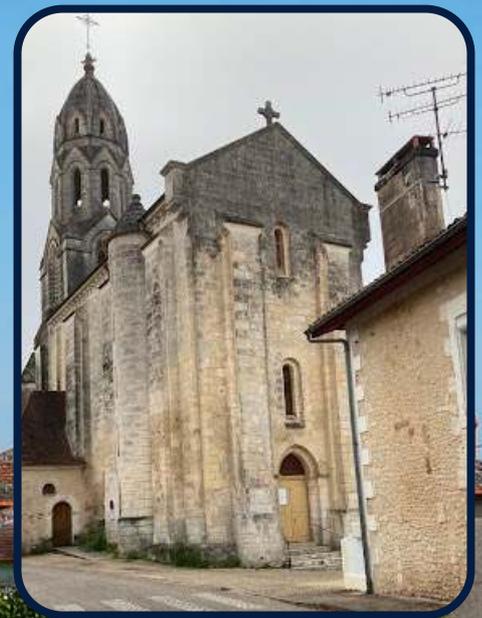


# FCC CONNECTION

The official newsletter of  
The Fellowship of Churches of Christ

27 August 2022

Vol 3 No 5



## SUMMER GREETINGS

Where does one go to church when on holiday? Lynda and I have been in France for the past few weeks and have found a lovely Anglican congregation that ministers to both expatriate British people and to visitors. The church uses a Roman Catholic building that the Catholics do not use. The local priest has been delighted that the building is once again being used for regular Christian worship. You will gain some idea of my summer reading list from the resource section at the end of the newsletter.

As summer ends and the new church year begins, we hope to meet many of you in FCC either at events or in your local churches.

*Martin and Lynda*

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# A BEACH IN MISSION IN BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham is one of those major cities that is a long way from the sea. So how can you have a beach mission so far from the ocean? Over the last few years, the community centre (the Pavilion) operated by the church, has constructed a beach area in the park. As you can imagine it's a popular feature.

This year the church had the opportunity to invite a team from Compass Church in Chicago, who generously came to help us run a week-long mission using the beach area as a focal point. Nine people of various ages and gifts arrived from Chicago and were hosted in two homes by members of the church.

There were four key activities:

1. In the mornings, younger children and parents used the area for playing and picnicking.
2. In the afternoons, older children and adults played volleyball. This created a relaxed atmosphere where we (home church and visitors) were able to strike up conversations.
3. The team also used these contacts and sang during the volleyball activity to publicise the music workshops that were being held some evenings.
4. The music workshops then led to a community concert on the Sunday night.

The various activities led to the creation of many conversations and new contacts that the church needs to follow up. The team drew members of the church into the activities that they were leading so that the church had an opportunity to engage in

community outreach. The team led worship on the last Sunday of the mission and of course friendships between the team and church were created.



# NEW MISSIONARY WORKER AT PORT GORDON – INTRODUCING MORGAN COBB



I am originally from a small town in Colorado in the United States. Although I accepted Christ in my childhood it took me years to find out what that gift of grace really meant. In my 20's, I discovered a love for short-term missions specifically serving in missions with more hands-on and practical needs-based ways. I never dreamed that my love of these would lead to something much more.

In 2019, I came on a short-term mission to serve in Portgordon and falling in love with a country and its people was never my plan but during those two weeks God completely changed my life. When I returned home, I sat down with my pastor and took the leap of faith into being a Fulltime Missionary. So, I sold my home in Colorado, found new homes for my 2 dogs and sold or gave away the majority of my worldly possessions, I said "See You Later" to my family and friends and made my way back to Scotland.

Thus, 'Life with Mor Ministries' was started. It is so much more than a name (and no, it's spelled without an 'E' for a reason) because I believe that God has called us all to live a Life with MORE... MORE love, MORE hope, MORE faith and MORE God. I thought I had life figured out...then I heard His call for More. In the past few years God has provided More for me in every single way. I know He has More for you too.

My ministry here in Portgordon covers all sorts of outreach including working with Portgordon Community Church and its ministries like; 'The Shed' project, 'Footprints', and recently the 'Life Challenge Outreach' bus.

At Portgordon Community Church, our aim is to love everyone as Jesus loved and to be a light in this small community. When we had no building to meet in this summer due to some renovations being done, we focused on serving outside the church walls as well as building a church family that supports and loves one another. We had a community service day where we served in our community in some capacity. It was amazing to see the church body out helping their neighbours, cleaning up community spaces, visiting the homebound and being God's hands and feet.

'The Shed' Project, serves men with learning difficulties, special needs, and mental illness allowing them to use their hands to learn a life skill and build relationships at the same time. We provide services to the community

in assisting in building projects like leading the building of the Portgordon Community Gardens facility and fitting of kitchens for other local charities.

I also work with a group called ‘Footprints’ that serves adults with special needs. We do cooking, baking, crafting, playing games and singing lots of Karaoke! It is really the best day of the week when getting to hang out with these amazing humans.

Recently, I was approached to help on the ‘Life Challenge Outreach’ program. The outreach bus goes out into the community and works with those suffering from addictions. The goal is to help those who are wanting to Break Free from the chains of addiction whether it be drugs, alcohol, gambling, eating, etc. We counsel them and offer help and resources for rehab programs, local support groups, mentoring and pastoral guidance.

So I continue building furniture, building gardens, and building relationships in this small fishing village. As well as the biggest build of all- God’s Kingdom. And as I like to say, “Get out there and live a Life with Mor!”



# THE CONNECT CONFERENCE

FCC holds two conferences every year (Covid permitting). One is called Connect and the other Create. What is the difference between the two?

- **Connect** is our annual FCC gathering for church delegates. Connect is a one-day conference, held on a Saturday, and is normally located in one of our local FCC churches.
- **Create** is our annual leaders conference. It is normally held over a two-day period in a residential conference centre on a Monday and a Tuesday.

## ***What happens at Connect?***

This year there will be four key focal points:

1. There is some business to conduct, especially the election of people to the FCC National Council.
2. We will welcome some new congregations into membership of FCC. Last year we welcomed 11 churches into membership and probably it will be a similar number this year.
3. We will be ordaining approximately 10 ministers who are currently on our ordination track. All these people are already functioning as ministers in local FCC congregations but have never been formally ordained.
4. We have invited some guests from the Evangelical Alliance to share with us some of the research they have conducted recently into the attitudes of British people towards faith and Christianity. They will help us to understand how our outreach can be more effective.

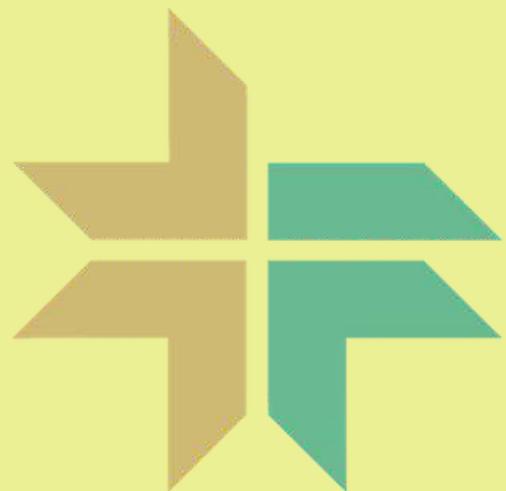
We will also be sharing in worship together and the various contributions will reflect our amazing cultural and ethnic diversity. We describe FCC as a family and spending time together informally over lunch and coffee breaks is as important as the formal time together. It's called Connect for a very good reason!

## ***Where and when will it take place?***

This year Connect will take place at **our Corby Congregation – the Living Faith Temple**. The building is located very centrally in Corby and is easy to access by car or by public transport. Corby is about as central in England as it's possible to be. The event will take place **on Saturday 5 November**.

## ***Who can come?***

Delegates will be invited from all our local churches and invitations will be sent out in September. In addition, there will be guests, the friends and church members of those being ordained and the representatives of those new congregations being welcomed in.



# DATE FOR CREATE CONFERENCE

The next Create Conference will take place on 8/9 May 2023 and will be held at the Kings Park Conference centre in Northampton. Work has begun on the programme. One of our key speakers will be Jeff Metzger who leads the mission organisation New International. Jeff's wife Teresa will also be joining us. New International is a significant organisation for FCC. They are sending increasing numbers of workers to the UK and FCC would love to be a partner in this. New International are strongly connected to our churches in the USA and share our heart and vision for mission. If you intend to come to this event please save the date now.

## JONATHAN BELL DESCRIBES CHURCH MULTIPLICATION



Church Central is a church in the centre of Birmingham led by Jonathan Bell. It belongs to the New Frontiers network and while it is not a large church, it has been a significant church in terms of mission in the city of Birmingham. In the video below, Jonathan explains how the church has attempted to plant 10 new congregations in different parts of the city over the past two decades.

When FCC began its new phase of life in 1980, there were just two FCC congregations

in the city. One of those has since closed although FCC retains the building. Since that time FCC has seen the development of 13 new congregations in the greater West Midlands area. Our approach to this development has been strikingly similar to that of Jonathan Bell's initiative.

In the video above, Jonathan captures how to engage in significant church multiplication. He points out that it does not take a huge church to do this but it does take huge faith!

Enjoy experiencing Jonathan's energy and enthusiasm in the video that follows. Here are the highlights from his talk.

### **Readiness to Respond to the Unexpected – Church Multiplication**

We recently invited local church leaders and planters to share their stories, and Jonathan Bell (Church Central Birmingham) shared their story of multiplication. The edited video story from our conference is above, and here are some of things he shared that helped them to respond to unexpected opportunities that came their way. Jonathan shared that most of their church planting has been in response to spontaneous opportunities that have opened up – whether it is a growing group of people in a specific community; or someone with a strong vision to plant that we've partnered with; or a call for help from somewhere; or simply a venue that becomes unexpectedly available. He says, "Although it hasn't all been strategically thought through, what we have found is that in order to be responsive in the moment, does require a degree of pre-planning. Here are four things that have helped".

#### **1. Reduce busy-ness**

There are probably way more opportunities if we take the time to look up and look around us.

#### **2. Think collaboratively**

We have come to learn that working with others (even those, or maybe particularly those, outside of our stream or

denomination) can lead to us doing way more than we could ever do by ourselves.

#### **3. Raise leaders**

When we started encouraging multiplication at a grassroots level, with lay leaders seeking to reproduce themselves, we started seeing new leaders emerging. Coupled with that, the more you plant, the more space you create for new leaders to come through and to carry real responsibility.

#### **4. Raise Money (or not)**

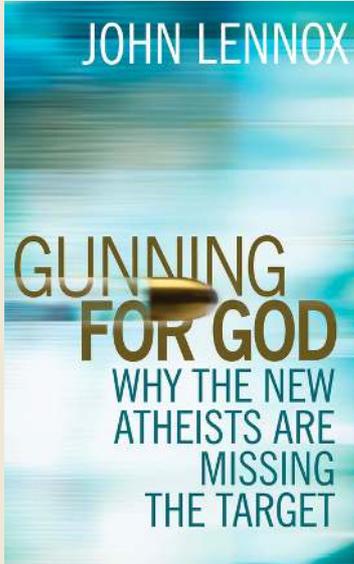
Multiplication can be costly – both in terms of set up costs and also the loss of giving of those you send. But if we always waited until we could afford to do it, we would probably never have done anything. Most of the time we have been pretty 'hand to mouth'. Nonetheless we have found that where we have stretched ourselves in faith, God has always come through, albeit often at the 11th hour.

As they look forward, they want to continue to be responsive to unexpected or spontaneous opportunities that God opens up, and also think more strategically about the unreached and the harder to reach.

"There are whole communities that are unlikely to be reached just by doing the things we have done up until now. To that end we are looking to multiply simpler, smaller and swifter, and develop models that are more easily reproducible and way more contextualised".

# RESOURCES

John Lennox is a well-known speaker at Christian conferences. He has been a professor of mathematics at Oxford University and currently holds that title in an emeritus role. He is an outstanding debater, defending Christian truth with people such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. He is also an excellent writer and has published many books. This edition of Connection highlights just two such books.



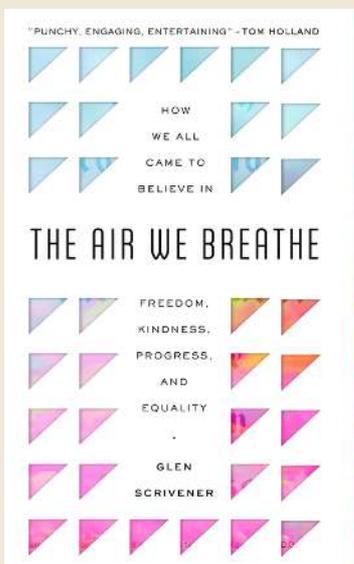
## **Gunning for God: Why the New Atheists are Missing the Target (2011)**

*This is a slightly older book, first published in 2011. Lennox takes on the atheists at their own game and explains why their various contentions are themselves statements of faith, just as Christian convictions have a faith element. He tackles the well-known accusations such as the idea that Christianity is the enemy of reason and science. Lennox points out that the opposite is true. He tackles the idea that religion is poisonous and suggests instead that atheism may indeed be poisonous itself. He asks whether the idea of the new atheists that we can be good without God is misplaced. This is not an easy book to read but it has plenty of evidence behind it. It's worth considering if you interact with atheists and give a reasonable account of the Christian faith and its positive benefits.*



## **2084: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity (2020)**

*This is a very different kind of book and asks some really profound questions about the whole issue of whether robots will ever enslave us or even whether by implanting chips we might become more like machines ourselves. The subject will not be everyone's cup of tea but if you are looking for an introduction to this complex subject then Lennox provides just such a resource. This was published by Zondervan in 2020 so it's fairly recent.*



## **The Air we Breathe: How we all came to believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress, and Equality (2022)**

by Glen Scrivener

*I love this book for two reasons. First, because it is very accessible and even the newest Christian should be able to follow the arguments very easily. Second, Scrivener is giving voice to many of the arguments that I like to make with non Christians but I have never seen in print before. The core argument is that the values that we tend to take for granted are not just inevitable outcomes of rational thought, but rather have been initiated, developed and campaigned for as core values as part of the gospel. Scrivener helpfully identifies how each of these values have been advanced by Christians. He suggests that part of the success of the gospel is that these values are now so widely accepted as common sense. It was not always so!*