



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Summer Seminar for trainee teachers



Back row: Mr. Selwyn Daly (Kilskeery); Mrs. Daphne McKee (Portadown); (Front Row) Miss Joanna Clarke (Newtownabbey); Miss Julie McAuley (Ballymoney).

As part of its Christian Education programme, the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster conducts seminars for trainees and probationary teachers each August in Whitefield College of the Bible. The subjects dealt with include the history of Christian education, its philosophy and methodology.

Special subjects such as the character of the Christian teacher and leading children to Christ also feature in the annual gathering.

The seminar is an integral part of the four-year course that each trainee must undertake in order to be recognised as a teacher in one of our Christian

schools. Teachers, moving from the state sector into our Christian schools are required to attend two annual seminars in order

that the Biblical ethos of our teaching methods and philosophy is properly maintained. As well as the seminars, the training includes practical experience in the classroom under the supervision of a qualified and experienced teacher. Coupled with these labours, the trainee is required to obtain a university degree.

All told, the trainee requires a high degree of dedication and zeal to undertake such a burden. Our Christian schools receive no state funding whatsoever. Nor, we must emphasise, do our teachers receive their wages from the state. Every financial outlay, buildings, teaching materials and salaries, must be met by the school itself. The fees charged to parents are kept at a minimum in order to exclude none. Indeed, to give an idea of the sacrifice made by our staff members and those who seek to raise funds for the maintenance of our schools, the fees charged fall short of those levied by the average child-minder!

Please pray for this vital Christian work, especially now that it has been targeted by a coalition of Sinn Fein/IRA and anti-Bible organisations such as the NSPCC in an attempt to curb the Christian's right to educate his children according to the teaching of God's Word. Erstwhile IRA Commander, now Education Minister in the Northern Ireland Assembly, Martin McGuinness plans to introduce new legislation, banning corporal punishment within Christian schools next year. Not content with the plague of lawlessness presently rampant in state schools, they would outlaw the Bible's means of proper discipline from Christian schools. Next it will be the Christian home that comes under this tyranny.

Anyone wishing to know how they may financially support this work may do so by contacting the Convenor of the Presbytery Education Board, Rev. Ivan Foster at 51 Old Junction Road, Kilskeery, Co. Tyrone, BT78 3RN.