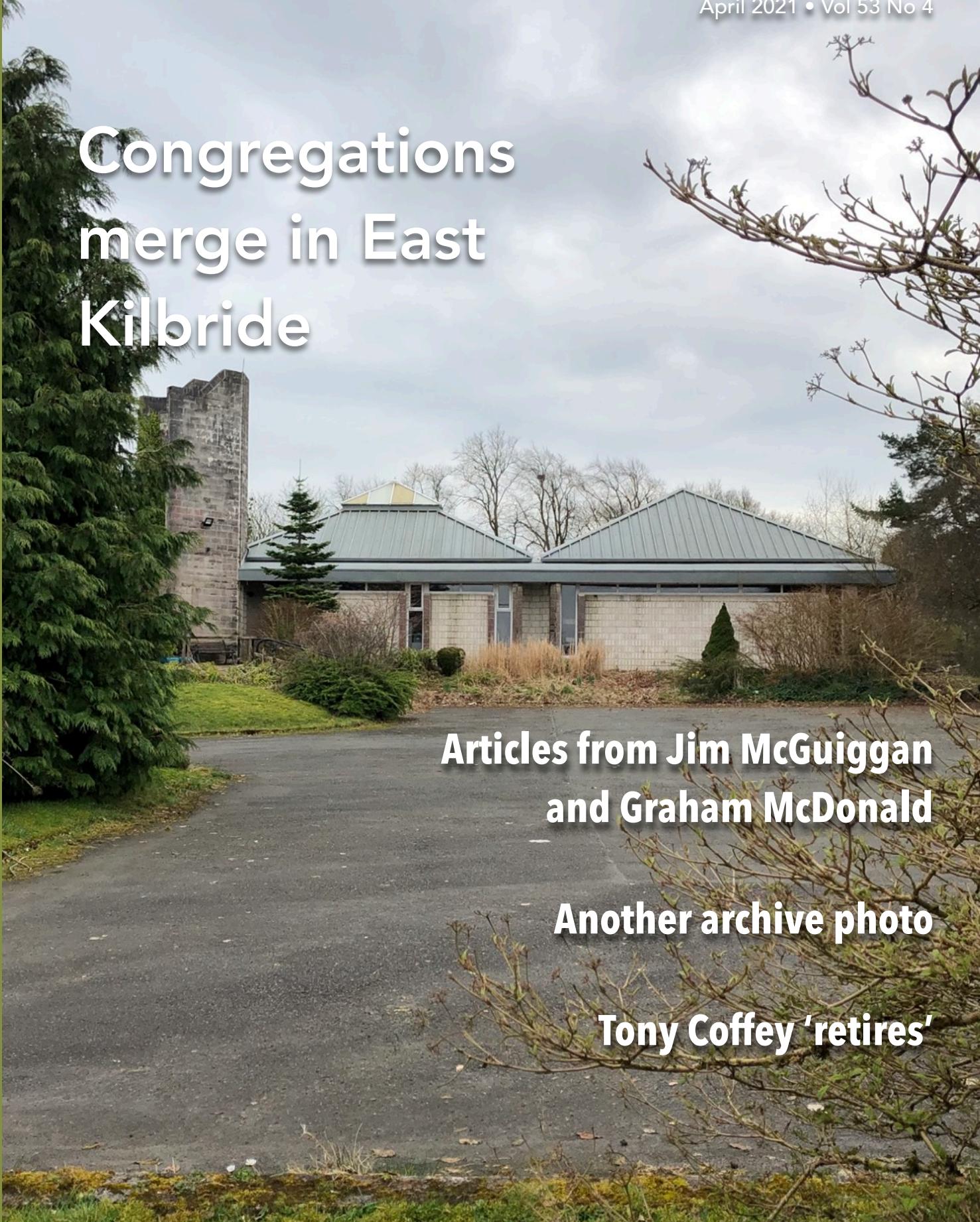


April 2021 • Vol 53 No 4

Congregations merge in East Kilbride



Articles from Jim McGuigan
and Graham McDonald

Another archive photo

Tony Coffey 'retires'

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Front cover: East Kilbride building



GRAHAM A. FISHER (1941-2021)

Graham died peacefully on 30th March at his holiday home (long story – the North Marston house was damaged by a central heating oil leak and the insurance company have put them up in a local holiday cottage while the damage is being repaired). Sarah and Arthur were able to get back to see him and he was conscious and lucid until near the end. I expect cause of death will be given as kidney failure but with his diabetes and heart problems as well it was truly time to go home and if ever anyone has run a race and deserved some rest it was him.

Given the current situation I expect the funeral will be local congregation and neighbours only although I hope we can arrange a more fitting tribute when we are allowed.

Graham A. Fisher, born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, on 21st October 1941, died in Middle Claydon, Buckinghamshire, on 30th March 2021. Husband of Barbara, father of Sarah and Arthur, father-in-law of Kalyn, grandfather of Declan and Adeline. Most recently a Christian at the Buckingham Park congregation in Aylesbury. He was editor of the *Christian Worker* from 1987 to 2014.

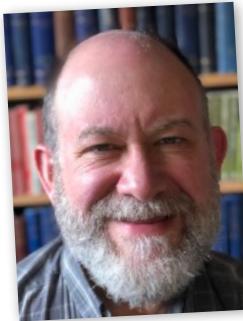
Please keep the family in your prayers at this time.

God bless

Steve Whitehead



MY PERSPECTIVE



The virus
continues
to be
suppressed

What do you miss most?

I was listening to NBC News earlier today (I have been doing that for several months through online live streaming). They were interviewing people about what they were looking forward to the most as their country returns to ‘normality’ over the next few months as the population is vaccinated.

That got me thinking – what is it that I have missed the most since we went into our first lockdown just over a year ago? What is it that I am most looking forward to as, Lord willing, we return to some ‘normality’ in a few months?

The three things that were missed most by those interviewed on the news programme were hugs, being with family, and singing (which was divided between singing at worship and attending live music performances). Those resonated with me as I’m sure they do with you, as well.

I miss being with family. We are fortunate that ‘essential childcare for expectant mothers’ is a listed reason for travelling in Scotland. Every few weeks we are able to spend a few hours with our grandson and we also get to see our son and daughter-in-law. But we can’t do what we normally do when we are together. We haven’t been able to see our daughter in Newcastle since September. And it is approaching two years since we have seen our son and his family in Tennessee.

With worship resuming we are at least able to be with other Christians which provides encouragement. But I look forward to being able to physically

interact with others, whether it be handshakes or hugs. One person on the news broadcast said she was going to hug everyone when it was safe to do so. Not being a ‘huggy’ person, I can still relate to what she said.

Having said that, there are those many of us will not be able to hug again. My father-in-law and mother have both departed this life within the past year. It had been a year and a half since I was with my mother – we had trips cancelled due to the virus.

My father-in-law always had a hug for me – and I will miss that. His death due to Covid-19 has given our family a different perspective on this virus, especially when we hear people say “I don’t know anyone who has died of the virus” – as if to say that the virus really isn’t there. Sadly I know several who have died and others who have struggled with long Covid.

I am so looking forward to singing. As someone who sings I realise the danger singing has been – with a virus that spreads through droplets, singing is a ‘super spreader’! At East Kilbride we sing songs in British Sign Language, which we have discovered to be a very expressive way to worship God – and I hope we retain this new skill by continuing to ‘sing’ some in sign. But I’m looking forward to it being safe to sing with my voice with others again.

Living as we have had to do for the last year has allowed us to take stock of our lives. What is it that you miss the most?

Jon



Two congregations merge

In was a day of thanksgiving in East Kilbride on Sunday, 28th March. We were thankful that we were able to resume worship after being in lockdown for eleven weeks. It was good to be with our brothers and sisters in Christ once again. But we were also thankful that this was the day that the two congregations in East Kilbride joined together to become one family of God.

We had been planning for this event for over a year. It was in March 2020, before the first lockdown, that Alex Gear and Jon Galloway met to discuss the possibility of merging the two congregations. Alex approached Jon but both had the same thought: for the Lord's people to survive in our town we needed to join forces.

Alex spoke to the West Mains congregation and there was unanimous approval for the merger. Once everyone was back and worshipping in person at the congregation in Greenhills in the late summer/early autumn, they began discussions which took place over a number of weeks. By the end of the year unanimous approval was given for the merger to take place.

The plan had been for the merger to happen just after the beginning of the year, but due to the surge in Covid-19 cases, this was delayed until

there would be sufficient room for both congregations to be able to meet together.

A few weeks ago it was announced that worship could resume in Scotland for Easter but, as Covid cases continued to drop, this was moved forward to the last Sunday in March with fifty being able to meet together. So we planned that this would be the day of the two congregations merging.

In consideration for this event we had several things to prepare. First was the building. Thanks to the help of several the storage at the back of our auditorium was condensed so that we could fit in sufficient seating to allow fifty to worship together with social distancing between family groups. We also wanted to begin to live-stream our worship for those who live a distance away. WiFi was put into the building and a camera purchased.

Last Sunday we had 18 who met physically in our building and an additional 13 who joined us live on Zoom. Both congregations still have several who are vulnerable who are waiting for their second vaccine before venturing out.

Our prayer is that together we can more effectively reach our town with the good news of Jesus.

Jon Galloway



BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

One of the more positive aspects of these past twelve months must be the familiarisation of the masses with the phenomenon of online conferencing facilities. Admittedly they may not be everybody's cup of tea – nor even accessible to all – but they have enabled many to take part in activities which might otherwise have been prohibitive.

Take for example our Evening Lectures Online. Although a relatively new addition to our repertoire, these have already provided opportunities for many, from far afield, to enjoy presentations on more selective topics than might generally be available.

Online Modules

Then there is our Online Extension Programme which we launched in January and which has just now completed its first term. We had a full class of twelve students, actively engaged over a twelve week period studying one of our Introductory Modules: The Authority of Scripture. We are delighted that all these stayed the course, and a number are planning to undertake our next offering.

Speaking of which, there are still places available for our next study module on

Parables, being taught by John Griffiths for twelve weeks commencing 27th April 2021. If you are interested in being a part of this, then do please look at the details on our website or get in touch for further information.

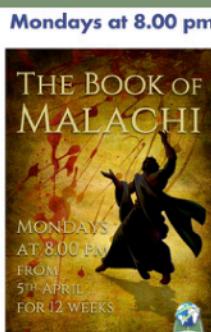
Our Online Extension Programme is enabling students to engage in a more focused and structured course of study that is normally possible within a congregational setting. It is providing the opportunity for guided personal research through additional assignments that students are required to complete. Do look out for further details of other modules we plan to be offering in the future.

Two new series

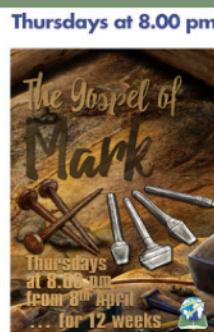
In addition to the above, we are continuing to hold our two regular evening Online Bible Classes each week. From 5th April we will be starting two new series, one on the book of Malachi with Mike Glover on Mondays and the other on the Gospel of Mark with Mark Hill on Thursdays. These classes begin at 8 o'clock and are held on Zoom. Please see our website or our Facebook page for details.

Online Bible Classes with the British Bible School

For twelve weeks commencing
5th April 2021



When the Lord looks upon his people, he must be broken hearted after everything he had done for them as a nation. Israel's lack of respect for the Lord, is seen in many ways. But it's not all doom & gloom, there's hope for the future. ...
Presenter: Mike Glover



"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." The thrust of Mark's gospel is to move people to faith in the Son of God. As we study this gospel together may we also come to the same conclusion. ...
Presenter: Mark Hill



Some light-hearted, educational, entertainment for everyone - nothing too testing (promise!). And you might want to have a pen and paper handy - plus a box of chocies to award yourself if you happen to win ...
Quizmaster: Steve Whitehead

We are so very thankful for the continued support of and interest in the work of the British Bible School. Please watch this space for coming details of how you might be able to be a part of this work as we continue to help prepare others to teach the Word to all the world, wherever our world might be.

Patrick Boyns
britishbibleschool.com



GOD AND ONESIPHORUS

It's true! He was as tough as the stones he and his accomplices used to murder Stephen with! I'm talking about Paul of course. This was a man who could hound and hunt down believers in Jesus Christ.

Even after he became a Christian he could defiantly stride to the mother church in Jerusalem with the uncircumcised Titus in tow and face everybody saying, "I don't care who you are, I won't swallow this view of the gospel that's coming out of here!" This was a man who would publicly [in Antioch] bury the apostle Peter and Paul's own close colleague and benefactor, Barnabas—calling them hypocrites when they folded under pressure.

When it came to the truth of the gospel he wouldn't give an inch—"not even for an hour," he said. And yet, for the gospel's sake he would bend over backwards to save some. With Jews he behaved as a Jew, with Gentiles he behaved as a Gentile, with regard to harmless customs, food habits and the like. "Who is 'weak?'" he wanted to know "and I am not weak?"

All of that's true, but it's true because he was driven and not because he was without deep feelings. As a preacher, he says, he has no choice (1 Corinthians 9:15-19) and in 2 Corinthians 5:14 he says he is "compelled" or as the NEB puts it, he is "left with no choice" by the love of Christ. He tolerates the pain, endures the weight of worry (yes, 'worry'—2 Corinthians 11:28) over the little assemblies he established because he is "impelled" by a power that has taken hold of him. But at times he wept, felt lonely and discouraged and frequently he feels personally inadequate and socially lacking. He tells church leaders to stop their sad appeals to him

because, he said, "You're breaking my heart." Acts 20:31, 36-38; 21:12-13; Philippians 3:18.

On arriving in Italy his spirits are uplifted when brothers travel more than fifty miles to meet him (Acts 28:14-15). When Demas abandoned him you can hear the pain in his tone and also when he tells of being abandoned by all those in the Asian province and asks Timothy to come before winter and bring Mark so the once unhelpful Mark can help him (2 Timothy 1:15; 4:9-10, 16-17).

And it's in the middle of all that rejection that he pours out a passionate appeal to God as he thinks of Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16-18), Onesiphorus who hunted through Rome and its something like a million and a half population until he found the jailbird. He "worked hard" to find Paul. He worked hard and without embarrassment to find the great man and so lifted his spirits that he could write the things he wrote later in 2 Timothy 4:6, saying that he was "ready" (prepared) to be poured out as a drink offering unto God.

Strong or not, inflexible or not, Onesiphorus knew Paul well enough to know that he needed to be searched for and found and ministered to! And this **very** strong man was not ashamed to admit his need and offer his fervent thanks.

So, you're in the pew, Holy Bible open and reading Paul's intense expression of gratitude for the man who (not for the first time) hunted for him until he found him and helped him much!

Just then, without trumpets blowing or cymbals clashing God slips into the pew

GOD AND ONESIPHORUS

beside you. You get over your astonishment and because the meeting is soon to begin God leans close and whispers, "So what are you reading?"

And you whisper back, "2 Timothy 1:15-18."

"What's it about?" He wants to know.

"You don't know?" you ask.

"I like to hear people tell me about it," He whispers and glances around Him.

You tell Him about the little-known man that helped Paul to "stay on his feet."

God leans over and whispers in your ear, "He did indeed and Paul did well to tell about that."

You nod in agreement as if you and God spent a lot of time talking to one another.

Then He whispers with a smile in his voice, "I really really like Onesiphorus."

You whisper back, "I know!"

And He to you, "Do you know why?"

You to Him, "Yes, I do!"

Still whispering He says, "OK, why?"

And you whisper to Him, "He reminds you of someone."

He looks around to make sure congregational worship of Him hasn't yet begun before He whispers, "Who is it?"

And you say, "You should know that; it's your Holy Son."

And He says to you, "Yes, I do know that but I love to hear others tell Me."

That's when the congregational worship began and God sat back to listen. You couldn't be sure but you think you heard Him say to Himself, "Well done, Onesiphorus, good and faithful servant."

There's something truly lovely about those who will never be famous but who enable others who gain such a status knowing that they will honour God and bless the world!

Onesiphorus! He's mentioned once more in 2 Timothy 4 but we know nothing else about him other than what Paul says about him in 2 Timothy. Still, we don't need to hear any more about him than this: he was a lovely soul.

Jesus would have been pleased with what Muhammad Ali did in California and what the man did in the gloomy court corridor when he stepped out into the aisle and as a token of friendship lifted his hat to the criminal Oscar Wilde as the once everywhere sought-after celebrity tumbled down into a world of self-created shame and public derision. "Men have gone to heaven for less than what he did for me," the lonely and devastated Wilde wrote later. How brave it was. Scattered throughout the world in every generation there are people who made themselves present to bless those who are suffocating in loneliness, those who were wrestling against great anguish within and relentless criticism around them.

Maybe you've been such a person!

Maybe you've met and been helped by such a person.

When you finally realised God had seen your anguish and been searching for you and came to your aid, who did He look like? A parent, a grandparent, a child who put his or her arms around you and whispered life into you?

"Onesiphorus!" A beautiful soul by any other name would smell as sweet (2 Corinthians 2:15). I've met him more than once. The good news is: he's alive and well!

Jim McGuiggan

[From a future book he is writing.]



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Another photo

We have another photo for your consideration. This one is of the 102nd Churches of Christ Annual Conference Picnic, which took place in 1948 in Llangollen in northeast Wales.

Can you recognise anyone in this photograph? I don't expect to find everyone this time, but some might spot some relatives or ancestors. Let me know if you do find anyone!

The photo is very long so I had to do several scans of it, and I've divided it in two so that you can see all the people. It actually fits together so you can see it is one of those extremely wide photos!

It will be interesting if anyone who was in this photo can be identified. I realise the images are fairly small but hope they retain their resolution when enlarged on your screen. If you would like the original scans, please contact me.

Many thanks once again to Stephen Daniell for donating the photograph which will be added to the archives of the British Bible School.

Jon Galloway
jdgalloway@mac.com





TONY COFFEY 'RETIRES'

On 31st January I 'retired' after fifty-one years serving the congregation in Dublin. I reluctantly use the word 'retire' since there are areas of service I will continue to be involved in. I will continue my video ministry along with our work in India. At present I am developing a work to encourage workers in various parts of Europe and am making myself available to speak in other congregations.

I look back with pleasure on my time serving the God's people; the evidence of God's grace and power is evident among the Christians here. I have been blessed by the lives of some of the finest people I could ever have hoped to meet; they are dear, precious people and together we have continued the journey of faith.

I am profoundly grateful to God for having called me to be a preacher of the gospel, a proclaiming of the unsearchable riches of Christ. I have never doubted his call and can testify that his hand has always been upon me. The fruit that has come from my service I attribute to the work of God in my life along with the support of some wonderful fellow believers who have always been a constant support.

I am not a reluctant retiree – the time is right for me to step aside and pass on

the role to another person. Again, I see the hand of God in all of this. For the past five years the church had been looking for someone to replace me; after bringing Matt Stephens and family to Dublin for ten days we knew we had found the right family. I have confidence that Matt will be a blessing to the congregation in the years ahead.

It's been an honour to serve God in this capacity and I praise him for his grace and mercy which he has bestowed upon me in abundance.

For the past two years I have been recording, '**The Three Minute Video.**' Some of you may be on the mailing list. Here is the link to all these videos – https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVgSmzY_D9b4SOKLDV0z8Gg

May I encourage you to share these with your friends on Facebook and other social platforms and together we can help spread the word of the Lord.



Tony Coffey

FREE HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

I have been thinking for the past few months if brethren would like to swap their homes for a holiday somewhere else in the UK. Effectively this would mean linking up with somewhere you would like to go and swapping houses. Costs would then be minimal and would allow travellers perhaps to be near a congregation to worship with. For example, our own home is based just outside Nottingham, in easy reach of the Derbyshire Dales, Nottingham City, local countryside. We have two bedrooms a double and twin, a pleasant garden. C.H., Parking, Wi-Fi. study. Happy to go anywhere.

OK I know this will take some organising but if you think this is a good idea let me know with your ideas. Thanks.

Trevor Williams



TWO GREAT QUESTIONS

Two of the remarkable things about Paul's life even before he was a Christian was his sincerity and his conscience. Is there a better demonstration of this than when he was on the road to Damascus? When confronted by the resurrected Christ, Saul asks the two most important questions in Acts 9 any of us could ever ask: "Who are you, Lord?" and "What do you want me to do?" What else could he say?

Later, when he wrote to the Philippians, I wonder if that experience was on his mind as he wrote of every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus is Lord. I suppose we could learn from Paul that we must bow now, or we will bow later, but we will bow before Him.

Still it amazes me that Saul of Tarsus, zealous for the law and chief persecutor of Christians, could respond so immediately to the appearance of Jesus on that dusty road. There was no hesitation, nor

reluctance to the vision. He says as much to Agrippa (Acts 26:19) and spent three days praying and fasting as he awaited Ananias to bring the message that he was now desperate to obey.

I think that that experience was another foundational factor in the life of the rabbi turned preacher. What meditations did he make on the Scriptures he had memorised and practiced throughout his life? What stories of Joseph, Moses, and others must he have considered of those who accepted their mission to trust the One they obeyed?

But also, why didn't Jesus just go ahead and tell him what to do? Why does the Resurrection and Life, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords need Ananias? "Just tell me now!" I can only imagine him thinking. Yet, Paul was learning, as he so eloquently states to the Romans, that God sends others to proclaim the gospel. God chooses mere men to preach about the risen Christ, men like Ananias.

It shouldn't be too much of a surprise then that in Acts 10, it is another man who is sent for when a vision gives instruction to Cornelius to find the preacher and apostle, Peter. Jesus saves, but He commands us to go and preach that message of salvation and it was one of the most important and persistent lessons that Paul received and practiced!

Also, it seems odd at first glance, that the story of Peter is interrupted by Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Peter has preached to the crowds in the temple on the day of



The Conversion of Paul by Adam Elsheimer (1598). Public Domain.

TWO GREAT QUESTIONS

Pentecost and gone to the Samaritans. Just as Jesus had prophesied in Acts 1:8, the gospel would start in Jerusalem and spread to Judea and then the Samaritans. It doesn't stop there though: and to the rest of the world – to the Gentiles! Acts 9 then becomes the plot spinner. We're following the story of Peter, we're interrupted by the Grand Interruptor that is Saul of Tarsus, and then... Gentiles! Suddenly, Saul's

story of conversion is the introduction of the new main player who will continue what Peter has started.

Saul can't start it though. For whatever reason, God wants Peter to be the continuity of the spread of the gospel that Jesus prophesied of in Acts 1:8, and Saul, the wee man Paul, would earnestly and relentlessly continue it for the rest of his life. If there was any doubt about where the Gentiles would fit into the church with the Jews already there, it would take a man like Peter to acknowledge their parity before God, and a wee man like Paul to fight for that parity.

Acts 9 is remarkable and those two questions that Paul asked are the most important ones any of us could ever ask. I wonder if Paul, years later making his way north from Jerusalem after one of his occasional visits there, came by the spot where

he had met the Lord, bowed in a moment of prayer, and said, "Thank you Lord for answering my questions. Thank you for the preacher who told me what to do."

Graham McDonald

Graham serves the Christians in Cumbernauld as one of the evangelists.

Dear brethren,

I'm sure that we can all agree that the past year has been challenging in many ways. It's now over a year since our first lockdown so as we look forward to emerging from this why not join us on a trip of a lifetime to the bible lands of Israel and Jordan? This will be a journey of spiritual refreshing, growth in bible knowledge and understanding all in the company of your brothers and sisters in Christ. We hope that you can join us.

God bless,

Ian & Barbara Starrs

A TRIP OF A LIFETIME TO THE BIBLE LANDS OF ISRAEL & JORDAN

2022
January 22nd – February 3rd



If you are interested in joining us please contact Ian Starrs for further details

email: jes22ian@msn.com





AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA

It is almost a year now since we had our first Covid-19 lockdown. As I look back at the times passed all I can say is that we had a year-full of mercy and grace. Last year about this time the whole world was in chaos and little we knew then was maybe God is bringing the world into order!



Thankfully by the grace of God, we have survived one year of pandemic. God has not only provided for our family, but used us as tools to serve hundreds of families by providing food and other necessary supplies. All this was made possible due to faithful and compassionate contributions from the congregations and individuals in UK, Singapore and India.

Things started to slowly fall in place from October onwards as our schools were allowed to open, public and private meetings were allowed, public transportation was restored. All these were on very limited basis and observing Covid protocols. So we restored our gatherings for Sunday worship in October 2020 from a Home Worship pattern to congregational worship, but we cancelled all our midweek meeting until February 2021.

From the first week of February 2021 we have restored all our weekly meetings, Sunday School, youth class and women's meetings, and our elderly meal programme. Lord willing we are planning to hold our first public meetings of 2021 during Easter weekend.

Many good things happened during the lockdown period. During the first part of lockdown we concentrated more on benevolence work. During the later phase of the lockdown time was spent more on building relationships, through visits and studies. During the course of personal studies, five of our youth – Raju, Daniel, Harsha, Divya and Shanthi – have accepted Jesus as their personal saviour and were immersed and were added to the church. As a result of home worship, we started to witness an increase in men attending, which is a good thing.

We held a year end thanksgiving meeting with very limited members. We once again thank God for the opportunity of being his people and serving during this difficult time. One thing this lockdown has taught us is to spend more time in prayer so, Lord willing, as a congregation we plan to spend more time in prayer this year.

Last year November, I was hospitalised for fourteen days with an unknown



AROUND THE WORLD

infection. It was either Covid or Typhoid, the doctors could not conclude what it was even after a number of diagnostic tests. What ever it was, I lost 12kgs in 14 days, and became extremely weak. Even after three months I am not 'fully' recovered. All I can say is God heard the prayers and spared my life. Thankfully my health insurance company has reimbursed 70% of the bill, which was a huge relief. Now I am slowly getting back to my usual schedule and visitations.

Jason and Graceson have started going back to school from February. Jason will be celebrating his 14th birthday on 13th March – please pray that he grows in the favour of the Lord and men. My mother is due for her cataract surgery and Covid Vaccine. Please pray that everything goes well with her. Ruth is doing good, assisting me in my work, as well as serving and mentoring women and young girls in the congregation. She took care of me very well while I was in the hospital. In January we celebrated our 14th wedding Anniversary with our family members. We as family thank God for protecting and providing for us so far.

Joel Madiki

PHILIPPINES

The term **balikbayan** refers to a Filipino returning to the Philippines, especially after having lived overseas for an extended period of time. A **balikbayan box** is a cardboard box filled with gifts sent by a Filipino living overseas to his family and friends back in the Philippines.

We, of course, are not Filipino and we are not returning to the Philippines right now, but we will be packing and sending many necessary supplies next week to several congregations scattered throughout the Philippines. Our good friend, Johnny Eastep, director of Leyte Christian College



(where Dale teaches) is a pro and veteran of Balikbayan box shipping, and he has inspired us to engage in this useful work.

Thanks to Apologetics Press, Global Seedsowers, and numerous churches and individuals, these supplies (primarily Bible school materials and songbooks) will be shipped to five different locations,

blessing many Christians and congregations to teach the Bible, and worship God, more effectively.

Dale Byrum (sent in by Graham McDonald, Cumbernauld)

PAKISTAN

I have prepared a one page comparison in the Urdu language that the church Jesus Christ started is according to Bible prophecies. This is a one page quick survey for readers and I hope people will read it and find the truth in scriptures. We plan to distribute it free of charge in our area. If anyone wants to help and support our Urdu literature, all funds would be very welcome.



Naeem Sabir



FAMILY NEWS

GREAT BARR

The congregation at Great Barr held a two-day Bible Seminar in partnership with the British Bible School on Saturday and Sunday, 6th-7th March via Zoom. The theme of the seminar was 'Love and Forgiveness' covering four sessions on Saturday and two sessions on Sunday.

On the first day of the seminar, Patrick Boyns led the studies on 'love and forgiveness: in the Torah and in the prophets' and Mark Hill presented lessons on 'love and forgiveness in the Psalms and in the Gospels'. The second day was devoted to 'love and forgiveness in the Acts and the letters and 'love and forgiveness in life' and were led by Patrick Boyns. Practical lessons were drawn from the studies on both days and there was ample time for questions, answers and general discussion.

We had 30 participants on Saturday whilst on Sunday there were 35. One of the blessings of conducting this programme online was the wider coverage, affording an opportunity for people outside the United Kingdom to be part of the programme. We are deeply encouraged by their involvement and we thank God for them all.

We ascribe all praise to God for such instructive and spiritually uplifting lessons that are focused on helping our walk with God through conscious efforts to gain a slight understanding of the love and forgiveness offered to mankind by the instrumentality of the sacrifice of Jesus. Such unfathomable redemptive love should motivate us not only to love God and each other sincerely but to be ready and willing to forgive others who trespass against us.

Our thanks are offered to Patrick and Mark for their efforts in putting very great lessons together and also to all those all who took time to attend.

Sola Adeosun & John Onyebuchi

NEWTOWARDS

Due to many problems with their rented premises the Newtownards congregation has closed with brethren attending nearby congregations with their own premises.

David Dunn

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WORKSHOP

It is with regret that due to the present COVID-19 Pandemic and the uncertainty of the situation over the summer we have had to cancel the worship for this year.

Stephen
Woodcock





DIARY

April

1st – **Cumbernauld**: Winter Words – “The shout heard ‘round the world!” (Nehemiah 11-12), presenter: Jon Galloway, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 826 7328 3069; Passcode: Nehemiah or <https://www.facebook.com/CumbernauldChurchOfChrist>. Contact: Graham McDonald (graham@gmcd.net).

5th April-14th June – **British Bible School**: Evening Online Class – “Malachi” (taught by Mike Glover), each Monday at 8.00 pm. Please see British Bible School website for details (<http://britishbibleschool.com/news-and-events/online-events>).

6th – **Encouraging Each Other**: Online time of encouragement organised by Tony Coffey, 10.00-11.30 am on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86145750127?pwd=YXRXMLkwUFBvNFkvVWprbWVrSmIzdz09>; Meeting ID: 861 4575 0127 Passcode: Edify. “Faith Over Fear”, presented by Bob Eckman, and “How to Face Each New Day”, presented by Tony Coffey. Contact: Tony Coffey (tonycoffey@gmail.com) or Jon Galloway (jdgalloway@mac.com).

8th April-17th June – **British Bible School**: Evening Online Class – “Mark” (taught by Mark Hill), each Thursday at 8.00 pm. Please see British Bible School website for details (<http://britishbibleschool.com/news-and-events/online-events>).

8th – **Cumbernauld**: Winter Words – “Standing by our promises” (Nehemiah 13), presenter: Ian Starrs, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 826 7328 3069; Passcode: Nehemiah or <https://www.facebook.com/CumbernauldChurchOfChrist>. Contact: Graham McDonald (graham@gmcd.net).

24th – **Liverpool**: Gospel Meeting – “Finding God” (Matthew 11:28-30), speaker: Peter Bain, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 970 213 6444. Contact: Charles Yankiah (07891 262910 or cyanikiah@hotmail.com).

27th – **British Bible School**: New Online Extension Programme term – “Parables”. Enrolment required. Please see British Bible School website for details (<http://britishbibleschool.com/biblical-studies/online-extension-programme>).

May

22nd – **British Bible School**: Evening Lectures Online. Please see British Bible School website for details (<http://britishbibleschool.com/news-and-events/online-events/evening-lectures-online>).

22nd – **Liverpool & Skelmersdale**: Ladies’ Day on Zoom, 1.30-5.00 pm. Contact: Maria Appiah-Anane (mgyaa5@googlemail.com).

29th – **Liverpool**: Gospel Meeting – “Finding God” (Matthew 11:28-30), speaker: Graeme Morrison, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 970 213 6444. Contact: Charles Yankiah (07891 262910 or cyanikiah@hotmail.com).

June

11th – **Liverpool**: Evening of Songs – “Psalm 34:1”, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 970 213 6444. Contact: Charles Yankiah (07891 262910 or cyanikiah@hotmail.com).

Parables

A British Bible School Applied Biblical Studies Module

The parables of Jesus must be understood in their original context. This module sets out to understand them as they were intended, drawing important practical lessons relevant to present day circumstances.

- Two hours each Tuesday
- Enrolment required
- Additional assignments
- Personal tuition
- BBS certification

Tuesdays at 7.30 pm

Online from 27th April 2021
... for 12 weeks

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THE FINAL WORD



Jesus, Meek and Gentle

'By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you' (2 Corinthians 10:1).

I read this text a few days ago and it jumped out at me to think about. The apostle Paul was praising the Corinthians and doing his best to encourage them. In this part of his letter he wanted them to be generous with what they said they were willing to do. Verse 1 links being generous with their finances and trying to sort out what some Christians in Corinth were gossiping about. But that is not what went through my mind; it was the thought about Jesus – this meek and gentle soul who gave his life for us.

Many congregations use the title ‘church of Christ’ as if it was some denominational title and it is not, and should not be used as such. This phrase is not a noun but an adjective, it describes what the church is, Christ’s body. If I suggested that we put up a sign saying the church of Jesus or even the church of God some of our brethren would have me hung, drawn and quartered. It was Paul who wrote to the Corinthian church describing them as the church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2) and then the church as the body of Christ (Ephesians 1).

When we read that Jesus is meek and gentle it is a far cry from him being a limp rag of a man. Jesus is no doll to dress up and play with. Both ‘meekness’ and ‘gentleness’ are powerful words that are difficult to translate into our English language. Meekness can be described as an inward grace of the soul and is a work of God. It can be linked with humility but again not in any weak form rather the opposite – it is a source of

strength to deal with the opposition that stands against goodness.

Gentleness can be linked with patience and is again a strong word. Gentleness stands its ground and is open to help the other person – it is a hand that reaches out. Both ‘meekness’ and ‘gentleness’ are strong characteristics of Jesus. In the text Paul uses these divine attributes in his appeal to the Christians in Corinth. The whole point of the matter is that he is trying to get people to see Jesus. Much of Paul’s teaching uses discussion to bring about his specific point, this was the way the Greeks did things. Today we like to know what the bottom line is; we want to know the final result, the cost, the effect. Paul uses the meekness and gentleness of Christ in such a way that he tries to bring the very attributes of Jesus to persuade his readers.

I cannot imagine how many lessons I have heard – and I often think about how many are delivered every Sunday – and sometimes wonder if it was Jesus that was preached about. Do we preach Christ crucified? Is Jesus really heard by the people? When Jesus is preached he must be presented with both meekness and gentleness to make the appeal of the gospel viable.

Jesus, please be our all in all, not only to follow you or to keep your directions but to be you as we tell the gospel story; the good news of life and hope and joy. Amen

Trevor