

May has been a month with a number of external commitments away from TCF. Thank you for your support as I meet these obligations which I made before I committed to the role of Pastor. I was particularly pleased to be allowed some development time for my own learning.

I was privileged to attend the Messianic Testimony (MT) retreat when their staff came together from across the world to exchange information about work amongst Jews. God is moving among his ancient people and it was reinforced to me that Jews who become Christians don't use the term 'conversion' as this implies they cease to be Jews. Messianic Judaism is the term given to Jewish people who believe and have accepted Yeshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus) of Nazareth as the promised Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures. These Jewish people do not stop being Jewish, but they continue to remain strong in their Jewish identity, lifestyle and culture, while following Yeshua as He is revealed in the Brit Chadashah, the New Covenant. Many Messianic Jews refer to themselves as "completed Jews," since they believe that their faith in the God of Israel has been "completed" or fulfilled in Yeshua. The theme I was asked to develop for these workers was 'Resilience in Ministry' and the study I had previously completed was based on the life of Jesus. His life is a constant source of inspiration and meditation and the talks seemed to be useful. One of the outcomes of this help to MT is that Sam Gordon, their retiring Chief Executive, will be coming to TCF for four Sunday evenings in 2017 to teach us! **Please pray** for the work of MT as they help Jews to be complete in their Messiah.

I was also developing the theme of the example of Jesus in my presentations at the European Leadership Forum in Poland (an annual conference to which I am presently committed). At the ELF I supplemented the input of Mark Stirling (who was with us in TCF at the Leaders Breakfast event) and modelled the life of disciple-making on the life of our Lord Jesus. The message at the conference which I provided to the network participants is simply that 'The extent to which we will become disciple-making leaders is limited only by the extent to which we become like Jesus'. I was blessed too by the preaching of John Piper from the USA who taught on themes from Philipians.

A further two commitments have now been fulfilled and this will relieve me of some pressure on time at TCF. The Elders at TCF agreed to let me manage a transition for the elders at Hillbank and I met with them formally for the last time on Tuesday 10 May 2016. As they readjust to the change - and the loss of seventeen members for various reasons including some going home to the Lord - would you also **remember them in your prayers** as a gesture of fellowship?

I will also have delivered the last two sessions on training for elders and prospective elders from four churches like TCF in the Central area (the last session is on 28 May 2016 when I return from Krakow where I am writing this update). Please also remember these churches at Cumbernauld, Falkirk, Grangemouth and Maddiston as they consider the next stage of development. Two of these churches are advertising for church workers, and so far there have been no applicants. I had been helping these two churches in my previous role with the Church Strengthening Initiative - they are now quite anxious about how they can realise their vision and ambition to survive and grow in gospel effectiveness. **Please pray that the Lord will raise up the right workers.**

My next external milestone is an annual trip to Romania scheduled for 6-10 July 2016. That trip includes a considerable number of preaching sessions but also an opportunity to monitor progress in the business that was started back in 1999 and which has maintained a steady profit since those days and which now sustains a number of works in Romania and also in the 'two-thirds world'.

I only have 10 blank cells in my spreadsheet of pastoral visits - and a number of them will be filled with dates in the next week or so. The experience of meeting so many TCF members and families in their own homes has been wonderful and has provided a springboard for regular visits to some. This includes planned celebration of the Lord's Supper with those who can't get out to communion once we have the 'travel set' in hand. Let me know if you would be interested in this - and, as always, please remember that you can contact me at 07784 702876 for a chat or ask any question.

Jim

Thank you for ...

contributing to the...

event on our developing vision!