Vandy Religion Essay Essay, Research Paper

I have been around religion all my life, but only recently has it become important to me. I find this ironic, because I recently transferred to a ‘public’ DODDS school from a small, private Catholic school. Only after I was removed from the Catholic school environment did I begin to see what religion really is.

I came to the Catholic school system in Leavenworth, Kansas in the fifth grade. Before that time, I was na?ve; I barely knew any swear words and all I knew about sex was that I was interested in cute boys. Ironically, it was this time, all through and every year after fifth grade that I was subjected to and learned vulgarity. By the time I was a sophomore, I was so familiar with all of the four-letter words that I swore casually with my friends when we would discuss sex or gossip about other students. I picked up every slang word for every body part and knew every sexual innuendo there was to know, all during the six years I attended Catholic school. Even though we were not very good examples of church-going youngsters, my friends and I regularly went to Youth Group meetings. I never really listened to what the speaker was saying or to what I was singing, I just went to socialize with my friends.

When we moved to Okinawa, I immediately wanted to make friends with the popular crowd, but my mother forced me to go to Youth Group. I only knew one person there, but I met another girl, who introduced me to her group of friends, the exact crowd I wanted to meet. We went out a couple of times, but after a few weeks at school, they decided I was not ‘cool enough’ and dropped me from their group. I was crushed. However, since I was new, I had met other new people, who I brought to the Youth Group so I would not be alone. Soon I met other people at the Youth Group and began to get more involved with that crowd. They did not reject me because of my appearance or because I sometimes said stupid things, but accepted me for who I was and welcomed me into their group. I could not fathom that kind of acceptance at the time. My friends from Catholic school would never let someone else into our group without scrutinizing him/her first.

I continued to attend Youth Group every Sunday to see my friends, not to hear about God. I still did not think about what I sang and I simply tuned out the ‘Jesus talks.’ As the year went on, my friends from the Youth Group began to talk to me about God, mostly saying how he had helped them in their lives, but sometimes directly asking me how I felt about Him. I always hated it when they would start with the ‘Jesus talk,’ because I was purely scientific. I had chosen to pursue a career in the medical field years before, and ever since, science had been the focus of my life. Also, I had learned from my friends in Catholic school that it was never cool to talk about Jesus. I tolerated the religious part of our friendship because the social part was so good for me. I never smoked or drank, and these people would never pressure me to do anything of the sort, since they were so in tune with the Lord. These were the first people who agreed with me when I would say that a good time can be had without alcohol or cigarettes. Not even my Catholic school friends believed that. I went out every weekend with my friends and had a blast. We would go out Friday, Saturday, and on Sunday would end up back at Youth Group.

After a few months of regularly attending Youth Group, I began to listen to what the leaders spoke to us about, but I still did not buy most of it. These people were not Catholic, they were mostly Protestant, Lutheran, Baptist, and other Christian denominations. Ideas such as ‘being saved,’ and ‘ministering to others’ seemed radical and unnecessary to me. However, some other lessons that were taught made sense, and I began to wonder about God’s love and power. I found out that only two years earlier, my best friend had been addicted to Brome, a Japanese medicine with Codeine. I could not believe it. This person was the first to introduce me to God. He was the person who I wanted to emulate the most, he was the most devout of all of my friends, and he had been addicted to drugs? God did not seem like some high and mighty king in the sky after that. The parable about the shepherd who left his flock to find one lost sheep actually became believable.

That was the beginning of my journey to Heaven. It has been a bumpy road since then, full of hills and valleys. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior last April, and nearly forgot about my ‘scientific days’ in Leavenworth. I still want to learn more about medicine, but now, I also want to learn more about God and his wonders. I thought that I had learned all there was to know when I attended Catholic school. I knew about the Bible, but I did not know about God. Is it not ironic that the only time I was ‘around God’ every day was the time I was farthest away from Him?