

## **A brief testimony**

My family (parents and two brothers) immigrated to Australia from Liverpool, England in 1964. I was born a few years later and raised in Adelaide. The family religion in name was the Church of England; in practice it was the Everton Football Club. As far as I understood following Everton was not a question of football but of morality (no, I am not joking).

There are three significant periods in my life which led to my conversion.

At the age of six I was first exposed to the Gospel through a local Baptist church which held a kids club after school. Although I don't recall much about the lessons themselves they did create for me an interest in the Bible. My parents responded by having me christened and buying me a children's Bible which my mum would read to me at bedtime. I remember very clearly being captivated by the pictures and the people and events they depicted. In my own way I knew that the Bible was a not just another story book. Once the Baptists stopped coming to school my interest quickly waned but I do believe that seeds were planted at this time.

My next encounter with the truth occurred when I was fifteen. It happened through a fellow student at high school. He was new to the school and caused a stir in the classroom when he challenged a teacher about evolution. He objected to evolution being taught as a fact when he believed it was only a theory, and a wrong theory at that. The teacher welcomed the interaction and he was allowed to put his creationist viewpoint forward. While most of the class revelled in the disruption I found his reasoning compelling. I already had a lot of questions about the meaning and purpose of life and I began to seek him out for discussion. Although non-committal neither was I dismissive. Unfortunately sin won the day and I hardened my heart to what I sensed was true and pursued the lusts of the flesh with vigour.

I can only describe my latter teenage years as a wasteland. I indulged in every form of sin available to me, the fruit of which was emptiness and despair. Thankfully the door of mercy had not been shut. At the age of nineteen a girl with whom I became acquainted had an older brother who was a Christian. Whenever our paths crossed I was keen to question him about his beliefs. We got along very well and I soon began to call at his house for discussion. He and his wife always had time for me and we sometimes sat up talking until morning.

Once again I was confronted with the guilt of my sin just as I had been in high school. The idea that I could be ushered into the presence of an angry God at any moment filled me with terror. On several occasions I was overcome with nightmares to the point of waking drenched in sweat and gasping for air. The intensity of those dreams is still as vivid today as when I experienced them. Unlike five years earlier I could no longer ignore what I knew to be true. Even though I wasn't yet a Christian I felt compelled to warn my parents and friends of the predicament we were in as sinners. I saw us all on the precipices of an eternal hell and they thought I was on the precipices of losing my sanity!

Not having grown up in church there was much that I didn't understand about Christian living and commitment. Importantly however I understood that the Gospel was a lifeline to condemned sinners. In April 1988 I asked God to forgive me for my life of sin believing that Christ paid a debt that I could never pay. It was not easy parting with my former ways, and I felt constantly pulled in two different directions. I became aware very early that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Yet God who is faithful to His Word was working in my life and so I began to slowly grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Shortly after my conversion I moved back in with my parents and this provided me with much opportunity to witness to them and for them to see the change in me. By God's grace, within a year of returning home they were also converted and attending church every week. They have both since gone to be with the Lord.

I hope that this testimony would encourage parents and those who teach little children. It is a wonderful privilege to relate Biblical truth to young minds. Seeds were sown in my life at the age of six. The people who came to my school and even my unconverted mother were the means through which I was introduced to God. I wasn't converted at this time but the ground had been ploughed.

I hope that this testimony would inspire boldness. Christian reader, do not be afraid to speak up for Jesus Christ. A fifteen year old youth was courageous enough to challenge the Godless philosophy of evolution, and while the class mocked, his words spoke to me. He never saw me converted but the soil was watered.

I hope that this testimony would strengthen faith in a God who is able to save to the uttermost. In my teenage years I indulged constantly in the vices of this world. I caused my parents no end of heartache. Today I am a minister of the Gospel of God's grace, the grace which rescued me from the power and penalty of sin. No one is beyond the reach of the Gospel. It is often the case that those who seem least likely to become Christians are the ones in whom God is pleased to work. Did not the apostle say that God reaches out to the weak, the beggarly and foolish things of this world that His power, wisdom, and grace might be made manifest?

Glory be to His wonderful name!

**Romans 1:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

**1 Corinthians 1:18-21 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup>For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written: *"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."* <sup>20</sup>Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

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