



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

News From Jireh Chapel



A group outside Jireh Chapel in July. Included are young people over from Ulster to help with outreach work under the supervision of Rev. Wesley McDowell and Rev. Ivan and Mrs. Foster

Jireh Chapel in Lewes, East Sussex, was built in 1805 to facilitate the preaching of Rev. Jenkin Jenkins. It fell into disuse and decay in recent times, but was carefully restored under the guidance of Pastor Jim North with the aid of funds from the English Heritage Trust in the mid 1990s and handed over to the Free Presbyterian Church in April 1998. Evangelist Noel Shields from Ulster has ministered in the chapel from that date. Here is a report from him of how things are going in that part of England.

During our 18 months here, we have had the usual set backs that one finds in church building. There have been a few families who have left our fellowship for various reasons, coming to the conclusion that the witness and the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church is not for them.

Nevertheless, as we look back over the past months we do thank the Lord for the progress that has been made here in Jireh Chapel.

There are between 15 - 22 attending the Sunday services with around 5 - 7 coming to the midweek Bible study and prayer meeting. It has been encouraging for us to see a lady and a young man called Patrick both coming to Christ and trusting Him for salvation, since our arrival here. Both of them are going on well with the Lord. This helps us to believe that there are yet more people to be saved in this town. We are praying that the Lord will bring in new Christians who will give us 100% support here in the work and that sinners will be saved.

The work among the children is still proving to be a difficult work. Over the last number of months we have been trying to get a children's meeting established in a mobile hall in a local housing estate. Sad to say, this has been to no avail. There is no interest at all amongst the parents or the children in the meetings. Because no children at all turned up at the last couple of meetings we have decided to close this door for the present and perhaps in the near future start the meetings in the church. There is no doubt that much prayer is needed for this work if ever we are going to reach the children with the gospel of Christ.

The Sunday school still is progressing slowly with around 10 - 12 children coming along each week. Five of these children are from non-Christian homes, so we count it a blessing to be able to reach them with the good news of the gospel.

Our door to door work continues here in the town. We have already been around the town and some local villages with invitations and gospel tracts inviting people to our services. At this present time, we are visiting the homes in Lewes for a second time with a new invitation to our meetings. This can be a discouraging work as we are continually meeting people who are in complete darkness concerning the things of God. Indeed, many profess to be atheists. Yet we know that the Lord will bless the Word that is sown. Over the last few



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weeks we have had great opportunities of presenting the gospel to some in their homes. May the Lord Jesus draw them soon to Himself.

The open-air witness still continues here in the precinct, a pedestrian area in the centre of the town, once a month. We are not allowed to use loud-speaking equipment so we just have to rely on the old lung power! Although the interest in such meetings is small, we know that our meeting is a public witness for Christ, and we do get opportunities to speak personally to some people about their need of Christ.

A door has been opened up for us to hold a meeting in an old people's home once a month. We have been very well received and have had good opportunities of witnessing to the staff and patients alike about the Saviour.

Recently a group calling themselves Humanity United organized a march on November 5th to try to remove the "No Popery" aspect from the famous annual bonfire celebrations here in Lewes. They claim that the "No Popery" banner which is displayed for one day each year on November 5th is offensive to some in the town. As a result we have had many opportunities to present the message of the gospel and defend the Protestant cause through the local newspaper and T V. A documentary about the bonfire celebrations in Lewes, shown on BBC South, included part of our morning service which was recorded back in July. Rev Ivan Foster was the preacher at that service. Also on the same program was part of an interview we gave on why we oppose the church of Rome.

On the Sunday before 5th November, the local Orange Lodge held their annual thanksgiving service in Jireh chapel. The guest preacher was Rev. Kyle Paisley, who spoke a powerful message on why we Protestants believe what we do. Rev. Paisley showed how that we base our authority on the Word of God. The service attracted a good few visitors, including the local Unitarian minister and the Roman Catholic priest Mr. Flood. On his way out Mr. Flood invited me out for a drink, as he thought it was time that we got together! I told him that I do not drink as I was converted to Jesus Christ almost 15 years ago. Then he asked me out for a meal which I also refused. While we have no time for compromise, we pray that this man who is held in the darkness of Rome will get his eyes opened to the true teaching of the Word of God.

Please remember the work over here in Lewes and pray for us all before the throne of grace. Yours in Christ. Noel and Joan Shields and family. *Brethren, pray for us*, 1 Thess 5:25.