



action of churches together in scotland  
7 Forrester Lodge, Inglewood, Alloa FK10 2HU

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Autumn/Winter 2007

# TOGETHER

## The importance of Ecumenism

Now that I am Convener of ACTS I have relinquished one of my other jobs. As of September, I am no longer the Ecumenical Officer for the Synod of Scotland. All in all, I have been an Ecumenical Officer for the past 15 years and before that was heavily involved in a Churches Together group. Ecumenism has become an important part of my vocation as a minister.

In the Statement of the Nature and Faith of the United Reformed Church it is stated: "We affirm our intention to go on praying and working with all our fellow Christians for the visible unity of the Church *in the way Christ chooses*."

I see my ministry as very much being conducted in the light of that statement. Since I came back to Scotland five years ago, I have been part of ACTS through the Forum and I continue that now on the 'other side of the desk'. I am still, and always will be committed to the ecumenical movement. I was once asked at a meeting what being ecumenical means. I think it means, first of all, to pray regularly for the unity of the Church as *Christ wills* and when he wills. A theologian once said "The way through the door to unity is on our knees". Prayer is important because prayer's effect is in us. Prayer can change our hearts and it is our hearts that most of all need to be changed.

Secondly, it is to be rooted in a particular Christian tradition and to know it well and to be able to present that tradition's response to the

Gospel. Genuine ecumenists are not at the margin of their church's life but at the very heart of it. They know what is important in the Christian life and can recognise these elements in other churches, even if they may be differently expressed.

Thirdly, it is to take an active part in the careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be done for the renewal of one's own church. Ecumenism is not a speciality within the church but an expression of every dimension of its life. It can help the church to be more the church it should be and to be faithful to her calling. Fourthly, dialogue is the meeting of the churches. Its purpose is to help one another renew the churches in order to carry out Christ's mission for his one church. We must be willing to learn about and from each other. Each Christian tradition has presented better than others, one or more aspect of the mystery of God's work in Christ. The work of unity aims at restoring the fullness of our common appreciation of that mystery.

We are on a journey together as ecumenism is a movement, not a standing still. Let us journey well together, ever open to the Holy Spirit and what she is saying to the churches.

*Rev'd Mary Buchanan  
Convener, Scottish Churches Forum*

Are you ready for

## One World Week

One World Week (21-28 October) is coming up fast but there's still time to plan that special event to celebrate 'All Together Now', the theme for 2007. Of course you can have your event any time – it doesn't have to be that week, but many take strength from knowing others are celebrating OWW at the same time. Please go to [www.oneworldweek.org.uk](http://www.oneworldweek.org.uk) for ideas and resources and do tell OWW what you are planning so your event can be posted on the website.

## Journey into Growth

The Seven Core Values of a Mission Church, edited by Terry Tennens is a workbook for local churches looking to grow in mission.

ISBN: 978-085169-346-0

£7.99 plus £3 post.

To order tel: 01733 325002

## Doors Open

**Doors Open**, published by The Village Storytelling Centre in 2006, is a book of interviews and conversations between local people and asylum seekers living in Greater Pollok, Glasgow. It covers many subjects, including the trauma of asylum, old communities and new communities and friendships formed across racial divisions. The website gives background about the book, extracts, commentary, information and links with a wide range of organisations.

[www.thevillagestorytellingcentre.com](http://www.thevillagestorytellingcentre.com)

Doors open (from Plantation to Pollok, from Kabul to Kennishead)  
ISBN 0-9547491-2-X

## What are we waiting for? Reflections through Advent 2007

Prepared this year for ACTS by Sr Moira Donnelly, Religious of the Sacred Heart, Aberdeen. The material is set out over the four weeks of Advent and offers readings and reflection.

Copies are available FREE from ACTS to download in a text only format from the website, or at a small cost to recover printing and postage costs in booklet form for 15p each which includes postage.

To download your free copies now visit: [www.acts-scotland.org](http://www.acts-scotland.org)

or send your order for hard copies in booklet form ( **available from 5<sup>th</sup> October** )

Order from:

ACTS Publications, 7 Forrester Lodge, Inglewood, Alloa FK10 2HU.

Cheques should be made payable to ACTS.

## The Offices of ACTS Secretariat Receive Blessing

On 29 August, members of staff of the ACTS Secretariat, together with members of the Scottish Churches' Forum met in the offices at Forrester Lodge, Alloa, to take part in a Blessing Prayer and dedication to the new offices.

The Opening Prayer was led by Rev Ian Boa of the United Free Church, followed by Rev Bill Brown of the Church of Scotland. The Prayer of Commitment, which was first taken at the Inaugural Service of ACTS in 1990 was renewed and led by Elspeth Davey of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

The Blessing was given by Major Robert McIntyre of The Salvation Army, Most Rev Mario Conti of the Roman Catholic Church and Rev Mary Buchanan, United Reformed Church and Convener of the Scottish Churches Forum.

**Stop! In the Name of God:** A meeting was recently held to discuss plans to bring a National Quiet Day to Scotland. The Retreat Association of England already have this day in June each year, but it is hoped that Scotland will offer a

day, through the channels of the Church Life Network, which will mean more to the people of Scotland, perhaps on St Andrew's Day. The purpose is to offer an opportunity to take a minute from an otherwise busy day to stop for quiet reflection and/or prayer – whether it be in a busy shopping centre – your place of work or in a garden. Planning is in the very early stages but its aim is to have something in place for the first Quiet Day in November 2008.

## Christians around the World to Pray for Peace on 21 September

Christians from Congo to the USA, and from Columbia to South Korea will join in prayers on September 21, the International Day of Prayer for Peace. The initiative was first proposed at a 2004 meeting between WCC General Secretary Rev Dr Samuel Kobia and the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The day coincides with the United Nations International Day of Peace. Visit : [www.overcomingviolence.org](http://www.overcomingviolence.org)

**Towards 2010:** Representatives from most of Scotland's major Churches gathered at Inglewood House, Alloa, recently to discuss preparations for the 1,000 delegates who will gather in Edinburgh in 2010 for the centenary of the World Mission Conference. Nominations were received to form a Steering Group who will shape and take initiatives forward over the next three years. Their task will be a huge commitment in time, energy and creative thinking, but will provide an important role in hospitality from the Scottish Churches. The worship was led by Rev Mary Buchanan, Convener of Scottish Churches Forum and also by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, General Assembly, Rt Revd Sheilagh Kesting. Speakers were Revd Prof Ken Ross, Dr Daryl Balia and Br Stephen Smyth General Secretary of ACTS. The Day was chaired by Revd Douglas Nicol, Church of Scotland.

## **Pray without Ceasing: Prayer for Christian Unity 2008:**

In January 2008 – the Week of Prayer is usually 18-25 January, but in some places observed at Pentecost – we shall celebrate the Centenary of Prayer of Christian Unity. The Octave was first marked by the Revd Paul Watson, an Episcopalian Franciscan priest, within the grounds of Graymoor, the home of Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement, in January 1908. Graymoor, just north of New York, USA, has the title ‘Holy Mountain’, remains the setting for a vibrant Franciscan community and was host to the international group which prepared the centenary material soon to be available in translation throughout the world.

The theme text suggested by the local American group is 1 Thessalonians 5.14-18, with the key verse “Pray without ceasing.” The material reflects ways in which the unceasing prayer of Christian people over many years has brought forward the cause of Christian Unity. The image used in material is from Ground Zero and symbolises the sense of praying for peace and reconciliation, both within the Church and the world.

For our country the material has been edited by a group representing the ecumenical bodies of Britain and Ireland. It includes both devotional material for the eight days and a full service – all to be published in September – and in due course extra worship resources will be available through the CTBI website. A hundred years on we want to be praying without ceasing in ever new ways!

*Andrew Scobie  
ACTS representative of World Council of  
Churches and CTBI editorial groups.*

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Copies of this newsletter can be downloaded from  
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## **Christmas and Alternativity**

A new resource for women to help take the stress out of Christmas has been launched by Alternativity. The material written and produced by women has been trialled in the urban priority areas of Glasgow and Paisley and is offered as a resource for leaders of women's groups. For further information please visit: [www.alternativity.org.uk](http://www.alternativity.org.uk)