

The APC News

The Magazine of the Associated Presbyterian Churches in Scotland

Death or Glory – for the Scottish Church?

AN INTERESTING BOOK has been published entitled 'Death or Glory' referring to the future of the Scottish Church. The book is published in honour of that worthy gentleman Dr Geoffrey Grogan for his contribution to the work of the Church. (He took a paper at our APC Conference in the 1990's at Madras Street Hall).

The book is written by several authors and covers a wide range of approaches on the subject of the future of the Scottish Church. Each writer tells in his own way, of the reality of the present situation. We are not in a healthy condition. There is a serious need to get the gospel out to the masses or it will be death!

David Smith says "Many analysts believe that we are living through a cultural transformation at least as significant as that which occurred with the invention of the printing press in the sixteenth century... it is impossible to think of the spread of the Reformation apart from Gottenberg's printing press. My question is simple: why should the church at the close of the twentieth century not employ the new technologies now shaping our culture for the sake of the kingdom of God? Why should the electronic superhighway not

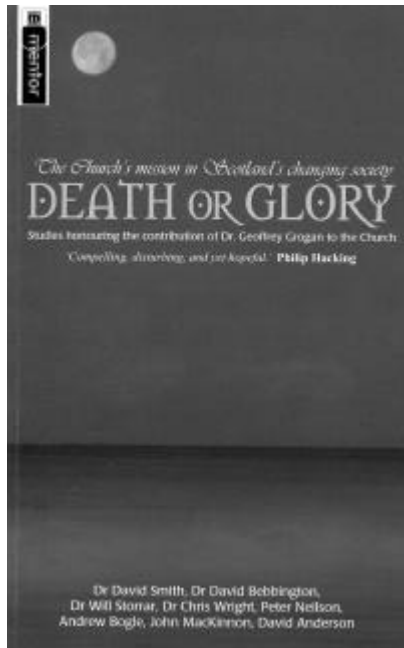
become a 'way of the Lord'? It is simply impossible to reply that the Bible sanctions nothing but preaching as the means of Christian communication. The Bible does nothing of the sort...From Genesis to Revelation, including story,

dream, proverb, vision, as well as sermon. It is a Biblical text that affirms "Ears that hear and eyes that see – the Lord has made them both" [Pro 20:12]. In an era when, we like it or not,, our children's lives are being shaped by visual imagery through TV, film and video, Scottish Christians cannot afford to ignore the implication of this proverb".

David Anderson (who died last month) writing about revival and responsibility quotes [Psa 110:3 AV] "Thy people shall be willing in a day of thy

power" adding "God alone can initiate, determine and inspire by his Spirit the day of his power. That is his sovereign prerogative. But on that day it is also true to say his people will be found prepared and willing. That is our responsibility. There is something we all must do, something we can do to believe in and prepare for that momentous day of extraordinary blessing".

The book is necessary reading



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Congregational Details

*“These are the
people of the
province...The
priests...The
Levites...The
singers...”*

[Nehemiah 7:5cf]

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Revd Roddy MacRae, 6 Frogston Grove, Edinburgh EH10
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uk.
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6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm. Treasurer: Mr A Cumming, 31 Doune
Park, Dalgety Bay, Dunfermline, KY11 9LX Tel 01383 825637.
www..welcome.to/edinburghapc

FORT WILLIAM

Services held jointly with the Free Church, High Street, 11am &
6.30pm. Contact: Donald MacNicol, 14 Altour Road, Spean
Bridge, Inverness-shire PH34 4EZ, Tel 01397 712405.

HARRIS

Contact: Norman MacDonald Tel 01859 530345. Seilabost
School - 12 noon & 6pm Tue 7.30pm. Treasurer: John
MacKinnon, 8 Stockinish, Isle of Harris HS3 3EN Tel 01859
530211.

INVERNESS

Revd Dr Malcolm MacInnes, Drumalin, 16 Drummond Road,
Inverness IV2 4NB, Tel 01463 223983 Fax 01463 226939
Email: mmacinnes@btinternet.com St Stephen's Parish Church,
Old Edinburgh Road - 12 noon & 6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm.
Treasurer: Mr Kenneth Macdonald, 'Arnish', 16 Drumdevan
Place, Inverness IV2 4DQ, Tel 01463 231364. www.
apcinverness.freeuk.com

KINLOCHBERVIE

Kinlochbervie: Conference Room, Harbour Offices, 11.30am;
Treasurer: W D MacLeod, 114 Inshagra, Rhiconich, by Lairg
IV27 4RH Tel 01971 521388.

LAIRG & ROGART

Revd Alexander Murray, APC Manse, Saval Road, Lairg, IV27
4EH, Tel 01549 402176 Email: amurray@lairg.freereserve.co.uk
Lairg Church - 11.30am, 1st, 3rd, 5th Weds 7pm; Rogart
Church - 6pm. 2nd, 4th Weds 7pm. Treasurer: Miss Annie J

Morrison, Woodlands, Lairg, IV27 4DB; Tel. 01549 402362.

LOCHCARRON

Revd J W Ross, Highfield, Croft Road, Lochcarron, IV54
8YA Tel 01520 722680 Lochcarron Village Hall - 11am &
6pm, Wed 7pm; Kishorn Meeting House 3pm on 2nd Lord's
Day of month.
Treasurer: Mrs Alison Stewart, 13 Kirkton Gardens,
Lochcarron IV54 8UQ, Tel 01520 722239.

LOCHINVER & STOER & DRUMBEG

Revd David Parker, Free Church Manse, Inver Terrace,
Lochinver IV27 4LH, Tel 01571 844685, Free Church Stoer -
11am; APC Church, Drumbeg - 12.30pm; Free Church
Lochinver - 6pm. Treasurer: Mrs E. MacKenzie, Church
Road, Stoer, Sutherland, IV27 4SE, Tel 01571 855279.

OBAN

Revd Archibald McPhail, Fernhill, Polvinister Road, Oban
PA34 5TN, Tel 01631 567076 Email: amcphail@quista.net
Campbell Street Church - 11am & 6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm
Treasurer: N Matheson, Carnish, Glenmore Road, Oban
PA34, Tel 01631 566259 and D Morrison, Glenstruan, Old
Shore Road, Connel, PA37, Tel 01631 710226.

PLOCKTON & KYLE

Mr J van Woerden, 8 Bank Street, Plockton IV52 8TP, Tel
01599 544272
Email: jan@vanwoerden.freereserve.co.uk Plockton 3pm.

POOLEWE

Services held jointly with Poolewe and Aultbea Free
Church - Poolewe 10.45am, Inverasdale 4.30pm, Aultbea
6.30pm. On 4th Lord's Day of month - Poolewe 10.45am
and 5.00pm with APC pulpit supply. Treasurer/Contact: K
MacLean, Dunedin, 42 Strath, Gairloch IV21 2DB, Tel 01445
712050.
Email: kendunedin@aol.com

SKYE

Revd Angus Cattanach, APC Manse, 20 Glamaig Place,
Portree IV51 9PJ, Tel 01478 613258 Portree APC Church,
Staffin Road - 12 noon & 6.30pm, Thu 7.30pm; C of S,
Dunvegan - 12.15 & 5pm. Contact: Norman MacKay Royal
Bank House, Portree IV51 9BX, Tel 01478 612822.

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Email: g.i.macaskill@btinternet.com
72 Keith Street - 11am & 6.30pm, Thu 7.30pm.
Treasurer: Mr W K Macleod, 3 Oliver's Brae, Stornoway
HS1 2SS, Tel 01851 703796. www.treetapesministry.org

TAIN & FEARN

Revd John Ross, APC Manse, 2 Cameron Gardens, Tain
IV19 1NT, Tel 01862 892199, email: revjr@talk21.com
Tain Church, Upper King Street - 11.30am & 6.30pm; Hilton
Church 11.30am and 5pm, Wed 7.30pm. Treasurer:
Roderick Mackenzie, Geanies House, Fearn, by Tain IV20

EDITORIAL

Spirituality

ON THURSDAY 29th November George Harrison of 'The Beatles' fame, died. He was a very spiritual person. The press recorded the following about him, 'He died as he lived, conscious of God, fearless of death, at peace'. 'Everything else can wait, but the search for God cannot wait'. 'The purpose of life is "Why am I here? Where am I going?"' His former manager said 'George found it' (the meaning of life) 'in his Hare Krishna's beliefs'. George Harrison was very spiritual.

Many people are inclined to think that if a person is spiritual then they are 'good' and on their way to heaven. But there are evil spiritualities. In fact the Christian warfare is not against people but *"against principalities and powers against spiritual hosts of wickedness"* [Eph 6:12]. It is because of the reality of evil spiritual forces, that Paul goes on to instruct us how to defend and attack these forces with spiritual weapons.

Because a person believes in God, that does not necessary make him a Christian. Neither does the fact that he prays. Few people actually disbelieve in God. Few people never pray. The question is what kind of God do they believe in? What kind of God do they pray to? Many people today have 'their own view' of what God is like. They make God in their image. The Psalmist met people who thought God had the same values, ideals and views as themselves *"You thought that I was altogether like yourself"* [Psa 50: 21].

Nor in fact, is a person necessary a Christian because he holds to principles that accord with the Bible. Biblical principles are exceedingly wise, logical and workable. Family, business and social relationships benefit from the wise counsel in the Scriptures. It is no wonder that people still hold to much of the Bible's teaching because they have stood the test of time and have been tried by a wide range of cultures over a long period of time and proved successful.

It is indeed encouraging that many are now turning away from the materialism and sexual pleasures which are not satisfying the basic needs of mankind. It is good that people are turning to spiritual things, but it must be true spirituality. False spirituality abounds. Satan knows it is just a matter of time before humankind will turn from the unsatisfying pleasures of secular ideology. So what is true spirituality? What is Christian spirituality?

A Christian is a person who believes what Christ believed. A



George Harrison with Dr Deepak Chopra a specialist in healing for mind and body

Christian believes what Christ taught. *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My Words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man will also be ashamed"* [Mark 8:38]. The Christian's spirituality is defined by the person of Jesus Christ and the words of Jesus Christ. He accepts the life and teaching of Jesus. He subjects his whole understanding of reality by what Scripture says.

A Christian believes in the reality of **sin** as defined by God in Scripture. It is an evil that deserves punishment from God and must be forgiven if eternal life is to be enjoyed after death. It is not what we think of sin, nor what the government think sin is,

The SPIRIT ENLIGHTENING

"By nature fallen man is in a state of darkness with respect unto God. Be he ever so wise, learned, and skillful in natural things, unto spiritual things he is blind. Not until we are renewed in the spirit of our minds by the Holy Spirit can we see things in God's light. But this is something which the world cannot endure to hear of, and when it is insisted upon, they will hotly deny the same. So did the Pharisees of Christ's day angrily ask, with pride and scorn, *"Are we blind also?"* [John 9:41], to which our Lord replied by affirming that their presumption of spiritual light and knowledge only aggravated their sin and condemnation [v41]; unhesitatingly, He told the blind leaders of religion, that notwithstanding all their boasting, they had *"never heard the Father's voice at any time"* [John 5:37].

"No matter how well we be acquainted with the letter of Scripture, no matter how sound and faithful be the preaching we sit under and the books we read, until the soul be

Continued on foot of next page

**THREE
REASONS TO
FORGIVE**

Christians, having received forgiveness themselves, should have less difficulty forgiving people than anyone else. Jesus' reminds us of our need of forgiveness and adds "*as we forgive our debtors*" [Mat 6:12]

Philip Yancey in his book 'What's So Amazing About Grace', gives three other reasons apart from the command of Jesus why we ought to forgive people.

The first is: "Forgiveness alone can halt the cycle of blame and pain, breaking the chain of ungrace".

The second is: "Forgiveness... can loosen the stranglehold of guilt in the perpetrator".

The third is: "Forgiveness... allows the possibility of transformation in the guilty party".

If Jesus said to His murderers "*Father forgive*

The Wonderful Grace of Forgiveness

LAST AUGUST the newspapers carried an article about two children playing near a railway line. They were being cared for by a child-minder. A train came by and killed the two children. It was a horrific accident. The mother, however, just could not forgive the child-minder and went on record as saying she would never forgive the child-minder. She was bitter and full of anger. We know nothing of the religion of the mother.

In the August issue of 'Evangelicals Now', an account is given of the sudden murder of a missionary in China who had six children. The Christian attitude of his wife to the horrific death of her husband is in stark contrast to the attitude of the mother of the railway children.

On 3rd February last, Bruce Morrison, a short-term teacher of English at the Hubei Institute of Technology in Wuchang, China, was about to start teaching, when a madman burst into the room. He stabbed Bruce, who was rushed to hospital where he died.

On her way to the hospital, Bruce's wife Valori, told her six children what had happened, and they resolved to forgive whoever had done this. On arrival at the hospital, they were told that Bruce had died.

Valori immediately turned to her six daughters, and quietly said, 'Your father has gone to be with Jesus. He is asleep in Jesus' arms.' She turned to the medical worker and said 'Please contact the killer and tell him that the family has forgiven him and will be praying for him. Valori then comforted the many students who had come to the hospital and had witnessed the killing. She reminded them of Christ's words that if a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it brings forth fruit.

Bruce was admired by all his students and his Christian witness made a great impression on all who knew him. On his gravestone is an inscription which reads "*Your gentleness has made me great*" [2 Sam 22:36].

What a beautiful thing forgiveness is. Here is an example of the

Continued from page 3

but what God says it is. The prophet said "*your sins have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you*" [Isa 59:2]. Solomon said "*sin is a reproach to any people*" [14:34]. Paul said "*the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*" [Rom 6:23]. Sin is the cause of all the misery in the world.

The Christian believes that sin can only be forgiven through Jesus Christ – there is no other way to be forgiven. "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*" [Acts 4:12].

True spirituality focuses on Jesus Christ as the saviour of His people.

He came into the world to save them and to deal with their sin. His very name means "*He will save His people from their sins*" [Mat 1:21]. After healing people He would say to them "*Go and sin no more*" [John 5:14, John 8:11]. Sin was the big problem that had to be dealt with. True spirituality takes cognisance of the significance of sin. Some religions refer to ignorance as mankind's problem, but the Bible tells us it is sin.

Central to Christianity is the Cross of Jesus. The traumatic events of Calvary are fundamental to the salvation of the Christian. A spirituality without the significance of the Cross is not Christianity. Jesus came, not so much to preach the gospel but to live and die so that there would be a gospel to preach. The Cross brings peace and satisfaction to the guilty sinner. The Cross was the means whereby all our sin was removed.

The Unreported Genocide

The Persecution of Christians in Indonesia

AT LEAST 10,000 CHRISTIANS have been murdered by Islamic fundamentalists in the Maluku region of Indonesia because of their faith. One Christian was asked ‘Are you a follower of Christ?’ As they crucified him they said ‘Then you will also follow him to his death!’ and left him to die. A further 8,000 Christians have been forced to convert to Islam and undergo circumcision.

Indonesia is made up of various islands and last year the island of Ambon was ‘cleansed’ of all Christians, their homes and churches being burned and destroyed. Those who could not flee were made to convert to Islam. Water was thrown over them to ‘wash away the dogs, pigs and Christian demons’ and were forcibly circumcised. Those who resisted were killed. One young woman said ‘they can circumcise my body but they can never circumcise my soul’.

This is the unreported genocide that is going on in the far east. All the above is definitely happening although there is little press reporting of it.

Nearly half a million Christians

international help to prevent another bloodbath.

Here is a song written by one of the Christian refugees from the Maluku:

In this world
Your people suffer
For Christ we continue to stand
And pray
Lord Jesus help...
Many have become
The victims of the conflict
Let there be no more killings
Give us Your peace, peace,

peace

Bring peace to Maluku

Refrain:

Hide us
From the cruelty of the world
Teach us Your people
To continue to forgive one

another

Lord (Lord)
Reveal (Reveal)
Your power (Your power)
Yes Lord

The Barnabas Fund (Serving the Suffering Church in the Muslim World)

INDONESIA CRISIS

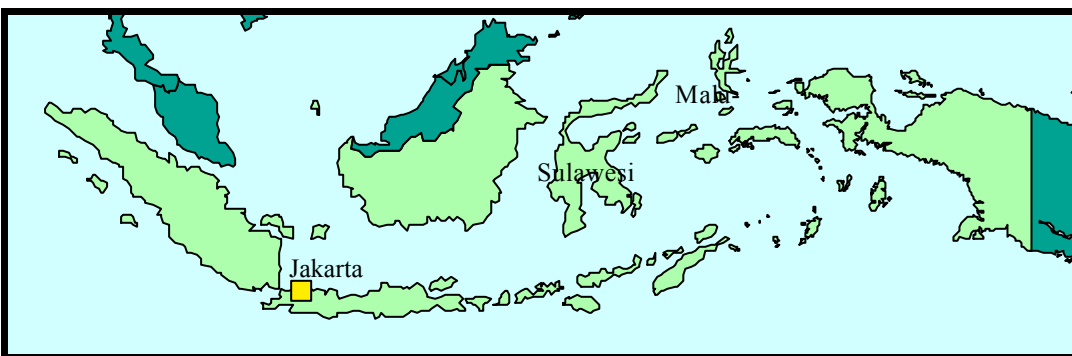
ACTION IS NEEDED URGENTLY

First of all we must **pray** – daily for our brethren in Indonesia.

Then we must **write to newspapers** stating our concern about the religious cleansing spreading throughout Indonesia and ask them why it has been given so little coverage.

Sign the Barnabas Fund’s ‘End the Silence’ petition (forms from the Barnabas Fund website) to the United Nations Human Rights Commission to ask that the Muslim nations give their Christian minorities the same rights as those enjoyed by Muslims in the West.

Write to your MP or to BBC Information PO Box 1922 Glasgow G2 3WT telling them you are extremely concerned about religious cleansing spreading



are still living in appalling conditions as refugees. While the government is pressuring them to return to their villages, the Islamic group Laskar Jihad has declared that Christians cannot come back to ‘cleansed’ areas unless they convert to Islam. The concern is that the crisis is spreading to the Sulawesi province.

Western Christians must act quickly to stop the slaughter in Sulawesi. The Church in Indonesia are calling for

have published literature to tell us of the horrific sufferings of Christians under Islamic authorities. Please read the side panel on this page, and take the necessary action.

The Barnabas Fund are asking us to do all we can to persuade the British Government to lobby the Indonesia authorities to bring to an end the anti-Christian violence.

Contact:

The Barnabas Fund, The Old Rectory, River Street, Pewsey,

Prepare Them for the Future

GODLINESS and DISCIPLINE

“There is no such things as instant godliness. Today there is instant pudding, instant coffee...instant everything. And counselees want instant godliness as well...The trouble is godliness does not come that way.

“The Bible is very plain about how godliness does come. Paul wrote about godliness to Timothy *‘Timothy, you must discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness’* [1 Tim 4:7]. Discipline is the secret of godliness.

“The word discipline has disappeared from minds, mouths, and pulpits in our culture. Modern American society hardly knows what discipline means.

Yet apart from discipline, there is no other way to attain godliness; discipline is God’s path to godliness”.

[Jay Adams in The Christian Counselor’s Manual]

PARENTING COURSES

For helpful resources on parenting contact

WE READ IN Scripture *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it”* [Pro 22:6]. An alternative rendering for the Hebrew is “Train up a child according to **his way** and even when he is old he will not depart from it”. If this alternative rendering is correct then it teaches that if a child is allowed to go his own way when young, then there is little hope of changing him afterwards!

The reality of this can be seen in the current change of attitudes to child-rearing and to assessing the resultant adult problems.

We used to be able to cope and put up with hardships. We used to be able to overcome difficulties. But now, very often, if trouble arises it often means stress and depression, or far worse, the breaking of vows, the terminating of relationships, and renegeing on commitments.

In the past, when wronged, people did not always resort to litigation and libel. They could take a reverse and endure hardship without looking for someone to blame – and pick up the bill. People used to have the courage of their convictions and be willing to suffer and to stand for what they believed to be right.

Why are more and more people today cracking up under pressures previously considered to go with the job?

We believe one of the factors is the way we now bring up children. We need to bring children up in God’s way (not their own way).

We need to give them responsibility and make them accountable. Too many parents fail to warn their children, instruct them, and train them. Too many of the threats made are never carried out. There is little consistency in discipline. Many just allow children to do their own thing. There is no punishment for disobedience. The child only needs to persist and it gets its own way.

Parents must tell their children that life is difficult. Life is full of hardships and inconveniences. Children need to be instructed and trained for the rigours of life. Parents must give their children responsibilities in the home, else they will never be able to carry responsibilities later on in life. Children need preparation for the years ahead.

If children are given everything they want in the home, once they go out into the cold hard world and discover that things are not given to them without hard work, they crack up and end up with psychological difficulties. Hence counsellors' waiting rooms are packed.

Most importantly, children are no longer taught the Bible, the oldest, best proven counsellor in the world. Some years ago, the president of Yale

University said that knowledge of the Bible was more valuable than a university degree. The basic principles of life, the essential keys to prosperity, and the elementary rules for progress are all contained in the Bible.

Much of the difficulties of the young today, arises from the fact that children are no longer being brought up by their parents. The State now wrongly assumes this role and provides nurseries so that parents can carry on with their careers. The Bible puts the onus of child-rearing fairly and squarely onto parents. The following notice was found in a Police Station - not in a church:

How to Make Your Child a Delinquent:

- Give him everything he wants.
- Laugh at his bad habits.
- Never give him spiritual training.
- Pick up everything he leaves around.
- Give him as much pocket money as he wants – why should he be denied anything he wants.
- Satisfy every wish - otherwise he will be frustrated which is harmful.
- Take his side against all neighbours and teachers who criticise him.
- Prepare for a life of GRIEF - you are



Congregational News

DUNDEE

The Saturday Lunches have started again and we were very encouraged with the first Saturday. A young man came in and we chatted as he was having his soup. He was a student from Dundee and was interested in our conversation with Mr Quinn who was dining at the same table. He said he had a faith of some kind but it wasn't 'religious'! Reference was made to the Muslims faith and we had opportunity to tell him of our faith. Mr Quinn mentioned how unlike Christ, Osama bin Laden was, as he made his young soldiers die for his cause, whereas Christ offered up himself. If Osama was a real leader he should offer himself up as Christ did!

Our church is now open on a Tuesday lunch time for prayer. Christian leaders in the city meet each Tuesday until Christmas to pray – there is tea/coffee, but no food – the emphasis is on prayer!

The crisis help service Alternatives still use one of our rooms for counselling girls in trauma over their pregnancy. There is an increase in requests for post-abortion counselling. Many girls are not told before undergoing abortion of the trauma they may experience afterwards.

David Dow (our full time worker) has been encouraged with his meeting in the schools. Over 40 came to the last lunch time meeting, doubling up on the previous week. This is encouraging especially as no Christian witness was able to penetrate into this school.

Plans are afoot for another mission around the church during the month of December. We also hope to have a communion on the last Sunday of the year – 30th December DV.

Please note that our midweek meeting night is back to Thursday and the time is 7pm (not 7.30pm as before). This is a more suitable time for those who can manage to come along. Please remember to check our website for all up-to-date events and times at www.apcdundee.org.uk

POOLEWE

For the past three months the Poolewe APC congregation has had the use of the Poolewe Free Church building for public worship. A new arrangement is now in place. Following agreement with both Presbyteries, the congregation now worships jointly with the Poolewe and Aultbea Free Church, with services as follows - Poolewe 10.45am, Inverasdale 4.30pm, Aultbea 6.30pm. On the fourth Lord's Day of each month there will be two services in Poolewe - at 10.45am and 5.00pm - with APC pulpit supply.

The pastor of the Free Church congregation is Rev Dr John R McIntosh. May this new arrangement be to the glory of God and to the advancement of His Cause and Kingdom.

STORNOWAY

The congregation enjoyed a communion on the 25 November along with a Guest service in the evening when we were encouraged by the attendance of some new faces. One of them had never been inside a church in her life.

A Youth Fellowship has begun once a month for a trial period, and it is hoped this may develop over the winter.

A Parenting Course has been running since November when mothers in the congregation gather in the manse to watch one of the videos produced by Care for the Family. A Thanksgiving Day was held on the last Thursday of November as is the custom throughout the island in Lewis.

OBAN

We are pleased to report that our pastor Revd Archie McPhail is improving and is now taking all three meetings.

A most enjoyable communion was held in November when the Revd

FREE CHURCH

TEENS AND TWENTIES FELLOWSHIP WEEKEND

Speaker:

IAIN MACASKILL

Subject:

REVIVAL

**15th, 16th, 17th
FEBRUARY 2002**

Dulnain Bridge

COSTS:

£39 EMPLOYED

All Others £30

Booking Fee £10

BOOK EARLY
TO AVOID
DISAPPOINTMENT

Contact:

KATE GRAHAM and
FIONA WALKER

01224 641515

GRAHAM MACLEOD

01349 861187

So come along to this amazing weekend. Aviemore is just five miles away and Inverness a half hour drive. Meet new friends, play pool, play table tennis or just laze by the open log fire.

**C S LEWIS on
JESUS**

Observed C S Lewis, the brilliant and once skeptical Cambridge University professor who was eventually won over by evidence for Jesus,

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him. ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say.

“A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic...or else He would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.

“You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall down at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His

The Unjust Trial – ‘The Tables Turned!’

By Revd Alexander Murray, Lairg

Read Luke chap. 22 verses 66-71

SOME JEWS ATTEMPT to excuse themselves from complicity in the condemnation of the death of Jesus and have suggested that their rulers tried to save him from the Romans. Our present Scripture, along with the other three gospels, tells a different story. It was, Pilate, in fact, who attempted, once and again, to free the prisoner at his Bar; and, to no avail, in the presence of unrelenting pressure to destroy Him from the side of the chief priests.

Innocence in the hands of envy

The “*contradiction of sinners against himself*” was an enduring feature of the experience of Jesus whilst here on earth. His family had to flee to Egypt to escape the fury of Herod against the young child and, subsequently, they had to turn aside to dwell in Nazareth.

From the hour of the Lord’s first official appearance at the feast of the Lord in Jerusalem the rulers had already decided that he must die. It was hostility that increased to become truly intense by the time of the Passover three years later. The treachery of Judas Iscariot gave opportunity to effect their wish. Jesus is, therefore, apprehended, brought before Annas; and, at the break of the day, the whole Jewish Council convene under Caiphas.

It is this extreme hostility that Jesus was now to suffer. He complains, - “*if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go*”. Already they had failed

to answer his question with regard to the baptism of John [20:3-8] and now, in the course of trial before a duly constituted Court of Law, the issue was one of basic justice that the prisoner at the Bar be given an answer. In its absence the trial was a formality and a farce with the outcome already decided!

Equally revealing is the complaint – “*If I tell you, ye will not believe*”. Nothing could be more frustrating for the defending party than to realise that whatever he would say would make no difference as the minds of the judges were closed. Such is the prejudice of unbelief and, even more, the blind prejudice that bitter hatred had engendered in the hearts of these rulers. The omens were ominous!

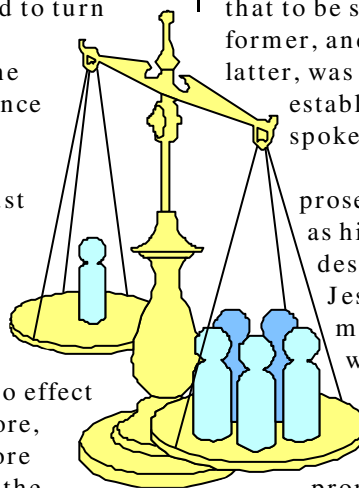
A need for self-accusation

The semblance of a just trial before their Council was clearly demanded. It was also needful in that, as a subject nation seeking the death of the prisoner before them, they present a credible case to the Roman Governor. Pride in respect of their ecclesiastical law again required that to be so. Treason with regard to the former, and blasphemy in respect of the latter, was what needed to be established. False witnesses had spoken but to no avail.

The case for the prosecution was in crisis! Caiphas, as high priest, thus invokes the desperate procedure of requiring Jesus, under the oath of the most high God, to answer as to whether or not he was the Christ. The rulers had understood that the Prophet of Galilee had aspired to the promise of God to Abraham in

this regard being fulfilled in himself. It was what the common people had spoken in the presence of his mighty works, -- “*Is not this the Christ?*”

At this juncture the observation of Jesus (already noticed) comes to have



such relevancy. They were saying, “tell us”, and the Lord knew that if he would tell them they would not believe him nor let him go. The rulers of Israel would not believe because they had already, and to so full an extent, made up their minds that this was **not** so. No prophet was to arise from Galilee and, in any case, there was the urgent need to rid themselves of a most troublesome person who was usurping their place with the people and exposing the hypocrisy of their behaviour. The High Priest’s enquiry was, therefore, no search for information but an undisguised stratagem to obtain a basis of accusation to condemn.

If there were any person that morning in the house of the high priest that knew what was transpiring in the minds of these rulers it was Jesus. The question put had one purpose and, if the hoped for response be given, the sentence to death would follow. What others had failed to do was now in the power of Jesus himself to accomplish at one stroke.

His guilt in terms of the caricature of a trial that morning in Jerusalem would be fully established and he would be delivered to the Romans to be crucified. He must needs, therefore, be his own accuser! Here was that further step, in the self-humiliation of the Lord of glory, which Jesus now takes, alike with determination as with measured dignity.

The accused, is in fact, judge!

The trial does not, however, take end at that point; and, in parallel, neither does the noble confession of Jesus [cf. 1 Tim 6:13]. What the Lord says in answer to the “leading” question, -- “*Art thou the Christ?*” is a most definitive affirmative but does not stop there. He is the Son of Man who is to sit at the right hand of the power of God.

This was, of course, reference made to the prophecy of [Dan. 7:13,14], and so what Jesus is affirming to these elders of Israel was that He, the prisoner at their bar, is that Person, anointed by God and sent into the world to redeem the Israel of God in all generations. He is proceeding to receive the universal dominion which by right pertains to this “*Son of Man*”, and so to sit on His throne at God’s right hand. It remains for Him

to come in the clouds of heaven to judge all the nations. This was the truth of the situation not to be concealed; and come out it did, under the oath of the Almighty, in the presence of these arrogant and murderous rulers of the people!

Yet another vital item of information emerges. It is plain that the Jewish rulers understood Daniel’s words as having reference to a Divine Person; so, on hearing the reply of Jesus, they respond with the further question, -- “*Art thou the Son of God?*” From the side of the prosecution this suited very well their case in that they might now accuse Galilee’s prophet of “blasphemy”. And Jesus, so aware of all the implications of this further confession, declares the truth of the matter, -- “*Ye say that I am.*” How truly overwhelming in its glory and wonder the truth that here unfolds from the lips of Jesus - as He, God’s very Son walks on earth in such

A BETTER ‘RAILTRACK’

Oh! What a deal we hear and read
About railways and railway speed;
Of rail which are or may be made,
And selling shares is quite a trade.

Allow me as an old divine
To point you to another line,
Which does from earth to heaven
extend,
Where real pleasures never end.

Infinite wisdom sketched the plan,
To save apostate ruined man;
And Jesus Christ, Jehovah’s Son,
The mighty work Him self has done.

Of truth divine the rails are made,
And on the rock of ages laid;
The rails are fixed in chairs of love;
Firm on the throne of God above.

At Calvary’s Cross it does commence,
And runs through all the Word from
thence,
Then crosses Jordan’s swelling flood,
Before the royal throne of God.

Our grand first-class is used for all;
For Jew or Gentile great or small;
There’s room for all the world inside;
And kings and beggars here do ride.

MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE for JESUS

World-class scholar Bruce Metzger said that compared with other ancient documents, there is an unprecedented number of New Testament manuscripts and that they can be dated extremely close to the original writings. The modern New Testament is 99.5 per cent free of textual discrepancies, with no major Christian doctrines in doubt. The criteria used by the early church to determine which books should be considered authoritative have ensured that we possess the best possible records about Jesus.

“We have better historical documentation for Jesus than for the founder of any other ancient religion.” said Edwin Yamauchi. Sources from outside the Bible corroborate that many people believed Jesus performed healings and was the Messiah, that he was crucified, and that despite his shameful death, his followers, who believed he was still alive, worshipped him as God. One expert documented thirty-nine an-

JESUS

“Of All the images he could have chosen for himself, Jesus settled on that of the groom whose radiance cheers up the entire wedding party...

“He had nearly inexhaustible patience with individuals but no patience at all with institutions and injustice...

“Surely his style had little in common with that of modern day evangelists, with their tents and stadia, their advance teams and billboards and direct-mail campaigns, their electronically enhanced presentations. His little band of followers, possessing no permanent base of operations, wandered from town to town without much discernible strategy...

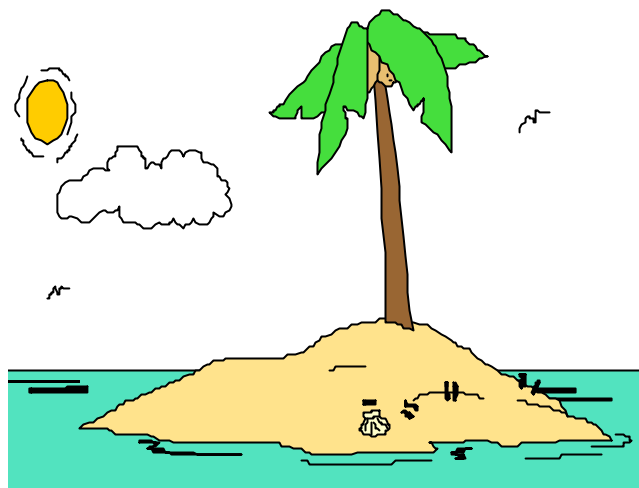
“Were they living in modern times, with the crack-down on homelessness, Jesus and his disciples would likely be harassed by police and forced to move on”.

[Philip Yancey in The Jesus I never Knew']

Philip Yancey is

Desert Island Books

with **Catherine MacInnes**



HELLO CATHERINE, I'm sure there are days when you would quite fancy a trip to a desert island. Well, I'd like you to imagine that you are going to be given that opportunity and that it will be a few days before you are rescued during which time you can catch up with some reading. You are allowed the Bible, The Pilgrim's Progress - three other books and a luxury. First of all would you describe yourself as an avid reader? Did you enjoy reading books as a child?

No not an avid reader but a constant reader. I usually have at least one book or two which I daily dip into. I did not enjoy books as a child, the books I read were usually for school and I would



Mrs Catherine MacInnes

much rather have been playing outside.

That's probably true for a lot of children. Right now you are involved

with the Inverness Crisis Pregnancy Centre (CPC)... how has this work changed or challenged you? Do you get opportunities to share God's word with the people you meet?

The work of the CPC has certainly been challenging, especially in my own faith and love for Christ. It has made me aware of my own weaknesses and my total dependence on God. It is so easy to say we have biblical principles but it is quite another thing to put them into practice. Going into schools and speaking to teenagers has also made me realise how biblical morality is no longer considered relevant by many of our teachers and young people. Yes I have had many opportunities to share the gospel with girls and that is a wonderful privilege.

Can you tell us about a book you have read recently that has challenged you spiritually?

Yes two - The Prayer of Jabez by Bruce Wilkinson reading this book convinced me more than ever of the power of prayer and it made me pick up for a second time Jessie MacFarlane's book A Housewife's Adventure with God.

Remember that you are allowed to take the Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress with you onto the island - three other books and your luxury. What will these be?

The Mystery of The Holy Spirit by R. C. Sproul, What's So Amazing About Grace by Philip Yancey and any one of

Max Lucado's books. The luxury I would take with me would be a radio.

If you were to pick a sentence or quote from any book or piece of poetry to stick on the wall of your mud hut on this fictional desert island what quote would that be?

"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD."

You have two grandchildren - Rohan and Blythe. As a grandmother do you enjoy sharing books with your grandchildren? What are your favourites?

Yes. I love reading children's bible story books to them - ones with lots of illustrations and pictures. I believe it is very important to get children interested in bible stories from as young an age as possible.

Once you are on the island you are cut off from society but you are allowed to send one book to a non Christian friend back home. What book would you pick and why?

'Right with God' by John Blanchard because we have given it in the past to people and it has been blessed to them.

Out of all the books you will have read in your life, God's Word, the Bible will have had the most profound effect on you. In what ways has God's book the Bible shaped you as a person since you became a Christian?

God's word has transformed my thinking and directed me into areas I never thought I would ever be involved in for example the verses *"If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength! Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering towards slaughter. If you say 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not he*

FIRST THINGS FIRST

We live in a world that increasingly thinks it can do without God's laws. The Fourth Commandment is about the Lord's Day – our Sunday – a special day given by God.

The videotape programme 'First Things First' produced by the Lord's Day Observance Society addresses the relevance of the Lord's Day and its benefits, through the eyes of people of all ages and different walks of life.

This will prove to be a valuable resource for those in pastoral oversight who wish to present the principles of the Lord and His day in a clear, up to date and relevant fashion.

Price £7.99

For further information or to purchase the VHS videotape contact: Iain A Macdonald, 3 Wimberley Way,



Notice To Congregations

Congregations are encouraged to send reports in regularly of what is happening in their communities. The editor will be pleased to receive information any-time during the month. It is up to each congregation to send in their own report without the editor reminding them each month.

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*January/February
March*

All the views expressed in this magazine are not necessary those of the editor or the denomination. The articles are meant to stimulate thought and provoke a serious study of Holy Scripture. All articles not attributed to an author are by the editor.

The typeface is 10pt 'Georgia' using Microsoft Publisher 98.

The style for Scripture quotations is italic within double inverted commas, and then square brackets for the Scripture reference, chapter and verse separated by a colon.

Articles are best sent by email. Text may also be sent on disc in Microsoft Word. Clearly printed well-spaced typing and artwork in one column is also acceptable.

Photographs can be sent by post or by email or on disc – in JPEG format

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Dundee, DD4 7SB
Tel 01382 451798*

A Morning Prayer

Another day I'm spared to see
And I would ever conscious be,
Of how I need Thy strength and power
To keep me in the trying hour.

I know not what this day will hold
As moments pass and scenes unfold,
But keep me in my conscience clear,
To grieve Thee may it be my fear.

In all my duties may I seek
To know Thy strength for I am weak;
With all I do; oh may I find
That Thou art gracious, good and kind.

If trials sore become my lot
May I trust Thee, no matter what
Should me befall, since all, I know,
Is for the best Thou wouldst me show.

So may I this day joyful be
And know adventure here with Thee,
In many ways Thy kindness prove
And in my heart enjoy Thy love.

Then all my days will be blest days
And to Thy Name I will give praise,

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DAY of PRAYER

The Presbytery have appointed

Wednesday 12th December

as a day of prayer for the nation. There is plenty to pray about. Each congregation can make its own arrangements. We trust that much prayer will be offered up for our land especially for a spirit of repentance and for the Lord to send lasting revival.

NEXT PRESBYTERY

will be held on

TUESDAY 26th FEBRUARY

at 2pm

in St Stephen's Church, Inverness

Subscriptions and Renewals for APC News

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