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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION

A woman with a braid is seen from behind, looking out over a landscape. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The background is a blurred natural setting with trees and a wooden fence.

12 WAYS TO HUMBLE YOURSELF

» A CALL TO PRAYER: PART 2

» EL OLAM: THE EVERLASTING GOD

» FACING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS



A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

We look back to Bangor Convention with thanks to God for His presence and for the anointed, challenging ministry of His Word. Several smaller Bible weekends and convention weekends take place over the coming weeks and we particularly look forward to the larger Conventions in Edinburgh, 30 June - 5 July, and the Irish Midlands, 16 - 18 August.

At the time of writing, the Bible College students have just joined our full-time members for five weeks of outreach and ministry placement. This runs from mid-May through until 16 June. We trust these weeks of intensive outreach will result in many having life-changing encounters with the Lord Jesus Christ.

July and August are busy months as the programme of twenty-five children's and young people's camps take place. We are so grateful to God for the blessing the camps prove to be, but every year we become more aware of the increasingly dark and godless influences which affect today's young folk. Please pray that God's presence and protection will be evident at each camp.

These days bring a number of changes of personnel and their locations. At the end of April both Samuel Patterson and Scott McFarland withdrew from the Mission, each having accepted ministry opportunities in Northern Ireland. Noel McClintock is withdrawing from the Mission at the end of June, having given twenty-eight years to the work. We are grateful to each of these men for their fellowship and commitment to the work and wish them God's blessing upon their future ministry.

We face further major adjustment with the retirements of Trevor and Sandra Matthews and David and Marjorie Bennett in July. Both Trevor and David entered The Faith Mission Bible College in October 1972 and Sandra and

Marjorie commenced training in October 1976. This means that each couple has given a combined total of ninety years of service with the Mission. We thank God for their passion and dedication in ministry and their wisdom and commitment in fulfilling their respective leadership roles. We wish them a blessed and fruitful retirement.

As intimated previously, several Mission personnel relocate and take up new responsibilities during the summer. Changes are usually accompanied by challenges and each of those involved will value prayer for the Lord's overshadowing. Some will be leaving areas they have been in for several years and this is particularly poignant for Paul and Elizabeth Crowe who move to Aberdeen after being in central Wales for the past nineteen years. Also, especially uphold Jim and Hilda Lyons as Jim assumes the responsibility of Director for Ireland and oversight of the Irish Border District. Interim arrangements are in place for the oversight of the North West Irish District from July onwards and we value prayer for the Lord's provision of a new leader for the work there.

Eight students graduate from the Bible College on 22 June and we are delighted that four of them will be joining the Mission. From September onwards Brian and Hazel Parker are to be based in Cootehill, County Cavan. Pray for them as they prepare to resettle their young family; pray too that guidance will be given as placements are finalised for Reuben Lyons and Lewis MacDonald who also join the work in September. Finally, please pray that student enrolment for the College session commencing in September will more than replace those who are graduating.

Thank you for your fellowship; we trust you will enjoy this edition of the magazine. •

| *John Townsend, General Director*

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

BY SAM GORDON



PART 4

‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.’

Galatians 5:22-23

The Fruit of the Spirit is Kindness

A Japanese proverb says that ‘One kind word can warm three winter months.’ The Russians express it in a different way: ‘A word of kindness is better than a fat pie.’ Mark Twain once said, “Kindness is a language which the deaf can

hear and the blind can read.” That tells us everyone can relate and respond to kindness. Sadly, in today’s world, kindness is in short supply. There is so much insolence and incivility in today’s culture.

In a sense, kindness is king, a fruit of the Spirit that we can't do without. Kindness is not a weakness; it is a God-like character, for God is kind. To have the grace of kindness reproduced in our lives is to be more like Jesus. It is an essential ingredient in the mix of human relationships. *'Be kind and compassionate to one another...'* (Ephesians 4:32).

Experience kindness

We see the kindness of God every day. The theologians call it 'common grace', God doing what He does best; it's His nature to be kind. It was God's kindness that came looking for us and led us to repentance (Titus 3:4-5, Romans 2:4). We don't deserve His kindness and even though we turn away from it, it doesn't put Him off. He showers us with kindness on a daily basis.

Express kindness

As the people of God we need to be showing kindness to others. A lady was doing social work amongst the homeless. She found a hungry, dirty, destitute man and gave him a good meal. The man thanked her for her kindness and said, "I wish there were more people like you." The lady replied, "There are, look out for them." The man thought for a moment and then answered, "Yes, ma'am, but you came looking for me." This is the ethos of kindness: if we don't exhibit it, how will sinners be attracted to Jesus?

In 2 Samuel 9, King David asked the question, *'Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?'* David showed the kindness of God to the grandson of his enemy Saul. Mephibosheth had been crippled when he was dropped as a baby. When David summoned him to the palace, he thought this was the end for him. Instead David showered him with kindness

by inviting him to sit at the king's table each day. Our kindness to others should mirror the Lord's unfailing kindness to us. It should affect our loved ones, those within our church family, in the workplace and in the wider community. It can precipitate a reaction from those who don't expect to receive kindness.

Embrace kindness

Is kindness an attribute you would like? We can't do it for ourselves; we need the help of the Holy Spirit to cultivate the spiritual fruit of kindness in our daily lives. The Greek word for 'Christ' (*christos*) and the Greek word for 'kindness' (*chrestos*) are very similar, just one letter of a difference. The fact is people will see Christ in us when they see our acts of kindness.

The Fruit of the Spirit is Goodness

Goodness is not feeling good, looking good or owning good – it is being good and doing good. C S Lewis said, "No man knows how bad he is until he has tried to be good." In Romans we read the testimony of Paul and the internal conflict, the battle of the soul – the things we don't want to do, we do, and the things we want to do, we don't do.

Goodness is not natural to mankind, it is supernatural, a Spirit-produced fruit in our lives. Only then can we be productive Christians and impact our generation for Jesus Christ. If you were looking for Jesus in the Bible you would look for a person who is helping others. In the Anglo-Saxon language the word for 'God' meant 'good'. Good and God are related, intertwined, and if we left God out of 'good' there would be nothing left. Jesus told the rich young ruler in Mark 10, "If you want to call me good, you must call me God, if you won't call me good you can't call me God." The two are inseparable.

God is Good in His Person

When we look through the Bible we discover that goodness is a God-like characteristic. *'With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: "He is good"'* (Ezra 3:11); *'For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations'* (Psalm 100:5); *'The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him'* (Nahum 1:7).

God is Good in His Precepts

Isaiah declared, *'The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever'* (40:8). God's word is good. What He says is good, what He teaches is good, what He commands is good, what He promises is good. Is it any wonder we call it 'the good book'?

Good is Good in His Purposes

Because God is good then what He does is good. It cannot be any other way. Read the Creation account and along the way we are told God said it was *'good'*. At the very end He calls it *'very good'* (Genesis 1:31). Paul tells us in Romans 8:28 that God is working all things for our good. This does not mean all things are good; it does mean that God has a purpose for everything He allows to intrude into our lives. Whatever it may be, God can turn the worst of times into the best of times.

Filled full of Goodness

The apostle Paul tell us that is possible for us to be full of goodness. Romans 15:14 and 2 Thessalonians 1:11 speak about being good and doing good. We know God is good and we are not good. The only way for us to be good is through a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. When that happens we share in the divine nature (see 2 Peter 1:4). In Acts 11:24 we read of Barnabas that *'he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith,*

and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.' He was *'good'* and *'full of the Holy Spirit'*. His goodness is mentioned before his fullness.

Attaining Goodness

Goodness is not just a kindly disposition but it is also a kindly action. One of the best definitions I have read is: *'Goodness is personal godliness lived out in a practical way.'* How do we do that? We do it by reading the Word for ourselves, by feasting on the manna of Scripture. The Word of God shows us the way of goodness. It is not only about doing *'good'* in our walk with Christ; it is about doing *'good'* work. We are urged this from Psalm 37:3: *'Trust in the Lord and do good.'* We are not saved by our good works but we are saved unto good works. They are the evidence of grace in our life. An excellent example in the Scriptures is Dorcas (Acts 9). She didn't have any spectacular gifts, but she had a needle and thread and used it to do good for others in need. At her death all the widows stood around her body, most of them dressed in the clothes Dorcas had made! Her clear, compelling testimony is a challenge.

To do good is to see no duty too small to do,
To see no task too meagre to tackle,
To see no person too insignificant to encourage and lift,
To see no person too unimportant to help,
To see no feet too unclean to stoop and wash.

God is good and what He does is good. John Wesley knew the secret when he said, "Do all the good you can, to all the people you can, for as long as you can." •

Sam has an international Bible teaching ministry under the banner of Truth for Today. Check out his website for free resources – www.truthfortoday.co.uk.

EL OLAM

אל עולם

THE EVERLASTING GOD

Genesis 21:33

BY H E GOVAN

It was at Hebron, southern Judea, where Abram and his 300-strong encampment was located, when God visited the cities of the plain. When Isaac was born and he proved the promise of El Shaddai, he moved south to Beersheba. There, he was thirty miles south of Hebron, and Jerusalem twenty miles further north.

The Israelites spoke of ‘from Dan to Beersheba’ as we speak of ‘from John O’Groats to Land’s End’. Beersheba was on a wide spreading plain. So why did Abram leave Hebron on this caravan route to Egypt where water supply was so good to move towards Beersheba? The horror of the destruction of the cities of the plain may have caused him to want to leave it all behind, or maybe he was just searching for new pastures for his flocks and herds. Moving with so much stock must have taken them three or four days to reach the district between Gerar and Beersheba.

At the end of Genesis 21, the Canaanite king was Abimelech, a great man who sought to form an alliance with Abraham when he recognised how God’s favour and protection was upon him. Some disputes had to be settled, one of which included a supply of water, but they got the oath of alliance sworn before Abimelech went back to his capital. Then, Abraham confirmed his rights, planted a few seeds which would form lofty evergreens by his well and he called on the name of Jehovah, ‘*the everlasting God*’.

El Olam, the God of eternity, is a title even rarer than those we have already considered. ‘*In the Lord Jehovah is an everlasting rock*’

(Isaiah 26:4); *'Our Redeemer from everlasting is Thy Name'* (Isaiah 63:16); *'Jehovah is the true God, the living God... the everlasting King'* (Jeremiah 10:10). These verses approach a near expression of this Name, as does the end of Psalms: *'from everlasting to everlasting'*. But the only passage other than Genesis 21:33 in which the precise title occurs is Isaiah 40:28: *'the everlasting God... the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary.'*

This is describing what is beyond our furthest vision, either forward or back. Seen in this light God is the God of infinite duration, who was in the infinite past, and will be in the infinite future, who superintends and controls all ages. Psalms 90 and 91, attributed to Moses, combine the thought of God's eternity with His supremacy and all-sufficiency. This is summed up in *'He that dwelleth in the secret place of El Elyon shall abide under the shadow of El Shaddai'* (91:1) and *'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God'* (90:1-2). Why is it that, especially on this occasion, Abraham worships God as the everlasting? In Genesis 20:13 Abraham says to the King of Gerar, *'God caused me to wander from my father's house'*. Wandering, like the lost sheep, indicated he had often, as a flock master, gone to seek and recover lost sheep and felt as far as the world was concerned, to be astray.

Coming to Beersheba marked the climax of his pilgrim course. So, he was deeply aware of how rootless and unanchored his earthly life was – insecure, here today and gone tomorrow. From Ur to Haran (11:31), from Haran to Shechem (12:5), Shechem to Bethel (12:8), Bethel to Egypt (12:10), from Egypt back to Bethel (13:3), from Bethel to

Hebron (13:18), Hebron to Gerar (20:1) and Beersheba (21:31). This was a story of unending 'fittings'. Would his life always be this way – a nomadic life of continual restlessness and change, with no place to call his own? In fact the cave at Hebron, in which Abraham, his wife, son, grandson and great-grandson were eventually buried was the only bit of land he ever possessed. But here at Beersheba, having brought his flocks to the verdant pastures and living streams, would he be ousted by the men of Gerar?

However, it was here the new discovery of God was made – El Olam, God the Everlasting. This special title given to Jehovah here meant that Abraham, oppressed with the sense of earthly instability, was led to set against it the fact of God's eternity. C G Finney amplified this as 'God is a God without a beginning, a God who never will cease to be, a God who will never grow old, to whom eternity is what present time is to us.' When Jehovah revealed Himself to the patriarch as El Shaddai, He spoke of establishing with him *'an everlasting covenant'* (Genesis 17:7). This revealed to his changing earthly condition a secure attachment to eternity. This compared how fleeting life is against the unchanging face of nature, with *'everlasting hills'* and perennial streams; but actually it is the world which is transitory and man permanent.

Abraham was content to be a pilgrim and stranger on the earth, because he realised he was of an eternal realm (Hebrews 11:8-10). While his earthly tent was always being dissolved, his building in the unseen and eternal stood firm. He knew his vision had been lifted far above the earthly Canaan as God's possession for him, to that country it typified beyond the world's horizon. His life was not unanchored; in fact the anchor had

entered far into that which is *'within the veil'* and there it was attached to the imperishable God. It is one thing to be astray from God, but quite another to be astray with God. The world often thinks *'pilgrims and strangers'* very far astray; eccentric, not conforming to the fashions or treading the maxims or by the principles of the broad way. But our response to this would be:

*Marvel not that Christ in glory all my inmost heart has won;
Not a star to cheer my darkness, but a light beyond the sun.
All below lies dark and shadowed, nothing there to claim my heart,
Save the lonely track of sorrow where of old He walked apart.*

It is God who had called him to wander from Ur of the Chaldees which was once his home. Abraham now found himself astray *with* God, not *from* God, because the Everlasting God was his true home. It is a wonderful realisation to know we are children of eternity. Coming into the inheritance of 'everlasting' mercy, kindness, righteousness, love, joy, light, strength, salvation of which the Old Testament speaks. Waiting upon the Everlasting God brings into one's life everlasting vitality and everlasting strength (Isaiah 40:28-31). Whatever the earthly benefits of following the call of God may be, the ultimate goal is certain and so real.

When we move into the New Testament the norm of eternity is constantly used. *'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God'* (John 1:1); and He is *'the same yesterday and today and forever'* (Hebrews 13:8). It is Jesus who brings us, otherwise perishing utterly, into the fellowship of the eternal (John 3:16). And it is He who

has brought us out of the world and made us pilgrims heading to eternal bliss.

Abraham, a homeless pilgrim on earth, sat down by these symbols of eternity – the perennial spring and evergreen tamarisk. This was his *'water of life'* and *'tree of life'* (Genesis 2:8-16, Revelation 22:1-2). Underneath him, he felt were *'the everlasting arms'*. With joy he drew water from the wells of salvation which became within him *'a well of water springing up into everlasting life'* (John 4:14). This everlasting God *'is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death'* (Psalm 48:14).

When Theodore Beza, the great reformer and Bible translator, was dying in 1605, he told his friends of an exposition he had heard years before, near Paris, on Psalm 91: *'He that dwelleth in the secret place of El Elyon shall abide under the shadow or El Shaddai'*. It came home to him with power, and by grace he was enabled in faith to appropriate to himself the following verse: *'I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God in Him will I trust'* (Psalm 91:2). And in those final hours of life he testified how through all storm and danger in his earthly pilgrimage, God had fulfilled to him the promises of the Psalm. "I have no more to wait for," he said, "but the fulfilment of those final words – *'I will show him my salvation'* – which with confidence I look for."

If we are prepared for its implications, we too can claim such reality of the Everlasting God. With Him, our future is secure. Blessed is His Name, our God who is the Supreme God, and the All-Sufficient God is also the Everlasting God. No power in heaven or earth or hell shall *'separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Romans 8:39). ●

| *Adapted from the writings of HE Govan*

BY DAVID LANG

The Vision of Abram

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid... I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward"

Genesis 15:1

After what things? The Lord had told Abram to leave his country and relatives and go to a land that God would show him. God promised to make of him a great nation, including a blessing that would reach all families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). Abram departed with his wife, his nephew Lot and others. He came to the land of Canaan where the Lord appeared to him, saying, *'to your descendants I will give this land.'*

Abram and Lot both had flocks and herds and when a dispute arose between their herdsmen, Abram suggested they should separate, giving Lot the first choice. When Lot saw the fertile plain of Jordan he chose to dwell there. He was drawn to the city of Sodom, where the citizens were described as being *'sinners before the Lord exceedingly'* (Genesis 13:13). Then several kings made an alliance to make war with the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, resulting in the latter fleeing to the mountains and taking Lot with them. When Abram heard that his nephew was taken captive, he pursued his captors and brought him back along with the provisions. The king of Sodom said to Abram, *'Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.'* But Abram declined that offer, being wary of the king of Sodom possibly claiming that he had made Abram rich.

The Discomfort of Abram's Depression

Abram must surely have been disappointed by Lot's choice to live in Sodom. Another source of discouragement was the absence of children. *'Lord God, what will you give me seeing I go childless ... you have given me no offspring.'* It would appear that the absence of children weighed heavily on Abram's mind, as children would be essential if God's promises were to be fulfilled. But the Lord reassures Abram by revealing His unfolding plan.

The Demonstration of God's Design

It is lovely to see how patiently God deals with Abram. He answers him immediately, *'one who will come from your own body shall be your heir'* (Genesis 15:4). He then invites him to look at the stars, promising, *'so shall your descendants be'* (15:5). And, as if the scales had fallen from his eyes, Abram *'believed in the Lord and He accounted it to him for righteousness'* (15:6).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul says of Abraham, using his later name (see Genesis 17:4-5), *'...being not weak in faith, he considered*

not his own body now dead. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief... being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was reckoned to him for righteousness' (Romans 4:19-22).

The Dispelling of Abram's Disquiet

God further encourages Abram by reminding him that He is the Lord who had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give him this land to inherit it (15:7). But Abram is still puzzled as to how all this will work out, and by his question in verse 8, it seems that he has retreated somewhat from his expression of faith in verse 6. Still apprehensive, he asks, *'Lord God, how shall I know that I shall inherit it?'*

Remarkably, God's patience still shines out, making a covenant with Abram, and sharing prophetic secrets about His descendants, (vv.13-14). Verses 9, 10 and 17 describe an ancient form of agreement or contract; a similar procedure is found in Jeremiah 34:18-19. The smoking furnace and burning lamp represent the Lord passing between the divided animals and thus ratifying the covenant. This ritual may seem strange to us, but Abram would be familiar enough with these procedures in his day.

Does Abram's vision have anything to teach us? Surely, it has. Abram's God is our God! A God who keeps His covenant promises. He is our shield, speaking of protection. He is our exceeding great reward, speaking of provision. He does not simply bear our shield - He is our shield! He does not only reward us - He is our reward!

*Dear name! The rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding place,
My never failing treasury filled
With boundless stores of grace.*

John Newton •

David is married to May and lives in East Lothian, Scotland.

BY FRANK
PARKER

Discovering Jesus in John's Gospel

The Deity of Jesus Christ
1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being. 4 The life was the Light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
— John

In chapter 6 of John's gospel we see a gallery of word pictures, each depicting Jesus. Sometimes the portrait is conveyed by just a few words. The value of such comments is in the picture that their perception of Jesus reproduces. Their understanding of Jesus is sometimes limited but at other times it is surprisingly full of remarkable insight.

Jesus the Healer (v.2)

John draws attention to the great crowds following Jesus *'...because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.'* This reveals the compassion of Jesus for sick people and His miraculous healing power.

Jesus the Leader of His Disciples (vv.3-9)

One of the features of Jesus' leadership was His wise testing of His disciples. Jesus saw the great multitude following and asked Philip, *'Where are we to buy bread that these may eat? And this he was saying to test him for He Himself knew what He was intending to do'* (vv.5-6). We should not be surprised when Jesus puts us to the test. He does it to develop our faith in His power.

Jesus the Organiser (v.10)

Faced with a hungry multitude, Jesus is calm and has everything under control. *'Have the people sit down,'* He commanded. We know from other gospels that Jesus organised the

crowd into manageable companies. The Christian life should be a disciplined, orderly life reflecting the balanced life of Jesus.

Jesus the Provider (vv.11-13)

The feeding of the five thousand was an outstanding creative miracle by Jesus. It reveals Jesus as Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord who provides and another proof of the deity of Jesus.

Jesus the Prophet (v.14)

When they saw the miracle Jesus had performed the people said, *"Truly this is the Prophet who is come into the world."* The Jews believed the prophetic promise of God that He would send them a prophet (Acts 7:37). Their statement reveals that they expected the prophet to be a miracle-worker like Elijah and Elisha were. They spoke true words about the Prophet-hood of Jesus but did not acknowledge His deity. He was and is much more than a prophet.

Jesus the Man of Solitude (v.15)

Jesus spent time alone with His Father in prayer. He taught the disciples to pray in secret (Matthew 6:6). In withdrawing from the excitable crowd who saw in Jesus a meal ticket, Jesus set the example of solitude with God. The wild throng sought to make Jesus their political king but He had come to atone for sin on the cross. So He is found here in solitude.

Jesus the Lord of Creation (vv.16-21)

The disciples were struggling to handle their boat in the rough sea when suddenly they saw Jesus walking toward them on the water. It is a wonderful revelation of the Master of every situation, Jesus the Lord of Creation. Jesus came to the disciples at their darkest hour and He produced peace and calm.

Jesus the Rabbi (vv.25-32)

Jesus was addressed as '*Rabbi*' by the ordinary people of the crowd. This shows respect. In these verses Jesus stresses the vital need of faith in order to please Him.

Jesus the Bread of Life (vv.33-35)

Jesus said, '*I am the Bread of Life, he who comes to me shall not hunger.*' Only a man who is also God could make such a statement. Jesus fills the empty life with His nourishing fullness. The only condition is that you come to Him. Millions have proved the truth of His words.

Jesus the Thirst-Quencher (vv.35-37)

Faith in Jesus brings satisfaction to each thirsting soul. Jesus is here repeating the promise He made to the woman of Samaria. He is the well-spring of the pure water of eternal life. '*He who believes in Me shall never thirst*' (see Psalm 145:16)

Jesus the Bestower of Eternal Life (vv.38-40)

Jesus said, '*For I have come down from heaven.*' This statement reveals His pre-existence. Jesus was in heaven before He came to earth. Jesus is the giver of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

Jesus the Resurrection (vv.39-40)

Referring to all those who believe on Him, He said, '*...and I myself will raise him up on the last day.*' When you are united by faith to Jesus, His resurrection life flows in your life already and one

day His resurrection power will be demonstrated universally. What an amazing promise.

Jesus the Teacher in the Synagogue (vv.41-59)

These verses record the words of Jesus as He taught in the synagogue (v.59). Jesus was so different in His teaching from other rabbis. Again and again He emphasised the necessity of faith. The Capernaum synagogue was greatly blessed that day.

Jesus the Counsellor to His Disciples (vv.60-66)

They had the best Teacher, the best Leader declaring the purest truth. Yet many of His disciples left Jesus, even after His wise counsel to them.

Jesus the Giver of the Words of Eternal Life (vv.67-68)

When Jesus saw the departure of many of His followers, he asked His disciples, '*You do not want to go away also, do you?*' Peter had seen the truth and said, '*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*'

Jesus the Holy One of God (v.69)

Peter made many mistakes but he also received some wonderful revelation. He continued by saying, '*And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.*' What a wonderful truth he utters in these words.

Jesus the Discerner of Spirits (vv.70-71)


Jesus had discerned in Judas the spirit of a devil. Judas was the treasurer amongst the twelve and had a position of prominence. Let us remember that church office does not protect us from sin. We must love Jesus and be loyal to Him. •

Frank administers our correspondence course Into The Word. If you would like information about this course, contact The Faith Mission Bible College.

BY
ANDREW
PAGE

A CALL TO PRAYER

PART 2



*Do you struggle
in the place of
prayer? Do you
find it difficult
to maintain a
regular time for
prayer in your
daily activities?*

Just as Jesus gave us a pattern for prayer because He knew it would help us, He also gave an example to show us that the place of prayer (geographically) was important. *'And in the morning, rising up a great time before day, He went into a solitary place and there prayed'* (Mark 1:35). We need to find 'a place' if we are to have real, deep and meaningful fellowship with the Father.

When do we pray?

Let us look at our Lord's example, *'rising up a great time before day'*. To many the morning is a difficult time and some say they prefer to pray later in the day. There is no reason why we cannot make time in the morning, down through the centuries the great men and women of God did. Why do we need to spend time in the morning? We are prone to allow the circumstances and events of the day to overcome us and when things go wrong we begin to feel unable to handle them. Perhaps the neglect of the morning solitary place, that place of meeting with God, has caused us to be unprepared to meet the day's events or trials. We would think it strange if an orchestra tuned up at the end of the performance rather than at the beginning. Yet how often do we wait till part of the day is over, or even wait till the end of the day before we get into fellowship and harmony with our God.

We read of the great men of God who led extremely busy lives spending three hours or more in prayer before their day began, and if the day was going to be busier they would not shorten their prayer time, they would add to it. I would not suggest attempting to have a morning prayer time of such length, at least not to start with. We do need to follow the example of our Lord Jesus and these great men and women by *'rising up a great time before day'*, before the household comes to life, before the first phone call, before others place demands on us. We can then commit ourselves and our day to God our heavenly Father.

Where do we pray?

Jesus sought the *'solitary place'* on so many occasions – on the mountain top, on the east shore of the lake, in the garden, so many times He drew apart. We need to seek a space where uninterrupted we may be alone with God before our day begins with family demands or pressures from work. We need to have uninterrupted time when we read God's Word and allow Him to speak to us through it. We need to spend time in prayer to prepare ourselves for the day ahead with the expected and unexpected events it brings. Is there a special place where you like to be alone with God?

Jesus shows us by His example the need to take practical steps to ensure that we have this daily meeting with our God. In Matthew 6:6 it is called the secret place. In the secret place where only God hears, there can be no pretence, He sees us as we really are. Matthew 6:6 uses the word *'closet'* or *'room'*. In the Greek it is *'store chamber'*, the place of provision. It is here, in our store chamber, our bedroom, our study, a chair by the fire, the place where you feel comfortable in the Lord's presence, a place that others respect as your meeting place with your God, that we receive provision for the day. In the calmness there will be time for deliberation, meditation and we will know much joy in the presence of our Lord. Prayer is not a 'spectator sport', nor is it something that we engage in to give off signals of spirituality. When we pray we are to go into our solitary place, our secret place and shut the door. It is our time to be alone with our God and discover more and more of His awesome majesty.

How do we pray?

How can I succeed in this ordering of my prayer life? Often much praying is not done because we do not plan our prayer time. We need to recognise that we are all liable to be lazy and forgetful, the enemy of our souls will see to that. Be forewarned that when you get down to

prayer Satan will try to distract you. So a plan for our prayer time makes sense. Paul had a system. It is a recurring theme of his letters that he is remembering this person or that person in his prayers. Some he had never met.

How do I begin my prayer time?

Reading God's Word before you pray helps. From the portion of scripture you read, so often God gives something to pray about, something to praise Him for or something which helps you to see your present situation more clearly. Reading God's Word in a systematic way is preferable and using Bible notes or some such ordered Bible aids can be a help. Sometimes reading a hymn or just a verse of one helps to quieten our hearts before we pray. The expression of some of the hymn writers can often be helpful to communicate the thoughts of one's heart.

When we pray we need to exercise self-control to overcome the practical difficulties. We need to avoid loss of concentration as our minds so often stray to other things. Ensure that your solitary place and posture are conducive to prayer. Make sure your posture does not result in you doing what the disciples did when they were supposed to be praying – they fell asleep!

How long should I pray for?

If you have neglected your prayer time then it is best to start off again by only praying for ten to fifteen minutes and as you begin to do this you will be surprised at how your prayer time increases. The more time we spend in God's presence, the more we want to. You cannot pray for everybody and everything every day. You need to order your prayers so that over a period of time, say a month, you regularly pray in an ordered fashion for those people and things that you are most concerned about and that God has laid on your heart. Make a prayer list. Your church may already have one but try making one for your own personal prayer. My wife and I would pray for our two sons and

their families every day in our prayer time. It is natural to pray for those closest to you each day.

There are other things which we can pray for on a weekly basis. We should pray that not only would God prepare our pastor as he brings God's Word to us on the Lord's Day, but also that the Lord might prepare our hearts to receive the message. The power of God has not just got to be on the preacher but also on the hearer.

It can be a help and comfort to others to tell them that we are praying for them, not of course in a boastful manner. But just letting them know we are bearing them up in prayer, especially those who are going through troubled times. Daily, weekly and monthly prayer lists and prayer letters from missionaries are helpful in our praying but we must not become slaves to our lists and only pray for what is on our list. There are times when we should instantly pray for people when they come to mind. We may discover later that there was an acute need in the lives of those we felt prompted to pray for. The Holy Spirit prompts us in such a way: do not ignore His prompting.

D A Carson wrote with regard to prayer: 'One of the most important steps we can make with regard to prayer is to recognise where we are at. We quietly confess that we are dangerously dry; our knowledge of God is slight and we long to pray with a greater sense of reality and a greater degree of fruitfulness. We want to learn how to pray.'

Prayer is certainly not a 'spectator sport' but something that we ourselves must seriously engage in, every day of our lives. ●

Andrew, a great friend and supporter of many Faith Mission workers, went to be with His Lord and Saviour in 2013. This article is part of a series he wrote for Drumchapel Baptist Church, Glasgow, in 2000. His wife, Maureen, has kindly given permission to print these. One of Andrew and Maureen's two sons, Mark, is a member of The Faith Mission Board.

Facing Challenging Situations

The miracle of feeding the multitude with just five loaves and two fish is well-known.

Matthew 14:21 tells us there were about five thousand men plus women and children. Adding the women and children to the men it is estimated that the number gathered could have been more than ten thousand. It was a desert place (Matthew 14:15) and the day was far spent (Mark 6:35). It was evening with daylight fading and the night soon to fall (Matthew 14:15).



The large crowd of people who had been listening to the teaching of Jesus had grown hungry and the disciples were faced with an enormous challenge. Where could they get food in a desert place, get sufficient to feed so many and get enough money to buy it?

From time to time we are faced with situations that can be challenging to life and faith. We can find ourselves in a 'desert place' where the day is far spent. Light is fading from the hope of seeing anything happening or finding any way through the situation, not to mention solving it. What do the disciples of Jesus do when they are faced with a crisis?

Disciples turn to prayer

Jesus was in the midst with His disciples as they faced this challenge. They were able to turn to Him about the situation (Mark 6:35). Jesus is always with His disciples, even though at times it can be difficult to sense that. Not only is Jesus always with His disciples, but they can always turn to Him in prayer and find that much needed grace to face the challenges of life.

Disciples exercise faith in Jesus

Philip was worried there was not enough money to buy sufficient food. Andrew was troubled by the five barley loaves and two small fish – what use was that to feed so many? It is evident that as far as the disciples were concerned the feeding of so many people was a challenge too big to handle. Humanly

speaking they thought it was impossible. They lost sight of the fact that the challenge was too big for them to handle but not too big for the Lord! Jesus knew all about the situation and He had the resources to do something about it. John tells us that Jesus himself knew what He would do (John 6:6). All that was asked of the disciples was to exercise faith in Him, but they were finding it difficult to do that. We can empathize with them.

**Jesus knows
about
everything
we face and
He Himself
knows what
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and keep our
eyes on Him.**

Humanly speaking there are times we just cannot see any way forward or any way out, where everything seems impossible. Our faith is challenged and we lose sight of Jesus and what He is able to do. Jesus knows about everything we face and He Himself knows what He is going to do. Therefore, we need to exercise faith in Him and keep our eyes on Him.

*Bigger than all my problems, bigger than all my fears,
God is bigger than any mountain that I can or cannot see.*

Disciples acknowledge the wisdom of Jesus

As it was getting late in the day, the disciples thought the best thing to do was to dismiss the crowd. 'Let them go to the villages and buy food for themselves,' they request of Jesus (Mark 6:35-36). Perhaps the disciples thought that by sending the multitude away it would rid them of the problem! The situation was too stressful, too difficult, too awkward, too big, too hard, too late and too dark, so please Lord, 'send them away'. However, as much as the disciples didn't

want to face the challenge and hoped to get rid of it, Jesus in His wisdom permitted them to face it (Matthew 14:16). Jesus was working on a bigger picture, which the disciples could not see. How easy it is to react like the disciples when faced with challenges in life and to our faith: “I can’t handle this! It’s too big for me! I can’t take any more! I don’t want it anymore! I can’t see any way out of it.” So we request, “Lord send it away.” In His wisdom Jesus permits us to continue to face the situation, which in some cases can last a long time. It isn’t that Jesus is not hearing our cry and not able to rid us of the problem or resolve it immediately. In His wisdom, Jesus is working on a bigger picture that can only be completed by allowing us to face the situation and work through it with His help.

Disciples hand the situation over to Jesus

Andrew found a boy who had five small loaves and two small fish. Jesus challenged him, ‘*Bring them to me*’ (Matthew 14:18). The disciples are told to make the men sit down on the grass. Jesus takes the loaves in His hands and lifts up His eyes to heaven. The disciples are no longer focusing on the challenge, wondering how they could feed so many people or get enough money to buy enough bread or what use were five small loaves and two small fish, but they are totally focused on Jesus and what He was going to do. They got their focus off the enormity of what was facing them and on to the sufficiency of the Lord, totally depending on Him to intervene.

The bringing of the loaves and fish to Jesus was a key moment in faith for the disciples. The performing of a miracle was now a very real possibility.

The key to handling the challenges we face in life is: ‘Bring it to me’. Bring the problems, the questions, the fears, the doubts, the inadequacies, the weakness, the stress, the worries, the impossibilities, and place all into the hands of Jesus and see what He can do. Get our focus off the situation and keep our focus on the Lord. Hand it totally over to Him and expect Him to break through in His way and in His time.

Bring the problems, the questions, the fears, the doubts, the inadequacies, the weakness, the stress, the worries, the impossibilities, and place all into the hands of Jesus.

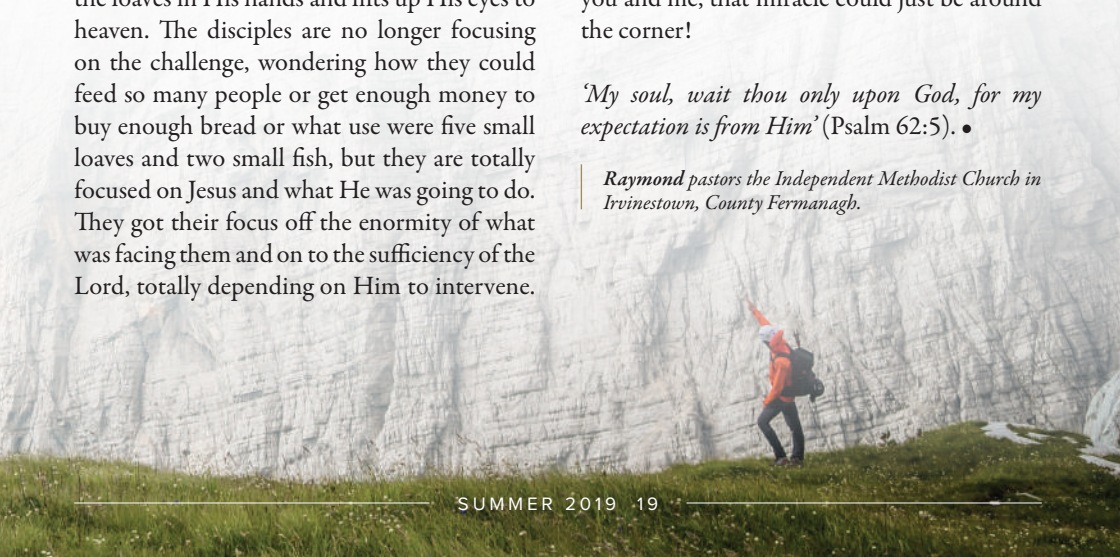
Disciples can expect an intervention by Jesus

Around ten thousand hungry mouths were fed with five loaves and two fish, with twelve baskets of fragments left over! Jesus intervened in a way the disciples

could never have envisioned. When facing the challenges of life, we can always expect Jesus to intervene in ways we can never imagine. For you and me, that miracle could just be around the corner!

My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him’ (Psalm 62:5). •

Raymond pastors the Independent Methodist Church in Irvinestown, County Fermanagh.





12 WAYS TO HUMBLE YOURSELF

BY JANET CHISMAR

1 Routinely confess your sin to God (Luke 18:9-14)

All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God. However, too few of us have a routine practice of rigorous self-honesty examination. Weekly, even daily, review of our hearts and behaviours, coupled with confession to God, is an essential practice of humility.

2 Acknowledge your sin to others (James 3:2, 5:16)

Humility before God is not complete unless there is also humility before man. A true test of our willingness to humble ourselves is willingness to share with others the weaknesses we confess to God. Wisdom, however, dictates that we do so with others that we trust.

3 Take wrong patiently (1 Peter 3:8-17)

When something is unjust we want to react and rectify it. However, patiently responding to the unjust accusations and actions of others demonstrates our strength of godly character and provides an opportunity to put on humility.

4 Actively submit to authority... the good and the bad (1 Peter 2:18)

Our culture does not value submission, rather it promotes individualism. How purposely and actively do you work on submission to those whom God has placed as authorities in your life? Doing so is a good way to humble yourself.

5**Receive correction and feedback from others graciously (Proverbs 10:17, 12:1)**

In the Phoenix area of Arizona, a local pastor was noted for graciously receiving any negative feedback or correction offered. He would simply say: “Thank you for caring enough to share that with me, I will pray about it and get back to you.” Look for the kernel of truth in what people offer you, even if it comes from a dubious source. Always pray: “Lord what are you trying to show me through this?”

6**Accept a lowly place (Proverbs 25:6-7)**

If you find yourself wanting to sit at the head table, wanting others to recognise your contribution or become offended when others are honoured or chosen, then pride is present. Purpose to support others being recognised, rather than you. Accept and look for the lowly place, it is the place of humility.

7**Purposely associate with people of a lower state than you (Luke 7:36-39)**

Jesus was derided by the Pharisees for socialising with the poor and those of lowly state. Our culture is very status conscious and people naturally want to socialise upward. Resist the temptation of being partial to those with status or wealth.

8**Choose to serve others (Philippians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 4:5, Matthew 23:11)**

When we serve others, we are serving God’s purposes in their lives. Doing so reduces our focus on ourselves and builds the Kingdom of God. When serving another costs us nothing, we should question whether it is really servanthood.

9**Be quick to forgive (Matthew 18:21-35)**

Forgiveness is possibly one of the greatest acts of humility we can do. To forgive is to acknowledge a wrong that has been done to us and also to further release our right of repayment for the wrong. Forgiveness is denial of self. Forgiveness is not insisting on our way and our justice.

10**Cultivate a grateful heart (1 Thessalonians 5:18)**

The more we develop an attitude of gratitude for the gift of salvation and life He has given us, the more true our perspective of self. A grateful heart is a humble heart.

11**Purpose to speak well of others (Ephesians 4:31-32)**

Saying negative things about others puts them ‘one down’ and us ‘one up’. Speaking well of others edifies them and builds them up. Make sure, however, that what you say is not intended as flattery.

12**Treat pride as a condition that always necessitates embracing the cross (Luke 9:23)**

It is our nature to be proud and it is God’s nature in us that brings humility. Committing to a lifestyle of daily dying to ourselves and living through Him is the foundation for true humility. •

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THROUGH A MOTHER'S PRAYER



TESTIMONY OF BOB AIRLIE

I was born in October 1945 into a working class family in Renfrew, Scotland, where I still with my wife, Sandra. My father was a welder in a large local engineering company and often travelled away from home earning very good wages, which should have given us a comfortable lifestyle. However, as was common in those days, it was mostly the publican who reaped the benefit of the money earned by men like my dad. Every Friday night when they received their pay packet, their first port of call would be the pub. Dad often came home with no money left for my mother to feed and clothe her three boys.

My mother had to go out to work to provide for us, taking on three jobs – cleaning for anyone who could afford to employ a cleaner. She was hard working and devoted to her family. One thing I realised very early in my young life was that my mother was different from many of my friends' mothers. My mother was a professing Christian and would often tell us about her love

for the Lord Jesus Christ. Her life was a true example of what a Christian should be, even though it was very difficult, as my father was an alcoholic and life was very unpleasant due to his drinking. She did so much for her family and we wondered why she suffered so much, yet she never gave up her faith. She would pray for us and always tell us that God was good and that he would provide for our needs.

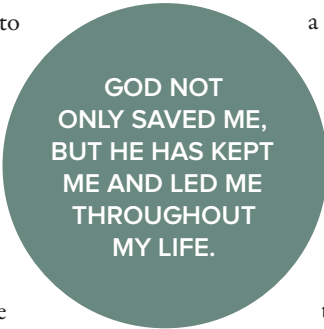
Being the youngest, she would often take me to a midweek gospel tea meeting. I looked forward to it as it was the only time I got to sample lovely cakes and biscuits, not realising I was also being fed by the food of the gospel and some of this was finding a place in my young mind. I would sometimes feel guilty because I became aware that I was doing things that the Bible said were sinful in God's eyes. Even at that early age I was aware of right and wrong. At times I felt God was speaking to me. Sometimes people would go forward to give their heart to the Lord but I never had the courage.

At the age of ten, one Thursday night as we were getting ready to go to the tea meeting, my mother said to me, "Ask your dad if he will come with us to the meeting." We were so surprised and happy when he said he would come. As I sat there beside him and listened to him sing the songs I felt so proud that he had come with us. At the end of the meeting the preacher said we were going to sing a closing hymn, then a prayer and the meeting would be over; but if anyone wanted to speak to him at the end they should wait behind. My dad spoke with the preacher and promised that he would come back when we returned from holiday in two weeks' time. Unfortunately he never got that chance. Forty-eight hours later he was dead, killed on the Saturday night in a car accident. I'll always remember that Thursday night and in particular the old gospel hymn we sang in closing:

*Be in time! Be in time!
While the voice of Jesus calls you,
Be in time!
If in sin you longer wait,
You may find no open gate,
and your cry be just too late:
Be in time!
Sinner, heed the warning voice,
Make The Lord your final choice,
Then all heaven will rejoice,
Be in time!*

These words have stayed with me all these years. As a young man of twenty I was still living at home with my mother. I attended another gospel meeting, not through choice, but because my own life had been on a downward spiral throughout my teenage years.

I had followed my father into engineering and, like him, became a welder in the shipyards and even worked in the same engineering firm he had worked in. I was becoming more like him, so much so that my mother had to pack my bags and ask me to leave home because my way of life was now too much for her to take. She couldn't bear to see me destroy my life.



**GOD NOT
ONLY SAVED ME,
BUT HE HAS KEPT
ME AND LED ME
THROUGHOUT
MY LIFE.**

After being out of the house for just a few days, I realised how much hurt and sorrow I was causing her. I went back and asked if I could come back into the house and promised I would try and sort myself out. She agreed providing I would go back to church and get God's help. I kept my promise and two of my friends agreed to go along with me for support. After attending for three Sunday nights, on 24 October 1965 God changed my life. As we were sitting watching the clock and just longing to get out of there, I suddenly started to feel that God was speaking to me through the preaching of God's Word. As the service was drawing to an end the preacher said, "After we sing our final song we'll have a prayer and the service will be over, but feel free to speak to me if you have any questions you want to ask." We sang the closing hymn and incredibly it was 'Be in Time'. It was ten years since I last heard this song but that night I had no hesitation in turning to my two friends and telling them I was giving my heart to God.

God not only saved me, but He has kept me and led me throughout my life. Sadly I have not always been faithful on my part, but I can honestly say that God is faithful. What God has done for me He can do for you, if you will just trust in Him. ●



'THE PACE SETTER'

Patricia St John is famous worldwide for her fascinating children's books but it may surprise you to learn that initially writing played only a very small part in her full and varied life.

'A naughty child'

The third of five children, Patricia was born on 5 April 1919 in Southampton to Harry and Ella St John, who had recently returned from missionary service in Brazil. Her father spent most of his time abroad in his preaching ministry but her mother, believing strongly that a child could be saved, 'brought her little children to Jesus.' Patricia was converted when she was about six years old. She described herself as 'a naughty child' which must have been difficult when, after living in Switzerland for a year, she attended a private school in Malvern where her aunt taught English and later became head mistress!

'Go and do something with your brains'

Patricia decided to follow her brother into medicine but somehow her application was lost. The Second World War had started and after a while she enrolled in nurse training. Nursing in war-torn London did not come easily to the often-sickly young woman and she was encouraged to abandon it and 'go and do something with your brains'. However, the Lord assured her that He was able to strengthen her and she continued. Nevertheless children were never far from Patricia's heart and after the war ended she became house-mother to some of the children in her aunt's school.

'You missionaries do a great deal of harm'

When the family still consisted of only three children, Ella St John had dedicated each of them to the Lord for missionary service. She had written in her Bible, 'only yielded up in the place of sacrifice are they perfectly safe.' Patricia's brother went as a doctor to a small mission hospital in Tangier, Morocco, and in 1949 she decided to join him as housekeeper and nurse. Soon she heard God's call to the more remote towns up in the mountains. She saw the medical and educational needs and so opened a dispensary and began teaching the children and ladies, always with the goal of reaching their great spiritual needs. There were some converts but, when things were going well, opposition set in. The authorities appreciated the medical and welfare work but all Christian teaching was to stop immediately. The one affected the other and soon the school and dispensary were empty. Going back home to England to consider her next step, she assessed her time in the mountains. A few bodies were healed, some children felt that someone cared, but very, very few came to a vital faith in Jesus Christ, with only four remaining Christians publicly in later years and no church having been formed. A fellow passenger on a train in England, on hearing that Patricia was a missionary nurse, commented, "I

think you missionaries do a great deal of harm. These people have their own religion...why can't you leave them alone?" Patricia conceded that it would be so easy to agree but if we 'believe in the priceless, measureless, eternal value of one redeemed soul to God [we will] press on [and not] leave them alone.'

Her brother asked her to start a nurses' home and training school for Moroccan girls who were interested in Christianity, so she returned to the hospital at Tangier. Beginning with seven teenagers, she taught not only nursing but also the Bible, and spent most of the following twenty years in that role. As far as nursing was concerned, most were successful; spiritually, the picture did not look so good. Patricia was only beginning to realise the stronghold of Islam and the spiritual battle involved in the release of its followers.

'Never meant to be a writer'

While she was house-mother in her aunt's school during the war, she began to write stories, simply out of the need for cheerful Christian books to read to the children! *The Tanglewoods' Secret* was written for that reason only, but her sister Hazel persuaded her to enter it for a competition. Despite not wanting her little story to go public, she agreed. It was not considered worth the first prize money (even though it came first) and so she received fifty pounds instead of one hundred! Letters of appreciation flooded in. Eventually it crossed her mind that perhaps God could use her as a writer and so she began to write *Treasures in the Snow*, basing the story around real people she had known as a child in Switzerland. Somehow, she left the half-finished manuscript in a phone box and it was gone when she went to look for it. She was not disturbed and thought that perhaps she was never meant to be a writer. Her mother thought otherwise and

prayed. Later the manuscript was posted back to her mother and in due course to Patricia while she was in Morocco!

Following the death of her father she wrote an account of his life, and was subsequently asked by the Rwanda Mission to write an account of the East Africa revival. Patricia felt that she could not write about a place she had never visited, and so she spent some time in Rwanda observing and listening. The next year was devoted to writing what she had seen and heard. A childhood dream to write a novel based on the story of Philemon and Onesimus was fulfilled once she travelled to Turkey, with the book being entitled *Twice Freed*. Following a visit to her sister in Lebanon, she wrote *Nothing Else Matters*, based on the experiences of a Lebanese family. After settling in England, the number of broken homes she encountered disturbed her and so *Where the River Begins* took shape. The rise of interest in the occult prompted her to write *The Victor*. Patricia became involved with the charity Global Care and visited the refugee camps on the Sudan/Ethiopia border created by the famine in 1984. *I Needed a Neighbour* followed this experience. As her fans will know, these are only a few of the many titles she wrote.

The final few years

Looking back, she commented, 'Perhaps the most significant thing about these last years has been the gradual but growing realisation that the apparently almost fruitless years of toiling and praying in Muslim lands are beginning to yield a harvest.' After an enjoyable Sunday in August 1993, the Lord took her in her sleep to see the full extent of that harvest. ●



All quotations are taken from *In Her Words, Patricia St John's Story*, published by 10Publishing. This book is available through all FM bookshops.

PEOPLE NEED THE LORD

BY JOHNATHAN AND
JANET SLATER



The main purpose of the work that God has called us to in County Cork, Republic of Ireland, is to see people saved from sin. God has given us a love for the people in West Cork. We are encouraged when we see new things happening and God at work. Our desire is that the work would be a lasting work and not just count for time but for eternity. We want to see fruit that will remain.

The work of God is often a hard work and some might wonder why this is so. We are in a spiritual battle for precious souls and our enemy, the devil, doesn't give up easily on people who show an interest in the things of God. The desire and burden of our hearts is to reach the people with the gospel because this is their only hope. For us to do this work we need your help. We need heartfelt, earnest, longing prayer for us and for the people. Will you help us in the work by praying?

Parent and Toddlers Group

Through this we have contact with local parents and their children. Many of these families have no other Christian influence in their lives. Pray we will be able to build on the contacts made through interacting with them every week.

Children and Teenagers

We have various clubs in different areas of West Cork which children from many different backgrounds attend. Please pray that God would transform their lives. We also have two weeks of camps in the summer, and some teenagers have trusted the Lord. We keep in contact with them; some are feeling the pull of the world away from Christian things. However, we are encouraged with those who are standing up for Jesus in a world that has increasing pressures and influences upon young lives.



Families

We spend time with families, seeking to help them grow in their knowledge of God and His Word. Some have problems that only God can solve. Please pray for our Family Camp, 16-18 July, at Bandon FM Centre. This is a time when those with children too young for camp, can be introduced to camp by spending time around God's Word, family activities, games, crafts and much more.

Individuals

Pray for those who have attended outreach events. Some have begun their walk with God, some have wandered away, some are facing opposition for being a Christian, and some still have no time for God. It is encouraging to see those who are seeking to know God.

Elderly

There are older and more mature folk who come to events and need the Saviour. Pray that God will open their eyes to the wonderful certainty that Jesus is *'the way, the truth and the life'* (John 14:6).

Our Family

The many meetings and clubs, the practical work around the Camp Centre, and the busyness of life, can be very demanding at times. Pray for us as a family – for strength, protection and guidance as we seek to continue to serve God amongst the people we have grown to love. How much more does God love them and want to see them saved for His glory. ●





FROM IRELAND

TO SCOTLAND AND BACK

Brian and Hazel Parker look back, and forward, as they come to an end of two years of study at FMBC.

FM: Why did you give up your jobs and move to Scotland to study at FMBC?

Brian: For a long time, we have both sensed that God was calling us to full-time ministry. We attended the FM Satellite course at Portadown a number of years ago and enjoyed the teaching. After a time of prayerful consideration, we applied for the College and were accepted. And actually, once people within our workplaces were aware of our decisions, it opened up a lot of opportunities to speak to them about Jesus.

FM: Was it difficult uprooting your family from Ireland to Scotland?

Brian: Yes, it was difficult because of leaving family and friends, the whole upheaval of moving the family across the water, and losing the security of a house and secure jobs. That said, there were a number of individual incidents throughout the last few months before we left, through which God confirmed to us that this was where He wanted us.

FM: Hazel, as a mother and wife studying the full-time course at FMBC, it must have been a huge challenge at times, especially having a new addition to your family while here. How did you manage to fit everything in and work out your priorities?

Hazel: Yes, it has been a challenge at times, but also a great privilege to have the opportunity to set these couple of years aside to learn so much about God and His Word. With Brian's support, I tried to make the most of this opportunity and avail of as much of the course as I could in a way that fitted around our family. Most weeks I was able attend class two mornings a week, thanks to a couple of wonderful ladies who faithfully cared so well for our boys. The remainder of the lectures I listened to in the evenings once the boys were in bed, alongside completing assignments. It did require some perseverance to study every evening, after a busy day with a young family. However, on many of those evenings where I lacked energy, I felt a real sense of God focusing my mind.

FM: How has College life worked out for your boys? What are their names and how old are they?

Hazel: The boys have loved their time at FMBC! Luke, aged five, and Caleb, aged three, have really enjoyed campus life, getting to play with the other children around campus in 'the green courtyard', and also enjoying the love and attention the other students show to them. They settled well into their schools and enjoying walking to school, often with

other children from campus. Jude, aged three months, has also settled well into our home here! We are so thankful for the many answered prayers for our boys.

FM: As a married couple what advice would you give to other couples coming to study at FMBC?

Brian: It has been great to share this experience together, and to be able to discuss all we have learned. However, given that the course is quite demanding, it has been difficult to set time aside away from the books to spend time together and in prayer. Looking back, I feel we may have benefitted from being more disciplined in this area and I would encourage other couples to consider how best to balance their priorities as a couple or family.

FM: Would you recommend FMBC for full-time study to others?

Brian & Hazel: Yes, we would. We have gained so much from our two years here. The course is varied and has a focus on practical, devotional and academic aspects. However, it is an intensive course that has presented many challenges, but during them all we have felt God's strength and the prayers of many. We have learnt so much that we feel will be beneficial to our future ministry.

FM: Where are you both for College placement and what experience do you think you will gain that will be helpful to your future ministry?

Brian: As the boys are in school, we will be largely based in and around Edinburgh. For the first week though, I will be joining up with the team on the Isle of Raasay. I will also have a week helping Gordon Thomson with outreach events in Keltly and a few weeks working alongside some of the local churches in Gilmerton and Moredun. I am looking forward to placement, and the different

churches and settings will hopefully provide with a good range of experience that will be beneficial for future work.

Hazel: I am looking forward to supporting Brian and the other students in the local placements, largely with children's events, where possible around school runs and family life. Even though I may be restricted in the ways I can get involved this year I am looking forward to observing and learning from the variety of settings.

FM: You finish with FMBC in mid-July; what are your plans for the future?

Hazel: We are thankful that God has guided and opened up the opportunity to work with The Faith Mission in the Cavan and Monaghan areas once we have completed our summer commitments at FMBC.

FM: So, you are uprooting your family again, and going to live in a different country. Why do this?

Brian: We believe that God is calling us to work in the Republic of Ireland, and we are confident that God is leading us to this opportunity in Monaghan and Cavan. We are excited by the move and are looking forward to the work.

FM: What would you like FM supporters to pray for you as a family and your future work?

Brian: Pray that we would settle into a routine and find the balance between ministry and family time, that we would find a church to worship with, and that we would be able to build friendships with the fellowship.

Hazel: We would greatly value your prayers particularly for the boys as they settle into their new schools. Also that we will be an effective witness in our local community, for meaningful relationships to be built at the school gates, and that we would love our neighbours well. ●

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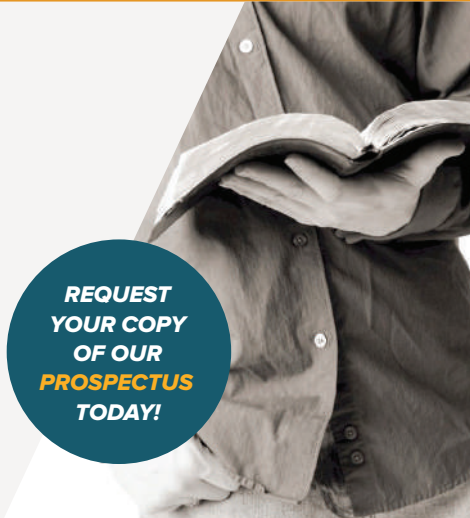
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