

Free Church

Witness



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Communions

September:- 1st, Dumfries, Portree, Metropolitan Washington (Cumberland)

2nd, North Uist & Grimsay

3rd, Scalpay Harris

4th, Glasgow Thornwood, Inverness Greyfriars, Lochalsh & Glenshiel (Ardelve)

October:- 1st, Ayr, Snizort,

2nd, Cross, Metropolitan Washington (Bethesda), Rogart and Eddrachillis (Scourie)



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Do you want to be an elder? Are you an elder? Remember, one of the requirements is that you must be 'given to hospitality' (1Tim.3:2). A woman was not accepted into the special order of widows unless she was 'well reported of for good works' and that included having 'lodged strangers' (1Tim.5:10). It is possible to emphasise justification by faith in such a way as to neglect good works. The true faith that justifies always finds its expression in good works and loves to keep God's commandments. On the Judgment Day the Judge will say to some, 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in' (Mt.25:35). To others Jesus will say: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took me not in' (vv41-43).

Biblical emphasis

Abraham is given the name, 'the Father of the Faithful'. Reading his story it immediately becomes clear that his house (or tent) was an open one. He sees three men, runs to meet them, pleads with them to stop at his house. He offers to provide them with water to wash their feet and they can rest under the shade of his tree. 'And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on.' Nothing was spared, fine flour was used to bake cakes, a calf tender and good was killed and cooked and presented with butter and milk (Gen.18:2-8). Lot coveted the rich lands of Sodom yet showed hospitality to the men who came to Sodom and would not let them stay all night in the street. The writer to the Hebrews commands us not to be 'forgetful to entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares' (Heb.13:2). Who knows what wonderful men or women of God might come into our home if our home is open to entertain! Who knows what blessing guests might be to us!

Saved by hospitality

Joshua sent men to search the land in preparation for invasion (Josh.2:1). Rahab gave hospitality to the spies and when the men of Jericho wished to arrest them protected them. It proved the salvation of herself and her household. 'By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace' (Heb.11:31).

Evidence of Grace

Paul's first convert in Europe was a woman called Lydia. He had spoken to a few women who used to gather for prayers at a river outside Philippi every Sabbath. Scripture records that the Lord opened Lydia's heart so 'that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul' (Acts 16:14). It was not a dramatic conversion, in the sense that there was no vision, miracle, earthquake or voice from heaven, but the change was obvious. Following her baptism, 'she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us' (v15). Her hospitality was an evidence of grace. It showed that God was at work in her life changing her. The opening of her heart led to the opening of her home. Has grace done this in your life?

Wrong approach

A woman named Martha received Jesus into her home. She had a sister called Mary. Both women had a great love for the Lord but it showed itself in different ways. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened

to his teaching. Martha went to great bother trying to provide a wonderful meal for Jesus and His companions. Was there not some pride and showing off mixed with her love? Eventually the stress became too much for Martha. She complained, 'Lord dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me' (Lk.10:40). Jesus' answer is most helpful, 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her' (vv41-42). Hospitality is often a burden because people try too hard to impress. Pride makes us want to put on a good show. We feel we must provide just as good meals as others if not better. However the essence of hospitality is providing what is vital and concentrating as Mary did upon Christian fellowship and the good we can get for our souls.

Spongers

Every good thing can be misused. Some people take advantage and are spongers. Though relatively well-off they prefer to have their holidays at the expense of others. They talk about the blessing of Christian fellowship but it is all one way. They seldom entertain others. Little sensitivity is shown for the stress which can be caused to a family or couple by someone living for a prolonged period in their home. It is hard work providing meals and changing beds

and keeping a house clean. Also it is tiring for some to be talking and listening to a stranger. It is wonderful to help those who truly need us, and even

" Invite those who cannot invite you, and they will be thankful and bless you "

with spongers when we do it unto the Lord we will receive a reward from him. Paul could have taken advantage of people for the labourer is worthy of his hire but he says: 'Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us' (2Thess.3:8-9).

Who should you invite?

The teaching of Jesus is often the opposite of what we would do naturally. When you make a big meal He says: 'Call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' (Lk.14:12-14). Invite those who cannot invite you, and they will be thankful and bless you. Surprisingly, Jesus tells us that the blessings of people we help is something of great value. I have heard folk speak disparagingly about a pocket full of thank yous. Remember too, if you do not have your reward in this life then you will get your reward at the Day of Judgment. Nothing done for the Lord is a waste of time. Eternal rewards are better than temporal ones. Further it is not the lavishness of the feast that matters but rather the spirit in which it is done. Even a cup of cold water given for Christ's sake is valued by heaven.

Open your home

Let us have open homes. Be friendly and welcoming to those who come to our churches. Look for opportunities to show hospitality to our fellow-Christians. Many are lonely. One of the most effective methods of evangelism in a selfish age like our own is through inviting people to our homes, showing love and kindness to them and so introducing them to our Saviour.

HOME MISSION WORK



Mr Donald John Morrison

The following is the substance of the address given by Mr Donald John Morrison at the Assembly May 2006

A famous evangelist of a bygone era once said: 'What a marvel that the Devil does not like field preaching (open-air)! Neither do I. I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, a handsome pulpit. But where is my zeal if I do not trample all these underfoot in order to save one more soul?' I believe, passionately, that we too must trample all the comforts we enjoy underfoot if we are to make the gospel known to the innumerable multitudes that are largely un-churched and un-reached throughout Scotland in 2006. Is this not the spirit of the Great Evangelist to the lost, Jesus Christ, when He said 'go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city...go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled'. If souls are ever to be won for Christ, the great and searching question for us all is this: How are we to go about doing what the Lord has asked us and called us to do? I think one word alone answers that question: sacrifice! A sacrifice has to be made before it is too late.

Priorities

The old book tells us that 'if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost'. What a tragedy if it is said of our church that the Lord Jesus Christ has been our best kept secret and that we have hidden the gospel from those who are lost and on the road to hell. If the multitudes in our land are to hear the gospel and be saved, the time has surely come for us to make a sacrifice if Scotland is to be won for Christ in 2006. Surely this is what the great apostle Paul was saying when he expressed his heartfelt and burning desire to become 'a servant unto all... I am made all things to all men, so that I might by all means save some'. What an awakening call it should be for us all to think of what he did with the means that he had! Paul did so much with so little, whereas in 2006 as a church we, sadly, do so little with so much! Maybe I should just rephrase what 'we do' a little clearer. We do so little to spread the gospel and win the lost and we do so much with what's seen and regarded as the 'far more important things' in the church's life. These 'far more important things' are given priority number one and so much of our time and energy is so passionately devoted and enthusiastically dedicated to their cause at the expense of evangelism, gospel outreach and a vision to win the lost. I don't need to tell you that this 'expense' is a very costly one. 'Without a

vision the people perish'. It's easy, maybe, to make bold statements without backing them up. I want, however, to provide you with the evidence of what I've been saying, once I've given a brief overview of some of my work over the past year.

Work done

To the year ending 31st December approximately 33,000 gospel tracts were given out, along with 374 evangelistic booklets. Over the past two years, since my work began, a combined total of around 81,000 tracts have been circulated throughout Scotland, most of these in Inverness. In 2005 I was engaged in gospel outreach in eight different areas: North Uist, Beauly, Dumfries, Portree, Drumnadrochit, Galashiels, Glasgow and Inverness. A concentrated effort was made in the last of these two cities in December during the hype of Christmas activity. Throughout 2005 extensive door-to-door visitations were made in Inverness, along with city-centre tract distribution and various forms of evangelistic outreach. Thirteen open-air monthly meetings were held on the High Street in 2005. Many engaging conversations took place with people from all walks of life, including those from cult backgrounds such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. There is also an increasing Muslim population in the city, especially amongst the youth. They appear to be friendly enough and ready to listen to the difference between false teachings, like Islam, and true Christianity. Some asked for more informative booklets to read in their own time. Personally I got to know some of these people over the past two years. My hope is that my relationships with them will grow so that they might be led to hear the gospel for themselves. Tracts in other languages, along with the booklet Ultimate Questions, were also given out to people from other nationalities including: Arabic, Czech, Dutch, Farsi (Persian/Iranian) French, German, Kurdish (Sorani), Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovenian, Tagalog and lastly Polish which form the largest number of the immigrants in Inverness from Eastern Europe. My stock of gospel literature includes Ultimate Questions in 31 foreign languages and gospel tracts in 20 languages. Last August I also had the privilege to speak at tent meetings in Moldova during a week of special evangelistic services.

For me personally it continues to be a great privilege and joy to be able to give gospel literature to the many thousands of people

who come to Scotland every year. Who knows what the Lord will bless? 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good'. We rejoice that His Word never returns to Him void – it never has and it never will.

An incident over the last few days illustrates the power of God's Word. A young man from London, whom I met and spoke to in Covent Garden three years ago, telephoned me to let me know that he had recently been converted. I rejoiced further when he informed me that he was now sharing and spreading the gospel on the streets of that same city. Despite the many discouragements these greater encouragements give us reason to rejoice: 'in due season we shall reap, if we faint not'.

Sad Words

Those of you who know me, know that I'm not usually a person with a morbid disposition, nor go around with a sad countenance in my work as an Evangelist. That would never do. It is, however, with a very, very heavy and sad heart that I stand on the rostrum here this evening as I make the following claim, which I do with the utmost respect. The claim is this: As a church we have no vision. As one who travels extensively across the country in the work of evangelism, there's probably no-one in a better position to make that claim than the person who is standing here this evening. The evidence is two-fold. Throughout the year, at various administrative church meetings, there is always nearly perfect attendance. Everyone invited makes every effort to be present and there are few, if any, excuses made as people rush from different parts of Scotland and gather together to deal with the 'far more important things' which, sadly, have been given priority number one. I long for the day when that same concentrated effort, commitment and unselfish sacrifice is made in our communities to win the lost for Christ.

Further evidence comes through the eyes of a student. Our first year Seminary student, Kerey Thayananth from Sri Lanka, recently gave a word of testimony in one of our after-church fellowship meetings. He was bombarded with questions from the audience. Asked if he had any questions, he had one that silenced those present. Firstly, he said how he was deeply humbled by the things he had seen and heard since coming to Scotland ie the deep spirituality of Christians, their understanding and discernment of God's Word, theological resources, quantity and quality of good Christian books etc. There was, however, one thing he didn't see, and that surprised and saddened him. In broken English he said 'I not understand why your people not witness! Why Christians not tell sinners about Jesus? Why you not love unconverted people going to hell?' He felt that there could only be one answer to these questions. 'I think you not love Jesus deeply'. Indeed, this is a solemn and searching thought for us all to ponder over.

Let us arise and build

I believe that we all need something of the sacrificial zeal and vision that Nehemiah and his co-workers had as he laboured to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in the heat of the mid-day sun. He successfully completed 'a great work' because God was with him throughout the project from beginning to end. The Rev William Macleod, earlier this evening, also highlighted the importance of broadening our horizons if the gospel is to be made known to the masses still in spiritual darkness. My hope and sincere prayer is, when the Assembly doors are closed tomorrow, that Thursday 25th May will mark a new chapter in our church's history and that the Lord will give us a vision for the lost of Scotland and that we will be ever ready to make a sacrifice, whatever the cost.

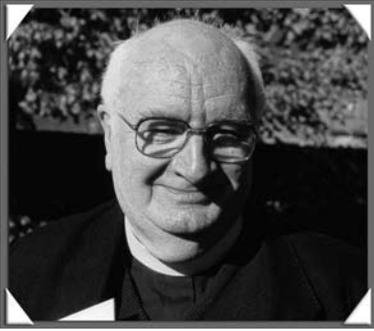


MARKS OF RELIGIOUS DECLENSION

You should be worried:

1. When you have no delight in the company of serious, heavenly-minded Christians, and enjoy yourself best with worldly people.
2. When you are frequently absent from prayer meetings, attend only Sabbath services, and are ready to find excuses for such neglect.
3. When you are afraid to consider certain Christian duties seriously, in case your conscience condemn your past neglect, and insist on a change now.
4. When you are more bothered to pacify your conscience, than to honour Christ, obtain spiritual profit, or do good to others.
5. When you have an over-critical spirit with regard to preaching; are dissatisfied with the manner, as too plain, too dull, too intellectual, or with the matter, as too doctrinal, or too evangelistic; or when you complain of it as too searching or too direct and personal.
6. When you are more afraid of being regarded as old-fashioned or prim and proper, than of sinning against Christ by negligence in practice and unfaithfulness.
7. When you have little fear of temptation, and can play with spiritual danger.
8. When you desire the acceptance of men of the world, and are more anxious to know what they think or say of you, than whether you honour the Saviour in their sight.
9. When scandals in the church are more the subject of your public condemnation, than of your secret grieving and prayer before God.
10. When you are more afraid of experiencing the ridicule of an offending person by rebuking sin, than offending God by silence.
11. When you are more bent on being comfortable than holy.
12. When you cannot receive deserved reproof for faults, are unwilling to confess them, and justify yourself.
13. When you are impatient and unforgiving towards the frailties, misjudgements, and faults of others.
14. When your reading of the Bible is formal, hasty, or merely intellectual, and unattended with self-application; or when you read almost any other book with more interest than the Book of God.

Extracted from *The Watchword*, December 2, 1872.



The Banqueting House

Part 1

Rev Donald MacDonald (late of Greyfriars Free Church, Inverness – The substance of an unpublished Sermon preached on Sabbath morning, 21 June, 1976)

'He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love' (Song of Solomon 2:4).

Now friends, there are different kinds of sermons. This is an experimental text and I am going to speak on it from that point of view. When we preach an experimental sermon we don't expect everyone in the audience to be able to follow it, because everybody hasn't got every experience. But there are some in this congregation who, I believe, will know in their own experience what the church of Christ actually means when she says that Christ brought her to the banqueting house and that His banner over her was love. This book is a love-song between Christ and the church. Sometimes Christ speaks of and to the church; at other times the church speaks to Him and tells about Him, and it is the church who speaks here.

I. The Place to which she was brought

She calls it the 'banqueting house', and we want to know what this means.

Not always there

It means, first of all, that if He brought her to it then she was not always there. There are times, without speaking just now of the unregenerate soul, when Christians are not in the banqueting house of Christ, and yet they are as true Christians as those who are. But they are just not feasting with Christ. As there is a time of feasting in the Christian life, so there is a time of fasting, and this is a time of fasting. So it means, then, that she is not, or was not, always in it.

The priceless ordinances of the Gospel

It means the priceless ordinances of the Gospel which we possess, and you are being taught enough to know what these are. They are, putting them very briefly:

(a) The preaching of the Word. That is a banqueting house which Christ has prepared for His church. Now, what would we do for our souls without the preaching of the Gospel? Would the Word and the Sabbath Day be enough? No! If that were enough then the Lord would not have established preaching. But the Lord appointed preaching because it was meant to be a banqueting house for His people – a place where their souls would be fed. Now friends, you who are Christian people here today, and who have been listening to my ministry for so long, if your souls are not fed by the preaching that I do, then it is a fearful reflection on the preaching, and a fearful reflection on me. You see, preaching ought to be to your souls like a banquet to the hungry. No man should ever come inside a church without feeling the better of it inwardly. If you don't there is something wrong – and I am not saying it is wrong with you – I am saying it is wrong with the ministry. It can't be wrong with the Bible or with the text, so it must be wrong with the

minister. There is nothing more pathetic than a famishing soul in the presence of food. You know what difficulty doctors have in this very thing, when they come across a person who has no appetite whatsoever for food. The food is there but these people have no appetite and the doctors do their best by their medicine and by their coaxing to make them eat, but to no avail. Well now, if it is the case that we have no appetite for the food which God provided in the preaching of the Gospel, there is something far wrong with the preaching. And I maintain this very strongly. You think of all the types of experiences that are present here even in one day. There are people who are very happy – young married couples and people who are getting on well in the world. There are people who are sad – people who have recently been bereaved and people who feel something wrong with them physically and people who are depressed mentally. There are all sorts of experiences, and the point I make is that unless the preaching of the Gospel meets with you and helps you and is a banquet to you in your circumstances, then there is something very far wrong.

- (b) The banqueting house of prayer. Prayer is a marvellous thing. We would die if we couldn't pray. Prayer is a wonderful avenue by which we get nigh unto God. It is a private access to the palace of the King. If you try to get into Buckingham Palace without an invitation you'll see what will happen to you. There are guards clicking their heels there at the gate and they won't let you in unless you have an invitation. But the point about prayer is that we always have an invitation and there are no guards to keep us out from the presence of the King. And when we come into the presence of the King it is a banquet to our souls. Now friends, I never said to anyone, and I never will, to stop praying, but I say this, and I shall always say it, that if our prayers are formal, if they go unanswered, and if they mean nothing but that we bend our knees and address some invisible person for a little while, then there is something wrong with our prayers. Remember that prayer is as much God speaking to you as it is you speaking to God. And when you pray aright you get into the banqueting house because in prayer God feeds your soul.
- (c) Then there is the Bible. The Word is inestimably precious and what a banqueting house it is! What would you do if things went against you, say in your family life, or in your professional life, or in your physical life? What would you really do? Would you try to get comfort by telling it to a friend or going to the doctor? Well, these have their uses as far as they go. But what I suppose you would really do is go to the Bible, and before long you would come across something in the Bible that would meet your need and prove a banquet to your soul.

(d) Then there are the Sacraments. Now, I believe with all my heart that there are Christian men and women here today who were converted long ago and they have never sat at the table of the Lord. Well, whatever else may be said to them, this is said to them, they are missing a feast; a banquet of which they would otherwise take part if they were obedient. By not coming, they are missing a meal that would satisfy their souls, and they therefore ought to be there.

The door

Let me go on, very briefly, to tell you that there is only one door leading into the banqueting house. You can't get in any way you like. The door is the door of regeneration or the door of saving grace. Jesus said, 'I am the door', and there is no way whatsoever into communion with God but through Jesus Christ. You can't get into communion by the mere exercise of your own emotions; you can't organise a series of meetings and have a wonderful time and think that that is communion. No! Communion is a thing by itself. And it is only through Christ by the Spirit that communion is had with the Father. That is the only door and if you try to get in by yourself you will fail, but if you seek it through Him you will win.

The foundation and roof

The house is founded upon a Rock and is therefore perfectly safe. I would like to emphasise that point. The Gospel ordinances are safe for our souls – and nothing else is. You have heard me say all these things before but it won't do any harm to say them again. Supposing you saw a vision of angels, that would be no token that you are a saved soul. Supposing you heard a voice from Heaven with your natural ears, that would not be a sure token that you are a child of God. But if you make use of the Gospel ordinances and trust in the promises of the Word, then that is a sign, and a sure sign, that you are a child of God. This is the only safe house and all the rest are unsafe. And it is roofed with the blood of Christ. No drop of wrath will ever seep through it because the blood is over it. And then again, Jesus Himself is always present in it. Whoever else may be absent from His banqueting house, He is always there. A marriage is not a marriage if there is no bridegroom. He is the Bridegroom and the church is His Bride and whoever is absent the Bridegroom is not.

Believers are always welcome

And last of all regarding the house, believers are always welcome into it. If they come they will never be turned away. Let me just draw a picture for a moment of the way some people talk. They tell you, 'Oh! I am poor and ragged and unworthy to sit at the Lord's table. I am unworthy to pray and I'm not like the rest of the Lord's people. I feel there is something missing'. Well, my friend, remember we read the story of that poor young man who left the far country and came ragged and filthy – just as he was – to his father's home, and the father ran to embrace him and told the servants to wash and clothe and feed him. And this is the way it is. Whatever you feel like today as a Christian, even if you feel yourself a worm and the vilest of the vile, you come just as you are and I tell you on the warrant of Heaven, by my God, that you will not be turned out. 'Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out'. It doesn't matter what we're like. Oh my friends! I can give my testimony just as Samuel Rutherford did in a verse

which I am going to quote in a moment, that if I stood on my own merit I would never have had a moment of communion with Christ before, nor would I ever hope to have it again. But I don't stand upon my own merit but upon the merits of Christ.

II. Who brings her to the banqueting house?

The church says 'He brought me'. That is, Jesus Christ Himself, for none else but He can do it, no matter who he is. You see, it's just like this: at times when you come to church you may like my sermons and you feel I am speaking directly to your case; at other times I preach and your mind wanders and I just have nothing whatsoever for you at all, and you get bored and uninterested and you long to get out. Oh yes, friends! That is the way with us all. But why is that if we are Christians? Because of this: if the holiest man who ever was, and the best preacher who ever was, stood in this pulpit he cannot take you to the banqueting house by himself. He cannot make the Word effectual and he cannot give the unction of the Spirit. God alone can do that. And in this I am going to give you an encouraging sign: if you are able to get communion with God any time you want and if you are easily moved in religious services, well I am afraid I would begin to doubt that you have very much good in you, or indeed any good at all. But if you are one of these people who strive and who long to get communion with God, and you can't get it, nor can you see any means of finding it, then that shows that neither yourself nor anyone else can give it to you and that you are dependent upon Christ. Now that is the kind of person I like and that is the kind of person I would like to be. But remember, I don't mean people who say that they would like to get it and then forget God all day long. I don't mean that, for that kind of thing is hypocrisy of the worst kind.

You will notice that it is an act of condescending grace. 'He brought me to the banqueting house'. I am reminded of the story of King David and Mephibosheth who was lame in both his feet. You will remember that Mephibosheth called himself a dead dog and he couldn't have abased himself more than that. But the King told him: 'Now Mephibosheth, you are going to sit at my table

“a meal that would satisfy their souls”

for ever after and your place will be with me, the King'. Although Mephibosheth may have felt as a dead dog it made no difference to David; he was doing it for Jonathan's sake and Mephibosheth had that privilege for the rest of his life. What an act of condescension that was on the part of David! Oh friend! When you think of what you are, when you call to mind all your sins, your rebellion, your prayerlessness, your distracted thoughts; when you come to think of your own utter uselessness, and yet in spite of it all, God grants you communion with Christ, is that not an act of unspeakable condescending grace! And this is where I come to mention that beautiful verse in Mrs Cousin's poem on Samuel Rutherford's sayings:

I am my Beloved's,
And my Beloved is mine;
He brings a poor vile sinner
Into His house of wine;
I stand upon His merit,
I know no other stand,
Not ev'n where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

Not even in Heaven, let alone on earth, is there any other way whereby He brings a poor vile sinner into His house of wine.

Authentic Christianity – Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles, Volume 5 Acts 7:30-36

D Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth Trust, hbk, 298 pp, £15.75

Each volume in this set of sermons preached by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones on the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles has been eagerly awaited. The series constituted the last Sunday evening series that the Doctor preached in the years 1965 to the time of his retirement in 1968. Volumes 1 to 3 cover Acts 1-6. Volumes 4 and 5 contain the sermons – 38 in all – on Acts 7, Stephen's defence leading to his martyrdom. It is hoped that there will be a final volume covering Acts 8.1-31 – the point at which his ministry in Westminster Chapel ceased.

It was fitting that 'the Doctor' should end his pastoral ministry preaching on these chapters. He saw clearly how much people needed 'to know exactly what Christianity is and what the Christian church is'. In Acts 7 there is the striking contrast between Stephen and those who opposed him. It was because Stephen was so different from the world, so Christlike, and filled with the Holy Spirit that his witness in life and in death made such a lasting impact. The message that Dr Lloyd-Jones presented so clearly nearly 40 years ago on 'authentic Christianity' needs to resound throughout our churches today. May these volumes be used to that end.

Rev JJ Murray

Old light on New Worship

John Price, Simpson Publishing, hbk, 256pp, \$15.99

The author is a Reformed Baptist pastor in New York. He has put us in his debt with this rare volume on the use of musical instruments in the worship of God. It is doubtful if such a substantial work has appeared on this subject since JL Girardeau's *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (1888). The sub-title of John Price's illuminating book gives a good

idea of the subject matter: 'Musical Instruments and the Worship of God, a Theological, Historical and Psychological Study'. His avowed purpose in writing the volume was two-fold: (1) To confirm in their position those Churches which exclude musical instruments in public worship services; and (2) to encourage those who have one instrument to accompany praise not to add any more and hopefully move to a full-blown a cappella position.

Our Church is of course in the first group. It is important for us to know our position on this subject. Certainly Mr Price's book will help to confirm us in our position. The principles supporting the exclusion of musical instruments in worship are simply summarised by Mr Price: '(1) The Old Testament Temple worship in all of its outward ceremonies and rituals has been abolished; (2) We must look to Christ and His apostles alone for the worship of the church; and (3) With no command, example, or any indication whatsoever from the Lord Jesus Christ that He desires musical instruments in His church, we have no warrant for their use'. The only reservation we would have with these principles is with the second. We would rather stress that principles continue from Old into the New Testament except where there is clear abrogation, or by good and necessary consequence practices may be taken to be changed, such as is the case with the two sacraments.

In an age in which there is increasing use of a variety of musical instruments in public worship this is a timely work. No doubt people will find it strange to come into services in which only Psalms are sung and without the accompaniment of musical instruments. In Scottish Presbyterianism musical instruments have been a fairly modern innovation deriving from the 19th Century. It was said that an impetus, and not a very spiritual one, was the availability of money from Andrew Carnegie to provide organs in churches! As John Price points out, the innovation of such instruments constituted a breach

with the apostolic, reformed and puritan traditions. Let it be said of course that whilst such churches as ours do not have instruments it is not correct to say we do not have music. For the voices make the music, something perfectly consistent with Hebrews 13:15: 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name'.

In this valuable book John Price has four sections. There is first a discussion of the Regulative Principle determining this matter from a Biblical perspective. There is then an outline of the history of the use (or non-use) of instruments in worship. He then deals interestingly with the impact of music on mind and heart and finally he addresses the arguments for the use of such instruments. There is a fairly limited Index, but an excellent Bibliography. [Missing are two classic studies, one from James Begg Sr, *Musical Instruments in Public Worship* (1808); and the other by James Glasgow, *Heart and Voice* (1873)] If there is a quibble it would be that the chapters might have had more sectional headings. Also, John Price faithfully applies the regulative principle to musical instruments. There is a distinct suggestion that he has not yet done this consistently with reference to the content of praise materials. However, that may come! All-in-all, though, this is an excellent book, and highly recommended.

Rev John W Keddie

The Da Vinci Code – From Dan Brown's fiction to Mary Magdalene's faith

Garry Williams, Christian Focus Publications, pbk, 62pp, £1.99

There has been considerable publicity given to a book called *The Da Vinci Code* written by Dan Brown. This has created such an interest that a mainline movie has been produced based on the book. Although it is a work of fiction, claims have been made in the book of its having an historical basis. Many readers are inclined to believe that it does have historical credibility.

Because of the widespread publicity surrounding it, and given the blasphemous claims in relation to Christ, this must be a real concern for Christians. We are therefore indebted to Christian Focus for putting out this excellent brief booklet by Garry Williams, the Principal of Oak Hill Theological College in London. It is not a comprehensive analysis and answer to Dan Brown's book, but provides in brief compass sufficient to alert concerned Christians about the errors and inaccuracies of The Da Vinci Code. Garry Williams does this by countering the arguments concerning the blasphemous claims that Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife and mother of his child, central features of what Brown maintains in his book. Williams very succinctly goes on to demonstrate the utter unreliability of the sources of the specious claims of The Da Vinci Code, and by contrast provides the basis for the utter reliability of the Christian gospels as the source of the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.

This booklet is timely and is well written. It will prove useful to inform Christians of the fundamental issues arising from The Da Vinci Code phenomenon. It also contains a distinct gospel message which makes it useful to pass on to others.

Rev John W Keddie

Catholicism: East of Eden – Insights into Catholicism for the 21st Century

Richard Bennet, Berean Beacon Press, pbk, 340pp, £10.75, (Obtainable from Reformation Ireland, Raymond Stewart, 15 Lakeview Avenue, Newtownabbey, BT36 5ZG, Tel: 07801 756112, www.reformationireland.com)

As a divinity student in the early 1970s I studied Loraine Boettner's excellent book Roman Catholicism. Written ten years before, it provided a comprehensive and clear statement of what Roman Catholics believe and also a well-argued response from the Scriptures. The present volume

is an up-to-date treatment of the same subject. It benefits from being written by one who knows his subject intimately having been a priest for twenty years. He is able to illustrate his subject at various points from personal experience. Richard Bennet was born into a devout Roman Catholic home in Dublin. Most evenings they would kneel together in the living room and say the Rosary. They never missed Mass on Sundays. His early years were spent in a Jesuit school. This was followed by eight years of theological study under the Dominican Order culminating in 1964 at the Angelicum University in Rome. From there he went to Trinidad as a priest. He entered his work with great enthusiasm but as the years passed became more and more convinced of the conflict between the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the Scriptures. He saw that, like Cain of old, we all have a natural tendency to come to God in a way of our own devising and with the sacrifices which we think God should accept, rather than humbly coming in the way He reveals to us, putting all our faith in the blood of Christ once offered to take away sins forever.

The book is full of helpful insights. If you want to know what Catholics believe and practise, you will find out here. His chapter on the New Evangelicals and the document Together (ECT) is most helpful. Amongst the signatories of this document was J I Packer who, Bennet reminds us, at one time wrote of justification by faith alone as being 'like Atlas, it bears the world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of saving grace!' Now, says Bennet, the same saving faith is downgraded to the 'domestic differences about salvation'. In the 1994 article, 'Why I Signed It?' Packer refers to sola fide (faith alone) as 'small print'. Bennet comments, 'What Packer has done in setting aside the crux of the issue – justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone – is thoroughly in tune with the practice of the Church of Rome'. Christ Jesus' righteousness is the crown jewel

of orthodoxy. Packer has chosen to deny the Reformation history, indeed the very doctrine for which the Reformers 'under the Roman Catholic Inquisition gave their lives, not for any correctness of words, but rather for their faith in Christ Jesus alone'.

It is a book well-worth having both to read through and also to consult as a reference tool.

Rev William Macleod

Shaky Town

Colin and Euan Gunn, DVD, Gunn Productions, 52 minutes, www.shakytown.com, \$19.95

The Gunn brothers who produced this DVD were members of Shettleston Free Church. In this documentary they deal with the battle that has been going on between biblical Christians and homosexuals in San Francisco. The story is told of an Orthodox Presbyterian Church which hired an organist and later, when they discovered that he was a practising homosexual, had to dismiss him. The minister, Charles McIlhenny, and his family were then subjected to terrible persecution, threatening phone calls, mobs protesting outside their home and eventually the church and manse was firebombed with the intent to kill them. Mrs McIlhenny's words are particularly moving: 'It's been a challenging life.... I began to learn the fear of God. I'm terrified of denying Christ, because Christ is the one who kept us. At the same time there's been a gloriousness, but it's been very hard'. The story is told of the mayor who introduced so called 'Gay Marriage' and then of the overthrow of this in court six months later. The targeting of children in schools with homosexual propaganda is exposed. The biblical teaching on marriage and homosexuality is clearly presented. Obviously a low-budget production, but at the same time challenging and helpful treatment of this unsavoury subject. It was Winner of the Best Political Film at the San Antonia Independent Film Festival.

Rev William Macleod

NEWS DESK

Golden Wedding



Our congratulations go to the Rev and Mrs Bryan Baxter who on Monday 17th July celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. They were married in Cairo, Egypt where they were both on missionary service. Their honeymoon was drastically affected by a bout of malaria which Mr Baxter took and then by the Suez crisis. Thankfully despite all that the Lord has preserved them for fifty years together. Mr Baxter is recovering from a hip replacement operation and hopes to be in circulation again soon. The Thornwood congregation presented Mr Baxter with a book and Mrs Baxter with a plant to mark the occasion.

We also congratulate the Rev and Mrs Bill McKnight (formerly of Leith, now resident in Northern Ireland) who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary (60 years) on 11th July. The Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth sent them a message of good wishes.

Home-schoolers take their case to the Human Rights Court

German home-school parents who are facing fines or jail sentences are prepared to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. An appeal by Christian parents was recently turned down by the German Constitutional Court (Supreme Court). According to the justices they are obligated to send their children to state registered schools. Home schooling is

illegal in Germany, even if parents object to institutional education for religious reasons. Many Christians have been defying these legal requirements and because of this have been fined or incarcerated when they refuse to pay the fines. It is estimated that at least 1,000 children in Germany are taught by their parents.

Retirement of Rev John MacLeod, Tomatin (Andrew Allan)



A large number gathered in Dores Free Church recently to mark the retirement of the minister, the Rev John MacLeod. The evening's proceedings began with a time of worship conducted by the Rev Hugh Ferrier. Following worship a number of tributes were paid to Mr MacLeod's life and ministry by his ministerial colleagues: the Rev John MacLeod, Tarbat, the Rev Allan Murray, Brora, the Rev Maurice Roberts, Greyfriars, Inverness, and retired ministers the Rev John Angus Gillies and the Rev Ronald MacKenzie. The Duthil Dores elders, Alistair MacKintosh, Donnie Fraser and John Campbell also spoke highly of their esteemed minister and presentations were made to Mr MacLeod and his wife Mary. Mr MacLeod was born in Shawbost, Isle of Lewis, graduated with an MA degree from Aberdeen University in 1960, afterwards taught English, History and Modern Studies in Aberdeen from 1961-80, attended the Free Church College, Edinburgh, from 1980-83 and following the completion of his studies he became the minister of the united charge of Duthil Dores Free Church 1983-2006. Following the presentations the congregation enjoyed a sumptuous tea provided by the ladies from the congregation.

Mr MacLeod is pictured receiving parting gifts from Duthil Dores' treasurer Mr. John Campbell, right, while Mrs Mary MacLeod receives a bouquet of flowers from Roma MacRae (14), from Gorthleck, one of Mrs. MacLeod's Sabbath School children.

Construction of our new building finished (Colin Hart)

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the construction and fitting out of the Christian Institute's new headquarters has been completed. We give thanks to God for this wonderful news. The Trustees of the Christian Institute have decided to call the building Wilberforce House in memory of the great Christian campaigner, William Wilberforce. Our new address will be: The Christian Institute, Wilberforce House, 4 Park Road, Gosforth Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8DG. Our telephone and fax numbers remain unchanged. We are delighted that £1,101,436 has been raised for this necessary project. We thank God and our supporters for this generous provision. We have £98,564 yet to raise to pay for all the costs of construction, fitting out and moving.

Female Bishops for Church of England

The General Synod of the Church of England has approved the concept of female bishops, although it may be 2012 at the earliest before any women could be elevated to the episcopate. Before the measure could become a reality the rules of the Church must be changed, a process requiring a two-thirds majority that is likely to take several years. Conservatives have requested several measures designed to safeguard their convictions.

Rev Alex Murdo Macleod dies

The Rev Alex Murdo Macleod, retired minister of Kinloch Free Church of Scotland, died on 26 June, 2006. Mr Macleod was an eminently gifted preacher and theologian, and at the same time a humble and gracious man. He exemplified to a high degree one of the most distinctive traditions of the Highland Presbyterian pulpit by combining dogmatic and experimental theology. Few

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in his generation had a better grasp of the teaching of Scripture. In his best days in the 1970s and 1980s his preaching was a feast to the Lord's people. A further much valued contribution to his native island was the realization of his vision to establish a non-denominational nursing home and hospice in Stornoway, Bethesda, which was opened by the Princess Royal in 1992. Mr Macleod completed his studies at the Free Church College in Edinburgh in 1963, and was then called to the congregation of Kinloch in Lewis, which he served until his retirement in 1997.

Scottish Christian Party announces candidate

The Scottish Christian Party is getting organised with a view to contesting list seats in the Scottish Parliament elections of 2007. The first candidate to be announced is Mr Murdo Murray who will stand as the regional list candidate for the Highlands and Islands. Mr Murray, who comes from the Isle of Lewis, was formerly Director of Technical Services for Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (The Western Isles Council) in Stornoway. He is an elder in the majority Free Church in Stornoway. The Party leader, Rev George Hargreaves, introducing Mr Murray at a press conference in Stornoway stated that at a time when all other political parties were unwilling to stand against laws that flew in the face of biblical truth, and seemed hell-bent against taking the course that an all-powerful and all-knowing God had set for us, there was no other alternative than for Christians to come together and seek a place in the corridors of power.

Seminary Closing

The Closing Lecture of the Seminary this year was delivered by the Rev Professor Joel Beeke of the Puritan Reformed Seminary, Grand Rapids. A much larger crowd than usual was present in the Inverness Royal Academy for the occasion and heard an excellent talk on Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine. The process by which they were forced out of the established Church of Scotland for their faithful stand was described and the distinctiveness of their proclamation of the gospel as a gospel of promise was portrayed. Their freedom

in commending Christ to sinners surely needs to be emulated today. Mr Bert Pohl graduated having completed the one year of special studies prescribed by the Training of the Ministry Committee on top of his four year course at Puritan Reformed Seminary. He is expected to be licensed shortly and should be open to a call.

Persecution Report from China

China Aid Association (CAA) has released a report stating the number of cases of persecution against Chinese House Churches, province by province, in China. In the past 12 months, according to the report, at least 1,958 Chinese House Church pastors and Christians in 15 provinces were arrested. The report shows that Henan has had 823 pastors and believers arrested in raids from July 2005 to May 2006. This is the worst province in persecution against House churches in the past 12 months. The report explains that the term 'Chinese House Church' refers to congregations in China that refused to join the so-called Three-self Church, which the Chinese government insists should accommodate all Protestants. House Churches are independent, but usually operate underground.

Knock and Point Induction

On Friday 28th April the Presbytery of Lewis inducted the Rev. James Clark to the congregation of Knock and Point. The service took place in the Stornoway Free Church Continuing building at Sandwick. The Rev Timothy McGlynn presided and the service began with singing from Psalm 95 in Gaelic. The rest of the service was in English and Mr McGlynn preached from Psalm 126. After the relevant questions were put to Mr Clark, the Presbytery formally inducted him to the pastoral charge of the congregation. The new minister was then addressed by the Rev MacAulay MacLeod, and the congregation by the Rev Donald MacDonald. The reception was held in the Stornoway Primary School where the tables were overloaded with good things. Token presentations were made to the minister, to the minister's wife Christine, and to his two daughters Miriam and Lydia.

There were over two hundred at the service and the singing of the Psalms was indeed splendid. We pray that his ministry will be to God's glory, and his preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ a blessing to many souls. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts' (Zech.4:6).

Thornwood Induction

The induction of the Rev William Macleod to Thornwood Free Church (Continuing) took place on Friday 23rd June. Rev D N MacLeod preached a very suitable sermon on the words, 'For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake' (2Cor.4:5). May that indeed ever be the note from this pulpit! Rev David Fraser addressed the new minister encouraging him to preach not in word only but in power. Rev John J Murray challenged the congregation to loving faithfulness. Following the presentations by Mr John Macpherson, Mrs K Baur, and Mr and Mrs Walter Wright, kind words were spoken by the Revs Maurice Roberts, Kenneth MacDonald and Murdo Angus MacLeod. Rev William Macleod commented on the multitudes of Glasgow who had to be reached with the gospel and the impossibility of doing this in one's own strength. 'It is time for thee to work' Lord!

FCC Psalmody CDs

The FCC Psalmody CDs entitled 'Worthy to be Praised' vols 1 and 2 are available at £10 each post free or at £18 for the two post free. Cheques should be made payable to: Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) Psalmody, and should be sent with order to Mrs Isobel Scott, 36 Pinewood Place, Blackburn, West Lothian, EH47 7NX.

Newsdesk Extra

Arbroath Youth Weekend

The next Arbroath Youth Weekend is DV to be held Friday 13th till the morning of Monday 16th October 2006. The speaker is Rev Alan Murray and the topic is Christ in the Psalms. Brochures can be obtained from your local FCC congregation and details are available by contacting James Macinnes at amacinn@hotmail.com or by calling 01383 621 933.

NEWS DESK

Letter from an Antipodean

Recently the Rev James Frew accepted a call to minister in Adelaide. This letter from a member of the congregation tells us something about the place.

MAGILL FREE CHURCH (Australia) is without doubt the most far-flung of all the churches that make up the FCC. The truth of this will be borne out by many of the ministers who have, over the past few years, so graciously agreed to make the long trek out here from Scotland. After 13,000 miles and over 20 hours of flying the tired and jetlagged visitor arrives in Adelaide the capital city of South Australia.

Geography

Take a look at an atlas and you will find South Australia in the centre of the southern half of Australia. It is the driest state in the driest continent in the world, with 60 percent of it being desert. Over 80 percent of the State is flat, being less than 250 metres in height above sea level; Lake Eyre, an enormous salt lake in the far north of the state, is 15 metres below sea level! The landscape ranges from undulating hills and grasslands to deserts in the north. This description however belies the magnificent and diverse beauty of this part of God's creation, as any visitor will attest. South Australia is a vast tract of land some 983,482 sq. km (12.7% of Australia's total) in area making it about 10 times larger than Scotland!

History

It was founded in 1836, and unlike the rest of Australia, it was colonised by free settlers, not convicts. Its capital, named in honour of Queen Adelaide, the consort of King William IV, was built to a plan. It has numerous parklands and gardens, and wide roads laid out in a grid pattern. Of a total state population of 1.5 million, over 1 million live in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, and most of the remainder live elsewhere along the coast. From its earliest, Adelaide attracted immigrants from many countries other than Britain. After the Second World War Italians, Greeks, Dutch, Polish, and possibly every other European nationality came to make a new start. An influx of Asian immigrants following the Vietnam War added to the mix.

'City of Churches'

Adelaide is sometimes referred to as the 'City of Churches', although this is a reflection more on Adelaide's past than its present. The white settlers who came to South Australia in the 1830s were Protestant Christians including Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists who suffered civil and religious restrictions in Britain because they did not conform to the Church of England. These non-conformists, or dissenters, believed that South Australia offered them freedom from a system that privileged the followers of the established Church of England. German Lutherans also came here in the 1840s to escape religious persecution. It is not surprising then that Adelaide soon became known as the 'City of Churches'. It grieves the heart to see that these days so many of the churches that once graced this beautiful city have either been demolished, or have boarded up their doors due to dwindling congregations or are venues for worldly activities for which their builders would never have dreamed they would be used. The sorry state of true religion, we know, is experienced in all those countries in which the church of Christ was once strong and stood firm against the tide of ungodliness and unbelief.

Spiritual State

If you were to go to the Lonely Planet travel guide on the internet and type in Adelaide you would find the following introduction to the city: 'When the early colonists arrived and began building Adelaide they used stone. They wanted to build a solid, dignified city, a civilised and calm place, with a manner no other state capital in the country could match. Nowadays, much to the 'wowers' (puritan spoilsports) chagrin, pubs and nightclubs outnumber the churches. The solidity goes further than architecture, for Adelaide was once regarded as a city of wowers and was renowned chiefly for its disproportionately large number of churches'. Sadly this description of the spiritual state of this city is true and one that might also well fit the land of Scotland at this time. Yet there are in Adelaide those that fear the Lord. The apostle Paul was encouraged by the Lord in a vision at Corinth (Acts 18: 9,10) to preach the word, 'for I have much people in this city'. There is a great work to be done here; a multitude of souls are marching blindly towards a lost eternity.

Magill Free Church

Magill Free Church, which is situated approximately 10 minutes drive from the city centre, is currently made up of 20 communicant members and several adherents. We have two services each Lord's Day and a midweek Bible study and prayer meeting with folk travelling up to 40km to attend. We, like our mother church, have experienced great difficulties and testings in recent years. Having had a vacant pulpit for the last four years or so, the fact that the church has maintained a testimony in the city speaks clearly of the Lord's gracious dealings with us. It is also true that without the marvellous practical assistance and prayerful concern of our brethren in Scotland, your willingness to respond to our 'Macedonian' plea for help and your embracing of us as members of the FCC, our lines may not have fallen in such pleasant places. The doors of the house of God remain open here at Magill, we enjoy excellent taped sermons each Lord's Day and excellent preaching and pastoral care whenever a minister comes to visit us from Scotland (and, in one instance, Canada). We hold a very successful Bible Conference each year (now in its 17th year) which brings together like-minded people from around Australia to hear preaching on various topics by highly respected ministers from overseas. Each week our tape ministry goes out to a number of people around Australia who, for various reasons, are unable to attend a church or who just like to hear some good Gospel preaching. Of course it is our prayerful desire that we should have a man after God's own heart and of his choosing to minister among us. We wait upon the Lord, trusting that He will grant us our hearts' desire in His timing. We also continue to pray for the Free Church Continuing and the congregations in Scotland and North America that the Gospel of Christ will prosper in those places as well as our own. Scotland and Australia are vastly different places with very different histories, each located on opposite ends of the earth. But in belonging to the Lord we are bound together by the love of the truth as it is found in God's Word, a common love for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ and a desire that His name may be known and exalted throughout all the earth. 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me' (Jn.12:32).



The Only Begotten

C H Spurgeon

‘The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’ (Jn.1:14) Believer, you can bear your testimony that Christ is the ‘only begotten of the Father’, as well as the first begotten from the dead. You can say, ‘He is divine to me, even if He be human to all the world beside. He has done that for me which none but a God could do. He has subdued my stubborn will, melted a heart of adamant, opened gates of brass, and snapped bars of iron. He hath turned for me my mourning into laughter, and my desolation into joy. He hath led my captivity captive, and made my heart rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let others think as they will of Him, to me He must be the only begotten of the Father: blessed be His name’.

And He is full of grace. Ah! Had He not been I should never have been saved. He drew me when I struggled to escape from His grace; and when at last I came all trembling like a condemned

culprit to His mercy-seat He said, ‘Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee: be of good cheer’. And He is full of truth. True have His promises been, not one has failed.

I bear witness that never servant had such a master as I have; never brother such a kinsman as He has been to me; never spouse such a husband as Christ has been to my soul; never sinner a better Saviour; never mourner a better comforter than Christ hath been to my spirit. I want none beside Him. In life He is my life, and in death He shall be the death of death; in poverty Christ is my riches; in sickness he makes my bed; in darkness He is my star, and in brightness He is my sun; He is the manna of the camp in the wilderness, and He shall be the new corn of the host when they come to Canaan. Jesus is to me all grace and no wrath, all truth and no falsehood: and of truth and grace He is full, infinitely full. My soul, this night, bless with all thy might ‘the only Begotten’.

The Friend of Sinners

One there is, above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once His kindness prove
Find it everlasting love.

Which of all our friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled in Him to God.
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a Friend in need.

Men, when raised to lofty stations,
Often know their friends no more;
Slight and scorn their poor relations,
Though they valued them before:
But our Saviour always owns
Those whom He redeemed with groans.

When He lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was His name;
Now, above all glory raised,
He rejoices in the same:
Still He calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.

Could we bear from one another
What He daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
Loves us though we treat Him thus:
Though for good we render ill,
He accounts us brethren still.

O for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above.
But when home our souls are brought,
We will love Thee as we ought.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Shewbread or Presence Bread

Rev David Murray

'And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me always' (Exodus 25:30; Lev.24:5,6).

Leaving the outer court behind, together with its altar and laver, we now pass through an elaborately curtained entrance into the Holy Place. The ceilings, walls, and curtains are coloured blue, purple and scarlet. On them are brightly and beautifully embroidered cherubim. There is no sound in this sacred place. Silence reigns. Gold shines from a lamp, from an incense altar and from a table. The table is made of acacia wood plated with gold. It is 3 feet long, 18 inches broad, and 2 feet 3 inches high. There are two 'handbreadth size' rims, the outside one being golden, which run around the table edge in order to stop anything falling off. On this table are 12 large loaves of unleavened bread, set out in two columns. It is to this table and especially to this bread we now turn our attention.

I. FOR GOD

This bread is an offering from the children of Israel to God (Lev.24:8). It was a symbolic portion of their labours, consecrated, and offered in thanks to God on the Sabbath day, the day which closed the working week. So, the twelve loaves represent the twelve tribes' thank offerings. Patrick Fairbairn states, 'It was, consequently, a kind of sacrifice; and as the altar of God was, in a sense, His table, so this table of His in turn possessed something of the nature of an altar and the provision laid on it had the character of an offering.'

On top of each of the two columns of bread were two bowls containing frankincense, a perfume also associated with the offering of sacrifice (Lev.24:7). Fairbairn adds: 'Now, the offering of incense was simply, as we have seen, an embodied prayer; and the placing of a vessel of incense upon this bread was like sending it up to God on the wings of devotion. It implied that the spiritual offering symbolized by the bread was to be ever presented with supplication, and only when so presented could it meet with the favour and blessing of Heaven'. In offering a part of their substance, they were acknowledging that they and all they had belonged to God. In offering the twelve loaves they were presenting themselves, all twelve tribes, to God.

'Shewbread' is literally translated 'the bread of presence'. Just as the shewbread was continually in His presence, Israel were reminded that they too were continually before Him (Lev.24:8). This theme of remembering is underlined by the frankincense, which was on the bread for 'a memorial' (Lev.24:7). But who and what was being remembered? Surely, the ascending fragrance reminded Israel that they were remembered by God. Wiersbe writes: 'The twelve tribes of Israel were represented in the tabernacle in three ways: by their names on the two engraved stones on the high priest's shoulders (Ex.28:6-14); by their names on the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate (28:15-25), and by the twelve loaves of bread on the table in the holy place. These loaves were a reminder that the tribes were constantly in the presence of God and that God saw all that they did (Lev.24:5-9).'

Figures of the True

Like Israel, the believer offers a portion of his substance to God in symbolic recognition that his whole life is both 'for God' and 'before God'. Like the shewbread, he is always present in His presence. The

'handbreadth size' golden table rim (lit. 'enclosing') pictures the believer's security in the royal hand of Christ. 'And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand' (Jn.10:28). The frankincense of prayer in the believer's life 'come[s] up for a memorial before God' (Acts 10:4). It reminds them that they are remembered in heaven. The ultimate and perfect Israel of God, Christ, offered Himself to God. Just as the shewbread was made of 'fine flour' which had been sieved eleven times to secure its freedom from grit and imperfection, so Christ was 'sieved' by temptation and trial and 'no fault' was found in him. Just as the bread was baked in a hot oven so Christ endured the searing heat of God's anger against sin. 'From above hath he sent fire into my bones' (Lam.1:13). The 'twelve cakes' in Leviticus 24:5 may be translated 'twelve perforated' cakes. In like manner, Christ was pierced. Just as the table was never empty, even when Israel were on the march, so as the 'bread of presence' Christ is always in God's presence and continually acceptable to Him. His person and work are an everlasting monument and memorial in heaven. He is our 'continual bread' (Num.4:7).

II. FROM GOD

It was common for the people of the Ancient Near East to regularly bring part of their produce to their King to supply His table. In doing this they were acknowledging that their piece of land was his gift to them, as was the security and peace of the land. So, in the shewbread, the Israelites were acknowledging that all their bread was from God. They were returning to God what He had given them. They were acknowledging that all their support and sustenance was from Him. The land, its fruits and bounty were His, and they recognised this in their tithes, firstfruits, and free-will offerings, but especially in the shewbread. William Brown writes: 'The Israelites, represented by the twelve loaves, acknowledged their dependence on God as the giver of the staff of life, and evinced their gratitude in giving Him part of what they owed solely to His bounty. The shewbread, ever lying on the table, was thus a constant memorial of God's goodness in providing for the nourishment of His people.'

The 12 loaves ever in God's presence signified that all 12 tribes were always dependent on Him. Their daily existence was from Him alone. He prepared a table for them in the wilderness and in the presence of their enemies (Ps.23:5).

Beside the shewbread were two bowls for 'pouring out withal'. Wine is not mentioned but it was the most common drink used for pouring out libations to God. So, here in the Holy Place we have bread and wine brought together, the two main forms of nourishment in the ancient world.

Figures of the True

Just as God provides for Israel, so He provides for the believer. 'For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?' (1Cor.4:7).

God's ultimate provision for His people's spiritual nourishment is Christ who is 'of and from God'. In Leviticus 21:21 the shewbread is called 'the bread of his (the priest's) God'. Christ confirmed that

He was the bread of and from God when He said: 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world... I am the bread of life' (Jn.6:32-35). Just as the table of shewbread was designed with golden rings and staves to allow it to accompany them throughout their wilderness wanderings, so Christ accompanies His people throughout the wilderness of this world.

III. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

In the Ancient Near East a table was a symbol of fellowship as social and family life was centred around it. A golden table was a symbol of royal fellowship. In God's royal palace it was fitting that there should be a royal table. The fact that the priests were to eat the old shewbread when it was replaced with the new each Sabbath again points to the association of eating and fellowship. The fact that only the priests were allowed to eat it, that it had to be eaten in the Holy Place, and that this was done on the Sabbath, suggests that it was spiritual fellowship and communion that was being symbolised. Also, covenants were usually sealed by a meal between the two parties. This, therefore, was a constant reminder of Israel's privilege and responsibility in being in covenant with God.

Figures of the True

In the Old Testament only the priests could eat. But now all of God's people are a 'royal priesthood' (1 Pet.2:9) and all may partake of the 'bread' in both its written form (Mat.4:4) and in its incarnate form (Jn.6:53-58). The fact that the eating of the shewbread was associated with the pouring out of wine cannot fail to point the New Covenant believer to the torn flesh and shed blood of the Saviour as symbolised in the Lord's Supper. Pink states: 'What we have here is the person of Christ as the Food of God and the One in whom He has communion with His people. The Table sets forth Jehovah's feast of love for His saints and for Himself in fellowship with them... This bread which had been before Jehovah seven days, was now enjoyed by the priestly family. It speaks of Christ as the One who delights both the heart of the Father and His beloved people.'

IV. FUTURE WITH GOD

The shewbread, signifying God's supply, pointed forward to the day when God would bring Israel into the Promised Land; a land where, by God's blessing, agricultural fertility and fruitfulness would abound. In 'Tabernacle' terminology the Psalmist describes such a hoped-for day: 'How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light (Ps.36:7-9).'

Figures of the True

The gracious supplies of physical and spiritual nourishment on earth encourage the believer to look forward to the Promised Land, heaven, when he shall eat and drink at Christ's table in His Kingdom (Lk.22:30). William Brown writes: 'May not the golden table point to the abundant supply of good things prepared in the heavenly temple for all those whom Christ will make kings and priests unto God for ever? There, a table is spread before His face, that is continually furnished with new wine and heavenly manna, with which the ransomed of the Lord will be refreshed and made glad. "In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore".'

New Clothes for the Beggar

Andrew Bonar

Many years ago, I was walking with a friend along the pleasant banks of a Scottish river, in early summer, when the trees had just begun to show their fresh verdure and to offer us a shade from the sun. A man in rags came up to us begging, we supplied his wants somewhat, and entered into talk with him. He could not write nor read. He knew nothing of his Bible, and seemed not to care about knowing it.

'You need to be saved, do you not?'

'Oh yes; I suppose I do,' he said.

'But do you know the way of being saved?' we asked.

'Yes, I do,' was the reply.

'How, then, do you expect this?'

'I have not been a very bad man; and am doing as many good works as I can.'

'But are your good works good enough to take you to heaven?'

'I think so; and I am doing my best.'

'Do you not know any good works better than your own?'

'I know about the good works of the saints; but how am I to get them?'

'Do you know of no good works better than those of the saints?'

'I don't think there can be any better than these'

'Are not the works of the Lord Jesus Christ better than the works of the saints?'

'Of course they are; but of what use are they to me?'

'They may be of great use to us, if we believe what God has told us about them.'

'How is that?'

'If God is willing to take these works of Christ instead of yours, would not that do?'

'Yes, that it would. But will He?'

'Yes, He will. For this is just what He has told us; He is willing to take all that Christ has done and suffered instead of what you could do or suffer; and to give you what Christ has deserved instead of what you have deserved.'

'Is that really the case? Is God willing to put Christ instead of me?'

'Yes, He certainly is.'

'But have I no good works to do myself?'

'Plenty; but not to buy pardon with them. You are to take what Christ did as the price to be paid for your pardon; and then, having thus got a free pardon, you will work for Him who pardons you, out of love for Him.'

'But how can I get this?'

'By believing the gospel, or good news, which tells you about the Lord Jesus Christ: how He lived; how He died; how He was buried; how He rose again – all for sinful men; as the Bible says, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things".'

The beggar stood and wondered. The thought that another's works would do instead of his own, and that he might get all that this other's works deserved, seemed to strike him.

We never met again. But the Word seemed to tell upon him; he seemed to take it with him as something which he had never heard before – something which seemed almost too good news to be true.

THE LUSAKA BOYS

Work amongst the Street Boys in Lusaka
Don & Christine MacDonald

Over the years Don and Christine have been a great help to our missionaries passing through Lusaka. Some time ago they started helping homeless children in the city. Here they tell of how the work has developed and of the needs of this great work.

Dear Everyone,

I did not intend to start another letter about our adventures with the street kids so soon after the last one, but events appear to be overtaking us more quickly than I can keep track of, and since we have a two day public holiday in Zambia this week, I felt I should make use of the time to get something on the record. The trouble is knowing where to start.

Last time I told you we had decided that something must be done about the increasing number of little boys we have seen abandoned at Manda Hill (part of Lusaka). Our earlier experience of street kids in this area was that they were older boys, whom nobody wanted or trusted, and who had been on the streets for a number of years. Consequently they were pretty hardened characters usually with a heavy drug addiction, and by definition they were survivors, having made it to their late teens. These were the boys we took in, and about whom I have written over the past three years. In total we have probably looked after 30, with a drop out rate of 5 or 6, meaning that 24 are still going straight, either with us or on their own. By and large we have been encouraged and humbled by the progress they have made and how well they have adapted to a new life, and as we look at them now we can see that many of them will make kind and responsible husbands and fathers thereby securing the happiness of their wives and children also. Mission accomplished you might say, and certainly we thought so.

New Crisis

But over the past twelve months we have seen a disturbing new development in the street kid population around Manda Hill. For those who do not know, Manda Hill is a western style shopping mall near to the area where we live. It is the biggest shopping place in Zambia, and is frequented by well-to-do local people and the expatriate community. This makes it a good place to beg, and although the boys are not allowed inside the premises they hang around at the traffic lights outside and ask for food and money from the shoppers. When we arrived in Zambia five years ago, the lads at Manda Hill were the older boys I have been talking about. As we got to know them we were able to take a good number of them in, and at one point the problem had reduced in the area except for a few hard cases who simply refused to leave the street. Of course there are thousands of other street children in Zambia – an estimated 100,000 – and many of them live in Lusaka and beg in other parts of the city. One such area is a local market called Soweto, where an estimated 200 boys used to sleep every night. The marketers had historically tolerated their presence but decided some time last year that the boys were a nuisance and a risk to their business, so they cracked down on them and drove them out of the market. This left 200 boys, most of them very young, with no shelter and no begging pitch, so they scattered around town, and about 50 of them settled at Manda Hill, where there were few

other boys to stake claim. And so, the problem multiplied before our eyes. The newcomers were very different from our existing group of lads. For a start they were much younger – some as young as 6, and they were therefore not so hardened to street life. Secondly, they were made up of all kinds of boys. The brutal fact is that the average life expectancy of a boy who goes on the street in Zambia is six years. Since the survivors make it to adulthood, this means that a lot of little boys, with gentler natures or less robust physiques, do not make it to their 6th year on the street. With the migration that took place, we were suddenly faced with little boys who were not just little, but were almost certainly NOT survivors. Added to this, the bigger boys who were around Manda Hill were quick to spot the opportunity to introduce the little guys to glue and solvent abuse, and then sell it to them to feed their habit, and so within a short space of time we found a whole new generation of little lost souls, stoned out of their heads, high on glue, dirty, smelly, cold and hungry, begging for enough money to survive through to the following day. For many of them ‘the sands of time are sinking’ very fast, with little hope of ‘the dawn of heaven’ breaking, and it was, and is, very distressing to watch. And on a weekly basis, Christine and I would say we must do something about the problem, we cannot just walk past again.

Sunday lunch?

But we did not know what to do. The fact is that we do not have enough space on our premises to take many more children, and certainly not another 50. Yet if we leave them, many of them might die, and so the soul-searching and hard questions rose again and again, with no apparent solution. Out of all this we came to a strong conviction on a couple of issues. First that we were willing to take up the challenge of taking on more children if the resources to do so became available, and second that the resources would become available if we were meant to do it. But none of this answered the immediate question ‘what can we do now?’ Our previous experience with the boys we currently support told us that the first step has to be to get to know the boys and let them begin to feel confident with us. To do this, we had to meet them on their terms, and in large numbers as they are automatically suspicious of any move which tends to separate them into individuals. So we agreed four weeks ago to invite them all for Sunday lunch. We expected about 20, but in the event 45 turned up, and the number has remained at that level for the four weeks we have been operating. That first Sunday was a life-altering experience for us all.

There is so much I could tell you about, so many little glimpses of the horrors of life on the street, so many flashes of love winning over all the odds, so many illustrations of what God has done for us on a cosmic scale. But let me just give you a couple of incidents which show some of it. Clifford is a mentally retarded teenager, abandoned on the street, high on glue, with patches of pink skin all over his body, and hair turning prematurely grey. Unable to express himself clearly, he just put his head on my shoulder and grinned at me when I hugged him. Or Sam, 14 years old, pretending to box with me, then dropping his stance, running to me and holding me round the neck for dear life. He had to be prised off by a couple

of helpers, but all he wanted was a cuddle. Or little Albert, 8 years old, shivering with cold, and hunger, yet leaving his place in the food queue to get a hug from one of the helpers. Or Gift, 15, with dead hopelessness in his eyes, who told me how he had been to school until 2003 when his parents were killed in a road accident and he went from comfortable home to the street in a matter of days. Or our own dear lads, giving up their afternoon, to sit amongst little groups of street kids and talk to them, counselling, showing kindness, affection and the love of Christ to children who are where they used to be. Or Nicholas, Sarah and Mulenga running themselves ragged fetching and carrying all afternoon and in the end crying over the misery they had seen. Or little Rachel and Memory taking some of the small boys by the hand and bringing them to play with their toys. And on every side the dirt of the street, lice (yes lice!), the smell of unwashed bodies and the overpowering fumes of glue and solvent, from the boys' clothes and breath. I cannot convey properly what it was like, but I am in no doubt that love was shown and relationships forged that will stand the test of time. The subsequent 3 Sundays have followed a similar pattern, though of course with each passing week, we recognise more of the boys and they become more confident in relating to us. Helpers have appeared from nowhere, so that we are never left to manage the situation alone, and our faithful friend Phil Bailey has been a tower of strength throughout.

New Investment

This has all been happening while we considered a much longer term idea of trying to obtain a small farm on the outskirts of Lusaka and turning it into a small village type location for keeping many more children. We had been concerned that taking more kids would mean losing that one-on-one contact which is vital to them, but the last few weeks have showed us that many of the older lads are now fit and able to be responsible older brother figures to the younger boys and could in fact be trusted with a lot of the work in caring and nurturing them. A smallholding would be ideal for building housing, a small school, a workshop for trades education and an agriculture project, run by Phil which would serve the dual purpose of providing food and teaching good farming methods to the children. It all seemed like an impossible dream so we discussed it many times only to shelve it again. Yet now here we are faced with a crisis. We need more space if we are to do any more. We are willing to go forward, and the personnel seem to be available to make such a project work. And then.... Well I told you last time that we had been contacted by an estate agent who wanted to donate some cash for every sale they made, then said she had found a bigger place for us to move to. We really did not consider it seriously since the asking price was \$200,000. However, prompted by curiosity we went to look at it. It was exactly what we were looking for. A lovely house with enough bedrooms for our extended family and visitors, a double garage which would make a great dormitory for twenty little boys, with two small cottages for the bigger lads, its own water supply, and five acres of land to build on and farm. So now we had the need, the vision, the people to help, and the site. The question was – were we willing to take the next step? After much thought, Christine and I decided that we could probably afford to offer \$150,000 (£85,000) if we sold our house in Edinburgh and re-invested the proceeds. So we offered this amount, almost certain it would be rejected. But last Friday the offer was accepted since we were going to use the house to help street children. In between fits of excitement, we are panicking as we contemplate the undertaking, but it all seems to be coming together. Of course we worry about losing our base in Scotland, but faith reminds us we are in the hands of a Father who knows

all we need, and our security does not rest in possessions such as houses or land.

Since we started feeding the street kids, we have got to know quite a few of them quite well. Over the last four weeks two of them have come to stay with us. One of them, Jonathan, was best friends with one of our lads, Danny, when they were on the street together. They used to sleep together and look out for one another. One day someone stole something from a shopkeeper who reported it to the police. The police descended on the area and arrested everyone in sight including Jonathan. Danny escaped and ran away, at which point he came to our house and stayed with us. Poor Jonathan says he was beaten unconscious by the police in the cells and when he was released without charge, found that his friend had disappeared. Then two weeks ago he was asked to come to our house for lunch and met Danny again. It was a tearful reunion all round, and Danny, who is very shy and quiet, begged that Jonathan be allowed to stay with him. How could we refuse? Then David our carpenter met a little boy John one Sunday and felt so moved at his plight he asked if he could 'keep him'. So John moved in, and sleeps with David and proudly helps him in the workshop. Culturally this is a very unusual thing for David to do as older boys would traditionally have very little to do with younger ones and certainly would not agree to share a room with them, but the relationship seems to be working on both sides.

Three scallywags

And then last night happened. We were finishing supper when we got a message that four of the little boys were at the gate. One of them, called Wisdom, who looks about nine, had been assaulted while begging for money. Instead of just refusing to help or ignoring him, the driver of the car slapped him hard enough to knock him onto the railings by the roadside where he gashed his head and started bleeding profusely. Once all the chaos had settled, three of his friends remembered I had told them that they should come to us if they needed help, so they set off with him and arrived about 7pm. We managed to get poor little Wisdom cleaned and patched up but felt he should stay the night in case he had any reaction to the head trauma. His friends immediately took this as a general invitation, and tried to get me to agree that they could stay 'forever'. I refused to be drawn, knowing full well that every day they stay is an unspoken promise, but told them they could stay the night, provided they bathed first. We should probably draw a discreet veil over the bathing episode – maybe I will relate it when we are all older and wiser – but suffice it to say I nearly collapsed laughing at their antics. Then they gobbled a huge meal of maize porridge and eggs and settled down in sleeping bags to watch Lord of the Rings. This morning new hope was dawning in their eyes and we realise we are not going to be able to send them away. Wisdom is very quiet and shy, but walks around the compound holding my hand, while the other three scallywags cannot believe their luck, and are generally creating havoc. But they are in our hearts now, and the big boys are very happy to share with them. Some of them even said they would move out and rent a house together so the little ones could be looked after properly.

So there we have it. Everything is moving at breathtaking speed. The road seems to be going quickly in one direction, and we are happy to follow it. It could all yet go wrong, but somehow I don't think it will, and we are enjoying the anticipation of seeing how our God will supply all our needs.

Until next time, who knows where we will be by then,
God Bless

Don, Christine, Sarah, Rachel, Nicholas and Mulenga, and all the boys.

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

NET INCOME FROM CONGREGATIONS

	2006 Jul	2006 Total	2005 Total to July
Caithness & Sutherland			
Brora	£1,600.00	£11,452.00	£10,384.79
Assynt & Scourie	£1,800.00	£5,520.00	£4,695.72
Total Caithness & Sutherland	£3,400.00	£16,972.00	£15,080.51
Inverness			
Duthil-Dores	£1,146.00	£13,801.00	£17,822.72
Inverness	£2,260.00	£21,337.00	£15,614.05
Total Inverness	£3,406.00	£35,138.00	£33,436.77
Ross			
Kilmorack & Strathglass	£1,200.00	£9,593.00	£8,068.72
Kiltearn	£1,700.00	£11,660.00	£11,320.00
Tarbat	£0.00	£3,902.00	£6,050.00
Total Ross	£2,900.00	£25,155.00	£25,438.72
een	£500.00	£4,475.00	£5,720.51
Edinburgh	£2,000.00	£20,598.00	£15,500.00
Total Edinburgh	£2,500.00	£25,073.00	£21,220.51
Glasgow			
Ayr	£0.00	£1,119.42	£3,701.51
Arran	£610.00	£4,357.00	£4,232.67
Dumfries	£0.00	£768.00	£1,860.00
Partick	£3,542.00	£19,000.00	£22,976.59
Shettleston	£1,000.00	£7,730.00	£7,597.09
Thornwood	£1,400.00	£11,762.00	£14,651.85
Rothsay	£0.00	£1,295.35	£1,152.31
Total Glasgow	£6,552.00	£46,031.77	£56,172.02
Lewis			
Cross	£1,700.00	£13,080.00	£13,264.00
Harris - Leverburgh	£1,000.00	£7,322.00	£8,124.26
Harris - Scalpay	£0.00	£8,953.00	£10,035.28
Knock & Point	£800.00	£5,450.00	£4,724.28
Stornoway	£4,530.00	£29,279.18	£28,854.65
Total Lewis	£8,030.00	£64,084.18	£65,002.47
Lochcarron			
Glenelg & Arnisdale	£139.60	£1,174.15	£1,072.67
Lochalsh & Glenshiel	£733.40	£7,490.73	£6,851.52
Poolewe & Aultbea	£1,714.00	£8,389.00	£7,253.92
Total Lochcarron	£2,587.00	£17,053.88	£15,178.11
Skye & Uist			
Bracadale	£1,000.00	£7,213.00	£7,696.10
Duirinish (Waternish)	£400.00	£2,437.00	£2,836.67
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	£1,300.00	£8,774.00	£6,274.18
North Uist	£700.00	£5,918.00	£3,564.10
Portree	£1,712.00	£18,505.19	£15,225.97
Snizort	£1,650.00	£12,360.00	£11,863.36
Strath	£1,550.00	£14,272.00	£13,789.03
Total Skye & Uist	£8,312.00	£69,479.19	£61,249.41
Total From Congregations	£37,687.00	£298,987.02	£292,778.52
Other Donations	£1,014.40	£6,871.79	£13,149.69
TOTAL	£38,701.40	£305,858.81	£305,928.21
Included in the above:			
Tax Recovered on Gift Aid Declarations		£48,178.00	£37,709.10

Zambian Experience

Two of our young folk speak of their experiences as volunteers in Zambia, summer 2005

Fiona Smith

'ndi kutaya pa iye nkhwana yanu yonse, pakuti iye asamalira inu' (1Pedro 5:7) ['Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you' 1Pet.5:7]

Above is a verse which will for me forever hold fond memories of these adults and children whose faith is constantly tried and tested and remains strong. It was one of the first memory verses I taught to my lovely group of 0-6 year-olds on children's day. The conviction with which they memorised and repeated it to me instantly struck me. I had frequently skimmed over this verse paying little attention to its words, but now they took on greater meaning, they spoke of cares which I had never known; cares for sick and dying parents, cares for younger siblings, cares for lack of food and clean water. All of these, my little children really did cast upon our Lord.

While I was in Zambia I felt constantly aware of the Lord's provision for me, as I had never been away from home for any length of time and was worried that homesickness would be a problem. However I was blessed with a wonderful support network of friends on the mission: Phil Bailey, Joseph Pettitt, Abigail Brown and James Skelton (latter two, volunteers from England) as well as Irene and Iain were always there to encourage and support me. This was greatly appreciated!

I was also blessed with friendships with the farm workers and students of the college. Irene and I also grew very attached to many of the wives of current and ex students who would attend our ladies' meeting; the courage they showed throughout the hardships they had faced was inspiring.

My trip to Zambia gave me a new perspective on life. It taught me to give thanks for every little blessing which I had previously taken for granted. Having been back home now for almost a year I have found it all too easy to slip back into old habits, but my love for those with whom I came in contact while away has only grown stronger. The ready smiles, the warmth and kindness always shown to me will never be forgotten.

Irene MacKinnon

Preconceived visions gleaned entirely from guide-books and news reports did nothing to prepare us for the Africa we encountered arriving in Lusaka on the 11th of July 2005. Each of the members of the team saw the living faith of some of the most disadvantaged people we'd ever meet.

'I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord' (Ps.27:13-14).

The faces of the women that we met on the monthly Women's Day would have told you nothing about recent bereavement, sickness or hardship of any kind. They were desperate to meet us with wide smiles and hungry for every word that we spoke. Most of the ladies spoke the native tongue Nyanja with only smatterings of English, so whatever we said was passed through an interpreter. We prepared English lessons that would be practical for their everyday life and this included practising common greetings and how to ask for items at the local market. They were always eager to learn and participated in the rôle play with shrieks of laughter. These

were women who were all too aware of the reality of death from malaria, the consequences of AIDS and the high infant mortality rate of the children they conceived. But they were not coming to us for sympathy; they came so that they could learn how to love God more.

Their joy was infectious. It was times like this that I knew why God had led us to Africa. We didn't feel qualified to teach women twenty years our senior, yet Christ was a common language and created a platform where we could all relate to each other. They wanted to know how our lives had changed in coming to know Christ, how the grace of God had worked and how we had in our different journeys been led to work for a summer in Zambia.

Although a material famine was ravaging the Zambian countryside and endangering the welfare of many of the locals, the students and their families, the spiritual abundance of the people we encountered was striking. They were desperate for the Word of God, to hear about the church in Scotland and to worship with us. Their dependence was entirely on the mercy of God and His goodness was what gave them hope for each day.

A Typical Day

(although there were always exceptions, variations and things out of the ordinary!)

05.30 – waking up to prepare breakfast for everybody on the mission – that could mean anything from 7-13 people

07.10 – morning devotions with the students

10.00 – teaching English to local children for about two hours (Saturdays)

12.00 – prepared lunch (main meal) for 13.00

15.00 – children's ministry for about three hours (Wednesdays)

16.00 – teach farm workers English for an hour (Mondays & Fridays) teach college students English for 1-2 hours (Tuesdays & Thursdays)

18.00 – prepare evening meal

20.00 – Bible study for the volunteers

21.30 – official bedtime

PRAYER POINTS

* Jan and Fransa van Straaten in their health and the work that they do at Covenant College

* Phil Bailey (and all the workers) on the farm and the other projects that he is involved in

* The students at the College and their families some of whom live very far from the Mission

* Future volunteers

* The famine in Zambia – the failure of the maize crop has meant hardship for many families

* The work that the MacDonalds do in Lusaka with the street children – we only got a brief glimpse of the work that they do but it is incredible to see the children that they have brought into their home and how they have progressed since being taken in and being exposed to the love of a Christian family

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour
Titus 3:5-6

Communions

September:- 1st, Dumfries, Portree, Metropolitan Washington (Cumberland)

2nd, North Uist & Grimsay

3rd, Scalpay Harris

4th, Glasgow Thornwood, Inverness Greyfriars, Lochalsh & Glenshiel (Ardelve)

October:- 1st, Ayr, Snizort,

2nd, Cross, Metropolitan Washington (Bethesda), Rogart and Eddrachillis (Scourie)