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Seek First the Kingdom of God!

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



God's Faithful Purpose Through Flawed People

» A KEY TO UNLOCK REST: PSALM 131

» WHERE ARE THE EVANGELISTS?

CONTENTS







BIBLE TEACHING

04 A Key to Unlock Rest: Psalm 131

07 God's Faithful Purpose Through Flawed People

CHRISTIAN LIVING

10 A Busy Schedule

12 Finding Hope in Depression: Psalm 43

15 The Nature and Growth of Faith

LIFE STORIES

18 Testimony: by Jenny McCullough

20 Testimony: by Stephen Johnston

MISSION PROFILE

22 Revive the College Again

24 Where are the Evangelists?

26 Coastlands

28 Bangor Blessings

30 Summer Camps 2026

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

New Growth

In this spring season, the most impressive shade of green upon the hedgerows is the first new leaf from the bud. Likewise in the Mission, we are encouraged as we see signs of new growth. A consolidated Edinburgh Convention hopes to attract new visitors with some on-site accommodation options. Jeff & Sarah Townend lead a team to conduct outreach in Shetland in the summer. FMBC staff are continually engaging with prospective students through online seminars and courses.

Bookshops

Many have been praying for our bookshop ministry. The consultation process has now concluded. We are grateful for the valuable input from our bookshop staff - as well as from suppliers and others, which has helped to shape the future. Following a recent board meeting, the trustees have approved a model that places the shops on a sustainable footing and equips them for the next chapter of ministry.

Faith Mission Bookshops can continue and grow if churches and communities choose to collaborate with the Mission. We are appointing a dedicated church worker to build those relationships, and we warmly invite churches to partner with the bookshops, to source resources through their local shop, to visit and meet our staff and to consider how their congregations might support this work through prayer, retail sales and volunteering.

What Is Changing

- Our Edinburgh shop and café will function under a different operator whose vision and values align with ours. This is an ongoing discussion.
- Our Dunfermline shop will be repurposed into a ministry hub, reaching out with the gospel into the town and run by a separate Christian charity.
- Our Portadown shop and café will transition to a sustainable model of a bookshop with a smaller self-service catering offering.
- A web shop will launch as a dedicated channel and part of the renewed operation.

People

In early March retired members Olive Greenaway and Kathy Wood passed away to glory. Even in retirement, Olive took a keen interest in Faith Mission efforts, having been known to advise the pilgrims on their open-air efforts at the summer campaigns. Kathy studied at FMBC in the mid 90's and gave many years to outreach and personal witnessing in the Kirkcaldy area. We are mindful of their loved ones as they mourn.

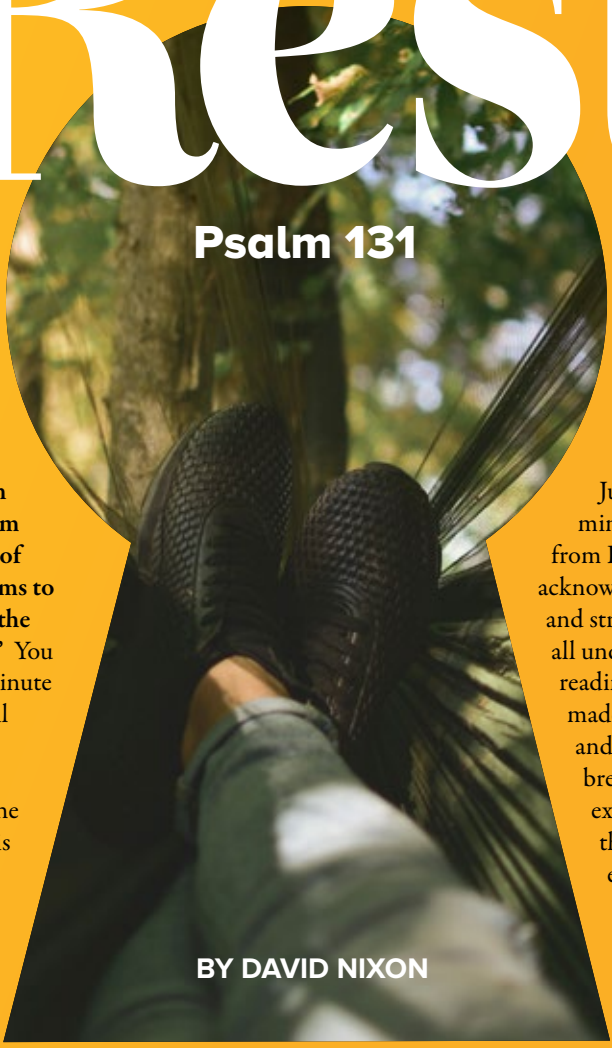
James and Katie Brown have been based in the South East English district for some years. They have accepted an invitation from Mission Council & Board to relocate to the Irish Midlands District and oversee the Durrow Centre. They are expected to move in the early autumn. Do pray for the Brown family as they prepare for this change. This will allow Mervyn and Rachel Tomb to be more present in Edinburgh, so do remember all the practicalities as they are worked out.

At headquarters in Edinburgh, our Operations and Administrative Support Officer, Daniel Trail, and his wife Katherine, welcomed a baby son in mid-April. That same week FMBC student Stephen Johnston and his wife Molly welcomed their first baby son. We are so thrilled with these reminders of God's goodness. Do pray for these new families as they adapt to parenthood. •

Mervyn Tomb,
General Director

A Key to Unlock Rest

Psalm 131



BY DAVID NIXON

The great British preacher, Charles Spurgeon once said of Psalm 131, "this is one of the shortest psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn." You can read it in a minute but to learn it will take a lifetime!

Let me tell you the story of when this psalm first came alive to me. Back during the darkest depths of lockdown in 2020, I attended an online meeting where pastor Julian Hardyman ministered to us from Psalm 131. He acknowledged the stress and strain we were all under. So before reading the psalm he made us slow down and take a deep breath. Then he explained that what that relaxation exercise does for our *bodies*, is what this psalm is designed to do for our *souls*.

A couple of weeks later, I remember lying on the floor of my study, feeling overwhelmed with the weight of everything going on. While lying there the Lord brought Psalm 131 back to my mind. It was as if God was saying, you're approaching this all wrong! You've got this psalm back to front and inside out. With the benefit of hindsight, I can admit that I was doing it wrong. My heart was lifted up, my eyes were raised too high, I was occupying myself with things too great and too marvellous for me. No wonder I had wound up stressed and depressed!

Similarly, many of us go through life feeling stressed and distressed. The western world is suffering from an epidemic of poor mental health. If that's how you're feeling, then Psalm 131 can help you today. It contains a principle (v.1), a picture (v.2) and a plea to rest in God (v.3).

Rather than exhaust himself trying to do the impossible, David rests in trusting that there is nothing too great or difficult for God!

The principle that leads to rest is recognising our rightful place on the organisational chart of the universe. You and I are not the Managing Directors of the Universe. According to the heading, this psalm was written by David. Although David is king of Israel, he's not king of the universe. That's why David begins addressing his prayer to the One who is, *'O Lord'*. Then he describes himself using three negatives, *'My heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvellous for me.'* In other words, David humbly recognises that he is not God. The world does not revolve around him, and the universe does not depend upon him.

There's a progression in the outworking of David's humility. It starts in his *'heart'* where he has internalised the truth that he is a mere man rather than Almighty God. That flows out to affect his *'eyes'* – he doesn't look at everything as a problem that he can fix, or everyone as someone that he can help. He recognises his limitations. Nor does he look in envy at those who have more or in contempt on those who have less than himself. Finally, that shapes the way he *'occupies'* (literally *'walks'*) himself. Just as in running or swimming there's the expression: 'know your lane' or 'stay in your lane'; David knows his lane. He acknowledges that there are issues too big for him to get his mind around, there are some problems too complex for him to unravel or solve. Rather than exhaust himself trying to do the impossible, David rests in trusting that there is nothing too great or difficult for God!

So here's the essential principle that leads to rest. Remember you are not God! You can't know it all, you can't do it all, you can't be everywhere, with everyone, all of the time. The good news is that God doesn't expect you to even try! Instead, He summons us to let Him be God and to rest in His sovereign hands as His children.

That's the picture that David goes on to paint in verse 2, *'But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me'.* Unlike the proud person who is running all over the place, trying to keep all the plates spinning, David paints a beautiful picture of peace and serenity in a child curled up in their mother's arms. The key part of the image is that this is a *'weaned child'* in contrast to a nursing child. Using this image, David testifies to having been weaned

off his selfish pride and self-reliance, so he has learned to trust in God.

The thing about weaning is that it is a *process* rather than an *event*. It doesn't just happen in a single day. In fact, many children do not like being weaned and resist the process. In the same way, calming and quieting our souls is not an experience that suddenly happens to you. It takes time and training. We should expect that God will bring circumstances into our lives to wean and mature us – to bring us to an end of ourselves and to train us to rest on Him. It's not always going to be easy. In those moments it will help to remember that if we are being weaned like a child, then God is like a mother. He wants us to stop exhausting ourselves and stressing ourselves trying to be something that we are not, trying to carry burdens that we were never made to carry. He wants us to rest in His sovereign arms of love.

David finishes his personal prayer, with this public appeal, *'O Israel, hope in the Lord, from this time forth and forevermore'* (v.3). In other words, hope in the Lord, not in yourself! If David was sitting across from you today, he would say the same thing, *'O [insert your name], hope in the Lord'.* He's your Lord, God, Saviour, Father and Friend – so please rest in His sovereign arms of love. •



***David** is a graduate of the Faith Mission Bible College (2010-2012). He's the incoming Senior Pastor at Carrubbers Christian Centre in Edinburgh.*



David contributed to the evangelistic book 'Have You Ever Wondered?' *and published his first book* 'A Student's Guide to the Good Life' *in May 2026.*



God's Faithful Purpose Through Flawed People

BY ALISTAIR CHALMERS

One of the most striking features of Scripture is its unflinching honesty about the people God uses. The Bible does not present us with polished heroes, but with real men and women, deeply flawed, often inconsistent, and at times profoundly sinful, yet sovereignly chosen and powerfully used by God. From Jacob the deceiver, to David the fallen king, to Peter the impulsive apostle, we are confronted with a humbling and hope-filled truth: God's redemptive purposes are not hindered by human weakness but are often displayed through it.

Why has God given us such examples? Why does Scripture repeatedly draw back the curtain on the failures of those who were otherwise faithful? The answer is both theological and pastoral: to magnify God's grace, to humble human pride and to encourage persevering faith in all who are called to serve Him.



Grace that Overcomes Human Sinfulness

Consider Jacob, memorably described as a schemer from the womb (Genesis 25:26). His life is marked by manipulation, deceiving his brother Esau, lying to his father Isaac and navigating life through cunning rather than trust. Yet this same Jacob becomes Israel, the patriarch through whom God's covenant promises advance. The turning point is not Jacob's ingenuity but God's intervention. At Peniel, where Jacob wrestles with God (Genesis 32), he is broken, renamed and blessed. His limp becomes a lifelong reminder that God's strength is perfected in human weakness.

David's life similarly illustrates this pattern. Anointed king and described as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), he nonetheless commits grievous sin, adultery with Bathsheba and the arranged death of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 11). Scripture does not minimise this failure, yet neither does God abandon David. Through repentance (Psalm 51), David is restored and God's covenant with him remains intact. Indeed, it is through David's line that the Messiah comes. God's grace does not excuse sin, but it does triumph over it.

Peter, too, stands as a vivid New Testament example. Bold in confession (*'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,'* Matthew 16:16), he is equally bold in failure, denying Christ three times in His hour of need (Luke 22:54–62). Yet the risen Christ restores Peter (John 21:15–19), recommissions him and uses him mightily in the early church. At Pentecost this same man proclaims the gospel with courage and clarity, and thousands are converted.

In each case, the message is clear: God's purposes do not depend upon human perfection. Rather, they are accomplished through divine grace.

A Necessary Antidote to Pride

For those engaged in ministry, whether in the pulpit, classroom, mission field or in the home, these accounts serve as a necessary corrective to pride. It is dangerously easy to assume that effectiveness for God is tied to personal strength, gifting or moral consistency. Scripture dismantles such illusions. Paul captures this principle succinctly: *'We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us'* (2 Corinthians 4:7). The fragility of the vessel is not an obstacle but a means by which God displays His power. The failures of biblical figures remind us that we are, at best, instruments in the Redeemer's hands.

This has profound implications for those in leadership. It guards against both self-reliance and despair. When ministry bears fruit, we are reminded that the glory belongs to God alone. When we fail, and we will, we are driven not to hopelessness, but to repentance and renewed dependence on grace.

Encouragement for Evangelism and Discipleship

These biblical portraits also fuel confidence in evangelism. If God can redeem and use Jacob, David and Peter, then no one we encounter is beyond the reach of His saving power. The gospel we proclaim is not a message for the morally refined, but for sinners in need of grace. Moreover, these examples shape our approach to discipleship. We are reminded that spiritual growth is often uneven, marked by setbacks as well as progress. The sanctification of God's people is a process, not an instantaneous transformation. As pastors and disciplers, this should cultivate patience, compassion and perseverance.

Importantly, Scripture does not present failure as normative or inconsequential. Sin is always serious, and its consequences can be severe. Yet

the overarching narrative is one of redemption. God is committed to conforming His people to the image of Christ, and He will complete the work He has begun (Philippians 1:6).

The Ultimate Faithful One

Finally, these flawed figures point us beyond themselves to the one true and faithful servant, Jesus Christ. Where Jacob deceived, Christ is the truth. Where David fell, Christ remained righteous. Where Peter denied, Christ endured faithfully to the end. The inclusion of imperfect people in God's redemptive plan serves to highlight the perfection of Christ. He alone secures our salvation, and He alone is the foundation of our hope. Yet in His grace, He calls and uses weak and sinful people to participate in His mission.

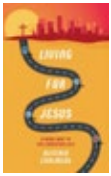
Conclusion

The Bible's honest portrayal of flawed yet faithful individuals is not an embarrassment to be explained away, but a treasure to be embraced. It reveals a God who is rich in mercy, abounding in steadfast love and unwavering in His purposes.

For those labouring in gospel ministry, this is deeply encouraging. Our weaknesses do not disqualify us from being used by God; rather, they provide the very context in which His grace is most clearly displayed. Therefore, let us press on in evangelism and discipleship, not in confidence in ourselves, but in the God who delights to accomplish His perfect will through imperfect people.

In the end, the story is not about human faithfulness but divine faithfulness. And that is very good news indeed. •





__Alistair__ was born to missionary parents and grew up on the mission field in Romania. He studied at the Faith Mission Bible College (2013-15) and Edinburgh Theological Seminary (2015-21) and is the Pastor of Ferniehill Evangelical Church. Most of the time you will find him with a good book in his hand or writing at www.achalmersblog.com.

He is the author of 'Road Map to Jesus' and his newest book 'Living for Jesus' came out in March 2026.



A BUSY SCHEDULE



BY JIM LYONS

On one occasion George Washington wrote in his diary, "Tonight, my wife and I had dinner alone for the first time in twenty years." This may have been due to several contributing factors, but surely a busy life had something to do with it. As children, we were convinced there were more than sixty seconds in every minute, but looking at it with some years behind us we tend to think there must be less because of increased responsibilities and activity. This may resonate with you as life seems so busy and sometimes families are like ships passing in the night.

The Lord Jesus made time alone with His Father a priority.

As we follow the Lord Jesus' ministry in the gospel accounts, we notice He had a full schedule, and this is highlighted in Mark 1:37 as His disciples said, *'Everyone is looking for You.'* The reason for His increased popularity is found in the context of those words. Prior to this He was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, during which there was a man present possessed with an unclean spirit, yet the Lord Jesus delivered him. From there He entered Peter's house and healed his mother-in-law of a fever. Nearing the close of the day, many who were sick and demon-possessed were brought so that He would touch them.

Despite this flurry of activity and the disciple's excitement over His popularity, one verse highlights the priority He established and maintained in a busy ministry: Mark 1:35, *'Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.'*

There are two other places Mark mentions when Jesus went to seek a quiet place to be alone with His Father. The next one comes

in Mark 6:46, which Mark set between the feeding of the five thousand and prior to the episode of Him walking on water. *'And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.'*

The third takes us to the night He was betrayed when He resorted to Gethsemane. These are just three instances, yet it doesn't mean they were the only times He prayed, rather this was a regular habit as for example Luke records that He prayed all night prior to choosing the twelve disciples (6:12,13).

The Lord Jesus made time alone with His Father a priority, and this is what He taught when He was contrasting the pious attitude of the religious hypocrites in Matthew 6:6, *'But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place.'*

There is something special about beginning the day with God in prayer.

So, what He taught was but an extension of how He lived. How He lived was set before the disciples whom He called to be with Him before He would send them out to preach. They witnessed His power, received His teaching, were touched by His compassion and impressed with His wisdom, but it became evident to them that the secret was His relationship with the Father therefore they asked Him, *'Lord, teach us to pray'* (Luke 11:1).

When it comes down to setting prayer as a priority in our lives it does sound a bit like our ABC's, but we know how easy it is to allow our busy schedules to dictate our priorities. Rather than it being something we can deal with in a moment of counselling, it is a daily discipline to set down this marker in our lives.

We don't find this easy. In fact it is extremely difficult, and the battle rages against us, yet we can persevere despite the many distractions.

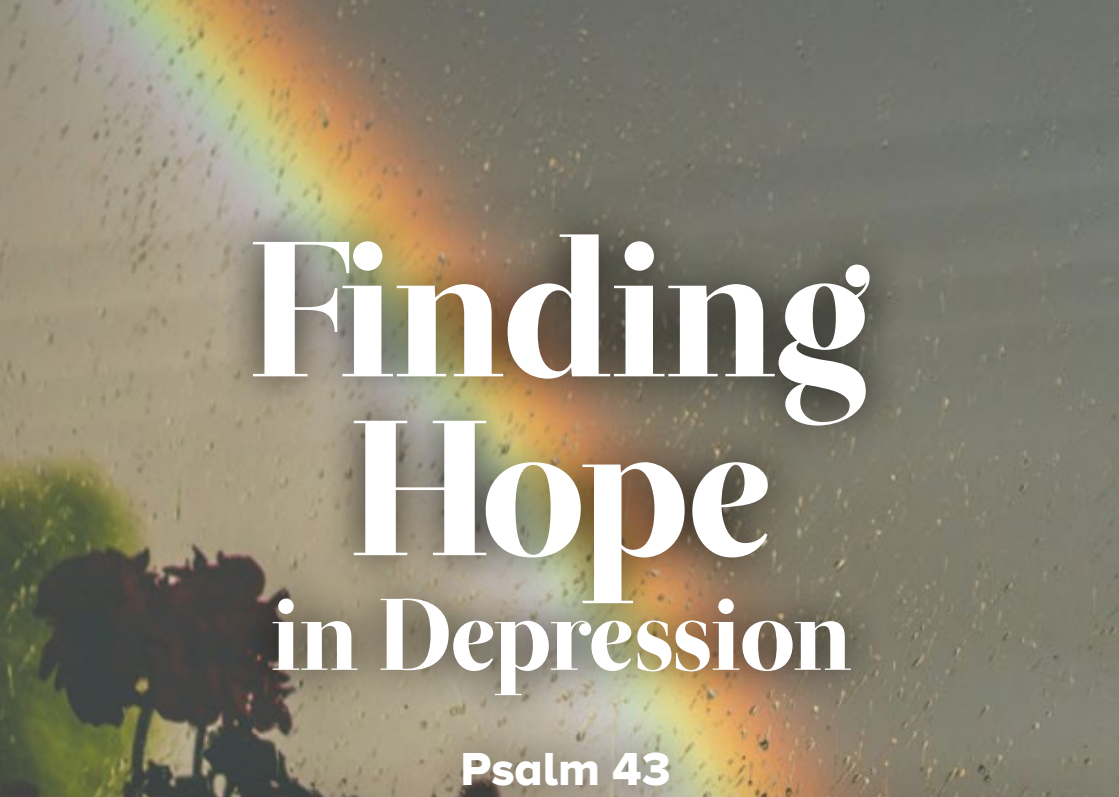
"The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in." C.S. Lewis

There is something special about beginning the day with God in prayer, and if you develop a regular habit of it then you feel it deeply when you don't have it. Whatever demands our daily lives make upon us this is the best way to begin, to make this a priority and then a busy, challenging day can be coped with more easily.

The tale is told that the Christians in a small West African village had no privacy for prayer in their huts; so, every Christian used to make off to the bush, away behind his hut, to have times of prayer with God. As a result, behind every Christian's hut there was a little track that became plainly visible where they went to and fro to their places of prayer. If it ever happened that the track was getting overgrown for want of use, another Christian would say, "Brother, there is something the matter with your track." •



***Jim** is married to Hilda; they have four grown up children and two grandchildren. Jim served for eighteen years in the Faith Mission and a similar period in pastoral ministry. Currently he is pastor of Coleraine Congregational Church on the North Coast of Ireland. Jim will be speaking at the Edinburgh Convention in the summer.*



Finding Hope in Depression

Psalm 43

BY VANEETHA RENDALL RISNER

Some days, life feels relentless. Just when I have come to terms with the wave that has almost toppled me, another one comes up unexpectedly. Nothing feels safe and I wonder if the waves will ever end.

Right now, my physical losses confront me daily. Years ago, I gave up painting and scrapbooking because they were too taxing on my arms. Writing became an alternative way to process my pain. While it wasn't my first choice, I grew to love it because I saw God using it. But now, I fear that gift will slip away as well because my arms are wearing out, even with voice-activated computer software and a trackball mouse. I'm tired of continually adjusting to a new normal. I want the old one back.

I feel myself slipping into depression, and I don't know how to pull out. And this depression, which is largely based on the lies I'm telling myself, is much harder than the suffering itself. What I am telling myself about my future is more debilitating than the actual pain I'm feeling.

God feels distant, mostly because I'm pulling away. But Psalm 43 pulls me back. Like the psalmist, I cry out, *'For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning?'* (Psalm 43:2).

For the psalmist, darkness is falling quickly and the walls of his life are closing in. He has known the Lord intimately. God has been his refuge. He has experienced God's steadfast love and presence. But now, with troubles all around him, he feels rejected. He is mourning. It seems like the enemy is triumphing over him.

So what does the psalmist do? Rather than continuing to listen to himself and spiralling downward, he starts talking to God. He says to the Lord, *'Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God'* (Psalm 43:3-4).

In his trouble, the psalmist pleads with God for light and truth. He knows that God's light and truth can lead him out of his own darkness and lies.

In his trouble, the psalmist pleads with God for light and truth. He knows that God's light and truth can lead him out of his own darkness and lies. The darkness that seems hard to penetrate and the lies that the enemy loves to whisper to us. Lies like: "It's only going to get worse." "God doesn't care about you." "Your life is going to be miserable."

God brings His light and truth through His Word and His presence, which are the best ways out of depression. The psalmist knows the power of God. And he knows that God can miraculously lift the enemy's oppression and give him joy again. So he is looking past his circumstances, choosing to ask God for what seems impossible right now.

After the psalmist talks to God and asks for help, he begins talking to himself. He questions why he is depressed, asking, *'Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?'* (Psalm 43:5a).

These are important and revealing questions. I often feel vaguely depressed, unable to articulate the core of my fears. But when I purposefully write down everything that is troubling me, I can look at my situation biblically. If I'm able to follow my fears to the worst potential conclusion, I can face them. Even if the worst happens, I know that God will be there. He will walk with me through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4). He will never ever leave me (Hebrews 13:5). He will make sure the waves do not overwhelm me (Isaiah 43:2).

Lastly, the psalmist exhorts himself to hope in God. He says, *'Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God'* (Psalm 43: 5b). His situation has not changed. If it had, he wouldn't need hope. As Paul says, *'Hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience'* (Romans 8:24-25).

The psalmist is trusting that God will bring him to a place of praise. Right now everything looks dark. His soul is cast down. He is in turmoil. He feels rejected by God and is mourning what used to be. And yet he chooses to tell himself truth, based on who God is, rather than listen to himself, based on his own

fears. He doesn't let his own assessment of the circumstances have the last word. He lets God's Word have that.

Martyn Lloyd Jones says in his book, *Spiritual Depression*, "Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?"

When we listen to ourselves, we allow our emotions to take over, and the voices of self-pity and defeat become deafeningly loud. In those moments, God calls us to start preaching to ourselves. And the best way to do that is to read the Bible, reminding ourselves of God's promises.

Paul Tripp reinforces this idea in his devotional, *New Morning Mercies*, saying: "No one is more influential in your life than you are because no one talks to you more than you do. It's a fact that you and I are in an endless conversation with ourselves. We either preach to ourselves the gospel of aloneness, poverty and inability or the true gospel of God's presence, power and constant provision. You are preaching to yourself the gospel that produces fear and timidity or one that propels you with courage and hope. Today, when it feels as if no one understands, what gospel will you preach to you?"

So today, when life feels overwhelming, what gospel will you preach to yourself? •

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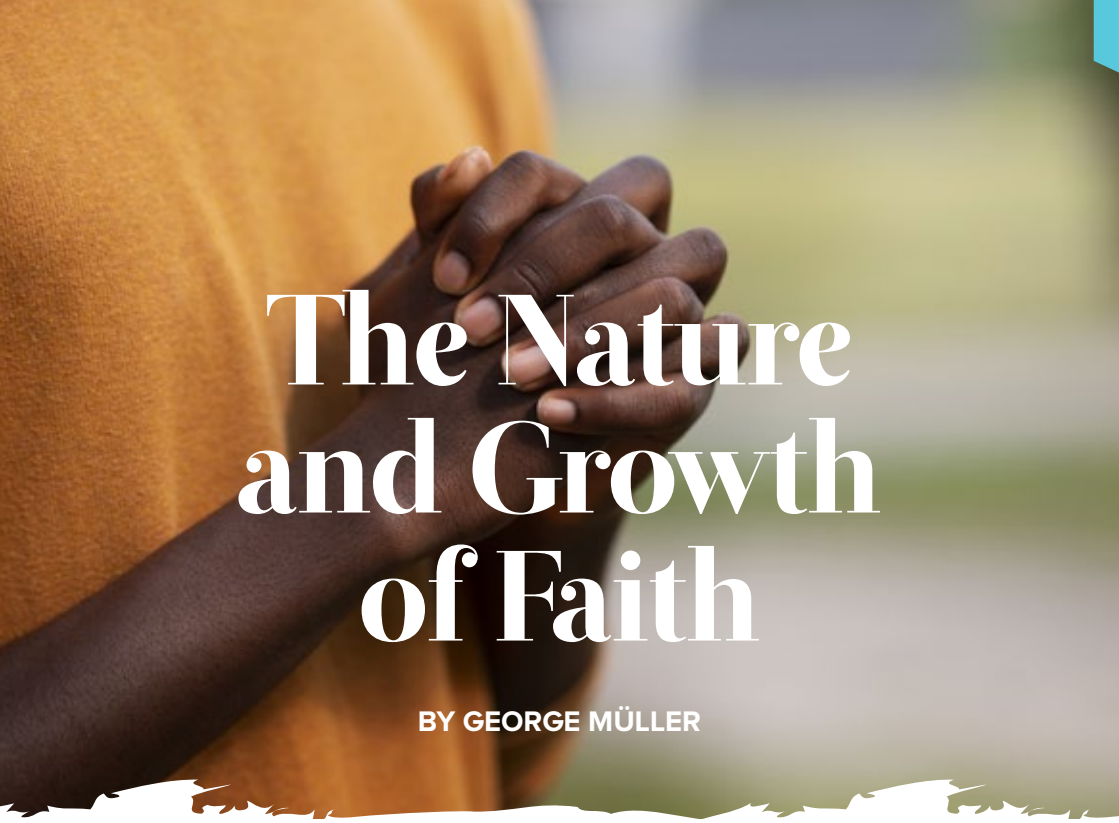

The Nature and Growth of Faith

BY GEORGE MÜLLER

What is faith? In the simplest manner in which I am able to express it I answer: Faith is the assurance that the thing which God has said in His Word is true, and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence, is faith.

Impressions are not to be taken in connection with faith. Impressions have neither one thing nor the other to do with faith. Faith has to do with the Word of God. It is not impressions, strong or weak, which will make any difference. We have to do with the written Word, and not with ourselves or our impressions.

Probabilities are not to be taken into account. Many people are willing to believe regarding those things that seem to them probable. Faith has nothing to do with probabilities. The province of faith begins where probabilities cease and sight and sense fail. A great many of God's children are cast down, and lament their want of faith. They write to me and say that they have no impressions, no feeling; they see no probability that the thing they wish will come to pass. Appearances are not to be taken into account. Impressions, and feeling, and probabilities are not to be taken into account. The question is: Has God spoken it in His Word?

Now, preliminary to what I have to say to you, dear Christian friends, lay to heart that it is because there is so much dependence on these things that it comes to pass that we have so little blessedness among us. All these things must be left alone. The naked Word of God is what we are to depend upon. That is enough for us.

And now, beloved Christian friends, you are in great need to ask yourselves whether you are in the habit of thus confiding in your inmost soul in what God has said, and whether you are in earnest in seeking to find whether the thing you want is in accordance with what He has said in His Word. If it is, then that the thing you ask for will come to pass, is as sure as that you were able to confide in Him.

How may faith be increased?

God delights to increase the faith of His children. He is thus glorified before an ungodly world and the powers of darkness. The confidence of His children in times of trial, discouragement, pain and sorrow, gives great encouragement to other Christians. God delights that He may do good to others through them, and that they themselves, through the exercise of faith, may obtain an increase of it. For difficulties, hindrances, bereavements and losses, though we shrink from them, and shrink exceedingly, are the very things God uses to develop us more and more, as the young infant has its weak limbs developed till by-and-by they grow to the power of a man's. I am not one of those who believe that we can attain to a strong faith at once, any more than a weak infant can spring into manhood at once. Our faith, which is weak and feeble at first, is developed and strengthened more and more by use.

What we have to do, instead of wanting no trials before victory, no exercise for patience, is to be willing to take them from God's hand as a means. I say – and say it deliberately – trials, difficulties, obstacles and sometimes defeats, are the very food of faith. As we ask to have our faith strengthened, we must be willing to take from God's hands the means for strengthening it. We must allow Him to educate us through trials and bereavements and troubles. It is through trial that faith is exercised and developed more and more. God affectionately permits difficulties that He may develop increasingly that which He is willing to do for us, and to this end we should not shrink. If He give us sorrows, hindrances, losses and afflictions, we should take them out of His hands as evidences of His love and His care for us, in developing more and more in us that faith which He is seeking to strengthen in us.

Again, it is necessary that we seek to acquaint ourselves with God as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. We must not content ourselves with the notions that people have about God, but we must diligently seek



to know what He has disclosed regarding Himself. For I say, and I say deliberately, that the notions which the world has about God and His character are not the truth. We want to come to the very fountain – the revelation the Lord has made of Himself in His written Word – and step by step, as we read, to learn not only of the power, the infinite wisdom, justice and holiness of our God, but also of His gentleness, pity, beautifulness and bountifulness. When we read and see what God has revealed of Himself in His Word, we shall find out more and more from it that God is the loveable One. Is God to you, the loveable One? What is the response of your inmost soul? If not, you are not acquainted with Him. You have yet to find out that He is the Most Loveable One.

The result will be that you will confide in Him unreservedly at all times, in all circumstances. Though He slay you, yet will you trust in Him. Read Psalm 9:9-10, *'The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble; and they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.'* We, who learn to see God as He has revealed Himself in His Word, are so satisfied with God, and in His dealings with us that we see how everything is for our good.

On account it is deeply important for our usefulness, and for our growth in faith, that we get correct ideas of God from the fountains of truth contained in His Word. In the exercise of faith, and in studying God in His Word, our faith grows.

***George Müller** had faith in the Lord and saw the Lord bless his ministry and supply all the needs of over 10,000 orphans. This extract from a sermon by George Müller was first printed in March 1908 in* 'Bright Words' *the former name for* 'First'.



AS FOR GOD, HIS WAY IS PERFECT

By Jenny McCullough



Pictured: Jenny with husband, Andrew

Growing up as a child in the 1980's, we were very blessed with the simple things of life. I enjoyed school activities and Girl Guides. Sunday School introduced me to the teachings of God's Word, and Sunday afternoons were spent visiting grandparents.

The greatest impact of the gospel upon my young heart came through a Friday night children's meeting. While it only lasted for one hour, the ladies taught us the true way of salvation through Christ alone. We learned memory verses, watched the story taking shape on flannelgraph and sang great choruses. The lady often closed by praying the sinner's prayer and clearly taught us the only way to heaven is by repenting of our sin and trusting Jesus as our Saviour. One of the prizes I received was a book about Gladys Aylward entitled *Never Say Die*. I was amazed at what God could do through a life lived for Him. While I knew God was knocking on the door of my heart, I also had several excuses which were all stripped away when I was about 21.

My sister, Olwyn, had battled cancer for a year, and during this time God saved my dad first and then Olwyn. He wonderfully uses the difficulties that we face in our lives to do an eternal work of grace, as we allow Him. God's voice continued speaking to me, "What about you?" - again, I put it off. When Olwyn died, I really wondered is this gospel true? Was she really in heaven? God continued to speak, not

only to me but unknown to me, also to my mum. He speaks into the secret place where others cannot see or hear.

For the first time we attended a gospel mission on Easter Tuesday, 30 March 1999, taking place in a portable hall, six miles from our home, out in the heart of the countryside. The visiting speaker announced the title of his sermon, "time no more". This was very relevant to our family situation, and the Holy Spirit spoke directly into our lives. He had been preparing us over recent months. I struggled through an appeal but eventually made my response – as did my mum. We were pointed to the Lord afterwards and began a personal journey of faith, learning to walk with the Lord. It was a great privilege to meet the preacher, the late Jack Morton, several years later in a mission in Clabby, and we are thankful to God for His faithful servants. *'For You are great and do wondrous things; You alone are God'* (Psalm 86:10).

I am so thankful for God's goodness and grace in my life ... He is a faithful God in every way.

Around 2001 I met Faith Mission workers in Co. Monaghan, and in the summer I met two Faith Mission Bible College students. This led to a visit to the College in the autumn of that year and to attending the Bangor Convention in 2002. God deeply challenged me through many of the meetings. Looking back, I can see many links in the chain as God led me to the College and then into the ministry of the Faith Mission. *'As for God, His way is perfect'* (Psalm 18:30). Even amid many challenges and difficulties, I can say "All the way my Saviour leads me".[1]

Having known the tremendous blessing of Christian teachers in high school, I know that gospel witness in a school setting can influence young lives towards God. We have been very privileged in Northern Ireland over many years to share with the children and teach them God's way of salvation. This is so important and may be the only means that some children will have of hearing of God and His love. Having faced much opposition in recent months, we desperately need to pray God's protection over this vital ministry in which several organisations are involved. In serving with the Faith Mission, I have shared in assemblies, Bible Explorer lessons and Scripture Unions, mainly in primary schools. While assemblies seem very short, a lot can be communicated to the children in only five or ten minutes. Bible Explorer lessons have taught me so much regarding the overview of the Bible, and while it is an interactive series of lessons working with 8–11 year-olds, I have been blessed at how quickly the children learn and remember the hand signs. I have also been amazed at some of the questions asked over the years. Children often put things so simply, and God honours childlike faith.

On reflection, I am so thankful for God's goodness and grace in my life and for all the encouragements I have received from His Word. Like many of God's people, I find great blessings in the book of Psalms, as God instructs and teaches me in His way. He is a faithful God in every way. •

References:
[1] Hymn, Fanny Crosby, 'All the Way My Saviour Leads Me'

***Andrew & Jenny McCullough** work with the Faith Mission in Northern Ireland. Along with outreach and serving local believers, Andrew is the Director for Ireland.*

‘WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE? AND THERE IS NONE UPON EARTH THAT I DESIRE BESIDE THEE.’

Psalm 73:25

By Stephen Johnston
(student at FMBC)



Pictured: Stephen with wife, Molly, and son, Hugh

Growing up I knew my need of Jesus and struggled with the fear of death and hell, and at nine years old I repented of my sin and trusted Christ as my Saviour. I remember the peace I felt that night. I knew my sins were forgiven, and I belonged to Him. From a young age I had a desire to be used by God and got involved in church life and many Christian activities. I was committed and sincere in trying to follow the Lord.

In 2017, I went to university in Belfast to study engineering. I remained active in serving the Lord, but I started to notice more of my own struggles. I came to realise that much of my happiness was tied to friendships, social life and what others thought of me. Without being involved in these things I felt overwhelmed and had no peace. By my final year, I was praying more earnestly, asking God to help me overcome these struggles. I wrestled

with them throughout the year. As graduation approached, the Lord opened the door to go on a short-term mission trip to Uganda for four and a half months in August 2021. Being away from home, I was removed from many comforts and distractions I had relied on, and God began to deal with me. I enjoyed my opportunities in Uganda, but in the quiet evenings I found no contentment.

Life back at home went on without me, and even the things I enjoyed like farming and sports no longer interested me. But this drove me to prayer. Night after night, I wrestled before God, often in tears, pleading for things to change. For weeks, the heaviness remained, yet as I continued to pray, things slowly began to turn. God made His presence real to me, and I began to enjoy time with Him in the evenings. But still, each morning the same sense of being overwhelmed returned. This pattern continued. Over time, however, the Lord brought me to a place of surrender, and then it was His Word and His presence that became everything to me. I began to understand more of what Jesus had done for me, and that true rest is found in Him alone. Christ became my answer for everything. I had a new joy and stability, and I remain very thankful for this time.

While I am aware of my own weaknesses, I am looking to the Lord to continue to help me grow in Him.

I came home and began to work in design engineering. I had met Molly at the CU at university, and we were married in July 2023. Over the years I had considered Bible college; in summer 2024 the Lord strongly renewed this burden in both Molly's heart and mine. Our sense of calling deepened, and we prayed for direction, asking God to make His will clear. In His timing, He answered through various circumstances and people, confirming that this was the step He wanted us to take. After attending an open day at the Faith Mission Bible College, God gave us a love for the place, along with confirmation through His Word and a settled peace. In this step, Joshua 1:5 has been a special promise to us, *'as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.'*

We are thankful we can testify to how clearly and personally the Lord has spoken to us and met our needs in different situations throughout my first year of study. I have enjoyed studying God's Word in depth alongside the other students. There have also been valuable opportunities to gain experience alongside Faith Mission workers and within local churches, for which I am very grateful. The sense of community at the college has been a real blessing as well. While I am aware of my own weaknesses, I am looking to the Lord to continue to help me grow in Him.

Molly and I are thankful for the blessing of our newborn son, Hugh, on 17th April. He is truly an answer to prayer, and we are grateful for God's goodness to us. My great-uncle Hugh served in the Faith Mission in Canada. It is our prayer that our son will come to know the Lord at a young age and go on to live a life fully surrendered to Him.

God has been good to me. Most of all, when I consider the finished work on the cross, surely, I can only respond by giving my life fully to Him. My desire is to live each moment, led by the Spirit of God, for His glory.

REVIVE THE COLLEGE AGAIN

BY RUSSELL NEWTON

Over the past 129 years, God has graciously used the Faith Mission Bible College (FMBC) to equip His people for lives of service around the world. John George Govan founded the Faith Mission in October 1886, but by 1893 he had realised that in order for it to expand, the Mission needed a training home. Mount Clare, just outside Rothesay on the Isle of Bute, was purchased in 1897, and the Training Home's three-month training course began later that year.

Govan lectured daily with others contributing, while students met together informally to seek God in extended times of prayer. It is said to have been a "happy home", filled with "quiet fun" and that "Govan knew how to draw the best out of the students."[1]

Consistent Mission

Govan established the Training Home to prepare Christians for evangelistic work at home and abroad, and desired for, "the training to be thoroughly Scriptural, spiritual, and practical."[2]

The mission of FMBC today remains consistent: we seek to equip passionate servants of Jesus Christ for evangelism, mission and ministry wherever God leads them. We seek to do this by ensuring that our training is biblical, practical and transformational — just as Govan originally envisioned — because we remain convinced that all three ingredients are necessary for Christian training.

Changing Approaches

Despite the Training Home starting well, it was struggling by 1911. The course was only running infrequently, and some thought the Faith Mission had had its day. So as part of a wider shakeup, the Training Home was relocated to Edinburgh: first to Joppa in 1912 and then to Ravelston in 1913, with the course extended at this time from three months to a year.

This marked the beginning of a series of changes in the decades that followed. In the 1940s, with declining student numbers amidst the Second World War, the 'Training Home' was renamed as the 'Faith Mission Training Home and Bible College' and the course was extended to two years. By 1971, the standard training course was three years. Then, in 1984, after four days of prayer, it was decided that the remit of the College should be expanded, "to enable students who would appreciate the opportunity of gaining a recognised qualification, such as the diploma in theology, to do so."[3] By God's grace, the College flourished in the 1980s and 1990s. It moved to larger premises in Gilmerton in 1986, where it remains to this day.



Ravelston Park

FMBC has always required changing approaches as it has adapted to different eras and circumstances: the name, location, duration and scope of the training programme have all changed over the decades. While there has been a consistent mission, there has been variation in how that mission has been accomplished.

The world today is different from 1897 when the Training Home was established, and also from 1986 when student numbers were booming. The church today is smaller than it was 40 years ago and fewer Christians are thinking about training, and we recognise that we must adapt.

Over the past year, we have developed a new partnership with Highland Theological College (HTC), which makes it possible for our diploma graduates to progress to degree studies with HTC if they wish. We have developed new pathways, including our online *Exploring Ministry and Mission* course, which is designed to help Christians understand what mission is and discern whether or not God is calling them into gospel work. We are also making new provision for those who are gifted for, and called to, evangelism to train with us through our Evangelist Training Scholarship because we want to see a new generation of prayerful, passionate and persuasive evangelists raised up across the British Isles.

Complete Dependence

We are seeking to faithfully uphold the College's longstanding mission, while responding wisely to changing circumstances. Yet we recognise that we are ultimately dependent on God. This is not new: the Faith Mission Bible College has always been marked by complete dependence on God, including at times when student numbers have been low.

In 1912, when the Training Home moved to Edinburgh, it was at a low ebb. Yet soon after relocating to Joppa, the students at the Training Home experienced spiritual blessing in a special way as they met with God, which in turn reinvigorated the Faith Mission. According to Colin Peckham, "The Spirit of the Lord pervaded the place ... The effect of this was felt throughout the Mission. Confidence was restored, and with it new hope for the future."[4]

We stand at another challenging period in the College's history, and we are, once again, in need of God's reviving work. Jesus taught His disciples that the *'harvest is plentiful'* and to *'pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'*[5] The spiritual need in our day is great, so our prayer is that God would revive the College again and use it as a hub from which to send out the next generation of evangelists into the harvest field. •



The Men's House in Ravelston Dykes where lectures and Friday morning prayer times were held.

References:

[1] I.R. Govan, *Spirit of Revival: The Story of J. G. Govan and the Faith Mission*, 4th Edition (The Faith Mission, 1978), 120

[2] Govan, *Spirit of Revival,* 118

[3] Colin N. Peckham, *Heritage of Revival: A Century of Rural Evangelism* (The Faith Mission, 1986), 127.

[4] Peckham, *Heritage of Revival*, 140.

[5] Matthew 9:37-38.

***Russell** is the Academic Dean of the Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh.*

WHERE ARE THE EVANGELISTS?

BY ANGUS MOYES

There is evidence of a new spiritual openness in our culture today. The Bible Society reports that Bible sales have increased by 106% since 2019, multiple surveys indicate interest in Scripture in at least a third of young people, and today they are as likely to be influenced by Christian sportspeople, musicians and public intellectuals as by the 'New Atheist' types so prominent in the early 2000s (biblesociety.org.uk/the-quiet-revival). We are all aware that across the UK and Republic of Ireland, millions remain without Christ. Yet this new openness is encouraging. The harvest is plentiful, but the evangelists are few.

The New Testament reminds us that Christ's intention for His church is to be equipped to meet this need. In Ephesians 4, we are told that the risen Lord Jesus has given gifts to His church – the apostles and prophets who laid the gospel foundation (cf. 2:20), the pastor-teachers who build upon it and the evangelists – all to equip Christ's people for the work of ministry. Evangelists, therefore, are not an optional extra, nor is it a niche calling for a few enthusiasts. Evangelists are one of Christ's good gifts to His church. So, it is worth asking: where are they?

I have been encouraged to see across Scotland and further afield a growing emphasis in local churches on identifying and training pastor-teachers. Local churches are increasingly taking responsibility for raising up and apprenticing gifted young people to serve in pastoral and preaching roles. The Faith Mission Bible College is of course glad to support that work. This is something we give thanks for. But what about evangelists? Where are the pathways for recognising, nurturing and training those whom God is raising up with a particular burden for the lost? And where are those gripped by God's call, burdened to take the Good News into the harvest fields of the UK and Republic of Ireland today?

The life of the Faith Mission's founder, John George Govan, might help us here. Govan's life was not always marked by evangelistic zeal. As a young Christian of 23, he recognised inconsistency and a lack of spiritual fervour in his faith. He found himself repeatedly resolving to do better – to read his Bible more, to live a more committed Christian life – but something was missing.





Then, through a profound work of God in his heart, everything changed. "This is what I need", he wrote, "... not a mere giving of myself to God, but a work of God to be done in my soul."[1] And that is exactly what the Lord did.

What followed was not merely a renewed private devotion, but a burning concern for the lost. Govan discovered an evangelistic zeal he had not known before. He began holding open-air gospel meetings in Glasgow and soon also in surrounding towns and villages. Those who knew him spoke of his "consuming desire for the glory of Christ" and his "passion for souls."[2]

This is a pattern we see again and again. God works deeply in a person, and from that work flows a deep concern for the lost. Evangelists are not manufactured – they are raised up by God. They are men and women who have been gripped by the reality of the gospel and are compelled to share it.

So, it is the Lord of the harvest who sends out the workers. But the wider church has its role to play – to recognise that calling, to test gifting, to train and equip the called for the work. That was Govan's conviction too. As the work of the Faith Mission grew, there was no question that training would be needed. For men and women to be prepared for gospel work, they needed to be rooted in the Word, dependent on God and able to communicate Christ clearly in their day.

What God did in and through Govan, we long for Him to do in our day. Surely Christ continues to give evangelists to His church today – and in this post-Christian culture, the need for training is all the greater. Evangelistic zeal needs biblical depth. Passion needs clarity. Enthusiasm must be joined with wisdom. Training does not replace God's work; it serves it. And so the challenge comes to us.

First, we must pray. Jesus Himself told us that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. And He commanded us to, *'pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest'* (Matthew 9:38). If we are not seeing evangelists raised up today, we must begin with prayer.

Second, we must look. Are there young men and women in our churches who have a burden for the lost? A willingness to speak? The beginnings of a gifting to share Christ? These things should not be overlooked, but actively encouraged and nurtured.

And finally, we must be willing to send. When God raises up evangelists, they must not be left to find their own way. They need support, encouragement and training.



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There is a new spiritual openness in our culture today. The potential of a great harvest. But a harvest requires workers. Let's pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would grip the hearts and lives of many, and raise up a new generation of prayerful, passionate and persuasive evangelists – and may we be ready to recognise them, support them and send them into His harvest field. •

References:
[1] I.R. Govan, *Spirit of Revival: The Story of J. G. Govan and the Faith Mission*, 4th Edition (The Faith Mission, 1978), 24
[2] Govan, *Spirit of Revival,* 32

***Angus** is lecturer in theology and ministry at the Faith Mission Bible College. He lives just outside Edinburgh with his wife and four children.*



BY MARGARET ROBERTS

When I first moved to Ireland from Canada in 2018, I knew very little about the country I was moving into. I was aware of some aspects of the Irish culture, and something of the religious history but overall, I did not know what to expect. Once I became settled in County Wexford, I took a trip to Hook Lighthouse, a historic and symbolic monument for the county. On the way, there were few, if any, churches. I would later learn that the main churches are in three of the five central towns in the county and for some, that could mean a journey of 30-40 minutes.

As I considered the light coming from the lighthouse, I began to think of the great contrast of darkness and light. In the Bible *light* is symbolic for *truth* and *life*, which comes from Jesus who said in John 8:12, *‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life’,* whereas darkness is a symbol for sin and death. My thoughts turned to all these outlying villages where there appeared to be little gospel witness. While I do enjoy coming alongside the churches in the town, it’s often on my heart to reach the small, ‘out of the way’ villages. A vision was born to share the gospel in these areas that the *light* of *truth* may spread in those outlying areas.

Every summer tourists are attracted to the coast, and I have considered how the gospel could impact even them. I remember one conversation I had with a visitor while conducting outreach at Kilmore Quay. I had offered him a gospel tract with the words “Got Hope?” on the front. He took one look and very honestly repeated the words, “Got hope?” before answering, “No, I have no hope.”

Village outreach doesn't come without difficulty, and yet I have seen the Lord bless the effort, especially with children's work. There is one village near the Hook Peninsula that seems to be hardened to the gospel message. Yet after some door-to-door work, it was this village that God laid on my heart to start children's work in. For the first few years I had no guarantee that children would attend a kids' club. When I was beginning to question if I was correct in God's calling for this village, 12 children suddenly appeared at the hall door. From then I've had a core group attend, and the club has moved from seasonal to monthly. Many who attend have very little Bible knowledge and some aren't sure how to use a Bible! After five years it has been a joy to see those who have attended since the beginning grow in their understanding of God's Word. The years have also allowed me to build a relationship not only with them but also with their families. As some of the children are getting older, I'm praying over the question of what is next for the older ones.

Another village not far from the Hook Peninsula was placed on my heart over a year ago, and here I have begun seasonal children's work. The community is similar to the other village on the peninsula although closer to Wexford town, which creates more difficulty in gaining interest for the club. Yet several parents, although with no church background, have shared appreciation for it. I later learned that I am not alone in my burden for this particular village as I've met several others in the church who have been praying for *years* for a gospel witness for that village! While these places are small, the contact is significant: when one family is impacted it can have a ripple effect in the community.

New and sometimes surprising opportunities have emerged in villages and towns throughout



Children's outreach through craft

County Wexford and into Waterford. I have joined with members of the local church community to support outreach efforts, including Bible studies and children/youth clubs. It is always encouraging to see local Christians come together to serve where they are able and to get behind the work in prayer. One church I have partnered with in Waterford has growing connections to families in the town which has been a great benefit for the weekly children and youth clubs. In turn, a couple of families have started attending the church.

It is my desire to see the light of the gospel spread across the southeast of Ireland, reaching souls for the Kingdom. We know that God's Word will accomplish what He purposes (Isaiah 55: 11). The Lord gives the increase, and it is a privilege to be part of what He is doing. •

***Margaret** works with the Faith Mission in the Irish Midlands based in County Wexford.*

BANGOR BLESSINGS

Easter is a key period in the Christian calendar when we reflect on the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people of all ages look forward to Bangor Convention - the theme this year was, 'Revive us again!' Over the weekend we were stirred by challenging ministry from each of the speakers. You can listen to the messages on the Faith Mission website.

While there is the obvious need for national revival, we were reminded also that so often there is a need for personal revival. That is best summed up in a song that was beautifully sung on Easter Monday, which is a highlight of the Convention – "Revive us again; Fill each heart with Thy love; May each soul be rekindled with fire from above; Hallelujah! Thine the glory. Hallelujah! Amen. Hallelujah! Thine the glory. Revive us again."

We look forward to the Convention next year DV and hope that you can come along! •




Jesus said, "I am the light
of the world. Whoever
follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the
light of life."
John 8 :12















FAITH MISSION

CAMPS 2026

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.

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- 9-12 years, 27–31 July
  Stephen & Cynthia Walker
  hq.england@faithmission.org

SCOTLAND

Highland District

FM Bible College, Edinburgh

- 13-16 years, 13-18 July
- 9-12 years, 20-25 July
  Jeff & Sarah Townend
  highland.scottish@faithmission.org

South Scottish District

Newton Stewart Centre, Dumfries & Galloway

- 9-12 years, 20-24 July
- 13-16 years, 27-31 July
  Robert & Phillippa Cismas
  phillippa.cismas@faithmission.org



IRELAND

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Portadown Centre, Co Armagh

- 8-11 years, 6-10 July,
- 12-14 years, 14-18 July
  Andrew & Jenny McCullough
  north.irish@faithmission.org

Irish Border District

Portadown Centre, Co Armagh

- 8-11 years, 20-24 July
- 12-15 years, 27-31 July
- 16-18 years, 13-16 August
  Brian & Hazel Parker
  brian.parker@faithmission.org
  Simon and Rebecca Walsh
  border.irish@faithmission.org

Irish Midlands District

Durrow Centre, Co Laois

- 8-10 years, 20-24 July
- 11-13 years, 27-31 July
- 14-18 years, 3-7 August
  Mervyn & Rachel Tomb
  midlands.irish@faithmission.org

South West Irish District

Carhue Centre, Co Cork

- 9-12 years, 29 June -3 July
- 13-16 years, 6-10 July
- 15+ Outreach Camp, 13-17 July
  Johnathan & Janet Slater
  southwest.irish@faithmission.org

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