

THE CORNERSTONE

"Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone...."

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF BALLYMENA FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Issue 26

cornerstone@ballymenafpc.org

June 2013

A Word from our Minister

In the last edition of Cornerstone, I mentioned an up-coming visit that I was scheduled to take to Nepal on behalf of Presbytery. For me, that visit was most memorable. Rev. Ian Harris and I, along with Dr Alan Cairns, arrived in Kathmandu on Tuesday 16th April. Mr Harris and I had been sent by Presbytery to speak with the Nepali brethren about their desire to establish themselves as a properly constituted church. Dr Cairns had already arranged to speak at the annual Bible



Conference for the Nepali believers, so our visits coincided.

The meetings with the leaders of the Nepali witness concerning its establishment as a church were very profitable, and I would encourage you to pray that the Lord will guide in all future developments. Apart from these discussions, we were also privileged to partake in various church meetings and preach God's Word to a people most zealous for Christ and His cause.

It is no exaggeration to state that what has happened among these dear people is the evidence of a genuine awakening by the Spirit of God. In a short period of time, over one hundred churches have been

brought into existence, comprising a body of over five thousand people. The Spirit's work continues, with the conversion of others to Christ and the further establishment of new congregations.

The man whom the Lord has greatly used in this exciting new work is Rev. Paul Thapa. The son of a Hindu priest, Mr Thapa was converted to Christ some years ago

and then saw other members of his family brought to the Saviour. From that point onwards, he began to see many saved, with these converts coming together to form the nucleus of the witness. Some of these newly converted men have also felt the call to preach, so that there is a good band of brethren now pastoring these fledgling churches. I can truly say that it was a thrill to my soul to witness what the Lord has done and have the privilege of preaching to those who are first-generation Christians, saved out of a background of paganism. In the meetings in which we participated, there was a real and tangible sense of the presence of God, with worship that was clearly Christ-centred and filled with the power of the Holy Ghost.



The Rev. Wesley Graham and his wife Carol have been serving the Lord in connection with the Nepali work for a number of years, and to our brother we owe much. Under Mr Graham's very capable guidance, the Nepali brethren have been helped to a great extent

in the development of their ministry. Mr Graham helped to pioneer a Bible College for the further training of men and women for Christian service. This College is now well established, so much so that its courses are largely now being taught by Mr Thapa and some of his colleagues.

LTBS has also played a major part in the increasing development of this Nepali work for Christ. In earlier times, Rev. Leslie Curran prepared and sent out radio programmes for airing on Nepali radio stations, but since then this radio work has been taken up by Mr Thapa. LTBS have supplied him with the necessary equipment, and he now produces all of the broadcasts, which cover around ninety percent of the nation of Nepal. The results are wonderful, with thousands of contacts being made and over twenty churches formed.



The conclusion that can be drawn from visiting Nepal and seeing first-hand what the Lord is doing is that Christ's promise in Matthew 16:18 continues to be fulfilled – He is still building His Church in this world. What is taking place in Nepal is therefore the greatest encouragement and incentive to us all to pray on and support our entire missionary endeavour wholeheartedly.

Sunday School BBQ



The Lord and I At College



Emma Wilkinson

In 2011 after my GCSEs, I left Cullybackey High School to study Business and Administration at Northern Regional College (NRC) in Ballymena. Praise God, during the period in-between, I was spiritually changed and I started college with a fresh desire to walk with the Lord. As a child, I had professed faith in Christ; but my five years at High school were spent following the things of the world. In my final year, in 2011, I was shown the reality that all must die, when my Granny Wilkinson was taken home to Heaven after her battle with cancer. The Lord was working in my heart around this time; and, in August 2011 at summer camp, the Lord, in love and mercy, drew me back to Himself.

Before commencing NRC in September 2011, I prayed that God would provide another Christian friend on my course. That prayer was answered, and I was blessed with a

Christian girl on my first year course. Having a Christian friend around to talk to daily was a great privilege and blessing. This year, I am the only Christian on my course, but God has been with me step by step and day by day. Every day you see the sin of the world around you, but thankfully God has kept me near to Him. With God at my side, I have the only help I need to take my stand for Him and witness to my class friends when we talk about God, Creation, the Bible, or Christianity.

My prayer is that as I continue on my course that those around me will see something different in my life and that they will come to know Christ as their own and personal Saviour, because no other life is worth living.

My closing word of advice to any young Christian who is facing a change in their educational or work situation is, right from day one, take a stand for God and always remember He will never leave you or forsake you. Prov 3 v 6 says, *"In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths."*

Financial Update

	Average Weekly Offering	Home & Foreign Missions	Building & Repair Fund	UK Fund	Special Offerings	
Apr	£ 4956.41	£ 1868.40	£ 835.00	£ 276.85	Joanne Greer	£ 1862.85
					Chris Killen	£ 1500.47
May	£ 5074.47	£ 1733.50	£ 956.20	£ 154.00	Whitefield College	£ 505.00
					R McConnell	£ 1092.00
					Nepal Gifts	£ 450.00



Internet Ministry

	Audio Downloads	Video Downloads	Webcast Viewers
Apr	3780	1367	2044
May	5091	1803	2568

Ordination of New Elder

Debbie McCosh

Sunday 28th April 2013 marked another much anticipated juncture in Ballymena Free Presbyterian Church, as Mr James McKeown was ordained to the eldership and added to the present Kirk Session.

The service was presided over by Rev Alan Smylie, Deputy Moderator of Presbytery, who led the congregation in hymns that captured the nature of the service – ordination to church office and personal testimony – “Pour out Thy Spirit from on high”, “O happy day, that fixed my choice”, and “Lord of the Church”.

Before the ordination and installation began, Rev David Brown opened in prayer, publicly thanking the Lord for His leading in the congregation and for the testimony and witness of Mr McKeown. Dr Stephen Pollock then read the Scriptures from 1 Peter 2 v 8-25 and 1 Peter 5 v 1-4.

The Clerk of Presbytery, Rev Ian

Brown, openly authorised the ordination by asking Mr McKeown a series of 12 prescribed questions set by Presbytery. Once answered, Mr McKeown then subscribed in writing to the Westminster Confession of Faith, affirming his belief in the standards of the Confession. Following this, all ministers and elders in the congregation were asked to come forward for the “laying on of hands” and to extend the right hand of fellowship. Rev James Beggs offered the ordination prayer.

It was at this point that Mr McKeown gave a word of testimony, and told the congregation how the Lord had clearly guided him up to this point in his life. He stressed that God was in control and that He had evidently worked in his heart, as an individual, and in the hearts of the congregation. He pledged that he was ‘ready to launch out’ in the work of an elder with the motto text of Rev. 3 v 18, “*I counsel thee to buy of me...*” in his heart.

The Moderator of Presbytery and Minister of the congregation, Rev John Greer then preached from 1 Peter 2 v 25, “*For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the*



Shepherd and Bishop of your souls”. Rev Greer showed that this passage was the Holy Spirit’s representation of the role of the elder and a revelation of all that is involved in his work. In summary, an elder is to be “a Christ-like man; like his Lord in character and in service”. Rev Greer then challenged the congregation to accept Christ as the true Shepherd and Bishop, and outlined how Christ saves, as the Shepherd of the soul, and secures, as Bishop of the soul, for all eternity.

Rev Paul Thompson brought the service to a close with prayer, and supper was provided for all those in attendance.



New Baby



Abigail Brown with her new baby sister, Elianna, Violet.

Ballymena Show Outreach



Saved By Grace

Testimony of Robert Orr

Job 33 v 14-30, aptly summarises the later years of my life and conversion. First, let me tell you a little of my early years growing up in a very privileged environment; privileged to grow up under an umbrella of prayer and affection from loving and caring parents, grand-parents and others who instructed me in the Holy Scriptures.

Robert Orr was a sinner, and, like Cain, I rejected the ways of truth, becoming an extremely sinful young man. I was the black sheep of the family, careless of my soul and deeply rebellious against God. Leaving school at 14, I worked for a time on the farm, and then went to work in Ballymena. Looking back, I realise this was when the rot really set in. Jer 17:9 says *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* I was deceived by sin and on the road to Hell. I knew it, but would not turn even though I had friends, family, neighbours and others praying for me. In Job 33 v 14 says *"For God speaketh once, yea twice"*. In 1953 I contracted Polio but escaped with little disability. I believe this was the Lord speaking once, but I wasn't listening. In 1959, I came very close to death in a car crash. The Paramedics were sure I was dead and sent for the Coroners Ambulance to take my body to the morgue. It was only as they were lifting my badly crushed body



from the wreckage that the nurse found the faintest flicker of a pulse; (Job 33 v18,19,22) God had spoken twice.

In 1963, I met Jane; she already knew the Lord and soon made it clear that our relationship was going nowhere in the long term. Privileged again, because her company had a moderating effect on my wildness – believers truly are 'the salt of the earth', and Jane 'salted' me. God was beginning to bring me to my senses (Job 33 v 23,24). On 23rd December, as I left her home, she faced me again with the matter of my soul. I said nothing and got in the car but 100 yards down the road I was suddenly smitten with deep conviction of sin. God, in His electing love, had fashioned it long before

in eternity. I hurried home, and at my bedside I simply told God that I was a sinner and asked Him to save my soul. (V26-30). I had two problems - a filthy mouth and an addiction to tobacco. I still look back in disbelief at the sudden change, for there was not a word out of place all of the next day. I still smoked on the Friday, so on Friday night I took the problem to the Lord; and on Christmas day, the problem was gone. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

In February 1966, I sang and gave my testimony for the first time in a public meeting. That was the start of a ministry taking me all over Ulster, and

further afield, preaching and singing the Gospel. In May 1966, I went to communion in my Presbyterian Church and came away unhappy at what I had witnessed. I had been to Rasharkin Free Presbyterian a few times, and God began calling me to separation, so I left the church of my father to become what was known as a 'Barn Rat'. There, under Dr S.B. Cooke I began to grow; I joined the Rasharkin Testimony Team, learned to pray and work in the open-air. Jane and I got married in 1967, and in June 1968 we transferred to Ballymena Church and the ministry of Rev. Beggs. In Autumn 1968, at a meeting in Carnlea Mission Hall, God called again, and I surrendered my life to His will.

Around 1970, I began teaching Sunday school under Mrs Paisley, and it is my great privilege to still be active in that work. My life for Christ has had many wonderful highs; but, like all believers, I have also had tough times and failed my Lord many times as my love ebbs and flows. However, His love remains constant and sure. I am indebted to my own family and community, Rasharkin F.P.C, Rev. Beggs, Rev. Greer, and members of my own congregation for their prayerful support down the years. Special thanks must go to Almighty God who called me, saved me, and has kept me as the apple of His eye in all the changing scenes of life.

Young believer - have you surrendered your life to serve the Lord? You know you should, and you won't regret it. Sinner - has God been speaking to you? Listen now; confess your sin, turn from it, look to Christ, and be saved. *'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved'*.

Points for Prayer

Some of our young people will be travelling to mission works in the coming months. Pray for their safety as they travel and that they will return with a greater vision for the lost.

Romania - Deborah House - July

Rachel Houston, Alice McKeown
Emma McKeown, David Warwick

Papua New Guinea - New Tribes Mission - August

Jonny Blaney, Glenn Hamilton
Andrew Houston, Jonathan McKeown

Lithuania - Hope for Youth Ministries - July

Kyle Hamilton

The Philippines - Hope for Youth Ministries - October

Paul McIntyre, Cheryl McClintock

There are various outreaches going on over the summer months. Please pray that those taking part will know the Lord's help and that new contacts will be made.

- Outreach at Carfest - 8th June
- Ballykeel Bible Club - Mon 1st - Fri 5th July
- Children's Mission in North Centre 29th July - 2nd Aug
- Ballee Bible Club - Mon 12th - Fri 16th Aug

Dates for your Diary

- Annual Bible Conference : 8th -14th June
- Children's Day : 30th June