

# Reformed Vision

Autumn 2013

A vision to be caught - a vision to be shared

## Jesus *and Mission*

The chapter on mission in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony opens with these words, 'Mission is at the heart of the Gospel.' It is really saying that the Gospel and mission are inseparable. The message of the Gospel must be taken into the whole world. So how did Jesus go about this great mission? How did He reach the people He came to seek and to save? Matthew, quoting from Isaiah, describes Christ's mission and points to five aspects which set the pattern for mission in every age and place.

### Jesus Engaged in Mission ***With God-given Approval***

When my internet connection broke down I needed someone to repair it who had the authority and the skill to do so. I wasn't tempted to look for help to well meaning friends or neighbours! Even very ordinary kinds of service require someone who has the right credentials. It was a relief then when an engineer, approved and sent by BT, arrived and solved the problem.

From the throne room of heaven God declares that Jesus has come into the world with the necessary approval. Matthew is quoting words written seven hundred years earlier by the prophet Isaiah and confirming that they are now fulfilled in Jesus, 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.'

Jesus alone is approved by God to carry out this mission. It is the greatest work that can ever be done. He came to seek and save the lost. He came to redeem lost men and women and bring them into the family of God. No-one else could do this. Christ alone has the authority and the approval needed for such a great work.

And the risen Saviour gives to His church the necessary authority for mission in the world. He sends us to preach and witness and plant and publish. The church is His approved instrument to make the Gospel known to this world. So we do not need to be hesitant or intimidated or unsure.

### ***With Spirit Anointed Power***

Christ's mission is demanding and costly. He will engage in spiritual struggles and whole nights in prayer. He will face the assaults of the devil and the hostility of men. He will be alone in the Garden and will go to the Cross. But as the Servant, chosen by His Father, Jesus is assured every moment, of Spirit given power, 'I will put my Spirit upon him and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles'.

Spirit given power is vital for mission.

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We must remember how entirely we depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. We have no strength nor resources in ourselves. We are fragile and weak. As Paul put it, we are jars of clay, and like those jars, we are ordinary and unexceptional and vulnerable. As we engage in mission within our own congregations, or on Go teams, or in a new work, or in some other way, we must rely on the Spirit's power. The mission of Jesus is carried out with authority and power. But what comes next may well surprise us.

## **With Confident Quietness**

'He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.' Many assume that authority and power will be demonstrated by a loud and forceful manner. That is certainly how the world thinks. If you are to gain a hearing for your cause you must turn up the volume. If you are to make your mark in public life you must ensure you get noticed.

But there is a danger that in the church we can be affected by this kind of thinking. Do we sometimes equate loudness and forcefulness with spiritual power? Do we get too concerned about publicity and presentation? Do we think that powerful witnessing needs to be loud and forceful? Jesus shows that there can be real power where there is a quiet manner. The Messiah carries on his work without ostentation. He does not quarrel or cry aloud.

Now, we must not think that quietness is just another word for timidity or uncertainty. Far from it. Christ like quietness is in fact, a mark of dignity and of confidence. Jesus goes about his mission with absolute confidence that the message He is proclaiming is the only one which brings salvation, 'He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.' He knows that this Gospel of salvation will reach the ends of the earth and through believing it, multitudes will be brought into the Kingdom. It is certainly honouring to our Saviour when we engage in mission with that same confident quietness.

## **With Gentle Compassion**

The rose bushes were a picture and their perfume was a real delight. Until the thunderstorm broke overhead! After it the bushes looked a sorry sight and it seemed they would never recover.

The storm was so severe that all the electricity in the area went off and the only way to boil a kettle was on

that old camping stove which had very little gas left and could go out at any moment. These two pictures of weakness are like those used by Isaiah and Matthew to describe the people Jesus encounters on his mission. They are 'bruised reeds and dimly burning flames.' These are people whose faith and love are weak. People who have no strength. People who have been battered and bruised and are barely standing. It's the new convert who has to stand up to cynical colleagues at work. Will his faith survive? It's the young girl who is the only Christian in her family and finds her faith is regarded with indifference. Will she persevere? What will happen to these bruised reeds and dimly burning flames? 'The bruised reed he will not break and the smouldering wick he will not extinguish.' Jesus will watch over them and make sure they are safe. He cared for 'doubting Thomas' till the flame of faith and devotion burned more strongly.

The church in its mission is bound to meet 'bruised reeds and smouldering wicks.' We will encounter people, like ourselves, who are slow to learn and often inconsistent. We will meet people who, like ourselves, are 'works in progress.' We are to minister to them in the way Jesus did. His gentle compassion ensures the safety of all those whom He saves until one day the bruised reeds and the smouldering wicks are made perfect. Christ honouring mission will always display that gentle compassion.

## **With Glorious Success**

Matthew concludes his description of the mission of Jesus by giving an assurance of its success. 'He brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.' Christ's mission is triumphant. From a kaleidoscope of languages, cultures, races, He will gather all He came to save. Not one will be missed and not one will be lost. His mission is crowned with glorious success.

Should that assurance not govern all our thinking and all our praying and all our service? Should it not enable us to persevere when we see very little happening? Should it not cause us to keep looking to Jesus and waiting with expectation to see what He will do? Should it not help us to wait on Him knowing that in His way and at His time He will certainly build His church. Should it not above all else, move us to worship Him and long for His glory to be seen in all the earth?

*Rev. Knox Hyndman  
Minister in the RPCI*

# Ruth Coulter

## My Summer in the



Free refills, free ice cream samples, free pretzels, nuts, or cookies on flights, free t-shirts, free books...the list could continue! One of the things that took me by surprise was the amount of “free” things there were in America. This became a novelty, but as I reflected on it the reality is sad. The society we are living in is blinded to the most amazing free gift, the free gift of salvation. From Northern Ireland to America this fact doesn't change, and as I reflect on my summer serving God with RP Missions, I am thankful that we still have the freedom to serve and speak openly about Christ to a world that needs to open their eyes and receive the free gift that is being offered to them.

With that in mind it was a huge privilege to serve Christ this summer in Seattle, Colorado Springs and White Lake. Six weeks is hard to detail in an article so let me share 3 highlights, one from each destination.

Whilst in Seattle, the team, Jordan, Mary, Hannah, and I, served the Reformed Presbyterian Church there and personally I was encouraged by the kindness, love, and fellowship of the congregation as we worked alongside them in a variety of ways throughout the week. A high-

light for me was the opportunity that the team had to do door-to-door in Portland, Oregon, which is about 3 hours from Seattle and to attend the first evening service of this new church plant. There are 3 core families, and it was so exciting to worship with them and to see the gospel being taken to another part of our world.

The purpose of the Colorado Springs mission team was to provide



teaching for the kids programme at Horn Creek Family Camp. I was the teacher for the 3 year olds and fell in love with 9 lovely children in my class. It was such a privilege to be able to teach them about creation and to invest time in young lives. I joined the middle school devotions in the evening, and it was a blessing to get alongside some of the girls to share and chat with them.

White Lake is a camp that happens every summer for 2 weeks, first for Kids and Teens camp and secondly for Family camp. During the first week I was a counsellor for a cabin of girls of varying ages. The church was reaching out to these girls who were refugees. This was an exciting cabin which was full of life, but it was real blessing to show them love and to be part of their lives. For family camp I was a counsellor for

girls aged 13-18. This was a wide age range but I thoroughly enjoyed getting alongside the girls to share with and encourage them which is one of the things that I love to do.

I am thankful to God for the opportunity that I have had to serve Christ over the summer. This is just a small snapshot of my trip

which has been one of many opportunities and challenges, one where I have met many people who have encouraged and influenced me, and one where I pray that the many people that I have met would have been strengthened in their faith or challenged of their need for the free gift of salvation.

Ruth Coulter  
Carrickfergus RP Church





# teams 2013

## Riverside, Newry

The Go Team arrived on Saturday 10th August looking forward to a week of Holiday Bible Club, Teen Club, and leaflet distribution. We had help from young people of Riverside throughout the week and were led by Rev. Simon Sweeney and Andrew Harvey.

On Sabbath evening, we joined the congregation for a praise service where young men from the team introduced the Psalms. Later we enjoyed further fellowship with the congregation over supper.

The Holiday Bible Club began on Tuesday with the theme "GOING BANANAS!" The children were introduced to Ripe and Rotten, "The Banana Buddies", who lived on "Banana Island". Each day, short dramas introduced Bible characters who seemed to have 'gone bananas' by choosing to follow Christ. After talks explaining the Bible stories, we had discussion groups when we asked the children what we could learn about God from each story and how we need to ask forgiveness for our sins. This was a really encouraging part of the week as we built friendships and heard how some children had already found salvation in Jesus Christ.

Each evening at "Close Encounters", the Teen Club, we played games which were followed by a short talk by Andrew Harvey, David Matthes, and Simon Sweeney. After the talks, more activities allowed us to really get to know the young peo-



ple and build friendships with them.

On Wednesday afternoon, there was a tea party for older members of the congregation, friends, and family. This was a great time of fellowship over a cup of tea and some buns. The tea party was encouraging as the older generation appreciated and enjoyed conversations with us. Mr Sweeney was able to share the gospel with those who attended through a short epilogue.

That afternoon, a number of us did some door-to-door around the city. We also spent several afternoons doing leaflet distribution and we thank God for the conversations we had.

The week was topped off by a fun barbeque on Friday evening with children and teens from the week coming with their families.

Every day the team had discipleship through Bible studies from Mark's gospel. We also spent time praying for God's help, strength, and wisdom. We give thanks to God for the amazing work that He has done in people's lives and pray that others would soon find salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We wish to thank the Newry congregation for their hospitality, kindness, and encouragement and we will be praying for their ongoing work.

*Peter McCollum  
Ballymoney RPC*



# teams 2013

## Letterkenny

On the 17th of August I set off on the long journey from Glasgow to Letterkenny to take part in the GO Team. I was looking forward to being involved in God's work there and hoped to learn more about church planting and the RP Church in Ireland.

As I had been warned, the week was a busy one! However, although the afternoons and evenings were filled with leaflet distribution, door to door outreach, psalm singing in a local care home, and community service, the mornings always began with a time of prayer. After this time of prayer Mark led seminars on apologetics. In these we discussed common objections to the Christian faith and how to respond to them Biblically. We also listened to some debates and shared experiences of our own conversations. This equipped us not just for the week but also for our personal evangelism back home.

Before the team arrived, Mark had arranged an outreach event in a local cafe. He wanted to provide Biblical answers to some of the big questions the people in the community had about God by delivering a short talk

there. The team went round the houses in the nearby area asking them what these questions might be as well as inviting them to hear the answers at the event. We were hopeful that a few people we talked to would come to the event as they seemed particularly interested. When not one of them turned up, we were admittedly discouraged. Sometimes God doesn't work in the way you expect or hope for! I think this simple truth is all too evident to those involved in church planting work, but of course it applies to the rest of our lives too. The next day, we set up a stall in the shopping centre with free gospels, tracts, invitations to take part in Christianity explored courses, and pretty low expectations! But God brought two people to our table looking to start a Bible study with Mark! Our disappointment from the previous evening was lifted, and we remembered that God's ways are always higher than ours.

I would really encourage others to take part in GO Teams. It's a great opportunity to serve God in His church, learn from other Christians, and to grow in Christ.

*Katie Wyllie, Glasgow RPCS*





# GO teams 2013

## Galway



The Galway Go Team commenced on the 20th July 2013. The Hamiltons, Billy & his wife Mary, have been in Galway since 1991 and have been at the coal face of evangelism there ever since. Their 2 boys, Michael and Patrick, were to join myself, Ruth Greer, Anselm McDonnell, Phil Aicken, Reuben McCollum, and Sarah McCulloch on this year's team (Rebekah Kerr arrived on the Tuesday). Peter Jemphrey has been the Pastor there for over a year and has quickly settled into his work there. His wife Jenny and 4 children, Thomas, Rachel, Christopher, and Timothy, were also a big part of the week.

Each morning would open with Bible study on 1st Corinthians, then in the afternoons there was a mix of leaflet distribution of the 4you magazine, some questionnaires in Galway city centre, and bookshop duty in the

Aisling Christian Bookshop. Mr Hamilton would do street preaching in the evening, and the team were charged with creating a crowd around this to get others interested. The main event of the week was a public talk/conference on the subject of "All Religions Lead to God – Don't They?" The invitations for this were to be posted to people with 4you magazine.

The Lord's Day morning Mr. Jemphrey preached on Luke 15, the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin. There was a church lunch afterwards, and it was wonderful to get to speak to many people of all ages in their congregation. The Galway Covenant Fellowship, as the church is known, has perhaps 30 or 40 people attending, and a variety of ages, races, backgrounds, and experiences. It was wonderful to speak to them all if only for a short time. The team were introduced one by one, and I was also encouraged by the interest and prayers said for the church in Scotland and our own congregations there.

The Go Team week was a wonderful blessing to me, mixing with Christians from different RP churches was quite enjoyable, and the Lord showed me that through Him, He will give power to those who wish to proclaim His word.

*Jonny Malseed, Glasgow RPCS*

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## Woodstock Road Update

Since October 2012, under the direction of a committee appointed by the Eastern Presbytery, several areas of ministry have commenced in the Cregagh Road Church building. We are using the name Woodstock in this work since that more accurately reflects the location.

To date we have held weekly Bible studies, one public meeting, English classes, and a regular worship service each Lord's Day morning. We have also done door to door visitation and had an outreach on the street outside the build-

ing. Before Christmas we distributed around two hundred Gospel calendars in the local area.

We give thanks for the many ways in which God has encouraged us. The Presbytery has decided the work should continue for a further period as we seek to discern the Lord's leading and discern His will for this ministry.

We greatly appreciate all the interest and prayer support from around the church.

*Rev. Knox Hyndman*



# RP Mission Team to Uganda



*Stacy Muir,  
Airdrie RPCS*

For a long time I have always had the desire to visit Africa and look into mission work, and for God to open that door this year was such a blessing to me. I remember before I left for Uganda I was so scared and nervous. Now I could easily jump on a plane and go back. I can honestly say that a bit of me has stayed there, it sounds so cliché, but it is true. I fell in love with the place, people, and culture.

This trip has been the best missions trip I have ever done, due to the missionaries, the people, and the culture, but a huge part of my enjoyment of this trip was the wonderful ladies who joined me: Steph, Liz, Rachel, and Emily Pihl. Apart from teaching at the schools and the other girls working at the clinic, we did a number of things such as cleaning, organising, visiting villages and teaching Bible stories, going to Bible classes down in Namalu, hanging out with the missionary children and the missionaries, and teaching health lessons around villages.

During my time in Uganda I learned and grew a lot; you have to trust and rely on God a lot more, and I definitely learned that when I was there. It has opened my eyes to the needs of many people physically and spiritually, and the right way to help

them. Before I came on this trip I had the idea that handouts were really good for people, and it will help them a lot as they are “poor” and have nothing. Quickly I realised by talking with the missionaries that this idea of giving out free stuff is not good; it causes more harm than good. Another problem in Karamoja is polygamy - men have many wives in different villages and have lots of children by these wives. This causes a number of problems: first, and most importantly, it is a sin, and God does not approve of it. It also causes many fights between the wives, and some of the men have lost track of their own children. Another major issue is alcoholism - most of the Karamojans are alcoholics. This makes it hard for the mission to interact and tell them about Christ, to implement their aim of working to gain, and to build honest, trustworthy relationships. There are many other needs and issues in Uganda. Please pray for the missionaries as they seek to serve Christ in this hard culture, that God will open opportunities for them to share His Word, and that the men and women in Karamoja will change and love Christ.

For the school programme we taught the kids about the ocean as most of them don't have a clue what it

is! Tying in with this theme, we taught Creation and the Fall, Noah's Ark, Jonah and the whale, the woman at the well, and Jesus catches fish. We wanted to show the kids how sin entered the world, how Jesus came into the world and led a perfect life, and then died for our sins so we can have eternal life. Please continue to pray for these children and their teachers as the missionaries work with them. The first week we were at a school called Nakallee where we started with four children and by the end of the week we had around 90 kids! Please pray for these children and their schools; pray that the teachers will actually teach them the meaning behind letters and numbers so that they aren't just memorising; that Nakallee school will get a roof and toilets so that the children can stay dry during rainy season; and most importantly that God will work in these two schools bringing more people to come to know Him.

I thank God every day for opening up this opportunity for me to come here, and I thank you all so much for your support and prayers. I had an amazing time in Karamoja and one day soon, God willing, I hopefully will return.

*Stacy Muir, Airdrie RPCS*





**cookstown rp outreach**

The RP Bible Study in Cookstown continues to be an encouragement. There is a core group of 10 who are in regular attendance. Several others attend occasionally. Among those who attend most have professed faith and are seeking a Reformed church, with 2 attending who are not yet believers.

At present we meet in a room in the Leisure Centre every Thursday evening. The Bible Studies are from Hebrews with the focus being on the person and work of Christ.

The plan is to move the work to another stage in November with the commencement of worship services on the Lord's Day. An approach has been made to rent a room in a local school. At this stage the prospect of obtaining permission is very promising.

We are looking to the Irish and Scottish churches to uphold this fledgling work in prayer. Ask God to use the Bible Studies to inform, encourage, challenge, and convict those present with the claims of Christ and the truth of the gospel. Pray also that all the practical arrangements will fall into place for Sabbath worship to commence in November.

Rev. Robert McCollum



# Nantes



Monday 21st October  
Tullyvallen  
8.00pm

Tuesday 22nd October  
Trinity  
8.00pm

Wednesday 23rd October  
Cullybackey  
8.00pm

Thursday 24th October  
Faughan  
8.00pm

Friday 25th October  
Stornoway  
7.30pm

Lord's Day 27th October  
Airdrie & Glasgow  
10.15am & 7.30pm

*Come and hear the latest news about what is happening in Nantes, France.*