

# Free Presbyterian VISION

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

Growing  
in Grace

## Preaching Through the Pandemic

Interview  
with the  
Moderator

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2020  
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“In moving on from lockdown, there is a tremendous opportunity for younger believers to take up the mantle and serve God in their local congregation.”

## Editorial

Covid-19 has continued to dominate local and national news as we approach the close of 2020. Social distancing, sanitiser, lockdowns and restrictions have become familiar terms and practices. Parts of the economy have suffered, and businesses have felt the strain of a very different economic climate. Mental health issues are rising, and there are reports of undiagnosed illnesses throughout the population. For many, it has been a stressful time.

Christians are not exempt, and easing out of lockdown has presented challenges within our congregations. Numbers attending public worship services have decreased. In many cases, this is due to the elderly or those feeling vulnerable choosing to stay at home and watching live broadcasts online. They miss the assembling of the saints and are missed in their congregations. In other cases, the break in public worship has led to complacency. The words of Hebrews 10:25 serve as a timely reminder that gathering together to worship God is both a privilege and a command: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Christ promises to be with the two or three who gather in His name, and such times have proved a rich blessing to those who pant after Him.

While the world staggers around, unsure and unclear of its next step, the believer can rejoice in the knowledge that our God does all things well. He is trustworthy and has promised never to fail, forsake or forget His people. God’s work goes on. He remains in sovereign control of all the affairs of this world. He continues to superintend the preaching of the gospel; therefore, we can rest on Him and look to Him to bless us. Christ once said to His disciples, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid” (Matthew 14:27). He says the same to us. ■

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# The Glorious Christ



*“Christ Himself  
declares His  
eternal nature.  
Nothing precedes  
Him, and nothing  
succeeds Him.”*

**T**he words of the book of Revelation declare that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and that His majesty and power are not, in any way, diminished. They also confirm the promise given in Acts 1:11 “... this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Matthew Henry counselled that the second coming of our Saviour is something “we should meditate frequently upon...and keep it in our expectation.” The believer’s expectation of this coming event is a source of great comfort, enabling him to declare with Job, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25).

Christ’s coming is loaded with benefits and comforts for the Christian. However, the believer must remember that it is not so for the unbeliever. Revelation 1:7 reminds us *‘Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen’*. This truth should stir the church to pray for those who are yet without Him. Revelation also gives us a clear sight of Christ’s character. He declares, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). Christ Himself declares His eternal nature. Nothing precedes Him, and nothing succeeds Him. For believers, we must learn, know and allow it to permeate all areas of our lives that He is the First and the Last, that we cannot do anything without Him, and we must not put anything before Him. Thomas Guthrie advised, “Take Christ first before you think of doing anything else. Did He not say, ‘without me ye can do nothing’? So then, all you do without Him is sheer nothing.”

Revelation 1: 9 reveals the individual who wrote the book, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation”. John self-identifies as a suffering saint to show his companionship with the suffering saints in the seven churches to whom he writes. He also describes himself as their spiritual brother. He was a son of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Could you be described as a brother and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ? And if so, is Christ all precious to you? ■

✍ **Rev B Lorimer,**  
*Cloughmills Free Presbyterian Church.*





# THE CAMBUSLANG REVIVAL



## THE PRELUDE TO THE CAMBUSLANG REVIVAL

Church history alerts us to the fact that the course of God's cause in this world ebbs and flows. The Old Testament affirms the cyclic rise and decline of true religion. Nor has the expansion of Biblical Christianity across the globe prevented this fluctuation in spirituality. All of us do well to note that, over the course of history, the work of God has waxed and waned.

The early 1700s in Scotland was largely a period of spiritual decline. The previous century had witnessed a very significant religious awakening and the laying down of a Puritan, Protestant and pious foundation in the land. The 1640s saw the production of the Westminster Confession of

Faith and its implementation into the faith and fabric of Scottish society. Presbyterianism became the established system of Church governance. Protestantism had its champions in the Covenanters who would rather die than bow to the Popish, Prelatical or political powers that sought their compliance to their unscriptural dictates and policies.

However, the spiritual temperature in the land began to plummet. Arnold Dallimore describes the period: "With the opening of the eighteenth century, however, there came much easier conditions and therewith the strong fervour of the militant years declined." He added, "spiritual life



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SLUMBERS.**

was cold.” His analysis of the period prior to the revival is stark, stating, “Throughout the preceding decades, the work of God in Cambuslang was at a low ebb.” Speaking of the state of religion in England at this period, John Wesley said, “Ungodliness is our universal, our constant, our peculiar characteristic.” The same generally applied to Scotland. Religion had become formal and cold. Enthusiasm for spiritual things waned. Indifference abounded, and worldliness reigned.

Economically, times were hard. A succession of poor harvests and an extremely cold winter saw many reduced to abject poverty and misery. Revivalist author Arthur Fawcett wrote, “It has been estimated that at least 2,000 persons perished of hunger and cold during the great famine of 1739-1740.” James Robe, a godly minister who also experienced revival in Kilsyth to the north of Glasgow around the same time, commented that the harsh conditions of the famine did not make the people concerned for their souls. He said, “I could not see anyone turning to the One who smote them, or crying to Him because of their sins.”

These physical and material maladies were also reflected in the spiritual state of many. The 1700’s are referred to as the Age of Reason. New anti-Christian philosophies were replacing the old certainties that were founded on the Scriptures.

### THE PREACHERS OF THE CAMBUSLANG REVIVAL

While others undoubtedly played a part under God in this work, two key figures stand out. The lesser known is Rev William M’Culloch, and the other is Rev George Whitefield. M’Culloch was ordained in the Church in Cambuslang in 1731. He was a studious minister who rose at five in the morning and studied through to eight at night, taking two or three hours in that period for relaxation. As a preacher, he was not eloquent! His church building was in such a poor state of repair that he often preached in a tent or in the open air at a natural amphitheatre close to the church,

which became known as the Preaching Braes. Being inspired by reports of the Lord’s blessing on Whitefield’s ministry in England and America, he regularly read these reports of revival to his congregation. M’Culloch urged his people to pray for a mighty work of God, and the Lord was pleased to hear their prayers.

When Whitefield visited Glasgow for the first time in 1741, some from Cambuslang went to hear him. Having witnessed how the Lord was using Whitefield, M’Culloch later wrote to him urging him most earnestly to return to Scotland and preach the glorious Gospel of redeeming grace.

Whitefield complied and came the next year. God’s power rested mightily upon him. If M’Culloch’s preaching style was monotonous, Whitefield’s was melodious! He was a gifted orator, but it was not his oratorical powers that regenerated or revived the hearts of many, it was the power of the Spirit of God which rested upon him. He was “endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Though educated at Oxford University Whitefield depended not on his education or his eloquence but on the Spirit of the Lord.

### THE POWER OF THE CAMBUSLANG REVIVAL

What did the Lord do in Cambuslang? He manifested His power in the conviction, conversion and the consecration of men and women and young people. These became lasting monuments to His sovereign and saving grace. Even before Whitefield came to preach in Cambuslang, the Lord was using M’Culloch. For twelve months, he had preached on the nature and necessity of the new birth. After preaching on 18th February 1742, some fifty souls were brought under conviction of sin and came to the manse to enquire about getting right with God. God was at work! Following this, M’Culloch recorded, “I daily see new instances of conviction and conversion.”

When Whitefield came in the summer of 1742, many had been praying and

expecting the Lord to do great things through him. Huge numbers attended the meetings conducted by Whitefield and others. Whitefield reckoned that up to thirty thousand were present on occasions. Many sinners were turned to the Lord, and many saints revived. M’Culloch wrote detailed reports about the impact of the revival. He spoke of a visible reformation of the lives of some who were formerly notorious sinners, particularly in laying aside cursing and swearing, and drinking to excess. People showed remorse for the wrong they had done to others and a readiness to forgive others. Religious duties became a delight. New prayer meetings were established, and there was an ardent love for the Scriptures and a deeper love for their ministers who expounded them. There was a deep thirst for greater knowledge of the Bible. Some who had been illiterate learned to read in order to know God’s Book. Some of the ministers who assisted on these occasions said that they had never seen so much of heaven on earth.

### THE POSTSCRIPT TO THE CAMBUSLANG REVIVAL

M’Culloch lived and ministered in Cambuslang for thirty years after the revival, dying in December 1781. He was able to testify that God’s work in 1742 was a lasting work. However, that legacy has all but disappeared today. The church on the site of the revival is no longer used as a place of worship. M’Culloch’s headstone is so faded that one can hardly read his name. It seems that today’s generation are keen to let this wonderful work of God be forgotten.


Scotland today is spiritually where she was before 1742. She needs the reviving power of Almighty God to awaken her from her spiritual slumbers. Let us pray earnestly with the Psalmist, “Wilt Thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee.” Psalm 85:6. May God answer this prayer as He did in 1742! ■

✍ **Rev W Irwin,**  
*Rutherglen Free Presbyterian Church,*  
*Scotland.*



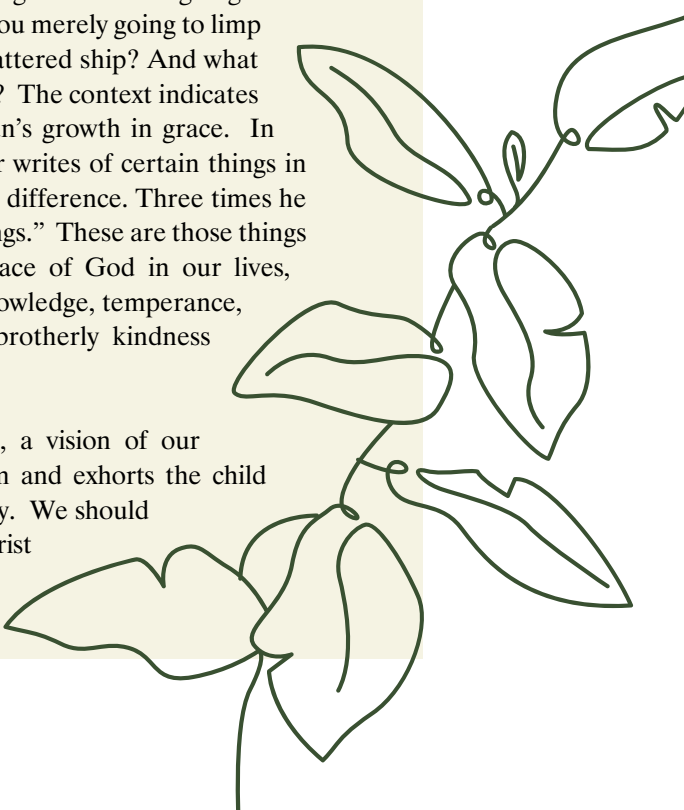


# GROWING IN Grace



**I**n 2 Peter 1:11, Peter declares, “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” What does this mean? Adam Clarke sees it as an allusion to the Roman Triumph, a great celebratory procession granted to a successful Roman general on his return. It was the highest honour which Rome could bestow. Others have seen in this the ship entering harbour in triumph after a successful voyage. The text is speaking of the manner of the Christian entering heaven. Is it going to be in triumph? Or are you merely going to limp home like a storm-battered ship? And what makes the difference? The context indicates that it is the Christian’s growth in grace. In chapter 1:7-10, Peter writes of certain things in our lives making the difference. Three times he mentions “these things.” These are those things produced by the grace of God in our lives, things like virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity.

Peter then, sees, as it were, a vision of our entering the heavenly kingdom and exhorts the child of God to prepare for that glory. We should allow the wonder of all that Christ has done for us, and all He has



prepared for them that love him, to fill our hearts with love and awe, and diligently seek to grow in grace. The Christian's great purpose is preparation for the world to come. It is to be our continual purpose. I wonder is this your purpose? Is your heart set on the world to come and growth in grace? Have you grown in grace since you were converted? Growth in grace is about increase, it is about becoming spiritually stronger and wiser, more mature, more stable, yet more humble. Have the fruit of the Spirit appeared more and more in your life? Galatians 5:22 tells us that "the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Have others noticed an increase in these things in your life? Are you more patient now with the faults of others than you were before? Are you gentler with people? Above all do you know more of love for Christ in your life and more delight in all that He is and has done for you? Is there stability in your Christian life? Ephesians chapter 4:13 & 14 speaks of growing up: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God unto the perfect man...that we be no more children tossed to and fro..." The child is often unstable and unwise. The child runs after novelties.

James highlights the control of the tongue as the mark of growth. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). That is an area in which all of us need to show growth. Have you grown in knowledge? What about knowledge of the word and its teaching? Many a humble individual has shown a surprising ability to master the Scriptures when they find it hard to master other things. What about spiritual experience?

You are not long in the company of certain Christians before you realise that they have grown in grace as a result of the things they have come through. They have learnt about themselves and grown more humble; they have learnt more about the Lord and His ways and are more spiritual.

Spiritual growth is the work of God the Holy Spirit. However, He uses means to promote spiritual growth, but what means does He use? He uses what we call the means of grace: the word of God and prayer. Consider the poignant words of 1 Peter 2:2, "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby..." We need to attend seriously to the word of God. Dr Peter Masters writes of the need to think "...upon spiritual matters deeply and at length. Study them, weigh them..."

There is also public and private prayer. Prayer is, as Dr Masters reminds us, "the incomprehensible privilege of having power with the sovereign God, and he may yield to our cries, because we are his children and he loves to do so." Nor should we minimise the importance of the communion feast.

***“Growth in grace is about increase, it is about becoming spiritually stronger and wiser, more mature, more stable, yet more humble. Have the fruit of the Spirit appeared more and more in your life?”***

Remembering Christ's death prayerfully and regularly will promote spiritual growth in the soul. No proper meditation of Him who loved us will ever go unrewarded. For this reason, the words of Hebrews 10:25 are highly significant, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

The Lord also uses afflictions to promote growth. Hebrews 12:11 reminds us "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." The Psalmist knew that by experience. His testimony was clear, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Psalm 119:67).

We must also avoid things which are harmful to spiritual growth. In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter warns, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Worldliness harms spiritual growth.

Does healthy life and growth not also demand exercise as well as good food? Then be busy for the Lord. As you have opportunity to do so, bring spiritual comfort to other believers, pray for others, witness to others, and practically support the needs of God's work.

In 2 Peter 3:18, we have the positive direction, "But grow in grace..." The word "but" points us to the previous verse, which warns against "falling from your own steadfastness." We are warned about the danger of falling away. The best way to hinder backsliding is to go forward. If you come to a stand-still, you can very easily go back. With winter now approaching, motorists will do well to remember that if you have to drive a vehicle up a hill in snow you must not stop or hesitate midway or you will begin to slide back and find it very difficult to go forward again. You must keep going forward.

May we live with eternal glory before us and attend to our walk with God. One commentator observes, "here and now the man who gives himself wholeheartedly to Christ knows more of the joy of the Lord than the half-hearted. We have no warrant from the New Testament for thinking it will be otherwise in heaven." John Bunyan said, "He who is most in the bosom of God here, and so acts for him here, he is the man who is best able to enjoy most of God in the kingdom of heaven." Jonathan Edwards teaches that in heaven there are degrees of holiness and happiness according to each person's capacity. You will enjoy heaven in accordance to your capacity. Those who have most grown in grace will enjoy most of heaven. Is that going to be you?

✍ **Rev W McDermott, (retired)**  
Moneyslane Free Presbyterian Church.



## Retirement of Rev Kevin McLeod

Rev Kevin McLeod recently retired as the minister of Rasharkin Free Presbyterian Church. He is pictured, at his retirement service, with his wife and family and also with church office bearers and ministerial colleagues



## Retirement of Rev R McLernon from Bushmills Free Presbyterian Church



Rev Raymond McLernon is pictured with his wife, at their last Lord's Day (30<sup>th</sup> August) in Bushmills. A farewell service was held in Coleraine on Friday evening 28<sup>th</sup> when presentations were made to mark Mr. McLernon's retirement.

## Presentation in Ballygowan Free Presbyterian Church



Mr Hugh Garrett, who has served as the Clerk of Session in Ballygowan Free Presbyterian Church for 30 years received a presentation on behalf of the Kirk Session, committee and congregation. His wife Dorothy also received a gift at the close of the morning service on Sunday September 6<sup>th</sup>. Included in the photograph is the Minister of the congregation Rev A Smylie.



### Lisburn Free Presbyterian Church Installation Service



☒ Rev Higginson with Rev and Mrs Ian Kenny

Rev R Higginson was installed as the minister of Lisburn Free Presbyterian Church on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the service was held in Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church, Belfast. Rev Higginson is pictured with his wife Elaine and children, Sarah, Luke and Joshua

### 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary for Omagh Couple



Mr and Mrs Ernest Monteith from Omagh Free Presbyterian Church recently celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Mr Monteith is a founding elder of the congregation and has served as the clerk of session for many years.

### Presentation in Omagh Free Presbyterian Church



☒ Mr and Mrs Jack Sproule are pictured with children's meeting workers, after receiving a farewell gift from the Omagh congregation. Jack has helped with the weekly children's meeting. He and his wife are relocating to Co. Armagh.



"...thy faithfulness reacheth  
onto the clouds..."  
Psalm 36:5

## Clouds

Earth is a cloudy planet. Satellite images show that at least two-thirds of the globe is covered by clouds, swirling about at the beck-and-call of the wind. As a child, I used to lie and look up at the cloud formations and imagined their shapes to be all kinds of things. Sometimes clouds used to bring about a sense of foreboding into my young mind, mostly if they were dark and filled the sky just before a storm. At other times they were a thing of wonder, as the sun's evening rays fanned out from under them in great shafts of light and beauty.

Clouds are mentioned about fifty times in the Bible. Sometimes they are used to tell us about what was happening with the weather. We read of clouds on the ground, referring to smoke or dust rising. On other occasions, clouds are used in the Bible to describe the state of a person's understanding or perhaps their lack of it, about spiritual matters. Clouds are also very often associated with the

Lord's second coming. The Bible says that He will come with the clouds and those who are His will be caught up in the clouds to meet Him.

Thick, dark, grey clouds often conjure up feelings of gloom and despair. If someone is downcast, to cheer them up, a friend might say "every cloud has a silver lining". However, to have no clouds at all would be much better. In 2 Samuel 23, there is a record of King David's last words. There he spoke about the day whenever he would leave this scene of time and go to be with the Lord forever. He described it as being like a bright and cloudless morning. What a great description, for not only will there be no clouds for a believer on that day but God has promised that there will be no more tears, sorrow, pain, death, sin and separation for all who enter into heaven's glory some day. Now that is what "blue sky thinking" is all about. ■



Look up the Bible references and match them up with the pictures shown. There will be one picture left over. That picture will be mentioned in one of the verses in Exodus 16 but which verse is it?

- » Revelation 1:7
- » 1 Samuel 20:18
- » Leviticus 26:4
- » Revelation 4:3
- » 1 Chronicles 11:22



ANSWER:

### 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)

### £5 WINNERS LAST TIME

- » Ruth Dundee (Antrim)
- » Kylie McKeown (Aughnacloy)
- » Joanna McIlwrath (Clogher Valley)
- » Emily Chambers (Ballymena)
- » John Forbes (Bethany)
- » James Wilson (Dromore)
- » Abigail Dalton (Clogher Valley)
- » Charlotte McIlroy (Moneyslane)





# SITUATIONS VACANT

We are well used to employers advertising vacancies within their companies. Prospective suitable employees are invited to apply for the posts and the process of selection gets underway. In today's economically troubled times, job vacancies do not remain empty for long.

What a contrast to over 2000 years ago when the Lord Jesus Christ referenced vacant positions in His harvest fields (Matthew 9:37-38). The role in question was that of a labourer. No simpler description could have been given. The word "labourer" denotes a toiler or one who is prepared to work extremely hard, often under pressure and with orders from the Master of the field. The work was not glamorous and required physical energy. As the Lord Jesus Christ looked at the fields around Him, brimming with a plenteous harvest, He lamented that such labourers were few. How then were those vacant positions for labourers going to be filled? The Saviour provides a simple yet poignant answer in verse 38. He exhorted His

people to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth labourers into his harvest! This is God's answer to the scarcity of labourers on home and foreign mission fields. We do not need an advertising campaign but rather holy, burdened advocates to PRAY for the sending forth of labourers into His harvest.

We need labourers who are sent by the Lord into the harvest fields at home and abroad. In all our congregations we need more labourers in every department of the work. Faithful older saints, who have worked tirelessly well beyond retirement years, are no longer physically able for the work; we need young people!

Furthermore, we need to pray for more young people to prepare themselves for God's work in Bible College. One of the greatest challenges facing our Mission Board is the cry from various parts of the world for missionaries to "come over and help us" (Acts 16:9). Yet we must wait on the Lord and pray, for we do not have the luxury of a pool of

labourers from which we can draw. As in Matthew 9:37, we have to face the reality that the labourers are few.

*'My house is full, but my field is empty,  
Who will go and work for me today?  
It seems my children all want to stay  
around my table,  
But no one wants to work in my field'*

We need men and women with burdened, broken hearts for the lost: those who will labour for Christ and who have nothing but the glory and honour of Christ at heart as they serve Him.

Labourers are needed more than ever on the mission field. There are teeming multitudes all over the world, who live and die in spiritual darkness without a light to cheer the tomb. In 1792, William Carey calculated the population of the world to be approximately 731 million. His heart cried out to God for labourers because 420 million of them, he lamented, lived and died in heathen darkness. Today the population of the world is nearing 8 billion but the children's chorus, sadly, continues to ring true:

*Untold millions are still untold  
Untold millions are still outside the fold*

We all cannot stay around the table. God is still calling labourers into the fields which are white and ready unto harvest, to tell those untold millions of Jesus' love. In Matthew 10, Christ called his twelve disciples and sent them forth. One by one they were sent out into the fields of service. As He calls us to pray, we need to be prepared to be sent. This is Christ's method for filling these vacant situations. Let us not rest until we see those empty positions filled and the harvest being garnered and gathered in. May God put His hand upon individuals in our congregations and send them forth. ■

✍ **Rev I Harris,**  
*Annalong Free Presbyterian Church  
and Chairman of Mission Board.*

# Preaching THROUGH THE Pandemic

**W**ith the dawn of Covid-19, the world found itself adjusting to new ways of doing old things. Those adjustments are still with us today. I am sure most of us can list a handful of these alterations in our daily lives.

For those of us who are called to pastor among people and preach the Word of God, such changes brought unique challenges. There was no 'How to Minister Through a Pandemic' book available. It was in these times that our churches and ministers undertook the unprecedented task of ministering through the lockdown. So, what exactly did this entail?

## **PREACHING THE WORD**


There were some surface differences. For example, some of us in the ministry belong to bigger congregations. The infrastructure was already in place or needed to be tweaked to broadcast online. However, others belonged to smaller churches with little or no provision for undertaking such matters. Likewise, while many were adept at using technology, others struggled to come to terms with recording and sharing recorded sermons online.

However, the most significant difference was the same for every Gospel minister. Our church buildings were empty. Preachers were either broadcasting to cameras while the pews remained unoccupied or were limited to using their home environment.

I recall one Lord's Day, a couple of months into lockdown, when all of this fell very heavily on my heart. My tripod was refusing to steady

itself as I attempted to angle the camera away from the sun's glare. I had triple-checked the app on my phone to ensure I was not about to appear upside down (as I had a few weeks prior) or even not at all. I





feeling very discouraged. Our kind God and Heavenly Father, who knows all our needs (Luke 12:30), was always gracious at such times. Often, I would receive an email or message from someone in the congregation expressing thanks for the ministry received that very day.

Also, I was under a pressing burden to get the Word of God out and to preach it faithfully. The words, "...how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14) carried, not only me but I am sure, many preachers through this period.

The Apostle Paul exhorted a younger Timothy to not just "preach the word..." but to preach this Word "...in season, out of season...". This was and shall always be the pressing need of any age - lockdown or not. We were experiencing an unusual season in our lives. Preaching to a camera could and would never replicate or replace the public worship of God but it was still a means to bring God's Word into the homes of many. Knowing this brought impetus and focus to preachers as they navigated their way through these uncharted waters.

but also singling out those in different positions or different age groups. For example, Peter said, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5:5).

In moving on from lockdown, there is a tremendous opportunity for younger believers to take up the mantle and serve God in their local congregation. Quite a number of our elderly church members may still abstain from public worship for one reason or another but don't let this become a reason for the work of God to suffer. Recently, I was preaching in a church which is not part of our denomination. I had ministered there before and had come to know some of the older stalwarts of the faith. On this occasion, they were not present due to shielding. What encouraged me was to see younger men and women helping out in various ways.

Let us also learn well the importance of preachers having people to preach to and people having preachers to stand before them. For a long time, before Covid-19, our churches had become accustomed to having cameras present in the building. Our public services for years have been live-streamed via SermonAudio, YouTube and Facebook, meaning that those who are housebound have had the means to follow along at home. However, we have always done this with the congregation present. It never dawned on us that a day would come when the camera alone would be the preacher's company.

Possibly I took this for granted but now, more than ever, I realise the vital need of seeing faces as I preach. To watch for expressions, to note someone's countenance to see if they are captivated or confused. In Bible College, we learned the importance of eye contact and this is why. It is not enough for the preacher to give the appearance that he has eye contact but also to earnestly watch for the people. If a younger person seems distracted or unable to follow

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UNCHARTED WATERS.  
”**

#### **LEARNING LESSONS**

Did we learn anything in all that time? By this, I do not mean whether we finally worked out how to refresh webpages when watching on at home or else coming to terms with frame rates and streaming programmes when standing before a camera. What did we learn about the relationship between preacher and hearer? Have we come out of lockdown with a better understanding of the blessing which comes our way as we sit among the people of God under the preaching of God's Word?

When we read the New Testament letters, we often find Paul or Peter addressing everyone in the church

found myself willing on the 4G signal to remain strong throughout the sermon. Sitting down for a short while I found myself looking around the empty building and not for the first time, since the lockdown commenced,

## YOUTH FOCUS

the sermon, then the preacher must adapt to this. If someone is clearly under the weight of conviction, then let them hear the way of life in Jesus Christ clearly.

What about the person who sits on the church pew or chair? Maybe you sense your minister is struggling, if so, offer up a quiet prayer for him. Is your body language or lack of interest causing others to be distracted? Then rectify this.

In Luke 4:16-21 we read that when our Lord Jesus came to Nazareth, the place of His upbringing, He went into the synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath and stood to read the Scripture. This was His custom. On this occasion He read from Isaiah 61. It is at this point we read, "And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him" (Luke 4:20). Eyes were fixed on Him and with that attention gained He continued to speak and preach. As a result, they were amazed at the words which came from His mouth.

As much as God has been pleased to use the live streaming of church services into homes, it always carried the possibility of carelessness. Sitting in our homes makes it easier to take a break from the sermon or flick over to something else. These observations are not intended to be harsh or critical, just realistic.

Let us take up these lessons, learn from them and rebuild the walls of our churches again. Maybe you have never attended a pre-service prayer meeting in your church. You've left this to office bearers and others. Why not go and pray with and for your pastor? Maybe the preacher has looked down and the numbers have been small but let us thank God for a people to which to preach.

It is only God who can bring something beautiful out of something painful. Preaching through the pandemic may have brought with it a unique set of challenges for us all but these are also opportunities for us. As our church doors open, we have an opportunity again to not only love the house of God and the fellowship of God's people but an opportunity to cherish the preaching of God's unchanging and matchless Word. ■

✉ **Rev P. Baker**, *South Grove Free Presbyterian Church, London.*



## YOUTH COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

“TO EXTEND CHRIST'S KINGDOM  
AND DEVELOP CHRISTIAN CHARACTER  
AMONGST THE YOUTH.”

*Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, many of our events did not run in 2020. However, God willing, the Youth Council hope to facilitate the following events in 2021. All subject to possible restrictions that may be in place at that time.*

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**TRAINING WEEKEND**  
**PORTADOWN FM CENTRE**  
March 26<sup>th</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup>

**YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT**  
**CASTLEWELLAN**  
April 30<sup>th</sup>- May 3<sup>rd</sup>

**CAMP**  
**GREENHILL YMCA**  
August 2021

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*For further updates, information & videos visit us on:*

 **Facebook: FPC Youth Council**

 **YouTube: FPC Youth Council**

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**FPCYOUTH.ORG**







A Word to Women

# Charlotte Elliott

1789 – 1871

Charlotte Elliott was born into an evangelical and wealthy home. Her maternal grandfather, Rev. Henry Venn, was a prominent minister during the Great Awakening of the 18th century. Two of Charlotte's brothers were evangelical Anglican ministers. Despite this Charlotte was not saved until she reached her early twenties. Growing up in an evangelical home is a blessing but does not confer salvation.



Charlotte had settled the great need of her soul. Apart from some brief respite from illness, she lived a life restricted by pain and confined to her home. Such trying circumstances brought frustration and depression. Charlotte felt useless. Unable to help with a church function, she decided to put her feelings in writing. As she did so the words of Dr Malan returned to her and her poetic nature blossomed as she wrote:

Charlotte mixed in high social circles where she was popular as a writer of humorous verse and a talented portrait artist. However, she was also conscious of her sinful nature and felt unworthy of God's grace. The need for more prayer, Bible study and good works was often emphasised. There is a tendency to list and tick off all the good things we do, while judging others by what they do or fail to do. Praying, studying the Bible and good works are commendable but without a work of grace in the heart they will never satisfy the needs of the soul.

A serious illness in 1821 removed Charlotte from her socialite companions and for the remainder of her life she battled ill health. Charlotte experienced a lot of pain as a result of her illness and her life was greatly restricted. Life was depressing and Charlotte was irritated when a family friend, Swiss minister and musician, Dr Caesar Malan, asked her about her faith and if she knew God's peace in her suffering. It is easy to react with anger when asked about our spiritual life or when challenged by a sermon. We often take offence when our conscience is pricked. Thankfully, Charlotte after her initial upset thought long and hard about what had been said and realised that she had never known God's peace in her life. She sought out Dr Malan, telling him of the spiritual vacuum in her life and asking for his help. She wanted to be saved but didn't know how. Dr Malan reply was simple, "Come to Him, just as you are." Charlotte did just that, confessing her sins and crying for mercy, she experienced the forgiveness of her sin and knew the, "peace that passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me some to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

More verses followed to complete this beautiful hymn. It was published anonymously in a Christian paper and unbeknown to Charlotte it rapidly gained popularity. One lady was so touched by the hymn that she had it printed and distributed as a little tract. Charlotte's doctor passed the tract to her for encouragement. Recognising her own words Charlotte realised she had found her ministry. Charlotte wrote more poems/hymns and was involved in some Christian publishing. Years later reflecting on the hymn, Charlotte's brother acknowledged that this single hymn may have borne more fruit than his entire ministry. The simple words articulate the experience of the anxious soul and the all sufficiency of the Saviour.

*Just as I am, poor wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need, in Thee, in Thee I find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come. ■*

## ✍ Olive Maxwell

*lived and worked as a missionary in Cork for over twenty years. She is married to Colin who serves with the Mission Board, mostly in the Republic of Ireland.*

Interview  
with the

# Moderator

**Rev John Armstrong** was recently elected as the Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. He is married to Alison and they have three children, Louise, Jamie and Charlotte and three grandchildren. He kindly agreed to be interviewed, by the editor, for the Free Presbyterian Vision. Readers are asked to pray for him during his time in office. Ed.

**ED: When and how did you come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?**

**JA:** I was converted to Christ on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1979. My family did not attend church but, as children, we were sent to an afternoon Sunday School and it was there that I first heard the gospel. In my teenage years, I had no church connections. However, in September 1979, my father asked me if I would take him to a gospel mission. The evangelist was Dr Paisley and the mission was to mark the opening of the new building for Ballymena Free Presbyterian Church. The gospel that I had heard as a child was presented powerfully to me, again, that Sunday afternoon. It had a deep impact upon me; conviction of sin followed and, a few weeks later, I cried to the Lord for mercy.



**ED: How did you experience the Lord's call to the ministry?**

**JA:** After conversion, I started to attend Ballymena Free Presbyterian Church. I knew very little concerning the things of God, but I was well instructed under the faithful ministry of Rev James Beggs. Looking back, I have to say that the Young People's Fellowship proved a valuable training ground. I found myself taking part in the youth services: leading or bringing the quiz or sword drill. My first effort at preaching was in the open air – a few minutes speaking

about blind Bartimaeus. Sometime later, having joined the church, I was asked to become a Sunday School teacher and felt completely happy with my life. I certainly had no ambitions to go any further in the Lord's work. However, that changed one Monday evening as Rev Trevor Baxter preached at the congregation's annual general meeting. I was undoubtedly called to the ministry that night. A time of great conflict commenced within me. I discovered that it is one thing to know the Lord's will and another thing to do



it. I knew I was called but felt that I did not have the ability or education to be a minister. It was more than a year later before I made application to the Whitefield College of the Bible for training. I had entrance examinations to sit before acceptance. I owe a great debt to Mrs Ann Foster for her assistance in preparing me for those exams. I entered the Bible College in September 1991.

**ED: How long have you ministered in Dungannon and are there particular challenges in Co. Tyrone?**

**JA:** I was installed in Dungannon in 2015 and have ministered there for over five years. The town and district are home to people of many different nationalities, so one of our challenges is to reach those people with the gospel. Our ‘Tumble Tots’ is a valuable outreach and we engage in missions in different parts of the area in an attempt to win souls for Christ.

**ED: What other aspects of the Lord’s work are you involved in?**

**JA:** A number of years ago, I was asked by Dr Douglas if I would consider teaching Hebrew in the Whitefield College of the Bible. I have always felt that if a door of service opens, it is right to consider that opportunity seriously. Hence, I accepted the invitation. The pastorate and College work have taken up all of my time.....until now.

**ED: We live in days of spiritual apostasy. Why is the ministry of the FPC important in these times?**

**JA:** Apostasy is a departure from, and repudiation of, the truth of the Word of God. In the light of that, we are exhorted in Jude to “earnestly contend for the faith”. Therefore, in resisting the apostasy of these days, we are obeying the express command of Scripture. But the ministry of our church is also important in both the practical and eternal sense. What is it that people need today? It is hope. Hope for time, in the midst of the turmoil and uncertainty of life, and hope for eternity. Those who espouse apostasy cannot offer such hope. They peddle a false gospel that offers no consolation to the troubled.

It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that people can experience hope. Therefore, this land of ours and other lands, as well, require the hope that Christ alone brings. Our ministry is to continue to present Christ and His gospel as the only hope. It is vital that we remain faithful to that ministry.

**ED: Covid-19 presented challenges to our usual way of ministering; how can the church continue to preach the gospel in the midst of a pandemic?**

**JA:** Sessions are to be commended for adapting the methods of preaching the gospel during lockdown. The Lord has certainly blessed through social media and open-air ministry. I’m convinced that, had it not been for the pandemic, some of us would never have considered these approaches. In a sense, they have been forced upon us and, while they certainly have presented challenges, surely, they have proved a useful tool in the spread of the gospel. We must also exercise care. Undoubtedly, for those who are physically unable to attend our services, social media is a lifeline. However, these means are no substitute for gathering with the people of God in the Lord’s house, for those able to do so.

**ED: What are you looking forward to most as you serve as Moderator?**

**JA:** What I’m looking forward to most has no direct reference to me serving as Moderator. Rather, I look forward to a gracious visitation of God the Holy Ghost in revival at some time in the future. That was one of the prayers of the founding fathers of

our denomination. It is still our need today. Habakkuk 2:3 gives the promise that has been quoted often in our churches, “though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry”. Times of revival, I feel, should be the desire of all of our hearts. It is a vision and aspiration that we must never lose.

**ED: What prayer requests would you like to leave before the readers of the Free Presbyterian Vision magazine?**

**JA:** I thank God for the praying people of the Free Presbyterian Church. We are in existence as a denomination because the Lord has graciously answered the prayers of God’s people. On a personal level, I need the prayers of our readers. The position of Moderator brings extra duties and responsibilities. Also, our elders require prayer in their duty of “taking the oversight” (1 Peter 5:2) in our Sessions and in Presbytery. Our ministers need prayer for their faithful preaching and pastoral work. Added to that, the people in our congregations require prayer. This pandemic has brought difficulties for all of us. Sickness, fear, loneliness, financial hardship and changing circumstances have overtaken many. However, we thank God that the Lord is still interested in the work of our church. His grace is sufficient and His power infinite. In Jeremiah 33:3, He says, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not”. This is the God to whom we pray and the God we delight to serve. ■

“  
*It is only through  
faith in Jesus  
Christ that people  
can experience  
hope. Therefore,  
this land of ours  
and other lands,  
as well, require the  
hope that Christ  
alone brings. Our  
ministry is to  
continue to present  
Christ and His  
gospel as the only  
hope.*  
”

# A letter from Rutherglen

**R**utherglen Free Presbyterian Church has a unique position in our denomination's history in that it was the first witness established in Scotland. The work commenced when a number of believers who had witnessed the work of the denomination in Ulster desired a similar work in Glasgow. The first meeting of this pioneer work was conducted by members of the Scottish Commission on 7th June 1987. Meetings were held in rented accommodation in the old Stonelaw High School on Stonelaw Road, now converted to flats. In fact, these premises were used for approximately the next five years

If you were to walk into a Christian bookstore and gaze upon the plethora of Bibles on the shelves, you might ask the question 'Which Bible is the Word of God?' Some argue that all the different Bible versions say the same thing, but they are just worded differently. If that is the case, why is Matthew 18:11 and Acts 8:37 missing from the main text of most modern versions? And where is the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6? These are but a few examples of the thousands of differences which exist between Bible versions.

The Lord sent a permanent under shepherd to guide and guard the flock when Rev Stephen Hamilton moved from the Mount Merrion congregation in Belfast to pastor this group. His faith in God's call was tested when a number of those who had desired a Free Presbyterian witness left within a very short time of his arrival!

Meeting in the classroom or gym hall was not an ideal situation, so a search for a church property was begun. After some time, a property was located on King Street in Rutherglen. The building was in very poor structural condition and necessitated extensive reconstruction. While a contractor was employed, individuals from Northern Ireland gave a helping hand in the renovation. Around this time, the Lord was pleased to provide the Church with a substantial legacy enabling the congregation to significantly reduce the amount of money they needed to borrow to fund this work. The building was opened for the preaching of the Gospel on 8th October, 1994.

Rev Hamilton continued as minister until November 1998. On 12th December of that year Rev Wesley Irwin was installed as minister of the congregation. Two years later, two elders were elected and ordained. Mr Alex Anthoney continues to serve in this capacity. Our longest attendee and member is Miss Patricia Jacob, who has been with the work since its inception.

Over the years, many thousands of tracts and invitations have been given out. The response has been miniscule! I can think of one summer when we had the assistance of two large groups

of evangelistic workers and we gave out 113,000 invitations by hand! Yes, you read that number correctly. What response did you get, I hear you ask? We got one person in as a result, and she only came once!

The Lord has sent us people. Some have made it their church home. Our congregation is small, and through the years we are thankful for those who been faithful in their attendance and financial support. The demographic of our church consists largely of older people and from a widespread area. Some travel one and a half hours on public transport to attend. This in itself shows their commitment to the Lord's work and the dearth of Bible preaching churches free from the ecumenical apostasy which has infiltrated religious bodies today.

The impact of COVID-19 has already affected numbers attending. Pray that the Lord would again awaken many in the area to their need of Christ as Saviour. As minister, I give an invitation to young people from N. Ireland studying at any of the Glasgow Universities to join with us for public worship. ■


✉ **Rev W Irwin**, *Rutherglen Free Presbyterian Church, Glasgow.*






# Whitefield College Graduation & Commencement

The annual Whitefield College of the Bible Graduation and Commencement Service was held in Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church, Belfast, on Monday 14th September 2020. Due to Covid-19 restriction the service was by invitation only. Rev G Dane (Moderator) preached and graduating ministerial students were licensed to preach. Incoming students were welcomed. The service signals the beginning of another College year. ■

 **Right - incoming students (L to R):**  
G Gibson, J Eccles, J Jordan and S Greer.

 **Below - graduating students (L to R):**  
D Wilson, A Bernabeu, S Ross, C Brown, M Eccles, A Murray and R Morrow.





## Interview with Mr Alastair Hamilton

Mr Alastair Hamilton is a member of Ballymena Free Presbyterian Church. He also serves on the Missionary Council and through that, on the denomination's Mission Board. He is the Mission Board's treasurer. He kindly consented to be interviewed by the editor of the Free Presbyterian Vision magazine. Ed.

 **Photo:**  
Mr Alastair Hamilton CBE.

**ED: Please relate something of your childhood and introduction to the gospel.**

**AH:** I was born in the town of Ballymena, to Christian parents who attended the local Gospel Hall. My Father was a local businessman and lay preacher who, along with my Mum, sought to teach my sister and I the way of salvation from an early age. I was steeped in the gospel as a child and at the age of seven, following months of concern about my eternal future, I was saved in my own home

**ED: How did you become involved with the Free Presbyterian Church Mission Board?**

**AH:** In the mid 1980s I began dating the daughter of a minister in the Free Presbyterian Church. We were married in 1989, set up home just outside Ballymena and became members of the local church. I

became involved in the youth work in Ballymena and in due course became Ballymena representative to the Youth Council eventually leading to becoming Secretary of the Council. In 2001 the Youth Council commenced fund raising for a missionary project in Kenya. George McConnell and Margaret Russell thought it would be good for me to visit the work in Kenya to see the project on the ground. That visit was a turning point in my life – I was so impressed with the country, the people and the work, that a seed was sown in my heart for mission work. As a deacon in Ballymena, I became one of the representatives to the Missionary Council and after a few years there, I was nominated to one of the posts that the Missionary Council has on the Mission Board. When George McConnell retired from the Board a few years ago, I was asked to take over the Treasurer role that he carried for many years.



## MISSIONARY VISION

### **ED: What are the primary roles of the Mission Board Treasurer?**

**AH:** The key role is to manage the proper financial tracking and management of the funds that are entrusted to the Board and to ensure that they are used to further works that we are responsible for and in line with the wishes of those who donate so generously. As the work of the Board has increased over the past few years and as regulation and transparency requirements have increased, this work has intensified – we now have 48 individual funding lines to manage and balance from year to year. As our work in Kenya and Uganda are managed through a registered company, that adds another layer of reporting and accountability in both of those countries. We are indebted to Mrs Glenda Graham for the work that she carries out in the Mission Board office – reconciling all gifts received and funds spent on our accounting systems, managing the payroll and gift aid, along with lots of other essential administrative work.

### **ED: How many missionaries are financed by the Mission Board and where are they presently serving?**

**AH:** We currently provide finance for 22 workers at home and in Spain, Kenya, Liberia, Uganda, Asia and Australia. In addition, we have a further 40 staff directly employed or funded in our school and bookshops in Uganda and Kenya. This not only represents a significant financial challenge but involves increasing levels of administration with pay, National Insurance and pension obligations, as well as managing job descriptions and employment contracts in multiple currencies and legal jurisdictions.

### **ED: During 2020 there was an appeal for an emergency aid fund to help in various parts of the world. How has that money assisted those in need?**

**AH:** The response to the Emergency Aid Fund was overwhelming, particularly at a time when many of our contributors were facing

employment challenges themselves. The initial target was exceeded by a factor of 3! This has permitted over 2000 aid packages to be distributed to support pastors, families and needy children in all areas of our missionary work. At a time when many of the beneficiaries are out of work, with no income or government support programmes and living from day to day, this aid support has been a real lifeline. The letters of appreciation which we received were heart-warming and made us feel privileged to be able to help in their hour of need.

### **ED: Do you ever fear that there will not be enough money for our mission works?**

**AH:** Yes! Often we take on new workers or projects and while it seems more straightforward to raise funds in the initial phase, I do worry about our ability to continue to fund into the future. However, I never cease to be amazed at how the Lord continues to fund His will and we have witnessed such cases recently across our Mission work. We particularly appreciate those who provide ongoing monthly support for a worker or project as this helps to remove some of that concern for the future. I have been particularly touched by those godly saints who leave legacies to the work on the mission field. Clearly those decisions were taken years ago but the legacies are often received at just the right time to meet a need. Truly we have witnessed the Lord “do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”.

### **ED: Are there particular difficulties in sending money to foreign mission fields?**

**AH:** At present the Mission Board manages receipts and payments in 13 different currencies, using traditional banking, ebanking, online payment platforms and mobile payments services. The online and ebanking systems have significantly enhanced our ability to operate in these currencies quickly and efficiently,

however we are experiencing increasing difficulty transferring funds to parts of the world where Christianity and evangelism are not welcome. We would ask for prayer that these transfer options would remain open so that we can continue to support the Lord’s work in all these areas.

### **ED: Where are the greatest financial needs in our mission works presently?**

**AH:** There are needs all around – one of the biggest challenges is in Uganda where we seek to manage a school with almost 400 children on the roll. Also, in Kenya, as we seek to develop the new works in Glory Bible Church. In Asia we support pastors and families in over 100 small churches and an orphanage. We are also working with friends to support outreach works in three other countries. We would encourage readers to continue to support the fundraising efforts of the Missionary Council who provide us with regular salary support, contributing 30% of our pay bill each month.

### **ED: If you could write to every contributor what would you say?**

**AH:** Firstly - thank you. The generosity of our contributors is, at times, overwhelming. We thank those who covenant to support a work or worker every month, those who support our school and orphanage funds and those who give sacrificially to projects as they are launched. We also really appreciate the prayers of our supporters who hold the ropes for our mission workers across the globe. Secondly - if it were possible, I would ask our contributors to go and see the work on the ground and to meet the men, women and children, that we seek to reach with the Gospel, help practically and encourage in the faith. I know that everyone cannot visit the field but we try to ensure that in our publications and video presentations, we show the real challenges and opportunities that there are to seek out the lost for Christ. ■

# Missionary Endeavours in Pakistan

Recent contacts with Christians in Pakistan have continued in recent months. Muslims expelled the Christians from the property where they were worshipping, forcing them to meet outdoors in the blistering sun. For a time, they assembled on the rooftop of Friha's home, meeting at 6.30pm in the evening when it was a little cooler. A room has now been acquired through the Mission Board to allow these believers to gather for worship indoors. Friha continues to run the 'Thyatira Sewing Centre' where ladies gather to learn the art of dress making and study the Scriptures together. The facility also provides adequate space for her Sunday School class of 25 children. ■



## Mr Kumar begins a ministry under the Mission Board

Mr. Kumar, who is 66 years old, has been a pastor in India for 40 years. He is the father-in-law of Deepanker Nandy, one of our Whitefield College students. Fully persuaded of the Reformed faith, and holding the convictions of the Free Presbyterian Church, Mr. Kumar applied to come under the authority of the Mission Board. After an interview process, the Board has accepted the Lord's servant as an evangelist for a

probationary year, with a view to him becoming a pastor under the Board. He has a burden to start a Reformed Church in Chhattisgarh and to see this needy area of India evangelised with the gospel. Mr. Kumar is in contact with many other pastors and is a great encouragement to them. Please remember him and his wife in prayer as they seek to develop and strengthen ties with the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. ■





# Whitefield Graduate, Alejandro Bernabeu McAuley Returns to Minister in Spain



Alejandro completed his theological training at the Whitefield College of the Bible and graduated on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 along with six other students. God has opened an effectual door for Alejandro to return to his homeland to preach the gospel in Cortijos Nuevos, Spain. A “Sending Forth” service was held on Lord’s Day 27<sup>th</sup> September in Hebron Free Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney. Presentations were made to Alejandro and his family. At the time of writing, a “Welcome Service” has been arranged for Saturday 31st October, in Cortijos Nuevos. On the same day the congregation will say farewell to Rev and Mrs Lyle Boyd who served in the church for over 30 years. ■

📍 **Left:** Alejandro and his family at the Farewell Service in Hebron Free Presbyterian Church

## Indian Orphan Project

A third distribution of food parcels has taken place successfully in India. The orphan children are spread over 45 villages, often in very remote areas. Please pray that the gospel will go forth to these needy children and that the team of workers who travel to these places would know safety and help. We thank God’s people for their kind and generous support in this ministry. ■



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# Christ Our Consolation



Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer, ministered in the city of Zurich in the early 1500s. In 1519 the Black Death, struck the population. Zwingli was away from the city at the time but returned quickly to minister to the people in their misery. It is claimed that almost a third of the population died. Zwingli himself contracted the disease and became very ill. He thought he was going to lose his life. In the providence of God he recovered and continued his Christ honouring ministry. In the course of the disease Zwingli wrote a lengthy hymn in three stages. The following lines were penned in the midst of his illness.

*Console me, Lord God console me!  
The illness increases,  
Pain and fear seize  
My soul and body.  
Come to me then,  
With thy grace, O my only consolation!  
It will surely save  
Everyone, who  
His heart's desire  
And hope sets  
On Thee, and who besides  
Despises all gain and loss  
Now all is up.*

*My tongue is dumb,  
It cannot speak a word,  
My senses are all blighted.  
Therefore is it time  
That Thou my fight  
Conductest hereafter;  
Since I am not  
So strong, that I  
Can bravely  
Make resistance  
To the Devil's wiles and treacherous hand.  
Still will my spirit  
Constantly abide by Thee, however he rages.*