

Heading for Home - a former Alcoholic's Testimony

My life up until this year had to me seemed to me to be near to pointless. My father was dead (through alcohol), and at times, my mother might as well have been. Our family did not function in any fashion whatsoever and the only thing on offer was anger and hatred. Every one around me seemed to have a chip on their shoulder and it wasn't long before I got one too. In 1988, the day before the Lockerbie bombing, I left the so-called family home vowing never to return. Soon after, I married Sharon, my partner of 6 years.

After I left home and split from my family, things, materially at least, got better. I got out of a dead end job at a car dealer and now have ended up at in a comfortable, better paid position. I holidayed abroad, culminating in a fantastic vacation in the Maldives a couple of years ago. If you get the chance, go there. It is the closest you will get to paradise on this earth. Why? Chiefly because mans' interference is at a minimum and nature flourishes. We even bought a new car albeit a Vauxhall Corpse, sorry Corsa. I bought a new PC, we bought our own home, I pursed many hobbies etc. etc. and yet a huge invisible chunk was missing.

Those that I thought should have been my closest allies, my family, had become wrapped up so much in their own problems that the anger and frustration just blew us apart. I was missing those that many can count on and perhaps take for granted. The death of my father back in 1999 brought us all back together briefly, but the old resentments were simmering beneath the surface. After a gap of a decade it was more or less back to how it used to be. I am now out of the family circle altogether.

Amongst the turmoil of losing a family something else was trying to make itself heard. On the rare times that I sat still and dwelt on my thoughts at length Jesus just kept coming into my head. Why? Apart from the services that you get dragged off to at school, and weddings, christenings etc. I had had absolutely no encouragement or pressure put on me to adhere to or study religion. Despite this at times a clear and strong sense of being 'called'. I just shoved it to the back of my mind and carried on pursuing whatever would take my mind off things. Eventually, like my father, I turned to alcohol. Going on vacation again changed my mind and direction.

Our latest foreign holiday was to Thailand in November 2002. What a pit it was in places. Yes, the brochures make it look idyllic and pristine on the beaches, but the sleazy sub-culture just beneath the surface, or at times in your face, needs to be considered before you go there. Part

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Written by Guest contributor: D.C. from the UK
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of our trip was to Phuket, and we visited a nearby town of PatPong where the fleshpot was at its worst. One bar after another had Thai girls pouting inside, young enough to be my daughter, with white men easily old enough to have been my dad. Many might think it's amusing to search for sex on foreign holidays and may doubt my criticism but it literally turned me.

We also visited some temples and when I saw the Buddha images back came stronger than ever that call from Jesus. I just wanted to get back home and worship my God, the only one. In our hotels, naturally, there was a Bible and a book on the Teachings of Buddha. I kept going back to the Bible, the first time I had read it since RE at school. It held me more than Buddha did. Even though the resort we stayed in was fantastic I was glad when the vacation was over as I was keen on taking my first rather belated steps toward God. By the way, the part of Thailand we were in was supposedly 50% Muslim and 48% Buddhist. With the proliferation of crooks, conmen and transvestites I guess that we just kept on bumping into the other 2%.

Back at home I went to a nearby Christian bookshop and was overwhelmed by the amount of Bible versions that were available. An assistant who could see that I was lost guided me to the NIV, no surprises there, and I happily left with a copy zip bound like a Filofax. About this time I started searching the Net for sites on Christianity and discovered www.christiandocctrine.net (replaced by christiandocctrine.com) I read the many diverse topics and criticism about the NIV, and the defence of the KJV, about Charismaticism etc. I carry a small pocket KJV everywhere now and no matter how low I can get, just a few minutes after starting to read from it I feel pulled up and free. The site also blew away my previous stereotyped image of a typical weak and easily knocked over kind of Christian. I've searched for a lot of Christian information over the last few months and I think that your site's angle is not only unique, but necessary and vital in today's age of growing apostasy, something I admit that I was guilty of.

More importantly on the website I first encountered the doctrine of Election & Predestination. Although I had seldom gone to church I had had 3 years of Religious Studies at school, and not once was this topic mentioned. Finally, bit by bit I came to realise my deep down attraction to Christ. Looking back now I curse myself for not taking up his call years ago.

I have been on anti-depressants for several years now, without much effect. The alcohol that I consumed did not help. I went to see the doctor initially because I had been switched from Amitriptyline to Lofepramine as I believed that the former was not having any effect. However, less than a week into the new medication I was feeling very low, and my skin was becoming irritable as when I took Seroxat. I realised that the Amitriptyline did actually do something that I had not appreciated. Our conversation turned to alcohol as he knew from the past that I drank quite a bit. He showed me after asking me to be honest that I was consuming 100 units of

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alcohol a week! The Dr. re-prescribed Amitriptyline and asked that I come back in three weeks to see if I could control my drinking or not. My father had literally drunk himself to death a few years ago and I could have quite easily gone down that road too. I vowed that I would cut back on the booze but this time I meant it. I had an ally that really had been there all along and I had just ignored him.

I started going to church for its real purpose, praising and worshipping God. I have started to study the Bible regularly. I am telling you now that my alcohol addiction of 100 units a week fell to just one or two pints a week in a matter of days. My medication has been reduced by half and I am pressing the doctor to cut it even further. It's a case of drinking from Jesus' water of life than from a beer bottle.

If you ever get that call, don't ignore it like I did. It doesn't matter if believing in Christ today is not fashionable. One day going to hell will be. I sadly note that in almost every church I have been to recently I am by far the youngest at 36. If it can change my life about in a short time then it can do so to you. Although I now understand and acknowledge election I will not rest on my laurels and think, "well that's me saved" as I think God will kick my butt. I want to strive each day to please him because he has been so patient and merciful towards me for 36 years before I turned to him. I can at last come to terms with my past and start forgiving. I'll never completely forget those that have hurt me in the past but I have looked back for far too long in my life. I find that I can forgive my father easily now even though he had no time or money for us, even though it all went on booze. I know how he felt, and I recall with fondness the few times that we shared a moment of humour together. I just wonder if he ever thought about Jesus.

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