



Mrs Glenda Graham

## ALL CHANGE IN THE MISSION BOARD OFFICE

**G**eorge McConnell has retired from his full time work as Presbytery Missionary Officer, a position he held since 2000. Serving as Board Treasurer from 1991, George was also Missionary Council Chairman, 1970–2012. A Council delegate since 1967, he has been involved in missionary work for fifty years. George's full time role included keeping accounts and presenting reports, representing the needs of the Mission Board and our Missionaries, and raising funds for various projects. The first port of call for those in difficulty, he helped in many emergencies over the years.

George was also responsible for the publication of 'Harvest Times', informing congregations of various prayerful and financial needs. In his office, where challenges came in on a weekly (sometimes daily) basis, he was able to record with thanksgiving the wonderful provision of Almighty God.

Part of George's remit was to visit the field. These visits were eagerly anticipated by both missionaries and nationals with whom many friendships

were formed. His ability to communicate despite language barriers and to reach out in love won the hearts of young and old alike. Many weary pilgrims were helped onward to Zion.

Thanks are due also to George's wife Jean. When George 'disappeared', she knew he would be at the office – when he would return would be another matter! When George was abroad she was left to hold the fort. George could not have served as he did without one whose heart was so devoted to the work.

There is a unique joy in serving God, and that is reward enough. There is also a day of recompense when even the cup of water given in His name will not be unrewarded. (Luke 14: 12-14) We all owe a singular debt to George for a job done unstintingly as unto the Lord. We wish George and Jean every blessing in the years ahead.

Mission Board has appointed Alastair Hamilton, a Missionary Council representative on the Board, as its Treasurer. Pray that the Lord will bless him in this new role. Glenda Graham

from Mourne church has also agreed to help us. She takes up the story...

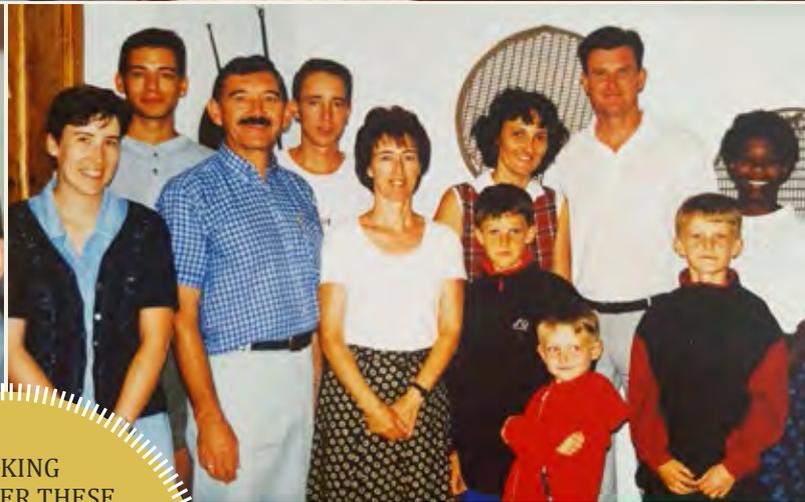
*I have been working with George McConnell for a few hours every week for several years. Mission Board Chairman Rev Harris asked me to consider continuing in the office, but on a more permanent basis with added responsibilities, in view of George's imminent retirement. It was a big decision – I did not want to make the wrong one, as I had another job which I'd have to give up. Taking advice from George, Rev Harris, and my minister Rev Patterson, I prayed that God would lead me. Through 1 Corinthians 15:58, then Joshua 1:5,9, in my own personal Bible reading, I realised that this post was not just a job, but God's call to serve Him by taking on an administrative role in the Mission Board Office.*

Please pray for Glenda. Mourne church has kindly agreed to continue to allow us use of office space in its Sunday School Complex. The Office opens Mon – Friday, 9am – 1pm.

∴ Rev Ian Harris



# JOHN & NORANNA HANNA: FOUR DECADES IN SPAIN



LOOKING  
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**L**ittle did I know that winter night fifty years ago, when God in His grace brought me to the cross, what He would have in store for me. I could never have imagined how that incident would change my entire future.

God burdened me for His service, and after completing four years of study in our church's Theological Hall and ministering for three years in the Castleberg congregation, Noranna and I set off for Spain under the auspices of our Mission Board on April 13 1977. The importance of this venture was obvious: We were the first missionaries sent out by our Mission Board. Our arrival in Spain, just after Franco's forty-year dictatorship, coincided with a time of instability and change in the country, yet there was the promise of new liberties, not least the freedom to preach the Gospel.

We went to Spain without knowledge of any Reformed separated works. In the providence of God, in our second year we made contact with a Presbyterian church in Alcorcón, a town of about 200 000 people, 15 kilometres south west of Madrid. The Lord was already preparing the way for this to become the basis for our future in Spain.

Our first years were a real struggle, learning the language, and adapting to a new culture – everything entailed in becoming Spaniards. We owe a great debt to God's people in Alcorcón for their untiring help and constant encouragement, and to our home churches who prayed so faithfully for us. In

February 1981, our future in Spain was suddenly in jeopardy, due to a military coup led by an old ally of Franco. Only afterwards did we realise how mightily the power of God had acted in answer to the fervent prayers of God's people.

Looking back over these 40 short years, it is appropriate to record our heartfelt gratitude to the Lord for His faithfulness to us each step of the way. We are grateful for the wise guidance received from our Mission Board and the tireless support of our Missionary Council. Also to the thousands of members of our various churches who have stood faithfully by us through the rough and smooth of these years. Thanks to their sacrificial giving and perseverance in prayer, we can testify that we "continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great" (Acts 26:22). Truly, "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Ps.118:23).

⋮ Rev John Hanna



**I**t is a privilege to be able to acknowledge the very important milestone of 40 years of faithful ministry of Rev John Hanna and his wife Noranna in the land of Spain. We truly appreciate their friendship and encouragement throughout these many years, as well as their words of counsel and advice.

It was through John's preaching at a deputation meeting in Lurgan Free Presbyterian Church that the Lord spoke to Heather and myself and called us to the mission field in Spain. We visited for a couple of weeks the following summer to see the work at first hand, and the following year we left the shores of Ulster to join the Hanna family in the work. In those early months, we appreciated Noranna's cooking on the Lord's Day, and many other times as well!

It has been a great joy to see how the Lord has blessed the work year after year in Alcorcón, and supplied another minister for the church in the person of our brother, Angel Álvarez. We pray that the Lord would continue to bless and raise up others to preach the gospel to this dark land, and that John and Noranna may enjoy many more happy years in the land of their calling.

⋮ Rev Lyle Boyd

**T**his is a time to celebrate the special leaders Rev John Hanna and his wife Noranna have been for us. It is also a time to note that an important cycle for the church in Alcorcon is coming to an end. The words of Hebrews 13:7 are true of John Hanna, who has been a faithful man of God, having always spoken the Word of God, whose faith has always been an example to all, and whose conversation and conduct have always been an encouragement to follow Christ. And behind a great man there is always a great woman; this is the case with Mrs Hanna. Noranna has always been a good helpmate to John and a true example of piety and humility to the other women in the congregation in Alcorcon.

I think it says it all when a congregation does not only thank their man for his ministry, but they turn to the Lord with thankful hearts for giving them such a man for such a time. We can say nothing more than that the future absence of such a man could not be replaced by anything else but God's peace and His grace.

May the Lord spare him many more years, so that the generation that saw him come from Ulster to Spain will continue to be blessed by this pillar of the congregation in Alcorcon; so that he will see his spiritual sons grow and mature in the faith; and so that he will have Christ's joy fulfilled in himself as he sees the Lord our God showing mercy unto them that love Him and keep His commandments, fulfilling His covenant of grace with the third generation of our congregation as well.

I have very little space to say all that I could say about John and Noranna. Perhaps it could be compared to those most blessed words they will hear from the lips of the Lord Himself, when their good fight will have been fought, their course will have been finished, and they will have kept the faith: *'Well done good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'*

⋮ Rev Angel Alvarez

## MISSION BOARD DETAILS

website: [www.fpcmission.org](http://www.fpcmission.org)

### Office:

Mrs Glenda Graham,  
3 Carrigenagh Road,  
Kilkeel, BT34 4NE  
T: 028 4176 5574  
[office@fpcmission.org](mailto:office@fpcmission.org)

### Chairman:

Rev Ian Harris,  
23a Moneydaragh Road,  
Annalong, BT34 4TY  
T: 028 4376 8040  
[ian.harris@fpcmission.org](mailto:ian.harris@fpcmission.org)

### Secretary:

Rev David Park,  
55 Market Street,  
Ballymoney, BT53 6ED  
T: 028 2766 2039  
[hebronfpc@btconnect.com](mailto:hebronfpc@btconnect.com)

### Treasurer:

Mr Alastair Hamilton,  
T: 078 6061 6302  
[a.hamilton@fpcmission.org](mailto:a.hamilton@fpcmission.org)