

Easter Tron Times

Newsletter | St George's Tron Church Glasgow | April 2012

We are an Easter people

Dear Friends

When I was growing up, I had a picture on the wall from my father's great friend, Tom Swanston (who ministered in the West Parish, Inverness until he died in 1991). It was of a glorious sunrise, overlaid with the words 'We are an Easter people, and Hallelujah is our song!' My father loved the expression, and more than once I recall it being on the wayside pulpit outside Holyrood Abbey, to be read by the passengers on the buses continually passing by, as they slowed down for the bus stop beside the church.

I was reminded of it recently while preparing to speak from 1 Peter at one of the Glasgow CUs. (Bob has also been preaching this Epistle in our lunchtime service on Wednesdays.) Peter's letter certainly rings with the message of glory, Easter glory. God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory so that we too might have certain hope of glory (1:21). It is 'through the resurrection of Jesus Christ' our consciences are cleansed (3:21), and 'through the resurrection of Jesus Christ' we have been born again into a living hope, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading (1:3-4). So glorious is our hope that even though we do not yet see the revelation of Jesus, we nevertheless 'rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory'. Hallelujah is indeed our song!

Yet there is nothing the least bit superficial or trite about the music of rejoicing that permeates Peter's writing. Bob captured it with vivid clarity when he said, 'It is a bracing letter, filled with the smell of resurrection hope, yet underneath is the tread of the jackboot and the sound of the prison door'. It is a letter full of the utmost realism. Peter recognises that precisely because true followers of Jesus are Easter people, they are at the same time an elect people, special to God, yet an exiled people, still strangers on earth. And so their song, though triumphant, is not triumphalistic; it will as often ring with grievous lament as with glad laughter – at least for 'a little while'.

To Peter's first readers, 'elect exiles of the dispersion' scattered around the edges of the Empire, the exiled nature of their experience was immediately obvious. Many were slaves, and very few the 'in' or 'with it' people of their culture. Living under Nero, probably before systemic, state persecution arose, Christians were however becoming marginalised; they were distasteful to society, shut out by its institutions and facing increasing hostility from the populace. Already conscious of being 'grieved by various trial', Peter warns them of worse 'fiery trial' to come (1:6, 4:12). Nor is it so difficult today for us to empathise; more and more we feel like strangers in our own culture. Our newspapers recently noted Richard

Dawkins' own study could not show the UK to have properly become a 'secularist' nation (with a majority still claiming some allegiance to Christianity), but they simultaneously reported the ruling of the High Court against Bideford Council (thus banning prayers at the start of meetings), and also the failure of the appeal of the elderly couple, the Bulls, against a malicious prosecution by the homosexual lobby (simply for seeking to maintain a 'married only' policy for double beds in the Christian Guest House run in their own home). The tread of the jackboot may not be as distant as we imagine in Britain today. But Peter's instruction (the heart of the letter) tells us how to respond: 'Keep your conduct...honourable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers they may see your good deeds and glorify God on a day of visitation' (2:12).

But to live like this we need to be assured of who and whose we are, which is why Peter first reminds us that we are an elect people, and all that this means. Chosen 'according to God's foreknowledge' (1:2), 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...God's people' (2:9-10) — these wonderful brackets encapsulate the opening chapter and a half of the letter which lay out the privilege that is ours, and certainty, even as we walk the path of uncertainty and hostility in this world. There is glory, but not yet; it is an inheritance kept in heaven for us by the same power that is keeping us for a salvation ready to be revealed when Jesus returns. It's so important to realise that, isn't it? Especially when we are struggling, perhaps facing abuse for being a Christian, or wrestling painfully with sin or failure in our lives. This is not as good as it gets! In truth, our real experience of God's redeeming power has hardly begun.

But what of our experience now, if our full salvation still lies in the future? The answer, according to Peter, is that we will know both joy inexpressible and pain that seems often inexplicable. In the real Christian life now, both grief and glory will fill our songs; our Hallelujahs need a

minor as well as a major key. Unless we keep hold of both sides of this truly biblical perspective, we will end up with a very unbalanced Christianity. Either we shall think we should always be feeling gloriously 'up', and if not then something is wrong with us and our faith, or God is displeased with us and his Spirit has abandoned us.

Or, we shall always be morose and depressed, so full of earth's sorrows we are never able to rejoice with joy at all. But no, says Peter. We are elect people who are still exiled people, and we must not underplay either. 'This is the true grace of God', says Peter, 'stand firm in it'.

Moreover, it is not simply a matter of balancing these two sides of our Christian experience — the present suffering and the glory that is to come —

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but of understanding it. These two things hold together and are explained because, through faith in Jesus we also are, above all, an Easter people. It is this third theme in Peter's letter that holds everything together, and is the greatest encouragement of all to us. 'In this we rejoice' he says, not just because grievous trials are only for a short while, and the glory to come will be eternal (though that is wonderfully true, and should cheer us greatly when we suffer); it is much more than that. Christians are those who have been granted the extraordinary privilege of sharing the pattern of Christ himself in their lives of discipleship, and the unique joy of sharing the path of Christ himself on the road to glory. 'We rejoice', therefore, that we are counted worthy of being a people who, like our Lord Jesus, are being shaped now, through grievous trials, for glory! These very sufferings are the crucible in which is being forged something that will be glorious for eternity; the present battles that bring us such pain are testing and refining us for 'praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ!'

In other words, what God has promised us, and has kept for us in heaven, he is achieving in us already as he guards our faith through all the trials of life. In all this he is shaping us gloriously, like a master craftsman, for glory! For an Easter people, a people united to their Saviour, Jesus Christ, the road to glory is the road to Calvary; the road to the crown is the road to the cross. There is simply no other way to be shaped for Jesus' glory, and no other glory will outlast the sun.

So when grievous trials come to your life, as come they will, do not despair. It does not mean that your faith has failed, far less that God has abandoned you. It means he is committed to you, that he loves you, and that he is, even now, determinedly fitting you for glory everlasting! And if 'the fiery trial' should come upon us all, to test us to the very limit, we will not be surprised, as though something strange were happening to us. Rather, together let us 'rejoice insofar as we share Christ's sufferings that we may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed', for we know that 'after we have suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish us.' (1 Peter 4:13; 5:10). And in the meantime, if we do suffer increasing hostility in the world, and opprobrium from the worldly church because we seek to preserve the honour of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (and we will), remember Peter's words: 'if you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.' (4:14)

What an encouragement! But this is the true grace of God; so let us stand firm in it. For we are an Easter People, and Hallelujah is our song!

Yours in living hope,



William J U Philip
Minister



Home news

compiled by Ruth Hodgson

Would you like people to take notice of you? Then join the Flash Mob, a bunch of cardboard-wearing, testimony-bearing, smiley-faced students walking up and down Cathedral St at the busiest time of the day during Strathclyde Uni Mission Week! That's got to be more effective than the typical distribution of a thousand flyers. It certainly produced packed houses at the lunchbars and other events. 'The CU have taken over the campus,' someone was heard to say. During February, CU missions took place in many Scottish Universities including the big three in Glasgow — Caledonian, Glasgow and Strathclyde — and many of our students plus Cornhill folk and **Caz Dodds** (UCCF staff worker) were all involved.

What kind of inspirational, attention-catching strategies might we employ for our own **church mission week** at the end of this month leading up to Easter? It's now three years since our last mission week when we opened our renovated building. We occupy a prime site — the second busiest retail street in the UK — and though many people still come in and say that they pass by nearly every day and have never been in before, many others still just....pass by! Several events have been planned and provide golden opportunities for us to reach out and invite folk in — friends, family, workmates, whoever.

We greatly miss our beloved brother **Robin Brough** who went to be with the Lord in December. Described by one of our international friends as 'my favourite man' he was dearly loved and appreciated by so many for his faithful and caring visits, and by many others for his words of wisdom and experience. We continue to uphold **Agnes** and her family in their loss. We were sad, too, to hear of the death of **Alex McRae** one of our former elders who in recent years had moved north to Nairn. Several members have been in hospital and/or out of action for some time. We are so grateful to God that **Christine Gundry** is making good progress after major surgery. **Margaret Brown** is home and awaiting an access ramp to enable her to go in and out.

We were glad to see **Nan Baillie** back in church recently after a long absence but we miss **Annie Robertson** who has not been well enough to come out for some months. We remember **Marion Thomson** and family who are seeking the right provision for **Scott's** long-term care.

It was with mixed feelings that a bus load and many car loads of folk headed for the other end of the M8 on February 1st where **Euan** and **Helen Dodds** with little **Anna** were being welcomed into Holyrood Abbey Church. Euan will be responsible for the outreach ministry there. We have been so grateful for his ministry here, especially among the internationals, and we shall miss him and his family a lot.

One of our international brothers was recently granted a visa and we rejoice with him but do not forget several others whose applications are still pending.

Arthur and **Alice Dell** left the cold of Scotland for Australia in January. Work and church are both encouraging and they are settling well in Melbourne.

We were pleased to welcome **Lesley Nichol** to a prayer meeting last month.

Her studies at Redcliffe Missionary Training College are going well and she is gradually adapting to communal living where, it seems, the only chance of a bit of solitude is in the shower!

Engagements and weddings continue to bring much rejoicing. We look forward to **Phil Copeland** and **Emma McKeown's** wedding on 23rd March, to **Julie Constable** and **Oli Coltman's** wedding on 20th April, and **Mary Francis** and **Tom Slimming's** wedding on 27th April.

Warm congratulations to couples who have announced their engagement —

Naomi Hull and **Andy Baxter**, **Gillian Gray** and **Robert Hamilton**, **Vicki McIver** and **Brian Cunningham** and **Lynn Clark** and **Stephen Ballingall**.



Debbie and Andrew Mountford
16th September St George's Tron Church



Robin and Kirsty MacDonald
28th October Smithton Culloden Free Church



Terry and Charlene McCutcheon
3rd December St George's Tron Church



Uniting Nations

KATIE PIGGOT TALKS TO TT ABOUT THE BUSY INTERNATIONAL HUB OF THE TRON.

A lot of the 'work' is informal, meeting people one-to-one. We have a great team with Gak, Ailsa Hamilton, Derek McPhail, John & Elspeth Taylor and Rieko Ando from Japan to name but a few.

Ma Yue, is an amazing Chinese woman who helps with the international ministry. In China she was told Christianity was a fairytale but although she was educated that there is no God, culturally it is more fatalistic — God is there but as some kind of spiritual force. She came to the UK and her husband was interested in the bible and wanted a blessing so he forced her (nicely) to go to the Chinese church. Through bible studies and hearing the call of Christ, she gave her life to him and became a Christian. She has been coming to the Tron and helps on Thursdays. There is also a Chinese/English class for migrant workers.

Monday nights vary from 20-35 people in the group helped by a lot of helpers. There are people from Iran, China, Spain, eastern Europe, Thailand,



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Japan and South America. Ali, from Iran, came to faith in part through the Monday studies which is a great encouragement. Not all do. Some come to the study but are antagonistic or are interested for a short time but disappear. So in reality there are some discouragements. We pray God will break into their hearts.

The church is doing a lot but there is always more we can do. Even just a smile or saying 'Hello'. Some people are lost without community but we are an open community and all nations are welcome.

The Tron is here to meet international people's needs — teaching english, providing help and friendship but most of all showing them Jesus. As for the teaching, I am not convinced their English has improved through my teaching but we have great friendships now!

A ROUGH GUIDE FOR LOCALS

① With internationals it's easy to start a conversation and the obvious thing is they are from elsewhere! If people are worried about knowing nothing then I am a total ignoramus! If you are interested in the person and loving that person it will come across. They might not want to talk about where they are from, or about their family but you will have a common link.

② How lovely it is to have feedback from internationals about how friendly people are at the Tron. It makes such an impact when people talk and show interest in their lives. 'How has the week been? Where are you from and why are you here?'

③ Food is a great topic of conversation. There is a common theme — talk food and eat food, it's a bit like Jesus, he ate a lot to the point people called him a glutton! We have had great feasts for Chinese new year, Iranian new year, Thai celebrations and St Andrews Day. Maybe people think we are gluttons?



④ Sunday lunch is the ideal time to invite people around or if you are going on a day trip and have room for one more. Spending time with people opening your home or helping them out with basic things like proof reading an essay or simple hospitality: it's an easy way to make people feel loved and cared for with low risk.

▼ ARRIVALS

	⇓ NAME	↘ FROM	↘ REMARKS:
	KAK PRATCHAYAPONG YASRI	BANGKOK, THAILAND	I'M REALLY FEELING AT HOME AT THE TRON. IT'S AMAZING TO SEE HOW GOD'S LOVE BRINGS ALL OF US HERE.
	DOOSUUR & MARIAM MALU	JOS, NIGERIA	WE KIND OF STUMBLED INTO THE TRON AND IMMEDIATELY FOUND A WARM SMILE OF GREETING, WARM HANDS TO SHAKE AND WARM HEARTS. IT HAS SINCE BECOME HOME FOR US.
	RIEKO ANDO	SENDAI, JAPAN	I HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY MANY KIND PEOPLE WHO TALKED TO ME IN CHURCH..AND BY GOOD FRIENDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY.
	JASON WHITT	GEORGIA, USA	THROUGH 'RELEASE THE WORD', I WAS ABLE TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND SETTLE INTO GLASGOW QUICKLY'.

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 On Mondays we have the English class for non-native speakers and an optional bible study at 25 Bath Street. On the 1st and 3rd Tuesday there is a women's group in the morning at the church, and on Thursday nights there are international bible studies for Christians and seekers at 25 Bath Street. ↓
 FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: [KATIE@THETRON.ORG](mailto:katie@thetron.org)

▼ DEPARTURES

	⇓ NAME	↘ TO	↘ REMARKS:
	EVAN, HELEN & ANNA DODDS	EDINBURGH, UK	OUR ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONALS, EVAN, WAS INDUCTED AS OUTREACH COORDINATOR FOR THE CHURCH AND WE SEND THE FAMILY OUR PRAYERS AND LOVE FOR THIS NEW BEGINNING.
	KENNY MCLEOD	LEVICE, SLOVAKIA	IN MID-JANUARY KENNY MCLEOD PACKED UP AND WENT TO LEVICE, SLOVAKIA, WHERE CSABA AND DARINA TOLNEI LIVE. HE HAS BEEN WARMLY WELCOMED AND IS ALREADY TAKING ENGLISH CLASSES, HELPING WITH ENGLISH CONVERSATION IN A LOCAL SCHOOL AND GETTING INVOLVED IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES.

Away News

compiled by Ruth Hodgson

David and Julie returned to a situation of considerable unrest in Northern Nigeria which was compounded by both **Rebekah and Elizabeth** being unwell for a month. Thankfully they are now better, the rainy season is over, Julie is busy canning loads of seasonal fruit and vegetables and David's work with translators and computer link-ups is as busy and demanding as ever.

Roy has been in Venezuela in February/March in his new role of making contacts, establishing strong links, and seeing more Latin Americans join the great need for workers in Asia. Much groundwork has to be done, and although there have been

some encouragements he finds leaving the increasing opportunities for the gospel in his usual sphere of service difficult.

We are glad to hear that **Elspeth and Catriona Wall** are beginning to settle in SE England. **Darren and Susan** both feel their need of much wisdom as they get to grips with a demanding workload re finance and short-term workers respectively.

Jonathan and Juay are now back in Asia missing **Andrew** (at university in UK) and **Nina** (in India as part of a gap year). Juay is not nearly back to full strength and

although Jonathan is working full-time there are some difficult work situations which need much grace and wisdom.

Scott and Nok Murray's workload at the Kwai River Christian Hospital seems to escalate continually and a request to take on new responsibilities for 'The Safe House' — a home for elderly and migrant people — is now being considered. They were encouraged by a visit earlier this month from **Alasdair and Pamela Walker** and **Alison Thompson**.

Other Ministries

Alex Bedford has just finished leading a Christianity Explored course in Milngavie and will start the training for one in Caldercruix after Easter. As well as preaching engagements, he continues his faithful ministry outside (and inside!) the church on Saturdays engaging many in what frequently turn out to be fruitful conversations.

Murdo Maclean has been encouraged in that though they have lost several stalwart members through death, a number of new people have come in who are committed to prayer and the cause of the gospel. They hope to start another Christianity Explored course soon.

James Torrens (formerly of St Rollox) and his family hope to move to Inverness at the end of the current school year with a view to planting a new IPC (International Presbyterian Church) there.

The new Trinity Church in Aberdeen where **Peter Dickson** and **David Gibson** minister is meeting at present in the Northern Hotel until such time as a more permanent home can be found and established. Despite all the upheaval they have had an encouraging start.

John and Susan Rushton look forward to retirement and a return to Scotland next month. They have had many opportunities in church and local schools of their three parishes over this past year

and are praying that they will be able to finish well.

Bill and Margaret Dunlop continue their teaching at Westminster Theological College near Kampala, Uganda. Margaret helps students with English language skills and Bill's desire is that students would want to know God better and hunger for a fuller understanding of his word rather than just strive for a degree.

Hugh and Maggs McKenna are encouraged by the numbers attending the Christianity Explored course. They continue with the street work and prison work in Barlinnie and are praying re possible opportunities when Low Moss Prison begins to function.

Apprentice / media apprentice opportunities



Our two-year programme comprises attendance at the Cornhill Training Course (Scotland) two days per week alongside ministry experience with our church staff in word ministry, evangelism, mentoring and practical service to the congregation.

In addition to our regular apprenticeships this year, we are looking for a **media apprentice** to combine Cornhill training with work on our website and publications.

If you are committed to expository bible-teaching, are able to learn, desire to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ—and therefore willing to serve the local church family—then we'd love to hear from you.

For further details contact Richard Henry
e: richard@thetron.org
t: 0141 332 2795

For info about CTC Scotland
www.cornhillscotland.org.uk

SPOTLIGHT on

... Eric and Kay MacDonald



Working for the gospel

Irn Bru advertisements claim the drink is “phenomenal” but that is exactly the impact it had on Eric and Kay MacDonald

When Eric and Kay first met, Eric introduced himself by spilling a bottle of Irn Bru over Kay at his parents’ home in Skye but thankfully this was not the end. And later, after a short ‘long-distance romance’ relationship, Eric and Kay tied the knot, beginning a marriage that has touched the lives of many not just here at the Tron but in many small corners across the world. And we mustn’t forget Nathan and Joshua, their two boys, who are now a vital part of that equation.

Both Kay and Eric have always had a real passion for mission, and while the MacDonalds have never felt the call to full-time Christian service. Eric’s work with global textile giant Coats has taken him right across the globe to Eastern Europe, India, China and the US providing opportunities to share the gospel with many different people in many different places.

Growing up in Lewis, Kay had a deep interest in mission and a particular burden for Romania. So in 2003 when Eric was asked to oversee a three year project opening a new factory in Romania they felt God’s leading and Kay and Nathan joined Eric on his trip to Odorhei, a small town in Northern Romania. While there they threw themselves into gospel outreach supporting local churches. Eric was involved in preaching and training

ministers and elders while Kay was involved in children’s work.

After a year Kay returned home to have Joshua before returning to Odorhei for a final year. During both her spells in Romania Kay played an important part in getting involved in children’s work and sharing her testimony with other believers to help them with their spiritual growth.

Eric said of their time in Romania, ‘This was a real purple patch in our Christian service. Preaching regularly propelled my personal biblical insight to new levels and we enjoyed so many blessings as we shared fellowship with local believers, building lasting friendships that remain to this day.

And it is this experience of being strangers in a strange land that has prompted the MacDonalds to reach out to the international community here at the Tron.

Kay said: ‘We were touched by the hospitality and friendship offered to us in Romania and how that made the difference on those Sundays where we would have loved to have heard a sermon or sung a hymn in our own language. In welcoming and befriending our international visitors and members we feel we are giving something back.’

Returning to Eric’s travels... he continues to enjoy many opportunities

to share the gospel. Whether on board flights or on factory floors across the world Eric has had opportunities to share the gospel with people for the first time.

‘On a recent US flight I got into conversation with a Jewish lady who was reading the Hebrew psalms so we began talking and I had the opportunity to point her to some of the Messianic psalms. I gave her a copy of the new testament and I can only pray that God will speak to her and truly reveal the person of Jesus and what he has accomplished.’

Eric and Kay’s main gospel priority is their two boys, Nathan and Joshua and the surrounding community. They are part of a prayer group set up three years ago for Christian parents at the boys’ school to pray for the staff and the children there. They are grateful for the two opportunities they have each year for outreach events at Christmas and Easter where a clear Christian message is given.

The MacDonald household is a busy one and Jesus Christ and gospel outreach is at the very heart of it; a 21st century missionary family!

in conversation with Andrew McIntyre

As easy as ABC

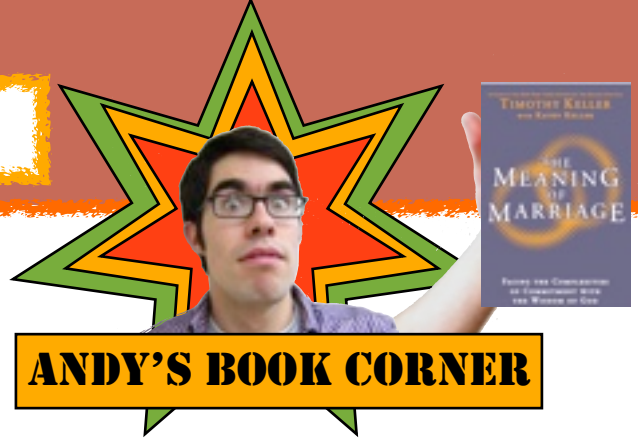
Having recently just got engaged I thought this would be a good time to research exactly what I'm getting myself into.

This is another great Tim Keller book, very readable and approachable for Christians and non-Christians alike. Keller once again applies a sharp analytical mind to the world's view of marriage, and brings the Bible's teaching to bear on it. Very good for witnessing to the Christian view of marriage, as well as giving lots of helpful Biblical wisdom for married life. If you've never read a marriage book before, then this one would be a good start!

The Meaning of Marriage: Tim and Kathy Keller

What's it about? — The Christian view of marriage, what it means and how to enjoy and nurture it.

What did you get out of it? — A challenge : that marriage in the Bible is a lot more important than the world thinks it is.



ANDY'S BOOK CORNER

An encouragement: that working at a marriage can, with the grace of God, bring much blessing.

How long did it take to read? — Eight chunky chapters, each best read in one go. Give it an hour per chapter and take your time!

Who's it for? — Anyone (over the age of 16 of course), who is married, planning on or hoping to get married, and even those who aren't. Everyone in the church needs to have a Biblical view of marriage. There is a helpful chapter on singleness and marriage, exploring this issue in more depth.

HE IS RISEN

MIRACLE OR LIE. A DECISION WE CAN'T AVOID.
THE DECISION WHICH DIRECTS OUR ETERNITY.

EASTER WEEK

INFORM YOUR DECISION. THE EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED THIS EASTER.

THE MARK DRAMA

Fri 6th April, 19:30. Sat 7th April, 15:00

Mark's evidence for His life, death and resurrection.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

6th April, 13:00

Examining the historical sources for His execution.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES

8th April, 11:00 & 18:30

Examining the historical sources for His resurrection.

EASTER CONCERT

Fri 30th March, 19:30

EASTER THIRTY MINUTE SERVICE

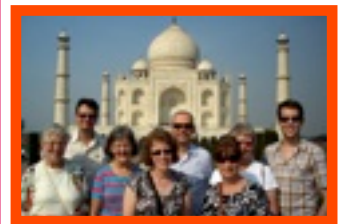
Wed 4th April, 13:10

QUIZ NIGHT

Tue 3rd April, 19:30



Buchanan Street, Glasgow | www.thetron.org | 0141 332 2795



Delhi DVD

At a Church Family Evening in January Tron Team India 2012 reported back on their experience of visiting the country, meeting the people and attending the opening of the Delhi Bible Institute's fourth Bible Training Centre in North India bought with tithe money from our Building Redevelopment Fund.

Did you miss out on being there?

A DVD shown on the evening is available on request.

