



PORTOBELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Messenger

June 2007

www.portobellobaptist-church.org.uk

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A THOUGHT

As Christians, we sometimes refer to the fact that we belong to God's world-wide family. And I'm sure that we have all been in situations where we have welcomed fellow Christians that we have never met before, into our homes and in next to no time we feel that we have known them all our lives.

I would like to mention a couple of examples of this kind of experience from a personal perspective. The first occasion was when we had the privilege of entertaining two Baptist pastors from the old USSR, one from Moscow and the other from Kiev. They were with us over a weekend and shared in the services on the Sunday. As well as explaining what life was like for them as Christians within the USSR they ALSO spent some time TELLING Marion and I, Reagan – Gorbachev jokes. I can also remember taking them to Cameron Toll, where they stocked up on clothes for their families, before returning home.

The other instance that stands out in my memory is a visit from an American pastor and his wife, black couple from a Baptist Church in Washington. We had a great weekend together and on a later visit to Washington we were able to meet up with Muriel (a Professor in Law at Georgetown University – and one of the few left wing Americans that I have met). Unfortunately, by then her husband had died. We were able to attend their church on the Sunday morning. It was quite an experience – being only two of about twelve white folks in a congregation of over a thousand.

It is great to share in Christian fellowship together – to share in other's joys and sorrows – to be able to laugh and cry together. We have also had a very vivid experience of this within the past year.

Andrew and Jenny ministered in Clydebank when we were at Drumchapel. We struck up a friendship that has continued for over thirty years. Last autumn, their son Mark died. He was in his late thirties. He had been diagnosed with, and had been operated on for, a brain tumour in the early years of his life and had survived to lead a very fulfilled and active life, despite his acute disabilities. I had the heart breaking privilege of taking his funeral service.

However this weekend we are back up at Arbroath with Andrew and Jenny to celebrate the wedding of another of their son's. The valley and the mountain top experiences of the Christian life that we can share together!

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Robert Gemmill,
Pastoral Assistant.

THE PULPIT

June	3rd	Rev. Robert Gemmell
	10th	Rev. Alan Berry
	17th	Rev. Robert Gemmell
	24th	Rev. Alan Berry



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

June	28th	7.00 p.m.	Management/ Pastorate Committee
	13th - 17th		'The Life of Christ' -- Dundas Castle, South Queensferry
August	23rd - 25th		Christian Resources Exhibition -- at S.E.C.C. Glasgow

CHRISTIAN AID HOUSE COLLECTION

The district with which Elsie Thom and Ewan Sinclair were involved raised £1109.50. Their section contributed £209.79. In addition, the offering at the Christian Aid Dedication Service amounted to £65.50. We are grateful to Elsie & Ewan.

BETTY YOUNG'S FAREWELL

A pleasant afternoon was held on Thursday 24th to mark the retirement of Miss Betty Young from her service to the United Mission to Nepal (U.M.N.). The company consisted of the Chief Executive Officer of U.M.N., past missionaries and local supporters of the mission. Betty's sister from Ireland had come across for the occasion. Six representatives from the church were present. The C.E.O. Spoke of the high qualities exhibited by Betty during her long service of 50 years. Betty recounted some of her experiences getting to Nepal, in Nepal and then setting up archives in Edinburgh and how she had known the presence and provision of God throughout. She was presented with a picture of a Nepalese street which was very reminiscent of what she had known. A more than adequate afternoon tea complete with birthday cake was served.

Jack Spiers

EMAIL UPDATE FROM LINK MISSIONARY (ANGOLA)

Just thought I'd give a quick update as I'm travelling today (20 May) and will be away for a week.

Last week I was in Lubango in the south of the country to tell the churches about PEPE. I flew done on Friday and returned on Tuesday. It was a really blessed time and I felt fully recovered after my dodgy tum. Meetings about PEPE went well. IEBA has a small mission church there and they had invited me to explain PEPE. I met with the deacons on Friday and then with the whole church on Sunday and they are keen to start the programme. On Saturday I met with Pastors and young people from the Convention churches and await their response once they have had a chance to read the materials. On Monday it was a meeting with the Dept. of Education for the Province. This was a good meeting with lots of questions and some suggestions that I need to follow up on. Apparently, with the reform of education, it is the governments duty to provide free education from reception to year 6 so questions were raised about us asking for a voluntary contribution. According to the Pastor, sometimes people like to complicate things in the provinces. So it's a matter for prayer. It would be great if primary school was free for all, but we have yet to see this in reality.

It was lovely to meet the church folk and they looked after me really well. On Sunday afternoon we went sightseeing and it was like another world. Good roads, fields with cattle grazing on either side, fruit farms. Lubango sits in a hole in the mountains so beautiful views all around. What was most refreshing was the temperature, I had to use a blanket at night and it was lovely to be free to walk around the city. I hadn't realised just how tiring the heat in Luanda was, until I had those cool days in Lubango.

Today, Joan and I are heading up to Mbanza Congo in the north. I'm hoping it will be cooler there too. I'll be talking about PEPE and hopefully visiting some village areas with the hope of getting PEPE started there, rather than in the city itself. Joan will be checking how her house repairs are coming on, then planning for the visit of a water engineer in June. She'll stay a week longer than me. Please pray for the journey. It's only 500k but will take about 14 hours if all goes well. The rains should have finished by the 15th May but we heard this morning that there have been a couple of big rainstorms which could mean the roads will be muddy and the going tougher.

Manuel is all organised to take the teachers meeting while I am away, and most of the work should be finished on the container that will be my office

by the time I get back. I slept in my new place for the first time on Thursday night. It was lovely, cool and peaceful. I'm bit by bit moving things in and will start living there when the office is organised, staying in Samba while Joan is off travelling and other occasional nights until she leaves for good. I'm so grateful to have found a nice, safe place to live, with less of the stress and hassle of this house in Samba. Thank you for all your prayers about this and please keep us in your prayers as we travel, that God's work would go forward.

Lynne

NEPALI EVANGELISM

The law of Nepal states that no one should be forced (or persuaded) to change his religion, and there are severe imprisonment punishments detailed. This law is not being enforced today, but it has been over past years, and expatriates have promised to obey the law. So what are missionaries doing in such a situation? Just good works?

Our first pioneers trekked to Kathmandu only a few months after the country opened in 1951, and talked with the Foreign Minister. They asked if they could answer if someone asked them what they believed and why, because as Christians they had to share their faith. The Foreign Minister replied that there was no law against answering questions! So the early missionaries entered the country, beginning with medical and then education work, and with the first listed purpose of the UMN to support the Nepali church. There is no UMN church, and little awareness of background denominations – just Christians working together.

Some examples of how one can witness:

- a) On a trek in the hills, when you stop at a house for the night and the villagers gather around the foreigner to see what is going on, just keep the conversation going – about yourself, and more general questions are bound to follow which will lead to an opening, such as “Why do you live in Nepal when it is so much easier in your own country?” Share your faith, but not in “preaching” form – only in questions and answers. The questions will keep coming, and you are not breaking the law in answering.
- b) Actions: Come to work on time and work honestly through office hours without taking long breaks; refuse to accept a bribe; go out of your way to help a poor person, etc., and those actions will make a far more effective witness than any words.

- c) Be polite! One day I went to a little “hole in the wall” shop to buy a Nepali shawl. The shopkeeper did not talk to me, but in choosing a shawl and paying for it I was polite and treated him with respect as an equal. When I was about to leave the shop he suddenly asked me, “Why is there such a difference between you folk who really want to help us in Nepal and the hippies who come in just to get drugs and make themselves a nuisance?”
- d) There are scores of ways of witness without “preaching”, and of course the the Nepalis can do that far better then we can with their knowledge of the language and the people they are talking to, etc.

In 1951 there were no Christians in Nepal; today the guestimate is 1 million baptized Christians, and many more true believers who love the Lord but have never heard of baptism. Laws like the Nepali ones can help to build a strong church in the face of much persecution over the years!

Betty Young

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"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD,
 "when I will send a famine on the land --
 not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
 but of hearing the words of the LORD.

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Amos Ch 8 v 11

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

Over five days in June the spectacular parkland of Dundas Castle, South Queensferry is transformed into the Holy Land of Biblical times for a dramatic production of the greatest story ever told. The audience follows the play through wooded valleys and by the stunning loch as over 100 actors bring the Gospels to life. What is described as Scotland's premier outdoor theatre event makes an enthralling day out for the family as the story unfolds over four and a half hours.

The age old features of the estate are transformed into breathtaking natural scenery as the loch becomes the sea of Galilee, the old walled garden the city of Jerusalem, and the ice house, Jesus's tomb and the scene of the resurrection.

"I thought that the play was an extraordinarily vivid pen-portrait of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and nobody could fail to be touched by it."

Right Reverend Sandy Millar

PERFORMANCES

Wednesday June 13 -- Saturday June 16, 10:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. with a one hour lunch break. Sunday June 17, 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Duration -- 4.5 hours from the Nativity to the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension.

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST (Cont'd)

If you would like to attend the 'Life of Jesus Christ' this summer, please apply for your tickets as soon as possible by :-

- > Telephone 'The Hub' booking office on 0131 473 2000
- > Visit Wesley Owen bookstore. 117/ 119 George Street, Edinburgh. Please note: credit/ debit cards are not accepted.

