

Bishop Anthony E. Ray



Born August 3, 1954 in Portsmouth Virginia, Bishop Ray began his education in 1960 at the Arthur L. Bristol Elementary School in Argentina, Newfoundland. In June of 1962 following his father's retirement from the Navy, the family returned to Portsmouth, Virginia where he was educated in the public school system. He accepted a scholarship offer from Elizabeth City State University in Elizabeth City, North Carolina and began studying for a Bachelor of Science Degree in Geology in August of 1972. After reading the Autobiography of Malcolm X and hearing a speech by Louis Farrakhan in November of 1973, he felt compelled to undertake an intense study of the Islamic Religion. Bishop Ray never joined the Nation of Islam, because of its racial rhetoric and separatist views, and opted to become a Shiite Muslim by taking the shahada, a public declaration of belief in the Islamic faith, in the fall of 1976.

Upon his completing his undergraduate studies in May of 1977, he enlisted in the United States Navy. Selected as a Recruit Chief Petty Officer, he was instrumental in leading his training unit in receiving The Command Award for Excellence, as The Most Outstanding Company. After completing Boot camp, Anthony received orders to The Navy's Anti-Submarine Warfare Training Command, in San Diego, California in September 1977, where he continued to excel, and upon the strong recommendation of his Commanding Officer, he was selected to attend The Naval Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island. Because of his outstanding leadership skills and his commitment to the highest traditions of The Navy, he was afforded the privilege to return to his hometown as a Navy Recruiter upon completing Anti-Submarine Warfare Training in November of 1977, before reporting to OCS in January of 1978. He was commissioned as an Unrestricted Naval Line Officer in July of that same year, and immediately reported to duty for further training at The Naval Surface Warfare Officer's School, which was also located in Newport, Rhode Island. In November of 1978, he reported for duty on board the USS Fiske DD (842), as the Combat Information Center Officer, with collateral duties as Intelligence Officer, Electronic Warfare Officer, Legal Officer, and Public Affairs Officer. When the USS Fiske was decommissioned in July of 1980, and transferred to the Turkish Navy, Anthony was assigned to the staff of Destroyer Squadron 41, and ordered to stay with the Fiske as a Liaison Officer, to help affect a smooth transfer of the ship. Subsequently, he received orders to the USS Guadalcanal (LPH-7) stationed in Norfolk, Virginia as the Main Propulsion

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Assistant in September 1980. During the course of the Guadalcanal's deployment to the Mediterranean Sea, (July – November) 1981, the ship conducted operations in the Gulf of Sidra off the coast of Libya, was positioned off the coast of Egypt immediately following the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and patrolled the coast of Lebanon prepared to evacuate American citizens from Beirut. Recognizing the gaining momentum of Islamic Fundamentalism in the Middle East, particularly after the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, threats by Libya's Qadafi and Hezbollah in Lebanon, Anthony strongly felt that he was facing a possible conflict of interest as a Naval Officer and a devout Muslim. As matters continued to deteriorate in the Middle East and with tensions building between The Judeo-Christian West, and The Muslim world, he felt he had no other choice, but to resign his commission when the Guadalcanal returned to its homeport. He left active duty in April of 1982, and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Naval Reserve in November of 1984.

Subsequent to his departure from active duty, he was offered several opportunities with major Fortune 500 Hundred Companies, such as IBM, Abbot Labs, Mobil Oil, Dow Chemical, Dupont, and Johnson & Johnson. Unable to secure a position with Aramco in Saudi Arabia, he decided to take the offer with Johnson and Johnson in New Jersey, so that he could be in the New York area – which would allow him to study Islam with a Shiite Muslim group based in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. Told by members of the group that if he was serious about his desire to further his studies in Arabic and The Quran, Bishop Ray was instructed to leave his job with Johnson and Johnson, and move in full time as a resident on the group's campus, and he did so in September of 1982. Shortly after moving in, he realized that there was more to just studying and practicing the basic tenets of Islam, but the Muslim sect he had become a part of, "The Ansaru Allah Community," had put together a rigorous and intense physical training program that would rival any military training he had ever received. He really became concerned when he discovered that the Ansaru Allah Community had ties to the Sudanese government, strong anti-American views, possible connections to Iranian Islamic Extremists, with the intent, rather real or perceived, to assist the Iranians in staging an insurrection during the Hajj in Mecca following Ramadan in the spring of 1983, and consequently decided to sever his ties to the organization in December of 1982. Within a day or so of his departure from Brooklyn, Bishop Ray returned to his hometown of Portsmouth, Virginia. Disturbed by what he viewed as a battle beginning to brew for the very soul of "True Islam," between Sunni and Shiite, moderates and extremists, he continued to practice his faith, but withdrew himself from active association within a particular mosque. In April of 1983, he accepted an offer with The U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Cincinnati, Ohio and joined the Kroger Company in 1984.

On Memorial Day in 1986, during a nine hour non-stop dialogue with a Christian Minister, that he had hoped to persuade to become a Muslim, Anthony converted to Christianity, based upon what he believed to be irrefutable evidence, that the Minister presented to him, that Jesus was not only a Prophet, but He was truly the Son of God, who was indeed crucified for the free pardon of man's sin, and that He had been raised from the dead. Within ten days of his conversion,

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Anthony felt compelled to become a minister, and accepted the call of God on his life. In January of 1987, he began study at the Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary, and earned a Master's Degree in Christian Apologetics in June of 1989. Since then, he has been privileged to pastor two churches leading countless numbers of people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and share his personal testimonies all across America. In September 2001, he launched a nationwide campaign initiative entitled, "Operation Heal the Land," in an effort to enrich the debate in finding a means to help policy makers, religious leaders, scholars, and democracy activists committed to instituting reforms in the Muslim world.

In the spring of 2012, he teamed up with best-selling authors and ministers Lee Strobel and Mark Mittleburg-for a series of national simulcasts called "The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask", based on Mittleburg's book by the same title. In August of 2012, he hosted Greg Laurie's Harvest America nationwide simulcast and shared his testimony right before Greg preached. Bishop Ray is passionate about church planting and helping churches in decline. He is the founding pastor of World Missions Church and the Founder and Executive Director of The HBCU Project - an apologetics focused ministry set to launch in the fall of 2014, empowering students of the HBCU faith community with resources that provide biblical, historical, philosophical, and scientific evidences for following Jesus Christ. He is the Founder and Chairman of The HBCU Nation and Host of The HBCU Nation Radio Show. You can learn more about Bishop Ray following him on Twitter and Facebook @TheHBCUNation. He and his family make their home on a small farm in Southampton County Virginia.