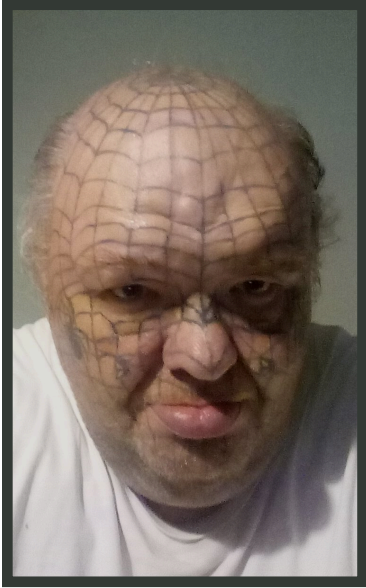


Testimony

Geoffrey Brooking Tells His Story

Amazing Grace



I first went to an Elim Pentecostal church called Assemblies Of God in a town called Skegness in Lincolnshire in the mid 1980's.

I went to a children's group called Sunshine Corner on a Friday night at 6:30 pm, a church assembly on Sunday morning at 11:00 am, a Sunday school at 4:00 pm , and an evening meeting at 6:30 pm.

I was quite active in the church, had a Bible, was never afraid to show it, but I hardly ever read it.

Whilst at the church I went to hear a speaker called Gerald Coates at the Lincolnshire show ground and to hear Billy Graham for a second time at Sheffield United's football ground.

The first night I went to hear Billy Graham was with my Aunt Mary and the Baptist Church party. I remember Cliff Richard being the special guest that night.

My Aunt Mary still to this day insists I made a commitment at the Billy Graham rally which somewhat upset my mother. Whatever commitment it was didn't really take effect because within a couple of years I had given up church for other things in life.

By 1987 I had completely backslidden from church and by 1989 had moved away from home. I was desperate for a job and my own independence.

For a good ten years I moved from job to job despite a growing number of tattoos popping up all over my body. I sometimes went out drinking too.

Then I started travelling around the country. I would basically take on debts and whenever I got chased to pay them back I just moved somewhere else. Even though I was living in hostels and mixing with some really dodgy people I still somehow got work.

One of the cities I lived in though was St. Albans in Hertfordshire. Hence In July 2000 I stopped at a night shelter called Open Door after being evicted from a hostel in Guildford for not paying my rent. One Saturday night whilst I was waiting outside Open Door to book my bed for the night I was given a copy of John's Gospel and invited to Lattimore Gospel Hall. Hence the following night I went to Lattimore Hall's GOSPEL meeting.

I was made to feel so welcome, met lots of loving Christians and was treated to the most lovely tea afterwards. The following Sunday I was invited to dinner before the gospel meeting too and the hospitality I received was amazing and I was so grateful.

Even though I moved around and about after I left St Albans, I continued going to Lattimore Hall. Each time I went to Lattimore Hall the GOSPEL was clearly given and despite being interested only in the natural food and drink at first, within a few months, the spiritual food had had a great effect On me. So much so that by January 2001 I had started going to the morning meeting too.

On Good Friday in 2001 I went to Lattimore Hall's Annual Conference where I had the opportunity to learn even more. Then on Easter Sunday at the evening gospel meeting I heard the gospel yet again from Brother Keith Sherwood who afterwards asked if anyone wanted to put their trust in the Lord to raise their hand. Those lovely words from John 3:16 had been ringing in my ears for way too long and needed to be acted upon.

Hence, I raised my hand, put my trust in the Lord, went to the back of Lattimore Hall to pray with elders Keith Sherwood, the late Ron Austin, and the late Henry Laycock, and the following Lord's Day I was baptized to the tune of that lovely hymn Amazing Grace. The hymn underlined how lost I was prior to trusting in the Lord.

My new found salvation really turned my life around. I grew spiritually too. I went to regular prayer meetings, bible studies, and Saturday night ministry meetings in Luton, Cheshunt, Harrow, and Bishops Stortford. I met some excellent Bible teachers like John Riddle, David Tinkler, and Matthew Hall too.

Many people saw a big change in both my attitude and way of life as well. I wasn't afraid to spread the good news too. Hence I went into a prison with Keith and Rosemary Sherwood for about two years and tracted on some Saturday's in Harrow or St Albans. Whilst I was at college a lot of my fellow students noticed how different I was from others too. I even became a local councillor for a while.

I left St Albans in 2003 to move to Lincoln to study politics at university and whilst there went to a lovely place called Lincoln Evangelical church. The folks made me feel most welcome there and the pastor and his family provided the most amazing friendship and hospitality to me. For another five years I would say I was spiritually sound.

However, when I moved to Portsmouth in 2008 to set up my own business I really backslided. I mixed with the wrong people who unfortunately used me and my political skills for their own advantage. Hence I would put out stories on social media and spread rumours that were not always true. I started running up debts and getting tattoos again too.

However, I was out delivering for my business on Hayling Island in September 2015 when I saw a poster promoting a testimony meeting one evening and decided to go along. Basically, a guy from Newcastle gave a story about how he turned from a life of theft and drug dealing and instead put his trust in the Lord. Afterwards the pastor at the church said that if anyone wanted to put their trust in the Lord to raise their hand. I gladly raised my hand and explained to the pastor how I needed to renew my faith in Christ and turn away from my backsliding ways.

Hence between 2015 and 2020 I grew spiritually at The Bridge Church on Hayling Island, Havant United Reformed Church, Bethel Church in Leigh Park, Portsmouth Christian Fellowship, and Calvary Chapel in Bedhampton.

I also used to help run a soup kitchen for the homeless and disadvantaged at Havant United Reformed Church and am still a member of their Ad hoc choir as an outreach.

Since 2020 though, I have been back (albeit virtually) at my spiritual home at Lattimore Hall in St Albans where we have a Zoom Gospel Meeting every Sunday at 4:30pm and a Zoom Bible Study every Thursday night at 8:00pm.

I also have a Facebook page called Christian Basics and continue to spread the gospel in local newspapers around the country.

Kindest Christian Regards,
Geoffrey Brooking