

BBS Winter Family Retreat in the Lake District



Remembering Linda Ferrie

**"What are we leaving the
next generation?"**

Update from Malawi

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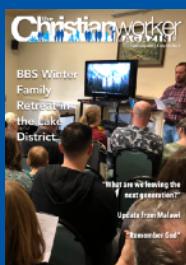
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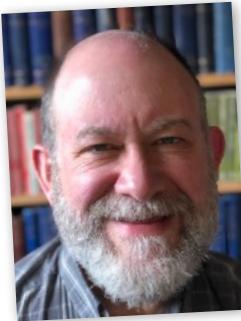
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Front cover and above: BBS Family Retreat at Bassenfell Manor in January.



MY PERSPECTIVE



**Seizing
opportunities
placed
before
us**

Beginnings and endings...

How has the New Year of 2023 been for you? In many ways I find it difficult to believe that January is over and we are now into the second month of the year. Resolutions made at the beginning of the year undoubtedly have been broken and many already abandoned. But I trust that those which are spiritually important, even if they did not get off to a flying start, will still be accomplished this year.

I always enjoy starting the year with the BBS Family Retreat at Bassenfell. It is so good to see so many Christians and friends and to spend time for a weekend encouraging each other. This year's retreat was particularly good – but you will read about that in the following pages.

It is good to see plans being organised for events throughout the year. The British Bible School's study weekends are being organised to take place and teachers are preparing their lessons to teach. Congregation events have been announced so we look forward to getting together with Christians in different locations for encouragement and to open God's word together. Sometimes I feel that there is so much to do and, particularly as I get older, there is so little time to do it. But the important part for each Christian is that we are doing all that we can.

There have also been set-backs for many as the year began with health issues. I have had friends and family end up in hospital with broken bones and on-going health problems. Despite these, we must continue to move forward, making plans to further God's kingdom.

In this issue we also more formally say goodbye to Linda Ferrie. In many ways this is an end to an era for some of us. It was Alastair and Linda who initially talked to Arlene and I about moving to work with the congregation in Castlemilk. Linda was so helpful when our children were born. Because they lived very near the Maternity Hospital in Rutherglen, I had many a meal there between visits at the hospital, particularly when our first son was born pre-mature.

We continued working with Alastair and Linda as we reached out into other areas of Glasgow and helped begin a congregation in Glasgow's West End. My first ten years of working with congregations in Scotland was spent with Alastair and Linda being our co-workers. To say I learned immensely from them would be an understatement.

So, as we end the first month and begin the second month of 2023, we encourage all to keep going, make plans, and work to see them fulfilled. It seems to me that life gets busier and busier – and I don't think I'm wrong in feeling that way. But isn't that the way it should be? As we get to know more people there are more opportunities to be of help to others. As we grow in our faith there are more opportunities to share our faith, both in teaching others about Jesus and encouraging Christians through studying God's word together.

May we seize the opportunities that are placed before us. By doing so we will grow more to be like Jesus and help others to also grow.

Jon



Being family...

I believe virtually everyone would agree that family is important. We enjoy spending time with our parents, siblings, and – as we get older – our grandchildren. There is just something special about being family.

But for Christians we have a larger family, the one where God is our father and Jesus is our ‘older brother’ – and we are brothers and sisters with all Christians. We realise the bond we have – a family bond – that is based on Jesus. And just as family ties are ‘blood ties’, our ties as Christians are also ‘blood ties’ – we are united by the blood of Jesus.

The family retreat organised by the British Bible School each January is very much a family reunion. Many of us don’t see each other through the year, and especially during the past couple of years. Yet when we get back together, just as in families, we pick up where we left off.

One of very good aspects of this retreat is that there are people of all ages who not only attend but interact with each other throughout the weekend. All are made to feel welcome and all pitch in to help. Everyone helping is very much a family type of activity and, as none of us are paid staff, everyone’s help is needed. Everything from helping prepare meals, to setting up

and cleaning up, and the final clean up at the end involves all who are able to help out.

Wouldn’t everyone want to be part of something special like this? I realise that not everyone can attend (spaces are limited) but I believe the atmosphere that has been created can only keep getting better and better. From the three Bible-centred lessons from Steve Whitehead, Jon Galloway, and Patrick Boyns, to the evening activities, to the morning devotionals, to the lessons for the children of all ages organised by Mark Hill, all is geared toward creating a Christian setting to enjoy time together.

There were several who were first-time attenders this year as well as some ‘old’ faces (and some of us are getting older!). If you would like to be part of this extended family of Christians, sign up for the next retreat, either the one in September at Letton Hall in Norfolk or the next one at Bassenfell Manor in the Lake District. But be warned! You need to sign-up quickly because the limited spaces fill up quickly.

We hope to see you soon!

Jon Galloway



BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

With every room taken, and virtually a full house, our recent mid-winter Weekend Family Retreat at Bassenfell Manor in the Lake District was one of the best we've had. The sense of being 'family' is very evident to all who take part and each year seems more and more like a family reunion. Far from being exclusive, it is a real joy to welcome others into our midst and to share the warmth of family with those who haven't been before. We are already looking forward to next year's event, but first there's the Weekend Family Retreat in Norfolk this September...and a whole lot more before then!

Revised plans for the coming year

One of the most significant changes we have witnessed over these last few years has been our familiarisation with, and general acceptance of, both online conferencing and video learning. Although these may have brought great benefits and continue to be used extensively (we still have two weekly Online Bible Classes) there seems to be a clear understanding of the greater need of being with each other, and of meeting face to face, wherever possible.

As we continue to try to balance the demands of an online presence with our in person teaching and training events, we have decided to temporarily suspend a couple of areas of our work to focus this year on the development and launch of The Book Programme – our much anticipated video teaching project which was significantly delayed following the imposition of governmental restrictions back in 2020.

This ongoing project requires considerable attention in all stages of production, and some reasonable expense too, but we believe that it will be of great value. Of course, there is already a vast amount of video material available online, but the majority of it is either not particularly geared towards our culture or else is simply unsuitable for other reasons. We are persuaded that we have something useful to offer, and something which will also lead into other developments in the pipeline.

Your help is much needed

We remain immensely grateful to all those who continue to help with our funding on a regular basis, and we urge you to continue to

help in this way. If you, or the congregation with which you meet are not yet involved, then please do think about making a regular contribution to this work. You can find details of how to become a Friend of the Bible School on our website here – <http://britishbibleschool.com/community/supporting-the-school2/friends-of-the-bible-school>.

May God bless us all, and may we be found to be always useful in his service.

Patrick Boyns
britishbibleschool.com



AT REST

Linda Ferrie (Dundee)

1954-2022

On Thursday, 8th December, the Lord opened his arms wide, and likely got one of the biggest hugs ever, as our dear sister Linda Ferrie went home to him. The family is so thankful for all the love and support that has been given to their mum, especially over the last few years, from the family of God here in Scotland, the UK as a whole, and the worldwide family of Christ.

"Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." (John 21:25)



What does it look like for Jesus and his love to live out in us? What would he be like in your place, my place...or important for these few words here... in the life of Linda Ferrie?

In echo of the scripture above: If all the hugs given, meals cooked, the kind words, the laughs, and all the times her loving eyes locked onto you or others...were to be written down... Even her late husband's Alastair's shelves would not have enough room for the books to be written on this (and that's saying something).

I wonder how many people reading this have been a recipient of this care and benefited from the heart that God gave her? It's definitely a heart God had been moulding for a while.



Having had a large role from a young age in caring for her family, she always showed the deepest desire to nurture and care for those around her. Linda carried this on when she met Alastair and married him at Castlemilk in August 1974.

They began married life in Edinburgh in the mid-1970's before moving to work with the Castlemilk congregation and living in East Kilbride and Rutherglen in the 1980's. Throughout this time they began their family and raised this rather large collection of children, serving the Lord faithfully as a strong couple and strong family.

They moved to Dundee to work with the congregation there in 2001, where Linda was a pillar of love, support, and strength for all. Whether here or in the previous congregations, words can't describe the service that she gave to the Lord, though I know many Christians who can testify what it felt like to receive it from her.

Family is a word that means many things to us. Linda certainly loved her family: her husband, her five children, but it must be said that her favourite role was

At rest

to love her nine...count them... nine grandchildren. And yet, that word family did not just finish for her with her own flesh and blood. There are many beyond these numbers all around the country that classed her as a sister, mum, and Nana. All of us in this number felt this embrace and thank the family for sharing her with us.

In 2017 after almost 43 years of marriage she lost her soul mate Alastair, a very much loved husband, father, father-in-law and Papa. After his brave battle with cancer, he went on to his reward. The last five years were difficult for Linda without Alastair, as they'd been together since she was fifteen years old and she had never lived on her own. Yet she continued to love every one she could in whatever way she could find, and took great strength from the Lord and others through this time.

In Linda's final days she showed incredible strength and bravery and spoke of her certainty of her place in heaven and excitement of being reunited with her loved ones – her mum and dad and of course Alastair (whom she reckoned would be ordering one of her trifles as soon as she arrived).

We know that everyone we love, loves us in slightly unique ways... Like their own aroma of love... And Linda had one of the most distinctive wholesome aromas of love many of us have seen.

Within Scripture there's quite a few commandments and instructions... But the Lord decided to give us a cheaters guide. Jesus tells us all of it can be summed up in, love the Lord and love others. And if you're ever looking for an example of someone who did that, most certainly you can find that in some of the Biblical characters. Yet sometimes we forget that some of the best 'Biblical' characters are those that mirror these qualities and might be right in front of

us. Certainly, if you could sum up Linda in two phrases, I think that would be it. She loved the Lord and she loved people.

Linda spoke about God the way you and I talk about a close family member or dearest friend. She spoke about God the way scripture speaks about God. She spoke about God as someone she trusted with all her life.

As for loving others, she did it...and you've felt it. If you were lucky enough to be near Linda anywhere along the years mentioned above, you got a double helping of God's love. Yet it wasn't even just us in the family of God. It was everyone she came into contact with: neighbours, visitors,

other patients in the hospital, the doctors and nurses. Stories have continually have been told to the family about how astounded people were to see how Linda and her family handled this difficult time.

This short piece in no way sums up our friend and our sister Linda Ferrie. However, to finish on a note we might recognise...Linda was

known to have said that there were 'elastic walls' to her house that allowed her to take in and take care of those God brought to her path. I'm also confident that God gave her an elastic loving heart...a heart that could stretch further than you could imagine.

Those that knew her, of course, dearly miss her. Yet we thank God for bringing her to his side, and ask only that we have have the faith and trust in him that she did. And we all thank God that we got to be the ones who loved her. Though, of course, she'd argue that she loved you more.

Patrick Sullivan
Dundee





WHAT ARE WE LEAVING THE NEXT GENERATION?

If the past thirty years is anything to go by, then the church in the next generation will face issues previous generations knew little about. We have witnessed rapid changes, and many are not good. For example, the traditional understanding of marriage has changed, the sanctity of the life of the unborn is no longer assured and the termination of the life of the terminally ill is gaining traction in many countries. Wide acceptance can be found for all of the above because of the attitude of tolerance which affirms that there is no such thing as right or wrong. The door has been pushed wide open for the next generation.

Against this background we need to be affirming the authority of God's word, so the next generation will know where they can turn to determine the moral standards for their life. They must see in our own lives the place the word of God has and hear the authority of the scriptures being affirmed from the pulpit. We must teach them to embrace the attitude Jesus had to the scriptures.

The Old Testament scriptures we read are the same scriptures Jesus read. They are the scriptures he pointed to when answering questions about eternal life. And they are the same scriptures he said he came to fulfil. Jesus endorses the scriptures as his source of authority. For example, on Easter Sunday morning Jesus met two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were deep in conversation about what had happened to Jesus whom they had hoped was the Messiah. When he died their hopes also died. But he said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what

was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

After Jesus vanished from their sight they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). The two disciples made the seven-mile return journey to Jerusalem to tell the apostles what they had encountered.

Later that evening Jesus appeared to all the disciples and said, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures." (Luke 24:45). Their hearts were burning and their minds were open to the scriptures.

Application for today: Scripture must be the authority we appeal to in determining what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false, and how are we to live. 'What has God said?' must be the question we put to every issue we face because truth is determined, not by popular opinion but by what scripture says. Biblical literacy is all important. For no matter how loud an unbelieving world speaks, the voice of God can still be heard in the living word, the scriptures.

We will be leaving a rich inheritance if we teach this to the next generation.

Tony Coffey
Dublin





FAMILY NEWS

KIRKCALDY

After several challenging years when we have been unable to meet together as a wider congregation, the congregation in Kirkcaldy are now delighted to advise the return of our annual social event. It will be held on the 29th April 2023 at 1.30 pm in our meeting place within Hayfield Community Centre, Hayfield Road, Kirkcaldy.

Unfortunately due to limitations placed upon us by fire regulations, we are only able to offer a limited number of spaces (90) which will be offered on a first come first served basis.

Please let us know as soon as possible how many are planning to attend from your congregation.

Alan Moyes – alan.J.Moyes@gmail.com

Allan Hughes –
allan580@virginmedia.com

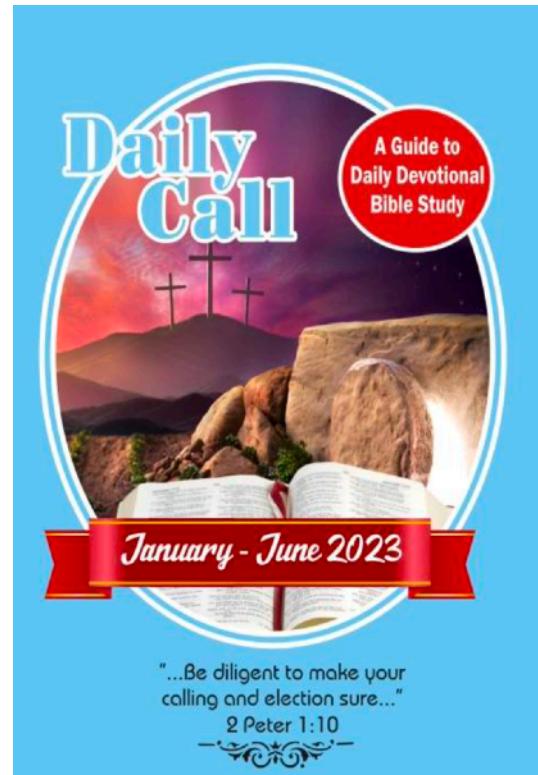
Allan Hughes

DAILY CALL

Several Christians in this country help put together a devotional publication. Kunle Orekoya and Biodun Owolabi serve as the editors – Kunle is part of the congregation in Northampton. Contributors to the current issue include Trevor Williams, Mark Hill, Sola Adeosun, and many others.

Published twice yearly, each devotional contains a text, the message, a prayer and an evening reading.

If you would like to receive this as a pdf, contact Kunle –
kunleorekoya@yahoo.co.uk.



A British Bible School Applied Biblical Studies Module

This module explores the letters written to Timothy and Titus, young men whose lives were devoted to the work of mission, and suggests plenty of important lessons for those working with congregations today.

Northampton

Christian Fellowship Centre, Shadowfax Drive, NN3 8DB

Saturday, 4th March, 9.00am to 4.30pm
Sunday, 5th March, 10.15am to 1.15pm
Saturday, 25th March, 9.00am to 4.30pm
Sunday, 26th March, 10.15am to 1.15pm

Teachers: Patrick Boyns, Jon Galloway and Jack Paton
www.britishbibleschool.com





AROUND THE WORLD

MALAWI UPDATE

Malawi is among the top ten poorest countries in the world, though we have enjoyed peace since independence, but it is now facing problem after problem.

Cholera has hit us hard, especially in the Central and Southern part of the country.



Tumbuka Sunday worship in Ekwendeni

Evangelism & Outreach Programmes

During the past three months I mostly concentrated at Ekwendeni, as it was difficult to travel due to an acute shortage of fuel in the country. So at Ekwendeni, we intensified our door-to-door preaching, teaching the newly baptised, and encouraging the backsliders. In the first week of this year we had to take stock of what was and was been achieved in the past year.

It is pleasing to note that by 31st December 2022 the total number of Christians was 356.

The average attendance for the last quarter of 2022 was 177, while for the year it was 165. A total of 54 souls have been saved within the year and 18 have been restored.

We now have a part time youth minister catering for the English service as it was too much work for me on Sundays. So we engaged Petros Geza to be helping mainly in the part of the youth. We did this as Sunday attendance in the English service was mostly below thirty and with this arrangement I hope we may see some improvement in 2023. The English service is from 8.00-9.15 while Tumbuka is from 10.00-12.00 every Sunday except the last Sunday of the week when we have a joint worship service.

As for our sister congregations, there will be a meeting/seminar on 25th February for all church leaders and village preachers to attend to do the 2022 evaluation and lay out plans for 2023.

Outreach

Despite the fuel problem, I managed to attend the gospel meeting at Kawanda from 7th-9th October where five souls were saved although the attendance was poor as we were about 212 on the last day which was Sunday.



Gospel meeting and immersion

I also managed to travel to Katula for the gospel meeting from 11th-13th November. Here the attendance on the last day was bit better as we were 388 and there were three baptisms.

Around the World

Benevolence & Church buildings

Not much has been done for this last quarter of the year apart from roofing the Embombeni building and repairing the Libwelitali meeting place.

Locally we have also not managed to help the needy and the widows because of a lack of funds. Most households are starving now and the cholera outbreak has worsened the issue. It seems the problem will be much worse from November to March as both Christians and the community at large are struggling to get the subsidised fertiliser.



People waiting on subsidised fertiliser

Conclusion

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Paul reminds us to give thanks in all circumstances as it is the will of God. Please accept my heartfelt thanks to you all for your concern, time and energy. You have families and many responsibilities in your homes and congregations but to think me and the Christians here, I'm very grateful indeed.

I lost my beloved wife two years ago, but you have given me strength and faith to continue working for the Lord which I was called to do. Without your support I would not be doing what I can now do as I was so hopeless and devastated. Please continue to pray for our work for the Lord.

Davison Ndhlovu

Death of Cromwell Shumba

Cromwell Shumba was born on 7th July 1950. He passed on 24th January and was laid to rest on 25th January 2023 at his home village of Samson Shumba at Emazwini in Mzimba, Malawi (this is about 20 km northwest of Mzimba).



Cromwell attended primary and secondary school in Mzimba and later joined the teaching profession as a Primary School Teacher. He retired in 2002 and became active in congregation work. In 2009, the Cumbernauld congregation in Scotland visited us and began supporting him.

He was able to make some improvements helped congregations to grow and led him to help begin other congregations around Embangweni.

Cromwell was struck by a vehicle while he was riding his push bike on the way to the bank to withdraw his support. On course of avoiding a cruising vehicle he fell down and had some internal head injuries which led to his death.

Cromwell is survived by his wife Gloria, eight children and twelve grandchildren. All the children are adults and married but only two have constant work.

Cromwell's passing is a great loss to the Lord's people and especially his family. We shall live to remember Cromwell for his commitment and hard work for congregations in Malawi.

Davison Ndhlovu



REMEMBER GOD

We can all forget things: keys to the car, a wallet, anniversaries, even birthdays! Forgetfulness is not an intentional thing we do; no one goes out of their way to forget something or someone. We can forget if we are pre-occupied and if our minds are distracted.

Philippians 3:13-14 encourages us to forget the past and look forward to the future. Though we find it difficult to forget the past, in the present we should remember God in our lives, remember his ways for our life and remember that we are made to have life. To remember God in our life is to remember who we are – we are made in his image as living symbols of himself. We represent the reign of God with moral, ethical and intellectual capabilities in the governance and management of the earth in which we live. No greater honour in creation is given to mankind than to be made ‘in his image’. We are here for a purpose.

As we remember God’s way for our life, we could be overcome with concern and so to help us along the pathway we should “endeavour to walk as children of the light” (Ephesians 4:17-18); “walk in a life of love” (Ephesians 5:1); and “walk in wisdom” (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Our experiences of life are all different – we have all experienced different sorts of lifestyles and some have been difficult.



Remember!!

Jesus calls us back to the way that he wants us to go. The call to the apostles was “follow me” – that is the same call for us today.

We are no accident: we were made for a purpose and that was to have a relationship with God and with each other. There is so much to learn about our self physically, psychologically and spiritually. When we do learn something it is only a reminder of how much we do not know.

Jesus wants us to have an abundant life. We often think that somehow we are all the same but we are aware that we are not. Some may be physically different than others; we understand more now that many are on the ‘spectrum’ that there are differences in understanding who we are and what we are. But the hand of God draws each one to him.

God is love and by knowing Jesus and faithfully following him we can see God and know Him. God is in our life, his way is for our life and we are made to have life.

Anthony Newman
Reading



NOTICES



ADVANCED BIBLE STUDY SERIES

ABSS I 14-17 February / ABSS II 17-19 February

Gemünden, Germany

Important to note: This year's sessions will also be offered on ZOOM!

This year's presenters:

Patrick Boyns (Peterborough, UK) - "A Question of Identity"

Max Dauner (Marseille, FR) - "Peter against Jesus"

Craig Young (Marseille, FR) - "Reflections on Romans"

John Mark Hicks (Nashville, US) - "Chosen" and other Christian Media

Daniel Napier (Thessaloniki, GR) - "Soul Whisperer: Jesus' Way of Personal Transformation"

And for **ABSS II** - lessons from **Daniel Napier** and **Patrick Boyns**

REGISTER EARLY - SPACE IS LIMITED!

For additional information and more details on the programme, contact: Paul Brazle - ABSS Coordinator

Maria Clarastraat 13 - 2160 Wommelgem (Antwerpen) - BELGIUM tel - + 32/488 481 082 (abss.gemunden@gmail.com)

On Facebook: ABSS - Gemünden, Germany

**THE
GOSPEL OF
JOHN**

Mondays at 8.00 pm
from 2nd January ... for 12 weeks

**SOLOMON'S
WISDOM**

Thursdays at 8.00 pm
from 5th January ... for 12 weeks

Links to join the classes can be found on the BBS social media and website: www.britishbibleschool.com

NOTICES



CHURCHES OF CHRIST EUROPE
EUROPEAN ANNUAL
BIBLE LECTURESHIP
Host:
Verona Church
Via Pasubio 17, Villafranca, Verona, Italy

Speakers:
Dr. Opoku Duah
(USA)

Speakers:
Everett Chambers
(FRANCE)

THEME:
Being CHRIST-LIKE

7TH – 9TH
APRIL 2023

FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL OR TEXT
(+44) 7985 20 5561 OR (+39) 328 107 7700

SCAN ME

A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the poster.

A weekend full of building your faith and friendships with Christian youth **Challenge Youth Conference**

WITH

- Inspiring youth speakers from the USA
- New friends from all over Europe & USA
- Outdoor activities & sports field
- Campfire nights with songs & devotionals



Age indication
12-25 and whoever
defines him/her self
as youthful :)

When 28.04. (20pm) – 01.05 (12pm) 2023

Where Eerselsdijk 50, 5571 TM Bergeijk,
Netherlands

Transportation from Eindhoven Airport,
close by train or busstation is provided

Registration

Early bird registration through March 15th
is €35 per person

Late registration is €50 per person

Please register here





DIARY

February

2nd – British Bible School evening class: “Solomon’s Wisdom” taught by Jon Galloway each Thursday, 8.00-9.00 pm. Links to join the class can be found on the BBS social media and website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

3rd – British Bible School quiz night: a light-hearted, educational Bible quiz hosted by Steve Whitehead, the first Friday of each month from 8.00-9.00 pm. Links to join the quiz can be found on the BBS social media and website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

6th – British Bible School evening class: “The Gospel of John” taught by Colin Hinde each Monday, 8.00-9.00 pm. Links to join the class can be found on the BBS social media and website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

13th-19th – Gemünden, Germany: Advanced Bible Study Series I and II. Contact: Paul Brazle (brazle.paul@gmail.com).

25th – Castlemilk: Devotional Evening, 7.00 pm. Contact: christianwoman@btinternet.com.

March

4th-5th – Northampton: British Bible School Study Weekend: “Timothy and Titus”; teachers: Jon Galloway and Jack Paton. All day Saturday and Sunday class and worship. For details see the BBS Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com. Contact: Mark Hill (marks@uwclub.net or 07434 956692).

11th – Great Barr (Birmingham): “Bible Seminar”. Contact: Sola Adeosun (sola.adeosun@gmail.com)

25th – Brandon: Ladies’ Day. Contact: Rachael Sandison (rachael_sandison@hotmail.co.uk).

25th – Livingston: Devotional Evening, 7.00 pm. Contact: christianwoman@btinternet.com.

25th-26th – Northampton: British Bible School Study Weekend: “Timothy and Titus”; teachers: Patrick Boyns and Jon Galloway. All day Saturday and Sunday class and worship. For details see the BBS Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com. Contact: Mark Hill (marks@uwclub.net or 07434 956692).

April

7th-9th – European Annual Bible Lectureship: “Being Christ-like”. Speakers: Opoku Duah and Everett Chambers. Host: Verona congregation – Via Pasubio 17, Villafranca, Verona, Italy. Contact: 07985 20556.

28th-1st May – Bergeijk, Netherlands: Challenge Youth Conference for ages 12-25. Contact: Bernie Wells (BERN.WELLS@hotmail.co.uk).

29th – Kirkcaldy: Annual Social Day. Speaker: Nick Wilson. Contact: Alan Moyes (alan.j.moyes@gmail.com).

August

5th-12th – British Bible Camp: EPIC – the Greatest Fish Story Every Told. Location: Lockerley Water Farm, E Tytherley Road, Lockerley, Romsey SO51 0LW. Contact: Jason Snethen (07795 560990 or Britishbiblecamp@gmail.com).



THE FINAL WORD



The need to be effective servants

Seven ways to help close down a congregation: –

1. **Boring lessons.** Make sure that our teaching has nothing to do with life today and make sure the congregation can't hear or understand what is said and can fall sleep. Use every scripture that you can think of and do not explain any of them.
2. **Singing.** Let the person who can't carry a tune lead hymn singing. Ignore timings. Get the men to sing the ladies' parts and never practise new songs.
3. **Communion.** In its introduction, talk about anything but what communion is all about. Rush it through so that people can't finish eating bread before receiving wine.
4. Make sure **visitors** are ignored.
5. Put an **offering basket** in front of people who may not have enough to live on. Or make it a third part of communion.
6. Keep the doors to the **meeting place** closed, so any one passing will not know that you are open. Make sure you do not have a sign board.
7. **Attendance.** Arrive late, leave early, or just do not turn up.

Congregations, of course, usually have a life span for all sorts of reasons: communities change, Christians move away, and the list could go on. In the UK, the religious nature of a community can change to another type of belief. Quite often when a congregation is

planted the first generation are the most evangelistic. The second not so much and by the fourth generation the congregation may find itself struggling to continue. It is always sad to see a congregation close its doors and even sadder for the remaining Christians to go nowhere to share in fellowship.

In our travels to several countries we have found some common factors that help to weaken Christian assemblies, including those that I have mentioned above. The list, sadly, is not complete. When writing my dissertation some years ago I chose the subject: the renewal of inner city independent churches. I could have written a far larger work if I had studied why churches fail, but I wanted to look on the brighter side and find out what happened to churches like ours that had almost died out but then came to life again. In every case there was one main reason – there had been a dominant leader who either left, handed over the reins, or died. But it all started off with the list above and the number one issue was the first point, preaching that was so bad it killed off people wanting to attend.

Not everyone is a gifted speaker and many have preached the simple story of salvation in Jesus in such a way that souls have been saved. The church relies on faithful Christians doing their best and we thank God for them. Perhaps, though, if you see something that could be improved in your congregation you will act upon it – the congregation is in the hands of every faithful Christian.

Lord, we long to see revival in our land. Guide us and motivate us so that we will be effective servants. Renew our hearts and minds we pray. Amen.

Trevor