

# FREE PRESBYTERIAN VISION



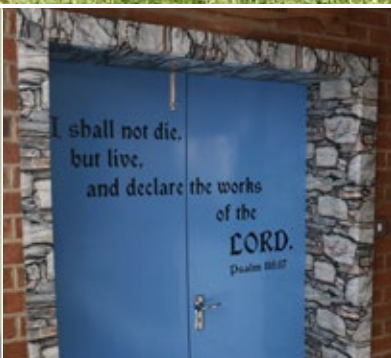
THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER



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Katherine von Bora: 'Mrs Luther'



Reformation Room at Martyrs' Memorial



Castlewellaan 2017

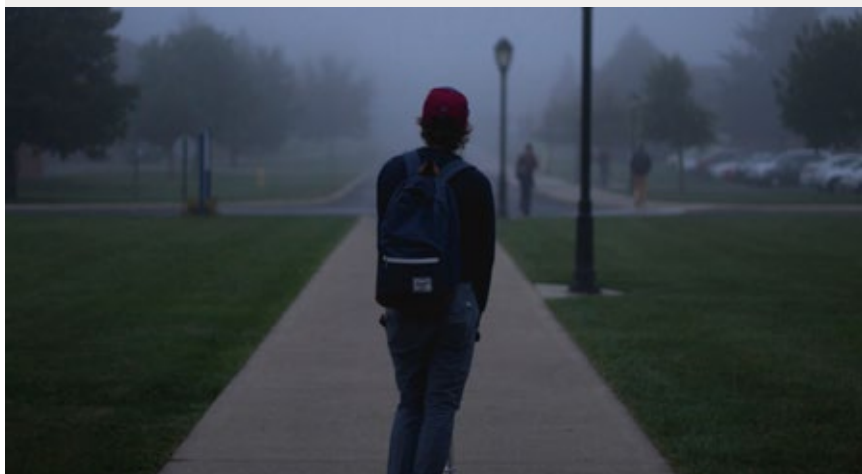


Radio Station Commences in Liberia



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## Editorial

**T**eamwork. That's the word in my mind at the moment. I write this against the backdrop of two events that are worlds apart, one essentially local, and the other blazed across international news media. The latter is the awful atrocity visited upon concert-goers in the city of Manchester, where suicide bomber Salman Abedi was responsible for the murder of twenty-two people and the maiming of dozens more. The former is a Gospel Mission, conducted in a borrowed tent on ground granted just a mile or so from Ballynahinch. Yes, I know, the contrast could hardly be more marked.

So how are they linked? Back to teamwork. Ongoing investigations at Manchester have surmised that Abedi did not act alone, that he was part of a confederacy of Islamic extremists bent on wreaking havoc in an English city – a team of disparate individuals joining hands for the furtherance of evil. I'm

reminded that a mishmash of otherwise contesting parties made common cause to oppose Christ two millennia ago (Acts 4:25-27). And it has been ever so.

It was a very different team indeed that made possible the Gospel outreach on the outskirts of our little market town in N Ireland. Many believers sacrificed their time, pooled their strength, shared their resources, and dedicated their talents – all with the object of making Christ known, all so that men and women in darkness might have opportunity to see the light. And it happens over and over again across our denomination. Paul valued believers for their 'fellowship in the gospel' (Philippians 1:5) – more and more, I understand what he meant.

And I know which team I'd rather be part of.

∴ Timothy Nelson,  
editor@fpvision.org



# THE RAINBOW OF THE COVENANT

## “A RAINBOW ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE.”

### REVELATION 4:3

**T**he beloved disciple John, in vision, saw a throne set in Heaven and One sitting on it (Revelation 4:3). Ezekiel, in vision, gives a similar description of the same throne and upon it the appearance of a man (Ezekiel 1:16). It is the man Christ Jesus who is ‘set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens’ (Hebrews 8:1) in inconceivable glory.

John also saw a rainbow round about this throne. The rainbow in the visible heavens is an allusion to God’s covenant with Noah in which He promised that the earth would never again be destroyed by a flood (Genesis 9). It was a token of His faithfulness, linked to the promise He gave. God’s throne of grace, from which all the promises of His covenant come, is here surrounded by a rainbow. It is a sure token of His faithfulness to His own word; that word of grace and promise which is forever ‘settled in heaven’ (Psalm 119:89). Every word He speaks is sure and steadfast and cannot be undone. The covenant of grace, sealed with the blood of its Mediator, is a glorious security against the deluge

of God’s wrath. It cannot fall on the soul resting by faith in Christ. God has brought all His grace in Christ into a covenant of grace and pledged His faithfulness to it.

In faithfulness to the covenant made with our Surety on the throne, God will not send the floods of His wrath upon His children. Knowing God’s covenant faithfulness means we can encourage ourselves in Him, and be fully persuaded that since His covenant He will not break, though the mountains depart and the hills be removed, He will never forget or forsake His redeemed! To do so would be to deny Himself and that is impossible. We are not to look on God’s covenant and promise as things in the past and therefore out of date. He is a promising God to His people now as much as when His first promise was spoken.

This spiritual rainbow about the throne was ‘in sight like unto an emerald’ (Revelation 4:3). Its ever-green colour signifies that it is ever the same, by

virtue of the faithfulness of the One sitting on the throne. ‘He will ever be mindful of His covenant’ (Psalm 11:5). ‘He is faithful that promised’ (Hebrews 10:23). ‘Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness’ (Isaiah 41:10). To plead these promises is to take hold of His covenant (Isaiah 56:4). As the natural rainbow assures us of showers on earth, so the spiritual rainbow gives the greatest assurance of the rain of the Spirit. ‘He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth’ (Hosea 6:3). The refreshing dew of the Spirit, the thirst-quenching rain of the dew of Heaven from our faithful God, will fall on the praying heart that remembers the rainbow of the covenant.

**‘HE SHALL  
COME UNTO US  
AS THE RAIN,  
AS THE LATTER  
AND FORMER  
RAIN UNTO  
THE EARTH.’**

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





# KATHERINE VON BORA



## ‘MRS LUTHER’

**W**edding bells rang out in Wittenberg. The excitement was building. Citizens lined the streets to congratulate their own Dr Luther on his marriage. Martin led his Katie through the crowds to the parish church. There, before the great gate, the wedding ceremony took place. Then the procession made its way to the Augustinian cloister, where a sumptuous banquet was spread. It was a happy day, a day to be remembered.

Katherine von Bora, Martin Luther's wife, was a remarkable woman. She grew up entrenched in Roman Catholic teaching. She was born on 29th January 1499. It is thought that Katherine's mother died when she was a baby. When her father remarried, Katherine was placed in a convent, where she acquired a basic education, a privilege denied many girls in the sixteenth century. In 1515, aged 16, Katherine became a nun, solemnly vowing chastity and total obedience and relinquishing all worldly possessions.

In time, Katherine began to hear of Martin Luther. Tracts by the Reformer mysteriously found their way into the nunnery. In 1516, Luther visited the monastery at nearby Grimma and news reached the nuns of his sermons. Then came 1517 and Luther's ninety-five theses. One of the nuns, Magdalene von Staupitz – niece of Johannes von Staupitz, responsible for encouraging Luther to read the Bible – received some of the Reformer's writings. The 'new' doctrines were eagerly discussed and imbibed by Katherine and her friends. They couldn't believe that this man Luther preached to the ordinary people in German! He said that God was merciful and full of love. He asserted that sinners need not approach God through saints but through Christ alone.

These world-shaking events caused Katherine to question her life in the cloister. She became disenchanted and longed to be free from her vows. She and many fellow nuns believed the principles Luther taught. They could

no longer live a life dedicated to false teaching. At Magdalene's suggestion, they appealed to Luther himself for help. To their surprise he responded immediately, asking Leonhard Koppe to rescue the twelve nuns.

Koppe, a merchant, often delivered herring to the convent. On 4th April 1523, he smuggled the nuns out of the convent, in empty fish barrels, to the town of Wittenberg. There they became Luther's responsibility. What was he to do with them?

Luther eventually managed to find husbands for all the girls, except one: Katherine von Bora. A year later she was still on his hands! Luther attempted to marry her off twice, but both courtships proved unsuccessful. She was a strong willed woman who was determined to marry the man of her choice. When Luther's friend, Nicolaus von Amsdorf, visited Wittenberg, she asked him to tell Luther that she would on no account marry her suitor; in fact she added, "I'd rather have Dr Luther himself, or you!"





This message reached Luther as he was visiting his parents. His father, who had never wanted his son to become a monk, urged Martin to marry, have a family and carry on the family name. At the same time, many of his friends encouraged him to follow the advice he often gave to former monks – defy the pope and marry! Why did he not practice what he preached?

After much thought, Luther's mind was made up – marriage it would be. He reasoned that “my marriage would please my father, rile the pope, and cause the angels to laugh and the devils to weep.” He asked Katherine for her hand in marriage. Katherine, contemplating marriage, said, “Now I

shall no longer be Katherine, runaway nun; I shall be the wife of the great Dr Luther, and everything I do or say will reflect upon him.” She realised the privilege, but was not oblivious to the responsibility she would carry as Luther's wife. She was 26, he was 42.

Katherine went to live with Martin in the old Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg, gifted to Luther by his patron, Duke Frederick of Saxony. For both Martin and Katherine the first year of marriage meant many adjustments. Martin was not a good house keeper.

Before marrying Katherine, he confessed he had not made his bed for a whole year! He had no idea how to maintain the monastic building or how to use the accommodation profitably. Katherine had her work cut out to turn the buildings into a viable source of income for them. But she responded with characteristic spirit. She used the land for growing fruit and vegetables. She also stocked a fish pond and bought a small farm to raise cattle and chickens. She proved herself to be a resourceful housewife despite limited finances.

Katherine managed to be hospitable yet frugal. At times the Luther household was full to capacity. Besides the Luther children and six nephews and nieces, the doors were opened to orphans, tutors, student boarders and frequent visitors. Their home became a centre of open-hearted hospitality. Katherine was the perfect hostess, filling the table with poultry, fruit, nuts, raisins, honey, fish and meat, all procured from her lands and gardens. The students had the privilege of questioning Dr Luther at mealtimes and many debates ensued. Katherine did not shrink from joining in and giving her opinion. With Katherine as business advisor, Luther was forced to manage his money more efficiently. He had unbounded liberality; at times he was charitable to excess and Katherine often had to hide money and valuables from him!

**KATHERINE WAS AN OBVIOUS BLESSING TO HER HUSBAND. THIS PROACTIVE, RESOURCEFUL, INDEPENDENT WOMAN LIFTED DOMESTIC AND FINANCIAL BURDENS FROM LUTHER'S SHOULDERS.**

Katherine was an obvious blessing to her husband. This proactive, resourceful, independent woman lifted domestic and financial burdens from Luther's shoulders. This enabled him to concentrate on his teaching and writing. He once wrote, “The greatest blessing is to have a wife to whom you may entrust your affairs.” She understood the importance of what her husband was doing and willingly supported him. His contented married life and

his deep admiration for Katherine's abilities reminded him that his work for God would have been impossible without her support.

Martin and Katherine often teased each other in good humour. Her quick tongue, humour and stubbornness matched Martin's. Around the table at mealtimes, Martin, revelling as the centre of attention, often waxed eloquent and became verbose. Katherine would tell him firmly to stop talking and eat! He affectionately called her "my lord Katie" or "my dear rib", alluding to Genesis 2:21 or "my chain", a pun on the German of her name, Kethe.

Katherine, of course, was a mother as well as a wife and a business woman. Their first child, Hans, was born on 8th June 1526 and Luther was delighted. He wrote, "My dear Katie brought into the world yesterday, by God's grace, at two o'clock, a little son." They lost their second child Elisabeth at eight months. Katherine was inconsolable. The birth of their third child, Magdalena, helped to heal their grief somewhat. She was a sweet natured child, gentle, obedient and loving. After Magdalena, there were three more children, Martin, Paul and Margaretha.

When she was fourteen, Magdalena fell seriously ill. On her death bed, Katherine and Martin spent hours in prayer for her. As the end drew near, Luther fell on his knees by her bedside saying to her, "Magdalena, my dear, you would be glad to remain here with your father, but are you willing to depart and go to that other Father?" "Yes, dear father", she replied weakly, "just as God pleases." She died in his arms. Katherine was consumed with sorrow. She sobbed uncontrollably. Luther, comforting her, said, "Dear Katherine, think where she has gone. She has certainly made a happy journey. We, dear Katherine, should not lament as though we had no hope". Neither Martin nor Katie fully recovered from this terrible grief.

Katherine was an encourager to her husband in his depression and melancholy – though not always traditional in her methods! Once she dressed in black mourning clothes when Luther was depressed. When her husband enquired who had passed away, she replied, "Don't you know,



God is dead?" Luther immediately was pricked in his conscience. Often Martin shut himself away in his study for long periods of time. But Katherine didn't allow this seclusion. Once he retreated to the study for three days and wouldn't even come out for meals; Katherine had the door of the study removed!

Katherine was also a nurse to her husband. She patiently nursed him back to health on many occasions, with home grown foods, herbal remedies, poultices and massages.

There is no doubt that a deep love existed between them. He called the book of Galatians, "my Katherina von Bora", as it was closest to his heart; he had been converted through the words of Galatians 3:11.

In 1546, Luther insisted on travelling to Eisleben on business, even though his strength was failing. Katherine was not happy with this decision. She made medicines for him and wrote him many anxious letters. However, Martin became gravely ill and died before she could be brought to his side. She was overwhelmed with grief. Writing to her sister-in-law she said, "Who would

not be grieved and full of sorrow over such a precious man as was my dear husband? I can neither eat nor drink nor can I sleep."

Katherine died four years later, after complications from a fall from her wagon. As her strength was failing, she said, "I will cleave to the Lord Christ as the burr to the cloth." She remained faithful to her Lord to the end.

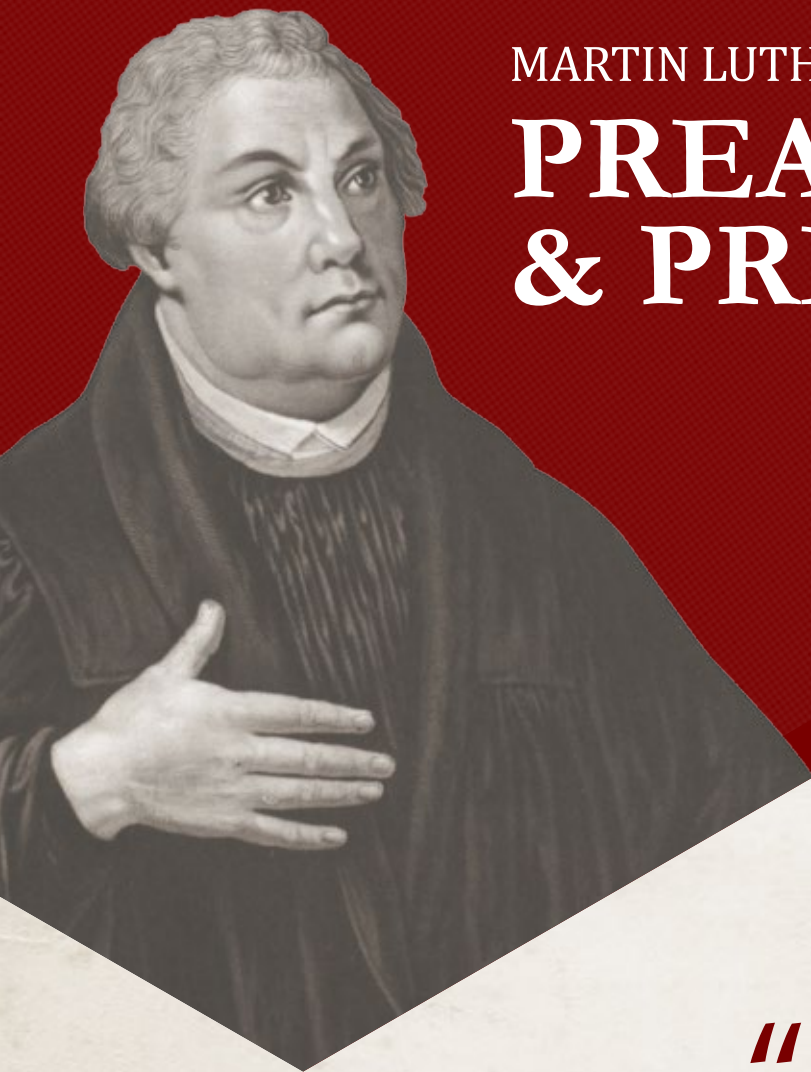
**THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT A DEEP LOVE EXISTED BETWEEN THEM. HE CALLED THE BOOK OF GALATIANS, "MY KATHERINA VON BORA", AS IT WAS CLOSEST TO HIS HEART.**

Katherine von Bora was the perfect wife for Luther. He was a genius, preoccupied with writing and studying, over generous, neglectful of his health and totally impractical. She was an astute business woman, diligent, pragmatic and frugal; she was a nurse, an encourager, and at times her feisty character was just what Luther needed to keep him on course! Without his Katie, humanly speaking, Martin Luther could not have achieved all he did for God. He described her in his will as his "pious, faithful and devoted wife, always loving, worthy and beautiful".

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✚ **Alison Armstrong**, a qualified teacher, lives in Dungannon, where her husband is minister of the Free Presbyterian Church.





MARTIN LUTHER SPEAKS:

# PREACHING & PREACHERS

**//** *If I should write of the heavy burden of a godly preacher, which he must carry and endure, as I know by mine own experience, I should scare every man from the office of preaching. But I assure myself that Christ at the last day will speak friendly unto me, though he speaks very unkindly now. I bear upon the malice of the whole world, the hatred of the emperor, of the pope, and of all their retinue. Well, on in God's name...I will fight it out. I know my quarrel and cause are upright and just...*

**//** *A good preacher should have these properties and virtues: first, to teach systematically; secondly, he should have a ready wit; thirdly, he should be eloquent; fourthly, he should have a good voice; fifthly, a good memory; sixthly, he should know when to make an end; seventhly, he should be sure of his doctrine; eighthly, he should venture and engage body and blood, wealth and honour, in the word; ninthly, he should suffer himself to be mocked and jeered of everyone...*

**//** *Ambition is the rankest poison to the church, when it possesses preachers. It is a consuming fire. The Holy Scripture is given to destroy the desires of the flesh; therefore we must not therein seek after temporal honour. I much marvel for what cause people are proud and haughty; we are born in sin, and every moment in danger of death. Are we proud of our scabs and scalds? We, who are altogether an unclean thing...*

**//** *The defects in a preacher are soon spied; let a preacher be endued with ten virtues, and but one fault, yet this one fault will eclipse and darken all his virtues and gifts, so evil is the world in these times...*

**//** *We ought to direct ourselves to preaching according to the condition of the hearers, but most preachers commonly fail herein; they preach that which little edifies the poor simple people. To preach plain and simply is a great art: Christ himself talks of tilling ground, of mustard seed etc; He used altogether homely and simple similitudes...*

**//** *I would not have preachers torment their hearers, and detain them with long and tedious preaching, for the delight of hearing vanishes therewith, and the preachers hurt themselves...*

∴ Selected by the Editor from 'Martin Luther's Table Talk'



## NEW MINISTER FOR TANDRAGEE



**Rev John Gray has been installed as Minister of the Tandragee congregation.** Interim Moderator Rev G Dane conducted the service at which Revs D Park, D Smith, J Patterson, I Harris, K Elliott, W McCrea, J Morrow and Moderator Rev T Murray also participated. Rev and Mrs Gray were welcomed to Tandragee by Clerk of Session Lavelle McIlwrath. (Photos courtesy of Olive Russell).

## NEW HALL OPENED IN GARVAGH



**Our pictures show the interior of the new church hall** recently opened by the Moderator, and Rev Murray with Garvagh minister Rev G Lucas and office-bearers Messrs T Catherwood, S Dickson, J Robinson and C McNeill.



## SUNDAY SCHOOL SUCCESS



**Two Clogher Valley pupils** have completed the Shorter Catechism. Shown with Ian McClung (Superintendent) and Rev P McIntyre are Craig McMullan and Chloe Wilson.



**Portavogie's P4 Sunday school Class** has been collecting 20p coins in Smartie tubes, raising £150 for Deborah House Romania. Isaac Mooney, Johnny Kelly, Reuben McWhinney, Caleb Gibson and Matthew Cowan are pictured with Samuel Beattie (Superintendent), Mechelle Caughey (Teacher) and Rev S Murray.

## MARKETHILL REOPENING

**On Friday 10th March 2017 Markethill congregation opened its refurbished building, after a new church Hall was opened last year.** Moderator (and former Minister of the congregation) Rev T Murray preached from 2 Chronicles 5:13, and Revs I Brown, K Elliott, D McMillan and P Fitzsimmons also participated. God's blessing was known throughout the project and the congregation can say "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126:3). A week of mission followed with Rev T Martin.



## A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

**Miss Martha Dennison, former Matron of the Whitefield College, has celebrated her 100th birthday,** receiving the customary message from the Queen and visits from the Moderator Rev T Murray and her minister Rev J Greer.



With Dr J Douglas





# CHILDREN'S CORNER

Compiled by  
Robert McConnell

"Men loved darkness  
rather than light,  
because their deeds  
were evil"  
John 3:19

## Darkness over New York City

New York City, the biggest in the USA, has 13,000 "Yellow Cab" taxis and 6,200 subway trains serving 468 stations. There are thousands of restaurants and cafes and some 40,000 street vendors selling hot-dogs, coffee and doughnuts to the 8.5 million inhabitants. It's a city that never sleeps. Many of its businesses and entertainment centres are open 24 hours a day, making it a very bright and exciting place to visit.

However, on the 13th July 1977, lightning strikes from a thunder storm caused a power cut. The city was plunged into an eerie, dark silence as the sun went down. Very quickly it became a night of two extremes. Some took strolls, chatted with strangers or huddled around little battery radios to get news updates – but others went on the rampage. Warehouses and shops were broken into, looted and burned down. By morning, parts of

the city were like a war zone, with billions of dollars' worth of damage caused.

Experts in the field of human behaviour couldn't fully grasp why so many New Yorkers behaved so badly that night. However, John 3:19 gives the answer: "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

I wonder if these words describe your life. If you have no love for the Lord Jesus, the Light of the world, to draw near would only reveal the awfulness of your sin and cause you great shame. The Good News of the Gospel is this: There is still mercy, forgiveness and cleansing for you, if you will humble yourself, come to the Saviour, repent of your sin and be saved through His precious shed blood.

## Quiz:

Which of the words found here:  
"MEN LOVE DARKNESS RATHER THAN  
LIGHT, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL"  
does not appear in the word search?

Answer:

Name:

Address:

Church:

A	B	T	H	E	I	R
W	E	D	E	E	D	S
E	C	Z	X	C	A	V
R	A	T	H	E	R	B
E	U	H	N	Q	K	U
Z	S	A	Z	X	N	R
M	E	N	Y	K	E	Q
M	L	O	V	E	S	M
L	I	G	H	T	S	O

## PRIZES!

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

Rev Garth Wilson

Email: [answer@fpvission.org](mailto:answer@fpvission.org)  
or post to: 39 Millreagh Ave., Dundonald,  
Belfast, BT16 1TZ

### £5 WINNERS LAST TIME:

- » Luke Murphy (Portlengone)
- » Rachel McQueen (Cookstown)
- » Esther Wilson (Clogher Valley)
- » Michael Brown (Magherafelt)
- » Hannah Johnston (Coragarry)
- » Matthew McClung (Clogher Valley)
- » Ashleigh Cooper (Lurgan)
- » James Reilly (Portadown)



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



# THE BOY MARTYR OF BRENTWOOD

Compiled by  
Rev Garth Wilson

**S**ometimes we think that many of the great men and women of the past were well advanced in years. As you read of the great Protestant Reformation you may have the impression that it was middle-aged and even older men and women taking their stand for the Lord. However that is not the case.

Martin Luther was only 34 when he nailed his theses to the Wittenberg church door. John Calvin was just 27 when he wrote the timeless 'Institutes of the Christian Religion'. And there are many other examples of those who, while still in their youth, took a courageous and bold stand for the Lord.

One such was a young man called William Hunter. Brought up in the doctrines and teachings of the Reformation from his earliest days, William had a good grounding in the faith. In his early years he grew to love the word of God, and it was while reading the Bible that he came to saving faith in Christ.

Because of his desire to remain faithful to God's word, William lost his job in London as a silk weaver. At that time there was an order that everyone in the city of London had to attend Roman Catholic mass, but

William refused. He knew from the Bible that the mass was a blasphemy of the finished work of Christ on the cross. He then moved back to the town of Brentwood where his parents lived.

William loved reading his Bible, but under the reign of Queen Mary this practice was banned. One day he was discovered reading the Scriptures in Brentwood Chapel, and he was taken before the court to be tried for daring to flout the law. The local judge, Master Brown, questioned him about his refusal to accept the teaching of Rome on transubstantiation. William Hunter put his case very well, but Master Brown refused to listen. William was then sent to London to be tried. There he was given an opportunity to recant,

but he refused. Even bribery would not prompt young William Hunter to deny his faith.

Eventually he was returned to Brentwood and sentenced to be burned at the stake. As he went out to his death, he stopped and read aloud Psalm 51. Then, as he was tied to the stake and the flames were lit, William Hunter cried out, "I am not afraid of death". He lifted his eyes to Heaven and said, "Lord, receive my spirit".

William Hunter lived for his faith, and William Hunter died for his faith on 26th March 1555. He was just 19 years old, and became known thereafter as 'the boy martyr of Brentwood'.

Young Christian, don't be ashamed to take your stand for the Lord. It may not cost you your life as it did for William Hunter, but don't allow youth to prevent you standing for the cause of Christ. Take your stand, and make your life count for the Lord!

YOUNG  
CHRISTIAN, DON'T BE  
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# WHY AM I A FREE PRESBYTERIAN?

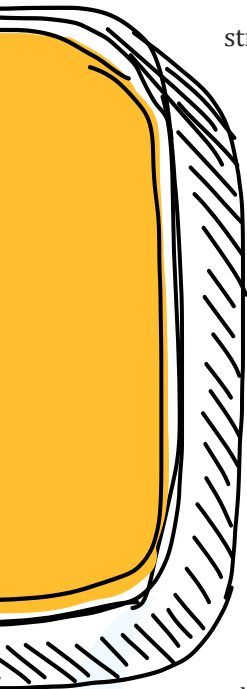


**T**he late Noel Grant was well known for conducting Gospel campaigns around the country with his friend Matt Boland. He was also renowned as a writer of Gospel tracts. One of the little pieces of literature he distributed was a tract entitled *"I have my own church."*

Inevitably this is the reaction of many when confronted with the Free Presbyterian Church. The response, "I have my own church", is all too familiar when a door is knocked or a Gospel tract offered. So why should you attend, or join, the Free Presbyterian Church? How does this denomination differ

from the plethora of others around in the twenty-first century?

Converted in my early teens, I was not brought up in the Free Presbyterian Church. However, under God, I was led to this denomination while in secondary education through the influence of a friend. One of my abiding memories as a budding Christian is my first Bible Class in the denomination. I had been struggling with a particular issue, and on that very morning the leader, unaware of my situation, opened the Bible and dealt with that very matter in a clear and Scriptural fashion. The approach of turning



straight to the Bible for the answer immediately drew me to the Free Presbyterian Church, together with other distinctive marks of our church.

So what does set the Free Presbyterian witness apart from other churches out there?

### FOUNDATION

The administration and activity of the Free Presbyterian church is regulated by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

This is undoubtedly the key tenet of our denomination. We are thoroughly scriptural in all aspects of church life. The worship services on the Sabbath day, weekly ministry, outreach activities, and governance at a local and denominational level are all regulated scripturally. That is our foundation. The constant and overarching principle is, "What saith the scripture?" (Romans 4:3)

### DEVOTION

Worship is an issue that is hotly debated today, perhaps because of the failure to understand what worship actually is. Someone has defined it as "devotion and allegiance pledged to God." This devotion and allegiance must then be expressed and displayed in tangible ways.

The Bible shows that the way to express this devotion is to come together as a body of God's people (Hebrews 10:25). This is not merely for fellowship, although that is a part of worship (Acts 2:42). The New Testament pattern of corporate worship consists of prayer and praise (Psalm 105:1 - 4; Acts 2:42), the reading (Luke 4:16-17) and preaching of the God's Word (Luke 4:18-20; Acts 13:5; 2 Tim. 4:1-2), giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) and the administration of the sacraments (1 Corinthians 11:23-24). This worship

is to be spiritual (John 4:24) and not ritualistic. Worship is not just singing! It embraces every aspect of the service. Sadly, the modern way is to elevate singing at the expense of other elements of worship, particularly preaching. One of our distinctives is that preaching is still upheld as the central act of worship. This was a view held within historical Protestantism, and it has a clear Scriptural basis. (1 Corinthians 1:17)

### COMMISSION

Prior to Christ's ascension into heaven, He left His disciples and their successors with the challenge of the Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel". Our denomination is Calvinistic in its belief, holding to the sovereignty of God in salvation, but we are also evangelistic in our outreach. Evangelism has always been a vital part of the ministry. It has at its heart the great objective of leading sinners to knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour. Evangelistic preaching is a major aspect of the weekly ministry, particularly on the Sabbath day. Intermittently, Gospel campaigns are held, again with the aim of bringing the Gospel to the local community. Ministry to children, utilization of media outlets, and street and door to door evangelism are but a few of the other means used.

### SEPARATION

The scriptural stance that the denomination upholds on separation, both ecclesiastically and personally, is another which commends the church to those interested in a Biblical ministry. Amos 3:3 asks "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" and we are instructed to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). In response to the liberalism, modernism, Romanism and ecumenism of today, the duty and the need for ecclesiastical separation are plain!

Separation is often viewed as purely negative, but there is a positive aspect to it as well. Separation is from evil, but it is also separation unto Christ. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:13). An organization that denies Christ and His Word, or departs from His finished work of atonement, is not a true Bible believing fellowship. When we separate from such, we are actually separating unto Christ.

However, separation is not isolation. We seek to stand with others who have a love for the Scriptures and the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, even when they do not endorse all our positions on matters not fundamental to the Gospel.

### TOLERATION

Another unique distinctive of the denomination is its accommodation of differing opinions on matters such as Christian baptism and eschatology. The Free Presbyterian Church allows brethren to worship and serve together in mutual respect even though they may

differ on the mode and the subjects of baptism. The same attitude prevails on the issue of eschatology, the doctrine of last things. Belief in the classic orthodox statements is unwavering, but on many aspects of how the events of the last times will develop and fit together there is acceptance of a diversity of opinion.

This is by no means an extensive list, but just a glimpse at some marks of the Free Presbyterian church. We are by no means perfect, nor will we be until the consummation of the church (Ephesians 5:25-27). Yet we seek to remain faithful to the Word of God, and to preach Christ at every opportunity. These distinctives drew me to this denomination and explain why, today, I am a Free Presbyterian.

EVANGELISM  
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MINISTRY.  
IT HAS AT  
ITS HEART  
THE GREAT  
OBJECTIVE  
OF LEADING  
SINNERS TO  
KNOWLEDGE  
OF JESUS  
CHRIST AS  
SAVIOUR.

∴ **Rev Julian Patterson** is the minister of Londonderry Free Presbyterian Church.



# YOUTH COUNCIL EVENTS

## FERMANAGH 12<sup>TH</sup> OPEN AIR

**Date:** Wed 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1.00pm

**Location:** Garden/Driveway of 14 Enniskillen Road, Mullybritt, Lisbellaw, BT94 5DF

**Preacher:** Rev Larry Power

## PORTRUSH OPEN AIR

**Date:** Sat 15<sup>th</sup> July

Assembling at Ramore Head Car Park at 6.15pm for March of Witness. Open Air commences at Amphitheatre at 7.00pm

**Speaker:** Rev G Lucas

**Singer:** Jenna Malcomson

**Testimony:** David Laverty

## SUMMER OUTREACH

### LEWES, ENGLAND

12<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2017

Cost £230; Maximum 8 places;

Age Limit 18+

Application form: [fpcyouth.org](http://fpcyouth.org)

## NEWCASTLE AIR SHOW OUTREACH

**Sat 5<sup>th</sup> August 10.00am - 1.00pm**

(meeting at Beulah Bookshop at 10am)

An evangelism training and fellowship evening will be held in Banbridge FPC on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July at 7:30pm in preparation for the outreach.

## PORTRUSH AIRWAVES OUTREACH

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> September** (Meeting at Creation trailer in Lansdowne at 10am)

An evangelism training and fellowship evening will be held in Coleraine FPC on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August at 7:30pm in preparation for the outreach. For further details on the Air Show outreaches and training evenings please contact Jonathan Smith on 07533 035923

## YOUTH COUNCIL AUTUMN RALLY

**Hillsborough FPC**  
**Fri 8<sup>th</sup> Sept, 8.00pm**

**Speaker:**

Rev Peter McIntyre

**Topic:** Young People of the Reformation

## REDESIGN OF YOUTH COUNCIL WEBSITE

**The Youth Council Website ([fpcyouth.org](http://fpcyouth.org)) has been revamped!**

Please visit the site regularly, make use of the resources on offer, and stay informed of the latest events. May the site be used for the Glory of God!



## CASTLEWELLAN 2017



# A WORD TO WOMEN

**M**iriam is best known as the sister of Moses and Aaron, but she was a strong personality in her own right.

Her parents were Amram and Jochebed, a faithful, God-fearing couple. The third child was born to Amram and Jochebed when Egyptian law ordered that every new-born Hebrew boy be drowned. For three months they carefully hid their baby before coming up with a plan which would ensure their child's survival.

Jochebed wove a "Moses Basket", waterproofed it, carefully placed her infant in it, and then put the basket in the river among the plants. We can only imagine her anguish of heart and prayers for her darling baby. Miriam, although only a child of ten or twelve, watched to see what would happen. As Jochebed had anticipated, Pharaoh's daughter came with her retinue for the daily ritual of bathing in the Nile. Noticing the basket, she had it brought. Compassion filled her heart as the baby cried when the basket was opened. As she was wondering what to do, Miriam appeared and suggested that she could find a nurse for the infant. The baby, named Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, was returned to his mother to be nurtured, with all expenses paid by the palace. Miriam deserves credit for quick thinking and bravery in approaching the princess.

Young people and even children can put us to shame with their faith and courage.

Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and was educated as a prince in Egypt. However, Moses the adult identified himself with the Israelites and, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is

invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) Moses was forty years old at this time. He would spend another forty years as a shepherd in Midian. We know nothing of Miriam during this time but she appears to have remained single. Faithful to the Lord, she was well known and respected among the women.

We meet her next, in her nineties, when Moses had led God's chosen people out of Egypt. Inspired by the Lord, Moses and the people sang a song of praise. Miriam, described as a prophetess, led the women in song as they danced in joy before the Lord (Exodus 15:20, 21). The Lord gives gifts to His people and it is our duty to use these as He directs.

In her generation, Miriam was used to lead His praise, and she used the freedom of being single to serve God among the women.

THE LORD  
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AS HE DIRECTS.

But Miriam was not without blemish. Incredibly she criticised Moses, finding fault with his marriage and questioning his authority. (Numbers 12:1,2). Aaron joined her in the criticism, but Miriam seems to have been the instigator. Moses

was content to let her remarks pass, but the Lord stepped in to rebuke and punish. Miriam was smitten with leprosy. We are all inclined to think we know how things should be done and to want pre-eminence and praise. It is a battle to keep the flesh submissive to God's will. Hebrews 13:17 instructs, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Thankfully Miriam acknowledged and repented of her sin. It was Aaron who articulated the words of repentance (Numbers 12:5), but Moses who cried to the Lord for Miriam's healing. Miriam had overstepped the mark and suffered the consequences. It was a humbling experience but her punishment, although severe, was limited to seven days. Miriam would die an old woman, mourned by the people, and an example to us all.

✚ **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.





# REFORMATION ROOM OPENS AT MARTYRS' MEMORIAL

**W**hen Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, he aimed to spark a debate on the misuse of Indulgences within the Catholic Church. His introductory line set the tone for the rest of the Reformation battle: “Out of love for the truth, and the desire to make it plain.”

This has been our aim at Martyrs’ in opening our Reformation Room (strictly speaking, “Rooms”, for the project now occupies four rooms and incorporates a tour through various parts of the church): to make plain the truth of faith alone in Christ alone to the neighbourhood in which the Lord has placed us – to help people towards a love for the truth. We have been treated to so much ‘fake news’ in recent times, it is high time that the truth was presented and promoted in a tangible way!

Our Presbytery is marking this anniversary year in a significant way. However, I felt we should do something on a local level, especially since that God has blessed us

with space and resources, and gifted us a team of willing, enthusiastic workers.

After months of planning and hard work, we opened officially on Thursday, 4 May. It was on this date, almost 500 years ago, that Luther entered the Wartburg Castle (1521). We are praying that the Tour, as an outreach to our community, will have a dramatic impact upon hearts and minds. 15 school classes had already taken the tour by the end of June; many other groups are now availing themselves of the opportunity to book a tour. You are invited!

Please use: [reformation.room.youcanbook.me](http://reformation.room.youcanbook.me)  
(for evening and weekend tours);

Schools should book using:

[martyrsmemorialyouth.youcanbook.me](http://martyrsmemorialyouth.youcanbook.me). Should none of these work for your group, then feel free to contact us directly.

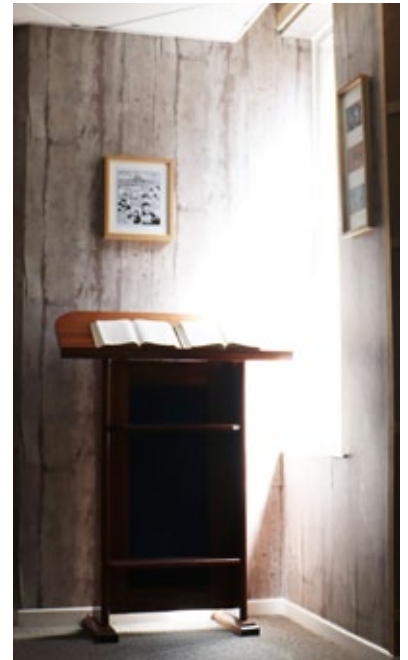
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∴ Rev Ian Brown





Whitefield College students visit the Reformation Room





# RETIREMENT OF DR KENNETH ELLIOTT



A large crowd gathered for a special service of recognition, held in Bethany Free Presbyterian Church on Friday 28th April, to honour Dr Kenneth Elliott for over 43 years of Gospel ministry in Portadown. Mr Elliott retired in February of this year, having ministered in the church since November 1973. Presentations were made to Dr and Mrs Elliott on behalf of the Session, Committee, Congregation and Independent

Christian School. The honorary title of 'Minister Emeritus' was formally bestowed on Mr Elliott. Former member of Portadown, Rev D Smith, preached, Mr Michael Briggs sang, and all enjoyed supper and fellowship. The congregation wishes Dr and Mrs Elliott a blessed and happy retirement.

∴ Rev D Abernethy



## FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

**A**fter almost two years in the Martyrs' Memorial Complex, we are getting used to the unpredictability of the early morning rush hour. Belfast is much busier than when the college was last located here – just one accident on the Westlink brings traffic to a halt on all sides. However, we have not been affected too badly by such problems.

This year seems to have flown by. Students have been extremely busy with deputation meetings, planned summer outreach and other opportunities. To meet all the requests, I have had to restrict the number of 'free weekends' the students usually enjoy. I am conscious of the need not to overstretch them. Incessant work and demands will drain energy and enthusiasm. We want them to

experience the Lord's blessing and power and to look forward to His service. Song of Solomon 2:3 tells us: 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' We want the students to have such sweet fellowship with the Saviour.

This year we have had two young women and nineteen male students. Five will (DV) finish their course and one (Matthew Higgins) will return to Australia. His visa allows him to stay in the United Kingdom for a maximum of two years. He will continue studies by Skype and will still be part of our student body. With fewer applicants accepted for next year, there will be a slight reduction in the numbers.

I would urge all young people to seek the Lord earnestly about their future.

Should He lead you to our college, you will find a warm welcome, real fellowship and good sound instruction from men thoroughly versed in the Reformed Faith and totally committed to the service of Christ.

We cannot determine the will of God for your life but we can, and must, ask you to pray about your future, knowing that for each child of God the will of God is 'good, acceptable and perfect' (Romans 12: 2). Indeed you cannot be truly happy or fulfilled outside the will of God.

Please pray for the students, staff and lecturers, and for others to be led into His service (1 Thessalonians 5:25).

∴ **Rev Gordon Ferguson** (Principal)



## TRAINING ACADEMY

**T**he recent Whitefield Academy Graduation Service saw 43 students receiving certificates from Rev Ferguson. The Moderator preached from Psalm 1:2. Another opportunity to take the course will be offered in Magherafelt this autumn. Two eight-week terms, one evening per

week, will commence at 8pm Monday 16th October 2017 and Monday 15th January 2018. The course will deepen your knowledge of God's Word, help you in God's service, and promote friendship and the experience of student fellowship. Anyone may enrol – and there are no tests or examinations!

Applications or enquiries, before Friday 6th October 2017, to Miss Hannah Lewis (email [Hannah-lewis@live.com](mailto:Hannah-lewis@live.com) or phone 07710426594). The cost is £96.00, which must be paid on or before the first evening.

∴ **Rev G McCammon** (Director)





# SUMMER SERVICES

At the suggestion of a number of our readers we publish the following times of services, as advertised recently, for our congregations in the UK. It is to be hoped that these details will help visitors with attendance while on holiday in different areas.

## Editor

🕒 10.30AM & 6.30PM	📍 Merthyr
🕒 11.00AM & 6.00PM	📍 Ballymagerney
🕒 11.00AM & 6.30PM	📍 Bridlington, Bristol, Liverpool, Oulton Broad, Tavistock (am only).
🕒 11.30AM & 6.00PM	📍 Gardenstown
🕒 11.30AM & 6.30PM	📍 Aghalee, Aughnacloy, Ballymena, Banbridge, Bushmills, Castlederg, Coleraine, London, Lewes.
🕒 11.30AM & 7.00PM	📍 Antrim, Armagh, Ballyclare, Ballygowan, Ballynahinch, Bangor, Carrick, Carryduff, Clogher Valley, Comber, Convoy, Coragary, Crossgar, Donaghadee, Dromore, Dungannon, Dunmurry, Gilford, Hillsborough, J Knox Memorial, Kesh, Kilskeery, Larne, Limavady, Lisburn, Londonderry, Lurgan, Markethill, Martyrs, Mount Merrion, Mullaglass, Mulvin, Newtownabbey, Newtownards, Portadown, Portavogie, Randalstown, Rutherglen, Sandown, Sixmilecross, Stranraer, Tyndale Memorial.
🕒 12.00PM & 6.30PM	📍 Cloughmills
🕒 12.00PM & 7.00PM	📍 Annalong, Ardaragh, Ballymoney, Cookstown, Enniskillen, Garvagh, Magherafelt, Moneyslane, Mourne, Portglenone, Rasharkin, Tullyvallen.
🕒 12.00PM & 7.30PM	📍 Omagh





## KENYAN PASTORS' CONFERENCE

**B**eulah Christian Literature sponsored its first Pastors' Training Seminar 2-4 May 2017. The Lord blessed as 40 men gathered from Kenya and Uganda for ministry by Dr John McKnight, Rev David McMillan and Rev Ian Kenny. Mr Paul Haffey assisted with registration, allowing me to attend to other needs.

Men from Dr McKnight's Evangelical Methodist Church of Kenya joined with pastors from Bible Christian Faith Church, the new FP Mission in Uganda, and some from Kakamega. Dr McKnight spoke from 1 Timothy about pastoral life and ministry; Rev McMillan spoke from Jonah, and on Martin Luther in

this 500th anniversary of the Reformation; Rev Kenny spoke on the Inspiration of Scripture. We had two very able translators, Stephen Macharia (Kitale) and Patrice Makali (Nairobi), and a sound system from a local church – extremely useful during some noisy rain storms! Many expressed appreciation and requested more conferences soon. The Lord provided a very good venue close to the bookshop and undertook for all the arrangements, bringing help just when needed. Please pray that the Word will continue to speak and

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that this would be just a beginning to a much needed ministry here in East Africa. Thank you for praying for the conference.

It was also a blessing to enjoy fellowship with others from Ulster. Rev Ian Harris, Rev John Gray, and Mr and Mrs Barry Stewart joined Margaret Russell for a visit to Kisii to minister there,

and then all travelled to Kitale and Kapenguria churches and a visit to the BCFC Christian Academy.

✚ Kathy Walker



# RADIO STATION COMMENCES IN LIBERIA

**A**fter a three-year application process, the Free Presbyterian Mission Church of Liberia (FPMCOL) was finally granted permission to set up its own radio station on the compound in Duazon, broadcasting on 92.5 FM throughout the greater Monrovia area. Broadcasts have been aired 18 hours a day for just over a month, and people are listening. I was in a shop about 45 minutes' drive from our property, and a man recognized my voice from the radio. That suggests that others too are listening.

We set up a 150-foot tower on the mission property, and are broadcasting on a 1000-watt transmitter. The station can be heard about 20 miles out in each direction. There are spots where other stations interfere 10 miles out, but for the most part the signal is really quite good.

We are broadcasting under a "test" status from the Liberian government, and have been promised a licence as soon as the government's test is done. The government agency have informed



us that they have received no indication of our broadcast interfering with other stations, so we are fairly certain that the licence will soon be granted.

Thus far just over \$20,000 USD has been raised and spent to set up the entire station. We hope to buy a new transmitter for about \$6000 USD and operate the used transmitter as a

back-up. The generator is running an extra 6 hours per day, which costs an additional \$600 USD per month. This allows the station to run from 5:30 am to 11:00 pm, 7 days per week. Readers can learn more about the project at [fpcnamission.org](http://fpcnamission.org)

Rev David DiCanio

## EASTER IN ULSTER FOR SPANISH GROUP



**T**his past Easter weekend, 12 people from the church in Alcorcón in Spain travelled to Ulster to celebrate John and Noranna Hanna's 40 years of ministry in Spain. Joy Gillespie did a great job organizing everything. On Friday night we enjoyed John Hanna's preaching at the Easter Convention, on Saturday we enjoyed a lovely day out at Giants' Causeway and Portstewart, and then on Saturday evening we had a great time as 200 people gathered at the Lodge Hotel to celebrate John and Noranna's time in Spain. Two elders from Alcorcón (Carlos and Santiago), as well as a deacon and the treasurer (Jesus), and Angel, all gave testimony to the faithful ministry of John and Noranna, noting the giving of their very lives for service to Him and to His people, and how much they are loved by the church in Alcorcón.

John Hanna also spoke about the Lord's grace through these 40 years of ministry in Spain, and highlighted how much George McConnell had helped with his steadfast prayers, support, and encouragement. He also mentioned the new church that Mark Witte (American missionary in Spain) has opened in the nearby town of Toledo (1 hour away), and requested prayer for the Lord to work there. On Sunday morning the Spanish group attended Magherafelt, where Ruth Stewart prepared a lovely lunch for us. In the evening, we worshipped at Ballymoney, with a delicious supper afterwards. We also had the opportunity to meet two brethren from Chile, and another brother from Argentina who wanted to come and get to know the Free Presbyterian churches of Northern Ireland and to have fellowship with them. As Monday and Tuesday were not holidays in Spain, most of the Spanish folk had to fly back on Monday morning. We all had such a wonderful time of fellowship in Ulster. Thank you to all who shared their time and their homes with us. And thank you to John and Noranna for their 40 years of service to the Lord in Spain, for their godly example, listening ear, and spiritual discernment and guidance over all of these years.

✚ Kelley Alvarez

## NOEL & JOAN SHIELDS: THE NEXT CHAPTER



**N**ot long after my conversion in January 1985 I began to seek the Lord for my future. Through the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim 4:5 "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry", I felt God was calling me into full time service. After completing the two year course at the Whitefield College, our evangelistic journey for the Lord began. Over the last 26 years we have had the privilege of serving in N Ireland, Australia, England and Scotland.

In February of this year, after spells in Kenya and Malvern, U.S.A., we arrived back and made application to the Mission Board to resume evangelistic labour. We are delighted we have been accepted for this ministry.

Through door to door visitation, open air preaching, children's meetings and gospel missions, we trust we will have the opportunity to proclaim the way of salvation to the lost. We are hoping to visit as many of our congregations as possible for deputation meetings to bring the needs of this work before the people of God. We would greatly value your support and prayers for this venture

✚ Noel and Joan Shields

### MISSION BOARD DETAILS

website: [www.fpcmission.org](http://www.fpcmission.org)

#### Office:

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#### Chairman:

Rev Ian Harris,  
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#### Secretary:

Rev David Park,  
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T: 028 2766 2039  
[hebronfpc@btconnect.com](mailto:hebronfpc@btconnect.com)

#### Treasurer:

Mr Alastair Hamilton,  
T: 078 6061 6302  
[a.hamilton@fpcmission.org](mailto:a.hamilton@fpcmission.org)





# DATES FOR THE DIARY

## JULY

**24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> RASHARKIN,  
HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB**  
Time: Mon - Fri, 7.00pm  
Speaker: Miss C Logan, Mr J Smith

**31<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> MOUNT MERRION,  
HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB**  
Time: Mon - Fri, 10.30 - 12.30  
Speaker: Mr R McConnell

## AUGUST

**5<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> ENNISKILLEN,  
ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
Time: Nightly, 8.00pm  
Sunday, 12.00 & 8.00pm  
Speakers: Revs J Douglas  
C Mercer  
T Murray

**7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> BALLYNAHINCH,  
HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUB**  
Time: Mon - Fri, 6.30pm  
at High School  
Speaker: Mr R McConnell

## SEPTEMBER

**16<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> BALLYMENA,  
REFORMATION CONFERENCE**  
Time: Saturday, 7.30pm  
Sunday, 11.30 & 6.30pm  
Mon - Fri, 8.00pm  
Speaker: Rev J Wagner

## OCTOBER

**1<sup>st</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> RASHARKIN,  
REFORMATION MISSION**  
Time: Sundays at 7.00pm  
Speakers: Revs Morrow, Priestley,  
McLaughlin, Smith,  
Greenfield

**4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> PORTGLENONE,  
REFORMATION RALLIES**  
Time: Wed - Fri, 8.00pm  
Speaker: Rev J Greer

**15<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> SANDOWN,  
BIBLE CONFERENCE**  
Time: Sunday, 7.00pm  
Mon-Fri, 8.00pm  
Speaker: Rev T Nelson

**27<sup>th</sup> MARTYRS' MEMORIAL,  
PRESBYTERY REFORMATION  
RALLY**  
Time: Friday, 8.00pm

## FREE PRESBYTERIAN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

**PHILADELPHIA, USA**  
**30<sup>th</sup> July - 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 DV**  
Further Details to Follow

