



Galashiels Old Parish and St Paul's Church

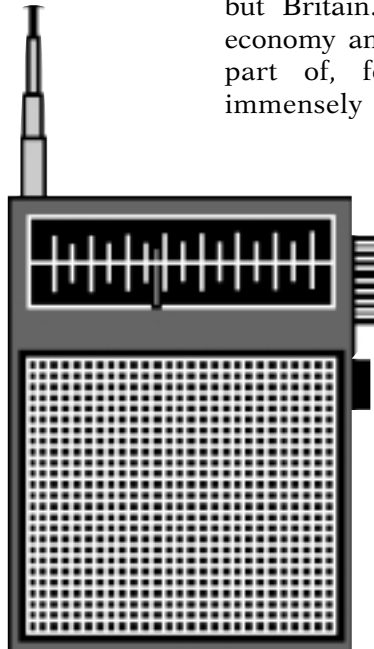
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Dear Friends,

The Spectator magazine's Michael Heath submitted a cartoon for BBC Radio's 'Today' programme which invited people to send in cartoons with their ideas of what the programme meant to them. Heath's was a series of small radios with a voice coming out of them saying, "Good morning, today's worry is even worse than yesterday's worry, which ... was an awful worry. This worry is the worst worry I can remember, certainly in my lifetime ... nobody knows what to do about this worry, a minister declined to come in and talk to us about this worrying worry, which is now out of control. What about our children? Will they have this worry hanging over them? Or maybe even a worse worry, a worry so awful ..." The cartoon's title is "On an' on an' on".

His cartoon has an edge to it that suggests that finding things to worry about and raise concern over week after week and month after month has become such a habit that the content of the things are not so important as the relish for something new to chew on just as a dog does a bone.

Don't you sympathise? There seems to be a national introspective cynicism that unless there is something to 'chew on' we're not happy. The newspapers we pick up, the TV programmes we watch and the general workplace gossip and chat all have to have a grumble. Without something to



grumble about and complain over we feel bereft of the opportunity to live. In the BBC's "What the world thinks about God" it was noteworthy that in answer to the question about whether the problem of suffering affected belief in God, it was not the poor countries of Africa or Asia that came out on top but Britain. *Our* country, sitting in it's growing economy and welfare state that everyone wants a part of, found its problems and sufferings immensely problematic and damning of the existence of God – well, talk about spoilt children!

It appears that our class-leading secularism is going hand-in-hand with a grumbling, complaining, depressiveness that is so much part of our culture that we don't even recognise it when it stares us in the face or blasts us in the eardrums.

We in the Church have a different drum to march to. We have a Lord who 'leads us in triumph everywhere' (2 Cor 2:14) and gives us hope and life that makes for real inner joy. We don't have things to grumble about but things to praise about for the Christian's inner heartbeat is 'Our God reigns' (Mission Praise 249) and the more we learn of Him the less there is to worry about. We have a great task; to show forth light in the midst of darkness, to show forth praise in the midst of complaint and to be faithful amidst the cynics of a depressing world. Yes, its an exciting time to be a Christian in 2004.

Yours in Christ Leslie Steele.

Silent Auction – Friday, May 28th

It is proposed to hold a Silent Auction on Friday, May 28th at 7.00 p.m. in the church hall. As this is to be one of the major fund raising events this year, we would like the help and support of the entire congregation. So – please rummage around in your attic or other cupboards and if you can contribute one or more items, we shall have a successful evening. **Please** no jumble (or electrical goods due to regulations) but any items of some quality big or small are acceptable. Contributions please to Nancy Noble, Catherine Bain, Zena Forsyth or Vi Wood. Collection can be arranged.

Please come and bring a friend or friends – the more, the merrier! **REMEMBER MAY 28TH.**

Stated Annual Business Meeting

The Stated Annual Business Meeting of the Congregation of Old Parish and St. Paul's Church was held on Tuesday 24th February. It was attended by a good number of people who heard reports on the past year and also about plans for the future.

The Treasurer, David Leckey, presented the Accounts for 2003, and also the proposed Budget for 2004. The actual deficit for 2003 was £1,721, and the budget for 2004 predicts a deficit of £7,310 if no specific fund raising is undertaken. The Treasurer was thanked most warmly for all his hard work.

The Fabric Convener, Ian Forsyth, reported on various projects that had received attention during the year, principally the alterations to the Hall and Kitchen to provide upgraded kitchen facilities and also disabled access to the Halls as well as disabled toilet provision. All of these were necessary under government legislation. The Convener paid tribute to the tremendous work done by Bobby Stewart in overseeing the day to day work, and liaising with the architects etc. Without his tireless commitment and attention to detail, the work would not have been completed so satisfactorily or in such good time. The Congregation owes Bobby a great debt of gratitude for all his work particularly in Fabric and in so many ways. The Minister expressed the thanks of the Congregation to the Fabric Convener for all his work on their behalf.

Mr. Colin Hanley speaking for the Finance Committee, presented two proposals for consideration for reducing costs in view of the present and predicted deficits, including a proposal to display the Communion Silver (now in storage) in Old

Gala House. The authorities there had shown some interest in this proposal. The cost of display and insurance would not rest with the Congregation. There was also a possibility of changing the storage facility for the rest of the collection. The Meeting approved the follow up of these suggestions. Mr. Hanley also reported that Gillian Paterson from the Stewardship Department at 121, George Street had addressed a meeting of Elders and Board members. She had outlined various ways in which the Department could help with reaching out to others. Following this meeting, a decision had been made to undertake a campaign in the Autumn to arouse renewed interest in members in church attendance and church matters. The campaign would involve a visit to each Church member with an invitation to a Congregational meal, where the Church's programme would be presented afresh, and an appeal made for members to share more actively in the life of the Church. The programme would need the help of many members of the Congregation. More detailed plans would be available after the Steering Committee had met. In conclusion, the Minister announced that four people were due to retire from the Congregational Board at this meeting, as they had completed the statutory 3 year period.

Those retiring were: Catherine Bain, Robin Cockburn, Gail Fox and Barbara McCann. Those nominated were: Rita Breeding, Moira Frew, Irene Glenfield, Aileen Hegarty and Vi Wood. All were elected as there had been a vacancy created in the previous year due to retirement from the Board which had not been filled.

The Guild



By the time you receive this Newsletter, the first meeting of the month of March will be over, when we heard from a speaker representing the Leprosy Mission. It seems hard to believe that we are now approaching our A.G.M. and the last meeting of this session. Our A.G.M. and Spring Tea will take place on Wednesday, March 17th at 2.15 p.m. On that day we will also have a Bring and Buy Sales Table as usual, so please bring an article with you for sale, and be prepared to buy as well! We hope to welcome a good number on that day to finish the meetings on a good note. We have had some very interesting speakers this session, and have enjoyed our fellowship together.

Summer Outing We hope to meet many members at our Summer Outing on Wednesday, May 26th. We plan to go to North Berwick, leaving at 1.30 p.m. and returning after a High Tea there by 8.00 p.m. Firm bookings will be taken at the A.G.M. when precise charges will be available. We expect the outing to cost in the region of £20.00. Please contact Margaret Cashman (752711) if you would like to join us, but will not be at the A.G.M. to sign up.

Firm Foundations

Yes! – we've survived! Our monthly meeting Bible Study Class has completed the above. The Course claimed that "The overall result is an engaging and effective Course for reinvigorating Christians in their understanding of God, the Gospel and their love and service of others". The general impression was that this claim is accurate. The Course stimulated debate which was both invigorating and enlightening. The informal nature of the material encouraged everyone to take part in the debate, and reflected a wide range of opinion and experience.

We would recommend the course to any other group, existing or new, who would like to have access to the materials. Meanwhile, we are prayerfully seeking our next challenge ... all will be welcome there too!

TEARCRAFT ... A big 'thank you' to all who ordered goods from Tearcraft this year, and so contributed to the benefit derived by the craftsmen and women from overseas who provide the goods to Tearcraft. Sales through Reps, via the catalogue, as we have done in St. Paul's this year, raised a total around £1.3 million.

Death

Jan. 30th Arthur Taylor, 15 Dale Street, Galashiels.
We extend our sincere sympathy to the bereaved families and friends.

PASSING THOUGHTS

On: The Way to Salvation. Part Three – continued from The Road to Salvation in February Newsletter.

You may remember in a previous Newsletter a conversation overheard in a hotel. Well, same hotel, another night. A chap called Ian Travail was recounting an unusual experience to a few guests in the Coffee Lounge.

Ian – “Last night, I was chatting to an elderly guest. Albert was his name, Albert Teacher. You know, there are some things you don’t like talking about, especially to a complete stranger. I don’t know why I did. You see, two nights ago I had an unusual dream. I dreamed that I phoned God!” Ian then told us his dream, and recounted his conversation with Albert. “So, Albert, I certainly learned what repentance really means.”

Albert: “Aye well, Ian, that’s your first step.”

Ian: “My first step? You mean there’s more. What do you mean.”

Albert: “You must continue on the way to salvation!”

Ian: “Salvation? What do you mean by Salvation?”

Albert: “Salvation delivers us from the power of sin. It makes us God’s children, giving us peace with Him, and a share in future glory. Christ’s atonement makes Salvation available to everyone who believes, that is everyone who unreservedly accepts and embraces the truth about Jesus as revealed by God, acts accordingly, and who will accept His offer. Here is the true meaning and purpose of the cross. On it, a divinely ordained exchange took place. First, Jesus endured in our place all the evil consequences that were due by divine justice to our iniquity! Now, in exchange, God offers us all the good that was due to

the sinless obedience of Jesus!! Did you notice the tense of ‘everyone who believes?’ It’s a present tense. You’ve got to believe every living moment” God’s offer is available every living moment – BUT you must accept it.

Ian: “How?”

Albert: “Repentance – the recognition of rebellion against God and the desire for forgiveness. Faith – you must believe with all your heart that Christ lived and died for us and for our salvation, and that His sacrifice will save. The Scriptures: – they will awaken your repentance, strengthen your faith and open your heart. Communion. – the Sacraments are the channels through which, by faith, renewing grace will flow.”

All this is given solely out of the unfathomable grace of God, and is received solely by faith. None of us has done anything to deserve such an offer, and none of us can ever do anything to earn it. Salvation is God’s gift – You better believe it!

Whilst I was thinking this over, Albert said: “Ian, how about getting us a cup of coffee?”

When I returned with the coffee, Albert was gone! I went back to the counter and asked Tom the waiter: “Where did Albert go?” Tom said “Albert? Who’s Albert?” “The elderly guest I have been sitting with all evening.” Tom gave me a funny look and said: “Ian, you’ve been sitting alone all evening, looking very preoccupied.”

Well, I was shattered, so I staggered off to bed. The Gideon’s Bible was open by the bed, and a note was lying on top: Write out Ephesians Chapter 6 verses 10 – 20. It will do you a power of good! Yours ever, A. Teacher.

“Well,” said Ian looking round at us. “What do you make of that?”

“Ian”, we all said as one, “here’s a pen. GET WRITING!!

Quiz Night – Saturday, March 20th

I hope the Quiz Night is written in red letters in every one’s diary. Entry charge is £5.00 for each team of four – either 4 over 18s, Junior – four between the ages of 13 and 17, or a Family Team – 2 Adults and two under twelves.

The invitations are out, the Hall is booked, the questions are (nearly) finalised, the trophies are bought, the catering is in hand – all we need now is **YOU!**

BOYS’ BRIGADE



Our last company meeting in 2003 was our Annual Carol Service which was held on 19 December. The service was conducted by our Chaplain, the Rev. Leslie Steele and included prayers by Gordon Smith and our Captain David Nightingale. The readings of the Christmas Story were read by boys from the Company Section, namely, Mark Welsh, Austin Law, Alan Ferguson, James Aitken, James Cairns and Douglas Pflug. We again were grateful

for the support of the Musicmakers in boosting the volume of the carols and for their own contributions of “Now dawns the sun” and “We will sing your song”. Thanks also to Eddie Oliver for playing the organ, Bert Hegerty for the sound and Bob McKendrick for the operating the PowerPoint. Finally, many thanks to all who attended the service and gave generously to the retiring collection for the Boys’ Brigade World Mission Fund (Church of Scotland). The Project for the World Mission Fund this year is the supply of Bibles to young people in Nigeria.

Our Annual Display/Parent’s Night will be held in the Large Hall on Friday, 26 March, 2004, commencing at 7 p.m. A warm welcome is extended to members of the congregation and friends.

Ian Forsyth, President

Fair Trade Fortnight March 1st – 14th

A special service will be held in the Church on the evening of Sunday, March 14th at 6.30 p.m.

Do you know?

Of which country in the world are these following facts true?

- There are 16,000 churches and many more meeting points
- Every three days, two new congregations are formed.
- 1 million new believers are baptised every year.
- New Christians need Bibles for their growth.
- Amity Press produces 10,000 copies daily using 100 rolls of paper per week (funded by the Bible Societies).

The answer is China. "Ask why their churches are growing at such a rate, and you'll get an answer given by one church leader there: **"Every Christian considers the Bible to be the centre of their life."** Take that literally, accept the conservative estimates of 21 million Chinese Christians – four times the population of Scotland – who choose to live out their faith, and you begin to understand

- Why they make lots of individual impacts;
- Why church attendance steadily increases;
- Why more people still need Bibles"

These words were written by Rev. Doug Campbell, Executive Director of the Scottish Bible Society and appear in the Spring edition of their magazine "Word at Work" He goes on to describe a visit he made to China with a group of others last November. They were amazed to see people queuing to buy Scriptures in the heart of the capital Beijing. They also visited remote areas and attended services there. "One man walked for four hours to attend the open-air service at Shaoji Wa. ...It was deeply moving for us, too, worshipping with folk so limited in wordly terms, yet so eager to discover how God wanted them to live. Maybe that's why two young women, carrying their babies, plodded uphill for two hours to participate."

You can read the rest of the story of the visit to China in the Word at Work magazine which is available free from the back of the church. It also describes how the winner of "Big Brother" on Channel Four last year – Cameron Stout – helped to open the new Bibleworld experience in Edinburgh. Do you remember – Cameron took his Bible with him to the Big Brother house, and read it every day, and gave his prize money to his Church fellowship in Orkney. In Scotland and in China, God's Word influences lives!

Riverslea History Day – April 17th

There are a few spaces left for the intended Church History Day to be held on Saturday, April 17th at Riverslea from 10.30 a.m. until after an evening meal. If you would like to join us in a fellowship, fun and fact finding day please phone Nancy Noble (752724) as soon as possible. The cost will be £15 – all proceeds to Church Funds. Meals are included, and transport will be provided if required.

Treasurer's Report

JANUARY 2004

Income

Offerings 4 weeks (Weekly average £705.29).....	£2,821.16
Dividends, Bank Interest, VAT Reclaim, etc.....	£1,444.96
Donations (incl for alts).....	£120.10
	<u>£4,386.22</u>

Expenditure

Electricity, Gas & Church Telephone.....	£143.00
CCL (Licence Copyright Renewal).....	£225.00
Advertising, Printing, Stationery.....	£84.62
Finlaysons (Manse Painting).....	£1,862.87
Murray & Burrell (3rd Invoice – Alts).....	£16,054.49
Sunday School Materials.....	£407.73
Church Repairs.....	£766.30
Pulpit Supply.....	£57.00
Church of Scotland – Life & Work costs.....	£130.81
Standard Monthly Expenditure.....	£104.00
	<u>£19,835.82</u>

STANDARD MONTHLY EXPENDITURE		OFFERINGS	
Organist	£80.00	5th	£424.50
Cleaners (4wks)	£24.00	12th	£525.66
		19th	£503.37
		26th	<u>£471.63</u>
	<u>£104.00</u>		<u>£1,925.16</u>
		Paid through Bank	<u>£896.00</u>
			<u>£2,821.16</u>

OFFERINGS UPDATE

		2004	2003		
January	4wks	£2,821.16	£2,957.66	4wks	
		<u>£2,821.16</u>	<u>£2,957.66</u>		

Xpedition Force

This is the title for Holiday Club this summer. It will run from 26th July to 1st August. This year, we would like to expand its outreach with materials provided by C.P.O. We would like to purchase the items listed below, working on the assumption that we will be inviting all children in Galashiels (over 1000) and hope that 100 will turn up on the week:

1. Matthew's Gospels – an excellent gospel designed to be taken home after Holiday Club. £1 each
2. Invitations - £45 for 1000
3. Parent Cards – an evangelistic tool to inform parents of the Bible passages the children have been looking at. 50p per child

We are asking you, the congregation to help fund these items. If you feel this work is worthwhile, and would like to donate money towards these items, or Holiday club itself, please speak to Catherine Bain, Gordon Smith or Shirley Sandison at church, or post to Catherine Bain, 11, Langhaugh Crescent, Galashiels. Thank you.

Christmas Fayre

The Congregational Board have decided to hold two fund raising events this year – the Silent Auction in May (details elsewhere in the Newsletter) and a Christmas Fayre on November 27th in the Church Hall. Hugh Bain is co-ordinating arrangements for this, and hopes different organisations within the fellowship of the congregation will take on responsibility for various stalls. If you have any ideas, speak to Hugh (before he speaks to you!!) but anyway, please put the date in your diary now.