

FREE PRESBYTERIAN VISION



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

Is there a Christian Sabbath?



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Editorial

Have you noticed the proliferation of charity shops in our province?

Recently as I drove through a small rural town I counted no less than four within yards of one another. They seem to be springing up everywhere, and I admit that I am not averse to scanning their bookshelves, hoping to find some discarded treasure among the dross – and not altogether without success!

I'm not sure what the rise of the charity shops says about our society. Perhaps it is a commentary on straitened economic circumstances, or just testimony to the modern penchant for 'recycling' and, more contemporary still, 'up-cycling'. I do know that when the word 'charity' is found in Scripture, it has a different connotation. It signifies love, and that of the highest kind.

But the two things are not unrelated.

What is charity if it is not love in action? A charitable disposition is required of Christians, Galatians 6:10. Paul's counsel challenges us to be generous especially towards fellow-believers (cf Philippians 4:14-18, Hebrews 13:16), but not exclusively. As we approach 'the season of giving' we have opportunity not to pander to the crass commercialism of an ever more secular age, but to find appropriate ways of helping those in need.

And we should remember the best present we can make to our neighbours. We can, by testimony and example, acquaint them with the good news of the One who is "the unspeakable gift", even Christ Himself (2 Corinthians 9:15)

∴ Timothy Nelson
editor@fpvision.org

FOR THIS PURPOSE



“HE WAS MANIFESTED.”

1 JOHN 3:5,8

The first gospel message ever revealed promised the manifestation (appearance) of a Saviour (Genesis 3:15). There would be One “manifested to take away our sins” (1 John 3:5) and to Him all the prophets gave witness (Acts 10:43). Moses prophesied of Him as the great Prophet that God would raise up like to himself (Deuteronomy 18:15,18). Isaiah names Him “Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14), Daniel calls Him “the Messiah” (Daniel 9:26). All these prophetic manifestations were fulfilled personally “when the fulness of time was come” and “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Galatians 4:4).

In the incarnation of Deity, the Godhead was united to manhood, and Christ in His glorious person is God and man. It was a true humanity which He took in intimate and indissoluble union with His Deity. As merely God, He could not endure suffering or die; and as only man, He could not have sustained the weight of our sin and our sorrows. The one is of no avail in the great work of redemption apart from the other, and the two in mysterious union constitute

the great “mystery of godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16). The first Adam was only man, but Christ as the “last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45) is the God-man.

In the manifestation of the Son of God as the only Saviour, the love and mercy of God was so wonderfully revealed. Adam’s breach of the first covenant, which declared death against the soul that sinned, meant that he, and we in him, came under the curse of the law and power of the devil. The devil has “the power of death” (Hebrews 2:14) because he tempts men to commit sin that meritoriously renders them liable to death. Satan believed that by causing man to rebel against his Creator he would rob God of the love and allegiance of those He made in His own image.

While the tempter knew that God in His holiness must punish His rebel creatures, he had not considered the infinite love and wisdom of God for them. Even his cherubic intellect never envisioned the matchless plan of God’s

salvation by way of substitution and sacrifice. The apostle John reminds us that “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the

works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). It was particularly by shedding His blood that He did so when He died “the just for the unjust” (1 Peter 3:18). He removed man’s obligation to death due to his sin and so broke the devil’s power to ruin lost souls. How it galls him to the heart when he sees himself defeated, even in a soul that through his means was put far off from

God being brought nigh unto Him in Christ! (Ephesians 2:13) Every new manifestation of Christ through His word to the believing soul wounds Satan’s interest in us, weakens unbelief, and warms the heart as we “go unto God [our] exceeding joy” (Psalm 43:4).

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∴ 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.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

A VISIT TO ANWOTH

Samuel Rutherford was born of farming stock in the little village of Nisbet in the Scottish Borders sometime in the year 1600. A keen scholar, he studied at Edinburgh College – forerunner of the University – where he was later appointed Professor of Latin. He was converted in his early twenties, and after preparing for the ministry, he was ordained in 1627. It is hard to believe that the name of Rutherford, thereafter famous Covenanter and devoted pastor, is little known today, even in his own beloved Scotland. Some will remember him only because of the well known hymn ‘The sands of time are sinking’, which was written by Anne Ross Cousins and inspired by ‘The Life and Letters of Samuel Rutherford’. But few will have seen the roofless ivy-clad church which he pastored at Anwoth in Kirkcudbrightshire, close

to the Solway Firth in South West Scotland. It involves only the slightest detour travelling the A75 from Stranraer to Dumfries, near Gatehouse of Fleet.

As we visit you will find the ruins of a small building, sixty feet by twenty, which could not have seated more than two hundred and fifty people, yet it was here that Rutherford faithfully served his flock for nine years, overseeing them with a true shepherd’s heart. A colleague once said of him: ‘He is always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always

catechising, always writing and always studying.’

An English merchant of the time, travelling in Scotland, wrote in his journal, ‘In St. Andrews I heard a sweet majestic-looking man preach and he showed me the majesty of God. After him I heard a little fair man preach and he showed me the loveliness of Christ. I went to Irvine where I heard preach a well favoured, proper old man with a long beard, and that man showed me all my own heart.’ The ‘sweet majestic-looking man’ was Robert Blair who ministered at St. Andrews

‘HE IS ALWAYS PRAYING, ALWAYS PREACHING, ALWAYS VISITING THE SICK, ALWAYS CATECHISING, ALWAYS WRITING AND ALWAYS STUDYING.’





LIFE LESSONS

Church in Edinburgh. The 'proper old man' was the great covenanter David Dickson who had seen a great awakening among his people in the early days of his ministry in the same parish of Irvine. But the 'little fair man' was Samuel Rutherford, one of the greatest preachers Scotland has ever produced. A friend of Rutherford commenting on his unique style of preaching said, 'Many a time I thought he would have flown out of the pulpit when he came to speak of Christ.' 'For generations Rutherford has inspired the best preaching in Scotland,' wrote Alexander Whyte in 1908.

The martyr John Bell of Whitesyde, who was shot along with four others, was buried here in the churchyard at Anwoth. A flat tombstone records that he was shot at the command of Grier of Lagg in 1685. More significant for our purposes is the obelisk of grey granite erected to Rutherford's memory on the crag overlooking the estuary of the Fleet in 1842. This impressive structure perpetuates the historical link between him and the Presbyterian Protestantism of Galloway. It is a noble tribute to the Covenanter's distinguished public labours in the cause of civil and religious liberty. Rutherford was deposed of his pulpit and banished to Aberdeen in 1636, largely as a result of his opposition to Arminianism and King Charles' determination to interfere in the affairs of the Scottish church. A return to Anwoth was short-lived – he was appointed to the Chair of Theology in St Mary's College, Edinburgh. Later he was to play a significant role in the famous Westminster Assembly. Indeed it is believed that the Shorter Catechism was largely his work – a fact which might not endear him to generations of senior Sunday School pupils! Rutherford was chosen as Principal of New College, St Andrews, and it was there that he died, again an outcast, this time by the will of Charles II, on 29th March 1661.

Visiting the ancient remains of Rutherford's Church at Anwoth will make history come alive and enable you not only to remember Samuel Rutherford as the courageous Covenanter – it will also prompt recognition of him as the man of God who, like John the beloved disciple, 'leaned on the bosom of his Beloved'. In his seraphic letters he exhorts the saints to do the same when he says, 'There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom and there is room for yours among the rest. Go where ye will, your soul shall not sleep sound but in Christ's bosom'.

Stopping here at Anwoth will be time well spent and you will surely desire to know more about this famous covenanter and the Master whom he so faithfully loved and served.

*Fair Anwoth by the Solway,
To me thou still art dear!
E'en from the verge of Heaven
I drop for thee a tear.
Oh! If one soul from Anwoth
Meet me at God's right hand,
My Heaven will be two Heavens,
In Immanuel's land.*

∴ Dr Stanley Barnes

Is there any profit in contemplating these facts from a bygone age? What has Samuel Rutherford to teach us, over 350 years after his passing? What may we learn from this rich and colourful life? First, in this life there is much evidence of the presence and loveliness of Christ. Christ was the supreme object of Rutherford's affections, the theme of his preaching and his various writings. Truly, he sought always to show 'the loveliness of Christ'. Can we say the same?

Again, Rutherford's experience is a potent reminder of the inevitability of trial and affliction in the Christian life. Faithfulness to Christ will bring opposition, and we may find it to be so more and more in an increasingly secular society, when men do not want to be confronted with the 'narrowness' of the Gospel. Rutherford counted his suffering "that honour my kind Lord hath now bestowed upon me" – and so must we.

Once more, Rutherford's story demonstrates the usefulness of really dedicated Christianity. Preacher, pastor, teacher, and writer – whatever he did, he did as unto the Lord, and he did it with all his heart. In the words of his biographer, "His is one of those lives to which we can point as an instance of what the religion of Christ, when left to work out its full effects upon a human character, is capable of producing, in unfaltering fidelity to principle, holy beauty, meek endurance, and moral courage that never feared the face of man." Need we say more?

∴ Rev Timothy Nelson

Is there a Christian Sabbath?

On Sunday 13th September, the first fully timed marathon to be staged in County Tyrone passed through the village of Sixmilecross, bringing 850 runners on to the rural roads, and impacting travel to and from our regular morning service. That it should be so scheduled, and that the sole concern of the race official with whom I spoke was for the safety and support of participants, is testimony to the disdain in which the Lord's Day is held in our province. Times have changed! And nowhere perhaps more obviously than in the realm of sporting events – rare is the spirit of Eric Liddell, who refused to take part in the 100 metre competition at the 1928 Olympics because the heats were planned for Sunday; rare indeed is such principle among professing Christians today!

Those Christian sportsmen are not alone in this – many evangelical churches and their members appear to have abandoned the long-held view of the first day of the week, siding with the New Testament scholar who concluded that “it cannot be argued that...God appointed the first day to be observed as the Sabbath”. Such a concept, it is said, is of the old covenant, now abolished in Christ. On the other hand, the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that the Lord's Day is “to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath”. So who is right?

OLD TESTAMENT REFLECTIONS

Opponents of the idea of ‘a Christian Sabbath’ are fond of observing that the concept is inextricably linked with the law – it is, after all, part of the Decalogue, the fourth of the Ten Commandments. But it must be kept in mind that the Sabbath pre-dates Sinai, that it was instituted at the very beginning of time; it is, therefore, a creation ordinance. On the seventh day, God ended His work, rested, and blessed and sanctified the day (Genesis 2:2-3). Not that He was in need of a rest – the idea is nonsensical if not blasphemous – but He established this weekly refrain for the benefit of His creation, and to show that there was to be a regular time for honouring Him. Thus the Sabbath principle was ordained at creation, when man was made, the apex of God's creative work, to share His life and to enjoy His blessing, and a special day, every week, would bring these truths before him.

The Sabbath prescription was then repeated in the Ten Commandments, hence the directive to “remember” this day, an indication that the people were already aware of what was expected of them (compare, for example, Exodus 16:22-30). The importance of these laws must be acknowledged. There

is evidence of this in the requirement to have them formally recorded (Exodus 34:27-28 cf 31:18) and perpetually preserved (Exodus 25:16, 40:20).

It is evident too that Christ made much of the Ten Commandments. When He sought to honour the law (Matthew 5:17-18), He moved immediately to expound some of the key points of the commandments (Matthew 5:21, 27), demonstrating the timeless quality of these precepts over against those laws that were obviously ceremonial and so abrogated by the Gospel. When He set about defining ‘goodness’ – and indicting “a certain ruler” – it was by appeal to the Ten Commandments (Luke 18:18-20). While Christ had no liking for the plethora of man-made decrees, often elevated to the status of ‘laws’ (Matthew 15:1-9), nowhere does He undermine any of ‘the ten words’ – the fourth commandment included. The question for those who would set aside this obligation is this: which of the other nine commandments will you dispense with? If the answer is ‘none’, then why single out the fourth?

NEW TESTAMENT REVELATIONS

Christ Himself observed the weekly Sabbath, and made it His habit to go to the place of worship, Luke 4:16. The two go hand-in-hand – is it coincidence that a diminishing respect for the day sits alongside declining church attendance? Surely not!

Consider that Christ associated Himself with the Sabbath in a very particular manner. He declared “*That the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath*” (Luke 6:5). Something of the glory that belongs to Him is His lordship over this day! That He should make such a claim is another indication of deity, associating Himself with the very Creator of the day – but that He should do so identifying Himself as the “Son of Man” is significant, taking the requirement to honour this day beyond the Jewish constituency and relating it to all over whom He exercises rule in His kingdom. He **is** Lord of the Sabbath – who are we to set it aside, if we profess to own his lordship in our lives?

Mark records Christ's assertion that “*the Sabbath was made for man*” and not vice-versa (2:27). This day was instituted for man's benefit – to assist him physically, psychologically and spiritually. Are we in any less need of this divinely ordered benefit today?

Subsequently, the resurrection of Christ saw the day of rest become the first day of the week. Pentecost bore powerful

testimony to His glory and power, when, as He had promised, He sent the Holy Spirit. This occurred on the first day of the week. This day, 'the Lord's Day', became a Sabbath to the first-century church, Acts 20:7. Thus Paul, giving direction for regular giving in the congregation at Corinth, assumes that it will be done on the first day, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

Those Scriptures said to advocate, at best, a relaxed attitude to this matter – Galatians 4:9-11 and Colossians 2:16-20 are often cited – must be kept in context. The danger of those times was of adding ritual to faith, making observance of such old Jewish practices necessary for salvation; in truth, the exhortations have nothing to do with the keeping of a Christian Sabbath – if they did, they would contradict Paul's practice elsewhere.

An interesting verse is Hebrews 4:9 where, after using one Greek noun to signify 'rest' in verses 1, 3, 5, 8, another is chosen, 'sabbatismos', signifying 'a keeping of Sabbath'. Why? To remind believers of an anticipation of future, eternal, heavenly rest – and it is theirs as they observe a weekly Sabbath here and now!

CONTEMPORARY REQUIREMENTS

Puritan Thomas Watson once described the observance of the Lord's Day as the Christian's 'badge of religion' – that he could be identified by his honouring of the day. Perhaps we need to be so identified again! Let us see to it that what we do on the day advances holiness, drawing us after God and away from the world. Let us do only works of necessity and mercy. Let us determine to glorify God, to make our loyalty to His house and His service means to that end. And let

us resolve to put God first – first in our week, and first in all our affairs!

By the time these words are read, the rugby World Cup will be over for another four years. If New Zealand has triumphed, no doubt former player Michael Jones will celebrate. Michael played over fifty times for the 'All Blacks'. He was, by all accounts, one of the finest ever to represent his country or any other. But he would have won many more 'caps', and he would have been selected for the World Cup squad in 1995, but for one thing. Michael Jones, a Christian, refused to play on Sundays. For him, it was that important – God did come first, and He must for us too!

∴ **Rev Timothy Nelson**, Editor, is the minister of Sixmilecross Free Presbyterian Church, and lecturer in Biblical Exegesis in the denomination's Theological Hall.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL SUCCESS



Randalstown children Erin Ross (left) and Abigail McVicker received awards for answering the entire Child's Catechism. Also pictured are Frew Rainey (Clerk of Session), Wendy Verner (Teacher) and Jonathan Cahoon (Superintendent).

GARVAGH RETIREMENT



May Lamont has retired after many years' service as a Children's Worker and is pictured receiving a gift from Rev G Lucas.

DROMORE YPF



Hannah McCauley, who received the Youth Achievement Award 2015, is pictured with Youth Worker Mr R Poots and Rev I Kenny.

COLLEGE GRADUATION & COMMENCEMENT



A large congregation attended the Annual Whitefield College Service, hosted this year by Magherafelt. Rev Alan Smylie (Academic Committee Convener) presided, and also participating were Principal Rev Ferguson, Presbytery officers Revs Brown and Elliott, and Faculty members Revs Greer and Nelson. Mr Ferguson introduced those graduating – Christina Logan, Alana Stewart, Kyle Graham and Paul Hanna. Kyle and Paul were subsequently

licensed by Presbytery. Moderator Rev T Murray brought an appropriate and challenging message. The offering for College funds exceeded £1200. Magherafelt ladies provided a hearty supper.

Our pictures, kindly supplied by Wesley Brown, show the student body with Lecturers and participants, and those graduating with the Principal and Presbytery Officers.

New Contact Details

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CHILDREN'S CORNER



The Apple

In the last few weeks you may have had your church harvest services. The displays of ripe, plump fruit and vegetables on show are always very attractive. One of my favourite fruits is the apple. A harvest display is never really complete without a few shiny, bright, red apples. There are many lessons we can learn from the apple.



Secondly, there is the storing of the apple. At harvest time, unlike other food stuffs, apples have to be stored away very carefully. They must be placed on racks without touching each other in case of disease. If one of those apples is bad and touches the other apples around it,

the rot will spread, destroying everything. What a lesson about the company a Christian should keep! Are there any rotten apples amongst your friends? Are you being pulled down or led astray? Good companions are a blessing. (Psalm 1:1)

Firstly, all apples are different in colour, size and use. Some are great for eating, while others are better for cooking. However, all apples do have one thing in common. When you cut into their centre, they all have a hard, tasteless core. What a picture this is of us all! Although we are all different on the outside, inwardly we each have that same hard core of sin. This sinful nature within spoils and ruins our lives. Yet it is something that can be dealt with by the Saviour, who is willing and able to cleanse us from all our wickedness, if we repent and seek His forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)

Finally, there is the usefulness of the apple. The rhyme says "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." Apples are full of vitamin C. They are a handy sized, healthy food. They are refreshing, tasty and juicy. I wonder, do our lives reflect the goodness of the apple? Are we sweet and beneficial to those around us? This can only really be the case if we are saved and are living in a Christ-like manner in obedience to God's Word. (Galatians 2:20)

Compiled by
Robert McConnell

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

1 John 1:9

PRIZES!

Are you 12 or under? Send your answer, name, address and church to:

Rev. Stephen Pollock
Email: answer@fpvission.org
15 Fernagreevagh Road, Loughgall,
Armagh, BT61 8PN

£5 WINNERS LAST TIME:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| » Maisie Adair
(Portavogie) | » Jodie McKeown
(Aughnacloy) |
| » Matthew McCoy
(Comber) | » Sophie McAuley
(Ballymoney) |
| » Adam Watt
(Dungannon) | » Joshua Lucas
(Garvagh) |
| » Joe McMullan
(Portglenone) | » Judah Omerod
(Cloughmills) |



EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T WIN THIS TIME, PLEASE KEEP TRYING - MAYBE NEXT TIME!

Quiz:

Cross out all the different kinds of fruit in the words below to reveal a very familiar Bible verse found in Psalm 34, but what is the verse number?



Banana O orange taste and pear see that grapes apple the plum LORD is peach good: blessed pineapple is the grapefruit man that strawberry kiwi trusteth in date him gooseberry.



Answer:



We all know that we are to wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to return. Yet the complexity of some of the prophetic scriptures and the vivid imagery used prompt some to feel it is a matter best left alone. Add

to that the many different opinions as to what will happen before and after the Lord's return, and it is not difficult to see why many Christians shy away from a study of the end times.

The Westminster Confession of Faith gives us a helpful appreciation of the challenges in the study of Scripture when it states: 'All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.' (1:7) This is very much the case with the subject of the Lord's return. Young person, set yourself to study the Scriptures! Some things are clear and plain. We get an insight into those things in the message to the disciples at the Lord's ascension (Acts 1:9-11)

The Lord's return is certain. *"this same Jesus...shall so come"* (v11). It is a word from the God of heaven who cannot lie!

The Lord's return will be visible. As the disciples saw Him depart, so He *"shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* *"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him"* (Revelation 1:7).

The Lord's return will be glorious. As He departed in the clouds of Divine glory, so He will return. *"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

The Lord's return will be personal. *"this same Jesus"* (v11); *"the Lord Himself"* shall descend. The God-man Himself will come as the appointed judge (Acts 10:42)

The Lord's return will be sudden. *"Behold, I come as a thief"* (Revelation 16:15).

In light of these clear truths it is our solemn responsibility to be ready. The foolish virgins of Matthew 25 were shut out when the bridegroom returned and *"they that were ready went in with him to the marriage"* (Matthew 25:10). We must ensure that our sins are pardoned and that we are prepared for His coming. *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."* (2 Peter 3:10-11, also Revelation 16:15)

FROM THE OLD TO THE YOUNG

"As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen."

- Westminster Confession of Faith, 33:3

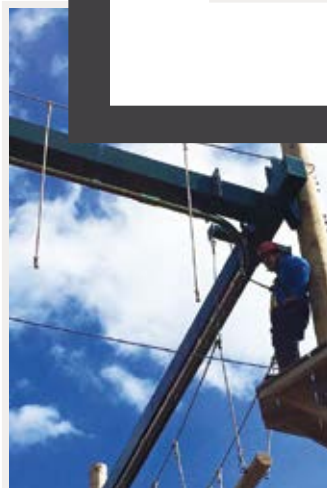
YOUTH COUNCIL Summer outreach

It has been my privilege to lead the Youth Council camp for the last three years. This year saw 42 young people enjoying the activities and sitting under the sound of the Word each evening. One of my tasks is to organise the young people and other leaders into groups for the various activities. Each year I had managed to 'organise' events so that I was as far away from the high-ropes course as humanly possible. The high-ropes course in Shannaghmore is several hundred feet above the ground (at least that's how it looked to me!) and requires the willing(?) participant to negotiate his or her way around several obstacles. Sadly this year Mr Jonathan Smith (a former friend!) spotted my rouse, told the campers and set in motion a campaign ensuring that I would not leave the camp without having made my way round the aforementioned torture!

To my utter shame I succumbed to the fear of man in a futile attempt to overcome a fear of heights! The first two obstacles were a breeze. In less than 30 seconds the cargo net and wobbly bridge were traversed. But then I stood on the platform and before me was a wire trapeze. Please recall this is several 'hundred' feet up. I found every thought coming into my mind. What would happen when I stepped out onto the wire? There was no way I wasn't going to fall off! What would I grab onto? What part of me would I break first? The presence of a harness was supposed to be a comfort but I had little confidence in it. You can ask the campers what happened next, but safe to say I'm now at my desk on terra firma writing this article!

Some Christian young people look at witnessing for Christ the way I viewed that high-ropes course. They contemplate giving out a tract or saying a word about the Saviour and think: 'What will happen next? How far will I fall and what will I break?' My fear of proceeding across the trapeze was utterly irrational. I was going to suffer no harm. There was no need to fear. The Lord told His disciples the same when they contemplated the tests of witnessing. He warned them that they would be hated for His name's sake (Matthew 10:22). He then told them: *'Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.'* (Matthew 10:31-32) Please

Youth Camp



read the reports of young people involved in the Youth Council outreach teams and determine to courageously, boldly and faithfully witness for Christ.

∴ Dr S Pollock



Bristol

Bristol has a great gospel heritage and we had the opportunity to see evidence of the ministries of William Tyndale, John Wesley, George Whitefield and George Muller. It was a great experience to see places where God had used these men. Sadly, today, Bristol has little or no thought about the Gospel. During our visit to John Wesley’s church we had an amazing opportunity to sing ‘Jesus the name high over all’ to all the visitors in the church at the time.

At the Sunday services we each had opportunity to testify, to sing as a group, and Rev McKee preached. Each day began with devotions and a time of prayer which was a real blessing. We saw God answering our prayers over the week. We prayed for people to come into the church and on one occasion as we finished prayer a man came in to ask about the church – an immediate answer! As well as helping with a children’s Bible Club, we gave out tracts, gospels of John and leaflets about the Ten Commandments to homes in the area around the church and a little further afield. I pray that God will use these to speak to people of their need of salvation.

∴ Ruth Gailey



Larne

On Monday 10th August I had the privilege of joining eight young people from various parts of Northern Ireland at Larne Free Presbyterian Church to form the Youth Council outreach team led by Rev David Brown. Each day we sensed the Lord’s presence with us as we started with a time of devotion and prayer. This was followed by door to door outreach and a Holiday Bible Club for the children. The

outreach not only gave me the opportunity to assist and participate in the Lord’s work, but each day challenged me in relation to my personal walk with Him. We were taught the importance of our spiritual blessings in salvation and of prayer for the Lord’s work. Sometimes due to our ‘busyness’, even in the work, we fail to love the Lord the way we should, therefore we do not enjoy the Lord and His many blessings. In the evening, youth meetings were conducted. Rev. Brown spoke on how God reveals Himself to us. It was very beneficial to consider how to know God and His characteristics.

To any young believer interested in serving the Lord I would highly recommend the Youth Council outreach team. I thank the Lord for this opportunity to serve Him in sharing the gospel with the people of Larne. *“The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”* (Psalm 126:3).

∴ Faith Haffey

YOUTH COUNCIL EVENTS

DELEGATES MEETING

Mon 16th November, 8.00pm, Moneyslane FPC

YOUTH COUNCIL CAMP

Shannaghmore Outdoor Education Centre
Mon 1st – Fri 5th Aug 2016, Age: 12-18, Cost: £155
See Youth Council Website for application form.
Deposit required.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING DAY

Sat 21st November, Dungannon FPC, 10:15am, £10

CASTLEWELLAN

Preliminary Young Adults' Weekend
Fri 29th April – Mon 2nd May 2016
Age:16+, Cost: £85

SEPTEMBER RALLY

HOSTED BY
LURGAN FPC



A WORD TO WOMEN

**“COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT THEY BRING
UNTO THEE PURE OIL OLIVE BEATEN FOR THE LIGHT,
TO CAUSE THE LAMPS TO BURN CONTINUALLY.”**

(LEVITICUS 24:2)

When I was a child, olive oil was kept in the medicine cupboard. Often my mother warmed it and used it to soothe painful ears. Most of us will use olive oil for cooking. In the Scriptures, olive oil was used in the beautiful seven branched candlestick in the Tabernacle.

The Lord gave clear instructions as to how the olive oil was to be obtained. The olives were to be “beaten with a pestle in a mortar, and not ground in a mill, that so it might be quite clear; for being bruised and beaten, only the pulp or flesh of the olive was broken, but being ground in a mill, the stones were broken and ground, and so the oil not so pure.” (John Gill) Lower quality oil could be used for other purposes but this oil, symbolising the Holy Spirit, had to be pure.

A description of the candlestick is given in Exodus 25:31-40. Made of pure gold, it had a central shaft and branch and three branches to either side, all with an intricately crafted bowl at the end. The oil burned clear and bright in these bowls and illuminated the Tabernacle. The candlestick pictures Christ bearing up the branches which represent the people of God.

Christians are to “*shine as lights in the world*”, Philippians 2:15. We cannot do this of ourselves no matter how talented we may be. John the Baptist was described as “*a burning and shining light*” John 5:35. What was his secret? He was filled with the Holy Spirit. John came to bear witness of the Light, the Lord Jesus Christ. We need the grace of God, the indwelling of His Spirit to shine out for our Saviour.

The priest attended to the candlestick every day. The wicks needed trimming, the oil needed replenishing. We must tend our lives daily for

sin creeps in and mars the brightness of our testimony. We must confess our sin and seek the help of the Spirit to grow in grace. The oil was pure and did not splutter as it burned. We need that gentle nature of the Spirit. Peter exhorted adornment with, “*a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*” 1 Peter 3:4.

The light from the golden candlestick shone on the golden table of shewbread and the golden altar of incense – the bread speaking of Christ’s body given for us, the incense of Christ’s prayers for us.

The beauty of Christ shines forth under the glow of the candlestick. The grace of God, if apparent in our lives, will shine forth and be used to draw others to our Saviour. “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*”, Matthew 5:16.

The candlestick was the only light in the Tabernacle. There were no windows. The Lord has left us as the only spiritual light in a dark world. What a responsibility rests on us! Yet we have so many promises to encourage us, including, “*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness*”, 2 Corinthians 12:9. Let the olive oil of God’s Holy Spirit flow in your life and you will shine for Him wherever you go!

*Jesus bids us shine with a clear, pure light,
Like a little candle burning in the night;
In this world of darkness, we must shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine.*

∴ **Olive Maxwell** lived and worked for over twenty years in the city of Cork. She and husband Colin continue to serve with the Mission Board focusing primarily on the Republic of Ireland

CONGREGATION CALL: BALLYMAGERNEY



Photo by Kerry Walker

THE CONGREGATION OF BALLYMAGERNEY FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MET FOR THE LAST TIME IN ITS ORIGINAL BUILDING ON SUNDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2015. MR ALBERT DOHERTY, A MEMBER OF SESSION, WAS INVITED TO ADDRESS THE CONGREGATION ABOUT HOW THE LORD PLACED A CHURCH ON A COUNTRY ROAD ABOUT TWO MILES OUTSIDE LOUGHGALL IN COUNTY ARMAGH...

“Steps of faith are not easy but the people of God take them when they hold onto the promises of God and believe that ‘Little is much when God is in it.’ I wasn’t saved very long when God put a burden in my heart for the lost souls of the Annaghmore and Loughgall area. The Lord put the words of Leviticus 26:11-12 on my heart as I prayed over the matter: “And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.” Mr Everett Smyth was similarly burdened of the Lord and a meeting was held in Ardress Mission Hall in October 1987. This was the start of a series of prayer meetings. They were held in a Methodist Chapel which Mr John Capper was using as a mushroom house! Much prayer was offered for the opening of a door in the area. Everett and I met with Dr Paisley on 26th January, 1988 and the Lord’s servant was used of God to encourage and motivate us to press on. As we prayed for the Lord to open a door, little did we know that the door was opening in the very place we were praying, for the Lord had opened John’s heart to sell us the building. After much happy labour and fellowship the church was opened on 10th April, 1988. A work that was born out of a burden for souls, received the seal of God’s approval as two souls were saved in the meeting to open the work.”

The church has since continued under the ministries of Revs John Gray, Timothy Nelson and Ivor Cartwright before the present incumbent, Dr Stephen Pollock, was installed in January 2014. In the Lord’s providence it was under an Interim Moderator that a most significant step of faith was taken. For many years discussions had been held regarding a new building. A site was generously provided by the late Mr Alex Preston, just half a mile down the road from the original meeting house. Plans were drawn and a building fund opened. Progress was slow and the way forward seemed fraught with difficulty. It was clear to the Session, now working along with Rev Jim Hartin, that a new



Minister, Committee & Builder

Photos by Mark Linton

build had to commence and that the Lord would overrule and undertake in every challenge. Believing in the gracious power of God, building work commenced in the spring of 2013.

In light of this you can appreciate the joy in the congregation, as it gathered to open the new building on the 26th September, 2015. The church was packed to overflowing – over 400 were in attendance. Moderator Rev Thomas Murray opened the building and preached the Word from Genesis 35. He encouraged the congregation to know a real experience of the living God through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The promise of the Lord that He will build His church is a strong reminder that the church consists of living stones and not bricks and mortar. “Christ...

loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” (Ephesians 5:25-26) The precious blood of Christ has purchased a people unto God and the Spirit of God is poured out to bring that people to saving faith through the miracle of the rebirth. These great truths undergird the building project on the Ballymagerney Road.

A new building will not build the church. Only the power of the Spirit of God in the lives of sinners can do that. We must never trust in our resources and forget our God. *“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.”* (Psalm 20:7)

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST HAS PURCHASED A PEOPLE UNTO GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS Poured OUT TO BRING THAT PEOPLE TO SAVING FAITH.

However, our God is pleased to use the preaching of the Word to bring sinners to faith. *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”* (1 Peter 1:23) Thus it is our prayer, and we ask readers to join with us in praying, that the new building will be a place where Christ is preached and souls will be born anew. (Psalm 87:6) *“The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”* (Psalms 126:3)

∴ Dr Stephen Pollock

PORTADOWN & MOURNE

Pupils from Portadown and Mourne Schools enjoyed a joint 3 day residential trip to Millisle in June 2015 which included a visit to Mount Stewart House. Also pictured, Portadown pupils with cuddly toys donated to Emmanuel Christian School. The pupils raised £200 on World Book Day for books for the school in Uganda.



BALLYMONEY

Ballymoney School hosted a Praise Service at the end of term in Hebron FPC. Pupils were joined by others, including the Hebron Choir, to give thanks to the Lord for His blessing over another school year. Rev Park brought a closing message and everyone enjoyed some delicious desserts.



BANGOR



Left: Key Stage 1 & 2 trip to Dobbies in June. Bottom: Key Stage 3 & 4 pupils taking part in a mystery trail around Newtownards. Below: New Year One pupils, Faith Cullen and Ethan Green



NEWTOWNABBEY

Twenty-one Primary pupils travelled to Newtownards in September. Rev Johnstone displayed his very realistic model of the High Priest and gave a talk before the pupils study the topic in Scripture class this term. A revision lesson on the Tabernacle followed and Rev and Mrs Johnstone kindly provided ice cream treats after lunch.



CLOGHER VALLEY

One current Year 12 pupil Thomas Wilson and three former pupils, Timothy Boyd, Philip Wilson and Samuel Fitton made a static line 3200m parachute jump on Saturday 20th June at the Wild Geese Sky Diving Centre near Coleraine. This raised £1736.50 for two charities which have connections with school families: JDRF (Junior Diabetic Research Fund) and the Birmingham Children's Hospital Ronald McDonald House.



KILSKEERY

At the Annual Praise Service a fond farewell was said to Miss Amanda Dane, Principal, 2006-2015. Miss Dane married Mr Gordon Kennedy on 21st July and has now joined the staff of the Bangor School. A presentation was also made to Mrs Pamela Foster, 25 years teaching in Kilskeery, and now appointed the new Principal.



NEW STUDENTS

Seven new students have begun studies at college this year. Pictured (left to right) are Matthew Higgins (Australia), Paul Backhurst (Crossgar FPC), Glenn Wilkinson (Aughnacloy FPC), Jenna Malcolmson (Ardaragh FPC), Andrew Stewart (Magherafelt FPC), Nathan McVeigh (Donaghadee FPC) and Joshua Moffatt (Ballymoney FPC).

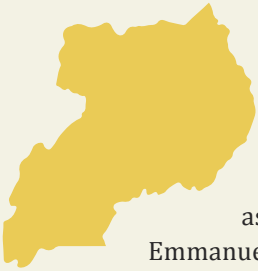


NEW LOCATION

The College has relocated to temporary premises in the Jubilee Complex at the Martyrs' Memorial Church, Belfast, following the Presbytery decision to remove from Lawrencetown and explore the possibility of the erection of a purpose-built facility on another site. Principal Rev Ferguson is thankful for the provision made at Martyrs' and reports that the students have settled well in their new surroundings.



STUDENTS' SUMMER SERVICE



STEPHEN MILLER reports:

"My wife and I were asked to visit Emmanuel Christian School, Uganda, for six weeks during July and August. We might have been there to preach or teach or give other practical help but we learned a great deal, particularly from the children. Tusabe Ivanovic (Yve for short) is a young man in Primary Seven. His daily routine is typical of the dedication and hard work that is part of everyday life:

It's just beginning to get light; time to be up and ready for work. The cows grazing peacefully in the playground will not milk themselves! The milking done, he arrives late to assembly at 7:40 a.m. but in time to hear the challenge of God's Word.

As the strains of the national anthem fade away, minds turn to the pressing

matter of school exams. The Primary Leaving Exam, the culmination of years of hard work, must be passed. The practice test continues past the 11:00a.m. Break Time, and the late porridge is enjoyed quietly with the younger children back in class.

In the late afternoon sunshine, there is cleaning up to be done and water to be collected before the 4:30 p.m. church service. Homework completed, he makes his way across a dark compound overlooked by millions of glittering stars. His work is nearly done but there are always errands to run for those visitors from far away!

With an eager mind and a willing heart, he questions the visitors about their homeland and, more importantly, the things of God. When the future with all its uncertainty is discussed, he says simply, "God will make a way".



BRIAN LORIMER

reflects on serving the Lord in Lock, South Australia, during July and August:

"My responsibilities included preaching and assisting Mr Andrew Fitton with fortnightly discipleship classes. Trevor and Joy Spiers have their own printing press and they send out gospel literature and invitations to meetings monthly. I was able to assist with invitations for Gospel Missions in two neighbouring areas, Cleve and Wudinna. On the last night at Wudinna, a teenage girl professed faith in Jesus Christ. I also preached in Port Lincoln. The trip ended with a visit to Perth for Gospel meetings with Rev Gardiner. Some visitors attended for the first time. One woman came after receiving an invitation at the local high school."

UNITED CHILDREN'S CAMP REPORT



We want to thank the Lord for His goodness in our second United Children's Camp. 53 children gathered in Newcastle, Co Down for a week of fellowship. There was great unity among the leaders as they taught the Gospel to the boys and girls and encouraged young Christians to grow in the faith. The theme for the week was, 'People who met Jesus,' and our missionary focus on George Mueller. It was a blessing to participate in morning and evening dorm devotions, giving the campers an opportunity to study God's Word in a small group setting and hearing them pray publicly, some for the first time. Visit the Mission Board website for an application form for next year, and encourage your children to be a part of this ministry!

∴ Rev Ryan McKee

ALL CHANGE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Presbytery licentiate Andrew Fitton reports that the work on the Eyre Peninsula has experienced the Lord's blessing in recent days. On Sunday 20th September, the Port Lincoln congregation marked 35 years since the opening of its church building by Dr John Douglas, who was instrumental in the early days of the work, and who forwarded greetings and memories for the occasion. Mr Fitton returned to N Ireland on 30th September. He is thankful to the Lord for the support and prayers of our churches in Australia and Northern Ireland, and he encourages prayer for the churches in South Australia and for those ministering over the next few months.

Meanwhile another licentiate, Kyle Graham, has known the Lord's leading to serve in Australia. "The Lord has been burdening me to minister in our congregations in Port Lincoln and Lock, having challenged my heart through the words of the great commission and through those words first addressed to Esther: 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' We are currently beginning the process of applying for visas and hope to depart next summer. I will be conducting deputation



meetings in a number of our congregations, and would greatly appreciate your prayer for the days ahead.

Please pray for the Lord's hand on all these matters, and for His protection of the work in S Australia."

IN A LINE...

Joyce Walsh reports many opportunities to present the gospel to the boys and girls through Holiday Bible Clubs, Residential Camps, and Outdoor Meetings, encouraging attendances and some trusting in Christ as Saviour.

Jonny Smith tells of young people from Dungannon who attended outreach meetings and a girl encountered during street evangelism, who once attended Dungannon's children's meeting.

Chris & Linda Killen were blessed by the drugs awareness meeting at the start of September in Tiger's Bay and are looking forward to meetings in Ballygowan & Antrim.

Colin Maxwell's highlights from the summer included trips to Knock Shrine, the Agricultural Show at Athlone with the literature table, street preaching in Dublin, the Race Week at Galway, and the Ploughing Championship.

Robert McConnell conducted children's meetings in Ballymena, Portadown, Newcastle (UCC), Magherafelt, Mourne, Ballintoy (camp), Banbridge, Lisburn, Merthyr Tydfil (South Wales), Comber and Bangor with increasing numbers, and precious young souls gloriously saved.

THANK YOU!

A very sincere word of thanks to so many from across our churches for your continued support! Throughout 2015 we have know the Lord supplying needs through the giving of His people.

Under God, your financial and prayerful support has kept our workers in the field and assisted them in their labours. The Lord has given many encouragements. Souls have been saved; young and old alike have been reached with the Gospel; many needy people have been helped; new workers have been raised up for the Lord's harvest fields. To God be all the glory and praise! We can rejoice in what has been accomplished and yet we know there remains much more ground to be taken. How can you help still further?

Please support the Deputation Meetings undertaken by our missionaries. When they come to your congregation, make sure you don't miss the meeting. Bring the whole family along and get your children interested in missionary work. As older saints are called home we need new monthly covenanters to support our workers. If every family in the Free Presbyterian Church would covenant to support at least one of our Free Presbyterian missionaries, what a difference that would make to Mission Board finances!

Continue in prayer for all of those in the work. The daily Missionary Council Prayer Calendar is a good way of structuring your intercessions.

Be informed. The Mission Board and Missionary Council website at www.fpcmission.org has been a great help in getting out important updates and urgent prayer requests. Make sure you mark it as one of your favourites.

Again, to all our congregations and countless individuals in our Free Presbyterian Church family, please accept our sincere appreciation. What a blessing to be involved in such a work, and to be *"labourers together with God"* (1 Corinthians 3:9).

∴ Rev Ian Harris (Mission Board Chairman)

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DATES FOR THE DIARY

NOVEMBER

1st-15th BERAGH, GOSPEL MISSION
Time: Sundays, 3.30pm
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speakers: Mr C Maxwell & Rev T Nelson
Outreach of Sixmilecross FPC

1st-15th TANNAGHMORE ORANGE HALL, GOSPEL MISSION
Time: Sundays, 3.30pm
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev J Morrow
Outreach of Markethill FPC

7th-13th BALLYMENA, ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE
Time: Saturday, 7.30pm
Sunday, 11.30am and 6.30pm
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev J Wagner

8th-13th NEWTOWNARDS, BIBLE WEEK
Time: Sunday, 7.00pm
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev T Murray
Theme: The Life of Abraham

8th-22nd MOURNE, GOSPEL MISSION
Time: Sunday, 7.00pm
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev T Martin

15th-20th BANGOR, BIBLE WEEK
Time: Sunday, 7.00pm
Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev R Johnstone
Theme: The High Priest's Garments

NOVEMBER *(continued)*

18th-20th + 22nd RASHARKIN, BIBLE WEEK
Time: Wednesday - Friday, 8:00pm
Sunday, 12:00 & 7:00 pm
Speakers: Rev's G McCammon, J Greer, R Higginson, G Ferguson, Dr J Douglas

27th PORTADOWN, PRESBYTERY EDUCATION BOARD GRADUATION SERVICE
Time: Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev T Murray

MARCH 2016

11th-13th LADIES' RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND LODGE HOTEL, COLERAINE
Speakers: Mrs M Beattie, Mrs V Dawson, Mrs T McLeod
Details: Linda Harris (Annalong) 028 4376 8040