

Palliative care consultant
Nicholas Herodotou
recounts his search for
the 'One True God'

From the occult to assurance

I come from a Greek Orthodox background although this personally meant nothing to me, as within the Greek community you cannot separate culture and religion. From the age of 15, I had a great desire to know truth and if there was that 'One True God', I wanted to find him. I often thought about the reason for living. Was it merely to get married, have children, then to get old and die? Was there a life after death and if so, where would I go – to heaven or to hell?

Unfortunately, I met a lady who introduced me to the occult. I started attending spiritualist meetings where a medium would relay messages from the 'dead'. It all seemed so realistic and true. I thought this was real Christianity as it demonstrated a spiritual dimension I had not experienced before in church. She taught me the philosophy of Eastern Mysticism which is a belief that we can all become one with God – in essence we can become God. This can only be achieved through countless reincarnations and this progress to perfection can be accelerated by acquiring hidden (occult) knowledge.

I started to delve deeper into the occult. I read countless books on the subject including titles on mediumship, spiritualism and tarot cards. I had my palm read, practised meditation, and even experimented with hallucinogenic drugs.

Empty spiritually and increasingly immoral

As I continued in these practices, I became empty spiritually. I realise now there is an evil power in the occult that keeps you in spiritual bondage. I had also become increasingly immoral in my lifestyle. There was such loneliness in my heart, coupled with guilt for the things I had done wrong. There was also a great fear of death. I certainly was aware of my sinfulness, and I instinctively knew that my lifestyle was going to lead to my destruction.

I continued to take on board every aspect of 'open belief' (believing all things and accepting all things without questioning) but grew more and more frustrated with all these different teachings. God seemed so far away and impossible to reach. I felt imperfect and the thought of never being able to reach God made me despair. Suicide was an option I considered but I was too fearful of pain.

I used to read the Bible but regarded Jesus Christ as no more than a great man. I accepted some of his teachings but rejected those I had difficulty believing. In the end, it was Jesus' authority and the great signs and power he demonstrated that left me with a conviction he was God. I was, however, unable at first to acknowledge him as God and allow him to change my life. His promise that he would return to

save those who trust in him but would also judge the world in righteousness frightened me immensely. I was truly frightened at the thought of an eternity in hell and yet at the same time constantly drawn back into the pages of the Bible.

My only answer

The more I started to question Jesus, the more I realised he was my only answer. Many times before I had called on his name to help me but experienced nothing but silence. I prayed often but my prayers seemed unanswered. I now know this was because I was not prepared to repent of my old life and to trust and follow Christ.

It got to the point where I was questioning Christianity more seriously and I started to attend a local evangelical church. I began to realise that God loved me and showed his love by sending his Son into the world to die for me. This would save me from God's judgment and I would receive Christ's righteousness by faith and have everlasting life. This revelation of God to me was something quite wonderful – I could know this holy personal God and have peace with him.

I do not remember the exact date when I became a Christian. I said a prayer in church and asked Jesus to forgive me for all of my sins. It was not a dramatic conversion with thunder and lightning but a simple reassurance that all my sin was removed and forgiven forever! I was totally free from my past and my guilt and fear had disappeared. It was, and still is, the most wonderful experience of true freedom, hope and peace.

Being a Christian is having an eternal assurance, hope and joy. This is not for the things that this world offers, as these are all temporary. I live for the promise of Christ's return and our freedom from death, pain, suffering and sorrow. Jesus' kingdom is a perfect and everlasting place.

Starting medicine as a new Christian

I had always had a desire to be a doctor, but left school with no suitable qualifications. After a few months as a nurse and several other short term jobs, I returned to night school at 21 to resume my O Levels and then went to college full time to obtain A Levels. After three years I eventually succeeded in obtaining a place at St Andrew's University in Scotland, and followed that by doing my clinical training at St Bartholomew's Hospital.

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