

## Short testimony of Roger Arthur Keech

Born at St Albans in Hertfordshire I was believed to have had jaundice a few days after. Because I cried a lot I was put in an airing cupboard to stop me making so much noise. I was bullied at school and bullied at home by my brother for many years. I had a lot of time off from school owing to my frequent bouts of chronic asthma. Because of this I did not get good results from examinations at school and my parents firmly believed that if they told me time and again that I was not doing well enough then this would encourage me to do better, needless to say it had the opposite effect.

When I went out to work however, I got the red carpet treatment – people thought they could walk all over me. If there were an unpopular shift or working pattern that had not been filled it would go to me and I was not allowed to argue with it. I worked on a news stand and bookstall at St Pancras station in London for quite a time, during which I was locked onto the shift that finished at nine thirty in the evening, leaving me no time to see my friends and as I was working weekends I could not see them at that time either.

As time went by it became clear that the only way to get out of the shift was to resign, something that would seem unwise because jobs were not easy to come by in those days especially if you had resigned or been sacked from a number of jobs, which was certainly the case for me (though the reason for this was not dishonourable) I left work one night determined to commit suicide. This was not a cry for help this was a determination since I was taught that if I help people and do not do anything particularly wicked I would be certain to go to heaven when I eventually died.

My plan was to throw myself out of a speeding train and aim my head to go under the wheels so that it would be severed completely and there would be no possibility of a recovery. When I got up to do this I was physically prevented from doing so by the person sitting opposite me who (would you believe) was travelling to a station beyond St. Albans. Having been unsuccessful in everything I had ever done (now including committing suicide) I began to walk home feeling very down. Because I had been educated at Anglican schools before I went out to work I cried out to God in desperation – “Lord if you can get me out of this situation I’m yours forever”. I did not mean one syllable but immediately Jesus appeared to me (like St Paul on the road to Damascus) and started to show me that I had never been taught that Christianity is not about good works but about a real relationship with the creator, something I had never been told before.

The next day when I came into work my boss called me in and told me that the area manager wanted to see me. Prepared for the worst I went along to him and was told that he did not think it good for me to be doing so much travelling into work, there happened to be a vacancy much nearer to my home and I was to see the Manager tomorrow morning about starting work there the following Monday. After working with the man for only a few days he started talking to me about how I could have a personal one to one relationship with Jesus **before** I died, at the time I thought this was just making conversation. Because of my interest in politics I spent many an afternoon at Hyde Park Corner where many go to listen to anyone who wants to stand up and speak there.

On my way to the political stands I had to pass a stand where the man on it was proclaiming "God loves you". I thought God loved me as part of a collection of people but as I heard these words more often I came to realise that He loves me as an individual. Even then I did little about responding to this love. At least 8 months later my aunt came to spend Christmas Day with us. "You and Roger go to church and I will get on with the dinner" said my mother. Well, you didn't argue with her. My aunt did not want to go and I didn't want to go, but off to the church we went. There was no nativity play, no appeal for people to give themselves to Christ and no evangelistic sermon but at the end of the service there was only one thing I could do, totally surrender to Christ, I was a broken and empty man. It was then I asked God to forgive my sin and be my saviour and my God forever and I left that church with a joy greater than I could ever accurately describe. It lasted at least six weeks; the liberation I felt though was not yet to be permanent. Now you did not have to **persuade** me to go to church, it was impossible to keep me away.

Since then despite much opposition I have been in Christ more than 44 years and reached an estimated 100 million people with the true gospel of Jesus Christ across something like 90 different countries and been working for unity amongst the churches of all Christian denominations for at least 35 years. When I preach or testify anywhere I am very careful not to say anything that would offend someone of a different denomination but after drawing really close to God and deepening my relationship with Him every day I have no other desire greater than to see people come into the revelation of the love of God and respond to the true gospel of Jesus Christ in their hearts.

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