



the Christian Worker MAGAZINE

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One new Christian!

**Covid-19 update from
Malawi**

**"When you're hanging
from a cross" by Jim
McGuiggan**

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Front Cover & above:
autumn arrives in
East Kilbride.



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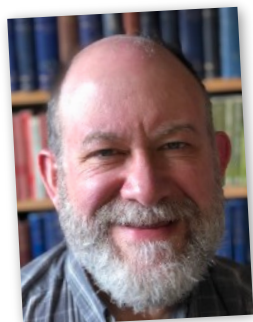
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MY PERSPECTIVE



Live our
lives so
we are
ready
for
eternity

Thoughts on pandemics and life...

We are living in strange and different times. As the last major world-wide pandemic was a century ago we have nothing with which to compare what we are going through except possibly the conditions imposed during the Second World War.

The Spanish Flu of 1918-1920 was far more severe than the 2019 coronavirus. An estimated 500 million people worldwide, or $\frac{1}{3}$ of those living on the earth at that time, were infected. That compares with the infection rate for Covid-19 now approaching 34 million.

The Spanish Flu spread swiftly through the world, as has Covid-19. There was also this similarity: there were no effective drugs or vaccines that could treat it. The only way to try to prevent the spread of it was the same as today: people were told to wear face coverings while schools, theatres, churches and businesses were closed.

There were somewhere between 20 million and 50 million who died from the Spanish Flu. To date worldwide we have just seen the number of deaths go over 1 million to Covid-19. As we are reminded each day in Scotland, each loss of life to this virus represents a loss to a family of someone who was loved by them.

As I've mentioned previously in these pages, my father-in-law caught this virus and lost his life in the spring. That was a blow to my wife and her sisters and all of the associated families. Although we all know that one day our lives will end – and the

lives of our loved ones – it doesn't make it any easier when you suddenly lose someone you loved to a virus.

There are, of course, other diseases available and people continue to contract them and sometimes they, too, lose their lives. This has also been driven home to our family.

My mother entered hospital in July for a relatively minor procedure, a cardiac ablation, to help her heart return to a normal rhythm. Little did we know that when she left her home that she would never return to it.

The procedure was a success. But the effect of being anaesthetised left her with a sudden onset of dementia. She had struggled to recover in past medical procedures which required her to be put under. Sadly this time she did not fully recover and her life on earth ended just over a week ago.

Life is fragile. This worldwide pandemic has shown this very clearly, although we see this in other ways as well. Because there are no guarantees in living we need to do what we can to protect others and we need to always be prepared for the time our lives will come to an end.

We spent a week recently with our youngest son's family on holiday. Being with our eleven-month old grandson everyday was also a reminder of how little time we have on the earth. It is important that we live our lives for Jesus so we are ready for eternity.

Jon



CONGRATULATIONS!

A new Christian in Ilkeston

Clifford Nsiah was immersed by his father Ben during worship on 6th September in the Ilkeston chapel. We are thankful for the faith of this 16 year old.

Trevor Williams



NEWS FROM MALAWI

A three hour meeting of congregation leaders and preachers at Ekwendeni (right). We are just being saved by the grace of God as social distancing is still a problem though we do try to put on masks. God is just kind with us otherwise by now many of us would have been gone.

Baptism! It is sometimes a challenge in as it is difficult to find clean water as some of the rural congregations still do not have a local baptistery.

Davison Z. Ndhlovu





BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

Waiting for the doors to reopen?

Once Paul and Silas had headed north through Syria and Cilicia, and then westward, stopping in Derbe and Lystra where they picked up Timothy, they found themselves forbidden by the Holy Spirit to move on into Asia. Passing through Phrygia and Galatia, they found themselves once more prevented from venturing further north into Bithynia. Luke doesn't tell us exactly how the Spirit of Jesus prevented their progress in these areas, but he does make it clear that when doors are closed, others are opened – often leading to most unexpected destinations.

In the case of Paul, Silas and Timothy, the door that was opened was the door that lead to what we know as the European continent. Accompanied also by Luke, this small group of pioneering believers made their way across the sea and found themselves in Philippi, where the good news of Jesus found a home in the heart of a believer called Lydia.

Over these past few months it might seem as if many doors have been closed, but maybe you have already seen other doors open to new opportunities, leading to places you may not have formerly considered. It would be sad if we had spent all this time simply standing by doors that have closed, only waiting for them to open up once all this is over. Who knows what we might have been missing?

As doors were closed to events we had planned, other doors were being opened online, enabling us to reach hearts and minds that we might otherwise have not encountered. Moving on beyond this present crisis we plan to continue with very much of an increasing online presence, whilst also looking forward to being back together face to face.

If God is willing, we plan to proceed with our Study Week in November at Bassenfell Manor in the northern Lake District. That door remains open as I

write, and should it stay that way we'll be there working our way through the book of Acts. We would love to have you with us too as we continue our journey with Luke, meeting Paul and Silas and others along the way.

Look out for details on our website, and do please get in touch if you'd like to join us.

Patrick Boyns

britishbibleschool.com

ACTS

British Bible School Autumn Study Week

Bassenfell Manor, Bassenthwaite, Lake District
Monday, 2nd to Friday, 6th November 2020

- Three full days of study and reflection away from the cares of life
- Delightful accommodation, good food and decent company
- All inclusive cost: £150 per student





“When you’re hanging on a cross”

In 1923 one of the greatest earthquake disasters in history hit Japan and reduced Tokyo and Yokohama to smoking ruins. Millions were homeless; starvation, disease and anarchy were the only things flourishing and the government and military could do nothing about it.

They knew a man who could reorganise and restructure things but he was in prison. The common people almost worshipped him but the government, the capitalists, the radical nationalists and the military people hated and feared him. He was in prison for orchestrating a vast non-violent strike in the docks and even though the workers got all that he had demanded for them he himself was thrown into prison for his leadership in the strike action. His name was Toyohiko Kagawa. They let him out of prison and he began the work of rebuilding the nation. The government offered him a huge wage and all the privileges that went with such a role but he turned it all down saying, “To work with the poor I must be poor.”

He was born in 1888, the illegitimate son of a wealthy and high-ranking politician and a geisha. The father took a liking to the child and adopted him but before the boy was five both his parents had died and although he was officially a samurai and head of nearly twenty villages he went to live with his grandmother and a stepmother. The stepmother hated him and his life was one of unrelieved misery until, when he was eleven, a rich uncle adopted him and planned great things for him. If his stepmother’s house was the frying pan his boarding school was the fire.

But he met and learned English from Henry Myers a Presbyterian minister. He

learned more than that—he learned about Christ and Myers baptised Kagawa into Christ.

Horace Shipp said, “**Young Kagawa became a Christian. He did a rarer thing: he began to practice Christianity.**” He was a pacifist to the core and at times he literally turned the other cheek and he insisted on giving away all his possessions and often his food.

In 1904 Japan without warning attacked the Russian ships at Port Arthur and destroyed their entire Far Eastern fleet. Japan as a nation hailed this as a great triumph and justified it on the basis of less obvious but threatening developments in Russian foreign affairs.

At the seminary where he now attended Kagawa dared to speak against Japan’s act of war and the students would take turns to beat him up. Finally he was expelled, he fell ill (tuberculosis) and went away to die in a little fishing village. But a boat was wrecked on the coast and Kagawa worked until he was absolutely exhausted helping to rescue people. This experience made him determined to live and later his stated aim was “The salvation of 100,000 poor, the emancipation of 9,430,000 labourers and the liberation of twenty million tenant-farmers.”

He took a header into the infamous slums at Shinkawa and for nineteen years he lived in a cubicle six feet by six feet, with one side open to act as door and windows. As part of the lowest of the low, even by Shinkawa standards, he shared his living quarters and for four years he held the hand of a murderer who couldn’t sleep alone. He got a little income from a Training school and he doubled it by working as a chimney

"When you're hanging on a cross"

sweep and gave it away or gave away all the food and clothes it bought.

It was from one of his ceaseless stream of visitors that he contracted a fierce eye disease that moved him closer and closer to blindness.

The slum bullies robbed him with violence, burned down his shack, knocked his teeth out and challenged his faith by demanding that he give away his clothes. He did that on more than one



occasion and had to wear a woman's robe until he could replace them.

Once he was on the verge of taking on a jeering and threatening bully who was going to stop his preaching but instead he turned and ran. The crowd roared with laughter but he was back the next day in the same place preaching Christ.

It's no surprise then that when the earthquake hit and Japan was in awful need that they let him out of prison and asked him to be Chief of Social Welfare. Once, as he visited an American University, two students went to hear him speak but when he was done, unimpressed one said to the other, "He didn't have a lot to say, did he?" A woman behind them leaned over and said, "**When you're hanging on a cross you don't need to say a lot.**" He died in 1960.

Toyohiko Kagawa is one face of God's love for the world.

Jim McGuiggan

AT REST



Barbara Galloway (Florence, Alabama)

My mother was known by many in the UK, particularly in Scotland where she and my father visited many times.

She was born on 28th June 1938 in Rogersville, Tennessee, the eldest of what was to be two children. She became a Christian as a teenager and met my dad while she was a student at Freed-Hardeman College. They were married in June 1957. My dad spent his life as a preacher and teacher of God's word and my mother helped him in many ways as he worked with congregations in Tennessee, West Virginia, Finland, and Ohio. She enjoyed studying the Bible and teaching ladies' classes and Bible study courses written by dad.

They were blessed with four children: Ed, Jon, Brian, and Judy. All are faithful Christians today and active in congregations where they live.

Due to their declining health my parents moved to be near their daughter and lived in Florence, Alabama, for their remaining years. My mother departed this life for her heavenly reward on Tuesday, 22nd September.

She loved her family. She took pride in her eleven grandchildren and adored her ten great-grandchildren, three of whom she was never able to meet due to the pandemic travel restrictions. She died of dementia complications brought on by minor surgery in July.

Jon Galloway



FAMILY NEWS

GREAT BARR

Great Barr Online Fellowship Day

The importance of reading large sections of scriptures is an inevitable aspect of our discipleship. The main method by which God speaks to us today is through his holy words. This truth was substantiated and aptly demonstrated during the online fellowship programme held by the congregation at Great Barr on Saturday, 5th September. The event was attended by around 26 participants via 17 connected devices.

The theme of the fellowship programme was *'Devotion to the public reading of Scriptures'*. A brief introductory speech was given by Sola Adeosun highlighting 1 Timothy 4:11-16. This was followed by readings from the book of Daniel. The entire book was segmented into three parts, each of which was excellently read by Mark Hill from Northampton, David Adeosun and Martin Huburn, both from Great Barr. Each segment of the readings was followed by a pause for the participants to reflect and a prayer afterwards.

Following a short tea break, the designated readers took turns to read from chapters 5, 6 and 7 of Matthew's

gospel. The afternoon session featured a memory challenge where three of our teenagers, Queenette, Emmanuel and David, brilliantly recited Psalm 1, Psalm 23 and Matthew 5:1-16 from memory.

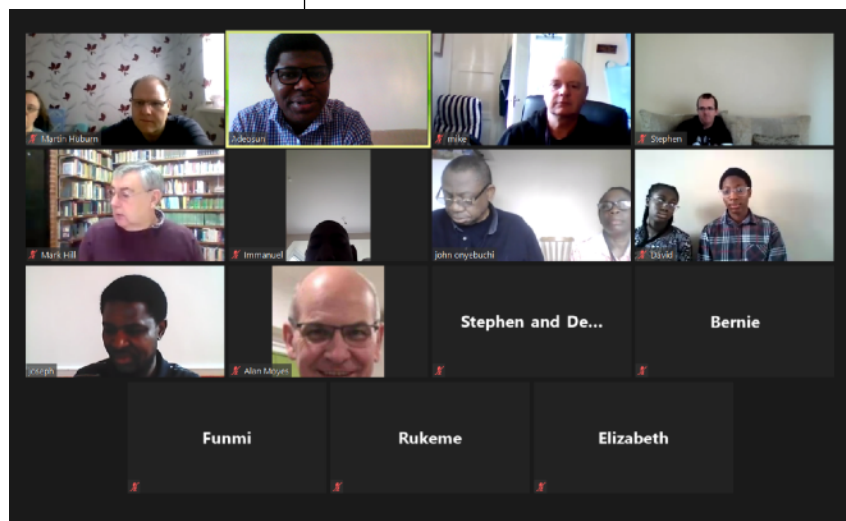
The last part of the programme was a Bible quiz and this was well anchored by Mike Glover from Liverpool. John Onyebuchi then gave the closing remarks.

We hope and pray that all who attended the programme were spiritually uplifted and encouraged to greater devotion to God's words. Our next fellowship programme, which will focus on Psalms and Prayers, has been scheduled for 4th September 2021.

Sola Adeosun

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WORKSHOP

2020 has indeed brought many changes to events throughout the calendar year. While we were in the planning stages of this year's workshop, it became apparent that due to the ongoing health situation with Covid-19, our usual Workshop hosted at Lancaster University wasn't going to be possible. The ECW Board, however, felt that there would be a good opportunity to offer something to encourage Christians, though with an obvious change of format. During the same days we had scheduled the workshop, 27th-29th August, we hosted a session each evening with one of our speakers. The sessions were streamed via Facebook Live, as well as on the European Christian Workshop YouTube channel. The sessions on the YouTube channel have had over 300 views so far, with around 50 people tuning in "live" each night to watch it on Facebook and YouTube.



**EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN
WORKSHOP ONLINE**

AWAKEN

27th – 29th August 2020

Each Evening at 7:30pm
Thursday - Patrick Boyns
Friday - Luk Brazle
Saturday - Earl Lavender

JOIN US ON...

 bit.ly/ECWYouTube
 [/EuropeanChristianWorkshop](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanChristianWorkshop)
Available afterwards on Youtube & Facebook

The theme for this year's ECW was "Awaken". This theme looked at discipleship and the practices we put in place in our daily lives as we strive to grow in our relationship with God, and to have intentionality in our Christian Living.

The first session was led by Patrick Boyns. He challenged us as disciples of Christ to focus on being both learners and practitioners of the discipline of Jesus as we follow in the steps of the teacher. Patrick gave an overview of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, highlighting that the first few chapters of the book deal with theological and doctrinal matters, essentially showing what God has done, with the final chapters then focusing on how to live as disciples, in other words what we need to be doing... Lord willing, if next year's workshop is able to resume in the original format, we'll continue a textual study of Ephesians with the British Bible School.

Our session on Friday evening was led by Luk Brazle, an evangelist in Ghent, Belgium. His topic was: "Confession: Good for the soul, hard for the body." Luk led a very convicting session on our need to ask ourselves, "do we leave room for confession in our churches?" Within the session Luk shared some very practical steps on how we model confession and repentance, on both an individual level and a church level, and how we can create safe spaces to be able to increase transparency in our walk with brothers and sisters in Christ.

Our final session was led on Saturday evening by Earl Lavender from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee. His session was titled "Awaken: The Intentional Life" and looked at our intentionality in Christian living. Within this session he led us through an overview of Paul's letter to the Colossians and its relevance to us today as Christians, particularly in a Western cultural context. He gave an introduction to Spiritual disciplines, the things we intentionally incorporate in our life to live faithfully and grow in our relationship with the Lord.

We're thankful for each of the speakers, and the messages they shared. The lessons are still available on the European Christian Workshop YouTube channel, should anyone want to watch them at a later date. Though the format was certainly different this year, we hope and pray it was still an encouragement to those who were able to participate 'live' as well as for those who are able to access the content later.

We are planning to go ahead with the ECW next year, with this year's sessions offering a taster version of what the full Workshop would offer. We will, however, keep everyone notified via the *Christian Worker* and our social media channels on the status for 2021. Whether in person, or virtually, we hope you'll be able to join us!

Robin Vick





Book Review

Revelation Road

By: Nick Page

Hodder & Stoughton / 2014 / 294 pages / ISBN: 978-1-444-74966-3 (paperback)

978-1-444-74968-7 (e-book)

One man's journey to the heart of the Apocalypse and back again.

Having enjoyed Jon Galloway's recent series of online BBS classes (still available to view on YouTube, by the way) I wanted to remind myself of some of the background. It takes a brave – or a foolish – author to tackle the concluding book of the Bible. Revelation is notoriously difficult to interpret, not that this has deterred many authors. As a reader I can say that I enjoyed Nick Page's unusual approach and will explain why shortly. As a reviewer I have to offer the almost traditional caveat: those who read this book looking for problems will find them, although I am confident that the author would be among the first to agree with you.

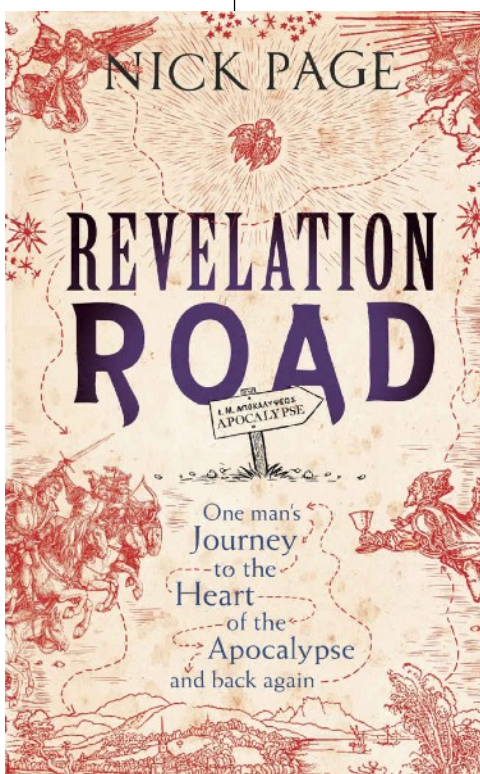
Indeed, Nick Page comes across as an agreeable sort of chap and I enjoyed spending time with him in the 294 pages of this book.

His way in is curious and illustrates Page's approach. Having decided to study Revelation, or "The Book of the Revelation of Saint John the Divine" to give it the title used by King James, he turns to Peter Levi's excellent guide to

ancient Greece 'The Hill of Kronos'. Good choice. Levi tells him that Patmos, the island where John received his Revelation, was "somewhere like Chipping Norton towed out to sea and abandoned" (page 3). Peter Levi was an interesting man: a Jesuit, an archaeologist, and a poet. Page here accidentally on purpose takes a poetic description literally and heads across to Chipping Norton where, to no one's surprise, he finds very little in common with any of the Greek islands. He does, though, find a better class of charity shop where he comes across Hal Lindsay's 'Late Great Planet Earth' which enables him to reminisce about the book and its strange contents.

Readers of a certain age will remember that Lindsay used the Bible to predict – often in astonishing detail – the events that would lead up to the end of the world in (cue drum roll) "within forty years or so of 1948" (page 5). Ah, and there lies the problem. All those who over the years – the centuries – have tried to find a certain date for the end of the world from Revelation have a success rate of precisely nil. Could it be, perhaps perchance, they have been trying to read Revelation wrong? Page thinks so and provides ample evidence to defend his position.

To better understand Revelation, Page decides to hit the road and visit the places mentioned in the book. So he works his way around the sites of the Seven Churches of Asia as per



Book Review: "Revelation Road"

Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Page is an affable guide, writing in a style not unlike Bill Bryson. Some of his jokes will wear thin on repeated readings but there is more than enough information, both on the "need to know" and "nice to know" levels, to keep our attention and make this a book worth returning to. The maps are useful, as are some of the illustrations but others are too close to holiday snaps to help show and tell. However I expect your favourite search engine will find you all the pictures you need if you need them.

On the theology of Revelation Page has some excellent advice. The visions are just that, visions and have to be understood symbolically not literally:

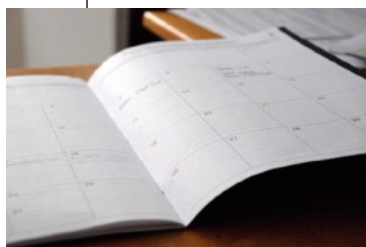
Revelation, like all apocalyptic literature, deals in symbols. Symbols are its currency, its stock-in-trade. But here's the thing, the Very, Very Important Thing which so many writers on Revelation just don't seem to grasp: SYMBOLS ARE NOT LITERALLY REAL." (Page 24, emphasis in original.)

Another key point is that the book had meaning for its original, first century, readers and we need to unlock that meaning before trying to find any other meanings for ourselves. In brief (spoiler alert!) Revelation describes a battle between two forces: those of the Lamb and those of the Beast. For the original readers the Beast was the Roman Empire, for us the Beast is any power opposed to the Lamb. The Empire could not defeat Him, the Beasts of today and tomorrow – whoever they might be – will not defeat Him. As the old Gospel song memorably puts it: "I've read to the end of the book and we win!"

'Revelation Road' is not intended to replace your favourite Bible commentary but is a thought-provoking introduction to the Book of Revelation and is an entertaining and informative way in.

Although it was first published in 2014 my local Christian bookshop still stocks it and would be pleased to sell you a copy through their reliable mail order service at www.standrewsbookshop.co.uk.

Steven Whitehead



DIARY

November

2nd-6th – British Bible School: Residential Study Week at Bassenfell Manor, near Keswick; module: "Acts". Teachers: Patrick Boyns, Jon Galloway, Mark Hill and Jack Paton. Contact: study@britishbibleschool.com.

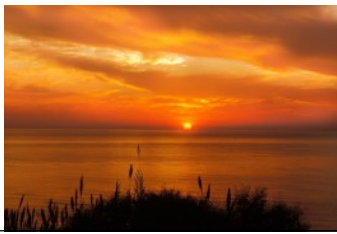
European Events Calendar

October

2nd-3rd – Central European Faith Talks. 6.00 pm BST. Speaker: F. LaGard Smith. Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82375801720?pwd=SzNmUkJWRjVCeWQ4czZNSkg2aUthdz09> Password: Jesus.

February 2021

15th-21st – Gemünden, Germany: Advanced Bible Study Series. Arrive Monday evening for ABSS I, which begins on Tuesday morning. ABSS I – Tuesday-Friday; ABSS II – Friday-Sunday. Contact: Paul Brazle (brazle.paul@gmail.com).



THE FINAL WORD



"Dad"

"Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will be discouraged." (Colossians 3:21)

Reading this a couple of days ago I was struck by the importance of this scripture. Why is there no directive for mothers in this passage?

The more I thought about it I realised that most women seem to know what to do or where they can get advice, whether it is going to classes, listening to their peer group, or hearing programmes on the radio or television. The mechanics of what to do somehow can be explained though the hard work is still learned through experience.

But what about Dads? There is no 'Men's hour' on radio and no 'Men's Institute'. Society generally expects the guys to go hunting and gathering or at least have a job and provide for their family. Men are expected to know how to deal with babies, wives, in-laws, relationships, as well as fix cars and climb ladders whilst pushing ahead with a career and greater responsibilities. But there is no instruction manual. Sadly a lot of men in society are not ready for parenthood and many are too frightened to take that responsibility on. Many guys are eager for recreational sexual encounters but not for being a Dad. For single parent families in the UK, *Gingerbread* suggests that 90% are mothers while only 10% are fathers.

"Children's children are a crown to the aged and parents are the pride of children."
(Proverbs 17:6)

No child arrives in the world with an instruction manual and no child should have to be frightened or belittled because they have a bully for a father. It is easy

for a grown man to scream and shout, to become angry and dominate a young life, but that is not what a Dad is. Eugene Peterson in his paraphrase *The Message* interprets Colossians 3:21 as "Parents don't come down too hard on your children or you'll crush their spirits."

Age should bring wisdom but sadly it doesn't always. Looking back to when I was a young Dad I know I made mistakes. When I did, and realised it, I would go to my children, talk to them and tell them I was sorry. Our little children are little for such a short time and their character is moulded in those early years. When that short time has passed it is gone forever. You can't carry a teenager on your back like a one year old; you can't cuddle them on your knee when they are in their 20's; they don't want you to tickle them in the bath in their 30's; and if you live long enough for them to be older than that then it will be a case that they are probably helping their Dad out.

Even if Mom is better at knowing what to do, Dad can enjoy the experience by loving and building up their child who is a gift from God. Perhaps even if the father/child relationship has been strained through time Dads can still go to their children and tell them how much they love them, how much they care. That is why the creator of the world is called, "our Father".

Trevor

*We are thankful Heavenly Father that your word can be our guide,
We need your help with our families,
Teach us your ways that we may teach our children and grandchildren.
Take away anger, distress, raised voices and grant us your peace. Amen.*