

OPEN HOUSE

Reflecting faith issues in Scotland
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Whatever happened
to ecumenism?

Reshaping the
Catholic Church

The church and
the referendum

The silence of the women

We are used to hearing all those stories about the first Easter morning, about the women going to the tomb and being told that Jesus was not there but had been raised from the dead. It is impossible to make all the stories agree exactly. They come from different Christian communities which were all grappling with different problems but they were all united in one common faith, although expressed differently. St. Paul sums this faith up when he reminds his Corinthian converts of what he had preached to them: *“For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures”* (1 Cor. 15, 3-4).

Each of the Gospels has a different approach to the same story. The strangest of all seems to be that of Mark. Biblical scholars tell us that Mark’s Gospel actually ends with the women being given the news of the resurrection, being shown the empty tomb, being given the command to tell the other disciples to go to Galilee in order to meet the Risen Jesus but then they ran away and said nothing to anyone because they were afraid! Of course Mark’s Gospel has the usual stories also about the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection but the experts tell us that these were added later.

There are various theories about the silence and fear of the women. Some people say that the ending of the Gospel was lost and the stories we have were added to fill the gap but others say that Mark actually intended to end his Gospel with the women too afraid to say anything to

anyone. If that is the case, what can he have meant? Perhaps he intended to show that despite our fear and reticence, the Good News is the work of God and cannot be suppressed. Death does not have the last word no matter how dark things may get.

The state of the Church can be depressing. How has the Church survived the ups and downs of history as well as the many self-inflicted wounds? We, like the women outside the empty tomb, may be too afraid to speak out and we may run away from our task but the Good News will not be kept buried in a dark tomb. The crucified Jesus was no longer in the tomb but had been raised from the dead. He is God’s guarantee that love is stronger than hatred and life is stronger than death. All the scandals that have rocked the Church are not sufficient to prevent this Good News from triumphing.

It is helpful from time to time to remind ourselves of just what God has done for us. The *Exsultet*, sung at the Easter Vigil, is an out breaking of joy for the triumph of God over darkness:

This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave.

What good would life have been to us, had Christ not come as our Redeemer?

Father, how wonderful your care for us!

How boundless your merciful love!

To ransom a slave you gave away your Son.

O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a redeemer.

The voices of women

The church needs to hear the voices of women at all levels. News that four women have been named by Pope Francis as members of the new Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors has been widely welcomed. In particular, the appointment of the Irish survivor of clerical abuse, Marie Collins, has caused much comment. Ms Collins, who campaigns for support for survivors of abuse, was sexually abused by a chaplain when she was a 13-year-old in a Dublin hospital. She is reported to have said that one of her priorities for the new commission is a sea change in the response of the church to abuse survivors and their families. She told Catholic News Service that many survivors will be watching the Vatican commission with interest and looking for evidence of real change.

Ms Collins has said she hopes the commission can change Pope Francis’ mind on his remarks that no one had done more on the issue of child sexual abuse than the church, yet the church is the only one to be attacked. She told CNS

that he seemed to miss the point – the anger directed at the church was not caused by the fact that it had abusers within its ranks, but that people in authority were willing to protect them.

Ms Collins’ appointment, together with those of the other women, seems so appropriate that it raises the question of why it has taken so long. In an institution characterised by secrecy, the independence and professionalism of all four women, who include British psychiatrist Baroness Hollins, former Prime Minister of Poland Hanna Suchocka and French child psychologist Catherine Bonnet, promise a wider perspective and a welcome transparency.

Ms Collins told CNS that she had remained a Catholic, but not without difficulty. She had tried to separate the institution of the church from the faith. There had been times when practising her faith has been impossible, but her belief in God had never wavered. Being appointed to the commission has not changed anything in this regard.

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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.

www.openhousescotland.co.uk

Cover: Stained glass window in the church of St Mary, Mother of God, Leslie, by Lorraine Lamond. Contact Lorraine on 07792 465889 or email lorrainelamond@gmail.com

Photo by Dominic Cullen.

WILLY SLAVIN

Mary's Meals

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, founder and Chief Executive of Mary's Meals, was interviewed about Lent by Fr Willy Slavin. Willy spent five years in Bangladesh.

WS: What does Lent mean to you personally?

MM: It's an opportunity to think afresh about God and neighbour. It's a chance to show more solidarity with the poor through almsgiving and prayer. I normally try to do things and then fail – but I suppose that is good for humility. Lent can help me physically and most importantly allows me more space for God.

WS: Do you think the Church could make more of Lent?

MM: I certainly think fasting was something that was more practiced in the church in the past and we seem to have lost that. Fasting seems to be practised more in some Orthodox countries I've been to. And we know that the Muslim Ramadan is now very much respected. Many Muslims as well as fasting at that time also give to the poor. I think we all need to spend less on ourselves. Lent is the time to decide what we should spend on others.

WS: Is it important for you that Mary's Meals is Scottish?

MM: You need to know that Mary's Meals wasn't something I planned. It came out of our experience at Craig Lodge House of Prayer in Dalmally. That was a result of us visiting Medjugorje. Bosnia was part of the Balkan conflict at that time and we simply took donations back there

mostly for children who had been abandoned. Eventually that became Scottish International Relief (SIR) which spread beyond Bosnia. Dalmally is still my home and Scotland is a very special place for me. Through receiving donations I have come to know a Scotland that really I hadn't known before.

WS: Does the use of Mary's name raise questions?

MM: Yes, of course. Some people presume it's my mum's! I love to have the chance to speak about the mother of Jesus. In non-denominational schools I can tell them Mary was a woman who had to bring up a child in poverty. She was a refugee. This makes the story real for them. It's also a great advantage with Muslims who of course respect her greatly as Miryam.

WS: You have deliberately linked your feeding programme with education?

MM: The origin of the change from SIR to Mary's Meals was when we were told of famine in Malawi which has a special link with Scotland because of David Livingstone. I visited a family where the parents were affected by HIV. Yet one of the boys at 14 still had the hope he would be able to go to school. That had an enormous impact on me. We can all remember how important school meals have been for us. You can see school meals are still an important issue even in Scotland

today - the link between good nutrition and being able to learn. Mary's Meals is a very simple concept. Let's provide a meal in the place of learning.

WS: If I could refer to my own experience in Bangladesh where the problem of lack of food was political?

MM: I am absolutely against the idea that there is not enough food in the world. That's a myth. There is enough food for everyone. The reason children don't eat is because their families can't afford to feed them. Not because the food is not there. So we are very careful to source the children's meals locally. We don't fly in sacks of grain or tins of food from elsewhere – unless absolutely necessary. We want to have an influence on the local economy, especially agriculture. But our priority is to get the children to school. Give them enough food so they can study. I believe their education will change the many things including the likelihood of better governments being elected and held to account.

WS: What about collaboration with other aid agencies?

MM: For our very focused approach to succeed we need to collaborate with other good organisations – for example those that work in agriculture, education, water and health. And here in Scotland, for example, during Lent we don't go into schools in Scotland because we know how important that is for SCIAF. I believe we have struck a seam where children who know the importance of a school meal to themselves understand that their peers elsewhere in the world have exactly the same need. They respond to that. You saw what happened when over in Lochgilphead 10 year old Martha Payne tried to do something on her blog about her own school meal. Her campaign took off like a rocket. Then she made the link to Mary's Meals. Oscar Romero said nobody can do everything. I believe you need clarity about what you are aiming for. One meal a day in a place of education for the hungry child. That's all we are trying to do.

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY CENTRE

'A Welcoming Space in the Heart of the City'

2013 - 2014 Programme

DROP-IN EVENTS: Except July & August

Taizé Prayer Evenings: 3rd Monday of the month, 7.30-8.30pm

Tuesday Lunchtimes - *Eat, Pray, Breathe*: Every Tuesday, 1-1.30pm.

Carers Support Group: Last Tuesday of the month, 1.30-4pm

First Friday Retreat Mornings: 1st Friday of the month, 10am-1pm

LENT EVENTS

A Film for Lent: Friday, 4th April, 6.45-9.30pm

'Bread Broken and Shared': led by Margaret Linforth. Looking forward to Holy Thursday . . . a day to celebrate the Bread of Life by making bread and reflecting together. Sat 12th April 10.30am-4.30pm

OTHER EVENTS

A New Moment For Church: A Vision of Church, afternoon series, inspired by Ignatian & Franciscan Spirituality. With the election of Pope Francis, people across the Christian traditions and from other faiths have enquired about his background as a Jesuit and about the spirituality implied in his chosen name. This series of monthly afternoons will reflect on some of these themes as they touch institutions and our individual sense of the importance of living a more simple and integrated life. 2-4pm.

27th April: *Walking Together in Peace with Our Interfaith Friends* led by Isabel Smyth SND

Dancing in the Spirit: 28th April, 12th May, 2nd & 9th June 7-8.30pm

These Monday evenings, which will be led by Sr Isabel Smyth SND, will provide an opportunity to dance to the rhythms of life, leading to stillness and contemplation.

'Conversations in Faith': Supporting Interreligious Dialogue: In an attempt to foster understanding and respect among people of faith, as a contribution towards world peace and to creating an international community of faith, Isabel Smyth SND, on behalf of the Bishops' Conference for Interreligious Dialogue and in partnership with the Ignatian Spirituality Centre, will facilitate a series of conversations with people from the major faith traditions:

30th April – Judaism led by Fiona & Howard Brodie

Dreams, The Real Agenda: Saturday, 3rd & Sunday, 4th May, led by Patrick Greene SJ

(A Non-Residential Weekend: 10.30am – 4.30pm on both days)

The invitation this weekend, both for spiritual accompaniers and those more generally interested in dreams and spirituality, is to discover the way dreams point us to places of growth, healing and surprise; to learn the language of dreams and how symbolic images reveal possibilities; to see connections between the dreams of a given timeframe and discover the real agenda of your life. Topics will include recall of dreams, dreams in the Old and New Testaments, dreams in other cultures, death in dreams, dreams and health and much more.

'The Literature of Love' – Closing Day of ISC Programme Year 2013-14, Saturday, 14th June 10.30am-4.30pm. This day, led by David Lonsdale, will explore Ignatian Spirituality and its echoes in literature of both past and present.

RETREATS

Two Residential Individually Guided Silent Retreats in the Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne, Co Antrim: The ISC and the Epiphany Group are delighted to join this joint venture with the team of Drumalis, a beautiful Centre in Larne Co Antrim (www.drumalis.co.uk). *Please contact Drumalis for bookings.*

1) 6 Day Retreat - Saturday 28th June to Saturday, 5th July 2014

2) 3 Day Retreat - Saturday 28th June to Wednesday, 2nd July 2014

The Bield at Blackruthven, Tibbermore, Perthshire, 14th-17th October 2014. A silent mid-week individually guided retreat, led by a team from the Ignatian Spirituality Centre, in the beautiful Perthshire autumn time. Retreatants have access to The Bield's excellent facilities which include a chapel, art room, swimming pool, labyrinth and extensive grounds. Accommodation is in single rooms (max 9 retreatants). *Please book via the Ignatian Spirituality Centre for this retreat.*

Please browse our website, www.iscglasgow.co.uk, which has more information on the events, course and retreats. For bookings or a copy of the programme contact:

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JOHN MILLER

Whatever happened to ecumenism?

A Church of Scotland minister and former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland offers a personal reflection on the state of ecumenism in Scotland today.

All my life I have wanted closer relations between the members of the Christian family. Let me set out before you some of my first steps when I went to be minister in a Castlemilk parish in January 1971. The troubles in Northern Ireland were heating up. There was real tension in the housing scheme. Funerals were still taking place for casualties of the Ibrox disaster. We heard that one of the chants at Parkhead was ‘66! Hahaha!’ These were the circumstances in which I started out as a 30-year-old Church of Scotland parish minister.

In my first week in Castlemilk I went to the nearby chapel, St Bartholomew’s, and asked if one of the priests would go for a walk with me round the streets of the scheme. I had the lofty thought that such a walk would be a public demonstration, a visible symbol of the kinship of Roman Catholic and Protestant in the life and work of the Church. Father Peter McCafferty kindly agreed to go on this journey. We fixed an afternoon. It was surely the wettest day of the year. Drenched, we plodded through the deserted streets. A wet dog watched us from the mouth of a close, but apart from the dog not a living soul witnessed the symbolic spectacle.

I went to visit the parish priest, the memorable and beloved Father Daniel Toy. After a friendly discussion I was taking my leave. In the words of my parting greeting I asked for God to bless him. He did not reciprocate. So I said, ‘Will *you* bless *me* please?’ There was a pause. I think it must have been

contrary to his tradition. I just kept standing there on the steps. I felt a little like Jacob, refusing to let the angel go till he had blessed him. ‘Oh all right then,’ he said in an irritated kind of way, and with a little gesture of the hand and a few words he gave me a blessing. And off I went.

The Archdiocese had just appointed its first full-time School Chaplain – to the challenging East End school St Mary’s in Boden Street. In acknowledgement of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity the new chaplain invited some ten Church of Scotland ministers to visit the school classes. It seemed like an avalanche! This very first very close encounter made as much of an impression on the ministers as on the students. And we were assured, when the week was over, that the students had been astonished at all the beliefs we seemed to share, the same as theirs.

These early steps were the prelude to almost 40 years of friendship I was to enjoy among the churches in the scheme. There were monthly meetings of clergy and religious for prayer and discussion, worship events for the churches, ecumenical Lent groups, an annual retreat at Craighead and then at the Craighead Institute. The religious sisters were always in the vanguard, always suggesting new and improved ways to broaden the contacts between the churches. But this ‘ecumenical activity’ did not have a consistent momentum of its own. Not everyone had an equal sense that it was a vital part of Christian witness. Ecumenical activity was swimming

against a strong, long-running tide.

Let me digress briefly here on the topic of language. History is embedded in language. In some ways, as a visitor, I am wanting out of courtesy to use the phrase, ‘The Catholic Church’ when describing the affiliation of, for example, St Aloysius’. But I want to be sure that you know that I have a share in the Catholic Church. For there it is in the Creed which I say:

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints.....*

Accordingly, I may often use the expression the Roman Catholic Church. It is not intended as discourtesy. Rather it is to secure my own claim to be part of the Catholic Church, when I am quite clearly not part of the Roman Catholic Church.

Vatican II

Let me go back 50 years, to the Second Vatican Council. The Council’s *Decree on Ecumenism* urges the Roman Catholic Church to try to see all Christians as part of the one household. This was a very new thought for the Catholic Church. But that’s the basic meaning of the word ‘Ecumenical’. It comes from the Greek word meaning ‘a house’ and means ‘the entire household’. Very much the same as ‘catholic’ or ‘universal’.

Until January 25th 1959, when Pope John XXIII announced his intention to call an Ecumenical Council, the standard position of the Vatican was

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that the path to ecumenical unity was for those who had left the Catholic Church to return to it. But Pope John XXIII issued a call for a complete re-consideration of that view. He began speaking of members of other churches as 'our separated brethren'. Vatican II for the very first time began to speak of people in the Reformed and Lutheran and Anglican churches as Christian. This was completely new ground. It was the opening of a door in what previously had been a solid wall. There was a smile where before there had been a frown.

Since 1910 the Reformed Churches had been giving expression to an 'Ecumenical Movement.' A wide range of Reformed Churches linked themselves together in a determination to overcome differences and to seek their unity in Christ. The impetus for this movement occurred in 1910 at a conference in Edinburgh. No representatives from the Eastern Orthodox churches or the Roman Catholic Church were invited, but *The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference* brought 1,200 people from churches and Missionary Associations from across the world. Together they generated a transforming energy to share in global evangelism. Eventually, in 1948, a World Council of Churches was established, with its head office in Geneva. The Lund Principle, developed in Sweden in 1952 asks: *Should not the churches act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel*

them to act separately?

All through those decades, the Reformed Churches were aware that the Roman Catholic Church was not participating, and that so far as the Vatican was concerned the only true ecumenism was for the Eastern Orthodox Church to heal the ancient schism, and for the Reformed Churches to return to the true Church which they had left at the Reformation. But in the years following the Second World War a tremendous amount of profound thinking was under way in the Roman Catholic Church. So when Pope John XXIII announced that he was calling an Ecumenical Council, although the Reformed Ecumenical Movement was not asked actually to participate, they and the Eastern Orthodox Churches were invited to send delegates as observers. Pope John XXIII had these delegates seated in St Peter's, just across the aisle from the cardinals.

Among the 16 texts issued by the Council, the *Decree on Ecumenism* took its special place. It ventured some extraordinary new steps. Its focus is on a 'pilgrim' church moving toward Christ, rather than on a movement of 'return' to the Roman Catholic Church. It goes beyond the assertion that the Catholic Church is the true church, to assert that Jesus, in His Spirit, is at work in churches and communities beyond the visible borders of the Catholic Church. It asserts that believers in Christ who are baptised are truly re-born and are truly brothers and sisters to Catholics, and that God uses their worship to sanctify and save them.

Progress

This document has been in our hands for 50 years. Pope John XXIII's dynamic new words about 'separated brothers and sisters' have been wearing away the walls of division for 50 years. But what have we so far managed to achieve? In some ways it seems very little. Yet I go back to those years of genuine small-scale friendship among local churches and I

recognise the importance of those areas of growth.

They are a great improvement on the conflicts which preceded them; conflicts which, even during my active years as a minister, were not entirely extinguished. But, on their own, the acts of friendship are not enough. For the divisions which lie between us are long and deep. In her seminal book, *Britons*, about the national identity of people of Britain, Linda Colley begins with 1707 and the act of Union, joining Scotland to England and Wales, and follows through to 1837, the beginning of the Victorian Age. She demonstrates how the national identity of Britons was shaped during those years by Protestantism and Anti-Catholicism. We are still living through the aftermath of that identity formulation. And we must find ways of outgrowing that determining movement.

Let me offer two simple stories. In 2003, Scottish Enterprise was promoting the development of Glasgow's Science Park on a site between the High Street and Albion Street, at the edge of the Merchant City. As they dug the foundations the developers uncovered the remains of Glasgow's mediaeval Franciscan Friary. The remains of 20 individuals were uncovered: twelve men, seven women, one undetermined. From the location of the graves it is likely that they were benefactors of the Friary, significant citizens of Glasgow of their day. Having disturbed their former resting place, the City Council found them a new place in the Southern Necropolis situated in the former Roman Catholic Parish of St Francis. A Requiem Mass in St Andrew's Cathedral would be followed by the re-interment of the remains with prayers from the Abbot of the Franciscan Order.

The mediaeval Friary was destroyed at the time of the Reformation, but it dated from before the Reformation, when the Christian family in Scotland was undivided. At the time I was Moderator of Glasgow Presbytery,

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common history.

and I approached Archbishop Mario Conti. I explained to him how it seemed to me that these venerable bones belonged to us all, part of our common undivided heritage. In recognition of this, he invited me to be present at the service, and to read one of the Scripture lessons. Archbishop Conti in his sermon, and Lord Provost Mrs. Liz Cameron in her speech in the St Francis Centre, noted how suitable it was for the Moderator of Glasgow Presbytery to be present at the Mass affirming the shared history of the church in the City of Glasgow. So it came to pass that on that Friday morning in March 2005 two large caskets, each containing the mortal remains of ten mediaeval citizens of Glasgow, were laid to rest in the Southern Necropolis, beneath the branches of a silver birch tree. We had expressed the profound truth that we share a common history.

The second story concerns a visit to Rome I made in 2003. I was one of the guests of Archbishop Keith O'Brien, when he went to Rome to be made a Cardinal. When all vows had been taken and all the presentations made, it was time for the new Cardinal and his family and close friends to share some time together. They gathered for a meal. And the new Cardinal invited the Church of Scotland representative to say grace. At this most personal occasion, as the Cardinal's own family celebrated with the Catholic Church's family, Keith Patrick O'Brien marked the event with a poignant ecumenical invitation.

The divisions between us have been so longstanding and so deep that it is going to take huge steps and symbolic

gestures to move us forward. It may take heroic courage to move the ecumenical enterprise forward.

I have had the privilege of encountering another way. Outside Edinburgh, in the village of Roslin, there is a small community, the Community of the Transfiguration. It was founded in 1965 by the Rev Roland Walls. A contemplative community, it follows a life based on prayer. When it started it had three members. They were all priests of the Episcopal Church. Roland Walls taught theology in the University, Robert was a youth worker and John worked as a miner. They were utterly committed to the ecumenical task. Various other individuals from different denominations came to test themselves, to see if the contemplative life was for them.

But the community has had a way of life that was not for everyone. In utter contrast to the acquisitive nature of our society and culture, they have lived very simply. Their house is a former Miner's Welfare library, a wooden-framed building clad with corrugated iron sheeting. They have had no television, and for 35 years no phone. Each member has had a small garden hut in the Enclosure at the back of the House. The hut has a bed, and a desk and a stool. There the members could study and pray and sleep. Their chapel is two garden sheds end-to-end, where they have met for prayer four times a day. They have welcomed anyone to their plain wooden kitchen table for a simple meal. Wayfarers, bishops, ministers, priests and professors would come to the door and each was treated with the same courtesy and welcome.

The community at its largest grew to have five members. But they yearned to fulfill their ecumenical hopes by welcoming a Roman Catholic member. After 20 years, an unexpected development answered their hopes. In 1985 Roland Walls became a Roman Catholic.

The then Cardinal Archbishop, Gordon Gray, could see that a

community which had centred itself on prayer and on Eucharistic fellowship would be asking itself to accept division at its very heart. They would not be able to share the sacrament. Cardinal Gray asked Roland to go and search with the rest of the community, to see if they could have the courage to live with such a burden. They decided that they could, and the Cardinal sent Roland off to prepare himself for the move into his new role as a Catholic, and later as a Catholic priest. He sent Roland to live for three months on the Isle of Cumbrae, with the documents of Vatican II for company. On his return, having read the documents most carefully, Roland said to the Cardinal, 'They seem to be full of unexploded bombs'.

For almost 30 years the community have lived with that discipline of a division at the sacrament. When one of the non-Catholics celebrates the Eucharist, only the non-Catholics receive the bread and the wine. When Roland or another visiting Catholic was to celebrate, only the Catholics receive. In this way the Community feel that they have taken into their heart the pain of Christ at the division of his body, the Church. Very occasionally they have been granted a dispensation, to share hospitality in the Eucharist.

Roland died in 2011 at the age of 93. Sister Patty will be 98 in June. John, the youngest, was 80 last Boxing Day. It was in their rule that they were never to seek publicity, or join causes or campaigns. Nevertheless, in their extraordinary humility and constancy they have been hugely influential in the lives of religious communities and of individuals all across Britain.

I am left wondering, however, about the significance of that disunity which they so faithfully maintained at the Eucharistic table. It remains a continuing focus of ecumenical attention, and a painful barrier excluding separated brothers and sisters from the heart of the family's

While we dispute among ourselves we fail to take the part we could and should take in the shaping of the future of our culture.

life. But does it warrant the effects it produces?

Many of you will be familiar with watching football. You will often have seen a couple of players squaring up to each other off the ball. They push and pull at each other long after the ball has moved to another part of the pitch and the rest of the players are focusing on the game. I am afraid for the churches as we take part in the ecumenical enterprise. I fear that we may be like players taking part in a scuffle off the ball, while the game is continuing somewhere else on the pitch.

We are increasingly aware that Islam is playing a major role in the dynamic of Western society. I am convinced that the whole Christian Church needs to be shaping our relationship to Islam, and that is an even more urgent call on our resources and our spiritual attention than our internal historic Christian divisions.

I fear that in another way, too, we are failing to take part in the game itself which is continuing in Europe and the West. Other forces are contending for the soul of our culture and for the individual souls within it. Secularism in particular dismisses the Churches and our spiritual message, and while we dispute among ourselves we fail to take the part we could and should take in the shaping of the future of our culture.

Conclusion

But there are indications of hope. Pope Francis seems to be drawing the curtains back from those windows

which Pope John XXIII opened with Vatican II. At the end of this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity he said. *'Unity will not come about as a miracle at the very end. Rather, unity comes about in journeying. If we do not walk together, if we do not pray for one another, if we do not collaborate in the many ways that we can in this world for the people of God, then unity will not come about.'*

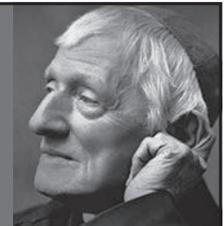
Pope Francis has also spoken of another kind of ecumenism. In a startling phrase, he has spoken of, 'the ecumenism of blood'. *'In some countries,'* he said, *'they kill Christians for wearing a cross or having a Bible, and before they kill them they do not ask them whether*

they are Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic or Orthodox. Their blood is mixed. To those who kill we are Christians. Those who kill Christians don't ask for your identity card to see which Church you were baptised in. We are united in blood, even though we have not yet managed to take necessary steps towards unity between us.'

So I am not without hope. The enterprise is of such great importance that it will not be laid aside.

This is an edited version of a talk given at the Glasgow Newman Association in February.

THE NEWMAN ASSOCIATION (GLASGOW) 2013/2014 LECTURE SERIES



Promoting open discussion and greater understanding in today's Church

THE VATICAN AND THE AMERICAN SISTERS' LEADERSHIP GROUP – AN UPDATE

A talk by
SR MARY ROSS
Sisters of Notre Dame

THURSDAY 1st MAY 2014
at 7.30pm

Ogilvie Centre
St Aloysius' Church, Rose Street
GLASGOW G3 6RE

Admission: Non-Members: three pounds (includes refreshments)
Any enquiries, email to: danbaird981@gmail.com

WILLY SLAVIN

The challenge of mission

A retired parish priest who has just celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination says the church is what's left when the preacher leaves town.

Cardinal Nicholls surprised some churchgoers when he said that you don't need the Eucharist to be a good Catholic. He was talking about remarried divorcees who are prevented by Canon Law from receiving communion. But he could have been thinking of his relative, a well known Mill Hill missionary who may have told him that in 'the missions' Catholics in general don't have access to the Eucharist.

Yet in the panic building up around the Catholic Church in Scotland - that is, as older people have known it - key decisions are about to be made which appear to be based on the need, first and foremost, to continue to provide Sunday Mass as conveniently as possible for the those who retain that habit. We don't see ourselves as a missionary church. The priority is to provide local vicars for Mass and the quasi state rituals around births, marriages and deaths.

Priests in the 'better' parishes who still have an impressive Sunday attendance comfort themselves hearing from Church of Scotland ministers whose congregations have all but disappeared. However even in these affluent areas the absence of young adults is apparent. On the other hand, there are still lively Church of Scotland congregations and not all of them in better off places. Furthermore, if we look beyond the main denominations we can see independent congregations who are paying for their own youth workers and sending missionaries overseas. These often are lay led churches with members recruited from the mainline denominations, including the Catholic Church. Why

have they not exercised leadership in the churches they were born into? Because the preacher has not let them. He (sic) has not moved on, job done. He has stayed and become the manager of the plant.

Or, if he has not been able to build up the community, he has been moved to a 'busier' parish. The building(s) he has left are closed, their fate to be decided by HQ. Unless there are enough of those who burst a gut building and paying for them. They might be articulate enough to get an agreement that a priest will be good enough to squeeze them in over the weekend.

There are Catholics who have shown in the midst of scandals that they know there is a church beyond the clergy. Therefore there is a church besides the Eucharist. After all what makes us Christian is baptism. If Sunday Mass becomes irregular it will be all that Catholics have to go on. Will the water of baptism prove more influential than the demands of kith and kin? Relying on baptism could make it easier, indeed imperative, to link with Christians from other churches who find themselves in the same boat.

On the missions the priority is not to get those who have been baptised into the habit of Sunday mass. It is to get them fed. To build a school and provide a dispensary. That's how Catholicism returned to Scotland. 'Parishes' were legally the remit of the Church of Scotland. The new Catholic organisations were set up as 'Missions'.

This is what is expected of newly converted poor Africans. How much more might be expected of healthy

and wealthy Scots? Or have we been kidding ourselves they have been educated also in faith? After a century and more of Catholicism in Scotland we are returning to a small number of priests. Is the laity able and willing to manage the building(s) and use them as centres for compassion and outreach to the lost sheep in the 'new evangelisation'?

I once heard Cardinal O'Brien appealing for more (priestly) vocations saying 'no priest, no Eucharist, no Church'. I thought of Bangladesh and the villages of the old Portuguese Padroado who (like the Japanese in Nagasaki) had survived centuries without benefit of clergy. It was their daughters at boarding school in Calcutta who went over the convent wall with Mother Teresa and became the founding members of the Missionaries of Charity. Perhaps the single most effective gospel witness in our life time. Of course it takes courage and confidence. And imagination.

Catholics come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Some have concluded, not always happily, that it is really non-sense but still belong because of all the cultural associations. Some practise in the sense they go to church but they do not preach because they lack the confidence to tell others what they believe. Some preach but do not practise discomfiting the comfortable. But there are others, and it never takes very many determined individuals to make an impact, who have the courage and the confidence of the Catholic Idea. Their time has come. All they need now is a bit of imagination.

WILLIAM R MCFADDEN

The experience of Galloway diocese

A parish priest and former rector of Scotus College reflects on the opportunity for a renewed focus on the ministry of all the baptised as the Catholic Church faces up to dramatic decline in Mass attendance and clergy numbers.

In the present climate where our diocesan communities throughout Scotland are looking at the demands and the requirements of pastoral provision in what can only be described as rapidly changing circumstances, the Diocese of Galloway is in the midst of what it is calling the process of 'Embracing Change.'

This process builds upon a previous pastoral vision called 'Embracing the Future,' which presented principles which were considered as non-negotiable in underpinning all pastoral analysis and decision making as the diocese entered into the 21st century.¹ The principles of 'Embracing the Future' remain valid, yet the pastoral reality is that what was considered as something vaguely linked to the future has in fact now become the present. What was suitable in the past is no longer sustainable, and so 'Embracing Change' means that the diocese must now address some very serious pastoral questions.

Yet from the outset it has been clearly stated that such a process of pastoral discernment is not simply about trying to come to terms with a dramatic decline in the number of active clergy available to minister on a day-to-day basis. Nor is it about simply facing up to the fact that we have too many church buildings and other properties that are no longer required to accommodate the numbers of people attending Mass. Rather, 'Embracing Change' is part of a bigger picture that looks at ministry as something that unites both laity and clergy, and that sees the wonderful

'Embracing Change' is part of a bigger picture that looks at ministry as something that unites both laity and clergy, and that sees the wonderful opportunities available today, especially to the laity, when new situations require creative and collaborative responses.

opportunities available today, especially to the laity, when new situations require creative and collaborative responses. It is about having a mindset of mission, not of maintenance, where the focus is on the proclamation of God's Kingdom, and where all the baptised are seen as being uniquely and individually called to serve one another in faith.

'Embracing Change' is rooted in encouraging all members of the diocesan community to pray about the situation. Only from this foundation can we hope to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in seeking to nurture inspired and imaginative pastoral possibilities. It is by being rooted in prayerful discernment that we can listen to God's Word as it is directed to us in the midst of our structures and organisations, many of which may have been looked on as essential in the past, but through prayer are now being recognized as secondary, and no longer required.

From the foundation of prayerful discernment, change can be seen as

something to be eagerly grasped, and not something to be feared or avoided. Change will of necessity involve practical decisions, but these decisions must come only as the result of constructive and reasoned dialogue involving as many members of the different parish communities as possible.

The parishes of Galloway Diocese are a mixture of rural communities and sizeable towns, and so different responses are required in different areas. In recent years many parishes have already experienced the value of clustering, where after the initial shock of losing a resident parish priest, there have been benefits from the use of shared local resources, where parishes working together experience a bond which had not been there before. Parishes grouped together highlight the truth that every single parish has gifts and resources, but that no single parish has all the gifts or means required for a vibrant community of faith. Uniting parishes and encouraging lay leadership to emerge has acted to strengthen the local community, and not diminish it, as some may have feared.

The number of laity who in recent years have taken on positions of responsibility and leadership in the diocese is sizable, but this will have to increase significantly if the people are to continue to experience ministry and service. Different areas will need to come up with different scenarios with an assortment of roles for lay team ministers, for deacons and for priests. Some parishes may flourish in having a parish co-ordinator, others may be team-

led, while others may discern that their future is best served by amalgamation or merger. There can be no one size fits all proposal but rather each pastoral area will need to seek solutions to whatever challenges arise. Of course, there will be hurts and disappointments. Not all expectations will be met. Individuals may well have to go through the experience of what they had once considered a vital part of their Catholic identity is no longer accessible.

Yet in all this, the wonderful and vibrant message of the Gospel is close. We have the opportunity to form communities of faith which can directly respond to the needs and demands of today. The desire for a Catholic community where collaboration between laity and clergy is not simply an ideal but a reality is worth the effort. A Church where lay people are empowered to recognise their role in mission originating in their baptism is a Church that surely better reflects the vision of the Gospel.

As Galloway Diocese seeks to 'Embrace Change' it does so conscious of the mysterious promptings of the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit has led Pope Francis to assume his role as Bishop of Rome, and so has dramatically brought a prophetic voice to help us address the pastoral questions facing us today. As different communities reflect on how, why and where we must change, our pastoral priorities must emerge somehow in tune with the priorities being enunciated by Pope Francis. This is an enormous challenge, and one that may well mean we have to re-assess positions which we had previously held with certainty. Francis' pastoral message is clearly a Church of the poor and a Church for the poor. In 'Embracing Change' we will have to let this be our main concern.

Fr William McFadden is parish priest of St Andrew's and St Cuthbert's, Kirkudbright and adult education co-ordinator for the Diocese of Galloway. He taught Fundamental and Systematic Theology at Scotus College, Scotland's National Seminary, where he was rector until the college's closure in 2009.

¹The principles contained in the document 'Embracing the Future' can be found on the diocesan website at www.gallowaydiocese.org.uk

PAT BAIRD

Opportunities missed

The 'Notebook' of the March edition of Open House mentioned the consultation in Glasgow Archdiocese on the possible closure of parishes. Experience of that consultation suggests that, 50 years after Vatican II, we seem to be no further forward in acknowledging and capitalising on the role of the laity. The attitude appears to be one of defeat - there are fewer priests in the pipeline so no solution is considered but to close churches and amalgamate parishes. No discussion is suggested or encouraged about possible alternatives, about what the other members of the People of God can do to help.

The first part of the process involved a series of open meetings held at parish level to consider a future when there will be far fewer priests than at present. The second stage required parishes to send three representatives to their deanery for further discussion. Of the 14 parishes in my deanery, it is estimated that in 20 years time the number of priests will fall from 18 to 6 and the Consultation Document wanted parishioners to vote on how to deploy these priests.

The document posed two questions:

- What pastoral commitments are there in the deanery - schools, nursing homes, hospitals etc?
- Do any of the priests currently have other commitments which affect the time that they can give to parish ministry?

At our parish meeting considerable time was spent on those questions and in discussing the central role of the priest, the role of the laity according to Vatican II, and what the laity could do to assist in the parish ministry.

However, at the subsequent deanery meeting, the second part of the consultation process, none of these observations, or indeed any feedback from the parish discussions, was expected or invited. We were straight

into feedback for the steering group, whose composition was not revealed, but presumably is composed of clerics. Certainly a comment regretting the fact that no members of the laity - young people, sisters, or women generally - appeared to be on the steering group was not contradicted.

We were asked to answer six questions on how parish consultations had been undertaken: the number of formal and informal meetings, attendance at those meetings, which option/s chosen etc. We were then directly into the main agenda (although no formal agenda was distributed) which was about closures. I should say here that no minutes were to be taken, since the chair did not like minutes. No agenda, no minutes - fait accompli!

Pleas from our parish representatives to outline our concerns were disallowed, although these concerns were such that, at our open meeting, we were unable to vote for any of the closure options. Several (respectful) attempts to present our thoughts were rejected and there were accusations of filibustering! Finally, the chair suggested a vote on whether our views should be heard before or after the vote on the closure options. The meeting voted to hear these after the vote.

On the six options from the steering group, the majority (8 parishes) voted for Option B (6 parishes each with one priest) or Option C (3 parishes each with one church building but some with more than one priest). The chair then invited the priests and deacons present for a private few minutes with him, while the laity went for tea. After some 'had taken counsel and some had tea', the summary of our parish concerns was read out and a written statement of them distributed.

The meeting restarted, with an eye on the clock, and we were asked

immediately to vote on ‘Which three parishes should stay open?’ – that is, Option C seemed to have been decided for us. Many representatives were reluctant to vote, pointing out that we were not there as delegates but as representatives from our parishes and we should not vote on this question until we had consulted open parish meetings. The view of the chair was that if we did not vote on this, ‘The opportunity was lost’. (Of course, the opportunity had also been lost to explore the respective roles of the clergy and of the laity). In the event, no vote was taken and the chair asked for an answer from our parishes by 6th April on which three parishes should stay open to pass to the Archbishop. The meeting then closed with a prayer.

So that was the meeting. What a failure of imagination! And many questions which should have been posed were not. For example the estimated number of priests in this deanery in 2034 is based on factors such as current number of seminarians, current mass attendees, current number of First Communion, current number of funerals - which are all internal factors. Surely other trends and demographics should have been considered such as, population projections, new housing developments, immigration trends - especially from the European Community.

The exercise would have profited greatly by exploring more fully the roles of deacons, sisters, lay catechists and women generally in playing a greater part in parish ministry. The whole consultation process was narrow and priest-centred. If it had broadened, then the role of the priest could be more concentrated on Mass, the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, and preaching the Word of God.

The Church in developing countries could teach us a lot about sustainability when the priest in on his travels within parishes the size of Central Scotland. We could also look to St Paul and his travels and his talent for delegating ministries to men and women when he was no longer there. There are more options than the narrow few we have been given.

If my experience of the archdiocese’s consultation is typical, I must ask: is this a serious consultation or an attempt not to involve but to implicate the laity in decisions already taken elsewhere? This is not Vatican II’s vision of a laity whose ‘activity within the church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to attain its full effect.’ (Vatican II, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, chapter 3, n 10).

Pat Baird is a retired newspaper executive.

THEODORA HAWKSLEY

Sharing in the journey

Have you ever notice how much movement there is in the Easter liturgies? Catholic liturgy already includes plenty of movement, as we genuflect, make the sign of the cross, kneel, stand, and so on – a Presbyterian friend of mine who came to Mass with me once remarked, ‘You could get fit doing that!’ But over the course of the Holy Week liturgies, we add in even more movement. On Palm Sunday we gather outside our churches with palms to walk with Jesus on his entry into Jerusalem, and on Maundy Thursday we wash one another’s feet and walk with Jesus to the desperate loneliness of the garden of Gethsemane, watching and praying with him in silence. On Good Friday, when all is finished, we solemnly process to the crucifix and kiss the feet of Christ. Finally, at the Easter Vigil, we gather outside in the darkness for the lighting of the Easter fire, and we move into church as the light of the resurrection spreads around us, candle by candle.

All this moving about in Holy Week comes as the climax of the journey of Lent which, for Jesus, is the journey towards Jerusalem. On the road to Jerusalem there is a kind of impatience in him, a restlessness: ‘I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed!’ (Lk 12:50) He seems to grow distant, pulling away from those around him who do not understand his preoccupation with his impending suffering and death, and to their protestations of loyalty, he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ (Jn 13:33) The passion and death that Jesus is walking towards is a work that only he can accomplish, and he will be alone in it. Nobody will speak for him at his trial. The disciples will desert or deny him. The women will watch from a

distance. He will die, and be laid in a tomb, and the stone will be rolled over the entrance: where I am going, you cannot come.

But Jesus’ journey is not only a journey to Jerusalem, one that comes to an end in a lonely death outside the city wall. It is also a journey *back to the Father* (Jn 16:28). The momentum of Jesus’ journey back to the Father does not come to a dead halt in the tomb: it continues, and becomes the momentum of the resurrection, as the Father raises Jesus into his presence with the glory he had before the world began (Jn 17:5). And in this journey back to the Father, Jesus is *not* alone, because he brings us with him. ‘I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.’ (Jn 17:24) This is what he prays before his lonely death: *I want those you have given me to be with me where I am.* I want you to be with me where I am.

Often, our moving around in day-to-day life is purely functional. We walk to get to the shops, to work, we catch buses and trains and, once we have got where we are going, we get on with whatever tasks await us there. But when we move about in the Easter liturgies, we are not doing it to *get* anywhere. We move with Jesus through the events of his passion and death because we recognise that, through these things, we are sharing in a much more profound reality: Jesus’ movement towards the Father, and the Spirit’s movement towards the world.

Dr Theodora Hawksley works for the University of Edinburgh’s Centre for Theology and Public Issues on a project called Peacebuilding through the Media Arts.

GLASGOW NEWMAN MEETING

Catholics, the referendum and afterwards

There was a full house for the Glasgow Newman Association's discussion on 'Catholics, the referendum and afterwards' which took place at the end of March.

Three speakers set out their views: Sister Isabel Smyth SND, secretary of the Scottish Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interreligious Dialogue; advocate and former Labour MSP Brian Fitzpatrick; and journalist Kevin McKenna. The debate was chaired by Gerry Carruthers.

Sister Isabel opened with the observation that whatever the outcome, next September's referendum has encouraged reflection on the future of Scotland. In particular, she said good conversations are taking place around the values engraved on the Scottish mace which sits before parliamentarians in Holyrood: wisdom, integrity, justice and compassion.

There are, she suggested, two approaches to the referendum question of yes or no to independence for Scotland. The first is governed by the head and focuses on the economy and issues like monetary union and currency. But here she found no answers – for every statement there is someone to argue the opposite. The practicalities, she believed, would only be resolved at the time of a post referendum settlement.

The second approach is one of the heart which focuses on the resources, capacity and ability of Scots to run their own affairs. Sister Isabel said she will vote Yes because she believes in subsidiarity. When it is ignored, governments often overstep their boundaries. At UK level, Scotland, as a nation with its own unique culture and history, should be taken seriously but in her experience is not. At Holyrood, she argued, it is easier to hold politicians to account. We are all – people of all faiths in Scotland – bound together by civic identity. Borders can be places where people meet and encounter one another. Independence need not separate us but

allow us to relate to one another in new ways. We would be better together as independent and equal countries.

Journalist Keven McKenna, who declared himself undecided, began by recalling his Catholic and Labour Party background which gave people the opportunity to carry the values of Christianity into daily living. But today he perceives that Christianity for the Left is the 'sin which dares not speak its name'; a development he traces back to the 1990s and the refusal of the Labour Party to allow pro-life stalls at party conferences. But despite what he called 'neo-liberal socialism' he is still a Catholic and a Labour voter at heart.

We are, he said, a privileged generation to be voting on the most important event in our lifetime. We have a rich and dramatic Christian history which includes one of the purest forms of worship – that of the Free Presbyterians – which we should cherish. The consequences of a Yes vote for Catholics is already being debated: some think that anti Catholic bigotry would become more prevalent and others hint at the 'orange menace'. They are wrong, he argued; Labour is more hostile to Catholicism, and Alex Salmond has pledged to keep Catholic schools.

What, then, should we be looking for? A society built on equality, inclusiveness and social justice. As someone who loves England, should he vote to remain in the union where we might be able to 'help defeat unfettered capitalism', he asked, or should we take a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a new country?

Brian Fitzpatrick, who declared that he will be voting No, observed that 30 years ago people would have been amazed by

recent headlines which declared that Catholics were the most pro-independence group in Scotland. Catholics are no longer in the ghetto. This allows us, he said, to speak to the nation as equals who are part of a bigger whole. We are Irish Catholic by heritage, Scottish by birth and culture, British and proud of it all.

The Catholic hierarchy should remain silent because of 'real and remaining scandals'; but lay people have a duty to encourage a high turnout so that we reach a definitive decision in September. The church can help the tenor of the debate, which all three speakers found unpleasant in parts, suggesting that bridges would have to be built after September's vote.

Independence, he argued, would come at a cost: we will be poorer, have a risky pension base and higher taxes. He said the debate lacked honesty and the SNP had failed to answer many questions. Which currency will we use? Who will be the lender of last resort? Will we be in or out of Europe?

The process of separation, should it come, would be long and damaging; in the meantime the real issue of inequality remains. The biggest challenge, he argued, is the East end of Glasgow about which the Scottish government has done nothing in 10 years. Looking for a crusade, he asked? We should be using all our resources to be ambitious for social justice in Scotland and the UK.

In the course of the debate which followed, Sister Isabel challenged the audience to reflect on how many of them have participated in Scottish government consultations. She stressed the importance of civic identity and participation. Brian Fitzpatrick argued that after the referendum we need to find a way of

having a conversation about better government in Scotland which devolves power to local areas.

One member of the audience who hailed from Northern Ireland said his experience was the further you are from the centre of power, the less you get. He pointed out that the East End of Glasgow had not flourished under Labour, and while social justice should play a big part in the debate, it will not: the emphasis is on the pound in people's pocket and he spoke of 'scaremongering and corporate intimidation from the south'.

Gerry Carruthers asked if federalism was the answer. Kevin McKenna said that his colleagues on *The Observer* wouldn't support independence, but hope the debate on social justice will lead to heightened awareness in parts of England and spark a movement for autonomy for areas like the North East, South West, and Midlands. An independent Scotland could come to be seen as part of a federal union which rejects London. Brian Fitzpatrick thought this was a pipe dream and Sister Isabel said what was on offer is independence, not federalism. There are no guarantees whatever the outcome, she argued, but it is a risk worth taking.

Neither Kevin McKenna nor Brian Fitzpatrick thought there was such a thing as a 'Catholic vote' but, like Sister Isabel, thought the church could play a part by moderating meetings and encouraging participation in the debate. Workshops conducted by the Church of Scotland around the country were seen as positive.

A show of hands at the end of the evening indicated a fairly even split between Yes and No with a sprinkle of undecided.

STEPHEN SMYTH

Churches and nations

Many people consider that, whatever the decision of the referendum on the future of Scotland on 18 Sept 2014, relationships among and across our churches and nations are facing significant change.

To help address this, ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) hosted a conference, 'Churches and Nations – Possible Implications of the Referendum on the Future of Scotland', designed for people with senior ecumenical responsibility from across Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland. It took place in Edinburgh on 10th and 11th March, and 48 delegates took part. The National Ecumenical Instruments (ACTS, CTBI, CTE, Cytun and ICC)* and 18 denominations were represented.

The approach was participatory and conversational. Formal input came from some well known presenters: Dr Alison Elliot (Impact of the Referendum on Contemporary Scotland); Dr Donald Smith (Crossing Borders: Culture and Faith); Rev Dr Graham Blount (From Stateless Nation to Nation State?); Rev Dr David Cornick (Scottish Decisions, British Consequences? The Referendum and Cross-Border Churches); and, V Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting and Rev William McFadden (Identity and Identities: Called to Be One? A Theological Reflection).

There was plenty of time for informal input and reflection – not least at the conference dinner. Then we were joined, and briefly addressed, by Rt Rev John Armes (Scottish Episcopal Church, Bishop of Edinburgh), M Rev Mario Conti (Roman Catholic, Archbishop Emeritus of Glasgow), V Rev Alan McDonald (Church of Scotland, Former Moderator of General Assembly), and Rev Francis Alao (General Secretary of MECTIS – Minority Ethnic Christians Together in Scotland) who was a delegate to the conference. They each shared important considerations about the role of the churches, encouraging participation in the referendum, maintaining relationships afterwards, the history and current social context of Scotland, and questions about the kind of society we wish to have, including issues around immigration and inclusion.

Worship was led by Rev Carolyn Smyth (United Reform Church). The facilitation was led by Helen Hood (Convener of ACTS), Br Stephen Smyth (retiring General Secretary) and a small team drawn from across the Scottish churches.

Practical initiatives

The conference produced no formal papers or reports. Rather, there was plenty of passion and rich, lively, informative and challenging input and discussion. Delegates were charged with taking the conversation back to their churches and organisations. A few practical initiatives have been proposed by way of follow up. We hope to be able to share something of these later in the run up to the referendum.

The Scottish delegates and churches are encouraging people – however they decide to vote – to consider the values they would wish to see in Scottish society, to engage in the national debate leading up to the referendum, to exercise their vote and to actively work for the common good for everyone in our society.

The following resource materials may be of interest to readers:

- ACTS: 'Values for Scotland', four Scripture-based group reflection materials, themed on the four values inscribed on the Scottish Mace: Justice, Wisdom, Compassion and Integrity. Visit www.acts-scotland.org Material available for free download.
- Church of Scotland, *Church and Society Report: 'Imagining Scotland's Future – Our Vision'*. Visit www.churchofscotland.org.uk Report available for Free download.

* KEY: ACTS: Action of Churches Together in Scotland; CTBI: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland; CTE: Churches Together in England; Cytun (Churches Together in Wales); and ICC: Irish Council of Churches.

Stephen Smyth is a Marist Brother and retiring General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland.

DR EILIDH WHITEFORD

Women and independence

Dr Eilidh Whiteford, SNP MP for Banff and Buchan, offers the third in our series of reflections on Scotland's Future, the Scottish Government's White Paper on Independence.

By any measure Scotland is one of the richest countries in the world, but it's also one of the most unequal. For me, the greatest opportunity that a Yes vote in September's referendum offers is the chance to build a fairer, more prosperous society in line with our democratic aspirations. Women have a lot to contribute and a great deal to gain from that process.

Any measures that tackle economic inequalities in our society are likely to benefit women most, because women are currently heavily over-represented in low income groups. After 40 years of equal pay law, women on average still earn less than men, and are much more likely to be working in low paid, low skilled jobs. Women are also more likely to stop work, or work part time in order to look after children or elderly relatives.

The long term impact of low pay and part time work is felt by many women much later in life, when they find that they don't have an occupational pension, or haven't paid enough contributions for a decent standard of living in retirement. That's why most of those who end up on means tested benefits in old age are women. They have often spent years juggling caring while working hard in any number of low paid jobs – cleaning, catering, cashiering - but they have little to show for it at the end of their working lives.

Pensioners in the UK are among the least well supported in Europe, and recently proposed changes, while they will undoubtedly help some women start saving for retirement, won't compensate for low pay. Westminster is raising the age at which individuals receive the state pension; young women entering the

workforce today will likely have to work until they are 70.

Yet life expectancy in Scotland is consistently lower than the rest of the UK across all income groups. Like all developed nations, Scotland needs to adapt to an aging population, but we spend a lower proportion of our GDP on pensions and other forms of social protection than the rest of the UK. With pensions more affordable in an independent Scotland than in the UK as a whole, we are able to guarantee that State Pensions and public sector pensions will be paid exactly as now post independence, but looking ahead, we can think more carefully about whether further increases in the state pension age are necessary or desirable.

One of the key potential benefits of independence likely to help significant numbers of women will be improvements to childcare that will give much more choice for working parents. We know, for example, that many parents who want to work full time don't because they simply can't afford the cost of childcare, so they stay at home, work part-time, or in some cases take jobs below their skill level in order to get the flexibility they need. Mums are much more likely than dads to find themselves in this position. It's not just families that lose out - our whole economy underperforms when a large part of the workforce is inactive or semi-active.

The Scottish Government has already enhanced the availability of quality childcare – provision is better in Scotland than the rest of the UK, and that may be one of the reasons why we have more women in work, and why our child poverty rate fell twice as fast over the last

decade. However, with independence, we plan to be much more ambitious, drawing inspiration from our Nordic neighbours, providing free childcare for children aged one to five. Fully implemented, it'll save families on average up to £4,600 a year, bring more parents back into the workforce, boost family incomes, and ensure women in particular are not forced to choose between career and family. If we can raise women's participation in the labour market to levels achieved in, for example, Sweden, then not only will we boost our wider economic performance, but there's a taxation dividend to the tune of hundreds of millions of pounds.

The powers of independence would also give the Scottish Government the ability to raise the minimum wage, which has not kept pace with inflation. Had it done so, the lowest-paid workers would today be over £600 a year better off. Women are disproportionately represented in the minimum wage jobs market, and this failure to maintain a reasonable wage has impacted low-paid women harder than just about any other group. A minimum wage that keeps pace with the cost of living is a key commitment in the White Paper and is a building block of a fairer society.

In September we choose between two futures – one decided for us, where the UK Government continues to dismantle the welfare state, cuts support to families, and stigmatises disadvantaged people – or one we decide for ourselves, in line with the values, needs and circumstances of the people who live and work in Scotland. The chance to set ourselves on a path to a brighter, fairer future is in our own hands.

NOTEBOOK

Vikings in London

The impact of the referendum continues to reverberate south of the border. An exhibition on the Vikings in the British Museum has been described as 'quietly subversive' (Madeleine Bunting, *The Guardian*, 25 March) as it invites Britain to look afresh at its northern boundaries and the influence they exerted over national identities.

The Vikings were not just wild savages emblematic of mythical forces who struck terror into the hearts of coastal settlements around the British Isles: they were seaborne traders who sailed as far as Afghanistan, Constantinople and Newfoundland. Like the Scots and English who came after them and built the British Empire, they traded and pillaged their way to power and wealth. The beauty and delicacy of the jewellery on display in the exhibition speak of a different domestic life.

Why is this subversive? Because it reminds us of the many forces that shape our communities and nation states, and the uncertain boundaries and ambiguous legacies we have inherited. It is an invitation to re-imagine our identities and relationships beyond the UK and perhaps look for new

ways to create a new kind of union.

Pilgrims' tales

Next month's *Open House* will carry a feature on pilgrimages. If you have walked an ancient pilgrim route or journeyed to one of Scotland's many ancient sites of religious significance, we'd love to hear from you. Send a letter or short article by 25th April to editor@openhousescotland.co.uk

Referendum resources

The Archdiocese of St Andrew's and Edinburgh has produced a series of leaflets for groups who want to discuss issues like economic justice, human dignity and solidarity in relation to September's referendum on Scottish independence. To download, go to the Justice and Peace section of the website at www.edinburgh-archdiocese.com

A Nun on the Bus

In the summer of 2012, Sister Simone Campbell was one of a group of Roman Catholic nuns who took to the road and toured parts of the US to rally support against Congressman Paul Ryan's budget which planned to cut vital social

programmes for the poor. Along the way, prayer groups turned into rallies, and small town meetings became national media events. Sister Simone became a galvanising force for progressives of all stripes and remains a driving force for programmes and policies that support faith, family, and fairness.

Rooted in a deep spirituality of compassion and service, Sister Simone gives voice to the hunger, isolation, and fear that so many people in America are feeling and shows how we can create transformation in our communities and in our own hearts through the contemplative life of prayer.

In a new eBook due to be available for download on 15th April, inspiring stories from the *Nuns on the Bus* tour and from Sister Simone's own life offer readers a fresh vision for a lived spirituality that is at the heart of today's progressive Christian movements working for change.

Sister Mary Ross, who gave a talk on the dispute between American women religious and the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Open House* 228) will provide an update on the sister's situation at the beginning of May (see Newman advert page 8).

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LETTERS

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

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

Taking up the challenge

The letter by JV Isaacs (*Open House*, March 2014) challenges readers to be 'bold and creative' in building the church of the future as Pope Francis has exhorted us to do. This is a welcome challenge and a timely one, given the Parish Pastoral Provision Consultation Document currently being considered in parishes in the Archdiocese of Glasgow. Doubtless similar exercises are going on or will go on in other dioceses in Scotland.

The *Open House* conference held in Glasgow in November 2013 drew attention to the role of the laity in the governance of the church – opportunities that have not been taken up for a number of reasons. The meeting has led to the formation, very recently, of a group in Glasgow to consider the role of the laity in the church, especially in the light of the falling number of priests. We strongly welcome the idea of 'concept parish and church' proposed. In prayerful and respectful conversation we wish to develop our ideas on the ministry, administrative and other roles which the laity can undertake in their 'parishes', thus freeing the clergy to concentrate on the roles for which they are ordained – celebrating mass, the sacrament of reconciliation, preaching the good news. This would simultaneously lead to a growth in the confidence and spirituality of the laity. What models of 'parish' are possible? What is required for this sort of collaboration, eg in terms of formation of laity and priests and structures for working together collaboratively, in conversation and with mutual respect? We are a fledgling group, confident

that the Holy Spirit will guide us. Our third meeting takes place on 8th May, 7 to 8.30pm, at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre, 35 Scott Street, Glasgow G3 6PE. You are very welcome to join us if you would like to participate in the conversation. Please email : pamelanoone@btinternet.com for more information.

Ahilya Noone, Glasgow

The business of change

I wish to repeat in outline a remark I made on governance at a recent interchurch meeting in Edinburgh, in response to an item in the March edition of *Open House* 'Notebook' column.

Fundamental changes are being proposed for the Archdiocese of Glasgow. This will be a major form of reorganisation involving people, places and organisations with essential inbuilt financial implications. As I suggested at the Edinburgh meeting, surely those carrying out these tasks should have an MBA background. An experienced business as well as a commercial background.

Parallel to what might be taking place in a supermarket or any countryside business? Yes. What I am suggesting is the degree of competence which is involved in these and other changes. In Edinburgh, of the churches present, only one stated a definite NO to this suggestion.

But then as I read in the Notebook piece, 'There is no room in the consultation for discussing how lay people might contribute...' That quote is, alas, my MBA case.

Tom Reilly, Edinburgh

Do you have a view on any of the topics covered in *Open House*? Or a suggestion for future editions?

Write to the editor at the address on the back page or email editor@openhousescotland.co.uk by Friday 25th April to have your thoughts included in the May edition.

LIVING SPIRIT



When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices with which to go and anoint him.

And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, just as the sun was rising.

On entering the tomb they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right-hand side, and they were struck with amazement. But he said to them, 'There is no need for alarm. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here. See, here is the place where they laid him. But you must go and tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him, just as he told you"'. And the women came out and ran away from the tomb because they were frightened out of their wits; and they said nothing to a soul, for they were afraid....

Mark 16:1-2; 5-8

A hundred years ago there were Isles Folk who believed that in honour of the Risen One, the sun danced every Easter morning over the floor of the sky-with mad delight-with laughter. As who would not to the music of Him who gave Death his wound. What a madcap fancy! Possibly. But what a beautiful one as well! Is there no breadth and vision, even a reach of majesty in the faith that sun and wind, mosses and flower and sea share in the resurrection joy of men, and that men should think it not strange at all.

Alastair Maclean, Hebridean Altars

Oh! let us dare to be vulnerable!
let us dare to believe that we are as capable as Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and even Jesus. But first we must be vulnerable and accept our own fear and insecurity before the enormous task of transformation. Yet still in the face of God's grace, we must cherish our possibilities. It is then, from within our grace-filled trembling, that we dare to step forward in trust and tenderness to the brokenness of others. God will transform our small hearts into vessels of great grace. We are capable of healing the world.

*Edwina Gateley, A Mystical Rose
Crossroad Publishing 1998*

BOOKS

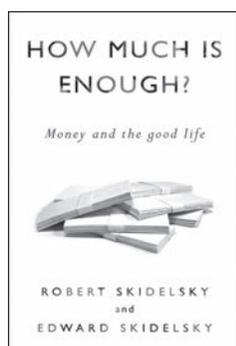
How much is enough? Money and the Good Life

Robert Skidelsky and Edward Skidelsky

Penguin Books 2013 (revised edition)

In 1930, at the time of the Great Depression, Keynes predicted that within a hundred years, people would be able to satisfy all their material needs by working a fifteen hour week and would therefore use their extra leisure to live 'wisely and agreeably and well'. Unfortunately, this prediction has turned out to be mistaken: while per capita incomes rose fourfold in the seventy years from 1930, working hours have only fallen to roughly 80% of the 1930 average (though with sizeable variations).

Keynes' mistake is the starting point for this investigation by a father and son team of authors, an economist and a philosopher respectively. In their view, his error was to assume that material wants are naturally finite. Rather, people's material wants know no natural bounds: they will expand without limit unless consciously restrained. Modern capitalism has provided wealth beyond measure, but it has also taken away its chief benefit, namely the consciousness of having enough. Collectively, we maintain a system which continues to celebrate acquisitiveness at the expense of enjoyment, and our political leaders have nothing to



offer other than the continuation of economic growth without end, despite plentiful evidence that the current form of individualistic capitalism is entering a degenerative phase, maintained unchallenged largely for the benefit of a predatory plutocracy. A major failure of economic theory lies in its continued use of GDP as the only measure of collective well-being.

Since 2007, we have been sunk in another 'Great Contraction' and unemployment is endemic across the western world. To a non-economist, 'the markets' have taken on the qualities of transcendence, omniscience and omnipotence more traditionally associated with divinity, indeed a rather fickle and volatile deity whose moods are anxiously measured by the FTSE100 and the Ratings Agencies. 'The economy' is said to be in crisis. In response, governments in Europe and the USA have imposed 'austerity', presuming that the chief economic problems lie in government budget deficits which increase national debts and which can only be solved by cutting government spending and by some limited tax increases.

The Skidelskys' response is driven by a moral concern, that we who live in the rich world are incapable of saying 'enough is enough' when it comes to money. Instead, we are insatiable: individually and collectively, we want more than others have. These authors want to reclaim economics as a moral science, a science of human beings in communities. They regard the pursuit of money as an end in itself as mistaken, not only because it is detrimental both to happiness and to the environment but because it rests on a misunderstanding about the nature

and function of money. Money is a means to the good; to treat its accumulation as an ultimate goal is a mark of delusion. All that anyone needs is enough money to live the good life.

What, then, is the good life? For the Skidelskys, the answer is to be found in a revived Aristotelian ethics. The good life consists in a number of basic goods. These goods are basic because they are universal, final, *sui generis* and indispensable: their value does not depend on some further benefit. The goods in question (which are examined in greater detail than is possible here) are health, security, respect, personality, harmony with nature, friendship and leisure (ie activity which is undertaken for its own end and not for the sake of something else). A good life is one which realises all these basic goods. The authors devote careful attention to dealing with relativist objections: they are happy to say that some ways of life are better than others, independently of individual taste and conviction, that these ways of life can be identified with some degree of certainty, and that the state has the duty to promote these ways of life over others. A life in which a person exercises autonomy is objectively better than a life of slavery (understanding these terms broadly). Consequently, the state is not neutral between rival conceptions of the good: it must promote autonomy. To enable the individual to live a good life, social policies governing working hour regulation, work-sharing, stricter controls on advertising, an unconditional basic income for all (which is not to be identified with the minimum wage), and a progressive consumption tax need to be introduced.

It seems clear that western

societies are already living in an unsustainable way both environmentally and economically, and that by doing so we are making the world less secure. The interests of those whose power comes from the control of diminishing resources are protected by ever-more costly military and other technologies, and the increased power of multinational corporations, including the banks, underlines the loss of national sovereignty. The current rhetoric of austerity ignores the fact that the budget deficits were the consequence and not the cause of the economic contraction, which was rooted in the behaviour of financial institutions. Rather than acquiescing in the power of the markets, we need to start with the vision of a good society and ask what this then demands from the economy.

Even when Aristotle is viewed through the lenses of the Jewish/Christian/Muslim traditions (and the Skidelskys have many positive observations to make about Catholic Social Teaching), is it realistic to look to Aristotle for a solution to our contemporary difficulties? The society which Aristotle lived in succeeded economically on the basis of slave labour, and ignored women, an absence which has persisted throughout the gendered history of economics. Feminists and green economists especially have argued that (typically) women's unpaid work and the negative impact of our collective activities on the environment are excluded from standard economic measurements. Economic theory consequently needs to adapt. Other questions arise. Can 'sufficiency' appeal as a middle way between unrestrained

conspicuous consumption and dispiriting material frugality? Perhaps the value of sufficiency appeals mainly to those who already have enough? What kind of a society would it be if the rest of us live virtuously while the 1% exploit the virtuous and the resources which we all need? The authors wonder whether a social market could emerge to tame neoliberal capitalism without religious sentiments. Such an appearance, sadly, seems unlikely while religious efforts remain more focussed on ameliorating the effects of the crisis rather than on challenging its causes. This book nevertheless provides a stimulus to thinking about the economic and political changes required to enable all to flourish.

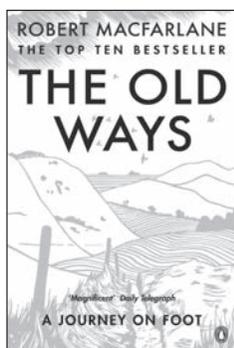
Paul FitzPatrick

Wilderness Walks: the writing of Robert Macfarlane

The Old Ways

Robert Macfarlane, (Penguin, 2012)

Robert Macfarlane is a young Cambridge don whose nature writing has received widespread commercial and critical success. Yet in a lecture to introduce *The Old Ways* – the final part of his loose trilogy on landscape and the human heart – he cautioned that this was a subject around which many readers would 'scare easily'. A fugitive concept, veiled to cold



reason yet open to the subtle metaphor by which landscape gives texture and contour to our imagination.

Quoting the English elegist Edward Thomas' poem *The Path* he reminds us: *while men and women content themselves with the road and what they see.....the path, winding like silver, trickles on the children wear it*

The children carry the significance. Perhaps Thomas' own, who ran the chalk trails of the South Downs; they *wear* the path both literally and symbolically. They create and are informed by it – through them *the path, winding like silver, trickles on* – they open the path as it opens them. We too have minds and moods porous to our surrounding as Ted Hughes says simply in

'Weather', *we are nature's barometers.*

In many ways Macfarlane is a modern day homo-viator, a wanderer, a cultural nomad ill-at-ease in today's increasingly fragmented society. Yet in his return to sentiment and re-grounding of the human person in nature (a trend helped by etymology, where the oldest root of the verb to *learn* is to follow a path) he reflects a wider cultural concern to reassert *human affect* and *connectivity*. Recognisable as a new mood or tone within post-modernism this approach is sometimes referred to as *metamodernism*.

Here topics that would have been career suicide amidst the hip irony of previous generations are being rehabilitated with artists now keen to display a sense of the social.

One group gathered around the web magazine 'Notes on Metamodernism' seek to expand the prefix 'meta' to mean an *oscillation* between variant and sometimes opposing positions. The aim is a new eclecticism where artistic freedom and social responsibility can cohabitate. So now exuberant conferences on 'LUV' sit alongside earnest discourse on the management of 'Common-Pool' resources.

This is all great fun, however with its turn to sentiment and the apparent reprioritising toward *real things*, some have questioned whether it is a betrayal of the modernist project; in particular postmodernism's emphatic legacy that the world is constructed through a language that disguises its instability, hidden clusters of power and inauthentic confidence in authorship.

It was to reassert metamodernism's continuity with this more exacting tradition that Mary Holland produced her invaluable 'Succeeding Postmodernism – Language and Humanism in Contemporary American Literature'. Here she identifies a stream of affect and connectivity even in texts at the extreme end of literary theory. The deconstructed novel emerging as a vehicle for an inverted affirmation of *real things*. Of particular note is her outstanding close reading of Cormac McCarthy's 'The Road' where she describes a powerful: *turning back to the real, to asserting the importance, significance, and primacy of the material world over the image, idea, and representation*

Set in a terrifying 'late world'; that seems 'both already dead and not yet done dying', a nameless father and son travel a barren ashen road seemingly without hope

or consolation. The landscape evokes a post-apocalyptic dead zone, a dire warning for those *who still have time to relearn to value the things we have before we only know we had them by their loss.*

This is a reversal of the classic postmodernist trajectory towards absence and lack of meaning; here loss is used as vehicle to re-assert the value of presence. The father is the classic postmodern subject; devoid of meaning he is dying both literally – through a gunshot wound – and spiritually as he is permeated by a landscape imposing its vacuous desolation.

Yet two points of light remain. One is *the turn to the other* in the form of his son. He embodies a numinous goodness that strengthens the father. The other comes near the end of the book in a simple second person address to the reader.

'Once there were brook trout in the streams in the mountains. You could see them standing in the amber current where the white edges of their fins wimpled softly in the flow...On their backs were vermiculate patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming.'

The deceptively simple 'Once', announces a striking reversal. Once things were different. Memory regroups into a form of anamnesis where even the divine can be reaffirmed. Whereas now the landscape is 'Gray. Silent. Godless.'; through an image worthy of Hopkins' *Kingfisher*, the trout's 'vermiculate patterns, point to an inscape, a providential ordering that although now *absent* wrestles back hope from the desert's apparent finality'.

'The Path' and 'The Road' sit well with the Christian Lenten pilgrimage. One evokes a fecund tonic of wildness, the other is a

penitential wasteland of ash and dust. Both are seasons of the heart and as such are integral to any realistic application of *metanoia*. They are also stages of life. Macfarlane is right to remind us that before we attempt to *change our heart* we should first enlarge the one we have. Yet perhaps his *path 'winding like silver'* remains a song of innocence,¹ one followed by children, whereas McCarthy's desolate straight road is inevitably part of the adult world of commitment and experience. The former with its secluded Hebridean bays and wild Cornish peninsulas provides a numinous glimpse of heaven, yet it is the latter desert that offers a way out of hell.

Both rest on a renewed reverence for *real things*. Perhaps they sense what Duns Scotus understood by *heaccuity*, the unique *thisness* of each person and thing. In doing so they remind us that the whole postmodern critique of language was meant to bring us closer to reality rather than drive us further away. There will always be a fracture between books and life, but good ones come pretty close and by establishing a community of readers they maintain the hope of a common sympathy.

Both use words and in Macfarlane's case, a lot. His trilogy totalled 300,000 and he admits to binning over a million. A hint perhaps that in life's most testing moments, words fail. At such times, in the mute groping for coherence – a direction, a *way* - the human heart is revealed in its true nobility and who knows, we may even have begun to pray.

¹Blake 'Songs of Innocence and Experience'

Jim Hart

FILM

Starred Up(2014)

Director: David Mackenzie

Starring: Jack O'Connell, Rupert Friend, Ben Mendelsohn.

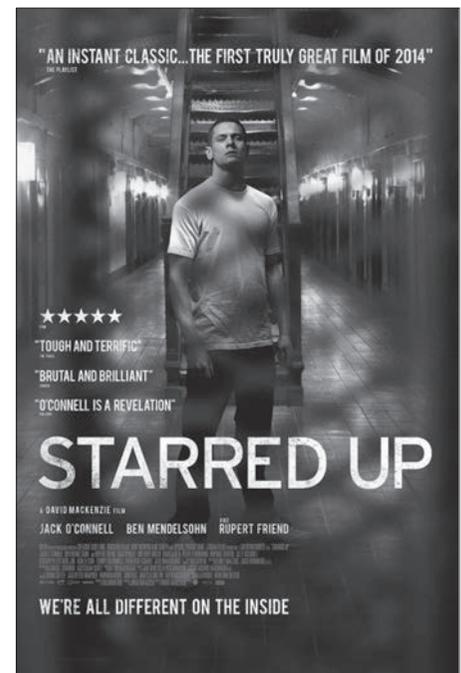
Open House readers, even if they have never been inside a prison, will be aware how important prisons are to the economy. All through the 1980s the average number of those imprisoned in Scotland was more or less 5,000 on any given day. Now it is over 8,500 and still rising. This is despite political claims that all forms of crime are on the decrease. It has just been announced that the biggest Scottish prison, Barlinnie with a capacity of 1,000, is to be rebuilt to accommodate twice as many. The local MP is looking for assurances that the new building will remain in his constituency because of the number of jobs involved. *Starred Up* is the story of a father and son for whom this system is designed.

Eric is a 19 year old Young Offender who because of his incorrigible violence is transferred to an adult prison where his father is a long term resident. The opening scene is a classic demonstration of how prisons 'work'. Eric conforms to every brusque command but is no sooner inside his new cell than he has fashioned and concealed a weapon. In prison all that

is required is external conformity. Rehabilitation is for the birds. The film ends with the shot of a revolving door just in case anyone had failed to get the point.

In between most of the film is taken up with extreme brutality. This is an anachronism. Intimidation now takes more subtle forms. First of all, hand to hand combat among men in the street is disappearing. In a world of drones even criminals have wisened up and increasingly 'tool up' to suit the occasion. Secondly the physical punishment inflicted by not very fit or clever 'screws' was eliminated after the riots of the 1980s. Nor are prisoners left at each other's mercy. The current model of imprisonment has been imported from the USA. It is called warehousing. By an ever increasing system of surveillance and isolation prisoners can be contained safely and securely for indefinite periods of time. Their clothes are clean and their food nutritious. They may even have in-cell TV but their minds are wasted.

Apart from the violence Scottish director David Mackenzie is more successful in exploring the father - son relationship. Young Eric naturally hopes his father can afford him some protection. Old Neville obviously thinks he can stop his son following in his footsteps. He says the mother was useless. Eric says he didn't have one. The increasing number brought up in care now form a significant part of the prison population. The catalyst is the violence reduction unit. This is conducted by a do-gooding volunteer (which is also unlikely). The programme does allow Eric to grow up a little, at least to the level of saying sorry and thanks. 'Nev' doesn't understand this. Eric begins to have some feelings for his dad. Unfortunately dad has been inside long enough to be able to get a cell mate who fulfils his emotional needs.



Christians are exhorted to visit those in prison or risk hell fire (Matthew 25.43). Eric is the kind of prisoner who would benefit from the gospel of mercy. First of all he has nobody to visit him which puts him at risk of being exploited by other prisoners. Also, being visited, especially by church associated strangers, puts staff more on the alert about their own responsibilities. For this reason the film can be recommended to *Open House* readers. Potential prison volunteers should not be put off by the myth of violence. They are more likely to find themselves meeting a recidivist like the one who, having robbed a pensioner of a pound coin and a can of lager with a knife recently received a sentence of six and a half years from our co-religionist Lord Uist who told him: 'The time has now come for you to receive a lengthy prison sentence in order to provide the public with some respite from your criminal activities'. (*The Herald* 15.02.14).

Perhaps the public needs respite from this approach. With respect to the referendum the expansion of imprisonment in Scotland has kept pace with that in England. There doesn't seem to be much discussion as to whether independence would offer alternatives to custody, not least for the most vulnerable.

Norman Barry



Director David Mackenzie (centre) flanked by actors Rupert Friend (left) and actor Jack O'Connell (right).

As it is in Heaven (2004)

Director: Kay Pollak

Starring: Michael Nyqvist, Frida Hallgren, Helen Sjöholm

Not so much new release as recently discovered. This is one for those of us who have become hooked on a steady diet of 'Nordic noire' dramas and conquered our resistance to subtitles. Why the fascination for all things Scandinavian has taken off to the extent it has is hard to explain. Perhaps it is the gloomy weather and the sometimes gloomy subject matter that strikes a chord with British audiences fed a constant diet of

slick American productions. *As it is in Heaven* is an antidote to sun baked locations and carefully scripted endings.

It has its darker moments but is an optimistic and life affirming film about the power of music to heal and the capacity of communities to support and encourage each other. Daniel, a successful conductor, returns to his childhood home where he was bullied to 'create music that will open a person's heart'. He takes charge of the village choir and the confidence he passes on percolates through to their lives outside the choir.

For anyone who has ever been



Daniel Daréus (Michael Nyqvist) motivates his choir.

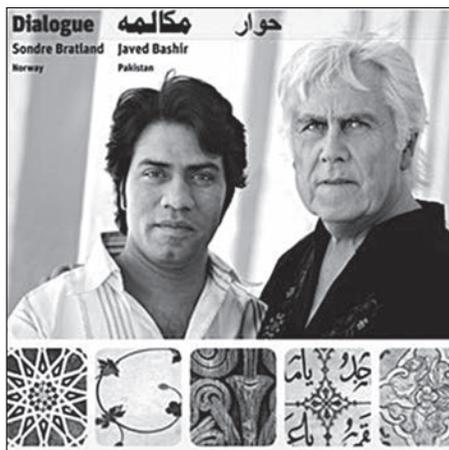
involved in music making in a group, or any other community activity, this film accurately reflects the sense of mutual support and achievement. It is not all happy ever after (it wouldn't be a Scandinavian film if it was) but it is well worth viewing. One for a wet weekend.

Florence Boyle

MUSIC

Dialogue

Javed Bashir & Sondre Bratland:
Kirkelig Kulturverksted
FXCD 308



Javed Bashir is a Pakistani singer. His singing is influenced by Qawwali, a style of Muslim devotional music, associated with the Sufi Muslim traditions of India and Pakistan. Javed says: *'The inherent poetry in Sufi music has made it popular. Sufi*

music speaks of God and love and peace between people — all timeless, universal sentiments, and therefore will always be heard'.

Sondre Bratland is famous in Norway as a folk singer and a leading singer of traditional Norwegian hymns. On a journey to Pakistan, Sondre met Javed, and they recognised in each other kindred spirits. Together they visited mosques in Lahore where they sang songs and hymns from their different religious traditions. They sang to each other call-and-response: a Muslim devotional couplet answering a Christian religious refrain; a Christian hymn counterpointing Sufi mystical poetry. The religious repertoires of the two singers are well-matched, both expressing a longing for union with God. The voices complement each other. Sondre's older, deeper, sonorous, meditative voice is like water from an ancient well. Javed's sweet, youthful, soaring tenor voice has astonishing range and

exquisite ornamentations. The kaleidoscopic mosque and the rugged Viking church.

Javed and Sondre decided to record their dialogue, and so began this album. They wanted to record in sacred places in Pakistan, Norway and Syria. The mausoleum of the 17th century Mughal emperor Jahangir was a symbolic place to start, because Jahangir was a lavish patron of the arts who showed great tolerance towards Hindus, Christians and Jews. Jahangir was buried in Lahore. Javed and Sondre recorded *'Hope'* and *'I Am You'* beside his tomb, at sunset with the crickets singing in the background.

Sondre sings the Norse words of Olav Hauge: *'This is our dream....that time will open, that hearts will open, that doors will open, that the mountains will open, that we one morning will ride in upon a wave that we never heard of.'* Javed replies with the 16th century words of Shah Hussein: *'God you are present inside me and outside,*

you are in every part of my skin.' ('Hope')

The next recording place was Masjid Wazir Khan, a beautiful mosque in the centre of the old walled city of Lahore, and a place of continuous worship. Here they recorded 'God's Presence' and 'To Find The Path'.

Javed sings a 17th century song of self-admonishment by Bulhe Shah: 'You have exhausted yourself with learning from books, but you have never tried to know your self. You enter the mosque or the temple routinely, but you have never entered your inner self. You fruitlessly fight Satan. Bulhe Shah, you catch that fly in the sky: but you never catch the one who sits in your house.' Sondre replies with a hymn by John Henry Newman: 'I wander in darkness far away from my home. Lead me on! You know so well that I did not always pray like this. Lead me on! I wanted to choose my way myself, but now: lead me on! I was proud and stubborn with haughtiness – Oh, forget that time of folly!' ('To Find The Path').

Next, they went to Oslo, Norway, and the church of Gamle Aker, the oldest building in the capital, built of stone in the Romanesque style in the 12th century. They recorded 'The Source' and 'Unity With God' there. Then they recorded 'Devotion' in the biggest medieval wooden church in Norway, the Heddal Stave Church, built around 1250. This building displays beautiful woodcarving from the age of the Vikings. Then they went to Sondre's home town of Vinje, and its small, wooden, cross-shaped church from the 1700s,

brightly coloured inside and outside, overlooking a small lake between high snow-covered mountains. 'Praise' was recorded there.

The final leg of Javed and Sondre's journey took them to Damascus. The Umayyad Mosque is a huge basilica built around 850 on the foundations of an old Byzantine church. The grave of John the Baptist is there, as is the grave of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed. Sondre and Javed asked the Grand Mufti Dr Ahmad Hassoun for permission to record music in the most sacred place in Syria. The Grand Mufti met the singers and said: 'Music follows all of us through life from the sound of lullabies to the grieving lament at the grave. And God is the greatest composer of all, having created the sound of the wind through the crown of the trees, and the sound of the sea against the shore'. The Grand Mufti blessed the project. For the Syrian recordings, Javed and Sondre had the additional accompaniment of the nine-man Peace Choir of Damascus. In large side chapels during two late evenings when the activity of the mosque had subsided, they recorded 'Heaven', 'Following', 'Morning Hymn', 'Who Am I?' and 'Across the River'.

Javed sings the 16th century Punjabi words of Shah Hussein: 'Across the river lives the Lover. I must go as I have a commitment to keep. I am begging the boatman to take me over'. And Sondre replies: 'Watchman, will the night soon come to an end? Like the deer from thirst we suffer. Oh let the morning soon break!' ('Across the River').

Sondre sings the traditional Norse hymn: 'After the darkened roads of desert, The land of promise is next to come'. Javed sings back in Urdu: 'Everyone bows before You at prayer times. When I came out of ignorance, I saw that You are present everywhere and in every person'. ('Following').

Grand Mufti Dr Ahmad Hassoun wrote this in his letter to Pope Francis last year: 'Maybe we can stop the fire of those who want to destroy the land of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad. Let us remain, hand in hand in spreading peace and security for all peoples of the world, to counter the extremists and divisions on the basis of religion or ethnicity. We continue our journey in the footsteps of the Prophets, Saints, the righteous and the men of good will. May you remain, Your Holiness under the protection, guidance and Providence of God, so together we reach the fullness of faith and light'.

Paul Matheson

Reviewers

Norman Barry is the pen name of well known and long time reviewer for *Open House*.

Florence Boyle is a lawyer who worked in the financial services sector.

Paul FitzPatrick is a retired teacher of Religious Studies and an aspiring commentator on the construction of 'religion'.

Jim Hart is a househusband who formerly worked in health. He is a member of the *Oneir* spirituality group.

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

Moments in time



The sun has just risen from the sea as we set out for an early morning walk on the coast of Angus. Far

away to the south we can see the coast of Fife around St Andrews. There has been a frost, the first I have seen since before Christmas, and the grass is white and the puddles have a thin coat of ice. We come to a large sign at the entrance to the Carnoustie Championship Golf Course. I am surprised to see that it is very welcoming notice, which informs walkers that they can walk almost anywhere on the course but to take care of flying golf balls. As well as some early dog walkers, there are several men working on the course soon after 7am.

We follow the coast for a short distance until we come to a fence and another less welcoming sign warning visitors that this is the Barry Buddon Rifle Range and that access is prohibited when red flags are flying, which they are today. We turn inland along a track which follows the edge of the golf course with the boundary

fence, which is not large and could easily be crossed, on our left. The golf course is attractively landscaped with scattered trees, several water courses and pools, complete with ducks and swans, and even some heather. The military area beyond the fence has higher sand dunes, some covered by pine trees, interspersed with low lying boggy areas. A curlew flies off and a couple of reed buntings are singing from low bushes.

The warmth of the sun's rays has removed the ground frost and the sky is cloudless; this is the sort of day I have dreamed about during the long weeks of grey, wet weather this winter. The sandy soil means that there is no mud as yesterday's rain has already drained away. Then, a small brown bird flies up into the sky, filling the air with song, then another and another. We stop and listen, entranced by the skylarks, one of the harbingers of Spring, as they rise higher and higher into the blue sky.

Tim Rhead

Tim Rhead is a pastoral assistant in the Episcopal Church.

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