

Pastoral Thoughts

October 2013

Someone to Hang on to

We have two children, now in their twenties, and it's fascinating to see their similarities and differences. Our daughter has a strong Christian faith, but our son decided some years ago to become an atheist. However, it took him some years to grow into his atheism because we had brought him up to rely on God and to involve Him in his life. So when our son decided that God didn't exist, he went through quite a few years trying to find himself as a person and to learn to be himself without the support of a loving God.

I was reminded of this when chatting to a couple recently, who had moved to this country from abroad a few years ago. All the trauma of moving countries and leaving family behind, as well as trying to establish themselves in UK, find jobs and pass the British Knowledge Test to enable them to stay here indefinitely, made me exclaim, "It's a good thing you had a Christian faith to help you through all this! How would you have coped without God's guidance and support?" They agreed wholeheartedly.

Quite often people say to me wistfully, "I wish I could believe!" Perhaps from the outside they see more clearly than believers all the wonderful things about the Christian faith. Certainly, I am amazed, looking back over the years, to see how God has guided Kathy and me, even though things may have looked murky and unclear at the time. And whenever a crisis occurs, my first instinct is to send up a prayer of desperation. Often the first sign of an answer is the peace I get, which enables me to get through it and eventually - probably - to see God's hand in it.

It's certainly frustrating at times when I don't seem to see answers, but looking back encourages me to trust God for the future. Thank goodness there is Someone there to hang on to!

Chris van Straaten