The EXPLORER

FREE

FEBRUARY 2024

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EDITORIAL

Dear Fellow Explorers

I have the privilege of being the first to read the articles that appear in each Explorer, and this month I really enjoyed reading about Mission in Moyobamba. I liked learning about Lassie, and I agree that he has an important lesson to teach us which is brought out in the article. But I think there is another lesson that we can learn from Lassie – and that is the danger of falling asleep in church. I hope that if you ever do fall asleep someone will wake you up in time to go home. To understand what I am referring to you will need to turn to page 6.

The Bible teaches us about a young man who fell asleep during an evening service (you can read about it in Acts 20). It was late, and warm, and the service was long, and this young man Eutychus (who perhaps had had a very busy day) fell into a deep sleep. I hope the others present that night were paying attention to the preacher, it was the Apostle Paul, and perhaps because of this they didn't immediately notice Eutychus being asleep. But eventually everyone did notice, because being fast asleep, Eutychus slipped from his seat, high up in the meeting place, and fell to his death on the floor.

You can imagine the disturbance and the shock; everyone would have been very upset. Everyone, except the Apostle Paul. The reason that Paul remained calm was a realisation that God would deliver Eutychus. In the time of the Apostles, before the New Testament Scriptures had been written, the Lord worked great miracles through His Apostles, by which He confirmed the power of His Word. Paul, conscious of the power of God to give life to the dead, put his arms around Eutychus, and the young man's life was restored. We are not told what Eutychus' life was like after that, but I imagine that he was always ready to tell others about what the Lord had done for Him. I also guess that he was very careful to never again fall asleep in church.

Thank you to everyone who has sent money to help build a toilet for Miss Jansie's Preschool in Sri Lanka. This is an exciting venture which allows us to help the young children from a very poor village connected to the church mission work. We have not yet reached the target amount of £550, and it would be very encouraging if you would like to contribute. No amount is too small and every gift is valued. Please ensure you have your parent's permission, details of how to send money are available at financialadministrator@fccontinuing.org

I hope that you are working hard with Scripture memorisation, and also working through the catechisms as well. Remember if you want to take part in the Maurine Murchison Award you will need to have completed this by the end of March. Your Sunday School teacher should be able to give you all the necessary information.

God bless you all,
James MacInnes

JACK FROST

Have you ever noticed the beautiful designs that are left on windowpanes on a cold and frosty morning? In a warm house there can be droplets of condensation in the corner of windows, but in a cold house that condensation can freeze over into a spectacular display.

If you get into a car on a winter day before the windows are scraped and the windscreen defrosted, you will notice that the ice stops so much light getting into the car. If the ice is thick and particularly if there is also snow the light becomes bluish. But when the ice is thin and if you look closely, you will see interesting shapes, like the leaves of many intricate ferns, and curled feathers, twisting and intertwining. You might see something similar engraved upon the bowl of a crystal vase, but never with the same delightful delicacy. It is a great skill to engrave upon crystal – but no engraver can compete with Jack Frost. Unseen, in the quietness of the night, he visits – or at least that is the story that children were once told. He leaves no signs of his presence, but for the beautiful shapes outlined on glass. He doesn't use colour, working only in sparkling white. And then when the sun shines and the day warms, or when the windows are scraped and the heaters put on, all these beautiful patterns just melt away to nothing. But Jack Frost is a persistent fellow, and if it's cold the next night – you can be sure he'll come back.

Of course, attributing this ice art to Jack Frost is simply an entertaining story told for amusement.

The patterns which develop as the crystals of ice form across a smooth surface are an aspect of the beauty of God's great and varied creation. Just as much as the greatest mountain, or the furthest star, these little lines of ice speak eloquently of the greatness of God.

Great artists, like those who engrave upon crystal or glass, are people with an ability to replicate and display something of creation's beauty. But God is the great originator. The beauty displayed in creation isn't copied. Before the work of creation, there was no world to copy. Even on the first day when the world came into being it was without form, like a blank canvas it had potential but remained empty. But then, over the course of the creation week the Lord filled it with beauty and order, and such a variety of shapes and forms, and colours and textures, so that everything upon which we may look, says in its own way – God is great.

Because the voice of creation says so powerfully, God is great, many people are left fearful of what such a great God will say to them. They fear that God is so great that He will either have nothing to say to them, or He will only be angry with them because their lives are characterised by a sinful compromise, and failure. Isn't it therefore wonderful that we have the clear testimony of God's Word? The Bible speaks even more powerfully than creation, repeating again and again, our great God is gracious and merciful, and He is ready to receive all who place their trust in him.

ALWAYS COME HOME

Probably you are asking - why would anyone tie two cows together?

I don't think it is something that happens in Scotland, but seeing cows tied like this is not unusual near our church mission in Sri Lanka.

These cows have been tied together by the owner who has a very good reason for doing so. In this part of Sri Lanka cattle aren't kept in a fenced field, but rather are permitted to spend all day wandering along the roadside, or through the streets of a town, eating whatever they might find. At the end of the day the cattle come home for a final feed and to be kept safe through the night.

So, why tie two together? Well, one of these cows has only recently been bought and because of this it hasn't yet learnt where its new home is. If it wasn't tied to another who knows the way home, the new animal would wander off, no doubt looking for its former master, (or at least for the food its former master used to provide). To prevent this from happening the new owner uses an experienced beast that will force it to go towards the new home.

I'm sure the owner is always careful to choose a very stubborn animal as the teacher. Otherwise, both might end up lost!

I don't know how long it takes for a cow to forget it's old master and feel at home with a new one. But I'm guessing that after a few days, and a few good feeds, it will soon be ready to come back all by itself. Then after that there will be little risk of wandering off, and so, no need to be tied to another cow.

This picture helps illustrate two passages from the Scriptures. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 the Christian is told not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. The image suggested is of two very different creatures being yoked (tied) together. It might be wise to use one experienced cow to teach a less experienced cow. But it would be unwise to use an elephant, or a street dog, or a goat (which are some of the other animals that are found in this part of Sri Lanka). An unequal yoke would be a cow and a dog tied together, and that isn't likely to work very well!

The meaning of the passage isn't that a Christian shouldn't be friends with an unbeliever – Christians are to be friendly toward everyone. But it does mean that we are to be careful in all our relationships; not to bind ourselves to those who do not know and honour God. It is good to learn from those who are more experienced in the Christian life. But it is not easy to continue in the Christian life if you are bound to someone whose whole direction of life is very different. There is a very high risk of being pulled away.

The second passage is in Isaiah where the Lord complains that his people are less wise and less faithful than an ass or an ox.

Isaiah 1:2,3 … I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

The Lord is saying that despite having provided the very best for His people they have wandered away and abandoned Him; they clearly have no love, and they show no loyalty to Him.

I think cows and people have the same tendency to think that the grass is always greener on the other side, and because of this, do a lot of wandering about. However, at the end of the day the wandering cow is wise enough to always come home. But sadly, people can be very reluctant to come back because it would hurt their pride to do so. What a terrible and foolish way to be; to rebel against a good and gracious master and refuse to come home.

Will you allow these two tied-together cows to teach you an important lesson? Always come home. And even if you have wandered far away, remember the loving kindness of the Lord who is ready to receive all that will come back to Him.

Badaguish Youth Camp Summer 2024

FRIDAY 12TH – FRIDAY 19TH JULY

If you don't like meeting old friends and making new friends and fun and excitement and laughter. If you don't like exploring and adventures or surprises. If you don't enjoy races or competitions or puzzles or games or tasty dinners and not even tremendous puddings. If you don't enjoy new activities with all the hustle and bustle of being part of a team, trips and outings, picnics, and tremendous puddings (there are lots of tremendous puddings) – then maybe, just maybe, you shouldn't book a space for camp this summer.

However, if you would like to be part of all the fun of church camp, where there is also Bible teaching at an evening meeting and dorm discussion and a project hour, and if you are going into Primary 7 after the summer (or older), then please ask your parents to contact **gregmacdonald@fccontinuing.org** for further details.

Junior camp is for boys and girls entering Primary 7 (usually 11 years old) up to age 15.

Senior camp is for young men and women entering Secondary 5 up to age 19.

DORES YOUTH CONFERENCE

Saturday 23rd March

11:15am – 4pm

Lessons from Elijah

This is a free event for all young people aged 11-18

- **Speaker - Donald John MacLean, Cambridge**
- **Meet old friends and make new ones, group discussions, and activity time**
- **Please book your space by contacting Rev. Davide Ratti at davideratti@fccontinuing.org**

CHRIST THE ROCK

"And upon this Rock I will build My Church."
Matthew 16:18

Jesus Christ is the foundation and the Builder of His own church. The church is built on the Rock. This Rock is strong, Divine, not weak like Peter (whose name means 'a stone'). Peter's faith was weak and sometimes disappointing, but the Saviour never fails to support those who rely upon Him. He is the Rock. He is solid, real and not fantasy. And we worship God our Rock (Psalm 95:1).

A human foundation could not support our weight. It would move, shifting under our weight. It would be changeable each day. But this Rock is the same every day. And His promises are rock-like; solid and enduring.

As the Builder of His church, He tells us how it is to be built, we are not to invent things to be put into the church. The church belongs to Him, and the church which He builds will stand the test of time, and eternity.

Sinners are taken from the quarry of the world and laid upon this Rock; this eternal foundation laid by God. On this Rock they are safe, but nowhere else. They sometimes tremble on the Rock, but the Rock never trembles under them.

Are you a 'living stone' like Peter? (1 Peter 2:5). Then the Lord Jesus will be precious to you. Peter did love Christ. It was a weak, imperfect love, but it was real. And that's what matters! On what are you relying for life and death? That Rock, that foundation, was laid for sinners to rest upon. On whom is your own hope resting?

MISSION IN MOYOBAMBA

Children, Two Men, and a Dog

Mostly, the folk in Moyobamba were very good at being in their place at church services. There were 2 services on the Sabbath Day, a children's meeting on Tuesday afternoon, a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, and sometimes also a youth fellowship or a women's meeting in the mission house.

The children happily came to all the services. It was a poor village, and I don't remember seeing them having toys, and there were certainly none to buy in the few shops that were there. Birthdays and holidays went by without any fuss. But they were happy and contented. (It was only when people went to the big city of Lima and saw what you *could* have, that they became discontented!) What does 1 Timothy 6:6 say about this?

A mother and her two teenage daughters used to sit quite near the front of the church. Their dog would follow them all the way and then come into the church with them! If they were absent, it was because their father was at home, and he would not allow them to come. But they were certain to be there when he was away from home. Isn't it sad when people are not allowed to go to church? It can happen today too, even in Scotland. The funny thing was, that even if they were not in their place, as often as not, their dog was still in his! He would come, sit under the bench where they usually sat and lie there quietly until the service finished! There were no pews in the churches, only long thin seats with a thin wooden panel along the back for support, and which were not very comfortable! By the way, the dog's name was "Lassie", despite being a male!

One Tuesday afternoon, the missionary's wife walked the short distance to open the church for the children's meeting. As usual some of the children were already waiting around the door. When the door was opened, to everyone's surprise out staggered Lassie, the dog! He must have been inside the building since the Sabbath evening! Lassie didn't hang around. I dare say he wanted to get back home for something to eat.

News about one of the elders, who wasn't attending the services so regularly, came to the missionary's attention. The man was a barber, and apparently, he had started cutting hair on the Lord's Day. So, not long after he heard this, the missionary asked the retired pastor, Don Manuel, to take the morning service, and he drove the Land Rover to where the man lived. There were hardly any vehicles in the town so the barber would hear him coming. True enough, there he was, cutting the hair of one man while two other customers waited. The missionary went in, and quietly took his place in the queue. Happily, no more customers arrived. Of course, the man realised very well why the missionary was sitting there. It wasn't to get a haircut! He expected to receive a sharp rebuke, but the missionary without a word, put his hand out – and the barber took it with tears in his eyes. After that the barber was never missing from his place in church.

And that is where we all should be, Lord's Day by Lord's Day – in our place at worship.

1. The children loved being in their place. I hope they are still attending church, though perhaps now they are grown-up it is with their children and grandchildren. I hope and pray that when you are adults you will still be attending church, and indeed, more than that, that you will be trusting and obeying the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and your Lord.

2. I hope you will never be like the father who would not let his family attend church. If the Lord spares you and gives you a family, remember to always take your family, and to encourage others to go with you to hear God's Word preached.

3. Maybe you are like the dog! You go out of habit, or because your parents take you. Before your next church service, pray that the Lord will help you to say, "I'm going to the service to try and listen well, to pray in my heart when the preacher prays, and to worship God by singing the Psalms the best way I can, thinking of the words."

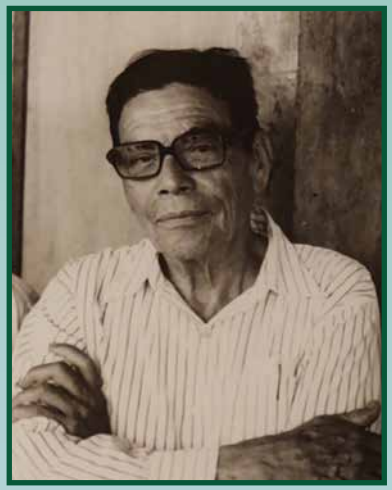
4. Some people are like the barber. They stop attending because there is something that they love more than worshipping God. Maybe it is sport, or music, or seeing friends, or making extra money. Whatever it may be, by putting it first it becomes an idol (a false 'god'). Please don't let that happen to you. Thankfully, the barber repented, so that again he was putting God first, and obeying the first commandment: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'.

David sang:

I joy'd when to the house of God
Go up, they said to me.
Jerusalem, within thy gates
Our feet shall standing be.
(Psalm 122)

***Remember** the many people in the world who may go to prison, or be attacked, if they are found attending church.*

***Pray** for those who listen in secret to radio or internet Christian programmes, that the Lord will protect them, take away their fear, and give them His peace in their hearts.*



BEE FRIENDLY

It was bedtime and Anne, without paying much attention, began to close the curtains. Suddenly she jumped back, there on the windowsill was a bee. Anne, who had never been stung, was keen to keep it that way. Wondering how she might safely shoo the bee out of her room, Anne, who was growing a little braver because the bee wasn't buzzing angrily, and a little more curious as she began to admire its delicate wings, stepped a little closer. Something about it's slow and hesitant movement convinced Anne that the bee was weak and needed help. Anne's mother said that there wasn't much that could be done for a sick bee, other than try to give it a little food.

Placing a small amount of white sugar on a thin card, Anne added a few drops of water to soften the sugar and carefully pushed it along the windowsill until it was right next to the bee. Watching, Anne was delighted to see the bee struggle onto the card and slowly start to feed. It was fascinating and satisfying to have been able to help. Rather than put the sick bee outside before it was ready, Anne's mother suggested closing the curtains tight and leaving the window open a little. When Anne awoke the next morning, the bee was gone.

As it was Friday Anne spent time with her friend after school, only returning home after dinner. Can you imagine her surprise when she went to close the curtains at bedtime and discovered lots of bees on her windowsill? Buzzing noisily, they were enjoying the remains of the sugar left from the previous night. All the courage and confidence Anne had gained while tending to the solitary sick bee vanished, and she ran out of the room.

Only on special occasions would Anne's mother allow her to sleep in the spare bedroom, but as a room-full of bees is quite a special occasion that is what happened. Thankfully by Saturday morning all the bees had left. As Anne's mother closed the window, she said it would remain shut for a few days so that the bees wouldn't come back to visit, or even move in. I suppose, she added, it is really a compliment to your kindness Anne that the first bee came back with all its friends.

Showing kindness is always a good way to make new friends. (Proverbs 18:24) *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly.*

In this way, we follow the example of the Lord, who demonstrates his kindness to every person, everywhere (Matthew 5:45) *he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Sometimes trying to make friends can be a strange business. It is possible to decide – I want to be friends with him or her, only to discover that that person doesn't make the same effort that you do. Other times you can discover that you have formed a friendship almost without trying, and maybe even with a person who, once-upon-a-time you didn't get on with.

Jesus is the greatest friend anyone could have. And through this relationship many other friendships are formed as Jesus' friends meet one another. When you meet another Christian, even without having known them before, there is that wonderful realisation that there you already have a connection because you are both friends with Jesus.

PUZZLES

Colour in the text

Luke 10 v 27

Love the
Lord thy God
with all thy heart.

PUZZLES

Parables in Luke

Find the answers in the wordsearch

1. What was to be killed in the parable of the prodigal son? Luke 15 v 23 (two words)

2. What did the thorns do to the good seed in the parable of the sower? Luke 8 v 7

3. What did the lord in the parable of the great supper want his house to be? Luke 14 v 23

4. How many sheep were lost? Luke 15 v 4

5. Where was the beggar carried to? Luke 16 v 22 (two words)

6. What are the two parables in Luke 18 v 1 - 14 about?

7. What did they do to the son of the vineyard owner? Luke 20 v 15

8. What did Jesus liken the Kingdom of heaven to? Luke 13 v 20 - 21

9. What of ours are numbered? Luke 12 v 7

10. What did God call the rich man? Luke 12 v 20

F	A	T	T	E	D	C	A	L	F
T	P	H	E	C	R	X	B	E	W
I	R	X	L	H	A	I	R	S	L
F	A	Z	B	O	E	J	A	X	O
I	Y	Y	X	K	Z	I	H	Z	N
L	E	A	V	E	N	H	A	E	X
L	R	A	X	D	V	E	M	K	N
E	O	V	Z	E	X	R	S	I	O
D	N	E	Z	S	Z	I	B	L	N
X	N	Z	X	E	F	O	O	L	R
Z	W	H	X	Z	X	N	S	E	O
X	R	E	X	Z	X	E	O	D	Z
P	Z	X	E	N	Z	T	M	S	Z

When you have found all the answers stroke out all the Xs and Zs then use the remaining letters to fill in the blanks

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Latest entries

1st prize: Murdo Maclennan *(Knockbain Free Church)*

Runners up: Joseph Clarke - Beacon Baptist Church
Bethany Blaney, Benjamin Blaney, Abigail Blaney, Seth McMurray - Ballyclare & Doagh
Donnie Maclean - Knockbain Free Church
Alastair Morrison - Cross
Abigail Keddie - Dores
Lila Schuman - Portree
Seumas MacInnes, Coinneach MacInnes, Catherine MacInnes - Lochalsh & Strath
Lauren Cormack, Amelie Maclean - Inverness
Ellie Joy Mackay, Charles Keir Mackay - Tarbat
Sarah Munday - Exeter Independent Evangelical Church

Lauren Cormack: 30 Entries / Charles Keir Mackay: 10 Entries

Name: .....

Age: .....

Congregation: .....

Address: .....

.....

PUZZLES & DRAWINGS

Young folk are encouraged to complete the various puzzles in the magazine and send them in to:

Miss Anne Macaulay
30 Mackenzie Place,
Maryburgh IV7 8DY
Email: **macaulayanne@hotmail.co.uk**

Younger readers who find the questions too hard may like to do a drawing based on one of the articles and send it to the editor.

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(Unattributed articles ought not to be considered the work of the Editor)

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