

# CORNERSTONE

BEHOLD, I LAY IN SION A CHIEF CORNER STONE

## A WORD FROM OUR MINISTERS *Rev. John Greer*

On April 14th, Mrs. Maria Crawford reached the significant milestone of her 100th birthday. For some years Marie (as she is known to so many) has resided in Kintullagh Care Home on the Carniny Road in Ballymena. I have no doubt that she is one of the happiest residents in that facility. She's constantly singing the Lord's praises! What a testimony in itself! Our Minister Emeritus, Rev. Beggs, has recounted that when he visited Maria in her previous home, they would sing together! And our Clerk of Session, Mr. James McCosh, also joined in praise with her on many occasions when in her home. She was from the Ahoghill area and was saved as a young girl. Later, living in Ballymena, she and her

late husband Tommy, came into our congregation and were faithful to Christ and His work over many years. Please remember Marie in prayer.

As a church family we are very thankful that the Lord has enabled us to move forward in our return to public worship services. A sincere word of thanks to the church officers for managing all the arrangements in this return to God's house. We are thankful that various ministries are opening in a gradual fashion. At present, as most will be aware, the Session and Committee are making plans to utilize the Church Complex space to expand our Sabbath attendance. Many have indicated their desire to be part of this forward step and the relevant details will be made known to you. Continue to pray for God's hand to be on these steps that we endeavour to take.



As a family it has been wonderful to have Joanne home for a time. Not having had a break for two years, she was certainly ready for this one.



*Joanne had a belated birthday celebration with her family on returning home.*

On her behalf, I thank you for your prayerful support for her and her work. She deeply appreciates your interest. As she returns, continue to supplicate the Lord's Throne for His rich blessing on His work. Also remember Rev. DiCanio as he labours faithfully in the needy mission field of Liberia.

## *Rev. Andrew Stewart*

I have decided this year to attempt to grow some vegetables which should be interesting since my knowledge and experience are limited. You may or may not get an update, depending on how things go! There are many spiritual applications that can be drawn from the whole process. The Bible is full of analogies, parables and metaphors concerning this, including preparation of the ground, weeding, pruning, and feeding. Yet there is a key part that cannot be forgotten; namely, sowing. If forgotten, there will be no harvest. I was amazed at the smallness of some of the seeds I sowed. I kept thinking about the

potential, power and productivity that were contained in one little seed as I dropped it into the soil.

I also noticed that each packet of seed contained a 'best before date'. Seed sown beyond that date could not be guaranteed by the supplier to germinate. It could corrupt, be of no use and bring forth no harvest. What a contrast to what we read in 1 Peter 1:23 about the seed of the Word of God which is incorruptible. It's not subject to spoiling for it liveth and abideth forever. I think of all the individuals who have passed through our Sunday School, Children's

Meeting, Gospel Services and Missions who know the Word of God. Some of them are your sons, daughters, friends and family, and the good seed of the Word now lies within the deep recesses of their memory. Just remember – that seed will not corrupt! There is no 'best before date' with the Scripture.

Pray therefore that the Lord would cause His word to bring forth fruit. In the meantime, believer, keep sowing the seed, for there is great potential and power in just one little word used by God.

# FEEDBACK

We include emails sent by those who have been watching across the world during the COVID pandemic.



## EMAIL 1



I enjoy Reverend Greer's clear and concise presentation of the Gospel. Because of the COVID virus, which prevents me from attending church, I listen to his sermons on SermonAudio. From time to time, Reverend Greer mentions the fact that sermon notes (for his Sunday Bible Study class) are available for the class to pick up. I was wondering if there is any way for your listeners "across the pond" here in the United States to get copies of those notes. I greatly appreciate your ministry. M.O.

## EMAIL 2



Brother Greer, I just want to tell you that your sermons have been a blessing to me. I don't remember when I first came into contact with you, at least a few years ago. I listen to many different preachers so I don't hear you every week but I am always encouraged as I hear the Scripture expounded and sense the fervency in your voice. Praise God for voices such as yours in the day in which we live. I live in Texas but I pray for pastors around the world that I know or listen to, and you are always included. What a blessing to be able to fellowship with brothers from around the world, and be encouraged by them in my pilgrim journey. I just want to thank you and hopefully give you a bit of encouragement as well. God's grace to you as you continue to contend for the Faith and preach the truth unreservedly. Praying for you and the ministry entrusted to you and your fellowship. Ps. 73:25-28 D.L.

## EMAIL 3



To all in charge, and the leadership, Thank you for the substantial ministry of the Word coming forth weekly from Ballymena Free Presbyterian church, by which we are nourished and blessed in these days. Thanks also to the media team in charge; the enhancing art work the services are presented with is second to none in beauty, sound, imagination, taste, music selection, coordination, light, precision, variety and sharpness. Many thanks to all involved. Keep up the good work. B.M'C

# NEW BABY



Three happy sisters, Alyssa, Fayth and Sophia welcome little Luke Joseph Greer into their home. Luke was born to Joseph and Ruth on 31st March, weighing 8lb 13oz.

## EMAIL 4



I listened to John Greer's lecture on separation, prepared years ago and downloaded on sermonaudio.com. Thank you. I was raised German-Catholic in Wisconsin, USA. It was a long path to the truth. I am thankful that I can hear faithful preaching. Keep up the courageous work in our Saviour, Yeshua. Sola fide. Thank God for redemption through the blood of the unblemished Lamb. Thank God for faithful preachers!! Amen and Amen. K.Z.

## EMAIL 5



Dear Pastor Greer - I am currently listening to your teaching from the book of Daniel, preached a few years ago. It is so relevant to all the events of today. I am very encouraged as, more and more, I am assured of The Lord's sovereignty and the Holy Spirit's work as seen in Daniel and his three friends. I am so thankful for the technology God has blessed us with. I have been worshipping with your congregation for several years. I am looking forward to that great day when we will all be together with Jesus in that home He has gone to prepare for us. Praying for you and your congregation as His word goes forth throughout the universe. B.C.

## EMAIL 6



As a former Roman Catholic it grieves my heart to see the apostasy growing in our day. Many Roman Catholics believe that they understand the truth, while they use words that are used in the Bible, the meaning is far different. The traditions of Roman Catholicism have even been carried into R.C. Bible studies, teaching their heresies to further ensnare deceived souls.

Here in the United States of America the attack by Rome on Fundamentalism and Bible believers has continued growing... Thank you again for this timely message, it truly strengthens my soul with the armour of Truth and burdens me for lost family members. It seems there is a very subtle and serious attack against ministers of the Gospel who wish to remain true to the WORD of God and the GOSPEL of Jesus Christ today. Each needs the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God to stand against this coming Apostasy!

February 2021		March 2021	
Average weekly offering	£ 2161	Average weekly offering	£ 9138
Home & Foreign Missions	£ 1160	Home & Foreign Missions	£ 5058
Joanne Greer	£ 170	Building Fund	£ 3716
Liberia Radio	£ 100	UK Fund	£ 204
Robert McConnell	£ 30	LTBS Deputation	£ 2776
		Liberia Gift	£ 1077
		Uganda Gift	£ 1077
		Matthew Higgins	£ 250
		Robert McConnell	£ 240
		Cherith Brown	£ 200
		Joanne Greer	£ 190
		Missionary Boxes	£ 173
		Colin Maxwell	£ 150
		Angel Alvarez	£ 150
March 2021 - continued			
Stephen Greer	£ 110		
Glenn Hamilton	£ 110		
Joy Gillespie	£ 100		
Christina Logan	£ 100		
Liberia Radio	£ 100		
Romania Gift	£ 50		

# A COMMUNITY CHANGED

*The preaching of W.P. Nicholson had a huge impact in Ballymena and the surrounding areas.*

The story of the great evangelist W.P. Nicholson would not be complete without a mention of the work he did in missions around our own local area. He came to Ballymena in 1923, and again to the surrounding districts over the following decades; and through his ministry, thousands were added to the Kingdom. We are still being blessed by the legacy of those families and communities who were changed by the gospel. Many of these converts are now gone home to their reward; but they, in turn, have passed on the gospel message to their sons and daughters; and then in due time to grandchildren and great grandchildren. For many years our Province, has seen the fruit of the great evangelist's preaching through the generations.



*Wellington St. Presbyterian Church*

In the spring of 1923, the town of Ballymena was awaiting a scheduled series of meetings with the now renowned W.P. It was to be held in Wellington Street Presbyterian Church, and when it started, the blessing came down as at other times. Nightly the church was filled to over capacity with people crushing on to the windowsills of the church. Apparently, the crush was so great, that on different nights, windows were broken. At the end of the campaign, it is believed that Mr Nicholson insisted on paying for the restoring of the glass. It came to the princely sum of around £100, which in 1923 was a lot of money and represented much broken glass!



The shipyard men, recently converted in the Ravenhill campaign, travelled from Belfast after a day's work, to attend the mission in Ballymena. Locals recalled these men, some still in their working clothes, singing as they walked from the railway station to Wellington Street. They carried their 'Alexander' hymn books in one hand and a paraffin lamp, to read the words, in the other - what a sight that must have been! On the last night of the mission, they hoisted W.P. on their shoulders and carried him all around the town. (Mr. Greer and Mr. Stewart beware!) An estimate at the end of the meetings put the number who passed through the enquiry rooms, young and old, at 2,530.

An early supporter of the separatist work in Ballymena, Mr Charles Beattie, was saved in the Wellington Street mission. He was



a founding member of the Gospel Tabernacle work which of course was the forerunner of the Ballymena church.

W.P. returned in 1929 for a campaign in Ballymena Town Hall, and again in 1938, to Ahoghill. In a letter of encouragement to the Christian folk in Ahoghill who started up the Christian Workers Union in 1931, W.P. wrote: "My, but you have a Cathedral there ... boys a boys, I never thought that dear old Ahoghill would have such a place and that there would ever be such a work done there for the Lord." From then on it was affectionately known among the locals as "The Cathedral".

Dr Paisley attended this mission as a boy, and often spoke of the great blessing felt. He joined other children sitting on the pulpit floor to give room for more adults to squeeze in. In later years Dr Paisley said, "That campaign wrote indelible lines into my youthful soul which I will never forget and had a tremendous influence upon my own Christian experience and upon my own ministry of the Word of God." W.P.

returned again in 1946 and our former member Sinclair Leith was saved at that mission (see back page).

In 1948, another Nicholson campaign was held in Cullybackey Methodist Church. This was the mission at which Malcolm Steele and Robert Fleming were saved (see back page).



*Cullybackey Old Methodist Church*

In 1958 Mr Nicholson conducted a farewell meeting in Ballymena Town Hall. Some in our congregation may have attended that meeting, as did Rev. and Mrs. Beggs as a young couple. Due to deteriorating health, W.P. and his wife returned to America. In 1959, they decided to return home to Ulster, and while on board, Rev. Nicholson took seriously ill. He was brought ashore at Cork and was taken to the Victoria Hospital where he was called home on 29th October 1959, aged 83 years.

At his funeral service, the following was recited by Rev James Dunlop. The words are as applicable today as in 1959!

*God give us men! A time like this demands  
Strong men, great hearts, true faith and ready hands.  
Men whom the lust of office does not kill,  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,  
Men who possess opinions and a will,  
Men who have honour – men who will not lie,  
Men who can stand before a demagogue and  
Storm his treacherous flatteries without winking;  
Tall men! Sun-crowned, who live above the fog  
In public duty, and in private thinking.  
God give us men!*

# NICHOLSON CONVERTS

Brief accounts of four men, associated with our congregation, who were converted through W.P. Nicholson.

## Conversion of Malcolm Steele

By Mrs May Steele

Let me tell you how Jesus saved my husband, the late Malcolm Steele. He was born in 1927 (a very long time ago!) but most importantly, he was born again in April 1948. This is how it came about.

The well-known, and much-loved evangelist, W.P. Nicholson asked permission to conduct a mission in the Cunningham Memorial Presbyterian Church, Cullybackey. This permission was refused, but Rev. Wilson from the Methodist Church issued the invitation to Mr. Nicholson with the wonderful words, "Just cross the river, Brother". The old Methodist church sat on the opposite side of the River Maine.

So, a three-week mission was conducted in the old Methodist church. On the first Monday night, Malcolm cycled to the meeting and heard the message of

salvation, but the words which stayed with him were "I defy you to attend for five nights in a row and not get saved." Malcolm said in his heart "Right, you're on!"

True to his pact with himself, Malcolm attended each evening, and God, true to His word, gloriously saved him on the Friday evening. Malcolm was so convicted of his need of salvation, that at the end of the service he was unable to leave his seat. Mr Nicholson noticed the young man, still in his pew and sat down beside him to lead him to Christ. This in itself was unusual, because very often it was the church workers who stepped in at this point, but Malcolm was led to the Lord by W.P. himself.

Malcolm and I often said the

best things happened in that wee old church – he was saved there, and we were married there! Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, Malcolm was called home to glory in May 2016. By God's enabling, he left behind a testimony of faithfulness to the Lord and a personal legacy of generous financial support to Christ's cause in the Whitefield College of the Bible.



**Mr Robert Fleming** gave an account of his conversion to Christ under the preaching of W.P. Nicholson in the October 2020 edition of 'The Cornerstone'.

He recounted the following. "In 1948 the people in the local area were talking about the missions being held by the well-known evangelist W.P. Nicholson. He came to the Old Methodist church in Cullybackey and I determined, as a young lad,

that I would go. As I sat under his preaching, I felt a deep conviction of sin; and when I raised my hand to indicate my need, Mr Nicholson called out and said 'that young lad there, come up here beside me in the pulpit'. I still remember vividly looking down from beside him and seeing neighbours and friends in that meeting. I was then counselled on how to get saved, and that night I accepted Christ as my Saviour."



**Mr Sinclair Leith** was well known to many in our congregation. He and his wife attended our church for many years. In August 2010, his testimony was included in 'The Cornerstone' and he wrote the following. "I began to attend Lisnafillan and meetings in the C.W.U. Hall in Ahoghill. In October 1946, the well-known evangelist W.P. Nicholson came to take a mission in the C.W.U. Hall in Ahoghill. People came from far and near to hear him, many nights standing outside as all

the seats were taken. On 20th October 1946, his text was Gen 6 v 3 - "**My spirit shall not always strive with man,**" and as a young man I was smitten with conviction and stayed behind to be counselled and was led to the Lord.

I remember, as I cycled home, I was filled with a tremendous peace and assurance that I was a new creature in Christ."

**Mr John Greer** (no relation to our senior minister) attended the Nicholson meetings in Ahoghill C.W.U. and was converted to Christ through his preaching. He was a long-time member of Ballymena church and was elected an elder in 1971.

In later years he transferred his membership to the Portglenone Church. His daughter, Mrs Margaret Carleton is a faithful member of our church.



*Pictured outside the Tabernacle at Waveney Road are (from left) Mr. Roy Sampson, Rev. Stanley Barnes, Mr. John McAuley, Mr. John Greer, Rev. James Beggs, Mr. John McCrory, Dr. Ian Paisley, Rev. Gordon Cooke, Mr. William Russell, Pastor Paisley.*