

# **Navigating Religious Crossroads: A Pastor's Journey from Catholicism to Christ**

In a world filled with diverse religious beliefs and practices, the journey of faith can take various routes.

One such journey is that of Pastor Mike Shreve, who transitioned from being a devout Catholic to a dedicated Christian. In sharing his story, Pastor Shreve offers not a condemnation of the Catholic faith, but a loving and compassionate message for Catholics to find a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. His story is a testament to the importance of personal encounters with the Lord and a desire to follow Scriptural teachings.

## **Warm Memories of Catholic Upbringing**

Pastor Shreve's background is deeply rooted in the Catholic faith, with warm memories of growing up in a Catholic family. He recalls his grandmother's unwavering devotion to her faith, praying the Rosary daily and expressing her hope of rising with Jesus. Shreve's own early experiences included serving as an altar boy and being influenced by priests who exuded Christ-like character. These early encounters with Catholicism had a positive impact on his life, as they kept him sheltered from many of the challenges present in the public school system.

## **The Quest for Biblical Authenticity**

Despite these fond memories, Pastor Shreve's journey led him to explore the Bible for himself, a practice he believes many Catholics overlook. As he delved into Scripture, he began to

notice disparities between the Catholic teachings he'd received and what the Bible conveyed about authentic Christianity. His pursuit of the truth led him to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **Understanding the True Nature of the Church**

One significant point of distinction that Pastor Shreve raises is the definition of the church. In Catholic doctrine, the church is viewed as the sole repository of truth, excluding all other denominations from being part of the "true church." With over billion members, Catholicism is the largest segment of Christianity worldwide. However, Pastor Shreve emphasizes that there are two aspects to the concept of the church: the professing church and the possessing church. The professing church includes all who acknowledge the historical existence of Jesus, His death and Resurrection, while the possessing church consists of those who have a personal, authentic relationship with God. Pastor Shreve's testimony places importance on the latter, emphasizing the need for a personal relationship with Christ.

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## **Challenging the Doctrine of Infant Baptism**

A significant point of divergence between Catholicism and Pastor Shreve's perspective is the practice of infant baptism. Catholic doctrine teaches that infant baptism results in regeneration, receiving the Holy Spirit, eternal life, membership in the church and the removal of original sin. However, Pastor Shreve contends that true biblical baptism requires repentance and a conscious choice to follow Jesus, making infant baptism biblically unfounded.

## **The Exclusive Priesthood and Mediatorial Role**

Pastor Shreve also questions the concept of an exclusive priesthood in Catholicism. In the Catholic faith, only priests can administer sacraments and perform religious rituals. This emphasis on a mediatorial priesthood from birth to death fosters a sense of dependency on the church for salvation and forgiveness. Contrary to this, the Bible teaches that all believers are priests, able to approach God directly for forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

### **Rethinking the Notion of Saints**

Another topic of discussion is the veneration of saints within Catholicism. While Catholic doctrine canonizes specific saints who are believed to have miraculous powers, Pastor Shreve argues that all believers are saints, having been sanctified, made holy and set apart by God through salvation. Therefore, he questions the need to intercede with saints and emphasizes that true believers have Jesus and the Holy Spirit as intercessors.

### **Contemplating the Doctrine of Purgatory**

The Catholic doctrine of purgatory, a temporary realm of suffering where individuals are purged of their sins, is another subject of scrutiny. Pastor Shreve asserts that belief in purgatory undermines the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, as it implies that individuals must atone for their sins through suffering.

### **Reaffirming the Foundation of Faith**

In sharing his journey from Catholicism to Christianity, Pastor Mike Shreve extends a hand of understanding and love to those in the Catholic faith. His aim is not to criticize but to encourage Catholics to explore a deeper, personal relationship with Jesus Christ by seeking biblical authenticity and a clearer understanding of Christian doctrine. His message is an invitation to embark on a faith journey that prioritizes faith in Christ over religious

tradition. {eoa}

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