

My Testimony

by Sally Murphy



My name is Sally Murphy and I am very happy to tell how God saved my soul, and made me a child of the King.

I was born and raised in Northern Ireland in a little country village called Drumaness, which is about twenty miles (32 kilometres) from the capital, Belfast. My grandmother was brought up Catholic, although her father was a Protestant. When grandmother was a little older she left the Catholic church and joined the Church of Ireland. When my mother was born she was christened in the Anglian way, and that was her spiritual home.

The parishioners of that little county church were blessed for they had a kind pastor who sought to care for his flock.

In 1933 Mr. Tom Graham and J. B. Jordan preached the gospel and souls were saved, but none from our family.

Some time later there came into our area a man called Mr. Lindsay. He was a very godly man and had a genuine love for his fellow countrymen. In particular, he was burdened for a family member who lived in Drumaness. Cycling to a little hillock called "Corry's Corner" which overlooked the village, his nerves got the better of him and he turned back. Like Jonah, God sent him a second time, but this time, like Jonah, God used him to preach the gospel. That was the seed time. Later, a man who was a sales man for Irish Linen came to speak the gospel. His name was Mr. William Campbell. Mr. Campbell was a "platform man", he was a personal worker and a Conveyer, that is, he brought others who could ably present the gospel to preach. Very shortly after that my grandmother, her sisters, and many others got saved.

In 1944 mum married dad in Magheradoll Parish Church in the town of Ballynahinch. They began married life in Drumaness. Neither of them were saved.

As mum listened to the earnest preaching of Mr. Campbell she accepted the Lord Jesus as her Saviour.

My father was born into a very religious and strict Presbyterian family where he was one of nine children. They were comfortably off for grandfather was a tailor and grandmother managed a restaurant to help in rearing her family. They also had some pigs, and in due course, this became quite a big pig farm in later years, as did the restaurant in Ballynahinch. Dad's parents were both saved, but dad, while very religious, was not. He was what is called "a clean living man" and honestly thought he was going to heaven because of all his good works, going to church, working in the church Sunday School, the Boy Scouts, and he never cursed, smoked, or drank.

Time passed and Mr. Lindsay got two young men, Mr. Samuel Thompson and his brother-in-law Mr. Jim Graham, to come to preach in the village of Drumaness. Once again many got saved in my mother's family.

Mr. Lindsay tried to get daddy to go to the meetings but daddy was horrified. He thought no one outside his church was good enough. Then mum's brother-in-law (Tom Lewis), who was a great sportsman in football and cricket, got saved. The next day when working with dad he said to him: "I got saved last night". He was confessing with his mouth Jesus is Lord. That was his first testimony meeting. Well, dad was not too happy, Tom speaking to him about religion and getting saved! Tom the sinner who smoked, etc., dad soon let him know that he may have needed that, but not dad. But God had begun to deal with dad and that night God convicted him of his sin, so much so he couldn't sleep. He realised he never had an experience with God, that Tom and mum and others had. It came to the crux and on Saturday 10th of April 1954, dad accepted Christ as his Saviour.

All these people used to have gatherings in each others houses every night, and once again Mr. Lindsay brought able men to teach these young converts the scriptures. Many of them didn't even know a verse of the Bible.

Those were very happy times. New believers, excited about the peace they had with God and a burden for others, started gospel meetings and a Sunday School. One of the men Mr. Lindsay brought was a farmer, Thomas Graham, who had got saved during ploughing on his farm. God can save anywhere.

The numbers coming to the Gospel Meetings on Sunday evening needed a larger meeting place, and so they moved to Cumberbridge Orange Hall. They also began having prayer and Bible readings. At one of those meetings farmer Graham, in his soft country voice, said: "Brethren, instead of putting money into the "tay pot" (they were very ordinary county folks and used the tea pot for the collection, and "tay" is how the word is pronounced in that part of Ireland), we will put it in a box so that some day we will not have the use of these halls. So they got a box, but the tay pot continued as well. In 1954 there was a further visitation of the hand of God when seven were saved including four men, three of whom were the husbands of ladies that were saved at the first meetings in 1933 under the preaching of Mr. Tom Graham and J. B. Jordan. What an answer to prayer. These ladies prayed for some 21 years for the salvation of their husbands.

In time a little hall was built called Drumaness Gospel Hall. That was in 1957.

On 22nd September 2007 the assembly celebrated fifty years of testimony in the village from the time the hall was built. Despite it being burnt down in 1996, the believers were enabled to rebuild and improve on the original hall. On that day of celebration Mr. Sam Thompson spoke a little on the history of Drumaness and of when he and his uncle, Mr. Hugh Lindsay, first came.

I was born on the 8th November 1949 and I grew up with all the aforementioned going on. I remember well when daddy got saved, and I so enjoyed the prayer and bible readings in the home. It seems to me that there seems to be few families today who have the "family altar" where children are brought up with a reverence for God and a knowledge of God's way of salvation.

We had a wonderful home life. I just loved singing the old favourite hymns such as: "When The Trumpet of The Lord Shall Sound and Time Shall Be No More" or "Three Crosses Standing Side by Side", hymns that had eternal truths presented in them.

I loved going to Gospel meetings all around the country where men like Jim Hutchinson, Frank Knox, Mr. Beattie, Mr. Tom Campbell, and Harold Paisley preached the gospel clearly, but I was not saved! My favourite time of year was when the open air meetings were on at Newcastle promenade during July and August. We went up every night to the meetings, but I was not saved!

The year after the Drumaness Gospel Hall was opened farmer Graham died. Dad went to his funeral. He was buried on the Friday 14th March 1958. He was a real herald of the gospel and it was fitting that (while unknown to us) he preached his last message on the opening night of Drumaness Gospel Hall.

We must never forget the impressions being made on children, for I will never forget that day. When daddy came back from the funeral mummy asked him about it. No one really noticed the little girl, not yet nine years of age, sitting and listening intently. Suddenly it came to her mind, she would never see Farmer Graham again as he had gone to heaven, and unless she got saved she would never be there. Getting up I went and hid behind the kitchen door crying my heart out. When my brother John saw me crying so sorely, he asked: "What is the matter Sally? I told him I wanted to be saved. He must have told dad for very soon he took me up to the little back room in the house, 28 Cumber Gardens, and began to read the scriptures to me. After reading several verses he read the most beautiful words to my heart: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). As He finished it, I cried out: "That's it. Daddy I am saved"! Turning to me he asked "How do you know?" In my child like simplicity I answered: "Because the Lord Jesus died on the cross for ME". This was the very room where daddy got saved.

I was a little child but the Lord Jesus said: "Except ye become as a little child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18:3). When I was about 15 years of age I got baptised and was received into fellowship in Drumaness Gospel Hall. Some fifty-five years have come and gone, things have changed, but I do know that my relationship with God my Father will never change. The work of Christ will never lose its efficacy and I have eternal salvation.

Hallelujah, what a Saviour!