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November 2002

# The APC News

The Magazine of the Associated Presbyterian Churches in Scotland



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ONE OF OUR OLDEST members is Mrs Elliot from Chesley in Ontario, Canada who is now in her 90s. She has sent in the article on page 21 about the death of Mrs Prayer Meeting!

She is seen here in the centre of the picture above with our deputy Revd George Macaskill and his wife Isobel who were over in Canada and New Zealand visiting our congregations there.

It is hoped that there will be a report of their visit to these congregations in the next issue of The APC News which is due out in December.

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## EDITORIAL

# Conversions and Revivals

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**I**T CAN BE VERY discouraging to hear of reports of revival and growth in other churches when we ourselves may not be seeing much fruit for our labours. There are two responses we should make when we hear of such things

First we ought to rejoice at any sign of encouragement of growth or revival, no matter in what denomination or under whose ministry it may be found. Because we ourselves are not experiencing such blessing is no reason to doubt God's blessing on someone else's work. We must guard against jealousy and 'nip in the bud' any sign of its subtle workings.

Neither ought we to be suspicious about the genuineness of a work of God - questioning that God would use someone with a different theology or worship style from ourselves. After all, if we are Calvinists, then we believe that God is sovereign and uses all kinds of people to bring about His purposes. Conversion is wholly attributed to God's grace and power, not the faithfulness or theology of the preacher.

If the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, we should expect to hear of conversions and revival and rejoice over them, for God has promised a great future for the world for *"all the families of the*

*nations shall worship before You"* [Psa 22:27].

The Apostle Paul was delighted to hear of the conversion of the Colossians although it was brought about under Epaphras' ministry and not his own. Neither was he suspicious of the genuineness of their profession. Despite Paul's concern about the pagan philosophies which influenced the Colossians, he still called them *"saints and faithful brethren"* [Col 1:1]. He also commended the zeal Epaphras had for them [Col 1:7 & 4:12 & Phil 23].

Then we should follow Paul's example and begin to praise God and to pray for those new converts. *"...we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you...giving thanks to the Father..."* [Col 1:9cf].

Paul proceeded to earnestly pray for the **growth** of new born believers - for their knowledge, wisdom and understanding to mature and develop along with a worthy walk. If this was done more often by God's people, then I am sure there would not be the same amount of backsliding and apostatising from the faith.

The second response however, is to remember the solemn examples in Scripture of those who made a profession and fell away.

Paul had personal experience of this phenomenon. He complained that *"all those in Asia have turned away from me among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes...only Luke is with me"* [2 Tim 1:15, 4:11].

Jesus also experienced what it was to have false professors. *"From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more"* [John 6:66].

Not all those who profess are true believers. Jesus gives us a solemn reminder in the parable of The Sower showing us that three out of the four professing groups had false professions.

Conversion is a mighty work of God in the soul and nothing less than His power can effect it. There is not enough awareness today that Satan can imitate conversion. He can, and does, appear as an angel of light [2 Cor 11:14]. There is much need for solid teaching on what regeneration actually is. It is much more than a feeling and passing interest in the gospel. It is more than agreeing to make a profession about believing in Jesus. The devils believe and even tremble at the truth but they have not submitted themselves to God. Conversion is a change of heart and life.

We also need to remember what the Biblical doctrine of revival really is. We have a perfect example in the city of Ephesus. When revival comes to a community it changes the whole culture - social, economic, political! When a community changes its faith and lifestyle there

is revolution. There was social turmoil in Ephesus *"There arose a great commotion about the Way"* [Acts 19:23]. The economy suffered so badly with job losses in the silver trade, that the 'chamber of commerce' called a special meeting *"together with the workers of similar occupation"* [Acts 19:28].

This happened because of the Christians' changed attitude to life - because of the new values in society. People believed what they did not believe before. They stopped living the way they did before out of conviction and that altered the whole social structure.

Businesses, the social services and the media all took on another shape because of the impact the gospel had on the community.

When we remember that it was parliament who asked the Church at the Reformation for a Confession of Faith, we realise how much our parliaments needs to be changed before we can claim Christians are making an impact. When we read the type of items that make front page news, we realise how far away we are from true spiritual understanding.

So let us continue to pray for real revival, let us work away at bringing the gospel to those who have never heard it in our own land. Our nation is searching for answers to its many problems without realising God is the answer. We, the Church, have been entrusted with the responsibility of informing them of truth, and of being salt and light in our generation. •

# Bringing Up Children

Reprinted from 'The Commentary' in November's 'Evangelicals Now' by John E Benton with kind permission

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**C**HILDREN AND young people have been in the headlines recently. First of all, though they are a great gift of God [Psalm 128], it seems that there are far fewer of them around than there ought to be.

One of the primary schools in our own town in the south east of England was closed last year due to falling numbers. And that local snapshot seems to reflect a national pattern.

The recent census has shown that in Britain there are now more inhabitants over the age of 60 than there are of age 16 or under. Part of the reason for this lack of youngsters must be to do with the "sexy singles" culture, and the denigration of motherhood. But along with that we have a horrible abortion policy. The official 2001 figures for abortion show the highest number of abortions funded by the NHS at 134,705. Something like seven million abortions have been performed in Britain in the 35 years since the Abortion Act was adopted. On average therefore the nation has been losing about 200,000 children per year.

Not only is this a staggering attack on precious human life, it will have dreadful consequences for the future. Over the summer the British

government admitted for the first time that the decline in births may threaten National Insurance. It is calculated that on present trends the current ratio of 3.4 working people for every retired person will have fallen to around 2.4 by the year 2030. Already there is a move to put a positive spin on raising the age of retirement. But one wonders whether it will not be long before these figures are used to give extra momentum to the euthanasia lobby. The prophet Hosea tells about sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind.

## Smacking

At the same time that we find there are fewer children in our country, we are also being told that we are bringing them up wrongly anyway. At the beginning of October a United Nations report told the British government that it deeply regretted that smacking of children by their parents had not been banned in Britain. As Christians we must be against the physical abuse of children, but according to Scripture the firm smack of correction is actually an act of love, and not to discipline our children is to hate them. We have a Father in heaven who disciplines us, his

children, for our good [Hebrews 12:10].

Of course, in the secular domain, what lies behind notions like that of the UN is the rejection of the Christian doctrine of original sin. Our society wants to believe that children are born neutral or even good. In fact, we are part of the fallen race of Adam and we have the seeds of evil in us from conception [Psalm 51:5]. It is a strange fact that whenever the idea of original sin is rejected things get worse in society.

It was back in the 1940s that the US psychologist Dr Benjamin Spock started suggesting things like when a school-age child steals something, the child might simply 'need more...approval at home', or just a raise in his or her pocket money. Yes, a child needs lots and lots of affection, but are we to say 'no' to correction? It is since those days that we have seen behaviour in schools plummet to unbelievable depths. Nick Pollard's excellent book on understanding teenagers. 'Why do they Do That?' [Lion], has the following telling paragraph:

'According to Californian Police Department and the Department of Education in Fullerton, California, the top seven discipline problems in schools in 1940 were: talking in class, chewing gum, getting out of line, running in the halls, making a noise, wearing improper clothes and not putting waste in the waste-paper basket. However in 1990 the top seven problems had become: drug abuse,

alcohol abuse, pregnancy, rape, suicide, robbery and assault.'

Discipline does not solve everything. But if the doctrine of original sin is true and we have the right to lovingly discipline removed, where do parents turn? I can imagine that it's enough to make many people decide not to have children.

*John E Benton*

## I Heard That

**O**NE DAY A MINISTER was sitting in his car when he heard a noise behind him. He heard a young girl of 13 years cursing a boy. The minister got out of the car and went up to the children and said 'Hey, I heard that - stop that swearing'. The minister was surprised when he discovered it was a girl from one of the clubs in his church. When the girl recognised the minister, she gave a squeal and clapped her hand over her mouth in embarrassment.

What is our Lord's reaction when he hears what we sometimes say - He weeps. It breaks our Lord's heart when He listens to Christians speaking ill of one another and all the other things we say about each other.

Would it change our conversation if Jesus said 'I heard that!?' Or if Jesus walked into our living rooms? I think it would.

*Sent In*

# A Letter

The letter below appeared in the Summer 2002 News Update of MLJ Recordings Trust in Kent, and is reprinted with permission. The trust produced tapes and CDs of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones sermons. Their website address is: [www.mlj.org.uk](http://www.mlj.org.uk)

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Dear Friends

It was disappointing news to learn recently that the latest figures for Church attendance here in the UK continue to drop. Currently, so we learn, only some 7.5% of the population now attends Christian worship. This, despite claims over the years from various groups that revival is just around the corner. Its even more depressing when one considers that this 7.5% is a measure of **all** church-goers, and that the portion of truly 'born-again' believers would be considerably lower than that.

However, strange as it may seem, these statistics, although obviously disappointing, should really not depress us at all. How could they, when we know that we worship a sovereign God who is never taken by surprise by events or circumstances? For we know that our God has unlimited control over the affairs of nature and of history [Isa 44:9-19]; Rom 8:18-39].

But why is it, we must ask, that we as churches and individual Christians are so ineffective in our efforts to reach folk at this particular point in history?

Well, Dr Lloyd-Jones, several years ago now, pinpointed

the problem as being our failure to understand just who we are in Christ and as members of His Church. He said "There is surely nothing more important today, therefore from every standpoint, than for us to realise these things. It is important for us personally. Most of our trials and troubles, tribulations and problems would be viewed in an entirely different manner if we really saw ourselves as we are in Christ.

And still more important, if the whole Church only realised what she is, we would already be on the high road to true revival and a mighty spiritual awakening. It is because we fail to realise these things that we do not pray for revival as we ought, and do not look for it and long for it. It is not surprising then that the apostle mentions it so much."

Dr Lloyd-Jones longed and prayed for revival throughout his life - a revival that never came. A revival, that is, were it possible, more desperately needed today.

As I've mentioned before, I do believe that there is in our society today a spiritual hunger that presents us with a very fertile ground onto which we may sow the

seed of the gospel message. However, will we miss this opportunity because, as Dr Lloyd-Jones pointed out, we have failed to grasp who and what we are in Christ?

Personally, I think in recent years that so many of us in the Church have increasingly forgotten the supernatural power of the God we serve and the message we preach. Indeed we have often been so busy with refuting error that we have become guilty of forgetting this very fact and falling into the trap that Dr Lloyd-Jones so often warned against - dead orthodoxy.

In other words, we have allowed our faith to become something that is primarily intellectual in content. Yes, we do enjoy the latest books and arguments and the intellectual exercise of refuting error, but have we forgotten that Christianity is also experimental and a religion of power - the power of God's Holy

Spirit? *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts"* [Zech 4:6 KJV].

Although it saddens me to admit it, I have only been too guilty of this myself, and recently it seems that sermon after sermon that I have heard has challenged me on this very point. I identify so much with Wesley who commented that he felt his heart 'strangely warmed' - for my heart had grown cold and needed warming again.

I pray as I write this letter that God will, in his mercy, warm all our hearts and make them sensitive and responsive. That he will indeed revive his Church in this land that we should, once again, be the witnesses he calls us to be.

What we need to remember though is that those who experienced real revival in the past became changed men and women. Are we prepared for the cost of the changes that will be wrought in us?

*Tony Rushton*

"Our inclination is to see adversity as an interruption and we hope that when it is over we can get back to living 'the normal Christian life'. Then we discover from the Scriptures - and we see it lived out all over the world - that adversity **is** the Christian life...to enter upon the life of the kingdom is to invite a whole bundle of new problems..." *Richard Bewes*

"Could it be that the reason a person could give his body to be burned and not have love is that his act had no connection to a genuine love for God?"

"Could it be that Paul's conception of horizontal love between people is such that it is authentic only when it is the extension of a vertical love for God?"

*John Piper*

# A Final Call to Urgent Action

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**O**N TUESDAY 5th November there will be a second vote in the house of Lords regarding Homosexual adoption. There is a need once more to write to peers.

It seems that the Commons are to vote again on this issue in order to overturn the Lord's first vote which rejected the idea of homosexuals being permitted to adopt children. So, if the Lords overturn this second Commons vote then the victory will be won - as both Houses (Lords and Commons) must agree on this issue before the 7th November.

Prayer is therefore requested, **but also letters** to relevant peers. Lady O'Cathain and Earl Howe have led an excellent campaign and need our prayers and encouragement. Ask your peer to vote in support of Lady O'Cathain and Earl Howe.

Keep letters short and polite and write in your own words. You could mention that the Commons are completely out of touch with the public. Thank your peer if he or she voted as you wished. Also mention

that homosexual adoption was not on the Labour Party Manifesto or the original adoption bill.

A complete list of all the peers that voted in favour of Lady O'Cathain and Earl Howe can be had from The Christian Institute who can also tell you who the peer for your area is.

Please do write your peer and pray about Tuesday 5th November's vote. Remember to give the proper and full title to your peer; eg, The Rt Hon the Lord Aberdare, KBE DL. They must be sent to The House of Lords, Westminster, London, SW1A 0PW. The letter should begin with, eg, Dear Lord Aberdare.

More information may be had from:

The Christian Institute  
26 Jesmond Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE2 4PQ  
Telephone: 0191 281 5664  
Fax: 0191 281 4272  
Email: [info@christian.org.uk](mailto:info@christian.org.uk)  
[www.christian.org.uk](http://www.christian.org.uk)

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"WE HAVE SEEN GREAT INCREASES in our material prosperity in the last few decades. Yet we do not seem to be any happier. The average man apparently laughed for 18 minutes per day in the 1950s, compared to only 6 minutes per day in 1990 despite vast improvements in the standard of living. [We need to] recognise the truth of what we have learnt from Jesus: materialism does not pay and does not satisfy. But is there any alternative? Jesus insists that there is another better way to live." *Vaughan Roberts*

# Worship Involves Both Heart & Head

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**I**N HIS NEW BOOK 'The Purpose Driven Life', Rick Warren notes, "Since worship is delighting in and enjoying God, it engages your emotions. God gave you emotions so you could worship him with deep feeling -- but those emotions must be genuine, not faked. God hates hypocrisy. He doesn't want a show, or pretense, or phoniness in worship. He wants your honest, real love. We can worship God imperfectly, but we cannot worship him insincerely.

"Of course, sincerity alone is not enough; you can be sincerely wrong. That's why both spirit and truth are required. Worship must be both authentic and accurate. God-pleasing worship is deeply emotional and deeply doctrinal. We use both our hearts and our heads.

"I want to emphasize again that worship is more than music. Actually, worship predates music. Adam worshiped in the Garden of Eden but music isn't mentioned until Genesis 4:21 with the birth of Jubal. If worship was just music then all who are non-musical could never worship. Real worship happens when your spirit responds to God, not to some musical tone.

"Unfortunately, many equate being emotionally moved by music as being moved by the Spirit, but these are not the same. In fact, some sentimental, introspective songs hinder worship because they take the spotlight off God and focus on our feelings. Your biggest distraction in worship is yourself -- your interests and your worries over what others think about you." •

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## Evangelistic Training Day

**O**N SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER the APC held an Evangelistic Training Day in North Kessock Free Church Inverness. The teacher was former Evangelical Alliance leader John MacKinnon. It was a most helpful meeting which revealed the great need today for communicating the gospel in our communities. The Church can no longer expect people just to walk into their buildings and worship. We are living in a post Christian era where the Church needs to be seen as a caring body of people with a relevant message.

The sessions were interspersed with tea breaks and a lovely lunch was provided. An excellent time of fellowship was enjoyed. •

# MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

## The Harvest is Past.....The Summer is Ended

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**A**S FAR BACK AS WE can remember, and beyond, it has ever been the same. For a country boy, each season of the year brought its own excitement. Little did I think then that God had appointed the changing seasons, with a special purpose for them all.

Some basic things were important – that much I knew. If we planted potatoes, we got potatoes, and if we planted carrots we got carrots. I knew too that there was work involved. Men had to plow and to sow. The sunshine and the rain seemed also to play a major role in the outcome of it all.

I noticed too that the older folk seemed very pleased when the harvest was gathered in. But on reflection, is there not a predictable cycle to the seasons? Something inevitable? Yet, at the centre of that sure sequence, there lies something that cannot be changed while time lasts. Summer and winter, seedtime and harvest are not mere products of the moon and the sun in their cycle.

Something, or rather, Someone, is behind it all. It is not just 'nature'. It is not just the 'created order', but the 'created order under the hand of a covenant and faithful God.' He it is who has promised that the seasons will continue while the earth remains. What enormous comfort is ministered to us as we contemplate the yearly witness to his faithfulness.

Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet, knew that God's hand had given the fruit of the earth, but he also lifted his heart and mind to the greater

blessings of Heaven. He knew that there is a divine Physician. Jeremiah also knew that there were many people who did not turn to God for what only He can give. So he wrote "*The harvest is past, The summer is ended, And we are not saved!*" [Jer 8:20]. Foreign gods were being served by a people to whom God had given his special revelation. What more could He do for them or give to them? The yearly reminder of His faithfulness was passing by.

For many churches the "Harvest Thanksgiving Services" for the year will now be over. How appropriate that we be grateful to God for the rich provision he gives, but let us remember that we cannot live by that food alone.

God wants you to read on past the 'harvest bit' and the 'summer bit' to the place where it says "*and we are not saved*". Has another year of seasons come and gone, bringing all the changes on the earth, and yet our souls are not saved? How many more seasons will it take? Let me answer the question for you!

It is not a matter of more or less seasons; it is a matter of repentance, of turning to God, of trusting in him. Another year of seasons will not bring grace into your life, supposing you lived thousands of years. The matter is not one of 'enough time' to believe; it is 'the will to submit to God'. Get rid of your pride and bend before him confessing your need and drawing on his mercy. Then you will be the harvest.

*Malcolm MacInnes, Moderator*

# Congregational News

## DUNDEE

The congregation enjoyed a communion on the 8th of September when Revd George Macaskill took the services and preached most appropriately. We are grateful to him for fitting this in while on his way to visit our congregations in Toronto, Vancouver and New Zealand.

Our work with Alternatives (Crisis Pregnancy Centre) continues with our halls still being used for interviews. On Tuesday lunchtime we hold a prayer time for local Christian leaders and from 10am to 2pm on Wednesdays our church is open for public prayer - requests being given to David Dow who is always present.

In October we had another Mission for young children and we were delighted with the response. The children did well at the crafts, were very well behaved, and listened attentively to the lessons. It ended with a trip to Perth swimming pool on the Saturday.

As many of our members work on shifts and out of town we hold our midweek meeting on the evening that suits those who attend. This is usually on a Thursday evening at 7pm. However, we sometimes have to change the night

and the time, so please check our website to confirm what day and time the meeting is held on a particular week. Our website is updated each week..

## INVERNESS

### Sponsor a Chair

The Inverness Congregation is developing a former restaurant into a Christian Centre to be a meeting place for worship services and other Christian-based activities.

A large part of the aim is to reach the surrounding community with the gospel, but we hope that the premises will prove useful for meetings involving our wider church fellowship, such as Presbytery and Committee meetings, Conferences and Camps.

The project involves considerable financial outlay, and we thank God for his on-going provision, part of which has come through some of the readers of the APC News.

A large single item is the cost of purchasing chairs. This is where you might help. Can you sponsor a chair, or even two? Each chair costs about **£50**. If you would like to "**Sponsor a Chair**" please send your donation to the Inverness APC Treasurer, indicating that you wish to "Sponsor a Chair".

If you pay Income Tax, please indicate that also, and the Christian Centre will benefit from reclaiming the tax involved. The Treasurer is: Mr K. MacDonald, 16 Drumdevan Place, Inverness IV2 4DQ.

### **Suffering Church Sunday**

In remembering the 250 million people suffering for their Christian faith throughout the world, and that the Barnabas Fund are asking that one Sunday in November be remembered as Suffering Church Sunday, Inverness have decided on Sunday 17th November.

### **PORTREE**

"We wish to put on record the Lord's great goodness in restoring Rev. Angus Cattanach to a measure of health and strength again, after a serious illness. Mr. Cattanach, who had not been able to take services since the middle of June, returned to his pulpit duties on 20 October. Whoso is wise and will these things observe and them record. Even they shall understand the love and kindness of the Lord. [Ps.107:43]"

The Kirk Session also agreed to send the following letter to their peer at the House of Lords. (See page 9 - Ed.)

*The Lord Gray of Contin  
The House of Lords  
Westminster  
London, SW1A 0PW*

*Lochcarron & Lochalsh Congregations  
Plockton,*

*30th October 2002*

*Dear Lord Gray,*

*Please accept our thanks for voting against homosexual adoption on 16th October in favour of the present adoption law. As a Christian church, we feel deeply concerned for our children relative to the rapid slide of moral standards.*

*Adoption by a homosexual couple will confuse children and will damage their psychological development as they grow up in a perverted surrogate of marriage.*

*The Labour Government Green Paper in 1998 stated: "Marriage is the surest foundation for raising children".*

*The Labour Party did not have homosexual adoption in its Labour Party Manifesto nor in the original Adoption Bill. We are alarmed about the proposals, removing marriage from the adoption law.*

*If the law were changed, adoption agencies may be unable to give preference to married couples over homosexual couples.*

*Not only is the House of Commons out of step with public opinion, but more importantly it is out of step with the Bible, which states: "Those that honour Me, I will honour and those that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" [1 Sam. 2:30].*

*We prayerfully urge you to vote the same way again on November 5th in support of Lady O'Cathain and Earl Howe.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Jan D. van Woerden  
Session Clerk*

# Tolerance, Truth-telling, Violence, and Law

## Principles for How Christians Should Relate to Those of Other Faiths

Spreading a Passion for the Supremacy of Jesus Christ in a Pluralistic and Hostile World Where National Identity and Religious Identity Are Blurred

by John Piper, Senior Pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, TN  
August 26, 2002

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**S**INCE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 the question how Christians and Muslims relate to each other has been more urgent. This question is part of the larger issue of how Christians are called to live in a pluralistic world. More specifically, how shall we as American Christians think and act with regard to freedom of religion in a pluralistic context defined by the ideals of representative democracy? In particular, how shall we bear witness to the supremacy of Christ in a world where powerful cultures and religions do not share the love of freedom or the ideals of democracy?

"The elders of Bethlehem Baptist Church, on August 26, 2002, endorsed the following 20 principles as Biblically faithful guidelines for Christians. We commend them, first, to the church under our care for their guidance, second, to the wider Christian community for serious consideration and benefit, and, third, to non-Christian com-

munities for the sake of mutual understanding. Our primary aim is to help Christians commend the uniqueness and supremacy of Jesus Christ with humility and courage so that others might honor him by faith and have eternal life."

1. Whether approved or disapproved by others, we should thankfully and joyfully hold firmly to the true Biblical understanding of God and the way of salvation he has provided and the life of love and purity and justice Christ has modeled and taught. (1 Cor 15:2; Heb 3:6; 4:14; 6:18; 10:23; Rev 2:13, 25; 3:11)

2. Both in the church and the world we should make clear and explicit the whole counsel of God revealed in his inspired word, The Bible - both the parts that non-Christians approve and the parts that they don't. We should not conceal aspects of our faith in order to avoid criticism or disapproval.

(Mat 10:27-28; Eph 6:19-20; 2 Cor 4:2; Gal 1:10)

**3.** It is loving to point out the error and harm of Christ-denying faiths. The harm consists not only in some temporal effects, but especially in the eternal pain caused by refusing the truth of Christ. This warning should be given with earnestness and longing for the good of those who are in danger of the consequences of not trusting Christ. (Luke 6:31-32; Rom 13:10; 1 Tim 4:8; 2 Thes 1:8-9; 2 Cor 5:20)

**4.** We Christians should acknowledge our sin and desperate need of salvation by a crucified and risen Savior, so that we do not posture ourselves as worthy of salvation as if we had superior intellect or wisdom or goodness. We are beggars who have, by grace, found the life-giving bread of truth, forgiveness, and joy. We desire to offer it to all, so that they join us in admiring and enjoying the greatness of Christ forever. (1 Cor 1:26-30; 4:7; 1 Peter 5:6; James 4:8-10; Luke 18:13-14; Mat 10:8b)

**5.** We should present Christ not as the triumph of an argument among religions but as the most trustworthy, beautiful, important, and precious person in history, and as our desperately needed and loved substitute in two senses: 1) He absorbed, by his suffering and death, the wrath of God in our place; and 2) he became our righteousness before the all-holy God by living a sinless life which was imputed as righteousness to us

when we believed on Jesus. (1 Cor 2:1-2; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Peter 2:6-7; Rom 3:24-26; 5:18-19; Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21)

**6.** We should make clear that Christian faith, which unites us to Christ and all his saving benefits, is a childlike, self-despairing trust in the worth and work of Christ, not a meritorious work of our own. Our call for others to be Christians is not a call to work for God or to earn his approval by doing deeds of righteousness or love. We are calling for people to renounce all self-reliance and rely entirely on the saving life and death of Jesus Christ. (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Rom 4:4-5; Rom 10:1-4; Phil 3:9)

**7.** We believe it is a just and loving thing to publicly point out the errors of other faiths, provided this is done with sufficient evidence that the sacred writings or representative spokesmen of those faiths do indeed express these errors. It is crucial that we strive to avoid misrepresenting other faiths, as that is not only disrespectful but also undermines our own credibility. (Acts 6:8-7:53; Mark 12:24; Mark 8:33; Acts 3:15; 5:30; Exod 20:16; Eph 4:25)

**8.** As we expose the errors of other religions, we should feel and express sorrow and compassion for those who do not embrace Christ so as to be saved. (Luke 19:41-42; Phil 3:18; Rom 9:1-3; 10:1)

**9.** We should make clear that we are Christians first and Americans second. We are aliens and exiles in the world and our

deepest and truest citizenship is in heaven. Our decisive Lord and Leader is Jesus Christ, not the president of the United States. This first and deepest allegiance unites us with Christians of all nationalities more firmly than our secular citizenship unites us with other Americans. In regard to many American values and behaviors we are dissenting citizens. American culture is not Christianity. We believe it is not unpatriotic to criticize unjust and ungodly aspects of our own culture. (Phil 3:20; 1 Peter 2:11; Mat 22:21; Acts 5:29; 1 Tim 6:14-15; Rev 17:14; Eph 5:11)

**10.** We should not expect a "fair fight" in a secular world that is hostile to God and uncomfortable around the truth of Christ. Therefore, our response to abuse or distortion or slander should not be angry resentment, but patient witness to the truth, in the hope and with the prayer that returning good for evil may open hearts to the truth. We must recognize that persecution of various kinds is normal and that much of the protection we have in America is abnormal in history and in the world. Our witness will not be advanced by resentful huffing and puffing about our rights. It will be advanced by "suffering yet always rejoicing," and by overcoming evil with good, and by steadfast statements and reasonable defenses of the truth. (Mat 5:43-45; Rom 12:17-21; 1 Cor 4:12-13; 1 Thes 5:15; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Peter 2:15, 19-24; 3:9; 4:12)

**11.** We should renounce all violence as means of spreading our faith. Biblical Christians do not try to spread their faith by the use of political or personal violence. Christians spread their faith by suffering, not by causing suffering. Authentic Christianity cannot be coerced by force or manipulation. (Luke 10:3; 2 Cor 5:11; Col 2:24; 1 Peter 2:19-24; Rev 12:11; )

**12.** We should acknowledge and proclaim that Christ will, at his personal appearing, punish those who have rejected him. He will assign them to everlasting judgment in the miseries of hell. However we must make just as clear that Christ's violence at the end of the age is a decisive reason we should not and may not exert violence against others because of their beliefs. This is Christ's right, not ours. (Mat 25:46; Rom 12:19; Thes 1:7-9; 1 Peter 2:20-23; Rev 6:16)

**13.** In this present time before the coming of Christ himself in person, civil authorities should not use physical force or any other coercion of power or withhold benefits to reward or punish persons because of their beliefs. (Implied in the Biblical pattern of voluntary faith sought by the power of persuasion and example; and in the necessity of divine enabling grace for conversion. 2 Cor 5:11; 1 Thes 1:5-6; Eph 2:8-9; Acts 6:14; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 2:24-26)

**14.** No physical force or any other coercion of power, or withheld benefits, should be used by civil authorities to punish persons

because of their speech or writing or art, unless the communication can be shown, through due process of law, to reveal intentions to commit crimes or help others commit crimes. (See the support for #13)

**15.** We believe that God has given to civil government, not individuals or the church, the duty to "bear the sword" for justice and safety. (Mat 26:52; Rom 13:1-4; Rom 12:17-21; 1 Peter 2:20-23; 3:9, 14)

**16.** We should distinguish between a just war of defense against aggression and a religious war against people because of their beliefs. We should acknowledge that this distinction will probably not be recognized by certain religions who define their beliefs to include the right of cultural domination by force. But we should insist on this distinction rather than accept the claim of the aggressor that our resistance to their aggression is a religious attack on their faith. We should argue that the ground of such national defense is the civil right to freedom (of religion and speech and press and assembly), not the disapproval of the religion underlying the attack. We will deeply disagree with other religions, but that disagreement is not the ground of armed national defense. We should distinguish between the de facto military resistance against a religiously motivated force, on the one hand, and the motivation of our resistance, on the other hand, which is not rejection of any religion but freedom for all religions to win

converts by non-violent means of persuasion and attraction. (Implied in the previous principles)

**17.** We should acknowledge that beliefs and behaviors do not have the same standing before the law. No beliefs are to be punished by civil authorities. But some behaviors rooted in beliefs may be outside the law and therefore punishable by the civil authority. These behaviors may include killing other people, assault, stealing, various forms of discrimination, etc. Which behaviors are legally prohibited in a society based on freedom of belief and freedom of religion, will be determined in a process of persuasion and debate and election of representative lawmakers, with checks and balances provided by the executive and judicial branches and by constitutional safe-guards for the rights of the minority. Ambiguities are recognized. (See the support for # 13 and the implications of the previous principles taken together)

**18.** We should distinguish between the right to express criticism of erroneous beliefs and sinful behaviors, on the one hand, and the false inference some draw from this criticism that proponents of the criticized beliefs can therefore legitimately be mistreated. We should not accept the claim that being criticized or denounced as mistaken or as sinners is a form of "mistreatment". It is not a crime (hate crime or otherwise) to publicly call someone's belief wrong and harmful, or to call someone's

behavior sinful and destructive. A necessary part of all debate concerning beliefs and behaviors and proposals is the argument that some are wrong, ill-founded, and have deleterious effects. This is how all political debate proceeds. This is not illegitimate in the religious sphere. For example, if someone violently assaulted a U. S. Senator on the street after he had been criticized on the floor of the Senate because his bill was flawed and based on misinformation and would lead to hurting poor people, we would not blame the criticizing Senator for the later violent assault and accuse him of inciting violence. Hence we must distinguish between public criticism of beliefs and behaviors, on the one hand, and the illegitimate inference that these erroneous beliefs and sinful behaviors warrant being mistreated. (See the support for #3 and #7)

**19.** We believe that different beliefs change the inner meaning of all convictions and behaviors, but do not change the form of all convictions and behaviors. Hence, for example, two persons may have different beliefs but hold the same form of conviction and behavior concerning abortion. We desire that all people share faith in Christ and have convictions and behaviors whose inner meaning is that Christ is the Lord and treasure of life. But, even so, we are glad when the form of our convictions and behaviors are shared by those who differ with us in faith. We believe that it is

possible to make common cause with them in social issues provided that this shared action does not undermine the ground and meaning of our Christ-exalting conviction. (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17; Rom 14:23)

**20.** We believe that every religion, world view, or philosophy of life may freely endeavor to influence and shape our culture. We renounce the use of force or bribery or deceit in this culture-shaping effort. We affirm the preaching of the gospel, the publishing of truth, the modeling of love and justice, the power of prayer, the use of persuasion, and participation in the political process. We recognize that all laws "impose" some group's behavioral conviction on all. Thus it is not a compelling criticism to say that a law which governs behavior is bad because it "imposes someone's morality" on society. Nevertheless, this makes it all the more important that we support principles, laws, and policies that protect the legal freedoms of minorities who do not have the numbers to sway law-making processes. The extent of these freedoms is determined by the principles expressed above, especially #17. (Implied in the previous principles and supports)

*By John Piper*

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# Where Were the Christians?

A reprint of part of an appeal by Stephen Green, the National Director of Christian Voice

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ON 11th JULY, MILITANT homosexual Peter Tatchell and the National Secular Society - with MPs and 'celebrities' - were planning to read James Kirkup's pornographic and blasphemous poem 'The Love that Dares to Speak its Name' on the steps of St Martin's in the Fields church in Trafalgar Square.

I was among those Christians who went along to protest, and by preaching and by our very presence we were able to prevent audible publication and distribution of the evil to passers-by. Take my word for it, this poem is vile. It was condemned as a blasphemous libel in Court, and Tatchell and his cohorts want a "blasphemers' charter" to distribute it - and worse - and vilify our Lord.

**No other Christian group turned up to protest.** Not one. If we in Christian Voice had not bothered to alert supporters, a tiny gang of God-haters would have been handed a propaganda coup. The press and TV cameras were there, waiting to report on a successful reading of the blasphemy. The homosexual and secularist activists would have said "There, you see, no-one cares about Jesus Christ, the law against blasphemy is a dead letter." And do you know, they would have been right.

But as it turned out, they were wrong, and they were furious. Their media stunt turned into a fiasco. It wasn't even reported, (except on Channel 4!) because it had become contentious, and that would have sent out the wrong message! And we were able to preach the gospel to passers-by in a positive and immediate way. People were impressed and convicted that we felt so strongly about our God and our Saviour.

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The House of Lords Committee is going to recommend repealing all historic laws against blasphemy and to substitute a law forbidding 'incitement to religious hatred'. Preaching against Islamic persecutions of Christian minorities overseas or preaching against the homosexual lifestyle will fall foul of this law.

Christian Voice is trying to raise £20,000 to mount a campaign to safeguard our Christian heritage and our blasphemy law. Donations, however small will be most welcome.

**Please support:**

Christian Voice

Tel 01994-484544

Email: [info@christian-voice.org.uk](mailto:info@christian-voice.org.uk)

[www.christian-voice.org.uk](http://www.christian-voice.org.uk)

# Scottish Northern Convention

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**T**HE ANNUAL SCOTISH Northern Convention, now in its 71<sup>st</sup> year, met at the beginning of October in Dingwall in the beautiful Highlands of Scotland.

The Convention began on the Saturday with a Youth Rally, led by Angus Jamieson and a music group from his church. Then, on the Sunday evening, there was an evangelistic rally, where the speaker was the Rev Richard Gibbons, organiser for Evangelism in the North of Scotland.

The main convention meetings began on the Monday and went on through the Thursday. The speaker at most of the evening meetings was the Rev Philip Hacking, formerly vicar of Christchurch, Fulwood in Sheffield and well known for his involvement both in the Keswick Convention and in Reform.

The Bible Readings were given by the Rev Alasdair I. MacLeod, minister of the Free Church of Scotland in Leith and formerly Professor in the Free Church College. The meetings were well attended and great encouragement was taken from the word preached.

Next year's convention will have as the main speakers the Rev Hugh Palmer, the current vicar of Christchurch, Fulwood and the Rev Ian Hamilton, minister in the

Cambridge congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England & Wales. We look forward to next years convention with great anticipation.

The dates are 27<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003 and we hope that people will even now put these dates in their diaries.

The Scottish Northern Convention, like the Portstewart Convention in Northern Ireland, follows the Keswick pattern of ministry and it is a delight to see Christian brothers and sisters from many different congregations and denominations coming together under the banner "All one in Christ Jesus".

These meetings over the years have been a source of great blessing, wherein many have come to know Christ as their Saviour and others have been built up in the knowledge of the Lord through solid biblical teaching. We trust, in the Lord's providence, that these meetings will continue for many years to come.

Further details about the convention can be had from the secretary:

The Rev Rob Jones,  
The Manse, Perrins Road,  
Alness. IV17 OXG  
Telephone: 01349-882265  
e-mail: rob-jones@freeuk.com

# Mrs Prayer Meeting Dies a Horrible Death

The article below was sent in by one of our oldest members in her nineties, Mrs Elliot from Canada

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**M**RS PRAYER MEETING died recently at the First Neglected Church on Worldly Avenue. Born many years ago in the midst of great revivals, she was a strong healthy child, fed largely on testimony and spiritual holiness, soon growing into world-wide prominence, and was one of the most influential members of the famous Church family.

For the past several years Sister Prayer Meeting has been in failing health, gradually wasting away until rendered helpless by stiffness of knees, coldness of heart, inactivity, and weakness of purpose and will power. At last she was but a shadow of her former happy self. Her last whispered words were inquiries concerning marts of trade and places of amusements. Her elder brother, Brother Class Meeting has been dead for many years.

Experts, including Dr Works, Dr Reform and Dr Joiner, disagreed as to the cause of her fatal illness, administering large doses of organisation, socials, contests, drives and religious education, but

of no avail. A post mortem showed a deficiency of spiritual food, coupled with a lack of fasting; faith; heartfelt religion; shameless desertion, and non-support were contributing causes. Only a few were present at her death, sobbing over memories of her past beauty and power.

Carefully selected pallbearers were urged to bear her remains tenderly away, but failed to appear. There were no flowers. Her favourite hymns: "Amazing Grace" and "Rock of Ages" were not sung. Miss I Am Modern rendered "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere", but none has any idea where this fancied place may be.

The body rests in the beautiful cemetery of Bygone Glories, awaiting the summons from above. In honour of her going, the church doors will be closed on Wednesday nights, save on the third Wednesday of the each month, when the Ladies' Pink Lemonade Society serves refreshments to the members of the Men's Handball team.

- *The Hammond Vindicator*

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"Prayer is not the least we can do - it is the most"

# APC PREACHING CONFERENCE

Specially Designed for lay preachers  
(Ministers will also find it very helpful)

By **ALASDAIR I MACLEOD**

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**TAIN FREE CHURCH from 10am to 4pm**  
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Light lunch provided. No charge - offering to defray expenses

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Fax 01382 451764  
dcmacaskill@apchurches.org.uk

## APC NEWS

*Please remember*

### SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

are now due **overdue!**

**See page 2 for details**

The **Next Issue** of  
**The APC News**  
is due out on  
**7th December**

# Congregational Details

## DINGWALL

Revd Dr Malcom MacInnes, Drumalin, 16 Drummond Road, Inverness IV2 4NB, Tel 01463 223983, Fax 01462 226939 Email: mmacinnnes@btinternet.com Community Centre, Tulloch Street - 6pm, Tue 7.30pm in Free Church Hall. Treasurer: D M Macdonald, Scoraig, 8 Kinnetas Square, Strathpeffer IV14 9BD, Tel 01997 421847.

## DUNDEE

Revd Donald C Macaskill, 238 Arbroath Road, Dundee DD4 7SB, Tel 01382 451798, Fax 01382-451764 Email: dcmacaskill@apchurches.org.uk Dens Road Church - 11 Dens Road - 11am & 6.30pm, midweek meeting confirmed on website. Treasurer: Mr W J Macaulay, 4 Lomond Drive, Carnoustie, DD7 6DN, Tel 01241 853621. www.apcdundee.org.uk

## EDINBURGH

Revd Roddy MacRae, 6 Frogston Grove, Edinburgh EH10 7AG. Tel 0131 445 3673. Email: roddy.barvas@blueyonder.co.uk. Viewforth Church of Scotland, 104 Gilmore Place - 12 noon & 6.15pm, Wed 7.30pm in manse. Treasurer: Mr A Cumming, 31 Doune Park, Dalgety Bay, Dunfermline, KY11 9LX Tel 01383 825637. www.welcome.to/edinburghapc

## FORT WILLIAM

Services held jointly with the Free Church, High Street, 11am & 6.30pm, Thursday 7.30pm. Contact: Donald MacNicol, 14 Altour Road, Spean Bridge, Inverness-shire PH34 4EZ, Tel 01397 712405.

## HARRIS

Contact: Norman MacDonald Tel 01859 530345. Seilabost School - 12 noon & 6pm Tue 7.30pm. Treasurer: John MacKinnon, 8 Stockinish, Isle of Harris HS3 3EN Tel 01859 530211.

## INVERNESS

Revd Dr Malcolm MacInnes, Drumalin, 16 Drummond Road, Inverness IV2 4NB, Tel 01463 223983

Fax 01463 226939 Email:

mmacinnnes@btinternet.com St Stephen's Parish Church, Old Edinburgh Road - 12 noon & 6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm. 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.

## LAIRG & ROGART

Revd Alexander Murray, APC Manse, Saval Road, Lairg, IV27 4EH, Tel 01549 402176 Email: amurray@lairg.freeserve.co.uk Lairg Church - 11.30am, 1st, 3rd, 5th Weds 7pm; Rogart Church - 6pm. 2nd, 4th Weds 7pm. Treasurer: Miss Annie J Morrison, Woodlands, Lairg IV27 4DB; Tel 01549 402362.

## LOCHCARRON

Lochcarron Village Hall - 11am & 6pm, Wed 7pm; Kishorn Meeting House 3pm on 2nd Lord's Day of month. Treasurer: Mrs Alison Stewart, 13 Kirkton Gardens, Lochcarron IV54 8UQ, Tel 01520 722239 Email: ajs.kishorn@tesco.net

## LOCHINVER & STOER & DRUMBEG

Free Church Stoer - 11am; APC Church, Drumbeg - 12.30pm; Free Church Lochinver - 6pm. Treasurer: Mrs E. MacKenzie, Church Road, Stoer, Sutherland, IV27 4SE, Tel 01571 855279.

## OBAN

Revd Archibald McPhail, Fernhill, Polvinister Road, Oban PA34 5TN, Tel 01631 567076 Email: amcphail@quista.net Campbell Street Church - 11am & 6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm Treasurer: N Matheson, Carnish, Glenmore Road, Oban PA34, Tel 01631 566259 and D Morrison, Glenstruan, Old Shore Road, Connel, PA37, Tel 01631 710226.

## **PLOCKTON & KYLE**

**(Lochcarron-Lochalsh congregation)** Mr. J. van Woerden, 8 Bank Street, Plockton IV52 8TP Tel 01599 544272 email: jan.vanwoerden@virgin.net Plockton 1st and 3rd Lord's Day of month 3 pm

## **POOLEWE**

Services held jointly with Poolewe and Aultbea Free Church - Poolewe 10.45am, Inverasdale 4.30pm, Aultbea 6.30pm. On 4th Lord's Day of month - Poolewe 10.45am and 5.00pm with APC pulpit supply. Treasurer/Contact: K MacLean, Dunedin, 42 Strath, Gairloch IV21 2DB, Tel 01445 712050. Email: kendunedin@aol.com

## **SKYE**

Rev'd Angus Cattanach, APC Manse, 20 Glamaig Place, Portree IV51 9PJ, Tel 01478 613258 Portree APC Church, Staffin Road - 12 noon & 6.30pm, Thu 7.30pm; C of S, Dunvegan - 12.15 & 5pm. Contact: Malcolm Nicolson, 4 Heatherfield, Portree IV51 9NE Tel 01478 612235.

## **STORNOWAY**

Rev'd George I Macaskill, APC Manse, 36 Newvalley, Isle of Lewis HS2 0DN, Tel 01851 703217, Fax 01851 703775. Email: g.i.macaskill@btinternet.com 72 Keith Street - 11am & 6.30pm, Thu 7.30pm. Treasurer: Mr W K Macleod, 3 Oliver's Brae, Stornoway HS1 2SS, Tel 01851 703796. www.treetapesministry.org

## **TAIN & FEARN**

Rev'd John Ross, APC Manse, 2 Cameron Gardens, Tain IV19 1NT, Tel 01862 892199. Email: revjr@talk21.com Tain Church, Upper King Street - 11.30am & 6.30pm; Hilton Church 11.30am and 5pm, Wed 7.30pm. Treasurer: Roderick Mackenzie, Geanies House, Fearn, by Tain IV20 1TW, Tel 01862 871000. Email: cfp@geanies.org.uk

## **WICK & THURSO & STRATHY**

Wick Church, Breadalbane Crescent - 11.30pm, alternate Wed 7.30pm; Strathy Church - 4pm Treasurer: Wick/Thurso: Mr D S Bremner, 'Camore', 34 West Banks Avenue, Wick KW1 5LU. Tel 01955 606099. Treasurer: Strathy: Mrs J Jappy, 113 Strathy Point, by Thurso KW14 7RY, Tel 01641 541316.

## **ABROAD**

### **TORONTO, ONTARIO**

Church: 2712 Victoria Park Avenue, North York, Ontario, M2J 4A7 Canada. Tel 001 416 491 9778 11am and 7pm, Wed 7.30pm Contact: Mrs Wilma Kling, 52 Chestertown Square, Markham, Ontario L6C 2R2 Tel 001 905 887 2017

### **VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Vancouver: corner 15th Street & Fraser Street - 11am, and 7pm (alternate Sundays) Wed 7pm Contact: Hugh Fraser 001 604 526 0431

### **AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND**

Auckland: St Hilda's Church Centre, Young Road, Mount Wellington - 2pm

Contact: Donald MacLean, Tel 649 524 5747

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Rev'd A N McPhail, MA. Mth, APC Manse, Polvinister Road, Oban PA34 5TN Tel 01631-567076 Email: amcphail@quista.net

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