
Never too late



Many of us at St. Andrew's have heard Jean Davidson speak of how she found a real faith in Jesus Christ in recent years, and now she has added something of her varied journey through life before she joined our congregation.

At the age of eleven, on my own initiative, I went to Sunday School. Thereafter, and for some years, my church attendances were somewhat irregular.

After completing a secretarial course, I worked for several firms of patent agents. This involved typing technical specifications for application to the Patent Office.

In 1958 I became a medical secretary to a clinic at Guy's Hospital, which brought me into touch with many patients suffering from cancer. One day a BBC Outside Broadcast team arrived to film an operation for the series 'Your Life in their Hands'. This led eventually to my application for a job at the BBC as an assistant to the Music and Arts Department where they produced programmes, including the 'Omnibus' series.

One such programme was about the Trinidad Carnival, including the steel bands and folk in fantastic costumes—all very colourful. For the sake of economy, we were sent from Trinidad to Jamaica to interview Noel Coward at the house which had belonged to Ian Fleming, and then on to see Leopold Stokowski (then aged 96) who was living in a flat overlooking Central Park in New York. Back home, there were programmes about Yehudi Menuhin—I had to carry his violin! There were programmes about brass bands: one of 'our' bands, Black Dyke Mills, won the Championship that year at the Royal Albert Hall.

In 1971 I married Iain and we moved to a village in Cambridgeshire. It was therefore no longer possible to continue working the irregular hours required for TV production. In 1975 I decided to apply for nurse training as an SRN; I was accepted and in 1978 successfully completed the course.

Apart from my 'proper' jobs, I derived great pleasure from joining various amateur operatic societies. I took soprano roles in works by various composers including Mozart (*The Magic Flute*), Benjamin Britten (*Albert Herring*), Puccini (*Gianni Schicchi*), Johann Strauss (*Wiener Blut*).

In 1982 we moved to Impington, by which time we had adopted a little boy. I became a member of Impington Church, until 1996 when we moved to Histon.

Coming to faith

In 2013 a friend who had been working for Father Ben O'Rourke at Clare Priory, helping to prepare his new translation of *Confessions* for publication, sent me a copy of the newly published work. *Confessions* is the autobiography of St. Augustine of Hippo, written around 395AD. It's the story of Augustine's life from childhood to his eventual conversion at the age of 33. He led a wayward life as a young man but, after many twists and turns, he resumed his search for God, being baptised before he later became Bishop of Hippo.

With some trepidation I began reading. One passage (based on Psalm 38) read:

But all my cries reached your ears
as I groaned aloud in the weariness of my heart.
All my longings were plain to you.

The light of my eyes no longer shone for me.
The light was *within*, but I was outside.
The light was not outside,
but I was looking at things that *were* outside.

In a chapter entitled 'Not humble enough to accept God', Augustine says it was *not until I had accepted the mediator between God and human beings, the man Christ Jesus, who is God and above all things is blessed for ever . . .* [from 1 Timothy 2: 5]. *He was calling to me and saying, 'I am the way, the truth and the life'* [John 14: 6].

Then, 'And the Word was made flesh' [John 1: 14].

Altogether there were four Bible references in this passage, but the last two were from St. John's Gospel. So I turned to Chapter 1 and read the Gospel from the beginning. I had heard this passage many times, but my eyes were now opened, and at last I was understanding the truth.

In the beginning was the *Word*,
and the *Word* was *with* God
and the *Word* was God.
He was in the beginning *with* God;
all things came into being *through* him.
. . . And the *Word* was made flesh (verse 14).

After this I realised something in me was different: I had come to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and I had been graced with the Holy Spirit. The joy I felt was unlike anything I had experienced before. I started to share my good news with everyone. My life had changed.

St Augustine: Confessions, translated by Benignus O'Rourke
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