

## Not By Might



**This year has unconsciously drawn our attention to the power of the invisible. Although the existence of microbial life has been documented as early as 6th century BCE in Jainism (an ancient Indian religion) and microbiology became an established specialty in the early 19th century, people around the world have become more aware about the scope of microbiology now more than ever before. The COVID19 pandemic and its mutant strains has exposed our vulnerabilities and turned our attention to the brilliant minds in this field as we desperately need a solution to turn things around: crisis creates awareness.**

This has brought home an important point for all believing Christians, especially in our field - who are we looking up to during a crisis?

The dental fraternity is facing unprecedented challenges from an invisible virus which continues to debilitate our workforce. NHS Practice principals are having to handle patients' demands with limited resources and changing goal posts with regards to

remuneration. The associates have become inadvertent casualties due to these vagaries in a target driven system. Many of our hygienists and therapists have been furloughed for a long time and some of them are sadly looking to retrain in other fields. Our dental laboratories are gasping for breath to hold on to their businesses. Unanswered questions on the long-term impact of the current scenario are writ large on the faces of decision makers, dental educators and students.

As Christians in this profession, we strive to derive confidence in affirming from scripture that our help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth:

I lift up my eyes to the mountains - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. (Ps 121:1-2)

The acclaimed American pastor and author Aiden Wilson Tozer writes in his famous book - Knowledge of the Holy: "We shall not seek to understand in order that we may believe, but to believe in order that we may understand". The

world operates only on *vision*, God's people live by *revelation* as well. We live by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). He already knows! What God wants is to get the attention of His people and reveal to us what is on His heart and what is His *will*, for God's ways are not our ways (Isa 55:8-9). Has this crisis sharpened our hearing to tune into His frequency?

During the time of the prophet Zechariah, the people of Israel went through a crisis of a different kind. They had been exiled in Babylon for 70 years and witnessed the strength of the most dominant military powers in the world. They probably felt inadequate in their own weakness in comparison with the enormous strength and wealth of the superpowers of their day. They were returning to Jerusalem after 70 years in captivity with the mammoth task of rebuilding their city, surrounded by the reality of their poverty and weakness. Then came God's word! He promised that they would indeed build their city. But, He told them the rebuilding would not be accomplished by their own power and resources but by His Spirit. As long as they had God's Spirit, they had everything they needed.

Even as we are refined in the crucible of this crisis, let us be reassured that the resources of heaven are at our disposal, by virtue of our relationship with Him. The success of our endeavours will greatly depend on how we obey the Spirit of God.

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty". (Zec 4:6)

**Prince Thomas**  
CDF President



# Dentistry in a Pandemic: A Practice Owner's Perspective Since Reopening



**As I write, it's six months since dental practices were allowed to reopen since the first lockdown in March. It's been a tumultuous time keeping up**

**with ever-changing guidance and trying to find that balance of seeing enough patients to meet demand and stay financially viable versus not having a packed waiting room or enough time for extra cleaning.**

The week following the announcement that dental practices were allowed to reopen at the end of May, was spent trying to source PPE, re-writing the infection control manual and planning the new patient journey. We had a list of over 200 patients needing treatment from triage and were very keen to open as soon as we could, which made for a frantic few days. I remember trying to rummage through my Bible in a panic looking for something to help with this next unknown chapter. I found myself drawn to the start of Joshua where God empowers him to lead the Israelites:

*"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous." (Josh 1:5-6)*

Then verse 7 says:

*"Be strong and very courageous."*

It struck me that God had to reiterate this twice to Joshua because He was setting him a very challenging task. He was really going to need courage! So, I felt God was saying He would be with us but we would have to be brave and step out in faith as leaders to get through this next challenge.

We started back on the 8th June with a skeleton staff, having had barely enough time to unfurlough them. None of the staff looked happy to be back and anxiety was very high. The nurses were

particularly concerned about being responsible for cleaning in and out of surgery and not wanting to risk our patients, especially the older and more vulnerable ones. After a couple of weeks of a very slow start with one patient in the building at a time, we went to split shifts with Ed and I often passing on the A15 up and down to the practice as we tried to manage the home schooling as well as seeing the patients and running the practice. Everyone hated the new hours and it reminded us why as a practice we have always worked limited late nights.



By mid-July we had all the staff back except for the hygienists and were starting to think about having a holiday and leaving Lincolnshire for the first time in the year. We were originally meant to be going on a special family holiday to Australia in July to see Ed's brother, which we realised early on was never going to happen. We agonised with how much time to take off, feeling that although we had only been back in the work place a few weeks, we had been through a very stressful time in lockdown and had been worried about whether we would have a practice to go back to. My passport was due for renewal and things were opening up in Europe. We badly wanted to go on a family holiday to a campsite chain in France we love where we knew the distance from the practice would do us good and we could relax. I sent my passport off and prayed God would guide our holiday plans. Sure enough within a

couple of weeks my passport was back, despite the news reporting there were massive delays with passport renewals. We took the plunge and booked the holiday. As we headed to France in early August, there was talk on the news about putting France on to the quarantine list. We debated on whether to come back early but I really felt God had given us this blessing at this time and it would be alright. We arrived back in Dover, exactly as planned, about 10 hours before quarantine came in and we both made it back to work the following Monday.

In September, after a very honest practice meeting, we all mutually agreed we had to get back to more normal hours in order not to burn out and to help those of us with children. Staff morale instantly improved, as did quality of life and the rate we were getting through the backlog of patients. The PPE became more bearable as temperatures reduced and we were generally more used to the new ways of working.

As we entered the second national lockdown in England in November we continued to work as normal and thankfully the boys remained in school.

Despite the challenges, the practice has survived, no staff have had any significant time off for isolating or had Covid themselves, which feels like a miracle as our county has fared badly in the second wave. I am reminded of the verse Prince gave us at the start of the first lockdown

from I Kings 17 when Elijah speaks to the widow of Zarepath. It ends like this:

*“For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.” (1 Kings 17:16)*

God has given us everything we needed at each point this year on so many levels: be that through resources, rest, protection or wisdom on dealing with anxious staff. The CDF prayer meetings on Zoom have been an enormous encouragement where

we have prayed for each other and our profession in only ways we could understand as dentists.

To end on a hopeful note for the future, it looks like we will be owners of land adjacent to our current premises we lease. We have an old cottage building which is beautiful but has really shown its faults this year with the requirements for Covid. The land came up for sale in July and we found out the price on the day that I was being prayed for on the CDF

calendar. A CDF friend also gave me this verse from Genesis 26:12

*“Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received a hundredfold despite a famine in that land, because the Lord was with him.”*

We felt God was giving us the green light and we should try to buy it. Watch this space!

**Kirsty Gayton**

## Passing on The Baton



**At the AGM this year a comment was made that members should not remain on council for more than seven years. As I have been on the council for 35 years, I think I have overstayed my welcome! I was treasurer on the council when Lois Mason was our first lady president. Richard Barwick, our faithful auditor for many years, suggested at one meeting that CDF should have a daily prayer calendar. Lois replied “Yes, good idea but who can we get to do it?” As I had just retired from my practice and was looking for a useful occupation to spend my time, I jumped at the opportunity. I have always thought that we must, in CDF, surround all our activities in prayer; on dependence on our God.**

Our first priority should be prayerful support of our mission partners. When I started, our means of communication was by Air Mail letters, involving much delay in receiving replies. Emails have been a great blessing. As my computer skills improved, our administrator didn't have to decipher my handwriting when I sent in the draft calendar for printing!

In the past 60 years we have seen great strides in the growth of dental missions: DentaAid, Bridge2Aid, Mercy Ships and Global Child Dental Fund as well as the work of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship flying dentists to give treatment to people in remote areas.

Another feature of our prayer calendar has been to pray for national Christian dentists, e.g. Kharel in Nepal, Chonde in Zambia, Mathew George in India and the dental team in Dohnavur Mission in South India. Also we remember in prayer students going overseas for their electives; a life changing experience.

Let us pray for each of our Council members in their responsible tasks and pray for the planning of conferences and regional meetings .

Let us pray for our profession; for our colleagues we work with and meet at BDA meetings and other social and professional gatherings. Pray for the General Dental Council, that good standards will be maintained. Pray that CDF will make an impact on the dental profession.

One offshoot from the Covid19 pandemic which has been a blessing is the Saturday morning prayer meetings on Zoom. I'm sure we have been impressed with the way Susie Barstow has picked up the prayer requests and emailed the list to us. So I wrote to ask her if she would take on the task of prayer calendar compiler. After prayer, she kindly agreed to do this. I am glad now to hand on the baton!



**Alan Vogt**

# CDF Online Conference

## 7th November 2020



Ruth Perrin

**Wow! Wasn't our conference really special this year? After the disappointment of not being able to gather together at our family conference, Frances our conference secretary, with help**

**from her team, brought us a condensed version with all the essential elements.**

130 people with a love for Christ and for dentistry met via Zoom. We were able to be joined by friends outside the UK, which was a blessing and a joy. We worshipped together in songs of praise – but could only hear our own voices, prayed together and shared a special Agape meal in a service of thanksgiving.

Our Bible talk was by Ruth Perrin on the Raising of Lazarus from John 11. This was a compelling and engaging talk, walking us through the reality of the story and looking at it from a perspective I hadn't seen before. In the current pandemic, we can identify with the disappointment Jesus' friends felt with His initial reaction to the news of Lazarus' illness. There was a tension for Jesus between the love for His friends and His obedience to His

Father. The raising of Lazarus showed that Jesus does keep His promises. Ruth challenged us to pray about our own journey with Jesus - our disappointments and joys. Her talk was a taster for the Bible studies she will lead when we meet at conference in 2021. This is a speaker that I would encourage you not to miss!

### Mission partner reports

Tony and Anne Giles gave us an update of their work over the last year. In November 2019 they spent three weeks at Dreamland in Kimilili in Kenya. Then in January and February 2020 at the Hope Medical Centre in Guinea and back to Kimilili in March to hand over responsibility for cleft palate surgery to Cyrus. Then "lockdown" happened and they have had to remain at home for the remainder of this year. They hope to travel to the Hope Medical Centre in Guinea in 2021. Tony asked for prayers for energy and good health and prayerful thanks for successful prostate cancer surgery.

Neil and Jane McDonald gave us an interesting and amusing update. They have had to remain in England this year but have been sending out lectures to their students in Asia. They gave us a resumé of their lives as dentists and their

missionary work. Their present missionary work is fulfilling but challenging both physically and mentally. They hope to return in the spring. Neil reminded us of the rainbow - the sign of God's love and faithfulness to all people.

Simon and Grace Stretton-Downes reported from their missionary home, serving God in ELWA hospital in Liberia. Simon talked about the last year and the staffing problems, but we can also give thanks for the completion of their dental hospital. Thankfully Covid19 has not been a too serious problem in Liberia. Covid has meant that they have been unable to return to England this year but they hope to be able to make a visit to South Africa in the New Year.

We must give very special thanks to Frances, Karen Silcox and the expertise of the team from her church who pulled it all together, Vicky, Tracey, Karen Paterson and Cathy. They worked hard at short notice to enable us to join in this excellent and rewarding time together as the CDF family.

**Maureen Richards**

## Supporting our Mission Partners in 2020

**Now that we are at the start of a New Year, I thought you might like to know how we have supported our mission partners in 2020.**

Members of CDF have always been generous in their donations to support mission and our partners do value our support both financially and also through continued prayers. They all make a huge sacrifice in being separated from their families and friends and giving up the security of life here in the UK for the uncertainties and sometimes danger of working in countries where there is a need for dental care.

The Autumn issue of Three-in One gave an update on their work.

CDF give to our mission partners in February and September each year and also from the donations given at the CDF conference. Our members can give to our mission partners in several ways:

1. Through a restricted donation to a particular mission partner, which is passed directly to them.
2. Through a restricted donation to the mission partners in general which is part of the allocation in February and September.
3. Money made to our general account and is surplus to the monies needed to cover the costs of running the charity. This amount is calculated for the February and September donations.

Although this has been a difficult year for all of us in the dental profession, the generosity of our members and some non-members has meant that we have been able to continue our financial support. Our accounting year runs from April 1st to March 31st but I have included February 2020 as this gives you an idea for all of 2020.

FEBRUARY	£15,850.00
SEPTEMBER	£2,772.00
CONFERENCE	£9,315.00
DECEMBER	£1,000.00
<b>TOTAL 2020</b>	<b>£28,937.00</b>

Our Conference giving this year was exceptional. The Conference at Hothorpe Hall was cancelled and we had a half-day online conference. As a result, we asked

through our website and emails for you to donate to our conference giving as this year we were unable to do this physically. The response exceeded our expectations. Thank you so much for your generosity.

The conference collection is split in the following way.

Dentaid – 25%,

UCCF (Universities and Colleges Christian Dental Fellowship)- 12%

and the remainder is divided amongst our mission partners.

We give a donation £1000 to ICMDA (International Christian Medical and Dental Association) each year. The vision of ICMDA is to see a Christian witness through doctors and dentists in every community in every nation. This was in February (last financial year) and December.

At each CDF council meeting, we review our giving to mission. We welcome your comments, thoughts and suggestions. Your council are all unpaid volunteers and only our administrator receives payment. This enables us to keep our running costs as low as possible.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions to ask via the CDF administrator: [christiandentalfellowship@gmail.com](mailto:christiandentalfellowship@gmail.com)

God bless.

**Maureen Richards** CDF treasurer



Simon & Grace Stretton-Downes



Andy Patching



Tony & Ann Giles

## A Flight of Fancy! The Hummingbird Hawk Moth



**A number of years ago I looked out of the window and thought I was 'seeing things'. There, hovering by a hanging basket, was what appeared to be the minutest hummingbird. More than surprising, as hummingbirds don't occur in the wild in Europe, let alone in England. I didn't get a long or close look before it disappeared at high-speed and I decided it had to be a butterfly. It was flying and feeding via its long, uncoiled tongue in bright sunshine. Wrong again! It was a hummingbird hawk moth, of which I had never heard!**

Writing this, I could be taken as an impostor. Richard South, FRES (1846 – 1932) was an authority who wrote about butterflies and moths and it was from one of his books (which were being reprinted as late as 1980) that I learnt more about what I had seen. My

namesake described it as a day-flyer, which 'delights' in sunshine, although it could be seen on the wing quite late in the evening and had even been seen hovering and probing flowers in pouring rain. It likes a wide range of blossoms, including jasmine and verbenas.

He described migration from more southerly parts of Europe as the most likely source of the moth in Britain. That is now accepted, although it is now suspected that it may also be resident in this country. It is widespread in India, China, Korea and Japan as well as parts of the U.S. It can be seen flying from May to September but rarely sightings may occur throughout the year. Locations and timings of sightings seem to have changed over the years, associated perhaps with climate change.

It was first described in 1758 by Carl Linnaeus and its scientific name is *Macroglossum stellatarum*. The adult is said to live for about seven months and can achieve speeds up to 12mph – making it one of the world's fastest insects.

Its wingspan is slightly under two inches. The brown forewings and orange hindwings are seen as a hazy blur in

flight. The forewings are described as having dark stripes – but I have yet to see these as I have only ever seen the moth in flight and the rapidity of wingbeat is phenomenal. The wings produce a hum which is audible to some – I have yet to hear it.

This July I had my best and most prolonged opportunity of observing the hawk moth – lasting some eighteen minutes. During this time, it flew continuously, never alighting – hence I still have not seen the stripes on the forewings. Trying to photograph them is a little like trying to get a sharp picture of an aircraft propeller.

I have found watching the hawk moth almost mesmerising. Its body appears totally motionless in the air, surrounded by its halo of blurred wings, with its 'tongue', which is longer than its body, uncoiled and placed precisely in even the smallest of flowers. When it moves off to another flower, it can do so in any direction and it leaves me marvelling at its precise flight control. A flight of fancy? No, this is real, a joy to behold and has rightly been described as a masterpiece of Mother Nature.

**Richard South**

# Thoughts For 2021

## From Your New Regional Coordinator



CDF Scotland

**Here we are just into a new year and I, probably like most people, have spent more than a few moments reflecting on events through 2020 and how they have affected us personally, as families, and our work. I wonder whether we think about our relationships with each other and the Lord in quite the same depth?**

I am naturally an introvert and am generally happy with my own company and must make an effort to talk to people, but this last year, I realise that I am not as introvert as I thought I was. I truly miss meeting others face to face, being in the company of others is so much better than Zoom or Teams.

It has its place and I thank God for the technology that keeps us in touch, and we can do so much this way. We pray together, have church together, have conferences together, but don't you miss



CDF East Anglia

the human contact, being in the presence of others? This technology has been so successful that organisations are considering closing offices, working from home, teaching online, doing interviews online, even taking exams virtually. We

can buy our food online, our clothes and furniture online, book holidays and even buy cars online.

I really worry about the wellbeing of people in such a potentially isolating world. It is easy to disappear from someone's attention, to be ill and put on a brave face for the PC monitor screen. Who is going to look out for these people? People are now courting and dating each other online. Is that real or desperation?

Relationships are a big deal to us and to God.

Jesus came among us because He wanted a relationship with us, He is not a God

who prefers to stay aloof or distant. He came to show His love for us, to be with us, die for us, so we can be with Him. As Christians, I believe we have a responsibility to share Jesus with others and encourage each other in the faith by caring for each other.

I will be glad when we can safely be in each other's company, sharing face to face, reading each other's body language, understanding how people feel, giving someone a hug. Having a laugh, sharing a tear, enjoying a meal together. Singing praise to God and worshipping together. Meeting up with your friends and family, visiting a distant relative, going on holiday, celebrating an event like a birth or wedding. Sharing the disappointment of a failed exam or mourning the loss of a



CDF East Midlands



CDF Wessex

loved one with others.

We have so much to be thankful for, so much to look forward to and so much to learn from this last twelve months.

I learnt that we could keep in touch and see each other from a distance.

I learnt that we need to meet physically if we really want to get to know each other

and support one another.

I learnt that we could pray on our own or (virtually) together, but it is better in the presence of others.

I learnt to be more patient.

Looking ahead to this coming year, my first step will be to learn from all our regional reps as to how they have coped in the last year, share successes and difficulties. I hope that through more regular meetings we may encourage one another in our work and in our faith and being able to reunite and celebrate at the autumn CDF conference.

**Malcolm Prideaux**

CDF Regional Groups Coordinator

## CDF Happy Families



**An important feature of our conferences is that they are family conferences. Members bring their children who are well looked after by a youth team with games, craft work, singing and teaching . Mums and dads can attend the meetings with peace of mind knowing their children are in good hands. Our children always looked forward to going and meeting their friends each year. We need to pray for our CDF families, that the children will grow up to know, love and serve the Lord. We need the Lord's help to guide us to get the right balance between work, family, church and leisure.**

I want to tell you about a testing time we had as a family one year. It was a family holiday in August when it rained solidly for the whole fortnight, except one sunny day! We were in a self-catering cottage in

Swanage with eleven-year-old Sue, ten-year-old Libby, seven-year-old Anne and five-year-old Paul. One card game which was popular was called "Pit" based on the USA stock exchange. The aim was to collect nine cards of the same commodity (oats, barley, wheat etc). We decided to adapt this to a home-made game with bird varieties on the cards.

We set out in the pouring rain to the shops to get plain postcards, pens, brushes and paints. We had

a book with pictures of all the birds. The artists in the family copied the pictures when we had chosen nine distinctive varieties with outstanding features. The not-so-good artists copied them onto cards and the others put on the numbers and the values. We also had the "joker" cards; instead of the Bull and Bear of "Pit", we had the RSPB warden as the good card and the bird's eggs thief as the baddie.

Making the cards took up most of two days. Then we could start playing the game, calling out "two, two" or "three, three" according to the number of cards you wanted to swap. Everyone calling at the same time desperate to change cards (especially if you had the egg thief!). This was all noisy fun! When someone had collected nine cards of the same set, they

called out "Flock!" and the scores would be added up, with a deduction made for the one still holding the egg thief.

There was no television set provided in the rented accommodation in those days. We were left to our own devices for entertainment. We managed to keep the family harmony most of the time with indoor games and visits to swimming baths and cinemas and church on Sunday.

A favourite hymn, not often sung, is "O happy home, where Thou art loved the dearest".

Here are two more verses:

"O happy home where each one serves Thee lowly,  
Whatever his appointed work may be,  
Till every common task seems great and holy,  
When it is done O Lord as unto Thee.

O happy home where Thou art not forgotten,  
When joy is overflowing full and free.  
O happy home where every wounded spirit  
Is brought Physician, Comforter to Thee".

Let us pray that every CDF family will be a happy home!

**Alan Vogt**

# Purposeful Wealth for Dentists



**Jonathan Gibson, a financial planner and member of St Peter's Free Church, Dundee, has previously spoken at a CDF Scottish regional**

**day. He contacted our administrator in April last year offering his services to the membership in light of the current financial concerns that dentists were facing. Initially he hoped to be able to present at our national conference or at regional groups, however as this is not an option at the moment, he kindly agreed to write the following article.**

Do you want to live a fulfilled and purposeful life? Are you unsure how to create the fulfilled life that you're seeking?

When it comes to wealth planning, I feel it's my responsibility to help my clients live a fulfilled life. Understanding my clients' lives, especially their purpose and what they want to get out of their lives, is fundamental.

"Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless." Ecclesiastes 5:10

This concept of a fulfilled life is at the heart of my approach to wealth planning. What I've come to realise is that if we approach our money, as well as our time and talents, with a proper perspective and with integrity, we're more likely to find contentment. As such, I believe real wealth is a fulfilled and purposeful life, a life that is characterised by contentment – in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul wrote, "For I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content." (Phil 4:11)

There are a number of principles that feed into this, and ultimately what it comes down to is that real wealth is about much more than money and possessions. I'm

sure you would agree. Furthermore, as Christians we find real wealth in Christ and His Gospel.

The concept of integrity is dealing fairly with others, and the concept of stewardship means rather than asking yourself, "How do I protect or use my money?" you ask yourself, "How can I make best use of the time, talents and money entrusted to me by my Heavenly Father?"

Within this principle of stewardship, there are seven key areas dentists ought to focus on. The first is what I like to refer to as, Authentic Investing, which will provide you with the greatest chance of having a successful investment outcome. The other six areas are what I describe as Wise Financial Strategies:

- Cashflow – preparing you for life's many transitions.
- Borrowing – ensuring debt does not choke your financial future.
- Risk – providing for you and your family if the unexpected happens.
- Tax – not paying more tax than you need to.
- Legacy – providing for those who are important to you.
- Giving – making a real difference to others.

## What's your purpose?

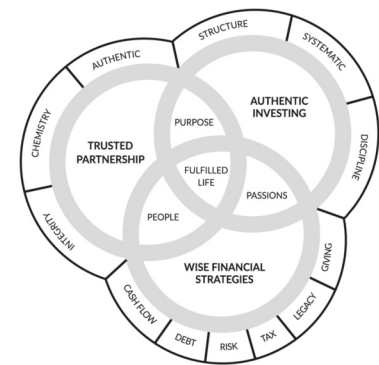
Defining your purpose and purposeful goals starts by answering life-centred questions such as:

- What is important about money to you?
- Who is important to you and who would you like to spend more time with?
- What activities or skills would you like to spend more time doing or learning?
- What would you do differently if you had more time or money?

How you answer these questions is vital if you want a wealth plan which is aligned with your purpose in life and being a good

and faithful servant.

"No one is so miserable as the poor person who maintains the appearance of wealth." Charles Spurgeon, preacher and author 1834-1892.



## Trusted Partnership

As you can appreciate there are many challenges when it comes to addressing the seven key areas highlighted above. For instance, not putting the tax 'cart' before the investment 'horse', so to speak; avoiding a consumptive lifestyle and living within your means; or perhaps, it's deciding on how much to transfer to loved ones...



If you want to bring clarity, contentment and certainty to your financial life, I believe you need to establish a trusted partnership with a wealth planner, someone who puts your life at the centre of their conversations with you and everything they do for you – they can stop you making the wrong decisions, at the wrong times and for the wrong reasons – they can show you strategies you may not have previously considered – they can take away a lot of the hassle that comes with managing your money, planning your financial future and importantly, ensuring you remain on track.

## Jonathan Gibson

*Jonathan is the author of Purposeful Wealth, available on Amazon.*

Deadline for the next issue of Three-in-One is 1st April 2021. Please send contributions to Tracey Dalby: [editor@cdf-uk.org](mailto:editor@cdf-uk.org)

Email: [christiandentalfellowship@gmail.com](mailto:christiandentalfellowship@gmail.com) Website: [www.cdf-uk.org](http://www.cdf-uk.org)

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