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Seek First the Kingdom of God!

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



Gethsemane

» DON'T GIVE UP: LESSONS FROM A LEADER WHO KEPT BUILDING

» AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

'And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins'.

Mark 2:22

I am sure you have faced situations in your home or workplace where you ask the question "Should I repair or replace?" Or perhaps you are about to extend your home, and you are concerned about whether the new extension will fit in well with the existing structure. The reality is that sometimes it is better to start afresh instead of adding to what is already there.

Jesus warned about putting new wine into old wineskins, and He had good reason. After the wine is fermented for some time in the old wineskins, the old wineskins become dry, hard and brittle. They are also stretched to their limits. Unless these wineskins are put through a renewal procedure, where the leather is moistened and massaged with oil, they will just burst upon further use.

Jesus was referring to the new experience of believing in Him, and how there were those who were trying to confine this within the limits and an old form of Judaism. It would not work.

In our day, if God chooses to send "new wine" and do a fresh work in the Faith Mission and ultimately in our land, I trust that we will not allow the "old skins" of the past to be the vessel, perhaps limiting full potential. Instead, new wineskins will be prepared for this purpose.

Bookshops

Remember the Faith Mission Bookshops staff as the future of the shops is undergoing a consultation process. Sales were good over Christmas, but a growing shift towards purchasing product elsewhere, coupled with increased overheads and wages has meant that the shops have been in deficit for some time. We need to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to the Mission.

Personnel

We congratulate our Academic Dean, Russell Newton, and his wife, Becky, on the safe arrival of their twin girls, Martha and Hannah, just before Christmas.

Calvin Park informed the Board of his intention to resign from the Mission, effective from late January. We are thankful to him for his efforts – he was able to bring fresh outreach initiatives to children and young people in the southeast of England.

Also in the southeast, we rejoice with James and Katie Brown on the birth of their daughter, Rosie.

At the end of February 2026, Paul and Elizabeth Crowe retire from the work of the Faith Mission. We thank them for their faithful service over many years. (See their interview in this edition).

Do remember all these people and their changes in circumstances in your prayers. •

Mervyn Tomb,
General Director



BY DEREK MAXWELL

DON'T GIVE UP

LESSONS FROM A LEADER WHO KEPT BUILDING

During a recent visit to the coast, I found myself watching a surfer battling the powerful waves along the beach. His efforts were nothing short of admirable as, again and again, he attempted to balance himself on his board, only to be thrown off by the relentless force of the tide. Yet what captivated me most was his unwavering perseverance. He didn't allow the mighty waves to defeat him but continued to strive, determined to master the challenging conditions.

This striking image left me pondering a question: as Christians dedicated to serving the Lord, do we possess that same level of determination when faced with the waves of opposition and discouragement?

Today, we find ourselves in a culture where perseverance in Christian ministry seems to be waning. Is it possible that our self-centred society has influenced our commitment to God's work? It seems that far too often we prioritize self-pleasing and self-satisfaction, which can bleed into our attitudes towards service in the church.

The story of Nehemiah in the Old Testament offers a relevant perspective in this context. Faced with the daunting task of rebuilding the broken walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah encountered intense opposition almost immediately after commencing his work. Hostility arose as the walls were raised, yet God's servant demonstrated remarkable resolve and continued pressing on despite the resistance. His story serves as an excellent example for Christians today.

Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th president of the United States, once remarked that although he was admired as a great man, he preferred to be known as, "a plain, ordinary man—highly motivated." This depiction could equally apply

to Nehemiah. He was an ordinary individual motivated to fulfil the monumental task set before him, facing numerous challenges with unwavering faith.

Two lessons emerge from Nehemiah's example: firstly, at the heart of his resolve was a profound concern for people. His inquiry about the state of Jerusalem in Nehemiah 1:2 reflects his prioritization of people over things. Today, it seems that many place greater importance on material possessions than on the well-being of individuals. Nehemiah's burden for the people of Jerusalem demonstrates what true leadership and service look like: caring deeply for others while remaining committed to a purpose greater than oneself.

In times of despair and desolation, we can learn much from stories such as that of Nehemiah. His account stands as a testament to resilience amidst adversity. When Nehemiah learned about the state of Jerusalem—its walls broken down, its temple in ruins, and its people disparaged—he was grieved, responding not with anger but with a heavy heart filled with prayer, fasting and deep sorrow.

The city of Jerusalem, once a sanctuary of God's glory, was reduced to rubble. This was more than just a physical destruction; it symbolized a spiritual desolation that echoed through the ages. Psalm 137 articulates the collective grief of the exiles, *'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land*?' Such a lament reflects a deep yearning for restoration and hope among believers.

As followers of Christ, we must examine our own hearts and motives in our service for the Lord. Are we highly motivated like Nehemiah, pushing through adversity and showing a genuine concern for our communities? Or are we allowing the waves of self-interest to wash away our commitment?

Much like Nehemiah, we find ourselves in moments where the landscape of faith appears bleak. The church, at times, seems riddled with materialism, while the world around us often appears to embrace a godless ethos. In such times, it is easy to become numbed, convincing ourselves that all is well despite the heart-wrenching realities surrounding us. Yet, Nehemiah exemplifies a different approach—a response steeped in empathy and a passionate commitment to a higher calling.

Secondly, Nehemiah's commitment didn't just stop at empathy; he took action. His declaration in Nehemiah 6:3, *'I am doing a great work and I cannot come down'*—is a rallying cry for us today. It speaks to the collective heart of the church: we are engaged in a significant mission, and one that requires our full attention, perseverance and dedication. With a group of motivated volunteers rallying behind him, Nehemiah completed what appeared to be an impossible task—the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt.

As we reflect on this account, let us embrace the same spirit of perseverance. The walls we must rebuild may not be physical, but they are often the moral and spiritual foundations within our communities. We are called to recognise the cost of a broken heart and in response, commit to rebuilding what culture may have torn down. Let us encourage one another to remain steadfast in our work. Like Nehemiah, let's roll up our sleeves, rekindle our motivation and finish the task God has given us with unwavering dedication. •



***Derek,** who serves as General Director of Slavic Gospel Association UK, lectures in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, while also engaging in extensive deputation work throughout the British Isles. Derek is one of the speakers at Bangor Convention 2026.*

BY SAM GORDON

Ebenezer



1 Samuel 7 gives us a remarkable insight into the life of the Hebrew people as related to the ark of God. In fact, there are two eras here in this particular chapter – there was a long time when the ark was not with them, but now the ark is back where it belongs, and God is seen to be in the midst of His people. After some time had lapsed, Samuel came along, and he took a stone which he used as a memorial unto the Lord. He called the place 'Ebenezer', testifying to the help which the Lord had given His people. Have you ever wondered what kind of a place it was?

A Place of Backsliding

The ark was absent, and God was absent. He withdrew Himself when the people turned to other gods, and idolatry crept in. That's an ever-present threat to each of us when God is not central in our lives. You can see the incredible contrast when the Lord is among them, for He makes all the difference.

A Place of Fear

They lived in fear and dread of the enemy. Their spirits were overwhelmed within, and they appeared to be carrying all kinds of burdens. Their past haunted them and the future seemed ominous and foreboding. That was until they came to Ebenezer – for help was only a prayer away.

A Place of Consecration

The lamb was offered as a burnt offering, and the thought behind this sacrifice was that it was entirely yielded to the Lord. That's the place we must get to in our walk with the Lord, when we see Jesus Christ as our Lamb - the One who gave His all for us expects nothing less in return. That's when Ebenezer becomes a turning point.

A Place of Intercession

It was here they cried unto the Lord. As we look back on our lives, we do so with a measure of thanksgiving. However, as we look forward it is with a sense of dependence on the Lord. This is the great need of the hour, when we need to cry unto the Lord on behalf of one another, our friends and our families, our ministries and our churches, our land and our world. When we do this, we find Ebenezer is a place where help is handed down from above.

A Place of Answered Prayer

'...And Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him' (I Samuel 7:9).

What hallowed ground that must have been. Here we see how God miraculously answered their prayers when He moved in response to the cries of His people. And, He hasn't changed. Not only is it good to pray, but it's also always thrilling to watch for the answer when it comes. Yes, we watch and pray, and we also watch after we pray!

A Place of Battle

The enemy is there, the adversary is present, the conflict is on. We have had our days when the battle has been raging all around us and at times within us as well. There is the battle against sin, the battle between the flesh and the Spirit, the battle against temptation, so much and so many, but thank God when we come to Ebenezer we realise and we remember that the Lord has always been there to help us and see us through.

A Place of Realisation

'...the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion and they were routed before Israel' (1 Samuel 7:10). They discovered that God was on their side. The battle is the Lord's. He is the captain of our salvation and, as Jehovah Nissi, He is our banner. No matter how many are against us, what does it matter when the Lord is for us! He is on our side. He has our back 24/7. That's what Ebenezer is all about.

A Place of Victory

As we look back, we thank God for all that He has done for us. The end is not yet, thank God. Today, as individuals, we raise our Ebenezer and go forward with our confidence rooted in Him. He is our help. The hymn writer, Robert Robinson (1735-90), put it so well:

> Here I raise my Ebenezer,
> hither by thy help I'm come;
> and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
> safely to arrive at home.[1] •

References:

[1] Hymn: R.Robinson, 'Come Thou Fount', Public Domain



***Sam** is 'almost' retired, having served the Lord in gospel ministry for just over 50 years – you can read all about him*



Gethsemane

BY TOM SHAW

One of the aspects of our Lord's passion that is often neglected is the Gethsemane experience. The crucifixion and resurrection are kept prominently in our thinking but there is a tendency to forget Gethsemane. Perhaps the hymn writer had this in mind when he wrote, "Lest I forget Gethsemane."[1] As Christians we must never forget that in that garden one of the most difficult times in our Lord's earthly life took place.

It was night and Jesus made His way from the city over the Brook Kidron with eleven disciples. Jesus often resorted to Gethsemane to pray, but on this occasion it was going to be different. As He made that journey, He knew what lay before Him. John records in John 18:4, *'Jesus therefore, knowing that all things that should come upon him, went forth'* (KJV). Nothing that happened that night was accidental nor did it take Christ by surprise. Already Jesus had a preview of Calvary in the Upper Room, and now He was to have a foretaste of Calvary in Gethsemane.

The Gethsemane experience of our Lord is extremely sad but remarkable. So much that emerges from the story cannot be dealt with in a brief article.

There was His disappointment with His disciples, His separation for private prayer, His agony in prayer, the betrayal of Judas and His clear submission to the Father's will. What He had agreed in the council of heaven, He is now going to undertake willingly, without reserve or turning back.

Two things are amazing in this garden experience. One is that Luke describes, *'His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground'* (Luke 22:44). The other is in Luke 22:43 where an angel is dispatched from heaven to strengthen Him.

The sweating of blood clearly indicates the intensity of His spiritual and physical agony as He feels the burden and anguish of this critical moment. Perhaps the best commentary on this comes from the pen of the 17th century Puritan, John Flavel, "This was a load that so oppressed His soul that it could not find relief in tears; but the innumerable pores of His body are set open to give vent by letting out streams of blood." While to many minds this is a mystery, it clearly indicates the deep agony of our Lord in Gethsemane. Words of a hymn sum it up - "How deep were the waters crossed".[2] It is probably not without significance that this aspect of the story is recorded by Luke who was a physician.

While Christ's agony in Gethsemane was unique to Him, bearing what no mortal could ever bear, as Christians we must ask very serious questions about our lack of real spiritual burden and concern in a day when Christianity is portrayed as solely a life of spiritual rhapsody.

The dispatching of an angel to strengthen Christ is also amazing. God, the Father, had His finger on the pulse of His only Son and sensed His need for someone from home to help Him. What a remarkable thing this is – a creature being sent to strengthen the Creator but Hebrews 2:9 reminds us that He *'for a little while was made a little lower than the angels'.*

Prof. Frederick Leahy in his book, *The Cross He Bore*, has a very interesting comment, "Whatever comfort the angel brought the Saviour was transient. The angel's mission was not to bring relief to Christ but to strengthen Him for further and even greater anguish - anguish quite beyond human endurance... The angel's presence served to aggravate His suffering. It was in order that the suffering might not only be maintained but also that it might be intensified that the angel was sent. The battle must go on. It was too soon to say, 'Finished'".

Dr John Duncan, the Scottish scholar known to many in Scotland in the 19th century as Rabbi Duncan, is alleged to have said, "If I arrive in Glory, first I shall look for the face of my Lord and then I shall enquire for the angel that came to help my Lord in the hour of His agony in Gethsemane."

Maybe we need to ask ourselves if heaven has ever had to send an angel to help us in our spiritual struggle to honour and glorify God and so do the will of our Father. Perhaps, we have taken the easy option and dodged our spiritual Gethsemanes and Calvarys. •

References:

[1] Hymn: J.E. Hussey, 'King of My Life'

[2] Hymn: Ira D. Sankey, 'There were Ninety and Nine'



***Tom,** a retired pastor and president of the Faith Mission for 30 years, is married to Mabel and involved in itinerant preaching throughout Ireland. Tom is one of the speakers at Bangor Convention 2026.*



Why do the Nations Rage?

BY NATHAN FIELD

The Western world's political landscape has become even more polarised over the past few years. And it seems that just when it can't get any more so, another event or opinion crops up that causes people to divide even further over that particular situation's resolution. Battle lines are drawn so readily nowadays that it can be hard in some circumstances to work out who is arguing with whom over what.

Whilst I try to limit the amount of news, views and reviews I peruse on a daily basis, I was feeling particularly troubled about several current affairs one morning as I sat down to read my Bible. Providentially, I had recently started reading Acts and got to chapter 4. Transported into this scenario, my present-day troubles seemed somewhat minuscule.

The disciples have just started preaching regularly, with Pentecost fresh in their memory. The church is newly being established, and so of course, meets with opposition. To be clear, when we say 'opposition', that means being seized and thrown into jail by the same religious authorities that recently oversaw the death of Jesus. A tad more reason for alarm than simply reading the newspaper.

Fast forward to verse 25. Peter and John have been released (for now) and are reporting back to the other believers. Raising their voices in prayer, they quote from Psalm 2, *'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one* (Acts 4:25b-6 quoting Psalm 2:1-3 (NIV).

I've heard a few sermons on Psalm 2, and it's become a passage that I've often returned to when I've been troubled by the actions of those in authority. It's always spoken to me about the sovereignty of God over the affairs of humanity. I particularly like verse 4, *'The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them'.*

The very idea of mere humans counselling together against God, as if they can so much as lay a finger on Him, is laughable to the Almighty. What a concept. More likely that a lamb could trouble a lion, or a minnow could wallop a whale.

In Genesis 11, when people sought to make a name for themselves, their thoughts turned to building a tower so high that it reached the heavens. Perhaps they thought elevation would make them like God. I love that in verse 5, it says *'The Lord came down'.* What an aside. These people are straining to reach up into the sky that they can see, and there is this picture of God, who is above the highest heaven, having to come down all the way just to look at what they're doing.

Preach Jesus. He is the hope of the world

But the overriding omnipotence of God was not really what stood out to me in my reading of Acts 4. I know that there's a large part of Psalm 2 that has to do with a future triumph. It speaks of a day when nations will tremble, kings will kneel, and all peoples will bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:11).

But why then this quote in the context of Acts 4? What does Psalm 2 have to do with the formation of the church?

The answer is the gospel. Because, while of course we look forward to the consummation, there is much joy to be had, even in this life. Joy in the overarching power of the gospel to reach into every circumstance, every nation, every stronghold and do its saving work. Rulers try to quash it, cynics try to ridicule it, sinners try to resist it, and yet the Lord holds them in derision, because for the past two thousand years, the gospel has been uncontainable, unstoppable, irresistible. And so it will ever be. This is indeed Good News. Better than anything you'll ever read in any newspaper. And it's available to read every single day.

Those who have hope only in this life, in that leader or this political party, are of all men most miserable. That's a lot of people right now. But there is real hope. The older I get, the less I desire to enter debates about this fiscal plan and that economic measure. Just preach Jesus. He is the hope of the world. That's not to say as Christians we shouldn't engage in conversations or try to influence the culture for good by upholding biblical values in society, but we don't do it out of a desire to win arguments or score points. We do it because our entire outlook on life has been affected by this Good News, and it is that, first and foremost, that we want to see change the hearts and minds of those around us.

There's one more promise right at the end of Psalm 2. It's a promise for now and for eternity. It's for those who don't seek solace in anything else but trust simply in the saving power of the gospel in their lives, and in its ability to transform the world around us: *'Blessed are all who take refuge in Him'.* •



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



AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER

BY SANDY ROGER

I celebrated Christmas in Utrecht last year. On Boxing Day I was invited to a performance of Handel's Messiah, performed in the famous Amsterdam Concert Gebouw. Built between 1883 and 1886, it is an impressive building with outstanding acoustics. The only thing I found strange about the performance was the audience not rising to their feet for the Hallelujah Chorus. Any time I have been to a presentation in Edinburgh's Usher Hall, the audience has kept to the tradition going back to the premiere performance in 1743. Apparently, King George II rose to his feet on that occasion, and British audiences ever since have followed suit. Christians like to interpret the king's action as a recognition of a superior Kingship and Higher Throne than that of any earthly monarch.

Even though there is some doubt about the story's total accuracy, it is on record that when Handel had finished writing this part of the score, his house-servant found him with tears in his eyes saying, "I felt as if I saw heaven open and the Great God Himself."

Scripture Set To Music

The three Bible verses on which the Hallelujah Chorus are based all come from the Book of Revelation. Reading them is an inspiration in itself, but when set to Handel's music they take on a magnificence to thrill the soul.

- Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns (Revelation 19:6)
- The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His

Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 11:15)
- On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

Rise and Fall of Leaders and Powers

Given the amount of uncertainty in today's world, maybe even in our own hearts as we move forward, these words come across with tremendous confidence. The world is not going to end with a bang or even a whimper, as TS Eliot surmised in his poem 'The Hollow Men'. Evil and hatred are not going to have the last word, for the future is as bright as the promises of God.

When John was granted this vision of the exalted Christ in the days of the Roman Empire, the world was not a happy place for Christian believers. Persecution was on the increase and to assert that any other than Caesar was lord was to write your own execution warrant. But John saw beyond the turmoil, as have firm believers in every age since, including the Puritan preacher Richard Brooks of York. He wrote, "The history of the world is littered with kings and lords who have come, been hailed and followed for a season and then have disappeared from view; here today and gone tomorrow."

The Name Above All Names

Mysterious and hard to interpret as the Book of Revelation is, the message is clear on every page. John was left in no doubt as to who the supreme Lord is; none other than Jesus Christ whom he describes as

- The Faithful and True (19:11)
- The Word of God (19:13)
- The King of all kings and Lord of all other lords (17:14; 19:16).

It seems to be a common characteristic of far too many world leaders, politicians, religious leaders and dictators that they long for world domination. Literally, they seem hell-bent on claiming by force that which only rightly belongs to Christ.

A Vision Realised

As I sat intently listening to the rendition of Handel's Messiah, I couldn't help but think of Paul's great doxology uttered in anticipation of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ when he described Him as *'the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To Him be honour and eternal dominion'* (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

This is the point to which all history is moving; the judgement of God, the triumph of the Lamb and the victory of goodness. One day a generation living will see John's vision and desire fulfilled.

"His Name forever shall endure,
last like the sun it shall;
Men shall be blessed in Him and blessed
all nations shall Him call.
Now blessed be the Lord our God,
the God of Israel,
For He alone doth wondrous works,
in glory that excel.
And blessed be His glorious Name
to all eternity;
The whole earth let His glory fill, amen.
So let it be."

(Scottish Psalter – Psalm 72:17-19) •

***Sandy** is a retired minister still active in Christian ministry. A former principal of the Faith Mission Bible College, he lectures at our college on a part-time basis as required.*



The Power of Example and Dealing with Disappointment

BY RICHARD MYERSCOUGH

When Paul wants to encourage young Timothy to keep serving God in difficult circumstances, he frames his counsel in a way we might find somewhat unexpected: he urges him to press on in what he had learned because he knows those from whom he learnt it.

I'm guessing that might not be the route we would take. Instead, we might make a beeline for the second part of Paul's statement: the scriptures that Timothy knows. We might legitimately have said to him, "Keep your eyes upon Jesus; look full in his wonderful face, Timothy. Lean hard on your Lord and gain your strength from him." But that's not what Paul does, which ought to give us at least some pause for thought.

His actual words in context are these:

'Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:12-17 NIV).

Timothy hardly needed Paul to remind him that in this world and in his locality there were evildoers and imposters, who would get worse and worse. Ouch! But the full picture is not so jaundiced. There are also those who had set before Timothy an example of solid and consistent faith, whose lives matched the message they taught. And it is to them and their memory that Paul encourages Timothy to direct his attention.

The same route is taken by the author of Hebrews: *'Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome*

of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever' (Hebrews 13:7-8).

Maybe there are people who fit that description in your own experience? For Timothy it included Lois his grandmother, Eunice his mother and, of course, Paul himself, but there were likely others too. (Incidentally, notice that Paul isn't shy to encourage others to learn from his example. That in itself is something for us to consider and take to heart. It need not be an expression of pride in oneself and failing to do so may be a faux humility. 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:7,9; 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:10)

For Timothy, the memory of the examples he witnessed should be a strong encouragement to keep going, despite the struggles—not simply because the Bible is true but because he has seen its evidence in the character of others.

Paul's letters to Timothy also include numerous counter-examples of those who had left the faith and forsaken the Lord and His people (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17; 4:10,14). Such people were to stand as warnings for Timothy and were examples to avoid.

And yet we know that life is seldom as categoric and discrete as that—examples to follow, warnings to heed. We have all likely found that those we esteem highly also have feet of clay, that those who are among the most consistent followers of Jesus have their moments, and perhaps even seasons, of disquieting instability. How should we respond when we see that and does it mean we ought to temper Paul's words? When those who have been so significant in our lives, perhaps even in our coming to faith in Jesus, fail to be everything their early promise or their regular example led us to believe they would be, it can be profoundly disappointing. When that happens we might wonder if we have over-relied on them, held them in too high a regard, and not sufficiently fixed our eyes on the only unfailing one, Jesus himself? Well, perhaps we have. It's certainly possible. And we do need to keep ourselves from idols (1 John 5:21).

But Paul is not implying that he or anyone else in Timothy's life was error-free and without sin. In the absence of flawless examples of what a Christian is and should be, our confidence in all they taught and showed us need not be knocked and shaken—learning from the fallible and unfinished is part of God's way with us, keeping us humble and fixing our ultimate confidence on Jesus only.

So in recognising the above, perhaps we can say at least the following: that we ought to:

- Pray we would ourselves be consistent, godly exemplars for others, without imagining that such a wish in itself is evidence of self-righteousness on our part.
- Be genuinely thankful for and honour those who have been such to us. Yes, we will almost inevitably experience disappointments—and not necessarily because we have put them on a pedestal—but in forgiving unexpected lapses of judgement or behaviour we will give space and grace for the renewing of their example.
- And with a great cloud of witnesses bearing such clear testimony, let's resolve to honour their faith by fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, the one to whom every faith-filled word and grace-fuelled deed was always intended to point us. •

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

BY WH GILES



Sit Still - Until

This is one of the most difficult things for a man to do, but it is one of great profit and should be practised by all of God's children. Just how to keep our hands off the ark and "let God" is a great problem to most of us, our tongues will not be subdued, and to bring our minds to a place of rest regarding things that perplex us, or people who vex us is a priceless secret and only learned as one walks with God in his every day life.

It is not an attitude of body, but it is rather an attitude of mind and spirit, as is well illustrated by the story of Ruth and Naomi, suggested by the motherly advice of Naomi, *'Sit still, my daughter ... for the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day'* (Ruth 3:18). What a wonderful promise and assurance is here displayed in type and shadow of the faithfulness of a loving Father who has given all power into the hands of a loving and wonderful Christ.

'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'

John 15 :7

To sit still in body for a season is comparatively an easy thing to do – one may sit perfectly quiet in an easy chair with all the outward appearances of stillness, but alas, all this is far from the real thing of getting quiet before God long enough to hear the Father speak His mind to the troubled and perplexed

soul. It is not the position of the body, but rather of the rest of spirit in the very midst of all one's physical activities. Especially is it so when we are weary in mind and body, and the enemy has been pressing in upon your soul from every angle, when your dearest friends have thrust in an angry word, and you have been misunderstood in your doing, the livelong day.

Perhaps the attitude of "sitting still" is well summed up in the passage that is so frequently used by tempest tossed souls, *'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose MIND is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee'* (Isaiah 26:3). In order that this peace of mind might become a reality – a living, practical experience, one must have the ever abiding conscience of a life of peace within. One reason that so many of God's children fail at this point is for lack of a settled viewpoint of what Christ actually accomplished on the cross. We must know without the shadow of a doubt that Jesus shed His blood on the cross and was raised **for our justification** and ascended to the Father and placed as it were, His blood before the Father as an ever present witness that all the demands of **God** had been met. Here alone is the true rest for every broken heart and every troubled soul. Oh, thank God, our Jesus the slain Lamb – took our just deserts that we might be the reciprocants of the glory that belonged to Him, not for a season, but for all time – for ever and for ever.

It is the privilege of the very feeblest of God's children to know that they have an advocate (an attorney) to represent their claims before the court of heaven. And nothing short of this will ever give perfect rest and peace that they might "sit still – until". Then listen to this wonderful promise, *'I know that whatsoever God (the Father) doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it'* (Ecclesiastes 3:14). It is ever thus when we are satisfied with "Him" that we can "sit still – until". It is to the one that can roll the cares of this life upon the Lord and rest in a released frame of mind, realizing that into whose keeping it has been entrusted or committed that will be assured that, *'He is able to keep ... unto ... that day'* (2 Timothy 1:12).

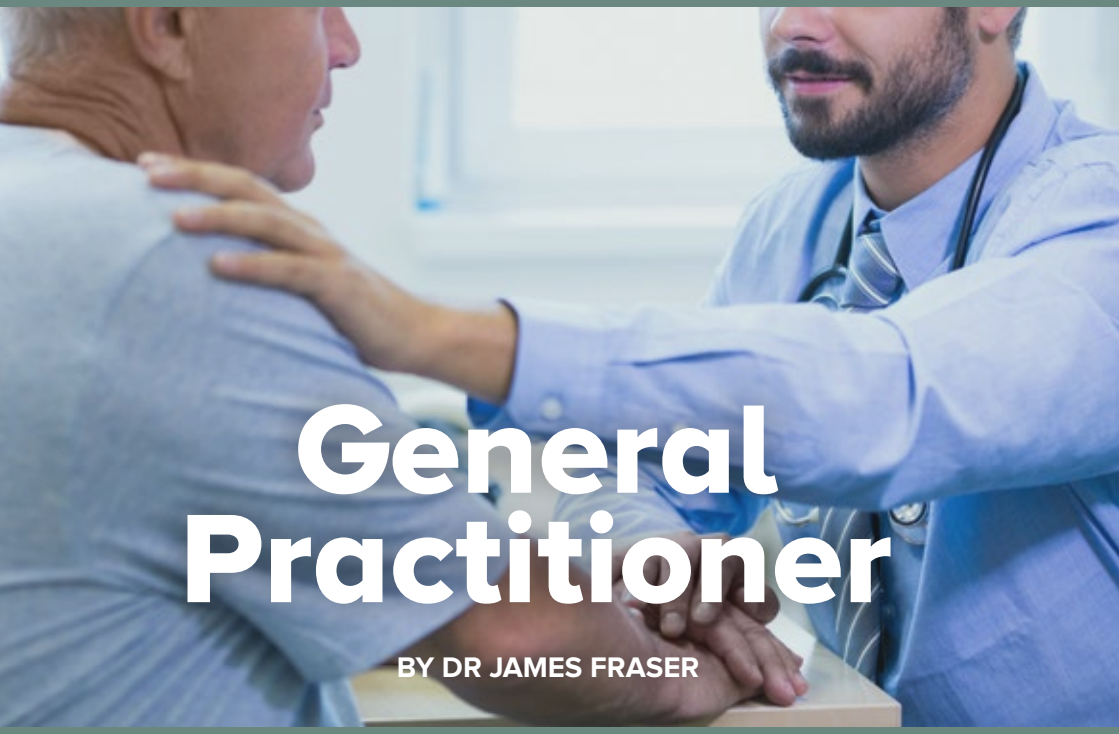
It is to the satisfied and to the obedient that the good of the land is promised. There is no true satisfaction or rest to any soul that is not in perfect agreement and obedience to the full will of God. It is only as we move in His will and Word, that we are satisfied with Him, it is then that we are able to commit with confidence our cares and "sit still."

From start to finish what a record of loving obedience there is in the case of Ruth to Naomi and Boaz, with what submissiveness she yielded to their counsel and advice. Through the heat of the mid-day sun we see her as she toiled and garnered the grain, but it was with a satisfied spirit and trustful patience that she reaped the experience of "sitting still"...

It is far from idleness and a waste of time to wait on God – do not be in a hurry as our impatience only hinders God's plans. Remember that it is the same sun that brings the beautiful green grass of spring with all its charms to old and young that soon changes the grass under its scorching rays of summer heat to a dull grey, and likewise produces the well matured fruit of autumn days. It is ever thus with the Christian life, it is only as we "sit still – until" that we are changed into His likeness as we behold Him. •

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BEING A CHRISTIAN IN THE WORKPLACE:



General Practitioner

BY DR JAMES FRASER

What is it like being a Christian in the field of medicine?

I work as a GP in Sandhead, Scotland. GPs see patients who present with a wide array of health problems and most of the joys (and frustrations!) come from the wide variety of health problems that people attend their doctor about.

Being a doctor is an immensely privileged position of trust: within moments of starting a consultation with a doctor (even if they have never met the doctor before), patients will candidly reveal deeply personal information about themselves, their relationships, their fears about the future or even worries about death. Being unwell (or fearing being unwell) is a time of particular vulnerability and it often exposes worries that would usually be masked by the trappings of "success", as defined by the secular world. Many of the problems that people present to the doctor with, are actually a form of spiritual (or existential) distress, either in part or in whole. Many people struggle with feeling "cheated" if they become unwell despite having taken steps to try and keep fit, eat well and avoid unhealthy behaviours. Many more struggle with trying

Many struggle with trying to present an external image of "having it all" in terms of material things, while they desperately struggle to find meaning in life.

to present an external image (even to those closest to them) of "having it all" in terms of material things, while they desperately struggle to find meaning in life.

Until relatively recently in history, the aims of medical science and Christian evangelism were seen as partners, whereas more recently, the medical world has tried to divorce itself from Christianity. This vigorous attempt to de-Christianise medicine has led to the yawning void in the "spiritual care" side of medicine. Modern medicine is increasingly good at answering the questions "what", "how" and "when" but doesn't provide any answers to the biggest and most pertinent question that most unwell patients have: "Why?". Being a Christian doctor allows me to frame that question in the context of an all-knowing, all-powerful God who does not perpetuate purposeless suffering on His people, but instead uses it to refine them and to make them realise their complete dependence on Him.

The secularisation of medicine has brought frustrating restrictions on the kinds of conversations that Christian doctors can have with people who are struggling with life in this way. We are largely prohibited from talking about God (at least in specific terms) unless this topic of conversation is initiated by the patient. However, some of the best interactions I have ever had with patients have been witnessing the peace of someone who has their faith in Christ, especially towards the end of life.

Being a Christian doctor enables me to view all of the suffering I witness in the light of a God who has foreordained every illness that will befall us. It is freeing as I know that despite all the wonderful medications and treatments at my disposal, it is only by God's mercy and will that any of them will have an effect – my patients will not be cured by me, but by God in His mercy, if it is His will.

How do your beliefs impact your day to day life?

It is an immense privilege to learn more and more about the human body and the wonderful way in which it has been designed by our Creator. The fact that wonderfully effective treatments (like morphine for severe pain or antibiotics for bacterial infections) exist are not a shining beacon of human achievement, as many a medical textbook would proudly proclaim. They are instead a reminder of God's common mercy, allowing doctors (Christian or not) to try and relieve suffering and preserve life.

Knowing that an illness was not the result of blind cosmic chance, but instead foreordained



The secularisation of medicine has brought frustrating restrictions on the kinds of conversations that Christian doctors can have with people who are struggling with life .

by God, helps both as a sufferer and as a clinician. It is also a helpful guard against becoming cynical, which is something that many doctors slip into. However, I have found that Christian doctors, in my experience, do not follow this trajectory. Knowing that God is the giver and sustainer of health helps to prevent the pride and egotism that can so often infect work as a doctor. It is tempting to accept the praise from a patient following a correct diagnosis or successful course of treatment, rather than give it to God as we should do.

The effects of the Fall are so clearly on display when working as a doctor - it doesn't take long to see the brokenness of man. So much suffering is caused by man's cruelty to his fellow man - our capacity to lie, cheat, steal from and abuse one another is endless. Biologically, living is the process of dying slowly. However, I am able to approach my job with the knowledge that although all of our bodies are predetermined to die, we all have an eternal soul that will never die. Only in Christ, the Great Physician, do we have the means of a cure for our otherwise terminal spiritual condition.

"Whoever applies himself to medicine should seriously weigh the following considerations: First, that he will one day have to render an account to the Supreme Judge of the lives of sick persons committed to his care.

Next, whatever skill or knowledge he may, by the divine favour, become possessed of, should be devoted above all things to the glory of God and the welfare of the human race.

Thirdly, he must remember that it is no mean or ignoble creature that he deals with. We may ascertain the worth of the human race since for its sake God's only begotten Son became man and thereby ennobled the nature that he took upon him.

Finally, the physician should bear in mind that he himself is not exempt from the common lot but is subject to the same laws of mortality and disease as his fellows and he will care for the sick with more diligence and tenderness if he remembers that he himself is their fellow sufferer." Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689), a Puritan who has been called the "Father of English medicine". •



***James** lives in southwest Scotland with his wife and four children. They are members of Stranraer Reformed Presbyterian Church where James serves as an elder.*

Be Still My Soul

Be still, my soul, the Lord is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul, your best, your heavenly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul, your God does undertake
To guide the future as He has the past;
Your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul, the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He lived below.

Be still, my soul, when dearest friends depart
And all is darkened in the vale of tears,
Then shall you better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe your sorrow and your fears.
Be still, my soul, your Jesus can repay
From His own fullness all He takes away.

Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still my soul, when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last. •

By Katharina von Schlegel 1697-1777



IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

Mo Sharratt


Mission Team Sao Paulo:
Ian and Marylin Larkin, Mo Sharratt and Wesley

My life was transformed on Christmas Day 1999 when I read a booklet from a local church. It contained testimonies of 12 of the congregation, ordinary people, just like me. I went to that church the following day and after the service, chatted with the pastor who told me that Jesus would, "never let me down nor forsake me". That is not what my 51 years of life had taught me. I learned not to trust people as a youngster so, if I could not trust people that I could see, hear and touch, how could I even think about trusting a God I could not see, hear nor touch. It had been a long conversation and as I left and walked into the bright sunshine of Boxing Day, I definitely felt a load fall from my shoulders.

I attended the church regularly, always with this idea in my thoughts that I needed to trust Jesus. On 13 February 2000, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. Looking back I can see that the transformation of my life began that Christmas Day but still the 'trusting' was an issue and so, a few weeks later, I prayed and asked God to teach me how to trust Him and not let me waste any more of my life. I truly expected that He would perform a miracle in me overnight, but He didn't. He just kept changing the way I thought and worked and spoke.

Then Easter Sunday arrived and, in church before the service began I read about a four week trip to Sao Paulo, Brazil to work with favela pre-schools. A mission organization was looking for 12 people and I 'heard' a voice say, "You could do that." My immediate response of "No way" stayed with me for two days, and then I contacted the church office for the information

I was accepted onto the team and made a team leader as



I fell in love with Jesus, with Brazil and with Brazilians.

well! There would be 17 of us in total as five older people had applied - three school teachers and one teaching assistant and all mature Christians. God was showing me that He has a wonderful sense of humour!

That visit to Brazil was life-changing. I fell in love with Jesus, with Brazil and with Brazilians. I couldn't speak Portuguese, I struggled with the poverty in which we lived and with the culture generally, I was challenged by eating beans and rice every day, but I knew I wanted more of it.

I returned to Reboucas, the same favela/pre-school in 2001 but this time on my own. There were no English speakers in the favela, but I had met an English missionary, married to a Brazilian and working with street children in Sao Paulo, and they graciously offered me a place of rest for my four weekends.

During my final journey back to Reboucas, I felt God was asking me to return full-time to work with street children. I arrived there and sat down with my thoughts and a cup of tea. A Bible was lying on the table, and I opened it randomly, more something to do with my hands than seeking God's Word if I am honest. Joshua 1:9 flew off the page and hit me between the eyes! *'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'*

I returned to England, my home, my friends, my church, my work and began planning a very different future!! I prayed again and asked that God would confirm my thoughts by giving me a mission organisation to go with and some training and finished with the words "... please could You do it by the end of September so that I will know it is from You."

Within those six weeks, I was accepted by UFM Worldwide as an appointee and by All Nations Christian College to begin a two year diploma course beginning in September 2002! God was really asking me to do this! Really asking ME! I gave 12 month's notice at work and set off preparing for another 'adventure with Jesus'.

Throughout those two years, I received blessing after blessing. After more than 40 years of full-time employment, new friends helped me get into full-time study where I attained a 2:1 degree in Theology and Cultural Studies. This enabled me to get a missionary visa for Brazil, which took less than 30 minutes of my time at the Consulate in London. Within eight weeks, without doing one deputation visit I had 80% of my financial support.

I left London Heathrow on a one-way ticket on 29 September 2004. At 56 years of age, I was about to start a 13½ year 'adventure with Jesus'. •

BUILDING THE WORK

UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS (PSALM 127:1)

BY BRIAN AND HAZEL PARKER

It has been our absolute privilege to serve God in the border counties of Cavan and Monaghan for the past six years. Due to a gap in Mission personnel in the area, we arrived fresh from Bible College to a fairly sparse programme with the mandate to "build up the work in the area". At the time, this was a dauting task; what would that look like in a new area and culture? What a joy it is to reflect and see how God has indeed built up a work in this area that has allowed us the joy of sharing the gospel with many.

Building Connections with Churches

In our first few weeks in the area, Brian spent some time meeting local ministers, mainly from the smaller rural churches, trying to get a sense of where the local churches were at and how we might best support them if needed. We are blessed that a number of local ministers are godly men with a heart to reach into their communities. It has been a real blessing to step in from time to time and assist these churches in various outreach endeavours, including monthly/fortnightly children's clubs, Holiday Bible Clubs, soup lunches and pulpit supply.

Building Relationships with Families

God has opened other doors to reach out into areas with little or no gospel witness. One such area is Doohamlet, where a weekly parent and toddler group and fortnightly Lego Bible Club have been running for the past four years. It has taken these four years to build trust and relationships in this new area. Nearly all of the attendees would be from a non-Christian background and know nothing of the Faith Mission, and at times it seemed like little was happening. But what a joy it has been over these past six months to watch God at work in two families. It has been a joy to read the Bible regularly with two of the mums and see them grow in their knowledge and love of God. It is also wonderful to see another couple of families grow from the toddler group into the Lego club. We are so aware that these things don't just happen, and that it is God's gracious response to the prayers of so many who faithfully pray for us and these families.

Building on the Faithful Witness in Ballinagh

In County Cavan sits a town with a Faith Mission Hall perfectly placed on its main street. Although only 10 minutes from a good Baptist church, there is no other evangelical witness in the town itself. A faithful committee have kept a monthly meeting going in this hall over the years. However given its locality, it was our desire to see the doors open more frequently. Lockdown provided the opportunity to complete some needed renovations to the hall, not only to freshen it up but to make it a more useable space. Once completed, a parent and toddler group and Lego Bible club also started in Ballinagh.











Once again it took time. Locals told us they viewed the hall as 'a closed Protestant hall.' However, after a few years it has been wonderful to now see families from the town feeling comfortable to enter this space. Although it is not about numbers, it is encouraging to see the toddler session on a Monday often being busy and 15-20 children sitting under the sound of the gospel at the Lego Bible clubs. Beyond and behind these numbers are families we have grown to know and care about. We would love you to pray on with us for these families that God would break through and build His church in this needy area.

Building Connections in Schools

We were thankful to arrive with connections already established in three primary schools for monthly assemblies. Being aware that school's ministry provides a great opportunity to share the good news with children who might not otherwise be taken to church or children's clubs, we were keen to see if God might open other doors. Brian, having had some experience with a soccer coaching ministry, offered his services to schools. Alongside this and the Lego, God has allowed us to use these tools to build connections with schools. We are thankful that there are now five monthly assemblies and other schools are willing to have six week long soccer coaching blocks or Lego clubs throughout the year. Brian also has the privilege of taking three 'Religious Instruction' classes in the local secondary school each week. Please pray with us that these sessions would be formative in the children's lives.

We hope this has given you an insight into what God is doing in this area. We are very aware that a 'busy work' doesn't always mean blessing. *'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain'* (Psalm 127:1).

We are so thankful for your partnership in the gospel as you pray with us that our labour is not in vain, but that God would build His kingdom in Cavan and Monaghan. •

***Brian** and **Hazel** work with the Faith Mission in the Irish Border District along with their three boys Luke, Caleb and Jude.*

SOWING GOOD SEED

BY JAMES AND KATIE BROWN

Leighton Road Evangelical Church can be a tricky place to find! The building sits at the back of the tightly packed Gainsborough Estate, where the streets all seem to loop around each other. When we first moved to Ipswich in 2016, it wasn't until our fourth trip to the church that we were able to get there without a SatNav – and we only lived one minute away!



In the years since then, we have become familiar with not just the geography of the local streets but with the local people. We have served alongside Brian Langston, the former pastor, and his wife Sheila for nine years, and for the past year with Reuben and Debs Hutchinson, also Faith Mission members.

The gathered church on Sunday mornings is a small number of people, with others joining from other churches on Sunday evenings. Preparing sermons, children's talks and Sunday School is a big part of our week, and it is a privilege to teach through the Bible knowing that God's Word changes lives, no matter the size of the congregation. We also have practical responsibilities like cleaning the building, and we meet together again on Wednesday evenings for Bible study and prayer.

However, as with the rest of Britain today, most people have no intention of attending a church service! Although we have visited every home on the estate and spoken to many people on their doorsteps, inviting them to Sunday meetings and other events, only a handful of people have ever come as a result – however, we thank God each time He puts it in someone's heart to come to church or ask for a Bible – there are still people across our country who are seeking for God.

Our children attend the primary school next door to the church, and it is through the school that we have made many of our connections and had more opportunities to share the gospel. Katie has got to know many local mums and spent time with them, offering practical help in their lives when she can. They have brought their children to Little Stars, a baby and toddler group which Katie began on Friday mornings, and then to B4T Club for primary

children, which happens each Friday afternoon. It has been fantastic to see children learning Bible verses, and parents listening to Bible truths. Some of these families have then sent their children to soccer school and camp at the Red House Farm Faith Mission camp centre.

On Tuesdays we open the church as a drop-in, and serve refreshments, trying to build bridges into the community and welcome them into the building. Recently we have been very thankful for conversations we have had about Jesus and the hope which we have! These include speaking with a Muslim lady about Jesus, with another mother about the hope of the gospel and eternity, and a conversation with three teenage lads about why Jesus died on the cross, and how His sacrifice means that we can be forgiven. It is so exciting to be crossing the room with a mug of tea for someone and to hear the gospel being shared with someone who needs to hear it.

God has also blessed us with a good relationship with the primary school, and twice a year all the children come into the church, one class at a time with their teachers, to learn about harvest and Christmas. We are glad that they look forward to coming and pray that what they hear will stay with them, and that the good seed will bring a harvest in the future.

As we look at other churches in the town, we see the temptation to make church a social venue, where people are lovingly welcomed – but Bible truth is neglected. Our prayer is that we would love local people enough to tell them what the Bible says! People are running around in this crazy, broken world harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. But Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep – the Good Shepherd who came to seek and to save the lost.



Please pray that we would be faithful witnesses where God has placed us, and that we would make the most of the time God gives us. The Faith Mission's involvement with LREC will run until 2027, God willing, and the church is looking to God for the future.

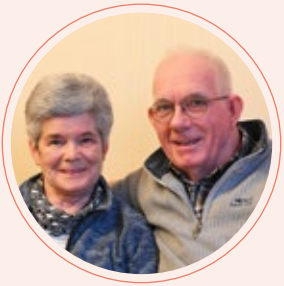
Please pray for those who have been impacted by the gospel. One teenage lad who professes to be a believer said recently that he wants to be a preacher – pray that God will use him, first of all to reach his family and school friends, and then his neighbourhood! We serve a mighty God – may He be known and worshipped all over the Gainsborough Estate and across our world. •





__James__ and __Katie__ work with the Faith Mission in the southeast of England along their children Suzie, Ben, Micah, Ezra and Rosie, the newest addition to the family.

PAUL & ELIZABETH CROWE



As they retire from the work of the Faith Mission, Paul and Elizabeth look back at God's faithfulness over their many years of service in the Lord's work.

FM: Where did you grow up and how did you come to know Christ?

Paul: I was born in Omagh, Co. Tyrone and grew up in Belfast and then Glenrothes, Fife. I was brought up in a Christian home and taken to church Sunday by Sunday and sent to Sunday School and camp. I came to know Christ at the age of 19. For months before my conversion experience, I had a yearning to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. One Wednesday evening after a youth meeting in Charlotte Chapel Baptist Church in Edinburgh I came to know Christ as Saviour.

Elizabeth: I grew up near the village of Kells in Co. Antrim. My parents came to faith when I was ten years old and it was two years after that when I also came to faith after hearing the gospel many times and realising my own need of salvation. It was the death of my baby brother that finally turned my heart to the Lord.

FM: Tell us a little about your family.

Elizabeth: We have two children. Miriam is an occupational therapist in Edinburgh and our son Daniel is an electrician and living in Wales with his wife Catherine and their two little boys, Robert, 3 and Timothy, 1.

Paul: Both our children and Catherine know and love the Saviour – what a blessing.

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

Paul: I trained as a chef and spent six years in this career.

Elizabeth: I worked in the office of a hardware and drapery shop in Antrim for one year before entering Bible College.

FM: How did the Lord call you into the work of the Faith Mission?

Paul: Soon after my conversion experience I felt the Lord's call to the Faith Mission Bible College. I remember while sensing this call, Mr David Howden, principal of the College, said to me, "Paul, tell the Lord to help Himself to your life".

Elizabeth: In my early teens we would often attend Faith Mission missions that were being conducted around our area, and it was then that I felt the Lord was leading me to serve Him.

FM: Where have you served the Lord over the years?

Paul: I served as a single worker for my first three years working in the Highland District in Caithness and Orkney, then in the East Scottish District on the Moray Coast and Fife. After our marriage we worked in Durham, York, Carlisle, Wales and Aberdeen.

Elizabeth: I started out Mission life working in Peterhead bookshop for six months and later spent two years in Leith and Dunfermline bookshops.

Before our marriage for the first ten years of my time with the Mission, I worked as far south as East Anglia and as far north as Shetland, one year in Northern Ireland and quite a number of years between the South and East Scottish Districts. I also did a stint in the Highlands.

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

Paul: Durham and Wales although in each of the various places we have served, the Lord has been at work. I always remember Irene Cummings, a Bible College staff member, telling me that the Lord was more interested in the worker than He was in the work.

Elizabeth: I think to see another person coming to faith in Christ has been one of the most encouraging things.



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

Paul:

- I poured out my heart before the Lord. Psalm 62:8
- I spent time reading and meditating on the Word of God.
- I was greatly helped sharing fellowship with fellow workers, and the Lord gave me a great wife.
- The Rev Robin Moscrop greatly helped me as far as spiritual warfare was concerned and taught me much about prayer in this area.

FM: What book other than the Bible has most influenced your life?

Paul: As a book lover there are many books that have influenced my life! But if I was to go on a desert island for a month and take my Bible and one other book it would be *Practical Religion* by J.C. Ryle.

Elizabeth: I love to read though I can't think of any particular book that has stood out as most influencing my life but in recent years I have read a few books on the life of Mary Slessor. After finding an old copy amongst Paul's collection of books, I was inspired by her life. She was born and spent her early years in Aberdeen so that has been the connection in my interest.



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

Paul:

- Make sure of your call to ministry.
- Remember the Lord is more interested in you as a worker than He is in the work.
- Remember there is a spiritual battle to face.
- Your stronghold is Christ Jesus.
- Make much of the Word of God and prayer.
- Read many good books. •

MILLTOWN
Prayer Union Centenary

Back in 1924 three men became concerned for the souls of their neighbours and began to hold open-air meetings at what was then the New Bridge, now Milltown Bridge. Others joined them, and numbers increased, so they moved to Coolaghey Bridge and held open-air meetings on Sunday afternoons. When the weather became unsuitable for open-air meetings, Mr Wachope gave them the use of his barn. Numbers continued to grow, so they felt that they needed to build a mission hall.

The Tyrone Constitution of 27 February, 1925 reads, "On Wednesday afternoon a new mission hall was opened for Christian work at Milltown near Ardstraw... The greater part of the cost of the hall was generously provided by Miss Russell of Omagh (aunt of the late Willie Russell) who has many ties with the Ardstaw district." The hall cost £100.00 to build.

We believe that only eternity will reveal the full extent of the work accomplished for the glory of God.

Following the opening of the hall a mission was held, and on 25 May 1925 a Faith Mission Prayer Union was inaugurated. Over the years various missions have been held in the hall, and a total of seven young people from the Prayer Union have gone into full-time Christian service.

In 1970 Rev Duncan Campbell held a week of meetings in the hall. There were no outward results that we knew of at the time. However, years later, we had a letter from a young woman enquiring about a mission in the seventies which she had attended one night as a teenager. She had been saved at that meeting. What a thrill that was! We believe that only eternity will reveal the full extent of the work accomplished for the glory of God.

Over the past 100 years, Sunday night meetings have continued regularly, originally, weekly but in more recent years monthly on the last Sunday of every month at 7:30pm. Numbers are encouraging, and God has blessed us with a gracious sense of His presence. A lovely supper is enjoyed by all at each meeting .

During lockdown when we couldn't meet in the hall, we held drive-in services in the farmyard up the lane during the warmer months. The prayer meetings were held, by telephone conferencing; so we were able to have fellowship and pray together. The Prayer Union meets weekly on Tuesday nights at 7:30 in the home of one of our members.

In 2000 a new kitchen was added to the hall, which greatly helped with providing supper, and in 2018 extensive renovations were carried out ensuring that the hall is warm, comfortable and welcoming.

As we look back over the past one hundred years, we can only say, "To God be the glory, great things He has done".[1] •

This reflection on the work of Milltown Mission Hall and the centenary of the Prayer Union was penned by Iris Russell who has since gone home to glory.

References:
[1] Hymn: FJ Crosby, 'To God be the Glory'

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BANGOR CONVENTION

The Faith Mission

EASTER 2026

Good Friday 3 – Easter Tuesday 7 April

"Revive us again!"

REKINDLING OUR SPIRITUAL FLAME




Ministry Team




Jacques Nadeau • Derek Maxwell • Andrew Mullan • Tom Shaw

SCAN FOR FURTHER DETAILS

Bangor Easter Convention
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