

Introducing the
**Gospel
Advocate
Relief Fund**

*'I have commanded the ravens
to feed thee there.'*

1 Kings 17:4





What is the Gospel Advocate Relief Fund?

The object of the Gospel Advocate Relief Fund, (GARF), is to help needy ministers of the Gospel, their widows and dependants.

Its business is managed by a small committee, which meets quarterly. The Fund was established in 1878; plenty has changed since then, but there are still many preachers in small churches, or doing pioneering work, who have to exist on very meagre salaries. GARF can help some of them, by finding out about their needs, sending some financial relief, encouraging them through correspondence and upholding them in prayer. There are also the widows of men who spent their lives proclaiming the gospel, perhaps with little opportunity to provide for their retirement, or for their dependants. GARF knows some of these who are in particular need, and is able to send money regularly to help with expenses, along with letters to remind these elderly Christians of our fellowship together in the Gospel.



We believe

GARF is non-denominational, and upholds the historic Christian faith of sovereign and electing grace, in particular the following- The verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. That there are three persons in one indivisible Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal. The fall of man by original transgression is total and complete. That God the Father made absolute and particular choice of all his people in Christ before the foundation of the world, without respect to any good works foreseen in them. The eternal salvation of the elect is secured in Christ by their complete redemption and justification by his blood and imputed righteousness. That all the elect by nature need, and duly receive, regeneration by the Holy Spirit to bring about their repentance and faith. That the faith of God's elect is the free gift of God's grace to every one of his people by which they believe in Christ, and receive the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins, which has been secured by Jesus Christ.



Where does the money come from?

Historically GARF has not held large reserves of money, but in recent years God has blessed the fund to such an extent that Grants totalling approximately £50,000 per year are made as opposed to £5,000. The committee manages the Fund so that as much as possible can be sent to those who need it most.

Donations come from concerned Christians and from churches who feel able to give to the continuing needs. We aim to hold public meetings as often as we can to promote awareness of the work of GARF and to encourage the Lord's people to give to this work.

Our accounts are subject to independent audit and published in our annual report. We also hold an Annual General Meeting during which Charity and Magazine progress reports are given and a sermon is preached.



Why GARF?

Is there a place for committees, and organisations like GARF? The committee members are all believers holding the reformed faith, who are committed to honouring the Biblical doctrine of the local church. GARF works simply as an agency for facilitating practical fellowship between believers who are in need, and other believers and churches who are able to help with that need. We recognise that the primary responsibility for providing for dependants belongs to their immediate families (see 1 Timothy 5.4). Churches ought, as far as they are able, to provide for their own pastors. But we also know that there are many circumstances in which these obligations cannot be fulfilled.



The history of GARF

A quaint name like the Gospel Advocate Relief Fund takes some explaining. In 1867 North Street Chapel, Eastbourne, called as the pastor of their church (which was to become known later as Cavendish Place Independent Chapel) A J Baxter. Baxter was a gifted and energetic man who among his many other endeavours began to publish a magazine, The Gospel Advocate for Promoting Spiritual Unity. This publication was well-received and had a good circulation. Through the magazine, Baxter began a fund to help needy Gospel ministers, inviting subscriptions and gifts from his readers. The Gospel Advocate Magazine Fund was born. After the death of Mr Baxter the magazine was edited for some years by Mr J W Tobitt, Pastor at 'The Tabernacle', Hastings, but sadly ceased publication in 1921. However, the charity established through the magazine continued. It was renamed the Gospel Advocate Relief Fund in 1979. In 2007 several friends felt that an attempt should be made to re-launch the magazine, and meetings were arranged to prayerfully explore the possibility. The prospect seemed somewhat daunting, after what must be a record gap of 87 years! The first issue of the new 'Gospel Advocate' was published in January 2008 as a quarterly magazine under the editorship of Mr Timothy Martin, and continues to serve a growing readership. The 'Gospel Advocate' describes itself as a devotional magazine, and as such seeks to maintain the warm application of sound teaching found in the spirit of its founding fathers, Baxter and Tobitt.





The people we help

Our rules specify that ministers benefiting from the Fund should uphold the doctrines of free grace.

We ask those we help to complete a statement showing their income and expenditure, so that we can try to give according to need. We cannot completely satisfy every financial need, but we do our best to make sure that money that the Lord's people have given for this work goes to those who will benefit from it most. We have a burden especially to help those men who are labouring to reach the unsaved, to extend their work into new territories. As news comes in from different parts of the country, we hear of pioneering work in difficult circumstances, of pastors labouring to reverse years of spiritual decline, of individuals' struggles with problems of health. But we also hear of the encouragements of conversions, and of churches growing.



How can you help us?

- ✓ 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

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