

NEWSL

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September 2002



MINISTER'S LETTER

The Manse
Thurso

01847895186

Dear Friends

I am writing this in the aftermath of a Sunday Morning Service, and a disturbing conversation with two ladies from Switzerland who joined with the congregation for worship. Before coming to Thurso they had been over in Orkney and were deeply upset by a conversation they had with a retired

minister there. He was apparently due to go to a Conference organised by a grouping within the Church of Scotland in which he was going to be speaking in favour of ways of living and behaving which are clearly spoken against in the bible. Understandably this had greatly disturbed this Swiss Christian who is a missionary in Albania. As someone seeking to reach the world with the truth of Christ it alarmed her to hear of someone speaking so clearly against the truth of God in the Name of Christ!

It is a strange thing that often in the church we become very resistant to altering the way we do things but are quite happy to alter the bible's message. I came across something not long ago that perhaps shows there is more to this than meets the eye. You have maybe never heard of someone called Alice Bailey. I hadn't until I read about her a few months ago. She was born in 1880 and wrote many books claiming to be what spirit guides (i.e. demons) had said to her. Her main book is called "The Plan." What is the plan? To set people free from the restrictions of Christianity so they can enjoy liberty of life. The principles of her book are actually enshrined in many Western Countries as law. Listen to the ten principles of the Plan. And as you do maybe you will see it is more than cosmetic changes are needed in the church today it is real spiritual battles in the place of prayer until enemy strongholds in people's lives are torn down, spiritual blindness gives way to spiritual sight to see clearly the deception of the devil.

1 – Push God out of the Schools. If the people grow up without reference to God, then they will consider God irrelevant to modern-day life.

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2 – Break the traditional Judaeo-Christian Family Concept. Break communication between parents and children so that parents can't pass on spiritual values to their children. Do this by pushing excessive children's rights.

3 – Remove the restrictions on sex. Sex is the biggest joy and Christianity robs people of this. People must be free to enjoy it without restrictions. It's not just for marrieds. It's for everybody

4 – Since sex is the greatest expression of man's enjoyment in life, man must be free to express sex in ALL its forms. Homosexuality, orgies, even bestiality are desirable so long as one is being abused or harmed.

5 – People must be free to abort unwanted children. If a man can have sex and live without the consequences, then the same should be true of a woman too. A woman must have the right to abort and unwanted child.

6 – Every person develops soul bonds, so when a soul bond wears out a person must be free to divorce. When a new one starts to grow, one must be free to get together with that person even if they are married.

7 – Defuse religious radicalism. Christianity says Jesus is the only way. Defuse this by a) silencing Christianity; and b) promoting other faiths.

8 – Use the media to influence mass opinion. Create mass opinion that is receptive to these values by using film, the press etc.

9 – Debase art in all its forms. Corrupt music, painting, poetry and every expression of the heart and make it obscene, immoral and occultic. Debase the arts in every way possible.

10 – Get the church to endorse every one of these nine strategies. Get the churches to accept these principles and to say they are O.K. then legal ground is given for these values to get a foothold."

This makes disturbing reading. These ten points are almost a description of our society today. This is the world that we are called to live out the Christian life. More than ever we need to pray. More than ever we need to be willing witnesses to the truth of Christ and His Word. Even if what the bible says seems to be so out of line with "they way things are", we must not compromise on truth, and we must be willing to share it in a gracious way.

I recognise this is not the usual cheeriness that people look for from a pastoral letter, but as Christians we are involved in spiritual warfare. Let's not think the fight is lost. At the cross Jesus triumphed over sin and evil. Where his people live in his victory today, light can dispel darkness. A nation really can be changed when the church dares to be the church. May God help us to be in the world but not of it.

Your friend and minister

Rev. Kenny Borthwick

FUNERALS

Isabella Gunn – formerly of Manchester
Audrey Mair – St. Peter's Road
Sandy Allan – John Kennedy Drive
Jessie McEwen – George Street
Janet Sutherland – Murkle
Sinclair Robertson – Pentland View

We extend our sympathies to those who have lost loved ones.

WEDDINGS

Donella Murray and Mark Boulton
Susan Cameron and Philip Matheson

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Susan Brass and David Sutherland
Julie Simpson and James Swanson
Elaine Monaghan and Ronald Sinclair
Amanda Stevenson and Colin Brown

NEW MEMBERS

Joining us by Profession of Faith:
Raymond Mackay

*We hope Raymond enjoys being
part of our church family.*

“The Shape of things to Come...in Caithness Presbytery.”

Caithness Presbytery has been conducting training sessions to encourage lay participation in the leading of worship. Several of our elders and one or two others from within the congregation have attended these. Some have preached at either the morning or evening services already and in due course some of them will help to lead services in other places.

Please pray for Caithness Presbytery as it seeks to develop a plan for the future, which will help with the current severe shortage of ministers.

JUNE 2002

Christine Stone
United Mission to Nepal
PO Box 126
Kathmandu
Nepal

My dear Friends

I have known for quite a long time that the opportunity to get involved in civics education in all schools and also to run a really good teacher training course were reasons for staying in Nepal, even though both presented frightening challenges. But as they

seemed unlikely, I began knocking on other doors as perhaps my openings for work were ending. But at our recent UMN conference where I was busy all day in the kitchen God confirmed that I should stay in Nepal, and that all the obstacles the M.Ed. course were facing were to be overcome. This conviction had been growing since March, but suddenly it all seemed to be settled. The M.Ed. should start in August 2003, and declining a request to teach Chemistry in Pokhara this year, I decided to stay in Kathmandu. And this very week there's been a flurry of meetings about a new curriculum in civics education, just as I completed a whole teaching pack for Grade 6, which I hope to trial in schools in September. Getting 'involved' in these things is in God's hand, so it seems very exciting. Now the uncertainty is over I have been filled with joy and renewed enthusiasm. As I stay in Kathmandu I'll be able to help out at KISC when and if they've a need — perhaps some A level English next term by way of a change.

As I said in my last letter, my contract with Church of Scotland ends soon, and I want to say what a privilege and pleasure it has been to continue the long tradition that the Kirk has of witness in the Himalayan regions. And to say thank you for all the love and support I've received over the years. To continue to stay here within the United Mission I need to belong to another mission agency, so I am looking into that now. Many of you have been praying for Nepal, and for me, for 20 years; and I trust that this won't stop. It is something I value more than I can tell you. I'll be in touch!

May we all rejoice in God's faithfulness even when He tests us.

*With my love,
Christine*

Notices

2002	Kirk Session	Communion	
Month	Date	Date	Time
February	27		
March	13	3	Morning
April	10	28	Evening
May	29		
June	12	2	Morning
July	10	28	Evening
August	28		
September	11	1	Morning
October	9	27	Evening
November	27		
December	11	1	Morning
January	8	28	Evening

Notes:

- 1 Morning communion held on the first Sunday of March, June, September and December,
- 2 Evening communion held on last Sunday of April, July, October and January,
- 3 Kirk Session held on 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7.00 pm, except month before communion when it is the last Wednesday.
- 4 The Kirk Session dates are provisional and may change.

Advance Notice

Men's Coffee Morning

14th September 2002

see intimations for details nearer the time



The Church of Scotland

GIFT DAY

Following the most generous response over the past two years, the Finance Committee has decided to hold the event again, on Saturday 9th November (provisionally)

An envelope has been enclosed for your donation.

The church will be open, once again, 10a.m. - 12m.d.

&

2p.m. - 4p.m.
for receipt of above.

Alternatively, envelopes can be returned to your elder, or handed in on a Sunday near the above date.

If you are a taxpayer & care to print your name & address along with your donation, the church can recover the income tax on your gift.



"IF THIS KEEPS UP, WE'LL HAVE TO PUT ON EXTRA HELP JUST TO PROCESS PAUL'S LETTERS."

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso

RESTORATION FUND TO AUGUST 2002

Since the last report in May 2002

- 1) The overall maximum cost of the complete Restoration package is now £395,000
- 2) The total amount of grants from awarding bodies will not be clear for some time. However current projections show the Fund closing out in **December 2003**: so please plan for your Standing Orders and FWO envelopes to continue to the end of **2003!**
- 3) Historic Scotland has finally granted £20,600 towards this phase of the Restoration work (less redecoration). Money will be released against individual pieces of approved completed work.
- 4) Our Architect Mrs Leet is now setting the contractors (whom the board approved) to work on;
 - a) Window grill protection
 - b) Tower floor and Louvre repairs
 - c) Stone wall indenting
 - d) Side door repairs
- 5) Our Property Convenor, Mr Chalmers, is now progressing internal redecoration work (and the required plasterwork repairs) along with improved internal lighting.

Funding to Date

Donations	40,250
Regular Giving	109,250
Tax Recovery	23,850
Events	3,300
Trustees	15,000
Grants	25,250
Historic Scotland	124,300
Interest (Net)	6,150
Cash Raised	347,350
Loans	36,650
Cash Flow	384,000
Bills Paid	323,100
Bank Balance	60,900

Forward Projection to 2002

Projected Cost	376,500
plus Redecoration	18,500
Fund Target	395,000
Raised to Date	347,350
Plus:	
Historic Scotland	20,600
Pledges '02-'03	10,150
Tax Recovery	2,600
Minor Grants	11,650

Fabric Fund	3,500
(towards window grills)	
Loan Interest	-850
Funds Identified	395,000

James Houston, Restoration Fund Treasurer 31st July 2002

Out of the Mouth of Babe's

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

"Because white is the colour of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

Missing Church

It was Palm Sunday and Sue's five-year-old son had to stay home from church with a neighbour, because of strep throat. During the service the pastor handed out palm branches and invited people to participate in a drama, holding them out as a character dressed as Jesus Walked down the isle. It was quite a dramatic moment. When the family returned home carrying their palm branches, the youngster asked what they were for. His mother explained, "As Jesus walked by, People held them over his head."

"Wouldn't you know it," the boy said with a pained look on his face, "The one Sunday I don't go to church, Jesus shows up!"

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HOUSE GROUPS

Have you ever wished that you could meet and get to know members of the congregation during the week or find out a bit more about what is being taught on Sunday? Have you ever wanted to find a person or people with whom you could share your joys and troubles and find support and prayer? Would you like to be able to explore your faith and deepen your relationship with Jesus in an informal setting where you are loved and cared for? Have you ever wanted to introduce a friend to the life of the church but felt that they would be put off by a formal service?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then House Groups are for you.

With these aims in mind the Kirk Session have felt it right to encourage the development of House Groups within the congregation. There are presently three Groups meeting on a regular basis for praise and worship, prayer, bible study and mutual encouragement and fellowship in an informal home setting.

The Groups are designed for everyone using a variety of material and do not require any 'homework' between meetings. They have the following aims:

- ⌚ To encourage fellowship amongst the congregation
- ⌚ To deepen the spiritual life of the congregation
- ⌚ To provide an informal setting where members could introduce friends to the life of the church
- ⌚ To encourage understanding of scripture
- ⌚ To support each other in prayer and practical ways.

If anyone is interested in joining one of the Groups please speak to either Kenny, Richard Sharp, Jean Brock or Roger Bowser.

Go . . . and tell

By that time Mary had returned to the tomb and was standing outside crying. She glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing behind her. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him.

'Why are you crying?' he asked her. 'Whom are you looking for?' (She thought he was the gardener.) 'Sir,' she said, 'if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.'

'Mary!' Jesus said. She turned towards him. 'Master!' she exclaimed. 'Don't touch me,' he cautioned, 'for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.'

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them.'

John chapter 20, verses 11, 14 - 18

For a while Mary, too, was blinded to the truth because of her grief. But notice how Jesus comes on the scene and gently deals with her. When joy took the place of sorrow Jesus reminded this woman that she must tell others and so must we.

Ask God for someone to tell to-day, if you have found that Jesus is alive.

From "Going the Jesus Way" Text © Helen Lee. Used by permission of Scripture Union.

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Reaching Vulnerable People

Bringing spiritual hope and physical care, Mission Aviation Fellowship uses light aircraft in developing countries so that people in remote areas can receive the help they need.



The most significant problem among young children examined in Ukwaheri, Tanzania, in June was eye infections. MAF's monthly Mbeya safari flew in the Brandt medical team, who gave valuable health advice in how to maintain hygiene, as sadly there was no medicine available at the time.

Pilot Herman Sterken flew on from Ukwaheri to Upagama, where he delivered essential supplies of vaccines together with pictures, books, Bibles and dictionaries.

The following day, the plane landed at Solwarambo and Msangaji taking nurses Rehema and Elisa. At Solwarambo, they saw 130 mothers and children, and found one child suffering from scabies. Also on board the flight was John Rowse of Scripture Union, who seized the opportunity to share the Gospel. At Msangaji, John found the people had many questions. He was asked, 'Why did Moses need to take off his shoes at the burning bush?' This was the first safari visit to Msangaji for several months because of licensing problems. With these resolved, Herman and John received an enthusiastic welcome at an airstrip where the grass was nicely cut!

Following the excitement of opening a new airstrip at remote Kapenta, Ted and Kim Rabenold of Grace Ministries worked with Baptist doctors Doug and Karen Lehman, to run a trial medical clinic for the Fipa and Wanda people. Herman reports, 'Kapenta is a really difficult airstrip with shifting winds, an upslope, and as it is surrounded by a mountain ridge, there is only one direction to land and take off.' But at the end of June, an MAF plane landed there, bringing Doug and Karen, together with a Tanzanian student doctor to run the trial clinic and to explore the possibilities for future medical safaris.

Facing overwhelming needs among local people, the team stayed longer than planned. The doctors diagnosed a wide range of problems from kidney failure and heart disease to eye trauma, malnutrition and chronic jaundice. It was clear that there was much more work to be done. Doug Lehman is eager to begin the medical safaris on a monthly basis. The Baptist Mission and Grace Ministries are working and praying to make this vision a reality soon.

MAF is involved at the heart of reaching vulnerable people, whether they are in physical or spiritual need.

Reflections

Time flies when you are enjoying yourself. If I were to blink I might have missed these last nine months, they have zoomed on by as if David Coulthard was behind the wheel! I thought that I would put this article together to let you know just what I have been up in that time. Before I do this however let me begin by saying how much I have fallen in love with the north. Caithness has well and truly captured my heart: The big skies that race and roll on by over the Causi Myre; the friendly Fulmar who flies close by at eye level as she glides on a cliff thermal; beaches that belong in some children's fairy story, golden sands which go on and on; the unique sunsets with no two ever being the same or the fact that it never gets fully dark in the long days of summer. All of these things point me towards a greater sense of awe and wonder at the beauty of our Lord. I hope I never take any of these things for granted.

On a local level my time has been spent building friendships with the youth in or related to the church. This has happened either in a group setting or a one-to-one basis. In January we saw a Friday night youth house group get off the ground. It really has been a blessed time, friendships have grown deeper and we are all learning more about the Lord and His Kingdom ways. I am excited to see what the harvest of these small seeds sown will be. More recently we have got a youth band together, it is still in the early stages but it creates an outlet of creativity to flow in worship that the youth can run with and develop for themselves.

Out with the church, links have also been made with other churches and youth groups in the area. I have travelled through to Wick, Castletown and Watten to join in with or to speak at different events and youth groups. Through going to meet with a group of unchurched young folk in Castletown, we have recently seen one girl give her heart to the Lord. As well as this her friend is now also inquisitive about what it is to be a Christian. These are exciting first fruits of what God wants to do in our midst. One Friday night a month there is a joint games night in Thurso High School organised by Howard Stone, this is also proving to be a great way of building bridges with young folk who have very little or no church contact.

Over this year I have also helped organise weekend conferences called "Riding the Wave" these are geared towards the youth and young adults who go along to Clan Gathering in the summer. We have had two weekend gatherings this year, one in Thurso in February and one in Aberdeen in late April. The vision behind these weekends is that they serve as a stepping stone into more of what God is doing in the youth across the land. They have proved to be a great source of encouragement and blessings to all those who came along.

Further afield, it has been great to help Kenny with driving when he has different meetings or gatherings to attend. I have learned a great deal through our conversations on these long journeys and through the people meet and stay with at our journey's end. I especially think of Kenny MacDonald from Loch Carron who was saved in the Lewis Revival. I will never forget when our paths crossed. He is a man who is both gripped with the friendship and the fear of the Lord, meeting him stands as a milestone in my own Christian walk.

I don't know what it is with me and cars but I have this strange habit of naming them. I

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have taken it upon myself to name Kenny's car "Crunchy". This is because second gear has the tendency to stick and crunch when approaching junctions or roundabouts (a bad workman always blames his tools!). Kenny has been woken up many a time on a journey home with me apologising to both car and passenger after I have crunched my way into second. We always have a great deal of fun climbing the Berriedale Braes!

I hope that by now I have helped put you in the picture as to what I have been doing so far since moving north to Thurso. I look forward to seeing what the Lord has in store for us in these coming months. Recently I am learning that you can't out-dream God. He is one who always does abundantly more than we could ask or imagine so let's lift our vision higher and let go and let God be God.

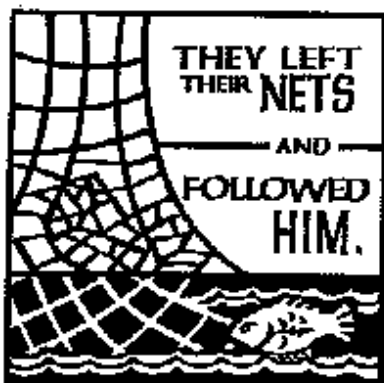
Love and blessings in Christ,

Howard Espie.

Tuesday Ladies Meeting

For some time now a group of ladies (of all ages) have been gathering together on Tuesday mornings at approx. 10.30a.m. for Coffee/Tea and Fellowship, followed by a time of Waiting on the Lord (from 11a.m. onwards). During this time our aim is to draw closer to the Lord, to welcome Him in to our gathering, to invite Him to direct the meeting and, to seek to listen to what in on His heart. In the past we have found that the meeting normally comprises Praise and Worship (for He truly is always worthy of all honour, and glory, and praise), the Holy Spirit lays a time of Thanksgiving, Intercession and whatever else upon our hearts. All of us are seeking to grow in the gifts of the Spirit and, if this describes how you feel, please accept this as an invitation to join with us any Tuesday morning. You will be made most welcome.

Since the ladies meet in a House Group setting, the venue varies from week to week. Details of venues are posted on the cork noticeboards in the front vestibule of the Church and in the church hall. If you would like more information please telephone Ruby Brock on 892682, or Jackie Newton on 892061.



IN
Everything
GIVE
Thanks

St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso



As guild meetings do not restart until 9th, September local news at present is in short supply. The 2002-2003 syllabus has been drawn up by the management team and includes some regular visitors such as the Salvation Army Songsters, Wick Baptist Ladies and the Occasionals, as well as some new speakers and some "homegrown" evenings.

Our Presbyterial Rally held in Strathy in early June was voted by all who attended it to be one of the very best. The children of Melvich School entertained us with medleys of songs some based on a Victorian project they had completed and some choruses learned 4 for school assemblies. Their obvious enjoyment of what they were doing was infectious and set the tone for the whole evening. Our guest speaker, Alison Twaddle, the guild general secretary from Edinburgh, spoke of her visit to Croatia to see some of the churches that had been rebuilt using money raised by Scottish guilds as one of our first round of three-year projects. Alison's fluent delivery peppered with humorous incidents held everyone interest. It was interesting to hear at first hand that our money raising efforts had indeed made a great difference to the lives of many people in war-torn Croatia. An excellent tea served by the ladies of Strathy Guild completed the evening.

Two of our members attended an excellent rally in Elgin also in June. This was organised by Moray West Presbyterial Council and drew an audience from all over the north of Scotland to hear a great variety of speakers including the new moderator on one of his very first official engagements. The speaker who made most impression was Rev. Stuart Windsor of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, an organisation that ventures into areas of the world where Christians are being persecuted for their beliefs. He told some very harrowing stories of such people especially in the Sudan where he and Baroness Cox have ventured to redeem Christian children from slavery. This organisation would value the prayers of all who read this. Other speakers included our guild National Convenor and Vice-convenor. The orchestra and choir of Mime High School and some classical dancers completed the programme.

During the next year some changes will be made to the guild constitution to remove any remaining references to 'women' as it has been open to men for several years now and many guilds do have male members. WE would welcome some so come on, Gentlemen, find a few like-minded friends and join us. New members, male or female, will be made most welcome when we resume in the autumn. Even if you don't feel able to commit yourself to regular meetings you will be most welcome to any meeting which interests you and hopefully there will be many.

Edited by Hector M MacLean for the members and friends of St Peter's and St Andrew's Church Thurso. Many thanks to all who contributed. Contributions not used may be used in later issues.