

Mission to Croatia



Two new Christians!

Helping our Ukrainian friends

Learning from the pandemic

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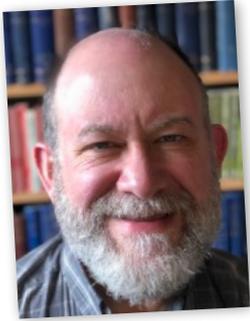
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Front cover: teen group taught by Mark Hill in Croatia
Above: Ukraine worship in Croatia



MY PERSPECTIVE



There's
a war
going
on

Hope in the midst of turmoil

I continue to be amazed at how we can be bombarded with so much turmoil and sadness – both in what goes on in the world as well as in our own lives – and then something happens that gives us hope and brings us joy.

We have seen this time and again in our own lives. My Dad died in 2018 and less than a year later my first grandson was born – and he has my Dad's name. Arlene's Dad died in 2020 and our second grandson was born a month later. My mother died later in 2020 and less than a year later two more grandsons were born. Sadness, yes – but joy in the new lives.

Even in the midst of the turmoil of the pandemic and now war in Ukraine, life continues and new life is born. We rejoiced again in March when our fifth grandson was born – and it is even more joyous in that we get to see him in just a few days.

But isn't this what happened around 1,992 years ago? When Jesus was executed on a Roman cross, it would have seemed to his followers like the world was coming to an end. You can hear it in the voices of the two who were travelling to Emmaus a few days later, telling a 'fellow traveller' what had happened.

"The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel."
(Luke 24:19-21 NIV)

Their hopes had been dashed, only to discover that Jesus really was alive! After

he left them their eyes were opened and they realised they had been conversing with Jesus himself, come back to life from the dead! (See Luke 24:28-34.)

It seems at times we forget what the source of our hope is. It isn't in ourselves or what happens to us – for that I am thankful because too often I let myself and others down. Our hope is in Jesus and in the fact that he came back from the dead. Paul wrote about this to the Christians in Corinth.

"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:19-20)

The idea of 'firstfruits' is significant. The first of the crops to be harvested points to there being more to come. As Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead, it points to our being resurrected, as well. That Jesus overcame death gives us the hope that we have as Christians.

The world so often seems to have gone crazy. But of all people, as Christians, we should be beacons of hope to those around us. We have no reason to fear anything that might happen to us including death, because Jesus has already won the victory over death.

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Jon



CONGRATULATIONS!

New Christians in Nottingham

It was on Easter Sunday, 17th April, that **Alfred Owusu-Boakije** was immersed into Jesus. Last month, on 20th March, **Lois Frimpong** also became a Christian.

Both of these young people used the baptistery at the Ilkeston chapel but attend the congregation meeting in Sherwood, Nottingham. It was a joy to witness these happy occasions.

Trevor Williams



Grandparents again!

Milo Reid Galloway was born on 16th March to David and Christina Galloway in Memphis, Tennessee. He was welcomed by his big sister Piper and older brother Jay. Joyful grandparents are Jon and Arlene Galloway. They are looking forward to meeting Milo in May!

Jon Galloway





Mission to Croatia

Several years ago, I went on a gospel mission to Russia. Whilst there I became friends with an American, Joel Petty, who had decided to make his home there and work as an evangelist. He married a Russian and they had two children, now both in their teens. Due to the war on Ukraine Joel was deported. He has been a regular member of a team going into Croatia to help the church there. As he needed to spend time getting his family out of Russia he could not go this year.

Joel recently introduced me James Nored of “Next Generation Ministries” who developed the “Story of Redemption” film series. They asked if I could take Joel’s place in Croatia. This was three weeks before the flight I would need and my passport was expired! The processing time for a new one was ten weeks and for many it seems it was longer. We decided if I was meant to go the passport would be done in time. It took two weeks from applying to getting it back. I had been asked to go and teach; however, I was very much a student as I got to know faithful believers who praised God in the most difficult of circumstances.

I joined a team that was made up of James and Becky Nored and their daughters Emily and Kaylee (USA), Jeff Walling and his wife Cathryn (USA), Samuel Topi (Albania), and Sandy Detherage (USA). The locals from the Varazdin congregation were

Mladen Dominic and Željka Prahčić along with Jurica Lazar of Croatia for Christ. Together we would be working with the church camp in Crikvenica.

The added blessing was that Ukrainians would join us who were in Varazdin through the efforts of the church in Varazdin, Kristova crkva Varaždin. This opened the possibility of studying with them and showing God’s love.

Each evening Jeff presented a lesson on faith, using the life of Abraham, Moses, and the teachings of Jesus. The following morning the different discussion groups talked about the message given and discussed issues arising from it. There was a children’s group, teens, English speaking Croatians, Croatians, and Ukrainian groups. Bible teaching was the priority but there were also opportunities for those who wished to learn some English. I had to concentrate on not using my usual slang and lazy phraseology as being the only English-English speaker many were interested in hearing me!

In the Ukrainian group, one said that the discussion questions asked things she had never thought about before, and they just blew her mind!

Max, a teen from Varazdin, was baptised into Christ in the freezing cold sea. He had been attending Željka Prahčić’s English and Bible classes for several

years. Max's mother has also been worshipping at the church in Varazdin for several months now. His decision may lead others make this decision as well. Please keep Max in your prayers as he begins his new walk with God.

In the evening, for the testimonial time, one of the Ukrainian refugee families shared about their experience with the war in Ukraine and how the church in Zagreb took care of them. The mother, Julia, sang "Holy Father, Grant Us Peace" with two of her children – that was very touching. Julia who sang the song for peace said this:

"Yesterday was two months since the war started in native Ukraine... It's been two months since we didn't see our native home, since I divorced (*what is meant here is being separated from her husband because of the war, not divorced*) my beloved husband, and the children with their father...

"When I'm asked the question: 'How are you?', I don't know what to say. On the one hand we are lucky – we have friends who are around who help, we are safe. On the other hand, I can't imagine what our future will be in another country, away from my husband. No one knows when all this horror will end and we will be able to get back to normal life. I understand that others feel the same way.

"When I talk to those who sang in my choir, they say it's the songs that help them experience the most difficult emotions. And I am very pleased with the thought that I once contributed to the development of the abilities of many Christians.



"Today, when I lost almost everything, my talents and abilities, and my voice is with me. Today we and the girls sing a prayer to God about peace for Ukraine. And let the Almighty hear our pain as soon as possible!"

Jeff Walling made each lesson memorable by involving the youth: he had one of the young

boys play the part of Isaac as he was nearly sacrificed one night, and many of the youth came up to help demonstrate the Greatest Command and the Beatitudes. I had never heard the description of the Beatitudes conveyed in such a helpful manner. I am thankful for his ability to impact both young and old.

After a discussion with the Ukrainian group about loving like Jesus, including discussion of the different

love languages, Jeff and his wife Cathryn did an impromptu session on marriage. This was so straightforward and common sense based on scripture that I am talking to them about coming to the UK just to present the full talk (we only had an hour at the camp).



Another testimonial of one of the refugee families from Mariopol left us all speechless.

Briefly here is what happened, though this does not do justice to their story.

The family hid in their cellar as bombs were dropping in Mariopol. They heard their house collapse. Russian soldiers found them, searched them, and put them back in the cellar with the door which couldn't lock, guarded by armed soldiers. For three days and nights they were left there without food, water, or light. A battle broke out, so the soldiers were called away. The family got out of the cellar and managed to get away

in the car to Romania. Susan Fox of Eastern European Mission gave them money for fuel and arranged for them to meet up in Croatia with Jurica Lazar. A lady in the Varazdin church had a house she uses for holiday lets and is now letting the family live in it. This is at a time when she needed to recoup money lost during the travel limitations of the pandemic. He had this to say:

“I would like to thank Anastasia Staicu and Irina Bastricheva. Thank you very much for your help in Romania. God bless you for your work. Jurica Lazar, special thank you for your help and understanding the situation in which our family was. You are very good and kind man. Many thanks to Susan Fox for caring and supporting our family! Friends, I want to thank you on behalf of our entire family. For a warm welcome and understanding of what we had to endure in Mariupol. Thanks a lot to the organisers for the trip to the amazing place Crikvenica. Thank you very much Kristova crkva Varazdin (church of Christ Varazdin) With your help, my family has found hope for tomorrow.”

I said I went to Croatia because I thought I was to teach. Instead, I have learned what true hospitality is. It is not just having your friend's round for a cuppa, but taking in people who have lost everything and cannot give you anything in return. Yet the rewards for both are beyond anything we can put into words. I have learned what loving others as God has loved us looks like. People who love Jesus spend so much of their effort loving others that they do not have time to make mountains out of the molehills in congregational life. Christians met some strangers and have “given them hope for tomorrow”. Would it be too much to ask that after each worship service we all leave feeling the same way because of how God has been glorified by those who love Him?

Some connections have been made, and many people were impacted for Christ. Several seekers were at the camp from Croatia, including many teens, ‘Story of Redemption’ contacts, and neighbours. It was good to note how many new converts were there, people who had previously come to the camp as seekers!

We were blessed by the Ukrainian refugees that were there. They bonded between themselves and with God's people that were gathered.

In the 1990's a terrible war took place between Croatia and Serbia. Here at camp both nationalities that now had their citizenship in heaven shared meals together, discussed the Bible together, relaxed over a coffee together. Only Christ can bring such peace and hope. May we bring that peace through prayer and sharing the love of Jesus from where we live to wherever people who need Jesus are found.

What happens now? We do not have to go out into the world, the world is coming to us. We have refugees from other wars already in our country and we will be receiving more. If you can provide a place for Ukrainian refugees to live it will be as though you are doing the same thing for Christ (Matthew 25:34-46). Please consider the appeal to take people in.

Would your youth group please video songs and choruses we can send to Croatia? Especially songs with actions. Could someone help compile these to send? They can be sung in English and those there can translate them, so the words need to be sent as well.

The 'Story of Redemption' film series is proving very useful in reaching out to the lost. These can be used locally or even from the comfort of your own home you can study internationally with people. For more information and training please get in touch. If you read this in time the next training session is Tuesday, 3rd May, at 8pm on Zoom.

Whilst ‘Story of Redemption’ is a great introduction to Jesus and how he answers the questions of life, in-depth studies are available with the British Bible School. Many UK based lessons are now conducted on-line. I would not have been equipped for the opportunity to be involved in this work without the British Bible School. Please be supportive by joining the Zoom lessons, taking the distance learning programme or invite us to come along to your congregation and help.

Starting from our doorstep we can reach around the world with the good news of Jesus Christ. No matter how small you think your congregation is you are a local group of a worldwide fellowship. United in Christ we are one body and are unstoppable because of the one we serve. The question is: do we believe it?

Mark Hill
marks@uwclub.net



"PEACE"

What is peace?

Is it the calm after the storm?

Is it the stillness when the thunderclouds have rolled away?

What is peace?

Is it the truce after a heated argument?

Is it the tranquillity of the house when the children are in bed?

What is peace?

Is it the ending of a battle?

Is it the cessation of a war?

What is peace?

Is it contentment felt in the heart?

Is it sitting quietly alone at home?

Peace?

It is the indwelling of the Prince of Peace

This is true peace indeed.



Nora Waite



BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

Ezekiel Study Weekends

After what seems like such a frightfully long time, we are very much looking forward to resuming our Study Weekends on a face-to-face basis, in various locations up and down the country. On Saturday, 7th May, we will be returning to Northampton for the first of two weekends on the book of the prophet Ezekiel. The second weekend event will take place a fortnight later.

Thought by some to be a difficult book, this module shows the writings of Ezekiel to be both clear and full of excitement, as well as very relevant to the work of mission today. If you've never had the opportunity to explore this fascinating book, then now's your opportunity. Seize it!

The study event will be held over the Saturday and Sunday of both weekends. The Saturday will have six sessions, with

a further two on the Sunday. You can find a programme and module syllabus on our website. And if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

'Something to think about'

You may have seen that we recently

launched a new weekly broadcast, going live each Sunday morning at 10 o'clock. This is essentially a thought for the week type message – nothing too heavy – and each episode will soon be available as a podcast.

You can find a link each week on our Facebook page, or you can find us on YouTube where you can freely subscribe to our channel. And don't forget to click on the 'bell' to receive notifications of each new upload.

On our channel you can find not only these new 'Something to think about' messages, but also recordings of many of our regular Online Bible Classes which we hold each Monday and Thursday evening through the year.

Looking further ahead

We'll shortly be commencing a new term with our Online Extension Programme in which we'll be studying Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. In September we'll be hosting another Weekend Family Retreat in Norfolk. And then in November we plan to hold our annual Autumn Study Week in the Lake District. Do please look out for more details – the dates should be in the Diary section.

As always we thank all of you who continue to support this work through prayer and contributions. May God bless us all in his service.

Patrick Boyns
britishbibleschool.com

Ezekiel

Northampton

Christian Fellowship Centre
Shadowfax Drive
NN3 8DB

Saturday, 7th May 9.00am to 4.30pm
Sunday, 8th May 10.15am to 1.15pm
Saturday, 21st May 9.00am to 4.30pm
Sunday, 22nd May 10.15am to 1.15pm

Teachers: Patrick Boyns and Mark Hill
www.britishbibleschool.com

Thought by some to be a difficult book, this module shows the writings of Ezekiel to be both clear and full of excitement, as well as very relevant to the work of mission today.

All are welcome to either or both weekends!
For more information please visit our website or look for us on Facebook.



HELPING OUR UKRAINIAN FRIENDS

We have linked up with several charities to help understand how we can be better informed to help Christians and friends who arrive in the UK from Ukraine. One of these 'Welcome Churches' offers the following advice.

- **Good practice** includes remembering that stress levels will differ from person to person and this could be anything from tears to aggression. It is OK for hosts to encourage them to talk but not to push the subject but do find out what they like to do and let them do that. Apparently lots of guests enjoy gardening but that will not include everyone.
- **Give freedom and independence.** Do not post photos on social media without their permission. Avoid 'show casing' guests, but at the same time Town Councils, Doctors, Dentists, Schools, etc, should all know so that registration can take place. Let guests tell their own stories and let them have privacy to be included or even excluded if necessary.
- **Trauma Awareness.** This may be acute and may involve post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Guests may have seen or have been involved with

situations they cannot put into words. All will have strains and stresses of one sort or another. Hosts must also be careful of their own response to other people's problems. Hosts will want to be involved but should not take over the guest's life but be a friend alongside their guests and if necessary seek more medical or professional help.

- **Signs of trauma** can be seen in a fight or flight mood, meaning they may feel they want to get back and physically fight for their country or runaway from the situation as far as they can get. They may show anger or shut themselves off from everyone. Guests may be hyper-vigilant, constantly alert or easily panicked. They may have deep fatigue and be unable to plan properly. Loud bangs can easily trigger negative emotions. Because they are stressed and anxious they may even become angry or frustrated with their host. Trauma can also cause physical pain as well as mental stress.
- Hosts and church fellowships should have lots of compassion and grace. Do not expect that what you think should happen, will happen.



Helping Our Ukrainian Friends

Our ways are not necessarily their ways.
Expect the unexpected.

- Being helpful will involve being calm and organised – patience is important. Set aside enough time to befriend and to enjoy the guests. Take them out for coffee and walks in the parks. Express empathy both verbally and non-verbally. Be an advocate for others. Get them off their phones and include them in activities.
- There will be differences in culture between city people and those coming from the countryside. Try to get guests to link up with others from their home country. Perhaps they might even cook a meal together and invite people in from the locality. Our meeting places can be used as International cafés – after all Jesus fed crowds of people.
- Ukraine will have **special days** in its calendar. Easter for instance was one week later than in the UK. 19th May 19 is Vyshyvanka Day – look that one up yourselves.
- The Bible Society is working on producing **Ukrainian Bibles** which it is hoped will be distributed free of charge. They are also producing a booklet to help called ‘Beyond Disaster’.
- The **war** between Russia and Ukraine did not start 24th February but in 2014 and they have had struggles ever since.

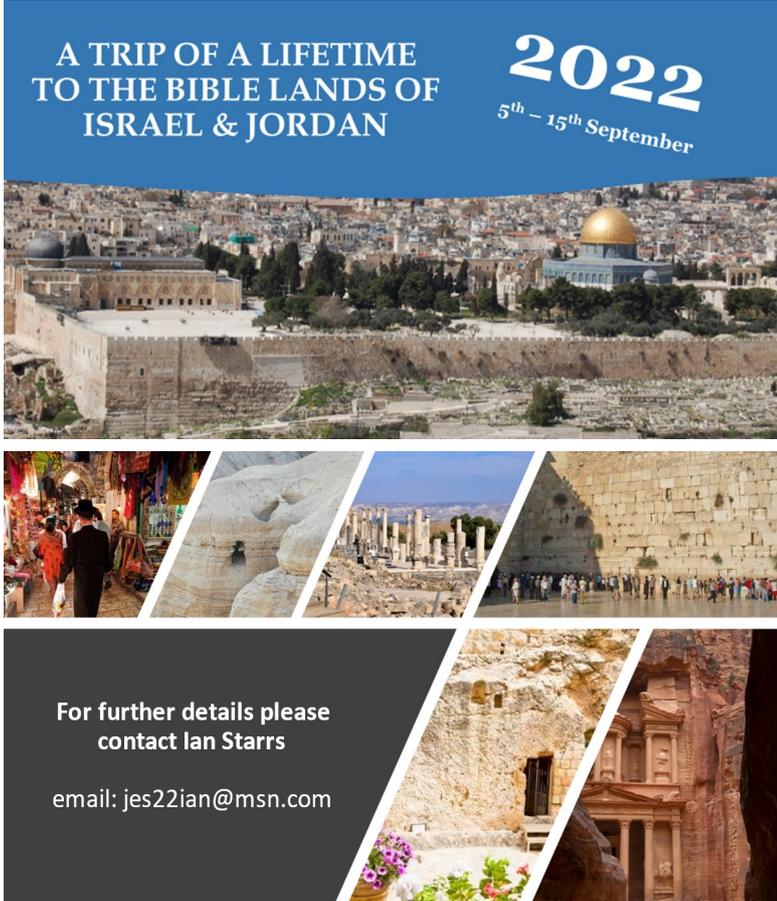
Remember that there will possibly be more refugees in your area who also need help. Look out and share with those who are displaced. Not everyone is looking for a hand out but everyone needs a friend.

We may not be able to go into the entire world to preach the gospel but the whole world has come to us – what an amazing opportunity to share the love of Jesus.

Trevor and Pauline Williams



2022
Singles ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME
Theme: **Christ - Centred Marriage**
CHURCH OF CHRIST, EDMONTON (UK)
30TH JULY, 2022
12:00 - 16:00pm
zoom Meeting ID: 849 2443 9737
Passcode: marriage
Speakers:
Bro Patrick Boynes: Director, British Bible College
Bro Emmanuel Manny Ebong: Evangelist, Lagos Island Church of Christ
Contacts (UK): 07833 296396 | 07908 725427 | 07852 343010



A TRIP OF A LIFETIME
TO THE BIBLE LANDS OF
ISRAEL & JORDAN
2022
5th - 15th September

For further details please
contact Ian Starrs
email: jes22ian@msn.com





APPEAL AND UPDATE

HELP FOR PAKISTAN

Naeem Sabir and the Christians in Pakistan are in urgent need of financial help. They have lost support from America and from some congregations in the UK. They also face an unknown future due to a change of government in Pakistan – we can only hope and pray that the new prime minister will protect Christians as Imran Khan did.

The Pakistani Christians are grateful for all the funding they have received over the years from British congregations and for continuing support from congregations and individuals.

Any and all help is gratefully received to continue the work of upholding and proclaiming the Gospel in that benighted land, especially by the Bible College graduates.

Any donations can be sent to:

Barbara Fisher (Pakistan Account)
5 Portway
North Marston
Bucks. MK18 3PL

Barbara Fisher

UKRANIAN FUNDS

We have continued to receive funds through the *Christian Worker* account – Thank you.

To date over £13,000 has been sent out to help. As matters become clearer we shall shortly be paying for guests to travel to the UK which will be paid for out of the fund. An allowance will also be given to everyone in need, to buy some new clothes when they arrive. We shall also need to maintain support in a variety of ways to help congregations here and in Europe to get to grips with so many difficulties.

We also need to think about the future. Christians over here need to start thinking about travelling to Ukraine or other countries to help with camps, and even resettling people back to their homes. There is a huge amount of work that can be done. More will become clearer as time goes by.

Thank you.

Trevor Williams





“GOD IS NOT AN AUTHOR OF CONFUSION”

I have been reflecting recently on the pandemic and what I can learn from it. A sister recently said to me, ‘When you think about it...we haven’t really had to endure any testing or persecution like the first century Christians did... maybe we have much to learn from the pandemic.’

During the pandemic, many decisions were made which I have no doubt were difficult for our leaders, of the world and in the church. Whilst there is no point dwelling in the past, it is, however, important to reflect to help us in the future; to ensure that we never base our decisions on our emotions, thoughts, opinions, or assumptions (Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 14:12-13; Psalms 119:105).

God is not an author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33), and when making decisions, it is important to use wisdom. Wisdom comes from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and it is found in his word – the Bible. The beginning of wisdom is to fear God and to keep his commandments (Proverbs 9:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

God knew that a pandemic would start in the year 2019, and he gave us all the answers for how to manage this (Romans 15:4). Some interesting accounts that I have read from the past can be found in 1 Kings 12 and 2 Chronicles 29 and 30.

Some of our decisions may have been right, but we also must recognise that some also may have been wrong. It takes humility to learn (Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 15:31-32) and sometimes admit this. As we continue on our Christian journey, let’s remember to study (2 Timothy 2:15) and test everything (1 Thessalonians 5:21). God calls us to have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind (1 Peter 3:8). He is not an author of confusion.

Lori Knight-Barker

(Lori was raised in a Christian family and attended a congregation where she was baptised at aged 16. She has been a Christian for 20 years. She worships in London with her husband. They both work in primary education and have an 8 year old daughter.)





FAMILY NEWS

UKRAINE REFUGEES ARRIVE

The first Ukrainians to arrive to be hosted by British Christians arrived on a flight from Warsaw to Birmingham on Thursday evening, 28th April. Irene Bagdasaryan and her daughter Hanna came from Sloviansk. Albert, her husband, is a preacher and teacher in Ukraine but had to stay in the country and has now had to join the army in defence of their homeland. They will be hosted by Carla Sutton in Shepshed. Two other ladies and their children will soon join them to be hosted by other Christians who are part of the Shepshed congregation.

Eighteen people are currently being processed for visas to come to the UK to be hosted by Christians in various congregations, but the scheme is very slow in making this work. Some have contacted us and then decided to stay where they are after escaping from

Ukraine. We are still receiving details of others considering coming here.

Trevor Williams

CELEBRATION OF GRAHAM FISHER'S LIFE

When Graham passed away last year his wife Barbara wanted to have a celebration of his life but with Covid, winter, etc, it could not take place until now.

Barbara is inviting Christians, friends and family to remember Graham and share fellowship together in word and song on Thursday. 16th June, at 12:00. Lunch will be served.

If YOU would like to attend please contact Barbara on blfisher888@aol.com or (01296) 5344774.





DIARY

May

2nd – British Bible School Evening Class: “The Saviour of the World – a short study of the Gospel of Luke”, 8.00 pm on Zoom, each Monday during May, part of a 12-week series. Teacher: Patrick Boyns. For details see our Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

5th – British Bible School Evening Class: “Jeremiah – a short study of the book of the prophet Jeremiah”, 8.00 pm on Zoom, each Thursday during May, part of a 12-week series. Teacher: Mark Hill. For details see our Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

6th – British Bible School Monthly Bible Quiz on Zoom, 8.00 pm. Quiz master: Steve Whitehead. For links and details see the BBS Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

7th-8th – Northampton: British Bible School Study Weekend – “Ezekiel” (part 1). Teachers: Patrick Boyns, John Griffiths and Mark Hill. Friday evening and all day Saturday. For details see our Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

21st-22nd – Northampton: British Bible School Study Weekend – “Ezekiel” (part 2). Teachers: Patrick Boyns, John Griffiths and Mark Hill. Friday evening and all day Saturday. For details see our Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

28th May – British Bible School Evening Lecture: “William Tyndale and the English Bible” with John Griffiths. www.britishbibleschool.com.

29th-31st – East Kilbride: Outreaching meetings: “Removing our mask: following Jesus in a post-pandemic world”, 6.00 Sunday evening, 7.00 Monday and Tuesday. Guest speaker: Ian Starrs. Contact: Jon Galloway (jdgalloway@mac.com).

June

16th – Buckingham Park (Aylesbury): “Celebration of Graham Fisher’s life”, 12.00 pm. If you would like to attend contact Barbara Fisher: blfisher888@aol.com or (01296)5344774.

July

30th – Edmonton (London): Singles Enrichment Programme – “Christ-Centred Marriage”, 12.00-4.00 pm on Zoom (Meeting ID: 849 2443 9737, Passcode: marriage). Speakers: Patrick Boyns and Manny Ebong. Contact: 07833 296396, 07908 725427, 07852 343010. Info also at BritishBibleSchool.com.

31st-5th August – Camp Tayside. Douglaswood Scout Camp, near Dundee. For more information and to register: camptayside.co.uk/register. Contact: Aubrey Boyns – a.boyns@gmail.com or (07502) 220902.

September

5th-15th – Trip of a Lifetime to the Bible Lands of Israel & Jordan. Contact: Ian Starrs (jes22ian@msn.com).

16th-18th – British Bible School: Weekend Family Retreat at Letton Hall, Norfolk. For details and registration: britishbibleschool.com.

October

1st – East Kilbride: 50th Anniversary meeting: “Into the Future with God”. Guest speakers: Patrick Boyns, Mark Hill, John Mooney and Ian Starrs. Contact: Jon Galloway (jdgalloway@mac.com).

4th-6th – European Vision Workshop in Rome. Theme: “Those who were scattered”. Registration will open soon at: <http://www.sibi.cc/evw>. For further information contact Douglas Reeves: dreeves@sibi.cc

22nd-23rd – East Kilbride: British Bible School Study Weekend – “Contemporary Christianity” (part 1: the history of British congregations). Teachers: Jon Galloway and Mark Hill. All day Saturday and Sunday class and worship. For details see our Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com.

31st-4th November – British Bible School Autumn Study Week at Bassenfell Manor: “Gospel of John”. Teachers: Patrick Boyns, Jon Galloway and Steve Whitehead. Cost: £150 all inclusive. Further details and registration will be on our website soon, but make plans now.

November

25th-26th – East Kilbride: British Bible School Study Weekend – “Contemporary Christianity” (part 2: Christianity in the world). Teachers: Jon Galloway and Mark Hill. All day Saturday and Sunday class and worship. For details see our Facebook page or website: www.britishbibleschool.com. Contact: Jon Galloway (jdgalloway@mac.com).



THE FINAL WORD



Use what we have

At this time of the year there is something in the air that seems to overtake me. It starts when the snowdrops appear and new life comes from the ground. Now I am only too aware that many people hate gardening but most people do like to see things grow. Where I was born in the back streets of bombed out Birmingham it was such a thrill to see flowers blooming in the parks. Aston Hall opposite the Aston Villa football ground was especially beautiful.

Over the years I have tried my best to plant up our gardens wherever we have lived and tried to create something that was pleasing to the eye and which pleased my wife. Sadly over-enthusiasm gets in the way and I buy packets of seed but only really need a half packet. The other half packets are carefully stored away for next year to use, that is until next year when I purchase more seeds, only to find that I already have some of the same sitting in the seed box which lives in the shed. My over-enthusiasm can cause me trouble.

Jesus told many stories about plants and trees growing. I know we call them parables but they really are gentle stories to make us think. As we were taught in

Sunday School a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. So often in life we have good intentions: to be more vigilant, to

be more loving, to contact Christians and friends when they are ill, to send a gift to someone as a surprise ,or to write to a missionary mentioned in the Christian Worker. We have spiritual packets of half used seed and store them away in a spiritual shed intending to get the job done. But the seasons pass, we don't get around to doing what we intended and after a while the seed just dies in the packet because it was never used.

There has perhaps never been a time that we can do so much more in reaching out to those who need help. Even if you do not have a refugee family living with you, you can encourage those who do. Communities are developing to help others, to be friends with the frightened, but also to the lonely who may have always lived near you.

So often over the years Pauline and I have been involved in catering for various events and I always think that Jesus was the best caterer of all. With five loaves and two fish Jesus fed five thousand. These people were not church members and he probably did not know them personally – but he shared what was given and everyone was blessed.

Please don't store your flower seeds of blessing in your garden shed. Instead plant them all and give them away. When we give we shall receive; when we love we shall be loved even more; when we bless, God himself will bless us.

Father God plant in us holy seeds of loving kindness, flowers to make for beauty, fruit to nourish, new life to enrich. Use our hands and homes, hearts and minds. Put a new song in our mouths, a hymn of praise to our God. Amen.

Trevor

