

Good News

A scenic landscape featuring a dirt path that leads from the foreground into a field of trees. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and long shadows. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The trees are mostly bare, indicating a cooler season.

**Come to Christ
Today!**



Editor

Rev William Macleod
B.Sc Th.M

25 Branklyn Crescent
Academy Park
Glasgow
G13 1GJ

Tel 0141 959 0292

williammacleod@fconcontinuing.org

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Mrs Isobel McQueer
The Manse, Tordarroch, Farr,
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Email: isobel@mcqueer.com

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Inverness IV2 6XF.
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All donations and gifts for the Church should be sent to the Financial Administrator:

Mrs Muriel Smith
The Manse
Coillore Farm
Struan
Isle of Skye IV56 8FX

from whom further information may be obtained. Cheques should be made payable to "Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)".

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General Treasurer

The General Treasurer Designate is:

Mr Murray MacKay
27 Morison Avenue
Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2HQ
Email: murrayfcc@gmail.com
Mob.No 07793535227

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Church Website at www.freechurchcontinuing.com

For more information, contact the Editor at the address above, or the Home Missions Worker:

Donald John Morrison
85 Old Edinburgh Road
Inverness IV2 3HT
Email: murtieuk@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01463 241618
Mob: 07776 010000

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In the Beginning, God...

The opening words of the Bible are surprising: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. No attempt is made to tell us who God is or to prove His existence. In the beginning of time, when the universe came into existence, God was already there. God is not part of the universe. He is eternal and had no beginning. He always was there and always will be there. God's creative activity is what set the clock of time going. All that there is, everything that exists, apart from Him, was made by Him.

Why no proof of God?

God created us all with a certain consciousness and awareness of Himself. He placed in the heart of everyone of us some knowledge of Himself. We all have a sense of right and wrong. If there is no God there is no such thing as evil or sin. If we are just a combination of molecules which came together by chance, we are answerable to no-one. Might is right. But we all know that might is not right. We have a sense of justice and injustice. We know that there is an ultimate Judge.

There is nothing more natural than to pray when we are in danger. This shows our awareness of God. Further,

in all the many different civilisations around the world, every single one has a religion and a god or gods of some description. Atheism is largely a modern phenomenon, deriving from abstract and flawed intellectual reasoning, and is an expression of man's desire to be free from God. Atheists are usually angry and passionate when discussing religion which indicates a guilty conscience and a need to prove to themselves as well as others that there is no God. Everyone knows in his heart that there is a God to whom they are responsible at the end of the day, though they may deny it.

Why no definition of God?

God has given to all an understanding of what He is like. The world around us points to the Creator. Paul put it well when he wrote, 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse' (Romans 1:20). Even without the Bible, God has revealed to men and women sufficient of His glory and power to leave them without an excuse for not worshipping Him. The Bible can then start with the living and true God

and present Him to us. This wonderful book tells us what we are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of us. It explains the holiness of God, presents us with His law, condemns sin as a breaking of that law and tells us as sinners the good news of the gospel.

Didn't everything start with the big bang?

Don't scientists get rid of the need for God? Stephen Hawking and others treat the Big Bang as fact and describe what happened within milliseconds of the Bang. But there is a problem. What was there before the Bang and why did it Bang? Scientists know the universe is not eternal. It is gradually running down – the entropy of the universe is increasing. How can nothing 'bang' something into existence? Everything needs a first cause or is eternal.

Then there is the problem of life. Where did it come from? Charles Darwin did not know of the complexity of cells and DNA when he proposed his theory of evolution. No-one has a clue today how inorganic molecules could possibly come together without divine direction to form the simplest of single cell creatures. In fact there is no such thing as a simple single cell creature – even the simplest are immensely complicated. This is why some have proposed 'Intelligent Design'. Some intelligence must have been guiding the reactions and the development of the various species. We know that this was God. He made all things out of nothing by the word of His power. 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'.

It takes faith

For the atheistic scientist who believes that there is no God and that all started with a 'Big Bang' and that life formed mysteriously in a warm puddle and that one species gradually by natural selection over millions of

years developed into the magnificent diversity we see today, it takes faith. When you look at men and women today, at their accomplishments in art and music, in science and engineering, in computers and microbiology, in literature and philosophy, how can any sane person say it all happened by chance? However, if people do not want to believe in God they will believe in anything that will justify their atheism. For us, Christians, 'The heavens (the universe) declare the glory of God' (Psalm 19:1), the world around us reveals the Creator to us. We have no difficulty in receiving the first words of the Bible: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. Nothing that true science has discovered conflicts with this. Increasing numbers of scientists accept the simple Bible account of creation.

Why did God create the world?

God created the world to glorify Himself. He created man in His own image to have fellowship with Him, to worship Him, to be His children and to enjoy Him forever. Sadly man has rebelled against His Creator, does His own thing and worships Himself. We live in a world in rebellion against God. Sin will be punished. God is just and holy. Hell has been prepared for Satan and his followers. 'The wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23).

The Good News

The Good News is that God reveals the loving and merciful side of His nature in sending His Son into the world to be the Saviour. He became a man, took our sins upon Himself, suffered for us on the cross and died in our place. He rose from the dead on the third day victorious. He is mighty to save and willing to save. How can we be saved? Repent and believe the gospel. Turn from your sins and 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts 16:31). Why should anyone perish when Christ freely offers salvation to all?



"God reveals the loving and merciful side of His nature in sending His Son into the world to be the Saviour."

My Testimony

Debbie Allan



Today I am serving the Lord as a minister's wife in Partick, Glasgow. It is a far cry from how I imagined my life would be, but I wouldn't change it for all the world. I wasn't born into a Christian home, nor did I have the privilege of having Christian parents. I was brought up Roman Catholic along with my sister and brother, as that was what our mum wanted. I can't remember going to church in my very early years due to moving around quite a bit as my dad served in the Royal Navy.

It was when we moved to St Helens, after my dad retired from the services in the early 1970s and I was a pupil at the Catholic Infant and Junior School attached to the church, that I recall attending. It became a part of our life and I went through the stages that were expected of me, taking my first Confession and first Holy Communion. In the mid 1970s we moved again to Great Sankey and church didn't seem to play such a big part in our lives. In the summer of 1978 we had a holiday in the Highlands of Scotland and fell in love with the place. When we went back home we couldn't settle, so decided to come again in October to see if it was feasible for us to move up north, which as it turned out it was. We all moved up to Tain in the December of that year.

I remember we hadn't long been in our new home when we had a visit from the local Church of Scotland minister, Rev Douglas Horne, and I was taken with how warm and friendly he was, even after my mum told him we were Catholics. That was the first time I had seen a man of God other than our priest.

Church again became a part of our lives, especially as we had nuns move in next door, and then, when they left, the priest. I took my Confirmation at fifteen, a year later than usual because I had been in hospital for an operation.

Love and marriage

In 1982, aged sixteen, I met Andrew, who was a local photographer and had Christian parents. He attended Balintore United Free Church but was not a believer. Both sets of parents were not happy about our courtship at first – it was the age old problem, religion, but thankfully they came around. Andrew never came to church with me but whenever my parents were away I would go to his. It was totally different to what I was used to. We went through a mass and took part in it, whereas in his the only time you took part was when you sang. The priest would only preach, if that's what you want to call it, for ten minutes, while the minister preached for about forty

minutes plus, and he gave you food for thought.

We married in 1985, moved to Alness, and I stopped going to church. Then we had our first child at the end of 1986 and I started wanting to go to church as a family but did nothing about it other than having our son baptised in the local Church of Scotland.

In September 1988 my husband was converted and was invited to attend the Baptist Church in Alness to which we all went. I felt very much at home there and enjoyed being a part of the church. I could see a change in Andrew and I too started to want this for myself, so would pray every night that God would change me, but I would wake up next morning no different. Through the preaching of the Word I would sometimes come away from church on a Sunday morning as though a dagger had pierced my heart but it still had no lasting effect on me.

Then a few weeks before Christmas in 1988 our minister, Rev Bill Murdoch, said something that struck a chord.. He asked the congregation, 'If you died tonight where will you go?' Dread and fear came over me because I knew that I would go to hell. Still this didn't move me to do anything.

Saved

On Hogmanay our church had a gathering so that we could take in the bells together. About fifteen minutes before midnight we all sat together and talked about what we would like to see different in the New Year and one of

the deacons, Colin Temple, got up and said he wanted to see families united and all I could hear was a voice saying to me, 'But you're not united, you're not united'. The bells came and we went round wishing everyone 'Happy New Year' and as I approached my minister's wife I suddenly felt this weight upon my shoulders pushing me to the ground and I was crying. Not really understanding what was happening to me my minister's wife said quite excitedly, 'Do you want to ask Jesus into your heart?' I answered, 'Yes', but not knowing what I had to do she called her husband who took me into the vestry. He asked me what was happening and then he said, 'Do you want to ask Jesus to be your Saviour and repent of your sins?' 'Yes', I said. Again, with me not knowing what to do, he prayed with me and when I said 'Amen!' a great weight lifted right off me and in fact I felt I could float; then my teeth started chattering.

I went back to the gathering and told everyone. I was so excited that I wanted to shout it out in the streets. Then over the next day or two I told family and friends – some were delighted and some indifferent. The hardest part was telling my parents, especially my mum. Their reaction was that Andrew made me do it. How can you explain to somebody that it was between you and God, and that it was you being convicted? Both Andrew and myself got very involved in our church and we loved being a part of it.

Stabbed to death

Then in January 1997 our world was torn apart when my sister Kathryn was stabbed to death by her ex-husband. She had three young girls who came back up North to live with my parents. You wonder how you can get through this but by the grace of God you can. You never forget but you learn to live with it. Six months after her death my health, especially my mental health, deteriorated. I would cry at the least thing, wasn't functioning properly and hiding away from people. The only place I found solace was by going to church and being surrounded by the love of God's people. This

went on for a year and in the end I sought medical help which got me through it, along with the power of prayer. Throughout it all though I never once felt God had left me or I was alone. He was my rock through those troublous times. 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee' (Hebrews 13:5) is His promise. I held onto this through my bleakest, darkest days.

A big change came for us all when in the early 2000s Andrew felt he could no longer worship the way our Baptist Church did. He had been troubled about worship practices for some time and after a brief meeting with Rev James Frew, then minister of Kiltearn Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), who gave him a book to read, he was totally convinced we were not worshipping God the way we should. So, in June 2003 we left Alness Baptist Church and went along to Kiltearn FCC, where again we very quickly settled in. With regards to myself I was very saddened to leave but it was the people I was sorry to leave. They had been a great help to me when I needed them.

Andrew felt called to the ministry. He applied to the Church, was accepted and he started his studies in the Seminary in September 2004. It was to be for four years. These years he did not find easy but he got through. His first congregation was Aultbea FCC, where we stayed for five and a half years, then we moved to Partick, Glasgow. It's amazing the love you have for the people of God. I have found that since being a Christian I have lost a lot of friends but at the same time I have gained a family, brothers and sisters in Christ, and that is far better.

I love the life the Lord has given me but most importantly I want to serve Him to the best of my ability and to do it to His glory. I have had many ups and downs, but who said it was going to be easy? I wouldn't have it any other way. He is my rock and I always hold on to this, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths' (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Are you living 'a bit of a life'?

Ken's car had just undergone its annual service and he was sitting with George, the Servicing Manager, waiting for the usual paperwork to be completed and the arrival of a necessary car part. It was late morning.

A rather dishevelled looking young man, carrying a package, approached the desk from the direction of a counter marked 'Parts and Servicing'. He was unshaven, had rather unkempt hair, bleary eyes, and looked very

much as if he could do with a shower and a good night's sleep! Despite this, he had a pleasant face and smiled broadly as he reached George's desk. Ken estimated he was in his mid to late twenties, and noticed that he wore a name badge on the right side of his company issue shirt bearing the name Sean.

'There you go old man!' he said cheekily, placing the package on the desk in front of George his boss, who looked no older than sixty. 'Feeling a bit rough th'day. Wild night last night. Didnae get hame till after four! Wrecked! Brilliant night! Paying for it now though!' Sadly, as is all too common, Sean's brief conversation also contained several swear words.

'Careful', said George, 'Ken here is a Christian and does not like swearing. Watch your language'.

'Sorry mate!' Sean's smile lit up his face again, 'No offence an' all that', he said turning to Ken. He was one of those young men that were impossible to dislike, a 'cheeky chappie' with a street-wise character and the gift of 'patter'.

He looked at Ken, still smiling. 'Christians? I know about that. You believe in Jesus and that He forgives your sins and all the bad stuff you've done in your life'. 'Indeed we do', replied Ken, 'that's the wonderful news of the Bible that we want to share with the world. Jesus Christ forgives sin'.

'No me mate. I'm too far gone. Too much bad stuff in my life. Stuff that I've done isnae pretty'. The smile on Sean's face was waning slightly. 'I'm a lost cause mate!' The smile disappeared.

Ken held his gaze and said, 'Sean, I am living proof that Jesus has the power to forgive even the very worst of sinners. If he can save someone who has done all the things I have done in my life, He can save you too'.

'You lived a bit of a life in yer day have you?' asked Sean as a slight grin returned. 'I'm sorry to say that I have', explained Ken, 'but no more! That old life is behind me. Jesus has forgiven me. I now live to please Jesus, and as the Bible tells us to live'.

'Well I'm still living a bit of a life myself mate! No hope for me!' Sean smiled, shrugged his shoulders and made to head back to his work station.

'You're wrong' said Ken softly, 'No one is beyond help'. Sean stopped, turned back to look at Ken and shook his head. There was no smile or grin now. Ken continued, 'Read the Bible and you'll find there that even really hopeless sinners can be saved'.

'Aye mibbae', Sean replied quietly. Head down, he walked away, pushed open a door and was gone.

The car's paperwork with George was completed in silence. Ken picked up his car part, shook hands with George and drove away. He wondered for days what impact this conversation might have had on young Sean. Are you a Sean reading this and living 'a bit of a life'? A life full of drinking, partying or chasing temporary pleasures

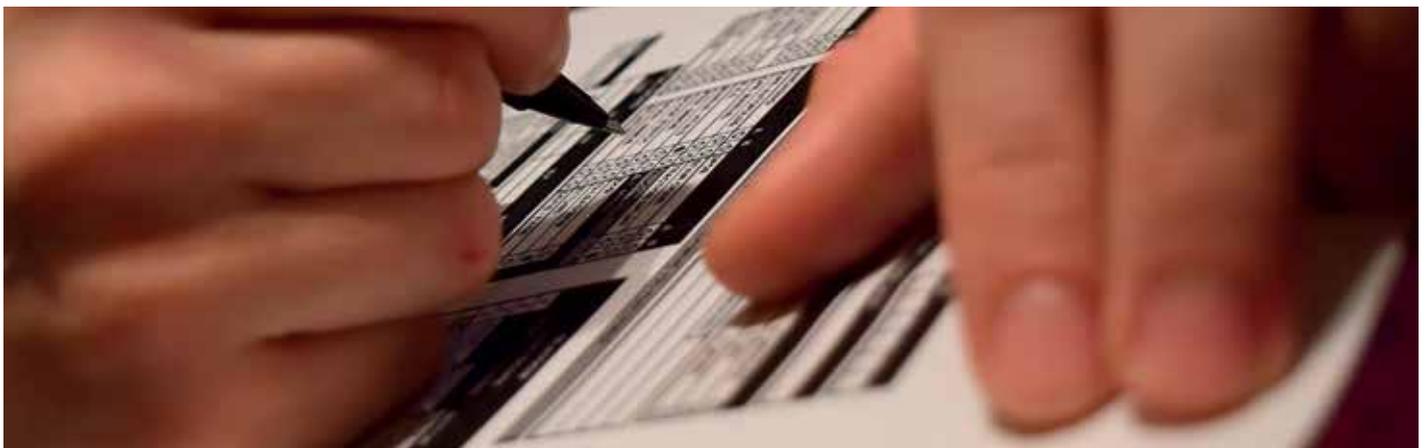
that never seem to satisfy the aching need in your heart? A life without considering what will happen to you after you die? Thoughts that you are perhaps 'too far gone' to be saved, 'too great a sinner', a 'hopeless case'? We do not know what happened to Sean! We hope that he did read a Bible and pray; that he perhaps went to church; that he perhaps realised he was wrong! He was not 'too far gone' or 'a lost cause' because he was living a wild, sinful life, a life without God. The Bible is full of accounts of terrible sinners being saved by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament one of the kings of Israel, Manasseh (2 Kings 21:16), murdered so many innocent people that the streets of Jerusalem literally ran with their blood. Yet we are told later in the Bible (2 Chronicles 33:11-17) that he repented of his sins, humbled himself and found forgiveness from God.

In the New Testament, we have a similar account of a dreadful sinner called Paul. Filled with hatred for Christians, he searched them out with great determination, imprisoned them and had them executed, often in cruel circumstances. On his way to Damascus to search out and destroy more Christians (Acts 9:1-19) Jesus met with him, showed him his wickedness and brought him to repentance. Paul found salvation, became a preacher and brought the Gospel to Europe.

There was a thief crucified on a cross beside Jesus. His life had clearly been full of crimes that had led to him being executed by the Roman authorities. We can only imagine the wide range of sins he must have committed to deserve such an execution. Surely he of all people could say, 'Stuff that I've done isnae pretty'. He surely had lived, 'A bit of a life!' And yet, the wonderful news of the Bible is that in the final moments of his life, speaking to Jesus beside him, and repenting of his sins in what we would regard as seemingly the most hopeless of all possible situations, he too found forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ.

If you are reading this and you are still 'living a bit of a life', realise you must change, come to Christ and trust in Him for salvation. Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross to save poor needy sinners like you.

M M





What if all our Jonahs ran away?

Rev Greg MacDonald

When the word of the Lord came to Jonah, telling him to go to Nineveh, Jonah famously ran away. God told him to shout against the city, warn them of their sin, and say they had only forty days to repent. Instead Jonah hopped aboard a ship headed for Tarshish.

The way God brought him back is well known: God used a storm to stop him and a great fish to rescue him from the waves. Recommissioned, Jonah went finally to Nineveh, and there saw remarkable success in his ministry, with the whole city, from the King downwards, repenting of their wickedness. And God did spare them.

There is, however, a fearful thought: what if all our Jonahs, all God's messengers to us, ran away? What if God didn't bring them back? What if God left us without anyone to tell us of our sins and the need to repent?

Listen to Jonah's stark message: He cried against the city for their evil, and told them, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown'.

When God stops sending His messengers to a place, it is a sure sign that He is leaving them to their evil ways, and preparing them for judgment. Could that be happening in our country?

Surely not! After all we have plenty of churches, plenty of denominations, preachers and congregations. We would certainly notice if suddenly all our pulpits were empty, and all our ministers stopped preaching. Perhaps the idea is a welcome one for you. But think more carefully. It is also alarming, unsettling and uneasy. For heaven suddenly to fall silent, for no message to be brought to us, for there to be no truth to hear, no one to explain God's mind and will

to us – that would jar us – the awful eerie silence would unnerve us.

So have our Jonahs run away?

Filled pulpits can be a deceptive thing – if the message does not plainly tell us about sin, our sin, and about God's anger with it. Where sin is not spoken of, not addressed, not condemned, or even condoned, the message is not God's, nor the messenger.

Think about this for Scotland. You might feel we are all right – but look at our land. How many pulpits address the great need of man – God's anger at sin? The stark and alarming truth is that most never mention such things at all. Most refuse to present God in His wrath, or man in his filth; God in His justice, or man in his fallenness.

Our Jonahs have run away

If the man in the pulpit is not willing to tell you exactly what God's problem with your sin is – he is either not sent by God at all, or else he has tampered with his commission, and doctored the message to suit your ears. Listen to such a messenger at the peril of your immortal soul!

You see, that is the real issue. Sin is a hard subject. It is hard to preach on, and hard to hear. But we cannot make it go away by avoiding it. We cannot avoid the consequences by ignoring it. Only by speaking plain truth is God's position revealed, and man's danger highlighted. It's a matter that concerns you. It's love that brings this subject to the lips of the preacher. Love from the pastor, yes. And more – love in the heart of God to the lost. Sin is the great problem for which Christ's death is the only remedy.

Barry the Heroic Dog

The National Geographic Magazine some time ago devoted a large section of one of its issues to the subject of dogs and their deeds, and the following story of Barry is worth repeating. Barry was a Saint Bernard. This famous dog, during his lifetime, actually saved more than forty human beings from being frozen to death high in the Alps. Whenever a snowstorm begins, these well-trained, devoted dogs become very excited at the prospect of saving men from a terrible death. They leap and bark and show every sign of impatience if they are not sent out into the storm immediately. God has gifted these great dogs with a keen sense of scent, so that they can discover a person, although he may be buried many inches beneath the snow.

But the strange and sad part of Barry's unique story is that while he saved more than forty persons, he lost his own life during his last rescue. After digging the perishing man out of the snow, the dog stretched himself over the body of the man, as he had been trained to do, to impart warmth and revive the flickering spark of life. When the man began to regain consciousness, he saw the huge dog hovering over him. In his dazed, drowsy condition, he mistook the dog for a wolf intent on devouring him. Quickly he plunged a dagger into the animal's side! Without a whimper, the noble dog crept away to his home, leaving a trail of blood which led rescuers to the injured man. News of the death of Barry soon spread, causing genuine grief because of such a tragedy. The deeds of Barry the heroic dog stand as a monument to the selfless nature of these Saint Bernards.

Why did this man, imperilled as he was, do such a cruel, terrible thing? Because he misunderstood the dog's purpose and mission. He thought the dog had come to devour him, but actually he had come to save him. How many today, in regards to spiritual things, have wrong thoughts as to God and His plan of salvation for lost man. Like the man

in the parable of the talents (see Matthew 25:24,25) who said, 'I knew thee that thou art a hard man', they think that God is hard, cruel or even nonexistent. This is exactly what Satan wants man to believe about God and His Son, when the truth is, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3:16); and, 'The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me' (Galatians 2:20). This is what God wants you to know and believe, dear reader, that you might be delivered from the dreadful peril of eternal separation from God, the second death in the lake of fire.

What are your thoughts right NOW about Christ? You cannot plead ignorance, for have you not heard that He died on the cross for sinners? Have you not heard that He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures, and now lives to appeal to you through His Word? He has salvation for you if you will but repent and accept Him as your personal Saviour. Do you not realize what your awful plight is without Him? Do you not know that He is the only Saviour? Why not plead with Him to warm you with His love and save you by His power right now?

Do not neglect nor misunderstand the purpose of Christ's work. Turn to Him now in repentance and faith, for He is able and willing to save you with an eternal salvation. Call upon Him sincerely as Peter did, 'Lord, save me', and immediately you will hear Him say to you in reply: 'Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace' (Luke 7:50). 'He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life' (John 6:47). 'He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God' (John 3:18).

Moments With The Book



"One day when I was pretty drunk I tried them. I felt FANTASTIC! I was ten feet tall! With my low self-esteem they made me feel great. From then on I'd take cocaine every weekend."



From Drugs to Christ

Brian Kyle

I grew up in a very loving family in Townhead in the east end of Glasgow. I had two older sisters, two older brothers and two younger sisters. Like so many homes at the time it consisted of two rooms and a kitchen, complete with outside toilet. Both our parents worked: dad as a welder, mum as a nurse.

Schooldays

In deep contrast my schooldays can be summed up in one word: horrendous! From the age of five through to sixteen I struggled. I could neither read nor write and, because I was otherwise bright, my teachers put my behaviour down to laziness and dealt with it by belting me. I had my own way of dealing with this. I would trot into school most mornings with the other children only to dart for the small toilet window at the rear of the building and out I went. This truancing formed a pattern from the age of five. Although I enjoyed the social aspects of school, I simply survived and as a result

my self-esteem was non-existent. Also, wandering the streets, I got involved in petty crime. If only dyslexia had been recognised during my schooldays what a different experience would have been mine?

Secondary school was even more of a nightmare. By the time I reached fourth year, I was given an ultimatum: attend school for a full six months or be sent to a List D school. I stuck to this arrangement and my total attendance for my secondary schooling was just over six months.

Work

All my adult life I have worked and this desire for work and money began away back when I was thirteen. I took on milk deliveries, paper deliveries, etc. Although I began an apprenticeship as a bricklayer, I left as soon as I'd got my driving licence and got a better-paying job, driving. Most of my jobs since then have involved driving. I used my old excuse of 'forgetting my glasses' when I had to fill

in an application form. My mother or one of my sisters would fill it in for me at home.

I met my wife through her brother-in-law, a pal of mine. We married within a year while I was just twenty. We have three boys, including twins. I have tried to encourage and support our sons and they have given us no trouble.

Drugs

I used to drink socially with the boys at work at weekends but by my early twenties I was drinking seriously. I hid this as much as I could from my wife and family. A couple of years later I began trying drugs. At first when offered them I rejected them as crazy, but then one day when I was pretty drunk I tried them. I felt FANTASTIC! I was ten feet tall! With my low self-esteem they made me feel great. From then on I'd take cocaine every weekend. This wasn't out of choice; however, I was hooked. I needed more. It was the beginning of the end. I even began distributing cocaine among other users. I was making money but money to feed my habit. I was my own best customer. Eventually I was on drugs 24/7.

Cocaine Anonymous

My mother died in 2006 and this had a profound effect on me. I needed help to deal with this and started surfing the web. Whenever any reference to the Bible came up, I knew 'God stuff' wasn't for me. While on the net I came across 'Cocaine Anonymous' and I took the online test. 'Seek help immediately' were the words staring at me from the screen! This was a real wake-up call.

This was my lowest point. Drugs had affected our marriage and family life, our finances and my work life. One day as I woke from drugs my wife gave me the ultimatum to make the call to Cocaine Anonymous or pack my bags! (By this time our boys knew the situation as they had caught me taking drugs.) This phone call, although hard, was a life-saver. Here I was speaking to someone who knew exactly what I was going through. I was invited to a meeting in Maryhill.

Hesitatingly I approached the steps leading to the venue of my first Cocaine Anonymous meeting, tempted to run away. A man met me, obviously expecting me because he called me Brian. He said to me, if you ask God to help you'll never drink or take drugs again! I thought he was 'off his head!' However I found it was true. Once I was settled in the meeting I felt in a strong way I was going to be alright especially so as the Serenity Prayer was repeated. Although I knew there were some Christians in the meeting I still held to the opinion, 'no God stuff for me'. Yet bit by bit I realised that I couldn't change things on my own. I had to

pray for a willingness to change. As someone said to me, if God is doing all this without you asking, think what he could do if you asked! For the first time I prayed on my knees in my own lounge. I was aware of something happening but didn't know what it was. That was seven years ago and I haven't taken drugs or alcohol since.

Salvation

I began attending AA meetings wherever my work took me, sometimes two meetings a day to support me. One night, while working in Inverness I was looking for an AA meeting but because I didn't know the city I found myself at the wrong church hall. I saw folk going into the hall and asked if it was an AA Meeting. They said it wasn't but that it was a Bible study and that I was welcome to come in. I wasn't keen but I was persuaded. On being handed a Bible I again used the 'no glasses' excuse for, of course, I didn't know my way round the Bible. At that meeting in Madras Street the Lord began to work in me leading eventually to my conversion. That was five and a half years ago. I found peace with God and Christ as my Saviour and a joy and satisfaction drugs could never give. I continued to attend the Bible study when in Inverness. They encouraged me to start attending a church regularly in Glasgow where I would receive good Bible teaching. I am now a member of the church in Fulton Street at Knightswood Cross. At first it all seemed so foreign to me but now I just love the Psalms and solid Bible teaching and am aware that my relationship with God is deepening every day.

I begin and end each day with God in prayer, thanking Him for what He has done in my life. Each day I look for opportunities to share my faith with others and try to encourage fellow Christians. None of my family are professing Christians but I pray for them and we speak together often about these things. God is willing to deliver you too from drink and drugs if you ask Him. Christ is a wonderful Saviour!





Saved or Lost?

Rev John W Keddie

A terrible thing happened in 1912. A great cruise ship was built in Belfast. It was called the Titanic. It was thought to be unsinkable. Someone even said that God couldn't sink it. There were 2,200 people on board. It sailed from Southampton on 10th April 1912. On its maiden voyage across the North Atlantic it struck an iceberg and sank – a great tragedy. There weren't enough lifeboats and 1,500 people lost their lives. Was God to blame? No, it was the folly of man to think nothing bad could happen. Sadly it took a long time for rescue boats/ships to arrive to pick up survivors. Only 700 survived. Back in Liverpool the shipping line put up two boards. One was titled **SAVED**. The other was titled **LOST**. Family members and friends would crowd round to see on which board the names of their relatives or friends were to be found. It was a great human tragedy. Such tragedies are very frequent even in today's world, whether they relate to natural phenomena or are man-made. But you know the Bible tells us that there is an even greater tragedy that can befall people in this world. And that is that they believe they can live without God or any thought of God and nothing bad will happen. It's like thinking our lives 'unsinkable'. However, the Bible teaches that we are all sinful and must appear before God at last for judgment (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). This is not popular today. In a sense it never can be popular. However, the question is not whether it is popular but whether it is true.

The question is, Is there a way to be saved from your sin? Is there a 'rescue boat? The Bible says, Yes! It is found in Jesus Christ, through trusting in Him, believing in Him, keeping His word. What happens when people die? You may say: 'No-one knows'. But Christ teaches that you are either lost or you are saved. Those are 'saved' who have come to trust in Jesus and recognise His death as providing the remedy for people's sins. Just as those on the Titanic could not save themselves but were dependent on getting in to a lifeboat and being picked up from the sea by another ship. In a way it was like these two boards at the port: Lost or Saved. As far as the Bible is concerned, and as far as Jesus is concerned, this is the great issue of life. The question is not, 'Is it popular?' but, 'Is it true?' This at any rate is what Christianity involves: trusting in Jesus, following Jesus, believing the Word of God and being saved by Him. The importance of this lies in the fact that it is concerned with more than just this life. As Jesus taught: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:19-21) and, 'the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost' (Luke 19:10).



Conversion of an Atheistic Scientist

In the 1990s, Francis Collins, the head of the Human Genome Project, stood by Bill Clinton's side as the President announced: 'Today we are learning the language in which God created life'.

One of the most respected scientists in the field of genetic research, Collins was a self-described 'obnoxious atheist' in his student days. During this stage in his life, it seemed clear to Collins that science had all of the answers. Any questions about life and the universe could ultimately be reduced to physics and chemistry.

After university, Collins attended medical school, where he was confronted by a broad spectrum of suffering and disease. To his surprise, one of his patients happily described how her religious beliefs supported her through her suffering, and then challenged him on his own beliefs.

Forced to examine the evidence concerning the truth or falsity of religion, Collins was eventually led to read C S Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, where, he says 'within the first three pages, I realized that my arguments against faith were those of a mere schoolboy'.

When Collins read Lewis' presentation of moral law, he realized that no law of science could adequately explain the existence of morality, but a Creator God fitted the explanation perfectly. This shook him.

While the logic of it was striking, Collins' true conversion

experience came later from an experience of natural beauty. He describes it this way: 'I was hiking in the Cascade Mountains on a beautiful autumn afternoon. I turned the corner and saw in front of me a frozen waterfall, a couple of hundred feet high. Actually, a waterfall that had three parts to it — also the symbolic three in one. At that moment, I felt my resistance leave me. And it was a great sense of relief. The next morning, in the dewy grass in the shadow of the Cascades, I fell on my knees and accepted this truth — that God is God, that Christ is His Son and that I am giving my life to that belief'.

Collins made his name in gene research at the University of Michigan where he discovered several genetic causes for disease. During this time, he discovered that the academic environment wasn't particularly friendly to religious belief, and believers are socially pressured to keep these beliefs to themselves.

Francis Collins currently heads up the National Institutes of Health, and is a published author of several books that seek to unite faith and science. It is worth noting that as deeply involved and devoted to the world of science as Collins remains, he also remains a convicted apologist for the truth of Christian faith, unable to see a contradiction between the two.

The Lamb of God

Rev David Blunt



'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29)

These words were spoken by John the Baptist when he saw the Lord Jesus approaching. John was Christ's forerunner, preparing a way for the Lord into the hearts of sinful men and women. He did this by preaching repentance and baptising those who willingly confessed their sins. His ministry was now drawing to a close for Christ's own ministry was beginning. John's words tell us some vital things about Jesus.

Jesus is the true Sacrifice

John has a wonderful title for Jesus: He is 'the Lamb of God'. John's hearers would be intrigued by the description. The lamb was crucial to their worship and Jesus was being linked to the lamb. What place did it have in their thoughts?

When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit they were separated from God, losing the fellowship they had previously enjoyed with Him. Their nakedness now became a shameful thing and the Lord made them 'coats of skins' (Gen.3:21). These garments also had a spiritual meaning. To provide them, animals had to be killed and very likely they were sheep or lambs. In a similar way God, who in His holiness is 'of purer eyes than to behold

evil, and canst not look on iniquity' (Hab.1:13), would in an act of infinite mercy produce a covering for our sins by the death of Jesus.

Abel was a righteous man who worshipped God in sincerity and in truth. As a shepherd he offered to the Lord 'of the firstlings of his flock' (Gen.4:4). He brought the very best to the altar for he knew that God would not accept a lamb which was lame, or sick. Jesus is 'a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1Pet.1:19). A newborn lamb with its snow-white fleece is the very picture of innocence and Jesus the Lamb of God is totally morally perfect, being 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners' (Heb.7:26).

Abraham was told by God that he must offer his son as a sacrifice. However he was confident that God would provide a lamb instead of Isaac and his faith was soon rewarded. 'Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son' (Gen.22:13). The lamb was a substitute for Isaac, whose life was spared. So Jesus willingly and lovingly took the place of others in order to rescue them. Scripture says that He has 'once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God' (1Pet.3:18).

The lamb was at the centre of Israel's life. The firstborn child in every family was redeemed with a lamb. Every year, each household kept the passover, sacrificing a lamb to commemorate the deliverance from Egypt. Morning and evening, a lamb was offered in the temple, the offering being doubled on the Sabbath and increased to seven or fourteen at the feasts. So many lambs and so much blood – yet none of these sacrifices could actually deal with sin and reunite men to God! They all pointed ahead to the sacrifice which Jesus would offer as the Lamb of God.

Jesus is the Sin-bearer

What did Jesus accomplish by His sacrifice? John tells us that Jesus 'taketh away the sin of the world'. As the eternal Son of God Jesus entered our world by becoming man. He was 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Phil.2:8). Christ suffered for the sins of His people, being punished by God that His justice might be satisfied. Bearing the guilt of sin and enduring the divine wrath due to it, He bore that sin away.

By His death Jesus made atonement for sin and restored and secured friendship between God and men. 'And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight' (Col. 1:21,22). How does this great blessing become ours?

By the grace of God the guilt of sin is removed from the

sinner the moment he or she receives and rests upon Christ crucified. The merit of Christ's death is applied to us instantly and we are justified or declared righteous in God's sight. The power of Christ's death then works in us more and more for the subduing of our sins so that we are sanctified or made actually holy and fit for heaven.

Jesus is the Saviour

When Jesus appeared, John knew the significance of this and exhorted everyone to 'behold' Him. The lesson of the Bible throughout is that if we would be saved from our sins and enjoy the gracious benefits which God has to bestow upon men then we must forsake our wicked way and look upon Jesus the Lamb of God by faith. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house' (Acts 16:31). Pray that God would open your eyes to see the glory of this mighty Redeemer.

Jesus is the only Saviour of sinners. Apart from Him we have no hope and must perish eternally. The way back to God is through the blood sacrifice of Calvary by which He has dealt fully and finally with sin. Jesus Christ 'bare our sins in his own body on the tree', being beaten with the strokes His people deserved (1Pet.2:24). Through His wounds sinners are made whole. This precious Lamb of God is indeed 'the Saviour of the world' (1John 4:14). Is he yours?

A Foolish Mistake

A young woman was earnestly trying to 'make her peace with God'. She went to church regularly and did everything she could to secure God's favour. Still, in spite of her efforts, she failed to find rest for her soul and peace of conscience for which she longed.

A minister visited her one day. After some conversation, he thought he understood her problem, so he asked to be allowed to use her well-thumbed Bible. She willingly handed it to him and he, turning to Colossians 1:20, read aloud to her: 'And, having made peace through the blood of His cross'. He read the words again and said: 'You see, you have set yourself a hopeless task. You are trying to do what Christ has already done'. She was astonished. Taking the Book in her own hands, she said: 'Let me read that for myself'.

Slowly she read the words: 'And, having made peace through the blood of His cross'. Joyfully she exclaimed:

'Oh, it's strange that I never saw that before. And it was there all the time. I've been trying to do what Christ had done long ago. What a stupid mistake! I might as well have tried to accomplish my own redemption. But thank God, I see now, He made peace for me. I'll just be satisfied with His work, and rest my soul upon it'. 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Romans 5:1).

Will you not also stop your working and striving for salvation, and accept the finished work of Christ on the cross, and receive the peace of God which passeth all understanding? 'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed' (1 Peter 2:24).

Gospel Tract & Bible Society



Finding the Water of Life

Yoke Sim Fong

I would like to begin my story with my family's migration from China to Singapore, for without that move my life would have been very different. My grandparents on both sides of the family, newly married, arrived in Singapore around 1925 from the same region of Guangdong Province in China. From the stories told by my paternal grandmother, great aunts and parents, I pieced together a picture of my forebears. Hailing from peasant communities, they moved to Singapore in the hope of finding a better life. Despite their poverty, my grandparents provided for their sons' education. Both my parents valued literacy highly and ensured their six children were well-educated. That was significant for me as it was in school-related settings that I heard about God and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before I was six years old, my parents enrolled me in a church kindergarten near our home. I recall one scene when the principal, a kindly old Chinese lady, told us children the story of Jesus ministering to little children. She used a storybook with pictures as an aid. I didn't understand then who Jesus was; that was probably the first time I heard of him. I was to hear more stories

about Jesus when I went on to primary school, mainly from cousins who were studying in a Catholic mission school, but still with little understanding. However, when I reached secondary school, I began to learn more about Jesus Christ and His life. I had classmates and teachers who were Christians and who lent me books and invited me to meetings. One particular book, *The Queen of the Dark Chamber*, an autobiography of a Chinese Christian lady, left a deep impression. At one evangelistic Youth for Christ meeting, I was moved to raise my hand 'to accept Christ'. However, I later regretted my hasty action; it was probably an emotional response.

What stopped me then from coming to believe in God? I believe it was cultural pride. I should say that my family was very Chinese in its outlook and practice. My paternal grandmother lived with us and held much influence. (To this day, my mother boasts that she has faithfully kept all the traditions handed down to her by her mother-in-law.) Moreover, I was an avid student of Chinese literature and probably knew more about Chinese literary traditions than most of my peers. Thus, my thinking was 'I belong to a fine Chinese cultural

tradition; I don't need a Western religion'.

However, unknown to me, Higher Hands were leading me. By the time I reached pre-university to prepare for 'A' levels, God in His mercy saw to it that all was not well. I have to add another strand related to my family that God used to weave the tapestry of my life. About the time I entered secondary school, my father entered a business partnership. That changed our family life as he became busier and my mother had to assist him. As the eldest of six siblings, I felt the burden of my responsibilities. Besides helping at home with the chores and my siblings (including a new baby, my youngest sister), I also had to do well in my studies. I began to feel self-pity for what I saw as unfair demands on me. Other things also began to distract me and I lost interest in my studies. My grades started to slide and I became afraid. I made resolutions to change but was powerless to keep them. My troubles manifested in bouts of rebellion but I could not tell my parents my inner conflicts. Had they known, they would have shown their understanding and support.

In His grace, God carried me through the 'O' levels so that I could go on to pre-university but I was often frustrated and downcast, wondering what life was all about. However, God had prepared His children to minister to me. Some Christians among my classmates and schoolmates were extraordinarily kind and friendly. They sometimes invited me to their church meetings but I declined. Yet, God had a way to reach me. I was particularly poor in mathematics, and one classmate offered to help. She stayed behind with me after school for many days each week to show me how to solve those unfathomable sums, for a whole year! At the end of that first year, she gently invited me to a Saturday Christian club meeting, and I could hardly say no.

I believe that was the first time I understood from the message that Christianity is not so much a religion as a relationship. I went back again and again and revelled in the unconditional love of God. I felt as if I had been travelling in a desert and I had finally found the oasis that would save my life. Indeed, I had received the Water of



Life when I came to know Jesus and yearned to know more of Him. I made friends at the Gospel, Literature and Tract Department, which was the predecessor of my present church, and through them came to understand more what it meant to be God's child. Some months later, when I was alone in the bedroom I shared with my siblings, I knelt and asked God to forgive me and save me from my sins. In the forty years since then, I have learned that God is gracious and merciful. His Word is true and sure. He is not only a loving Father who provides for all my needs, but is faithful in disciplining me to keep me from sin.

Thank you, Lord, for saving me, and giving me a new life and an eternal inheritance.

"I understood from the message that Christianity is not so much a religion as a relationship. I went back again and again and revelled in the unconditional love of God."



A Changed Woman

Miriam Clark

Friedrich Nietzsche, Alice Cooper, Katy Perry... We may be able to identify those people individually but what sense do they all make in a group? Simple. They're all 'preacher kids'. What's more, they're all strong evidence that apples often do fall very far from the trees. As one of the daughters of a preacher, where was I going to end up? To me it was simple: 'Lord, convert me. But, not yet Lord, not yet'. Such was St Augustine's prayer back almost 1600 years ago and such was my experience through my teenage years. I liked the idea of salvation from my sins and hell very much but having a relationship with the Christ who embodied that salvation? That could wait. Plenty of time for that yet. It all seemed a bit sacrificial and I was about having a good time.

Outwardly, I was in an environment that would seem eminently suitable to becoming a Christian. Born and brought up in a Christian family with a father in full time ministry, most of my childhood was steeped in learning about the Christian faith. Yet, Jesus had me summed up perfectly in His description of the hypocrites; the word in Greek means 'stage actors'. Much like the hypocrite, I would play my part perfectly on a Sunday and in Christian company but, outside of that, the mask would soon slip and I would revert back to my true self. However, I played my part too well. At times displaying a genuine interest in Christianity, I was frequently mistaken for being a Christian – a fact which was always difficult to put right. 'Oh, but you probably are – you just don't realise it yet! Examine your life against the Bible – look! You believe that Jesus died to save sinners – that's enough!' And so, I would read my Bible, pray as they told me to pray, set my alarm for Monday morning and wake up, still not a Christian. And thus it went – on and on –

until, eventually, I started a new plan – attracting God's attention.

On embarking with this plan, I actually thought that the more I sinned, the more likely I would be to have a sudden dramatic conversion – a clear transition from darkness to light. And so, I started a party lifestyle – out most nights of the week – shouting defiantly to God: 'Look, here I am! What are you going to do about it?!' Like many others, I thought I was in control; I thought I knew what I was doing. But, I had no idea. Sin has a domino effect. One sin leads to another: it's like going deeper and deeper into a coal mine until you eventually lose sight of the opening. By the time I had gone to university, sinning had become a full-time occupation. God was pushed to the peripheries of my mind – yet, although I had tried to forget about Him, He hadn't forgotten about me.

During my university time, God put Christian influences around me in the form of Christian friends who encouraged me to attend the Edinburgh Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). Haphazard in my attendance, I was there initially to pay lip service only – show face, get out. However, in time, I started to actually pay attention to the message of the services and slowly but surely was given an insight into how far the depths of my own sin truly ran. Verses like 'He that committeth sin is of the devil' (1 John 3:8) shook me to the core but what hope was there?

Studying law, I would listen intently to sermons on Christ as an Advocate – struck by the fact that He could act as my Advocate and represent me in the court of God's justice. The only argument He had to put forward was Himself – His sacrifice for my sin by dying on the cross would be enough – in fact, it was the only argument

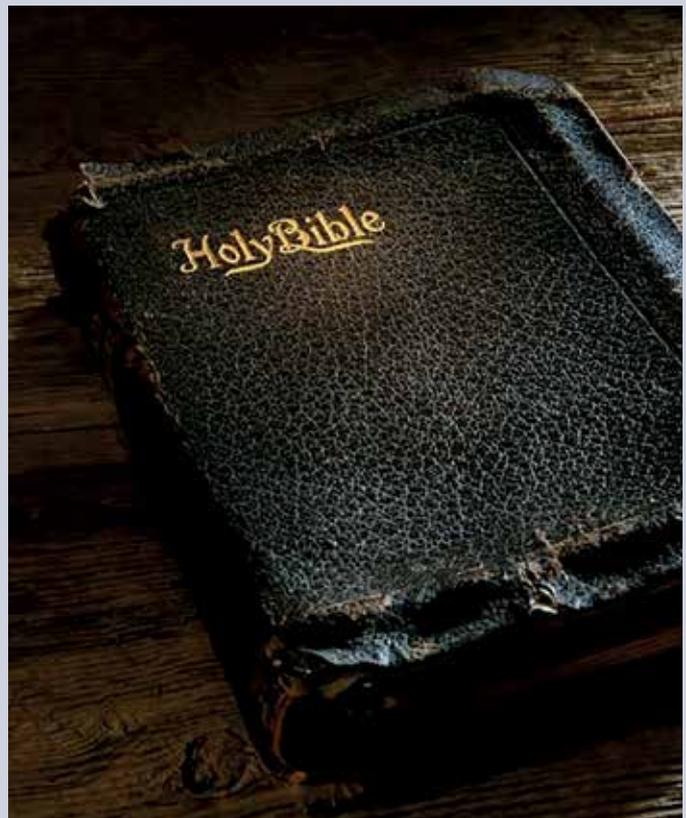
that could win in that court. There was no argument I could make – no argument that would find any favour with God. And so, I started trying to be everywhere the Gospel was – keen to learn more about this Advocate. I knew I wasn't a Christian and, equally, I knew something needed to be done about that. I couldn't go on as I was – I wanted to be Christ's and for Christ to be mine.

From that point on, all I could do was pray, and pray I did; praying continuously that the Lord would forgive my sins, cleanse me from them and receive me as His own. And, as I walked into a New Year's day service in a small Lutheran church in an equally small village in Germany, I was handed my answer in the form of a card reading: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness' (2Corinthians 12:9). At that moment, I believed my prayer to be answered and I was filled with peace – peace that God had heard my prayer for pardon, that He alone was enough to pardon and that He could meet every need I had in the future. And so, I flew back from Germany a changed woman.

Before, I had flown out without Christ. Now, I flew home with Him.

In your home, there may be a Bible waiting to be opened. In many homes there are Bibles in cupboards, in drawers and in bookcases. Waiting and waiting to be opened. Open one. Read one. See Him.

His Word in the hands of the Holy Spirit has the power to change your life and give you a future. Take it from me: it is the only life that guarantees a 'happily ever after'; a happily ever after that goes past time and into eternity. Just as it was sufficient for me, I pray that you too by faith and trust in Him would know His grace to be sufficient for you. To Him be all the Glory!



"In your home, there may be a Bible waiting to be opened. Waiting and waiting to be opened. Open one. Read one. See Him."

Ten Reasons Why You Should Believe In Jesus Christ

Rev Maurice Roberts

1. Because God in His love sent Christ to die for our sins.
2. Because Christ in His love for sinners suffered death on the Cross.
3. Because you have a precious soul that needs to be saved.
4. Because the Bible tells us that whosoever will may come to Christ.
5. Because the door of salvation shuts forever once we die and are without faith in Christ.
6. Because Christ will bless all who trust in Him forever.
7. Because all who die without Christ must suffer in hell.
8. Because all believers will be welcomed to glory in the Day of Judgment.
9. Because none who pray to Jesus for mercy will be shut out.
10. Because God makes all sinners into saints when they come to Christ.

So, come to Christ TODAY! We cannot promise ourselves tomorrow!

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts 2:38