



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

**Brother Stephen Smyth,  
former Ecumenical Officer of  
Glasgow Churches Together,  
Is the new  
General Secretary of ACTS**

(see page 2 for more details)

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Spring/Summer 2007 **TOGETHER**

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## **Churches commemorate the Bi-centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act**

An Open Weekend organised by the National Trust to commemorate the Bi-centenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade Act was held at Blantyre over the weekend of 16 – 17 June 2007. ACTS were proud to host the national ecumenical service on 16<sup>th</sup> which witnessed the signing of a statement made from the Scottish Churches which read:

“We remember with gratitude all those, slave and free, who worked to bring about the ending of chattel slavery, for which the first major step was the abolition of the British Slave Trade in 1807.

We acknowledge that many Christians were slow to speak out against the evils of the Slave Trade and that many were actively involved in it and profited from it. We express our sincere regret for this.

The legacies of the Slave Trade are still active in the world and we commit ourselves to working for reconciliation and for an end to both the economic imbalance between the powerful, rich nations and the poorer ones and to racism. We call on governments to be particularly supportive of the nations in Africa and in the Caribbean which bore the brunt of the effects of the Slave Trade.

We recognise that out of this economic imbalance comes an exploitation of poverty which has led to forms of de-humanising treatment of people such as trafficking in people and forced or bonded labour.

We commend the Christian men and women who are already working to combat these evils and call on the people of this Church to find practical ways to support their efforts.”

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## Brother Stephen Smyth Is ACTS new GS

Action of Churches Together in Scotland, recently welcomed Brother Stephen Smyth as their General Secretary succeeding Rev Dr Kevin Franz who moved on to work for the Religious Society of Friends, in London.

Br Stephen Smyth: born Glasgow 1950 is a member of the Marist Brothers, a Roman Catholic Religious Congregation. Stephen has been the Ecumenical Officer for Glasgow Churches Together for the last seven years and has a wide experience in education at secondary and adult levels.

Stephen has a Master of Ministry and Theology from the Urban Theology Unit, Sheffield University; and, is a member of the Contextual Bible Study Development Group in Glasgow. About his appointment he said, "I look forward to this next stage of our pilgrimage as Churches in Scotland. My vision is that together we can deepen our relationships and celebrate more, the gifts of one another's traditions.

Brother Stephen will take up his post in mid July.

**30 April to 10 May 2008**

## Peru *Trek to Machu Picchu*

Experience the history of the Incas on this picturesque NEW trail to Machu Picchu. We trek away from the tourist route to reduce the impact on the environment. Trek through luscious vegetation, past waterfalls to visit Machu Picchu at sunrise. Meet local communities and enjoy Peruvian culture.

Visit one of ActionAid's highland community projects, talk to the children and hear how your sponsorship is changing lives. *To join this expedition you will need to pay a registration fee of £300 (can be paid in two instalments) and pledge to raise a minimum sponsorship target for ActionAid. Places are very limited so we recommend you book early to avoid disappointment.*

**For your free information pack contact 01460 238 047**

**Email: [actionadventures@actionaid.org](mailto:actionadventures@actionaid.org) or visit [www.actionaid.org.uk/adventures](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/adventures)**

**Brush up on your skills –  
and learn new ones with**

## Scottish Storytelling Centre Training Programme

14 August 2007 - **It's the Plot, Stupid Storylines in Youth Media: How to Devise, Interpret and Discuss them 10.00am – 4.30pm £30.00/£24.00 conc. Incl lunch**

7 September 2007 - **Advanced Skills (2): Telling the Story Through Song 1.30pm – 4.00pm £15/£12 (Netw members £12/£10) Incl refreshments**

8 September 2007 – **Songmaking, Stories and Community Ceilidhs 10am-4.30pm £30.00/£24.00 conc, incl lunch and refreshments**

**Contact : Scottish Storytelling Centre on: 0131 556 9579**

## Migrant Tales

Maria Zwiernik is the President of the Reformed Polish Club in Alloa. She lives in the area with her husband Leszek, son Witek and daughter Milena. Witek first came to Scotland on a Student Association Scheme, working at the Mushroom Plant in Callander, living in a caravan there, just before Poland received A8 approval. When this was granted he looked for somewhere more permanent and found affordable housing, with 'plenty of shops and good transport links'.

Maria followed, securing work as a cleaner at the Gleneagles Hotel. Maria had been an accountant in Poland but is happy to receive a salary which provides a better standard of living here than in Poland. Maria doesn't speak any English but daughter Milena does and has secured part time work as a 'Migrant Support Worker' with Clackmannanshire Council.

I asked Maria what she required from the churches in Scotland and she told me:

*"It is very important for us, as Poles, to have an active link to our Church. We now have a Polish Priest giving Services every two weeks and this has been very welcome.*

*If the churches could work alongside local agencies to support the work already started that would be good. What we want from the churches is for them to help us to become self-sufficient, and confident so we are able to integrate into society and to access the jobs we are qualified to do, and for the churches to become a part of our daily lives."*

Taken from a report by Scottish Churches Rural Group. the complete booklet will be available soon. For a copy please contact Shona Paterson

Email: [shonapaterson@acts-scotland.org](mailto:shonapaterson@acts-scotland.org)

Tel: 01259 222362

## Churches commemorate ...

Continued from front page:

The Statement, which was also signed by individual members of the congregation, is to be sent to Gordon Brown on his first day as Prime Minister.

Representing the strong, but rarely publicly acknowledged, connections which the Slave Trade forged between Scotland and the Caribbean, Rev Marjorie Lewis, a minister of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, was the first speaker to address the congregation. Her reflection invited people to think about whether Jesus was welcome in our homes today.

The second speaker, Rev Arlington Trotman, formerly of the Churches Commission on Racial Justice, used the words of Doctor Martin Luther King Jr "Lest we forget" to encourage the congregation to use the legacies of the Slave Trade as the starting point for a struggle to create a more just world for all people.

The Service sought to be a bridging point, linking people with the past through the reading of accounts of slavery and the singing of Negro spiritual songs which were led by the Glasgow Gospel Choir and Hamilton Salvation Army Band, and encouraging people to look to the future and to commit themselves to racial justice locally and in the global community.

## London Exhibition shows early Christian, Jewish and Muslim texts

Several of the world's earliest surviving texts of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths are being exhibited side by side for the first time in a major exhibition which opened at the British Library in London on Friday 27 April. 'Sacred – Discover what we share' runs , with free public admission, until 23 September.

*"We hope that this exhibition can make a significant contribution towards promoting better understanding of the three faiths. We took the groundbreaking decision to display objects of the three religions side by side, rather than in separate zones to show how they have interacted and influenced each other and how much they have in common."* Exhibition curator, Graham Shaw

## Religious attire still causing controversy in Europe

The Dutch and Italian governments have come out against the wearing of some religious clothing in public. In the Netherlands, five schools situated in what is known as 'The Bible Belt' have become the first in the Netherlands to be allowed to ban the wearing of headscarves and other religious symbols. A spokesman for the Dutch Commission for Equal Treatment explained:

*"Normally schools won't be allowed to ban the headscarf .. These are specialised (Christian) schools ... If someone wants to attend the school, they are asked to sign papers agreeing with the religion, identity and rules in these schools."*

In Italy, Interior Minister, Guiliano Amato has also presented guidelines on religious veils. *"Types of clothing that cover the face are not acceptable because they prevent the identification of the person and are an obstacle to the interaction with others"* he said.

These articles are from 'The Bridge' the Ejournal of the Churches' Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland. For a copy of this Ejournal please contact Andrew Sarle on [andrew@cairs.org.uk](mailto:andrew@cairs.org.uk) or tel: 0772 456 8259

## Racial Justice Sunday

9 September 2007

**"Go to a land I will show you"**

Genesis 12:1

**People are on the move – This is God's doing** and the result is that in both town and country, people from all over the world rub shoulders with each other. Racial Justice Sunday 2007 takes this mass-movement of people as its theme and follows different 'signposts' to view it from several angles.

**The Racial Justice Sunday pack** offers you stories, worship suggestions, biblical reflections and practical resources to mark this special occasion. You can choose one "Signpost" and build a service around that, pick and mix, or sue all six to plan a series. Discussion starters suitable for house groups are also included. Racial Justice Sunday is marked by local congregations from many different Christian traditions across Britain and Ireland. Other local churches choose to emphasise racial justice on an alternative day in the year.

Packs are available from Racial Justice Officer ACTS, 7 Forrester Lodge Inglewood, Alloa FK10 2HU

Cost £3.50 includes post

Please make cheques payable to 'CCRJ'

# Spiritual Accompaniment Course for Clergy

at St Margaret's Convent, 88 Strathearn Road, Edinburgh

18 Thursdays from 1pm – 4pm in 3 blocks of 6 weeks

25 October – 29 November 2007

17 January – 21 February 2008

3 April – 8 May 2008

Contact: 0141 354 0077 Ignation Spirituality Centre

Email: [www.iscglasgow.co.uk](http://www.iscglasgow.co.uk)

## Scottish Churches' House Events

### YOU ARE THE MUSIC WHILE THE MUSIC LASTS"

Faith, Culture and the Aesthetics  
of Resistance  
20-24 August 2007



Scottish Churches House

An International Conference sponsored by the Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe, to examine the dialogue between art, religion and prevailing cultures: how the language of the arts translates the experience of poverty, power, joy, suffering, love and death into practical encouragement and sustenance for living in the world.

With Richard Holloway on "The Aesthetics of Resistance", Fr. Benedict Hardy of Pluscardine Abbey on "Gregorian Chant as Sung Theology: Truth and Beauty as One", Michael Kocab, Czech rock star and politician, on "The Moment in and out of Time", Ronald Rae, artist and sculptor, on "Exploring Faith through Art", and Donald Smith of the Netherbow on "A Nation of Storytellers".

Full fee, including board and lodging: £189.00;

Non-resident, including all meals: £85.00

Flyers available.

### Walking

Do you enjoy walking, or does your church have a walking group? Why not try our Walking Week, which runs from 23-28 July and costs just £228 for full board accommodation including packed lunches. Transport is also included, which allows us the opportunity for linear walks through the beautiful hill country near Dunblane.

***For more details and booking please call Margaret Boon, Customer Services Manager, Scottish Churches House, Dunblane 01786 823588 or email: [reservations@scottishchurcheshouse.org](mailto:reservations@scottishchurcheshouse.org).***

**Redesigned, revamped, relaunched – new website for The Methodist Church goes online.**

The Methodist Church has completely revamped its website . From Thursday 24 May, visitors to [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) will see a completely redesigned site that aims to be easier to use and more expressive of the best of Methodism.

The site will feature a daily prayer, and dedicated sections for particular elements of the Church's work and mission. The new site also makes use of Web 2.0 ideas, allowing people to form networks around common interests as active users rather than passive readers. "This moves from the old model where we presented information to people to a new form where the website is also a way for everyone to contribute", says Dave Webster, Co-Head of Communication for Electronic Resources. "Over the past few years we have launched podcasts and weblogs amongst other things, but the new site draws together all of these ideas to create something that is flexible and useful enough to support the whole of the Church and its work."

### **How many lightbulbs does it take to change a Christian?**

Did you know that by changing just one high energy lightbulb to a low energy saving one saves 75kg of carbon dioxide a year?

The full colour book provides hundreds of practical ideas for making small changes to your lifestyle and will inspire you and your church and community towards actions which will reduce your ecological footprint .

£4.99 ISBN 9780715141274  
Church House Publishing

## **Communications Day** **Friday 12 October 2007** **Methodist Church House** **25 Marylebone Road, London**

**Websites, Press releases, Newsletter, Magazines, Posters, PowerPoint, Leaflets, Banners...**



These are only some of the ways that churches, circuits and districts communicate with people. If you are already helping with any of these, or would like to learn more, then you are invited to a Communications Day at Methodist Church House on Friday 12 October. A series of workshop swill show you how to make the best of all your communications with the help available from the Connexional Team. We will have advice on:

- How to avoid copyright
- What resources and support the Connexional Team can offer
- How the make the best of your website.

Whether you are an 'old hand' or just starting out, the day promises to be informative and entertaining.

And --- IT'S FREE! Including lunch and refreshments.

To book a place, please email Lynne Newland on:

[newland@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:newland@methodistchurch.org.uk)

# Kirchentag 2007 – Köln

Lebendig und kraftig und schärfer (Lively and powerful and sharper – Hebrews 4:12)

A hundred thousand people registered 3000 events, a million visitors, 5000 international participants. There is no getting away from it, Kirchentag is big. The whole of the Köln Messe (Exhibition Centre) and several hundred other venues dotted about the city played host to a whole variety of events. Bible studies, political discussions, services, concerts, and a “marketplace of opportunities” that stretched over four vast halls of the Messe (Exhibition & Conference Centre).



The emblem of this, the 31<sup>st</sup> Kirchentag is the fish symbol, with a fin added, demonstrating the German Churches' commitment to be sharks rather than minnows. And the topics discussed, and speakers invited were 'big fish' indeed. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, WCC general secretary Samuel Kobia, German Chancellor Andrea Merkel (straight from hosting the G8) and Köln's Cardinal

Meissener were some of the more famous participants, with Scots involvement led by Kathy Galloway and Angus Mathieson of the Iona Community.

The international Visitors' welcome meeting was hosted by bilingual Angus Mathieson, wearing full highland dress, and one of several simultaneous Bible studies on Matthew 4:1-11 was led by Kathy Galloway.

Desmond Tutu had 3000 people eating out of his hand, and at least a further thousand in an overflow hall watching a video link of his powerful Bible study on Jeremiah 23:16-32. The Archbishop likened supporters of Apartheid and Nazism to the false prophets that Jeremiah was warning us about. He also described God's love as being for ALL humanity, without exception, and in his inimitable style reminded his listeners that God loves Bush and Bin Laden, as well as homosexuals!

If religion can and does fuel conflict, globalization driven by non-religious forces also contributes a great deal to the emergence of new ethno-religious conflicts says World Council of Churches' general secretary Rev Dr Samuel Kobia. He affirmed that in such conflicts, Christians are called by the gospel to work towards healing and reconciliation - but he was forthright about the way both

diseased religion and other malign ideologies can lead to death and destruction. He recalled, as one example, how a 19th-century German missionary in present-day Tanzania destroyed the trees of an ancient African shrine near Kilimanjaro. "When they started to cut the trees, an old man stood in their way, asking them, 'What kind of God is this who wants you to destroy the holy places of others?'" The gospel imperative "to affirm justice and to honour the dignity of the other" compels Christians to work for healing and reconciliation, something that "often requires healing of memories that are deeply hurt".

With so vast a choice of events to attend, I know of several that I would liked to have been able to attend, but that's the point of something as big as Kirchentag – you know you will go away disappointed at what you have not been able to attend – but reinvigorated by what you have been able to fit in.

Opening and closing worship was held on a meadow on the banks of the Rhein, and was attended by a vast crowd, some of whom were several hundred yards from the stage. Music was provided by a brass band of over 6000 musicians, and the preaching was lively, powerful and sharper, particularly in the closing worship which reminded Germany, and the whole of the developed world, that they had a responsibility to take the lead in achieving a more just world. The preacher contrasted the range of toothpastes she could choose in her local shops to the empty bellies of millions in other parts of the world.

I met my counterpart in Inter Faith work from Hessen, spoke with one of the staff from the "House of Religions" in Hannover, and led a workshop at the Iona Community's centre which showed that Scotland and Germany's point on the inter faith journey are fairly similar. Plans have been submitted to build a Central Mosque in a Köln suburb, and many local residents are actively campaigning against it. NIMBYism is universal! The local bishop issued a less than helpful statement on Christian-Muslim relationships, and was criticised by many for failing to move the dialogue forward. Fortunately, others are more willing to build bridges of opportunity instead of road blocks.

Andrew Sarle

## **Churches sign up to stamp out sectarianism**

Leaders and representatives of a wide spectrum of Churches in Glasgow signed a common statement on 17 May 2007 celebrating how today's churches work more closely together than in the past.

The move coincides with artist, Roddy Buchanan's exhibition, *Histrionics*, showing at Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art until October 2-007, which explores aspects of sectarianism.

The Statement will be supported by a leaflet – *How They Love One Another* – produced in partnership by Culture and Sport Glasgow, Glasgow Churches Together and Sense of Sectarianism. The leaflet can be downloaded at

[www.glasgowchurches.org.uk/downloads/leaflet.pdf](http://www.glasgowchurches.org.uk/downloads/leaflet.pdf)

## **General Secretary of Churches Together in England to Retire**

The Revd Bill Snelson (62), General Secretary of Churches Together in England, for the past 10 years, is to retire at the beginning of 2008. His post is to be advertised in mid-July.

## **Hundred Years after mission conference gave impetus to start of ecumenical movement, Kobia calls for ecumenically responsible evangelism**

On the threshold of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the 1910 Edinburgh World Mission Conference, widely regarded as the symbolic starting point of the modern ecumenical movement, World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary, Rev Dr Samuel Kobia offered a sober analysis of the past century's achievements and failures, and called for an "ecumenically responsible evangelism".

Speaking in Edinburgh recently, at a meeting to prepare the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the landmark event, Kobia affirmed: "We need a new Edinburgh and can only hope that the celebration we foresee for 2010 will be a step in the right direction."

Such a re-edition depends on involving today's newer and most dynamic mission movements, Kobia said. These "are to be found among Christian traditions not represented in any of the formal for a that exist as a consequence of the structures of last century."

Only after acknowledging Christianity's new face, the result of the "spiritual revolution brought by the Pentecostal and charismatic movements and churches, "can a fruitful theological dialogue ....

# Wedding Congratulations

Congratulations to Scottish Churches House Warden, Alastair Hulbert and new bride, Liz Law who were married during a Quaker ceremony at The Annexe, Scottish Churches House, Dunblane on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May

Alastair and Liz

We all wish them a  
long and happy  
life together

Continued from page 9 **Hundred years after ...**

.....on priorities and disciplines in mission” be envisaged.

In that sense, it is particularly urgent that mission “be understood and practised in a way that does not lead to an increase of hatred and violence”. New forms of “non-aggressive evangelism” must keep “the bold witness to Christ and God’s kingdom in creative tension with respect for men, women and children of all convictions.”

For Kobia, “ecumenically responsible evangelism “means” a proclamation which, while critical of human pride and sin, makes it clear that God wants peace and not war, life and not death, unity and not division, forgiveness and vengeance.”

## Healing of memories

Reflecting on the famous Edinburgh motto “the evangelisation of the world in this generation,” the WCC general secretary acknowledged that 100 years later, the number of Christians in the world is proportionally the same: roughly a third of the world population.

“Realistically speaking, it doesn’t make sense to just repeat the Edinburgh watchword.” Kobia argued, Instead, and in view of the extent to which both the world and the landscape of Christianity have profoundly changed since 1910, he proposed to focus on “this generation’s mission in a globalized world.”

Amongst wounded memories in need of healing is the rift between “Christians of the evangelical mission family and Christians of the conciliar or ecumenical mission family.” “We should find a way to confess mutual exaggerations and disrespect” so as to favour “an authentic reconciliation process” if any progress in co-operation around 2010 and beyond is to be achieved”, Kobia said.

## **Ecumenical Relations/ACTS Annual Conference**

**Thursday 25 October 2007  
10.30am to 3.00pm  
Church of Scotland Offices  
121 George Street, Edinburgh**

**Theme: 3<sup>rd</sup> European Ecumenical  
Assembly which is to be held in Sibiu,  
Romania in September 2007.**

**Invitations are to be issued nearer the  
time, but please do put this date in  
your diaries now.**



## **Nexus Scotland**

This Christian Resources exhibition, the largest ever to be held in Scotland, takes place from Thursday, 23 to Saturday, 25 August 2007 in the SECC, Glasgow. Further details can be found at [www.nexusScotland.org](http://www.nexusScotland.org)



## **Resourcing Churches**

Have you heard about this new ecumenical website which is proving to be a great online resource for everyday congregational life? Why not have a look for yourself?

[www.resourcingchurches.org.uk](http://www.resourcingchurches.org.uk)

## **Hope2008**

A great new resource is to be released on July 1<sup>st</sup> 'Hope – great ideas'.

This magazine-style manual contains more than 160 pages packed with tips on how to make Hope08 a reality, and it's been written by over 30 authors from different backgrounds.

It is expected that copies will sell fast so get in quickly if you don't want to miss out!

It will cost £2.99 from Wesley Owen bookshops postage may be applied if ordering by post.

## **Giant 'carbon footprint' to spark debate at Methodist Conference**

The Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) will be using a red, two metre high 'carbon footprint' at this year's Methodist Conference to highlight the danger to developing countries posed by climate change.

The charity will be challenging Conference representatives to measure their own carbon footprints and to act to reduce them. As more people commit to action throughout the Conference, the footprint will gradually turn green.

# Missing

**Missing Children's day 25<sup>th</sup> May**

As the investigation into missing tot Madeleine McCann continues, and the Missing Children's Day has now passed, more than 2,000 children have been reported missing in this country since her disappearance. An estimated 210,000 reports of missing people are made to UK police forces each year, many of those concern people under the age of 18. The National Missing Persons Helpline (who are to announce a change of name soon) directly finds 10 missing people each week.

Many go missing on purpose, due to difficult family life and some, for reasons known only to those involved, take great steps to stay missing.

However, many go missing under more worrying circumstances, dealing those who have been left behind a devastating blow. For those left behind faith is often what they cling to most.

So while there are numerous helplines and campaigns for those missing in the public eye, I would like to ask everyone reading this article to pray for the safe return of all missing loved ones: for Alan Johnston BBC Gaza correspondent; for missing tot Madeleine McCann and for Alan Templeton, son of Elizabeth and Douglas.

Elizabeth is the Convener of our Church and Society Network, her 25 year old son disappeared last November after leaving a friend's flat in Edinburgh and they are naturally anxious to know if he is ok. There have been no conclusive sightings

of him so far.

Elizabeth told me, "If Alan needs time and space out, which is apparently an issue sometimes, especially for young men, then we would want to respect that. We just want to know that he's alive/safe/ok. If other parents have coped with this we would be glad to hear from them."

Alan is 6'4" medium build with blue eyes and short brown hair. When last seen in Edinburgh, he was wearing a blue jumper, jeans and trainers.

If you have seen Alan please call the confidential National Missing Persons Helpline on Freefone 0500 700 700

[sightings@missingpersons.org](mailto:sightings@missingpersons.org)

Visit:

[www.myspace.com/findalantempleton](http://www.myspace.com/findalantempleton)

[www.alastairmcintosh.com/alan-templeton.htm](http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/alan-templeton.htm)

Email: [templeton.e@btinternet.com](mailto:templeton.e@btinternet.com)

**If you have any interesting news you would like to see in the next edition of our newsletter, or if you have a change of mailing details please contact:**

**Shona Paterson at ACTS, 7 Forrester Lodge, Inglewood, Alloa FK10 2HU  
Email: [shonapaterson@acts-scotland.org](mailto:shonapaterson@acts-scotland.org)  
or telephone 01259 222362**

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