

KENNETH L. JENKINS, MINISTER AND ELDER OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCH, USA (PART 2 OF 3)

Rating: 4.0

Description: A once misguided boy finds his salvation through the Pentecostal Church and answers his call to ministry at the age of 20, later to become a Muslim. Part 2: "All that glitters is not gold."

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I would meditate while alone and pray to God to lead me to the correct religion and to forgive me if what I was doing was wrong. I had never had any contact with Muslims. The only people I knew that claimed Islam as their religion were the followers of Elijah Muhammad, who were referred to by many as the "Black Muslims" or the "Lost-Found Nation." It was during this period in the late seventies that Minister Louis Farrakhan was well into rebuilding what was called "The Nation of Islam." I went to hear Minister Farrakhan speak at the invitation of a coworker and found it to be an experience that would change my life dramatically. I had never in my life heard another black man speak the way that he spoke. I immediately wanted to arrange a meeting with him to try to convert him to my religion. I enjoyed evangelizing, hoping to find lost souls to save from the Hellfire - no matter who they were.

After graduating from college I began to work on a full-time basis. As I was reaching the pinnacle of my ministry, the followers of Elijah Muhammad became more visible, and I appreciated their efforts in attempting to rid the black community of the evils that were destroying it from within. I began to support them, in a sense, by buying their literature and even meeting with them for dialogue. I attended their study circles to find out exactly what they believed. As sincere as I knew many of them were, I could not buy the idea of God being a black man. I disagreed with their use of the Bible to support their position on certain issues. Here was a book that I knew very well, and I was deeply disturbed at what I deemed was their misinterpretation of it. I had attended locally supported Bible schools and had become quite knowledgeable in various fields of Bible study.

After about six years, I moved to Texas and became affiliated with two churches. The first church was led by a young pastor who was inexperienced and not very learned. My knowledge of the Christian scriptures had by this time developed into something abnormal. I was obsessed with Biblical teachings. I began to look deeper into the scriptures and realized that I knew more than the present leader. As a show of respect, I left and joined another church in a different city where I felt that I could learn more.

The pastor of this particular church was very scholarly. He was an excellent teacher but had some ideas that were not the norm in our church organization. He held somewhat liberal views, but I still enjoyed his indoctrination. I was soon to learn the most valuable lesson of my Christian life, which was “all that glitters is not gold.” Despite its outward appearance, there were evils taking place that I never thought were possible in the Church. These evils caused me to reflect deeply, and I began questioning the teaching to which I was so dedicated.

Welcome to the Real Church World

I soon discovered that there was a great deal of jealousy prevalent in the ministerial hierarchy. Things had changed from that to which I was accustomed. Women wore clothing that I thought was shameful. People dressed in order to attract attention, usually from the opposite sex. I discovered just how great a part money and greed play in the operation of church activities. There were many small churches struggling, and they called upon us to hold meetings to help raise money for them. I was told that if a church did not have a certain number of members, then I was not to waste my time preaching there because I would not receive ample financial compensation. I then explained that I was not in it for the money and that I would preach even if there was only one member present... and I'd do it for free! This caused a disturbance. I started questioning those whom I thought had wisdom, only to find that they had been putting on a show. I learned that money, power and position were more important than teaching the truth about the Bible. As a Bible student, I knew full well that there were mistakes, contradictions and fabrications. I thought that people should be exposed to the truth about the Bible. The idea of exposing the people to such aspects of the Bible was a thought supposedly attributable to Satan. But I began to publicly ask my teachers questions during Bible classes, which none of them could answer. Not a single one could explain how Jesus was supposedly God, and how, at the same time, he was supposedly the Father, Son and Holy Ghost wrapped up into one and yet was not a part of the trinity. Several preachers finally had to concede that they did not understand it but that we were simply required to believe it.

Cases of adultery and fornication went unpunished. Some preachers were hooked on drugs and had destroyed their lives and the lives of their families. Leaders of some churches were found to be homosexuals. There were pastors even guilty of committing adultery with the young daughters of other church members. All of this coupled with a failure to receive answers to what I thought were valid questions was enough to make me seek a change. That change came when I accepted a job in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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