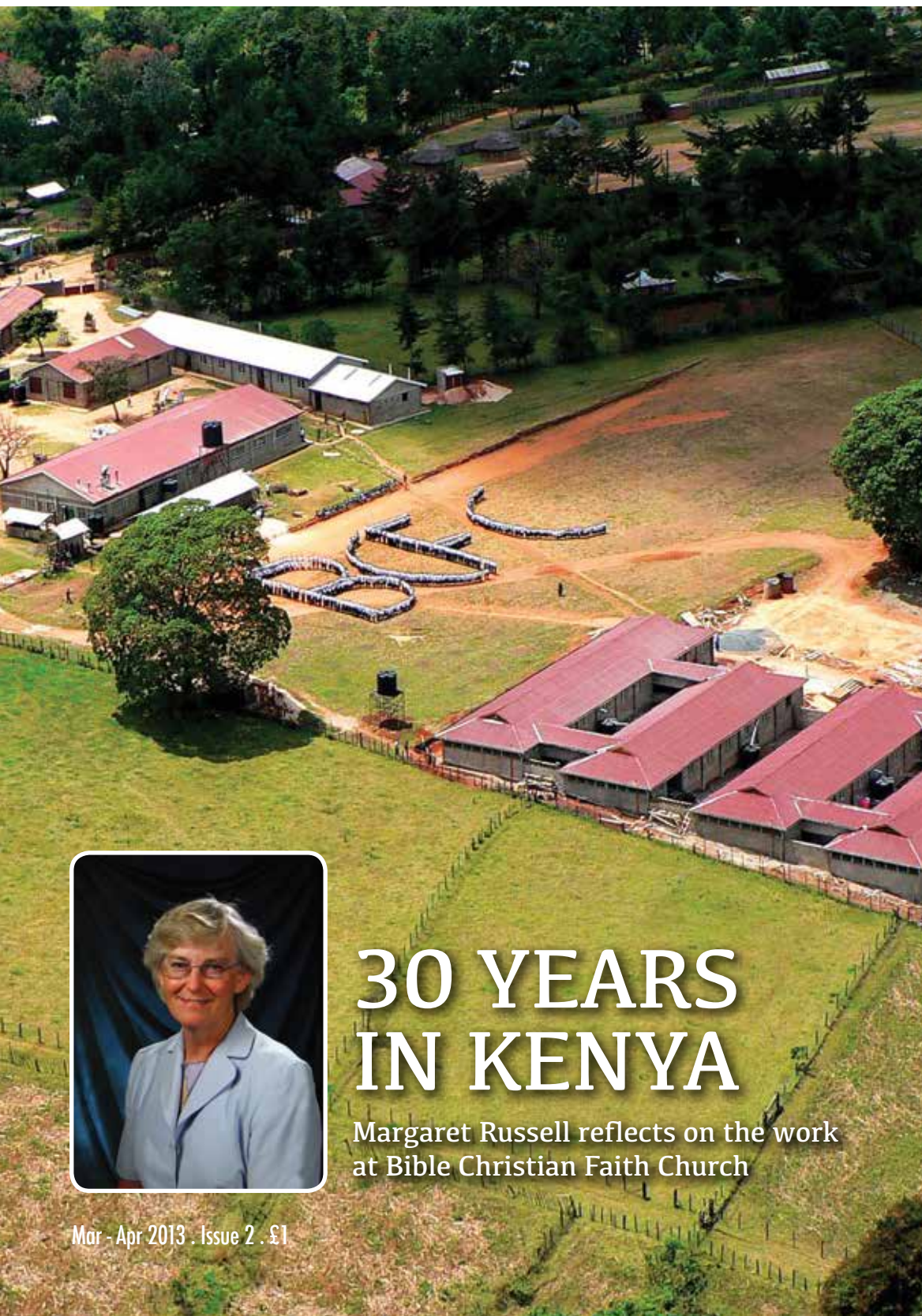


FREE PRESBYTERIAN VISION



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER



30 YEARS IN KENYA

Margaret Russell reflects on the work
at Bible Christian Faith Church

Mar - Apr 2013 . Issue 2 . £1



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'One of the four conventional temperate seasons, following winter and preceding summer' – the definition is factual but hardly inspiring. It does little to convey the gentle beauty of spring, and the welcome most feel for those months that arrive to dispel the darkness of winter.

In nature, spring stands for growth, renewal and new life. Nationally and politically, it is often a metaphor for the start of better times – the celebrated 'Prague Spring' of 1968, and the so-called 'Arab Spring' just last year come to mind – times of hope, of reform, of increasing freedom.

And what of the church? Does it not need awakening, quickening, a new experience of that blessed phenomenon we call 'revival'? I think we all know the answer. At a time when it is 'success' if we can hold the ground we have, when there is complacency within and apathy without, when our voice is barely

heard, we long for Divine intervention, for a 'rending of the heavens' (Isaiah 64:1)

A certain Virgil Kraft once observed, 'spring shows us what God can do with a drab and dirty world'. The wonderful transformation witnessed every year in the natural world is indeed a picture of what He can do in the spiritual realm – life instead of death, light instead of darkness, warmth instead of coldness. May God revive His work and, as the song says, 'bring back the springtime'!

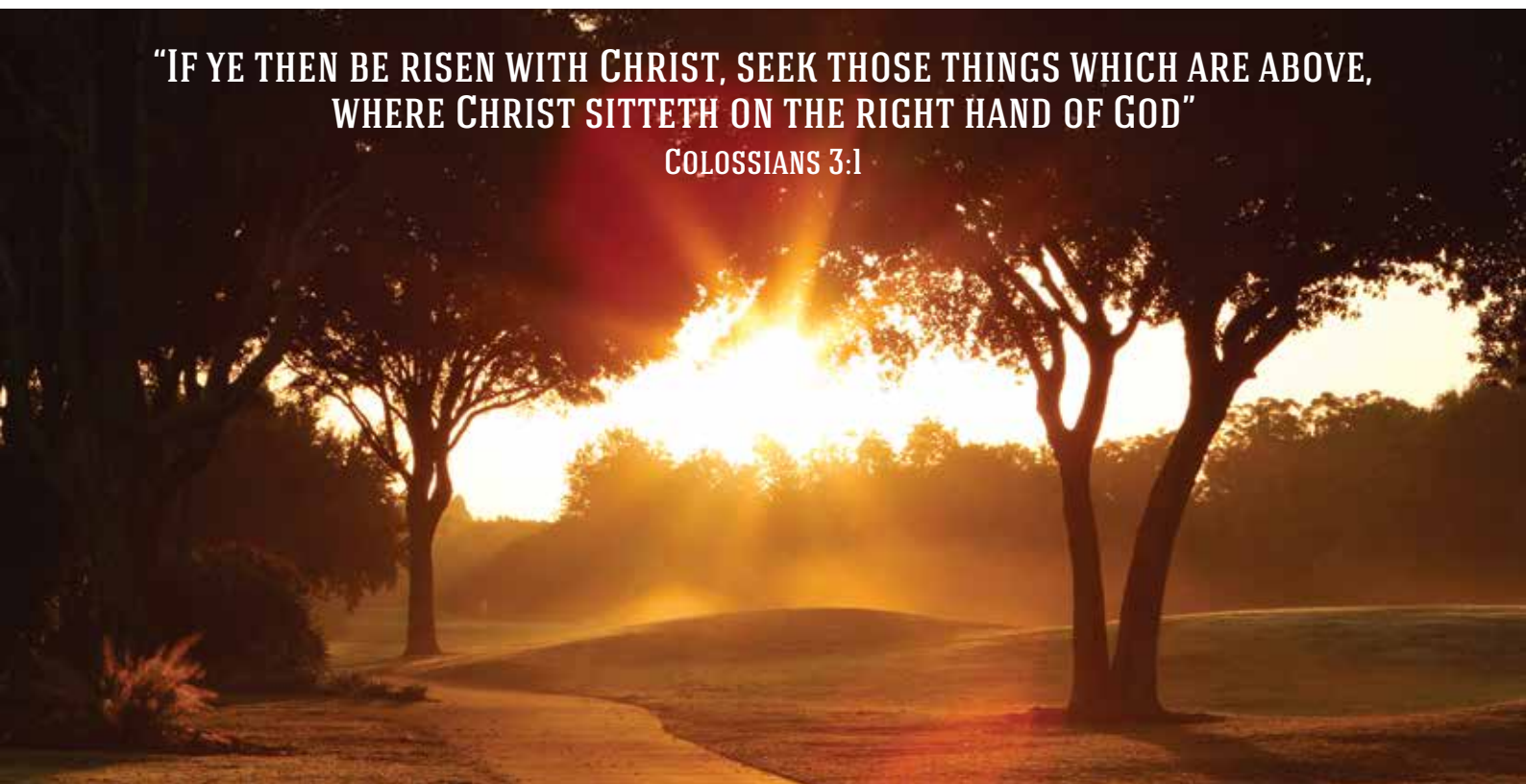
Speaking of new beginnings, I think Free Presbyterian Vision still qualifies. I am grateful to all who took time to respond so positively to our first issue – your comments were such an encouragement! Do continue to stand with us and pray for us.

✠ Timothy Nelson
editor@fpvision.org

'RISEN WITH CHRIST'

**"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE,
WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD"**

COLOSSIANS 3:1



The resurrection of Christ of necessity presupposes His death. Our Saviour's death was the completion of His humiliation. *'Thou hast brought me into the dust of death'* (Psalm 22:15) was a cry that described the degradation and darkness of the cross. Jesus knew that He was to suffer and die as our Substitute – but He also knew that death could not hold Him in the grave!

While His body was placed in the earth it could not remain there. He rose bodily from Joseph's tomb and did what no one else had done. Elijah raised the widow's son and Elisha restored a young man to life; but they were raised from the dead to die again. Lazarus too was raised from the dead only to yield his body at the appointed time to the grim reaper. Every dying saint falls asleep in Jesus. The body sleeps in its lonely bed of earth and the soul goes to be with Christ.

Paul reminds us that Christ is *'the firstfruits of them that slept'* (1 Corinthians 15:20). During the feast of the firstfruits, the first sheaf was brought as a token or pledge of the complete harvest and dedicated to God as a testimony of the gratitude of the people for the harvest He had given. This was a picture of Christ *'the firstfruits'* – a pledge of the resurrection of all who are His.

As the firstfruits, Christ rose as our representative. All the righteous dead were virtually raised in Him. All His chosen had a resurrection when their Head appeared as *'risen indeed'*. He was the first to enter heaven bodily after lying in the grave. The first who rose from the dead to die no more, death has no

more dominion over Him! He lives, having the keys of hell and of death, possessing all power in heaven and in earth. He sits at the right hand of the Father and as our covenant head He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places even in Him. Because He lives all who die in Christ shall live also. His resurrection is the pattern of theirs, since there is a union between Christ and His people by which they are vitally one.

Though our bodies return to the dust they shall not see corruption forever! *'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality'* (1 Corinthians 15:53). As the Saviour rose with the same body, though changed, so He will change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. As His body was raised from the dead to be glorified and crowned with gladness and honour, so the resurrection of the saints will be to them the day of the gladness of their hearts.

What consolation would there be in this world if the hope of the resurrection were taken away? We would be *'of all men most miserable'* (1 Corinthians 15:19) – but it is not so, death is swallowed up in victory! *'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ'* (1 Corinthians 15:57).

∴ **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 GORDON FERGUSON

IN EARLY
DECEMBER
2012, THE GENERAL
PRESBYTERY APPOINTED
REV GORDON FERGUSON TO
SUCCEED DR JOHN DOUGLAS
AS PRINCIPAL OF THE
WHITEFIELD COLLEGE OF THE
BIBLE. THE EDITOR CAUGHT UP
WITH MR FERGUSON RECENTLY
IN HIS NEW SURROUNDINGS.

**TN: You were
brought up in the
West, isn't that so?**

GF: Yes. I was actually born in Portadown, but County Armagh doesn't figure significantly in any childhood memories since we moved to Fermanagh when I was just over four. We lived in various locations there, near Derrygonnelly, then Springfield, and finally near Lisbellaw – so, yes, my upbringing was very much in the West.

TN: What about your schooldays?

GF: After primary school I spent almost seven years at Portora Royal School in Enniskillen. However, I did not really enjoy my years at school. I was glad to move into employment.

TN: Where did you work?

GF: I worked in the Ulster Bank for ten years, first in Belfast, then Lisburn, a spell in Head Office, before finishing my banking career in the Area Office in Omagh – back to the west again. I did enjoy my time with the bank.

**TN: How did you come into the
Free Presbyterian Church?**

GF: My background was Church of Ireland, in common with most Protestants in Fermanagh, although we did attend Methodist services for a time since the church was nearby.

A friend with a concern for me brought me to hear various other preachers including the late Pastor Willie Mullan, and Dr Paisley when he ministered in the Ulster Hall.

TN: Timothy Nelson GF: Gordon Ferguson

It was in Dr Paisley's Ravenhill Road Church that I was converted, through the preaching of visiting American evangelists, in February 1966. While I did not leave the Church of Ireland immediately, the connection with the Free Church was established, and the break came in 1969. That was the year Rev Ivan Foster conducted a memorable mission in Springfield, and I was led to attend the services he conducted in our church in Lisbellaw. Many other family members were saved under the ministry of Mr Foster, and, later, Rev Gordon Cooke led my parents to Christ.

TN: Lisbellaw brought one very important encounter.

GF: Yes, it was there that I met my wife! Anne has been a great help to me and unfailingly supportive in the work to which the Lord has called us. I am very thankful.

TN: How did you come to be in the ministry?

GF: I was concerned about the future and had a sense of calling for some time. Opportunities to preach arose, mostly in prayer meetings and Youth Fellowships, and while often I didn't feel I succeeded in doing what I set out to do, I was burdened about entering the ministry of our church. Things came to a head in June 1973. Then, the Lord showed me – through 1 Samuel 27:7 – that I should prepare for entry to the Theological Hall in October 1974. Four years of study followed.

TN: You had an interest in London from the first.

GF: I did. After completing my studies here, I went to London to study Classics at London University, spending four years in the capital. Things did not open up for continued ministry on the mainland at that time, and I was advised to consider serving 'back home'. Subsequently, I was called to the Mourne congregation in 1982, and we spent fifteen happy years in Kilkeel. Then, in 1997, the witness that had been, by now, established in London found itself without a minister. I had never lost interest in the city and, in due course the way was opened for me to take up the work in a field for which I had been burdened for a long time

TN: Did you enjoy your fifteen years there?

GF: Very much so. There were all the usual challenges of pastoral ministry, an expanding schedule of radio broadcasts, and opportunities for me to become involved in the work of the British Church Newspaper and the Trinitarian Bible Society. The Lord was very good to us, and the work moved

forward. The church has now been constituted and the Rev Patrick Baker has been ordained and installed as minister. This is a development for which we are most grateful.

TN: Retirement has brought you back to Northern Ireland.

GF: We felt that was the right thing and Anne and I prayed that the Lord would open doors of usefulness for us as we returned to the Province.

TN: Were you surprised when asked to consider the work of the College?

GF: I certainly was. I had known that there would be an opportunity for me to help out in teaching the Greek class, but I had no thoughts of becoming Principal. However, when the contact was made, I felt duty bound to consider the matter before the Lord. I decided to allow our Presbytery to decide, and I am very conscious of the great responsibility committed to me by the Presbytery.

TN: What would you say to those who think this is an odd way to begin 'retirement'?


GF: One thing is sure – I will not be able to give the long years of service rendered by Dr Douglas. All I wish to do is my best. I am, thankfully, in good health, and my desire is to use whatever abilities the Lord has given me in His service. I will seek to do that, in the College, for the next few years as He enables.

TN: What is your vision for the College?

GF: I would like to see more of our young people raised up to carry the work forward, home and abroad, into the future. We are committed to providing the best training we can here, and to help and guide with any additional, specialised preparation required. A flourishing College is surely indicative of the Lord's favour, and it would be the best tribute we could pay to over thirty years of spiritual, sacrificial service given by my predecessor. As a church, we owe much to the vision of Dr Douglas, and I am honoured to have been chosen as his successor.

TN: How can our readers help you?

GF: I would emphasize just how important it is for everyone to pray - for me, for our lecturers, our staff, our students and our overseeing committees – that is crucial, and it is a practical way of sharing in this vital ministry. Take an interest in the life and work of the College, attend deputation meetings, and seek to encourage all who serve. Your help will be much appreciated!



INVESTIGATING THE ISSUES:

Abortion

So abortion is illegal in Northern Ireland? If only it were as simple as that! Abortions are being carried out every week in hospitals and clinics throughout the province. While the 1967 Abortion Act only applies to the mainland, a lack of clarity in our laws, together with some spurious court rulings and an ever more permissive interpretation of existing legislation, means that the flood gates have already opened. Now we have the opening of a Marie Stopes clinic in Belfast.

There, abortions are carried out up until the ninth week of pregnancy. Because medication is prescribed, rather than the surgical option, there appears to be a view

that it is not so serious, certainly not wrong. In addition, abortions have been carried out here for decades in cases where there are detected 'foetal abnormalities' like Down's Syndrome and Spina Bifida.

Abortion is the sanitized name for the murder of the unborn child. Current figures put abortion rates in England, Scotland and Wales at around 200,000 per year. No one appears to know precisely how many happen in Northern Ireland. But is it too much to say that all these so-called 'terminations' are so many murders? If we are to justify the claim, we must first establish that the unborn child is alive; and then that it is morally wrong to take that life.

WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

Medically speaking, every individual is unique. What makes us unique is the fact that our genes – the blueprint in DNA – differ from those possessed by every other person. This combination of genes is determined at conception. Such a combination did not exist prior to conception, but at this point, though only consisting of one cell, it contains all the unique information to determine the individual characteristics of the person concerned. Our uniqueness is thus determined at the moment of conception. The unborn child has a detectable heartbeat between the 18th and 25th day after conception, detectable brain cell activity at 40 days, and by 6-8 weeks is a perfect miniature baby albeit only about 10mm in length. At this time, by ultrasound scan, the baby may be seen moving in the womb.

A key portion of Scripture is Psalm 139: 14 –16. Here, David praises God for his own life and development, with special emphasis on the time *before* he was born. The word translated “wonderfully made” is not the term usually rendered ‘made’. It means ‘to be marked out’, or ‘to be set apart’. In addressing the matter of the origin of human life, and the unborn child, Scripture indicates that we are not simply ‘made’ – we are marked out, set apart by the Almighty as individuals, those who are special in the sight of God.

The word “works” (v14) means ‘a product’, or ‘a thing made’, so the Lord owns this unborn child as His product, something He has personally made. “Substance” (v15) may be translated ‘bones’ or ‘body’. So we can read verse 15, ‘My body was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth’. Notice that this body, though unborn, is not a non-entity, it has ownership: ‘my body’ (“substance”). It is not just a piece of human tissue with the potential for life; it is the body of the person David, though as yet unborn. Now we must

notice the point at which the Lord is recognising this unborn child as an individual – as David. One Hebrew word is translated “my substance, yet being unperfect” (v16). This word can also be rendered ‘embryo’ or ‘foetus’. Literally, it means ‘wrapped’, or ‘unformed mass’. What a good description of an embryo!

So the Lord’s recognition of this individual as David, occurs at the embryo stage – at the latest, within *hours* of conception – and long before implantation in the womb which occurs several days later. The word “book” (v16) refers to ‘a register, a record book’ or ‘a legal document’. So the Lord has a book, or a blueprint, for every life, and in it details of the members (organs or

body parts) making up that individual body. “Which in continuance were fashioned” (v16) may also be rendered ‘what days they should be fashioned’. So even the specific timing of the development of the organs within the embryo is contained in this book, and “when as yet there was none of them” (v16) – before conception has even taken place.

In Jeremiah 1:5 the Lord refers to the prophet at the point where his body is unformed, at the early embryo stage. “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” Once again, therefore, the embryo, in God’s eyes, has both significance and identity.

DOES GOD SANCTION TAKING THE LIFE OF THE UNBORN?

We have established, both medically and scripturally, that life begins at conception. One question remains: is it morally wrong to take the life of the unborn for any reason? The 6th commandment is clear: “Thou shalt not kill.” That ought to be enough to settle the question, but there is particular reference to the

killing of the unborn in Exodus 21:22-25, “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” Simply put, if a woman is injured so that she miscarries (“her fruit depart from her”) even if the child is born alive with no injury (“yet no mischief follow”), the offender “shall be surely punished.” But if harm does come to the child (“if any mischief follow”), then the punishment will be in kind, “thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” Notice that the life of the unborn child has equal status with that of the adult in this scenario.

What about the ‘difficult cases’? What if pregnancy follows rape? Such instances will often be cited. While we must extend the greatest sympathy and support to those in such a situation, the facts remain, the unborn child is alive, and God forbids the killing of that child. Neither is it appropriate to build an argument around the case where life-saving treatment results in the death of the unborn child. No one is accusing the woman in this situation of unlawful killing – that would be insensitive and unscriptural – but it must be emphasized that such instances are exceedingly rare.

The truth is, abortion is just one of many crimes that man has legitimised and legalized. Christians must be prepared to hold to the teaching of God’s Word, our only rule of faith and practice; to speak out for those who have no voice; and to show compassion for those burdened with the guilt of past sin, pointing them to Christ.

∴ **Dr Lindsay Wilson**, a medical doctor, is the minister of Castlederg congregation, former Deputy Moderator and current President of the denomination’s Youth Council.

WHITEFIELD COLLEGE MATRON RETIRES

After many years of faithful and dedicated service as Matron of the Whitefield College of the Bible, Mrs M E Walkingshaw has retired. Her commitment to the College was acknowledged at the Graduation and Commencement Service in September 2012, though she was unable to attend. Subsequently a presentation was made at the Lecturers and Students' Christmas lunch in December. 'Matron', as all know her, is pictured with The Moderator, Rev J Greer, Deputy Moderator, Rev A Smylie, and Lecturers Revs J Armstrong, G Dane and R Johnstone.



SILVER ANNIVERSARY



A special service was held in Londonderry Free Presbyterian Church to mark Rev Ian Brown's twenty-five years of ministry in the 'maiden city'. Mr Brown, the denomination's Clerk of Presbytery, was ordained in the Londonderry congregation in November 1987.

He is pictured with members of Session, George Wallace, Scott Mackay and William Doherty; and with his wife Gillian and children Aaron, Joel and Chloe.



SUNDAY SCHOOL SUCCESS



James Porter (*centre*) receives a certificate for reciting the entire child's catechism from the Rev. James Porter (Minister of Markethill Free Presbyterian Church) and Sunday School superintendent Mr. Wilbur McMullan.

CARDIFF OUTREACH



Twelve Free Presbyterian young people plan to travel to south Wales, 15-18 March. The visit coincides with the 'Six Nations' international rugby match scheduled for the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff, on Saturday 16th. Open-air witness will be held in the lead-up to the game. The group will also participate in the Cardiff outreach meeting that evening, and in the Lord's Day services at Rhiwderin where Rev Richard Monteith ministers. Please support this venture in your prayers.

WHITEFIELD COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE

Entrance Examinations for prospective candidates for the Theological Course at the Whitefield College for the year beginning September 2013 will take place at the Whitefield College on the following dates:

Monday 15 April	19.30	English Language
Tuesday 16 April	19.30	English Literature
Wednesday 17 April	19.30	History

Candidates must report to the College by 19.15 and are expected to provide their own writing paper.

All candidates should forward the Entrance Examination Fee of £20 (for each subject) before 25 March 2013 to:

Whitefield College of the Bible
117 Banbridge Road, Gilford, CRAIGAVON, Co Armagh, BT63 6DL

NEWTOWNABBEY INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

**Part-time Primary Teacher
Required**

**Summer Term & from
September 2013**

Applications in writing to:

Rev B McClung,
9 Sherwood Parks,
Newtownabbey, BT36 5FY

FREE PRESBYTERIAN EASTER CONVENTION MARTYRS' MEMORIAL FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Friday 29th March, 8.00pm: Youth & Missionary Rally

Reports, DVD Presentation, Youth Choirs

SPEAKER: Rev D Park (Missionary Council Chairman)

Monday 1st April, 3.30pm: Afternoon Meeting

Missionary Report + Ballymena Male Voice Choir. **SPEAKER:** Rev J Greer (Moderator)

Monday 1st April, 7.30pm: Evening Meeting

SINGERS: Mourne Male Voice Choir. **SPEAKER:** Rev Alan Smylie (Deputy Moderator)

Creche & 'Kids' Club' - Refreshments Available to Purchase - Bookstalls

CHILDREN'S CORNER



Boys and girls, when I was young I remember how exciting it was to draw back the curtains on a cold winter's morning and see a wonderful blanket of white snow covering everything in sight.

In the Bible, snow is mentioned over twenty times. Once God wanted to draw Job's attention to the wonders of creation, so He asked him a question: **'Canst thou enter into the treasures of the snow?'** (Job 38:22). That was a good question! I wonder if you have ever stopped and thought much about the treasures and the secrets that are found in the snow?

Firstly, although it floats down silently and gently, rather like feathers falling, snow is in fact very heavy. It takes huge, powerful snowploughs to keep the roads clear. If just 10cms of snow were to fall on an area of 1km square it would weigh over 21,000 tons! Yet when the snow comes, sometimes covering thousands of square kilometres, it falls so softly and quietly without any noise or fuss.

Then, **secondly**, when you look at the snowflakes themselves as they fall on the sleeves of your coat you see how beautiful they are. No two snowflakes are the same. Every one comes in the shape of an exact hexagonal pattern, some of

which can be up to 2.5cms in diameter. Even in something as small and delicate as the snowflake we see the handiwork and perfection of God's creation!

Just like everything else that God has made, snow has its purposes as well. And it is not just to be a source of fun and games! When the severe cold weather comes, snow actually has a warming effect. It acts like a big fluffy blanket of protection for grass, plants and trees, helping them to survive against those blasts of icy cold winter air. In nature God has thought of everything. He does everything perfectly!

But we are far from perfect. We sin against God every day. However, the Bible says that we can be made perfect, not in ourselves, but as, **'...in Christ.'** (Colossians 1:28). His righteousness and spotlessness covers the believer. Just as the clean, pure, white snow covers the rubbish dump making it look perfect we too can have Christ's perfection to cover us. David prayed to God and asked, **'Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow'** (Psalm 51:7) and he was then able to say, **'Blessed is he whose...sin is covered'** (Psalm 32:1). I trust that you are depending on Christ and that you are covered in His righteousness today.

Compiled by Robert McConnell

**Wash me and
I shall be whiter
than snow.**

Psalm 51v7

Fill in the blanks

I was typing out this verse from Isaiah 1, but some of the keys on the keyboard didn't work sometimes. Help me out by filling in all the blanks to complete the verse. Then, using those same letters, spell out the name of one of the books found in the Bible.

Com__ now and let __s r__ason together saith the
Lor__, though you__ si__s be as scarle__ they shall
be as white as snow th__ugh the__ be red like
cri__son they shall be as w__ol.

Answer: _____

PRIZES

Send your name, address and answer to

Rev. Stephen Pollock
Email: answer@fpvision.org
51 Old Junction Road,
Kilskeery, Co Tyrone,
BT78 3RN.

Winners from January in
next issue!

WHY AM I HERE?

*'Begin each day:
as if it were on purpose'*

The origin of this statement is unknown, but the wisdom cannot be disputed. We are not on this earth by accident. We are made by God, and **'The LORD hath made all things for Himself...'** (Proverbs 16:4) So, when we consider our purpose on this earth, we must not leave God out of our thinking. Our purpose is to glorify God. The writers of the Catechism referred to it as 'Man's chief end'. Paul leaves nothing out when he instructs the Corinthian church: **'... whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'** (1Corinthians 10:31) All of creation is to the glory of God. How much more those who are redeemed? **'For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.'** (1Corinthians 6:20)

Stating the believer's purpose is much easier than understanding it, which, in turn, is easier than living it. How do we live out our purpose? We must begin by remembering that we cannot add anything to the glory of the perfectly glorious God. God is not a God who is **'worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything...'** (Acts 17v25). What is it, then, to 'glorify' God? Well, creation is said to **'declare the glory of God...'** (Psalm 19v1). Creation 'glorifies God' by showing His nature and essential glory to the world around. **'For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the**

things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead...' (Romans 1:20). Thus our purpose is to glorify God by showing His glory to the world around. We do that with our lips: **'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me...'** (Psalm 50:23). To praise God is to glorify Him. And we do it by our lives, living in a way that reflects His character: 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.' (Philippians 1:11)

So, begin each day 'on purpose.' Purpose to show God to others in your words and in your walk. Then others may glorify God. '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).

*Purpose to
show God to
others in your
words and in
your walk.*

FROM THE OLD TO THE YOUNG

'Man's tongue...is given to him as a proper instrument for speaking forth the glory of God. So it must needs be a strange perverting of the tongue, to set it against the heavens, and let it loose to the dishonour of God...'

'A holy life is a life of light; it is a shining light, to let the blind world see the glory of God. Sin darkens the glory of God, draws a veil over it.' Thomas Boston ('Of Man's Chief End and Happiness', Works, Vol.1, Pg.9f)

WHAT MUSIC SHOULD I LISTEN TO ON MY IPOD?

(OTHER DEVICES AVAILABLE!)

Modern technology has transformed the way in which we listen to our music. Using an mp3 player, iPod, or mobile phone, you can have a private collection of thousands of songs you can listen to wherever you want, whenever you want. How can we differentiate between good, wholesome, God-glorifying music and that which is poisonous to the soul?

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

This month, Rev. Peter McIntyre (Clogher Valley) was asked 'What music should I listen to on my iPod?'

Sounds from Heaven

The Bible teaches that music is a gift of God. The Psalms were sung to musical accompaniment (Psa.150). The Psalmist uses the metaphor of music to describe the beauty of the natural creation (Psa.96:11-12, 98:8).

Heaven is depicted as a place which is alive with music, expressing the happiness of its inhabitants (Rev.5:8, 14:2, 15:2).

Man is a spiritual creature, made in the image of God, and this gift of music touches the spirit of humanity in a unique manner. So we should seek music that reflects something of the beauty and glory of God. All that we do – and this includes what we listen to – should be according to God's Word, and for His glory.

Thus, 'good' music should:

1. Give us a greater view of God's glory
2. Affirm a biblical view of man's depravity and sin
3. Encourage godly living and Christian service
4. Prompt the reading of the Word of God and prayer
5. Agree with the truth of Scripture

Does the music you listen to fulfil these criteria?



MUSIC ...
WILL BE GOOD
FOR THE SOUL OR
DANGEROUS TO
THE SOUL.'

Does Satan have his music?

Scripture and experience teach us that Satan distorts every gift of God. This means we must expect to hear the antithesis of godly music in the world today. We discover this form of music in the modern 'pop' phenomenon. Most of this has developed out of the 'Rock and Roll' or Beatles era and, as such, has been nurtured in sinister soil. Popular music, in which western youth culture is immersed, will have a detrimental impact on those who listen, for it carries the marks of satanic influence.

Take the music itself. The dominance of the beat and the powerful intensity of the rhythm are opposed to the natural

musical rhythm of the human body, causing tension rather than soothing the mind and the soul. William Shafer, a non-Christian sociologist wrote: *"What is undeniable about rock is its hypnotic power. It has gripped millions of young people around the world and transformed their lives"* ("Rock Music").

Satanic influence is also found in the lyrics. These songs frequently blaspheme, promote immoral behaviour, preach a message of rebellion and express the hopeless darkness of a lost generation. And what of the artists themselves? Some are steeped in the occult; others have a record of drug and alcohol abuse;

many have well documented immoral lifestyles; and, tragically, an alarming number have taken their own lives. Never consider the modern pop culture to be just harmless entertainment! As you listen your thinking may well be warped by Satan's distortion of God's gift of music.

Music is Never Neutral

Music is either from God or Satan. It will be good for the soul or dangerous to the soul. We should remember the words of the Apostle Paul when selecting our music:

"Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure... think on these things" (Phil.4:8).

Wonderful Words

The Bible often refers to itself as 'Scripture' (2 Tim.3v15-16). The word denotes 'writing' – which, in turn, consists of groups of words. So the Bible is a collection of words. When we study the Bible we are studying words, and we gain much by examining the words used. The words used by Spirit-inspired men give us wonderful pictures of God and what He is to His people.

Take the word refuge. In Psalm 46v1, God is pictured as a **refuge** for His people. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psa.46: 1) Psalm 62v8 reiterates the personal nature of this: "...God is a refuge *for us*." A refuge is a place of safety and security. The word is used in the context of 'trouble'. The prophet Isaiah gives us another insight when he speaks of "a refuge from the storm" (Isa.25: 4).

Who could forget the dangerous effects of 'Hurricane Sandy'! East coast Americans were told to find a place of 'refuge.' Thus God would have us see Him as a place of safety for our souls.

The Hebrew term derives from one of the words for 'trust'. Seeing this is a help to us when we think about what it is to trust in the Lord. This root word means 'to flee for safety or refuge'. It is the word that is used in Psalm 2v12: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their *trust* in him." The blessing is promised to those who take refuge in the Lord.

Thus a soul is saved when he runs to the Lord for refuge, and for protection from the wrath of God. The unsaved soul is in danger from the outpouring of God's just wrath for his sin. Safety is found only in the person and work of Christ. But the child of God is not only saved through faith – he lives by faith. Life brings many trials, dangers and troubles. Where is safety found? Preservation and security for our souls is found by fleeing for refuge, to the place of refuge, the Lord Himself!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?

LOOKING AHEAD WITH RYAN MCKEE (ASSISTANT MINISTER, MAGHERAFELT FPC)

Summer is a time of opportunity for young people. Prepare to make the most of your summer!

PLAN

'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth', Ecclesiastes 12:1

Endeavour to spend time every day in the study of God's Word and prayer. There is a must for every day throughout the year, but with the extra time that summer affords, plan to use a portion of each day to get alone with God. Perhaps you could study through a book of the Bible this summer. Also, set aside additional time for special seasons of prayer for unsaved friends and family members, as well as for missionaries and your local congregation.

PARTICIPATE

'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together', Hebrews 10:25

Even in the summer, the Christian's duty is to honour the Lord in public worship on the Lord's Day. Don't neglect this privilege! Use it as an opportunity to get unsaved friends and family members under the sound of the preaching of God's Word. The Youth Council, in their annual Summer Camp, provides another great opportunity to fellowship with young people. This year, two camps will be held and, as in previous years, these will be filled with outdoor sports activities, team challenges, Quiet Time devotional groups, singing, preaching and fellowship. We praise God that the camps have been used of God in encouraging young believers in their walk with God and in pointing others to saving faith in Christ. Why don't you come along?

PRAY

'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?', Acts 9:6

Have you sought God's will for your life this summer? Perhaps you have felt the Lord leading you to serve Him among boys and girls in children's ministry, or in outreach to a community. Ask about opportunities to serve in your own congregation. There are ways to serve the Lord with the Youth Council. This summer there are openings in child evangelism as well as in two outreach teams in England.

It seems quite far away at present, but soon summer will be here, and it will pass quickly. Determine in your heart to honour the Lord this summer!



TRAINING WEEKEND

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

CHILDREN'S OUTREACHES

SOUTH DOWN
29th June - 5th July 2013

CONVOY
1st - 7th July 2013

BELFAST
10th - 16th Aug 2013

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

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

SUMMER CAMPS 2013

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

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

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

MAINLAND OUTREACH

LONDON 2013
3rd - 10th August

LIVERPOOL 2013
17th - 24th August

Cost £220;
Maximum 10 people
on each; Age:18+.
Applications
by 30th March 2013

SPRING RALLY

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

YOUTH COUNCIL EVENTS

OTHER EVENTS

MARTYRS' MEMORIAL
YOUTH CAMP
CEF CENTRE, ROSSNOWLAGH
22nd - 26th July
Details of activities, cost, deposit etc
Call Maurice Bannatyne
028 95089065

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

A WORD TO WOMEN

**GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS WORD FOR OUR GOOD.
HE WANTS US TO ENJOY IT FULLY, IN HOLY OBEDIENCE TO HIM.**

You don't have to be a Latin student to have heard the words that Julius Caesar reportedly wrote in his memoirs on going to war in Zela, Turkey, "*Veni! Vidi! Vici!*" – 'I came! I saw! I conquered!' Since then there have been many variations of this phrase in music, art and literature. One such is attributed to King Jan III of Poland after the 17th-century Battle of Vienna, "*Venimus, Vidimus, Deus vincit*" – 'We come, We see, God conquers'.

If we consider the first woman, Eve, we could say "She came! She saw! She disobeyed!". Eve had every privilege possible at creation. Not just the first woman, she was also the first wife and the first mother in the Bible. She was created in perfection for a perfect husband and placed in a perfect environment with everything necessary for survival. Better still, God the Creator was her friend and companion in the beautiful Garden of Eden. She could speak with Him face to face, without shame or guilt. Life, indeed, was paradise for Eve! But, sadly, not for long. God's arch enemy, Satan, knew that if he was to succeed in destroying this perfection that God had made, he would have to be subtle, devious and cunning.

**SATAN
KNOWS HOW TO
ATTACK US AT OUR
WEAK POINTS. HE KNEW
THAT WITH EVE IT WAS HER
DESIRE FOR NICE THINGS,
THOSE THINGS WHICH
LOOKED
NICE.**

In her innocence, Eve, was none of these things. She didn't have the foresight to understand that such characteristics could exist and so she believed whatever Satan told her. But God knew what Satan was capable of, and this is exactly why He gave Adam and Eve the instructions about 'all' the trees they could eat from, and about the 'one' they

couldn't. Even though Eve was deceived about the consequences of trusting Satan's promises ("Ye shall not surely die", Genesis 3:4), she did know that the only one she should take instruction from was the Lord Himself. But she came into the Garden of Eden, she "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes" and "she took...and did eat" (Genesis 3:6). She came! She saw! She disobeyed!

Satan knows how to attack us at our weak points. He knew that with Eve it was her desire for nice things, those things which *looked* nice and *seemed* to hold wonderful promises ("a tree to be desired to make one wise", Genesis 3:6). 'God has said "No" – but surely just a bite of this fruit won't be that harmful!'

God has His reasons when he says "No" to something, just as we do when a small child, seeing a sweet shop, makes a dart across a busy road to get to it. We shout "No!" – we rebuke him – why? Because we don't want him to have sweets? Of course not. It's because we can foresee the dangers that he can't see, and we are trying to warn him and keep him safe.

Dear friend, please know that God has given us His Word for our good, to warn us of the consequences of disobedience (see 2 Timothy 3:16). He does not set out to stop us enjoying life; indeed, He wants us to enjoy it fully, in holy obedience to Him. Be thankful that He cares enough to warn us!

✠ **Karen Murray** lives in Tandragee, N Ireland. She is a busy minister's wife and is actively involved in the life and witness of her local congregation.

CHRISTMAS IN ROMANIA

Lorena Rusovan, Co-ordinator of 'Children at Risk Ministries', invited the Park family to spend Christmas at Deborah House, a home for abused girls, in Romania. We accepted the invitation. The visit was very special, and we've all returned home with cherished memories.

Christmas time in Romania centres around Christ and the church. Lord's Day before Christmas, I preached in the village church of Utvin, near Timisoara. I was glad to fellowship again with these folks. During my first visit four years ago, I had the privilege of pointing some young people to Christ; three of them connected to the Deborah House, the other, a local girl. In the evening I ministered in Bethany, Rev. Eugen Groza's church in Timisoara. We were blessed as various choirs participated, and I preached on 'The Great and Immeasurable Gift of God.'

Another service was held on Christmas Eve at 6.00pm, when the youth pastor spoke. At 9.00pm various groups went out carol singing around the homes. We joined one group, 45 young people ready for a night of singing and praise. Traditionally, this lasted all-night, but with Ulster visitors, it was curtailed.

We finished early - at 4 am! It was a real marathon, but so enjoyable. Our group sang enthusiastically, many stayed up to receive us, and everywhere we went, food was provided.

On Christmas night I spoke again in Bethany, to a packed congregation. The young people went out carolling. My children joined them - but the older members of our family stayed behind!

Boxing Day morning took us to Bethel Baptist Church in Timisoara, and the 'Christmas for All' service. For twenty two years, this meeting has helped the poor and needy of the area. The Deborah House girls, poor children nearby and from orphanages, teenagers from juvenile prison, inmates and warders from the local jail - all were present. The Mayor, local Senator, and many pastors and leaders also attended. I had the honour of speaking on 'The Greatest Gift of All.' Afterwards over three hundred children received a hot meal and special gifts.

CHRIST HAD COMPASSION FOR THE OUTCASTS OF SOCIETY. AND HE CAN STILL TRANSFORM A ROMANIAN CHILD FROM A DELILAH TO A DEBORAH, ... TO A WOMAN USED OF GOD TO LEAD HER PEOPLE.

Next morning, we visited the juvenile prison - children aged 14-18 - for another service. Doru and Rodica are children's workers, and they witness here every week. The children learn hundreds of Bible verses. One young man who wanted a 'nice copy' of God's Word was told if he learned Psalm 119 he would get one: he responded by reciting all 176 verses! We were asked to return and conduct a Vacation Bible School.

Such is the governor's respect for the mission, it seems there is an open door for evangelism. Pray for God's direction as we think of the 70 young men and 12 young women. May God save them and bring them out of spiritual bondage!

Our final few days were spent with the Deborah House girls. Meeting them is always a blessing, and we have come to love them in the Lord. The home is a physical shelter, and a spiritual haven. Christ had compassion for the outcasts of society. And He can still transform a Romanian child from a Delilah to a Deborah, from a woman who used her femininity to destroy to a woman used of God to lead her people. Recovery requires removal from a destructive environment to somewhere she can discover the real meaning of the word 'home'. The aim is to provide the skills needed to live an independent life, and to show the girls how to become the people God intended them to be.

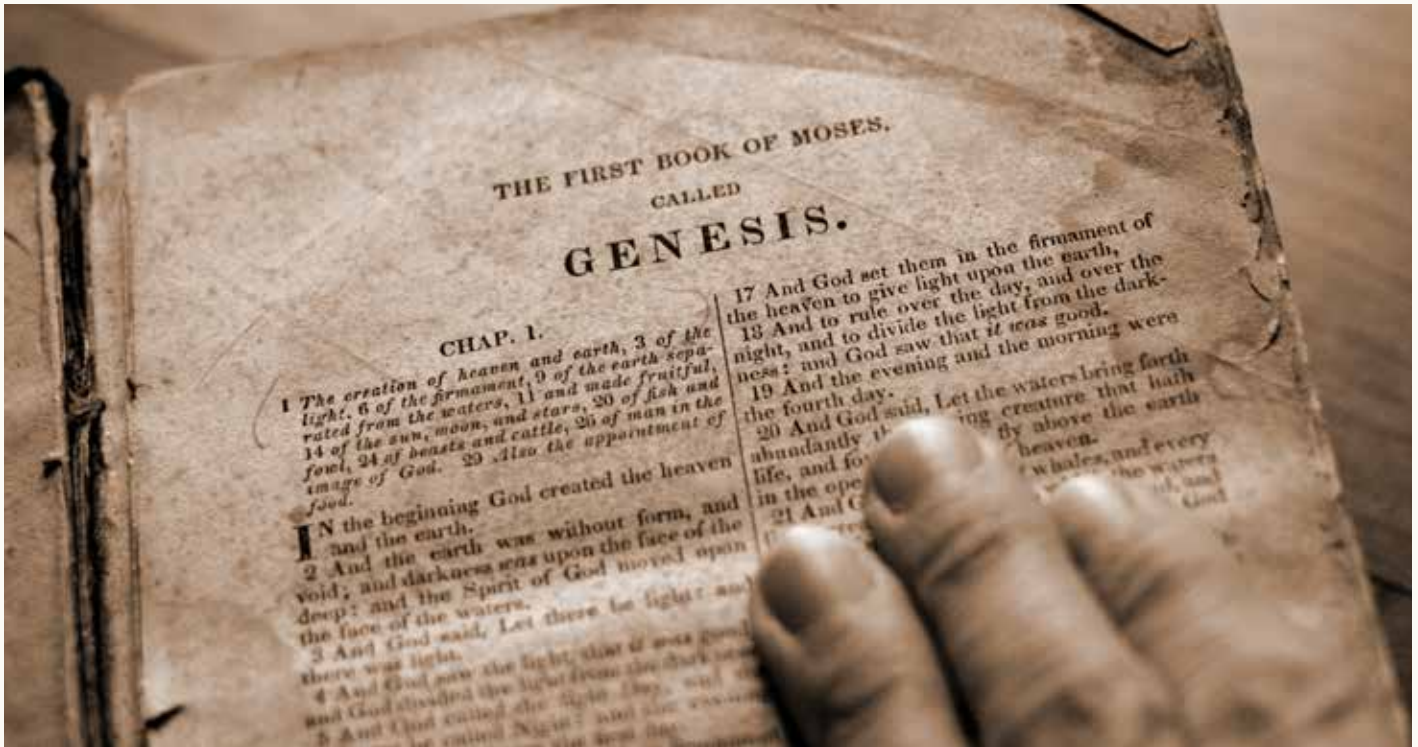
Dr. Stanley Barnes first introduced me to this mission-field. After the revolution, he travelled to Romania, and formed lasting friendships, especially with the Groza family. We thank him, and his dear wife Ina, for sharing their vision, and for all they have done, under God, to advance the Lord's work in this land.

✚ **Rev David Park**, minister of Ballymoney Free Presbyterian Church, serves as Missionary Council Chairman and Mission Board Secretary in our denomination.



A LOOK AT THE BOOK: GENESIS

WHAT A VAST FIELD OF STUDY IS PRESENTED TO US IN THE FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLE! GENESIS HAS 50 CHAPTERS. IT COVERS A PERIOD OF AT LEAST 2,300 YEARS.



In terms of our own lifetime, an equal period of history would not only reach back to include the activities of the apostles and the early ministry of our Lord but also border on the days of Malachi!

Yet God has been pleased to compress these two millennia, for the most part, into the small compass of a few chapters. Genesis chronicles momentous events from that primeval age and uses them as a basis for the unfolding of the plan of redemption. This we will come to see in the analysis of the Book.

Different outlines, of course, have been suggested. Frequently Genesis has been taken as THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS. Indeed this is how it came by its title, which is derived from the Septuagint. This Greek version of the OT Scriptures, thought to be the work of 70 scholars (hence the symbol LXX), was written in Alexandria, 300 BC. The name Genesis indicates “generation” or “origin.” (See Matthew 1:1, where ‘genesis’, the Greek word, is translated “generation”). Chapter one,

appropriately, opens with the words, “**In the Beginning**”. This suggests a host of useful topical subjects for Bible Study. Creation, Divine revelation, temptation, Satan’s work among men, sin, death, promise, prayer, marriage, family Worship, redemption, prophecy – all of these and more have their beginnings in the chapters which follow.

Some relate the beginnings of Genesis to the 11 distinct “generations” which occur, making 12 parts to the Book in all. You can locate these by looking up the references: 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2. Above all, the student should not fail to note how all the beginnings of Genesis have their antithetical climax in the book of Revelation - a marvellous testimony to the absolute and Divine unity of Scripture.

Dr. Morgan’s outline is easily remembered – a requirement for any useful outline – but it seems to concentrate mainly on the earlier chapters: Generation, Degeneration and Regeneration.

OUTLINE OF GENESIS

CHAPTERS	CHARACTERS	CHRIST FORESHADOWED OR SEEN IN THE:
1-11 Foundational And Introductory	Adam Noah	The substitutionary sacrifice and promise of deliverance, 3:15,21 The ark, the sinner's refuge, 6-9
12-50 Biographical and Explanatory	Abraham Jacob Joseph	The altar of intercession, 22 The God of Bethel and Peniel, 32 Forerunner and Interpreter 45:5,7 41:15,45 (Made known to his brethren when they see him the second time, Acts 7:13 cf Genesis 42:8.)

A TWO-FOLD ANALYSIS

I prefer a straightforward division of the book into two parts:

(i) **Genesis 1-11** is largely introductory and lays the foundation for the greater part of the book, and for the rest of Scripture. These are fundamental chapters. Therefore it need be no surprise that they have been subject to Satanic assault, especially chapters I, 3, 6 and 7.

(ii) **Genesis 12-50** demonstrates that the book is not only historical but also biographical. The narratives of Genesis focus on five principal characters: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. These five figures fully illustrate God's dealings with men. In Adam, there is the promise of the sinners redemption; in Noah, the finding of grace; in Abraham, the giving of the covenant for the land. With Jacob, the history marks the appearance of a particular and peculiar people, and Joseph's life reveals indisputably the preservation of that people. And, the doctrines of grace are exemplified here: ADAM, reflecting total depravity; NOAH, irresistible grace; ABRAHAM, unconditional election; JACOB, particular redemption; and JOSEPH, the preservation of the saints of God. (cf Genesis 6:5-7; 6:8; Isaiah 51:2; Genesis 48:16; 50:20).

ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD

Of the five central characters, the last three share greater prominence, occupying approximately four-fifths of the entire book. This corresponds to chapters 12-50, the second division in the outline.

Abraham, however, has a prominence that continues through the rest of the Bible, something immediately discernable in the New Testament. He holds a supreme position as the friend of God and the father of the faithful (James 2:21,23; Galatians 3:7,29). In Genesis, more chapters are devoted to the life of this one man than to the narrative of creation, the fall, the antediluvian period and the flood combined! Even chapters 1-11 prepare the way for his coming. These chapters, in round figures, account for 2,000 years of the Genesis history, while the remaining 39 chapters concentrate on 300 years.

Moreover, 'Abraham's chapters' pertain to the last 100 years of his 175-year life span. The scientists and educators of this age would certainly change the emphasis in Genesis if they could. For them, those 100 years would merit little attention, while the 2,000 years so hurriedly passed over by the inspired pen would receive a detailed treatment, perhaps expanding into as many volumes.

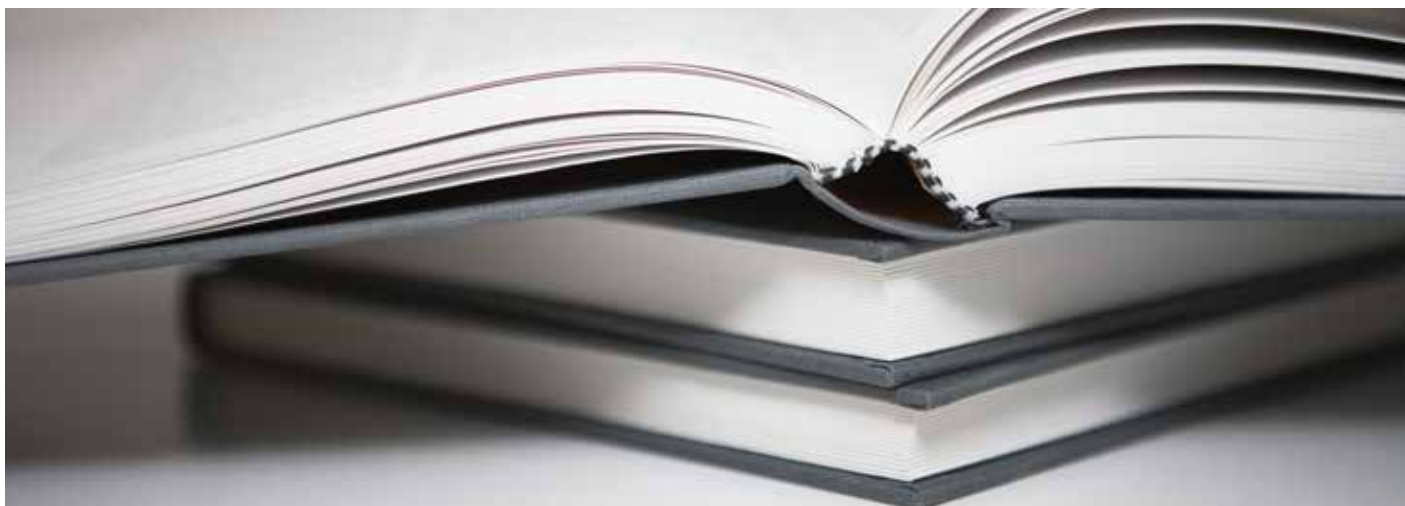
THE DESIGN OF THE AUTHOR

Thankfully Genesis, in common with all Scripture, has a Divine origin. It derives from One who says "**My thoughts are not your thoughts**" (see Isaiah 55: 8, 9). No, the first words of this first book sum up the origin of the Bible and the supernatural perfection of its message: "In the beginning GOD..."

Resembling a miniature Bible, these words lie equally at the back of the creation of this universe, and at the back of the whole scheme of redemption and our eventual salvation. All true scholarship, all true Bible study, all sound investigation, thinking and doing, can build only on this sublime foundation – in the beginning, God!

No other explanation for the genesis of life, or of the world, will stand. The same goes for the Bible, starting with Genesis itself. There is no other way to account for its origin but in the first four words of the opening chapter.

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



THE BELIEVER'S BOOKS

'AUGUSTUS TOPLADY' DOUGLAS BOND

This attractively produced little volume is meant to serve as an introduction to the life and ministry of Augustus Toplady – a worthy subject indeed! It is probably true to say that many readers are acquainted with the name of Toplady only because they have seen it appended to the most celebrated hymn to come from his pen, 'Rock of Ages', but there is much more to the life of this remarkable individual.

After chapters dealing with Toplady's birth and early life, conversion and college years, ordination and early ministry, there follow eight themed snapshots of his 38 years on this earth, viewing his life in terms of preaching, praying, scholarship, pastoring, contending, praising, hymn writing and

fruitfulness. This approach manages to give a useful overview of the key aspects of a very full life.

What were, perhaps, most interesting were the insights given in relation to Toplady's controversy with John Wesley. Many will be unaware of this – most of those who are will likely side with Wesley, who is much better known. However, while not excusing any intemperance of language or attitude, Bond shows that Toplady was on the right side of the argument.

Incidentally, he also demonstrates that the words and ways of Wesley in these disputes are not beyond criticism. Bishop Ryle concluded that Toplady's theology was 'scriptural, sound and true', and he continued: 'I will never

shrink from saying that the cause for which Toplady contended all his life was decidedly the cause of God's truth. He was a bold defender of Calvinistic views about election, predestination, perseverance, human impotency, and irresistible grace. On all these subjects I hold firmly that Calvin's theology is much more scriptural than the theology of Arminius. In a word, I believe that Calvinistic divinity is the divinity of the Bible, of Augustine, and of the Thirty-Nine Articles of my own church, and of the Scots Confession of Faith' Just so.

All in all, this is a good read. It is readily available, and is not expensive.

∴ Timothy Nelson

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE REVIVALIST,
MARCH-APRIL, 1973

100,000
GOSPELS FOR
ULSTER

The Martyrs' Memorial Free Presbyterian Church has ordered a special printing of the Gospel of John – 100,000 copies, initial printing, for distribution throughout Ulster. They hope to increase this to a quarter of a million copies.

Believing that the only answer to Ulster's problems is to deal with the problem of sin in the human heart, and that this is possible only through the new birth, the church has felt compelled to proceed upon this massive

undertaking of sowing the Word of God. The gospels will be supplied by the Trinitarian Bible Society. The version will be the God honoured Authorised Version.

Churches, mission halls, ministers, preachers, evangelists and all Christians interested can have supplies freely for distribution in their districts.

Editor's note: Forty years on, the message of God's Word is still the only real answer to Ulster's problems!

MISSIONARY VISION

KENYA: 'SENDING FORTH' SERVICES



Mission Board organised two 'Sending Forth' Services in January for outgoing missionaries to Kenya. The first, hosted by Lisburn on Thursday 3rd, saw a large congregation, with many family members and friends, convene for the sending forth of Rev and Mrs Patterson. Malcolm and Alison left on the 14th January and are settling into their new home in Kitale, and commencing their ministry for the Lord. Please pray for them, and for those family members remaining in N Ireland.

The second service, hosted by Tandragee on Tuesday 8th, marked the return of Margaret Russell to Kenya for her thirtieth year of service. Margaret is now back in Kapenguria, and is re-adjusting to life and ministry there once again.

Mission Board would like to thank all who travelled to support the meetings, Moderator Rev John Greer for finding time out of a busy schedule to preach with great acceptance at both services, and the 'home' congregations for their unstinting hospitality.

Please continue to 'hold the ropes' for the Pattersons, Miss Russell, and all who serve in Kenya. Remember the country with elections looming. Pray for the work of the Bible Christian Faith Church, that God, through it, would bring blessing to many hearts and lives.

∴ **Rev Ian Harris**
(Mission Board Convenor)

NEPAL NEWS

The Free Presbyterian Church's connection with Nepal 'Mission to the Unreached' goes back to March 2006 when Rev Wesley Graham preached at a pastor's conference. The bond has strengthened, with ministers travelling to speak at this annual event. In addition, there have been regular autumn trips to visit many of the churches and bring encouragement to believers.

From the first, Paul Thapa and the ruling board of the Nepal Mission have been interested in forming

closer links with the Free Church in Northern Ireland. April 2010 brought a vital development – Rev Graham was sent by our Mission Board to help establish a college in Kathmandu for the training of pastors and evangelists. This has played an essential role in the formation of the work in Nepal, with 86 men and 40 women being trained for evangelism in remote parts of the country.

Recently the Mission applied to become part of the Free Presbyterian Church. The Mission Board gave serious and prayerful consideration to this

request, before recommending to the Ulster Presbytery that an autonomous Free Presbyterian Church be formed in Nepal. In January, our Presbytery duly passed this proposal. Next month, the Moderator, Rev John Greer, and the Mission Board Chairman, Rev Ian Harris, will join Rev Wesley Graham in Nepal and seek to prepare the way for this next phase in the work. Truly, this is a remarkable development! Pray that wisdom may be given as these matters are considered and important decisions made.

∴ **Rev Wesley Graham**



30 YEARS IN KENYA

In October 1982, Mission Board sent Rev David McIlveen and Mr George McConnell on a fact-finding trip to Kenya.

I eagerly awaited news of that visit because I believed that God was calling me there! The report was good, and I was sent to Kenya on a 3-month visitor's visa. Little did I know then that three months would stretch to almost 30 years!

I was converted when 17, and after training as a nurse and midwife, God called me to missionary work. When I finished in the Whitefield College of the Bible, God spoke to me about Kenya. Rev Nathaniel Kendagor visited Ulster, presenting the need for missionaries in the Bible Christian Faith Church (BCFC). The leaders of that church had separated from the African Inland Church (AIC) in 1980 due to its membership in an organisation that associated it with the World Council of Churches. Margaret Armstrong, a missionary with African Inland Mission, had joined our church in Armagh. She knew the Kendagor family. Hearing of their stand, she was instrumental in introducing them to the Free Presbyterian Church. I met Margaret once, and she had an evident vision for God's work in Kenya. Sadly, she passed away in 1981 at just 47.

I arrived in Kapenguria on the 8th July 1983. God's people in the BCFC warmly welcomed me. Soon I went to Nairobi to learn Kiswahili, and then to Eldoret

Hospital for nursing orientation. Even then, I saw a great need in Sunday school ministry. I did not rule out medical work, but government authorisation for such a work was then impossible. My medical training has been invaluable, but I have concentrated on Sunday school work, producing a curriculum, training teachers, and writing lessons in Kiswahili.

BCFC had a turbulent start, and every step was taken with much opposition. As a missionary, I felt this keenly. In Kenya, a church cannot operate legally without registration. At that time it was difficult for any new work to be registered, especially one arising out of secession from an influential denomination like the AIC. After refusal of its application, BCFC appealed to the Attorney General. Meanwhile the work went on, and a small Bible School opened in September 1986.

In 1988 the authorities continued to pressurize BCFC. On Sunday 21st August security officers visited two churches. Rev Nathaniel Kendagor, another Pastor, and adult worshippers were arrested and held on remand in Kapenguria until Monday evening, when they were released. The following day the court fined the church and banned its worship services. The next Sunday, BCFC people met in homes. The Bible School moved to my house. We continued teaching as the church continued to appeal the refusal of registration. After about three years, tension eased, and people trickled

back to worship in the churches.

During 1993 tribal clashes erupted in West Pokot, and Kapenguria was severely affected. All non-Pokot felt threatened, even though many had spent their lives in the area and knew the language and culture well. On 2nd January 1994, gunmen attacked Nathaniel Kendagor's home in Lityei. His sister Ruth died instantly, and his nephew Isaac two days later. The church and many in the community were stunned! Much soul searching followed, imploring the Lord to reveal Himself in the midst of this awful tragedy. As the two young people were laid to rest on church owned land in Lityei, little did we know that one day the Christian Academy would be established on the same ground. Surely the death of those two bright, zealous young people was not in vain!

In 1992, while I was on furlough, May Spiers, Anne McAuley and Gillian Gillespie had relieved me. Gillian worked closely with Ruth Kendagor and, on hearing of her death, the Lord burdened Gillian to come to Kenya. Mission Board sent her in October 1995. She lived first in Kitale, then moved to Kapenguria, and now is serving in Kakamega, Western Kenya. She has worked with the teenagers, witnessed the establishment of several small nursery schools in outlying BCFC churches, and is now assisting in the congregation in Nyaporo, thirty minutes' drive east of Kakamega.

In February 1996, after much prayer and perseverance, registration was granted! This marked the end of a long struggle and gave BCFC the opportunity to establish and expand its work. In the same year, the Armstrong Evangelical Bookshops were opened, first in Kitale, then in Makutano, the trading centre near Kapenguria. Cherry Dale was the first bookshop manager. Today the BCFC bookshop committee, with a faithful team of seven staff, run these bookshops. Consignments of books and gifts from Ulster have helped greatly, and the bookshops have assisted in making good contacts locally and throughout Kenya.

Rev Ian Harris was part of a Mission Board delegation that stood with us as we came to terms with the sad loss of Ruth and Isaac. Subsequently, God called him to Kenya. He was accepted by Mission Board and arrived with his family in 1997. He taught in the Bible College, and his eight-year ministry saw churches established in Kitale, Moi's Bridge and Nyaporo. Mrs Linda Harris was greatly involved in women's ministry and in the bookshops. When the Harris's returned home, Rev Gregory McCammon taught for 4 months in the College. Later Rev Dave DiCanio worked here, 2009-10, teaching in the College and renovating the property.

The BCFC was always concerned about what children were subjected to in



Margaret Armstrong



Margaret Russell, 1982



Margaret Russell

Kenyan public schools, and prayed much about starting its own school. This vision became reality in January 1998 when a small preschool started in Lityei. In September that year, a building programme commenced, and continued to 2009. The Academy, starting with fewer than 30 students, today has over 600! I remember surveying those first foundations and wondering what teacher would be able to help us establish such an institution. I did not know of anyone, but God did! He had already challenged Noreen McAfee. The Mission Board sent her, and since August 2000 we have worked with the BCFC to see the erection of buildings and the establishment of nursery, primary and secondary departments. These excellent facilities were made possible by the sacrificial giving of so many throughout our Free Presbyterian churches.

On 6th May 2006, the Mission Board of the North American Presbytery sent Kathy Walker, a music teacher from Orlando. She has worked in the churches, and the

Academy, teaching music and choir, and gives invaluable help in the bookshops. From 2009-10, Joanne Greer, now in Liberia, provided relief for furloughs and taught in the Academy.

Rev Malcolm and Mrs Alison Patterson have now arrived. They have been here previously, and now have been sent for a longer period. We appreciate this additional help and trust God to bless their labours. So many have contributed to the establishment and expansion of the witness in North West Kenya! And the service, perseverance and vision of those in BCFC must be acknowledged.

Today there are twenty-one churches and outreaches, two ordained ministers, six pastors, and elders and laymen involved in the work. Sunday School, Teen, Youth, and Women's ministries continue every week. Together, we are labourers with God. To Him be all the glory!

✚ **Margaret Russell**
(Field Leader, Kenya)



KENYA: CHRISTIAN ACADEMY DVD

Mission Board has just produced an up-to-date DVD on the work and of the Christian Academy in Kenya. Contact the Mission Board Office (see below) for your FREE copy.

COMING & GOING

Joy Gillespie (Spain): Joy is home for several months of deputation. Anyone wishing for such a meeting should contact Rev David McMillan (028 3778 8150).

Kathy Walker (Kenya): Kathy was due to leave for her home in USA in early February. She will spend a few months visiting the churches in USA and Canada before returning to the field.

Australia: Please continue to pray that work permits will be granted to the Gardiner and Hall families to enable their removal to Perth and Tasmania.

Pray too for the Patrick family, preparing to return home to Northern Ireland after many years of service in Australia.

MISSION BOARD DETAILS

Office:
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Secretary:
Rev David Park,
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BT53 6ED
T. 028 2766 2039
E. hebronfpc@btconnect.com



DATES FOR THE DIARY

MARCH

3rd-17th

MONEYSLANE, GOSPEL MISSION

Speaker: Rev T Martin (Lisburn),

Time: Sunday at 3.30pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

10th-15th

LISBURN, BIBLE WEEK

Speaker: Rev J Greer (Ballymena),

Time: Sunday at 7.00pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

10th-24th

ANTRIM, GOSPEL MISSION

Speaker: Rev A Patterson (Mourne),

Time: Sunday at 7.00pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

17th-22nd

CROSSGAR, ANNUAL FOUNDATIONS BIBLE CONFERENCE

Speaker: Dr R Johnstone (Newtownards) Theme: 'Objects around the Cross'

Time: Sunday at 7.00pm, Monday - Friday at 8.00pm

22nd

BANBRIDGE, PRAISE SERVICE

Speaker: Rev M Baxter (Mulvin),

Time: Friday at 8.00pm

Singing: Rev F Greenfield, Combined Calvary Choirs, Kingdom Heirs

Offering: For 'Bibles to China' project

23rd

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, CONSIDER CHRIST OUTREACH

For details of venue, times, transport, programme etc contact Dr L Wilson:

Mob: 078 8626 5600 Email: outreach@ConsiderChrist.com

25th

NEWTOWNABBEY (Kindly Granted), WHITEFIELD COLLEGE CHRISTIAN WORKERS' TRAINING ACADEMY GRADUATION

Speaker: Rev J Greer (Ballymena), other Lecturers participating

Time: Monday at 8.00pm

29th

RASHARKIN, EASTER MISSIONARY RALLY

Speaker: Rev Milos Solc (Czech Republic),

Special Testimony & Singing

Time: Friday at 7.45pm

Supper Served

31st+ 2nd

MOURNE, EASTER MISSIONARY SERVICES

Speakers: Rev R Hall (Tasmania), Miss J Gillespie (Spain), Mr C Killen (N Ireland)

Time: Sunday at 12.00am & 7.00pm, Tuesday at 8.00pm

APRIL

6th-7th

NEWTOWNABBEY, SOUL WINNERS' CONVENTION

Speaker: Rev John Hanna (Spain),

Time: Saturday at 7.30pm, Sunday at 11.30am & 7.00pm

7th

BALLYGOWAN, RADIO ULSTER BROADCAST SERVICE

Speaker: Rev A Smylie Station: 1341 MW

Time: Sunday 10.15am - 11.00am