

CHRISTIAN WORKER



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the conquest
in the Lake
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British Bible School

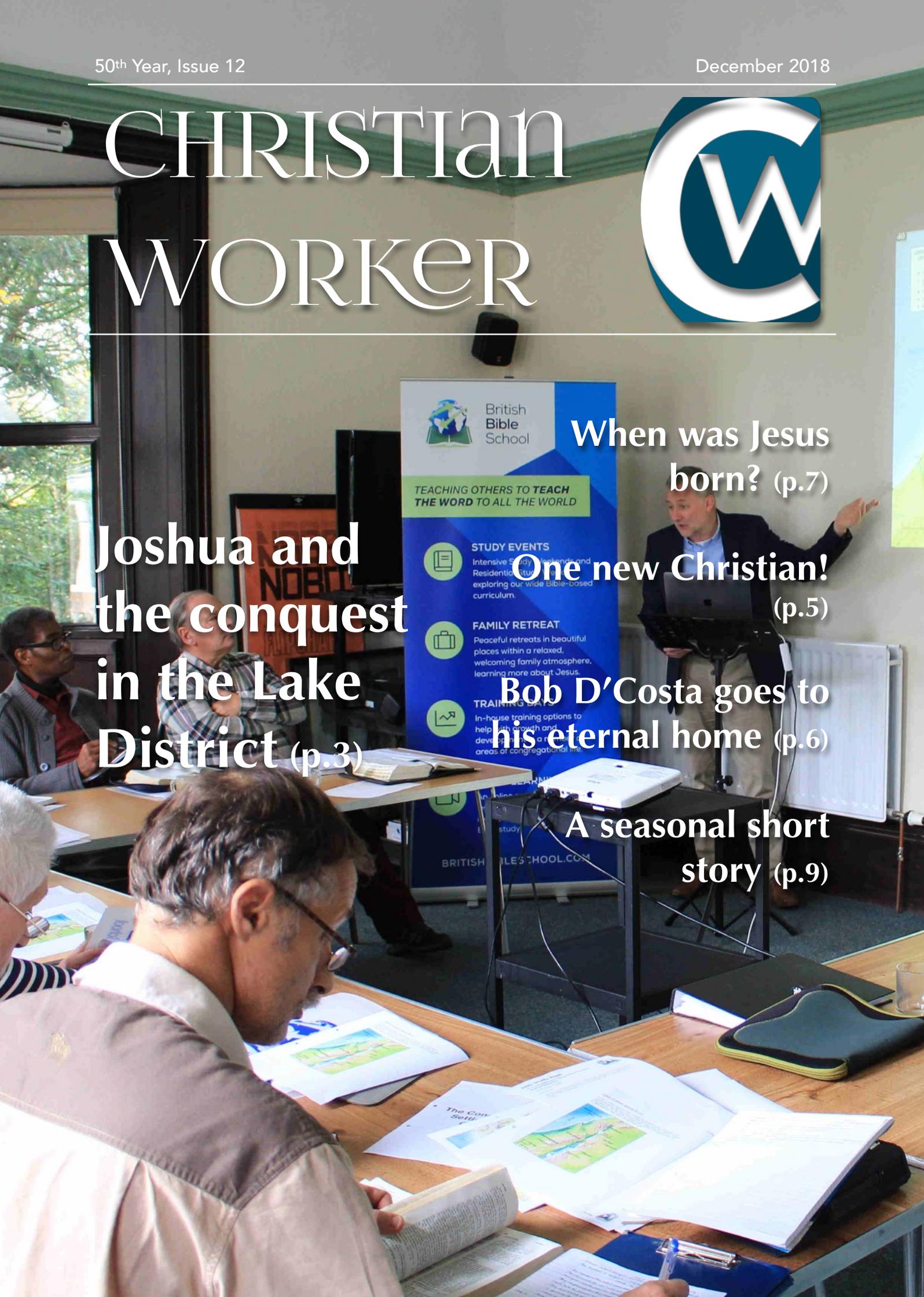
TEACHING OTHERS TO TEACH
THE WORD TO ALL THE WORLD

STUDY EVENTS
Intensive Study Weekends and Residential Study Days exploring our wide Bible-based curriculum.

FAMILY RETREAT
Peaceful retreats in beautiful places within a relaxed, welcoming family atmosphere, learning more about Jesus.

TRAINING DAYS
In-house training options to help with growth and development in a range of areas of congregational life.

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From the editors:

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Manor

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The *Christian Worker* is published monthly as a news magazine for Churches of Christ in the United Kingdom.



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Deadline: 21st of each month

Another year is drawing to an end. A few more weeks and Christmas will be here and then the New Year of 2019.

We have included (below) some guidelines to help us get information in a timely way. Please read through these as they will make the *Christian Worker* the best magazine that we can produce. Throughout our almost fifty years of publishing, the goal has been for this to be your magazine, a magazine for the Christians among British congregations.

We wish one and all a very happy Christmas-time filled with the love of friends and family.

Guidelines to help the CW

1. Each congregation should have someone appointed to forward news on a regular basis. Old news is not so thrilling.
2. It really helps to have items in by the 21st of the month. This gives Jon some breathing space.
3. Please send your articles to Trevor so he knows what news we have received.
4. Always include a picture if possible but first ask if you can send a photo of a person.
5. The CW is sent out free by email but if you have requested a printed copy please remember that this costs money and your suggested donation is important for us to receive.
6. Jon's and Trevor's email addresses are on page 2 as is the website with information of where British Churches of Christ meet.
7. If there is anyone who has studied desktop publishing and would like to be involved with us please do speak up and let us know.
8. If you enjoy the magazine please let us know. If you know of ways that we may improve tell us. If you do not like the CW tell us a better way.
9. There are many appeals issued through the pages. We will advertise only those who can be verified by someone in this country.
10. Pray that this work may be a blessing to all who receive.

Jon & Trevor

Spotlight on BBS Study Week

The so-called 'Battle of Jericho' is probably the best known episode in the book of Joshua. Images of a strong city, the procession marching around its walls, the tumbling down and Joshua who, according to the song, 'fit' the battle of Jericho might readily come to mind. Though probably the best known, it may not be the best understood episode, particularly with regards to its context.



The fall of Jericho takes place at a pivotal moment in the history of the nation of Israel. Having crossed the River Jordan on dry ground, the nation is poised to 'conquer' the land God had promised to their ancestors. Jericho was first on the list of cities to be taken, and the people prepared themselves for conquest.

We might speak of Israel 'taking' or conquering Jericho and the remainder of the land, but that's not really the whole story. The promises of God are never to be earned and the book of Joshua makes it abundantly clear that it is God who gave Jericho into the hands of Israel, as he was to give the

remainder of the land to his people in the months and years that followed.

The book of Joshua formed the basis of our recent Study Week at Bassenthwaite, in the northern Lake District. For the best part of a week, at the beginning of November, Bassenfell Manor was home to the British Bible School as we conducted our second autumn Study Week on 'The Conquest and Settlement of Canaan (Part One)'. And what an absolutely splendid week it was!

Leaving aside for a moment the beauty of the setting, the splendour of the manor house, the pleasantness of the company and the plentifulness of the food, the week provided such a rich and fulfilling time of

study and learning – the likes of which are far too few and far between.

The benefits of a short-term, residential study event are immense. Our Study Weeks enable us to focus on a single

module over a solid three days in the classroom. Staying from a Monday afternoon until the Friday morning, students enjoy an intensive period of study



alongside others sharing a similar passion for the Scriptures.

Though the week provided an excellent opportunity to become much better acquainted with the text covered in the module, there is also the option of undertaking additional assignments in order to complete the requirements for module credit. This additional study complements that in the classroom and encourages the student to think even more deeply about the text.

This recent week was taught by three of our teachers: Patrick Boyns, Jon Galloway and Mark Hill.

Each teacher brings a different experience to the classroom, ensuring both variety and depth in presentations and discussion. It wasn't long before the class had bonded together, forming a happy band of students.



There is something very special about an event like this and all present felt like family. Here's what some said:

"The discussions and time the teachers took to take and answer questions were very useful. Thank you so much for such an uplifting few days together studying God's Word".

"I enjoyed every aspect of the programme but I found the quality of the teachings and the depth of the Biblical concepts presented particularly exciting".

"Let me take this opportunity to thank and congratulate you on pulling-off another

wonderful week of Bible studies at Bassenfell Manor Christian Centre. It was most fulfilling for me".

The setting for the week was Bassenfell Manor, a charming old house overlooking the tranquility of Bassenthwaite Lake. This is where we hold our annual winter retreat at the end of January. Food was ably prepared and served by Isobel Ferguson who joined us from Scotland, and mealtimes were most pleasant as we sat together around a big table. The centre staff could also not have been more helpful.

Each day began with morning devotions and

in the evenings we enjoyed a variety of activities, enjoying our time together as family. This event is now a firm part of the School calendar and we are very much looking forward to being there again in November 2019. We'd love to have you with us, so

you might want to mark your calendar from 4th to 8th November 2019 and make plans to join us then. Details to follow.

We are thankful for the continued and growing support of believers and congregations from around the U.K. If you know of any way in which we might be of service to you – through either teaching or training events – please do get in touch. And may all we do be to God's glory and praise.

Patrick Boyns

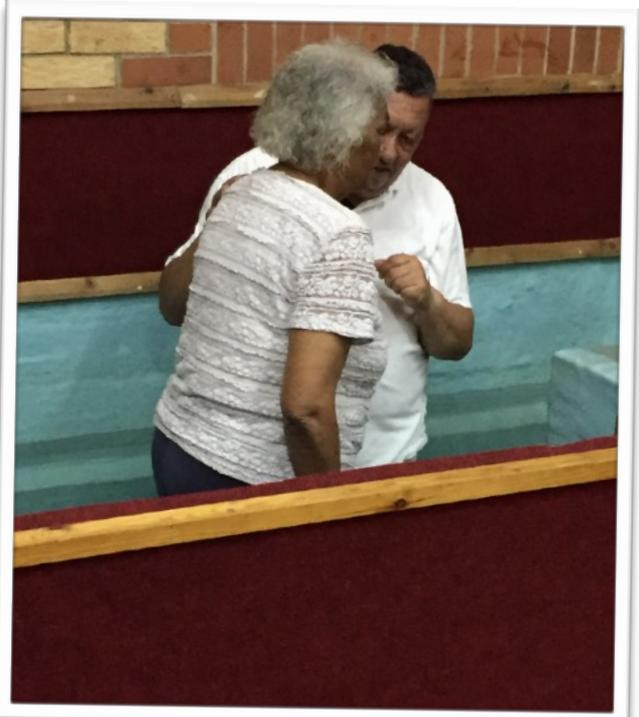
www.britishbibleschool.com

Congratulations!

Northampton: On 6th November **Avis Drummond**, just a few weeks short of her 86th birthday, was immersed into Christ.

Having been involved in the life of the Northampton congregation for many years, Avis came to the conclusion that her previous baptism with another group was invalid. We rejoice with Avis that studying and hearing God's Word has resulted in this conclusion and by God's grace has secured her salvation.

Mark Hill



East Kilbride: **George Hill** has turned 80! He enjoyed a small celebration with a meal out with his family.

George has been an active part of the congregation at East Kilbride for half his life. Becoming a Christian in the late 1970s, he hasn't looked back. You can always count on George and his wife Joyce being among the first to arrive at any meeting of the congregation.

A scientist by training and profession, he retired a number of years ago. He continues to enjoy excellent health. Even a hip replacement a few years ago did not slow him down. Although his heart gives him some problems, once he has an easy day he seems to always be back in the thick of things. Until fairly recently he could frequently be found up a ladder at our building, fixing something or changing a bulb.

He continues to serve the congregation in distribution of leaflets, visiting those sick or bereaved, as well as presiding at worship, leading singing, and even filling in teaching a class. He is also the treasurer for the congregation. He and his wife Joyce were recently two of the students at the BBS Residential Study Week at Bassenfell Manor in the Lake District.

At eighty, he shows no sign of slowing down! We wish George a continued long life in the service of his Master!

Jon Galloway

Ernest 'Bob' Thorton D'Costa

16th January 1937 – 7th October 2018

Ernest 'Bob' Thorton D'Costa – known fondly to most of us as Uncle Bobby – was called home on 7th October after a short battle with cancer.

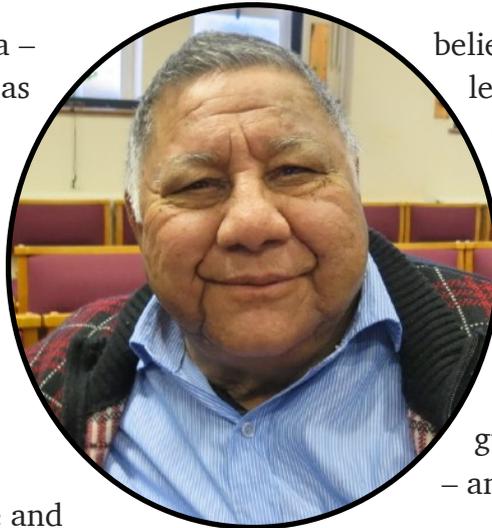
Born in Calcutta on 16th January 1937, Bob was the third of six children to Ulric and Flora D'Costa. Along with his siblings Arthur, Dorothy, Ulric Jnr, Prudence and Joy, Bob attended Carey Baptist Church throughout his childhood years.

Bob had many opportunities to pursue careers in boxing and the Air Force but instead opted to become a customs and excise officer.

The first of his siblings to marry, Bob arrived in England with his wife June and eldest son Jeffrey in 1962. Throughout this period he worked many jobs – even three at one time – to support his young family and never took a sick day. Eventually he worked as a housing officer for Brent Council until his retirement.

His family remember Bob as a great provider and protector who remained firm in his principles. They also remember him as an exceptionally good father who was hands on with raising his children and joining in the housework.

Uncle Bobby was baptised in the late 1970's and can only be described as an 'Institution' at the Wembley congregation. For over 35 years, Bob attended each event, worship service and Bible study with a zealous faithfulness. Bob strongly



believed in the importance of learning all you can about God's Word and that attending fellowship activities was an important way to support both the organisers and each other. Whatever was going on at Wembley, you could guarantee Bob would be there – and often lead a song or two.

In his younger years, Bob was the congregation's mini-bus driver and would do pick-ups from the train station as well as driving the elderly back to their homes. Despite a decline in his health in recent years, Bob continued to show his support for the work of the congregation through his attendance, involvement and, of course, through his song leading.

Bob will be remembered most for his love of singing. A regular and meticulous song leader, Bob led the congregation with great passion, warmth and gusto. For those of us who have grown up at Wembley, the sound of a pitch pipe will forever be associated with memories of Uncle Bobby.

The congregation at Wembley feels an incredible amount of sadness at the loss of our faithful brother in Christ. The auditorium of our building was overflowing with well-wishers on Saturday 17th November, the day of his memorial service, as we all gathered to say goodbye and send him off with a handful of his favourite hymns. The turnout was testimony to a life well lived.

During his short stay in hospital, many visited him regularly and among the last was Rowland who reported that Bob said: "I'm going home." Despite our grief – which we share with June, and their

children Jeff, Belinda and Jess – we are delighted to know that he has gone home to be with our Father where he will find a peaceful resting place.

Megan Griffiths

The birth of Jesus

Christmas can be quite a controversial topic amongst Christians. Some celebrate it as the birth of Jesus. Some believe it is wrong due to its origins. Others enjoy it as a festive period of family and giving.

There is almost, at times, a religious battle over Christmas. There are those who advocate "Jesus is the reason for the season" while others are quick to point out that Jesus was not born on 25th December. Then there are those who simply want to keep peace who remind everyone that it doesn't matter what you celebrate it as.

So, is it wrong to celebrate Christmas? Is it right to do so? What would be the Bible view?

When was Jesus born? 25th

December? 6th or 7th

January? 6th December? 17th November? 11th September? Spring? or Autumn? All of these have been suggested as the day of Jesus' birth. In fact, just about every day of the year has been suggested by someone at some time! Why these days, in particular?

25th December – This is the traditional date that western society has chosen (and those cultures that it has influenced) – why is

actually unclear. This date was first identified by Sextus Julius Africanus in AD 221. A group of Donatist Christians in North Africa recognised this date some time before 312 (Donatists were schismatic Christian group).

One widespread explanation of this date is that it was a 'Christianising' of a day popular in the Roman Empire that celebrated the winter solstice, the casting away of winter and heralding the arrival of spring and summer. Although this might sound good, historically there was strong

opposition to recognising the birthdays of martyrs or Jesus because celebrating birthdays was a pagan custom. Instead, they honoured these people on the days of their martyrdom (their true 'birthdays' from a Christian perspective).



The idea of Jesus' birth celebration replacing a pagan feast did not occur until the 12th century, which was then latched on to by 18th & 19th century Bible scholars – but there is nothing in the writing from this early period about substituting Jesus' birth for a pagan festival. Instead, there was great opposition toward doing anything that was considered pagan.

It wasn't until Constantine (early 300s) that there was a deliberate adapting and Christianising of pagan festivals. As you will have undoubtedly noticed, this is *after* 25th December had been recognised by many as the date for Jesus' birth. It was Pope Gregory around 600 who advocated that missionaries change pagan temples to churches and pagan festivals to become festivals of Christian martyrs. Some things concerning Christmas have been borrowed from pagans, but there is no evidence that the date was.

Andrew McGowan pointed this out in an article he wrote for *Bible History Daily* last year. "But we don't have evidence of Christians adopting pagan festivals in the third century, at which point dates for Christmas were established. Thus, it seems unlikely that the date was simply selected to



correspond with pagan solar festivals. The December 25 feast seems to have existed before 312—before Constantine and his conversion, at least." ("How December 25 Became Christmas", 12 March 2017).

The date the Eastern Orthodox Church continues to use is **6th or 7th January** based on their use of the Julian calendar. Some European countries have used the date of the feast of Saint Nicolas – **6th December**.

Clement of Alexandria (c.155-220) gave the date of Jesus' birth as **17th November**. Some have even suggested **11th September** due to trying to work out 'signs' based on the book

of Revelation. And some have suggested the **spring** (or **autumn**) due to sheep being in the fields near Jerusalem, reasoning they would not have been kept high in the hills during December.

In the final analysis, we cannot be totally sure historically how 25th December became equated with Jesus' birth.

As far as not observing Christmas because we think it might have had a pagan origin, we should remember what Paul wrote about pagan origins 1 Corinthians 10:18-33. Although talking about eating meat offered to pagan idols, he reminded the Corinthian

Christians that an idol was nothing and meat was simply meat. But if someone believed you were involved in pagan worship by eating, don't do it. I know of no one today who seriously would believe we were involved in pagan

worship by observing Christmas (or even birthdays for that matter).

Another scripture to consider is Romans 14. Among other problems Paul talked about keeping special days. He emphasised that what was important is that we honour the Lord, whether we choose to keep a special day or not, and that we should not judge each other (v.5-6 & 10-19).

Many believe we have an opportunity at this time of year. Most of the year people don't want to hear anything about Jesus, but in December there is still a thought about his

coming into the world as a baby in a manger. Yes, there are challenges to take someone from the manger to what happened on the cross, but at least people are thinking about Jesus this time of year. We need to use the opportunity this time of

year brings us to let people know about Jesus, who he really was, and why he came.

Let me wish one and all a Happy Christmas and God's bountiful blessing for a New Year.

Jon Galloway

The day the lights were turned on

After weeks of preparation the great day was here; the city centre Christmas lights were to be turned on. Just the Sunday before the same space had been filled with soldiers and marching bands complete with solemn faces remembering those who had died in battle; now the fun could begin. Two months of unrivalled laughter, thrill seeking and over-eating.

Everyone it seemed turned out that night, children on the shoulders of their fathers, old people with their grandchildren. There were young girls trying to be older than they were and making a mess of makeup and clothing. Groups of lads were there being loud telling each other of fantastic accomplishments with more fantasy than fact. Everyone smiling, laughing, going around seeing what was there.

The great bell on the City Hall boomed a welcome and competed with the singers, wearing hardly anything but singing out that they wished it could be Christmas every day. The children were fascinated, thrilled to over-excitement, wanting to go on every ride and eating everything, sweet or savoury, in sight.

The older teens and twenty-somethings showed their prowess as they skated on the ice rink doing their best to impress some sweet girl that had taken their eye.

Every restaurant was packed out. Looking through one window there were couples enjoying their Italian meal, a little treat after weeks of hard work. Another table was filled with Chinese students who had gone out for an Italian. Another table was of young women from work having a night out and wishing that there were more men in their lives.



Then there was table after table of male and female. It was possible to see some of the young men were out on a first date. Two weeks ago all they thought of was football but then Cupid's arrow had struck and a change of life style was in front of them. Some others were ready to move on to the next stage

in life together. The awkward moments of general chat had passed; they now gazed into each other's eyes, held hands across the table and felt safe in each other's company. By next Christmas they would seal their relationship and be in each other's arms every day. One couple out on

their first date were university students intent on putting the world to rights, or at least their part of the world. Romance hovered but did not travel far. For some that night would be the beginning of something wonderful, for some the end.

The pubs were likewise filled to capacity. Glasses clinked and were emptied all too quickly. Laughter grew louder. Food in all its various flavours tempted everyone. Cash flowed and plastic cards were well-used.

At the centre of the events was the giant Christmas tree. Standing proud, it was now covering itself with lights of every hue. Just a few days ago, it stood among its peers – thriving and expecting to live for at least another hundred years. Now, like so many of its counterparts, it was separated from its roots to be admired by hundreds of thousands of people and then to be discarded as unimportant, its moment of glory passed. Surrounding the tree seemed to be food, mainly with a German theme –

potatoes with ham, gingerbread, and sweet treats with far too much sugar.

With all the noise of music and laughter there were some who walked gently, thinking that last Christmas things were so much better. Some walked wondering what things would be like for them next Christmas. Few walked alone – the event was not for the lonely.

In fact, just one person walked alone among the crowds; he pushed passed no one. He went on no rides with the children, though smiled at their excitement. He heard the conversations, occasionally heard his name, though no one spoke to him. He looked again at the restaurants, the pubs, even the shop doors, and thought to himself that nothing had changed. There was not one quiet place for him before and even now, there was nowhere for him to go. The reason for the season had been forgotten.

Trevor Williams

Directory Update

LEEDS (West Yorkshire)

Christians: 30

Meeting place: Glass Merchants building, 403 York Road LS9 6TD

Send post to: ?

Website: Christleedsukbranch.webstarts.com

Sunday meeting: 10.00 am

Contacts:

Mr Opoku. 📞 (07469) 943003

BANGOR (Southwell Road)

Christians: 10

Meeting place: 40-46 Southwell Road, Bangor, Co. Down

Send post to: ?

Sunday meetings: Worship 11.15 am, Evening 6.30 pm

Midweek: Wednesday Bible Study 7.30 pm

Contact:

Michael Keaney. 📞 (07907 136146)

Appeals

Poland:

Christians in Sopot, Poland are looking for Bible teachers to work with them teaching English. They have a structured programme and accommodation is available. They particularly would like help from 18th February to 28th June and 2nd September to 6th December 2019.



This would be a wonderful opportunity to visit for two to three weeks on a practical mission programme. Contact Molly and Anabelle Dawidow (mike.dawidow@me.com) or contact Trevor Williams for more information.

Pakistan: Naeem Sabir is continuing to be in need of funding for the Christians he works with in Pakistan as well as the students at the Bible college. Additional funding at this time of year would be useful if any are able.

Donations should be sent to Barbara Fisher, 5 Portway, North Marston, Bucks. MK18 3PL.



India: We have been involved in community benevolence activity called 'Share A Blessing' (see below), to share our blessings with those around us who are less fortunate than we are. We want to make the best use of this festive season to create a positive impact in our community, so we request your prayerful partnership to help us to 'Do Church' not just 'Be Church' in our community. As religious tolerance is falling in India, we want to reach our community with more love and kind deeds, rather than just words.

Joel Madiki



Share A Blessing - The Joy of Giving

Share A Blessing is a community cause initiative of church at Gollaprolu, where we encourage our friends and family to share a blessing with those around them who are less fortunate than them. It may not be a life changing gift, but something that brings a smile on their face, reminds them of love and fills their heart with gratitude and joy. A small toy, a blanket, a new dress, a sari, a pack of groceries, pair of sandals or even a delicious meal can do the magic and make their day. Wherever you are we want to encourage you to make use of this festive season to show and sow the love of God by sharing your blessings and experience the **Joy of Giving**. If you want to be a partner with us in this blessed work, please let us know and share your blessings, we will make sure they reach to the most needy. – **every little help, Helps !!**

for more details please contact tonytyson66@yahoo.co.uk or joelmadiki@gmail.com

Summer Lane (Birmingham): For the past few years the congregation here have been involved in the 'Shoe Box' appeal. This year we collected goods and were able to send fifteen shoe boxes. These are gifts boxes which go to children who have very little and it brings a little happiness to their lives at this time of year.

Should you be interested in doing something similar, please contact us for information.



Trevor Ralph

Edmonton (London): The Christians at Edmonton devoted the month of November as 'Benevolence Month' with the theme: "Benevolence to improve relationships." As part of our benevolence-month programme, the congregation visited a local care home. We sang, entertained and prayed for the residents and staff. We also presented them with some gifts. May the almighty God help us all to do more in His kingdom.



Benevolence Team

Great Barr (Birmingham): 'Bearing one another's burdens' was the theme of our fellowship day on 8th September 2018.

There were two lessons aptly presented by Jon Galloway and Patrick Boyns. Both of

the teachers challenged our thoughts in a motivating manner. The first lesson was on 'fulfilling the law of Christ' while the second was

on 'taking personal responsibility'.

We had an encouraging time of praise, worship, study, Bible games, a sumptuous meal and a blessed time to interact with fellow Christians from other congregations.

Giving all praise to God, we thank all the 48 people that were in attendance as we look forward to our next fellowship day on Saturday, 14th September 2019.

Sola Adeosun

Northampton: Around 100 ladies from several congregations met together for the Northampton Ladies' Day 2018 on Saturday, 17th November. The speakers presented excellent lessons asking, "How does the hope of heaven affect the way you live now?"

During a craft session – with a choice of three items to make – pastries, tea and coffee were provided as discussions on the theme took place around the tables. Lunch was served in an 'Afternoon Tea' style with an assortment of dainty sandwiches and cakes, cakes and more cakes.

Songs were presented by three of those attended: Carol from Buckingham Park (Aylesbury) and our own Jennifer and Katie.

Three good talks were given by Barbara, Patience and Maureen. Discussions, songs, prayers, crafts, refreshments, lunch, and bags that had been hand-made by Alison were given out and a wonderful time was had by all.

Though the men who helped in the background were rushed off their feet waiting on the ladies, even they had a good time together. In fact, it was a pleasure to be involved and see all who were there enjoying themselves so much. It was truly a great day of fellowship and friendship.

Mark Hill

East Kilbride:

Ian Davidson was the speaker for our annual joint gospel meeting with the Clarkston congregation. We have now been having these joint meetings with congregations in the west of Scotland for almost twenty years.



Ian recently had a book published entitled "Have Faith!". Jack Paton from Clarkston suggested that we invite Ian to present a series of lessons from that book. Ian was happy to oblige and we were extremely pleased with the lessons he presented. We also had Ian's book available for any who might like a copy.

Ian spoke Friday evening at Williamwood High School in Glasgow,

Saturday evening at East Kilbride (with Solus giving a brief presentation of the gospel in song). The weekend finished with both congregations coming together on Sunday for worship at the Duff Memorial Hall in Clarkston. It was a very encouraging weekend with excellent attendance at each meeting.

At East Kilbride, we hosted our second "Sing Out" afternoon on Saturday, 10th November. During the afternoon those who attended learned more about singing, sang some of the

hymns written by Tillet Teddlie, and explored the backgrounds to some hymns. Solus presented a short selection of songs to give a break from singing. The afternoon was directed by Jon Galloway and Kenneth Nisbet.



Jon Galloway

Notices



Advanced Bible Study Series

Join us in Gemünden, Germany for ABSS...

18 - 24 February 2019

ABSS I - Tuesday AM to Friday noon / ABSS II - Friday PM to Sunday noon

Keynote presenter: Charles Rix (Dean, Bible College - Oklahoma Christian)
speaking on: "**Pain, Suffering, and the Love of God**"
(and "**The Ten Commandments and the Stories We Tell**" - ABSS II)

Additional presenters: Patrick Boyns (Peterborough, UK); TBA (Marseille, FR)

For complete program information, contact ABSS Coordinator - Paul Brazle (email):

abss.gemunden@gmail.com Site: abssgemunden.be or Facebook: ABSS - Gemünden, Germany

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WORKSHOP

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

22nd-24th August 2019

Theme: THE JOURNEY

Fee: £150 (Before 31st May),
then £160 After.

We can set up an easy
payment scheme for you.

Please contact: Stephen
Woodcock

Phone: (01509) 768789

Email:

registration@europeanchristianworkshop.com

www.europeanchristianworkshop.com

Looking forward to seeing you there.



YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED
TO ATTEND
WEMBLEY CHILDREN'S DAY

A ONE DAY EVENT FOR THOSE
AGE 5 -12
TO ENJOY TIME TOGETHER
LEARNING ABOUT FINDING
REFUGE IN JESUS

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

PLEASE CONTACT
ATHENA THEODOTOU
07402 437 837

THEODOTOUATHENA@GMAIL.COM

TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

Diary

December

8th December – London (Wembley): Children's Day – "Refuge", ages 5-12, 10.30 am to 3.30 pm. Contact: Athena Theodotou (07402 437837 or theodotouathena@gmail.com).

23rd December – Livingston: Carol Service, 6.30 to 7.30 pm. The evening will include *Solus* and a short gospel message. Refreshments will be provided at the conclusion. Contact: Charlie Harding (chas.hard@btinternet.com).

January 2019

18th-20th – Bassenthwaite Family Retreat at Bassenfell Manor, near Keswick. Theme: "Good News is Jesus..." Cost: £60 per person (children ages 5-16 sharing a room with parents are half price, 0-4 are free). Fully booked. Organised by the British Bible School.

March

1st-2nd – Scotland East Coast: Joint gospel meetings. Friday at Hyvots Bank, Saturday at Kirkcaldy, 7.30 each evening; speaker: David Chapman. Contact: Nick Wilson (nick-donelda@blueyonder.co.uk) or Alan Moyes (alan.J.Moyes@gmail.com)

9th-10th – **Birmingham (Great Barr)**: British Bible School Study Weekend. Module: “A Letter to Ephesus” (part 1), teachers: Patrick Boyns and Jon Galloway.

15th-16th – **Northampton**: British Bible School Study Weekend. Module: “Galatians” (part 1), teachers: Jack Paton and Jon Galloway.

23rd-24th – **Birmingham (Great Barr)**: British Bible School Study Weekend. Module: “A Letter to Ephesus” (part 2), teachers: Patrick Boyns and Mark Hill.

24th – **Edinburgh**: *Solus* singing at ‘St. Giles at Six’ – St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, 6.00 pm. (*Solus* is a singing group made of Christians from congregations throughout the central belt of Scotland.)

April

12th-13th – **Northampton**: British Bible School Study Weekend. Module: “Galatians” (part 2), teachers: Jack Paton and Jon Galloway.

18th-21st – **16th European Annual Bible Lectureship**: “Leadership – a crying need for the church.” Cost: £120 (adults), £80 (6-12 year olds) – this covers accommodation and meals. Venue: All Saints Pastoral Centre, Shenley Lane, London Colney, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 1AF. contact: Bright (07985 205561).

27th – **Kirkcaldy**: Annual Social Day, 1.30 pm.

June

28th-5th July – **Camp Heatherbell**. Venue: Auchingillan Outdoor Centre, Blanefield, Glasgow G63 9BA. Contact: Graham McDonald (graham@gmcd.net).

July

28th-2nd August – **British Bible Camp**. Contact: Jason Snethen (jsnethen@hotmail.com).

August

22nd-24th – **European Christian Workshop**: “The Journey,” at Lancaster University. Cost: £150 (if register before 31st May, £160 after). www.europeanchristianworkshop.com Contact: Stephen Woodcock (01509 768789) or registration@europeanchristianworkshop.com.

European Events Calendar

February

18th-24th – **Gemünden, Germany**: Advanced Bible Study Series. ABSS I Monday-Friday, ABSS II Friday-Sunday. For further information or to book your place, contact: Paul Brazle (brazle.paul@gmail.com or +32 488 481 082). (Follow group on Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/697781630273815/>)

28th-3rd March – **Dreisbach-Mettlach, Germany**: The European Ladies Retreat (ELR) is a four day Christian conference/retreat for ladies from any part of the world, who speak English and would love to have a time of fellowship and learn more from God’s word. It is organised by congregations in Europe. This year’s theme is: “Wait for Gold.” For further details: <http://elr.yolasite.com>.

April

26th-28th – **Gemünden, Germany**: European Singles’ Retreat. This is a Christian weekend retreat held twice a year, in April and September, at Gemünden, Germany. It’s an uplifting weekend where people from different countries and nationalities come together to learn from God’s word and to fellowship. This event is for EVERYONE who is 18 or older, and not married, who wants to be spiritually encouraged / have fun in a Christian environment. For more information: <https://www.singlesretreat.net/about.html>.

June

19th-23rd – **Athens, Greece**: Family fellowship for all ages, hosted by the Omonia congregation. A beautiful hotel based retreat near the site of ancient Cenchrea. Morning devotionals and fellowship; free afternoons with evening meetings. A chance to visit Corinth and the Corinthian Canal. For those who can stay longer visit and worship with the church in Athens – an unforgettable experience. Christians from several countries will attend. Meetings will always have a translator of not held in English. Contact Eleni (emelirry@aol.com) or Trevor Williams (twilliams195@hotmail.co.uk).

October

2nd-5th – **European Vision Workshop**: A time for meeting Christians from congregations all over Europe, hearing about the blessings and problems of their work for Christ. This past year 140 gathered to celebrate, encourage, learn and share. Contact Trevor for more information (twilliams195@hotmail.co.uk).

The Final Word: "The Importance of the Birth"



Set aside the Christmas presents and look again at the great present offered to us by God himself. No one can fully understand the nature of God but Scripture opens up and gives us a glance into finding out who Jesus is. Have your Bible open and go through this with me from the gospel record attributed to Matthew, chapter 1.

Verses 1-17 gives valuable information that most people overlook. Whenever we find a genealogical listing we find a change in the story. Look through the book of Genesis and you will find this true. This is a wonderful way to start what we call the New Testament – there is a new story taking place. Verse 1

sums things up: Jesus was the son of David, the hero of Israel, and Abraham, the founder of the nation. The Hebrew people did not think of separate generations as we do but simply the following on of those who had gone before. This was wonderful if you had a famous ancestor, and the joy of leaving this life was to go to be with your forebears. David was to have an enduring kingdom and his throne was to be established forever (2 Samuel 7:16). Matthew places a great deal of importance to this as there is constant teaching about the Kingdom all through his work. Parables of the Kingdom are vital to Matthew, and finally the sign above the cross, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37). This is the same person the wise men wanted to see in Matthew 2:2.

The key to the next section is verse 17, where we find three lots of fourteens. What we discover, though, is that three fourteens only comes to forty one and not forty two. David ends the first lot of fourteen and starts the second section, so is counted twice. Some kings were discounted in the list because Matthew was demonstrating to the Hebrew who Jesus is. It was also through the unique line of Judah that there was someone special to come, to whom belonged the obedience of the nations (Genesis 49:10).

In verse 18 we are introduced to the earthly parents of Jesus. Firstly, the mother of Jesus carried in her womb the gift of the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit who gives the Christian new life (Acts 2:38). Verses 20-21 tell us of the experience Joseph had when he met an angel, a messenger from God, in a dream. He is informed that the child Mary carries is conceived by the Holy Spirit. The child was to be known as Jesus - not an unusual name (akin to the name Joshua) – which means 'the Lord saves' or, simply, Saviour. Now we find the reason for the name: "because he will save his people from their sins." Here is no earthly battle – no armour-clad general – but God in Christ, holding out the hand of salvation for all who would make him their king.

Now we have verses 22-23, the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Some 800 years earlier he had prophesied Emmanuel would come. Jesus the Saviour was to be linked with Emmanuel, God with us. Matthew is urging his readers to realise that Jesus was the Messiah they sought and the fulfilment of their Scriptures.

Now look at Chapter 2 and compare verse 6 with Micah 5:2 & 2 Samuel 5:2. Verse 11 with Psalm 72:10. Verse 15 with Hosea 11:1 and Verse 18 with Jeremiah 31:15.

Many have looked at Christmas and almost belittled the Biblical narrative. It seems to me that many have not looked closely because of the razzamatazz of commercialisation. It is only when we look at the Hebrew Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament, that we can form a basis for understanding the New Testament. Matthew's writings are an inspiration for every Christian looking backwards into the Old to reveal the truths for the New. For those who want to take this study further, go through every chapter and find where Matthew refers to the Old Testament, put them together, and wonder at the marvel of Biblical prophecy fulfilled in Jesus.

Trevor