

AUTHOR INTERVIEW



Tim, you have a background as a minister for six years and you grew up Catholic. How did that type of experience and training – coupled with your Growing Up Catholic class – help you write this book?

When you do a project like this, you need to have gone through what your targeted audience has experienced. You need to feel the frustrations and go through the same struggles having the same questions as they do. Only then can you begin to relate to what they are feeling. I know what it means not to relate or feel connected with the Catholic mass. I understand how difficult it can be to make yourself go to mass and still feel empty. I fell into the routine of attending church on Sunday but the service having no effect on me the rest of the week. After becoming an ordained Christian minister, I could plainly see both sides of the street. This has given me an enormous amount of first-hand experience that I can use to help others.

What prompted you to write this book?

A number of factors were involved but mainly it was the January 06 issue of the *Christian Standard* when they printed an article in the Buzz section about my Growing Up Catholic class. When emails and phone calls from ministers around the country started coming in asking for curriculum, my eyes were opened to the need to reach out and share my story.

Tim, you've written a true adventure story that touches upon so many issues and beliefs that confront Catholics today. Is your book a wake up call to alert those who are opting out of church altogether?

Yes, but it is much more than people opting out of attending church. A lot of the Catholic faithful are buffet churchgoers, picking and choosing what part of the faith to believe in and moving on. Church becomes more of a duty rather than an opportunity so we find ourselves simply going through the motions on Sunday mornings. I once stood in that same buffet line customizing the way I approached church, believing I had a personal relationship with Christ only to find it was only a casual affair.

Who should read, *Growing Up Catholic A Pursuit for Truth from Tradition to Satisfaction*?

The book was written for Catholics and former Catholics but it is a good read for protestants or anyone who may be struggling with church today. The three main groups who will benefit from this book are those Catholics who attend church occasionally and at Easter and Christmas. Those who have left the Catholic Church altogether and those Catholics who are now attending another church but are struggling with the change.

Abundant Publishing Company

Page 2.

What is most intriguing is that you say in your book you can have an adventure with Christ, but one of the vital steps in achieving that adventure is re-baptism. Can this become a reality because of the deep tradition of infant baptism in the Catholic Church?

Yes, once it is understood that you can make your own decision to accept Christ. In other words, we as Catholics relied on our parents to accept Christ for us when we were infants. We had no say in the matter and don't even remember the event. It is important to understand the commitment we are making and why. By accepting that responsibility, we can personally invite Christ into our hearts and outwardly show Him by being re-baptized by immersion in the same manner as Jesus. We then proclaim Him the Lord and Savior of our life.

Did you ever proclaim Jesus your Lord and Savior as a Catholic?

No, not in those exact words. I believed in Jesus but I never made Him Lord over my life until I understood the true meaning of baptism. Not until I was re-baptized as an adult did I fully accept Him into my life.

Staying on the subject of re-baptism for a moment, you address the phrase *born again* in your book saying, "I always believed only religious fanatics used that particular phrase." What did you mean by that comment?

Yes, it's true I did believe this and it showed how illiterate I was when it came to the Bible. I learned how wrong my thinking was by discovering how adamant Christ was when He used that same term. He said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." I go into more detail in the book but *born again* means dying to your old self, washing away sins and signifying the start of a new journey in one's life, a commitment to follow Christ.

You have worked on staff at two different churches, one in Louisville, KY, and the other in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Did you ever have the ambition or had you thought of becoming an ordained minister at anytime in your life?

Absolutely not. Serving and working in a church was never a consideration. As I share my story in the book, it just happened to come upon me. I did not go looking for it or pursue the position in anyway. As I look back now it is almost laughable. I have been truly blessed by what has taken place in my life. It is a non ending journey of colossal proportions. My seatbelt is buckled and I am literally hanging on for the ride.

You have a chapter entitled, "What Do I Say To My Family". In that chapter you reveal the actual conversation you had with your Mother. In that conversation she said, "I feel as if I have failed as a Mother." Is this the answer we can expect to hear when confronting our own family about attending another church or thinking about being re-baptized?

Perhaps. When you first explain what you are about to do there will be shock, disappointment and in some cases anger. Because our parents raised us as a Catholic, hearing this news will make them feel like you are breaking a bond. They will be confused and will not understand your reasons. In many cases this causes strife and resentment in the family. However, it can be avoided and I go into detail in the book on how to handle such situations. It is important for you to know that at the age of thirty-eight I did not ask their permission. Rather, I shared my intentions with them so as not to be alienated from my family.

Do you have any comments on needed changes in the Catholic Church about divorce?

Jesus said in regards to divorce in Mark 10:9. "Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce because our hearts were hardened. We make mistakes on a daily basis, some small and others horrific. I would like to see the Catholic Church keep the doors open for those who get divorced. More and more annulments are being approved but teaching about marriage from the Bible in church along with offering marriage classes may have a better outcome than offering only marriage classes. The more time spent teaching (preaching) and about everyday life and how to overcome the battles we face in marriage through a foundational bond that the Bible lays out for us to follow will greatly enhance both parties ability to understand and believe in the seriousness of marriage. When both people have the belief and understanding of God's word their lives are being built on a solid foundation together in which the difficulties of marriage cannot destroy.

You have been a "born again" believer for eight years. How will you live differently over a long period of time, giving up self-pride and materialism and truly sacrifice for others?

Being *born again*, (dying to your old self) is a beginning of a life long journey. When I accepted Jesus into my heart I gave up the self pride and understood having a lot of what money can buy doesn't bring inner peace or happiness. I stay grounded by the lessons I have learned in life and continue to keep my focus on Christ, not only by attending church but also by reading His word. Yes, I will make mistakes and fail at times but by keeping Christ in front of me will ensure I will keep on track. I believe you are given a choice and when you make that conscious decision in your heart to call Jesus your Lord, you need to be serious enough to say, "I want this relationship to last" and make every effort to do just that. If Christ is in the center of your life, humbling yourself and serving others will come easier, self-pride and materialism fades.

You have a chapter titled, "What Do I Say To My Family". Tell me how your family reacted towards your re-baptism?

Family members can be the most difficult to talk to when it comes to this subject. At first, they were taken back and thought that I had lost my mind. Although they did not come out and voice their opinion directly to me. The only deep and difficult discussion that took place was between my parents and myself. My mother was affected the most by my decision, and it did not help when some of the people she knew made comments like, "Doesn't that royally tee you off?" None of my three younger brothers had much to say either way on the matter. I can tell you that most everyone in my family including my two nieces came to support me at the re-baptism. But my experience from teaching the Growing Up Catholic classes told me that this was not the norm.