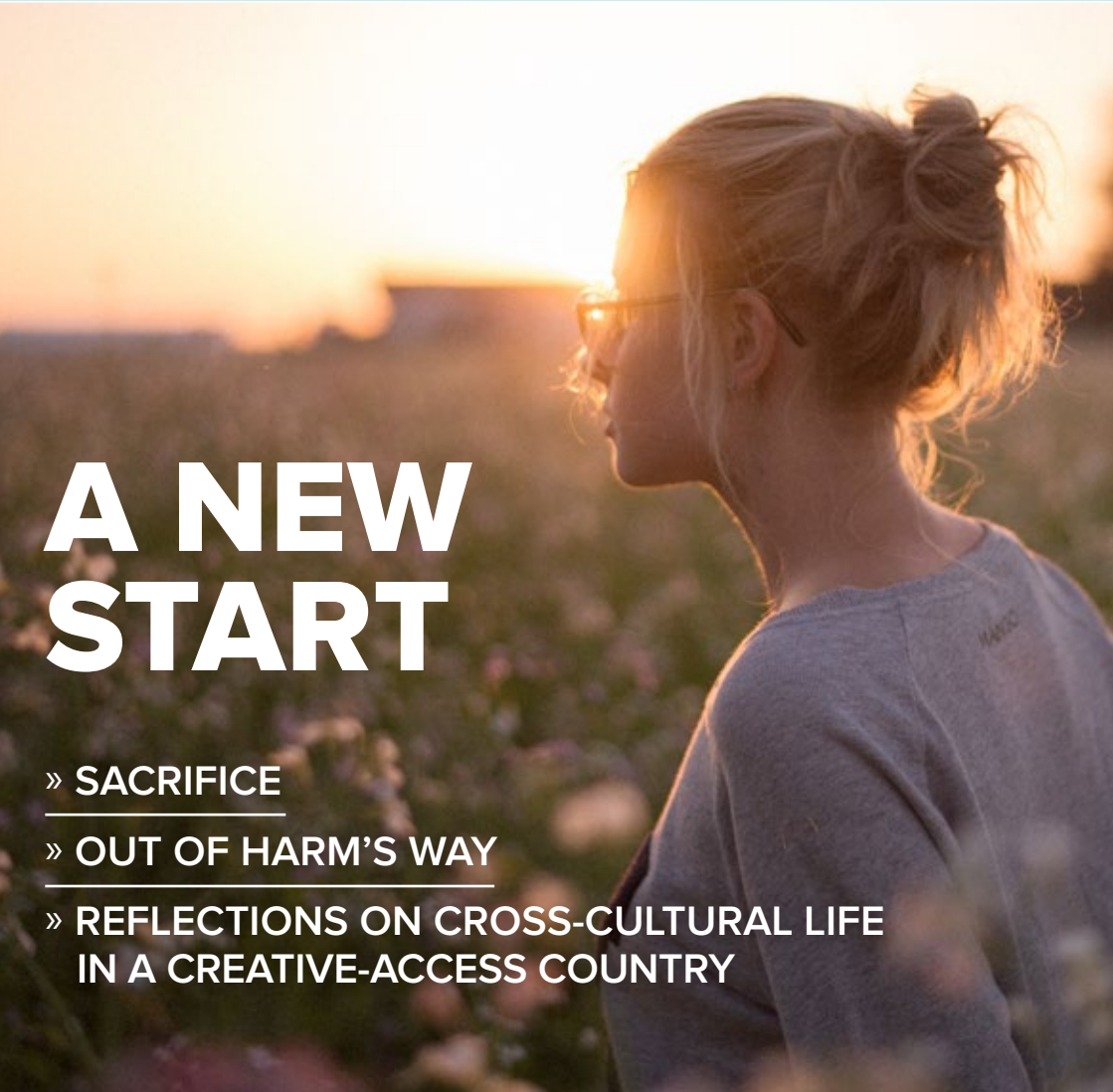
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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

SPRING 2022 | ISSUE 1323

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



A NEW START

» SACRIFICE

» OUT OF HARM'S WAY

» REFLECTIONS ON CROSS-CULTURAL LIFE IN A CREATIVE-ACCESS COUNTRY

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

After two frustrating years navigating the restrictions created by the coronavirus pandemic, it is so encouraging to see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. We are currently aiming for the conventions in both Bangor and Edinburgh to take place in person, albeit with slightly reduced programmes. Planning for the children's and young people's summer camps are well under way and we look forward to a greater number of outreach events being possible as the restrictions continue to ease including tent and drive-in missions, evangelistic Bible studies, theme nights, schools' ministry, sports outreach, and family-focused events.

Many of you may already be aware of the passing, in January, of our former colleague Bobby Dukelow. Bobby served with The Faith Mission throughout his entire working life until retiring in 2000. Please uphold his wife, Sadie, their children, Valerie, Heather and Victor and their families in prayer. A fuller tribute is included later in the magazine.

Reuben Lyons withdrew from the Mission at the end of January and George and Chloe Clayson resigned from membership at the end of February. Reuben has felt led to take up the opportunity of becoming a trainee pastor with Newtownards Congregational Church in Northern Ireland. George feels strongly that his burden and calling is to city centre street evangelism and has been accepted to work as an evangelist with the Open-Air Mission commencing on 1 March. George and Chloe will continue to be based in Tibshelf where Chloe will continue her work with Matlock Area Schools Trust. We are sorry to lose each of these personnel from the Mission family but thank them all for their dedicated ministry with the Mission and wish them God's blessing in their future ministries for Him.

Thank you for praying for our staffing needs here at General Headquarters. Recently, Joe Kunjumon accepted the role of finance assistant and is due to commence shortly, initially working three days per week. Joe is from northern India and has ten years of experience in financial management with a US telecoms company. Over time, as he adapts to the complexities of The Faith Mission's accounting procedures, he will increasingly assume the responsibilities previously undertaken by Carole Townley who left us last summer. Please uphold Joe in prayer as he settles in to the Mission's admin team.

The Faith Mission Board and Mission Council are nearing the end of what has proved to be a challenging and protracted succession planning process. A number of Mission leaders are due to retire this summer and a shortage of personnel has made it difficult to determine how best to fill some of the gaps which will be created. We hope to be able to announce the planned changes soon and certainly expect to include them in the introduction to the summer issue of this magazine. This process has further highlighted the urgent need for the Lord's provision of clearly called people who are passionate for rural evangelism and willing to face the cost and challenge of taking the gospel to the unreached areas of Great Britain and Ireland. Pray with us that the Lord of the harvest will thrust out more workers into this harvest field.

We appreciate your fellowship and support in the gospel and trust you enjoy this issue of the magazine. •

John Townend, *General Director*



A New Start

BY IAIN JAMIESON

The first months of a new year are often seen as a time to 'start again'. In the profound and moving story of Ruth we encounter a desperate family who try to make a new start. Little did they know that their journey back to Bethlehem would lead, one day, to the birth of the Saviour who made it possible for all of us to make a new start

The Return

The family of Elimelech had fled their home town of Bethlehem (the house of bread) because there was a famine. God had promised that He would provide for His people in the land He had given them. Elimelech chose to take his family to Moab where the grass looked greener, but this decision had serious consequences. In chapter one we read Elimelech and his two sons are dead and his wife Naomi is left destitute with her two Moabite daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah.

Israelites were not to marry Moabites (see Deuteronomy 23:3). Having disobeyed God's commands, Naomi faces the reality that she must return to Bethlehem. However, Naomi's faith in God is at a low ebb. She cannot see a future for Orpah or Ruth back in Israel and pleads with them to remain. Orpah takes her advice and Naomi says to Ruth: *'...thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto*

her gods: *return thou after thy sister in law'* (1:15 KJV). Naomi believed that the security of marriage, even in a pagan nation, was preferable to returning destitute to Israel.

It is at this low point that we read one of the most touching declarations of loyalty in the Scriptures: *'...whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God'* (1:16). Ruth not only shows her devotion to her mother-in-law, but also demonstrates saving faith in God. Despite the poor examples she has had, Ruth has been attracted to the God of Israel and is willing to leave behind the pagan worship of Moab. What is more, Ruth believes that this God will somehow take care of her and Naomi, though at this point she probably doesn't know how.

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The Refuge

Will Ruth's faith in God's provision be justified? Consider all the difficulties that faced Ruth and Naomi as they returned to Bethlehem. The whole population of the town would have heard about their arrival: "That's the widow of Elimelech, who left us when the famine came!" It was obvious that Naomi's sons married Moabite women, and Naomi had the temerity to bring one of those foreign girls back to God's land! Perhaps Ruth looked, and probably dressed and sounded, different to all the other young women in Bethlehem. Add to this Ruth's lack of a husband with no stable income to sustain them, and things were looking bleak for this mother and daughter-in-law. And yet, in the midst of all this uncertainty, the unstoppable, eternal plan of God is being enacted.

Ruth decides to go and gather ears of corn discarded by the workers in the fields: *'...her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz who was of the kindred of Elimelech'* (2:3). Clearly God's sovereign hand of providence is at work. God knew the needs of Ruth and Naomi, and He guided the steps of Ruth to glean in the fields of Boaz. Each of those steps was a small step forward in the outworking of the eternal purposes of God.

Boaz invites her to stay and to glean only in his fields. He makes provision for her safety and comfort, and Ruth, in humble gratitude asks: *'Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?'* (2:10). This is a question all Gentile Christians must ask. We have no national or ethnic claim on the promises of God to His people. Ephesians 2:12 reminds us that we were *'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.'*

Why did Boaz show so much kindness to this Moabitess? *'It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore... the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust'* (2:11). God's Word makes it very clear that true faith is evidenced by works. In Ruth, Boaz saw both in full measure. However, the words of Boaz demonstrate that although he was the instrument used by God to provide for these two needy women, it was God Himself in whom Ruth had taken refuge.

The Relationship

At the heart of the Book of Ruth is this developing love story illustrating the refuge

and redemption that God's people have in Christ and the pleasure that He finds in them. Throughout the Scriptures, threshing floors are places of importance. This threshing floor in Bethlehem provides the setting for the uniting love between a Gentile widow and her Jewish redeemer.

Ruth has found refuge in the fields of Boaz and benefitted from his generosity; it is now Naomi's desire that her daughter-in-law's future be secured: *'My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?'* (3:1). Ruth is washed, anointed and clothed. These are three steps that have been accomplished for every child of God. We have been washed and cleansed by the precious blood of Christ and anointed with the Holy Spirit Himself.

Having found Boaz and revealed her identity, Ruth receives the wonderful assurance that Boaz will perform the duties of a kinsman-redeemer. Ruth can rest in the promise, *'...but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth'* (3:13). They had left Moab with nothing and no signs of hope, and yet Ruth, who had placed her faith in the God of Israel, now finds herself in the arms of her redeemer and hears him say, *'...lie down until the morning'* (3:13 ESV).

The Redemption

There remains the issue of another kinsman-redeemer who has a prior right to purchase Elimelech's land. At first, the man is keen, but when Boaz makes clear that it comes with responsibilities towards Ruth *'the Moabitess,'* he loses interest. Would he want to taint his family line with Moabite blood? He was qualified to redeem, but he was not willing.

This refusal provides Boaz the opportunity to fulfil his promise to Ruth and the redemption is enacted. According to custom, the other kinsman took off one of his sandals and gave it to Boaz as a symbol of a confirmed transaction. Finally, the book reaches its climax as Boaz makes his declaration, *'...Ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's... Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife...'* (4:9-10). What a contrasting picture to the scene at the beginning of this story! Bereaved, destitute and separated from the land of promise, Ruth and Naomi now find themselves, through God's grace, back in Bethlehem with a secure future and a new family. This is of course a clear and profound picture of the redemption that has been provided in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus for us. In a beautiful picture of the New Testament church, Ruth has been graciously *'grafted'* into the line of Boaz and there is one new family, both Jew and Gentile.

The redemption of Ruth came at a price to Boaz. He would have to provide workers to tend the extra land, as well as taking care of Ruth and her aged mother-in-law. However, what marks out Boaz from the other redeemer is that Boaz was both qualified and willing to redeem. Why was he willing? Because He loved her.

It was love too, though an infinitely greater love, which motivated Christ on his journey to the cross. Love for the church, for people like us who have disobeyed, disrespected and disregarded Him time and again. The price He paid was also infinitely greater: *'...ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ'* (1 Peter 1:18-19). In order for Boaz to redeem Ruth, he had to first be her kinsman. If a sinner is ever to have Christ as his kinsman, he must first take Him as his Redeemer. •

***Iain**, is married to Rebekah and they live in Fife, Scotland, where he is involved in full-time evangelism.*



Sacrifice

BY ROGER CARSWELL

King David had motivated his army with loyalty (2 Samuel 23:8-17). The four hundred soldiers who had become renowned as being men distressed, in debt and discontent, became the core of a much bigger army. They became valiant men, famed for their exploits.

There was an occasion when David was with his men, and the Philistines were occupying Bethlehem, when almost under his breath David said with longing, *"'Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!'"* David's desires were natural enough. His fortunes were at a low ebb, hiding in the cave of Adullum and the Philistine garrison holding Bethlehem. David was indulging in allowing his mind to revel in the past, and to dwell on those never-to-be-forgotten memories. This was a craving for the old life, which was neither spiritual nor helpful to him, to others, or to the cause he was fighting for. Sometimes, especially when things are tough, we can indulge ourselves by envying the wicked, or the world with its ways and wealth. However, the longings are never quenched by gratifying them, but by replacing them with things that are legitimate.

David's three mighty men were, as Warren Wiersbe puts it, "close enough to hear his whispered words, loyal enough to take his wish at their command, and brave enough to obey at any cost." Responding to the wish of David, they bravely broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem and brought it to David.

He was overwhelmingly grateful for the dedicated, sacrificial service of Josheb-Basshebeth, Eleazar and Shammah. However, David refused to drink the water selfishly.

David's actions were spiritual. It seemed to David that the water was dyed with the blood of men. Only God had the right to receive that for which the men had risked their lives.

It is good for me to ask myself whether the things which gratify me are purchased at too great a price. My home, my hobbies, my holidays, my honour and the things I hoard. They may all be legitimate, but have they taken a hold of me to the extent that the Lord is being displaced? God has given me great privileges, including time and energy, gifts and abilities. They are not to be used self-indulgently but for the glory of the Lord. I have to ask myself whether the Lord is being eased to the edge of the plate of my life.

Resolved to sacrifice the longed-for water to the Lord

As David poured out the water to the Lord, he offered to God what was too precious for his own use, and when offered, it became more precious. If he had just drunk the water, he would have enjoyed its refreshment for some moments and it would have been forgotten forever. Instead, it has become a timeless picture of devotion and sacrifice. It is the Old Testament equivalent of the oil of Mary's alabaster box, and the widow's two mites. They could have been used selfishly, but instead were given to the Lord, multiplied in usefulness and immortalised. Jesus' blood was always precious, for it is "the blood of God"; but when it was poured out at Calvary, it became of inestimable value to the millions who have found their sins washed away because of it. The water of Bethlehem became sweeter to David in pouring it out to the Lord, than it would have if he had greedily gulped it.

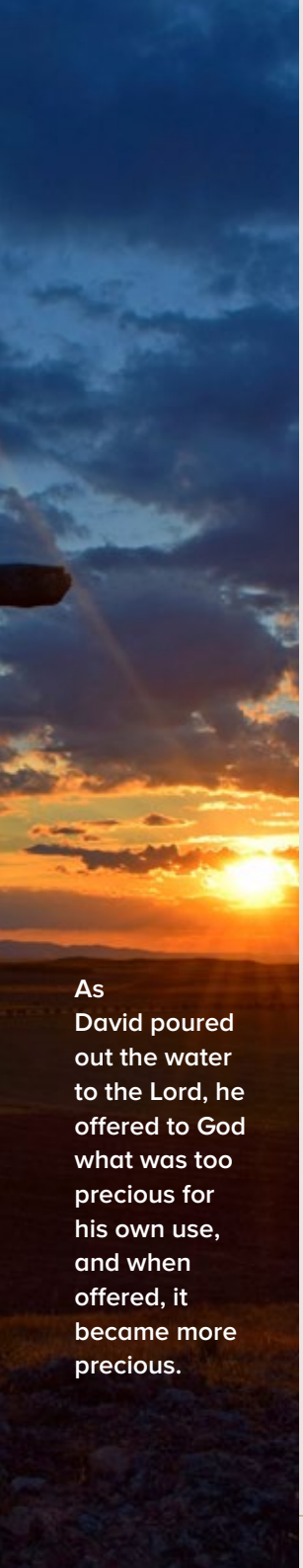
The principle is scriptural

Sacrifice is a theme permeating the entire Bible. Our salvation is based on the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. *'Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich'* (2 Corinthians 8:9). David's act doesn't compare to the sacrifice of Christ, and realistically, what can we give in gratitude to the Lord? Nevertheless, we are privileged to sacrifice for Him, and in so doing, we give to God a fragrant offering. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son, Moses gave up his position in Egypt, the Israelites willingly devoted their possessions in building the tabernacle and temple, and the prophets sacrificed their comfort their reputation, and even their lives to proclaim the word of God. Esther, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego would have laid down their lives, as would Daniel, for the cause of the Lord.

David said that he would not *'offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing'* (2 Samuel 24:24). On another occasion he wrote, *"'Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up to the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob'"* (Psalm 132:3-5). The Lord was a greater priority to David than sleep and comfort.

Jesus said, *"'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me'"* (Matthew 10:37-38). He also warned, *"'He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life'"* (John 12:25).

The challenge is not to be entangled in the affairs of this world, but to dare to *'go outside the camp, bearing His reproach'* (Hebrews 13:13). The seriousness of commitment will be a testimony to those around us, as well as to heaven itself. God uses devotion like this to overcome



As David poured out the water to the Lord, he offered to God what was too precious for his own use, and when offered, it became more precious.

Satan, who is defeated by the blood of the Lamb, the Word of their testimony, and believers not loving their own lives even to death (see Revelation 12:11). I have seen this in action when I met with a group of young people in India who were preparing to go and live and evangelise in a huge, desperately unlovely shanty town. They were willing to live with no running water, sanitation, electricity or comforts. I found this deeply challenging.

Is sacrifice too costly?

Gladys Aylward, missionary to China, testified of the compensations of living sacrificially: "I have not done what I wanted to do. I have not eaten what I wanted, or worn what I would have chosen. I have lived in houses that I would not have looked at twice. I longed for a husband and babies and security and love. But God never gave them. Instead he left me on my own for seventeen years, with one book – a Chinese Bible. I don't know anything about the latest novels, films, theatres. I live in a rather out-of-date world. And I suppose you say it's awfully miserable, isn't it? Friend, I have been one of the happiest women who stepped on this earth, I have known the heavens opening and the blessings tumbling out."

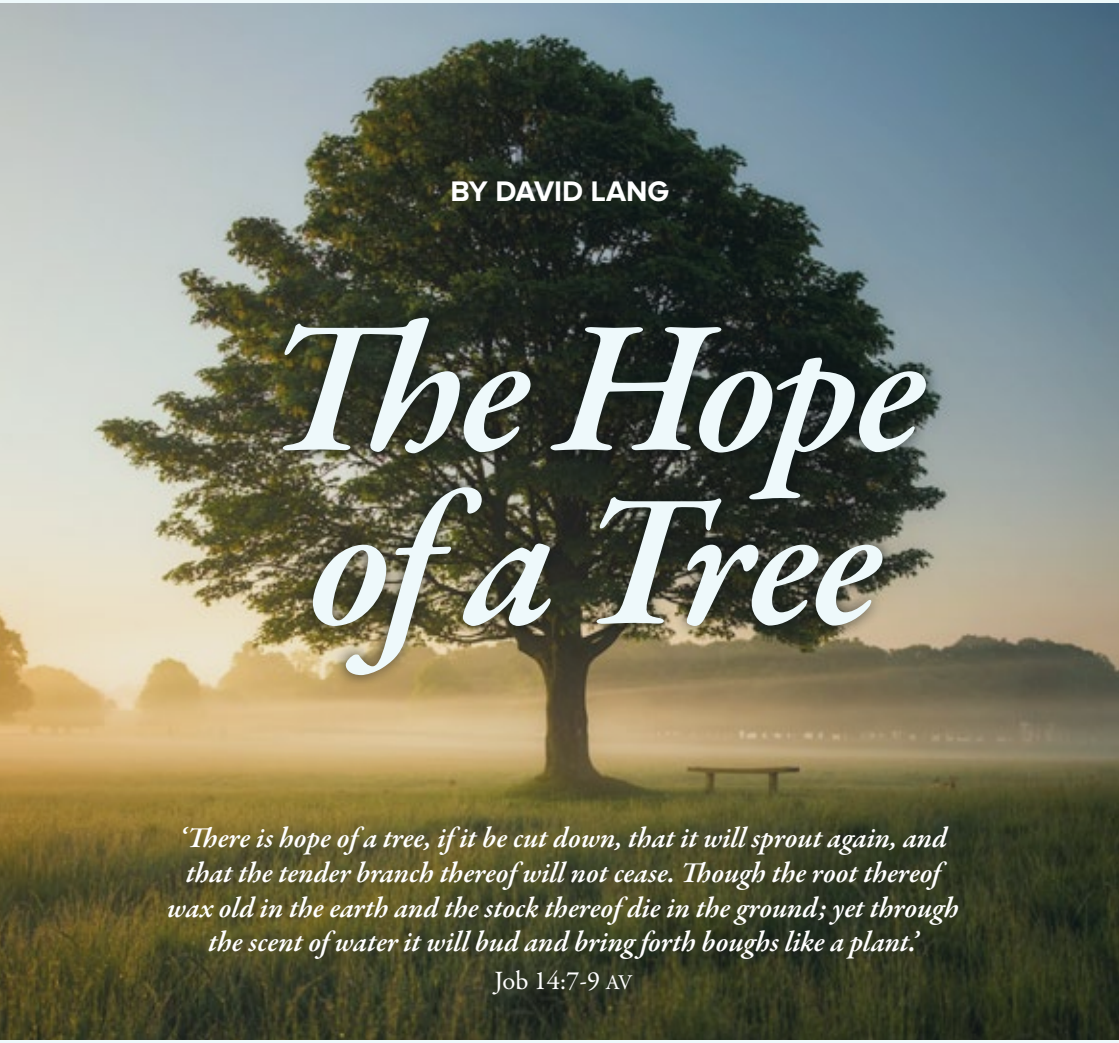
Three or four miles from my home is the village of Arthington, named after Robert Arthington. He was a Cambridge graduate who lived in a single room, cooked his own meals, and nearly a century ago gave £500,000 to foreign missions on the condition that it was all to be spent on pioneer work within twenty-five years. He wrote: "Gladly would I make the floor my bed, a box my chair, and another box my table, rather than that men should perish for want of the knowledge of Christ."

"Nothing is too precious for Jesus," said Amy Carmichael. My desires are to be transformed to devotion and duty; my rights turned to responsibilities; my gifts given back to the Giver. This leads to questions such as, is my work merely advancing my career or is it exalting Christ? Is my money being used for self-indulgence or self-sacrifice? Is my spare time used for self or for others?

I recently heard a tape of a sermon where retired people were challenged to be venturing into so-called 'closed' countries to distribute gospel literature and speak of Christ. "Better to die as a martyr than on a golf course," said the preacher! Certainly it is better to sacrifice than to selfishly indulge.

The Lord poured out His life for me... how much more should I be willing to give to Him, yielding my rights in a daily act of love to the Lord Jesus. I believe... I belong... do I obey? •

***Roger** lives in Yorkshire and is passionate about evangelism. www.rogercarswell.net*



BY DAVID LANG

The Hope of a Tree

'There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant.'
Job 14:7-9 AV

There is surely no more comforting thought for a backsliding Christian than to discover that, contrary to expectations, there is forgiveness with God: *'If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you'* (Psalm 130:3-4).

The pain becomes more acute when the devil whispers that there is no way back. If this were true, however, the Bible would have to be largely rewritten. David would be finished (2 Samuel 12-13), and so would Noah (Genesis 9:21). Even Daniel, when praying, included himself in Israel's sins (Daniel 9:20); as did Nehemiah (Nehemiah1:6). And what shall we make of Simon Peter? Not content with denying his Lord, he ends up by cursing and swearing (Matthew 26:14). Yet the Lord Jesus restored him so completely that he

became one of the most notable leaders of the early church.

Before we proceed further, we must guard a precious and important truth, because the question arises: "Does this mean I can live as I please?" The answer is a resounding "No!" Unless the desire to return to the Lord is accompanied by complete repentance, it will be of no avail. Psalm 51 is a fine example of true repentance, together with 2 Corinthians 7:10-11.

The Apostle Peter

It is surely most surprising that, of all people, Peter would be the one to let the Lord down. When Jesus asked His disciples, *"'who do you say I am?'"* Peter replied unhesitatingly, *"'you are the Christ, the Son of the living God'"* (Matthew 16:15-16). What came over Peter when the servant girl claimed that she saw him with Jesus? The presence of Satan cannot be ignored: *"'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat'"* (Luke 22:31-34). Yet, how wonderful to read of our Lord's gracious dealings with Peter in John 21. Peter, who knew the bitterness of falling, could close his earthly ministry with a call to holiness and steadfastness: *'You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability'* (2 Peter 3:17 ESV).

There is surely no more comforting thought for a backsliding Christian than to discover that, contrary to expectations, there is forgiveness with God.

The Prodigal Son

We can do no better than to examine our Lord's teaching on this oft-neglected theme. Of the three parables that Jesus taught in Luke 15, the parable of the 'lost son' is most detailed. Here was a young man who wanted his inheritance early, so he asked his father for what he seemed to think was due to him. Why wait? He made his way to a far country and spent the lot, having a good time. This became a miserable time when he ran out of money and found a job feeding pigs.

The Loving Father

Whether this young man was a backslider or trusting the Lord for the first time is immaterial. We're told that *'when he came to himself'* he hurried home to his father. But did his father rebuke him? Did he cast up all his sins to him? No, he called on his servants to *'clothe him with the **best** robe'*. How different was the behaviour of his brother to Jesus' teaching. The words of Psalm 23:3 are words of hope – *'he restoreth my soul'*.

If you feel discouraged because of your failures and backsliding from following Jesus, to you He says, *'the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost'* (Luke 19:10). "No way back," is a lie of the devil. Let us never give up hope, but remember the words of Job, *'There is hope of a tree'*.

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Saviour,
And life more abundant and free!

His Word shall not fail you – He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell.

Helen Howarth Lemmel. ●

***David** and his wife, **May**, live in East Lothian, Scotland.*

BY SANDY ROGER

OUT OF HARM'S WAY



Harm and injury are part and parcel of life. No one is exempt, and Christians are no different to the rest of society when it comes to being harmed. Being a believer does not guarantee immunity from all sorts of dangers, injuries, troubles and trials. Because we live in a fallen world we are surrounded by all kinds of dangers and succumb to them just like others.

Peter writes to those who were facing persecution simply for being Christians and living according to Christ and their faith-inspired conscience, *'Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer...'* (1 Peter 3:13-14). He wrote because the attacks were gaining in momentum, directed towards their minds, bodies and souls (4:17). Although persecution may not be our immediate danger, there are plenty of others and the pandemic we are in reminds us of our own mortality; life is a very fragile thing. The circumstances we find ourselves in reinforce that very powerfully.

When I think about Peter's initial question concerning who would possibly want to do us harm, it brings to mind several possibilities that will have entered into many people's minds in the last few months. Reading Peter's epistle there is a sense in which his question is being answered all through the five chapters he pens.

Will God Harm You?

The thought will certainly have crossed many people's minds in these days of global pandemic. Is He so fed up with the way society is going that He has decided to wipe us all out and start again? But why would He want to do that? People are God's handiwork by creation and all Christians are His by redemption. He has mapped out great plans for this planet, and Peter dismisses this idea before it really takes hold of people's thinking. He writes, *'In the past you were not a people at all; but now you are the people of God'* (2:10; 3:8-12), and finishes his letter with the confident assurance that *'the God of all grace has called you to share His*

eternal glory through Christ and will Himself make you whole and secure and strong. All power is His forever' (5:10). God is not out to get us!

Will Circumstances Harm You?

Peter is well aware that those to whom he is writing have had a tough time. Everything has been against them. But he assures them it is not going to last forever. *'Though now for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials'* (1:6), but I don't want you to *'be surprised at the fiery ordeal... as though something strange were happening to you'* (4:12).

And we too have had to cope with strange things in the past year. But as firm believers in a loving, gracious, saving God we are not at the mercy of a steady succession of random events. Christians can never adopt a philosophy of "whatever will be, will be" or "what's for you will not go by you". That is faithless fatalism and far removed from trust in an all-loving and good God.

Will Satan Harm You?

This is a distinct possibility and clearly evident in this letter. When Peter speaks about the devil prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (5:8), he is probably thinking back to his own experience in the courtyard when he was severely mauled by Satan (Mark 14:66-72). Satan's unrelenting interest in the lives of believers must never be underestimated. There is no doubt he is a mighty being – but not almighty. He never has the last word. He is restrained by the work of the cross (Colossians 2:14) and by the Holy Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:17).

Will Non-Christians Harm You?

Ask the believers in Pakistan or Iran or Nigeria or China; there is no doubt that non-Christians are set against God's people for no other reason than that they are Christian. That was the situation facing the people to whom Peter wrote (3:13-17). But, just like the devil, they are under a restraining order. God has taken out an ASBO against them, severely restricting what they can ultimately do to Christ's cause, church and people.

Although Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on worship services and Christian outreach, the church will survive. Yes, there will be a depletion of numbers, a crisis with finances, and a need for re-thinking what it means to be the church, but it will not go under.

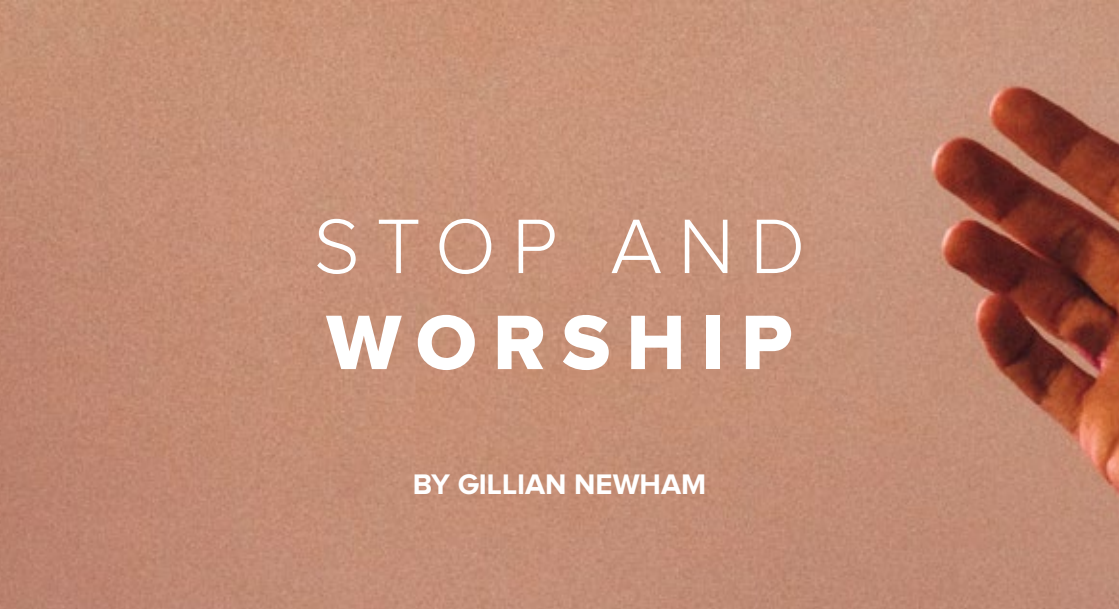
Will Death Harm You?

Many of those to whom Peter wrote would lose their lives in the persecution under Nero. At the time of writing, mob violence was still only localised and sporadic, but it would eventually become empire wide and legally sanctioned. Peter tries to prepare his readers for such an eventuality. Death is the last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). But though it is the last enemy every Christian will have to face, it is nonetheless an enemy and we must never minimise that fact. But those who are trusting in Christ have nothing to fear from such a foe. They have already conquered it in Christ.

And though they take our life,
Goods, honour, riches, wife,
Yet is their profit small,
These things shall vanish all,
The city of God remaineth.
Martin Luther

In the final analysis, through Christ the believer is safely out of harm's way. This is why Peter says, *'So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good'* (4:19). •

***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.*



STOP AND **WORSHIP**

BY GILLIAN NEWHAM

Tricky conversations, challenging situations, friends who are sick, family members who are struggling, not to mention the uncertainties and doubts that plague my own mind, leave me, time without number, overtaken with worries. Like a huge weight that appears on my doorstep, larger than life, worry consumes my view, diminishing my world to a narrow, cramped corridor.

Of course, I come to God full of need, crying out for help, begging Him for wisdom and He is ever faithful in answering my prayers. But in all the wrestling I sometimes forget to lift my eyes and focus on the vastness of the horizon, the loftiness of His heavens and the huge expanse of the oceans.

Feelings and emotions side-track me. I let busy days, talking with friends, Zoom meetings, writing, cooking meals and doing the laundry, keep me on the run. There is nothing wrong with being busy, but sometimes the busyness conceals my desire to control, to understand God, to explain who He is and what He's doing when I don't really know.

I need God, certainly in the big things of life, but there are some things, let's be honest, I can practically manage by myself. I can do God's work for Him. But, before I know it, the day has gone, the sun has set and the moon has risen, and I've forgotten that the God who fills the skies and illuminates the earth, is the one in whom everything begins and ends.

Doubts, uncertainties and unanswered questions remain. Before I let my mind spiral out of control and try to fix my world, I must stop and worship Him. Worship Him for who He is.

Shifting my focus changes my perspective, reminding me that I belong to Him. He has chosen me and He has not set me free to find my own way. This simple, yet profound truth revives my flagging soul. God has adopted me into His family, and in every detail, I am to live a life purposed by Him. He alone provides me with the boundaries that lead to my destination.



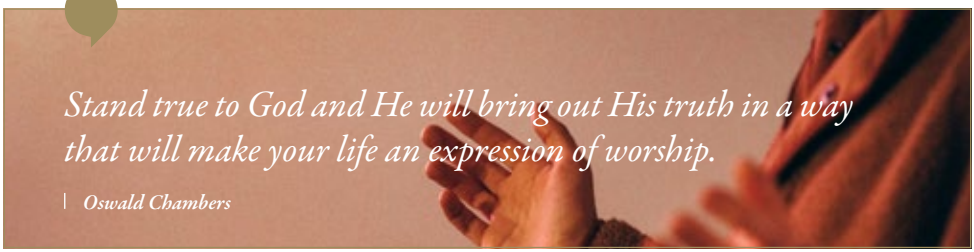
Shifting my focus changes my perspective, reminding me that I belong to Him. He has chosen me and He has not set me free to find my own way. This simple, yet profound truth revives my flagging soul.

I must accept that I live with uncertainties, that I live in a mystery that is huge. God is above and below, before and after all, the beginning and the end. Realising this humbles me. I know so little of Him and His workings. Words of protest, disagreement and worldly wisdom fade, I can only come before Him with open hands and worship. In worship I receive what I could never have imagined, God simply delights in me.

He is lavish with His grace and blessing and through my relationship with Christ, God leads me in His light. As He gathers the fragmented, dismembered parts of my life into His Son, I begin to assimilate and digest truth. My relationship with Christ brings me into the mystery of God and I am content not to have answers to all my questions. Little by little I am learning – truly knowing a thing comes only as I am in relationship with a person.

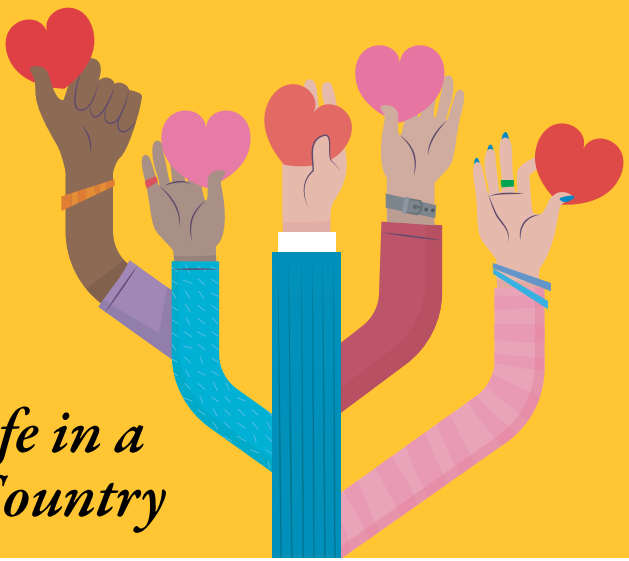
My eyes rise to the grandeur of the Creator in His creation, my lips sing of His bright glory. Keeping my sights fixed on Him and not the obstacles that seek to block my view, He enables me to live the resurrection life in His body. •

Gill, *originally from Worcestershire, now lives and works in Mongolia with her husband, Mark. Along with being involved in mission, she enjoys writing. © Gillian Newham*



Stand true to God and He will bring out His truth in a way that will make your life an expression of worship.

Oswald Chambers



Reflections on Cross-cultural Life in a Creative-access Country

Recently my son pointed out a beautiful yellow gorse bush near to our home. The bright flowers caught his attention. However, as he looked a bit closer, he was surprised to see just how spiky it was.

As I reflect on life as a cross-cultural worker in a creative-access country, I can't help but think of the gorse bush! It is a life full of wonderful blessings and great joys. It is also a life of painful trials and difficult challenges. The two come together, intertwined in many different experiences. I have reflected on three experiences that highlight this – living cross-culturally, community and living with security pressures.

Living cross-culturally

The cross-cultural life is a rich one. There is something really exciting about learning a new language. It opens your eyes to a new way of thinking and helps you to better understand your host culture. It is fun to sit and drink tea with someone who has a completely different worldview than yourself. It is satisfying when you master a certain aspect of the culture you are learning about.

Learning a new culture has also changed the way in which I read some passages of the Bible – sometimes the point of a passage has a much stronger impact when read through different cultural eyes.

The cross-cultural life can also bring difficulties. It is draining when, in a desire to be accepted by those in your host country, you are always second guessing yourself. Am I wearing appropriate clothes? Did they want me to accept their invite for dinner? Did they *really* understand what I was trying to say? These are all questions that I regularly ask myself in the effort to be culturally appropriate.

Cross-cultural teams are one of the big blessings of this life, while at the same time being one of the big challenges. I have been in a prayer group with four women – myself (a Brit), a Korean, an African and a South American. How amazing to have the

opportunity to pray and serve the Lord with women from all over the world! And yet, cross-cultural teams can also be difficult. Communication can be challenging. A diverse group brings with it many differences – theology; ideas on church planting; expectations for group prayer; parenting styles. While being part of a team like this brings a richness and many blessings, it requires a lot of work and much grace.

Community

I believe that one of the most important needs for Christians is that of community. There is something powerful about God's people worshipping Him together! Fellowship with other believers spurs us on in our walk with Jesus. Our Christian community can provide a great source of encouragement or a much-needed challenge.

As a family, community has been one of our greatest joys as well as one of our greatest challenges. We have experienced times when we had a great team to serve with. It is a real blessing to be able to visit local friends with a teammate. When one of you is talking, the other is praying!

We have also experienced times when we have felt very isolated, with little Christian fellowship and no local church to attend. However, during these times of isolation we developed deep relationships with other cross-cultural workers in different cities. We didn't see each other often, but we experienced what it means to be part of the body of Christ. Once when we were going through a particularly difficult time in ministry, one of these friends, who lived two hours away, turned up at our door having packed for two weeks!! She didn't need to stay for two weeks, however the love and care that she showed was an amazing example of what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ.

As a family we spent many months doing church together in our living room. Despite missing the fellowship of other Christians, we look back at these times as being very special and as times of growth for our children.

Security pressures

Sharing the good news of Jesus in a creative-access country brings with it many issues of security. Who can I trust? Who is listening to my phone calls? Is my internet use being monitored? These sorts of questions are the daily reality. This life comes with the knowledge that you could find yourself expelled from the country at very short notice.

It can be difficult to navigate friendships with other non-Christian expats, when you are unable to share a large part of your life and daily activities. Often this results in the feeling of being misunderstood. Even simple things like what to wear can be challenging! How can I dress conservatively, so that I am accepted as a moral and godly woman in the host culture, without standing out like a sore thumb in the expat community?

And yet, living and serving in a closed country comes with amazing blessings and great privilege. The privilege of being part of someone's journey with Christ when they are one of the few known believers in a country. The joy of meeting someone who has responded to an online media advert and wants to read the Bible. The joy of seeing someone count the cost and make the decision to follow Christ despite the enormity of the suffering and persecution they might face. The joy of being a small part of God's work in bringing the nations to Himself. •

If you would like to receive regular updates from these missionaries, please contact FM Headquarters or email hq@faithmission.org and put 'FAO First Magazine' as the subject.



MY Search FOR God

Testimony by Jordan MacKay

I have always considered myself an atheist. I was one of those people who had no belief of any kind and, to my shame, I mocked those who had a faith. I thought everyone who followed Jesus Christ was brainwashed. However, it did intrigue me as to why they believed in this God.

While at high school, I met Ben, who became a good friend. One day I simply asked him: "So, are you a Christian?" His answer was, "Yes," but somehow I'd already known that, probably by the way he lived his life, very different to mine. I had the privilege of having hours upon hours of conversation with my friend, asking lots of questions as to why he followed Christ and what his beliefs were. Through asking these many questions the seed was being planted and I found myself thinking about this Jesus and, most important of all, how I could 'find Christ'.

Both Ben and I finished our schooling and we went our separate ways, which resulted in us losing touch with each other. At this point, my life was very different as I began living for the things of the world, drinking every weekend. My search for God had gone by the wayside and instead I was looking for pleasure, happiness and satisfaction in a very different way. When we live our lives in this way, we will eventually encounter difficulties. For a long time I blamed God for all that was wrong in my life.

"The good news of the gospel is for everyone.
God wants you to reach out to Him.
He changed my life and more importantly,
He saved me."

After some time I decided to get back in touch with my friend Ben. My search for God began again and, to my surprise, I slowly started to think more about why we are here on this earth. Throughout all this time the Lord Jesus was never far from my thoughts and I knew it was God that was dealing with things in my life.

After numerous months of seeking and searching, I came to the conclusion I would never get saved and I was wasting my time, even though the Lord Jesus was always at the front of my mind. As a sufferer of anxiety that causes panic attacks, intrusive thoughts, mild forms of OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) and depression, I began to pray, asking God to help me. Many times I would pray, but everything remained the same. Then it dawned on me that I was coming to God in a half-hearted way, expecting Him to answer prayer the way I wanted. Jesus said: *'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'* (John 14:6).

One night at 2am I had a severe anxiety attack that led to a panic attack, with suicidal thoughts entering my head. At that moment while I was shaking and crying on the floor, I called out for Jesus to help me. I told the Lord I was sorry for my sins and I was tired of living for an empty world of sin. I repented of all my sin and asked the Lord Jesus to open my blinded eyes and come into my heart. I told the Lord I believed He died for me on that cross and rose again, and with a full heart of faith I asked Him to save me, to wash away my sin and make me new again. It's hard to explain the sense of peace and calmness that filled me once I surrendered my life to Jesus. The anxiety is still there, but so is the joy and appreciation of being saved by His grace. Knowing I'm completely known and loved by the living God, that He is always with me and, more importantly, that I'm secure and will one day be in heaven, is wonderful. All we need to do is, *'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'* (Acts16:31). It's really that simple; it baffles me as to why it took me so long to see it.

The good news of the gospel is for everyone. You are known and loved by God: *'For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son'* (John 3:16). He wants you to reach out to Him. He changed my life and more importantly, He saved me. I know following Jesus is not always easy but He did say, *'If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me'* (Luke 9:23). My prayer is that many will kneel before Him and surrender their hearts to Him. •

HAZEL PIERCE

Many who phone or email our Irish Headquarters will have been in contact with Hazel. We thought you might like to know a little bit more about her and the great job she is doing and has been doing for forty years.



FM: Tell us a little bit about yourself, your family and how you came to faith in Christ.

Hazel: My name is Hazel Pierce and I have been married to Raymond for thirty-seven years. We have a son and a daughter, who are both married, and now have three precious grandchildren. I am the eldest of four, having two sisters and a brother. My parents, William and Isabel Porter, were full time in The Faith Mission for most of their lives. I grew up knowing that Jesus had died on the cross, but at the age of seven, became aware of my need to do something about that when one night my dad was preaching on the 'Second Coming' and I realised that if Jesus came back then, I would be left behind. The next day, after reading a little children's booklet written by Noel Grant, I asked my mum to lead me to Jesus.

FM: What was it like growing up as a child whose parents were in full-time ministry?

Hazel: It was an excellent grounding in living a life of faith, watching God supply our needs over and over again and having many godly people staying in our home. Rev Stanley Banks was one who made a big impression on me.

FM: What is the loveliest memory you have of growing up in your family?

Hazel: I used to love when my mum and dad took a Saturday off and we went away for the day as a family. It was good to see dad relax with us children – he loved fun, but mostly he

taught me to put Jesus first in my life and that's something I will never forget.

FM: Did you find it difficult moving around from place to place and having to change schools?

Hazel: I never enjoyed the attention of being the 'new girl'– I went to two primary schools and two secondary schools – but the Lord was with me, helping me make Christian friends in each place, something which I greatly valued. Trying to fit in to a new school again aged sixteen was difficult, but straight away the Lord helped me to find a group of Christian friends and I enjoyed those two years especially. That support of others who were like-minded was invaluable in helping me grow as a Christian.

FM: Tell us something about your work and what you do on a daily basis.

Hazel: My work involves various administrative duties in The Faith Mission Irish Headquarters office in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, including accounts, editing the regular Prayer Focus, admin for the FM Portadown Camp Centre, Bangor Convention, Gift Aid claims, as well as answering many emails.

FM: Who was your first boss and what was he like?

Hazel: My first boss was my dad, for whom it was a pleasure to work for seventeen years! We had a good relationship and I learned so much from his strong work ethic. He was always methodical, appreciated value for money and was meticulous at accounting – he was able to add a column of figures much quicker than I could do on the calculator!

FM: You have been in this work for a long time; what has kept you steadily plodding on in a 'behind-the-scenes' but vital role?

Hazel: I love my job and I am so thankful to the Lord for this means of serving Him in the background. I could never be a preacher, but I know I am contributing at my computer to help keep the work going.

FM: As you look back over the years you will have had to adapt to many changes, both in administrative processes and in the ministry of the Mission. What are the biggest changes and how did you cope with the challenges they brought?

Hazel: Obviously, when I started back in September 1982, there were no computers! I remember moving from an electric typewriter to a word processor and that was a huge jump! I don't miss the inky duplicator for the Prayer Focus! Back then, I could never have imagined that one day, we would rely less on the post and instead use the speed and efficiency of email so much, or 'meet' via a screen (hasn't Zoom become the norm?!) But some things never change – the people who support the work are still as committed, both prayerfully and practically, inspired to help sustain the Mission as they see the Lord at work through it, and for that I am so grateful. The message of Jesus' love is perhaps being conveyed in different ways than forty years ago, but the message never changes. I love the new Gospel Truck ministry in particular: the same sort of idea as the first 'portable halls', providing a neutral venue around various towns and villages, bringing the life-changing message of the gospel. The Mission's founder, John George Govan, said: "If The Faith Mission ceases to be a soul-saving agency, it does not deserve to exist."

FM: What is your favourite Bible verse and why?

Hazel: Oh, that's hard! I think I would have to say Isaiah 26:3: *'You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.'* In these uncertain times, when peace is something so lacking for many people, it is great to know that the Lord will give us His *'peace, which passes all understanding'* when we keep our focus on Him alone. •



NOT GIVING UP

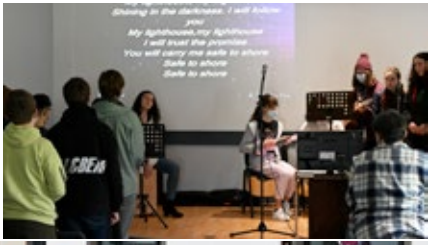
FOCUS ON THE MIDLANDS OF IRELAND

BY MERVYN AND RACHEL TOMB

The parable of the persistent widow taught by Jesus impressed upon His followers the need to pray and not lose heart. Throughout the summer months of 2021 and continuing to the end of the year, we praise God for the encouragements that have kept us pressing on and not giving up. We have seen God answer prayer in remarkable ways.

The comments from Christian families in our area helped us to realise the importance of holding summer camp in some format at Durrow FM Centre. The children and young people needed it. During three days each week for three consecutive weeks, a meticulous operation of temperature checks, sanitisation, podding of campers, separation measures, and predominantly open-air activities and ministry were set in place. Valuable Bible teaching, testimonies and quiet time groups fed the campers with truth they had lacked for so long in this format. We are confident that lives were changed. Also the expressions of thanks from parents who had dropped off their children and collected them each day were so emotional and heartfelt. It was a huge encouragement to parents to see that Christian ministry to children and young people was continuing despite the pandemic.

With Covid inter-country travel restrictions contributing to the cancellation of the Midlands Convention Drive-Ins in 2020, we were even more determined to see open-air ministry return to the FM Centre in 2021. The Gospel Truck itinerary for August included three afternoons of drive-in services on our playing field. People came from far and wide, prepared to remain in their cars and listen to the music and ministry. It was encouraging to see those who have a limited interest in The Faith Mission coming along and benefitting from the experience. At the close of each service, refreshments were provided to each vehicle, with people being quite cognisant of current distancing protocols. A large part of the appeal of the Midlands Convention is the fellowship among Christians, and it was good to see that despite Covid, this has not been completely lost.



The motivation to not give up allowed us to restart children's and youth activities when some churches were unable to do so. Our monthly 4th Seed and Delve groups at the Durrow Centre yielded fresh interest in the autumn, with many speaking of help received. Our much-anticipated sleepover for 8-10-year-olds built upon fresh contacts made in the summer, with forty children coming along to the overnight event during the October mid-term break. This was the first overnight event we had hosted at the Centre for some time. These children have missed out on so much; let's not allow them to miss out on meeting with God! Exhausted children being reunited with delighted parents are good indicators of a positive experience.

The momentum with children continued throughout the autumn with fresh interest in the Thursday Bible Club in Mountrath. Here the Covid hiatus since December 2020 until the restart in September 2021 had not affected attendance. They came with such enthusiasm, bringing new recruits with them. Online booking allowed new children to register, with many parents having a greater determination that their children should not miss out on Bible-related activities where possible. We must not undervalue the impact that such regular Bible teaching can have upon children. For some of those attending, it is the only Bible input that they have outside of school.

The planned YouthMix event for 14-18-year-olds also happened in late November, much to the delight of the forty young people who attended the sleepover event at the Centre. Some of the young people were very honest in sharing of their experiences during the lockdowns, and this only served to remind everyone of the value of Christian support and Bible teaching.

At the time of writing in early 2022, we still face some uncertainty. Some of the above-mentioned activities have already faced further interruptions due to Covid. However, we are determined not to give up. Many people have encouraged us in our work. The impact of what has been accomplished in recent years is all around us. Based on what we were able to do last summer, we are confident that we will be able to accomplish much more this year and are already planning our summer camps. We continue to pray and look to God for salvation blessing in the Midlands of Ireland. We will *'pray and not lose heart'* (Luke 18:1). •

BY MARGARET ROBERTS



THE NEED FOR Stillness

FOCUS ON THE MIDLANDS OF IRELAND

In an age of information and technology, it is very easy for us to be swept away by all the noise. The media can be the loudest 'voice' drowning out the amazing truths found in God's Word. Our societies are now based on a 'fast-pace' in which we don't need to wait, and in place of stillness, there is confusion and pressures to conform.

Today's young adults especially get the brunt of this as they try to work out the transition to adulthood. Previously when



> RECHARGE HAS BEEN A BLESSING TO ME, BECAUSE I CAN SEE THE DESIRE IN THE NEXT GENERATION TO KNOW MORE OF THE LORD, TO SEEK HIM, AND TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER.



I worked with The Faith Mission (in Canada), my co-worker and I were involved in connecting with young adults who were trying to live out their faith in this fast-paced, confusing and noisy world. When I first moved to Ireland, I noticed that the young adults were scattered, with little for them to get involved with.

And so, Recharge was born: a weekend away for young adults (ages 20-35). Inspired by my previous co-worker who also began a young adult retreat in Ontario, I thought of the need for young adults to be refreshed and encouraged in their faith.

As I began planning, Psalm 46:10 leapt to mind: *'He says, Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'* This became the theme verse for the weekend. I centred it on being a weekend to take time apart to focus on God, being 'still' in His presence.

The first weekend in October 2019 was a blessing, with roughly thirty young adults from all over Ireland. Since then and despite the pandemic, interest has only increased. Feedback was also encouraging, with some saying the weekend is "too short" and other's saying that it is "so needed".

Recharge has also been a blessing to me, because I can see the desire in the next generation to know more of the Lord, to seek Him, and to encourage one another despite the pressures they are facing. But Recharge also emphasises the real need all of us have as Christians to step away from our fast-paced schedules, and refocus ourselves on God who asks us to *'be still'.* In doing so, we are refreshed by His presence, and in those moments of quietness we find encouragement in His Word. •

STUDYING AT THE FAITH MISSION BIBLE COLLEGE



In this issue we catch up with the students who are almost finished their two-year course at our Bible College in Edinburgh. Here they share a little about their experience and what effect it has had in preparation for future ministry.

FM: Where are you from and why did you decide to study at FMBC?

Emily: I am from County Tipperary in the south of Ireland. I felt the call of God to Bible College in 2017 at a Child Evangelism Fellowship summer course when I was still in school. In the months and years that followed, I was burdened about going into full-time ministry. I was teaching kids about the Bible but wanted to know and understand more to grow in my faith. In 2020 I was finishing up school, and it was time to apply for college. I asked God to give me a sign of where I was going to study - would He show me the country. At the YouthMix event in Durrow FM Centre, someone came to speak to us about FMBC in Scotland. I asked the Lord if this was it. *'And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry'* (1 Timothy 1:12 KJV)

Jonathan: My name is Jonathan and I'm from Falkirk in Central Scotland. I decided to come to Faith Mission Bible College during lockdown as I had so much time to study the Bible and I knew that going to Bible college would really help me to know and understand the Bible more.

FM: What are some of the subjects you have studied and which parts of the course have you enjoyed or learned the most from?

Calvin: We have had the privilege to study many different topics –

subjects like Church History, Discipleship, Old and New Testament, Evangelism and many more. I have enjoyed studying this variety of topics, but if I was to choose one that I have learned from personally it would be the lectures on Prayer in first year with Sandy Roger. These had a biblical emphasis on how Christians ought to pray. I found the lectures extremely helpful as we focused in on what it looks like to really pray, and the importance and necessity of prayer.

James: Over the past two years we have studied a number of subjects: Old and New Testament, Theology, Mission, Church History and Ethics, as well as more practical subjects like Preaching, Prayer, Pastoral Care, Evangelism and Children's and Youth Work. Each of us students has something that we particularly enjoy, as well as other areas where we are pushed and shaped. I have especially benefitted from the Church History course as it is incredibly practical to learn from the past about the lives of missionaries, revivalists, and founding church fathers. Evangelism has been really helpful to immediately apply when we do our weekly outreach in Edinburgh city.

FM: In what ways have you benefitted from the course that will help you in future ministry?

Jeff: The course has prepared me practically for future ministry in many ways. Studying theology has given me a greater understanding of the Word of God; the preaching class has given valuable understanding of how to develop a sermon from a text and then preach it. But more importantly I feel God has been preparing me spiritually for ministry whilst at College. One such lesson was to be brought to the place of realising my own inability and that in my own strength I can do nothing; it is only when fully relying on God that I can do anything of value for Him.

Daniel: I have benefitted both practically and personally. Practically, in terms of Bible study – in general and in close reading of the key texts – and in interpreting the Bible correctly and then being able to convey its message faithfully. Personally I have been blessed by the modules that focus on prayer, discipleship and character, times of fellowship where we praise God together as students and staff, and in giving a hand in practical work to develop a servant heart. The benefits from the course are these: the head and the heart both filled, nurtured and transformed as a result of letting God have His way.

FM: As a wife and mum you have been doing the part-time course. In what way has this challenged you and how have you overcome those challenges?

Sarah: My biggest challenge, as I'm sure most mums can relate to, was keeping on top of things. It was hard enough just having the children and house to look after without adding the studies to it all! To start with though, I had the mindset of just putting my head down and 'cracking on with it'. But I had a lesson or two to learn. God was showing me that trying to press on relying on me, myself and I just wasn't going to work. And it didn't. I was all for giving up my studies until I realised that I had to give everything over to Him. And in doing so I was given the help and strength needed from the Lord to get through. I have to be honest and say that I've had to re-learn that lesson a few times since being here, and probably will again this term with having a newborn now too. But when I am not able, God is able, and He will *'supply all [my] need'* (Philippians 4:19) and be with me to overcome all the challenges that come with being a student, wife and mum. •

The second-years will appreciate your prayers as they seek the Lord to know His will for their future ministries. Please pray for all the students, including those who study the part-time Foundation course. Ask the Lord to bring a good number of students into the College for the new session beginning in September.

BOBBY DUKELOW

A TRIBUTE



BY TREVOR MATTHEWS

As a teenage farm boy, Bobby Dukelow lived life to the full, playing his accordion around the dance halls in the community around Skibbereen, County Cork. There was never a dull moment in his life. Faith Mission workers Annie Wilson and Anne Farquhar conducted a gospel mission in Churchcross which attracted many local teenagers, and at that time Bobby was truly converted to Christ. Some time later, at the newly established FM Bandon Convention, Bobby was clearly called by God to Christian service. At just seventeen years old, with a small suitcase and his accordion over his shoulder, he got a lift on a tractor which connected him to public transport as he headed for The Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh. It was the beginning of an adventure.

"Bobby's great burden was to make God's Word available to everyone. He had a heart for God's work, was blessed with so many gifts and abilities and was a thoroughly practical man."

He spent his entire working life serving the Lord in the ranks of The Faith Mission. He, along with other Faith Mission workers, conducted many missions throughout Ireland and Scotland. Sadie and he were married in 1963 and their first home was in Dunfermline, Fife. Later they moved to Aberdeen to lead the work in the East Scottish District, and then on to Dublin to superintend the South Irish District. Bobby's great burden was to make God's Word available to everyone and he became one of the leading Bible distributors at that time in southern Ireland. He had a heart for God's work and was based at various times in Ballymena, Omagh, Portadown and Ballykelly as leader of four FM Districts until his retirement in 2000.

He was blessed with so many gifts and abilities and was a thoroughly practical man. No project daunted him. He was the expert when erecting tents and portable halls. He repaired cars, undertook electrical and plumbing jobs and many building and joinery tasks. It is difficult to think of a job he would not tackle. In the early 1980s when FM Camps and Camp Centres were being established throughout Ireland, Bobby was the 'go-to' man. His advice, encouragement and practical input was enormous. This was also true when the FM Bible College transferred from Ravelston to Gilmerton, Edinburgh, in 1987. If a project appeared expensive, he would often say, "There's got to be a more economical way of doing this," and with his sharp business mind, he would find it!

His life was characterised by some wonderful personal traits. He had a great sense of humour and was kind, courteous and pleasant. In any discussion with Bobby, even when he had a deep understanding of a subject, he never showed any trace of superiority. Bobby read widely and could converse about almost any subject in an intelligent way. However, he was a humble, gracious man, whether in the pulpit leading a Convention meeting or sharing in a local FM Prayer Union. On one occasion where he had been invited to preach in a church, the chairperson gave him a wonderful introduction highlighting the blessing and benefits received from previous ministry and the great encouragement he had been in Christian work. Before commencing his message, Bobby simply said to the congregation, "After an introduction like that, I can't wait to hear myself speak!"

He was a great family man, and along with his wife, Sadie, was a great inspiration and guide to his three children, Heather, Valerie and Victor, and his eight grandchildren.

As a man of many talents, gifts and graces, He was utterly dedicated to a life of Christian service. Bobby has now heard from His Saviour, *'Well done, good and faithful servant.'* •



Together Through the Storm

A Practical Guide to Christian Care

Sally Sims
Publisher: Matthias Media
Price: £8.99

Jenny McCullough reviews a book she found very helpful.

This book begins with Sally (a trained nurse) sharing part of her own difficult journey as a Christian, and some of the fiery trials that God led her through to prepare her for a specialised ministry. God had a purpose, and as she received the pastoral care and support she needed, she grew spiritually and developed a real heart of compassion to minister to others around her. God knew her heart to serve in this capacity, and a door opened for her to coordinate pastoral care ministry.

The first section considers the purpose of suffering in the life of a believer, and the living God who is always present, who fully cares and comforts so that we may be deepened in our faith and become a blessing to those around us. Sally invites us to pour out the deep sorrows of our hearts to Him, the God who knows and fully understands us. He often leads His children to meditate on and pray through the laments of the Psalms, the heartbreaking journey of Job and the complaints of Jeremiah. And as we continue to walk by faith, He desires to bring restoration to our soul and a greater awareness of the suffering of those around us.

In part two, Sally seeks to develop our understanding of the necessity of Christian care amongst the body of Christ. A good foundation of Biblical truth and how God works through suffering is vital. Learning to listen with empathy and encouraging continual trust in the Lord even during hugely difficult circumstances is also important. Wisdom and discernment need to be developed to become skilled in helping a range of different people and difficult issues.

The practical outworking of Christian care is the focus in the final section. This material covers practical principles and is very useful for a visiting and counselling ministry. Christian care brings the truth of God's Word and prayer into the situation, making it different from secular counselling. Prayerful dependence upon God and asking for His help and strength can bring comfort, care and counsel to others. God is continually working out His good purposes in the lives of those we serve. We are His ambassadors, and He can enable us to love and serve well for His glory.

Throughout this book Sally adds relevant quotes, short stories from blogs, and other resources on soul care. This gives us opportunity for further reading and study. I highly recommended this book. Life is hard, but God is good.

Nothing *'shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Romans 8:38-39).•

***Together Through the Storm** is available from FM Bookshops.*

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The Faith Mission

EASTER 2022

BANGOR Convention

FRIDAY 15 - TUESDAY 19 APRIL 2022

- Solid Bible Teaching
- Inspiring Meaningful Worship
- Renewed Spiritual Vision
- Refreshing Warm Fellowship

*Subject to change due to Covid-19

SPEAKERS



Joe Barnard



Paul Mallard



Robert Murdock

www.faithmission.org

EC22

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SUNDAY 3 - FRIDAY 8 JULY

DAVID COOK will speak at the morning Bible Readings



LIAM GOLIGHER is the speaker at the Evening Celebrations



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