

Free Presbyterian VISION

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

The Soul
Winning
Shepherds

Interview with
Rev Alan
Smylie



Emmanuel



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Editorial

Recently, I have started to read through a delightful little book which takes for its theme the precious names and titles of our Saviour. In this book, a well-known Christian minister recounted an occasion when a young man started to attend church meetings. After a period of time, he was saved and subsequently applied for church membership. It was during the interview for membership that this young man pointed out to the elders that things had changed since he started to attend. For example, the hymns seemed more singable to him, and the sermons made much more sense. The reality was that the church did not change or adjust its message; instead, this young man had experienced new life in Jesus Christ.

Every genuine Christian will experience something similar to this; when the Holy Spirit of God awakens the sinner, then there is an awareness of God and Bible truth like never before. This is the difference which the name of Jesus Christ makes in the life of every child of God. A well-known hymn puts it this way, 'Something lives in every hue, Christless eyes have never seen'.

The angelic utterance spoken to Joseph all those many years ago comes with a fresh application to our hearts at this time of year: 'Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21). The greatest difference Christ our King makes is that He alone saves from sin, but it is not the only change. This glorious and incomparable salvation, while giving us standing before the Almighty so that our eternity is forever safe, also impacts our lives in the present. Let us give much thought to our profession as believers, and may those around us see the reality of Christ in us, 'the hope of glory' (Colossians 1:27). ■

✉ **Editor**
editor@fpvision.org



“*Christ's Church shall persevere unto the end because, through her, God's redemptive purpose is brought to pass in the spreading of the Gospel. What a word of comfort this is!*”

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“
*...he (Jesus)
was parted
from them, and
carried up into
heaven.*

”
Luke 24: 51

‘As He entered the heavenly sanctuary, what rejoicing and thanksgiving sounded forth from the redeemed saints already in glory and wonder from the angels who desire to look into God’s redeeming grace.’

Christ, who was born in a lowly manger, lived in the world as the man of sorrows, and was shamefully crucified, is now ascended, enthroned, and ruling at God’s right hand! John Flavel said, ‘O what a change is this! Here he sweated, but there he sits. Here he groaned, but there he triumphs. Here he lay upon the ground, there he sits in the throne of glory.’ Christians serve the reigning Christ, worship the exalted Saviour, and submit to the glorious Lord. As subjects of His Kingdom, our desire must be to do His will, obey His law, trust His promises, depend on His power, rely on His grace, declare His authority and salvation, and look for His coming again.

Others, such as Enoch and Elijah, had gone to heaven before, but Christ’s ascension was unique (John 3:13). This was because He came from heaven and so was returning home (Ephesians 4:10). Jesus went up to heaven to be enthroned, so His ascension was His Coronation day! To receive the honour and glory His Father promised and His sufferings deserve, He must ascend to His throne. Jesus, our great high priest, ‘passed into the heavens’ (Hebrews 4:14); however, He does not ascend alone, but with His children in His loins who one day will join Him in glory. Hebrews 6:20 says that Christ ‘the forerunner is for us entered’ - He goes before to prepare a place for us so that we can be with Him. His resurrection and ascension confirm to us the complete removal of our sins, for our Substitute, who was charged with our sins, ascends into Heaven guiltless and vindicated. The fact there is a Man in heaven is the ground of our hope that we shall be with Christ in glory.

From our perspective, Christ left the world; but in Heaven’s perspective, the Son came home and returned to His welcoming Father. Since Luke 15:7 says there is joy in ‘heaven over one sinner that repenteth’, how much more joy there must have been when the Saviour of sinners entered glory! As He entered the heavenly sanctuary, what rejoicing and thanksgiving sounded forth from the redeemed saints already in glory and wonder from the angels who desire to look into God’s redeeming grace (Mark 16:19).

The Lamb takes the centre stage with Heaven’s myriads around Him. Think of God the Father’s joy in receiving His Son, whom He did not spare for us, who always did His will, and who cried, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ (Mark 15:34). Now His humiliation is over, all sin’s awful effects have been paid for by the blood of the cross, the work the Father gave Christ is finished, and Jesus’ prayer in John 17:5 is answered. Significantly for us, Christ said, ‘I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God’ (John 20:17). What comfort and elation are ours as we see the One we are united to being received into glory! Because He is the delight of His Father, we are accepted in the beloved. We, who were driven from God’s presence in the first Adam, are received into God’s presence again in the last Adam.

Have you embraced Christ with joy and thankfulness as your exalted King? ■

✍ **Rev Matthew Higgins**, *Limavady Free Presbyterian Church.*



EMMANUEL

The English translation of a twelfth century Latin hymn expresses the desire of those who longingly waited for the coming Messiah, ‘O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.’ The sad reality is that many Israelites were waiting for a mere human deliverer, yet Scripture revealed that the Promised Seed of the woman, who would bruise the serpent’s head, would be God manifest in the flesh.

When the first beams of light from the Day-Spring broke through the darkness of this sinful world at the incarnation, we are told in Matthew 1:22-23 that

all had come to pass in fulfilment of a prophecy spoken by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, ‘Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.’ Emmanuel was not a name which the Messiah would be commonly called. That name was Jesus. Rather, the name Emmanuel was given as a revelation that God had indeed come to dwell among men. We could fill volumes writing of Who it was that dwelt with men. We could exhaust language speaking of how this wonder of wonders came to be; and we could spend the rest of our days thinking about the reason why God stepped out of eternity and into time. The Who, the How and the Why of Emmanuel are all

worthy of our contemplation. But our focus will be on the context in which the prophecy was given in Isaiah 7.

A WAVE OF FEAR

This prophecy came at a time when Ahaz was king of Judah. He was one of the most corrupt kings to sit upon David’s throne. At that time, he succeeded in preventing an invasion of the Assyrians by paying them with silver and gold from the house of the LORD and the king’s treasuries (2 Kings 16:8). The Assyrians, therefore, turned their attention to the alliance of Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel. This enraged Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the king of Israel, who gathered their armies together and laid siege to Jerusalem. When Ahaz and

Judah heard about this, their hearts were moved, 'as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind' (Isaiah 7:2). A wave of fear swept over the land like a forest being blown by a mighty wind.

Many in Judah had turned away from God, and you might expect that God would hand them over to the consequence of their sin. But, amazingly in the middle of this national crisis, God sent Isaiah to Ahaz with a word of comfort (Isaiah 7:3). The LORD told Ahaz not to fear, for both Rezin and Pekah were as two 'smoking firebrands' (v4). Matthew Henry commented that they were 'burnt out already; their force was spent'. Syria and Israel planned to overthrow Ahaz and set up their own vassal king upon the throne (the son of Tabeal), but God's covenant must stand. The LORD promised to establish David's throne (2 Samuel 7:13) and through the Davidic line, the Messiah would come. Therefore, the LORD said of their plan, 'It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.'

These are words to take to heart as we think of the foes which are arrayed against Christ's Church. No matter what they plan in an attempt to eradicate her, God says of their schemes, 'It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass' (Isaiah 7:7). The Church cannot be snuffed out, because God is with us, and, as Romans 8:31 asks, 'if God be for us, who can be against us.' Christ's Church shall persevere unto the end because, through her, God's redemptive purpose is brought to pass in the spreading of the Gospel. What a word of comfort this is!

SUPPRESSING THE TRUTH

The LORD told Ahaz that, within sixty-five years, Ephraim, the northern kingdom of Israel, would be broken and that they would not be a people (verse 8). God fulfilled this word in 721 BC when the Assyrians conquered the land. While Ahaz received a word of comfort concerning the siege, he also received a word of caution. Ahaz was warned that if he did not change

his ways and believe what the LORD had said, then he too would 'not be established' (verse 9). Just as Israel would be removed from the land, so too would Judah. Here was a gracious warning to a wicked and undeserving king. Isaiah came to Ahaz at God's command, not because Ahaz sought a word from the Lord. King Ahaz was given space by God to repent; however, he was not interested in hearing from God. His heart was so cold that he was utterly inclined to disbelief, even though the LORD extended extraordinary grace to him. Such grace was in the form of offering him an opportunity to ask for a sign in order to confirm all that He had said, 'Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above' (Isaiah 7:11). What a proposal! Ahaz could have asked for some cosmic wonder, an earthquake, or a fire from heaven.

However, the king didn't want any confirmatory sign. With pious hypocrisy, even ingratitude, he declined, 'I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD' (v12). Ahaz rejected God's offer as he did not want evidence that God is true. He did not want to trouble his conscience, for he loved his sin and did not want to turn from his own ways. There are many like Ahaz today. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness, they reject the evidence of God in creation, and they seek to silence their guilty conscience in a variety of ways. Just like Ahaz, they don't want to be confronted with the truth so that they can continue in their sin without being troubled.

GOD GIVES A SIGN

The godly prophet was righteously enraged by the king's impenitence and in effect said, 'if you won't ask for a sign, then listen to this, House of David'. Isaiah declared, 'the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel' (Isaiah 7:14).

Here was a word about Christ. This would be a sign against Ahaz, while at the same time it was a token of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His covenant. The Lord would graciously perpetuate David's line from which the virgin-born Messiah would come, in spite of evil kings like Ahaz. This sign was fulfilled when Jesus Christ was born, the One who was given as 'a covenant of the people' (Isaiah 42:6).

King Ahaz rejected the good news, and in Isaiah 8 he got the bad news. The Assyrians would come in like a flood upon the land of Judah, referred to as 'thy land, O Immanuel' in verse 8, because Christ would be born there. The enemy would come right up to the gates of Jerusalem, besieging it. Yet once again, in mercy, God gave hope. He would bring the counsel of the Assyrians to nothing, confound their plans and shatter them in pieces. The reason why Isaiah could speak with such confidence was that he knew 'God is with us', which in Hebrew is 'Immanuel'.

The Lord is still with His people. He has promised never to leave us, nor forsake us. He is Emmanuel! ■


✉ **Rev Andrew Stewart,**
Ballymena Free Presbyterian Church.

***“The Lord is still
with His people. He has
promised never to leave
us, nor forsake us.
He is Emmanuel!”***



Whitefield College Graduation and Commencement



 **Whitefield College of the Bible Students and Licentiates:** (students absent from the photo: Samuel Fitton and David McAuley)

The Whitefield College of the Bible Graduation & Commencement Service was hosted this year by the Ballymena congregation. Rev Alan Smylie (College Academic Committee Convenor) began by referring to the mood of national mourning occasioned by the death of Queen Elizabeth II and assured members of the Royal household of continued support in prayer. Rev Samuel Murray and Rev

Ryan McKee participated before College Principal Rev Timothy Nelson brought his report.

Mr Nelson offered thanks to Almighty God for His abiding help and protection and expressed appreciation to College Students, Lecturers and Staff, to the College Committees and their Convenors, to the Martyrs' Memorial Church, and to all who supported the

work prayerfully and practically. He urged constant prayer for the College and the New Building Project, plans for which currently remain with the Local Authority.

Four new students were introduced: Thomas Hanna (Annalong), Adam Kennedy (Sandown), Christopher Orr (Newtownabbey) and Sharon Van Harberden (External, from Canada).

WHITEFIELD COLLEGE NEWS

Mr Nelson paid tribute to Rev William Whiteside, now retired after a long tenure as Lecturer in Hermeneutics. A presentation would be made to him later. Congratulations were extended to the Graduates, Stephen Crawford (Magherafelt) and Jonathan Storey (Ballymoney), who received their Diplomas.

The Licensing of the Graduates to the Ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church was conducted by Clerk of Presbytery, Rev John Greer, and Moderator of Presbytery, Rev John Armstrong. The Moderator then delivered a stirring and appropriate message from Isaiah 6.

Mr Norman McIlroy (Management Committee Convenor) offered the closing prayer. The retiring offering was for College funds. ■



✉ **Rev T Nelson,**
Principal, Whitefield College of the Bible.

✉ **Graduation:**
(L to R) Rev J Greer, Mr J Storey, Rev J Armstrong, Mr S Crawford and Rev T Nelson.

New Students



Thomas Hanna, from the Mourne area, is a member of Annalong congregation. He was converted at a Youth Camp in Scotland. A plasterer by trade, he is married with a young family.

Christopher Orr was converted just after his eleventh birthday. He is a member of the Newtownabbey congregation, and God called him through Ezekiel 2:7.

Sharon Van Harberden is an external student from British Columbia, Canada. Currently living in Belfast, she has begun the two year course.

Adam Kennedy is a member of Sandown, and was saved at the age of seven. He recently graduated from QUB where he studied Spanish and Portuguese, and has known the Lord's leading for a period of years. ■

Ploughing Championship Outreach 2022

“Thank you all for your prayerful and practical support towards this great open door that God has given.”



The Ploughing Outreach took place this year from 20th-22nd September. The venue was Ratheniska, Co. Laois, about nine miles from the county town of Portlaoise. Held every September, the Irish National Ploughing Championships attracts over 1,700 exhibitors; and, this year, 276,000 people attended the three-day event.



This year, a team of nine from our denomination conducted outreach from our marquee. We had an excellent location, being directly opposite the O’Neills factory shop, and a short distance from the popular Grassmen stand. With the crowds being drawn to these two stands, many people came into the marquee or passed by, and in doing so, received a Gospel farming calendar.

15,000 of these calendars were distributed over the three days. We were greatly encouraged by the response at the book table. 262 Bibles and 145 New Testaments were taken from the table as well as many other items of literature - especially the new bookmarks and postcard prints. We

were heartened to learn that calendars for this year had been posted to Kazakhstan and Sweden by folks from Ireland who had contacted us when they saw the advertisement in the Irish

Farmers Journal. It is amazing to learn the number of people who tell the team they receive the calendar every year and that they have it hanging on a wall at home.

On Thursday, a journalist from the Irish Times interviewed Rev Larry Power and me. He noted how we were sandwiched between two hurling shops and how well we were received along with the amount of literature the people were taking with them.

We thank God for the opportunity to serve Him. We also thank you all for your prayerful and practical support towards this great open door that God has given. Pray much that God’s name will be glorified and that many souls will seek and find the Saviour.■

✉ **Rev Jonathan Creane,**
Convoy Free Presbyterian Church.

📷 **Ploughing Outreach Team 2022:**
Back row: Rev. Brian McClung, Rev. Raymond Robinson, Rev. James Porter, Rev. Simon Anderson, Rev. Jonathan Creane. Front Row: Rev. Larry Power, Rev. Gregory McCammon, Mr Colin Maxwell, Mr John Irwin.



A Tribute to Rev Harry Cairns



As 2022 draws to a close, we look back upon the year when one of the Lord's servants, and one of the great Gospel preachers of our denomination, was called home to be with the Lord. Rev Harry Cairns passed away on Tuesday 5th April at the age of 89.

He was one of the founding members of the Hillsborough congregation before the Lord called him into the ministry. He commenced his studies in the Theological Hall in September 1970, and before the end of that year was placed as a student minister in Larne Free Presbyterian Church.

In April 1972 he was ordained and installed in Portavogie Free Presbyterian Church. Then in 1976 he accepted the call to become the minister of Tandragee Free Presbyterian Church. However, his longest pastoral ministry was to be in Omagh Free Presbyterian Church - where he ministered faithfully for over 16 years from 1982 until his retirement in 1998. The Lord also used him to commence churches in Bangor and Markethill.

One of the great characteristics of Rev Cairns' ministry was his evangelistic outreach. He held campaigns in the areas in which he laboured for the Lord and even further afield. Along with the late Rev Wesley Graham, they would conduct scores of missions in various places including mission halls, Orange halls and wooden huts; here many precious souls were born again by the power and Spirit of God.

His interest in the Gospel and the denomination did not diminish despite retirement. Even though the physical ability to be actively preaching came to an end, his work as a prayer warrior continued unabated. On reflection, he was a true shepherd to the flock, a Barnabas to the preacher. It was an honour to know him, to learn from him and to be in his company, and it is a comfort to know that in 2022 Rev Harry Cairns saw His Lord and Saviour face to face and heard, 'Well done thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of the Lord' (Matthew 25:21).■

✍ **Rev Timothy Ormerod,**
Sixmilecross Free Presbyterian Church.



Sunday School Achievements at Ballymena

✍ Pictured alongside Rev John Greer, Mr James McCosh and Rev Andrew Stewart are (L to R) Alyssa Greer, Lydia Trimble, Lucy Maternaghen, Rebecca Bell, Elijah Montgomery and Jacob Hanna. Each received a certificate and prize on Children's Day, for reciting the complete *Child's Catechism*.



'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.'
Psalm 119:11



Spot the Difference

I am sure you have all heard the saying, 'learn or know something off by heart'. I think that we could perhaps apply this in some small way to Psalm 119:11, where it says, 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.' Imagine knowing God's Word so well, that whenever you are confronted by something that is wrong, you know to keep clear of it and so avoid the shame of sinning against God.

Surprisingly, this same idea of knowing right from wrong can be seen in the world of banking. A few hundred years ago, when bank notes were first circulated widely among the population, criminals then began to produce their own counterfeit bank notes. Over the years, millions of pounds worth of useless bank notes have been passed off as the real thing to people who don't know the difference.

Now, to deal with this problem,

certain bank employees go through special training so they are then able to spot the difference. During their training, these staff members are never shown any of the forged notes, rather they spend all of their time focusing on and familiarising themselves with the real thing. As a result, they soon know off by heart every detail of every line, pattern or security mark embedded into those notes. Then, as soon as those same people are presented with a forged note, being so familiar with the real thing, they quickly pick up on the fact that it is a worthless fake.

If you are a Christian, it is vital that you know what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. Can you see now how important it is to focus upon, read and study God's Word thoroughly to spot the difference? Hide this precious knowledge in your hearts so that when the situation arises you will be ready to honour God, rather than sin against him.



QUIZ

Which of these lines will help this young person to hide God's Word in their heart?



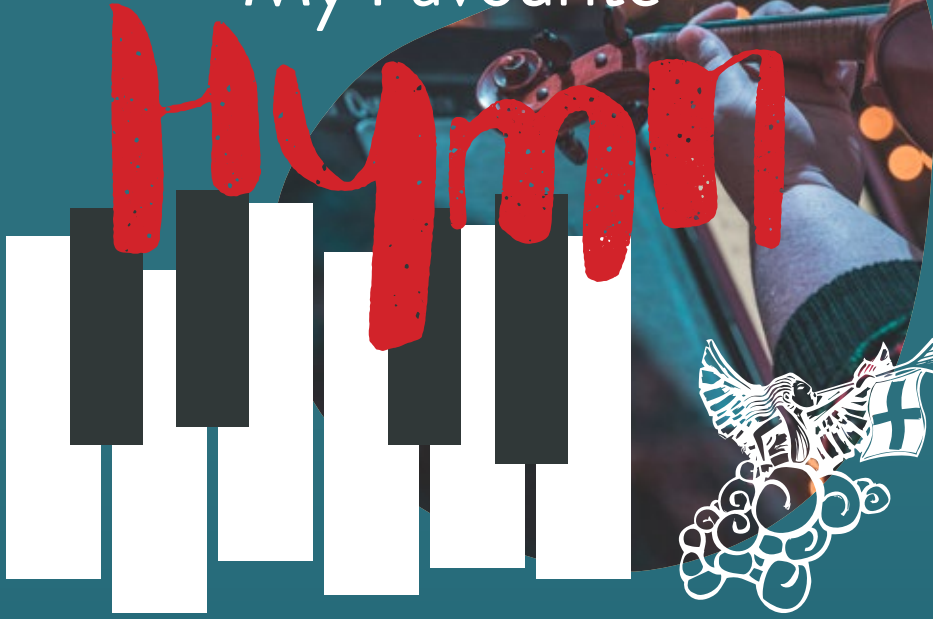
ANSWER:

PRIZES!

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



My Favourite



“ WE, AS MEN AND WOMEN WERE UNDER AN INFINITE CURSE. YET, WE HAVE A SAVIOUR WHO CAN BEAR SUCH A CURSE AND OFFER A SACRIFICE OF INFINITE VALUE THAT WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY GOD. ”

the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.’ We thank God that Christ in His human body bore our sins and sorrows, and thus, the word of reconciliation has been spoken unto us, and therefore we have peace in our hearts.

As we get ready to welcome another Christmas season, our minds are drawn to many of the Christmas carols we love to sing. There is no doubt these carols bring us much joy as we contemplate the Saviour’s birth and incarnation. My personal favourite is the hymn written by Charles Wesley, ‘Hark! the Herald Angels Sing.’ The hymn first appeared in John Wesley’s collection Hymns and Sacred Poems in 1739 and contained the words ‘Hark how all the welkin rings’ in the opening verse, but this was later changed by George Whitefield in 1754 into the famous words we now sing. With other edits to the hymn, we have the version which now appears in our hymn book today:

*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
‘Christ is born in Bethlehem.’*

*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King,*

*Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the Everlasting Lord.
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!*

*Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.*

*Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.*

*Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Rise, the woman’s conquering Seed,
Bruise in us the serpent’s head.
Now display Thy saving power,
Ruined nature now restore;
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine!*

This hymn is based on Luke 2:14, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ In this verse, the angelic host is praising God, as they contemplate the reality that Christ is born in Bethlehem. What could evoke such praise for this babe in the manger? Our hymn takes us right to the heart of it: Christ was born to effect a reconciliation between God and men. This could only be done by the removal of the guilt, and therefore the wrath of God, for our sins. 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, ‘To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling

The second verse of this carol reveals the great glory of the incarnation. This is in the fact of the Theanthropos - the Son of God, taking upon Himself a human nature in union with His deity. This child in Bethlehem was God and man. What a wonder! Should we not then hail the incarnate deity? We, as men and women were under an infinite curse. Yet, we have a Saviour who can bear such a curse and offer a sacrifice of infinite value that would be accepted by God. Why? Because He was Immanuel, and so has cried, ‘...it is finished...’ (John 19:30).

The last two verses are quoted from Malachi 4:2 and Genesis 3:15. These Old Testament texts are prophecies of the Lord Jesus and His saving work. The incarnation was the fulfilment of thousands of years of prophecy. Paul describes it as a ‘mystery’ in Colossians 1:27, which means something revealed that was previously hidden. The Gospel certainly was not hidden in the Old Testament, but the fulness of its revelation was not revealed until the coming of Christ. The written word revealed the incarnate Word. Let us praise God in this Christmas season that His Son has been revealed to us and ever marvel in Him who was, ‘Pleased as Man with men to dwell’. ■

✠ Matthew Eccles, Licentiate.



“
HERE WAS A GROUP
OF ORDINARY,
HUMBLE MEN, AND
WITHOUT QUESTION
OR HESITATION,
THEY EXERCISED
FAITH IN THE
MESSAGE.
”

THE SOUL-WINNING SHEPHERDS

The story of the shepherds in the account of Christ's birth portrays for us a wonderful picture of the people of God in relation to our soul-winning endeavours. The shepherds were missionaries of their day; they were soul winners. They had just heard of the Saviour's birth, they saw the glory of the Lord, and they had witnessed the multitude of the heavenly host singing glory to God. But then, as the angelic host left, the shepherds displayed a wonderful curiosity and interest in the things that

they had just heard. This message so captivated them that they wanted to hear more about it and then they went on to tell others about the Saviour's birth. These humble shepherds became soul winners - spreading the news of Christ's coming into this world.

THEIR FAITH IN THE MESSAGE

In Luke 2:15, we read that they said, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass.' Here, we see their faith in the message which they had just

heard. Here was a group of ordinary, humble men, and without question or hesitation, they exercised faith in the message.

The shepherds believed the message, and so they desired to go and find out more. That phrase in verse 15, 'said one to another', in the original language depicts a repetition of the desire. In other words, over and over again they kept on saying, come and see, come, let us go to Bethlehem. Is this not what faith is all about -

conviction and then an interest? There was a hunger to find out more and to discover more about this message. That hunger should also characterise the Christian. May we, with a desire to learn more, go to Christ and find out more of what He has to say to us in His word. With the swiftness of feet, they went 'with haste' to find out more, because there was a sense of excitement and anticipation about learning more about the newborn King.

The declaration of the faith of the shepherds was confirmed by the deeds of their faith, in that they went with haste. Is there that sense of anticipation and excitement in our faith? At times, our faith can become stale and stagnant; and as a result, our enthusiasm for the work of God can wane. How much we need the continual infilling of the Holy Spirit to give us that fresh vitality and energy for the work of God.

THEIR FURTHERANCE OF THE MESSAGE

Luke 2:17 reads, 'when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.' They had now found Christ, their faith had been rewarded, and now they broadcasted the message to others. They saw Christ, and they went and witnessed concerning Christ. They had a personal experience of the Messiah, and they desired that others would have this personal experience as well.

Every child of God has a personal experience of Christ. At conversion we saw Him by faith, at conversion we experienced His new life within us, but how we need to continually have that fresh view and that fresh vision of Christ, constantly and continually! We need to see Him as He is revealed to us in the Word of God, and when we have that fresh view of Christ, then we will be motivated into action and will seek to tell it abroad of what Christ has done.

They found Christ, but they also saw Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:16); yet it

was only Christ who they went on to tell others about. Their message was all about Him. In our reaching out to others, may we never forget that we are to tell others about Christ. We have no other message for this world; our message is all about Him. Over this Christmas season, may we take the opportunity to tell others about the Saviour, the One who came into this world to save sinners.

The shepherds did not limit themselves in furthering the message, and neither did they limit the ones to whom they furthered the message. They published Christ wherever they went, and they were missionaries everywhere they went - such was their enthusiasm and their excitement concerning the message. What instruction for us in soul winning! These shepherds were not involved in large evangelistic crusades, yet simply by their life and their living, they told others about Christ. By personal witness, they reached more than many preachers could ever reach with the Gospel. Personal witnessing -the one-to-one witnessing to others has such a great potential to reach many for Christ.

May God give us such joy in spreading the message of hope through Christ. This world is filled with false hope and false joy, filled with messages with no hope, but we have a message of hope, a message of joy in the Gospel. We must declare all of this message to all people.

THEIR FERVENCY BECAUSE OF THE MESSAGE

Luke 2:20 goes on, 'and the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.' Here was their fervency and their zeal because of the message - they glorified God. How telling and

instructive that is; this message had a real impact upon them, but it also had the desired impact in that they glorified God. They did not seek to bring glory to themselves, to Mary, or to Joseph; they sought to bring glory to God.

Their devotion to the Lord was continuous, but I believe it was also contagious. They were so overcome with what they saw that they could not hold it in. They sang praises to God, and they glorified God, all in order to advance and promote the message of the incarnation

This encounter had such a dramatic effect on their lives that their lives

broadcasted the truth of Christ. They were the greatest advertisements for this Gospel truth because they brought glory to God. Their faith was not simply a decision, it was a decisive way of life; and when we have Christ within us, then our lives ought to show that and our lives must be God-glorifying and God honouring. This means that we will

conduct our lives accordingly, we will order our lives according to that desire to glorify God. Great is the Lord and is greatly to be praised. He is worthy of our honour and our praise.

What an example of soul-winning these shepherds are! They showed great faith in the message they received, they sought to further that message everywhere they went, and as they did, so they displayed great fervency in the message because they brought glory and honour to God. Let us use this Christmas time to be soul winners, and to tell others of the true meaning of this season and why Christ Jesus came into the world. ■

✉ **Rev Garth Wilson,**
Sandown Free Presbyterian Church.

“ THIS ENCOUNTER HAD SUCH A DRAMATIC EFFECT ON THEIR LIVES THAT THEIR LIVES BROADCASTED THE TRUTH OF CHRIST. ”



SUMMER CAMP

It was fantastic to be back at camp for my fourth year. This year we stayed at Greenhill YMCA where we enjoyed great times of fun and fellowship. I have made many great memories and friends at camp and this year was no different! Over the course of the week, we took part in many different activities from photo challenges and ice-breakers to high ropes and bouldering – my favourite being the paddle-boarding! You know it has been a good week when you are home with no voice and little sleep!

Each of the male leaders brought devotions to us in the morning and in the evening meetings Rev Foster spoke on various passages which have

been a blessing to him over the years in his Christian walk. Every one of the meetings was a great encouragement to me, especially the one on Tuesday night when Rev Foster spoke on Luke 10:20, ‘Rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven.’ This message brought much comfort and reassurance to me for while there is so much unknown about Heaven, if we are saved we can rest assured there is a wonderful place for us in eternity with our Lord and Saviour.

A highlight of the camp each year is the time spent around the campfire. This year we really felt the Lord’s presence as we shared favourite verses, gave words of testimony, and sang

and spent time in prayer. It is always a great blessing to me to hear friends and campers I may not know so well talking about their faith in the Lord.

I can truly say the camp was a great blessing and I would encourage anyone who would like an action-packed few days away spent making new friends and worshipping God, to come and join us next year. You will not regret it! A huge thank you to all the leaders and Rev Foster for all the effort they put into making camp a success, and most importantly, we thank our Saviour for His presence with us. ■

✍ **Beth Hanna,**
Ballymena Free Presbyterian Church.

YOUTH COUNCIL EVENTS

DELEGATES MEETING
21th Nov, 8pm
RANDALSTOWN FPC

INFORMAL BIBLE STUDY

26th Nov, 7.30pm

Martyrs FPC
Topic: Abortion

- » Learn how to defend pro-life teaching from Scripture when faced with pro-choice arguments
- » Understand the truth about abortion in Northern Ireland
- » Grasp the great consequences facing our nation if it continues with this sin

SUMMER CAMPS

August 2023

Application forms are now available online at fpcyouth.org. Book early to avoid disappointment.

KENYA OUTREACH

August 2023

Limited places available. Book early. Great opportunity to see the Mission Field and serve the LORD on it with Vacation Bible Schools and Youth Conference. Stay updated with posts online.

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FPCYOUTH.ORG



A Word to Women

A Mary Heart in a Martha World

We face constant demands for our attention these days, and much of that is due to the never-ending access we have to media of all forms. It can feel like someone is always trying to tell us what to do and how it should be done; even our time spent with the Lord becomes an ‘Instagrammable’ opportunity, that must look a certain way to be valid!

In my day-to-day life, I relate very well with Martha in Luke 10:38–42. While Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, and endeavoured to hear every single word He said, poor Martha was stressing over other responsibilities. She was distracted, burdened with her work, and overwhelmed. Yet, the Lord Jesus was so very tender in His response (verses 41–42). He addressed her affectionally with a double ‘Martha,’ and went on to encourage her to pause, sit still, come away from the many things that preoccupied her, and focus on that ‘one thing needful.’

There is a time for aprons, spoons, pots and pans. Yet, there is a time to set them aside. There is a place for legitimate work and using our phones to catch up with what is going on in the world. However, we also must battle

against anything that seeks to take priority over our time spent in prayer and hearing from Jesus in His Word. Our Lord put his stamp of approval on Mary’s choice. She had chosen the better part, which could never be taken away from her.

So, does this mean that going and doing is bad? Of course not! Indeed, what Martha sought to do in serving everyone was not wrong in and of itself. God has called us to important duties. Raising children in the home, going out to work, preparing meals and being involved in church ministries—these are all good. However, let us be careful that they do not make us fretful and anxious, and distract from fellowship with Christ. This is the one thing needful; when we keep our priorities in the correct order, all the other things fall into place, and we find grace to deal with every situation.

I am reminded of a story I read once about Charles and John Wesley’s mother. She was mother to ten

“
*We must battle
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His Word.*
”

children (she had nineteen children but nine died in infancy), and she would be found each day in her chair with her apron pulled up over her head. It was there that she met with God while her children played, read and studied around her. When they saw her in this posture, they knew she was not to be disturbed. This is a helpful example of a

busy woman who endeavoured to make time to sit still a while, even amidst the chaos of home life.

May the Lord teach us to be still before Him daily, like Mary was, and allow ourselves the opportunity to hear His voice above the noise that clamours for our attention. Perhaps, we will have to settle for a chair in the middle of our home, with a chorus of children all around us and an apron upon our head. It may not be social media approved but that is ok! ■

✉ **Melanie Thomassian** is married to Rev Armen Thomassian, Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville (USA).

🖼️ **Above:** Rev Smylie and his wife Vivien receiving gifts on the night of his last service in Ballygowan.

Interview with

Rev Alan Smylie

With over 40 years of preaching in our denomination, Rev Alan Smylie has first-hand experience of the many ups and downs that come with full-time Christian service. The beginning of September 2022 marked a significant moment in his life as he retired from pastoral ministry. As Editor of the FP Vision, I asked Rev Smylie if he would be willing to answer questions which I am sure readers would find very helpful. Much to my delight, he was more than happy to oblige.



ED: I believe your last Sunday in the Pastoral ministry was September 4th 2022. I imagine this must have been very emotional for you all. Maybe you can tell us about these last services in Ballygowan Free Presbyterian Church.

AS: Yes, September 4th was a very emotional day for my wife and me. It was also the same for the members and friends of Ballygowan Free Presbyterian Church. The Lord's day evening service was my farewell as minister there after almost eighteen years and my retirement from the pastoral ministry after forty-three and a half years (1979-2022). The church was

packed to capacity and Rev Samuel Murray (Interim Moderator) was there to lead the service. There was a real sense of the Lord's presence from start to finish with Dr Stanley Barnes leading in prayer, Naomi Wilson, Dr Fred Greenfield, and Natasha Acheson ministering in song. The Lord gave me help as I preached on the subject: 'My Final Message to You,' based on the words in Genesis 6:3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' After the concluding hymn, Dr Ron Johnstone closed in prayer. There followed a series of presentations by the Kirk Session, Committee,

and various aspects of the work in Ballygowan. My wife and I responded with words of appreciation for the gifts and the love shown to us through the years. Gifts had already been given to us at the Retirement Dinner held on Wednesday 31st August in the La Mon hotel. A sumptuous supper was served by the ladies assisted by the men folk of the church. What a night! Never to be forgotten by my wife and me, while words would not adequately express our appreciation of all that was done for us. We just give thanks to the Lord. Psalm 136:1, 'O Give thanks unto the Lord for He is good ...'

ED: Ballygowan is far from where you grew up as a child. Will you tell us a little about your childhood and where you were raised?

AS: I was born in County Fermanagh in the townland of Cleenagh, near the town of Newtownbutler. I was born at home, the youngest of five (three sisters and one brother). I like to remind my siblings that I was the only one born in Co Fermanagh! I attended the local primary school in Newtownbutler until I was nine years of age when due to my father's illness we left the farm and moved to live in Belfast. I went to church and Sunday school in those early years at Ballyhobridge Presbyterian Church, a few miles from where we lived. I have fond memories of my childhood on the farm, helping with the milking as a boy, and working with the haymaking during the summertime. Great days. Also, the Christian influence of my parents taught me the things of God and brought me under the sound of the Gospel.

ED: How did you come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

AS: I was brought to saving faith in Christ on the 15th of January 1969 having attended a mission in Lisburn Christian Workers Union hall conducted by Rev Sam Workman. Before this, I had attended many missions, and Gospel meetings, and had been brought under conviction of sin. That was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Often I pass the house on Ravenhill Road in Belfast where I came to Christ and I look up at the room where it happened and rejoice in God's 'so great salvation' which was freely given to me. His marvellous grace!

ED: Who have been some of the greatest influences on your ministry?

AS: The greatest influence on my ministry was the late Dr Paisley. He was my minister from my mid-teens. Listening to his powerful preaching week after week impacted greatly upon my life, building me up in the faith, and seeing at first hand his fervency in evangelism. These fired my soul to engage in soul-winning. Many close colleagues have greatly influenced me too. Men I studied with, prayed with, laboured alongside in the Gospel, and

those who gave me wise counsel in the many challenging situations that one faces in the ministry. Also, my wife Vivien has been a true helpmeet to me and has stood with me through the years. My mother and father-in-law were also a tremendous help and encouragement to me through many years of ministry, also godly elders, and godly people in the congregations where I have ministered.

ED: Are there any standout memories during your Pastorate which you wish to share with us?

AS: I suppose there are several. One was the burning of the church building at John Knox Memorial by terrorists when I was minister there - a devastating experience. Yet, the Lord had a purpose, the congregation moved to a new site off the Shankill Road and a new church building was erected and several very successful missions were held in that building in the years that followed. A church hall was added some years later. In 2010, at Ballygowan Free Presbyterian Church, the church hall and ancillary rooms were added and later that same year the extended and remodelled church building was re-opened. During the years we had some great missions in the church and two special tent missions held jointly with other local Free Presbyterian Churches in Lisbane and Moneyreagh with the Evangelist Dr William McCrea on both occasions. Souls were saved and the fellowship was great among the churches. The last year of ministry in Ballygowan was very special when we saw some souls that had been long prayed for coming to Christ. To God be the glory.

ED: Even though you have entered retirement I am sure you will be as busy as ever! Tell us about how you are looking forward to serving the Lord in the days ahead.

AS: I am looking forward to continuing to serve the Lord in various ways, preaching the Word of God, doing prison chaplaincy work, and helping in vacant churches - if appointed to do this by Presbytery. I love helping in the work of the Lord in the Free Presbyterian Church and at present helping with our Bible college in the Academic Committee.

ED: Speaking of the Academic Committee, what encouragement and advice would you give to students currently studying in our college?

AS: I would say to them to work hard at their studies, keep humble, and work on their preaching. People skills are vital so that you can work with anyone. This is important because you will have to do this as you serve the Lord wherever He calls you. Never think for a moment you are the Lord's answer to the church! Just give yourself to the task to which the Lord has called you. Do not try to open doors God has not opened to you.

ED: Finally, will you share with us a verse of Scripture which has been special to you during your Christian ministry?

AS: A verse that has stayed with me throughout my ministry is John 3:30 and these are the words of John the Baptist referring to Christ, 'He must increase, but I must decrease'. ■

📖 **Below:**

Mr Cecil McBurney (deacon/treasurer) presents Rev and Mrs Smylie with a gift.





Contentment in the Christian Life

As the children of Israel left Egypt and journeyed through the wilderness we are told how they, on many occasions, murmured against God and complained about their circumstances. They grumbled about food and water, complained about the difficulties of wilderness life, and even accused Moses of misleading them. Discontentment really was a major problem amongst the people of Israel at that time. Psalm 78:17 puts it like this, 'And they sinned yet more against Him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.' This complaining and discontented spirit, very often found in the camp of Israel, was no small and insignificant matter, it was sin and it was something that greatly grieved the LORD.

In 2 Timothy 3:1-2 we read of how one of the sins which shall mark the last days is unthankfulness, 'This know

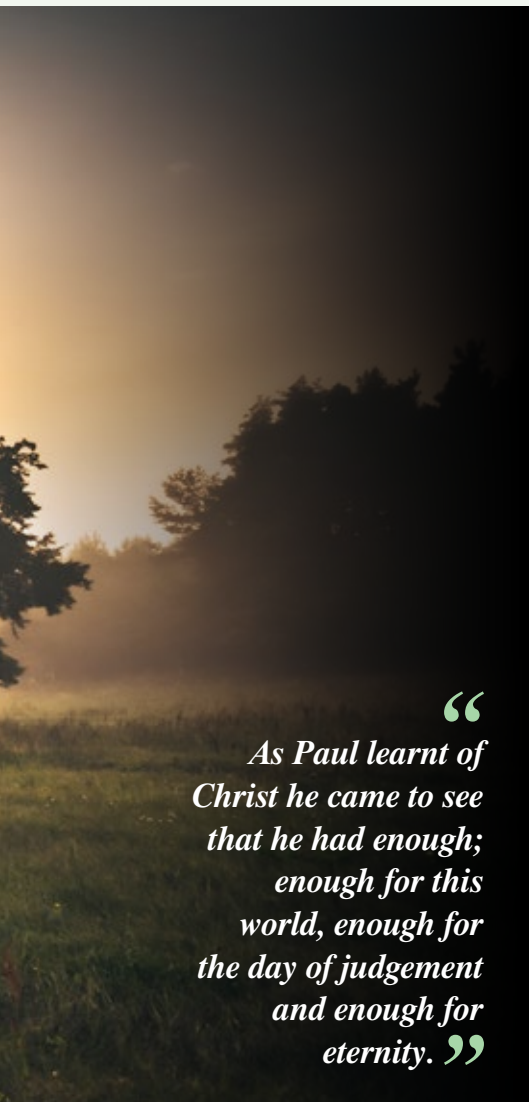
also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...' Being unthankful, having a discontented spirit, is then a most serious matter and it is something that the child of God should ever seek to guard against.

Yet, how can we as Christ's people learn to be content? How can we, through all the struggles of life, live in a state of contentedness? Over the last number of months we have seen prices rise in a most startling way and the phrase, 'the cost of living crisis,' is repeatedly used by politicians and the media. There is no doubt about it, many are feeling the pinch financially and are having to cut back and do with less. As God's people can we then still live in a state of contentedness even when we are facing financial restraints and maybe even hardship?

LEARNING CONTENTMENT

When Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, he declared in Philippians 4:11, 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' As God's servant wrote these words his circumstances in life were extremely difficult. He was under arrest and held as a prisoner because of his love and labour for Christ.

Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 also spoke of the many trials he faced as God's servant. He declared, he was, 'in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in



“
*As Paul learnt of
 Christ he came to see
 that he had enough;
 enough for this
 world, enough for
 the day of judgement
 and enough for
 eternity.*”

perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.’ What tremendous troubles and trials Paul faced in life. However, despite all of these things, he could boldly say, ‘I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.’

It is important to note here that Paul says he had, ‘learned’ contentedness. This word learned indicates a receiving and a comprehending of the truth. Paul’s contentedness, in the midst of the troubles of life, flowed out of the fact that he had learned the truth and he was able to rest his soul upon the truth while the winds of adversity blew upon him. It is also important we understand what Paul means as

he speaks of being, ‘content.’ The word ‘content,’ literally means strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support. And so what the apostle is really saying here is that he had learned that whatever state he was in, he had enough as a Christian, to be content. It did not matter what his physical or material state was, he as a child of God had enough, enough to live in a state of contentment.

TRUE SATISFACTION IN CHRIST

This then brings us to the question, what was it Paul had which enabled him to be contented in every circumstance in life? What truth had he learnt that revealed to him he had enough to be continually content? Paul’s contentedness was not based upon his possessions but it was based upon a Person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul lived in a state of contentedness, not because of riches but because contentedness filled his heart because of a saving relationship. We know this because after Paul says, ‘I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,’ he then declared, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’ Philippians 4:13.

The simple truth is this: true contentedness and satisfaction are found in the One who has said in John 10:10, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’ Remember what the Lord Jesus said to the woman at the well, ‘[W]hosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.’ John 4:14. The Saviour was telling this dear lady, who had lived a most discontented life, only in Me will your soul be satisfied.

Of course, we need to consider, why, in Christ, it is possible for the Christian to live in a state of contentedness. What is it about the Lord Jesus that should fill the soul of the believer with peace and satisfaction? In answer to this, we can say firstly, there is full contentedness found in Christ for in Him we have a complete pardon. Colossians 1:14 tells us, ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.’ Horatio Gates Spafford put it this way,

*My sin O the bliss of this glorious thought!
 My sin, not in part, but the whole,
 Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no
 more;
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my
 soul!*

Oh, how can our hearts not be filled with the greatest contentment and joy when we consider that we have been forgiven and set free from the dreadful punishment of our sins? In Christ, the believer not only has a complete pardon but also has complete perfection. Paul in Philippians 3:9 spoke of how he was, ‘found in Him, (Christ) not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.’ The moment sinners trusts in Christ for salvation they are clothed in the perfect and sinless righteousness of their Saviour. Robed with this glorious righteousness, the believer has what it takes to enter heaven and to dwell in God’s house forever. Furthermore, in Christ, the Christian has a complete provision. In 2 Peter 1:3, we are told how the LORD, ‘hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.’

All that we need to live the Christian life and to fight the good fight of faith God has been graciously supplied. As believers, we have the assurance of God’s presence with us and the power of God’s Spirit within our lives. God has blessed us with His Word to direct and strengthen us and He says to all His children in Matthew 7:11, ‘If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?’ As Paul learnt of Christ he came to see that he had enough; enough for this world, enough for the day of judgement and enough for eternity. Therefore, knowing this he was able to truthfully declare, ‘I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.’ May we so learn of Christ for 1 Timothy 6:6 tells us, ‘But godliness with contentment is great gain.’ ■

✉ **Rev Graham Lucas,**
Garvagh Free Presbyterian Church.

Missionary Council Celebrate Sixty Years



The Missionary Council held an anniversary dinner in the Jubilee Hall on Friday 30th September to celebrate six decades of Missionary work. Council members, including some veteran members, came together to give God the glory for His faithfulness to the missionary cause of the Free Presbyterian Church. Special guests included Presbytery officers, Mission Board members, and missionaries.

After a sumptuous meal, the Missionary Council Chairman, Rev Park, presented a pictorial overview of the Missionary Council through the years. He highlighted the many projects that were supported and the essential missionary funding which was delivered.

The Missionary Council was formed in 1962 following some initial ideas that were communicated in a letter to Presbytery by Miss Valerie Shaw, where she laid out proposals which became the basis for the work of the Council.



At the first meeting, Cecil Harvey was appointed as chairman; Elizabeth McIlreavey (now Hartin) as treasurer; Elizabeth McAuley (now Menary) as assistant treasurer; and Valerie Shaw as secretary. The decisions at that first meeting set the Council's agenda for the years to come; which was to raise financial support across the churches and encourage missionary interest throughout the denomination.

The next chairman was R.J. McAuley from Ballymena, who was followed by Brian Foreman for a short time until he emigrated. George McConnell became chairman in 1970 and occupied the position for 42 years. Many others, past and present, have served faithfully in the other roles on the Council.

The Missionary Council supported many of our early missionaries, including Tom Lewis in Europe, Edmund Norwood in Brazil, and Denis Murphy in the Canary Islands. The Council also provided support for Ron and Raema Johnstone in Papua New Guinea and Bill Woods, who had been serving the Lord in Brazil since 1960.

Rev Park congratulated the Council for the dedication to the missionary cause, and encouraged the members to continue the good work. The Moderator, Rev John Armstrong,

brought greetings and congratulations from Presbytery; Rev Ian Harris spoke on behalf of the Mission Board; Miss Noreen McAfee on behalf of our missionaries, and greetings were brought on behalf of the Mission Board Chairman, Rev Mercer.

The night also presented an opportunity to say thank you to Rev Park as he steps down as Chairman this year, following his ten year term. Rev Park thanked the officers of the Council and the members for their support, encouragement and missionary vision. He also acknowledged the unwavering support of his wife, Susan, who has been a great encouragement.



Rev Park also spoke of how he has been inspired by others, such as George McConnell, Bill Woods, Margaret Russell and Noreen McAfee. He spoke fondly of the honour and privilege of visiting the mission fields of the world in Spain, Kenya, Uganda, Nepal and Brazil. He also highlighted the blessing of the Missionary Weekends in Ballymoney and the Missionary Council Weekend.

Rev Park's leadership during the past decade was acknowledged with presentations made by the Treasurer of the Council, Miss Rosemary Wallace. ■



We give thanks and praise to our Lord for the blessings enjoyed at United Children's Camp 2022 (1st - 5th August). Every space in the camp was full with forty-eight children and eight leaders in attendance. Over 75% of the children were first-time campers; some were away overnight from their parents for the first time.

Before the children arrived, the leaders met for a time of preparation and prayer. We can truly say that God heard and answered our prayers. Some of the activities that we enjoyed together were: camp challenge; camp Olympics; table quiz; DVD night; crafts; assault course; football skills workshop; trampoline park; mini golf; shopping; Aunt Sandra's chocolate factory workshop; swimming; board games and much more.

The vision of the camp is to teach the children about the Lord Jesus Christ.

This year we had a Bible Lesson series each evening on the theme 'People who Met Jesus'. In the morning meetings, we looked at the life of George Muller and how God hears and answers the prayers of His people. Alongside this teaching, we had songs, memory verses, quizzes, testimony times and devotional times in the dorms.

The campers were able to express their thoughts about camp by writing them down on the final night. A couple of extracts from the children speak for themselves:

'Camp is very good. It helps you get closer to Jesus. It's been a great experience for the first time.'

'I enjoyed the Missionary meetings about George Muller and the Bible meetings. They made me think about what God has done for me. I also enjoyed making friends at camp.'



On Friday morning we welcomed the parents and friends, who had come to collect their children, to an open-air meeting where they could experience what the camp meetings were like.

We are thankful for the children's excellent behaviour throughout and their attention during the meetings. We are also grateful for the wonderful food that was provided, for the weather, safety and the opportunity to teach the children about the things of God.

I would like to say a personal thank you to the team of workers. It was a blessing to have such unity and fellowship as we served together. In the will of the Lord, we will be holding United Children's Camp next year - do look out for information in January 2023. ■

✉ **Rev Ryan McKee,**
Camp Director.



Missionaries Return to Fields of Service

Miss Noreen McAfee Returns to Uganda



A large congregation gathered in Hebron Free Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney, on Lord's Day evening 2nd October, for the Sending Forth Service for Miss Noreen McAfee. The minister of the congregation and secretary of the Mission Board, Rev David Park, led the service.

Rev Ian Harris, brought greetings to Miss McAfee on behalf of the Mission Board, highlighting Miss McAfee's faithful labours. Presentations were made to Miss McAfee by Mr Alastair Hamilton (Mission Board) and by Mr Philip Calderwood (Hebron FPC). Miss McAfee expressed her thanks for

the support that she receives and also asked for continued support in prayer. Rev David McMillan, Chairman of the Ugandan Subcommittee, preached a missionary challenge from Ruth 2:2 on the subject, 'Are you in the field of service?'

At the close of the service, the Mission Board members and elders who were present gathered with Miss McAfee at the front of the church, and special prayers of dedication were offered. After the service, supper was served and a time of refreshment and fellowship was enjoyed.

Miss McAfee returned to Uganda on Tuesday 4th October. Do remember her in prayer. ■

Sending Forth Service Miss Joy Gillespie



Miss Joy Gillespie's Sending Forth Service took place at the evening meeting in Armagh Free Presbyterian Church on Sunday 7th August. A good number was present including several members of Miss Gillespie's family. The missionary family was well represented, with members of the Missionary Council, Mission Board and missionaries, both past and present, in attendance.

Rev David McMillan (Armagh), led the service and spoke of how highly respected Miss Gillespie is in the Armagh congregation. Mr Eric Graham from Lisburn made a presentation to Miss Gillespie on behalf of the Board. Miss Gillespie then addressed the meeting and expressed her thanks for the faithful support that she receives, while setting out important prayer

requests. Chairman of the Mission Board, Rev Ian Harris, brought a very profitable message as he preached on missionaries being sent out as witnesses. After the message, all the elders and ministers present gathered at the front of the church with Miss Gillespie, while Rev Harris led in prayer, dedicating Miss Gillespie to the Lord for another term of service.

A special missionary offering was taken, totalling £1274. Some light refreshments and fellowship were enjoyed after the meeting, when friends had an opportunity to say farewell to the Lord's servant. Miss Gillespie returned to the land of her calling on Monday 8th August and, a few days later, received a very definite seal upon her new term of service, when she was granted a visa for one year. ■

In his own words

In recent weeks, Rev Ray Carscadden has been approved by Presbytery as a probationary missionary to Uganda under the Mission Board. Commenting recently, Rev Carscadden said:

‘From an early age I was sent along to children’s meetings where I was told my need of a Saviour. While I am not sure of the date, I remember asking the Lord to save me. In the years that followed, I have known the Lord’s hand upon my life. In my final year of university, the Lord began to challenge me about full-time service but I was unsure of how He could use me.

The Lord answered that question by opening the door to serve Him in Clogher Valley Independent Christian School. During those years, I became a member of Kesh Free Presbyterian church and married Rhonda. While working in the school, the Lord began to call me into further service. Having completed my four years of study at the Whitefield College of the Bible, I received the call to Coragarry Free Presbyterian Church.

However, for many years I felt the burden for the Lord’s cause in Uganda and so was thrilled to hear, several years ago, of the open door for a Free Presbyterian witness there at Emmanuel Mission Station. In recent months, my family and I have had the opportunity to visit Uganda following which the Lord led me to apply to the Mission Board to work as a missionary in that land.

“The Lord has proved Himself faithful to me and my family. We go forward assured of His faithfulness in the days to come.”



Throughout the years of study and ministry, the Lord has proved Himself faithful to me and my family. We go forward assured of His faithfulness in the days to come.’ ■

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Bryan McVeigh: 07771791522

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FP Vision Commemorative Edition

The beautifully illustrated commemorative edition of the *FP Vision* is now available to read online at fpvision.org.

Articles include:

*“A Nation in Mourning”,
“Her Glorious Reign”,
“From the Queen’s Own Lips”,
and “God Save the King.”*



Dates For The Diary



NOVEMBER

7th - 11th, 8pm

SIXMILECROSS FPC,
BIBLE CONFERENCE

Speakers: Rev Thomas Murray, Dr Ian Brown

14th - 18th, 8pm

RASHARKIN FPC,
AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Various topics and speakers

Free Presbyterian
VISION

