

God has turned my whole life around.  
He has been the best thing in the world that has ever happened to me.

Kia ora, my name is Petrina  
Ko Nga Puhi te iwi  
Ko Patuharakeke te hapu  
Ko Nga tekematawhaorua te waka  
Ko Takahewai te whenua  
Ko Thomas Pitman tokupapa  
Ko Marahea Bown toku mama  
Ko Craig Sullivan hoa rangatira

I have five children. I am 38 years of age.

Before God became the anchor of my life 4 years ago, I grew up in a violent, drunken environment with my father leaving home when I was the age of 5. I ended up leaving home at the age of 12-13.

I became a Christchurch City Street Kid. One day I found myself to be in the wrong place at the wrong time which lead to a violent rape by a gang member. I started taking narcotics and alcohol to suppress my feelings and emotions, ending up with a prospector for the black power.

Even though the relationship was controlling and abusive, I thought it was love. I received hiding after hiding, lie after lie, mentally it became a normal life for me. I stayed with him for 13 years. I don't think I would have ever left but he got shot dead in a drive by shooting in 2001, leaving me with a 6 year boy wanting to be a gangster, a 5<sup>1/2</sup> month girl who had just been diagnosed with cerebral palsy as well as being 3<sup>1/2</sup> months pregnant.

I found it hard to adapt to life. After two more relationships, 2 more children I noticed a pattern. I liked being hurt, I loved pain. I ended up losing my children to child, youth and family and got into hard drugs. I tried to commit suicide four times. I was lost and didn't know who I was, I was searching to fill this emptiness in my heart.

As I reflect back, I can see God had a plan for my life. Everything I had been through was for a reason. I also know that God's love is true love and His Word sustains our wellbeing. I'm reunited with four of my five children and have been married for just over a year. My dad is in regular contact and I have a sense of belonging, knowing my identity in God's Kingdom.

Petrina – Lower Hutt