



FEATURED THIS MONTH:

Gareth Edwards / Jack Hay / Craig Mackie / Craig Munro / Graeme Paterson / Alan Smith / Graeme Smith / Andrew Williamson
Also: My Conversion & Call - Gareth Edwards

'A man is what he is on his knees, and no more.'

Robert Murray M'Cheyne

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■ GARETH EDWARDS (Perth)

It was great to recommence our two weekly soup kitchens back in September and to have had opportunity since to meet with people in a socially distanced way around the trailer. It's been good to share the Gospel with a "live" audience again, and the attention and interest has been encouraging, especially on Monday evenings in the city centre. Pray particularly for Scott, who sleeps rough, but requested a Bible last week and has a real interest, and also Fred, an elderly gentleman whose heart has been softened to the Gospel through the kindness of God's people in his recent time of need.

Back in September we managed five weeks of our football-related outreach with young men from the community. It was a much briefer opportunity than previous years, but encouraging nonetheless to observe their good attention to the Gospel again.

Much of my time in recent months has been spent in literature distribution, maintaining contact with various people in different ways, and online activities. Our Facebook page is approaching 2,000 followers and our more recently created YouTube channel is steadily growing too – it's encouraging to hear from people who have been tuning in.

I've recently produced a Christmas edition of our community magazine, which will be distributed along with calendars to several thousand homes in Perth and a few surrounding villages over the coming weeks. During our Christmas distribution back in 2016 we made contact with a lady in the community who subsequently came to the Hall – she was saved back in June and was baptised a month or so ago. We hope and pray for a similar outcome to this year's efforts! Thanks as always for your interest and prayers.



PERTH SOUP KITCHEN

This picture was taken last winter, hence no social distancing!

■ JACK HAY (Perth)

In the last edition, I mentioned the Drive-in meetings at the Ayr Cattle Market, and these continued till the end of August, Saturdays and Sundays. Paul Jenkinson spearheaded that and either Blair Martin or I helped him each time. It was also live-streamed and Paul had a little feedback from that.

From August till the end of October, I helped Craig Munro with Drive-in meetings on a Lord's Day at Lochore Meadows Country Park - a very convenient venue. On three of the weeks we had a couple of midweek nights as well. The Lord was very gracious and visited with salvation. On the first night a 17 year-old girl from a believing family was saved, and subsequently a gentleman from Ballingry indicated that he had got saved at home after the meeting. His daughter has attended well and shows interest but her husband is unsympathetic. As of 1st November we moved venue to the Halbeath Park and Ride and had two well attended meetings despite wild and wet afternoons. Sadly, when Fife was moved into Tier 3 for restrictions, that precluded further drive-in events. God willing we will restart whenever there is a return to Tier 2. I gave Limavady three Gospel meetings remotely, and then Gareth Edwards has involved me on a regular basis in helping him with a similar effort as from Perth Gospel Hall. It looks as if many many people are hearing the Word in this way.

Many places have been "visited" for ministry including series in Derby, Wick, and Bracknell. God willing, tomorrow I commence a five-day series for Skibbereen, Co Cork. I speak to Colombo (Sri Lanka) twice a month and there is a four-day series arranged for over Christmas, Christmas Eve till 27th D.V.

I arranged for a mail-shot of over 17,000 leaflets to be delivered to homes in south and west Perthshire, and these went out a couple of weeks ago.

Normally, we have a Gospel meeting in Comrie on Christmas Eve with a children's message incorporated. We have begun to advertise a computerised "event" this year which will go out at 7.30pm on 24th. Gareth Edwards has kindly agreed to use his internet platform for this, and if you want to "join" us, the details are as follows; www.goodnewspertthshire.com or www.facebook.com/goodnewspertthshire. Try to encourage unsaved relatives or friends to "attend".

■ CRAIG MACKIE (New Cumnock)

2020 has undoubtedly been a strange year. In the two full years of our being gradually called to serve the Lord, I never once imagined that our first year would be spent mainly in making plans, cancelling them and remaking them ad nauseam.

The last time we submitted a report for HM was for the spring edition and this leaves us with quite a bit to report. From the beginning of lockdown we have been engaged in recording messages for assemblies and for distribution on social media - including a series of Facebook Live Gospel Meetings in April. This, along with Zoom meetings, has continued steadily for most of the year.

In June, with the relaxation of lockdown and the reinstatement of 'outdoor work', we recommenced the literature distribution in Ayrshire. This allowed me to leaflet every home in our village as well as the surrounding countryside and presented some interesting conversations. This was followed by distribution of the same leaflet in Bellsbank. Concurrent with the literature distribution, we commenced a Drive-In Gospel Meeting in the village. I

preached for nine consecutive Sundays in a council-owned car park in the main street of the village, with encouraging feedback.

The assembly at New Cumnock began to meet again to remember the Lord at the end of August and for Bible teaching mid-week in the first week of September. In September we recorded Gospel messages in fellowship with the saints at Woodpark, Ayr and these were broadcast 'live' on Facebook, YouTube and on the assembly website during October.

At the beginning of October we commenced a weekly open-air work in Dumfries and have given away several Bibles on each visit. I contracted COVID-19, which put us 'on furlough' for a few weeks, but we are glad to have returned to health and to be able to get back out again. The little tracting group (God Loves Ayrshire) that I am part of in Ayrshire, organised a magazine in fellowship with many Ayrshire assemblies, to be delivered by Royal Mail to 135,000 homes in June. The Lord has given us the help to do the same again, this time for 100,000 homes in time for Christmas.

We have just started packaging our calendars this week for distribution in coming weeks. We are praying for a safe, but speedy, relaxation of restrictions and trust that the proposed vaccination programme will make a 2021 diary not an altogether pointless purchase. We greatly value the prayers of the Lord's people and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a spiritually prosperous New Year (D.V.)

■ CRAIG MUNRO (Glencraig)

Jack Hay and I continued the drive-in gospel meetings until mid-November. We have had to stop temporarily because Fife has moved into Tier 3, but we hope to recommence as soon as Fife moves back into Tier 2. We have moved from our Lochore Meadows Country Park site to the Halbeath Park and Ride on the side of the M90 a few miles north of the Forth Road Bridge. We praise God for these excellent locations. The young girl who professed on the first night of the drive-in meetings is making good spiritual progress. Another man from the local village of Ballingry was also saved in October. We simply praise God for his salvation. This man had not been in a gospel meeting for forty years and was saved on his first night. He is now attending the morning meeting, prayers and Bible reading and is literally beaming. A wonderful answer to a mother's prayers. His daughter is also now attending the drive-in meeting with him. Many unsaved souls have been coming to these meetings (in the wet, dark and cold!) with an audience far larger than our gospel tent could ever hold. God is so good. Please continue to pray for us.

We have also been busy with socially distanced pastoral work with so many needing encouragement at this lonely time. There are ten men that we meet with very regularly for Bible study on a one-to-one basis – in cafés, conservatories and garden sheds as the regulations change! They have all been saved in recent times.

Two baptisms took place in October outside. Jim was baptised. He found salvation on the day after Stephen Graham and I stopped meetings in the Lochore Miner's Institute in March because of Covid-19. Sammy was also baptised. He had a rock and roll background but has been restored recently after being converted some years ago. We sang hymns together outside – it was very special.

We were encouraged to hear that a girl/teenager who came through our Gospel Hall Sunday School but moved to Airdrie, has now found salvation as a young woman. Apparently, she

never forgot what she had been taught. It encourages us all to keep sowing the seed with the children.... We shall find it after many days.

We are also preaching here and there most nights in many parts of the world, but increasingly we are beginning to preach in 'real' halls locally, and not just virtually! We are trying to support the assemblies in the Fife area. We cannot wait until normality fully returns. We have also had a regular monthly meeting in India and in Sri Lanka which is allowing us develop lines of truth systematically.

■ GRAEME PATERSON (Plains)

All our work is online at present. We are holding a live online Gospel meeting each Sunday at 3pm and have had over 1000 people watch some messages. While the numbers are good, what is very encouraging are the number of locals who are watching. The local electrician was in our house a few weeks ago and he was telling me that he watched every week with the family! The local republican band organizer has been watching each week too! We have also had some local Zoom gospel meetings for those who are showing an interest. These are run as discussion sessions.

Assembly-wise we have been able to break bread, however Gospel, Sunday night Bible class, prayer meeting, study groups and other meetings are held online. Another positive is the exercise of our own son Ben. He was received into the assembly last month. Praise be to God! Lord's Day past we had a baptism of a young sister and she will be received into the assembly this Sunday, God willing. How wonderful to see the Lord moving in these unusual days and circumstances.

At the moment we are looking at ways to have our Christmas Eve meeting in the hall with limited numbers. Amazingly, the villagers have been asking to have it!

Our last Gospel meeting in the hall was on 15th March where we had a Mother's Day afternoon tea (a week early). It was wonderful to see the hall so full with unbelievers. We had over 60 adults plus children attend. Many of these locals are still watching our Gospel services online. School visits have been vastly reduced and this may continue until Easter 2021 and beyond! We look to the Lord for guidance. On a positive note, many local schools have booked online assemblies and class talks, so this looks like my new normal for the coming months. I have been approached by schools to record some RE lessons for them and have been busy doing this. Thankfully I have over 60 assemblies and classes booked, with more in the pipeline. I feel like I'm living in a little box on my computer screen!

I was due to start drive-in meetings on the grounds of our local football stadium, however this had been postponed due to Lanarkshire being in Tier 3, therefore we cannot have organized groups like this! We also had some planned in a secondary school car park - again we need to hold off.

Last month I held special online Gospel meetings on Wednesday nights. Many locals logged on and watched, and I have some two minute videos planned each day in December leading up to Christmas.

We will be offering Christmas food parcels to the locals who are struggling. As part of the community council, this gives me access to reach out to help the vulnerable in the village. We trust the Lord will bless this work as it's given many new contacts already.

We are holding an online Lockdown Bible club each week and some nights have over 90 people logging in (from all over world). I do feel some children are tiring of online events, so will be changing this to have a special week of meetings commencing on a Monday.

It's wonderful to see the Word of God still going out even during these difficult times!

■ **ALAN SMITH** (Kirkmuirhill)

Throughout the months of lockdown, I have been able to work in my own study but the novelty of this has long since worn off! There have been, and continue to be, many opportunities to minister the word via Zoom to assemblies across Canada, from PEI in the east to Vancouver in the West. Though this is quite different from what we are used to, we are assured of the living power of the Word of God and trust, as ever, that the ministry will be blessed to the edification of His dear people.

In the early months, some time was devoted to writing and producing a tract entitled 'A Bright Future'. This tract is based on Revelation 21:4 and addresses the question, 'To whom do these words apply?' In early August, I felt free to recommence tract work and, in fellowship with the assembly in Kirkmuirhill, 3000 of these tracts were distributed in Kirkmuirhill, Blackwood, Auchenheath and Sandford.

The tract work continued until mid November. Towns and villages covered include: Stonehouse, Douglas, Crossford, Coalburn, Netherburn, Newmains and Allanton. The number of tracts distributed has greatly increased as, due to social distancing, I have been simply posting through letter boxes rather than my usual practice of knocking for conversation. The tract gives a link to my blog where there are both written and video gospel messages and, over the months, there have been more than 600 visits to the site. I intend to continue in this work when local restrictions are lifted.

2020 has brought many challenges in the work of the Lord but, over and in it all, we see the sovereign hand of God and can say with Paul, 'the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel', Phil 1:12. Please pray that 'the word of the Lord', even in tract form, 'may have free course, and be glorified', even as it was in Thessalonica, 2 Thess 3:1.

On a personal note, my father, William Alan Smith, was called to be with the Lord on 23rd of November. At such a time, we derive much comfort from the Scriptures but prayer for the family, especially my mother, Earla, would be greatly appreciated.

■ **GRAEME SMITH** (Inverurie)

During September the Covid-19 restrictions in Scotland meant that school visits, clubs and SU groups have all been disrupted as no visitors have been allowed into the school buildings here in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. However, I have been able to communicate with one school electronically via Google Meet. Prayer is appreciated for this as other schools are contacted. I really miss all the pupil questions and of course singing is prohibited at the moment. Please pray that the doors will be kept open after Covid.

I was asked by one school to provide some examples of Bible Stories which tie in with the school's health and wellbeing values and this has been well received.

Please also pray for those who heard the gospel on the Inverurie Gospel Hall YouTube Kids channel. It was encouraging to note that up to 170 people had viewed some of the messages, some in different countries as far away as Australia!

It was encouraging to be able to provide a "live" session of Bible Explorers with 15 or so children after school using the Zoom video conferencing service. It is encouraging to be able to teach the children the gospel verses and present the Lord Jesus and the great news of God's salvation. It is amazing to see how much the children are remembering.

Please pray that the Lord will preserve those secondary pupils who we haven't seen for some time also that the gospel verses on this year's calendars will lead precious souls to Christ.

ANDREW WILLIAMSON (Inverness)

It has been a privilege to get back out on to the streets of Inverness with the coffee/tract stand with brother Michael. The last time we were down in the centre we had a number of great conversations about the Lord, and you could sense that the Lord was at work in the lives of a few of the individuals. Many people, once they begin to trust you, will unpack something of their lives to relative strangers in the street that they might not say to their nearest and dearest - it is a privilege to bring the Lord into conversations like this. Please pray for M., a lady with a very difficult life, an abusive relationship, and suicidal thoughts. The good seed had been sown in the past and there seemed to be a little evidence of 'sprouting' during the conversation. Please pray also for a homeless man who we chatted to last time - he had served in the army, including a tour in Afghanistan and Northern Ireland. We were able to present the gospel to him - so often ex-soldiers have to live with what they have had to do in foreign places. The last time we were down we had the chance to share booklets in foreign languages with a number of 'tourists'! Who would have thought in the middle of a pandemic!

Other responsibilities continue. I've just finished a Monday evening class with young teens on 'how to study the Bible' - they come from various assemblies and churches in the vicinity. I hope to be back to my Friday Home Bible Study after a few weeks off. We managed to get to N.I. to see my family for a week, which was a great thing for the children especially.

Lindsey continues to support me greatly, and do the vast majority of work in raising Isaac (5), Hannah (4) and Hope (nearly 2) - and had continued a mums and toddlers on Zoom - with the difficulties that come with that - as well as educating our children. The children are doing well. Thankfully, we are well supported by Lindsey's parents who live in Nairn now - please pray for them, and the rest of the immediate family that they will come to know the Lord.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Please pray that 'utterance may be given to me' (Eph 6.19) and I may 'open my mouth boldly' in upcoming opportunities in the gospel.

MY CONVERSION & CALL - Gareth Edwards



I had the privilege of being brought up in a family where parents and grandparents were all believers. The first 9 years of my life were spent in Elgin where I was taken to Sunday School and Gospel meetings from before I can remember! On Sunday 10th May 1992, following a Gospel meeting, I placed my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ having been convicted of my sin and need of a Saviour that night. I was 9 years old.

A few months later we moved down the road to Perth. Sadly, throughout my teenage years I was spiritually side tracked and drawn away from the Lord by other interests. I continued to attend meetings, but in body only – my mind was elsewhere! Having finished school I went to St Andrews University to study (in the loosest sense of the word!) for 4 years. After drifting through University with little interest in spiritual things and very little motivation or ambition in life generally, I obtained my degree and took up employment back home in Perth. After a year of mind-numbing work in a call centre I began to face up to the emptiness of a life in which God has been pushed well down the priority list. At that point I began to read the Bible again and over time God began to speak to me, challenging me about the way I was living my life. I was particularly challenged about the matter of baptism and was finally obedient to the Lord's command at the age of 23 in June 2006, at which point I was also received into fellowship in the assembly in Perth.

After wasting 14 years I had a lot of lost time to make up for and I set about doing it with great enthusiasm, getting involved in as much as I possibly could to serve the Lord. My particular interest was in evangelistic work and the Lord put upon my heart a burden for the souls of men and women, particularly in Perthshire. I got involved in work with teenagers, youth camps, literature distribution and door to door visitation fairly early on and having begun to do a little preaching it wasn't long before I was engaged in that most weekends in various places.

Within a year or two most of my spare time and holidays were being used in the Lord's service in one way or another. Short-term mission trips to Italy and Moldova and weeks spent in Gospel preaching and visitation work alongside other evangelists, provided a good training for me. Time spent with both John Campbell and Jack Hay was especially helpful in learning the ropes and further increased my interest in different methods of reaching the lost.

The thought of serving the Lord on a "full time" basis was at the back of my mind for several years before it eventually happened. After a while it became fairly clear to me that this was the way things were heading for me, and I started to take steps to prepare myself for it. Around 2014 I moved into the scheme where the Gospel Hall is located in order to be amongst the people we were seeking to reach, and then in 2015 I reduced my hours at work to 3 days a week. Work by this point was going well and held good prospects for the future, but my desires and ambitions were all centred in the Lord's service. Indeed, in my annual work appraisals, from as far back as maybe 2012, my boss would often ask whether I expected to still be with the company the following year, or if I planned to leave to work for God! In addition to work colleagues, other believers started to mention the possibility of full-time service to me fairly regularly, which brought it ever increasingly to my mind.

In 2015 the Lord was speaking to me in various ways. Having taken a substantial pay-cut by reducing my working hours, the Lord met my need through His people sending gifts – some of whom I had never met in my life! Also at that time, my good friend Alasdair Baijal, whom I had shared several series of Gospel meetings with, felt called to leave his employment to serve the Lord in South Africa.

By this point, veteran evangelist Peter Brandon had moved to Perth and we had struck up a close friendship, often speaking and praying together about the Lord's work. Towards the end of 2015 I visited Peter in hospital and asked him to pray that I would get clarity on the matter of full time service. In November of that year, the confirmation came through the reading of Joshua 1:2 – the commissioning of Joshua following the death of Moses. A few days before Peter went to be with the Lord I was able to visit the hospice and let him know that the Lord had given the clarity we'd prayed for.

The elders and other believers in the assembly in Perth were very supportive and happy to commend me to the grace of God for the work to which He had called me. In early 2016 I left secular employment to serve the Lord, with a particular burden for Gospel work in the local area. Over the last few years the Lord has provided numerous opportunities and has graciously blessed the work here in Perthshire in spite of my many weaknesses and frequent failings!



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