

“FROM FAME TO FAITH” Tony Anderson’s journey



“I do believe in God's providence. In other words, God works in your life long before you know him.”

Tony Anderson grew up in Accrington, Lancashire, and went in the flow of the burgeoning rock and roll scene in the 1950s and 1960s. He worked on a farm with his brother Jon, he studied engineering. But Tony’s idol was Elvis Presley and he threw himself into the music scene.

THE SPANISH YEARS

He auditioned for and joined a band called The Warriors, who supported big acts such as The Hollies and The Byrds. And then came his big break, when he was asked to join the Spanish band Los Bravos, who at that time were the equivalent of The Beatles in Spain. Tony played stadiums across the world, but as the band decided to move back to Mallorca, Tony recognised, ‘*God had begun to deal with me.*’

Detailing one particular experience, Tony thought of all the bad things he had done - infidelity, stealing, lying and indecision.

He said: *“I was really terrified and I cried out to God from my heart. And believe it or not, the bedroom where I was lying actually just filled with light and with love and I was weeping because I knew God had answered that prayer.*

“So one thing I knew was God was real, and that he loved me.”

A MOMENT IN TIME

With the seed planted, Tony started to act differently and he had another moment during a performance in Mallorca with Zebra, a band formed after Los Bravos had split.

“We were playing in this club and it was halftime, we’d played one set and I went to the bar and there was a guy there, who said, ‘how you doing?’ All right mate, you know, that type of thing.

“I can't remember exactly what I said, but he looked at me and said, ‘you're just not real, are you?’”

“I said, what do you mean, not real?”

“You know, prancing up and down on the stage. Why don't you give your life to Christ?”

A BEAUTIFUL PEACE

On the way back to where he was living, Tony did just that. He stopped his car at around 3am, got on his knees, cried out to God - and gave his life to him.

As he did he describes, *"A beautiful peace came over me"*

Two months later, Tony's life took a sharp turn as he found his wife, Eileen, dead - within a month, he was back in England, now as a Christian and moved to the Isle of Wight to raise his children alongside his cousin, who had children of a similar age.

During this time, Tony said God gave him a song, *"One Seen Unspoken Glory,"* which he recorded decades after he had written it. The lyrics detailed his experience of God's love through the period.

Listen here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5_V1EHUliA

"THE MUSIC CAME BACK"

Tony started attending the Ryde Elim church after hearing the Pastor, Neil Broomhead preach from outside - and was there for 30 years. And after not wanting anything more to do with music, having sold all his records, he started to sing in church and the music came back.

He became the pastor there in 1986, leading the church successfully. During this time, he cared for his second wife Nancy who was very ill.

Following Nancy's death, Tony met Suzi and they married, together bringing up Suzi's three children and caring for his daughter Sharon who battled drug addiction following a car crash.

In 2007, Tony retired from Ryde Elim - he said *'when God wants to move, he makes it all uncomfortable'* Initially, they travelled around different churches, before finding themselves sticking at Church on the Roundabout, where God wanted them.

On his day-to-day Christian life, Tony said he gets up early and spends a couple of hours with God. He said: *"I'm an early riser and I've been an early riser since I started working on the farm. So I can thank my mum for that. I've continued that practice since and I just love to spend a couple of hours with the Lord first thing."*

"My dad and I didn't get on at all, especially in my teenage wilder years. So when I became a Christian, I immediately equated God with my dad and tried to be as good as I ever possibly could all the time - when eventually, that facade broke, I realised you are what you are."

And that's the wonderful thing about Jesus. He loves you just as you are."