

ACF NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

HOPE



Auchinleck
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Serving Christ, Serving the Community

The World's on Edge!! What's the Problem?

At the time of writing there is a lot of tension in the world. Fear that World War Three is on the horizon. The world is watching in anticipation, for Israel's response to the recent drone and missile attack from Iran. Will the result be an enlarged Middle East conflict with other nations being dragged into the fight? War in Ukraine continues, as does the war in Gaza, Yemen and Sudan with many local skirmishes taking place in a number of other countries. There are also threats of war between China and Taiwan, Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as NATO anticipating conflict with an expansionist Russia and so on. Does mankind never learn the lessons of history? Tragically the only lesson we seem to learn from history is that we don't learn the lessons of history!! (not original BTW).



There is so obviously a massive problem in our world. Why would anyone want war? Who wins from armed conflict apart from the weapons manufacturers? **What's the problem?** Is it political, cultural, racial, ideological, practical, emotional, strategical, or is it deeper than that? You see the reality is, conflict, enmity, war, etc are things that permeate the whole of society and ever have. Rivalry of tribe against tribe, village against village, fans of one sporting team against others, even fighting within families where the deepest body of unity and affection should exist.

Maybe the answer is spiritual. There seems to be a general difficulty in just simply getting on with everybody. That's maybe because we often can't even get on with ourselves. Tensions exist within our own hearts and minds – inner struggles, lack of contentment, absence of peace.

Who would question that there is a great crying need for reconciliation in our world??

The Bible indicates that there is even an enmity between men and God. Man was created by God and to live in harmony and peace with Him. Sadly, man has rebelled against God and thus brought alienation and separation from Him. Isaiah

59.2:- “your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

However, God offers us reconciliation. In fact, that is the Good News of the Bible. Paul writes about it in 2 Corinthians 5.18-21:- “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that **God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ**, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. **We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

So, reconciliation needs to start between each of us, as individuals, and God. This can take place by humbly taking the blame for ours in the alienation (**in fact the blame is all our part, not God’s!!**); acknowledging our sin and receiving His forgiveness. God is ready to forgive us and to make all things right between us. Romans 5:1:- “Therefore being justified (made right) by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Did you notice the phrase of the last paragraph, **“PEACE WITH GOD”**? That’s the starting point – get right with God and we have a desire, and the grace, and the strength to get right with others.

Have you been reconciled to God or are you still at war with Him?

We can’t do much about the world’s wars, but we can do something about our relationship with God.



MEET A MEMBER **ALLAN CONNELL** HOW I BECAME A CHRISTIAN

My name is Allan Connell and **I belong to Jesus**. However, it wasn't always the case. I was brought up a Roman Catholic and always thought I was guaranteed a place in heaven because of that. How wrong was that way of thinking!! God's grace, and a close relationship with Jesus through faith is what is required for entry.

I always knew that there was something I was missing. There was an empty feeling inside me, but I could never put my finger on what it was. I have done the alcohol, the cannabis, the pornography but **nothing ever filled the gap.**

For many years I tried different denominations, Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, and numerous others – but still nothing filled the emptiness.

Around 2005/6 my wife Frances bought me a laptop and I started listening to Christian music. It made me feel good. But what I began to notice was, at these Christian concerts, when the camera panned into the crowd, I could see on the faces of the crowd, peace, contentment, relaxation, love and happiness. **I knew they had something I didn't have, and I wanted what they had.**

Many years passed by during which **I always said my prayers morning and night**, bought a lot of Christian CD's and watched a lot of Christian films and documentaries on Christian TV channels.

Then one day a new manager, John Carden, started at my place of work. What a blessing that was!! After an invite to his house one Friday evening, he invited me to a worship meeting that same weekend. It was February 2015. I woke up that Sunday morning at 4.10am with this strange feeling all over my body. I was totally hyper,



feeling great and couldn't sleep. I went to the worship place. I was totally buzzing – high as a kite but not the buzz or high I had experienced from the substances previously mentioned. **This was different!!** I didn't know what it was or what was going on. I didn't know what being saved or born-again was. During the worship time, "Amazing Grace" was sung --- that's when the penny dropped!! **I was lost but now I am found. I was blind but now I see.** Just like Paul, in the Bible, the scales had been removed from my eyes, now I knew what being saved and born again meant having now put my faith and trust in my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I got baptised on April 1st 2015. Once again, the vessel God used to get me, John Carden, invited me to a baptism at Auchinleck Christian Fellowship. **As soon as I walked in the door, I knew I was home.** This was what I had been chasing all these years. I am still attending Auchinleck Christian Fellowship and brotherly and sisterly love, care and fellowship oozes from this place. At last, I have found my home.

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Men's PRAYER Breakfast

LAST SATURDAY
OF EACH MONTH AT 9AM
ALL MEN WELCOME

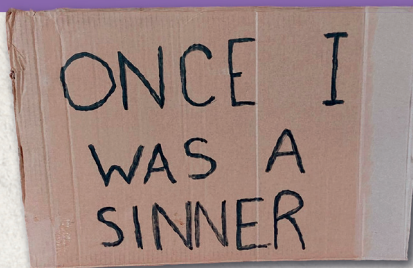
Sunday @ Seven

Bible Teaching at
The Community Hub,
Furnace Road, Muirkirk

on 2nd and 3rd Sundays of
each month at 7.00pm

CARDBOARD TESTIMONIES

At the end of our Easter Service recently, we had a time for Cardboard Testimonies, when various people walked to the front of the audience and held up a piece of cardboard telling the story of what the Lord had done in their life or what He meant to them in their life. It was very powerful and poignant. **Not many dry eyes in the house!!**

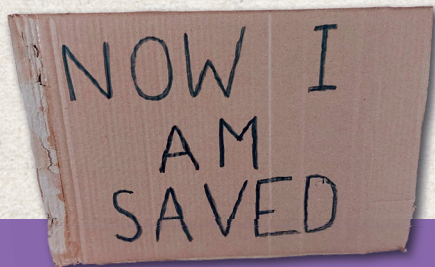


The youngest participant held up the front of his card which simply read, **"I once was a sinner."** That is something everyone of us can say about ourselves. The Bible says, **"All have sinned** and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3.23) This just means we have all fallen short of God's standard, which is perfection. Some might fall short by a long way, some might fall short by a small way but **we all fall short in some way** – so in reality we are all the same -- sinners!! However, on the other side of his card it said, **"But now I am saved."** He was referring to the fact that he had acknowledged (confessed) his sin and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

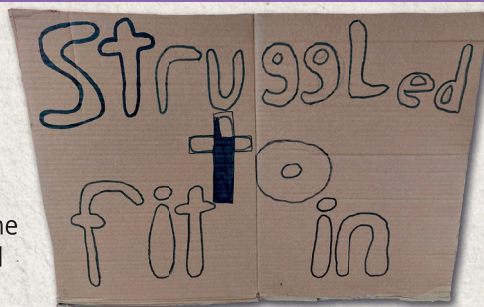
The reason Jesus came into the world **was** "to save sinners." (1 John 4.14) That was why He died on the cross at Calvary, **"Christ died for our sins**, and was buried and rose again the third day." (1 Corinthians 15.3). Another verse in the Bible says, "...he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7.25). However, **what is it that the Lord Jesus is able to save from?** Well, our sin has consequences. I am sure that is to be expected. If we do wrong, if we break the law, if we fall short, etc. there is a penalty or punishment to face. **What is the penalty for sin?** Again, the Bible clearly answers that question, "The wages (penalty) of sin is death." (Romans 6.23) When the Bible speaks of death as being the punishment for sin it is referring not simply to physical death, which we all face, but to eternal death, or eternal separation from God which is eternal punishment, **which is what we all deserve**. So, when Jesus died, He bore that penalty. He became accountable for the sins that others committed. He became accountable for my sins. He **"bare our sins in His own body on the tree"** says Peter (1 Peter 2.24).

How can we, personally, know that we are saved from the punishment that we deserve? What can we do? **There is absolutely nothing we can do!! Jesus has done it all.** So,

how can I be saved and have the assurance of it? By believing, exercising faith, in what Christ has done and what Christ promises us on the basis of what He has done. He says **"whosoever believes has everlasting life"** (John 3.16) In Ephesian 2.8-9 we read, "For by



grace (God's unmerited goodness) are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works (anything that man does), lest any man should boast." An early preacher of the Good News message was asked, "What must I do to be saved?" to which he answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (Acts 16.30-31)



Can you say like the cardboard witnesser, "Once I was a sinner but now, I am saved"? You can have that same confidence through faith!!

Does being saved from sin mean that we never sin again? I wish it did!! All saved sinners sin. We never become sinless, but we should increasingly, as we walk with the Lord, sin less and less. Sin should be abhorrent to the saved sinner and when he, or she, sins, confession should be made to the Lord who will give the assurance of cleansing of our sins through His blood. (1 John 1. 7-10 :- "...if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Another of the testimonies was **"I struggled to fit in"; "Found a home in God's family"**. Maybe you can identify with the first side of that piece of cardboard. Maybe you have spent your life feeling, marginalised and victimised -- bullied. Feeling you didn't fit in, and nobody gave you an opportunity to fit in. Possibly to try and fit in and be accepted you have done things, said things, gone places, etc that you wish you hadn't because you knew that it just wasn't you. **You were being untrue to yourself**, and you have been left with guilt and shame and still left on the outside. The wonderful thing is that **God accepts us as we are and gives us a place of acceptance in His family**. He doesn't ask us to try to change who we are. He doesn't ask us to try and fit in. No, He receives us as we come to Him. **"Him that comes to Me I will in no way cast out."** (John 6.37) We **will change** as we become part of His family, but we change, not to fit in,

but because we have been accepted in. As part of God's family, He gives us the grace and strength to become more and more like Him. He gives our lives a purpose and He places others around us to fulfil that purpose.

Do you have a testimony that you are able to share with others, an experience or an encounter with God that changed everything for you?





Are you finding it difficult to make ends meet?

We provide a food bank in the hall at Park Road at 2pm every Thursday & at The Hub, Furnace Rd Muirkirk at 11am every Friday

Good News Service

@ 12.30 Every Sunday

Lunch served after service
(all ages welcome)



COFFEE MORNING

Why not drop in for coffee, cake and chat the 1st Monday of each month from 10am

Tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits.

All free of charge.





Friday @ 9.30 - 11.00
(term time only)

Please contact Ruth on
07940 355 882
for details.



For times of other meetings see website

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