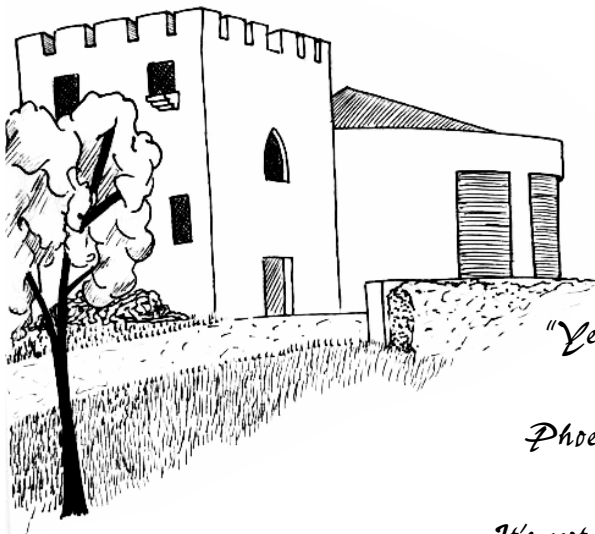


# Maxwell

## Matters



*John Sartin*

*"Yer God Stuff"*

*Phoenix to Mearns*

*It's not God's problem*

*Tearfund visit to Malawi*

*A conversation with Linda Renn*

## Caught, not taught

A couple of months ago, a book called *The Bible as Prayer* appeared. It garnered much attention with substantial articles in national newspapers and magazines, and discussion on radio programmes. The subject of all this media interest was not (no surprise here) the book's divine author, but rather the human compiler of the biblical texts, who also wrote an introduction on using or living with the Bible as a book of prayer. And this darling of the media is ... the English pianist, Stephen Hough.

Certainly not a household name (there has hardly been a classical pianist since Paderewski who has attained that status, and he was helped there by being Prime Minister of Poland for ten years), Stephen is one of the most highly regarded pianists around today. Now in his mid-40's, he became a Catholic when he was 19, and, when invited, is highly articulate on the subject of his Christian faith.

So many wonderful Christian writers would give their eye teeth for their books to receive the attention of the secular media that Stephen's has. Unfortunately, life (or the media) isn't like that. Christian writers produce Christian books. There's no story there. But when one of the world's most outstanding pianists is discovered to have another, highly unexpected, side to him, well, that's maybe even more startling than one of his concerts.

How will people react? Some might say: "Look at this brilliant pianist, who is such an inspiring writer" (Stephen Hough, I mean, not me). "He's actually a Christian! Maybe I should think again about this faith thing..."

I was once told, on the subject of spreading the Gospel, that Christianity should not be *taught*, but *caught* by others – in the way you catch a cold. We pay attention to people we respect. We are often powerfully influenced by people we admire. We want to know who they really are, what they think, and what they say and do. We might actually *catch* something good from them.

There have been many such people in my life, and one of them is Stephen Hough. I have not met him; I know him only through his music, his interviews and his writing.

And I say to myself: if this man's faith is so central to him, then perhaps I had better pay more attention to mine.


Archie McLellan

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# Tearfund Visit to Malawi

**February 2007**

 Green, red, black – the colours of Malawi, the colours on the flag. As we arrived in Lilongwe, and journeyed north to Ekwendeni, I was struck by the greenness of the country. I had imagined a bare brown landscape but instead there was vegetation everywhere – scattered trees, pine forests, crops of ripening maize, cassava, sweet potato, Irish potato, beans, ground nuts and all kinds of fruit trees. We hurtled past small villages by the roadside, all but concealed by six-foot high maize. The villagers displayed their vegetables and fruit – mangoes, bananas, tomatoes, oranges, passion fruit, and avocados in neat, tempting piles – but we swept by.

I have a vivid memory of the red-brown earth of Malawi. Apart from the surfaced M1, most roads we travelled on were dirt tracks. We were very aware of the impending dangers of the red-brown road as we lurched and slithered for mile after tortuous mile. I thought how much worse it would be for a patient being transported to hospital. The same red-brown colour was apparent at the road-sides where people walked, among the hoed crops and in the villages, where the little grass-roofed huts were constructed of bricks made by the villagers from the red-brown earth. When it

rained, which it did almost every day, my feet, my sandals and the hem of my skirt were covered in red-brown earth. It was a warm, vibrant colour, somehow symbolic of Malawi.

Black smiling faces greeted us wherever we went. Malawians are hospitable, friendly and generous in sharing the little they have. At first, everyone looked the same but soon we were learning names, some surprisingly non-Malawian, such as Washington, Mackenzie, Nelson, Wilford, Austin, Frank, Albert, Susan, Florence and Lena. We were also introduced to Meshach, Abednigo, Moses, Faith, Mercy and Blessings – names witnessing to the strong Christian faith of these lovely people, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Sunday, the first day of our visit, was very special – there was so much that was different and interesting, so much for my mind and senses to take in. John Blyth and I went to the prayer house at Emazinyeni. After a hair-raising journey along an almost impassable road, which our driver negotiated with amazing dexterity, we arrived an hour before the service was due to start. I was glad I had time to walk round the village with Kelvin (an evangelist) and John. He was a fount of useful information; an agri-forester, he had spent five years in Malawi in the eighties and identified all the crops which

require expensive fertiliser to grow in the poor soil.

We returned to the prayer house, a brick building with a corrugated roof and holes for the windows and doorways. We gathered in the vestry where I was the only woman given a seat. The lady deacons, lady elders and elders' wives sat on a mat on the floor.

After prayer, we went into the church where John and I sat on either side of Kelvin. Young men sat on benches at one side of the church while women and children sat on rush mats on the other side. The service opened with the singing of 'I to the hills will lift my eyes' to the familiar tune 'French'. I was deeply moved as we joined in, Malawians singing in harmony in Tombuko, as we sang in English. I was reminded that we are all one in Christ and these people were worshipping because David Livingstone travelled from Scotland to share the gospel. It was a privilege to be able to share in that service as we taught the children 'My God is so big', John preached on Psalm 121 and I led the prayer of intercession. We enjoyed standing at the doorway at the end of the service while everyone, including the children, was eager to shake our hands.

The next few days in Ekwendeni passed very quickly as we visited many of the

projects which Tearfund is supporting. Margaret (Halliday) and I were encouraged to see local people taking the initiative and working hard to improve conditions for orphans, for children and for HIV/AIDS sufferers. They were grateful for the financial help provided by Scripture Union, working in schools, and Tearfund.

One of the most memorable parts of my visit was the twenty-four hours I spent in a rural home. I stayed with Mr Nyirongo, a retired teacher and his wife who had been married in Lilongwe forty-seven years ago by Rev Roddy Campbell. Eleven children had been born to the couple but three had died. There had been three sets of twins; the only remaining set, twin daughters aged twenty-five, lived at home. The house had no electricity or running water and the daughters, Blessings and Grace, prepared the meals on a wood fire in a separate building. Due to the very heavy rain, it grew quite dark in the small living room but the family were reluctant to light the paraffin lamp until the evening, as paraffin is very scarce and dear. My stay with the Nyirongos was a very interesting but humbling experience. These people were prepared to share what they had with a total stranger and they made me feel so welcome.

During the long journey by mini-bus to Lilongwe where we had an over-night stop, and then to Blantyre, we were able to admire the beautiful scenery and the changing landscape as we descended from the high plateau in the north to the warmer south. As we travelled, we were intrigued by the variety of goods which the women carried on their heads; the men transported their goods on bicycles – firewood, bags of charcoal, hens, goats, sacks of maize or wife and child. In a land of very few cars, there was always a steady stream of pedestrians, including many unaccompanied children, trudging along the roadside.

While we were staying in Blantyre, we attended the Living Waters Pentecostal Church, where Sunday morning worship lasted almost five hours. However, the time passed quickly as the singing was enthusiastic and lively, three babies were dedicated and communion was served to the large congregation. In Blantyre, we visited the Chisomo street children's project which restores children to their families, who are then supported by the project's social workers. We visited Fombe, the village where Esther and Alinafe live. Having spoken to Guilds in Glasgow about Esther who is HIV positive,

and about her daughter who has been tested and is free of the virus, I could hardly believe that I was seeing the people I had watched on the video, 'Work a Miracle'. We visited two other villages close to Fombe and at all three, we saw where new crops and fruit trees had been planted, bore-holes provided clean drinking water, goats were kept for milk and meat and nurseries had been provided for young children whose mothers worked in the fields. We met the village headmen and various committees and we were impressed by the commitment of the villagers and their determination to improve their standard of living. Once again, we could see the difference that Tearfund makes, by supporting Christian groups such as Eagles who were able to give practical and financial help to these poor communities.

I would like to describe so much more of what I saw, heard, smelt, tasted and felt but space does not allow. Our visit to Malawi was a wonderful and unforgettable experience. I hope I have conveyed some of the problems and potential of this wonderful country, 'the warm heart of Africa'.

*Elspeth Burgess*

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## *From the Kirk Session*

*A*s you may be aware, the Kirk Session has recently spent time reviewing the initial experimental dual services offered on the last Sunday of each month and this has included consideration of response forms submitted by members of the Church Family. We are extremely grateful for the many constructive comments received.

We found ourselves impressed by the strong desire and concern for unity as a Church Family and after prayerful consideration, the Kirk Session has decided that this period of experimentation will not continue beyond the services on 24 June 2007.

We will now continue with a single “blended” format service each Sunday, attempting to benefit from the valuable insights gained throughout the period of experimentation.

As a Kirk Session, we are committed to seeking God’s will for this Church Family and to finding ways of realising meaningful growth both in spiritual and numerical aspects – something which, we were reminded, will only materialise if underpinned by prayer.

We will continue to consider these aspects over the coming months and would welcome your prayerful support for us as a Kirk Session as we do so.

*Calum McPhail*

Session Clerk

## Yer God Stuff

**J** don't want yer God Stuff, the woman announced as she opened the door the C of S Tom Allan Counselling Centre in Glasgow.

It was her way of setting out her boundaries right at the beginning of her attendance at the Centre.

Hamish Montgomery, the first Director, shared this incident with us trainee counsellors to hammer home that it is the client who sets the agenda in counselling, not us.

It raised an important question for me. Isn't Jesus the answer to all our needs? Don't Christians have as a prime responsibility to share the Good News about Him?

I started to study the Gospels trying to bring my newly acquired counselling

insights to Jesus agenda. What was going on when He met Nicodemus at night, the woman at the well at noon, the rich young ruler as he travelled, Zaccheus up a tree or Mary and Martha in their home?

He had the knack of meeting people where they were. Listening to them, answering or posing questions and sometimes presenting them with comfort or a challenge. No wonder the prophet Isaiah called the coming Messiah that He would be called "Wonderful Counsellor"!

Is His way a good blueprint for our relationships? It may not seem like evangelism but it has the stuff of Jesus about it and God knows where that might lead!

*Ken Carter*

## Web stuff

**T**he internet is a most wonderful tool. I use iTunes on my computer and I download sermons and minute talks from some of the world's great preachers such as Max Lucado. They are most interesting and thought provoking.

I collect Max Lucado talks onto CD's – 65 talks on one CD or hundreds on an iPod.

I have recently booked my holiday to Toronto and New York online: flights, places to stay, including the YMCA just off Central Park. .

Although the internet can be used to harm people, it can also be used to great effect to show that God is right in the centre of it all – but you have to look.

*Watson Beattie*

## Who Were They?

I have been reading *The Maxwell Story*, the history of Maxwell Parish Church from 1865 to 1965. You do not need a reason for reading *The Maxwell Story*; it is a very good read and it tells an inspiring story. But I did have a reason. I had noticed that the Cups and Plate we still use at Communion are engraved with names of the donors and the dates on which they were presented to the Church. Who were these people and what was significance of the dates? I also had a mystery to solve.

Maxwell Church was established as an offshoot of Govan Parish Church. Govan Parish was having difficulty coping with the rapid growth in population south of the Clyde and the gaps left by the Church of Scotland were being filled by the Free and United Presbyterian Churches which had broken from the Church of Scotland at the Disruption of 1843.

The initiative was taken by a small group of Pollokshields men, who wanted to stay within the Church of Scotland, but who felt that Govan church was too far from their homes. With their help, the Minister of Govan persuaded the local landowner, Sir John Maxwell, to grant a site in Pollock Street for a new church. There was a problem though. In the 19th Century, Churches like Govan established in

ancient parishes (with the same civil and church boundaries) received financial support from a land tax. If you wanted to build a new church, you had to find the money to build it and to maintain it.

Six of the Pollokshields group opened the Subscription Sheet with a total of £350 in 1863, a minister was appointed to Maxwell Church in 1865, and in 1867, Maxwell was recognised as a full Parish Church, able to appoint its own Kirk Session and ordain Elders. There was no Congregational Board in these days. Its place was taken by the Trustees, men of substance who controlled the business affairs of the church.

Three of the six names on that first Subscription Sheet are found on our Communion Silver: William McOnie, Andrew McOnie and William Wilson. A fourth name on the sheet, Charles Randolph, puts these names into context. He was the shipbuilder who endowed the Randolph Hall at Glasgow University and like the other five Subscribers was one of the original Maxwell Parish Church Trustees.

Establishing a church in those days was not just a matter of acquiring a site, building a sanctuary and hiring a minister. In the first three years of its existence, the

Maxwell Kirk Session also built and staffed a school and built and staffed a separate "Mission". The ladies of the Church (including Mrs William McOnie) also ran the Maxwell Clothing Society which distributed relief (not just clothes) to the poor of the Parish. When a bitterly cold winter coincided with a trade depression with high unemployment in 1878/9, the work of the Clothing Society was supplemented with a Parish Relief Committee.

At Maxwell, we have three sets of Communion Cups and Flagons. William Wilson started us off in 1865, the year the church opened, with two Flagons and four Cups. These handsome vessels are silver plated. He also presented the silver Basin for the Font. The following year, William McOnie presented two more Cups of similar design to the original William Wilson Cups but these seem to be solid silver. They have hallmarks.

The third set, the set we currently use, of six Cups and two Flagons was presented to the Church in 1886, by Mrs Andrew McOnie in memory of her husband who had died on 19 May 1886. She also donated two Plates, one in memory of her husband and one in memory of her two children: Alexander (died 11 March 1861) and Evelyn Berta (died 23 Nov, 1873). In 1906, two further plates were donated by

Mrs McOnie's children in her memory. Mrs McOnie died in 1901.

We do not know much about William Wilson; it is too common a name to track down through Google. But we do know that he was ordained an Elder in the original Kirk Session of 1867 and was one of the first Trustees. A lot more is known about the McOnies. William and Andrew McOnie were brothers who ran an engineering business located in Scotland Street. It made sugar refining equipment, mainly for markets in Mauritius, Brazil and Java. William and Andrew had broken away in 1851 from McOnie and Mirrilees (later Mirrilees Watson) which had been founded by their elder brother Peter in 1848. They must have prospered since in 1867 William (later Sir William) was elected to the Town Council and was Lord Provost from 1883–1886. 1867 was the year that William and Andrew were appointed amongst the first Trustees of Maxwell Parish Church. William was also admitted as an Elder to the first Kirk Session. Since he was admitted and not ordained, he was, presumably, already an Elder, probably of Govan Parish Church.

The McOnie family remained associated with Maxwell Parish Church for nearly 100 years. Another Andrew McOnie was appointed to the Trustees in 1903 and served as Chairman of the Trustees from 1910 until his death in 1918. Miss Mary

McOnie, a descendant of William, died in 1964. Her final bequest of £1,000 was only one of many.

The final two plates were presented in 1911 by the then Minister and Session Clerk. The occasion seems to have been the demission of the Rev Adam Ferguson who had accepted a call to St Mary's Dundee. Mr Ferguson had been the fourth minister of Maxwell and had served 10 years from 1901 to 1911. The Session Clerk was John Imrie, who was ordained an Elder in 1899 and was Session Clerk from 1902 to 1923. His plate is inscribed "To the Glory of God, In Thankful Remembrance of many mercies and in Loving Memory of his wife Jane Kerr Pollock died 18 June 1895 and their son Robert Pollock who died 13 November 1904".

The inscription on the Minister's plate is in some ways my favourite. It is inscribed "To the Glory of God and for perpetual use in the Ministration of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, this Paten, is dedicated by the Rev Adam Wightman Ferguson BD in Thankful Remembrance of the ten happy years of his ministry in Maxwell Parish Church 5 Sept 1911" After all these canny businessmen, it is the Minister who takes precautions to make sure his plate is kept for the purposes he intended!

The new plates must have been needed. The peak attendance at Communion was

in October 1911 when more than 900 members packed the church at a single sitting. No wonder the Communion Silver now has a few scratches.

What was the mystery I was trying to solve? In 2004, the Church was contacted by Mappin & Webb. Would we collect two Communion Cups which had been lying in their vault in Buchanan Street for as long as anyone could remember? We checked the insurance valuation which had been completed in 1993 and there was nothing missing. Nevertheless I was dispatched to Mappin & Webb and was presented with two cups, one of the William Wilson Cups from 1865 and one of the William McOnie cups from 1866. They were our Cups. Clearly they had been in Mappin & Webb's safe since before 1993. When had they gone missing?

*The Maxwell Story* has a picture of the Communion Silver. In the picture there are 10 cups, four flagons and six plates. With the cups returned by Mappin & Webb, we now have 12 cups. There are also 12 Cups listed in Appendix IV of *The Maxwell Story* but, interestingly, two question marks are entered in the Donor column for two of the 1866 cups, suggesting that the author had not had access to these cups. So it looks like the cups which were returned to us were missing in 1965 and therefore were never transferred Maxwell Mearns Castle Parish Church.

The story of the Communion Silver goes back to the foundation and to the founders of Maxwell Parish Church. The founders' commitment went far beyond the donation of a few items of silver. They established the Church itself, served as Trustees and Elders, established a School and more than one Mission. Certainly they were wealthy men with respected positions in Society but they and their womenfolk considered it their duty to put their resources and their time into providing many of the functions that the Social Work and Education Departments carry out in the 21st Century. It is not just ancient history either. People whose names are mentioned in *The Maxwell Story* are still members of Maxwell Mearns Castle and the last of the McOnies must have overlapped with some of our current members.

The story of the Communion Plate reminds us of how life has changed in 140 years. Few of us may have the resources

of the successful men who founded the Church. On the other hand, the plate records several stories of children who died before their parents, a much rarer event now thanks to modern medicine.

Maxwell's Story is inspiring – especially the early years. The book ends rather sadly, though. It was written in 1965 for the Church's Centenary. At that time, they knew that the church would be demolished to build the Kingston Bridge and they were losing members as "Comprehensive Redevelopment" demolished much of the parish and moved residents to the peripheral housing schemes. The decision to relocate to Newton Mearns was still in the future.

*The Maxwell Story* is held in the Church Library. This has just been one of the many stories it contains. See Sue Amery-Behr, the Minister's Secretary, if you would like to follow up any more.

*Alistair Brunton*

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## Suffering

Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has. Out of pain and problems have come the sweetest songs, and most gripping stories.

Billy Graham

# Entertaining Angels

## Entertaining Angels – Dinner for six Desert Hills Preparatory Visit

November 2006 saw a visit from Jim Noble pastor of Desert Hills Presbyterian Church. He came merely to introduce himself and to say, “Hi” from his church. He had been encouraged to come by Dick Dietrich who had recognised the similarities in our two churches during a visit with a group of musicians earlier in the year. During the November visit, plans were made for some members of his church to come over in May 2007 to forge links with Maxwell Mearns.

### Accommodation

A small group was formed to organise the trip from the Scotland side. My remit was to arrange hospitality for the group. I had no idea when I took up this challenge just how busy we are as a church family. People on holiday, folks in Romania, families coming to visit using up the spare room not to mention my own difficulty being three stressed teenagers sitting exams that week. We worked round these challenges (remember: no problems in life only challenges) and managed to accommodate 20 Americans in our homes. Some of the group had “two-centred” accommodation and, far from being stressed by the packing up

midweek, actually felt enriched by engaging with new hosts.

### Hospitality

The meals side of the remit was delegated and I am grateful to Petrina McTear who undertook the task of finding hosts to provide meals for the group. Initially it was thought that we would entertain the whole group in the church flat in the evenings. We realised however that the congregation were keen to entertain guests in their own homes. This was a great success as the guests were able to meet more of our congregation. As we had mixed up the Desert Hills team, they were also able to get to know each other better.

### Do we know each other?

This got me thinking. How many of our congregation do we really know? Do we invite people in our own congregation round for supper, dinner or coffee? Do we know what makes them tick, what to pray for etc. David Cameron, in a recent sermon, was calling us to engage more with one another.

### Dinner For Eight

In conversation with some of the Desert Hills Team, I learnt of a programme that works very well in their church. This

programme is called, “dinner for eight”. Interested members of the congregation sign up for this hospitality programme. They are then put into groups of eight where the idea is they have a meal once a month for four months. The person hosting the meal in their house makes the main course and some of the others provide a starter, salad course and sweet. Other members of the group act as hosts over the next three months. Their programme runs from October to January with another running from February to May. One person from the group is allocated as the leader. The leader organises the dates for the four months at the beginning of the programme. Following this so far? Good!

### **Dinner for Six**

In a recent conversation with Ruth and Alistair Bull, it was decided to try a Maxwell Mearns Castle version of this.

The plan is to have a “Dinner for Six” programme. Scottish people don’t normally have a salad course! (My imagination hardly goes past lettuce, tomato and cucumber!) We hope to start this in September 07 and run the first one until November 07. The next programme will start in January 08 and will run to March 08.

If you are interested, speak to me, Phyl Campbell (0141 639 5117), or Ruth Bull (0141 639 7358), as soon as possible please, as the holiday season is approaching and we would like to have the groups organised by August 2007.

*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13: 2*

*Phyl Campbell*  
(Social Ministry Team Leader)

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## *Repentance*

**A** man volunteered to paint the church steeple. With great difficulty, he hoisted himself up on to the steeple with a can of paint and a bottle of water.

After painting half the steeple, the man realised that he was running out of paint, so he added some of the water to the paint. He was almost at the top when he realised he needed more paint to finish, so he added more water to the paint, and mumbled, “No one will ever know.”

When he finished painting, he began to lower himself off the steeple.

Just then, the skies darkened, a loud clap of thunder was heard, and a voice from above said, “Repaint, repaint, and thin no more!”

## *Phoenix to Mearns*

Desert Hills Presbyterian is so far away  
Yet some of their number were coming our way  
To our bible study five guests came  
For of course our Father and their's is the same  
There are similarities between them and us  
We'd discuss differences too without any fuss.

We'd sent a photo the previous day  
So they'd know us when they came to stay.  
Eileen and Sue were a sheer delight,  
We ate and talked until nine at night.

Every day they were really busy  
Sometimes I thought we'd get in a tizzy  
But all the planning surely paid off  
Though neither of them needed the cough  
That they acquired after some days-  
For weatherwise we missed the sun's rays.

It was interesting hearing about the west  
And getting to know all about each guest.

We went to Edinburgh and saw the sights  
We came back around eight but needed no lights;  
A fact that really amazed our friends  
Because in Phoenix daylight ends  
Much earlier than it does in our city  
But we don't get their heat – more is the pity.

We “did” the shops in Glasgow town  
Though they refrained from buying a gown  
Saw some of the sights of Glasgow and how –  
On the way home saw a highland cow!

The ceilidh and music was enjoyed by all  
With line dancing display, we each had a ball  
Popular too were the suppers of fish  
When they came in a carton – not in a dish.

In Aberfoyle we saw a goat  
Then on to Loch Katrine for our cruise in a boat.

Eileen and Sue, having you was a privilege  
Now Mearns to Phoenix? It'll seem like an age!

*Evelyn Foote*

# When Desert Hills meets Maxwell Mearns!

On behalf of the team from Desert Hills, I wish to thank you for your kindness and warm hospitality.

When we first began planning our trip to Scotland we had three goals in mind. The first was to get to know you here at Maxwell Mearns and what the Lord is accomplishing through you. Everyone in the team enjoyed their time with their host families, eating dinner with others in the church, and the many conversations held over a cup of coffee or tea. We also benefited from talking with you about your prison ministry, Alpha program, mission projects, and many other ministries.

The second goal was a pilgrimage of our Celtic roots and the insights we can gain from the past for our life together today as the body of Christ. The trip we took together to Lindisfarne, worshipping and breaking bread together in St. Mary's Chapel, and listening to Ray Simpson talk of the ministry of Columba and Aiden really inspired and challenged us. That you went with us made it all the more special and strengthened our awareness of our connection to the Body of Christ.

The third goal was to impart some sort of blessing to you. To that end we hope that

our sharing about our ministry at Desert Hills, our love for Arizona (including our songs), and our passionate desire to continue to grow to become more like Christ encouraged you in some way. We also enjoyed working to set up the library, cleaning the preschool toys, and weeding in the garden.

We look forward to being together in the future and extend an official invitation to you to come and visit us in Arizona. We would love to show you around Arizona, lead you on a retreat, and introduce you to some of our missions in the Phoenix area.

The Apostle Paul put it best, "For I want very much to see you, in order to share a spiritual blessing with you to make you strong. What I mean is that both you and I will be helped at the same time, you by my faith and I by yours." (Romans 1: 11-12)

We thank you again for the blessings you imparted and are eager to see you again!

Peace in Christ,

*Jim Noble*

Pastor, Desert Hills Presbyterian Church,  
Carefree, Arizona

# Evening Services

Following recent discussions both with the folks who attend our evening services and also the Kirk Session, we are proposing to revamp the programme and pattern of our evening services from the beginning of September this year. Though this decision was made some time ago, I, for one, have found it difficult to implement sooner, given recent family and church commitments, and I trust that this has not resulted in any loss of momentum which some of you may have sensed building up during the lead up to these new initiatives.

Essentially the proposal is as follows:

**1st and 3rd Sunday evenings at 7.00pm** – worship in the Sanctuary with emphasis on Bible teaching.

**2nd Sunday evening in the Maxwell Hall at 8.00pm** – Café style event similar to those run whilst Desert Hills team was over. Topical with teaching and testimony, interactive and varied with musical input appropriate to the occasion. Oh yes, and Coffee and Cake!

**4th Sunday evening in the Church Flat at 8.00pm** – Conversations – an opportunity to gather in an informal setting to explore with others some of the issues and topics of the day. Drawn from media, church, life!

And then on **those rare occasions when we have a 5th Sunday evening** – between say 4.30 and 6.00pm – an opportunity for families to gather with something for everyone; inspiring worship; relevant teaching for kids and parents; and then the one thing we can all safely do together – EAT.

Interested in helping to make any of these events happen? Have you any ideas for topics and themes to be explored? Do get in touch by email, phone or note to the church office.

*David Cameron*

# A conversation with ...

## Linda Renn

*I first met Linda in the summer of 1987, on a bus, on the way to a Scripture Union camp in Dunbar. She was a young leader, just leaving school. Twenty years later, we pick up the story...*

### **At that point, where did you think you would be now?**

I really didn't think I would end up in Newton Mearns. I was about to go to university then, so, ten years after that I probably thought I would be working in Optometry. I was a teenager and for me twenty years later didn't exist as a concept.

### **Has becoming a mother changed you?**

Being a mother: I have changed in virtually every way. I used to avoid working with this age group! Primary 6 and 7 was the youngest I used to work with. I think on the whole I've had to learn to be content with being in the house a lot playing with a two-year-old and a four-year-old – which, when you go from being a full-time working person to doing that, is quite hard. And also to be content. There are fantastic times and difficult times – and I have had to learn to accept what life holds. It gives you a great sense as well, of being

human, and of passing on to the next generation.

### **Why do you come to Maxwell church?**

We had moved into the area and neither of us were from here so we didn't know anywhere. We tried various churches and when we came here it was very welcoming and friendly and lots of people spoke to us. It felt a bit like coming home; and so we stayed.

### **You were recently elected to be an elder. How did that come about and how do you feel about it?**

I had a very surprising letter through the post one morning, out of the blue, saying that the Kirk Session were considering appointing new elders, of which I was one. I went through a couple of weeks of "What do I do?" and then I felt that God said that I should do it, and I wouldn't have done it otherwise! But I had a verse in the service that Alister Bull read out. It was Matthew 12 when it talks about your "burdens". That really spoke to me and I felt God said that if I did take it on then he would make it work and that it wouldn't be too much and that I would fit in and that was what he wanted me to do. That's why I did it.

**How do you feel about being a young woman on the session?**

Someone did come up to me after communion and say how nice it was to see some younger people on the session. I think there are a whole lot of things going on in the church and we are always looking to the future and looking outwards and we are going to need some younger elders for that and for bringing in different ideas. That's where I see my role at the moment. I am involved in the overseas missions side of things.

**What is on in the church to do with overseas missions?**

Well, I am going to try and raise the profile of what goes on and take some slots in services and notices in the intimations as a start, and build towards getting folk involved. However there are lots of things that go on that most people don't know about and I want to try and raise that profile so that people can be praying and getting involved.

**You have also just taken on to be Chair, for the second year, of the Castle Nursery. What have been the good things about being Chair of the Castle Nursery?**

I am doing it again because I have enjoyed it overall. I think it is great and it is

a good way of meeting people – there are so many families from the community that are involved. And that's where I am at the moment – I have a young family. The Nursery was originally the church playgroup and it grew from that. There is still a church board connection and we follow the Scottish Executive's curriculum for pre-schoolers. It is a very good nursery. Everyone loves the atmosphere, possibly because it is a bit smaller than other ones – my children love it. And I look forward to taking it forward for another year.

**And what about the future? Would you see yourselves overseas long term?**

Lawrence and I have done various projects overseas with YWAM, both separately and together. We haven't done anything for a long time. I do find it hard to find out where the kids would figure into this because that is a big thing. Kids overseas!

**And what is the appeal of working overseas?**

I think partly it is the romance of it. It's just great. I love being in different countries, different cultures. I love all the different things. I enjoy being overseas. I think it is important that my children see that not every one has as much as they do here, and that they shouldn't expect it.

**What's your favourite bible verse?**

Zephaniah 3: 17 "The Lord your God is with you; the mighty one will save you. He will rejoice over you. You will rest in his love; he will sing and be joyful about you"

**What advice would you pass onto your children?**

I want them to know that they are special, that life is special – that God does love them, has died for them and is there for them. And I want them to know that life should be an adventure.

**What's your biggest challenge?**

Motherhood and juggling everything.

**What is your biggest blessing?**

My children.

Thank you for talking to us, Linda – I'll be interested to catch up with you in ten years time and see where you are!

*Sandra McNicol*

(We are grateful to Sandra for stepping in to Lyn Steven's shoes for this conversation. Lyn is on holiday.)

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## *New Probationer at Maxwell*

Once again we are delighted that the Church of Scotland has invited us to provide an opportunity for one of the Probationers training for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament to complete their final 15 months with us at Maxwell Mearns Castle .

On 1 August, we look forward to welcoming Alastair Cook and his wife Sheila into our church family and it is our prayer that together, over the next 15 months, we will sense God's presence and see God's hand at work in our shared ministry together.

Alastair has been a fellow student of Catherine Beattie's and Andrew Robertson's since their first days of study at Glasgow University; this a far cry from Alastair's days as a partner in a City Centre accountancy firm.

They are both members at Burnside Blairbeth Church where Alastair's accountancy skills were put to good use in overseeing the financial aspects of a £1 million pound refurbishment programme and Sheila's musical gifts enriched the worshipping life over many years.

We look forward to welcoming them and sharing with them in all that lies in store during our days together.

*David Cameron*

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Why did only one cleansed leper return to thank Jesus?

One waited to see if the cure was real.

One waited to see if it would last.

One said he would see Jesus later.

One decided that he had never had leprosy.

One said he would have got well anyway.

One gave thanks to the priests.

One said "Oh well, Jesus didn't really do anything."

One said "Any Rabbi could have done it."

One said "I was already much improved."

# Communion Services

## Dates for Your Diary

Elsewhere in this issue, the Minister has explained the new format of the Evening Services. When we agreed this new format, we in Kirk Session realised that we would have to think again about our schedule of Communion Services.

For the last few years, we have served Communion at both the Morning and Evening Services of the second Sunday of December, March and June and on one Sunday in September or early October. Whilst it was easy to remember, that programme of Evening Communion Services did not seem to be meeting the needs of the Congregation.

So, the Kirk Session decided to keep the current timetable of Morning Communion Services and to schedule Evening Communion Services roughly half way between the Morning Communion Services. Evening Communion will be served from next November on the first Sunday of November, February, May and August. In case you think that sounds familiar, you are correct. We are more or less going back to how we scheduled the services in the 1990s.

The dates for Communion Services in 2007/2008 will be:

### Morning Communion Only

16 September 2007  
9 December 2007  
9 March 2008  
8 June 2008.

### Evening Communion

4 November 2007  
3 February 2008  
4 May 2008  
3 August 2008

Communion will also be served on Maundy Thursday, which next year is 20 March 2008. Maundy Thursday Communion is usually one of the Joint Holy Week Services that the Newton Mearns and Eaglesham Churches share and so the Service might be held in another local church. Details will be in the Notices.

*Alistair Brunton*

## Home and away

Normally at this time of the year, the various Ministry candidates who have placements to do are heading off to different parts of Scotland. Some will experience ministry in a rural or island charge for the first time, while others will go to chaplaincy or a city parish. Having been in most of these settings I decided that this was an opportunity to branch out and try something completely different. The opportunity arose for me to go to Desert Hills Presbyterian Church, Phoenix, Arizona and, along with Linda and the boys, I am heading off there on Saturday, 30 June. We arrive back on 8 August and on 13 August I start at Langside Parish Church where I will complete my summer placement.

I am looking forward to having the opportunity to experience church life in another culture. There are many similarities between Maxwell Mearns and Desert Hills. However it is the differences between the two which will be most interesting. It was really good to be involved with the visitors we had from Arizona, and it means that there will be people looking out for us when we arrive at church there. When I'm there, I have to preach, attend home groups, do pastoral visiting and follow-up calls, attended various church meetings, and generally do what I would do here – except that it will be shorts and t-shirt weather! Langside will

obviously be different but, hopefully, no less instructive. They have recently started the process towards linkage/union with neighbouring congregations and it will be interesting to see how this has affected the congregation.

I have completed my university studies for this year and am waiting for results. Assuming I have passed everything, I am required to do one more year which will be postgraduate study (MTh). I have no idea what courses are available yet, or what topic to consider for my dissertation, but there's plenty of time to get organised.

I have been on placement at The Park Church, Giffnock since last October. There was a Reader in training as well so we treated it like a team ministry and shared most of the services. It was a good placement, although similar to experience I already have. I have had to think about possible places for probation (for a year in September) and hope to have the opportunity to visit the different congregations before the final decision is made in November. It is a long, sometimes convoluted, process but that's the first year gone already. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers and encouragement, not only for me but for Linda, Alasdair and John too. They have a lot to put up with!

*David Clarkson*

# News from the Plews

## Births

Dave and Kirsty McLaren's son, Cameron Alistair, was born on 25 February. We congratulate Alistair and Ada.

Stuart Mills and his wife Helen became the proud parents of twin boys, Thomas and Harry, on 11 March. Congratulations to grandparents, Raymond and Alison Mills.

On 7 April, Isobelle, daughter of David and Claire, was born – a wee sister for Amelie and another grand-daughter for Sam and Muriel Nugent.

On 14 April, twin daughters, Mollie and Madeleine, were born to Christopher Halliday and his wife Jen, in USA. Congratulations to grandparents, Sandy and Margaret Halliday.

Jake Thomas, son of Mark and Karen, was born on 18 May. Congratulations to Edith on the birth of her first grandchild.

Craig and Suzanne's daughter, Orla Kirsten, was born on 6 June. Orla is the first grandchild for Elspeth and Jim Burgess.

## Weddings

Congratulations to the happy couples

Chris Plews and Lyndsay Cameron were married on 5 May

Fiona Brown and Chris Gilroy were married in Culzean Castle on 9 June

*Elspeth & Jim Burgess*

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## **Nexus Scotland, Thursday 23 – Saturday 25 August, SECC**

nex-us n. pl. nexus or nex-us-es

1. A means of connection; a link or tie
2. A connected series or group.
3. The core or centre

An exciting and dynamic new event from an exciting and new dynamic partnership. Presented by the Clyde Presbyteries in conjunction with Scottish Christian Resources Exhibition and Church without Walls.

*Not so much an Exhibition ... more of an Experience*

# Minister's Report to SAM

## Report to Stated Annual Meeting in March 2007 by David Cameron

**A**cts 1: 8–11 in the Message reads: “What you’ll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world.” These were his last words.

These last words of Jesus to his disciples have been powerfully lived out down through the centuries. What began as a mere drop in the ocean has become a worldwide movement of change and transformation. The image which comes to my mind is of the impact of a pebble upon a still pond, where the ripple effect goes out and out and out. I use such an image for reflecting on this past year at Maxwell Mearns Castle and sadly (!) all my headings begin with the first letter of the word “pool”.

We start at the heart of our Congregational life – the first place where we are able to witness the impact of the Holy Spirit :

### People and Personnel

It is fair to say we have a great team of people actively involved in a huge range of activities, in and out of church. Up in our offices, I’m grateful for the provision of a

great team of folks who, week by week, enable the life of our church to function smoothly – in particular my secretary, Sue Amery-Behr, youth minister, Jay Lennartson and admin guru, Graeme Lipsett. Over this year, we saw a major increase in our support team when, back in May, our Church Officer Graeme Wright sadly died after a long battle with cancer. Into the gap stepped up a team of folks, as well as Bill Leitch, to cover the myriad of duties undertaken by Graeme. We were able to pay tribute to Bill and to acknowledge his significant contribution to us over these years. After a very good response, we welcomed Alastair Kerr as our new church officer and we look forward to forging a strong partnership with Alastair and Joyce in the days to come.

Continuing in the personnel mode – our whole youth ministry underwent a review this past year with the outcome being a revised Job Description for Jay, as we seek to develop a greater sense of involvement and ownership of the congregation in the youth ministry.

Finally, in this section, we have, in the Session, been taking stock of our ministries and with the happy integration of a new group of elders, we hope, in the next few months, to announce some new

developments in the ministries of our Session.

Staying with the ripple effect we move out into the 2nd topic:

### **Probationers**

Glad to say **Graham Nash** is now settling in to his new charge in Glenburn in Paisley. Time with us saw Graeme grow and develop and this has undoubtedly prepared him well for his new adventure. We continue to receive news from **Paul and Ali Grant** in Stonehouse and **Ian McDonald** in Westerhailes. Glad to say that of the making of probationers there seems to be no end and on 1 August this year we look forward to welcoming **Alastair Cook**, a member at Burnside Blairbeth who with his wife Sheila, will become an active part of our church family. Your prayers for them during the final weeks of university life are appreciated.

The third area is:

### **Praise**

Next Sunday sees the start of a new development in our worshipping life with the introduction of a 2nd service in the Maxwell Hall at 10.30 am. These two services will differ in their ethos and, given that we are going to run them once a month, we hope to experiment and assess as we go. Further changes are also being

proposed to our evening pattern of services and the details of these will follow in the months to come.

This year saw the instruction of a stunning new screen and clear projector here in the sanctuary and we are grateful, firstly to all who give financially to support this and secondly to those who made it happen. A particular thanks to Stuart Clark who project-managed the whole process!

Going wider to our 4th area:

### **Presbytery Plan**

This is not yet agreed, but essentially, the 5 local churches will work together. Lynn McClery was here yesterday in the first pulpit exchange with Eaglesham. It went well. News also from yesterday was that Rev Jim Boag from Dalry preached as sole nominee at Broom and was accepted. It is fair to say that the challenging vision of the Presbytery Plan is not fully owned by the local churches and I sense that the time is perhaps right for us to forge ahead. To this end, we hope to announce a new outreach initiative into the wider Newton Mearns area in the near future.

Further out still, our 5th area:

### **Presbytery**

The Presbytery is giving us two challenges this year as a congregation:

1. To get on board with Nexus, the follow up to Big Saturday and CRE on 23–25

August. We had great support on many areas of it before, youth work, stewarding, labyrinth, newspaper distribution etc.

2. To release their minister to become Moderator of Presbytery from June for one year. This involves moderating meetings, sharing the lead of special services of induction and anniversary and acting as a representative of the church in a number of civic and ecumenical roles.

Wider still, the 6th area:

### Pioneers

It is great to continue to see folks from our congregation out in the field, forging new opportunities and ways of ministry. This past year **Bryson and May Arthur** have returned to Israel, to build up a Spurgeon's Development and Training centre. We spoke today. **Catherine Beattie** and **Andrew Robertson** are near the end of Uni training and have now been allocated Probationer placements. Catherine will be at Newlands South and Andrew at Cathcart Trinity. Following in their footsteps, **David Clarkson** is currently on placement with Rev. Calum McDonald at Giffnock the Park Church. Pray, as he and the church attempt to discern where his probationer placement might be. **Ian Walker** continues his preparation for the readership with a placement at Balornock

Grayfriars Church. **Fiona Maxwell**, in Dalmuir, Barclay, and **David and Joyce Swan**, in Cove, continue to forge ahead into the challenges of two very different settings for ministry. Pray for them, especially now as the honeymoon period will, no doubt, be passed.

Other pioneers include **Alan Gray** with YFC Kick and Sports Ministry. The challenge ahead includes a new portable soccer pitch and development of the Kick Academy. Also **Mark Cameron** out in Sydney at Hillsongs – more information in the recent Maxwell Matters. **Kay Steven** has now returned from Canada after a significant time with YWAM there. Kay had a short spell as a youth worker in Westerhailes, and following this she is now back in town seeking God's direction and vision for her future. **Chris Plews** can be found most evenings in the Paisley/Linwood area, working with YMCA as an outreach worker. Pray for him as he seeks to develop ministry amongst young folks on the fringe.

And FINALLY, (big pool this!) we come to the widest impact, beyond our shores.

Area 7:

### Partnership

It is great to see growth in partnership with the AWI people and in particular those out in the field. This year saw four of our folks head out to visit Mark and Debbie

McLachlan and see at first hand the challenging situation. Our partnership with Romania continues through Heart to Heart and in May – after a wedding! Maggy and Lesley, Heather and Kirsteen and Sue Anderson all head out there. This follows on from a team of seven who ventured out last May. Last night there was wonderful insight following Margaret Halliday and

Elsbeth Burgess's visit with Tearfund to Malawi, and in May this year we hope to develop a partnership with Desert Hills Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Arizona, when Rev Jim Noble and perhaps 24 of his congregation come over on 24 May to say "Hi".

*David Cameron*

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## *John Sartin*

John Sartin was one of the first Newton Mearns members of Maxwell Mearns Castle. With his wife Jo and children Richard, Hilary and Elizabeth, John was heavily involved from the earliest days of services in Kirkhill School. He was one of the first local men inducted as an elder, and his energy, enthusiasm and DIY skills were put to good use. After the move into the new church and halls, John spent hours woodworking – he made the wall cupboards in the middle kitchen, among many other tasks.

John was a committed Christian, active on the Kirk Session, Congregational Board, the Men's Association and the Bible Study Group. Discussions at the September family weekend at Abernethy were enlivened by his presence, and his warm smile, host of funny stories and infectious laugh are fondly remembered.

When the family returned to Derbyshire in 1977, their parting gift of the pair of kneelers which are still used at weddings, came with the usual Sartin-type joke that he'd make us more Episcopalian yet!

Over the years we have kept in touch, with the occasional exchange visit and the regular note in the Christmas card. It was with great sadness that we had Jo's phone call telling us that John, who had not been ill, died suddenly at home on 13 June while she was out shopping. To Jo and family we extend our sympathy, with warm memories.

*Heather Russell*

## It's not God's problem

### A parable

Gran's 80th birthday was coming up soon and her three children and nine grandchildren met to discuss how they should mark the occasion. The family was full of bright ideas, ranging from the exotic to the exhausting. Reluctantly, the teenagers accepted that paintballing was maybe not the right activity this time. But they were quick to voice their objections to the formal dinner suggested by their parents – we'll have to dress up and sit in one place for the whole night, they said.

At length, one of the bright young things came up with the brightest idea yet. "Why not ask Gran what she'd like. After all, it's *her* birthday."

And so Oldest Daughter and her teenage son went to Gran and did just that. Gran was delighted at the idea of the whole family wanting to celebrate her special day together. She thought for a while, and then said, "How about a family concert? So many of the family play instruments and sing. There's nothing I enjoy more than the family making music."

The family met again to plan the concert. The four youngest family members were quickly organised into each preparing a piece on their various instruments. This was turning out to be a great idea – so

easy to organise. The parents looked expectantly at the five teenage cousins who'd been in a huddle together. They emerged fresh-faced and excited: "It's really cool; we can make a band between us. We can have Jack on bass and Max on drums and ..."

"Drums, bass, what are you talking about? This is for Gran's 80th, not Jack's 18th! Gran doesn't want to hear stuff like that. She wants to hear *nice* music; you know, like *Ye banks and braes*, and *My favourite things*."

"Aw Mum, you're joking. No way. That's not our scene; you guys can do that."

"Well yes, we will. But you need to think who you're doing this for. It's not for you, it's for Gran, and she certainly doesn't want to hear that kind of music. And if it comes to that, neither do I. If you're going to play that stuff, I'll be sitting in another room and your Gran will be too."

The battle raged on until that same bright spark as before illuminated the proceedings again. "Why not ask Gran what she'd like. After all, it's *her* birthday."

Off went Oldest Daughter and Son, both flushed with righteous indignation. Gran heard them out with her usual quiet courtesy. When they'd finished this time,

she didn't need to think for a while. "I'm so thrilled that the whole family are going to celebrate my birthday together. But I'm such a silly old thing; I thought that music would be the ideal way for us to enjoy a time together. We're a family who love each other, and love music. I thought music would be a way that everyone could express their own feelings in their own special way. I don't care what kind of music people play. I'll enjoy everything as long as we're all together to share it."

Mother and son looked at each other. They both got up and gave Gran a hug.

### **Music speaks without words**

We've been given the gift of music, just as we've been given the gift of our world's natural beauty. The very nature of music is that it speaks where words cannot. It touches hidden places in us that we sometimes can't find by ourselves. Because music is so intimate and personal, it can either calm or create the 'troubled breast' and it is a measure of how deeply it touches us that, often in a church setting, the latter occurs more than the former. Perhaps this is because our coming together as a church has nothing to do with our musical taste, although expression of our reasons for being together often take a musical form. In the 'parable' above, the family planned to join together in celebration of the life of a much loved family member and the chosen

mode of expression was music. In church, we meet together in celebration of a beloved Creator/Saviour and *one* chosen mode of expression of that love is music. For God, as for Gran, it is our coming together in recognition of our common love that is important – not what style of music is played, or indeed, whether there is music at all.

### **God's taste in music**

So let's be quite clear in any discussion about church music that it's not God's problem, any more than the family ding-dong about the merits of Heavy Metal over Edelweiss is Gran's problem. What we have to achieve is a way of making music a meaningful means of expression. Meaningful to God? No – sincere worship is always meaningful to God. But it is hard for *us* to be sincere through a style of music which is alien to us, be it folk, classical, contemporary or from another culture. Yet our being *together* in worship must override these difficulties and that is possible to do with an open-minded attitude from us all.

### **What does this mean in practice**

I don't imagine there are many, if any, who want to revert to singing only the hymns of our fathers. Most, if not all, recognise, accept, indeed welcome, the need for change. At Maxwell Mearns in recent years, morning worship has retained the

best music of the past, while embracing the music of the present. Though not everyone will be in tune with all of the music all of the time, we have to accept that give and take is part of life in any family.

### **Let the contemporary music swing and the traditional music sing!**

Gran's teenage grandchildren were quite justified in refusing to play *Ye Banks and Braes*. What sort of travesty would it have been if they had? The universal appeal of music derives from its variety and diversity, but for music to 'speak' as it can and should, it has to be true to itself. We are blessed with a variety of musicians on a variety of instruments at Maxwell Means, allowing a wide range of music in a wide range of styles. So while contemporary church music invites one kind of musical treatment, more traditional

church music needs another. Those who favour a contemporary approach may have a broader attitude to the blending of old and new styles of music, but those who are more at home with traditional styles will not find it easy to relate to a contemporary treatment of their familiar and loved hymns. *In our blended service, we must be careful to retain the musical integrity of each praise item so that all of our family may feel able to praise through the medium with which they feel at home.* The practice of mixing old and new songs in one worship service at Maxwell Means recognises the need to provide musically meaningful ways for all our church family to share in the praise of a God who loves the rocker, the rapper, the opera buff and the tone-deaf equally.

*Esther McLellan*

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## *Temptation*

**A** Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner: "Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time."

When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied. "The one I feed the most."

# Take a tune

Take a tune, make mysteries friendly  
play the music of your heart,  
reach within each treasured memory,  
cultivate your precious art.

All your saying, feeling, seeing,  
all your history, where you home,  
make a context for your singing,  
give a sense of what you own.

Never lose your rich tradition,  
never lose your sense of place,  
yet, this is no contradiction,  
find new signs of love and grace.

In the essence of your music,  
Christ, the starting point of song,  
brings new fragrance to each meeting,  
helps us all to love along.

Andrew Pratt

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# Talent Auction

As many of you will already know, we plan to have a Talent Auction at the end of September. We did this a couple of years ago, and, as well as raising a lot of money, people said that it was a lot of fun. For this to be a success again, we need you to support the event.

Firstly, we need people to offer their talents. Everybody has something they can offer as a talent even if they don't think they have. It can be anything at all. Some examples of talents we were offered the last time are listed below:

Babysitting

Round of golf with or without lunch

Dinner for a number of your choice

DIY job

Shopping for someone

Day trip

Gardening

Murder Mystery Party

Last time a few people who offered didn't get the expected phone call. Rest assured – people paid on the day when they won your talent, so the church still got the money.

Secondly, we need people to come to the event and bid for the items they would like. There has been a suggestion that we should have the event on an evening rather than a Saturday morning because a lot of people have things organised on a Saturday. If you have any views on this then I would love to hear from you as soon as possible before we decide the date.

Lastly, does anyone have access to a gavel that we could borrow to use on the day.

I hope this has given you some idea about the event and that you feel you can take part in some way. Information will be in the Notices soon as to how you can let us know of any talents you are willing to offer.

*Susan Clark*

[susan.eight11sc@btinternet.com](mailto:susan.eight11sc@btinternet.com)

# Book Review

*God's Politics (Why the American Right gets it wrong and the Left doesn't get it)*  
by Jim Wallis.

I have had the privilege of travelling to the US many times, both for holiday and ministry and have frequently wondered why a country with such a rich Christian heritage – where Christianity is worn on the sleeve and is absolutely essential if you plan to win the race for the White House – appears to avoid an awful lot of Jesus' teaching on the poor and downtrodden, hiding its mass poverty and deprivation.

Find it hard to understand why moral values and a belief in God seem to make people pro-war, pro-rich and pro-Republican? Why is it that right-wing evangelicals hug their Bibles and attempt to take the high ground in any discussion of religion and politics? Why are they very passionate about these, along with fundamentalist stances on pro-life and homosexuality and yet appear unable to share Christ's love for the marginalised, or care about mass poverty amongst its own citizens? Why do the Democrats ignore faith and continually separate moral discourse and personal ethics from public policy?

Jim Wallis is a prophetic and influential writer involved in working for justice and peace. He earths his challenges to Christians of all political persuasion, and none, in scripture.

I found this a fascinating book and also very challenging. Obviously it has a very strong American slant, whilst also covering international issues, but undoubtedly it has a lot to teach Christians here in the UK, as things have a habit of coming across the pond.

Maybe not one for the beach but well worth the read. Be warned though, there are no pictures!

*Alan Gray*

# M M M M...

## **The Monthly Musings and Meanderings of the Moderator of Glasgow Presbytery**

**B**y now many of you will have heard the somewhat surprising news from Glasgow Presbytery that I have been nominated as the next Moderator of the Presbytery, beginning on the evening of 19 June 2007, for one full year. I say 'surprising', as usually Moderators are over 60 when such an invitation is extended to them, and here am I only just turned 50, albeit a grandfather, when the Presbytery Clerk David Lunan calls me up and asks me to come in and see him in the Presbytery offices in Bath St. in Glasgow. Arrrrrrgh – usually the Clerk calls if he's received disturbing reports or representations regarding a minister's behaviour or else he has a job for us to do!

Thankfully I was sitting down when the decision of the nominating committee was presented to me by David and after due consideration (read: 'a heated discussion with the Lord along Exodus 3 grounds'), I accepted the invitation. This was not without considerable heart-searching and consultation with the Session, whose wise insight and support I greatly appreciated.

### **What on earth does it involve and will I be out of the parish in a way similar to**

### **the Moderator of the General Assembly?**

Essentially there are 3 main areas that the Moderator is involved in:

1. Chairing the monthly Tuesday evening meetings of the Presbytery.
2. Leading, and being at, special services in congregations such as Ordinations, Inductions, Anniversaries, etc.
3. Being the Presbytery's representative in both Civic and Ecumenical settings.

### **Will I be out of the Parish much?**

Not, I BELIEVE, anywhere near the scale of that experienced by the Moderator of the General Assembly; however in a letter from Rev Alex Barr, former minister of the congregation I grew up in (St Nicholas, Cardonald), he indicated that during his term of office as Moderator he had 150 extra engagements!

On my first full day as Moderator – I go on holiday.

Upon my return, however, I will be conducting the Induction of the new minister to... guess where ...St Nicholas, Cardonald.

July and August, it seems, are relatively quiet months for Presbytery and so this should allow me some time to enable

Alastair Cook to find his feet, as well as to put in sufficient measures for preaching and pastoral support.

Thank you for your words and cards of encouragement. Do pray for the presbytery and the congregation here at

Maxwell Mearns, as together we rise to the challenges of this year – ‘stepping out of the boat’ and keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.

*David Cameron*

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## Think on

**A forum for you to express your views on a subject chosen by our minister, David Cameron. For this issue we focussed on the following:**

*M*any years ago I was with a group of European ministers; we were exploring the different approaches to sharing our faith in the different countries represented. When we got down to discussing what would help us to be more effective in the task, I'll never forget the response of the Swedish pastor who suggested that having a lion on a lead would be just what he needed.

WHY such an alarming and drastic companion? Simply because of the apathy of the people to things spiritual. He suggested this was due to the fact that in his country 95% of the population were members of the church! When a Swede turns 18, a big celebration takes place marking the coming of age; as part and parcel of the celebration, you joined church.

Today in our society the membership issues are very different. During a wide-ranging late-into-the-night discussion recently with some of our members, we attempted to identify the reasons and issues that so often prevent folks in our community, families, workplaces etc from exploring what we believe to be the best news in the world!

As well as our attempts at analysing the problem, we also tried to offer a solution, looking at relationships, courses, venues, and perhaps even the kinds of questions and issues people have.

*David Cameron*

## An Apathy to Things Spiritual

I don't believe there is an apathy about spiritual matters. Spirituality in the 21st century takes on a whole range of different guises. People are still very interested in the occult, palmistry, horoscopes etc, the desire for a new body image – the perfect figure, driven by the cult of celebrity and wannabee's, the incessant desire to consume stuff in our western culture; all of these, in their own way, are an attempt to fill a spiritual void.

Pascal said 'there's a void in the heart of every man that can only be filled by God' In writing this, perhaps he was considering the writer in Ecclesiastes who, in ch 3 v 11, says that God has 'set eternity on the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.'

There are none of us who will be able to fathom God this side of eternity. Some, sadly, don't even have a clue where to look.

It is my privilege to travel across Scotland and present the gospel in a relevant way through sport. I find that both I and my team get a very good response to the gospel message from young people, teenagers, who are intrigued to know about Christianity.

The tragedy from my perspective is that they can't match up the Christian message

with the Church! The church in its early days in Acts was dynamic, fast moving and Spirit inspired – definitely not an institution and not intended to be one.

I believe that there is a spiritual hunger in this country which can be filled by a Holy Spirit inspired movement of Christians. What shape does that take? Church – what is church? I'm not talking here about the struggle of contemporary over traditional but the battle for relevance against irrelevance. A church in the 21st Century acting like one in the 18th Century cannot hope to present a relevant message to our desperate world.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever – yes – the gospel message the same – yes, but not our method of sharing the gospel. That has to change, and needs to be like the early Church – dynamic, fast moving and Spirit Inspired.

Groucho Marx said 'I don't want to join any club that would have me as a member!' He wasn't a prophet but maybe he got it right. Many people's perception of Church is very negative. The Church is not a club, but appears to be one, and one that people don't want to join. People still come to faith and can still worship the creator but perhaps not in the way we anticipate. We need to adapt or die!

Jesus' final instruction to his disciples (and that's all of them – even today) was to go

and make disciples, Matt 28: 19–20. It was a dynamic and challenging statement

I pray that the Church in Scotland today would allow the Holy Spirit the freedom to move dynamically through us to see Scotland discipled for Christ.

*Alan Gray*

### **A response**

A profound, and perhaps prophetic, response from Alan Gray. Why? Because it was the only one! Might this suggest there is apathy in the church regarding the

need to engage in a relevant way with the society we live in? Alan's voice is indeed one we do well to listen to, for much of his time, energy, creativity, and, dare I say it, his footballing skills (!) are spent seeking to engage one increasingly disenfranchised group within our society. His challenge to us as a church is to ask big questions about all that we do, and in addressing such questions, let's not be afraid of the cost or the consequences of our response.

*David Cameron*

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## *Sunday School Trip-Up*

**S**unday School trips were Saturday afternoon outings in the early days. One year Mr. Arbuckle arranged the use of Drumclog Church Hall and adjoining field. Drumclog was part of Avendale Parish, Mr. Arbuckle's previous charge in Strathaven.

The buses trundled along the country roads and quite soon we were exploring the tea-making facilities in the little hall. All went well till someone discovered the first hurdle. The field was separated from the hall by a barbed wire fence. Boy Scout or Girl Guide inventiveness involving covering the fence with floor rugs from the hall allowed us to scramble over unscathed, and to pass the smaller children over into the field. Races began (including some banned today for health and safety reasons) but the wheelbarrow race participants soon found other reasons to call a halt. The field had, it seemed, been inhabited by cows until that morning. Furthermore, it was sprouting a promising crop of thistles. My own three small children were there and the faded black and white "snaps" look as if they enjoyed themselves. The singing on the bus home was as hearty as ever, but we did make a point of booking a different venue the following year!

*Heather Russell*

# From the Congregational Board

*End of Term Report from the  
Congregational Board*

## Property

We are still constrained by lack of funds and can only concentrate on critical items. This is a source of constant concern to Chisholm Macrae, Property Convenor, who works hard at keeping our buildings and plant in good order. We owe a lot to his careful attention and constant monitoring of the premises.

Apart from the Maxwell Hall floor repair last October and the usual minor wear and tear items, we have replaced the badly rotted windows of the Church Officer's flat and brought our gas boilers and heating systems up to legal and safety requirements. We have, too, made several necessary repairs at the Manse.

## Church Signs

We finally persuaded East Renfrewshire to erect the signs at the entrance to the church road and Sam Nugent was able to have the large sign at the same entrance completely refurbished. Maxwell is now much easier to find due to the generosity of our Council and the efforts of Sam. Thanks to both.

## Finance

As ever, we are keeping a tight rein on our controllable costs. These are, however, a small part of the Congregation's total costs which rise inexorably each year and it is only due to the vigilance of the Finance Committee and the Board, in general, that we manage to survive on our limited means.

### “The Big Tidy”

There has been, recently, an attempt to clear our premises of much of the rubbish and clutter which lay around. The task is not quite finished yet, but should be complete soon. We hope the place is looking a bit smarter and that we all will work to keep it that way. Everyone has been most co-operative in identifying what must stay and what can go but if we have, by accident, taken something which should have stayed, we apologise.

## Plans for the Future

There are a few matters which we intend to work on between now and the end of the year.

- ◇ Church roadway: The Nursery has made a donation toward repairing the roadway and the Board has authorised

spending some additional Development Fund money for this, too. We hope to start the work during the school summer holiday and plan to have as much of the work done as our funds allow. We are grateful to the Nursery for starting us off on this project.

- ◇ Sanctuary Sound Loop: This has not worked as well as we would have liked and various investigations have not properly solved the problem. The suggested solution is that we limit the area of coverage to only one side (or, even, half a side) of the Sanctuary. This is being investigated and may soon be changed. We will let everyone know when it happens.
- ◇ The Manse: Further repairs are needed.
- ◇ Maxwell Hall Windows: We would like to continue the programme of replacement but this is an item held in reserve until we see how our other costs are working out.

## People

A great strength here at Maxwell is the number of people who can roll their sleeves up and get on with things. Much of the work is repetitive and, probably, unnoticed by many of the congregation but the role played by these volunteers is vital in ensuring that our worship and other

activities are held in a warm, weatherproof and safe environment.

In particular regard to the work of the Board, I would like to thank everyone for their support and, on this occasion, mention:

*Alistair and Joyce Kerr* for taking up residence in the premises, working as Church Officer and, particularly, throwing themselves so keenly into our congregational activities.

*Sue Anderson* for her fine work as Finance Convenor over many years. Sue has now resigned from the post and John Foote has agreed to take her place.

*David McTear*, our Treasurer, who looks after the myriad of invoices and bills but, at the same time, maintains a spiritual view of the numbers.

*Stewart Martin*, Grounds Convenor, who ensures our grass etc. is cut regularly and any dangerous trees are removed. Stewart, too, has recently resigned and we have not yet appointed a successor.

*Jean Ewen* for co-ordinating, and doing, the Teas & Coffees served at so many times during our church life.

*Margaret Campbell* who has recently taken on the post of Clerk to the Board and *Kathleen Henderson* who did this before Margaret.

*Robin Russell*

## about the Bible

### **An extract from Stephen Hough's introduction to his book *The Bible as Prayer* – mentioned in the First Word in this issue of Maxwell Matters**

The Bible (the word means 'book' in Middle English) is not a book, but a collection of books – a precious, sprawling, uneven library rather like a patchwork quilt. Some squares are so familiar that they have lost their pattern or colour; others are so little read that they are musty and stiff; and it appears that still others have been lost or removed at an earlier point in history, rejected by the Church Fathers who sewed these particular squares into this particular quilt. It is perhaps the most sold yet least read book of all time; the most quoted, yet least observed. Useless lists of unknown, unremarkable people following obsolete laws, buried in an alien desert under the sands of history, lie next to names which resound by the minute in the lives and surroundings of almost every culture on earth: Jesus Christ, King David, Abraham, São Paulo, Los Angeles, Notre Dame ... the list is endless.

The Old Testament contains one of the great learning curves in literature – the story of a people's gradual, humbling discovery that God is not part of the endless cycle of violence which our human frenzy projects on to him. My selection of Old Testament texts unashamedly traces a path of lights in the midst of darkness – stars which illumine a violent night, and which, in turn, lead us to pray and work for peace.

from *The Bible as Prayer. A Handbook for Lectio Divina* by Stephen Hough. Publ Continuum 2007

*Oops!*

NEVER

A

CROSS

WORD

No prize this time. Don't worry about the chocolate.

## Details

In the last issue, we wrote that we were approaching the time when we thought from the beginning we would stand down from compiling the church magazine. We have compiled this issue, but it will be one of, if not *the* last that we do. There are as many styles of magazine as there are people to create them. It's more than likely that within MMCC, there are people who would like to try their hand at producing our church magazine in a different style. Things often benefit from a fresh eye and new ideas. In fact, as we look around, we can see the very people who might be decide to take on the magazine. It won't – mustn't – be the same, and may well have a new name.

Is it something you would like to do? Do talk to David, our minister, or if you want to discuss the nuts and bolts of the job, have a chat with us (Esther or Archie McLellan).

Thanks to all our contributors: Watson Beattie, Alistair Brunton, Elspeth and Jim Burgess, David Cameron, Phyl Campbell, Ken Carter, Susan Clark, David Clarkson, Evelyn Foote, Alan Gray, Archie McLellan, Esther McLellan, Sandra McNicol, Heather Russell, Robin Russell, Martin Smith.

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*Maxwell Matters* is published in spring, summer and winter. Items for the next issue to Esther and Archie McLellan. [ea.mclellan@ntlworld.com](mailto:ea.mclellan@ntlworld.com)

## Last word

Masses of  
Marvellous  
Musings,  
Meetings  
and the  
Moderator's  
Meanderings  
in Maxwell  
Matters.  
Mmmm...