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# FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

SPRING 2019 | ISSUE 1311

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION

# EL ELYON

The Supreme God

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

**W**e are grateful to the Lord for the blessing and encouragement we have seen on our ministry already this year and rejoice to know of a number of people putting their trust in Christ as Saviour. With the arrival of spring, we move into a busy time of outreach programmes, tent missions, conventions and Bible weekends, and look to the Lord for His enabling as each opportunity is taken to present the gospel.

At a recent meeting of The Faith Mission Board and Mission Council, consideration was given to leadership changes which have become necessary due to recent resignations from the work and the retirements later this year of Trevor and Sandra Matthews and David and Marjorie Bennett. After careful and prayerful consideration the following appointments were agreed:

### Ireland

- » Irish Director and Irish Border District Superintendent  
*Jim and Hilda Lyons*
- » North Irish District Superintendent  
*Andrew and Jenny McCullough*
- » West Irish District Superintendent  
*Garry and Alison Tutty*
- » North West Irish District Superintendent  
*To be confirmed later*

### England

- » Central English District Superintendent and Harby Centre  
*Alistair and Yvette Park*
- » South West English District Superintendent  
*Nigel and Ruth Wilson*

### Scotland

- » East Scottish District Superintendent  
*Paul and Elizabeth Crowe*

All other Director and District Superintendent appointments are to remain unchanged at this time. It was agreed that from August 2019 the Irish Headquarters office will be relocated from Lisburn to Portadown. Due to the shortage of suitable personnel we do not at this time anticipate placing workers in Wales or Peterhead. Noel McClintock has asked to be released from District Superintendent's responsibilities when these changes take place.

The majority of the changes will happen during July and August at times which are convenient to the families involved. However, due to the need for oversight of Harby Centre, Alistair and Yvette Park will relocate there in the spring, but will also continue to oversee the work in the South West English District until July.

Paul Curwen, who has worked with the Mission for the past seven years, resigned from membership at the end of January. We are grateful to Paul for his ministry and fellowship and wish him God's blessing as he continues to develop the Bible Roadshow and balloon ministries for which he has a passion.

Stewart and Jill Megaw join the College staff in February as maintenance manager and house manager respectively. They and their three daughters will continue to appreciate prayer as they settle in to their new roles and adjust to life back in the UK.

We are deeply grateful for your fellowship and ask for your cooperation and continued support in prayer, especially upholding all those who are directly involved as these changes take effect.

We trust you will enjoy this edition of the magazine. •

| *John Townsend, General Director*

# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT



BY SAM GORDON

*'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance,  
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and  
self-control. Against such things there is no law.'*

Galatians 5:22-23

## The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace

In the twenty-first century it is peace that mankind is looking for, inner peace – a peace of mind and peace of heart. They look here and there but can't seem to find it. It's elusive! It is ironic that this generation has sought peace more than any other, yet we seem to have found less peace than any previous generation. The world is in turmoil and people's lives are messed up. There is an air of uncertainty hanging over many in today's world. Some are frenetic, fearful, some frantically searching for a deep, settled peace in the midst of life's turbulent storms.

Peace has to be one of the great words of the Bible. The Old Testament word is 'shalom', which means 'wholeness' or 'a total well-being'. The basic idea is that things are under control. Someone is at the helm, someone bigger than me has His hand on the tiller. One of the names of God in the Old Testament is Jehovah Shalom – the Lord our Peace. It means here is the God who has got it all together, the God of wholeness, the God who has His finger on the pulse of international affairs, the God who has all things under control – He is the God of peace.

When we cross over into the New Testament, the Greek word 'eirēnē' is a word that appears many times. It means 'to bind together'. It is often expressed as a greeting as in Paul's letters to various churches. It really means 'tranquillity' or 'serenity'. I have a word for it that you won't find in the dictionary – the peace of God is the 'undisturbableness' of God! Peace is an azure-blue-sky word, it is something that happens within us, a freedom from inner distraction, an

internal rest. It's that tranquillity of soul that frees us from fear and takes the sharp edges off our anxiety. It effectively deals with all those things that cause us to wobble.

When we think about peace, we are talking about peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with our spouse, peace with our friends and colleagues, peace with our past, our present and our future. It embraces every area of our life and covers every relationship that we have. This peace is not a spiritual marshmallow, full of softness and sweetness without much actual substance. It is surprisingly full of strength and vigour. It is more wonderful than the human mind can understand. It is incomprehensible, it surpasses our wildest dreams.

THE PEACE OF  
GOD IS A SENTINEL  
AT THE DOOR OF  
THE HEART AND MIND  
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OUR LIVES.

In Philippians 4, the apostle sees God's peace as a garrison for the heart and a guard for the mind and we experience it in the hour of trial or triumph, in moments of pain or pleasure, in seasons of sorrow or joy. Peace is not the absence of problems, it is the presence of Jesus. The peace of God is a sentinel at the door of the heart and mind when the devil comes along and tries to invade our lives. This peace is a quiet confidence in Him, it is an inner composure which only comes when we are fully trusting in Him. The storm may be a hurricane force on the outside but we have a deep calm on the inside. It is designed for the heart as it protects us from wrong feelings and it is tailor-made for the mind to protect us from wrong thinking. It is a 'perfect peace' (Isaiah 26:3).

Jesus talked a lot about peace in John 14:6 yet He was only a few hours away from Calvary.

This tells me the peace of God is independent of what is going on outside – outside the four walls of the upper room there was treachery, betrayal, violence and agonizing pain. Inside there was an unbelievable peace, calm and a stunning serenity. Paul said: *‘it transcends all understanding’* (Philippians 4:7). Such a peace cannot be explained away. We know it when we have it and we also know when it is missing. I can recall very clearly after our son, Timothy, was tragically killed in a car accident, a dear friend and brother lovingly shared these words with me: “Sam, in acceptance there is peace.” Our hearts were at an all-time low, we were devastated, the bottom had fallen out of our world; but when we yielded to the Lord’s sovereign will and accepted His plan, then God’s peace flooded our hearts and minds. Jesus said: *‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you’* (John 14:27). He takes all of life’s broken pieces and gives us an unbroken peace.

### The Fruit of the Spirit is Patience

The meaning of the Greek word that Paul uses here is ‘long tempered’. It is about being patient in a world of impatience. In Psalm 40 David *‘waited patiently for the Lord’*. Many of us struggle with ‘waiting’, in the supermarket queue, at the traffic lights or caught up in road works. If we are honest, patience for most of us is in short supply.

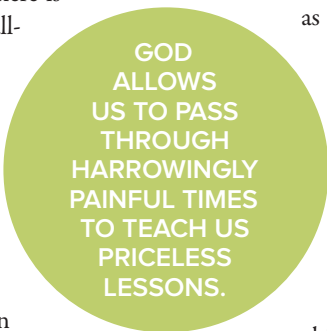
Patience is a sterling attribute of God. It eloquently sums up His nature and His character. We know this from Exodus 34:6, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 103:8, Psalm 145:8 – *‘the Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger (that is His patience) and rich in love’*. It was the longsuffering of God that held

back His wrath before the flood. Our God is a God of infinite patience. We need God’s patience in our lives. Living in the real world, dealing with real-life issues, as we wrestle with all kinds of problems, we need patience. Paul is an outstanding example of such patience. When his world collapsed around his feet, he exhibited patience. His circumstances didn’t change overnight but God worked things out through time.

Job in the Old Testament personifies patience at every twist and turn and James uses him as a breathtaking example of pure patience. God allows us to pass through harrowingly painful times to teach us priceless lessons. We live under pressure, and patience can help us handle it. We need patience to manage failures that come our way. It’s not just having patience in the big things but also in the small things.

We all have days when little annoyances, the minutiae, the trivial, cause us to need an infusion of the fruit of patience. The Holy Spirit can produce in us the fruit of patience.

When Mr Stanley found David Livingstone in Africa, he was greatly impressed. Livingstone never spoke to him about spiritual things but Stanley watched the old missionary deal with the African people with love and patience. He wrote: “When I saw that unwearied patience, that unflagging zeal with those people in Africa, I became a Christian at his side, though he never spoke a word to me about it.” People are watching our lives and how we react. Let’s be patient, God is incredibly patient with us. ●



*Sam has an international Bible teaching ministry under the banner of Truth for Today. Check out his website for free resources – [www.truthfortoday.co.uk](http://www.truthfortoday.co.uk).*

BY H E GOVAN

# EL ELYON

אל עליון

THE SUPREME GOD

Genesis 14:8 - 15:1

**W**e have no means of judging how God first spoke to Abram, recorded in Genesis 11 and 12. Four centuries had passed since the flood. Nimrod, a great builder, first of Babel, is stated to also have been the father of idolatry. Pure faith did survive as we see in

the book of Job, and Shem had been instructed in the faith of his father Noah. Joshua (24:2,14,15) states explicitly that the family to which Abram belonged, living in the land of Nimrod, were idolaters. From Ur, Abram's father migrated northwest to Haran, where

Abram personally received the Divine call to proceed south to Canaan.

It was on arriving in Canaan (Genesis 12:6,7) that Jehovah revealed Himself to Abram. At Shechem and Bethel, the patriarch raised altars to Jehovah as Noah had done (Genesis 9:26). His knowledge of God up until this point was dim and imperfect. It is probable that, with the constant stress of heathenism, Abram may have believed the existence of other gods possible, but he was faithful to whatever light he had and this increased rapidly to a life of faith and spirituality. The stages in his journey are well marked.

The first is seen in Genesis 14 as the war between kings for free movement in the Jordan valley en route to Egypt comes to an end. At this point, Abram steps out in a new light. He displays swift initiative, tactical skill and bravery as he sets out on a rapid march of 140 miles, recovering all the spoil from battle.

Perhaps the revelation of Abram's noble, unselfish character in what follows is even more interesting. How a man conducts himself through success and triumph tells us what is in him. On his victorious return, Abram met the King of Sodom wanting to promote him, which contrasted with the reaction of the King of Salem. Every man must choose which to respond to.

To the north of what would be later known as Jerusalem, all of a sudden the King of Salem, Melchizedek, interestingly comes onto the scene. In Psalm 110 the author recounts when this type of God's anointed appeared. And, yet another thousand years, and the writer to Hebrews (ch.7) takes up the same theme, sharing how fully Melchizedek shadows the glories of our Saviour. There he is revealed as

the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace (cf. Romans 14:17): he combined in himself, as Christ alone did in Israel, the two offices of priest and king.

He was the priest of El Elyon, God most high, of heaven and earth. '*God Most High*' is a Divine title which occurs four times in this brief passage (Genesis 14:18-22), twice again in the Pentateuch, in the book of Psalms, Lamentations and Daniel, but practically nowhere else in the Old Testament. The revelation of such a God was a red-letter day for Abram, bringing him into a new relationship with his Lord. In other issues, we have considered "any blessing that is lasting, is a blessing that is contained in some new discovery of God." The effect of this new vision was deep and permanent.

The story of the conversation between Abram and this King of Salem, sole priest of '*God Most High*' is very compressed. The king-priest brings bread and wine, reminding us instantly of the sacramental ministry of the Lord Jesus. Then he receives tithes, humbly given by the Hebrew chieftain and blesses him in the name of '*God Most High*', maker of heaven and earth. He would have said more, because in verse 22 Abram uses the title, prefixing it to the personal name of the God he worshipped, Jehovah. Jehovah, at whose call he had left Haran, was the supreme God, the mighty maker, sustainer and ruler of the universe.

God had so revealed Himself to Abram that there would be no place for any competing deities. This was a new gift to his faith, and it found a ready response. In reverent humility he presented to Melchizedek a tenth of all he recovered, and now he vowed allegiance to the Most High.

Then arrived the other king, and Abram faced temptation. Yes, after his expedition, Abram would be offered material spoils, after rescuing captives and a lavish proposal; an attractive offer was made, but he stood fast.

His sense of the iniquity in the cities of the plain was such that he had grace in that hour to decline all their gifts. With sadness, he had seen his nephew, Lot, fall prey to their seductions, and he vowed to God he would keep himself undefiled. Let common custom be what it was, it was his religious principle that would determine his attitude. He had been Sodom's deliverer but did not in any way want to give the impression that he was committed to or allied with Sodom. His was a disinterested righteousness; he had not acted as he had to gain reward. He would not condescend to any close intimacy with or indebtedness to these men, *'sinners against Jehovah exceedingly'* (Genesis 13:13).

We might ask what was it that enabled him to decline such tainted gain, with such grace? We might be in similar situations, tempted to accept unclean gains of money or position at the expense of principle. As some have fallen, once bright for God, materialism has taken over, spiritual vision grown dim, and little left of any reality.

Surely it was the revelation Melchizedek brought of the supreme greatness of God which enabled Abram to stand firm. With Him, he could stand independent of Sodom and all its wealth, and depend on Jehovah alone! With Him, nothing is impossible. He knows our

need and is well able to meet it. Offers coming our way outside His will and guidance, are not worth having.

Such was Abram's attitude – to the King of Salem, priest of God Most High, reverent humility; to the King of Sodom, splendid independence and detachment.

**'YE SHALL BE  
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Melchizedek prefigures Jesus. It is He, Who in His everlasting priesthood opens to us the supreme greatness of God. Luke 6:35: *'Ye shall be sons of the Most High'* is beyond our understanding and yet, our Father has a Father heart and He is the universal Creator. Surely then, if we seek first His kingdom and righteousness, all else we need will be added to us. *'Godliness with contentment*

*is great gain.' All things are yours and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'*

El Elyon – this is our God. Let Jesus give you the revelation, and, like Abram, you will be proof against Sodom's tactics and all that would tempt to draw pleasure or profit from unworthy sources. And, when you are *'not disobedient to the heavenly vision'*, you will hear Him say as He did to Abram: *'Fear not! I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward'*. He may have incurred the wrath of kings of the east but the Most High would be his shield.

*'Fear not.'* Eighty-four times, we find it in the sacred writings, but this is the first. To one who makes the choice Abram did, the future is absolutely safe and the sure reward is exceedingly great. Praise Him. ●

| *Adapted from the writings of HE Govan*



BY RON COLLARD



# The Linen Cloths

*'If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.'*

1 Corinthians 15:17

**W**hen Christ died on the cross at Calvary, did He not take our sin in His own body on the tree? *'He who knew no sin, became sin for us'* (2 Corinthians 5:21) and took upon Himself our guilt and bore our punishment. What then does Paul mean when he says to the Corinthian Christians: *'If Christ is not risen... you are still in your sins'*? Would Christ's sacrifice of Himself have been in vain if He had **not** risen from the dead?

When a sacrifice is offered, it can only fulfil its purpose when it has been accepted. This is true for any offering or gift presented to someone. God accepted Abel's offering but did not accept Cain's (Genesis 4:3-7) – Abel's offering fulfilled its purpose but Cain's did **not** (thus

God's statement in verse 7a when He tells Cain how his offering could be accepted).

When Jesus made an offering of Himself for our sin, that offering was to God and in obedience to God's will as shown in Mark 14:32-42. Did God accept it? Yes indeed, but how do we know? What evidence is there that the sacrifice was received and fulfilled its purpose?

God's requirements for sacrifice and offerings are clear from the Old Testament. Consider Leviticus 16:1-4, 23 with Exodus 28:32-35. Prior to making the sacrifice in the Holy Place, the High Priest had to wash himself and put on the holy linen garments (Leviticus 16:4). Having made the sacrifice, he was to go into the tabernacle of meeting, *'remove the linen garments (and) leave them there'* (Leviticus 16:23). The golden bells on the High Priest's robe (Exodus 28:33-35) were a means of informing the people that he was still alive and had not been struck down because the sacrifice was unacceptable (Exodus 28:35b). An offering, no matter how holy in itself, still had to be accepted by God before He fulfilled His purpose with it.

At Calvary, Christ was not only the sacrifice on our behalf, He was also our High Priest who made the offering. If God had not accepted it, Christ would still be in the tomb – our High Priest would be dead – and our faith would be futile as we would be worshipping a dead figure of history, like all the world's 'religions'. In addition, we would still be in our sins, as Paul states, and we would be *'false witnesses of God'* (v.15).

But... on that first day of the week our High Priest came out alive from the tomb and left *'the linen cloths lying there'* (John 20:5) as proof that the **once-and-for-all** blood sacrifice for sin had been approved and accepted. Calvary

was the **means** of our salvation: *'It is finished'*! Christ's resurrection was God's **acceptance** and **application** of the sacrifice: *'He is risen'*!

Christ's resurrection not only means God has forgiven our sin, but also means that our own resurrection is assured (1 Corinthians 15:17-22).

Do you know this risen Saviour? Are you living in the freedom of knowing your sin is forgiven and cancelled? Are you assured that your physical death will not be the end, but rather the beginning of a life in the actual presence of the risen Christ and that you will have a glorified body like His glorious body?

*'Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself'* (Hebrews 7:23-27).

As we celebrate Easter let us rejoice in the **historical fact** of Christ's resurrection and in the **eternal significance for you** of the linen cloths our High Priest left behind. ●

*Ron came to know Christ as a school boy and saw many fellow pupils become believers. He held the Queen's Commission for twenty-three years before joining Mission Aviation Fellowship in which he and his wife Elizabeth served for nineteen years. Subsequently he pastored a church in Dorset before retiring to North Yorkshire. He and Elizabeth have four children, fourteen grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren. They are both still active in their local evangelical church and Ron has a continuing itinerant preaching ministry.*

BY CHARLES PRICE

# In Him Alone is My Strength

A photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark top and a light-colored skirt, standing in a field of tall grass. She has her arms raised in a gesture of prayer or praise, looking upwards. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a bright sky, suggesting a sunrise or sunset.

**O**n one of my frequent absences from home, when I lived in England, the grass on our lawn was in need of cutting. We had recently purchased a new lawnmower, which my wife, Hilary, had seen me use several times. Knowing I would not be back for several days and the fine weather was not likely to last until then, she decided to mow the grass. The mower was fairly solid, with rotary blades, roller and motor weighing down on the machine. She started the engine, which automatically began to turn the blades in its stationary position, and then began to push. It was really hard work! To get any movement took almost all her strength but, determined as

she was, she applied all her might and, with her body against the mower at a forty-five-degree angle, she gave it everything she had until after two lengths of the lawn she was exhausted.

This was confusing. She had seen me walking up and down the lawn behind the mower, apparently effortlessly. Although she knew I was stronger than she was, she also knew the difference wasn't as great as this! In frustration and anger she grabbed hold of the handle to give the machine a good shake and in so doing caught the clutch lever and engaged it. Suddenly the mower took off across the lawn under its own power, cutting the grass in its

path with Hilary flying out behind it almost horizontal to the ground! What a marvellous difference.

How frustrating to find yourself manually operating something designed to run on its own power! And how wonderfully liberating to discover after a long, hard, tiring struggle that there are resources at your disposal you knew nothing about. This has been the personal experience of many Christian people all through history. They have tried with the utmost sincerity and dedication to do for God what only God Himself could do for them. There was no fault in their zeal or failure in their enthusiasm. They just did not know or appropriate the indwelling presence of God Himself, as the only One who can provide what it takes to accomplish His will. When out of despair and exhaustion they find Christ to be alive, and alive in them, the discovery has been revolutionary.

There can never be any significant progress in the Christian life until a fundamental discovery has been made and appropriated: *'It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me'* (Galatians 2:20).

### The strength you have

There is a man in the Bible whose back was against the wall. He, along with the people around him, was intimidated, oppressed and defeated by an enemy who refused to slacken its oppression much less to quit. His name was Gideon. One day the Lord spoke to him: *'The Lord is with you, mighty warrior'* (Judges 6.12). Gideon was totally unimpressed. *'If the Lord is with us, why has everything gone wrong?'* he asked and began to recite the troubles and

misfortunes of his nation, whose history was full of dramatic stories of God's intervention on their behalf, but whose present experience was one of misery and defeat. If this was more than some meaningless theological statement, more than dead sentiment in a dead creed, where was the evidence of God acting on their behalf? The answer God gave was a complete surprise.

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yet most  
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*'Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand.'* That was a revelation to Gideon – *'the strength you have.'* Whatever strength God was speaking about was not something he had to receive, but something he already had. Gideon asked the obvious question: *'How can I save Israel?'*

*'My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.'* In other words: "You say I have strength, yet I am the least and the weakest. How can you tell me to go in the strength I have – it is totally inadequate".

The Lord answered Gideon: *'I will be with you.'* This was the explanation – God himself was his strength. He was not speaking of some kind of strength that might come to Gideon in packaged form. Although he already knew God, Gideon had not been counting upon the presence and ability of God; he had been counting only upon himself. But now he was to make a great discovery. The Authorised Version gives an alternative translation in its margin, of the expression *'the Lord came upon Gideon'* stating most beautifully: *'the Lord clothed himself with Gideon'* (Judges 6.34). The simple yet most profound discovery any Christian can make is that God Himself is our strength. He does not simply give it to us, not does he teach us techniques for producing it, but it is Himself! Fail to realise that, the

Christian life will be like pushing a heavy lawnmower across the lawn, when all the time the engine waits only to be engaged!

When I first became a Christian, I understood I had received from God what in retrospect I see as three things: a ticket, a certificate and a catalogue. The ticket said: “Single to Heaven”. I only needed a one-way ticket! Secondly, the certificate said: “This is to certify that Charles Price has had all his many sins forgiven. Signed, God”. My fundamental understanding was that my sins were forgiven in order that I might one day go to heaven. But what about now? How do I live in this world with all its temptations to sin? This is where I saw the third ingredient as being a biblical catalogue. I would read the catalogue to find out all the good things I could get from God. For example, I would discover I could be loving. So, I would put in my order (called prayer) and ask God to give me love. I imagined Him coming with something like a tube of toothpaste, squeezing it into myself and I would become loving – but it would wear off. Then I would ask him for peace... and that would wear off; then I would ask for joy... and then for power. I imagine Him lighting a blue fuse and planting it within me to explode in spiritual power – but that too always wore out. It was only after several years of a frustrating Christian life that I realised that when I became a Christian, God had only given me one thing – Himself. That God, by the Holy Spirit, had come to live the life of Jesus in me, and that in Him alone was my strength and everything else I needed. I knew the language, but had not enjoyed the reality, that when I received Christ, I actually received Christ. My body became the home of his Holy Spirit to live His life in me. Paul wrote: *‘Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who*

*has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ’* (Ephesians 1.3). Every blessing God has to give us is in His gift to us of Christ. Peter wrote: *‘His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness’* (2 Peter 1:3). What is left out of that? We don’t become zombies and passively lie back and everything happens. We live disciplined lives, but the discipline is not to get godliness into our lives, but to allow the life of God already within us to be expressed **through** us in blessing and enrichment to a weary world.

The indwelling presence of Jesus Christ within us is the ultimate test that we are genuinely in the faith. Paul challenges some readers to: *‘Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?’* (2 Corinthians 13:5). He does not say “examine your Bible” to see if your doctrines are in order but “examine yourself”. Are there things going on in your life which carry no explanation other than the fact Jesus Christ is in you? The Amplified Version of the Bible translates the last part of the verse: *‘Do you not yourselves realise and know [thoroughly by an ever-increasing experience] that Jesus Christ is in you - unless you are [counterfeits] disapproved on trial and rejected?’*

It is His presence within us that is the nature of our spiritual life. Are we living in daily dependence on Him, daily obedience to Him, and with daily enjoyment of Him? •

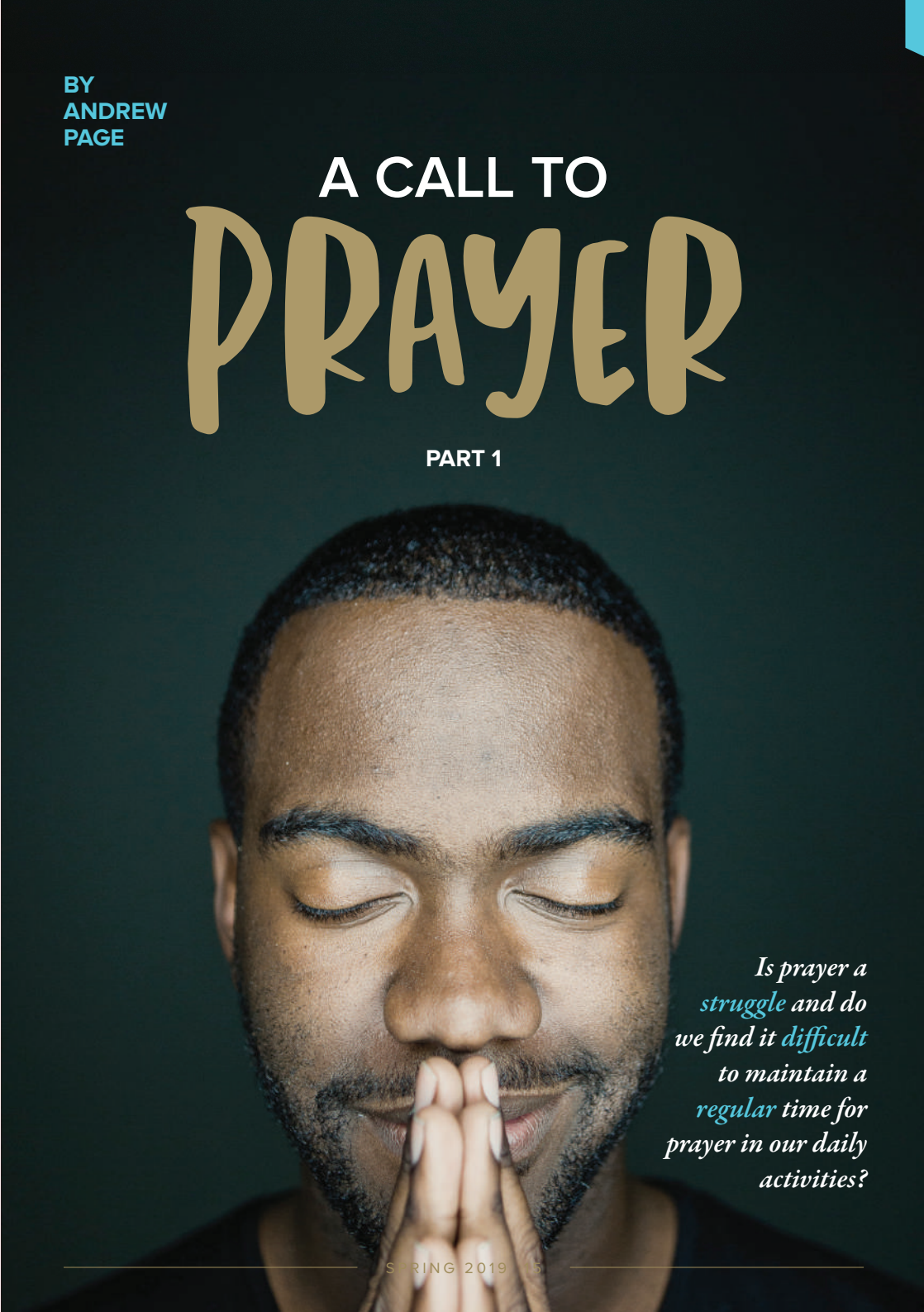


*Charles Price is minister at large with The Peoples Church, Toronto, Canada, where he was lead pastor from 2001 to 2016. He is married to Hilary and they have two daughters, one son, and five grandchildren. Charles is one of the speakers at The Faith Mission Easter Convention in Bangor.*

BY  
ANDREW  
PAGE

# A CALL TO PRAYER

PART 1



*Is prayer a  
struggle and do  
we find it difficult  
to maintain a  
regular time for  
prayer in our daily  
activities?*

**T**here is no area of Christian life and experience in which we have so abjectly failed as churches and as individuals, as in the place of prayer. We often treat prayer in a glib and derisory manner, as if it were optional. James Montgomery the hymn writer wrote: "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air". It is therefore no wonder that many Christians are being slowly asphyxiated for want of vital air, because of their neglect of prayer. Is it not a fact that we each want to know the victory of a better prayer life, and a closer walk with God?

Perhaps we should ask ourselves the question "Do I pray?" Only we can answer that question. Our minister knows if we attend the services, our family know if we have 'family' prayers; but whether or not we pray in private is a matter between us and God. The saintly Robert Murray McChesney, who burned out for Christ and His gospel at the age of twenty-nine, said: "what a man is on his knees before God, that he is and no more." There can be no pretence before God. We may put on an act before others, but when we are alone with God the pretence finishes. No Christian is greater than their prayer life, and their prayer life can be no better than their personal life. We cannot divorce our living from our praying.

Does the request that the disciples made, 'Lord teach us to pray' (Luke

11:1), find an echo in your heart? We all want to be successful in the place of prayer and long for a prayer life in which we know that we have really met with God. Why should we be concerned that we need to be taught to pray, and that by the Lord? Like the disciples we are slow to learn and forgetful. With that forgetfulness do we tend to be lethargic? The enemy of our souls, Satan, knows the power of prayer and seeks daily, hourly, to discourage us and put us off from praying. Jesus knew the human heart and because of this He taught His disciples to pray using what we refer to as 'The Lord's Prayer'. This prayer was given as a pattern for our corporate and private praying. In this 'pattern prayer' we find that no less than three quarters of it



**The enemy of our souls, Satan, knows the power of prayer and seeks daily, hourly, to discourage us and put us off from praying.**

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is taken up with God. First of all in Adoration, and then Confession, followed by Thanksgiving. It is only then that the prayer turns to our requests or Supplication. An easy way to remember the pattern is the first letter of each word A-C-T-S.

If we were to remove from our prayer time all the things we are asking God for, all the requests for ourselves and others, what would our prayer time be like, how long would it be? Are we not prone to being those who pray 'give me' prayers? As we come in prayer to our heavenly Father we need to bear in mind that although we can come into His presence with boldness because of Jesus and His shed blood on Calvary,



we need to come in reverence. Many view God today as the 'all-matey' rather than the 'Almighty'. We must remember that when we come in prayer we come to none other than the God of all creation. If we want to know fellowship with this God, then we need to take time in His presence, to quieten our hearts before we speak. We need to recognise that the Lord of heaven is worthy of prayers that come from the heart, recognising Him for who He is. We need to spend time in magnifying Him, in giving praise and glory to His precious name.

God called Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach. This was not on Jonah's list of priorities at all, so he took things into his own hands and went off in the opposite direction. Then things went wrong, then they got worse, and then they became desperate. Then and only then did Jonah pray! His priorities were wrong: he acted first and prayed later, when things were desperate. How often do we find ourselves getting things in the 'Jonah order' and it's only when things get desperate that we pray? Prayer needs to be high on our list of our priorities. Prayer was a very low priority on Jonah's list. Instead of praying when God gave him a task which he did not particularly like, he took things into his own hands and dealt with them in his way. When we are faced with tasks that God wants us to do for Him, perhaps not particularly attractive tasks, then talk to your heavenly Father about your fears, difficulties and the dislikes that you face in doing what He wants you to do. Remember He is your heavenly Father, He is not an ogre, and He has your well-being at heart.

Jesus prayed daily and He asked His disciples to do the same. When we look at the life of Jesus we find that He prayed before notable events such as His baptism and before making decisions like choosing the disciples. He prayed in agony in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed when men spoke well of Him, and He even prayed on the cross for His enemies. For Jesus, prayer was always a priority. It is important we ask ourselves what priority prayer has in our lives. When prayer is the highest priority in our lives, then in times of pressure and trouble prayer comes naturally and easily. The fact that Jonah took so long to get around to prayer suggests that he had got out of the practice of praying and it was not natural to him. It was only in the depths of despair that he prayed. Note the priority the disciples gave to prayer in Acts 6:4 – they recognised that all their preaching was powerless and pointless without prayer.

Derek Prime, formerly minister of Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, said: "God wants our fellowship with Him more than He wants our service." If we are going to see God at work in our lives, our church, then we need both personally and as a church to maintain prayer as our highest priority. •



*Andrew, a great friend and supporter of many Faith Mission workers, went to be with His Lord and Saviour in 2013. This article is part of a series he wrote for Drumchapel Baptist*

*Church, Glasgow, in 2000. His wife, Maureen, has kindly given permission to print these. One of Andrew and Maureen's two sons, Mark, is a member of The Faith Mission Board.*





# *Contentment in Old Age*

**BY DEREK PRIME**

## **Contentment**

Some of us are more content by nature than others. This may be influenced by our temperament, childhood and the parents to whom we were born and their unconscious example.

Areas of life may bring both contentment and discontentment. The first sphere this is seen in is our **family and friends**. We may be proud of them, but it may be that we see all too little of them, perhaps making us think they do not care much about us. Rather than thanking God for them and all that they do for us from time to time, we are disappointed in them.

The second area is **our health**. Old age brings health problems, more to some than others. Perhaps in the past we scarcely ever thanked God for the health we enjoyed. But now our diary records many visits to doctors and hospital clinics. Preoccupation with physical ailments or disability may almost blind us to the benefits we daily enjoy.

The third area may be **our finances**. It is so easy to look enviously at those who are better off, so that we fail to commiserate with and to be concerned for those who are worse off than we are. A problem as we get older may be that because our expenditure

is small compared with what it used to be, we accumulate money, and we are at a loss as to how to use it wisely for the benefit of the members of our family and others.

The fourth area may be discontent with **our circumstances**. Perhaps when our family members come to see us, their visits seem all too short. If we have carers, we may be discontented with the haste with which they do everything.

## **A priority – and a great secret**

The key to contentment is understanding and living according to the priority of the

health of our soul (Mark 8:36). In the book of Psalms we find the writer talking to his soul: *'why are you downcast, o my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and God'* (Psalm 43:5).

The apostle Paul shares how he too had learned the secret of being content. When the Philippian believers heard that he had been put in to a Roman prison yet again, they were concerned for him. They knew that he would have many practical needs, but they could not do a bank transfer of funds as we may do today. The answer was sending gifts with Epaphroditus, a church member. But it was not a glum, self-pitying man he found. One word summed up Paul's state: contentment!

Paul's letter to the Philippians – the Christians living in Philippi, where he had seen the first church in Europe established – is a 'thank you' letter: *'I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned the secret to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and what it is to have plenty. I have the secret*

*of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want'* (Philippians 4:10-12, my emphasis).

The explanation for Paul's attitude is found in the next verse: *'I can do everything through him who gives me strength'* (v.13). This was a truth built into Paul's Christian experience. Contentment increases when we recognise that God is in control of our circumstances and that, wherever we are, God's purpose is to bring into our lives people who need our Saviour. Contentment may be a telltale witness to them of the reality of our faith.

I want to avoid any kind of glibness in writing in this way, but I am encouraged by the telling word that Paul uses twice in Philippians 4:10-13 – it is the word 'learned'. **Contentment is something we have to learn.** But more than that, **we have to keep on learning it in the twists and turns of our life!** Paul's secret can be ours! Having the Lord Jesus as my Saviour and Lord, I have everything I need, together with a most glorious eternal future! This truth is like a comfortable pillow upon which to rest, calculated to help my contentment whatever my circumstances. That does not mean that the

enemy of souls may not try to undermine my contentment; he will attempt to do so because he knows how vital it is to my testimony to my Saviour's grace and help.

Day by day the reading of the Scriptures feeds our contentment. Our contentment is not only a blessing to us but an unconscious witness to others of what it means to belong to the Lord Jesus. There is nothing worse than a grumpy old man or woman! I wonder how people think of us?

### **A prayer for contentment in old age**

*Father, you know the challenges I face and my disappointment in myself when I do not respond to them as I ought. Thank you that you are my Father, the Lord Jesus is my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit is my indwelling Friend and Guide. Please keep my eyes open to my spiritual riches and may my life witness, without my realising it, what it means to be satisfied in knowing You. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen. •*

*This is an excerpt taken from 'A Good Old Age' written by Derek Prime, who is himself in his eighties. Derek has pastored churches in the UK for thirty years, his last church being Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh. In his book, available in all Faith Mission Bookshops, he shows us that there is another way to view old age.*

© Derek Prime

# AN INVITATION FROM THE LORD JESUS



## TESTIMONY OF LOUISE FOX

**I've been invited to many events, but this invite that I received was very different from any other.** I understand what a journey entails as I'm a retired bus/coach driver and I have travelled many roads across Ireland through the years. On one of these journeys I was having my coffee break in a busy café in Dublin when a young woman asked if I would mind if she shared my table. Of course I was happy to agree to this.

We started talking and in a natural way we engaged in an interesting conversation. One topic we discussed was stress. She began to

tell me how she wouldn't be able to cope with anything if she didn't know the Lord Jesus. "My life is in His hands," she told me as she held out both hands with palms upward. I was amazed to hear this and felt compelled to listen to her as I had never thought of Jesus in this way.

Along with all my family, I was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church. We knew about all the rites and traditions, but not of a personal relationship with Jesus. I had never heard of this before and it was totally new to my understanding of religion.

This lady invited me to a 'Carols by Candlelight' service which was taking place in her church in Dublin. I was delighted to accept this invitation as I love music and singing. My mother was an organist in the church and we all loved singing in the choir, even though it was sung in Latin. I went along to the carol service and found it to be a lovely experience. The pastor spoke about Jesus as a loving friend. He then made the comment that if anyone was interested in knowing more about Jesus to put their name and contact details on the space provided on the order of service. That is exactly what I did! There and then I understood that this was an invitation from the Lord Jesus.

EVERY DAY  
I'M LEARNING  
THAT JESUS WILL  
NEVER LEAVE OR  
FORSAKE ME. MY  
HOPE IS IN HIM  
ALONE.

In the new year of January 1996 my exciting journey began. I received details of a six-week Bible study in the home of one of the elders and I decided I would go along. During this time of looking at Mark's gospel, I learned so much, especially about the love of Jesus and what my response ought to be to His love for me.

Since then my Saviour has led me through many discoveries on my journey. Of course there were trials, but I'm continuing with my confidence in God and trusting in His leading. Through a one-to-one Bible study with a lady from my church, I was learning God cares for me and He helps me in the trials. Every day I'm learning that Jesus will never leave or forsake me. My hope is in Him alone, He died to save me from my sins.

A very dear friend, who is now with the Lord in glory, introduced me to The Faith Mission Convention in Stradbally, County Laois. While

attending this convention, I learned more about the Word of God. It was a wonderful time praising and worshipping God with His people. When I heard about the convention in Bandon, County Cork, I knew I wanted to go, and was blessed by the excellent ministry.

The Lord was burdening me to be involved in praying for the work of The Faith Mission. I enquired about the possibility of starting a Prayer Union (Faith Mission prayer group) in Carlow. With help and guidance from Faith Mission workers and God's guiding hand we now meet to pray for the work in Ireland and further afield. Each time we meet we know God's blessing: we are blessed by His strong presence with us as we look at His Word and bow in the place of prayer, trusting always in His wonderful Name.

*I hear Thy welcome voice  
That calls me, Lord, to Thee,  
For cleansing in Thy precious blood,  
That flowed on Calvary.*

*Though coming weak and vile,  
Thou dost my strength assure;  
Thou dost my vileness fully cleanse,  
Till spotless all, and pure.*

*I am coming, Lord!  
Coming now to Thee!  
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood  
That flowed on Calvary. •*

*Details of various FM Conventions around Britain and Ireland, and of Prayer Unions in your area, are available from District Superintendents (see inside back cover).*

A person's arm and hand are visible on the left, holding a large, bright yellow smiley face emoji sign. The sign has a white border and a pink circle on its left side. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with green grass and trees.

# MY HAPPINESS DIARY

BY RHONDA FALCONER

*'Give me happiness,  
O Lord, for I give  
myself to You.'*

Psalm 86:4

**T**owards the end of 2017 our minister asked me to do a Bible reading at a special prayer service he was holding in our church. Every hymn, reading and activity in that service was to be a prayer. I was privileged to read Psalm 86. I had read it many times before at home but wasn't prepared for how personal it became for me when at the reading lectern! As I read verse 4: *'Give me happiness, O Lord, for I give myself to you'* (NLT), it came from my heart, my whole being, direct to the Lord as a very deeply felt plea.

I had been walking with the Lord for many years, loving and trusting Him while

praying for many changes which didn't seem to be happening. I am ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven and so very grateful. My husband and I didn't have a family, we had done our best to care for his disabled older brother and ageing parents, we had studied and passed university degrees, but careers were difficult. I'd had quite a few health issues myself over the years, we don't have close family living in Scotland and ... on and on one could go. One of our main concerns was that we were running a growing business in a bungalow which still hadn't sold after six years on the market!

So God certainly knew what I meant when I asked Him to give me happiness. It was in His timing that I was asked to read this psalm and it was He who reassured me as I prayed and read that psalm.

I had a new 2018 diary, across the front cover of which I wrote: *'Give me happiness, O Lord, for I give myself to You'*, trusting that God would answer this prayer. Each day of the year I would write 'Thank You Lord' records in the diary. I imagined I would be happy with the sighting of the first snowdrop, the summer sun, the autumn colours, which I love, and the snow-topped

mountains when they came along, as it always delights me to see nature declare the glory of its Creator.

But I am overjoyed! It is now November 2018 and many a time I could write to midnight – there are entries every day. I've received blessings I'd never have asked or imagined (see Ephesians 3.20).

Both little and very big blessings have been poured upon me. A dear friend was very ill, but now she is leading the life of a very active person (praising the Lord as she goes); and others have grown so much in their faith and service.

My husband and I are so happy! We sold our bungalow to a couple who are delighted with it and we bought two amazing properties! One at a property auction (otherwise we couldn't have afforded it) – this is where we now carry out our business. It is beyond our wildest dreams, a spacious and bright building sitting in the picturesque outskirts of Newton Stewart on the side of Penkiln Burn. We have red squirrels, lots of ducks which swim or fly up and down the burn, and we have a herd of fallow deer who visit from time to time. We are blessed indeed and welcome friends old and

new to share our joy. God has been so kind to us.

A few months later we bought a house which is ideal for us. God had it set aside for us – it had been on the market for... six years! We bought it as a furnished house, expecting to like some but not all of the contents. To our delight not even a teaspoon has been discarded. We had a couple of lovely casseroles; the house had the matching pie plate and soufflé dish. We had some nice white (very shiny!) plates and some matching bits and pieces – the house contained matching dishes for this set too. I could go on. Isn't the Lord amazing! Robin and I are settling into a lovely new church family. We are blessed behind and before in this respect!

If you are struggling, please do keep trusting God, who gave His only Son for us. Keep praying, reading and praising Him and never give up! He keeps all His promises. He knows the plans He has for you. Perhaps you too, will begin your very own 'happiness diary'.

Psalm 32.8 (ESV): *'I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you.'* •

# “ON EARTH WE SERVE GOD... IN HEAVEN WE PRAISE HIM”

ANN JUDSON



*Ann Hasseltine Judson was the wife of Adoniram Judson.  
Her journals bear witness to the fact that she walked closely with her Lord.*

**A**nn Hasseltine was born in Massachusetts in 1789, the youngest of five children. Along with her family she attended the local church. She had a happy childhood, becoming a popular young woman who loved to socialise, going to dances and spending time with her friends. Ann spent a lot of time reading religious books and praying, but had no understanding of the gospel. She writes in her journal: “For two or three years I scarcely felt an anxious thought relative to the salvation of my soul”<sup>1</sup>. After becoming more aware of her sin and sensing a yearning for godliness, Ann decided to visit her aunt, who she knew was a godly woman, seeking to understand how one can attain godliness. She writes: “I began to discover a beauty in the way of salvation by Christ. He appeared to be just such a Saviour as I needed. I committed my soul into His hands”<sup>1</sup>. Knowing she was a lost sinner, Ann responded: “This view of myself humbled

me in the dust, melted me into sorrow and contrition for my sins, induced me to lay my soul at the feet of Christ, and plead His merits alone, as the ground of my acceptance”<sup>1</sup>.

At the age of seventeen, she prayed: “Direct me in Thy service and I ask no more. I would not choose my position of work or place of labour. Only let me know Thy will and I will readily comply”<sup>2</sup>. She began teaching in a school when she was eighteen, but her main concern was to tell the children of the Saviour.

In 1810 she met Adoniram Judson, who was invited to her parents’ home for lunch after speaking at their church on mission. Adoniram was captivated by Ann. A month later he proposed marriage. She considered this step, knowing it would take her to a foreign land, and writes: “I am a creature of God and He has an undoubted right to do with me as seemeth

good in His sight. When I am called to face danger, to pass through scenes of terror and distress, He can inspire me with fortitude and enable me to trust in Him... I am quite willing to give up temporal comforts and live a life of hardship and trial, if it be the will of God”<sup>2</sup>.

Adoniram wrote to her parents asking permission to marry Ann: “I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure for a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you?”<sup>2</sup>. On February 5, 1812, at the age of twenty-two, she married Adoniram Judson, and the next day left for India!

After their arrival, they were ordered back to America. Not knowing what to do, they set up a mission in Rangoon, Burma, where the religion was Buddhism. Ann began to study Burmese and found it a language lacking words for God, heaven and eternity. She and Adoniram started to translate the Scriptures into Burmese. Ann began with with Jonah, which particularly appealed to the mind of the Burmese. She also opened a school for girls.

After three years of marriage, Ann gave birth to their son, Roger, who lived for only eight months. Of this painful experience, she writes: “God is the same when He afflicts as when He is merciful, just as worthy of our entire trust and confidence. We do not feel a disposition to murmur, or to enquire of our Sovereign why He has done this”<sup>2</sup>. In 1822 she became very ill and

had to return to America, where she recorded: “Rangoon has been the theatre in which so much of the faithfulness, power and mercy of God has been exhibited”<sup>2</sup>. In her absence, Adoniram finished translating the New Testament.

Ann arrived back in Rangoon in 1823 during the Anglo-Burmese War. Her time with her husband was to be brief: he was thrown into prison, awaiting execution. Now Ann was alone and pregnant, but tirelessly spent hours each day visiting government authorities to plead for her husband’s life. After their daughter, Maria, was born, Ann endured much affliction, both she and the baby becoming ill with smallpox. She writes: “If I ever felt the value and efficacy of prayer, I did at this time. I could not rise from my couch. I could make no effort to secure my husband. I could only plead with that great and powerful Being who has said: ‘*call upon me in the day of trouble*’. God made me feel so powerfully this promise, that I became quite composed, feeling assured that my prayers would be answered”<sup>2</sup>. Despite suffering great brutality, Adoniram survived the long months of imprisonment and was released when the war was over.

Their remaining time together was short. Just eight months after the war ended, on October 24, 1826, Ann died, aged thirty-six. Adoniram had been called by the authorities to carry out official translation work away from their home and only only received the news of his wife’s death a few weeks later. Soon afterwards their daughter, Maria, also died.

Although Ann Judson did not live to see the fulfilment of her dreams for Burma, her husband’s translation of the Bible into Burmese became the foundation stone of Christianity in that country. •

<sup>1</sup>‘My Heart in His Hands’ by Sharon James

<sup>2</sup>‘Great Women of The Christian Faith’ by Edith Deen



BY MERVYN AND  
RACHEL TOMB

WILL YOU BE



*'You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.'*

*'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.'*

Matthew 5:13-14 (ESV)

**I**n the past, Mullingar was known as a traditional market town. Nowadays it is more known for its famous singers and businessmen. Showband singer Joe Dolan came from the Westmeath town, and now a bridge in the locality is named after him. Nearby, the Gigginstown House Stud has been home to many famous racehorses

under the watchful eye of its owner and Ryanair CEO, Michael O'Leary. Being centrally located and within commuting distance from Dublin, the town has grown significantly in recent years. Some of the churches which are in the town are now well located to reach these networks of homes with the gospel message.

We received a request from one church, inviting our team to come and reach out to the homes around the area where their church was situated. So in early June, just as the weather was turning into the unforgettable summer of 2018, Margaret Roberts, FMBC students Brian and Hazel Parker and family, and I arrived on the Grange Estate.

We were able to conduct a door-to-door questionnaire in many homes with varied and interesting responses. Residents were made aware of the various outreach events which were planned and it was thrilling to witness children emerging from every corner, arriving on the green for the afternoon holiday club. Twenty to thirty children attended, with each day being different. Some days we had a few dogs visit our gazebo. On other days, loud verbal disagreements between some of the traveller families on the estate could be heard as we sought to teach the children. We had to constantly return our equipment to the car as some of the sports equipment was very attractive to 'sticky fingers'. Despite all this, there was a real appreciation from some parents for the club, and a good group of children attended each day, hearing and considering the gospel. One large family from the estate attended the barbecue, which provided further conversation on a spiritual level.

For the older children and young teens, we were able to organise some soccer coaching on the nearby sports pitch. It was evident that some young people were being bullied, others faced difficult problems in their home. They just needed someone to show

**SO WHETHER IT  
IS IN A HOUSING  
ESTATE, OR  
A RURAL  
COMMUNITY,  
ARE YOU BEING  
THAT INFLUENCE  
FOR THE  
GOSPEL?**

---

them the love of God. So we patiently organised training and tournaments, giving the local kids something to look forward to in the evenings. In the football coaching interval, refreshments were distributed and someone from the team shared their testimony or a brief thought from the Bible. Awards were promised to tournament winners and it was such an answer to prayer to see these young people coming into the church for the prizes.

We cannot underestimate the impact created upon such people, when living in such an environment. There were trying times, and we had to hold our tongue when some of the children were pestering us at our accommodation. We are asked to be 'salt' and 'light'. We do praise God for the couple who opened up their home as a base for the team.

They have already been salt and light, and their testimony over the years has created the opportunity for a gospel witness in an estate where there is little gospel light.

Later in the summer we were able to go to a housing estate in Portlaoise and conduct a short holiday club in a new area. This was simply because a Christian family lived there and created the opportunity for us to run the club. They knew the neighbours and, through their influence, some of the other children surrounding that green attended the club.

So whether it is in a housing estate, or a rural community, are you being that influence for the gospel? Are you creating the conditions that will enable Faith Mission teams, or other evangelistic groups, to visit with the life-changing message of the gospel? May we all pray for all the efforts this summer where Christ will be shared to the lost people in the UK and Ireland.

Please pray for the counties of Offaly and Westmeath. Presently we have requests from some churches to help them in their outreach and we need workers, called of God to go to the towns, villages and rural areas with the gospel. •

BY ALISTAIR PARK



# CHAOS

*but God is in Control*

**A**s I look back on the carol service in Devon on Saturday 15 December, I marvel at the hand of God in it all. Hatherleigh Market, the venue for the last ten years, had been closed to make way for a housing development. After praying about the service, we felt that the right thing to do was to have it in a different location. We tried to find a big enough venue where there would be ample parking. In the end we decided to try the village hall in Lewdown, where we live.

There were doubts as to whether we would be able to fill the hall and if the local villagers and farmers would come. We asked the children from the local school, where we regularly take assemblies, if they would come and sing. Unfortunately they were already booked that night. However the local brass band agreed to come and play; only one of them was a

Christian, so at least we would have eight unsaved coming along.

Everything was prepared, with the mince pies, cakes, tea and coffee all sorted, when we heard an air ambulance land in the field just next to us. It was now only fifteen minutes to the start of the service. Both ends of the village had been closed because of an accident and no one was getting through. It went through my mind to cancel. All the preparation, all the visiting of the homes, and no one was going to be able to come. One of the Faith Mission supporters went down to speak to the police, explained the situation, and they opened the roads! We were only five minutes late in starting and had over eighty people at the service, including many unsaved who came in from the village. Later we found out that nearly twenty people had been turned back by the police.

This reminded me of the first Christmas and of Joseph not being able to find a room for his wife to give birth, and the concern that must have been to their hearts. It also made me think of the time after the birth of Jesus when the wise men had gone to the palace and King Herod had barbarically commanded that all the young children be killed. The seeming chaos around His birth and early life reveal how Satan was trying his best to get rid of Jesus. Once again I saw that evangelism and the pursuit of seeing people hear the gospel and being saved is a battle. *‘For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places’* (Ephesians 6:12).

Once again  
I saw that  
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It was amazing to see people come through the door and the hall begin to fill. God answered prayer and brought His plans to fruition, bringing people under the sound of His Word. Ten people left with Bibles, others took ‘Ultimate Questions’. One man came to the table where the literature was, waited until everyone else went away from it, took a Bible and put it under his coat, before leaving the hall.

Please pray that God will speak to this man and others as they read the Living Word.

Even in seemingly impossible, chaotic situations, God is in control. We pray God will touch people’s lives for eternity. •



## GALLOWAY BIBLE WEEK

**fn**  
The Faith Mission

 **Tues 28 May - Sun 3 June**  
Tues - Fri 7.30pm, Sat - Sun 3.00pm

 **Newton Stewart FM Centre**

 **Dr Sam Gordon**

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**Ladies Coffee Morning:**  
- Friday 10.30am, with Lynda Bovenizer  
Contact William and Carolyn Harrison for more details



## LADIES RETREAT WEEKEND

**fn**  
The Faith Mission

 **Fri 26 - Sun 28 April**

 **Newton Stewart FM Centre**

 **Hilda Lyons**

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Contact William and Carolyn Harrison for more details

## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Better Than We Dreamed*



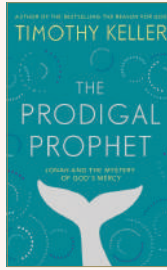
Simona Gorton

Publisher: Christian Focus

Price: £9.99

From social star of Chicago in the 1930s to a Wycliffe missionary in South America and the USSR, Elaine Townsend's life was far from boring. Meet the woman who became the wife of Cameron Townsend (founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators), and discover how a life can be filled with adventure, by simply saying 'yes' to God.

### *The Prodigal Prophet*



Timothy Keller

Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton

Price: £12.99

Timothy Keller reveals the hidden depths within the book of Jonah. Keller makes the case that Jonah was one of the worst prophets in the entire Bible. And yet there are unmistakably clear connections between Jonah, the prodigal son, and Jesus.

### *Celestial Fire*



Maureen Wise

Publisher: Bryntirion Press

Price: £9.99

In the minds of many people in the UK and USA, true revival is something that happened many years ago. Maureen Wise puts the record straight, with personal memories and testimonies of how the Lord worked in Moldova, bringing revival even while persecution and privation were all around. Maureen's earlier book 'With God All Things Are Possible' was blessed to many people.

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# ec19

## EDINBURGH CONVENTION



SUNDAY 30 JUNE  
- FRIDAY 5 JULY



FAITH MISSION  
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### SPEAKERS



CHRISTOPHER ASH



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