

Inspiration

As I write this I am listening to the Proms on BBC4. Mozart's Requiem is being performed and it is full of pathos. He composed it in his final year of life but it was unfinished. The work was handed over by Mozart's wife to another composer to finish so that she could claim the final instalment of the commission. The composer who attempted the first completion was Süßmayr and the work was first performed in January 1793, 13 months after Mozart died. Since it was published, 12 different composers have attempted alternative compositions to complete the piece and ignored or adapted the Süßmayr elements. What's more, the man who commissioned the piece originally tried to pass it off as his own composition (Count Walsegg)!

The unfinished nature of Mozart's work and the false claims (or attempted co-authorship) led me to meditate on the words and work of our Lord Jesus on Calvary. He declared triumphantly in the moments of His dying: 'It is FINISHED'. *Hebrews 10:12-14* says: 'But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.' His work was completed, it can never be improved upon and it is valid for all eternity. What a privilege to have come within its circumference and to be rescued for all time.

As we resume our more usual pattern of service and worship for God, we are reminded that our work is unfinished but I trust that we are coming to the second half of the year with renewed vitality and dedication until He calls an end to our labours - however that may come.

Summer Work

I last preached in TCF on Sunday 17 July 2016 and it is with intense longing I look forward to the beginning of our series on Matthew which starts on 4 September. I have enjoyed the input of others on Sundays but I have missed the seclusion of time alone with God and His Word and although I have started reading for the Matthew series, I am eager to have specific meditation and reflection on the text we have planned to teach in the next few months.

However, the summer weeks have enabled me to do some writing for the elders and others including a piece on pastoral care and another biblical survey. The starter piece on the purpose of Home Groups was useful for me to undertake for my own thinking and also the starter paper on Evangelism and Social Action. Another smaller piece has been the description of what it means to be a 'disciple' in TCF but this is yet to be considered by the elders. Some revision work on Home Bible Studies from a collaborative set of material I helped with for Hillbank Evangelical Church has also been undertaken and given to the elders to consider for use in the Home Groups later in 2016 as has a draft revision of the 'Work in Progress' brochure we have used for some years. These pieces of writing will be used for our ongoing work within our 5-year plan and will be shared in due course.

The writing and revising of documents has gone alongside ongoing pastoral visitation including with two families in TCF who will each be dedicating a child in September and October. It has been a privilege to have ongoing encounters with various individuals and I will be continuing to visit as and when I can - but for the second half of the year, apart from those I have already made specific arrangements with, I will be available on request or if there are any particular crisis to work through. I will work alongside the Visitation Team and the Home Group Leaders to supplement their excellent work. I will also post when I shall be available at the church for 'drop-in' sessions for those who would like that.

We will also be working very specially to build momentum on three aspects of TCF work: Evangelism And Social Action (remember Dave Martin in this respect very especially); Web Presence and Social Media and the Young Adults Group (please remember Darren and Cat and Michael and ChiChi).

Please also remember Cliff Kitson as he joins us at the end of September and please drop me a line about any ideas you have for including Cliff in any ministry in TCF with which you are engaged and to which he may contribute.

Thank you for ...

holidays...

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Giddis".

but for service to undertake!