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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



THE NEARNESS OF GOD IS MY GOOD

» FAITH THAT ENABLES OTHERS

» HUMBLING THAT GIVES US HOPE

» A GAP-FILLER FOR GOD

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

Throughout the past year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Mission's normal patterns of ministry have been severely restricted, and the work of the Bible College, Bookshops, Cafés, and Camp and Conference Centres have also experienced the detrimental impact of this.

This was, and still is, both frustrating and concerning, and we look forward to a time when it will be possible to return to a regular programme of activities. However, reminding us of the need to be adaptable and make the best use of our circumstances, the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:22: *'I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.'* Our members have known God's help as they have adapted to the new circumstances and, looking back, I am amazed at the many gospel and ministry opportunities which have been possible.

Over the past months, Bible rallies, one-to-one Bible studies and gospel missions have all been conducted effectively online. Blogs and video posts using social media have been used widely. Youth meetings, women's ministry, school assemblies, children's camps and clubs have all taken place by virtual meeting forums. Prayer Unions are being held by video and conference calls. When coronavirus restrictions eased, drive-in services, open-air meetings, leaflet drops, and socially distanced doorstep evangelism were also possible in some areas. These are some of the means that Mission personnel have been using to share the love of Christ and keep in touch with people. We rejoice to know of some who have trusted the Lord, and others in whose hearts and lives God is at work.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled that the Lord has made it possible for ministry using a mobile exhibition unit to be developed. This will primarily be used in Northern Ireland for drive-in services, missions, local shows and special outreach events. Andrew and Carolyn Maybin will lead this ministry using an articulated lorry with a specially adapted trailer unit, which has been anonymously made available for this purpose. The aim is to have the unit ready for use later this spring and Andrew and Carolyn will appreciate prayer as they work towards this goal.

At the time of writing, the decision has just been taken that our Bangor Convention will once again need to be held via an online forum. However, we trust that before the Edinburgh Convention is due to take place later in the summer, restrictions will have eased permitting us to hold small, socially distanced meetings, which we would also broadcast live online.

At the end of January, having given thirty-four years of dedicated service, John Matthews retired from the Mission. John spent twenty of those years on the Bible College staff and for the last fourteen years has been the general manager of our literature ministry. We thank John for his fellowship in gospel ministry and wish him and Hazel God's richest blessing in retirement. Please uphold Stephen Dundas, who takes over from John as the general manager of our Bookshops in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

We deeply appreciate your fellowship and prayer support, and trust you enjoy reading this edition of the magazine. •

| *John Townsend, General Director*



THE
Nearness
OF
God
IS MY GOOD

Psalm 73:28

BY PAUL CROWE

In Psalm 73, the psalmist Asaph struggles with the problem of why wicked people seem to prosper as compared with the righteous. It was only when he goes into the temple that he understands what is to be the final destiny of the wicked (vv.16-17).

It is good for me to draw near to God.

In verse 25 of this psalm, we notice that we are to draw near to God with a desire in our heart. Matthew Henry said the following: “Our

desires must not only be offered up to God, but they must all terminate in Him, desiring nothing more than God, but still more and more of Him”. We need to remember that when we are drawing near to God, we are drawing near to the throne of grace: *‘Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need’* (Hebrews 4:16). James in his epistle reminds us of the affirmation we have when we draw near to God: *‘He will draw near to you’* (James 4:8).

In the New American Standard Bible, the footnote for Psalm 73:28 reads: “the nearness of God is my good.” C H Spurgeon describes it in the following way: “The greater our nearness to God, the less we are affected by the attractions and distractions of the earth. Access into the holy place is a great privilege, and a cure for a multitude of ills. It is good for all saints, it is good for me in particular; it is always good, and always will be good for me to approach the greatest good, the source of all good, even God Himself”.

The psalmist Asaph continues in verse 28 with the words: ‘*I have made the Lord God my refuge*’ (NKJV). He is saying: “I have trusted my soul unto God and made my peace with Him by the blood of the cross” (Colossians 1:20). It implies spending time in fellowship and communion with the Lord, to walk in dependence upon Him as the great burden bearer. Asaph re-asserts in personal terms how wonderful it is to be within God’s saving mercy and grace. He has found his lasting refuge, greatly values it, and therefore desires to tell others of all that God has done.

Spurgeon writes: “God’s ways are more admired the more they are known. He who is ready to believe the goodness of God shall always see fresh goodness to believe in, and he who is willing to declare the works of God shall never be silent for lack of wonders to declare.” We as the Lord’s people have much to declare. In Psalm 107:1-3 we read: ‘*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.*’

The hymn writer George Wade Robinson paints a beautiful picture of the works of God in creation as penned in his hymn:

*Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen;
Birds with gladder songs o’er flow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine.*

*Things that once were wild alarms
Cannot now disturb my rest;
Closed in everlasting arms,
Pillowed on His loving breast.
O, to lie forever here,
Doubt and care and self resign,
While He whispers in my ear,
I am His, and He is mine.*

We declare His works in redemption through His redeeming love, which is a forgiving and an eternal love. We are to declare His work of grace in our own lives. *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast*’ (Ephesians 2:8).

Let’s not forget we portray the works of God in our daily life as we live out what He has done in us. Every day we are engaged in a spiritual battle, but we declare to the enemy of our souls (the devil) what the Lord has done for us (Ephesians 1:7). We take up the Word of God and testify to the truth that it is only through the blood of Christ that we have been brought near to God (Ephesians 2:13). •

Paul and his wife, Elizabeth, are based in Aberdeen and oversee Faith Mission work in the north-east of Scotland.



BY
HOWELL JONES

GET MOVING



INTRODUCING THE
MINOR PROPHETS

Some time has now passed and the captivity is over. After seventy years in Babylon the people have been returned to their promised land. They have started rebuilding the temple and re-establishing the nation. This is the background of both Haggai and Zechariah, which cover the same brief time scale.

Haggai presents a scene where the early, enthusiastic rebuilding of the temple has come to a halt. The people are too busy with their own concerns and the house of God lies in ruins. God challenges them to “get on with it,” promising blessing to the leaders, Joshua and Zerubbabel. The purpose is to re-energize the people. It is a short, sharp, but resourceful, rallying call.

Zechariah on the other hand is concerned

with the same scenario – superficial complacency hiding the real state of affairs – but he approaches it differently. The book contains a series of apocalyptic visions (pictures with prophetic meaning) beginning with a survey of a seemingly peaceful land, but where Jerusalem is in ruins. Subsequent pictures depict the restoration that will take place. Central to this new development is the emergence of Joshua the high priest, rescued from Satan’s clutches, cleansed and re-clothed in righteousness. The focus is on the future and on leadership. The term ‘Branch’ in Zechariah 6:12 is referring to significant leadership and introduced as an important concept.

That positive note continues with the presentation of a lampstand with arms

branching out giving forth light, and each fed by pipes through which oil flows in abundance. The two olive trees ensure the continual supply of oil and resource for the maintenance of the light. It is a testimony and a declaration that: “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord’ (Zechariah 4:6).

In chapters seven and eight, that scenario is revisited but in a different way – by offering two perspectives. In the past, despite some apparent activity, rebuilding was superficial and unsatisfactory. Righteousness was not practised, it was tokenism. But in the future God will restore, He will bring His people back. They should be strong and continue with rebuilding the temple.

Finally, the book has two oracles – one painting a dismal picture of neglect and rejection of the King (riding on a colt), and the other declaring that God will be vindicated. It shows the divine perspective with strong and positive pictures. Far from being a disaster, Jerusalem will be an immovable rock. A spirit of grace and supplication will fall on the city that ‘kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her’ (Matthew 23:37), and ‘in that day a fountain shall be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness’ (Zechariah 13:1). There will be a process of refining and testing; they will be called and will affirm that “the Lord is our God”. Jerusalem will resist all the attacks of the nations. From it will ‘flow living water’ and ‘the Lord will be King over all the earth; in that day it shall be – the LORD is one and his name one’ (Zechariah 14:9).

The outcome will be a great festival – the Feast of Tabernacles – so great and wonderful that others will want to be allowed to participate in it. It will be joyful and it will be holy with

the inscription ‘Holiness unto the LORD’ as its trademark. ‘In that day “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts’ (Zechariah 14:20-21). It is a vision of a glorious future.

What can be said about these two books and their relevance for us? It does not need too much imagination to identify our state of complacency with the things of God neglected, second in priority to our own concerns, covered with a lulling sense of ‘peace, when there is no peace’ and people’s hands becoming slack. But the two books represent two complementary approaches. Where Haggai is concerned, it is a matter of exhortation, when the people are told in no uncertain terms to get on with it and to complete the work that God had commissioned them to do. As a result they responded and got going. For how long we cannot really say.

In Zechariah’s case however, it is a matter of insight and seeing, and it is that vision that provides the motivation. These two aspects are classical examples of the way God motivates His people. He exhorts His people and continually urges them to move on. At the same time, an understanding of the will of God helps to motivate the believer to continue working, to pray ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven’ (Matthew 6:10), and to persevere with confidence. •



Howell is a former lecturer and is now involved in informal Bible teaching in various contexts. He leads the Bearsden and Milngavie Prayer Union.

BY H E GOVAN

JEHOVAH MAKKEH

יהוה מכה

‘I AM THE LORD WHO STRIKES’

Ezekiel 7:9

What a new discovery of God when, beyond the ‘second causes’ we learn to discern His hand in the circumstances of life. As a result, the world around us seems transformed and our spirits are transformed by this new outlook.

One chapter in scripture which especially highlights God’s control in difficulties is Deuteronomy 28. This could be called the chapter of horrors and could make us shudder! Matthew Henry tells of a man who after reading this chapter savagely tore that page out of his Bible. The complete chapter

describes conditions needed for blessing: blessing for obedience, curse for disobedience; and while the first section only takes fourteen verses, the curse is described in the fifty-four that follow. It is as if stern warning was more necessary and effective in character formation than sweet encouragement. As far as faithless Israel was concerned, the threats of judgement as detailed in this chapter did come to pass. The wrath of the Lamb, the judgement of God, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, are treated as superstitious. The love of God is interpreted to the obscurity of moral distinctions, assuring the unrighteous that all is well.

One of the names of God in scripture is Jehovah Makkeh – *'the Lord that smiteth'* (Ezekiel 7:9 AV) or *'the Lord that strikes'*. It is used frequently of His acts among men. In Egypt He is represented as putting forth His hand smiting the land with wonders and going through the land, smiting all the firstborn. Assyria and Babylon were also smitten and the last word of the Old Testament is of a threat to come bringing a curse (Malachi 4:6).

God's children are not exempt. The frail unbelief of the wilderness generation at Kadesh Barnea were told of coming pestilence and disinherited from Canaan (Numbers 14:12) and in Isaiah 1:5 we read stubborn rebellion would bring further punishment. Even David found sin resulting in inescapable nemesis. History establishes the fact of the operation of retribution. The psalmist cried: *'You who love the Lord, hate evil'* (Psalm 97:10). The love of God essentially includes hatred of evil. Our truest friend is most faithful to us regarding our faults; the wise parent does not refrain from discipline.

If the love of God was His only attribute, we would see no judge; but this is a sin-corrupted world and the wrath of God is His holy love frowning upon wrong. Sixty times in the book of Ezekiel we read *'they shall know that I am Jehovah'* – they would know Him as sanctifier (20:12), covenant maker (16:62), restorer (20:42, 22:16), judge (39:7), and as the cause of their captivity (39:28).

The prophet introduces the point where he felt it vital for His people to recognise the

fact of God as their judge. He was among the outlanders in Babylonia, having been carried captive some six years before. Jerusalem was still standing, Zedekiah was still on the throne and the holy house and altar still not desecrated, but Jeremiah and Ezekiel recognised captivity to be the judgement of God upon the people for their sins. They reckoned this would last for two generations of needed correction. But this idea was not accepted and prophets in Judah were predicting a speedy restoration. These hopes had to be dashed though before the divine intention could be fulfilled. A recognition of being judged by God and acceptance that calamity had come through His wisdom and justice, brought an understanding of *'Jehovah the Smiter'*. Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar may have been the 'axe inflicting the blow' but the mighty hand of Jehovah their God was wielding it! The cause was their unfaithfulness to His covenant and the purpose was to recall them to restore their relationship with Him.

We are meant to be the better for all the difficulties and sufferings through which we pass. To feel suffering keenly is not wrong, but we need faith above feeling.

If we regard inflictions as mere misfortunes, or attribute them to 'bad luck', we fail to derive from them the benefit God intends. Whether we face sickness, bereavement, disappointment of earthly hope, unfaithfulness of friends, or loss of prosperity, there is always a spiritual meaning for us to discern. When we fail to do so, our moral development is lost. We are meant to be the better for all the difficulties and sufferings through which we pass.

The classic passage on this subject in the New Testament is Hebrews 12:1-13. The writer points out that under chastisement, we could go one way or another. It is possible to 'despise'

the Lord's chastening; to just grin and bear it; to ignore or deny any divine intervention in the situation we face. We may look at the second causes only and blame wherever the trouble seems to have come from. The other possibility is 'fainting' under the blow; losing heart, faith and hope; abandoning the struggle for righteousness; harbouring hardness toward the divine love and wisdom which has permitted the suffering. It certainly is not expected for us to be hard and senseless of this and make ourselves 'steel' to bear it. To feel suffering keenly is not wrong, but we need faith above feeling. The example is given of a little boy saying of medicine: "It's good, but doesn't taste good."

The question is how we are to respond when smitten? We need to *'submit to the Father of our spirits and live'* (Hebrews 12:9), and recognise His hand, earnestly seeking to discern His purpose and meaning. When we are strongly

opposed (with *'righteous'* indignation) to the human instrument, we will miss the lesson God designs for us. Questioning and arguing against His wisdom will also rob us of purposed blessing. Our loving Father is in no means careless, but compounds His medicines discriminately, directly adding burden to our strength. There are certainly *'peaceable fruits of righteousness'* as a result, springing from the affliction.

We must consider, the One who was 'Prince' of sufferers. *'To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings'* (Hebrews 2:10), none of us have known suffering as He knew, and for our sake. Considering Him, who *'learned obedience by the things which He suffered'* (Hebrews 5:8), we may ask what we might learn from our suffering. The smiting will either be fought or new grace imparted to bear it. •

| *Adapted from the writings of HE Govan.*

GC21 EDINBURGH CONVENTION LIVE

 SUNDAY 27 JUNE - FRIDAY 2 JULY

This summer, we plan to hold a week of meetings in **The Faith Mission Centre in Edinburgh** which will be livestreamed — accessible wherever you are

Depending on the Scottish government restrictions at the time, we trust it will be possible to allow some to attend these meetings. Further details and a seat booking system will be available nearer the time via our website: faithmission.org

WE REGRET THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION THIS YEAR



BY SANDY ROGER

A hand holding a lit lantern in a field at dusk. The lantern is lit, casting a warm glow. The background is a dark, blue sky with some foliage visible in the foreground.

Faith

that enables others

When I worked for the Scottish Prison Service I was often dealing with men who had reached rock bottom; they looked to me to provide the faith that they were so consciously lacking. If only they had known how weak my faith sometimes was in those situations. The same was true in the parish ministry dealing with people who never darkened the door of a church, yet looked to me to provide

something which they didn't have. They seemed to assume that my faith could fill in the gap and bring them to a better place.

But leaving aside prison and parish, isn't that the sort of encounter we all have as we rub shoulders with folk in daily life? The Covid pandemic has brought to the surface in people's lives the need for something to hold on to, and in many cases that 'something' is a 'Someone'.

There is a name for this kind of experience and it is surprisingly common in the pages of the New Testament. It is the principle of vicarious faith, meaning something done for and instead of another; hence the word 'vicar'. If you want it in a concrete example from the ministry of Jesus, then it is there in the story of the paralysed man (Mark 2:1-12). This is the famous miracle of the man who came in through the roof with his back on his bed, and went out the door with his bed on his back. The vicarious element is *'when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic...'* (2:5). Jesus was impressed by the faith of the four.

VICARIOUS FAITH IN ACTION

The reason we pray for others, the reason we reach out a helping hand, and the reason we feel so wretched when we let people down, is because we know that they are depending on us for support which they cannot find anywhere else. It is a terrible burden of responsibility to carry the paralysed to Jesus, and can shake our own faith to the core in the process.

Think of some of the incidents mentioned in the Bible and ask yourself whose faith was responsible for the healing – to start with it wasn't the person needing the Master's touch.

- The Roman centurion who told Jesus, *'Lord, my servant is lying paralysed at home'* (Matthew 8:5-13). He wasn't asking for himself.
- The royal official who pleaded with Jesus, *'Come before my son dies'* (John 4:46-54).
- The father of the demon possessed boy whose faith Jesus challenged by telling him, *'If you can believe, all things are possible'* (Mark 9:14-29).

- The woman from the district of Tyre and Sidon who threw herself at Christ's feet and would not take no for an answer and Jesus declaring, *'Woman, great is your faith; be it done for you as you desire'* (Matthew 15:23-28).
- The instructions given by James for how elders should pray for the sick, *'Let them pray over the sick person... and their prayer of faith shall save'* (James 5:15).

VICARIOUS FAITH AT WORK

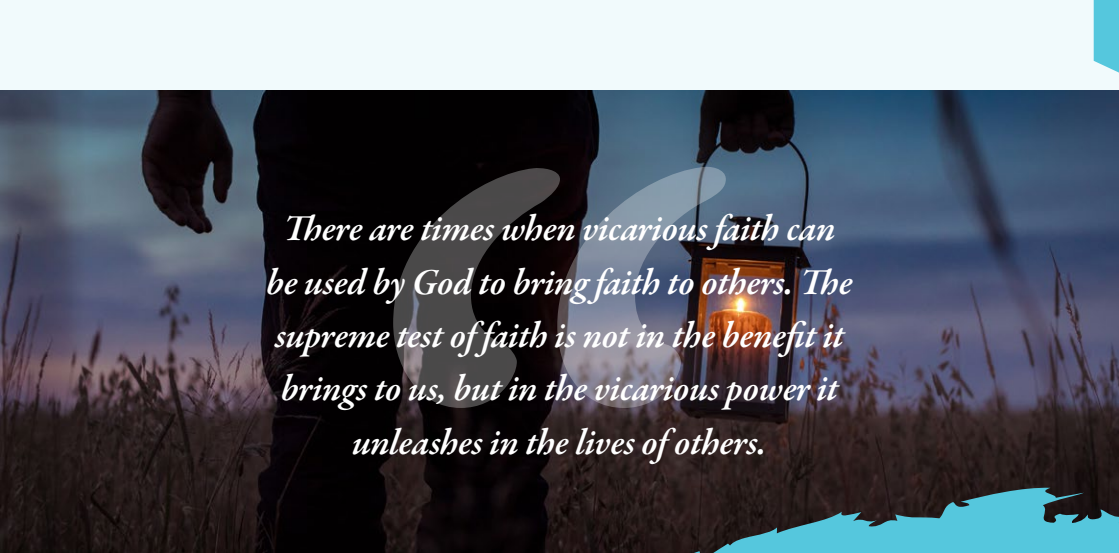
There is no doubt that personal faith brings the assurance of personal salvation to all who are enabled to put their trust in Christ alone. Ultimately we are each responsible for our own reliance on Christ. But there are times when vicarious faith can be used by God to bring faith to others. The supreme test of faith is not in the benefit it brings to us, but in the vicarious power it unleashes in the lives of others.

It calls for identification.

In the examples given it is clear that there was a real identification of the person asking and the person being asked for. "If you can do anything for us" is the keynote. If people see enough of Christ in us to recognise us as believers, then the least we can do is show a willingness to respond to their trust by identifying with them in their need and bringing them to Christ.

It involves co-operation.

In the case of the paralysed man, if ever he was to reach Jesus then his four friends knew that he would have to be brought. The dead weight of a bed-ridden man was too much for one and a struggle even for two; it needed all four.



There are times when vicarious faith can be used by God to bring faith to others. The supreme test of faith is not in the benefit it brings to us, but in the vicarious power it unleashes in the lives of others.

Jesus in His teachings endorsed this principle of vicarious faith when He explained that, *‘If two of you shall agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I among them’* (Matthew 18:19). The Greek word for agree means: ‘to sound together like the answering notes in musical instruments’. Orchestras produce their finest music when all are playing their part.

It needs perseverance.

As the four men brought their helpless, bed-ridden friend to Jesus, there were several discouragements that happened along the way. There was the hassle of getting him through the crowds, the problem of accessing the roof, and the risk of being thought fools and fanatics by all who witnessed the unusual entry of the paralytic. But they never gave up; they persevered to the extent that *‘when Jesus saw their faith’* He forgave and then healed the paralysed man.

Those prisoners and parishioners I mentioned at the start would often say, “Oh, I wish I had your faith”. Unshaken by their flattering

praise, my response was always the same: “It’s not my faith you need, it’s my Jesus!” In the final analysis it is not somebody else’s faith that initiates Christ working in our lives, but a personal trust in Him for ourselves: *‘for without faith it is impossible to please God, and whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him’* (Hebrews 11:6). We have no reason to doubt that all those who were brought initially to Jesus by the faith of others came to find in Christ all that they needed by way of healing or forgiveness for themselves. That should encourage us to keep on bringing folk, either through prayer or literally, to the Lord.

The only thing I don’t recommend is that we go around dismantling roofs in order to do so! Although it is worth remembering that the roof had to be fixed and paid for and presumably the bill was paid by the four friends. Putting vicarious faith into action costs! ●

Sandy lives in Edinburgh and is a former Faith Mission Bible College principal and Church of Scotland minister. He is a visiting lecturer at our Bible College.

Humbling That Gives Us Hope

A quick internet search of ‘Christian revivals’ will bring thrilling accounts: times of immense spiritual blessing, stories of prayer meetings that lasted months, buildings physically shaken by the presence of God, streets full of people brought to their knees in sudden awareness of sin, and thousands of souls converted in days. How we rejoice! But also, we yearn. If then, why not now? If them, why not us? If there, why not here?

In considering revival history and scripture, I have been both challenged and excited. In 2 Chronicles 7:14 we read: *‘If my people, who are called*

by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. It strikes me here, and in numerous accounts of revivals in history, that it is through our own **humbling** that we will grow in our realisation of revival **hope**.

Humbling

How often, when we think of the need for revival, do we direct our thoughts ‘out there’ – at the wickedness of those around us? But this passage is a stark reminder that revival starts with God’s people – with us. To see the desperate need for a move of





God, we need look no further than the walls of our own churches, even our own hearts.

Have we become cold towards God? Are we more influenced by the ways of the world than the things of His Kingdom? Are we lazy in dealing with sin or divisions with fellow believers? It is this which we must first address with God's help. Revival starts from within.

Hope

Prayer. So often we want to skip past that part of the revival story. We want the thrilling conversions, the uplifting worship, but not the long and sometimes laborious and unseen prayer. Yet it is there every time: the precursor to revival has been the heartfelt, relentless and consistent prayers of God's people.

In the Hebridean Revival of 1949-52, it was two old ladies praying in their cottage and another small group of men at the other end of the island greatly burdened to pray for an outpouring.

Do we struggle to pray? Then surely our first request to God must be a revival in our own hearts of love towards Him. It is He alone who will

bring revival. Revival does not have a particular formula or preacher. It is all of God and His sovereign will. We must resist the urge to make it about us. He is the One able to do *'immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine'*.

So, it is in seeking after more of God and His glory that we pave the way for revival to come. Nothing in our actions will guarantee it; but we are compelled as God's people to look to God rather than so many other distractions, to seek out time alone with Him in prayer, to know the joy of approaching Him as our Heavenly Father rather than as a duty of ticking off a quiet time every day. Surely then we will see our own sin and hate it, and see the desperate state of the lost and cry out urgently for their salvation. We will not be content with a lukewarm life of church attendance mingled with secret sin but will surrender ourselves as instruments to be used for God's glory, content with however He sees fit to work.

'Lord, will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you?' (Psalm 85:6). •

This article was written as an assignment by one of our Bible College students, as part of their studies on Prayer and Revival.

Suggested reading: Revival by Martyn Lloyd-Jones

DO WE STRUGGLE TO PRAY? THEN SURELY OUR FIRST REQUEST TO GOD MUST BE A REVIVAL IN OUR OWN HEARTS OF LOVE TOWARDS HIM.



The Invitation



COME UNTO ME

BY ANNA ANDERSON

There is no doubt that this has been a strange year for all of us and for some a very difficult one. The experience of going through a pandemic with many restrictions has left us confused at times. In the midst of this, many have unexpectedly been met with grief, some even being unable to see their loved one before they passed away. Young parents have found it a challenge trying to explain to their children why they can't visit grandparents or play with their friends and making 'church' happen in their homes. Jesus forewarned us

that while we are here on this earth we are to expect suffering and trials: *'In the world you will have tribulation'* (John 16:33). In speaking to His disciples He says: *'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you... Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid'* (John 14:27). When we feel crushed by our struggles and heartaches, Peter urges us to: *'Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you'* (1 Peter 5:7).

The application of scripture to our own hearts can sometimes be difficult. We can quote these

verses to others but when we find ourselves facing anxiety, sadness, distress and hurt we struggle to claim the words of Jesus and apply them to our situation. None of us finds this process easy. To obtain help, our first port of call ought to be in prayer to our God; but sometimes for us it is the last.

A few months ago, while I was pouring out my troubles and burdens to God in prayer, He spoke from His Word to my heart. *'Come unto me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'* (Matthew 11:28). Like everyone, I knew this verse off by heart and quoted it many times to others who were going through struggles. But the Lord let it jump out of the pages at me and I needed to listen, heed it, and apply it to my heart.

Jesus tells us to *'Come'* – it's an invitation to us as His children. When we receive an invitation to a wedding, we usually have to send a reply stating: "Yes, we can come," or "No, we are unable to come." Jesus is inviting us to come to Him with our burdens, our struggles and our anxieties. He tells us in a very effortless way to simply, *'Come to Me'*. We come to the One who is able to do all things, who hears the heart's cries, who sees the pain and the darkness. We don't need to say anything, just *'Come'* and sit in His presence.

The invitation is to the *'burdened and heavy laden'* or as some versions have it, *'weary and burdened'*. In Matthew chapter eleven Jesus was speaking to the ordinary common people who were laden down with traditions, ordinances that the Pharisees and scribes had imposed on them. For the average, work-a-day folk to hear Jesus say these words would have been music to their ears. In the next verse He says, *'take my yoke upon you'*. His yoke of commands were much easier and lighter to bear. Matthew Henry sums it up: "It is

a yoke lined with love." By surrendering to Christ's yoke the people would know a release from harrowing burdens and obtain freedom by following His commands. The religious leaders could not give this rest, only Jesus could bring the balance. The emphasis is on *'I'* – He does what no one else can do. Jesus is inviting the burdened, the weary and the tired to come with what is weighing them down and His promise is, *'I will give you rest'*.

Rest is a wonderful thing after a hard day's work – you want to get home and put your feet up. But the rest Jesus offers has a much more significant meaning with a wider interpretation. We read that when God had finished His creation, *'He rested'*: nothing needed to be added or taken away, it looked good. In our distress, our eyes ought to look to our Creator who can assure us, *'...that for those who love God all things work together for good'* (Romans 8:28). Knowing this gives us confidence to do what the psalmist did, *'Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you'* (Psalm 55:22), and in return know *'rest'* because we have *'cast'* or *'thrown'* our burden at our Lord's feet. Habakkuk knew this experience, *'...that I might rest in the day of trouble'* (Habakkuk 3:16). He knew there was trouble ahead but his soul was at peace, quietly resting, trusting in his God.

Elisabeth Elliot said: "All the weight of God's promises sometimes seems to be only a feather and the weight of my fears as lead." Jesus invites us to come: that requires us to commit or surrender to Him. We wait on Him in stillness, *'Be still and know that I am God'* (Psalm 46:10), and in that quietness, all our anxious thoughts are silenced.

"O Lord, when I feel overwhelmed by my circumstances, help me to come to you, the One who enables me to *'rest'*." •



REMINISCING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Testimony of Bert Menary (Lt Col (Retd))

Psalm 90 was written as a prayer by Moses and is the oldest of the psalms. In it God's eternal nature is contrasted with people's frailty. Our time on earth is limited, and we are to use it wisely, not living for the moment, but with our eternal home in mind. God is not limited by time: *'For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by'* (v.4). On life's journey of faith we see the timelessness of His love, and forgiveness for our shortcomings and mistakes, yet He remains faithful. This should encourage people to come to Him, and feel that each one of us do matter to Him as we look over the seventy or more years granted to us.

Psalms 90 is often read at funerals as an introduction to a tribute being given about the life and the influence of the deceased. As I look back over my ninety years let me share some special moments of God's timeless companionship and His faithfulness.

As a young boy I grew up in a churchgoing family. With my younger brother and sister we went from our country home to the nearby Presbyterian Church Sunday school in the morning, and in the afternoon. We walked three miles to church in the nearest village of Beragh, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. In 1942 two lady students from the Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh came to our village to conduct a two-week mission as part of their summer assignment. A tent to hold about fifty people was erected in a field at the edge of the village, and there they held an evangelical meeting each evening. As a boy of thirteen I went along and heard a very clear message challenging me to become not just a Sunday school attender, but to give my young life to Christ. One evening I shared my conviction with one of the students, who knelt beside me on the grass at the front bench seat. Her name was Miss Livingstone, and her companion was Miss Cameron. Seventy-eight years later I can still remember it well – it

was 14 July, 1942. That two-week mission was not very successful: a report in the magazine described it as a disappointing mission for the only recorded decision was a young boy of thirteen years of age. No mention of potential.

I started attending a local prayer meeting, which was a great encouragement. I went to grammar school until I did my finals, which was followed by work in London where I met the Salvation Army that I had never seen or knew anything about. Attending Wealdstone Corps brought a deep spiritual satisfaction, and within eighteen months I responded to God's call and entered the William Booth Training College. While there I was introduced to a fellow cadet, named Bronwen. Ordained in 1951, we were married in 1953, and from then on we shared in Christian ministry wherever the Salvation Army appointed us.

In 1962 we were appointed to Bangor in Northern Ireland. Every year in Bangor a missionary convention is held to which the church leaders welcome the delegates. Just imagine the thrill I had when a lady with her husband now on homeland leave from India came to me and said: "You may not remember me, but I was Miss Livingstone that knelt beside you in that tent mission in Beragh." The little boy she had led to Christ twenty years before was now serving the Lord. Was the mission in Beragh a failure?

In 1972 we arrived at Staplehill Corps in Bristol, which turned out to be our final church appointment. During our four years there we were blessed to see over a hundred people becoming Christians and then church members. In our final seventeen years leading up to our retirement, we were appointed divisional leaders for all of Ireland. While there I discovered that Miss Cameron, who ministered to me in the Beragh mission, was now living

in Portstewart. After a possible forty years we were so delighted to make this contact, and recall that two-week mission in Beragh. I was able to say "thank you" for the ministry that was the beginning of a life accompanied by a timeless, loving God, indicating that the results were not so disappointing: *'From everlasting to everlasting you are God'* (v.2).

Our final appointment was leadership of what was then the East London Division, stretching from Hoxton to Harwich, with fifty Salvation Army churches. God granted us the joy and blessing to see many coming to Christ – "to God be the glory". Throughout my life and with God's help I have taken hold of the opportunities He has given me. Just last month the daughter of a former soldier contacted me. She is reading my notes on the selected psalms along with her mother's Bible and being spiritually influenced.

It all began on 14 July, 1942, when a boy of thirteen responded to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in a tent mission. We should never underestimate the value of child conversion, especially when they have reached the years of understanding, which will vary from child to child. Think of that moment when you encouraged a young person to keep going, and to let their little light shine. That's where our church members come from, our candidates for full-time church ministry, for Christian leadership, and witness in the church and in our society.

While reading Psalm 90 I was reminded of the companionship of a never-changing loving God who, for me, throughout a lifetime of years, was always there to guide, to inspire, and to forgive the mistakes.

'May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands' (v.17). •

The Main Spoke in My Wheel: *Mary Livingstone*



Mary Livingstone was born on 12 April, 1821, in the Northern Cape province of South Africa, the first child of Robert and Mary Moffat. Her mother dedicated her new-born daughter, as she did with all her children, to be a missionary to the dark continent of Africa.

Young Mary spent most of her early life in Kuruman at her parents' mission station, accompanying them on many journeys deep into the jungle. Along with her younger sister, Ann, she was sent to the Wesleyan School over five hundred miles away from Kuruman. At the age of eighteen Mary came to Britain with her parents, staying for five years. It was in London that the first meeting occurred between David Livingstone and Mary's father. Livingstone was planning to go to China, but after hearing Robert Moffat speak of the great need in Africa, he decided that is where he should go.

Mary returned to Kuruman to teach in the school and it was here she and Livingstone met. While recuperating from his adventure with a lion, David fell in love with Mary. It was not long before they were engaged; but he soon had to leave for his station over two

hundred miles away. He wrote to her: "My dearest, farewell. Let your affection be towards Him much more than towards me." In January 1845 they were married in the mission church in Kuruman built by her father.

The young couple settled amongst the Bechuanas and life soon became busy, with Mary teaching and her husband giving pastoral and medical help. This was the first of three missionary stations they would work from, eventually settling at Kolobeng in modern day Botswana. Having to move so much must have been difficult for Mary. On one of these moves she was pregnant with their second child and joined her husband later. Holding her sick firstborn, Robert, in her arms she made the journey by ox wagon. On seeing a flooded river that needed to be crossed, she burst into tears. Having come through very dense regions amongst warring tribes, now crossing this river with the water moving so unsteadily filled her with fear.

On arrival at Kolobeng, they lived in a dry and dusty hut while David built a new home. Like her mother, she made her own candles, soap, ground her meal and baked her bread in ant mud covered with hot ash. When there was

no meat she learned to roast locusts, to broil frogs and caterpillars. Daily life was hard, rising at dawn with family prayers, breakfast, schooling, then ploughing and sowing until midday. After a few hours rest, Mary would walk into the village to hold an infant school for eighty to a hundred, with men, women and children all being present. In April 1849, when their third child, Thomas, was born, David was already planning another trip. Mary was often left alone while David went on his expeditions, causing her to endure much hardship. When he arranged a second Kalahari trek, she was reluctant to remain at Kolobeng. They set off in the ox wagon, eventually arriving at Lake Ngami. Unfortunately they were overwhelmed by mosquitoes so badly that every square inch of their bodies was bitten. With Mary now seven months pregnant, the trek was abandoned and the laborious journey back home was exhausting.

A baby girl, Elizabeth, was born, but sadly died six weeks later. Weakened by the trip to the lake and suffering from an infection, Mary suffered a temporary paralysis on the right side of her face. So David took her and the children to stay with her mother to recuperate, while he set off on another expedition. Livingstone put his missionary service above comfort, home and family, which caused a dispute between him and the Moffats.

Mary gave birth to their fifth child, William, in 1851 and was again afflicted with partial paralysis. Reluctantly she set off for Scotland, taking her four children with her to stay with David's parents. It was a sad parting for all. After a four-year separation, Livingstone returned to England, having made such discoveries that the map of Africa had to be redrawn. He was applauded everywhere he went, causing Mary to forget her months

of terrible anxiety and her many sacrifices. The Livingstones did not care for all this attention and announced, at a dinner held in David's honour, that they were returning to Africa. In a speech he praised his wife saying: "She has always been the main spoke in my wheel." Although they spent much time apart as a couple, they were appreciably united and thoroughly understood each other.

On March 10, 1858, they sailed for Africa with their youngest son. On the journey Mary became very ill and discovered she was pregnant. Not long after giving birth to a daughter, Anna Mary, she travelled back to Scotland to be with her other children. At this time her letters to her husband show she was going through a period of deep spiritual darkness, with some suggesting she was questioning her Christian faith.

Finally she sailed back to meet David on the Zambesi estuary, arriving on February 1, 1862. He was desperately anxious to get his wife away from the fever-ridden coast and up to higher ground, but she became afflicted with a sudden illness. He never left her side, kneeling by her bedside, weeping like a child. On April 21 she went into a coma and six days later she was gone. David wrote in his journal: "I loved her when I married her, and the longer I lived with her, I loved her the more."

Mary wrote very little, so we only catch a glimpse of some of her struggles from her husband's correspondence. One wonders if he really knew about all the heartaches she faced. Her voice is quiet on all her difficulties; perhaps she knew when she married Livingstone that this was what her life would be like. She may be overshadowed by her famous husband, but we can learn much from her steady, quiet, unpretentious life. •

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I NEVER WILL CEASE TO PRAISE HIM

Testimony of Joan Rogers

I was born near Dungannon in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, the youngest of three girls. I was very blessed to have been brought up in a happy home; but more than that, it was a godly home. My parents loved the Lord, they prayed much for us and the Bible was read with us.


I can never remember a time when I didn't know about Jesus' love for me. Our Sundays were taken up with attending church, Sunday school and other gospel meetings; but this did not make me a Christian. At the age of nine I attended children's meetings and it was after one of these that I recognised my need of Jesus as my Saviour and gave my life to Him. I have no certainty of the date but I am certain of the experience. This was only the beginning of my journey as a Christian. At primary school I did not speak to others about my experience but when I moved on to secondary school it was a different scene. I soon realised I had to take a stand about my faith. I made many mistakes and bad choices; but God is a faithful God. When I came to Him and asked for forgiveness for my faults, failures and disobedience, I knew

His forgiveness. I praise Him for keeping me on the right path.

When I started in the workplace and began to see the way my workmates lived, I knew I needed to be strong and lean on the Lord. I praise God, He really did strengthen and enable me to speak and live for Him in the midst of it all. He gave me the courage to witness to others in the office and they respected me for what I believed. Some of them came to gospel meetings and God worked in their hearts.

The Lord gave me a desire to be involved in serving Him. I started teaching at Sunday school and a Good News Club as well as attending a Faith Mission Prayer Union. I praise God that, many years later, some of these children I taught told me how they had come to know Jesus through the Sunday school and the club.

After I married, I came to live in County Donegal. God



*Life has not always been easy – we have had
our trials and testing times, but God has never
left us to carry our burdens alone.*

blessed us with three children, two sons and a daughter, who works with The Faith Mission in County Cork. We give God praise that all our children are married, living for and serving the Lord.

Life has not always been easy – we have had our trials and testing times, but God has never left us to carry our burdens alone. One verse that is very precious to me is: *‘Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you’* (Psalm 55:22). When I miscarried a child, when my husband lost an eye in an accident, and when both our sons, at different times, were in near-death situations, God always sustained me and to Him I give thanks and praise.

After many years of teaching Sunday school, I felt the time had come to pursue other avenues of service. To confirm my decision, a verse of scripture that the minister read one Sunday morning really gripped my heart. God led me to do an accredited preachers’ course, which I must confess was hard work, but also a blessing. It has been my privilege and responsibility to help out in churches that have no minister and do holiday relief. What a joy to speak for the Lord. I can honestly say: “For all the Lord has done for me, I never will cease to praise Him”. To Him be all the glory.

*For all the Lord has done for me,
I never will cease to praise Him;
And for His grace so rich and free,
I never will cease to praise.*

*He gives me strength for every day,
I never will cease to praise Him;
He leads and guides me all the way,
I never will cease to praise Him. •*

A GAP-FILLER FOR GOD

*John Matthews shares
of God's workings
in his life*



Growing up took place in a strangely religious atmosphere.

Reading the Bible at home, prayers and hymns, the daily assemblies, weekly church services, and a myriad of para-church activities where the gospel was clearly and powerfully presented, created this atmosphere. Although I was spiritually awakened as a young child, teenage years brought the temptation to abandon the 'church' and become successful and wealthy through the ways of the world. That battle raged and was eventually won in my mid-teens after being very powerfully challenged one Sunday evening in a local gospel service. On my knees I surrendered my heart to the Lord as best as I knew

how. Real assurance of salvation didn't come right away, but after being prepared to confess openly what had taken place privately, the Spirit of God witnessed with my spirit that I was accepted before God. Sins were forgiven and a desire for purity and holiness was implanted within my heart.

A comfortable local Christian life was a strong temptation. But there were powerful, Spirit-anointed meetings in those days when the challenge to "full surrender" to the will of God and the "filling of the Spirit" was preached. To do the will of God and to experience the "fullness of the Spirit of God" it was necessary to allow God to have His way in my life. That would lead to being willing to

be uprooted from all that was familiar and comfortable to prepare for an unknown path into Christian ministry. That was the *'living sacrifice'* that we read about in Romans 12:1. Sacrifice is never a soft option. There is no sacrifice without separation, which is always painful. So why do it?

This can only be understood when viewed from the standpoint of eternity. This Romans text goes on to explain that the outcome of a living sacrifice is *'reasonable'* or *'logical'*. When the final accounts are audited, the books will show the extent of the glory brought to Christ through the life of sacrificial service. Sadly they will also show the futility of worldly success and wealth without an eternal and spiritual dimension.

The outworking of those spiritual foundations led to two very blessed and formative years in The Faith Mission Bible College. Transformative intercessory prayer times marked and made the Bible College experience a resounding blessing.

After some time, my wife, Hazel, and I felt called to serve the Lord in one of the most inaccessible and remote parts of the world, namely the Amazon jungle. There followed seven very happy and blessed years serving with Acre Gospel Mission in the Brazilian Amazon. Gospel work was growing. The church of Jesus Christ was being built. We were settled, content and happy in the work of the gospel. Soon we had two Brazilian-born children and anticipated being long-term career missionaries.

Disruption came through family ill health and necessitated a return to the homeland. The Lord opened a door for us at the right time to return to FMBC where we would be involved in Bible teaching and support ministries for the next twenty years.

Preaching the gospel in a pioneer situation and leading people to saving faith in Christ gave way to teaching the scriptures and various other subjects to keen young men and women in preparation for Christian ministry. It was huge privilege and sometimes a big challenge over the years to share the lives of around five hundred candidates for Christian mission around the world. They came from various cultural backgrounds and different denominations of the Christian church, and all needed to be moulded to Christlikeness in order to be true ambassadors for Christ. Today they serve the Lord in The Faith Mission and many other mission agencies across the world.

The Lord unexpectedly intervened and another development and complete change came about when an opportunity arose to be involved in The Faith Mission's bookshop and literature ministry. Many prayers were answered in the growth and development of this valuable ministry to many high streets, where thousands of customers normally frequent the shops to find resources to satisfy their spiritual needs.

One further year was spent in a leadership role in The Faith Mission Bible College as a gap-filling exercise. The prophet Ezekiel had issued the call for someone to '*stand in the gap*' for God in his day. Perhaps the greatest honour in life is simply to be a gap-filler for God. It is always the Lord who indicates the gap and prepares His servant to fill that specific gap. It is the Spirit of God who stirs up our nest and moves us on in His service. The location or the size of the gap is not so important, but our willingness to be used by God in God's time is all-important. Whether it is gospel work in a pioneer situation in the Amazon jungle, or in ministry in a Bible college setting, or in literature ministry, the important bit is to be available for God irrespective of the cost.

God lamented in Ezekiel's day that there was no one to be found to fill the gap. The next gap hasn't yet been revealed, but a former Bible College student has assured me that there is no retirement in the Lord's work! Are you prepared to sacrifice your ambitions and fill the gap that God has opened just for you? •



THE PRAYER UNION

BACKBONE OF THE FAITH MISSION

The word ‘backbone’ can have many meanings depending on the context it is used in. One of these definitions is ‘pillar’ - something used to give support to a structure.

The first Prayer Union was started in July 1887 by the founder of The Faith Mission, John George Govan. He writes about his desire for these small groups to be drawn together “by the all-devouring, all-sacrificing love which animated their Master”. At the beginning,

Prayer Unions sprung up where pilgrims – Faith Mission evangelists – had missioned, which enabled the work of evangelism to carry on after the pilgrims had moved on.

As the work was steadily increasing, John George felt these groups needed to be better organised and more closely connected to the work of the Mission. A ‘representative’ was put in charge, with a structured membership also in place. The Prayer Union was, and still is, non-denominational, with doctrinal

differences put aside. The founder's prayer for them was: "May the Lord preserve the Prayer Union meetings from any tendency to exist without the Spirit. Better were they to die a natural death straight away". That was one hundred and thirty-four years ago!

A monthly visit was organised by the 'district pilgrim' – known today as the superintendent – who had responsibility for a specific District. John George writes: "To this end there was regular visitation of each place that had been missioned. Irvine, Peebles, Walkerburn and Innerleithen." This was more than a fleeting visit: a Christians' meeting on Friday night was followed by a half night of prayer. On Saturday the Prayer Union members were visited, and encouraged to come to the open-air in the afternoon and a gospel meeting at night. Sunday was taken up with an early morning prayer meeting, visiting local churches, and a Christians' meeting in the afternoon before the after-church service that evening.

In the summer of 1888, the first anniversary of the Prayer Union was celebrated by a large gathering at Dunfermline in Fife with the first item on the programme being tea! Govan writes: "We thought it would be a blessed thing that the members of all the Prayer Union branches who have heard so much of each other, should all meet together, and still more blessed thing that all together should meet with God". Today, Faith Mission Prayer Unions still meet to celebrate the anniversary of when their meeting was founded and give thanks to God for all He has done in their

particular area. The invitation was to "come with expectancy, come with faith, come in the Spirit of hearty praise, come to meet with your King to receive of His fulness, to witness for Him and to be used of Him for His eternal glory".

One of the greatest encouragements for those involved in the work of evangelism is to know that folks are taking the time to pray for the work and the worker.

One of the greatest encouragements for those involved in the work of evangelism is to know that folks are taking the time to pray for the work and the worker. As Faith Mission members, we truly value the support of all our Prayer Union members; you are our 'pillar'. Some of you have been members of a PU for many years. This takes commitment and a deep interest in the work.

Our land is in great spiritual darkness. More than ever we need evangelists to bring the message of salvation and hope to a broken world. But we also need

prayer warriors. In this formidable task, we are workers together with God at the helm. "We need prayer to obtain victory and then prayer to maintain victory" (Leonard Ravenhill).

At present we have approximately two hundred Prayer Unions throughout Great Britain and Ireland. The majority of these prayer groups are held in people's homes, with some being as small as four, and others up to twenty. If you would like to start a Prayer Union in your area, please contact us using the details on the inside back page.

Thank you for standing with us in the place of prayer. •

Quotations are taken from Spirit of Revival, a biography of John George Govan.

Serving God in Rural Cavan and Monaghan



BY BRIAN AND HAZEL PARKER

For the past sixteen months it has been our privilege to live and work in beautiful County Cavan, not far below the border between the North and South of Ireland. When joining The Faith Mission after Bible College, God clearly directed us here and it has been amazing to see the opportunities for sharing the gospel that God has opened up.

We enjoy working in counties Cavan and Monaghan. With the exception of the main town in each county, the remainder is a fairly rural setting with small Irish towns and villages and very welcoming folk. The towns of Cavan and Monaghan have a couple of slightly larger, strong evangelical churches; while on the whole, some smaller towns have much smaller churches but with some very faithful ministers and members.

Up to this point God's work here has developed in three main areas:

Supporting the local churches

Being new to the area, back in September 2019, Brian spent a fair bit of time meeting many of the local Christian men for coffee to get an understanding of the culture, spiritual climate and to see where best we would 'fit in' with the work already being done. A repeated theme of these meetings was often a heart

for evangelism, but there were limited hands. With many of these men being responsible for three or four small churches over a fairly large area, they were kept very busy. But there was a real openness and desire, which we thank God for, to us coming alongside them to give support in various ways. The Faith Mission is quite well known and respected in the area, which was a huge help in breaking down barriers. Although many plans have been hampered by Covid-19, we are so thankful as we look back at the opportunities God has given us to work alongside the local churches in the following ways:

- a fortnightly children's club in Cootehill Presbyterian Church (this continues by Zoom and video format)
- summer outreach opportunities, including facilitating an outdoor children's club with Cootehill Christian Fellowship and soccer coaching alongside Ballybay Presbyterian Church (see photo)
- monthly teaching at a church youth club and Girls' Brigade
- regular pulpit supply
- a drive-in carol service supported by six local churches, which was a real highlight at the end of the year.

It has been wonderful to see how God used some of these activities to make new contacts for the local churches. We had plans to support a few other churches with their outreach events, but unfortunately the restrictions have put paid to this for now. However we hope to run with these when restrictions allow.

Schools ministry

The opportunity came for us to share in three local school assemblies, originally commenced by previous FM workers. It is such a privilege to share God's Word openly to these families. Having had some experience with soccer coaching, Brian approached schools about the possibility of providing soccer coaching sessions which would include a ten-minute sports-themed Bible talk. We were delighted that this was well received among four of the five schools he approached. It was a real shame to have to put the brakes on this new development due to lockdown, but we trust in God's time these doors may open again. We would also love you to pray with us that God may use this avenue to open the doors to other schools.

Areas with no evangelical witness

As we get to know the area, it is clear that there are some small towns that have little evangelical witness and we are burdened for these towns and villages. It was a privilege to work with Robert Little and a small group of believers during a mission in one of these areas back in

February 2020. It was also a joy to organise a small but wonderful children's club during this time. It gave us a real desire to seek God as to how to break into some of these areas, families and communities. Sadly, we haven't been able to progress this too far given the current restrictions. Please will you pray with us about this burden over the coming months?

Faith Mission monthly meetings and Prayer Unions

We cannot stress how appreciative we are of the faithful, welcoming and supportive group of FM supporters in this area. We have been challenged by their deep burden for their communities and faithful witness for our Saviour over many years. It is a real privilege to stand with them and support their work in any way we can. Before lockdown, it was a blessing for Brian to meet with them for times of prayer, a monthly meeting and rallies. Again, it has been a shame that these things are not currently able to happen, but these folks continue to encourage, pray and keep contact, for which we are very grateful. We would love that as opportunities open up again, new faces to Faith Mission activities will join in praying for the work of the gospel in this area.

We praise God for all He is doing in this area and are excited about what the coming months and years may hold. Thank you so much for all your prayerful interest. •



Soccer coaching



Soccer coaching Bible talk

BY REUBEN
LYONS

WHAT IS A STREET CAFÉ?



It's quite safe to say that we live in a day when most people will not attend a church or a gospel meeting. We are reminded throughout scripture to think and to live with an eternal perspective, focused on our Saviour and His work. *'How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?'* (Romans 10:4). It is the duty of the Christian to take the gospel to where the people are, whether that is a ministry that we are used to and comfortable with, or whether this takes the form of a new vision that shifts us far away from what we are accustomed to.

The work of street café has existed for many years, with one factor commonly staying the same, that being that the ministry is very much mobile. All that is needed is a foldable table, informative banner, gospel literature, plenty of hot drinks, and a few folks willing to help in the serving of drinks and speaking to people who stop by.

My first experience of street café came as I began my studies at The Faith Mission Bible College in 2017. Over the past few years, it has struck me how suitable street café is in

reaching out to twenty-first century society. Providing a hot drink and opening up a one-to-one conversation creates a very warm, friendly, and relaxed atmosphere to share the gospel. Perhaps the greatest opportunity with this ministry is the variety of people from different backgrounds that come to the table. Each individual is different, but all have the same need - salvation through Jesus Christ.

In recent months we have begun street cafés in Ballymena and Coleraine in Northern Ireland. On these days of outreach we have encountered a number of people struggling with addiction, unemployment, loneliness and more. We count these as precious moments to share the hope which Jesus offers. Learning about people and their situations also helps us to direct them towards good Christian resources that are applicable to them and, if needs be, information of people and organisations who minister in these areas.

Please pray for the work of the street café and the broken lives that are reached. Pray we will be able to resume this outreach when restrictions and lockdowns are eased. ●



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