# winter Tron Times

Newsletter | St George's Tron Church Glasgow | Winter 2012

### The Fruitfulness of Forgetfulness



Dear Friends

Many of you have commented on how wonderfully the latter chapters of Genesis have spoken into our congregational life in our current time of struggle. This is just one evidence

among many of the tender care of our heavenly father whose nearness has been almost palpable, for which we give deep and grateful thanks. So as we face having to leave our building, in which we have invested so much both spiritually and financially, and as we look to a future which will be very different for us, I want to encourage us to embrace what we have learned from God's servant Joseph.

The 'Joseph story' is really all about the Great Story of God: how his promise unfolds, serenely, according to plan. Yet at the same time it is also the story of how the Lord deals with this one man, Joseph, a real human being, flesh and blood just like us. So we must never forget that although God does care—infinitely—for his covenant plan, he also cares infinitely for his covenant people. He is wonderfully faithful to his covenant, and therefore wonderfully faithful to his children. God is at work with Joseph's life to achieve wonderful things through him, but he is also working to achieve wonderful things for him and in him.

Of course, 'we are not Joseph'; you have heard that many times! But Joseph's story is our story; like him, we too are part of the Great Story — the story of the coming King who reigns forever. And Joseph's God, now made known in all his radiant glory in the Lord Jesus, is our God. His Spirit abides in us who love Christ. He has promised we also will share the glorious salvation which Joseph's life served, and if at times we recognise the same pattern, the pattern of the death and resurrection of Christ, being played out in our own lives (as it was so remarkably foreshadowed in Joseph's) it must surely encourage us. For no matter how dark and mysterious the days may be that we have to face, we too shall prove his promises true. We are 'fellow-heirs with Christ, provided', says Paul, 'we suffer with him' (as Joseph did) 'in order that we also might be glorified with him.' (Rom 8:17). To use Joseph's own words, 'the thing is fixed by God, he will shortly bring it about.'

We will see all his promise fulfilled ultimately and forever when the Lord Jesus returns to reign, and on that day there shall be a great reward for us. But until that day there will be many struggles, many battles, many disappointments, just as there were for Joseph. And yet what his story shows us so clearly is that for God's beloved children there can be, by his grace, even now, great reward. And that reward is what is being forged in us in the crucible of God's sometimes painful and perplexing providence. My father comments in his notes on Genesis (available on the Tron Media website)

"We might speak of the recognition Pharaoh gave Joseph as God's reward to him, but it would be truer to say that the greater reward lay in what God had made him."

We all know the end of the story, and Joseph's gracious reconciliation with his brothers who had so wronged him. But much earlier, two apparently insignificant verses are very revealing of Joseph's inner heart and soul, and so instructive about the kind of man he had become through all the trials God had led him to endure. Two sons were born to Joseph during his 20 years of separation in Egypt, and Genesis 41:51-52 tells us that he called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, 'for God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house', and he named the second Ephraim, 'for God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction'.

He named his two sons Forgetful and Fruitful because, despite all the pain and heartache, that is what God had enabled him to be.

He was *forgetful* with the right kind of forgetfulness. He hadn't really forgotten his family and his father's house and his faith; of course not — his confession of God makes that clear. But he is forgetful of all the affliction, of all that could and would have made him bitter and hardened as a person had he allowed these things to fester in him. God had released him from all of that, and had done so most wonderfully.

It's not enough just to overcome great trials and make it good in life eventually. Sometimes people do endure great hardship and personal hurt, or loss, or injustice, but they overcome and emerge in the end prosperous, and with a bright future. They find success in life, in their career or their family or even in Christian ministry. But nevertheless they can carry a chip on their shoulder all the way to the grave: bitterness and resentment, determination to prove a point, ambition

to prove themselves to others or to themselves, or even to God. But that attitude of bitterness can consume you; It will eat you up inside and poison others as well into the bargain.

It is easy to become bitter as Christians because of what life flings at us, and what we may feel God has flung at us. That's why the bible warns us so clearly not to allow that to happen in the church: 'Don't let a root of bitterness spring up and cause trouble, defiling others with the poison!' (Hebrews 12:15). If ever a man could have allowed bitterness to poison his life, and be in a position of power to damage others constantly through that bitterness, it was Joseph. But no. God granted him forgetfulness: liberty from chasing after the esteem of man, and remembrance instead of all the goodness that he had found at God's hand.

He named his two sons Forgetful and Fruitful because, despite all the pain and heartache, that is what God had enabled him to be.

Forgetfulness... and *fruitfulness* — 'God has made me (and will make me) fruitful in the land of my affliction.'

"Why, of course! Affliction and fruitfulness are always united in the economy of God. It is the law of the spiritual harvest that except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone but if it die it brings forth much fruit. 'Out of the presses of pain cometh the soul's best wine'." (James Philip, Notes on Genesis)

When we are perplexed at the struggles and afflictions that do sometimes surround us in life, it is so easy to feel engulfed and to sink into despair. It can feel as if these things must surely leave marks upon our lives that we will never get over, that we will never, ever, leave behind. At times we may wonder if, because of things that have happened to us, or perhaps because of things that

have not happened for us, we shall never really be able to be useful in life again. When things seem to have gone terribly wrong we can feel that about our Christian life and service: I just can't see myself ever being able to be really useful to the Lord again!'

But, friends, that is not so. Because what God did for Joseph, he can do and he will do also for you, and for me, if we will let him. God can grant forgetfulness, freedom from all the bitterness of the past, and fruitfulness, even in the land of our affliction. That, I think, is perhaps the sweetest evidence of God's grace at work in this wonderful story in Genesis: not the great exaltation of Joseph to be ruler of Egypt, but the fragrant fruit of the Spirit of God in Joseph, God's dearly beloved child. The fruitfulness of forgetfulness in him.

Wouldn't that be sufficient reward for us, for you and for me, indeed for our whole fellowship, in these difficult days of hardship and perplexity and painful loss?

We have a hope that is steadfast and certain: we know that one day we too shall reign in glory with Christ, and that there is laid up a crown of righteousness for all who have longed for his appearing. But meantime, until that day, we are called to endure suffering, and to fight the good fight in order to keep the faith. It is through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God. And through it all, and in the midst of it all, 'godliness with contentment' is great gain.

And so, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, may God grant us to forget all that would embitter us (and through us, others); may he also make us fruitful for him in, and even through, all our present afflictions. And may the fragrant fruit of his Holy Spirit be among us, and as evident to all, as in the life of Joseph.

Your brother and friend

Dima Milis

William J U Philip

### Home news

compiled by Ruth Hodgson

'Sorry! No seats left.' The stewards upstairs on Sunday mornings were having to redirect folk downstairs or suggest they wait until the children had gone out to Sunday School. There have been many encouragements in recent days and we give thanks to our unfailingly faithful God.

The Ladies' Fellowship have rejoiced to have been crowded out in the Wynd this term. We have welcomed back our students plus seemingly more than ever new ones. Space in the Halls on a Thursday evening for Release the Word and the Internationals' groups is at an absolute premium and the caterers feel their task is akin to feeding the five thousand!

Over a hundred attended a very worthwhile Women's Conference in September organised by Agnes Brough and Katie Piggot. Tron at Two is a monthly Sunday afternoon alternative service run by Terry McCutcheon reaching out to the unchurched some of whom have association with para church organisations like Chanan or Glasgow City Mission. Another new venture this term has been 'Disciple' held on Friday evenings and run by Paul Brennan. This is specially for new Christians keen to find out more about the Christian faith, or for those wanting to brush up on what it means to follow Jesus. Also on Friday evenings is Christianity Explored led by Duncan Porter, and a good many have been attending. Alternate Friday mornings in the Wynd are busy with mainly music, a fun, interactive music session for parents/carers and young children.

We were sad to bid farewell to **Rieko Ando** last month. She returned to Japan and will take up her new post as Head of a girls' school in Tokyo in January.

Ross and Veronica Duncan have been much in our prayers — first in the loss of

their stillborn daughter Rachel and later in the sudden death of Veronica's sister in a car accident. After many months in hospital one of our long-standing older members, Annie Robertson, went to be with the Lord on 10th November. We extend our sympathy to her family. We also remember Annabel Baird whose husband, Gordon, died very suddenly, Phyllis Grant on the death of her father, and Manon McInarlin on the sudden loss of her mother at home in Holland. Manon's sadness was tinged with joy, however, as two weeks later she gave birth to Aaron. We warmly congratulate John and Manon. Congratulations also to Donald and Katherine MacPherson on the arrival of their twins, Jared and Campbell, and to Jonathan and Lorna Black on the birth of Leah. Three couples have become engaged and we congratulate them - Andy Hirst and Shona Brown, Matt Larmann and Nicola Murdoch and Alasdair Cameron and Jen Wood.

It was such a thrill for us to witness the baptism of **Ploy** (see Spotlight) from Thailand and **Ali, Amir** and **Dara** from Iran. We rejoice too with our brother **Saied** whose wife **Samoye** and daughter **Sepidah** have left their homeland and are now en route to Glasgow after nearly four years of separation.

Our minister, Willie Philip, is just back from India as is Rupert Hunt-Taylor.

Willie was speaking at the annual Word Conference at Delhi Bible Institute to which about four hundred pastors came from all twelve states of North India. Rupert was speaking at the preaching week at Ranchi Ashram — the centre we purchased with part of our building tithe and where Ram Raj David is the Director.

We were so pleased that **Alan Clark** was well enough to come from hospital to his daughter **Lynn's** wedding and we trust he will continue to make a full recovery. **Margaret Brown** is home and has a ramp facility which should make it possible for her to get out and about. **Nan Bailey** is still in Gartnavel Royal and **Dorothy Begg** has been in a Care Home in Fenwick but is now in hospital as a result of a fall. A number of our older members are in increasing need of care and we lovingly remember them.



Donald and Katherine MacPherson with their twin sons Jared and Campbell

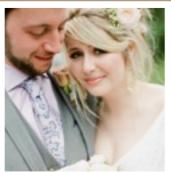
## Family Album



John and Manon McInarlin with Jenna and new baby Aaron



Jonathan and Lorna Black with daughter Leah



lain and Deborah Goodart



Louis and Jenny Cowan



Tom and Seonaid Donaldson



Stephen and Lynn Ballingall

The church is a body made up of older or younger parts working towards the same aim of loving Jesus. At the Tron we can go from 0-100 in just one pew! So how can one church suit all generations?



## YOUNGIE vs OLDIE

#### Dear Christian

Believe it or not, some people have an 'old' attitude at 21. My dad **talked about the 'old folk' when he was 95!** But he wasn't one of them, he was the opposite.

You feel more at ease speaking to young people. You share the same ideas about many things, including Christian faith and **you may feel older people are of no relevance**. From experience younger people approach older people when something is seriously wrong. "Who is that dotty old guy 25 generations away?", they may say.

**You gain a lot by listening**. Hearing about their life circumstances enlarges your vision and is of great benefit.

But life is a learning process; **the older I get the less I feel I know**. Old folk may seem past it but we do remember what it was like to be young. As you get older you will realise you didn't know too much — though at the time you thought you did! When I was working I remember the doctor standing at the ward door and saying, "Sister, here come the new medics — they have been at uni 3 years, but **they know it all**." We all fall into that trap.

Things change all the time. You young ones are more in touch with what's going on, especially with technology. But older people have usually been Christians longer and have more experience of life's trials.

## Older folks should feel free to speak to younger ones, that's what it's all about, passing on the word.

Older can encourage younger to attend church regularly, to get to get involved practically, and to read the right books. And older people are encouraged and greatly appreciate when young help them.

**Older people should take the first step.** We find it's always good to have young folks to our house, most Sundays to get to know them.

In church it is very Important for us to consider what is helpful for you. It's important to encourage young people and love them in all kinds of ways. You are valued.

Yours
The Older Saints

#### Freshers' Timeline

Ho	ow new students
ре	rceive older people in
ch	urch

17	Prime of life
18	Brain nearing
19	capacity
20	Pinnacle of
21	development

Age

30	Age at which body
	degrades
	by 50%

SS	
	Middle Aged

Retired

50	
	Age to which
	Moses lived?



### New Creation! (21 forever?)

50+

### Young ones, ignore the pearls (of wisdom) at your peril!

Young folks form cliques that may scare older folks—a big block of Tron Youth and 1st year uni, migrating as a sea of Jack Wills is all a bit scary!

Meeting friends at church is great but remember to mingle. After church, stay and speak. Try sitting in different places.

Getting on rotas is a great way to meet new people and serving is great. Join the coffee rota or welcome duty.

Anyone older than a student is scary to them. Here is what two Tron regulars think of their older brothers and sisters.

## YOUNG PERSONS'



that's anyone over 30, by the way

### Scary

I enjoy speaking to them, but for us old is intimidating especially if they are my mum and dad's age. I don't think that all old people are stuck in the past and someone who has survived 60 years has lots of pearls of wisdom.

#### What do U do?

Small chat is good: I love hearing what retired people used to do, what sport they used to play. I have met some great hilarious old people who have amazing banter.

# Diversity is good

I couldn't go to a church of all students,, that's not a church.

### **Telepathic**

They also always know a lot more than I've told them. How do they know? I don't know how they know but they do! Old people talk to each other properly. They care more than we realise and always take time to know.

Feed me

I was adopted by the Lobbs,

what a dream! Being a

proper meal.

## New v Old

student doesn't feel like They may be home so much. Going out to intimidated because of the house monthly or every a culture gap. Internet two weeks, just to get fed is changes the way young brilliant. They force food on people talk to each you. We had 5 desserts! The other and what we talk best Sunday I've had in a about. But we are long time. Really nice people all the same. vegetables properly done. You don't get that at uni — a

# Take the initiative

I wouldn't approach someone new unless they spoke to me first, or was stuck in a pew with them!

### Sing in tune

I am much more aware of words from when I was younger— there are some really amazing hymns. The tune does really affect the hymn. There are students who don't come to Tron because of the music. Not saying that is right but good words need sung well. Students sacrifice a lot in terms of expression but preaching is amazing so they don't care as much.

Third year physicist Andrew Gordon and third year physiotherapist Laura Kerr, share a young perspective on the older members of the congregation. Duncan and Jenty Munro gave sage-like insights from an older perspective.

### How older saints can invest for the future

Attitude is all to do with it, start thinking old, become old. Keep interest in people and be among the young. Young folks want to sit together when they can.

To cross generations leave your comfort zone and meet them. Sunday lunch is a perfect place to meet them, or after church.

Serving is really important, sharing church duty and what Katie mentioned — adopting one of the 40 students looking for homes.

### **Other Ministries**

compiled by Ruth Hodgson

Ivor MacDonald is enjoying his new location and is encouraged by developments in the church plant to be known as Hope Church Coatbridge. He wants to reach out to the community at large and already they have some new members. With the valued help of a former Latin Link worker, they have several social events and Christmas activities planned. Murdo Maclean in his responsibility as a prison chaplain has had quite a lot of interest in the gospel shown during his visits. The work at Mount Vernon and Carmyle continues steadily with visible signs of personal growth and some amazing answers to prayer.

Alex Bedford's ministry is a mix of preaching opportunities and the running of Christianity Explored courses at the invitation of various churches. We admire Alex's gift of engaging people in serious gospel conversations whether in front of the church on Saturdays and Sundays, or outside the Royal Concert Hall on Thursdays.

**Phil** and **Emma Copeland** have been settling into a very different world in Hertfordshire where they have been warmly welcomed into **Christ Church Harpenden**. Phil's responsibility is as leader of the Youth

Ministry Team and Emma is working parttime in the local Waitrose though looking for something more permanent.

Caz Dodds and Andy Baxter (both with UCCF) have had a really encouraging start to the term with lots of freshers getting involved in the CUs and with weekends away being enjoyable and fruitful times. Scott Hamilton is a Relay worker with UCCF based at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. He has found a very welcoming CU there and is thoroughly immersed in their activities including hall groups for freshers.

Oli Ward with his wife Susan and their family are now settled in Stirling where Oli works alongside Calum Jack in North Parish Church. We were delighted to hear they were able to sell their previous house and we thank God with them for that.

Kenny McKie has worked with SU Scotland for many years and currently leads the West of Scotland Regional Staff Team of about twenty. He also has responsibility for SU ministry in schools, camps and weekends in East and West Dunbartonshire. A recent encouragement was the opening of two parent-led primary SU groups.



Andy and Naomi Baxter were married in Northern Ireland



Bob and Gill Hamilton



Derek and Elizabeth MacPhail were married in Inverness

### IPC puts down roots in Scotland

It is just over a year since the first International Presbyterian Churches (IPC) were formed in Scotland. The IPC is a small, but vigorous and growing fellowship of congregations working together to help one another in gospel ministry.

The Tron Times caught up with the leadership teams of three new churches to see how each of their respective ministries in Aberdeen, Skye and Inverness is progressing.

#### Trinity Church Aberdeen

The first congregation of the IPC in Scotland began to meet together in the slightly quirky and somewhat retro ballroom of Aberdeen's Northern Hotel, in December last year. The church, with a ministerial staff team of **Peter Dickson** and **David Gibson** has a growing list of members and children. Although very happy where they are they would clearly like to find a more permanent home for the church family.

### Grace Community Church Kyle of Lochalsh

Grace Community Church in Kyle of Lochalsh has had an exciting year since starting in January. Meeting in Kyle Primary School the 50-strong congregation has been attracting new faces from the community surrounding the school. The congregation has also recently launched a Road to Recovery programme, providing both spiritual and practical support to those struggling with addiction problems. The church held an Alpha Course in a local café earlier this year and is planning to host a similar Christianity Explored course next Spring.

Their minister **John Murdo Macdonald** who recently had surgery following a heart attack has recovered well and has returned to work on a part time basis.

### Highland International Church Inverness

The youngest of the existing Scottish IPC congregations, Highland International

### Andrew McIntyre

met for the first time in April this year and is jointly led by **Rev Peter Humphris** and **James Torrens**. Growth has been slow but steady but the church has already been blessed with a number of non-Christians coming under the sound of the Gospel.

The church is seeking more outward-looking opportunities and is also setting up its first programme of house groups, a venture which it is hoped will enable deeper and more meaningful fellowship among its members.

The origins of International Presbyterian Church go back to the work of Francis and Edith Schaeffer who went to Switzerland in 1948 as missionaries from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the USA and started the church in order to meet the needs of the people who came to Christ through their ministry.

## SP T LIGHT on

### **Ploy** (Pittaya Klongkratoke)



## A journey worth making .... Ploy's study across the globe led her to faith in Jesus Christ

'To be honest, I don't really like haggis. It is a bit dry, but if it is moist it is quite nice.' Ploy is from Thailand, and as we supped our carrot and coriander soup at the Scottish OMF Conference she spoke of how much she enjoys the food that Isabel Murray cooks. 'She makes mixture of British and Asian. It is very good.'

Ploy, that is her nickname (something which everyone in Thailand seems to have), just radiates the joy and beauty of Jesus as she speaks so enthusiastically about her relatively new-found faith in Jesus Christ.

'I was a Buddhist for twenty-five years' (she is now twenty-six). I come from a scientific family and I do not believe things easily. I always believed in evolution but I now see from the Bible, and as I look around, that it is God who created the world.'

Already a graduate from university in Bangkok, Ploy came to London to do a Masters in Mathematical Science. During that course, and encouraged by her parents' offer of support and her Mum's desire that she should study at a UK university she applied for a scholarship to do a PhD in this country. 'I failed', she says through her smile, 'and I just wanted to go home, but my Mum wanted me to try "just one more". My Mum believes in destiny.'

With respect to her parents, Ploy applied to Glasgow having seen that the requirements for entry at that time were:

• three courses in economics (she had one)

- good grades and at least one merit (she had a C and only passes) and
- a degree in Quantitative Finance or equivalent (her degree was mathematical science)

'It seemed I might need to take MSc in Quantitative Finance there before entering the PhD,' she explains. In full assurance of rejection she applied in August 2009, received a reply accepting her in September and began her research into Quantitative Finance in January 2010. One cannot avoid the feeling that God has his hand on this young life.

I do not believe things easily. I always believed in evolution but I now see from the Bible, and as I look around, that it is God who created the world.

Ploy recounts her experience of coming to the Tron and of finding it different from a church she had attended where 'I went in for the service and then came out again after it, and that was all.' A Thai student friend, Kak, invited her to the English class which led to her coming to the church and subsequently to the International Bible Study. There she met with Elspeth Taylor among others. By this time she was beginning to seriously seek after God in his Word. She found that surrounded by so many Christians and finding strength and

confidence in their company was great. 'I was not sure, however,' she said, 'that I knew and understood enough of what it meant to be a Christian if I were ever to be on my own without all these others around me.'

On a visit home to Thailand in 2011 Ploy met up with Andy Baxter who was also visiting Thailand and together they attended a Christian church in Bangkok recommended to them by Kak. It was some time later, however, that Ploy was able to tell her family that she had become a Christian. 'My Mother was very sad that she could not make me as happy as I am now.' She has also told a family with whom she stayed in USA for a year as an exchange student in 2001. To her amazement their reply was, 'we have prayed for you every day since you left us.'

Ploy expects to be in Glasgow for one more year. She will then leave to take up a position in a university in Bangkok teaching Mathematical Education. Meantime she continues to soak up the teaching of God's Word, to deepen her understanding of what being a Christian means, and with her most infectious winning smile, to reach out to others with the good news of the gospel. 'I just thank God for all the blessings he has poured in my life. I feel like he is really lovely and reveals himself more and more to me making me fall in love with him more and more.'

in conversation with Tron Times

### **Away News**

compiled by Ruth Hodgson

Despite the cold and damp of a November Glasgow the **Rowbory** family are pleased to be settled back in their flat and to be being welcomed amongst us as they await the arrival of their third child early in the New Year. **Rebekah** is clearly delighted to be meeting up with 'old' friends while two-year-old **Elizabeth** is gradually catching on to everything.

At the Kwai River Christian Hospital **Nok Murray** has enjoyed returning to nursing after a gap of fourteen years. The staff shortage was occasioned by a nurse who had left shortly after completing her training and with still almost four years of her sponsored contract to complete. **Scott's** work is as diverse as ever and includes preparations for the Christmas events where a Burmese Christian singing group will be taking part.

**Kenny McLeod** has been in Slovakia almost a year and he now has his own rented house which has an enormous garden! His teaching commitment has



Rebekah and Elizabeth Rowbory



Kenny McLeod

mushroomed and can sometimes be up to eleven hours a day in elementary schools, a language school, the Kontakte Cafe (where **Csaba Tolnai** is now managing director) and informal situations.

The reaction to a film on the life of the prophet of Islam has caused much hardship for Christians in the area of North Pakistan where **Imran Gill** is working. He and his colleagues are pleased, however, with the positive response in the community to their opening of a computer centre in Risalpur. **Nagina** has a temporary teaching job which she hopes will lead to something more permanent soon.



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**GARLIC** DATES **FISH** ONION **OLIVE CUCUMBERS FIGS BEANS BARLEY** WHEAT **LENTILS** SALT **BUTTER BREAD LEEKS** MILK CAKES HONEY **GRAPES** CHEESE BANANA ALMONDS RAISINS HERBS

To enter put your completed word search in an envelope with your name and address & hand it in to the bookroom (photocopies accepted)



Henry Heinz was born in America in 1844. The eldest of 8 children he was good at growing vegetables in the family 12 he had grown enough to load a horse and cart! His parents had hoped he would become a minister but he had such good business ideas that his career took off in a different direction! Henry was a Christian and as boss of the Heinz food empire he became known for being fair and straight in all his business things. He was very caring towards his workers and provided things. He loved thinking up new sales methods and He came to London and

He came to London and persuaded the manager of a famous London shop which supplied The Royal Household with provisions to stock his products. We don't know whether the foods were introduced to Britain!

Even though he was so successful in business Henry Heinz continued to be a Sunday School leader and felt that telling children and young people about Jesus was the most important

WORD SEARCH COMPETITION Win a Prize

### fun fact

A competition to find the fastest eater of baked beans using only a cocktail stick was won by Andy Szerbini at London Zoo in 1966. Andy ate 226 beans in 5 minutes