

Both my Father and Mother who have since deceased were saved. My father was greatly involved in the local work of the Faith Mission and the Christian Workers Union. He had a strong faith and a good testimony in the community as well as his business and sporting life. I was greatly influenced by his high standard of behaviour and consistent witness. However, I was not saved until my early 20's and like many young people I made good friends who were more interested in worldly attractions, so I began to go to dances and places of amusement. I cannot say that I did not find some enjoyment but always had an underlying feeling there was something better. I can remember occasionally at a late hour on the dance floor having a feeling of conviction as I knew this was the hour when my parents and praying friends would be remembering me before the Lord.

On many occasions when I arrived home in the small hours of the morning I would stop at the door of my parent's bedroom to listen for their breathing in case the Lord had come and left me behind. The influence of real believers in my life was important. I remember a Christian lady who attended my 21st birthday party saying grace which turned out to be a gospel sermon. It created such conviction that my friends and I shed some tears.

In 1967 there was a 13 weeks mission held in Portrush Evangelistic Hall; the evangelist was Mr Frank Marshall a well known preacher with the Irish Evangelistic Band. I attended quite often, mostly as the result of persuasion from a good friend who made sure she was always there to accompany me. On one occasion when I was trying to hide from attending she stood outside the door and called in that she was waiting for me. I only advise this approach if you know what liberty you have with people. Throughout the mission the verse "my spirit shall not always strive with man" was often mentioned. After the meeting on 5th February I went for supper to the home of the lady who kept taking me to the meetings. My emotions were quite evident to her and she advised me not to put it off any longer. That night we went to the home of a Mr Montgomery in Portrush where the Evangelist counselled me and in the presence of my friend I trusted Jesus as my Saviour. One of verses he used was "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" Going to work the next day did not prove any great difficulty, as a self employed person I had good relationships with customers of several colours, classes and creeds and was used to discussing many issues with them. I witnessed to them what had happened to me and found that I had a flood of assurance when doing this. I felt an inner witness that my sins were forgiven and I was saved for eternity. One of my close social friends told me that it was as if I had died. I eventually understood what she meant as my desire to attend dances etc., ceased and my relationships matured with those who were of my new found faith.

All my life I have proven the Lord to meet my need in many ways and saw real evidence of his miracle working power. I would urge those who are not saved to avoid putting it off as the spirit of the Lord can be withdrawn at any time. Today is the day of salvation; no one knows if they have a tomorrow on earth; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Margaret Barbour.