



Galashiels Old Parish and St Paul's Church

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Dear Friends,

When you get this newsletter I shall be in America visiting our new grandchild, Fiona Lou, born to Elizabeth on 19th May. Both are well and we are happy for Bill and Liz in their new joy. Our thanks to the many who shared our joy and prayed for mother and baby.

When leaving the country, the General Assembly was still in process and the news was still of the aftermath of the Iraqi POW abuses. Things may well have moved on as far as newsworthy items are concerned by the time we return but one thing tends to stand out and that is the almost knee-jerk reaction of governments {as well as others} to avoid straightforward apologies and admissions of guilt when such things as the Iraqi abuse scandals break. We hear declarations that such shocking things are the doings of a few unrepresentative men and women in the forces, a defensive way of saying that whatever bad things in the world happen it can't be our fault. Now even given that the abusive events may be the acts of a few people would it not be far better to admit that terrible things had gone on under coalition control, make clear confession and then state that every effort would be made to clean them up. The trouble is that we are conditioned these days to the 'non-acceptance' culture where self-defence and self justification is all that matters.

A few years ago a young man known to me who had started a new job in the office of a large company was surprised when he admitted to making a mistake. His surprise was not at his mistake but at the attitude of the others in the office, for the culture throughout the company was never to admit mistakes but to always seek to pass the buck. Blame those in finance or in packing, blame the customer, blame anyone but don't give a hostage to fortune with your own admission of guilt. His response was that he was not going to go down that way.

The reason why people find it so difficult to make new beginnings in their lives is because they will not seriously deal with the truth about themselves. New starts begin when we are honest with ourselves and are prepared to cease the image building that comes so naturally, after all it was not governments who started 'spin', it is at the heart of every man and woman ever since Adam said 'the woman you gave me' and sought to evade his own responsibility. To be honest with ourselves and about ourselves is the start of every new beginning. I wish you that honesty and then the grace of God to live every day in his light for his light is a healing light. With every blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Leslie Steele.

Christian Aid Week 9th – 15th May 2004

Many, many thanks to all those who helped in any way with Christian Aid Week last month. Whether you collected, baked, prayed or donated you have brought much needed assistance to those in the third world who live in conditions which we cannot even begin to imagine. Your help will go a long way to bring about some much needed relief. Elsewhere in the Newsletter you will find an article describing some of the needy situations that will benefit from your giving.

The house-to-house collection brought in £852.96 while the collectors at the supermarkets and in the street collected £75.10 and the coffee morning at St. Ninian's realised £361. The preliminary total for the town at the time of writing is £6,371.81 plus Gift Aid Tax claim. This is up on last year with still more to come in from other churches. Thank you again for all your help.

Angela Miller

The Heavenly Bank

"To Him that is able to do far exceedingly above all we ask or think, according to the power which works in us, to Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus unto all generations" (Ephesians 3:20-21)

I know a never failing bank,
Well filled with golden store;
No other bank contains so much
That can enrich the poor.
Should all the banks of Europe break,
The Bank of England fail,
Fear not that heaven's glorious bank
It's discounts will curtail.

Though a thousand notes be scattered round,
All signed and sealed and free,
Yet, many a doubting soul will say:
Ah! They are not for me!
Proud unbelief cannot admit
Such tidings to be true,
And yet I tell each bankrupt soul:
These notes belong to you.

I too right at the door have been
With painful doubts molested,
Knowing, if Moses keeps the bank,
My notes had been protested.

Some fear they write so bad a hand,
Their notes will be rejected.
But always, humble souls obtain
Much more than they expected.

Whenever all my money's spent,
And I'm in utter need.
Straight to my bank I always go
For generous aid to plead.
I've been a thousand times before,
And never was rejected;
No notes can ever be refused
That are by grace accepted.

Should all top bankers close their doors,
My bank stands open wide,
To all the chosen of the Lord
For whom the Saviour died.
Sometimes my banker, smiling, says:
"Why don't you oftener come?"
And when I draw a little bill,
"Why not a larger sum?"

R.Hill

Jubilee Debt Campaign

£3.00 each per year for the next 10 years to cancel our share of World Debt! Sounds too good to be true, ***BUT IT ISN'T!***

IT'S SMALL CHANGE FOR US, A BIG DIFFERENCE FOR THEM.

Jubilee Scotland has lunched a new campaign theme – CALL FOR CHANGE. Our Government has committed to cancel 100% of the debts owed directly to them, to make a big difference to the lives of people living in the world's poorest countries whose governments are spending more on debt repayment than on health or education. However these countries also owe massive amounts to the IMF and the World Bank, and together with other rich nations the UK has an influential role in these institutions.

We are in the unique position, in the UK, to bring pressure to bear on the Government for 2005: the UK is hosting the G8 Summit, the UK will hold Presidency of the European Union, it will be the start of the countdown to achieving the 2015 Millennium Development Goals in 10 years time, and it will be 20 years since Live Aid – Bob Geldof recently commented that since he began campaigning, Africa has grown poorer by 25%, half the continent's population live on an estimated 65p or less per day.

Debt cancellation is only one part of the jigsaw – the Trade Justice Campaign will go on demanding that poorer countries need the current biased trade rules to be radically changed, as well as the need to increase aid (not just in Africa) to help those who are in need!

"Why should we help them?" I hear you ask.

Proverbs 31:8+9 – "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

For more information – contact Jubilee Scotland
Tel: 0131 225 4321 or visit www.jubileescotland.org.uk

Thank you.

Jim Tennant

St. Paul's Guild

On May 26th, a coach load of 27 headed for North Berwick, a little apprehensive about how the weather would be for the afternoon as 'a cool wind off the North Sea' had been forecast. In North Berwick, that can mean a howling gale!! We were joined this year by three ladies from St. Peter's Church, and also two brave men – although we have had gentlemen join us before, and I do not think they were too overwhelmed! We had about two and a half hours to enjoy the pleasures of North Berwick – the sea front walks, a browse around the shops, the fascination of the Sea Bird Centre – before gathering again at the Blenheim House Hotel where we enjoyed an excellent High Tea together. Our helpful driver took a slightly different route home, via Gullane and Aberlady and we arrived back in Galashiels at 2 minutes to eight – we had asked for 8 o'clock so had no cause for complaint! We do thank God for answered prayer – for a fine sunny day, for a safe journey and for a happy time of fellowship together. Why don't you join us next year if we plan a trip?

Christian Aid – where does the money go?

Christian Aid Week ran from 9th-15th May this year, and the money raised will be used to improve people's lives in more than 50 countries worldwide. One of the places that Christian Aid has recently begun working is the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan. Here, as in many other poor countries, money raised in Christian Aid Week is being used to help people live life to the full.

Khurshed Khuinov is 17 and lives in Tajikistan's capital, Dushanbe. He shares one room in a city hostel with his mother and five brothers and sisters. Life in the hostels is bleak and dangerous, so the organisation Zumrad, which is supported by Christian Aid, runs youth clubs to improve the lives of vulnerable children and give them emotional support. They enjoy climbing and camping expeditions, as well as workshops in which they make their own rucksacks and tents.

Zumrad is one of ten partner organisations in Tajikistan supported by Christian Aid. Tajikistan is one of the poorest countries in the world outside Africa, and Christian Aid began to work there quite recently. Situated in central Asia, north of Afghanistan, it was part of the Soviet Union until independence in 1991.

Subsequently the economy has collapsed, and there has been a bitter civil war. One in three workers is jobless, and vulnerable people such as children and the elderly have little or no support. Children are particularly at risk if they are orphaned. Fifty thousand were orphaned during the war, and many more have parents who have been forced to leave home and seek work in Russia. Huge state orphanages provide schooling and shelter, but they are overcrowded and poorly resourced. Children living in these conditions are stigmatised, often do not have enough to eat, and are starved of affection.

Zumrad provides a safe place where children find genuine care and can develop higher hopes for the future.

By supporting Christian Aid Week, you are among millions of people who think poverty is a scandal we do not have to accept. Your actions, commitment and contributions will bring about a better life for people in poor communities all over the world.

Silent Auction—28th May

A big thank you to all who provided, helped, attended, and bought at our Silent Auction on Friday, 28th May. By the end of the evening the sum raised was £1193 for Church Funds. All help was greatly appreciated by the Committee and myself and we hope you had an enjoyable time.

Nancy Noble, Convenor.

SPRING HARVEST 2005

Dates for next year are 5-10 April. If you think you might be interested please speak to Ishbel Adamson by 10 June or phone 756032 for details.

The following is an extract from an E-mail received recently from Scott Lescak, Recycling Appeal – Quality Systems Manager.



"Thank you for your continued support of the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) Recycling Appeal, over the last year. We have been able to raise over £94,000 for the charity, through the help of donors such as yourself. This year CHAS provided specialist palliative support through respite care, emergency care, terminal care and bereavement support for over 200 children with life limiting conditions and their families in Scotland. All your efforts are assisting the charity to fulfil their aims".

I would also like to add my own thanks to all the members of the congregation who have supported and continue to support this important work by passing on their used toner cartridges and used ink jet cartridges to me. Could I appeal to other members of the congregation for help in collecting more cartridges? Ask your friends or employers if they would be willing to pass on their used cartridges (sorry they do not take EPSON). One of the slogans used by the appeal is "It's a Sin to Bin" and this is so true, when used cartridges thrown in the bin, could be saved and go towards helping all those unfortunate children and their families. Used cartridges can be handed to me or left for me in the front porch of the church.

Thank you,

Ian Forsyth

Christian Aid Bridge Cross

Thanks to everybody who sponsored people doing this year Bridge Cross. This year eight people took part and between us we did 32 crossings. The total amount raised was £236.66. The weather was lovely and made the whole event a good day out. Thanks again and if you would like to join us in 2005 please put it in your diary.

Firm Foundations Bible study group got off to a quiet start, but anyone who would like to join (all are welcome, we're incredibly friendly and quite informal) will be made most welcome. This year's topic is entitled "Full of Promise", it's an overview of the Old Testament, covered in eight studies. If you do intend joining us, please contact Jim (Tel: 751003) to get a copy of the study material which you will need for our next scheduled meeting on Monday, 21st June at 7:30-ish, at Robbie and Anne's house.

The following article is condensed from "Insight" a quarterly publication of the Church of Scotland Board of World Mission written by Alastair Morrice. Some may remember that he was at one time in the past, Minister of St. John's, Langlee.

"Where is Bishkek?"

'But where is Bishkek?', people would say, as they puzzled over atlases more than ten years old. A forgivable ignorance, especially since you might find it as Frunze, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

'And where is Kyrgyzstan?', people would say.

Tucked in the centre of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is one of the five 'stans' which were incorporated into the old Soviet Union. (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are the other 4)

'What took you there?', people ask. A visit in 1999 associated with a group of Christian folk who work here brought us to this land and to its capital. 'We would like an International Church here', they said. 'To serve those who cannot cope with church in Russian or Kyrgyz. To support those who come here to help develop the business and international links. And we're sure there would be opportunity to help the local churches too.'

It seemed as if it could be for us, as we were beginning to wonder if God had some other plan for us in the last phase of our life in the ministry. So it was that I resigned from Stonelaw, and Mary and I prepared to come to Bishkek. With the support of many friends, we came first as students in the Kyrgyz National University to learn some Russian and prepare to start the International Church. We felt strange at 56 and 57 going back to a university class, but they did arrange it for the two of us with a very pleasant Russian teacher. Easter that year saw our first service. It took place in the Silk Road Lodge Hotel. The room was packed and we celebrated the wonder of Christ's resurrection in a special way. People of many nationalities were there and wished us well in starting the ICB - International Church of Bishkek.

That summer we met in our apartment on Sunday evenings but by the end of the summer it was clear that we could not continue long like that because of the heat of many bodies packed together. In September we started a morning service in the Dostuk Hotel and an evening service in the local Bible College. The first morning service was on the 1st Sunday of September, 2001.

At the end of the year we had the opportunity to use the Bible College building for the morning service as well and since then that has been our Sunday location and although it is not our building, people speak of it as the International Church.

A strong element in our congregation are the families of Christian workers here who appreciate our Sunday School and Youth Group which meets every second Friday.

'What's it like to be a minister in a church like that?' people sometimes ask. Different. Yes! No funerals in three years! No building to worry about!

Treasurer's Report

APRIL 2004

Income

Offerings 4 weeks (Weekly average £785.29).....	£3,141.15
Dividends, Bank Interest, etc.....	£1,508.16
Donations & Fundraising	£1,474.50
	<u>£6,123.81</u>

Expenditure

Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone.....	£158.00
Advertising, Printing, Stationery.....	£144.80
Organ Maintenance & Repairs.....	£1,570.00
Repairs & Maintenance.....	£371.30
Donations etc.....	£209.30
Standard Monthly Expenditure.....	£3,905.40
	<u>£6,358.80</u>

STANDARD MONTHLY EXPENDITURE OFFERINGS

Stipend	£2,998.60	5th	£484.95
Mission & Renewal	£802.80	13th	£553.58
Organist	£80.00	19th	£566.72
Cleaners (4wks)	£24.00	26th	£634.90
	<u>£3,905.40</u>		<u>£2,240.15</u>
		Paid through Bank	£901.00
			<u>£3,141.15</u>

OFFERINGS UPDATE

	2004	2003	
Jan-March 13wks	£9,615.34	£8,947.41	12wks
April 4wks	£3,141.15	£2,784.55	4wks
	<u>£12,756.49</u>	<u>£11,731.96</u>	

Opportunities. Masses of them! We are involved in a Homeless Shelter for which our church provides the food, and also a club for the children who live there. We are involved with a Young Offenders' prison where we have taken literature, clothing, pencils, and a team to play football. Contact with hundreds of people from the staff of embassies to students who come to our services, join us in fellowship, and enrich our lives. We are involved in training a new generation of Christian leaders through the Bible College where I teach preaching and pastoral care.

These are days of a new beginning in Kyrgyzstan, and it is our joy that after three years, the Board of World Mission approached us to ask if they could identify with us in partnership. We look forward to the development of new links and maybe God will call others as He called us to share in the work of building His church in Central Asia.

Alastair Morrice
Mission Partner, Kyrgystan

The Magic of the Musicals Quiz

The winner of this quiz (as drawn by the Minister from the correct entries) was Nancy Noble. Congratulations to all who sent in correct entries! Once again, many thanks to everyone who made a financial contribution. It's an amazing example of outstanding generosity that this quiz has so far raised £120! Thank the Lord. Answers will be posted on the Notice Board near the Hall entrance for those (like the Editor) who did not manage to find all the solutions!