

Winter 2004 Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

November 2004

Special points of interest

- AGM 2004
- E-Mail Interview
- AGM 2005
- Prayer Pointers

126th Year Annual General Meeting and Thanksgiving Service

Pastor Timothy Martin of Slapton and Wappenham Evangelical Church, Northants was the preacher at our AGM held at Five Ash Down Independent Chapel, situated near Uckfield, East Sussex.



Timothy preached from Psalm 72 v 18-24. He sought to show from the Psalm how God's Old Covenant People were faced with (a) "A Great Riddle" and how God provided a (b) "Grim Remedy" for it but with (c) "Glorious results" at the end of the day.

The Lord seemed to be out to destroy the fledgling community he had brought into being by bringing upon them a desperate famine, but by sending Joseph down to Egypt, would provide for them a wonderful way but not without appalling suffering coming Joseph's way in the short term. Here we

were brought face to face with the Saviour's sufferings for us upon Calvary and the provision made for us as a result.

The glorious results were plain to see at last—just as a recent legacy completely transformed the GARF situation. As with that deliverance of old it was unexpected, sudden and complete. That is God's work.

GARF treasurer, Chris David, reported an increase in income. This has encouraged the committee to make the work more widely known through advertising, newsletters, press releases, and deputation meetings. In the past year four more pastors have become beneficiaries and the committee is currently considering further applications.

The Chairman, George Rabey, Pastor of Five Ash Down, remarked it is good to have a very happy Treasurer and a committee that has enjoyed encouragement over the last two years.

The committee value prayers of God's people to make right decisions

when considering applications. As funds increase they desire to help more needy gospel advocates, their wives and dependents.



Pastor & Mrs Rabey of Five Ash Down Chapel.

This press release was sent to the following magazines:

- Grace
- Evangelical Times
- Evangelicals Now
- English Churchman
- Gospel Magazine.
- Gospel Tidings

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E-Mail Interview with the Editor of Evangelicals Now, Dr J Benton

Editor's Note: EN plan to print this in their January issue

- 1) *Explain to readers what G A R F d o e s ?*

The Gospel Advocate Relief Fund (GARF) exists to help *needy ministers of the Gospel, their widows and dependents*. The committee meet quarterly to discuss a wide range of issues. A typical meeting begins with opening devotions; the agenda includes applications for assistance; correspondence; opportunities to promote the fund; review of advertising, press releases and stands at conferences; arrange deputation meetings. A time of prayer always takes place during the meeting at which all members usually pray.

Once awarded, it is our practice to send grants quarterly to help meet the day-to-day financial needs of free grace gospel ministers and their families who are unable to support themselves. They may have varying needs, e.g. young family, inadequate pension, church planting, illness, few wage earners restrict an adequate stipend. Recipients are asked to keep us informed of any changes to their circumstances and every two years we invite them to update their grant application.

Prayer and encouragement are part of our ministry.

- 2) Give examples of how bad things are for some Pastors?

There are Pastors with young families who receive stipends of approximately £500 net per month. Thankfully child

benefit and working tax credit alleviate some hardship. However, some Pastors find they are unable to take holidays/respice; maintain their house and car; in extreme cases pay for food and heating. We often receive correspondence which gives thanks to God for providing urgently needed funds at just the right time.

Many churches are simply unable to adequately support their Pastors.

- 3) *What should churches be doing to prevent such situations from arising?*

Be realistic about the cost of living and running a car.

Be flexible in allowing Pastors to take part-time employment

but understand the impact this will have on his pastoral duties!

Each church member should know his/her responsibilities. The Church has a great responsibility both to pray for and provide for God's ministers and their families.

The apostle Paul says in Galatians 6 v 6 "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches". The Lord Himself said "A labourer is worthy of his wages". In an ideal world all churches would be able

to provide a sufficient salary to support their pastor. However, some pastors minister to small or ageing congregations, and others meet in buildings that cost much to maintain.

GARF also seeks to support those involved in church planting, where there may not be an "existing" congregation. Funds like GARF have long been necessary to meet the shortfall.

- 4) *What about the responsibilities of families to look after their elderly?*

Our booklet "Introducing GARF" which we will gladly send to interested readers states "We recognise that the primary responsibility for providing for dependents belongs to their immediate families (see 1 Timothy 5 v 4).

Churches ought, as far as they are able, to provide for their own pastors. But we know that there are many circumstances in which these obligations cannot be fulfilled."

As believers should do good to all men especially the household of faith, so families have a particular responsibility to care for their own. However, we recognise this obligation may not be fully met for perfectly legitimate reasons e.g. many needy pastors are themselves young, and have to support their children through school,

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Prayer Items

As a committee we are following up requests for financial support.

Please pray for:

- Wisdom to discern those most needy
- Wisdom to administer the funds in accordance with God's will
- People willing to serve as committee members. In recent years we have lost 3 members and as such need their replacements input and prayers.



- Churches willing to host deputation meetings.
- A renewed interest in the work of the Fund both financially and prayerfully.
- Advertisements in leading Christian periodicals will bear fruit.

Finally we ask that

- We obey God's leading and guiding, honouring Him above all else in all that we do and say.

Future Meetings 2005

A.G.M 2005

Meeting arranged D.V.
Tuesday 17th May @ 7.30pm at
Pantiles Baptist Church, 73
Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells.
Preacher Robert Morgan of
Erith.

A warm welcome to everyone. Why not incorporate a holiday!
Contact our secretary for details of accommodation.

Deputation Meetings (Preacher Tony Bickley)

Bradford on Avon Tuesday 21st June

Providence Chapel, Bedford,
Thursday 20th October

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college or university rather than being supported by them. Where children later have the means to provide for their parents this should be encouraged, but this is not always possible.

- 5) *What happens in your experience when pastor's children are not Christians?*

Where an older pastor has unbelieving children, support for his ministry may be less than from believing ones. Where a pastor has young children, the family is likely to have the same needs whether his children are Christians or not.

Insofar as GARF's ministry is concerned, the unbelief or faith of children does not influence the need of ministers or the level of grants we make.

- 6) *How has your work picked up in recent years and why?*

We are very thankful to God that churches and individual supporters have contributed to the fund over the last 126 years. For many years several of the Lord's people have made bequests to the work of GARF, in fact legacies have often been the means of keeping the work going. In recent years when the future of the fund was in doubt, God provided us with significant increases in funds which enabled us to set advertising budgets to promote the work and this has been the means of bringing to our attention many more pastors who are in need. However, we do need to attract more supporters if we are to meet the demand for providing help. Our level

of income needs to be closer to our expenditure to enable us to maintain grants at what many of our recipients gratefully describe in their letters of thanks as "meaningful amounts".

At a deputation meeting earlier this year, the preacher, Tony Bickley suggested there was a way to put GARF out of business if churches operated according to the Scriptures e.g. Acts 4 v 32—37. How good it would be if funds like GARF were no longer necessary!

Tony Bickley is Pastor of a Grace Baptist Church in Brighton. He is also GARF's deputation speaker and is willing to travel anywhere to speak and preach to churches.

Readers are invited to contact the Secretary David Cottington at 10 Ryefield Close, Eastbourne BN21 2XJ for more information about GARF or email Garfeditor@kstarnes.mistral.co.uk.

GOSPEL ADVOCATE RELIEF FUND

Registered Charity: 209606

The fund exists to support needy ministers and their widows and dependants.

Web Site

[www3.mistral.co.uk/kstarnes/
garf1.htm](http://www3.mistral.co.uk/kstarnes/garf1.htm)

If you want to know more please write to the Secretary and ask for the "Introducing GARF" booklet.

*For financial giving and enquiries please contact the Treasurer :
Chris David, 32 Scarletts Close UCKFIELD East Sussex TN22 2BA
☎ 01825 763035*

For general information and prospective speaking engagements please contact the Secretary:

*David Cottington, 10 Ryefield Close, EASTBOURNE East Sussex BN21 2XJ
☎ 01323 507168*

For Web Site feedback and ideas please e-mail the editor:

Garfeditor@kstarnes.mistral.co.uk

How can I help GARF ?

There are several ways of helping GARF

You can:

- Pray for us
- Support us financially
- Become a committee member if you feel prompted.
- Tell us of needy ministers, widows and their dependants.
- Remember us in your will
- Tell others of the work we are doing
- Host a deputation meeting

The taxman giveth!

Don't forget that the taxman now gives an income tax refund on all donations given by tax-payers who are registered for Gift Aid with their chosen

charity. Please make sure that you let us know that you are a tax payer so that any donations you care to send us may have the tax reclaimed by us for the benefit of our beneficiaries.



FOOTNOTE - GARF recently assisted the leader of a Christian fellowship working amongst Muslims in South Wales to go home to his family and recuperate from the stress caused by the death threats of extremists.