

REPAIRING THE BREACH

CC Bible College York, England

Story and photos by Tom Price



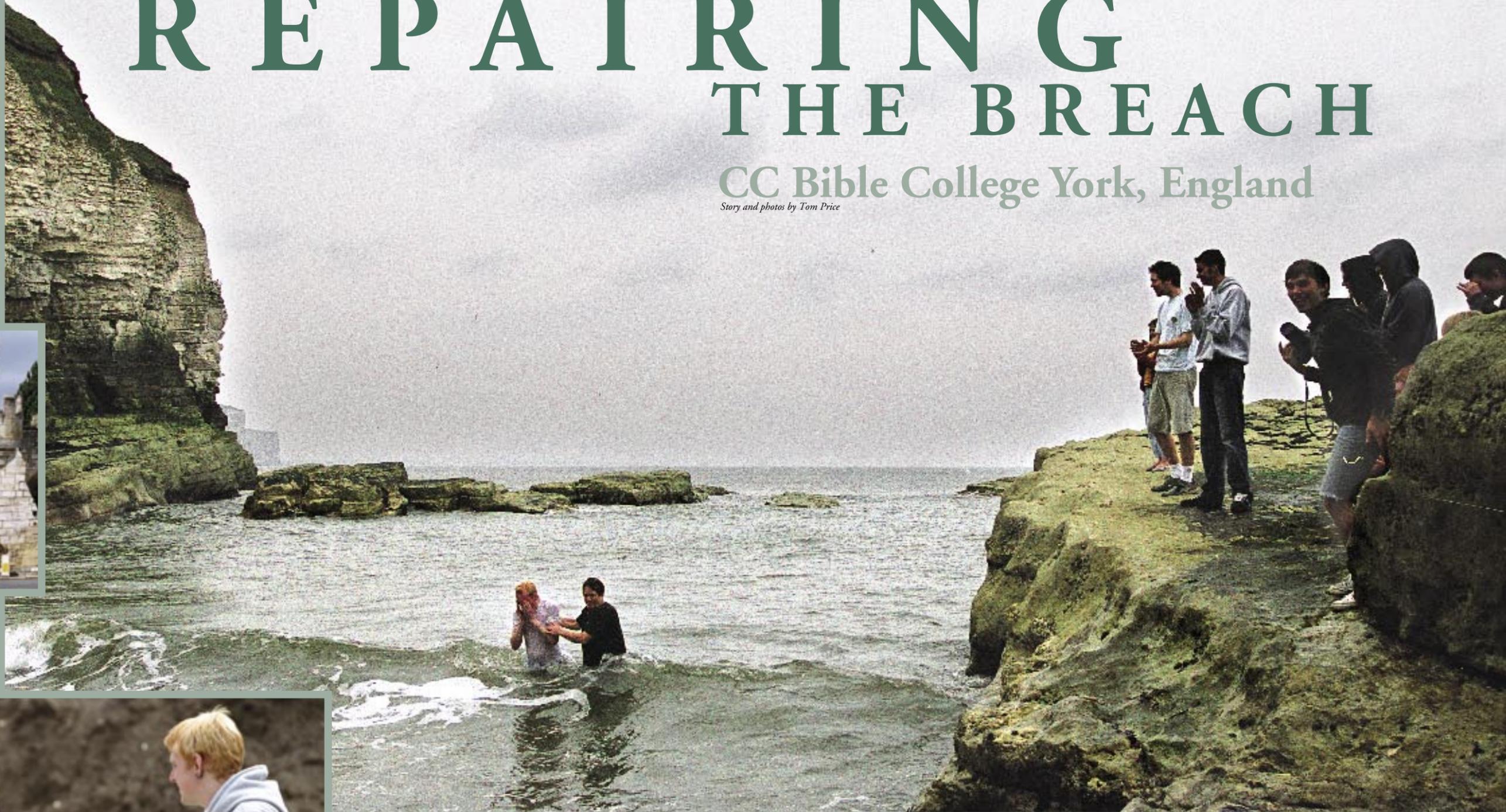
Historic York Minster is a reminder of England's religious heritage.



The medieval Walmgate Bar hosts prayer meetings, a library, offices, coffee shop, and CCBC classes.



CCBC York Director Dave Sylvester, left, and Tom Clare, right, discuss standing fast in the faith prior to Tom's baptism. Tom had come to Christ after meeting students.



Tom Clare, left, is baptized in the North Sea at Thornwick Bay by David Sylvester while fellow students clap in support. Tom is from York and attends the CC Bible College.

CC Bible College York is helping restore the spiritual foundation of a nation that produced giants of the faith and was once the center of Christian revival.

The North Sea at Thornwick Bay seemed at peace—but Tom Clare's heart was not. The 23-year-old redheaded Englishman had concerns before he was to be baptized. He felt compelled to talk to Dave Sylvester, director of the Calvary Chapel Bible College in York where Tom attended.

Two years prior, CC Bible College students had shared the Gospel with Tom on the

streets of York. At first he laughed off their attempts; he and his school friends thought their God was a relic of the past. The vacant cathedrals of York had become museums. But the more Tom listened, the more he realized the emptiness of his own heart.

Tom sensed the students' conviction as they spoke of God sending His Son to die for him. He began to look forward to see-

ing them every week: "They exuded such sincerity and certainty in their faith."

After he was invited to CC York, Tom eventually gave his life to Christ. An opportunity opened up to attend the Bible College. As his first year came to a close, he knew he needed to allow God to wash his sins away and have the old man—his former fleshly nature—laid to rest. Tom



Teacher Loren Combs, right, discusses cults class with student Sam Juarez in the church fellowship hall where many CCBC classes are held. Loren also pastors a nearby Calvary Chapel.

confessed to Dave that he sometimes struggled when he returned home to his old neighborhood, and he was concerned about the coming summer. Dave reassured Tom that God would be faithful to keep him and watch over him. Moments later, they both stepped into the icy water of the North Sea for Tom's baptism.

Raising the Foundations

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

Isaiah 58:12 (KJV)

"I believe the Lord gave this verse to us for the Calvary Chapel movement in England," said Dave. "England is the country that had once evangelized the world. English soil has the imprints of men like Charles Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, George Muller, the Wesleys, and George Whitfield." Now the country is spiritually dark. Some call it a post-Christian nation; Muslim mosques and the occult abound.

Dave continued, "But God is doing a fresh work and raising up a new generation to reach this nation for Jesus."

He added, "Isaiah 58:12 says, 'They that [are of you] shall build the old waste places,' and I believe the 'they' to be those that God is going to raise up out of this generation to reach this country as God rebuilds



Randy McCracken, left, discusses course work with student Timothy Thrasher.

the old waste places. I believe God wants to repair the breaches and restore the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake."



Teacher Mike Howard, left, works with students. He pastors a nearby CC church.



Dave, left, and his wife, Nancy, are both teachers at CCBC York.



Formerly a pub and private homes, row houses serve as CCBC student housing and are located near Walmgate Bar. Students enjoy a warm, sunny day outside.



Believers praise God in song at Sunday night service in the fellowship hall.



Worshippers wait on God in an intimate setting on Sunday evening.



Student Eddie Bennett, aka "Eddie B," raps one of his songs at "Open Mic Night" at the fellowship hall. The normally reserved Englishman delighted the student body with his act.



Once a month, students share Scriptures, poems, laughter and songs at "Open Mic Night."

After CC York was planted, the Lord gave Dave and Nancy the vision to start a Bible college to ground the next generation in the Word of God.

"It was just an amazing thing the Lord did, the way it all happened," Dave recalled. Back in 2000, he and several believers in York had been praying for God's direction regarding a Bible college, assuming it would be at least a year before anything happened. That July, Dave Shirley, director of the main CC Bible College in Murrieta, CA, called Dave to let him know that 23 students were coming for the fall semester. In less than two months' time, everything was supplied—housing, beds, a kitchen—all the things needed for a Bible college. "It was just a miracle," Dave said. Helen Salmon, secretary for the church and Bible College since it began, agreed: "The Lord has provided all of our needs every step

of the way." In the fall of 2000, CCBC York began.

The inaugural teaching staff was made up of pastors and elders from CC York and nearby CC pastors. Ten teachers currently oversee classes for up to 65 students. CC York purchased a row of houses and commercial property to house students, provide classroom space, and serve as a meeting room. CC York leased its first church home—historic Walmgate Bar, a small fortress that was a main entry gate into the ancient walled city of York. CC York has since outgrown it, and the quaint facility is used for church prayer meetings and Bible studies, offices, a coffee shop, and CCBC classes.

Laying the Foundation

“Teaching the Word of God to the young people is such a vital task,” said Dave. “Britain is like the ashes from what used to be a burning flame for the Gospel. I feel the Lord wants to raise up, out of those ashes, a new generation that is on fire for Him. God wants us to reach the towns and villages in this country.”

Randy McCracken is one of ten instructors at the college. With a master’s degree in biblical languages, he is a missionary teacher sent out from CC Stone Mountain, GA. His goal is to equip the students with the best tools available for ministry. Like many of the staff, Randy and his wife Gloria often open their home to the students for dinners and fellowship. “We understand

that the enemy can use homesickness to discourage the students who may be away from home for the first time,” Randy said. A Christian singer/songwriter, Randy also teaches biblical worship.

Loren Combs and his wife, Jeanna, had been missionaries in Hungary before attending the Bible College in Millstatt, Austria. They came to York as missionaries before the Bible College began. Pastor of a nearby Calvary in Bridlington, Loren teaches a class on cults and also feels it is essential to encourage students in their Christian walk. Mike and Theresa Howard had also been missionaries in Hungary before feeling God leading them to the York area. Mike teaches classes and pastors CC Harrogate. The rest of the staff includes Mark Santillanes, teacher, administrator, and assistant pastor; Doug Keen, teacher and dean of men; Mike Salmon, teacher and registrar; Ed Major, teacher and missions outreach coordinator; and Brian Cambra, teacher and administrator.

The impact of the York campus spans not only Great Britain, but also from Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia to CC churches



British student Mark Bateman shares his future plans at graduation.

back in the States. CCBC York graduate Adam Parsons is an intern pastor at CC Tucson, AZ. Graduate Brandon Liesenfelt, from CC Stone Mountain, GA, recently finished boot camp and wants to share Christ with fellow Marines on the battlefield. Students may also intern in York for two years and be placed in churches throughout Britain. While the student population is mostly American, the goal is to have an equal number of American and British students.

The main campus at Murrieta sets the curriculum, while the extension campuses have freedom in elective courses; this allows students to switch to different campuses. The Bible College staff prays over each applicant. All of the classes are taught live, as small class size and personal contact give students greater advantages. All CC curriculums include the “5,000” tape survey of the entire Bible by Pastor Chuck Smith. Studies include the Old and New Testament, biblical languages, church history, prophecy, and eschatology—all to prepare the student for a life in ministry.

After five years of the CC York family’s praying and waiting on the Lord, a large brick facility behind the row houses has become available for use. After renovation, it could seat up to 600 people, provide additional classrooms for Sunday school and the Bible College, and be used for youth and sports outreaches. 🙌



During spring 2006 graduation, Pastor Dave encourages graduates to serve Christ and apply what they have learned. Three of the 17 graduates will serve at CC churches in the UK.



CCBC York has celebrated 12 graduations since it began in 2000.



Helen Salmon, left, hugs Gail Fox, right, after her graduation. Gail plans to serve God at CC Mansfield, England.

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Next issue will feature Calvary Chapel Bible College Siegen, Germany.