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FIRST

Seek First the Kingdom of God!

SUMMER 2018 | ISSUE 1308

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FAITH MISSION



GOD GRANTED HIS REQUEST

» TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

» FAITH IN THE DARK

» THE FAITH MISSION BIBLE COLLEGE:
HOW IT ALL BEGAN



A MESSAGE FROM THE FAITH MISSION'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

These have been busy and demanding weeks with a lot of time being taken up with administrative issues, including getting ready for the newly introduced data protection regulations. Thank you to all who have been in touch to give your consent for us to continue to contact you with news and information about our ministry. If you overlooked doing this, don't worry. However, we do need your permission to keep in contact, so just drop us a line or give us a call and we'll get you signed up again.

In the busyness I sometimes have to refocus on what the primary calling of the Mission is. Well over twenty million people in rural Britain and Ireland do not know and are unlikely to hear about their need of a Saviour. The primary calling of The Faith Mission is to take the gospel to those unreached people. What a joy to know of men and women, young people and children who have come to faith in Christ at recent missions, camps and outreach activities. The busy summer outreach programme is just beginning to unfold and we look to God that the camps, campaigns, missions, barbecues, fun days and multitude of one-off outreach events will be fruitful and result in many people of each age group finding forgiveness, peace and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A number of personnel changes take place during the summer. At the end of April, Yvonne Bennett withdrew from the Mission to take up a role in her local community. She will continue to be involved in a number of her regular ministry activities and will fully support her husband, Trevor, in his outreach ministry along the Ards Peninsula. We are grateful to Yvonne

for her fellowship and commitment to the work. Timothy and Emma Condy will also be leaving us. Timothy has accepted the invitation to become the General Director of The Faith Mission (in Canada). We are grateful for their fellowship and assure them of our prayer support as they relocate and settle into their new responsibilities. This will leave a big gap in the North Irish District and the leaders in Ireland are putting together arrangements for oversight of the District from September onwards.

Recently the Board of the Mission warmly approved an enquiry by Jim and Hilda Lyons to rejoin the work of the Mission. Initially, from 1 October, they will be based in their own home and over the autumn and winter months Jim will be involved in a programme of 'special ministry'. Please remember them, and the Congregational Church they leave at Knockbracken, as they adjust to these changes. Another real answer to prayer comes in the form of Carl Braddy joining our finance team at the General Headquarters in Edinburgh. Carl, a fully qualified accountant and internal auditor, is married to Sabine, also a chartered accountant, and they have an infant son, Nathan. Carl will value prayer as he fully takes up his new responsibilities during the month of June.

We deeply value the support and fellowship of those who follow our work and pray for us. We would be unable to fulfil our ministry without the valuable help we receive through the prayers, gifts and time of our faithful supporters; we thank God for you all. •

| *John Townsend*
| *General Director*



BY JESSICA PARKINSON

*'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself
and take up his cross daily and follow me.'*

Luke 9:23

Jesus freely taught the masses as they gathered round Him to listen, His teachings provoking a varied response. Matthew reports that on some occasions the crowds were *'amazed at his teachings'* (Matthew 7:28). But John tells of other times where the crowds found His sayings so hard that they couldn't accept them and *'turned back from following him'* (John 6:66). Jesus' statement found in Luke 9:23 may well be described as one of these hard sayings.

The Cost

The words *'if anyone would come after me'* are an open invitation to discipleship. However,

whilst the offer is to all, it would seem Jesus is saying: "If you will come, there is something you must first consider, a cost to be weighed up." Often in recruitment, the difficult, unappealing aspects are glossed over or not spoken of at all. But Jesus, when calling men to follow Him, does not neglect to detail the sacrifice involved before men glibly respond. His next words explain the extent of this cost: *'let him deny himself'*. This is not a call to only deny certain things, but rather to deny personal control of one's entire self. At the fall, men who were once God-centred suddenly became self-centred, instead of living to please and glorify God they sought glory for themselves

(Romans 1:18-25). This twisted, sinful pattern continues in man to this day. But Jesus states for those who wish to follow Him, there must be a complete reorientation of life, where life is lived to bring glory and pleasure to God, not self. For this to happen, it will involve a costly *'daily'* denial of self.

The level of denial required is so deep and costly, that Jesus describes it as a call for a man to *'take up his cross'*. The impact of this image is somewhat lost today as we struggle to connect with an illustration of capital punishment or crucifixion. Therefore, people wrongly refer to some ailment or family problem as "just my cross to bear." However, to the original listeners, this image would have been instantly identifiable and carried a far greater significance. In a land like Palestine under Roman occupation, when people saw a man carrying a cross or a cross bar, no-one would have needed to ask him what he was doing or where he was going; he would be recognised immediately as a condemned criminal on his way to death. That man would have had little concern for his own personal ambitions or world comforts. He was on a single-track road to death from which there was no return. This is the graphic and sobering imagery that Jesus used for the level of self-denial required in those who wish to *'come after'* Him.

Death to Self

The statement recorded in Luke 9 was spoken by Jesus immediately after announcing His own cross and suffering to come. This second cross he speaks of, is one that is to be carried by His followers; though it is not a literal one like His, it was and still is very real. Bonhoeffer said: "when Jesus calls a man, He calls him to die."

The Christian is called not to a physical death, but to the death and end of 'self', to reckon himself *'dead to sin'* (living under our own rule) *but alive to God, in Christ Jesus'* (Romans 6:11). It is for the believer to have the mindset of that man on the one-direction road with his cross in arm, on his way to death. He cares not for his reputation, his desire for self-glory is gone; he has lost all his own rights, ambitions and hopes. Likewise, the believer is also to consider the old man of sin, who served self and his desires, as dead. All earthly hope of self-gain was to be gone and he must surrender himself fully, to be conformed to the will of God. Alan

The believer is to consider the old man of sin, who served self and his desires, as dead, and he must surrender himself fully to the will of God.

Redpath asks in relation to this: "have you died to your reputation, have you died to your point of view, died to your self-esteem? Died to some of even the precious, normal natural things of life, which are not God's will for you?" The apostle Paul lived this reality when he said: *'for me to live is Christ and to die is gain'* (Philippians 1:21).

Suffering

Furthermore, the call to cross-bear is also a call to suffer with Christ. It is to be prepared, to be led out to public execution following

Christ's example should it be required of us. It is not insignificant that nearly all of the early disciples were martyred: for many this became a literal call. The way of the cross is one of suffering. Paul told Timothy: *'Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted'* (2 Timothy 3:12). This suffering for the sake of Christ may be rejection by family, it may be gossip in the work place, physical abuse, or it could be martyrdom. What it involves for each individual will be different but it is clear, it is not a call to ease or comfort. Although it is a call to suffer, it is important to note and

emphasise as the following verses do, that it is in losing our life that life is truly found. Only when we are prepared to die can He live in and through us. Stott refers to it as: “one of the profoundest paradoxes of the Christian life and faith.” Christianity offers life to the full, but Jesus makes it plain the way to this life is through the death of self.

Take up your Cross Daily

Furthermore, we are helpfully told that cross-bearing is a ‘daily’ thing. It is not a once-off thing. There is a daily battle with self-will that must be fought and won again and again. Paul reminds us in Romans that we are called to be a ‘living sacrifice’ daily (Romans 12:1), moment by moment we must choose to lay ourselves down on the altar. And when we find ourselves wandering from it, we must come back repentant and climb back on.

Jesus’ final words in this statement ‘and follow me’, are perhaps the most profound part. He, the Son of God, does not call us to anything He has not already done. Even before the cross, the disciples had observed Jesus denying Himself and suffering on their behalf time after time. He had modelled the way of cross-bearing as He stooped to His knees and washed their feet; as He, even though exhausted, made time for people and healed the sick; as He laboured in prayer for them and as He suffered rejection. But above all this, Jesus ultimately demonstrated real cross-bearing as He bore a literal cross, the cross of God’s wrath for them and for us, that by His death He might bring life.

Obedience

Jesus calls us also to lay down our own lives that through us, through a selfless, servant-hearted, Christ-exalting witness, people might gain His life. We most clearly model His cross-bearing when we lose ourselves in order that

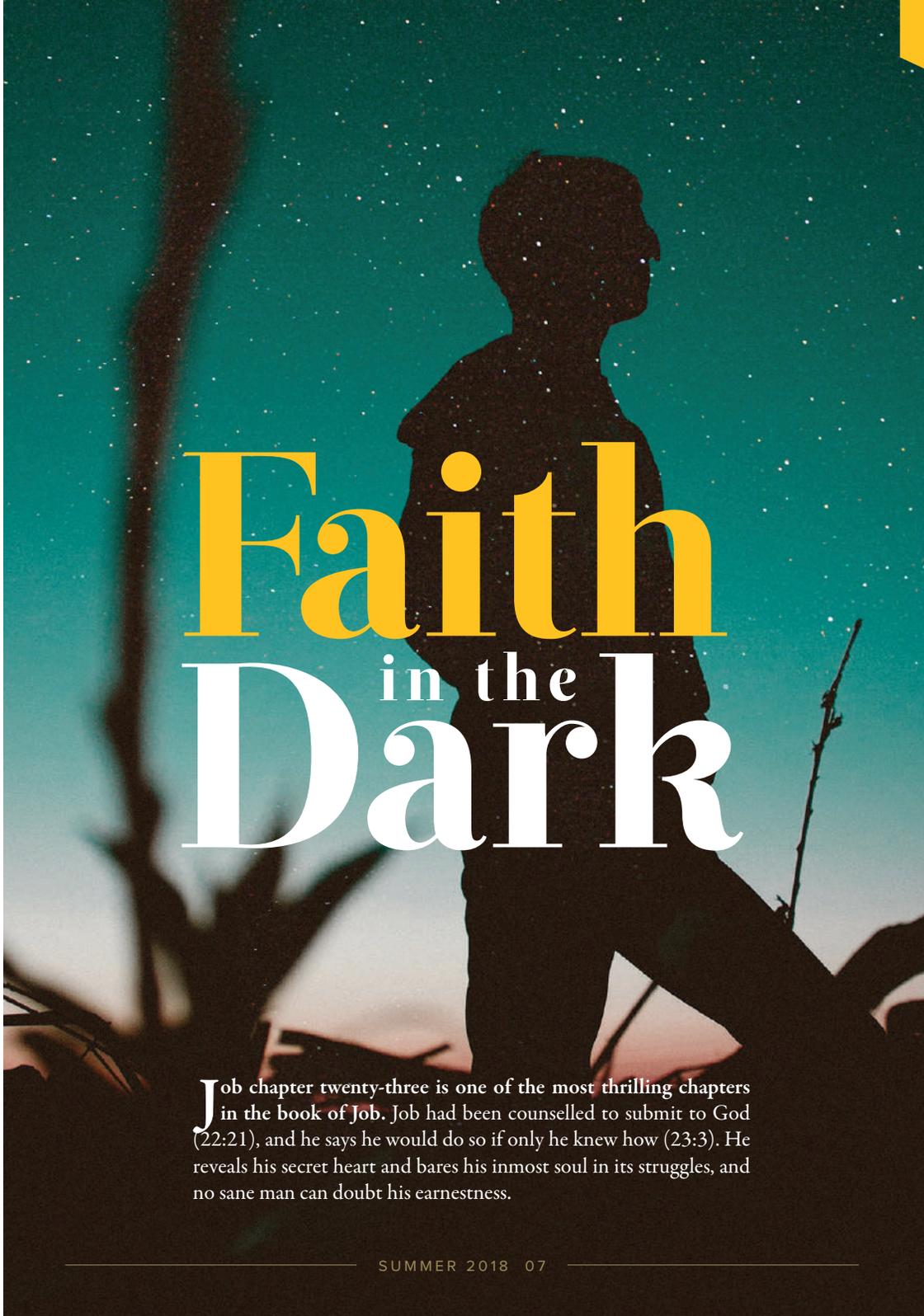
people may know Him. Obedience to the call of cross-bearing is the key to fruitful mission: ‘unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit’ (John 12:14). The total abandonment of self is evident in many missionaries. William MacDonald said: “When a man is truly committed to Jesus, it seems to be of little importance whether he lives or dies; only that Christ is glorified.” An example of one such man is Jim Elliot, who prayed: “Father, take my life – I would not save it for it is not mine to save. Have it Lord, have it all. Pour out my life as an oblation for the world.”

The words of Jesus are hard indeed. It is evident that the call to discipleship He offers, is a call to self-abandonment. The cost is not to be taken lightly: in agreeing to carry our cross, we make a commitment that will lead to rejection, suffering and ultimately death. In light of this, whilst Jesus called the masses to follow Him, it is only those who see His true worth and believe His promise of life to come that will respond accordingly. Jesus lived this life, and in light of His person and sacrifice, what other response can be made?

MacDonald quotes CT Studd’s response: “I never understood that if He died for me, then I didn’t belong to myself. Redemption means buying back, so that if I belong to Him, either I had to be a thief and keep what wasn’t mine or else I had to give up everything to God.”

*O cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be. •*

Jessica is from Lancashire and is a second-year student at EMBC. This article is an assignment written by Jessica for her studies on Discipleship.



Faith in the Dark

Job chapter twenty-three is one of the most thrilling chapters in the book of Job. Job had been counselled to submit to God (22:21), and he says he would do so if only he knew how (23:3). He reveals his secret heart and bares his inmost soul in its struggles, and no sane man can doubt his earnestness.

Trusting God

There is no easy religion with which to face life's realities. There is no reality without struggling. To participate fruitfully in God's purposes will mean your way is often not plain, obvious or understandable. Shakespeare says: "All the world's a stage," but in fact you need to think of two stages, one above the other, with the action going on simultaneously. The earthly stage without the drama of the heavenly is quite beyond comprehension. The man of God has wars without and fears within (2 Corinthians 7:5); he is despised by men and tormented mentally by the devil. The pattern of his experience is often like Job's: *'Oh that I knew... he knows... he performs what is appointed for me'* (vv.3,10,14 AV). This is faith.

Its value and worth are exactly what was paid for it. If you want quality you have to pay the price, not least in the realm of spiritual graces. There is no easy way to certainty, enjoyment and fruitfulness. There is a suggestion in these verses that Job has tried to keep silence but feels he must cry out. The cry is not of rebellion, nor of a man trying to escape from God. This is not a perplexed man throwing over his once dearly held faith. Job wants to get to God, not away from Him. That tells a lot about the man. He has no intention of bickering with God, but longs for a reasoned explanation of what is happening to him. Do you not think that if God explained to Job what we have read in chapters 1 and 2, the man would instantly consent and say: *'Be it unto me according to your word'* (Luke 1:38 AV)? Of course he would! Job knows and trusts his God. He is quite sure that the issue

of a personal, face-to-face interview would be a renewing of his strength and a confirmation of his protested innocence. It is a happy man indeed who is as sure of his ground with God as this. It is given only to those who walk out in the open with their God.

He Knows (23:8-17)

It is one thing to be led out into service on broad and deep dimensions, but another to be left there without any conscious awareness of God. You can scarcely help wondering if all your conflict is for no purpose. Job knows that God is always at work, but he can see no evidence at all relating this work to his life. But God knows exactly what He is doing and Job is confident that when the smelting process is finished he will come forth as pure gold.

It is not so much that Job interprets his sufferings as necessary refining, but that he claims that the process of God's dealings with him will reveal

that right from the start he has been true and pure metal. Remember that this glorious chapter comes to us by way of an answer to the criticisms of his 'friends'. This helps to explain the testimony of verses 11 and 12. It is this secret spiritual integrity of his life that is his anchor and peace now in the midst of storm. The word *'treasured'* (v.12) reveals the genuineness of the man's whole attitude to God and His Word. He was no 'sermon-taster', nor did he evaluate any given passage of Scripture according to the 'thrill' or 'blessing' of it. The Word was his food, sweet to his taste and absorbed to become part of his life. What a man! What a believer! And Christ was not yet come in the flesh!

There is no reality without struggling. To participate fruitfully in God's purposes will mean your way is often not plain, obvious or understandable.



Men are all trapped: either in the bondage of a world governed by the prince of evil, whose work is destruction, or safely held in the saving designs of God.

Wedge between two declarations of God's sovereign working in verses 10 and 12 to 13 we have the statement of human responsibility. But it is the sovereignty of God in His gracious purpose that is Job's strong tower, and not his own integrity. In verses 13 and 14 there is tremendous assurance for the beleaguered saint. God will perform and complete His perfect purpose for this trusting man. But what of the last words of verse 14? The RSV reads: *'He will complete what he appoints for me and many such things are in his mind.'* Therefore Job says he is troubled or terrified at His presence. When he considers all God might yet have prepared for him to do and suffer, he is filled with dread.

Little wonder, for it is no small thing to be drawn into the company of a determined God of glorious power. We can never say: "Stop

the world, I want to get off." It is a sentiment we can understand, but it cannot be done. There is no escape. In a very real sense men are all trapped: either in the bondage of a world governed by the prince of evil, whose work is destruction, or safely held in the saving designs of God, whose will shall most surely be done with perfect completion.

In Job's case the developing of this work and will of God has led him into darkness that frightens him. He cannot see the next step, let alone the end of the road, but then he walks not by sight but by faith. Even though you cannot see the end, you can know it. The life that is hid with Christ in God is safe, for ever and ever (Colossians 3:3). •

This is an excerpt taken from Faith in the Dark: Daily Bible Readings from Job by George M Philip © Rutherford House. Used by kind permission.

BY H E GOVAN

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JEHOVAH

I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE

*“Any blessing that is lasting is contained
in some new discovery of God.”*

In the last issue we looked at El Shaddai, the all sufficient God. At this point we turn to the more intimate study of the personal name Jehovah. It is in Exodus chapters 2 to 6 we see the reality of God revealing Himself to His people in their departure from Egypt.

As a shepherd's interest is aroused to a crackling sound where he sees an acacia shrub burning but not being consumed, he turns aside to examine, when out of the midst of the bush a voice calls him by name and tells him to remove his shoes as one would when entering his sanctuary *‘for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.’* In Exodus 2:23–3:15 Israel was being reminded that Jehovah God was still observing them and was now about to act for their deliverance and fulfil His ancient promises.

Dreary centuries had passed over Israel since the days of the patriarchs. Abraham had died over three hundred years ago and the title El Shaddai, which he had cherished, had become almost obsolete, merely a faint echo from the far past. Israel was now making bricks without straw under the Egyptians.

They had long been located in a country where countless gods were worshipped and the conception of Deity was polluted and degraded by being associated with creeping things and monstrous shapes. It was surely fitting that at such a time, after centuries with no notable communication from heaven, the One supreme God, the God of their fathers, would be readdressed by a new Name, or, rather an old name reaffirmed and emphasised. In Exodus 5:22–6:8 we find God saying: *‘I*

appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as El Shaddai; but in respect of My name Jehovah, I was not made known to them.’ That is, the name Jehovah was not unfolded to them but to be His name and memorial for all generations. It is however a personal name, not a generic title, such as the word, ‘God’.

We have seen Him as all sufficient but now the vision is of His power “working in the interests of grace, entering into history and revealing Himself as a God Of compassionate love.” I Am that I Am is not a dignified refusal to disclose Himself. But rather, this suggests essential and unconditional existence – absolute, self-determined, self-sustaining and eternal. Here is everlasting being, unvarying faithfulness and measureless vitality. Perhaps the vast possibilities implied can be more fully grasped if we give the verb a future tense – I Will Be That I Will Be: introducing the promise of increasing self manifestation, a God of ever-developing potency who will always go on to express Himself in a fresh way, according to our need! How could we define such a Perfect, Absolute and Infinite God?

God was revealing Himself to Moses as One he could always trust without limit to supply strength, counsel, protection, provision and much, much more. Many times Israel revelled in this personal Name of their covenant God – *‘His Name is great in Israel’* (Psalm 76:1); *‘The desire of our soul is to Thy Name’* (Isaiah 26:8); *‘our help is in the name of Jehovah’* (Psalm 124:8); *‘Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will make mention of the Name of Jehovah our God’* (Psalm 20:7). So we read of calling upon the Name, speaking in the Name,

proclaiming the Name, fearing the Name, exalting the Name, glorying in the Name, ministering, blessing, walking in the Name, waiting on the Name and giving thanks in the Name. These all indicate a definite turning of thought and affection to the personal Name of their God. He had so amply justified His covenant Name in the redemption of His people and in that Name was pledged to them so long as they would trust Him. This thought should bring new light into our reading of the Old Testament.

I Am that I Am suggests essential and unconditional existence – absolute, self-determined, self-sustaining and eternal.

Our God, Jehovah, is the God of the future, the God that is to be. In Jesus His revelation has assumed a more definite form; yet in Him we see the Name to be of infinite variety, limitless possibility and inexhaustible fullness. He declared Himself to us as *‘the Lord God which is, which was and which is to come, the Almighty’* (Revelation 1:8). All that He has been, He is, and will be eternally. Oh, the unsearchable riches of Christ! Through all life’s years, with all their needs, His wealth is open to us. Eternity itself will reveal ever-new discoveries of His sufficiency.

This Name, Jehovah, in all its glorious significance, is God’s memorial, His ‘forget me not’. Let our faith treasure it, and hold it fast against all the world’s attempts to rob it from us. We shall never be confronted by a claim He cannot meet. Again and again, God brought His people into conditions and circumstances which declared to them afresh some new light, bringing some new vision of His inexhaustible sufficiency. ●

This has been adapted from a further article written by HE Govan published under the title ‘Discoveries of God’.



God Granted His Request

BY DAVID LANG

*'Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory!
Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.'*

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Jabez is not one of the biblical names that comes readily to mind when parents are thinking of a name for their baby boy! 'Jabez' means 'pain'; chosen by his mother because she *'bore him with sorrow'* (v.9). All that we're told about Jabez is contained in these two verses. We know Jabez was a man of prayer because verse 10 tells us that he *'called on the God of Israel'*. This immediately raises the question: 'Can this be said of me? Am I among those who call on the name of the Lord,

regularly and continually with discipline?' Let us never underestimate the miracle of God's grace that finds us calling upon Him. John Bunyan said: "You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."

The Need for Blessing

There is almost a note of despair evident when Jabez goes to prayer: *'Oh that you would bless me indeed'*! He expresses a deep longing for God's

blessing, like Charles Wesley when he penned these words:

*Oh love divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
all taken up by Thee?
I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
the love of Christ to me.*

There's intensity and a passion there. Jabez's prayer reminds us of Jacob's wrestling in prayer, and crying: *'I will not let you go except you bless me'* (Genesis 32:24). Could 'wrestling' be a fair description of our own praying either personal or in the prayer meeting? One is reminded of the two old ladies in Lewis who prayed with great intensity prior to the revival in 1949. A similar situation was seen in Sialkot, North India before the revival there. It is said that Hyde, Paterson and Turner, leaders of the Punjab Prayer Union, "linked themselves as with hooks of steel" to the will of God, praying for the outpouring of His blessing.

The Need for Enlargement

Jabez's second request is that God would *'enlarge his coast'*. We all need enlargement. To be content with the present level of our spiritual life is a sure recipe for starting to go backwards. There is a race set before us which we must run, laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us, and looking to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2). The psalmist says in Psalm 119:32: *'I will run the way of your commandments when you will enlarge my heart.'*

The Need for the Lord's Hand

Continuing in prayer Jabez requests: *'that your hand might be with me'*. He was aware of his

weakness and that without the Lord he could do nothing. He needed the hand of the Lord to be with him, as Nehemiah when he asked the king for various items to help him in rebuilding the walls at Jerusalem: *'And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me'* (Nehemiah 2:8). And we remember the name given to the Lord Jesus: *'Emmanuel, God with us'* (Matthew 1:23).

We all need enlargement. To be content with the present level of our spiritual life is a sure recipe for starting to go backwards.

The Need to be Kept from Evil

Finally, Jabez asks that God would keep him from evil, that it would not grieve Him. We all need to ask God this as in the Lord's Prayer: *'Deliver us from evil'* (Matthew 6:13); from the evil of sin and the evil of our arch-enemy Satan, who will try his best to keep us from calling on the Lord. *'But whoever listens to the Lord will dwell safely and secure, without fear of evil'* (Proverbs 1:33).

Note the outcome of Jabez's prayer – *'God granted him what he requested'*. Of course He did! God answers prayer, not always in the way we would like, because He knows better than we do, He knows what is best for us. So why was He able to give to Jabez everything he asked for? Because he was asking for the very things God loves to give to His children (see Luke 11:9-13). Jesus said: *'If you abide in Me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you'* (John 15:7).

"God is still on His throne, we're still on His 'footstool', and there's only a knee's distance between". *Jim Elliot*. •

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



A Broken Spirit

*'A broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.'*

Psalm 51:17

BY WILLIAM SMYLIE

It is recorded that a lady approached Dr Alexander Whyte after he had preached in his pulpit in St George's in Edinburgh West and made the following remark: "Dr Whyte, you preached today as if you had just emerged from the throne room of the Almighty." He replied, "In point of fact I have." Obviously that lady had seen something of the glow of heaven on his face and a brokenness of spirit as he preached the Word of God.

If we were honest we would have to admit that we seldom encounter brokenness today or hear the subject being addressed in our pulpits. No doubt many reasons could be found for this omission but the following come to mind:

- Society encourages us to be self-assertive and adopt a more strident approach to whatever we are doing. We must present ourselves as strong and confident. We must not

admit to any weakness as it will undermine people's confidence in us and may affect our success.

- Even when believers are passing through sorrow or mourning they are afraid to weep or show emotion in case it would be interpreted as weakness of faith indicating a lack of hope, when in fact it is very natural to vent our feelings and emotions as Jesus did at the grave of Lazarus

Some of my most vivid memories of preaching are of men of God broken in spirit, shedding tears as they presented the truth of the cross of Christ and His love for sinners. A more recent impression of this brokenness came on my early visits with Slavic Gospel Association to Eastern Europe, well over twenty years ago, and meeting with a brother who seldom could handle the Word of God without being moved to tears. Naturally speaking he did not tend to be emotional, but when he addressed holy things it was evident he had a broken spirit. Though this may have appeared weakness to some, it was actually a great strength.

Dr Campbell Morgan recalled an interesting story about the English actor, Macready. An

eminent preacher once asked him this question: “What is the reason for the difference between you and me? You are appearing before crowds night after night with fiction and the crowds come where you go. I am preaching the essential and unchangeable truth and I am not getting any crowd at all.” Macready answered, “This is quite simple. I can tell you the difference between us. I present fiction as though it were fact; you present truth as though it were fiction.”

In today’s media we see how passionately theory and fiction are presented as fact. Truth must be presented with equal passion, firmness and conviction, but with sensitivity and a broken spirit. It would appear that preaching today has become more learned and pedantic,

and indeed is more of a performance. I feel it is right to say that we have largely lost the brokenness that characterised the revivalists of the 18th century awakening, such as Whitfield and Wesley. This applies not only to preachers but to all Christians who seek to make Christ known through lip and life.

May we exemplify a broken spirit in the place where God has placed us, and in the work to which He has called us, so that we may present the gospel with passion and fervour in the power of the Holy Spirit. This can only come about as we spend time in the ‘throne room of the Almighty’.

William is a retired pastor and lives in Northern Ireland with his wife, Beth.



If I appear to be great in their eyes, the Lord is most graciously helping me to see how absolutely nothing I am without Him and helping me to keep little in my own eyes. He does use me.

But I’m so concerned that HE uses me and that it is not of me the work is done.

The axe cannot boast of the trees it has cut down. It could do nothing but for the

woodsman. He made it, He sharpened it, He used it. The moment He throws it aside it becomes only old iron.

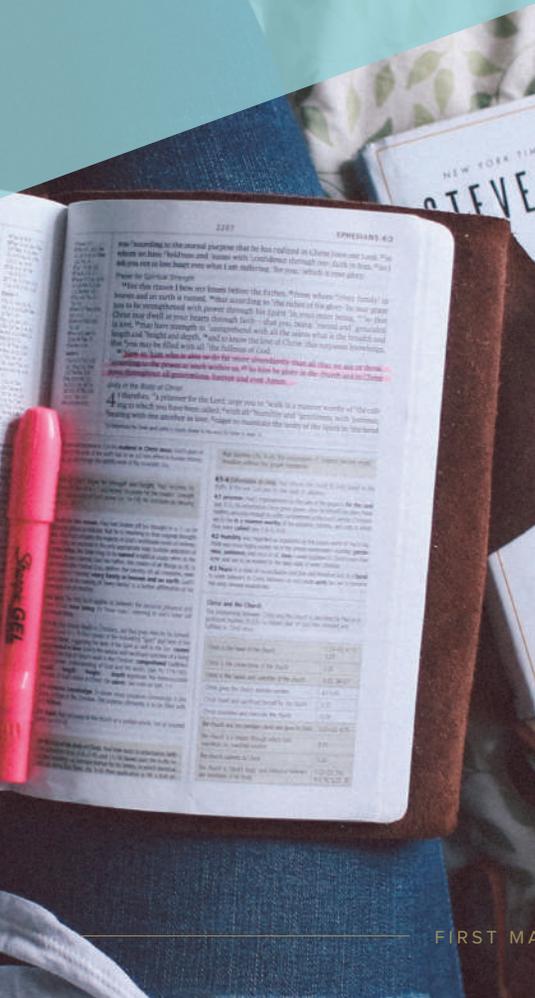
Oh, that I may never lose sight of this.

The spiritual leader of today is in all probability one who yesterday expressed his humility by working gladly and faithfully in second place.

| *Samuel Logan Brengle*



How to Study Scripture



It is a very difficult for anyone to attempt to prescribe for another the proper method of studying Scripture. The infinite depths of Holy Scripture, like the exhaustless resources that are in God and the moral glories of the Person of Christ, are only unfolded to faith and need. This makes it so very simple. It is not cleverness or intellectual power we need, but the simplicity of a little child. The One who composed the Holy Scriptures must open our understandings to receive their precious teaching. And He will do so, if only we wait on Him in real earnestness of heart.

We must never lose sight of the weighty fact that it is as we act on what we know that our knowledge shall increase. It will never do to sit down like a bookworm to read the Bible. We may fill our intellect with biblical knowledge, we may have the doctrines of the Bible and the letter of Scripture at our finger-tips without one particle of unction or spiritual power. We must go to Scripture as a thirsty man goes to a well; as a hungry man goes to a meal; as a mariner goes to a

chart. We must go to it because we cannot do without it. We go, not merely to study, but to feed. The instincts of the divine nature lead us to the Word of God as the new-born babe desires the milk by which he is to grow. It is by feeding on the Word that the new man grows.

Hence we may see how very real and practical is this question of how to study Scripture. It is intimately connected with our entire moral and spiritual condition, our daily walk, our actual habits and ways. God has given us His Word to form our character, to govern our conduct and shape our course. Therefore, if the Word has not a formative influence and a governing power over us, it is the height of folly to think of storing up a quantity of scriptural knowledge in the intellect. It can only puff us up and deceive us.

It is a most dangerous thing to traffic in unfelt truth; it brings on a heartless indifference, levity of spirit, insensibility of conscience, which is appalling to people of serious piety. There is nothing that tends so to throw us completely into the hands of the enemy as a quantity of head knowledge of truth without a tender conscience, a true heart, an upright mind. The mere profession of truth which does not act on the conscience and come out in the life, is one of the special dangers of the day in which our lot is cast. Better by far only to know a little in reality and power, than profess a quantity of truth that lies powerless in the region of the understanding, exerting no formative influence upon the life. I would much rather be honestly in Romans 7 than fictitiously

The mere profession of truth which does not act on the conscience and come out in the life, is one of the special dangers of the day in which our lot is cast.

in Romans 8. In the former case I am sure to come right, but in the latter there is no telling what I may come to.

As to the question of making use of human writings to help us in the study of Scripture, great caution is needed. No doubt the Lord may and does make use of the writings of His servants, just as He uses their oral ministry for our instruction and edification. Indeed, in the present broken and divided state of the church, it is wonderful to mark the Lord's rich grace and tender care in feeding His beloved people with the writings of His servants.

But, we repeat, great caution is needed, earnest waiting on the Lord, that we may not abuse so precious a gift, that it may not lead us to trade on borrowed capital. If we are really dependent upon God, He will give us the right thing; He will put the right book into our hands; He will feed us with food suitable for us. Thus we receive it from Himself and hold it in communion with Himself. It is fresh, living, powerful, formative; it tells on the heart and shines in the life; and we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Precious growth! Would there were more of it!

Finally, we have to remember that Holy Scripture is the voice of God and the written Word is the transcript of the living Word. It is only by the Holy Spirit's teaching we can really understand Scripture, and He reveals its living depths to faith and need. Let us never forget this. ●



ARE YOU LISTENING?

TESTIMONY OF PAUL SEWELL

It was summer of 1963 and, having just finished my secondary education, I was awaiting the results of my exams. Should I pass, I was hoping to go and study Economics at the University of Edinburgh, and should I not gain sufficient pass marks, then the idea of training to be a chef was appealing.

However, God in His wisdom had other plans for me and I already knew that He

was calling me into full-time ministry. In our church there was a widow who was ever open to the voice of God and she firmly believed that God was prompting her to pay for me to travel to Keswick Convention. She knew not why God wanted me to go but she obediently approached my parents and told them what she wanted to do for me. My parents were not able to afford the cost of sending me and so they graciously accepted her offer.

At the evening missionary meeting in the tent, Rev Eric Alexander and Rev Philip Hacking spoke, challenging us to consider that God might be calling some of us to full-time service. I clearly heard God saying: “Paul, that is what I want for you.”

Obedience to that call meant contacting the University of Edinburgh to adjust my course of study to a general MA followed by a BD. They quickly agreed to this and so it was that six years later, in June 1969, I qualified as a Church of Scotland minister and embarked on forty-one years of full-time service in three very different congregations, two in Scotland and one in the North East of England. Having retired in 2010, I still serve on an occasional basis by preaching at various services. All of this has been possible thanks to that lady who heard and was obedient to God’s voice.

Our God is a wonderful God for whom nothing is impossible, and throughout my ministry I have continually been reminded of the two

lessons that the events of that summer taught me. First, God regularly and often in amazing ways, gets people to the right place at the right time, be it a Christian He wants to use in the furtherance of the gospel or the person He wants to be witnessed to and brought to faith

in Christ. Secondly, there are many occasions when He will prompt us to do something or go somewhere, often without revealing the reason at the time, because He has a plan and we have a crucial part to play in its fulfilment. One example of both these lessons coming together is of course the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. The challenge

for us is to ensure that we are always open to hearing His voice and responding to His leading.

How grateful to God I am for that lady whose ears were ever open to God’s voice and whose ready obedience to His will was the start of what for me has been a wonderful life in the service of the One who has honoured my obedience and has never let me down. ●

**Our God is
a wonderful
God for
whom
nothing is
impossible.**

Jessie Penn-Lewis wrote a Handbook for Workers in 1895. It had been written for volunteers attached to YWCA branches and various city missions.

In the book she gave some instructions to those attempting to help others:

Seek to meet souls on their own level. Give them sympathy and encouragement.

Seek to be only a voice used to direct souls to Christ.

Seek for grace to discern the work of God.

Seek so as to be able to work in patience.

Seek earnestly to know the ‘silence’ of Jesus and enter the interests of others.

Seek to manifest lowliness of mind, never arguing or engendering strife (2 Timothy 2:23).

Do not dogmatize over anything, lead them to the cross.

Seek to live in unbroken communion with God.

Seek that your interior and exterior life correspond – blending spirituality with practicality.

Above all, press on and seek a life hid with Christ in God. ●



ENOCH

Now Enoch walked with God,
Walked in a fellowship so close and sweet
That all the clamour of the crowded street,
The angry tumult of the busy mart,
Could not disturb his tranquil, yielded heart.
He walked with God.

So far he walked with God
That earthly loss and gain were left behind
And earthly anchors had no power to bind;
He left the harbour and put out to sea,
Bound for the deeps of love's eternity,
Where souls meet God.

So close he walked with God,
He looked with God, and with that opened sight
He saw all shadows swallowed up in light.
He looked on men with God's compassionate eyes
And ministered to their infirmities
And blessed their need.

So long he walked with God,
So intimate their talk – he could not say
When earthly twilight changed to Heaven's day.
Only his Master spoke, 'Earth's paths are rough
And you and I have travelled far enough.
Come home with me.' •

This poem was taken from the book In Her Words by Patricia St John, a review of which is included in this issue's Book Review section. © 10ofThose

The Faith Mission Bible College



How It All Began

BY ROBERT MURDOCK

There is surely some truth in the quote “a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” If we are going to understand who we are, then it is at least helpful to know where we have come from. This is a brief account of how the Faith Mission Bible College came into existence.

The Faith Mission emerged towards the end of the 1800s. Its founder, John George Govan, was born in 1861 into a successful business family who lived and worked in the West End of Glasgow. He was converted at the age of twelve on the beautiful island of Arran where his family holidayed each summer. It

was a wet Sunday evening, the final meeting of a summer series, when his father asked if those gathered would ever meet again in this way. Conviction visited the heart of little Donnie, as he was called by his siblings. He went home and, in an upstairs room, put his trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour.

The family owned and ran a factory which produced muslin and it seemed like this would be the future focus of William Govan’s fourth son, John George. However, he began to look in a different direction when D L Moody visited Glasgow for a series of meetings. Moody visited Scotland twice and on his second visit, he preached night

after night in the city hall for six months. Many, including the Govans, were captivated by his stirring preaching. Not long afterwards, William and Catherine Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army came to Glasgow and actually stayed with the Govans in their home, ‘Southpark’. Interestingly it seems to have been Catherine Booth who made the greatest impression upon the family, with her joyful singing and godly life. John George longed for the spiritual reality and vibrancy that he witnessed in the Booths, and was impacted by their message. A battle began to rage in his young heart. Would he surrender his ambitions and desires to God and give himself unreservedly to living for Him? He later

described that battle as being taken to pieces, bit by bit, by the Holy Spirit over several months. After two real encounters with God, he emerged a man absolutely devoted to God.

One of the most notable things about the new Govan was his all-consuming desire to share the gospel with the people around him – factory workers and those living nearby. He became particularly burdened for the people around Water Street, which was a needy area of the city. Along with a little team of people, many of them girls that worked in the factories at Pollokshaws, he began to visit the area, calling into homes and sharing the message of Jesus. John George wanted his team to really engage with ordinary people, so he discouraged long discourses and encouraged them to sing and share their story in the homes of the people that they visited. They soon acquired the use of a hall in the area to hold meetings and not long afterwards it was completely given over to them. Their gospel efforts in that hall began with a half-night of prayer, and at their first meeting nine people responded and came forward for spiritual help.

John George soon began to



John George Govan

fall out of love with business and more in love with the exciting, though challenging, work of sharing the gospel and seeing people transformed by it. In 1885 he gave up his business interests and devoted himself entirely to serving God and proclaiming the gospel. Initially he spoke with Catherine Booth about joining the work of the Salvation Army in India, but she dissuaded him. He also considered joining the China Inland Mission but was told his health was not suitable for the climate. It was to the task of preaching the gospel in the villages of Scotland that he began to

turn his attention. People across his own native country were familiar with a form of godliness but knew little about its life-changing power. John George felt the call of God to do something about this need in his own country.

He began his work as an evangelist alone, holding meetings in villages and towns to the west of Glasgow. His first mission was in Lochwinnoch where over thirty people were converted in two weeks. After a series of similar meetings in Tarbert, he was joined by a friend for a mission in Irvine. On the seventh night of those meetings, the Lord did something remarkable and over forty people were born again by God's grace.

In 1886 John George Govan formed The Faith Mission. The name reflected his desire to live by faith and to ask no one for money except God. The goals of the Mission were to unleash the gospel and see God at work, and to encourage Christians to live devoted and committed lives for the Lord. His first colleague in this work was a friend, John Colvin. By the end of the first year their number had increased to nine, in the second year there were twenty, and by the end

Mount Clare



of the century, just fourteen years later, there were sixty-six workers in The Faith Mission.

One of the most fruitful missions of those early years was in Rothesay on the Isle of Bute. Two female workers began to hold meetings and, at first, the numbers were small. As those meetings continued, however, the numbers grew to around eight hundred on a weeknight and fifteen hundred on a Sunday. At the end of this mission, which lasted three months, hundreds had been converted and two hundred and sixty people formed a Prayer Union in the town to pray for the work of the Mission.

As the Mission grew, Govan saw the need for a property to serve as a base

or headquarters. He also felt the need to begin a training course which would enable new workers to be trained and inducted into the work of the Mission. It is no surprise that a property became available in Rothesay, the location of the earlier extraordinary series of meetings. The property was called 'Mount Clare', an austere grey house with delightful gardens. It was bought in 1897 and that same year saw the first three-month training course for new workers, and the birth of what is known today as the Faith Mission Bible College. Govan insisted that the course would be scriptural, spiritual and practical, and so it was. He presided over the training course and lectured along with others almost every day. There was an emphasis on prayer and

being alone with God, with no agenda other than that of talking to Him.

It was in this environment of dynamic, action-packed, gospel proclamation and transformation that the Faith Mission Bible College was born. The priority of the course was to train and equip people for real-life gospel work, both in the home countries and across the world, as already some workers were thinking about venturing across the seas.

The Faith Mission Bible College continues to focus on these original priorities today. There is a major focus on helping students to understand the Bible and become able communicators of its truth. Prayer is included in the programme and personal spiritual growth is encouraged. Students spend at least seven weeks per year in a practical ministry setting, five in the late spring and two to three in the summer.

The tree looks the way it does because of its roots. These are the roots of the Faith Mission Bible College and this is why it is focused on helping people prepare for real-life ministry.

The next article will look at developments over the years. •

Shaping our Future

A QUICK LOOK AT OUR **AIMS** AND **OBJECTIVES** FOR THE YEARS AHEAD



DEPARTURE POINT

The Faith Mission Bible College has been training and equipping people for Gospel work across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland for over one hundred years. The College was initially set up to train workers for the Faith Mission, the organisation that oversees the College. This early emphasis on evangelistic work has continued to be our focus in training people right up to this day. The college has a number of study options but the main course is a two-year diploma in applied theology.

Student numbers have fluctuated over the years. In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s the College had around fifty-to-sixty students in residence each year. However, with changes in immigration law and a number of other factors, student numbers are currently around fifteen per year.



DESTINATION

We believe there is still a place for a College that is committed to the Bible and focused on preparing people for work in God's Kingdom. We intend to maintain our core values while widening the options for future students. Our plan is to keep our evangelism track but to add a specifically designed mission track and further Church ministry track. Our vision is to have our course validated by a UK university, which will give students the option of graduating with a degree in theology at the end of a three-year programme. Alongside the degree modules, we plan to teach a series of other modules that will be primarily focused on preparing people for the practicalities of ministry in their chosen area. The final goal is that students will be able to graduate with a degree in theology plus a Diploma in Evangelism or Mission or Church Ministry.



THE JOURNEY

The journey involves lots of administration and meetings with university staff and departments. Our course content and delivery, building, student facilities and financial accounts will need to be assessed and approved before we will acquire degree status for our course. We will also need to acquire one or maybe two additional staff members who share our views of the Bible and our commitment to the Gospel but are also equipped to teach university-accredited modules.



CURRENT LOCATION

Our preferred university partner has been identified. We are currently engaged in an assessment process with them. Other options are available if the road we are currently on becomes impassable!



ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL

It does not seem at this stage that we will reach our destination by September 2018. It is more likely to be September 2019. However if everything goes to plan the work of students who begin in September 2018 may be recognised retrospectively. This means that if a student commences studies in September 2018 there is a good chance that they will be able to enter the second year of a three-year degree course in September 2019. No guarantees though, we may get a puncture along the way.



DAVID REIMER

What is your background and how did you come to know the Lord?

I'm a Canadian expat, resident in the UK for over thirty years now. I grew up in Toronto, raised in a Christian home. From a certain perspective, I'm the product of a 'mixed marriage': my father was Mennonite, while my mother's family was (English) Baptist. My paternal grandparents were among those who left the hard life of the Russian Ukraine in the early Soviet years for a new life in Canada. My older brother and I were brought up with family devotions: I have distinct memories from a young age of praying at my mother's knee for Jesus to be my Saviour. When I finished high school (where I met my wife-to-be!), I wasn't quite sure what next, so I took what we now

call a 'gap year' at the Capernwray School in south Germany. It dawned on me during my time at Bodenseehof that my life's work was going to be in Christian service of some kind.

What led you to come to the UK with your wife and family?

Susan and I married while we were both students; I had just finished my first degree in Theology and was about to embark on postgraduate work in Biblical Studies, while Susan was finishing her BSc in Nursing, both of us at the University of Toronto. I began a doctoral programme there, very strong in technical aspects of ancient Near Eastern history, languages, and literature, but not the best context for thinking theologically about

scripture. Through a family connection I sought the advice of a trusted Old Testament scholar in Oxford with my concerns. His reply was, “By all means come to us!”, so we did. Both our children were born in Oxford during those ‘DPhil’ years.

What professional things have you been involved in since coming to the UK?

My work has always been at the intersection of academy and ministry, although the proportions have varied with context. After completing doctoral studies in Oxford, we had a brief sojourn back in Canada before returning to Oxford where I was ‘fellow and tutor’ in Old Testament at my old college, Regent’s Park, in succession to my mentor there. That role had much to do with ministerial training. In 1998 we moved to Edinburgh, as I took up a lectureship in Biblical Studies in the Faculty (now School) of Divinity at the university. That was to be my professional home for the next twenty years, in a more academically focused context. We have always been active in local church life, so for me the connection between studying scripture and the life of faith has always been maintained.

Apart from Old Testament Theology, are there other things you are passionate about?

I love reading – I did a lot of reading aloud with our children when they were young. I enjoy well-written history (R W Southern and Iain Murray for example: very different historians, but both great to read), as well as fiction. I have a soft spot for Victorian fiction, with Anthony Trollope a particular favourite. I have wide-ranging musical tastes and have dabbled with instruments to varying degrees over the years. I’m not a sportsman, but enjoy staying active.

At present you are on the staff of FMBC; what is your role?

That’s a good question! Primarily I support Robert Murdock in the pursuit of developing the academic side of the College’s training. I’ve also done some lecturing here over the past year, and I anticipate that both academic administration and classroom activity will develop as I continue to settle in.

Tell us a little about your family.

Susan trained as a nurse, but after we settled in the UK she wrote a best-selling cookery book (Muffins: Fast & Fantastic) which no home should be without! In more recent years the bulk of her energies have gone into personal connections with a local community in Malawi. Our now adult children work in different spheres: our daughter is a primary school teacher, and our son works in the agribusiness sector, both of them having a pronounced international flavour in their working life.

Apart from the Bible, what book has had the most impact on your life?

That’s a hard question – do I have to choose just one? There are plenty to pick from! I read the Narnia books avidly as a boy, probably not too long after their publication. C S Lewis’s books along with Little Pilgrim’s Progress, an adaptation of that Christian classic for children, did a lot to shape my outlook and imagination. In terms of my life in biblical studies, probably I would give the nod to a landmark work by Brevard Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture, which demonstrated to me that it was possible to be both rigorous as a scholar and at the same time committed to theological vitality and the community of faith. •

GOD IS GOOD!

KENT CAMP 2018

BY ARABELLA PAUL

A huge thank you to those who have been praying for the Kent Camp (4-6 May 2018). Every year it is a challenge to fill the places available, but God is good. This year there were a number who were too old for the camp and Holey Moley Club, which had previously given us about half the camp, had closed. With four campers booked in from 2017, where were the youngsters going to come from? The Lord knew.

A local church suddenly came on board with six children booking in. At a new school I taught in, a mum asked if her child could come. I met up with her just before camp to confirm the details, but as no-one else from her school had booked in she was wondering how her daughter would get on. Mum then said she would be willing to help and maybe her seventeen-year-old daughter and younger daughter could come too. So they all booked in! Another mum emailed asking if her daughter could come and then on the morning camp was due to start, another mum rang asking if her child could book in. So the numbers crept up and in the end we were juggling dorms to fit everyone in!

I am grateful to Stephen and Cynthia Walker, who led the camp. Their eldest daughter, Emily, did a magnificent job helping her mum in the kitchen. James Brown taught a great series on the life of Joseph, and his wife, Katie, and little



six-month-old Benjamin came along to help too. Then we had a backbone of help from John, Margaret and Liz from Istead Rise, as well as Emma from Tonbridge. The weather was glorious and on Saturday we started with an early morning walk before breakfast, rambling through the woods with the glory of the bluebells in bloom, collecting logs for the camp fire. The Nerf gun wars, when they were guarding the president and rescuing the bombs were great fun! In the afternoon they were swimming with dolphins and getting totally muddied up in the swamp, with Red Indian mud marks on their faces before being hosed down with freezing cold water afterwards... all part of the fun! Tuck shop allowed them to buy treasures as well as a pile of goodies! Then a late-night walk deep into the woods, ending up at a roaring camp fire with hot chocolate and toasting marshmallows. As the fire died down to glowing embers, we gathered in close and heard Katie share how tough it was to lose her dad a couple of years ago and how it rocked her faith, but the Lord was with her and guided her through and out of the valley of darkness into His glorious light once again.



themselves. Another one of the campers said she also had just trusted the Lord. Amazing!

Before the prizes, we sang a couple of songs and I asked some of the leaders to give their testimonies in a sentence. We then asked if any of the children would like to share and without hesitation there were a number who wanted to say what God had done for them. God is so good. Prizes and invites to the five-day summer camp at the newly built FM Camp Centre near Ipswich were given out. Many thanks for every prayer that ascended... surely we are workers together; one sows, another reaps, but God gives the increase – praise the Lord!

Thank you also for the incredibly generous donations which were so deeply appreciated. It meant we could offer several free places and some at reduced cost, as well as helping towards covering the costs of the camp itself... *'may the Lord repay you... and may a full reward be given you from the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge'* (Ruth 2:12).



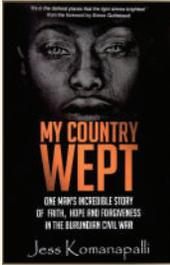
Each camper has gone home with gospel booklets and Bible notes to help them read the Bible. Please pray they will grow in their love for the Lord and be able to follow on to junior or senior camp in the summer, Rejuvenate in Edinburgh, and maybe even a gap year at FM Bible College... who knows... maybe one day become a camp leader or evangelist themselves, called by God to do a great work for His precious Kingdom and lead others to faith in the Saviour. God was so good; even though sleep was lacking, strength is quietly returning!

Since camp, two of the children who trusted the Lord have booked in to summer camp, and also one of the children who was homesick on the first night... brilliant! God bless you abundantly and a huge thanks for being part of the Lord's incredible work. ●

After the final meeting on Sunday morning, we went in to our quiet time groups. My little group of seven had gelled well and, from the beginning, Susie was obviously close to the Kingdom. I asked where Jesus was in relation to their lives – still knocking, would you let Him in? Susie definitely wanted to trust the Lord. Two sisters from a keen Christian home with good knowledge, also wanted to trust the Lord, as did Rosie. One of them prayed her own prayer and then I led in a prayer of commitment for the others to pray for

BOOK REVIEWS

My Country Wept



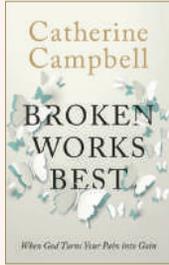
Jess Komanapalli

Publisher: Authentic Media

Price: £9.99

Theodore Mbazumutima was forced to flee from his native Burundi when tensions between Hutus and Tutsis escalated. Theo's dangerous and incredible journey fleeing the civil war is an amazing testimony of God's miraculous intervention, protection and guidance.

Broken Works Best



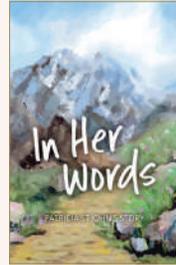
Catherine Campbell

Publisher: 10Publishing

Price: £7.99

Catherine Campbell, a well-known Northern Irish author, has walked the path of the broken-hearted. She shares with us how pain shapes our faith and develops a deep trust in the God who can transform what is broken in our lives.

In Her Words



Patricia St John

Publisher: 10Publishing

Price: £9.99

Patricia St John's personal story is full of adventure, larger-than-life characters and exotic destinations. But this isn't some unimaginable far-flung lifestyle; central to her story is the work of God in her life and in the lives of those she met. You'll also discover the inspiration behind Patricia's classic tales.

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