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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

WINTER 2024 | ISSUE 1334

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



I WILL NOT FORGET YOU

HOPE IN THE GRIEF OF DEMENTIA

» THOMAS: FALTERED BUT FINISHED THE COURSE

» GIVE EAR TO MY PRAYER, O GOD

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S DIRECTOR FOR SCOTLAND

'When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.'

Psalm 61:2

When Absalom listened to bad advice and rebelled against his father, David had to flee for his life. This would have encouraged David to write this Psalm. David's soul was overwhelmed but he knew he was safe and secure in the Lord's presence. The difficulties in his life drew him closer to the Lord. In our everyday lives, there are many things that take place causing us to feel overwhelmed. We can trust in the Lord knowing that His will is good, perfect and pleasing. Like David, we can be strong in all the different trials that we experience.

When David was being chased by Saul, he knew again the Lord's protection and peace in his heart. It didn't take away the circumstances he was in, but because of his trust and faith, he knew he would experience the Lord's shelter. As you read this, you may be experiencing things in your life that make you feel overwhelmed. Peter was overwhelmed by fear when he stepped out of the boat and took his eyes off the Lord. Keep your eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ and we know that we will be able to cope with what is going on in our lives. When we look to Jesus for help, He brings stability into our lives, *'Trust in the Lord with all your heart...'* (Proverbs 3:5).

We rejoice with Reuben Hutchinson and Debs Bailey on their wedding on 2nd November. They will be joining the work in Suffolk at the

end of the year. Pray that they will settle into married life and the Faith Mission ministry.

The Bible College term started in September with 28 students currently studying with us – 9 full-time, 10 part-time, 9 individual modules. Please pray particularly for our 9 full-time students as they settle into the regular rhythm of studies, practical service and evangelism, and as they adapt to community life at college.

We continue to look to the Lord for godly wisdom and His plans for the way ahead for the Bookshop ministry. Please remember the staff as they continue to share the gospel in the workplace and all the opportunities they will have in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Reuben and Bethany Lyons will be withdrawing from FM ministry as from December 1st. We wish them God's blessing as they continue to seek first His kingdom.

Thank you for your commitment in prayer for the work. We rejoice, knowing that both young and old have put their faith in Christ, and many Christians have known a fresh touch of God upon their lives. Please continue to pray with us in these spiritually difficult days and may you know much of God's daily blessing. •

*Gordon Thomson,
Director for Scotland.*

BY JOHN MOLLITT



THOMAS

Faltered
but finished the course

King Alfred the Great was a good Christian king who did much for his subjects and yet, what is it that most people remember about him? He was the man who let the cakes be burned! And although many historians doubt the validity of the story, that is still the one thing most associated with him.

I suggest that the disciple Thomas has suffered in a similar way. He is known as 'doubting Thomas', the man who, at first, refused to accept Jesus was risen from the dead.

And whilst this is sadly true, we do Thomas a disservice if that is all we remember about him. There is more to Thomas than just the day he doubted.

Followed the Master

Jesus went up on the mountainside and called to Him, those He Himself wanted and they came to Him' (Mark 3:13). Amongst those who were called and came to Him was Thomas (Mark 3:18). Thomas heard and responded to the call of Christ, just as Peter, James and John heard and responded. Thomas obeyed and followed the Master.

The call of Christ first came to Peter, James and John whilst they were fishing. The call came to Matthew when he was in the tax office. The call came to Nathaniel when Jesus saw him *'...under the fig tree.'* These 'calls' were quite dramatic and several verses in the New Testament are devoted to them. But with Thomas, there is no mention of what he left, perhaps he was not in business or even working when he first heard and responded to the call of Christ. In human terms, there was nothing dramatic or unusual and so no further details are given in the New Testament.



How thankful we ought to be if, like Thomas, we have responded to the call of Christ and followed the Master.

There is encouragement here for every believer. Some have a dramatic conversion. God intervenes and, in a moment, they are changed and transformed. There is a striking difference between the ‘old’ person and the ‘new’ person. But with others, it is not that way. Over a period of time, they are spoken to, they are brought to see their need and eventually they come to repentance and to faith in Christ. In human terms, there is nothing unusual or dramatic.

However, whether dramatic or not, every conversion is a

miracle because respectable sinners need to be saved as well as vile sinners. And respectable or vile, there would be no salvation except for the grace of God, the atoning death of Christ and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. Respectable or not, prior to conversion, how thankful we ought to be if, like Thomas, we have responded to the call of Christ and followed the Master.

Faltered on the Way

Thomas followed the Master, but he faltered. In John 11:7 Jesus says to His disciples, *‘Let us go to Judea again.’* But knowing what had happened there previously, the disciples advocate caution, *‘But Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You and are You going there again?’* (John 11:8). The disciples recommend caution but Thomas goes beyond that. Perhaps revealing the pessimistic, melancholic side to his temperament, Thomas says, *‘Let us also go that we may die with Him’* (John 11:16) As far as Thomas is concerned, it is a foregone conclusion that in Judea, Jesus and His disciples will be killed.

We all have different temperaments. Some are optimists, some are pessimists, some are extrovert

and some are introvert. And whilst the grace of God changes us as people, it does not altogether change our natural disposition. We might wish we were different but it is how God, in His providence and for His purposes, has permitted us to be.

In John 14:2, Jesus spoke tenderly of heaven, *‘In My Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.’* Surely, they are amongst the most comforting words Jesus ever spoke and yet Thomas saw no comfort in them at all. Jesus going away, Jesus preparing a place, Jesus coming again! To Thomas this created a sense of foreboding and uncertainty and exclaims, *‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, how can we know the way?’* (John 14:5). A question asked by the faltering Thomas in his weakness and pessimism, and yet it brought forth from Jesus one of the greatest statements He ever made. Jesus said to Thomas, *‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father, except through Me’* (John 14:6).

How many have been saved and are rejoicing in heaven through hearing John 14:6? And yet there would have been no John 14:6 without John 14:5. God, in His sovereignty,

took this faltering request and used it for the eternal benefit of multitudes. What an encouragement! We all have weaknesses and defects, but if I am a believer, God has chosen me, Christ died for me, the Holy Spirit indwells within me and that means that with all my frailties, God can use even me to glorify His Name and to fulfil His purposes.

In John 20:25, it is the night of the resurrection and the disciples say to Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord'. What a glorious statement but not for Thomas. 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe' Sadly, this is what Thomas is largely remembered for and we cannot condone his behaviour. We might make excuses for his depressive, melancholic nature, but we cannot condone behaviour which Jesus rebuked. However, which one of us has never faltered? Which one of us has never had doubts or questions? Before we are too harsh on Thomas, would we be prepared to say, 'Let us also go that we may die with Him?' (John 11:16). Thomas was so committed and devoted to Christ that he was prepared to die for Him. We must not write Thomas off, after all Jesus did not write Thomas off.

Finished the Course

Thomas may have faltered on the way, but He finished the course. Thomas was not in the upper room when Jesus rose from the dead, but he was in the upper room after Jesus had ascended into heaven. In Acts 1:13, he is named with all the other disciples, except for Judas.

In the New Testament, when Judas is mentioned, his name is often followed by the phrase '...who betrayed Him.' By contrast, when Thomas is mentioned, it does not

Praise God that what was true for Thomas is true for every believer. All sin, confessed and repented of, is sin forgiven - sin that God remembers no more.

say 'who doubted Him'. When Peter is mentioned, it does not say 'who denied Him'. Why the difference between Judas and Thomas or Peter? Judas was never a saved man and because his sin was never forgiven, it was

never forgotten. By contrast, Thomas was a saved man, whose sins had been forgiven, and therefore, God does not remember those times when he stumbled and faltered. It is the promised fulfilment of Jeremiah 31:34, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin, I will remember no more.' Praise God that what was true for Thomas is true for every believer. All sin, confessed and repented of, is sin forgiven - sin that God remembers no more.

Is not the way the Lord deals with us, how we must now deal with one another? The world says 'forgive and forget' but that can be very difficult - should we not rather forgive and choose not to remember? I may not be able to altogether forget what a person did to me or said about me, but with the Lord's help, each day I will make a conscious decision. I will choose not to remember those things. The way the Lord deals with me is how I must seek to deal with others.

Thomas followed the Master, he faltered on the way, but he finished the course. Thank God for this disciple, with whom so many of us can identify. •

John is a retired minister, he with his wife Pat now live in Yorkshire where he does some writing and speaking at various churches.

Speak The Truth In Love

BY
NATHAN
FIELD

Picture, if you will, a relatively calm Saturday afternoon in the Field household. The children are playing nicely, and I'm able to practice the guitar for church on Sunday. For context, you should know that I grew up in what most people would call 'a musical family'. Both my parents could play and sing, and they gave us children plenty of encouragement in developing musical gifts. My older siblings became accomplished singers and musicians, and I must admit, being four years their junior meant I was always a little intimidated to develop my own skillset! This



became less of a problem once they emigrated abroad, and so I found myself part of our church's worship group, and thus you find me happily strumming away in our living room.

I don't remember feeling particularly bullish about my talents that afternoon, but for whatever reason it was apparently necessary to give my self-confidence

a pre-emptive check. One of the songs contained a particularly tricky chord progression. Getting one of the chords wrong resulted in a rather jarring sound, and so after a few failed run-throughs my daughter felt the need to interject. Looking up at me sweetly she questioned with all innocence, "Daddy, are you not very good at the guitar?" My four-year-old clearly had the first part of

Ephesians 4:15 down pat. She's always been a truth-speaker, and long may she remain that way. I'm sure she does it in love as well, but the truth still hurt in that instance.

In my Bible, this famous phrase comes in a section of Ephesians 4 entitled 'Unity in the Body of Christ'. It is written in contrast to those who are '*...children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine*' (4:14). It's squarely aimed then at our language within the church, with other believers, '*Speaking the truth in love*' (4:15).

However, it's such a nice, concise turn of phrase that it's been applied to just about every interaction we can have with anyone. And in this instance at least, there's little harm in plucking this wise saying out and embedding it within us. From it we can learn three clear principles:

FIRST: SPEAK

This is a tricky one, because the Bible is also full of encouragements to keep your mouth shut. When I was growing up we read through the Proverbs often for our family devotions, so, '*Even a fool is counted wise if they keep silent*' (Proverbs 17:28) and '*In the multitude of words there wants no sin*' (Proverbs 10:19) were often in my mind growing up. Perhaps in this instance we would be best served by looking to Ecclesiastes 3:7 - '*There is a time to be silent, and a time to speak.*'


Maybe it's because I'm someone who has a tendency to think of the perfect response around 36 hours after I've had a conversation, but I personally find the command to speak, a challenging one. And I'd suggest that when it comes to sharing God's light in a dark world, it would be the same for the majority of Christians

today. Apart from a minority who perhaps are more likely to struggle with the latter part of this verse, most of us tend to err on the side of keeping quiet with regards to our faith.

There are plenty of reasons for this, some valid, some not. But my encouragement to you from this verse is this - speak. Given half an opportunity, do your best to shake off the worry of not using exactly the right words. While speaking on Psalm 8 recently, I was amazed by verse 2: '*Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have established a stronghold...*' If God can use the praise of children to such effect, just think what He can do with your words. So be ready to speak for Him

SECOND: THE TRUTH

I was recently at a conference when someone asked me if I ever taught in church. When I answered that I did, they



"There are so many people out there desperate for this truth. Because the veneer of this life's broken promises wears off pretty quickly."

proceeded to tell me that they didn't know how anybody could be a teacher of the Word because of how serious the responsibility was. "How can you be sure you're not getting it wrong?" they asked me.

It's a sobering thought for sure, and it's one that should always keep any preacher humble when approaching the pulpit. But of course it would be a tremendous shame if no sermons could be preached for that reason. I wonder where my life would be if I hadn't had God's Word explained to me throughout my years by many diligent teachers.

It's that diligence that I think is so important here. Not just for those who occupy the pulpits, but for those in the pews also, to actually know the truth. Perhaps in years gone by there was a sense in which it was possible to be a Christian who coasts. Our Western culture was not so diametrically opposed to the Bible that you could get away with it.

That's certainly not the case today. Not if you actually want to hold to the teachings of Jesus. And it's such a shame to settle for a 'pick and choose' approach to the Word of God. A "did God really say" attitude is where mankind first went wrong after all. The Bible is a

guidebook to teach us how to live, not a cookbook for us to pick a few favourite recipes. And there are so many people out there desperate for this truth. Because the veneer of this life's broken promises wears off pretty quickly. Those who have hope in this life only are the most miserable. We have to know the truth, because our fellow man needs something other than lies to live.

THIRD: IN LOVE

It's one challenge to get the truth of the Bible into our heads, and it's another to get it into our hearts. It is a sad fact that many Christians, and even non-Christians, do fill their heads with an awful lot of knowledge about the Scriptures, but without love, it would probably be better if it just stayed there.

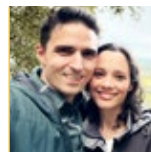
When it comes to speaking the truth, this is the perfect place to reference the famous words of 1 Corinthians 13. When we are speaking the truth, are we patient and kind? Do we envy those who say it better? Do we boast of our own understanding? Do we make others feel inferior? And when it's all done, do we resent the others in the conversation?

Speak the Truth in Love. That's quite the challenge. Which is hardly surprising,

after all it forms part of a passage that talks about measuring up to the stature of the fullness of Christ. But in this instance, and in every other, He is our example. Just look at how Jesus spoke while He was on this earth. He amazed rabbis as a twelve-year-old. He answered questions until no one dared ask Him anymore. Even when He was dying, He used His words to forgive and care for those around Him.

Wouldn't you like to speak like Jesus? It's easy to wish we could walk on water, heal the sick, give sight to the blind. But, oh to be able to speak the truth in love like our Saviour could. What would that look like in your life and mine?

This is not a challenge we have to face alone, for the master wordsmith did not leave us comfortless. We have His Word, and we have His Spirit. Let's see that we put them to good use in our lives, actions, and words. •



Nathan lives in Shropshire with his wife Becky and their four children, two girls and twin boys, who they home educate. They have been involved in various forms of Christian ministry throughout their married life.



BY PAUL CROWE

IRON SHARPENING IRON

*'As iron sharpens iron, so a man
sharpens the countenance of his friend.'*

Proverbs 27:17

The book of Proverbs can be read in thirty-one days by reading one chapter per day, a useful and profitable exercise. J Sidlow Baxter in his book, 'Explore the Book' said: "The book of Proverbs is to be read prayerfully, ponderingly and fairly often".

How can we sharpen one another spiritually? It can happen when we:

Engage in Godly conversation

In Malachi 3:16 we read, *'Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and*

heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before him for those who fear the Lord and who mediate on His name'. C.H. Spurgeon said: "Say much of what the Lord has done for you, but say little of what you have done for the Lord". It is always a blessing to hear others share

testimony of what the Lord has done for them and of how He has worked in their hearts to bring an individual to Himself. As the Lord's people we have much to speak about - His saving grace, His keeping grace, His care for us as His people, His forgiving love, His redeeming and eternal love. We can also speak of His protection in our going out and coming in (Psalm 121:8).

We need to remember that our conversation about the things of the Lord is not manufactured. The Word of God reminds us in Matthew 12:34, *'For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.'*

Benefit from Godly companions

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 we are reminded, *'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone if he falls, for he has no one to help him up.'* We can share in the success of our labour in the Lord together and be an encouragement to another when they fall. In 1 Samuel 23:16 we read that Jonathan strengthened David's hand in God (or encouraged him in God). When we go to the New Testament, the writer to the Hebrews encourages us to, '...

consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together' (10:24-25). A godly companion is a great blessing.

The Bible commentator John A Kitchen made this comment: "No man can be his best or reach the heights God intends for him without those friends who comfort, provoke, challenge, rebuke, chide, affirm, stimulate and encourage until his thinking is clear, his wisdom mature, his purpose refined and his faculties sharp".

Please note that if we feel we need to rebuke another brother or sister in Christ, let that rebuke be bathed in prayer and steeped in grace not with a condescending look. Look at Proverbs 6:17. What does the Lord hate? A proud look/a condescending look which is an abomination to the Lord. If we find it necessary to speak to a friend in such a way, we need to ask ourselves the question, "Does it wound me, when what I say will wound him/her?"

Neither are you a true friend if you flatter another. *'Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful'* (Proverbs 27:6). Remember Judas' one kiss was a deceitful kiss.

"It is often when we ask the Lord to make us a blessing to others, that He uses us in this way."

Learn from Godly counsellors

'Where there is no counsel the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety' (Proverbs 11:14). When seeking godly counsel or advice from a counsellor, be sure not to manipulate circumstances in your favour by speaking with individuals who will endorse what you want. Always seek balanced and godly counsel. We all, if we know and love the Saviour, must seek to be a godly advisor endeavouring to speak that word in season to those who have become weary in the way. We must base what godly counsel we give to those seeking guidance upon the Word of God, and encourage them to pray through the promises of God.

In conclusion, surely this is a ministry we can all have - sharing in godly conversation, being a godly companion and giving godly counsel. It is often when we ask the Lord to make us a blessing to others, that He uses us in this way. •

Paul and his wife Elizabeth work with The Faith Mission in the North East of Scotland.



GIVE EAR TO MY PRAYER, O GOD

BY ANNA ANDERSON

This is an earnest prayer from David in Psalm 55 where he pleads with God to hear his cry for help. It is known as a song of lament, where in the Old Testament, individuals expressed their feeling of helplessness in a situation out of their control. In the midst of it they felt they had been abandoned by God, and perhaps close friends also.

David's heart is in anguish, (verse 4) and expresses a longing to run away and hide, *'Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest...I would lodge in the wilderness. I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging*

wind and tempest' (verses 6-8). Many of us have expressed a similar desire like David's; when circumstances have overwhelmed us, and we don't see a way forward except to flee. We might try to hide from the storm but it is still raging furiously around us.

David has found himself in a difficult situation where his son Absalom, has rebelled against him. To make matters worse, one of David's closest friends has deserted him and supported Absalom in his revolt, *'For it is not an enemy that taunts me – then I could bear it...But it is you... my companion, my familiar friend'* (verses 12-13). David is referring to Ahithophel who was not just a close friend but his counsellor. The Psalmist speaks of having sweet fellowship with him, *'We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng'* (verse 14). To David, this betrayal felt like a stab in the back!

What does David do with his deep hurt, his heartbreak and the feeling of being torn in pieces, *'...his fearfulness and trembling...'* (verse 5)? He doesn't let it stay deep down but brings it all to God, *'Give ear to my prayer...Attend to me and answer me, I call to God... evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint*

and moan...' Feeling his wretchedness David beseeches his Heavenly Father, his God who has allowed this devastating blow to touch his life. After he tells God his *'... complaint and moan noisily...'* he confidently comes to the conclusion that, *'...he hears my voice'* (verse 17b). This requires faith to believe that after pouring out your heart to God – He has heard your cry. David recognises his own weakness and inability to solve the situation, and boldly brings his hurt, his betrayal and his anger to the God of Heaven and puts his trust in Him. David rests on the integrity of God's character knowing the matter is now in His hands. It may be that all of his past battles gave David the assurance that God would act on his behalf.

Perhaps you can identify with David and have experienced such pain and anguish. In verse 22 David comes to the conclusion that the answer in such situations is to: *'Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved'*. God has heard his cry, and the answer will come in God's time in God's way. However, to know this we have to, *'Cast...'* the burden. When a fisherman casts a line, he uses a fishing rod with bait on the end of the line and

throws it out into the water where the fish are. This is a picture of what God wants us to do with our burdens, to 'throw' them on the Lord. The burden is now His and the promise He gives: *'...will sustain you...'* helping to bring a steady and a continuous supporting strength for the believer who feels weak and helpless.

We sometimes hear sports commentators say of an athlete, "They need to sustain the same level in order to win." In other words when it comes to winning the final they need to keep up the same effort and keep their eyes on the finish line. In our struggles and trials our enemy would try to get us to look within instead of to the Lord. When we look within, we see hopelessness and can easily become despondent.

If we cast (throw) our burden on the Lord we are purposely saying to the Lord, "It's in your hands now, You take control of this unbearable situation, let Your will be done in it all." We hand the hurts and those who caused them over to God and His grace will enable us to forgive. As a result we will know His daily strength and His grace to keep going in spite of what comes our way. We will not fear the day because everything is in the Hands of our loving Heavenly Father. •



THE PRAYER OF FAITH

A Letter from the Mission Field

BY JO FRASER

The Scriptures speak of several kinds of prayer. There is intercession and there is supplication, there is labour in prayer and there is the prayer of faith; all perhaps the same fundamentally, but they present various aspects of this great and wonderful theme. It would not be unprofitable to study the differences between these various scriptural terms. Speaking generally, however, there is a distinction we all know; it is the distinction between general prayer and definite prayer.

By definite prayer I mean prayer after the pattern of Matthew. 11:21, 22; John 15:7, etc., where a definite petition is offered up and

definite faith exercised for its fulfilment. Now faith must be in exercise in the other kind of prayer also, when we pray for many and varied things without knowing the will of God in every case. I may pray much in this general way, for instance, about the European War, but I cannot offer much definite prayer, as I do not know the purposes of God sufficiently well to do so. In general prayer I am limited by my ignorance. But this kind of prayer is the duty of us all (1 Timothy 2: 1, 2) however vague it has to be. I may know very little, in detail, about the object of my prayer, but I can at any rate commend it to God and leave it with Him. It is good and right to pray, vaguely, for all people,

all lands, all things, at all times. But definite prayer is a very different matter. It is in a special sense 'the prayer of faith'. A definite request is made in definite faith for a definite answer.

Sometimes our petition has been such a good one, to all appearances, but that does not insure it being of God. Many 'good desires' proceed from our uncrucified selves. Scripture and experience certainly agree that those who live nearest to God are the most likely to know His will. We are called to be *'filled with the knowledge of His will'* (Col. 1:9). The *'secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant'* [Ps. 25:14].

We need to know more of the fellowship of Christ's death. We need to feed on the Word of God more than we do. We need more holiness, more prayer. We shall not, then, be in so much danger of mistaking His will. The wonderful promise of John 14: 7 is prefixed by a far reaching 'if'¹. I wonder if that verse ought not be paraphrased: 'If ye abide NOT in Me and My words abide NOT in you, do NOT ask whatsoever ye will (for) it shall NOT be done unto you.' Perhaps if we examined ourselves more thoroughly before God we might even discover, in some cases, that the whole course of our life was not in accordance with His will. What right would a man have, in such a case, to expect his prayers to be answered?

But is not this the fact with regard to much 'good Christian work'? 'Get your work from God', is a needed injunction. How often Christian leaders make their own plans, work hard at them, and then earnestly ask God's blessing on them. How much better, as Hudson Taylor

felt, to wait on God to know His plans before commencing! Much Christian work seems to have the stamp of the carnal upon it. It may be 'good', it may be successful outwardly, but the Shekinah Glory is not there.

Now all this applies to the prayer of faith. We must have the assurance that we are in the right place, doing the right work. We must be sure that God is leading us, when we enter upon specific prayer. It does not follow that because a thing is the will of God, He will necessarily lead you to pray for it. He may have other burdens for you. We must get our prayers from God, and pray to know His will. It may take time. God was dealing with Hudson Taylor for fifteen years before He laid upon him the burden of definite prayer for the foundation of the China Inland Mission. God is not in a hurry. He cannot do things with us until we are trained and ready for them.

God is not in a hurry. He cannot do things with us until we are trained and ready for them.

Let us *'press on, then'* (Philippians 3:12). We may be certain He has further service, further burdens of faith and prayer to give us when we are ready for them. And He will lead. Abraham would never have been a pattern of faith, if he had remained in Ur of the Chaldees. Nor will we ever have a faith worth calling faith unless we press forward in the footsteps of Him who said, 'Follow Me'. •

JO Fraser was a pioneer missionary to the Lisu people of the mountainous region between China and Myanmar. This excerpt is from a letter written to his prayer supporters and published in 'Behind the Ranges' by Mrs Howard Taylor (London: Lutterworth Press, 1945, Public Domain).

Reference:
¹ *'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'*

Living in the Light of Eternity

BY SANDY ROGER

From time to time all of us bump into people we haven't seen for ages. In the course of chatting, the conversation usually gets round to others that we both know. "How is so-and-so getting on these days?" More often than not they say, "O he's very well, he's got..." and then proceed to rhyme off a list of things they possess, which is meant to be an accurate gauge of their well-being. Everything is calculated and assessed in terms of material progress and financial success.

Jesus said very forcibly, that a person's life does not consist in the abundance of things people possess. Life, says Jesus, is more than having things. There are other values of much greater importance and to illustrate this He told a parable to show, *'How it is with the people who amass wealth for themselves and remain paupers in the sight of God'* (Luke 12:13 NEB). Two things stand out about this wealthy farmer in the story.

HE WAS A CLEVER FOOL

Usually described as the parable of the rich fool, some would say he had more money than sense.

The story is about a rich man, but it is told in response to a poor man who felt deprived of his rightful property (verse 13). The Bible never condemns wealth outright; being rich is a neutral condition. It is how we use or misuse our money that matters. We measure things by consulting our bank balance and viewing our possessions, God does it by analysing the hold they have on our hearts. Prosperity is not necessarily a sign of sinfulness, nor poverty a sign of righteousness. Why then do I call this man a *clever fool*? For two reasons:

I. His money was acquired lawfully

There is no hint of him being a corrupt businessman, a cheat or a con man. He made his pile by legitimate means; a normal, hard-working farmer. It wasn't his fault that *'...the ground brought forth plentifully'* (verse 16). He just struck it rich.

II. His money was invested wisely

The parable impresses us with the man's shrewdness. He is a thoughtful businessman and able farmer, acquiring what he had by

hard work, good agriculture and sound management. His was an expanding concern and he realised that change was needed if turnover was to increase at its present rate. Making plans for future growth, he began to build bigger and presumably better. He is to be commended for having such a clear aim and strategic goals. There is much we can learn from him, and none of this is condemned by Jesus in the parable.

HE WAS A STUPID FOOL

Having drawn a very vivid picture of the man which the hearers would have warmed to, Jesus proceeds to make the real point of the parable by outlining a number of major flaws in the farmer's character, thinking and actions:

I. He forgot God

In all his strategic planning, he left God out of the picture. God was not in his calculations. From beginning to end, it is a case of, "What I will do" and being proud of his own achievements, *'I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there will I store all my grain and my goods'* (verse 18). He was totally caught up in himself and his own plans. There was a basic self-centredness in all his clever schemes. God had no place in his thinking, his plans and his business. It is a trap that even God's people can fall into if they are not careful (see Psalm 106:13-15).

II. He forgot eternity

He prepared ahead, but not far enough. It never entered his head that there is a day when all our plans will be scrutinised and measured according to different standards. He forgot he brought nothing into this world and he certainly wouldn't be taking anything out of it. Imagine his friends in conversation at his graveside and one asking, "How much did he leave?" The laconic reply would have to be, "All of it!"

The foolish farmer is characteristic of so many. Preparation is made for school, career, development, marriage, family, holidays, retirement; for everything except meeting God (Amos 4:12).

III. He forgot the uncertainty of life

The way Jesus told this story must have been gripping. "I will say, many years" (v19), but God said, "This night" (v20). In Matthew 5:22 we are told to call no one a fool so when God calls a man a fool we need to sit up and take notice. He says you are a fool if you confuse your body with your soul, mistake time for eternity and exalt self but neglect God.

If amassing wealth in this life is our only goal and obsessing over the false security of earthly prosperity is how we gauge things, then we are fools. If we cannot see beyond the horizons of our own possessions that also makes us blind fools. In the rat race of modern living, it is all too easy to be drawn into covetousness. It shouts at us from every billboard, internet advert and TV programme. Obsessive preoccupation with what you have now, and how you can have more, places you in a very dangerous position. *'Even wise men die; the self-confident fool and the stupid alike perish and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is that their houses will continue forever and their dwelling places to all generations'* (Psalm 49:10-12).

Whatever else you are, don't be a fool! Those who face eternity with only money in their hands, face it with nothing at all. It is the height of stupidity to plan and live your life as if this is all there is. Says the farmer, "Many years, many years!" but God says, "You fool, tonight, tonight." •

Sandy is a retired minister and lectures at our Bible College in Edinburgh.

BEING A CHRISTIAN IN THE WORKPLACE: SOLICITOR

BY VICKY EVANS



“I wanted to open their eyes for them, to let them see what they were missing, but that is not my job – only God can do that.”

Working as a solicitor in a busy rural firm, it is often all too easy to forget to invite Jesus into that environment. I know He is always with me, but how often do I acknowledge Him in the workplace?

My clients are not, however, my main mission field at work. For me, the biggest opportunity to share my faith is with my colleagues. These are people we spend hours with each week, working closely together and getting

to know each other well. All my colleagues know I attend church, and I will often talk about church events, or people from church, but the challenge is how to go deeper, to share my faith and the basis for it, not just my

church experiences. Even on a good day, I still find myself falling into the trap of just being 'the nice person' rather than sharing a faith that is so much more than that, and on a bad day my actions definitely do not reflect those of Jesus. The pressures of a busy workload and the demands of clients make it all too easy to become part of the culture of gripes and moans.

Being a Partner in the firm, I also have to deal with issues raised by staff, whether that be work related issues or personal issues that may impact their work. I am by no means an expert, but anyone who is a boss needs to lead by example and how we manage our staff will say a great deal about us and the organisations we run. The example I follow has to be Jesus, so I need to seek God's guidance in dealing with any situation that may come up,

whether that is seeking His guidance more generally or shooting up a quick plea for help when directly faced with a difficult situation. I don't, and won't, always get it right, but as with any part of our lives we need to continually seek God's will and guidance and humble ourselves when we don't get it right. When you qualify as a solicitor you also become a notary public, a role which means you can administer the swearing of an oath when this is required to confirm the legal validity of a document. Every notary is given a seal/stamp which includes their name and a motto of their choosing. My motto contains words from Psalm 119:105 – *'Your word is a lamp to guide my feet'*. I chose this motto as I was embarking on my legal career, but it is one that I need to return to again and again in all areas of life.

I recently had an opportunity

to share a great testimony with my colleagues. My mum had been healed from cancer, a miraculous healing that doctors couldn't explain. When I told colleagues the news, and the fact we believe it was a miracle from God, I realised just how differently they see things, and how much Christians live against cultural norms. I spoke of miracles, but colleagues put mum's healing down to a positive attitude or the good health she had before getting cancer. I wanted to open their eyes for them, to let them see what they were missing, but that is not my job – only God can do that. What we can do is to shine our light by sharing our faith whether by actions or in word, and pray that God will use it. We can't force our faith onto anybody, but if we let it show in the relationships we build with others, it might just be used to change someone's life. •

"For me, the biggest opportunity to share my faith is with my colleagues. Even on a good day, I still find myself falling into the trap of just being 'the nice person' rather than sharing a faith that is so much more than that."

“Here we are Lord”

BY HEATHER HOLDSWORTH

“Well, here we are Lord,” I smiled, “what would you like to do with this?” The prayer was directed heavenward as there wasn’t any energy in my body to speak it out loud. It was a reasonable question. Christ promised not to leave or forsake us, so He *had* to be with us in this. We had never known Him to be anything but true. Unable to speak, hardly able to move, my eyes caught the swaying new buds on the Rowan tree from our first floor flat in Edinburgh. I got to know all its branches through the seasons from that window.

Covid surprised us. Our tickets for a final trip to Kenya before serving in a seminary there were on the sideboard. Our plans lay quietly in the hands of God. That Spring 2020, everyone’s did. For the next three years, there would not be enough strength to stand and wait for the kettle to boil – whatever could the Almighty do with this situation? I smiled at my

King – “Lord, You hold my breath – what would you like to do with this?”

I opened my Bible to the Psalms of lament. The words rang in tune with the newsfeeds. There was ‘trouble’ and taunts that there’d be, ‘no help from God’. But David’s fear dissolved when he saw who was with him – *‘You O Lord are a shield around me, my glory and the One who lifts my head high,’* (Psalm 3:3) he found radiating hope where there should be none.

Less than a month into this weakness, my husband Adrian, brought over a little folding table, some paper and pens and I began to draw. The hours raced by in the presence

of God, as I sketched through the meaning of the verses.

When my parents, Colin and Mary Peckham died in 2009/10, I began to draw the Bible. I wanted to remember God’s Word from the morning, but shock made the words float away. So I began writing the verses, then drawing them. Everything slowed down and with gentle understanding, the images settled on my broken heart as we walked through the valley of shadows.

In the quiet of this weakness, I picked up the Psalms and a pen. My sister and a dear friend called to ask what I was doing with my time. I held up Psalm 3 and whispered, “This.” They said I should share it on social media. I shook my head. These were simply notes from meetings with the Almighty. They weren’t for public consumption. She got really cross, “It’s a sin against the church for you to keep your gift hidden. What do you teach your students about

*The hours raced
by in the presence
of God, as I
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the meaning of
the verses.*

ABOUT THE BOOK

gifting? It's not given for you, but for everyone else – it's to build up the body of Christ," she went on and on! While my husband, with kindness, had been trying to persuade me to share these drawings for over ten years, Christine managed in just five minutes with guilt!

So, each day my drawings and comments were shared and what happened next, was beautiful. People of faith and of none, engaged with the truths inside the drawings. The art pulled down walls and we were amazed at God's Word and His ways together.

On many nights during these months I could hardly sleep. The excitement of meeting God in the morning made me feel like a child on Christmas Eve – it was hard to switch off my head! The Bible is not just a book. J B Philips said that translating it was, "Like trying to rewire the electrical wiring of a house without pulling the main switch!" It is living and very active!



In a unique blend of Scripture and art, *Landscape of Hope* invites us to discover the beauty and symmetry of the Psalms. Readers slow down in wonder at the restorative power of the ancient text.

Around 80 drawings and observations allow fresh engagement with the Bible and the triune God. It is a perfect addition to your devotional times, bringing thoughtful images into your day.



*People of faith and of none,
engaged with the truths inside
the drawings. The art pulled
down walls and we were
amazed at God's Word and
His ways together.*

Unexpectedly, a little while later, I sat in a meeting with Moody Publishers. Their focus on Christ brought me to tears. What a joy to work together for the glory of Jesus. The result was *Landscape of Hope*.

And now – am I still on the couch? Three years after Long Covid changed our lives, I was at a leadership conference in Perth. Weak, unable to stand or sing, a man felt compelled to quietly pray for me. He looked into my eyes and told me a story. “When Peter saw the man at the gate who couldn’t walk, he said, ‘*Silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ stand up and walk*’” (Acts 3:6). Nigel stood up and looking down at me, stretched out his hand, “So Heather, in the name of

Jesus Christ STAND UP and walk.”

My eyes filled with shock as I gripped his hand and stood to give him a hug. From that second everything changed. Our family and community were astounded at the transformation. It reverberates round our town to this day. My medical notes read, ‘Miraculous Recovery’, all the tests bear out the stunning power of God. He would still be stunning if I lay on the couch.

Months later in a prayer meeting we read scripture around the room. My verse from Psalm 119:71-72 read, ‘*It was good for me to have been afflicted that I might learn Your law. Your words to me are sweeter than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.*’ Silver and gold – there it was again!

My heart had been filled with sparkling treasure in those quiet days in the presence of God.

May yours be filled too as you meet Him. •



Heather Holdsworth is a speaker, artist and pastoral assistant at Cornerstone United Free Church of Scotland, St Andrews. She teaches Spiritual Formation and Discipleship at Chalmers Institute and is the author of, 'Landscape of Hope - an illustrated journey into the Psalms' (Moody Publishers, 2023). Her drawings are a remarkable method of meditation on Scripture. She lives in St Andrews, with husband, Adrian.



I WILL NOT FORGET YOU

The Grief of Dementia

BY KATHRYN BUTLER

Every Tuesday, Violet smiles when I visit and hold her hand, but she doesn't remember that I'm the friend who has helped to care for her for the past five years. The framed needlepoint pictures with which she lovingly decorated her home were forgotten long ago, and she now sits at the craft table in a daze, as if she's never held scissors before.

On a good day, she tries to recite the Lord's Prayer along with me, but increasingly she shows no recognition of the words that once buoyed her through the storms of life. The fog of dementia crowded out her recollection of such ordinary means of grace long

ago, and now her world has narrowed to the bright walls of her memory-care community. Walking alongside Violet feels like watching death in slow motion. As the quirks and values and personality traits I've come to love about her fade away one by one, it's as if I'm watching Violet herself dwindle and vanish.

Unique Grief

The sorrow I've experienced in my journey with Violet is only a shadow of the anguish that caregivers shoulder when a beloved family member has dementia. Families of dementia sufferers struggle with high rates of anticipatory grief — mourning in expectation of loss — while

a loved one is still alive. A devastating diagnosis brings tides of disbelief and heartache even before death takes hold. We grieve as we envision life without someone dear to us; we grieve as illness erodes our loved one's vitality and, in the case of dementia, memories and personality.

It is a strange and disorienting experience to mourn for someone who is still alive. In the most merciful cases, a dismaying diagnosis prompts us to prioritise heartfelt conversations and last lingering embraces while we can. Dementia, however, often robs loved ones even of this meagre solace. Sufferers often lack the language,

insight, and memory to have the meaningful conversations for which we pine. We may say the words pressing on our hearts, only for our loved one to forget an hour later, or even worse, to lash out with agitation and uncharacteristic cruelty. Closure in dementia grief is an elusive and seldom-achieved prize.

Our sorrow deepens as the insidious and progressive nature of dementia alters our loved ones before our eyes. Troubles with finding words and the loss of short-term memory pave the way for withdrawal from activities and friends. The abilities to cook and drive disappear. Eventually, even getting dressed independently becomes a feature of the past. As the familiar fades away, new unsettling behaviours emerge, with agitation, anxiety and hallucinations punctuating our loved one's days. In the wake of such changes, families experience the loss of the person they knew, and given the long and slow course of dementia, this period of grieving persists for years. Rather than offer closure, anticipatory grief in dementia hobbles on and on, accumulates new wounds, and often worsens over time.

As we ride the swells of confusion and sorrow, our

concerns turn toward the spiritual. What can we say about a loved one's soul when they lose all memory of attending church, of reciting prayers, and even of Christ Himself? Does God's grace fade away with memories, shrivelling as our neurons thin? Are our loved ones still saved when they can no longer affirm with their words that Christ is risen?

Kept as Memories Fade

Violet no longer seems to remember her beloved dogs, or how she would manicure the woods in her backyard, clearing sticks from the carpet of pine needles with a precision hinting of fairy work. And yet, she smiles, returns hugs, and feels emotions sufficiently deep to laugh and cry. Although her memories have faded away, God's fingerprint remains indelibly upon her. And so it does upon all of God's people, whether we stride through life clear-eyed or wander in a mist, because our salvation springs not from our memory, but from God's grace toward us in Christ.

Such an assurance can be comforting when we no longer hear the name of Christ upon a loved one's lips. When praises fall silent and long-recited prayers fade from memory, we may worry

that our loved one's prior declarations of faith were false professions. How can we still count loved ones among the saved, we wonder, when they no longer call upon the name of the Lord. *'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'* (Acts 2:21).

We can remind ourselves that a dementia sufferer's forgetfulness reflects the effects of disease rather than a wilful rejection of salvation through Christ. For those with dementia, the brokenness of creation affects the mind with particular devastation. Yet while such a sufferer's spoken trust in the Lord may falter, God has promised to uphold us into our old age, even as our memories fade, *'Even to your old age and grey hairs, I am he, I am he who will sustain you'* (Isaiah 46:4).

Undiminished Hope

God chose *'...a people for his own possession'* before the foundation of the world to be His own children (see John 1:12). Whether or not the ravages of dementia change a loved one's memory or behaviour, *'in Christ he remains a new creation...'* (2 Corinthians 5:17). Consider the assurance and the solace Peter offers: *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his*

great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time' (1 Peter 1:3-5). God has caused us to be born again. Faith is a gift from God Himself, '...not a result of works...' (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our inheritance of eternal life remains, 'imperishable, undefiled, and unfading...' That same inheritance awaits our loved ones with dementia, even when they can no longer remember Christ's name. Even when they cannot speak, the Spirit continues to search and know their hearts and prays on their behalf. Our loved ones' salvation depends not on their memory, but on His, and His memory is perfect.

Unfading Memory

God never forgets His beloved. Unlike our own sin-weary minds, prone to deterioration and breakage, nothing escapes His notice (see Psalm 33:13-15). He knows our thoughts even before we voice them (Psalm 119:1-2).

Even more astonishing, God's perfect memory is

caught up in His faithfulness. Over and over throughout the Old Testament, God remembers His people and acts in mercy even as they wickedly dismiss Him. When the floodwaters covered the earth, 'God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark' (Genesis 8:1), and He buoyed them to safety. God remembered Abraham and rescued Lot from the destruction of Sodom. When the Israelites languished under Pharaoh's tyranny, 'God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob' (Exodus 2:24), and He forged a path toward their freedom. In each case, God's remembrance of His people was bound to His goodness, His acts of grace, and His eternal character as one, '...merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness...' (Exodus 34:6). God declares through the prophet Isaiah, 'Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands' (Isaiah 49:15-16).

He Holds Fast

Although Violet seems a shadow of herself, I draw

Although Violet seems a shadow of herself, I draw comfort from the truth that God sees her and knows her. He has engraved her name on His palms and has promised never to leave her or forsake her.

comfort from the truth that God sees her and knows her. He has engraved her name on His palms and has promised never to leave her or forsake her (Hebrews 13:5). While she has forgotten how to pray, the One worthy of all praise will never forget her.

As you walk with those struggling with dementia, take heart. Dementia reflects the fall, and under its oppression, memories wither, fade and blow away like dry leaves on a gust of wind. But God's memory is perfect. His grip upon His beloved remains firm whether they recall His name or not. And in Christ, nothing can wrench His people from His love. •

Kathryn is a trauma and critical care surgeon and homes schooling mum turned writer. She and her family live north of Boston. This article was first written for 'Desiring for God'.



REACHING GALLOWAY WITH THE GOSPEL

BY ROBERT & PHILLIPPA CISMAS

Two years ago this month, we moved into the Faith Mission Centre at Newton Stewart, and took up the work here. We are thankful for the Lord's enabling and for the openings He has given us to reach this region of Galloway in southwestern Scotland with the gospel. Thank you very much for your prayers for the ministry and our family in those two years.

Much of the work at the centre is the day to day practical care, upkeep and development of the centre. We are thankful for the Lord's help and provision as we undertook tasks like repainting the outside of the main hall, putting in new boilers, installing fire doors and the many other jobs necessary to keep the centre up to code and pass health and safety inspections. The centre is blessed to have lovely grounds set in the countryside looking up towards the

Galloway Hills, but this means that quite a lot of grounds' work and gardening goes on in the background!

It has been good to be able to undertake bigger projects and see the site developed to achieve greater potential. We repaired a portable cabin, and transformed it into a beautiful games room with comfy sofas. Renamed 'The Pine Cabin,' this room is now often filled with children or teens having fun playing table tennis, pool or on the recently donated air hockey table, which they love!

Another larger undertaking, this year, was the female accommodation. The upstairs of a converted barn was one long room sleeping twenty-two in bunks. The vision was to turn it into a peaceful space with two dorm rooms and a leader's room connected by a small corridor. This became a reality just in time for camp,



and we had the joy of seeing the rooms filled with campers and young leaders.

There are many more aspects of the site we would like to develop to make this place the blessing we believe it truly could be to the work of the mission as well as a place for Christian groups and churches to get away and

spend time together. Pray for us in this aspect of the work.

There are many ways the centre is being used to share the gospel; we'll share just a few for your prayers. Each month our youth group meet for fun and to be challenged through the Word. This group of 12-18 year olds has been growing and we are delighted to have new young leaders coming on board. Pray that the Lord would do great things among them.

It's been a joy to see the centre filled with noise and laughter at summer camp. This was with a completely new team and new campers for the first camp since before lockdowns. We had a fantastic week, and it was great to hear of the impact this made in young lives. Pray for the campers as they come back for 'Day Camp' in January. Pray also as they tell their friends, and we get new campers coming along. Next summer we plan to add a teen camp. Pray for camp plans, but pray especially for the campers and their families.

Our heart for believers in our area is that they would, 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18). To this end, for over a year now, we have been running the monthly 'Galloway Bible Rally' with preaching, testimony, worship and fellowship to encourage

local believers to grow deep in the things of Christ.

The main goal of the work here in Galloway is to share the light of the gospel of Christ. As we reach into the communities around us, 'Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified' (1 Thessalonians 3:1).

Ministry here as elsewhere is all about the people. People we meet in the towns and villages on our doorstep. People we meet through our children's groups and activities. People we meet through the renovations. People we meet through outreach. These are a snapshot of some conversations we've had with individuals in the past few months.

"I'm confused about faith I've looked at many religions, I've even been to church! What do you think?"

"My relative told me that the Bible speaks to them. That can't really be the case, can it? Do you find that?"

"What's your story? How did you come to faith?"

"I'm afraid of dying. I'm afraid of nothingness afterward. Would you pray for me?"

"We're looking for hope in these crazy, troubled times. Would you come and speak to us of the hope you find in the Bible?"

"I'm really struggling. Could we meet up and talk?"

"I've been thinking there may be a God. It just makes sense."

"I believe there is a God, but I don't feel like I know him personally."

Pray for these people, individuals known to our Father in Heaven, who desires that they would come to know Him. Pray for the seeds sown in conversations not to be stolen away, but to grow and bear fruit (Matthew 13). Galloway is a field ripe unto harvest. A field filled with souls needing the Saviour. Please pray for the ministry of the centre and for us and our family as we seek to reach these people for Christ. ●

Robert & Phillippa along with their four children head up the work of the Faith Mission Centre at High Barbuchany in Dumfries and Galloway.



Beanstown Prayer Union Centenary



Beanstown Prayer Union, just outside Lisburn, County Antrim, was formed in November 1923 following a six-week mission conducted by Faith Mission workers (Pilgrims) Miss Harper and Miss Rigby. On Saturday, 21 October 2023, approximately 60 people gathered in Lisburn CWU hall to give thanks to God for faithful praying people for one hundred years. Margaret Sharkey, the current PU representative, gave an excellent report while Dean Davidson sang very suitable pieces and Trevor Matthews brought a most appropriate and encouraging word at the close.

The Beanstown Mission Hall lay at the base of the White Mountains, and

the majority of those who attended the mission in 1923 were local quarry workers, many of whom were saved at that mission. The Director for Ireland at the time, J B McLean, wrote, "A remarkable revival movement began among those fine strong men and a great many of them were led to the Lord". Initially, 103 members joined the Prayer Union! Children were not allowed to attend, as there was limited space, so they had their own meetings in the afternoons. One of those saved as a child at that mission, was Wesley Campbell who continued to attend throughout his lifetime. He subsequently organised children's meetings himself, followed by Violet Wallace who was also the

organist. Many other faithful members attended the Prayer Union each Wednesday evening, praying specifically for the Faith Mission workers by name and taking a deep interest in all the work of the Mission.

Successive missions were held in the same hall - 1954, 1962, 1981 and 1989 and a total of fourteen adults trusted the Lord. Margaret Sharkey was saved at a children's meeting held around the time of one of those missions.

Today the Beanstown Prayer Union meets each Thursday morning in various homes. We thank God for this significant milestone in the Prayer Union and praise Him that He still answers prayer. •

A Life Yielded to the Lord

Tillie Thompson 1935 -2024

BY ANDREW MCCULLOUGH

Tillie Thompson was born on 24th August, 1935 in the townland of Caddy, near Randalstown, Co Antrim. She was converted to Christ at the age of eleven. After leaving school, Tillie was employed in Ballymena for four years until 1955, when she firmly believed that God was calling her to the Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh. For ten years she worked in the rural areas of Ireland, Scotland and England, passionately sharing the gospel.

In 1967, while at a Faith Mission meeting in East Anglia, God spoke directly to Tillie. The speaker read Jonah chapter 3 and the words, *Arise and go...unto the city*, confirmed the next step of the Lord's plan for her life. Some weeks previously, the Faith Mission Council had asked Tillie to consider taking up the post of college secretary, and this was a clear answer to her prayers.

It was a new avenue of service as she left the country for the city and adjusted to working in an office. Tillie was to serve

in this role for 29 years and was extremely efficient. There were many changes over that time in terms of location, staff and technology – in the early days Tillie used a typewriter and went at speed, as she prepared notes for the students. Despite her heavy workload, she was always so bright and cheery, greeting all she met with a warm smile, always ready to give a word of encouragement. Many can look back and testify to the influence which Tillie had on them through her godly life and wise counsel.

In 1996 when Tillie retired and came to live in Ballymena, she worked voluntarily on a part time basis in the FM Bookshop for twelve years and helped in the North Irish District office with the mailing of the Prayer Focus each month. She was also treasurer of her local Prayer Union up until earlier this year. Tillie had an extremely sharp mind and was meticulous in her record keeping. The Lord, whom she served so faithfully, will reward her for all she has

done for Him. Her life was lived completely for His glory (Hebrews 6:10).

Following a short illness, Tillie was called home on 5th August and had all the practical arrangements made for her funeral service, including the passage of Scripture (1 Thessalonians 4:14) for the minister to preach from, with the sermon outline! The comment was made during the service of thanksgiving that Tillie Thompson had a simple philosophy that worked – live as closely to Jesus as possible and introduce people to Him.

She had a deep concern for the lost and a short time before God called her home, Tillie shared with unsaved people in her area about the hope and peace she had in Christ. The words of the hymn, sum up her glad surrender to His service:

*Take my life and let it be,
consecrated, Lord to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless
praise. •*



THE MEMBERS IN THE FAITH MISSION DURING 2024

Consulting Director & Treasurer

Director for Scotland

Director for Ireland

Director for England

J TOWNEND, 1st Oct 1975, and *Mrs Townend*

G THOMSON, 1st Oct 1987, and *Mrs Thomson* (rejoined 2013)

G TUTTYY, 1st Oct 1990, and *Mrs Tutty*

G S S WALKER, 1st Oct 1996, and *Mrs Walker*

Superintendents

P R CROWE, 1st Oct 1982, and *Mrs Crowe*, East Scottish District

W L HARRISON, 1st Oct 1983, and *Mrs Harrison*, North West Irish District

A PARK, 1st Oct 1989, and *Mrs Park*, Central English District (rejoined 2016)

E A BROWN, 1st Oct 1988, West Irish District (in charge)

N WILSON, 1st Oct 1993, and *Mrs Wilson*, South West English District (rejoined 2014)

A McCULLOUGH, 1st Oct 1994, and *Mrs McCullough*, North Irish District

M TOMB, 1st Oct 1994, and *Mrs Tomb*, Irish Midlands District

J SLATER, 1st Oct 1998, and *Mrs Slater*, South West Irish District

S WALSH, 1st Oct 2000, and *Mrs Walsh*, Irish Border District

J P TOWNEND, 1st Oct 2020, and *Mrs Townend*, Highland District

Faith Mission Workers (UK)

A H Paul

1st Oct 1987

N J Bovenizer and *Mrs Bovenizer*

1st Oct 1993

R Cismas and *Mrs Cismas*

1st Oct 2003 (rejoined 2022)

J Cummings and *Mrs Cummings*

1st Oct 2005

S Megaw and *Mrs Megaw*

1st Oct 2005 (rejoined 2019)

H Wilson

1st Oct 2009

J Brown and *Mrs Brown*

1st Oct 2013

G Harrison

1st Oct 2013

R Little

1st Oct 2014

B Parker and *Mrs Parker*

1st Oct 2017

M Roberts

1st Apr 2018

W Brewer

1st Oct 2018

A Maybin and *Mrs Maybin*

1st Oct 2018

S Dundas

1st Apr 2019

C Park

1st Oct 2019

D Brown and *Mrs Brown*

1st Oct 2020

R Lyons and *Mrs Lyons*

1st Apr 2024

Auxiliary Workers

N Dudgeon

1st Oct 1997 (rejoined 2014)*

Ladies' names in italics

* Denotes withdrawal during year

Mission-Foi-Evangile

K Ruegger

W Streiff & *Mme Streiff*

K Lipp & *Mme Lipp*

D Schott & *Mme Schott*

P Crosnier

L-M Lemofack & *Mme Lemofack*

J Makaya & *Mme Makaya*

B Drevon & *Mme Drevon*

P Benard & *Mme Benard*

The Faith Mission (in Canada)

T E A Condy and *Mrs Condy*

R Perron and *Mrs Perron*

K Evans and *Mrs Evans*

J Goudy and *Mrs Goudy*

L-A Drake

M Hardwick and *Mrs Hardwick*

C Arndt and *Mrs Arndt*

S Beaulieu and *Mrs Beaulieu*

M Macfarlane and *Mrs Macfarlane*

Retired Workers (Britain & Ireland)

O Greenaway (1953-90)

M Thompson (1955-97) (deceased 2024)

M Wright (1981-1999)

Mrs Dukelow (1953-2000)

C Slight (1968-2002)

J McDonald (1966-71; 1990-2003)

K H Percival (1961-2004) and *Mrs Percival*

J Macdonald (1989-2013) and *Mrs Macdonald*

L F J Pearson (1972-2013)

D Chambers (1983-2015) and *Mrs Chambers*

J McNeilly (1969-2015) and *Mrs McNeilly*

I H P Farrell (1973-2019)

T Matthews (1972-2019) and *Mrs Matthews*

D R Bennett (1972-2019)

S J Matthews (1973-1975; 1986-2021)

K I Wood (1995-2021)

G Conn (1985-2022) and *Mrs Conn*

D MacLeod (1996-2023) and *Mrs MacLeod*



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BANGOR

Convention

EASTER 2025

**Good Friday 18 April -
Easter Tuesday 22 April**



**Christian
Ministry**



**Worship &
Fellowship**



**Encounter
Youth Event**



Some of the Speakers expected...



**John
Bennett**



**John
Macleod**

Also check our website and Facebook page...

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