

A fabulous Testimony. . . (PG13)

In the spirit of all the upcoming holidays, I thought I'd share something kind of personal and special with all of you and extend an invitation.

Anyone who's known me knows that I have never been a particularly religious person, in fact, more inclined to stand apart from any kind of organized group or gathering. I'm a rebel, an individual, creative...Not a sheep. My biggest beef with Christianity specifically was seeing people claiming to be "Christian" but hanging out in a group with only other white, straight, well to do, fancy, unapproachable, dressed up people talking the talk but doing nothing to actually walk the walk. Bunch of hypocrites. How Christian can they really be? Pretty sure Jesus didn't dress up in a suit with pearls to talk only to other people in suits and pearls about how superior they are. If you're truly a Christian what's with all the judging and ostracizing? So, what are you saying? If I'm gay, dress like a bum, have tattoos or piercings, have had addiction issues, premarital sex, curse like a sailor, or whatever else, I don't deserve salvation? Eff that! I wanted no part.

My grandparents were devoted to church and as a child I watched them get bulldozed by bossy self serving parishioners. It pissed me off. People passing judgments on them, nasty pastors creating church drama....I think it pissed my parents off too, which is probably why we never went.

Last year, I lost 3 of my grandparents within a 6 month period. It was rough to say the least, and I was having trouble coping. After a few months I felt like maybe if I went to church like my grandparents did, it would help me to honor them, be closer to them, and try to leave all the crappiness behind. My in-laws attended church ever week and had always invited my husband and I along (though we never went except maybe Christmas) so we finally went with them. It just so happened that the pastor of their church was leaving to start his own church, and the sermon we attended was one of his last there. Pastor George Spangler and his family were about to throw themselves out on a limb to pursue something they could really believe in, something honest, real world, casual, inclusive, full of actions and doings that really help people, and not a stodgy parade of suits and pearls just saying nice words. I was impressed and intrigued. The message that day was that it doesn't matter who you are or what you've done, Jesus can forgive you for all the stupid crap you've pulled, you don't have to be defined by your past, and you can start over any time. Apparently, Jesus sought out the sinners and misfits and outcasts to hang with. Hey, that's like me. This is a new concept. What a cool dude. There was this video clip of Matt Chandler's sermon "Jesus Wants the Rose." I was really affected by this; you can check it out on YouTube.

Anyhow, I guess the point of all this is that I learned that day that church doesn't have to be a bunch of stodgy hypocrites in suits. I felt like I was presented with an opportunity to take action for once and help create a place in this hater world where people from all walks could be accepted. This is something I've certainly complained about enough in my life; shouldn't I get off my lazy ass, quit my bitchin' and make a move to create the kind of inclusive culture I want?

I am new to this whole church thing. There is more that I don't understand than I do, but I'm proud to be a part of the culture of love and acceptance I'm helping to create with Turning Point Church. I won't preach or guilt or bug everyone on Facebook with 16 posts a day asking for your contribution, but just this once I wanted to share my story of how I came to a place that I never EVER thought I'd be (because clearly I am way too cool for church) and invite anyone who might be into it to come check it out. Turning Point Church of God meets at the Park Inn on the Carlisle Pike (former site of the Holiday Inn and Wonderful Wanda's) Sunday's @ 10:30am. You can scope out the church on Facebook or the website @ www.lesspew.com