



Galashiels Old Parish and St. Paul's Church

Newsletter ♦ July/August 2007

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LETTER FROM LESLIE

Dear Friends,

Last month I shared with you something of my childhood memories, brought up in Edinburgh as I was, mentioning some of the things that stuck in my memory and had an effect on me and my eventual life's work in the ministry of God's Word.

I thought I would add a little more so that you might have a slightly greater insight into the minister who preaches to you Sunday by Sunday.

When I think back on my childhood I see an earnest but torn childhood (more of that at another time), for as early as I can remember I sought the Lord in my life (perhaps an indication of baptismal grace) and never thought of running away from Him. Some of my early memories are of making a cross out of plywood with a fretwork set I had been given one Christmas, and sticking it up at the top of my bed. I had said to my parents that that was the first thing I wanted to make. I also remember praying, kneeling on the floor before the window, for some lengthy periods - some of which I think stemmed from a misplaced religion of works; nevertheless, these were some of the early spiritual memories.

I used to read the Bible with help from some Scripture Union notes which my father got for me, and also went not only to Church on Sundays, both mornings and evenings (I think I mentioned that Sunday School petered out for me at about the age of 8 or 9), but also to Carrubers Close Mission in the High Street on Saturday nights, when I would hear a great variety of preachers over the years, and where I would eventually join the choir.

At secondary school I went along to the Scripture Union Group, which met on a Friday afternoon after school in the Edinburgh University Evangelical Union rooms, in Chamber Street initially, and then in Potterrow. We met there because we were an "outlawed" group - we were the only society in the school not allowed to meet in school because no member of staff was interested. Being a pupil-led group we always had to make sure that there were leaders in the up-coming years, and of course Scripture Union took priority over everything else. I loved gym, but when a Gym Club was formed on a Friday afternoon I knew where my duty was.

During my years in Holyrood Abbey Church the minister was the Rev. James Philip, who some may remember preaching me in here at St Paul's. His systematic ministry of the scriptures, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, and book by book is what caught my mind and fired my heart. I can remember walking home on my own along London Road after Evening Services thinking over what had been preached and at times wrestling with the Word and my own life. It was through those times that I knew the power and the truth of the Word of God in the scriptures, and many years later in my first parish I was convinced that spiritual growth could best be seen occurring in those who made a regular habit of attention to the preaching of the Word and daily Bible reading with aids to help.

Through the Young People's Fellowship at Carrubers Close, where young people from different Churches mixed, I was also introduced to an active evangelistic life where the gospel had to be exported and not just talked about. Open air meetings, house to house visitation, meeting people on the streets with soup and tracts late at night - these were all part of my teenage life. Not to be missed though was meeting a young 16 year old girl from a Pentecostal Church who came to have a rather important role in my life as the mother of my four children and now fellow occupant of the manse. It's hard to believe we were once young!

Maybe some of you are saying, "My, how unlike my life as a young person!", and most probably you are right, but God has brought us together for some reason and it must be for His good purposes that we are meant to be mixed. What is it that you have to gain from me? I can't answer that but I do know that God called me here to minister to you and together therefore we must grow, stretching forward so that we may reach the stature in Christ that we are destined for. I wish you every blessing this coming summer,

Yours in Him, Leslie



Carrubers Christian Centre, Edinburgh

DEATH

9th June: Edward Oliver,
Galashiels Nursing Home

(The following is an abbreviated Memorial Tribute that was given at Eddie's funeral.)

We finally said goodbye to our esteemed and much loved organist of 29 years when Eddie Oliver passed away in Gala Nursing Home, aged 87, on the 9th of June. Eddie was born on 26th January, 1920, in Galashiels. When he left school he became an apprentice plasterer with John Cleg-horn, though plastering was not an enthusiasm. In 1939, with his long time friend Jim Leslie, he walked into a recruitment office and they both joined up and then went home to tell their mothers! Eddie served in the KOSBs throughout the war: come 1944, after D-Day, he found himself in France, and over the coming months moved through Europe, until by VE Day he was up at the Baltic, meeting Russian troops coming from the East. After Demob in 1946 he went back to plastering for a time, but when the firm collapsed it was to the Post Office that his steps took him, and it was there that he worked until he took early retirement in 1981.

Nothing could be said about Eddie, though, without referring to his music. He learnt piano at an early age, but was also soon behind an organ console playing at his first service in Ladhope Church, aged 14. His musical career spanned his life thereafter: during the war when in the army he played in a dance band called the Arcadians - Myra has a photo of him seated at the piano at that time, with a bit more hair, of a darker hue! After the war he also played with the Rainbow Entertainers; he accompanied Gala Opera for 26

years and was accompanist to soloist, duets, groups in all kinds of settings from Burns to Braw Lads.

It was through his lifelong work as a Church organist that he met Myra, who was to become his faithful and dedicated wife of almost 54 years. When he returned from the war he played for a short time in Melrose, as he had done before the war, but then took up post at St Cuthbert's, where Myra was a singer in the Choir, and they were married in July 1953.

Eddie played in many Churches - Ladhope, Melrose, St Cuthbert's, St John's Church (in the days when it was in St John's Street) and St Andrew's Church (now the Art Centre in Bridge Street) - but longest of all, until his health took him to hospital two years ago, he sat at the organ in St Paul's for 27 years, and it was fitting indeed that he should make his last journey from St Paul's, where he had become a loved and respected member.

What can be said about Eddie as a man? Yes, he was a skilled musician, but he engaged his skills very willingly to all who needed help, and never grudgingly. He was loyal, willing and supportive. Not a great conversationalist, self-effacing, but with a droll sense of humour when you got to know him. You would know he was never one to draw attention to himself whenever you asked him how he was. His reply invariably, "Fine, fine". But that was Eddie - "Don't make a fuss about me". We had that opportunity, as we gathered in remembrance on the funeral day, to give God thanks for a quiet man who gave unsparingly of his talents to his town and to his fellow believers in the Church of Jesus Christ, here and elsewhere. Our thoughts and prayers we extend to Myra in her loss.

Sunday School Groupings

It has been decided to change Sunday School groupings slightly to get a better balance of numbers and age ranges within these groups. The following will now apply:-

Pre-School ... in the Crèche with a Bible story and colouring sheet along with free play

P1 - P3 ... in the small hall with Irene Glenfield and Louise Johnstone

P4 - P7 ... in the large hall with Gordon Smith, Gail Fox and Anne Noble

S1 - S4 ... in the UGC with Ishbel Adamson and Colin Hanley or Jim Tennant.



Flower Fund

I am looking for help with the delivery of flowers on a Sunday afternoon.

For the past ten years I have organised the Flower Fund, but it is getting increasingly difficult as so many of the folks who donate to the fund are unable to put flowers into Church and deliver them to members of the congregation. Consequently I am spending more and more time buying and delivering them myself. I would like to see a small group who would be willing to help deliver to homes in Galashiels or to the BGH, and perhaps help with the decorating of the Church at Harvest and Christmas.

It would be a shame to see this ministry stop because of a lack of support, and if enough people volunteered, help would only be needed now and again. Please give this careful consideration!

Angela Miller - Tel.755316

Coming to church – a dangerous activity?

This is the first article in a series, highlighting what it is like to be a Christian in other parts of the world today. The list is compiled every year by Open Doors (<http://opendoorsuk.org.uk>), and the countries are ranked in order of the intensity of persecution faced by Christians.



We start at No. 1: **North Korea**

“Everyday life remains harsh for millions. For the fifth year in a row, this is the world's most difficult country in which to be a Christian. More were arrested in 2006 than in 2005. Now between 50,000 and 70,000 Christians are undergoing torture, some facing death. Some take enormous risks to flee to China – if successful, they may be returned by China to face prison camps and worse. But some have become Christians in China”.

The leader of North Korea is Kim Jong-il, and the country's population is 23.1 million, of whom 2% are believed to be Christians. The government is a communist dictatorship.

Please pray for our brothers and sisters; that they would be given the strength to stand firm in their faith, that God would break through in the lives of the rulers of North Korea, and that those who are in prison, who have been arrested, tortured and put in labour camps will know God's nearer presence, love and peace.

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 2 Corinthians 4: 8-9 (New International Version)

Wycliffe News

We hope to have a visit from Cathie Aberdour later this year.

Cathie and her Wycliffe partner have worked in Brazil for over 30 years now with Apurina Indians, and last year had the great joy of seeing the New Testament in print for the first time.

Cathie has been with us a few times over the years during her furloughs, and we look forward to hearing her news and plans. Both ladies were awarded honorary Doctorates in Biblical Studies from the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Bluebell, Pennsylvania, in May this year.

Graeme and Marlis Lawson continue to work for Wycliffe though they are no longer in Burkina Faso, but in Linlithgow: Marlis in the Wycliffe Scottish Office doing personnel work, while Graeme combines further study at the Highland Theological Seminary with working on consultants' notes to help with translation work.

Their daughters, Shona and Davina, will both be in High School after the Summer. Graeme's Mum, Betty, lives in Galashiels and attends the Baptist Church.



Holiday Club

Just 5 weeks to go, by the time this newsletter gets delivered, until Holiday Club starts!

There are a few items the team would appreciate some help with – first and foremost, please pray for the Holiday Club: there are some prayer cards if you would like some guidance, but please just pray that God's Holy Spirit would guide the team in unity and in power as they seek to tell the children who come along about how much He loves all of us.



Also please pray for stamina, energy and a servant heart for all the team members, that the building and all its occupants would be kept safe, and that we would all be receptive to what God has to say.

If you have any free time at all during the week of 6th – 11th August, there are still places for extra helpers, just even for an hour!

Finally, we would appreciate some donations of shortbread for the children's craft activity on Tuesday 7th August; and any help in catering for the social fellowship on the evening of Saturday 11th August, would be warmly welcomed (last year there was a finger buffet). There will be details about these items in the intimations, even verbal ones, during the school holidays!

Christian Aid 2007

A huge thank you to all those who contributed in any way to this year's Christian Aid appeal. At the time of going to press the figures were as follows:

From St. Paul's:

Door to door collections £1051.64
 B & Q collections £ 65.51
 Asda collections £ 151.81
 Church collection £ 25.15
Total from St. Paul's £1294.11

Coffee morning at Trinity ... £ 381.36
Total from all Churches ... £7107.26



As you can see above, the total from Galashiels and surrounding area is over £7000, with Gift Aid still to be added. This is a magnificent total for which the Galashiels Christian Aid Group is truly overwhelmed, and I myself am mighty relieved!

This money will be sent to Christian Aid where it will be distributed amongst those who are still living in abject poverty.

Angela Miller

Can you help?

Scripture Union has recently successfully applied to hold an after school club in the Burgh Primary School, which is scheduled to take off



after the summer holidays. To run efficiently and to comply with child protection policy, it will need to have a minimum number of adult helpers, and so far two other people have kindly volunteered. The ratio is generally 1:7 adults to children, so the maximum number of children who will be able to attend is 21 as things stand, assuming that all the helpers are available every week, and don't do silly things like get ill, or have other commitments!

What kind of skills or ability do you need to be a helper? There is only one – nothing to do with singing, dancing, speaking, organising or anything like that – the greatest ability you could give to ANY group is your AVAILability.

If you think you can help - even once a month would be great - please contact Jim Tennant as soon as possible (Tel: 01896-751003, or email jim10ant@btinternet.com).

Thank you!

TREASURER'S REPORT – MAY 2007

The Treasurer's Report for January to May is summarised below:

Targeted Budget Income (January to May)	£31,910
Actual Income (January to May)	£32,513
Surplus:	£603

It is good that this month our total income exceeds our budgeted figure for the first five months of the year. This is the first month this has happened.

The income for May included £3,915 from our Gift Day – and many thanks to all who contributed generously. Many of these gifts will also allow us to claim the tax paid on them, which will increase this total. During the month we also received £1,623 in Gift Aid recovered from offerings, and again many thanks to all those from whom we can recover the tax paid on offerings and gifts. We also received £383 from the Listed Places of Worship – where we can reclaim the VAT paid on invoices incurred on maintaining the fabric of the building.

All this 'extra ordinary' income has resulted in the surplus shown above – but we need this monthly level of income to move into a healthy financial situation, where we could even consider reopening our Reserve Account for unforeseen expenditure.