

FREE PRESBYTERIAN VISION

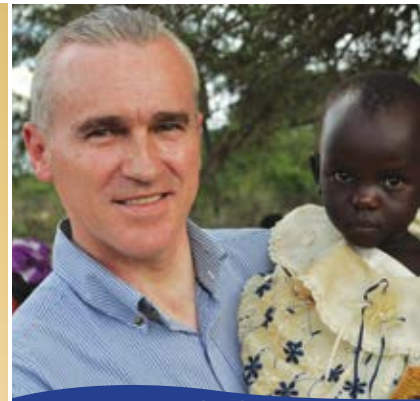


THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

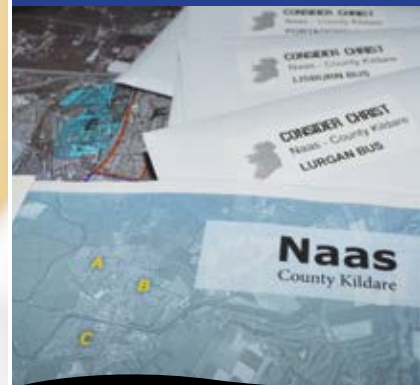


INVESTIGATING THE ISSUES: **Islam**

July - August 2014 . Issue 10 . £1



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Designed by Pepper Collective
Printed by JC Print.

Editorial

Protestant' – how disappointing to hear of those within the evangelical community who despise this grand old term! Some months ago a minister who arranges deputations for a well-regarded national society confirmed that certain churches excused themselves because they could not accommodate an organization so blatantly 'Protestant'. In the N Ireland context, Protestantism is associated with a particular political viewpoint. To employ the title, it is argued, will be off-putting for those who have a different perspective – all the more so at this time of the year, with events both lawful and unlawful. I do not dismiss these concerns. But do we simply forgo the term? Or is there another way?

It is the responsibility of sincere Protestants to be educators – in a positive, compelling and winsome manner. Our religion, founded upon God's Word, is for all that He is for. Thus, we proclaim

salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. What is more uplifting than this! And what needs to be sounded forth in the power of the Holy Spirit more than this!

But if our religion is truly Bible-based, it will also be against all that God is against. We do not set out to offend, but may have to adopt positions and enunciate views that incur the wrath of society: thus we are 'unreasonable', 'intransigent', 'bigots'. Such is the lot of those called to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). If we really believe the Bible is inspired and authoritative, then its content is not ours to abandon or amend. Instead we seek to maintain and defend it, with courage, with wisdom, and with grace. Such resolution is the very essence of vibrant, relevant Protestantism.

✉ Timothy Nelson
editor@fpvision.org

THE WIND OF THE SPIRIT

“THE WIND BLOWETH WHERE IT LISTETH...
SO IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT”

JOHN 3:8

The influences and work of the Holy Spirit are often set forth under the metaphor of wind.

As wind has a cleansing, refreshing and controlling nature, so the Spirit in His operation purifies the heart, making the soul to grow as the lily and cast forth its roots like Lebanon and be fruitful like the garden of God.

By the acting of His almighty breath, our physical life was produced (Genesis 2:7) and the same almighty breath quickened our souls when dead in trespasses and sins, forming spiritual life within us. When the church of Christ is in a languishing condition, the breathings and influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary for her reviving again. Why else would we pray for the breathings of this wind? Our prayer is, “*Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?*” (Psalm 85:6). “*Awake, O north wind and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*” (Song of Solomon 4:16).

Like the north wind the work of the Spirit is sometimes piercing and penetrating, making discovery of

lusts and idols that hide in the secret chambers of the heart. Having felt the moving of this wind we turn our backs on that east wind of sin and vanity. Like the south wind, He is also gentle and refreshing, putting gladness in the heart and filling the soul with joy in the blackest and cloudiest day (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Just as we cannot work grace in our hearts, neither can we exercise it without the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit. They are so necessary when we recall Christ’s express declaration: “*Without me ye can do nothing*” (John 15:5). Apart from the help of His Spirit we cannot do one thing. “*We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God*” (2 Corinthians 3:5). We are not able to move one step in the way of the Lord unless the heavenly wind comes with liberty and enlargement. By the help of the Spirit we can say with David, “*I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart*” (Psalm 119:32).

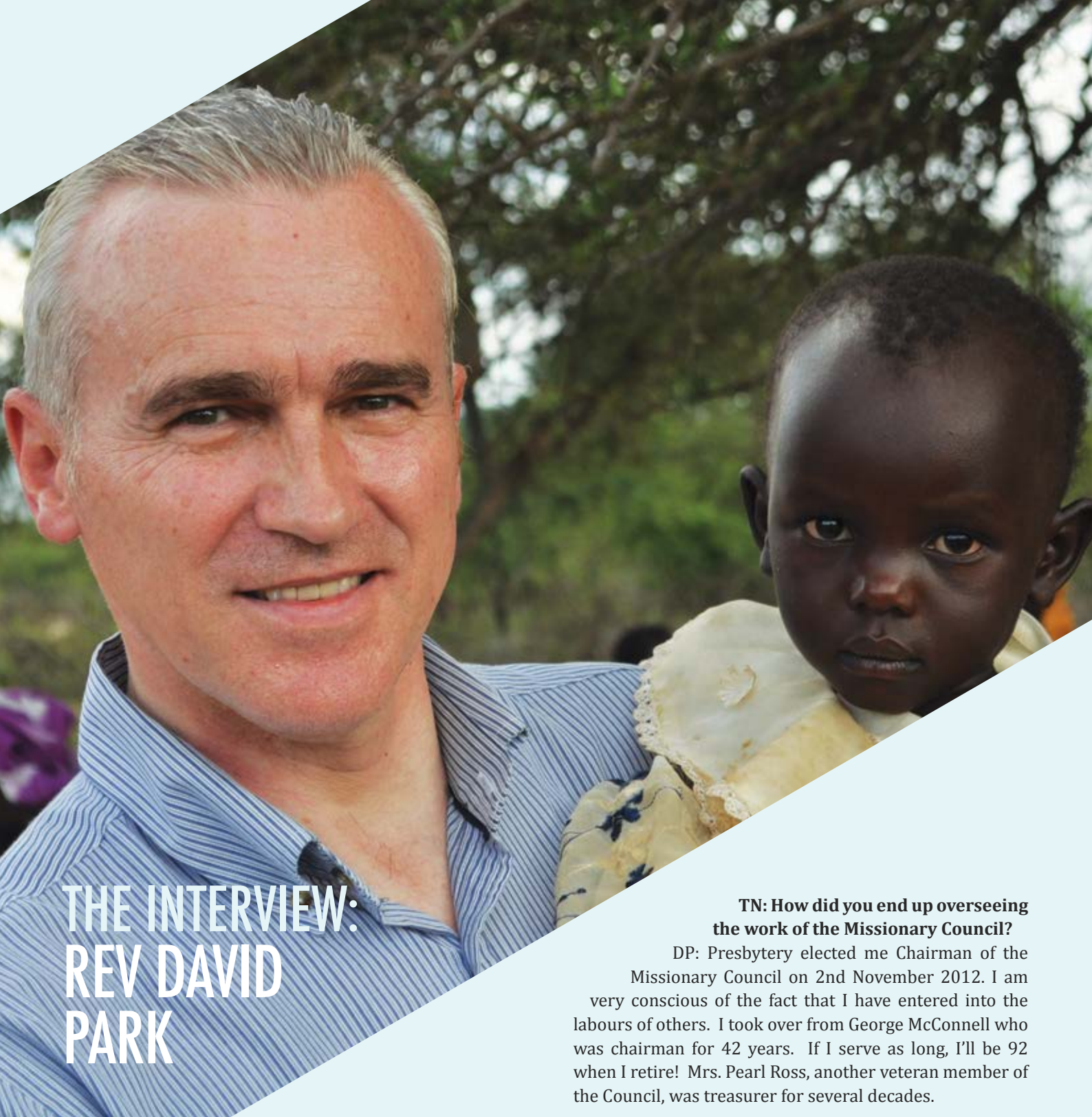
The work of the Spirit is sometimes piercing and penetrating, making discovery of lusts and idols that hide in the secret chambers of the heart.

It is He that gives power to the faint and increases strength to them that have no might (Isaiah 40:29). We cannot read, hear, pray, praise, or communicate to any advantage and profit unless the

wind of God blows upon us. Only then are we as the chariots of Ammi-nadib (Song of Solomon 6:12), a willing people in the day of His power. No longer will we do our duty in a half-hearted, matter of fact way. Dullness, indifference and apathy will flee. Our souls will be like a field that the Lord hath blessed. We will be fruitful in every good word and work.

When this wind blows on the soul we must go in the way of it, yielding ourselves to the conduct of the Spirit speaking in His word. May the reviving, refreshing wind of the Spirit come in power upon our hearts!

∴ 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.



THE INTERVIEW: REV DAVID PARK

THE MISSIONARY COUNCIL HAS BEEN A VITAL PART OF THE LIFE AND WITNESS OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOR DECADES. THE EDITOR CAUGHT UP WITH 'NEW' COUNCIL CHAIRMAN REV DAVID PARK TO HEAR ABOUT ITS HISTORY AND CURRENT ROLE.

TN: Timothy Nelson DP: David Park

TN: How did you end up overseeing the work of the Missionary Council?

DP: Presbytery elected me Chairman of the Missionary Council on 2nd November 2012. I am very conscious of the fact that I have entered into the labours of others. I took over from George McConnell who was chairman for 42 years. If I serve as long, I'll be 92 when I retire! Mrs. Pearl Ross, another veteran member of the Council, was treasurer for several decades.

TN: Tell us a little about the Missionary Council?

DP: The Missionary Council was established by Presbytery in 1962 to inspire missionary awareness and stimulate prayerful support in the churches, and to raise finance for missionary work. Cecil Harvey was elected first Chairman; Elizabeth McIlreavey (later the wife of Rev. Jim Hartin) was elected treasurer, with Elizabeth McAuley (later the wife of Rev. Cecil Menary) as her assistant, and Valerie Shaw as secretary. Every congregation may send two representatives – appointed by the local Session – to the monthly Council meetings. The Missionary Council works under the auspices of the Mission Board, which is ultimately responsible to Presbytery.

One of our main responsibilities is the promotion of missionary interest and endeavour in the local congregations. Council members report back to their churches and it is our desire that these reports will stir up the hearts of our people.

TN: What about the Council's fundraising activity?

DP: The money raised by the Missionary Council is central to the entire missionary endeavour of our denomination. Finances are raised by offerings in each church, and a statement is published annually. To illustrate the importance of contributions through the Missionary Council, it is worth noting that the main monthly grant from the Council (£8000) is to the Mission Board. Mostly, this is used to provide 30% of our missionaries' salaries – they raise the other 70% through deputation meetings, gifts and covenant support. Thus, here alone, £96,000 is needed annually. The total yearly grants from the Council amount to almost £135,000.

TN: Who benefits from this support?

DP: Over twenty missionaries are supported throughout the world: three 'Home Missionaries', one in the Republic of Ireland, six in Spain, six in Kenya, one in Liberia, one in Nepal, and three in Australia. With the expansion of our missionary interests, office and administration expenses have risen considerably, and we are seeking to secure extra funds to help with these costs. Recently, the Council has overseen the launch of new projects arising out of visits to Kenya and Nepal. Moderator Rev. Greer represented Presbytery, Rev. Ian Harris represented Mission Board, George McConnell travelled as our Presbytery Missionary Officer, Rev Curran for LTBS, and I went on behalf of the Missionary Council. We returned feeling a burden for both lands.

TN: How did you determine which projects to initiate?

DP: It is impossible to fund every practical need, so we consulted with our missionaries, and drew up a list of projects which our Board and Council were willing to endorse and support, as the Lord enables. These projects were launched at a special missionary rally in Ballymena in February and the list is on our new missionary website.

TN: How has this gone?

DP: There has been a tremendous response to the Kenyan projects. The money needed for a new oven at the Christian Academy has been raised by the Portavogie Ladies' Fellowship. The Kilskeery Christian School has financed a new Photocopier. A missionary family raised the money for a solar water

heater. Ballynahinch church has provided funds for urgently needed computers. Our Newtownards Sunday School sponsored tables and chairs for a school in a remote part of Kenya. Lisburn sends finances continually to cover Sunday School prizes for 2,000 children. Recently, I had a call from one brother promising money to buy maize for poor children. Another friend in Christ pledged sizeable contributions for various projects. The 'Books for Africa' appeal has taken off. Really, it has been overwhelming!

TN: What about Nepal?

DP: Projects there include the relocation of Precious Orphanage to a new site with more suitable facilities. A site became available beside the Kathmandu Church and Bible College, costing approximately £84,000. Though we doubted ourselves in this venture, we never doubted the Lord's ability to finance His own will. Around £70,000 has been raised already. We say, 'To God be the glory, great things He hath done!' A lady from our Larne congregation sent a sizeable gift to build churches in Nepal; our Magherafelt church did the same (These Nepalese buildings are relatively inexpensive, costing approximately £4,000 each). The Missionary Council also covers the costs of the Annual Conference.

TN: How have you found your first eighteen months in the role?

DP: I have been impressed by how the Council works as a team. We have superb church representatives who take an active part in this ministry and show a keen interest in what we seek to do, under God, to assist our missionary enterprise. Our secretary, John Dumigan, and our treasurer, John Gamble, both do sterling work. A subcommittee, which meets regularly, provides important advice and direction, and we really appreciate the contribution made by each member.

TN: How can churches help you at this time?

DP: I would appeal to all our churches to continue to support the Council, both practically, in gifts and offerings, and prayerfully, as we strive together before God to help and encourage our missionaries. We 'lift up our eyes' to 'look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest,' confident that, 'God shall supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'

TN: David, thanks for your time – and may God bless you and all who stand with you in this great enterprise!

Islam

INVESTIGATING THE ISSUES:

Late spring in N Ireland was enlivened not just by the hullabaloo of an election campaign but by controversy occasioned by a single sermon. The message was delivered by one of the province's best-known Evangelical pastors, and its theme was Islam. By all accounts, the preacher presented a forthright denunciation of the world's fastest growing religion. In the aftermath, he found himself condemned as an 'extremist' and a 'racist', and of making 'comments unbecoming a Christian minister'. We may not agree with every statement made from that pulpit, or in subsequent interviews – but that does not mean we think it inappropriate to issue a warning in respect of those 'faiths' that are patently unscriptural. Indeed we err if we fail to sound such alarms, especially in an age when many perceive one religion to be as valid as the next. It is right, then, that we ask the question, what is Islam all about?.

CREED

Muslim beliefs may be traced back to the seventh-century founder and 'prophet' of the religion, Muhammad, and to those who formulated his teachings after the death of their leader. Islam is monotheistic – believing in one true God – but this is not the God of the Bible. Allah, who is neither spiritual nor physical, is supreme; but he is so far above and beyond his creatures that he cannot be known in any personal way (cf. Hosea 4:6, 6:6, John 17:3). Muslims deny the Bible doctrine of the tri-une God, one God existing in three 'persons'. Christ is not God, and the Holy Spirit is equated with the angel Gabriel! Many Islamic tenets may be traced

to the Koran or Qur'an. This is one of just four of the original 104 holy books still in existence – the others being the Law, Psalms and Gospels – and is, to Muslims the most important. The Bible, in their view, has been amended to support Christianity, and it is therefore unreliable. All of this is far removed from the Christian understanding of the inspiration, inerrancy and sufficiency of Holy Scripture (cf. Isaiah 8:20, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21).

Islam has a deficient view of Christ. Of 124 000 prophets, 28 are referred to in the Koran. The six great prophets are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ and Muhammad – the last being the greatest of all. Key aspects of the person and work of Christ are denied: Muslims reject His pre-existence, His deity, His crucifixion and His atoning death. Truly, this is 'another Jesus'!

MUSLIMS REJECT HIS (CHRIST) PRE-EXISTENCE, HIS DEITY, HIS CRUCIFIXION AND HIS ATONING DEATH. TRULY, THIS IS 'ANOTHER JESUS':

And salvation, for the Muslim, depends ultimately on whether the good outweighs the bad. The individual is accompanied through life by two recording angels who keep a tally! It is salvation by works (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5) – there is no certainty, no assurance.

CONDUCT

Followers of Muhammad believe that religion must impact everyday life. They are right. Believers are to be light in a world of darkness and salt in a society blighted by corruption (Matthew 5:14-16). But for the Muslim this entails observance of a series of rituals, commonly styled 'the five pillars

of Islam'. These are the repetition of the Islamic mantra ('There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet'); five stated times of prayer each day, facing Mecca; fasting from dawn to dusk during the holy month of Ramadan; prescribed giving, including payments on property and income; and the Hajj, the requirement to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one's lifetime. Some add a sixth obligation – Jihad or 'holy war', a term that will be only too familiar to those who have suffered at the


CHRISTIANITY CROSSES BOUNDARIES AND HAS MADE STEADY PROGRESS IN MANY NON-WESTERN COUNTRIES.

hands of Islamic 'soldiers' in various conflicts, and as a result of various atrocities. Those who lose their lives in pursuit of Jihad are guaranteed a place in paradise.

There is no doubt that many Muslims are serious and sincere in the practice of their faith. And, yes, we might take a lesson from them as we review our own commitment to such things as witness, prayer, stewardship, and standing up for what we believe. Sadly, despite their zeal, they are ignorant of the one and only way to salvation (cf. John 14:6, Acts 4:12) – they have no Saviour, and without Him, no hope.

CONFLICT

The pastor mentioned at the outset was prompted to speak as he did because of the latest report of an individual from the Christian tradition facing execution in a state regulated by Islamic Sharia law. This is not unusual. Many Muslim controlled states have made conversion – 'reversion' is their term – a capital offence, and 'human rights' organizations regularly include these countries on lists of the most oppressive regimes in the world.



Why are these Muslims so aggressively opposed to the Christian faith? Some of this opposition may stem from historical events – the Crusades of the Middle Ages, for example, or the imperialism of more recent times – or from annoyance over present day conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and support for the state of Israel. Some arises from the view that Christians are ‘infidels’, and the Koran is intolerant of those who have departed from the ‘true’ faith.

But perhaps most significant is the belief that Christianity is just a Western religion. It is not, of course; it did not originate in the West, it crosses boundaries and has made steady progress in many non-western countries, it is for all – but long held perceptions are not easily left aside. And, of course, coming from this perspective, what do Muslims see in the West? Widespread immorality, abuse of alcohol and drugs, immodest standards, despising of all things ‘religious’ – hardly attractive, and certainly not the most ringing endorsement of the reality of the Christian faith and its ability to impact everyday life!

CHALLENGE

The rise of Islam is a challenge for us in the twenty-first century, a challenge that requires a robust and considered response. We must not be afraid to speak the truth. More and more, those from a conservative Christian constituency are being sidelined. Our voice needs to be heard, even if our message is unpopular. But we must deliver that message wisely and graciously (cf. Matthew 10:16). We must maintain an evangelistic focus – Muslims need salvation too! And this means making much of Christ; He, after all, is the answer, and there is hope for no man without a saving interest in Him. First and foremost, then, we must preach Christ; everything else is secondary. We must live as befits true followers of Christ, demonstrating that the laxity of modern western society is but a perversion of the liberty that Christ gives. We must shine for Him. Those in darkness need light: where are they to obtain it if not from those who possess it? (Matthew 5:16).

WE MUST
MAINTAIN AN
EVANGELISTIC FOCUS
- MUSLIMS NEED
SALVATION TOO! AND
THIS MEANS MAKING
MUCH OF CHRIST.

∴ Rev Timothy Nelson, Editor, is minister of Sixmilecross Free Presbyterian Church. He lectures in Biblical Exegesis in the denomination’s Theological Hall.

SMART WORK IN ARDARAGH SUNDAY SCHOOL!



Ardaraigh Sunday School children have collected £240 for the Christian School in Kenya, helping to purchase 90kg bags of beans, a staple in the diet of pupils there. The children filled Smartie tubes with coins and notes over a four month period. Miss Noreen McAfee visited during March to receive the gift.

CHRISTIAN WORKERS' TRAINING ACADEMY

The venue for the next Whitefield Christian Workers' Training Academy course is the Omagh Church. Two terms of 8 weeks will commence on Monday 20th October 2014 and Monday 19th January 2015.

The course is that offered for the first time in 2013-2014 in Lisburn Church. The 32 lectures cover the attributes of God, the Holy Spirit, the Tabernacle of Moses, studying Scripture, Jerusalem and the Temple in the time of Christ, Biblical counselling, depression, witnessing to Roman Catholics, Christ as preacher and Irish Church history. It is open to all, and costs £48 per term. All written material is provided, with refreshments between lectures. A diploma is presented to those who complete the course.

Applications to: The Secretary, Whitefield College of the Bible, 117 Banbridge Road, Gilford, Craigavon, BT63 6DL (028 4066 2232). Or contact Director of Studies, contact Rev McCammon, on 028 3832 4132.

Meanwhile the graduation service for the current session was held in Lisburn on Thursday 3rd April. Rev Gregory McCammon conducted the meeting with contributions from Revs Martin, McDermott, Curran, T Murray and S Murray. Fifty-four students graduated. Moderator Rev J Greer preached on "The One Thing Needful", Luke 10:38-42, emphasizing the necessity of being found at the Lord's feet. Afterwards supper was provided by the ladies of the Lisburn congregation.

MAINLAND WEEK OF PRAYER



The Mainland Minister's Week of Prayer this year was held in Bristol Free Presbyterian Church. We trust that the time spent will bear fruit in the coming days. Sincere thanks are due to Mr & Mrs McCaughey and family for their hospitality throughout the week

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED



Christ's exhortation to His first disciples is just as relevant today: *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). There is no farther-reaching communication medium available to us today than the internet. By the end of this year, it is estimated that some 3 billion people will be using this resource!

The new website of the Free Presbyterian Church, launched at our Easter convention in April, proclaims to the world the message of eternal salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Do seek to point the unconverted to the site where they will be faced with thought provoking questions about life, faith and eternity.

The website may also be used to introduce people to our denomination – to its history and distinctive beliefs. There are links to our various ministries thus displaying the depth and breadth of our witness for Christ. Other features of the website include: a daily devotional, the King James Bible, the Shorter and Larger Catechisms, the

Westminster Confession of Faith, access to online audio sermons, and an events page detailing the efforts of our churches to present Christ.

Each congregation has its own web pages. These pages contain the local church's history, a biography of the minister, a schedule of weekly services, and any upcoming special events. There are location directions, together with a link to an appropriate map.

Crucially, in an age when the internet is available in our hands as much as on our desks, the website has been designed to work equally well on small portable devices.

Our thanks are due to those members of the Publications and Media Committee who have worked so hard on this project and to all at Pepper Collective who have produced such a pleasing result. Please give your support – publicize this vital tool, and pray that the Lord would use it for the extension of Christ's kingdom.

FREE PRESBYTERIAN UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINS

Are you heading for University or College in September? Do you know someone who is? Various activities are organized for our students. Contact details for our chaplains are:

UU COLERAINE
Rev R Higginson
T: 028 7032 0266
M: 078 4003 3937

UU JORDANSTOWN
Rev J Woods
T: 028 9071 1626
M: 075 9522 0981

QUB / STRANMILLIS
Rev B McClung
T: 028 9083 5942
M: 077 1433 0390

CHILDREN'S CORNER



Boys and girls, "lacrimation" is the fancy name for crying. We have all done it. We cry when we are upset, or get hurt, or even sometimes when we laugh too much.

Many of the creatures in the animal kingdom can produce tears, but they don't cry. Many, especially puppies, howl and whimper if they are lonely, but they don't cry. However, one of the very few animals with the same tear glands as ourselves, and that is capable of shedding tears of sorrow, is the elephant. It's interesting to know that elephants have been known to cry when one of the herd dies, or if it should return after a long period of absence.

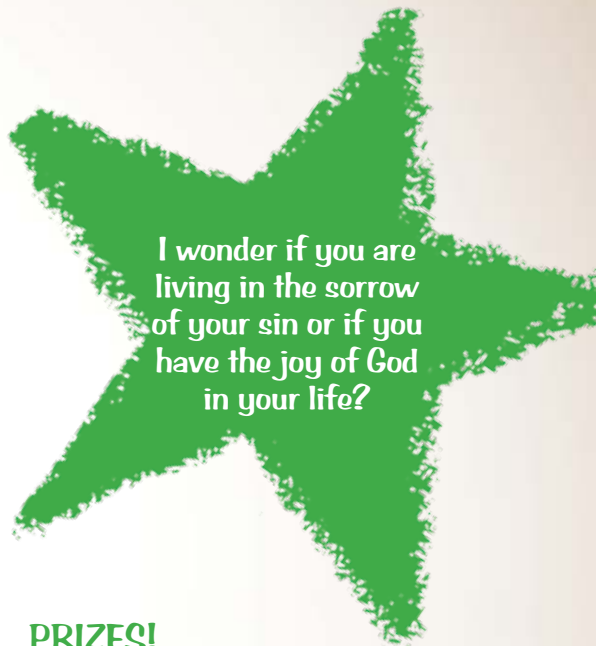
The Bible too speaks a lot about tears and people who cried. The shortest verse in our Bible is John 11:35: "Jesus wept". The Lord Jesus was called the "Man of Sorrows". Once, looking down over the great city of Jerusalem from the hillside, Jesus wept for the people that lived there. They were lost in sin and without a shepherd to guide

them. Then there was Peter – he also cried. This big, strong, burly fisherman broke down and "wept bitterly". Why? Well, he had just denied knowing the Lord, for the third time. Then the cock crowed just like the Saviour had said it would. And Peter wept, and went out into the darkness of the night, full of shame and guilt.

Then we read of Mary – she wept at the feet of the Saviour. She did so because she remembered that she was once an awful sinner. She was overwhelmed by the Saviour's love and mercy towards her. She cried because of His willingness to forgive her from all of her sin.

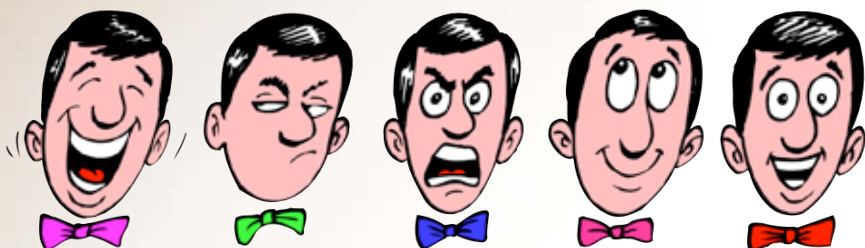
Sin always brings sorrow... but salvation brings joy. I wonder if you are living in the sorrow of your sin or if you have the joy of God in your life? Those who are saved have a bright and wonderful future because one day, for them, "God shall wipe away all tears" forever, when they enter heaven's glory (Revelation 21:4).

∴ Compiled by Robert McConnell



Quiz: Which one of these is not found in the Bible

LAUGHTER ANGER FRUSTRATION JOY BOLDNESS



Here are some references to look up if you are unsure of what the answer might be: 1 Samuel 18:6, Proverbs 15:1, Acts 4:13, James 4:9.

Answer:

Images from "Focus Multimedia" CD

PRIZES!

12 or under? To enter, send your answer, name, address, church attended to:

Rev. Stephen Pollock

Email: answer@fpvision.org

15 Fernagreevagh Road, Loughgall, Armagh, BT61 8PN

WINNERS LAST TIME ALL RECEIVE £5!

- » Noah Beattie (Aghalee)
- » Rebekah Burke (Markethill)
- » Jemma Halliday (Hebron)
- » Luke Murphy (Portglanone)
- » Emily Cuthbertson (Clogher Valley)
- » Catherine Fleming (Kesh)
- » Luke McKinney (Tandragree)
- » James Jones (Antrim)

GOD, TRUTH AND ME!

To have young people attending and active in our churches is a blessing from God. Many of you have the desire that marked previous generations: you want to be strong and do exploits for the Lord. This will only happen as you know God (Daniel 11:32). To know God is a relationship to be enjoyed, one that is based on who God is. Previously, we have considered aspects of the character of God – His sovereignty, His justice, His goodness. These snap-shots of truth are aimed at stirring our interest in the doctrines of God in order that we would be strong and accomplish much.

One crucial aspect of God’s character is that He is **true**. He is the one and only true and living God (Jeremiah 10:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). This age is plagued by relativism – ‘something may be true

for you without being true for me’. We acknowledge that human knowledge is subject to limitation and change. Finite man doesn’t know everything! But God, who is eternal and all-knowing, holds all the information required to speak **absolute truth** at all times. He is the God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He is “a God of truth” (Deuteronomy 32:4, also Exodus 34:6).

Thus the Lord Jesus, God manifest in flesh, describes Himself as “the truth” (John 14:6); informing Pilate that He came “to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). So, repeatedly we find the words ‘verily, verily’ (‘truly, truly’) before the pronouncements of the Lord. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and

believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). This life, He made clear, can only come through His death for He said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).

What assurance we have in knowing that the salvation of our souls is a matter of absolute truth! What confidence, when turning to the Word, to know we are reading truth! And the child of God will hunger to know the truth (John 8:32); will rejoice in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6) and will have a burden to speak “the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).
**Young person, know God...
 be strong...do exploits!**

FROM THE OLD TO THE YOUNG

“Pilate saith, ‘What is truth?’ This famous question, in my judgment, can only admit of one interpretation. It is the cold, sneering, skeptical interjection of a mere man of the world, who has persuaded himself that there is no such thing as truth, that all religions are equally false... It is precisely the state of mind in which thousands of great and rich men in every age live and die.”

- J.C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts on John’s Gospel, Vol.3 (Notes on John 18v38)

What Can I Do to Help my Minister?

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

This month, Rev David Stewart (Portglenone FPC) was asked 'What can I do to help my minister?'



In Paul's epistles he refers to his readers using the following terms: 'fellowlabours' (Philippians 4:3), 'fellovsoldier' (Philippians 2:25), 'fellowservant' (Colossians 1:7), 'partner' (Philemon 17), 'labourers together' (1 Corinthians 3:9). Such terminology expressed the truth that he, as a minister of the New Testament, did not want them to view the work of God as a 'one man show.' For Paul, believers were fellow-labourers working together with him for the cause of Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 8:23, he entitles Titus his 'fellowhelper', recognising him as a man who was a help rather than a hindrance to the work of God. The desire of every believer, young and old, ought to be, 'How can I be a help, rather than a hindrance, in the work of Christ? How can I be a help to the minister that God has placed in the congregation to which I belong?'

Firstly, you can help your minister in your *prayers for him*. Paul was aware of the value of the prayers of others when he urged, in Romans 15:30, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me". Many of the old 'prayer warriors' in God's work have finished their race on earth and entered into their eternal reward. The question arises: 'Who has taken their place in the prayer meeting?' Every minister covets the prayerful support of his people.

You might ask, 'what do I pray for when I pray for my minister?' First and foremost, pray that God will fill him with the Holy Spirit. Pray that his ministry will be effectively used by God to rescue the lost, recover the backslidden and revive God's people. Remember to pray for his wife and family. Pray also for unity to prevail in the work of Christ and that he will have a good testimony in the community where he labours. The desire of every minister is summarized in the words of Paul, "pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified", 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

Young people can also help their pastor by *their faithful presence* in the weekly church meetings. It can be disheartening for a minister on a Lord's Day morning, Lord's Day evening or midweek prayer meeting, to look down and see people missing. Simply sitting in the congregation, listening with reverence to the Word of God being preached, is

a real help and encouragement to the preacher as he ministers. Sadly, we live in an age when people run here, there and everywhere, not being fully supportive of God's work in their local congregation. Yet God would have us imitate the New Testament believers, of whom it was said that, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers", Acts 2:42.

Again, you can also assist your minister by *active participation* in God's work. There are many avenues of service open for young people to serve God in their local congregation. These include participation in media teams, outreach works, children's meetings and youth fellowships. Often these ministries are understaffed and left to the 'faithful few' to carry forward the work. Never expect God to call you to some wider field of service if you are not serving the Lord faithfully in your local church! When God leads you to a work, give yourself wholly to it. It is a hindrance rather than a help when workers are irregular in attendance and unreliable in support.

Samuel gave good counsel to Israel in 1 Samuel 12:24, "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you".

The final thing that will be a tremendous help to your minister, and the testimony of Christ in your district, is the *purity of your life*. When Paul wrote to youthful Timothy, he exhorted him, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity", 1 Timothy 4:12. Many today fail to live up to this exhortation and consequently bring themselves hurt and disgrace. In a world plagued by immorality, when many live unrestrained by God's boundaries of wholesomeness and purity, God would have you to be different! Nothing hinders the work of God more than the broken testimony of a professing Christian. We must then heed the instructions of Paul in 1 Timothy 5:22, "keep thyself pure", and of Peter in 1 Peter 2:11, "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul". By doing so, you honour the Lord and help maintain the testimony of Christ in your neighbourhood – a paramount concern in the heart of the minister.

May God enable you to be like Titus – a 'fellowhelper' to your minister!

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THE BELIEVERS, IN WORD,
IN CONVERSATION, IN
CHARITY, IN SPIRIT, IN
FAITH, IN PURITY.

NORTH DOWN

BANGOR (outside Danske Bank)
28th June, 11.30AM
 Preacher: Rev Graham Middleton

SOUTH & MID DOWN

BLACK SATURDAY PARADE
RATHFRILAND, 2.00PM
30th August
 Preacher: Rev David Smith

N & S ANTRIM & NORTH WEST

PORTRUSH, 19th July
 Meet at Ramore Head Car Park,
 6.15pm, for March of Witness. Open
 Air in Amphitheatre at 7:00pm.
 Preacher: Mr Tom Laverty

GREATER BELFAST

SHANKILL ROAD
28th June, 1.30PM
 Preacher: Rev John Woods

SOUTH WEST & MID ULSTER

BLACK SATURDAY PARADE,
ARMAGH (outside the Gaol)
30th August, 11.00AM
 Preacher: tbc

DELEGATES MEETING

Mon 15th September, Rasharkin FPC, 8.00pm

**YOUTH
 COUNCIL
 EVENTS**

**COMBINED
 YOUTH COUNCIL/
 CONSIDER CHRIST
 OUTREACH EVENTS**

FESTIVAL OF FLIGHT AIR SHOW
Newcastle: 9th August 2014

NI INTERNATIONAL AIR SHOW
Portrush: 6th September 2014

YOUTH COUNCIL SUMMER OUTREACH TEAMS

This summer will see, Lord willing, Youth Council outreach teams once again seeking to bring the gospel of Christ to the lost. Teams are due to work in Larne and the South Down region. Please pray for these teams, together with those involved in the summer camp. This year also sees a team going to work in Glasgow during the Commonwealth Games. Rev. Wesley Irwin (Rutherglen) writes:

Over eleven days from the 23rd July, 6,500 athletes from 71 countries will complete to be champions at the 20th

Commonwealth Games. Athletes, organizers, officials and visitors from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean and the Pacific are expected to gather in Glasgow. This presents our congregation in Rutherglen with a special opportunity for evangelism. Helping us in our efforts to reach the masses will be a team of young people, sent from our Youth Council. The young people will be involved in tract distribution at a number of venues, some of which are local to the church. As such we will be seeking to reach residents as well as those from afar. In effect, our witness for Christ

will be local and worldwide at the same venue! The team will be a great asset to our work, and it will also give the young people an opportunity to serve the Lord and be bold in witnessing for Christ and His glorious gospel.

We also pray that the distribution of literature with our church details will make our congregation more widely known, resulting in new people coming to our services and hearing the gospel.

We value the prayers of God's people for the gospel outreach in Glasgow this summer.

A WORD TO WOMEN

“CALL UNTO ME, AND I WILL ANSWER THEE, AND SHOW THEE GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS, WHICH THOU KNOWEST NOT.”

(JEREMIAH 33:3)

Between 1949 and 1952 revival swept through the Hebridean Islands off the west coast of Scotland. The evangelist, Duncan Campbell, largely attributed the tremendous outpouring of the Lord's power to the faithful prayer life of two sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith. Peggy (84) was blind, and her sister Christine (82) was almost bent double with arthritis. Unable to attend church, their humble cottage became a sanctuary where they met in prayer with God. They seldom prayed publically, or played any leading role in church life, but they spent hours praying earnestly that the Lord would visit in saving power. And He did! What an impact, through God, these ladies had in their district!

There was decay, defeat and discouragement in Israel. *“Every man did that which was right in his own eyes”* (Judges 21:25). There was no spiritual authority or leadership in the land. Then the Holy Spirit introduced another praying woman. Hannah bore terrible burdens. Not only did she have to share her husband, Elkanah, but she was constantly taunted by his other wife, Penninah, because she had no children. Devastated and broken, Hannah accompanied her husband to Shiloh for the yearly sacrifice to the Lord. Bitterness of heart and anguish of spirit clouded her life, to the point where *“she wept and did not eat”* (1 Samuel 1:7).

What did Hannah do? She went up to the temple and *“prayed unto the Lord”* (v10). She poured out her distresses and disappointments before Him. I am reminded of the hymn, ‘take your burden to the Lord and leave it there’. So many of us take our burdens to the Lord but we fail to leave them there; so often we take them away with us again. 1 Peter 5:7 says, *“casting (or throwing) all your care upon Him, for He careth for you”*.

Hannah left her burden, and she went away a changed person. Her circumstances had not changed; she was not leaving with a baby in her arms. She was still barren and Penninah was still around, but Hannah left

rejoicing, with the promise that God would answer her prayer (v17&18). What faith! She believed that one day she would have a son, a son who would deliver Israel. I wonder, when God speaks to us through His Word, are we as ready to believe Him as Hannah was? Do we hold on to those *“exceeding great and precious promises”* (2 Peter 1:4)? Do we trust God, even though nothing seems to be immediately changing for the better?

Of course, Hannah did conceive a child. Soon she held in her arms the tiny infant Samuel whom she had dedicated to the Lord. Hannah kept her promise – she gave Samuel back to Him. But instead of being full of sorrow and self pity, Hannah's heart was filled with rejoicing and thankfulness to the Lord. Her great prayer of praise (1 Samuel 2:1-10), expresses an exalted view of the Lord: *“My heart rejoiceth in the Lord...there is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee”*. Her delight was not so much in Samuel, though she loved him dearly; or in her own satisfaction, knowing that she was obeying God's will; but from a contemplation of the majesty and holiness of her Lord.

Soon God's Word was again heard throughout the land, and the people turned from idols to serve Him. Samuel became a towering figure in the history of Israel. All this was accomplished through the believing prayer of one woman! Can the Lord do the same today? Of course He can! He is *“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever”* (Hebrews 13:8).

D. L. Moody said ‘Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure’. Will you be that ‘kneeling figure’ in your home or local area? Will you ‘hold the ropes’ in prayer for our missionaries all over the world? May the Lord enable us all to be ‘kneeling figures’ in His work!

∴ **Alison Armstrong** lives in Portavogie, N Ireland. She is the wife of the Free Presbyterian minister there, active in the life of the congregation, and works as a primary school teacher.

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DISTINCTIVES

FEATURES OF FREE PRESBYTERIANISM

PREACHING THE WORD

THE YEAR WAS 1960. IT WAS A SUNDAY MORNING AND I WAS, AS USUAL, IN MOUNT MERRION CHURCH. I WAS NOT IN MY ACCUSTOMED PLACE, BUT WAS SEATED RIGHT AT THE FRONT, WITH NO ONE BETWEEN THE PULPIT AND ME. THE PREACHER WAS REV. BERT COOKE AND I HAD HEARD HIM MANY TIMES BEFORE. BUT THIS TIME WAS TO BE DIFFERENT.

That morning has never left me. Indeed it would not be too much to say that it made an impression on me that in some ways fashioned my own preaching ministry. I was overwhelmed with a sense of awe as never before. As I sat listening to the message I was struck with the solemnity of delivering God's Word and was gripped with a sense of the majesty of true Bible preaching. It would not be putting it too strongly to say that I felt a holy fear of preaching that has never left me.

As one who came into the Free Church in its very early days, I can say that one of the things that set it apart from other churches was the quality of its pulpit ministry. It was not simply that our ministers were men who could expound the Word of God – or that they were evangelistic in their gospel presentation. These things were obviously true, but what marked our early preachers and preaching was the sense that here were men who were not merely doing a job, or even delivering a sermon. No, these were men who knew God, who had sought God for a message, and who preached with a burning zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of souls!

Free Presbyterian preaching was preeminently biblical preaching. Our ministers expounded the Bible with reverence and the total conviction

that they were handling the inspired Word of God. Thus their preaching was Christ-centred. Free Presbyterian ministers did not waste their time with the quirky little follies that so many others indulged in. They were men on a mission. They believed that the Lord had raised them up for a specific ministry at a crucial time in Northern Ireland and they did not lose sight of their calling.

The preaching of these men was marked by a deep solemnity. It did not trifle with the things of God. They conducted their ministry in the light of the judgment day. Eternity was stamped on their messages. They were all convinced Calvinists in their theology, but theirs was Calvinism on fire for God and filled with the assurance that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”

Such preaching was the result of much study and fervent prayer. Those were the days before computers and the all too easy access to the “preaching material” now so readily available on the Internet. Our ministers read and studied the great pulpit giants of former days, but they did not do what so many “busy” preachers of today do – namely, hunt up a few alliterated

points and apt illustrations from other preachers and recycle them for their own congregations. Over the years I have received countless invitations to tap into such “resources,” all tailored for the busy pastor. Pastors who are too busy to give themselves to the prolonged study of God's Word and to the solemn pursuit of a message from God for their people are simply too busy – and they are failing in their primary calling. That was not a charge that could be levelled against our ministers.

The result was that when they entered the pulpit they came before their people as men who had come out from the presence of God – or rather who brought to the pulpit with them a deep and real sense of God's presence. In many ways, that is what I most remember about the preaching that I grew up listening to. Mount Merrion was a fairly small congregation seeking to serve the Lord in a particularly difficult situation on the outskirts of post-war Belfast. Our building and amenities were modest. Well, actually, that is being too kind: they were pretty mean! But one thing we did not lack was the thrilling, yet awesome, sense of the nearness of the Lord. That was particularly true of the Sunday evening evangelistic services.

THESE WERE MEN WHO KNEW GOD, WHO HAD SOUGHT GOD FOR A MESSAGE, AND WHO PREACHED WITH A BURNING ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE WELFARE OF SOULS!

Those were times none of us who were privileged to be there will ever forget. As Mr. Cooke preached the gospel and applied it to the hearts and consciences of men and women, the sense of conviction was, at times, overpowering.

I have naturally written mostly about Mt. Merrion, for that is where I was most affected by the preaching of the Free Church's ministers. Mr. Cooke was not alone in preaching with such solemn zeal and power. Rev. John Douglas, Dr. Paisley, Rev. Cecil Menary – all came to minister. These men had different preaching styles, but they shared the same fundamental characteristics. Each of them preached as a dying man to dying men and women. Each of them looked on preaching as more than the mere communication of information. That is something that has ruined many a man's ministry, the notion that a preacher's job is simply to be a "communicator," a mere conveyor of information. What a travesty! I learned from Mr. Cooke that a preacher is not just a mouth to communicate. He is a whole man and he must preach the gospel with everything that is in him. He communicates truth not as a lecturer, but as an ambassador of the most high God, a man who speaks with divine authority and spiritual power.

One thing must be noted. Free Presbyterian preaching was unashamedly militant. Because we believed the Bible we opposed and preached against the heresies that were prevalent in other churches and that were largely tolerated – or at least not opposed – by most evangelicals. Our preachers were crusaders against modernism, rationalism, Romanism and ecumenism. A sleep of death was hanging over large parts of the Ulster church scene and we saw it as part of our calling to disturb it. The Lord blessed that stand. Our own people knew why they were Free Presbyterians. They were well instructed in the truths of the gospel and in the issues that challenged the crown rights of King Jesus. And many others learned from us of the inroads of apostasy into their churches and were challenged to take their stand for Christ and His truth.

Here, then, are the features of the preaching on which our churches were built. Our preaching was biblical, Christ-centred, authoritative, solemnly fervent, evangelistic, militant and Spirit-anointed. We were not the most learned, or the most brilliant preachers in the land, but we were sold out to God to preach Christ in all His fulness, expecting Him to pour out His Spirit's power and blessing, as He had promised. To God's eternal glory, we can honestly say that we did not expect in vain, as it pleased God through the foolishness of our preaching to bring many to a saving knowledge of His Son. May God enable us ever to see the value of such ministry – and grant us generations of preachers ready and willing to respond to the challenges of this and every succeeding age!

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∴ **Dr Alan Cairns** is the Minister Emeritus of Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville, USA. He lives in retirement in Ballymoney, N. Ireland, but continues his preaching ministry home and abroad.

UPDATE: CONSIDER CHRIST



CAMPAIGN 'FLIES' AGAIN IN ULSTER

While Consider Christ has focused largely on the Republic of Ireland in recent years, we do not intend to forget N. Ireland, where the outreach began. Two Air Shows, one in Newcastle on 9th August, the other in Portrush on 6th September, present a great opportunity to reach many with the Gospel. Consider Christ is pleased to be teaming-up with the Youth Council for outreaches at these events, not least because the Council has faithfully supported our outreach in the South.

Preparatory meetings have been arranged for practical instruction and prayer on Saturday 2nd August in Annalong at 7.30pm, and in Ballymoney on Friday 29th August at 7.30pm. Newly appointed Youth Evangelist Mr Jonny Smith will be the speaker.

Perhaps you have been unable to join the Consider Christ Team in the South - here is an opportunity to join us and the Youth Council for these events. The outreach is open to all with a desire to serve the Master and spread the Gospel.

TAKING GROUND IN THE REPUBLIC

We continue to enjoy the blessing of the Lord in the South. Since our last report the team has been to Naas, Co. Kildare, and back to Athlone, Co. Westmeath. We returned to Athlone in an effort to consolidate the on-going work there, and we are pleased to report a definite increase in interest and attendance at the meetings, which has been running now for 18 months.

In May we ventured to Co. Kerry, necessitating an overnight stay. Seventy enthusiastic members travelled, and after a restful, though short night in Limerick, we made our way to Tralee, an hour and half further south. Though there was rain, often torrential, on our journey down, we enjoyed a virtually dry day in Tralee. What a joy it is to be conscious that we are "labourers together with God," and to see His hand even upon the weather!

There were good opportunities on the doors and we managed to cover the whole town. The follow-up meeting on the Monday exceeded our expectations,

with a real sense of the Lord's presence while eighteen local people, a mixture of saved and unsaved, sat in rapt attention as Rev Larry Power testified and Mr Colin Maxwell brought a Gospel message. After the meeting one concerned young lady talked to Colin at length about the condition of her soul. Pray the Lord will save her. We found in Tralee, as we have in other places, a real appetite for the straight preaching of the Word, in people who are spiritually starved. Before we had opportunity to announce a further meeting several individuals approached us, eager that we return. Our next Outreach Day is on 16th August, to Galway, we are happy to bring as many as will go.

We are grateful to God's people for their continued prayer and practical support, and to the churches who have put their minibuses at our disposal. We are confident that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord."

∴ **Dr Lindsay Wilson**
(Consider Christ Coordinator)



FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

This is my first 'End of Year' report and it is gratifying to be able to state that we have had an excellent year and that the students have worked hard and conducted themselves in a most acceptable manner in the college. We ended the term with a visit from Miss Noreen McAfee, Principal of Bible Christian Faith Christian Academy in Kenya. Miss McAfee, accompanied by her mother, was interviewed about her life and work and answered questions posed by the students; she also showed a short DVD of her work. We believe her visit was most helpful and instructive. Both she and her mother commented on the friendliness and courtesy of the students.

Six of our students will leave us at the end of this college year (subject to exam success!) and we will miss them from the college. Four are ministerial students, one took the two year course, and the other was an extern student who will be returning to South Korea in September. We will be praying for them as they seek to know where the Lord would have them serve Him in the future.

Meanwhile they will have had an exceptionally busy time, with little respite from the rigours of revision until the last exam has been taken. Then there is the anxious wait for results – something not peculiar to those at Bible College!

Many of our congregations have had the opportunity to meet and hear the students in deputation meetings and when they have been engaged to preach throughout the province and beyond. They have taken services both here and in the Republic; and also in England, Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man. We hope to increase the number of churches visited on deputation in the future. One student spent last summer in Lock in Australia, and another visited Calgary in Canada.

We are looking forward to welcoming new students in September and we anticipate a similar overall number to the present total. In the new college year we will be welcoming two new lecturers. Rev Samuel Murray will be teaching Pastoral Theology, while Dr Lindsay Wilson will handle Christian Doctrine, Ethics, and Evangelism – the

title sounding rather more complicated than we trust the course will prove!

Sadly we will be saying farewell to two of our lecturers at the end of the present term. Dr David McIlveen has taught Christian Ethics and Leadership since the commencement of the Whitefield College thirty-five years ago and also served for many years as College Registrar. We will also lose Rev David Park who has taught Christian Doctrine and Evangelism for eleven years. Both are stepping down because of the pressure of other commitments and we will be very sorry to see them go. We acknowledge all their efforts and wish them well for the future.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have supported us by your prayers and by your generous giving. The work of the college is vital to the future well being of our denomination and we appreciate the help you continue to give us in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

∴ **Rev Gordon Ferguson**



THE WEST COUNTRY

Two and half years ago, we moved to Bristol, a city with a rich Gospel heritage. To the North stands a monument to Tyndale, known as 'the most dangerous man' in Tudor England, just because he was armed with a pen and a desire to translate the Scriptures into English. Then there is Hanham, where George Whitefield preached to thousands in the open air. John Wesley's chapel sits in the centre of town, and the homes which George Muller constructed testify to what God can do through prayer. History comes alive in Bristol, but this great city is now deemed the third most ungodly in the United Kingdom!

Bristol and its environs contain nearly one million people and our work here is small, although we have seen a slight increase for which we give God the glory. Twenty-five attend the morning service, with a recent peak of thirty-one. Please pray that God would bless those who attend, and that He would add others through conversion. Prayer meeting attendances slowly increase. As yet there is no Sunday school, and the children in the area are rarely seen. Pray for an opportunity to reach children with the Gospel.

Each month members of the church deliver "The Messenger", a little gospel leaflet, to some 1000 homes. There have been good contacts and conversations, but we long to see people come in. "The Messenger" takes three

or four people two to three hours to deliver, and then the reality dawns that we are not even scratching the surface in attempting to reach Bristol. Pray that God would dispel the darkness – there is a second, and possibly third, generation, growing up ignorant of God's Word, perishing on a diet of natural religion and secularism.

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Once a month, until recently, we had a service in a Residential Home. This has closed due to financial cuts, but a door has opened in another facility close to the church. Pray for favour with staff and residents, and that they would hear the effectual call of God.

Jeremiah Lamphier realized that to reach the people of New York he required a thousand lives, but he only had one. The solution was prayer. He prayed and saw a revival, and so may we be encouraged to pray. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14) Your support, in this way, is much appreciated.

✠ Maurice McCaughey

REMEMBERING MARGARET ARMSTRONG

PART TWO

Last time we considered the life of Margaret Armstrong up to the point of her separation from the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) because of its connection with the ecumenical National Council of Churches of Kenya. While her separation from the Church of Ireland took place in 1966, she tendered her resignation from AIM in the late 1970's when she came to Southampton, England, to assist in looking after her ailing father.

On arrival in Southampton, Margaret aligned herself with Spring Road Evangelical Church, then pastored by the late Rev David Fountain, a noted conservative evangelical. She threw herself into the work of the church and warm tributes have been paid to her godliness and zeal. Jill May writes: 'She lived in a lovely rambling house overlooking the Hamble river which could always be used by the clubs belonging to the church. I remember a series on the 'I ams' of Jesus, with a treasure hunt round the garden, including the sheds where hundreds of apples were stored. Many of the children were from poorer backgrounds and running round the garden eating the apples was just what they enjoyed, but the Gospel was her great delight – all very happy memories of a very kind lady who loved her Saviour.'

During her time in Southampton Margaret became close friends with Larry and Barbara Darmanin. They were to prove a tremendous source of comfort to her when she was diagnosed with the illness which was to lead to her death on 22 August 1981 at the early age of 47. Margaret paved the way for Free Presbyterian missionary work in Kenya through her links with the Kendagor family. Pastor Nathaniel Kendagor takes up the story: 'I don't know exactly



when my father came to know the late Miss Margaret Armstrong. She started visiting my father and Andrew's missionary work in Kara Pokot in early 1974 when AIC did not support him. She would support his work at times whenever she was able. She heard of my work at Kapenguria in 1977 and the difficulties when the church was not strong to support the workers. I don't know how she got the information. After a while in the same year she bought me a motor cycle for the work. Margaret wrote to me later and told me that she had left AIM because of AIC membership in the National Council of Churches of Kenya.

She then wrote about the Free Presbyterian Church and suggested that we should come to Ulster, after which my Father and Andrew came over and met Margaret who introduced them to the church. Margaret was able to buy a Land Rover from an AIM missionary to assist Andrew in his work at Kara Pokot. In 1979 she bought me a Subaru which I used until the coming of Miss Margaret Russell. Margaret did not actually work in Bible Christian Faith Church (BCFC) but she supported our views and encouraged us in the work. Her plan was to come

out and work in BCFC, even after she took ill. She came out late in 1981 and was still hopeful. We were all saddened when we heard of her passing.'

Margaret Armstrong's funeral took place in Spring Road church and was conducted by Rev Fountain and Dr Paisley, who later spoke at a memorial service in Armagh Free Presbyterian Church. Margaret was greatly loved by those who knew her. She was a close friend of then Chairman of the Missionary Council, Mr George McConnell, who supplied much of the information for these articles. Mrs Marie Wilson, a founding member of Armagh congregation, says: 'I first knew Margaret Armstrong many years ago when I held a prayer meeting in our home for AIM. Margaret attended it with her mother and sister, and we had lovely fellowship. She loved to hear Dr Paisley preach and I can see her yet sitting with her elbow on her knee and drinking in every word. Margaret was a very humble person and had a great burden and love for Africa. It is lovely that one of the book rooms is named after her. It was so sad when she passed away at only 47 years of age.'

∴ Rev Gordon Ferguson



FROM CARS TO KIDS: ROBERT MCCONNELL

I was born in 1969, the second child of David and Annie McConnell. Mine was a privileged upbringing because my parents were saved, and from an early age I was taught God's Word. There was never a time in my childhood that I didn't know of my sinfulness and my need of the Saviour. However, being rebellious and feeling hemmed in by the demands of Scripture it was not until near the end of primary school that I sought the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing. It was a simple confession of sin, made by the fireside, one Sunday night, as I knelt to pray at the end of family devotions.

Childhood passed into adolescence, and I soon enjoyed the freedom of getting out and going here and there to various "Youth Rallies" and

"Convention" meetings. It was at one of these meetings that God challenged me for the first time about my willingness to serve Him. The Lord enabled me on that night to say "yes" to whatever He would have me to do. During counselling afterwards, I was told to get involved in the prayer meetings and the work in my own local church, and this I did.

However, God's call to 'full time' service did not come for another twenty years. I started work in the motor industry. As a Christian, I always nailed my colours to the mast, especially when moving from the smaller family run garages to the larger, more affluent dealerships in Belfast. And the Lord

blessed me abundantly. Very often I felt like Joseph, who was continually promoted and honoured by the Lord. Then, at the peak of my career,

THEN, AT THE PEAK OF MY CAREER, THE LORD CALLED IN THE VOW OF WILLINGNESS THAT I HAD MADE ALL THOSE YEARS BEFORE.

the Lord called in the vow of willingness that I had made all those years before. Things however had changed. I was now married and settled down with a little family, no longer carefree and young. I had responsibilities, and bills to pay. We had just put our house on the market and were making plans to move to a much bigger property...

but God had other plans: He was calling me into full time service among the boys and girls, a work I had always enjoyed in my local church.



After study in the Whitefield College, I was accepted by the Mission Board of our denomination to work as a full time child evangelist – and the rest, as they say, is history.

Today, in the main, the work involves speaking at 140 assemblies, SU and RE classes during the school term. In the summer and early autumn I conduct up to eight weeks of Holiday Bible Clubs, children’s missions and youth camps. In addition there are many children’s meetings, parents’ nights, youth meetings, magazine articles, seminars, Children’s

I CANNOT REALLY EXPLAIN THE GREAT JOY FOUND IN SERVING THE LORD IN THIS ROLE.

down to a good read with some Christian biography. Very often a tear would roll down my cheek as I drank in the miraculous things that the Lord was

Day services and door to door evangelism – all in connection with the existing works in our congregations.

I cannot really explain the great joy found in serving the Lord in this role. Years ago, I used to enjoy sitting

pleased to do in the lives of those of a bygone age – how their needs were met, their prayers were answered, and they were used to win souls.

To then have the privilege of living out those same experiences is more than tongue can tell! What a wonderful Saviour we have, transforming us, so that we might be fit for reasonable service! “To God be the glory.” Amen.



∴ **Robert McConnell**

<p>MISSION BOARD DETAILS</p>	<p>Office: Mr George McConnell, 3 Carrigenagh Road, Kilkeel, BT34 4NE, NI T. 44 (0) 28 4176 5574 E. gmckilkeel@aol.com</p>	<p>Chairman: Rev Ian Harris, 23a Moneydaragh Road, Annalong, BT34 4TY T. 028 4376 8040 E. ian.harris960@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Secretary: Rev David Park, 55 Market Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6ED T. 028 2766 2039 E. hebronfpc@btconnect.com</p>
<p>Website</p>	<p>www.fpcmission.org</p>		



DATES FOR THE DIARY

JULY

**21st-25th BALLYGOWAN,
SPORTS WEEK**
Details: 028 9752 8757

AUGUST

**2nd-10th ENNISKILLEN,
LOUGH ERNE CONVENTION**
Speakers: Rev J Greer
Dr J Douglas
Rev I Harris
Time: Nightly at 8.00pm

**4th-8th BALLYGOWAN,
HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB**
Details: 028 9752 8757

**4th-8th CROSSGAR,
HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB**
Monday – Friday: 6.30 – 9.00pm
Church Service: Sunday 10th, 7.00pm

**9th NEWCASTLE AIR SHOW
YOUTH COUNCIL /
CONSIDER CHRIST
OUTREACH**
Details: 0788 6265600

**11th-15th BALLYNAHINCH,
HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB**
Monday – Friday: 6.30 – 9.00pm
Church Service: Sunday 17th, 7.00pm

**16th GALWAY,
CONSIDER CHRIST OUTREACH**
Details: 0788 6265600

**19th COLERAINE,
SPECIAL MEETING**
Time: Tuesday at 8.00 pm
Theme: The Life & Ministry of R M M'Cheyne

AUGUST

**24th-26th COLERAINE,
REVIVAL CONFERENCE**
Time: Sunday at 11.30 am & 6.30 pm
Monday & Tuesday at 8.00 pm
Speakers: Rev R Higginson
Rev J Greer
Rev J Morrow
Rev J Douglas

31st-14th KEADY, GOSPEL MISSION
(ARMAGH ROAD, ARMAGH, MARKETHILL
& TULLYVALLEN CHURCHES)
Time: Sunday at 3.30pm,
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speakers: Rev D McMillan
Rev J Porter
Rev R McLernon

SEPTEMBER

**6th PORTRUSH AIR SHOW
YOUTH COUNCIL /
CONSIDER CHRIST OUTREACH**
Details: 0788 6265600

14th-26th PARKGATE, GOSPEL MISSION
(ANTRIM & BALLYCLARE CHURCHES)
Time: Sundays at 3.30pm,
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev R Higginson

**19th+21st BALLYGOWAN
MISSIONARY WEEKEND**
Time: Friday at 8.00pm,
Sunday at 11.30am & 7.00pm

**20th TANDRAGEE
MEN'S CONFERENCE**
Time: Saturday at 10.00am
Speakers: Revs S Pollock
Rev I Brown
Rev A Cairns