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New Beginnings

Missionary Focus:

Uganda



Testimony of **New Beginning**



History of **New Beginning** Booklet



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New Beginnings

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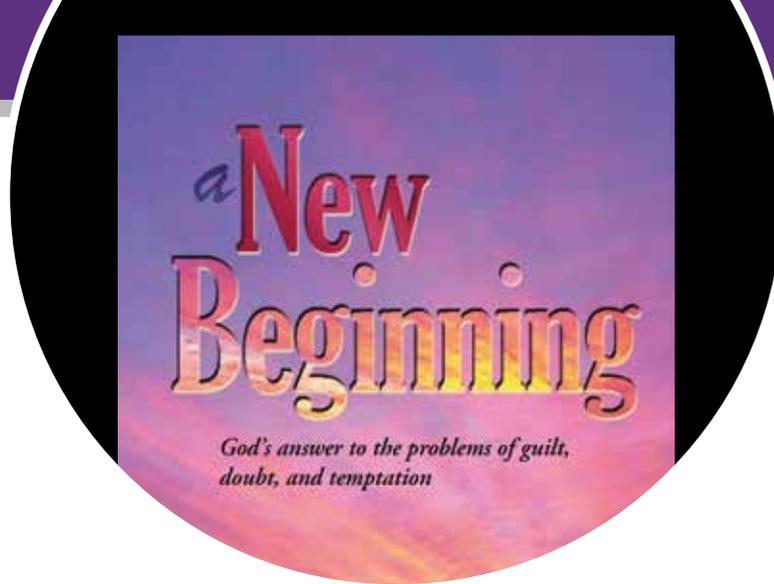
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Welcome to this issue of *LTBS Magazine*. As well as articles on the theme of *New Beginnings* you will find some new features that will be a regular part of our future magazines. These include *Biblical Word Studies*, *Interviews with Retired Ministers*, and instruction to *Help You Let the Bible Speak* in various settings. May you be blessed and encouraged as you read.

The History of the **New Beginning** Booklet



I think it was in 1975 that I made a very sketchy outline of what I thought might become a little gospel booklet to meet some evident needs in the field of evangelism. As I worked on that outline, each heading became a section in the booklet that was published as *Christ Is the Answer*.

The booklet was intended to meet four particular needs. It aimed to provide clear biblical instruction for people who desired to know the way of salvation; give help to newly converted souls in their walk with the Lord; put into the hands of believers a useful tool to help them witness to unsaved folk; and deal with some of the problems and questions that new converts often face, including the issue of the assurance of salvation.

I strongly believed the booklet must set out the gospel message in the very words of Scripture. Thus I stated my points briefly and supported them with multiple Bible texts. In those

far-off days, printing was very different from what we are used to now, and anything that went beyond black and white was pretty expensive. Despite this I decided it was worth the extra cost to do a two-colour booklet, printing the headings and some emphasised texts in bright red. The plan of the booklet was simple. It fell into two main parts. Part one dealt with the lost and told them how to be saved. Part two dealt with believers and sought to instruct them in following Christ.

Thus at the outset the booklet set forth from Scripture the spiritual condition of all men and showed what all men need, as well as their total inability to meet this need. Then came a section on God's way of salvation, showing that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. To make this point clear the booklet set forth who Jesus was and why He came into the world. Then followed a summary of the gospel and a section

on the invitation it gives to sinners with the Bible's clear statements as to how they ought to respond to it.

The second main part of the booklet was devoted to such matters as a scriptural basis for assurance of salvation and the Bible's instructions on living the Christian life. It ended with a section that addressed some problems believers often have to face. Here the booklet dealt with such things as doubt, opposition, worry and depression, unanswered prayer, victory over evil habits, and a proper response to felt failure and sin.

I thought that the most appropriate title for the booklet was *Christ Is the Answer*.

I thought that the most appropriate title for the booklet was *Christ Is the*

Answer. When it was published I had no idea that it would be so widely used. One key to its immediate success was that Dr. Paisley took one of the very first copies and read it. He was immediately enthusiastic about it – so much so, indeed, that he said to me, “This is the best thing you have ever done, or ever will do!” So I suppose I should have retired right away! Dr. Paisley ordered large numbers of the booklet for his own congregation and encouraged every Free Presbyterian church to do likewise. He personally used it as a tool for witnessing and led his people to do the same. God's people responded with soul-winning zeal. Many would simply ask an unsaved friend to take a booklet, read it, and then discuss it with them. The results were thrilling, for many souls were won for Christ. A high school teacher was challenged to witness to her students as the Lord gave opportunity and used the booklet to explain the way of life. Over a period of about eighteen months, around three hundred teenagers professed faith in Christ. Each day at break times and after school new believers would meet for prayer. The principal of the school personally told me that the entire atmosphere of the school was changed through that ministry – which is still bearing fruit today.

Over the years literally hundreds of thousands of

Christ Is the Answer were printed—I long ago gave up counting when the figure was approaching half a million. In time, however, the old format began to look dated. Printing techniques had developed, and full-colour printing was now available at a reasonable cost. It was time the booklet had a makeover. I stuck with the same basic outline, changing the wording where necessary and introducing colour photographs to illustrate and break up the text, the whole idea being to produce an attractive booklet that unsaved people would be willing to take and read.

Over a period of about eighteen months, around three hundred teenagers professed faith in Christ.

In addition, I expanded the section on the assurance of salvation. Because copies of *Christ Is the Answer* were still being used, I adopted a different title, *A New Beginning*, which is still being printed and used widely by our churches and particularly by Let the Bible Speak.

Both booklets have been translated into a number of foreign languages. Particularly interesting is the use of *A New Beginning* among Farsi speakers in places such

as Iran and Afghanistan. At the suggestion of Pastor Pooyan Mershahi, a series of discussion questions were added as a Bible study aid for new converts and Christian workers. Being caught with Christian literature can be dangerous in Muslim countries, so the availability of the booklet on the internet has provided a safer way to get it to both believers and unbelievers.

The key to the success of this booklet lies in its use of God's Word. It depends on what He says rather than what a human writer says. Also, God's people have used it as a tool for evangelism. In the 1970s the Lord richly blessed their efforts, and I believe He can do the same today, for Christ is still the answer. Just let us be similarly zealous in witnessing. Ultimately the sovereign grace of God is the real reason for any good done through the booklet. To Him be all the glory.



Alan Cairns
is now retired after serving as minister of Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC, USA.

The Book of Beginnings



As we read the first three chapters of Genesis we clearly see some foundational truths declared:

• God is our Creator

Perhaps no part of the Bible is more under attack today than the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. Genesis 1:1 reads, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” With his sinful, humanistic reasoning, mankind has tried to edit God out of the pages of history and indeed the Bible. The theory of evolution has been promoted to such a degree that it is accepted by many today as

It is God alone who has set the standards of right and wrong.

scientific fact. Of course, the underlying reason for the

peddling of such a theory is that it explains away a Creator. If there is no Creator, then there is no one to whom we are accountable. The opening verse of Scripture does not explain God, it declares Him. The rest of the Bible does not defend God, it reveals Him. As our Creator, God has given us every faculty and ability that we possess. Yet as Romans teaches us, such is the hardness of the heart of the sinner that the worship and service He ought to give to the Lord for such mercies is given to created man rather than to the Creator God.

• God is our Lawgiver

In Genesis 2, the law of God was encapsulated in the words of verses 16–17: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The Ten Commandments were later given as a practical

application of the law of God in our relationship toward the Lord and toward our fellow man. It is God alone who has set the standards of right and wrong. For many years in the United Kingdom, the Bible was the basis upon which the laws of the land were created and implemented. While society has embraced the teachings of evolution and wandered away from the standards of God’s Word, the Lord and His law have not changed. The words of Isaiah come to mind when we hear of some of the laws that our elected representatives have passed and are seeking to pass in future days: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20–21).

• God is our Saviour

Having read of creation in chapter 1 and the giving of

the law in chapter 2, we then come to read of created man sinning against his God by breaking that law. Adam’s sin had tragic consequences, not only in that moment when he fell, but for the generations that would be born of Adam’s race. Romans 5:12 teaches, “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Thus having broken the law, man stands at enmity

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with God. Adam sinned against God, offending God by that sin, and as a result was separated from God. Adam needed to be saved from his sin, and in mercy the Lord spoke to Adam and promised that He would send one who would defeat sin. This verse, Genesis 3:15, is known as the proto-gospel (the first gospel promise in Scripture): “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” As we continue reading through Scripture we discover that the one who would save would be of Abraham’s line,

would come as a Lamb, and would die as a sacrifice for sinners. Indeed, John declared of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

In this brief review of the opening pages of the beginning of the Bible we note the following:

We have a Creator – one to whom we will each give an account when our soul is called from this scene of time.

We have a Lawgiver – as we look at the law we see we have broken it in every aspect. Because of our sinful nature we face the consequences of the broken law that Adam experienced: separation from God.

We have a Saviour – one who can free us from the curse of a broken law. The perfect Substitute for sinners shed His blood upon the cross of Calvary, paying the debt of sin and reconciling sinners to a holy God.

Psalms 11:3 asks the question, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” To remove the foundations will result in a lack of stability. The people of God must continue to rest upon and proclaim the truths of the foundational book of the Bible, knowing that no matter what attack may come upon the truth from wicked hearts and minds, the

promise of God is, “The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:24–25).

*O wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!
True wisdom its pages unfold;
And though we may read them a thousand times o’er,
They never, no never, grow old!*

*Each line has a treasure, each promise a pearl,
That all if they will may secure;
And we know that when time and the world pass away,
God’s Word shall forever endure.*

When we read a book, it’s wise to start at the beginning. This is also true with Scripture. Open your Bible today – reread those majestic words, “In the beginning God created.” Remind yourself of those teachings and truths, praying that God will use them to give you a burden for others that need to know them.



Ryan McKee
is associate minister at Calvary Free Presbyterian Church, Magherafelt, Northern Ireland, and editor of LTBS Magazine.

Testimony of a New Beginning

I was born in Fremantle, Western Australia. I had a very good upbringing, a good education, and very loving parents. However, I never went to church. I never went to Sunday school or children's meetings or youth fellowships, and I never went to church on a Sunday. The only time I was in church was for the occasional wedding or funeral.

As a result, I grew up to be a self-confessed atheist. I had no fear of God. I thought that we were no different to a cat or a dog: that we are born, we grow up, we live our life, and then we die; we come from nothing and we go back to nothing. I thought that there was no existence beyond the grave. As a result, by the time I reached my twenties, I was drinking, gambling, going to pubs, and partaking of all the vices that most young people of my age were doing.

So when did it all change? Well, I met the girl of my dreams and decided to get married and settle down. People asked me what church I was going to get

married in. I told them that I did not believe in God, so it would be hypocritical for me to get married in a church. So we were married in the Queens Park in Perth, where many weddings were held. We were not married by a church minister, but by a marriage celebrant. We had a lovely wedding, with all the trimmings, but there was no mention of God. We then bought a little house and began to meet the neighbours. Now, even though we were not religious, we discovered that the neighbours beside us were Roman Catholics, from Cork, and the neighbours over the road were Seventh-day Adventists. The Seventh-day Adventists decided that we needed a little religion in our lives, so they invited us over to their home to watch a couple of videos about their religion. Now I was not really interested, but just to be polite, I watched the videos. Needless to say, the Seventh-day Adventists are a false cult, and there was nothing there to make me change my way of life. However, the one thing that was mentioned, that was to be the "hook" that the Lord used to get me thinking, was eternal life. I remember thinking to myself, even as an atheist, if there is a one-million-to-one chance that eternal life was for real,

I would be a fool if I didn't spend a little bit of time to look into this for myself.

So after listening to everything that the neighbours told me, I got

I told them that I did not believe in God...

talking to a man at work one day who I knew was "religious." I asked him what religion he was, and he told me that he wasn't religious, he was a Christian. George went on to tell me that he was a born-again Christian, and it was then, at the age of twenty-three, that I heard the gospel for the first time in my life. I was given various gospel tracts and booklets to read. Always having had a love for history, I enjoyed reading about the history of the nation of Israel. It was then that I was introduced to the subject of Bible prophecy, and I was fascinated to learn that the Bible not only tells us about the past, but it also predicts future events.

After about two weeks of reading, I realised there was some truth in the Bible, at least historically, but I still did not believe in the existence of God. So George gave me

another gospel tract to read, and this time he encouraged me to pray that God would prove to me that He existed, because the Bible says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." So that night I was home alone, my wife having gone out somewhere, and I sat down to read this latest tract. For the first time in my life, I prayed. I told God that I did not believe in Him, but if He did exist, I wanted to know. I had no desire to change my life, I just wanted to know whether God was real and whether or not heaven and hell and eternal life were real.

The little tract told me about the sufferings and the death of Christ. I read about how Christ was mocked by the Roman soldiers. I read about the scourging He received. He was whipped with a "cat-o'-nine-tails." It was a leather whip with nine strips of leather attached to it. Each time the victim was whipped once, he would receive nine lashes. Then if that wasn't bad enough, at the end of each piece of leather they would tie sharp pieces of bone or steel. These would dig into the man's back and, when pulled away, would slice open the victim's back. I went on to read about the horror of crucifixion. It was the most agonising death a person could face. I had no idea that Christ suffered so much for sinners.

Then I read how Christ, being the Son of God, could have

come down from that cruel cross at any time, but He didn't come down, because He was actually born into this world to be the Lamb of God who came to die for the sins of His people. When I read that, I thought to myself, He must have really loved us to go through so much for someone like me. It was then that the love of God and the peace of God flooded my soul. I had never felt anything like it before. I can only describe it as the Bible describes it when it speaks about a "perfect peace" (Isaiah 26:3) that "passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). I had been such a sceptic, but that night the Lord answered my prayer and proved to me that He existed. I knew then that I needed to be saved. However, despite having read several gospel tracts, I did not know how to get saved. I had to wait until the next day, when I could go to work and ask my Christian friend how to actually get saved. I didn't sleep very well that night, knowing that if I died in my sleep, before he could lead me to Christ, I would be in a lost sinner's hell. The next morning I told him what had happened and I asked him the way of salvation. He turned me to Romans 10:13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." So I simply bowed my head in prayer, admitted I was a lost sinner for whom Christ died, and asked the Lord to cleanse me from my sin in His own precious blood

and save me. At the moment I did that, there were no strange feelings, but I knew I was saved, because the Bible told me so.

I knew I was saved, because the Bible told me so.

Let me close by saying to anyone who is reading this, that if you are not saved, then I know why you are not saved. It is because you don't believe. You may not be an atheist, you may even have a form of religion, but what you need is the reality of God's so great salvation. I would urge you to pray as I prayed and to ask the Lord to come into your heart and life. Heaven is real. Hell is real. Christ is real. Eternal life is real. Therefore, "seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6).



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is minister of Randalstown
Free Presbyterian Church,
Northern Ireland.

Blessings of Beginning the Christian Life



The true Christian bears testimony to blessings of the Christian life right from its very commencement. A new life has begun. When viewed, the “before” and “after” pictures clearly show a change not just in the head but also in the heart. It is such a change that the only explanation is the grace of God – there has been an inward transformation and not simply an outward reformation. Any intelligent apprehension of the life lived before the

We are saved not only by Christ, but in Christ.

Lord came in saving power brings a much deeper appreciation of the new life in Christ. It was one marked by unrighteousness, whether in deeds of daring wickedness or in efforts to live a “good”

life. “Unrighteous” is description enough of a transgressor of God’s law; the kind of wrongdoing is only a matter of degrees. Not one spark of divine life is resident in the soul, and only the analogy of death can depict the frightening state of the natural man. Dead in (because of) trespasses and sins; bound by the devil, lust, and sin; under the wrath of God and by nature the children of wrath; living to gratify lusts of the flesh and obey the dictates of a depraved nature; conforming to the will of the world and the powers of darkness (Ephesians 2:1–3). What blessing, then, to come from death to life, bondage to liberty, condemnation by God to acceptance before God. This is the very salvation of God and the real experience of all who enter the Christian life.

It is God who produces the change, in grace, by Christ,

and with mighty power. There is no comprehension of the magnitude of such blessing unless we keep in focus the dominance of grace and the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is not due to human merit and so is wholly gratuitous. Such an effective, extensive, and evident change comes by the joining of poor sinners to the saving work of Jesus Christ, for He is the reservoir of all blessings that God conveys to needy souls. How then does His saving virtue become the possession of dead, bound, guilty sinners? God’s way is that of bringing them into vital life-union with Christ Himself. Then the virtue of His saving acts in life, death, resurrection, and ascension become the very power to deliver from the enslavement of sin and death. We are saved not only by Christ, but in Christ. All His work was done not only for us, but as us. He went into death for us and as us.

He rose not only for us, but as us, and ascended to the right hand of the Father not only for us, but as us. The Spirit Himself could not be our life apart from our union with Christ. It is the work of the Spirit to quicken in us the life of Christ, but it is Christ who is our life (Colossians 3:4). He promised this life to us and merited it for us. It is the impartation of life where once death reigned. Christ becomes the life of the believer at his union with Christ, when God puts forth the operation of His Spirit through the Word preached, effectually calling those who are dead in sins. There is no experience of life-union with Christ without this divine operation and the conscious response of embracing Christ in repentance and faith. Faith, from the believer’s perspective, is the seal of the bond.

The crowning act of Christ was His resurrection from the dead. His people are risen with Him (Colossians 2:12) and so are partakers of a resurrection life. This is the Christian’s life – a risen, heavenly life which seeks “those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1). This is the life of God in the soul of man. What a rich life of blessing comes when one is made a partaker of Christ and united with the risen Saviour. He is the life of our justification, adoption,

and sanctification. These are blessings the Christian enjoys in this life, along with ones that flow directly from these – “assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein

The crowning act of Christ was His resurrection from the dead.

to the end” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q36). Fellowship with God is now a blessed reality. His grace subdues the power of sin, His blood removes its guilt, and His righteousness gives acceptance with God. Worldly standards, fleshly joys, selfish ambitions have no part in a life that is risen with Christ and lived to the glory of God. The obligation is great to live to God and for God. Love for Him creates a desire for an unreserved surrender of all we are and have to Him. Paul summarized the Christian life so succinctly when he said, “To me to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21).

For the Christian, there are blessings yet to be experienced. While death in Scripture is called an enemy and the king of terrors, yet it can do the Christian no harm. Sin brought death into the world, and yet the believer’s

death takes him from the very presence of sin. Death makes a passage into the land of promise and brings us into our heavenly possession. It is no loss, rather great gain, to be with Christ in glory. His high priestly prayer was, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory” (John 17:24). Christ has His glory not only for Himself but also for His people. Those in heaven shall have as much of that glory as glorified humanity is capable of receiving. Then will joy be full, with all tears and sorrow gone. There will be no storms, just perfect rest and permanent, undisturbed peace. Every glorified eye shall behold his inheritance in light. There will be nothing lacking to complete the saint’s happiness there. Here is the fullness of blessings.



Leslie Curran
is the programme director of LTBS in Northern Ireland and Convener of the LTBS Committee.

Missionary Focus: Uganda

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa with a population of approximately forty million. Its story includes the rise and fall of various tribes and a period under British rule. Lying on the equator, its climate is tropical, and a wide variety of crops are grown in a largely agricultural economy. In recent decades, political stability has fostered economic development, although large parts of the country remain without basic infrastructure. Lake Victoria is perhaps Uganda's most outstanding feature. It is the second-largest freshwater lake in the world and was famously discovered to be the source of the River Nile as a result of adventurous expeditions by John Hanning Speke and Henry Morton Stanley in the mid-1800s. The explorers were quickly followed by Christian missionaries. Alexander MacKay, a Presbyterian from Scotland, reached Uganda in 1878, and the legacy of such gospel pioneers is strong today. There are many believers in Uganda, but sadly a lack of sound biblical teaching hinders their spiritual growth. Also, false teachers abound and large numbers are associated with a wide variety of unscriptural denominations.

Emmanuel Christian School

is situated about twenty kilometres below the equator and around forty-five minutes' drive from Lake Victoria. The school's purpose is to teach the gospel in all its fullness, seeking to see pupils and parents brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and led on in their walk with Him. The school caters to nursery, primary, and secondary pupils and aims to provide an education for those who would otherwise be unable to afford it. Staff members provide a good standard of education that is designed to prepare the pupils to live and work successfully in Uganda. At present there are twenty-three teaching and nonteaching staff working with around three hundred pupils. The school compound contains classrooms, dormitories, teachers' houses, missionary accommodation, a church, and other buildings besides. It is a busy place during the term with a daily round of assemblies, lessons, and chores. There is a lot of hustle and bustle as missionaries, teachers, boarding school pupils, cats, dogs, cows, sheep, and chickens all share the same 2.5 acre compound. The lizards, rats,

ants, and occasionally snakes are there, too, but they are less visible.

The ministry of the church is closely linked with the school while also extending beyond it. Each day the Word of God is taught to the children at morning and evening assemblies. The pupils attend a weekly Wednesday evening Bible study, and the boarders attend the church and Sunday school on the Lord's Day. The congregation is made up of a large number of children along with adults from the local area. The mission station is situated between two villages, and its rural location makes regular attendance at the Sunday services difficult for those who live farther away. Attendance is generally around sixty during the school holidays, rising to around one hundred during the term. The service on the Lord's Day is about three hours long, and while



many enjoy the opportunity to sing, the preaching of the Word is the central part of the worship. There is eagerness in many hearts to hear God's Word, but there is a great need for the Holy Spirit to move in applying the Word to hearts and using it to bring forth fruit in changed lives. Evangelism around the local area gives an opportunity to present the gospel to people in their own homes. Roman Catholics and Muslims readily listen to the preaching of the gospel, but without a miracle of grace they remain resistant to the claims of Christ.

My wife and I arrived in Uganda at the end of October 2016. In the short time we have been here we have experienced many blessings and challenges. The culture, climate, and language are all unfamiliar, and this can create problems at times. Having solar electric and mobile internet makes a huge difference to our daily lives, and we are thankful for these blessings. The absence of running water does add extra work to the daily routine, but we are thankful that the Mission Board has agreed to fund the installation of a water harvesting system to provide water on-site. We look forward to this work going ahead; the provision of water will make an enormous difference to the lives of everyone living on the compound. Our days have been filled with ministering in the church and preparing for the new school year. There is much

to do as we seek to see the work developing in a biblical pattern. Much patience and wisdom are needed. Just as the opportunities to serve Christ are numerous, so are the potential pitfalls.

The fact that the Lord is sending His labourers to Uganda ought to encourage us regarding a future harvest in this land. In the coming months, Miss Noreen McAfee will be joining the work at Emmanuel Christian School. She comes with valuable experience

The greatest needs of the work are spiritual...

from her years in Kenya and will be spearheading the development of the secondary school. Mr. Andrew Foster, who is currently studying in the Whitefield College of the Bible, is conducting deputation meetings around our churches, seeking to raise the necessary funds to send him to Uganda. Andrew has wide experience in construction work with the New Tribes Mission, and it is proposed that he will focus on building maintenance and site modernisation. The 25th of July marks the end of our nine-month stint in Uganda. God willing, we will return to Northern Ireland to conduct deputation meetings around our churches with a view to returning to Uganda in the spring of 2018.

Thinking about this work

gives us good reason to thank God for His goodness. In His providence, He has entrusted the work to our denomination and has enabled the transition from the leadership of Rev. Noel & Mrs. Stella Kelly. We give thanks that many young lives will be moulded by the ministry based in this small compound in a rural part of central Uganda. The Lord has granted to us safety in travel, good health, and many answers to prayer for practical and spiritual needs, for which we are very thankful.

The greatest needs of the work are spiritual, and those spiritual needs are truly great. But our God is far greater still than any of the problems lying across our pathway. Psalm 147:5 tells us, "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." We pray that God will grant the power of His Holy Spirit to herald the glorious name of Christ across the dusty hills and plains of Uganda.



Stephen & Ruth Miller
are missionaries working in Uganda under the Free Presbyterian Church Mission Board, Northern Ireland.



Retired Minister Interview

Rev. Gordon Cooke has ministered in Hillsborough, Rasharkin, and Enniskillen. LTBS spoke to Rev. Cooke recently and asked him to share his testimony.

Can you share how you came to know the Lord as your personal Saviour?

I was born, the youngest of nine, into a Christian home. My father was saved through W. P. Nicholson, and my mother was saved shortly after that through the ministry of a daughter of General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. When I was four we moved to the Lisburn Road and went to the city mission hall; through that, and at my mother's knee, I heard the gospel. In my teens I started keeping unsaved company and getting very involved in football. At this time I used to dodge the city missionary on the street in case he asked me to the young people's meeting. At fifteen my brother and

another friend got saved. As I was walking with that friend one summer's night in Belfast, we came to an open-air. Standing there, a man put his hand on my shoulder and said to me, "Gordon, is it not time you were saved?" I went back to the mission hall that night and got saved sitting on one of the old forms. That was 20 June 1948. That brought a great change in my life.

How did you come into contact with the Free Presbyterian Church?

I had trained in the Faith Mission Bible College and worked with the mission for a few years until my health required me to step down from that role. Back home, I met and married Margaret in 1959 and was working as a conductor on the buses. I'd heard Dr. Paisley once before, but my father invited me to go with him to Ravenhill to hear him preach one Sunday evening. I then started attending regularly.

What circumstances led you to apply for the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church?

I always had the conviction that I should be in full-time Christian work. One night when Dr. Paisley was in prison, Rev. William Beattie was preaching in Ravenhill, and he preached on the text, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion." It was during this message I felt the call to apply to the college for the ministry.

Outline some of the encouragements you enjoyed during your pastoral ministry.

As I look back, there have been people who have been great encouragements to me, and at times they maybe didn't realise what a great encouragement they were being. I was also blessed in having faithful and very honest people around me.

It has been good to see the work of the church go on and to have seen the growth in the work.

I also enjoyed being involved in the setting up of the Lough Erne Fundamentalist Convention, which for the first three years was held in Dr. Paisley's tent. The weather got so bad during the fourth year that it was transferred to the church. It went very well, and it is still going on.

The greatest encouragement was to see people saved and lives transformed by the gospel. Children's and young people's work has always been a great encouragement. I engaged in many gospel missions and many children's missions. To me they were "heaven on earth," to see the kids come in and get the gospel, and then the Lord by His grace bring them to himself. I never water down the gospel to a child. I may be different in my presentation of it, but I always put it to them that what they need to do is to accept Christ as Saviour and to repent of their sin. Children's work is not an inferior work – it is on a par with working with adults. Children's missions need the same amount of prayer, time, and effort as adult missions. Children's meetings are not just an offshoot. If these children get saved and live for the Lord, then these are lives that can be greatly used by the Lord.

Can you share any humorous moments from that time?

Rev. Beggs and I used to take

Rasharkin and Ballymena youth fellowships on holidays. We were staying in a school in Scotland, using the classrooms as dorms for the girls and boys. I woke one night to find Rev. Beggs in a sweat, trying to pull a big sheep out of our dorm. I thought I was dreaming about Abraham and his flocks! Some of the boys had gone to the field beside the school and brought a sheep into the school and pushed it in through the door of the leaders' dorm.

What advice would you give to young men starting out in their pastoral ministry today?

Remember, it's not a career, it's a calling. You need to be honest with yourself and be sure of your call through the Scriptures and inner conviction.

Always be open to the advice and guidance of older, experienced brethren.

Never get your eyes off the Lord. That may seem very basic, but it's not. You've got to keep your eyes on the Lord, because if you don't you certainly are going to run into trouble. You are going to run into trouble anyway, but if you don't have your eyes on the Lord you are going to run into bigger trouble.

Always remember that it is the Lord's work, not yours. You are only the instrument in the service of the Lord. There's no room for ego, pride, or "I'm it!" Never,

never look at another man and another man's work to compare your ministry. Ensure that you are doing what the Lord wants you to do and that you are where God wants you to be. Faithfulness is what God wants. Don't worry if people think you're a good preacher or not. Ensure you are faithful.

When you receive a call, don't look at the size of the congregation or at the size of the manse. If a young man receives a call he should get down on his knees and see if God wants him there. If God wants him there, then that's where he is to be, and all other things will fall into place.

Of course, you can't depart from the Scriptures. He must always study. Everything must be judged by the Scriptures.



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Advice on Helping Others

Let The Bible Speak— Personal Evangelism



The problem of reaching the multitudes is one that has long exercised the minds of those who are anxious for the salvation of others, and that problem is as acute as ever. The alienation of vast numbers from the churches is evident, and the difficulty, even in times of special missions, of getting outsiders in under the sound of the gospel is increasingly great.

By the personal touch many of them may be won for Christ. They need to be won, they ought to be won, and in the heart of every believer there should be the desire to win some of them. Compassionate interest in the unconverted ought to characterise every child of God.

Personal evangelism is the preaching of the gospel of Christ to individuals in order to secure their conversion. It is that hand-to-hand dealing with men, women, and children, and it is the simplest

form of Christian work – the kind that everyone can do. It is the most effective method of winning souls to Christ.

“The happiest thing in this world”

The great preacher and soul winner C. H. Spurgeon said, “To be a soul winner is the happiest thing in this world. And with every soul you bring to Jesus Christ, you seem to get a new heaven here upon earth.” Pleading with his people to become soul winners, he declared, “You cannot stop their dying, but, oh, that God might help you to stop their being damned! You cannot stop the breath from going out of their bodies, but, oh, if the gospel could but stop their souls from going down to destruction.”

An evangelistic heart throb

Before we can engage in the ministry of personal evangelism, we must possess a true burden for those who are perishing in their sin.

David Brainerd, missionary to the North American Indians, at the close of his life wrote in his diary, “I cared not how I lived, nor what hardships I went through, if only I might gain souls for Christ.” That is the kind of soul concern we need, like the great apostle Paul, who possessed an evangelistic heart throb. He could hear the tramp of men’s feet on the broad road to hell. “I have great heaviness,” he cried, “and continual sorrow in my heart” (Romans 9:2).

The greatest example of personal evangelism

Andrew brought his brother to Christ through his personal efforts. He first found Christ himself, then went to Peter and told him of his great discovery (John 1:35–42). Philip brought his friend to Christ when he sought him out and told him about the Saviour (John 1:43–51). Philip the evangelist won a stranger to the Lord, the Ethiopian eunuch, through his Christ-

centred presentation of the gospel (Acts 8:26–40). The greatest example of personal evangelism was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. A striking instance of concern, zeal, and wisdom in witnessing to someone and leading that one to salvation is Christ’s witness to the woman of Samaria (John 4:1–42).

The outcome was the woman’s conversion

We want to follow in the steps of Christ and learn from Him, the greatest soul winner. Our dear Saviour felt a compulsion – “He must needs go through Samaria.” The Lord was seeking one of His lost sheep. Despite the prejudice that existed between the Jews and Samaritans, and despite the weariness of His body, He engaged in personal evangelism. It was the Lord who started the conversation by simply asking a favour: “Give me to drink.” He did not begin with spiritual matters immediately, but in a manner which led on to them quite naturally and wisely. The outcome was the woman’s conversion, and many more people from that locality.

We should begin in our home

The ministry of personal evangelism can be done anywhere. We should begin in our home, among our family members, just like Andrew. The Lord Jesus told the demoniac of Gadara,

when he was delivered, to return to his own house and show the great things the Lord had done for him (Luke 8:39). Every person who is converted should begin early to tell the members of his own family and his closest friends about the saving power of Christ.

You might be the only Bible they read

Then we think of our neighbourhoods, our workplaces, and our schools. There are those around us who are in close proximity almost every day. They need to see Christ in us by our example, but we need to tell them of Jesus the mighty to save, and to make this witness gently, tactfully, and plainly. You might be the only Bible they read, the only witness they hear. Great, therefore, is your responsibility! Pray that God will give you the opportunity to say something or simply slip a tract into their hand – it has to start somewhere!

Go for them!

Personal evangelism brings the personal worker near to the people. When D. L. Moody was in Glasgow, someone asked him how the multitudes were to be reached, and his reply was, “Go for them!” People can be reached in this way that otherwise may not be reached. There are those who never enter a church, attend a mission hall, or stop to listen to an open-

air meeting. However, they may be reached as we “go for them!” Befriend them, build up a relationship with them, win their confidence and respect, and share the message of Christ.

Above all, look to the Lord for help

We should always be polite and gracious. You will never win others to the Saviour by being argumentative and angry. Endeavour to get the conversation onto spiritual lines, and especially with regard to God’s salvation. Above all, look to the Lord for help, to the Holy Spirit to apply God’s Word. Ask God for the opportunity to witness, to be wise in your words and faithful to Christ. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).



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Study on Biblical Words— Redemption



Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “The heart of the gospel is redemption, and the essence of redemption is the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ.” How right the Victorian preacher was! When we consider the work of the incarnate Word alongside the witness of the written Word, we find that both centre upon this fundamental doctrine of redemption. Redemption’s theme permeates every part of Christ’s life and prefigures the testimony of Holy Scripture. As Harry Ironside put it, “Everywhere from Genesis ... to Revelation you find God, in one way or another, presenting to us the truth of redemption – redemption in promise and in type in the Old Testament; redemption in glorious fulfilment in the New Testament.”

The commencement of our Christian life commences with our redemption from sin, but what exactly do we mean when we use the

term *redemption*? The word redemption comes from a verb which means “to loose” and carries the idea of a person being “released from bonds or prison on receipt of a ransom.” When sinners experience God’s redemption, they experience deliverance from a state of sin and are brought into a state of salvation by the means of a ransom price being paid by Jesus Christ on their behalf. John Owen stated, “Redemption is the delivery of anyone from captivity and misery by the intervention of a price or ransom. That ransom or price of our deliverance was the blood of Christ.”

When the apostle Paul listed the spiritual blessings that the believer receives in Ephesians 1, being now “in Christ” through redemption was one of them. In verse 7 the inspired penman wrote, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Those words

present a number of truths that unfold to us what is involved in our redemption from sin.

Paul commences with the source of redemption: “In whom.” The One to whom the apostle is referring in this verse is identified by name in verse 5: Jesus Christ. Our redemption finds its source in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is uniquely suited and equipped to redeem us, because He is related to both God – the offended party – and mankind – the offending party – with regard to our sin. The centrality of Jesus Christ in the work of our redemption is emphasised throughout God’s Word. In Romans 3:24 we read, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” while Galatians 3:13 reminds us that “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” The Lord Jesus Christ therefore is set before us in Scripture as the only

Redeemer of God’s elect. His credentials as Redeemer are clearly presented to us in Jeremiah 50:34: “Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name.” Divine omnipotence therefore is seen to be engaged in the redeeming of our souls from the power of Satan, the dominion of sin, the snare of the world, the condemnation of the broken law, and the wickedness of our own hearts.

Paul continues to unfold the truth of redemption in Ephesians 1:7 by speaking of the beneficiaries of redemption. By using the word *we* Paul includes himself with those to whom he was writing, who were recipients of Christ’s redemption. Paul the persecutor, Paul the blasphemer, Paul the zealous bigot a beneficiary of God’s redemption? Yes, as well as those who had been saved out of their idolatry and heathen practices from the city of Ephesus. What power there is in Christ’s redemption, a redemption that can deliver the vilest sinners from their sin.

If God is to deliver men and women from their sins, and that deliverance is accomplished only by the receipt of a ransom, what is the ransom price that effected our redemption? Paul writes of the price of redemption. A ransom price is required in order to secure our release from sin’s curse, condemnation, and

control. The Bible is clear that the ransom price is not monetary in nature. Peter declares in 1 Peter 1:18–19, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,” but he goes on to say that we are redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Peter affirms what Paul has stated, that it is “through his blood,” Christ’s blood, that our redemption from sin is secured. Nothing less than the shed blood of incarnate Deity was sufficient to secure the sinner’s redemption. Fanny Crosby was aware of the necessity of the blood of Christ for our redemption when she penned the words, “Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it! / Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.”

With the ransom price being provided for our redemption in the blood of Jesus Christ, Paul then declares the manward result of redemption. When sinners are redeemed, “the forgiveness of sins” is the natural outcome of that redemption. God’s law is satisfied, divine justice is fully met, and the debt of sin is paid on behalf of the sinner by Christ; therefore the forgiveness of sins can be granted to the one who repents and believes the gospel.

Paul concludes his teaching on redemption within this verse by reminding his readers of the grounds of

redemption. Personal merit or religious activity are not presented by God’s servant as the grounds upon which the sinner is redeemed from his sin. Rather, it is upon the grounds of God’s grace that they experience God’s redemption, “according to the riches of his grace.” Grace was defined by Charles Hodge as “love exercised towards the unworthy,” while Matthew Henry described God’s grace as the “free, undeserved goodness and favour of God to mankind.” If you have been redeemed from your sin, thank God for His grace, grace that has enabled you by faith to appropriate “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).

*Redemption! what a glorious plan;
How suited to our need!
The grace that raises fallen man,
'Tis wonderful indeed!
'Twas wisdom formed the vast design,
To ransom us when lost;
And love's unfathomable mine,
Provided all the cost.*



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When Waves Get into Your Boat



The sea can be a friend or a foe. I discovered its unpredictability one summer afternoon in Douglas Bay in the Isle of Man. Three young friends and I rented a small wooden boat to row a quarter of a mile out to the castle on the partially submerged reef known as St. Mary's Isle. It was the popular tourist thing to do, so we never gave danger a second thought, until we tried to row back to shore. The tide had begun to ebb and the wind had begun to whip up the waves. Suddenly, our pleasure turned to terror when the waves came into our boat!

Matthew records a very frightening voyage that he and the other disciples experienced on the Sea of Galilee, the largest freshwater lake in Israel. Jesus had asked the men to sail with Him from Capernaum to Gadara, on the other side of the lake. Distance wasn't an issue, because the Sea of Galilee is only eight miles wide and

thirteen miles long, but it is notorious for suddenly turning stormy and turbulent. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all mention that, after they sailed a while, a significant storm arose. Matthew calls it in Greek a *seismos megas*, from which we derive our earthquake vocabulary. Mark and Luke use the Greek word for hurricane. Whatever it was, the men all agreed that this storm was violent and battered the ship so brutally that the waves began to fill it. The disciples believed they would perish at any moment because their situation appeared to be life-threatening.

Imagine the fearful scene! Massive walls of dark water bursting over the sides of the vessel, causing it to list and sway under the extreme turbulence. Even the toughest sailor dreads the fury of the sea. It was during a severe storm off the coast of Donegal that rebel sailor John Newton cried out to God for mercy when he awoke in the middle of the

night to find his ship filling with water and in danger of foundering. Because the Lord spared him that night, Newton was greatly convicted that such amazing grace could be shown to a such a wretched sinner as he. This marked the beginning of his remarkable conversion to Christ and the precious words of a wonderful hymn.

How soon faith gives way to fear and doubting! Earlier that evening, the disciples witnessed incredible miracles. Before their eyes, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law and "many" others who were either sick or possessed of devils. And just before that, the Lord healed a leper and the centurion's servant. Even though they had witnessed so much proof of Christ's power, in their hour of personal darkness and trial, the disciples wavered.

How like us! At the least sign of a storm, we fret and faint and cower in terror on the deck. Our faith seems to work well when

our seas are smooth, but when we hit a rough patch, it seems to fall overboard. Waves of opposition, or disappointment, or sickness, or grief – they come crashing around us and threaten to undo us. They catch us off guard, knock us off our feet, and create such a distraction in our minds that we can forget about God's tender care of us through many past difficulties. We doubt His promises and apply our puny human reasoning to divinely superintended situations. Jesus was not on the deck that night. He slept on a pillow in the "hinder part" of the ship, but He was completely in control. Nothing could sink that ship with the Lord of glory on board! Mary A. Baker expresses it so well in her hymn: "No water can swallow the ship where lies the Master of ocean and earth and skies."

Consider this, too. Unlike Jonah, the disciples were faithfully doing the will of God when the storm hit. They embarked on this journey at Christ's command and were following Him obediently when they met enormous opposition. This tells us two things: faithful Christians will face storms, and storms are not always sent for correction. How unwise, therefore, for us to judge the purpose of another man's struggles.

I wonder how long the disciples waited before calling on the Master to help

them? Did they try bailing first or hoisting the sails? Did they try steering out of the storm themselves? Was their delay in asking for the Lord's help

It took a storm on Galilee to increase the disciples' faith...

what caused them to become frantic and cry at last, "Carest thou not that we perish?" The disciples deserved Jesus' rebuke for their accusation, but He only chided their lack of faith and rose immediately to relieve them. How precious the mercy of our blessed Lord!

So what was the purpose in it all? The disciples had witnessed the supernatural power of Christ before they boarded that ship, but now on Galilee they were about to see divine power unleashed that would exceed their wildest expectation. Never could they have imagined what would happen in the midst of their dire need! Before their eyes, the Lord arose and commanded the winds and the waves to cease, and there was a "great calm." The Bible tells us that the disciples marvelled. They were awestruck, and exclaimed, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"

What manner of Man! As we recount His wonderful works to us, we would cry, "What

manner of Man is this that gave His life for us, that loves us, and that keeps us daily by His grace and power!" He is the Fairest of ten thousand, the altogether lovely One, our Saviour, and our Friend.

It took a storm on Galilee to increase the disciples' faith. It will take storms in our lives to create the same in us. C. H. Spurgeon said, "Remember that we have no more faith at any time than we have in the hour of trial; but all that which will not bear to be tested is mere carnal confidence. Fair-weather faith is no faith; only that is real faith in Jesus Christ which can trust Him when it cannot trace Him, and believe Him when it cannot see Him."

Dear friend, Jesus knows all about your "hard ship." So when the waves come into your boat, be confident that He will arise for your aid in His time and in His way. May we be encouraged to pray then for faith to be able to say with John Newton, "With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm."



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