

Free Presbyterian VISION

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

Reaching
Youth for
Christ

The God of all
Grace in the
Life of Job

Christ:
Our Great
High Priest

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*Miss Martha Elsie
Dennison*

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Editorial

The connection between man's denial of God and his descent into sin is revealed clearly in Scripture. The psalmist's statement in Psalm 14:1 is a case in point: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good.*" The absence of godly fear leads to an outbreak of abominable works. It is hard to survey the present spiritual and moral landscape and not come to the conclusion that these words are being fulfilled before us. There is little fear of God in the hearts of many and, as a result, legislators are pressing on with unbiblical laws. The provision of abortion services in Northern Ireland is a shameful example. It is not the only one: conversion therapy law could impact our right to preach the whole counsel of God and pray for the salvation of those entangled in the sin of sodomy. God's law is deemed unsuitable and, as it was in the days of the judges, every man desires to do what is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). However, what society fails to appreciate is that God's law is good (Romans 7:12, 16 and 1 Timothy 1:8) and any deviation from it and replacement of it have adverse effects. Our society is not the better for its denial of God and His law. The apostle Paul gave sound counsel for such times: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). The church's duty is clear. We must maintain a Christ-centred ministry, preaching the Word of God in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and praying for a gracious outpouring of revival blessing. While the fool says in his heart, "there is no God", the church must declare, "... we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1:23-25). ■



“What an opportunity we have to reach the youth by showing them the reality of relationship. The gospel involves a living, vital, spiritual relationship with Christ. Those to whom we minister must see our relationship with Christ deepen. They must see a people who love Christ and love them.”

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Watching and Waiting

An old Dutch proverb states, “A handful of patience is worth more than a bushel of brains.” A survey carried out in 2009 estimated Britons spend about six months of their lives queuing. In 2010, a traffic jam on the main north/south highway into Beijing stretched 60 miles from the capital to the northern province of Inner Mongolia. Traffic was said at one point to be moving at a rate of two miles per day. What makes waiting so difficult is the feeling of powerlessness. We are unable to control events or, at the very least, influence their outcome.

In Luke’s gospel, we read of Simeon. Simeon came into the courts of the temple with only one thing on his mind. We are told he was “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). In Lamentations 1:16, we discover the prophet referring to the Lord as “the comforter” or the consolation of Israel. Standing like a sentinel in the courts of the temple, Simeon was looking for the coming of the Lord. He wanted to see him with his eyes. While we are not told his exact age, it seems Simeon was an old man. Tradition would have us believe he was 113 years of age. His beard was grey, his shoulders stooped, and his skin wrinkled and, yet he did not give up. Rather, he watched and waited for the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word “waiting” in v. 25 means “to plead a cause”. It is the same word used by Luke to describe the prayers or the waiting of the disciples in the upper room (Acts 1). Despite many disappointments, Simeon continued to watch and pray for the coming of the Saviour.

In Simeon we have an example how to pray. As we take hold of the promises of God, we must keep on asking,

seeking and knocking. Paul said, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The historian, Josephus, used the word translated “without ceasing” to describe the continual hammering of the battering ram against the walls of Jerusalem. Soldiers did not stop battering until the walls collapsed. Paul was telling the Thessalonians to keep battering at ‘heaven’s doors’ until their prayers were answered.

Waiting for God to answer prayer is often stressful and frustrating. This is especially true if the issue is urgent or we have been praying for months or even years without any response.

However, remember the name Simeon means “God has heard”. Simeon watched day by day and hour by hour for the coming of the Saviour, and he was not disappointed. His prayer was answered. Not only did he see the Saviour, but he took him up in his arms and blessed God for Him.

The next time you fail to get an answer to your prayer, do not give up. Like Simeon, keep watching and waiting. If the Lord has placed that desire upon your heart, the answer will come.

To each may the faith of Elijah be giv’n,
To pray till the answer we gain,
And sinners acknowledge the witness of heav’n,
And sound of abundance of rain. ■

✍ **Rev T Murray,**
Lurgan Free Presbyterian Church.



“
The next time you fail to get an answer to your prayer, do not give up. Like Simeon, keep watching and waiting.
”



Christ:

Our Great High Priest

The central figure in our salvation is Jesus Christ. He is glorious in His Person and majestic in His mediatorial offices of Prophet, Priest and King. He is the God-man; one Person in two natures forever. His work as Priest in His priestly office is the basis of His work as Prophet and King and Scripture gives a prominent place to it. We are never told that He is like a priest, or similar to a priest, rather He is a Priest, by name and office.

The biblical concept of priesthood, in its simplest terms, is that the priest is always a man who can identify with his fellows

(Hebrews 5:1). The reason for Christ's incarnation was for the accomplishment of His priestly work. Christ could not be our Priest unless He was taken from among men. As a true man, He is identified with us. He lived under the law, died under its curse and broke the bands of death. Since He is then truly man as well as very God, He is fully qualified to be a sympathetic priest.

Paul exhorts us to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). "Consider" means to contemplate with a view to understanding, so as to have a right impact upon the

life. It is to focus the gaze upon Him as our "great high priest" (Hebrews 4:14); meditating not only on what He is as Priest, but also on what His priestly work involves. That work may be considered in a two-fold way – an earthly, once for all activity, and a heavenly, continuous activity. Christ's earthly work is identified with humiliation, desertion, suffering and death. He offered himself to God, making an objective, substitutionary sacrifice for sin. In rendering unto God full obedience unto death, He bore the wrath of God against our sins. All this is now behind Him. He offered the non-repeatable sacrifice of Himself,

because we know “that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God” (Romans 6:9,10). Christ did not cease being a priest after His cross work. He is the “great high priest, that is passed into the heavens” (Hebrews 4:14). As well as a constant priestly ministry in Heaven of intercession directed to the Father for His people, there is a manward aspect of His heavenly ministry that He carries on towards His people. The earthly and heavenly functions are distinct but inseparable in that what He carries on in Heaven rests on His once for all sacrifice on Golgotha. His high priestly ministry in Heaven is rooted in what He did and experienced on earth.

The apostle Paul describes how Christ becoming like unto his brethren in all things means He can be a “merciful and faithful high priest” (Hebrews 2:17). He is able to be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15). Without His becoming like His brethren, He could not be as merciful and faithful as He is. As God, He does not need to experience something to know about it, since He knows everything with perfect omniscience. Christ is our Redeemer, not in His divine nature alone but, in the union of His two natures. If His humanity is to be suited to the functions of a sympathetic high priest and be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, He must pass through all the struggles of life and death, except that with indwelling sin. He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Does that mean then He cannot sympathise genuinely with us in our still-sinful condition, if He Himself is without sin? Not at all. While Christ’s human nature was not exempt from the infirmities which are part of the curse brought upon us by our sin, it was exempt from what was sinful in those infirmities for He was sent “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3). It was not the reality of sinful flesh that He took, only its likeness or

resemblance. He who “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21) “became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26). He was accused of being a sinner (John 9:24) but was undefiled. The infirmities of our fallen nature – which are the result of sin in us – He bore without any sin in Him. Weeping and weariness, sorrow and suffering, affliction and abandonment were among the infirmities of His sinless life.

As Christ had no sin of His own, does that mean He cannot have the sympathetic understanding for us as we battle our infirmities in the midst of our sinful desires? No. If He could have sinned, He would have lost the perfection of His tender and sympathetic nature. He took our nature and became man, not only that He might suffer for us, but also, that He might suffer with us by a compassionate feeling of what we suffer. The sense of feeling is surely even more true to life than the sense of sight. It is one thing to sorrow but quite another to be touched with the feeling of it. Christ has so identified Himself with His own that He is in loving sympathy with them. This is a great truth and an immense comfort in the hour of trial and day of trouble. “[I]n that he himself hath suffered being tempted(ried), he is able to succour them that are tempted (ried)” (Hebrews 2:18).

He was subject to poverty, reproach, hunger, thirst, pain, unkind treatment and every kind of suffering to which human nature can be exposed. The word “succour” carries the meaning of responding to a cry for help. When we cry for help it is because we are in a state of need. When we cry unto Him, He ministers sympathetic assistance. “Let us therefore come boldly unto

the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Our humanity is represented in Heaven by our High Priest, clothed in our nature, and from Him come infinite reserves of sympathy and succour: a never-ending, overflowing supply meeting every need and comforting every heart, bringing a relief which nothing but fellowship in suffering can teach. Our compassionate High Priest enters into the feelings of our infirmities exercising a tender, wise and watchful care.

HE TOOK OUR
NATURE AND
BECAME MAN,
NOT ONLY THAT
HE MIGHT SUFFER
FOR US, BUT ALSO,
THAT HE MIGHT
SUFFER WITH US BY
A COMPASSIONATE
FEELING OF WHAT
WE SUFFER. WHAT
BLESSING TO HAVE
SUCH A GREAT
HIGH PRIEST INTO
WHOSE PRESENCE
WE CAN COME
AND HAVE THE
CONFIDENCE THAT
HE KNOWS, FEELS,
UNDERSTANDS
AND CARES.

What blessing to have such a great high priest into whose presence we can come and have the confidence that He knows, feels, understands and cares. He does sympathise so tenderly and help so graciously and generously, and all the more because He is without sin. Whatever your circumstance in life, it is not unique. No sorrow, pain, bodily weakness, friendless feeling or loneliness, but He has already experienced. His touch lifts the frown from the brow, dries the tear from the eye and banishes the sorrow from the heart.

*Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother’s eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.*

*Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow-feeling of our pains;
And still remembers in the skies
His tears, His agonies and cries.*

*In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of Sorrows had a part;
He sympathises with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief. ■*

✉ **Rev L Curran,**
Director, Let The Bible Speak.



This year, 2021, marks the centenary of the establishment of Northern Ireland. One leading politician commented, “There is nothing to celebrate.” However, as Christian citizens, we not only have much to celebrate but have many reasons to offer thanksgiving to God.

WE SHOULD REMEMBER THE PAST

Repeatedly in Deuteronomy, God commanded the second-generation Israelites to observe anniversaries associated with the establishment of their nation. Remembering would cause them to glorify God for His providential and gracious dealings towards them as a people. By remembering, they would also realise where they came from, better understand who they were, appreciate their privileges, and so live as they ought. True, we are not Israel, but God divides “to the nations their inheritance” (Deuteronomy 32:8).

As believers, we must recognise that we are primarily citizens of heaven, but we must also realise we have earthly citizenship. The apostle Paul on various occasions referred to his

privileges as a free-born Roman citizen. He even stated that he was a citizen of no mean city (Acts 21:39).

As Christian citizens, we should thank God for His gracious providence in the establishment of Northern Ireland in 1921. By remaining part of the United Kingdom, all citizens have enjoyed British freedoms of civil and religious liberty. These are blessings that citizens of many nations can only envy.

On 22nd June 1921, King George V opened the first Northern Ireland Parliament in Belfast’s City Hall. The Parliament then moved to the Presbyterian Assembly’s College, where it remained for 11 years. In 1932, it moved to the purpose-built Parliament Buildings, at Stormont Estate.

SANCTUARY

The new Northern Ireland state became a sanctuary for families driven from their homes in Southern Ireland, due to their Protestant faith and Britishness. From 1911 to 2011, the Protestant population in Southern Ireland fell by 175,000 or about 60%. In the early years after partition, the scattered nature of Protestant communities in the south and west left them dangerously exposed. There was wide-scale religious intimidation and the murder of up to 200 Protestants. One of the most brutal murders was that of retired Church of Ireland Dean, John Finlay, near Bawnboy, County Cavan. On 12 June 1921, a group of ‘IRA’ men dragged the 79-year-old from the dinner table and slashed his throat on the lawn and burnt his house. Many examples could be given to prove the accuracy of the frequent warning cry of our forefathers that, “Home Rule would be Rome Rule.” Protestants were refused employment and their businesses were often boycotted. In 1930, Mayo County Council’s Library Board, supported publicly by the Roman Catholic

hierarchy, refused to confirm the appointment of a librarian on the basis that she was a Protestant.

In 1937, Article 44 of the new Constitution of the Republic of Ireland recognised the “special position” of the Roman Catholic Church. The clause was not overturned until 1973.

SURVIVAL

In 1921, many predicted the new state would soon collapse. Yet, despite attempts to destroy it by war, terrorism and subterfuge, Northern Ireland has now reached its 100th birthday. Honour is due to those who served faithfully in the defence of Northern Ireland, in the maintenance of law and order, and especially to those who paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of liberty. Freedom is not free; it costs!

At the end of the 2nd World War, Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, memorably said, “But for the loyalty of Northern Ireland and its devotion we should have been confronted with slavery and death and the light which now shines so strongly throughout the world would have been quenched.” Throughout most of the war, the Chief of Staff of the British Army, and Churchill’s chief military advisor was Ulsterman, Field Marshall Alan Brooke.

SUCCESS

God has graciously granted prosperity to Northern Ireland these past 100 years. God has enabled Northern Ireland citizens to make a massive contribution for good worldwide: scientifically, educationally, agriculturally and medically.

Some of the many such individuals we can think of are:

- » **Inventor Harry Ferguson** noted for his role in the development of the modern agricultural tractor and its three-point linkage system.
- » **Sir James Francis Pantridge**, known worldwide as the “Father of Emergency Medicine”, who was instrumental in the introduction of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

(CPR) for the early treatment of cardiac arrest. His main achievement was the invention of the portable defibrillator, which continues to save numerous lives.

- » **Engineer Sir James Martin** was involved with the Martin-Baker ejector seat for pilots. As of 2020, more than 7,634 pilots have ejected successfully from planes in emergency situations.

SPIRITUALLY

Most importantly, Northern Ireland has stood as a beacon for the Reformed Evangelical Faith.

Over 50 years ago, Jock Purves wrote in his book on the Covenantors, *Fair Sunshine:*

To-day, Ulster, Northern Ireland, is probably the most evangelically Christian part of Great Britain. This is the work of God. . . Ulster is a Covenanting triumph. It was in Ulster that the Godly Covenanters and Puritans settled in their thousands.

It is not a political partition only that is in Ireland. It is that between people with an open Bible and pure evangelical faith and a power that would draw them back again into a dense darkness from which there has been a merciful deliverance.

Evangelistically, the early 1920s was a glorious period. God, in His Sovereign mercy, raised W P Nicholson as His instrument in the conversion of thousands. Over the past century, there has been liberty to proclaim the gospel. We are thankful for the establishment of the Free Presbyterian Church in 1951 and its global impact.

Numerous missionaries from our Province have carried the glorious gospel worldwide.

STATE OF NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY

As we mark the Centennial, we should not only remember the past with thankfulness but also reflect before

God upon the present state of our Province.

Over recent decades, there have been seismic changes, socially, morally and religiously, in both of the countries that share the island of Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, the Roman Catholic Church no longer dominates society as it did for most of the past century. In Northern Ireland, we are grieved at the spiritual decline.



📷 Dean Finlay

There has been the legislation of sins that are an affront to our Holy God. Jeremiah wept over the judgement of God upon the sins of his nation, as did Daniel.

The Saviour Himself wept over His capital city, Jerusalem. Paul wept for his countrymen and longed that they would be saved. The present state of the land should cause us to weep at the judgement ahead for our Province, unless God intervenes in mercy.


100 years ago, every Protestant congregation was encouraged to pray for the opening of the new Northern Ireland Parliament. In Belfast, two special services were held on the day of its opening. Both were attended by the Prime Minister, Sir James Craig, and members of the new Parliament. At one, the Church of Ireland Primate preached on the text, “Righteousness exalteth a nation” (Proverbs 14:34).

It is surely appropriate that we mark the centenary by earnest prayer for our land. Looking back over 100 years can give us hope that, as God moved so powerfully through the preaching of W P Nicholson, He will again be pleased to intervene in our Province.

Only a mighty, heaven-sent revival can stem the flood of wickedness in the land we love. ■

✍ **Rev R Johnstone**,
(retired) Newtownards Free
Presbyterian Church.

Clogher Valley Presentation


 **Photo:** Rev P. McIntyre is pictured with Mr Cecil Boyd after presenting him with a retirement gift.

On 10th March 2021, Rev Peter McIntyre called with Mr Cecil Boyd to present a retirement gift on behalf of the Session and Committee of Clogher Valley Free Presbyterian Church. For over forty years, Cecil has been the church groundsman, a task which included not only grass cutting but also digging the graves in the church cemetery. Rev McIntyre noted, “He has been a faithful servant and we wish Cecil well for the future.” ■



Ordination of Elders in Tandragee Free Presbyterian Church

Messrs Leslie Badger and Sam McKee were ordained and installed as elders in Tandragee Free Presbyterian Church on Tuesday 16th March 2021. Rev John Armstrong (Moderator) preached the ordination sermon and was assisted in the service by Revs J Greer, S Murray, G Abraham and J Gray. ■

 **Photo:** (L to R) Rev J Armstrong, Mr L Badger, Rev J Gray, Mr S McKee and Rev J Greer.



Ordination of Elders in Banbridge Free Presbyterian Church



Elvis Hamilton



Ian McCrum



John Douglas

Three elders were ordained and installed in Banbridge Free Presbyterian Church on 21st March 2021. Banbridge minister, Rev David Smith, presided over the meeting, with the Clerk of Presbytery, Rev J Greer, asking the prescribed questions and the Moderator, Rev J Armstrong, delivering the ordination sermon. ■

GOVERNMENT AND MORALS COMMITTEE PRESS RELEASE

When Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis MP, stated that he would bring legislation regarding abortion services in Northern Ireland, the Presbytery Government and Morals Committee issued the following statement:

Abortion Services Regulation

The Government and Morals Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church views with deep concern the reports that Secretary of State, Brandon Lewis, is set to act, by way of regulation at Westminster, to direct the Department of Health to commission abortion services.

Abortion is the murder of innocent human beings and to hear those who classify this as a health care issue for women is beyond credulity. The Bible on a number of occasions treats children in the womb as fully human. Our conscience is bound by the Word of God that says, "Thou shalt not kill."

We are shocked that the Secretary of State should contemplate overruling the devolution of powers to Stormont to bring in such a regulation. If this is the way things are to be done, then devolution and the views of the majority of people in Northern Ireland – which are still against abortion – mean nothing. Is the Secretary of State really going to continue to undermine democracy in Northern Ireland by imposing things that the people do not want? To simply force unwanted doctrinaire regulations on people is not a way to ensure stability or confidence in democracy in our community. We are concerned that the flouting of God's law will further increase God's judgement upon our nation. ■



“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

Tools of the Trade

Boys and girls, have you ever thought about what sort of job you would like to do when you grow up? Most of the jobs people do nowadays involve tools. Bakers need to have bowls, scales and trays to make cakes and buns. Car mechanics need spanners and ratchets to repair engines. Barbers need a comb, scissors and razors to cut hair. There is, however, one job that involves a wide variety of different tools, and that is the work done by ministers. Now, unlike other trades, they don't have a toolbox as such, because all their tools are found in one place - the Bible. The Bible has all the tools they need to do their job properly.

The Bible is a SWORD. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit. . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). The minister uses the Bible to get beyond the exterior. As a sword, the Bible cuts deep into the hearts of those presented with its truth. Some will surrender to that sword, while others will resist, even though they are pierced through by the gospel message.

The Bible is a HAMMER. “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jeremiah 23:29). Some men are unfaithful in their preaching and, with the hammer of God's Word, they beat all around the truth, rather than hitting the nail on the head. However, if handled correctly, the Bible has a way of driving home the truth of the gospel message as nothing else can do. Every word is a hammer blow which can smash open the hardest of sinful hearts.

The Bible is a LIGHT. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). In a world full of sin and darkness, it is always good to have the comfort of the light of God's Word. The Psalms also say that the entrance of God's Word giveth light, and it is that light which provides hope, cheer and guidance to all who are presented with it.

These are just some of the many tools found in the Bible. Those of us who are saved ought to be good workmen for the Lord as we handle God's Word, using the tools therein to share the message of salvation with those perishing in their sin. ■



There are many jobs and various tools found throughout the Bible. Complete the wordsearch down below. Using the letters that remain, rearrange them to tell me what other work the Apostle Paul did.

SHEPHERD
PLOUGH
NEEDLE
POTTER

OVEN
NET
FARMER
CENTURION

PHYSICIAN
BOW
FISHERMAN
ROD

STAFF
AXE
CHARIOT
TRUMPET

ANSWER:

PAUL WAS A

MAKER

(If you need a clue, then read Acts 18.)

PRIZES!

Are you 12 or under?
Send your answer, name, address and church to:
Rev Garth Wilson Email: answer@fpvision.org

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

My Favourite

Hymn

Hymns
of Faith

“Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord....the soul refreshing view of Jesus, and His Word?”

While we have been delivered eternally from the penalty and power of sin, yet we have a daily battle with the presence and pollution of sin. Cowper fought the same battle and noted, “I hate the sins that made Thee mourn and drove Thee from my breast.”

Cowper’s words reveal the burden of his heart after holiness. His personal resolve is captured in the words:

*The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee.*

Therefore, when times of coldness have set in, and our love waxes and wanes, this hymn causes us to stop and ask about previous times in the Lord’s presence:

*What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.*

*Return, O Holy Dove! return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.*

Maybe you are battling with sorrow and depression; there is a blessedness in walking with God. He alone can provide the comfort and calmness that we need. Christ has provided a full, free and final salvation for us. The gospel brings joy, in the midst of sorrow and hope in the midst of trouble. There is nothing to be gained by drifting away from the Lord, but so much to be experienced and enjoyed by a closer walk with Him. Let us pray for grace to experience such blessed times with our Lord. ■

✉ **Mr P Knowles,**
Lewes Free Presbyterian Church, England.

Throughout my Christian life there have been many hymns that have been a blessing to me. However, there is one that I refer to continually: William Cowper’s, *O for a closer walk with God*. The verse of Scripture that inspired Cowper to pen these words was “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24).

William was born in November 1731, in Hertfordshire, England, near London. His mother died, when he was only six years old, and this had impact on him. Also, William suffered times of depression, from his early twenties until his death in 1800.

His now famous hymn, *O for a Closer walk with God*, was written during the serious illness of Mrs Unwin. In a letter, written the day after composing the hymn, Cowper said of his friend, “She is the chief of blessings I have met within my journey since the Lord was pleased to call me. . . Her illness has been a sharp trial for me. Oh, that it may have a sanctified effect, that I may rejoice to surrender up to the Lord my dearest comforts, the moment He may require them. . . I began to compose the verses yesterday morning before daybreak but fell asleep at the end of the first two lines:

When I awakened, the third and fourth were whispered to my heart in a way which I have often experienced.”

While sorrowing from the death of loved ones and suffering depression, Cowper lifted his focus to the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and desired a closer walk with God, as the only comfort in sorrow and help through every trial. Therefore, believer, during such times of suffering over the death of a loved one and battling with depression, open the Scriptures for there is a “light to shine upon the road that leads me to Lamb.”

I have often thought that the ending of each verse of the hymn is like the word “Selah” in the Psalms. It is good to stop and pause after each verse and consider what has just been said, prayerfully, and how it applies to our lives.

We can remember the time when Christ’s redemptive work was applied to our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit; there was zeal and gladness in attending the house of God. There was a desire to read the Scriptures daily, pray privately and publicly, and, also, to tell the lost about Jesus, the mighty to save. Those were days of refreshing and enjoyment. Cowper refers to similar times when he asks,



As a Christian pastor there is nothing so satisfying as looking down on a Sunday morning and seeing young people form part of the congregation. I have the same feeling when I'm present at the weekly youth group. Yet, in my heart, I often wonder how many of these young men and women will integrate into our church family or a church elsewhere? The church is a fellowship (Acts 2:42) and young people are to be part of that fellowship. Also, Jesus has commanded us to go into the world and "teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This obviously includes young people and teens. The question is: How do we reach the youth, whether inside or outside of the church structure?

BE CLEAR ON YOUR GOAL

We need to be clear on our goal in youth ministry. Often the

goal of youth work is behaviour modification. Kids and teens are often sent along to youth groups with the view that they will be instructed in morality and behavioural issues, such as gambling, alcohol and relationships. The pitfalls of these and other issues facing young people ought to be dealt with, but moral reform should never be the sole focus of youth ministry. As we seek to reach the youth, we must aim for their hearts, not their behaviour.

Our aim must be to have our young people trust in Christ and live. Our goal is for them to be in union with – and thrilled with – Jesus Christ. When we read the book of Acts, we witness a generation being reached by the apostles and their preaching. Words like 'marvelled', 'wonder', 'astonished', 'awe', describe that

generation's encounter with the gospel. The preaching of the apostles is often stereotyped by modern Christians as being heavy, bland and uninspiring, yet the Bible gives us a much different picture. People were moved by the words of the apostles.

The reason for this was simple: the apostles preached Christ in His fullness. This is the secret to the 'How to?' of youth work. We present Christ in all His glorious person and work. That means those who work with young people need to be captivated by the wonder of the gospel. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to reveal the glory of Christ (John 16:14-15), therefore, in our preparation, we should be praying for the help of the Holy Ghost to enable us to present the glorious Christ. This is something that the Spirit delights to do.

Several years ago, I read of a pastor who was present at a talk being given on immorality. To make his point, the speaker took a beautiful rose, threw it out into the crowd and asked the almost one thousand young people present to smell, touch and feel the texture of the rose. As he finished his talk, he asked for his rose back; a teenager walked forward and reached him back the rose. It was mangled. The petals had been broken and the stem crushed. He lifted it up and said, "Now, who would want this?" The speaker's climax was to make a comparison to young people who had made awful choices and were now suffering the consequences. He continued, "You have been passed around, abused, broken, lost your beauty and now no-one wants you!" The visiting pastor at the back of the room wanted to scream out in answer to the question, "*Jesus* wants the rose! *Jesus* wants it!" Young people will make many mistakes, yet, when they do, they need to be taught the message of the gospel. They need to know the devastating impact of sin, but they also desperately need to hear that hope comes only in Christ!

We need to talk to our youth about sin and its consequences - but not stop there! When we make Christ and the gospel our focus when speaking to young people on passages such as David and Bathsheba (immorality) or Noah (drunkenness) the essential element will not be the consequences of sin (which are real and must be emphasised) but the glorious hope that the gospel gives through forgiveness and redemption. Christ – and the gospel – is always our aim!

BE AUTHENTIC ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

"You guys care about us!" This was the answer I received from a group of young teenagers in Belfast when I asked why they kept coming back to our youth group. They could have attended many other things that were on each Friday, but they kept coming back. Many of these kids came from solid families, but that answer from one teenage boy told me this much: young people today are really at a loss as to know what

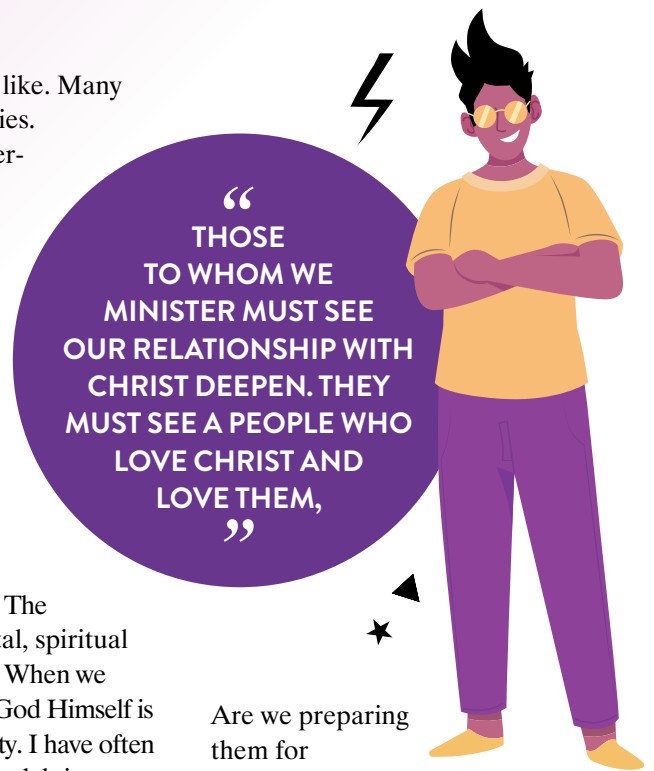
a real relationship looks like. Many come from broken families. Add into the mix, the ever-expanding, yet deeply superficial 'social media communities', like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and the detachment from real and meaningful relationships widens.

What an opportunity we have to reach the youth by showing them the reality of relationship. The gospel involves a living, vital, spiritual relationship with Christ. When we look at God, we see that God Himself is in a relationship as a Trinity. I have often asked myself: What was God doing for all eternity before He made the world and man? The answer is quite simple: God was doing what He has always done – enjoying and loving the 'inter-trinitarian' relationships of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 3:18 is an amazing verse for everyone involved in youth ministry, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. . ." The goal of Christ's death was not just to save us from hell – it was to satisfy the demands of God's justice on behalf of His people and, thus, reconcile us to God.

Those to whom we minister must see our relationship with Christ deepen. They must see a people who love Christ and love them, for Christ's sake! The young people that we seek to reach will see our desire to connect with them as authentic and not artificial and, by God's grace, respond to our message.

KEEP ETERNITY BEFORE YOU!

Youth ministry is challenging but exciting. There are games nights, youth retreats, BBQs, days away etc.; however, many a Friday night, I look at the young people who gather in our church building and remind myself that we are addressing the most critical matter in their lives – their need of Christ – and that, one day, these young people will stand before the throne of Christ, their Creator. The question is:



“
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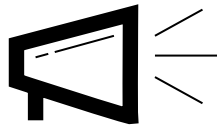
Are we preparing them for eternity?

Eternity ought to be a key motivating factor in youth work! By keeping eternity always before our minds when planning youth activities, we will ensure the greatest need of the youth is always to the fore.

It was Jonathan Edwards, the American pastor, philosopher and theologian (1703-1758) who saw youth as a period of life specifically designed, in which young people could seek conversion and be freed from the miserable estate into which they were born. Commenting on Ecclesiastes 12:1, Edwards writes, "And God has so ordered it that we should have a free and convenient opportunity in the beginning of our lives so that we here may soon get out of that miserable condition in which we were born."

We know that Edwards was a man with a deep passion for souls. His pleadings with people to seek Christ are well documented. Perhaps, surprisingly, it was to the youth that Edwards directed a large part of his ministry. Known as the 'Theologian of Revival', it was among the young people of Massachusetts that Edwards first witnessed revival breaking out. May God be pleased to do such a thing among our youth! ■

✉ **Rev P Thompson,**
Antrim Free Presbyterian Church.



YOUTH COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

TRAINING WEEKEND

18 – 20 JUNE

Faith Mission Centre, Portadown

Cost: £65

All young people welcome

SUMMER OUTREACH

7, 14 + 21 AUGUST

John Knox Memorial Free Presbyterian Church

Cost: Free

Age 16+

CASTLEWELLAN WEEKEND

30 JULY - 2 AUGUST

Cost: £89 for ages 15-18; £95 for 19+

Ages 15-28

SUMMER CAMP

9 - 13 AUGUST

Greenhill YMCA, Newcastle

Cost: £195

Ages 12-18

These events are all subject to the will of God.
Notice will be given if events are cancelled and, if possible, refunds will be given.

STAY UP TO DATE AT



FPCYOUTH.ORG



Miss Martha Elsie Dennison

1917 – 2020

Miss Dennison was a unique and remarkable lady. Personally, I feel privileged to have known her and I am thankful to those who have been able to supply me with her personal testimony and an account of her numerous achievements.

Martha Dennison was born in May 1917 in the townland of Kilgavanagh, near Antrim. The Dennison home was one where the Lord's Day was observed strictly and where high morals and manners were expected. A godly mother taught her children from the Scriptures faithfully and made sure they attended church and Sunday School. The four Dennison boys and three younger girls walked a mile across the fields to attend Creavery Primary School. Miss Dennison then spent four years studying at Antrim Technical College.

A nursing career always beckoned Miss Dennison, and, aged eighteen, she began her training in Dublin. Gaining two qualifications in mental and psychological nursing, she then moved to London to study general nursing and midwifery. She described the atmosphere in London as "exciting and challenging." This was during the

Second World War when the nurses had to sleep on mattresses along hospital corridors or wherever deemed safest from German bombs. Winston Churchill's niece, Dr Rodgers, would visit the dining hall at night appealing for volunteers to man the ambulances. Regularly, the nurses took turns in attending the victims of the Blitz, both at the scene and in transit to the hospital theatres.

Miss Dennison returned to N. Ireland in 1944, when her mother became ill. She worked in various hospitals progressing to the post of Matron. This marked the turning point in her life. The influence of Christian nurses and the seed sown in childhood was about to bear fruit. On 31st August 1947, under faithful preaching in Great Victoria Street Baptist Church, Miss Dennison was deeply convicted of sin and came to trust in Christ for salvation. Shortly afterwards, she was baptised and grew in grace under the ministry of God's Word and fellowship with other believers. Miss Dennison's career would involve various roles and positions in hospitals across the United Kingdom. As a Christian, she sought the Lord's guidance in her moves and in her work. She was a skilled organiser

with the compassion of her Saviour in caring for those often forgotten and unloved in society. Retiring in 1977, after forty-two years in nursing, she was a worthy recipient of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Award for distinguished nursing services.

Miss Dennison, however, was not ready to hang up her apron and relax. The Free Presbyterian Church was in the process of establishing the Whitefield Bible College of the Bible at Cyprus Avenue in Belfast. Dr Paisley recognised that Miss Dennison would make an ideal Matron. Her humour is seen in her response, "Having a background in psychiatric nursing and knowing Dr Paisley and some of his students, I thought I would just be able to cope!" Never afraid to get her hands dirty, Miss Dennison was invaluable in seeing to the practical tasks required to set up a residential college. Favours were called in and contacts used to good effect. In 1979, twenty students started under the watchful eye of "Matron". Again, Miss Dennison was very much involved when the College relocated to Laurencetown in 1981, until retiring in 1984. Miss Dennison remained in good health for most of her long life and was very active in her support of God's work at home and abroad. She spent much time in prayer, remembering individuals and specific needs. In July 2020, Miss Dennison was called Home at the age of one hundred and three. "[A] woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" Proverbs 31:30. ■

✍ 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.





The God of all Grace in the Life of Job

There are few books of Scripture so applicable and appropriate for Christians under trial as Job. The purpose of this article is to look at five texts from this book, which are keys unlocking the door and revealing the secrets of God's frowning providences:

1. Job 1:21

"...the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

"BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD"

JOB'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

These words, spoken at the beginning of Job's journey of brokenness, show that Satan's attempt to destroy faith lay in ruins. This instinctive reaction from a redeemed soul when overwhelmed with terrible grief brought glory to God. Only one who knew God could face trouble in such a triumphant fashion, therefore Job's faith became brighter as the darkness descended. These words are miraculous because

they came from a man who had lost his business and his children in one day. They are also grateful because he counted himself blessed that he had first received that which now had been taken away.

Job also displays submission because he accepted the purpose of one who rules overall by removing the gifts that were once given. As we struggle beneath the burden of our trials, the Holy Ghost gifts this grace of humility, with the spiritual ornaments of gratitude and acceptance, enabling us to confess with Job, "...blessed be the name of the LORD."

2. Job 19:25

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth..."

"...MY REDEEMER LIVETH..."
JOB'S HOPE IN CHRIST

Job was strengthened in soul through seeing by faith the eternal weight of glory, which made even his extreme brokenness fade. Job's hope is the same as the hope that we enjoy presently. This hope is fixed principally upon a person. The one whom Job described as his Redeemer, we know to be Christ – "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). With the certainty of assurance, Job declares a personal interest in his Redeemer, who obviously

had redeemed him and, therefore, guaranteed a glorious resurrection. After the earthly remains had long passed away, the Redeemer would stand upon the earth and, in his flesh, Job would see God; glory will dawn!

3. Job 23:10

“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

“...I SHALL COME FORTH AS GOLD...”

JOB’S TRUST IN A SOVEREIGN GOD

This text indicates that Job had hope for the physical life that he was currently living. Naturally, it seemed that he did not have much to live for: with a broken heart, a ruined business, and surrounded by friends who misjudged and misrepresented him. We should not see Job as a superhuman individual, who did not have ordinary fears and failings. He questioned why he had ever been born; he experienced depression of spirit and he felt a sense of fear and loneliness (Job 3:3,11,25). In Job 23, he speaks about looking all around him for answers and simply cannot see or recognise the purpose and the presence of God. Job’s faith triumphs, however, above the fear and the confusion, enabling him to accept that God would bring him through the trial, as gold in the furnace. Better days were coming.

4. Job 38:1

“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind...”

“...OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND...”
JOB’S EXPERIENCE WITH GOD

This is such a significant moment in the life of Job because it marks the entrance of God into the conversation. The book of Job can be studied as a series of conversations: between the Lord and Satan (chapters 1 and 2); between Job and his wife (chapter 2); and, between Job and his three

friends (chapters 3-31). Elihu enters the conversation and becomes the principal speaker (chapters 32-37). Then God appears to talk with Job and his friends and would, therefore, have the final word. Throughout these profound conversations many mistakes were made. Job’s friends, while being godly and spiritual men, misjudged the Lord’s servant by supposing that Job was being chastened for his sins (Job 5:17-18; 8:11-13; 11:5-6); they were indeed miserable comforters (Job 16:2). Job, himself, in resisting the words of his friends overcompensated by proclaiming his innocence in a way that was proud and vain (Job 31:4-8). Elihu, while being a younger man with less experience, got much closer to the heart of the matter by referring all four men to the absolute sovereignty of God

“
We should not see Job as a superhuman individual, who did not have ordinary fears and failings. Job’s faith triumphs, however, above the fear and the confusion, enabling him to accept that God would bring him through the trial.”

”

and, as such, was a help in returning Job to the ground of pure faith, expressed so admirably at the beginning. This story of faith being frustrated by the thoughtless cruelty of one’s companions has been lived out over and over in the lives of many through the centuries and, perhaps, in the experience of one who is currently reading this article.

Men had said all that they could say, but now the Lord drew near. As Job and his companions watched the cloud of swirling dust moving in from the wilderness, they were to learn that the presence of God was in the whirlwind. The whirlwind is a fearful natural phenomenon that uproots, devastates and even kills. The whirlwind was a fitting emblem of all Job’s calamities. He had faced an awesome storm of turmoil and upheaval. Yet, in a very visual way, God was showing Job that He was in the whirlwind. Job was not abandoned. When we face our whirlwinds of sorrow, suffering and human abandonment, let us remember: “He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.”

5. Job 42:5-6

“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

“DUST AND ASHES”
JOB’S NEW BEGINNING

These men had talked and reasoned in their attempt to understand the mysteries of providence. This is the question of the ages – Why are good people called to suffer? As all humans do when attempting to comprehend the incomprehensible, they went around in circles. How many times have we not talked and debated issues and, after hours of discussion, found ourselves no further forward? When God appears, however, everything makes sense, even though we still do not understand. Only when we are humbled before God can we move forward. Job needed a new beginning after his descent from happiness and prosperity to sorrow and bereavement. This new beginning took place when God revealed Himself to His servant.

Job’s new beginning involved confessing his faults to God, repenting in dust and ashes. Such is our view of Job it comes as a surprise that this great man should stoop so low, acknowledging his need of forgiveness. As God comes down, the greatest of saints perceive their sinfulness in a new light. He also prayed, presenting sacrifices and remembering his friends who had failed him. It was this act of grace on Job’s part that revealed the green shoots of recovery, which culminated in an amazing harvest because his latter end was greater than the beginning.

Whatever your sufferings and your struggles are, dear reader, take heart from Job. God is moulding and shaping you, preparing you for something better in this life, after which He will transport you to the glories of eternity. This is not the end: it is simply one stage along the journey. ■

✉ **Rev P McIntyre,**
Clogher Valley Free Presbyterian Church.

The Christian and Books



Paul's first request to Timothy, from the cold and draughty prison, was for his cloak to be brought before winter set in. This obvious necessity was followed quickly by another. Paul needed his books for companionship (2 Timothy 4:13). Every Christian should be a reader.

In His great wisdom, God gave us the "Bible" (literally: "The Book"). Sometimes we will simply read it. Other times, we should take the slower but more rewarding route of studying and meditating upon it. We should discipline ourselves to read and/or study it daily. It is a great treasure to do so with an Authorised Version, with good-sized print, easy to read font and pleasing page layout.

Along with the Book, God also gave teachers to help us understand it. The

ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, who indwells every Christian and guides us into all truth (John 16:13). He also gave us human teachers, usually mature Christians, who have the edifying gift of communicating truth to their hearers (Ephesians 4:11). Obviously, some of these gifted teachers are still alive and we sit under their ministries with profit. Many fine teachers have gone to higher service. However, we can joyfully reflect, "[H]e being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4) and we should make full use of their literary legacy.

The wise man observed that there was no end to the making of books (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Some books may have teaching well-presented but be heretical and dangerous. Others may be orthodox, but written poorly and therefore of relatively little value. The cost in a book lies not only in monetary terms, but also the time invested reading it and, if unsound, the wrong effect it can have upon our walk with God. We really need to be discerning in the books we read.

In choosing books, we do well to

find a great author writing on a great subject. The first may be defined by his (or her) faithfulness to Scripture and ability to communicate in an orderly fashion and in a memorable way. The second will include subjects, such as sound doctrine, practical advice on Christian living and biographies on Christian role models. Sometimes we will be guided to these books by the reputation of the author, or (especially for bios) by the name and exploits of the preacher or missionary. Sometimes we will be guided by the well-respected publisher of the book.

Books written more recently may be easier to read than books written in the 17th century, but not necessarily so. Great authors always worth reading include C.H. Spurgeon, Bishop J.C. Ryle, along with the Puritans. It is likely that you will have already accessed the pithy comments of Matthew Henry's Bible commentary. Some of the Puritans can be exhaustive. A 500-page book examining the technicalities of justification or the nature of faith is never going to be read easily. The "Prince of the Puritans", John Owen and his 24 hefty volumes is the obvious example of an exhaustive writer, although notable efforts have been made to simplify his writings. However, other Puritans are read easily, e.g. Thomas Watson, John Flavel and John Bunyan. I find it better to read a "Puritan Paperback" with one title than the same material bound in a volume with other books. If nothing else, it is easier to hold in your hand and you feel that you have completed the whole book, rather than having read but part of a larger volume. We should never get bogged down in a book. If necessary, you can always 'park it' for a while or simply abandon it and move on. There is nothing to be gained by reading just for reading's sake. Some books are designed to be reference books – to be consulted rather than read from cover to cover, like some of the deeper or longer commentaries. For all his greatness, John Calvin is certainly not too difficult to read, although sections of his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion* may lie beyond the average reader.

Some modern authors are worth reading. However, great care must be taken with men like J.I. Packer and John Stott. While popular, they are far from being reliable on many fundamental aspects of the gospel. Dr Alan Cairns has rightly noted of them, "On some issues of fundamental importance they have taken up positions that no true Bible believer should support." Like the young lady in the nursery rhyme: when they were good, they were very, very good; but when they were bad, they were horrid. You are on better and safer ground with men like Martyn Lloyd Jones and Arthur W Pink, although the latter could go pretty deep and has his somewhat ascetic moments. I have benefitted greatly from R.C. Sproul and the apologetic writings of J Blanchard. Again, there are several gifted contemporary writers out there. Notable publishing houses, like Banner of Truth and Evangelical Press, have staked their generally good reputations on introducing them to the general public. All authors and books should always be tested by the Scriptures. Bible-based discernment is vital.

Christian history should not be neglected. It is simply awe-inspiring to read of the struggles and triumphs of the Protestant Reformation, the Scottish Covenanters, the great Evangelical Revivals under Whitefield and Wesley, etc. and the great missionary endeavours. These books show what can be achieved under God by dedicated Christian living. It is a shame if an author buries his/her story in either a bland or difficult writing style. At least, you may have the liberty of perusing a book before buying.

We do not live in a reading age. We don't even use words anymore to answer our text messages, but

sometimes resort to an emoji. The second-hand Christian book market is flooded with books, partly because the demand for them has fallen. Some new books are expensive to buy, but are often available at very reasonable (and sometimes giveaway) prices in the second-hand section. Reading devices, such as Kindle, are very useful. There is usually a generous discount for Kindle editions, although the purists will like to see hard copies on their shelves. Many good Christian books are available for a free download from Amazon or other internet sites.

It is easier to browse social media than it is to concentrate on serious Christian reading. Yet, we are commanded to redeem the time (Ephesians 5:16). Maybe not quite taking up our cross, but serious reading requires serious discipline. I usually have two or three of books on the go at any one time, divided into those which needs greater concentration and those that a tired mind can cope with. Many secular books also have their advantages. Paul made profitable use of various heathen poets in his ministry. It is good to be widely read, as it expands the intellect – although poisonous books that incite wicked thoughts should be rejected. Sometimes we may read simply for pleasure, although it is always good to write down anything helpful for future reference. Unfortunately, I possess several notebooks with the first few pages covered in semi-legible scrawls, but at least I have tried. I actually prefer the use of Sticky Notes (use the kind that *actually* stick) placed in the inside cover. I am not a fan of underlining, but it really is each to their own. We should not totally abominate pragmatism. ■

✉ Mr C Maxwell,
Free Presbyterian Missionary.

“ The cost in a book lies not only in monetary terms, but also the time invested reading it and, if unsound, the wrong effect it can have upon our walk with God. We really need to be discerning in the books we read. ”



Like the engine in a car or the mechanism in a watch, there is much done in the background of our missionary endeavour to keep the wheels in motion. Without this vital team of workers, this ministry could not function.

There are two main bodies taking care of our denomination's missionary work: the Mission Board and the Missionary Council, each having their own presbytery appointed chairman, Rev. Ian Harris and Rev. David Park, respectively.

The Mission Board is comprised of 17 ministers and elders and 2 representatives from the Council. It meets at least once a month and directly oversees the work of our missionaries and mission fields. There are three officers, the Chairman (Rev Ian Harris), Secretary (Rev David Park) and Treasurer (Mr Alastair Hamilton), who each carry heavy responsibilities. At present, there are three subcommittees looking after three major areas: Uganda, Kenya and Asia; each committee has its own Chairman and Secretary. Each missionary has a 'Contact Person' to help, encourage, support and be the direct link with the Mission Board.

The Missionary Council is the fund-raising arm of this ministry. Each Free Presbyterian congregation has the

opportunity of sending two representatives, appointed by the Session, to its monthly meeting. These representatives report back to the minister and congregation with updates, projects and missionary news. The Missionary Council raises 30% of our missionaries' salaries and often organises fund-raising projects. Along with the Chairman, the Secretary and Treasurer, the members carry out a labour of love and do a sterling work.

Then, there is Mrs Glenda Graham in the office! Our sister works every day to oversee the many responsibilities assigned to her by the Board. She is to be commended for her diligent and efficient labours, looking after the day to day running of the accounts and making sure our missionaries receive their salaries on time.

Finally, there is a host of other dedicated individuals from all of our churches who, with a deep love and concern for the great commission, also labour behind the scenes in prayer, fund raising and exciting others to take seriously, and be involved in, this great mission to the lost at home and abroad.

Please pray for those who work tirelessly in the background to keep our missionary work functioning, as efficiently and effectively as possible. ■

Behind the Scenes:

“
PLEASE PRAY
FOR THOSE WHO
WORK TIRELESSLY IN
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KEEP OUR MISSIONARY
WORK FUNCTIONING,
AS EFFICIENTLY AND
EFFECTIVELY AS
POSSIBLE.”

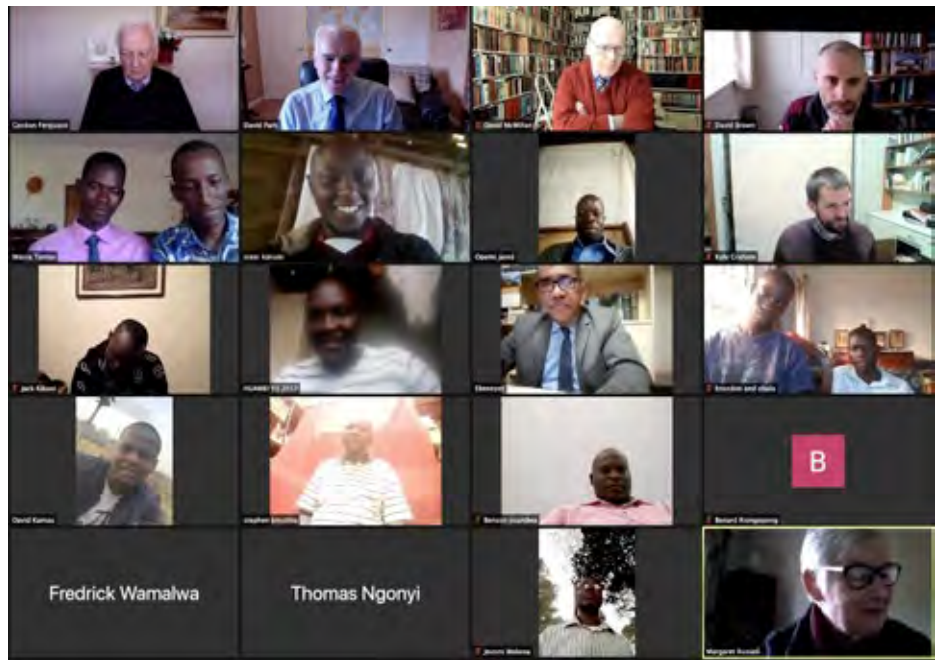
New Mission Board Office Equipment



The Mission Board has purchased a new computer and printer for the office in Kilkeel. The previous computer, bought by Mr George McConnell, had been in use for at least 10 years. Over the past years, it was running slowly and the Mission Board decided to upgrade. A new combined printer/scanner was also purchased. Appreciation is expressed to Mr Mike Crow for his expertise, time and help in setting up the new system. ■

Mission Board: Bible Training Institute

It has been the burden of the Mission Board for several years to provide formal training for Pastors in developing countries. After much planning and prayer, a Bible Training Institute has been set up which will arrange and deliver training courses to students in areas where the Mission Board seeks to establish and develop churches. The two-year course will be completed in modules and delivered remotely. Twenty-two candidates interviewed successfully and started their studies in February 2021 (18 from Kenya, 2 from Uganda, 1 from



Guinea and 1 from the Philippines). A sincere 'Thank you' to the lectures who have committed to the training

programme. The screenshot shows a Zoom call with many of the students and some of the lecturers. ■

Book Appeal

CHRISTIAN BOOKS AND BIBLES ARE REQUIRED FOR THE BOOKSHOPS IN KENYA

All books and Bibles (new and used) can be given to Missionary Council Representatives



Progress in Uganda

✉ **Right:** The Mission Board Chairman, Rev Ian Harris, is pictured speaking via Zoom at a special Assembly for Primary 7 and Senior 4 pupils at the end of February, just before the commencement of their exams.



✉ **Left:** Some of the children and young people hearing the Gospel at the Emmanuel Sunday School.



✉ **Below:** Families associated with the Emmanuel School are pictured receiving training through the Orphan and Vulnerable Children programme, operated by the Mission Board, to help support those families in greatest need.



✉ **Circle:** The electrical switchboard that is soon to be shipped from Northern Ireland to Uganda to help complete the installation of mains electric on the Emmanuel Christian School compound.



✉ **Far left:** Miss Noreen McAfee and members of the Emmanuel Church engaged in their Sunday afternoon outreach programme – visiting the homes around the Emmanuel Church and School.



Letter from Cortijos Nuevos



“ WE WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL SUPPORT AND PRAYERS; YOUR LABOURS ARE NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD. ”

Dear friends and supporters,

Only five months ago we arrived at the church in Cortijos Nuevos (Spain). We are so grateful to the Lord for bringing us here. We have settled well and the church has welcomed us with a deep Christian love. We are thankful to God, for we have received a great heritage from Rev Lyle Boyd’s work over the past 30 years and it is a privilege for me to be able to learn from him.

Like many other churches, we had to do online services during the different lockdowns. Some unsaved ones are watching in, so we are trying to use these means to reach others. Also, the other ministries of the church have been able to continue, which include a daily 3-minute radio program, a twice-a-week market stall and a daily devotional for all connected to our congregation. I am also translating the Q&A videos made by Dr Cairns and we trust they will be a source of instruction for believers.

My wife, Vanesa, has been teaching online Sunday School since January and we are grateful to the Lord for this opportunity.

She took up a study on *Pilgrim’s Progress*. We know that many are benefiting from her labours.

Please pray for our daughter Abigail, who just started school in March. Our great desire is that God would save our children early in life and keep them from this sinful world.

Finally, we want to thank all of you for your faithful support and prayers; your labours are not in vain in the Lord. ■

✉ Alejandro Bernabeu

✉ Above circle:
Alejandro preaching

✉ Right:
Alejandro and family



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Steadfast and unmovable

II PETER 1:6

*“To lengthen my patience
is the best way to
shorten my
troubles.”*

George Swinnock

You have need of patience is an admonition needful to every child of God. No service can be accomplished in spiritual matters without perseverance and steadfastness. It is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God. In some respects, the whole of our sojourn on earth as believers is to be conducted in patiently waiting for the coming of the Lord (James 5:7).

Every noted servant of God whose life is recorded in Holy Writ had to exercise his faith in this manner. Moses waited eighty years before he was deemed ready to begin his divinely commissioned task of delivering God's ancient people. David waited in the wilderness, hunted like a partridge, before he became king. Caleb was an old man before he obtained a promise concerning his inheritance in the promised land. Their faith had to be harnessed to patience. This admirable quality is highlighted again and again in the life of Joseph. As a young man, receiving the promises of God regarding his future exaltation, he had to wait many years for their fulfilment. He had to endure hardship, reproach, false accusation, and even imprisonment before God's truth came to pass.

Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. There always will be periods in our lives when we must not cast away our confidence although tempted so to do, times when we must earnestly wait upon the Lord. The opposite of patience is despair. Joseph had to guard against such an attitude taking root in his heart and colouring his whole outlook on life. Let us make sure we take similar precautions. We can best do this by keeping in mind the character of Him who has given us His promise, rather than allowing the circumstances of life to cloud our vision of Him. ■

☑ **Footprints of Faith**