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PORTOBELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Messenger

December 2011

A PASTOR'S THOUGHT

*The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.
We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory,
like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.
John 1:14 (MSG)*

Dr. John Rosen, a psychiatrist in New York City, is well known for his work with catatonic schizophrenics. Normally doctors remain separate and aloof from their patients. Dr. Rosen moves into the ward with them. He places his bed among their beds. He lives the life they must live. Day to day, he shares it. He loves them. If they don't talk, he doesn't talk either. It is as if he understands what is happening. His being there, being with them, communicates something that they haven't experienced in years—somebody understands.

But then he does something else. He puts his arms around them and hugs them. He holds these unattractive, unlovable, sometimes incontinent persons, and loves them back into life. Often, the first words they speak are simply, "Thank you."

This is what Christ did for us at Christmas. He moved into the ward with us. He placed his bed among our beds. Those who were there, those who saw Him, touched Him and were in turn touched by Him and restored to life. The first word they had to say was "thank you."

What a glorious opportunity we have this year to reach our neighbourhood. In our Christmas programme we will reach out and, as it were, wrap our arms around those who come to celebrate with us.

Some may not fully understand.
Some may not believe. Some may be cynical.
Some may be searching.
ALL WILL BE WELCOME.

*Joy to the world! The Lord has come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room...*



Amy Smith

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

December	Tues	10.30 a.m.	Weekly Hour of Prayer (all are welcome to stay for all or part of this time) (No Meeting 6th, 20th & 27th)
	Wed	7.30 p.m.	Midweek Prayer & Bible Study (No Midweek Meeting 21st & 28th)
	TBC	8.00 p.m.	Management Meeting
18th	Sun	11.00 a.m.	Family Christmas Nativity Service
		6.30 p.m.	Communion Service
23rd	Fri	7.30 p.m.	Carols by Candlelight
25th	Sun	11.00 a.m.	Christmas Day Morning Service
January	1st	Sun	11.00 a.m. New Years Day Morning Service

From 1st January, evening service (with Communion) only on third Sunday of each month

Here is a prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson that you might like to pray:

A Christmas Prayer

Loving Father,
help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.
Amen.



B.M.S. LINK MISSIONARY UPDATE (rec'd 12 Nov 2011)

Dear friends,

Hello from a hot and getting hotter Angola. As you head into winter and start piling on the layers, we head into summer and there aren't any more layers to take off!

November is the month of holidays, before the real holidays start. The 2nd was All Souls day where traditionally people visit the graves of loved ones, to tidy them up, take flowers and pray for the dead. The 11th is Independence Day. While people are celebrating freedom from Colonial rule, I remember those who gave their lives so I can live freely. This year there will be a Remembrance Service at the British Embassy. I don't know if they have had one in previous years, but it will be good to mark the day.

November is also the month for results and closing service of the Seminary. On Saturday the 5th, all the students were dressed in their best and the final year students lined up at the front. As usual, it was a female student who got the best results and came top of the class. Maria Pemba got 69% and she gave birth to her second child in August! She gave the students speech and it was all the more moving as her mother had died on the previous Thursday, she had left the family in Obito (crying) and the funeral was on the Monday. Pray for her as she grieves and also as she Pastors a congregation in Luanda and gets involved in the Women's Work of the region. My first year students were there too and it was good to see them again after my trip away. There's always been an ability division in the group and I wasn't surprised to learn that two of them hadn't done well enough in their exams to continue at the Seminary. It also wasn't a surprise to learn that Felipe got a distinction. He works hard and has a real thirst for knowledge.

The PEPEs will also close this month. Manuel has achieved a lot in this year as he has taken over the running of the programme. He's also learnt how difficult it can be to get simple tasks achieved when you have to depend on others. It's not been a smooth year with the coordinators. Januarío was ill for several months and there was the death of Maria Teresa's husband. The positive side is the enthusiasm of the missionary educators and the response from so many children participating in PEPE. We still need to have our meeting to evaluate the past year and plan for the year ahead.

I had a great break in Zambia. It is right next door to Angola on the eastern border. Many Angolans sought refuge there during the war. Some things were just like Angola, the colour of the taxis, the ladies in pano (bright printed cotton cloth) and carrying goods for sale on their heads. Other aspects were very different, and I really enjoyed staying with a Zambian family and learning about the culture. It wasn't all a holiday though, my friend asked me to help run training for Sunday



School teachers in a local church (*pictured above left: Training in Zambia*). It was so good to meet up with other Christians, who were keen to learn more about working with children. We had a good afternoon together studying God's word and trying out new techniques. I was able to meet with one of the members of the Accrediting body for seminaries in Africa. He talked me through the Accreditation process if our Seminary

decides to seek accreditation. Accreditation would mean the degrees offered at our Seminary would be recognised worldwide as having a set standard, rather than just the standard of the seminary itself. There are many years of work ahead before we would get to that level, but every journey starts with the first step.

Thank you for all your prayers over these last weeks. On my return from Zambia I took the paperwork into immigration to renew my visa. Praise God it only took an hour and a half to hand the documents in and get a receipt. I know an hour and a half sounds a long time, but not out here. Poor Fiona was stuck there all day on Thursday. They tell me I should get my passport and visa within four weeks. Please continue to pray as PEPE year wraps up and we look to next year. Pray for God to keep the coordinators, teachers, children and families in His care, and show areas to concentrate on for next year. Pray too about what lies ahead for me in the coming year.

P.S. Having just received copies of the Church Magazine and the Induction Service DVD, I was delighted to hear Portobello has a new Pastor. I watched the Induction service last night. A good view of Ewan playing the organ and Mr Spiers sitting at the front. What a treat to sing along to "In Christ Alone" and I would like to get the words to the "Hallelujah" tune. The service was lovely and so good to hear you folks at Portobello being commended for your perseverance and for being such a generous Church. It's true. I've valued your support in prayer, messages, gifts and coming to meetings when I've been back in Scotland. I've felt your support in many tangible ways. Thank you. My prayer is that God will bless your time with Pr. Scarcliffe, bringing a time of renewal, healing of hurts, growing together and fresh vision as you reach out to the community at Portobello. God is faithful. I was blessed by watching the DVD.

Every blessing

Lynne

GREAT QUOTES with Kirk



"Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on Earth."

~ John Wesley

I believe we can and will turn this upside down world right side up with the power of God. Politics alone won't do it. Money alone can't touch it. Not even brains and brawn can right the wrongs of our world. The only proven strategy that has ever brought true freedom from sin, self, and Satan, and brought Heavenly light into this present darkness, is the all in, sold out, sacrificing servant of Jesus Christ, fearing only sin, desiring only God, and stopping at nothing until God's will is done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Oh God, help us be this kind of Christian.



~ Kirk Cameron

CHRISTMAS CARD BOX

The Christmas card posting box for Church family will be available in the Cafe on 4 & 11 December. The cards will then be distributed on 18 December.

SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

December	04th	Coastline Comm. Church & Coatbridge
	11th	Collydean, Glenrothes & Colonsay
	18th	Cornton, Stirling & Cowal
	25th	Cowdenbeath & Crieff

Abr
aham
was the
father of
Isaac, and
Isaac the
father of Jacob,
and Jacob the
father of Judah and
his brothers, and
Judah the father of Perez
and Zerah by Tamar, and
Perez the father of Hezron,
and Hezron the father of Ram,
and Ram the father of
Amminadab, and Amminadab the
father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the
father of Salmon, and Salmon the father
of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of
Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,
and Jesse the father of David the king. And
David was the father of Solomon by the wife of
Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and
Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father
of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of
Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the
father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah
the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and
Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his
brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the
deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and
Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the
father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,
and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan
the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph
the husband
of Mary, of
whom was
b o r n

JESUS

who is called Christ.