

GRAPEVINE

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

The Bishop writes:

Our country's skyline has changed. Once when I set off for the station in Peterborough as I did almost every day for three to four years – I would approach the city centre from the west. The towers of the Cathedral – especially as dawn broke – always struck me as a dramatic statement on the skyline, echoing the towers and spires you see rising from almost every village and hamlet in east Anglia.

But then a change took place; at some point in my time there, two mosques went up to the west of the Cathedral's silhouette, with their domes and minarets; and it was even stranger in the twilight when, hanging over both, was a real crescent moon.

Today I want to consider one particular response to Islam from a religious Christian community and its founder. This comes in the form of a little story which I will tell and which says more about what Christian attitudes to Islam might be than anything else I know.

Some Christian men and women – some very holy men and women – have tried to understand other faiths, and particularly Islam. And I want to centre on one today whose name was Charles de Foucauld. Indeed it would be more accurate to say that I want to concentrate on one of his later followers, for de Foucauld in his own lifetime had no followers. At one time a travelling soldier of the French cavalry and fearless explorer, he had travelled across the Sahara disguised as a poor Jew. He mapped areas and regions of what was unknown; and he gained the French Geographical Gold medal for exploration.

But this godless soldier was struck by Islam, for everywhere he went he saw evidence of something else in human life: he saw evidence of the existence and power of a God wrought in the lives of the men and women of the desert. Day and night they lived in submission to Allah, day and night they went about their prayers, day and night they revered the creator and sustainer of life.



Charles de Foucauld

For de Foucauld this brought him back to rediscover the religious faith of his fathers, his Catholic faith. So the irony was that another world faith led him back to his own. Abandoning a life in the military (not to mention wine,

women and song) he set out to give his life in its entirety to **God**, just as he saw the Muslims doing.

He offered himself in total submission to Christ for the sake of other peoples and his own soul. He began as an unordained Trappist monk living a remote and harsh monastic life in Syria and in the most degraded circumstances imaginable, for he equated a holy life before Christ as wholly ascetic. He lived in simplicity and poverty, "like Christ," he said, "in Nazareth."

He thought he'd found it in the monastery, until he saw some really poor people living in hovels near the gate. He left the Trappists and moved to Nazareth where he lived in a hut in the grounds of the sisters, Poor Clares. He ate little, and slept on the floor; he worked and prayed all day. He was never satisfied.

Then a few years later after spending yet more time back in north Africa's desert he eventually found a home among the Taureg people: a wild, cruel, even ruthless people who lived off the desert. He set up home and a chapel among them. He lived amidst them and became like one of them. He looked after some of them becoming their doctor and nurse. He translated their language. He lived the gospel among these people year in year out, without any support, and hundreds of miles from what we'd call 'civilization'. "I simply want to be a brother to all men ... from wherever they come," he said; but he never made a single convert. And no one – despite his appeals back home to France – no one ever joined him in community. It was just too tough and he was left alone. In a *fraças* during the First World War, his little compound was attacked by some local tribes and he was shot.

But then, many years after his death, a community emerged in the 1930s, calling themselves the *Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus*, and they followed in his footsteps living not only on the edge of sandy deserts and among the same peoples, but in the industrial deserts of western Europe, in highly industrialized urban areas. Today they are everywhere; and their motto, like their founders (Rene Voillaume and Sister Magdalene), is to be (in the words of Charles de Foucauld) 'like Christ in Nazareth'; to live in simplicity accepting the people around them, trying not to change anyone or convert anyone. They will say things like "we are here as a presence among those to whom God also speaks."

One of the Little Brothers of Jesus, who followed on in our own time was Carlo Carretto. He had been a worker with European youth movements and Catholic Action in Spain, Italy and France. A teacher of prayer, he has written some wonderful books on the subject; and he threw himself into the desert life both of the industrial west and the literal deserts of North Africa.



Carlo Carretto

Carlo Carretto, like many in this community, though they move around the whole world living among the poorest of the world, in North and South America, in Western Europe and so on, sometimes return to the deserts of North Africa to recoup, to retreat,

to pray; and exactly at the same place Charles de Foucauld lived. Just to be. And it is from one of his times in the desert we get this story.

Carretto tells of his walk each evening to his little chapel with a Muslim boy of 'about' 8 – no records are ever kept. They had long been friends and often walked and talked. On this particular evening the little boy was quiet and sad, and Carretto had the greatest difficulty getting him to explain his unhappiness. The boy started to cry violently – saying that he was miserable because Carretto would not become a muslim. "Oh, and why should I become a muslim?" said Carlo Carretto, 'I am a Christian and believe in Jesus'. The boy insisted that Carretto would end up in hell if he did not become a Muslim, so said a man in the village.

Carretto assured the boy that they prayed to the same God and he must go home that evening (for the boy would never enter Carretto's chapel) and pray for them both to the same God in heaven who would save them both and bring them both to heaven.

On entering his place of meditation alone Carretto found it hard to meditate. Then, he says, with his knowledge of divisions between religions and after an hour of trying to meditate "I realized that tears were streaming down my white robe. I was the one to weep now."

[Letters from the Desert]

It can be so difficult for us to know how to react to people of other faiths and especially Islam, **but there are some lessons in this little story.** Being open, being alongside others can be tiresome, embarrassing, painful. You can get shot for a start.

But by looking at what others have said and done, by acknowledging that being a Christian is not about battering others over the head with the Bible or our belief, but it means being a presence among people – a Christian presence, a loving

presence. Here we are not necessarily going to 'find success' but we will have lived the gospel the way God wants.

Yet we are not living in a strange country; we're not living deeply among Islam (even if minarets go up in Dundee and Peterborough). We have a head start. We live in what is ostensibly a Christian country and we have our own natives, many of whom have lost all contact with the Christian story and its meaning. That means we have a chance to be something much more. If it is possible then we must look to our **own** communities, where the story of Jesus Christ is forgotten, even as a part of our history and culture.

If Carlo Carretto could look on little black Abdaraman as a true child of God, how much more can we look upon our fellow citizens in the community in which we find ourselves, where, not strangers, but in sense our own kin need to hear again the Story of Jesus Christ.

+ John

(The above is an edited version of the address given by Bishop John at the Diocesan Synod meeting.)

inspires

The Scottish Episcopal Church's Provincial magazine **inspires** has now become a quarterly publication instead of having ten editions a year.

However there is a free monthly publication called **inspires online**, which keeps people abreast of much that is going on. You can sign up for it by going to:

<www.inspires.org.uk/subscribe> and it will be automatically emailed to your computer each month.

Currently there are about 800 subscribers.

Visions for the Future

In 2007 I attended an International Summer School at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. The text accompanying the poster indicated that the course “would offer a unique opportunity to Christians from all over the world to study the complex and varied social, religious and cultural life of Scotland, including the historic impact of devolution, contemporary grappling with sectarianism, and the new challenges of a multi-faith society”. The idea to hold the course originated in correspondence between SCH and the Institute for Global Church Studies, based in South America.

The ‘study visit’ model was used, with Scottish Churches House being the residential base where we stayed as a group. There we worshipped in the tiny chapel and reflected on our experiences each day. Altogether we were to travel nearly 1,500 miles by bus over the following two weeks. Excursions took us all over Scotland. Historians and guides joined us on our journeys or met us at our destinations. Although the pace was hectic the course itself outdid all expectations. Visits were made – two days each - to Edinburgh and Glasgow; one day to St Andrews, and to Iona – where we stayed overnight; one day each to the Border Abbeys and to Inverness.

We saw Scotland and the Christian Church in Scotland afresh and learned about our religious history, gaining some insights into the medieval ordering of Scottish society through the establishment of the Abbeys and Cathedrals; the devastation and destruction brought about in the aftermath of the Reformation; the religious warring and dissenting which followed; the very interesting ‘flowering’ of Scottish prose, poetry and story-telling, and the ‘Christian’ spirituality discerned in poems written by so-called ‘atheist’ Scottish poets.

It was interesting to compare St Giles’ Cathedral, Edinburgh, with

St Mungo’s Cathedral, Glasgow – and the two ministers – the one well-established, and the other new to his post, with fresh vision, but limitations in place due to a small and scattered congregation, and the ‘official’ nature of ‘national’ services held in a ‘national’ building.

Comparisons too, in church outreach – Greyfriars, Edinburgh, the Covenanters’ Kirk, where funding had been acquired for a new Centre for the needs of the locally marginalised. In Glasgow, Govan Old Church where the Rev’d George MacLeod had ministered and where his vision of the Iona Community had taken shape. Galgael – a Govan-based project for unemployed youth, which uses the skills of former shipyard workers to build wooden ships, replicas of ships from Celtic times. There we also met Cathy McCormick, a courageous activist from the Easterhouse housing estate, which nowadays is also home for many refugees and asylum seekers. There was also the surprising and very impressive quiet American minister of the Wee Free Church in Inverness and his sensitive mission to the rebellious youth of the area.

As a group, we seemed to ‘bond’ in a quite remarkable way. We “became a Christian community even in so short a time,” as one member remarked. It was a truly global community, interdenominational, and not all theologians. Group members came from Brazil, Cuba, USA, Canada, Norway, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, Greece, Africa and India, as well as England and Scotland. Denominationally we consisted of Pentecostal, Baptist, Presbyterian, Reformed Church of Canada, Lutheran, Czech Brethren, Russian and Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Unitarian – and three of us from Scotland all turned out to be Episcopalians! A morning of ‘presentations’ from each country was fascinating, and widened our knowledge of each person and their homeland.

There was a lot of fun and enjoyment as well, and we managed to fit in an afternoon boat trip on Loch Katrine one weekend. I found great value in the shared worship, using different liturgies, songs and prayers from different countries, and particularly when we all prayed The Lord’s Prayer together in our own languages; as one person said, “It was like another Pentecost.” This was a very special experience which will stay with me for the rest of my life.

The reason I’m writing about it is that there is to be another **International Summer School this year** entitled *Visions for the Future* and I would like to highly recommend it. anyone interested.

2010 has several significant anniversaries for Scotland: the Reformation, including Calvin and Knox; the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910; and the Jubilee of Scottish Churches House in Dunblane.

The Summer School will run from 26 June to 9 July. The programme offers an opportunity for the 20-25 participants from all over the world to study the complex and varied social, religious and cultural life of Scotland. Excursions will go to a variety of social and faith groups. And there will also be visits to Iona, St Andrews, Edinburgh, Glasgow, New Lanark and Paisley. Discussions will take place with many who are wrestling with contemporary issues of theology, the arts, society and the environment.

It is expensive (£995), but I’m sure that, if anyone is keen to attend, moneys can be found to support them.

The full programme can be accessed on Scottish Churches House website <www.scottishchurcheshouse.org> where there is also detail regarding booking. Further information can be obtained from Elaine Cameron, telephone 01821 650482; email <elaine.ging@gmail.com>.

Margaret Knox

Learning the Faith

Do you want to know more about your Christian Faith? TISEC (the Theological Institute of Scottish Episcopal Church) has overall responsibility for training people for ministry in our church – whether Ordained Ministry or Lay Readership – and its academic accreditation comes from York St Johns (YSJ) University. TISEC also has a role in providing opportunities for Lay Learning, and through its links with YSJ is able to run their course modules in Christian Studies. Each Diocese will be able to set up a teaching programme using the YSJ course materials at a cost in the region of £50 per module, which is very reasonable in comparison with the costs at other institutions. Each module consists of 8 or 9 sessions based on one text book (although wider reading is encouraged) and

if participants want to submit written work, they can accrue academic credits – 10 credits per module – towards the Certificate in Christian Studies. The University suggests that, while the course is openly available to all, it is recommended that students would have a Standard Grade in English and two Highers, or the equivalent in work related experience.

A pilot project was run in the Diocese of Moray Ross and Caithness last year and about thirty students enrolled. They met in smaller groups, each led by a trained facilitator, at different locations across the Diocese, because of the difficulty of travelling to one venue. The student group consisted of people from a wide age range, both men and women, and with varied

educational backgrounds. There was a very high level of achievement by those, the majority, who submitted work to be assessed.

Anyone in this Diocese who is interested in such a course, which would begin in the autumn, should contact Canon John Cuthbert at St Mary's Church, Springfield Terrace, Arbroath, 01241 873392 or <john@cuth100.freeserve.co.uk>. The number and location of groups would depend on numbers and their distribution across the Diocese, but for the course administration to be set up it is necessary to know the level of interest soon after Easter. So, please, do get in touch before the end of April.

The Rev'd John Cuthbert

Hymn to the Holy Spirit

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

Oh fiery Spirit, praise to you
who stirs us with cymbals,
soothes us with the lute!

From you the minds of men catch fire; you know
how to set up the body's
tent, to house the soul.

From both, the Will ascends: lends the Soul
sapience, to taste the world;
desires, to light it.

Our understandings make
music with you, set up the Spirit's workshop
distilling golden deeds.

The secateurs are in your hand to cut
that apple - full of the black Parasite
who clouds our wills, and poisons

our longings; sets our souls in a flap
wheeling and screaming round, nowhere to settle -
till the mind, restored, restrains those wills and
those desires.

If our spirit is tempted to look
through that evil eye - or talk
with that 'wicked' tongue - you throw it back on the
fire;

If our reason is down on the boards, knocked cold
by our own bad deeds, you pound it up even smaller
and brew it up afresh - like a new Creation.

If evil draws a knife
or gun on you, you're faster: down he goes again
who made Heaven itself a penthouse for his pride.

You've made another tower to stand in Heaven
from publicans and sinners - those who daren't
look up, who beat their breasts.

So every creature that takes life from you
praises you - precious ointment
who turns stinking wounds to precious jewels.

Descend to us;
gather us to yourself;
Show us the paths of life. Amen.

SECMA

For those who are not familiar with SECMA (Scottish Episcopal Church Mission Association) may I say a little about us?

More usually known as 'LINKS', which is the name of the magazine published twice a year, the organisation began many years ago (1875) as the Church Women's Missionary Association (CWMA). The world has changed immeasurably, but there are still many people needing help and SECMA projects provide some of this. I hope all readers have had the opportunity of seeing the current magazine (Spring 2010) but there are still copies available if not. Please ask your Congregational Correspondent or your Rector if your church doesn't have a group or branch!

A tribute to Canon Charles Copland (1909-2009) appears on page 7 of *Grapevine* but many will remember his presentation about the Chanda Mission at the lunch held at St Ninian's, Kingsway, Dundee in January 2004. CWMA took a great interest in the Chanda Mission in the diocese of Nagpur, India and raised funds for work there. Some years ago SECMA and others supported a visit from the Brechin diocese to Gadisurla in the same diocese as Chanda or, to give its modern name, Chandrapur.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Mrs Elsie Greig. She was the 'new' Brechin Diocesan Representative for CWMA in 1974 when Mrs Jean Mantle (our present Bishop's mother) was Diocesan Correspondent. In 1976 Mrs Mantle was elected as Central Convener and Elsie took over as Brechin Diocesan Correspondent, an appointment she retained for ten years or so, by which time CWMA had changed its name to SECMA. Mrs Greig's contribution to the Association is remembered with gratitude.

This year our Fundraising Lunch took place on at St Mary's Church, Broughty Ferry. Mrs Sarah Sherlock spoke about 'Anglicanism in the Horn of Africa'

and enthused us with her knowledge of an ancient culture, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the role of the Anglican Church which ministers to the many folk from all over the world who find themselves in Addis Ababa for a variety of reasons. Sarah and her husband, Charles, lived and worked in Ethiopia for many years. The country is a melting pot of nationalities, cultures and languages. It is a largely agrarian economy, scenically spectacular, especially the rock hewn churches at Lalibela. Each of these is carved entirely out of a single block of granite with the roof at ground level. Christianity is said to have reached Ethiopia in the 4th century, so it is one of the oldest Christian countries in the world. The Lalibela churches were commissioned in the 12th century. They were to be a 'new Jerusalem' and a place of pilgrimage for those unable to go to the Holy Land.

We were reminded of the involvement of St John's Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh in the return of a 'Tabot' to Ethiopia in 2002. More than 130 years earlier, in 1868, this was seized by British soldiers at Maqdala, its religious significance was recognised when it reached Britain and it was presented to St John's where it was discovered much later in a cupboard and arrangements were made for its return to Ethiopia. A Tabot is traditionally kept wrapped in cloths at the centre of an Ethiopian Orthodox church. It represents the Ark of the Covenant and focuses the presence of God in the church. Sarah Sherlock illustrated her talk with slides and went on to tell us of her own and her husband's involvement with the work of the Fistula Hospital which SECMA supports and we heard about the work done there. Lack of available medical help and the need to travel long distances in the later stages of pregnancy can cause women internal damage with unpleasant results. In 1974 Dr Catherine Hamlin and her husband founded a special

hospital where a relatively simple surgical procedure has restored good health to many girls and women who have experienced problems. Doctors from all over the world are taught the techniques developed at the Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa.

(I am indebted to Mrs Ann Noltie for permission to use information from the article about the talk published in St Salvador's Church magazine earlier in the year)

Future plans for 2010!

A QUIET DAY led by Rev'd Angela Hughes to be held at Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth on Thursday, 13 May, Ascension Day. Further details later.

A SUMMER EVENT in August – speaker and venue to be arranged. Bring and buy stall for SECMA funds.

A MUSICAL EVENT in October - perhaps similar to the successful afternoon last year at Invergowrie.

Please look out for further details of these events and come along with your friends.

*Rosemary Eddy,
SECMA Diocesan Correspondent*

Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth

presents

Carnoustie Choir

conducted by Mr Stewart Fyffe
in

Concert

at

St Mary's Episcopal Church,
Queen Street, Broughty Ferry

on Monday, 19 April

at 7.30 p.m.

All most welcome

Donations at the door towards

Holy Trinity's

"Starfish Projects"

in aid of community projects
in Swaziland

Diocesan Synod Meeting – Saturday,

I have been asked to write this report from the view point of a first time attendee at Synod and someone new to the Diocese, so I apologize if there is a somewhat personal slant.

It appears that most Diocesan Synods have a life of their own and a very different style, so it was good to arrive at a venue where there was parking and a pleasant, light, warm and welcoming building.

The meeting commenced with the Synod Eucharist; celebrated by Bishop John, who included reference to Charles de Foucauld, the explorer and priest in his excellent address. One reading was this excerpt from 'Charles de Foucauld' by Jean-Jacques Antier –

Charles de Foucauld would often read the Koran, remembering the people of the Maghreb and their fervour, which had awakening in him ... religious concerns.

And indeed Islam had left its mark. "Islam has produced in me a profound upheaval" he would later write [to a friend]. "Observing this faith and these souls living with God as a continual presence has allowed me to glimpse something greater and more true than worldly occupations".

We have much to give and share and much to learn.



Members of Synod attentive in Chalmers Ardler Church

After a short break for much appreciated refreshments, the business got underway at 10.45 a.m. Minutes were agreed and accepted from the two previous meetings in March and October 2009

Reports were then presented:

- ▶ **Diocesan Statistics** indicated that the number of Communicants across the Diocese had fallen by 3.02% between the end of 2008 and 2009. The question was asked 'What are we going to do about this?' What, indeed, are you and I going to do about this, ladies and gentlemen readers?
- ▶ **Report on Election of Representatives and Alternatives for 2010:** names of these representatives and alterations were given.

- ▶ **Inspection of Church Registers:** the Dean reported on Church registers inspected since the last Synod meeting.
- ▶ **Standing Committee:** no report.
- ▶ **Administration Board:** this is a long and detailed report which can be seen in the Synod meeting booklet. It may well be worth asking to see your Clergy or Lay Rep's copy to see just how much work is done by this group.



Elspeth Daley, Provincial Church Relations Officer, sharing information from the General Office

- ▶ **Mission and Ministry Board:** another comprehensive report is given in the Synod booklet.

'In addition to dealing with the business of the Action Groups (noted below, this list shows just how much work is done within the Diocese), the Board continues to look at mission across the Diocese and within congregations and receives regular reports from the Diocesan Officer for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults'.

The Groups and Reports; Communication Action Group, Church in Society Action Group, Youth Action Group, Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adult Report, Diocesan Ministry Co-ordinator and Diocesan Mission Officer.

A number of appointments and alternatives were elected for various committees.

Lunch was taken at 12 noon and we recommenced at 1.00 p.m. after an opportunity to make new acquaintances and for many to meet and chat with old friends.

A Presentation from Bishop John followed which was of a serious and important nature. What stood out for me were his words that "It is crucial for our Diocese and the Church at large, I would suggest, that as a Church we 'Expand or Expire'." We were challenged and then sent out to do our work for the Glory of God.

Motion on Diocesan Banking

The Very Rev'd David Mumford proposed and was seconded by Rev'd Ashley Cummins:

6 March 2010

That this meeting of Synod should instruct the Administration Board to change the Diocesan Bankers from HBOS to the Co-operative Bank or Triodos or another bank which will respect and promote our ethical concerns in the areas of peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

Professor Peter Sharp proposed and was seconded by Rev'd Canon Fay Lamont:

Before any changes to the Diocese's banking and investment policy can be considered and mindful of the Diocese of Brechin's support for peace and justice issues, this Diocesan Synod instructs the Administration Board, all Church vestries and Lay Representatives to hold informed discussions on the ethical stance of those financial institutions in which they are involved. This process is to be led by the Mission and ministry Board. A full discussion on this issue, with a view to developing a Diocesan policy on its ethical position towards banking and investment institutions, to be held at the Annual Diocesan Synod in 2011.

After helpful presentations and some discussion the first proposal was defeated and the second accepted.



Bishop John addressing Synod

There were votes of thanks for all those who had been involved in the organisation of the day and for the work done by so many people. Words of thanks, a presentation and flowers were given to Lisbeth Thoms as she stood down as Convenor of the Diocesan Buildings Advisory Committee after eight years.

The next Annual Synod meeting will take place on Saturday, 5 March 2011. If a Special Meeting is required to deal with material sent down to the Dioceses by General Synod, it should be held on Wednesday, 13 October 2010.

The Day concluded with the Confirmation of the Acts of Synod, Final Prayers, the Blessing and Dismissal.

'Expand or Expire'

Canon Steve Collis

The Rev'd Canon Charles McAlester Copland, R.I.P

Charles McAlester Copland died peacefully in Whitehills Hospital, Forfar, on the 12 December 2009, just months before his hundredth birthday. He had been in the ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church for seventy-five years, and at the time of his death was the oldest priest in the Church. His father, Alexander, spent fifty years in the Ministry, the last 22 of them as Rector of St. John's Church in Forfar. His mother, Violet Williamina, was the daughter of the Chieftain of the Name and Arms of McAlester.

Charles was educated at Denstone College and then went up to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, graduating with honours in History and Theology in 1933. He demonstrated sporting prowess in shooting, athletics and rugby.

On leaving Cambridge, he trained for the ministry at Cuddesdon College, Oxford, before beginning a curacy at Peterborough Parish Church in 1934. In 1938 he offered himself for service overseas and went out to serve in the SEC Mission at Chanda, south of Nagpur in India, where he remained for fifteen years, latterly as Head of the Mission. Whilst home on furlough in 1945, he married Wendy Williamson, beginning a partnership in ministry that bore much fruit. In 2003 a man who had been brought up in Chanda wrote: "Chanda Mission is synonymous with Canon Charles Copland. It is almost fifty years since he left the Mission but he had so dedicated his life to the people that his service rings loud and clear to this day." Fortunately, Charles recorded the history of the Mission and, in a later book, an account of life in Chanda.

Returning from Chanda he became successively Rector of St Mary's, Arbroath. Older members of St Mary's will remember him cycling around dressed in his cassock and raising his hat to people, much to their alarm at the potential danger. Then for twenty years he was Provost of St John's Cathedral, Oban, a post that he combined with that of Dean of Argyll and The Isles. He retired from full-time ministry in 1979. He had the unusual distinction of having been appointed as a Canon in three Anglican dioceses – of All Saints' Cathedral, Nagpur; of St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee and of St John's Cathedral, Oban.

The Coplands retired first to Comrie and then moved for the last fourteen years to Kirriemuir, where he was a familiar figure in his McAlester kilt and, occasionally, wearing the red stockings that he had worn when playing rugby eighty years before. He and Wendy (who predeceased him in 2001) were always welcoming and hospitable. Charles Copland leaves two daughters, Frances and Jane, and two grandchildren, Robbie and Helen.

+ Edward Luscombe

Is the Gospel really “**Heard**” in our churches?

As an increasing number of our population become elderly and actually live longer, it is not surprising that one in seven suffer some form of hearing impairment, mainly due to the natural ageing process, but increasingly due to tinnitus, Menière's disease or vertigo. So vestries are obliged to show more than a passing interest in a sound amplification system within their churches. Paradoxically, good amplification systems are fine for those whose hearing is sound, but can present difficulties to those with a moderate or severe hearing loss. Despite the high quality of cleanliness with our churches, its polished floors and shiny seats and fine grey stone walls hardly constitutes an acoustic delight. This is because sound tends to reverberate and rebound off smooth surfaces, and amplified sound even more so. Many people who possess a hearing difficulty wear a hearing aid. But using such an aid only amplifies **all** sound and not necessarily the sounds you want to hear, i.e. the spoken word, although the recent advent of digital aids has improved quality of reception. Even so, slight distortions to the quality of sound do tend to be experienced amongst hearing-aid users, to the extent that such amplified sound actually becomes a hindrance rather than an aid to hearing.

Many friends of mine who are hard of hearing have complained that in church all too often the Word of the Lord is just an indistinct jumble of half-heard words. Church worship is based on the spoken word – hymns, readings, intercessions and sermons – and, if the finer points are missed in the intercessions and sermon it can be quite distressing for many.

People are often shy to admit to difficulty with their hearing as they progress with age, but it's a safe bet that in any congregation there will be several who strain to hear the Word.

And that is not all. When a person's hearing ability becomes impaired, their spatial aspect of life

– communication – is disturbed. Varying degrees of misunderstanding and isolation often result. Growing frustration may lead to a gradual withdrawal from church social activity and even to a cutting off from church attendance; and so a valuable church member is lost. I would wonder how many hard of hearing people in your church have experienced this problem and couldn't face participation in worship, since it may seem to highlight their loneliness and social isolation. No one apparently seems to notice that they don't now come very often, and so eventually they stop going altogether.

How is this perpetual problem to be solved? As I've already hinted, amplification of a hearing aid, especially in a largish church, is not that beneficial. The echoes, rustles, coughs and whispers are picked up and amplified with the same intensity as the voice they are straining to hear. A partial answer lies in the installation of a loop induction system. Hearing aid users are aware that, apart from the 'on' and 'off' switch, most hearing aids have a third 'T' switch which makes it operate like a tiny radio receiver. With this third switch on the hearing aid can pick up anything broadcast by an aerial. This is transmitted directly from the microphone into the ear and is heard as distinctly as if the hearer's ear was in the same place as the microphone. The microphone is attached to a small amplifier which acts as a radio transmitter, and this broadcasts a weak signal through an aerial or 'loop' of wire going right round the church. Anyone within the area of this loop can hear even the softest voice, even though that person may be sitting or standing far away from the speaker.

Like radio, the system is literally 'wireless' once installed. The induction loop system is such an ingenious idea and a recent marvel of technology, that many people think it's expensive to install and complicated to use. Fortunately, according to our diocesan directories, most of our

churches are already fitted with such a system, but it is surprising how often they are not switched on before a service or that a regular check is not made to ensure the system is functioning adequately. Time after time I find this is the case. The first thing I do when I enter church before a service is to switch on the loop as well as the lights: it's easily overlooked and can cause anguish (many are too polite to complain) among those who are hearing-impaired. Set the tone level to just below acoustic feedback and then leave it.

I tell you all this because first I am hearing-impaired myself and secondly I have the bishop's permission to advise individuals and churches in the dioceses of Brechin, Aberdeen & Orkney and Moray, Ross & Caithness on the various needs of the hearing-impaired. A portable loop is now operative in each of the three diocesan offices to assist visitors with a hearing impairment. I permit myself one day a week to these duties as I am also priest to an active LCM congregation.

It would indeed be helpful if you could bring me to the notice of your church groups and I would be willing to travel to speak to them on the subject of hearing-impairment and the church. Opportunities to preach at your Sunday Eucharist would also be welcomed.

You may have noticed that no mention has been made of the profoundly deaf person or community (whose main mode of communication is British Sign Language). I have served many years as Diocesan Chaplain in several English dioceses, but that is another story and worth an article on its own. Nonetheless, should you happen to know of anyone who is a Christian (or intends to be) and who uses BSL, please get in touch and I may be able to refer them to the appropriate Church for Deaf People; which brings me to the verse from Isaiah 29:18, "The deaf shall hear the Words of the Book."

*Rev'd Michael Sabell
St Ternan's, Muchalls*

The Church in Society Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church has submitted this response to the Alcohol Bill

The following statement has been submitted to the Health and Sport Committee at Scottish Parliament:

"The Committee wished to support the principle of minimum pricing for alcohol.

"However, the Committee considered that minimum pricing was not a complete solution and wished to call on the Government to address poverty which it believes is the real underlying issue. It felt that supermarket loss leaders in a sense "subsidised" poor life choices and it would support some sort of restraint regarding the deals on alcohol which the major supermarkets pro-

mote, e.g. 12 cans of lager for £5.

"The Committee also felt that more needed to be done on raising awareness of the cost of alcohol abuse – the personal, social, emotional and physical cost to individuals, families and communities as well as the economic costs to the Health and the Criminal Justice services. Alcohol abuse has an impoverishing effect on individuals and communities and has to be addressed at many levels.

"Finally, the Committee has been privileged to have sight of the submission being made by the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland and supports that submission."

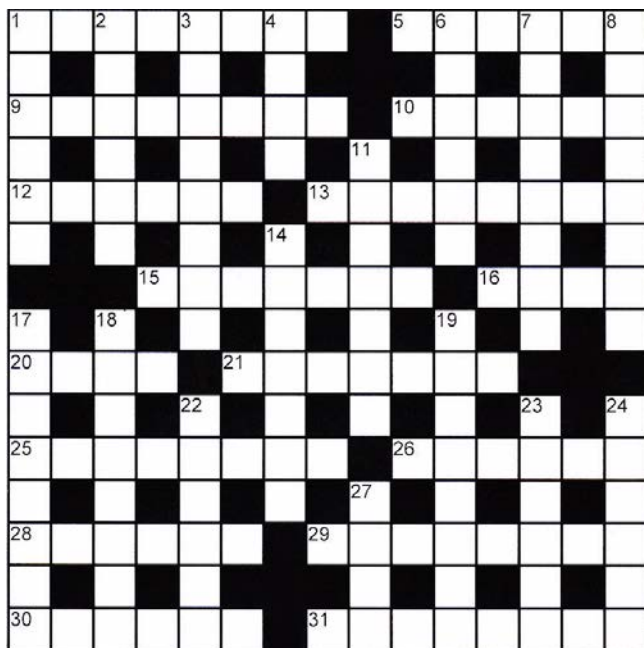
At the Cathedral



on Saturday, 16 January the Rev'd Jeremy Auld, formerly Rector of St James', Dollar, was instituted as Rector of the Cathedral Church of St Paul, Dundee and installed as Provost in the presence of a large congregation.

CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

Another work-out for the little grey cells! Send your entries in to the editor at the address on the back page by Saturday, 7 August at the latest and make sure you put your name and address in the box provided.



CLUES ACROSS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Revs soap up for the festival (8) | 13 I serve in this church (8) |
| 5 The apostolic warden, as it were (6) | 15 I will have no legs after this drink (7) |
| 9 A rip holds sway (8) | 16 How odd nothing is extinct (4) |
| 10 Sounds as if the pioneer aviators were correct (6) | 20 Each undergoes pain (4) |
| 12 Ah! most confused, undoubtedly (6) | 21 Venerated places on a meandering river between two poles (7) |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 25 The pines at the inn fell like skittles (8) | 6 Scandinavian in cord (6) |
| 26 A thousand amuse themselves at an Easter destination (6) | 7 An iron goat reinvented a day of prayer (8) |
| 28 The bar fills your lungs not your glass (6) | 8 Wear loot from this battleground (8) |
| 29 Disparage a tit flying into a French beauty (8) | 11 Do the kin of ibis sport this swimwear? (7) |
| 30 The relative you need to oppose (6) | 14 Mary and Martha's place was constructed from bent hay (7) |
| 31 Calculated to erase mud (8) | 17 A basin can supply this hallucinogen (8) |
| | 18 Five hundred hunters make lots of noise (8) |
| | 19 Do dim mares delude sailors with their beauty? (8) |
| | 22 He spat at this special form of leaf (6) |
| | 23 A steer gets a new lease of life (6) |
| | 24 Dances lift the spirit (6) |
| | 27 Just a lake (4) |

CLUES DOWN:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1 The governor ran an ale pit (6) | 2 Address sent to the pole in scrambled code (6) | 3 The best coal can cause a blockage (8) | 4 Frost comes back as a Muslim chieftain (4) |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|

Name

Address.....

Comment

The latest revelations about British intelligence officers being involved in the torture of Guantanamo prisoners is unpleasant enough, but the fact that there has been an apparent whitewash by the Government really gives cause for concern. In any institution which contains a set of inmates dominated by another group, whether it be a prison, mental hospital, part of the military, old folks home, or merely a good old-fashioned boarding school, there will be a small percentage of sadists who will pursue their unpleasant urges, unhindered until they are exposed. It is, however, a far more sinister state of affairs when they that should expose and punish, try to influence high court judges in their attempt to suppress the facts. The reason for this would seem to be a fear that we would offend the U.S. Government. In particular, David Milliband seems very anxious not to upset Hilary Clinton, despite her sycophantic endorsement of Netanyahu's behaviour towards the Gaza Strip. Lord Hesselatine said on a recent Question Time that the U.S.'s special relationship

was not with the U.K., but with Israel, an observation we refuse to address at our peril.

In mediaeval times the known world was divided cleanly into two very separate spheres of influence, Christendom and Islam. Occasionally warlike adventurers on both sides, such as Richard Lionheart with the Crusaders, and Saladin the Great with his Muslim hordes, dented the frontier zone around Jerusalem, but on the whole these two separate worlds with their very different customs remained stable. If the USA could be persuaded to stop playing world police, judge and jury, and if Britain got out from under her coat-tails and independently withdrew from Iraq and Afghanistan, and actively fought for Palestinian rights in Israel-dominated territories, our terrorist problems would cease.

The younger generation who delve into all the new age learning (so called!) urged me to read Eckhart Tolle, author of *The Power of Now and a New Earth*. Eventually I did. I expect many of you have already looked into these

books, but for those of you have not, I will give my own very brief impressions.

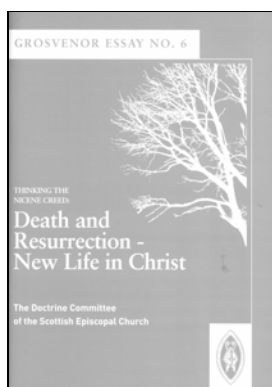
Having developed a serious depressive illness, he cured himself by applying the Buddhist technique of emphasising the fact that we only live in the present moment, and therefore we should dismiss the clutter of past guilt and the anticipation of future woes. He then consolidates this theory with appropriate meditation techniques. He also finds quotation from various writings, including the sayings of Jesus from the Gospels. So far so good, but then he defines a pantheistic god of which we become part of when we slip into a state that lies between thoughts. Although he can find appropriate quotations from the teachings of Our Lord to justify the whole ecumenical parcel, the concept of God as the loving Father, described by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer, is poles apart from the almost science fiction concept of Being propounded by Tolle. In short: good relaxation techniques, questionable theology.

Francis D. Bowles

GROSVENOR ESSAY NO 6

Since 2004 the Scottish Episcopal Church has published a number of booklets on various significant topics under the umbrella title of Grosvenor Essays. Now the SEC's Doctrine Committee has begun producing a series "considering the aspects of the Nicene Creed with particular attention being given to the pastoral understanding and application of the Creed". The Convener of the Doctrine Committee, the Rev'd Professor David Jasper, says, "It is the hope of the Doctrine Committee that through this we can provide an informed and stimulating introduction to the great statement of faith which lies at the heart of the worshipping life of the SEC."

The first publication in this series (which is Grosvenor Essay No. 6) is entitled *Death and Resurrection – New Life in Christ*. It is available from the General Synod Office, 21 Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 5EE and is priced £3.



BISHOPS HOUSE

WWW.ISLAND-RETREATS.ORG

Are you aware of Iona? Have you heard of Bishops House?

Bishops House is the Episcopal retreat house on Iona, capable of housing up to twenty-three guests in ten twin and three single rooms. We provide a unique venue for parish groups, reflective holidays and individual pilgrims, overlooking the sound of Iona and only a short walk from Iona Abbey. Founded in 1894 by Bishop Alexander Chinnery Haldane we still offer a place of Prayer, Eucharist and Study as he wished.

Visit our website <www.island-retreats.org> to find out more.

We now also offer winter self-catering opportunities on Iona from November till February. You can have the house to yourself and enjoy the quiet and beauty of winter on Iona.

We often offer last minute deals for groups and individuals, if you would be interested in being added to our emailing list for news and last minute deals please contact us at <iona@island-retreats.org>.

Unconfined Joy

"[God] will swallow up death forever, and the Lord will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth."

Isaiah 25: 8a

"On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined". These words originated with a poet from the Romantic period, Lord Byron. Born into a Scottish family and educated in Aberdeen, Byron had a rather exotic, turbulent life that ended too soon in 1824. Some thought that he was a degenerate, others that he was a genius. Most people agree now that he was a great poet. The Greeks think him a national hero, as he died fighting for their deliverance from oppression. His name is everywhere in Greece. Like the Greeks themselves, Byron embraced life with both arms. Exuberant enjoyment of all that life has to offer was seldom confined for him. Unsurprisingly, Byron was no regular church-goer.

I say "unsurprisingly" because we Scottish Christians are not well known for our joyfulness. Rikki Fulton's character "The Rev. I. M. Jolly" has just enough truth to make us squirm as well as laugh. Perhaps it's our reputed lack of

joyfulness that keeps folk away from Church. If so, that's a shame – and an indictment of Christians themselves.

Sometimes we Christians seem to live like we have forgotten that Our Lord changed water into **wine**, not wine into **water**. We forget the great passages of Scripture that talk about God overturning injustice, exile and sadness – the God who brings us joy. Instead of appearing to be the heralds and champions of human well-being, laughter and joyfulness, we often seem to extinguish these things in the Church by our earnest seriousness. This is particularly the case when our solemnity takes the form of an over-concern for respectability, "improving" recreation and good works. We leave everyone with the impression that God wants to suck out of life everything that creates human happiness and pleasure. This is not the picture of God that the Scriptures present us with. There we see that God does not want to confine our joy. "Let joy be unconfined". Byron may have said it first, but it was God's idea.

"Let joy be unconfined". How might human joy be confined? Obviously wherever there is poverty, injustice, corruption, fear,

hatred and war, happiness is a rare commodity. Nevertheless, even in bad times, joy is never completely confined. It can appear, however unlikely, as snowdrops break through frozen earth or dandelions through concrete. The greatest human confinement of joy is death. The ones we love die, and we too must face the fact that we too will die one day. It is this that always puts the brake on human happiness. It is death that is our frozen ground, our concrete. The good news is that to make our joy unconfined, God has acted.

In Christ God has visited us. By Christ's Death and Resurrection God has redeemed us. Our joy derives from the new life that flows from this, the life that overcomes every sorrow and even death itself. God in Christ has done it all for us. He has changed life's water into wine. He has swallowed up death forever. He has wiped away our tears. Apart from the life that there is in Him, there will always be a shadow over human joy. With Him, living the eternal life Christ has made possible for us, what then is left for us but to say with Lord Byron: "On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined."

The Rev'd Clive Clapson

James Gregory Lectures

The next public lecture in the series focusing on the interface between science and religion will be given by

Professor Bill Newsome

on

Thursday, 29 April at 5.15 p.m.

in the Younger Hall, St Andrews

The lecture is entitled

"The Mind – Brain or Spirit"

Dr Newsome is Professor of Neurobiology at Stanford University School of Medicine, California and has many academic honours. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Sciences (the equivalent to our Royal Society). His research focuses on the neural mechanisms underlying visual perception, visually based decision making, and related issues in cognitive neuroscience. He seeks to understand how higher mammals acquire sensory information about the world, how that information is processed within the brain, and how behavioural responses to that information are organized.

CROSSWORD RESULT

The answers to last edition's crossword were:

K	E	N	T	I	G	E	R	N	C	C	B
L	W	E	O	A	L	L	E	G	E		
W	I	N	E	P	R	E	S	S	E	L	T
J	N	M	S	J	O	S	E	P	H		
B	A	L	T	H	A	S	A	R	P	S	L
H	Y	N	N	C	A	S	T	L	E		
C	A	A	A	D	O	T	I	H			
H	A	C	K	N	E	C	A	R	R	I	A
R	C	G	E	R	R	A	L	M			
I	C	I	C	L	E	O	S	D	A		
S	D	I	I	M	P	A	T	I	E	N	T
T	H	E	N	C	E	A	C	N	N		
M	N	A	A	R	C	H	A	N	G	E	L
A	N	T	O	N	Y	T	E	E	X		
S	S	S	M	Y	S	T	E	R	I	E	S

Congratulations to the former Diocesan Chancellor, Alastair Cruickshank, whose entry was randomly picked as the winner.

Why not try the latest crossword on page 9

Arrival at Glencarse

The Rev'd Kirrilee Reid, formerly of St Mark's National Theological Centre, Canberra, Australia was collated as part-time Rector of All Saints', Glencarse on Saturday, 13 February 2010. She writes:

"Full of anticipation and excitement (not to mention a few nerves) we left a very hot Australia and headed for our new home in Glencarse. We've lost count of how many people have asked us why we would want to leave Australia and come to make our lives in Scotland. However, for Ewan and me, it feels more like coming home – connecting with both family origins as well as spiritual roots. Ewan's father was born and raised in Dundee before migrating to Australia and my family roots also lie in the region. We have visited Scotland many times and feel a deep connection with this place.

"I started ministry as youth worker in the Anglican Church of Australia but it was a longer journey to the ordained ministry with family responsibilities. We have three children: Angus (16), Toby (14) and Amelia (12). I have spent most of my adult life involved in youth, young adults, and children's ministry. I was

ordained Deacon in 2007 and spent a year at St John's Church, Canberra where I was ordained priest before establishing a new congregation in the chapel at St Mark's National Theological Centre, where I also worked on



Bishop John with the Rev'd Kirrilee Reid in the porch of All Saints', Glencarse before the Institution

staff as lecturer and co-ordinator of the University Youth Ministry courses. This past year has also seen me assisting the parish of All Souls', Chapman (Canberra) with

their ministry to families in their community. Ewan and I have also run a marriage preparation course and Ewan has been one of our diocesan child protection trainers (to supplement his day job as Assistant Head Teacher – Pastoral Care/Guidance).

"Prior to my ordination we spent some years in Durham (UK) where I had the opportunity of working at St John's, Neville's Cross as their Children's Chaplain, linking with the local primary schools and establishing a mid-week congregation. I also visited various Christian communities to explore 'new ways of being Church', where ancient traditions were enlivened and made accessible to contemporary culture. I am comfortable with a range of worship styles and value the traditions of the Church. I believe that these can speak to a society who is time-poor and searching for meaning. I look forward to deepening my spiritual journey here in Scotland.

"We have received a very warm welcome from the folk at All Saints', Glencarse and are looking forward to journeying with them and the Diocesan community over the coming years."

The Rev'd Kirrilee Reid

In Brief

At St Drostan's, Tarfside:

On Easter Day there will be a Eucharist at 2.30 p.m. with Tea & Cake after the Service.

On Sunday, 11 July from lunchtime onwards there will be a 'bring-and-share' Picnic to celebrate the Patronal Festival.

At St Mary Magdalene's, Dundee:

On Ascension Day, Thursday 13 May the 7.30 p.m. Sung Eucharist will be followed by Cheese and Wine. All are welcome.

In Brechin:

On Sunday, 18 April (if the Westminster Parliamentary election is to be held on 6 May) Brechin Churches Together will hold a hustings for the Angus constituency at the Baptist Fellowship, 16 Clerk Street, Brechin.

Brechin Churches Together are holding a Coffee Morning at 10 a.m. on 24 April at the Baptist Fellowship, 16 Clerk Street.

On 5 June St Andrew's Church will be present at the Brechin Pageant with a bouncy castle and stall, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the park.

The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 29 August 2010.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 7 August 2010.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

The Editor of Grapevine, Beattie Lodge, Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire, AB30 1HJ
(E-mail: <office@brechin.anglican.org> or <mjturner@zoo.co.uk>)