

Name: Russ Breault, Researcher, lecturer, author, U.S.A.

Questions:

1. **When** and **how** did you first hear about the Shroud?

I learned about the Shroud in 1978 when news articles carried the story of STURP. I read Sacred Shroud by Thomas Humber in 1979 and wrote two articles on it as a writer for the college newspaper in 1980. After that, I was hooked.

2. What interested you about the Shroud?

As a professing Christian I was intrigued by the possibility of something tangible that might be a document of the Resurrection. That was Christ's ultimate miracle. It maybe a cool miracle to heal somebody but to rise from the dead after three days is no parlor trick. It is the one thing, more than anything else, which sets Jesus apart from every other religious leader. If he can conquer death...that's big.

3. Do you believe the Shroud is likely the burial cloth of Jesus Christ, a fake relic, or are you uncertain what to believe?

I am 95% certain that the Shroud could be authentic. That is as far as I can take it. There is evidence for it and evidence against it. It is a fabulous mystery. The mere possibility of it being authentic should be enough to spur continued interest and research. Even so, it can never be proven absolutely through science. Belief in the Shroud as authentic is a step of faith; it is not anything science can prove beyond a reasonable doubt.

4. What, if any, actions did you take after you first encountered the Shroud (e.g., conduct research, contact people involved with it, etc.)?

I began giving talks about it at local churches. In 1981, I gave over 60 lectures throughout the Southeast United States.

5. Have you ever seen the Shroud at any of the exhibitions? If yes, which years?

I have been to all three recent exhibitions: 1998, 2000 and 2010.

6. What did you experience when you were in the presence of the Shroud?

For me, I think familiarity with the subject works against having any "religious" experience. People ask me this all the time, and I have to tell them, "Sorry to disappoint you, but I did not hear the audible voice of God, the ground didn't shake, a light didn't beam from heaven and the floor didn't fill with smoke." The impact occurred when I contemplated what the Shroud represents...the price that was paid and his victory over death.

7. Have you ever been involved in any scientific study of the Shroud? If yes, please describe **what motivated** your work and **why**.

No, not directly. I have attended and participated in over 11 international conferences, but I am not a scientist by trade.

8. Have you ever written anything about the Shroud, either factual or fictitious? If yes, please describe **what motivated** your work and **why**.

I have written several articles and most of the content on my websites, ShroudEncounter.com and ShroudUniversity.com. I have not undertaken a book because I don't know anything new that would add to what is already in print.

9. Do you favor or believe any of the current theories on how the image got onto the cloth? If so please name the theory.

I lean towards energy...probably light of some kind. The reason I say this, is because everything else about the Shroud lines up with the biblical account including Jewish burial practices for a man who died by violent death. The fact that the blood soaks all the way through the cloth yet the image is totally superficial speaks of two

things. The cloth must have wrapped a corpse yet direct contact with a body does not explain the image. Something else is at work. The scripture gives us clues with the Mount of Transfiguration story and Jesus' appearance to Paul. In both events Jesus is described as a being of light. So what might we expect the split second his soul zoomed back into his lifeless body? A transformation of light as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul describes the resurrection occurring in a "flash, in the twinkling of an eye." I would believe this whether or not the Shroud was authentic. Interestingly, the Shroud image seems to correlate with this very idea espoused by Paul.

10. Do you feel that you have a calling or vocation to be involved somehow with the Shroud? If yes, please describe **what motivated** you to make a commitment to the Shroud and **why**. I don't think anyone is crazy enough to be involved with something so controversial, so narrow in its scope, and yet potentially so profoundly significant unless one is called to it. There have been many dark days for those involved and only a sense of calling could maintain one's commitment.

The why for such a calling goes back to its potential. It is potentially the most significant artifact/relic on the planet. That potential demands our continued focus. At the same time, while the mystery is intriguing, the message of the Shroud does not hinge on it being authentic. It either is the burial cloth of Christ or it is an amazing representation that speaks of the very same events. I enjoy the Shroud's enduring mystery...we don't know for sure...it is precisely what draws us into its message. That is the magic and the majesty of the Shroud.

Please describe below any other *personal* reflections, experiences, insights, or thoughts about the Shroud of Turin that you would like to share.

My mother passed away on September 6, 2000. It was a day after my birthday. She was sick and dying from cancer. She knew I was scheduled to go over to Italy to attend the conference to be held in

Orvieto in late August. I was prepared to cancel my trip and spend the time with her during her final days. She would have nothing of it. She insisted I go and say a prayer for her in front of the Shroud. She was in the hospital when I left for Italy to arrive on Saturday August 26th; the conference started the next day. It was one of the worst nights of my life. The hotel was awful, for some reason a bell needed to ring outside my window every thirty minutes. There was no AC so the windows needed to stay open or suffocate. Jet lagged with no sleep and totally distraught over my mother's imminent death, I was a total wreck. I switched hotels but by Wed of that week, I got word that she had been moved to hospice. I took a flight from Rome to Turin that same day. As requested, I said many prayers for her as I stood before the Shroud late that afternoon. That night I couldn't sleep; I got up at 5:00 AM and took a cab to the airport, got on a different flight that routed me through Atlanta where I live. My wife and three young daughters met me at the airport to switch bags and I was off to Providence, RI where my brother met me. We went straight to the hospital. I walked in the door at 11 pm. All my family was there around her bed. She woke up and said. "Hi Russ, you look pooped!" I had been up for 56 hours. She was dying but was more concerned about me being tired. She lived another four wonderful days before she entered the gates of glory. When I was in Turin, I purchased several commemorative medals for the exhibition with an etching of the Shroud image. I gave one to each of my brothers and sister. On the day of her funeral, I placed a medal in the casket with her. If the Shroud represents anything, it is the promise of the resurrection. It is because of that promise that I know I will see my wonderful mother (and father) again. That is the message of the Shroud.

Writings/Websites/Blogs: www.ShroudEncounter.com
www.ShroudUniversity.com www.Shroud2000.com