

the monthly record

September 2007

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Enjoying God

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Policy

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the editors and contributors, which are understood to reflect generally the theological position of the Free Church of Scotland. The magazine also publishes from time to time the Church's official policies and statements. No material can be published unless the full name and address of the contributor is supplied. The preferred method of submission is in electronic form.

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Last May, the General Assembly, in a fit of collective madness, appointed yours truly as the new editor of *The Monthly Record*. After getting over the surprise, my feeling is one of great gratitude. I am thankful for the opportunity and the privilege of being able to serve the Lord and his Church in this capacity.

My first duty is to thank the outgoing editor, Alex MacDonald, for his seven years' hard labour. He did an excellent job, not only maintaining *The Record* but developing and moving it on. The Church owes Alex in more ways than one, and we pray that he will know the blessing of the Lord as he continues to serve in Buccleuch. One thing is clear – I would never be able to do the design, editing and all the other work that Alex was so good at. For that reason I am very grateful for the 'team' that is developing in order to produce *The Record*; Catherine Pearson is responsible for design and layout, Janet McPhail for the Gaelic, Charlie and Daphne Douglas (*From the Frontiers*), Elizabeth Graham for the prayer notes, and DaySpring Devan for the proofreading. We hope to add to this team over the next few months.

Each issue of *The Monthly Record* will be based on a theme. This month the theme is **Enjoying God**. Inside you will find an editorial article on **The Joy of Calvinism**; the first review in a Christian magazine of the last **Harry Potter** book; a new monthly **Meditation Moment**; news of the Free Church College, the Bethesda Hospice, and an encouraging induction in Kingussie; a feature on the fantastic work of **Colin Macleod**, the Free Church's army chaplain; the passing of an era in the death of **Nan Dunlop**; an introduction to the **Chapara Presbyterian Church** in India; news of the **WFM**; the opening Assembly sermon by the retiring moderator **Donnie Smith**; an introduction to the new **Outreach Support Committee**; the prayer notes, a book review, the finances and a couple of obituaries; and we introduce a new regular columnist, **Dr Carl Trueman** from Westminster Seminary. Carl has a great love for the Free Church, having been an elder in Aberdeen and having had the sense to marry a good Free Church woman. He manages to combine excellent theology with a fine and witty writing style (although his musical taste apparently leaves a lot to be desired!) which stimulates, informs and challenges. We are delighted to have him.



David Robertson

I hope that you will find several things to inspire, inform and encourage you. If you have any comments, complaints or ideas, please feel free to contact me. We are hoping to stimulate and provoke positive and constructive debate as well as prayer and good works. Send e-mails to record@freechurch.org or snail mail to the address on page 2.

Finally I would like to welcome all those of you who are not members of the Free Church. This Christian magazine is for you as well. Although we are the 'in-house' magazine of the Free Church our aim is to be a voice for, and to, Christians throughout Scotland and beyond. If you would like a subscription, contact the Free Church Offices (details on page 2.) And this magazine is not just for Christians – it's for anyone who has an interest in being fully human and really living! Please let us know your suggestions and comments as well.

Meanwhile, enjoy. And may the Lord richly bless you.

Yours in Christ

David

Can you help?

The Monthly Record is looking for good quality photos, good writing, news and to enrol many others in the Church who have artistic, writing and journalistic skills. If you are interested in helping then please contact the Editor ASAP. We are especially looking for the following:

- **Photos** – any budding or even experienced photographers out there?
- **Reporters** – ok, that's a bit of a grand title. What we are really looking for is someone in every church and in every presbytery to pass on news and events to us quickly.

- **Readers** – *The Monthly Record* wants to keep in touch with what is happening throughout Scotland and beyond. Do you read any of the major newspapers, magazines etc? Would you be willing to be the newshound for that newspaper? The way it would work would be quite simple. Let's say you read *The Guardian* or *The Daily Record* as your regular newspaper. When you see something that might be of interest to the wider Church you just send us the information and we look at what we can do with it. We would like to appoint one person for each newspaper and magazine.
- **Creators** – Ideas for articles, or themes or series are welcome.

It's your *Monthly Record*. Take part.

The Joy of Calvinism

The definition of a Calvinist as being a person who 'is miserable at the thought that someone somewhere is actually enjoying themselves' is sadly all too typical of the popular misperception of the Free Church (and other forms of Reformed Christianity) in Scotland today. Ricki Fulton's Rev I.M Jolly (and his alter ego Rev W.E Free) are caricatures, but sadly caricatures which are popular because they reflect a common understanding. Religion, especially of the Scottish Presbyterian kind, is doom, gloom, blackness, depressive and joyless. Of course our sensible countrymen do not want the happy clappy type of religion either (unless it is the Soweto Gospel Choir), but they do love to blame almost everything on poor John Calvin and John Knox. If the weather is bad, taxes too high, if we drink too much, are useless at sport or can't write an opera to save ourselves, it is all because of our Calvinist inheritance. And how many more times do we have to hear the media of Middle England refer to the Prime Minister as a dour Presbyterian Scot (the three words of course going together)?

The Miserable Christian

At this point it would be all too easy to admit guilt (like a good Calvinist!), blame our ancestors, have a go at sections of the Church today, and then go on to say how 'real' Christianity is not like that. But I can't. In 25 years' membership in the Free Church, urban and rural, Highland and Lowland, I have rarely come across people who have been made miserable by their Calvinism. In fact in general most of the people I have met are normal, healthy, well balanced human beings whose faith is actually a source for joy, rather than a cause of misery. Yes, there are people in the Church who are miserable. And there are people who complain, moan and have a spirit of bitterness. But that is not *because* of their Christianity – it is *in defiance* of it. Christians are commanded to be thankful – and we have a great deal to be thankful for. A complaining, moaning, bitter Christian is never a thankful one. This is not to say that we never become unhappy or that sorrow is sin. Such stupidity almost deserves no answer. Of course we become unhappy but that is usually caused by the same reasons as everyone else's - we are not immune from the sorrows and pains of this world. And we are not cut off from its joys either.

All things richly to enjoy

In July I had the immense privilege of watching my 'other' team, Barcelona, play against Dundee United at Tannadice. It was a really enjoyable evening – being able to thrill at the skill and style of Ronaldinho, Deco, Eto, Henry et al. Later on in this *Record* you can read a review of the last Harry Potter. Those who want to condemn the books as advocating witchcraft are kind of missing the point. The Potter books are popular because they are immensely enjoyable. JK Rowling has no aim other than to write good stories (which are actually very moralistic and, in the tradition of all good fairy tales, about the battle between good and evil). People read

them because they enjoy them. And in terms of attacking the Christian world view they are a lot less dangerous than *Neighbours*, *EastEnders* or *The Daily Mail*. As Christians we can enjoy reading a good book, listening to music, watching a good film, eating good food and having a drink with friends. Of course any of these things can be abused, so that what is given to us by the Lord, richly to enjoy, becomes instead a curse. But that never justifies any Christian pronouncing what God has given 'unclean' – indeed it is a sign of the heresy of the End Times when religious people seek to forbid marriage, eating, etc.

The Happy Man

I once received a lovely letter from a good woman who was a wee bit upset that I appeared to be advocating drinking alcohol (I was in fact stating the biblical and traditional Free Church position). She wondered whether I was betraying the memory of the 'godly' Lachlan Mackenzie (a particular hero of hers). I was happy to write her and point out that the Rev Lachlan Mackenzie of Lochcarron would have endorsed my position and indeed went a lot further, having an illicit still in his own manse. Of course this was not the reason he was nicknamed *The Happy Man*! His joy was in the Lord but the point is that joy in the Lord means that we can enjoy other things all the more, not the less.

Just as Christians do not grieve as do others, neither do we enjoy as do others. We enjoy so much more. The problem for the unbeliever is simply this – you have the gifts but you do not know the giver, and thus your enjoyment of the gifts is impaired. Indeed, instead of the gifts being welcomed as gracious gifts from a generous God, they can often become idols in themselves. Thus instead of going to watch a football match as a thing of skill and beauty, the supporter goes to 'worship' his team. His identity is so caught up with these 11 men kicking a ball around that he will get angry, depressed, frustrated and bitter when they lose and almost fall into states of ecstasy when they win. The unbeliever has no point of reference, no ultimate means of distinguishing between different kinds of joy and between the joy of experiencing the gifts and the joy of fellowship with the Giver. But the believer knows and is known. Thus we can enjoy the gifts all the more, without turning them into meaningless idols. The ultimate joy is to know God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And if we cannot thank the triune God for what we are doing, eating, drinking or watching then we should not be involved with them.

Joy in Worship

If that is true, then we need to ask ourselves how this joy is reflected in our worship. I have just been reading John Stott's marvellous new book, *The Living Church*. Whilst he warns us about flippancy and irreverence (a warning we need to hear even in the Free Church) he also states the following:

**Christianity is a joyful religion,
and every service should be a
celebration.**

'When I attend some church services, I almost think I have come to a funeral by mistake. Everybody is dressed in black. Nobody talks or smiles. The hymns are played at the pace of a snail or a tortoise, and the whole atmosphere is lugubrious. If I could overcome my Anglo-Saxon reserve, I would want to shout 'cheer up! Christianity is a joyful religion, and every service should be a celebration.' Every service a celebration? In the Free Church! I'm afraid that we are not good at joy in worship. There are exceptions, but is it not the norm that our worship is often devoid of joy (even of the 'deep, deep joy' that no one can see)? Why? Is it the lack of the Spirit in our midst? Is it culture and the fear of man? Is it style of worship?

I have experienced many joyful moments in Free Church worship, none more so than a number of years ago when I was in a house fellowship in Lewis. The worship was held first of all for 'the English'. It was good. The Word was read, a couple of psalms were sung and the prayers were heartfelt and reverent. But then we switched to 'the Gaelic' and the whole place was transformed. As the Gaelic psalms were sung there was swaying, tears and heartfelt praise. The prayers were fervent and the sighs and groans would have

satisfied the most ardent Charismatic! I loved it. Since that day I have often thought, if the Gaels can worship God in their own language from the heart, what about the rest of us who do not have 'the language of the Garden'? In comparison so much of our worship has no soul, no spirit and very little joy. Part of the trouble is that because the Free Church was dominated by the Western Isles in the 20th century, and because we had this appalling unbiblical doctrine of 'uniformity of worship' (at least in the way it is commonly understood), we ended up with the ridiculous situation of English psalms being sung in a Gaelic style. It is difficult to think of a more depressing and unedifying noise. Combine that with natural reserve, a misunderstanding of what reverence is, and the divorcing of worship from the reality of our everyday experience, and you can see how we have often fallen into this joyless worship. Let Kirk Sessions and congregations pray, think and act in order to deal with the sin of joyless worship. This is not a plea for frivolity, flippancy or entertainment 'fun' worship. God forbid. But please can we have some serious joy? In the words of Psalm 51:12 *'Give me back the joy I had; keep my willing spirit glad.'*

Meditation Moment

This is a new regular feature for *The Record*. Each month we will take a portion of Scripture, in line with the theme of that month, and reflect upon it.

The purpose of this is to encourage you as the reader to stop, take a break, find a quiet space, open your bible, reflect upon the passage and pray. Because all Scripture speaks of Christ can I suggest that you meditate on your relationship with Christ and that you seek to learn more of him and enter into a deeper fellowship with him. After all he does want to *'come in and eat with us'* (Revelation 3:20).

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For this month, please open your Bible to Hebrews 12:1-3. Read it and focus especially on the words *'Let us fix our thoughts on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross..''* And ask - Why did Jesus go to the Cross? Why did he not come down?

There are several answers to that. Firstly, because it was the Father's will and he always did the Father's will. Secondly he loved his people and he knew that he was making atonement for us, bearing our sin, suffering our hell, dying so that we might live. But there is also a third reason. He did not come down from the Cross because he saw the joy ahead of him. He saw the glory of returning to heaven – not as he came, emptying himself, but rather taking the fruits of his labour.

Psalm 22 is surely the ultimate song of the Cross. Jesus quoted its beginning words to show the extent of his suffering: *'My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?'* But he also quoted the last verse *'for he has done it' or 'it is finished'*. If you want to know something of what Christ was going through on the Cross, then read that psalm. You will notice that whilst it contains the most incredible sorrow and pain,

it also holds out the most wonderful joy. *'Those who seek the Lord will find him, the end of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, future generations will be told about the Lord.'* In



other words, Christ on the Cross was fully aware of what he was doing. He was fully aware of whom he was dying for. And he endured the Cross because he was looking forward to the joy of being in heaven and taking his people with him. His bought, redeemed and precious people; the Church of God which he bought with his own blood.

And we too can enter into the joy of the Lord, not least because the Christian can say *'The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'* Can there be any greater security, hope and joy than knowing that the Son of God loved you so much that he gave himself for you?! Reflect also on this – no matter what pain, distress and sorrow you are going through just now (and what could be more painful and distressing than the Cross?), you have been promised a 'joy unspeakable'. You share in that extravagant and exuberant joy of Christ. And that's not all! God sings over you. If the angels in heaven rejoice over you and God himself rejoices – then does that not make you think you have plenty reason to be joyful? The joy of the Lord is your strength.

*'The LORD your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with his love,
he will rejoice over you with singing.'*
Zephaniah 3:17

Farewell to Andy

It was with mixed emotions that all of us in South Uist and Benbecula Free Church bade farewell to one of our deacons at the end of April.

Andy Hendry, who moved to Uist from Inverness six years ago, has now returned to that city to be nearer his family. Andy served our Lord in a humble and faithful manner throughout his time in Uist and we shall particularly miss his cheerful welcome at the church door. We are immensely grateful to him for sharing with us in the work of the gospel and we wish to assure him of our prayerful good wishes as he resettles in Inverness.



Andy is seen here cutting the cake at a congregational lunch in his honour. He is joined in the photograph by the Rev Iain MacAskill and some of the children in the congregation .

Mike Townsend

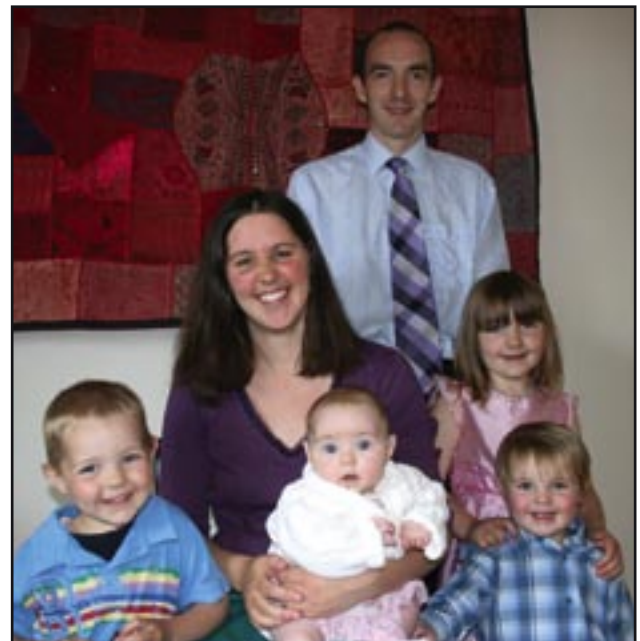
The Badenoch Induction

The 5th of May dawned a hot summer day; a distant memory now as I write this in a rain-soaked and cold July. At 2 o'clock the Presbytery filed in to take its place in the front seats of the Kingussie church, filled beyond capacity with visitors and locals who had come together to celebrate the ordination and induction of Ricky MacDonald as minister of Badenoch. The previous minister of the congregation, Rev D K Macleod, led the service, which followed the familiar dignified Free Church pattern. Psalms were sung, Scripture read, prayer made and a sermon, a very helpful sermon, was preached. The usual ordination and induction questions were put and, predictably, affirmed.

Allow me an aside at this point. I wonder if it really is necessary to make an ordination a public display of the mysteries of the Claim, Declaration and Protest of 1842 or the Protest by Commissioners to the General Assembly of

1843, or a disavowal of all "Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Erastian and other doctrines, tenets and opinions whatsoever..." to say nothing of placing the candidate under reminder of the strictures of Act V, 1932. This all bemused most of the congregation and produced not a few a few stifled sniggers and embarrassed looks by those conscious of the presence of the local Catholic priest, whose kindly presence helped welcome Ricky and Melissa to the community. Might not these arcane memories of 'old unhappy, far off things and battles long ago' be better dealt with by the Presbytery in private prior to ordination? Surely induction questions, like those put to a bride and groom at a marriage, ought to be short, serious, and above all, obviously relevant, not detracting from the essentially joyous nature of the occasion by turning it into a public justification of the continued separate existence of the Free Church of Scotland.

Just as in apostolic times, the new minister was ordained and inducted by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery and afterwards, the Rev Marcos Florit (Lochcarron), representing the Church Extension Committee, passed on some kind and appropriate advice to him. The Rev John Ross (Greyfriars Stratherrick), the Interim Moderator, likewise addressed the Badenoch church family. A final psalm was sung and the congregation made its way to the Badenoch Centre for a celebratory meal.



Ricky and Melissa with Skye, Fin, Seoras and Isla

That meal was quite an event. Outside, in the backyard of the centre, under the supervision of Fraser MacKinnon, local butcher and deacon of the congregation, beneath a red and white striped gazebo, a whole pig rotated slowly on a spit and beef roasted in an oven. In front of this array, salads and vegetables were displayed on a table. A hitch, however, held up proceedings. Someone had slammed a door, cutting a cable, and the power had failed. It was then that deacons showed their worth as they bustled around to rectify the problem, as important-looking elders stood by in serious groups discussing the best way to do it. The repair made, a few more minutes elapsed to finish the meat to perfection, and, the Grace having been said, the entire company fell to

with a will and made short shrift of the food. The event was rounded off with the usual witty speeches, presentation of gifts and public declarations of warm welcome to the Macdonald family.

As people drifted away in the warm evening sunshine one satisfied person, replete with spiritual fare, good food and fellowship, was heard to say it was the best induction they had ever attended. As long as the speeches have been kept short, I imagine that is said at most inductions, and so it ought to be.

John Ross

Bethesda Hospice Cheques for £200,000

Pictured below are cheques totalling £200,000 being donated to the Bethesda Care Home and Hospice in Stornoway. The money will go towards the £1.5 million extension on which work commenced in July.



Calum Martin (seated centre) the man with the inspiration for the Gaelic Psalmody CD's which raised £100,000 for the Bethesda Hospice in Stornoway, along with (left) Kenny Maclennan of Tong who chaired the fund-raising group, and D R Macdonald, the Bethesda Fundraiser, along with members of the fund-raising group.



The Rev James Maciver (left), Carol Sommerville, Bethesda secretary and the Rev Donald A Macdonald (right) with Bethesda fundraiser D R Macdonald, receiving the cheque for £100,000 from the Trustees of the Free Church of Scotland.

Bill Lucas

Five students graduate at Glasgow

Five Free Church College students recently received their Bachelor of Theology degrees at a Graduation Ceremony at the University of Glasgow. The five were: James Eglinton (with Distinction), William Schweitzer (with Distinction), Alexander Brown (with Merit), Ruairidh MacLean (with Merit) and Jeremy Ross (with Merit).



Ruairidh, Bill, James and Alex

William (Bill), a member of the Presbyterian Church of America and a former US Marine Captain, completed his degree at the Free Church College while simultaneously working on his PhD at Edinburgh University (with the University's permission). His research topic is the theology of Jonathan Edwards, and he expects to submit his thesis next year. Bill made a quick exit after the Graduation Ceremony. A couple of days earlier he had acted as midwife when his wife, Pam, delivered their fifth child at the family home.

James, a candidate for the Free Church ministry, was licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh in June. It was a double celebration for the Eglintons. A week earlier, James's wife, Eildih, had graduated MB,ChB at Edinburgh University. He has now been accepted as a PhD candidate at Edinburgh University and hopes to begin his postgraduate study there in October, focusing on the Christology of the great Dutch theologian, Herman Bavinck.

Like James, Alex, Ruairidh and Jeremy are all Free Church candidates. Alex has postponed his Licensing pending further postgraduate study in America. Ruairidh (one of our best precentors, in Gaelic or English) was inducted as Minister of Harris (Leverburgh) Free Church on 7th August. Jeremy, son of the late Reverend Jackie Ross, founder of Blythswood Care, is due to be inducted to Poolewe and Aultbea on 1st September.

Opening of New Session

The Opening Service of the new session at the Free Church College will take place in the Presbytery Hall of the Mound Buildings on Monday 10th September at 7.30 pm. The Opening Address will be given by Professor Donald M MacDonald. This is a public meeting, and all are welcome.

Donald Macleod

The Jocks Just Love Him

While visiting Free Church people and congregations in South East England, the Moderator, Rev John Ross, got a first hand look at Rev Colin Macleod's post as a military chaplain.

I said goodbye to Lt Col David Richmond, the Commanding Officer, his warm affirmation of his battalion chaplain ringing in my ears. At a brief interview with another senior officer I noticed, hanging on the wall behind his desk, a plaque bearing the winged dagger insignia of the SAS. Here, I thought, was a man who was no mean judge of character. In typically clear-cut military fashion he spoke frankly of the highly valued contribution made to battalion life by its chaplain. Crossing to the sergeant's mess for coffee, I met Steve Rae, the Regimental Sergeant Major. Steve's view of the role of a modern military padre was that of helping young men, many coming from difficult backgrounds, to find a moral compass and spiritual values outside themselves. In his view the battalion's present chaplain fulfilled this role admirably but, even better, he had won the loyalty and respect of the troops. Steve's parting shot, as he adjusted his Tam O'Shanter battle bonnet and smartly marched away, pace stick under his arm, was, 'The Jocks just love him'. This was evident as we walked around the barracks meeting soldiers and exchanging banter and chat with them. Professional

Soldiers and officers possess an agility of mind and body allied to an absolute will to win. Similar physical, psychological and spiritual qualities are necessary for a chaplain too.

testimony to the chaplain's skill and character also came from the battalion welfare officer.

Free Church minister Rev Colin Macleod, formerly of Urray, Muir of Ord, is padre to the 5th Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. The battalion, better known as the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, is currently based in Canterbury, Kent.

The Argylls have a long, illustrious history. They were the famous Thin Red Line that routed the Russian cavalry and protected the British dispositions at the battle of Balaklava in 1854. "There is no

retreat from here, men," their commanding officer, Sir Colin Campbell told them as he rode down the line, "you must die where you stand." And the reply of John Scott, the right-hand man, was taken up by them all: "Ay, Sir Colin. An needs be, we'll do that." This formidable courage looks set to be maintained with the battalion's cutting edge role as part of 16 Air Assault Brigade. As modern infantry they are men who are physically fit, robust, and capable of operating independently for prolonged periods, living and fighting with only the kit they can carry. These determined, capable and professional soldiers and officers possess an agility of mind and body allied to an absolute will to win. Similar physical, psychological and spiritual qualities are necessary for a chaplain too.

In barracks Colin's time is taken up with conducting the services in the battalion kirk, assisting in courses that introduce soldiers to moral values and standards, and helping men deal with personal and spiritual issues. With his wife Aileen's help, Colin is developing a well deserved reputation amongst officers and men for being hospitable, accessible, friendly and supportive. Deploying to Helmand province in south west Afghanistan next year, the Argylls will be up against a resourceful, tough and determined enemy operating in a demanding and austere environment. As they brace themselves for the probability of casualties, the responsibility for providing moral guidance and spiritual support to all ranks falls on its chaplain.

After decades without a military chaplain, it is a great honour for the Free Church of Scotland to be represented in the Royal Army Chaplains Department by Colin. He and Aileen and their three children, Lauren, aged 7, Michael, aged 5, and 4-year-old Jennifer, deserve our prayers and support for the demands of life in barracks at Canterbury and especially for the time when Colin will be deployed with the battalion, first for a training exercise in Belize and then for front line engagement in Afghanistan.



Colin Macleod

Annie Johnstone Dunlop 1918 - 2007

The Preparatory Years

Central to Nan Dunlop's life were her 30 years of missionary service in the heart of India, for which God had prepared her from her youth. Nan grew up in a missionary environment at home; her mother read missionary stories to her children, sent them to missionary meetings, and publicly expressed her willingness for them to become missionaries.



Mary Slessor of Calabar became Nan's heroine and by her mid-teens she knew she would serve the Lord abroad.

She qualified as a nurse in 1940 and as a midwife in 1942, and then worked as an industrial nurse in a wartime munitions factory. As the Lord prepared her for India, he never let her put her roots down at home.

As her missionary calling developed, she came to appreciate the advice of her minister, Rev W J Grier. It was he who guided her into medical training and later into the Free Church of Scotland Missions. South America had become the focus of Nan's thinking and she was taken aback when the Foreign Missions Board invited her to serve in India, but after prayer she consented.

So God used the family and the church to prepare her. Listening to the Word from the pulpit and preparing papers for the Youth Fellowship were of particular value.

The India Years

Nan sailed for India in a wartime convoy in December 1944, when she was 26. She served five full terms and one shorter final term.

She became the first nurse at Lakhnadon Christian Hospital which opened in 1936, but after a year moved 17 miles south to Chhapara, which became the hub of her missionary service. There she worked as a general nurse but many of her stories focus on her midwifery, much of it in outlying villages. In the 1960's she was also Manager of Chhapara Christian School, which today has over 800 students.

However, Nan is remembered in India first for her love for evangelism, in which her fluency in the Hindi language made her so effective, then as mother to the orphan children in the Mission's care, through which she became known as *Mamaji* (respected mother).

Nan was humble and supportive, always in the role of a helper. With her colleagues she faced dangers and shared sickness. Nan was once critically ill with snakebite, and it was health problems that drew her service to a close in 1974.

The Retirement Years

Nan's 33 'retirement' years were the longest phase of her life, and it was during this period that most today will have known her. But they were not inactive years! For ten of them she was Matron and Deputy Matron of two Belfast Boarding Schools. One of the Headmasters spoke of her 'ministry' - "to many you were a real mother when they were far from home." Nan undertook five more visits to India - for a wedding, to open an extension to Lakhnadon Christian Hospital, to cut the sod for the new Chhapara Church, for the opening of the new Church, and an extension to the school.

She was a faithful church member, involved to the maximum that health would permit. She was a gracious, spontaneous, generous Christian lady, always expressing her love for children. Her evident growth in grace and her life of prayer made her fellowship a joy and she was untiringly vigilant for opportunities to present the Gospel.

Nan's heart, however, remained in India - with correspondence, telephone calls, and her thirst for news. The Churches at Lakhnadon and Chhapara sent tributes to her Service of Thanksgiving.

There are encouragements in the work in India today that Nan did not see. One sows, another waters, but God gives the growth.

We extend our sincere sympathy to her family whose devotion meant so much to Nan, especially in her final years.

Ernest Brown

Colegio San Andrés

At their meeting on 5 June, the International Missions Board were notified that Mr Donnie MacAulay had resigned as the Headmaster of the Colegio San Andrés in Lima, Peru, for personal reasons. The Board accepted his resignation with immediate effect. Donnie with his wife, Marcella, and their daughters Victoria and Gabriela, have now settled back in Scotland.

After a long and distinguished career in education in Scotland and Chile, Donnie MacAulay was first appointed teacher of English at the Colegio in January 1999 and was named its Headmaster in July 2003. The International Missions Board express their appreciation to him for his years of service to the school and especially his input in raising the level of academic and teaching excellence within the school.

Following Donnie MacAulay's resignation, the Missions Board agreed to appoint Rev Tim Donachie as Interim Headmaster of Colegio San Andrés. However, he and his wife, Marjorie, will shortly be retiring and returning to Scotland. We commend the work in the Colegio and all connected with it to the prayers of the wider church.

STOP PRESS:

Mr Clive Bailey from Ayr has just been appointed as the new Head of Colegio San Andrés. He will take up the post in January 2008.

Chhapara Presbyterian Free Church

On 7th June 2007 the Free Church of Central India changed its name and became registered as the Presbyterian Free Church of India (P.F.C.). In this article, Pradeep Kumar tells us about the work of the Free Church in Chhapara.

***'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of CHRIST.'* (Ephesians 3:8)**

Our Mission

Free Church Chhapara is a very small but growing congregation. As Paul says *"Unto me the grace was given to preach."* This is our main theme, our supreme work, to go everywhere with the Gospel, telling everyone about the unsearchable riches of Christ. Before it, everything else pales and becomes dim.

Evangelism

We thank and praise God that through literature, prayer groups, missionaries, Church, personal evangelism, school and hospital the Good News is being spread in many villages around Chhapara, such as Gorakhpur, Danimeta, Devri, Anjanika, Tinsa, Payali, Lalmatiya, Bada Chhapara, Lakwah, Ghunai and Chamanpuri. We have prayer groups in these villages and in each group there are at least 10 -15 new believers and seekers.

A team of the Grace Ministries of India has been working with the Free Church in Chhapara.

- Mrs Prakash Kumar teaches the new believers, who regularly attend Sunday worship at the manse.
- Mrs T Lal and Ashish Lal take a Sunday School class of non-Christian children at the Health Centre.
- Miss Mamta Kumar has a Sunday School for a new young group of non-Christian children coming from Bada Chhapara where she teaches, 3 km from Chhapara.
- Mr Vinod Das visits Devri Village
- Mr Fakir Chand goes from village to village and to some government schools.
- Rev Emmanuel Ekka, Pradeep Kumar and Ashish Lal regularly follow up the new believers and seekers in their homes.

An Open-Air Meeting

A Free Church Chhapara youth group and Grace Ministries organized a joint open-air meeting at Lakwah village, 30 km from Chhapara. The head of the village supported it strongly and used a loudspeaker to call the villagers, saying that he had arranged it.

We were amazed to see a crowd of more than 500 people who had gathered to listen to the Word of God. And we were surprised that we could have heard a pin drop while we were





Chhapara School Assembly



The Session

preaching and singing. We distributed New Testaments and literature. Very many people and students came to us after the meeting asking for prayer and for another of these visits to their village.

Chhapara Mission School

We give all the glory to the Lord that Chhapara School has always been one of the best schools in Seoni district. The students have a good reputation, receiving the President of India Award and The Governor of State Award for the highest marks in scouting, sports, science, essay-writing, drawing and other cultural competitions. It is the fruit of the prayer of many people of India, Scotland, Ireland and Australia.

We thank God that in spite of very tough competition with other public schools and government schools our school has always been in the top position in the annual board classes. We have around 800 students from Kindergarten to Higher Secondary.

The government has now started schools of excellence with admission only for students with high marks. They give free bicycles to the girls, and free text books to the students, and they provide school computers to attract students to them.

We have started computer education for students from classes 6-12 (age group 12-18) with five computers. We are

also providing a Computer Application course in the new academic session, July 2007.

Rev Emmanuel Ekka, Mrs Prakash Kumar and Mr Vinay Das teach the Word of God daily during the compulsory Bible period for each class. There are many former students, old and young, who remember the Bible stories and Bible verses as well as Rev Prakash and his style of teaching. Many have kept in their homes the New Testaments they got in the school.

Conclusion

We request you to pray earnestly for the Pastor, elders, teachers and congregation to remain faithful and to resolve anew to intensify their efforts to reach the un-reached for Christ.

We are looking forward not to political change or persecution, but to Jesus and his Kingdom for he is the one who will ultimately rule the universe.

To God be the Glory!

Home on Furlough

We welcome Norman and Angela Reid who have arrived on furlough from Dumisani Theological Institute in South Africa and look forward to their deputation work among us.



If you wish to organise a visit from them, please contact Calum Ferguson at the Free Church Offices on 0131 226 5286 or calum@freechurchofscotland.org.uk

We extend our sincere sympathy to them and their family on the death of Angela's mother, Mrs Elizabeth Bell, just after they arrived home in mid June.



Chhapara Church

Projects

WFM President Christine Mackenzie gives an update on last year's project (*Masibambane*) and introduces the project for 2007-2008 (*Literature for Life*).

Masibambane

The hard work of raising money for another WFM project is over and the magnificent sum of £25,470 has been gathered for the work of Youth Camps in the Free Church in Southern Africa.

As 2006/2007 progressed and the money was sent to the Treasurer, the committee was made aware that the final amount would probably be more than could be adequately stewarded in a camps programme. You will all understand that the cost of living in the UK is very high and that when you travel abroad your money often goes further. Thus we realized that when we changed £25,470 from Sterling to Rands, the South African currency, it would actually be a huge amount of money.

It was brought to our attention that there is a great need for the Xhosa Psalm Books to be reprinted as there are now no more available to buy, and many of those in use need to be replaced. These Psalm Books would, of course, be used in the Youth Camps as well as at all other church meetings.

We therefore told those present at the Annual Meeting in Edinburgh in May about this and were given the permission of the meeting to divert some of the money raised for the Masibambane project to the re-printing of the Psalm Books. We will tell you at a later date how the funds available were divided.

There is an interesting connection with the WFM because we gave money towards the re-printing of the Psalm Books some years ago. At that time there was a fire in the printers and some of the newly produced books were lost. The WFMA gave money to replace these books. It is good to be able to be involved this time also.

So, once again, a big thank you to all who have worked so hard and creatively and to those who have given, often sacrificially, to Masibambane. Please be assured that the money will be used well and will be received with much appreciation.

Literature for Life

It is a great encouragement to us on the committee to see the interest and enthusiasm that you show towards the WFM projects and we are delighted that already money has come in for the 2007/2008 Project.



This year it is a multi-agency project as we raise money for the printed word. In the UK we are spoiled by the quantity and variety of Christian books that are available, and perhaps because of that we don't value them as highly as we might or appreciate the wealth that we have. However, that is not the case everywhere in the world, and we have the opportunity to help in two areas.

Firstly, we can help those who are producing literature to bring the Gospel to those who haven't heard it, particularly in the Asian world. Secondly, we can help those who are publishing Christian books to feed our Christian brothers and sisters who are longing for such material. To give people a book, booklet or leaflet containing the Gospel is indeed to give them something that can be life-changing and life-giving.

The agencies we have undertaken to help are Asian Outreach, Dehra Dun Theological Seminary (North India), Emmaus Road Trust, Dumisani Theological Institute (South Africa) and Operation Mobilisation.

If you need leaflets about the Project for your congregation, please get in touch with Kirsty Boyd, 42 Acorn Crescent, Larbert, FK5 3LT. Tel: 01324 551406. Email: jimandkirsty@hotmail.com

Thank you once again in anticipation, and please remember also to pray for these organisations and the people they work with.

Anne at the Palace!

One evening in July, Anne Mackay, our retiring Treasurer, was present at a reception given by the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh in the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Anne had been invited as an 'ordinary' woman from our church and she attended, conscious that she was representing all those 'ordinary' women from around the church who worked so hard and gave so much of their time and energy in support of the mission work of the church. She was presented to the Queen and Duke and thoroughly enjoyed the evening where, in the grandeur of the Palace, she met and chatted with lots of fellow guests from all walks of Scottish life.



A Thank You from Sandra

The compilation of the WFM page has now been taken over by Alison Macdonald, St Vincent Street. Sandra Bain would like to thank all those who supported her over the past seven years by providing items for the page and particularly those who sent in reports from their groups. She looks forward to seeing a fresh approach to the page and trusts that Alison will enjoy the same support.

The Trueman File

Enjoying God in America

It is very easy to enjoy God in America for the very simple reason that, in America, God is all too often the All American Boy. In England at the end of nineteenth century, at the height of Britain's imperial power, there was little doubt in the minds of many that God was surely an Englishman; or, if he wasn't actually *English*, he certainly embodied all the values which England liked to think she represented: fair play, a straight bat, a stiff upper lip. So in America at the start of the twenty-first century, at a point in time when America's international political power and influence knows no rivals, there is a tendency in the Christian culture of America to see God as, well, representing all that Uncle Sam holds dear; and that is not just freedom and democracy, but individualism, consumerism, and entertainment. Thus, anyone who has ever had the dubious pleasure of being exposed to American television can testify that much of the Christian programming found there actually represents straightforward, secular American values expressed in the language of Christianity. Indeed, there is a sense in which European secularism at least has the virtue of being transparent and even honest: as European society has abandoned Christianity, so it has abandoned Christian language and the public rituals of the church. In America, by contrast, the content of Christianity has by and large vanished; but the language and public rituals – prayer, church-going, the constant references by politicians and sports stars to God – have remained stubbornly in place, only now they have become the very religious idiom of very secular values.

Thus, when you switch on the Christian channels in the US, or visit a typical Christian (or even secular) bookstore, you can find plenty of guidance on how Christianity can help you to slim, make money, get fit, and generally feel better about yourself. In other words, the kind of typical individualist self-help that is of the essence of the American way has shaped the very way in which the gospel is understood. And it flows even into churches that really do strive to place Christ and the Bible as God's revelation at the very centre of their corporate lives. The intrusion of entertainment values (an obvious problem) and sickly sentimentalism (a more subtle but no less deadly intrusion) into the form and content of worship and sermons are merely the most obvious problems. Nobody, not even those who strive to be most faithful, are immune from the undetectable carbon monoxide of the wider culture.



Carl Trueman

Yet it is standard European fare these days to make condescending criticisms of America, as if to compensate for our own failures to offer a viable and significant alternative to America as the dominant world culture. Two things are worth bearing in mind here. First, as the answer to Question 1 of the Shorter Catechism tells us, Man's chief end is to glorify God and *enjoy Him* forever. So enjoying God is not wrong. Second, the real problem with the American God is not the fact that he is American. No. It is that he is made in the image of human beings, and conforms to human expectations of what God should be: quite like them, only bigger and better; and always ready to address whatever petty needs they feel they have. In fact, we could put this in an even stronger fashion: what they have done is create their own god, an act which actually allows them to hide from the claims of the true God.

Looked at in this way, it should become clear that what is so blatant in the crass greed of the televangelists and the gullibility of so many who donate to their shows, is also subtly present within the hearts of each of us. The drive within humanity to hide from God is, humanly speaking, irresistible; and all cultures will use whatever they can to do so. America is the entertainment capital of the world; it is inevitable that entertainment will be used as a way of hiding from the demands of God. Perhaps in the United Kingdom there are other cultural traits which can be used in a similar fashion. The cynicism of a society which once knew world greatness and now exists as a minor courtier of Washington can be just as useful for evading God: God becomes not the great self-help guru he appears in America, but just another element in the universal excuse for moaning about how bad things are now compared to fifty years ago. Or God can become the great symbol of love and tolerance in an increasingly pluralistic society; or, in stark contrast, he can be used as the excuse for hating and reviling all those who are different from ourselves. The church in its most self-satisfied state of orthodoxy has been guilty of both of these things.

The solution is obvious but not easy: a return to God's revelation of himself as basic. God made men and women in his image; we fell in Adam and that image was marred; it can only be restored in and through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The key is to start our theology, our thinking and speaking about God, not from the world around us but from his revelation in scripture and in Christ. Only then can we begin to correct the misapprehensions we have about God and the ways in which we abuse his name, and begin truly to live as the people of God.

The Public Teaching of Our Church

A sermon preached at the opening of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland on Monday 21st May 2007 by Rev Donald Smith, Rector of Lima Evangelical Seminary, Peru.

***'...and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.'* (2 Timothy 2:2)**

Introduction

Paul's instructions to Timothy on this occasion can be analyzed into three statements: Timothy is exhorted to pass on what he had heard from the apostle Paul, he is to pass on specifically what he heard before many witnesses, he is to pass it on to men who can be trusted and are able to teach others.

We can immediately apply these statements to the teaching function of our church today. Let us consider three subjects:

1. Our church, like Timothy, has received traditions and teaching from the apostles which are of great importance.
2. The preachers and teachers of our church pass on what we have inherited to our hearers and the younger generation.
3. Our church must select men that can be trusted and are able to teach others as our future leaders.

Let us consider some of the implications of these statements from the point of view of one who belongs to the Free Church of Scotland and lives and works outside Scotland in Latin America. In that continent the dominant Roman Catholic culture provides a background different from the situation in Scotland. This view of familiar things from a slightly different perspective may help us to evaluate our attitudes with respect to the issues raised by Paul in these well known instructions to Timothy.

1. The Apostolic Tradition

'... the things you have heard me say...'

1.1 Latin America is dominated by a church that says God's Word comes to us through the apostolic tradition and also through the church's tradition. The formal position of the Free Church of Scotland, defined by our confession of faith and ordination vows, is that the Word of God is identified with the Scriptures and therefore does not and cannot come through the church.

It seems worth asking if we as a church operate according to our stated principle on this point. Do we distinguish clearly enough between the apostolic tradition, preserved only in the Scriptures, and other traditions? We are proud of the long history of our church, and our traditions are very important to us. This in itself is neither good nor bad, but we ought to ask ourselves from time to time whether we confuse the apostolic tradition of the Scriptures, our only access to God's Word, with our other traditions.

On the way to this assembly, a Danish Lutheran priest who has lived for five years in Scotland told me his idea that the Free Church of Scotland is a very sad organization that is very like the Roman Catholic church. Is this a true perception? Do we in practice attempt to assert, maintain and defend both the apostolic tradition and our other traditions? The apostolic tradition preserved in Scripture has the highest possible authority. Our other traditions have no authority at all, being simply a collection of customs, habits and procedures which have accumulated over the years.

1.2 The Latin American religious scene is dominated by a church that says the Word of God must be interpreted by the authoritative teaching of the church, and communicated by its own exclusively authorized teachers. Our declared position is that the Word of God is plainly revealed in Scripture and does not require the authoritative interpretation of the church's teachers to be understood. Our declared position is that the church's teachers must submit to the Word of God revealed in Scripture and regulate their lives and message by it.

The evangelical movement in Latin America is today beginning to rival Roman Catholicism in the numbers of people involved, but this movement is very new and there is not yet a very well defined evangelical culture, theology or public testimony. Many leaders and preachers of the evangelical movement in Latin America confuse the authority of the preacher with the authority of the message he preaches and are hardly aware of what they are doing. They have the excuse that the churches are young and two thirds of their leaders have had no formal theological training.

We have no such excuses. Do we commit the same mistake? Do we sometimes confuse the authority of the teacher with the authority of what is being taught? Do we make strenuous efforts to ensure that the people who hear us teach appreciate the difference between what we say and the Word of God? Does the message of Scripture mould our thoughts or do we simply take what we want from Scripture and fit it into the thoughts we already have? Does Scripture really rule our lives and teaching, or do we simply use it to further our own ends?

1.3 Western society has hundreds of theological faculties that teach that the knowledge of God may be obtained in many ways. Our declared position is that the apostolic tradition contained in the Bible provides us with our only secure knowledge of God. Do we really believe this? Do we distinguish sufficiently between what is clearly stated in the Scriptures and the deductions that we have made from these statements? Are we sufficiently concerned that the people we teach understand this distinction clearly?

Are we sufficiently aware of the cultural components in our theology? Our culture is normally invisible to us because it

is shared by most people we meet. In the Free Church of Scotland our formal definition of what we believe was framed more than three and a half centuries ago in a cultural setting very different from that of our contemporary world. Are we aware that our basic definitions of theology were framed in a cultural setting very different from our own? Are we able to distinguish clearly between these definitions and the authoritative apostolic tradition?

The people who wrote our confession of faith clearly expressed the consensus of evangelical thinking about the Christian faith for their own generation. Are we able to do the same? The authors of our confession struggled for years to express a united statement of current evangelical thought. Are we interested in doing the same in our generation? Are we even aware of what other Christian groups say and think and do we feel at one with them? What efforts are we making to clearly express the apostolic teaching in terms that are at the same time understandable to our contemporaries and in harmony with the public testimony of other Christians? How well do our public pronouncements, magazines, website, publications and preaching measure up to these criteria?

2. Inheritance and Transmission

'...and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses...'

2.1 Paul asked Timothy to remember particularly what he had heard him say on one or more public occasions before many witnesses. He could be referring to public occasions such as Timothy's ordination service or other occasions on which Paul spoke in public. The circumstances are not explained but it is clear that Paul is making a distinction between all that Timothy ever heard from him and what he heard publicly in the presence of witnesses. Paul distinguishes clearly between the many things he said in presence of Timothy and the formal public teaching he wishes him to pass on. It is clear that this distinction was familiar to Timothy and that he could carry out these instructions even though Paul was not present to spell them out in more detail.

Are we aware of what we are passing on to our hearers when we teach? Do we make a clear distinction between what are merely our opinions, or the opinions of our favourite authors, and the essential authoritative teaching that is really important? How much of our teaching is directed towards explaining our preferred theories and personal preferences, and how much of it is directed to passing on the authoritative apostolic tradition? What have we selected for passing on in our pulpits and Sunday schools? Where is the main emphasis of our public teaching? Would other Christians recognize it as what they also believe, or would they disagree more than agreeing with what we say? Are we careful to distinguish between what the apostles taught and the theological opinions we have inherited from past debates or acquired from our private studies?

2.2 What are the options with regard to

Donnie Smith

the opinions we inherit from the past and acquire through our studies? There seem to be basically two options from the point of view of these instructions from Paul to Timothy. We may simply pass on uncritically all that we inherit and acquire, or we may distinguish between the authoritative apostolic tradition and everything else. The first option has no real importance for the future of the church and the second one is of vital importance for its future.

If we choose the first option we will simply perpetuate the traditions of our church and add to them our own experiences and prejudices. In among all the fog the gospel will be preached and people may still perceive the truth in spite of our confusing communications. Some may even be converted. If we choose consciously and practice consistently the second option, we will find ourselves in essential agreement with all true Christians in every church, we will preach the gospel clearly, and the people who hear us will be able to respond to God and not only to us.

2.3 What does our style of preaching and teaching tell people about our attitudes towards them? Do people who hear us preach get the impression that we are really interested in them and what they think and feel? Do we give the impression that we are more interested in ourselves and our own ideas than in our hearers? Do we preach to the converted or do we preach so that the unconverted may come to faith? Do we explain the apostolic message in plain language or do we expect our hearers to be able to handle our favourite technical and theological language without explanations?

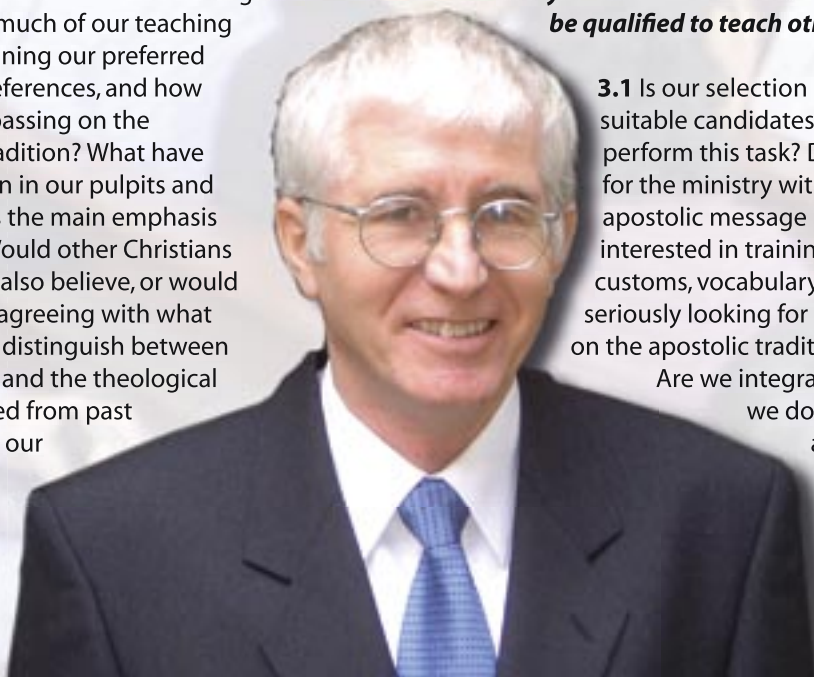
Is our aim when we preach to explain the words of Jesus and the apostolic teaching, or to communicate our own thoughts? Are we able to express ourselves in a way that our hearers understand? Are we familiar with the world in which they pass most of their time? Can we communicate to children and to visitors? Are we interested in trying to learn how to communicate better? Are we aware of defects in what we are transmitting to our hearers, and are we doing anything effective to remedy these defects?

3. The need to train leaders we can trust and who can also teach

'...and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.'

3.1 Is our selection process able to produce suitable candidates that can be trained to perform this task? Do we assess candidates for the ministry with the task of preaching the apostolic message in mind, or are we more interested in training people who share our customs, vocabulary and prejudices? Are we seriously looking for new leaders who can pass on the apostolic tradition to the next generation?

Are we integrating this search into what we do in Sunday Schools, Camps and Youth Work? Are we looking for new leaders, or do we just wait and hope that somehow they will appear from somewhere?



Highways & Byways

In 2006 alone, over 700 people throughout Scotland were reached through evangelistic outreach events that were supported by Highways and Byways Missions (HBM) in some way. This is a small part in the overall role that HBM has played in outreach work over the past 40 years or so in the Free Church.

Highways and Byways Missions was originally set up about 40 years ago by a few members in the Free Church. HBM became involved in most outreach events in the church and was the facilitator of many successful missions, namely Livingston, St Cyrus and Kirkcaldy. The amount of applications for HBM mission teams decreased in the late 1990's onwards. Concerned about this, the Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee requested a review of HBM, its focus and other relevant matters. The Committee felt that there should be greater ownership from around the Free Church, and invited presbyteries to nominate individuals for a newly formed HBM Committee in 2005.

The original aim of HBM was to support local congregations from around the country. For example, if a congregation in the Free Church was arranging a mission, it would apply to HBM for a team of people to come and help. Back in those days a Free Church College student would be appointed to lead the team. This no longer happens as the current student placement system has since replaced it. Over time, the application process for teams decreased, and over the past ten to fifteen years HBM became '*a smouldering wick he will not snuff out*' (Isaiah 42 v 3), supporting only a tiny remnant of outreach work. As requested by the Church Extension and Redevelopment Committee, a new HBM Committee was appointed in 2005. With a few adjustments over the last couple of the years, there is now a representative from each presbytery, minus Edinburgh and Perth who are yet to elect a representative.

Mini-Conference for Precentors

(and aspiring precentors, both male and female, welcome from all congregations)

**At St Columba's Hall, Edinburgh
on Saturday 6th October 2007
09.30 - 12.45**

Talks, Discussions & Workshop Activities
led by members of St C's Praise Team
(Colin Rogerson, Martha Middlemiss,
Bill Graham & Derek Lamont)

If you're interested, contact Colin Rogerson at:
colin.rogerson@talk21.com (or 0131 332 8308),
- or just turn up on the day.

3.2 Is the transmission of the apostolic teaching to the next generation the central concern of our training process? Are we more interested in producing academics, skilful pastors, leaders of attractive worship, or spiritual guides? Do we know clearly what job we want our future leaders to do? Is the passing on of the apostolic tradition the central requirement of the job description of our future ministers? Are we seriously trying to improve the quality of our training process? We are subject to external academic quality control. Are we also applying quality control ourselves internally? Are the people we are training being equipped to do the job the church needs them to do? Are they being equipped specifically to pass on effectively the apostolic tradition?

3.3 Our church needs to train loyal and reliable leaders for the future. Some interesting statements about loyalty and reliability were made on TV a couple of days ago by professional footballers: 'These are my people, this is my club, I want to be here forever.' 'Everyone in this team is clear about giving 100% for the team and not interested in personal glory'. Are we training our future leaders to be loyal and reliable? Do we know what they will be loyal to? Are we finding out how reliable they are and helping them to become more reliable during the training process? When they are trained will we be able to confidently entrust to them the mission of passing on the authoritative apostolic tradition? Do we know that the leaders, teachers and preachers we are training can be trusted to pass on the authoritative apostolic tradition?

3.4 Are we concerned to select people with teaching gifts and the desire to be teachers for our leadership training process? Do we require that a desire to pass on the apostolic tradition be a necessary entrance requirement to our leadership training process? Do the people we train learn to do what teachers learn to do? Will they improve their ability to pass on effectively the authoritative apostolic teaching? Will they be able to focus on this teaching, understand it clearly and present it effectively to contemporary people? Do they understand our contemporary society and are they learning how to communicate the apostolic message to our contemporaries who have never heard it?

Conclusion

These general applications of Paul's exhortation to Timothy to our preaching and training of future preachers are intended to focus our attention on this subject and remind ourselves what our priorities ought to be. Much of the business of this Assembly will be concerned with ministers' salaries, homes and pensions, and with providing places for public worship and keeping them in good shape. Most of our church's income goes to pay for these things.

How do our priorities compare with those of Paul, as revealed in these instructions to Timothy? How can this Assembly help to improve our performance in explaining the authoritative apostolic message to our contemporaries? What can this Assembly do to help guarantee that we will pass on this message to the rising generation? What can we ourselves do as individuals to improve our communication of the apostles' message?

ys - on a Mission with a New Name



Some of the Gairloch mission team

The aim set out by the new Committee is to facilitate evangelism training and to coordinate outreach and evangelistic projects as well as providing small grants for approved outreach projects. In order to encapsulate the new identity and purpose of the Committee, the name has now changed from Highways and Byways Missions to Outreach Support. This name best reflects the change of emphasis from short term mission activities to supporting longer term evangelistic projects.

It is the aim of the Outreach Support Committee to encourage and support individuals and congregations to instigate mission locally. Many Christians have a passion to reach the lost, but sometimes resources and encouragement are not always in place to promote evangelism or to support new ideas for mission at a local level within the church.

The committee aims to encourage pre-and post-mission activities to ensure that there is long term follow-up and not one-off bursts of activity. For example, projects in local communities need to focus on building relationships in order to develop suitable plans for evangelism in that area. Evangelism must be customised within communities so that it is suitable to the local situation.

Funds can be provided to support research, to train Christians who are willing to get involved in evangelism, to provide financial resources, and other various requirements. Prayer support and encouragement is also offered to congregations who are taking new initiatives on board.

During 2006 the committee approved and supported eight outreach projects in Gairloch, Kirkcaldy, Dumbarton, Kilmallie, the Skye & Wester Ross Presbytery, Greyfriars/Stratherrick and Park, Lewis. This included Children's Holiday Clubs, Barbeques, Christianity Explored, Youth Fellowship, Family Services, Day Conferences, Evangelistic Literature Distribution, Camps and other activities to reach out to local people in need of the gospel.

The Committee hope to support at least 10 outreach projects and training for congregations in 2007 by providing 50%

towards the project costs up to a maximum of £400 per project. Priority will be given to supporting outreach projects that are new to a particular congregation - activities that have not been tried before and that form part of a longer term mission plan. Applications for support from struggling congregations to encourage them to reach out with the gospel into their communities will be particularly welcome.

Over the coming year, the Committee will seek to publicise the outcomes from the projects more widely in order to share good practice and to ensure that all congregations are aware of the kind of support that is available to them for outreach.

Michelle Thomson



Children at Presbytery camp

To read the criteria for funding and to download an application form, go to www.freechurch.org/missions/os. For any other enquiries please contact your local representative.:

Skye and Wester Ross

Susan Maclean
Tel: 01445 731376. Email: susan.youthwork@btinternet.com

Glasgow & Argyll

Michelle Thomson
Tel: 01355 570392. Email: michellethomson82@yahoo.co.uk

Inverness, Lochaber & Ross

Jeremy Ross
Email: beinn.view@virgin.net

Northern

Rev Angus Lamont
Email: scotpe2000@yahoo.co.uk

Western Isles

Maretta Campbell (Clerk)
Tel: 01851 880776. Email: maretta@blueyonder.co.uk

Robert Mackenzie Elder, Maryburgh & Killearnan

The congregation of Maryburgh & Killearnan were saddened when they learned of the passing of their highly respected elder and dear friend, Robert Mackenzie in Raigmore hospital in November 2006.

Robert was born at Bonar Bridge on 19th August 1926 to Peter and Catherine Mackenzie. The family (including his brother Alex and sister Dorothy) moved to Kildary where Robert went to school and subsequently served his time as a joiner in the Easter Ross area. From 1945-1948 he served with the army in Italy and Egypt. Robert's family moved to the Tore area in the 1940s.

In August 1954 Robert married Jean Greig and stayed at Killearnan until they moved to their present home at Mulbuie, where they raised a family of seven: Catherine, Dorothy, Elizabeth, Mary, Ruth, Helen and Peter.

At a very young age Robert was introduced to the gospel in the Church of Scotland that his parents attended. By the 1950's he came under the spiritual influence of the late Rev Robert Murray, then minister of Killearnan & Fortrose Free Church, who had led him into the truth of God's Word. During this time he came under great conviction and it was at the Billy Graham Rally in Inverness in 1955 that he gave his heart to Christ; grace had triumphed. In July that year Robert made public profession of his faith in the Killearnan congregation at the communion.

There is no doubt that one of Robert's great loves was singing, especially the singing of Psalms. It was not long before he was called upon to lead the praise in the congregation, a labour of love he enjoyed until illness struck him in January 2001. Although unable to lead the congregation he still retained the desire to sing praise to his beloved Saviour, always interested in tunes old and new.

The esteem in which Robert was held in the congregation was shown in his election to the office of the eldership in 1987. In that capacity he endeared himself to the congregation, always showing his concern for the spiritual needs of young and old. He was a friend to all; a quiet, humble, and sincere man of God. Whoever called to see him would get a very warm welcome and a firm handshake.

The congregation have lost a good friend and a faithful and diligent servant of the Most High. We continue to commend his widow, Jean, and all the family, especially the grandchildren whom he loved so dearly, to the grace of God praying that they would draw comfort from a Saviour Shepherd who will comfort them in their sorrow.



Douglas MacKeddie

Donald Maciver Elder, Fort William

Last year the congregation of Fort William and Kilmonivaig lost a valued member and faithful elder.

Donald was born in 1922 in North Tolsta but grew up in Gress in Lewis. He left the island to join the Royal Navy, serving on destroyers and minesweepers, and was involved in the Murmansk conveys and D-day landings. He was de-mobbed in Buenos Aires in the Argentine and spent the best part of the next 20 years in the southern hemisphere. His interest in the sea took him on two whaling trips in the South Atlantic around South Georgia. After whaling stopped in 1961 Donald went to New Zealand for three years. It was while there that he had a remarkable providence which made a deep impression on him and was the start of his spiritual reflection and journey. He had signed on as a crew member but fell out with the mate over the pay. Donald left the ship and missed the trip – only to discover later that the ship had been lost with all hands. That deliverance was the start of his spiritual experiences and return from a very tough and rough life style.

Donald returned to Lewis to do some weaving, met Mary from Ballantrushal, and faced the choice – her or the sea. He chose well and they were married in 1965. But water and the sea were in his blood and so he came to Lochaber to work on the Caledonian canal and afterwards with Matheson's as a carpet layer.

Donald became a member by public profession in Fort William Free Church in 1984, but demonstrated a spiritual interest a long time before that public profession by his diligent attendance at all services and especially at the prayer meetings. He was ordained as an elder in 1987. He lost Mary earlier in 1987 and that loss had a profound effect on him and shook his confidence.

With Donald there was a warm Christian spirit and concern born, in a measure, out of his own experiences before he came to know the Lord. Like the prodigal son, Donald knew what it was to live in a far country; and also the spiritual reality of that woman at the end of Luke 7, that to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much. That concern was evident in the way he took every opportunity to speak for his Lord and in the way he prayed to the Lord for those who were still without the Saviour he loved and trusted. Donald was a fighter in life and that transferred across into his attitude in prayer and Christian living.

Towards the end of his life, his mind grew weary and exhausted and eventually failed. He was cared for in New Craigs, Inverness and eventually in Blar Buidhe, Stornoway. For us all, both family and friends alike, we feel the loss deeply, but we rejoice in the christian hope we shared with Donald: the glory of Emmanuel's Land, which increasingly dominates our expectations as we travel through this life.

Gordon Mair

Letters of Thomas Chalmers

Edited by W. Hanna with an introduction by I.H. Murray

Banner of Truth Trust £17.50

Readers in the Free Church of Scotland ought to welcome a new book about Thomas Chalmers. He is, after all, the nearest thing we have to a founding father, and his life and ministry bring us to our roots as a denomination.

Chalmers' life is full of personal interest; a brilliant philosopher and mathematician, he entered the ministry of the Church of Scotland as an unconverted man, with no love for Christ, and a deep aversion to those who preached Him.

His conversion was significant both for himself and his nation, as the new note heard in Chalmers' preaching galvanised the evangelical movement within the Church and eventually led to the Disruption.

These issues are highlighted in Iain Murray's introduction, which is itself a condensed version of a chapter on Chalmers from his recent book *A Scottish Christian Heritage*. What it does not evaluate is the nature of the Disruption itself, which was not, as some have alleged, a disrupting of the church, but a disrupting of the relationship in which the Church of 1843 stood with the State. Chalmers says as much in letter 295 in this collection: 'though we are for the principle of a religious Establishment, there are many hundreds of our clergy, and these the best and most influential among them, who are in perfect readiness for a dissolution of the connection between Church and State...' (p375).

Perhaps, as was suggested at our recent General Assembly, it is a pity that the Disruption ever happened; perhaps we are still reaping its unfortunate consequences in the divided landscape of modern Presbyterian Scotland. It is an interesting, if dated, academic question as to whether Chalmers' justification of the Disruption as the only way to

defend the establishment principle (p 421) is itself justified. Whatever; what is past is past, and we move on.

Indeed, we move on as Chalmers himself would wish us to move on, preaching the Gospel and addressing the social needs of modern Scotland. To this end he has much to tell us: 'We can set up the framework and mechanism of a church,' he says, 'but we are wholly dependent on the Spirit of God for the men, and should therefore pray without ceasing to the Lord of the harvest...' (p457).

In spite of all of this, and notwithstanding the publishers' conviction that the best way to know Chalmers is through his letters, this book has serious drawbacks. It is a reprinting of the 1853 collection of Chalmers' correspondence, edited by his son-in-law William Hanna. The title, therefore, is slightly misleading: it is by no means a collection of letters written by Chalmers. Several of the pieces were written to him.

No attempt has been made to modernise or contextualise the letters. Mrs Parker, Mrs Morton and Mrs Brown were among Chalmers' correspondents; but who were they? There is no identifying of Chalmers' penpals, or their significance. Nor is there an index, so any useful or relevant material will only be discovered by trawling through these pages. That itself is not an easy thing to do, and severely limits both the readability and the usefulness of this publication.

So yes, Free Church readers ought to welcome a new book about Chalmers, although I doubt if this is the one they will appreciate most. Even the gems in this volume, such as letter 243, in which Chalmers writes to his daughter about partaking of the Lord's Supper for the first time, are hardly appropriate for today. Our heroes of the past have their limitations as well as their uses.

Iain D. Campbell

Skye & Wester Ross Ladies Day

Aros, Portree
Saturday 29th September
10am to 4pm

Bloom where God has planted you

Speakers: Ishbel Maclennan, Stornoway & Mary Gillies, Inverness

Cost: £15 (payable on day)

For further information and booking please contact
Mrs Effie Campbell on 01470 521 437 or
effie.c@virgin.net



Fear-treòrachaidh

(Is e seo tiodhlaic eile a fhuair mi agus taing gu dearbh airson na th'innnte dhuinn.)

Mhòthaich sinn gun do chuir Clann Israeil an cuid bhrògan umpa aig àm bìdh an oidhche mus do dh'fhàg iad an Eiphit. Tha an eachdraidh a' toirt dhuinn aon boillsgeadh eile de na dearbh bhrògan sin.

Is iongantach gun robh dùil sam bith aca an oidhche ud gun toireadh an turas do dhùthaich eile buileach fada. Ach bha aig dà fhichead bliadhna mhòr ri dhol seachad agus aig iomadach tionndadh ri thighinn nam freastal mus deigheadh iad a-steach do Thìr a' Gheallaidh. Air iomall na tìr sin, le saoghal ùr romhpa, chuir Dia rudan nan cuimhne gus am misneachadh. Chuimhnich E dhaibh gach deuchainn, cogadh is cunnart tron tug E iad.

Tharraing E cuideachd an aire chun seo: nach do chaitheadh an t-aodach a bh'orra le aois, agus nach do chaitheadh na brogan a bha mun casan bhon là a dh'fhàg iad an Eiphit. Rudan beaga, is dòcha an taca ris na h-uabhasan tron tàinig iad. Ach nach tric a tha làmh Dhè ri faicinn gu soilleir ann an lùib rudan beaga làitheil, cho math ri rudan mòra follaiseach?

Is dòcha nach robh anns na brògan nach do theirig ach na beannachdan beaga; ach bha iad pearsanta is prìseil is mìorbhaileach don duine a chunnaic iad dha fhèin. An dùil a bheil sinn fhìn mothachail air na dòighean beaga anns am faod Dia a bhith a' bruidhinn rinne an-diugh?

Tha làithean saora an t-samhraidh a-nis a' còrdadh ri mòran, agus tha mi cinnteach gu bheil dìon air a bhith air mòran fhads a bha iad a' siubhal. Tha na geallaidhean fìor fhathast. Tha Esan a' gabhail cùram dhinn, agus nach sinn a bu chòir a bhith taingeil ann an saoghal cunnartach gu bheil seo fìor. Tha a gheallaidhean luachmhor, agus le beartas mar seo nach bu chòir dhuinn greim teann a dhèanamh orra?

A-rèist, anns an rèis-sa
Na biodh eagal air creutair
Na canadh gu bràth
Nach eil Tighearna na Glòir
Ag èisteachd ri ùrnaigh,
's a' toirt cobhar is dòchas,
Is e Maighstir òirdheirc
A th'ann anns gach dòigh.

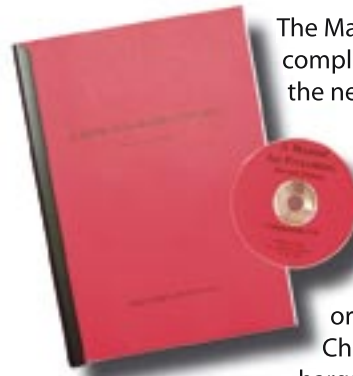
Raising The Tune

It is a solemn and awesome privilege to say to one's fellow-beings, "Let us worship God."

(Prof John L MacKay)

Do we regard worship as a "solemn and awesome privilege"? In the Free Church we train our ministers for their ministry: should our precentors not also receive training for their ministry, that of leading the people in the praise? It is probably unreasonable to require our precentors to undergo formal training, but help is available in the form of the Manual for Precentors.

The Manual, first published in 1985, contains straightforward and practical instruction in all aspects of psalmody and presenting and is accompanied by a recording illustrating the matters and tunes being discussed. It is suitable for use by individuals or groups, working at their own pace. Its use should improve the singing even of "good" precentors and of "good" congregations, thus making our praise not only more attractive to our own people and to strangers but also, more importantly, making it more worthy of the great God we are privileged to worship.



The Manual was recently revised completely to take account of the new words and tunes in Sing Psalms, and also to give an introduction to singing from Staff notation. It is available, together with its illustrative CD or cassette, from the Free Church Bookshop at the bargain price of £5.00.

Seanfhacail

Is mairg a nì uail à
gàirdean feòla.

Cuiridh teanga snaim nach
fuasgail fiacail.

'Brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured' (2 Thessalonians 3: 1)

- Sat 1 A Festival of Psalms, one of the few Christian inputs into the 'Highland Year of Culture,' is being held today in the Free North Church in Inverness. Pray that this will be supported widely in prayer and will bring glory to God and blessing to participants.
 - Sun 2 The development charge of Badenoch will be gathering together for Communion services today, guest preacher Rev Bill Graham. Please pray for them and their new minister and family, asking that the congregation may grow strong.
 - Mon 3 12 churches in Cumbernauld are coming together for a mission called 'Connect 07'. There will be an after school kids club in the Free Church from today to Wednesday. Please pray for this and for all the events of this week.
 - Tues 4 The International Missions Board of our Church meets today. Ask the Lord to bless and guide the members as they grapple with decisions affecting people far away.
 - Wed 5 The Ayr Bible Convention takes place this week. Prof John L Mackay spoke on Hezekiah; tonight Rev Mark Bentham on Mission Possible, Being or Doing? Rev Ivor Macdonald will speak on the Church Militant and Triumphant. Pray for blessing.
 - Thurs 6 Tomorrow Cumbernauld church are having a Supper Evening - 'In the Spotlight' - with 3 people sharing their experiences of living in Cumbernauld and how their faith impacts on their life now. Please pray for the Lord to bless.
 - Fri 7 Maryburgh, Dingwall and Strathpeffer Free Churches share a weekend of ministry from 7 - 9. This year Geoff Thomas from Aberystwith will speak. Pray for him and all who listen.
 - Sat 8 An update from Greenock congregation: "We praise God for another enjoyable Psalmody Evening. Our wee church was packed. The Psalm singers sang beautifully and were greatly appreciated. Sincere thanks to all who prayed. Please continue to pray for us."
 - Sun 9 Today there will be a special Family Service in Cumbernauld to involve the parents and children. Children will be encouraged to come to regular church events and parents will be offered an introductory course explaining Christianity, to begin soon.
 - Mon 10 Tonight there will be a service for the Opening of the College for a new session. Pray for all the students, especially those who are new, and for all the staff.
 - Tues 11 All the Church camps and the EEFC camps have finished and the campers and leaders are back at school or at work. How we thank the Lord for his care and provision for each camp! Let's ask Him now to continue to bless what was done in His name.
 - Wed 12 Give thanks for answers to prayer for the Discipleship Explored Course held in Kilmarnock. Pray that more local people will attend. Give thanks too for a communion season in Ayr when one new member from Kilmarnock was added to the church.
- If you have any request for prayer or praise for the November Prayer Diary please send now to Elizabeth Graham: Tel 0131 336 4071 or email w.d.graham@btinternet.com*
- Thurs 13 Praise the Lord with the people of Pairc for answered prayer for the Christianity Explored Course there. There was a good response locally with 10 'guests' participating and a positive outcome. Each person moved forward on their journey of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Many thanks for your prayers for us.'



smithton-culloden free church

Youth Worker Vacancy

- Do you have a passion for sharing the gospel with young people?
- Are you a sinner who understands grace?
- Are you familiar with the contours of today's youth culture?
- Do you want to put the 'in' into Calvinism?
- Can you teach and apply the Bible?

Then we may have a job for you!

Smithton-Culloden is a larger Free Church of Scotland congregation located in the vibrant capital of the Scottish highlands. We are looking for a new youth worker to build and consolidate our growing youth work.

Financial package

£17K plus expenses and possible accommodation

Email us at office@smithtonchurch.com for more information

Closing date 30 September

www.smithtonchurch.com

Ayr Bible Convention 2007

7.30pm each evening in Ayr Free Church

Monday September 3rd

Prof John L Mackay
Free Church College, Edinburgh
Hezekiah the Reformer

Tuesday September 4th

Prof John L Mackay
The Testing of Hezekiah's Faith

Wednesday September 5th

Rev Mark Bentham
Ayr Baptist Church
Mission Possible? Being or Doing?

Thursday September 6th

Rev Ivor MacDonald
Kilmuir Church of Scotland, Isle of Skye
The Church Militant

Friday September 7th

Rev Ivor MacDonald
The Church Triumphant

Join us afterwards for refreshments, fellowship and books

September Prayer Diary

- Fri 14 Many Youth Fellowships will be restarting now. Thank the Lord for much blessing in the past and answered prayers and ask him to bless each one as they begin a new session with hope and prayer. Pray too for each of the Youth Workers: Donna Matheson (Co-ordinator), Alison Macdonald (Western Isles), Susan Maclean (Skye and W.Ross), Kathleen McCallen (Nairn), Jonathan Worthington (Aberdeen), and James and Vicki Ross (Dingwall).
- Sat 15 There is a pilot programme called Apprenticeship in Christian Living which is to begin in September. Pray for all congregations and volunteers involved in this.
- Sun 16 Pray for the Church Extension charge of Dunfermline, and for their new minister Rev Douglas Campbell and family.
- Mon 17 Tomorrow is the relaunch of a new group for P4 – P7s in Poolewe called 'Shipmates'. Pray for Susan Maclean and others who will lead it, and ask the Holy Spirit to be in everything they do.
- Tues 18 Please pray for a series of 6 Psalm Singing Workshops starting today in the Pairc community. Pray for Norman Morrison who will be leading these, and for a high level of interest 'in learning how to praise God to the best of our ability.'
- Wed 19 Pray that our young people throughout the church would take a fresh interest in the Psalms, and receive blessing from learning to love, learn, and to sing them.
- Thurs 20 Many WFM's are starting to meet about now. Pray for them as they plan programmes or Bible Studies, and think of so many ways in which they can help with work at home and overseas.
- Fri 21 Remember all the overseas students arriving in Scotland now, many of them thinking we are a Christian country. Ask the Lord to find those who are looking for Him in their lives.
- Sat 22 A Discipleship Programme, "All for Jesus," is starting tonight in the Western Isles for young believers. It will explore the Bible's teachings, apply the faith practically and deepen commitment to Christ. Pray for each one and for Alison Macdonald, leader.
- Sun 23 Pray for your own church today, for your minister, elders and deacons, Sunday School teachers, children, members and adherents. Ask the Lord to make today a blessed day for all.
- Mon 24 By now the Scottish Parliament will be in business. Pray for your MSP by name, and for Alex Salmond, and also pray for all the discussion and the legislation which will be passed for us.
- Tues 25 Pray for any students from your church or family who are going to university for the first time. The temptations are many. Ask the Lord to keep them under His shelter.
- Wed 26 Pray too for the university city churches that they may be aware of new students and be able to welcome them into their church family, supplying what they need at this time.
- Thurs 27 Pray for the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, asking that he will have God's wisdom and courage so that he may lead the country in God's ways. Most people today reckon God to be quite irrelevant. Pray for revival.
- Fri 28 The Big Free Rally will be held tomorrow in Inshes Church, Inverness. Pray that it will be a blessing to the young folk and that more will go to camp next year.
- Sat 29 The Skye and Wester Ross Ladies are having an Away Day in Portree today. Pray for good fellowship together and ask God to give each speaker what the hearers need.
- Sun 30 Pray for the congregation in Ullapool as they worship God today. Especially remember Susan Maclean as she speaks to the Youth Fellowship tonight.

New Arrivals at the Free Church Bookshop

The Living Church - Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor **IVP £8.99**

In this book by John Stott the reader is given a vision for a church whose roots are deeply Biblical and whose touch reaches a dying world.

The Wondrous Cross - Atonement and Penal Substitution in the Bible and History **Paternoster £9.99**

In this book Stephen Holmes offers a readable and authoritative account of the way in which the saving work of Jesus is presented in the Bible, and has been understood throughout Christian history. In particular the book offers background to the current debates by looking at the idea of penal substitution in Biblical and historical perspective.

Growing in Christ **Crossway £11.99**

There are four sections in this book by J. I. Packer. Part one takes you through the Apostles' Creed. Part two highlights Baptism and Conversion. Part three is the Lord's Prayer, and part four the Ten Commandments.

Against All Odds - God at Work in an Impossible Situation **OMF £8.99**

Using the testimonies of Malaysian Christian leaders and the experiences of overseas workers, Elizabeth Goldsmith recounts how God has radically transformed the situation in Malaysia.

In Search of Spirituality - Finding a way through the Spiritual Maze **Monarch £6.99**

In this book, Michael Green shows how a spirituality to live by has got to be true, relevant, and able to change lives.

Sennacherib - Encountering Assyria's Great and Terrifying Ruler **Day One £5.00**

Using Biblical sources and drawing on his extensive knowledge of archaeology and ancient history, Clive Anderson gives the reader a fascinating insight into the life and times of this notorious Assyrian king – enriching our understanding of the Biblical text.

Held - A Journey Through Illness to Healing **Ambassador £7.99**

Angela Nicol's story will not only encourage other ME sufferers but other people struggling with long term illness. Angie writes with realism and honesty, inspiring others to trust God to bring us through the hard seasons in our lives.

Faith Enough to Finish **Monarch £7.99**

Are you facing a tough time – redundancy, bereavement, retirement, or worse? If you are wondering what God may still hold in store, this book by Jill Briscoe will restore your sense of purpose.

Winning Ways - Creating a Culture of Outreach in Your Church **Authentic £8.99**

Today the church needs a new approach to outreach. In this unique and challenging book, a pastor and an evangelist (Philip Jinadu & David Lawrence) combine forces to point a new way forward. Winning Ways provides a fresh model of "evangelical leadership" that is both Biblical and tested, drawing on material developed and shaped in real-life church situations over a number of years.

Walking as He Walked **Bryntirion Press £6.95**

Every Christian yearns to be more Christlike. In this book, Joel Beeke addresses how we can be more conformed to the image of Christ in four of the most difficult areas of the Christian life: cross-bearing, office-bearing, sorrow, and endurance.

15 North Bank Street, The Mound, Edinburgh, EH1 2LS
0131 718 4141 bookshop@freechurchofscotland.org.uk
www.freechurch.org/bookshop

Congregational Remittances

Amounts received by Central Office towards Congregational Target Figures.
The first figure is the total for 2007 and the second is the total for July.

Northern

	2007	July
Assynt	1,824	0
Eddrachillis	1,135	0
Clyne	4,882	3,000
Bonar Bridge	4,929	1,000
Dornoch	9,355	2,000
Fearn	5,231	900
Golspie	6,998	1,000
Helmsdale	5,400	1,200
Lairg	1,548	600
Lybster	2,812	100
Olrig, Watten & Bower	6,201	2,000
Rogart	595	1,000
Rosskeen	24,556	3,000
Tain	11,526	2,500
Thurso & Reay	9,482	1,000
Tongue	155	0
Farr	800	800
Strathy & Halladale	711	0
Wick & Keiss	4,061	2,090
Total	101,564	22,190

Glasgow & Argyll

	2007	July
Arran	1,527	500
Ayr	11,457	2,000
Bishopbriggs	7,361	1,032
Campbeltown,	9,600	1,164
Tarbert & Islay		
Coatbridge	8,503	2,600
Cumbernauld	7,084	1,500
Dumbarton	5,718	3,000
Dumfries	4,840	1,000
Dunblane	7,670	0
East Kilbride	5,937	1,100
<i>Glasgow</i>		
- Downvale	44,065	3,200
- Govanhill	8,615	800
- Partick	17,968	2,300
- St Vincent St	20,776	2,800
Greenock	260	33
Dunoon	1,395	0
Strachur	300	0
Kilwinning & Saltcoats	1,661	1,540
Lennoxtown	12,930	2,070
Lochgilphead & Lochfyneside	6,891	0
Mull	2,900	500
Coll	135	50
Oban	8,713	0
Paisley	1,944	800
Total	198,249	27,990

Inverness, Lochaber & Ross

	2007	July
Acharacle & Strontian	748	0
Ardnamurchan	1,401	25
Burghead	9,225	1,533
Dingwall & Strathpeffer	16,534	2,200
Elgin & Forres	5,389	2,200
Fortrose	10,466	1,350
Fort William	6,078	900
Glenurquhart & Fort Augustus	7,970	0
<i>Inverness</i>		
- Free North	51,974	8,000
- Greyfriars Stratherrick	26,933	5,500
Kilmallie	11,376	1,500
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	0
Kiltarlity & Kirkhill	166	0
Kiltearn	0	0
Badenoch	3,000	760
Knockbain	16,503	3,010
Maryburgh	8,201	850
Killearnan	6,220	2,058
Nairn, Croy & Ardersier	150	30
Resolis	2,746	2,600
Urquhart	9,521	1,500
Smithton-Culloden	38,112	3,458
Urray & Strathconon	15,802	0
Total	248,517	37,475

Western Isles

	2007	July
Back	47,594	9,160
Barvas	14,991	3,305
Callanish	18,399	2,500
Carloway	15,387	2,500
Cross	22,085	5,852
Harris	6,027	1,000
Kinloch	23,313	2,100
Knock	12,337	3,000
Lochs	22,019	4,600
North Tolsta	8,124	6,500
North Uist, Grimsay & Berneray	6,295	1,000
Park	12,627	2,500
Point	11,909	3,405
Scalpay	8,428	1,819
Shawbost	13,154	2,250
South Uist & Benbecula	7,879	1,500
Stornoway	111,308	25,022
Total	361,876	78,013

Edinburgh & Perth

	2007	July
Aberdeen	48,071	7,413
Dundee	15,289	3,530
<i>Edinburgh</i>		
- Buccleuch	27,344	4,000
- Leith	16,160	2,596
- St Columba	13,160	0
Falkirk	9,724	1,400
Kirkcaldy	6,581	1,225
Livingston	6,404	1,300
<i>London</i>		
- City	17,899	3,700
- Cobham	6,519	500
Perth & Pitlochry	9,406	1,600
St. Andrews	2,611	0
Total	179,167	27,264

Skye & Wester Ross

	2007	July
Bracadale	4,040	40
Coigach	3,471	0
Duirinish	7,679	350
Gairloch & Kinlochewe	6,421	1,352
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	7,917	175
Lochalsh, Glenshiel & Glenelg	3,485	600
Lochbroom	10,036	2,400
Lochcarron	7,427	1,725
Plockton & Kyle	10,612	1,700
Poolewe & Aultbea	12,509	1,800
Portree	10,311	1,500
Raasay	745	0
Sleat & Strath	7,337	170
Snizort	2,886	1,400
Total	95,234	13,212

Private Donations etc

	2007	July
Charlottetown	947	0
Private Donations	30,396	3,810
Total	31,883	3,810

Grand Totals

	Total	July
2007	1,654,566	209,953
2006	1,633,192	191,539
% increase		1.31%

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

I have to start this with a confession. I'm almost ashamed to admit that when I returned from America this summer, my first action was not to unpack or have a look at the holiday snaps or other usual post-holiday activities. The first thing I did upon arriving in Scotland was read the seventh and final instalment of Harry Potter, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. So strong was my inner Harry-Potter-geek that I had asked my dad to bring the book with him when he picked me up from Edinburgh Airport. I had started before we even hit the Forth Road Bridge, and was absorbed in seconds.

For those of you who do not know what I am talking about (where have you been for ten years?!), Harry Potter is the titular hero of JK Rowling's hugely popular series of seven books. The books are set mainly in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry which Harry attends along with his best friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. The books chronicle Harry's fight against the evil Lord Voldemort, who, in his attempt to take over the wizarding world, had killed Harry's parents among others but failed to kill Harry himself. By the beginning of book seven, Lord Voldemort has re-emerged from hiding with his followers, the Death-Eaters, and many good wizards have died fighting him, including Harry's headmaster and mentor, Professor Dumbledore. The book begins with Voldemort continuing in his plans to have total power, and Harry, with the help of Ron and Hermione, setting out to fulfil his last promise to Dumbledore: to defeat Voldemort.

In the culmination of seventeen years' work, Rowling does not disappoint. The intricate plot throughout seven books is outstanding and culminates brilliantly in this last book. Following the pattern of the series, this book is definitely darker than the last as the reader is treated to more deaths and the inner turmoil of Harry as he struggles with his task. Although the series was initially very well received, by the release of the fifth book Rowling was gaining more than her fair share of literary criticism, some claiming them to be clichéd, conservative, patronising and lacking in style. On this point, I would have to very strongly disagree with the critics. For me, the Harry Potter books are a thoroughly enjoyable read and a fantastic story. Rowling writes about the lives and feelings of teenagers without being patronising, and generally avoids clichés. The books do not present a black-and-white view of good and evil, nor do they have infallible heroes (Harry is, quite frankly, downright irritating for most of the fifth book). Rowling has not set out to be the next Shakespeare, and I think it's easy to forget that at the end of the day, these are children's books set out to entertain and maybe stimulate imagination, and anything else is just a bonus. If nothing else, Rowling deserves credit for making reading so much more popular among children over the past ten years. If you are looking for a good way to pass a few hours and get lost in a brilliant story, I cannot recommend the Harry Potter series highly enough.

However, the literary criticism levelled at Harry Potter pales in comparison to the criticism Rowling has received from religious groups worldwide, many of whom have labelled the books "demonic" and claim they encourage children to turn to sorcery. How, as Christians, should we respond to



what, if true, is a very serious threat? What is the basis for these claims? In truth, when looking at the books it is very easy to see that there is little. Once you look past the surface labelling of witchcraft, the description of what happens at Hogwarts is so obviously fictional and very far from true witchcraft. The use of wands and invisibility cloaks, the appearance of creatures such as house elves, unicorns and dragons, actions such as travelling between fireplaces or running between train platforms to reach platform 9 3/4, all indicate a very imaginative but clearly fictional world, bearing little resemblance to the current practice of any pagan, Wiccan or Satanic cults. If it is the use of magic in the books which offends, then it is just as easy to cite books such as the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy or the Narnia series as sources of magic, and it would be equally wrong to say these books encourage children to paganism or Satanism. While I greatly enjoy watching the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films, I have never felt the urge to sail the high seas, pillaging and murdering afterwards. The same applies to Harry Potter: while I love reading the books and think it would be pretty cool to own an invisibility cloak, I have never finished them with the desire to join the occult and practise magic. In the end it is insulting and patronising to imply that most children cannot tell the difference between fact and fiction and that they do not realise the world of difference between attending Hogwarts and joining a satanic cult.

So if these books are not going to encourage children to become witches, are they of any benefit? Unsurprisingly, I would have to say yes to that as well. Firstly, being something of a bookworm myself, I think anything which encourages young children to read on the scale which this series has, must have some benefit. Rowling presents a battle between good and evil where good does not always seem to be good and evil does not always appear evil; where most of the time there isn't a right answer; where the easy option is not always the morally correct one. Many of the moral lessons in this book are ones I would be happy for any human, let alone any child, to learn, such as that of loyalty or sticking to what you believe in regardless of the cost. Ultimately, it is down to a matter of taste whether you read the books or not, whether you like them or not. As Christians, we have nothing to fear from them and, I believe, can read them with an easy conscience.

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