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PORTOBELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Messenger

January 2006

www.portobellobaptist-church.org.uk

A THOUGHT

A member of the congregation requested that I would do a series on the "fruit of the Spirit". I am happy to do this and plan to start the series on 8th January. Several times I have mentioned the grandfather in Cowdenbeath who said he was worried about his grandson Matthew. When I enquired what was wrong he said that he thought "Matthew was letting Christianity affect his life". All of us would agree that this was not a problem but the very purpose of Christianity. If it doesn't affect our lives radically it is nothing but a waste of space.

As Paul writes to the Church in Galatia in Ch4 he says we only have two options. What he refers to in v19 - 21 as "the acts of the sinful nature" - and they are not a pretty picture; or in sharp contrast in v22 - 23 "the fruit of the Spirit".

All around us we see the first list being worked out. We only need to turn on our radio or TV to hear of murder, rape, abductions, thefts, debauchery etc etc. In London last Summer and Iraq, and other part of the world, almost every day we hear of horrendous suicide bombings where people are left maimed or dead. None of the perpetrators of these awful acts will inherit the Kingdom of God.

Kingdom life is very different. The kind of things I hope Matthew was allowing to affect his life are talked of as "fruit". Now this is not a bowl like you have on the sideboard where you choose an apple today and an orange or a pear tomorrow. The tree of our life should be bearing all of these all of the time. If you ever ask me for a reference I should be able to put all of these as characteristics. Let Paul have the final say ^{GAL 5:22} But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Please pray that I will be guided in the preparation of this series and that all of us will be delivered from being hearers and not doers of God's Word.

Alan Berry,
Interim Moderator.

THE PULPIT

January	1st	Mr Jack Spiers and others
	8th	Rev. Alan Berry
	15th	Rev. Robert Gemmell
	22nd	a.m. p.m. Rev. Alan Montgomery
	29th	Rev. Robert Gemmell

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January	12th	Management Committee	7 p.m.
February	22nd	Annual Church Meeting	7 p.m.

GOLDEN WEDDING CONGRATULATIONS

On a sunny 31st December 1955 Bill & Bett Blackie were married in Richmond Church of Scotland, Niddrie Mains Road. The reception was held in Bett's home and the wedding cake was made by a friend. Afterwards, the newly married, Bill & Bett Blackie caught the late train and stayed at Bill's sister's house in Congleton near Stoke on Trent.



Bill & Bett left on Tuesday to celebrate with their family at Crieff Hydro, returning this weekend.

NEWS FROM NEPAL

Dear Friends,

The other day I had a message from a friend saying she was confused because I relay good news from Nepal and all the other reports she hears are bad. Yes, that's it! Politically, economically, safety-wise, etc. the country is in a dreadful state and getting worse daily, with over 12,000 dead in the Maoist uprising, and limitless heart-breaking stories of hardship and loss, persecution, abductions, bombs and intense fear everywhere – that is what everyone hears. But it is also true that God's church continues to grow rapidly and there is much cause for rejoicing and praise in the midst of all the chaos – and so few people hear that side of the story. Just one congregation in Kathmandu (Gyaneshwar) meets in a building big enough to hold 2,000 sitting packed on the floor. Up to mid-2004 they had one service on Saturday and one on Sunday (apart from some 40 satellite groups and congregations across the country). Since then they have had to hold two services on Saturdays to fit all the people in. From 1st January 2006 there will be three services on Saturday (but not necessarily a total of 6,000 people). How many folk come to your church?! So as you pray for Nepal, remember there is a lot for which to praise as well as the need for prayer for the teaching and establishment of all the new believers, and His solution to the political mayhem.

Just a few snippets from the Church: Aanandit Church is three years old and has planted two other churches amongst many activities, prayer and fasting with an amazing record of answered prayer. Some 850 young Christians have been able to get scholarships for training through FOCUS, a funding set-up run by the Church in general, while NBCBS continues its evangelistic outreach to students in colleges – not easy in this political climate. Nepal Every Home Concern plans to print a million gospels/tracts, train 500 new believers, have 325,000 Bible correspondence course students, and continue to visit thousands of homes with the Gospel in 2006.

Nepal Fellowship for the Handicapped has lost its Nepali leader, Bonnie, and is struggling to continue the tremendous ministry it has had to the blind and disabled in Kathmandu. We hear quite a bit these days about the sad conditions of over 100,000 Nepalis from Bhutan who have been refugees in huge camps in south-east Nepal for years, with little hope of return or betterment.

Being a great-great aunt reminds one of the increasing years! A limp, a walking stick, a walker, a dropped immobile foot, a search for sheltered

accommodation – life always has new and interesting challenges! The latest foot development has necessitated the cancellation of my usual trip to Nepal this winter as coping with living and moving around out there is just a bit too challenging. Last winter Marianne worked with me on the archives to some extent, and we had been planning a lot more of this, even though she has her own fulltime job. Now she will have to cope without the extra help of learning the ropes by doing it together, and I would value prayer for her in these coming months. She is not officially assigned to take over from me, but is learning the Nepal end of the job to do or teach in the years ahead. While I hate to leave her in the lurch like this, from the physical point of view I am very relieved not to be going, and there is soooo much to praise God for in all the blessings and mercies He showers down day by day. One of the special joys right now is Nima, Principal of one of the 32 Bible Colleges in Nepal, who is studying at the Centre (where we have the archives), and is a wonderful addition to our Nepal prayer group, outreach to other Nepalis here, etc.

Betty Young.

FLOWER CALENDAR

There are still a number of vacant spaces on the flower calendar. If you would like to provide flowers on one of these dates, please enter your name on the calendar in the lounge as soon as possible.

COFFEE VOLUNTEERS



More volunteers are required to serve tea and coffee following the Sunday morning services.

Please see Margaret Parry or add your name to the rota in the lounge if you can assist.

GOSPEL TRACT HANDOUT

300 'Narnia' Tracts were handed out by Allistair & Ewan during the month of December outside our local cinema.