

The Official Magazine of Grace Church Blackburn

INSPIRATION

February 2016

FOR GOD GAVE US A
SPIRIT
NOT OF
FEAR
BUT OF
POWER AND
LOVE
& **SELF-CONTROL**

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

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**GRACE
CHURCH**
"KNOWING JESUS & MAKING HIM KNOWN"

Welcome to this issue of "Inspiration" our monthly church magazine, designed to keep you informed of all that's going on here at Grace.



Can I take this opportunity to welcome you to a brand new year and pray that it is a good one for you. Now by good one, I don't mean nothing goes wrong, but that you draw closer to Christ this year, knowing Him more deeply as beloved. You may wonder why I can't pray for both. Well I could say don't be greedy, but the real reason is that we rarely learn anything in the good times, that's when we rest. So although you may have to go through some stuff, can I pray deeply you use the pressure of that moment to draw closer to the Lord.

One of the deep joys of bible study is when you learn something you didn't know before, or see something you hadn't before. In our first bible study of 2016 we concluded our study of 1 Corinthians by studying chapter 16. It's a chapter containing greetings and salutation and very little of consequence. Then near the end of the chapter in verse 22 we read:-

*If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.
The Lord comes!*

1 Corinthians 16:22

This verse blew me away because in such a short sentence it contained much of what I knew in my heart to be true about the Lord. The word for 'the Lord comes' is 'Maranatha' an important word teaching us our opportunities in this life to draw close to Jesus are not indefinite, there will be a day when time will be called.

But it is the first part, if we don't love the Lord let him be accursed. The word for accursed is anathema, meaning to put out. Paul in 1 Corinthians had already taught that sometimes in order to get someone to repent and draw closer to the Lord it is required that the church put them out, so as to give them a short sharp shock to realise their behaviour is going to lead to their own destruction. But in this case that is required, not suggested, when someone doesn't love the Lord. What an amazing challenge to us.

The word for love is the Greek word Philo, which means an intimate connection based upon a shared experience. So the challenge is to know the Lord intimately or as Beloved.

The reason I share that again, in praying for a good new year for you, is because we have to realise, a relationship with Jesus is vital.

So I pray very earnestly that you turn your eyes upon Jesus and make Him the lover of your soul. He is our hope and consolation in times of distress and so times of distress help us to draw near to Him. So don't seek your own comfort, seek a relationship with Christ.

What I have been struck by in this first month of January is the many celebrity deaths we have had in such a short space of time. It seems to have got many people very upset that this has happened. Some have even looked to blame the Lord for such a thing. Yet even though a death is always tragic it surely can't be unexpected. It is a common experience that all mankind, no matter their religion, culture or race will experience. Rather than being so upset that someone famous, whom we may have looked up to has gone, surely we should realise life is temporary and fragile. Many of those celebrities who have died lived a life to excess, I don't say that to suggest they got what they deserved, I mean that eating, drinking and being merry did not stave off the inevitable or make it any easier.

So what will you do about death. The question what comes after death is one we Christians can answer very easily for you. The answer is eternity, for although your body may die your Spirit is eternal. But many make the mistake of thinking because your soul is eternal then that is what you must

take care of. Yet what the scriptures teach is it is an eternal body that we need to provide.

Yet our bodies are not eternal, they will pass away and so we need the gift of an Eternal body which the Lord promised to us all. It is called a resurrected body, and it has died and been raised up, just like Jesus was and is exemplified in adult baptism.

This eternal body cannot be earned, nor can it be made by man, it must be given by God and man must accept this free gift of God.

For that gift to be given then we must understand the body we are being given is a holy one, a righteous one and only the holy and righteous can inhabit it. Although you may be a good person you are not in the eyes of the Lord's standard. Therefore, although the Lord may want to give all mankind this gift, we simply can't measure up to it. Instead we must pay the price for our sin which is death, but not the first death, which all mankind goes through, but a second one, which is eternal separation from God.

It's too easy to say that those who lived lives of excess have now got what they deserved. But the truth is we all deserve it because we have all fallen short of the Glory of God. So it was the Father's mighty heart that He may reconcile all men to Himself.

So a divine transaction took place, a righteous, holy man who never sinned dies in your place. All that you have to do is accept that transaction and give your life over to the one

who saved you, who in terms we can understand, bought you with His own life.

That righteous, holy, sinless man was of course Jesus. And all of those who accept His sacrifice as taking your place, will inherit eternal life, for we get those new bodies because He is our righteousness and our holiness, not we.

So knowing that transaction, it shouldn't be hard to look upon one who saved you and call Him beloved, or to fall in love with them. During war time, many soldiers, who were injured, would fall in love with the nurses who brought them back to health. The name for this is called 'Florence Nightingale syndrome'. Surely when one has saved our lives we can fall deeper into love.

Through His Suffering He showed how much He loved us, through our difficult times we have a chance to lean

upon Him for strength and comfort.

And so since time has been proven to be short, and since we are required to know Jesus as Beloved surely this is the best way to plan the start of your year.

As always I pray for a blessing on those who seek the face of the Lord.

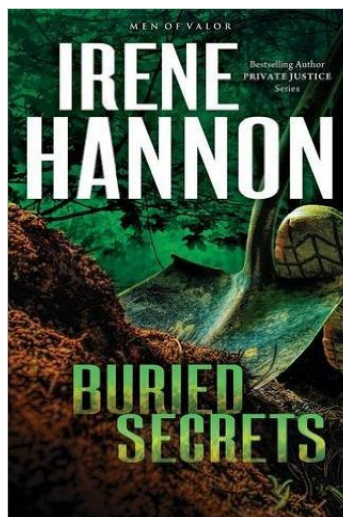


I would once again like to thank all of the contributors to this issue and a special thanks to Vicky for her time and effort putting it together. If you have a poem, testimony or a short message you want to add then you can come and see me or email it to pastorgracechurchblackburn@hotmail.co.uk.

written by lynne haydock

The Crimson Cord by Jill Eileen Smith and Buried Secrets by Irene Hannon both published in 2015 in USA by Revell Publishing.

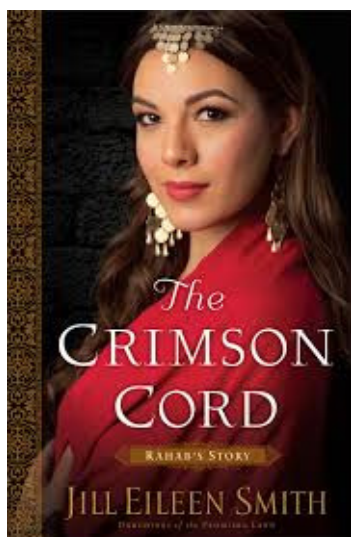
This month's book review is actually a double portion. I wanted to review a novel this month as I haven't done one for a long time since First Light by Bodie & Brock Thoene and I also wanted to do something current that had just been released. On Eden.co.uk (a Christian website that sells books and gifts) I couldn't decide between two books so, of course, I ended up getting both!



Buried Secrets is set in modern day America and is billed as a romantic suspense novel. I expected this book to be of a similar vein to a novel by Karen Kingsbury or Francine Rivers where the characters go through situations and their Christian faith shines through. Whereas those authors are aimed at mainly a female readership I was hoping that this, as a murder mystery, would mean that it would appeal to a wider readership.

The author is Irene Hannon, an ex Communications Executive with a BA in Psychology and MA in Journalism. She has written more than forty five contemporary romance and romantic suspense novels.

This book has two main characters – a female police chief called Lisa Grant and an ex Navy Seal county detective called Mac McGregor.



The good thing about this book is that although this is technically a novel about solving a murder there isn't any overly violent or gory scenes. Plus of course 'the good guys get their man.' I liked the main characters but they didn't particularly grab my emotions so that I cared about them and what happened to them. The book is easy to read and doesn't take too much study.

The bad thing about this book is that apart from very vague references to praying for

people or situations and the characters making Godly (or more accurately moral) choices when it comes to making decisions about work or relationships I wasn't aware of much that made this a distinctive Christian book. Unless to you the only things that define a Christian is someone who doesn't swear, get drunk or sleep around.

This is a reasonable (but not amazing) book as a mystery but to be honest as a supposedly Christian book it's a no go. It did nothing to encourage or challenge my faith or point me in the direction of God's word. I didn't feel that the characters so called Christian faith added any depth to the story at all.

The author doesn't even acknowledge God in her biography expect to say she is a soloist at her church. It has put me off (maybe not a bad thing) from reading any more contemporary 'Christian' novels.

'It did nothing to encourage or challenge my faith or point me in the direction of God's word.'

Therefore I quickly moved on to my next book – The Crimson Cord subtitled Rahab's Story. Jill Eileen Smith according to her biography is the best selling author of Wives of David series, Wives of Patriarchs series and Loves of King Solomon's Series. She

particularly enjoys researching women in the Bible.

This book starts with more promise than Buried Secrets as it begins with a dedication to God and continues on to an excerpt out of the Bible from Joshua 2 to introduce the story of Rahab.

This book is a fictional account of Rahab's life story, the culture she lives in and how she comes to a knowledge and acceptance of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It gives a story of Rahab's life (and her families) before she met the Israelites and an account (from the author's imagination) of how she became a prostitute. The author builds up a description of Jericho, the history, the gods and the culture especially for a woman in this time. The descriptions are fulsome and imaginative and give you a sense of being there. I found it easy to get to know Rahab and her sisters and although her upbringing has no relevance to mine I did identify with her emotions, insecurities and strength or weakness when dealing with particular situations.

I found myself really immersed in this story, and although I already knew the ending, I was gripped, wanting to find out how the story progressed. I loved reading about the strong faith of Rahab, Joshua and Salmon, and the grace of God.

Although much of the story comes from the writer's imagination, you could tell she had done a lot of research and that she really knew her

Bible and had a deep relationship with God herself. She included the relevant verses at the start of each section and I also enjoyed reading about why she made particular decisions about what was likely to have happened in Rahab's life.

My main criticism of this book is that over two thirds of the book is about Rahab before she accepted God and only one third describing her life with the Israelites. I personally would have liked more about the second part of her life after Salvation but that's just my own opinion. The only other niggle is I felt the situation with her falling in love and marrying Salmon was kind of too simple and too straightforward whereas I would have expected more complications when we were talking about two people from separate cultures, religions (in upbringing) and with emotional scars of going through actual and figurative battles in their lives.

'...but it also, once again, opened my eyes to just how merciful God is, and how we as human beings will never be able to understand his mind.'

It encouraged me to go and read my Bible to check out some of the concepts the author describes in her book, for example, about Captive Brides. I was always encouraged to

re-read the story of Rahab in more depth. The author does take some poetic license is that she weaves the New Testament story about an unmerciful servant into a situation regarding Rahab's husband which is obviously not technically correct as we are in Old Testament times but it is the actual principal of the story which is relevant and interesting.

I would thoroughly recommend this book, it is not only enjoyable, but it also, once again, opened my eyes to just how merciful God is, and how we as human beings will never be able to understand his mind.

The following are the books that have been previously reviewed by Turning Pages

- Living With Confidence in a Chaotic World by David Jeremiah;
- Joy of Encouragement by David Jeremiah
- The Valley of Vision by Arthur Bennett;
- First Light by Bodie and Brock Theone;
- Wigglesworth (The Complete Story) by Julian Wilson;
- Christ in the Feast of Passover by David Brickner and Rich Robinson;
- Whose Child is this by Bill Wilson;
- Oceans Apart by Karen Kingsbury
- Into Africa by David Womersley and David Garrad.

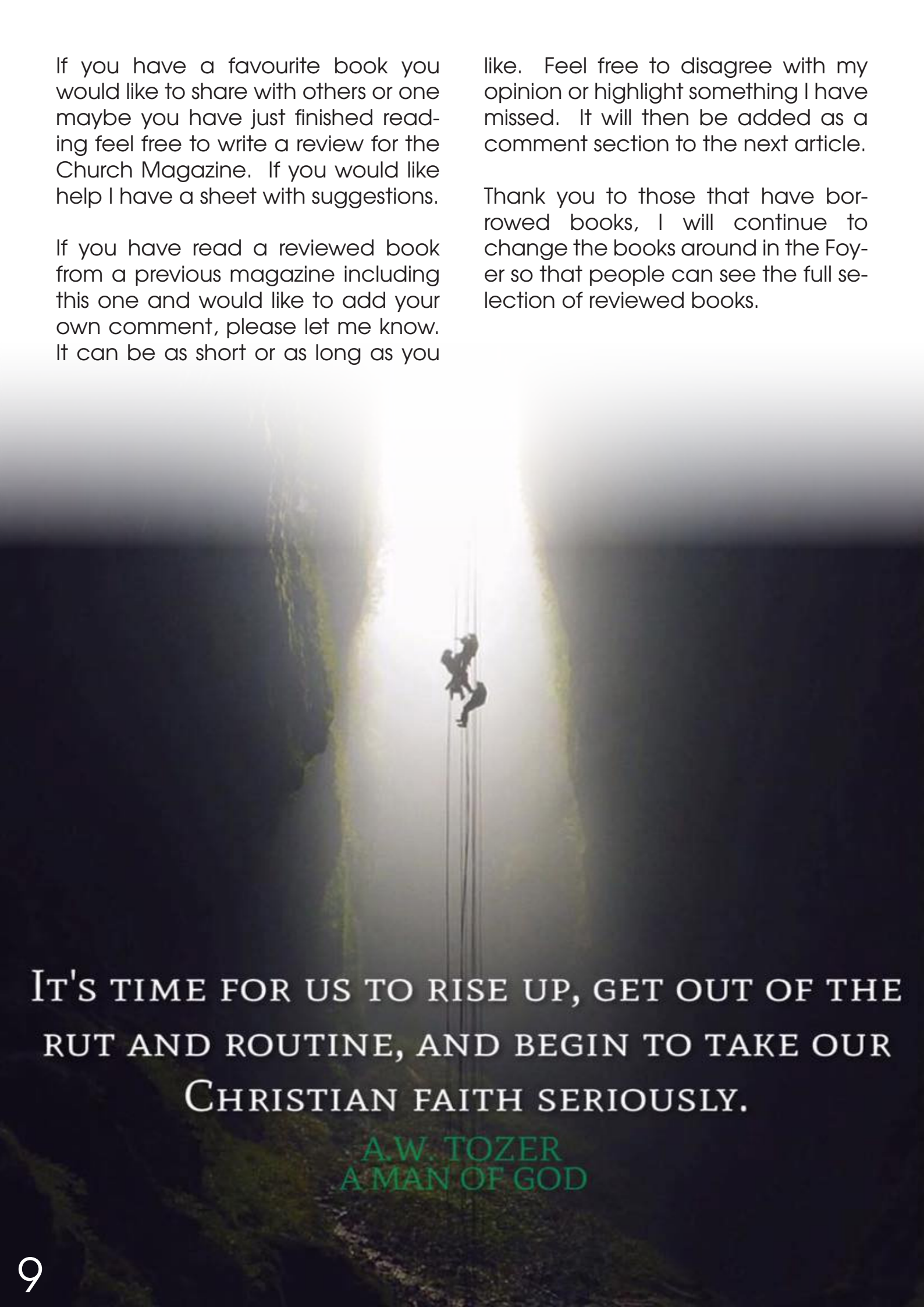
If you would like to borrow any of these please look on the Turning Pages book case out in the Foyer or come and see me. Please do fill in the signup sheet if you do take a book so that I know where it has gone and who has it.

If you have a favourite book you would like to share with others or one maybe you have just finished reading feel free to write a review for the Church Magazine. If you would like help I have a sheet with suggestions.

If you have read a reviewed book from a previous magazine including this one and would like to add your own comment, please let me know. It can be as short or as long as you

like. Feel free to disagree with my opinion or highlight something I have missed. It will then be added as a comment section to the next article.

Thank you to those that have borrowed books, I will continue to change the books around in the Foyer so that people can see the full selection of reviewed books.

A person is silhouetted against a bright, vertical beam of light that cuts through a dark, misty atmosphere. The person is climbing a rope, and the light creates a strong contrast, highlighting the figure and the texture of the rope. The overall mood is one of struggle, hope, and upward movement.

IT'S TIME FOR US TO RISE UP, GET OUT OF THE
RUT AND ROUTINE, AND BEGIN TO TAKE OUR
CHRISTIAN FAITH SERIOUSLY.

A.W. TOZER
A MAN OF GOD

written by daniel talbot

Grace Youth has undergone some significant changes since I last wrote a Grace Youth article. First off – we now have a mission statement that we can use to guide us with any future preparations or conduct with the Youth.

'For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God...'
(Ephesians 2:8)

We have changed some of what we do, and when we do certain activities. One of the activities that we had added – I believe is a fantastic opportunity for the Youth, if done correctly and so far it's worked well.

Each week me or Mel, takes the opportunity to simply sit and say to the Youth "Ask us any question, about what we have talked about this week – or at any time. We will answer you to the best of our ability." I believe this is a crucial part of the activities that we do – we have also set up a questions and answers box – in case they don't want to share any questions they have with the rest of the group. This opportunity helps everyone to understand, whilst encouraging conversations about the Lord in the middle of a variety of activities.

On a side note:

We have also planned the Girdle Busting Weekend. (The Youth will be sleeping over at the Church in April, with a day at Alton towers afterwards.) More details about this will most likely be coming in future months.

If it seems like the majority of this article is all about one seemingly little change. That's because it is! Though simply introducing a questions and answers section can not only help the Youth, but help us to understand where they are with the Lord, what problems they might be going through – and in turn helps us to support them, pray for them and do our best to provide Youth activities that is best for them, to support where they are with Christ.

I would ask that if you feel it is right to pray for the Youth, then please pray that they would feel open enough to ask us questions that are on their heart – and that we would be able to support and answer their queries.

lightofthegospel ministries

Involvement in schools

If we want to be involved in school work in Serbia, we need to be creative. So, in October with Rachel Issitt we organised lessons in English culture in two Kraljevo schools. It was very interactive and interesting, with lovely presents being given, including football kits, to children who gave the best answers. Both children and teachers enjoyed it very much. We had a great response and teachers are already planning how to do it next time when Rachel comes.

We as a church just finished a ten-day fast and over the next two weeks we have our Christmas program in four schools and one large state nursery. God has done a great miracle. He has opened a big amazing door for us in schools. Please, pray for it and pray for our Christmas program 4-6 January which we will have in our churches. That is always the opportunity for many new people and children to come.



Gorgeous

In our 'Gorgeous' evenings this Autumn we had great ministry from Sara and of Rachel Issitt and powerful testimonies. Rachel spoke about God who is here to heal and restore our broken lives and broken dreams. All ladies were blessed and impacted, including the new ones. Gorgeous evenings are especially attractive to new ladies and it is our bridge ministry.



At the beginning of November Sara had the privilege to be one of the two main speakers at the Serbian national Daughters of the King Conference in Novi Sad. In front of over 300 women she spoke about how to be courageous.

Strategic Prayer Warfare

Our dear friend from America, pastor Brian Higbee, came to us at the beginning of November, bringing with him a team of five mighty prayer warriors from CityChurch Connellsville. Pastor Eddie Robertson from New Orleans was part of the team too. Their mission was to fight powers of darkness in all key areas in our city and region, and gain "air superiority" for the Kingdom of God. They ministered mightily in Kraljevo and Chachak, and it was a powerful spiritual tonic booster injection for all of us.



Bible meditation

These days when you have friends for almost thirty years, then you are truly blessed. That's why we value so much Roy and Heather Harris from Reachout Christian Fellowship Doncaster. They blessed us with their visit in the second half of November and the special emphasis in their ministry this time was prayer and Bible meditation.

Evangelistic Concert

Vlada and Sarah Tajsic from Switzerland came to Kraljevo in September. Together with them we visited several families, who they so generously helped last year to recover from the floods. We invited them to come to church.

On Sunday Vlada did an amazing concert in our church singing so passionately Gospel music. One whole family, who we invited, five of them, came for the first time. The good thing is their daughter and granddaughter continue coming and they are all open.

AOG Balkan Forum

In the middle of October we participated in the AOG Balkan Forum in Sofia, Bulgaria. We were greatly inspired by Gary Rucci, Ron Hibbert, Mark Wiltshire and other leaders from the Balkan countries. It was a wonderful opportunity to establish new contacts, share our experiences and network.



Stronger Together

We believe in building the Kingdom together with you, our friends and partners. Together we are stronger and the most effective. Thank you for doing life and building the Kingdom in central Serbia with us.

At the beginning of October we were blessed by friendship and ministry of Mark Woodward, senior pastor of Clitheroe Community Church, and their youth pastor Justin Willis. They were amazing with their encouraging words and testimonies.



In the second part of October we had our dear friends Edward and Rachel Issitt with their two beautiful daughters Bethany and Hannah. They ministered powerfully, challenging us to have a Caleb spirit.

Kid's Church

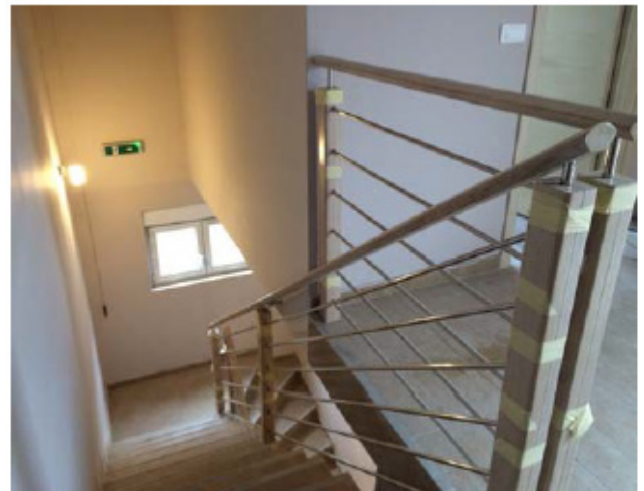
Kid's church on Saturdays is doing well. Our children worship God with songs, play games, listen to Bible lessons and memorise Bible verses. They also learn how to pray. Sara is teaching them.

This Autumn they had Justin Willis from Clitheroe and Heather Harris from Doncaster teaching them, too. Justin and Heather blessed them with delicious sweets from England, which they enjoyed very much.



Building progress

Lights throughout the whole building are put in, the beautiful banisters are done. As we write this Newsletter, the work on the tiles outside continues and painting of the gate and metal part of the fence. When we finish this work outside, we need to buy burn heater for central heating and to put laminate flooring in the main hall. Then we can apply for permission for use. We are close to this. Once we receive this permission, we will proceed to put inside furniture that is needed. Please, pray for the finances needed for the equipment inside.



May God bless you and keep you, our friends and partners. May God abundantly reward you for the generosity you show to us, so the Kingdom of God can advance in central Serbia.

Thank you for your love.

Yours in Christ,
Sasha & Sara

monthly devotional - oswald chambers

Let Us Keep to the Point

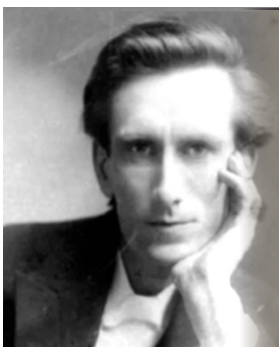
My Upmost for His Highest "...my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed...."

We will all feel very much ashamed if we do not yield to Jesus the areas of our lives He has asked us to yield to Him, It's as if Paul were saying, "My determined purpose is to be my upmost for His Highest - my best for His glory." To reach that level of determination is the matter of the will, not of debate or reasoning. It is absolute and irrevocable surrender of the will at that point. An undue amount of thought and consideration for ourselves is what keeps us from making that decision, although we cover it up with the pretense that it is others we are considering.

When we think seriously about what it will cost others if we obey the call of Jesus, we tell God He doesn't know what our obedience will mean. Keep to the point - He does know. Shut out every other thought and keep yourself before God in this one thing only - my upmost for His highest. I am determined to be absolutely and entirely for Him and Him alone.

My Unstoppable Determination for His Holiness. "Whether it means life or death - it makes no difference!"

Paul was determined that nothing would stop him from doing exactly what God wanted. But before we choose to follow God's will, a crisis must develop in our lives. This happens because we tend to be unresponsive to God's gentler nudges. He brings us to the place where He asks us to be our upmost for Him and we begin to debate. He then providentially produces a crisis where we have to decide - for or against. That moment becomes a great crossroads in our lives. If a crisis has come to you on any front, surrender your will to Jesus absolutely and irrevocably.



Lord, the rage of Your power, the touch of Your grace, the breathing of Your Spirit - how I long for these to bring me face to face with You. Forgive my tardiness; it takes me so long to awaken to some things.

Philippians 1:20

whats on at gcc

Sundays

10:30am
Communion Service

6pm
Cafe Church

Mondays

Revive Ladies Fitness

Mornings @ 9:30am

Evenings @ 7pm

Tuesdays

First Light Prayer
Meeting @ 7am

Prayer Meeting
@ 7:30pm

Thursdays Sanctuary Bible Discussion
@ 7am

Toddleabout Parent & Toddler Group
Mornings @ 10am Afternoons @ 1pm

Fridays

Oasis (over 55's) @ 1pm

Grace Kids @ 5:30pm

Grace Youth @ 7:30pm

Wednesdays

Lite Bites @ 11am

Bible Study @ 7:30pm



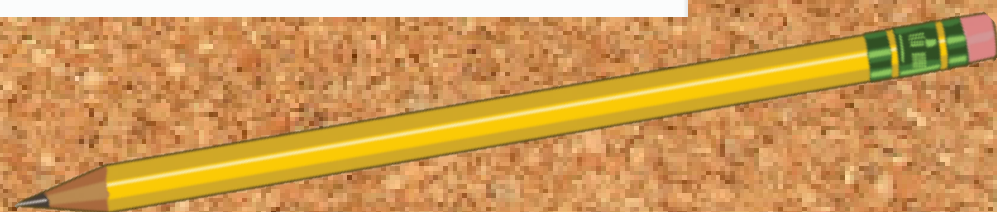
Monthly Meetings

Missionary Prayer Meeting
First Tuesday of each month @ 7:30pm

Prayer for Israel
First Wednesday of each month @ 1pm

Women of Grace Fellowship
First Saturday of each month
(Times vary, please ask for more info)

Men of Grace Fellowship
Last Saturday of each month
(Times vary, please ask for more info)



If you would like any more information about any of our meetings, including any costs, then please either see the notice board in the foyer or ring us on 01254 54541.

written by christine morris

Why the book of Ezekiel? Maybe it is the fact that he had to do some pretty crazy things that drew me in, but what I got out of this book was far, far more than I bargained for, so I thought I would share my findings. Some interesting facts: 'The Lord God' appears over 200 times; 'so says the Lord' appears 120 times; 'the word of the Lord that came to Ezekiel' appears 49 times; but this is the amazing bit...the word 'Spirit' occurs 25 times in this one book.... that's remarkable for the Old Testament.

The context:

Jerusalem had fallen, the house of David cut off, the Temple about to be razed to the ground and a nation exiled brought a spiritual and emotional fallout. Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Jerusalem had dealt a mighty blow to the false assurances the people were under. It was as if their faith had failed them. It must have seemed that the Babylonian god had won over Jehovah! Perhaps they were thinking they should follow the god who was stronger? The nation was disillusioned, cynical, bitter and angry with God and the prophets of God and everything to do with God. Have you been there?

To be under a false assurance can be awful. The Old Testament shows us that Israel tended to delude themselves. When prophets came to the people with a message, all they did was protest. It seemed to go against their lifestyle and they saw the prophets as a threat. "Can God judge His chosen people?" "We are the elect, surely God can't judge us?" God's holy city surely won't be destroyed?" The Temple of God was within Jerusalem and it is the symbol of His presence with His own people. Are God's promises to us sure, no matter what? If God has said that we are secure, if God has said that we can be assured of His protection and His safety, is that not enough?"

Israel asked if having the word of God, being the chosen people, the covenants, the law, the testimonies of God, the Ark, the ten commandments, Aarons rod, to have the holy of holies where the shekinah glory of God dwells was enough. They could recognise that they were God's chosen people, blessed, had all the promises of God....but they couldn't recognise their own sin. They assumed God's smile would always be upon them no matter what they did. This false assurance was cemented in their minds by the

false prophets. They preached 'peace, peace' when there was no peace. They failed to grasp the nature of sin and the terrible holiness of God Almighty.

If anything in our lives makes us numb to the awfulness of sin and the righteousness and holiness of the Lord – we need to beware! Like the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2) we can forfeit our reward and cause the presence of God to depart.

'They could recognise that they were God's chosen people, blessed, had all the promises of God....but they couldn't recognise their own sin.'

It all sounds pretty gloomy and bleak but Ezekiel was not just a prophet of judgement, he also brought hope. This message is one of reconciliation, a message of reconstruction of the nation of Israel. Away from Jerusalem, Israel are separated from all they know and recognise as being a closeness and nearness to God – Babylon. While the remnant of Judah sits by the rivers singing depressing songs (Psalm 137) we see Ezekiel seeing visions of God. Ezekiel sits by the river and sees the shekinah glory of God leave the Temple of Jerusalem.

I need to say, at this point, that the message of Ezekiel is for Israel and

not for the church, but there are principles within this book that we can apply to our everyday lives.

Did you know that Ezekiel does not feature in any other book of the Bible. He was born just before King Josiah discovered the law book in the temple. He may have known the ministries of Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Jeremiah. He witnessed a period of political instability following Josiah's death. He saw Judah shift from godliness, from righteousness to evil and wicked allegiances with Egypt and then to captivity in Babylon.

He was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Daniel. Jeremiah was ministering to a remnant; Daniel was in the court of the King of Babylon. Ezekiel is with the captives in the 2nd deportation from Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:12-15). There are three things we know about him. He is a priest. As a priest, your first offering, first sacrifice in the temple would take place at the age of 30, but Ezekiel was in Babylon, not Jerusalem. He was unable to fulfil his calling. He was away from the temple, but instead of beginning his priestly ministry, he begins the ministry of a prophet. Ezekiel was married with his own home, they seem to have everything they needed, but they were out of Jerusalem. Well off but separated from God. They weren't renowned for listening to God's prophets in the past, or for heeding the warnings to come. Here they are again, listening to false prophets and were waiting by the rivers of Babylon to be delivered.

As far as they were concerned Ezekiel's message was rubbish. He was

very entertaining in the drama of the message, as we will see later, but it was meaningless to them. But the message was this: that God would vindicate His prophet and God would vindicate His truth (Ezekiel 33:33).

The reality was that the exile would not be short. They would not be delivered very soon neither would they be spared. In fact many of them would be slaughtered or would die in exile. But Ezekiel, a priest and prisoner in Babylon is inspired by the Spirit of God to proclaim the message of God to God's people. He is inspired to live the message before them. Just like John in Revelation, Ezekiel is given visions that put them both on their faces. Ezekiel was called to much personal and painful suffering:

He was made dumb; he had to lie on his side for days; he lived on awful food; he was told to shave his head and beard; he was told to act like someone fleeing from war; he was told to sit and sigh to himself; he was told not to cry when his wife died and so much more.

It's not easy being a prophet of God. This message hasn't changed. If we stand for righteousness we too will suffer. It's hard when everything seems against you. You are opposed in every way. If we seek to follow the Lord with all our heart and speak out the message of the gospel, we will suffer for it. But we have a promise that Jesus will never leave us.

Ezekiel means God strengthens and boy would he need that. There are four themes that jump out and are repeated throughout this book.

• **The Glory of the Sovereign Lord.**

What struck me was the fact that Ezekiel can't describe God so he uses the phrase 'appearance of the likeness'. Where have we heard that before? Have we lost the awe of God we once had? God didn't let them go into Babylon....He led them in, so they would be sick of captivity and idolatry and paganism and return to Him.

• **The sinfulness of man.**

When a man sees visions of God he always sees his own sinfulness, because it is uncovered (Isaiah 6:5). Sin can't be swept under the carpet! Their sin stretched throughout their history. Chapter 16:46-48 tells us they were worse than Sodom and Gomorrah! Sin can't be made beautiful, it can't be ignored, it can't be excused, it can't co-exist with the presence of a holy and righteous God.

• **Divine judgement on sinners is a certainty.**

It was the end of the road for Judah and Jerusalem. They were being cast out. Judah's destruction would be almost total and its people scattered to the four winds. God was determined to judge sin.

• **Hope of a future restoration**

Three prophets wrote when they were out of the land – Ezekiel, Daniel and John. Their books always end on a hopeful note. The heart of the message is this.....the glory is gone. The glory will remain gone until you all repent. But all of your idolatry and

all of your wickedness and all of your sinfulness will not prevent My Sovereign Eternal Will and I WILL bring My Glory back to Israel.

One day there will be One in Judah who will rule righteously. One day God would give His people a new heart and a new spirit. He will raise them up for a new temple.

The temple that is abandoned in chapter 10 would return to glory in chapter 43. Can you see it? Is your hope steadfast and certain? Do you have a full assurance?

Next time.....Chapter 1: A Vision of the glory of God.

IF YOUR CHRISTIANITY DEPENDS UPON A
PASTOR'S PREACHING, THEN YOU'RE A LONG
WAY FROM BEING WHERE YOU SHOULD BE.

A.W. TOZER
A MAN OF GOD

GOOD FRIDAY

BREAKING OF BREAD SERVICE

25TH MARCH 2016

10:30AM

*"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross,
so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness;
"by his wounds you have been healed."*

1 Peter 2:24

Grace Church, Wensley Road, Blackburn, BB2 1QD

Tel: 01254 54541

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Summary

Alan Benson a missionary from our own church here in Blackburn has been arrested by a group of Japanese invading soldiers and is about to be charged and then tortured. He is accused of being a spy. This true story is set in China during the early part of the Second World War. Alan begins to endure a period of painful and vindictive torture during which his faith in the Lord is his sustaining strength. Alan is charged as a spy and the torture is continued and enhanced in more deeper and more painful ways but Alan sticks to his guns despite the pressure being brought to bear on him by his cruel captors. Despite sustained and diverse affliction over a defined period Alan holds fast and declares this faith and urges his cruel captors to repent and be saved. "God cannot help you!" was the Japanese assertion however, our missionary maintains his steadfast stand for Christ throughout. Alan is now subjected to the dreadful and humiliating water torture designed as another painful method of extracting a confession; this continued for a number of days. Rather than become weaker he gains strength and forbearance as he calls upon the Lord despite being at his lowest ebb.

He resists putting his associates in danger and his daily portion of prayer and God's grace suffices allowing him to endure the very worst of conditions. Amazingly, the Japanese request prayer but it only serves as an opportunity to further humiliate our missionary. The true testimony of this experience is that Alan finds the Lord to be a true source of strength in that he is able to endure and triumph over the adversity before him. Subtle familial methods are then used to try and break Alan's spirit but it was a cruel trick engineered by relentlessly wicked minds. The Japanese attempt auto suggestion as a trick. Our missionary graphically describes the conditions of his captivity and its limitations and lack of basic comforts. Bathtime proved to be an endurance test both physically and mentally once again death seemed nearby but the word of God was a joy, peace and a succour. When every single earthly thing and hope was lost he found deep joy in Jesus Christ. There was the opportunity to witness to a Chinese communist official this was mostly conducted using small strips of paper. This man became a Christian and began to effectively witness such that others also became Christians. Alan asks again are you the reader a Christian have you come to Christ do you truly know him in your heart. There are now some regular, surprise very short visits from Alan's wife. He is

also presented with a letter that had apparently been found in the Yangtze river. It was in fact a letter from the UK that contained the word Hallelujah. (Praise the Lord). This had confused the Japanese and they were disappointed that it was something they could not hold against him and point towards him being a spy.

Part 15 Alan is told that he is about to be shot !

Once the Japanese brought me a pen, paper and ink and told me to write two letters one to my father and my will. I was to be shot at dawn in two days time by order of the Japanese Imperial Court. So I wrote out the letter and my will and began to prepare for death. I had been close to death before and to be honest was ready for it after all the seemingly unending suffering. But after a while I began to complain to God about it

why was he allowing this why me etc, etc... but then I thought that this was a selfish line of prayer for if God wanted me out of this situation he could easily engineer it, my death was his will and purpose. During the first of two nights alone in the cell I prayed hard and slept very little. The second night I did not sleep at all and prayed constantly while waiting for the sun to come up. However, as morning came the guard did not come and I was left in the cell waiting, wondering, praying. I thought a mistake had been made and perhaps it was the third and not second day that I was to shot. So a third night I agonised and prayed and dozed but then again nothing happened. I should have realised it was just another trick to try and break me and admit I was a spy. In fact they said it was more likely that I would be shot at some time in the future without being specific.

Next Time: Part 16 Alan hears a comforting and reassuring voice

Church Vision

“We as the body will seek continually to know the Lord as our beloved, to study His word that we may know Him better and that we may be witnesses of Christ Jesus in all the world that we inhabit”.

Church Values and Behaviours

“That we as a church will seek to Reach, Teach and Keep men and women, boys and girls to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven accessed through salvation in Jesus Christ”

1. We believe that the Bible (i.e. the Old and New Testaments excluding the Apocrypha), is the inspired Word of God, the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. We believe in the unity of the One True and Living God who is the Eternal, Self-Existent "I AM", Who has also revealed Himself as One being co-existing in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

3. We believe in the Virgin Birth, Sinless Life, Miraculous Ministry, Substitutionary Atoning Death, Bodily Resurrection, Triumphant Ascension and Abiding Intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ and in His personal, visible, bodily return in power and glory as the blessed hope of all believers (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; Acts 2:22, 10:38; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:12; Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4; Acts 1:9; Eph. 4:8-10; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 1 Cor. 15:22-24, 51-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:1-6).

4. We believe in the fall of man, who was created pure and upright, but fell by voluntary transgression (Gen. 1:26-31, 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-21).

5. We believe in salvation through faith in Christ, who, according to the Scriptures, died for our sins, was buried and was raised from the dead on the third day, and that through His Blood we have Redemption (Titus 2:11, 3:5-7; Rom. 10:8-15; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). This experience is also known as the new birth, and is an instantaneous and complete operation of the Holy Spirit upon initial faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 3:5-6; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 5:1).

6. We believe that all who have truly repented and believed in Christ as Lord and Saviour are commanded to be baptised by immersion in water (Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 2:38-39).

7. We believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an endowment of the believer with power for service, the essential, biblical evidence of which is the speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 1:4-5, 8, 2:4, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 19:6).

8. We believe in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of Christ in the Church today (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-16).

9. We believe in holiness of life and conduct in obedience to the command of God (1 Pet.1:14-16; Heb. 12:14; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 2:6).

10. We believe that deliverance from sickness, by Divine Healing is provided for in the Atonement (Isa. 53:4-5, Matt. 8:16-17, James 5:13-16).

11. We believe that all who have truly repented and believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour should regularly participate in Breaking of Bread (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:20-34).

12. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the everlasting conscious bliss of all who truly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and the everlasting conscious punishment of all whose names are not written in the Book of Life (Dan. 12:2-3; John 5:28-29, 1 Cor. 15:22-24; Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:10-15).

written by jamie boulton

We, together and not we alone, are the body, not just anybody but the body of Christ.

The Body is made up of many individual parts; each has its own individual function. That dream that the Lord has put in your heart, the one you would like to do. This function, these gifts are not of yourself, you weren't called to the Kingdom because you might be good at drama, God isn't collecting. Instead the gifts you have been given are gifts from the Father, they are to be cultivated; they are to start small, as the acorn that they may become mighty become oaks for the kingdom. It is the job of every part of the body, both young and old to seek first the Kingdom of heaven, to invest in our heavenly gift, or face the fate of the unworthy servant in the parable of the talents, there is no 80/20 divide in the body of Christ.

The reason there is no divide in the body is because no part has greater honour than another, no function, no gift is better than any other, instead all are equally as important to the whole, that is the Body of Christ.

This is how the body functions, the individual parts working diligently in the gifting that the Lord has given to help the whole, the body of Christ, achieve its purpose.

So what is the purpose that we are all working towards? This takes me to teach how we as a body of believers at Blackburn will achieve what the Lord is doing. But friends we will not be able to achieve the purpose of the body until we function like a body.

So what is the purpose of the body? The answer is simple:

But you shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

The Body of Christ has the function of pointing to Christ Jesus Himself, we are witnesses of His transforming power, in that we were made righteous through Him, we were changed, our sinful selfish nature, to one that chooses God. We are a light to the world and salt to the world, so there may be a provision for man to turn to Jesus, and a beacon in the darkness that points not to ourselves, but

to Christ Jesus.

This best sums up the purpose of the body, as one which inhabits a fallen world and a world that is doomed. It cannot be saved. Some of those are in it may be saved. We are the ark; that some may be rescued from the terrible judgment to come.

But I'm fairly sure that's not a revelation to you, we all know that Jesus said:

Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen. Mathew 28:19-20

The question I want to answer, as a way of a challenge and statement on how we may go forward is, how are we to be witnesses of Christ Jesus within the world? By this I mean to discuss not the practical how, because this is done in a multiplicity of ways, but the thought process behind it. Why would I want to do this, well as John says:

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

John 15:14-15

Friends we must not be in ignorance as to why we do something for the Lord, it all has its reason, otherwise our religion is none other than one chasing after dumb idols with no understanding. We are called the friend of God, we who follow His commandments, because He is the living God who desires a relationship with us.

We must understand the theory behind being witnesses for Him within the world so that we might best understand the many ways we can outwork this as a church.

To understand this theory, I would like to study a couple of verses in John which highlight both a right and wrong attitude to being witnesses for Christ Jesus in the place we inhabit.

Read John 12:1-11

This story is repeated in Matthew and Mark, each giving a different element of what happened, omitting some things and including others. In Matthews version we learn that this was the house of Simon the Leper, in Marks, that Mary also anointed Jesus head. Only Johns account introduces the four main characters of Mary, Martha, Lazarus and where the other accounts lump all the disciples in with Judas statement of charity, John identifies the instigator as Judas and gives his true motive.

Why these differences? Well the answer is in who the four gospels are written to. This can be figured out by their genealogies. Matthews genealogy begins with Abraham because

he was writing to the Jews to highlight Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, Mark has no genealogy as it was written to the Romans highlighting Jesus as the suffering servant, and a servant's family ties are unimportant. Luke goes back to Adam, because he was writing to the gentiles who had Greek linear logic and loved to run everything back to its simplest terms.

But the reason we are looking at John's account is because he was writing to the Church, his genealogy highlights that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The full first chapter of John is a statement that without Christ Jesus we cannot stand.

And so this account is specifically to teach the church something.

What we have here is Jesus on what will be His last ever Sabbath before the cross, celebrating the Sabbath meal. From a chronological order, Jesus had spent the night before at Zacchaeus' house, He had travelled to Jerusalem through Bethany where His Disciples had got a donkey and Jesus had the triumphal entry.

In the company of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, Jesus and the disciples had found a base of operations which Jesus continually retired to every night.

In John this mention of Mary, Martha and Lazarus is unique and only their second mention in his Gospel. The first being at the magnificent miraculous raising of the dead of Lazarus, something done for the faith of his Disciples, that they might be encour-

aged to believe the resurrection of the Dead was truly possible. And for His enemies who had demanded a sign and in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, were told "even if someone came back from the dead you would not believe."

It was common at a feast that the women were not allowed to sit, but were to serve, as Martha is found doing. It was also common that the guest would be anointed on the head with oil as an act of hospitality and love, as almost a type of after sun.

What was not common was that it would be done with expensive fragrant oil, or that the guest would have their feet also anointed.

The personal element of Mary's service, by using her own hair to wipe the feet and her own tears show the emotionally charged and personal element of this act, not out of obligation but from a place of love, one which left her open for ridicule from the other guests, which she received.

The statements of this passage and the actions have deeply symbolic significance as well as from the attitudes displayed.

The symbolism of all that happens here has significance, because in Martha, Mary and Lazarus we can see a type of the church, before its inception, a mirror of what it should be. Now I emphasize, a type not the prophetic, nowhere does it say they are, but by their actions and Christ's they exhibit elements of the church making them a type. Scriptures such

as the use of their house as a place to minister from and a place of fellowship, or from scriptures akin to the bride and bridegroom relationship of Christ and His Church.

And Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. John 11:5

In fact, it's not just their home but the village itself, Bethany meaning a house of dates, or palms. Jesus ascended to heaven from Bethany, returned to Bethany, rode out on the donkey from Bethany

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Psalm 92:12

After these things I looked, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations and kindred's and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands. Revelation 7:9

its symbolism stands so strongly as the church that we must conclude a teaching representing the physical location and the inhabitants of the church. Bethany represents a place of growth in righteousness and a place of praise.

So what of the four characters?

Well each in their part symbolizes the way in which we may be witnesses for Christ Jesus.

In Judas, we see his idea is that the best reflection on Christ is not wastefulness but instead that our outward show is best served by the way we are seen treating those less fortunate than ourselves.

What he says in the face of it seems a wise statement. After all, how many times have you heard we need to be Christ to these people, quoting James faith without works. If we don't take care of their physical need what need have they of Christ.

This friends is a popular teaching.

But this teaching is in error, its called Liberation theology, it suggests that we must take care of the needs of some one before they will accept Jesus as Saviour that until their life is in harmony they will never see Him as such.

I'm afraid friends this is backwards, until they put faith in Christ they will not find harmony, why because as Corinthians teach us, they are but a seed, a dead Cornell until its buried and then transformed renewed.

The social gospel is a dead stick friends, attempting to be witnesses to Christ through our charitable work has no future, even though so many churches chase after it. Why, because we're not the only ones doing it. Anybody can be charitable, friends here is a simple truth; a born again Christian who is homeless is in a better situation than a millionaire who doesn't know Christ, that has to be fundamental to us.

But more importantly, Jesus said the

poor you will have always. How true, liberation theology goes hand in hand with kingdom now, the belief that we as a church will make the world a better place ready for Christ's return. Its wrong, Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost from within the muck and mire. Although all may be saved, all wont be saved.

But John highlights the real motive behind such thoughts, money. How many churches have compromised to seek out a social gospel, to get their hands on grants and national lottery money? Or it is to get themselves known, Jesus said do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.

I'm not suggesting we shouldn't be charitable. As Christians our Spirit should have compassion, as the Lord leads you. But Jesus didn't beg the young rich ruler, he didn't say let's see if we can work on it. Friends we are here as a beacon of Hope, and that Hope is Christ Jesus not a warm meal, because the second thing is temporal. James statements about faith and works as I said last week, are suffixed by the term if a brother or sister is in need.

Instead we look to the conduct of the other three who in themselves exhibit how we may be witnesses. Martha served the Lord, with out ceasing. Mary gave praise and hospitality, showing that Jesus was more than the most common of guests, but a beloved Friend, Teacher and Saviour. Lazarus sat a Jesus table and listened to His words, being a foreshadow of the Christian as He was dead and now he was made alive. And what is

the outcome of this.

Then a great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there. And they did not come for Jesus' sake only, but also that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus to death also, because many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus because of him.

John 12:9-11

And there we have it, the purpose of the body, to be a witnesses of Christ Jesus to all the world, through our lives, a life dedicated to serve God.

You see when we meet the need of someone we don't show them Christ, we meet their need. When you stop meeting their needs then they don't have a use for you. Friends we are treating the wound without first sealing it up.

But when we truly love the Lord, well we stand out, and as society moves further away from Christian principles, we who stand firmly on them are greater lights, better salt, a greater witness to those around us, who will say, let us go see that man who was dead but now he is alive. Formally he was a liar and a thief, he committed adultery or he murdered someone. But now that man is different, he doesn't do the former things, now he worships Jesus Christ the Son of God, he speaks of a change.

Mary loved the Lord so much that

she openly in spite of the danger of ridicule, intimately anointed our Lord, with the oil. The room filled with its fragrance. It cost a years wages, but she poured it out. Everyone could smell it, everyone could see it, they were all drawn into it and it was holy and acceptable to our Lord. Friends don't be mistaken it, isn't worship that Mary was doing, this would introduce something bizarre into the church. It was much more, it was symbolic of the fellowship between Christ and His church. It was about the sacrifice, tears and closeness, representing a prayer life, a study life and knowledge of Jesus as your beloved.

Mary was anointing Jesus for His burial, from which our sins were forgiven, When we are forgiven grace abounds, but when we are forgiven much grace abounds more. We don't have to look for a reason. If the fact that you are a child of God, a place is prepared for you in heaven and it was something you couldn't do anything to earn, isn't a motivation, then you don't know Jesus intimately enough.

So what is our application?

As a church this is the challenge I want to issue. This is the way I want to go forward taking the teaching of both weeks.

We are the body. We all have a function. Regardless of what it is, its important and you must seek to do it, please come to me as I will to you, what can you do?

And our purpose is to be a witness of Christ Jesus in this world, by becom-

ing more intimate with Christ, by falling in love with Him, that our lives, as much as our words, are a beacon of hope, that Jesus is alive, in each and everyone of us.

By accepting this no longer are we locked in a geographical location, saying our mission field is the surrounding estates, because its where ever you are and work. Its your family, friends and work colleagues who will notice.

Mary highlighted intimacy with Christ,

Martha that we serve the Lord as He requires

And Lazarus that we sit reclining at His table, listening to His word, that they may come to see a resurrection life, a life apart, the miraculous dead who are now alive.

The vision we have adopted as a body is this

“we as body will seek continually to know the Lord as our beloved, to study His word that we may know him better and that we may be witnesses of Christ Jesus in all the world that we inhabit”.

And this will be done, as we as church seek to reach, teach and keep men and women, boys and girls to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

On this frame work we can build our Church.

Toy Maker & Son



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written by david lambert

Thanks again, everyone for all your continued support for Missions during 2015 and into 2016. Please pray for our mission meetings for 2016. The next definite date in the diary will be Martin Dudgeon's visit on October 30th. However, through various sources I hear that there are a number of people coming to the area so hopefully we will be in a position to invite them to come and speak of their vision and the field in which they are engaged in ministry.

I now have 20 years of detailed and accurate records of all the finance we have given and missions meetings we have hosted a total of 187 visits and 92.5 thousand pounds has been sent out from January 1996. This is a testimony to your dedicated faithfulness and support during this particular season of the church history. Remember again this is only a fraction of our churches historic testimony to Blackburn and the wider world.

There was a particular word that I used last month in relation to the Smith's ministry the word is industrious. It simple means moving on steadily and effectively in several areas. One role model in terms of industry was I.K Brunel, the great engineer, who achieved a tremendous amount in a relatively short time. If you read his life story you will see that he progressed effectively in terms of time and resources always using the time he had well and in the best possible way. I don't know if he had accepted Christ but he was certainly focussed and I think as we enter 2016 you and I should be challenged again about the need for industry in our Christian testimony and walk, this means having a much more disciplined approach to our prayer life, study, witness and work for the Kingdom; while there is still the opportunity to do so.

It is easy to become complacent and new challenge is very important. We are, after all, this month already half way through the church year; our year of sowing. The Kingdom's work is, as we are all aware, a work that lasts not just for time but for all eternity so cannot be taken at all lightly, so let industrious be a word to challenge and encourage us all in 2016 as we think about our service for Christ and the challenge ahead as we seek to continue to carry our witness at Grace forward from now.

If you would like to join our missions covenant scheme for £24 a year or £2 a month then please ask me or collect one of the forms on the missions table. I have also continued writing letters of encouragement to every AOG missionary. AOG currently have 71

individuals on the field most of whom are in couples. So far up to the end of January, I have sent out 11 letters which is to 19 individual missionaries. If you want to join in you only need to write, or at the very least pray for a minute, a short letter of encouragement and I will post to the missionary along with mine. It shouldn't take more than ten minutes you will be blessed by doing it. If you can pen such a letter then the February deadline to pass them on is Sunday 28th. This month it is Vincent Borromeo (Italy) - (Youth Alive Italia). I do hope that someone will be the first to write a letter soon.

As we begin a new year perhaps I can also again encourage you to pray for the suffering church whose needs are greater now than ever before this is due to the rise of so called IS activism in many areas of the world. Pray that these people will see Jesus in their dreams. Pray particularly for the safety of the people of Syria and Iraq who are not necessarily sympathetic to IS but are forced to live under occupation with all the horrors and dangers that this entails. The next missions prayer meeting will be Tuesday February 2nd 2016 @ 7.30pm.

written by carol duxbury

During the time I recently spent with my family in Cornwall, I was watching a Christmas film on tv, and something that one of the characters said jumped out at me. It was an old chinese proverb. Not that that meant much to me, it was simply the words that sorta hit me square on. I didn't know that it was a "confucious say" type thing at the time but I googled the phrase to find out.

Thinking about the words got me ruminating as you do, about the weather. Hmmmmn . That subject alone has gotten worn out recently , because it has been quite varied and nasty over the last few weeks. Bucket loads of rain, even sleet and the winds have been something else indeed - at gale force too.

I found a little verse about the wind which goes;

The Wind

I come to work as well as play

I'll tell you what I do

I whistle all the live long day

Woo oo oo, woo oo, woo oo

I toss the branches up and down

And shake them to and fro

I whirl the leaves in flocks of brown

And send them high and low

I strew the twigs upon the ground

The frozen earth I sweep

I blow the children round and round

And wake the flowers from sleep

John 3v8 tells us that "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear it's sound, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it is going." For our purpose today we'll just think about the natural wind as we recognize it.

When we think of the winds there are various things that could spring to our minds;

The winds of winter

The winds of war

The winds of change.

The winds of winter may come in varying degrees of force and cold and we wrap up tight and weald our umbrellas.

The winds of war blow across our world on an almost daily basis these days in one form or another. These winds, we seem to take in our stride as it were, but, the wind of change affects us the worse I think, regardless of our state, by that I mean regardless of gender, age, wealth or the lack of it, as it were, in that it usually brings changes that mean our lives will never be the same again.

'Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King?'

The saying that spoke to me goes "When the wind of change blows some people build walls and others build windmills". What does this, or, could this mean to us as Christians or to you or me personally in our Christian walk?

I found myself asking the ? Which one am I ? What would I do? Changes in our lives bring us to a cross road. The name of that crossroad is "Choice "

When the wind of change blows on my life and as a Christian, that wind is the Wind of the Holy Spirit, when the wind of change blows on my life, do I;

1. Build a wall, A wall is a solid object, a barrier, a partition, a separator. Would I say to the Lord "Sorry you'll

have to go round me" "No Lord I've done enough, I'm comfy where I am, who me? Naaa not me. Would I put up a barrier of spiritual, apathy, say-ind well, am I really interested or concerned after all done my bit, God must speaking to someone else. Or

Spiritual arrogance, ooh nooo that's not for me Lord. Will I kick against the pricks of change or demand? Will I forget or take for granted that Jesus gave His life for me. That Jesus deserves my all. That Jesus wants my body as a living sacrifice, Roms12v1. Will I forget that Jesus wants me to take up the cross daily and follow Him? Jesus said, Matt 22v37. You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and do not stifle the Holy Spirit. 1 thes 5v19. Or would I;

'...that wind is the Wind of the Holy Spirit...'

2. Build a windmill? A structure that turns in the wind and generates power that grind the corn. Will I embrace the wind of change, regardless of my state, will I allow the wind of the Spirit to use me. Will I say like Samuel "Here I am Lord " will I help to generate and regenerate, will I say "How can I help you today Lord " to the God who sought me and bought me and keeps me. Almighty God, the Great I Am, the El Shaddai, does not NEED my help, but He does require my faithfulness and a willing heart. Like a windmill that welcomes the wind that turns her sails, like a Potter that

moulds the clay. God has a plan. That plan will succeed. Nothing can or will stop God's plan for this world, and that plan is that "All men should be saved".

The wind blows where it pleases, the call goes out loud and clear:

Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King?

Who will be His helpers, other lives to bring? Who will leave the world's side? Who will face the foe. Who is on the Lord's side? Who for Him will go..

V5. Chosen to be soldiers, in an alien land. Chosen, called and faithful, for our Captains, band. In the service royal, let us not grow cold Let us be right loyal, noble, true and bold.

Winds of change will blow of that there is no doubt. They will change our life that's for sure. Do we have a choice?.....ALWAYS!!!!

Wall or Windmill? Regardless of state. The choice is yours and mine?

Now unto Him who has loved us, and washed us from sin, unto Him.....be the Glory, FOREVER, Amen

written by christine morris

The Activity leaders began the year with a meeting that really made me to think again about Grace kids. I know its aim is to reach, and so is gospel orientated, but I needed to ask myself again, 'Where was the audible sharing of the gospel message' and how do we get it across. The programme has changed and is very much more gospel driven. Sometimes we make excuses for not sharing, I know I do, thinking that it won't be heard or that it is too hard, or boring, or of no interest. Now apply those thoughts to children, who have so much going on around them...but, this is where your, MY, faith kicks in, that in our faithfulness in sharing, in sowing, will produce fruit and we have to put our trust in His word, as it says in Isaiah 55:11.

So this spot in the mag is being dedicated to sharing what I share with Grace Kids leaders and helpers (adapted for us)as they think about preparing each week. I hope they encourage and bless you too.

Every one of us should know each other so well, that if I asked what any one person's most important spiritual need is, you could answer. We need to learn that listening equals caring. The more you listen, the more you care. There is no shortcut. There is nothing for children or adults to base their lives on anymore. On the outside, they may look like the same people who come through this door every week, but do you know who they are on the inside? Is what you are going to speak them this week going to help and encourage them? The lessons, at Grace Kids, are geared to bring these children to a point of decision, a point of change. What you share with someone may bring them to a point of decision, a point of change, a step back in the right direction, an encouragement to keep going, to keep studying, to keep being teachable. Let's not just share with each other, like it is a duty to pass on some the information and then go home. How many times do we have to hear about Daniel in the lion's den before we work it out? But the biblical principle of God's protection found in the life of Daniel is something we all need to hear. We can use examples from our own life about how God has protected you and those around you. We can use Daniel as an example of how God protected people in the Bible, but in sharing, bring those we are sharing with to a point of decision where they can decide to trust in that protection for themselves. That is making the Bible relevant. Want to be here! Make the Bible alive! Make it real. Help to turn this place into the city of refuge it should be!

Before we can begin to show anyone how to live their lives and what principles to build their lives upon, we need to lay a foundation. That foundation must explain their purpose in life. We all need to understand that God Made You for a Reason. If this foundation is not laid, then we will think that Christianity is just a bunch of rules we have to follow, and will not understand that we were created to live for God. People who do not understand God's purpose for their lives end up living for the moment. They are not interested in planning for the future or better yet, eternity. They will pursue every momentary, earthly reward that interests them. Storing up riches in heaven will be a foreign concept to them as they will drift from one thing to the next. How many times have we seen them trying to figure out what their purpose in life is? They ask questions like, "Why am I alive? Who am I? Why is my life like this?" Do you know why they ask these questions? Because they have no foundation! They do not understand that God Made You for a Reason. The Bible says in Colossians 2: 7, "Plant your roots in Christ and let Him be the foundation for your life." The only way we can lay a foundation in the lives of others is to show them that God Made You for a Reason. He made them:

1. In His Image
2. To Know Him
3. For a Purpose

Do you know what children say is their number one complaint 'it's boring!' A great way to combat that attitude is by using creativity to provide a better program. So we are working

together so that we never become so routine that the children, or us know what to expect. The element of surprise; working at making every week different. So my challenge to Grace kids leaders and helpers was to think about the lesson and come up with creative ways of presentation. To not just read it as it is. Add twists to the games that will make them more exciting. Grow and develop a high-powered program that does not rely 100 percent on the programme. So that we can use it as a springboard to create a service geared toward providing these children, in our care, the very best. We all need to contribute and be a part of the building process. Why do we need to do this?

'So my challenge to Grace kids leaders and helpers was to think about the lesson and come up with creative ways of presentation.'

If we stop and think about the competition for their attention; they may have stayed up late Saturday night. They've watched the latest film that Hollywood has to offer-anything from car chases and explosions to aliens dropping from outer space zapping across the screen. Maybe they've played a computer game-how does that hold up against a fuzzy felt story? OR... As they get to church, the teacher comes in five minutes late and fumbles for another ten minutes

to start. Then the teacher passes out a faded picture reproduced by the church's broken down copier. Next they handed a tin of broken crayons and told, "We're going to have a great time today." It's no contest. Meet the challenge of the world's pull for our children's attention. Avoid the rut of habit in planning your part in the programme. Let's strive for excellence. God has given you a few hours every week to make a difference for all eternity.

The above doesn't just apply to children's work. It applies to whatever the Lord has called you to...are you giving it your best? Is it a passion that drives you forward, to get better and better each time? We have talked about building your life on Jesus. In the society we are living in today, people are building on all kinds of self-serving foundations that directly contradict the Bible and the message of Jesus Christ. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sin to free us from this "alternative lifestyle." Let us not forget the ever-present peer pressure others are facing daily from

'God has given you a few hours every week to make a difference for all eternity.'

friends who have not decided to live for God. With so many lifestyle foundations being introduced at a young age, we must understand the seriousness of convincing our kids to build their lives on the foundation of Jesus. He is the only solid foundation. We can rely on Him. He has our best in mind. In order for anyone to build their lives on Jesus, they first must make a definite decision that they will live for Him and Him only. They must know His Word, trust Him, and obey Him. Our children are the next generation of leaders. Whatever foundation they learn now is what they will build on. Can you imagine what this world will be like in 50 years if our kids do not start building their lives on the message of Jesus Christ today? Every lesson we share is important.



**Our leaders
and helpers.**

written by sharon moorhouse

In January I was asked to bring an inspired word from God to our Oasis meeting. After much prayer and listening to God, this is what I was able to share. How do I know it was the right message? Well, the prayers that day and the short word from Jamie all fit around my message, which had not been shared with anyone previously.

As we enter our church 'Year of Sowing', what are we expecting from it? Do we see ourselves as sowers? Do we sit back and watch what's happening around us? Perhaps we should sit and wait to see what others are doing and then think 'ohh, that was good!' or do we wait to see what Jamie tells us from the pulpit and say 'Amen' at the end?

Have we really grasped what the 'Year of Sowing' means for us?

I myself, am a visual learner and God has granted me the ability to visualise things in pictures rather than having to read lots of words to explain or understand things. It's so beautiful the things I have been privileged to see.

Firstly, we have got to know God as our Beloved. Whilst this may sound odd and perhaps you haven't got the courage to ask how you go about this, think back. Do you remember when you first met your girlfriend/boyfriend, wife/husband and you would do anything for them? When you 'fell in love'? When your heart fluttered or your stomach churned at the thought of seeing that person again and your thoughts of that person never stopped? You did irrational things like putting their perfume or aftershave on cotton wool and stuffing it in the air vent or your car, so you could still smell them when driving alone. You remember the song that was playing when you first went out (your song). Well, having God as beloved is worse than all those things together.

Secondly, it's working for the glory of God's kingdom, by reaching others for God. I have likened this to a garden. The garden being the Kingdom.

God has given us this beautiful garden but we can't just roam around in it, we have got to work at it. We are just coming out of winter, the gardens look dark, bleak, almost dead with old plants lying withered and covered in dead leaves. We must prepare for

the next season. We must clear away the old dead leaves, dead-head plants and bushes, prune rose and fruit bushes, rake lawn/pebbles to get rid of any unwanted grass before it gets hold. We must tie up leaning plants so they grow straight and strong, tidy the shed/greenhouse, wash the windows and any old plant pots/seed trays. Wash and oil your garden furniture, so you can relax somewhat and enjoy the next season.

This is what God has been or is doing to us. He is preparing us by giving us new or resurrecting old skills and putting us to use again.

As the old saying goes, 'I can do anything through Christ who strengthens me'. He may need to prune us, take away the bits He does not want or like. Then when we have been pruned and fed on His word, we can go boldly and sow the seeds.

We shouldn't be disappointed if we don't see the harvest. Poppies can lie dormant for 30 years before they germinate and come through.

Are you ready to sow the seeds?
Is your garden prepared?
Have you sown any yet?

written by sharon moorhouse

Well, both groups are back after the Christmas break. We ended last year with a Christmas party for 18 children, as we brought both groups together and had one party. Everyone joined in the fun and games with food a plenty!

Our mums and carers all rolled up their sleeves to work in the kitchen, clean up or entertain the children. All the children received 2 presents; an age appropriate toy and a book.

We have returned in January and are pleased to see baby Evie return, as this means God has answered many prayers for the family. Evie's big sister has been in hospital for a long time and she is now home and back at school.

All the children have grown over the holidays, but the biggest development has been the language development of Finley and Ben. Finley speaks to me now and is our biggest a.m. boy. Ben now has a full conversation and has missed the two/three word structure.

A new development in the sessions is our 'Prayer Box'. Where parents and carers can write a prayer request on a post it note and as a group we will pray for the request. At the end of the sessions I will pass them on to Jamie who will take them to the church prayer meeting. We had two requests the first time we used it.

written by janine stellatos

WINTER UPDATE



Dear Friends,

Once again we are almost at the end of another year and the supermarkets will be heaving with people rushing around buying lots of gifts and spending endless hours seeking out all the traditional foods that go with the Christmas season. Just last week one of our staff was delivering a voucher to the family of a sponsor child where they can redeem to the value of the voucher for food. Imagine, you have lived all your life in Nakuru, Kenya struggling to meet the needs of your family and have never set foot in a supermarket and then you receive a voucher for two weeks supply of food! It is like being given a trip to Winter Wonderland to them! This is the reality of many families here. It is such a joy to see the tears of happiness on the faces of the parents when they receive the gift of food which is in effect the gift of life. In all the extravagance of commercialism that this season has become in the world, let us never forget to be grateful and to share the peace and love that God gave us wrapped up in His Son Jesus. Thank you for keeping me on the mission field enabling us to bring them the gift of life and the hope of eternal life.

Ministry

It has been a busy time since my last newsletter. I was over in the UK on tour with Pastor Bill in September then 6 weeks later over in the UK and Switzerland with my Department Head Mike as we travelled and spoke in many churches. Please forgive me if I did not get time to see you or get in touch. Things were extremely busy travelling every day to preach in a different church every night. It was a great time of ministry and also a great joy to see Mike experience snow for the first time in his life. We got back at the beginning of December and began preparing for the summer camp where we took 46 children to camp. They enjoyed riding bikes, bouncy castles, trampolines, swimming, team games and more, many of them for the first time in their lives. It was great to see the joy on their faces.



They also experienced having 3 meals a day. Normally, they can go 2 or even 3 days without a meal. At first they were over-awed but as the time went on they began to let themselves go and really enjoyed it!

Before we travelled we had our Christmas program, "Operation Holiday Hope" where we gave all 68,000 children packets of high energy biscuits and a carton of juice in all 68 schools. A mammoth project but well worth the smiles on the faces of the children.



In February we will be having some visitors from our ministry headquarters in New York and also a lady from Namibia. At the end of February I will be going on a 2 day mission to Ghana and would value your prayers.

We are expanding the feeding program in January to bring the total number of kids fed every day to 2250. Some say the work is too much. Some say you are doing too much. We say, you can always do more. It is just a matter of not wasting your time.

Hebrews 6:10

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed toward His name in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister.

Prayer Requests:

- Please pray for the health of the staff. We had another staff member recently with malaria.
- Please pray for the Ghana trip in February for safe travel and that I will see through the eyes of the Holy Spirit.
- Please pray that God will give us wisdom throughout the coming year in every decision as we seek to reach more children.
- Please pray that God will provide the finances needed to continue what we do and that God will keep the vehicles on the road. The road here take a heavy toll on the vehicle maintenance.
- Please PRAY.

THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE FOR ME. I LOVE AND APPRECIATE EVERY ONE OF YOU AND WISH YOU ALL A VERY WONDERFUL BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

written by kath welch

Well Revive has commenced again after a long Christmas break. We are at that time of the year when we all have good intentions to set a goal for the year. For some this will be to maintain, for others the effort may be too much and still for some it will be a time to set a goal and to grow and to achieve more than the previous year.

1. **Maintain** - To keep what God has given each one of us in good working order (i.e. our bodies shape and size)
2. **Slip/Slide** - To find the effort too great and to be overwhelmed - so in need of encouragement from the group.
3. **Grow and Achieve** - To be focused and dedicated, to grit our teeth if necessary and to go on to achieve our goal.

As we come week by week to the group, we can and do motivate each other, physically, mentally and spiritually to achieve our goals which we have set. "It may seem like hard work but after we have finished a session we all feel great - I think!"

The morning session continues to grow, some of the ladies have been there from the beginning and others have recently joined us. We are getting to know one another quite well which gives a great opportunity to share the good news of Jesus, which I do after each morning session. The format of the morning session is: Warm up, aerobics, muscle control, relaxation, then a thought for the day (this is when I can share how much Jesus means to me and that they too can know Him as Lord and Saviour.

The evening sessions are similar in format with the exception that we may sometimes do a step class, which is basic but quite taxing. We also have a rota for those who wish to share a thought for the day and what Jesus is doing in their lives at the end of each session.

My ultimate aim is to use Revive as a tool to make Jesus known in whatever way possible.

Therefore I urge you brothers in view of Gods mercy offer your bodies as a living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12: 1 - 2

