



Image of the day - St Brigid, Kildare

February, 9, 2021

Church of South India Celebrates 10 Years of Dublin Congregation



Some members of the Church of South India Holy Trinity Congregation during the service marking their 10th anniversary.

The Holy Trinity Congregation of the Church of South India in Dublin celebrated their tenth anniversary on Saturday February 6.

The congregation, which gathers for worship in the Church of St Catherine and St James on Donore Avenue in Dublin, marked their milestone anniversary with a special Service of Thanksgiving online. During the service they received greetings from Bishop Sabu Koshy Cherian, CSI Bishop in Kottayam in the Diocese of Madhya Kerala and from Archbishop Michael Jackson in Dublin and Bishop Thomas Samuel, Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Madhya Kerala

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Bishop Sabu Koshy Cherian reminded the members of the congregation of their calling to be co-workers in God's field and God's temple. He stressed the importance of remaining united in their being and doing and motivated the congregation towards being responsible, careful and fruitful in their call so that all may spiritually grow together as the Temple of God. Special prayers were offered for the Congregation as she enters into another decade of witnessing God's call to be a set-apart community.

Archbishop Michael Jackson expressed his delight and honour at being invited to send his greetings to the CSI Congregation in Dublin. He said, "It is not only a good story but also good news in itself. It is Christianity international and Christianity on the move." The Archbishop considered it entirely fitting that the Church of Ireland had assisted and continued to help the CSI Congregation, with which it is in communion. In the exhortation that followed, the Archbishop mentioned three things that we could learn from one another: the urgency of faith, discipleship of life, cohesion of worship. He concluded, quoting 1 Samuel 25: 6, "Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have." He assured members of his prayers for the peace of the congregation, peace of India, Ireland, and the whole world.

There were further greetings from Bishops in the CSI Diocese of Madhya Kerala and clergy who have served or visited Dublin congregation.

Representatives of the CSI Dublin congregation along with representatives of congregations in Belfast, London and Manchester congratulated Bishop Sabu K Cherian and Dr Jessy Sara Kohy, and the CSI Dublin congregation on



completing 10 years in her faith journey. The Revd Dr Jacob Thomas (who is also Bishop's teacher) prayed for the Bishop's and Kochamma's effective ministry, and for the Dublin congregation.

Bishop Sabu Koshy Cherian

The congregation presented the Bishop with a memento.

Treasurer Mr Siby Koshy Cherian (who is also the elder son of the

Bishop) presented the memento which marks both his consecration as 13th Bishop of the CSI Madhya Kerala Diocese as well as the 10th anniversary of the Dublin congregation.

The CSI Holy Trinity Congregation is grateful to all who were instrumental in forming the congregation. These include the Church of Ireland Archbishops of Dublin, Archbishop (Emeritus) Dr John Neill and Archbishop Michael Jackson, Bishops of the CSI Madhya Kerala Bishop (Emeritus)

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Thomas Samuel, Bishop (Emeritus) Thomas K. Oommen and Bishop Sabu Koshy Cherian, Canon Mark Gardner, Rector of St Catherine and St James' Church, Canon Horace McKinley (former chairperson for the committee for the International Community), the Revd Obinna Ulogwara (former Chaplain to the International Community) and Philip McKinley (former Ecumenical officer of Irish Inter-Church committee). They are also grateful to Revd Dr Jacob Thomas (their first Vicar) and Mrs Emily Jacob, Revd Shemil Mathew, Revd Dr Alex Yesudas, Revd Dr Jameson K and Revd Dr Paul Singh who helped conduct the worship services until 2018, Very Revd T O Oommen, Revd Dr Sabu K. Cherian (now Bishop), Revd Sunil Raj Philip and Revd Joby Joy who on their visit to Dublin, led Worship Services and Cottage Prayers, all those who have been used by God towards the formation nurturing of the congregation.

Tributes were paid to all the members of the Church



Rathlin Island sunset

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Committee, especially the Church Warden Mr Koshy Varghese, Secretary Mr John Uthup and Treasurer Mr Sibuh Cherian Koshy for coordinating the worship and the meeting. Mr John Uthup and Mr Sishir George Kurien (Tholassery) edited and mixed the videos. Thanks to the Revd Dr Jacob Thomas, Revd Dionysius, and Revd Shemil Mathew for joining the worship service.

Report by Revd Viji Varghese Eapen

Newest members of Belfast immigrant community get vital ‘helping hand’

Members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) have been providing the Belfast immigrant community with a ‘helping hand’ with food and essential items during the Covid-19 pandemic at the International Meeting Point (IMP) centres in the north and south of the city.

Since 2010, PCI’s International Meeting Point has been offering practical assistance to the hundreds of immigrants and asylum seekers, who arrive in the city each year. Although much of the work has been curtailed due to the pandemic restrictions, staff working at the IMP have continued to keep in contact with many immigrants and asylum seekers.

Over recent months, they have been helping dozens of families and individuals each week who have reached out to them in desperate need for the basic necessities of life. Thanks to a continuing flow of donations, the staff and

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volunteers have been able to provide the items in a Covid-safe way. In doing so, they are able to help one of the most vulnerable groups in society at this time.

Talking about the need that there is, Keith Preston, IMP leader, said, “Over the last month or two, there has been an incredible increase in the number of people getting in contact with us in urgent need of food and basic toiletries. Most of these calls for help have come from people who have arrived in Belfast recently from various countries in the Middle East. Items required include rice, pasta, cooking oil, tinned fruit, tea, coffee, sugar, washing up liquid and toiletries.

“Thousands of items are already being distributed each week, and we have been overwhelmed with the increased



On Benone Strand, County Londonderry

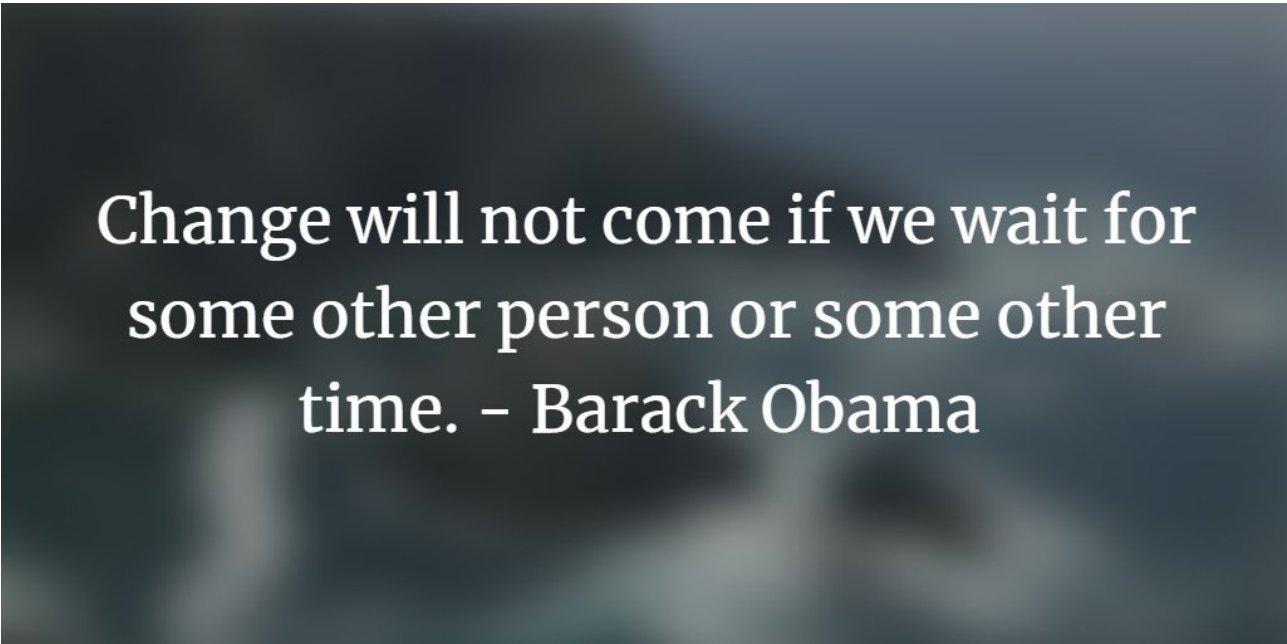
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response of local churches and individuals, who we can't thank you enough. We are more than amply supplied with clothing for both men and women now, but we are still in need of toiletries and basic food items.”

Keith continued, “We have put together a list of items required and these can be left at the International Meeting Point, 133 Lisburn Road, Belfast where they will be distributed to those in need.

“To minimise journeys during the current restrictions, we would ask that only people living locally donate at this time, and that they should consider dropping off their donations on their way home from doing their own essential shopping,” he said.

Based on the Lisburn Road in south Belfast, the International Meeting Point has been offering a wide variety of help and services to those who come through its doors over the past 10 years. This has included serving food and drinks in the cafe, running English classes, taking people



**Change will not come if we wait for
some other person or some other
time. – Barack Obama**

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shopping, helping the unemployed find jobs and leading Bible studies. In 2019 an 'Op Shop' was opened at Carlisle Circus in north Belfast, to reach out to those living in that part of the city.

Keith explained that the work of the IMP has been greatly impacted by restrictions to prevent the spread of Covid-19, however staff and volunteers have kept in contact with many families and individuals by phone and online.

“At this time of great need it is a privilege to be able to show the love of Jesus in very practical ways to those who are struggling to adjust to life, and the weather, in Northern Ireland. We are very grateful to all who have already donated items. Everyone who donates plays a vital part in this important ministry. As always, we also continue to appreciate prayer as we seek to witness for Jesus to all who come to the center for help,” he said.

For a full list of food and toiletries required and how to donate them in a Covid-safe way, please contact the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Mission Department on 028 9032 2284, or email: mission@presbyterianireland.org.

Swapping the green hills of Glengormley for the sun and sand of Majorca.

The Rev Bill Boyce and his wife Eleanor will shortly be swapping the green hills of Glengormley for the sun and sand of Port de Pollença, Majorca.



The Rev Bill Boyce and his wife Eleanor.

After 14 years as rector of St Brigid's, Mallusk, Bill is following a call to the Spanish island where he will be Chaplain in the Anglican Church of St Andrew.

The couple have had an apartment in Port de Pollença since 2013, but despite their love of the place, they hadn't envisaged a permanent move – at least not yet.

“We attend the church in Port de Pollença when we are in the town, and over the years have got to know quite a few of the local people and the minister,” Bill said. “We thought that when we were coming up to retirement we might consider living there.



Port de Pollença.

“The minister of St Andrew’s has now moved to Costa del Sol, but we did not think there was the money to replace him. Then, in one of the regular emails we received from the

church community in Port de Pollença, we saw that they were advertising for a part-time Chaplain in St Andrew’s.

“That set things in motion, causing us to wonder if a move like this would be possible. Then that sense of call became clearer and stronger.

“We have made real connections with the people there. They hold a Songs of Praise service on the beach, and a couple of years ago we had a real moment. We were singing ‘I am the Lord of Sea and Sky’ and both Eleanor and



The Rev Bill Boyce competing in a cycling race in Majorca.

I felt a real sense that maybe this is where God wanted us to be.”

Bill was interviewed for the post by Zoom last December, and was offered, and accepted, the job that same day. He announced his departure to his parishioners in Mallusk last month.

“We will miss Mallusk. We love the people here, but this has been a real call for us. Announcing that we are leaving was one of the hardest things I have had to do,” Bill said.

Eleanor took early retirement from the Organ Donation Service in 2017, and it was she who introduced Bill to Port

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de Pollença. “My love of the place just wasn’t going to go away,” she admitted.

“I will miss St Brigid’s. I felt enveloped in love when I first arrived in 2011. The parish is very much like family.”

St Andrew’s has a regular membership of around 30 people who live on the island, but in the summer season the church welcomes hundreds of holiday makers.

While Majorca is currently under Covid-19 restrictions, churches and restaurants are open. Bill’s last service in St Brigid’s will be the Sunday after Easter, and he will begin as Chaplain in Port de Pollença in May.

Bill has been rector of St Brigid’s since September 2007. He grew up in St Patrick’s Parish, Coleraine, and trained as a civil engineer. Bill worked for the Department of the Environment for almost 20 years before he was ordained to the curacy of Willowfield Parish, Down Diocese, in 2003. From there he moved to Bangor Abbey as curate until his appointment as incumbent of Mallusk.

In 2010, Bill and the Rev Andrew Ker, his curate at the time, raised more than £40,000 for the Friends of the Cancer Centre through the Tour de Connor. This cycle marathon, which called at every parish in Connor Diocese, was organised in memory of Bill’s first wife Sandra. Bill remains a keen cyclist.

St Andrew’s Church is situated in modern premises in the heart of the port of Port de Pollença, and if – once holidays

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are permitted – you ever find yourself on the island, Bill and Eleanor would love you to join them at a service.

Connor Mothers' Union (MU) meets vital need for emergency wash bags in two large Belfast hospitals



Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Connor MU Chaplain, delivers wash bags from Connor MU members to Hospital Chaplain Sanna Mallon in the church within Musgrave Park Hospital.

Connor Mothers' Union (MU) is meeting a vital need by supplying emergency wash bags for patients in two large Belfast hospitals.

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In mid-January, the MU received a request from Sanna Mallon, Church of Ireland Chaplain in the Royal Victoria and Musgrave Park hospitals, for help with providing wash bags for patients.

Sanna said: “More and more patients are coming into these hospitals and have not even a toothbrush with them. Sometimes they have to wait a week before their loved ones can bring a wash bag.”

MU members around the diocese responded quickly, with 75 packs made up for delivery, and are continuing to collect items to supply more bags.

Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Connor MU Chaplain, handed over the wash bags to Sanna at Musgrave Park Hospital.

Rector instituted in West Cork parish

On Thursday, 4th February, in a short Service broadcast online from Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, the Reverend Ivan Ruiters was instituted as incumbent of the Parish of Kinneigh Union of Parishes, in County Cork.

The new rector was presented for Institution to the Bishop, Dr Paul Colton, by the Archdeacon, the Venerable Adrian Wilkinson. After the Institution, the Dean of Cork, the Very Reverend Nigel Dunne, read the intercessions. The organ was played by Peter Stobart.

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In his sermon, referring to some of the readings for ember days, Bishop Colton said that they bring 'us back to the heart of what ministry, modelled on the way of Jesus, is. And that's appropriate as tonight we welcome and affirm Ivan in his new ministry here in Cork, Cloyne and Ross, and we send him to Kinneigh Union in the name of Jesus.'

The First letter of Saint Peter, the Bishop said, was a pastoral message of support, encouragement and hope - truly relevant to our own times - in which we are encouraged to be 'level-headed and to stand firm.'

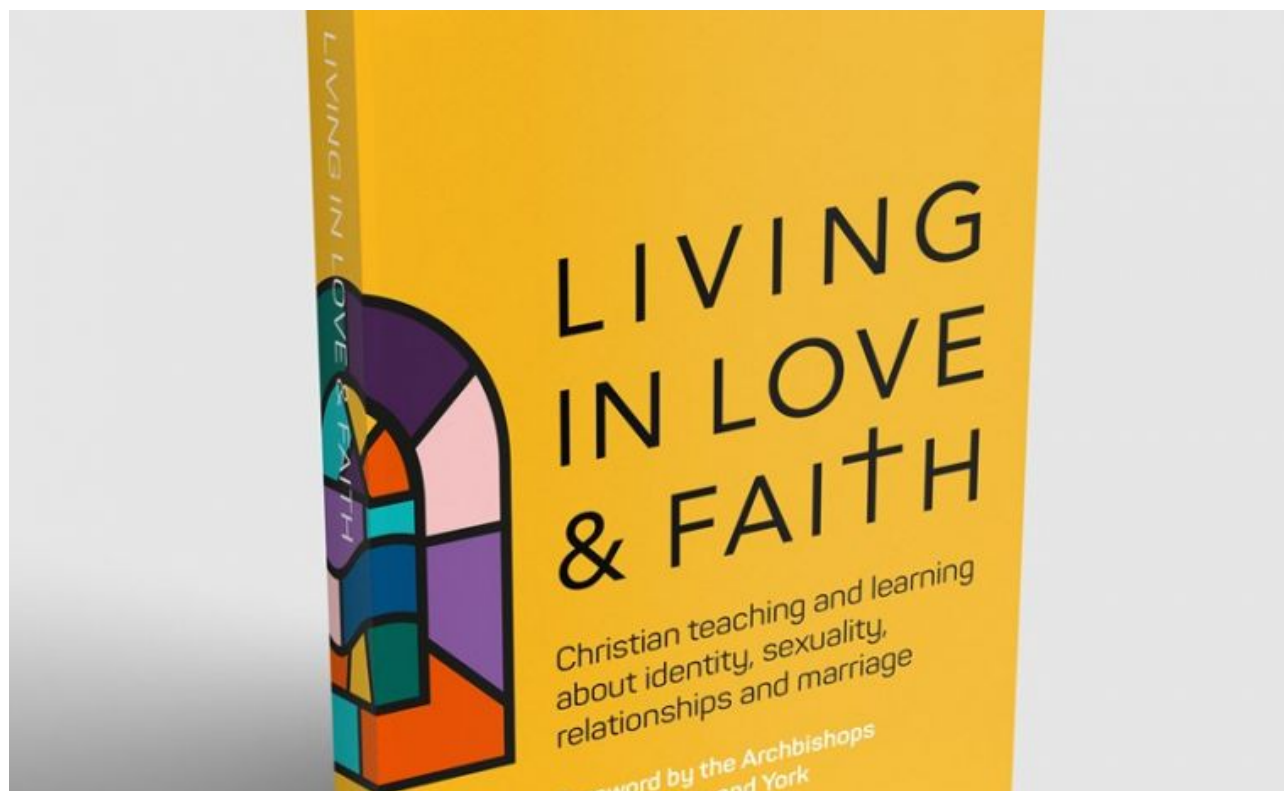
Thursday 4th was not only Mrs Raylene Ruiters' birthday, it was also Ivan and her wedding anniversary: a day not to be forgotten. They were supported and welcomed by a large congregation who joined in the Service online.

Bullying over theological differences is 'completely unacceptable' - C of E bishops

Bishops in the Church of England have called on Anglicans to be respectful when discussing sexuality and gender identity.

In particular, the statement from the London College of Bishops stresses that bullying over theological differences is "completely unacceptable".

The statement was issued as churches continue to discuss the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) resources on marriage,



relationships, sexuality and gender identity released last year.

The bishops called for “kindness, humility and profound grace”, and said that LLF should be an opportunity for Anglicans “to love, listen to and understand each other better with our theological convictions and in the diversity of our lived experience”.

The launch of the resources triggered a war of words between liberals and conservatives on social media, with a transgender priest who appeared in the trailer video for the resources

Engagement with the resources will take place across the Church of England throughout this year, with a debate in General Synod planned for 2022.

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In their statement, the bishops commended the Church of England's Digital Charter, a voluntary pledge committing Anglicans to making social media and the web "more positive places".

They also suggested that extra care be taken as much of the dialogue around LLF will take place online due to the pandemic rather than face-to-face.

"As a College, we have each decided at this time to sign up to the Church of England's Digital Charter ... We would encourage you to do the same," they said.

"The values at the heart of that Charter, including truth, kindness and togetherness, are fundamental to LLF, to the conversations that are happening digitally, and to the discussions which will, in time, hopefully take place in person.

"It is legitimate to articulate the traditional position of the Church and it is legitimate to argue the case for change in the Church, but we are clear that bullying on the grounds of expressed theological difference is completely unacceptable.

"We also profoundly regret the considerable harm, abuse and suffering caused to those in our Diocese and our Church as a result of homophobia or transphobia, which are inexcusable and deeply contrary to the love which lies at the heart of the Gospel.

"We all need to know that the conversations we have over these months will be as safe as is humanly possible.

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“As a College, each one of us is absolutely clear that abuse, bullying and discrimination are profoundly contrary to the Gospel.”

Jerusalem Christians condemn attack on Churches

The Patriarch of Jerusalem and other Christian leaders are calling on the Israeli government to put a stop to attacks on churches in the holy city.

A Romanian Orthodox Church in the Musrara neighbourhood of East Jerusalem was the victim of an arson attack on 2 February.

It follows an arson attack on a church in the Garden of Gethsemane in December and anti-Christian graffiti sprayed onto the doors of the Dormition Abbey, a Benedictine community in Jerusalem, last May. The graffiti said “kill the pagans” and “death to the Christian unbelievers, enemies of Israel”.

His Beatitude Theophilos III said the latest attack was a sign of “hatred for the Christian religion” by radical groups in Israel.

He condemned the “failure of official authorities” in the city to put a stop to the attacks.

“Their tolerance towards such terrorist acts will definitely lead to more fuelling of the conflict in the Holy City,” he said.



The Patriarch is asking the international community to intervene by opening up a dialogue with the Israeli government aimed at putting a stop to the attacks, which he said represented an attempt by extremist groups to “change the mosaic character of the city of Jerusalem by force”.

His calls were echoed by Dr Ramzi Khoury, President of the Higher Presidential Committee of Churches Affairs in Palestine, who said that radical groups were “trying to drag the region into a religious conflict” and were acting with “impunity”.

Anita Delhaas, Chief Executive of the International Community of the Holy Sepulchre, said that such incidents “only reinforce the idea for many Christians that the Holy Land is an increasingly intolerant place for them to live in

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and encourages many to permanently leave the region in search of more tolerant societies.”

“The international Christian community must come together to present a unified voice in condemning such actions.” Ms Delhaas added that such incidents,” she said.

Pointers for prayer

Pray for all teachers and parents involved with students or their children. We ask for stamina and creativity as they seek to educate in less than ideal circumstances.

Pray for Matana Diocese in Burundi - Give thanks for the confirmations that took place across the diocese last Autumn and for safety in travel for Bishop Seth. Ask God to bless the parish pastors as they nurture and disciple these young people in faith.

It has been announced that on Ascension Day - 13 May 2021, Bishop Hosam Naoum will be installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem, bearing the title Archbishop. Please pray for Bishop Naoum, his family and the Diocese.

Pray that the right person will be appointed to lead Church Army in the next chapter. Pray for wisdom for the Board members as they meet to decide who will be appointed.

We think today of families who are struggling to cope with the ongoing restrictions to normal life, especially those who live in small homes with no outside space. We pray for an



abundance of tolerance to help ease their less than ideal circumstances.

Today we give thanks for young climate activists. A UN survey shows that demand for green business and jobs is particularly high among young people, who have been a driving force behind getting the issue onto the political agenda.

We remember with thanks the numerous Mothers' Union members who, over the years, have used their God-given gifts to change the world. We pray that, in our day, we'll also

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be willing to use our gifts to help transform lives and communities

Today we pray for Mozambique. A cholera outbreak combined with a growing humanitarian crisis after fighting in a northern province displaced more than 500,000 people last year has led to the UN calling for help in the region.

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

Lord Jesus, you prayed that we would all be united together so the world would believe and experience your love. Help us to put aside that which keeps us apart and work together to share your love through our actions and our lives.

Speaking to the Soul

We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God through Christ. It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God.

2 Corinthians 3:4-5 NLT

Qualifications are important. You can't deny it. If I catch the train to London I want to be sure that the driver is qualified! If a surgeon operates on me I would be very concerned to know that they knew what they were doing, and had passed all the appropriate exams. The question is, what qualifies someone to do God's work? God's work is of eternal

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importance so we need to know exactly what kind of qualifications are needed.

There are any number of courses in biblical study and Christian ministry, and I am sure that they are all excellent in different ways. It is wonderful that there are so many courses, face to face and online, through which we can be trained to work for God. But don't for a moment imagine that those paper qualifications are all that you need to do God's work. What you need is the qualification of knowing that God's hand is upon your life and that he is directing, inspiring and enabling the work that you are doing. Paul sums it up neatly with the words, "our qualification comes from God."

I thank God for the privilege of going to college to study the Bible and for able scholars who helped me to understand how to interpret it. I even thank God for the exams which made sure that I worked hard to remember large passages of Scripture and how to apply what I had been taught. All of that was very valuable but none of it can, by itself, qualify someone to do God's work. Whether you are a minister, a member of a worship band, a pastoral worker, an administrator, a treasurer or a children's or youth worker what you need before anything else is to know that your confidence is in God, and in God alone. Look out for good courses to help you to improve your knowledge and skills but your qualification lies in your relationship with God.

QUESTION

If you love God how are you using that qualification to bless other people?

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PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you that you call us to work for you and that you always equip those whom you call. Amen.

