

An Interview with David Murdoch

July, 2010 Featured Author

at

Time with Tannia

(<http://timewithtannia.tripod.com>)

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés



1. Tell us about yourself. (Keep it short and sweet)

I am a convert to Catholicism from Toronto, Ontario and I am very happy to have come to know Jesus Christ through the Church.

2. You converted from a liberal protestant traditional family into Catholicism. What events in your life had a pivotal effect in your decision to embrace the Catholic faith?

That's a tricky question, but a very good one. I was raised in the United Church of Canada, which is a very liberal Canadian protestant denomination, and I left that church when I was a teenager. I found myself questioning a lot during that time about reality and the issue of what knowledge can really be known. While doing this I found myself questioning all kinds of things that I had grown up with, including my Christian faith among them, and I became an agnostic towards the question of God. I can pinpoint my becoming an agnostic to about the time I finished grade ten, when I was reading an English translation of a book that was written by the late Ayatollah Khomeini called 'Islamic Government'. While I was reading the book I was impressed by how seriously he took his faith (and it was far more seriously than I had ever really experienced growing up in the UCC), and I found myself wondering how it was that I knew that I had the right religion, and I questioned to myself if maybe he had the true faith while I had been the one that was duped. At the point, while reading it, I came to the conclusion that I didn't really know what the answer to that question was and in fact I didn't really know if anything I had been taught in my upbringing about religion was actually true. At the time it seemed to me that it was just something I had been told was true, but which I had never seen a reason for. Therefore I became an agnostic by that confession.

While I was an agnostic, I found myself much more interested in the question of religion and Truth than I had been as a believer. I never thought that God didn't exist, but I admitted I didn't know and I wondered if perhaps there was religion... or something... out there that was true. I read Plato, I went to Christian bible studies and read the bible, I talked with Muslims, I went to a Hindu meditation, I looked at philosophy, I looked at the occult, and I generally tried to answer this question in me about what was Truth. I knew that

there was Truth, but I wasn't sure what it was. I wondered if there was a God and if He wanted to believe in Him, and I reasoned to myself that if He was really there, then He could show me that He was there. I thought maybe if He existed He would show me a miracle or give me some reason to know that He was there, but I didn't see anything of that sort.

When I came to university, I found myself largely nauseated by the academic environment, which seemed to me as though it had abandoned the search I was pursuing and had accepted presumption instead. By this point I found myself grappling with my search and suffering greatly in despair over the emptiness I was finding. I also felt like I was losing my grip on things and that I needed help. In my second year at university, one day a thought came to me to try attending a Catholic mass. I therefore looked up the nearest church and went to the Sunday mass. I didn't know what I was doing, but I sat in the back of the church and watched it unfold in front of me, which was a bit like walking into an alien world for me. At that point, just in a few minutes, I realized that I had found the Truth.

I didn't see any miracle or hear any reason that convinced me that it was true, but somehow I just knew that it was what it was, and immediately decided to convert on the spot. I contacted the RCIA soon after and became enrolled. I had never really known very much about Catholicism before that point.

3. How did your friends and family react to your decision? Have you been able to sow for the Lord among your family and inner circle of friends?

I don't think they believed my story. I think they just assumed I had just found something that I liked and that I was shopping for religions. They weren't hostile to my decision and some of them were quite supportive, although they didn't think that I had found Truth, but rather it seems more like they just largely assumed I had found 'a truth that worked for me'. I'd compare my situation in some ways to what God told Ezekiel when people listened to him because they found his words to be beautiful and uplifting, but they were not actually going to accept what he had to say.

Ezekiel 32:30-32 "As for you, son of man, your people who talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, each to his brother, 'Come, and hear what the word is that comes forth from the Lord.' And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with their lips they show much love, but their heart is set on their gain. And lo, you are to them like one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it."

I've tried to share my faith with whomever I meet, but largely it seems that I've been unsuccessful at bringing anyone to conversion.

4. While attending Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, you wrote your novel, *Ana Markovic*. What motivated you to write this novel? What do you expect to accomplish by publishing it?

My main motivation was to try and do something with the grace that God had given me. I wanted to share the beauty of the faith that I had come to know with others, and the idea of writing a novel struck me as a good potential means of doing so. I hoped to achieve this purpose, although I don't expect too much success at the moment, largely because I have not succeeded in getting very many people to read it.

5. Let us talk about the main character and title to your novel, *Ana Markovic*. I couldn't help but to sympathize with this character, the events leading to her alcoholism, and ultimately her salvation. Who is Ana Markovic? Does she represent our sinfulness and societal misconception of the homeless?

She is a deeply despairing individual who suffers largely as a result of her own poor choices and whose life is spiralling down into ever deeper despair. I didn't intend to create her as a representation of sinfulness or societal misconceptions, although those elements are certainly present. In some ways I would even say that her character would seem to support some popular societal views on the homeless as people who are on the streets as a result of their fault. Even so, however, that doesn't free us from our responsibility to try to help her, and the book emphasizes that.

Human sinfulness plays a prominent theme in the dialogues in the book. The need of accepting God's love for us and everything that entails is met with great resistance from Annie who refuses to believe that she really matters. All the time, we turn our back on the great gift that God offers us of Himself, and that constitutes our sinfulness.

6. What aspects of your life would you change, if just like *Ana Markovic*, you were given a second chance? Why do you feel these changes are necessary for your spiritual growth?

In some ways I feel as though God has already given me a second chance; in fact many second chances. Many times I have spurned them, but over time I have come to accept them and get rid of my pride, my selfishness, my ego, my vanity, etc. I am most thankful to Him for liberating me in that way.

All of us have a second chance to change our life right now: God is calling each and every one of us to correct that which is in our lives that we know are not supposed to be there. It is not possible to enter His kingdom if we are still committing sin. Every sin that we commit takes us away from Truth and Love. Sin harms both ourselves and others, it blemishes our lives, it hurts the Church, it distracts us from is really important, it fills us with emptiness and guilt, it takes away from true meaning in our lives and it is destructive for all sorts of other reasons not listed. In order to grow spiritually we need to turn away from sin and embrace the gospel, since we cannot accept the gospel if we continue to commit sin. Once we accept the gospel we are able to enter His kingdom, we are not deprived of Truth and Love, we help rather than harm ourselves and others, our lives are brightened, the Church is strengthened, we come to possess the true meaning of our existence, we are filled with joy even if we suffer, it makes our lives truly meaningful and it is good for all sorts of other reasons not listed.

7. Why did you choose to self-publish instead of using a traditional publisher? Are you satisfied with your choice of publisher?

I was in touch with a literary agent and she recommended that I use this publisher. It is not actually a self-publishing enterprise, but it is something in between self-published and a traditional publisher. I took her advice and tried this enterprise. I am not too satisfied with it, although I don't know if I would have really had any greater success if I used a traditional publisher.

8. You attended university and also took a course to teach English as a second language. What do you consider the biggest challenges, obstacles, and rewards of teaching today?

I'm not an expert on the subject, as I haven't had very much experience in teaching. I'm not sure if I can give a very authentic answer to that, although I suppose in some ways it would be the same as any job wherein there are all kinds of big things and little things that will inflict suffering, as well as all kinds of big things and little things that one will find rewarding.

9. In addition to your novel, *Ana Markovic*, you authored the theological book, *The Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Tell us about your book. Who is your targeted audience?

It is a complicated book that I don't expect very many to have either an interest in or to understand (at least not easily), but it is intended for those who seek wisdom concerning the issues of human sinfulness, judgment and morality.

The book is focused on the issue of what it really means when the prophets of the Old Testament comforted the people of God by telling them that God would no longer remember their sins and that He would make it as though they had never sinned. It tries to present the idea that sin is a mere reflection of our will against ourselves and that it doesn't actually exist. I've been told by one person who has read a good portion of it that it also deeply shows God's love.

10. Where can our readers purchase your books?

Only online. It is available through major online retailers as well as the company itself. For buying directly it can be found here:

<http://www.eloquentbooks.com/AnaMarkovic.html>

<http://www.strategicpublishinggroup.com/title/TheKnowledgeOfGoodAndEvil.html>

11. We live in an era of technology where a cyberspace presence is essential for an author success. What has proven to be the most cost effective way to market your books?

The most effective things that I have come across have been the things that you recommended involving advertising in the internet blogosphere. I haven't generally found much success with very much of anything out there that I've tried, however.

For Tannia's readers I would like to inform them at this point that Tannia has been greatly helping me with all kinds of things in being a writer and she is a very generous person.

12. I found interesting the fact that you had not much interest in music. Music is considered the best tranquilizer and medium to escape the chaos of our daily life. How do you relax, gather your thoughts and ideas for writing?

I have a word document on my laptop that I entitled 'ideas'. Whenever I have an idea, whether I'm on the computer or doing something else, I jot down the idea and put it in that file. After doing this long enough, this file has now grown to about 120,000 words. When I'm writing something, I will upload this file and do a search with the 'find' button for particular themes I am thinking about and I almost always then come across an idea that I like, which I then base my writing off of. This system allows me to never require a period of gathering my thoughts in order to think about what I want to say, because I write down all my thoughts before I write and they are all available for me when I need to come up with something.

I don't suffer writer's block as a result of this system. I highly recommend it for others who have difficulties with this.

I also pray for wisdom to write what it is I ought to write.

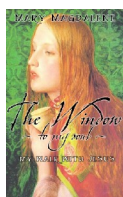
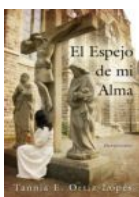
13. A word of advice to those, who like you, are passionate about their mission of sharing the Gospels with the gentiles and hard core atheists.

Jesus told us not only to love those who love us, but also to love those who don't. This is hard, but it is necessary and that's probably the most important advice I can give people who are bearing witness to their faith towards those who would attack us for our faith. If someone insults you, don't insult them back, if they hate you, love them back, if they treat you like garbage and scum, then pray for them.

Secondary and less important advice is that what we are being attacked with is not the Truth, and because it is not the Truth, it will not be able to stand on its own weight.

For example, in the news media these days there's a lot of attack against the Church over the sex abuse issue. However, if our society really cared this deeply about abuse of children, then the question then comes as to why it is we aren't doing more to help suffering children around the world? There are few people in the western world that are not aware of the masses of children who live without potable water, adequate food or medicine, basic education, etc. In the west we have the power to greatly mitigate this suffering by sacrificing unnecessary expenses and time we possess in order to donate money, volunteer our time, pray for them, etc. There are so many trivial expenses and unnecessary luxuries that we possess that we could sacrifice in order to help the multitudes of children around the world who are suffering for lack of such help. How then can people criticize the Church for failing to protect children, if we fail to protect millions of children that we plainly know require our assistance? I think it is because this attack isn't really based on Truth and we live in a selfish society that does not actually care about protecting children inasmuch as it cares about attacking the Church. People will watch the news and shake their heads in disgust at the Church for what they are told about the Church not protecting children, and then in the commercial break they will hear about how only a dollar a day will feed a starving child and then they will continue watching more digital cable on their expensive big screen TVs, and they won't connect the dots. Similar falsehoods can be seen in so many things that the Church is attacked upon. So often the one who points the finger is himself a guilty party. That is just the broken, false and sinful reality of this world.

Christ has overcome it.



Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés, author of *The Window To My Soul; My Walk With Jesus* (2004 Tate Publishing;). *El Espejo de mi Alma* (2010 Pleasant Word) .

Author's websites: timewithtannia.tripod.com, www.shoutlife.com/tanniaortizlopes, and www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes The author also has a blog at www.amazon.com

READERS' COMMENTS:

Date Received: June 30, 2010 12:53:50 PM EST

Name: Denise Turney

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Web site URL:(optional) <http://www.chistell.com>

Where did you hear about this interview? Tannia

Comments: Another great interview, Tannia! And David went all the way from Canada to China - quite the traveler! The best to both of you! Denise

Date Received: July 24, 2010 11:31:55 AM EST

Name: Georg

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Web site URL:(optional)

Where did you hear about this interview?

Comments: I totally disagree to the answer to Q 13. There was child abusers in the German catholic church. That's the truth. And for these victims it's no consolation that other children live without potable water. You will always find a bigger problem but that does not mean the smaller ones need no solution. Regards from Berlin. Georg

Date Received: July 30, 2010 12:45:06 PM EST

Name: David Murdoch

Email Address:(optional)

Web site URL:(optional)

Where did you hear about this interview? Tannia

Comments: Hi Georg, I don't mean to suggest that the abuse needs no solution or that the parties involved are guiltless. My point is rather that it seems hard to believe that this entire controversy is really about the issue of helping people who suffer from abuse. If it were, there a multitude of things that we could devote ourselves to in order to stop abuse, which we are not presently doing. It seems rather that many of those in society who are pointing the finger are not really doing so in order to help minors, but rather as a means of attacking the church. Letting children starve to death when we have the power to stop it and are fully aware of its existence, is far worse negligence than failing to act after reports are heard about someone in your employment who sexually abused a minor. Both of them are wrong and would need to be solved, but people who are truly upset about child abuse would be far more concerned with the former. Our society seems to be more upset with the latter. Thank you for your comment and God Bless,