

'MY JOURNEY INTO THE FAITH'

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INTRODUCTION

‘MY JOURNEY INTO THE FAITH’

It would be difficult to tell anyone when my journey into my faith began, because I am not very sure myself. If I could say it began when I entered the church house as a little girl and I believed, that might be a starting point. Therefore it is from that place I will begin.

My family is from the West Indies, which included some other islands. My grandparents moved to Brooklyn, New York, probably in the 1920's. Together they raised seven children. There were five girls and two boys of which my Dad was the oldest, but three of his sisters were older than him. My Grandfather was the Pastor of a church in Brooklyn and almost needless to say, his wife and children were all part of his congregation. They all worked in the ministry.

My Dad may have been the only ‘black sheep’ in his family, a term they used back in the day, for people in the family would wayward or did not follow the family rules of the house. He was a wonderful man but a little hard headed. He was a police officer for many years and then turned detective. A great community person who had many connections and no one was ever a stranger. My Dad had three children, but he was not married to my Mom. Each child that he had he brought home to his family to help him care for us and I was the oldest. So I was raised around the love of my Dad, my grandparents, my aunts who were not married and we lived in the family home.

This is my first memories of going to church. I am sure that even though I probably attended there as an arm baby, my participation did not begin until about age five. I was the first granddaughter to the Pastor, so I got some extra love there. I remember being taught the Word of God and the Scriptures at that precious age, until by the age of seven years old, I could teach

little children in Sunday school myself. I was a great reader at that time and I could memorize anything, especially for the Easter and Christmas plays. I remember giving my heart to the Lord every Sunday, and the thought of that makes me smile. I remember that I loved Jesus so much because I believed that He died on the cross for me and that made me love Him more. Those were my true feelings. I served in my Grandfather's church as a junior usher, in the Sunday school, and in the band playing the xylophone and another instrument. I loved Jesus and I loved church. My guess is that I was there all the time.

My Grandparents died when I was between the ages of about six or eight years old. However my journey continued there with my aunts until my Dad moved my Step Mother, my brother, my sister and I to Long Island, New York. I was almost ten years old by then. It was a rural area and we had a farm. We went to another church in Queens, New York with my Dad because he sang in the senior choir and he loved it. I only attended that church and participated as a Sunday school student. There was no such thing as junior church, so I have always heard the Word of God which was preached from the pulpit.

Then there was another shift of churches. The church in Queens opened a smaller church in our town and it opened from a converted garage. So I began going there with my Dad who assisted them in the organization process, especially in the area of finances and building.

I became a very active member there and soon they opened a bible study extension class from the Mother church. So along with attending services three times a week, I actively was involved in teaching Sunday school, the 3 and 4 year old class and teaching them in Vacation Bible School. My father alone attended the church in Queens and we pretty much attended the local church with our Stepmom. I loved the Bible and the stories I had learned and loved to teach them. At age 12, I signed up for the evangelism course that was being taught by the

Bishop's sister. She was the sweetest lady in the entire world. She was anointed to teach and at every class, the Holy Spirit met us there. I knew God was calling me into ministry. It was there I began to study the Word of God for real. It was more than the simple devotion that I had at home, where we would have to read memorize Scripture and pray. One of the things my Dad taught us to pray for was 'wisdom and understanding,' which became my daily prayer, even though I did not really understand what I was asking for. Here's what I know happened, God gave me what I asked for even when I did not understand, but I was obedient. The evangelism class was a weekly nine month course and I graduated in May 1963 as the youngest student at that time in the whole Bible Institute. I prepared a sermon that year which was titled 'trust and obey.'

At age fifteen I started a youth choir in my local church, which in a few years Pastor Donnie McClurkin was a member and pianist/organist. At age sixteen my walk with the Lord became more serious and I rededicated my life to Him and was filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, the infilling of which I tarried for as they did back in the day. I really enjoyed Jesus during that time in my life as He was always right there helping me even in my personal family life, which had some issues. I assisted with mentoring young ladies in my church and worked with the youth department. I continued on to the next phase of Bible study and graduated at eighteen from a three year General Bible Course.

Another shift came when I was twenty-one and I left home or should I say ran away because my Dad was so very strict. He was now divorced and I had the responsibility of my younger brother and sister, which was from about the age of sixteen. God did give me the strength but I left anyway and went to my aunt's home in Queens. They attended my Dad's church there and I began to attend there also. I joined the Youth for Christ Choir with my

cousins, but that was the extent of what I participated in church. I left my aunt's home at twenty two years old and got an apartment. I still attended church sometime but I was working and going to school full time. I held on to the foundational truths and upbringing of my Dad. I recognized that I was a chosen vessel, meant for the Master's use and I tried to keep myself that way. I messed up a few times but God did not throw me away or let me stay on the ground. He picked me up with His loving arms and saved me through and through. I was married by the age of twenty three and have a child by age twenty four. My Dad died when I was twenty five and I moved back to our family home on Long Island where I fell right back into ministry at my same church. I continued teaching, mentoring, Bible Study, choir and much more as I realized my role as a servant of God. I understood the 'Great Commission' to "go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel," and recognized the 'treasure' God had placed inside of this 'earthen vessel.'

By the time I was forty I had five children and was raising six of my sister's children, one who was handicapped. At forty-six, (1996) I moved with eleven children and my second husband to Georgia. Both my baby and my husband died in 1998. I did not go to church for two years, not because I was angry, I was just very sad and needed direction and purpose, when I heard the voice of the Lord say, 'come out of your house.' Within three months I was back on my journey and I was back at New Beginning and then also at TBN as a pray partner and usher. In 2006 I began working with Greater St. Stephen, now known as Changing a Generation (CAG). It is the brother of Bishop Morton at New Beginning. I worked both churches for about three years while God was also transitioning some of my children out of our home. In 2005 God transitioned my last daughter in at 30 days old. She was the natural child of the sister I had taken from my birth mother and raised from the age of twelve until the age of twenty.

Today, I am ‘on assignment’ at CAG in Atlanta and participating in ministry there. I am part of the media team, big brother big sisters, and Watchmen and Warriors. I teach a 12 week Discipleship class twice a year. I also teach in Sunday school when I am not teaching Discipleship. I teach and mentor twice a month a ‘Youth for Christ’ group that consists of 9 -12 year old boys and girls. This class has been my joy and my burden, as I teach them the ways of God, through the Word of God. I try to encourage them from their youth in order that they may avoid the snares and the pitfalls that Satan has prepared for them. Just last summer I enrolled in Beulah Heights University to continue my journey in the Word. This learning process has been both exhausting and rewarding. So many things I have learned for my journey and many people God has placed me in the midst of to encourage along their journey. However this has also encouraged me not to quit. When I see the amount of work to be done in the vineyard, you realize that I can’t stop until I am empty. On this journey my faith has increased, yet only to know that I never would have made it without Him. He is my source and my focus. I only desire to teach and preach Jesus and to me there is really nothing else. I try to instill in my grandchildren those same percepts that I tried to pour into my children. Many days I still find myself yet pouring into them. God blessed me with my last daughter who is now 11 years old and I say God certainly knew who and what I needed in the final chapters of my own life.

I have asked God to show me the things He would have me to do as I continue this journey, which He never said would be easy. I just need the Holy Spirit to continue to lead me and guide me as I travel on this Christian journey and lead me into all truth. As I counted the cost, I have counted my blessings, as the good times have out weighted the bad. God has been faithful to me, and He has never failed me or disappointed me, even though I have failed Him so many times and on so many levels.

It will be at the end of my journey that I want my God and my Savior to say, ‘well done my good and faithful servant, come on in and take your rest. Amen

