



Glasgow: planting the gospel

Paul Brennan |
Features

Date posted: 1 Apr 2017

Share



Paul Brennan brings us up-to-date with new congregations linked to The Tron Church in Glasgow



Paul Brennan

The last year has been one of significant change for The Tron Church.

It was a year of hard work, not a little trepidation, but also of great encouragement. At the start of 2016, the church met in one location with two main Sunday services. By the end of the year and by God's grace, the church was meeting in three locations and with five weekly Sunday services. How did it come to this?!

Unexpected path

It was certainly not the path the church would have expected if you had asked us a few years ago. But faced with the loss of the building on Buchanan Street in 2012 we found ourselves, happily, in what used to be the church halls, just around the corner on Bath Street in Glasgow's city centre. However, the Bath Street building, excellent as it is for our weekday ministries, was struggling to cope in terms of space, particularly on a Sunday morning. After a period of difficulty and change,

You may also be interested in...



Features

Ministry training with a difference



Reviews

Humbled by the cross

Rethinking democracy?



change was again being forced upon us, although for more positive reasons!

We found ourselves by the end of 2015 on the threshold of what some would call church planting, although we prefer the term ‘gospel planting’, as Willie Philip explains: ‘The term “church planting” puts the emphasis in the wrong place and confuses the seed with the fruit; you don’t plant fruit to produce seed, you plant seed to bring forth fruit, and the New Testament is clear that the seed we plant is the gospel, the Word of God, and it is this alone which bears fruit in the harvest that God desires. Hence the New Testament’s real interest is in “gospel planting”.’

Audible and visible gospel

That is what the book of Acts focuses on, with its great interest throughout in reporting that ‘the word of God continued to increase’. It is this which bears fruit in multiplying disciples and growing ‘obedience to the faith’ (Acts 6.7), which of course manifests as communities living as a ‘pillar and buttress of the truth’, the gospel audible on the lips and visible in the lives of those who thus join themselves with ‘the church of the living God’ (1 Timothy 3.15).

But this happens only where the word of the gospel is truly planted and nurtured, and this firm foundation built upon worthily by God’s fellow workers, and where God himself is in the midst to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3.6-17). So the Apostle Paul says we must be careful not to deceive ourselves. It is all about what we plant, and how we build.

Just putting a group of people in a place and calling it a ‘church plant’ may do none of these things, however exciting and vibrant and new it may seem. (Indeed, experience tells us that out of many such exciting plants have emerged things quite foreign to the historic Christian faith and church.)

Struggle and heartache

It is surely salutary that the testimony of Acts suggests rather that it is often not from excitement, but when the gospel seed is carried out and sown amid much struggle, heartache, opposition and tears, that a great and fruitful harvest abounds (cf Psalm 126.5-6).

Certainly in Acts 8 it was the outbreak of real persecution which sowed the seed widely as those who were scattered 'went about preaching the word' so that the new frontier of hostile Samaria 'received the word of God'. But whatever the catalyst, the consistent pattern is that as the word of the gospel continued to increase and grow, so the church was built up and multiplied.

And so, as a church, we sought to plant the gospel in two additional locations in 2016. We felt totally inadequate at the prospect of it all, but we knew that God is faithful and that his Word would be at work.

Tron Church at Kelvingrove

In the March of 2016 services began at The Tron Church at Kelvingrove in a 160year-old church building about a mile west from Tron Central's location. Home for the past 40 years to the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) the Lord brought this building into our path just at the point at which we knew we were losing the Buchanan Street building.

In God's providence we weren't able to take possession of the building for a number of years, due to delays with the RSNO's new headquarters. Which was just as well, because we wouldn't have been able to cope with it any sooner! However, by the end of 2015 we were given the keys to the building and work began in earnest to get it ready for services in the Spring – a bucking of the trend these days to return a church building to its original use! The building sits opposite the newly

opened Sikh temple, the biggest in the country, and so we're encouraged that there is now a living church proclaiming the truth and the good news about Jesus Christ in that area.

On Sunday 6 March 2016, at 9am, the 100 members who committed to serving at the new location gathered for the first Sunday service in the building.

It has been an encouraging first year as we've seen some folk local to the area come along. The new building also allows the whole church family, several times a year, to gather together in one room, which we hadn't been able to do since 2012, which is a great encouragement.

Tron Church at Queen's Park

On the south side of the city is a landmark neon sign proclaiming 'Christ Died For Our Sins' above a former Brethren Hall, subsequently the home to Crosshill Evangelical Church. We were asked to take over the building from a faithful but very small remaining congregation, and so a new work began at this third location in October 2016 with an afternoon service at 4.30pm.

This is one of the most ethnically diverse locations in the country and a good number of 'local' children are engaged in both Tuesday and Sunday afternoon ministries. Again it has been encouraging to see locals coming along to the afternoon service in the first few months.

One church family

These two new locations add to the work of Tron Central, which is where the bulk of the weekly ministries of the church take place, and folk from all Sunday venues serve together every day, nearly all day – groups for youngsters, the elderly, students, workers, women, Internationals, Mainly Music for toddlers, and a host of others. In addition there are other Sunday congregations meeting at Central: our Farsi congregation meets at 6.30pm and is still growing; on alternate Sundays the 'Tron at Two' congregation meets for a café-style service for those who are particularly vulnerable and find church difficult; we also have a small Chinese service every month.

With these six different congregations meeting on Sundays plus our Wednesday Lunchtime Bible Talk congregation and the various mid-week gospel initiatives going on week by week we feel very much out of our depth and quite often we'll say to ourselves: 'We don't really know what we're doing!'. So we must remind ourselves, and do so often, that, as the Psalmist said: 'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.'

The Lord's goodness

As a church we are very conscious of the Lord's goodness and of his faithfulness to us shown in real and concrete ways over the last years as we've embarked upon planting of the gospel in these new locations. It is the great task that all Christians in all places and at all times are called to; that great task of proclaiming to the nations the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and making disciples. It's early days, there is much to do and we don't know what the year ahead will bring.

But it is our privilege to be a part of that task of the mission of Christ's kingdom and it is our prayer 'that our manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ... standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel' (Philippians 1.27).

Paul Brennan is a youngster in ministry! The Tron Church, Glasgow

Share    < Previous article | Features | Next article >

[Read more articles by Paul Brennan >>](#)

Faith in action

Philippa Stroud is Executive Director and co-founder of the Centre for Social Justice, a think-tank chaired by the Rt. Hon. ...



New here?

Register and get three
free articles each month!

[Register](#)



Need to advertise?

We can help you reach
Christians across the
country

[Find out more](#)

Useful links

[About us](#)

[Browse by topic](#)

[Give to support en](#)

[The Newspaper](#)

[Jobs](#)

Keep in touch

[Contact us](#)

[Submit an article](#)

[Advertise with us](#)

[X](#) [f](#) [o](#) [@](#)

Subscribe

[Subscribe today](#)

[Give a subscription](#)

[Get free articles](#)

[Login](#)

Important info.

[Terms & conditions](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[Cookie policy](#)

[Cookie preferences](#)

Registered Charity No. 296794. All content Evangelicals Now