

Donald MacLeod, Testimony

I am writing this testimony on how the Lord came into my life.

I was brought up in the small island of Scalpay, Western Isles by Christian parents. I left the island to study Marine Engineering, so you can imagine the difference I found in the way of living in the city of Glasgow compared to the small island I had left behind.

I soon got used to the life in the Big City it drew me in and I felt it seemed more fun compared to the prison-like life I left behind. It soon drew me in and I went drinking, to clubs and dance halls having as I thought a good time, how deluded can you be.

After my engineering study was completed I joined the Merchant Navy as a junior engineer officer. At that time I could take drink as I thought in moderation, but as I was promoted up through the ranks to become Senior Engineer Officer, I turned more to drink to ease the burden of responsibility that came with the job. It became that I depended more on drink until eventually I could not do without it. I started to neglect my work and received bad reports from my various employers meaning that I could not get work with responsible companies and had no option but to go with foreign companies who did not have the same safety rules as my previous employers. They were not fussy who they employed they only needed me for my certificate as Chief Engineer they didn't care that I was a heavy drinker and blind drunk a lot of the time. In the end even they wouldn't employ me and by this time I was a chronic alcoholic drink was my God.

On my return to London I was admitted to the Seaman's hospital in Greenwich to get dried out, while in there I met a boy from Stornoway, Kenneth Montgomery he was also getting dried out. We got discharged on the same day so we booked into the Anchor House, Sailors Home which had a bar, we both decided one drink would do us no harm. One drink was not enough and we were both back on the drink again as they say about alcoholics one drink is too many and also not enough. I believe my friend Kenny died in New Zealand some time ago, we had lost touch through drink.

By this time I could not get a job as I was never sober. I was told that there were jobs in Lowestoft on trawlers so I hitched a lift on a lorry from Billingsgate to Lowestoft. As I had good qualifications I got a job straight away on a trawler. In this dangerous job the Lord saved me from harm a number of times.

On one trip to sea we were in a hurricane, it became so severe that we could not get the net aboard. I still remember the Skipper calling us all up on the bridge to tell us that we would not make it. Due to fear I prayed to the Lord to help us. The weather decreased and we managed to get the net back on board and returned to Lowestoft. Instead of thanking the Lord for saving us we all got drunk.

I was due to go on my last job on the trawlers and while ashore I got drunk and was hit by a car. I was in Intensive Care for over a week in fact they thought I would die and they sent for my parents to come and take my body home. It breaks my heart now to think of how my Godly

father must have felt. I am sure that through his prayers for me I survived once again. I was released from hospital to recuperate. I did feel that God was working on me but I wouldn't listen.

I got the urge to roam again this time to London where I met a lot of sailor friends and although drink had caused me to come close to death, I hadn't learnt my lesson and I started drinking again. One day in a London dock pub one of my friends told me a foreign company was looking for a Chief Engineer. I applied for the job and got it the money was great I soon found out why, it was for gun running to Angola, I was sworn to secrecy. I didn't care who the cargo killed the money was more important for me to get drink. The Captain and I were never sober during the voyage. On completion of the job I returned to London where it did not take long to drink all the money away.

Another time that God saved my life was when I got a job in Lagos, Nigeria teaching skippers how to use hydraulic machinery. I had to go to sea with them as they used the machinery for fishing. Small boats used to come out with black market Johnnie Walker whisky in exchange for the fish. For me at that time it was great what more could a chronic alcoholic ask for. On the way back to Lagos the vessel hit a rock going full speed at the time we were all drunk. There was a panic as the vessel sank within ten minutes. I could not swim but thank God the African natives swam like fish, they got me to a rock where we were stuck until we were rescued in the morning.

After this I made my way back to London again where I ended up sleeping on the streets drinking anything I could find, I was too ashamed to go back home. I remember one night I was sleeping on a park bench when the boots I was wearing were stolen they could have stolen my life, but I know now that the Lord was watching over me. So I decided to hitch a lift to Grimsby where I had heard that there were jobs going. I did not get a job and ended up sleeping rough again. But thank God it was His plan to get me to Grimsby where He was to come into my life forever. One Sunday morning I was roaming the streets of Grimsby I still remember it was wet and cold. I met the Seaman's mission man who was going to the Salvation Army, he invited me to go with him. As the pubs didn't open on Sunday until noon I decided to go with him to get in out of the cold. On going inside I saw how happy the people were praising the Lord. I could not go any further down I was at rock bottom, I prayed to the Lord to come into my life. I walked out of that hall born again, I had lost the yearning for alcohol the Lord had replaced it with a yearning for Him.

As I look back and thank God for the miracle he has performed in my life I remember the times where he saved me from harm and kept me safe until I turned and gave my life to him. There was a time in my life when I dreaded the thought of coming near to God as I knew I was guilty and I felt He was angry with me. But now I praise the Lord and thank Him for dealing with me until I accepted His salvation.

I was fortunate to have been brought up in a Christian home and to have many Christians praying for me especially my parents there prayers have now been answered. There are many people like I was who have no one praying for them, please pray for these people.

I pray that this testimony will be a guide and help to someone who is struggling with sin at this time.