

GRAPEVINE

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

The Bishop of Brechin writes:

Waiting on God

Most of us do not like waiting. There is irritable waiting – in slow moving shop queues and for buses that don't come. There is anxious waiting – for something to arrive in the post, for exam results or a medical diagnosis. And then there is waiting on God, simply trusting that the right thing will happen with the right people in the right place at the right time, God's time. That is the most challenging kind of waiting.

Advent is a season of waiting and expectation as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (the 'advent') of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final coming as judge at the end of time. Advent is a time of profound Christian waiting and watchfulness which struggles to fend off the worst of the commercial intrusions. However, a few years ago Anne and I visited Vienna at the start of Advent and were struck by the subtle interweaving of Christian and more secular 'winter festival' themes and activities, notably in the Christkindlmarkt which provides a street market with mulled wine and roasted

chestnuts and children's activities in the town hall.

Children find the approach to Christmas very exciting. Advent calendars and candles help families celebrate the anticipation in a delightful way. The Advent wreath, imported from northern Europe in the 19th century is now commonplace in our churches as we count down the Sundays before Christmas. In recent years we have always created our table-top version at home which is fun and strikes a chord with our grandchildren and visitors alike.

In our part of the world Advent falls at the darkest time of the

year when the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work both in Christingle Services and significant community events like Switching on the Christmas Lights in Dundee which I am much looking forward to. During that evening last year our Cathedral estimates that as many as a thousand people passed through the St Paul's to hear seasonal music, light a candle and say a prayer.

Amidst the understandable busy-ness and excitement making 'a quiet moment for God' is perhaps what we might aim for, offering to God all that we are, all that is going on in our lives and who we might become. Which is surely something worth waiting for.

With good wishes,



Meditation

Beholding His Glory is only half our job. In our souls too the mysteries must be brought forth; we are not really Christians till that has been done. 'The Eternal Birth,' says Meister Eckhart, 'must take place in *you*.' And another mystic says human nature is like a stable inhabited by the ox of passion and the ass of prejudice; animals which take up a lot of room and which I suppose most of us are feeding on the quiet. And it is there between them, pushing them out, that Christ must be born and in their very manger He must be laid – that they will be the first to fall on their knees before Him. Sometimes Christians seem far nearer to those animals than to Christ in His simple poverty, self-abandoned to God,

The birth of Christ in our souls is for a purpose beyond ourselves: it is because His manifestation in the world must be through us. Every Christian is, as it were, part of the dust-laden air which shall radiate the glowing Epiphany of God, catch and reflect His golden Light. *Ye are the light of the world* – but only because you are enkindled, made radiant by the One Light of the World. And being kindled, we have got to get with it, be useful. As Christ said in one of His ironical flashes, 'Do not light a candle in order to stick it under the bed!' Some people make a virtue of religious skulking.

from Light of Christ, by Evelyn Underhill

Don't take 'No' for an answer

Have you ever heard the phrase "don't take 'No' for an answer"? Or perhaps as a Christian you know how the Bible advises us 'never give up hope'. Well, for most of us that is definitely easier said than done! It's all too easy to set our hearts on something and then get one or two knock backs, and think "Ah well, it obviously wasn't meant to be", or "I'm just not suited to this" or "I might as well give up now."

Actually there is great wisdom to be found in the phrase "Don't take No for an answer" or holding on to God's word not to give up hope. The wisdom is perhaps this: It's only as we push sufficient numbers of doors open that we get the result we want. But with that comes the fact that some doors won't open. That's just how it is. In the same way as a new horserider is told they won't be a good rider until they've fallen off seven times, we could also say the same about many areas of life. You aren't trying hard enough until you've had at least seven Nos (or shut doors). This way of thinking can really help because, rather than seeing a shut door, or a No, as a reason to give up, one can count it as progress on the way to our chosen destination.

It's just the same if you are single and looking for a soul mate – someone special to share your life with. Perhaps you are scared of branching out to meet others because you fear rejection. Well,



Vestry members took it in turn to look for the star

with a new outlook, you can see this sort of No as your route to success.

friendsfirst is the UK's largest offline friendship and dating agency for Christians. It was established in 1999 and the staff are great at providing encouragement to members and helping them to keep going. One of their skills is helping members to *persevere* – to keep contacting others and keep responding to contacts, and they are good at it because they know it works – time and time again, as the many people who've married through them prove.

Recently Tracy, one of their members confirmed this when she wrote saying:

I had been looking for someone for a number of years and had almost given up hope. Nevertheless I continued to pray, asking God to prepare me for marriage. I joined **friendsfirst** and met James. We got married in September! God knew the type of person that I needed and James and I work so well as a team.

In fact **friendsfirst** has story after story of people who've persevered – through the Nos and disappointments – and then find happiness when they find the right person.

So, if you'd rather be with someone special than on your own, remember not to give up hope – whatever your age, it's never too late. And if you want help in finding your ideal match you'll find plenty of support as well as new friends through **friendsfirst**. Ring them for a confidential chat on 0141 530 9394 (or the main office at 0121 427 1286) or look at their website <www.friends1st.co.uk>. You'll find many stories to uplift you and all the information you need to become a member to make your life what you want it to be. They are also on [facebook.com/friends1st](https://www.facebook.com/friends1st).

A RUSSIAN LEGEND

Two dangerous criminals guilty of many violent robberies were converted by a hermit. They both confessed their many crimes and asked what reparation they could make.

The man of God said they should go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and in addition carry a heavy cross on their backs. Soon the big crosses were ready and the new converts set off.

All went well at first. The crosses were indeed heavy but they had strength enough. But after a few days their shoulders were sore from the continual chafing of the rough wood.

Then they had an idea how to improve the crosses. They stopped in a village and went to a carpenter's work shop. One sawed off the bottom end of the long arm of the cross and said: 'Now it's much shorter and it's still a cross.' The other did not want to make his cross shorter, only thinner. He sawed it through lengthwise and so made two crosses out of it. One of these he left lying on the ground. Then he said: 'Now it is much lighter and it's still a cross.'

So they were able to get along much better. And that was just as well because they soon came to a rocky desert where they could find nothing to eat. They had to go for three days without a bit of food. On the fourth day they saw a city on the horizon and rejoiced. They walked as fast as they could in their weakened condition.

Towards evening they came up to unexpected obstacle. A deep canal barred their way. And there was no bridge to be seen. They were exhausted and in despair as neither could swim. Then one had an idea: We can use our crosses as a makeshift bridge. But, you see, one cross was too short. The other was long enough but too thin. So they both perished miserably.

We too are sometimes tempted to halve our crosses. But the Lord did not carry his cross by halves. He carried the whole of it to the end.

CONSECRATION

The Cathedral Church of Saint Paul was filled almost to capacity on Saturday, 8 October for the Consecration of the Venerable Dr Nigel Peyton as the 54th Bishop of Brechin.



Entrance procession at the start of the service

A large number of clergy, not only from this diocese, but also from the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham where he had served for the last 26 years, as well as others to whom he is known, vested in the City Chambers and together with many civic dignitaries



The giving of the Pastoral Staff, symbol of a shepherd's care for the flock

were piped across in procession to the cathedral.

The service combined grand formality and uplifting music with warmth of feeling and sincerity of purpose. The service was led by the Primus, the Most Rev'd David Chillingworth, who, together with ten other bishops present, laid his hands on Nigel's head in consecration. The sermon was eloquently delivered by the Rt Rev'd George Cassidy, the former Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham.

Following the service a reception was held, courtesy of the Dundee City Council, in the former Chamber of Commerce building. At this speeches of welcome were made and greetings brought from our linked dioceses of Iowa and

Swaziland. Bishop Meshack Mabuza spoke not only for himself but also read a letter from Bishop Alan Scarfe, who, for health reasons, had been unable to be present.



Bishop Nigel with the Rt Rev'd George Cassidy

All participants in the process and preparation of this significant occasion were rightly thanked and there was heartfelt anticipation of what Bishop Nigel's ministry would bring to the diocese.

Photographs courtesy of Nancy Scott St Mary & St Pater's Church, Montrose

The Claremont Trust

Repeated financial crises contribute to making us feel less secure in life, and that is true whether you're a man under 25 with little or no post-secondary school education or an international banker, whether you are a country that has needed to be bailed out or one that has lost its AAA rating in the international markets. Among the many groups that are struggling at present are the charities, not least those charities which are trying to help the most disadvantaged in society. So bodies like the Claremont Trust are all the more important in the current financial situation. The Trust is a small, ecumenical body with limited financial resources, which seeks to help constructive and radical projects in Scotland and abroad, both within and outside the Church, as well as in the field of inter-faith activity.

This year it has given grants to a range of groups. One of them, for example, is the Citadel Youth Centre in a deprived part of Leith which runs open youth clubs and the grant enabled them to take groups of

disadvantaged young people away for residential activity weekends.

Further afield the Society for Community Development Project in Tamilnadu, India used its grant to empower marginalised and vulnerable tribal people to combat HIV and STD infections by organising street theatre performances and visiting schools.

Different yet again is the Dornoch Firth Group Bridge Project where five rural parishes worked at developing links among their young people with a week's programme of activities ranging from using Scripture Union materials in the mornings to managing a youth cafe in the evenings.

For further information or a grant application form please contact the Secretary, Mrs Chris Fulcher, 23 Langholm Street, Newcastleton, TD9 0QX. To contribute to the Claremont Trust contact the Treasurer, Mr Norman Kerr, 57 Raeswood Gardens, Crookston, Glasgow, G53 7LD.

The Bishop's Sermon at the Bishop Forbes' Evensong

St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee

Sunday, 9 October 2011

First may I thank everyone for your warm welcome to Anne and me on our return to the Diocese of Brechin. Your letters, presents, cards and emails, your prayers and practical help have meant a great deal to us.

Thank you for the joyful Consecration Service and Reception yesterday and the demanding preparations necessary. Among many contributions: especially Provost Jeremy, the musicians and cathedral staff team; our Diocesan Secretary Hilary Gibson; the flower arrangers who have adorned this place, together with much else behind the scenes. Also Anne and I wish to thank Judy Robinson for her care of Bishop's House. It is encouraging to come to a diocese where so many folk are doing their bits and pieces for God and to enjoy this Diocesan Festival Evensong together.

160 years ago St Paul's was the only Episcopal church in Dundee, a meagre and unadorned chapel up a stair in Castle Street. The religious atmosphere then was hot with prejudice, ignorance and controversy. It is said that the congregation was as dull as the chapel, and two years' work in Dundee had reduced Bishop Alexander Penrose Forbes well-nigh to despair: "I am doing no earthly good here, the people seem dead..." he said. The Vestry sensing his anxiety sent Forbes a warm expression of their appreciation of his teaching and self-sacrificing devotion to his people. His reply written on 9 December 1850 indicates where the heart of this godly man lay:

"Every association of family and early training, solemn vows and engrossing duties, the recollections of the past and the hopes of the future, bind me to the Episcopal Church; and though I may mourn over the lukewarmness and coldness of some of her children, and be anxious for her safety in these days of sifting and trial, I am not

without hope that He, who brought her through the trouble of the past century, will not abandon her in this."

The genius of Bishop Forbes was to link catholic worship with social action and pastoral care. He understood that worship is the intersection of heaven and earth. Our worship should be a cathedral of the spirit, drawing together the daily and the divine, engaging all the senses in a journey of spiritual discovery, seeking to transform personal lives and communities, making the real presence of Christ known in public space.

As in the wonderful story of Jacob's stone pillow under the desert stars and his vivid dream of angels and the ladder to heaven assures us that in all our restless busyness and anxieties about the future, if we would but pause and listen and just be before God for a moment, we might catch a glimpse:

'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, the gate of heaven.'

God promises Jacob that there is a bright and flourishing future; God blesses and multiplies the aspirations of his people.

The whole Vestry episode is a parable of loyalty to the Gospel and the Church and the communities we serve; about not allowing unresponsive people or unpromising mission results to defeat or deflect us.

It also indicates the growing importance of lay ministries in the life of the Church. Tonight we reaffirm our calling to ministry, renewing Reader licences and Eucharistic Minister authorizations and the rich calling to a variety of liturgical and pastoral responsibilities. Tonight we recognise the commitment of the laity to synodical government, the time given gladly to Vestries, boards and committees.

As in Forbes' day we face the 'sifting and trial' of many challenges and opportunities.

Certainly there is an urgency to grow our congregations and extend our reach into communities and their needs. Many fantasies are projected on to bishops and, like Forbes, I do not have all the instant answers. However I believe we can do better and trust that God will nudge us in the right direction. I do not believe that the Church is uniquely awful and it certainly brings great gifts for a needy 21st century world.

We should perhaps regard the word 'Church' as a verb rather than as a noun. Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, was verb-orientated, about things happening. So, in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus announces his missionary purpose in life: 'Today the Good News is fulfilled in your hearing.' Jacob's gate is flung open to heaven on earth now.

Jesus calls disciples – and in our calling we are always becoming Church. The Church is not ours to keep; in the theological imagination it is squeezed into existence, making its home in the community, living out the transforming presence of Christ, what John Donne called 'an echo chamber of the divine Word of God.'

The next few years present a liminal moment in Scotland's history. In his book *Stone Voices* (2002) which is about the search for Scottish identity Neil Ascherson describes 'the St Andrew's Fault', our tendency to veer between rigid conformity to our separated roots and to a more open shared future, between over-confidence and self-doubt.

Recently at the Celtic Bishops Conference we were addressed by John Swinney, Finance Secretary of the Scottish Government. He commended the churches for our prayers and for articulating the aspirations of Scotland. He pictured a more self-confident society, fundamentally open and at ease with itself, ready to move forward, welcoming contributions from all – it is not where we have

come from that matters but where we wish to go.

The Scottish Episcopal Church has an important contribution to make and in many ways I believe that this is the forward looking diocese we need to become.

What then is the measure of our ministry? The story is told of an American priest from Texas who was touring the English countryside. Leaving a tiny medieval parish church he bumped into the local Vicar in the churchyard. The Texan made polite conversation, then looking around him said, 'How big is this parish anyway?' 'Well,' replied the Vicar, 'the village has about a hundred people and we cover a few square miles I suppose.' The Texan priest grinned. 'Back in the States,' he said, 'my parish is just outside Dallas. Nine hundred on the membership roll. I get up at dawn and I get in my car and drive. I drive all day, right into the evening, and I still don't reach the boundary of my parish.'

'Oh dear,' said the Vicar, 'I once had a car like that.'

As disciples and ministers, as the people of God, we need to keep a sense of proportion in a world of celebrity where it can seem that only 'size matters'. We need humility and sacrificial service, taking God very seriously and ourselves rather less seriously, not thinking too highly of ourselves. Because God is never quite finished with us.

I recently received a congratulations card, featuring a Bishop fully robed with mitre and crozier, sitting in a railway carriage who complains to his businessman neighbour, 'when I started this journey I was a curate.'

Yes, a joke maybe about the rail network's failings and the frustrations of delayed trains, but encapsulating so well the discipleship journey we are all on as Christians – and for the clergy particularly so.

In my case, when I first

preached from this pulpit (in 1976) I was indeed a curate.

I am now called on the next stage of my Christian journey, re-joining you here in the Brechin Diocese where my ministry and our family life began. And with the words of T.S. Eliot whispering:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time
(Little Gidding)

Under God we will never have heard it all, seen it or done it all. Because it is not just what we have achieved that counts, but what and who you and I are yet to become – a lively and holy people, called to join together in nothing less than the transforming mission of God.

May God bless you and keep you today and always.

Amen.

*Rt Rev'd Dr Nigel Peyton,
Bishop of Brechin*

St Andrew's Church Hall, Brechin

On Saturday, 22 October the refurbished church hall was officially opened by the Provost of Angus, Ruth Leslie Melville and dedicated by the Bishop. It has been quite a journey to reach this day! The hall was built 150 years ago as part of the school and library of the original St Andrew's Episcopal Church. In the 1970s, part of the building was sold, leaving the present premises.

In 2002 the Rev'd Canon Sidney Fox proposed that a new hall be built in the church grounds; plans were prepared and an application to the Lottery was made, but this was not successful. A generous legacy was left to the church, and it was decided to buy a shop in the High Street of Brechin. This became the Rainbow Charity Shop, with the aim of raising money for a hall for church and community use. The first manager was Mrs Cheryl Birse, who was followed by Mrs Shirley Crozier and Mrs Barbara Watson. For seven years the funds gradually

accumulated thanks to the hard work of the volunteers and the support from the local people in buying and donating goods. The shop sells a small amount of Fair Trade goods, and that which cannot be sold goes for recycling.

With the arrival of our new Rector, thoughts again turned to the question of what to do with the hall. A further attempt was made to obtain lottery or grant money without success. After much discussion it was agreed by the Vestry, that there was sufficient money in the hall fund for a complete refurbishment. During the summer the work proceeded and there is now a brand new kitchen, a disabled toilet and complete refurbishment of the hall. We now have a building that has easy access, is all on one level and provides a good meeting place both for church use and for hire by groups or individuals. For further information about hire, for one-off events or regular use, contact either



l. to r. The Very Rev'd David Mumford, Provost Ruth Melville, The Rt Rev'd Nigel Peyton, The Rev'd Ursula Shone (with cake)

Margaret Watson on 01356 625506 or the Rev'd Ursula Shone on 01356 626087.

The Rev'd Ursula Shone

The Degradation of Palestine

In the autumn the Rt Rev'd Richard Llewellyn, former Bishop of Dover, spoke to the Brechin clergy about his experiences of three months earlier this year in Bethlehem as an observer in the The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme for Palestine and Israel, a project which is monitoring human rights and supports Israeli and Palestinian peace activists. What follows is an impression of his experiences.

None of us found it much fun getting up at three in the morning to be at the checkpoint before four o'clock. Every working day, about 2,500 Palestinians from Bethlehem and the surrounding villages have to pass through this checkpoint to reach their place of work in East Jerusalem (still part of the West Bank, but appropriated by Israel as part of "greater Jerusalem"), or further afield.

The checkpoint is a miserable place, especially on a cold and windy morning. To get to work on time, the earliest arrivals are there by 3 a.m. Even at that early hour, long queues form, and movement through the checkpoint is often very slow.



Early morning queue trying to get work in Jerusalem

Our task was to count as accurately as possible each half-hour the number of people passing through, and, where possible, to encourage the soldiers at the checkpoint to allow people to pass through more quickly. Our logs were forwarded each week to such organisations as the Red Cross and United Nations representatives in the area, to

afford them independent evidence in their discussions about checkpoints with the Israeli authorities.

I happened to meet one woman whom I had accompanied through the checkpoint a few days previously. "Going through that checkpoint with you at five o'clock has taught me more about the occupation than any other experience during my time in the Holy Land."

On one occasion, a young Israeli soldier called me over and wanted a conversation. "What do you think about all this?" I chose my words carefully: "I think it is very sad."

"I shouldn't be here at all today: I should be home with my family," he told me. "I fell asleep during a very long session of checkpoint duty the other day, and this is my punishment." The occupation does damage to Israeli society as well as dehumanising Palestinians.

In each of the villages we visited, there was our contact, someone accustomed to meeting successive teams of accompaniers. The occupation has severely disrupted life in many villages, especially those affected by the separation barrier.

Much of the barrier does not follow the 1949 armistice line between Israel and the West Bank: in places it bites deep into Palestinian territory, not only to encompass illegally built Jewish settlements but also to enclose considerable swaths of Palestinian farming land.

A number of Palestinian villages have been cut in two by this

barrier, dividing Palestinian from Palestinian and cutting off villages from neighbouring villages and from their local town. This has had devastating effects on the local economy.



Makeshift accommodation after house demolition

Then there are the house demolitions. Palestinians find it exceedingly difficult and expensive to obtain a building permit. Many build without a permit, knowing that they risk demolition, but having no other way of housing their families. They hope that, in the lottery of demolition, they will be spared.

Some are not. Since 1967, more than 24,000 Palestinian homes have been demolished by the Israelis (the figure is supplied by the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions).

Some of this has been to make way for the separation barrier or other military installations; some in order to inflict punishment. Most, though, serves to enforce discriminatory building regulations, all of which dispossess innocent and peaceful Palestinians of their homes.

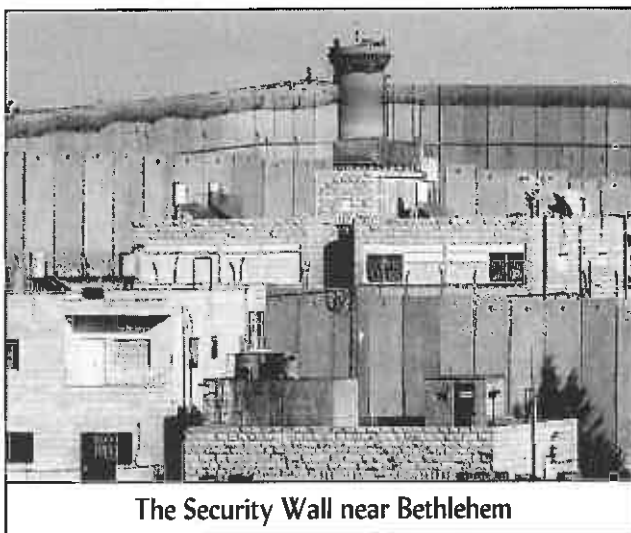
In one village, we met Sihan and her family. Her house had been demolished in December. She was pregnant at the time, and she subsequently had a miscarriage. We sat and listened to her story beside the pile of rubble that was once her home. Our Bethlehem team has been able to help with the rebuilding of the house later this year by involving the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, a marvellous Jewish organisation that will meet all the

costs of rebuilding, and lawyers' fees needed to contest any further demolition order.

Villagers living near Jewish settlements are frequently subjected to harassment by the settlers. Some of the Jews believe that the whole of the land from the Mediterranean to the River Jordan, and from Lebanon in the north to Egypt in the south, belongs to them by divine right. For them, the sooner the Palestinian Arabs leave for other Arab countries the better. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) is often less than zealous in preventing the harassment of the villagers.

We also visited refugee camps, of which there are three in Bethlehem. These started out as tented villages erected by the United Nations after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, when 513 Palestinian villages were destroyed by the advancing Israeli forces, and about 700,000 Palestinians were made homeless.

The refugees were assured that they would be returning to their homes within a few weeks. Sixty-three years later, these tented dwellings have become transformed into suburbs of Bethlehem. Many children of the first refugees still treasure the keys to the homes from which their parents fled, and still hope to return one day – a hope that the Israeli Prime Minister described recently as “a fantasy”.



The Security Wall near Bethlehem

There is a large variety of NGOs working in the West Bank. One of the most impressive is a Jewish body called B'Tselem (based outside the West Bank), established in 1989 by a group of prominent academics, lawyers, journalists, and Knesset members. It endeavours to document and educate the Israeli public and policy-makers about human-rights violations in the Occupied Territories. Its facts and figures are always carefully checked, and its website (www.btselem.org/english/) is full of useful and reliable information.

One way in which we supported peace activists was by joining non-violent demonstrations against the occupation. These were Palestinian demonstrations, not ours, and our role was one of accompaniment and support, so we stayed towards the back of the gathering. But our presence was visible because we always wore waistcoats with a distinctive logo, wherever we went.

The IDF would inevitably be there in strength, and would sooner or later bar the way, after which the outcome was unpredictable. Much depended on the attitude of the officer in charge. Tear gas and sound bombs were sometimes used to disperse the crowd.

It was during these demonstrations that I met Jewish Israelis who were completely opposed to the occupation. These valiant people told us that they were glad of our support.

What good did we do? Without a doubt, our presence was valued by the Palestinians we came to know in the relatively short time we were there, and by Israeli peace activists. And I am convinced that our duties at the checkpoint were important, providing reliable and objective statistics.

We did not go to Israel/Palestine to “take sides”. My respect and regard for Jewish people remain unaltered. And I grew to admire the resilience and humour of Palestinians.

I am, without apology, deeply critical of the policies of the Israeli government towards Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Its legitimate concern for the security of Israeli society cannot justify most of the restrictions and humiliations and discriminatory policies it has imposed on the Palestinian population.

I will do all in my power to persuade people that the continued military occupation is unjust, and does damage to both societies, Palestinian and Israeli.



Luke 1: 26-38

Agnus Day appears with the permission of www.agnusday.org

Reforming International Finance

We can judge that something is not working if the outcomes are wrong or if the dispositions encouraged are not those of the kingdom. The international financial system is not leading to sustainable stability which ensures that goods and services can be produced and distributed which meet people's needs and enable people to flourish. Money and finance should enable exchange to take place both in space and over time so that people's savings can be channelled into productive investment which produces socially necessary goods and services. This is not happening.

We clearly have a world divided between rich and poor, both within and between countries and in which the basic needs of many of our brothers and sisters are not being met. This is wrong.

The Roman Catholic Church is in the forefront of thinking through Christian responses to the present international financial crisis. This October the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace issued a paper entitled 'Towards reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems...'

The document pinpoints three main causes of the financial crisis: policy errors, systemic weaknesses and the increasing lack of a moral culture.

First, the erosion of public controls over the finance and banking sector. In the 1980's the barriers between retail banking and investment banking were lowered. The banks could more easily invest and speculate with the funds entrusted to them and increasingly this is how the money (our money) was used. The reduction in public pensions and the increase in the private pension funds meant that there was more money seeking investment opportunities. Money and credit instruments (credit cards, swaps, all the new financial instruments that are traded) have since the 1990s grown more rapidly than revenue. And the markets seek profitable investments – often creating speculative credit bubbles that then burst with disastrous effects.

Secondly, the lack of effective public will and capacity to regulate the international financial sector so

that it serves the common good.

This is not primarily a problem of systemic government deficits or of the size of the national debt. Indeed to maintain employment, governments need to run deficits when there is unemployment and surpluses when the economy is doing well. On this, government and households operate to different rules – as Keynes saw very well. A national debt just transfers money from taxpayers to bondholders. The UK coped with a major increase in the national debt during the last war – because it was necessary. Indeed austerity programmes (whether in Greece or the UK) at a time of significant unemployment make the economic system worse and hit the poor much harder than they do the rich. Directors in the country's top firms are currently receiving pay increases of almost 50% and receiving average earnings (salaries, benefits and bonuses) of over £2,600,000. Chief executives are having on average pay increases of 43%. All this at a time when most people are having a pay freeze or a pay rise of less than inflation, which as prices are rising means a cut in living standards. Even worse, some are facing unemployment. The hurt is not being fairly shared.

Markets have no morality. With the advances in information technology and software over the past 20 years, international markets are now much more intertwined, impersonal and interdependent. What happens in Greece or in China intimately affects our future in Scotland.

And there are literally billions and billions of pounds, dollars and euros sloshing round the global international network seeking to make a quick buck. And if that quick buck is to be made through speculating against the pound, or against the Greek or Italian government, or in hedge funds that drive up the price of basic foodstuffs, then the market has no social conscience.

Third is the culture. Lord Myners, the minister appointed by the previous government to clean up the city became so disenchanted by the greed and self-aggrandisement which he found in the banking community

that he became a theology student. There was, he said, a troubling absence of clear moral purpose in banking. Money had become everything. These are not dispositions and values of the Kingdom.

One response is for individuals to try and ensure that their money and savings are used for productive rather than sinful purposes. This can be done, for example, by choosing to bank with an ethical bank and trying to choose an ethical option for one's pension fund.

But what is also required, as the Pontifical document makes clear, is social action at the appropriate levels to ensure that the common good is served. And that means regulatory bodies, rules and laws and a move towards a culture that sees finance as a servant of the common good rather than a forum within which large profits can be made without heeding the damage to people, the economy or the environment.

The document calls for four important measures.

1. There is a desperate need for an effective global financial authority.
2. There should be clear barriers between investment banking and ordinary retail banking.
3. Forms of recapitalisation of banks should be adopted which lead to virtuous action which develops the real economy. [So, for example, if printing more money for the banks – quantitative easing – just means that the banks use the extra money to improve their reserves rather than lending it to productive enterprises then that is not a sensible policy.]
4. There should be a tax on financial transactions. This would help combat excessive speculation and help prevent future crises. It would make the financial sector contribute to the cost of the crisis. It would be an extra source of income which could be used to combat climate change and lessen global inequality and create a global reserve fund to assist the recovery of the international financial system.

*David Mumford
Brechin*

Diocesan Synod Meeting

There was an Extraordinary Meeting of the Diocesan Synod on Wednesday evening, 12 October at Carnoustie. Following the Eucharist in Holy Rood Church members were given generous refreshments in the Church Hall.

Following the Bishop's opening remarks the first part of the meeting, as has become habitual at such autumn meetings, was taken up with consideration of proposed amendments to five Canons. Mostly these alterations were of no great consequence, but the Canon *Of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults* was more extensive, due largely to the development of practice and statutory requirements which have come into being over the last few years. All proposed amendments received wide support.

The second part of the meeting focused on the latest draft of the proposed Anglican Covenant, which has been developing over the past 8 years. The General Synod last June had discussed the

proposed Covenant using the indaba style in small groups. This is discussion in groups based on three principles:

- I am here for the common good;
- I speak for the common good; and
- There will be no winners or losers in this meeting.

All eight groups considered the same three questions and were asked to identify three significant common themes or comments. The questions were:

- What for you is significant within the Anglican Communion document?
- Why are you a Scottish Episcopalian and does the Anglican Communion mean anything to you?
- What do you think the challenges are for a greater understanding of each other's theological position within the Anglican Communion and do you believe that the Covenant offers a way forward?

Having briefly shared the results from these group discussions all the comments will be collated and forwarded as a contribution to the

2012 meeting of the General Synod. This will seek to agree the Scottish Episcopal Church's position as to whether signing up to this Covenant will safeguard and enrich the life of the diverse Anglican Communion or whether it is more likely to diminish the quality of that communion.

The final part of the meeting saw the Rev'd Dr Annalu Waller give an impassioned presentation under the title 'Church for All'. In what she said, and in the views which others contributed, some of the problems of access to our church properties and movement in them and the needs of the less able were highlighted. What was said received widespread endorsement, but practical and financial constraints were also noted.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to all who had enabled a good and positive meeting and to Bishop Nigel for his light-handed chairing of his first Diocesan Synod.

Service in Westminster Abbey to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible

The Archbishop of Canterbury preached at a service attended by Her Majesty the Queen on 16 November as the culmination of the quad-centenary celebrations of the King James Bible.

This Bible began life at a conference convened by James I of England at Hampton Court Palace in 1604. There it was ordered that a new translation of the Bible be produced, as the King strove to forge unity between Scotland and England. It was the culmination of over two centuries of struggle to create a Bible in English, going back to John Wycliffe in the 1380s.

The gestation of the King James Bible itself began with William Tyndale, who was the first to translate the New Testament into English from the original Greek. But in 1536 he was burned at the stake in Flanders for his efforts. In 1538 Henry VIII ordered that a Bible be placed in every church in

England and Miles Coverdale was commissioned to produce what became known as the Great Bible, largely based on Tyndale's work.

Translation of the Bible remained controversial. In 1560 English Calvinist exiles in Geneva produced the Geneva Bible, beautifully produced but with tendentious translations and notes that James hated. Partly in response, in 1568 the English Church commissioned the Bishops' Bible. This was used every Sunday during Elizabeth's reign but was ponderous and never popular. English Catholics in exile produced a New Testament in Rheims in 1582 and an Old Testament in Douai in 1609-10.

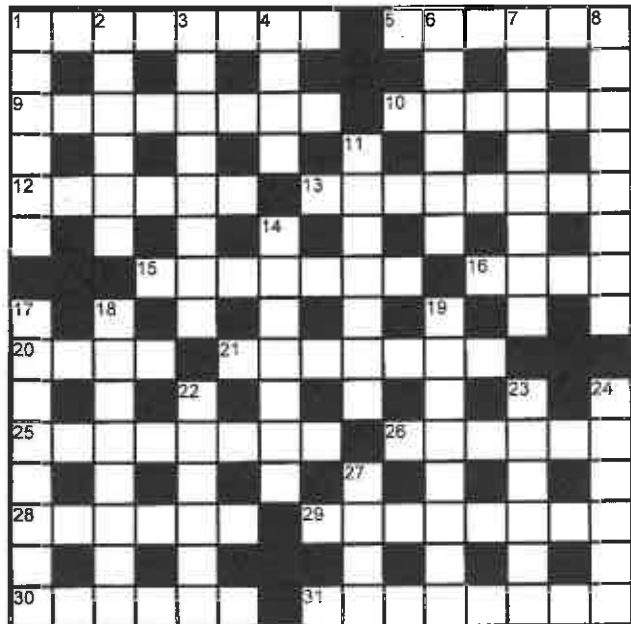
The King James Bible was produced in the light of each of these versions. It was the work of fifty-four scholars working in six translation committees based in Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster, two in each centre.

The crucial final editing took place at Westminster Abbey, in the Jerusalem Chamber, where the translators read their new version of the Bible aloud from start to finish. They ended up using a relatively limited vocabulary compared, for example, to their contemporary Shakespeare, but they coined many phrases we still use today: 'the powers that be'; 'the apple of his eye'; 'signs of the times', 'a law unto themselves', 'from strength to strength', 'the writing on the wall'. It was therefore fitting that this service should take place in Westminster Abbey, from where the King James Bible was first sent out.

'The scholars who produced this masterpiece are mostly unknown and unremembered. But they forged an enduring link, literary and religious, between the English-speaking people of the world.' (from Winston Churchill, *The New World*, 1956)

CRYPTIC PRIZE CROSSWORD

Another opportunity to while away the dark evenings! Send your entries in to the editor at the address on the back page by Saturday, 10 March 2012 at the latest and make sure you put your name and address in the box provided.



CLUES ACROSS:

- 1 A saint who will scan hi and lo (8)
- 5 Aha! I is a seer! (4)
- 9 The Arts supported by the tote? What a donor! (8)
- 10 Our ram is a strong defence (6)
- 12 The speaker has to roar (6)
- 13 Does he give spiritual direction at an alp in China? (8)
- 15 His books always have a sick end (7)

- 16 The rupee loses its point here (4)
- 20 A little noise whichever way you look at it (4)
- 21 Pet eels make a heavenly point (7)
- 25 Quiet Athena gets the bird (8)
- 26 A scene of the afterlife (6)
- 28 Did Noah mount a rat from the Royal Artillery here? (6)
- 29 A punch in charge of a monkey (8)

- 30 The rye lay like this annually (6)
- 31 The camel bed was motionless (8)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1 Is it not in a people? (6)
- 2 One wise man was involved in a scrap (6)
- 3 A musical composition provides the speaker with a Galilean moon (8)
- 4 The super nova flows back to the sea (4)
- 6 This rep has to be a celestial being (6)
- 7 Does this devoted admirer ride a lot? (8)
- 8 Aim the gun at a rhea, but just give it an ear bashing (8)

- 11 Does a Companion of Honour throw a spear around in a sacred space? (6)
- 14 The king sat still whilst gliding on ice (7)
- 17 Pip, the hyena, put in an appearance (8)
- 18 A dreamer that is sweet and unrefined (8)
- 19 Rejoice! All is found in a French place (8)
- 22 Put out some ale, sir, for him (6)
- 23 A thousand then produce a sacred song (6)
- 24 Having been in the ale den he didn't stand upright (6)
- 27 Made worse for the pantomime character (4)

Name

Address.....

.....

Hopes and Fears – this year as ever

Manolis Kypreos

What price can be placed on a commitment to truth and justice? In June of this year, this young Greek journalist was taking photographs of the demonstrations in Athens against the austerity measures. The police told him to stop, so he showed them his journalist's accreditation. The head of the riot police then swore at him and pointed him out to another officer, who threw a stun grenade at him.

Surgery may help him regain some hearing in one ear, but his hearing loss is permanent and total in the other ear. A criminal investigation has been opened but

there are long-standing concerns about impunity in Greece and it is feared that those responsible may never be brought to justice.

Please send a Christmas card (in Greek or English) to:

Manolis Kypreos
c/o Journalists' Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers
20, Academias Street
10671 Athens
Greece

Language – Greek or English

Salutation – Dear Manolis

Suggested message – 'Sending you solidarity and warm wishes from the UK. We are standing with you.'

You can:

Send a religious card or message.
Send an Amnesty card or mention Amnesty.
Include your name and address.

Please don't make political comments in your message.

If you would like to do more, either for Manolis or for other people in a number of other countries, visit <www.amnesty.org.uk> and navigate your way through the 'our work' menu to 'Write for Rights'.

Every card matters. For prisoners of conscience, and for all who are ill-treated. Above all, they are a sign that people care.

Stay-at-home Christmas?

Are you staying at home for Christmas or New Year? Would you open your home and share your festivities with a student from China, India, or some other part of the world, who would otherwise be stuck at an almost deserted UK university, far from their own family?

These adult students are guests in our country, who would love to experience your way of life for a few days, and are prepared to travel some distance for this privilege. HOST will match you with one or two guests to suit your household. More volunteer hosts are urgently needed for 3-4 days at Christmas or New Year, and weekends all year round.

Please see their website <www.hostuk.org> or call your HOST's voluntary local organiser for a chat: Kerry Bloom on 01376 561 889.

HOST UK is a registered Charity No. 325792. Its head office is at Unit 8, Water House, 8 Orsman Road, London N1 5QJ. Tel: 020 7739 6292.



AT LEAST WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT UP IN A STABLE HOME

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Holy Trinity Church, Monifieth Christmas Services

Sunday, 18 December:

9 a.m. Sung Eucharist

6.30 p.m. Carol Service (refreshments to follow)

Saturday, 24 December:

10.00 p.m. Christmas Eucharist

Sunday, 25 December:

9 a.m. Sung Eucharist for Christmas Day

Sunday, 29 January:

6.30 p.m. Christingle Service (refreshments to follow)

Upgrade of Facilities at St Drostan's Lodge and appeal for funds

The Trustees of St Drostan's Church have decided to refurbish the existing Ladies WC and Shower Room area to make an "Ambulant Disabled WC/Shower Room" and a separate "WC and Shower", these modifications will result in the Lodge having an additional shower and WC in a room particularly designed for those who are less able, but not wheelchair bound, in addition to a separate new WC and shower.

Presently the only facilities for the less able are located as en-suite facilities within a twin room, and when there are more than two less able persons at the Lodge this can cause some difficulties and invasions of privacy. As many of our regular groups are increasing in age, this is a facility which will directly benefit users.

St Drostan's Lodge provides low cost accommodation for groups and families, is **open to all**, and is located at Tarfside, in the heart of Glenesk. It is the only provider of low cost accommodation in the area, and, as a charity, aims to keep fees low by charging only sufficient to break even and maintain a strategic reserve for repairs and modifications.

The Lodge is used by groups from throughout Angus and NE Scotland. The users include Churches of **all** denominations, Youth Groups, Schools, Charities, Ramblers, Fishermen and the Elderly. Over the past few years, families in the Glen have recognised that the Lodge is an excellent location for family reunions, and there is very heavy demand around the time of the Tarfside Games. This is an extremely useful contribution to the family life of the Glen as there is now no other accommodation nearby.

The cost of this refurbishment will be in of the order of £10,500. We have written to all previous Lodge users inviting them to make a contribution and we have already received some donations which will enable us to start the work over the winter period.

If you would like further information, or wish to make a donation, please contact Peter Nelson, Secretary/Treasurer of St Drostan's Church & Lodge, Tarfside, c/o 4, St Michaels Road, Newtonhill, Stonehaven, AB39 3RW. Tel: 01569 730956, or email <stdrostansbook@btinternet.com>

The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 25 March 2012.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 6 March 2012.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

The Editor of Grapevine, Beattie Lodge, Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire, AB30 1HJ
(E-mail: <office@brechin.anglican.org> or <mjrturner@btinternet.com>)