

Book Review
David P. Stevens

Conformed, reborn, transformed—a spiritual journey by Lance Mosher, Charleston, SC, Lance Mosher Pub., c. 2013, 238 pp. ISBN: 978-0-9897041-0-6, \$8.95.

Lance Mosher relates the story of his own conversion to New Testament Christianity in this spiritual autobiography. The book begins in 1989 and continues through 2013. Since the book was written many years after the events actually occurred, Lance has filled in the gaps that memory could not fill and has been as accurate as possible to the original details. He tells us in the preface to the book that he writes about his own spiritual journey. He writes to teach the truth involved in genuine conversion. He writes to show the providence of God. He writes to show Jesus Christ to other people. In doing so, he exposes the doctrines and traditions of men which he had to set aside in order to follow the truth.

The book has a Foreword written by Devin the person who led Lance to understand the truth; a Preface written by Lance Mosher and the spiritual autobiography itself that is divided by sections given in chronological order.

Lance begins his story in 1989 by relating his first spiritual memory. He was four years old and going with his family to a church function. They lived in Phoenix, AZ at the time. The function involved a church buffet. The church was a Lutheran church. Lance had been baptized into the Lutheran church when he was an infant.

Lance's family life was interrupted when his father and mother divorced. His father remarried and moved to Rogers City, Michigan. His life took another abrupt change when his mother moved from Phoenix to Henderson, Tennessee. Lance began the second grade in Henderson and eventually graduated from high school in Henderson.

His parents did not teach him very many spiritual things. They taught him to love and respect God by saying repetitious prayers, living a generally good and clean life and refraining from using God's name in vain (p. 10). He received his first Bible from the Gideons when he was in the fifth grade—October 29, 1996 (p. 10).

Lance related that during the years 1995-1998, he and a friend, Derek, were "saved" at a youth event held at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. Lance was attending the Baptist church with his friend Derek when both boys attended the youth event and both were "saved" by praying the sinner's prayer with a youth minister named Keith (pp. 12-14).

Later, Derek would introduce Lance to a new genre of music that they listened to on the computer (1998) and Lance would become captivated with music. Lance was thirteen years old at this time (p. 19). Lance fell in love with heavy rock music and developed an interest in learning to play the guitar.

In the spring of 2000, Lance's friend, Jared, introduced him to the magical arts. Lance was fascinated by the material. However, when he spoke to others in his family about it, they warned him against it. Eventually, Lance also saw the potential harm and rejected the material.

During Lance's freshman year in high school, his friend Zeike and himself started experimenting with the punk scene. He started listening to bands that promoted drugs, anarchy, sex, vulgarity, etc. Heavy metal music and punk were influencing his life. At this point in Lance's spiritual journey, the influence of his friends and the music that he was attracted to becomes evident. He attempts to maintain his belief in God while he is experimenting with other concepts that would lead him away from God. He was influenced by the metal scene to change

his wardrobe and by the punk scene to experiment with drugs, theft, violence, and surface atheism (p. 27). These years are described by Lance as years of **conformity** with the world.

When Lance turned sixteen, he received his driver's license and secured a job at the local fast food restaurant. He states that his life began to change rather rapidly at that time. In 2003, he began to play guitar with friends who were putting together a Christian band at the Beacon Apostolic Church (p. 34). Lance was excited about the opportunity and was a good bass player and was accepted as a member of the band. After one practice at the church, the band had to move to another location to practice. Katie, a member of the band, suggested a shed on her property. They named it the *Recluse* and, after cleaning it up, they began practicing at this location.

Lance was introduced to Devin at work in March-April 2003. Devin attended college at Freed-Hardeman University located in Henderson. They became friends. Devin would eventually teach Lance the truth.

Lance continued his spiritual journey in 2003. Bob, one of the band members, began to guide Lance. The first song that the new band wrote together was called, "Martyrs of Sinners." Lance asked Bob what the song meant. Bob explained that, "We're taught by the world to be tolerant of sin and not to judge and all that. The world thinks that sin is so important that they would rather die defending their sinful lives than to look at their lives the way God does and change accordingly" (p. 49). Bob further instructs Lance concerning God's love and justice. Lance begins to do some introspection and knows he needs to change the direction of his life. As Devin's friendship with Lance strengthens, Devin teaches Lance more accurately the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament which clarifies some of the things that Lance's friends told him the Bible teaches. For example, that you could not eat bacon.

Lance and his friend Katie have a religious experience at the Apostolic church service in which Lance attempted to receive the Holy Spirit and speak with tongues. Mick, a friend of Lance's told him that he could not know if he was saved unless he spoke with tongues. Lance was never able to speak with tongues. However, he was convinced that he needed to be baptized so that he could receive the Holy Spirit and speak with tongues. Lance was baptized by Pastor John in the Apostolic Church (p. 86).

Lance told Devin about his baptism. Devin carefully asked him what Scriptures he had followed. Lance did not know any Scriptures. Devin told Lance to ask his friends at church the next time for the Scriptures. Lance persisted until he had a meeting with Pastor John who told him that Mark 16:15-17 and Acts 2:38 were the Scriptures.

Lance was warned by Tina that the church of Christ was a cult. He was invited by Lydia to attend a worship assembly at a local church of Christ and he did. The worship assembly was different than anything Lance had experienced before but he enjoyed it.

Devin taught Lance about the one true church. His approach was deliberate and thoughtful. He began with Matthew 16, the first time the word church is used in the New Testament and moved to Eph. 4:4-6. Slowly, Lance began to see what the Scriptures taught about the church. Devin taught Lance that denominations exist without Scriptural authority and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Devin taught Lance that vain worship consisted of worship according to the commandments of men rather than following God's word. Devin studied the passages that had been given to Lance by Pastor John—Mark 16:15-17 and Acts 2:38. He showed from these Scriptures that tongues were languages and when spoken by the apostles, the tongues were clearly understood by those who spoke those languages. The tongue speaking that Lance was exposed to in the Apostolic Church was unintelligible speech. Devin

continued to show Lance that the miraculous gifts, including tongue speaking, were not permanent aspects of the New Testament church, but temporary means of conveying biblical truth in the early days of the church. Once the complete New Testament was given by God, then these *in part things* would be done away (I Cor. 13). Lance also learns that a Christian can fall away from grace and be lost. When he was saved by saying the Sinner's Prayer, Lance was told by the youth pastor that he could never be lost. As Lance continued to study the Scriptures with Devin, he learned to discern between the doctrines of men and the doctrines of God.

As Lance continues his spiritual journey, Devin shows him from the Scriptures the commandments that God has given to those who desire to become His children. These steps are involved in obeying the Gospel: faith, godly sorrow, repentance, confession of Jesus Christ, baptism or the new birth where the transition is completed and one leaves darkness for light. Lance learns that infant baptism is not Scriptural, that the Sinner's Prayer is a hoax and that baptism to receive the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues is not the one baptism of Eph. 4:4-6. Additionally he learns that the Lutheran Church, the Baptist Church and the Apostolic Church are not found in the New Testament. Therefore, they cannot be the one body of Eph. 4:4-6.

Once Lance was convinced from the Scriptures that he needed to obey the Gospel, he arranged to be baptized at the Finger church of Christ on Saturday, August 2, 2003 where Devin baptized him into Christ. This is the time that Lance was **reborn**.

Finally, Lance relates what his new life in Christ entails. He enjoyed the fellowship of other Christians in the New Testament church. He grew spiritually. He also struggled at times with temptation and weaknesses of the flesh. The biggest faith-shaking experience of Lance's life came when his friend was killed in an automobile accident. The church rallied and helped him. He saw their love and concern. Eventually, he attends school at Freed-Hardeman University and there he met his future wife. He also determined that he wanted to serve God as a missionary. Lance and his wife Kristen serve as missionaries in Porirua, New Zealand fulfilling the Great Commission. Lance concludes the book with emphasis on a life **transformed**.

Every person is on a spiritual journey. Lance's spiritual journey helps us to realize the effect of our family, friends and culture on our own values and beliefs. Also, Lance was willing to interact with the Scriptures with an honest and good heart. Through the Scriptures, Lance was able to come to knowledge of the truth and develop a genuine faith that led to his new spiritual life in Christ.