

FREE PRESBYTERIAN VISION



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

THE EQUALITY AGENDA

March - April 2016 . Issue 20 . £1



The Interview: Rev Colin Mercer



Congregation Call: Moneyslane



Roman Catholicism



Introducing George McConnell

11

Youth:
TWICE-BORN

20

News:
DR JOHN DOUGLAS - 40 YEARS IN LISBURN

04

The Interview: Rev Colin Mercer

16

Congregation Call: Moneyslane

06

The Equality Agenda

18

Reformation 500 Committee

08

News

19

E. M. Bounds

12

Youth: Roman Catholicism

22

Introducing George McConnell

Subscriptions

FP Vision is available from your local Free Presbyterian Church, or by contacting Colin McKee:
Tel: 028 91821304
Mob: 07764224363
subscribe@fpvision.org

Presbytery Publications Committee

Dr R Johnstone (Convenor)
Mr I Campbell
Rev D Creane
Rev L Curran (Associate Editor)
Mr C McKee (Business Manager)
Rev T Nelson (Editor)
Dr S Pollock (Associate Editor)
Rev M Lecky

www.freepresbyterian.org



Design and Print by
Pepper Collective
T: 07729 526366

Editorial

Confession time: For decades I have been an incorrigible hoarder, resisting the disposal of countless long-neglected items on the basis of sentimental attachment or the notion that they may be useful some day. Recently, as they say, 'the chickens have come home to roost' – our removal from one congregation to another has necessitated a seemingly endless round of packing, the task magnified by this assortment of things accumulated over many years.

I have some recollection of reading a sermon entitled 'the tyranny of things', the preacher's premise being that we can so easily be brought into bondage to material things. Certainly we can become unduly attached to a host of random objects. We need to be reminded often of the Saviour's words: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). The things that

matter are not physical but spiritual, not temporal but eternal.

And, in a sense, this is the Easter message – what the risen life means for, and in, the Christian. We have moved beyond fascination with the trinkets of this decaying world. Paul's challenge is timely: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). Not always easy to do, is it? The Apostle shows us that our minds are to be taken up with Christ – the risen, ascended Saviour constantly interceding for us – only then will we be able to resist the lure of earthly things and be dedicated to the pursuit of higher things, of His cause, even Him in Whom our lives are hidden (Colossians 3:3).

∴ Timothy Nelson
editor@fpvision.org



THE EXALTED SAVIOUR

“THOU HAST ASCENDED ON HIGH”

PSALM 68:18

We rejoice in a risen and exalted Saviour. It was ordained that He should suffer and then “*enter into his glory*” (Luke 24:26). His ascension to the throne of glory is cause for great joy and gladness among all the redeemed in heaven and on earth.

If the bonds of death and the confines of the tomb had held Him, He could never have gone back to heaven. His ‘going up’ reveals He had fulfilled the law, satisfied God’s justice and brought in everlasting righteousness. Exaltation to glory was a declaration to the world that “*the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake*” (Isaiah 42:21).

If He had not magnified the law and made it honourable, we could not be begotten unto the lively hope of “*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for [us]*” (1 Peter 1:4). The gates of glory, before closed to us, were opened to receive One in our nature who “*entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*” (Hebrews 9:24). There, as our advocate, He appears in our cause

and transacts our affairs. Never doubt His success. His interest is so great in the court of Heaven that no cause in His hands has ever been lost, for the Father hears Him always (John 11:41,42).

His eyes are upon every sheep and lamb of His pasture. He tells all their wandering and puts all their tears into His bottle. Every sigh or groan from their hearts goes to His heart. As the great Shepherd, He continues looking after His flock on their journey here below.

When He ascended up on high He received gifts for men (Psalm 68:18). What He received for us He gives to us according to our needs. Fear not then to go where He sends and to do what He commands. He is at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our exalted King and glorious Representative.

He takes possession of the inheritance of eternal life, until His fellow-heirs follow Him and be eternally with Him. Our souls follow Him there at death and

our bodies at the resurrection. Here is comfort for the child of God. He has said, “*where I am, there shall also my servant be*” (John 12:26). Our present, tottering house of clay will soon crumble and we will enter the house “*not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*” (2 Corinthians 5:1). Death has been disarmed of its sting. He who has the keys of hell and of death took the armour of this king of terrors with Him, as one of the spoils of battle, when He went up to His throne. Christ has not gone up to Heaven in any private capacity. He

went up in the name of all His people as the forerunner to open their way to glory, having accomplished their full redemption. So then, “*be glad in the LORD and rejoice ye righteous and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart*” (Psalm 32:11).

**HE IS AT THE
RIGHT HAND OF
THE MAJESTY
ON HIGH AS OUR
EXALTED KING
AND GLORIOUS
REPRESENTATIVE.**

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

A portrait of Rev Colin Mercer, a middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a striped tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

THE INTERVIEW: REV COLIN MERCER

THE EDITOR WAS
DELIGHTED THAT REV
COLIN MERCER WAS ABLE TO
BE IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR
HIS INSTALLATION SERVICE TO
BALLYNAHINCH. MR MERCER IS
A LONG-STANDING, LOYAL AND
VALUED FRIEND, AND HE KINDLY
CONSENTED TO BE THE SUBJECT
OF OUR LATEST INTERVIEW

TN: Timothy Nelson CM: Colin Mercer

**TN: Tell us a little of your
background**

CM: I was born in the historic city of Londonderry. My mother was converted as a young girl and my father when he was in his twenties. My grandparents, on both sides, were believers. My two grandfathers were involved in various aspects of Christian work. I have four siblings, including my elder twin brother. After primary and grammar school education, I worked as an office administrator near my home. This was in God's good providence as I was able to spend extra time with my mother who died from cancer just before my twenty-second birthday.

TN: How were you brought to Christ?

CM: I grew up under the message and influence of the gospel. My parents brought up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Sunday school, morning and evening services, children's meetings and additional services were part of our weekly routine. Family altar times were observed and the gospel faithfully presented. As a child the Lord dealt with my heart, convicting me of sin. I did not understand every theological truth, but

I knew I was a sinner in need of Christ, and as a boy of eight or nine I called upon the Lord to save me. For years, I lacked assurance of my salvation. However as I grew in grace, under the ministry of the Word, I understood that while my faith was weak, Christ the object of that faith, was mighty to save! Because of my union with Him, it was indeed well with my soul. This truth was greatly advanced when I began to attend the Free Presbyterian Church in Londonderry.

TN: And how did God call you to the ministry?

CM: I left school at seventeen and for three years was content in my employment. In 1987 the Lord unsettled me and I began to pray that I would know His will for my life. For eighteen months there was no direct answer to that prayer. In May 1988, Rev Ivan Foster preached for a week in Londonderry and the Lord spoke very definitely to my heart through Scripture. The burden to prepare for the ministry in the Free Presbyterian Church was overwhelming. I couldn't deny the call of God and in time, after acceptance by Presbytery, I resigned from my employment and commenced studies in the Whitefield College of the Bible.

TN: You served first in Northern Ireland

CM: Upon completion of the ministerial course, I was licensed by Presbytery and received a call to Castlederg. By this time I was married to Heather and we had one daughter, Lois. We spent five and a half very happy years in Tyrone and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served that congregation. Our second daughter, Hannah, was born while I ministered there. In 1999 the Lord called me to Kilkeel. Ten years were spent ministering the Word and taking the oversight of that large congregation. I also served as the Administrator of the Christian School. I have the happiest memories of ministering in the Kingdom of Mourne. In May 2009 Faith Free Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina, called me to become their senior minister. We relocated to Greenville in time for our daughters to commence school in September 2009.

TN: Tell us a little of the work in Greenville

CM: Faith Free Presbyterian Church, formed in the late 1970's, knew growth during the thirty year ministry of Dr Alan Cairns. Greenville is often described as 'the buckle of the Bible belt' and the influence of many churches and Bob Jones University is evident in the community. Presently our regular attendance exceeds 200, some travelling many miles to attend. We broadcast a

one hour programme Lord's Day mornings on local radio and live-stream our worship services via Sermon Audio. A virtual congregation is scattered across various States, many prayerfully and practically supporting the ministry. The church finances broadcasts in the Caribbean and across North America. An annual youth camp in Pennsylvania attracts 100 campers and 40 staff for a week of activities and Bible study. A Reformation Conference is held in October, and in December our 'Lessons and Carols' service brings many visitors. Our church hosts Geneva Reformed Seminary, for the training of ministers for the Free Presbyterian Church. Certain classes can be taken online while others require attendance. Dr Mark Allison serves as the President of the Seminary having relocated from Malvern to Greenville last month.

TN: What are the particular challenges of serving in USA?

CM: Ministering in North America is somewhat different from ministry in Northern Ireland. North Americans regularly move home or church, so congregations are constantly changing. In Greenville numerous churches are within a short distance of each other. 'Church-hopping' is common – people leave one congregation for another only to leave that one a short time later. The fast pace of life is a factor. Long work hours and short vacation time make life very busy and additional church meetings hard to organize. Yet many show desire for the preaching of the Word and have a clear grasp of theology, and that is appreciated. Meanwhile, Heather and I have become what Americans call "empty nesters". Lois, our eldest daughter, teaches in Darlington, Maryland. A 1200 mile round trip means she is only home at holidays. And Hannah, our youngest, returned home to study at Queen's University, Belfast.

TN: How might our readers pray intelligently for the FPCN?

CM: While there has been some advancement in certain areas, there have been discouragements in others. The greatest need is for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our congregations, bringing salvation, and unity and edification to the Lord's people. Our seminary remains small and with ministers approaching retirement, there is a need for younger men who will take up the challenge of preaching Christ in all his fullness.

Thank you, Colin. May God continue to bless you in all your labours.



When King John, under considerable duress, pressed his royal seal on to the *Magna Carta* (Great Charter) on 15 June 1215, he could not have predicted that this document would shape our ideas of individual rights and freedoms for hundreds of years to come. Buried deep within its dense text was a genuinely visionary thought – “*To no one deny, or delay, right or justice,*” meaning everyone is equal before the law.

FOUNDATION FOR EQUALITY

What people tend to forget is that this document was set within a Christian framework, was advocated chiefly by the church (“at the advice of our

reverend fathers”), and had distinct biblical roots: its main purpose to limit royal power so that the king was no longer the law, but was under the law, is merely an echo of the biblical teaching on this subject (Deuteronomy 17:14ff, Psalms 2, 93). Many also ignore the fact that the first (and last) freedom established by the *Magna Carta* was that of religious liberty: “the English Church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished and its liberties unimpaired.”

It is both ironic and tragic that the 800th anniversary of this pivotal document sees its fundamental liberties under sustained attack – and witnesses its visionary concept of equality twisted

through a full 180 degrees to become inequality. This modern false ‘equality’ has become the favourite battering ram of the liberal left in our society. Or, in the revealing language of Gerry Adams, it is, “the Trojan horse of the entire Republican strategy.” He made this statement at a public meeting in Enniskillen on 24 November 2014 when he identified the principal tool by which to subjugate Protestants: “That’s what’s going to break them: equality.”

LEGISLATION FOR A NEW EQUALITY

The Equality Act came into force in the United Kingdom on 1 October 2010, ostensibly to grant people legal protection from discrimination in

the workplace and in wider society. A proposal to introduce similar legislation in the United States of America has filled conservatives with deep concern. Those who appreciate the most cherished symbol of their nation's liberty – *The Declaration of Independence* – understand that it leans heavily for its defence of human rights on the *Magna Carta* and even more heavily on the biblical belief of creation: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are *created* equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." However, what is now being proposed for America – *The Equality Act of 2015* – supported by companies like Apple, Nike, Google and Facebook, is not laying a foundation for equality, but for "repressive tolerance."

In his book *Takedown: From Communists to Progressives, How the Left has Sabotaged Family and Marriage*, Paul Kengor observes: "I think we're already seeing what's next from the 'LGBT' and same-sex-marriage movement – that is, an aggressive and uncompromising push for forced acceptance, forced compliance, and forced acquiescence. For these people, 'tolerance' doesn't actually mean 'tolerance,' just as 'diversity' doesn't actually mean 'diversity.' What they want is a very selective tolerance and very selective diversity, which, of course, isn't actually real tolerance or real diversity." Kengor further warns: "They are going to coerce those who disagree with their movement and their agenda, and that will include an aggressive attempt to force religious believers into full compliance with their movement and their agenda. For that, they will enlist the long arm of the state, and they will seek to do so with liberal politicians as their handmaidens. The force will take the form of fines, pickets, boycotts, demonisation, and, in some cases, incarceration." Much of this is already being witnessed in the United Kingdom!

"WHEN THE ENEMY SHALL COME IN LIKE A FLOOD, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM"

INTERVENTION BY OPPRESSIVE BODIES

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has intervened where Christian belief and homosexual rights have collided, cementing a habit of undermining religious belief.

- In 2011 the EHRC intervened in court against a Christian couple, Owen and Eunice Johns, to prevent them fostering a child on the basis that their Christian views might "infect" the child.
- The EHRC also caused outrage in March 2011 by commissioning a report recommending that children, if necessary without parental consent, should be asked if they are homosexual from the age of 11, and that records should be kept of those unsure about or "questioning" their sexuality.
- The EHRC funded a case in 2011 against devout Christian guesthouse owners Peter and Hazelmary Bull, who restricted double rooms in their guesthouse (also their home) to married couples only. They were sued by civil partners Martyn Hall and Stephen Preddy after they were refused a double room. The judge ruled against the Bulls and ordered them to pay compensation.

- Ashers Bakery was taken to court by taxpayer-funded quango the 'Equality Commission for Northern Ireland' because it declined to produce a cake with the slogan, "Support Gay Marriage." The Belfast County Court ruled in May 2015 that the company had acted unlawfully. This case is awaiting judgement in the Court of Appeal.

The modern 'revolutionaries' who speak of equality while promoting immorality and injustice fervently hope that no one will dare to ask the uncomfortable question: "What exactly does 'marriage equality' mean?" To answer is to expose the truth that "marriage equality" is simply the latest catchphrase to be thrown into the same-sex marriage

debate – an attempt to reframe the conversation and ascribe a certain level of irrationality to those who oppose same-sex marriage.

REVOLUTION FOR A RETURN TO TRUE EQUALITY

In modern societies that are increasingly secular and ungodly, the marriage equality debate is eventually going to be won by the 'gay rights' movement. But, whatever sin society seeks to annul, it cannot change the fact that followers of Christ are to align with, and submit to, His Word. His Word unequivocally declares that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman for a lifetime (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:2-16; Ephesians 5:23-33), and that homosexuality is an unnatural sin (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Jude 7). Therefore, homosexual union is not marriage. It does not matter if government legislates a new definition of marriage, or if society is overwhelmingly in favour of same-sex marriage. A homosexual union always has been, and always will be, a perversion of God's creation.

The bearers of this modern battering ram are not going to drop the "equality" tag any time soon. If we imagine that leftist equality has steered us into some terrible directions already, the truth is that worse scenarios are to come, including further charges in order to lower the age of consent and sanitize the gross sin of paedophilia.

However, in the midst of changing circumstances we cling to an unchanging promise: "*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him*" (Isaiah 59:19). May God, by His mighty Spirit, arise again in our day to sweep away sin, stir our hearts, and save our society! National repentance and revival remain our only hope.

✚ **Dr Ian Brown** is the minister of Martyrs' Memorial Church, Belfast. He serves as Clerk of the Ulster Presbytery, and lectures in Historical Theology in the Theological Hall.

EDITOR INSTALLED IN BALLYNAHINCH



FP Vision Editor Rev Timothy Nelson was installed as minister of the Ballynahinch congregation on Friday 8th January in the Hillsborough church (kindly granted).

Rev G Dane (Interim Moderator) conducted the service, with contributions from Revs C Mercer, P Thompson, S Murray, I Brown, R Johnstone and S Pollock. Moderator Rev T Murray

brought a challenging message and Mr G Craig (Clerk of Session) welcomed the Nelsons to Ballynahinch. Presentations were made to Rev & Mrs Nelson and Rev & Mrs Dane, and fellowship enjoyed around an excellent supper.

Our pictures, courtesy of Ruth Dane, show participants, and Rev Nelson with members of the Ballynahinch Session & Committee.

RASHARKIN 'SENDING FORTH' SERVICE



A Sending Forth service for Whitefield College graduate Christina Logan took place on 14th January at Rasharkin just before

her going to Liberia for six months to work with Joanne Greer and Rev Dave DiCanio. Christina is pictured with her sisters Joy, Emma and Cherith and her

parents Lorna and Robert, and with Rev McLeod and Session members J Cameron, R Logan, G Hanna and W Hanna.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUCCESS



Three children from the Sabbath School in Merthyr Tydfil (Wales) recently completed the Child's Catechism. Harleigh Thomas, Felicity Smyth and Michael Smyth are pictured with Mr J Boyce and Rev N Smyth.

Rev J Porter and Mr W McMullan (Superintendent) are pictured congratulating Zara Hopps who attends Markethill Sunday School, and

who was also able to recite the entire Child's Catechism.

Meanwhile, in Magherafelt, three pupils recited the Child's Catechism and two pupils recited the Shorter Catechism. Two teachers, husband and wife, Mr and Mrs Brown, also recited the Shorter Catechism. Pictured (l-r) are Rev R McKee, Alistair Brown, Gemma Brown, Scott Redfern, Roy Campbell

(Superintendent), Evan Johnston, Rachel McBride, Michael Brown, Sarah Brown and Dr W McCrea.

In Omagh, Rachel McFarland and Luke Dobbins received certificates for full attendance at Sunday School. Rachel didn't miss a single day for 10 years and Luke achieved 9 years full attendance. Both pupils are now in Bible Class.

New Contact Details

Rev Timothy Nelson

28 Lime Trees, Ballynahinch, Co Down, BT24 8NB
Tel. 028 9756 1069

CHILDREN'S CORNER



Boys and girls, it will soon be my birthday, with, hopefully, lots of cake and gifts! In Matthew 2:1-12 you will read of some rather strange gifts presented to a little boy to mark his birth: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The wise men brought them to the Lord Jesus Christ. I used to think that for men supposed to be "wise", these gifts were not only strange but stupid. Surely it would have been much wiser to bring a blanket, some clothes or even a toy for this little child – not gold, frankincense and myrrh. However, I have since discovered some of the reasoning behind the gifts and the wisdom associated with them.

Gold: In Bible times gold was the stuff of kings. From the Old Testament the wise men would have known that this child was of royal lineage, a king, not just any king, the King of kings. (Rev. 19:16)

Frankincense: It was a sweet smelling perfume that filled the air and lingered for a very long time, a little reminder of what the Saviour was really like. He was sweet and gentle. His presence filled the air. Everywhere people thronged to see him, hear him and be in his company (Song of Solomon 2:14).

Myrrh: This was an ointment used in ancient times by the Egyptians to anoint the dead. What a strange gift to bring to the home of a young boy! Nevertheless, this too was a very wise gift for it reminds us that the Saviour came to die for us on the cross of Calvary. (Romans 5:8)

Boys and girls, it would seem that the wise men really did bring the best gifts! The things they brought show that they really knew and loved the Saviour. Do you know and love him too?

Compiled by
Robert McConnell

"...they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him..."
Matthew 2:11

Quiz:

The Bible is full of stories about people and gifts. Using the references given, fill in the grid below with all the presents that people gave to others. Then take each of the letters from the highlighted squares and rearrange them to spell out the greatest gift of all.

John 6 v 9

Clue: there were five of these.

1 Samuel 17 v 18

Clue: there were ten of these.

Genesis 24 v 53

Clue: as well as jewels of silver and gold.

Genesis 43 v 11

Clue: a sticky sweet substance.

1 Samuel 17 v 17

Clue: sounds like "born".

Answer:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

PRIZES!

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

Rev. Stephen Pollock

Email: answer@fpvision.org

15 Fernagreevagh Road, Loughgall, Armagh, BT61 8PN

£5 WINNERS LAST TIME:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| » Joy Alexander (Omagh) | » Anna Tinsley (Portadown) |
| » Lydia Logan (Ballymena) | » Rhoda Laverty (Portlone) |
| » Kylie McKeown (Aughnacloy) | » Matthew Bunting (Stranraer) |
| » Thomas Condell (Coleraine) | » Luke McAuley (Ballymoney) |



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

TWICE BORN!

If a religious leader like Nicodemus could ask: 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?' (John 3:4), is it any wonder that many today are confused regarding the rebirth. Many claim to be 'born-again' Christians without experiencing this rebirth. The very fact that we cannot see or enter the kingdom of God without being born again should make us concerned to know what the Bible teaches on the subject (John 3:3+5).

The Lord has graciously helped us to understand it by giving us pictures in Scripture. We read of His promise in Ezekiel 36:26: 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' The result of such a work was that the recipient of the blessing was enabled to walk in God's statutes. Thus the Lord wondered that a 'master in Israel' would not know of the rebirth (John 3:10). It is described similarly in the testimony of Lydia. The Lord opened her heart, enabling her to receive the gospel (Acts 16:14).

The Rebirth is a Divine Work

These illustrations emphasise that no man can cause his own soul to be reborn. The born again soul is a soul that God has worked on, transplanting a new heart for the old dead one. The Spirit in His Divine Sovereignty moves where He will so that those born again are said to be '*born of the Spirit*' (John 3:8)

THE REBORN SOUL NOW LOVES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATES SIN AND THUS EMBARKS ON A LIFE OF NEW OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD.

The Rebirth is a Definite Work

The reborn man is a changed man. When you are born of the Spirit there are definable changes. Paul describes it as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). When the soul is reborn the individual both sees and enters the kingdom. He comes to see the Person of Christ as the only Saviour of sinners and, in turning

from sin in repentance, places his trust in Christ. We receive Christ as those '*born of God*' (John 1:12+13). We are not born again by receiving Christ. Moreover, the reborn soul now loves righteousness and hates sin and thus embarks on a life of new obedience to the Lord, willingly walking in His statutes (See 1 John 3:9, 4:7, 5:4+18).

Such an understanding of the rebirth encourages us to pray for the lost. They need to be born again of the Spirit. It also humbles us that when we walk with the Lord it is because God has graciously given us a new heart.

If you have not repented and believed the gospel and if you are not walking in the Lord's will then the Lord's words come to you afresh: '*Ye must be born again.*'

FROM THE OLD TO THE YOUNG

"It is not how man should live that we are first instructed by Christ in this Gospel, but how men are made alive spiritually. A man cannot live before he is born; nor can a dead man regulate his life. No man can live God-wards until he has been born again." - A.W. Pink, Exposition of the Gospel of John



All Christians will have a desire to share the gospel of Christ with people they meet. As we rub shoulders with others in this world we discover that they have their own faiths and world-views. As such it is helpful to understand what they might think or believe in order to witness for the Saviour. This year we will consider the faiths of some of those you might meet, beginning this issue and next with Roman Catholicism.

We thank Mr Colin Maxwell for writing these articles. Next time, we will look at witnessing to the Roman Catholic who has held on to his faith. It is likely that he will welcome a discussion with you on Biblical matters.

**THE MIND
OF MAN MAY
INDEED BE
DARKENED
BY SIN, BUT
GOSPEL LOADED
QUESTIONS MAY
WELL BE THE
MEANS THAT
GOD COULD USE
TO BRING THE
LIGHT.**

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Several years ago, I read a very interesting book written in 1999 by Irish Roman Catholic journalist, Mary Kenny. Entitled, '*Goodbye to Catholic Ireland*', the author charted the slow strangulation of Irish Catholicism at the hands of an ever increasing secularism. Many readers may have their first encounter or friendships with Roman Catholics in Further Education or in the workplace. While you will mix with the ungodly from many backgrounds you will probably discover the following in your interaction with Roman Catholics:

MANY ROMAN CATHOLICS HAVE GIVEN UP ON THEIR FAITH BECAUSE OF DISILLUSIONMENT

This may be said of all ages, from the young teenager to the senior citizen who can remember 'better days' when the Roman Catholic Church held great sway over its community. Much disillusionment may be traced back to the Church's handling of decades of systematic sex abuse in schools and orphanages under its patronage. Another cause is the traditional failure of the Roman Catholic Church to answer biblically the great questions which the human soul desires to know: How can I be saved? How can I be sure? True Protestantism has always sought to engage the mind of the sinner, encouraging him to



ask honest questions and supplying authoritative Biblical answers. Not so Rome. Past generations of Roman Catholics with little contact with the outside world were often happy to let the Church think for them. Those days are largely gone.

THE PROBLEM IS COMPOUNDED BY ROMAN CATHOLICS EMBRACING VIRTUALLY ANOTHER RELIGION

No one can live in a vacuum. A man who leaves one belief system will invariably embrace another. In the days of the Protestant Reformation, many of those who left Rome did so to embrace the Biblical faith of Martin Luther and John Calvin. Unfortunately today, the new belief system is atheistic secularism. This is the new opiate of the people. In many cases, the young disillusioned RC will learn his new creed from populist media, his peers and the very establishment he has gone to in order to further his education. Having 'tried religion' and met with disillusionment, he may be slow to embrace what he sees as another form of it.

WE CANNOT IGNORE THE RECENT POLITICAL HISTORY OF NORTHERN IRELAND EITHER

While it is highly debatable whether the recent troubles were about religion at all, yet the dividing lines did tend to

be drawn as such. To 'change religion' may be viewed by some as treachery to a political cause. While this may not be as evident as in the past, it can still create a spirit of fear which can only be overcome by the power of the Spirit of God in the Gospel.

How then does the Evangelical Protestant respond to this challenge? Quite simply:

He must secure his own faith to live and study or work in such an ungodly environment.

Young people are not required to boycott the University or the workplace. If Daniel could survive the Universities of Babylon with his young companions, then the God whom we trust is yet able to deliver and keep us! This He will do through the means of grace. Even with the pressure of study, do not neglect the devotional life. Time should be made for personal prayer, and the prayer meeting. And time should be set aside to read the Scriptures daily. Like the Apostles of old (also in trying circumstances) young Christian men and women should resort to their own company (Acts 4:23), where they will receive strength for their daily walk with God. A change of location and occupation should not infringe upon these basics of the Christian life.

He must be sincere and consistent in his Christian profession.

There is nothing that repels as much as hypocrisy. No one is without sin, but a consistent Christian lifestyle prepares the way for that evangelistic word fitly spoken. This requires swimming against the tide, may come across as "odd", and lead to scorn and attack. These obstacles can be overcome by displaying a sincere and friendly spirit towards all.

His duty is to proclaim his faith in an ungodly environment.

So how can he do this when meeting with young RC's in particular? Nothing is impossible with God. The young Christian should know how to bring the

gospel to the sinner, Roman Catholic or otherwise. He has nothing to be ashamed of in propagating the good news of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul openly declared that he was not ashamed of it (Romans 1:16) and this is borne out in his inspired biography in Acts and in those autobiographical parts of his epistles. He stood before the intellectuals and the powerful rulers and spoke of Christ crucified. He challenged Agrippa with the words: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? (Acts 26:8) Note the thinking end of the gospel. The mind of man may indeed be darkened by sin, but gospel loaded questions like these may well be the means that God could use to bring the light.

The writer's own experience is that young Roman Catholics will often supply their own questions; perhaps more so than their Protestant counterparts. This advantage must be pressed home if and when presented. A very profitable conversation may be struck up by the young Christian seeking clarification from his friend on some matter concerning the Catholic faith. We need to listen as well as speak, although it is all too easy to keep quiet and lose opportunities.

There are practical steps to be pursued in the holy task of evangelism.

Why not invite your friend along to a gospel meeting? This may be both within and without the University setting. Offer to bring them to a gospel meeting in the locality. There are also many good clear gospel and apologetic booklets available. Many online resources are within reach of his computer or even his mobile phone. Start off with a low key event, or just introduce him or her to your Christian friends. Let him see that Evangelical Christians, while embracing views that are not politically correct, are not the bogey men that the media try and portray them to be. In essence, look for and take the opportunity to present Christ. He, not the church, is the Saviour that the Roman Catholic needs to see.

**NO ONE
IS WITHOUT SIN,
BUT A CONSISTENT
CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE
PREPARES THE WAY FOR
THAT EVANGELISTIC
WORD FITLY
SPOKEN.**

CASTLEWELLAN CHRISTIAN RETREAT

Fri 29th April – Mon 2nd May 2016
Cost: £85 (Covers meals & accommodation)
Age: 16-28

An opportunity for young people to refresh their souls with Christian fellowship and the ministry of God's Word. Various activities & free time in the evenings!

2016 SPRING RALLIES

FRIDAY 11TH MARCH
8:00PM

LONDONDERRY
(North West / N. Antrim / S. Antrim)
Speaker: Rev J Creane

CASTLEDERG
(The West)
Speaker: Dr L Wilson

MARKETHILL
(South West / Mid Ulster)
Speaker: Rev J Porter

MOURNE
(South Down / Mid Down)
Speaker: Rev A Patterson

BANGOR
(Belfast / North Down)
Speaker: Rev D Priestley

SUMMER OUTREACHES

SOUTH DOWN
4th – 8th July 2016
Age: 16+, Cost: £130

MADRID, SPAIN
23rd – 30th July 2016
Age: 18+, Cost: £375

**GARDENSTOWN,
SCOTLAND**
6th – 13th August 2016
Age: 18+, Cost: £235

President Rev Brown writes:

To keep the prices of the three summer outreaches as reasonable as possible, they are subsidised by us, with additional generous help from the Presbytery Mission Board & Missionary Council, and include all meals, accommodation, vehicle hire, and for Spain and Scotland, flights, luggage, insurance, and administration fees. Please consider coming.

'For we are labourers together, with God' (1 Corinthians 3:9)

Please go to fpcyouth.org for further details and to download application forms.

YOUTH COUNCIL EVENTS

EVANGELISM TRAINING WEEKEND

4th - 6th March, Faith Mission Centre, Portadown
Theme: The Theology of Evangelism (simply taught!)
Cost: £65

A WORD TO WOMEN

"A LITTLE MAID." (2 KINGS 5:2)

We can be very quick to dismiss the words of a child or young person – “He’s only a child, what would he know?” The disciples were quick to turn the children away, but the Lord Jesus welcomed them and took them in His arms. In 2 Kings 5 we read of an unnamed “little maid” whose simple witness earned her a mention in the Scriptures.

Born in Israel, the little maid had been well taught in the Word from her earliest years. I imagine her in a happy home, learning at her mother’s knee, and happily helping in the family chores. However her life was to change dramatically. An enemy attacked and she was carried off as a slave to Syria. She may well have witnessed family and friends die as they tried to defend themselves. The little maid found herself serving the wife of Naaman, the Syrian army captain responsible for her abduction. In such circumstances we might expect her to be angry and bitter, longing for revenge or deliverance. She was neither.

A great cloud hung over the home of Naaman. It was a wealthy home but money buys neither happiness nor health. The slaves crept about their duties, conscious that their master had a terrible illness. No treatment, no hope! It would have been easy to say, “It serves him right!” However in the life of this little maid, the grace of God shone through! Saddened to hear that the master was ill, she longed to help him. Growing up, she had heard of, perhaps even witnessed, some of the miracles performed through Elijah and Elisha, and her faith was undiminished. “*Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! For he would recover him of his leprosy.*” It was the simple faith of a child, but such is the faith necessary for salvation (Luke 18:17), and such is the faith that sees prayer answered.

The little maid’s knowledge was limited. There is no record of Elisha having been used to heal any other lepers, indeed the opposite is true. “*And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.*” (Luke 4:27) Don’t make your limited knowledge an excuse for not speaking a word in season. Speak and let the Lord fill your mouth with acceptable words. Study also to increase your knowledge and pray for the Lord’s help. “*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*” (Psalm 19:14)

IF WE RESOLVE
ANYTHING THIS YEAR,
MAY IT BE THAT OUR
SPEECH “BE ALWAYS WITH
GRACE, SEASONED
WITH SALT”

The words of the little maid were acted upon. If Israel had a cure for leprosy, then Syria was prepared to pay handsomely to receive it. If Naaman had really listened to the little maid’s words he would have gone to Elisha, not the King of Israel. He would yet learn that God’s blessings are not bought by great riches but by humbling oneself in obedience to the Lord. Naaman eventually obeyed the prophet and received complete cleansing from his leprosy, “*his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child*” (2 Kings 5:14). He also experienced the cleansing of his sin, “*thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord.*” (2 Kings 5:17)

We do well to emulate this little maid who did good to those who spitefully used her (Matthew 5:44) and who shared her faith with wonderful consequences. And let us seek to win the young for the Saviour and encourage them to witness to others.

¶ **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: MONEYSLANE

THE GROUND WORK FOR MONEYSLANE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WAS LAID LONG BEFORE THE CONGREGATION WAS ESTABLISHED. TWO YEARS BEFORE THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER WAS ESTABLISHED, A GOSPEL MISSION WAS CONDUCTED BY DR PAISLEY IN THE TOWN OF RATHFRILAND, WHEN ABOUT 180 PEOPLE PROFESSED FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR.

Gospel missions like this, and many others, created a desire among many in the area for plain and fearless preaching of the old fashioned message, a preaching that was not being heard in many of the churches.

Another factor in the preparation of the ground for the Church was the preaching of Dr Paisley at annual rallies in the Ballyward area. This preaching had alerted people to the dangers and activities of the Ecumenical Movement. So effective was the protest being raised against this unbiblical movement that the Unionist government led by Captain Terence O'Neil attempted to crush the Free Presbyterian Church. A policy was followed by government which led to the imprisonment of Dr Paisley, and Revs Wylie and Foster. However meetings were conducted by the Rev John Douglas in the area between Lisburn and Rathfriland and it was after one of these meetings that Mr Douglas was approached by two ladies, Miss Lily Gordon and Mrs Hilda Magill, concerning the commencement of a new church in the Rathfriland area.

The desire of these and other believers was met when services began in Moneyslane Orange Hall, on Lord's Day 2nd October 1966, with 65 in attendance at 12:00 noon and over 250 in the evening service. Mighty times of prayer were held in a cottage next door to the Orange Hall, on the site where the manse now stands. Dr Douglas later accepted the call to be the first minister of the congregation which was established. It was during this same period that an attempt to silence Dr Douglas took place with his

prosecution by the authorities, the case against him ultimately being shown to be utterly false. In time Dr Douglas was called to Lisburn, and was succeeded in turn by Rev Michael Patrick, Rev Ron Johnstone and Rev William McDermott.

A site for the present Church building was given by the McElroy family, and it was opened for the preaching of the gospel on 16th May 1970. In more recent times the rather limited car park has been greatly enlarged, and the McElroy family home and site was given to the Moneyslane congregation by Mr Jim McElroy and his family, the house being subsequently demolished

and plans submitted to the authorities for permission for a Church hall to be erected on the site. It is hoped in the not too distant future to commence this building work, with the giving of the people being extremely encouraging.

Moneyslane congregation has always maintained a high interest in the work of Let the Bible Speak radio ministry, and that interest continues. Rev McDermott is involved in the recording, editing and uploading of programmes to the Q100.5FM radio station which broadcasts over the South Down area and reaches far into the Republic of Ireland.

**GOSPEL
MISSIONS
CREATED
A DESIRE
AMONG MANY
FOR PLAIN
AND FEARLESS
PREACHING**





The missionary interest of the Church is encouraged by the monthly visits of missionaries on deputation, and also by the diligent work of Clifford and Tracy McBurney, who faithfully attend the Missionary Council as the representatives of Moneyslane, and who regularly present updates to the congregation. Mr Ian Wallace, our Church organist for many years, is also greatly burdened for the Republic of Ireland and for the Roman Catholic population of our own province and always reminds us of the call to reach

the Republic with the Consider Christ outreach. Mr Eric Dickson has for many years managed the recording of the services, assisted in recent years by Mr William Megaw.

Former members of Moneyslane congregation are actively involved in many aspects of the Lord's work. Rev Samuel Murray is the minister of Tandragee; Mrs Jill Foster (nee Sterritt) is in Penticton, Canada with her husband Andrew; Mrs Andrea Stewart (nee McIlroy) is with her husband David, serving the Lord in Portglenone; Mrs Janice Paisley (nee McDowell) is with her husband Kyle in Oulton Broad, England; Mrs Alison Elliot (nee Herron) is with her husband Sydney in Liverpool, England. In addition Mrs Eppie Graham, a daughter of Rev William McDermott plans, God willing, to travel to South Australia with her husband Kyle in early May.

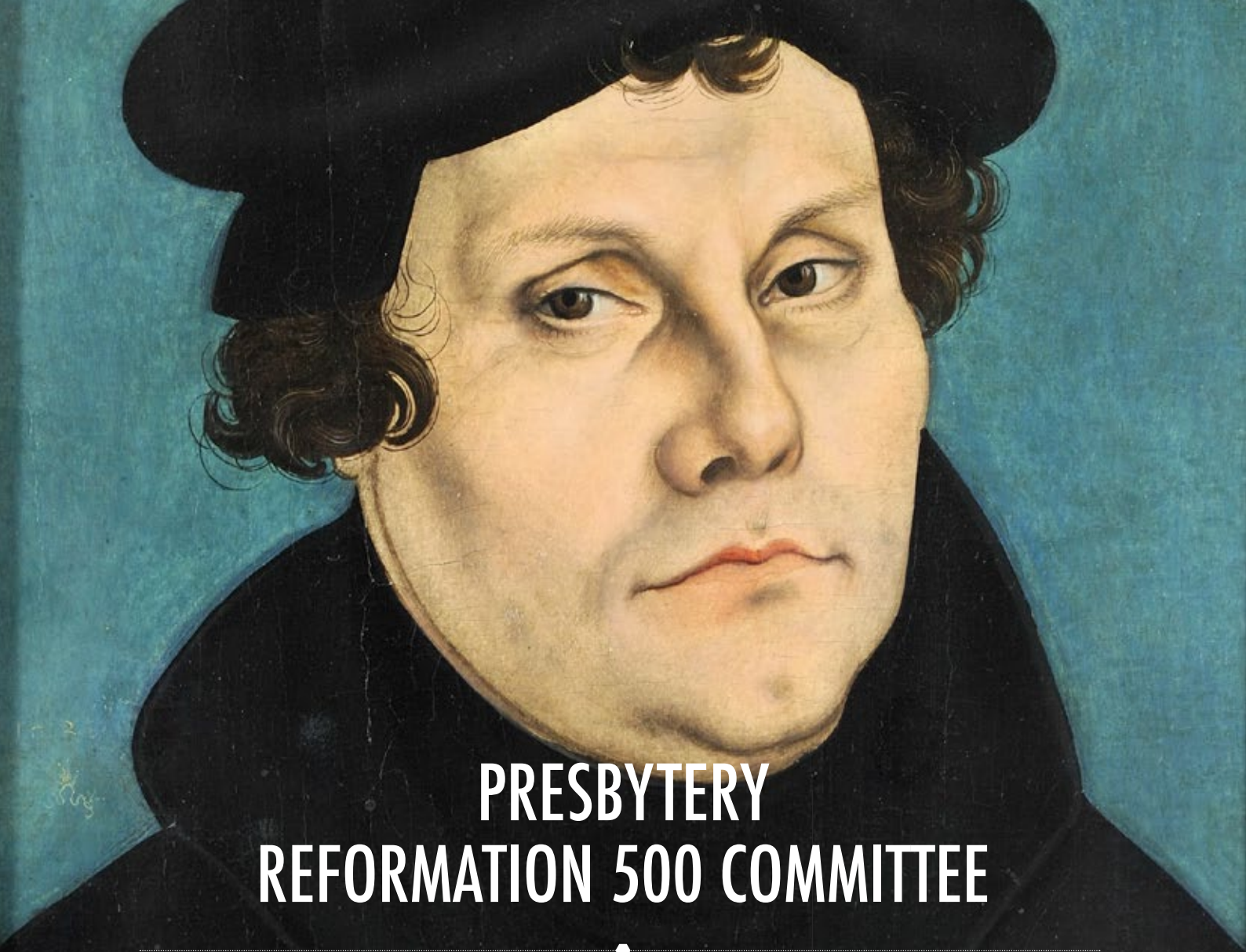
In the local area, for some years, outreach workers have visited, on many occasions, every home in the wide area of Rathfriland, Moneyslane, Katesbridge, Leitrim, and at times even as far as Castlewellan and Dromara, including the many scattered homes along the rural roads.

In addition, for many years the children's work was held in the Friend's Hall in Rathfriland under

the name "The Gospel Bus" – so called because the meetings in the early days were held on the Church bus! The children's meetings were later successfully transferred to our own Church building. Mr Raymond Wright led the children's work for many years, followed by Mrs Margaret Murray, with Mr Andrew Bell now in leadership. The work of the Sabbath School continues to be blessed of God, with Mr William Sterritt as Superintendent. Mr Sterritt also leads a team which faithfully visits and ministers to the residents of the Manor Nursing Home in Rathfriland on the last Lord's Day of each month. And we pay tribute to the many others, whose names we do not mention, who have played their part in all these avenues of service.

In October 2016 Moneyslane congregation will be fifty years in existence, and we are looking forward to celebrating the Lord's mercies towards us over that long period. Many who were among us when the work started are now in heaven, their work is complete and they have entered into their reward. However, we are thankful that the Lord has brought in others to take up the torch and go forward in service for God.

∴ Rev William McDermott



PRESBYTERY REFORMATION 500 COMMITTEE

We are living through 'the decade of centenaries'. Among these there is one anniversary every Christian should be ready to mark in 2017 - the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. October 31st 1517 saw one of the most momentous events in history. On that day, Martin Luther, an obscure monk in the small German town of Wittenberg, quietly nailed 95 arguments (theses) against the sale of indulgences to the church door, the town notice board of the day. While only a handful of people noticed, this was the spark that ignited the Reformation.

Luther's document was printed and spread widely, a blow that reverberated throughout Germany, and then all Europe, and it still impacts modern society. Historians recognise the great changes that resulted religiously, politically, socially, scientifically, morally

and educationally. Believers recognise that these changes resulted from the spiritual light that shone as Luther and successive Reformers sought to return to the sufficiency and supremacy of Scripture and the preaching of Christ and the efficacy of His atoning work.

In Scripture, God commanded the Israelites to mark important anniversaries. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses commanded those of the younger generation repeatedly to "remember" their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. They were to hold special anniversary services. Why? Because they needed to know who they were, and where they came from, in order to march confidently into the future. Jews still commemorate that deliverance. Failure to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation would be to forget how our spiritual liberties were obtained, robbing God of the glory and praise due to His Name.

At a recent Presbytery meeting, ministers and elders discussed the importance of marking this important anniversary. Presbytery felt that our church needs to commemorate this event and to consecrate itself again to historic Reformed principles. Moderator Rev Thomas Murray emphasised that the Reformation was the greatest revival since the days of the early church and challenged members to mark the anniversary by redoubling efforts to evangelise the lost. Subsequently the 'Reformation 500 Committee' was established to consider appropriate ways of marking this seminal event. Pray that its members will be given wisdom as they seek to chart a way forward. Further details will be made known in due course.

∴ Dr Ron Johnstone (Committee Convener)



E M BOUNDS

HIS BOOKS SURVIVE - BUT WHO WAS THE MAN?

The name of E M Bounds is inextricably linked to his many published works on the subject of prayer. Yet in his lifetime he was known to few outside his immediate influence. Many tragic events stalked his life and tested his spirit. Born in Missouri in 1835, he was named Edward McKendree Bounds – the middle name from a famous Methodist circuit rider. His father died when Edward was just fourteen, and in spite of his youth he took off with his older brother to seek fortune in mining and panning for gold. Four futile years of hard graft and exposure to immorality and degradation were enough, and he returned home. There he discovered a greater treasure, a “pearl of great price”, and he committed his life to God. He embarked on legal studies and was the youngest in Missouri to be called to the bar.

The Great Spiritual Awakening of 1857 swept his home town and he obeyed the call of God for full-time Christian ministry. Ordained in 1859, he became a country pastor, but not for him a peaceful and tranquil life. The Civil War began to divide the nation. Bounds witnessed the cruelty of Union soldiers executing 55 innocent civilians. He refused to sign the Oath of Allegiance, his church was raided, and he was beaten and thrown into prison. An exchange of prisoners secured his release on the condition that he stay out of Missouri, but he walked over 200 miles, then secured a mule and continued till he reached home!

He joined the Confederate Army as a chaplain. There he preached, prayed and encouraged his fellows. The tragedy of defeat came in the Battle of Franklin, in which General Hood’s army suffered over 6,000 casualties. Bounds was wounded by

a Union sword and taken prisoner. For two solid weeks he had the task of burying his fallen colleagues in a mass grave. The gruesome task earned his release as a non-combatant and he returned home.

However, Bounds’ heart remained in Franklin and he was haunted by the disrespectful way that his men had been buried; he determined to right a great wrong. Under his direction the bodies of 1,496 Confederate soldiers were exhumed and then given the dignity of individual Christian burials on the Carter Farm, where a lasting memorial was finally established in 1951. Bounds raised funds to pay for the care of the graves, published a list of the fallen, made contact with many of the families and helped fatherless children to gain scholarships.

The grief that overwhelmed the town of Franklin impressed upon Bounds that his ministry was to the living. He organised public prayer meetings in the town square and after a year or so God answered by revival fire. Over 500 believers were recorded in his own congregation. For the last 19 years of his life he devoted himself to intercessory prayer. Bounds engaged for a minimum of 3 hours a day in concentrated prayer; he also would rise up early and go and pray outside different people’s houses for their particular circumstances. Before his death in 1913 two of his books were published; today all eight titles are available. Want a book on prayer? Seek out a Bounds’ title!

∴ David Browne, Bangor

DR JOHN DOUGLAS: 40 YEARS IN LISBURN



A banquet was held on Friday 22nd January in Lagan Valley Island Centre to mark the 40th Anniversary of Dr Douglas's ministry in Lisburn. Various groups contributed in song and many speakers testified of their affection for Dr Douglas and their appreciation for his ministry.

Presentations were made to Dr and Mrs Douglas, including one from the Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Thomas Beckett. Our photo, courtesy of Press Eye, shows Rev & Mrs Douglas with Revs Martin & Salt and their wives and Lisburn office-bearers and their wives.

FINAL SERVICES FOR JOE PEDEN



Many in the Free Presbyterian Church will have reason to be thankful for the ministry of well known Tandragee preacher and soloist Mr Joe Peden. Now, after many years of service, and with the burden of health issues, Joe has

decided to lay aside public ministry. He preached for the final time in his home congregation recently. Our pictures show Rev Murray making a presentation to Joe, and Mr & Mrs Peden with Rev & Mrs Murray.

CONSIDERING MISSIONARY SERVICE? WHY BIBLE COLLEGE?

The Whitefield College two year diploma course provides an ideal training for missionary candidates and also for those wishing to work in child evangelism or who desire to be better equipped to help in their local congregation.

Perhaps some have the impression that our college is particularly geared to the training of young men for the ministry, but has less to offer those who wish to serve on the mission field or engage in Christian service on the home front – they are mistaken! Yet another misconception is that our course leans too much towards the academic side rather than the practical, and that this emphasis would not necessarily be of great value to someone when he or she reaches the mission field. But surely a good Scriptural and theological basis is an essential for every missionary! Practical training is most important but it must not take precedence over a thorough grounding in the 'things which are most surely believed among us'.

We cover a wide range of subjects: Bible Survey, Church History, Christian Doctrine, Ethics, Personal and Child Evangelism, Cults, English Grammar,

Missionary Principles and Practices, Greek, Hermeneutics; as well as those subjects which might apply more specifically to ministerial training – Systematic, Historical, and Pastoral Theology, Exegesis, and Homiletics. One of the great advantages of tackling difficult subjects in college is the preparation it gives students for the many difficulties and trials they will have to face on the mission field. Over the years our college has trained missionaries who have served the Lord long and faithfully in other lands. Miss Margaret Russell is a shining example, having worked in Kenya for over 30 years.

Of course I would not want to give the impression that our course is a hard, joyless grind. Students enjoy happy fellowship while training and many close friendships have been formed – some even resulting in marriages between students. The father of one student told me that his daughter really loved coming to college and looked forward to returning every Monday morning.

To find out more, obtain a copy of our Prospectus. Please write to: 356 Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 8GL. Our telephone number is: 028 9045 6169.

∴ **Rev Gordon Ferguson** (Principal)



WHITEFIELD COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE

Entrance Examinations for prospective candidates for the Theological Course for the year beginning September 2016 will take place at the Martyrs' Memorial Free Presbyterian Church, Paisley Jubilee Complex, on the following dates:

Mon 4 April 7.30pm: English Language
Tues 5 April 7.30pm: English Literature
Wed 6 April 7.30pm: History

Candidates must report to the Jubilee Complex by 7.15pm and are expected to provide their own writing paper. Contact the College for details: 028 9045 6169

INTRODUCING: GEORGE McCONNELL PRESBYTERY MISSIONARY OFFICER

In outlining the gifts Christ bestowed upon His Church to the Corinthian believers, Paul emphasised that not everyone was called to be an apostle, or a prophet or even a teacher. In meeting the great needs of the church a diversity of gifts was required, which included that of “helpers”. Various interpretations of this word have been given. Albert Barnes points out that the word, as found in 1 Corinthians 12:28, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It denotes properly, “aid, assistance, help” and then those who render aid, assistance, or help; as helpers. He goes on to suggest that they may have been deacons who assisted the poor and needy, or those who attended on the apostles to aid them in their work, such as Paul refers to in Romans 16: 3, where he described Priscilla and Aquila, his helpers in Christ Jesus.

In this issue I am happy to introduce you to Mr George McConnell, for many years at the heart of our missionary endeavour. George is a ruling elder in our Mourne Congregation. Day by day as the full time Treasurer of the Mission Board and Presbytery Missionary Officer, from the office in the Sunday School Complex of our Mourne Congregation (kindly granted), he renders invaluable help to the various missionaries under our Board.

Without such “help” and fulltime back-up our missionary endeavour would not function as it does. The Mission Board and all who serve Christ worldwide through its agency are thankful to God for the service of George McConnell, a faithful helper in Christ Jesus, in so many different ways, to those who serve the Saviour on the home and foreign fields.



The administrative costs of the Mission Board, and the support we are enabled to give to brother George, like all our endeavours, is totally dependent on the giving of God's people in our congregations. As a Board we have been greatly encouraged by congregations who have exercised their gift of giving, and have sent support in for this purpose in recent years. In helping us to maintain the work of the Mission Board Office you are enabling us to serve better our missionaries at home and abroad.

∴ Rev Ian Harris (Chairman)

In 1990 I was appointed Treasurer of the Mission Board replacing Rev Menary who had retired. My involvement in our missionary work commenced in 1967 when I joined Missionary Council. It was an expanding work to which I had been appointed. Mission Board (MB, formed by Presbytery in 1974) was growing yearly. By 2000 I was finding the work load too great to carry on part time as I was also running Mourne Missionary Trust (MMT). I shared my

concern with the then chairman Rev McIlveen, who in turn spoke with Dr Paisley. The suggestion was put to me that I work full time for the Board. Believing this to be the will of God I resigned my work with MMT and was appointed as Presbytery Missionary Officer. My appointment was duly recognised by the whole church at the Easter Missionary Rally in Martyrs in 2000. I still recall Dr Paisley's words on that occasion when he said, “every one of us finds our niche in God's work and

I believe brother George has found his.”

Presbytery tasked me with the work of looking after the day-to-day needs of all our workers world-wide. I would be the contact with the home base to see that they were looked after, reporting back usually monthly to MB of any major needs or problems that had arisen and required MB to deal with. I was also tasked with visiting the mission fields from time to time and seeing first-hand the various needs

and encouragements. Over the years I have visited all the mission fields on numerous occasions with the exception of Australia. I also tried to visit around our churches to increase the interest in our own missionary work and help to raise funds for the various projects. Not least among these was the erection of the Christian Academy in Kenya, when over the 10 or 11 years we were building the school over £800,000 was raised. No project was ever brought before our people without them rising to the challenge, and, with God's help, meeting the need!

I had the joy over the years of helping to establish seven Christian bookshops across the world and have been encouraged by the faithful support of our members through their prayers, funds and literature sent in to stock the shops. Several times in the year we ship literature across the world. I am greatly helped in this by the Missionary Council representatives. Mr Ronald Hanna willingly assists in sorting and packing. I was privileged also, for 28 years, to produce our magazine, 'Harvest Times'.

My work as Missionary Officer is most rewarding as nearly every week I am surprised by what the Lord does in answer to our prayers. I do not work alone; I am backed and encouraged by all our churches and members, and by a great band of brethren on our Mission Board who devote long hours of their time to the work. I had a great start in the early days with the encouragement of both Dr Paisley and Rev McIlveen. No man had a greater missionary heart than Dr Paisley. I thank God continually for having worked with him and visited many fields in his company.

✠ George McConnell

INTRODUCING: THE MISSIONARY COUNCIL

The Missionary Council was originally set up by Presbytery in 1962 to create missionary awareness, stimulate prayerful support in the churches, and to raise finance for missionary work.

Each of our congregations is encouraged to send two representatives to the Council meetings. These are appointed by the Kirk Session and meet monthly around the churches. One of the main responsibilities is the promotion of missionary interest and endeavour at local level.

The money raised by the Missionary Council is paramount to the whole missionary endeavour of our denomination. Finances are raised by monthly offerings in each congregation. The greater part of these offerings goes as a monthly grant of £8,000 to the Mission Board. This is used to provide the 30% needed by our missionaries for their salaries (they raise the other 70% through deputation meetings, gifts and covenant support). That means that £96,000 is needed annually to support our missionaries in their respective fields of service. The total yearly Missionary Council grants amount to almost £135,000.

Over twenty missionaries are supported throughout the world. We have three Home Missionaries, one in Southern Ireland, six in Spain, six in Kenya, one in Liberia, one in Nepal, and three in Australia. With the expansion

of our missionary interests over the years, office and administration costs have risen considerably. The Council is seeking to find extra funds to help with these running costs.

Superb representatives from our churches take an active part in this ministry and show a keen interest in what we seek to do, under God, to assist our missionary enterprise. I acknowledge the sterling work done by our secretary, John Dumigan, and our treasurer, Rosemary Wallace. We have a subcommittee which meets regularly to give important advice and direction, and we thoroughly appreciate the contribution made by each member.

I would appeal to all our churches to continue to support this vital aspect of the Lord's work, both practically and prayerfully, as we strive together before God to help and encourage our missionaries in their various fields of service. As a Council we 'lift up our eyes' to 'look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest,' in the certain confidence that, 'My God shall supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'



✠ Rev David Park
(Chairman)

MISSION BOARD DETAILS

Office:

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

Chairman:

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

Secretary:

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

Website

www.fpcmission.org

DATES FOR THE DIARY

MARCH

- 11th-13th AGHALEE, SPRING CONFERENCE**
 Time: Friday & Saturday, 7.30pm
 Sunday, 11.30am & 6.30pm
 Speakers: Dr S Pollock
 Rev A Patterson
- 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
- 13th-18th CROSSGAR, FOUNDATIONS CONFERENCE**
 Time: Sunday, 7.00pm
 Monday – Friday, 8.00pm
 Speaker: Dr R Johnstone
 Theme: The High Priest's Garments
- 26th RASHARKIN, EASTER MISSIONARY RALLY**
 Time: Saturday, 7.30pm
 Speakers: Rev A Alvarez, Mr J Smith
 Singers: Joy, Andrew & Ben
 Supper Served

APRIL

- 8th MARKETHILL, NEW HALL OPENING**
 Time: Friday, 8.00pm,
Gospel Meetings, 10th - 15th April
 Various Speakers
- 11th-13th BLYTHEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, SANDY ROW, CHILDREN'S CLUB & GOSPEL MISSION**
 Details from Martyrs' Memorial Church
- 22nd-24th GARDENSTOWN, SPRING CONFERENCE**
 Time: Friday & Saturday, 7.00pm,
 Sunday, 11.30am and 6.00pm
 Speaker: Rev N Smyth

MAY

- 8th-14th MONEYSLANE, BIBLE WEEK**
 Time: Sunday, 7.00pm
 Mon – Fri, 8.00pm
 Speaker: Rev T Murray
 Theme: The Life of Abraham

JULY

- 30th-7th ENNISKILLEN, LOUGH ERNE CONVENTION**
 Time: Sunday, 12.00 & 8.00pm
 Mon – Sat, 8.00pm
 Speakers: Drs J Douglas & R Johnstone,
 Rev T Murray



FREE PRESBYTERIAN EASTER CONVENTION

**25TH + 28TH
MARCH
2016**

Martyrs' Memorial Free Presbyterian Church

Fri 25th, 8:00pm

Focus on Missionary Work across the World

Singing: Youth Choir
 Reports: Rev A Alvarez
 Mr C Killen
 Preacher: Rev D Brown
 Supper will be served

Mon 28th, 3:30pm

Reports: Reformation 500 Committee
 Preacher: Rev T Murray
 Singing: Hebron Choir & College Choir

Mon 28th, 7:00pm

Reports: Miss J Walsh & Rev M Patterson
 Preacher: Rev K Elliott
 Singing: Men's Choir

Children's Club available during the services on Monday 28th.