

# The APC News

The Magazine of the Associated Presbyterian Churches in Scotland

## The APC Conference



On Saturday 1st September, the APC held their annual conference at the Drumossie Hotel, Inverness. It was an excellent conference many people saying it was the best yet. The theme was 'Solving Problems' and the speakers (shown above) were, Revd George Macaskill 'The Problem of Reaching the Lost'; Revd Noel Due, 'The Problem of Sin in the Believer'; Revd Dr Alistair Wilson, 'The Problem of Discouragement'. Revd J W Ross (far right), was the usual efficient chairman. The picture below shows people



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# Congregational Details

*“These are the  
people of the  
province...The  
priests...The  
Levites...The  
singers...”*

[Nehemiah 7:5cf]

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### FORT WILLIAM

Services held jointly with the Free Church, High Street, 11am &  
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Bridge, Inverness-shire PH34 4EZ, Tel 01397 712405.

### HARRIS

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School - 12 noon & 6pm Tue 7.30pm. Treasurer: John  
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### KINLOCHBERVIE

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Church - 6pm. 2nd, 4th Weds 7pm. Treasurer: Miss  
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### LOCHCARRON

Revd J W Ross, APC Manse, Main Street, Lochcarron, IV54  
8YD,  
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month.  
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11am; APC Church, Drumbeg - 12.30pm; Free Church  
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EDITORIAL

# Haman - bin Laden!

## 13th Adar - 11th September

**T**HE BIBLE TELLS us there is nothing new under the sun. Even the events of September 11th should not surprise us. There are many similarities between Haman in the book of Esther, and Osama bin Laden the chief suspect of the terrorist attack on New York city and the Pentagon. That is, similarities – apart from the outcome.

Haman was a racist. His hatred of all Jews on account of Mordecai's refusal to honour him, led him to conceive of a mass extermination of the Jewish race. Haman devised a plan, organised his troops, gained national support and set the date – 13th of the month Adar. But, unlike 11th September, the plan failed. We need to remember there was a particular reason for the plan failing!

What was that reason? It was the power of prayer and fasting by God's people. Queen Esther called on the people of God among her subjects *"Go gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan and fast for me...My maids and I will fast likewise"* [Esther 4:16]. Fasting of course, was always associated with prayer.

God has a special ear for the prayers of His people in a time of crisis. There are times when the circumstances are so unique that prayer and fasting are the only solutions. On one such occasion Jesus said *"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting"* [Mat 17:21].

The horrendous events in America on September 11, warrant a special time of prayer and fasting. The attack was of significant proportion to compel the nations of the world to stop for 3 minutes silence. The Church has a greater responsibility than the State in directing the nation to think clearly and wisely regarding the response. Prayer surely is a high priority in any response.

What are we to make of the terrorist attack on New York and Washington? Two passages of Scripture come to mind. One is when Jesus and the

disciples met the blind man in [John 9]. The disciples were concerned about why such a sad thing happened. Jesus had a different question – it was not why did it happen, but what can I do to help? That should always be our first reaction to tragedies – how can I help?

The second Scripture is when the Tower of Siloam fell in Jerusalem, recorded in [Luke 13:4,5]. There was much talk about that disaster also. Jesus' reply shows us that the bottom line is spiritual – we need to repent. Death can come in a moment and therefore we need to watch and be ready for we do not know the day or the hour of our death. All events, even national disasters, are to be seen in the context of spiritual preparedness for our inevitable death.

How should we respond to such tragedies? How did Jesus respond to His own murderers? His crucifixion was the greatest injustice of all history. On the personal level we read of His wonderful prayer *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do"* [Luke 23:34]. What a challenge for each of us towards our enemies. Who is sufficient for these things?

Ultimately of course, judgement did come from God on unrepentant Israel in AD70 when the *"abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet"* in [Mat 24:15cf] actually took place. And it was a terrible judgement. And ever since then also, the poor Jews have suffered for their persistent rejection of Christ as Saviour. But what wonderful promises there still are for Israel and us – and Osama bin Laden!

In the case of Israel we know there will come a day when they will acknowledge their Saviour, for *"through their fall...salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world...how much more their fullness...so Israel will be saved"* [Rom 11:11-27]. The gospel offers salvation to the greatest and the neediest sinner in the

*"Unless the Lord guards the city the watchman keeps awake in vain"*

[Psalm 127:1]

*"Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see...(what)...the Lord has inflicted...Is this the city that is called 'The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth'?"*

*"The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem"*

[Lamentations 1:12,15 + 4:12]

*"Remember O Lord what has come upon us; look and behold our reproach...the crown has fallen from our head".*

*"You, O Lord remain for ever; Your throne for ever and ever...turn us back to You, O Lord, and*

### **POSSESSIONS and HAPPINESS**

“The relentless pursuit of possessions makes us greedy, selfish and dissatisfied. An increasing number of people recognise the futility of such an existence. Fenn Chapman, a sixteen-year-old, hit the headlines when he ran away from Rugby School a year or two ago and flew to the Bahamas. He raised the fare by selling his stereo and his collection of CDs. The reporters tracked him down and asked him why he did it. He replied ‘I started thinking about my future: university, a job, buying a car, getting married, a mortgage and then dying. I thought there had to be something more than this. So I had to get away and think things through.’ He had recognised the truth of what we have learned from Jesus: materialism does not pay and does not satisfy. But is there any alternative? If this world is all there is then we have no choice but to invest our lives in earthly treasures. Jesus insists that there is

# Who's to Blame?

Chuck Colson writes from Washington on the New York Attack

The article below has been taken with kind permission from Charles Colson's 'Breakpoint' commentaries

## **Looking for Reasons: Disaster and a Prophetic Voice**

**S**INCE THE TERRORIST attacks in New York and Washington last week, BreakPoint commentaries have focused on a Christian worldview Response. And we've ignored our Schedule -- correctly so. The attacks were of such magnitude that no one could think of anything else.

Barring additional developments, however, we will resume our regular BreakPoint schedule tomorrow with a three-part commentary on a program on evolution which will be presented next week on PBS. You need to know what PBS is up to.

But, before we leave the topic of the terrorist attacks, I want to comment on the meaning of a prophetic response to this national disaster. Christians are called to speak prophetically to the world, calling for repentance.

The reaction of some evangelicals, however, was, unfortunately, to place the blame for the attacks on people in groups who have had a secularizing effect on American society. I don't associate myself with those comments. Nor do I believe most American Christians do. These remarks were ill-timed and inappropriate -- as those who made them, to their credit, have acknowledged. They have apologized for them.

While I obviously believe that the forces of secularism have done immeasurable harm, it is unfair to associate this tragedy with those forces. Nor can we lay the blame at the feet of Arabs or Muslims in general as some are wont to do.

The hijackers who crashed airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were Muslim in name only. Several of them were involved in drunk driving and visiting strip bars, things no religious Muslim would ever

do. In reality they were anarchists seeking to destroy, destabilize, and make us slaves to fear.

But, you ask, aren't Christians supposed to be prophetic within the culture and point out sin? Of course, but there are biblical guidelines.

First, remember the words of the apostle Peter: *"It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God"* [I Peter 4:17]. The sins of Christians and of the church are our first order of business.

Our materialism, pride, disunity, gossip, and lack of love are as much a cause for judgment as anyone else's behavior. To single out the transgressions of others while ignoring our own is to turn biblical teaching on its head.

Second, the biblical prophets who pronounced God's judgment upon the people were careful to count themselves among those being judged. And when judgment came, they shared in the suffering of the people. Jeremiah wept and wrote laments when Jerusalem fell, Ezekiel went into exile, and Moses threw his lot in with the people when God told him of his intention to wipe out Israel and begin again with him. We always speak as fellow sinners -- and should be the first to repent.

Third, if we would be prophetic, we need to speak out for the right reasons: not to find scapegoats, condemn, or denounce; but out of love for our neighbors. Rather than demonizing others, we offer an alternative to destructive worldviews that have left many victims -- including the victims of last Tuesday -- in their wake.

Comments that sound self-righteous and point the finger at others make it hard for ordinary people to see how the Christian message differs from

# An Afghan writes to fellow Americans

Dear Friends:

Yesterday I heard a lot of talk about "bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age." Ronn Owens, on KGO Talk Radio allowed that this would mean killing innocent people, people who had nothing to do with this atrocity, but "we're at war, we have to accept collateral damage," and he asked, "What else can we do? What is your suggestion?" Minutes later I heard a TV pundit discussing whether we "have the belly to do what must be done." And I thought about these issues especially hard because I am from Afghanistan, and even though I've lived here for 35 years I've never lost track of what's been going on over there. So I want to share a few thoughts with anyone who will listen.

I speak as one who hates the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden. There is no doubt in my mind that these people were responsible for the atrocity in New York. I fervently wish to see those monsters punished. But the Taliban and Ben Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who captured Afghanistan in 1997 and have been holding the country in bondage ever since. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a master plan.

When you think Taliban, think Nazis. When you think Bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan" think "the Jews in the concentration camps." It's not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this atrocity. They were the first victims of the perpetrators.

They would love for someone to eliminate the Taliban and clear out the rats nest of international thugs holed up in their country. I guarantee it. Some say, if that's the case, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban themselves? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, damaged, and incapacitated. A few years ago, the United Nations estimated that there are 500,000 disabled orphans in Afghanistan--a country with no economy, no food. Millions of Afghans are widows of the approximately two million men killed during the war with the Soviets.

And the Taliban has been executing these women for being women and have buried some of their opponents alive in mass graves. The soil of Afghanistan is littered with land mines and almost all the farms have been de-destroyed

The Afghan people have tried to over-throw the Taliban. They haven't been able to.

We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Trouble with that scheme is, it's already been done. The Soviets took care of it. Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering. Level their houses? Done. Turn their schools into piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? There is no infrastructure. Cut them off from medicine and health care? Too late. Someone already did all that.

New bombs would only land in the rubble of earlier bombs. Would they at least get the Taliban? Not likely. In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They'd slip away and hide. (They have already, I hear.) Maybe the bombs would get some of those disabled orphans, they don't move too fast, they don't even have wheelchairs. But flying over Kabul and dropping bombs wouldn't really be a strike against the criminals who did this horrific thing. Actually it would be making common cause with the Taliban--by raping once again the people they've been raping all this time. So what else can be done, then?

Let me now speak with true fear and trembling. The only way to get Bin Laden is to go in there with ground troops. I think that when people speak of "having the belly to do what needs to be done" many of them are thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed. They are thinking about overcoming moral qualms about killing innocent people. But it's the belly to die not kill that's actually on the table.

Americans will die in a land war to get Bin Laden. And not just because some Americans would die fighting their way through Afghanistan to Bin Laden's hideout. It's much bigger than that, folks. To get any troops to Afghanistan, we'd have to go through Pakistan. Would they let us? Not likely. The conquest of Pakistan would have to be first. Will other Muslim nations just stand by? You see where I'm going. The invasion approach is a flirtation with global war between Islam and the West. And that is Bin Laden's program. That's exactly what he wants and why he did this thing. Read his speeches and statements.

It's all right there. At the moment, of course, "Islam" as such does not exist.

## CHRISTIANS and SIN

"We have become worldly Christians. We still go to church, we still believe the right things in our heads, we still believe in heaven intellectually, but our actions suggest otherwise.

We are more concerned with happiness than holiness, with security than souls. Ours is a laid-back religion that seeks to be served, rather than to serve. We want a church that makes us feel good, rather than one that challenges us. So often we opt for religion that costs us little. 'Sacrifice' is a word that is not often on our lips...

"So many Christian people do the spiritual splits – they have got one foot in the world and one foot in Christ. They are the most miserable people around – it is very uncomfortable to do the splits. They never really enjoy themselves with their non-Christian friends because they are guilty about much of what they get up to together. And they are uncomfortable with their Christian friends as well because

*“Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths”*

[Micah 4:2 ]

*“For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands”*

[Isaiah 55:12]

*“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal”*

[Rev 22:10]

*“And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain”*

[2 Peter 1 :18]

*“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to*

## “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news” [Isaiah 52:7]

ON TUESDAY 11th September at 7am a group of Christian leaders in Dundee gathered in a church for breakfast and to pray for the city. At 7.30 am they left to walk up to what is known in Dundee as The Law, a hill in the centre of the city, the top of which overlooks the whole surrounding area. Some four weeks earlier, on the path leading up to The Law, there was a horrific murder of a young woman out walking her dog in broad daylight. The accused is a fifteen year old boy.

These Christian leaders were burdened for the spiritual welfare of Dundee. They came from a variety of evangelical churches. The mile walk uphill was punctuated with stops for reading Scripture and prayer at street corners. It was a very beautiful day reflecting the spirit and unity of those who met.

As we ascended up the hill, the leader of the group would stop us at regular intervals and read one of the Songs of Ascent from the Psalms of David with suitable comments. At the various prayer times, references were made to the sad state of the city and the need for repentance. As we viewed the

different areas around the city, we would pray for the students at the universities beginning their new term, the thousands visiting the entertainment and sporting arenas, the young visiting the night clubs, cafés and snooker centres.

Petitions were made to reverse the trend of church buildings being turned into restaurants and business premises, so that the demand for places of worship would outstrip the present capacity.

Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem was also mentioned in the context of our having the same heart and mind as He had when He saw thousands going to a lost eternity.

Dundee is known as the City of Discovery, because of the ship named ‘Discovery’ in which Captain Scott sailed to the Antarctic. The boat was originally built in Dundee and is now settled in the quay there, and is one of the main tourist attractions of the city.

May God hear the prayers that were offered over the city and may Dundee indeed be a city in which many will discover the greatest discovery of all – the Lord Jesus Christ. After a

**Dundee**  
CITY OF DISCOVERY.....



An aerial view of Dundee from the Law Hill

# A Mother in Israel

MRS E. D. TALLACH, widow of the late Rev James A. Tallach, passed away in Inverness on Saturday, the 25th of August. The following appreciation of her has been put together by her youngest son, John. Further details, particularly of her experiences in connection with the illness of her son Fraser, will become available next year when a book, based on material written by Fraser, will D.V. be published by the Banner of Truth Trust.

MOTHER WAS BORN IN Glasgow on the 12th of February, 1911. When she was still a toddler her parents moved north to Strathpeffer, where her father established a draper's business.

Before her father bought a car, there was no transport to take the family in to attend the F.P. services in Dingwall. In that situation they normally attended the services in the Free Church in Strathpeffer. It was on one of these occasions that Mother heard the Rev. Kenneth MacRae, who was later to become minister in Stornoway, preach on "He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" [John 3:36].

Mother was only twelve years old at the time, but she could remember the details clearly when she recounted that experience as recently as January of this year: "He pressed on us so powerfully the duty of believing in Christ. 'Are you willing to have Jesus?' he asked. 'He is willing to have you.' I cried when I got home from that service." "What was upsetting you? Why were you crying?" I asked.

"I think it was with longing to have Christ," she replied. "Probably I was converted then, but I went through a long period of questioning, and did not find peace until years later. My question was, 'What does it mean to believe?' One day, as I was washing dishes, I got help from the words of Acts 16: 31: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.' Light shone into my heart and I realised the simplicity of the gospel. But things did not become completely clear to me until after that, when I read a chapter in a book by Spurgeon entitled, Faith: what is it?"

As we grew up, one of the features of life in the manse was the sound of her feet as she sped round the house, getting stuck into her chores, from 6.30 am onwards. She was devoted to her work as a minister's wife. (In fact, before she agreed to marry our father, she was cycling one day along a country road when she felt urged to seek God's will for her life and she

found a quiet spot to do so. While she was praying about the fact that our father was asking her to marry him, she realised that one reason why she was attracted by his proposal was that this would give her an opportunity to share in his gospel work.)

One of the forces which drove her was, her insatiable appetite for Christian fellowship. Within ten days of her death she



Mrs Elizabeth Tallach

was recalling with great pleasure the details of a car journey from Dingwall to a Strathy communion in 1959. One verse which opened the door to a lot of lively and edifying discussion during that journey was "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Mother's comment on this was, "That whole journey was over in a moment".

On the day before she died, she was withdrawn into a world of her own at one point but suddenly a bright smile spread across her face. It faded, then she smiled again in a completely natural, warm way and her face settled into an expression which was relaxed and happy.

My brother Cameron noticed the

## A FAMILY

"What is a family? A family is a formation centre for human relationships. The family is the place where the deep understanding that people are significant, important, worthwhile, with a purpose in life, should be learned at an early age"

"The family is the place where children should learn that human beings have been made in the image of God and are therefore very special in the universe"

"The solution to a fight, argument, difference of opinion, unthoughtfulness, unfair treatment... is not splitting up and finding other human beings to live with, but... seeking to find solutions which are not perfect but which are possible."

"What is a family? A family is a well regulated hospital, a nursing home, a shelter in time of physical need, a place where a sick person is greeted as a sick human being and not as a machine that has a loose bolt, or a mechanical doll that no longer works – to be shoved aside because it is no more fun, nor is it use-

### A Mother's Example

A little three-year old boy was following his mother around the house and tripping her up wherever she went. She was angry and told him to go out to the garden and play. He replied 'But I would rather be here with you mummy'.

A few minutes later he got in her road again and she was very angry and he started to cry and looked up at his mother and said 'Well, mummy, last week in Sunday School the teacher told me that we must walk in Jesus' footsteps.

But as I can't see Him, I am just walking in your's'!

Here is a poem to help us remember the influence we have on children:

How careful then I ought to be;  
A little one now follows me.  
I do not dare to go astray,  
For fear he'll go the self-same way.

I cannot once escape his eyes;  
For what he sees me do, he tries.  
He thinks that I am good and fine,  
Believes in every word of mine.

I must remember as I go,  
Through summer's sun or winter's

same thing when he was with her that evening. He said it seemed as if, in some sense, she was meeting friends with whom she had had sweet fellowship in the past and whose company she was delighted to have now. She was slipping beyond our reach, but not beyond the reach of the Spirit who is the author of all real fellowship between believers.

She had compassion for people who were passing through a difficult time, and she had the strength to identify with them in their suffering, however much it might take out of her. I remember taking her out briefly from Ballifeary Home during the last period of her life, when she was confused and had great difficulty in understanding why she was staying where she was rather than in her own home in Dingwall. Yet, when she caught sight of a friend who had recently suffered a bereavement, she was able to focus with total clarity on this other person's situation, to sympathise with her and to respond in a supportive way.

My brother Cameron remembers listening as a young child outside her bedroom as she poured out her heart in prayer. He remembers also her prayers with us when we were small.

On one occasion we had inadvertently come across a nest with young birds. Someone said to us that the mother bird might not come back, because we had been near the nest. Cameron remembers how mother prayed about that with us, and asked God to care for the young chicks. This made quite an impression on him.

Her experience of the effectiveness of prayer became part of how she sought to commend the gospel to others. She would seek openings in conversation with people who were suffering, share with them the fact that God had helped her through her difficult times, and would encourage them to seek his help in their time of need.

She had deep personal appreciation of the preciousness of God's word. Towards the end of 1959 she was dusting a door in the manse in Stornoway when the thought came, apparently without reason, into her mind, "If James (her husband) were to be taken away, you would be utterly useless and helpless." Then words came to her from Psalm 23:

Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me.

And in God's house for ever more,  
My dwelling-place shall be.

She took comfort from these words in two ways. She felt sure that the goodness and



*Mrs Tallach and her sister Helen*

mercy of God would come behind her to support her, and she felt that God would also go before her to provide for her in a way which could never be taken away.

"Think of the security in that," she said. "Sometimes we do not lean on God's promises as we should, and we are the losers for that. But on that occasion I was enabled just to take God's promise and to lean on it." It was not long after that strengthening experience that mother suffered the loss of our father in January, 1960. During the last full day of her life, though she was very weak and at times confused and withdrawn from the scene around her, there were also times when her faith in Scripture shone out clearly.

At one point she commented, "We don't realise the power of God's word". She said of the Lord, "He's a fail-me-never. He never lets you down." When her sister Helen read some Psalms to her, including Psalm 84, she repeated several times the words from verse 11: *"The Lord will give grace and glory"*.

That weakness crept up on her with surprising suddenness during the last week. Outside her bedroom window there was the noise of activity as builders put up an extension to the home. But, inside the room, the temple of her body and her mind was coming down.

I felt a reaction against this process which was apparently going to take our mother away. Why should death take away this person who had shown such immense courage, spiritual strength and practical commitment; who had always been there for all her family, in selfless love

# Congregational News

## DUNDEE

Please note that we have changed our mid-week meeting night from Wednesday to Thursday. We have also changed our evening service on Sundays back to 6.30pm. This is more suitable to those who attend these meetings. On Sunday 2nd September we had Cameron Tallach tell us about his and his wife's work at Peace Clinic in Hong Kong. We need to be more prayerful for the excellent work they do.

Our new Sunday Schoolis still going well – thanks to the work of David Dow our outreach worker. A mid-week club has started with 15 mins Bible teaching after an hour's football in a hall near the church.

On Friday 14th September we opened our church for a the national 3 minutes of silence and prayer time and remained open for another hour for private prayer. We have Trinity Baptist Church joining us on 3rd October for a Blythwood meeting when Jeremy Ross will take the meeting. Plans are being made for our Mission on 26th to 28th October. Please do remember our financial needs as we are still in need.

## INVERNESS

Mission Meeting: Cameron and Ishbel Tallach (Peace Clinic, Hong Kong) told about the woman, alone on a "boat house", with apparently nothing to do but think. Cameron spoke to her about Jesus, but she replied that she was too busy to be interested! If you are too busy to think about Jesus, you are more busy than God meant you to be.

Book Reading Club: The first book for this session is "Praying for Revival", by Eric Hayden. Anyone is welcome to join in the fellowship of reading and prayer. Concluding the last Session, we had a visit from an author, and plan a similar event later. Get in touch with Calum MacInnes (01463-223983) who will update you on what is happening.

Drakies Sunday Club: We are encouraged by the commitment and talents of the Teachers and Helpers. The number of children attending has gone up, so our

privilege has increased. Pray for this special work.

Sunday School in St Stephen's: The Sunday school at St Stephen's has been reorganised, and we are grateful to the Lord for the gifts and energies of those who are helping to run it.

Parents Group: To encourage one another in Biblical principles, we have started a Parents Group, with the first meeting planned for October 28. We will have a lunch together, followed by a time of discussion and encouragement. If any readers want to be involved, please get in touch with us and we will be pleased to include you in the project.

Worship in Homes for Seniors: A committed core regularly visit several Homes for Seniors, for short worship services. For this important ministry, we thank God and all who are so diligently involved.

Prayer is requested for Christians to have vision, to be committed to the Lord Jesus and their church fellowships, and to have compassion for the unconverted and the many who have no interest in the worship of God.

## STORNOWAY

Stornoway Congregation have had a very busy August with their Barbecue on the 10 August; the Highland Theological Summer Conference from 17 to 19 August and their Communion at the end of the month. The congregation also had a meeting of China Medical Mission, when Dr Cameron Tallach spoke about his work in Hong Kong. This meeting was particularly significant as it was the evening of his mother's burial in Sandwick Cemetry on the outskirts of Stornoway. On the 6 Septemeber the congregation had a representative from the Trinitarian Bible Society speak to them..

The congregation were encourgaed to receive two new members at its



## SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE and RELIGION in SCHOOL

A review group is being set up by the Scottish Executive to look at how schools can update assembly to make it relevant for pupils. Education Minister Jack McConnell said schools must adapt to embrace today's multi-cultural society.

Mr McConnell said that in today's multi-cultural society it is time to debate the nature of appropriate religious observance and find an appropriate balance. He said: "The last thing we want to have in Scottish schools is an assembly first thing in the morning where 15-year-old boys are forced to sing hymns."

Schools inspector Douglas Osler said the findings of his report showed current religious guidelines were out of date and needed to be modernised. He said: "We need a debate on this issue in order to find ways to help schools provide religious observance in ways which are meaningful in today's society and cultural context."

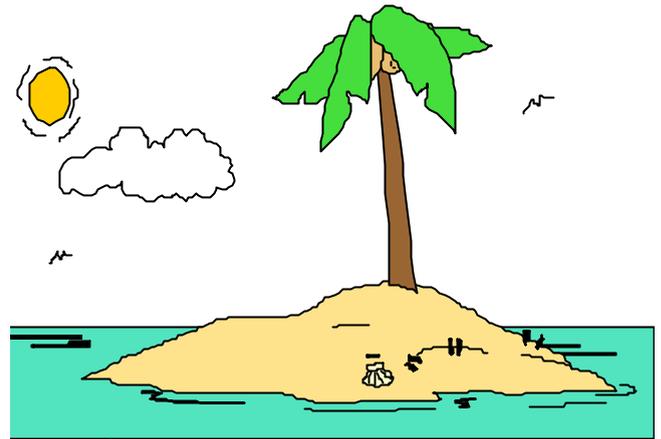
*"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and I heard behind me a voice, as of a trumpet saying 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the last', and 'What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches'"*

[Revelation 1:9-11]

**John G Paton** was missionary to the New Hebrides. On landing in Tanna in 1857, he wrote: "My first impressions drove me, I must confess, to the verge of utter dismay. On beholding these Natives in their paint and nakedness and misery, my heart was as full of horror as of pity. Had I given up my much beloved work and my dear people in Glasgow, with so many delightful associations, to consecrate my life to these degraded creatures? Was it possible to teach them right from wrong, to Christianize, or even to civilize them? But that was only a passing feeling!

# Desert Island Books

with Roddy (Barvas) Macrae



**H**ello Roddy – You've just moved down to the big city of Edinburgh. Are you settling in alright?

It has been very good so far. The city is different from the very quiet existence I had before.

*Well, I'm sorry but you're going to have to move again - in your imagination though - to a desert island. Do you think you would enjoy this experience - complete isolation for a week or two?*

Not sure I could cope with another move, but isolation for a couple weeks sounds like a good thing.

*On this desert island you are only being allowed to take very few items in your luggage - A Bible, A Pilgrim's Progress and three other titles... Plus a small luxury!*

You mean no laptop with infra-red Mobile so that I can get onto the internet? Having second thoughts already.

*If you were giving a book to a young non-Christian boy what sort of book would you give him?*

My answer would depend on how young they are. If they were under 12 I would give them "Ten Boys Who Changed the World" by CFP. It really is a storybook about how God changed these ten boys and how they went on to make a real impact in this world through God's power. In it there are characters like, Eric Liddell, Nicky Cruz, Billy Graham,

David Livingston. If they were older I think I would give them the student edition of "The Case for Christ", by Lee Strobel, which is a really good evangelistic tool.

*You have a little boy called Colin? Does he enjoy books? Do you read any together?*

Yes, we read a variety of books not just Christian ones. But when he goes to bed every night, he demands a story! That is always a bible story. He just never gets tired of Paul and Silas in Jail, David beating Goliath, Paul ship wrecked, Moses leading Israel out of Egypt. His main book is the Little Hands Story Bible, which has been a real blessing to him.

*Can you tell us about a book that you have read recently that has really challenged you spiritually?*

Yes, the book is called "Fresh Power" by Jim Cybala, from Brooklyn Tabernacle Church New York. It has surprised me how much I go on auto-pilot in my life. It has challenged me to walk more in step with the Holy Spirit as he seeks to help me become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

*If you were to pick a sentence or quote from any book or piece of poetry to stick on the wall of your mud hut on this fictional desert island what quote would that be?*

Can I have two please?

"We must lay before God what is in us, not what ought to be within us." C.S. Lewis

"To be a Christian means to forgive the

inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." C.S. Lewis.

*In what ways has God's book, the Bible, shaped you as a person since you became a Christian?*

First of all it has provided me with the answer that is above all answers, knowing how to receive eternal life through Jesus Christ. Then I can say that it has helped me to start to think in different ways. I guess that is part of what Paul is speaking about when he said the Word of God renews our mind. I am learning through God's word more about the path God has given me to follow. This is not an easy thing to do by any standard, as you never stop learning that you need to deny self and take up your cross. Following Jesus has its cost, but in the great scheme of things, there will be no loss in letting the selfish desire of our heart go and following His will for our lives.

*You are allowed to take The Bible and the Pilgrim's progress with you onto the island and three other books. What ones?*

This is tough, I would like more, but my three will be, Charles Colson's book called, "How Now Shall We Live". This book is about a Christian worldview. I cannot recommend this book enough! My next book is called "Who You are When No One is Looking". This book is by Bill Hybels on Christian Character and is a real beauty! My third is called "Jesus Freaks" and is about persecution Christians face. It is a modern day version of Foxe's book of Martyrs with some of the same stories, but more importantly, very modern stories just to remind us that the days of persecution are far from over. When you read this you realise how privileged we really are with our freedom and it reminds us how wrong it is to shun opportunities to share the love and good news of Christ.

*Once you are on the island you are cut off from society but you are allowed to send one book to a non-Christian friend. What book would you pick and why?*

I think I would use another of Lee

## FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE

**By Ray Chaplin, from Suffolk**

As farms throughout our nation now  
Are suffering awful grief,  
With Foot & Mouth that's spreading with  
No let up or relief:

We solemnly should ask ourselves  
What lessons can we learn?  
For surely sin lies at our door  
And we to God must turn.

For thankful to Him we've not been  
For much prosperity;  
And to ourselves we've praise ascribed,  
For herds and flocks we see

As those for which our skills have  
wrought;  
When only God can give  
True blessing when we look to Him  
To make us truly live.

So as we sadly livestock see  
With Foot & Mouth disease,  
And watch them slaughtered o'er our  
land  
With hearts so ill at ease:

Meekly we should acknowledge how  
We've on the Sabbath Day,  
Transgressed by working and not sought  
To heed God's blessed way.

And in our breeding methods too  
Through much technology,  
We've shown how greedy are our hearts  
As if God need not be:

So now we all must reap indeed  
What we ourselves have sown,  
For what a solemn thing it is  
When we His Name disown.

But as some treasured flocks and herds  
Are burnt before our eyes,  
Perhaps such heartache may well yet  
Before God make us wise;

### Notice To Congregations

Congregations are encouraged to send reports in regularly of what is happening in their communities. The editor will be pleased to receive information any - time during the month. It is up to each congregation to send in their own report without the editor reminding them each month.

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*January/February  
March*

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*The typeface is 10pt 'Georgia' using 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.*

*Articles are best sent by email. Text may also be sent on disc in Microsoft Word. Clearly printed well-spaced typing and artwork in one column is also acceptable.*

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

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## DEAR GRANNY

*The poem below was composed by David Tallach a grandson of Mrs Tallach (see page 7). When she read it she said it described the granny she would liked to have been.*

Many seasons, many summers,  
Many blossoms have grown around her garden.  
Apple-cheeked and smiling, she welcomes me  
To her house in Dingwall, as she always has.

Winters are the most memorable:  
The great clan gathering to celebrate the New Year.  
Sleeping up in the loft on late December nights,  
Waking in the sunshine shed through the skylight.  
Everything a merry hubbub at the meal:  
Cousins, uncles, aunts: all of us related to Granny.

She was so kind, giving me presents of books  
when I was small, encouraging me to read.  
She always hoped, always persevered for me  
in my schoolwork and creative writing.

Summers are more contemplative.  
Fresh strawberries picked, cream on top.  
We talk at length of things old and new.  
I used to dream Granny's garden was heaven.  
The uneven flagstones, the apple tree,  
One day I will meet her there, both of us smiling.

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## APC NEWS

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