

Free Presbyterian VISION

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

Precious Unity in Christ

Is God Calling
Me To Full-
Time Service?

Overcoming
Doubts

JULY
2024
#70
£1.00



Contents

REGULARS

- 8 Church News
15 A Word to Women
Links in a Chain
16 Christian School
News

FEATURES

- 4 Overcoming
Doubts
6 Is God Calling
Me To Full-Time
Service?
18 Precious Unity
in Christ

YOUTH

- 9 Kids
10 Great Gospel Words:
Justification
12 Reports
14 Book Review:
Treasures of Worth

MISSIONARY VISION

- 20 The Mission Board
Chairman Visits the
Churches in Australia
21 Retirement Services
for the Pattersons
22 Nepal
A Very Encouraging Trip
23 Bible Training Institute
First Graduates

Editorial

This summer, Rev John Greer and Rev Gordon Dane will both have retired from the Pastoral ministry and will also bring to a close long and faithful ministries in Ballymena and Crossgar, respectively. There is no doubt that both men will continue to be busy serving our denomination, but these milestones are significant and worthy of our reflection.

How thankful we must be to God for raising up godly men, both of whom have served our Presbytery as Moderator, lectured in the college, and have exhibited a Christ-like influence throughout their ministries. Contemplating their retirements, ahead of this edition of the *FPC Vision*, brought to my mind the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in John 4:38, 'I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours'.

There is no denying the fact that, as more of our ministers retire, the need for young men to be called into the Christian ministry will intensify. Knowing this, we have a solemn duty to pray for God to raise up such labourers. But what do the generations to come need to take on board as they take up the call to leave all and follow Christ? Our Saviour makes this clear; men who are called of God are men who enter into the labours of others.

This is comforting because God has always ensured that 'other men laboured'. Jesus spoke these words to the disciples and reminded them that others came before them. God has raised prophets and preachers in ages gone by, and He will raise preachers in years to come. This is His work, His Church, and His vineyard and we must never lose sight of this fact. The ministers of tomorrow, while they must furrow their course, may do so knowing they have entered into the labours of others. There is a precious continuity here and a reminder to hold fast to what others have faithfully maintained. ■

✉ Editor
editor@fpvision.org



“The Bible tells us that the unity of true believers in Christ is ‘precious’ (Psalm 133) and something to be cherished, nurtured, and guarded. Unity is not uniformity as we recognise that we are not all going to look or operate the same.”

Presbytery Publications Committee

Rev I Brown (Convenor), Rev P Baker (Editor)
Mr I Campbell (Business Manager),
Rev D Creane, Rev L Curran (Associate Editor),
Rev M Lecky (Secretary), Rev C Mercer,
Rev T Nelson, Rev G Wilson (Associate Editor)
Design and Print by Pepper Collective. T: 07729 526366

Subscriptions

FP Vision is available from your
local Free Presbyterian Church,
or by contacting Ian Campbell:
Tel: 028 417 62645
Mob: 07709 429271
E: subscribe@fpvision.org

Seeking & Waiting on the Lord

“The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

Lamentations 3:25&26

In our Western society and culture today, we are not very good at waiting. We can get so many things on demand and within a moment's notice. If we are hungry, we can go to a fast-food restaurant and have food within minutes. If we need an answer to a question, we can use Google to find the answer in seconds. If we need a new phone charger, we can order it for next-day delivery from Amazon.

Many of these things have their benefits, but they have also made us a very impatient society that is unwilling to wait for things. We want them now. However, when we come to the Bible, we see that it speaks much about 'waiting on the Lord'. These verses tell us that the Lord is good to those that wait for Him and it is good for us to wait on Him.

So, what does it mean to 'wait on the

Lord'? Well, the word here for 'wait' is an active verb which means to wait with hope and expectancy. It means to look eagerly for what the Lord has for us. This differs from what we often think about waiting. Many times, we wait for something; and when we get it, it disappoints us or satisfies us only for a short time. However, the Bible teaches us that God never disappoints those who wait on Him. Isaiah 30:18 reminds us that 'blessed (or happy) are all they that wait for him.'

Not only do these verses say that God is good to those who wait on Him, but He is also good 'to the soul that seeketh Him'. Seeking God is something that we, as the children of God, must be engaged in every day. Matthew 6:33 tells us, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...' We are to make seeking God a priority in our lives. There are multiple ways to seek God - in His Word, in prayer, and

in His house.

I wonder, is seeking God a priority in your life? Does it take the place of highest importance? We are to earnestly, diligently, with our whole spirit, heart, and soul seek the Lord. We are to seek His face, favour, grace, and glory. We are reminded that if we do this, the Lord is good to those who seek Him and wait on Him. Are you committed to seeking and waiting on the Lord?

I believe that we would do well to pray the same prayer that Thomas Aquinas prayed, 'Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you. Amen.' ■

✉ **Rev Jonathan Storey,**
Mount Merrion Free Presbyterian



Overcoming Doubts

It is easy to trust in the Lord when all things are going well in your life, when you are riding on the crest of the wave, basking in the sunshine of blessing, and soaring into the heights of joy and gladness. We can say in such times: ‘The Lord is good, and His mercy endureth forever.’ We can trace the hand of Divine blessing in those periods when it is well with us.

It is more difficult to declare this testimony in seasons of adversity and affliction. The testing time comes, some trial overtakes us, and some burden presses upon us that is heavy to bear. We feel more like Jacob in his darkness and despondency when he cried: ‘All these things are against me’ (Genesis 43:36). He thinks Joseph is dead, and he feels Benjamin may also be taken from him forever.

In such times of trouble and tribulation, we are tempted to doubt the goodness of God. We wonder why certain calamities befall us, a tragedy overtakes us, or a catastrophe pushes its way suddenly and unexpectedly into our lives. Sometimes our thoughts are like David when he cried in his distress: ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul! And why art thou disquieted within me?’ (Psalm 43:5).

One of the easiest verses to quote, but most difficult to apply, is Romans 8:28 – ‘And we know that all things work together for good to them that love

God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.’ In what was probably the darkest period of my life, my old friend who is now in Glory, Dr Alan Cairns, simply told me: ‘Romans 8:28 is still in the Bible.’ This verse is tried and tested, and must be one of the key promises that we hold unto in our darkest hours of trouble – come what may, we KNOW that all things work together for our good in the plan and Providence of God.

DOUBTING GOD’S PROVISION

In our Saviour’s Sermon on the Mount, He addressed those who worried about their daily necessities – what they would eat, what they would drink, what they would wear. Probably, in most cases, we do not worry so much about these things in our Western civilisation where good things are abundant. But

think of Bible times when there was much poverty - a little bit like what we see in developing countries. I have visited many families who hardly know where their next meal is coming from; some of them go for days without food. They worry about their daily bread and often doubt God in His provision.

Jesus draws attention to His providential care of the birds of the air that are fed and the lilies of the field that are clothed. As He rebukes those who doubted His provision by declaring ‘O ye of little faith’, He reminds us that we are more precious or valuable than the birds and lilies. He exhorts us to ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.’ In other words, put Him first and everything else will fall into place; God will not forget to provide for you because you are precious in His sight.

DOUBTING GOD’S PROTECTION

Come with me to a fearful band of the Lord’s dear disciples who are at sea in the midst of a storm. They are in the ship together with their Master. A great storm arose! It was more furious than these seasoned fishermen, who were accustomed to the wild seas, were used to. The waves rose to their heights and came crashing onto the deck of their little vessel. It was a dreadful time of danger. The disciples were fearful, indeed, terrified for their lives; they thought they were going to die.

Where was Jesus? He was with them, but was asleep in the hinder part of the ship. Did He know about the storm? Of course, He did. Did He care for His dear disciples? Most certainly, even though they questioned this when they cried inconsiderately, ‘Carest Thou not that we perish?’ (Mark 4:38). Jesus did care, more than

they could ever know, just as He still cares infinitely and considerately for us when we are in the storms of life.

When awakened out of His sleep by the fearful disciples, Jesus not only rebuked their fear and distrust, but He stood up and rebuked the threatening winds and the ferocious sea so that it was made calm. Do you doubt God’s protection in your storms? Do you sadly fix your eyes upon the boisterous wind, and sink as Peter did in Matthew 14? Please know, dear child of God, He can still your storm by the word of His power. He can stretch out His omnipotent hand and lift you from the angry winds to perfect safety. God’s storms always have a divine overruling purpose in the Master’s sovereign plan.

DOUBTING GOD’S POWER

It is the days following the resurrection of Christ. Jesus has been showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs. Five separate appearances took place on that first Lord’s Day, the fifth one being to ten of the disciples but ‘doubting’ Thomas is absent. When the Lord came and stood amid His disciples with words of peace, we are told, ‘But Thomas one of the twelve was not there.’ When he was informed that the others had seen the Lord, he doubted. The poor man was filled with doubts concerning the power of our Lord’s resurrection. ‘Except I shall see in

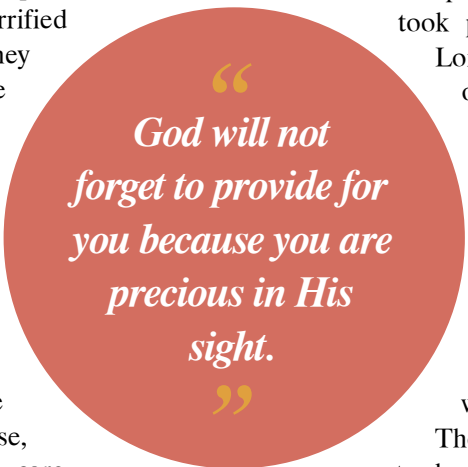
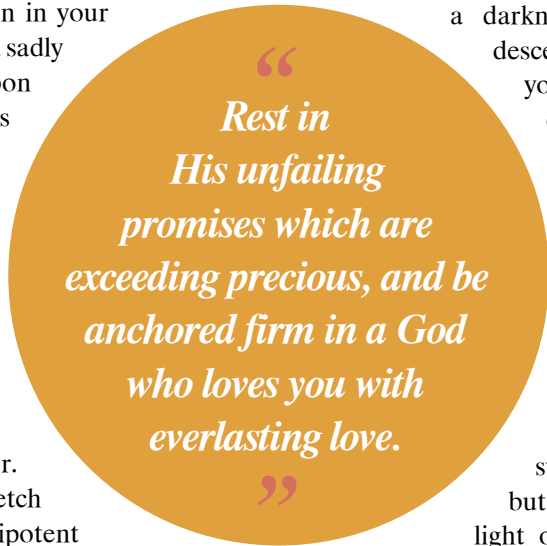
His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ (John 20:25). He had to wait eight more days in his shameful unbelief until the Lord appeared again and made Himself known unto Him.

Do you doubt God’s power or His ability to do all things? Has a darkness of unbelief descended upon your soul and compassed you about, causing you to doubt the greatness of God and His mighty power to do all things? Do not continue in such a gloomy state of unbelief but come to the light of Scripture and know that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we could ask or think.

Dear child of God, doubts will arise in our minds and hearts as we traverse this sinful world. We will be sorely tempted by the devil to distrust our God in the testing times. Rest in His unfailing promises which are exceeding precious, and be anchored firm in a God who loves you with everlasting love.

I was sent a Spurgeon quote recently from a dear Pastor friend that I found intensely helpful – ‘However difficult and painful thy road, it is marked by the footsteps of thy Saviour; and even when thou reachest the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, thou wilt find His footprints there. In all places whithersoever we go, He has been our forerunner; each burden we have to carry has once been on the shoulders of Immanuel.’ ■

✉ **Rev David Park,**
Hebron Free Presbyterian Church.





Is God Calling Me To

Full-Time Service?

“The Biblical idea of God’s calling is twofold: He summons men by His Word; and He lays hold of them by an inner conviction given by and through the power of His Holy Spirit.”

I find it ironic that, in the past number of years, I have been asked to do a few weeks of ministry meetings and now an article on the subject of the will and call of God. The reason I find it ironic is because there have been times down the years when I have had much difficulty with discerning the will of God. There are times when I have got it wrong. I can remember times when it looked plain that the Lord was leading in one direction, only to find that the door was firmly shut; and there were other times when the door was open, and I did not want to go through it, only to find that when I did, God’s way was best. So I have every sympathy with you if you are having difficulty with discerning the will of God. However, I also know that there are times when the will of God has been plain and clear, and none more so than when the Lord called me into full-time service.

So is God calling you into full-time service? Let us try to think this whole thing through as Biblically as possible.

GOD'S SPECIFIC WILL FOR YOU

The first point is that God does have a will for your life. You may be finding it hard to discover what it is at the moment, but can I assure you that the Lord has a will for your life - is that not comforting? There is a plan! There are things that should be true of every child of God. For example, the Lord says in Romans 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which* is your reasonable service.' But there is also a specific will for your life. In his first Corinthian letter, the Apostle Paul addresses Christians at least 15 times as those who are 'called'. He uses this term in matters of salvation, which is always initiated by God; but the Apostle, who already has been called to be a believer in Christ, refers to himself in an additional way — he is 'called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus' (1 Corinthians 1:1). It was like a call within a call. It was a specific call to a specific role, and God has some role for you to do. Whether that is in what is referred to as full-time Christian service or not, you should be full-time serving the Lord in whatever role you are called to.

A GOD-GIVEN COMPULSION

Let us come now to whether God is calling you to be a Missionary or a Minister, an evangelist or a full-time Children's or Youth worker. And if that is true, the first thing that you will need is a God-given compulsion. The first thing a lot of ministers will say if someone intimates to them that God is calling them is 'if you can do anything else, then do it.' C H Spurgeon put it this way: 'Do not enter the ministry if you can help it.' I remember when I began to feel the call of God, I was at university in England; and I dismissed it, as I felt that it was just homesickness and missing the fellowship in the church at home. I came home and got a job and still felt the call of God, and I remember coming to the place where I could not escape the call. I remember the Lord dealing with me in such a

way that I had no other option than to speak to my minister about how God was speaking to me. You need to ask yourself if the question of a call is fleeting or persistent. When the Lord calls, he makes His voice heard with a certain persistence. In this way, He may give us time to test the call. If the question of whether I am called or not is only occasional, it is not so likely to be a call to full-time ministry. It needs to be something you cannot get away from. It may not be something you think about every moment, but it will certainly be constantly brought back to your mind through your reading of Scripture or through the preaching of the Word. And the feeling should be confirmed by the Word of God. That is also vital. When God calls in the Scripture, there is a twofold aspect. The Biblical idea of God's calling is twofold: (a) He summons men by His Word; and (b) He lays hold of them by an inner conviction given by and through the power of His Holy Spirit.

A GOD-GIVEN CAPABILITY

The next thing that you should have if God is calling you is a God-given capability to do what God is calling you for. Maybe you say, 'I am off the hook here. I do not have the capability.' That is one of the arguments I put up in my own mind against the call for so long. I thought I could not do it. I felt there was no way I could get up in front of a crowd and speak. And yet at the same time, I was saying that to myself, I was finding myself time after time getting up before crowds to speak. I was giving my testimony or leading meetings or speaking in the children's meeting, or it even progressed to preaching, and the Lord was showing me I could do it. You will not be the finished article, and I certainly was not, but 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 emphasise the ability to teach. There needs to be that patience that will work to explain the truth that God has laid on your heart. And there needs to be patience with those who take time to learn those truths. There also should be humility, among other qualifications that are listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We must be able to ask of ourselves and others if the qualifications listed in those Scriptures have been met.

“
The special call to full-time ministry ought not to be rare in Christian circles. Before all young Christians choose a vocation for themselves, they should ask the Lord prayerfully and seriously, 'Do You need me for full-time service?'”

A GOD-GIVEN CHANCE

Then there needs to be something else. There needs to be a God-given chance. In other words, there needs to be an opportunity. If God has called you, He will open up the doors to service. Ultimately, the call to the ministry will be demonstrated when the opportunities to ministry or mission open up. That will happen when, after due training, a Church or Mission Board sense the call of God upon you and are willing to call you or send you forth. But it is only as a congregation calls you or a mission board commissions you or a door of service opens up that you can really say that you have been called by God.

In closing, note that the special call to full-time ministry ought not to be rare in Christian circles. Before all young Christians choose a vocation for themselves, they should ask the Lord prayerfully and seriously, 'Do You need me for full-time service?' We are not saying that it is easy. It is not! It is hard work if it is done right, but it is the most blessed service in the world. CH Spurgeon once said, 'If God calls you to be a minister, don't stoop to becoming a king.' ■

✍ **Rev Gordon Dane,**
Crossgar Free Presbyterian Church.

Retirements in Clogher Valley



☒ Above: Mr Condell is pictured here receiving his painting from Rev P McIntyre.



☒ Above: Mr Hetherington receiving his presentation from Rev P McIntyre.

Sunday 24th March was a milestone occasion for the congregation in Clogher Valley. Mr Jeffrey Condell retired from his position as Treasurer after nearly thirty years of dedicated service. He was presented by Rev Peter McIntyre with a watercolour and pen painting of the Church buildings (by local artist Ruth Elliott).

On the same day Mr David Hetherington received a presentation from Rev McIntyre on behalf of Session and Committee on his retirement from the role of Assistant Treasurer after more than twenty years of faithful labour. ■

Protest Outside The Bannville Hotel, Banbridge

On Saturday, 11th May, 2024 at 8pm, around forty believers, alongside Revs Daniel Henderson and David Smith, assembled outside the Bannville Hotel in Banbridge to oppose the flagrant violation of God's law that was due to take place by the so-called 'Pleasure Boys' group from England. This witness endeavoured to exalt Jesus Christ and expose the vices of darkness with the Spirit's help. A tremendous evening of gospel opportunity was had with the proprietor of the hotel coming outside and having a very keen ear for the



gospel and all that was said about the event itself.

Please pray for the many souls who were genuinely interested in what was spoken. On the following Monday morning, an article in the *Northern Ireland World* published the story that the Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council stepped in and said that 'no nudity' was permitted. This was a tremendous victory as the sin-loving

attendees had only come and paid for such obscenity and were reportedly left 'disappointed'. The 'Pleasure Boys' shared the protest on their social media account, most likely out of mockery, and yet unwittingly brought the faithful preaching of the Gospel to thousands of people who viewed this video! The Saviour teaches His people to be salt and light in this world. By such a stand made for Christ, we can see things done for God. ■

Christian Workers Training Academy

The Christian Workers Training Academy will be again be happening this year after its re-launch last year. The course is designed to educate and inform those who are looking to increase their knowledge and become a more effective witness and servant of Christ. The same subject material covered last year will be covered again.

The course runs for a **total of 14 weeks, with 7 weeks before and after the Christmas break,**

concluding in March. There will then be a graduation ceremony for the course. The course will be run this year in **Clogher Valley Free Presbyterian Church** (kindly granted) and the cost will be **£120** in total, with all course notes and materials fully supplied.

To apply, or for further information, please contact course co-ordinator Rev Julian Patterson:

T: 07708550733

E: cwtacademy@outlook.com ■



'What time I
am afraid I will
trust in Thee.'

Psalm 56:3



Time

The science of studying and measuring time is called horology. Now although we are all familiar with it, the whole concept of time is hard to explain. Time seems to be an ongoing, continual thing that is unstoppable and irreversible. People talk about saving time, having plenty of time, finding time and even making time, but if the truth be told they have no control over time, whatsoever.

Time can do strange things to our minds. Whenever you are bored, time seems to drag. However, whenever you are doing something exciting or really enjoyable, or if you are in a rush to get something finished, like an exam, then time just seems to fly. Furthermore, whenever something happens very quickly, we do not notice it, and it is just the same whenever something happens very slowly, such as hair growth - we do not notice that either.

There are some things that we do know. Time can be measured. Time has three main divisions, past, present and future. In the world around us, time is measured by things that repeat themselves regularly. The rotation of the earth on its axis takes one day. The moon orbiting the earth accounts for a lunar month. The earth's orbit of the sun, taking much longer, is how a full year is measured.

As well as looking to the natural realm, men have developed calendars to keep track of days, weeks, and months. Mechanised clocks and watches, followed by digital and atomic clocks using quartz crystal vibrations and electromagnetic waves have enhanced the accuracy of time-keeping beyond seconds to milliseconds, microseconds, and even nanoseconds.

Now, when we come to the Bible, God places a great deal of emphasis on time. In Psalm 31:15, God says our times are in His hand. In Psalm 90:12, we are told to 'number our days and apply our hearts onto wisdom.' From the New Testament, God wants us to realise that 'time is short' and that we should not boast about what we will do tomorrow. God tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 that there is a specific time for everything. There is time to weep and a time to laugh, a time of war and a time of peace, a time to be born and a time to die. In the light of the uncertainty of when all these things might happen to us, God then says in 2 Corinthians 6:2 that 'behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation'. God makes it abundantly clear that now is the time to prepare for the great eternity that lies beyond the realms of time. ■

QUIZ

Are you 12 or under?
Send your **answer, name,**
address and church to:
Rev Garth Wilson
e: answer@fpvission.org

Look up the following Bible references.
Add up the number of all the days mentioned
and work out how many weeks they come to.

- Genesis Ch.22** -
The number of days Abraham and Issac walked together in the land of Moriah.
- Jonah Ch.3** -
The number of days after which Nineveh would be overthrown.
- Nehemiah Ch.6v15** -
The number of days it took to finish building Jerusalem's walls.
- Mark Ch.8** -
The number of days the multitude followed after the Saviour.

Answer:



weeks





JUSTIFICATION



A writer once commented, ‘We have heard the words “justification by faith alone” so many times that they have lost their meaning. Perhaps the words have become little more than a slogan, and we can think and talk about this doctrine without being driven to our knees praising God, in which case we are not thinking that hard about it at all. Many of us need to go back and relearn the meaning and importance of this precious Biblical teaching.’ The importance and glory of justification demand our attention since it will produce heartfelt worship.

Justification by faith alone was a key tenet of the Protestant Reformation. Hated and fervently resisted by Rome (witnessed by the statements of the Council of Trent which spelt out her opposition to this doctrine), it was, as Martin Luther described, ‘the article of faith that decides whether the church is standing or falling’.

THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Justification is the legal act of God, whereby He declares a sinner righteous, placing him in a state of legal perfection before His law, based on

the righteousness provided freely in Christ. Perhaps nowhere else do we see so clearly many of God’s attributes brought together – wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

In terms of the ‘what’ question, it is an act of God, not a work or process (Romans 5:1). Once declared righteous in God’s sight, a person cannot become more or less justified. Either you are 100% justified or you are not justified at all. In terms of ‘who justifies’, it is monergistic (the action of one). God justifies alone (Romans 8:33). We are justified by His grace. As to ‘why’, justification is not based on any merit in the individual who is justified (Romans 3:24). Rather, it rests solely upon Christ. ‘In him we have redemption’, ‘being now justified by his blood.’ (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:9) Justification cannot be undone nor repeated (Romans 8:30, 33-34; Hebrews 10:2).

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Scripture uses four words concerning this subject, variously translated as ‘justified’, ‘righteousness’, and ‘justification’. These terms mean to declare or demonstrate to be righteous (Matthew 11:19; 12:37; Luke 7:29;

10:29); the act of declaring righteous (Romans 4:25); and the verdict or result of the act (Romans 1:32; 5:16, 18).

What this means in practice is pictured in Deuteronomy 25:1. The judge does not change the character of the man before him or alter his past. A judge can only declare the status of the individual before the law.

According to the Shorter Catechism, there are two aspects to justification – pardon and acceptance.

1. Pardon

God cannot justify if He is not just, therefore He must punish sin; He cannot simply ignore or excuse it. If God were to declare a sinner righteous even though his sins were unpunished, then God would not be just. And if God is unjust, He cannot justify anyone. Therefore, He must be both just and then the justifier; He must punish sin as well as declare men to be righteous (Romans 3:26). Christ’s obedience, both active and passive, benefits the elect (Romans 5:19).

2. Acceptance

Pardon is not sufficient in and of itself. Even if our sins are gone and there is

no positive righteousness, we cannot be acceptable to God. Clearly, it is only in Christ that God accepts the elect (Ephesians 1:6) and so views them as Christ (1 John 5:17b). But in what way do believers 'have' the righteousness of Christ? Does it make them perfectly righteous?

3. Imputation

Imputation is the idea of accounting or crediting some material value that an individual does not possess, as though it were their own.

Gospel imputation is double-sided. What is properly a believer's (his guilt) is imputed to Christ and what is properly Christ's (His righteousness) is imputed to His people. Christ assumes the legal responsibility for our sins. That becomes His and He is punished for them (Isaiah 53:6; 2 Cor 5:21). Also, the legal rights of Christ's righteousness are the believers' and God treats us as people invested with those rights (Romans 4:6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

It cannot be emphasised enough that the ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ. If justification were a meritorious reward because we have faith, we would have no assurance of peace with God. Our faith is not always strong, and until our glorification, it is mixed with sin. When our faith is weak, we remain justified because it is Christ Himself who is the basis for God's righteous verdict.

Romans 3:22, 28 makes clear that faith is the sole instrument by which the sinner is justified. Faith is not the product of human effort but is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8,9). Basically, faith means trust. A person believes God's testimony in Scripture about who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for their salvation. They then place their trust in God to save as He has promised. They trust Christ to do for them that which they cannot do for themselves, to take away their guilt and give them the righteousness required to be accepted before the Father.

“ JUSTIFICATION IS THE LEGAL ACT OF GOD, WHEREBY HE DECLARES A SINNER RIGHTEOUS, PLACING HIM IN A STATE OF LEGAL PERFECTION BEFORE HIS LAW, BASED ON THE RIGHTEOUSNESS PROVIDED FREELY IN CHRIST. ”

4. Impute versus Impart

Christ's righteousness is imputed not imparted. If it were imparted then the individual would become instantly perfect, fully holy. In time God will make those He declares to be righteous, perfectly righteous. God always sanctifies those He justifies. He will glorify those He sanctifies (Romans 8:30). Hugh Latimer said, 'We must first be made good before we can do good; we must first be made just before our works can please God, for when we are justified by faith in Christ, then come good works.'

PRACTICAL OUTWORKING

Justification is practical. The consequences are assurance, holiness, defence, humility, and thanksgiving. Too often Christians look for assurance in their believing – do I 'really' believe? Assurance rests not in anything we do – repenting, praying, believing – but in what Christ has done. It is not my best work that causes God to accept me, but Christ's. Here is the ground of assurance and peace (Romans 5:1).

Justification is the best motivation for holiness. Recognising what we are in Christ is the catalyst for putting off the works of darkness and living unto God (Romans 6:1,2,11-13). Justification defends against the baseless accusations of Satan. He seeks to

condemn but cannot, because through Christ, not only is there no condemnation (Romans 8:1), there is justification. Since God says that I am righteous in His sight, Satan cannot say I am not (Romans 8:33,34). Boasting cannot exist in light of justification (Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 3:27). Since God has not pronounced me righteous on account of my actions but only because of what Christ has done, boasting is excluded, and pride is abased. We are only sinners saved by grace.

All of this should cause us to be eternally thankful. Worthless, hopeless sinners, certain to be condemned by a holy God, are rather declared to be something we are not; all because of Christ, His incarnation, His life of obedience, His death and resurrection. May the cry of our hearts be 'thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!' ■

✉ **Rev Nigel Smyth,**
*Merthyr Tydfil Free
Presbyterian
Church.*

ISLE OF MAN

ENCOURAGEMENT TRIP



A group of eleven young people were privileged to join a recent encouragement trip to Port Erin on the Isle of Man. We were blessed with safe travel to the Isle of Man from Belfast where three of us were welcomed by Joan at the church apartment. The remainder of the group travelled to a local rented house before travelling to Douglas to get some groceries. We enjoyed a time of fellowship on our first evening with each other at a local restaurant and ended the night with devotions along with tea and cake to celebrate one of the group members' birthday.

On Saturday we started bright and early, splitting into two groups, and distributing tracts and invites to the church. Approximately 600 houses in Port Erin received the Word of God through their letterboxes. After lunch, we travelled to Douglas to hold an open air meeting. Several members of the group read verses of the Bible that were special to them; brief testimonies were given by Eva Cahoon and Bethany Edwards; and a Gospel message was delivered by Richard Edwards. As the testimonies and message were being spoken, three groups of young people handed out Gospel tracts to those passing by. As a group, we also sang two well-known hymns and received a round of applause from one passerby which was a great encouragement. After the

open air, we had some spare time to wander around Douglas as tourists.

Throughout the whole weekend, we were kindly provided with wonderfully home-cooked meals by Esther McKee. On Sunday morning, the men decided to give Esther a break by cooking breakfast for all of us. After the smoke alarm had a chance to sing its song, the men remarked, 'It's fine. I like my bacon crispy anyway.' We gathered around to find that they pleasantly surprised us with a perfectly edible breakfast.

On Sunday morning we went to Port Erin Gospel Church to worship. Richard Edwards led the meeting, and we sang two songs as a group. Rachel McNeill gave her testimony, Jessica Cuthbertson read a verse of Scripture, and John McNeill delivered the sermon. After the service, we travelled to the rented house for



lunch, and in the afternoon some of the group decided to explore the local walks while others spent time together in the house. We were in charge of the Sunday evening service again where Mark Curran led the service; we sang another two pieces as a group; Ellie Kerr gave her testimony and I reported to the church what we had done during the weekend. Rachelle Stripp read a verse from the Bible and Richard Edwards preached. After the meeting, we spent some time with the congregation getting to know them and said our goodbyes.

The weekend was a great blessing. The Lord provided us with safety in travel on all occasions and despite the weather forecast looking grim, we were able to complete our tasks in the sun. It was truly amazing to be given the chance to serve the Lord and the congregation on the Isle of Man. I hope and pray the congregation enjoyed our time with them and I encourage anyone reading this to remember them and their church in prayer.

The Word of God exhorts us in 1 Corinthians 15:58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' ■

✉ **Catherine Moore,**
Crossgar Free Presbyterian Church.



CASTLEWELLAN

On Friday 3rd May, 120 young people arrived at Castlewellan Castle to enjoy a weekend of fellowship and fun with old friends, make some new friends, and listen to teaching from God's Word.

The theme for the meetings over the weekend was glorifying God. In the first meeting on Friday night, Rev Paul Foster brought a message about what it means to glorify God and why we should want to glorify God. On Saturday morning, Rev Julian Patterson gave an overview of the life of C.T. Studd showing us how his life glorified God, warning us about some of the things that he did in his life which did not glorify God, and sharing how young believers can learn from that. On the Sunday and Monday mornings, Rev Foster brought an overview of the life of Dr Bill Woods and how he also glorified God by always wanting to do something more for Him and how God saved Dr Woods from so many different challenges to enable him to glorify God more through his life.

We also travelled to Ardaragh Free Presbyterian Church to join their Sunday evening service. One of the young people testified and many of us took part by singing in a choir. Rev Patterson then brought a challenging message on how our hearts need to be set on fire for God. After the service,

the church kindly provided a brilliant supper, and we enjoyed a time of fellowship and singing.

As well as the meetings, we also did a range of activities throughout the weekend. On Friday night we took part in some team games inside. On Saturday morning, we enjoyed some more active games outside, and we were also able to enjoy some free time on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons. On Saturday night we had a very competitive 'Beat the Chasers' style quiz where each team went head-to-head with the leaders to test our general knowledge.

This was my first year at the Castlewellan weekend and I was expecting to enjoy it and have a good time, but it really exceeded all my expectations. It was a unique opportunity to spend time with like-minded young people, build up friendships as well as meet new friends, and be challenged by the messages from God's Word.

The highlights for me were the singing in the meetings and after the service

in Ardaragh. It was great to be among so many young people with a genuine desire to praise God.

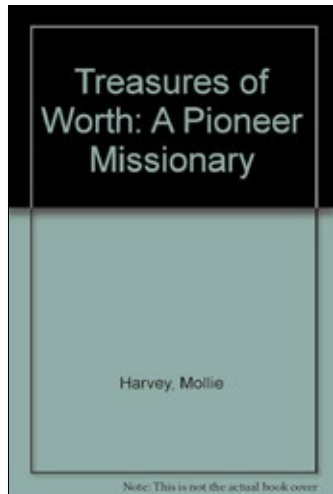
I would highly recommend the weekend to all young people, not only for the fun and fellowship on the weekend, but in how it makes youth meetings after the weekend even more enjoyable by knowing many more young people. ■

✍ **Caleb Haffey,**
Dromore Free Presbyterian Church.



TREASURES OF WORTH

BY MOLLIE HARVEY



As a young child, I always enjoyed hearing stories and reading about those men and women called to serve God in different countries, cultures and contexts. Their call, their courage, and their conviction to go through with God made a lasting impact on me. One such book that impacted me as a young Christian was Mollie Harvey's biography *Treasures of Worth*. It details the life and ministry of Mollie Harvey, who was a pioneer missionary.

Mollie Harvey was born in Scotland and reared in Belfast. Following her conversion to Christ under the ministry of WP Nicholson, as a young woman she followed the scriptural example of regularly attending her place of worship, becoming involved in 'outreach activities... door to door visitation, teaching a Sunday School class and open-air evangelism.' Mollie Harvey studied in both a Missionary Training College and the Nurse Training Hospital in London, afterwards completing her midwifery

qualification in Belfast. She left the city of Belfast for the Amazon jungle of Brazil as a missionary nurse. As Co-Founder of Acre Gospel Mission, the society of which the late Dr Bill Woods was a member for most of his life, Mollie had a 'great burden for the people of Brazil'.

It is so evident throughout her biography that she knew experientially the words of Isaiah 45:2,3 – 'I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight...' Despite the dire economic climate, pre-World War II, the door was opened for Mollie to serve God in Brazil. On 4th June 1937, God provided the £19 needed for her fare and passport (approximately £1650 in today's equivalent).

The book details her missionary journeys to Rio Branco, Sena Madureia, Labrea, and Boco do Acre. It is both a challenging and encouraging read, setting out Mollie's many trials and dangers, the difficult living conditions she endured, and the many oppositions of the devil to thwart her work. However, woven throughout all that, is the thread of God's faithfulness and Mollie's reliance on Him alone.

On one occasion, believing she was called out to an expectant mother, she left her home to provide aid. This had been a setup. She was assaulted by her attacker who saw fit to smash out several of her teeth, badly injure one of her eyes and throw her into the nearby rushing river. As this story is recounted, the sense of fear and panic is palpable. Yet, the Lord granted deliverance. Sometime later, she received a letter from a prayerful supporter at home asking about the events of that particular day. The writer of the letter had been awakened

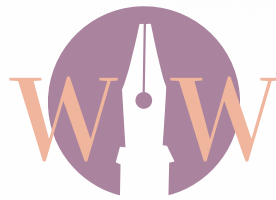
from her sleep at the time of Mollie's attack and burdened to pray for Mollie, not knowing anything of the great trial she was facing. This is just one example of the preserving hand of God upon Mollie contained within the book.

The biography highlights that 'God's work is never easy, nor does it run smoothly. There are always surprises and, at times, disappointments. However, God often uses these experiences to teach us to trust Him more and accomplish His own purpose.' Mollie's life as a pioneer missionary reminds the reader of the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 121:4, 'Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.'

Before her first departure for Brazil in 1937, her medical report read: 'Miss Harvey, I doubt if you would be able to survive much more than a year in such an inhospitable climate.' By God's grace and for His glory, she was enabled to serve over thirty years in that 'inhospitable climate'. This missionary saw much achieved under God in the salvation of many souls. She was instrumental in meeting the needs medically of many who were suffering, in the establishment of schools and churches, and in the encouraging of others as they sought to be true to their calling and 'go through with God'.

Mollie was ever humbled that God had chosen her to serve amongst these dear people and was often heard singing the words of the well-known hymn, 'Only One Life To Give'. Her labour was indeed for 'treasures of worth'. Friend, I wonder, can the same be said of us? ■

✉ **Rev Simon Anderson,**
Aughnacloy Free Presbyterian Church.



A Word to Women

Links in a Chain

2 Kings 5

Very few people are saved the first time they hear the Gospel. Lots of people, words, and circumstances are used by the Lord, like links in a chain, to draw a soul to Himself. It is said that a chain is as strong as its weakest link. Do you feel weak? Be encouraged, the Lord uses the weak things. It is only as we realise our weakness that we look to the Lord for strength. The apostle Paul said, 'When I am weak, then am I strong' (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Consider the 'links' in the chain that brought Naaman to the Lord for healing and salvation.

Naaman was a most unlikely candidate to be won for the Lord. As a high-ranking soldier in the Syrian army, he was fearless and undoubtedly a great strategist, leading the Syrians to victory over other nations. The adjectives, 'great', 'honourable', and 'mighty in valour', are used to describe Naaman, and then the postscript, 'but he was a leper.' Naaman faced an enemy that he could not defeat. The Lord often uses circumstances such as sickness to begin a work in the soul.

The news of Naaman's leprosy became known in his household. Among the slaves was a 'little maid' who was snatched during one of the Syrian raids on the land of Israel. This little maid had every reason to hate Naaman and to see his leprosy as the judgment of God on him. We are not told what horrors she may have witnessed, but her faith in the Lord remained unshaken. She wished only that her master would know healing and believed that Elisha the prophet could grant that. She shared what she believed, and her words were a link in the chain leading to the salvation of Naaman. Do you have a burden to see the lost, even those who may have hurt you, won for the Lord? Or do you want

vengeance? By our lips and lives, we can be used to see souls saved.

The information the little maid gave was basic, but the adults did not pay careful attention. The King of Israel thought Syria was looking for an excuse for war when he received a request/demand to heal Naaman of his leprosy. Elisha came to the rescue and told Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan to be cleansed from his disease. The soul can easily be waylaid in its search for salvation. It is important when witnessing to keep to the main thrust of the Gospel and not be sidelined into lesser issues.

“
*She shared
what she
believed, and
her words
were a link
in the chain
leading to the
salvation of
Naaman.*
”

Naaman was not pleased with Elisha's instructions: wash in the dirty waters of the Jordan! He turned to leave in a rage, but his servants came and reasoned with him. Naaman used the words, 'I thought.' People tend to have their own thoughts about how they can be saved but it is our job to redirect them to what God has said in His Word. Naaman listened to his servants and humbly dipped seven times in the Jordan and was healed. He testified, 'Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.'

Circumstances, a little maid, Elisha, and servants – all – were links in a chain used to bring Naaman to healing and salvation.

Although they were courageous, the little maid and the servants are not even named. Who was responsible for the miracle in Naaman's life? It was the Lord, and He alone should receive the glory. We can be links in the chain, but salvation is of the Lord. ■

✉ **Mrs Olive Maxwell**

is married to Home Missionary, Mr Colin Maxwell.

Kilskeery



The end of this summer term marks the completion of 45 years of Christian Education in Kilskeery Independent Christian School. There have been many changes since the school opened in September 1979. Every year there have been new faces in the classrooms, new names upon the roll book, new roles and responsibilities undertaken by staff, new achievements and attainments recorded. Interestingly, we have 13 pupils in attendance this year, just as there were when the school first opened. However, with all the challenges and changes of former years, the purpose of our school remains the same - to teach and train Christian children and young people in the fear of the Lord, with a knowledge of the Word of God and protected from much of the folly and corruption of ungodliness in this wicked world. Often we have testified and encouraged ourselves in the Lord - 'our God whom we serve is able' (Daniel 3:17). He has provided, maintained, and blessed throughout the previous 45 years and He is still sovereign and all-sufficient for the years ahead. I Kings 8:56 - "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise."

Mourne



📖 KS2 had a trip to the Post Office in their local shop to learn about the postal service to different countries, purchase stamps and post letters they composed and word-processed in ICT class to missionaries around the world, and - of course - get some yummy goodies.



📖 Our Year 11 pupils, who are studying GCSE Home Economics, recently visited their local SPAR, to research the marketing strategies used within this store.

Newtownabbey



40th Anniversary 40K challenge: as part of our 40th Anniversary celebrations we have set the children a 40k Challenge (40 km for the older pupils and 40 000 steps for younger children). We set a target of £4 000 in order to purchase ICT software and hardware, and new equipment for the PE classes. We have received much encouragement and support through our GoFundMe page and have raised £3185 as of 13th May. We are so thankful for those who have contributed so generously to this fundraiser - we really appreciate their sacrifice and kindness to this aspect of the work of God. Videos and photos have been uploaded to show our progress along the way.

Language Studies: in light of recent coverage by BBC News NI and BBC Radio Ulster on language provision at primary level in schools across Northern Ireland, we thought we would take the opportunity to showcase the language provision here at NICS. Our language of choice at NICS is French! Some of our recent language achievements include:

- All Key Stage 2 pupils study French and take the CCEA exam designed for Year 8.
- Our Year 7 pupils have had 100% pass rate.
- All GCSE students are currently taking French.
- All Year 13 and 14 students are taking AS & A2 French.

Bravo à tous.

Ballymoney



Earlier in the year, we had a visit from an Acre Gospel Mission representative who told us about the life of the late Dr Bill Woods, and we had the opportunity to learn about the wildlife found in the Amazon rainforest. In March, the children enjoyed a day at school dressed as their favourite book character for World Book Day. We ask that you continue to remember Mrs Moore in your prayers as she receives her cancer treatment and our own wee missionary Eloise McAuley as she heads to Uganda to serve the Lord with her family.

Bangor

Our school was one of 18 000 schools across the UK to receive micro:bits through the BBC's 'micro:bit – the next gen campaign'. The pupils are excited to use the pocket-sized computer by programming it in many different ways for multiple uses. Using them, they can see how what they do with the code on-screen has a direct impact on the devices they are holding in their hands.



Also pictured are KS3 pupils enjoying a Science activity. The object of the game was to deliver oxygen to, and remove carbon dioxide from, the organs of the body as fast as possible without running!



In another activity the pupils became forensic scientists to investigate the source of poison! The pupils were given four different foods that could contain starch, sugar, fat, or protein. They had to identify the main nutrient present in each of the samples. Analysis showed that the poison was rich in protein!

Portadown

Portadown Independent Christian School Primary pupils happy to have received the Cup for the most points in the Small school section for Art/Craft entries to Lurgan Show 2024.



✉ Above: Rosette winners in primary Art / Craft with John receiving the Cup for best overall Art Exhibit at Lurgan Show 2024.

✉ Above: A visit to Streamvale Farm was enjoyed by P3-4.



Teaching Opportunities Within Christian Education

Applications are welcome for the following posts from September 2024.

Portadown

**CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS - Primary/High School
PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER
NURSERY - Maternity cover Sept 2024 - April 2025**

Contact: School Administrator or Principal.

Rev D. Abernethy: 07821 544625

darrylabernethy@gmail.com

Mrs D. Haffey: 07510 629500

d.haffey@independentchristianschool.org

Newtownabbey

PART TIME TEACHER

Primary and/or Secondary

Contact: School Administrator or Principal.

Rev B. McClung: newtownabbeyfpc@gmail.com

Mrs L. McClung:

lj.mcclung@independentchristianschool.org

Bangor

**FULL TIME
TEACHER**

Secondary Maths and Science.

Some Primary subjects may be required.

or

**PART TIME
TEACHER**

*For primary or
secondary classes.*

Contact: School Administrator or Principal.

Mr Bryan McVeigh: 07771 791522 or bmcveigh@sky.com

Miss A Priestley: ae.priestley@independentchristianschool.org

Mourne

TEACHER

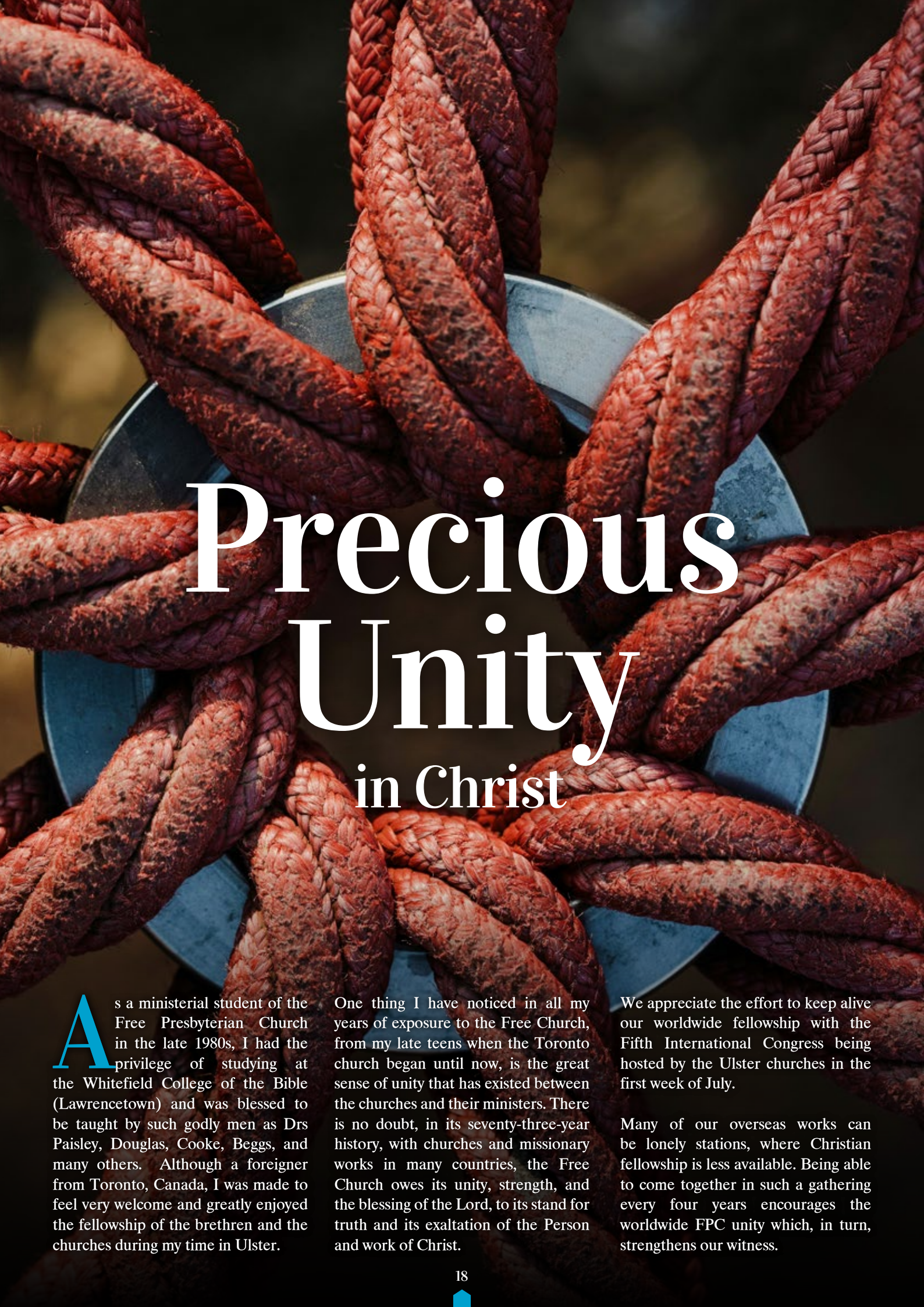
GCSE English, English Literature and Geography.

Key Stage 3 English, Geography, Scripture and Church History.

Key Stage 2 Art and Church History

Contact: School Administrator

Mr G. Imrie: 07714 530607, gordonimrie@yahoo.co.uk



Precious Unity in Christ

As a ministerial student of the Free Presbyterian Church in the late 1980s, I had the privilege of studying at the Whitefield College of the Bible (Lawrencetown) and was blessed to be taught by such godly men as Drs Paisley, Douglas, Cooke, Beggs, and many others. Although a foreigner from Toronto, Canada, I was made to feel very welcome and greatly enjoyed the fellowship of the brethren and the churches during my time in Ulster.

One thing I have noticed in all my years of exposure to the Free Church, from my late teens when the Toronto church began until now, is the great sense of unity that has existed between the churches and their ministers. There is no doubt, in its seventy-three-year history, with churches and missionary works in many countries, the Free Church owes its unity, strength, and the blessing of the Lord, to its stand for truth and its exaltation of the Person and work of Christ.

We appreciate the effort to keep alive our worldwide fellowship with the Fifth International Congress being hosted by the Ulster churches in the first week of July.

Many of our overseas works can be lonely stations, where Christian fellowship is less available. Being able to come together in such a gathering every four years encourages the worldwide FPC unity which, in turn, strengthens our witness.

CHERISHING UNITY

The Bible tells us that the unity of true believers in Christ is ‘precious’ (Psalm 133) and something to be cherished, nurtured, and guarded. Unity is not uniformity as we recognise that we are not all going to look or operate the same. Even among the reformers, there were differences in methodology, personality, liturgy, and culture but not in the vital truths of theology. We stand as they stood and praise God that we have weathered many storms and still have the same resolve to lift high the Banner of the Cross.

C.H. Spurgeon, in his sermon ‘True Unity Promoted’ said: ‘Beloved, there should be much peace, perfect peace, unbounded peace between the people of God. We are not aliens; we are “fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”’ So often the Scriptures speak of this blessed fellowship (Gk. *koinonia*) that should be guarded and cultivated among us as God’s people. It takes effort, as well as the application of 1 Corinthians 13, to preserve unity in the bond of peace. Spurgeon alludes to the miles that part God’s people in the world, ‘but loving as brethren, we feel the unity of the Spirit.’ There is a common bond in Christ, even if our nationalities, cultures, and faces differ.

May the Lord be pleased to bind the FPC denominations of Ulster and North America closer than ever in the true bond of Christian love and peace. May the Lord give us grace and strength to continue to stand against the religious evils of our day, which are increasingly subtle. May the Lord conform our motives, our methods, and our manner to the image of Christ and His glory so that the Free Presbyterian witness worldwide will be characterised by Christ-likeness.

Brothers and sisters, the Lord has called you and me to shoulder the work of His kingdom for such a time

as this. We are united by faith in Christ and thereby united to one another in the body of Christ. Not many mighty are called and not many noble, but God has chosen us as ‘the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty’ (1 Corinthians 1:27).

‘God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment’ (1 Corinthians 1:9&10).

‘Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves’ (Philippians 2:2&3).

CHRIST OUR FOUNDATION

One of my favourite hymns is ‘The Church’s One Foundation’, written in 1866 by Samuel J. Stone, in response to disputes going on in the church. It is a heartwarming summary of what the Lord has done for the Church. It helps us to remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is our great foundation and the precious unity we have now is but a glimpse of what we will share in Heaven.

Unity of purpose and unity of practice will continue beyond this generation if we remain true to God and gracious in our dealings one with another. ‘Why is Christian unity so hard?’ someone may ask. God did not promise that the pursuit of unity among earnest believers in Christ would be easy, but the true unity of the body of Christ is something God takes great pleasure in, and it must be preserved. We will not always agree on every point: the colour of church carpets, how to take up the offering, when to celebrate the

Lord’s Table, whether screens should be used to project hymns and Scriptures, and so on. These are not fundamental to the faith. They are sometimes cultural or just the way it has always been done, but nothing more. Paul admonished the Galatians, ‘But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another’ (5:15).

LOOKING AHEAD

Missionary William Carey said, ‘The future is as bright as the promises of God.’ While we live at a perilous time in human history when the Word of God, the honour of God, and the true Church of God are under attack, we must remain steadfast and remember that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. The Lord promised to build His Church and we should not fear the gates of hell prevailing against us. It behoves us, however, to keep our focus on the fundamentals of the faith and not allow ourselves to be sidetracked by peripheral issues which will distract from the main goal of preaching Christ.


As we look to the future, to another generation taking up the baton, may the Lord inspire us to deal graciously with our youth – not to ignore error – but to counsel with wisdom and a Christ-like graciousness and to help them understand truth at a very confused time in history when the level of wickedness is unprecedented. Our prayer is: that the Lord will allow the Free Presbyterian witness to continue many more years; that the next generation will be more faithful to God than we have been; and that the Banner of the Cross will be lifted higher than it was in our generation; that hundreds, even thousands of souls, will come to Christ under their witness; and that our legacy will be a source of strength and encouragement, particularly as times become more difficult and freedom erodes. Ultimately, may the Free Presbyterian Church worldwide always and only bring great glory to God our Father for decades to come. ■

✍ **Dr Larry Saunders,**
Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America.


“God did not promise that the pursuit of unity among earnest believers in Christ would be easy, but the true unity of the body of Christ is something God takes great pleasure in, and it must be preserved.”

The Mission Board Chairman Visits the Churches in Australia



 **Above:** The congregation in Port Lincoln


For three weeks in the early part of April my wife and I travelled to and across Australia to visit our Free Presbyterian Churches. After an uneventful 11,500 miles journey from Omagh to Hobart we met the Rev Ralph Hall, his wife, Tanya, and their family, Emma, James, Matthew, and Jack. They live in the picturesque area of Blackman's Bay, and he ministers in the neighbouring town of Kingston. The fellowship with God's people in Kingston Free Presbyterian Church was a rich blessing, as young and old gathered to worship God. Two services on the Lord's Day were separated by a church lunch, giving us an opportunity to hear the congregation's deep appreciation for Rev Hall's ministry and the warm affection they have for the many ministers, missionaries, and lay men who have visited Tasmania to supply the pulpit in the past. A missionary meeting on Monday evening and a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening completed the preaching schedule for

 **Below:** The office bearers in Kingston



our visit and soon we were preparing to make our way to Port Lincoln.

Travel to Port Lincoln involved two further flights, covering approximately 550 miles. Rev Kyle Graham has ministered in Port Lincoln and Lock congregations for seven years, and he lives in Port Lincoln with his wife, Eppie, and young daughter, Abiah. Prior to our arrival in Australia both congregations had held successful elder elections, and it was my privilege to conduct two ordination services on behalf of the Presbytery. On 14th April, Mr Graham Spiers was ordained at an afternoon service in Lock and three hours later, Mr Ian Douglas was ordained in Port Lincoln. A missionary prayer meeting was held on the following Tuesday and Wednesday evenings in the respective churches, and it was a thrill to hear the work of the Free Presbyterian Church across the world being remembered before God in prayer.

 **Below:** The congregation in Lock



Five days after arriving in Port Lincoln we were back on a Boeing 737-800 for a short flight to Adelaide, before taking another flight to visit Rev Philip Gardiner and his family in Perth. Philip, Cherith, and their two daughters, Anna and Cerys, live on the outskirts of the city, and Philip oversees the work in Perth Free Presbyterian Church. As with the other Free Presbyterian congregations in Australia, fellowship with God's people in Perth was a great encouragement. Four meetings had been arranged for me on the theme, 'Enjoying Christ'.

Although separated by vast distances, the congregations in Australia are very much part of the Free Presbyterian family. The ministers, office-bearers, and congregations are pressing on despite national spiritual apathy and are praying for a revival of true religion. As we made our journey home, we thanked God for raising up these congregations, establishing them and enabling them to continue to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ. Pray for the ministers and their families as they serve God thousands of miles from their homeland and join with our Mission Board and Presbytery as we seek God's blessing upon this witness. Heather and I are indebted to the Mission Board for the opportunity to visit Australia and thank all who remembered us in prayer. ■

 **Rev Colin Mercer,**
Mission Board Chairman.

 **Below:** The Gardiner family



Retirement Services in Kenya for the **Pattersons**



 **Above:** The Pattersons receive farewell gifts at the service in Kitale.

The apostle Paul encourages rendering 'to all their dues' and proceeds to use the words 'honour to whom honour' (Romans 13:7). In April of this year, the Rev Malcolm Patterson and his wife, Alison, celebrated their retirement from missionary service in Western Kenya, where they had served the Lord in a full-time capacity since 2013. Truly, they deserve to be honoured for their faithfulness over these years, and this was the desire of the people among whom they laboured. Consequently, our Presbytery and Mission Board arranged that Rev Garth Wilson and I should travel to Kenya to participate in the meetings to mark the Pattersons' retirement.

 **Below:** Service in Kitale




The Glory Bible Churches in Kenya had scheduled special services to recognise the labours of God's servants. The first service was held on Saturday 6th April at Nyaporo which is a rural area close to the town of Kakamega, and the second on Sunday 7th in Kitale. These two venues are approximately two and a half hours apart. This schedule facilitated the people of the churches located in these districts.

The meetings were lengthy, with various participants. I had the privilege of preaching at the Nyaporo meeting and Rev Wilson at the meeting in Kitale, with each of us in turn bringing thanks and greetings from Presbytery and the Mission Board. The presence of the Lord was real and powerful. It was evident that Rev Patterson and his wife are held in very high esteem by the people among whom they served. This esteem was not only demonstrated by the gifts given, but also by the deep emotion that was manifested openly in the meetings.

Our Presbytery and Mission Board owe much to the Pattersons. It is impossible in this report to detail what they accomplished in their service for

Christ. On behalf of Presbytery and the Mission Board, and above all in Christ's name, I salute them and thank them for work well done. ■

 **Rev John Greer,**
Clerk of Presbytery.

 **Below:** Service in Nyaporo



MISSIONARY VISION

A Very Encouraging Trip to Nepal

Rev Andrew Patterson and I spent almost two weeks in Nepal, leaving Northern Ireland on 10th April and returning on the 23rd. It was our privilege to meet with Joy our worker in Nepal; to fellowship with the Moderator of the Nepal FPC, Rev Paul Thapa, and his fellow pastors; to visit the LTBS studio that has been responsible for so many contacts across Nepal, often resulting in the establishment of substantial congregations; and to conduct the opening of a new church, Gyangrang FPC in Makwanpur, on Lord's Day 21st April.

The centrepiece was the annual 'Pastors' Conference' – with 250 plus people packed into the building in Kathmandu, sitting cross-legged on the floor, listening to four sermons per day delivered through an interpreter. Sandwiched between and surrounding the two weekends we spent preaching



☒ Above: One of the mountain churches

in the churches were visits to fifteen additional churches, the majority of which were in remote mountain locations. The journeys to reach them usually lasted between two and four hours and involved travelling on the bumpiest roads imaginable and circling many a mountain with drops of hundreds of feet – all too often just a matter of inches away. On several occasions, when our 4x4 vehicle could go no further, we trekked up the mountain for a couple of hours to get to the site of the church. In every location we visited, it was our joy to bring an encouraging word from the Scriptures.

These are bands of men and women "whose hearts God has touched" (1 Samuel 10:26) in a way which we covet for ourselves. Most are living in poverty but are willing to walk on mountain tracks for hours – sometimes barefoot – just to meet us for fellowship



☒ Above: The Pastors' Conference

or attend a church service. One pastor, based in India, had to travel for three days on a bus to get to the conference!

We are indebted to Presbytery for sending us on this mission trip; the large number of photographs and video clips will remind us of a most blessed time spent in the company of many precious people. ■

☒ **Dr Ian Brown,**
Deputy Moderator of Presbytery.



☒ Above: Dr Brown opening the new church building



☒ Above: The graduation of students from the College

The First Graduates from the Mission Board's Bible Training Institute

The first students have graduated from the Mission Board's Bible Training Institute (BTI) which was commenced in 2021.

Seven students from Kenya and one from Uganda have been presented with certificates to mark their completion of the two-year course of study.



Jack Musee Kikui



Obala Steve Odiwuor



Stephen Ngogho Mwenga



Benson Osundwa



LtoR: Isaac Kariuki Gachuru, Stephen Macharia Kinuthia, Joseph Methu Gichuki



Matua Tomas



Please pray for these students that the Lord will use them mightily in His service, and that they will be the first of many from around the world to benefit from studying through the BTI.

Office:
Mrs Glenda Graham
3 Carrigenagh Road
Kilkeel, BT34 4NE
T: 028 4176 5574
office@fpcmission.org

Chairman:
Rev Colin Mercer
12 Crevenagh View
Omagh, BT79 0JH
T: 028 8224 2299
rev.mercer@fpcmission.org

Secretary:
Rev David McMillan
1 Drummanmore Grange
Armagh, BT61 8RQ
T: 028 3778 8150
rev.mcmillan@fpcmission.org

Treasurer:
Mr Alastair Hamilton
37A Ballymacvea Road
Kells, Ballymena BT42 3NH
T: 078 6061 6302
a.hamilton@fpcmission.org





Dates For The Diary

JULY

28th July - 4th August

**LOUGH ERNE FUNDAMENTALIST CONVENTION
BETHEL FPC, ENNISKILLEN**

Speakers: Rev John Armstrong, Dr John Douglas
Rev Samuel Murray (Moderator)

Time: Sundays 12 noon & 8pm
Weeknights & Saturday 8.00pm

AUGUST

18th

KILSKEERY FPC, 50TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICES

11:30am: Rev M Patrick *3:30pm:* Rev I Foster

SEPTEMBER

13th + 15th

KILSKEERY FPC, ANNUAL CONFERENCE

13th September:

8:00pm - B McClung

15th September:

11:30am - Rev I Foster, 3:30pm - Dr J Douglas

16th

DUNGANNON FPC, LADIES' CONFERENCE

Time: 8pm

Speaker: Mrs Thelma McLeod

Singers: Mrs Amy McKew & Magherafelt Youth Group

OCTOBER

20th - 25th

KILSKEERY FPC, 50TH ANNIVERSARY GOSPEL MISSION

Time: Sundays 3:30pm, Weeknights 8.00pm

Evangelist: Rev J Morrow

26th

ANNALONG FPC, MEN'S DAY CONFERENCE

Time: 9:30am: Meet and greet with refreshments

10am - 12:15pm: Opening sessions 12:30pm: Lunch

1:15pm: Final session

Subject: The Inspiration, Infallibility & Interpretation of the Scriptures

Preachers: Revs Patrick Baker, Gregory McCammon, Simon Anderson.

A two course lunch will be provided by Top Nosh at £17.00pp.

*To facilitate catering arrangements, please contact Rev. Harris before 19th Oct
if you plan to attend and would like to book your lunch.*

Email: mensconferencefpc@gmail.com. *Telephone:* 028 437 68 040.