

Happy 2017

Christmas and New Year are becoming distant memories but I hope that not too many toys are broken and discarded? The temporary delight that many of us have in new things can quickly dissipate in the reality of day to day living. As I think on the anniversary of my time at TCF (yes, one year ago on 4 January I started in my role with a visit to Ernie and Edna and then Nigel and Ethel, John and Margaret, Allan and Liz then Trevor and Jane) the 8-stanza poem by CT Studd comes to mind:

Oh let my love with fervour burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

(7th stanza)

Yet, I am most blessed with the arrival of Sámuel Eliesar Crooks on New Year's day at 12:15. Although I had a precious few days with all the family, I have had to face the reality of geography - and a very restricted direct flight schedule that only begins in late March. Yet, despite that, technology has enabled me to 'chat' to him face to face as he engages with the world he has entered. Also, my son and daughter in law make sure that plenty pictures are sent. One that delighted my heart recently was of Sámuel sleeping on his tummy and Benjamin cuddled up beside him - also asleep. Time eats up our lives with alarming rapidity and when we have the rapid growth and development of new children, we are powerfully reminded of the brevity of our meagre existence, our 'vapour' (James 4:14). 2017 will be an exciting time for new children in the TCF Family and we pray with Gavin and Nichola, Scott and Rhona, Daniel and Joan and Darren and Cat for health and strength for mums to be, diligence and tenderness for dads to be and safe arrivals! Praise God for these gifts of life.

Technology and TCF

Technology helps us communicate, providing a window on our lives, which admittedly we need to use wisely. We have had a 'soft launch' of our new website (see <http://tcfperth.org.uk/>) and although there will be issues to resolve as we begin to use it, we hope that the website will be a window on 'TCF world'. It is surprising how many TCF Family members were influenced by a remote glimpse of life in the church through our old website (e.g. ask Gordon and Eunice)! So, in our renewed effort with technology, we will be putting the sermons there (still hosted on SoundCloud for the present) but also the Sermon Notes to help supplement personal study. The Events for January have been posted as has the Pastor's Update (see under the News tab). The Bible Reading Scheme for TCF will be posted there too and it is encouraging to hear of some who are using these as a new commitment to reading the word of God daily. Remember that we also have a 'closed group' on Facebook that is private (tcf perth) and a public presence (Tayside Christian Fellowship) as well as the various closed groups for Home Groups and others.

God's Word: Extract of Survey Results Ruth and Matthew

The full survey results have been shared with the elders - and again, I need to reassure you that all the answers are completely unattributable, individuals cannot be identified. So, in response to the Question 'Would you like to have more short series covering whole books?', 73% of respondents answered 'Yes'. Also, in response to the Question 'What do you think of the pace of the teaching on Ruth?', 87% answered that a Chapter at a time is a good pace! This is really useful information going forward. In relation to Matthew's gospel, 75% of respondents said that there was no single beatitude that spoke to them more than another, and all were equally memorable, yet of the non-beatitude topics, the one taken by Gordon Crawford, the Salt of the Earth, 70% of respondents agreed that this was more challenging than the other three topics. However, 83% of respondents believed they were part of the Kingdom of God today and 75% believed that this was because they were converted and believed the Gospel. 67% of respondents are not sure whether the Family Service is a teaching or evangelistic service but 67% agreed that the series seemed to be pitched mainly to Christians (33% believing it was balanced for both). This is helpful as we move forward and as we consider what the main emphasis should be at our Family Service. 90% of respondents said that the Family Service should have more than 25% of our series at the Family Service dedicated to the Gospels.

What teaching in Ruth was most helpful for you?	
God's 'hesed' love - faithful love	28.6%
The unfolding drama of redemption	35.7%
Making connections to other teaching about Jesus, the Messiah	14.3%
God is sovereign	28.6%
Our day to day human actions can be used of God in His purposes	71.4%
The importance of marrying someone godly	14.3%

Other

The Pines survived the advent of some young ladies of the church in my vacant house over Christmas and New Year. You'll easily spot them in TCF, they're the ones looking like prunes!

