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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

AUTUMN 2022 | ISSUE 1325

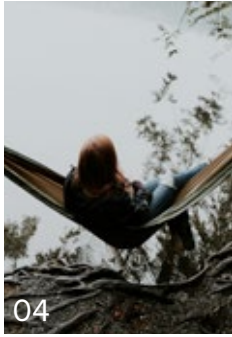
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



COME AND FOLLOW

- » LOOKING INTO THE GOSPELS (PART 2)
- » TRANSFORMING GRACE
- » EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY!

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

As indicated in the last issue of the magazine, August introduced some of the most significant changes within the leadership of the Mission that have taken place in many years. I will not repeat what was outlined in the last magazine, but please remember those who have retired, relinquished positions, moved on to new ministry opportunities, or taken up new responsibilities within the Mission. Please especially pray for the three new National Directors who have now taken up their responsibilities and together form an executive group taking overall responsibility for leadership of the Mission.

At the end of July, George and Andrea Conn retired from the work having each served with the Mission for thirty-seven years, Robert and Elaine Murdock moved on to a new sphere of ministry with Duncan Street Baptist Church, Edinburgh, David Reimer retired from his role as academic dean at the Bible College, and Lewis MacDonald left the Mission to commence a ministry apprenticeship with St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh. In addition, John McCartney will be leaving us at the end of August. We thank them all for their fellowship, ministry and valuable contribution to the work of the Mission, they will be greatly missed. We wish each of them God's richest blessing as they move into the next chapter of their walk with the Lord.

Currently the Mission faces some very significant challenges. These include identifying the right person to be the future leader of the Bible College, the need for suitable personnel to take oversight of our Newton Stewart Centre, and someone to superintend the Irish Border District. Another concern is the very small number of full-time students currently enrolled for the coming session at the Bible

College. This will have a significant knock-on effect, not only on the finances of the College but also on student community life. We value prayer for further applications prior to the College recommencing in September.

Pray too for the Bible College staff, about whom you will read more later in the magazine. We thank the Lord for this capable and committed team whose oversight will ensure the College functions effectively during this period of transition.

We welcome four of our recently graduated students, Emily O'Connell, Daniel Brown and Jeff and Sarah Townend, as they join the work of the Mission. An urgent need is for suitable accommodation to become available in the Inverness area to enable Jeff and Sarah to relocate there in preparation for taking over responsibility for our work in the Highland District next spring.

I have now stood back from the role of General Director. It has been an immense privilege to serve in that capacity for the last eighteen years, a role I could not have fulfilled without Linda's support and encouragement. We have been humbled to see the Lord's faithfulness, provision and blessing on the work in so many different ways during that time. However, I am not yet fully retiring from the Mission but will continue for a period as an Administrative Director supporting the new leadership group as they settle in.

As this will probably be the last time I write the introduction to the magazine, I take the opportunity to thank you all for your interest in and support of the work. We trust you enjoy reading this edition of the magazine. •

| *John Townend, Administrative Director*



Repentance and Rest, Quietness and Trust

BY RICHARD
MYERSCOUGH

Among the gathered promises in Isaiah are words that address us in all the hurry and flurry of life, along the highways of stress and struggle – an invitation that has all the hallmarks of a compassionate and merciful God: *'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength'* (Isaiah 30:15).

What could be more welcome than salvation and strength? Deliverance from all that

oppresses, both within and without, and a durability that can withstand turmoil and trauma – these are words to cling to, to embrace with our whole heart.

And yet the sad reality is that the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, reports on His people's response to His overtures: *'you would have none of it.'* The stubborn and wilful rejection of such a winsome invitation is as perplexing as it is striking. Why the rebuff? Why the refusal to accept what is sincerely offered?

The conditions for receiving this balm are deceptively simple. To have a change of heart and mind, turning from self-governance and self-reliance, and in place of all the clamour and chaos to draw the deepest breath, ceasing from noise and placing our lives into the strongest, most loving hands. Who could find such conditions a burden, an intolerable demand?

And yet we might be ready to admit that, alas, we do; that we struggle to turn from our own ways and our own wisdom that we're too much in love with, our own reflection, to see beyond it and gaze into the depths of these quiet waters. We listen all too willingly to the empty boasts of success that plague our ears, believing the lie that more resources, more influence, more capacity is what we need. An endless turning back in upon ourselves, a fruitless hoping in earthly might and riches.

The call to quietness, to lay down our burdens and to rest, often finds us unwilling and unable to yield – our hands holding onto the pains and anxieties of life with vice-like strength. It makes no sense at all and yet it happens: instead of casting all our cares upon the Lord who cares for us, we determine to demonstrate our own capacity for heavy-lifting and get crushed in the attempt. We're so conditioned to howl and to growl that the thought of being quiet appals and confounds us.

And yet the offer remains, in all the contours of its promised peace. If we will turn and if we will hush we shall be met by the One whose salvation is undimmed and whose strength is unlimited. The most we could muster from all our striving soon evaporates in the rising heat

of the day; the sum of all our unaided wisdom is only vapid and void. But His word remains, His call persists, His ear remains open.

In all our preoccupation with the cares of life and the hollowed-out promises of cisterns that are permanently broken, we can pray for mercy to meet us in the sham and in the shame, for the Spirit himself to replace our clamour with His calm, to quieten us in His love as He rejoices over us with singing.

**If we will turn
and if we will
hush we shall
be met by the
One whose
salvation is
undimmed
and whose
strength is
unlimited.**

*Today Thy mercy calls us
to wash away our sin,
however great our trespass,
whatever we have been;
however long from mercy
our hearts have turned away,
Thy blood, O Christ, can cleanse us
and make us white today.*

*Today Thy gate is open,
and all who enter in
shall find a Father's welcome
and pardon for their sin;
the past shall be forgotten,
a present joy be given,*

*a future grace be promised,
a glorious crown in heaven.*

*O all-embracing mercy!
O ever-open door!
What should we do without Thee
when heart and eye run o'er?
When all things seem against us,
to drive us to despair,
we know one gate is open,
one ear will hear our prayer.*

Oswald Allen, 1816-78 . ●

Richard is the minister of Pontefract Congregational Church in West Yorkshire. You can subscribe for free to receive Richard's weekly articles at www.thewaitingcountry.substack.com.

BY HOWELL JONES

Looking into the Gospels

PART 2

Behold Your King!

Matthew is the first and longest of the Gospels. Like the others, it records the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus but does so in a particular way. It is characterised by a number of features peculiar to Matthew.

In the first place, it reflects Matthew's own perspective on the Messiah. He seems to have been very conscious that so much in the life

of Jesus was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. He also seems to be taken up with the concept of power, and emphasises the authority aspect of Jesus' ministry. He presents Him as King. He also has a very distinctive way of grouping similar items together in related sections.

The second main feature of this gospel is its structure. Five teaching sections are arranged in order, interspersed with narratives. These are – the sermon on the mount (chapters 5-7), sending out the twelve (chapter 10), parables of the kingdom (chapter 13), attitudes towards others (chapter 18) and the end times (chapters 24-25). They form a significant sequence which takes us through the book.

Reducing that sequence to a simple pattern, we can say that the description of the Messiah, in fulfilment of prophecy, is the presentation of One who brings a new way of life and a new kingdom. The nature of that life is set out in this set of five teaching passages, which accord with the analogy of planting and reaping.

The first section describes the kind of life that is to be generated, a life of essence which stands out in stark contrast to what currently exists. It is seed with considerable potential and pedigree. That seed is to be sown, and this task is delegated to those whom Jesus has sent for that very same purpose, knowing that the reception they will encounter will often be unsympathetic. Yet, they are to continue diligently with that work regardless but rejoicing.

The very nature of the growth process is outlined in the section on the parables of the kingdom. The seed has life within itself, depends on receptivity, and is intended for fruitfulness. It will encounter a number of obstacles and have to compete with alternatives sown by an 'enemy'.

But the very point of planting is to see fruit, and so the next teaching section emphasises fruitfulness in the form of new behaviour representing the kingdom as they occupy roles and relate to one another.

Then there comes the harvest. The detail of these end-time events is indistinct other than that they are not always what they appear to be, but will cause major upheaval when they do occur. No one knows the time. It will be sudden and unexpected, whenever it happens. The harvest needs to take place and the fruit gathered together.

This is the picture that is presented in Matthew's gospel. Its implementation is achieved through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ and so it is not surprising at the end to see the renewed commission given to the disciples on the strength of the victory wrought by Christ and the authority bestowed on Him as He gives the command to: "*Go and make disciples of all nations*" (Matthew 28:19). This is the King heralding a new kingdom. And, so they are to go abroad in confidence teaching it and initiating its acceptance and implementation, assured of the King's enabling to the end. We have that same confidence and assurance today; may God enable us to go with the gospel where He leads us.

"If I know my own heart to-day, I would rather die than live as I once did, a mere nominal Christian, and not used by God in building up his kingdom. It seems a poor empty life to live for the sake of self. Let us seek to be useful. Let us seek to be vessels meet for the Master's use that God, the Holy Spirit, may shine fully through us."

D L Moody. •

| *Howell lives in Glasgow and is a retired pastor and lecturer.*

BY JOHN WILSON-SMITH

COME AND follow

To become a subject of grace is also to become a true-hearted follower of Jesus. We rejoiced when we received forgiveness but do we find equal pleasure in the path of obedience?

It is not a little remarkable that the first and last utterances of our Lord in the gospel by John consist of three words each. The first is, 'Come and see' (John 1:39) and the last is, 'Follow thou me' (John 21:22). The first recorded word that falls from His lips in this gospel is the most welcome of all words as sounding from Him — 'Come.'

He had come Himself. He, the Word, in all the glory of His person, ever-existent, distinct, divine, omnipotent, having become flesh, and seen in the grace that displayed His moral glory — He said, ‘Come’, a welcome and winning word. Unknown by the world He had made, refused by His own, He is a stranger in His own creation. But, spite of all, His heart still full of grace, He moves on in His path of love to man. The most absolute rejection does not chill the warmth of that heart, nor dry up its mighty springs.

When asked by two of John the Baptist’s disciples where He dwelt, His gracious reply was, ‘Come and see’ (John 1:49) and the result was, ‘They abode with Him.’ Where He conducted them it is not told to us. A palace on earth He had not; oftentimes He had no pillow for His head. He could supply no luxuries to these two disciples, saving that of being with Himself. And is not that the palace of delight to the heart of the true disciple? Is that not heaven on earth?

*When, blest with a sense of His love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.*

Heaven itself can furnish nothing better. Well, they came and they saw and they abode with Him, and they did not regret their choice.

The grace that attracted and kept these two men, Andrew and John, is exceedingly beautiful. Their conversion was one of heart-affection. They were won, drawn and attracted. Terror did not drive, self-interest did not impel. The one influence that acted upon them was that of

grace, ‘Come and see’ falling upon their ears in divine and charming power, and from henceforth they were captives in the chains of love. But the lips that say ‘Come’ also say ‘Follow’. To become a subject of grace is also to become a true-hearted follower of Jesus. It is incumbent on ‘them that are His’ to ‘depart from iniquity’ (2 Timothy 2:19). The two features are as clear as the two sides of a coin. Let either be wanting, and the coin is spurious; it lacks the legal mark of the mint. Hence the ‘come’ of grace in John 1:39 is balanced by the ‘follow’ of authority in John 21:22.

But does the word ‘follow’ sound as sweetly in our ears as did the ‘come’? We valued the grace, do we prize the claim? We rejoiced when we received forgiveness but do we find equal pleasure in the path of obedience? When the Lord Jesus says, ‘Follow thou me’ He means us to find pleasure in all that delights Him.

*He could
supply no luxuries
to these two disciples,
saving that of being with
Himself. And is not that
the palace of delight to
the heart of the true
disciple?*

To follow Jesus is practical Christianity. Any service which is not following Him, although perhaps very imposing and successful, is not of any real worth. Hence He said, ‘If any man serve me, let him follow me’ (John 12:26). Yes, the Lord would have that word engraven on the heart of each of His children, ‘Follow thou me’. It is His last recorded sentence in the gospel of John. It must have fallen with tremendous force on the ear of Peter, to whom it was said. It had a mighty effect upon His service. May we hear it in like manner, and may our course be truly formed by following the Lord Jesus Christ. •

A photograph of a hand reaching down from the top of the frame and another hand reaching up from the bottom, set against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The hands are positioned as if they are about to meet in the center of the page.

BY DAVID LANG

Transforming Grace

The Minor Prophets are so called not because of inferiority, but rather due to their tendency to brevity. There is, however, much profitable reading in these chapters and we shall miss much by passing over them.

Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament expresses much displeasure with the people of God. They were in a backslidden state and along with the priests, were far from God. Despite this, the book contains wonderfully rich promises, showing that God has by no means rejected His people, even though they have disappointed Him, often to the point of anger. Instead, He seeks for their repentance.

The authorised version of the Bible, in its customary poetic language, gives a vivid description of a faithful remnant who feared the Lord in Malachi's day: *'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His Name'* (3:16). There is surely a note of solemnity in the thought that, in heaven, books are written, and one day they will be opened (see Revelation 20:13-15).

But look back at verses 14-15. At this inopportune moment, people were saying: *'It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?'* It would be difficult to find more discouraging words.

"But wait", I hear you say, "Did Jesus not say: *'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly'*" (John 10:10)? Yes, Jesus did say that. Yet, if God's people could be saying: *'everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord'* (Malachi 2:17), it can come as no surprise that God moves in judgement (Malachi 3:5). God expects His people to be faithful.

"Men are not in hell because God is angry with them: they are in wrath and darkness because they have done to the light, which infinitely flows forth from God, as that man does to the light of the sun who puts out his own eyes" (William Law).

By way of contrast to this sad account, while the Lord Himself had many speaking against Him (Malachi 3:16), there were those who *'feared the Lord'* and that *'thought upon His Name'*. God sees His faithful ones. "God sees those who obey Him, ponders His truth, and exercises spiritual discernment. God sees and keeps a record of their names" (Warren Wiersbe). God Himself makes this clear: *'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him'* (Malachi 3:17).

God has by no means rejected His people, even though they have disappointed Him, often to the point of anger. Instead, He seeks for their repentance.

The prophet goes on to say: *'But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall'* (Malachi 4:2). 'Sun of Righteousness' is a title for Jesus Christ who will bring life and light.

This is such an encouragement to all of us, especially when we are aware of having let the Lord down. His promises are very real and scattered throughout the Bible. To make a habit of reading it is the finest habit we can develop.

*Jesus keep me near the cross.
There a precious fountain;
Free to all, a healing stream,
Flows from Calvary's mountain.
Near the cross, a trembling soul,
Love and mercy found me;
There the bright and morning star
Shed its beams around me. •*

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

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

*I see trees of green,
red roses too,
I see them bloom
for me and you,
And I think to myself,
What a wonderful
world.*

What a wonderful world, as we go on holiday or enjoy the Wiltshire Downs, or spend time with a friend. Yet, as Louis Armstrong's beautiful song plays in the film "Good Morning Vietnam", what an awful world, as scenes of death and destruction flash past.

At our church we've been studying the book of Revelation in the Bible. Looking over the Apostle John's shoulder, we've seen a vision of a wonderful world to come, not marred by

the empty pockets, empty armchairs and screens full of war, which shatter our present experience.

I used to think heaven was floating on a floaty cloud,

in (at best) a floaty nightie, playing tiny harps forever. It didn't sound very exciting. One might think heaven would be like Wiltshire: bluebell woods, rolling hills and not too many people!



*The Bible ends with John's vision of a heavenly new world.
Wonderfully, the only tree there is the tree of life,
which spreads as far as the eye can see.*

But in John's vision, the heavenly paradise will be as concrete as a city. By the end of Revelation, Jesus Christ has returned to judge the living and the dead, He's wrapped up this cosmos and brought a whole new heaven and earth together. What a life to long for!

'The angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse.' (Revelation 22:1-3 NIV).

The Bible begins with the wonderful Garden of Eden. It says God made people, not as robots, but free to choose as it were from two trees. One tree represented life in relationship with our maker. The other tree symbolised rejection of our maker, a decision that we know better what is good and evil. As a stone shatters a window, so

the wrong choice brought the world under curse.

The Bible ends with John's vision of a heavenly new world. Wonderfully, the only tree there is the tree of life, which spreads as far as the eye can see. The picture language reminds me of the prolific passion fruit which my parents planted at my childhood home in Gabon, Central Africa, and how, every day, I'd collect in my t-shirt fruit after fruit after fruit. It says the leaves of that tree will be *'for the healing of the nations.'* Don't we long for that healing? Finally, as this world metamorphosises into the next, God's promised blessing will swallow up the curse of Eden. What a wonderful world where God will live with His people forever!

I say to my friends: "Please make sure you'll be there!" It was Jesus, meek and mild, who warned most boldly of the alternative. I know I've done, said and thought things which Revelation says would have no place in God's heavenly new world.

I'm so glad the guest list is called *'the Lamb's book of life'* (Revelation 13:8), because Jesus is the sacrificial lamb. The first readers were called not to worship Caesar as Lord. Readers today are called to turn to Jesus as Lord and to trust that He died and rose to take our blame and to ensure our place in His wonderful new world.

Being in my early forties, I'm at the stage of having to fight off the mid-life crisis. No doubt there are many things I'm failing to achieve or experience. But I'm encouraged by C S Lewis that this life is just the "shadowlands" – the next life will be ultimate reality!

So, as we hear Louis Armstrong's tune, let's enjoy a holiday, perhaps the Wiltshire Downs, time with friends. But as we see empty pockets, empty armchairs and screens full of war, let's not despair but seek by faith the wonderful new world to come. •

Reuben is currently pastor of Emmanuel Church, Marlborough
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BY
SANDY ROGER


IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

When Paul wrote to the Christian church in Corinth he didn't mince his words.. His second letter to them is blunt and frank, especially in chapters ten to thirteen. In fact, because he wrote so plainly, the letter gives us a real insight into the man's feelings.

Apparently there were those in Corinth who did not think Paul was a genuine apostle. He had never been one of the original twelve, had come late to faith in Christ, and it was rumoured he was

only in it for the money. They even questioned his motives. Because of these misunderstandings and slanders levelled at him, he made a direct, personal appeal to those questioning his sincerity and his authority. He used battle imagery to emphasise that this personal opposition was yet another aspect of the spiritual warfare in which he was engaged.

Although 2 Corinthians 10:1-6 is primarily about Paul's personal struggles with his opponents, the section



*“though we have to live,
work and witness in
the world, that does not
commit us to living by
the world’s standards or
using its weapons.”*

contains practical pointers with a wide application to all involved in Christian work.

All Christians have to face opposition from time to time because none can avoid the spiritual battle. Even though he writes about his own experience, Paul incidentally provides clear teaching about where the battle is waged, the tactics we should adopt or avoid, and the kind of weapons at our disposal. They can be summarised in four phrases he uses

WE LIVE

Christians *‘live in the world’* (10:3); at conversion we are not mysteriously transported to heaven carefully packaged up in cotton wool. We are saved out of the world and then immediately sent back into it as a powerful influence for God. Jesus described it with the illustration of salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). God never intended His people to live in splendid isolation from the society Christ came to redeem. Spiritually quarantined Christians are no use in the working out of God’s redemptive purposes for the world.

But though we have to live, work and witness in the world, that does not commit us to

living by the world’s standards or using its weapons (10:2, 4). Christ’s co-workers are in the business of being used to win others and transform their society, but the way they go about things is quite different to the world’s way of doing things.

WE FIGHT

When Christians fight for truth and righteousness the struggle takes place in the arena of the world, but they do not employ the world’s strategies. Paul himself is an example of this. In Corinth much was made of a person’s authority and the impression they made on others, especially in the field of oratory. Speakers with a fiery delivery, a rich vocabulary and an impressive command of the language were seen to be people of authority.

But Paul makes his appeal *‘by the meekness and gentleness of Christ’* (10:1). He had had enough of the world’s type of authority in his pre-conversion days working for the High Priest (Acts 9:3-9), but now he preaches, writes and ministers with the authority of Christ. Even though he has some harsh things to say to these Corinthians he doesn’t lash out or blow his top. He knows only too well that “worldly

weapons” only ever maim, kill and destroy. So he rejects that approach in favour of simply proclaiming the truth, knowing that it has divine power to pierce through the armour of human pride, prejudice and ignorance.

Here is a wonderful example of the power of Spirit-filled restraint being used by Paul to gain ground for the gospel. Moses also had this quality. Both he and Paul were each capable of fiery outbursts and decisive action when necessary, but always under perfect control. The Bible word for this is ‘meekness’ and must never be confused with weakness (Numbers 12:3; Galatians 5:23). Self control is a vital piece of equipment in the battle. It needs to be possessed and cultivated by every Christian. It is part of the fruit of the Spirit.

WE DEMOLISH

Paul’s great spiritual objective was to encourage a true knowledge of God evidenced by genuine obedience to Christ (10:5). He is not out to destroy the arguments ranged against him using his opponent’s tactics. Rather, his one aim is to bring their thinking under Christ’s Lordship. His adversaries in Corinth had poisoned people’s minds against him,

but he resolutely refuses to use their approach. He is big enough to recognise that the opposition was not primarily directed at him, but at the truth he proclaimed. Much more important than his reputation as a preacher was the defence and proclamation of Christ’s gospel.

He knows that the real demolition job has to be done on false attitudes, entrenched positions, empty arguments and ignorant prejudice. Anything that sets itself up in aggrandisement against the message of Christ is a stronghold that needs demolishing.

WE CONQUER

Christians are not in the business of putting people down with clever arguments and pretentious show. They know that the battle for the souls of men and women is essentially a battle for the mind (10:5). It was true in Paul’s day and even more so in today’s multimedia, technological age. As never before, we are living at a time when the media can manipulate all the means of mass communication into a distorted parody of the truth as it is in Jesus.

In the life of Christian discipleship and in all

“the Holy Scriptures emphasise at every turn the vital importance of the mind. It is with the mind that we love God fully, give ourselves whole-heartedly and live in the world effectively for Christ.”

Christian work, the mind matters. Nowhere is this more necessary when we are called to pull down the strongholds of falsehood, stupidity and spiritual ignorance. This is why the Holy Scriptures emphasise at every turn the vital importance of the mind. It is with the mind that we love God fully (Luke 10:27), give ourselves whole-heartedly (Romans 12:1-2) and live in the world effectively for Christ (Philippians 4:8-9). Unredeemed people are not what they think they are, but what they think – they are!

By contrast, Christians are those who have set their minds on those things which are above and when they do so they are not merely on the defensive, but on the march. ●

Sandy is the chaplain and also lectures at The Faith Mission Bible College.

HE LED ME FORTH BY THE RIGHT WAY



Testimony by May Trimble



I came to the breakfast table this morning and, as normal, tore off my Choice Gleanings calendar page, and there was my testimony. It read like this: *'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'* (Romans 5:8). That's my testimony. The verse at the end was:

*It was for me, yes, all for me,
The love of God so great and free!
O praise His name, I'll shout and sing,
He died for me, my Lord and King!*

John M Whyte

My prayer is that, in sharing my testimony, someone else would come to that place where

they'll acknowledge that they have trusted in Jesus as their Saviour.

Looking back, I can say I've had a wonderful, happy and contented life because I have had peace in my heart through believing what Jesus did for me on Calvary. I was born and brought up on a farm in County Wexford. I was so privileged to have been born into a Christian home; I don't think there's any greater privilege a child could have.

An old Church of Ireland rector came to my parents' church, long before they were married. He not only preached the gospel in the pulpit but he went round the farming homes in the

evening where he conducted a 'sing-song', which consisted of singing, a Bible reading, prayer and a little epilogue. In that way they were steeped in the gospel even though they were in a part of the country where there was little gospel witness. He didn't just leave them there, but he taught them and created a love in their hearts for the Word of God with the assurance of their salvation. When they were married, he gave them a family Bible, with 1 Timothy 4:12 inscribed on it: *'Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.'* They lived into their nineties and lived out that text all those years, even in an area where there was very little gospel preaching. This old rector encouraged them to go to Keswick Convention, back in 1911 when travel wasn't popular. It was a wonderful start in their married life. In time they had five children and took every opportunity to bring them under the sound of the gospel – Sunday School, church and the occasional gospel meeting. However, with all that privilege, it didn't make us Christians.

I was sent off to a girls' boarding school where I was alongside girls who had a very different upbringing, and I became involved in their way of life. I read my New Testament and prayed to appease my conscience, but it didn't work, as I was doing it in my own strength. I knew there was something better for me. It came to confirmation time and I thought now I would change my way of life. I started to read the New Testament from the beginning under the bedclothes at night against school rules! I thought it would make a difference in my life, but it didn't.

In summer 1936, we went home for our holidays. It was rumoured abroad that a mission was coming to our parish conducted

by Faith Mission pilgrims. We'd never heard of The Faith Mission and we were looking forward to going out in the evenings and meeting with our friends. We enjoyed the bright singing, new hymns and choruses and people giving their testimonies. Our enjoyment soon turned to conviction and all I was concerned about was getting right with God. On the third Sunday night of that mission, 26 July, the closing hymn was "Be in Time". I believe it was when we were singing that hymn that I gave my heart to the Lord, and during the following week each one of my siblings did likewise. Needless to say, it made a great change in our home and my father and mother were so grateful to the Lord.

They opened their home for a Faith Mission Prayer Union, which was to be the means of strengthening our faith and growing in grace as different missionaries and Christian workers came to speak at the meeting. This was the start of my Christian life – now I had peace with God and the hope of heaven; but, of course, there had to be a building on that decision. We were taught to read our Bible every day and seek the Lord in prayer. We were encouraged by lovely Christian people who were made a great blessing to us – they left a fragrance of Christ in our home.

Going back to school after the holidays was a different matter; I didn't know how I was going to tell my friends that I'd become a Christian! But it was made easy for me as the usual question was: "What did you do during the holidays?" So I just told them plainly. Of course some giggled, but some took it seriously and acknowledged that they had made a profession of faith in bygone days but they'd never had the courage to speak about it. I was able to have a time of fellowship on Friday nights with those girls when others

*“We were taught to read our Bible every day
and seek the Lord in prayer. We were encouraged
by lovely Christian people who were made a
great blessing to us – they left a fragrance of
Christ in our home.”*

were getting their entertainment in different ways. I'm so glad that I came to know the Lord early in life because I needed guidance and a Counsellor for those formative years when I sought to know what I was going to do with my life. I thought of teaching but that didn't work out because of home circumstances.

I didn't go back to school after Junior Cert (GCSE) and seven years later, in 1943, I married one of those pilgrims! We had forty-eight happy years together. God blessed us with four children, all of whom came to know the Lord early in life and have set up Christian homes. God has been faithful. After our marriage God brought us to a small church. The congregation was made up mainly of five elderly men! This was during the war and the people were so poor. The church was dilapidated, but people began to attend the services and take in the Word of God. In time they began to tithe their money and, in a few years, the men discussed renovating the church. Where would they get the money? It poured in Sunday after Sunday by direct giving. God supplied workmen and miraculously provided timber when none seemed available. In 1948 the church was opened at a cost of £460! We held a mission at this time and the first two

to profess openly were the joiner and his wife. We had some difficult times following this blessing: a little child passed away suddenly and our own little baby was stricken with polio. We felt afterwards that it took our own personal circumstance to give us compassionate hearts for the people. God called us to another church and after some time it was thrilling to see His hand at work in saving whole families.

Thirty years ago, God called my dear husband home. I'm thankful I was able to do a little for the Lord by visiting in nursing homes those who had no-one to visit them. It's been a long road but, through it all, I have to say God has been so faithful.

At this late stage in my life, in my 100th year, I can still say God is faithful. I thank God for all His means of grace, the encouragements from His Word, for the church I attend in Newtownards, Northern Ireland, and the lovely Christian people we've met over the years.

The text my parents were given 111 years ago is as precious today as it was then. I trust it will be the longing of all our hearts – *'to be... an example of believers in word, conversation, charity, spirit, faith and purity.'* •

It is Well... With My Soul



Horatio Spafford



Mrs Anna Spafford

Horatio Gates Spafford (1828-88) was a lawyer and a devoted Christian living in Chicago where he was well known for his Christian witness. He and his wife, Anna, were blessed with four daughters, Annie, Maggie, Bessie and Tanetta, and one son, Horatio. Sadly their son died suddenly of scarlet fever at four years old.

They were good friends with the evangelist D L Moody. In 1873, Horatio decided the family

should go on holiday to Europe knowing his friend D L Moody would be in England in the autumn. He was delayed because of business commitments, so his wife and four children left for Europe and he planned to follow later. On the way across the Atlantic aboard the steamship Ville du Havre, there was a collision with an iron sailing ship. Within twenty minutes the Ville du Havre sank and all four of the Spafford children went down with the ship. Knocked unconscious, Mrs Spafford

had no way of doing anything to rescue the children. She was found floating on a plank of wood and brought aboard a rescue ship, unaware of what had happened to her children.

It took two weeks before the rescue ship reached Cork, Ireland. A few weeks later she sent a cable to her husband in Chicago. The message was only two words – “Saved Alone”. After receiving Anna’s telegram, Horatio set off to be with his wife. During the voyage, the captain summoned him to the bridge and pointing to his charts, he explained that they were now passing over the very spot where the Ville du Havre had sunk, and where his daughters had died.

In the depths of his bereavement, Horatio Spafford returned to his cabin, sat down and wrote the hymn: “When peace like a river attendeth my way.” His faith in his God had not faltered.

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
“It is well, it is well with my soul.”*



*Though Satan should buffet, though trials
should come*

*Let this blest assurance control:
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

*My sin – oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul.*

*For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.*

*It is well with my soul;
It is well, it is well with my soul*

After Anna was rescued and told of the death of her four daughters, she responded: “God gave me four daughters and they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why.” She was devastated, but in the midst of her grief and despair she remembered something a friend had once said: “It’s easy to be grateful and good when you have so much, but take care that you are not a fair-weather friend to God.”

After this tragedy, Anna gave birth to three more children but suffered more sadness as their second son, also called Horatio, died on 11 February 1880 at the age of four. The following year the Spaffords left America and settled in Jerusalem, where they helped the poor, took in homeless children and cared for the sick. Their one desire was to show the love of Christ amongst the needy people around them.

Seven years after leaving America, Horatio Spafford died of malaria on 16 October 1888. Anna continued to work in the surrounding areas of Jerusalem until her own death in 1923. •



Resting On the Faithful One

In a letter to his sister, Hudson Taylor wrote:

My mind has been greatly exercised for six or eight months past, feeling the need personally and for our Mission, of more holiness, life, power in our souls. But personal need stood first and was the greatest. I felt the ingratitude, the danger, the sin of not living nearer to God. I prayed, agonised, fasted, strove, made resolutions, read the Word more diligently, sought more time to get alone and meditate – but all was without effect.

Every day, almost every hour, the consciousness of sin oppressed me. I knew

Instead of growing stronger, I seemed to be getting weaker and to have less power against sin and no wonder, for faith and even hope were getting very low.

that if I could only abide in Christ all would be well, but I could not. I began the day with prayer, determined not to take my eye from Him for a moment, but pressure of duties sometimes was very trying, constant interruptions apt to be so wearing, and often caused me to forget Him. Then one's nerves got so fretted in this climate that temptations to irritability, hard thoughts and sometimes unkind words are all the more difficult to control. Each day brought its register of sin and failure of lack of power. To will was indeed present with me, but how to perform I found not.

Then came the question: “Is there no rescue? Must it be thus to the end – constant conflict and instead of victory, too often defeat?” How could I preach with sincerity that to those who receive Jesus, ‘...to them gave He power to become the sons of God’ (John 1:12), when it was not so in my experience? Instead of growing stronger, I seemed to be getting weaker and to have less power against sin and no wonder, for faith and even hope were getting very low.

I hated myself, I hated my sin and yet I gained no strength against it. I felt I was a child of God, His Spirit in my heart would cry in spite of all, ‘Abba Father,’ but to rise to my privilege as a child, I was utterly powerless. I thought that holiness, practical holiness, was to be gradually attained by a diligent use of the means of grace. I felt that there was nothing I so much desired in this world, nothing I so much needed, but so far from attaining it in any measure. The more I pursued and strove after it, the more it eluded my grasp till hope itself almost died out. And yet there were times of peace and joy in the Lord but they did not last long.

Oh, how good the Lord was bringing this conflict to an end. All the time I felt assured that there was in Christ all I needed, but the practical question was how to get it out. He was rich, but I was poor, He was strong but I was weak. I knew full well that there was in the root, the stem, abundant fatness, but to get it into my puny little branch was the question.

As gradually the light was dawning on me, I saw that faith was all I needed, faith was the hand to lay hold on His fulness and make it my own. But I had not this faith. I strove for it,

but it would not come, tried to exercise it, but in vain. Seeing more and more the wondrous supply of grace laid up in Jesus, my helplessness and guilt seemed to increase. Sins committed appeared but as trifles compared with the sin of unbelief which could not or would not take God at His Word but rather made Him a liar. I felt unbelief was the damning sin of the world – yet I indulged in it. I prayed for faith but it came not. What was I to do?

When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter was used to remove the scales from my eyes and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of our oneness in Jesus as I have never known before. The sentence: “How to get faith made strong? Not by trying to get faith, but by RESTING on the Faithful One.” As I read, I saw it all. I looked to Jesus and saw and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed! Ah, there is rest! I had striven in vain but I’ll strive no more.

But this was not all He showed me, not one half. As I thought on the vine and the branches, what light poured into my soul! I saw not only that Jesus would never leave me but that I was a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. The vine that I now see is not the root merely, but all. Jesus is not only that, He is the soil and sunshine, air and showers and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed or wished for or needed.

Oh the joy of seeing the truth! I do pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may know and enjoy the riches freely given us in Christ. •

| This article first appeared in our magazine in 1999.

FMBC

UPDATE



Sandy Roger Stewart Megaw Russell Newton Matt Baines Jill Megaw Catherine Briggs

Summer 2022 has brought a number of changes at the Faith Mission Bible College as key members of staff have left their posts and new people have joined the team, so we wanted to take this opportunity to provide an update on what has been happening.

Staff Leaving

In the early part of this year, a number of our key staff felt that it was the right time to move on.

Rev Dr Robert Murdock accepted a call to return to pastoral ministry and was inducted as pastor at Duncan Street Baptist Church in Edinburgh on 21 May 2022. Robert joined the College as principal in 2013, having previously served with churches in Northern Ireland and Canada, providing leadership and pastoral oversight, as well as teaching in the areas of New Testament, Preaching, and Ethics. In addition to his responsibilities in the College, Robert also served as chairman of Edinburgh Convention.

Dr David Reimer retired in July 2022, having served on the College staff as academic dean since 2018. During his time in post, David drew upon his decades of experience in theological

education to help strengthen the College's programme. He has also taught courses on the Old Testament and Christian Mission.

In July, John McCartney also stepped down from his role as administrator, which he had held since January 2021. John has played a key role behind the scenes, bringing a sense of order to many of our systems, during an unusual couple of years (including a semester of online teaching due to the pandemic). While we are sad to be losing such valued members of the FMBC team, we wish each of them God's richest blessings for the season ahead.

Staff Continuing

As these men left their roles, many of our existing team remained in post, with some taking on new responsibilities.

Dr Russell Newton, who has been a lecturer at the College since 2018, has taken on the responsibility of programme coordinator, ensuring that the people and processes are in place so that our courses continue to run smoothly and that our high standards are maintained. Russell continues to teach courses in Church History and Theology alongside these new responsibilities.

Catherine Briggs, who has been our librarian since 2019, has moved into the role of administrator. Catherine, who has also been studying with Biblical Counselling UK for the past three years, will be teaching a module on Biblical Character & Christian Relationships in the coming year, putting her training to good use.

Stewart and Jill Megaw continue in their posts as property manager and house manager respectively. The Megaws joined the team at the College in 2019. They not only play a vital role in ensuring that the College runs smoothly day-to-day, but also in discipling students and contributing to their practical training.

Staff Joining

This summer, we were also delighted to welcome three new people to the College team.

Rev Dr Sandy Roger has returned to the Faith Mission Bible College as chaplain. Sandy will be well known to many readers as a former principal of the College (1999–2008) and from his teaching ministry. In recent years, Sandy has served as a visiting lecturer at the College, and we are thrilled that he agreed to take on this role. As chaplain, Sandy has particular responsibility for the devotional life of the College, leading the extended times of worship, prayer, and ministry on Friday mornings. Sandy will also be teaching courses on Prayer & Revival and Preaching in the coming academic year.

In August, Rev Matt Baines joined the College staff as a lecturer. Matt is originally from Sydney, Australia, where he trained for ministry and served as an assistant pastor. He has been in Edinburgh since 2018 working towards a PhD in Systematic Theology. Matt has served as a visiting lecturer for the past two years, teaching Christian Theology. In the

coming year, he will be teaching courses on Theology, Ethics, and Pastoral Care. We are also delighted that Juliet Blesson has joined the FMBC team in a voluntary capacity as the librarian. Juliet's passion for books has already made her a very welcome addition to the College team.

Visiting Lecturers

As in previous years, teaching at the College continues to be supported by a variety of gifted visiting lecturers.

This year our external lecturers include: Ray Burbank (Christian Mission); Dr Marilyn Burton (Biblical Interpretation; Greek), Jessica Clayson (Children & Youth Ministry), Anna Grottoli (New Testament), Dr Iain Hepburn (Old Testament), Dr Derek Newton (Biblical Interpretation), and Rev Chun Tse (New Testament).

Looking to God

Summer 2022 has been a real season of transition for the Faith Mission Bible College, but we trust God amidst this time of change.

- Join us in thanking God for the contribution of outgoing staff to the College over the years and pray for them as they move into new seasons of life.
- Praise God for bringing new people to fill many of the vacancies. Pray for unity amongst the new team as we seek to glorify God as we train men and women for lives of Christian service.
- Pray for The Faith Mission Board as they seek the Lord's direction concerning the appointment of a new principal.
- Finally, please pray that God would call more men and women to be trained for lives of Christian mission and ministry. •



GEORGE AND ANDREA CONN

After serving the Lord in The Faith Mission for thirty-seven years, George and Andrea Conn retired at the end of July. We asked them a few questions about their lives.

***FM:** Could you tell me where you grew up and how you came to faith in Christ?*

George: I am originally from outside Portadown, County Armagh, Northern Ireland. My parents loved the Lord and I was saved in a mission conducted by pilgrims (Faith Mission workers) at the age of thirteen in 1971.

Andrea: I also grew up in a Christian home and, when living in Ballymena at the age of five, asked my mother to point me to the Lord after understanding my need of salvation at a children's meeting that day.

***FM:** When and where did you first come to bear of The Faith Mission?*

George: I can never remember a time when I didn't know about The Faith Mission. Workers stayed in our home when I was a child, when they were conducting missions in the area. We were taken to many FM meetings and I've attended the Easter Monday at the FM convention in Bangor almost sixty times!

***FM:** What career did you pursue when you left school?*

George: I spent just over eleven years in the motor trade, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

FM: *What led you to give this up and come into The Faith Mission?*

George: Nothing other than the call of God to Christian service. My natural desire would have been to stay in the vehicle industry and I had no special qualities to indicate my suitability for ministry. His call has not only brought us into ministry but has kept us there.

FM: *Andrea, some would think because you grew up as a 'Faith Mission child', it seemed the expected thing to do. What led to you coming into the Mission?*

Andrea: When the Lord called me into The Faith Mission in 1985, I asked Him to confirm it clearly in case anyone would ever ask, and thirty-seven years later, this is the first time I have been asked. The answer He gave me at that time is still the same. He spoke to me from Song of Solomon 7:11: 'Come my beloved, let us go into the field; let us lodge in the villages.' And that call to serve the Lord reaching people in rural Britain is what I have sought to do since.

FM: *As you look back over your many years in this ministry, what have been the most encouraging times for you?*

George: The most encouraging times have been when we returned to any particular area and witnessed folk who trusted the Saviour years before, still walking with God. For example, we recently met a bright Christian man who reminded us he was saved at one of our camps twenty years ago and is now sending his own children to camp.

FM: *No doubt it was not all easy. How did you cope with the difficulties of ministry?*

Andrea: For me personally, my biggest struggle was constantly battling weakness and exhaustion with health issues. However, in every situation the Lord reassured me I was in His will. And constantly being assured that we are there in response to God's call, enabled me to overcome many an obstacle, both physical and spiritual. I have found when seeking to minister to those in particular need, this has brought a greater understanding.

FM: *What advice would you give to someone just about to enter Christian ministry?*

George and Andrea: Do not delay if God is calling you. It is a tremendous privilege to serve the Master. However, do not go if it is only your own personal desire.

The most encouraging times have been when we returned to any particular area and witnessed folk who trusted the Saviour years before, still walking with God.

FM: *Has there been a book or verses of Scripture that have been a huge encouragement to you both throughout your time in Christian work?*

George: I am not an academic and don't enjoy reading. However, verses of Scripture which have been precious, especially in the more difficult times have been Proverbs 3:5,6: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.'

Andrea: I like to read testimony books of missionaries who have proved God in many situations. We read a daily reading book after breakfast, and Wiersbe's devotional book on the Psalms is one which has been a blessing. •

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY!

These are just some of our recent events where our workers were encouraged by much blessing. Please pray on for fruit to remain.



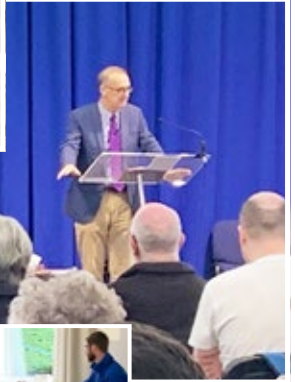
GOSPEL TRUCK OUTREACH



BANDON CONVENTION



EDINBURGH CONVENTION



REJUVENATE

DURROW LADIES' WEEKEND



TENT MISSION ON ISLE OF LEWIS

BOOK REVIEW

Through all the Changing Scenes

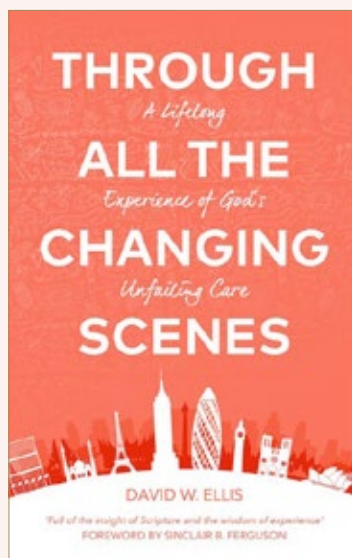
*A Lifelong Experience of God's
Unfailing Care*

David Ellis

Publisher: Christian Focus Publications

This is the story of David and Adèle Ellis and the journey that took them from Bible College in Glasgow to Indonesia, where they served for many years as missionaries. It is more than a biography as the book is filled with spiritual truths they learned on this journey.

The book opens by asking the question: “Can I really trust God?” David is about to embark on missionary work, sailing from Tilbury Docks in London to Singapore, and realises He needs to assure himself that God is with Him. The second chapter, entitled ‘From Fear to Faith’, gives an insight into how he faced his fears in the strength of God’s Word. This is apparent right through the book. He underlines the fact again and again that, even in the darkest of times, God was still in control and He was with them every step. Ellis writes: “It is all too easy for us to become fearful. Yet we have God’s promises.” He encourages the reader to see God’s faithfulness in every area of life: “We need to learn to hold on



to the faithfulness of God...”; a truth that is evidenced throughout the Ellises’ lives.

David is very honest, particularly in handling pain and disappointment. Both he and Adèle sought to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus through every twist and turn of their lives. In writing about how he dealt with Adèle’s illness of Alzheimer’s, David is open about the anxieties and fears of this cruel disease and to what extent it would affect his beloved wife. He refers to it as: “what in some ways feels like a living bereavement”. In these difficult circumstances he writes: “but now we had to discover that He is not silent or far away when we need Him more than ever.” Adèle went home to be with her Lord on 10 November 2016.

Having just read this book, I would encourage you to get a copy. Although quite an easy read, it is packed with practical biblical truths. Copies are available through FM Bookshops. ●



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FAITH MISSION RESOURCES



The Faith Mission has two quarterly publications.

First magazine contains Bible teaching, articles on Christian living, life stories, and information about FM outreach activities and missionaries.



Prayer Diary

gives daily points for prayer and praise, as well as Mission news and details of personnel.

The annual subscription for First is £6.40. Prayer Diary is free of charge.

Contact hq@faithmission.org



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