

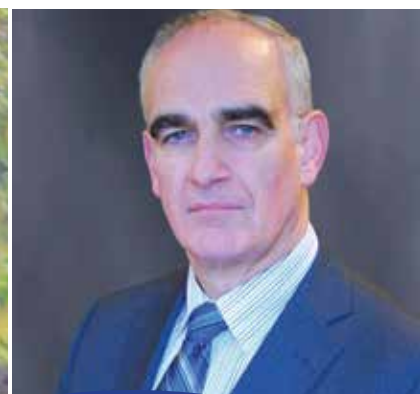
FREE PRESBYTERIAN VISION



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

THE CHURCH'S POSITION ON SEPARATION

Jan - Feb 2013 . Issue 1 . £1



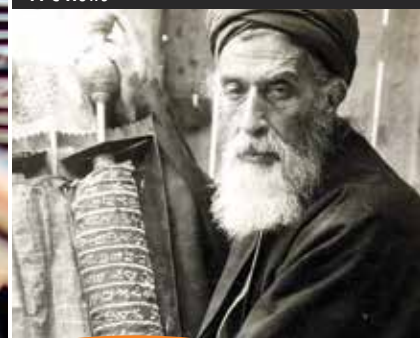
Interview: Rev. John Greer



35 Years in Spain



FPC News



'A Look at the Book'

08

NEWS

Consider Christ Update: Athlone



12

Should Young Christians Date?



04

Interview with John Greer

16

A Word to Women

06

Church's Position on Separation

18

A Look at the Book: Pentateuch

10

Children's Corner

20

The Believer's Books

11

Youth Focus

21

Missionary Vision

Editorial

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Welcome to the first issue of 'Free Presbyterian Vision'!

In June 2012, the General Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster adopted the recommendation of its Publications' and Media Committee to establish a new official organ, which would incorporate periodicals already produced by various interest groups within our denomination. This magazine is the result of that decision.

Why 'Vision'? Good question! The Committee agreed the title because its members believed it to be a concise summary of their aspirations. The proverb reminds us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). It is commonly supposed that the writer is indicting men for their lack of spiritual perception or foresight – not so; he is reminding us all that man is lost and without hope if there is no word (or prophetic vision) from the Lord. So it was in the days of Samuel: "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision" (1 Samuel 3:1). In an age blighted by religious

apostasy and moral decadence, there was no prophet commissioned to proclaim the Word of God. Historically, the Free Presbyterian Church has endeavoured to bring the truth of Scripture to bear on the issues that matter. And so, Vision will seek to continue in that vein – yes, of course, to inform, to keep our readers abreast of developments within and without the church – but, always, to "declare all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), and to do it in a way that is practical and grounded. Pray that we will be kept true to this objective!

It would be remiss of me not to thank those who have worked so hard over many months to bring us to this point: my colleagues in the Committee, the associate editors, the business manager, the contributors, and, of course, our designers and printers who have a wealth of expertise in areas where I have none.

Thank you all!

✉ Timothy Nelson
editor@fpvision.org

WORSHIP OF THE HEART

"UNTO THEE, O LORD DO I LIFT
UP MY SOUL" PSALM 25:1



We may lift up our hands, and even our voices, out of a sense of duty; and yet our hearts may not delight in God. While our souls languish in the dust, our drawing near to the Lord is with the lips only. But spiritual worship is always an exercise of the heart. True worship is *"in spirit"* as well as *"in truth"* (John 4:24). How futile are those acts of worship that leave the heart behind!

Our hearts must speak at the throne of grace. Those hearts are lifted up to the Lord when our desires are of Him and after Him and our love is fixed upon Him. When our expectation is from Him, then our hearts sigh and desire to get near Him. It is good to draw near to God and experience that meditation of Him which is so sweet. Then we can say, *"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."* (1 John 1:3)

Real communion with God heaps riches upon the soul. And a soul rich in wisdom, rich in faith, rich in goodness, is a blessing to others. Joseph was such a man and he proved a great blessing to his master's family and those among whom he lived.

While much good may be done with earthly riches, it is nothing compared to the good a believer can do whose soul is adorned with heavenly riches! Then the Lord's name will be honoured and his Word magnified. Opening the heart and pouring out the soul before Him in the secret place is a sure way of becoming rich with the riches of Christ. It is there that the soul meets with the King of Glory, and shares in the treasures of His grace.

Since the eyes of the Lord are principally fixed upon our hearts, so the eyes of our souls must ever be toward Him. Often we are at a loss as to which way to take. *"The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his*

steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). We must go to the Lord for wisdom and look to Him for direction. Only when we lift up our souls to Him will He show us the path He has marked out for us. It is in His light that we shall see light, and then the pathway will be clear.

You may have looked to self or to others in the past. Discouragement and disappointment have been your lot. Lift up your heart to Him, not just today but every day throughout this year. Then you will both know and do the will of God from the heart!

Commit to Him thy doubtful way,
Rest on His care, and trust His hand;
His goodness shall thy path display,
And soon a prosperous end command.

∴ **Rev Leslie Curran**, Associate Editor, is the Director of Let the Bible Speak radio ministry in N Ireland and a regular preacher on its worldwide network of broadcasts.

A portrait of Rev John Greer, a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a dark blue suit, a light blue striped shirt, and a dark blue striped tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a dark, solid color.

THE INTERVIEW: REV JOHN GREER

ON FRIDAY 7TH
SEPTEMBER, AT
ITS ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING, THE PRESBYTERY OF
THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF ULSTER ELECTED REV JOHN GREER AS
ITS NEW MODERATOR. MR GREER SUCCEEDED
REV RON JOHNSTONE WHO HAD HELD THE
POSITION FOR OVER FOUR YEARS. THE EDITOR
MANAGED TO PERSUADE THE MODERATOR TO BE
THE SUBJECT OF 'THE INTERVIEW' IN THIS FIRST
ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE

**TN: Could you tell us a
little of your background?**

JG: My background will be familiar to many acquainted with life in rural Ulster. I grew up on the family farm, which was about half way between Portglenone and Cullybackey. I suppose I am really a Cullybackey man! I am glad to say it was a Christian home, both my parents knew the Lord, and that was a great blessing. I was the middle child of five; I have three sisters and one brother.

TN: They say 'schooldays are the best of your life'
JG: Not for me, I'm afraid! I went to The Diamond, the local primary school, before moving on to Ballymena Academy. I have to say I wasn't really interested in schooling at that time – the farm was my passion, and it is still very much part of who I am. As soon as I could, I left school, not even waiting to sit 'O levels', as they were called then.

TN: How did you come to know the Lord?

JG: I was converted in a mission held in Portglenone in November 1969. I had been under conviction for some time, had attempted to seek the Lord, but never had any assurance of salvation. Even after that evening, I struggled, as many Christians do, but the Lord is faithful and He bears with us and ministers to us in our weakness.

TN: When did you associate with the Free Church?

JG: Before I was converted my parents had started to attend services in the old Ballymena church on the Waveney Road. Within a year, we were in the heart of the work. I joined in 1970, taught Sunday School, became involved in the Youth Fellowship, and was persuaded to preach – the first time was in the open air in Ballykeel, Ballymena.

TN: What about your call to the ministry?

JG: This came in 1972, through the preaching of my pastor, Rev James Beggs.

TN: So you commenced studying in the Theological Hall?

JG: Yes, I began in October 1974, finishing in 1978. That was also the year I married Joan. In those days studies were combined with placements as Student-Ministers, and I found myself placed in Sixmilecross, County Tyrone. I travelled to and fro, being helped greatly by members of the congregation who offered accommodation and hospitality. At the end of my studies, I was called to the church in Sixmilecross and ordained in Cloughfin Orange Hall, just next to where the present church building is located.

TN: You were soon involved in a building programme?

JG: That was a busy time, but we saw the new building opened in May 1982.

TN: You did not believe you would minister long in that building?

JG: No, indeed. It's a long story, but it goes back to a visit I made to preach at a fledgling congregation in Newtown Square, USA in 1979. A few months before the Sixmilecross building opened, I was made aware that the little congregation in USA wanted me to become their minister. Initially, I had no inclination towards that course, but very soon the Lord made it clear that this was His will, and so with Joan and the three children we had then, I relocated to USA in March 1983.

TN: Those early days in Newtown Square were difficult, weren't they?

JG: We went to a congregation of about 12, meeting in a house, the other part of which was our home. For seven years, it was a real struggle, but then the congregation began to grow. We extended the property, but by 1993 we had almost 100 people and further extension was out of the question. Then a property in Malvern was secured, and the work continued to grow, so that by 2000 we had around 200 in attendance.

TN: The year 2000 was to bring great change?

JG: Yes, that's true. I had been approached in 1999 about the imminent vacancy in my home church, where Rev Beggs was soon to retire. The Session had made the issue a matter of prayer for two years, and the elders were convinced that I should return to take up the work. Again, the Lord made His mind clear, and we returned to Ballymena in August 2000.

TN: Have you enjoyed being home again?

JG: It has been very busy over the years. The Ballymena congregation is large and there is much to do, but I have an understanding wife and family, very supportive office bearers, good assistants and many others who help in the work. I have been involved in the wider ministry of the denomination in a way that could never have happened had the Lord directed me to remain in USA. I have recently succeeded Mr Beggs as Professor of Systematic Theology in our college, and that too is an awesome responsibility – so, yes, it is good to be back, and to have the strength and opportunity to contribute.

TN: How do you see your latest role?

JG: On one level, of course, the work of the Moderator is simply to moderate or chair Presbytery meetings. I don't see this role as elevating me above my brethren; I am there to serve. There are extra duties – more meetings to attend – these things are just part of the job. I am conscious too that I may be sought out as a counsellor and advisor, and I pray earnestly for the wisdom and grace to be a good one. I do need the prayers of all our people, and I would encourage readers to pray for the Presbytery as it seeks to discharge onerous responsibilities.

TN: Thank you for your time, and may God bless you in all your labours!



INVESTIGATING THE ISSUES:

THE CHURCH'S POSITION ON SEPARATION

Anyone in attendance at an ordination service in the Free Presbyterian Church cannot fail to note one pledge required of those entering into office: *"Will you maintain with all the strength God shall give you the truly Scriptural separation position of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster and vigorously withstand ... apostasy ... exhorting God's people to obey the teaching and commandment of 1 Timothy 6:3-5?"*

Letterheads on much of our official Church literature cite words found in Romans 1:1, "Separated unto the gospel of God." A valuable resource on our church website outlines the reasons why we are a separated witness – 'Separated Unto The Gospel.'

THE POINT OF SEPARATION

On St. Patrick's Day 1951 the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster was born in the village of Crossgar, County Down, Northern Ireland. When local Presbyterian elders resisted a ban on the use of their church hall for a gospel mission by the Down Presbytery, they were immediately suspended. Those elders decided that they could not return

without denying or compromising the gospel, so they decided to leave – to separate.

With the help of Rev. Ian R. K. Paisley, their guest evangelist, and Rev. George Stears, a Presbyterian minister, they proceeded to form the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. Dr. Paisley's independent congregation quickly joined the Crossgar people. Soon two more congregations sprang up as the result of Dr. Paisley's evangelism and secessions from the Irish Presbyterian Church. Subsequent growth has brought us to the position we are in today.

This new church was cast in an old mould. It was unashamedly Protestant. It gladly identified with the great Protestant Reformation. Throughout its history it has stood opposed to the ecumenical movement's efforts to promote union with the Church of Rome, because that church still holds to every dogma that prompted the Reformation in the first place. In theology, the church is reformed: it stands foursquare in the great tradition of Calvin, Knox, the English and American Puritans, and some of the most notable revival preachers in history.

THE PURPOSE OF SEPARATION

For years evangelical Christians remained in denominations that were mostly non-evangelical, even liberal or Anglo-Catholic. They gave expression to their evangelicalism mostly through interdenominational societies and movements, believing that they could distance themselves from the rationalism or Romanism prevalent in their denominations without actually separating from them.

With the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, it became much more difficult for Christians to justify this position, because by virtue of their membership in the major denominations they were part of the movement to create a one-world church under the leadership of the pope. Included in the membership of the World Council of Churches today are many who deny the virgin birth of Christ and reject His Deity; who scoff at the infallibility of the Bible, dismissing it as a collection of myths; and who denounce the atoning, sacrificial death of Christ.

We are instructed to, *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* (Ephesians 5:11). To the Christian, Liberalism, Modernism, Romanism, and false ecumenism are undoubtedly *"works of darkness."* The duty of separation is plain. Paul teaches this duty again in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. John speaks of it in 2 John 10-11 – and in Revelation 18:4 he charts the proper course for every Christian with respect to these

corrupt affiliations: *"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."* We are not at liberty to use our human wisdom and say, 'we must remain in it, to win it', for the Word of God commands us to come out of it!

THE POSITIVES OF SEPARATION

To leave a denomination is regarded in some quarters as negative and defeatist. One runs the risk of being accused of breaking fellowship with brethren. Some go so far as to charge separatists with the sin of schism.

It is undeniable that any secession generates significant ill feeling. However, separation is more than negative reaction. It is thoroughly positive, because it is essentially separation unto Christ and His Gospel: *"Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach"* (Hebrews 13:13).

Fellowship in any organisation that denies Christ, repudiates His Word, or departs from His finished work of atonement and the gospel of justification through faith without works, is a fellowship that leads away from Christ! Our fellowship with Him demands separation from apostasy and fundamental error.

THE PARAMETERS OF SEPARATION

Our separation should not blind us to the Christian duty of expressing love for fellow believers and our spiritual unity in Christ. The Free Presbyterian Church therefore seeks to stand with the faithful around the world, even when they do not endorse our positions on matters that, though important to us, are not fundamental to the gospel. Whitefield was a Calvinist, Wesley an Arminian. Yet Whitefield laboured to ensure that they stood together in the work of the gospel. Spurgeon accepted and promoted Moody, much to the chagrin of some who thought that Moody, a confessed Calvinist, was not Calvinistic enough.

The ecumenical movement has misapplied Christ's intercessory prayer in John 17 – *"that they all may be one"* –

to join together heretics of every kind. But Christ was referring to unity – a unity among His true people, those who believe the Bible (v6) and who belong to Him (vv 6, 9, 10). We aim to express the fundamental oneness of God's people in any way we can, without compromising the fundamentals of the faith. We are Biblical separatists, not isolationists.

THE PRACTICE OF SEPARATION

Separation from denominational heresy and apostasy is no longer followed by many evangelicals. Anglicans remain in their deeply corrupt denomination no matter what. The Methodist Church is wholly committed to the ecumenical path, as evidenced by its membership of the World Council of Churches, 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' and other equally compromised bodies. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in common with other denominations happily harbours unregenerate elders and ministers within its ranks.

However, the commands to stand clear of false doctrine, immorality and worldliness are still in the Bible, and the warnings of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 stand over us if we persist in disobedience. The loss of separation has already led to a weakened and worldly evangelicalism in our land, and the situation will deteriorate without a recovery of loyalty to Christ and His Word.

May the Lord grant us determination to keep ourselves separate from the Rome-ward bound denominations; courage to bear the malice of those who will decry us; strength and heart to deepen our fellowship with all like-minded evangelicals; and the privilege of bearing much fruit as we stay true to Christ and His Gospel!

∴ **Rev Ian Brown** is the minister of Londonderry Free Presbyterian Church and the Clerk of Presbytery in the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster.

'CONSIDER CHRIST' UPDATE

Readers will remember the province-wide 'Consider Christ' campaign of recent years. This initiative resulted in Gospel literature being delivered to every household in N Ireland – and the campaign is ongoing in the Republic of Ireland.

Focussing initially on the border counties, the project has moved steadily southwards with late summer and autumn of 2012 witnessing the towns of Mullingar and Athlone targeted in day long Saturday outreaches as a prelude to weeknight meetings in local venues.

Tens of thousands of homes have been visited by willing workers – as many as 80 on some trips – and while no meeting has attracted vast numbers of 'locals', some have come, and useful contacts have been made.

The last of these gatherings, held in Athlone in late November, was especially encouraging, with 27 visitors in attendance, one lady professing faith in Christ and another seeking restoration.

We are thankful to those churches that have loaned minibuses, and for the

dedication of those who give time and effort to reach out into 'our Samaria' – around 30 of our congregations have been represented in the various teams.

Please continue to pray for Dr Lindsay Wilson as he coordinates this venture, those ministers and outreach workers who stand with him, and future fields of witness. The next foray south is scheduled for Saturday 26th January - new workers will be welcome! For further information, or to enlist, contact Dr Wilson on 07886265600 or by email, outreach@ConsiderChrist.com



"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." 1 COR 15:58

KESH INSTALLATION



A special service, attracting a capacity congregation, was held in November to mark the installation of Mr James Fleming (*third left*) to the eldership in Kesh, Co Fermanagh. Also participating were Mr J Anderson (*existing elder*), Rev S Pollock (*Kilskeery*), Rev J Gray (*Enniskillen*), Rev J Greer (*Moderator*), Rev I Brown (*Clerk of Presbytery*), Rev J Morrow (*Omagh*), and Rev R Robinson (*Kesh*).

AROUND THE MISSIONS



Rasharkin

Rasharkin congregation held a two-week campaign in the church building during the month of October when many unsaved were present and Rev Darryl Abernethy was the evangelist.

Orritor

Orritor was the location for a series of meetings organized by the Cookstown congregation. A portable hall was employed and Rev Marcus Lecky ministered, with good support, for two weeks in late November.

Martyrs' Memorial

Martyrs' Memorial was the venue for an autumn mission conducted by Rev John Morrow, who ministered faithfully to an appreciative congregation.

Ravara

Ravara Orange Hall was put to good use, also in November, when Ballygowan congregation held a special outreach. Rev Alan Smylie was assisted in preaching by Dr Stanley Barnes and Dr Ron Johnstone.

Tullywhisker

Tullywhisker, a townland in County Tyrone, was the venue for a special November outreach involving the Mulvin, Convoy and Castlederg congregations. Rev John Gray preached for three weeks. Numerous Roman Catholics attended, and one man was brought to faith in Christ.

CHILDREN'S CORNER



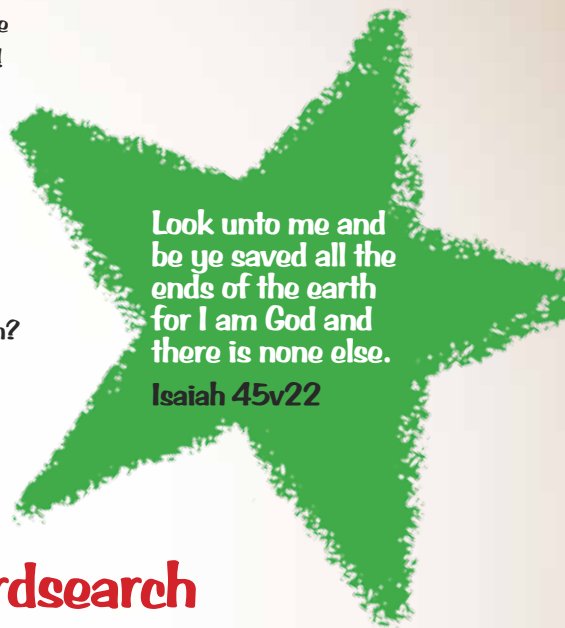
"...we see Jesus..."

Boys and girls, welcome to your very own page in our new magazine! Having good 'vision' and being able to see properly is, of course, very important. In the book of Hebrews chapter 2, verse 9, you will read these three little words, "...We see Jesus..."

As a young boy sitting in Sunday school and in church, very often I would find myself thinking, how wonderful it would be to actually see the Lord Jesus in person. However, as I grew up I began to realise that if I wanted to see the Lord Jesus all I really needed to do was to read my Bible, for 'in the volume of the book it is written of Him'. Boys and girls, as you read your Bible you should always be on the lookout for the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, very often you will find the Saviour there in the form of a picture or an illustration. Then as you come into the New Testament, especially in the Gospels, He is right there in the storyline... so watch out for Him as you read the Word!

Complied by Robert McConnell

From the book of Hebrews I want to point out three ways how we, each one, can see Jesus in the Bible. Firstly, we see Jesus crucified. Chapter 2v9 goes on to say that He, "...was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death..." I hope that you have been to the cross and that you have seen what the Saviour did for you there. Then secondly, we see Jesus crowned, because the verse goes on to say that He was, "crowned with glory and honour". The Bible says that the Lord Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Can you see Him sitting there upon that royal throne in heaven? Thirdly in Hebrews, we see Jesus coming. For this we need to go a little further along, to chapter 10v37 in fact, for there it says, "...yet a little while and He that shall come will come." I wonder are you watching, waiting and ready for that great day when the Lord Jesus will come back again for those of us that are His? I trust you are.



Look unto me and
be ye saved all the
ends of the earth
for I am God and
there is none else.
Isaiah 45v22

L	O	O	K	M	T	H	E	&	E
£	Y	?	B	E	N	D	S	!	A
%	E	B	A	A	£	L	£	I	R
&	H	?	U	N	T	O	?	A	T
S	A	V	E	D	&	A	!	M	H
T	H	E	%	\$!	N	F	O	R
&	A	L	L	G	O	D	?	I	E
T	H	E	R	E	\$	£	!	S	O
E	L	S	E	N	O	N	E	£	F
I	S	A	I	A	H	E	@	Y	?



Wordsearch

After you have found all the words of the verse above (Isaiah 45v22) in the word search (clue: no words are inside other words) you will be left with some symbols and letters. Take the remaining letters and spell out a part of the body that helps us to see.

Answer: _____

Send your name, address and answer to

Rev. Stephen Pollock

Email: answer@fpvision.org

51 Old Junction Road, Kilskeery, Co Tyrone, BT78 3RN.

Ten names will be picked out at random to receive a prize.

WHO AM I?

THE TWITTER BIO WAS SUCCINCT: 'I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I FIND OUT.'

That expresses very clearly an experience common to the young – the search for the 'true me.' Growing up includes the struggle to identify our personality traits, our gifts, and our attitudes. But as we seek to find out who we are, we must do so on the foundation of what God says about us.

We are made by God: ***'I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...'*** (See Psa.139: 13-16)

We are physical-spiritual beings. We have a body and we have a soul. Gen.2v7 reveals that complete humanity is found in the union of body and soul. Christ spoke of fearing the one who can ***'destroy both soul and body in hell.'*** (Matt.10v28)

We are made for God. ***'The LORD hath made all things for himself...'*** (Prov.16: 4) Truly, our chief purpose is to exalt God in both lip and life; doing all things for His glory. (1 Cor.10v30)

Thus ***'who am I?'*** is a question that will determine how we live. We are to present our bodies on the altar for God (Rom.12v1). We are to use our hands for His glory, walk with our feet in His paths, and speak with our tongues of His truth. But we are also to glorify God with our souls. ***'For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.'*** (1Cor.6: 20)

We are to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4v24). God has made us for fellowship with Him. Yet such right living requires a work of God in our souls. We will never live as we ought until we are born again. We cannot glorify God in body and soul until we are bought with a price – the price of Christ's blood. So when asking 'who am I?' try asking first, ***'Who do I belong to?'*** When you can really answer this question, make sure you let others know!

SO WHEN ASKING 'WHO AM I?' TRY ASKING FIRST, 'WHO DO I BELONG TO?'

FROM THE OLD TO THE YOUNG

"... it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating Him to scrutinize himself." – John Calvin (Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol.1, Ch.1: 2)



GOD WANTS US TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS THAT LEAD TO MARRIAGE

SHOULD YOUNG CHRISTIANS DATE?

AS A FATHER, WITH A DAUGHTER ALL TOO QUICKLY APPROACHING TEENAGE YEARS, I SHOULD PROBABLY DECLARE MY MEMBERSHIP IN DADD (DADS AGAINST DAUGHTERS' DATING). THEIR TAGLINE, 'SHOOT THE FIRST AND THE WORD WILL SPREAD', MAY NOT MAKE ME THE MOST SUITABLE PERSON TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION!

Do you have a question about Christian belief or behaviour? Send your questions to: questions@fpvision.org

First up, Rev. Ralph Hall was asked 'Should young Christians date?'

However, since a swift "NO!" is unlikely to suffice, let's look more closely at the subject.

In Genesis 2:18, God tells us that it is *"not good for man to be alone; I will make him an help meet for him"*. The Hebrew word translated "alone" means something like 'incomplete'. God intended Adam and Eve to complement one another, to fit perfectly together like pieces of a puzzle. Eve completed Adam, just as Adam completed Eve. The work of creation was not finalised until both man and woman were together.

Having created Adam and Eve, God instituted marriage, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."* (Genesis 2:24). Clearly, God intends men and women to get married and stay together for life. We are given general descriptions of the kind of spouse we should be looking for (Proverbs 31), and how they should be treated (Ephesians 5), but not how to go about finding that person.

Some Biblical methods of finding perfect wives include: having a bride crafted for you out of a rib (Adam, Gen. 2:21); having your father's aged servant go on a long arduous journey back to your homeland to find a suitable bride (Isaac, Gen. 24); finding a man with seven daughters, and impress him by watering his flock (Moses, Exod. 2:16-21); or purchasing a piece of land, and getting a woman as part of the deal (Boaz, Ruth 4:5-10)! Unfortunately, there is no such list available for women who want to find a husband – unless, of course, you are willing to water the camels of a servant! (See Genesis 24:14).

Our problems begin when we attempt to solve this issue by using the methods of the world: by dating indiscriminately in the hope of finding Mr/Miss Right. You do not have to date a whole bunch of people to discover who is the right person for you. God is not an Author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Dating someone different every week only shows that you're confused and not in step with God, who would have us to *"prove what is that good, and acceptable, and*

perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). Ask God sincerely, and He will show you, in His time.

Believers should be focused on finding a mate, not on dating per se. When God created Eve, He created her with the intention of marriage. The Bible refers to couples meeting with the intention of marrying, but there is nothing about casual dating. Believers should follow the precedent set in the Bible, not the pattern promoted by the world. God wants us to develop relationships that lead to marriage. That is how we were designed. For the Christian, the only purpose of dating is this – to find your wife or your husband.

Some final thoughts

1. Refuse to conform to peer pressure to pair-off.
2. Ask yourself, 'why do I want this relationship?' Is it about pride, self-esteem, even lust? Don't date someone just because you have 'fallen in love with him/her'.
3. Think and pray before you invest time and energy in any relationship. Pray with both eyes closed. Don't let looks alone determine with whom you go out. Inner beauty and Christian character are far more important than fading outward appearance. Allow the Lord to direct you, without seeking to dictate to Him. *"The Lord seeth not as man seeth for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart,"* (1 Sam. 16:7)
4. Is the person you date approved by your parents, and by those church leaders that *"watch for your souls"*? (Hebrews 13:17)
5. Do nothing that would harm another – whether physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually. Remember you may not end up marrying him/her; he/she could become someone else's husband/wife.
6. See that he or she grows spiritually and continues to serve God faithfully.

So should Christians date? If the answer is 'Yes', then it is about seeking to conform our conduct to the timeless principles of God's Word – at all times. Remember that courtship is the precursor to marriage – when we lose sight of that, we invite trouble.

OUR PROBLEMS BEGIN WHEN WE ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE BY USING THE METHODS OF THE WORLD:

REV. PHILIP GARDINER REFLECTS ON THE YOUTH COUNCIL MISSIONARY WEEKEND



On 2nd November 2012 over fifty young people met in Mullartown House, Annalong for this biannual weekend. Missionaries, missionary candidates, and local ministers participated in seminars relating to missionary work and Christian ministry.

A missionary candidate myself, I was much encouraged by the interest this group of young people showed in missionary work. It was evident during the weekend that some are earnestly seeking the Lord for direction in their own lives.

As a young man, Oswald Smith wanted to be a missionary, but the Lord closed that door. In time, Smith realised that the Lord had called him to pastor a church in Canada – the very church that became one of the greatest missionary sending churches in early twentieth century North America! Often associated with the words, **“the church that does not evangelise will fossilise”**, Smith was convinced that the local church had a

duty to be active in its own locality AND to reach out to the uttermost parts of the earth. And so it is encouraging for Cherith and I as we leave these shores that the Lord is continuing to convince our young people of the importance of having a vision for ‘the regions beyond’.

It is not without significance that many who attended the missionary weekend are active in outreach in their home congregations, and have helped in special efforts in the Irish Republic and on the British Mainland. CT Studd once said, **“the light that shines farthest shines brightest at home.”** If the Free Presbyterian Church maintains a heart for evangelism, then we can be sure that she will continue to be a missionary sending church. My prayer is, that like the church in Antioch, our denomination will see more young people called of God, and “sent away” to reach the multitudes without Christ. While the Lord will not send everyone, I trust that all of our young people will be ‘missionary minded’ and, praying often, will **“travel on their knees.”**

NEW YOUTH COUNCIL PRESIDENT: A MESSAGE FROM DR LINDSAY WILSON



I am both humbled and honoured by election to this position. Previous Presidents have made invaluable contributions during their tenure, and now I must look to the Lord for the needed grace to build on their legacy. One of the greatest encouragements is provided by the existence of a great team of Committee members and delegates, who continue to work tirelessly for the Lord among the youth of the church.

In the past, I have enjoyed leading two Youth Council outreach teams, to Gardenstown, and to London. On both occasions I was impressed by the calibre, zeal and commitment of the young people involved. Some of whom are now in pastoral ministry, while others are serving the Lord faithfully in their local congregations and beyond.

It is my role as Youth Council President to encourage Free Presbyterian young people to live for the Lord; to provide

training opportunities; to challenge them about involvement in local churches and facilitate openings to serve the Lord further afield.

**YOUNG
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AND VITAL
PART OF
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TODAY.**

It has been said, “young people are the church of tomorrow.”

The speaker was, no doubt, well intentioned – but quite wrong. Young people are an integral and vital part of the church TODAY. Young person, you are needed in all the activities of our churches! Young people may be the office-bearers, ministers and missionaries of tomorrow, but they are at the heart of the church of today.

To the young people of the Free Presbyterian Church, I say: Join us! Support the Youth Council and all its activities. Let us, together, serve the Lord wholeheartedly, remembering, **“We are labourers together with God.”** (1Corinthians 3:9) To older friends, I say: **“Brethren, pray for us.”** (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

MAINLAND OUTREACH

LONDON 2013
3rd - 10th August
LIVERPOOL 2013
17th July- 24th August
Cost £220;
Maximum 10 people
on each; Age:18+.
Applications
by 30th March 2013

EVENINGS OF PRAYER

GREATER BELFAST Thurs 14th Feb
Martyrs' Memorial FPC 8.00pm
(Youth Gospel Meeting Fri 15th Feb
Mount Merrion FPC 8.00pm, Rev Paul Thompson)
NORTH DOWN Fri 15th Feb
Ballygowan FPC 8.00pm, Rev Alan Smylie
MID DOWN Fri 15th Feb
Hillsborough FPC 8.00pm, Rev Gary Goodes
SOUTH DOWN Fri 15th Feb
Annalong FPC 8.00pm, Rev Ian Harris
MID ULSTER Fri 15th Feb
Tandragee FPC 8.00pm, Rev Samuel Murray
SOUTH WEST Fri 22nd Feb
Tullyvallen FPC 8.00pm, Rev Raymond McLernon
THE WEST Fri 15th Feb
Omagh FPC 8.00pm, Mr Garth Wilson
NORTH WEST Mon 25th Feb
Garvagh FPC 8.00pm, Rev Leslie Curran
NORTH & SOUTH ANTRIM Fri 22nd Feb
Larne FPC 8.00pm, Rev David Brown

DELEGATES MEETING

Mon 18th February, Banbridge FPC, 8.00pm

CHILDREN'S OUTREACHES

SOUTH DOWN
29th June - 5th July 2013

CONVOY
1st - 7th July 2013

BELFAST
3rd - 9th Aug 2013

Cost £180; Maximum 6 on each;
Age:16+ Applications by 30th April 2013

To book, contact Paul Cairns
M: 07962 486077;
E: paul@cairns05.wanadoo.co.uk
Application forms & further details
on www.fpcyouth.org

SPRING RALLY

Fri 8th March, Magherafelt FPC, 8.00pm
Preacher: Rev John Greer (Moderator)

YOUTH COUNCIL EVENTS

SUMMER CAMPS 2013

**SHANNAGH-MORE
OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE
NEWCASTLE**
29th July- 2nd August
(Ages 12-15)

**TOLLYMORE NATIONAL
OUTDOOR CENTRE,
NEWCASTLE**
13th-16th August
(Ages 16-18)

Details and application forms
at www.fpcyouth.org
Non-refundable
deposit required
by 30th March

TRAINING WEEKEND

15th-17th March, Faith Mission Centre, Portadown
Details and application forms at www.fpcyouth.org
Applications to be received by 9th March

OTHER EVENTS

**MARTYRS' MEMORIAL
YOUTH CAMP**
CEF CENTRE, ROSSNOWLAGH
22nd - 26th July
Details of activities, cost, deposit etc
Call Maurice Bannatyne
028 90809670

ANNUAL CASTLEWELLAN WEEKEND
3rd - 6th May
£69 or £67 for 15 and under.
Applications to Rev D Creane,
92 Banbridge Road, Lurgan, Co Armagh, BT66 7HQ
to include Name, Address, Contact Number,
Age, Church Attended + £10 deposit

A WORD TO WOMEN

IF WE PUT CHRIST FIRST, ALL THE LESSER MATTERS WILL FALL INTO PLACE.

Do you ever consider the women of the Bible – Deborah, Ruth, Esther, and the rest – and think, “Wow! Isn’t she amazing? I wish I could be like her”. Or, perhaps, with resignation, “I could never be like that”. Sometimes, we twenty-first century women tend to put these Bible characters on such a pedestal that we feel we could never attain their levels of spirituality, faith and testimony.

But, think about it...they were all women who lived normal, everyday lives - just like us. Maybe the difference is that they were willing to be led and used by the Lord in those ordinary lives. Take Ruth, for example. Starting out as an unknown in a foreign land, she happened (not by chance, but by God’s providence) to meet Naomi and her family; eventually, by God’s merciful guidance, and with a willing heart, she became the great-grandmother of King David and part of the ancestral line of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Women are certainly not the second-class citizens that the ‘women’s rights’ activists would have us believe. No, indeed not, for the Bible is full of ordinary women who have lived with the same cares and concerns that we face. They have borne the trials of loss, grief and pain with which many of us can identify. In tender love and compassion, the Lord has mentioned these women in His Word – not to make us feel inadequate and insignificant by comparison, but to help us learn from their experiences. Thus we are shown how to be resilient in

the face of adversity, and by following their example, to become strong and godly women who are willing to be taught of the Lord.

If you know Christ as your Saviour, and own Him as Lord of your life, while your story may not be recorded in Scripture, be assured that your life, with all its twists and turns, is important to Him. And, best of all, your name is written indelibly in the Lamb’s Book of Life!

At this time of year, many make resolutions to ‘behave better’ than in previous years. Maybe they want to lose some weight, or exercise more, or take up a new hobby. Almost inevitably, by February, all these good intentions have drifted away. Isn’t it better to focus on one thing at a time, and do it well?

How about taking your life with Christ really seriously this year, asking Him to lead you into a closer walk with Him? As Matthew 6:33 reminds us, if we put Christ first, all the lesser matters will fall into place. Let’s make it our aim and desire throughout the whole of 2013 to have that willing heart, and, like Ruth, be guided by our heavenly Father to live as ‘daughters of faith’.

My prayer for us all is that we will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ our Lord and Saviour, and so bring much glory to the name of God our Father.

✚ **Karen Murray**, lives in Tandragee, N Ireland. She is a busy minister’s wife and works to combat Asperger’s Syndrome, helping children, and providing strategies for those who teach them.

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GRADUATION SERVICE

PRESBYTERY EDUCATION BOARD



Graduates from left:
Mr John Dane; Mrs Grace Mander; Miss Lisa Grattan; Miss Caroline McCausland & Miss Anna Priestley

Friday 30th November 2012 witnessed the latest Graduation Service organised by the Presbytery Education Board for trainee and probationary teachers within our Independent Christian Schools (ICS). Those graduating on this occasion were Miss Anna Priestley, Bangor ICS; Miss Caroline McCausland, Clogher Valley ICS; Mr John Dane, Kilskeery ICS; Mrs Grace Mander and Miss Lisa Grattan, both Portadown ICS. We offer hearty congratulations to all five!

The Graduation Service was held in the Portadown church, with teachers representing every school present. During the singing of the opening praise, the five graduands led the procession of teachers working in the various schools into the service. Subsequently, Rev John Greer, Moderator of Presbytery, presented the graduands with their diplomas. Mr Greer later delivered an appropriate message at the conclusion of the service. Also participating was a combined choir, consisting of pupils drawn from the seven schools. The choir sang two hymns: *O give us homes built firm upon the Saviour* and *Go labour on, spend and be spent*. A special offering was designated for the Portadown School to help with the construction costs of their new school buildings, which were officially opened earlier in the month.

The Presbytery training scheme requires prospective teachers to have already attained an external degree or be prepared to study for such a degree while

undergoing practical training in one of the seven Independent Christian Schools. The resident Principal supervises this training programme. Candidates must also attend, over four years, the Education Board Seminar, organized during the month of August at the Whitefield College of the Bible. Completion of these studies entitles them to the graduates' Diploma of Christian Education.

The Presbytery Education Board established the teacher-training scheme in March 1988. Many recognised then that Stranmillis Teacher Training College was a contributor to the promotion of an ecumenical agenda in N Ireland. Some courses were so integrated with St. Mary's Roman Catholic Training College that much of the training of student teachers was taking place at that institution. This situation prompted one Free Presbyterian student – who has since come to teach in one of the Independent Christian Schools – to wonder if it was God's will for her to be instructed in a Roman Catholic institution, taking notes from a Roman Catholic lecturer while sitting under a crucifix! In the end that student decided it was not. She related her concerns to Rev Ivan Foster. Ultimately, the outcome was the institution of the Presbytery Education Board training scheme.

∴ **Rev Brian McClung** is the minister of Newtownabbey Free Presbyterian Church and the Convenor of the Presbytery Education Board.

A LOOK AT THE BOOK: STUDYING THE PENTATEUCH

OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO DR JOHN DOUGLAS WAS
ASKED TO PRODUCE A SERIES OF BIBLE STUDY
ARTICLES FOR THE 'TRUTH FOR YOUTH' MAGAZINE.

These studies brought much blessing to readers back in the 1970's, and it is my conviction that they may be read with profit by a new generation. Our selection begins, appropriately, at the outset of the Old Testament.

∴ Editor



Remember hearing of the pentagon, the five-sided figure, in school? 'Pentateuch' also derives from two words in the Greek and means five rolls of writing. FIVE books that begin the Bible, otherwise known as 'the books of Moses', go by that name. To one born in Israel, in modern times as well as in Bible times, these five books are, simply, the Law.

While these books have come under the fire and fury of the critic who rejects both the

Mosaic authorship and the Divine inspiration of the Pentateuch, the reader will do well to remember the God given counsel enunciated by the Psalmist, "*Thy word is true from the beginning.*" (119: 160). As the words are ordered in the Hebrew, the verse reads, 'The beginning of Thy word is true.'

Taking the Bible itself as the court of appeal - and we know of no better - the internal evidence for the Divine inspiration and authority of the five books of Moses is irrefutable.

1. Consider the UNIMPEACHABLE AUTHORITY THE SCRIPTURE HAS GIVEN ESPECIALLY TO THE WORDS OF MOSES ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN.

(A) Heb. 2:2. The giving of the law is called the “word spoken by angels.” That all these words were authorized, upheld and vindicated by the subsequent providential working of the Spirit of God may be seen since *“every transgression and disobedience (of the law) received a just recompense of reward.”* These words of the law were as much unassailable as to origin as they were unchangeable and unchallengeable in content. The word spoken was “steadfast.” It was therefore absolutely proved, established and verified.

Here then is information on Moses’ source of material for the writing of the Pentateuch, or at least a substantial part of it. We cannot discover any EVIDENCE of compilation from other documents then in existence. Certainly the *“word spoken by angels”* does not refer to existing documents and indeed hardly allows much room for their use even if Moses had them and carried them all the way from Egypt through the 40 years wandering in the wilderness. The wilderness is not the best place if the voluminous data of a reference library is needed! No, the writer of the Pentateuch had a vastly superior source for his material. God used the angels to supervise the giving of the law to Moses. There was not the slightest possibility of him being in error in anything he wrote.

(B) Acts 7:53,38. Israel, through Moses, received the law by the disposition of angels. The angels ordered the detail of his writing. In careful language we are told of the Angel which spake to Moses on Mt. Sinai in the wilderness where he received the *“lively oracles to give unto us.”* These oracles are the living uttered words of God. This Angel, we understand to be THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.

(C) Galatians 3:19. The law was *“ordained by angels in the hand of the mediator.”* Again, under God, the angels

arranged and framed throughout, all that Moses had to write. Indeed Moses’ own testimony was “God spake all these words” Exodus 20:1. Repeatedly in Leviticus we read, *“the Lord spake unto Moses”* (Leviticus 1:1; 4:1; 6:18; 8:1; 11:1 etc). With his last breath he said “The Lord came from Sinai... from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, He loved the people...they sat down at thy feet; everyone shall receive of THY WORDS” (Deuteronomy 33:2-3). Moses knew the words he wrote were God’s, not his own. The things he had done, whether in writing or speaking, were not of his “own mind.” (Numbers 16:28).

2. Recognize that THE NECESSITY OF IMPLICIT FAITH IN THE PENTATEUCH IS SHOWN CLEARLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

(A) The Lord Jesus Christ sets the highest honour upon the books of the Pentateuch

(i) Luke 24:25-27. Our Lord Jesus Christ offers no praise and no esteem to those who, even short of outright denial, have queries about the Old Testament. In fact, He calls them fools, who are slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken. We do well to commence a new year with the study of the first five books of the Bible. The Lord Jesus *“began”* at Moses. By example here, and by precept, He conferred a priority on the law. He taught the necessity of absolute faith in the testimony of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

(ii) Matt. 5:17, 18; Luke 16:17. The Lord not only gave it first place in the study, followed by the Apostles, He expressly taught that the LAW WAS INSPIRED OF GOD DOWN TO THE MINUTEST DETAIL. Such inspiration merits and requires absolute faith!

(B) The theme of the Pentateuch, as with the rest of the Old Testament, is Christ, Luke 24:27. Christ began at Moses and expounded “the things concerning HIMSELF” In John 5:46, speaking of Moses, Jesus said, *‘He*

wrote of ME:’ Luke 16: 29-31 is a most remarkable passage. Abraham, the father of faithful, who, because of the time in which he lived, never had the opportunity to speak of the written word of God, is heard putting his words on record for time and eternity.

He urges that the lost hear Moses and the prophets. The right application of the law leads to repentance. There is no hope of repentance for the man who abandons the Scriptures through unbelief. *“If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”* Abraham’s last words in Scripture indicate that no sign however dramatic, no miracle however sensational, put in the place of the written word, will effect faith! That which does is the faith of antichrist. In this role the word of God takes second place to nothing. It therefore requires implicit faith.

(C) Since their testimony is of Christ, those who reject the Books of Moses will not be saved.

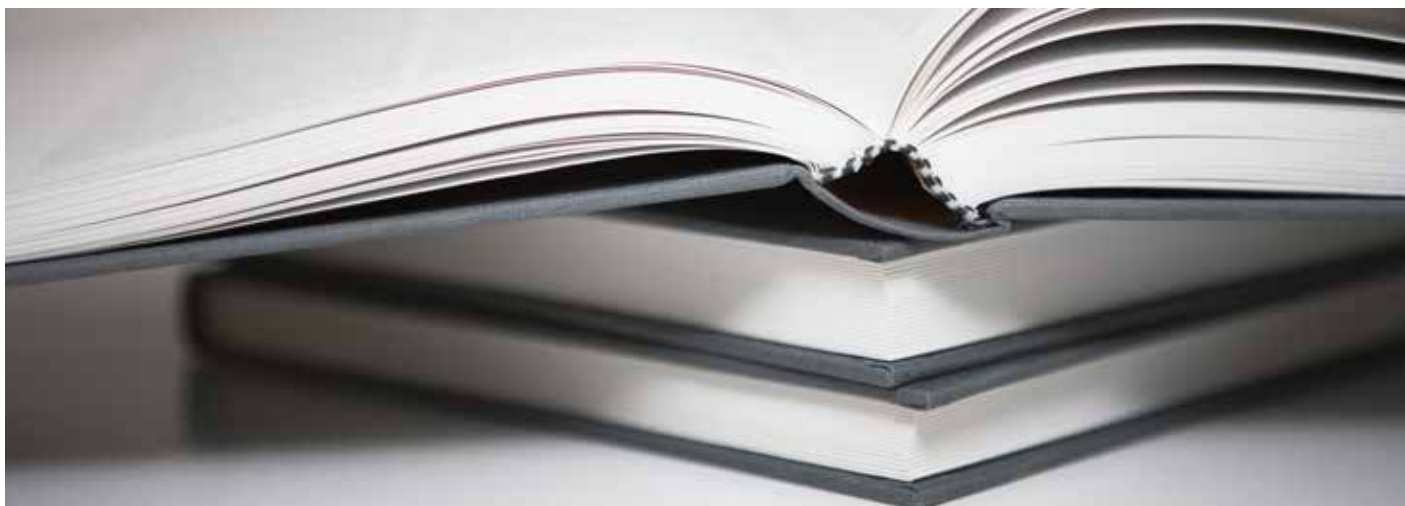
John 5:46, 47: *“But if ye believe not HIS WRITINGS, how shall ye believe my words?”* “HE WROTE of me.” Note the following:

(i) Jesus taught the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. There is not a hint of a multiplicity of authors or sources.

(ii) The words of Moses are equally authoritative with the words of Christ. Belief in one is inextricably linked with belief in the other.

(iii) The rejection of these five Books makes it impossible to accept the words of Christ. Reject Moses and there is no alternative but to jettison all the Scriptures, and the words of Jesus too. Reader, the necessity of faith in the words given from Genesis to Deuteronomy is absolute!

∴ **Dr John Douglas** is the senior minister of Lisburn Free Presbyterian Church. He served the denomination as long time Clerk of Presbytery and was, for over thirty years, Principal of the Whitefield College of the Bible.



THE BELIEVER'S BOOKS

'COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY BIBLE' MATTHEW HENRY

Last October marked the 350th anniversary of the birth of one whose name has been described as 'a household word', **Matthew Henry**. The renowned Bible commentator was born just a week before the 'Great Ejection'. Then, more than 2000 Anglican ministers were removed from their pulpits for refusal to conform to strictures threatening their liberty of conscience. Among them was Philip Henry, Matthew's father, who was later to suffer a brief period of imprisonment for defying restrictions on public assembly. Matthew himself was ordained privately, began his ministry in a converted barn, and was later to witness an attempt to burn down this building.

We must expect that one with such a rich experience of life and the challenges characteristic of Christian service will have something worth saying. Matthew Henry always does – never more so than in his greatest work. Managing to blend exposition and application – no easy task – he writes in a way that is always engaging, inevitably uplifting, and often memorable.

His remarks on the creation of Eve in Genesis 2:21-23 are a case in point. She was "not made out of his head to rule over him, or out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved".

Matthew Henry's Commentary has long been the first 'port of call' for Bible students, and it is difficult to disagree with Spurgeon, who described this monumental work as "deeply spiritual, heavenly and profitable; finding matter in every text, and from all deducing most practical and judicious lessons... it is the poor man's commentary, the old Christian's companion, suitable to everyone, instructive to all." Whether you are young in the faith or a seasoned saint, you will find blessing here. Three hundred years on, Henry's Commentary is readily available, in various formats, and at very reasonable prices.

∴ **Timothy Nelson**

FROM THE ARCHIVES

TRUTH FOR YOUTH,
MARCH-APRIL 1978

'PAISLEY'S MEN COME TO TOWN'

On the sports' page of the Irish Independent dated 25 July 1977, there appear the words – 'Paisley's men came to town but did not stay for the match'. Sunday 24 July 1977 was the day that the all-Ireland semi-final was played in Clones, Co Monaghan (a Gaelic match, of course).

The reporter introduced his coverage of the match by referring to the outreach of the Free Presbyterian Church. He commented on our young people visiting homes and public houses distributing Bibles and Christian literature, and he even gave

the times of the services in Coragarry! Clones was only one of the many towns which a team of believers visited in Counties Monaghan and Cavan...Each member of the team was surprised at the openness of the Roman Catholics and their readiness to receive a copy of the Scriptures. There were even instances when they were approached and Bibles were requested.

Editor's note: It is heartening to see the witness in the Republic of Ireland moving on apace, with the ever-widening reach of the Consider Christ campaign.

MISSIONARY VISION

A REGULAR FEATURE COMPILED BY THE MISSION BOARD
OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Welcome to this specially dedicated section of Free Presbyterian Vision! Issue by issue, we will report on the work of missionaries who serve at home and abroad under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church.

Missionary endeavour has always played a vital role in the life of our denomination. The Missionary Council, which predates the Mission Board, was formed in 1962 to help focus the minds of our people on a joined up and collective approach to missionary work. The Council helped to galvanise prayerful and practical support for the missionary cause throughout our congregations.

The early vision of the Missionary Council led to the formation of our own Free Presbyterian Mission Board

in 1974. This Board is a Presbytery standing committee tasked with the process of selecting, commissioning, supporting and overseeing the work of our denominational missionaries.

The Board's objective is to send forth Free Presbyterian missionaries, called of God with a burden for a particular field of service, to preach the Gospel, and to stand for the Lord but apart from the ecumenism of the World Council of Churches.

This year the Missionary Council has marked its Fiftieth Anniversary and welcomed the appointment of a new chairman, Rev. David Park. Both Council and Board are dedicated to the task of obeying the great commission of Matthew 28 v 19-20. This unfinished task requires the co-operation and support of all of our congregations, as

together we labour to see the fulfilment of Malachi's ancient prophecy: 'For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles' (Mal 1:11)

And so we plan to re-introduce the work of all of our missionary endeavours. In this opening edition we focus on the work in Spain. This was the first field to which we sent missionaries under the banner of the Free Presbyterian Mission Board. We hope you will be blessed as you read of how God's name has been magnified and made great through their labours!

✚ Rev Ian Harris
(Mission Board Convenor)



35 YEARS IN SPAIN

I could never have imagined 45 years ago what the Lord had in store for me that winter night, when I was gloriously saved and made a new creature in Christ Jesus!

Four years later the Lord called me to serve as a missionary. At that time there was no training programme in our church for missionary candidates. Nevertheless, on the advice of my minister, Dr. Alan Cairns, I applied to train in our Theological Hall. Presbytery acceded to my request, adding an extra year to provide for missionary training.

We came to Spain without any knowledge of a reformed, separated work. But, providentially, in our second year, we made contact with a reformed church in Alcorcón, a town of around 200,000 people fifteen kilometres south west of Madrid. This would be the basis for all of our future work in

this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country.

Our first two years were taken up exclusively with language training. Then our first son, Jonathan, was born. Almost two years later the Lord further blessed us, when Joel, our second son, was born. As our boys grew and attended school they became a great help to us, speaking the language fluently and without any accent whatsoever.

Having quickly settled in and become part of the Alcorcón congregation, it became apparent that a more official and stable relationship was needed with our Presbytery in Ulster. Dr. Paisley, then moderator, and Rev. David McIlveen, then Chairman of the Mission Board, came to visit. A very important agreement was reached – that the Session in Alcorcón would give spiritual

oversight to the new missionary. That probationary period was for three years, at the end of which, in 1980, Noranna and I returned to Northern Ireland. In March of that year the Presbytery ordained me in our home church, Ballymoney. The Session of the Alcorcón church was represented on that occasion by one of its elders. After much prayer and consideration the church decided to buy a building that wasn't far from where we were located. This newly renovated building was opened in June 1998. We were honoured to have Dr. Paisley with us to preach on that historic occasion, together with 150 people from many parts of Spain, and a few from Britain and Ulster.

From the moment of our arrival in Spain, we had recognised the need for many more workers for this needy field. We began to pray to that end.

While I preached one Sunday in our Lurgan congregation, the Lord was dealing with the heart of a young man. Lyle Boyd had been among the first group to enter the Whitefield College of the Bible, graduating in 1983. Three years later, he and his wife Heather, came also to Spain under the auspices of our Mission Board.

Soon after their arrival, the Lord began speaking to a young woman thousands of miles away in Toronto. When I was in Canada in 1983 preaching in the vacant Calgary congregation, I met Deborah Nichols. At that time a seed was planted in Debbie's heart concerning missionary work. Two years later she decided to visit Madrid and see the work first hand. Challenged by what she saw, the Lord called her and soon she began training.

Three years later (1989), Debbie arrived to join us in the work in Alcorcón. For ten years she helped in the ministry of the Sabbath School, women's meetings, outreach work by means of a weekly Bible and book table in the open air market, as well as helping in the Youth Fellowship. There was great sadness in the congregation in Alcorcón when Debbie announced her decision to return to Toronto, to continue serving the Lord in the Christian Academy.

However, before Debbie's decision to return home, God had already sent Joy Gillespie from our Armagh congregation. Although many tried to persuade her to occupy Debbie's place in the church, she was convinced of the

Lord's call to work in Cortijos Nuevos. She is presently helping in the outreach work and the children's meetings.

There is one aspect of the influence of the Free Presbyterian witness in Spain that must not go unnoticed. From very early on it became clear to us that we needed to form a church in strict adherence to Presbyterian doctrine and government. As early as 1988 the Church in Alcorcón made application to become part of the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster.

In order to ensure the future of any aspect of the work of God it is imperative that facilities exist for the biblical training of workers. Hence, in 1986, "El Colegio Bíblico de la Gracia" (Grace Bible College) was founded, on reformed lines, by a number of pastors in that part of Spain known as "La Mancha". Two years after its formation I was invited to lecture on the subjects of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology.

One young man from Alcorcón studied part time in this Bible College for four years. Angel Alvarez graduated with honours in 1998. Later the same year he went to Northern Ireland where he studied "Ulster English" for one year! Having made the necessary application to enter the Whitefield College of The Bible, he was accepted and completed

his two final years of biblical training in our Theological Hall. After graduation, he returned to Spain to serve the Lord. Angel was ordained in the Alcorcón Church on Saturday the 5th of April 2003.

In 2002 the Session of the church took the decision to send Mr. Jordi Ruiz and his wife to Miranda de Ebro in the Province of Burgos to pioneer a new work. After 10 years of faithful service they now have a building, which was opened officially on May 1, 2010.

LOOKING BACK OVER THESE PAST 35 YEARS AND REFLECTING ON ALL THESE EVENTS, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO RECORD HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO HIM WHO, IN LOVE AND MERCY, HAS LEAD AND GUIDED US EACH STEP OF THE WAY.

Looking back over these past 35 years and reflecting on all these events, it is appropriate to record heartfelt gratitude to Him who, in love and mercy, has lead and guided us each step of the way. And we are not unmindful of the thousands of Free Presbyterians who have stood faithfully with us through the rough and smooth, these many years. Their sacrificial giving and perseverance in prayer enables us to testify that we "continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great..." (Acts 26:22). Truly, "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Ps.118:23).

✚ Rev John Hanna (Field Leader, Spain)



2013 MISSION BOARD TRIP: KENYA

A trip to Kenya is planned this year to celebrate over 30 years working with Bible Christian Faith Church and to mark Margaret Russell's 30th year in Kenya. If you would like to join with us on this historic occasion please contact the Secretary, Chairman or the Mission Board Office for full details

MISSION BOARD OFFICE

3 Carrigenagh Road Kilkeel, BT34 4NE, NI
T. 44 (0) 28 4176 5574
E. gmckilkeel@aol.com

Chairman: Rev Ian Harris

23a Moneydaragh Road Annalong BT34 4TY
T. 028 4376 8040
E. ian.harris960@btinternet.com

Secretary: Rev David Park

55 Market Street Ballymoney BT53 6ED
T. 028 2766 2039
E. hebronfpc@btconnect.com

Treasurer & Presbytery Missions Officer:

Mr George McConnell
(See Mission Board Office details above)



DATES FOR THE DIARY

JANUARY

18th-20th

LARNE, SPECIAL WEEKEND

Speaker: Rev K Elliott (Portadown), Theme: 'Christ in the life of C H Spurgeon',
Time: Friday 8.00pm, Saturday 7.30pm, Sunday 11.30am & 7.00pm

25th

SIXMILECROSS, ANNUAL YOUTH FOCUS RALLY

Speaker: Rev G Dane (Crossgar), Subject: 'Does God really have a plan for every life?',
Time: Friday at 8.00pm

25th-27th

ANNALONG, YOUTH REACH WEEKEND

Speaker: Mr Jonathan Smith (Ardaragh), Singers & Testimonies,
Time: Friday at 8.00pm, Saturday at 7.30pm, Sunday at 7.00pm

FEBRUARY

10th-15th

MARKETHILL, ANNUAL BIBLE WEEK

Speaker: Rev J Greer (Ballymena), Theme: 'The Second Coming of Christ',
Time: Sunday at 7.00pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

23rd

MOURNE, ANNUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

Time: Saturday at 7.30pm

MARCH

1st-3rd

AGHALEE, ANNUAL SPRING BIBLE CONFERENCE

Theme: 'Pillars in the Old Testament',
Time: Friday 8.00pm, Rev J Woods (John Knox, Belfast);
Saturday 8.00pm, Rev I Brown (Londonderry);
Sunday 11.30am, Rev K Elliott (Portadown);
Sunday at 6.30pm, Rev P Fitton (Dungannon)

3rd-17th

MONEYSLANE, GOSPEL MISSION

Speaker: Rev T Martin (Lisburn)
Time: Sunday at 3.30pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

10th-24th

ANTRIM, GOSPEL MISSION

Speaker: Rev A Patterson (Mourne),
Time: Sunday at 7.00pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

17th-22nd

CROSSGAR, ANNUAL FOUNDATIONS BIBLE CONFERENCE

Speaker: Dr R Johnstone (Newtownards)
Time: Sunday at 7.00pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

29th + 1st

MARTYRS' MEMORIAL, FREE PRESBYTERIAN EASTER CONVENTION

Time: Friday at 8.00pm, Monday at 3.30pm & 7.00pm
Full details next issue