

The Testimony of John Michael Terrett

I encountered the L-rd during my first year of studies at the University of Calgary, on March 28, 1972. It was by accident, as I had no intention of exploring a religion which I thought I had already permanently rejected.

It happened like this. I was living in the dorms and was beginning to study for my final exams. There was so much going on in my life that I had trouble concentrating, so I would study for a few hours, then come into the common lounge and watch TV for an hour or so. I would then return to my room and repeat the process most of the night.

During one of my TV watching times, an evangelical Christian gave me a pamphlet about a former Hindu mystic who had become a Christian. I was upset by the document, and just before midnight, I knocked on his door and began a heated religious discussion with him.

He had been asleep, but was willing to talk and he soon had the upper hand, as he knew his Bible quite well. I did not give any ground easily, and once he had answered many of my objections, he said something to me that changed my life.

"Mike, forget about all that stuff. One day you are going to stand before G-d and the only thing He is going to ask you is: 'What have you done with my Son'."

At that moment a mental picture of cross came out of the ceiling and struck me on the forehead. I was stunned and speechless and quite startled. He saw that something had happened to me and loaded me down with all kinds of literature, prayed with me and I returned to my room.

A few days later, my friend was going on a retreat and wanted one more opportunity of sharing with me, because he knew that something was happening in my heart. He came to my dorm room when I was studying French, and told me that Jesus was standing at the door of my heart and knocking. He said that I shouldn't keep Him waiting, but that I should let Him come in.

I listened politely and wished him well at his retreat and returned to my French homework. I was supposed to translate English sentences into French and had stopped at number five. Number six read: "Don't keep him waiting, let him come in."

I was so shaken that I took a long walk around the campus to gather my thoughts. When I got back to my room, I admitted to myself that I had never let G-d explain Himself to me. I had always tried to tell Him who He was and what He was like. I took my head in my hands and prayed the following prayer:

"G-d, I give up, if you're real, come into my heart. If not I'll go somewhere else."

I immediately felt sheepish, and hoped that no one found out what I had done. It's not something Buddhists usually do. When I lifted my head, I was shocked. For the first time since I was a child, I felt peaceful. It was almost the same as the feeling of well being I got from drugs, with two exceptions.

I had not smoked anything and it did not affect my consciousness. It was also deeper than any high I had ever experienced. I wanted to cry and laugh at the same time. I got up from my chair and immediately went to bed. I had been having a great deal of trouble sleeping because of all the fear and dread that my life was full of as a very troubled 19 year old.

When I woke up the next morning the feeling of peacefulness had not gone away. That was 32 years ago and the feeling has never left. It is always playing like a restful symphony deep in my soul.

Now, I still had lots of problems to deal with and my life was in very bad shape. Gradually, with lots of prayer and help from my new Christian friends, my life began to stabilize and I went on to finish a degree in Education. I was still the same person inside, but with a difference. G-d's Son, through His Spirit had taken up permanent residence in my heart and I knew for sure that I had everlasting life.

I began to find answers in the Bible and all the inner turmoil of my heart began to settle down. I grew quickly and poured all my energy into my new faith and became very involved with all forms of Christian service.

I soon discovered that Christians still had problems and had many disappointing experiences with believers who ran away from their problems, instead of bringing them to G-d. Almost right away, I was counselling believers who had been Christians all their lives, without growing spiritually. I spent so much time helping other believers and sharing with the unbelievers I used to hang out with, that my own spiritual life was beginning to dry up.

It seemed the harder I tried, the more tired I got, and what I wanted was more spiritual power and energy. I got invited to a charismatic church and on a dare; I went forward to receive my baptism in the Holy Spirit. I resisted for nearly an hour, until the speaker laid hands on me and said: "I rebuke you for resisting".

Suddenly, it was like I was in an English country cathedral in the summer time. I felt all cool and warm at the same time and very peaceful. The Spirit turned up the volume of the inner music of peace that my efforts to serve G-d were beginning to drown out. The Spirit spoke to my heart and said: "Mike, quit trying to do it all yourself".

I am a slow learner when it comes to spiritual things, and I still struggle sometimes with not trying to serve the L-rd in my own strength. I have survived several spiritual disasters, which may be a good definition of ministry among believers who are still human, and who don't always listen to G-d or follow the Bible.

I was raised in the home of the daughter of an assimilated Jew, and when I discovered the dangerous wonder of my Jewish heritage, I became involved with the Messianic Jewish Movement. We are believers in Jesus of Nazareth who believe that the Gospel is the power of G-d to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16). We believe that the Bible teaches that there are two acceptable contexts where believers can express their faith, one Jewish and one Gentile.

We worship G-d in a Jewish context according to the clear teachings of the New and the Old Testament. Coming home to my ancestral spiritual roots did something to the music which the L-rd started playing in my heart when I accepted Him 32 years ago.

My experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit turned up the music, and my shift into Messianic Judaism, played the same song with a different tune, one that made even more sense to my heart. I feel I have come home to where my heart truly belongs and better understand many of the spiritual conflicts which confront believers in today's confusing world.

When the enemy of our souls could not destroy Judaism in time to prevent the arrival of the Messiah of promise, he poured his fury out on the two groups he hates most in the world: Jews and Christians. He actually succeeded in turning Christians against the Jewish people, which led to centuries of persecution and misunderstanding.

There is a wall of bitterness between the two groups that G-d is tearing down in two stages. First of all He has allowed His people to return to the Land of Israel; with a lot of help from countless Christians whose love for Israel is the state of Israel's greatest international resource.

Second He is causing many Jewish people to experience a great spiritual restlessness, which means that increasing numbers of our people are examining the Jewishness of Jesus of Nazareth and of the Gospel He preached. There is still a great deal of hostility towards Messianic Jews, both from the synagogues and from some churches.

But G-d, who knows how to pester His people and draw all people to Him, is working in the lives of so many Jewish people to bring them to Himself through His Son, whom we call Yeshua, the true Messiah of Israel and the King over all the nations of the earth.

When I accepted the L-rd into my heart, my life changed. When I was filled with the Holy Spirit, my life was empowered. When I discovered Messianic Judaism, my life was put back on course in a direction which I am still comes to terms with.

How about You? Have you met the carpenter from Galilee? One day you are going to stand before G-d and the only thing He is going to ask you is what you have done with His Son. What have you done with His Son? If you are a believer, do you need G-d to turn up the volume of His music in your heart? Have you been filled with His Holy Spirit?

Finally, have you found your spiritual home? If you are Jewish, have you discovered the wonder of experiencing the Gospel from a Messianic Jewish perspective? If you are a Gentile believer you need to know that sometimes it is hard for believers to find a good church home. I want to tell you, there is a place where G-d wants to take you, so you can grow and learn to minister in His strength, to the Jews first and also to the Gentile.

Let Him come into your heart and start playing the peaceful music of eternal life in your soul. Let Him adjust the volume of the spiritual music of your soul, until it drowns out all the noise of this world. Let Him show you which version of the love song of Jesus He wants you to hear in your life. Life is so short, G-d is so good, let Him be the music you listen to in the depths of your heart.

Amen and G-d bless you.