

My Journey to Discover God's True Identity

By Chris Vercelli

(Bradenton, FL) - Around 8 o'clock in the morning on Easter Sunday 2006, I unexpectedly encountered God on Holmes Beach while coming down from a 36-hour cocaine binge. I was a newly married 23-year-old who was successful in the worlds terms, but spiritually very lost. I was not raised in a Christian home or taught the bible while growing up, so although I heard God speaking to me that morning, telling me that I needed to get my life right, I had no idea who He really was.

For several months leading up to this I had been studying new age universalism which taught me that all roads lead to God and to heaven. I figured that whoever was speaking to me was the same one every religious person on earth prays to. After having such conviction come over me about what I was doing, I eventually went home, got rid of the cocaine and began a journey of discovering Gods true identity.

About a week later, I was in my condo walking through the living room and I heard this voice again. This time it said, "go to Walmart." Being that I'm a naturally curious person I went ahead and did what the voice said. When I got to Walmart, I heard the voice say, "go to the book section." When



I got there, I walked around the displays until suddenly I heard the voice say "stop." When I stopped, the voice told me to look down and when I did I saw one audio book that really caught my eye. When I saw it, the voice said, "that's it." I wasn't sure what the book was but the title was intriguing, "Your Best Life Now" by Joel Osteen. When I got into the car I began to play the CDs and I quickly became enthralled. For the first time in my life I heard someone quoting the bible and as I was listening, I felt a faith rising up in me that what he was saying was true. This was my first seed towards discovering Jesus.

Andrea's parents went to church, so we agreed to go with them. Andrea is from Peru and her family went to a Hispanic church so I had no idea what I was in for. These people were so happy to worship God. They danced, they clapped and they shouted.

They loved it. It was great. The translation of what the pastor said didn't come through clearly, but I remember that a few statements he made resonated with me. Afterwards he opened the altars for prayer and I came down. While I was there, a man prayed for me in what I thought was Spanish, but it turned out he was praying for me in tongues. He left without saying a word to me in English and the next day, he told my mother in law that God gave him a message for me. I called him that night and he said, "God told me that He has His hand extended for you and all you have to do is take it." He told me that there was a retreat called an encounter coming up that weekend and that I should come because they only do them every 3 months. Without hesitation, I agreed. When I got to the encounter, I was given a paper called an "inventory" which listed everything

the bible calls sin. It was a checklist you fill out that allowed you to understand how many sins you've committed in your lifetime and how badly you need a savior. As I filled out this inventory, I realized that I had committed thousands if not millions of sins and a deep remorse came over me. Oddly enough, at the same time, I also began to feel peace and joy that I never knew before because I knew God had been speaking to me the whole time, leading me to this place where I could receive forgiveness. I felt so special and loved that words can't describe it.

That night, as we sat down to hear the pastor preach, I was attacked by thoughts that I hadn't had in years. I saw a man across the room adjust his pants and as he did, I began to have uncontrollable, vivid sexual fantasies of him. I had battled these thoughts as a teen and thought I had conquered them but that night they came back with a vengeance. With grief stirring in my heart I asked God "did you bring me here to tell me that I'm gay?" When I did, my mind suddenly went blank and I heard the voice say, "the curse is lifted." Immediately after I heard this, I had a vivid memory of the time that I was sexually molested by my babysitters' son when I was about 6 years old. I hadn't thought about this in many years and suddenly, I was watching it play out in my mind like a movie. Once I saw it all replay, my mind again went blank. The next thing that happened was so supernat-

ural that I am still in awe of it today. I felt a hand and an arm reach down from heaven and pull something out of the core of my body. When this happened, I felt a release as if someone had removed a weight from my chest. Right after this happened, I looked back at this same man and now, for the first time, I saw another man and I felt a love for him like he was my own brother. This was something I always wanted because I never had a blood brother and that day, not only did I get free from a curse I never knew I had and from thoughts that I never wanted, but I also had the wall torn down that was keeping me from having close, brotherly relationships with other men. In total awe, I told God, "If you can do this, I will trust you with everything. You can have my life, it's yours." That weekend I met the one who I'd been hearing all along- Jesus. I left the encounter free from sin and heaven bound for the first time in my life. I often tell people that living your life without Jesus, under the weight of all your sin is like being born into a prison and living there your whole life without ever knowing there is an outside world. Sure, the prison is halfway interesting sometimes, and sometimes you have fun in it for a season, but you constantly live with the deep understanding that there must be something more, yet your ignorance causes you to fail to ever see what that something is. Once I gave my life to Christ I had purpose, I had significance, I had freedom. I had been given the keys to door of

the prison and set free to enjoy the outside world. Living life with an eternal perspective changes everything. Knowing that you are loved by the Creator of the universe changes everything. Knowing that God is in charge of everything and He is on your side, changes everything. If my story can teach us anything it's that God can and will go to any length He needs to reach us when we are lost. When there is no preacher or evangelist, He can even use His own voice to get us to where we need to be to encounter Him fully. This should encourage you, especially if you have lost loved ones. Also, know this- prayer works. What went on in the background that paved the way for all this to happen is that my mother in law and her sisters prayed earnestly for me for 3 and a half years prior to this encounter. Their prayers moved the hand of God and He showed up big-time. Your prayers are effective too. Continue to be persistent in prayer and know that in due season, you will reap a harvest if you don't grow weary. While you are praying remember that God can show up and move someone's heart by His Spirit alone and that the burden of "saving" people doesn't rest on you, it rests on Him. We are His partners in prayer and ultimately, He will bring about salvation any way He needs to. Thank you so much for allowing me to share this long story with you. To God be the glory!!!

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Planned Parenthood Sexually Transmitted Diseases Reach Record Highs Despite Planned Parenthood Sex-Education Programs

By MICAH BILGER

Planned Parenthood is trying to hide its own failing sex education and health programs by claiming it needs Americans' tax dollars to combat rising STD rates in the U.S.

A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found nearly 2.3 million people were diagnosed with chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis in 2017, an increase of more than 200,000 from 2016, according to Vogue.

The 2017 numbers represent the fourth consecutive year of an increase and the highest number of STDs ever reported, according to the CDC. Dr. Gillian Dean, senior director of medical services at Planned Parenthood, responded to the report Wednesday, saying, "These numbers make it clear that too many people aren't getting the health care and education they need in order to keep themselves healthy."

Dean is right, but part of

the blame appears to lie with her own organization. Planned Parenthood claims to be an expert in this field by providing STD education, testing and treatments through its sex education programs and facilities. It repeatedly has claimed it needs Americans' tax dollars (about half a billion annually) to continue providing these services - and even touts itself as the "nation's largest provider of sex education." "Even with rising rates of sexually transmitted in-

fections, the Trump-Pence administration is doubling down on its agenda to make it more difficult for people to access preventive care at Planned Parenthood," Dean said. But with the abortion nonprofit reporting a record income, growing name recognition and record tax funding during the Obama administration, one would think it already would be making headway in reducing those numbers. Instead, the opposite is occurring.

And Planned Parenthood's materials suggest why. In 2015, pro-lifers discovered a Planned Parenthood booklet telling patients that it is their "human right" not to tell their sexual partner that they have HIV. "Some countries have laws that say people living with HIV must tell their sexual partner(s) about their status before having sex, even if they use condoms or only engage in sexual activity with a low risk of giving HIV to someone else," the booklet states. "These laws violate the rights of people living with HIV by forcing them to disclose or face the possibility of criminal charges."

The abortion chain also tells children that promiscuity is not a bad thing. "There's nothing bad or unhealthy about having a big number of sexual partners," Planned Parenthood tells students on its Tumblr page. Ryan Bomberger of the Radiance Foundation wrote more about **Planned Parenthood's connection to the STD crisis in 2017**: Our nat-

ion is facing an STD epidemic. The 18% failure rate of condoms is alarming. Birth control pills, shots, implants, rings, and IUDs don't prevent STDs at all. Abstinence is the only 100% effective way to avoid STDs, HIV, HPV and unintended pregnancy. Should a business that profits from selling abortions, birth control and STD treatments to be teaching our teens that there's nothing wrong with promiscuity?

Bomberger offered a motive as well: "[A]bstinence doesn't generate a profit for Planned Parenthood. Risky behavior does."

Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion provider in America, aborting about 320,000 unborn babies every year. Abortion is a lucrative practice, and sexual promiscuity often is connected to abortion. Planned Parenthood does not need more tax dollars as long as it continues to promote dangerous behaviors that may lead to STDs and innocent unborn babies' deaths.