

Testimony

Joyce Walsh Tells Her Story

Testimony of a Children's Evangelist



As I share my testimony it is with a heart full of rejoicing that the Lord ever set His love upon me and brought me to Himself.

As a child, attending church, Sunday school and children's meetings was an important part of my life. At these meetings I heard of my need to be saved, so I knew from an early age that I was a sinner, even though I had never done anything really bad. Looking back, I remember attending gospel meetings in a Brethren Hall near our home. During those meetings I had a desire to be saved but didn't come to the Lord at that time. In 1967 I attended a mission in an Orange Hall conducted by workers from the Faith Mission. During that mission God spoke to me about my sin and the need to be saved, so it was during that mission that I trusted Christ as my Saviour. I knelt to pray a sinner and arose cleansed in the precious blood of Christ. My sin had been forgiven, and now I was a child of God.

As a young Christian, I along with others saved at that mission attended many meetings. On a Saturday night we went to a meeting in Banbridge Orange Hall. This meeting was conducted by John Dickson, who had a great desire to see us grow in the Lord. John knew missionaries all over the world, and in the meetings we had a time of prayer where we were encouraged to pray for the missionaries.

John thought his preaching and teaching made us aware that God had a plan and purpose for lives, and on many occasions I was challenged from the Word of God to think about the will of God for my life. So I began to pray earnestly and sincerely that God would show me His will for my life, and it was at a meeting during FM Bangor Convention that God called me to serve Him. I was willing for the will of God. I didn't know where I would be going or where the Lord would send, but I was willing to serve the Lord.

The Lord led me to FM Bible College in Edinburgh, where I spent three years. I didn't know where the Lord wanted me to serve Him, but I knew it was important to prepare myself for service. During those years the Lord taught me much academically. I found the discipline of study difficult due to the fact that I didn't much like school. However, I rejoice in all of the Lord's blessing in my life during Bible college days. While I was in Edinburgh the Lord called me to serve with FM in Canada. Leaving home and loved ones wasn't easy, but the Lord gave all the help that was needed.

When I arrived in Canada I was told that I would be going to work with a lady called Cathie Macaulay in British Columbia, Western Canada. Prior to going to Canada my desire was to serve the Lord in British Columbia, and I was rejoicing in the fact that the Lord had answered prayer. It was in Canada that I became a children's evangelist. Our time was spent in the rural communities, bringing the gospel to the boys and girls by means of after-school Bible clubs, school assemblies and Sunday schools. What a joy it was to see boys and girls trust the Saviour, and on occasion, because of children getting saved, parents came to Christ. As I look back I rejoice in all of God's goodness during those years. There were times when it was hard and difficult, but I can honestly testify to all of God's goodness and faithfulness.

In 1986 I began to feel that my time in Canada was coming to an end. I didn't know where the Lord would lead, but as I prayed about the future the Lord confirmed to me through His Word that the time had come to return to Northern Ireland. So in December 1987 I left Canada and returned home. In due time I applied to our Mission Board to become involved in children's ministry, and in September of 1988 I started as a children's worker under our Board. When I first started to conduct children's meetings, most of them were held in Orange Halls, Mission Halls and some homes. However, because of child protection rules and regulations, things had to change. The Lord has opened the door to many of our primary schools to conduct Bible clubs. Some of these are during the school day, and others are after school

As I look back over these many years it is with a sense of deep gratitude to the Lord for all the way He has led and guided. I rejoice in the privilege that the Lord has given me to serve Him and the joy it has been to see many children trust the Saviour and the encouragement of hearing of them growing in the Lord.

As I finish, the words of a hymn come to mind:

*All the way my Saviour leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.*

. . . . *Gleaned LTBS*