

Free Presbyterian VISION

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER

REVIVE THY WORK,
O LORD!



The House
on the Rock

Answering
Atheism

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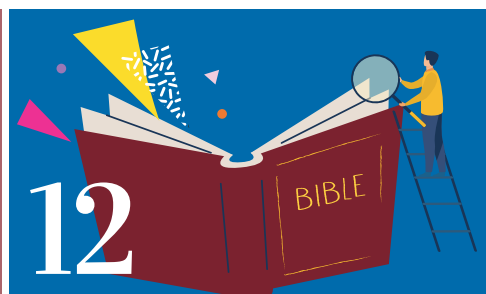
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Editorial

Most of us have been on a long road trip at some point in our lives. Either we love such journeys or else we must confess to loathing them. For those of us who have children, we can probably recall the many, varied experiences that our little ones have added along the way. Growing up, I was convinced that I was the first to have coined the phrase, 'Are we there yet?' but later realised that every child has this innate inability to measure time accurately. Ten minutes driving along the road is to a child's mind nearer to one hour! This illustrates for us the difference there is in the mentality of a child compared to that of an adult. The apostle Paul drew on this contrast when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:11, 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.'

As we enter into another new year, there is the tendency for Christians to think too far ahead. Quietly, in our thoughts, we ask what 2023 will have in store. Maybe this new year has come after a particularly trying 2022 and we feel overwhelmed by the idea of having to go through another year? Do we weigh this all up in our thoughts and ask, similar to a child, 'Are we there yet?' Many of God's people long for Emmanuel's land; they feel the weariness of this world and desire that better country. However, our time here is most precious and God would have us redeem it for His glory. All the time we are here, we are *not there yet* and, so, in the words of Hebrews 4:11, 'Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.' ■

✉ **Editor**
editor@fpvision.org



“ *The revival changed many ignorant and profane sinners into trophies of grace. Revival does that. It changes the whole spiritual landscape of a community and it does so through the anointed preaching of the Word of God, by men whose hearts are ablaze with Calvary's love.* ”

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Broken Before Blessed



Many people have heard of Job and the trials which he endured, but seldom realise what the purpose of those same trials was. Nor do they realise that Job suffered as he did, so that God's people today might learn of his experiences and be found to patiently endure to the end.

It is not because Job suffered that makes him important to us; rather, it is because he suffered in the same way in which we suffer: in his family life, physical health, and loss of physical possessions. It is not the subject of suffering that bothers us, but the subject of undeserved suffering.

All of us have memories of doing wrong things while growing up through life and receiving punishment for them. When discipline is connected to wrongdoing, it brings with it a sense of justice. It is reasonable then that, if we do wrong, we get punished. However, it is when we get punished for something that we believe not to be our fault that it hurts most.

Job declares, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him...' (Job 13:15). Although Job deemed himself to be a victim of undeserved suffering, he determined to defend his cause and his character. Even if his suffering became so increased, that the magnitude of them may conclude in his death, Job was depending on God. Therefore, he knew that physical death was not the end for the child of God, but, rather, the beginning of an eternity in glory.

The book of Job is laden with records of incomprehensible amounts of suffering. Nonetheless, the central theme of the book is that of the grace of God, and the overriding theme is salvation by grace alone. Like every other book of the Bible, it has a redemptive purpose – it is a gospel book. Job could say, 'For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth' (Job 19:25). In stating this, Job was not referring to any mere man; no, he was referencing the Son of God, the coming Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is evidenced in his speaking of the 'daysman' (Job 9:33)

which can be rendered "mediator".

The pattern of Job's life was like that of Joseph: it foreshadowed the coming of Christ. Job was a righteous man and was humiliated for a period while God seemed to be hidden from him. However, in due time, he was exalted to prosperity by an overwhelming display of God's glory. This is what we also see in Christ's sufferings and, then, His ultimate exaltation and glorification.

Oftentimes, as God's people, we must be broken before we can be blessed by God. The Christian does well to see and remember the burnt offering of Job (1:5) because it points us to Christ. It reminds us that, since God is pleased with Christ, then God is pleased with the Christian who is in Christ. As believers, we are found in union with Christ and, irrespective of the conditions or the circumstances we may find ourselves in, we can rest completely and absolutely upon Him. ■

✍ **Rev Simon Anderson,**
Aughnacloy Free Presbyterian Church.

The House on the Rock

Realising the Biblical Concept of Family



“ Christian couples can love each other with the love of God because this is the product of the Spirit’s work within. The Gospel is revealed to a perishing world through commitment, humility, selflessness and forgiveness in such a marriage. ”

At the heart of God’s redemptive plan for the world, society and the Church is the family. When He fashioned man out of the dust of the ground, the work was not complete until God formed Eve. Since man was the pinnacle of creation then marriage was at the pinnacle of God’s purpose for

humanity. Marriage was not only given for companionship and partnership; procreation was in the mind of our wise Creator as He commanded Adam and Eve to go forth and multiply. This purpose continued in the life of Noah and his sons even after the old Adamic world was destroyed.

In the post-flood world, God unveiled His redemptive plan for the world by selecting a family, a chosen family, which would become a nation out of which the Messiah would spring. Ultimately the Old Testament is the story of these chosen people. Within the Old Testament family unit, which was set apart by God, there is help for us in our marriages and homes. We too are imperfect, we have our sins and our struggles yet the same God of redemption treasures the covenant family of this New Testament age as He did the Old.

A COVENANT FAMILY

The covenant is a good place to start when unpacking the value of the Biblical concept of marriage and family. Abraham was selected by God to be the father of a mighty nation. For decades he, along with his wife, had longed for children but had become resigned to a childless marriage. Then God stepped in, calling Abraham to leave Ur for another land, to which he would be directed, with the astounding promise that all nations would be blessed through him. For an elderly couple, who never had children, to be told that they would have more children than grains of sand was truly incredible. This was God’s promise and covenant. When Isaac was born he would be the son of that covenant and Israel would be the heir of these amazing promises.

In like manner, Christian marriage is grounded upon the covenant that we enter into, in God’s presence, that we will be faithful to each other as husbands and wives until death. Unlike the marriages of non-Christians, who enter into this solemn engagement without faith, the Christian marriage covenant

“ *There is Providence at work in our domestic circumstances. Every tear, failure, sorrow and challenge is but a staging post along the journey as our homes are moulded by the Master’s loving hand.* ”

is born of the love of God in Christ. Christian couples can love each other with the love of God because this is the product of the Spirit’s work within. Christian husbands and wives by their covenant with each other have a solemn duty to make known in a visible way the everlasting covenant of grace, sealed with precious blood. The Gospel is revealed to a perishing world through commitment, humility, selflessness and forgiveness in such a marriage.

The children that God gives to such a covenant home are therefore the children of the covenant and as such have a special place in the life of the church and economy of God, as the Psalmist said, ‘Lo, children are the heritage of the Lord and fruit of the womb is his reward’ (Psalm 127:3).

A STRUGGLING FAMILY

Abraham, however, struggled to understand the enormity of who he was and what the full import of this covenant represented. Eventually, he did attain a place of complete trust, being called the friend of God. This high pinnacle, however, was reached only after years of struggle, sin and spiritual barrenness. His departure into Egypt, his lies to Pharaoh (where he was willing to sacrifice Sarah’s morality for his self-interest), and especially his relationship with Hagar - all contributed to brokenness within the home. This trend continued throughout the lives of the Patriarchs.

These details, faithfully recorded, illustrate most graphically that family life is tough. We are beset with our failings and fears. We often say and do that which grieves the Lord. On other occasions, we refuse to act and to speak. We do so because we struggle to understand our place as Christian marriages and families within the great

scheme of God’s covenant grace. The standard seems so exacting, so beyond our capabilities, and we fall far short.

A RESTORED FAMILY

Despite their failures and their difficulties, the Patriarchs experienced forgiveness, and as such, they were brought to realise the ultimate plan for their lives. Indeed, mysteriously and wonderfully, God permitted their backslidings and their challenges, which in turn helped them learn about the power of grace. After thirteen years of being cut off from fellowship with God, the Lord came again to Abraham. As Paul would later record, ‘he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief...’ (Romans 4:20). Not only was Isaac given but Abraham was willing to offer the lad up in what was the greatest ancient act of consecration and faith. Sarah, although she laughed in unbelief on hearing the news that she would have a son, as an elderly mother would give birth in faith. When Isaac and Rebekah were bereft of children, Isaac responded by praying earnestly and the Lord opened her womb. Jacob after years of straying and scheming was finally humbled at Peniel, clinging to the Angel as a broken and devastated man, only then did he become the Prince of God.

All of this instructs us that there is Providence at work in our domestic circumstances. Every tear, failure, sorrow and challenge is but a staging post along the journey as our homes are moulded by the Master’s loving hand. Whatever our circumstances are today as husbands and wives, as parents and children, we can learn and strive to be the people that God wants us to be.

A SURRENDERED FAMILY

In every case, we can be moulded into the people God wants us to be

through the crucible of surrender. Certainly, Abraham and Jacob were broken men, realising that their best had failed and in so doing they gave the Lord their all. Abraham learned to be a mighty man of prayer. The Lord’s words concerning his servant when Sodom was about to be destroyed are instructive and inspirational:

‘For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment.’ Genesis 18:19

Jacob as an old man gathering his sons around his death bed instructing and praying is so unlike the Jacob of old. He had stepped into the covenant promises as he revealed to his family the hidden mysteries of God.

A PRAYING FAMILY

In like manner, we need to step into the covenant purpose that God has for our homes. Through repairing and restoring the family altar, praying with and for our children, learning to pray with one another as married couples - surrendering our homes to the Redeemer. Consequently, He will build us up and make us what we in faithlessness thought we could never be.

Oh give us homes, built firm upon the Saviour,
Where Christ is head, and counsellor and guide.
Where every child, is taught His love and favour,
And gives his heart to Christ the crucified.
How sweet to know, that though his footsteps waver,
His faithful Lord is walking by his side. ■

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



“ The faithful witnessing of one Christian can be the catalyst that will see many sinners brought to Christ. Believing prayer is pivotal when it comes to revival, for every revival is birthed in prayer. ”

‘Revival’ is a word that carries with it both challenge and comfort. A challenge in the sense that the need for revival indicates a spiritual decline has occurred in the Church, but also comfort because through revival God can restore to His Church what she has forfeited through sin and worldliness.

On many occasions, County Antrim has known times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Large population centres such as Belfast, Lisburn and Ballymena, along with small villages like Kells, Ahoghill and Portglenone have all experienced God’s reviving power in the past. With much which could be said, we shall confine our thoughts to revival in Antrim from three different centuries.

REVIVAL THROUGH THE 17TH CENTURY

The Six Mile Water is a river that stretches from Larne on the east coast of Ulster to Antrim town on the shores of Lough Neagh. It was here that God moved in 1625. As with all revivals, the state of religion in Ulster at the start of the seventeenth century was dreadful; churches were in ruins and ministers were often non-resident. Politically things weren’t much better either; rebellions were a frequent occurrence. As a result of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnel going into voluntary exile in 1607, the English government in 1609 began a programme of colonisation in Ulster. Many who came as a result of the plantation programme arrived from Scotland where Presbyterianism was under threat from King James I.

Ulster was to become a place where these devoted Christians could escape political and religious persecution. Ministers who crossed the Irish Sea included men like John Livingstone, Josiah Welch (son of John Welch of Ayr and grandson of John Knox), Robert Blair and Edward Brice. James Glendinning was another minister who made the journey from Scotland to Ulster becoming the minister in Carrickfergus but soon moved to Oldstone near Antrim. It was there that Glendinning preached with tremendous success, so much so, that in 1625 God opened the windows of Heaven and multitudes came to experience conviction of sin. The problem, however, was that they could find no peace of soul because whilst Glendinning preached the law with great effect, his preaching was deficient in the matter of grace. Fortunately, neighbouring ministers were skilled at preaching the Gospel and came to help and as a result, many were brought to the assurance of sins forgiven. Dr William Dool Killen (former President of Assembly College, Belfast) described the revival as, 'One of the most remarkable awakenings recorded in the annals of the Church'. The revival changed many ignorant and profane sinners into trophies of grace.

Revival does that. It changes the whole spiritual landscape of a community and it does so through the anointed preaching of the Word of God, by men whose hearts are ablaze with Calvary's love.

REVIVAL THROUGH THE 19TH CENTURY

While faithful ministers continued to preach the Word of God in County Antrim after the Six Mile Water revival, the spiritual temperature sadly dropped to a concerning level within the County in the following years. But God in His mercy was going to intervene again in the County's history; this time in the year 1859. The spark that lit the fires of that revival came three years earlier in the spring of 1856 when Mrs Colville (an English lady from Gateshead in England) arrived in Ballymena to engage in house-to-house visitation. On November 3rd when visiting the home of Miss Brown in Mill Street, Mrs Colville found two ladies there discussing religious matters with a young man by the name of James McQuilkin. Mrs Colville spoke to James about the importance of seeking a personal interest in the Saviour. Soon after their encounter James McQuilkin entered into the experience of the salvation of which Mrs Colville had spoken to him about. When attending Connor Presbyterian Church, McQuilkin's minister (Rev J H Moore) encouraged his young people from the pulpit 'to do something more for God'. Taking to heart the counsel of their minister, Jeremiah Meneely, James McQuilkin, Robert Carlisle and John Wallace decided to meet weekly for prayer and Bible study in the Old National Schoolhouse in Kells, for their edification and the salvation of precious souls. Commencing the prayer meetings in September 1857, it wasn't until New Year's Day 1858 that they saw their first convert.

“ God is not limited in visiting a county once with His blessing; He can visit time and time again. ”

Prayer continued throughout the year so that by the end of 1858 about fifty men were taking part in the prayer meeting; praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon themselves and the surrounding countryside. Their prayers were answered and in the following year, 1859, it is estimated that 100,000 souls were brought into the Redeemer's Kingdom during this year of grace. There are lessons to learn from the details of the 1859 revival that began in County Antrim. The faithful witnessing of one Christian can be the catalyst that will see many sinners brought to Christ. Furthermore, a simple exhortation from a pulpit, taken to heart by a few hearers, can herald the beginning of untold blessings upon a church, community, county or even country. Believing prayer is pivotal when it comes to revival, for every revival is birthed in prayer. May each of us take these lessons to heart.

REVIVAL THROUGH THE 20TH CENTURY

Born seventeen years after the 1859 revival, William Patterson Nicholson, affectionately known as WP, became one of Ulster's greatest evangelists in the early to mid-1900s. Northern Ireland had just become a nation in 1921 and many feared the country was on the brink of civil war. However, God had His man for the hour and after conducting missions in Bangor, Portadown, Lurgan and Newtownards in 1921, W P Nicholson came to the County Antrim town of Lisburn the following year. During that mission over 2000 souls pledged themselves to Jesus Christ; one church in the town had 700 souls added to its membership. Nicholson then moved to Belfast to conduct a mission in the Albert Hall that resulted in some 2,260 souls passing through the inquiry rooms. In a subsequent mission, held in Newington Presbyterian Church Belfast, some 1,100 souls were converted to Jesus Christ. Later on in the 1920s, Nicholson would preach in Ballymena where 2,530 souls were dealt with. Certainly, the number of converts indicated that God was on the move again within County Antrim. W P Nicholson died in 1951, but God already had His man to fill the gap - Dr Ian Paisley. It would be in the autumn of 1975 that Dr Paisley would preach with extraordinary success in Ballymena Town Hall. At the first meeting of that mission, some fifteen souls were converted to Jesus Christ; and throughout the mission, not a single night passed without people being counselled in spiritual matters. Such was the evident token that God was on the move again in County Antrim.

Whether it was in Oldstone in 1625, Kells in 1859, Lisburn and Belfast in the early to mid-1920s or Ballymena Town Hall in 1975, we see that God is not limited in visiting a county once with His blessing; He can visit time and time again. In light of these visitations of God in the past our prayer to God must be, 'Wilt thou not revive us again that they people may rejoice in thee' (Psalm 85:6). ■

✔ Rev David Stewart, Portglenone Free Presbyterian Church.



A Tribute to Mrs E Walkingshaw

On the 29th of October 2022 Mrs Elizabeth Walkingshaw, the former Matron of the Whitefield College of the Bible, went home to be with the Lord. Mrs Walkingshaw will always be remembered in our denomination for her sterling work in the Bible College over many years. She was a true servant of the Lord who gave of her time and talents in the service of her Master. Mrs Walkingshaw always had a concern for the students who passed through the college, continually enquiring about them, long after they had finished their training. She was a woman who loved missionary work and prayed for our missionaries regularly.

Mrs Walkingshaw had been a faithful member of the congregation in Tandragee from shortly after she was saved. She was always in her place on the Lord's Day and the mid-week prayer meetings. As her minister, I always found our sister an encouragement in the work and a pleasure to visit. The Tandragee congregation will miss her greatly.

However, more than anything Mrs Walkingshaw will be missed by her family who loved her greatly. She was indeed a lady who always talked with great affection about her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them' (Revelation 14:13). ■

✉ **Rev John Gray,**
Tandragee Free Presbyterian Church.

Certificate Awarded in Lisburn

✉ Pictured between Mr Daniel Hamilton (Sunday School Superintendent) and Rev Roger Higginson is Jedidiah Wright, who received a certificate and prize for reciting the complete Child's Catechism. ■



Elder Ordained in Omagh



✉ **L to R:** Mr A Dobbin, Rev J Greer (Clerk of Presbytery), Mr H McFarland, Mr D Monteith, Rev C Mercer, Rev J Armstrong (Moderator), Mr R Little and Mr D Aiken.

Mr Darrell Monteith was ordained as an elder in Omagh Free Presbyterian Church on Friday 11th November 2022. Mr Monteith is the son of Mr E Monteith, who served as an elder and Clerk of Session in the Omagh congregation for many years. He is pictured with members of session. ■

Across the Missions



Magherafelt



Ballynahinch



Hebron



Ballynahinch



Portglengone



Lisburn



Lisburn

Autumn 2022 was a busy time for a number of our churches as Gospel Missions were conducted across the province.

In September our Lisburn congregation held a two-week Gospel Tent Mission at the Old Burnhouse Site. Their own minister, Rev Roger Higginson was the evangelist for this 'Christ is the Answer' outreach. Rev Higginson was also the visiting evangelist in two other endeavours. First in Dunmurry during a week long October Harvest Gospel Mission and

then in Portglengone Free Presbyterian Church, where he and Rev Thomas Martin preached the Gospel for two weeks towards the end of October.

The glorious Gospel was further preached in Antrim during October with our Hebron congregation holding a two-week Mission in Ballymoney Town Hall. Their own minister, Rev David Park, was the evangelist throughout. South into County Down, Ballynahinch conducted a two-week mission in their own church building. Mission Board Evangelists, Mr Noel

Shield and Mr Colin Maxwell were the guest preachers. Rev Thomas Martin was back preaching Christ during a two-week November mission in Calvary Free Presbyterian Church, Magherafelt.

Throughout these seasons of rich sowing in these areas, many unsaved were in attendance and a number professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Please pray for these souls to go on with God and for continued tokens for good. To God be the glory! ■

COMPILED BY
ROBERT MCCONNELL



'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.'

John 10:11



Recently, while out walking in the countryside, I found myself having to set free several sheep caught up along the hedgerow. It was a wonderful feeling to see them running back over to the rest of the flock in those moments just after their release. In the Bible there are several main chapters that speak about sheep, namely John Ch.10, Matthew Ch.18, Ezekiel Ch.34 and Psalm 23. From these readings you will discover that sheep and sinners behave in similar ways.

The law for the sheep

In Bible times there were laws laid down for the betterment and benefit of sheep (Exodus 22v1). The Law of God has also been laid out for the benefit of the sinner (Exodus 20v3-17). The Law acts as a school master teaching the sinner what God requires of them.

Sadly, all of us as sinners have fallen short of God's standard.

The life of the sheep

Sheep need a great deal of looking after. Ezekiel 34 says that sheep are subject to disease, sickness, hunger, injury, and being scattered and lost. Ezekiel describes all these terrible events in the life of a sheep as a "dark and cloudy day." Every day for the sinner is dark and cloudy. Their sin is a sickening disease, paining every part of their being, causing loss, injury and eventually eternal destruction.

The loss of the sheep

Sheep are foolish animals that are prone to wandering away. In Luke ch.15 the Lord tells a parable about one such lost sheep, in danger and unable to find its way back to the safety of the fold. Again, what a picture of

the sinner, lost and undone in the darkness of their sin.

The love for the sheep

Neither the hired help, nor the "shepherds of Israel" in Ezekiel's day cared much for the sheep. The "Good Shepherd" however loves the sheep. Sheep do not respond well to cruel or forceful behaviour. Knowing this, the Good Shepherd gently calls and cares for those that are his.

The latter end of the sheep

The latter end for the lost sheep was a most joyful one. 1 Peter 2v25 reminds us that although they had gone astray, the lost sheep have since been returned to the Shepherd of the soul. John says, there is but one-fold and one Shepherd. I wonder dear sinner friend, if you are abiding safely within the fold of God.

QUIZ

As well as sheep, the Bible mentions many other animals. You will need to look up all the Bible references to find each of the different animals in the word search. From the letters that remain you will be able to spell the name of a man that fought and killed a lion.

ANSWER:



Luke 16:21
Jeremiah 8:7
Proverbs 6:6
Luke 12:24
Isaiah 65:25
Luke 12:6
Luke 12:6
Leviticus 11:22
Isaiah 11:7
Mark 10:25
John 21:10
Revelation 19:11
Job 39:27
1 Kings 1:33
Exodus 4:20

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

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

Recently I had to visit the dentist for some long overdue dental work. Visits to the dentist are never a pleasant experience. Probably one of the things that a dentist will often say to their patients is ‘open wide!’. In Psalm 81:10 the Lord instructs His people, ‘open thy mouth wide...’. As we consider this phrase, it has some wonderful lessons for us concerning prayer. With the start of a new year, there is no better time than to refocus our prayer life before God.

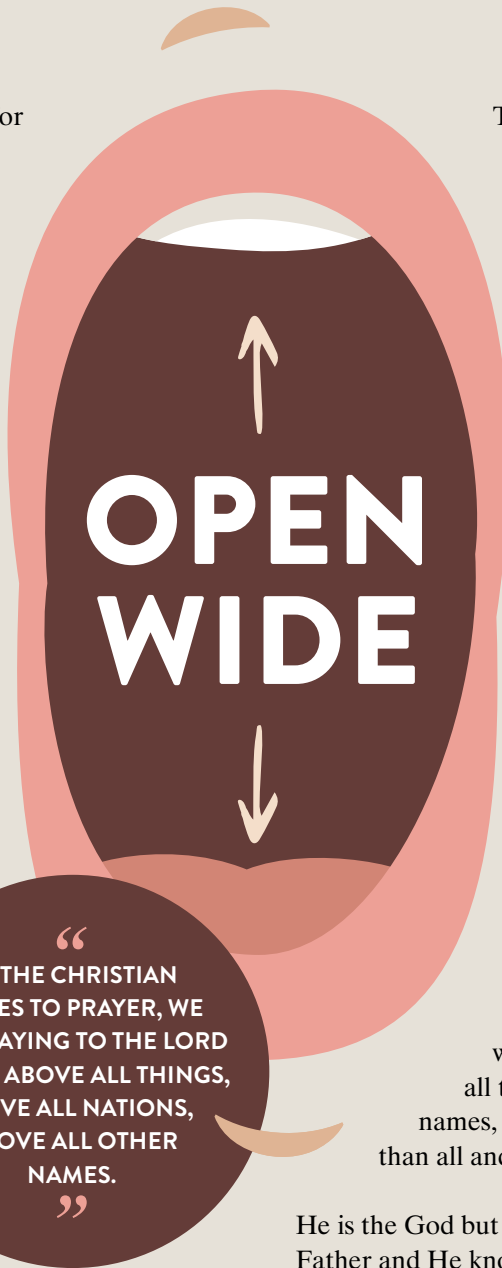
THE EXHORTATION

‘Open thy mouth wide...’ implies a sense of hunger and a sense of a need to have something - that which we do not currently have. When we come to the dinner table and our mouths are open wide, it means that we are hungry and we want to be fed with food.

Similarly, when we come to prayer, both public and private, there needs to be that sense of hunger and more than that, that sense of need. What a needy people we are and what a multitude of needs we have! We must be conscious of our weakness and the more conscious we are of that, the wider we will open our mouths to God in prayer.

THE EXPECTATION

The verse goes on to tell us that when we do open our mouths wide, the Lord reveals, ‘I will fill it.’ Here is the promise in the prayer that God Himself will fill our mouths when we open our mouths in prayer. When we begin to pray as young Christians in the faith, we often fail to find the words to say or fail in being able to put words together. This is especially so in public prayer because it is a daunting thing to pray publicly. However, I would encourage every young Christian, not only to be present at the church prayer meeting but also to participate in them by praying publicly.



There is the expectation that when we open our mouths in prayer, God will give us the words to pray. He will give us the right words and He will enable us to express the desires of our hearts in prayer. What a tremendous truth to know that God will give us the words to say and as such our prayers will be those that are born in Heaven (Romans 8:26).

THE ENCOURAGEMENT

There is also great encouragement as we come to prayer. Prior to this exhortation to open our mouths the Lord said, ‘I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt...’ As we come to the Lord in prayer and open our mouths wide, it is a great encouragement to know we are coming to the true Lord. All false religions and their followers pray to gods of wood and stone or even gods in their heads.

Yet, as the Christian comes to prayer, we are praying to the Lord who is above all things, above all nations, above all other names, above all false gods – our God is higher than all and greater than all!

He is the God but He is also our God. He is our Heavenly Father and He knows exactly what we need and He can provide exactly what we need because He cares for us. He has provided for us in the past and we have this confidence that He will provide for us in the future. Answers to prayer in the past are encouragements for us to pray to God in the future.

Psalm 81:7 ‘Thou calledst in trouble and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.’ The Lord never forsook His people and so His people should never forsake Him in the place of prayer. What a great God we come before in prayer therefore let us open our mouths wide and call unto Him. ■

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

“ THERE ARE HARD PARTS IN THE BIBLE, WE NEED TO ASK FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LEAD US INTO TRUTH, AND TO OPEN THE WORD TO OUR HEARTS AND MINDS. ”

How to Study the Bible



Already we have looked at the subject of prayer and so now we turn our attention to the other great necessity in the life of the Christian – reading and studying the Bible. When we read the Bible, the Lord speaks to us, and when we pray, we speak to the Lord. How can we study the Bible and how should we approach our daily Bible readings in 2023?

REVERENTLY

As we read the Bible we should always remember that this is the Word of God. They are the very words of God to man. Great emphasis should be placed

on reading the Bible during public services and as well in our private times. This means coming to it with great reverence and awareness of Who it is that is speaking to us. When we read other books, whether they be Christian books or secular books, these are just the words of a mere mortal. Such words may or may not influence us. However, our approach to the Bible must be very different. The Word of God is without error because God is without error and that should give us further cause to reverently approach the study of it. What we are reading is truth, all the truth, every word of it is truth.

REGULARLY

How often should we read God’s Word? The people in the Berean church read and searched the Scriptures daily. The Word of God is that daily manna to feed our souls and sustain our spiritual life. Now, if we were to go a few days without physical food, we would know about it. The same principle applies in our reading and studying of the Bible. If we do not feed ourselves regularly on Scripture, then we will become weak and spiritually fragile. Set time aside each day, for the reading of the Scriptures and do not let other things get in your way



means we must take time to allow God to speak to us through His word. There is no point in reading lots of verses every day and yet not hearing the voice of God through them.

SUBMISSIVELY

We must submit ourselves to the authority of the Word of God. When the Lord speaks to us, we must do whatever it is that He is asking us to do – we must be submissive to his authority.

The word of God is our rule and our regulator for life and living. It is the yardstick against which we measure our lives and it is the searchlight into our hearts. It reveals the hidden things and highlights those areas that need to be put right.

The Word of God is that sharp two-edged sword, that pierces right through the heart and soul. We may not always like what we read and find it hard to accept at times, yet we must submit to the Word. As you read the Bible, be submissive to it and be prepared to act upon it.

SYSTEMATICALLY

There should be an order to our Bible reading. There is much in the Bible about doing things in a decent and orderly fashion. That also applies to our reading of the Bible. The Bible is a continual and unceasing revelation to our souls; one verse leads on from the other, and one chapter from the other chapter.

Start at the beginning and then read the entire book through. Go to the next book, read that through and so on. Adopt a reading plan, that suits you and which systematically gets you through the Bible. Many people use Robert Murray McCheyne's method but there are other Bible reading plans, such as Professor Horner's. Whichever method you use, it must be orderly and arranged.

There are also lots of aids to Bible study and a lot of good commentaries such as Matthew Henry's Commentary.

Use a commentary as you read and also a concordance (Strongs or Young's). Do not be afraid to use such aids to get a better understanding but do not depend on them entirely as they are only intended to be a help. First and foremost look to the Lord to help you and give you the understanding which you need.

JOYFULLY

We should read the Bible with great joy and delight. It should thrill our hearts to read the Bible; it should delight our souls when we come to the Word of God. We should never see it as some sort of drudgery or mere ritual, but as we read the Bible each day we should come with a great expectation as to what God is going to say to us. Jeremiah 15:16 reads, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.'

PURPOSEFULLY

The key to understanding the Bible is Christ. The main theme of the Bible is the theme of Redemption through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we should always keep that in mind as we read the Bible. Purpose in our heart that we are going to see more of Christ in the Bible, learn more about Him and so love Him and serve Him more.

Christ is found in all the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. He is to be found in every book. Go to the Bible, first and foremost to find Christ, because in finding Him, our souls will be fed and our souls will be led. Martin Luther said, 'As we go the cradle only in order to find the baby, so we go to the Scriptures only to find Christ'. Let us purpose in our reading and our studying that we are going to find Christ and so feed our souls on Him.

Do not neglect the reading and studying of the Bible this year and allow the Word of God to guide you in 2023. ■

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

PRAYERFULLY

Psalm 119:18 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' There is no better prayer to pray before we read the Bible each day than this one. There are hard parts in the Bible but the Lord in answer to this prayer can reveal them to us. So we need to ask for the Lord's help, we need to ask for the Holy Spirit to lead us into truth, and to open the Word to our hearts and minds.

SLOWLY

While it is good that we discipline ourselves to read as much of the Bible as we can, let us remember why we are reading the Bible in the first place. We are reading the Bible, to hear the voice of God speaking to us. This

REFORMATION HISTORY TRIP TO BRISTOL

Over the weekend of 28 - 31 of October, seventeen young people went on a trip to Bristol to learn about our Christian heritage and to visit the places that were significant during the Reformation period in Bristol. On Friday night, we flew over; and on Saturday morning we met for prayer, then breakfast, before heading out together on the buses to start the walking tour with Pastor Roland Burrows.

We had a wonderful time visiting the different sites and hearing all about the Christian history in places such as the Quakers Friars building on Penn Street and Charles Wesley's House. We also spent some time in John Wesley's New Room Museum. After lunch, we visited some more places including Millennium Square, where there is a life-sized statue of William Tyndale. We also went to Hanham Mount where George Whitefield and John Wesley's open-air preaching took place. Some of the group



even tried "preaching" from the pulpit! After dinner, later in the evening, we learned about Alfred the Great in a lecture given by Pastor Burrows.

On Sunday we attended the morning service at Bristol Free Presbyterian Church. The church kindly provided us with a lovely lunch, and in the evening we attended the evening service in Merthyr Tydfil Free Presbyterian Church in Wales.

On Monday we went to the George Muller Museum and finished our walking tour in Gloucester. There we saw the George Whitefield Memorial, Robert Raikes' House, and the Martyrs Monument.

The weekend was a great encouragement; and, even though there was a lot to take in over such a short period, yet each person in the group came away with a deeper understanding of Church history.

I came away with a reminder to be grateful for the opportunities for Christian fellowship that we easily take for granted, and the access to God's Word in our language, not forgetting the Christian liberties that we enjoy because of how God has worked in our land using ordinary people for His extraordinary plan. ■

✍ **Hannah Douglas,**
Banbridge Free Presbyterian Church.

YOUTH COUNCIL DATES 2023

Online details can be seen at fpcyouth.org or on Facebook and Instagram at *FPC Youth Council*. Alternatively, speak to your local YF leader or delegate.

SCOTLAND OUTREACH

28th - 30th Jan, to Gardenstown FPC
Cost: £55 plus flight. Ages 18+
See online for further details.

INFORMAL BIBLE STUDY

21st January, 7.30pm, Martyrs FPC

DELEGATES' MEETING

6th February, 8pm, Aghalee FPC

REGIONAL NIGHT OF PRAYER (February) REGIONAL RALLY (March)

See online for details specific to your area.

TRAINING WEEKEND

3rd-5th March, Moyallen Centre
See online for cost and further details

CASTLEWELLAN RETREAT

28th April-1st May, Ages 17-29
See online for further details

MAINLAND OUTREACH

21st - 28th Aug, to London FPC
See online for cost and further details

SUMMER OUTREACH NI

Mid-August 2023, to Mulvin FPC
See online for cost and further details

SUMMER CAMP (ages 12-18)

31st July-4th Aug, Greenhill YMCA
Cost: £180pp

STAY UP TO DATE AT



FPCYOUTH.ORG



A Word to Women

A Good Shaking Up?

I am sure many of you have had the experience of walking out the door on a frosty morning, putting your foot down, and feeling the ground slide away beneath you. You gasp, steady yourself, and then continue, but you have that uneasy feeling in the pit of your stomach that comes with a near-miss – you are a bit shaken up.

Sometimes believers get shaken up spiritually. Something happens that jars us out of the familiar, comfortable path we were on – it could be a difficult life event like an illness or bereavement, losing a job or failing an exam. It could also be a good but a major change – becoming a parent or starting a new job. It could be the Holy Spirit pointing out to you a sin in your own life that you had previously committed in ignorance. For Isobel Kuhn, shortly before she left as a missionary to China in the 1920s, it was a false accusation about her to her prospective mission board.

Whatever it is, it is not comfortable, and it may be very unsettling - but is it in any way good for us? Yes! If God in His providence brings a shaking up, then it is for His glory and our good. What benefits could it bring? Think about what we instinctively do if we feel our feet giving way – we look down to see what we slipped on, and we stop for a moment to take stock.

It should be the same with a spiritual shaking up.

“
If God in His providence brings a shaking up, then it is for His glory and our good.
”

WHAT ARE YOU STANDING ON?

The Psalmist describes how he evaluated his footing when he was shaken up by a close friend's betrayal; he states in Psalm, 55:22b that the Lord 'will never suffer the righteous to be moved.' If you are saved, then you are one of 'the righteous'; your foundation is sure because it is God Himself, the One Who does not change. He

will not allow you to be moved – even when it feels like your foot is slipping. Remind yourself of this promise when you have been shaken up.

HOW ARE YOU WALKING?

A spiritual shaking up is a good opportunity for an examination of your walk with God. Have you grown careless in some way? Is there some aspect of your personality that needs to be more under the Holy Spirit's control? Undoubtedly, this jarring can be used to further the work of sanctification in the believer's life. The false accusation made against Isobel Kuhn meant that her mission board delayed sending her out to China. Though deeply troubled at the time, she was able

to look back later and see that it was a good thing that her self-confidence had been completely shaken. The next task that was given to her required great delicacy and sensitivity, and she said later that if she had gone straight to that task without being shaken first, 'I would quite possibly have wrecked that work at the very outset.' (Kuhn, 1986, *By Searching*, p. 124)

WHO ARE YOU HOLDING ON TO?

David counselled, 'Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee.' (Psalm 55:22a) If you have been shaken up and have realised that you are not sufficient for these things, then cling to 2 Corinthians 3:5 – 'Our sufficiency is of God.' Cast yourself again on God for grace or wisdom or whatever your need is.

“
If you have been shaken up and have realised that you are not sufficient for these things, cast yourself again on God for grace.
”

Perhaps, like Isobel Kuhn, we will be able to look back on the shaking up and say, 'I needed that; it was in preparation for this next task or trial which was coming'. Or perhaps the reasons for the shaking up will not become clear on this side of glory. Either way, we can say with Job, 'But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold' (Job 23:10). ■

✉ **Joanne Greer,**

Missionary in Liberia under the Mission Board of the FPCNA.

Let us Pray

We have heard those words so many times from the pulpit that we hardly give any thought to what is about to take place. The congregational prayer is perhaps the least understood part of the worship service. So many are unsure of what they are to do during the pastoral prayer. While some people battle distractions, others pray themselves, while the pastor prays. So what should we be doing? Let me suggest some things to keep in your mind before and during the congregational prayer.

THERE IS ONLY ONE VOICE BUT ALL PRAY

In public prayer, the pastor says 'let us pray', not 'let me pray'. This indicates that all gathered are not praying alone, but as one group unitedly praying with the one 'leading' in prayer. The minister's expressions should reflect this united voice. At the end of the prayer, there should be a congregational 'Amen' expressing the collective assent of the congregation. I know this traditionally does not often happen in many churches, but it certainly has a precedent in Scripture (Deuteronomy 27:15-16; 1 Chronicles 16:35-36; 1 Corinthians 14:14-16).

ANTICIPATE A BATTLE

Psalm 87:2 tells us that the Lord loves public worship more than any other spiritual exercise we can engage in. This means Satan will be giving his full attention to ruining the worship service. Therefore, in coming to public worship, you should expect a battle. But not only do you battle with the devil, you also have an even greater enemy to contend with - your flesh. The 'flesh' is that sinful part of every Christian which

remains until the day we are glorified, and it resists every spiritual exercise that we engage in. Galatians 5:17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' The apostle Paul said that when he went to do something good (such as read or pray) the flesh or sin was right there beside him, battling him (Romans 7:21). You must be acutely aware of this in worship. So bow your head with your pastor, conscious you are entering into a battle with the powers of darkness and with your flesh.

PRAY FOR POWER

Martin Luther believed that 'The highest worship of God is the preaching of the Word; because thereby are praised and celebrated the name and the benefits of Christ.' Preaching is also God's means of bringing transformation to those who gather each Sunday. However, there is something that we must remember as we gather for church on Sunday, and it is that preaching is made powerful through prayer. When the pastor invites us to bow our heads in prayer, he is the one leading in prayer. However, as he prays for the blessing of God to be upon the preaching of the Word, we should pray with him that


the Holy Spirit would drive home the sermon into our hearts and bring about spiritual transformation.

PREPARE FOR CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

Distractions will come from everywhere as we listen to the congregational prayer; therefore, we should pray before the service commences that all distractions will be removed (1Corinthians 7:35). The second commandment impresses upon us the need to prepare for the congregational prayer. 'The duties required in the Second Commandment are the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has instituted in his Word; particularly prayer...' (Westminster Larger Catechism Question 108). So out of love for Christ and a desire to obey and glorify Him, we should give full attention to the congregational prayer.

When your pastor utters those familiar words, 'Let us pray', hopefully you will know that what is about to happen is one of the greatest acts of public worship and moments of service to Jesus Christ and His church. ■

✉ Rev Paul Thompson,
Antrim Free Presbyterian Church.



“Bow your head with your pastor, conscious you are entering into a battle with the powers of darkness and with your flesh.”

Saints, Stools & Skulls

It has not gone unnoticed by me that the last two ‘unsung saints’ were females. Perhaps it is a comment in itself. With no intention of ‘going woke’, the next unsung saint was also a member of the gentler sex, although, by the time you read this article, you will perhaps conclude that gentleness was not her distinguishing feature. Her name is Jenny Geddes, and she was, by occupation, a street seller.

Once again, we stand on Scottish soil during troublesome days. The year is 1637, and the wicked Charles II is seated on the throne. His chief director in matters of religion is Archbishop Laud, who, having cruelly subjugated the English church, now smells the blood of Scottish Presbyterians. He insists that they use the Anglican Prayer Book in their churches, including St. Giles Cathedral. He picks on the wrong people, because these Scots are the inheritors of the mantle of John Knox, and they smell Popery in some of the prayer book teachings.

The first battle was fought on Lord’s Day 23rd July 1637, when the clergy were required to read the collects or prayers. The Dean of Edinburgh complied with the command. An uproar followed, during which our heroine pounced into action. In those days, the worshippers brought their seats for what was frequently a long service. Jenny brought hers and soon discovered that it had other uses than the resting of weary limbs. As the unfortunate Dean began his reading to the hostile crowd, young Jenny hurled her three-legged stool at his head with words to the effect, ‘De’il gie you colic, the wame o’ ye, fause thief; daur ye say Mass in my lug?’ which (being interpreted is) ‘The devil give you colic in your stomach, you false thief! Dare you say mass in my ear?’

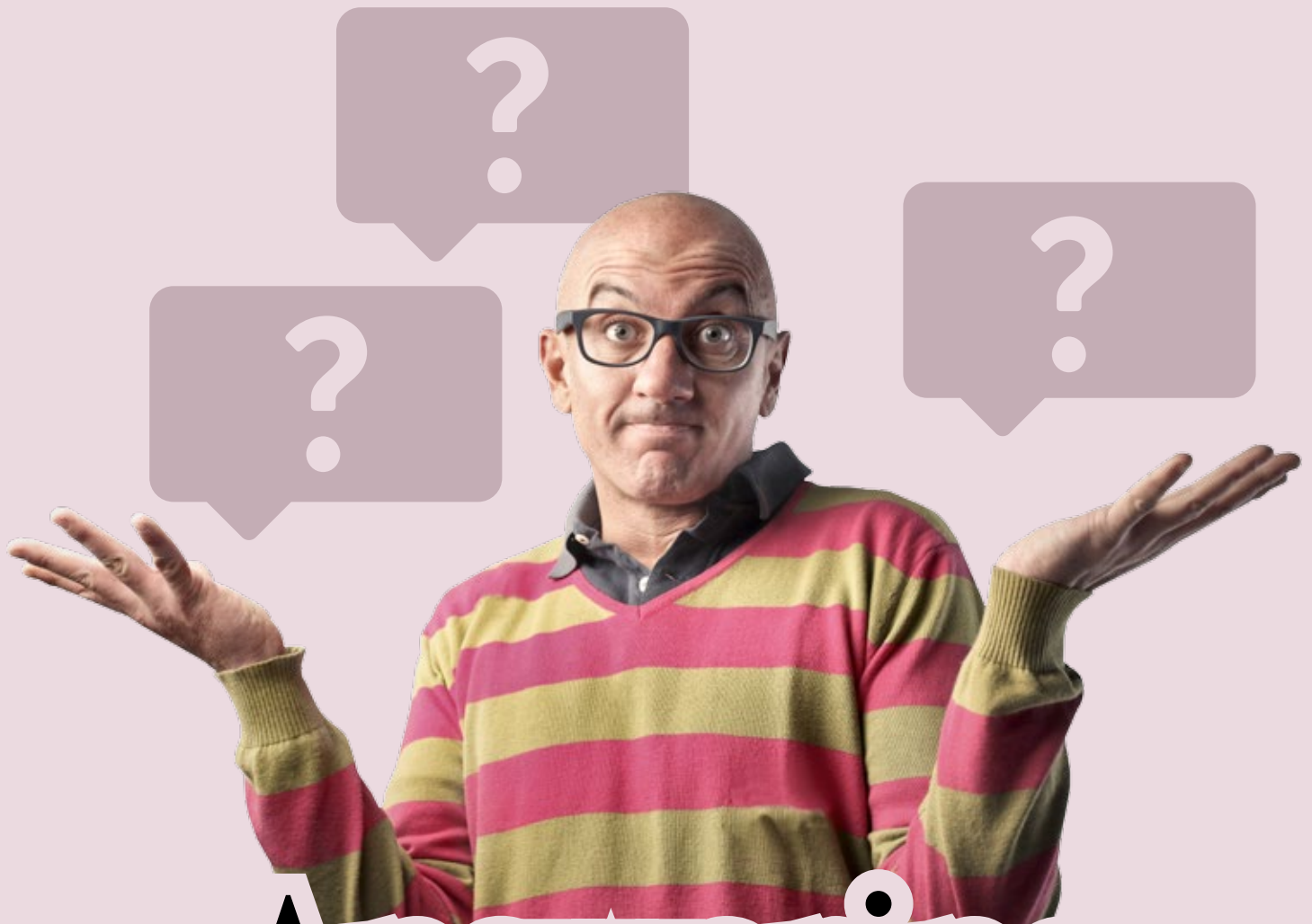
Others followed her example, and not a few Bibles and stools flew through the air. The Provost summonsed officers who ejected the protestors from the cathedral, and they remained outside for the rest of the service, hammering the doors and throwing stones at the windows. Rioting broke out on the street; and, for a while, the Provost and magistrates were besieged in the city chambers and had to negotiate with the rioters.

What was the long-term effect of the protest? Did it turn Laud and his master, King Charles II, from their popish ways? Not at all. But it certainly stirred Scotland and led to the signing of the Scottish Covenant in 1638 where people signed, some with their blood, to resist state interference in the church of Jesus Christ unto death. State torture, exile, and martyrdom were not unknown at this time. Trouble brewed, and major events which followed were the setting up of the Westminster Assembly and also the Civil War, which saw Charles beheaded by Oliver Cromwell.

But let us go back to Jenny. Some may think it is a little romantic to see here a young, pious, Psalm-singing lass sitting on her stool and taking notes during long Puritan sermons. Was she part of a mixed multitude who liked a good fight, religious or not? Surely, the presence of a monument (a three-legged stool) and a plaque in St. Giles cathedral recording how she ‘struck the first blow in the great struggle for freedom of conscience’ would point towards the former. So, I am putting her down as an unsung saint. The Lord knows those who are His.

For the record, I do not advocate the hurling of missiles to help settle church disputes! ■

✍ **Mr Colin Maxwell**, *Home Missionary*.



Answering Atheism

It can feel daunting to enter a discussion with an atheist, especially since the impression is that the atheist is the rational thinker, having the blinkers of faith removed, and with science on side. Whereas, in contrast, the Christian is anti-intellectual, ignorant of the facts, and blindly trusting in an old book. It is not uncommon for the Christian to receive the jibe that we may as well believe in the flying spaghetti monster. We ought to be clear that this is a twisted caricature and far from reality.

Although presented as the view of

science, atheism is not a scientific but a religious claim. Science is the study of natural phenomena in the world through observation and testing; it is not to be feared by the Christian since 'the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.' (Psalm 1:1). The atheist goes beyond that which is observed and makes the religious claim that there is no God.

The Christian and the atheist both take the same scientific observations and give different explanations: the atheist concludes it came about of itself, and

the Christian, with the altogether more logical view, concludes that a well-designed world came from a Designer.

GOD IS NOT IN THE SHADOWS

All of this said, if we are to answer the atheist effectively, it is of vital importance that we do not get bogged down merely in proving the existence of God; primarily because we do not need to prove the existence of God.

As Christians, we do not believe in a god who abides in the shadows waiting to be discovered. Instead, we believe in the God who has already conclusively revealed himself.

Our God has revealed Himself in creation in such a clear manner that ‘the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead’ (Rom 1:20). This renders the God-denier ‘without excuse’ because the things of God are not only clearly seen, but also understood by him. This passage teaches that the atheist proclaims his godless faith in opposition to what he already knows is true.

Not only has our God revealed Himself in creation, but our God has revealed Himself progressively throughout the history of our world, not as one at a distance, but rather as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who undertook for our spiritual forefathers, and who has revealed Himself through prophecies, miracles, and more.

This brings us to the climax of God’s revelation, seen in the person of Jesus Christ. Ours is not a God of the shadows, but rather a God who ‘was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth’ (John 1:14). In discussion with an atheist, we do not need to spend long hours peering behind the curtain of creation to see if there is a God back there. God has personally stepped onto the stage of history in full view of all.

THE ATHEIST’S ROOT PROBLEM

Of course, by nature, the atheist will reject even this, because, as our Saviour said in John 3:19, ‘this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.’ Here, Christ shows us the root of the atheist’s problem; it is not an issue of lacking evidence or rational thinking. The issue is the same one which plagues every human heart: the problem of sin and rebellion against God.

Recognising this, while there can be a place for presenting certain evidence for God, our primary task is not to debate over scientific discoveries and the bare existence of a god. The answer

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We are to be confident that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is what the Lord uses to powerfully save sinners - atheists included. Let us never be ashamed to bring the simple, and yet the wonderful message of Christ and Him crucified, even to the atheist.”

to atheism is the same one which God has given to address the need of all sinners: the Gospel itself.

We are sometimes tempted to think that the Gospel will merely be foolishness if we do not first engage all sorts of arguments on the grounds of God’s existence, and yet, we ought instead to hold the same confidence as the apostle Paul, who said, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek’ (Romans 1:16).

We are to be confident that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is what the Lord uses to powerfully save sinners - atheists included. Let us never be ashamed to bring the simple, and yet the wonderful message of Christ and Him crucified, even to the atheist.

Now, of course, we recognise that even after hearing the Gospel, the atheist will often reject it. This is not a shock to us. We are told in 1 Corinthians 1:18, ‘the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.’ Again, Paul said in verse 23, ‘we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.’ We recognise that many will scoff at the Gospel, but that brings us to the second major part of our answer to atheism.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Since the main issue is a heart problem rather than an intellectual problem, a major part of our answer to atheism is not in what we say to the atheist, but rather in what we say to God.

The Bible tells us that ‘Salvation is of

the LORD’ (Jonah 2:9). Therefore, if we want to see the hard heart of the atheist overcome, and if we want to see the blindness of the heart removed, then we need more than a good argument, and we need more even than the bare preaching of the Gospel. We need the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our Saviour said of the Spirit in John 16:8, ‘when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.’ The margin of our Bible reads ‘convince’, rather than ‘reprove’, and commenting on this verse, Matthew Henry wrote, ‘Convincing work is the Spirit’s work; he can do it effectually, and none but he’. He added, ‘man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart.’ We must recognise this: that we can open the cause, we can preach the Gospel, we can present the things of God, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart.

What a reason we have then to come before our God in earnest prayer, crying out, ‘Lord be merciful, work by thy Spirit.’ In many ways, the words of Christ concerning a rich man could apply to the atheist, ‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.’ (Matt 19:24) We might ask along with the disciples, ‘Who then can be saved?’ Thankfully, while ‘with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.’

How then do we answer atheism? Confident Gospel proclamation, and much prayer, leaning on the power of the Holy Ghost. ■

✉ **Rev Kyle Graham,**
*Port Lincoln and Lock Free
Presbyterian Church, South Australia.*



Visit to Nepal

The work of God in Nepal continues to know God's blessing despite all the restrictions and difficulties that Covid-19 brought to the country. There are many shrines, holy sites and idols across Nepal, and in the midst of it all, God is building His church and calling out a people unto Himself. Due to the effects of Covid-19, there had been no visit to Nepal by the Mission Board since 2019. On knowing that the Youth Conference was scheduled for October, the Mission Board sent out Mr Alastair Hamilton, Rev David McMillan, and me to view the work and to conduct meetings. On arrival, we were met by our worker in Nepal and also by the moderator of the Nepal Presbytery.

The next morning (Saturday and the day that people are off work) is the day that Nepalese Christians observe the Lord's Day because it is a Hindu country and Sunday is a working day for everyone. Mr Alastair Hamilton conducted the

youth meeting before the morning service, which was followed by the worship service. Rev McMillan spoke from Philippians 4:19, encouraging the people that God has promised to supply their every need in Christ Jesus.

After lunch, we set off on a six-hour drive to the Chitwan area. We stayed overnight there and the next morning drove a further hour and a quarter to Nayabasti to open a new church building. It was lovely to see God's people there and their Pastor eager to erect a building for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. This building project was sponsored by the Mission Board, and it was tremendous to see Church planting in operation. It is a simple little church building that accommodates their needs. There are between 20-25 people who worship God there. It is a Buddhist area, and the Pastor has been saved from Buddhism.

We spent the remainder of that day visiting five Churches around that area. Rev McMillan and I took it in turn to bring a short word to the local Pastor and the folks that gathered. These churches had been opened by Rev Wesley Graham and it was great to see his labours continuing to come to fruition. Some of these churches are growing steadily with over one hundred people in attendance. Others are smaller with between 20-50 at their meetings.

On Monday, we visited the new LTBS Radio Station which is approximately a forty-minute drive outside Kathmandu. What stunning scenery there was to view with the snow-capped Himalayas in the background! From this studio, the Word of God sounds forth across much of the area. The Youth Conference was held from Tuesday to Thursday, and some 143 young people registered for the conference. Many of them travelled long hours on a rickety bus, along twisty and treacherous mountainous roads to come to the meetings. These young people were very enthusiastic and keen to learn more about God's Word. Rev McMillan and I spoke to them from the book of Ruth, highlighting many topics like backsliding, restoration, serving the Lord, doing God's will, going on a date, looking for a partner in life from a Christian viewpoint, and Christian marriage.

During our time, we also visited two other Churches and the children's home. It was a blessed trip with a lot packed into the time there. Do continue to pray much for the churches and radio work in Nepal and God's people in that needy land. They are a lovely and very welcoming people. May God bless them richly and may He continue to build His kingdom in the land of the Himalayas. ■

✉ **Rev Jonathan Creane,**
Secretary of Asian Subcommittee.



Missionary Reports

Home & Abroad

Ballynahinch Mission



Noel Shields and Colin Maxwell were the two evangelists who preached at the two-week Gospel mission in Ballynahinch Free Presbyterian Church in October and November. The meetings themselves were preceded by a week of door-to-door outreach. The town itself and

some of the outlying districts were reached and members of the congregation helped in distributing invitations to the meetings along with Gospel tracts.

The meetings were well attended, and were noted for the infectious enthusiasm of the members of the congregation along with bright congregational singing. A number of soloists and other singers played their important part in the proceedings. Both evangelists were also given opportunity to give their personal testimony to the grace of God in their lives. George Whitefield used to speak about a 'felt Christ', and it provided an opportunity to show that the saving faith is about having that personal relationship and union with the Son of God. Unsaved attended every night and heard a variety of messages over the two weeks, which centred round the Person and Work of Christ and the way of salvation. One message was especially targeted at backsliders.

The meetings went in all too quickly. We are presently unaware of any professions of faith, but the good seed was faithfully sown, and we continue to look to the Lord of the Harvest to ensure that His word prospers in the thing whereto He has sent it. (Isaiah 55:11). ■

✓ Mr Colin Maxwell, Home Missionary.

Liberia School Update



I know many of you have been praying for the Christian School Pilot Project, and I appreciate this. When I returned to Liberia in April 2022 after deputation in Ulster, we were working towards a possible start date of September 2022 – although, at that time, the building work at the proposed school site had already been delayed. Over the next months, even as we made progress with government documentation, preparing materials, and working on the curriculum, two main concerns emerged. Firstly, there was no further progress on the building work by the landlord, due to major road construction immediately adjacent to our rental property, the heavy rains in the summer months, and possibly other factors unknown to us. Secondly, during the summer of 2022, the global increase in fuel costs and general costs of living reached Liberia, and we realised that we need to rethink the budget and prospective tuition fees in this current economic climate.

As most of you have undoubtedly gathered, we were unable to start a preschool class in September 2022 as we had hoped, so our prospective start date has rolled on to September 2023. Please do continue to pray that God will open the necessary doors and that He will give me the wisdom to know His will and courage and faithfulness to do it. ■

✓ Miss Joanne Greer, Missionary in Liberia.

MISSIONARY VISION

Plans for two United Children's Camps

United Children's Camp began in the summer of 2014, under the Mission Board of the Free Presbyterian Church. The vision was to bring together children aged 7-12 for a week where they could make friends with other young children from our various churches, have a time of recreation, and most importantly, be taught the things of God. Since 2014, the camps have been a great blessing to our denomination. It has been of particular blessing to hear of children whom the Lord has saved at camp, and to see them grow in their walk with the Lord.

Over 2020 and 2021, our camp was not able to meet in person; however, we did have a Christmas broadcast in 2020, and we also held an online camp via Zoom in 2021. We were so glad when the residential



aspect of our camp recommenced in summer 2022. Over 75% of the group were first time campers, many being away from home for the first time. The Lord truly blessed at that camp, and many parents contacted us to say how much they appreciated the week that their children had enjoyed.

While we enjoyed that week, we were mindful that the camp was oversubscribed by almost 50%, meaning that many children didn't get the opportunity to attend. After prayerful consideration by the Mission Board, it was agreed that we would hold two children's camps in 2023, thereby doubling the number of children who will be able to attend. Both camps will have the same format and teaching, so

we encourage parents to see which of the weeks will suit you best and book for your child to come to that camp.

We really look forward to welcoming your child or children at Camp 2023. ■

✍ **Rev Ryan McKee**, *Camp Director*.

CAMP DETAILS FOR 2023:

**MOYALLON CENTRE
near Portadown**

First Camp: 24 July - 28 July

Second Camp: 31 July - 4 August

Cost: £130 / person

Application forms:

Available on www.fpcmission.org

New Chairmen Appointed



Leadership changes took place last autumn in the Missionary work of our denomination as a new Chairman was appointed to both the Mission Board and Missionary Council. These changes came about because the ten-year term in office had come to an end for Rev Ian Harris as Chairman of the Mission Board and Rev David Park as Chairman of the Missionary Council.

At the Presbytery meeting in Armagh in September 2022, Rev Colin Mercer was appointed as the new Chairman of the Mission Board. Rev Mercer is the minister of Omagh Free Presbyterian Church and has previously ministered in the congregations in Castledearg, Mourne and Greenville (USA). While in America, Mr Mercer served for seven years on the North American Mission Board; and, for six of those years, he was the Secretary of their Board.

Rev Mercer has been a member of the Ulster Mission Board for just over five years, and during that period, served for three and a half years as the Secretary of the Ugandan subcommittee.

At the meeting of the October 2022 Presbytery in Crossgar, Mr Eric Graham, Clerk of Session of the Lisburn Church,

was appointed as the new Chairman of the Missionary Council. Mr Graham is a foundation member of the Lisburn congregation and was elected as one of the first elders of the church in 1977.

Eric's wife Mrs Mona Graham was appointed to the Missionary Council in 1970 and has continued serving on the Council faithfully since that time, and Eric then joined her in that role approximately twenty years ago. Mr Graham has also been a member of the Mission Board for approximately eight years.

Both new Chairmen have a great vision and burden for Missionary work, and they have wide experience in visiting the Mission Field. Please pray that they will both know the Lord's wisdom, guidance, and blessing on their term in Office. ■

2023 MISSION TRIPS



“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

Mark 16:15

UGANDA

at the
EMMANUEL
MISSION STATION



Dates:

26 June - 7 July

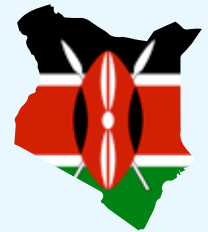
Led by: Rev Garth Wilson

Outreach Activities:

- Conducting a VBS
- Open Aairs
- Youth Conference

KENYA

with the
GLORY BIBLE
CHURCH



Dates:

10 - 26 August

Led by:

Rev Paul Foster & Rev Garth Wilson

Outreach Activities:

- Conducting a VBS in three locations
- Youth Conference

Cost of both trips: £1,000 / person (subsidised price)

Application forms available on the Mission Board Website: www.fpcmission.org

The Kenya Trip is run in conjunction with the Youth Council

Places are Limited / Applicants must be 18 years old or over

More details can be obtained from the Team Leaders

Office:

Mrs Glenda Graham,
3 Carrigenagh Road,
Kilkeel, BT34 4NE
T: 028 4176 5574
office@fpcmission.org

Chairman:

Rev Colin Mercer,
12 Crevenagh View,
Omagh, BT79 0JH
T: 028 8224 2299
rev.mercer@fpcmission.org

Secretary:

Rev David McMillan
1 Drummanmore Grange,
Armagh, BT61 8RQ
T: 028 3778 8150
rev.mcmillan@fpcmission.org

Treasurer:

Mr Alastair Hamilton,
37A Ballymacvea Road,
Kells, Ballymena BT42 3NH
T: 078 6061 6302
a.hamilton@fpcmission.org

STAY UP TO DATE AT



FPCMISSION.ORG



Dates For The Diary

JANUARY

27th

**MARKETHILL FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
YOUTH PRAISE SERVICE**

Time: Friday 8.00pm

Speaker: Rev David Stewart

Various singers taking part

FEBRUARY

12th - 17th

**MULLAGHGLASS FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BIBLE TEACH WEEK**

Time: Sunday 7.00pm

Monday - Friday 8.00pm

Speaker: Rev Timothy Nelson

Whitefield College of the Bible

Entrance Examinations

Entrance Examinations for prospective candidates for the **Theological Course** at the **Whitefield College** for the year beginning September 2023 will take place at the Whitefield College on the following dates:

Monday 20 February, 19.00: English Grammar

Tuesday 21 February, 19.00: English Language & Expression

Wednesday 22 February, 19.00: History

Candidates must report by 18.50 and are expected to provide their own writing paper. All candidates should forward the Entrance Examination Fee of £35 (for each subject) before 3 February 2023 to:

Whitefield College of the Bible, 356 Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 8GL

E: whitefieldcollege@icloud.com (Email for Bank Transfer details)