

How disabled clergyman restored his faith in God (C)  
Keith Blundy / Aegies Associates Published: 08:39 Friday  
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A CLERGYMAN who defied disability to follow his ministry in the church is moving to pastures new.

The Reverend Nick Barr-Hamilton is moving from his post as curate of St Barnabas, in Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, where he has been for four years, to become the vicar of St George, in Fatfield, Washington.

A wheelchair-user, Nick, 37, was severely injured playing rugby as a teenager and said the experience eventually brought him to the ministry. He said: "As a teenager, I was highly active, playing rugby at North Midlands division level and working towards the Duke of Edinburgh Gold award. "I was an NCO in the Army Cadets and was keen to join the Marines. However, when I was 16, I broke my neck playing rugby. "The spinal injury put a stop to my activities and plans and also turned me very much against God for a time.

"At university, I made some Christian friends with whom I spent over a year arguing against Christianity. "I was studying natural sciences at Cambridge at the time and the more I looked into how everything works, the more I became convinced that there must be a creator, a designer behind evolution.

"Eventually, I ran out of arguments against the person of Jesus and after a realisation that there is more to life than just the here and now, God brought me to give my life to Jesus. "After university, I spent a year unemployed, finally ending up in London as a fund manager. "I became very involved in a church near where I worked and after several years of leading Bible studies, evangelistic groups and

helping in pastoral work, a friend thought I should consider full time ministry.”

After his city job came to an end in 2003, he was given the chance to work unpaid as a parish assistant in Hull for two years and went forward to be selected for ordination. After three years studying at theological college, he became a curate in Middlesbrough and has now been given his own parish.

He said: “My biggest challenges have been the obvious struggles of achieving, particularly when I was in education then working on the city, despite the prejudice and physical obstacles that a full-time wheelchair user faces, as well as simply keeping going when life gets hard because of pain and frustrations with a dysfunctional body.

“The work of which I am most proud is youth work and working with children, which I love. The difference a real faith makes to young people’s lives is hugely encouraging.”.

Nick has been married to Lucy since 2005 and has two children, Elisheba, two, and Raphaiah, nine months.  
Twitter: @sunechochief

Read more at: <http://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/how-disabled-clergyman-restored-his-faith-in-god-1-4905615>

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