

## Why I Left The Pentecostal Church

*By Mike Cornwell*

*"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them;" 2 Tim 3:14.*

Paul could have been thinking of me when he wrote this verse to a young man named Timothy. I was born into a Pentecostal family of many years. My grandfather preached "fire and brimstone" from the time I could remember until his death in 1968. He was somewhat of an intimidating individual who was demanding and abrupt. I was taught that only those who were "chosen" or "called" could ever enter into the "faithful" ministry of our Lord. I never challenged his thinking or his preaching. What he said was like a direct command from Jesus Christ himself. With this in mind, at the age of 12, I was told I was being called into the ministry and preached my first sermon shortly thereafter. I spent a total of 18 years preaching as a "Pentecostal" preacher. I taught the "Jesus Only" doctrine known as the "Apostolic Faith" (United Pentecostal Church).

To this day, my family fully believes that if one is not of the "Lord's true church" that being, saved in baptism in Jesus Name, and filled with the "Holy ghost" with the evidence of "Speaking in Tongues," one is not a Christian and headed for a "Devil's hell." My Grandfather (before his death) preached this 54 years. My step-father has preached this in excess of 50 years. My brother-in-law and sister "Pastor" a very large Pentecostal church in the Cincinnati, OH area. I have two cousins that are "Pentecostal" preachers. I have been accused of being "In a den of thieves and a pit of vipers," because of my stand on the Word of God and my faithfulness to the Lord's church. My wife and I have been publicly chastised and the atmosphere is very tense when we are visiting with my family. We are shunned by most of my family. We are reminded regularly of (2 Tim 3:12): "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

It was the first Thursday night of October, 1984, at the age of 42, when I realised that all that I had been teaching for 18 years as a "Pentecostal" had been "false doctrine" and that I was like the "blind leading the blind." That Thursday night of October, 1984, changed my life, my thinking, and my understanding of the "Word of God." I was invited to a "Gospel Meeting" at the Sandstone Drive Church of Christ, Little Rock, AR. (I had never been to a Lord's church in my life.) Chris Bullock, of Kansas City, MO was to be the speaker. I consented to go with the attitude that I would be able to shed some light on his teaching and thus convince others of their wrong. Something happened: what was preached was what I had secretly believed all my adult life. One did not have to come to an "altar," cry out, beg and plead for mercy to receive forgiveness. One did not have to come again to the "altar" to "seek for the in-filling of the Holy Spirit," which was promised to believers. One did not have to "utter" confusion in an attempt to show one has the gift of "speaking in tongues."

All one had to do was hear the simple word of truth, believe it, confess Christ as the Son of God, repent of one's sins, and be baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. The Lord not only forgives completely but adds one to the church. This I did in obedience the following Sunday evening. I became a "born again Christian." I gave up my life, my music, even my future dreams, to follow Jesus for the first time in my life. I was on the right path.

It was not until October, 1987, when I met Louis Sharp in Little Rock, AR, that I really understood what "faithfulness" really means. As we began to study and learn, I began to realise that the Lord had work for me, as a Christian, to do. I then began to teach and preach the Gospel of Christ. It has now become my life. My desire is to teach those who are in error the truth that they might become part of this body of Christ.

**I. Let Me Tell You Why I Am A Member Of The Lord's Church.**

- A. Pentecostalism traces itself back no further than New Years Eve, 1899. (Topeka, KS). This is when a small group of people supposedly received a "Divine Revelation" for the first time ever recorded.
  - 1. The Lord's church dates back to 33 AD when the 12 disciples received the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:4).
  - 2. This was a result of the fulfillment of the promise Jesus gave to his disciples. (Acts 1:8).
  - 3. The Pentecostal church cannot show authority from God's word for its beginning!!
- B. Pentecostalism teaches that the "power of the Holy Spirit" fell first on the 120 gathered in the upper room.
  - 1. The Bible teaches that only the 12 disciples received first the "Holy Spirit". (Acts 1:26-2:1).
- C. Pentecostalism believes that this power is received today because of the "New Revelation of God" in 1899.
  - 1. The Bible teaches no such thing. (2 Tim 3:16-17).
  - 2. The scripture holds all that man needs to know for his salvation. There are no new revelations.
- D. Pentecostalism teaches that in 1914 another revelation was received, revealing that being baptized in "Jesus Name" became tenets of faith. Thus, they produced a law, a formula!
  - 1. That is not what the Bible says. (Mat 28:19-20).
- E. We find that in the early half of this century (1900 - 1944) several Pentecostal groups were established. Two of those are: Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, Inc., and the Pentecostal Church, Inc. In 1944 these two bodies became known as the UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH. The authority is: Pentecostal Church Manual, pp. 8-10, Foreword.
  - 1. The Bible teaches that the Lord established only one church. (Mat 16:18).
  - 2. This is the only church that Christ and the Apostles ever speak of.

**II. What are some of the Pentecostal practices?**

- A. They claim that through the instrument of the Holy Spirit, miracles and healing incurable diseases occur daily. Silver fillings become Gold, Poor become miraculously rich, Dead are raised, and Sick people instantly healed. I never saw anyone miraculously healed in all the years I was "Pentecostal."
  - 1. I will not limit God. He has the power if he so chooses. Man does not have that power.
  - 2. If he does, where is the proof? They call it: "lack of FAITH."
  - 3. When does the Holy Spirit give to one man this power and not another? That is unscriptural.
    - (a). Only the disciples and those they laid hands on had this power. They are all dead.
- B. Pentecostalism teaches that a person may speak in "tongues" while under the influence of the "Holy Spirit" just like Peter and the other Apostles at Pentecost.
  - 1. The only others who were able to do this were Cornelius and his kinfolk (Acts 10:44-46).
  - 2. And those whom the apostles laid their hands on.
  - 3. Don't we all have the continued influence of the Holy Spirit through the word. Can any one of us speak in an "unlearned" language?
- C. "Pentecostalism" espouses religion as a "romantic" philosophy, that the heart of man has reasons which his mind knows not of, and that man's feelings are the highest authority.

1. The Bible is truth. (John 17:17). The truth is not subjective. It does not originate with a person's own thinking. Religion is not based on a "feel good" experience.
  - (a). I get excited sometimes because of the truth. That is natural.
2. The Bible must be read, studied and obeyed. (2 Tim 2:15; John 8:31)
3. The Bible is the absolute, inspired and authoritative Word of God. (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21).
4. When a man regards his feelings as the basic authority, he is on the wrong path.
5. To reject the Word of God and do "that which is right in our own eyes" is to reject God. (1 Sam 15:22-26; Mat 7:13-14).
6. I feel good about the truth but my feeling good is not authority!
- D. Pentecostalism believes and teaches that women may participate in leading in prayer, teaching, and preaching in public, and doing the work of an evangelist and teacher.
  1. The Holy Spirit contrasted the duties of men from that of women in public prayer. (1 Tim 2:8-15).
  2. Women are to learn in silence. (1 Cor 14:34). They are not to teach in any capacity over a man.
  3. Women may teach younger women. (Titus 2:4). They may teach a man in private. (Acts 18:25).
    - (a). Timothy was taught in private. Apollos was taught in private.
  4. Women may not "teach" (deliver discourses). Women are forbidden to preach. (1 Cor 14:34)
  5. There are many things women can and should be doing.
- E. "Pentecostalism" teaches that instruments of music are used to "glorify" God in worship.
  1. True worship is according to "Spirit and Truth" (John 4:24), the word of God, not Moses, not our feelings, and not what we believe to be right. Jesus will judge us in the Last Day. (John 12:48)
  2. Vocal music was repeatedly specified as the kind of worship God wants from Christians. (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19).
  3. Christians are to abide in the teachings of Christ, not in man. (2 John 9-10). We are to follow the pattern given by God (Heb 8:5), without adding, subtracting or altering according to our own desires or opinions.

#### CONCLUSION:

I had read the Bible all my life. I preached that which I had been taught. When I doubted, I was always told of "new revelations" received from God. In the "Pentecostal" church, one is taught that the "Pastor" is the authority within the church, and knowledge is only gained by adherence to "God's man" and in the leading of the "Holy Spirit" directly. Accept that which you doubt with your faith.

Only until I realised that in order to understand the "Gospel" one must study with an open heart prepared to accept the truth of the "Gospel," and with this truth obey the word of God. The Bible really is a simple book to understand, but when man attempts to add to it, his opinion and his feelings, he begins to lose the truth and believe a lie.

Trust this word completely. Obey it! It contains all that man needs to get him into eternity with Jesus Christ.