

Alyssa's third interview

1

2

3 **Interviewer:** Has anything changed for you about the way you see your faith?

4 **Alyssa:** Um – I'm not – I never was like - a Churchy-type person. No
5 offence to anyone who is. But – um – I'm just starting to wonder
6 about certain things that are taught to you. Um – different ways
7 of receiving the – um – (*pause*) – Yeah, jus' –

8 **Interviewer:** Okay. Can you think of anything that you have been thinking
9 about? Anything specific?

10 **Alyssa:** Aah – (*pause*) – just – just the way religion is shown to us in –
11 like the way – y' know the way when you go to Church, you hear
12 this, that an' the other, um – you know, you – (*sighs*). You just
13 start to think about it an' you start to think, you know, "Hang on,
14 y' know, certain things just don't sorta add up. Um – yeah, it's
15 just like – you're taught like, you know, it's one thing or another
16 thing it's more – um – just broad kinds of thinking about –
17 thinking, I guess (*laughs nervously*). Yeah.

18 **Interviewer:** So do you know if anything has prompted you to think like that
19 now?

20 **Alyssa:** Um – well, not really, not a certain thing. It's just – yeah, I'm just
21 starting to (*pause*) I've been doing it for a while, thinking about,
22 you know, what's the Church about, its teachings – um – you
23 know, it (*sighs*)

24 **Interviewer:** And that was happening last year, wasn't it?

25 **Alyssa:** Yeah. I think i- – probably not as much as what it is now, but –
26 um – yeah, jus' – yeah, it was happening last year but it wasn't
27 like me thinking hugely about it an' it's just, you know, just
28 wondering.

29 **Interviewer:** Would going to university have introduced anything into the way
30 in which you think?

31 **Alyssa:** Um, I think it makes you think that hey – um – not everything's
32 black and white. Um – you know, i- –it – you have other things to
33 think about an' you have different – Y- – you know, you just
34 learn that – that what you've been taught necessarily isn't (*long*
35 *pause*) the whole idea, the whole thing.

36 **Interviewer:** So, you're beginning to see that there's more to truth than what
37 you've been given?

38 **Alyssa:** Yep. Yeah, more to the whole thing of – yeah, jus' more – more
39 to life, more to – what you think, more – yeah, jus' more after –

40 **Interviewer:** How does that affect your involvement in Church?

41 **Alyssa:** Um – I go to Church occasionally. I – I – when I was younger I
42 used to go every week, but something's changed now a bit. Um
43 – but – but when I go to Church I try to pay attention, but I kinda

44 lose it after a while. Um – and um – I mean I do a youth group
 45 and that's kind of – yeah, it's learning more about religion an'
 46 your faith an' – it doesn't really like hugely affect – but that, it's
 47 just, you know, thinking about things, yeah.

48 **Interviewer:** Can you identify in terms of going to Church what leads you to
 49 end up not paying attention?

50 **Alyssa:** The homily. Okay, the priest stands up on the pew-thing. I don't
 51 know the proper word.

52 **Interviewer:** Pulpit.

53 **Alyssa:** Yeah, that's the one. And he just – I don't – aw, it's just me. I
 54 have really bad attention, like, you know, you start talking about
 55 stuff or I'm gone. It's jus' – goes over – goes over my head. An'
 56 that – he's just talking about sorta the Bible an' how it exis- – he
 57 doesn't talk about life. Like there – I went to see this one priest
 58 one – one time. Um, he was Irish an' he was brilliant. First time
 59 in years I've listened to the homily. Um, he stood on a level with
 60 everyone. He stood on the ground an' he talked about – um – a
 61 certain incident that happened in his life an' it was something I
 62 could relate to because if it – yeah it's just – I don't know – after
 63 some bombing in London or something, you know, everyone
 64 was bagging at the Irish over the incident. I could relate to that
 65 because, you know, I was Irish an' – I have that behind me.
 66 Yeah. Jus' something to laugh about, you know, jist – you know,
 67 this is – you know, they just – it's all extremes, you know, but he
 68 was brilliant. An' he – I think it was because he was on a level
 69 with us. He wasn't higher than us. You know, he was the same. I
 70 really liked that. Yeah.

71 **Interviewer:** Would you like to reflect on what all this is telling you about your
 72 image of God? Has that changed?

73 **Alyssa:** I've still got the image of the white beard an' the big man an' all
 74 of that.

75 **Interviewer:** So all that's still there?

76 **Alyssa:** Yeah. That's still there. Like I still believe that there's a God up
 77 there and I still believe he did something wonderful. Um – y'
 78 know – bringing us all down here an' bringing us all to be. Yeah,
 79 but it's just the sorta teaching of that I'm just kinda thinking
 80 about.

81 **Interviewer:** Can you name one teaching that's been bugging you?

82 **Alyssa:** Awh! (*like a deep sigh*) This is going to sound really stupid. I was
 83 talking to Gran about it last night. If (*pause*) Jesus was the king
 84 of the Jews, right? – this might be totally backless argument –
 85 but if he was the king of the Jews, jus' why, why was he – why is
 86 he the symbol for Catholicism? An' she says, 'Aw, y' know,
 87 because he died for all of us.' Yeah, but I says, Why – I says – if
 88 he's the king of the Jews, like a – it says it in the Bible he was
 89 the king of the Jews, and if that – why isn't he the symbol for

90 Jewish faith? Why is he the symbol for – or why isn't he – if he
91 died for all of us – why isn't he the symbol for the world for us to
92 model ourselves off him, or something?

93 **Interviewer:** So can you recall when that question was first prompted in your
94 mind?

95 **Alyssa:** Ah, I was jus' thinking about it last night.

96 **Interviewer:** So it was out of the blue?

97 **Alyssa:** Yeah. I ha- I ha- I ha- I have them – kind of thing. An' I've just
98 done a debate with someone over it, you know, but poor Gran
99 had to be the one I spoke to last night, but – um – yeah, I don't –
100 I don't know where it came from – um – aw, it was – oh I just
101 said something an' – aw she, y' know, she was saying that
102 Jesus was a Jew 'cause we were looking at the people on the
103 TV singing with the band on – they're on *The Australian Story*, I
104 think it was, an' they were singing along with this Cath- ah, this
105 Christian band. An' I was jus' saying 'They get into it.' and – um
106 – I don't know how we got onto it that Jesus is a Jew but we did
107 an' I just started – um – just askin' her, you know. I don't know
108 how we got onto it, but we did. Yeah.

109 **Interviewer:** So, is this the way it generally happens with you: that things just
110 suddenly pop out and you go through a questioning phase for a
111 while?

112 **Alyssa:** Yeah. I usually just – I think I usually question it with someone.

113 **Interviewer:** And then?

114 **Alyssa:** It goes away.

115 **Interviewer:** Okay.

116 **Alyssa:** 'Cause I've – I – I've voiced my – what I'm thinking so –

117 **Interviewer:** Does it bother you that these things pop up?

118 **Alyssa:** Not really. No, it doesn't. Thinking about different stuff, different
119 things.

120 **Interviewer:** Are your friends like that? Do they think about these religious
121 things?

122 **Alyssa:** Not really. No. Or if they did they don't voice it with me. Um –
123 you know, ah, no.

124 **Interviewer:** I was just wondering about that.

125 **Alyssa:** It wasn't like over a fringe thing. I was just thinking. Yeah.

126 **Interviewer:** And this one was prompted by television, wasn't it? Seeing
127 something on TV? And that was the starting point?

128 **Alyssa:** Possibly. I read *The De Vinci Code* and that started to make me
129 think as well. And I thought, 'Far out! What's real and what's
130 not?' Yeah, an' I was jus' like, 'Oh God', y' know, 'cause it really
131 brings some radical views of what – um – of the whole Christian

132 faith and what we've been taught. Some things are totally
 133 different to what we've been taught. Far out! You know, what if it
 134 – it's right? Semi-facts based on a – put into a – not true story
 135 like a fiction story. But you just don't think like, you know, where
 136 did he get these ideas and where did he get – all of this? Far
 137 out, man! I couldn't get over it. You know, I'd be thinkin' about it.
 138 I'd be thinkin', "Where the hell, y' know, it's weird stuff." Yeah.

139 **Interviewer:** In the interview, I asked you about who had influenced you in
 140 your faith, and we spent a bit of time looking at Mum and Dad
 141 and, I think, your Grandma. So, is there anything you'd like to
 142 add about that just as you reflect on it at this stage? For
 143 instance, how do you think your parents have influenced you?

144 **Alyssa:** Um – my folks – my folks used to take me to Church when I was
 145 just a nipper. Um, we go every week, y' know, no questions
 146 asked type o' thing. It was just we went. It was good 'cause – if –
 147 y' know, it's different over here Church. Over there, you know,
 148 you get all dolled up in y' Sunday best, y' know, you go to
 149 Church an' ev- – like nearly everyone goes to Church 'cause
 150 that's jist how they are – and – um – I was more like – I was
 151 bored entirely one time, wanted to go to Confession – like don't
 152 know why, but I just decided, "Hey, guess what, I'm goin' to
 153 Confession." Don't think I ended up going, but – um – I jist said
 154 to my friend, y' know, "I'm goin' Confession here." And – um –
 155 yeah, like – I dunno, jus' more (*pause*) sort of (*pause*) yeah, just
 156 my – my parents did influence me because they taught me, you
 157 know, about God an' – all – an' Jesus an', you know, the Holy –
 158 an' the – the Holy – the Father, the Holy –

159 **Interviewer:** Holy Spirit.

160 **Alyssa:** Yeah, that's the one. An' they – they taught me that it was one,
 161 you have one. How do you have three, y' know? What's this all
 162 about? And they said, you know, It's one, let it be one person:
 163 God. And – um – you know, they – they taught me a lot of that
 164 that there thing really. Yeah.

165 **Interviewer:** Okay.

166 **Alyssa:** An' like, after school or whatever, on my way home I used t' go
 167 into the Church 'cause the Church is right beside our school An'
 168 I used to go in an' say my prayers an' – an' then I'd go – Every
 169 day I'd do this. Every day after school, go into the Church, say
 170 my prayers and then go home. Yeah. It's just habit. An' a lot of
 171 people did do that.

172 **Interviewer:** How old were you when you did do that?

173 **Alyssa:** Oh, far out! Probably – um – (*pause*) eight or nine.

174 **Interviewer:** Okay. About Year 3?

175 **Alyssa:** Aah (*pause, then to herself quietly*) That'd be what? Junior,
 176 senior, second class, third class (*pause*) – Yeah. So I just had to
 177 do it like it is back then or I get really confused.

178 **Interviewer:** When you came to Australia, what grade did you go into, or what
179 year did you go into? Can you remember?

180 **Alyssa:** Aw, I went into Year Five and it was the end of – um – nearly the
181 end of the school year. They were going to put me into Six but
182 they thought it would be too much, y' know. Last year of primary
183 school and you'd go to Un- – high school. So they decided to
184 put me into Sixth Class – oh, (quietly) Sixth – Year Five.

185 **Interviewer:** Do you think that move changed the way you viewed your faith
186 and the practice of it? (*Pause – no response from Alyssa*) Like
187 the difference. You've already made a comment about how it
188 was different back there.

189 **Alyssa:** Even in primary school we still went to – um – we didn't go to
190 Church every week with my – with my parents, but we still – you
191 know, we went to Church during school. Um – we'd have, you
192 know, we went to Church every Tuesday to – afternoon to
193 practice our songs, you know, that we'd sing. Um – yeah, we did
194 like – um – you know, an a- – an assembly. We'd have, you
195 know, prayer – um – don't know if school back in Ireland was as
196 sort of – like they did – can't – like I can't hugely remember, but I
197 don't think they went into RE as much as they would – they did
198 over here. I jist – you know, you jist – y' parents, uh – taught you
199 about that. I just don't remember them, you know, the – you
200 know, you wouldn't have like a room with – I dunno – a cross or
201 like a table with, you know, like a sort of a miniature table or
202 whatever. Ah, they jist – they jist didn't do that as much. You
203 know, they focused more – they just focused more on like
204 academic stuff, like, you know, your RE, your English, your
205 Maths, all that sort of stuff. All the fun stuff. Y' know, it's just a –
206 yeah. But over here they just talk more about – y' know, they
207 teach you more about RE, an' religion, an – yeah.

208 **Interviewer:** Would you like to say a bit more about RE, like, for instance,
209 when I raise that with you now, does anything pop into your
210 mind about your experience at school? Any images?

211 **Alyssa:** Um – We had to learn in Year 12 RE about – tell me if I'm going
212 way off the track – um – about certain influential people in – um
213 – you know, that had been around, you know, Fiona Woods – ah
214 – Stanley – whatever her name was – and – um – you know, um
215 – I forget the name now – the bloke in India – um – Gandhi and
216 that sort of stuff – to research them And you really learned a lot
217 about different people and what they do.

218 **Interviewer:** That's the second time you have mentioned that so that had a
219 big influence on you?

220 **Alyssa:** Yeah. Um – you know, I just – I did learn a lot about – um – the
221 way other people perhaps viewed their – their chosen religion
222 an' – yeah. Mmm. Good. An' learning about the different
223 religions. An' like I still talk about the day the – um – monk – the
224 Buddhist monk came. An' I jist – I still talk about how calm he

225 was an', you know, how he just laughed – had a brill- – yeah,
 226 brilliant – an', you know, just – yeah, jist learning about how
 227 other people viewed their religion, an' their – their particular
 228 faith, an', you know, just – yeah, jist stuff like that. It was
 229 wonderful learning about that. Yeah.

230 **Interviewer:** So that is what you recall?

231 **Alyssa:** Mmm. An', you know, learning about (*pause*) – you know,
 232 stories an' – um – y' know, particular – um – theories an' – um
 233 (*pause*) – different views to certain issues – um – y' know, when
 234 a society – y'know, jist learning, y' know, learning about that sort
 235 of stuff. Um – really – it's really – I like learning about stuff like
 236 that so I found that interesting an' it pulled me in.

237 **Interviewer:** So what you're talking about is more likely Years 11 and 12, isn't
 238 it?

239 **Alyssa:** Yeah.

240 **Interviewer:** Do you recall anything from lower down? Anything sort of stick in
 241 your mind?

242 **Alyssa:** Year 8 learning is about Edmund Rice because he was my
 243 House Patron. Um – we're learning about he – the way he was
 244 able to come from being, you know, a rich guy who had a wife
 245 who died and then giving everything away to – um – you know,
 246 various groups of people, becoming poor himself, becoming,
 247 you know, really part of it all an', yeah. Yeah, just stuff like that.

248 **Interviewer:** Being in Rice House for five years, did that have an influence on
 249 you?

250 **Alyssa:** Yeah – um – I loved Edmund Rice because he – um – he was
 251 Irish and – um – the way he could just give up his, you know, his
 252 riches. A lot of people wouldn't do that today. You know, if you
 253 were a millionaire, you wouldn't give your riches away to
 254 someone else. Some people would, but (*pause*) I don't think I
 255 could name a lot of people who would – um – and – um – just to
 256 be able to do that because you have a certain – you have a
 257 sudden – um – you know, idea or feeling, then jist givin' it all
 258 away, yeah, everything you've built up in your life, becoming
 259 poor an' like everybody else, it's just like really good an' you –
 260 you're someone you could look up to for that because he – he
 261 done all that, he kinda, you know, did what he had to do to
 262 become – to feel like he could belong.

263 **Interviewer:** So do you think it is important to have people like that?

264 **Alyssa:** Aw, definitely. I think if you don't have people like that – um –
 265 everybody becomes – y' know, y' – if you don't have people like
 266 that there's no hope for people to become better, for people to
 267 be able to climb higher up in the hierarchy, if you like, of social
 268 standing. Um – you know, just – yeah, you need it because if
 269 you don't – if you can't give – if you can't say, "Right, I'm gonna
 270 give this away today." Y' know, y' jist – y' know, y' full o' y'self. If

271 you're – y' know, you can't give stuff away because it's too
272 important to you, or – you know, you just can't an' – yeah.

273 **Interviewer:** Okay.

274 **Alyssa:** Yeah, I've grown up doin' weird things. I used to dress up and
275 go 'round the houses an' get money off them, like – y' know –
276 from no one in particular, but, y'know, sayin' we were gonna
277 send it to, you know, whoever, for whatever country, y' know.
278 We used to do weird – weird stuff like that. And – um – yeah,
279 it's jist – think it kinda taught me that hey, people need to be
280 able to give stuff away, they need to be – y' know, there are
281 people out there who are hell of a lot less fortunate than what we
282 are. You know, we need to be able to – um – bring hope back to
283 them, we need to be able to them something to live for. Um –

284 **Interviewer:** Did your teachers do that for you, that they taught you stuff that
285 helped you?

286 **Alyssa:** Um – see I wasn't a normal kid, like – um – you know, I didn't go
287 around drawing pictures or colouring in. Mum says this all the
288 time. You know, I didn't go around drawing, being a normal kid.
289 You know, I watched, you know, the news an' all o' that. Y'
290 know. So I think I kinda been aware o' that since I was, y' know,
291 younger an' – um – you know – Don't know if my parents in- –
292 instilled it in me or – Can't really remember where the hell it
293 came from, but – um – you know, m- – jus' yeah, jus' something
294 inside o' me. It's something I've always – you know – taught
295 that people should be (*pause*) There's no need for people to be,
296 you know, really, really poor. They have nothing an', you know,
297 there's no need for that. There's just, you know (*pause*)

298 **Interviewer:** So you're not sure where that idea has come from?

299 **Alyssa:** No.

300 **Interviewer:** It's not something that's originated at school?

301 **Alyssa:** I don't think so. It could of, but I honestly can't remember, but it
302 came from something I've had my whole life.

303 **Interviewer:** Did teachers reinforce it for you?

304 **Alyssa:** (*pause*) Aaah, (*pause*)

305 **Interviewer:** What about with the Rice House thing? Was that reinforced
306 inside the House by teachers? Or is that you?

307 **Alyssa:** Um (*pause*) I don't know. I think that was me. Um – in a – we
308 learned it from our teacher and, you know, our House was
309 always like a really happy and friendly House. You know, people
310 helped out other people if they were going through, you know,
311 diffi- – difficult times in their life. You know, we jist – I – I found
312 out with our particular House group – I had like the – my Year in
313 our House group. You know, we jist, y' know, we're there for
314 each other, especially when we were like in Year 8 an' stuff. We
315 (*pause*) you know, we – it jist – yeah, we jist helped each other

316 an', y' know, helped each other along, an' encouragement, an'
317 (*pause*) Yeah, it was really good.

318 **Interviewer:** So obviously, more of this is supported by your peers rather than
319 by your teachers?

320 **Alyssa:** Yeah. Um – yeah. Well, like because the school does like
321 Project Compassion, all of that, i- i- it kind of instilled from the
322 school as well because, you know, you do Project Compassion,
323 like helping people an' you know, bringing hope to them. Um –
324 you know, I think generosity of people as well perhaps has, you
325 know, made me think that there's a chance for, you know,
326 people to have a shot in – in their lives. Yeah. I dunno. It's just –
327 yeah.

328 **Interviewer:** Okay. I'll bring you back to your parents for a moment and your
329 involvement in the youth group in your parish. Your parents
330 seem to be involved as well.

331 **Alyssa:** Yeah. Yeah. They are. Parent leaders. Yeah.

332 **Interviewer:** Is that an influence on you to be involved because your parents
333 are? Or is that a coincidence?

334 **Alyssa:** No. They were asked because I was a leader there. And – um –
335 um – you know, people like my parents. Dunno why, but – um –
336 they're – they're – they're good people. They – y' know – they
337 help in (*pause*) like my Mum does – Mum does a lot. My Mum's
338 like a super woman. She does Luke 18, she does Parish
339 Council, she does – ah – the thing down here, You know, she –
340 y' know (*sighs*). Yeah, it's – it's good to see that. She's a good
341 role model to have, you know, because she does go out there
342 and do things. She just doesn't sit around an' wait for things to
343 happen to her. An' my Dad's the same. Um – you know, they
344 (*pause*) they make me get off my bum sometimes (*laughs*) and
345 do things, you know, because of employ- – you know, you have
346 to do this, y' gonna get a good job, y' gonna do something. Um
347 – but li- – yeah, saying that like they haven't – um – put a lot of
348 pressure on me. It's always "what you wanna do, we'll support
349 you." Yeah, if you wanna be a bum, we'll support you doing that.
350 You know, um – just they're a bit – yeah, they are – they do go
351 out there an' help an' – yeah, they're good – they're good role
352 models to have for – my brother an' my sister an' myself. And –
353 um – yeah, we're jist – I've got my Gran as well, a good role
354 model as well for me. Um – and, y' know, yeah, (*pause*) yeah,
355 the – (*pause*) yeah, they help me like with things if I'm having
356 issues with certain things, with difficulties, you know. And, y'
357 know, they're there to support me. Yeah. An' yeah, it's good
358 having them around at the youth group because they do add
359 something to it. You know, they add their – their thoughts, their
360 feelings, an' (*pause*) y'know, they are – they do do things like
361 they – they – they don't like – like, take, for example, last night's
362 meeting, you know, Dad came an' got involved an', you know,

- 363 he – um – that’s what – yeah, that’s what they do. They do
 364 things to try and help us an’ sup- – support us an’, you know,
 365 give us something back for our lives.
- 366 **Interviewer:** Okay, is there anything you’d like to add about prayer and your
 367 relationship with God?
- 368 **Alyssa:** Um -
- 369 **Interviewer:** We explored this in the first interview and the second.
- 370 **Alyssa:** Yes, I know. I don’t really like pray type of thing. You know, I
 371 believe that if you’re a good person an’, you know, an’ you live
 372 your life in the – in the right way an’ y’ know, you try to do the
 373 right thing. God knows y’ love him, you know, um, (*pause*)
 374 Yeah, jist um – pray I don’t, y’know. I should, but I jist – but I jist
 375 don’t pray, I don’t – um – don’t need to do all that. I don’t know if
 376 it’s somethin’ I don’t need to do – um – like my Gran’s always
 377 sayin’ to me, y’ know, “What do you pray?” an’ “Why don’tcha
 378 pray?” an’ all o’ this an’ – ‘cause she prays ev’ry night before
 379 she goes to sleep, which I just couldn’t do ‘cause I’m usually up
 380 an’ I just don’t have the whole thing of sitting by the bed an’ – or
 381 kneeling by the bed an’ praying, y’ know, I don’t have that in me.
 382 Um – yeah. Um – but – like I pray when I go to Luke 18. Um – I
 383 pray when I go to Church, but – um – yeah, sometimes I ask
 384 God to help me.
- 385 **Interviewer:** So your prayer is more formal sort of prayer, rather than
 386 spontaneous prayer?
- 387 **Alyssa:** Yeah. More or –
- 388 **Interviewer:** More the Our Father and Hail Mary sort of thing?
- 389 **Alyssa:** No. Um – Luke – when we go to Luke 18, we kind of jist pray for
 390 what we – um – are feeling, what we want to do to reach out and
 391 help, you know, say what we need to say basically. An’ then, y’
 392 know, I pray formally at Church when – um – after the
 393 Communion – um – an’ then, y’ know, jist whenever I need
 394 something. I jist say, “God, please help me.” type o’ thing. But I
 395 don’t really pray formally that much.
- 396 **Interviewer:** Okay. Is there anything you’d like to say that expands on
 397 anything you’ve said, or anything you recall from the previous
 398 interviews?
- 399 **Alyssa:** Mmmm (*pause*) Don’t think so. Don’t really – can’t really think of
 400 anything to expand on. No.
- 401 **Interviewer:** Is there anything we haven’t covered that you wanted to say
 402 something about?
- 403 **Alyssa:** Not that I can think of, no.
- 404 **Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you, Alyssa, for allowing me to interview you.