

FREE PRESBYTERIAN VISION



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

COLLEGE GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT

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Here We Must Stand



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Editorial

By the time these words are read, most of the events organized to mark the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation will be just a memory. Among many meetings I attended or addressed were those convened in September in the city of Salisbury, England. I was invited by Emmanuel Church (an independent, evangelical and Reformed assembly) to speak at their 21st Annual Conference, and I received a very warm welcome from Rev Malcolm Watts, his congregation, and many visitors, a significant number of pastors among them. It was a precious time, and for me, a profitable and instructive time.

It taught me again the value of fellowship, around God's Word, with those of like precious faith. We are favoured by many such opportunities in our numerous congregations, often in close proximity to one another. Is there the danger that we have come to take these privileges for granted?

I learned that while we often see the mainland as altogether barren – and no one I met minimised the spiritual dearth – there are, nevertheless, godly men and good churches outside our own denomination, and they ought to have a place in our prayers.

And I saw, afresh, the need to stand shoulder to shoulder with those who are true to the principles of the Reformed faith. There are indeed matters that are non-negotiable – that fact, the sixteenth century men knew only too well. But we do not have to agree with brethren on every little detail in order to recognise their authenticity, and their contribution to the cause of truth.

The greatest Teacher of all taught a timeless lesson: *"He that is not against us, is for us"* (Luke 9:50).

∴ Timothy Nelson,
editor@fpvision.org



THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

**'FOR VERILY HE TOOK NOT ON HIM THE NATURE OF ANGELS;
BUT HE TOOK ON HIM THE SEED OF ABRAHAM'**

HEBREWS 2:16

The incarnation of Deity reveals the depths of divine love and compassion. The

Son of God took on Him human nature in the seed, or family, of Abraham. Though angels were creatures of His power, He 'took not on him the nature of angels' (Hebrews 2:16) for He did not come to save any of them from ruin (Jude 6). Rather, in an act of amazing love, grace and condescension He took our nature upon Him, knowing that He could save man only by becoming man. God joined human nature to Himself in the person of His eternal Son. What hath God wrought! O 'what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?' (Psalm 8:4).

In His unique Person there is to be seen God and man joined in an intimate and indissoluble union. This union is such that each nature retains its own essential properties. Here is the work of the Holy Ghost in forming that body by His overshadowing power in the womb of the virgin so that it would be sinless and be offered as a sacrifice without spot to God. Here is the love

and wisdom of the Father in preparing a body for His Son, in which the fullness of the Godhead would dwell. And for this the apostle cried out in wonder, 'without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh' (1 Timothy 3:16).

His human nature was no phantom. It was pure humanity consisting of body and soul. He wore it on earth for about thirty three years, then carried it to heaven with Him. From heaven He declared the truth of His incarnation and death in saying: 'I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death' (Revelation 1:18).

Without such a body, nothing could be done for the redemption and salvation of us poor sinners. As merely God, He could not endure suffering or die and as only man he could not bear the weight of our sin. Was not His

incarnation that first step on the way to the cross? The sword of justice that was ready to be soaked in the blood of guilty sinners was awakened against the man who is God's fellow (Zechariah

13:7) and so He 'made peace through the blood of his cross' (Colossians 1:20).

There He bruised the head of the serpent and overcame him by His own blood.

The glorious Son of God, the brightness of His Father's glory has

taken hold of our nature so that we might take hold

of Him as our Kinsman, unto

whom the right of redemption belongs. As He took our flesh, so He wears our nature that He might have us with Him forever. Let our heart's response be: I will be for Thee and not for another, the very One who took my nature in the seed of Abraham.

HERE IS THE LOVE
AND WISDOM OF THE
FATHER IN PREPARING
A BODY FOR HIS SON, IN
WHICH THE FULLNESS OF
THE GODHEAD WOULD
DWELL.

¶ 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.



HERE WE MUST STILL STAND

Some time ago, a colleague related details of a casual conversation he had with a young woman. She was a Christian, indeed the daughter of a pastor.

In the course of their interchange it became clear that she had never heard of John Calvin, and was altogether ignorant of the history of the Protestant Reformation. Perhaps her experience is an indictment of the kind of ministry under which she had sat. Whether that is so or not, I am sure her case is far from unique. Multitudes of believers in this age are altogether unfamiliar with the events of the sixteenth century, and with the key players in the drama that unfolded five hundred years ago. Well, does it matter? Don't we have more important issues to address in 2017? Shouldn't we be most concerned about the survival of true religion in an ever more godless and more antagonistic age?

It is precisely because we are in such a battle that we must familiarise ourselves with the contentions of the Reformers, and determine to stand where they stood! The twenty-first century is markedly different from the era of Luther in so many ways, but the conflict between truth and error is ageless.

The enemies of the Gospel may wear different clothes today, they may be more polished, and have access to resources of which their forefathers could never have dreamed, but they are still enemies, and they must still be resisted, no matter how winsome their ways or how subtle their strategies. We will do this best by remembering how Luther and his colleagues and successors stood fast for the truth.

SCRIPTURE MUST BE PREEMINENT

‘What saith the scripture?’ We live in an age when men, even good men, do not begin with the inquiry posed initially by the Saviour. A cursory glance at the Gospels of the New Testament will demonstrate what Scripture meant to Christ – it means much less to men today. Instead, priority is given to what is popular, or expedient, or to what ‘works’. What God says is sidelined in deference to what man wants. If the Reformers had embraced this approach, it is unlikely that there would ever have been a Reformation! “I have before me God’s Word which cannot fail”, Luther declared, “Thereby will I remain, though the whole world be against me.” And this is the kind of determined intransigence that is required in our day!

We must maintain the authority of Scripture, otherwise ‘sola scriptura’ means nothing to us. We must weigh the pronouncements and practices of men in the scales of the Word, as John exhorts (1 John 4:1). We must become modern-day Bereans (Acts 17:11). That Christian people are ready to believe and accept almost anything right now, is one sad consequence of the failure to make Scripture preeminent, and it is a failure we must not tolerate in our lives and in our churches!

SCRIPTURE MUST BE PREACHED

The preaching of God’s Word is at a very low ebb in some Christian circles today, despised and virtually dismissed in some quarters. Dialogue, discussion, debate, drama, and dance – all of these are to be preferred. But how different it was with the Reformers! First and foremost, these men were preachers. At the height of his ministry, Luther preached three times each Lord’s Day, and once every week-day too. Some 2300 of his sermons are still extant. “The highest worship of God”, he affirmed, “is the preaching of the Word; because thereby are praised and celebrated the name and the benefits of Christ.” It is hardly necessary to refer to the preaching of Calvin in his Geneva years, working his way through many of the books of Old and New Testaments, messages delivered with warmth and passion, full of powerful and pointed application.

It may be argued that formal, Bible-based preaching is not acceptable to most in this age. Is this, then, the reason to abandon it? Not in the estimate of the apostle, who counselled his younger colleague to

“preach the word” faithfully and fearlessly, even at a time when the inclination of hearers was altogether against such ministry (2 Timothy 4:1-5). Preaching the message of Scripture – and therefore preaching Christ – remains God’s appointed way of bringing the Gospel to sinners and building up the saints, the way by which He “deigns to consecrate to Himself the mouths and tongues of men in order that his voice may resound in them” (Calvin).

If we believe what Scripture teaches about Bible preaching, we will esteem it highly, praying for those so charged, supporting it by our presence, and trusting God to employ it to the advance of His cause.

CHRISTIANITY IS ABOUT LIVING IN THIS WORLD, IN CONFORMITY TO THE WORD, NOT ABOUT SHUTTING ONESELF AWAY IN SOME RELIGIOUS ORDER, AS LUTHER, OF COURSE, DISCOVERED.

SCRIPTURE MUST BE PRACTICED

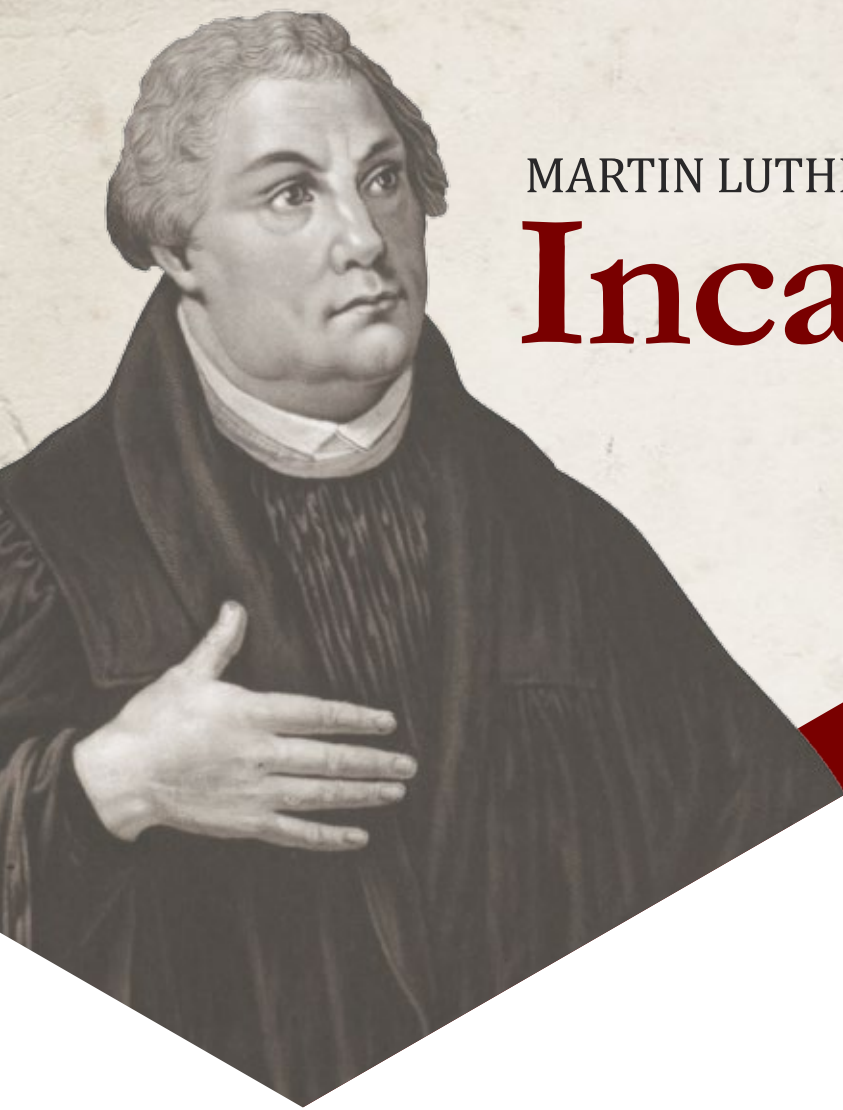
Acceptance of the authority of Scripture, and faithful preaching ministry, must be reflected in an obedient response to God’s Word. Scripture must be practiced in the believer’s **individual walk**. When Calvin wrote his monumental work ‘Institutes of the Christian Religion’, the preface announced that his purpose was “solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness” – not how that massive volume might be viewed by many readers! But it was his desire to show that doctrine “must be transfused

into the breast, and pass into the conduct...it ought to pervade the whole man”. Christianity is about living in this world, in conformity to the Word, not about shutting oneself away in some religious order, as Luther, of course, discovered.

Scripture must also be practiced in our **corporate worship**. We must resist the corruptions and innovations of this age of ‘anything-goes’ worship. “Only when we follow what God has commanded us, do we truly worship Him, and render obedience to His Word”, affirmed Calvin, and he was right.

The right attitude to Scripture, and the right actions flowing from that attitude. This is where we must stand, without apology, and without wavering. Our duty is still to “do the right: Consequences are with God” (C H Spurgeon).

∴ Rev Timothy Nelson



MARTIN LUTHER SPEAKS: **The Incarnation**

// *All the wisdom of the world is childish foolishness in comparison with the acknowledgement of Christ. For what is more wonderful than the unspeakable mystery, that the Son of God, the image of the eternal Father, took upon him the nature of man. Doubtless he helped his supposed father, Joseph, to build houses, for Joseph was a carpenter. What will they of Nazareth think at the day of judgement, when they see Christ sitting in his Divine majesty; surely they will be astonished, and say: Lord, thou helpst built my house, how comest thou now to this high honour?*

When Jesus was born, doubtless, he cried and wept like other children, and his mother tended him as other mothers tend their children. As he grew up, he was submissive to his parents, and waited on them, and carried his supposed father's dinner to him, and when he came back, Mary no doubt, often said, 'My dear little Jesus, where hast thou been?' He that takes not offence at the simple, lowly, and mean course of the life of Christ, is endued with high divine art and wisdom; yea, has a special gift of God in the Holy Ghost. Let us ever bear in mind, that our blessed Saviour thus humbled and abased himself, yielding even to the contumelious death of the cross, for the comfort of us poor, miserable, and damned creatures...

// *St Paul teaches, that Christ was born, to the end he might restore and bring everything to the state in which it was created at the beginning of the world; that is, to bring us to the knowledge of ourselves and our Creator, that we might learn to know who and what we have been, and who and what we now are; namely, that we were created after God's likeness, and afterwards, according to the likeness of man; that we were the devil's vizard through sin, utterly lost and destroyed; and that now we may be delivered from sin again, and become pure, justified, and saved...*

// *But I, God be praised, have learned out of the Holy Scripture, and by experience in my trials, temptations, and fierce combats against the devil, that this article of Christ's humanity is most sure and certain; for nothing has more or better helped me in high spiritual temptations, than my comfort in this, that Christ, the true everlasting Son of God, is our flesh and bone, as St Paul says to the Ephesians, chapter 5: 'We are members of his body, of his flesh and bone; he setteth at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us.' When I take hold of this shield of faith, then I soon derive away that wicked one, with all his fiery darts...*

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL STORIES



Children from Ballymena Free Presbyterian Sunday School who completed the Child's Catechism with minister, Rev Greer, and Superintendent James McCosh. Back row – Deborah Bell, Lewis Maternaghan, Ellie Mae Purcell, and Kaitlyn Millen. Front row – Hannah Ritchie, Bethany Hanna, Hannah Logan, Paul McClure, and Rachel McClure.



Four members of Enniskillen Free Presbyterian Sunday School have completed the Shorter Catechism. Pictured are (left to right) Nathan Dane, Richard Edwards, Kloe Little and Andrew Moore.



Rebekah Davidson, Ardaraigh, who recited the Shorter Catechism with Distinction is pictured with Sam Smith (Sunday School Superintendent) and former minister Rev David Smith.



Adam McVicker from Randalstown Sunday School who recited the entire Child's Catechism with teacher Jonathan Cahoon and Rev Goodes.



The end of the 2016/17 Sabbath School year in Portglenone Free Presbyterian Church saw the retirement of two faithful teachers. Mrs Margaret Cameron (right), who served for 39 years, and Mrs Carol Stewart who served for 6 years, are shown with Rev Stewart, minister, and Melvyn Marshall, Superintendent.

OMAGH INSTALLATION



Rev Colin Mercer has been installed in the Omagh congregation, bringing to an end a vacancy of over two years. Interim Moderator Rev J Gray presided, and Revs T Nelson, J Greer, K Elliott, I Brown, J Morrow and Moderator Rev T Murray participated.

A welcome to the Mercers was extended by Mr E Monteith, and Mr D Aiken oversaw a series of presentations. Mr Mercer has previously ministered in Castlederg, Kilkeel, and, for the last eight years, in Greenville, SC, USA.

MOUNT MERRION ANNIVERSARY



A special service has been held to mark the 65th Anniversary of the Mount Merrion congregation.

Minister Rev P Hanna was joined by former ministers Rev Hartin and Dr Barnes and Clerk of Presbytery Dr Ian Brown.

REV DAVID PRIESTLEY RETIRES



An overflow congregation gathered for the retirement service of Rev David Priestley in Bangor on 11th August. Rev Priestley, a native of Dromara, served in Dromore (1983-91), Clogher Valley (1991-2000), and for the past 17 years in Bangor.

Interim Moderator Rev Garth Wilson conducted the service and Revs R Johnstone, B McClung, S Miller (son-in-law of Rev Priestley), G Middleton and Moderator Rev T Murray participated, with many other ministers in attendance.

The Clerk of Session, David Browne, spoke of Mr Priestley's pastoral diligence, faithful exposition of the Word and

unsurpassed outreach activity, which achieved the distribution of John's Gospel to every house in the town and 10,000 tracts per year. Mention was also made of hidden talents and hobbies – recorded on a celebration cake – a camera for photography, a tent for camping and a racing bicycle!

Rev Priestley acknowledged presentations made to him and his family and thanked the congregation for its loyalty and support. He also remembered former members who have been called to higher service.

The Priestleys have retired to 12 Mill Cottage Park, Millisle, Newtownards. BT22 2FF (Telephone: 028 9107 8197)

GARDENSTOWN REFORMATION CONFERENCE



The 500th anniversary of the Reformation was remembered in Gardenstown, Scotland, in September when Rev Alasdair J MacLeod (Isle of Lewis) – pictured with Rev Dennison – preached on the 'Solas'. The Gospel was faithfully delivered throughout and those in attendance were blessed through the ministry of the Word.

CONGRESS 2018 INFORMATION EVENING



The Free Presbyterian International Congress will be held from Monday 30th July to Friday 3rd August 2018 in Philadelphia, USA. A tour from Northern Ireland is planned from Friday 27th July to Monday 6th August which will include flights, accommodation, meetings, day trips etc. An informal information night about the proposed trip will be held on Monday 13th November 2017 at 8pm in Mount Merrion Free Presbyterian Church for all who might be interested. There is no obligation to sign up to anything by attending.

CHILDREN'S GOORNER



A Good Name

Names play a very important part in our lives. We all like to have a good name. Sometimes actors and singers will give themselves a stage name, something catchy or more memorable. Marion Morrison, for example, was the birth name of the Hollywood movie star "John Wayne". Shirley Crabtree was the real name of 1980s British wrestler "Big Daddy". Dawn McManus from England gained notoriety when she changed her name so that it would be the longest of anyone alive – 161 words and 898 letters! Missionary Jonathan Goforth certainly had a very appropriate name for the work that he did faraway in the land of China.

Proverbs 22:1 says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Now this verse isn't speaking about how catchy, popular or pleasant your name might be, rather it's all

to do with earning a good reputation through good behaviour. It's easy to get a bad name, for bad behaviour, but it's much more difficult to be well spoken of for honesty, uprightness, kindness and holiness. Christians should strive to get a good reputation early in life. That is indeed more important than having great riches. Riches will come and go. Money will be earned and spent, but a good name will always stick by you, and will bring you a contentment in life that money will never bring.

I wonder, young Christian, do you have a good name? Are you truthful, careful and dependable? Do others see something of the Saviour in you today? The apostle Paul said that we are to be living epistles for the Lord. Remember, people might not read their Bible, but they are most certainly reading you.

Compiled by
Robert McConnell

"A good name is
rather to be chosen
than great riches."
Proverbs 22v1



Quiz:

There is one chapter in the Bible that stands out for the **good** things found in it. Read through Genesis 1 and count how many times the word "good" is mentioned.

Answer:

Name:

Address:

Church:



PRIZES!

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

Rev Garth Wilson

Email: answer@fpvision.org
39 Millreagh Ave., Dundonald,
Belfast, BT16 1TZ

£5 WINNERS LAST TIME:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| » Joel Hammond
(Martyrs Memorial) | » Ellie Cunningham
(Mourne) |
| » Caleb Gibson
(Portavogie) | » James Cassells
(Bethany) |
| » Harry McKew
(Tandragee) | » Abigail Dalton
(Clogher Valley) |
| » Matthew McCormick
(Mourne) | » Stephen Hylands
(Comber) |



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



TESTIMONY

V S

REPUTATION

What sort of a reputation do you have? What sort of a testimony do you have?

Maybe you think I am asking the same question by just using different words? Well, testimony and reputation are two very different concepts; while they have similarities, yet there are also distinct differences.

A reputation, essentially, is how you look in the eyes of others. Many will go to great lengths to try and maintain a good reputation. They will try to make themselves look good, appear upright and honest, and maintain an air of respectability in order to gain the acceptance and the favour of others. The problem with reputation is that it can change and vary from one person to another. Of course you can amend your reputation by altering your way of life in order to gain acceptance with different people.

However a testimony is altogether different: it has to do with how we are viewed in the sight of Almighty God. The all-seeing eye of an all-knowing God is a very humbling and heart-searching reality, because no matter how we may appear to others, God sees us for what we are. While we may seek the favour of others and cultivate a good reputation, the testimony that we have before God is of much greater importance. Many will strive to build up a good reputation, but, sadly, that can often come at the expense of our testimony. Pursuing the applause of our peers and friends, we do and say things that are dishonouring to the Lord. We let our guard down. We fall into sin simply to have a good reputation. It is possible to have a good reputation but a bad testimony.

Young believer, if you have to resort to sinful, worldly and fleshly actions and attitudes in order to gain a good reputation among those around you, perhaps such people are not the best choice as friends.

The truth is that when our testimony before God is right, then our reputation in the sight of others will take care of itself. Better to seek after a right testimony in God's eyes than to run after a vain reputation in the sight of your peers.

We read that the Lord Jesus Christ "made himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7). He did not seek a 'slap on the back' from the world, but according to John 8:29 did "always those things that please Him" (His Heavenly Father). He cared not as to His reputation before men. Like Enoch, but to the ultimate degree, He "had this testimony that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5).

So, the challenge is to live right before God, to honour Him in every part of our daily walk and talk. And if our reputation has to be forfeited in order to have a good testimony before God, so be it, because, as the Lord reminds us, "them that honour me, I will honour".

PROFITABLE BIBLE Study

SOME PRACTICAL TIPS

Bishop JC Ryle of Liverpool said: “next to praying, there is nothing so important in practical religion as Bible-reading.” He went on to say “the man who has the Bible, and the Holy Spirit in his heart, has everything which is absolutely needful to make him spiritually wise.” If you are thinking, “I don’t know where to begin”, well, here are some practical tips on how to study the Bible profitably.

REVERENCE

We must remember that the Bible is no ordinary book. It “is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). It is food for the soul and we are commanded to “desire the sincere milk of the word” (1 Peter 2:2). We are to use it as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. (Psalm 119:105). It has the power to sanctify us, empower us to forsake sin, and to make us holy (Psalm 119:9).

And the Bible is our absolute authority. Our lives are to be brought under its rule. It governs how we live, worship and serve the Lord. Therefore we should approach it with the utmost reverence.

PRAYER

Before we open our Bible, we should ask God to speak to us through His Word. Pray that you will learn more about God, gain a greater understanding of His will, be instructed, comforted, and if needed, rebuked through Scripture. Pray that God would make you holy and that the word will remain in your heart and not be forgotten.

Eli taught Samuel to pray: “speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3:9). The result of this prayer is seen in verse sixteen; “and Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.” We must make this our prayer. We need the Lord to speak to us. Seeking the help of God’s Holy Spirit is therefore essential.

PREPARATION

It is impossible to properly study the Bible if the TV is playing in the background or if your mobile phone is beeping every minute. Turn them off and get into a quiet room alone with God. Be disciplined; have a set time every day. Be consistent; don’t miss a meeting with your Bible. As you would not miss a meal for your body, endeavour not to miss a meal for your

soul. Lack of Bible study will bring stagnation in your spiritual life.

It is always best to have a reading plan to cover the whole of the Bible. Robert Murray McCheyne devised a popular plan to read the whole Bible in a year. If you are a new believer or young reader, why not begin by reading a chapter of the Old Testament in the morning, and one from the New Testament in the evening. Start a plan that works for you and stick with it.

METHOD

Some come to the Bible looking for a quick answer to a problem. They open the Bible randomly and search for a verse to apply to their situation. This is not how to study the Bible! We must read and understand Scripture in its proper context.

The whole of scripture points us to one person – the Lord Jesus Christ. Look to see Him on every page. Bad theology has led many away from reading the Old Testament, claiming it is not relevant for the church today. However, Christ is as present in the Old Testament as He is in the New, many just fail to see Him! David Murray, in his helpful book, ‘Jesus On Every Page’ exhorts us “to find and enjoy Jesus in the Old Testament. That alone makes Old Testament study profitable and enjoyable.” Throughout the Bible there is one dominant theme that we should be aware of. One old preacher called it ‘the scarlet thread of redemption’. From Genesis to Revelation, we see God’s gracious plan of salvation.

As you come to study your Bible, ask questions of the passage you are reading: Who is writing this book? Why is he writing it? What is the author seeking to show regarding the LORD, His salvation, and His will for men?

In 1 Chronicles nine chapters of genealogies may seem to have little relevance today, but Ezra is writing to encourage God’s people. While they are returning to a land where God’s presence is not very visible and God’s

promise of a Davidic king seems lost, those genealogies show God's presence has always been with His people – even in the darkest of times – and that God's promise is as real and as alive as ever. The genealogies turn into nine chapters of encouragement: God is with His people in the darkest of times and God's promises never fail no matter how bleak the outlook! Such gems are always there, we just need to take time to discover them.

A much neglected tool of Bible study is memorisation. Take a verse each day or week and commit it to memory. I used to visit a man who had committed scripture to memory from childhood. At 87 he quoted entire chapters without missing a word! When his eyesight failed and he could no longer read, he had a reserve already prepared.

RESOURCES

There is an abundance of good resources available to help us study. There are various Study Bibles and innumerable commentaries to help us understand God's Word.

Many of us enjoy reading diaries and journals of believers from past days. Why not start your own journal? Write down verses that bless and challenge you. If you find a promise to pray, add it to your prayer list.

THE MORE
TIME YOU SPEND
CONTEMPLATING
WHAT YOU HAVE READ IN
YOUR BIBLE, THE MORE
BENEFICIAL IT WILL BE
TO YOUR SOUL.

Sometimes we come across difficult passages. Don't ignore them, seek to understand them. Look up a commentary, ask your minister, or download a sermon on the passage from 'Sermon audio' and pray for understanding.

APPLY

Reading the Bible is an encounter with the living God, so we must meditate upon what we read. Paul encourages us to 'think on these things' (Philippians 4:8). The puritan Thomas Manton said: "Truths are ripened by meditation". The more time you spend contemplating what you have read in your Bible, the more beneficial it will be to your soul. But for the Word to be truly effectual, we must put it into practice. Why not try summarising what you read and then seek to put it into practice throughout your day, praying over it? Keep the commands and ordinances it teaches you, flee from the sin it warns you of, and fill your heart with knowledge of Christ's grace that flows from it.

Martin Luther said "the Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me." May this be your experience as you study God's Word!

Rev Craig Dennison
is the minister of Gardenstown
Free Presbyterian Church,
Scotland.

YOUTH COUNCIL EVENTS

YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING SEMINAR

Saturday 18th November 2017

10:15am – 4:30pm, Cookstown FPC

Open to all, but specifically for Youth Fellowship Leaders, Committee Members and young people actively involved in their local fellowship. The Seminar is free of charge, but attendees should bring their own lunch. Hot & cold drinks will be provided.

DELEGATES MEETING

Monday 20th November, 8pm.

Venue: tbc

SPRING RALLIES

Friday 9th March 2018, 8.00pm

Venues: tbc

TRAINING WEEKEND

Portadown Faith Mission Centre

Date: 16th - 18th March 2018

Cost: £65

CASTLEWELLAN WEEKEND

Date: Fri 4th - Mon 7th May 2018

YOUTH COUNCIL CAMP

Shannaghmore Outdoor Education Centre

Date: 30th July - 3rd August 2018

See Youth Council Website for application forms. £40 deposit required.



REPORTS: SUMMER 2017

Read the reports on page 20!

A WORD TO WOMEN

The story of Ruth begins in Israel with the family of Elimelech and Naomi. Set during the period of the judges, the land was experiencing famine, both physically and spiritually. The book of Judges ends by telling us that *"every man did that which was right in his own eyes"* (21:25). Therefore it is no surprise to find Elimelech and Naomi packing their bags and taking their two sons from Bethlehem to seek prosperity in Moab. It was not a step of faith, and the decade spent there brought little joy. First Elimelech died. Then both sons married Moabite women, and died shortly afterwards. Embittered by her loss, Naomi said on her return to Bethlehem, *"I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty."* (Ruth 1:21).

News of the Lord's blessing in Bethlehem caused Naomi to return home. It was both a return to the Lord and to His people, and would be instrumental in bringing Ruth to trust in the Lord God of Israel. Initially both her daughters-in-law were ready to go with her. However when given the option to remain in Moab, Orpah turned again to Moab and her gods. Ruth clave to Naomi, making a clear statement of faith, *"thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"* (Ruth 1:16). Orpah was like the seed that sprang up quickly but had no root and fell away, whereas Ruth was like the seed which was sown in the good ground and would go on to bear much fruit (Luke 8:11-15).

Ruth had no qualms about going out to glean after the reapers in the harvest field. It was hard and humble work but a blessing provided by the Lord for the poor. It was not by chance that

Ruth happened to glean in the field of Boaz. The Lord was working all things together for good. Boaz was a faithful man in Israel, a kind and observant employer. He was quick to notice Ruth following his reapers and spoke encouragingly to her, *"The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."* (Ruth 2:12) His words would be fulfilled in a way which he might not have imagined! Like Ruth, the Christian should be an example of industry, even when doing menial work.

Day after day, through barley and wheat harvest, Ruth continued to glean, surreptitiously helped by Boaz' command to his reapers, *"to let fall also some handfuls of purpose for her."* Each evening Ruth generously shared her gleanings with Naomi. Naomi, restored to the Lord, recognised the Lord's kindness and provision, and believed that the Lord would provide a husband for Ruth. Thinking that Boaz was the closest kinsman she instructed Ruth to go, lie at his feet at the threshing floor, and ask that he spread his skirt over her (marry and protect her). There was no impropriety, and Boaz was impressed with Ruth's willingness to submit to this Jewish law. He quickly set about clearing the way for Ruth to become his bride. Boaz is a type of Christ, while Ruth typifies the church, the bride of Christ. All that had been lost when Elimelech took his family to Moab was restored or redeemed by Boaz. It is through the descendant of Boaz and Ruth, the Son of David, our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ that we have been redeemed.

Ruth shines brightly as an example to everyone. As a new convert she fully embraced her new faith being a model of piety, industry, selflessness and obedience.

IT WAS NOT BY CHANCE THAT RUTH HAPPENED TO GLEAN IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ. THE LORD WAS WORKING ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD.

¶ Olive Maxwell lived and worked in Cork for over twenty years. She and husband Colin continue to serve with the Mission Board, mostly in the Republic of Ireland.

A SUMMER IN LEWES

Last summer I, my wife Elizabeth and daughters Rebecca and Anna, spent three weeks in the East Sussex town of Lewes as part of our annual vacation. During this time we stayed in the apartment at Jireh Chapel, and I ministered on the Lord's Days and Monday Bible Study.

Seeing Jireh Chapel for the first time, I was instantly struck by the remarkable manner in which this old building has been preserved for generations. While walking around the town of Lewes, however, I also became aware that this is a very ancient community with a history that stretches back to the Norman Conquest in 1066 and beyond. There are many old buildings and churches, all of which are marked on tourist maps, with Jireh Chapel being included on every single one.

Lewes is most interesting, however, not merely for its place in English history but more importantly, for its rich Protestant legacy. At one time the town was famous for its priory. However, Chancellor Thomas Cromwell carried out the reforms of King Henry VIII and demolished this centre of wealth, as the Monasteries throughout England were dissolved, thus breaking the power of Rome in English national life. This was not the first occasion when Lewes was involved in the tussle between the English throne and the Papacy. The Knights who killed Archbishop Thomas Beckett for his failure to support King Henry II in his debate with the Pope over the power of the Church, fled to Lewes where they, reputedly, rested their swords on



Rev McIntyre with Ian Gander and Kevin Turrell



a marble table, still displayed in the town today. It was in the years between 1555 and 1558, however, that the Protestant heritage of Lewes became firmly established. In those dreadful years when Queen Mary reigned, seventeen Protestants were burned to death in the town for their failure to attend the Mass. In 1901, almost 350 years after these terrible days the inhabitants of the town erected a very fine memorial cataloguing the names of the courageous martyrs.

It is no surprise that this was an area where the Evangelical cause prospered. Jireh Chapel bears witness to the progress of true religion in the town. In

1805 a group of believers, in fellowship with the famous Calvinist, William Huntingdon, erected a building where the Welsh preacher Jenkin Jenkins could minister. Within twenty years, after the death of Jenkin Jenkins, the congregation had grown sufficiently to merit the enlargement of the property into the fine building which sits in Malling Street today. At one time this Meeting House was spiritual home for 1,000 souls.

Architecturally, Jireh Chapel is a fine example of an early 19th Century Non-Conformist Meeting House with the interior being dominated by the imposing pulpit. Its uniqueness is



recognised by English Heritage who have classified it as a Grade 1 Listed Building. While listing carries financial obligations, it has also given the congregation outreach opportunities, with Jireh Chapel being open once a year for visitors to come and view, as is the case with the other historic buildings in the town.

All of those who attend the work, although few in number, came to the fellowship during the ministry of Evangelist Noel Shields, who served between 1998 and 2005. These were years of numerical progress and outreach, with our brother's ministry being gratefully remembered. It was certainly indicative to me that with pastoral leadership and evangelistic thrust there is much that can, with God's help, be achieved in this community.

I was most impressed, personally blessed and challenged by the faithfulness of the little flock which worships at Jireh Chapel. Their attentiveness to the Word, their earnestness in prayer, and their attention to the practical details of the buildings is most commendable. I was especially challenged when helping Kevin and Ian during their monthly open air witness. Lewes High



Street is a hub of activity on Saturday afternoons with various community groups, charities, buskers, cults and others setting up their stalls to promote their message. Once a month Jireh Chapel, for one hour at lunchtime, offers free literature with Kevin preaching for 25 minutes, without the use of amplification equipment. One middle aged lady came storming down the middle of the pedestrian precinct when Kevin commenced, and vehemently castigated Christianity, showing such animosity that she did not cease until she was out of earshot. I was taken somewhat aback by the negative reactions when offering Gospel Literature. In many cases, particularly among elderly people, there were expressions of disgust. Yet we were thankful for those who stood around to listen, those who accepted the literature, and the young man who came forward to ask for a Bible. We were especially encouraged by another young man who approached Kevin afterwards, congratulating him on the Word and admiring his courage.



As we left Lewes to return to County Tyrone, it was confirmed to me once again that the work on the Mainland is a mission field because of the terrible spiritual darkness that exists. In Ulster we should remember that we owe Great Britain a great spiritual debt. If the Reformation had not taken root in these lands, and were there not a people willing to pay the greatest sacrifice for the Gospel, we would not enjoy the heritage than is ours today. We must believe, we have to accept with faith, that in these dark days the flame, now burning low, will again be kindled into a mighty fire!

I would encourage you to pray continually for the works throughout Great Britain, for our brethren who labour there, and for the little flocks, asking the Lord of the Harvest to thrust out more labourers into this needy field.

✚ Rev Peter McIntyre

POST SCRIPT

Mr Philip Knowles, recently licensed by Presbytery after completing the four year College course, is currently engaged in deputation work prior to giving at least eighteen months to the work in Lewes under the supervision of the Mainland Commission. Please pray for him and his family as they prepare for this opportunity.



COLLEGE GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT SERVICE

Whitefield College Academic Committee Convenor Rev Alan Smylie presided at the well-attended Annual Graduation and Commencement service held, this year, in Lisburn on Monday 18th September.

College Faculty members Revs G Dane, S Murray, I Brown and R Johnstone also participated. Rev Gordon Ferguson, Principal, reported on another successful year and encouraged prayer

for an increase in enrolment. He introduced graduates Andrew Foster, Jenna Lorimer (nee Malcomson), Ray Carscadden, Philip Knowles and Brian Lorimer, the last three of whom were duly licensed by Presbytery for the Ministry. Moderator Rev Thomas Murray brought an appropriate message. The offering for College funds exceeded £1200.

Appreciation is extended to the host congregation, and to Ruth Dane for taking the photographs.





New students Jonathan Wilson (England),
Simon Anderson (Mullaglass), and Stephen Nelson (Ballynahinch)



Principal with Lecturers present at Lisburn



Graduates Brian &
Jenna Lorimer (nee Malcomson)



Students and staff at Martyrs, Summer 2017



SHANNAGHMORE CAMP

The Shannaghmore Summer Camp, my fourth, was a fantastic experience. I felt spiritually blessed, with a real sense of God's presence in the meetings. Our times in devotions helped answer many questions, and allowed for discussion of spiritual matters, which helped strengthen us in our daily walk with the Lord. The meetings held encouraged me personally, and I learned many helpful lessons from God's Word.

I have awesome memories and made many new friends throughout the week, especially on the outdoor activities. Wet-bouldering, archery, mountain biking, rock-climbing, abseiling, canoeing were some of the fantastic activities we took part in. The staff really made every activity fun and enjoyable.

I would really encourage young people to go on this Camp. It was the experience of a lifetime, with lots of fun and great fellowship with other believers.

⋮ Lewis Rutherford

LEWES OUTREACH

Last August 8 young people, led by Mr Noel Shields & Mr Jonny Smith, travelled to Lewes for the summer outreach. Lewes is a small town of approximately 17,000 inhabitants north east of Brighton in the far south of England. It has had a rich Gospel heritage. Sadly, however, there has been a turning from the Lord.

From Monday to Friday, we carried out open air services in the main shopping precinct, a great opportunity to present the Gospel through messages in song, testimony and the preaching of the Word. During the afternoons door to door evangelism was carried out, knocking doors or dropping Gospel tracts through letterboxes. Some conversations were had and it was encouraging to see people taking Bibles from the book table at the open airs.

Pray for the work that was done, and for the little church in Lewes.



A SUMMER BARBECUE

MISSION BOARD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Averse much on my mind in recent months is 1 Corinthians 3: 9. It is a wonderful description of Paul's ministry at Corinth. Reviewing his time with the believers, he said that they were "labourers together with God".

What an apt description of the work of the Mission Board, our missionaries, and every missionary-minded believer in our denomination! We have laboured in 2017 together with God to proclaim the Gospel home and abroad, and to build up believers. So I say a sincere 'thank you' to every congregation and individual member!

It has been a year of many battles but also one in which the Lord has been pleased to grant us His blessing. Precious souls have professed faith in Christ, the lost have been evangelised, the needy helped, and new ground taken for the Lord. We genuinely appreciate your labours together with us under God in the Master's harvest field.

Rev Ian Harris



Friday 28th July 2017 was a memorable evening. We had over 500 people attend a Barbecue on our farm in support of Emmanuel Christian School, Uganda, and the Christian Academy, Kenya.

My husband Paul, who visited Africa in April, felt that we could organise a Barbecue where people could enjoy some time together and at the same time raise awareness of the needs of the children in these parts of Africa.

Following discussion with Rev Harris it was decided that any funds raised could go towards a very much needed toilet and shower block for the school compound in Uganda and to provide food for the many children in the school

and nurseries associated with the Christian Academy in Kenya.

With the help of family and friends the necessary arrangements were made, including a DVD presentation and photo display. We were so grateful to the Lord for suitable weather and for many people who came. An auction in the tent provided a very entertaining, enjoyable end to the night.

As the event became known the Lord touched the hearts of many business contacts, family and friends to give – an amazing £18,120 was raised! We thank all who helped in any way – we could never have anticipated the response.

Diane Haffey

BALLYMENA WORK TEAM VISIT TO LIBERIA



On 14th July, ten people from Ballymena Church flew to Liberia to visit Rev Dave DiCanio and Miss Joanne Greer. The trip was organised to coincide with the annual Vacation Bible School (VBS) which Joanne runs each year in Paynesville Free Presbyterian Mission Church. The team also had plans to assist with joinery work and other practical tasks, including making 18 bench seats and wiring lights for the Junior VBS hall.

The VBS started on the Monday morning and it was quickly apparent that there were many more children wanting to attend than expected. Two classes had been arranged but over 100

extra children had to be accommodated by the Tuesday morning. A temporary open tent structure was erected outside the buildings and this was used for the remainder of the week. In total, around 350 children attended each day. The following week the team also hosted a sports day for all of the children on Liberia Independence Day.

Rev DiCanio has built and launched Free Presbyterian Radio. This enables the broadcast of Christian radio content eighteen hours per day to the 1.5 million people in the greater Monrovia area. It was a real surprise to hear so many of our own ministers on the airwaves as we travelled across the city. The team was present for the

official opening of the station with a live broadcast from the compound.

A short internal flight brought the group to a small Free Presbyterian Mission Church in the interior of Liberia in Charlie Town, Rivercess. This enabled them to see tribal Liberian life and the challenges faced daily by the people in these isolated areas. They were given a wonderful welcome in the simple mud building and enjoyed a local meal of rice and potato plant with chicken followed by cucumber for dessert!

It was a blessed time and the team left Liberia with first-hand experience of the great spiritual and physical needs of these friendly, welcoming people.

UNITED CHILDREN'S CAMP 2017



Camp was held this year from Monday 31st July to Friday 4th August with 48 children and 9 workers at Humphreys, Rathmore, in Larne. Morning meetings were missionary themed – on the life of Dr Bill Woods – and the evening meetings were on the life of Joshua. Quiet Time Devotions for 15 mins each morning

and evening had each leader meeting with 4-6 children. It was a blessing to hear young children praying sincerely, some for the first time.

Special visits outside were also enjoyed at Brakenhill at Clogh, and to Ark Farm outside Newtownards. In the evening we held camp Olympics. The children were put in mixed age groups and got to take part in eight activities. This is always a highlight.

On the Thursday evening, a BBQ was cooked by Barry and Ruth Stewart. This was prize night, with a photo review and a short testimony time. One of the

girls had asked the Lord to save her on Tuesday night at camp.

I am thankful for sincere and devoted leaders who worked in unity during the week, for the testimonies of lives changed during the week, and for the Mission Board for their vision in commencing this camp and for their support practically, financially and prayerfully. Perhaps the Lord will raise up some of these young people to be the missionaries of tomorrow. Camp is at same venue next year, 30 July – 3 August (£130); contact the Mission Board for details.

✚ Rev Ryan McKee

MODERATOR VISITS AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES



The Australian churches are deeply indebted to the Presbytery for sending the Moderator and his wife, Rev and Mrs Murray. Their visit was very much appreciated. Mr Murray commenced his tour in Perth. During that time he conducted special Protestant Reformation anniversary meetings on the subject of Martin Luther. It was a blessing to see some visitors in those meetings.

Mr Matthew Higgins, who is studying in the Whitefield College of the Bible, has returned to Australia where he will study next term using Skype. In January, Matthew hopes to return to Northern Ireland. He recently got engaged to Leanne Gardiner, a member of Carrickfergus congregation. Meanwhile, Matthew will have opportunity to minister in the Australian churches.

∴ Rev Philip Gardiner

The congregations of South Australia enjoyed a visit from Rev & Mrs Thomas Murray in early July. Mr Murray spoke in both Port Lincoln and Lock on the Sabbath and so was able to experience something of the landscape as we travelled the 180 mile trip to Lock and back.

A Monday evening lecture on Martin Luther in Port Lincoln was streamed via the internet to Lock congregation, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Tuesday night, Rev & Mrs Murray joined us in the Lock prayer meeting, before which the congregation had dinner together and introduced the Murrys to a few of the local animals. The visit was a great encouragement to us. We were reminded that, despite the distance between Australia and Ulster, we are united in the service of the Lord, and are upon the hearts of those back home.

∴ Kyle Graham



Monday 17th July 2017 saw the long-awaited installation of Rev. Ralph Hall in Kingston,

Tasmania, where he had been ministering since 2013 under the Mission Board after having agreed to go to Tasmania, initially on a two year working visa. A permanent visa soon followed, as the family settled into their new surroundings.

The visit of the Moderator was then supplemented by Rev Gardiner from Perth and Mr Kyle Graham from Port Lincoln and Lock, both of whom assisted in the installation service. Some 50-60

were in attendance, including friends and neighbours of the Hall family and a contingent from Hobart Southern Presbyterian Church.

Rev Murray preached powerfully from Acts 26:16, many people commenting on the blessing received from his message. A fellowship supper followed, which allowed everyone to meet the guest ministers.

∴ Rev Ralph Hall

MISSION BOARD DETAILS

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DATES FOR THE DIARY

NOVEMBER

1st-12th MOUNT MERRION, MISSION CONTINUES

Time: Sunday, 3.00pm
Mon - Fri, 8.00pm

Speaker: Rev T Martin

5th-10th MARKETHILL, BIBLE WEEK

Time: Sunday, 8.00pm
Mon-Fri, 8.00pm

Theme: The Protestant Reformation
Various Speakers

13th MOUNT MERRION, CONGRESS INFORMATION EVENING

Time: 8.00pm

DECEMBER

8th SANDOWN ROAD, ELDERS' ORDINATION

Time: Friday, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev T Murray

JANUARY 2018

14th SANDOWN ROAD, SENDING FORTH SERVICE FOR KNOWLES FAMILY

Time: Sunday, 6.30pm
Speaker: Rev T Martin

20th LEWES, WELCOME SERVICE FOR KNOWLES FAMILY

Time: Saturday, 1.00pm
Speaker: Rev G Wilson

✈ Best Airport: Gatwick

MARCH 2018

2nd-4th ANNALONG, ANNUAL LADIES WEEKEND

Venue: Lodge Hotel, Coleraine
Details: Mrs L Harris,
028 4376 8040

APRIL 2018

15th-29th PORTGLENONE, GOSPEL MISSION

Time: Sunday, 7.00pm
Mon-Fri, 8.00pm
Speaker: Rev R Higginson

JULY 2018

30th-3rd UNITED CHILDREN'S CAMP

Cost: £130
Contact: Mission Board

FREE PRESBYTERIAN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

PHILADELPHIA, USA

30th July - 3rd August 2018 DV

Further Details to Follow

