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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



WHEN YOU PRAY, SAY "FATHER"

» MATURITY MATTERS

» OUR GOD IS ABLE

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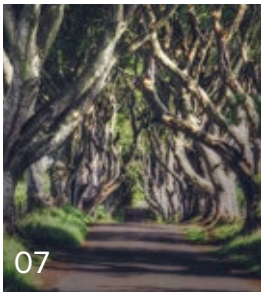





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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S DIRECTOR FOR IRELAND

Many years ago, whilst moving cattle with my father by road, my job was to run ahead and close any open gates and if there was no gate I had to stand in the gap. The picture of standing in the gap is used by the Psalmist in Psalm 106:23 to describe how Moses pleaded with the Lord not to pour out His wrath on the people (see Exodus 32). The golden calf incident is recorded for us when the people had sinned greatly rousing the anger of the Lord. *'If you love me keep my commands'.*

Surely we live in a very sinful time in our nation, creating the challenge to 'stand in the gap' in prayer. This reminds us of the language of the Lord Himself in Ezekiel 22:30, *'So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one'.*

To 'stand in the gap', one needs to be persistent as Moses was in Exodus 32:11. The Lord's parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8 enforces this. Although the ruler is presented as being unlikely to help the widow, yet he did because of her persistence.

To 'stand in the gap', one needs to bring good reasons to the Lord as Moses did. In a different context, God uses this language Himself, *'Come now, and let us reason together'* (Isaiah 1:18). The spiritual decline in our nation, increasing antagonism to Christianity and needs within our families and neighborhoods are all good reasons to bring to the Lord in prayer.

To 'stand in the gap' holds promise of influencing God to act, as He did for Moses. Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:7-8, *'Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened'.* Perhaps you are considering 'standing in the gap' or are already doing so, can we thank you for praying for us as we serve the Lord in The Faith Mission. If you would like to know more about joining one of our prayer groups do get in touch we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you would like to know more about joining one of our prayer groups do get in touch.

We said farewell to Naomi Dudgeon in March as she has sensed the Lord's call to withdraw from the Mission. Naomi rejoined in 2014 to commence a work in West Belfast in which she engaged in passionately. We trust she will know the Lord's blessing and leading into the future.

We look forward to Bandon Convention (31 May – 3 June), Edinburgh Convention (30 June – 5 July) and Durrow Convention (16-18 August). •

Garry Tutty,
Director for Ireland.

BY ANGUS MOYES



When you pray, say "Father"

In the 19th century, God used George Muller to impact the lives of countless orphans in the South West of England. Muller once wrote: "Thus I am myself now waiting upon God for certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for ten years and six months, without one day's intermission. Still the full answer is not yet given concerning the conversion of certain individuals, though in the meantime, I have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have also prayed daily without intermission for the conversion of other individuals about ten years, for others six or seven years, for others from three or two years; and still the answer is not yet granted, concerning those persons... yet I am daily continuing in prayer, and expecting the answer, that I have often thanked God that He will surely give it, though now for nineteen years faith and patience have thus been exercised. Be encouraged, dear Christians, with fresh earnestness to give yourself to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask things which are for the glory of God."[1]

Ten years and six months without a break! Do you feel inspired? Or convicted? Many of us feel we should pray more, pray harder; it's something we feel we *should* do, but not something we *love* to do.

It need not be like this. It *shouldn't* be like this. Prayer is not a chore or a burden. It is a privilege. In fact, when we consider what the Bible teaches we are *doing* when we pray, we see it for the *unimaginably great* privilege it is.

The gospels are full of Jesus praying. He prays when He is full of joy, He prays in Gethsemane faced with death; He prays early in the morning, He prays for His disciples. And yet in the first verse of John's gospel, we read that, *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God',* and in verse 14, *'...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us'.* This is God incarnate praying. Why is God praying?

Surely it as an example for us. But the reasons go far deeper than that. He prays because of who He is. In one of these prayers, Jesus' 'High Priestly Prayer' (John 17), Jesus says, *"Father glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed"* (verse 5) and in verse 24, *'...you loved me before the foundation of the world'.*
John 17 is a prayer – yes – but not just of a man to God. Jesus is the eternal Word, the eternal Son of God the Father, who put on flesh and dwelt among us. God the Son is praying to God the Father. This is an insight into the life of the Trinity – a glimpse into the very heart of God!

"Before the foundation of the world you loved me": God the Father has eternally given His love and glory to His Son, and the Son responded with the same. So, there has always been communion and communication between God the Father and His eternal Son. And now, the eternal Son has become flesh in the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth. That is why Jesus prays. Jesus prays because He is God the Son – and God the Son has always communed with His Father. And that communication with His Father continued after God the Son took on flesh. Jesus of Nazareth's communication with God the Father is not a new thing, it is a continuation of an *eternal* thing.

In verse 26, Jesus prays these glorious words, *'I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them'.* Note that Jesus is now praying for *'... those who would believe through their* [i.e. the disciples] *message'.* That's us! And what does He pray for us? That the love with which the Father has eternally loved His perfect Son may be in us! This is the gift of life that Jesus brings to us through His death – He comes to share with us His own communion with His Father! When Jesus meets Mary Magdalene after His resurrection from the dead, He says go to *'...my brothers and tell them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father"'* (John 20:17). Jesus' Father is now our Father, in order that He prays *'...the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them...'* (John 17:26). Jesus' desire for us is that the love that He has eternally received from His Father would also be ours. The Good News really is this good!

Jesus prays because He is God the Son – and God the Son has always communed with His Father.

Yet, how can sinners like us receive such love from the Holy God? *'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son...'* (John 17:1). What is the hour? The hour of His death on the Cross. The incarnate Son's death on the cross makes complete atonement for our many sins and brings us the forgiveness that means we can call Jesus' Father, our Father.

What the cross wins for us therefore, is an invitation into the communion between the

Father and the Son. Peter calls it becoming *'... partakers of the divine nature...'* (2 Peter 1:4). That is what He offers us. And here is the thing, that is most basically what prayer is. Our confidence in laying our requests before God is that, at its foundation, prayer is our participation in this relationship between God the Father and His eternal Son. The gospel makes us sons and daughters of God so that we can speak to Jesus' Father, as our Father. As He taught us: *'When you pray, say Father...'* (Luke 11:2).

And the Spirit helps us. Luke tells us at that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, *"I praise you, Father..."* (10:21). We find that pattern throughout Luke's Gospel (Luke 1:41; 67; 4:1, 14, 18, etc.): The Holy Spirit moves Jesus to prayer. Again, the point is that this is not just something the Spirit did while Jesus was on earth: this is eternally the role of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has eternally taken the love of God the Father to His eternal Son to fill the Son with joy as He responds in love. And that same Spirit now lives in us! For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. *'For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God'* (Romans 8:15-16). The same Spirit who has eternally moved Jesus to cry out in love to His eternal Father is the Spirit who now lives in us.

When we think of prayer like this, how could we see it as a burdensome add-on? Prayer is 'the chief exercise of faith', said one theologian.[2] Prayer is putting the gospel into action: that I daily believe His almost incredible promise that I can come to my Father, despite *my* sin. That is prayer: relating to the eternal Father as *my* Father.

Prayer is putting the gospel into action: that I daily believe His almost incredible promise that I can come to *my* Father, despite my sin.

Our Father in heaven wants to hear from us. Augustine of Hippo's one-time mentor, Ambrose of Milan said that because Christ is sealed in our heart by the Spirit, He "is our voice through whom we speak to the Father"[3]. What is on your heart? Who is on your heart? To see prayer as first and foremost not a chore or burden or even a skill to master, but a relationship we enjoy with our heavenly Father: that is the foundation for faith and patience and "fresh earnestness to give yourself to prayer... for the glory of God". •



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[1] https://www.georgemuller.org/devotional/george-muller-and-the-secret-of-his-power-in-prayer (Accessed: 29 April 2024).
[2] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book III, Ch. XX.
[3] On Isaac or the Soul, CSEL 32, 1, 694.

***Angus** joined the staff at our Bible College in September 2023 where he lectures in theology and ministry.*

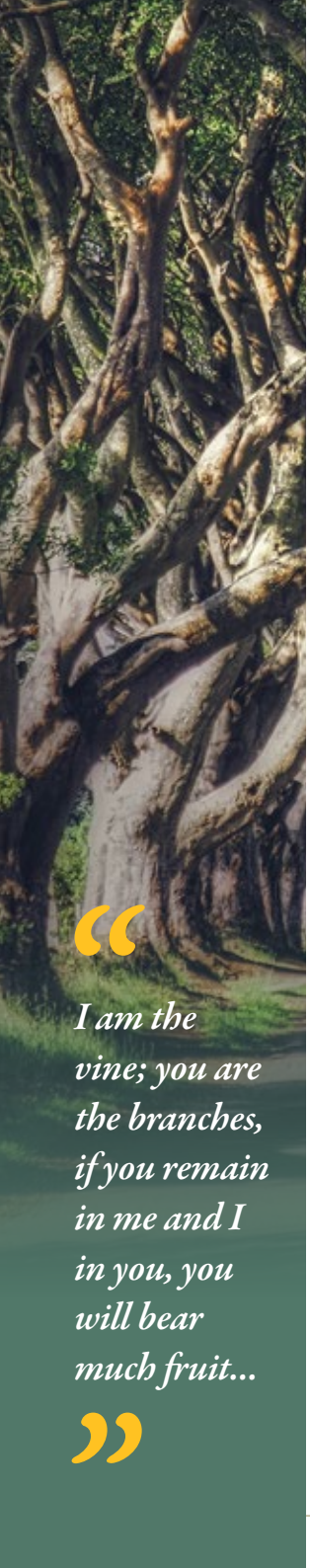
BY ARTHUR RODERICK

Maturity Matters

'But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'
(2 Peter 3:18)

To write an article on this topic is a challenge to me as I need to reflect on my own condition. The Bible says we are to, *'Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith'* (2 Corinthians 13). First and foremost, you must be born again to mature spiritually. Here are some guidelines to maturity.

Did it offend you in your childhood when you were told to, "Grow Up", or to hear the words, "Don't be a baby." The whole of God's purpose is that we grow and mature. We could say the goal is from growth to glory. It is sad to see immaturity in adulthood, whether physical, mental, emotional or in social skills. We have a sadness that our son, who is now 48 years old and seriously impaired with cerebral palsy, has not been able to mature in the natural. We must recognise that spiritually, God wants us to grow. He has built into us a process that will lead to maturity. Some factors that are essential for growth in grace are gifting's, godliness, faith, time and acceptance.



The Faith Factor

Believing God's Word is not just positive thinking, it is the total acceptance by faith of the factual nature of the gospel. Firstly, salvation is by faith alone. The beginning of maturity is to be born again and then to grow. To please our Father we must proceed with complete faith, *'And without faith, it is impossible to please God'* (Hebrews 11:6). How parents delight when their child begins to stand and then walk. The Bible tells us we are to, *'...stand fast in the faith...'* (1 Corinthians 16:13), and after standing we are to walk. We are to live by faith, *'The life I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God...'* (Galatians 2:20). Peter tells us, *'As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby'* (1 Peter 2:2 KJV). This is a plea for enthusiastic feeding and how we grow by faith. It is complete dependence on God and not on ourselves. God looks on from above, at His child's growth through the exercise of faith. *'The just shall live by faith'* (Romans 1:17 KJV)

The Time Factor

Stating the obvious, it takes time to develop information in our minds. Knowledge needs input. Built into each human is potential both naturally and spiritually. Rome wasn't built in a day, nor does maturity come overnight. Time needs to be redeemed; an unprofitable waste of time hinders maturity.

Yes, special feeding times are needed and God has ordained the mutual benefits of fellowship. We grow together. The Christian life is a spiritual finishing school. Paul speaks about pressing on, and reaching forward, *'I press toward the goal...'* (Philippians 3:15). This requires effort, determination and involves the discipline of using our time to grow and mature.

There is a challenging indication in the Old Testament in Exodus 23:29-30 that God sometimes allows slow progress, *'Little by little, I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.'* Life has different times and seasons for our growth and God determines the 'when and where' of life. Peter had to learn about God's timing. In his youth he jumped the gun sometimes. As the Lord predicted, when he was old he did strengthen his brethren. (See Luke 22:32).

Paul hints at this in his two epistles, *'He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ'* (Philippians 1:6) and *'I have fought a good fight and finished the course'* (2 Timothy 4:6)).

The Development Factor

Along with the concept of taking time to grow, there is a lesson from nature that we can learn from. We have the planting of

the seed, the shoots, the blossoms and then the fruit. God is looking for the fruit. This could mean the experience of pruning and God's redirections in our lives.

John tells us, *'I am the vine; you are the branches, if you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit...'* (15:5). God is glorified when we bear fruit, *'...this is to my Father's glory when you bear much fruit...'* (John 15:8). God chose us so that our fruit would remain (15:16). Our development comes when Christ lives in us and imparts His life through us. The Word says that Christ is our Life. To have the Lord Jesus on board, means we will experience the fellowship of His sufferings and be conformed to His death. Paul passionately prayed that Christ would be formed in the lives of the Galatian believers (see Galatians 4:19). This matches the words in Philippians 2:5, *'Let this mind be in you'.* Christ in us becomes the hope of Glory.

The Acceptance Factor

As we develop character, transformation takes place. Our own feelings will not be influenced so much as to desire human acceptance but rather God's approval. Naturally, we want acceptance and approval by our peers and fellowmen. But sometimes this creates a conflict. What dwarfs these natural desires to be appreciated and respected is to understand and believe that we have been divinely and totally accepted and chosen by God. This is spelled out in Ephesians 1: 6, *'...wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved'.* You are sure of this, are you?

We not only have acceptance but *'...peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'* (Romans 5:1) and *'...by whom we also have access by faith into his grace...'* (5:2). We know nothing, *'... can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus'* (Romans 8:39). In studying the book of Romans we should get the great truth of justification and the faith factor under our belt. Romans 8:31 says it all, *'If God be for us who can be against us'?*

The Transformation Factor

The ultimate outcome of our lives on earth is eternal glorification. This deserves a further study on how every part of the triune Godhead is involved in what we are talking about. The Holy Spirit is God's agent of change, '*But we all...are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord'* (2 Corinthians 3:18). It begins on earth, as we behold in a mirror the glory of the Lord. God created us in His image but that image was marred by sin. Christ the last Adam died to renew the divine image and He was victorious. Death was defeated and resurrection to glory, for those who believe, is assured by God's grace and our faith in Him.

Of course, our devotion and discipleship down here brings glory to God in this life and ultimately our growth and maturity may well be evidenced at the heavenly assessment of our earthly investment in heavenly matters.

I close this by urging you to grow up into Christ so that you no longer remain a baby Christian. To understand what maturity brings, I emphasise the words of Paul, *'For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear, for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward'* (1Corinthians 3:11-15).•



Arthur *is married to* ***Vivienne*** *and they have just celebrated sixty years of marriage. Arthur is the founder and retired Director of Christian Education Europe.*



Our God is Able

BY SANDY ROGER

'If this be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.'
(Daniel 3:17, 18)

The story of these three boys in the fiery furnace is one of the most inspiring tales in the whole Bible. The way they stood up to the demands of King Nebuchadnezzar is a salutary lesson for these days of compromise which we see all around us. Here are three young men willing to burn rather than bow to the demands of a tyrant king. Who can fail to be impressed by their polite but defiant address to the king?

The story that unfolds is a heroic example of no compromise and its result, good or bad. Notice the conjunction of the key phrases, *'Our God is able...but if not...'* These are not the words of three over-grown immature teenagers, but solidly based on their experience and knowledge of the living God. Their uncompromising attitude is the expression of their inward resolve and inner conviction.

Had they given in to Nebuchadnezzar's demands and just gone with the flow, several things in the incident would not have happened. Compromise always has repercussions for others, as well as for those taking a firm stand.

They would never have proved the reality of *'...our God is able...'* (3:17)

It would have remained as a mere pious expression on their lips rather than a living reality in their lives. The outcome of their stance was based on the firm conviction that God is always able for the demands of the moment. Convinced that nothing defies God's ability, here was the opportunity to put that belief to the test come what may. For these Hebrew boys God was not some distant deity, but ever present to stand by those who stood by Him. He was real and He was able and still is (See Ephesians 3:20-21). God is more than a match for every eventuality that comes our way, even if it entails a fiery furnace.

They would have been robbed of the fellowship of the fourth Man (3:25)

The king was baffled when he looked into the furnace. He and his counsellors knew that only

three men had been thrown in, but now there were four walking around in the midst of the fire. But while the king was puzzled by what he saw, the three men were experiencing the support and presence of the Son of God. The fourth Man is one of those few times before the incarnation in Old Testament times when God's Son made Himself known in human form. The technical name is a theophany but they were only ever temporary appearances, unlike the permanence of the incarnation. Other such appearances were granted to Abraham (Genesis 18), Moses (Exodus 3) and Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1; John 12:41).

Had these men compromised they would have missed out on proving that the Son of God is never closer than when He shares with us in our fiery trials. Fellowship with Him in times of trial takes on a deeper dimension which we would never know had we taken the way of compromise and denied our deepest convictions.

The Son of God is never closer than when He shares with us in our fiery trials.

They would have remained restricted in their lives (3:23-25)

Having been thrown into the flames severely restricted, it was quite clear that they were now unbound and freely able to walk around. The only thing the fire managed to do was burn away the things that hindered. They were now enjoying a larger liberty than they had ever known before. Had they taken the route of compromise they would have been forever restricted in their testimony and witness, for no man can serve two masters.

The lives of many believers are dwarfed and undeveloped because they have never stood up and stood out for Christ. These boys were prepared to lose everything for what they believed. Had they compromised they would have been forever bound by false religion, public opinion and the fear of criticism. The only sure deliverance from such things is a touch of fire. Nothing of real, lasting value is lost in such a fire; only that which hinders perishes in the flames.

They would have missed an opportunity for witness (3:25)

Because of the stand they took this idolatrous pagan king caught a faint glimpse of the Son of God. Compromise always stifles such witness and deprives others of seeing the Lord. There is no greater ministry than to let others see the Lord at work in our lives. Maybe there are people all around us who have never seen the Son of God because we have taken the easy way of compromise. Although they are ultimately responsible for their own decision to follow Christ, our unwillingness to stand up and be counted has denied them the opportunity and light they could have had because of our failure to adopt a firmer stance.

Their own personal experience would have been sorely lacking (3:27)

After it was all over, there wasn't even the smell of burning upon them. If the boys teach us anything it is that it is possible to pass through fiery trials with the fire leaving no trace upon our lives. We have all come across people who have been through the fire, but their lives show little evidence of how much they have endured. There is no bitterness, no self-pity, no grumbling and no smell of fire.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie
His grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee, His only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.
(Robert Keen 1787) •

***Sandy** is a retired minister and lectures at our Bible College. He is one of the main speakers at The Faith Mission Edinburgh Convention 2024 (see details on back cover).*



Going forward with God

BY ANNE BROWN

The children of Israel had been slaves in Egypt for many years but now they were free! Moses, former prince turned shepherd, had returned to the country of his youth at God's command and led them out. It had been a memorable night, following ten plagues Pharaoh chased them out (See Exodus 12:31-32). Part of their subsequent journey from Egypt is recorded in Exodus 14 which is a picture of our exodus from the slavery of sin.

On that journey we notice:

The Assurance that Surrounds us

'And the Lord went before them by day...and by night' (Exodus 13:21). God is with us, He has said, '*I will never leave you nor forsake you*' (Hebrews 13:5). In all the rough, dark and crooked places in the journey of life, we have the Lord, just as much as in the smooth, bright and straight places. However, we are not long saved until we experience:

The Attacks that Surprise us

God was leading the children of Israel but that was no insurance against enemy attack. Pharaoh and his army pursued them and caught up with them when they were at a vulnerable place, surrounded by obstacles including the Red Sea! As Christians we need to be on our guard especially after a high point in our lives. There are several examples in the Bible of these challenges which God allowed - David

had no sooner been anointed king over all Israel than, *'...the Philistines went up to search for David'* (2 Samuel 5:17), the disciples had just participated in the feeding of the 5000 when a storm arose as they crossed the sea and most notably, Jesus had just been baptized when He *'...was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil'* (Matthew 4:1).

The children of Israel are panic-stricken and their hearts turn from faith to fear. They saw the Red Sea ahead and the Egyptians behind, rather than the pillars of cloud and fire. So often our issues block out our vision of God. The children of Israel were praying and complaining time about (14:10-12). They were looking at God through their circumstances rather than at their circumstances through God. Thankfully, Moses knew that God wouldn't let them down and he gave:

The Advice that Stills us

'Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD ...The LORD will fight for you" (Exodus 14:13-14). George Philip writes: 'Stand firm... has more to do with 'stop and think' than with 'wait and see'....it is what we know of God that must be our rock, refuge and assurance.'[1] Someone has said that rushing around creates sandstorms that hide God. We need to remember the familiar verses that we often quote to others when they are in trouble. The NASB has a very helpful alternative translation of Psalm 46:1 in its margin, *'God is...abundantly available for help in tight places.'* However, the children of Israel couldn't continue to *'stand still'* forever and neither can we. We have to admit that it is:

The Advance that Strengthens us

It seemed as if God was contradicting Moses; He was commanding them to *'go forward'* (verse 15) when Moses had previously said *'stand still'.* This was not the case; there is a time to think, meditate and pray but there is also a time to move forward by faith, to trust God's Word. Surely the God who caused all the waters under the heavens to gather together into one place (see Genesis 1:9), could gather together one localised area of water! The Red Sea was still ahead of them but following God's direction to Moses it opened up and they went through on dry ground. What a miracle! There may have been as many as two million people crossing over, so the seabed had to remain dry the whole night. I'm sure that was a test of faith especially for those at the end of the queue! We all face our 'Red Sea' experiences at times. Let this incident be an encouragement to you to trust God to open up a way for you. You are not alone; just as *'...the Angel of God came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel ...so that the one did not come near the other all that night'* so God will lead you through (see Hebrews 11:29). After such a night the most natural thing in the world to do would be to praise God and so chapter 15 is a wonderful song reminding us of:

The Adoration that should Spring from us

The phrase, *'The LORD'* occurred ten times in this song. God had promised Moses, *'I will gain honour over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen'* (14:17) and so, rightly the glory went to God, not to Moses. Our response should be the same. I love the verses in 15:9-11, *'The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake'.... You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them, they sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like You, O LORD, ...who is like You?'* Surely, *'...there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You'* (1 Kings 8:23). •

References:
[1] 'Exploring God' by George M Philip

***Anne** is from Northern Ireland and works with the Faith Mission in the West Irish District.*

Encouragement or Disappointment

BY DAVID LANG

'Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt...For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deed that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.'

Deuteronomy 34:10-12

The testimony that shows Moses to be exceptional as a prophet is quite accurate. And yet, despite all of his fine qualities, he was sometimes let down by the very people he may have been expected to rely on to support him. Take for instance the episode when his right hand man, Aaron let him down very badly by allowing the children of Israel, *'...to eat and drink and rose up to play'* (1Corinthians 10:7KJV)

It is of more than passing interest that the Apostle Paul should equate these activities with idolatry, and using them as an illustration of falling from grace. It must have been a dreadful disappointment to return from a close encounter with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to find that the very people to whom Moses had been so close to had behaved badly. There is much evidence that on many occasions, Moses had to deal with such disappointments.

Another was when the people spoke against God and Moses. Their complaint this time was shortage of bread and water – a common complaint. They claimed that God and Moses had brought them up out of Egypt just to die in the wilderness. The Lord sent fiery serpents among them and they bit the people. Many died as a result. They came to Moses in repentance, confessing their sins and asking Him to pray that the Lord would, *'...take away the serpents from us...'* which He did.

These two encounters are sufficient enough to show the kind of situations which Moses had to deal with, sometimes on a daily basis. But what of us, how do we handle such situations?

In his book[1] Paul Mallard writes, 'Disappointment is the sadness experienced when people or circumstances do not fulfil our expectations'. He goes on to say, '...There is a purpose in disappointment... and the greatest purpose of all is to drive us into the arms of Jesus'. Moses was able to carry on with God's work because he knew he was aided by God Himself. *'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...'* (Matthew 20:28). There are times when those who are involved in Christian ministry need encouragement and support. "Lord, help us to be an encouragement rather than a disappointment." •

References:
[1] 'Invest your Disappointments' by Paul Mallard

***David** is a retired teacher, married to May and lives in East Lothian, Scotland.*

BEING A CHRISTIAN IN THE WORKPLACE: FUNERAL DIRECTOR

BY MARK SUTHERLAND

I had never planned on being a Funeral Director. Most kids would probably not dream of doing such a job. I did think I was going to be a PE teacher until a few years ago when I was offered a job with a local firm, I didn't even know what they did or how they worked. But here I am, ten years later and thankful to God for the way He has directed my steps in this way.



I find it extremely difficult to speak about my faith with the clients I meet with. It is such a sensitive and delicate situation for many, and so very rarely has it come up that I have been given the opportunity to share my own personal faith in Jesus.

My role within the company is a Funeral Director. This means that my time is spent working alongside bereaved families. From that first phone call when they tell us their loved one has passed away, to going to the house or care home to collect the deceased, to then meeting with the family. Funeral arrangements are discussed and we then stay in contact with them up until the day of the funeral.

The day of the funeral is important, and I would be there all day making sure all the arrangements are carried out as the family wished. By doing this, the families are able to build up a relationship with us as we see everything through from beginning to end.

It is a hands on occupation, organising the funeral, contacting the different parties involved and making it happen on the day. From the florist, to the minister, to the crematorium staff, but at the same time we are working with individuals and families that are grieving. It is not just a tick box practical exercise when I am arranging a funeral. Instead I take time to listen to the family's situation and understand what they have been through, whether it has been sudden or if they have been ill for a long time. And then with care and sensitivity I seek to reassure each family of our care for their loved ones who have passed away, and for them as together we make the decisions that need to be made.

The role is one in which I have developed into over a number of years. As a young man I had not experienced grief first hand. It has been a learning process. The truth is that every individual is different, and when it comes to grieving, no two families are the same. This brings a challenge in itself as you never really know how one individual is going to react, but it also keeps me on my toes, to be sensitive and respond accordingly.

I am fortunate to work for a company that is run by Christians. However, the majority of my colleagues and most of the clients that I come into contact with each day are not. I find it extremely difficult to speak about my faith with the clients I meet with. It is such a sensitive and delicate situation for many, and so very rarely has it come up that I have been given the opportunity to share my own personal faith in Jesus. However, I am conscious of seeking to spread, *'...the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere'* (2 Corinthians 2:14) in my conduct, speech and actions. I've known the Lord's help in this as I try to leave a lasting impression *(aroma)* on the families I come into contact with on a daily basis, whether that is by the way in which I engage with them or the reassurance I try to give.

However, I have been able to have a number of conversations with colleagues about my faith. At times we are dealing with some very upsetting situations and it causes people to think and to ask questions themselves. This has allowed me a few occasions to speak of my own beliefs and my faith in the Lord Jesus. On one occasion recently I was able to give a clear gospel explanation to a colleague who had told me they had been reading a Bible and was not sure why. Knowing I was a Christian they came to ask me about it and I directed them to the Gospel of Mark, encouraging them to read it and ask the question; "Who do you say that Jesus is?" I am praying that God would do a work in their life.

It really is a privilege to do the job that I do and I am thankful to God for the way He has led me into this

role. It was never something I would have chosen for myself. There is something so special knowing that our care for the deceased is the last thing that you could do for someone on this earth. And so we as a company and I as an individual seek to do it with care and dignity and respect.

The majority of the funerals I conduct would be "non-religious". And so the focus is on the individual and a celebration of their life. Generally this means there is little or no mention of God and no acknowledgement of where the deceased may now be. When we gather at the graveside or the crematorium for the funeral of a believer and the minister reminds us that, *'...we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope'* (1 Thessalonians 4:13), there is such a sweetness to these words. Even in the pain and grief of death we can say, *'Where, O death, is your victory? Where O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ'* (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

It is good for me to be in this role as a Funeral Director. I can see God's wisdom in leading me into this occupation. Not many of us take time to think about death and dying. Society and our culture tends to focus more on living life to the full and making life last as long as possible. The reality is that one out of one die. To be reminded of that on a daily basis brings a reality to life, an awareness that it is fragile, and that tomorrow is not guaranteed. It is also a helpful reminder as a Christian of the urgency of the gospel.

I am surrounded by people who do not yet know that Jesus died for them. They are in danger and are heading for a lost eternity without God. Today is the day of salvation. My prayer is that the Lord would use me in whatever way to bring the Good News of Jesus to those He has placed around me, as well as enabling me and helping me to serve the bereaved families that I come into contact with each day. •



ELIZABETH BUNYAN

Courageously Faithful

BY ANNA ANDERSON

Elizabeth Bunyan is well known for pleading her husband's case when he was imprisoned for preaching without a licence. In his writings Bunyan likened her to the importunate widow in Jesus' parable who continued to plead with the unjust judge to help her (Luke 18:3-5).

Elizabeth grew up in Bedford attending a dissenting church and was aware of some of the disagreements with the Church of England; however under the rule of Oliver Cromwell some of these rules were relaxed. This all changed at his death in 1658 when the threat of persecution was becoming very real. John Bunyan was also a member of a Nonconformist church in Bedford.

John and Elizabeth were married in 1659, three years after the death of his first wife. She had been struck by his perseverance and determination to reach his fellow countrymen and often after working all day as a tinker he would walk many miles to different villages and towns to share the gospel.
Elizabeth was aged seventeen when she got married and must have been aware of the responsibility ahead of her. She became a mother to John's four young children. Mary, the eldest was blind and needed more care and attention. She cared for all of the children as though they were her own.

Troublesome times were ahead. In 1660 King Charles II was now on the throne and persecution was spreading throughout the land, despite the fact that in the restoration of the monarchy, promises of leniency were given. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Bunyan. Aware of the risk involved and while preaching to a group of forty believers in a quiet secluded farmhouse, he was arrested. No doubt, he would have weighed up the

consequences of preaching without a licence, not just for himself but for Elizabeth and his family. When Elizabeth heard of her husband's arrest, shock and dismay brought on premature labour and eight days later her first child died. In January 1661 John was sentenced for three months, at the end of that period if he still refused to stop preaching, the judge stated in a cold blooded, heartless way, "You must stretch by the neck for it." His persistent refusal to stop preaching resulted in him staying in prison for twelve years.

Very bravely Elizabeth travelled to London to plead her husband's freedom before the House of Lords. On three separate occasions she presented petitions begging that her husband might be heard in his own defence. One judge asked her, "What is his calling?" Someone replied, "A tinker, my Lord." Elizabeth courageously responded, "Yes, and because he is a tinker and a poor man, therefore he is despised and cannot have justice...as for preaching, he preacheth nothing but the Word of God...God hath owned him and done much good by him." When John heard of how she conducted herself in front of the judges with such dignity and intelligence, he was filled with admiration for her.

Elizabeth was facing hardship. Her husband was in prison and she had no means to provide for her children, having to rely on charity. She had pleaded with the judges on compassion grounds that she had four children and had suffered a miscarriage. They poured contempt on her plea, "Your husband's doctrine is the doctrine of the devil". In response to their scorn she boldly replied, "My lord, when the righteous judge shall appear, it will be known that his doctrine is not the doctrine of the devil." Another judge replied, "I am sorry, woman, that I can do thee no good. Thou must do one of three things, either apply to the King, sue out his pardon or get a writ of error. The last will be the cheapest." Elizabeth wept saying, "What a sad account such poor creatures will have to give at the coming of the Lord, when they shall there answer for all things whatsoever they have done, whether it be good or bad."

Despite the daily struggles Elizabeth faced she continued to support her husband. She and the children often visited John in prison, bringing food and encouraging him to write and as a result we have his books today. John was imprisoned a second time and it was during this confinement he wrote his most famous book 'Pilgrims Progress'. Of these visits he wrote, 'The parting with my wife and poor children hath oft been to me as the pulling of my flesh from my bones'.

Elizabeth was a strength and support to her husband showing courageous perseverance. In 1688 while on a pastoral visit John got caught in a storm and died at the home of a friend. This was a huge loss for Elizabeth. In his study she discovered many of her husband's writings which were unpublished. In urgent need of income she placed an advert in the newspaper: 'Mr John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress* and many other excellent books...hath left behind him ten manuscripts...his widow is desired to print them...'[1]

It is because of her resilience we have John Bunyan's writings today. In 1691 Elizabeth, a faithful devoted wife and mother went home to be with the Lord. When reading her story one can't help admire her strength of will and determination to keep going despite the difficulties she faced each day. •

References:
[1] © 'Seeing the invisible' by Faith Cook



FROM UKRAINE TO SCOTLAND

BY YULIIA STETSYK

My name is Yuliia, I come from Ukraine and I am a full-time student at The Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh. I would like to share with you God's amazing work in my life. I grew up in a Christian family, for which I am very thankful to God. I went to church every Sunday since I was little with my whole family. My mum was Greek Catholic and my dad attended a Baptist church. My dad came to know Christ just after I was born and was then baptized in our local Baptist church. I went to Sunday school in my church with my sister and brother. I visited many summer camps for kids where I was taught about God and what Jesus has done for me. My father played a special part in my walk with God. He taught me that Jesus has taken my sins on the cross, died for me, and on the third day He arose. As the Bible says, *'For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life'* (John 3:16).

My testimony cannot be described by one single moment in my life but rather by a way of gradually turning to God. When I was nine years old, I remember praying the repentance prayer with my dad and telling him how much I love Jesus and that I would even die for Him as He did for me on the cross. When I became a teenager, God was working in my heart and convicting me of my wrongdoings. I could not go to sleep as I knew that if I was not going to wake up in the morning, I would probably go to hell. But the scariest thing for me was that God's presence would not be there and I would not be able to worship Him.

The reality of hell horrified me as I knew that it was real. I was crying out to God at night and pouring out my heart in despair for help. This continued for a few months.

"Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, God has revealed to me even more personally that our hope isn't based on earth but instead in heaven, my treasures should be placed only on Jesus."

I went to a Christian camp called 'Hope English'. There we had English classes with native speakers, but more than that, we had the opportunity to hear about the bigger hope that we can have in life. That week had a big influence on my life as I knew the gospel very well. I asked one of the leaders to pray with me and I gave my life to Jesus. God has worked in miraculous ways and shown His goodness many times. When I was eighteen years old, my sister and I were baptized in my local Baptist church. Those years were an amazing time of growing in my faith. I used to pray wherever I went, on the bus, at school, at home, and just praising God every day of my life.

Since then, I have walked with Christ and the Holy Spirit. God has been faithful through every life event and He has built my character. Each day I know that, as it says in Romans 8:28, '*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*'. I knew with this verse that it will work out for good in God's way and not mine.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, God has revealed to me even more personally that our hope isn't based on earth but instead in heaven, my treasures should be placed only on Jesus. He has shown so much love through this time as well as to my whole family in Ukraine. He has protected them through this turbulent time as all of them are still in Ukraine. Every day now, I look forward to when we will be in glory with Christ. These verses in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 are now very special to me, '*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*'. In all circumstances we are to give thanks and rejoice always!

I moved to the UK in July 2022 and it has been an amazing provision from God. I have found my family in Christ here and I have had a lot of opportunities to share the gospel with unbelievers. For one year I was working in a bank with no intentions of going to study in a Bible college but around the time of May 2023, God placed a desire on my heart to study His Word more. Without knowing too much about The Faith Mission, I applied and in July I was fully accepted for my further studies.

I am so thankful to God for bringing me here and excited to see what His plans are for my life in the future. '*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand*' (Isaiah 41:10). This verse has a special place in my heart and encourages me in my walk with God every day. •

***Pray for Yuliia** as she goes to Cumbria and Suffolk in England on 13 May for her six weeks student placement.*

RUTH WILSON

In a changing culture and society, ways of communicating the gospel can be diverse. Below, one of our members, Ruth Wilson gives us an insight into how a hobby became a tool in reaching others for Christ.

www.youtube.com/@ruthlovestoknitpodcast



FM: First things first! What is a podcast?

Ruth: There are quite a few different versions of podcasts but mine is done as a video on YouTube where I talk into the camera so you can see me and my knitting in full technicolour. It is super informal and some viewers say they feel like they are just sitting alongside a friend having a chat.

FM: Tell us a little about yourself.

Ruth: I have been married to Nigel for seventeen years and we have two teenagers (Eva 15 & Samuel 14). I was a midwife for twenty years working in the UK and overseas so I have delivered hundreds of babies over this time. I learned to knit at school but really got back into it just before we moved to Devon while recuperating from surgery.

FM: You weren't always in Devon were you?

Ruth: No, prior to joining The Faith Mission I worked at a missionary hospital in NW Bangladesh for several years firstly as a midwife then as a chaplain. We joined The Faith Mission in 2014 and spent five years serving in Peterhead then moved down to Devon in 2019 just a few months before lockdown.

FM: How did 'Ruth Loves to Knit' podcast come into being?

Ruth: Like everyone we were in lockdown at home so our work was really affected. I was thrown into trying to home school the kids (which nearly finished me off) and needed an outlet to destress. I had enjoyed knitting as a hobby for years so I was invited to join a zoom group with some ladies who knit and some of them had podcasts. I thought I could never do that, but with their encouragement I tried and one day to my amazement folk actually watched the video. Then I thought, what a great way to share the gospel even though I was stuck at home. At the end of the knitting chat I have a little epilogue where I share the gospel. I love that God can use anything for His glory. This has allowed me to reach people that I will probably never meet in real

life. On average over 5k watch every episode. My prayer is that those watching will realise their need for God and truly trust in Him.

FM: Tell us about your audience, where are people tuning in from?

Ruth: Every so often I asked the viewers to leave a comment as to where they are from and it is absolutely incredible to see they come from every corner of the world with some having to use the subtitles as they don't speak English. Connecting with folk like this is amazing and we have built up a lovely community. I sometimes joke that I will do a world tour and stay in their homes.

FM: I love how you weave a spiritual message into your podcast. What are some of the messages you've shared?

Ruth: I try to share something that is applicable to everyone's lives. I have spoken on worry, forgiveness, salvation, prayer, God's love, the difference between true faith and religion and reading the Bible to mention a few. If something has happened in the world that week, I have spoken about that from a Biblical perspective. I always have to remember that some watching have never been to church or opened a Bible so I keep it simple but hopefully relatable too. I have Psalm 46:10, *'Be still and know that I am God'* on the wall behind me and even if viewers turn off before the end, they still know my faith is in God

FM: It's great to hear the impact your podcast is making. Could you share with us some of the comments and feedback you receive?

Ruth: Obviously it is primarily a knitting podcast, so I get asked for help with techniques, patterns, yarn and all things knitting related. However, I have an email for the podcast and that is where I have had the most amazing privilege of 'talking' with viewers and sometimes other members of their families too. This is obviously confidential, but God is moving in an amazing way. Many times folk have left messages under the videos and by email to tell me that just at the right time, whatever I spoke about that day was what they needed to hear. God's timing is perfect. I have had a lot of correspondence with one lady who got saved and through seeing the change in her life, her husband also trusted the Lord. I have been able to pray for so many experiencing difficult situations in their lives.

One message said, "I came for the yarn but the message you gave had me in tears and hope of salvation as I am a sinner. I cannot thank you enough for the message." I was then able to talk online with her and help her. A few other comments have been: "I don't usually stay for the end but I did today and I have so many questions about what you said ...it's all new to me." "I am going to strive to have a more complete faith and grow in my own faith." "Your devotional was just what my heart needed to hear". "My message is that you have reconnected me to God with your non-judgemental approach and real life experiences".

FM: Where can we find you?

Ruth: www.youtube.com/@ruthlovestoknitpodcast. There are 54 episodes to choose from. Please feel free to subscribe to the channel as the more subscribers there are the more likely YouTube will recommend it to others, hopefully in turn more will hear the wonderful news of the gospel.

FM: Finally, what are you casting on at the moment?

Ruth: Ah, if you watch my podcast you will quickly find out that I like to have a lot of projects on the go at the same time. So, watch my channel to find out what I have on the needles at the moment! •

From Bangor Convention to Members Meetings, Edinburgh

BY GARRY TUTTY

Our Bangor Convention 2024 was very encouraging with excellent attendance, including a good number of young people. There were some meetings where the presence of God was very real with some being moved and challenged. It was an encouraging start to our new youth venture, 'Encounter' with an attendance of sixty on Easter Monday night which was heartening.



Convention:
An attentive audience

We enjoyed having fellowship with our Bible College students and staff over the weekend. Their input and help was invaluable adding greatly to the whole atmosphere. This year FM staff provided a meal for visitors on Easter Monday which went down a treat. Café Verve, that was running throughout the whole convention was busy, while folks relaxed and chatted over a cuppa.

The Bible teaching during the convention is what people come for and we were greatly blessed and challenged by the anointed ministry of all the speakers. Visit our Faith Mission Recordings UK site at "The Faith Mission Audio Recordings Soundcloud" where you will be able to access and listen to all of the convention meetings. You will also find other Faith Mission recordings on this site.

After the convention all Faith Mission members travelled to Edinburgh for our United Members Meetings. We humbly thank God for a blessed time through the ministry of Jeff Goudy, who along with his wife Jani work with The Faith Mission in Canada. It was also great to have the Bible College students join us for the ministry. We were particularly blessed through a prolonged time of prayer when God drew near in a remarkable way. •



Convention:
Encounter Youth Night



Convention: Singing group



Convention:
Nathan Purdy preaching



Convention:
Bible College students helping
at children's meeting



Convention:
Browsing in the bookstall



Members meeting



Members meeting

Planting the Seed

BY ANDREW McCULLOUGH

During His earthly ministry the Lord Jesus Christ often referred to agriculture and from His teaching there are lessons which we can learn for our lives. Think for instance about some of the parables He taught. There is the story about the sower and the seed which illustrates the different responses to God's Word. Jesus gave a solemn warning about priorities when He spoke about a wealthy farmer who thought more about his farm, fields and fortune than the future. He spoke about a straying sheep and a wayward son who left his family behind – yet there was great rejoicing when both were found. A parable has often been described as 'an earthly story with a heavenly meaning'. They are understandable and relatable to us all.

The Faith Mission since its inception has had a close association with the farming community. We are a rural Mission seeking to reach those in the country areas of Great Britain and Ireland with the gospel. Many of our past or present members were raised or worked on a farm, and there are those in the farming sector who have a deep prayerful interest in the work.

Obviously there have been massive changes in the world of farming over the years, especially in terms of machinery. Even to the observant individual, tractors are now bigger and more powerful than ever! They can cover more ground and are a valuable resource to those who are seeking to care for God's creation and make a living.

In the spring of this year, we in the North Irish District





had two special theme nights when George Conn gave informative and interesting talks on the life of John Deere and Henry Ford. Prior to joining The Faith Mission George taught motor vehicle engineering in a training college and has a keen interest in vintage tractors. For many years, George has skilfully applied lessons from the lives of these gifted men and others to relate Biblical truths.

We purposely planned the two events in late February/early March as it gave a 'window' to target farmers, and we chose locations where they would feel 'comfortable' coming into. It was tremendously encouraging to see about 70 along at the first evening in Draperstown, when we were able to partner alongside the small Presbyterian Church. Much groundwork had been done and those gathered in the Community Hub building heard that John Deere had 'a heart for the right thing.' Despite being extremely successful in business he was a man who loved the Lord as His Saviour.

It was also thrilling to see the livestock mart in Kilrea packed to capacity with over 150 people present to hear the Henry Ford story. We were thankful to have the Faith Mission Gospel Truck along, and the dry evening was a real blessing. A display of vintage and modern tractors, with a free BBQ all added to make it a good night.

Much prayer had preceded both events and there was great attentiveness as George presented the gospel. It was good to have a wide age range from all backgrounds present which evidently included some needy individuals. These theme nights could be described as 'stepping stone events' where those who perhaps are unfamiliar with Christianity, clearly heard how they could have a relationship with their Creator. It may provoke them to think more deeply about how Christ can be their Saviour and Shepherd. For others who have heard the gospel over many years, there was a fresh challenge.

Solomon wrote about time: *'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted'* (Ecclesiastes3:1-2). A wise farmer uses their time well, and takes advantage of the favourable weather to plant crops. These events and indeed much of what Christians do may be 'planting seeds' - but we pray that the spoken and written Word will be fruitful in the lives of individuals. •

Draperstown and Kilrea are small rural towns in County Londonderry.

***Andrew** and his wife **Jenny** work with The Faith Mission and are based in Ballymena, N Ireland.*



REACHING THE FARMING COMMUNITY

BY SIMON WALSH

'He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.'
Isaiah 40:11



In farming life there are many uncertainties and complexities that require the ability to adapt and work through a process. Whether that is battling with the elements, the unpredictability of livestock, prices for the product produced on the farm, or the costs of buying what is necessary to produce that end product. Coupled with that, there are the pressures of every day family life.

When thinking of reaching the farming communities with the gospel what comes to your mind? Is it just simply driving up a farm lane, making sure they know they are a sinner and they must trust in Jesus to be their Saviour, otherwise they are lost for all eternity? We all agree, this is the message everyone must hear, *'So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God'* (Romans 10:17).

When we visit a farm we see the beautiful countryside setting, well maintained livestock, a good layout of the farm to efficiently help the business progress and the farmers' hard work. However, other things can be going on behind what we see? Who else might be going to that farm and taking time to listen while that farmer off loads burdens and sometimes frustrations? Farmers think in practical terms, our message needs to be relevant to where they are and what they are experiencing. The Lord Jesus is concerned for the whole person.

When you read in the Bible of the Lord being described as 'The Shepherd' (John 10:11-18) you don't see Him forcibly ramming the sheep through a narrow gateway. Those who are acquainted with sheep will know this can be a disaster!

Concern

To get up early every morning, in whatever weather and tend to livestock there has to be a concern for their welfare and an understanding of their needs all of which takes time. If there is a real concern about an animal, you will want to know the problem. Many times I have stood in a farm yard or sat at a kitchen table not knowing what has been happening in the life of the farm. Only by taking the time to listen and ask questions would it become apparent there are issues causing some deep seated emotions. Sometimes these conversations reveal the reason as to why there is a hardness toward Christian things. I have discovered that when we show concern, not just for their soul which is why we go with the gospel, but also for their situation, it is always appreciated. At times there have been tears shed with the comment, "You have come at the right time" or "I needed that."

In reaching the farming community we have events to which local farmers are invited. It is an informal evening with local Christian men connected to farming giving their life story. At one of these evenings, someone who many had not expected to attend came, simply because of the interest and concern shown towards them. Jesus our Great Shepherd showed concern for the specific needs of individuals and to some he would say, *'...your sins are forgiven'* (Matthew 9:2). Pray for us as we plan more of these events in the district.

Compassion

Christ saw the multitude as, *'...sheep without a shepherd...'* (Matthew 9:36). For a shepherd to be focused on one needy animal but ignore the others can be detrimental to his flock. Helping small lambs in need requires tenderness. When the gospel is put into practice we show consideration for those who are struggling. Sometimes I work along with The Rural Chaplaincy[1] team who by caring for farmers and their families, bring the hope of Jesus the Good Shepherd. It is important to show compassion not just spiritually, but also to the physical and emotional needs. Compassion can be shown in different ways. I have often offered practical help to farmers who are in need, sometimes it is helping them find the right guidance for that specific need. There are well trained support organisations giving help and advice.

Continuous

Often our evangelism can be a brief point of contact. However, like many aspects of farming, it takes time for relationships to develop. Compassion shown to those in need works over a period of time. I visited a particular farm regularly for over four years trying to build a friendship.

Marts are a place of business, and when visiting such places we have to be mindful that many are there for that reason. By visiting regularly we get to know individuals and quite often our contact with them leads to a spiritual conversation. Some farmers use the same mart for many years which gives the opportunity for ongoing contact but it can take a few meetings to gain their trust. When barriers have been removed they often come with questions and for advice.

Ultimately, our hearts desire is to lead many to Christ. For the farming community, this requires patience and a consistent witness to the reality of the Lord Jesus in our own lives. •

References:

[1] For more information on rural chaplaincy visit www.ruralchaplaincy.com

***Stephen** and his wife **Rebecca** work with The Faith Mission in the Irish Border District.*

FAITH MISSION

CAMPS 2024

This summer our heart's desire is to see many young people coming to Christ through our camp ministry. We earnestly value your prayers for this. If you are interested in helping or know children who would like to come, we would love to hear from you. See contact details on opposite page.

IRELAND

Portadown Centre

- 8-11 years, 1-5 July, Andrew & Jenny McCullough
- 12-14 years, 15-19 July, Andrew & Jenny McCullough
- 12-14 years, 15-19 July, Brian & Hazel Parker *email: b.parker@faithmission.org*
- 8-11 years, 22-26 July, Brian & Hazel Parker
- 8-11 years, 29 July – 2 August, Garry & Alison Tutty
- 12-14 years, 5-9 August, Garry & Alison Tutty

Durrow Centre

- 8-10 years, 22-26 July, Mervyn & Rachel Tomb
- 11-13 years, 29 July – 2 August, Mervyn & Rachel Tomb
- 14-18 years, 5-9 August, Mervyn & Rachel Tomb

Carhue Centre

- 9-12 years, 1-5 July Johnathan & Janet Slater
- 13-16 years, 8-12 July, Johnathan & Janet Slater
- 16-20 years, 15-19 July Johnathan & Janet Slater



SCOTLAND

FM Bible College

- 9-12 years, 15-20 July, Jeff & Sarah Townend
- 13-16 years, 22-27 July, Jeff & Sarah Townend

Newtownstewart Centre

- 9-14 years, 5-9 August, Robert & Phillippa Cismas *email: phillippa.cismas@faithmission.org*

ENGLAND

Earl Stonham Centre

- 13-17 years, 29 July – 2 August, Stephen & Cynthia Walker
- 9-12 years, 5-9 August, Stephen & Cynthia Walker

Harby Centre

- 9-15 years, 29 July – 2 August, Alistair & Yvette Park

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BIBLE READINGS



REV JOHN MACLEOD
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