

Date		Speaker	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Other info
Feb	3	Gilbert	Al H	-	1 Tim 6:3-10
	Thurs 7	Musician's night for ALL in Glenabbey Music Ministry 8pm in Al's Office (see News section for details)			
	10	Gilbert	Al B	Al H New Songs Workshop	1 Tim 6:11-16
	17	Gilbert	Suz	-	1 Tim 6:17-21
	24	Paul C	Sarahanne	Al B	TBC
Mar	Sat 1	Stocki	U2 Contact Event in the Warehouse		
	2	Stephen Shaw	Al H	-	Jesus on Trial series
	9		Al B	-	
	16		Suz	Al H	Naomi Duff's Commissioning
	Fri 21	TBC	TBC	Good Friday communion	
	23	Gilbert	Al H	-	Easter Sunday
	30	Al H	Sarahanne	Al B	Micah 7:7-9
Apr	Thurs 3	Musician's night for ALL in Glenabbey Music Ministry (8pm)			
	6	Gilbert	Al B	-	TBC
	13	Gilbert	Al H	Al H	TBC

Downhere – Wide Eyed and Mystified

In live music, there's little to beat the sense of satisfaction in coming across a support act that could quite easily hold their own at the top of the bill. It's a rare experience, but will be familiar to anyone fortunate enough to see Downhere support Chris Tomlin in Belfast last summer. What was striking then about this Canadian four-piece was not just the dynamism of their music, but also their humility, sincerity and sense of humour. All of these characteristics are as evident on "Wide-Eyed and Mystified", their 2006 breakthrough album, as they were in the Odyssey Arena.

Stylistically, this is melodic alt rock with a definite nod to classic rock influences; it's catchy but never clichéd, dramatic but unpretentious. Seeming contradictions abound, yet the raw, guitar-driven energy found on opener "The More" does not jar alongside contemplative piano-led tracks such as "Unbelievable". The styles of co-lead vocalists Marc Martel and Jason Germain could not be further apart; Germain is subtle and understated while Martel will put you in mind of Jeff Buckley at a Queen tribute night. The two combine to incredible effect though, perhaps best on standout track "A Better Way".

With such diversity and ambition, it would have been easy for this album to lose direction, yet it is entirely cohesive and perfectly balanced. This can be explained in part by Downhere's stellar musicianship, but it is their unequivocal heart for God that is the real constant, clearly demonstrated by the breadth, depth and sheer honesty of the themes explored lyrically. These include surrender, maturing in faith, seeking forgiveness after straying, and spurring each other on to live as salt and light. If these sound heavy-going, I can assure you that this album is anything but. The ever-present sincerity of Downhere's delivery and their hunger for God are in equal parts humbling and inspiring. Wide-eyed and mystified indeed.

Reviewed by David Currie



transformission

worship that shapes and sends

February 2008

running on empty?

I have run out of diesel three times in all my years of driving. The jamiest of those happened at the top of a long hill which had a garage at the bottom. 'If I'm really fortunate,' I thought, 'I can freewheel to the bottom and fill up as if nothing has happened!' I willed my car all the way down. I prayed that no other cars would pull out from side-roads or that no slow drivers would make me lose momentum. I made it to the entrance of the garage and had just about enough energy left to allow me to coast up the ramp into the garage and roll to a stop beside the pump. I filled up and drove off and no-one had any idea I'd been running on empty. I had got away with it!

It's all too easy in our service for God to try to get away with running on momentum, hoping that no one will notice and that we'll get away with it. The busyness of life and the pressures of commitments can mean that we become consumed by activities themselves. We can end up so task-orientated that we confuse our actions *for* God with our relationship *with* God. While service for God is absolutely vital, in many ways what we do *for* God is our secondary calling. Our primary calling in the Christian life is our relationship *with* God. Our primary calling must be the basis from which we act out our secondary calling. In other words, our relationship *with* God must empower what we do *for* God if our service is to bear any lasting fruit.


Let's take a look at Jeremiah 17 to help us work through this challenge. The prophet is contrasting two ways of living out our relationship with God, two directions our life can take. So go grab your bible, get it opened at Jer 17:5-8 and let's get stuck in.



what's your **direction of trust?**

Firstly, contrast the **direction of trust** in the two ways of living (v6a & 7a). The cursed one trusts in human strength and turns away from the Lord. Of course, none of us sets out not to rely on God as we serve. But it's all too easy to depend on our own skills and experience when standing to lead worship. We've played the songs before, we know what we're doing, and we shift into auto-pilot relying on what we can bring to the mix. If this is the direction of our

a community of worshipping artists seeking to make his praise glorious



Blessed is the one
who trusts in
Yaweh ... he is like
a tree planted by
water that sends
out roots to the
stream ... he does
not cease to bear
fruit. (Jer 17)

lives, the passage is clear – this is far from the blessed life.

In contrast, the blessed life – the service that bears fruit – is for those who trust in the Lord. Trust implies dependence and reliance. When we're trusting in God, in every moment we're serving we're acutely aware of our utter dependence on God to empower and use the service we offer. Where is the direction of your trust?

do you trust God in your private worship?

The passage then goes on to use two powerful and contrasting similes to develop the point (v6b & 7b). Read them again, looking for the contrasts between the two.

The cursed man is like a **desert shrub**. Think of the tumble-weed you see often in deserted towns in Westerns. Lifeless, of no substance, easily uprooted and blown around. He dwells in parched places, in salt flats, places where there is no water and therefore no life. This is a stark warning for us: if we rely purely on our own strength, although there might be activity, there will be no spiritual life flowing through what we do. Our service will produce nothing of any lasting value or substance. We can't run on spiritual empty and expect to get away with it before God.

In complete contrast is the **tree by a stream**. Note the differences: a majestic tree, rather than an insubstantial shrub; set by running water, rather than in a parched place.

But also note what this tree does. It sends out roots to the stream. The roots are hidden from sight, of course. And yet, without those roots, there would be no life. I think this is a powerful image of the importance of our

hidden life of worship. How rich is our secret spiritual life, the life that no-one else sees? I think this is especially important for those who stand at the front in a very public act of service. Is there authenticity to what we do, the kind of authenticity that emerges from an orientation of all of our lives that says, 'I trust you, Lord, and I show that by throwing myself on your mercy and grace on a regular basis.'

That's our part – to send out our roots to the water. And God's promise in turn is to flood our hearts with his life-energising stream. And the result of this secret life of trust? Even when heat comes, there is still life and fruit. Even when the drought comes when we're only too aware of our own weakness, he is strong and alive in us. The very same conditions that expose the lifelessness of the shrub do not diminish the fruitfulness of the tree, because the tree is drawing from a Source outside itself. If we want to be part of a ministry that has that kind of life and fruit, then our private relationship must be paramount.

When I was coasting down the hill towards the garage, running on empty, to the casual observer, there was nothing wrong with my car. But it wouldn't have taken much to expose my fundamental weakness. No power, no life, no energy. As we serve, if we try to run on empty people will sense our lack of integrity. On the other hand, people will be drawn to the kind of authenticity that accompanies those whose direction of trust is towards God. They will see God's fruit in our lives, even in the midst of drought, and be drawn to him as a result. We who stand publicly to serve God must privately be drawing deeply from him. Invest in this, drink from the living water he offers, that the power that God offers will flow through us in life-giving fruit.

news

U2 Contact Event

The U2 Contact night has been confirmed for Saturday 1st March. As I'm sure you know, this night is designed as a Contact Event and we'll be encouraging people to invite non-Christian friends who might be interested in the music of U2. Steve Stockman will be sharing some reflections on the spirituality of U2's music and we'll be doing cover versions of classic U2 songs. This is the first time that our Sunday morning bands have all taken part simultaneously in an event in the Warehouse and I'm very excited by both the outreach potential and the chance for all of us to work together on a common project. Get thinking about the songs you'd like to do – a number of them have been snapped up already!

Musicians' night

You'll see there are a couple of musician's nights in the current rota. These are going to be a more regular feature in the future and they'll be a key part of the training and development of those involved in the music ministry in Glenabbey. Let me encourage you to make every effort to attend, even if it means re-scheduling other activities. Please confirm your attendance through my email: alistair.hamill@glenabbey.org.uk

Newsongs night

Sunday night 10th Feb is another date for your diaries. Come along and learn the core new songs that we'll be introducing over the next few months in an informal and relaxed evening.