

“MI”, EX-CHRISTIAN, USA (PART 1 OF 3)

Rating: 5.0

Description: The daughter of a southern Baptist preacher finds her way to Islam. Part 1: Growing up as a devout Christian

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“In my mind, there was nothing wrong with Christianity. I was perfectly fine with it. I had questions and had not been feeling the same fervor I once experienced as a teenager but I just had to shake it off, pray, and continue to be faithful in the hopes that my change would come. My pursuit of education changed this view.”

I pray that whoever reads my story; whatever faith a person may practice, I pray that the overall theme conveyed here is submission to the will of God and to be in constant pursuit of knowledge. Ameen.

Shouting, speaking in tongues, a choir accompanied by a Hammond B3, pianos, and drums among other things were a part of my religious upbringing. The louder the sounds were, it seemed to me, the more pleasing to God it was. I was raised to see these acts as normal. It was how my church grew to become. My father was and still is a southern Baptist preacher. At seven, I dedicated my life to Christ and was baptized by my father at his church. My sister and brother-in-law are ministers of music at the church my mother and I went to after my parent’s divorce. As a teenager, I was full of fervor and reverence for God. And thus I wanted to live a good Christian lifestyle in which I strived to be like Christ as we were taught. I would attempt to share my beliefs with others in the hopes to get them to become saved; asking Jesus into their hearts so that his ultimate sacrifice could wash away their sins, and thus, they would return to him. In my mind, there was nothing wrong with Christianity. I was perfectly fine with it. I had questions and had not been feeling the same fervor I once experienced as a teenager but I just had to shake it off, pray, and continue to be faithful in the hopes that my change would come. My pursuit of education changed this view.

My sister led my mother and I to this new church which became our home church after my parent’s divorce. We loved it. The music was awesome, the preacher had a degree in divinity, and we had a youth choir! Even more importantly, these groups of people were mostly black, had microphones which made the music and preaching really loud, and were welcoming each Sunday. At 16, on a visit with my father in the mountains, a young white preacher friend of my dad’s stopped by his house. I met him, shook his hand and went on about doing whatever I was doing. He and my dad were speaking in

the kitchen. The preacher asked if I was saved and my father told him I was. The man asked to speak with me and called me into the kitchen. The man began to prophesy (a practice of reporting information from God communicated to one person to tell someone else). He stated that I was going to be a minister, and that I would begin to speak in tongues more fervently, and that he would find a lady in my church that would be a mentor to me. He completed his message with a prayer over me and that was it. My father and I discussed it later as we typically had always discussed spiritual matters. When I returned home, I prayed and asked God to show me who this woman was, I asked him for the gift of speaking in tongues, and for the courage to approach my new pastor and to ask him if I could be a minister. Eventually, two out of three things happened. I would attend what we called "intercessory prayer" in which we felt we were praying for those whom we did not know, in an unknown but godly language. It can only be described to the outsider as sounding like gibberish (not to offend anyone.) I worked up the courage to speak to the pastor and he allowed me into the class. I was among one or two teenagers present in the class. I was very proud. In one assignment, we had to construct a sermon, which I presented to the pastor he said I did an exceptional job!

At 17, the ministers training class had been postponed or pushed back so much so, that my high school graduation came and went and I was off to college. I still had hopes of being obedient to God while in college. The pastor prayed over us that we would hold true to our values and morals and sent us on our way. College was a blur. There were no wild intimate encounters; I stayed away from the football team as they were the ones who were looking for wild encounters, and I did not do any drugs. I joined the marching band, attended church, worked and studied. I met and dated two different guys at two different times. In both relationships, we discussed marriage as was the custom according to our teachings but sadly our relationships ended. In all honesty, I was heartbroken by both relationships.

One relationship actually went to the point of an engagement. However the breakup, triggered in me a deep sorrow that I was unable to shake off. I graduated, worked in the area for another year and moved 6 hours away to wait to get married. Once I broke off the engagement, I was so angry at God. I felt that I did everything he asked me to do. I trusted my gut feeling which I interpreted as God leading me and this is what happened! (Looking back, relationships were complex but it worsens the situation when you have poor communication skills and do not listen to others. And that was just me.) I lay in bed crying for several hours. When I felt I could not cry anymore, I found my bottle of sleeping pills took a handful and tried to go to sleep indefinitely. The next thing I remember after becoming sick, is calling my mother and her telling me that she bought me a ticket to fly home.

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