the cantor's voice as he chanted the psalms. With my whole heart I sought the forgiveness of sins that I believed was to be gained by the observances of the day. A sense of God's approval of me, if it were to be gained by sincerity, was certainly assured.

But even as I returned home that night, walking with my father through the darkened streets, haunting questions remained: Has God really heard my prayers? What real assurance do I have that my sins have been forgiven? In the years to come, God would lead me to an answer to these questions, for I longed for peace of mind and the truth that would quiet these intruding thoughts.

The answers I received from my Jewish teachers from time to time in response to my questions proved not to be sufficient, for they did not assuage my doubts. Eventually, as I entered my teenage and young adult years, I stopped asking the questions that seemed to have no answers. I pursued studies in science, engineering and philosophy and participated in life's pleasures. My religious training kept me away from falling into the grosser sins, but I ended up as an agnostic since the various philosophers did not provide me with meaningful answers.

Yet, with all the searching, I still considered myself a Jew. Below the surface, ready to be aroused when the time of challenge would come, were the unanswered questions: Who am I? Can I know God? What follows death? Can I have the positive assurance that my sins are forgiven?

I completed my education in engineering, took a job and found myself working with a technical assistant who was an impassioned and vocal believer in Jesus. He lost no time in sharing his faith. I, in return, wasting no words, told him that such belief disgusted me. I was offended by his intrusion on my belief, acquired in earlier training, that Jesus was an imposter according to traditional Judaism. I suggested in no uncertain terms that religion was a taboo subject between us.

However, it proved impossible for me to avoid the daily encounter with the testimony of my technician, his radiant manner and the force of his convictions. He challenged me one day to give the Scriptures, including the writings called the New Testament, an honest reading. To a challenge like that I felt that my only real defense would come through a Jewish understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. Certainly that was the only background against which I could give a hearing to the New Testament and to this man Jesus whom I felt to be an imposter. I was piqued by my helper's

insistence that he "knew" that he had atonement for his sins, for it caused the old haunting question to return to me: How could I know that I had forgiveness of my sins? I really couldn't deny that if God were a reality, then sin also was a reality between God and myself.

As I began to read the Hebrew Scriptures, I discovered something that struck me forcefully concerning my ancestors. I found that they had an intimate and personal relationship with God. Abraham and Moses spoke with God; Jacob wrestled with him; David wrote of an assurance of his presence; Solomon sought and gained wisdom from him; Elijah heard him speak, even calling for signs and miracles. They saw the Almighty active in their lives--so why not I? Where was God in my life? Yet, Judaism places God so far away from the individual that one despairs as to where to find him. This was an area that had to be disentangled in my mind--what were the Holy Scriptures saying, and what were the rabbis' interpretive additions of tradition?

It was a source of distress and frustration that my gentile friend, believing in Jesus, spoke as familiarly of God as had these people about whom I was reading. The old questions about God, forgiveness of sin and my relationship to the God of my fathers were raised again, this time not in a child who could set the problem aside, expecting an answer to be found later, but in me as an adult. I knew that this time I had to resolve my religious questions; more than that, I had to assert my integrity as a responsible being, able to study, able to reason, able to ask--able to choose.

Out of the religious lessons harking back to my childhood, I recalled the place to begin. A holy God could not countenance sin. I restudied the Scriptures dealing with atonement. In Vayikra (Leviticus) chapter 16, the Yom Kippur observance is described. The requirements of the holiest day in the Jewish calendar are set forth in detail by Moses. Briefly, the high priest first made an atonement for himself and his family through the sin offering sacrifice. Then the atonement for the sins of the people was made. For this, two goats were chosen and the high priest cast lots upon them, one for the Lord and the other for Azazel (scapegoat).

The priests slaughtered the goat chosen as the Lord's and sprinkled its blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies and also in front of the mercy seat. The main emphasis as to this goat was that inasmuch as it was representative of the people before the Lord, it bore the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement. When the high priest killed the goat, our people vividly saw that the penalty of sin is death. God, however, in loving kindness, provided a substitute who died in place of our people.

This was only half of the lesson, however. There was also the tremendous offer by the mercy of God that in the death of the Lord's goat, it gave its life to our people as a whole. This was then an "exchange of life," the very heart of atonement. The picture is vivid in that the sinful lives of our people had been placed on the goat, and this caused the death of the goat. But in the death of this goat, the life of the animal was given to the people. God then saw Israel as cleansed from sin and as having a new life.

The sacrifice was also intended to be made personal. As individuals personalized the "exchange of life" for themselves, their personal sins were forgiven.

The other aspect of the Day of Atonement sacrifice served to bring into sharper focus the personal forgiveness of sin. The high priest laid his hands upon the second goat, symbolically transferring to it the sins of the people. Then the goat was driven into the wilderness, thus making clear God's

intent to remember no more the sins against his people. This illustrated that renewal, a new beginning, was possible and that the past did not cling to the community or individual forever. Those who grasped this for themselves were assured of forgiveness of sins and were brought into a personal relationship with God.

As I read and pondered God's instructions to Moses concerning atonement, I realized that I was face to face with the answer to the question I had asked myself as a boy. The barrier between myself and God was my sin, and only God could take away that sin--this I knew.

I knew what most Jewish people would say to this presentation by Moses. Some would reply, "We don't follow this procedure anymore because we no longer have a temple and besides, we need to be concerned with ethics and what is right, not with these ancient rituals." Many of our people would add that the rabbis have developed the ways and means by which we are to approach God in the time of Yom Kippur.

But here is where I had a major problem. When did God change the concept in Leviticus of the "exchange of life"? Did God ever say that this was to be turned into an atonement of repentance, prayers and good deeds only? Certainly this is never seen in the Written Law (the Hebrew Scriptures).

It is in the Oral Law, the Jewish traditions, where our rabbis accommodated a templeless Judaism (70-90 C.E.). The explanation given is that through the repentance of our sins, a life of prayer and doing mitzvah (good deeds), we hope to have the atonement for our sins. I know that the rabbis use halachah (development of new laws) to reinterpret the Written Law so as to make it livable from generation to generation. But did God ever sanction these decisions concerning the basic doctrine of atonement or give his stamp of approval on the change from the biblical principle of the "exchange of life"?

When my technician friend shared with me his faith in Y'shua (Jesus), he described the concept of a suffering, dying and resurrected Messiah. Obviously, this did not square with what I was taught as a boy. However, after studying closely Moses' description of atonement and checking closely Y'shua's claims of being the promised Messiah, I could see a relationship between what Moses was picturing and the ministry of Y'shua. The New Testament teaches that there was one called Y'shua who became the Lord's sacrifice and who alone can take our sins from us. In other words, he came to do exactly what is described in the Yom Kippur services in Leviticus.

Many Jewish people shy away from the name of Y'shua and claim that he started another religion for the gentiles. But listen to what Y'shua himself taught as he lived as a Jew among his generation of Jewish people: "I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

He also declared, "'Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:26-27).

In his struggle with the symbolic cup of our sin before he died, he groaned in his prayer, "'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done'. . . . And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground"

(Luke 22:42, 44).

When it comes to Paul, too many of my people want to shun him, claiming that he not only Hellenized Jewish beliefs but even took pagan beliefs and started a new religion as well. But notice how Paul's explanation of atonement is based squarely on what our teacher Moses had already taught. He saw the connection between why Y'shua died and the death of the animal substitute in the Day of Atonement picture.

"God made him [Y'shua as the Lord's sacrifice] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The basic question that confronted me when I examined the New Testament and the history of our people in the first century was whether Paul and thousands of other Jewish people in that day changed the concept of the "exchange of life" in the Hebrew Scriptures. Did the Jewish writers of the New Testament do this? No, they did not! Rather, they continued on with just what the Hebrew Scriptures had precisely laid out. The only difference was that instead of a goat sacrifice and a scapegoat, it was the Messiah himself who (1) died as the substitute by taking our sins upon himself, (2) in his death gives us a new life if we will receive it and (3) takes away our sins from us so that we never have to be charged with them again.

This is an atonement by which we know that our sins have been forgiven. It is a redemption by which we have the assurance that our names are recorded in the Book of Life, not for just one more year, but for all eternity. My study led me to these conclusions. The forgiveness of sins that I had begun to seek as a child was accomplished through Y'shua.

I found that in receiving this "exchange of life," I now have the Shechinah, or Holy Spirit, living in me and enabling me with a dynamic to live to the moral code. In walking with the Lord for many years, I have come to appreciate all the more this dynamic that makes life a triumphant experience. It is not God's will that life be nothing more than a legalistic drudgery. Neither does he expect us to search for some mystical experience that only continues to raise the haunting and vexing question of whether a relationship with God is truly possible.

People who are lonely, despondent, with no hope and feeling guilty will never find meaning in this world apart from a living personalized relationship with God who is, in fact, personal. In realizing atonement for sin we can experience what is not possible in this world's philosophies. We can also have a hope that someday we will be with God when we leave this life. God intended for us to have this experience, and it is ours merely for the asking.

FROM LIFE HERE TO LIFE ETERNAL!

FROM LIFE HERE TO LIFE ETERNAL!

By Vijay Anands

I am from Madras, a fairly large city in southern India. My parents are Hindus by practice and faith. I came to Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio to pursue my M.S. degree the spring of 92.

I was acquainted with Christianity through my fiancée Ammu, a Christian, in India, but as a Hindu, I could accept Christ as one of the many gods. After coming to Cleveland and being away from my family, I missed the 'religious experience' of going to a temple and worshipping idols. So, that summer, I started attending various churches in the area where I lived in Cleveland.

The Lord brought me to Cedar Hill Baptist church where I noticed a genuine friendship and hospitality and love that I had not felt in any church or religious place that I had attended before in my life. I started attending Cedar Hill regularly, and I was introduced to Dave Ferguson a Campus Bible Fellowship staff worker. We developed a friendship, and I shared with him that I wanted to learn more about Christianity because of my fiancée. He encouraged me to attend CBF meetings on campus every Friday and I slowly learned many concepts from the Bible. My idea until that point was that to become a Christian, one had to read the Bible, write some exam, and once you pass the exam, they give you a certificate and you become a Christian. All of that changed with my Bible studies at CBF and the worship services at church. I gained a lot of knowledge about the Bible, saw genuine love among the students at CBF, and developed great friendships.

One morning in the fall of 1992, I was walking home from classes and listened to a Christian radio program on my Walkman. The message caused me to realize for the first time that I had committed acts of sin every day. I went to my apartment very distressed because of my sinfulness. I called Dave, asked him to pray for me, and we met the next day and discussed the new realization that I was a sinner. Dave showed me from the Bible that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of the Lord" and "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." That night I was not ready to accept Jesus as my Savior, and he did not push me. I went home and spent the next week thinking about all that I had learned in the past few months from the Bible. I came to believe that the Bible is truly God's revelation to mankind, and the words of the Bible challenged my intellect and stirred my soul. That weekend by a series of events I came to realize that relationships on earth are only temporal, and the Bible promises an eternal relationship with Jesus Christ. On September 20, 1992, which happened to be a Sunday, I came to realize that I was a sinner whose actions deserve death and that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. I had been reading the Bible almost all night. At noon I walked over to church and met with some friends. It was there that I confessed my sins and asked Jesus to be my Savior.

Out of the New Age and to Jesus

Out of the New Age and to Jesus

By Tamara Roberson

I want to share an abbreviated testimony for what it is worth. Probably, people who are still out there involved in the "new age" movement will not be poking around these kinds of sites, but then again, you never can tell what the Lord will do!

I was raised a Christian in a mainstream Protestant denomination. I will not mention it, because I do not want to cast any aspersions on that denomination, but I never really found a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ in that church -- so maybe it was just me. But the Lord had a great and tortuous and rewarding journey planned for me.

I was saved, in heart and spirit, one night alone in my bedroom, when I was about 15. But it was like the seed cast upon rocky soil-- without nurturing, I immediately fell away. I went into drug experimentation, bad lifestyle, abuse of alcohol, and eventually at age 30, entered AA under the influence-- divine influence, I believe! God used that program as a last call for me to either get straight, or get taken home. By the grace of God, I am sober today, twelve years later, but through the program I got introduced to the New Age movement in a tremendous way-- sort of Satan's last big fling at my soul. Psychobabble, mumbo-jumbo, Science of Mind, Emmett Fox, Christian Science, energized crystals, spirit writing, channeling spirits (i.e., demons), opening chakras, attending Buddhist services, Bahai Faith— there was not much I did not try in my search for the "Truth".

The last big belief system in which I became ensnared was A Course in Miracles, which could aptly be renamed, Lost Souls 101. I studied it intensely for four years. All the while, God was drawing me closer and closer to Jesus. See, deep down, I thought I was not good enough for

Jesus, that I had done too many bad things for Him to ever love me -- how could He? That is exactly where Satan wanted to keep me, uninformed, and in doubt. But things started happening in my life -- God led me to my husband in 1987-- we felt we had been put together by God, but we were both out of fellowship.

One night, once again, in my bed, as I was reading the "Course." I felt I was getting the very strong message from my reading that I should kill myself in order to be one with the "Jesus." Something inside me cried out against that self-destructive message -- I know now it was the Holy Spirit fighting for my life. That night, I suddenly realized I ought to go in search of the belief of my parents, back to my Christian roots. Maybe there was something to it! Maybe I had just not quite gotten it right...

I began to pray for God to lead me-- and lead me he did, right to a word-teaching, fundamental, bible-believing church, which I promptly embraced. I began actually READING my bible, almost every day -- I won't claim I did it right all the time. But God used the Word to draw me, and, after

reading Romans, I became convicted to rededicate my life to Jesus, to Whom it had really belonged all along. And I went to our pastor, and asked to be baptized to show what the Lord was doing in my life. Praise the Lord -- that was nearly five years ago, and He has not stopped working in my life since. I even had the chance to teach English in a Christian school-- me, a worthless sinner, whom the Lord loves anyway! He continues to bless and reward us, and we have seen our five sons come to the Lord in faith, and are watching them attempt to continue in His ways -- some times are more rocky than others, but we have the gift of His faith that He is faithful to finish when He has begun a work in someone's life, and we are secure in the knowledge that He is always in control.

And I thank Him it is not me, because just look what I was able to accomplish without Him! All glory be to God!

Sincerely, Tamara Roberson

Monica's Testimony

Monica's Testimony

By Monica

My mother brought me to church when I was 6 weeks old and I have never been "out of church". My grandfather was an Independent Baptist preacher but died 3 years before I was born and my mother raised me Independent Baptist. Even though I never met my grandfather, I have always felt some sort of closeness to him I guess because of him being a preacher.

My father is unsaved and I pray daily for his salvation. He thought he was saved when he was a child because several of his friends went up to the front when there was an altar call and he went too and professed to be saved, but wasn't really. Years later, he realized he was not saved and now believes God will not save him.

When I was around 11 years old, I was constantly searching for how to be saved. I had always asked my mother "How do you know when you are saved?" And she said "you will feel it in your heart." I took this literally and one Sunday afternoon, I had chest pain and asked her if I was saved because I felt something in my heart. Of course this wasn't the case. I searched the Bible and a book my late grandfather (the one that was the Baptist preacher) had given my mother called "Here's Your Answer". It had many questions that people ask about the Bible. I had still never found the answer I was looking for on how exactly to be saved, I guess because it was so very simple.

When I was 13, on a Saturday afternoon, around 2 p.m. on December 13, 1986, a preacher at a church I didn't go to, but had went to Bible school there since I was little, came to my house and asked me if I wanted to be saved. I am sure he knew I wasn't saved because at Bible school every year when they would have the altar call, they would ask the ones saved to raise their hands and the ones that didn't know or that were not saved to raise their hands. I wouldn't raise my hand either time. I was really embarrassed and didn't want to raise my hand either way for fear that everyone would know and I didn't want to have to go up in front of all those kids.

Anyway, on the day the preacher came to my house, I said yes I wanted to be saved and that I believed that he died on a cross for my sins and was resurrected and I prayed and asked Jesus into my heart and to forgive me of my sins. The next Sunday I was baptized at the church we regularly attended. About a year or so later we moved our membership to the church where the pastor had came to my house to tell me how to be saved.

I have always went to church, but I knew that going to church since I was a baby wasn't going to get me into heaven. I had a very strict father growing up and he had a really bad temper. Before I was saved I hated him and wished that he and my mother would get divorced. I knew that he wasn't saved and that he would go to hell when he died. In a way it made me glad. When I became saved, my heart was changed and I no longer hated him.

We are really close now, but he will not listen to me or my mother concerning the gospel. He says I am brain-washed. I have a left-behind letter and several Bibles for him during the Tribulation. I pray that he will be saved before that happens, but since I do not know when the Rapture will take place, if he is left here during the Tribulation, maybe he will read the information I have left for him and be saved. For now I can only pray for his salvation. Family members are sometimes the hardest people to reach for Christ.

I have a real enthusiasm for Bible prophecy. My favorite book of the Bible has always been Revelations. I read it even before becoming saved. Now I have learned more about prophecy concerning the end times and enjoy Isaiah and Daniel as well. In March 2001 I started reading the Old Testament from beginning and hope to finish the end pretty soon. I never really understood the Old Testament and thought that all there was in it was "begats", but since I have found so many different end times prophecies in it I had to read it from beginning to end.

I strive to get closer each day to the Lord and to walk with him. Reading the Bible at least twice each day and having a continual daily prayer time has tremendously helped. I also listen to Southern Gospel and some Contemporary Christian music. I am not real good at witnessing to people, usually what I say comes out the wrong way. I hope to get better at it.

I know that my story isn't very exciting because I was saved at home on my living room floor, but there is a time that I know that I accepted Jesus as my Savior and if you haven't done the same, you really do need to TODAY! The Bible says "Boast not thy self of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." There is a real possibility that by the end of today your body could be laid out for viewing in the local funeral home. Then it would be too late for you to be saved.

Please accept Jesus Christ as your Savior today.

Revelations 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Trudy's Testimony

Trudy's Testimony

By Trudy

God knows my heart, I have a good heart, cause I really have a lot of love to give. Maybe it's true. Maybe God is shaking the heavens and the earth right now. To call up the last of his children that will awaken to the last chance warnings as his signs for his return unfold right under our very nose. And those who will humble themselves before him like a child, (especially during this time of world-wide chaos), and seek him with all their hearts, then they too will be written in the book of life, and invited to the marriage of the lamb. Those who are anticipating the rapture are hearing the word of GOD. Matthew 24:40,41 Revelation 3:3 Jesus was the first to defeat death and the first to descend into heaven, those who are born again have also defeated death and in Christ will be next to descend into heaven.

Here is my testimony. On this one night about a year ago I will never forget, (thank you God), that I did something very unlike me. I had just gotten home from work, and my roommate was out for the rest of the evening. After I had settled in for the night I went out to the porch to have a cigarette. I had the music on the radio station for dance-mix.

I don't know if anyone can relate to a time in your life where everything that you once loved to do becomes dull and boring. Well that's where I was in my life, just blah and disappointed. I tried to escape by dancing alone in my living room, but as I can remember at this time of the evening I had a miserable headache. Something came over me like an impending doom.

I don't really remember exactly what thought it was that made me do the unthinkable, but thank you Jesus, cause I got down on my knees and prayed. I did not know why I was doing it at the time, but something was just consuming me. I felt that God was really listening to me, but that I also didn't really know him at all. (ok like in previous so-called prayer I sounded like this "please god if you can make this one time happen for me than I will never ask you for any thing else") and of course I was a non believer asking for something selfish and I was lying on my back in bed feeling sorry for myself. I was that type of "non believer" who would say to anyone trying to tell me about Jesus, "did they get his vital signs when they took him down off the cross?" "No, not back then, so how do people know for sure that he was really dead?" (I love you Jesus). This time though it was different.

I didn't know how to pray or what to ask for, I just gave up or gave in, and asked God to help me and to help me with my headaches, and that I promised to quit smoking and I would also cut back on the coffee or vice-versa, but just really that I needed his help cause I was lost. And well what do know? Did you know that God has a son? I had forgotten about Jesus at this point in life, after all "Jesus" was just another word to use when you were mad.. Do you know what? God did hear me.

For about a month later I was still not born again until he lead me to his son. I found the movie "Jesus", it was still in its wrapping, under my brothers TV stand. My brother said to me, with little enthusiasm, that his girlfriend had received it a long time ago in the mail. That one small free gift saved my life for eternity. When I said that prayer to myself at the end of the movie, and asked Jesus to come into my heart. I felt as though I was completely transformed....and the feeling of Love was just overflowing in my heart so deeply that it felt as though I could have lifted up out of my seat and floated away.

I had goose bumps, but not from being cold, cause a warm blanket fell over me with a forgiving comfort and the tears just came down like never before. My chest felt like a big ball of warm fuzzy butterflies that moved throughout my body all the way down to my feet. For I had just been born again, only to learn later on that that is what had happened to me. I never once heard of such a thing before.

The Holy spirit lives in me and in many others as well. Without him we are dead, for he shows us things unimaginable to anyone who does not see him or know him. He and he alone is way to the light. His word remains still in our hearts until the end, cause until then, these things are unfinished. Those who are born again know they are born again.

It is the most simplest of things to do to gain everything for free, and yet it is still to this day, the one thing that is so hard to tell someone. Repent!

So why is it you can't just simply tell someone the way to eternity, for they too will see what you are saying. Why cant you just simply tell someone that all you need is Jesus Christ. That the money, fame, popularity, good looks, its all lies of Satan, trying to keep you from the truth. Jesus is what is missing. Those who have him, have all they need. So why is it so misunderstood and so hard to get through to those who are not saved. and isn't trying to save someone a good thing? Perhaps that too is part of Gods mystery and perhaps we may find out very soon.....may God be with you all and I'll see you at supper time!

His God Didn't Answer

His God Didn't Answer

By Alikhan

For many weeks, Alikhan would rise up early to worship one of his gods, this time the sun god. At the break of dawn he would lift his hands towards the rising sun, he uttered a ritual prayer and add a desperate plea for healing from his mysterious illness. But no matter how carefully he followed his parent's advice to cry out to the sun for this help, there was no answer and his condition progressively worsened. When he was finally admitted to hospital, the doctors diagnosed his illness as the initial stage of leprosy. Alikhan was heartbroken discouraged and frightened. Someone had placed a few Christian tracts and magazines in rooms at the hospital, and lying in his bed one day Alikhan picked up one of these and started to read. As he browsed through this magazine, the testimonies of people who had been healed by our living Jesus from impossible and dreaded diseases caught his attention.

In Alikhan's own words: " God's mighty deliverance filled me with new hope, and in faith I asked the Lord to touch me with His healing hands. It was amazing for me to discover that I had been completely cured. God almighty had restored me back to my old self, I was so grateful and got on to the floor and prayed and accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour.

Though Alikhan's parents were glad to see their son's health restored, they did not encourage his new found faith in Jesus Christ. " But my experience with the loving Saviour, he recalls, God strengthened me to overcome every adversity and cling to His love." The young man soon joined a church and started to spread the message. The Lord gave Alikhan a heart to win souls and today he is following God's call to share the Good News with those who have never before heard it.

In the Valley of Tears

In the Valley of Tears

By Ibrahim

I am Ibrahim who, for the sake of my family's security, go also by the nickname Timothy Abraham. I am a simple Egyptian from the Delta region. Farms surrounded me from every side with streams of the luxurious Nile River endowing life with fertility. I had a strong Islamic upbringing in my childhood, studying in the village shop for teaching the Quran (al-Kutaab). They taught me to fear God (Allah in Arabic) who created the Heaven and the earth in six days. There was not a single reason to doubt a religion which emphasized fearing God, doing good work and living a moral life. The recitation of the Quran was meant to produce a sense of tranquillity. I enjoyed the Sufi circle of worship, as they adored the person of Muhammad. This was Abu-al-Azayem's group. I was searching for more closeness with Allah Almighty.

One evening around 7:00 p.m. in al-Mahatta mosque, having finished praying al-Maghrib prayer, I was introduced to Muhammad Imam and Sulleiman Kahwash. They were vitally influential in incorporating me into their group "The Muslim Brotherhood -- i.e., al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin." They encouraged me to be a devout Muslim and fast on Monday and Thursday of every week and break the fast with them in the mosque where we ate bread, cheese, palm dates (tamr), and delicious salad. I diligently imitated every thing the Prophet Muhammad did, even the sitting posture of the Prophet as he was eating. They were so kind to me. They also saw in me the potential of being an eloquent speaker. Therefore, Sulleiman Hashem, the leader at the time, approached me gently, "Ibrahim, you are called by the Quran's teaching to proclaim the message of Islam "da'awah." "My Allah!" I pondered. "I am just 14 years old and I am easily intimidated." Nevertheless, Sulleiman gave me a stack of books to study in preparation for the sermon I was to deliver the next day. From then on, it became customary for me to preach a sermon on the first Monday of every lunar month. I was filled with zeal as my leaders had arranged for me to go across the neighboring towns, preaching from mosque to mosque. I zealously wanted everyone to follow the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, and subsequently, my sister had no choice but to obey my Quranic command and wear the veil which indicated modesty. I needed my father's approval. I wondered if he had ever heard his son, the 14 year old Muslim evangelist preach. To my astonishment my father was sharply criticized by people for having a son who was now a "fanatic." The Islamic Brotherhood was regarded as a religious gang by the majority of regular Muslims. My father, therefore, became wrathful over my Islamic radicalism and thoughtlessly punched me in the teeth. Today my front tooth is a fake one. It reminds me of my former perseverance to the point of death to be a zealous Muslim fundamentalist and my willingness to be persecuted for my commitment. My father burnt my Sunni (mostly wahabi and salafi) Islamic library. He knew quite well that Mohammad Mansour, a security police informer, was recording my sermons from the bathroom in the mosque. I was so strict in the fashion of the sunnah of Muhammad that I did not shake hands with women. I simply wanted to be a devout Muslim. Having finished their prayers in the mosque,

my father stopped one of the leaders in my group, Sulleiman Hashem and asked him pleadingly to leave me, his son, alone. When my father swore an oath of divorce(hilif alaya bi al-talaaq) that I will not be permitted to enter the mosque where the Islamic Brotherhood is praying, I obeyed my father, but asked for mercy in letting me hear their sermons while sitting outside the mosque.

I was never daunted by any of this and continued to preach Islam everyday in the morning parade (taboor as-sabah) as well as in every mosque where I went to teach. It never occurred to me for a second that Islam could be wrong. In my pursuit to propagate Islam everywhere, a magazine came into my hands which had pen pal addresses from the United States. I chose one at random and wrote, hoping to convert the man into Islam. I wrote to John from Pennsylvania, USA back and forth for two years, each trying to convert the other. I read every book I could get hold of to refute the Bible. To make things worse, I had no respect for the Bible as I put my feet and shoes on it since the Quran taught me it was corrupt.

Then John surprised me by coming to visit me in my village. That was the first time I saw a real Christian. His sincerity, frankness, genuineness, and openness impressed me. John stayed with me for two months. He had an amazing prayer life which served as a model for me in my latter life. I did not know that Christians prayed until I saw a "living epistle" right in the middle of my house, a man from a far off land who became one of us and genuinely incarnated the love of Christ. John had an amazing prayer life, for he prayed more than he talked, speaking the words of the Bible. I became jealous of John's intimacy with God and increased my recitations of the Quran.

Islam is a religion that has to be credited for teaching its followers to be virtuous, chaste, and benevolent. There is no doubt that Muhammad remains a genius in history. One has to also note that a Muslim may do as many good works as possible in this world and on the Day of Judgment God weighs the deeds of every individual in a "balance." The good deeds will be placed in one pan of the balance, and the evil deeds in the other. If the good deeds are heavier, then the believer will go to the paradise described in Quran as a place of sexual pleasure and frolicking with the wide-eyed huris (sura al-Waqia 56:20-23). However, Christ our Lord said "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). My Muslim friend, according to Islam, if your evil deeds are heavier, you will be cast into the fires of hell. It looks like you would need to be only fifty-one percent good to get into paradise. Yet you remain absolutely unsure whether or not you are going to heaven. All you say, my Muslim friend, is, "Only God Knows!" You hope for the mercy of Allah and hope that the angels or the Prophet will intercede for you in the last day, so you will be saved from Hell.

I was like you, my Muslim sister or brother, right in the same boat until I knew that you can be absolutely sure of going to Heaven. Tears well up in my eyes just to recall how lost I was and now that I am found. While trembling in tears, seeing the majesty of God, I rejoice to know that I have eternal life for certain.

God in the Bible is both just and merciful. His justice requires that everyone be punished in Hell, for He is perfect 100 percent. No matter how hard we try to please God, we always fall short of His perfection. Our good works will not bring us closer to God. God saw our insufficiency, and decided to pay the penalty Himself. He sent His Word Isa Al Masih (Jesus Christ), who is absolutely sinless and faultless to carry the punishment of our sins on the cross. What can you say to the Judge when He chooses to pay your penalty for you? The Bible says in John 3:16 "For God so loved the

world that he gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." It is because God loves us that He sent His Word, Jesus Christ, to die for us. Islam never grants us the assurance of going to Heaven, but Christ absolutely does! Praise God! Thank you, my Lord, for sovereignly choosing to pay the price Yourself in the Person of Your incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the express revelation of the nature of Allah Almighty.

After John left, his influence stayed. I thought I would depress John by saying, "John, your visit made me a stronger Muslim in the faith and do not try to convert Muslims anymore." Yet John prevailed in his supplication and prayers. His intercessory prayer moved the LORD to wake me up in the middle of the night as I had no sleep or rest. Inner conflict reached its zenith. Restless, I reached out to my Bible and opened it at random. I found, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" I remember one day in the heat of a debate between me and John, I made fun of the Bible and said, "John, your Bible is the most absurd thing! How can you believe the story of Saul who became Paul, the servant of the Gospel?" John said, "The story is true, and that is why I am patient with you. You will be another Paul one day!" I replied, "John, you must be out of your mind to think for a second that I could leave the religion of all religions, Islam!" Reflecting on "Saul, Saul ..." I said Lord! Me? Me persecute You? I did nothing to You in person ... I remember I turned in a female medical student to the police ... but I did nothing to You. Is it true that He who touched one of Your people touches the apple of Your eye?"

Islam denies the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ because the Quran intended to deprive the Jew of the victory they claimed was their in Jesus' death. The Quran asserts that God put somebody who looked like Him on the cross in the place of Jesus. Now my Muslim friends, God is not in the business of fraud, for if he had wanted to deliver Jesus from the cross, He could have done it miraculously without having to deceive and put Jesus' likeness on someone else. This Quranic error is too blatant, and proves that the Quran has no divine origin. What is more, the Quran is self-contradicting, for while it claims that the Jews did not really kill Jesus it also affirms very distinctly the reality of Jesus' death in the sura of the family of Imran (3):55 as it states in the first part of that verse:

When God said:"OH JESUS, I SHALL CAUSE YOU TO DIE,AND THEN I SHALL RAISE YOU UP TO ME."My Muslim friend, my goal is not here to proselytize you, but to raise the ultimate questions, Who is Christ? Was he crucified? And how does this affect you? If the whole history of humanity revolves around Christ, then my entire life and existence should revolve around Him too. Denying the cross of Christ is contradicting history itself. Muhammad himself is claimed in the Quran to have been urged, by God, to refer to the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) is he in doubt concerning the Quran?:

"And if thou (Muhammad) art in doubt concerning that which we reveal unto thee, then ask those who read the Scripture (that was) before thee." Sura Yunus 10:95For the first time in my life, I began asking the question "why?" and challenged everything I took for granted. All postulates were critically examined. This got me into trouble in an authoritarian society. Questions, they say, fly in the face of Allah. Obey. That is All. In the Islamic Brotherhood, our motto was "samaana wa ataana" i.e. "we have heard and obeyed." After years of study, I came to two logical conclusions: The Bible is the inerrant Word of God, and Jesus is the Word of God. I began to see it was

possible for Jesus to be God. Intellectually, I accepted all the claims of the Christian faith, but in my heart I still feared being struck dead for calling the Almighty God "My Father." I needed a miracle! The Bible teaches us that no one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). No wonder every Salvation experience is one of a miracle of birth out of death into eternal life!

From the depth of my heart, in the midst of inner conflict, I cried out to Allah, even in the mosque, "Lord, show me the truth! Is it Jesus or Muhammad? Could it be that You are my Father? Show me the truth, and the truth you lead me to I will serve all my life whatever the cost may be!" I burst into tears since I knew the cost could be outrageously too high for a weak, thin person like me. For how could I afford to be cast out of my family and sleep on the streets like a homeless person? And what if my leaders in the Islamic Brotherhood would find out about me? And what if they, in their Islamic righteousness and zeal, rush on to defend Islam and kill me? According to the Islamic religion, an apostate should be given a three day opportunity to recant, and after that the infidel's blood is legitimately shed in the name of Allah! The words of the Prophet Muhammad kept ringing in my ear, "Any person (i.e., Muslim) who has changed his religion, kill him." This tradition has been narrated by AbuBakr, Uthman, Ali, Muadh ibn Jabal, and Khalid ibn Walid. Yet I persisted in asking God to guide me.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty.

One night Christ appeared to me in a dream and said with a tender sweet voice, "I love you!" I saw how obstinately I had resisted Him all these years and said to Him in tears, "I love You, too! I know You! You are eternal for ever and ever." I woke up with tears all over my face filled with abundant joy, believing that Christ Himself touched both my mind and my heart, and I yielded. I was filled with great passion for Christ, jumping up and down, singing praises to His name and talking to Him day and night. I would not even sleep without God's inerrant Word, the Bible, next to my chest.

I experienced what a "spoiled child" of God would: God would give me anything I ask for in prayer. But then the Lord wanted me to love Him and worship Him for His own sake, not for what I get from Him. I tried to keep my faith secret and so was baptized secretly in a pastor's house.

Filled with the joy of salvation I could not hide or deny Christ anymore. Therefore, when my childhood friend asked me if Christ was crucified, I answered, "Yes!" and explained why. He prayed with me to receive Christ. He was shaking and perspiring every time he prayed with me. He could see how mighty the name of our Lord Jesus was. My former leaders in the Islamic fanatical group, desiring to know who the spearhead was, threatened to kill him if he would not tell them everything about my evangelism. Sadly, he betrayed me and I was beaten up in front of the mosque where I had formerly preached Islam zealously. In their sight I was a blasphemous infidel who deserved to be killed unless I would recant. They regarded my conversion as the most horrendous form of desecrating Islam and the Quran.

Since my secret conversion was now made public and Muslims plotted to kill me, I had to flee. I was hunted by Muslims from my village in the Delta, to Ismailia until I arrived in Cairo where my Christian friends lived. Yet Christians were not willing to shelter me and I had to go back to the village, seeking refuge in His protective hands. I came back from Cairo and found an angry mob of

Muslims filling up our house. My mother was wearing the garment of mourning, dressed in black as is the custom in Egypt. To them by deserting Islam, I was dead!!! Muslim women yelled at me, "Your mother doesn't deserve all this from you. Why cause her all this grief?" Another woman lamented, "Poor mother! Her son left her for the Christian infidels. If I were her, I would kill my son for running after the infidels like a dog." I received a letter from a friend in Jordan who reported that my father was walking down the streets in Jordan weeping bitterly as Muslim laborers there reproached him severely. He stayed sick in bed for a month because of this until he and I talked on the phone.

It is absolutely unforgettable that outraged Muslims broke into our house barbarically. My mother knelt down at the feet of our neighbor "Sayed" begging him to spare my life and kill her instead. In such indescribable agony, my mother disowned and disinherited me before all people in my village. I love my mother more dearly than any person in this world, but no human power, regardless of how gigantic it is, can separate me from the love of Christ. I will always live for Jesus.

My Bible, all my Christian books, and music tapes were confiscated and burnt. I decided to flee from the Delta region to Cairo. Even though the police were tracking me down, the Lord blinded their eyes and protected me. In Cairo, I was hiding at M.'s, an Egyptian Baptist friend who was comforting me all the time. I broke down when he read,

"So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41) I am grateful to God for providing this friend, M., who disciplined me, teaching me to live a victorious life rich in worship and thanksgiving. He gave me a pocket Arabic New Testament and told me frankly that his parents were afraid. Also I was told that if they continued to hide me they would be in jail forever. I had nowhere to go. So, upon the advice of my secret pastor, I went back to the village, hiding the Arabic New Testament in my socks, praying that it would not fall out. I was eventually arrested and released repeatedly. I learned what it means to have God as my only Hiding Place. In prison, my Savior knows I have come to experience true peace. I was not shaken because I saw Christ in prison, not myself. I sang songs of joy in the midst of tears, anticipating the shining Morning Star to come and deliver me. I decided to hide the Bible in a place where the police could not confiscate it -- in my heart by memorizing it. I have since made it a habit to sleep with my Bible by my side. Five years later, I managed to flee Muslims' attempts to kill me and I was shocked to find out that there are some professing Christians in America who attack the Bible for which I was willing to die. God's word has given me promises of faith which I apply as a little child and pray them through in confidence. The gates of Heaven open as we pray through God's Word. His word speaks life!!!

Once when I went to give my mother a Mother's Day gift, she asked me rhetorically, "Mother's Day gift?" I answered, "Yes" every time she repeated the question. She looked at me with such crushing grief and said, "My son, whom I waited 15 years to have and finally was born is now dead. I disown you till the day of judgment, Ibrahim." I cried but Christ touched my heart and said, "I am your family now! I am your father, brother, mother, sister, friend, and everything to you, Timothy, now." I cannot forget those days when my mother would call the police to arrest me. She even went to a witch to put a curse on me and bring me back to the fold of Islam. The witch said, "Your son is following a path which he will never forsake and he will be victorious all his life as long as he walks in it." These words, from the mouth of a witch, brought my younger brother to know

Christ. The testimony of demons about our victorious Lord renders skepticism and unbelief absurd (Please read Romans 8:35-39). You also can be more than a conqueror through Christ, your Victor who loves you! Believe it!

I lost my Bible and all my Christian books were confiscated. All I had was the radio. I went sneakily to get my radio to listen secretly to Voice of Hope, searching for some comfort-songs in the night. (By the way, I speak now publicly over Voice of Hope since I live in a free country, America). Yet my mother caught me and she immediately snatched the radio out of my hand and beat me on the head with her shoes. I was just 20 years old at that time. I prayed for a Bible and the Lord heard me. I went to pick up a Bible package from the post office. The head of the post office, Kamal, slapped me forcefully and punched me in the face. I saw all kinds of terror...I was crying from the intensity of pain. He said to me, "You just go after these Christian infidels, leave Islam and we will wipe you out. We will send you behind the sun!" I felt trapped praying fervently to leave Egypt and practice my faith in Christ. Father of comfort, you never left me. Please remind me of your Son hanging on the cross crying out in the depth of agony, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" Lord Jesus, they all forsook you, and yet You found rest in Your Father. I need to depend on the Father as you did".

After 3 years, I decided to move to Cairo which was not any safer. The last time the police had arrested me they said, "According to us, you are an infidel who has committed high treason. Next time we arrest you, it will be capital punishment." To make it worse, the "Christian" landlord told me he could not shelter a fugitive criminal anymore. I was not welcome in my own country anymore. Nevertheless, the Lord intervened, and a Palestinian evangelist, Anis Shorosh, introduced me to Dr. Paige Patterson. He began to help me apply for a visa to the United States. At first, I was denied the visa, but Dr. Patterson did not give up. Finally, I was granted an entry visa, and I was supernaturally able to leave Egypt. Lord, You never deliver your children out of bondage to bring them back into it...Help me to live somewhere to practice my Christian faith without the police harassment. Lord, please do whatever it takes so I don't have to live in an environment where people would force me to go into the mosque. You want your children to worship freely even if this means fleeing for their lives like me so that Christ becomes all in all.

If it had not been for Dr. Patterson, I would have been history today. I was scheduled to be executed, and God saw that He had more work for me to do. So, he used Dr. Patterson in supernaturally rescuing my life. God Almighty is a Father of the fatherless (Psalm 68:5), and when my father and mother forsake me, as David declares, the LORD holds me to Himself. Is God the Almighty, Your Heavenly Father, my friend? (Galatians 4:6) God the Almighty and Majestic One delights in you personally (Proverbs 8:31).

Having fled to the United States, I was still afraid that I would have to face the Egyptian police authorities someday, especially in view of the fact that I came on a student visa, which could expire any day. According to the Egyptian government I am an infidel who has defamed Islam as well as caused national disunity. Allah alone knows how I have no hard feelings towards either Egypt, the motherland, or Islam. Preachers offered to hide me in ranches, if worse came to worse. I just wanted to live and not to be the scapegoat of somebody's religious wrath. One ministry organization sponsored me and sent a petition for my permanent residency. After six long years of waiting, the Lord honored my request by giving me permanent residence a few days before the

wedding day, April 18,1998. I did not want anybody to falsely accuse me that I married a woman so that I may get a green card. I have married Angela for her own sake, and not for the sake of getting a green card. I give Angela all of me, for the source of our love is divine. It is never a fleeting emotion, but a covenant in which the LORD is the Witness between me and the wife of my youth, my partner and my best friend. (Malachi 2:14)

Here it is the time for me to praise God for the gift of marriage. It is when I abandoned myself to God and the godly desire of marriage that he brought along Angela. Angela is the angel of God to my heart. She is beautiful both internally and externally. We both share the same vision in manifesting the love of Christ to our Muslim brothers and sisters. I did not compromise for less than what I knew Allah wanted me to have: Angela is a woman of prayer, caring affectionate, hospitable, giving and gregarious. She is perfect for me. I revel in the fact that she loves my parents and gives sacrificially to them. Lord, what did I do to be treated with such extravagant kindness of yours that you give me a wife who loves me and my family? The Lord honored me for putting Him above my desire to have a wife, and now we are a praying couple. Indeed, our Creator and Redeemer is our ultimate Matchmaker.

Lord, may I never be secure or seek easiness in life at the expense of union with You. Didn't you tell us Lord, "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved" (Mark 13:13)? Please don't let me rush your salvation, Lord, in the midst of trouble, but please give me patience so I can endure hardships as a soldier of the cross of Christ! Lord, may Your love consume me to such an extent that the doing of your will would be the real bread of my life. In Christ's name, amen!

A Life of Atheism, Islam and finally Salvation thr

A Life of Atheism, Islam and finally Salvation thr

By L. Washington

A Life of Atheism, Islam and finally Salvation through God's Mercy

From Atheism to a Spiritual Experience I was born to a family without religion. My mother at some point said she believed that there might be a God but she wasn't sure and my father and brothers were atheists. I was raised with good morals and decent behavior and taught the theory of evolution. All religious thought was laughed out of the house.

I was an obedient child but by the time I reached my teen years I rebelled and experimented with everything there was to try. I was lonely and sad in my heart and even wished to die many times. I had no purpose for living.

Material wealth was desirable for a while but I soon found out that this didn't make me any happier. Time went on and I married and divorced.

Months later I became very close to the brother of my good friend. He was always telling me about God but I never paid any attention to him, I did however put up with him because he was a very nice person and had many wonderful qualities that I admired. Then one day suddenly I got a phone call from my friend saying "come over, my brother is dead". I thought she was joking and was trying to get me over there for some other crazy reason that she didn't want to tell me about on the phone. When I arrived I saw that everyone was quiet and looked like they had been crying, I realized that this wasn't a joke and something really happened, but what, he couldn't be dead, that's impossible, I just saw him the day before and he was fine and we were laughing. I asked my friend what happened and she said that her brother had risen that morning but then told everyone that he felt a little tired and was going to go back to bed. He never got up again, he died in his sleep.

How can that be, all of a sudden you're not here, you don't exist, that's not possible, you have to exist, but where. This was the turning point for me. I decided I had to figure out where we go when we die, I couldn't think of anything else, this idea consumed my every waking moment. Where do I start I thought, there are many religions in the world, one of them might be right if God is real but is he really? I started studying the basics of different religions and decided to throw most of them out the window because they were so far from anything at all conceivable that I was left with what seemed the most logical place to start, one of the world's monotheistic religions, Christianity.

I went with my friend to her church one day, having never been in a church in my life, and stood at the back and tried to look like I wasn't there, I tried to be wallpaper, and there in the midst of maybe a hundred people I decided that God might be real because all of these people thought so and I wanted to believe that so much. The preacher asked if anyone wanted to ask the Lord into their heart to do so and at that moment I opened my heart and said "God I believe you are real" for

the first time in my life.

Suddenly I felt very different and as I was standing in the pews I saw a cloud move over the ceiling very slowly. I looked around and realized that other people weren't seeing this cloud, at least they didn't look as though they did. I thought maybe my eyes were playing tricks on me but the cloud stopped moving and the edge of it was above me. Suddenly the cloud started descending and came over me and in amazement I could feel it move through me from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. It was hot, like fire, I felt like I was on fire but it wasn't hurting me, it was a feeling of totally encompassing love, love in every part of your being, not just your heart or your soul but in every part of you. A love that was beyond any human love I had ever known in my life or that could even be possible. I knew this was the Spirit of God and He was transforming me and showing me His love.

I knew that as amazing as Gods love was for me that it was only a tiny little bit of His love and that the total of His love would be impossible for the human mind to comprehend. I was shocked and remorseful that I had not believed in Him before and hoped that He would forgive me because I knew I didn't deserve to be forgiven after all the horrible comments I made prior to that moment about people that believed in God and God Himself. I begged Him to forgive me.

The Spirit started to ascend and the cloud started to move away from the ceiling until it disappeared. I was left with a new reality and wanted everyone to know that God really existed.

I found myself very different after this happened. I threw out my tv and I stopped drinking alcohol. Everything that was normal before seemed wrong now. I was very conscious / convicted of the smallest infractions against God.

I spent many months studying the Bible and trying to understand the deity of Christ. I read the Bible day and night and marked every passage about death and every passage pertaining to the divinity / humanity of Christ and His mission. I went to church a few times primarily to discuss my theories with theologians.

As the year ended and my study of the New Testament was completed I had arrived at the conclusion that Jesus was divine and that the Spirit in Him was the same Spirit that was God and the same Spirit that had come into me.

Discovering the Qur'an

I lived as well as I could after that trying to please God but not thinking much about Jesus being divine, the Bible, or what had happened as time went on. I never went to church. Several years passed and I was living in a new area. I had many women friends near by. They were all Muslimahs. I decided to read the Qur'an and see what they believed.

At this point I was far from practicing a Biblical life, although I wasn't a terrible person either, and had real doubts about what I had years before believed very briefly about Christ. Most of what I had previously thought was in the hidden recesses of my mind and not in my conscious mind.

After studying the Qur'an I decided that what I had previously believed must not be true. That Jesus couldn't be divine because it just didn't make sense that a man could be God. I wrote off what had happened to me previously as God trying to show me that He was real and that's it.

I thought for some time and decided that I would become a Muslimah. I took the Shahada with friends as witnesses and started practicing the faith. I studied the ahadith and spent lots of time at the Mosque. My son and daughter were learning Arabic and were on their way to being good Muslims. My son on occasion called the Adhan in the Mosque. I prayed five times a day, fasted during Ramadan and taught my children Islam in every aspect of our life. On several occasions I could not find work that wouldn't compromise my religion and so I went hungry. At one point I even married a man, who was a stranger to me, recommended to me by the Sheikh, through an arranged marriage at the Mosque. That marriage was a disaster and ended in divorce. I stayed home most of the time because many people in my society did not accept my religious beliefs or practices.

Nearly ten years after taking the Shahada, I was a strong Muslimah and I decided to go online and bring Islam to the world. I found a computer program that allowed me to open rooms and bring knowledgeable people in to educate the Christians and less knowledgeable Muslims using voice technology. I taught people about Islam and told them that the Bible was corrupted. I threw many Christians out of my rooms.

From Islam to Salvation

Ramadan came and I started fasting from dawn to dusk. One evening I made a prayer for the people of Palestine, the children especially, they were suffering for the cause of adults. One little boy had just been shot and killed trying to hide from the gunshots. I couldn't bare that. Then something happened to me.

I felt an energy force come into me and it was warm and beautiful and full of the love of God. It had been 15 years since I had experienced anything supernatural like this. I no longer believed that Jesus was God or that He died on the cross and I already knew God existed so this was confusing. Why was God reaching out to me like this again?

I thought this over for several days and talked to many other Muslims. No one had experienced anything like this. Throughout this time I felt the presence of this force inside of me. Why did the Qur'an not mention this? Why didn't other Muslims have this happen?

I started thinking back to my first experience with God and I remembered how I thought after reading the Bible that this was connected to Jesus. I looked for a Christian that I was acquainted with and I told him what had happened to me. He talked to me for a long time and then suggested I go directly to God for an answer. After days of torture I finally decided to ask God about Jesus. I wasn't so stubborn that I thought that I was right no matter what God told me, so that night I lay on my bed and started praying.

"Allah (swt), I'm raising my children in Islam and I'm fervently trying to bring others to you through the teaching of the Qur'an. I spend day and night in your cause and this is my soul and my children's souls so if I am wrong I have to know and I have to know from You. I will not accept an answer from any person or book as You are the Creator and I believe you will answer me directly. Allah (swt), if it's true that Jesus died on the cross and was divine as the Bible says then I want you to show me. Prove it to me in such a way that I cannot deny. Not a way that I can say maybe it meant that or maybe not, but a way that's beyond doubt. Allah (swt) if it's true I want You to take me and shake me and wake me up to that truth, however You will."

Immediately after I said this I felt my body start to tremble, then it started shaking harder and harder until it was as though I was having a seizure and suddenly my head and shoulders were pulled up off of the bed and suspended in the air while my body was shaking violently. I wasn't scared but surprised, surprised because of the answer. All of those years I thought I had been right and I was wrong, dead wrong. Now God was showing me the truth and at the same time His loving mercy.

After a few minutes the shaking stopped and my head and shoulders were released and I lay there filled with God's Spirit, heavenly beyond belief, powerful but loving. It was as though I was weightless and transformed, feeling only the love of God surging through me, forgiving me. I cried because I knew that what I had believed prior to that moment had been wrong but He still loved and forgave me. I praised Him through that night and glorified His Name.

Many weeks went by and each day the Holy Spirit became stronger and stronger. I would pray and praise Him and I would be totally consumed in His Spirit to the point that I wouldn't even feel myself anymore but only His Spirit consuming me in love. This is as close to heaven as a human being can get until He comes for us I think. I can't imagine getting much closer. I felt at times like I was floating and not even part of this world.

I went into the Islam rooms that I had created and told everyone what had happened to me and how Jesus was really divine and that He really died on the cross and that I knew this from God Himself. I told them that I had prayed to God and how He had answered me. They thought I was possessed by jinn or had lost my mind. They tried to bring me back to Islam every way they could think of. They read the Qur'an to me, talked to me and tried to find reasons for what happened. Nothing they said made any sense to me. I knew that I didn't belong there any more. I closed the Islam rooms I created and started going to the Christian rooms. When the Muslims realized that I was not coming back and that I was telling people what happened to me they started messaging me with all kinds of death threats and insults. They slandered me with lies trying to discredit me and ruin my reputation. I was very upset that the people that I had loved and many had taught were turning against me, hating me and wishing death on me. Many times I was attacked but through God's mercy He spoke to them through me even when I didn't have the words to say myself.

One day shortly after I was on the pc and I was listening to a group talk about Christianity versus Islam and suddenly I couldn't talk. I felt like I had cotton in my mouth and when I spoke just mumbling came out, no clear words. I tried and tried but it got harder and harder to talk. I prayed and asked God to show me what to do, to help me because I didn't understand, and when I said that suddenly something clicked in my mind and my speech and I started speaking another language. Praise God! I was speaking in tongues just as it said in the Bible!

I had received so many blessings but one thing was left. My children had to be told. They had never known any religion besides Islam. I spent many agonizing weeks trying to figure out how to tell them on top of adjusting to a new life myself. I had up to a few days before my conversation with God told my son that the Bible was corrupt. Now I had to explain what happened to me and why I wasn't a Muslimah anymore and that I was now a believer in Jesus as Lord and in the Bible even though I didn't even own one. I prayed a lot then. I waited until the Lord told me to tell them.

One day I was alone with my daughter and I felt God was telling me that the time was right. I told her what happened to me and that I was now a believer in Jesus. She was surprised and started crying but after several minutes she stopped and asked me questions and to my surprise and God's mercy she said "mommy whatever you think is right then that's what I will believe, you have to teach me".

My son was harder to talk to. I spent a lot of time thinking about what to say to him and prayed a lot. One day I went into his room and just told him. He started yelling at me, called me a kafir, hit me and threw me out of his room. He didn't speak to me for days. I prayed and prayed and many other people prayed as well and thanks to God he started coming around and talking to me. I found a comic book on the net about a Muslim that had come to Jesus and how he and his family were seriously abused by the Muslim community. I gave this comic to my son and he changed his attitude quite a lot after reading it. He realized that hurting people because of what they believe is wrong. (You can get that comic at this url, scrolling down to 'Timothy Abraham'.)

Today my son is accepting of my faith and is listening to everything I tell him. He asks me questions about the Bible and has abandoned the Qur'an. He's on his way to becoming a believer, praise God.

Conclusion

It seems incredible that a person could be reached by God in such a powerful way initially and still fall into disbelief regarding the divinity of Christ. It happens, believe it or not. I'm proof of that. I was filled with the Holy Ghost and did believe that Jesus was divine but it was brief, so brief in fact that I couldn't say that I was really a Christian. I was however saved even if it was for a short time and fell into disbelief soon afterwards. I pray daily now that the Lord use me and make me a strong witness for Him. I thank Him for saving me from my own mind and the destination of eternal death. I ask Him to give me comprehension and understanding of His Word and show me how to apply it to my own life. I have so far to go. I'm not and never will be worthy to be saved. It's only through His mercy that He brought me out of Atheism and Islam and into His family.

If you were born into a Muslim family or have accepted Islam later in your life and you sincerely believe you are following the truth path, I ask you to do just one thing, open your heart and pray to Allah to reveal Himself to you in His time and in His own way, to show you who Jesus is and why He really came amongst us. Do this with a sincere and open heart and He will answer you.

L. Washington

David's Testimony

David's Testimony

By David

Praise The Lord! I am David, Perayur Village, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu, India. I was born on August 27, 1978. I was born in a strong Hindu family. They named me Ramaiah. We were very poor . My father worked in the field on daily wages. I was very strong in Hinduism. I was a man who opposed Christianity very much. I thought it belonged to western people. When I was 12 years old I instigated communal problem in my village between two communities. I was involved in stealing and I have lied on many occasions. I studied till 10th standard but when I was studying 10th standard I was sent out of school.

At this juncture, my mother accepted Christ as her personal Saviour. So, the church people used to come to my house for carol rounds. As they came for carol rounds I was attracted by a boy's playing the drums. So just to watch him playing the drums I started going to church. There I met my Lord and accepted Christ as my personal Saviour. And I was baptized on 10th March 1996. In the following year God called me to serve Him. According to the advice of my church elders I joined this college in order to receive proper Bible training and ministerial experiences. I thank God that I could find a seat here in this Bible college.

In Him,D. David

An Iranian's Search for the Truth

An Iranian's Search for the Truth

By Nadereh

My father was a Sunni Muslim and a Kurdish chieftain. My mother was a Shi'ah Muslim and was from the royal Qajar family. When I was four years old my father was executed by the government.

At the age of seven I began asking questions about God and creation. I would ask my mother, "Who destined my life on this earth?" or "How were the earth and the heavens created?" Mother would usually answer, "When you grow up I will explain about your creation, but as far as the earth and the heavens the unseen God has created them."

My mother had completed her high school education in a prestigious Catholic school in Tehran. She was a wonderful mother. She also tried to live in accordance with the Islamic religious requirements. I became eager to be a good Muslim. When I was 12 years old I also began to observe the Islamic prayers and fasting. I felt the existence of the unseen God with all my heart. My mother had instructed me that if I were to reach God and enter paradise, I must, 1) perform the ritual prayers and fast, 2) not wish bad for others, 3) not steal, 4) believe in Mohammad as God's apostle and in the innocence of 14 persons (the 12 Imams, Mohammed and his daughter, Fatemeh, 5) give alms to the poor, and 6) take a pilgrimage to Mecca, the Muslims' most holy city. I carefully followed her advice because I desired to go to heaven. I even read the Qur'an regularly.

When I was 16 I met the man who later became my husband. He was a very wealthy man. Soon after our marriage, I asked my husband to hire a mullah (a Muslim clergy) to instruct me in the teachings of the Qur'an. For two hours every Thursday I studied the Qur'an under the guidance of this Mullah.

By the age of 27 my husband and I had five children. I had also studied the Qur'an for 10 years. Nevertheless I sensed that I did not know God personally and I found no peace in my soul. For instance, according to the Qur'an, I was required to wear the Islamic veil in front of the people who worked in my home every day. This proved to be impractical. However, my contacts with these people were unavoidable and it bothered me very much. At this point it occurred to me that if I made a pilgrimage to Mecca (the home of Allah), perhaps I could find the elusive peace I was seeking.

My husband was greatly surprised when I asked him to make arrangements for me to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. But he consented. He contacted a famous ayatollah in the city of Qum and soon my passport, the special clothing for the pilgrimage and all other details were arranged. I was the youngest female pilgrim in our company. I could hardly contain my joy.

In Mecca, I observed all the rites with much eagerness; I gave sacrifices of sheep for my sin and the sins of my dead parents and grandparents. I believed that I was even able to help the dead to go to paradise. Finally I was on the plane returning to Iran from Mecca.

I was quite content with my pilgrimage. A half hour before our plane landed in Tehran, I went to the restroom and took off the face and body coverings (the veil.) I put on a scarf and a manto (an ankle length overcoat). As I returned to my seat, the mullah who was the supervisor of our pilgrimage company came up to me and abruptly said, "What have you done hajieh (a female pilgrim)? Why are you wearing a scarf and manto? Are you aware that I can see your hair showing from under your scarf? Don't you know that with this violation you are going straight to hell?" I stared at him with astonishment and disbelief, and asked him "What kind of teaching is this? Isn't God supposed to be in a persons' heart?" The mullah said, "No! According to the Qur'an one gets close to God by observing the hejab (the Islamic dress code) and the Shari'a (the Islamic law) and not by one's heartfelt desires. It is Satan who resides in man's heart, not God!"

This discussion gave me a feeling of despair in my heart. I said to God, "Why every time that I try to get close to you I end up farther away? Show me a way to get close to you." Soon I began thinking about leaving Iran and living abroad. I discussed the possibility with my husband. He finally relented. And in 1977, my husband, children and I left for the U.S.

One day I shared my desire to go to church with an Armenian friend. As a result the following Sunday I went to her church with her. I requested the pastor of the church to find me a Persian language New Testament (Injil). He gave me the New Testament the following day and instructed me to begin reading from the Gospel according to Matthew. I followed what he said and when I finished reading my New Testament I knew I had found the Living, True and Eternal God. He was not the person I had been told about all my life. I thanked God for this and continued to study the Bible. Later, I placed my faith in the true God.

Soon after our arrival in the U.S., the government in Iran changed. We learned that our home in Iran had been confiscated. Even some of our family members had been executed. Then, my husband was recalled to Iran. Upon his arrival there, he was arrested and imprisoned. Due to beatings he received, he lost several teeth and suffered a broken leg.

Caring for my children in the U.S. made me feel very much alone. I did not know what to do. I surrendered all my worries to the Lord Jesus Christ. My Iranian friends, acquaintances and family members said that God had struck my family with all these disasters because I had abandoned Islam and become a Christian! However, I was sure that I had chosen the true path and that I had found a true relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I knew that every detail of my life was in God's good hands and took place according to His will. Thus I constantly prayed and gave thanks to God.

In the end, all our possessions in Iran were confiscated. However, praise God, my husband was released from prison and returned to us. We once again began our lives together in the U.S. We both worked until our children completed their education. Then two of our daughters married. Life seemed normal, but suddenly we suffered another blow. My husband who was only in his forties died of a heart attack, leaving me alone again.

But I had faith, and that was enough to hold me up. Through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and by His grace my children and I gradually overcame our difficulties. Life took on a normal routine once again. Soon all my children were now leading good lives on their own and I was the grandmother of several beautiful grandchildren.

Now I clearly see how our loving God has sustained my family and me through the difficulties of life. He has blessed us with true peace and joy. Salvation is my greatest wealth and this limitless wealth is God's gift.

I end my life's story with two verses from the Injil (New Testament):

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes me will live, even though he dies."
(John 11:25)

Nadereh

Why I am not a Muslim?

Why I am not a Muslim?

By Sami el Amin

It was a question that I had been asked on more than an occasion after converting to Christianity. I had heard this question from both Christians and Muslims. From the Christians it was a question of curiosity or emotion upon seeing how God had changed my life. As for Muslims, it was a question which was directed at offending and humiliating me. For the Christians, they wanted to know how and when I decided to follow Jesus Christ. But for the Muslims the question was, "You are a Christian?" (MASIHI in arabic). When I heard this question, in the beginning it was dangerous and complicated for me, not because it was difficult or incomprehensible, but rather because it put me in the middle of a confrontation between my soul and the challenges around me. And because of this, the question required a sincere decision in order that I might experience my new point of view conscienciously.

This was just a part of the issue. The other part had to do with the fact that every time someone asked me the question "Why did you stop being a Muslim?", they sincerely wanted to know what I had found in Jesus in order to leave Mohammed. It was in 1976 that I turned 12 years old. That year with my best friend, we bought a Moroccan newspaper in Arabic. At the time I did not know why we bought this newspaper and furthermore at an age so young to read it. But now I understand that God was preparing the way for me to get saved using this newspaper.

What was in this newspaper? Well, my friend and I found an ad in Arabic that said, "If you want to receive a Bible Correspondence course and a Bible, write to this address." It was the address of a Ministry in France that was focused to North Africa.

This announcement didn't really get my attention because I didn't know what these Bible Study courses were all about, nor did I know what the Bible was. Actually, the only thing that got my attention was that it said "... if you want to receive a Bible and some Bible Correspondence courses for free write to ..."

The two of us decided to write to the address in Marseilles, France. After waiting about two weeks, the first course about creation came in the mail. Both of us were really happy to receive these lessons in the mail.

But I was especially happy to the point of selfishness over the matter. It made me feel really important. I didn't want anyone else to discover this address. I only wanted that they write to me and that no one else share this experience. After about two years, my cousin discovered that I was having correspondence with Christians. And he warned me that if the police discovered this, they would throw me in jail. I was just 14 years old and jail was something I feared. So from that moment on I began to ask myself, "Why do the people turn away and don't accept information concerning Christianity?"

For fear of going to jail, I stopped my correspondence. As time went by, I began to forget it all. But for God, nothing is forgotten. One day I was looking for a radio station and I discovered an Evangelical program in Arabic called NUR AL NUR ("Light Over Light" in Arabic). It was broadcasted from Monte Carlo. I could then listen because no one knew that I was in contact with the "Good News". And thanks to the radio, I discovered many addresses that offered me the Gospel.

Both my age and my curiosity continued to grow, I felt pushed without reason like so many other Muslims to reject Christianity. According to the Muslims, the Christians (The Masihiyin):

(1) have changed the Bible (The Injil);(2) believe in four gospels;(3) believe that Jesus was crucified and(4) believe that Jesus is God and at the same time the Son of God. But Islam teaches us exactly the opposite, i.e. the Christian Bible cannot be respected because it has been altered, there are not four gospels, Jesus was not crucified, and Jesus is not God. So as a Muslim I had to reject Christianity. It was false. And for me to change my religion would mean that I was blaspheming God (Allah). I would be looked on as an atheist (Kafir). This would be a terrible thing to do and a costly decision to make. Up till now I had practiced all the pillars of Islam except that of doing the pilgrimage to Mecca (which can be done at any point in the span of one's lifetime).

It was a continuous battle in my life, both inside of me and outside. Inside I had doubts about what the truth was and I could not rest because I worried about what people would think of me if they knew I was in contact with Christians. And if they discovered that I was studying the Gospel, what would happen to me? Meanwhile I had a battle going on outside of me because it was difficult to deny the religion of my family and my grandparents. And if it came to this, the people would reject me and I would bring shame on my family like a prodigal son, a disobedient atheist. As a consequence of this terrible battle, I decided to stop doing the Bible correspondence courses and stop listening to the Evangelical Radio programs.

But God would not leave me alone. As it says in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you, will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." In 1983, once again something moved me to listen to a radio program that came from Monte Carlo but was broadcast from Malaga, Spain. In that particular program they announced an address in Modena, Italy to receive Bible correspondence courses. The person that wrote me was a Moroccan believer. He visited at my own home in Morocco; and one year later, another Moroccan believer visited me too. Both they told me about their faith in Jesus Christ, and about the Bible. I continued to correspond with them. During their visits, I asked them a lot of questions concerning my doubts about Christianity, not in order to humiliate them nor did I want answers to my doubts. Instead I wanted these new friends of mine to see that they were mistaken in being Christians. But they gave me good answers to my doubts. Yet in the end, the whole thing really did not seem that important to me because I was not satisfied.

During this time one of these Moroccan believers gave me a Bible as a gift and asked me to begin to read it. While I read, I had some discussions with some of my friends in my neighborhood. We discussed issues like whether or not Christianity is true and whether or not the Bible is authentic. And while I was studying the Bible I also read the QUORAN. I made comparisons between the two. And to tell you the truth, during this time I found myself in total confusion with no way to get out. The QUORAN said that it was the last and the only truth inspired by God. But on the other

hand, the Bible said the same thing: Jesus said in John 14:6 that he was the only way to salvation. I was perplexed and I asked myself the question, "What is the TRUE way?"

During this period of comparison, I based my beliefs on the foundation of the false ideas that every Muslim has against Christianity. First, I believed that the Bible had been corrupted. Second, I believed that Jesus was never crucified nor did he know death. Third, I believed that Christians believed that Jesus was God (Allah) and the Son of God at the same time. And forth, I believed that the Bible predicted the coming of a prophet after Jesus that would be called AHMED (Mahamad). The trouble was the Christians took it out of the Bible.

What then was the result of my doing this comparison? Well, God illuminaated my mind and with the help of the Holy Spirit I arrived at an answer to my questions and doubts. What I came to see is that the QUORAN contradicts itself. For example, The Quoran denies the Trinity (the beliefs that there is One God in Three Persons, not that there are three Gods). In Sura "The Women (An-Nissaa)", 171 it says: "People of the Writings. Do not exaggerate in your religion. Don't say about God but the truth: that the anointed, Jesus, son of Mary, is the only sent one of God and his Word, that He has communicated to Mary and a spirit that comes from Him. Believe, so, in God and His sent ones."

So for the Muslim this verse only shows that Jesus was a sent one. But can he not see that this verse in the Quoran also confirms that Christ is God? YOU ASK HOW?

The Quoran declares that Jesus Christ is the Word of God and the Spirit of Him. So the Word of God and His spirit exist with and in God from eternity and neither His Word nor His Spirit have a beginning or an end. So then, Jesus must be God. This truth confirms waht John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God".

The second thing that I discovered has to do with the Bible being perfect. In spite of everything that the Quoran says about the Bible being corrupted, I found that the Quoran orders that each Muslim should believe in the Bible. It says, "Say: People of the Writing do not do anything fundamental while you do not observe the Tora, the Gospel and the Revelation that you have received from your Lord." (Sura "The Served Table", 68). Then the Quoran itself orders me that I apply what the Writings say. That means that the Bible is correct and perfect. It is not corrupt. In accordance with this the Bible says, "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it". (Deuternmy 12:32).

And Revelation 22:19 says, "and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

The third thing that I discovered has to do with the crucifixion and the death of Christ. The Quoran denies the crucifixion and the death of Christ but at the same time confirms this truth when it says in Sura "MARY", 22: "Jesus speaking: the peace on me the day that I was born, the day that I die and the day that I resurrected to life." An in Sura "The Family of Imran", 55 says: "When God said: Jesus! I am going to call you to me. I am going to elevate you to me. I am going to liberate you from that which they don't believe and put, until the day of the resurrection, to which they follow you above which they don't believe."

Besides all this, the most effective argument that I could give in order to leave Islam and refute those doubts and mistaken beliefs that I had towards Christian doctrine had to do with the prophet Mohammed. He himself could not give me any assurance of my salvation because of the fact that he declared himself to be a sinner and need of the forgiveness of God. However, Jesus Christ could save me when he died on the cross and was resurrected from the death. and he did this all for me and for humanity. Anyone who believes on him can know that they are saved as it says in Acts 16:31, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved..." and 1 John 5:11-12, "and this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. he who has the son has the life; he who does not have the son of God does not have the life."

Before, I practiced the Islamic laws - The "Pillaars of Islam" - without being sure of my celestial future nor did I know how I could fix the matter of my being separated from God because of my sin. But in Christ I found the solution to this problem and I realized that in order to be saved, I needed to accept Christ and follow him as my only Lord and Saviour. I recognized that I was a sinner, that I had broken God's laws and that by believing in Christ and accepting the price that he paid for me by dying on the cross for my sins that I could receive God's pardon and forgiveness for my sins, as John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Therefore, I no longer need the Islamic pillars and more laws in order to please God and reach him. Jesus Christ offered me pardon for my sins and the sins of others through his death on the cross. As it says in Hebrews 9:22, "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness," and Hebrews 9:28, "So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." As the Holy Writings says, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

So, in 1985 I made the decision to accept and follow Jesus Christ as the Lord of my life. And I thank God that I am saved and I belong to His kingdom. 12 years have passed since I received this new life and I give glory and honor to God's name for it. But you may ask, did this change in my life come from me or from God?

I believe that it came from God by His grace (His undeserved favor on me) as it says in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works we have done, lest any man be able to boast".

I want that this testimony be a help to all those that want to experience the joy of receiving salvation in Christ. May the glory be to God, "who desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4).

Sami el Amin

Aishah's Testimony

Aishah's Testimony

By Aishah

I grew up as a Muslim in a Muslim country, and my religion was very important to me. After my first degree, I came to the U.S. to go to graduate school. Beginning graduate students took many of the same courses together their first year. I befriended an American graduate student from my classes, and we got along well. I had a birthday early in the semester, and my friend found out about it and gave me a small New Testament as a present. At first, I was taken a back. I didn't pick up the book for a week. I was too afraid to touch it. But as I thought about it, I considered myself to be a strong enough Muslim to read the book.

I started with the Gospel of Mark. My friend had recommended it because it was the shortest one. As I read further, many things struck me about the life of Jesus, but the biggest thing that influenced me were the verses Jesus spoke in Matthew 23:25-26. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean."

What surprised me was that these ideas had been taught to me by my parents while I was growing up. They had a strong dislike for hypocrisy in religion, for people whose religion was only external and for show, but inside they were selfish and proud. They taught me that real Islam was in the heart and not just a set of rituals on the outside. When I saw that Jesus said the same thing as my parents had taught me, I recognized his authority over my life and that what he said was true. About a month later, I prayed for salvation through Jesus.

My family was furious with me when I told them I had become a Christian, and their displeasure with me has been the most painful thing I have endured in my new faith. I had had a very close relationship with my family, especially my mother, and there have been days when I thought about leaving my Christian faith just to restore my relationship with her. But I have no doubts about Jesus and am thankful that I had the opportunity to learn the truth about him from the Bible.

Aishah

Shlomy's Testimony

Shlomy's Testimony

By Shlomy Abramov

My name is Shlomy Abramov, and in this photo you will also see my wife Miriam. They call me a Sabra (in Hebrew "Tsabar") which means I am a native-born Israeli. Sabra is also the name of the Israeli cactus. I was once like that thorny cactus. I was born into a traditional Jewish family and as a boy I loved it. But when I was 13, I asked God to show Himself to me because, if I could not see Him, I would not believe in Him. I didn't get an answer. So I stopped believing in Him. It was very bad for my family, but it happened.

Then started a time of rebelliousness in my life. I thought only of money and success. After the army I joined the police force, then went on to private security work where I earned the nickname "Rambo" (I served as Sylvester Stallone's bodyguard when he came to Israel). All of this time, the Tsabar showed himself. But I was looking for answers anywhere: fortune tellers, cards, mystics. When they failed to provide anything, I went back to my roots in the synagogue. Even there I didn't find answers. During this time you would not even have wanted to talk to me. My life was a string of night clubs, bodyguarding, and fights.

While I was on vacation in the north, I met a young woman who talked to me about Jesus. I remember telling her, "Don't talk about that and don't say his name in my presence. I'm a Jew. If you were a man, I would break you in half." But I didn't know the Lord was working. I kept asking her questions. And she made me look at the prophecies about the Messiah—where I saw things they had never told me at school.

I struggled within myself because, for the first time in my life, I wanted to make a decision for God by accepting Jesus. But what about my tradition and my family? I struggled hard. But God is bigger than anything and He gave me the ability to make a stand for Him. I did it! I found myself enthused about Y'shua day after day. And I married the young woman who was so brave to speak to me about Jesus!

A big change happened in my life. As an Israeli, I had seen how my uncles and friends died in the army. Before I knew Y'shua, no Arab could stand next to me without my trying to kill him. The Lord, in His grace, arranged for me to be baptized* with a Palestinian who became my friend. Isn't the Lord wonderful? The thorn of the Tsabar is gone for good!

Kinlay's Testimony

Kinlay's Testimony

By Kinlay Dorjee

2 Tim 2:12.

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him!.." Christians were persecuted throughout the history. They have been killed, tortured and rejected by kings, rulers, and society. But no power on this earth can destroy Christianity from this planet.

Romans 8:35 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

When I was in my mother's womb, my dad left home to join the Bhutan army and hardly earned anything, so my mother was fully responsible for taking care of us three children. My mother was illiterate and had no means to support us financially, so we went without food & clothing a lot. From my childhood, I always asked these questions, "what will happen to me if I die? Where do people go after they die?" I was afraid to die. I thought that I will give anything to avoid death in my life. Sometime I even thought of going deep into the forest and spend my whole life meditating like Buddha. I tried to follow my religion strictly, but I never had assurance of salvation, nor peace and joy. During that time there were no Christians or churches in Bhutan. I never heard about Jesus, never heard the word Bible, or church. One day in another part of the country I heard that if I become a Christian I would go to heaven. That was what I was searching for in my life. Due to the lack of teaching the Word, I came to know Jesus personally after two years.

During that time Christians were so few in Bhutan that we rarely met any. In 1982, I was searching for Christians for fellowship, but did not meet any. In 1983, I met one Christian couple with whom I started fellowshiping. I was hungry and thirsty to learn more about God. As soon as I accepted Jesus in my life, I started witnessing about Jesus to my friends, relatives and neighbors. This led me into fulltime ministry. In 1987, I was preaching in Sibsoo Bhutan, and I felt something in my spirit, that I needed to leave that place immediately.

Later I came to know, that as soon as I left, the police came searching me. In 1989, my whole village people came to me and told me to leave the Christian religion or face the consequences. I told them that I cannot deny Jesus even if I have to face death. They boycott me from the society, but half of the village stood with me, so it did not affect me much. I have been Christian for more than 20 years now. I have never faced persecution like 2001- 2002. I was called by my village authority and asked if I am a Christian. I told them that I am a Christian. They told us to write an agreement that we are Christian. It was a privilege for me to witness Jesus to them. I wrote why I became Christian and what happened after I became Christian. After this, I left my village, my mom had to go through lot of mental harassment from villagers and the head man of the village.

In the month of December 2001, we were again called for national census. When we reached our village, people were different. They started treating us like strangers. We were not allowed to enter our own house. My wife, Deoki and our two sons, Joel and Navin and myself, had to sleep outside the house in a single bed in the December cold. My second elder brother started scolding and shouting at me. He said everything bad that he could think of. But praise God, I could feel the love of God going out of my heart towards him. I did not say anything to him. The next day, we left our village without completing our national census work. After a few days, I had to go again for the census work which was incomplete. This time I went alone, I reached my home at about 4PM, as soon as I reached home my second elder brother disappeared. I was not allowed to enter the house. Later, my mother and sister came to me, and said, I was not to stay that night in that house. My brother has threatened that he would kill me or break my arms and eyes so that I would not be able to do any work. My mom and sister told me to go to one of my aunt's which was about 1.5 miles away from our house. I had to walk up hill to reach that house and when I arrived there, it was already dark. There is no electricity in the village and there was no moon in the sky and it was very cold. But to my dismay, even my aunt and uncle told me that I could not stay in their house, because I was Christian. I had to leave that house not knowing where to go. It was too dark to walk in such hills where there is no paved path. Anyhow I managed to reach another house which was not far away from that house. I asked them for one night shelter outside the house, but the man of the house refused. The lady of that house showed me a small shade where they kept corn covers. She told me to go and sleep quietly and to leave early in the morning without her husband's knowledge. The shade was so small that I could hardly sleep there. I thank God for such place. I felt the warmth of God. I told God that He is my blanket and mattress. I thanked Him that I had the privilege of suffering for Jesus. I thought of my wife and children who will be sleeping comfortably in the city. After about one hour, the man of the house came out and put a flash light toward that shade. The shade was about 50 meter away from house. But, as the shade was too small to hide me, he saw me sleeping there. He went inside the house and said in loud voice that he would call people of the village to come and beat me to death. I jumped off the shade and left that place in the dark without knowing where to go. They were the people that I grew with. That was my own village. They were my neighbors I was their friend. According to our culture they have to give shelter to the stranger. But I was not a stranger to them. Just because I was Christian they would not want to give me shelter, even in a cow shade. I went down the hill through the forest about one mile to reach my own house, because my mom and sister were the only help that I could get in that situation. When I reached home I was thirsty and exhausted. Moreover, I was mentally tortured, and called my mom from outside the house. She came with a lamp in her hand and I fell in her arms and cried. I could not control my tears. At this time, my brother, who was sleeping inside the house came out groaning like a lion to hit me. This time, I told him, that if he hit me, it is of no use. There is the law of the country that will decide what to do. When I said this, he shouted at me, and went inside. That night, I slept outside the house in cold. But praise God I slept soundly because I was so tired. I prayed to God that he would give me the privilege of repaying these village people 'good for the evil' that they did to me. Most of the people of this village have hardly anything to eat or wear. I am planning on taking some clothes to them. I spent about one week in this village. But all our former friends, neighbors and relatives treated me as their enemy. Later my wife, Deoki, came and joined me and we slept outside the house and ate outside. We were not allowed to enter our own family house. We became totally untouchable, outcast and low caste for

them. But praise God that I had privilege of suffering for Christ. Matthew 5:11-12.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Bhutan is a country where preaching the gospel and converting to Christianity is prohibited by the law of the kingdom. My family members and relatives do not know that I am one of the active ministers of the gospel. We tell people about Jesus without telling that I am a preacher. We minister in the underground churches without telling people that we are the pastors. Whatever my village people and my brother did to me was because I am a Christian. If they knew that I am a full time minister of the gospel they would have handed me to the police. One of the things that I experienced, while going through such suffering, is that I still love these people and pray for them. I do not have a single evil thought toward them. Praise God that He has given me the spirit of love. This is my prayer that I would go back to this village again with the message of love and compassion. I am not going to preach with my mouth only, but will take clothes to them, demonstrating this love. Please pray for this great work God is doing in Bhutan.

For Heaven's Sake: A Jewish Astronomer's Odyssey

For Heaven's Sake: A Jewish Astronomer's Odyssey

By Dr. David Block

The year was 1969. The event had been advertised on the radio again and again. I arose at four o'clock in the morning and watched a blazing comet with utter awe, as its tail stretched across the eastern skies. My love affair with astronomy had begun.

South African astronomer Jack Bennett, who discovered the comet and whose name the heavenly object bore, became my hero. The next day I telephoned him and asked him rather timidly, "May I meet with you?" To my surprise he said, "Yes, do come over." And it was really then that the little hidden flame which had been ignited began burning to understand the cosmos.

Shortly after that my father bought me a four-and-a-half inch reflector telescope. That was no little thing for a teenager. With that incredible instrument I could start to look at planets like Saturn and at some of the nebulae in which stars are born.

I wanted to pursue studies in astronomy and my father was my biggest supporter. Leon Block always encouraged me to question things, to look beyond the ordinary and to make up my own mind. After all, we were Jews and that was part of our tradition as well.

My Jewish UpbringingBoth of my parents' Orthodox Jewish families have their roots in Lithuania. And we certainly kept to all the traditions as well: My mother would light the Shabbos candles and we would have a traditional Shabbos meal together. I went to shul both on Friday night and Saturday. We kept Pesach. I fasted on Yom Kippur. I was bar mitzvah. We were practicing Jews. And I did all the things expected of a good Jewish boy. Actually, I felt that I was doing the best that I knew how to live out my Jewish faith.

Now that didn't mean that I was unquestioning when it came to the things of God. On the contrary, I'd listen in shul as the rabbis expounded how God was a personal God and how God would speak to Moses, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, and wonder how I fit into all of it. And by the time I entered university I became concerned over the fact that I had no assurance that God was indeed a personal God. I did know that he was a historical God and that he did deliver our people from the hands of Pharaoh. But that seemed far removed from me in this scientific age. Those were "stories," as it were.

Where was the personality and the vibrancy of a God who could speak to David Block? If God is truly God, I reasoned, then why had he suddenly changed his character? The seeds of doubt were sprouting.

University YearsIn order to follow my interest in astronomy I entered the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg. I sought a Bachelor of Science degree in applied mathematics and computer science. As a professional astronomer, a background in mathematics and statistics was essential.

While still a student, I was appointed as a "demonstrator" on the staff--in other words, I would help students with their tutorial problems on a formal basis. And while a student I also became quite friendly with Lewis Hurst, then professor of genetics and of medicine. He had a great interest in astronomy, if only from an amateur point of view, and he asked if I would give him individual lessons.

Week by week, Lewis and I would sit around the table and I would discuss the complexities of the cosmos with him and also explain fundamental terms in astronomy such as "black holes" and "quasars." It was a full but private course I was giving him.

The friendship grew and I started sharing my feelings about the cosmos with him--that it is so beautiful, that God is so creative, that he's made this stunning world. I even shared my doubts with him:

"Are we, as Shakespeare said, just as a 'fleeting shadow to appear and then disappear'? What is our purpose for living? What's the *raison d'être* for being here? Is there a Designer out there?"

Lewis listened thoughtfully and then spoke, "David, there is an answer to all your questions."

"You know, Lewis, what does concern me is that the universe is so large, it's so immense. Do we go anywhere when we die?"

"There's an answer to all the questions you're asking. Would you be willing--I know you come from an Orthodox Jewish family--but would you be willing to meet with a dear friend of mine, the Reverend Mr. John Spyker?"

My parents had taught me to seek answers where they may be found and so I consented to meet with this Christian minister. Of course, in my heart, when I had put my telescope on Saturn, and saw it in all its majesty and splendor--its rings simply encircling that globe--I just knew that there was a Great Designer. In fact, I knew there must be a personal God.

The Reverend Mr. Spyker read to me from the New Testament book of Romans where Paul says that Y'shua (Jesus) is a stumbling block to Jewish people, but that those who would believe in Y'shua would never be ashamed.

Suddenly it all became very clear to me: Y'shua had fulfilled the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as where the Messiah would be born and how he was to die. While my people were still waiting for the Messiah, I suddenly knew that I knew that I knew that I knew that Jesus was the Messiah and is the Messiah. And I surrendered my heart and my soul to him that day. That was in October of 1976.

I gave Judaism a chance and I accepted him who is fully, fully Jewish. Paul, before he believed in Jesus, was a student of the great rabbi, Gamaliel. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He had studied. He had examined. Yet, when Paul met the Master face to face, the Master mastered him. The Master mastered me as well.

Faith and Science might seem strange to some that a scientist and a Jew could come to faith in Jesus. But faith is never a leap into the dark. It is always based on evidence. All people believe and all scientists believe. They don't all believe in a personal God, of course, but each one of us

uses our own measure of faith. Each one of us has a personal world system, a personal belief system.

As a scientist, I always think logically and I reason things out. That was how my whole search for God began. I looked through my telescope at Saturn and said to myself, Isn't there a great God out there? And when I studied relativity, relativistic astrophysics, cosmology and all these beautiful areas of mathematics, they pointed me to the fact that this whole universe is masterfully made, finely-tuned and controlled by the Great Designer. The logical next step was to want to meet this Designer face-to-face.

Among astronomers today there is great theistic sentiment, where even if scientists don't say Jesus has made the universe, they are coming to the very distinct conclusion that the universe is not an accident. The "Big Bang" was not a cosmological firecracker. As the physicist Freeman Dyson put it, the universe seemed to be acting in anticipation for the appearance of mankind.

So it is on the basis of logic that we can understand that we live in a universe made by a personal God. It's logic from start to finish.

When it comes to God, many scientists lean toward assumptions which are philosophically comfortable to them. For example, in the "Big Bang" universe there is an unverifiable assumption called the principle of homogeneity, which asserts that on a large scale there is "no preferred center"--each point is equivalent in every sense to every other point. This, then, is a drastic departure from the cozy framework early cosmologists had worked with in their geocentric universe models.

Let me explain: If we go back to the 1500s, before the impact of the work of Copernicus, the worldview of the universe was a geocentric one. The earth was the center and the sun went around the earth as did all the stars, and to many it was a very reassuring ideal to adopt. In 1543 Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* was published and we perceived ourselves to be living in a heliocentric world, (although Ptolemy's earth-centered system was still taught at Harvard University in the first years after its founding in 1636). Mankind was dethroned from his central position in the universe.

Many astronomers have gone to extremes by saying we are simply a "zero" in this large cosmos. After all, there are 100,000 million stars in our Milky Way galaxy. That can make us feel very lonely and unimportant in the light of all the immensity. Yet a simple study shows the opposite is true.

The universe has not always existed. It had a definite beginning. Our early universe expanded at just the critical rate to avoid recollapse. Galaxies and stars then formed, but one must realize that half the stars in the night sky are members of binary or multiple star systems and are therefore unable to support life. (No stable planetary orbits could exist around such star systems.) Of the remaining half there are about 30 parameters which must be met in order for them to support life. With billions and billions of stars, it is improbable that all the conditions which must be met for the existence of life exist elsewhere. I would not be surprised if we were the only intelligent life species in the entire universe. In fact, leading evolutionists, such as Dobzhansky and others have agreed that there has not been enough time for mankind to have assembled spontaneously within the time span of our universe.

We've astronomical evidence that demands a verdict. And I've examined this evidence, not from an emotional point of view, but from a logical point of view. We've got historical evidence that Jesus, the Jew, lived and died and rose again from the dead. When Albert Einstein was asked by a reporter if he accepted the historical existence of Jesus, he responded, "Unquestionably! No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life. I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene."

To the person who is seriously seeking today I would say, read the gospels from an objective point of view, as Albert Einstein did. As Isaac Newton did. Don't let your emotions override or cloud your decision.

Seek after truth and don't let anyone make up your mind for you. It is far too important. It does matter what you believe.

Cathy's Testimony

Cathy's Testimony

By Cathy

I would like to share my testimony with you and pray that all mankind would listen to their hearts and know that God exists.

On April 26, 1971 God gave me the most wonderful gift of a son to love and cherish. Jason Allen Hamilton. How I love to hear that name ! Jason was all a mother could ever ask for honest, dependable, hard working , handsome and he and I loved each other so much, life was so wonderful !. God additionally blessed me with a daughter October 31, 1973.

I had a family and grew up with my children loved every day of my life. I have always loved and believed in God . My mother died when I was 7 years old and it was always evident to me I was never alone. Even though I was young I always new a higher power looked over me.

On March 17, 2001 our phone rang at 4:30 p.m. and a nurse at the hospital asked me if I had a son named Jason . I replied, " yes, is everything all right" ? And she asked me to come to the hospital - there had been an accident and they thought it was my son and I should not come alone.

As long as I live I will never forget those words and the knowing feeling I had was so strong even though I prayed to my God, "please let my son be okay" as I begged God to not let those feelings be true I knew the news I would receive. The reason I am sharing this is even though so many parents have already been through this horrible nightmare some more than once I never want a human being to ever suffer the loss of their precious children without Our Lord.

He immediately took over my body, my mind, my soul - he literally held me up. I wanted to die to run and never come back, but there was no where I could go to make my heart whole again and until I go home I will know no peace except the love grace and mercy of my God.

When I want to die from the pain in my heart and the horrible missing in my gut I talk with him. There is no one else who understands, loves and listens to me in this world. I begged for dreams to assure me God had taken Jason home and that he was safe and with God but that was a long time coming.

I could not believe that I could not dream of my precious son - it was not normal. I share my most personal dream and I believe gift of God with you because I want you to know through Jesus Christ and his father Our Lord in heaven there is hope and I pray you will accept him into your heart and life so that you will never be alone.

The dream finally came and I rejoiced as only God could send this dream. I am vacuuming a rug. It is my kitchen rug. The kitchen is Jason's favorite place as a farm boy works hard and loves meal time. I am vacuuming stairs that go on and on my arms are tired I think I have never seen so many stairs when will they end? They are very visual and I vacuum on and on. I finally see a tiny door

and continue vacuuming until I reach it. I open the door and sitting on a chair is Jason! I asked him, "where have you been, I have searched for you everywhere I love you and miss you so much!" He was full of light (No other way to explain the vision of him) He simply smiled and said I knew you were coming mother! So simple yet so self explanatory,

God had shared my son and given me his promise "In my fathers house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am you shall be also. Please teach your children how to get to heaven - tell them that God lives within them not in the church and he is always with them and will never forsake them.

It is hard for me to write my heart but tonight I wish to witness to you all there is only hope in our Lord our God please let him into your hearts and lives before the rapture. God Bless and keep the children!

Cathy

I was a minister in the Nation of Islam

I was a minister in the Nation of Islam

By Khalif M. Hassan

"Nigger, do you see this black jack? I am going to teach you a lesson." I was told to take off all my clothes, but I refused. After arguing and being threatened, I decided to comply, except for my underwear. I was then thrown into a ten by ten foot metal box called "the Hole." It was cold and there was no light except for what was shining through a tiny peep hole. Three times a day bread, soup, and water were shoved through the slot in the door. I was fifteen years old. I had been raised as a Christian in a predominately White church. My mother attended church, but my father did not. Though he was an alcoholic, he was a good provider. At times, under the influence of alcohol, he would be abusive, especially towards my mother. My mother showed good Christian conduct. As a child, I never saw her drink alcohol or heard her use profanity. The conflict in my home left me very confused.

I learned all the Bible stories in Sunday school. I was taught that Jesus died for my sins. I can even remember asking God to come into my heart, yet I never knew him as my personal Savior. As a child, I liked going to church, because it was a place to have fun. It gave me opportunities other kids in my community did not have. However, as I grew older, I went to church just for something to do.

The people in the church were very loving and kind. Coming from a family of seven brothers and three sisters meant that we had great needs. The church was very helpful to our family. Each summer I looked forward to going to camp, which was sponsored by the Salvation Army. However, around the age of ten, I experienced both name calling and sexual abuse from a counselor.

I remember incidents of racism and name calling both in my school and community. Unconsciously anger began to swell inside me, and gradually I began to rebel, but I did not know why. I lived on the west side of railroad tracks that separated the two sides of town. Ninety-five percent of the people who lived on the east side were White. Ninety-five percent of the people on the west side were Black.

When I was fifteen, I was jumped by four White boys at school one day. While they were kicking me and stomping me on the ground, my White teacher stood watching. Since the teacher made no attempt to stop them, I decided to pull out the razor that I carried in my pocket for protection. As I did, the four boys ran. My teacher then told another teacher to call the police. I was charged with assault and battery for carrying a concealed weapon, taken to the juvenile section of the county jail, and locked up in a cell for three weeks. After the first week, I led a protest for being locked in a cell for such a long time. The mattresses of those involved in the protest were taken away. For seven days I slept on a box spring on the concrete floor. Then, because I had led the protest, I was taken to the wardens office, threatened and thrown in the Hole. After six days I was taken back to my cell to sleep on the box spring.

Shortly after being released from the juvenile center in 1966, I moved to Queens, New York to live with two of my aunts. It was during this time that I came in contact with the Muslims of the Nation of Islam. The only thing I knew about the Nation of Islam was what I had read in the autobiography of Malcolm X. He had lived in the East Elmhurst section of Queens, not far from where I then lived. I noticed how clean the Muslims in the community looked and how well they took care of business. Not very far up the street on Northern Boulevard was the headquarters of the Black Panther Party. I can remember a shoot-out they had with the police. They were very active in the community. There was a section of Northern Boulevard that was so dangerous it was nicknamed "Vietnam." Because of the conflict I was having inside of myself, I started getting involved with drugs.

On occasion I would attend church, searching for hope, but I did not hear anything that was relevant to me. I needed to hear about a God that would help me here and now, not after I died.

Because of drug use I ended up in the detention house called the Tombs, and eventually in Rikers Island. There I got involved with an Islamic group called the Five Percenters. Eventually I joined the Nation of Islam.

The Nation of Islam offered me the moral teachings, discipline and direction that I needed. I had been very confused. We had been called Niggers. We had been called Negros, Colored people, Black people, Afro-Americans, African-Americans, but I had not known who I was. The Nation of Islam gave me some type of identity.

After my release from Rikers Island, I moved back to New Jersey, got very involved in the Nation of Islam, and started teaching the message of Elijah Muhammad. I became quite visible and active in the community teaching in schools, community centers, and jails. We had a big impact on juvenile homes and inner cities.

Just to see what ministers were preaching about, I started attending different churches in the area. I heard a lot of hollering, whooping, and shouting, but no teaching. There was a lot of talk about a God in the sky, and about how people like me needed to hear about a savior that could help them.

Around the early part of 1972, I started going to Chicago to visit Elijah Muhammad. I also started attending some classes in Harlem, New York at Temple Number Seven. I met and began talking with Minister Louis Farrakan, who was the national representative of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. I received and learned all the lessons in the Nation of Islam.

By 1974 I had started reading the Quran and other Islamic books. These books did not coincide with some of the teachings of Mr. Muhammad. Around this time Elijah Muhammad's son, Wallace D. Muhammad, started teaching the ministers in the Nation of Islam, probably to prepare the members for the death of his father. At the time of his death on February 26, 1975, I was in Chicago. That day Wallace D. Muhammad was declared the leader of the Nation of Islam. He reinterpreted some of the teachings of his father and even admitted some mistakes that his father had made. He claimed that his father was wrong for teaching that White people were devils. In this way, Wallace D. Muhammad began to bring the followers of Elijah Muhammad into the mainstream of Islam. I can remember when Elijah Muhammad was asked by a foreign Muslim, "Mr. Muhammad, what is this strange teaching that you are teaching the people." Elijah Muhammad replied, "I am not here to teach Islam. I am here to save a baby from the fire." Wallace Muhammad taught that his father wanted to wake up the sleeping black giant by sending a shock

wave throughout the Black community.

I read the entire Quran and any book about Islam that I could find. Since no Muslim can pray properly in English, I learned to say my prayers in Arabic. I began to travel and study intensively under imams in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria. I read as many Hadith's about the traditions of Prophet Muhammad as I could. Because of my study, I eventually obtained the position of an imam. I delivered sermons in the mosque, led congregational prayers, and taught Islam on college campuses, in schools, and in communities. I began preaching very strongly against Christianity.

Around 1985, I began discussing Islam with my family. Islam teaches that Allah is one, not three. How could he be one and three at the same time? I read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, but I could not comprehend the concept of three in one.

My twin sister was attending a school called Christ for the Nations in Texas. We often wrote to each other. She wrote her views on Jesus Christ as the Son of God. I wrote about Jesus Christ as a prophet from my Islamic perspective.

Once I wrote telling my sister that Jesus could not have died on the cross, otherwise it would have been like committing suicide, since one man cannot die for everybody's sins. She phoned and told me, "Regardless of what you say or believe, Jesus died for your sins and he loves you. Someday you are going to accept Christ and become a Christian." I responded, "Not in a million years!" We continued to write and call each other. I also had conversations with my other two sisters and mother about Islam versus Christianity.

One day, my sister and I were talking on the phone when she said, "I have been praying for you and I challenge you to pray and ask God to prove to you that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he died on the cross for your sins." I accepted the challenge, because I love challenges and because I was confident in Islam. I decided that if God would prove to me that Christ died for my sins, then I would become a Christian. If not, I would teach and promote Islam like never before. I prayed that prayer often. I did not realize until later that hundreds of people were praying for my conversion.

One evening I was standing in front of a 7-11 store. Suddenly, a man asked me for directions to a church. When I asked him whom he knew in that church, he named my oldest sister. Realizing who I was, he said, "Oh, you are that Muslim we've been praying for." I insisted, "You don't have to pray for me. Islam is my religion. Allah is my god." As I looked at that minister, a strange feeling came over me.

As I kept challenging God with my prayers, strange things began to happen. One Sunday, after my teaching in the mosque on the story of Christmas and the Christian belief about the birth of Christ, a Muslim sister asked me to explain the Islamic view of the birth of Christ. I recited Surah 3:45-47 from the Quran. I had recited and explained these verses many times and had heard imams and Islamic scholars explain them. Yet as I spoke, for some unknown reason, deep within my heart doubt arose for the first time. I was not sure of my answer. I began to intensify my study of the Bible, comparing references to Jesus in the Bible with the ones in the Quran. I had no problems with the teaching of the virgin birth. The Quran says in Surah 3:47, "She said, O my Lord, how shall I have a son, when no man hath touched me." (Translation by A. Yusuf Ali.) What Islam rejects is calling Jesus Christ the Son of God.

My recitation of the Quran in Arabic was not articulate or fluent. However, it was understandable and acceptable enough to lead prayer in a mosque. One time as I recited Al Fatiha like I had done many times, strangely I could not remember each and every word. The recitation of the Quran is supposed to be word for word, without even one word left out. I could hear a Muslim brother behind me trying to correct me, but I could not remember. After prayer he came to me. An Egyptian, he was fluent in Arabic and the recitation of the Quran. I have never forgotten his words. He said, "Brother, because of your error of omitting a word, Allah will not accept our prayers. The imam is the one who stands in front. Everyone else follows him as he leads prayer. The responsibility of the prayer is on him. If he is incorrect, everyone's prayers are rejected." His words rang in my ears, and the weight of the responsibility was too great for me to bear. I told him that I would never lead prayer in the mosque again.

After that day, I knew there was something happening to me, but I did not know what. As much as I loved Islam, doubts began to enter my mind. My life as a Muslim began to unravel quickly.

Then one day I received a letter from my sister inviting me to attend her graduation ceremony from Christ for the Nations. I knew in my heart that this visit to Texas would be important. I telephoned my sister and told her, "I believe this trip will be a turning point in my life. I have been praying that prayer you asked me to pray. When I come back I will either be a Christian, or I will rededicate my life to Islam."

My sister met me at the airport and took me to her graduation. Singing and praise filled the air as we entered the auditorium. I could sense that it was special. After the service, my sister introduced me to a former Muslim from Africa. He began to explain why he had become a Christian. He explained that he had been raised a Muslim in a tribe that mixed old tribal practices with Islam. He shared an awesome testimony of how he came to know Jesus Christ.

The next day, my sister introduced me to an Egyptian student who was a former Muslim. I will never forget him. I was really impressed because he came from a long line of Muslims. He knew Islam and the Quran and was fluent in Arabic. He shared Philippians 2:5 with me. He began to tell me how God loved us so much that He came Himself in the very person of Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins, leaving his high throne and giving up his authority to take on human form and became a servant. He told me God was a personal God. He said his mother had told him, "If you denounce Christianity, I will give you one million dollars. For you to confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is shirk [idolatry] in Islam." She said, "Son, if you do not denounce Christianity, then from this day forward you are no longer my son. You are dead." He told his mother that he could never, never deny Jesus Christ as the Son of God, because Jesus was his Savior. He told me how he cried and was deeply hurt because his whole family turned their backs on him. His words touched my heart deeply.

The next day, my sister took me to her church. There they were singing, praising and worshipping God, and I decided that day that I would accept Jesus Christ. After the pastor gave his talk, I told him I wanted to accept Jesus. I did not understand the concept of the Trinity, but I had to take a step of faith. Everything else I had tried had disappointed me. The minister explained that understanding would come, but I must first experience Jesus Christ by faith.

I did not understand what I had done, but I knew I was a changed man inside. It was like a ton of weight lifted off of me. I no longer had to try to live by law or try to be good enough to get to heaven.

Today, I know that I have a personal relationship with Jesus. I know that it is by God's grace that I am saved.

As a Muslim I was formerly known as Khalif Majid Hassan. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior in Dallas, Texas in December, 1986.

Jeff's Testimony

Jeff's Testimony

By Jeff

I have had a very interesting life, with some unique experiences. I was born and raised in a middle-class, Jewish home. Though not very religious, we went to the temple for most of the holidays, and kept many of the Jewish traditions. I was BarMitzvah'd at age 13, after years of Hebrew school and religious training. My religious training consisted of bouncing superballs, trading comic books, and flipping baseball cards. We read Bible stories in books about Jewish people, but I never owned nor even saw an Old Testament. I saw the Tenach, (torah), first 5 books of Old Testament and we had prayer books as well. My religious books were a joke. They made Bible stories sound as believable as AESOPs' fables, very liberal teaching.

I was a teen; I had no need for religion I figured anyway. I supposed if there was a God, and a life hereafter I would go to the good place cause I was a good guy. If not, I figured my body would make good fertilizer when I died. The only time in my whole life unto adulthood, I heard the name of Christ as a curse word. I also was called a Christ killer in elementary school. I had no idea who Christ really was, only that I didn't kill him. I knew Catholics and some people from other religions. But, I was taught if you were not a Jew, you were a Christian. I knew Christians hated and persecuted Jews all throughout their history. So all my friends were people who kept their religious beliefs to themselves. I just grew up doing my thing, being a bit of a troublemaker in school. I thought I was kind of slick, managing to get away with all my antics. I was a smart mouthed, trouble making punk.

The only time anybody ever tried to tell me about Jesus was my junior year in high school. He was a Catholic that told me he had been born again, and was now a Baptist. I mocked him and wanted nothing to do with some crazy religious fanatic.

I wanted to be rich, to have new cars, travel, etc. My God was money. I couldn't wait to graduate and find a good paying job. I figured if I had money, I'd surely be happy. I found a good job and spent money like it was going out of style. I ran up debts like my job and bank account would last forever. Unfortunately work became slow and I was laid off.

I had a scam going with a buddy. We went into stores and changed price tags on items to real cheap prices, purchased them and sold them as at a profit. I thought it was just getting a bargain, not stealing; the store could afford it. One day my buddy said it was wrong, it was stealing. He said since he is a Christian, it must stop. I was livid. He was messing up my money making scheme.

That started a very intense period in my life. I started challenging him on what he believed and why he believed it. He had few answers. This angered me even more, that he'd give up our scam for nothing. Although I'd never admit it to him, I felt empty inside. I had chucked Judaism and tried worshiping things but they didn't satisfy. About this time he started going to college so I figured I'd

check out college too. Why not? Maybe the answers I was seeking could be found in knowledge.

I took some courses in Philosophy, Psychology and World Religions. I was interested in what was going on out there. I was surprised to see that there were some differences in religions. I had thought they all believed the same thing. I checked out some Korean religion where they prayed to this thing on the wall called a gonyo. But nobody could even tell me what they were saying except it was supposed to make you rich and all that good stuff. I also checked into some other religions like Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, but they didn't seem right to me. I was on a quest for "truth" and would leave no stone unturned on my quest, except Christianity. I knew Jews don't become Christians.

My conversations/arguments with my friend increased about Christianity. This searching process continued over a couple year period. I decided one day to see what was in this Bible that I had heard about. There was a Christian bookstore at a local mall, and I decided to go in and buy this Bible. I remember being very cautious, as I went into the bookstore to be sure nobody I knew was around. I'd hate to been seen in that place, I was shocked that there were so many Bibles. This search sure wasn't getting any easier. The manager helped me pick out a Bible and I went out in the mall to start reading it. I had many questions and few answers. I figured I could debunk this Christian stuff and move on to the next step. I decided I'd start at the beginning of the New Testament, with Matthew. I challenged God before starting. And said, "If you are who you say you are, then show me why the Jews don't believe in Jesus." A challenge I assumed He couldn't answer. When I read Matthew 28:11-15, I was shocked. God answered my question and I knew all those years I had been lied to. I then told God I believed in him, and Jesus.

I honestly didn't know what I believed in but knew truth had just smacked me in the face, and woke me up. My next concern was what do I do next?

My buddy was going to a Catholic Church and so I wound up there. My first mass felt very strange. I knelt on the floor the whole time. I had no idea they had kneelers. This was the first time I had been in any church in my lifetime. I was baptized, confirmed and had first communion after going to some religious classes. I really got into novenas, prayers to saints and Mary, and every other ritual I could find. I had no idea what I was doing but the church said it was the thing to do so I listened.

Catholicism was very much like Judaism, with a little of Jesus thrown in with many rituals, prayers and much tradition. I assumed all churches were the same anyway. During this time, while going to school at Cleveland State, I became involved in the Newman Center. It is an on campus group of Catholics. They were people my age that I could talk to and they even had guitar mass, which I really enjoyed

In retrospect, like my ancestors after being set free, I returned to slavery. I was trying to earn my salvation, hoping I was good enough to get to heaven. I read my Bible less and less. I had no concept of grace. Ignorance is not bliss. Religion is the opiate of the masses.

I began to have discussions with other students and the Priests, and had more questions than answers. I was confused, things just didn't seem to agree with the Bible, at times. I saw the hypocrisy in the priests and others and especially myself. One day I walked down the street to downtown Cleveland and met a man that would change my life.

It is amazing how God can change a person. It is also amazing how He puts people in our lives at just the right time, coincidence, nope Godincidence! If I had met this man before I would have mocked him or at best ignored him. Yes, me, Mr. Cool, became a fool, a fool for Christ (1 Cor. 1:18-25). This middle-aged black man was standing outside May Co. on Public Square in downtown Cleveland, preaching and singing with his guitar. I had never met anybody so bold in my life, so I stopped to talk to him. His name was Orris Price and he ran a Downtown Bible club. I thank God for this man because I don't know what would have happened to me, if I hadn't met him. This shows the importance and impact one person can have on another. The other thing I'll never forget is that God can use anybody, if they are willing. If God used a donkey to talk to Balaam, He can use me. (Numbers 22:23-25.)

Mr. Price took me under his wings and mentored me. I felt like a fish out of water at first; I had never heard all these hymns before. I had many questions - Why this? Why that? Is the Catholic Church teaching me the truth? The Lord equipped him with wisdom. He'd say, "Read your bible, what does it say?" He forced me into the word. He challenged me, "don't just tell what you believe, tell me why you believe it." He taught me to street preach wearing a sandwich board on the streets, with Isaiah 53:5 on one side and another scepter on the other side. I began to visit many of the Black Baptist Churches in the area wearing my Jesus made me kosher (kasrite), clean fit for service.

Through the years as I grew in the Lord many doors have opened, many dealing with teens, which is my heart's burden. I was never told as a teen about Jesus and have dedicated my life to giving teens at least the opportunity to hear the gospel. I have worked for inter-varsity, campus life and was even youth pastor for a few years at a Baptist church. Through the years the Lord has continued to work in my life, and has taught me very much. I have had the privilege to be blessed by many great friends on and off-line. I have traveled all over the USA, seeing this awesome country. I am under construction, and unsure what is in store for me next. I have no bible degree, but attend the school of hard knocks. I am a Graduate in heaven. I have completed some series from Moody Bible correspondence school. And would enjoy taking more classes when able to. My life is an open book, if anybody has any questions, ask me and I will answer. I am available to speak to any group anytime and anyplace that the Lord leads.

In my years as a Christian, after not growing up in the church, I have a few observations. I am saddened by many who have never read the Old Testament. If you want to understand the Church you need to understand Israel, and if you want to understand the New Testament you need to understand the Old Testament. Also, the Church has lost its Jewish roots, I was shocked to find out that Jesus and the disciples were Jewish. If the church has any intention of reaching the Jews it needs to understand Jewish holidays and basic Judaism. My life verses are 1 Cor 9:19-23. If we want to win someone to Christ we need to understand them, walk a mile in their shoes. We need not be so quick to judge each other. We need to be known for our love. It has been said that the Christian army is the only army that shoots its wounded.

Also the lack of money spent on reaching the youth is shameful - they are our most precious resource, There is a great battle going on for the minds of our kids and we are not winning. I call myself a completed Jew because, Jesus made me whole before Christ; I knew part of the story but when I accepted Jesus into my life He completed me. I read the New Testament and read as they

say 'the rest of this story.'

Shalom,Jeff

Y'shua--The Missing Piece of the Puzzle

Y'shua--The Missing Piece of the Puzzle

By Moshe Shuai

Life was a mystery to me when I was growing up. As a child we observed the Jewish traditions and holidays at home. In Israel people are either Orthodox, traditional, or secular. To be traditional means to observe the holidays and traditions, but it doesn't mean to acknowledge God. Our family kept the traditions but left God out of the picture.

I was born 25 years ago in Kiriat Haim, near Haifa area. My parents, both deaf, divorced when I was two years old. My two sisters and I were then sent to different foster homes. I was educated in the Jewish traditions by my foster parents.

When I was 16 years old, I went to live in my mother's house once again. Then, when I was 18, I went into the Israeli army. I took my three years of service seriously, guarding a big warehouse where military equipment was stored. When I was released from the army I returned to my mother's house. Soon after I traveled to Acco for the Feast of Tabernacles - Sukkot. I was there on business, selling vacation time-shares when I met a believer in Jesus whom I will call Steven. He was witnessing about Y'shua to the Israelis attending the yearly festival.

I stood with Steven on a busy street corner as he explained the Gospel to me for over one and a half hours. He said that the Messiah had come and His name is Y'shua. I told Steven that I did not know who Y'shua was, but that I had heard stories about His many miracles and that the Christians believed in Him. Our conversation was very friendly and ended with a handshake.

Steven had given me a book, *Why Me*, by Yakov Damkane, a messianic Israeli believer. I eventually read the book but was not convinced and put it to the side.

A year later one of my friends became interested in Orthodox Judaism. I remembered Yakov's book and re-read it, underlining key points to show my friend. But the truth of what I was reading began to open up to me. God revealed Himself to me from the pages of that book, in spite of my objections.

I found myself drawn to this man Y'shua. I began to understand what He had done for me as a sinner. Y'shua the Messiah was the piece of the puzzle that was missing in my understanding of God.

I contacted Yakov Damkane at his phone number in the back of the book. I told him that I now believed in Y'shua. We prayed together and I received Y'shua as my Lord and Savior. Yakov took my phone number and told me that someone would be in contact with me.

Several days later Yakov called to say that someone would be coming to visit me, and who should appear at my house, but Steven himself! God showed me that He has a sense of humor. Steven and I met together once a week for discipleship studies. I began to grow in my faith and started

attending the Bethesda Congregation in Haifa.

I wanted to share the Gospel with my mother, but I only have limited knowledge of sign language. The Lord sent a wonderful deaf believer named Sarah*, and she and my mother established a good friendship. Eventually my mother prayed with Sarah to receive the Lord!

In the summer of 1997 I was invited by Efraim Goldstein to participate in the Jews for Jesus witnessing campaign in New York. We first had two weeks of evangelism training at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. My English is very basic, but the Lord helped me to do better on the exams than I expected.

Most significant to me are some of the witnessing experiences I had on the streets while handing out tracts. In Chicago, I prayed with an older woman to receive the Lord. When we went on to New York, I was able to pray with many people to receive Y'shua as the Messiah. One of these people was an 80-year-old Jewish woman in a wheelchair. This experience was very dear to me.

I've been through both the Jews for Jesus campaign and Israeli Army basic training and believe me, the campaign is harder! But the Lord gave me the peace to go through it all, and I even went on a second campaign in '98.

Before the campaign in '97 I struggled over what I would do with my life. Through that summer experience the Lord showed me that He wants me to be a full-time missionary. After the '97 campaign I moved to Tel Aviv to begin studying at the King of Kings Bible College, and I moved in with my father. The Lord used Sarah and another deaf believer, Robert*, to lead my earthly father to accept Y'shua.

The year I spent at the King of Kings Bible College helped me to gain more theological knowledge to use in evangelism. Now, as I get my practical training in New York as a Jew for Jesus outreach worker, I look forward to the future when I will return to Israel as a full-time witness for Y'shua. Life is no longer a mystery to me, for I know what He has called me to do, to be a light to my people.

A Vision of Heaven Changed My Life

A Vision of Heaven Changed My Life

By Robert Sornsen

On December 26, 1989, I was travelling along East Road in Lakeside, Michigan, when a snowplough pulled out into my lane. I was going between 45-50 miles per hour and when we collided my 1985 Ford LTD was totalled. I was rushed to the Memorial Hospital in St. Joseph, Michigan, where the emergency room personnel struggled to save my life.

As I lay there, a product of a terrible home life and an atheist at heart, something like an out-of-body experience occurred. I appeared to be in a dark place that was endless with no floor, walls or boundaries. I felt a very evil, cold, and scary presence far behind me. Whatever it was, I knew I didn't want anything to do with it. It was pulling me towards it. I was completely terrified and I ran in terror.

I saw a great light in this world of darkness. I moved towards this light and a figure appeared at a distance. I froze in fear. I crouched and started to tremble. When I looked up, a tall man about 6'3" or 6'4" with a white robe and a gold sash was standing in front of me. He was of the greatest power I had ever imagined and more. I couldn't see his face because his eyes were the brightest light I had ever seen, ten times the sun's intensity.

I asked if there was a heaven. The man, who I now recognized as Jesus, could have just said "yes" and because of his power and glory I would have believed Him, but instead He transported me to heaven. I appeared in an open field and expected to feel the wind sweep all around me. But there was no wind, just gospel music. I never liked gospel music before but at that moment it was by far the most beautiful music I had ever imagined.

I looked around and it was like daytime but there was no sun. I thought that was strange and Jesus appeared again. He said, "Come see the light." He led me through Heaven. He knew my every thought. We walked side by side. Jesus was talking and I looked at Him from a side view and His eyes were like red flames. He said, "Do not be frightened. I am in spiritual form as you are." I looked at my body and there was no fat and my feet and legs were dangling as we moved. I was floating off the ground. I looked up and we were passing through a lot of gigantic mansions that were so beautiful that it seemed like everything on earth I had ever seen was black and white. Everyone working on the mansion were in a big hurry like they were expecting a lot of people very soon. As we walked past the mansions, one of the workers stopped and waved to me and the overwhelming sense I got was that this place is home.

We walked on and Jesus said, "There is the light you wanted to know about." I looked and the image I saw was more than any words can describe. I saw a castle with light coming from it 1,000 times the intensity of the sun. This light was more than words can describe. Even though it was so bright, it didn't hurt my eyes. It was warm and brought to mind every good feeling I ever had plus

other feelings beyond imagination. It was everlasting and I knew I would never forget it or grow accustomed to it if I lived there.

I also knew that through this light I would never be tired or sick. We entered the castle. Everything inside was perfect. I saw many statues and paintings. It got brighter and brighter as we moved through the castle. It was the same light from before. As we came upon a doorway, the light became more intense. I didn't look into it. I tried to see what was in the room. I saw some chairs and steps leading up to the throne of God. I looked up into His light and in an instant was transported back to the same place where Jesus first met me. He was there and He said, "I am the truth, the light, and the only way."

I came back from that experience to spend 20 hours in that emergency room. My life would never be the same. Months later, after recovering, I found my way to the Lighthouse Village Church of God where I committed my life to Christ. I'm serving Him and working in the church, sharing with others my testimony. That glimpse of heaven changed my life. I plan to return there as a member of the redeemed!

Taryk's Testimony

Taryk's Testimony

By Taryk

When I was nine years old I began to attend the Mosque due to the influence of my grandmother who was a very devout Muslim. My parents were not that devout. At this same time I began to ask many questions about God. I really desired to know more about Him. At thirteen I began to read the Qur'an in Turkish. It started to bring out many questions about one person in particular. This person was Jesus Christ as the Word of God. I also began to think about an older religion that the Qur'an was talking about, Christianity. This was my first encounter with Jesus.

The second influence about Jesus came from Victor Hugo's book (LesMiserable). In this novel the life of the priest really influenced me. The third influence really pushed me to the Bible. This came through the TV series, "Little House on the Prairie". It was here that I first met a Christian family. They were talking with God as if He was their friend. How could they just talk to God like He was one of their friends? This really had an impact on me, because if you need to talk with God in my religion you first needed to perform so many rituals.

Because of these three influences I decided to visit a church, so I went to one near my house. I asked some questions there but the answers didn't seem adequate to me. In any case, I kept attending for one year. On the same street there was one small Bible bookstore, the only one in Istanbul. I met with a believer there and he invited me to a small meeting. From the outset the preaching from the Bible and the verse by verse commentary really influenced me. I believe that it was in that meeting that I truly understood who Jesus was. This knowledge created a lot of stress inside me. It even affected my blood pressure. This stress came from my spiritual ties with our nationalistic fundamental culture. According to this view if a Turk converted to any other religion, mainly Christianity, he would betray his own nation. These thoughts disturbed me deeply. But on the other hand, I was hearing the call of Jesus as a peaceful voice.

At this time I began to study Arabic Literature and Islamic History at Istanbul University. During my studies it seemed I was always encountering Jesus for I could see Him in the midst of the Islamic main sources. If one was looking for the creator of Life, He was there as the Word of God. And He was in fact God himself. I finally understood why the term the "Word of God" influenced me in the Koran. Satan can twist most of the reality but he cannot hide it fully. And so I finally understood this reality in the midst of my Islamic studies. There was simply no way to escape this Jesus and so I decided to pray and receive Him as my Lord and Savior.

Christ Changed My Life

Christ Changed My Life

By Sommer

Unlike many of my brothers and sisters on this website, I had attended Church as a child. This was only during the summer time though, when I visited my mother's parents in The USA. I grew up in Kuwait with a Muslim father and a Christian mother.

Having a Muslim father required me to study Islam. I remember the confusion at such a young age. I thought Jesus died on the cross, but I had friends who strongly disputed this. We were only in primary (or elementary) school. By the time I was nine years old, I had a nice and pleasant Arabic tutor who was a Muslim. She did not only help me with my homework, she took me on picnics and other trips with her family and neighbors. I thought of becoming a Muslim by the time I was eleven and she was my tutor until the end of that year.

At age twelve and on I was in confusion again, but I decided that loving God was important. I was easily occupied by a good group of friends. Even in my later teen years I went to parties where there was dancing with both sexes. My mother would always make sure that there was a parent at the party. Most of the time these parents were scared when I arrived, because I was female and Kuwaiti. I never got into trouble, as far as drinking or drugs or even sex. I felt like I was a pretty good person.

I woke up to find the truth, when I had graduated from high school. This was the same year that Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. I was saddened and hurt by what was going on. I was in America with my family. I had friends who were stuck in the country and some of them were Palestinian and Jordanian! One of my Palestinian friends had to give up her jewelry and beautiful clothing, before leaving. I would cry every night feeling like I was in the same identity crisis that started when I was thirteen. Eventually, all of my friends made it safe through the Gulf War, but one of my Palestinian friends lost her father due to unhappiness of leaving Kuwait. Life was unfair, I became angry at everyone, especially at the journalists. I thought that once Kuwait was free, I would be happy again, but it was not true. It would never be the same. My friends were supposed to be my enemies, though they had nothing to do with Saddam. Some of my friends decided they were my enemies, but two stayed loyal. In all this mess, I asked God what was going on. I began to have a hate for people in general. The nice person that I thought I was, was no longer there.

I was not a nice person and I was very lonely. However, God was not about to leave me in the dark. I was going to Church, since I could easily in America. I was asking questions, but at the time Christians got on my nerves. I felt like they were finding excuses for their sins by saying Jesus forgives. I decided I was not going to think about Christians or Muslims. I was going to compare the Quran and the Bible, and look at the men of these religions. Here was Muhammad who said in the Quran that other men could only have four wives, but he was special, he could have more. As a female, I was also questioning the idea of virgins in Heaven (the houri.) If women went to

Heaven to why was nothing specific in the Quran about her rewards? And wine was all right in Heaven but not on Earth. Isn't what is wrong on Earth still wrong in Heaven? Then I looked to Jesus and saw a man who was not self serving, never married because he knew he would die soon, and also he loved his enemies. He even spoke to the dirtiest people, the prostitutes and the tax collectors. He even loved them and wanted to forgive them. I let this become personal and realized he forgave my dark and hateful heart. If he could do that I had to forgive the Iraqi soldiers for our property damage. I was nineteen years old, when I excepted Jesus as Lord. However, it would take me another year to forgive the man himself, Saddam Hussein. The Holy Spirit worked in my heart, and taught me to love people, even with all of their problems. I thank the Lord for what I have been through, and I now know what God wanted. He did not want me to be a Christian just in name, or because of my mother or American culture. God wanted me to be his in truth and in love, no matter where I go. If you ever feel so hateful, that you think it would destroy your soul, turn to Jesus. It doesn't matter where you are from, or what you have done, he has come to save the world through his death and resurrection, not to condemn it. I can say that the Lord has blessed me with good friends, even though I have moved to three different cities in America due to my husband's work. Still, Jesus is the best friend anyone could have. If you don't know him, please give him a try.

Peace be with you Sommer

Simply Being Born Again

Simply Being Born Again

By Mike Z.

My family attended Presbyterian churches as I was growing up. We moved from Fargo ND to Tifton GA when I was 13. This was a Q like moment for me. The things in life that I depended on to make sense of things seemed quite fragile. I started attending the youth group at our church to make new friends. The leader of the group was a woman named Lavonne. She carried herself with an inner peace I had not perceived in any one else before. I knew that she had several teenagers herself and that according to worldly standards her circumstances were at times difficult. In spite of this she had her peace.

Over a period of about one month I would spend hours in my room alone pondering my situation and comparing myself to Lavonne. I came to the conclusion that the difference between her and me was that she had Jesus in her life and I did not. I asked Jesus into my heart and into my life. At that point I did not realize that I was a sinner in need of a savior. My faith was more like the bumper sticker -- no Jesus no peace, know Jesus know peace.

I started reading the Bible and growing in my faith. The next three years living in Tifton I think I grew a lot. My family moved to Athens GA and began attending a very liberal Pres. church. At the time I did not know the difference. My remaining years in high school and college I did not grow much in my faith. I prayed and read the Bible but there was no one challenging me or encouraging me.

I moved to MD to attend law school. In the spring of my first year I found a church I really liked. I picked it because I had heard they had a good softball team. Really mature huh? Any how I realized at that first softball practice this was beyond my rather mundane expectations. I actually went to softball practice before church. The church is called Chapelgate and is located in Marriotsville MD which is in the west of Baltimore burbs. I have been challenged and encouraged at Chapelgate. First primarily in the singles group and when I graduated from that by getting married through various Sunday Schools and small group Bible studies. I've been at Chapelgate about 12 years and I have grown much more in those years than any other time period in my life.

Mike Z

Ali's Story

Ali's Story

By Ali Khan

I was born in eastern Kurdistan (Iran). My parents were nominal Muslims and I never really gave much thought to religion. At a very young age, I was sent to an Islamic school to learn the Qur'an but I dropped out after a few months and never went back. All of the washing and different times for prayers never made sense to me. Whenever there was talk about religion, I would just become sick in the stomach. I hated religion. I have always thought that it was something that enslaved people and that religious people were dumb.

Because of my dad's political activity and his troubles with the Iranian police, we had to leave our homeland. After a few years we settled in the west. Life became a hell. Discrimination was everywhere, not knowing what to do; I started hanging out with the wrong people. Without thinking twice, I started experimenting with drugs even though it was hard for me to get my hands on them. My friends and I would drink every Saturday night and watch pornographic films.

At one point, I just became sick of this kind of life and I was searching for a new life, for a way to escape all of these problems. As problems were mounting day by day, I started thinking of suicide, but I did not have the guts to do anything like that. When I told a Muslim friend of mine all of these problems, he suggested that I go with him to the mosque and so I did.

That night, when I left the mosque, I brought a copy of the Qur'an home with me. Reading it just made me depressed and I could not get anything out of it. When I told this to my friend, he told me that I should read it in Arabic. But Arabic was not my mother language and I did not speak it. I started taking Arabic classes but it was so hard and I felt like this was just making the problem grow.

I accidentally got a Kurdish Qur'an, translated by the famous Kurdish poet, Hajar. It was just as empty and dead and boring (with respect) as the English was. I finally made my decision that I would not read it again as there is nothing I could gain. It could not solve my problems.

One day, I was with my girlfriend at a bookstore. I bought a book that just made me curious. It was called Siddhartha by German author, Herman Hesse. When I read that book, I started thinking about Buddhism since the book was based on Buddha's life. But I still felt like the answers weren't there and something was missing.

One day, I met a few people who told me about God's love and His mercy. It led to a lengthy discussion. When I was about to leave, I accepted a Bible and a tract. When I went home, I opened it and closed it, and then put it aside. When I woke up, it was 4:30 in the morning. Whenever I get up that early, I get headaches and I become dizzy, but this time, I felt like I had been up all night and I did not feel sick at all.

To my surprise and shock, the tract that I was given the day before was on my chest. Still hard-headed, I told myself that all of this time I have been running from God. I would try to just read the Bible this time and see what it really had to say. As I opened it, I saw a verse where it was written, "He who is in Christ is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come." I thought to myself that all this time I have been looking for a new life and here it is being offered. I put my Bible down and went to the bathroom. I washed my face. I looked in the mirror and all of my disgusting life just felt like "an old thing". I could feel God's Holy Spirit. When I came back to my bedroom, the Holy Spirit just brought me to my knees and that morning at around 6 o'clock, I accepted Christ as my Savior.

When I went to school that morning, I felt like I had rockets under my shoes. I walk all around and I just couldn't feel my feet. I could not help smiling. God's presence was everywhere. For some of my addictions, I sought help. My grades in school improved big time. My relationship with my parents and sibling also improved. I owe all of this to Jesus Christ who demonstrated His love by dying on the cross so that I don't have to pay the consequences for my sin.

Ali

IS GOD A FAIR GOD?

IS GOD A FAIR GOD?

By Fareed

Absolutely! He should be or else He's not worthy of being worshipped. "Don't talk about God like that!", you say? If God cannot be trusted, then who can you trust?

Every person on earth in the history of mankind was created through God's miracle design of procreation, except Adam the first man, and Jesus Christ, born of a virgin. This means we're all created from our one and only sovereign creator. Even Adam was created with God's own hands. The Christians believe He was created from the earth; the Muslims believe he was created from a blood cell. Whatever it is, that's irrelevant right now. The miraculous birth of Jesus is what we have to be concerned with, but I'll get to that later.

Let's go back to the beginning and talk about God's fairness. Since God is fair, and we are all His creation, then we are all created equally. Most everyone on this earth is born into some form of religion, whether Jewish, Catholic, Protestant (nominal Christians), Muslim, Buddhist, Shinto, Taoist, Hindu or whatever. We grow up believing our religion is the true way of life, redemption and salvation. Although ALL these religions contradict each other (according to their holy scriptures) in the most important declarations of their faith, everyone born of these religions perceive their religion to be truth.

If a person grows up from childhood with his parents calling him stupid fool every day, he will grow up believing this to be true! If a child grows up with his parents' encouragement, he will grow up with self-confidence and ambition. It's the same with religion. If we're born into, say, Protestant Christianity, we are taught it is the true religion. Rubbish! If we're born into Islam, we're taught from birth it's the truth. Rubbish! Then we passed down our religious beliefs to our children and they believe it too. This is known as religious tradition. Now, how can the one and only God have so many truths? If He does, He cannot be trusted. The truth of the matter is that in order for God to be a fair God, He cannot allow one person to be born into a "true religion" and another person into a false religion. The only way God can be fair is if we were all born separated from Him, born in sin, inherited from man's first sinner, Adam. We have to be like Abraham - pagans who searched for the true God.

Previously mentioned was the fact that the first man (whom was uniquely) created had sinned and we all inherited his sinful nature. Although he was uniquely created, he still had the inherited characteristics of what he was created from. He was created from the earth for the earth. God told him to till the land and take care of the land. God gave him guidelines to replenish the earth. God gave him dominion over all things on the earth including the animals. He was to take care of the animals - not abuse them. Adam was God's special creation for the earth.

Now, the second and last unique creation - or was Christ a creation? Have you ever asked yourself why Jesus had to be born of a virgin? You may say - so he can heal and perform all those miracles. In the Old Testament, Elijah, Elisha and Moses performed some of the greatest healings and miracles in history, but they weren't born of a virgin. But Jesus did so many miracles, you say. God is not limited. He could have done the same amount of miracles through any other man if He had chosen to.

Then, why did the most unique birth in the history of man have to take place? Remember Adam and how he sinned? Jesus was born of a virgin so he could redeem us from that sin. You see, anyone born from the sperm and egg of a man and woman inherits the sin nature from Adam and Eve. Children inherit qualities from their mothers and fathers in their genes. The inherent quality of Jesus Christ from His mother was His flesh; the inherent quality from His Father was Divinity.

God is spirit, man is flesh and Jesus was both. Jesus was not a sinner, but His body became sin. He had become a curse for all of us so we, by accepting Him in our hearts, could be redeemed. You see, God knows what it's like to be tempted, slandered and killed. He can identify with us through Jesus Christ. God also taught us a lesson about the flesh. The body of Jesus, the inherited quality of Mary, was killed. The inherited quality of His Father, God the Spirit, had always existed from before the foundation of the earth when Jesus rose again on the third day according to Jewish time, and defeated death.

We, too, have to die in our flesh some time, but the flesh is only temporary. It is the spirit which lives forever. We must have a spiritual rebirth in order to be redeemed by God the Spirit. Our good works cannot get us in communion with God. That is something of the flesh! And it's selfish! All religions believe that by being a good person, you can go to heaven and yet they all contradict each other in the most important areas. You must believe in what God has done for you through Jesus Christ, not what you can do. God must have the glory - not us! There is only one God and Jehovah is His name and Jesus Christ is the redeemer.

Wait a minute! Didn't you say earlier that if we're born into Protestant Christianity, it's rubbish? This stuff about Jesus sounds like Christianity to me! Yes, religious tradition is rubbish; that is a fleshly birth. You must be born of the spirit which is a birth of choice. Growing up as a Muslim, I was told I am responsible for my own actions. That's what God says too.

From the words of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, "Most assuredly, I say to you unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, `you must be born again.'" (John 3:5-7)

There is only one entity in this universe who can come up with something so complex, spiritual and rational at the same time. His nature is hard to comprehend, yet it is apprehendable. His mysterious ways seem to be more understandable now that he has walked with us 2000 years ago. Only Jehovah god can be this and do this.

Religion is man's way of reaching God. Born again Christianity is having a relationship with God, made possible by Him reaching us!

My Muslim friends - I know the Qu'ran says if anyone has any doubt that Allah is one God and Mohammed is His messenger, this is an unpardonable sin. That has been put in there to lead you into bondage to religious tradition.

You have to become like Abraham to find the truth - a person who had no religion, but knew there was a God in heaven. He came in faith, not religious tradition. Just keep talking to God in whatever language you speak and ask him to lead you to the truth. Approach Him in humility with an open heart. He may not lead you to "Christianity", but He will lead you to Jesus Christ, the Word of God.

Fareed

Dinah's Testimony

Dinah's Testimony

By Dinah Turnil Sered

My name is Dinah Turnil Sered and I am a second-generation Jewish believer in Jesus. My father is from Guatemala; he came to believe in Jesus through an American missionary at the age of six. He moved to New York when he was eighteen. My mother, who is from Colombia, grew up in a secular Jewish home. Her family moved to New York when she was twelve. There she came to believe in Jesus when she was invited to a church. Through my mother, the message of Y'shua was spread to all of her family, even in Colombia. Today, most are believers in him.

I was born in Queens, New York, and it was there that God did a miracle in my life. I was a year-and-a-half old when I ate chipped paint from the wall which contained lead. I was rushed to the hospital and the doctor told my parents that the prognosis looked bleak. I would most likely die from lead poisoning or be severely mentally handicapped. Immediately, my parents involved family and church members in praying for me. My grandmother related that she had a vision from God that I was healed. The doctor hadn't started treatment, but my mother insisted that I be tested again. When I was, the doctor couldn't believe the lab reports. "The lead levels in Dinah's blood are drastically decreasing," he reported, "and the lead is exiting through her urine." Three years later, my preschool teacher told my mother that I had the mental capacity of a six-year-old, despite the fact that I was only four. God mercifully spared my life and prevented the brain damage the doctors had felt was inevitable.

It wasn't until I was ten that I made a public confession of faith in Y'shua. At age seventeen, I joined the Army Reserves, went to basic training in South Carolina and then advanced training in Texas. Then I moved back to New York City, as did the rest of my family.

I know God saved me from physical death when I was a baby and from spiritual death at the age of ten so that I would be able to live with faith in Him today.

God's Patience Leads to Repentance

God's Patience Leads to Repentance

By Larry Pierce

My testimony is a pretty simple one but nonetheless powerful. I grew up in a regular family but my grandmother was a Pentecostal preacher. So my mom and dad believed in raising us kids in the church but we were in and out of church instead of being consistent.

We attended a few different churches over my childhood. I grew up in the world though. As a young person I never really connected with being a Christian because we were so inconsistent in church attendance.

Through the years as I continued to fall in and out of the world, God would place men and women who really knew Him in my path. But instead of coming toward God I would run away because I never knew that in order to make a change, we have to want to do that from our heart. I sat back and would say, "Here I am God, I am waiting for you to make a change in my life". Of course nothing would happen. Then I learned that God will not push himself on anybody and in order to change, we have to seek Him!

After many years of living in the world, having sex with any women I could, drugs, rock and roll music and living a very unsettled life, I married a wonderful woman.

After 2 years of marriage I was still very unsettled in my heart, I was incredibly restless and wanted so much more. I thought, "there has to be more in this life than just marriage, kids and work"? I tried to fill that void with everything from dirt bikes, jet skis, going to the bars, hanging with different friends, etc. Nothing seemed to fill that void and that hunger for something more, not even my new wife.

At that point in my life, something told me that my wife and I needed to return to church. We began going to a small Christian church and soon accepted Christ and were baptized together, but the church offered nothing as far as growth or discipleship training. After about 3 years I met a man at work who is absolutely on fire for God and through his church he began to disciple me. My wife went through discipleship training as well. After about 2-3 months my wife and I changed churches and thoroughly enjoy our new church. We have been called into youth ministry and spend every other month teaching our pre-teens about God. We serve on staff as youth leaders and I have felt the call to be a youth pastor and will soon begin Bible College and will continue to pursue Gods calling on our lives. God is so awesome. He can change anyone! He took me and has absolutely transformed me from a man who was on his way to hell to a man with a passion for Christ.

Thank-you,

Larry Pierce

Sirpil's Testimony

Sirpil's Testimony

By Sirpil

My grandmother was an Orthodox Christian. When she came to Turkey many years ago, she became a believer of Jesus Christ and started to join a small Protestant church in Istanbul. My mother wasn't a believer until I grew up. My father was a Muslim from Bulgarian Turks.

For many years I didn't understand much about the Bible. From time to time with my grandmother I joined the Sunday Services, but it was not really speaking to me. My father teased us a lot with the Christian faith. This is the reason I didn't take the faith seriously. When I was 17 years old, I started to have a lot of psychological problems. My family took me to many doctors. But I didn't receive an answer for my problem. God really started to work in my heart through this problem.

One day I was sitting hopeless at home. Some ladies from church visited me. They started to talk about Jesus. Even though I had heard about Jesus, this time something really hit me in the deepest part of my heart.

Still I was so doubtful to say yes to Jesus as my Savior and Lord. I was really afraid to give control of my life to somebody. I thought he really wouldn't let me live my own life. Even though I was sick psychologically, still my hope was to live a free lifestyle without any limits.

After that day I really fought with myself. "I will never give up, I will never be directed by someone who I do not know". These were my words in opposition to Our Savior. But one day I lost all of my power to be opposed to Him, I started to cry and say "Yes, you are my Lord. I'm giving my life to you".

It was a kind of miracle, after that day my psychological problem started to lose power over me. Then I started to share about Jesus with my family, and my mother and cousins became believers after me. I began to see God's hand in my family. But still there was a problem. My father didn't like what happened to us. He put pressure on us. He forbade us to tell anyone about our new faith. Our neighbors and friends never knew us as Christians for a while. It wasn't good for our spiritual life. We couldn't even join church easily. Then I started to pray for a Christian husband. My mother and cousins had no hope for my prayer.

Meeting my husband was a second big miracle in my life. He was a pastor of the Turkish Protestant Church and also a Turk from Muslim background. Through our marriage, God made a lot of difference in my family. One of the most important things is that my father has joined our church services for the last one year and a half. He doesn't say he has converted, but from his seriousness in the service we can see how God has changed his heart.

Danabalan's Testimony

Danabalan's Testimony

By Danabalan

I am Danabalan. I was born and brought up in strong Hindu family in Tamil Nadu. I have a father and a mother. I am the eldest son of my family. And I have three younger brothers and a younger sister. I used to worship the idols in order to get more blessings and peace in my heart and in my family. But I didn't get peace or blessings in my family and in my personal life.

My father is a short tempered man. Whenever he went through problems in or outside of my family, he always used to speak rough words and beat me. I hated my father very much. Because of him I lost my peace and happiness in my life. The bitterness had increased in me towards him. I felt that I was alone. I went the way I desired and I did all kind of sins.

Meanwhile, a Christian lady who knows me and my life very much, gave me the book titled "Grace of God". After I read that book, I felt the peace of God and something dealing in my heart. Then I begin to understand that the Holy spirit was working in my heart. I begin to go to the church and enjoyed the fellowship of God with His children. Through that book I came to know Jesus and the amazing grace of God, what He has done for me on the crucifixion of Calvary. I prayed to God, O Lord, I am a great sinner, forgive all my sins. Cleanse me from all my sins by the blood of Your Son Jesus Christ. I got the assurance of salvation. I was baptized in the water on April 6, 1993, at the age of 21. I began to love my father and my family. I am happy that I am in Jesus Christ. Please pray for me.

In His Love.Danabalan

How I Came to the True Church

How I Came to the True Church

By Ivy Yong

Hallelujah, in the holy name of Jesus I bear testimony:

I ORIGINATED from a Buddhist family. In the past, neither had I ever heard of Jesus nor read the bible. I knew that there was a God. So, whenever I met any difficulties and had any requests I would light a joss stick and pray to the Chinese deities. At every religious festival my family would prepare a lot of food and joss papers to offer to the idols in request for peace. So, I had the concept that eating food already offered to idols would bring me peace. In reality, that is not the case.

When I was ten, my family visited my grandmother in Perak, Malaysia, during the school holidays. It was then that we were introduced to a Chinese Taoist Sect and persuaded by our grandmother to believe in it.

Contact with the True ChurchIt all started after I graduated from high school and began to study English in a college. I met a certain Bro Yong from the True Jesus Church. At that time, his own faith was no good; he smoked, used swear words, was ill-tempered and did not attend church at all. He did not tell me that he was a Christian. On one occasion, on discovering my religion he remarked that the god I worshipped was false.

In March 1993, both of us enrolled for a university twinning program in Sabah, to embark on our university education. In college, we met Bro Louis Liao who was our classmate. During one of the lunch breaks, we sat at the same table and during our conversation, we discovered that Yong and Louis were both from the True Jesus Church. From then onwards, Louis encouraged us to attend church services.

I remembered the first time I went to the church in Likas, KK, Sabah. During the prayer the tongues-speaking frightened me off and I felt the impulse to run. However, out of respect for others, I stayed on. From then on, every time I attended any service I always hoped that the service would end quickly because I did not understand the truth, and I was becoming increasingly bored. Every time when Louis tried to explain the truth to me, I would ask many difficult questions to challenge him and put him off. I held the concept that all of us were worshipping God, albeit in different ways. I would not slander or discriminate other religions.

The Motivation of the Holy SpiritPrior to my conversion to Christianity, I was a religious teacher at the Taoist Sect. On one Sunday, I was teaching the children at the temple as usual. After the classes, Yong came to fetch me home and told me that he had to send his aunt to the church for the spiritual convocation. We had to make a trip to the church first. We attended the service. During the prayer Yong encouraged me to go forward to ask for the Holy Spirit. I asked the Lord to forgive my sins, save me and grant me salvation and eternal life. Miraculously, not long after, I

began to vibrate unconsciously and tears streamed down my cheeks uncontrollably. I felt very curious and tried to stop which I did. Later, some believers told me that I had been moved by the Holy Spirit.

I told my mother about my experience, but she could not explain the phenomenon to me. Since then, I kept this experience to myself. When I resumed praying, I encountered the same experience. Whenever I felt so lonely, empty and helpless, there was always a source of strength like a warm current filling, comforting and soothing me. The emotions I felt at the time were beyond description.

On one occasion, something strange happened to me. I was told in the back of my mind, "What are you doing? Are you trying to renounce your faith?! Go back to your original faith." Suddenly, the warm current disappeared. This same experience did not recur until I went to London to further my study.

At that time, my family could not afford to send me overseas to complete my final year but, with the Lord's help, the impossible became possible:

The principal of my college knew of my plight and encouraged me to apply for loans from the banks. All my initial applications were turned down. Though I continued trying, I was not very hopeful of my study abroad. Three weeks before I was due to start my final year in London, one of the banks informed me that my loan had been approved. I was overjoyed. Praise the Lord!

The loan was only enough to pay for the tuition fees, and I had to find an alternative means to pay for my living expenses. I told my mother that I needed 32,000 Ringit (Malaysian dollar) but she prepared 45,000 Ringit for me. At that time, the value of the Ringit took a plunge and what she prepared was just sufficient to cover my expenses. From this, I learnt that "God's grace is sufficient for me", as the scriptures tell us that we should "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and the rest will be added unto us". Under the guidance of the Lord, I successfully completed my bachelor's degree.

A few DreamsIn December 1997, London church held its first Evangelistic Training Camp. One week before that, I put up in church on the Sabbath day as usual. On that night, I dreamt that I came to a temple and in it was an idol. The whole atmosphere was engulfed in smoke. A giant mosquito flew to the idol's ear, seemingly bringing a complaint against me. At once, the countenance of the idol changed and it grew bigger and flew towards me. I clasped my hands together and said "Hallelujah, in the name of Jesus I pray..." Before I could finish, I woke up. I was in deep fear and immediately prayed in silence. I could not understand the significance of the dream then.

One week later, several sisters and I were sleeping in the sister's dormitory. At night I had another dream, I saw a huge wall and a black shadow came forth from the wall. It wore a black robe and had a long beard. It said to me "I am god!" I said to myself, "God? Is this what God looks like?" I always thought He was holy and white. At the time, I wanted to pray, but as I was in the dream I could not. I struggled to wake up from my sleep. Suddenly, I heard a loud "boom" sound like in a car accident, which woke me up. I was very frightened and again I prayed.

The next day, I asked the sisters in the same room whether they heard anything at night but none of them did. I told Yong about my dream and on questioning me, he found out that I still had a talisman in my handbag. I immediately approached a deacon, who removed the talisman in the name of Jesus.

On the first day of the spiritual convocation, I was greatly moved by the Holy Spirit during the prayer. On the second day, Bro Yong received the Holy Spirit. At night, before I went to bed, I asked the Lord to grant me the Holy Spirit as the next day was the final day of the convocation, and if I still had not received His Spirit, I would feel weak during prayers.

During the prayer session on the last day, I prayed earnestly, asking God to forgive my sins. Suddenly, I recalled my unrefined attitude towards my father and I became very remorseful. If I could not even respect my father, how could I worship the heavenly Father? I continued to beg for forgiveness. I then felt a power coming from above. The Holy Spirit filled me and I started to speak in tongues. I was at a loss for words to describe the joy I was experiencing.

Baptism and Returning to the Truth Since I had received the Holy Spirit, baptism should have followed naturally but I was hesitant, wondering whether to let my family know about it. The brethren encouraged me to pray and ask God to open a way. Thank God, my family did not oppose my decision. On the contrary, my father, who was the most stubborn one in my family, even instructed my mother not to mention my baptism to our relatives.

On 8 February 1998, 10 of us set off to the baptismal site. I was the only baptismal candidate. The weather was very gloomy and it was windy that morning. I felt very cold and asked the preacher, who baptised me later on, whether I could postpone the baptism. He turned down my request. All I could do then was to ask the Lord for courage. After the prayer, as everyone was preparing to sing hymns, the clouds parted and the sun shone right on us. It gave me the hope of becoming a new person. Everyone was deeply moved by the scene. I am only a very ordinary person and yet God allowed me to receive such a great blessing. I thank Him from the bottom of my heart for His mercy.

God loves me and I deeply believe that He also loves my family. My mother had an operation and because of the prayers offered by the brethren, she experienced a speedy recovery. Although I have only believed in Jesus for such a short time, the little things in my life have allowed me to feel His abiding presence, guidance and protection. My greatest wish is for my family and friends to believe in Jesus and receive eternal life.

I thank God for guiding and choosing me and allowing me to experience Him - the only most high, true and living God. I thank Him also for allowing me to finally see the truth that there is only one ark and only one way to salvation. I hope that all of us will serve the Lord with all our hearts, minds and strength so that the church can prosper.

May all glory be ascribed to the Lord. Amen!

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