

My Testimony

I am what is called a "cradle Catholic," born into a Catholic family and raised as such. While I have never disbelieved in God, nor seriously questioned the divinity of Jesus, there were many things that disillusioned me at an early age. Generally speaking, I began to look at the various Christian churches as being fundamentally the same as any other institution, with its own rules, regulations, culture and failings. The flaws were not as common or as serious as the secular institutions, yet the flaws were there nonetheless.

While that alone probably would not have driven me from the Church, there was something in me about God that needed to be expressed. Something that wanted to speak, but for which I didn't have the words. The Church seemed to proclaim that it knew the truth, yet so did other Christian churches, as well as the pagans and atheists. And there was plenty of evidence to support all these other views. Although I could not articulate it at the time, I was desperately searching for what was really real, and had no confidence that anyone could help me.

I became a pantheist. I believed that every religious view, including atheism, had an element of truth that somehow tied everything together. I still held that Christianity was the best option of all religions, and that Catholicism was the best option for Christianity; nevertheless, I felt I no longer needed the churches to help me. This appeared to work for a while, but I was only fooling myself. For six years, I drifted away from the truth I desperately wanted, and didn't even realize it. When one believes that everything is true, then nothing can be seen as false. But sooner or later, reality *will* demonstrate what is the truth, and what are lies. Reality hit me with a messy divorce, and suddenly I saw all too clearly where my foolish self-deceit had led me. I thought I had everything figured out; in reality I had nothing figured out.

With nowhere else to go, I returned to the Catholic Church for a mass. When someone there held my hand during the Lord's Prayer, I realized that a total stranger was giving me more love than my own wife. From that point on, I became extremely devoted to attending weekly service. All the flaws that I noticed in the Church remained, and the burning questions inside me were still unanswered, but now I understood that what I needed was discipline and trust.

It took another 24 years for the questions I yearned to understand finally had some light shed on them. Someone came to me and asked me to do a book study on C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* with him. I was captivated by what was written. All that was buried in me was unearthed by what I read. What was trying to be heard finally found a voice.

I've learned a lot more since I first read the book, but my life changed immediately. I learned that there are others who think like I do. The loneliness I felt for 48 years was gone. But more importantly, I came to realize that the truth I always thought was contrary to Christian teachings is actually an essential element of the Christian faith. Furthermore, the 24 years of obedience without understanding taught me a lot about the struggles other people may be going through when it comes to faith.

I invite you to seek what is really real. Jesus is the only man who ever claimed to be truth incarnate. Indeed, any honest search of truth, no matter how misguided, ultimately leads to Him. I'm living proof of that, as are C.S. Lewis and many others I can name. It is not an easy road, as obedience is rarely a pleasant experience. There is but one Earthly reward Jesus promised to His followers, and it

is peace. But if you faithfully pursue truth, you will find Jesus whether you want to or not. All I'm doing is offering you an easier road than the one I took. The destination will be the same regardless. If you accept Him when you get to that point, then you will know what is really real, and what are lies. Peace then comes from having the rock of truth to hold on to as the world of lies tries to tear you apart.

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