

Recollections of Bethany by Louise McCullagh.

I have a little Christian book for young people given to me on August the 3rd 1947. This is when I date my conversion.

In the spring of 1947 I was brought to live with my aunts (my father's sisters) who had a Haberdashery and Wool shop in Nodehill, now a Chinese takeaway.

Aunties went to Bethany Gospel Hall at Coppins Bridge and, of course, took me also. On this August Sunday, a County's Evangelist, Nelson Walker (known to Steven Gilham) and his wife May, were taking the service. They were well known, lovely people and used to sing duets.

At the end of the 6:30 evening service Nelson invited anyone who wished, to stay behind and talk to him. His talk must have touched my heart as a rather traumatised little girl, and I asked Aunties if I could talk to Nelson. So he explained to me about the Saviour who wanted to be my friend and showed me verses from his Bible. He had verses in different colours for different subjects in his Bible and I, with Aunty's help, did this in my own little brown Bible!

I also remember on a Sunday after evening service, aunts having Bethany folk back to a tea and fellowship time, singing choruses with Miss Tuffley playing the Harmonium, in the sitting room above the shop and I was allowed to hand round the biscuits before bedtime. This is where I first saw Peter's parents Ruth and Eric McCullagh.

We subsequently moved away from the Island but many years later I have a fond memory of Ada Thompson (Ernie and Ada then living in Drake Road) wanting to take me round to see the new Bethany being built and her great pride in the kitchen, especially the centre Island.

For me, there are many lovely memories of happy times at old and "new" Bethany. Looking back over the years my testimony is as in:

Alexander's Hymns No 3, number 1:

When I fear my faith will fail

Christ will hold me fast

When The Tempest would prevail

He will hold me fast

I could never keep my hold

For my love is often cold

I am precious in his sight

Those he saves are his delight

He'll not let my soul be lost

Bought by him at such a cost.

He will hold me fast - for my Saviour loves me so - he will hold me fast.

We thank the Lord that the fellowship remains strongly true to Bible teaching and has a ministry which honours the Lord. May the Lord continue to bless you all.