



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Kilskeery Independent Christian school celebrates 25 years



[More pictures of the gathering](#)

On Saturday, June 19th, the staff, pupils, parents and supporters of Kilskeery Independent school met to praise God for His merciful provision and protection for our school over the last 25 years.

The school commenced with 13 pupils in September 1979. Mrs. Ann Foster was its sole teacher and principal.

Over the intervening years, in answer to prayer, the school has survived and prospered without any government funding whatsoever. The wages of teachers and the equipment within the school are all paid for

by money raised by the School Management Committee through pupils' fees and the many gifts and donations from our army of friends and supporters.

Testimonies were given by Mr. Alan Edwards, the oldest pupil of our first intake and now a successful businessman living with his wife and family near Lisburn, Mrs. Hazel Campbell (nee Shier), the first assistant teacher recruited by the school and now a teacher in Mourne Christian school and Miss Amanda Dane, the first candidate in our teacher training scheme, now Vice-Principal in Kilskeery.

Rev. Ivan Foster, acting as chairman of the meeting, gave a brief history of the establishing and development of the school. He said: "When the decision to proceed with Christian education was initially taken here in Kilskeery, the congregation had just been formed and consisted of 17 adults and 22 children!

The congregation had just taken on the expense of a minister (I had been installed in February 1978), the building of a manse and now it took on the building of an extension to the church to house the school.

Home

The manse was built and has been our happy home for just over 24 years. Other extensions have since been added to the school and the school survived. To date, some £850,000 has been raised and spent, and that is not counting the expenses which the church has covered, on the educating of our children here in Kilskeery. All told, the school's budget would be approximately £1million over the 25 years. Please remember that this total does not include one penny from the government!

Covenanters

We had 258 covenanters in our Covenant Support Scheme when it was first launched in 1978. Over the years, what with other schools commencing and God's saints going home to glory, that number has dropped to 47. Of that 47, 31 have been with us since the first, many of those from the Kilskeery congregation.

For all that has been done we can only say, "To God be the glory."



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Thanks

I wish to thank every teacher and trainee who has had a part in that labour. It was your labours and sacrifice primarily that made our school a success. I wish to thank every parent who, out of obedience to God and faith in His Word, sent their children to the school and have thus shared in the excitement of the venture and laboured in prayer for this great work.

Committee

I wish to thank the members of our School Management Committee, all of whom were involved from the first day of our school, though two were primary school pupils on that day! They have done all in their power to sustain the work and facilitate the education of those children sent to us.

Covenant scheme relaunched

I wish also today to relaunch our Covenant Support Scheme with a view to seeking to upgrade our teachers' wages to the best of our abilities. When we asked for help from covenanters back in 1978, we suggested that perhaps they might contribute 50p per week! Well, we will not be greedy when we suggest that the sum should be increased to £1 per week. I would ask God's people to stand by this great missionary work and give to that venture which is on your own doorstep and which should have some degree of priority amongst those institutions that we support, since it will affect the life and the eternity of your own children and those of your neighbours. (See covenant form below). The issues at stake are great. The State school system is a promoter of anti-Bible atheistic evolution; Christ dishonouring multi-faithism and leads the assault against the morality of the Ten Commandments. Without Christian education the outlook for our children is bleak."

Mr. Ivan Morrison, Clerk of Session of Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church spoke on behalf of the Management Committee, thanking all those who had been faithful to the school over the years. He presented Rev. Ivan and Mrs. Ann Foster with a cheque from the school's supporters which was to be used to fund a good holiday for the couple. Mr. and Mrs. Foster plan to put it toward a trip to Israel in the Spring of 2005.

Other gifts were also presented. The past pupils of the school gave a gift of £2640 to the school funds and a portrait of Mrs. Foster was presented to her. Mr. John Woods, a former head boy in the school and now a licentiate minister in the Free Presbyterian Church, made the presentation on behalf of the past pupils.

Rev. Trevor Baxter, a member of the Presbytery's Education Board, brought greetings from the Board, rejoicing with what was the first of seven schools opened by the Free Presbyterian Church.

Preacher

Rev. Colin Mercer of Mourne Free Presbyterian Church was the guest preacher. He spoke powerfully from Rev. 3:8, 11. Following the service, a sit-down buffet tea was enjoyed in a marquee on the school's playing field. Rev. and Mrs. Foster were called upon to cut a special cake to mark the occasion. It is difficult to describe adequately the feelings of those who have been associated with the school over the last quarter of a century on this special day. We can but repeat, "To God be the glory."



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