

## NEWSLETTER



FPE Conference ... P2



2013 Conference... P4



Walk Uganda... P7

## Walk Cornwall 2 needs Team members!

### JOHN WRITES ...

Will you come? David Baslington, David Culhane, Jeremy Borton and I have been to Cornwall on several occasions recently to brief churches. The meetings have been tremendously encouraging with small teams of people coming from churches all over Cornwall. From the very beginning we have encountered the goodwill from our mission through the county in 1993. More recently, the large number of churches signing up has hinted at a big mission. But it is the briefing events that really show commitment to engage in planning the mission; more than that, we have seen people go away inspired by the possibilities that the Walk offers.



So I write to ask you to join us in Cornwall this autumn. This is the only written prayer letter that will go to all of our supporters in time. If you have been on Walks before and you are wondering about coming again ... stop wondering and sign up! If you have never been but would like to, then there are training events available. It's a long way for most of us to travel but not as far as the journey that Jesus made from heaven to earth and then to a cross, a tomb and the resurrection. He thought you were worth it – and so are the people of Cornwall.



**John Hibberd**

T 01954 210239

E [john@throughfaithmissions.org](mailto:john@throughfaithmissions.org)

TFM's John Hibberd and Peter Adams were the main speakers at this year's annual conference of the Fellowship for Parish Evangelists.

## JOHN WRITES ...

### **Apologetics without apology**

This was the title of the annual conference of the Fellowship for Parish Evangelists, at which Peter and I were the main speakers. It was a real highlight for us to be asked to be the main speakers.

### **The value of apologetics**

I write this the day after going to hear Alistair McGrath speak on the relationship between science and faith as part of the Cambridge Science Festival. I sat next to a Roman Catholic who said she was not a scientist but came because

## we need to give a reason for the hope that we have in Christ

she wanted to be able to answer the sincere and probing questions that come from non-Christian friends. Her experience illustrates the fact that those outside the church no longer find the phrase 'the Bible says' to be conclusive in an argument. We need to continue to preach Jesus and I believe that, by the power of the Spirit, people's hearts can be opened to receive him as Saviour. Alongside this, however, we need to give a reason for the hope that we have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15). This means showing that Christian faith makes sense of life.

### **The challenge of apologetics**

To show the value of Christian faith requires more than quoting chapter and verse. It means wrestling with other areas of knowledge – science, ethics, philosophy, popular culture (e.g. books and films), etc. Depending on your background, some of these subjects may be more accessible than others. Having been a scientist – and, at that time an ardent atheist – I have a strong interest in addressing the issues science raises. This also seems to me strategic in the public understanding of faith. Aggressive atheists such as Richard Dawkins enjoy a high profile in the media and use this to attack Christianity in particular. I am quite sure that their slick TV programmes sound convincing to many, creating barriers to faith in the process.

So, at FPE the first issue I addressed was: has science replaced faith? Absolutely not. Science is excellent at

exploring the physical universe but it has limits. Simply put, it answers well the question, 'How does this work?' but it cannot tell us 'Why is there a universe in the first place?' Even Dawkins admits, 'Science has no methods for deciding what is ethical.' (The Devil's Chaplain, p34). This clearly shows that science cannot explain everything; such a view is known as 'reductionism'. The reason we have so many other fields of knowledge, faith included, is that a rounded understanding of life requires a rich variety of insights. This is common sense when you think about it!

If we are going to engage with science and other fields of understanding, then we must also be willing to acknowledge the conclusions they establish. If we believe that God is the author of all truth and reality, then all truth belongs to Him. With regard to science this can produce deep insights for Christians but also challenges. At FPE part of my session considered how our universe came into being. You will have heard of the 'Big Bang', considered the most likely explanation by virtually all scientists in this field. Research has shown in more and more astounding ways how finely tuned the conditions had to be for our universe to form. The fact of a beginning and the way in which the universe is clearly more than a 'chance' creation have deeply disturbed some atheist scientists. For Christians they are pointers to a Divine Creator – not proof but certainly consistent with, 'In the beginning, God ...'. Having said this, Christians have something to grapple with too. Diverse forms of evidence are conclusive



*John relaxing during the conference*

that planet Earth is 4.6 billion years old and the universe was formed 13.7 billion years ago. This means letting go of a literalistic timescale in Genesis. In fact this view of a young Earth has only been circulating in Christian thinking since the 1970s. Theologians down the centuries have understood Genesis to give insights into the big themes of life – God as the Creator, humans in his image and yet prone to sin, etc. – without trying to turn it into a scientific text.

## The joy of apologetics

Today there are many readily accessible sources of information to help us engage with science and culture. Damaris ([www.damaris.org](http://www.damaris.org)) produces resources for Christians to relate faith to their friends around current films.

Test of Faith ([www.testoffaith.com](http://www.testoffaith.com)), the Faraday Institute ([www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday/index.php](http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday/index.php)), and the Focus Institute ([www.focus.org.uk](http://www.focus.org.uk)) are among those who have videos and other resources on issues in science and faith. Incidentally this shows that there are many scientists who do believe. Learning more about our world in all its rich variety has given me a greater sense of wonder and appreciation of our Creator God. Sometimes this does involve re-evaluation of things we believe but the majesty of God is in no way diminished by seeing Him unfold a plan over an absolutely immense timescale.

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## PETER WRITES ...

### Hot Potatoes at FPE and in a variety of venues

To be a speaker, along with John, at the Fellowship for Parish Evangelism now has to top off my CV. I have been blessed by listening to Eric Delve there, Robin Gamble, Daniel Cozens, Max Wigley and many others, so to have the roles reversed is an accolade beyond compare!

My subject was evangelistic apologetics particularly linked to Hot Potatoes. The first point I made was that, for me, apologetics without evangelism is not enough. Defending the faith, which is what apologetics is about, is essential to the Gospel these days; but to do that attractively without

*natural disasters; **Atheism** – Jesus and knowing if God is there; **The X Factor** – Jesus and the celebrity culture; **Assisted Suicide** – Jesus and dying well.*

By majority vote, people decide which Hot Potato subject and, after 15 minutes expounding a Bible passage, I make an appeal offering the Nicky Gumble book *Why Jesus?* to people who respond. Then take questions. Team members get into conversation with our guests, arrange personal follow-up visits, or give Alpha course information, or more literature.

You could do it. Or you could invite me to do it with you. This is just one way, thanks be to God, that apparently works of doing evangelistic apologetics.

## apologetics without evangelism is not enough

making an appeal is inadequate. People need to be told how they can be saved through responding to Christ's death and resurrection, as well as knowing about the rational grounding of our faith.

This is how it works. Usually a pub, that sells baked potatoes, is hired by the local church(es), and team members are out on the streets with cards inviting people to a Free Lunch! Sometimes the Free Hot Potato Lunch is served in a café bar, a hall or even a tent, almost invariably in non-religious premises. The people come in good numbers – as few as eight or as many as forty or fifty. Undoubtedly, the initial attraction is the free food.

In addition, though, is the intriguing attraction of the Hot Potato apologetics subjects, a list of which are printed on the back of the invitation card, that Peter Adams will speak on for just 15 minutes then take questions. For example, **Astrology** – Jesus and your star sign; **Tsunamis** – Jesus and





## DANIEL WRITES...

Once upon a time a young man met an old lady. He had seen her often enough but they hadn't spoken, except to pass the time of day. One particular sunny Saturday afternoon she approached him, looked up and said, "Do you love Jesus?" He said that he didn't. He rather feared to meet her again but the next Saturday she asked him the same question and once again he replied that he didn't. At this she took him by the arm and said, "You should do, He loves you."

In the most intriguing way those words began to lodge deep within him, with a strange sense of interest, illumination and fondness. Lo and behold within 18 months and after other life incidents, the young man was thoroughly converted to Christ.

When that young man met the old lady again, those months later, he stopped and reminded her of their encounters and told her of his conversion. She was delighted and bid him good day.

## Christianity has no barriers – not age, culture, appearances or interests

You may have guessed that that young man was me and I've told that story many times during my ministry. Please note that she and I were different in many ways – age, culture, height, looks, interests – yet her words formed part of my conversion story.

What do we learn? First, Christianity has no barriers – not age, culture, appearances or interests. Secondly, if I had not approached her later on, as I did, she would have had no knowledge of the influence she had had on my life. Thirdly, she couldn't have predicted the ministry with which God has entrusted me.

Why am I writing this? It is to encourage you to spread the Gospel – 'casting your bread upon the waters'. Cornwall needs more labourers – will you come? Please give us one week of your time – become a Walker or a Walk Associate. God knows how you will be used.



**Daniel Cozens**

T 01954 210239

E [daniel@throughfaithmissions.org](mailto:daniel@throughfaithmissions.org)

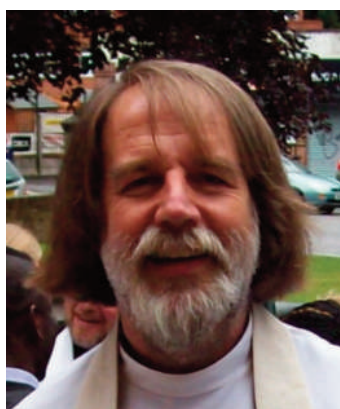
## PRAYER PARTNER CONFERENCE 2013 Saturday 29 June 10am to 4pm

### 'Developing partnerships that bear fruit'



The title for our annual Prayer Partner conference this year is 'Developing partnership that bears fruit'. A crucial part of the work of TFM is developing strong and lasting partnerships with churches who want us to work with them on mission.

Our keynote speaker will be David Richards, vicar of St John's Stratford, who will speak about his church's partnership with TFM over many years. Also speaking will be Peter Adams, TFM's Evangelist Emeritus, who will share



with us some of his many years of experience of partnering with churches for mission. We will also hear from Daniel Cozens, TFM's founder, who has lead over 400 missions. There will also be feedback from all the team on recent news and events from the work of TFM.

The venue for the conference will be Great Shelford Free Church, located just south of Cambridge and with easy access to the M11. The cost of the day is £10 including tea and coffee but please bring your own packed lunch. To book online please visit the TFM website and go to our online shop or if you prefer, send a cheque payable to Through Faith Missions Ltd to our address on the back page. We look forward to seeing you there.



## ROGER WRITES ...

Well it seems a long time ago as I look back on the wonderful time at the Olympics in Stratford last year but it still feels like a 'warm glow' as we look forward to a follow up outreach with the Stratford churches from 16-19 May. A lot has happened since then, as August was followed by a busy September with two mission outreaches in Worthing and Manchester.

### ... many teenagers responding to Christ

We had a very good mission involving 5 churches in Worthing called 'Crossover Broadwater'. There were three small TFM teams working across the area led by David Culhane, Mike and Maggie Wilkinson and John and Sylvia Margereson. The teams worked very hard and we saw around 80 responses to the Lord, and there were many others who expressed a real interest in finding out more. We sensed in prayer before the mission that one of the areas we would reach out to would be teenagers, and so it turned out to be with many teenagers responding to Christ at the various events which was great.

One of the local secondary boy's schools opened its doors to us to come in and lead over 20 hour long RE lessons where the young men could ask any questions to the team members about the Christian faith – it was a great opportunity and the questions came 'thick and fast'!! As we look back at events there were young men responding across the events – like the 13 year old lad who responded to Christ at a barn dance then told his mates and the next day bought a Bible in town!! There were also some good responses of parents linked to local church schools.

The churches are gathering together the stories from a great variety of events and visiting many people who responded, linking them into various follow up courses including an Alpha course, and a Youth Alpha course at the boy's school.

I also had a great weekend to mark the 125 years of St Cuthbert's, Cheadle. There were various events over the weekend including visits to the youth club, men's breakfast at a local pub, later visits to two local pubs to make a presentation of faith with some members of a local gospel choir, and a ladies' meal.

On Sunday there was a special morning celebration service, with messy church in the afternoon with a large attendance. There were 26 responses to follow Christ over the weekend, which were followed up and invited to the Alpha course.

I have had a long association with St Cuthbert's going back over fourteen years, and it was a pleasure to meet many people who had come to faith over the years and were going on and serving Christ as a result of this fruitful partnership.



Then for the first time in many years I came to an abrupt halt as I entered hospital to have a hip replacement. The operation went well and I was soon getting around again by Christmas and have been on the road again from January.

### God spoke into our lives and has opened up some new areas to explore

However, it was a good time to rest and reflect and pray about life, ministry, family and the future. The timing was good now that I have reached the ripe old age of 60! God spoke into our lives and has opened up some new areas to explore which we had not really thought about. The results of which are still emerging as we continue to think and pray. Watch this space!

Recently I have been mainly preparing churches for missions later this year and next but have enjoyed speaking on a number of occasions and seeing people respond to Christ and become new Christians. Jill has started a new NHS job in the local district nursing team where she is much happier, and we are looking forward to seeing our daughter Carol, Andy and grandsons from NZ, and our son Chris and Abbi coming over from Canada, both in April.



**Roger Murphy**

T 01926 420093

E [roger@throughfaithmissions.org](mailto:roger@throughfaithmissions.org)



# WALK KENYA 2013

January 6-23

Eight of us left a sunny Kenya to fly back to a snow-bound UK at the end of January. Whilst it is always nice to return home, we came back with much gratitude to the Lord for His work and presence amongst us over the previous two weeks.

The first week was spent in the village of Osonkoroi. In visiting home to home, we were bowled over by the openness and ready response to the gospel by most of the people we met. Whilst we were very conscious that our white skins would affect contacts we made, there was nonetheless an amazingly warm response in the homes. We need, now, to pray for the local Christians, led by Pastor Joseph, as they seek to conduct the follow up. We were, too, able to pray for healing on a number of occasions, with some clear direct healing results. We were able to spend two full afternoons in the Primary School, as well as a morning in the church-sponsored Nursery. On the Saturday, we led a teaching seminar, before participating in the Sunday worship. Our presence was very clearly an encouragement to the local Christians – many of whom we found utterly humbling and inspiring. Pastor Joseph is a man of no formal education, but on conversion swiftly found he was able to read the Bible. He also is the Father of a boy, now 12, who was apparently still-born. As the funeral was about to be conducted, signs of life were seen. We saw a healthy child running around!

The second week mirrored the first, at another community, Almaram. Response in the homes was more varied. Again we visited schools, including a boarding secondary school for two afternoons. In the senior class there, we encountered a married man, who himself is a pastor. He had never progressed beyond primary education, so is in the process of catching up! The final day or two was somewhat disrupted, by an election, which meant that schools were closed to act as polling stations, and people were travelling to cast votes. Follow up is being led by Pastor Esaiiah.

Local worship at the seminars and church services is different in feel from what the team, in our varied churches, was used to – spontaneous, simple, and marked by joyful singing led by a number of different choirs, even in small churches.

Gifts of clothes, stationery etc which we had taken were well received – in many cases being given to church pastors for use amongst the community. We were accompanied for



the two weeks by local translators. Two young women, Joan (Pronounced Joanne) and Eunice, were both at the stage of further education, and should have been getting ready to continue those studies. However, as is so often the case for Maasai young people, they had no personal funds or sponsorship to meet the fees, and so were translating for us instead. Here is another matter for prayer, and perhaps personal response, as so many young people are caught in that position.

The team faced its challenges. Sheila was 24 hours delayed, because of a passport issue, Tom was quite poorly, and ended up at the hospital where malaria was diagnosed – after which he got a lot better quickly. Philip was delivered from caffeine addiction while we were there. For everybody we found ourselves doing things for the first time, and having strong encouragement to really trust the Lord.

We were cared and provided for amazingly well by local hosts, and chef John: we even survived the roasted goat's liver presented to us as a treat on one occasion (it was actually quite tasty). We return home, with huge admiration for local Christians, led overall by Pastor David Kereto, and great awareness of the spiritual and social challenges they face. They are seeking in a host of ways to spread the gospel by word and deed, in a culture which has aspects that militate against it, especially in the treatment of adolescent girls, often married to older men for their dowry.

One half-finished project we were taken to see is a rescue centre for such girls – a place of refuge until they are able to be independent, or individual family attitudes have changed.

Many thanks to those who have prayed. The interest, concern and prayer from the UK really is immensely valued amongst the Maasai, as it was by the team when we were out there.

David Rhodes



# WALK UGANDA 2013

## February 3-25

Thank you all so much for your prayers – they were all answered! Nobody was seriously ill, we all travelled safely in spite of many pot-holed and occasionally slippery roads, we only suffered one puncture, and we delivered the three programmes our hosts had arranged. None of this would have been possible without the Lord's guiding and the wall of prayer that went up.

Of course our team of nine had to be flexible – that is a key quality in third-world mission. The programme was always subject to alteration at very short notice and the times given for each activity were always variable. One wonderful quality of Ugandans is that people matter far more than timekeeping.

Since Walk Uganda 2012 we had lost our senior missionary, John Lane, who went to be with his Lord in March 2012, aged 85. A last wish of his was that some of his ashes should be scattered at Namakuku, a church and infant school which he loved and supported over the twelve years he had visited. The team held a short service there and shared memories before I scattered his ashes. Archdeacon Eric also organised a Holy Communion service in his memory at St Luke's Church, Kagadi, where I was able to give testimony about John's service in Uganda. Both occasions were recorded on video for John's daughter, Pauline.

We worked in Timuna, a parish new to us, where we stayed nearby with our old friend and colleague, pastor David Sseruwagi. Each evening we helped at crusades in Timuna. Our contributions were to sing a hymn or song as the "International Choir" (!), give a testimony and preach the message. Every time many came forward for prayer to commit their lives to Christ, to ask for healing or some other burden in their lives to be lifted.

We made many visits to primary schools, where we mimed the story of the "Good Samaritan". In secondary schools we gave a bible message. We asked for commitments, and many, especially in the primary schools, responded. At each school we left two copies of the Bible in English for the Library.

One day we hosted a meeting with HIV/AIDS patients, who come each year to worship with us. It is always very moving to hear the joyful singing of those who suffer from



this life-threatening illness. We preached the word and a number came forward to commit their lives to Jesus. In advance of their arrival the team buys and packs individual bags of food and soap for some one hundred guests to take home with them.

We have an annual invitation from Bishop Nathan of the diocese of Bunyoro-Kitara to visit and minister in his area. He is bishop both of Hoima, where we spent four days, and Kagadi. Archdeacon Eric Twine, like David Sseruwagi, is very good in sharing new areas of work with us; just as Timuna was new to us, so was the parish of Ruteete, near Kagadi. In both places we gave eight talks on aspects of discipleship. One highlight was visiting a prison near Ruteete, giving testimony and a message to one hundred male and some ten female prisoners in the open courtyard – about seventy responded to the invitation to commit their lives to the Lord. We celebrated with them by providing fizzy drinks, doughnuts, bananas and bars of soap.

Another highlight was going door to door and shop to shop in Timuna and in Kagadi. Many here too made a commitment to Christ. We visited Kagadi hospital and prayed for healing for the patients. Again we took to each bedside a gift of food as a token of our love. We did this too to some needy homes.

On the first day of our mission each year, we visit Bible House in Kampala. We try to buy bibles in the heart languages of the areas we visit, plus English, but two were being reprinted. So we left money to buy these in mid-March when they would become available. We purchased and gave some 400 bibles and a team member brought out a further 100 English bibles. This never satisfies the demand but many people will have been helped to know God better through reading their own copy of His word.

So, exhausted but elated after some three weeks of solid evangelism, (there was one day off to relax near Lake Albert on a Retreat day) we flew home, having received so much more spiritual benefit than we could possibly have contributed. May all the glory go to God!

If you would like details of Walk Uganda 2014, please contact me on: [sj.miller@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sj.miller@tiscali.co.uk)

Sidney Miller



## TFM missions for 2013

Chippenham Deanery	9 to 19 May
Pentecost Outreach Stratford	16 to 19 May
Walk Cornwall 2	21 Sept to 13 October
St Jude's Belfast NI	2 to 10 November
Seagoe Parish Church NI	23 November to 1 December



### Annual Prayer Partner Conference

### 'Developing partnerships that bear fruit'

Saturday 29 June  
Gt Shelford Free Church  
High St Great Shelford  
Cambridgeshire CB22 5EH

Cost for the day £10 to include tea and coffee, bring your own packed lunch.

To book your place visit  
[www.throughfaithmissions.org/conference](http://www.throughfaithmissions.org/conference)  
or send a cheque payable to:  
**Through Faith Missions Ltd**  
to our address opposite

## CONTACT US?

**Please tick a box below and complete your address details.**

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- ☐ Please note my address change or email address below
- ☐ Please remove my name from the mailing list
- ☐ Please send me the weekly email Prayer News (need email address please)
- ☐ I enclose a gift to support TFM's ministry (Cheques to Through Faith Missions or go to **[www.throughfaithmissions.org](http://www.throughfaithmissions.org)** for online giving options).
- ☐ I want to gift aid my donation
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THROUGH FAITH MISSIONS  
58 High Street  
Coton  
CAMBRIDGE  
CB23 7PL

**Telephone** 01954 210239  
**Fax** 08707 062062

**[admin@throughfaithmissions.org](mailto:admin@throughfaithmissions.org)**  
**[www.throughfaithmissions.org](http://www.throughfaithmissions.org)**  
**[www.walkcornwall.org](http://www.walkcornwall.org)**