

MY JOURNEY INTO THE FAITH

I grew up in a Christian home. Both my parents (biologically grandparents) were committed to living their lives for Jesus Christ. I saw it demonstrated on a daily basis. Mama was sanctified (COGIC) and Daddy was a Baptist. They were both very strong in their faith and dedicated to their church. I spent most of my Sunday's in church with Mama and Big Mama Mary (her mother). Up until 1968, I only went to Daddy's church to say an Easter Speech. I said one in the day time at his church and one at night at Mama's church. They were always different speeches. In 1968, Big Mama Clara Strong passed away and that was no longer required of me

. Of course, as most children do; I accepted Christ at a young age and didn't really understand what I was doing. I did it at St. James Temple Church of God in Christ Clarksdale, MS under the leadership of Bishop T.T. Scott, Sr. I only knew that I wanted to shout and speak in tongues like those folks. But, I didn't get baptized because I was afraid of water and Mama didn't force me. I remember vividly the tarrying bench and being a participant. There is one particular time that I asked a neighbor to pretend with me that he had the Holy Ghost. Of course, I didn't know he would tell everyone but he did. Mama said, "Why didn't you tell me you were in the church shouting"? You know, I never did that again.

As a teenager, I begin going to church with the young man that I was dating. It was a Baptist church. Mama was ok with that she just wanted me in church. When I went to college both of us stopped going to church regularly. I would from time to time say my little prayer, "don't let me die without being saved but that was about it. Years after college into adulthood; I did not go to church that much.

In 1987, I moved to Atlanta GA. My girlfriend told me there was a Baptist church that was like a sanctified church and she could not believe it. Her dad was a preacher in the Church of God in Christ. So needless to say, she took me there. I had never seen a Baptist church like that before. I said to myself, I am not going to be coming here because this man will get me saved.

After doing my thing and getting caught up in the wrong relationship with the wrong guy; I was left broken and torn and wanted revenge on him. However, on a particular Sunday God put it on my heart to go to Antioch. So, I did. I sat at the back of the church with a navy blue suit on and a green blouse. I will never forget it. At the end of the service, when the doors of the church were opened; I felt the urge to go down but I kept saying that I'm not doing it because I'm going to get him back. I never wanted to be a hypocrite. When I came to myself, I was at the altar and Rev. Alexander was saying, why did you come? I said to him because it is time. The fear of being baptized still gripped me because of my fear of water. I remember my girlfriend telling me that there was no fear in God's water. I was baptized a few weeks later on Father's Day. . Rev. Alexander spoke over my life before immersing me in the water. My friends thought I had talked to him. It was The Holy Spirit. That is where it all started. That was the greatest gift I ever gave my Daddy and Mama. They lived to see me give my life to The Lord and be baptized.

I remained a faithful member of Antioch for about eight years. I began to grow deeper in the things of God. The church did not teach or preach about the speaking of tongues. I knew the gift was real and wanted to experience it. I became more thirsty and hungry for more of God. I felt something lacking there so I didn't attend faithfully.

During this period, I was transitioned to a new job. One of my co-workers was a member of a ministry that was having church in the home. I begin to attend some of the meetings with her. I

received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in that home meeting. I was exposed to the prophetic but not taught about the prophetic. This led to some error in decisions on my part.

In 1998, I went to a church service at Faith Christian Center. Evangelist Tim Storey was there ministering. I was having problems with my back as the result of a work injury. My friend invited me to the healing service. I went in expectation that God was going to heal my back. The Evangelist never called out back injuries. Storey told the congregation, that the anointing of God was so high in the room and to just lift your hands to get what you needed from God. I lifted my hands. The Spirit of the Lord said to me “welcome home.” I said, I didn’t come here to join. I came here to be healed. Shortly after, I joined Faith Christian Center. . Faith Christian Center was a teaching ministry and called a Word Church under Bishop Keith Butler, leadership. There the Word was taught line above line and percept upon percept. I became active in the ministry. I served as an Assistant Touch Group Leader and in the Ministry Room. I attended and graduated from The Layman’s Bible School which was a two year intense program. There the calling of God on my life became clearer to me. After losing a job, I sensed the time to go to Bible College. I applied and was accepted at Word of Faith in Southfield, MI. However, I allowed a family member to deter me from making the move to go. There were many changes of leadership at FCC; while I was a member. At some point, I remember feeling empty and unfulfilled at the church. I slowly begin to drift away by visiting other ministries.

In 2011, I begin attending a small ministry in Douglasville. The ministry was extremely small and the people were friendly. A friend and her husband were both ministers at the church. I would attend their service and then my service. After months, the pastor told me that I needed to make a decision. I said ok. I remember my last Sunday at FCC. It felt like death had occurred. I

wrote Pastor Joel Gregory a letter to let him know that I was leaving the ministry. I then joined the church in Douglasville.

My experience in the Douglasville church was great at first. It became a very controlling environment. I was promoted in the ministry as a minister in training and licensed. However, when I started at BHU and there were times when I had to devote to studies and classes that became a problem for them. Needless to say, that ruined my fellowship and relationship with them. I turned my license back in to them and left the church. I was extremely hurt. My friends at the church told me of all the bad things that were being said about me. I decided then it would be a long time before I joined anyone's church.

I began talking to my classmates and professors about my church relationship at the time. I was encouraged to go to church and trust God in the process. I was very weary with Church folks and ministry. I visited many churches but would never join one. One of my classmates at BHU took me to a church on a Friday night that she always visits. I enjoyed the service and it was great. I began attending the church on Friday nights and then starting going on Sunday's. In 2014, I joined the church. The Church is Life Center Ministries in Dunwoody, GA.

I joined the church but I did not fellowship with the people. I would go to church and leave like lightning. I didn't try to make friends or get to know anyone. At a particular church conference, I saw an old co-worker. I began to talk with her and we sat together for a few Sunday's. She is a back of the church person and I am a front of the church person. I have to be close to the front (preferably the second row) because I am easily distracted. We don't sit together anymore but through her I have extended myself to meet more people.

Last month, a church member Harriet that went to membership class with me called to ask me to participate on a committee for membership retention. She introduced me to one of the Pastors who is in charge of the committee. We had our first meeting at Harriet's house. At that meeting, The Lord allowed Pastor Alex to minister to me concerning my role in the Body of Christ. The things that he spoke were confirmation to me. I am serving on the team as the coordinator. God is moving me forward as he sees fit. I am excited to see what God has in store for me. It's my pleasure to serve His people in Love.

I am continuing this academic journey in faith. I believe that God is true to what he has spoken to me time and time again. Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.