

A photograph of a stone church building with a large arched window and a cross on the roof, partially obscured by a flowering tree with white and pink blossoms on the right side.

## Weekly Newsletter: 29 July 2025

### Reflection: "Greater Works Than These"

By Joe Barnard

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it" (Jn. 14:12-14)

I've always been troubled by these words in John 14. In particular, I find the statement "greater works than these" unsettling. How could anyone do a "greater work" than Jesus did in his death and resurrection? The obvious answer is that no one can. Clearly, Jesus did not mean that believers will do "more powerful" or "more important" works than he himself accomplished. They may carry the gospel to further lands than Jesus visited, but in doing so, they at most announce a headline of which the subject is "Jesus". Jesus is and will always be the greatest servant in the household of God. His feats are incomparable.

Now, I was recently reading this passage and saw it in a fresh way. The first thing I did was ignore the word "greater". Instead of thinking about the qualitative bigness of the works we are invited to do, I merely thought about the fact that God wants us to partner with Him. It's an incredible thought that God has projects for each one of us to be involved in. The truth is that the bigness or smallness of these tasks is of little importance. What is amazing is that none of us is overlooked. To be a disciple is to have a role in the mission of God. The implications of this are staggering.

As I began to ponder this truth two things stood out to me. The first was the need to discern what these works are. So often I fall into the pattern of treating God as if He is my side-kick. I figure out all of the things that I would like to happen in life and then, when I pray, I ask God to partner with me in my self-wrought, me-centred endeavours. This mindset would be comical if it were not on the fringe of being diabolical. What Jesus is encouraging us to do in John 14 is to invert the all-too-common paradigm for prayer. Rather than using prayer as a means to get what we want, he is inviting us to find a place in the greatest mission of all, the advent of the kingdom of God. Is prayer a matter of asking for things? Absolutely! But the things we should be most earnestly requesting are not our own pet wishes but the things that align most directly with the mission of God.

Now, this raises a massive question: how do we intuit the purposes of God? Here much of the answer is prayer. As many Christian writers have said, the essence of prayer is not getting God behind our hearts but getting our hearts behind God. The more we commune with God the more we are aware of the things He is already doing, and it is this insight that enables us to pray boldly "in the name" of Jesus.

The second thing that stood out to me was the importance of praying *into* the will of God. Prayer truly is what people used to call a secondary cause. Just as God uses rain to grow plants and wind to scatter seed, so he uses the activity of believing prayer to develop his purposes in the world. Prayer is not passivity. Prayer is not perfunctory. Prayer is not a game of pretend. Prayer is in the spiritual realm what sunlight is in the physical realm. It is a genuine means that God uses to bring about His will. This is why Jesus is so insistent in his summoning us to pray.

Where does all this lead? It should lead to a feeling of excitement. What an incredible thought that Jesus has staked his position in heaven so that we can collaborate with him on earth! He is in the position of power; we are in the position of need. If we link our need to his power, there is no end of what God may accomplish through us.

“Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

## Re-Commissioning Service for Lorna Ferguson

On Sunday, as part of our morning service, Lorna will be re-commissioned to the task of serving the Lord in Japan. She will be returning to Japan the following weekend to work in Sakata with Pastor Kizu and the church family there.

We'll have a picnic in the park (weather permitting) after the service and we'd love you to join us! Please bring your own picnic and something to sit on. Hot and cold drinks will be provided.

## Summer Appeal 2025

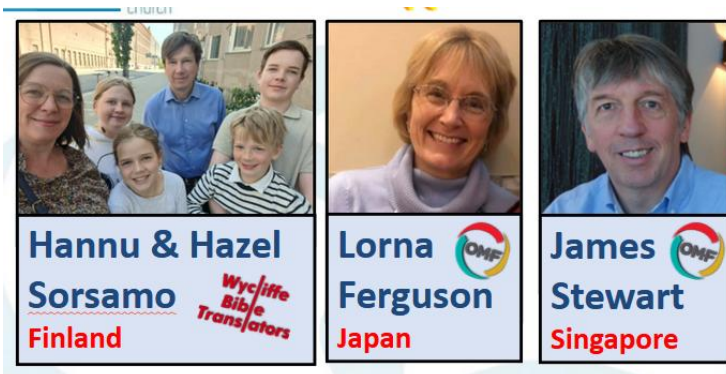
Each year our Summer Appeal goes towards the support of our three Holyrood missionaries – Lorna Ferguson (with OMF in Japan), James Stewart (with OMF in Singapore) and the Sorsamo Family (with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Finland).

Thank you to all those who have given generously to the appeal so far. The current total is £15,521 and the last day of the appeal will be this Sunday.

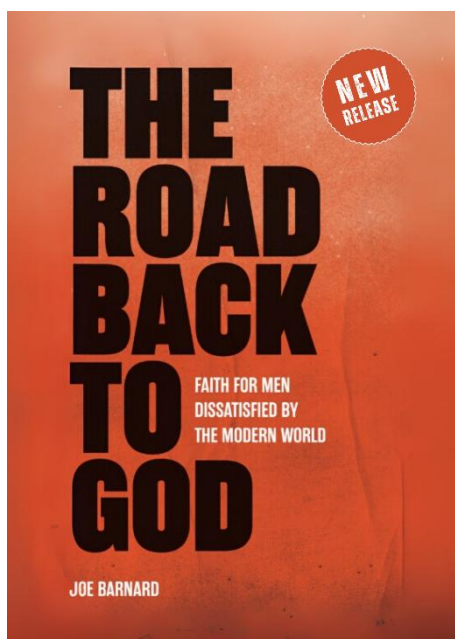
If you would like to give, here are two ways that you can:

1. Electronically via BACS payment to the church account: Sort Code 80-22-60, Account number 12345666 and use the reference 'Summer Appeal'
2. By cheque or cash in the offering box marked 'Summer Appeal'

Please speak to Nick Archer if you have any questions about how to give. Thank you!



## The Road Back to God: Faith for Men Dissatisfied by the Modern World



Joe has a new book coming out in September! You can pre-order a copy from Amazon [here](#) and here is a bit more info -

‘In an age of unprecedented religious interest among men, Joe Barnard provides a compelling roadmap for those curious about Christianity but unsure where to begin. This thoughtful guide meets men where they are—often trapped in materialistic thinking and spiritual numbness—and leads them step-by-step toward authentic faith.

Unlike typical religious texts, The Road Back to God doesn’t just provide information; it offers transformation. Barnard masterfully addresses the unique challenges modern men face, from intellectual skepticism to moral uncertainty, while guiding readers through ten crucial milestones on the path to faith. Through clear prose and relatable examples, he helps men navigate questions of meaning, purpose, and spiritual truth.

Whether you’re a skeptic intrigued by Christianity’s resurgence, a seeker looking for answers, or someone simply dissatisfied with modern materialism, this book offers a fresh perspective on ancient wisdom. Barnard doesn’t shy away from difficult topics like sin, holiness, and the cross, but presents them in ways that resonate with contemporary minds.

This is more than a book about religion—it’s a guide to rediscovering what it means to be fully human in a fragmented world.’

## Psalms, Songs and Stories – Duncan Street Baptist

We’re invited to join Duncan Street Baptist Church for a night of inspiring music and stories on **15 August** from 7.30 – 8.30pm.

**Scottish Psalmist** have written songs inspired by the Psalms. Let their powerful words uplift your heart, as they sing songs of praise and share personal stories of faith. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect with others and celebrate the beauty of music and testimony. Tickets are available [here](#).

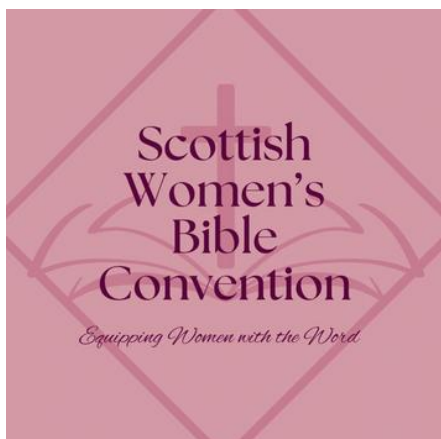
## SU Scotland – Fundraising Walk

Join es-team on **Saturday 30 August** as we walk the Water of Leith to raise funds for SU’s work across the city and local ministries. We’ll start at Balerno at 10am and end in Leith at around 4pm. Join us for all or part, and invite your friends to donate at <https://www.justgiving.com/page/suedinburgh>

## Edinburgh Fringe – Palmerston Place (Venue 254)

Two Christian theatre companies (Searchlight and LAMPS Collective) are performing a number of shows during the Edinburgh Fringe. For more details go to <https://palmerstonplacechurch.com/>

## Scottish Women's Bible Convention – Saturday 4 October



What does it look like to really love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? What did it look like when Jesus quoted these words from Deuteronomy and what does it mean today?

Kaete Wiese (who did a seminar at our Understanding Eve Conference in May) is teaching on **Whole Life Love** at this year's SWBC on **Saturday 4 October (10am to 3pm)**.

Early Bird tickets are still available until the end of July – use the code EARLYBIRD [here](#) and for more info see the SWBC website [here](#).

For more details, speak to Liz and let Liz know if you would be happy to help with stewarding or catering at the event. Thank you!

## Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm in person
- Thursday: Thanksgiving Service for the Life of Sean Stephen at 11am followed by refreshments in the church.
- Sunday:
  - Morning service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed) and Lorna Ferguson's Re-commissioning
  - Picnic in the park after the morning service
  - Evening service at 6pm – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)



[www.holyroodevangelical.org](http://www.holyroodevangelical.org)

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