

Australian Evangelist Helps Prostitutes Find Hope, Healing

Once a prostitute and drug addict, Bronwen Healy is helping women discover the unconditional love of Christ.



[] After spending years addicted to heroin and working as a prostitute to support her habit, Australian evangelist Bronwen Healy is helping women caught in the sex industry find freedom through Christ.

Through her Hope Foundation based in Brisbane, Healy offers women the same hope she found, using what she calls “consistent Christ-centered connection and care.” The ministry helps meet women’s practical needs, and runs special events to pamper, feed and comfort the often-overlooked women in the sex industry, many of whom have been victims of domestic abuse.

Healy’s message is simple: “Please realize that there's hope, that you're not alone, and that you do have a destiny and a future,” she tells women. “You are loved, valued and created with a purpose.”

Unlike many others who have battled addiction, Healy did not begin using drugs after a life of abuse or hardship. She was reared by loving parents, attended a private girls school and studied diligently to gain admission to college.

But during her second year of college she began experimenting with marijuana and before long had moved on to speed and ecstasy. Then her boyfriend introduced her to heroin, and within two weeks she was hooked. She began using every day. “The addiction very soon became like a wild animal that needed to be fed,” she said.

To pay for the heroin, she began stealing from her parents,

friends and co-workers. The day her employer fired her for theft, she turned to prostitution to fund her habit. "It was that afternoon that I made a phone call to an escort agency, and they asked me to start that night," Healy said. "I had officially given up the will to live by that stage. I was no longer my own person. I was now a complete slave to the heroin that I believed I needed to survive."

A confronting visit from her mother brought a halt to the downward spiral. "'Bronwen, I've been looking for your name in the death notices,'" Healy remembers her mother telling her. "It was then that I decided I needed to change."

In 1999, having just turned 24, Healy began to seek a permanent life change. A doctor recommended a Christian rehabilitation center, and after several weeks in the program, Healy became a Christian. Having tried for six years to break her dependency on heroin on her own, Healy said she knew she needed supernatural help. "From that moment on I gave control of my life over to Jesus," she said.

Today the 33-year-old is married with three daughters. "My life has not just turned around, it has changed into something absolutely beautiful," she said. "It truly is nothing short of a miracle."

Healy's testimony, which she recounts in her autobiography, *Trophy of Grace*, has captured the attention of several ministry leaders, including Crystal Cathedral pastor Robert H. Schuller, who twice interviewed her for his *Hour of Power* TV program.

Los Angeles Dream Center pastor Matthew Barnett said Healy's story "shows how great the love of God is for each one of us." *Barbara Wentroble, founder of International Breakthrough Ministries in Texas*, describes Healy as "sincere, passionate and full of the fire of God."

"Bronwen has a radical love for Jesus and His women," Wentroble told *Charisma*. "[She] brings hope to the hopeless and gives them dignity in life. Bronwen helps women discover

their value as a child of God. She is very sensitive and an amazing woman.”

This year Hope Foundation is taking steps toward establishing a drop-in center in the inner city of Brisbane, where women who work in the sex industry can wash their clothes, enjoy a meal, make phone calls to loved ones, use the Internet to look for jobs, seek God in prayer, and learn arts, crafts and photography. “We want these women to be accepted and valued beyond measure,” Healy said.

Mary, who was a victim of domestic violence, said Hope Foundation has given her the courage to move forward with her life. “I have always believed in Jesus, but mostly hated and blamed Him for everything,” she said. “With ongoing support, a part of me believes that the real relationship I crave with Him will materialize, much like all of my needs are being met before my eyes.”

Margaret, a former drug addict and prostitute, said Hope Foundation showed her another way to live. “I will never look back,” she wrote in a letter to the ministry. “Thank you for being Jesus to me. Now I am free to be Him to other people.”—**Mark Badham in Queensland, Australia**