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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



ACCEPTED IN THE MESSIAH

» IDENTITY CRISIS

» WHAT IS SECURE?

» WHO IS THE REAL GOD?

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S DIRECTOR FOR IRELAND

In Philippians 4: 6 Paul tell us to, *'Be anxious for nothing...'*. Previous to this in Philippians 3:1 Paul warns of Judaizers who want to control behaviour, mischief-makers who want to control emotions and the circumcision party who want to control outward appearance. These are all things we are confronted with and can cause stress. In Philippians 4:2-3 we can see the difference of opinion in the context of Christian ministry.

Paul mentions those who proclaim Christ with ulterior motives, attention-seeking, egotism or with the Elijah mind-set ("I'm the only one courageously and properly serving God"), *'Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition...'* (Philippians 1:17). This creates unnecessary stress and strain in Christian work and is the opposite of the mind of Christ and the humility of Christ. Paul frequently refers to Christian character: *'Let your moderation be known to all men'* Philippians 4:5, *'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...Who being in the form of a servant...He humbled Himself...'* Philippians 2:3-9.

Set in the context of worship as in Philippians 4:4, *'Rejoice in the Lord always'* anxiety and worship are like oil and water, they do not mix. Paul instructs us in Philippians 4:6-9 to turn our cares to prayers and thanksgiving, to allow the peace of God to guard against anxiety and focus our minds on what is pleasing to God. Perhaps we need to ask the question, are we characterised by peace or anxiety?

As a Mission, we say farewell to Alistair and Sharon Patterson who have answered God's call to the pastorate of Straid Congregational Church, Ballyclare, Northern Ireland. They entered FMBC in 1986 and 1988 respectively and between them they have given 72 years to the work of the Mission. More recently, Alistair served as Director for England, where his leadership and pastoral oversight were greatly appreciated by the members in England. We will certainly miss them, yet wish them every blessing as they enter a new sphere of service in Christian ministry.

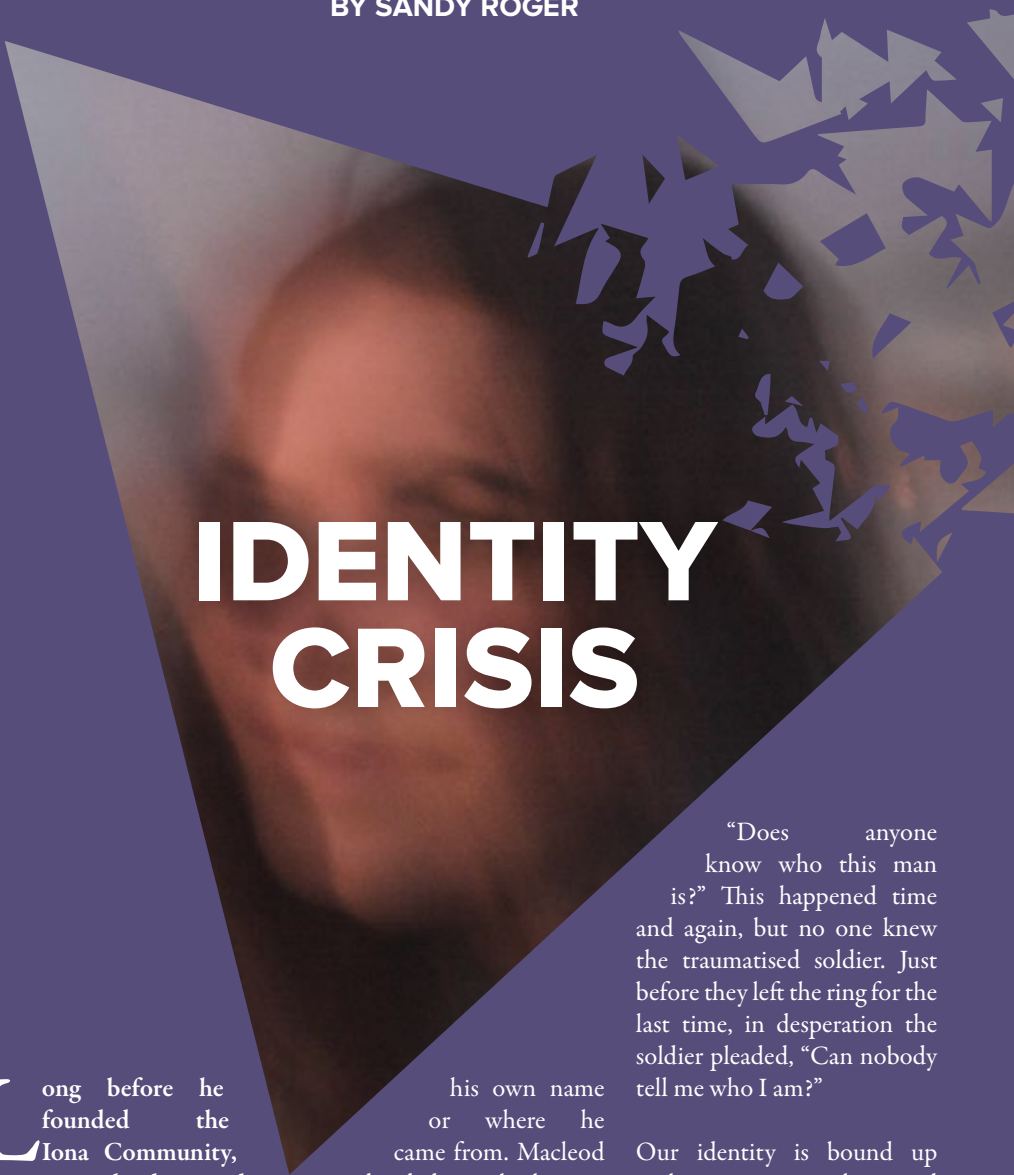
We welcome Simon and Rebecca Walsh and their children, Sarah, Samuel and William to the Irish Border District. They have been associate workers with The Faith Mission based in Derbyshire where Simon was a shepherd. On moving to 131 Mahon Road, Portadown in late August, they return to being full members of the Mission. We look forward to Simon and Rebecca joining the Irish team and commend them to your prayers.

We rejoice with Daniel Brown & Emily O'Connell who will be getting married on 2 September. They will be working in West Wicklow and we are excited to see what God will do through them. You can read more about them in an article later in the magazine.

Thank you for your prayers and support as we *'Seek first the kingdom of God...'* (Matthew 6:33). •

***Garry Tutty,** Director for Ireland.*

BY SANDY ROGER



IDENTITY CRISIS

Long before he founded the Iona Community, George Macleod served as a chaplain during the First World War. On one occasion a badly shell-shocked soldier came to see him because he had no idea who he was. He didn't know his own name or where he came from. Macleod decided to take him to a Forces boxing match that was happening that night. After each bout the chaplain and the soldier climbed into the ring and with his booming voice, Macleod announced, "Does anyone know who this man is?" This happened time and again, but no one knew the traumatised soldier. Just before they left the ring for the last time, in desperation the soldier pleaded, "Can nobody tell me who I am?"

Our identity is bound up with our personality and they function together if we are to make sense of our lives and the relationships we have with others. A sense of our own identity is essential if we are to live the Christian life to



the full and be of service to others in society. The Apostle Paul is a good example here. He managed to achieve as much as he did because he never forgot where he had come from, who he now was in Christ, and where this new identity in Christ was eventually taking him. He wrote, *'By God's grace I am what I am'* (1 Corinthians 15:10). In so many of his letters to individual congregations he hit home the importance of this idea of union with Christ.

It is a timely emphasis for the society in which we now live, where there is so much confusion. Distortion and untruth are thrown at us from every angle. People have lost any sense of who they really are and what they are meant to be. Christians are not immune to these unrelenting pressures and there is great need to see ourselves as God sees us and of what Christ has made us. Here are three possible approaches to understanding one's identity.

'We are living in an age when we are being told that we can be whatever we want to be, including fluidity of sexuality and gender if that's what we choose.'

I AM WHAT I AM AND I'LL NEVER CHANGE

The thinking here is along the lines, "You can't change human nature", or more popularly, "Once a thief always a thief" and "A leopard cannot change its spots".

The whole Bible takes a very realistic view of human nature. It consistently says something has gone wrong and human beings are not as God intended them to be. That hasn't stopped people trying to improve themselves and pull themselves up by their bootlaces. But all such efforts are doomed to failure without reference to God's help.

Paradoxically, we are living in an age when we are being told that we can be whatever we want to be, including fluidity of sexuality and gender if that's what we choose. All we seem to hear is that we are in control of our own lives and destiny, and free to become whatever takes our fancy. We can self-identify as anything we want, no matter how obviously ridiculous.

Paul's teaching from God's Word is that it is only by the grace of God applying the redeeming and transforming work of Christ to our lives that we can have any hope of seeing change. And that change is firmly rooted in God's original plan when we were created male and female. Only in the Lord can we become new creatures in Christ Jesus. *'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation'* (2 Corinthians 5:17). Prior to coming to faith in Christ our identity is that of sinners; after conversion our new identity is bound up with what we now are in Christ.

I AM WHAT I AM NOT

Quite simply, it is the essence of hypocrisy; pretending to be what you are not usually by comparing yourself to

others or giving in to what they tell you that you are. The best Biblical example is the pretentious Pharisee in the temple courts who pointed to another person and said, *"Thank God I am not like that tax collector over there"* (Luke 18:11). The Pharisee had a very high opinion of himself and assumed God held the same position regarding his character. His identity was based on what he was not, but he failed to see the true state of his soul before God. Forget wanting to see ourselves as others see us; how does God see us? His assessment of us is the only thing that matters.

Christians are often accused of having a morbid obsession with sin; their own and that of others. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's just that coming to faith in Christ gives them a true understanding of human nature and a realisation that apart from Christ all the confusion surrounding who they are and what they are meant to be, becomes crystal clear. Being *'in Christ'* allows them to view things from God's standpoint. The Christian's identity is fixed in Christ alone.

John Hunter, formerly of Glasgow University, had the balanced approach when he prayed:

"Dear Master, in whose life
I see all that I would but fail to be,
Let Thy clear light forever shine, to shame and guide this life of mine.
Though what I dream and what I do in my weak days are always two,
Help me, oppressed by things undone, O Thou whose deeds and dreams were one"

BY GOD'S GRACE I AM WHAT I AM

Paul's testimony was that God's amazing grace had changed him and made him the man he was. Every Christian has a similar story to tell, though possibly less dramatic. Paul outlines in brief how God's grace alone changed and moulded him, allowing him to achieve all he did, *'But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me'* (1 Corinthians 15:8-11).

Paul's back story is well known. The man, who was once a persecutor and destroyer of the early church, was transformed by God's grace into a proclaimer of the Christ he so much despised. He hadn't wanted to change, he thought he was in the right, but God waylaid him on the Damascus Road and the encounter changed him completely. He never forgot what he had been, but never allowed it to hamper the work in which he was now engaged. We could summarise his argument like this - and it is true of every believer:

- God's grace established his new identity in Christ (verse 10)
- God's grace gave him a new job to do in Christ's service (verse 10)
- God's grace created a new intimacy with others of the same mind (verse 11)

Next time you sing John Newton's hymn, put your whole voice into that wonderful phrase, 'Amazing grace'. •

***Sandy** is a retired Church of Scotland minister living in Edinburgh and a lecturer at our Bible College.*

BY PHIL UTLEY

Invitation to a Prayer Meeting

Suggested Readings
Matthew 17:1-13
Mark 9:2-13
Luke 9:28-36



When we look closely at the gospel accounts of the transfiguration, we find elements of what we should be seeking in the place of prayer. It does help when we recognise the fact that our Saviour was not only truly and properly God, but also truly and properly man and so developed His prayer life just as a man with a Bible. The life and ministry of Jesus was totally and utterly reliant on two key elements.

His knowledge of the Scriptures

He knew who He was, and did not have to rely only on anecdotal testimony. He knew the Torah, and at twelve years of age, was able to discuss it with the rabbis in the temple. From this knowledge, He was able to prepare Himself to. *'...be about His Fathers business'* (Luke 2:49)

His Practice of Prayer

The Jews had three times of prayer each day. David sets this out in Psalm 55:17, *'Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice',* from sundown to sundown. In prayer He would develop His relationship with His Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit within Him guiding Him into all truth. If you do not know the promises of God, you cannot ask God for them in prayer.

The mission of Jesus was to declare and establish the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. In order for this to be done, He chose twelve men from all those who followed Him to be His disciples. From that moment He had just three years to accomplish the task of training those who were to carry on His work here on earth.

Prior to his transfiguration, there are three things which should be noted. Jesus had asked His disciples, *'But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'* (Matthew 16:15-16). He then told them that He was going to be put to death. He went on to say, *'There are some standing here who will not taste death til they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom'* (Matthew 16:28). Jesus then invited Peter, James, and John to the prayer meeting on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The Purpose of the Invitation

It was to truly establish who He really was. Peter had said, *'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'* (Matthew 16:16). He wanted the disciples to know what that really meant and to show them that the Kingdom of Heaven was more than a piece of real estate which God had given to them through their forefathers. It was a parallel kingdom apart from the kingdoms of this world, which are for the moment in the hands of Satan. If they were to declare the Kingdom of Heaven, they needed to know what they were talking about. To help them understand that His death, resurrection, and ascension was totally in the plan and purposes of God, as revealed in the Scriptures.

The Place of Prayer

'Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves' (Mark 9:2). It was a place where there was no fear of outside interruptions, nor anything else which would take their attention. Fortunately, they didn't have to contend with mobile phones!

In your minds' eye, where is God when you begin to pray? If He is somewhere beyond the ceiling in a happy land above the bright blue sky, then listen up. The Lord showed that the prayer meeting is the portal of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Here we learn that we live in a parallel kingdom. Its proximity is so close, that two Old Testament prophets stepped out of it into time and space. At His ascension, Jesus was going to step into it. As the disciples of Jesus, we live in a different dimension, *'They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world'* (John 17:16). *'He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love'* (Colossians 1:13).The kingdoms of this world are political and secular, and under Satan's control. They rely on the power and force of arms. The Kingdom of Heaven is spiritual, and relies on God's power through the power of prayer. *'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here'* (John 18:36). The prayer meeting is where the Kingdom of Heaven is engaged and victory is achieved before the event.

John Oxtoby, a Primitive Methodist minister from East Yorkshire, was known as "Praying Johnny" (because he prayed for at least six hours every day). The Bridlington Circuit unsuccessfully tried to evangelise the wicked fishing village of Filey. Workers had been beaten and maimed. The quarterly meeting decided to withdraw from the work but Johnny volunteered to go. Overlooking Filey from the top of Muston Hill, he fell on his knees behind a hedge and there pleaded with God for hours for the success of the mission. A miller passing by overheard his prayer:



> *The prayer meeting is where the Kingdom of Heaven is engaged and victory is achieved before the event.*

"Tha munna mak a feal o' me. I told them at Bridlington Thou was gannin to revive Thy work, and Thou mun dea so or I shall never be able to show my face among them again, and then what will the people say about praying and believing?" The assurance came, and jumping up, he shouted, "It is done Lord! It is done! Filey is taken forthwith." Next morning, he entered Filey and in the open square he sang a hymn and preached the gospel. God's presence had already filled the place and a great revival began. Through persistent prayer, the Kingdom of God had invaded Satan's stronghold and routed him. When we come to the place of prayer, we are confronted with something awesome.

The Purity of the Kingdom

We read in Luke 9:29, *'And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering'.* Three things happened when Jesus began to pray. There was a glorious metamorphosis took place. His countenance, His facial features were altered, His garments shone and light flashed from His innermost being. He demonstrated to them that He really was the Son of the Living God. His Godship was displayed before them. The KJV correctly translates what Luke was saying, *'...his raiment was white and glistering...',* which means to flash out like lightning, to shine, to manifest that which is within. To glisten is to reflect light, like a dew drop in the sun. Whilst He is our mediator, our advocate and great High Priest, He is also the One at whose feet John fell down as though dead. He might have leaned on Jesus at the last supper, but now, displayed in all His eternal majesty and splendour, he can only worship. Jesus showed the three disciples the way into the presence of God, just as He does today.

The Permanence of the Kingdom

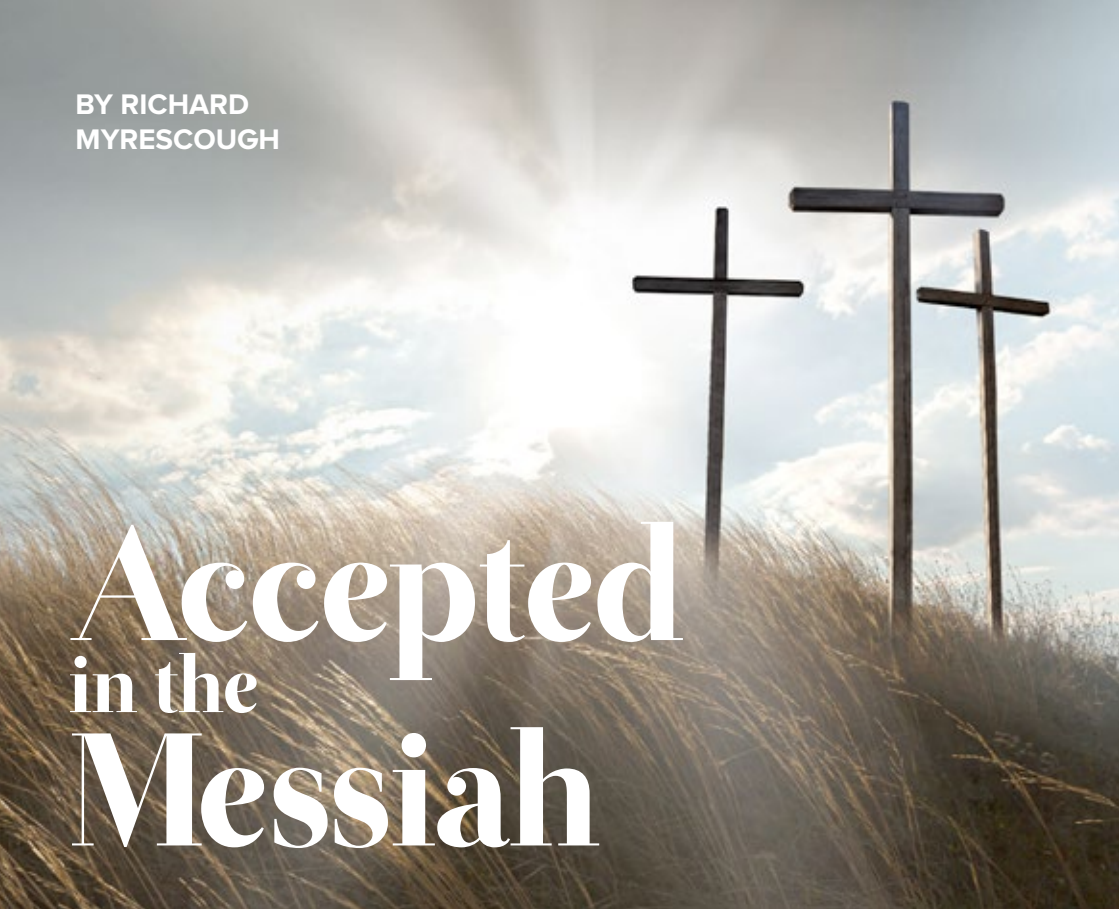
Matthew 17:3, *'And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him'.* The Kingdom of Heaven never lost a member by death, *'His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him'* (Daniel 7:27).

The Programme for the Prayer Meeting

There should always be a purpose for a prayer meeting and guidance sought. *'And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem'* (Luke 9:30-31). Jesus was being prepared to go through the departure lounge. When He came to earth, He was fully aware of the plan, but now He wanted to know what the final details of the programme for Him were. The discussion would include His arrest, trial, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension. These two men appear again at the resurrection (Luke 24:4), and at His ascension (Acts 1:10-11).

Jesus was not only truly and properly God, but also truly and properly man, and as such developed His prayer life just as a man with a Bible. •

***Phil** is a retired Pastor who originates from Yorkshire but now lives in Northern Ireland where he is still involved in ministry.*



BY RICHARD MYRESCOUGH

Accepted in the Messiah

In a letter to a church that was wrestling with the potential of being riven by factions and disunity, the apostle Paul reaches towards something of a conclusion when he urges them to, *'Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you...'* (Romans 15:7).

People from different sides of the tracks with multiple backgrounds and of diverse ethnicities, were being asked to open their arms and their hearts to each other. Sometime this is easy to say but nearly impossible to achieve.

This isn't a request that is made in isolation from their new identity as, *'...believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ...'* (James 2:1). The welcome and acceptance they are to show each other is patterned on this: *'...as Christ, the Messiah welcomed you'.* What does this mean for us as believers?

They have been welcomed, accepted - not simply tolerated with a heavy heart and a false grin that barely conceals a grimace, but with the warmest embrace into His family with tender, sincere delight. This they have experienced at the hands of the Messiah. The Lord of history, heaven's unrivalled Champion, God's chosen and appointed King of all Kings, His unique and ever-blessed Son who laid down His life, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, the One who is Creator and Sustainer of all things. He has welcomed them and

welcomes *us* as we come in simple, repentant trust. Despite all our inadequacies, all our indolent failures, our inconsistent crippled efforts at goodness, our inexcusable faults and failures, He has opened His arms and the gates of glory to reveal our forever home.

All of this, says Paul, lays down the pattern and lifts up the power for a life together that is not constrained by ideas of worth based on prestige, position, status or similarity. The welcome we give to each other is to match and mirror the acceptance by the Lord Jesus Christ that we know and feel in the depths of our souls. He has endless, boundless joy that we are His and prayed, *'Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am'* (John 17:24). That same joy is to imbue all our relationships within the church.

It *is* possible to take steps, even tiny ones that in the goodness of God can grow larger over time. It is possible to move forwards in humility and hope, because it is what our Lord Jesus prayed for in the upper room, *'...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me'* (John 17:21). This isn't foolish idealism; it's the life of God in the soul of the church. The hostile walls that divide are taken down at the cross and their bricks ground into dust that is blown away by the breezes of divine love. The words of Galatians 3:28, *'...for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'* can become more than a neat little slogan; they can be woven into the fabric of the life of God's people, stitch by stitch.

Paul is in no doubt what this will achieve and where it will lead: *'...in order to bring praise to God'* (Romans 15:7). Honour and glory to the One whose wisdom will dazzle the entire cosmos, powers seen and unseen, when fractured humanity is displayed as the single healed family of the God who is one.

The hostile walls that divide are taken down at the cross and their bricks ground into dust.

Let this be our prayer: *'May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'* (Romans 15:5-6).

Risen Lord, whose name we cherish,
all the stars are in your hand!
Walk today among your people,
light each candle on its stand;
look in mercy, not in judgement,
on your church in every land.

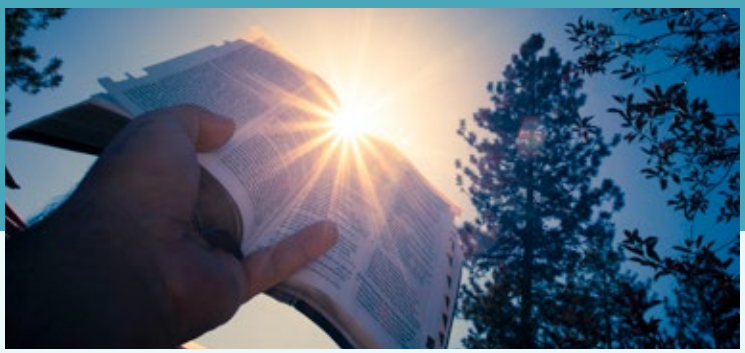
So, we pray, that by your Spirit
all your scattered flock may find
that deep unity you prayed for
and would share with all mankind;
by this gift our fears and envies
shall in truth be left behind.

Risen Lord, your hand is knocking
at each church's bolted door!
Enter now, and dwell within us,
trust and fellowship restore;
that your Father's joys together
all may taste for evermore.

David Mowbray © Jubilate Hymns •

***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*

The Faith of Christ



'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.'

Galatians 2:20

The Apostle Paul in his epistles was always presenting to us the mystery and power of an indwelling Christ. Here Paul tells us that having been crucified with Christ he is now alive through the indwelling Christ and the faith he has is the faith of the Son of God. In other words, the Lord Jesus dwelling in his heart reproduced in him His own faith. It is not the faith of Paul but the faith of Christ dwelling in his heart.

When instructing His disciples in the way of faith, the Lord Jesus told them to, *'Have faith in God'* (Mark 11:22). This can only mean that God has faith in His own Word. When He spoke, *'Let there be light and there was light'* (Genesis 1:3), He believed in the efficacy of His own Word. This was the faith that the disciples were encouraged to possess.

It is of the greatest comfort and encouragement to His children that He Himself lived, walked, triumphed and served by faith. How wonderful and blessed is it to learn that the

Lord Jesus can, will and does abide in the heart of the believer by the Holy Ghost to reproduce within us, His own wonder working faith.

We look to Jesus as our great exemplar and see the faith of the Son of God and the life that He lived as the Son of Man here on earth. We worship and adore Him and can say like Paul, *'I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...'* We could say His faith was a faith that lovingly offered all to His Heavenly Father. Without faith none can either render or surrender. Unless our faith is deeply rooted in the love of God, there can be no glad surrender to His will.

The supreme purpose, as well as joy, in the Lord's earthly life, was His supreme devotion to His Father's claims; though it led along a pathway of thorns, into places of suffering and woe, He gladly followed because His faith was rooted in the love of God His Father. In so far as Christ dwells in our hearts, just so far shall we be able to accept the will of God as our portion. Charles Finney called it, "Having affectionate confidence in God." If Christ be within we shall find it easy to surrender and to obey His holy claims with gladness of heart.

One of the most astonishing things in the earthly life of the Son of God was the place that prayer occupied. Surely He who was coequal with the Father had no need to pray, or ask for what was His own. He who unlike ourselves knew all about the mystery of prayer, was ever bowing His knee, ever seeking solitude, ever asking for what He knew His Father loved to bestow, ever thanking and praising in anticipation for the promised gifts, ever in the practice of approving His Father's way for the bestowal and communication of all His blessings.

The more consciously He lives within, the more perfectly He has control in our hearts, the more simply and confidently will we approve of God's appointed way of instant earnest believing prayer, as the means of grace to our souls. So much the more shall we believe in its necessity, its efficacy and its delight.

All the works and power of the Lord Jesus were given of His Father. The Father was the Mighty worker; the Lord Jesus was the instrument. This faith above all things brings rest to the heart. To know the Lord as our Saviour and Sanctifier is blessed indeed, but to know Christ indwelling as the mighty worker means a greater and yet more wonderful rest.

When He, the *'...author and finisher of our faith'...* (Hebrews 12:2) dwells within, then surely the life we live will be by the faith of the Son of God who lived, walked and laboured by faith in His Heavenly Father, not only ordaining all His works for Him but supplying the power and energy for their accomplishment. It is our business to wait upon such an indwelling Christ, till He not only works in us to will and to do, but till we find Him working with us and for us.

This brings rest and joy. There are few if any joys in Christian service deeper and more satisfying than that of watching the Lord working in answer to the prayer of faith. In this way we know we are well pleasing to Him, that He is with us and for us. We are laying up treasure in heaven and accomplishing that which will abide for ever. •

Note from the editor: Taken from 'The Dynamic of Faith' *by A Paget Wilkes, twelfth edition 1933. I came across this book on my bookshelf and to my shame have never read it but when looking within I discovered some wonderful truths. Perhaps you may also have it hidden on your bookshelf!*

BY MICHAEL CORNALL

Grace to be Given

'Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.'

1 Peter 1:13

The instruction is clear; we are to set our hope on something that we are going to receive in the future: '*... the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*'

In the future, when Jesus Christ is revealed, Christians are going to receive more grace; we are going to benefit even more from God's abundant generosity. This is where we are to set our hope.

Many put their hope in health. The world rejoices, and rightly so, at breakthroughs in the fight against cancer and other diseases. Others put their hope in money, with some religiously purchasing their lottery ticket, crossing everything they have in the hope that 'Lady Luck' might be smiling on them. The ritual continues each week in the belief that a jackpot will bring the ever elusive fulfilment they seek.

But the human race is a race of death; defeating diseases does not secure immortality. Good health does not last. Sadly growing old is accompanied by many trials and difficulties, all precursors to the inevitable. Although money may plug the holes and solve many short-term problems, it cannot keep its false promise to bring lasting fulfilment.

What a joy for Christians to be able to set their hope fully on the grace to be given us when Jesus Christ is revealed. This wonderful prospect should fill our minds, capture our hearts and impact our behaviour. God in His great mercy has given us new life in the here and now and He has reserved for us an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, which will be revealed in the future.

What a joy for Christians to be able to set their hope fully on the grace to be given us when Jesus Christ is revealed.

We all enjoy many legitimate pleasures in this life and we give God thanks for them: loving relationships perhaps with a spouse, close friend or family member, the exhilaration that comes from scoring a goal, a favourite meal that makes our taste buds sing! These are all wonderful gifts from God, to be received with gratitude, revealing to us part of His goodness. But we must realise that they are just signposts, indicators; a foretaste of our inheritance to come.

When Jesus is revealed and we meet Him face to face, the longing will be over. All previous joys will seem small and our faith will give way to sight. We will not be disappointed! *'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, [5] who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time'* (1 Peter 1:3-5).

God, through Peter, instructs us to set our hope fully on the grace to be given when Jesus Christ is revealed. The prospect is so wonderful we shouldn't need this command, but we are all prone to distraction and tempted to put our hope elsewhere. Live for that glorious day - long for that day. Use the anticipation of that day as the lens through which you view all your current circumstances. Hope in Jesus, He will not let us down. *'Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming'* (1 Peter 1:13).

When all my labours and trials are o'er
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore
Will through the ages be glory for me.

When by the gift of His infinite grace,
I am accorded in heaven a place,
Just to be there and to look on His face
Will through the ages be glory for me.

O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me;
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.

Charles Hutchinson Grabiel (1856-1932) •

***Michael** is the Pastor of Hope Church, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan. He is married to Holly and they have two children.*

WHAT IS **SECURE?**

BY MARGARET ROBERTS

It has now been over a year since the war in Ukraine began. While we may not receive as much news about the war, its effects are a very stark reminder that it is still ongoing.

When the fighting first began I remember watching a video of a woman in Kyiv playing her piano one last time before evacuating. Her house had been impacted by a nearby bomb and was therefore no longer safe to live in. As she played, the cameras went through the house to show the damage inflicted by the bomb. It was clearly once a lovely big house, now filled with the debris of broken walls, windows and doors.

The entire situation is heart-breaking. These people have lost their livelihoods, homes and in many cases, their loved ones who have joined to fight in the war. What was once secure is now gone. Many have left their country in hope while yet still living with uncertainty of what is to come, where to live and if they can ever return to their homeland.

The Covid19 pandemic taught us to not take what we have for granted and the war



is a reminder that even material things are insecure. We all want our creature comforts, nice homes and perhaps a bigger one, a sizeable income and money in the bank. But the security of these things does not last and are easily removed. Homes can be destroyed and livelihoods go up in smoke. Material things are not worth trusting in because when disaster does strike everything falls apart.

When I think of security I think of strong protection, a place that cannot be broken or taken away. As humans we need to feel secure, to know ourselves and loved ones are protected from danger. When we are under threat, we run to the next place of safety. If someone offers protection whether it is financial or physical we are prone to accept it. But in a tumultuous world these can quickly fall away. Nothing is guaranteed. There is only one place that offers such unfailing security: *'Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come'* (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

The Bible shares that security is found in Jesus. Christians are secure in Him because our hope is placed in an eternal, living God.

The Bible shares that security is found in Jesus. Christians are secure in Him because our hope is placed in an eternal, living God. We're told if we trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour and honestly repent of sin; we are forgiven, saved from the consequences of sin with a lost eternity in Hell. Heaven is promised and all this received through faith in what Jesus did on the cross. We have promises such as Romans 10:9: *'If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* Also, from Numbers 23:19: *'God is perfect and cannot lie, nor does He change His mind'.* This security in eternity is certain and cannot be destroyed. It is not something that we build with our hands but is a gift from God, through what Jesus has already done. We are secure because of the cross.

If our security is in Christ then nothing can separate us from Him. This world cannot change our eternal security. God is our refuge (Psalm 46:1), even in the troubles of life we can run to Him and know that He won't leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). His love for us is immense and nothing can take that from us.

Everything around us may crumble like dust and it certainly won't come with us after death, but there is real security in Jesus. The Christian can live confidently knowing that even if everything is taken away; our lives are still secure in the Saviour's hands.

'And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:38-39). •

***Margaret** works with The Faith Mission in the Midlands of Ireland*

WHO IS THE REAL GOD?



Testimony by Hasan Nas

I was born in 1985 and grew up in Belfast in a loving family home. My childhood was split between the North of Ireland and Turkey. Once school was out for the summer we as a family packed up and headed off to Trabzon, Turkey where my father was born. I had a very happy childhood. However, in my primary years life began to change as my mother came to know Jesus as her Saviour. Each Sunday we were taken along to church. Thankfully my father, being a Muslim, never stopped us from attending church.

My life was fairly normal until I started High School when things began to change for myself and my family. With a name like mine and distinctive markings, I stood out and was an easy target for bullying. This had a huge effect on my personality as I began to have a lot of anger building up inside. What was to come next was the start of a turning point in my life and what God used as a significant circumstance in which He would reveal Himself to me.

While growing up, my family consisted of an older brother and a little sister. What I didn't know was that I had another older brother called Tahsin. He was not my mother's biological son but from the day he came into our lives, we welcomed him as part of our family. My father owned several takeaways and all of his sons worked together in the family business.

Suddenly, Tahsin took very ill and after a short space of time, sadly he passed away. His family all came from Turkey for his funeral, the Imams and all the religious folk were there, but as I watched all the proceedings I became very bitter and angry with God. To my shame, I remember shouting at my mother, "Some God your God is. It was He who took him." To me, Tahsin who was brought into our lives was snatched away. At this time I spiralled out of control and developed a real hatred toward God. I began asking lots of questions. Why would God bring Tahsin into our lives to take him away, he was only twenty six when he passed away. This whole experience made me run further away from the God I had heard about.

After Tahsin's funeral, life went back to normal. On my lonely drive to and from

"Many questions were toiling over in my head. Are you real God? Who is the real God? Is it my dad's God or is it my mum's God? Round and round in my head the questions went. I got an answer from the Bible."

university many questions were toiling over in my head. Are you real God? Who is the real God? Is it my dad's God or is it my mum's God? Round and round in my head the questions went. I got an answer from the Bible. I read in the Old Testament of the Bible, *'And call ye on the name of your gods and I will call on the name of the Lord and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, it is well spoken'* (1 Kings 18:24).

I thank God for a praying mother! Early in 2004 on a Sunday night, I ended up in a small church sitting beside my mother. After the Word was opened and the Pastor began to preach, I knew God was dealing with me, and I knew the God I had shunned, shamed, and scoffed was the God of Elijah. I battled for a while as the desire for the things I was doing began to lessen and I wasn't satisfied. I knew there was a void in my life and this void could only be filled through Jesus coming into my life. In late October 2004, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ, the One and true living God.

At this stage I was still involved in the family business. I continued to work there until God began to change my heart and reveal His plan and purpose He had for my life. I was now married to my wife Paula and we were greatly blessed with our first couple of children.

God began to move in our lives, and we found ourselves being uprooted from Belfast and all that we knew, like Abraham of old, by faith, we were called out from our country, kindred, and family. We started to home-school our children and attend the church that we are now fully involved in. God began to reveal to us we were to get behind the vision and the work in our church. God was challenging us to leave and follow Him which led to a life-changing decision for our family. I stepped away from our family business. We now have seven children and are learning the reality of walking by faith and not by sight. God had already shown His goodness by providing us a home *'Jehovah Jireh - the Lord will provide'* (Genesis 22:14).

The priority of our ministry in our church is to reach the lost and the broken. We have established Café 3:16 and at the heart of this ministry is to give to the hungry, the lost and the broken. Our aim is to build relationships with local people and simply share the good news of the gospel. Within the café there is Harmony Books and our fellowship has been able to set up Harmony Christian School. My wife and I also oversee the youth in our church where we trust and believe God to work amongst our youth of today.

Thank you for reading my short testimony. God has a great plan and a purpose for your life. May we keep trusting Him in all things as we walk this narrow way." •

Visit www.ntcballynahinch.org for more information



Being a Christian in the Workplace

Life as a Christian in the modern world is tough, especially with everything Satan wishes to promote. Nowadays organisations are more interested in promoting ideals that go completely against the Bible and Christian values. For me, working in the police service as a Christian certainly has its challenges especially with some of the things that are actively promoted.

When I first joined the police service in 2003, I wasn't a Christian and to be honest, wasn't overly bothered, though I was conservative in my views. I was told that as soon as I walked through the door, all my views and opinions must be left behind so I could remain impartial when dealing with the public. Also, some of the things promoted now weren't even entertained back then. Some would say the police service has progressed!

Although I wasn't overly bothered about Christianity, I was always careful regarding Sundays. I was brought up in a strict Christian home so knew what was right from wrong and for some reason, I wouldn't get involved with work social events on a Sunday. Maybe I didn't want to upset my parents.

The thing that let me down and made things difficult was that when I got invited out for a social event, I always made excuses – sorry can't make it as I've got a birthday, sorry I'm going to visit my parents, sorry my girlfriend is coming down etc. By not being honest

and telling the truth, the team didn't see me as someone who respected the Lord's day but someone who made excuses about going out on team do's. It also made me try harder to be one of the lads, always pushing the boundaries with practical jokes and quite strong worded statements. I stayed the same until I was transferred to a different branch and met someone who went to church.

Although I wasn't a professing Christian at this point, my values had changed. I would rather spend time with this new friend and I actually wanted to go to church on Sundays. It is quite amazing what you learn when you decide to listen and take an active interest.

On transferring to a different branch and when people asked about joining them on Sundays, my answer was no with an explanation that I went to church. This brought about a different set of challenges but at least they knew where I stood and didn't ask me to go out on Sundays and on occasions they changed the days so I could join in with them. By stating that I went to church and eventually becoming a Christian caused many discussions. The majority of these discussions started by poking fun at me, usually along the line of: "he doesn't believe in dinosaurs!" or "Jesus was a storyteller that fooled many, who would believe in Him?"

And then you get the creation versus evolution arguments. Though they initially set out to mock, it gave an opportunity to discuss the Bible. The skill is knowing when to carry on and when to stop.

If I could give some advice to help you either at school, college or in the workplace it would be the following:

1. Don't be ashamed of Jesus but be honest and up front and try not to make excuses.

2. When your colleagues tease you, use this as an opportunity to discuss Christianity but be careful it doesn't turn into an argument or a battle of wills.

3. Don't compromise your faith by trying to fit in or agree with what you feel is wrong. It is exactly what they want you to do and they won't respect you for it.

The workplace can be a difficult place for a follower of Jesus but if you believe the Lord has placed you there then He will not abandon you. He will give you the strength to be a bright witness for Him wherever you are. •

For reasons of confidentially names have been removed. First appeared in Horizons magazine and reproduced with kind permission by the author.

Often our influence in our communities extends to church programs, musicals, or weekly services. While those things can help present the gospel, God desires for us to personally be influences on the world around us. Spreading the gospel isn't solely the church's job; it's the job of every Christian.

Paul Chappell



Champions of the Faith

BY THE EDITOR

In 1937 the Japanese had taken control of Korea forcing their pagan religion on its occupants. The people had to bow to the Japanese sun goddess, failure to do so resulted in being thrown into prison which involved torture, hunger and possibly death.

Esther Ahn Kim was born in Korea in 1908. Her father was a wealthy man and wanted the best education for her. She attended an exclusive girls' school in Pyongyang and her later years of schooling were in Japan where she was able to grasp the language fluently.

Esther came back to Pyongyang and taught music in a Christian school. During these days life for a Christian in Korea was extremely difficult, especially if they didn't bow to the gods. All the believers knew what would happen if such an order was defied. The day came when Esther knew she had to take a stand against this order. All the children and teachers were ordered to walk to the shrine and bow to this unknown god. Anyone who opposed it was taken to the police station and subjected to horrendous torture. Esther made the decision there and then that she would not bow down to any other, only the one true living God.

On her way to the shrine she repeated the words Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego spoke to Nebuchadnezzar, *'If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...But if not...we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image that you have set up'*(Daniel 3:17-18). All along the way she was reciting scripture and praying, "I am so weak Lord, watch over me." Then an order was bellowed out, "Attention" and everyone straightened, line by line making their way to the shrine. In a solemn manner they bowed the upper half of their bodies to Amaterasu Omikami (the sun-goddess). There was only one person who remained upright, Esther Ahn Kim and at this moment she felt complete calm. Drawing strength from the words of Paul, *'For when I am weak, then am I strong'* (2 Corinthians 12:10), she knew what this stand for her Lord and Saviour would mean.

On arrival back at the school, four detectives were waiting to take her to see the chief of the district who was incensed with anger and began shouting aggressively, "Don't you know what we can do to you?" At this moment the phone rang and in an instant his whole manner changed. Shaking all over he left the room. Esther walked out of the office. She lifted her eyes heavenward

and gave thanks to her Heavenly Father. This was the beginning of trying to evade every policeman as they would now have her description and told what to do with her if she were found. Esther lived in hiding for many months. Knowing they would soon find her and to be able to endure what was ahead she memorised scripture, fasted and prayed. Other believers who were hiding in the mountains were doing the same. Fearless of what might be ahead, they were ready to take up their cross and follow Jesus.

Esther was constantly moving from place to place, eventually she decided to come out of hiding and boldly proclaim Jesus. An old saint came to visit her, "I have been a Christian for over fifty years, but I have never heard God's voice so clearly as in these days. Only at such time as this persecution and disorder by the hands of Satan do believers awaken in faith." This encouraged Esther to stay strong.

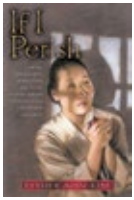
One morning a knock came to the door and Esther knew this was it. A policeman had been ordered to take her to the police station for questioning. She was put into a prison cell for women. She looked around and noticed some other believers, some were unrecognisable. Every day the prisoners watched anxiously to see who the guard was for that day. One of these guards was wicked and cruel. Everyone knew what was coming when he was on duty and those who witnessed it described it as, "Hell on earth." Esther had one advantage in that she understood the Japanese language. Hunger was a daily battle causing her to become very frail. The supper finished and they were still hungry. One evening they heard singing resounding throughout the dark prison. Someone was singing a hymn. The guard started beating the prisoner, but she carried on singing.

With the Lord's help, Esther used this time in prison to be a bright witness to both the guards and the prisoners, being aware in a very clear way that the Lord was with her, "I realised that it was because of this persecution that I was able to truly experience God's presence and trust His promises." The Scripture that she had memorised was enabling her to survive each day. On one occasion when her situation was having a punishing effect the Lord reminded her, *'Fear not for I am with thee, yea. I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee...'* (Isaiah 41:10). She describes it as, "A trumpet sounding forth loudly and strongly from my mouth as though the sound had been ringing in every corner of the prison." The promises of God's Word gave her the needed strength.

On August 15, 1945 a jailer announced that Japan had signed an unconditional surrender. This created waves of shock through the prison. All the Japanese staff had gone. Two days later all the Christians were released from prison. Just outside the gate the jailor in charge shouted, "These are the ones who for six long years refused to worship Japanese gods. They fought against severe torture, hunger and cold, and have won without bowing their heads to the idol worship of Japan. Today they are champions of the faith."

Outside the gates of the prison they sang a hymn –

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him lord of all.
(Edward Perronet 1782) •



You can read the complete story of Esther Ahn Kim in her book, 'If I perish' *(Moody Publishers, Chicago).*

DANIEL BROWN & EMILY O'CONNEL



We interview Daniel Brown and Emily O'Connell who have just completed their first year in the work of The Faith Mission.

FM: When did you come to Bible College and how has this experience helped you in the work over this past year?

Daniel: I arrived in September 2020 and the whole experience of college was deeply helpful in learning how best to communicate the truth of God's Word to people from different backgrounds. Homiletics taught me the theory and street café pushed me to be concise.

Emily: I also came in September 2020 and it was the practical experience of personal evangelism that has helped me the most, especially the street cafe and the Summer Placements.

FM: Emily, you are from Tipperary, so how did you meet Daniel who is from Cookstown in the North of Ireland?

Emily: I met Daniel in Edinburgh for the first time as we were both studying at the Bible College. It wasn't really love at first sight but more of an opportunity for a friendship. From there, that friendship became the foundation of the God-given relationship we now have.

FM: Where have you been working with The Faith Mission for the past year and has this been good grounding for future Christian work?

Daniel: I've been in an itinerant capacity this past year, alongside the Gospel Truck Ministry, in the North of Ireland and then in the Irish Midlands. What really sticks with me is that evangelism is all about listening. Finding out where people are coming from, and then seeing how Christ can meet their need from that new perspective.

Emily: I have been working in what's called the 'Sunny South East' of Ireland, an area that takes in Counties Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford. This has given me good grounding by teaching me to be flexible and try new things when what's been done before doesn't seem to be effective.

FM: When do you get married and where will you both be living and working?

Daniel/Emily: We are both looking forward to getting married on September 2. We are equally excited to be moving into the West Wicklow area, in and around Baltinglass and to see what we can do for God there.

FM: What would you like FM supporters to be significantly praying for you both as you seek to serve the Lord in the Republic of Ireland?

Daniel/Emily: We would be thrilled if you could join with us in praying for openings into communities, schools, coming alongside local churches to share the hope of the gospel to people who are in need. Pray for guidance as we investigate what's possible. Thank you all so much for following us with your prayerful interest. •

JEFF & SARAH TOWNEND



Interview with Jeff and Sarah Townend who have also just completed their first year in the work

FM: Where are you both from and what was your occupation before coming to Bible College?

Jeff: We lived near Stranraer in the south west of Scotland where I was working on a large dairy farm. I loved farming from a young age and was fortunate enough to reach my goal of working as a farm manager.

Sarah: I was working as a dog groomer and at the weekends I worked on a dairy farm where I met Jeff. Before coming to college I was a stay at home mum to our five children.

FM: What made you give up farming to come to study at FM Bible College in preparation for Christian work, was this a difficult step to take?

Jeff: Gradually I became unsettled, the love I had for farming seemed to disappear. I spent long hours working and became challenged about what was I doing that was of eternal value. The Lord put a new desire on my heart to reach the rural areas of Scotland with the gospel. At the time it felt like a great cost to give up farming (and I still miss it), but now I see what a privilege it is that God would use me to serve Him in such a way.

FM: Sarah, how did you manage to do the part-time course and look after the family?

Sarah: There were times I wanted to give up! I can only say that the Lord had to take away my pride of thinking I could do it all in my own strength. Not being academically minded I found it hard but I had to lay myself at the Lords feet and surrender it all to Him and in doing so He gave me His help and strength and God deserves all the glory for how I got through.

FM: You are both working in the Highland District, has this been a steep learning curve?

Jeff: Since we moved north in April it's been busy with a couple of holiday bible clubs, a trip to Tiree, a tent mission and camps. We are learning that *'Apart from Me you can do nothing'* (John 15:5), we can be busy but unless we surrender ourselves fully to God and allow Him to work through us it will all be in vain.

FM: You have a busy family life, has this been a limitation to getting involved in the work?

Sarah: If I'm honest this is something I battle with. Sometimes I feel quite useless not being able to do anything, but we have manged to help at a holiday club and camp when our own children have been on holidays. Being at home and being present for our own children is very important and they are my first mission. I'm aware that I don't want to drag them into too much and sickening them of Christian work or for them to resent us for not having time for them.

FM: What is your main burden for the work in the Highlands and how would you like FM supporters to be praying for the future of the work up there?

Jeff & Sarah: It's amazing to hear and read about the way God worked in the past in Scotland, but now the spiritual tide is well out and we see few conversions. Isaiah 43:18-19 is very much on our hearts. *'Remember not the former things...Behold, I am doing a new thing...I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.'* Our burden is simply that God would come in power and we would see many souls saved in rural Scotland. If you would like more specific up to date prayer points you can get the 'Highland Prayer Focus' at the Faith Mission website or email jeff.townend@faithmission.org. •



The Faith Mission Bookshop Ministry

BY STEPHEN DUNDAS

For well over thirty five years The Faith Mission Bookshop ministry has been resourcing the local church and individuals across the UK and Ireland, both through high street bookshops and online. Looking back over recent months we have witnessed the impact of the high street ministry, as there have been several testimonies of people coming to faith after visiting their local store.

Tracy, the Manager of our Lisburn Bookshop shares one such story:

"In November, a middle-aged gentleman (we'll call him 'M') walked into our shop and expressed an interest in purchasing an easy-to-read Bible. As we chatted, he shared that his wife was battling Alzheimer's and had recently been placed in a nursing home. He was understandably distraught, but I offered him some words of encouragement and support.

Three months later 'M' returned to the shop with his son who was visiting from Florida. He wanted to thank me for taking the time to talk with him during his last visit. To my great joy, he told me that he had since given his life to the Lord. (His son was delighted too!) I asked him if he had found a church yet, and he replied that he had been following a certain church's services online. My colleague Maureen goes to that church, so she invited him and his son to come along in person on Sunday. On Monday 'M' returned with the news that he had really loved the church, to the point of being in tears throughout the meeting. One of the elders had also shown him around and invited him to attend the next men's night.

One morning last week, as I was preparing for work, I felt exhausted and wished I could just crawl back into bed. Just then, my phone pinged with a message from that elder. 'M' had shared what had happened at our bookshop, and the elder wanted to let me know how valuable my

support had been. He also reminded me that my work is much broader than just running a shop; it is a ministry serving people. As I read the message, my heart was overwhelmed, and tears streamed down my face. It felt as though the Lord was speaking to me through these words of encouragement.

Now 'M' has been going to the church for four weeks and is very keen to learn more about Jesus and the Bible. He still pops into our shop for a chat. This whole experience has refreshed my commitment to the work we do, and further motivated me to continue providing a safe haven for people to find hope, peace, and comfort through faith. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to serve and praying our bookshop will continue to make a difference in people's lives."

Another encouraging part of the ministry is when a new believer comes into our shops asking to purchase their first Bible. Many of our staff and managers are thrilled to be able to sell them one and help guide them where to start reading.

Increasingly, as I visit the shops and attend events, I am hearing similar stories about how God is moving in people's lives. Our staff have been encouraged in recent months, as some customers are only now returning to our shops after Covid. We are thankful to God for His provision and faithfulness during lockdown, but also to see more recently, the opportunities we have had to share the gospel with customers.

We have had several other encouraging trends in our work and ministry with a growing number of teenagers and young adults attending Christian events and buying resources from our bookstalls. We have events where the author speaks and these have also been well attended with some unsaved coming along with family members. It is also uplifting to see an increase



Above: Retirement for Linda Collins

in churches asking for tracts, booklets with relevant social issues (especially for teenagers) and Bible study material as small groups seem to be on the increase especially for Alpha material. It is good to see new opportunities develop for the wider mission to evangelise through camps, tent missions and the gospel truck attending different events. At all of these events there would be a bookstall.

We continue to seek ways to *'Go into all the world and preach the gospel...'* (Mark16:15), through daily encounters and through the products we sell. We are currently exploring partnering with a Christian organisation to supply them with products for their website and have also been invited to supply a bookstall to a Christian conference centre. As the products we sell find their way into people's homes, pray with us that God will use them to cause His Kingdom to grow.

A member of our staff, Linda Collins retired after 36 years of fulfilling a key role in overseeing our Irish bookshop office. We thank her for the commitment she has shown to this ministry. To help with the transition of someone replacing her, we are very grateful to Linda for staying on two days a week until the end of August. •

> ***Stephen** is the Bookshops General Manager and Gavin Harrison is the Regional Manager for the Scottish shops. Do pray for them both as they work to see our bookshops growing and being used in ministry.*

THE GOSPEL TRUCK MINISTRY





BY ANDREW MAYBIN

The longer I serve the Lord, the more clearly I see that while we make ourselves available it is Him alone who does the work and gives the increase. The work has grown significantly from 2022. This year we had just over 400 young people on the truck compared to 300 hundred last year. It was such a blessing to be approached by other schools in the area requesting a visit with 'Charlotte' 'Poppy' and 'Sandy' (our three bears) being in high demand.

What a blessing it was to revisit Raphoe in the Republic of Ireland and join with the Congregational Church in reaching out with the gospel message. The primary school children heard the message through the story of Noah and all received activity packs while the highlights of St Patrick was shared with the secondary school young people.

The afternoons were packed with one to one evangelism including sharing lunch and Christian literature with whoever dropped in. The evenings spent in the market yard were a valuable time of outreach with people walking in, riding in, and driving in to hear the truth of the gospel message. One man experienced the blessing of salvation while others received counsel and prayer.

A working farm with a barn full of straw is not what you would call a typical outreach venue. Nevertheless 'Faith on the Farm' did not fail in exalting our great God and King. Friday night saw 100 young people gather in for a barn party with a very helpful epilogue. On Saturday evening the gospel was presented through the theme of grass cutting and silage making! We felt the weightiness of the task, as we reflected on how some people who attended the mission in 2022 had unexpectantly been called into eternity. Sunday evening was the family service with over 200 attending. It was such a joy to hear of a lady who trusted the Lord for salvation in the days that followed! To God alone we give all the glory.

It has been a special time on board the truck this year with God's help and nearness being felt. Watching the young people participate in the interactive lessons and listening to the helpful questions they posed was such a blessing. Please do continue to pray for all the Gospel Truck team. •

POINT TENT MISSION

BY JEFF TOWNEND

At the end of May a team of us headed over to the Isle of Lewis, one of the larger islands of the Western Isles on the west coast of Scotland. When we arrived at Point which is on the east of the island, it was great to have a good squad of men from the locality to help put the tent up.

From the start we had a good attendance of 80 for the first night and rising to 265 on the closing night. Although we were delighted to see so many come, it was of far more joy to see around 30-40 unsaved coming in over the course of the two weeks. Our time spent on going from door to door was very profitable with many good conversations and some of the people we spoke to came along to the meetings. Throughout the two weeks there was a real sense of God's Spirit at work with many being challenged by God's Word. One person commented, "I want to know more" and went away with a New Testament. There were many others who were seriously considering Christ. Please continue to pray that the seed sown will bear fruit and even though the tent is now long gone, they will still hear God's voice speaking to them.







During the second week we held an after-school club with the help of two of our students. The club finished with a BBQ and fun day on the Saturday with many parents present. Thank you for your prayers for which we are so grateful. Please pray for more opportunities to have tent missions on the island. •

Commons Prayer Union 100th Anniversary



Above: Commons Mission Hall

Commons is a townland approximately five miles from Carrickfergus in Co Antrim, Northern Ireland. It was here that the Prayer Union was formed in the spring of 1923 as a result, we believe, of a fruitful mission by The Faith Mission pilgrims. We had special centenary services from May 24 - 27 to celebrate this anniversary. This included a series of Bible studies on the subject of 'Joy in Prayer' by Noel Darragh. It was a real blessing to us as he reminded us of the joy we can have in spending time in God's presence in prayer.

A praise service was held on Saturday, May 27. It was encouraging to see so many people attend who had been blessed through the ministry of the Mission Hall and the Prayer Union down through the years. Various people took part in this service including three generations of the Stewart family from Portrush who ministered in song. Anne Brown shared her memories of a mission she had with Violet McCullough in April 1994 and Joe McNeilly (previous FM Director for Scotland and England) spoke of how much the prayer union meant to him and how God called him into the work of The Faith Mission. Linda Boyd also gave a report on the history of the Prayer Union and the work of the Mission Hall.

The meeting was led by Garry Tutty and Rev Tom Shaw gave a closing message from Nehemiah. He challenged the congregation on the importance of resorting to prayer: remembering the Lord, resisting the enemy, returning to the work and rallying together. The praise service was followed by a time of fellowship and supper with a special centenary cake to mark the occasion and one of our oldest members, Nancy Johnston cutting the cake.

The Prayer Union continues to meet every Wednesday evening to pray for The Faith Mission, the Mission Hall ministry and the needs of our local community. The Lord has answered many prayers over the years and has blessed the work of the Mission Hall and The Faith Mission. To Him be all the Glory! We praise Him for all that is past and trust Him for all that's to come! •

Below: Nancy Johnston with Noel Darragh and Tom Shaw



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