

Real Life Stories
The Gospel Tract

It is now more than fifty years ago since I met a man as I walked down Canmore Park in the city of Belfast to attend the prayer meeting in Lower Avenue Gospel Hall. In those days I gave out a lot of gospel tracts and that night is particularly memorable. About 15 minutes before meeting, Frank Meehan and I had given a tract titled, "Shall I go to a Christless grave", to a couple of well dressed women in a fashionable area of the city. I remember it so well. They looked at it and then I watched as they threw it away. Back then I wondered, and have oftentimes to this day, if they ever got saved.

Canmore Park is a long avenue being over 800 yards and it was on the last 180 yards I met Frank. Back then I was only twenty years of age and to me He was an old man. Actually he was only 69 years of age. I offered him a tract and graciously he took it. This elderly gentleman then turned to me and asked, "Do you know who I am?" I had no idea who he was. Then he spoke deliberately and thoughtfully saying, "My name is Frank Meehan and I am a monk who escaped the monastery in Southern Ireland." He spoke of having been the only son in a large family and as such was pressured to go into the priesthood, which he dutifully did. For twenty years that was his calling but for reasons I do not know, he decided to become a monk in a very strict order of Catholicism. He had been that for twenty years and had seen the utter corruption of the system and thought there must be a way to God and the removal of ones sins. Disheartened by the evasive answers of his superiors and corruption, he escaped the confines of the monastery and fled to Northern Ireland where he knew no one. All he had for clothing was what he was wearing. If I recall correctly, I gave him what few bits of money I had and asked him to a gospel meeting.

It was the last big tent meeting series in the city of Belfast and the huge tent, which could seat 1000 people, was erected right in the middle of the city. Mr. Harold Paisley was the speaker and I arranged to meet Frank at the tent.

I went to meeting and told the saints and they prayed, but one person who was more cautious, told me not to be disappointed if he did not show up. Well, I went the next night and there Frank was. Together we sat in the gospel meeting and for the first time in his 69 years Frank heard the gospel. In those days we had what I would call "real gospel preachers". Plainly they warned of a "heaven to gain and a hell to shun". Above the platform hung a very large banner on which was written, "Heaven or Hell for eternity . . . where?" The meeting ended and I walked with Frank down the road and asked him what he thought of the message. Turning, he stood and said to me, "I accepted Jesus Christ tonight as my Saviour". This was after being in the first gospel meeting in his life and hearing the gospel for the first time. The dear old man did not even have a Bible. Soon the news spread and the saints opened their doors to him. How kind they were.

Very soon the Jesuits got in contact with the leaders of the churches in Belfast wanting to know where he was so as to bring him back "into the fold". While no one would disclose this information, somehow there was a slip and they learnt how he was going to a certain saints for lunch and then going back to his little job. Frank never reached his destination. En route He was abducted and brought back to Southern Ireland and we never heard anything more about him. The Catholic church refused to say anything except that he was back with them again and was a very sick man. None of us ever doubted Frank's salvation and I have no doubt that one of my joys when I get to heaven will be to see Frank Meehan again, and together we shall rejoice in God's salvation and providential movings that Thursday night.

. . . . *Rowan Jennings*