

OPEN HOUSE

Reflecting faith issues in Scotland

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What a difference a
pope makes

New series on
independence referendum

1914-18 anniversary:
books, film, music

The future is with us

Catholics in the west of Scotland are familiar with stories from the rest of the country of several parishes being looked after by one priest. Before Christmas the Archdiocese of Glasgow produced a discussion document which envisages it having fewer than 50 priests. Currently it has more than 100 parishes. Chickens have come home to roost even in the heartlands.

The *Open House* conference on church governance was well received as reported in the December/January edition. However some cynicism was also expressed. Some said that discussion about the future of parishes will only be for show. The clergy still think they are ultimately responsible for church property. They may carve it up to fit their own resources.

The Glasgow discussion document suggests this may not be the case. It includes Parish Pastoral Councils. It presumes all parishes have these. Priests are reminded that in canon law they are required to have at least finance committees. Bishops cannot 'suppress' parishes just because they want to or feel they have to. Parishioners have the right to appeal any decision. There will be no mass closure programme.

The biggest problem may be the laity. Some have the uncatholic attitude of parochialism. No parish assessed as a turkey by others will necessarily vote for Christmas. Some of the most faithful attenders broke their backs to build their churches.

Meetings with parish council representatives have already been held at deanery level. There are better natural and/or

civic boundaries than deaneries. In such areas people should be required to sit down together and work out what they should do with their buildings.

There will be a temptation to save the richest or the biggest. This might not be wise. Pope Francis has re-asserted the option for the poor. Congregations of people saying their prayers while the priest reads from the missal are visibly ageing. Full churches on the hour every hour on Sundays are gone forever. Missing the weekly Eucharist as an occasion for a mortal sin was in English speaking countries a necessity of fundraising for schools and churches.

Plans are needed for smaller, friendlier congregations. At the same time provision should be made for 'occasional Catholicism' - Christmas, Easter, First Communion - which require large venues. Archbishop Tartaglia has intimated that confirmations, for example, should take place in the cathedral. So it could be that each parish council will have to sell itself as best for different events like funerals and weddings or as a centre for social ministry and further education.

Many years ago a missionary order worked out that once there were about a hundred Christians they should think about providing Sunday mass for them. Fewer than that the priest should visit midweek and gather the people for a Eucharist. More than that there was the possibility of a parish structure and eventually perhaps a parish priest. If that is good enough for the missions why shouldn't it be good enough for Scotland?

A fairer Britain?

Debate on September's referendum on Scottish independence is increasingly focussed on its impact on the rest of the UK. Will Hutton, among others, suggests that the vote could trigger the creation of a better, fairer Britain (*The Observer*, Sunday 2 February).

He confesses that if he were a Scot he would be sorely tempted to leave behind the political order that delivers growing inequality and faltering investment - too much of Thatcher, Cameron, Osborne and Farage, and too little of politicians and ideas that reflect more mainstream Scottish and European values. But he thinks the SNP's half way house of keeping the pound, the Queen and the Bank of England will put Scotland in a weaker position to spend, tax and borrow to finance its ambitious social programmes or create a new social and economic model.

A substantial Yes vote short of independence, he suggests, would trigger huge change in both countries. Scotland would be the battering ram to create a more federal Britain with Scotland as the main beneficiary in a 21st century Britain with a more democratic constitution.

Following Tom Gallagher's *Divided Scotland: Ethnic Friction and Christian Crisis*, which was reviewed in the November edition of *Open House*, two further books have been published which look at the role of faith and Christianity in Scotland with respect to the referendum: Doug Gay's *Honey from the Lion: Christianity and the Ethics of Nationalism*, and Donald Smith's *Freedom and Faith*. *Open House* will review both of these.

Starting this month, we will also run a series of reflections on the Scottish Government's White Paper on Independence by those engaged in the debate. This will be followed by a special edition on the referendum in June.

It would be good to hear from *Open House* readers what they think about the most far reaching constitutional change proposed since the parliamentary union of 1707. They might recall that Scotland's independence as a nation was secured first of all ecclesiastically when the Treaty of Arbroath appealed to Pope John XXII in 1320. And that it was the Catholic Stuarts who put paid to independence when James II made England safe for Protestantism.

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Thank you to all those who contributed to this edition of *Open House*.

Open House, which was founded in Dundee in 1990, is an independent journal of comment and debate on faith issues in Scotland. It is rooted in the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and committed to the dialogue which began at the Council - within the Catholic Church, in other churches, and with all those committed to issues of justice and peace.

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Cover image: Crosses at the Cenotaph, Glasgow. Photo by Dominic Cullen.

GERARD CARRUTHERS

The religious poetry of Robert Burns

An academic who specialises in Scottish literature since 1700 and the work of Robert Burns finds in an often overlooked poem the sign of God's grace everywhere.

Robert Burns' image as a religious iconoclast, satirising the hypocrisy that he sometimes portrayed in his cradle Presbyterianism is well-known. Equally, a strong case is sometimes made for 'Burns, the Protestant poet', his forthright voice positively licensed by the democratic mentality of his Scottish religion.

Burns, the author of both the scathing 'Holy Willie's Prayer' and the celebratory 'The Cotter's Saturday Night', represents something of a paradox. Part of the resolution lies in the fact that one can argue these texts are not primarily about Presbyterianism or Calvinism. 'Holy Willie's Prayer' is about human avarice, more generally, and the misuse of religion as a simplistic rule-book. 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is about restoring Presbyterianism to the imaginative record, providing for it a proper praise for its simple, sincere mode of worship. Too often prior to Burns, in Scotland as well as England, Scottish Presbyterianism was depicted as mean, character-less, culture-less. Burns' widely-known reputation as a poet of universal sympathy was built in large part upon his ability to praise and blame in equal measure such spheres of human activity as organised religion, the political constitution of Britain or even the Excise service in which

he found employment.

In the cultural debates about Scottish religion raging since before and long after Burns' time, and in which texts such as 'Holy Willie's Prayer' or 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' are often still called upon as evidence of one kind or another, Burns' religious poetry has tended to be obscured. That is to say, those texts of his which meditate on the



*Burns statue in Stirling, one of many around Scotland.
Photo Dominic Cullen*

nature of Godly incarnation within the human soul. When in 2009 I edited for Everyman the book, *Scottish Poems*, I included as a main section, 'Philosophical Matters', and in that section Burns' extended spiritual mediation, 'A Winter Night' (1786).

Without disapproving as such, a number of Burnsians have since expressed mild puzzlement to me that Burns should be so portrayed in the Everyman anthology as a 'philosophical' or even a 'religious' poet. I'd argue that this bemusement is part of that effect to which I've already alluded: Scottish religion as *cultural* rather than *spiritual* matter and a central focus dictated by our centuries of sectarian strife, though not simply within the Scottish but more widely within the British context. For example, for a long time High Anglicanism, when it thought of it at all, regarded Presbyterianism in Ireland and Scotland as the disputatious faith of the fanatic. This is the unkind caricature that Burns is intent to counter in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night'.

'A Winter Night' represents Burns' voice coming to maturity in matters of religion. His earlier juvenile efforts from the late 1770s and early 1780s were rather morbid affairs worrying over the corrupt nature of human flesh and the awesome doom-saying judgement of the Almighty: texts like 'A Prayer, in the Prospect of Death' and 'The First Six Verses of the Ninetieth Psalm'. These dark, fearful poems give way by 1784-5 to work defiant of the church authorities which had censured him for fornicating and fathering out of wedlock. 'A Poet's Welcome to his love-begotten Daughter' (1785) is one of Burns' most moving (what I choose to call 'pro-life') texts. Even more bullish and primed by the same event of illegitimate fatherhood is 'The Fornicator' from the same period where the narrator talks of 'before the Congregation wide' having 'passed the muster fairly.' Such lurid,

imagined exhibitionism perhaps unsurprisingly continues to catch the eye of many readers of Burns, while the quietism of 'A Winter Night' is largely overlooked.

Burns' poem opens with a bleak mid-winter night, noisy storm raging all around. If on a night like this, the songful little birds of spring are vanquished, even more brutal manifestations of nature are also assailed by the elements:

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote
spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

What Burns is depicting is straightforward life (straightforward both in its spring beauty and in its animal predatoriness) assailed by a universe overwhelmingly inhospitable (seemingly). Already, in the lines quoted however, there is a clue to a redeeming feature: the human heart, which can even feel sympathy for the fox or the wolf amid the bitter weather. Before the heart can triumph in the text, however, the odds look even longer against its kindness, and much shorter in favour of a ubiquitous brutality because of the prevalence of another human sensibility in the world:

See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad ambition's gory hand,
Sending like blood-hounds from the
slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder oe'r a land!

This is a characteristic manoeuvre through Burns' oeuvre where humankind is depicted as unnaturally imperious ('man's inhumanity to man'), or unnatural in nature. 'A Winter Night' explicitly inspired by *King Lear* sets up a counsel of despair, which seems to be the empirical, rational conclusion in the face of the multitudinous, unalleviated suffering on earth. Where is God amid the harshness of the planet and the even harsher attitudes of humanity? Where

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can He be seen with clarity amid all the rancour and ruination of life? Burns' poem ends:

Thro' all his works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

What links all of 'A Winter Night', 'Holy Willie's Prayer' and 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is an Enlightenment sensibility, that culture which inspires Burns' promiscuous sympathy for so many different kinds of human being across his work. He hates unfeeling callousness, injustice, hypocrisy and prejudice. Human beings are made human by the heart, by the reaching out to other human beings and not only because they belong to one's own tribe, community or religion.

Speaking personally, I become rather annoyed with present-day religious fundamentalists (including Catholic ones) railing against the 'humanistic' Enlightenment as the harbinger of dangerous relativism. The relativism (or perhaps 'relationalism') of the Enlightenment was the universal apprehension that we are all relatively human and that God's chosen people are nowhere, or rather everywhere. The organ of the soul's apprehension, metaphorically 'the heart', or sign of God's grace everywhere, is what Burns quietly identifies in the bleakest mid-winter circumstances of life.

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MICHAEL J WALSH

New pontiff, old problems

A historian and author takes a long view of church teaching and challenges the view that tradition is unchanging. He suggests how Pope Francis might foster a different understanding.

One major problem we have in our Church is that of change. When some Pope finally brings out an encyclical approving of birth control, it will open with the words ‘As my Venerable predecessors have always taught...’ The issue of change in Church teaching has always been a special interest of mine and birth control is a perfect example.

There has been a constant teaching of the Church that birth control is wrong. However, it is described as wrong, or sinful, for different reasons at different times. In 1930 Pius XI declared in his encyclical *Casti Connubii* that ‘Since ... the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose, sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious’.

You could scarcely have a clearer statement than that. Yet Pope John XXIII set up a commission to look into the whole question, thereby at least suggesting that there was the possibility of a development in Church teaching. His successor Pope Paul VI strengthened the commission, adding lay people, a married couple. The commission produced a report which recommended that the teaching should be changed: and then the Pope backed away from the challenge.

I am not here interested in the rights

and wrongs of birth control as such, but of its context within the teaching of the Church. The most weighty pronouncement in the past was *Casti Connubii*. This insists that ‘The conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children’. The Second Vatican Council, however, shied away from talking about primary and secondary ends of marriage, while stressing that abstaining from the conjugal act is detrimental to the health of marriage. *The Code of Canon Law*, surprisingly, is much more explicit. Canon 1055 § 1 states ‘The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its own very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation of children, has, between the baptised, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament’. Well, it was recognised as a sacrament only in the 13th century, long after the time of Christ. The point is that Canon Law puts the well-being of the spouses first, not the procreation of children.

The weight of tradition is heavy, and weighs especially heavily upon the pope of the day. Yet tradition is a slippery thing to get hold of.

The context in which we understand marriage has changed.

The new Code had not been published at the time of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, but the documents of Vatican II had, leaving scope for a re-envisaging of the Church’s teaching. It did not happen. The weight of tradition is heavy, and weighs especially heavily upon the pope of the day. Yet tradition is a slippery thing to get hold of.

People are convinced they know what that tradition is and what it is not. I recall a television programme in which I took part to mark the silver jubilee of Karol Wojtyła’s election to the papacy. Huw Edwards turned to me for the last comment. I said something like, ‘Life in the Catholic Church would be a lot less fraught if we could talk about disagreement rather than dissent’. From the other end of the line of panellists Anne Widdecombe’s voice boomed out, ‘It is dissent, it is dissent’. I am reminded of a piece of doggerel I learned long ago: ‘When Pastor X steps out of bed/he slips his neat disguise on/That halo round his holy head/is really his horizon’.

During the conclave which elected Benedict XVI, I was taking part in a phone-in on television with Archbishop Peter Smith, still at the time in Cardiff. One of the questions was ‘Is it time the Catholic Church ordained married men?’ Peter Smith said: ‘I don’t really know what I

The fact is, the Catholic Church isn't unchanging, whether you think of its structures, its liturgy and certainly not its doctrine. People think the doctrine is unchanging and, what is worse, think they know what it is.

think about this issue, but I hope that in the next pontificate we may be able to discuss it'. I found it startling that an Archbishop felt himself unable to discuss something which was clearly of great significance for the future of the Catholic Church.

As the late Clifford Geertz, the anthropologist, has commented, nothing alters quite like the unalterable, and the pre-conciliar 'fortress Catholicism' had seemed at least to the unhistorical eye steadfastly unchangeable. This was particularly so under the pontificate of Pope Pius XII, whose austere figure and penchant for oracular pronouncements had seemed to many Catholics the ideal of what a pontiff should be. The fact is, the Catholic Church isn't unchanging, whether you think of its structures, its liturgy and certainly not its doctrine. People think the doctrine is unchanging and, what is worse, think they know what it is. Nothing is more central to Catholicism, and indeed to Christianity, than the doctrine of the Trinity as it was defined at the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon. But I am willing to bet that there are quite a number of heretics, if judged by the canons of these ecumenical councils.

A changing church

My first task for the new pontiff, then, is to create within the Church a realisation that things as they are now, haven't always been so. 'The unhistorical, without knowing it, are usually slaves to a fairly recent past', C. S. Lewis once remarked. At the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries there was an enormous dispute between Jesuits and Dominicans over the nature of grace. The controversy dragged on for twenty years, until in 1607 Pope Paul V forbade any further argument. He did, however, allow the opposing parties each to teach their own theory as long as they did not describe their opponents' views as heretical. That seems to be an excellent approach: we can disagree, but that doesn't mean we dissent. Pope Francis took a step down this road when he said to a group of religious, early on in his pontificate, 'You may get a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, from time to time. Don't let it worry you.' So that is my first hope for the new pontificate: that people will be more relaxed about the niceties of Catholic doctrine, and not rush into print at the slightest hint of a deviation from what THEY think is the true faith. There is a corollary: debate, the Peter Smith issue. Why do we have to wait upon a nod from the Bishop of Rome before we can discuss controversial issues?

The role of the Pope

This is my second point: the role of the Roman pontiff. Popes were not always the oracle of God. Indeed for much of the history of the Church they played a quite small role, though an important one. We are always being told that St Peter was the first pope: he is listed as such in the papal yearbook, the *Annuario Pontificio*. The claim is made despite

the fact that there is no secure evidence that he ever was in Rome, let alone that he was that city's first bishop. In fact we know very little about Rome's first Christian leaders, and the consensus of scholarly opinion is that the notion of there being a bishop in the modern sense did not arise until, at the earliest, 150 AD. The primacy of Rome was regularly acknowledged by the other patriarchal sees from the fourth century if not before, but just what that meant took a long time to formalise. But what came before the popes for the most part were not doctrinal disputes. What the papacy, or the papal curia, dealt with mostly were appeals to Rome from local tribunals. The pope was seen not so much as the supreme doctrinal authority as the supreme judicial one.

At the end of the thirteenth century Pope Boniface VIII overreached himself, and abetted first by the exile of the popes to Avignon then by the Great Western Schism, the power structure of the papacy came tumbling down. For the most part the renaissance popes had little interest in what was happening outside Italy, and it took the Reformation to jolt them back into playing a greater role.

What I am trying to stress is that the role which is currently assigned to the Roman Pontiff is not something which has always been there. Were I trying to be provocative I would suggest that the modern papacy was the creation of a group of 19th century aristocrats who saw in the threat to the papacy occasioned by Italian unification a threat to that social fabric of Europe which sustained them.

What I hope for from the present papacy, therefore, is less emphasis on the authority of the pope and far more upon the pope as one bishop among many. When I was asked

during recent conclaves whether it was time the Church had someone from Latin America or from Africa, my answer was always no: Rome is an Italian see and should have an Italian bishop. The cardinals are not electing a CEO of some multinational corporation, but the senior bishop of what is, constitutionally, a federation of local churches whose local bishops receive their authority directly from God - so the Council of Trent declared - and most certainly not from the bishop of Rome. We ended up, of course, with an almost Italian bishop of Rome, but one who came from Latin America.

Yet we have also ended up with someone who wishes to play down the papal magisterial role, and emphasise the pastoral; to be, in other words, a bishop of Rome. I would like to adopt for the papacy the famous Dunning's Resolution, put before the House of Commons in 1780: 'The influence of the monarch has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished'. Happily, in Francis we have someone as bishop of Rome who would appear to agree.

But of course Francis is not simply a bishop. He has as part of his office, and a very important part, the role of being a symbol of the unity of the Catholic Church - a role which many people outside the Church would be ready to concede.

Collegiality

And that brings me on to the third task I see for the new bishop of Rome: revitalising collegiality, the belief expressed at the Second Vatican Council that responsibility for the well-being of the Church was shared by all the bishops of the Church. At the end of the Council, episcopal conferences were instituted where they did not already exist. Similarly the synod of bishops came into being, a new structure created in

the immediate aftermath of the Council, but neither delivered what had been hoped for. Even in the course of the third session Paul VI was prevailed upon to add the 'Nota praevia explicativa' to chapter three of the Constitution on the Church, asserting that 'The Supreme Pontiff can always exercise his power at will, as his very office demands. Though it is always in existence, the College is

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as a result not permanently engaged in strictly collegial activity... rather it acts as a college in the strict sense only from time to time and only with the consent of its head'. This undermined the fundamental concept of collegiality. In a recent lecture, Christopher Hill, the bishop of Guildford, said: 'If Vatican II is in a process of at least partial reception by Anglicans, the Nota Previa is not'.

Synods of bishops, theoretically the most evident expression of the doctrine of collegiality, have been disappointing, at least since the synod on Justice in the World in 1971. Since then they have been packed with papal placemen. In 1980 there was a synod on the family, after which Pope John Paul II produced *Familiaris Consortio*. As one commentator remarked, the pope could have written it even if the

synod had never met. Next year there is to be another synod on the family. It remains to be seen whether Francis will pay more attention to the debates than did his predecessor-but-one. At the 1980 synod Cardinal Hume and Archbishop Worlock made pleas for a more understanding treatment of divorced and remarried Catholics. The Pope has shown himself sympathetic to this. We will have to wait and see if the more merciful approach will receive much backing from the gathered prelates. My hunch is that it will, the bishops being aware of the immense pastoral harm which is being done.

Repairing this harm is one of the tasks, as I see it, of the new pontificate. Whatever he does, he should do it collegially, so that he carries with him at least most of the bishops. Will the Pope act collegially? He is a Jesuit by training, and Jesuit superiors do not commonly act collegially. They are obliged to take advice, to have their team of consultors, but superiors decide for themselves. That appears to be the way Francis is currently operating. It is more open, more transparent, than the way popes have governed in recent decades, but it is not collegial government, and collegial government is what the Second Vatican Council put before the Church.

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Clearly, when Pope Paul VI added the *Nota Praevia* he was feeling himself somehow to be threatened by the notion of collegiality. But just as threatened has been the papal curia. When the Pope's butler removed some letters from Benedict's desk and passed them on to a journalist who promptly published them, we learnt some remarkable facts about the people who work in the Vatican. So the fourth task is the renewal of the papal curia, which seems to have been one of the reasons why Papa Bergoglio was elected in the first place.

Renewal of the curia

Catholics used to boast of how small a number of clerics ran the world's largest Christian Church. There are some highly admirable men among them, but the Pope has already accused them of careerism and narcissism. Robert Mickens, the *Tablet's* Rome correspondent, has described the curia as a renaissance court. It is a largely self-selecting bureaucracy, whose members depend for advancement on patronage rather than on ability. In its strange uniforms and exotic protocols it does indeed resemble a renaissance court, despite the fact that it sees itself as running an enterprise, population-wise, almost as big as China. It has not been dissimilar to China in its lack of transparency and careful news management - and now we know, thanks to Vatileaks, not free of the corruption that plagues China. Also like China, it is operating in a world which is increasing democratic, yet it knows nothing of democracy.

I have neither the time nor the competence to discuss the necessary reforms of the curia, but just let me take three obvious examples, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the

Faith (CDF), the Congregation for Divine Worship, and the papal diplomatic service, which falls within the remit of the Secretariat of State.

The CDF is the Vatican's doctrinal watchdog. It was set up as the Holy Roman Inquisition to counter Lutheran incursions into Italy, and it won fame - or infamy - by ordering the execution, in Rome's Campo dei Fiori, of the Dominican friar Giordano Bruno. For most of its existence it dealt with legal issues to do with the Papal States. After the demise of the Papal States it was a dicastery in search of a role. Pope Paul VI tried to give it one, not so much of defending the faith as promoting it.

There are many problems with the CDF. One of them is easy to solve. When theologians are summoned before its tribunal to be interrogated about the content of their teaching or writing, they are not allowed to know who has complained, or to defend themselves. It would be easy to make this a more open and transparent process: on the other hand it would be easier to abolish the CDF altogether. The pope, in whose name of course the CDF operates, has not traditionally been the arbiter of the faith. Any exercise of the kind of authority administered by the CDF could be much better dealt with at the level of the diocese or, if the diocese did not think itself competent, of the ecclesiastical province. If there is a really serious theological dispute, which there hasn't been as far as I can recall since the reformation, it can be decided by the synod of bishops. However it is decided, the process should be wholly transparent, the accusers known to the defendant so there wouldn't be trivial charges brought. Above all, let such issues be dealt with wherever possible within the local community.

Do I think the CDF will be abolished? No, but the process could be made much more open so that justice is seen to be done. It never ceases to surprise me that Vatican officials do not learn from history. In the first decades of the 20th century the Biblical Commission condemned much of modern biblical scholarship. And its decisions, said Pius X, had to be obeyed as if they came from the pope himself. Well, they were wrong, as everyone now agrees. Surely there is a lesson there for those who wish to pronounce on matters of theological scholarship.

Now to the Congregation for Divine Worship. I imagine everyone would agree that in any given language area the liturgy should be more or less the same. There was a perfectly good organisation for achieving that in the English-speaking world, but instead of letting ICEL get on with it, a group of conservative prelates within the Congregation, not all of them native English speakers, with some outside help, foisted on us a new translation which is widely loathed and, as I understand it, even violates the Congregation's own guidelines for translation.

Why can these matters not be decided locally? In the middle ages there were many different rites, some of them still preserved, rather like mummies in a museum. Why not a rite of Glasgow, a rite of Westminster, a rite of Liverpool? One argument against that is the danger of giving too much authority to diocesan bishops, who might attempt to impose their own liturgical tastes upon reluctant congregations. There is a quotation I have preserved from an editorial in *The Catholic Times* in 1962, which said: 'Letters discussing the possibility of a vernacular liturgy will no longer enliven the columns of the Catholic Press. It is not a debate

for which our bishops have ever shown much enthusiasm and we must recognise they were right'. A decade later and it was quite clear that they were wrong.

Finally, the papal diplomatic service, papal nuncios and apostolic delegates. It became clear at the Council that the bishops of the word did not like having nuncios breathing over their shoulders. The local hierarchy want to represent their Church to their country's government and for the most part they do so. The Council fathers wanted rid of papal diplomats, but they have stayed. They represent not the Vatican City State but the Holy See, which is recognised in international law as a sovereign entity in its own right.

They are an anachronism, a relic of the days when the popes ruled as temporal sovereigns over great swathes of the Italian peninsula, and as such were major players, though for the most part ineffective ones, in the power struggles within Europe. Abolishing the papal diplomatic service would save a good deal of money and restore to national hierarchies the autonomy which is rightfully theirs.

Will it happen? Not a chance. Nor is it likely that the CDF or the Congregation for Divine Worship will disappear. But the Pope could certainly reduce their influence, and remind them forcefully that they exist for the benefit of the Church as a whole. I would like to see Vatican officials serving fixed-term contracts, working on secondment from their dioceses. That would certainly put an end to the careerism that Pope Francis has spoken about.

The role of lay people

But why must the people seconded by the dioceses, were that to happen,

be clergy? Why does the Church have to be run by priests? There is no necessary connection between sacramental authority and juridical authority yet, for instance, the Code of Canon Law lays down that there is only one legal authority in the parish and that is the parish priest.

There are an increasing number of lay people in the Roman Curia, which would seem to be a good thing. But there is a danger that they become clericalised, and clericalism, as the scandal of child abuse has taught us, is something which we need to eradicate from the Church. We are making strides in that direction: at Heythrop and increasingly elsewhere we are educating our clergy alongside the laity, and there are a good many lay people who are at least as learned in theology as those who govern the Church.

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We tend to forget how closely involved the laity were in the Church in the first millennium, not least by electing the bishops. This was not always a successful procedure: the election of Pope Damasus in 366 is said to have left 137 dead in the Liberian basilica - now Santa Maria Maggiore. Moreover the elections happened within a style of community wholly different from those in which we live today. But that does not mean that the process

of selecting bishops could not be a good deal more open, with much wider consultation of the laity - not just asking the opinion of those judged by the Apostolic Nuncio to be the great and the good.

Finally I want to quote something from a recent issue of *The London review of Books*, a discussion of a book on the *Sendero Luminoso*, the Shining Path guerrillas who terrorised Peru in the 1980s. Peter Canby ended his review like this:

One striking consequence of Shining Path's defeat was the growth of evangelical religion. Before the violence, only five per cent of the population were evangelical Christians, but after peace was restored this rose to more than half. Evangelicals formed the backbone of the *rondas campesinas*, the paramilitaries who collaborated with the army and pursued their opponents with millennial fervour. The big loser was the previously dominant Catholic Church. Monseñor Juan Luis Cipriani, who became the archbishop of Ayacucho during the final years of the violence, was an Opus Dei member who posted a sign on the door of the archbishopric announcing 'human rights complaints not accepted here.' It tells you most of what you need to know about the Vatican's recent priorities to learn that Cipriani is now archbishop of Lima.

At the end of this pontificate I hope above all that we have a Church of which such things can no longer be said.

This is an edited version of a talk given to the Newman Association in Glasgow in October 2013.

JOE FITZPATRICK

The age of the laity?

A theologian celebrates the new spirit Pope Francis has brought to the church which is in tune with lay movements calling for change.

For many centuries the Catholic Church has been a two-tier Church. There has been - is - undeniably a clerical class, consisting of Pope, bishops, priests, religious, deacons and others in orders, and then there is a non-clerical or lay class consisting of those baptised members of the Church who have not been 'ordained' or 'professed'. By and large, the first two - the Pope (with his court, the Curia) and the bishops - are the ones who make all the important decisions while the clerical class as a whole does almost all the teaching and preaching as well as presiding at acts of worship such as the Eucharist. The class of the laity, on the other hand, is expected to obey the decisions of the Pope and bishops, to be taught, and to take only a minor part in acts of worship. Not to put too fine a point on it, we might say that there is an upper *clerical* class and a lower *lay* class.¹ That, I believe, is a not inaccurate description of the experience of most Catholics in today's Church, of their actual experience both before and since the Second Vatican Council.

It could be argued on the basis of the Council's documents, and especially the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity which the Council sought to put into practice, that the two-tier model of the Church ought not to have survived for long after the Council. But the fact what occurred after the Council was a further centralisation of power and authority in Rome, in the Curia and the Papacy.

A large part of the excitement generated by the election of Pope Francis is that at long last we have a Pope who appears determined to implement the decrees of Vatican II and to re-build the Church on the basis of the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity.

This was made clear in the revised Canon Law promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1983, which was presented as giving canonical expression to the decrees of Vatican II but which, for the first time in history, deemed bishops to be functionaries of the Pope.²

A large part of the excitement generated by the election of Pope Francis is that at long last we have a Pope who appears determined to implement the decrees of Vatican II and to re-build the Church on the basis of the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity. Many of his pronouncements seem designed to do away with the two-tier model of Church that has been the norm for so long. For example, in his by now celebrated interview published in *Civiltà Cattolica*, headed 'A Big

Heart Open to God', Pope Francis is quoted as saying that 'thinking of the Church' is not just a matter of taking orders from the hierarchy; that 'the prophetic function and the hierarchical function do not coincide'; and that the Church avoids error when it listens and 'thinks with' the entire faithful rather than dispensing top-down dogma. These are remarkable statements that appear to make '*the faithful*' (a term that embraces both clergy and laity together) normative when arriving at true Christian beliefs.

That this is not a misunderstanding of what the Pope means is confirmed when he goes on to say, 'And all the faithful, considered as a whole, are infallible in matters of belief, and the people display this 'infallibilitas in credendo', this infallibility in believing, through a supernatural sense of the faith of all the people walking together.'

And when Francis asserts that 'when dialogue among the people, the bishops and the pope ... is genuine, then it is assisted by the Holy Spirit', he is surely heralding a new set of priorities in the Catholic Church - note how 'the people' are placed ahead of 'the bishops' and 'the pope' in this statement, mirroring the order found in the Vatican II decree on the Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, where the chapter on 'The People of God' was very deliberately placed ahead of that on 'The Hierarchical Structure of the Church'. This is 'bottom-up' language that has

The Church is once again on the move, opening out to the world with its joyful message of deliverance, freedom and growth.

rarely been heard in our Church in recent decades.

What is truly remarkable about Pope Francis - and it is something that confirms one's faith that the Holy Spirit is ultimately in charge - is how he appears to be matching and meeting a feeling of longing that was present in a good deal of the Church prior to his election as Pope. Movements such as the continental 'We Are Church', the Austrian Priests' 'Call to Disobedience', the movement in England known as ACTA (short for 'A Call To Action') and others in Ireland, Australia and the USA, all sprang up in response to a widely shared feeling of misgiving about the direction the Church was taking, and indeed, truth be told, had been taking ever more steadily since the end of Vatican II and the pontificate of Paul VI. With each new papacy the joy and hope - the *gaudium et spes* - of Vatican II appeared to shrink further and further, to be replaced by a finger-wagging, increasingly isolated figure convinced that Vatican II's 'opening to the world' had been a historic blunder.

The movements I have alluded to were all in their own way protests against this negative, defensive spirit and with it the disconnect that had opened up since the Council between the Church's leaders (the Pope and the Curia) and the led (the faithful, many ordinary priests and not a few bishops). This was a disconnect that appeared to get wider with each passing year and which reached its limits with the appearance of these

various movements which echoed the anguished cries of the faithful.

Then along came Francis. Suddenly the joy, the *gaudium*, is back - and, significantly, Francis's first encyclical is entitled *Gaudium Evangelii*. The idea that the good news of salvation is indeed good news, a source of joy and celebration, has been revived. The defensive Church is yesterday's news. The Church is once again on the move, opening out to the world with its joyful message of deliverance, freedom and growth, and the era of the self-absorbed Church, turned in upon itself, is over - let us hope, for ever.

That does not mean, however, that all these various movements should disappear and shut up. No, the need for dialogue goes on as Pope Francis himself indicated on his trip to Brazil when he identified 'dialogue, dialogue, dialogue' as the chief instrument of progress in the world. But dialogue needs to address the problems we are confronting at the present. There is a danger that some of these movements which arose in the Benedict era are addressing problems that no longer exist or, to change the metaphor, are seeking to heal maladies that have by now disappeared. If they are to avoid falling behind the curve they need to catch up with the Pope, so that they can both support him in his efforts and also provide him with ideas and suggestions that might move his thinking on and help the Church in its mission to the world. He has, after all, said he wants to listen to the faithful.

The movement that appears to me to be most fully in touch with the new mood in the Church is that which calls itself the Catholic Church Reform Group. This is an international movement which represents millions of Catholics throughout the world, both individuals and regional and national groups. It is also one that goes straight to the top: so far the Group has written three letters to the Pope,

taking great care to ensure that the letters are put into the hands of the Pope and his chief advisers. The Group's first letter suggested, radically but in keeping with the Pope's thinking, that governance of the Church should be tied to baptism rather than ordination - in other words that well qualified baptised Catholic men and women who have not been ordained should be appointed to senior leadership posts in the Church.

Their second letter suggested that the Pope should strongly promote the formation of Parish and Diocesan Councils so that parishioners and lay people could have a voice in local affairs. Behind this stands the healthy notion that the best ideas are not confined to this or that group in the Church but can come from the most unexpected quarters.

The third letter, which is still in process of being drawn up, attempts to influence the Pope, Cardinals and relevant bishops as they prepare for the forthcoming synod on the family and family life. Of all the movements in operation in the Church at the present time this seems to me to be the one with the best chance of achieving results: it has a strategic plan, is theologically sound, is polite and deferential to those it addresses, and its aims and objectives are practical and, it would appear, in line with the thinking of Pope Francis. It can be contacted at info@catholicchurchreform.com.

¹For a clear account of how the two-tier Church came to be, see Herbert Haag, *Clergy & Laity: Did Jesus Want a Two-tier Church?* ()

²See *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, edited by Paul D. Murray (Oxford University Press, 2008), p.391.

Joe Fitzpatrick is a theologian and writer.



AD MAIORA NATUS SUM

St Aloysius' College

Gonzaga

2014 Lectures

PASTORS NOT PRINCES

Reflections on Pope Francis' Address to the Nuncios

4TH
MARCH

From Pope to Pastor: Putting Pope
Francis in his Place

Michael Walsh

Author, commentator and former Librarian of Heythrop College, London

11TH
MARCH

Pope Francis and the World: Holy See
Diplomacy under the First Jesuit Pope

Ambassador Michael Baker

Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See and Diplomat since 1989

18TH
MARCH

A Personal and Episcopal Reflection on
Pope Francis' Address to the Nuncios

Bishop Stephen Robson

The 9th Bishop of Dunkeld; installed 9th January 2014

25TH
MARCH

Pope Francis and Mary Ward:
In Conversation

Sister Frances Orchard CJ

Provincial Superior of the Congregation of Jesus, founded by Mary Ward

Venue: St Aloysius' College Hall

Start Time: 7:30pm

Admission is Free

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Scotland's Future

SNP member and former Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis Duncan MacLaren writes the first in a series of reflections on the Scottish Government's White Paper on Independence.

By any objective standard, the 649 pages of *Scotland's Future*, described as a guide to Scottish independence, is an impressive document for two reasons. The first is the wealth of detail in transparent layperson's language in its five distinct parts plus a summary covering everything from international relations and defence to an assurance you'll still be able to see Eastenders on TV.

The other reason is less acknowledged. The SNP has, in its long journey towards independence, stuck strictly to the democratic path which I would suggest has reached its apogee in this document. It lays out clearly what an independent Scotland could look like and freely admits that the new Scotland would face challenges, but that we have the resources, skills, talent and courage to face them. The No campaign has still to come up with a document offering in similar detail why Scotland should remain in a Union that, for many of us, was born in infamy and has well run its course. Modern times require modern solutions, not outdated imperialistic nostalgia.

Scotland's Future is a sharp retort to the No campaign's relentless barrage in favour of Scottish exceptionalism - that is, why, among all the nations of the world, Scotland cannot or should not become an independent nation, with everything from lower pensions to the EU barring us from entry trotted out as if Armageddon would result in Scots making a choice for root and branch change in a democratic fashion. The list of European nations becoming states in my lifetime is long - none ended up as basket cases and Latvia is now the fastest growing economy in the EU.

The First Minister's preface stresses democratic choice rather than the

economy, 'building a country that reflects our priorities as a society and our values as a people' (p viii) because so often in the past the Westminster government has not been elected by Scots. We live in a country where for years the dominant coalition partner, the Conservative Party, has one MP from Scotland in the House of Commons but still passes laws that affect Scotland in, inter alia, macro-economic management, tax, foreign affairs and defence. This way of running our country has, *pace* the document, resulted in the privatisation of the Royal Mail, unfair welfare changes such as the 'bedroom tax', an appropriate successor to Mrs Thatcher's poll tax imposed on Scots until they rebelled, cuts in capital spending, harming economic recovery and a commitment to spend as much as £100 billion on the lifetime costs of a replacement nuclear weapon system which currently endangers most of the Scottish population. As the book succinctly states, 'with independence, Scotland will always get the governments we vote for' (p 41). The English language may be slightly tortured but the meaning is crystal clear.

For those who think that a No vote will automatically usher in 'devo max', reading pp 60-61 could be sobering. It deals with 'The consequences of Scotland voting No in the referendum'. If you want a new generation of nuclear weapons on the Clyde, the cutting of the Barnett formula which determines Scotland's block grant from Westminster and therefore the Scottish budget, and the possibility of a UKIP-influenced England taking the UK out of the EU, with Scots in tow no matter how they voted, then vote No. The British state has in the past stated a capacity for

vengeance, and powers to the Scottish government could easily be cut as a lesson to us. As the relevant section reminds us, it took 20 years after the 1979 referendum on devolution for it to be implemented. Some of us don't have that long.

I have a few caveats. In a world where reading a tweet is about as much as many people manage, who will read the document in the way it deserves? The only person I know who has read it cover to cover and made his own annotations is a passionate 'No' voter. Scots cannot say they were not informed if they don't at least read the sections that impinge most on their lives before the biggest constitutional decision they will ever have to make.

My second caveat would be that it is too detailed, always a mistake with the SNP as I recall the Party's brown trout fishing policy in the 1970s. It is a solid piece of work but no Declaration of Arbroath, that stirring medieval document articulating some of the first glimmerings of democracy. And that brings me to a final caveat. *Scotland's Future* is well written and interesting but it does not excite. Many of us on the Yes side feel great excitement at the possibility of this ancient nation of ours taking its place again on the world stage and all the changes that will bring, not least to the Scots' notorious lack of self-confidence. My fear is that, no matter what sense is written about independence for Scotland in the modern era, the 'complex inferiority' of Scots, fuelled by the No campaigners' negativity, will hold sway. and the many pages of a good and informative document will be, in Aquinas's words, 'mere straw'.

ISABEL SMYTH

A Wider Dialogue

A religious sister with extensive experience of interfaith dialogue reflects on recent steps towards dialogue between religious and non religious groups in Scotland.

While we have much to be proud of in the area of interreligious dialogue in Scotland we have not had too much success with dialogue between religious and non-religious groups.

When I was involved in drawing up a document for the Scottish Government on Guidelines for Dialogue between religious and non-religious groups, we tried to find examples of dialogues which were instigated by and included humanists. In spite of the fact that the humanist member of the working group spoke of his commitment to dialogue, we could only come up with an example which had taken place in London in the aftermath of the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Britain. At this meeting Catholics and humanists had discussed a number of difficult issues and at the end a humanist summed up the Catholic position and a Catholic summed up the humanist perspective. I am not sure if this dialogue continued or if it was a one off event, but the process of articulating the other's point of view is a good and healthy one in both ecumenical and interfaith relations.

A timely initiative

At the beginning of November last year, the Conforti Institute in Coatbridge organised a seminar with the American province of the Xaverian Missionary Society for people with religious and non-religious beliefs. Participants came from America, England and Scotland. This was a very timely and important contribution to a dialogue that is

becoming increasingly important, and an initiative which will hopefully generate other such dialogues in Scotland. The weekend was refreshing, informative, challenging and encouraging.

The keynote address at the beginning of the conference was given by Chris Stedman, the humanist chaplain at Harvard University. Chris describes himself as an atheist, a humanist and a secularist but one who is totally committed to interfaith dialogue. He has two degrees in religion, has done a course in spiritual direction at the Jesuit Centre of Pastoral Studies, Loyola University, and worked with the U.S. Interfaith Youth Core.

Here was someone quite different from well known atheists such as Richard Dawkins who was not out to get rid of religion but respected it, wanted to dialogue with it and was even interested in it. I suggested to Chris that he might even have a religious personality and he agreed with this, though his religious stance is to reject any belief in a transcendent supreme being.

Another presentation was more sobering. Professor Calum Brown of Glasgow University shared his research on 'leavers' of religion. His oral history stories suggested that many of the subjects of his research had given up religion because of a bad experience they had had when they were quite young (between seven years and nine) or because they had not felt that their homosexuality had

been accepted. Leaving religion for them had been liberating and honest. It reminded me of Aloysius Pieris, a Sri Lankan theologian, who said that all religions had liberating and oppressive aspects to them. It was obvious that the 'leavers' had experienced only the oppressive aspects and had no insight into the liberating aspects that I presume those who remain in religion have experienced.

This is shameful for those of us who are religious. Much of the tensions between religious and non-religious people are caused by religions being dogmatic and rejecting of people who feel they don't fit in, and some of this feeling had begun at an early age. Surely this has implications for religious education at the primary stage. An interesting statistic in Professor Brown's research showed a

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significant decline in religious affiliation in the 1960s. This was universal in the western world. It was attributed in part to the self-realisation of women at the time - another lesson for religion.

There was a lot said about identity over the weekend with just the suggestion that religious identity was rather monolithic while people who were non-religious could be described as humanist, atheist, secular depending on the context. But of course religious identity is also complex. Before the unfathomable Mystery of God I certainly could describe myself as agnostic; when it comes to desiring human flourishing I could describe myself as humanist; and when it comes to living in a secular world which gives freedom to all religious and philosophical beliefs I could call myself secular. We all need to know who we are and a strong identity is necessary for dialogue, but it is important to have an open identity which recognises the wisdom and insights of others. This I would think is essential to any serious dialogue as the opposite, a closed identity, does just what it says: closes people off from dialogue and sets up barriers.

To understand one another means to learn the other's language. It is so easy for religious language to be rejected as meaningless, whereas sometimes if we just scratched beneath the surface the language would reveal a human reality which all might agree on. An example of this was a participant suggesting that the language of call, used by another participant, meant nothing to her and yet as a psychiatrist she must have felt some attraction to leaving one profession to follow another - perhaps through dialogue she might have come to understand that the reality was not so different.

These reflections are just one window into the discussions and dialogue of the weekend. They moved the dialogue on. Just as 9/11 moved interreligious dialogue on from people asking why should we engage in it to how we should engage in it, so this initiative has set the scene for a conversation which will take for granted that our common humanity and common citizenship, our common concern for the future of our world, our nation and our society require a dialogue between religious and non-religious people. The question is how we are going to further and develop the dialogue.

Isabel Smyth is a Sister of Notre Dame. She is chair of Interfaith Scotland, a trustee of the UK Interfaith Network, and secretary to the Scottish Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interreligious dialogue.



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NOTEBOOK

Global connections

Fairtrade Fortnight this year runs from 24 February - 9 March. Fairtrade sales in the UK have risen to £1.57 billion since the Fairtrade Foundation was established by international development charities and the National Federation of Women's Institutes in 1992. There are now 4,500 Fairtrade certified products to choose from.

This year in Fairtrade Fortnight the focus will be on bananas. And Business Secretary Vince Cable is going to be asked to investigate unfair supermarket pricing practices.

One in three bananas sold in the UK - a total of 1.2 billion - are Fairtrade. Their producers are guaranteed a minimum price which covers the cost of sustainable production. It's a safety net for farmers when market prices fall below a sustainable level.

But the massive buying power of supermarkets and their battle for customers has pushed the price of bananas so low that many producers are trapped in a cycle of poverty. The shelf price of bananas has almost halved in the last ten years, while the cost of producing them has doubled. Many banana farmers and workers don't make enough to provide for their families.

So the Fairtrade Foundation is launching a campaign to deliver a fair deal to all banana farmers and workers as part of its long term commitment to transform trading structures and practices in favour of the poor. They are asking supporters to sign a petition asking Vince Cable to investigate supermarket pricing policy.

To find out more go to www.fairtrade.org.uk.

Colombia focus

SCIAF's Lent campaign this year will focus on the charity's work in Colombia where it helps vulnerable native and Afro-Colombian communities. Colombia continues to be affected by a violent war and over five million people have been forced to flee their homes. Many of

the country's poor go hungry and have no access to electricity or clean water and are forced from their land to make way for mines and cattle ranches.

Working with Church partners in the dioceses of Apartado and Quibdo, SCIAF is helping people make a living and regain land that has been lost.

People in Scotland are invited to give something up in solidarity with them during Lent (5 March-19 April) and put the money saved in the charity's WEE BOX. SCIAF will also ask us to look closer at the impact we have on people in developing countries through the decisions we make as individuals and consumers, which help maintain the unequal global economic system.

To get your WEE BOX and find out more about the campaign call SCIAF on 0141 354 5555 or email supporterservices@sciaf.org.uk.

From the archives

As the last session of the Second Vatican Council began in September 1965, *The Scotsman* carried a full page article on the historic opportunity it promised for evangelisation and ecumenical relations. The author was theologian, Church of Scotland minister and *Open House* board member Dr Ian M Fraser, now in his 90s.

Ian had been taking part in dialogue between the Lay Apostolate in Rome and the Laity Committee of the World Council of Churches and was a close observer of the Council. He wrote in *The Scotsman* of the wind of change blowing in the Catholic Church and the new willingness to examine its relationship with other churches. He said:

'What matters now is that Churches work in partnership towards that unity which is compatible with whatever truth they are able to affirm together, and undertake common acts of service and love...

'The re-examination of the

Church's faith and practice which has been the hallmark of the ecumenical movement, now joined to the renovation of life sought by the Roman Catholic Church, provides an unexampled opportunity for drawing a large number of people into a search for purpose and meaning to life. No chance like this has been provided for centuries'.

What has happened to ecumenism in the decades since then? Another Church of Scotland minister and former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev John Miller, will address the question at the February meeting of the Newman Association in Glasgow at the end of this month (see advert on page 15).

Thank you

Thank you to Eileen Kidd, who has been looking after *Open House* subscriptions since last year. Eileen joined the small team of volunteers who produce the magazine each month, keeping mailing lists up to date and issuing reminders when subscriptions are due. If any of our readers have the skills and time to take over the task, we'd love to hear from you.

Events in your area

Do you attend talks and meetings on issues of church and society in your area? Would you like to share the programme with other *Open House* readers or write an occasional article for the magazine? There are many fascinating discussions taking place across Scotland and we'd like to record them in the pages of *Open House*. Contact the editor at openhousescotland.co.uk.

Do you have news or views for *Open House*?

The deadline for letters and contributions for the March edition is Friday 28th February.

LETTERS

The Editor of Open House email : editor@openhousescotland.co.uk

All correspondence, including email, must give full postal address and telephone number

Christian philosophy

Open House is to be congratulated on publishing the article by Ron Ferguson (Dec/Jan 2014) on the life and times of Søren Kierkegaard, the extraordinary Danish Christian philosopher. It was a bold move that raises the question whether *Open House* is going to promote an in-depth discussion of Kierkegaard's thinking.

2013 marked the bi centenary of Kirkegaard's birth, and perhaps for that reason his work has attracted increased attention recently. However, Kierkegaard is not one to be treated lightly.

Hypocrisy, particularly 'clerical', can be a relatively easy target, and has been since the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican was created. 'Whited sepulchres' were mentioned in the New Testament. Kierkegaard devoted much of the energy of his short life - he died in 1855 - to satirising the Lutheran Church and its adherents, clerical and lay, in his own country. A problem for him, and other satirists (Burns and George Bernard Shaw are examples) who indulge in this literary exercise, in an effort as it were 'to remove the guilt from Christianity's gingerbread', is the risk they face of striking the real gold underneath.

Kierkegaard is looked upon as the Father of (modern) Existentialism. He did not use the word, perhaps because he thought it self-explanatory - a philosophy about the nature of existence. Ironically, in the hands of some modern exponents, it has come to mean its opposite - a philosophy of non-existence, or nothingness.

About 150 years after Kierkegaard's death, the French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier in 1947 published a short book entitled *Introduction Aux Existentialismes*, in which he contends that there are as many existentialisms as there are existentialists. Are there not also as many philosophers as there are men and women? A translation of this book intended, hopefully, to be read by 'laymen' as well as 'professional' philosophers was made in 1948 by Eric Blow and printed in Great Britain by Rankin Bros, Trenchard Street Bristol 1.

It appears to have been largely ignored by both laymen and professionals, until resurrected recently in the USA and made available by Amazon.

In Mounier's account, Existentialism is presented as a tree with some roots BCE, and others in the Common Era. He mentions Socrates, St Augustine and St Bernard as being part of these roots. In the scriptural account of Moses' encounter with the Burning Bush, he heard a voice which proclaimed, 'I Am who Am' - an expression which could mean, I (alone) exist of myself. An extended discussion of this text is contained in former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sachs' book *Future Tense*.

Kierkegaard is the trunk of Mounier's existentialist tree, which is capped by a mass of foliage described generally as phenomenology. Hidden somewhere in this is the philosopher Husserl and his disciple Edith Stein, who as a Jewish Carmelite nun met her death at the hands of the Nazis in 1942. She is now St. Edith Stein, canonised by Pope John Paul II.

Not surprisingly, the trunk then divides into two main branches. The first, represented by Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre, is the 'atheist' branch; the second, non-atheist branch, represented by some phenomenologists and personalist thinkers, contains Gabriel Marcel and Jaspers.

Kierkegaard's main work is called *Either/Or* - perhaps a reflection of something in his make-up or the effect of his difficult upbringing. Although he was convinced that wholehearted commitment to an intellectual or spiritual insight lay at the heart of authenticity in living, he could not commit himself either to ordination or matrimony. In this respect he may be a warning to those of the present uncertain generation who sit on the intellectual fence and are paradoxically committed to a similar position of non-commitment.

In the years following World War II, the impact of Hiroshima and the revelations of the Holocaust seemed to give added credibility to the thinking of Nietzsche (*Death of God*) and J P Sartre who were particularly influential in the minds and attitudes of the rising generations.

Advances in science also contributed to a widespread attitude of uncertainty. The reaction of such Christian thinkers as Martin D'Arcy S.J.,¹ Emmanuel Mounier and Etienne Gilson² had begun in the late 1930s, and revived a little in the post-war years, but was largely ignored. Gilson published a prophetic tone-poem *The Terrors of the Year 2000* in 1949. Even the work of the Second Vatican Council, especially its document *Nostra Aetate*, has taken decades to become widely known.

Clearly there is room for a re-awakening of a Christian philosophy, a kind of Christian Existentialism. Mounier, who died in 1950, concluded that Existentialism was just another name for Christianity itself. Is there any statement more unequivocal, more requiring commitment than Our Lord's: 'he who would gain his life must lose it'?

¹*The Mind and Heart of Love*

²*The Unity of Philosophical Experience*

Thomas A FitzPatrick, Glasgow

We would be happy to hear from any Open House readers who would like to make a contribution on the topic of Kirkegaard or Christian philosophy.

Editor.

Faith and independence

The stark problem of ecumenical discussion beyond informed theology into cultural religion was highlighted for me as I watched the House of Lords' debate on Scottish Independence. Scotland formed herself into a nation in the sight of God-even if not peaceably! 'Democracy' was not involved. Burns' 'parcel o' rogues in a nation' formed an economic union. Faith struggled on.

There was no humility of prayer from any speaker I heard. Is the House of Lords duly convened without prayer? Are all Scots (those who can vote!) condemned to a Governance by Mammon by the power of the unelected? Is anybody in Westminster (or Holyrood) studying the Gospels? Is it really the Church that needs to change?

Mary Ferguson, Newry

LIVING SPIRIT



The Mother of expectation is patience. The French author, Simone Weil, writes in her

notebooks: 'Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life.' Without patience our expectation degenerates into wishful thinking. Patience comes from the word 'patior' which means to suffer. The first thing that Jesus promises is suffering: 'I tell you you will be weeping and wailing - and you will be sorrowful.' But he calls these pains birth pains. And so, what seems a hindrance becomes a way; what seems an obstacle becomes a door. Jesus changes our history from a random series of sad incidents and accidents into a constant opportunity for a change of heart. To wait patiently therefore means to allow our weeping and wailing to become a purifying preparation by which we are made ready to receive the joy which he promised to us. That is the great conversion in our life: to recognise and believe that the many unexpected events are not just disturbing interruptions of our projects, but the way in which God moulds our hearts and prepares us for his return.

Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude*. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1974

As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected - and a sword will pierce your own soul too - so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'

Luke 2:33-35.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple is celebrated on 2nd February

BOOKS

The war that ended Peace

Margaret MacMillan,
Profile Books, 2013.

The Prime Minister wants us to commemorate not the end of World War I which was thought victorious, but the beginning which remains contentious. As a way into understanding the controversies surrounding how 'the war to end all wars' began in 1914 the Governor of the BBC has recommended the latest work of the Canadian Professor of International History at Oxford: *The War that ended Peace* (Profile Books 2013).

Professor MacMillan introduces the war as a result of Social Darwinism, 'that bastard child of evolutionary thinking and its cousin militarism (which) fostered the belief that the fittest would survive'. Social Darwinism ranked human societies 'as if they were species and promoted a faith not merely in evolution and progress but in the inevitability of struggle' as in Teutonic-Slav rivalry or Anglo-Saxon superiority.

Contrary, however, to other commentators she does not believe the war was the inevitable consequence of a decade or more of bluff and counterbluff. It was the result of actions - and lack of action - by leaders who could have and should have done better. One of the attractions of this study is that the author makes comparisons with contemporary political decisions - or indecision - which have led to the wars of our own time.

Not everyone knows that Queen Victoria died in the arms of the Kaiser. Well, he was her eldest grandson and less inhibited than his uncle the new King Edward. Her first language was German. When the Kaiser corresponded with his cousin the Tsar, which he did regularly, he did so in English. How did he then manage to go to war against both England (sic) and Russia?

We are familiar with the picture book version of events. The heir to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire was assassinated by a Serb terrorist on 28



The King of England (sic) in 'national' dress.

June 1914. Although Sarajevo was in Bosnia the 83 year old Emperor declared war on Serbia. Russia had a treaty to defend Serbia and Germany had one to support Austria. But how did France in the west and Britain on an island get involved in this spat? France saw the possibility to avenge the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany in 1871. Britain only joined the fray on 3rd August when German troops entered ostensibly neutral Belgium on their way to Northern France. A week previously Lloyd George had said he knew of no Cabinet Minister who would be in favour of war.

This then was no chain reaction. Each move was carefully calculated. Each needed the help of bankers and industrialists. Wars are seldom paid for in advance. They are financed by loans which often take generations to repay. More than \$10bn came from the USA. The industrialists told the politicians they could provide armaments for, at the most, four months. The one cost nobody considered was human life.

Leaders reckoned their ultimate strength not in cash or arms but in hundreds of thousands of expendable young men (and horses, equally rated - cf *War Horse*). Surprisingly, peasants and workers flocked to their respective flags. Not only on 'Red Clydeside' but in all European countries revolutions had been

attempted and class warfare fostered. Socialism was already international. However people referred to each other as huns and frogs, jocks and paddies, mohammedans and heathens and learned songs about John Bull and Uncle Sam. MacMillan quotes the Marquess of Salisbury, as Prime Minister, saying it was like having a large lunatic asylum at his back. Life in the trenches may have been horrific but what does that tell us about toil in the farms and factories that had been so enthusiastically abandoned? Suddenly every man could become a boy scout. Over 500,000 (*half a million!*) went from Scotland, with a casualty rate second only to Serbia which started it.

In the end nobody was blamed for starting it. The Kaiser lived out the rest of his life drinking English tea in Holland. The King of England gave up his German surname. Austria was 'balkanised' with consequences still with us. The German people were expected to pay for the war, paving the way for an Austrian veteran to lead them to seek revenge on those they identified as the money lenders. The war turned out to be the survival

of the unfit. The most common word used by historians to describe 1914 is stupidity. No one has ever tried to justify the 'mutual butchery' anticipated by Hindenberg. On the eve of war Churchill wrote: *Everything tends to catastrophe and collapse. I am interested, geared up and happy.* Pope Benedict XV thought it was suicide.

MacMillan compares World War I to the Olympics which were revived shortly before it. The ambition of the politicians was 'stronger, faster, higher' - battleships, railways, machine guns. The military, she claims, can never back down because that would be to suggest their fundamental intentions were wrong. Under the guise of deterrence the Ministry of Defence is always ready to become the Department for War. Yet WWI proved attack is not the best form of defence.

We are left with the question what to do about the monuments in every town and village 'to God, King/ Kaiser/Tsar/Emperor/Sultan and Country'. God too was a victim of the carnage. Nor did the divine right of rulers survive. That leaves only

country. But the truth is that in each country the ruling classes were more afraid of their own populations than they were of each other. WWI was the sacrifice they chose to make to prolong the status quo. There was no surrender, only an *armistice* (cessation of arms) before the Bolshevik virus spread.

In this highly recommended book Professor MacMillan offers a reflection on a country invented during World War I: Iraq. As a result of our leaders' decision to invade it there are scenes there today that resemble trench warfare with daily death rates which should horrify us. Amazingly, 100 years on Britain is still run by Old Etonians. In WWI Eton sacrificed proportionately more than any town or village. Whether it was for the same reason that those who had left school at 14 for a 55 hour working week went to the trenches remains disputed. MacMillan allows us somewhat to penetrate the fog of this particular war.

Willy Slavin

Poetry of the First World War: An Anthology

Edited by Tim Kendall.
Oxford University 2013.

When I was at school in the 1970s every November was punctuated on the 11th by attendance at the Remembrance Day service. This meant the whole school went to church.

Patrolled by teachers, some of whom had served in World War II, we snaked across the road to fill St Andrews, a large, freezing, Victorian salute to Scottish Presbyterianism. There we poked, fidgeted, yawned and slumped our way through a sermon about Greyfriars Bobby (same one every year) preached by a minister who was himself a veteran of 'the last push' of 1944. Once we



had slaughtered one of Charles Wesley's hymns (a gym teacher at the end of the pew hissing 'SING!!' at us) it was mercifully all over for another year.

Unsurprisingly, the relationship between this tortuous event and the sense of veneration I experienced when, in the same school, we turned to the poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, went over my head like a spitfire. There was no relationship. One was boring beyond belief; the other caught my imagination and held it. One was trying to drill into me the 'remembrance' of something of which I had no experience; the other used the music of language to stir in me feelings of sorrow, anger, horror and compassion over something of which I had no experience. In the town where I grew up, real memories of war were only some twenty years old, still painfully fresh for many parents, grandparents and teachers. For my

pals and me it was all just history, the more alien for its very locality. The poems, however, were different. They would appear on the exam papers but I would have read them anyway for the gift of those stirred emotions.

More than thirty years on, as the first guns of 1914 are 'remembered', it is in that same poetry that due honour is paid to those for whom war is always more than an 'act' of remembrance. Tim Kendall, Professor of English at Exeter University and President of the War Poets Association has edited a new anthology of the poetry of the First World War and it forms the best kind of monument: vital, beautiful, engaging and moving. The well-known are there, of course: as well as Owen and Sassoon, Thomas, Graves and Blunden. But Kendall has understood and acknowledged what often goes unnoticed even now; that war is by no means the preserve of soldiers, nor is it a platform for homogeneity.

Rudyard Kipling's reputation, for example, as something of a jingoist, is demonstrated to be overly simplistic in the context of his poem 'Epitaphs', highlighted by Kendall as giving voice to the vast cultural, class and social diversity of those afflicted:

The blown sand heaps on me, that none may learn
Where I am laid for whom my children grieve...

(*'A Grave Near Halfa'*, Rudyard Kipling)

Similarly the experience and the writing of civilians, including women, is given its deserved place. Kendall points out in his introduction that this was an age of development in English poetry and that this raised a moral dilemma for many poets: were their literary skills being crafted and cultivated at the expense of enormous human suffering? Was war, in other words, just great material? The experience of women left without cherished men in their lives: husbands, lovers, brothers, friends, perhaps echoes this dilemma best. Their poems speak of a despair that is

pure, without even the consolation of having taken the risk of death themselves, and their dilemma in continuing to live and write is all the more acute.

Under the purple, the green, the red,
It is all young life: it must break some women's hearts to see
Such a brave, gay coverlet to such a bed!

(*'The Cenotaph'*, Charlotte Mew.)

Tim Kendall has been faithful to a tradition in this anthology. It is the tradition of the neutrality of the good editor. There is no anti-war 'agenda' in the collection, only the anti-war sentiment of many of the poems, though not all. This might disappoint some, especially as efforts are made this year to counter the more subtle apologists of the BBC. The criteria here, however, is the quality, not the message of the poetry. That's as it should be and for one admirer of the art at least it has performed the task of making remembrance more than an act.

Reading Wilfred Owen again evokes some very real remembrances now: the presence of a grandfather, born with the turn of 1900, who went to France in 1916; the known relatives and neighbours who were fleeing burning homes only thirty years before my own very safe schooldays; and the droning voice of an elderly minister, lost on his teenage congregation, who could be forgiven if he made that day easier for himself by repeating a familiar, folksy story of love.

Remembering should be what tells us that peace costs and that its scarcity still afflicts the world. These poems remind those of us in its safer corners that the opposite is never far away in time or place.

Comforted years will sit soft-
chaired,
In rooms of amber;
The years will stretch their hands,
well-cheered
By our life's ember.

(*'Miners'*, Wilfred Owen)

Lynn Jolly

FILM

The Railway Man (2013)

Director: Jonathan Teplitzky

Starring: Nicole Kidman, Colin Firth

The film of *The Railway Man* begins with the central character, Eric Lomax, lying on the floor of his Scottish home, tormented by his memories, unable to sleep. As the film proceeds we learn that Eric's life, even 40 years after the end of the war, is still dominated by his wartime experiences. As a young officer in the Signals, he became a Prisoner of War of the Japanese at the fall of Singapore in 1942. The film switches, sometimes awkwardly, between the horrendous years of the Prison Camp

with its tortures, and the psychological torment he suffered in his later years.

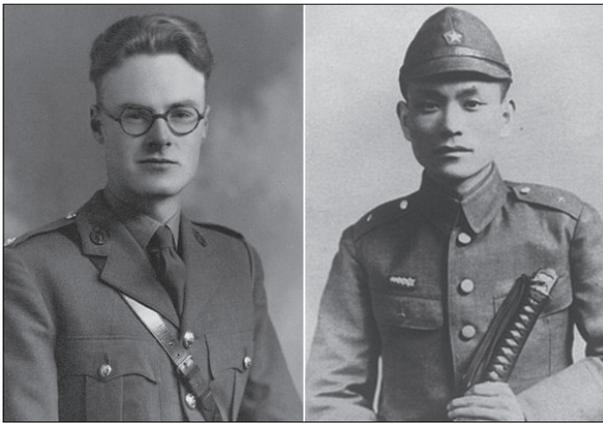
It was difficult viewing for me, because Eric and I were close friends for the last 12 years of his life.

The film shows how the former POW has been permanently scarred by the brutal beatings and the torture inflicted on him at the direction of a Japanese military interpreter. The war has been over for 40 years, but



Based on the true story of a victim from World War II's "Death Railway", who set out to find those responsible for his imprisonment and torture.

Eric still imagines how he will repay that inquisitor if they should ever meet again. Unknown to Eric, on the other side of the world in Japan the former interpreter is haunted by the



A young Eric Lomax and Takashi Nagase at the time of WWII.

face of a young soldier whose torture he supervised. He remembers the young man calling out to his mother in his agony. And now he campaigns in Japan for peace and for repentance.

In England, Eric strikes up a conversation with a woman named Patti whom he meets on a train. They fall in love. When they marry, Patti discovers that Eric, at the mercy of his memories, is unpredictable and is prey to violent rages. With love and determination she tries to encourage Eric to confront his past. Then, through a fellow former POW he learns that his torturer, Mr Nagase, is still alive. Eric goes out to the Far East to take him by surprise. In their first encounter Eric comes close to killing Nagase. Then after returning home to Berwick, Eric takes Patti with him on a second visit to Thailand, to meet Nagase and his wife. In a moving final scene Eric gives Nagase a letter, assuring him of



Eric Lomax met with his former torturer Takashi Nagase 50 years later.

his complete forgiveness.

Though full of pain, the film is ultimately uplifting. It relates a profound reconciliation between two bitter enemies. Jeremy Irvine as the younger Eric, and Colin Firth as the older man, both give excellent, moving performances, although missing out completely on Eric's

essentially Scottish character. Colin Firth in particular bears a striking resemblance to Eric himself, and Nicole Kidman catches Patti's quiet strength.

The Book

The film is powerful, but the best-selling book *The Railway Man*, Eric's own autobiography, is even better. Two-thirds of the book traces in detail Eric's three years of captivity. He wrote the basis of his account of those years in the weeks immediately after his liberation at the end of the war.

The book, unlike the film, also relates the failure of his first marriage and the tragedy of their family life, destroyed in all probability by the damage done to Eric by the war. Both the film and the book then tell how Patti brings hope into his life. The film suggests that Eric was then shocked into

confronting his past by the suicide of a friend. However the book explains that The Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture, founded by Helen Bamber, gave him the counselling which enabled him to retrace his journey through his hitherto un-faceable memories. The film's melodramatic first

encounter between Eric and Nagase, when Eric threatens Nagase with a knife at his throat, is shown by the book to have taken place only in Eric's mind. Moving as the film is, Eric's written account of his first encounter with his former interrogator has a deeper ring of truth.

The Man

What emerges in both accounts is that Eric Lomax was a very remarkable man. A Post Office technician who loved railways, with an unusually orderly mind, as a young man he was exceptionally courageous. From his early days he lived his life to the highest standards. In his later years, by the time he had examined and set down the story of his life, he had a confidence and a stillness in him which communicated itself to those who met him.

Reconciliation

Eric's story is a message for today's world. He and Nagase transformed themselves from enemies to friends. After they were reconciled they phoned each other annually on their respective birthdays. 'And I wrote his Eulogy,' said Eric, when I asked how he had received the news of Nagase's death. At Nagase's funeral Eric's tribute was read out, and its significance moved all the mourners.

No one encountering their story can say, 'Reconciliation is impossible'.

John Miller

Reviewers

Lynn Jolly is arts editor of *Open House*.

Paul Matheson is an equality & diversity advisor for the police, and a music reviewer.

John Miller is a minister of the Church of Scotland and a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

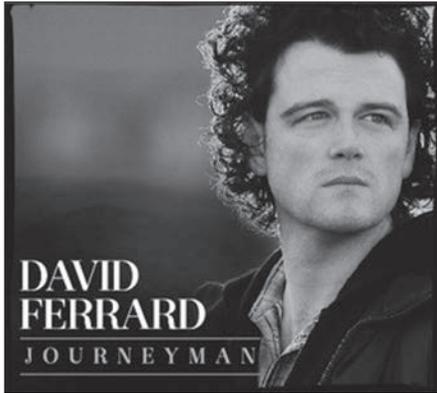
Willy Slavin is a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

MUSIC

CD REVIEW

David Ferrard 'Journeyman'

Alter Road Records, ARRC002



David Ferrard is a young, Edinburgh-based Scottish-American folk musician and singer-songwriter. *Journeyman* is his third album.

David's singing voice is reminiscent of both John Denver and Joan Baez: sweet, gentle, quite high, and with immaculate diction. There's a sincere, tremulously honest quality in his vocal, which gives his singing a quietly emotive impact.

David draws both musical and political inspiration from the singers of the 1960s folk revival. Like them, he is a dedicated anti-war campaigner (he produced the *Not In Our Name* compilation album about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as a fundraiser for the Stop The War Coalition). However, David's songs don't shout out slogans or angry condemnations. They paint tender, truthful, intimate portraits of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. The whole album is greatly enhanced by delicately nuanced accompaniment on cello, double-bass, fiddle, guitar and piano.

The album opens with a song of reconciliation and hope (*Bridges*), and closes with a hymn-like song about the consequences of war, in

which David counterpoints Pete Seeger's original words with his own contemporary lyrics (*The War Carries On - Turn, Turn, Turn*).

David touches gently on the civil war in Bosnia (*Wildflowers*), on disease in Africa (*The Father Says*), and in other songs he looks at issues of family and belonging.

He says: 'Since my last album of traditional material I have been digging deep as a writer, using my own life and the world around me as source material. These songs, about childhood, family, relationships, and the impact of war on my and others' lives, explore my hopes and fears. It's a more personal expression than my first album of original songs, even though I'm often writing from the perspectives of different characters. You have to find the right character to tell the story. It doesn't make the song any less personal.'

The album's most autobiographical song is *I Am An Immigrant (I'm From Here)*, based on David's own life. He was raised in Scotland by an English-Italian father and an American mother.

David explains: 'I've spent my whole life explaining to people that despite my accent and my last name I am in fact Scottish. This song deals with three stories: my Italian grandfather who was interned in Scotland during World War Two and afterwards changed his name from Ferrari to Ferrard to be more accepted; my American mother who did her 'junior year abroad' in Glasgow and then settled in Scotland a few years later to be with my father; and myself - a Scot of mixed origins who embraces open borders and who feels more at home in a diverse, multicultural Britain.'

As a heartfelt prayer for a humane, tolerant, inclusive society, David's *I Am An Immigrant (I'm From Here)* stands right up there alongside the Proclaimers' *Scotland's Story* and the McCalmans' *Coming Home*. It

richly deserves to be picked up and sung by singers everywhere.

If you go online to David's website, www.davidferrard.com - you can listen free to tracks from this album, including *Wildflowers*; *The War Carries On (Turn, Turn, Turn)* and *I Am An Immigrant (I'm From Here)*.

I Am An Immigrant (I'm From Here)

My grandfather came to this island
in nineteen thirty-nine
A hot-blooded Italian youth: at
home he ran wild.
So he joined his father and together
they worked.
At sixteen war was declared and he
was interned.
I am an immigrant too: it runs in my
blood.

I speak with an accent and you ask
where am I from?

I'm from here.

My mother crossed the Atlantic on a
ship named after the Queen.
She came here for only a year, to the
university.

That was now forty years ago, and I
guess love's to blame,
'Cause just like my father's father,
she married and stayed.

I am an immigrant too: it runs in my
blood.

I speak with an accent and you ask
where am I from?

I'm from here.

I am a cocktail, a masterless race,
A coat of many colours, a nightmare
to trace.

I have several passports, I'm a
rolling stone.

I don't believe in borders, the world
is my home.

Here on the streets and in cafes mix
all colours and creeds.

I can hear every language, and it
comforts me.

Some come for adventure, or for
love. Some have travelled to learn.

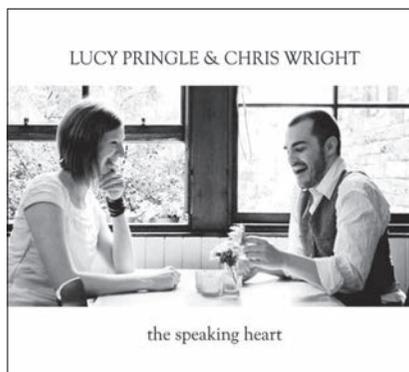
Some were torn from their homes
'cause of war. Some come for
the work.

Some of them immigrants, some will return.
 Some will have children, and they'll call this home.
 I am an immigrant too: it runs in my blood.
 I speak with an accent and you ask where am I from?
 Like you, this is my home. I'm from here.

CD REVIEW

Lucy Pringle & Chris Wright 'The Speaking Heart'

Mondegreen Music,
 MONDCD01



Pringle and Wright are young Scots singers of great talent. They won the Danny Kyle Award at the Glasgow Celtic Connections festival back in 2009: this exceptionally good debut album lets you know why. The genius of Pringle and Wright is that they keep their song arrangements simple but expressive, providing haunting and hypnotic accompaniment on shruti box, guitar, 12-string guitar, banjo, cittern and piano.

The album includes traditional 'big' ballads (such as *Lady Maisry*), humorous songs (*The Earl o Errol*, *The Auld Woman o Kelso*) and recent songs (Ewan MacColl's *Fisherman's Wife* and Sara Daniels' *Bramblethorn*). There are two songs of unrequited

love, one French and one Norwegian, translated into Scots by Hamish Henderson and Steve Byrne respectively. The predominant tone of the album is one of serious, melancholy beauty.

The vocal delivery is quietly expressive and never overstated, letting the melodies and words weave their spell. The subtle instrumental accompaniment complements the ballads superbly, cradling, almost caressing the vocals in response to the unfolding events and emotions being described in each song. This approach is devastatingly effective in the big powerful songs. In *The Dun Broon Bride* the tension builds unbearably as the drone of the shruti box, the softly pulsing arpeggios of the guitar, and the restrained sweet pathos of Lucy's vocal all combine to fill us with rising dread that the story will end in horror.

Hallowe'en is a deeply moving love lament by the Angus poet Violet Jacob to her only son who died in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Violet Jacob describes the Halloween guising, games and dances as forming a surreal background to her own longing to see the ghost of her son return to his accustomed place by the fire. Lucy's tender vocal hints at pent-up emotion. Chris's flowing guitar accompaniment pauses and surges, like the uneven breathing of someone sobbing quietly.

Steve Byrne (himself a great singer of Scots song) produced this album, and he has created something which will never grow old. With its nuanced vocals, sensitive accompaniment and heartbreaking melodies, this will be as fresh and as gripping in 50 years time as it is today. www.pringlewright.com

Paul Matheson

POEM

Contempla(c)tion

by Tom A Younger

I started praying
 to befriend the silence
 but in that silence
 I first heard the cry of those
 Oppressed by violence.

I started praying
 to heal the separateness within
 but facing my own divisions
 I turned to find a world
 Divided by sin.

I started praying
 in a verdant house of prayer
 but on returning to the city
 found that the homeless
 greeted me there.

I started praying
 to nurture this deepest, fresh belonging
 then couldn't ignore the strangers
 who were refused
 the new life of their longing.

I started praying
 to part the soil
 and plant the seeds of peace
 but soon found my garden
 bounded by
 fires that would not cease.

And now?
 I cannot stop.

The time will shortly be upon us, if it is not already here, when the pursuit of contemplation becomes a strictly subversive activity...I am convinced that contemplation, including the common worship of the believing, is a political act of the highest value, implying the riskiest of consequences to those taking part.

Daniel Berrigan, SJ.

Mysticism is the experience of the oneness and the wholeness of life. Therefore, mysticism's perception of life, its vision, is also the unrelenting perception of how fragmented life is. Suffering on account of that fragmentation and finding it unbearable is part of mysticism. Finding God fragmented into rich and poor, top and bottom, sick and well, weak and mighty: that's the mystic's suffering...the long-lasting and most dangerous resistance is the one that was born from beauty.

Fulbert Soelle

Moments in time



We leave the old road to Loch Lomond and turn up a quiet tree-lined lane, passing the ruins of the

old Woodbank Hotel, which was destroyed by fire many years ago. We pass the Drumkinnon Farm steading, now used as kennels where for many years my own dogs went during our holidays. After crossing the main road on a footbridge, we join a narrow road, which climbs steeply up the hillside past silent woods and rough pasture. Apart from a land-rover and a post van, one of the enduring features of the rural landscape, there is no traffic.

The road ends at a gate beside an isolated cottage; now we follow an old track across open moorland, still climbing but less steeply. This has the feel of an ancient path and it is in fact the old Coffin road used centuries ago by the people of Balloch to take their dead to the parish church at Cardross, some five miles away. This route, known as the Stoneymullen, must have been difficult to walk, particularly in winter. We turn to admire the wonderful view; to the north, Loch Lomond, studded with

wooded islands which form the Highland Boundary Fault, and to the east, the heavily populated Vale of Leven with fields and moors stretching beyond to the Campsie Fells.

A row of venerable beech trees borders the track on our left and some much smaller stunted hawthorns on the right; they must have been planted many years ago and protected from the attentions of grazing sheep. Suddenly, a buzzard flies past, very low and carrying in its talons a recently caught animal; it is long and thin, possibly a stoat. Then we see a small flock of large dark-coloured birds, flying with rapid wing-beats and sometimes gliding. They land in an isolated larch tree, near to the forestry plantation at the top of the hill. They are black grouse, the males are called black-cocks, and are an uncommon bird in most places. However today, as we pause for our mid-morning snack, the grouse sit in their tree in full view, as if waiting for us to move on and leave them in peace on the lonely hillside.

Tim Rhead

Tim Rhead is a pastoral assistant in the Episcopal Church.

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