

The APC News

The Magazine of the Associated Presbyterian Churches in Scotland

Wishart's Arch



Wishart's Arch as it is seen today in the Cowgate, Dundee.

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George Wishart was the second Scottish martyr to die for his faith in Christ at the Reformation. He had a strong link with Dundee, and a plaque (on the reverse side of the picture shown above) commemorates his visit to Dundee during the Great Plague of 1544. The text below is taken directly from Thomas M'Crie's book 'The Story of the Scottish Church', pages 18 and 19. The assassination attempt incident described below, almost certainly took place at the spot shown above.

IN WISHART'S CHARACTER piety was beautifully blended with benevolence. He was so liberal to the poor, that he parted not only with his money, but even with his body-clothes, to supply their necessities. The town of Dundee, which was the first of the Scottish burghs that embraced the Reformation, having been visited with a severe plague in 1544, [Wishart] no sooner heard of it than he hastened to the scene of death with as much earnestness as others were fleeing from it.

"They are now in trouble and need comfort," he said; "and perchance the hand of God will make them now to magnify and reverence that word which before, for fear of men, they set at light part." He was received with great joy by the inhabitants; sermon was intimated for the very next day; and as the plague was still raging in the place, he took his station at the head of the East Gate, the infected standing without and those that were free within; and

Continued on back page

Congregational Details

***“These are the
people of the prov-
ince...***

The priests...

The Levites...

The singers...”

[Nehemiah 7:5cf]

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Services held jointly with the Free Church, High Street, 11am &
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Treasurer: Mr Kenneth Macdonald, 'Arnish', 16 Drumdevan
Place, Inverness IV2 4DQ, Tel 01463 231364. www.
apcinverness.freeuk.com

KINLOCHBERVIE

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

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Church - 6pm. 2nd, 4th Weds 7pm. Treasurer: Miss
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Wed 7pm; Kishorn Meeting House 3pm on 2nd Lord's Day of
month.

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11am; APC Church, Drumbeg - 12.30pm; Free Church
Lochinver - 6pm. Treasurer: Alex MacLeod, The Rowans,
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OBAN

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POOLEWE

Church of Scotland, Poolewe - 11.30pm & 6pm. Treasurer/
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SKYE

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Dunvegan - 12.15 & 5pm. Contact: Norman MacKay Royal
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TAIN & FEARN

Revd John Ross, APC Manse, 2 Cameron Gardens, Tain
IV19 1NT, Tel 01862 892199, Tain Church, Upper King
Street - 11.30am & 6.30pm; Hilton Church 11.30am and
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Geanies House, Fearn, by Tain IV20 1TW, Tel 01862

EDITORIAL

Music and Hymns in History!

THROUGHOUT THE Christian world the use of instrumental music and hymn-singing has divided the church. The younger generation may feel that the time has come for change, but many do not know the history of the subject. The issue has always plagued the church. There has always been a wide range of views regarding singing in church. An article in 'Evangelicals Now' in January this year makes interesting reading. Our Psalm singing tradition has escaped many other problems!

The article shows how the whole issue is complex and many Biblical verses have influenced people's views. For example, in London at the end of the 17th century, a baptist congregation split because some felt that women should not be allowed to sing as they are to "keep silent in the churches" [1 Cor 14:34].

Others believed it was wrong to make unregenerate people sing the praises of God. They did not want any singing at all in church, psalms or hymns, if unbelievers were present. When Benjamin Keach introduced singing after the service in 1691 there was a furious uproar. One member wrote 11 books on the issue and distributed pamphlets saying that those who wanted congregational singing were 'book-burning papists'!

Some others believed that singing was an extra-ordinary gift like tongue-speaking and not for today. Using written hymns was like a liturgy and was contrary to Reformation principles. Using metre and rhyme were 'carnal formalities'.

Isaac Watts opposed Psalm singing only on the grounds that it forced us to make false confessions. That is, sins we never committed, sorrows we never felt, cursing of enemies we never had and praising and thanking God for victories we never won.

Regarding tunes the issue gets worse. In the 1770's, at Hitchin Baptist Church, Watt's hymns were to be sung on one condition – every hymn in the book, no matter what metre, was to have the same tune! Others in the congregation advocated that each person could sing his/her own tune at whatever speed they wanted!

Now to music. No music (or hymns) were used in the church until the 12th century! So it was natural that when it started there would be problems. Many genuinely believed that when music came into the

church it was 'unlawful to use instruments in church'. Others said it was the slippery slope to Rome. Even when Sankey in 1872 published his 'Sacred Songs & Solos' there was an uprising at bringing the music into the sanctuary. Many churches would not use it on Sundays, only at mid-week meetings!



The debates over music and hymns in church history were bitter and vitriolic. Toplady called Wesley a 'tadpole in divinity', (yet he placed Wesley's 'Jesus Lover of my Soul' next to his own 'Rock of Ages' in his 1776 hymnal). Wesley called Toplady 'the most rancorous hater of the gospel system'.

We have been told recently, by those who tour the evangelical world churches, that 'no issue is so divisive today than the issue of music and hymn singing'. Everywhere, north, south, east, west, churches are splitting over what hymnody and what music should, or should not be played in church.

So what does all this teach us today? It shows us how Satan can distract the people of God from their responsibilities and duties. The unsettled issues of history ought not to deter us from spreading the gospel of Christ. We must not allow issues which have divided the church over the centuries to prevent us from our main function of distributing the good news. It ought to be our greatest concern that the gospel itself, not its administration, be published far and wide. Differences of opinion on 'things indifferent' should not prevent cooperation in gospel witness to a perishing world.

We also learn that each of us needs to be "fully convinced in his own mind" [Rom 14:5]. We need to know the history of each subject we have an opinion on, we need to read the current writings also, and only come to a decision after much prayerful study. History shows that many who advocated change did not know what they were doing although they thought they did. The uncertainty regarding music and hymns should never be an excuse for not 'getting involved' in the work of a church.

In an age like our's, where there is so much uncertainty, Christians need to be knowledgeable and take a lead in certainties about fundamentals. As someone else has said, 'we need to believe our beliefs and doubt our doubts, not doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts'!

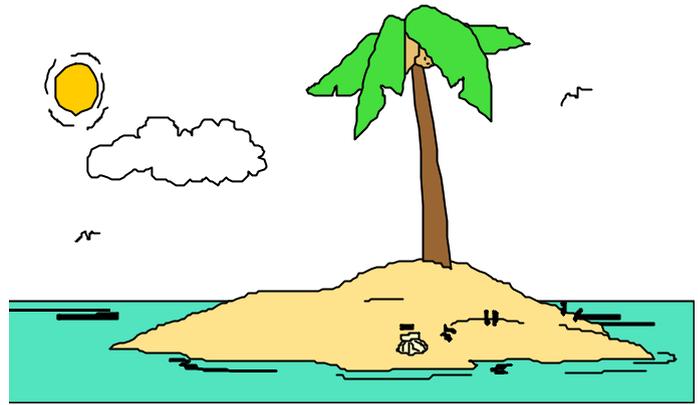
[See Sharon James's article 'Musical Discord',

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God"

[Ephesians 5:18-21]

Desert Island Books

with Hugh



Hugh is a member in our Aberdeen congregation and is being interviewed here by Catherine

SO HUGH, YOU WORK off-shore? Is that a bit like a desert island?

The main difference is that on a desert Island I would have lots of free time and plenty of privacy. As an engineer I work a 12 hour shift and then do reporting in the evening. I don't have much time for books offshore. However once the job is finished, I am usually waiting for a helicopter for a day or two so I manage to get some reading done then.

When you do have time what kind of books do you like to read?

The books I read are broken down into three areas. If I'm feeling lazy I'll read a good yarn like a Tom Clancy or Ian M Banks book. I usually take a Christian book with me. At present I am reading Creation and Change which is excellent. Recently I've been reading some science books such as Drexler's Engines of Creation (a book on the coming age of Nano technology) or The Search for Schrodinger's Cat (A book on quantum physics). I usually bring out one or two magazines as well for reading on the helicopter, these are usually science and technology orientated.

Now instead of being on an Oil Rig you are going to be cast adrift beside a South Pacific island. But before you leave Aberdeen you are allowed to pick a book to bring with you. What books stand out in your mind as the best? Let's start with your child hood? Did you enjoy reading books as a boy?

This is a hard one. As a child I spent most of my time playing with my twin and building huts and bases all over the farm. I was fortunate to be brought up in a Christian family but although I was encouraged to read books they never seemed as interesting as getting out

there and doing something yourself. The one book we read as a family twice a day was the Bible. This book is one that I could read again and again. So the Bible is my obvious choice, here's why; even an atheist could read it and still get something out of it. However we know that it's the inspired Word of God - wow. You could read it for all your days on a desert island and think "Man I missed that bit last time round." If I'm allowed to bring one other book as well as my Bible it would be the world's biggest book on quantum physics or How to Survive on a Desert Island. If I was to take a Christian Book it would be The Trinity Forum short stories in one large book. Unfortunately it is not a book that exists. These short stories such as How Much Land Does a Man Need? Or Two Old Men have meant a lot to me and really made me think about my life. They tell an excellent story which has you enthralled until you get to the end and discover the meaning. These stories really drive a point home. When I left the farm to go to college in Aberdeen these Trinity Forum books, next to the Bible, influenced me the most in my personal reading.

If you were to pick any words from poetry or prose that have changed you, what would they be?

Well, in the Steve Cutris Chapman Album 'Heaven in the Real World', there's this song 'Miracle of Mercy' based on the verses Micah 7:18, 1 Timothy 1:14-16, Titus 3:5-7.

If the truth was known and a light was shown on every hidden part of my soul
Most would turn away, shake their head and say,
he still has such a long way to go.
If the truth was known you'd see that the only good in me is Jesus, oh it's Jesus.
If the walls could speak of the times I've been weak
when everybody thought I was strong
Could I show my face if it weren't for the grace of the one who's known the truth all along
If the walls could speak they'd say that my only hope is the grace of Jesus, the grace of
Jesus

But, oh the goodness and the grace in Him. He takes it all and makes it mine and causes his light

"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"

[Revelation 1:9]

in me to shine
 And he loves me with a love that never ends.
 Just as I am not as I do.
 Could this be real, could this be true?
 This could only be a miracle. This could only be the
 miracle of mercy.

Life on a desert island and offshore can be very lonely. What Scriptures comfort you when you are lonely?

To be honest, offshore life is not that lonely as I'm usually too busy, however, I still enjoy reading my Bible at night and doing my devotions. It's not so much one scripture as the knowledge that I have a Saviour who I can chat to who can really change things on the ground and look after me in every way. Now that is a comfort. If God can create quantum physics, genetic replicators, DNA, and a



Hugh having dinner with friends

complex interacting nature, all in under 7 days, then looking out for me is a breeze!
Finally as part of your provisions for the island you are being given a jiffy bag and a chance to post a book of your choice to a non-Christian friend. What book would you chose to send to one of your non-Christian friends on the oil rigs?

I would probably send How Much Land Does a Man Need? to a few of them. Firstly, it's a short story so there would be more chance of them reading it, and two, the oil industry is very career and money orientated. People scrambling for more money and better jobs have often totally forgotten what actually makes them happy. This book would bring home the point that it's not what you have

How the Birds Were Set Free

THERE IS A FAIRLY well-known story used to illustrate how Jesus sets people free. It is the story of the birds getting out of the cage. The point about the birds being set free is well made, but there is a mistake in another part of the story and that needs to be corrected. If you read the story in an earlier issue you perhaps noticed that the story was not completed and that near the end it told how Jesus gave his tears and his blood to set believers free. It is true that he did that but it was not to Satan that he gave the price but to God. The Bible tells us that very clearly in Ephesians 5:2 *"Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God"*. God was in full control and he made no bargain with Satan. Jesus gave himself as the sacrifice to meet the claims of God's justice. Just remember that it is God who saves us from our sins and Satan can do nothing about it. *M.MacInnes*

Scotland For Christ

Family Evening of Praise *"Because He Lives"*

Friday 16 March 2001
 at 7.30pm

Culloden Academy, Inverness

Guest Speaker: Dr George Mitchell
 Book Table Refreshments

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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(Certificates Issued)

SATURDAY 21st APRIL 2001

12 noon to 3pm

£3 (lunch provided)

St Stephen's Church, Inverness

Contact: 01463 223983

A 'must' for all those working with children

Scotland For Christ

SATURDAY 21 APRIL 2001

at 7.30pm

Culloden Academy, Inverness

Guest Speaker:

John Blanchard

Book Table Refreshments
 Admission by Ticket, obtainable from:

Open-Air Preaching

Bught Park, Inverness

Sunday evenings at 8.15pm

July 1

David Parker
 Male Voice Gospel Choir

July 8

Jim Tarrant

July 15

Max Donald

July 22

Roddie Macrae

July 29

Campbell
 Mackinnon

NEXT PRESBYTERY DATE:

TUESDAY 20th MARCH

Devotions 4.30pm
 Presbytery 5pm

Can We Take the Bible at its Face Value?

CAN WE TAKE THE BIBLE at its face value? ie can we interpret the Bible just as it appears to mean on the surface – or is there a hidden deeper meaning? Must we apply some presuppositions to the reading first before we can be sure of its meaning? Why do we ask such a question? Because we have been challenged by an article in ‘The Times’ newspaper last year, which stated that a theologian in Liverpool said the Bible did not teach that prostitution and homosexuality (among other evils) are wrong!

The article appeared in ‘The Times’ on Monday 27th March 2000. It referred to a book that was being published by Dr John Elford. The report says “Dr John Elford, Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral, argues that the widespread belief that the Bible prohibits active homosexual relationships is a false combination of prejudice and ignorance.” Elford attacks conservatives who defend traditional moral values and says that the Bible does not take a view on homosexuality at all.

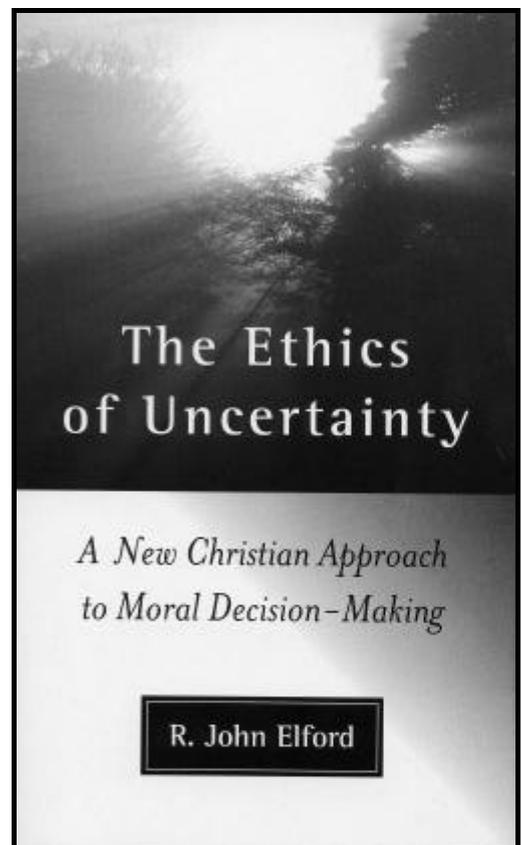
We were so astounded by the report that we decided to buy the book and read Elford’s arguments for ourselves. Why does he discount what seems, to this editor at least, to be the plain and unequivocal teaching of Scripture on homosexuality – it is a sin. The book is ‘The Ethics of Uncertainty’ - ‘A New Christian Approach to Moral Decision-Making’, by R John Elford, published by One-world, Oxford.

First, let us look at what the Scripture says on the subject. Paul says “*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, **nor homosexuals, nor sodomites**, nor thieves... will inherit the kingdom of God*” [1 Cor 6:9-10]. That seems plain enough. Of course, such people can be saved and forgiven, for Paul continues, “*And such **were** some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*” [11].

Paul also wrote to the Roman Christians that “*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness*”. These men “*exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator*”. Paul adds “*For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is*

shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due” [Rom 1:18cf].

That too seems to be pretty clear teaching. Homosexuality is unnatural as well as sinful and immoral and brings its own reward. Mankind deliberately made a change from the natural ‘God given’ gift of sexual activity between male and female to the unnatural sexual activity of two males or two females.



In the Old Testament homosexuality was classified as a capital crime and in fact carried the death sentence. “*If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them*” [Lev 20:13cf].

There are other verses which give the same teaching. So, on the surface, the Bible seems to teach clearly that homosexual activity is wrong, it is a sin and is condemned by God.

What are Dr Elford’s arguments then? This is what he says: “There are very few references to it [homosexuality] in the Bible. A central one in the book of Genesis chapter 19 seems to attribute the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to homosexual acts, but it is

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life”

[John 5:39cf]

more likely that the object of condemnation is the homosexual rape of divine messengers.”

Dr Elford adds “The condemnation of homosexual acts as such has to be read into the text at this point and the same is arguably true of the other biblical references (Lev 18:22, 20:1-3; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10).” [page 125]. So, according to Dr Elford, the real reason Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed was not their practices of homosexuality but the evil treatment of the two angels, and we conservatives are guilty of reading our prejudices into the text.

He has nothing to say about why the angels come to Sodom in the first place. Moses clearly wrote that the men/angels had come for the express purpose of destroying the city “*The men said to Lot...the Lord has sent us to destroy it*” [Gen 19:13].

How about Paul’s account in Romans chapter one, what does he say about it? This: “The one in Romans, for example, is more clearly directed against homosexual lust in connection with the main topic of discussion at that point which is idolatry. Here again there is need for more careful discussion and reading of these texts”. Dr Elford continues “As we would expect to find, following our earlier examination of biblical morality, the Bible does not take a view of the issue at all and the few places where it does mention the subject all occur in the context of the discussion of other things with which the concerns of the writers are noticeably more marked. Jesus, of course, is never recorded as mentioning the subject. Clearly, the Bible does not give an answer to the problem at all, any more than it does on other such specific issues. We have to think things out for ourselves.” [page 126].

That is all Dr Elford says about this vital passage on the subject of homosexuality in the Bible! The passage is clearly about the wrath of God being revealed from heaven “*against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*” [Rom 1:18]. The main topic is not idolatry but unrighteousness and ungodliness!

Dr Elford’s book is about one main subject – ethical uncertainty. He tries to show that the Bible has nothing concrete to say by way of definition regarding what is moral and what is not. He says that Jesus “did not legislate on the ethical life in any detail at all. What he, in fact, did was something more fundamental to it which enables his followers to work things out for themselves, and this is the important point, to do so amid uncertainty.” [page 75].

Dr Elford questions if we can ever know we are doing God’s will. He says we can never be sure about ethical matters. Regarding ethics, he says “Part of the answer to this must, again, be to recognise immediately that we can never be sure of this. Since we are not God we can never know either God or the mind of God completely.” [page 143]. How different from Paul who could confidently say “*But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth*

against those who practice such things” [Rom 2:2].

Dr Elford denies we can know God’s mind on ethics for certain saying “We have rejected this position on the grounds that neither the Bible nor the Church can give us access to this sort of knowledge...The only reality we know is the reality we derive from our sense-experiences of the world in which we live. That is it. All else is conjecture.” [page 144].

Reading the book, it is clear that Dr Elford does not accept the Holy Scriptures as the inspired, infallible Word of God, so it is no wonder that he complains about the Church misleading society by offering certainty regarding ethics and morals. He is certain there is no certainty in ethics. The Bible only gives guidelines – everything has to be ‘worked out’ he says. Ethics is “something to be wrestled with constantly and must ever be open to new ideas and insights wherever they might come from, including secular sources as well” [page 96].

Leaving aside Dr Elford’s view of the Bible we cannot understand how he thinks the Bible is neutral regarding homosexuality. We cannot see any other interpretation of the Bible on the subject of homosexuality than that it is a sin and condemned.

How sad that our present day theologians are leading our younger generation astray in promoting the idea that the Bible is not clear on the subject of homosexuality, prostitution, etc. What hope for the world if the Church itself is not clear on morals and ethics?

I purchased the book to find out how an intelligent scholar could interpret the Bible in such a unorthodox way. I am astounded that someone in such a high position could ‘get away’ with such poor exegesis of the Scriptures. ‘O Lord, save us from such theologians who are misdirecting people who are searching for truth and righteousness’.

But we need to remind ourselves when we are on the subject of homosexuality, no matter how wrong it is, we must always love the homosexual as we do other sinners. The homosexual is not in another class, above or beneath others breakers of God’s law.

The gospel applies to them in exactly the same way as it does to adulterers, thieves, murderers, etc. The gospel is ‘designed’ for homosexuals as it is for writer and reader. God in His grace, has sent His Son to die for sinners of every kind. Christ’s atonement covers every type of sin.

“Do not think I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you – Moses... For if you had believed Moses you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words”

[John 5:45cf]

The Fool Says in His Heart 'There is No God'

This article is by Norman Macleod, Bridge House, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris who was in the CID with the Northern Constabulary before he retired. He is now an elder in the Harris congregation of the APC. He is a gaelic enthusiast but agreed that this article could be printed in English! The article originally appeared in the CPA journal "The Witness".

*"When I consider
Your heavens, the
work of Your fin-
gers, The moon and
the stars, which You
have ordained, What
is man that You are
mindful of him, and
the son of man that
You visit him?"*

[Psalm 8:3,4]

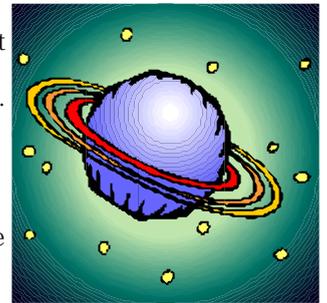
IN THE THEOCRACY THAT was Israel in the Psalmists' day it would take an even bigger fool to express such thoughts outwith the secret recesses of his heart. Stoning might have been his lot. No such constraints on peoples tongues or pens nowadays. Any blasphemy of God is permissible providing it is uttered or written in the Christian (so called) Western World.

Among the latest in atheistic publications to be spewed out on an ever more gullible humanity is a book by Ludovic Kennedy entitled "All in the mind, A farewell to God". His conclusions like others of his ilk rest on the supposition that scientific enlightenment has dispelled from the minds of people the mists of superstition that has led them to a belief in a Creator, all pervading and personal God.

The undeniable existence of an endless universe moving in perfect cohesion poses no problem to militant atheists. They have a very simple explanation. It goes something like this: "In the beginning there was nothing, no time no motion not even empty space, that is except for one tiny atom, a primeval atom, smaller even than one of the myriads that cavort within the confines of a single hair in a flea's ear. About fourteen billion years ago this minute element of nothingness in the midst of nowhere exploded with a bang, a BIG BANG. And of it cascaded all the material contained in all the billions of galaxies each of billions of suns about one million times the size of the earth and many possibly with their own family of planets and moons in tow."

Now there can be nothing more mindless, utterly shambolic, chaotic and unplanned than the mechanics of an explosion, especially an explosion in an airless vacuum, the debris of which, in the form of galaxies of stars, is still hurtling through the space it is creating in its wake at one million miles per hour. It is just by pure chance we are assured by the scientifically enlightened, that a tiny part of this debris rolled itself into a ball, became our sun and caught into its orbit other even tinier fragments that became planets, our own earth being one of them.

Planet earth again purely by chance happened to be in the most beneficial distance from the sun near enough to be nice and warm but far enough away not to fry. By a further combination of flukes it settled into an annual orbit so precise that not a minicule of a second separated the time taken for the completion of each orbit. Although the earth is three quarters covered by oceans mostly miles deep, the enormous centrifugal forces generated by the 70,000 miles per hour speed of its orbit do not cause the seas to fly off into outer space, this is because by chance the earth spins on its axis once every 24 hours, exactly the best speed not only to hold on to the seas but to distribute the heat of the sun as evenly as possible. It also orbits with a rocking motion to give every square inch of earth's surface the same duration of sunshine each year.



As if that was not enough, a single moon swept into earth's orbit, of exactly the best possible size, namely one sixth the mass of the earth, travelling at the best possible speed to eternally lock itself into the most beneficial orbit at the best distance from the earth, ensuring a perfectly regulated tidal system and oceanic currents, aerating the seas and distributing warm waters towards the poles and cold waters to the tropics -algae started forming in the seas, single cell life forms appeared from nowhere and started feeding on it, developing into multicell creatures which in time evolved a brain and nervous system, getting smarter with each generation, until after a few hundred million years, man evolved, not only walking the earth but sailing the oceans, flying through the air and even venturing over the edge of space. All we are asked to believe within the chaos of a still reverberating BIG BANG.

Continued on back page

Round Our Congregations

ABERDEEN

On Saturday 20th January, the congregation gathered to hear Revd Alexander Murray from Lairg give a lecture on the basis and constitution of the church. His outline was in the form of a pyramid, a solid base which was not easily toppled!

His first head was the need for a constitution, likening the church's constitution to the Articles of Association in a business. Vows and signing formulas had the same function as a contract of employment.

Mr Murray went on to explain about creeds and confessions with a brief history on the old confessions and current distinctions between presbyterians today. The larger part of his address was given to the Regulative Principle. This subject was the one which generated the most interest and questioning.

The basic teaching of this principle governs worship in the reformed churches across the world. It states that whatever is not commanded, or practised by example or precept, by Christ or the Apostles, is forbidden in public worship. It opposes the alternative principle, 'What is not forbidden in Scripture is permitted in public worship'.

The whole meeting was held in a most caring and gracious manner and all questions and answers were given in a spirit of love and understanding. Many found the meeting helpful.

Please pray for the ongoing situation in Aberdeen.

DUNDEE

All the work in redecorating the church building at Dens Road has now been completed. The congregation are to have a Thanksgiving Service on **Saturday 17th March**. We trust many friends will come and join us. We also intend to have a communion service the next day, 18th March.

We hope the Revd John W Ross from Lochcarron will say a few words at the Thanksgiving Service and take the communion services. Mr Quinn, another dear friend known to the local congregation, also hopes to be present on the Saturday meeting to speak.

We have had three new faces since our last report and the congregation have been able to help one of them with their urgent needs. It is a privilege to be of help to anyone and we ought to consider it a joy to be in a position not only to help practically, but also to give advice.

The Praise classes have now started on a Sunday after the evening service. We are learning the 'parts' to the short metre version of Psalm 67. On two weeks out of three we are looking at the new study subject of 'Seeking God's Will'. Please pray that present contacts

with the community would develop into spiritual forums.

As we were writing the last paragraph the phone rang – it was the police to say that our church has been broken into again! Thankfully nothing valuable has been taken and no great damage has been done except to our front door. Do pray for Divine protection for our premises which seem to be an attractive target for vandalism.

INVERNESS

Inverness Book Reading Club. The Club has continued to meet and is currently reading Stephen Olford's book, Not I But Christ, having recently completed the one by Richard Bewes on prayer. We plan on some more reading before we have our Guest Author, David Searle, from Rutherford House, meet with us in May.

Drakies Sunday School Outreach. The Sunday School continues to meet and a "church service" meeting is arranged from time to time. This is a great work being carried on by some of the young folk from the congregation, and we thank God for their commitment.

Scotland For Christ

A Praise Evening For the Family is arranged for Friday, 16 March at 7.30pm in Culloden Academy, with the theme "Because he Lives". The Guests Speaker is Dr George Mitchell, and the Offering will be given to Prison Fellowship and New Start. For more information contact John Lister 01463-220969

Church Leaders Planning Meeting. The church officers meet from time to time for a Prayer Breakfast, and have arranged to meet for a longer "discussion and planning" meeting on 17 March. It is essential that church leaders be men of vision, prepared to give leadership, under God.

Child Protection Policy : Training Day. A Training Course, in accordance with the Child Protection Policy, will be run in St Stephen's Church, Inverness, from 12noon to 3pm. A light lunch will be served at 12noon, after which the Course will run. A Certificate of Attendance will be issued to all who take the Course. Numbers are limited, so if you wish to attend PLEASE contact Calum MacInnes on 01463-223983, as soon as possible.

John Blanchard Meeting. The author of "Does God Believe in Atheists?", will give a public Lecture on **Saturday 21 April at 7.30pm** in Culloden Academy, Inverness. The Lecture is free, but Admission is by Ticket, so if you wish to attend, please contact John Lister on 01463-220969. (This Lecture is being arranged by "Scotland For Christ"). John Blanchard will preach in St Stephen's Church, Inverness, on 22 April at 12noon.

"Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

[Colossians 4:16]

What in the World is Happen-

This page is devoted to encouraging events that are taking place around the world to stimulate appropriate prayer.

France

FRANCE HAS NEVER been in the forefront of reformed religion despite John Calvin being the main theologian of the reformation. Calvin himself had to flee from France to Switzerland. The awful massacre of protestants on St Bartholomew's Day in 1572 proved that there was still fierce opposition to the new teaching.

France never grew to be a stronghold of protestant religion and today the nation is languishing under a dearth of good evangelical ministries. 70% of the population are professed Roman Catholics (but only 10% are practising) and 1.77% are Protestants, of which only 0.65% are evangelical! Its not that the French are unspiritual or disbelieve the supernatural – 25% of the population put their faith in clairvoyancy or astrology!

However, over the last few years there are signs of encouragement. Since 1970, over 1,000 new churches have opened and since 1988 over 400 new evangelical churches have been started. There is also 'France 2001 – An International Movement of Prayer for France' which encourages prayer from around the world for France. The organisation are inviting people to come during the 40 days from 7th March to 15th April. They ask that we pray for believers there, who are weak and marginalised, and that leaders would receive protection from discouragement, overwork and spiritual pressure. They also ask for prayer that a new generation of young leaders would arise and also for unity between the various denominations.

Here is an excerpt from their web site: 'Come to France and join the battle in prayer during the 40 days of prayer and fasting (7th March - 15th April 2001). Pray for a few days, a week, or the full forty days. Pray alongside believers from France and other nations.

'At this time, there will be many special meetings for prayer throughout France, a time when probably more people will be praying for France than at any other time in the nation's history. It is estimated that over 1000 French churches and prayer groups will be joined by hundreds of thousands of believers from many different nations in these special 40 days of prayer and fasting for France.'

[See web site www.lafrence2001/frenchfacts/]

USA – Gospel Solves Social Problems

AN ARTICLE IN THE 'Los Angeles Times' at the end of January by Chuck Colson (ex-Watergate Scandal) gave a report of the success of a new initiative by Prison Fellowship. It is a programme where prison volunteers are immersed in intensive life-skills training and Bible Study for eighteen hours per day. After a year and a half the prisoners are released, given a job and a mentor, and welcomed into a local church.

The scheme is borne out of the conviction that there needs to be a moral transformation of the individual before there can be any real improvement in the prisoner's behaviour. Experts have shown that crime is caused by the lack of moral training during the formative years. This new programme provides training with Biblical morality and values as its base. The success rate seems most effective. Of the 80 prisoners who completed the first programme only 3 are back in custody, ie under 5%, and the national average is between 40% and 60%.

As many will know, Colson operates Prison Fellowship on Christian principles and he is very encouraged that the new president of the USA has unveiled plans to encourage faith-based communities to provide solutions to the many social problems in the country. Colson was at a meeting in February with the president and says that he witnessed a landmark event in American politics when Bush promoted this type of initiative.

Colson sees a wonderful opportunity for the church to get out of its comfort zone and get involved with those most in need. The American government has signaled a new era in American life with the government and private organisations working side by side to solve the country's most intractable problems.

In our own country Sir Fred Catherwood has sounded the same note in his book [It Can Be Done](#) where church and state work together to make a difference. The breakdown of the family, and the many other resulting problems produce a bleak picture of our disintegrating society but Sir Fred sees hope if more churches get involved in the problems of our society by offering help. He is encouraged that some have begun this work and cites Garston Bridge Chapel in Liverpool, West Street Baptist Church in Crewe, The King's Centre in Chessington as prime examples of churches living out in a practical way the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"...the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever"

[Revelation 11:15]

CHILDREN'S PAGE



TOP CLASS

Adults can use this page with our permission, APC KIDS.

The pictures on this page are of a special bird which you can find out more about in a book called: Rainforest Adventures by Horace Banner. It has two names: Night Jar; Night Hawk. To find out the third read the following word backwards

rekcus-taoG

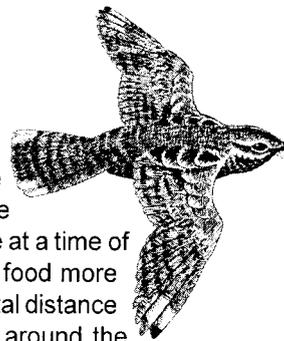
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Here is a puzzle about birds. Place the letters in their boxes. The first one is done for you. Once completed you will have some words from Psalm 84 that mention the names of two different breeds of bird.

A: 3c, 4a, 5g, 5n, 6g, 6n, 7g, 7m, 9a, 9e, 9k, 10f, 10i **E:** 1h, 2h, 3e, 4j, 4L, 5c, 6L, 7c, 8b, 8k, 8n, 9g, 9j
I: 1L; 2K; 4D; **O:** 1B; 1F; 2B; 3G; 3J; 5J; 6B; 6J; 7J; 8G; 10B; **U:** 2C; 6C; 10C.

The amazing world of Birds

Have you ever seen birds flying in a large V shape through the sky? This is birds migrating. They fly in a large group with one bird at the front and the others spreading out behind it. The birds all take turns to fly at the front. This is because the front bird has the hardest job flying against the wind. Migration is a very long and difficult journey for birds. It takes place at a time of year when the weather in the birds' breeding grounds gets colder and food more scarce. The birds know it is time to move on. The Arctic tern migrates a total distance of 25,000 miles - over 40,000 km. Which is the same as flying once around the equator. The reason for migration is usually a search for food. Food is generally more plentiful in the warmer climates. Then they return when the breeding season comes round once more.



Experts have calculated that nearly 4,000 million birds fly down from Europe and western Asia to spend the Northern winter in Africa. For many the route to North Africa crosses over Israel, which is where the prophet Jeremiah spotted them one day. In Jeremiah 8:7 it is recorded that God pointed out to Jeremiah something about birds. "Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord." What did he mean? God meant this. Even the birds know what to do. They obey me. But the people of Israel don't even seem to know what I want.

Just as the birds are still migrating around the globe, sin is still a problem today. These words that God said to Jeremiah are still important for you to understand. We all must study God's word to know what he wants us to do and then we should obey him. In Psalm 119:11 King David prayed to God, he said, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Have you ever tried to memorise bible verses? This is what David means by hiding God's word in his heart. If you read and memorise God's word and ask him to help you obey him God will help you to remember his word when you are tempted to do wrong and sin. If even the birds can obey God when he tells them to do things surely we can read his book the Bible to find out what he wants us to do?!

"And teach them to your children and your grandchildren"

[Deuteronomy 4:9]

The APC News is published 9 times per year in the following months:

- January/February
- March
- April
- May/June
- July
- August/September
- October
- November
- December

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

The typescript is set in 10pt 'Footlight MT Light' on Microsoft Publisher 98. The style for Scripture quotations is italic within double inverted commas, and then square brackets for the Scripture reference, chapter and verse separated by a colon.

The most helpful way to send articles is by email. Text may also be sent on disc in Microsoft Word. Some rtf files are so acceptable. Clearly printed well-spaced typing and artwork in one column is also good as we can scan it.

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

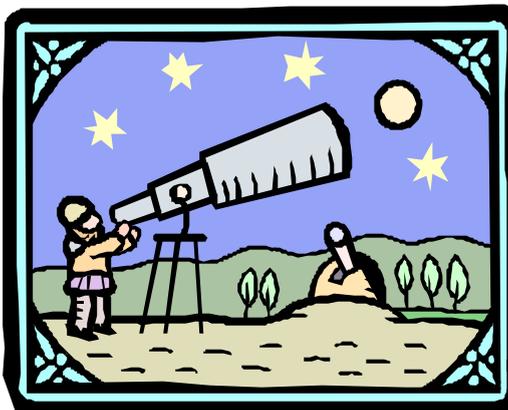
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Any self-respecting bookie would give more odds against a fraction of this happening by pure chance than there are atoms in the universe. Anyone believing it the most audacious delusion of the father of lies who is the devil can believe anything but the truth. Why? - "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sent them strong delusions, believe a lie". [2 Thess 2:10-11].

How reassuring the TRUTH is - "In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth." [Gen 1:1] and "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." [John 1:1]

Ludovic Kennedy's search for the unsearchable God did not take him outwith the confines of his own intellect. Little wonder



he could not find Him. His reasoning does not soar over the pathetic. Without bothering to check on God's own claims in His word he launches forth on prophecy.

"It is not possible" he declares, "for anyone, God or man to know the future". Had he read the last part of Isaiah 46 he could have seen that the proof God gives that He is in fact God is His ability to foretell and to foreordain the future. Israel, God's chosen people among whom He dwelt, failed to live up to their high calling. They broke all the covenants and all the laws that God made with them. When finally persistent idolatry deteriorated to child sacrifice, the Covenant God, known to Abraham as the Judge of all the Earth, had seen enough.

The advance in science on which Ludovic Kennedy rests his hopes is again a fulfilment of prophecy, - "In the last days many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased" [Dan 12:4]. Kennedy himself is living proof of the veracity of prophecy; - "Knowing this first, there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." [2 Pet 3:3].

Continued from front page

there he preached to them on these appropriate words in the 107th Psalm "He sent his word and healed them;" adding, by way of paraphrase, "It is neither herb nor plaister, O Lord, but thy word heals all." "By which sermon," says Knox, "he raised up the hearts of all that heard him, that they regardit not death, but judgit thame mair happie that sould de-pairt, than sic as sould remain behind."

But, in truth, the life of Wishart was in greater danger from his persecutors than from the pestilence. One day, as he was descending from his elevated position after sermon, he observed a man standing at the foot of the stairs, and immediately suspecting his purpose he laid hold of his hand, saying, "My friend, what would you do?" taking from him, at the same time, a dagger, which he held concealed under his gown. The wretch was so confounded, that he confessed on the spot that he was a priest, who had been bribed by cardinal Beaton to assassinate Wishart. The people would have torn him to pieces, but the good minister took the assassin in his arms, and saved his life. "No," said he, "he has done me no harm, but rather good; he has let us understand what we may fear; in times to come we will watch better."

Subscriptions and Renewals for APC News

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Note for Congregations

Congregations please note that the **minimum charge** for bulk copies (up to 50) is **£20**. Additional copies thereafter in bundles of 50 for £15 and 25 for £7.50. Congregations of course, can order fewer copies, but they must pay the minimum **£20** for each issue. They can, if they wish, charge for their own distribution, or give them away free. Cheques should be made out to 'APC News' and sent to the address below. Please state if acknowledgement of donation is required.

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