

GRAPEVINE

No 90

Winter 2009

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

The Bishop writes:

As I sit to write, Christmas seems far away. The sun is blazing into my study and the River Tay is aflame. Yet there are literally only a few weeks left.

In Dundee, as always, the Christmas decorations have gone up and the city has produced its *Christmas in Dundee* booklet with a list of 'what's on' in the city including concerts, theatres, and festive markets. There are the opening times for the Overgate and the Wellgate shopping centres, and the pages are filled with shop advertisements encouraging, with detailed descriptions, the purchase of goods including new TVs and jewelry. Close to the end of the booklet our own Cathedral and St Salvador's are included with details of service times over the period and with attractive pictures of both Churches.

At this time of the year it's easy to be cynical about the apparent premature start to Christmas that seems to arrive as early as September. Charity shops among others are the first to fill their shelves with Christmas cards, though this year I detected more 'religious' cards than usual, suggesting that we may be getting over the worst of political correctness which for some years has banished such cards and small nativity scenes from some shop windows. At least I hope so!

The question remains, what do we as a Christian community have to offer at Christmastide? Is it more tinsel and colour, a series of services that will warm the heart? Well, why not? That is what people often expect, not a series of services that pamper to 'non-Christians' or 'nominal Christians' – but the 'real thing'. Yet I would be the first to admit

that I have called for our churches to open their doors to *everyone* in the community, with the hope that a more appealing service might speak to those who have lost touch with the faith.

The service of Nine Lessons and Carols – the invention of King's College in Cambridge – may be said to commend itself. It is of course theologically dubious in places: readings from Isaiah and Micah are not necessarily predicting precisely what 'comes to pass' in the New Testament. But it is a rich and colourful presentation of that 'grand narrative' – the bolder and wider story of the salvation of humankind.

So, whatever you decide to do this Christmas, try putting yourself in the shoes of a complete stranger. What's it like to enter a church for the first times in decades, perhaps with your family, very unsure what is about to happen?

Will your Christmas service commend itself? Will it be reasonably straightforward, or will there be the danger that a stranger may get lost in the text? And what about afterwards? What happens if someone is deeply moved this Christmas; sufficiently moved to want to learn more about the faith? Are there facilities for learning in your church? Is yours an open congregation geared to welcome and attract the stranger who has been moved to 'reappear' this Christmas?

Someone opening Dundee's festive magazine will suddenly find our city churches get a mention, and just might decide to go in and hear again the great Christmas story.

All of us need to be geared-up and ready for this. I don't expect strangers, with or without a family, will assume they are going to understand everything that happens in church, but, like the commercial world and better than the commercial world, we have a story to tell and good news to proclaim. Unlike the local colourful printed magazines with their once a year encouragement to come and spend spend spend, we offer something that begins at Christmas, but lasts forever.



Pat McBryde

An Appreciation

[Pat McBryde's death on 31 July occurred just too late for this tribute to be included in the last edition of Grapevine; but it is right and valid that it should appear here.]

Pat McBryde, born on 12 August 1941, was the only child of Jean and John McBryde. Her father was in the army when she was born and was wounded in Normandy. On repatriation it was discovered that he had contracted TB, from which he died, aged 36, when Pat was five.

Pat was a clever girl. She was Dux of St John's Episcopal School in Dumfries, and later a star pupil at the academy, where her English teacher was to become an important figure in her life, determining her choice of studies at Glasgow University – English literature.

Pat was and remained a clever woman, with an elegant and apparently effortless writing style that even made sense out of the minutes of church boards and committees in her final job, but, mysteriously, she never took her degree. Was there a failure of confidence, maybe, related to her lost father figure? It didn't matter, because in the course of her life Pat read and understood more books than a whole common room of professors.

Before becoming deputy secretary general of her beloved church, Pat worked as Student Christian Movement (SCM) secretary for schools for six years, in the days when that organisation was a strong presence in British education. She followed this with a stint as deputy director of the English Speaking Union, then spent 14 years as advisory officer to the Scottish Association of the Citizen's Advice Bureaux, where she developed her skills in working with and training volunteers,

She opened the CAB office in Berwick at a time when the English

CAB was not interested in the fate of that stolen Scottish outpost, though Pat's border raid concentrated their minds and they took it over.

These jobs all showed someone who wanted to work, not for profit and prestige, but for the human good; that vocation reached its full flowering when she became deputy secretary general of the Scottish Episcopal Church in 1988.



On the golf course at St Andrews

Archbishop Robert Runcie used to say that what united the Anglican Communion was not doctrine or discipline, but bonds of affection, the kind of emotional sinews that hold families together through tragedy and disagreement. Affection was the secret of Pat's success in her work. She did not see herself as a bureaucrat – though she was an extremely efficient one – but as someone who exercised responsibilities on behalf of her family. She expressed this in many ways, often through close personal friendships and on areas of institutional responsibility that were particularly dear to her.

One of these was the Community Fund. This was a pot of money provided by the Church that could be accessed without fuss or formality for needy people and good causes – just the thing

busy parish priests needed when they ran up against the rigidities of a welfare state that moved too slowly to meet urgent need. Another was Mission 21 – the Church's initiative for mission in the 21st century. Pat's conviction that Church is about coming home, returning to a place that accepts you unconditionally as you are, with all your frailties and needs, and will never turn you away, was a major factor in the effectiveness of Mission 21. Pat, knowing herself accepted just as she was with all her weaknesses and needs, wanted Mission 21 to be about that same absolute acceptance of humanity in all its doubts and confusions. She worked to make that the mark of the Church she was born into, the Church that cherished this gifted, fatherless child.

Happily, Pat came home to more than Church in her life. In her final years she found in her companionship with Bishop Ted Luscombe love and the family she had longed for. One of the secrets of their bond was a shared addiction – both were crossword fanatics, and between them they won just about every national crossword prize going. Right up to the end they were doing seven crosswords a day – a tragic condition for which there is, as yet, no known cure.

They loved their holidays together, particularly their discovery of Upper Ryedale in North Yorkshire ten years ago, where they became greatly loved members of the local parish church.

Sadly, these sunlit years were not to last. Pat had been severely ill earlier in her life, and cancer invaded her again shortly after she retired in 2001. When the end came it was mercifully quick. She had run her race to the end with grace and courage.

Rt Rev'd Richard Holloway

A Brush With the Bible

The Scottish Bible Society, as part of its bicentennial year, is sponsoring an exhibition of the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art and associated events. The prestigious collection of contemporary paintings includes works by Graham Sutherland, Patrick Heron and Elizabeth Frink.

The exhibition will be at the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ from 12 December 2009 until 24 January 2010 (gallery closed 25 Dec-4 Jan). Entrance is free.

The picture below (the original is in glorious colour) is one of this Collection and is entitled *The Dalit Madonna* and was painted by Jyoti Sahi in 2000. The commentary is adapted from a description on the Methodist Church website.



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After receiving his National Diploma in Design from Camberwell, Jyoti Sahi was invited by Dom Bede Griffiths to join him in his newly founded ashram in South India. It was in this ashram that he met his wife Jane, who is English, and from a Quaker background.

They were married in 1970 and went to live in Bangalore where he was connected with the National Biblical Catechetical, and Liturgical Centre, founded by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, soon after the Second Vatican Council, to reflect on the relation of the Church in India to Indian Cultures and Spirituality. He founded an Art Ashram in a village outside Bangalore in 1984.

Dalit is the current name for the caste previously called 'the untouchables'. In addition the image of the Dalit Madonna has arisen out of a very important folk symbol which used to be found in every home in India.

This is the grinding stone, which is often set into the ground, particularly in the courtyard of traditional homes.

There are a number of household rites of passage which take into account the grinding stone, which consists of two stones, one fixed and stable, known as the "Mother Stone" which generally has a hollow part carved out of its centre. Into this fits a smaller egg-shaped stone which is called the "Baby Stone" that is free to move about, and is used to grind various food stuffs which are placed in the hollow of the Mother Stone.

At the time of marriage, the bride and groom are often made to stand on this grinding stone, and are reminded that as the grinding stone remains fixed and stable at the heart of the home, so also their love for each other should be immovable.

Relating the figure of Mother Mary and her son Jesus to this symbol of the grinding stone, we can reflect on the way that the bond between Mother and Child is also linked to the preparation of the daily bread and other items of food which are blended together in this kitchen quern.

This communion of love is the source of all plenty, and we might think of the relationship of Mary to Jesus when saying "Give us this day our daily bread".

The word "Dalit" means broken, and in a way the grain or other items of food are also broken in this grinding stone. But this breaking is preparatory to the creation of wholesome food for the family. As the early Father of the Church, Ignatius of Antioch said, there can be no bread without a process of breaking and transforming. So already in the relationship of Jesus to Mary there is suffering, but also in their communion a possibility of life and hope.

The grinding stone is especially important at the time of harvest festivals. The Indian festival of the New Rice takes place in mid-January, which in India is the time of harvest and threshing.

It is around this time that the early Church celebrated the feast of Epiphany, and we are told in some apocryphal stories of the Nativity, that Mary escaped being robbed of her newborn child when the massacre of the infants was happening, because when the soldiers came to her humble place, they found in the cradle only a bundle of new grain, which was in fact the new-born Jesus appearing in this form.

In fact the very name "Bethlehem" means "House of Bread". In India the Nativity naturally can be associated with harvest, as this is what is going on in all the fields in the countryside. Unlike in Europe, where midwinter is a time of darkness and cold, lifeless earth, in Asia the winter season is a time for rejoicing, and bringing into the home, the fruits of the earth.

That is why in this image of the Mother and Child, the relation of Mary to Jesus is symbolic of the transformed earth, which becomes like a full vessel of life. The Birth of our Lord is in this way celebrated every time we come together for the Eucharist.

Afghanistan: Violence or Non-violence?

There are two broad traditions within Christianity. Nonviolence – pacifism, love of neighbour and love of enemy – was the dominant Christian tradition in the first three centuries; and this is the position that I would take. The tradition of the Just War, from Augustine and refined by Aquinas and others, is presently the dominant Christian view. It should be noted that this never says that war is just but that there are occasions when Christians will not be condemned for killing other people. And these circumstances are closely defined and are couched in terms of legitimate self-defence.

The generally accepted criteria for a just war are as follows:

1. The harm or damage caused by the aggressor must be lasting, grave and certain.
2. All other means must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective.
3. There must be a serious prospect of success. (Success needs to be defined. In the Falklands War success was the restoration of the islands to British rule; so going on to invade Argentina or trying to bring about regime change in Argentina was not part of the task. A 'war on terror' is very ill defined.)
4. The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders greater than the evil to be eliminated.

Just war criteria also extend to how the war is to be fought. In particular the rights of non-combatants, prisoners and wounded soldiers must be respected.

Afghanistan

Osama bin Laden took refuge in Afghanistan when the Taliban was in government. After the attack on the twin towers in New York in September 2001 the US launched its war on terror which led to its attacking the Taliban government with the aim of arresting bin Laden and destroying the al-Qaeda leadership. The legality of this

intervention, named Operation Enduring Freedom, is still very seriously questioned. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter does give nation states the right of immediate response to aggression but only until the matter has been determined by the UN. It is even more difficult to defend it when the Operation is continuing some eight years and at times crossing the border into Pakistan. The US did not declare war on Afghanistan, as it regarded the Taliban not as combatants but as terrorists (and so refused to extend the safeguards of the Geneva Conventions to them) and many non-combatants were killed in indiscriminate air strikes. The Operation had the support of United Kingdom forces and of many of the northern warlords, who subsequently ended up in senior positions in the Kabul government. The intervention was successful in ousting the Taliban government but has still not been successful in capturing bin Laden or in destroying the Taliban as a military or political force.

The United Nations mission in Afghanistan was set up in late 2001 to contribute to security and state building in Afghanistan. The UN Security Council also authorised a force to assist the Afghan government in the maintenance of security in Kabul and the surrounding areas. This force is the International Security Assistance Force. It is a coalition of willing participants rather than a UN force, although it operates under a UN peace enforcement mandate. This mandate, renewed each year, has slowly extended the area in which the force can operate and now it covers the whole country. NATO has been in control of this force since 2003 and now has over 60,000 troops in Afghanistan.

The 9,500 or so British forces are mainly operating with ISAF although some, including the UK Special Forces, are with the OEF. Over 220 of the British forces have died, of which over 90 fatalities were with the OEF.

Is the war just?

There are four broad areas of concern in respect of whether the war in Afghanistan can be considered just.

1. There is serious doubt as to whether Operation Enduring Freedom can be classified in 2009 as legitimate self-defence by the United Kingdom. Eight years on it is not hot pursuit across international borders. It is not as if Taliban tanks are coming along the Kingsway and their planes are bombing Angus, which would be a very clear, lasting, grave and certain danger. By now there should be an explicit authorisation from the United Nations as the legitimising body for all activities undertaken by British troops in Afghanistan.

2. There is serious doubt as to the prospect of success. Gordon Brown in his speech of 4 September 2009 said that British troops are in Afghanistan as a result of an assessment of the terrorist threat facing Britain and that success would be achieved by the Afghans themselves defeating the Taliban and al-Qaeda and denying the territory of Afghanistan as a base for terrorists.

This proposition assumes a strong connection between acts of terrorism in the United Kingdom and the existence of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. It is at least arguable that a better way to reduce acts of terrorism in the United Kingdom is by a transparent and impartial exercise of the rule of law in our own country and by showing that the UK is committed to promoting human well-being and development throughout the world.

But the Taliban has substantial support especially in the Pashtun in parts of Afghanistan. Their view that the Kabul government is corrupt, that it is being propped up by foreign troops who have no right to be in Afghanistan, that its police force is in no way impartial and that it cannot guarantee security, let alone development, to the mass of the population is

shared by many in Afghanistan, including many aid and development workers. There is a strong argument that sections of the Taliban must be part of the solution and are unlikely to be defeated militarily.

There is the additional risk of the destabilisation of Pakistan. The recent heavy handed action called for by the United States in the Swat valley and now in Waziristan has led to a major refugee problem and very significant difficulties resulting from major destruction of houses, farms, hospitals, schools and water supplies. And Pakistan has a nuclear capability.

These are prudential issues and the first assumption is that the government is in the best position to judge these matters. However, as some of the information used to justify the invasion of Iraq later proved to be unfounded, so a degree of scepticism about governmental information and judgement is in order.

3. It is difficult to compare the harm caused by a particular action with the harm prevented. War and civil strife are destructive of people and of social capital. The UN give a figure of over 2,000 civilians killed in 2008. They reckon that some 55% of civilians were killed by the insurgents and some 39% by coalition forces. The peoples of Afghanistan have suffered conditions of civil strife for most of the past 30 years. This has been worse when foreign troops have been present. It could be argued that a policy of working for development with the various tribes and areas in Afghanistan is much more likely to lead to stability and an improvement in human rights rather than a policy in which there is a heavy military presence and foreign troops. The majority of the Afghan population see foreign troops, the aid programme, the Afghan police and the Afghan army as tools of a corrupt and incompetent Kabul government.

4. The treatment of non-combatants, civilians, and wounded and

captured combatants gives grave cause for concern.

Christians, especially those who members of the armed forces, have a particular problem and witness in this situation. If a war is no longer a just war, then it is not licit for a Christian to participate in it. The above are some of the issues with which Christians grapple in terms of forming their consciences on this matter.

David Mumford

[The best concise and referenced source is the Wikipedia section on the war in Afghanistan. The conditions for a just war are taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The British Government's case was well set out in a speech by Gordon Brown on 4 September 2009. Although he has subsequently expressed concern about aspects of the Afghanistan government's competence and probity, the primary cause for British involvement in Afghanistan is that it is essential to keep Britain safe.]

AUTUMN DIOCESAN SYNOD

The Synod met at St James' Church, Stonehaven on 14 October and commenced with the Bishop celebrating the Eucharist.

After refreshments generously provided by the congregation the meeting took place in the hall.

In his charge Bishop John reported that most vacancies in the diocese were being filled and that there were a number of possible young ordinands and training courses are under review. He said that the iconic picture of the three Jacobite priests incarcerated in Stonehaven Tolbooth in 1748 had been restored and he hoped that all congregations would contribute to this cost.

The Bishop introduced the first of the major items on the agenda: the latest draft (April 2009) of the proposed Anglican Covenant. He himself drew attention to areas where he detected inconsistency and then invited two clerics to speak. The Dean referred to the centrality of the ancient threefold

ministry of bishop, priest and deacon in the life of the Church as it has been upheld within Anglicanism. This he felt was reflected in this proposed covenant and that bishops were fundamental to making decisions of faith and practice. Dr John Cuthbert spoke about the Bible and its interpretation. He acknowledged that there was a considerable breadth of attitude but he noted that the truth of Scripture was not necessarily to be found in literalism and that the Church had always been evolving its understanding of the meaning. After a few contributions by others the Bishop stated that the Diocesan Synod was not required to vote on the draft text but that comments made would be passed to the Faith and Order Board of the Province who would be making a response on behalf of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

There then followed consideration of proposed changes to various canons, the most

significant of which was of Canon 35 *Of the Structure, Furniture and Monuments of Churches*, and the *due Care thereof*. No longer would the Diocesan Buildings Advisory Committee be 'advisory'. To ensure that any alteration or adaptation is acceptable and will be properly carried out requisite procedures will have to be followed. These are mostly in line with what up to now has been termed 'advisory'. A list will soon be published of minor works which will not need consent. These, and the other proposed canonical amendments, were all passed after due discussion with overwhelming majorities.

The last main item of business was a presentation by Canon Fay Lamont of reflections on the recent Diocesan Conference *Growing towards a Thriving Church*. Using a PowerPoint presentation she shared a large number of ideas, reactions, statements and exhortations which were expressed to and by the participants.

In order to assist and equip those who share
in the leadership of public worship
there will be

A TRAINING DAY

for those who lead Intercessions and / or
read Scripture

*(or equally for those interested in finding out more about
these ministries)*

**Saturday, 6 February
10.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.**

**at St Mary's Church, Queen Street,
Broughty Ferry**

A day of teaching input, hands-on tasks and resourcing.
There will also be an opportunity to share resources and
ideas,
as well as to share fellowship and meet with others in our
Diocesan family

Please bring a packed lunch. Hot drinks provided.

Further details from:
The Very Rev'd David Mumford,
tel: 01356 622708
or

The Rev'd Jonathan Bower, tel: 01382 805088

The James Gregory Lectures

The Younger Hall, University of St Andrews

The next lecture in the series is entitled

"God and the Big Bang"

to be given by

The Rev'd Dr David Wilkinson

at 5.15 p.m. on Thursday, 18 February
followed by a Reception until 7.00 p.m.

David Wilkinson is Principal of St John's College and part-time Lecturer in Theology and Science in the Department of Theology at the University of Durham, England. His background is research in theoretical astrophysics, where he gained a PhD in the study of star formation, the chemical evolution of galaxies and terrestrial mass extinctions. He is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. He also holds a PhD in Systematic Theology.

His current work at the University of Durham involves the relationship of the Christian faith to contemporary culture, from science to pop culture. In particular, he is working on the future of the physical Universe and Christian eschatology; Christian apologetics in a media dominated culture; and the public understanding of science and religion.

Rationality and Religion

There was once a time when Christians discussing important matters used rational argument. The Church did so even without accurate scientific knowledge. Christians argued logically on the basis of what they did know or thought they knew. Inheriting this attribute from pre-Christian Classical culture, the Christian Church made logic one of the cornerstones of Western civilisation. Ironically, it is logic that is being turned against the Church by Rationalists in modern times, and the Church seems to be finding it hard to respond rationally to attack.

But the Rationalists should look to their laurels. Increasingly, there are signs all around us that we are

becoming an irrational, illogical society. Otherwise intelligent, sophisticated people use crystals and "dream catchers", for example. Not only are many modern folk more superstitious than their Christian parents and grandparents were, but many today are also incapable of articulating thought. It is only how we feel about something that matters. Despite the triumphant crowing of Richard Dawkins and other militant atheists, the demise of Christian influence in Western countries has led not to less muddled thinking and superstition, but to more of it. Dawkins and his ilk may have seen off the Church and are leading us toward a "rational" society, but it seems that they have failed to make it a more

logical society. They can hardly ascribe this failure on their part to the Church's propaganda, when most of the illogical, muddled thought around us isn't Christian at all.

As secularism rages, a muddled, illogical society is a concern for Christians, but that is a condition that is not of our making. More of a concern is the evidence that muddled, illogical thinking from outside has penetrated our own deliberations. Are we a Church that has ceased to function logically? I fear so. Let us find again our minds, and seek the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2: 16 b).

St Salvador's Magazine

...in the Year of Homecoming...

On 14 November the Very Rev'd Canon Stephen Collis, formerly Dean of the Diocese of Cyprus and The Gulf, was instituted as Rector of St Mary & St Peter's, Montrose and St David's, Inverbervie.

For Kath our move to Montrose is a return to her home area as she was brought up in Arbroath and Brechin and trained at Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology before moving to Edinburgh, which is where we met. Both of us worked at the University in the Pollock Halls of Residence. We were both trained in Catering Management and I spent the first 12 years of my working life working in University administration. My home town is Stoke-on-Trent, a place of which I am passionately fond, even though in my youth it was a dirty, 'smoggy' city, much improved today, yet in my opinion lacking some of the character of its industrial past.

I worked at Edinburgh, Durham and Sheffield Universities as well as for an organization called Scottish National Camps, managing their Conference Centre at Middleton Hall near to Dalkieth.

My theological training was at Cranmer Hall, St John's College, Durham, from where I moved to All Saints' and St Paul's in Crewe, Cheshire for my Title. I spent two periods in the Parish of St Bartholomew's Wilmslow, Cheshire, either side of 9½ years in the Royal Air Force. Our second departure from Wilmslow took us to the Parish of St Bertoline's, again in Cheshire, where I was Priest-in-Charge and Diocesan Industrial Chaplain for South Cheshire.

Time in the RAF had introduced me to warmer climes and from Barthomley we moved to Abu Dhabi

and then Cyprus, both in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

We have two daughters, Sally and Mhorag: both are married, each with a young daughter. We share some interests that others have introduced us to on our own journeys.

After a career as a lecturer in Hotel and Catering Management Kath retrained as a Special Needs Teacher and has used this training in Germany, Abu Dhabi and Cyprus. Guiding has been a great love of Kath's life for very many years, and she was County Commissioner in Cyprus immediately before we left and is still on the Executive of British Guides in Foreign Countries (BGIFC) having been involved in Guiding in the UK and the three countries mentioned above, where there are BGIFC Units.

I trained as a Trainer and Counsellor working with Cruse and Relate. I have played various games but sadly I am now mostly

reduced to watching from the sidelines. I have been a football referee and Chaplain to two professional clubs in England, so it is probably fair to say I love the game. We caravan and walk the dog – something that was very difficult in some of the high temperatures we have recently left; now we hope to have the opportunity to enjoy walking in the Glens and along the Coast.

With this insight into our background, as we settle in to work in the Diocese, we look forward to meeting many of the readers of *Grapevine* and we very much look forward to being involved with the life and work of St Mary and St Peter's Montrose and St David of Scotland, Inverbervie.

Steve Collis



Canon Stephen Collis and Bishop John



International Peace Day was celebrated by members of Brechin Churches Together with a vigil service at the Peace Pole in the grounds of Brechin cathedral. The service was led by recently retired Church of Scotland minister Alan Watt and Ian Gray read the passage of scripture. The United Nations fixed 21 September for the day and the World Council of Churches have asked all churches to pray for peace around that time. The Very Rev. David Mumford, chair of Brechin Churches Together, said, 'We remember the conflicts presently taking place, especially in Afghanistan and central Africa and we pray for a just and non-violent resolution of these conflicts.'

John Calvin 1509 - 2009

'The man God mastered'

In this year, the quingentenary of John Calvin's birth, it is worthwhile reading an appreciation of his life, especially bearing in mind the foundational contribution he made to the Protestant part of the Church and thereby to the origins of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

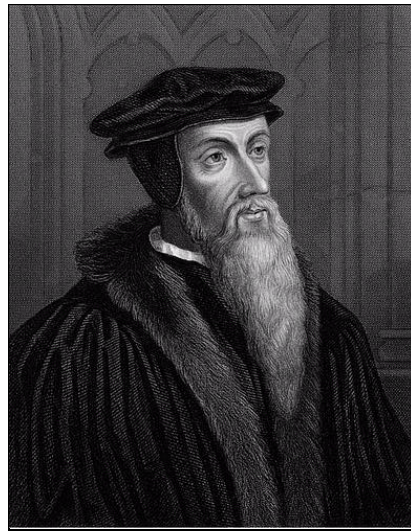
John Calvin, the half-millennium of whose birth falls this year, belongs to the whole Christian Church. He ranks among the titans of Christian theology with Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Schleiermacher and Barth. We should commemorate him for his massive contribution to Christian theology, to biblical studies and to unity, as well as for certain remarkable personal qualities.

It was predictable that the anniversary would be celebrated in Geneva, Scotland and North America. But Calvin has also been commemorated in such less likely places as Budapest and Moscow and he is very big indeed in South Korea! The Calvin anniversary was marked in England with the 'Calvin Colloquium' on *'The influence and legacy of John Calvin for the religious traditions of England and Wales'* at the University of Exeter.

Theology

I first read Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion as a theological student aged twenty-one. It gave me a doctrinal foundation that remains largely intact to this day. Most of what Calvin writes in the Institutes is mainstream Christian theology. Some of what he says is distorted by polemic, and in this he is a man of his time. Calvin is relaxed about bishops but implacably opposed to the papacy. I think I first learned a high view of the sacraments from him. When I got to his exposition of double predestination I wrote in the margin 'No!'. But Calvin's theology should not be defined by his extreme development of the doctrine of predestination – a doctrine that is to be found in Paul, Augustine, Aquinas and Luther, to name a few.

I moved from reading Calvin (and Luther) to modern Anglican theologians: F. D. Maurice, Charles Gore, William Temple and Michael Ramsey and from them to many others, especially Karl Barth and Karl Rahner. All these coexist quite amicably in my mind – and I don't think I'm particularly confused! Perhaps that is because I want to be catholic and reformed in my theology and to focus on what the traditions have in common, rather than what keeps them apart.



Scripture

The Institutes are dwarfed by Calvin's commentaries – he wrote or preached on every book of the Bible except 'Revelation'. Biblical scholars still cite Calvin's interpretation of a text, though Calvin lived well before the emergence of the critical methods that we take for granted today. Nevertheless, he was a Renaissance scholar, as were most of the Reformers, who brought the best contemporary scholarship to bear on the study of the Bible.

Calvin is acknowledged as one of the greatest biblical commentators; his commentaries are still worth consulting for their insight into the meaning of Scripture as well as for what they tell us of Calvin's own mind.

Unity

In spite of his grim reputation, Calvin's belief in the catholicity of the Church gave him a passion for unity. He does not quibble about non-essentials. He was happy to sign the Lutheran Augsburg Confession of 1530. His reply to Cardinal Sadoletto was a reasoned and irenic apologia for the reform. He and his fellow Reformers had no intention of starting a new church, but wanted to renew the face of the one Church. He told Archbishop Cranmer that he would willingly cross seven seas to bring about unity among Protestants. Like the Reformers generally, Calvin was the heir of the conciliar movement of the fifteenth century which had attempted to reunite a fragmented papacy and to reform abuses by calling together the whole Church in a representative way.

In his lifetime and subsequently Calvin has been vilified for his life and his theology. In the sixteenth- and seventeenth century Roman Catholic attacks nothing was too fantastic or too repulsive to be flung at him. Lutheran insults were not much better. Like God's Servant in Isaiah 52-53, 'he was despised and rejected of men'. That fact alone might suggest that Calvin was a good man and an instrument of God's work. Calvin was a self-effacing person who chose to be buried in an unmarked grave, but on the rare occasions that he spoke about himself what he stressed more than anything was his 'fearful' nature. On his deathbed he referred to this three times. Calvin was by nature reserved and timorous. The fact that he achieved so much against huge odds suggests to me that alongside timidity we should set courage. I think that the word that best describes him is courageous. Truly, in the words of one of his modern biographers, John Calvin was 'the man God mastered'.

Dr Paul Avis

General Secretary of the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity

TO THE EDGE TO FIND THE CENTRE

I went on retreat this summer to very remote places – but I wasn't alone. There's much to be gained from a few days at a retreat house as many know: they provide stillness and spirit-moments and enable retreatants to meet others, meet God, and meet themselves. They are a truly rich resource and we in Britain are very fortunate to have so many of them.

But there are two other treasures available to us. The first is our land: mountain, sea, island and shore, lake, river, moor and hill. These form what Celtic peoples called 'The Big Book' – the book in which we can 'read God' in the wideness and wildness of his creation. The second treasure is each other.

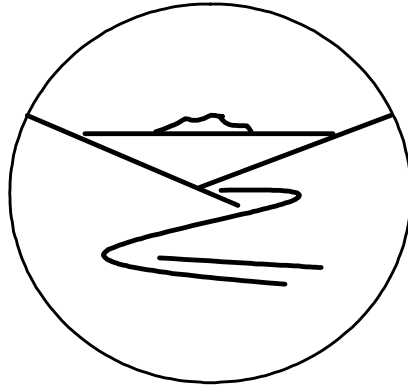
These two can come together in a way complementary to classic retreats. **Journeying** (of which the Bishop of Oxford [John Pritchard] is the Patron) is a non-profit-making organisation, run by volunteers, which takes small groups to remote and not-so-remote places in Britain and Ireland. They have been doing this quietly and unobtrusively for over 20 years, previously under the name *Pilgrim Adventure*. Each year they run 7-8 journeys to a wide variety of places. The original vision was to follow in the steps of early saints and thus an element of Celtic spirituality is always present, but there's no heavy religiosity at all – and people of any faith, denomination or none are welcomed warmly and openly.

The practical outworking developed over the years to encapsulate the vision's essence with the needs of ordinary people in mind ... for it is *they* for whom the organisation exists and in that regard the work of **Journeying** is a ministry. The shape of each trip is determined by the two (unpaid, volunteer) leaders but even with different people leading there are elements common to every journey:

- accommodation is usually self-catering (but occasionally on a full-board basis and even

perhaps in a classic retreat house);

- gentle, reflective worship takes place at the start and at the end of each day (and perhaps also at other times on the hill or by the shore);



- walks of varying length (you can opt in or out as you wish)
- times of sharing in the evening, maybe around a log fire;
- and the communion found so often as you do the dishes together.

A trip may include visits to small islands, hill-walking and / or visiting ancient sites of worship. Sometimes there is a greater emphasis on prayer-accompaniment and deliberate reflective companionship.

Highlights for me on recent journeys have included a simple Eucharist at the tide's edge, trudging over a Welsh moorland in the rain to reach the remains of an ancient Cistercian monastery as a rainbow arched overhead, standing on a Hebridean island to watch the sun flash the waves with setting light, the strength shared by three of us sheltering from fierce wind on a remote hillside – and my silent weeping with deep joy as our group felt able to share feelings about our relationship with God as the embers crackled in a dying log-fire.

The real essence of these journeys, for me (and for fellow travellers) is a Christian companionship within the beauty of the natural world. To that is added the true spirit-presence that

comes from being quiet together, laughing (and crying) together, sharing life's stories and our unique, but common, understanding of God.

There are many organisations who will take you to Rome or the Holy Land, on retreat to Nepal or Antigua. But I believe there is no other group offering such journeys in our green and pleasant (and rugged and most beautiful) land; indeed the **Journeying** idea appears to be unique in my experience and touches me deeply, offering transformation and enrichment in ways which I am certain would be valued by many. It allows me to be myself amongst God's creation and other like-minded people with whom I can develop a relationship of trust and love. In so doing I discover the God whom Gerard Hughes called the 'God of surprises'.

In 2010 there will be holiday journeys to 'edge' places in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England. To find out more – and to see the full programme – go to:

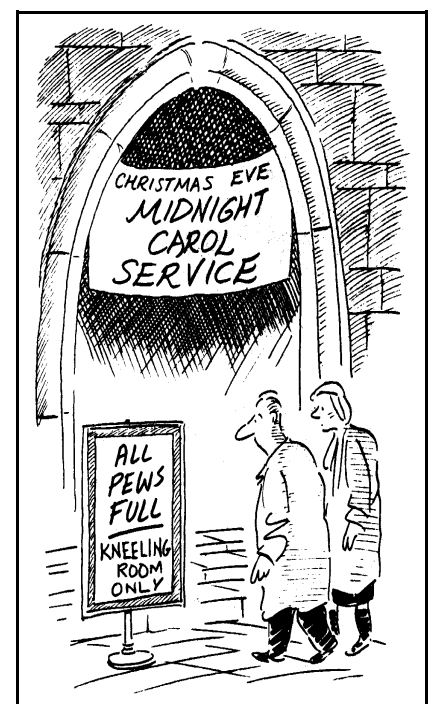
<www.journeying.co.uk>

send an email to:

<info@journeying.co.uk>

or telephone: 01834 844212

Paul Heppleston



Edinburgh 2010 is an ecumenical project set up to commemorate the centenary of the World Missionary Conference, and to provide new perspectives on Christian mission today.

In June 1910 the city of Edinburgh hosted one of the most defining and most long-remembered gatherings in the history of Christianity. Edinburgh was chosen as a conference venue since Scotland had an importance in worldwide mission out of all proportion to its size. More than 1,200 Christians from many churches came together to think strategically about the worldwide mission of the Christian Church. Participants recognised the need to move beyond colonialism and to welcome the birth and maturing of independent and self-governing churches around the world. Although there were no Catholic or Orthodox delegates present, Edinburgh 1910 is considered to be the birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement. Concerned with advancing co-operation and unity in the study and practice of mission, its most significant achievement was that it raised the vision of the church as a global reality.

Edinburgh 2010 is governed by a General Council, made up of 20 representatives of the Protestant, Pentecostal, Evangelical, Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christian traditions. Apart from this international body, many groups and organisations are involved on a local level, including a multi-denominational Scottish co-ordinating team called ScoT. In contrast to 1910, Edinburgh 2010 is a truly global and truly ecumenical project and event.

As in 1910 a study process is at the heart of the project. For the past two years study groups have been working on nine main study themes and seven 'transversal' themes. Participants of the study process have met for conferences and workshops in places like India, Korea, Germany, West Africa and

Bolivia, and are using the Edinburgh 2010 website (www.edinburgh2010.org) as a platform for discussion and exchange.

The study process will peak in a four-day conference, to be held at Pollock Halls in Edinburgh from 2-6 June 2010. 70 representatives of the study groups will come together and be joined by 150 mission leaders from all over the world. The aim of the project is a serious, in-depth interaction on both the present and future of Christian mission and on specific missiological themes. It is hoped that this discussion will not just take place among conference delegates, but that it will develop into a global conversation before, during and after the conference. Christians all over the world are invited to share their thoughts on mission on the Edinburgh 2010 website and to engage in its growing Facebook community.

The highlight of the conference is to be a celebratory service on Sunday, 6 June. Delegates and about 1,000 local and international guests will gather at the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh, the historic venue of the 1910 World Missionary Conference. The Archbishop of York, the Most Rev'd Dr John Sentamu, has agreed to lead the three-hour worship together with representatives of other Christian traditions. It is planned to stream the celebrations online in order to make it accessible to Christians all over the world.

Moreover, the stakeholders of Edinburgh 2010 encourage Christians worldwide to set up their own events in the Edinburgh 2010 spirit. Local ecumenical celebrations of mission can be at any time of the year 2010, or on 6 June to link with others around the world. An up-to-date list of events is available on the website: <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/> for information and sign up for the newsletter which is sent out regularly. Anyone who is organising an 'Edinburgh 2010' event is asked to contact the

Communications Officer for Edinburgh 2010, Jasmin Adam, so that your information can include it on the website listing

Also, congregations and Churches Together Groups who would like to host one or more delegates before or after the conference are invited to contact Jasmin Adam who will try to match delegates who want to make pre or post-conference visits with those who have registered their desire to host people, and will put them in touch with each other: thereafter, all arrangements will need to be made through direct contact since there are no E2010 resources (finance or personnel) to facilitate this.

The organisers of Edinburgh 2010 and the SCoT group would ask that you pray for the conference and for all the ecumenical endeavours which will take place in 2010 using the following prayer at Sunday services and in your prayer groups:

*God of Grace,
Your love flows in abundance through
your world,
You have come close, touched our pain,
And fired our hearts with hope.
As now we give you thanks,
And celebrate your mission
To reconcile, heal and transform.
Fill us with your irrepressible Spirit of love
Made known among us in Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.*

As part of the preparation for
Edinburgh 2010
there will be a

Day of Prayer

with

Father Gerard Hughes
(Jesuit priest, writer & broadcaster)

on Saturday, 5 December
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

in St Andrew's Church,
Barngreen, Arbroath

Further details from Mrs Rena Scott
Tel. 01674 677688

A Hidden Anglican

The country church is still there. Somebody lives in it now, and it isn't Jesus. It's smaller than I remember it; but I was a child back then. I suppose it's big enough to be the second home of some prosperous city slicker now. When I was last inside, the little church was full.

In those days, in solidly Catholic Quebec, in what was then called "the Eastern Townships" south of Montreal, little Protestant churches like this one were dotted all over the beautiful rural landscape, in the towns, villages, crossroads, and just by the side of unpaved country roads like this one was. The congregations were sustained by a considerable but scattered English speaking population, many of them descended from the original settlers in what was an uninhabited wilderness 200 years earlier. This core group was added to over the years by other settlers, many of them also English speaking. People like us. The little church had been built for the needs of the local Anglicans. Its dedication was "Saint Matthew". It was our church.

I say that it was our church in something of a notional sense. I had been baptised in the Church of England not all that long before my mother. Very unhappy in her marriage to my father, she had absconded with me, to disappear in Canada. Mama too was an Anglican. However, I don't recall my mother going to services, and I remember visiting Saint Matthew's myself not more than once. Mama and I were hidden Anglicans.

I heard later that the little church was full for Mama's funeral. I don't know for certain as I wasn't there. The well-meaning adults wouldn't let me attend. I can't recall what I did instead that day. It must have been one of those life-changing days that we all experience unawares. Even nine-year olds have them; perhaps I had one that day, playing with my toy soldiers or something. People said nice things about Mama at the house afterwards. They were consoling and kind to my stepfather, brother and me. Mama had just turned 34.

Someone shook their head and said that only the good die young. If that was true, I thought, I wish that Mama had been bad.

But she wasn't bad; just unhappy and unfortunate. She had been worn down by years of anxiety and care, her life tied to a flamboyant artist whose creative talents were at best mediocre, but who excelled at profligacy and self delusion. We lived in a remote ramshackle farmhouse with only plastic sheeting on the windows to protect us from near-arctic winters; avoiding creditors while my stepfather declaimed on the subject of returning to the land. In fact, he was lazy; he sponged off my grandparents; he bullied me and he brought my mother to an early grave. And it was a grave that I would not see, as I did not go to the funeral.

But I did go to the little church once. It was before Christmas. My mother took me to a carol service there one night. I can't recall whether my stepfather and brother came too. I only recall my mother, wrapped in what had once been an elegant fur coat, now used for warmth and so sorry-looking one almost wanted to apologise to the poor dead animal. I cuddled up to Mama in the seat of our beat-up yellow pick-up truck. It was a dark night and there was a lot of snow.

I recall the journey over the gravel road, ploughed but still coated in ice and snow. Ahead of us the snow twinkled in the headlights. From out of the cold darkness we approached little Saint Matthew's. The church was ablaze with lights, drawing from all directions people on foot or in vehicles like ours. We were packed in to the service. The Christmas story was read and carols were sung. Although as a hidden Anglican it should have been unfamiliar, somehow I didn't think that it was. It was hopeful. It was joyful. It was cosy. It seemed like home. No. It was nothing like home. Home was a sad ramshackle farmhouse with plastic sheets on the windows, down a long dark road.

Clive Clapson

The Arts Chaplaincy in Scotland

presents

Advent

An examination of the season of
Advent through poetry
literature and art

**in the Chaplaincy,
University of Dundee**

on Saturday, 5 December

Programme:

10.00-10.30 Gather and Coffee

10.30 - Advent through Poetry

Rev'd Prof. David Jasper

11.30 - Advent in Literature

Rev'd Dr Scott Robertson

12.30-1.30 Lunch

1.45 - Advent in Painting

Rev'd Dr Donald Orr

2.45-3.15 Plenary Session

3.30 - Depart

There is no charge for the day but
contributions to the
costs of coffee, tea, etc. are most
welcome

[http://www.dundee.ac.uk/
general/campusmap/](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/general/campusmap/)

APOLOGIES

for the accidental omission of the
clue for 29 across in the last
edition's crossword, but

Congratulations

to Mrs Forsyth of Broughty Ferry
for correctly solving the whole
puzzle.

For those who didn't manage to
complete it, this is solution:



Diocesan Festal Evensong

One of the days on which people from all the congregations in the diocese are especially invited to come to the cathedral is that on which we commemorate Alexander Penrose Forbes, who was Bishop of Brechin from 1846 to 1875 and under whose inspiration energetic developments took place. So on 27 September (a little early for Forbes' day) a good number of people gathered together in St Paul's.



The Rev'd Sidney Fox being presented to Bishop John by the Vice-Provost

Following the opening hymn the Rev'd Sidney Fox, formerly Rector of Brechin and now an incumbent in Lancashire, was installed as an Honorary Canon.

At the end of Evening Prayer Joyce Mumford was licensed as a Lay Reader and that was followed by the re-licensing of all the other Lay Readers in the diocese and the affirmation of other lay ministries.



Dr John Cuthbert presenting all the Lay Readers to the Bishop for their re-licensing

In his sermon Canon Fox gave several examples both from the Bible and from the life of the Church of how God is the God who cares for the 'have nots'. Forbes' own ministry had been characterised by his energetic care for those in great poverty and social deprivation both in practical compassion and in raising their eyes and spirits through beauty of worship. The seeds of similar opportunities are with us today.

POVERTY & HOMELESS ACTION WEEK

This 'week' will run from Saturday, 30 January through to Sunday, 7 February 2010.

The theme for this year's action week is *Enough for All*. During this period Churches and associated organisations throughout Scotland will be holding special services, organising "sleep outs", celebrating the practical work they do in their communities, etc. to help and highlight the plight of the homeless and poor.

"All of them ate and were filled. When they collected the leftover pieces, there were twelve baskets." Luke 9:12

- The recession is not just a crisis but also a time for us to explore new ways of doing things. We have had enough of an economy built on greed and selfishness. There is another way.
- There is a growing gap between rich and poor. This is not only immoral; it is bad for all of us, harming our health and happiness. But we can close the gap.
- There is **Enough For All** – enough food, enough resources, enough money, enough homes, enough love, enough joy.
- But there is only enough if we don't retreat into our shells. We must greet our neighbours, give what we can and share our ideas, hopes and skills.
- Our churches and communities contain a wealth of skills and resources, including many we do not know about yet. We must rediscover and share them.

Scottish Churches Housing Action along with Housing Justice and Church Action on Poverty have jointly developed various resources to assist churches etc. in making the most of Action Week. Resources (free to download) can be found on their website: <www.actionweek.org.uk>.

Any further information or help on Action Week or the issue of homelessness and poverty can be obtained by contacting your local Scottish Episcopal rep. Joe Cassidy at <joe.cassidy@tesco.net> or telephone 07774 432740.



LEADING YOUR CHURCH INTO GROWTH

Aberdeen & Orkney Diocesan Mission Committee are offering an important conference to churches in the North at the beginning of next year, running from 11 - 13 January at Peterhead. 'Leading your Church into Growth' is a training programme which seeks to take the mystique out of church growth making it 'normal' and do-able. Now in its seventeenth year it is a three-day residential course for lay and ordained leaders providing help, encouragement and fun as we seek to lead our churches from a largely pastoral to a pastoral in mission role. The conference will be led by two Anglican clergy drawn from different backgrounds,

traditions, and ministry contexts. Both can speak from personal experience of leading churches into growth and are passionate to see local churches enabled for mission.

Damian Feeney is a Vicar in the Diocese of Blackburn and Assistant Diocesan Missioner. He is a priest of the Society of the Holy Cross, and a member of the College of Evangelists. He has been involved in three Eucharistic church plant projects and was a member of the 'Mission Shaped Church' working party. Tim Sledge is the Vicar of Romsey Abbey in Hampshire. Previously Missioner for the Peterborough Diocese and

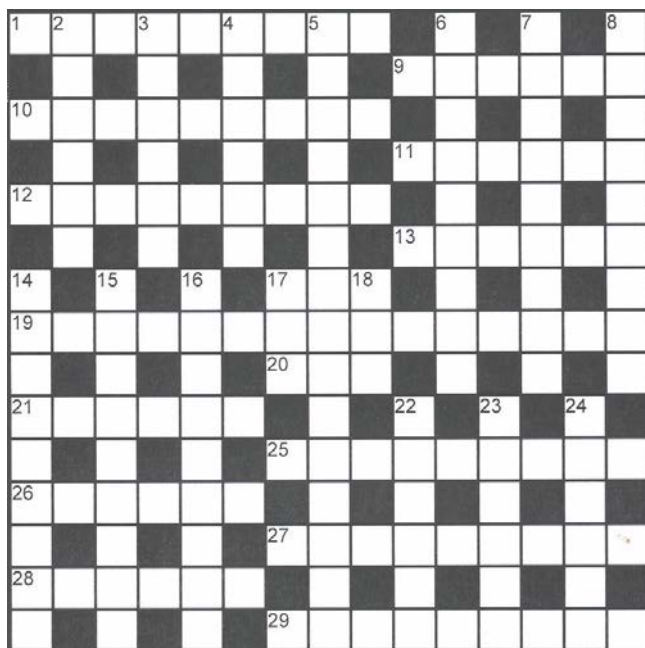
Rector of three varied parishes near Halifax, his main interests are in developing new services and worship opportunities for local churches. He is co-author of the book *Mission Shaped Church; Traditional Churches in a Changing Context*.

The Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway held this conference with the same speakers in 2008 for most of its charges to great enthusiasm.

Further information can be obtained from Canon John Walker, The Rectory, St Mary's Place, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 3NW. Tel. 01467 620470

CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

Another offering of an exercise for your brain! Send your entries in to the editor at the address on the back page by Saturday, 6 March at the latest and make sure you put your name and address in the box provided. As a little help, five of the answers are the names of people associated with the Christmas season as well as some other festive references.



CLUES ACROSS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Let the king enter and bow to the saint (9) | 17 Mad or not, it's a lot of fuss (3) |
| 9 Assert that you step into the drink (6) | 19 If the Holy Family had fled in this transport they might have got to a London marsh! (15) |
| 10 Vintage juice extractor (9) | 20 Lose the conjunction and you make a mistake (3) |
| 11 A shortened letter of Paul knocked off the point of his incense stick (6) | 21 Two commanders with the French produce a chilly spear (6) |
| 12 It takes a wise man to throw a slab at the hart (9) | |
| 13 At least a hundred needed | |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 25 I'm being treated but am restless (9) | 7 Line the roof with slate for a heavenly finish (9) |
| 26 For that reason he dropped the small coin (6) | 8 Does he wear a helmet with blood on it in this place? (9) |
| 27 An other-worldly being appears when you hang Clare (9) | 14 The festival shirt scam has to be unravelled (9) |
| 28 Nay, not this man! (6) | 15 The CID have a clear stance over unexpected events (9) |
| 29 The seer parts the misty cloud to behold what is revealed (9) | 16 Fifty can sing for faithful millions round the world (9) |

CLUES DOWN:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 Surely he didn't go to jail! (6) | 18 Nothing for the start of the rower (3) |
| 3 Each eye has a perfect score (6) | 22 A holy man has a pain inside a small bag (6) |
| 4 It wasn't a Jew who made the manger, then! (6) | 23 Now that the colourful hostelry has been redesigned it's the place to have a meal (6) |
| 5 Ran on a hundred stormy roads in northern Scotland of old (15) | 24 She has her former boyfriend with her but he is in the overflow accommodation (6) |
| 6 A real quiet coat for this queen (9) | |

Name

Address.....

.....

Comment

I was both surprised and disappointed by the Pope's secret deal with Forward in Faith to accept their clergy, (wives and all!), subject to certain conditions, into the Roman Church, and F. in F.'s apparent acceptance. I was surprised, because on the one hand, there would be considerable discontent among Roman Catholic priests about their own continuing celibacy, and among the more progressive of their parishioners about the influx of the most reactionary element of the Anglican Communion; and on the other hand, the acceptance of the authoritarian and highly concretised beliefs, especially the new post reformation dogmas, of Rome by members of an organisation whose publication *New Directions* contained a feast of theological and philosophical dialectic. One might not have liked the things they said but one could not but admire the way they said it. I was disappointed because the Anglican Church gains its strength from what more authoritarian bodies might consider its weakness; its gentle tolerance of a wide diversity of beliefs and practices from so-called Anglo-Catholicism at one extreme

and ultra Protestantism at the other. With the departure of the traditionalists, we might just see an overwhelmingly protestant church split between Evangelical fundamentalists and liberal modernists. F. in F. members having quit their Anglo-Catholic heartland like rats, leave a squabbling crew to a sinking ship.

As a member of Amnesty International since the late '60s, I am certainly not a supporter of Fascism. Nevertheless the old Amnesty maxim of 'though I hate what you say, I will defend your right to the last to say it' holds sway, and I certainly thought Nick Griffin was treated very shabbily by the BBC. If a political party has won a million votes and has an MEP, it is entitled to be heard on Question Time. And if that person is invited on to the panel of Question Time, he is entitled to be treated as impartially as any other member of the panel. This was not the case. Griffin was subjected to a verbal lynching, the original order of questions being changed so that he could be exposed to a great deal of unnecessary abuse both from the panel itself and the very multicultural audience. The

BNP gets votes because it voices the fears of what they call 'ethnically British', e.g. Christian Anglo-Celtic Europeans, of being culturally suffocated by hostile Muslim Asians; fears which the main political parties are too politically correct to even voice.. My curiosity being aroused, I visited the BNP website. Whilst their law and order policies are predictably tough-minded, their education policy is, in my mind as a retired lecturer, excellent..

In the past I have supported Richard Dawkins and his support of Darwinism. However during a recent broadcast in which he discussed the compatibility of science and religion with Archbishop Rowan Williams, he suddenly went into a manic rave about the beauty of science completely replacing God which exposed him to be not so much an experimental scientist finding no evidence in his research of there being a God, as a fanatical atheist who supports his atheism using scientific arguments. Never mind. Malcolm Muggeridge was the same. Perhaps the Professor is just ripe for a dramatic conversion!

Francis D. Bowles

LINKS

(Scottish Episcopal Church Mission Association)

DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

LINKS LUNCH

on Monday, 25 January 2010

at St. Mary's Church, Broughty Ferry

at 12 midday for 12.15 p.m.

(finishing at approximately 2.30 p.m.)

Speaker (not yet finalised) will be given in
the Brechin Bulletin

BRING & BUY stall

Donations towards lunch for LINKS Mission projects

All Links members and any friends welcome

St Salvador's Cards

St Salvador's, Dundee has Christmas cards for sale depicting the Annunciation scene which forms part of the reredos behind the high altar (as below but in colour).



All proceeds go towards the current restoration fund which aims to make the church building water tight and hopefully prevent further damage to this Burlison and Grylls art work.

To order a pack of 5 cards (cost £1.00) contact Dr Alan Geddes on 01382 641991.

GROWING TOWARDS A THRIVING CHURCH

On 5 October the Diocesan Conference took place at Chalmers Ardler Church in Dundee. The theme was "Growing towards a Thriving Church" and the lead speaker was Bob Jackson, who is an Archdeacon in the diocese of Lichfield in the Church of England. Although it was a 'diocesan' event, people were there from Dumfries, Edinburgh, Glasgow as well: about a hundred all told.

For the opening service there were no service sheets; words of the hymns and prayers were projected on to the walls. Then the Bishop introduced the proceedings.

Bob Jackson gave a polished performance, and he certainly had many pointers for congregations to pick up on that would aid them in retaining membership, or in bringing new people in. Some of his books were available for purchase.

There is a worry of the apparent decline of the Scottish Episcopal Church. But we were urged not to worry since we are not declining as fast as the other denominations. (Rather cold comfort!) In our own diocese we were told that the five largest congregations are losing numbers faster than the smaller charges. One of Bob Jackson's answers was to get the people in by any possible means. What is the point, he asked, of having a building that is only used for 2-3 hours on a Sunday? The new

members will not all stay. His statistics showed that only 10% of new people do stay.

He had a novel way of dealing with giving. Everyone should place the price of a fish supper in the plate. Of course, the amount would depend on what sort of fish you eat, but it provides a visible and realistic benchmark.

We were told that we need more love for each other: people are less inclined to leave a loving church. A lot of time it is our own fault because of poor leadership. Quality in our leaders is required – but isn't that obvious! In a growing church there is joy and laughter. Nowadays there must be a variety of facilities: space for children, toilets, provision to supply drinks and refreshments. Wherever there is growth, in the main morning service on a Sunday or in weekday services, there needs to be social mixing. If there is a lunch club, then follow it with a service.

The Conference then was split into three groups with leaders who talked on three different subjects. Ann Tomlinson gave a good presentation on mission and congregational development.

"Growing together" was the heading of the talk given by Mrs Ness Brown. She is a member of St Mary's, Dunblane and moved to that town just after the massacre of these innocent schoolchildren. She described how she became involved with children of all denominations and built up

ecumenical youth groups that were listening to God. These youth groups became "not about me" but "about others". Links were made with churches, schools, and parents, working together. Use needs to be made of notice boards, messaging, communicating all that is going on. It was an inspiring talk by a relatively young woman and the light of love and purpose shone out of her.

The Rev'd Canon John Walker of St Mary's, Inverurie led the third session on the subject of spirituality. As his talk developed the sense of peace grew. He said that we needed to pay attention to our souls, to base our mission on spirituality and he spoke of the hunger there is for this in modern society. We should deepen our sense of identity for mission; discipline ourselves and always find time for Christ. There are times when we need to be active in prayer and times for silence, waiting upon God. We need to be open to God rather than just having a service and we need to be aware where God is.

There were opportunities for people to contribute their reactions to what they had heard and experienced and these have been collated and sent out to all congregations for their further consideration. The Conference was not an end in itself, but a springboard for our ongoing congregational and diocesan life in God's service. It was an inspirational day.

Careful what you ask for ...

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and asked his father if they could discuss his use of the family car.

His father said he would make a deal with his son. "You bring your grades at school up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, get your hair cut and we'll talk about the car."

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, I've

been real proud. You brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm real disappointed you didn't get your hair cut."

The young man paused a moment then said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in studying the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair. And there's even a strong argument that Jesus had long hair."

His father thought for a moment. "Did you also notice that they all walked everywhere they went?"

Diary Roundup

Sunday, 6 December, 6 p.m.

Advent Carol Service

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Friday, 18 December, 10.45 a.m.

Children's Carol Service

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Sunday, 20 December, 10.30 a.m.

Joint Centenary Service with Bishop John
Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth

Christmas Eve, Thursday, 24 December, 7 p.m.

Carol Service

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Christmas Eve, Thursday, 24 December, 9.30 p.m.

Carols, followed at 10 p.m. by **Christmas Eucharist**
Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth

Christmas Eve, Thursday, 24 December, 11.30 p.m.

Midnight Mass

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Christmas Day, Friday, 25 December, 10.15 a.m.

Said Eucharist with carols

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Christmas Day, Friday, 25 December, 10.30 a.m.

Eucharist for Christmas Day

Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth

Sunday, 27 December, 10.15 a.m.

Sung Eucharist and Sermon

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Friday, 1 January, 10 a.m.

Holy Communion for The Naming of Jesus

Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth

Sunday, 10 January, 6 p.m.

Epiphany Carol Service

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Sunday, 10 January, 6.30 p.m.

Christingle Service

Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth

Saturday, 16 January, 2 p.m.

Institution and Installation as Provost of the Rev'd Jeremy Auld

St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee

followed at 7.30 p.m. by

A Ceilidh

The Bridge, Dundee West Church, Perth Road,
Dundee

MARY'S BOY

by Liz Butler of St Ninian's Church, Dundee

*A bundle of joy sent from above
Ascended like the wings of a dove
fluttering down from on high
like a snowflake from the sky
Who? Mary's boy*

*She wrapped him up in swaddling clothes
to keep him warm, right down to his toes
she gazed down on this little mite
and knew that he would make things all right
Who? Mary's boy*

*He stood up for the poor and the lame
His Father on high does just the same
He took a leaf out of His book
He told the blind man, open your eyes and look
Who? Mary's Boy*

*With loaves and fishes, the hungry he fed
people followed wherever he led
He walked on the water, he did not drown
he never looked on anyone, with a frown
Who? Mary's boy*

*And how did we repay this lovely man?
Disowned and rejected, poor wee lamb
he was lifted high on a cross on a hill
people talk about him still
Who? Mary's boy*

*His mother watched him, he was so brave
only God above has the power to save
he died on that cross, he suffered the pain
he knew his death was not in vain
Who? Mary's boy*

The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 28 March 2010.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 6 March 2010.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

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