



PORTOBELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Messenger

October 2006

www.portobellobaptist-church.org.uk

A THOUGHT

I read an article the other day in which the author referred to Leonardo Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. It was written before Ben Brown's controversial book *The Da Vinci Code*.

In the original article the author reminds us that the mural was painted directly on to a wall. As you know, the twelve disciples are all grouped around Jesus on the far side of the table and around its ends.



This technique is of course one that is often used in drama and in films. The side of the table nearest to the audience or the viewer is left empty, so that we can see all that is going on in that particular scene with nobody obscuring our view.

It could also be said that this makes it easier for the viewer to feel part of what is going on – a participant, not just a spectator. We share in the drama – there is a place for us at the table.

Da Vinci's painted his masterpiece on the end wall of a refectory of a monastery. When the monks sat down to eat, their tables were a continuation of the table on the wall. In a sense they were sharing their meal with the Lord.

Jesus said – “This is my body broken for you”. Not just for the original twelve gathered around the table in the Upper Room, but for all of us willing to take our place at the table. The host at the table invites us to join him. But not only that he also invites us to participate in the meal.

Bob Gemmell,
Pastoral Assistant.

THE PULPIT

October	1st	Rev. Alan Berry
	8th	a.m. Rev. Alan Berry p.m. Mr Jack Spiers
	15th	Rev. Alan Berry
	22nd	Rev. Robert Gemmell
	29th	a.m. (To Be Arranged) p.m. Mr Jonathan Slater
November	5th	Rev. Jim Barclay

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

October	26th	Management Committee
	27th -	Baptist Assembly, Aberdeen
	29th	(Leaflets available on the half landing)

B.M.S. NEWS

The B.M.S. Box Opening will take place on Sunday 22nd October when globes, boxes and donations should be brought to the services. The 31st October is the end of the B.M.S. financial year.

The Harvest Thanksgiving realised the very commendable total of £848.50 including Gift Aid. Grateful thanks are expressed to all who contributed.

Jack Spiers

TRIBUTE TO MRS HELEN McDONALD

Our sister, Helen McDonald (one of our older members, both in terms of age and of membership) died in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on Friday evening, 1st September 2006. She had been admitted to the Infirmary during the night suffering from a heart attack. Helen was 85 years of age.

Helen was a member of this Church for fifty-seven years, being baptised on the 10th April 1949 by Rev. James Taylor. She was widowed in January 1999 when her husband, Willie McDonald, a former Treasurer of the Church, died. They had three children -- Ian who now resides in Australia, Anne who resides in Australia and Sheila who died in July 2004 and whose death was felt very keenly by Helen. For some time now Helen's health had been deteriorating. Latterly, she had been making repeated phone calls to her good friend, Netta Heriot, and to Tom King and concern for her was being expressed.

Helen has not been in Church for a good number of weeks but beforehand when present she was always ready to help with washing-up in the kitchen, etc. She had a friendly nature and while not a "front" person she was faithful in her support of the Church and the Women's Own during the years of her better health.

Helen served in the A.T.S. during the war and made lasting friendships there. She would tell of attending the Tent Hall in Glasgow in these days.

We give thanks to God for our memories of Helen. We do not sorrow as those who have no hope but rejoice that she is now at home with the Lord and her frailty is over.

To Ian, Anne and Dick and their families we extend our love, sympathy and prayers.

Jack Spiers

EMAIL FROM OUR LINK MISSIONARY IN ANGOLA

Hi folks,

Hope all is well with you. I am well and enjoying having our volunteer out with us. Jane has taken early retirement from primary teaching so that she can do short term mission work and the PEPEs are certainly benefiting from her skills in the craft department. Butterflies, fish, football playing puppets, I'm having a great time, not just the children! I've introduced her to all the PEPEs in Luanda and her first visit on her own went well. She has been learning Portuguese and I'm sure she'll have fun communicating with gestures where words aren't easy.

Thank you for your prayers for Jovita. She is now at home and recovering, but won't start back with PEPE until next year. Pray for Nsimba and the children at Hoji-Ya-Henda as they continue without her.

Now that Jane is settled in and feeling more independent it's time to start arranging meetings with pastors and writing letters for funding for the next stages of PEPE. I'd value your prayers for this. I was disappointed that the 3 day seminar on children's work organised by the government didn't take place. We turned up on the day to discover it was postponed. We are still not sure if the representative from Harvest Brazil will come for a visit. Speaking of harvest, many of you will be celebrating Harvest around now. Judging by the amount of fruit and veg on sale at the sides of the road, there has been a good harvest in Angola this year. Pray for PEPE, that there would be a good harvest from the seeds being sown in the lives of children here. Thanks for all your prayer support.

Love
Lynne

EVANGELISM FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE (Part Two)

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" [1 Peter 3:15]

One of my abiding memories of my three years at college in Scotland was when I was being driven in a minibus by one of my fellow students. He came from a country renowned for its erratic drivers and my friend wasn't about to change that stereotypical image! As well as making full use of a motorway lane (by swaying from one side of it to the other) he also had a fear of 5th gear! He had no problem with the first four gears, but for some

reason 5th was out of bounds. We would sit in the deafening noise of an over-revved engine as he plucked up the courage to go into 5th! Then, when there was nothing coming, and there was a long straight stretch of road, he would hold his breath and ram the stick into top gear. This would last for about 20 seconds until the first sign of a bend or another road user, upon which he would quickly get back into 4th and breathe a sigh of relief!

My friend was the only person I have met with such a phobia. However, there are many Christians that I have met with a different kind of fear. This has nothing to do with driving. This is the fear we have when speaking to non-Christians. The fear of changing the gear of conversation from everyday things to spiritual things. We are quite happy talking about the weather or the football, but many are gripped by an irrational fear when it comes to speaking about God and the Gospel. We wait for the moment, pluck up courage and then 'go for it' before returning to the 'safe' theme of last night's episode of Neighbours! Yet surely that is not the way it is meant to be? Is there not a natural way of speaking to people about the greatest news of all? Peter gives ordinary Christians good advice on how to speak to those who don't yet know Christ.

1. Make Sure People Ask

Some people complain that no-one ever asks them questions about spiritual things. But Peter presumes that they will. He expects that people will ask Christians questions, and in particular, questions about their hope. Throughout his letter he has explained that Christians are to be characterised as people of hope (1:3,13,21; 3:5,15). Christians are to be visibly different because of their hope. Hope is not a vague longing for what might happen, but a certain expectation of what will.

It is hope that should make Christians different – it gives them joy in spite of suffering, willingness to give up time, money and energy for others, and it gives them certainty in the face of death. People should look at our lives and ask us about our hope. “Why do you give up your holidays to help on a young people's camp?” or “Why did you turn down a promotion so you can spend more time being involved in your local church?” or “How do you remain so joyful when you are stuck here in hospital?” They should see that we are not living for this world alone but for the age to come. If people don't ask questions is it because there is no difference between us and them? Are we so busy living for the here and now that we have forgotten to invest in eternity?

2. Make sure we answer

A friend once said 'Don't pray for the opportunity to speak about the Gospel – they come every day. Pray rather that you will take the opportunity when it comes.' So how do we do that?

Firstly by ensuring that we 'set apart Christ as Lord'. We are to fear God more than other people and their opinions of us. Then by 'always being prepared'. The Australian cricket star, Shane Warne was asked to give the secret to his prolific ability to take the most difficult of catches in the last Ashes series. He said that whenever the ball is bowled he expects it to come to him – he is always prepared. In the same we should be ready every day waiting, and expecting that opportunities will come along to give the reason for the hope that we have.

3. Make sure the answer is the Gospel

Sometimes we fear people asking questions of us because we don't know how to answer. But what is the reason for the hope that we have that people ask us about? It is not 6 day creationism, or archeological evidence for the flood. It is the death and resurrection of Jesus (1:3) – the reason for our hope is the Gospel! We don't need to know it all, but we do need to know Him.

4. Make sure the answer is gentle

There are many books about *methods* of evangelism. But over and above methods the Bible emphasises *manner* – it should be done 'with gentleness and respect'. A friend of mine was out doing door to door evangelism with another Christian from a different part of the world. They walked down one drive to find an old man doing some gardening. Before my friends could say anything his colleague had spoken "Old man! You die soon! You need Jesus!". It may have been true, but it certainly lacked gentleness and respect! We need to treat people as Jesus treated the outcast Samaritan woman. We need to genuinely love people and not just see them as projects or scalps.

Speaking to people about the Gospel needn't be as scary as 5th gear! It should be the most natural thing in the world – we have great news to share. Let's 'live good lives among the pagans'. Let's live lives characterised by hope. Let's be prepared to take the opportunities to speak about the one who means so much to us.

By Michael 'Motsy' Ots
(Minister of Evangelism, Lansdowne Baptist Church, Bournemouth)



BMS WORLD MISSION HARVEST APPEAL 2006

Body and Soul, Sow in tears, reap with joy
Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.

These words from Psalm 126 have real meaning for the Karen and Karenni refugees who are the focus of the 2006 harvest appeal.

Forced from their traditional homeland in Burma many of these people have crossed the border into Thailand in their thousands over the past 25 years.

Despite their bleak prospects, there *is* hope.

Why do we refer to Burma and not Myanmar?

The official UK government position is the one followed by BMS World Mission and is expressed as:

“Britain's policy is to refer to Burma rather than 'Myanmar'. It is the form preferred by the leaders of Burma's democracy movement, the legitimate winners of the 1990 elections. They do not accept that the unelected military regime has the right to change the official name of the country to suit its own ends.”

Source: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, country profiles.

DISCOVERING OUR WEBSITE'S FULL POTENTIAL.

For all friends of the church who have internet access, please consider making the church website (www.portobellobaptist-church.org.uk) your 'Home Page'.



You can now search the internet direct from our site and in the process an account, which has been set up for the church, will gradually accumulate and each time the account reaches \$100 we will be sent a cheque.

webmaster@portobellobaptist-church.org.uk

CLOCK CHANGES

On Sunday October 29 2006, Daylight Saving Time ends. Remember the saying 'Spring Forward, Fall Back' -- so put your clocks back one hour.





THE GUIDE BOOK

On the table side by side,
the Holy Bible and the TV guide.
One is well worn but cherished with pride
(not the Bible -- but the TV guide).
One is used daily to help folk decide.
No! It isn't the Bible, it's the TV guide.
As pages are turned what shall we see.
Oh, what does it matter, turn on the TV.
So they open the book in which they confide
(No, it's not the Bible it's the TV guide).
The Word of God is seldom read,
maybe a verse as they fall into bed.
Exhausted and sleep and tired as can be,
not from reading the Bible, from watching the TV.
So then back on the table, side by side,
is the Holy Bible and the TV guide.
No time for prayer, no time for the Word,
the plan of Salvation is seldom heard.
Forgiveness for sin, so full and free,
is found in the Bible, not on TV.
(given by Jack Spiers)

