Akifah Baxter, Ex-Christian, USA

I have always been aware of the existence of God. I have always felt that He was there. Sometimes that feeling was distant, and often times I ignored it. But I could never deny this knowledge. Because of this, throughout my life, I have been searching for the truth of His Plan.

I have attended many churches. I listened, I prayed, I talked to people from all different faiths. But it seemed that there was always something that didn't feel right; it felt confusing, like there was something missing. I've heard many people in the past say to me, "Well, I believe in God, but I don't belong to any religion. They all seem wrong to me." This was my feeling exactly, however, I didn't want to just let it go at that and just accept it. I knew that if God exists then He wouldn't just leave us with no direction, or even a warped version of the truth. There had to be a plan, a "true religion." I just had to find it.

The various Christian churches are where I concentrated my search, simply because that is what I grew up with, and there seemed to be some truths in some of their teachings. However, there were so many different views, so many conflicting teachings on basic things like how to pray, who to pray to or through, who was going to be "saved", and who wasn't, and what a person had to do to get "saved." It seemed so convoluted. I felt I was near giving up. I had just come from yet another church whose views on God and the purpose of our existence, left me so completely frustrated because I knew what they were teaching wasn't true.

One day, I had wandered in the bookstore and I went over to the religious section. As I stood there gazing over the vast array of mostly Christian books, a thought occurred to me to see if they had anything on Islam. I knew virtually nothing about Islam, and when I picked up the first book, it was solely out of curiosity. But I became excited with what I was reading. One of the first things that struck me was the statement 'There is no god but God,' He has no associates, and all prayers and worship are directed to Him alone. This seemed so simple, so powerful, so direct, and made so much sense. So from there I started reading everything I could about Islam.

Everything I read made so much sense to me. It was as if suddenly all the pieces of this puzzle were fitting perfectly, and a clear picture was emerging. I was so excited my heart would race any time I read anything about Islam. Then, when I read the Quran, I felt like I was truly blessed to be able to read this. I knew that this had come directly from God through His Messenger [may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him]. This was it, the truth. I felt like all along I had been a Muslim but I just didn't know it until now. Now as I start my life as a Muslim, I have a sense of peace and security knowing that what I am learning is the pure truth and will take me closer to God. May God keep guiding me. Ameen.