

BBS teaching in Northampton



Two new Christians!

**Thoughts from Tony Coffey
and Trevor Williams**

**Updates on India and
Pakistan**

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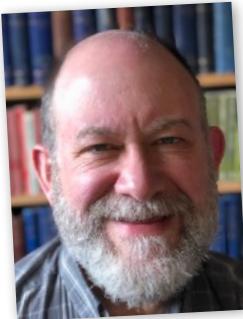
To receive *The Christian Worker Magazine* as a free pdf, send your e-address to jdgalloway@mac.com. Professionally printed copies are available at cost. Please contact Trevor for details – twilliams195@hotmail.co.uk.



Front cover and above: British Bible School Study Weekends in Northampton



MY PERSPECTIVE



Perspectives from the letters to Timothy and Titus

Learning to serve

As we were finishing our teaching in Northampton at the end of March, I tried to summarise the lessons that stood out from our study of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. These are the ones that seemed to stand out to me as a result of our two weekends of study and discussion: the need for good leadership; the need to grow as a Christian by concentrating on God's word; the need to live and treat each other as family; and the need to serve.

It was the last of these that seemed to resonate most with those who attended the weekends. Being a servant is not waiting to be asked but helping when we see any need arise. In many ways, being a servant is what good leadership and being God's family is all about. As servants and slaves listen to their master, we need to be listening to God as we study his word. Notice some of what Timothy and Titus were told about serving.

"And these also must be tested first and then let them serve as deacons if they are found blameless...For those who have served well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3:10,13 NET)

"By pointing out such things to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, having nourished yourself on the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed." (1 Timothy 4:6 NET)

"But those who have believing masters must not show them less respect because they are brothers. Instead they are to serve all the more, because those who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved." (1 Timothy 6:2 NET)

"I am thankful to God, whom I have served with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I remember you in my prayers as I do constantly night and day." (2 Timothy 1:3 NET)

"And the Lord's slave must not engage in heated disputes but be kind toward all, an apt teacher, patient, 25 correcting opponents with gentleness." (2 Timothy 2:24-25 NET)

"From Paul, a slave of God and apostle of Jesus Christ..." (Titus 1:1 NET)

"This saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on such truths, so that those who have placed their faith in God may be intent on engaging in good works. These things are good and beneficial for all people." (Titus 3:8 NET)

Although the word for 'serve' or 'servant' isn't always found, the description of how they were to live and how they were to teach people to live was based on doing good works and serving. In fact, one of the needed people in a congregation are those we often refer to as 'deacons', which really isn't a translation but a transliteration of the Greek word *diakonos*. This word simply means 'servant'.

Sadly we have made the role of servant one of authority. In fact, the Greek word for 'minister', which we have made a position, is this same word: *diakonos*. We don't find 'ministers' as we know them in the pages of scripture but we do find many servants who helped in any way that they could.

We often get caught up in titles and positions. If we would only learn to serve and to realise we are servants and slaves of God, we could accomplish so much more.

Jon



CONGRATULATIONS!

New Christians in Northampton

We are overjoyed to share with you that two additions have been made to the Kingdom.



Kofi Osae

On 14th February **Kofi Osae** was immersed. Kofi's grandmother in Ghana would take him to church meetings. She told him when in England he needed to find a church and be baptised. Living at first near the Northampton church building he came along. After reading the Bible for himself Kofi came to the conclusion he did need to be baptised to be saved. His delight and enthusiasm are contagious.

On 23rd February, **William Rands** was immersed by his dad Stuart. How wonderful it was to witness not only the saving of a soul in this way but to know they are now united spiritually by the blood of Jesus as well as by physical blood.

Mark Hill



William Rands and his father Stuart

Requests for funds – warning!

Almost daily I receive requests for funding from somewhere in India or Africa. They may be genuine or they may not. If they look genuine I may enquire for more information or direct them to someone whom we know in their area. I hope that I am right in doing this. I realise that many of our brethren are suffering across the world and they are genuinely needing help but I am also very aware that there are so many scams that I often do not write back. I stand as judge and jury in this situation.

I am also aware that several other people receive requests for funds in a similar way. Many congregations in the UK are small and struggling but they are often generous. For many years congregations have sent hundreds of thousands of pounds to both India and Africa. It is often better to support established works rather than try to take on more especially where there is no personal contact or knowledge of these people. I encourage brethren to be careful in this sort of situation.

Thank you - Trevor



BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

Study Weekend at Northampton

For a number of years now the congregation meeting in Northampton have hosted Bible Study weekends with the teachers of the British Bible School.

These Study Weekends are held at various locations throughout the UK and provide excellent opportunities for students of Jesus to immerse themselves over a couple of weekends in intense Bible study. In addition to the experience of being face-to-face in a classroom setting, there is also opportunity to complete additional assignments to fulfil the Module requirements for the British Bible School Applied Biblical Studies curriculum.

Over alternate years in Northampton we have had the privilege of studying from the Old Testament then the New Testament. In March of this year we turned our attention to the letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus. The first weekend, 4th-5th March, Jon Galloway and Jack Paton taught 1 Timothy. Due to

be said they were very well behaved and it was lovely to have them along.

On the second weekend Jon Galloway and Patrick Boyns taught 2 Timothy on Saturday, 25th March, and Titus on Sunday, 26th March. On both Sundays one session was following the worship with the second session being the adult class time. With around twenty present on Saturday, again some children were brought along, one of whom wrote some questions down such as, "What does it mean to rebuke?" and "What does it mean to reprove?". It's safe to say the studies had something for each generation present, considering the topic that was very appropriate.

We recommend that any congregation seeking to know more about or wanting to prepare for leadership – or should that be serving? – in the congregation, should consider hosting this study. We use words like, pastor, pastoral, minister, ministry and have certain ideas about them. Do we use them accurately?

Are they even biblical? We learned so many valuable lessons for how we should personally conduct our life in Christ through what we found in these letters. Those present benefitted from the study and the fellowship that is enjoyed through such Bible study.

Please do consider hosting a study weekend in your location.

Mark Hill
britishbibleschool.com



Jon Galloway teaching 2 Timothy

transport difficulties Jack recorded his lessons which were able to be played and projected on a big screen. Around twenty were in attendance and rather than not attend some parents brought their children along. It has to



THE GOSPEL FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

There are few, if any, who have not had someone in their family get Covid. We simply ‘got it.’ No need to have been sick previously thereby making yourself a candidate for Covid, no, you simply ‘got it.’

What’s true about the virus is not true about the gospel. The next generation must be taught how unique the gospel is and we dare not presume that because they are raised in the church they will ‘get it.’

When Jesus told his disciples, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,’ he didn’t say something new, his words were echoing the words God spoken to Abraham 2,000 years earlier. God said to him, ‘All nations of the earth will be blessed through you’ (Genesis 12:3).

What does that mean? God promised Abraham a son and through his descendants God would bring a saviour into the world who would bless all nations. Here’s how Paul put it:

“Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham, saying, ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’”

The blessing is justification, which would come through the gospel which God spoke about long before it was revealed in the New Testament. What we have are the words of Jesus in Mathew 28 shaking hands with the words God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 12. The gospel is not a New Testament doctrine; the gospel is rooted in the ancient promise made to Abraham in the Old Testament scriptures.

There is one central message running throughout the scriptures; it is about God working to fulfil his promise to Abraham and bring a saviour into the world. That’s the theme, the thread running through the scriptures which Jesus confirmed on the Emmaus Road that first Easter Sunday: ‘And beginning with Moses and all the prophets he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself’ (Luke 24:27). Christ in all the scriptures! The gospel in all the scriptures.

In Israel’s sacrifices there is a generous hint of the gospel. For example: A person sins and a sacrifice is offered. What does that tell us? Two things – One, sin is a

crime against God and demands that someone must die; second, the death must be that of an innocent victim. Do you hear the gospel screaming out to us? This is the doctrine of divine substitution. The innocent dying for the guilty, the sinless dying for the sinner, the guilty going free. That’s the gospel.

John the baptist uttered one of the most amazing statements ever spoken when he said, ‘Behold the



The gospel for the next generation

Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' Jesus said this about John: 'Of all men born of women there has not arisen one greater than John.' What made John so great? All the prophets foretold the coming of the saviour, they were pointing to a moment in the future, but John was given the privilege of actually identifying Jesus as 'the Lamb of God.' The prophets were saying, "He's coming." John said, "He's here."

Let's analyse John's words:

- (1) '**Behold**' is a word filled with amazement. It's far more than saying, "Hey, look over there." 'Behold' carries the 'wow' factor. John is saying that the redeemer of the world has come.
- (2) '**The Lamb of God.**' For centuries Israel provided their own lambs which were ineffective sacrifices though the procedure was repeated year after year. But now, God has provided the sacrificial Lamb.
- (3) And God's Lamb will do what no other lamb was able to do, take away the sin of the world.
- (4) The words, '**take away**' bring us back to Leviticus 16 which needs to be read with some

imagination. On the day of atonement the high priest selected two goats, one he sacrificed, that was the scapegoat, he placed his hands upon the other and confessed the sins of the nation, he then chased the goat into the wilderness, signifying the sins of the nation being taken away. But now, God has provided a sacrificial Lamb who would take away the sin of the world.

God's sacrificial Lamb, Christ crucified, is the solution to sins. That's the gospel. And that's the inheritance we need to leave for the next generation.

Tony Coffey



FINDING REFUGE IN AN UNSAFE WORLD (ISAIAH 45:22)

Stretford Church of Christ Special Meeting

Venue: Green Hut, 538 Kings Road

M3 28JT

Saturday 15th April: 1-4pm

Speaker: James Lim



FAMILY NEWS

BUCKINGHAM PARK (AYLESBURY)

Greetings from the **Buckingham Park** congregation (Buckingham Park being a new housing development on the northern edge of Aylesbury where a group of Christians has been meeting since 2009).

Like many – and probably all – congregations, we faced challenges during the pandemic but are happy that we are still meeting together and can now look to the future once more. Sunday 5th March 2023 was the first time we had felt ready to eat together at the community centre where we meet since the lockdown restrictions ended. We had lost our senior brother, Graham Fisher (one time editor of this publication) in March 2021 during the pandemic, so eating together without him was a poignant moment as Graham loved spending time with his church family in our regular fellowship meals.

Since Graham's passing we have been pleased to welcome six new people into the congregation (one new Christian and five who have moved into the area) and are regularly welcoming visitors to our meetings. Although still a relatively small group we hope, by God's grace, to keep growing.

If ever you are in the Aylesbury area, please come to visit us.

Steven Whitehead
www.aylesburychurchofchrist.org



The saints at Buckingham Park enjoying lunch

LEICESTER

We wish to thank all who have been able to assist in prayer and offerings towards our first church building in Leicester. We have faced a few legal issues regarding the sellers that slowed the process down but these are now resolved and we are drawing closer to completion.

The congregation outgrew our current location and our landlord voiced concern due to our numbers. We are thankful things are moving forward at this time. We hope to complete contracts within a few weeks and give thanks to God for bringing us to this point.

Appeal: We are asking if any congregations in the UK have any spare chairs available for gift or purchase or loan, we require around 120 or more for the main auditorium. We will collect in person from any location, these can be plastic seat base or fabric. If you are able to help please contact us.

Paul Hill
churchofchristleicester@gmail.com
07804 653690

STUDY AVAILABLE

For the past several years I have been asked about the ministry of sisters in the church today. Over the past few months I have endeavoured to write down my thoughts starting with Acts 2:17-18. My essay is not the be all and end all of the discussion but is offered to anyone who would like to read it and research the scriptures themselves.

If you would like a copy please send your name and email to me at twilliams195@hotmail.co.uk. I shall be happy to have comments about the work.

Trevor Williams



AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA UPDATE

The congregations we work with in Samalkot and Pavara are both doing well, and growing in spirit and in truth. Nine souls were added to the Lord's body this past month. We are active in evangelism and reaching unreached people and making disciples. It's so good that younger Christians in the local assemblies take part in the Lord's work and are actively involved in the serving and leading various activities. We do have regular Children and Youth Bible Studies and weekly men's and women's meetings in the congregations.

Rural Preachers' Network: Every month in five different locations we gather 60-70 preachers in each place – there are nearly 300 preachers who lack Bible resources but are eager to learn from the scriptures, to pray together, to have fellowship and a quality time of

Bible study. The theme I am teaching this year is "Fruit of the Spirit".

I travel to the various locations to share the word of God with them. We travel to the most interior parts where the preachers reach a common point from



100 -150 kms with very few public transport facilities. This makes me more committed to continue this work for the Lord. We thank God for new opportunities and challenges.

In January, 37 people committed their lives to Christ from different places

where we have had a concentrated effort in proclaiming Jesus. This network of preachers is a great encouragement, not only to the leaders but a blessing to the rural and tribal congregations and the expansion of the Kingdom.



Women's Empowerment: During 2022 a total 75 women graduated from our SWAN sewing centres and all received new sewing machines and a little startup fund to start their own business, based on the skill they had learned. We celebrated a graduation ceremony day to make them proud of themselves and praised and thanked God together. This year, so far 90 people are admitted in the course from 5 different places. We thank God for the resources we have and are able to provide this training for these

Vijay and Sonia Madiki



Around the World

unprivileged and deserving women and young girls. Sonia is empowering women to leave their situations of despair – last year six women who were sex workers left their former way of life and are now able to support themselves. Coming to these training centres and listening to the Word of God. Sonia has regular Bible studies with some women and three Hindu and two Muslim women have accepted Jesus.

Work with children: We care for 150 underprivileged children in two different places. Every evening they come and have some snacks and get to learn English and about God. There are some orphans and semi-orphans who lost their parents during the Covid pandemic and need additional care. Please uphold them in your prayers.

Please keep us and our work in your prayers, that God will provide what is needed to sustain the mission work, for long term evangelistic work and financial support, for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus and help build up the local body of Christ. If you can help in any way with our needs we shall be extremely grateful.

Vijay and Sonia Madiki



PAKISTAN

Greetings in his beloved name!

Last week we had 26 baptism by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please keep us in your prayers.

Naeem Sabir





A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT

'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh'. (Ezekiel 36:26)

We have a God of the second chance. The people of Israel had been in captivity in Babylon for decades at this point. Their failings had been well documented and demonstrated by Ezekiel. The people had been punished but God, the Redeemer, now says enough is enough. The promise

of hope and restoration is placed before the people. They would be able to go back home, the fertility of the fields would be enjoyed, the fruit trees would blossom again and give a harvest. The sky it seemed would clear and brightness shine upon the broken ruins of the people and the land that should always have flowed with milk and honey would flow again.

The text firstly talks about a new heart and a new spirit. It is all too easy to go through the heartaches, worries and the disappointments of life. We are flesh and blood. Each and everyone of us have to carry the good and bad experiences of life. Each one of us is moulded by what has happened in the past but God gives to each of us a new heart and a new spirit. It does not matter if we grew up in a Christian home or we never heard about Jesus; we are given a new heart and a new spirit. The best is yet to come if we walk with the Lord. We go forward in his power with vitality and strength.



Secondly, our text teaches us that our hearts of stone will be removed and replaced with a heart of flesh. With enough practise it is possible to make our tender feelings become so internalised that what comes out of our mouths is nothing more than harsh and flinty words meant to cut other people down. Sympathy, kindness and generosity are no longer part of our being. We self-destruct with our own feelings. Our God want us to have hearts of flesh that can touched by divine grace and demonstrated in human care.

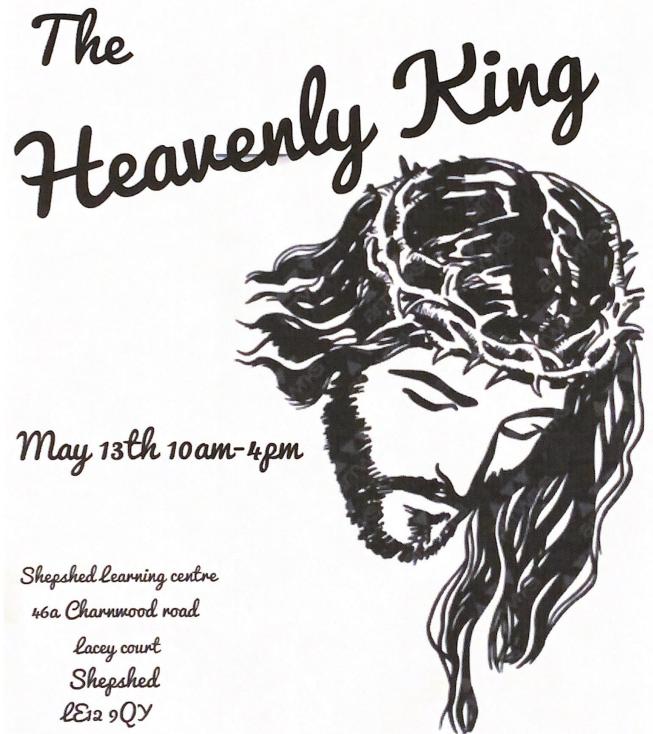
Today is the day of salvation and the Saviour calls to your heart to listen to him and be loved by him.

Trevor Williams

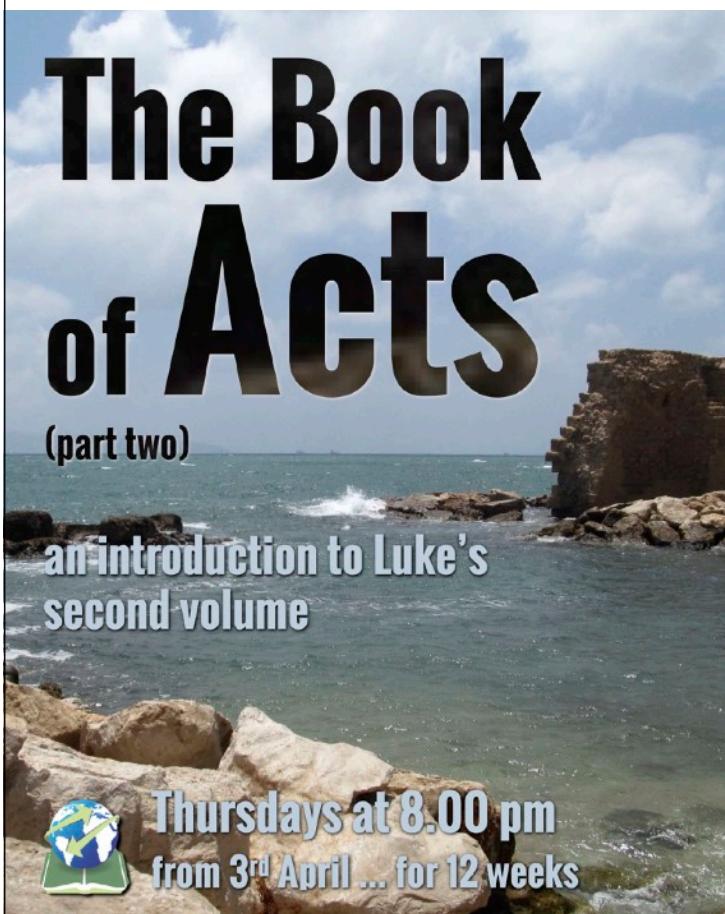
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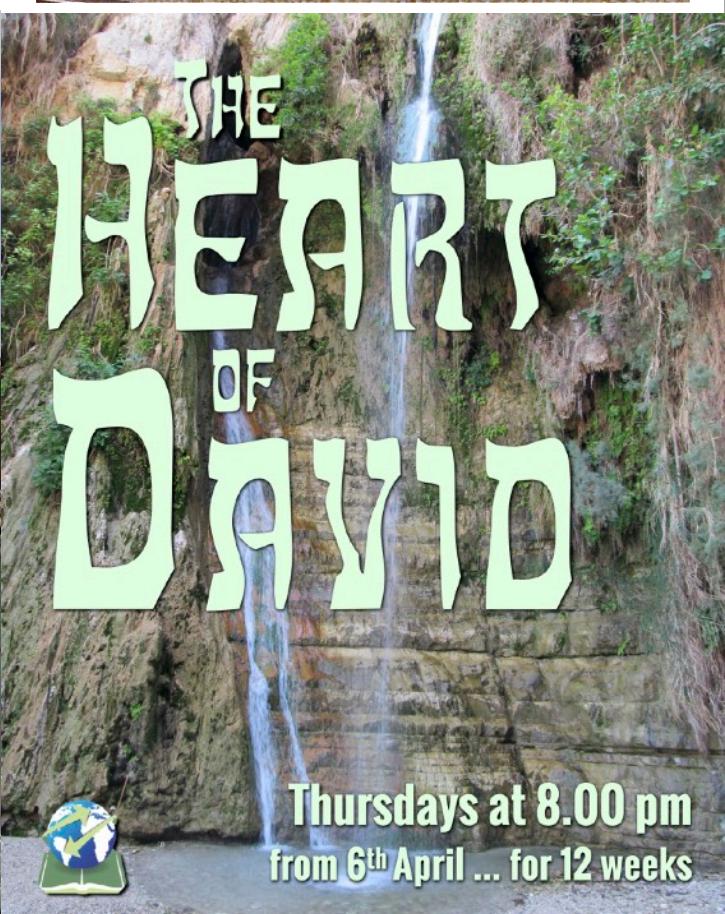
CHURCHES OF CHRIST EUROPE
EUROPEAN ANNUAL
BIBLE LECTURESHIP
Host:
Verona Church
Via Pasubio 17, Villafranca, Verona, Italy
Speakers:
Dr. Opoku Duah (USA)
Everett Chambers (FRANCE)
Theme:
Being Christ-like
7TH - 9TH APRIL 2023
FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL OR TEXT
(+44) 7985 20 5561 OR (+39) 328 107 7700
SCAN ME



Shephshed church of Christ fellowship day
Speakers: Mark Hill & Mike Glover



**The Book
of Acts**
(part two)
an introduction to Luke's
second volume
Thursdays at 8.00 pm
from 3rd April ... for 12 weeks



**THE
HEART
OF
DAVID**
Thursdays at 8.00 pm
from 6th April ... for 12 weeks

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

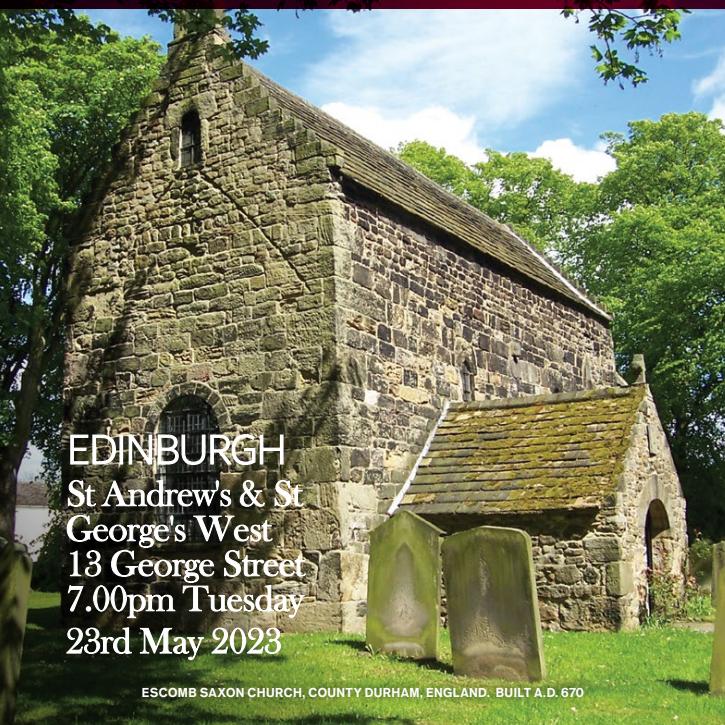
Notices



OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

PRESENTS

A LITERARY & HYMN PILGRIMAGE



EDINBURGH
St Andrew's & St
George's West
13 George Street
7.00pm Tuesday
23rd May 2023

ESCOMB SAXON CHURCH, COUNTY DURHAM, ENGLAND. BUILT A.D. 670

Enjoy one of the most beautiful places in Greece for wonderful Christian fellowship!

The event will take place in ancient Corinth from 28th June - 2nd July. The cost is €350 per person sharing a double occupancy room + about €24 to go from Athens to Corinth. The price include 12 delicious meals. There will be lots of time for fellowship and free time. The theme is Hebrews 6:19.

Fly out and stay for as long as you want to. A visit to the Omonoia church in Athens will thrill your soul. Let me know if you would like more information or what to do in Greece. Please e-mail me at thesaint195@gmail.com

Trevor

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



Notices

Calling 18-26 year olds

FRANCE

7th-29th JUNE 2023

TOURS - WORKSHOPS - CLASSES - PROJECTS

Grab your passport and join us for more fun than you've ever had learning – and the most enlightening travel experience of your life.

Come explore the high concentration of outstanding cultural and historical resources France has to offer while engaging your curiosity and forming deep - rooted bonds.

Ignite your passion! Discover a curriculum which draws on team-based activities, workshops, projects, and classes from our 6 areas of special interest in order to produce transferable skills and demonstrate intercultural fluency.

Delve into European civilisation. Sign up to our programme which includes visits to prehistoric caves, medieval fortresses, gothic abbeys, renaissance chateaux, Roman fortifications and a total of 10 UNESCO world heritage sites and elements of intangible heritage.

Who we are: Centred on Christ, our aim is to create something both irresistible and intrinsically Christian which accepts students from varied walks and shows each person a way forward. We strive to glorify God with our distinctive educational approach. Featuring guest professor, Dr Justin Nati, University of South Carolina.

Sign up to the Summer Session to unlock this exciting opportunity: Le Mont Saint Michel - Chartres Cathedral - Bayeux Tapestry - Chateaux of the Loire Valley - Jublains Roman Village - Palace of Versailles - D-Day Landing Beaches - Seine River Cruise - Cathedral of Notre Dame - Sainte Chapelle - The Louvre Museum - Place de la Concorde - The Eiffel Tower - La Monnaie - les Champs Elysées - l'Arc de Triomphe - **and MUCH more...**

Cost: £1600 (payable in instalments if necessary) which cover:

- All tuition, including our courses and workshops
- All transportation on tours
- Pickup in Paris (if you arrive on the assigned day/time)
- 18 nights accommodation at our campus
- 3 days accommodation in Paris
- All entrance fees to sites which are part of the programme
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner on campus
- Picnic lunches on travel days
- Drop-off in Paris at the end of the programme



Our fee does NOT include: airfare and personal spending money, or meals in Paris.

Contact: Jerry Jones (elite.not.elitist@gmail.com) to book or for more information.

<https://www.lachapelleinstitute.com/>



DIARY

April

3rd – **British Bible School evening class**: “The Book of Acts, part 2” taught by Patrick Boyns 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.

6th – **British Bible School evening class**: “The Heart of David” taught by Mark Hill 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.

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.

14th- 16th April – **Cumbernauld**: Young Adult and Youth Retreat – “Catching Fire (Igniting our Faith in God)”, ages 11-30. Venue: Rowardennan Youth Hostel, Drymen, G63 0AR. Cost: £25 for two nights. To book contact: Nicole Barr (nicole8barr@gmail.com).

15th – **Stretford (Manchester)**: Special meeting – “Finding Refuge in an Unsafe World” (Isaiah 45:22), 1.00-4.00 pm. Speaker: James Lim. Contact: Pilomon Raja (dr_mpraja@yahoo.co.uk or 07963 876942).

22nd – **East Kilbride**: Devotional Evening, 7.00 pm. Speaker: Niall Scobbie. Contact: christianwoman@btinternet.com.

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). *If you haven't booked, there are no spaces left – spaces are limited due to fire regulations.*

May

5th – **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.

13th – **Shepshed (Loughborough)**: Fellowship Day: The Heavenly King, 10.00 am-4.00 pm. Speakers: Mark Hill and Mike Glover. Venue: Shepshed Learning Centre, 46a Charnwood Road, Lacey Court, Shepshed LE12 9QY. Contact: Stephen Woodcock (stephen.woodcock@hotmail.co.uk).

20th – **East Kilbride**: Devotional Evening, 7.00 pm. Contact: christianwoman@btinternet.com.

23rd – **Hyyvots Bank (Edinburgh)**: “A Literary & Hymn Pilgrimage: (escorted by Dr Jerry Rushford, professor of church history, Pepperdine University). Venue: St Andrew’s & St George’s West, 13 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PA, 7.00 pm. Contact: Helen Kerr (hkerr412@yahoo.co.uk).

June

17th – **Stretford (Manchester)**: Special meeting – “Who is Jesus?”, 1.00-4.00 pm. Speaker: Sam Appiah Anane. Contact: Pilomon Raja (dr_mpraja@yahoo.co.uk or 07963 876942).

17th – **Castlemilk**: Devotional Evening, 7.00 pm. Contact: christianwoman@btinternet.com.

July

23rd-28th – **Camp Tayside**. Location: Douglaswood Scout Camp near Dundee. Contact: Aubrey Boyns (a.boyns@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).

October

30th-3rd November – **British Bible School Autumn Study Week** at Bassenfell Manor. Further details and registration will be on our website soon, but make plans now.



THE FINAL WORD



Upside Down

Some of our readers will know that Pauline and I have been on an extended visit to see two of our three children and their families in Australia. We are now back home with a pocket full of memories. They say that travel broadens the mind but it also touches the heart, for when we leave our loved ones behind, we leave our hearts there with them. It is, however, nice to be back home – but home here is only a temporary dwelling place, our permanent place is in heaven above.

While in Australia we met people that we love in the Lord and friends that we have made over the years. We often joked about being ‘upside down’. We went in the British autumn only to arrive in the Australian spring; we left as they were going into autumn and we arrived with the daffodils in flower. We have Christmas in the depths of winter, they have it in the middle of summer. We all know what Santa looks like in the UK but in Australia he may well be imaged with a string vest, shorts and is seated on a sleigh pulled by kangaroos. Everything seemed back to front or upside down.

This time we saw several trees painted blue; the reason was to make people aware of the mental health issues facing men.

So often we



have expected the stiff upper lip and men are told to take life on the chin, but we are beginning more and more to experience and realise that men and women,

boys and girls are all able to go through times when it seems that life is not worth living and the strains and stresses of life are a burden. The Christian is just as much liable to such difficulties as anyone else.

Acts 17:6 implies that the early preachers of the gospel had turned the world upside down by their preaching the resurrection of Jesus. Christians may still suffer from stress but at least we have a Saviour who cares for us and loves us. We can only read about the good news in our Bibles.

I remember a Sunday School song about ‘the best book to read is the Bible, it will send us on our way and will help us every day, the best book to read is The Bible’. Mahatma Gandhi once said, ‘You Christians look after a document containing enough dynamite to blow all civilisation to pieces, turn the world upside down and bring peace to a battle-torn planet. But you treat it as nothing more than a piece of literature’. Perhaps our Bibles could turn our own little world upside down by making it the right way up.

If you are going through tough times right now may God grant you peace and healing. Hold on to your God and open the sacred pages to find the comfort they contain.

Trevor