Have you heard about the Church Army?

From Faslane to Orkney, the Church Army has had a variety of appointments in Scotland. With a current focus in Aberdeen with Gerry Bowyer, and the Grafted Project outdoor adventure centre on the Scottish Borders, Church Army is still contributing to the mission of the wider church. However, we are not great in number and still 'the churches best kept secret' as a previous Archbishop described. I am therefore very glad to accept the invitation to write this reflection as a Church Army evangelist working for a national ecumenical instrument, and to reflect on our work in the light of the ecumenical vision.

Our founder, Wilson Carlile was a convert to Christianity. From being a 'rank outsider', he became comfortable to all traditions and none. Playing the piano for evangelical Moody and Sankey meetings, he also became a curate in an Anglo Catholic Church. His outreach to the servant class, fervour for street preaching, and work with the homeless, soon earned him the reputation 'Archbishop of the Gutter' in the new 'army' style of his friend William Booth from the Salvation Army. The Church Army has stayed within the Anglican tradition since early 1882, but with an ecumenical heart. 'To work for Christian unity' being in our Rule of Life.

Church Army has recently become an acknowledged mission community with a vision to embrace hundreds, if not thousands of people committed to evangelism, from whichever church they belong. www.churcharmy.org.uk provides an insight in to this great work, including the examples in Scotland. Most CA evangelists work on the edge with the 'least, the last, …
Don’t Forget to visit the

Churches in Rural Scotland Stand at the Royal Highland Show this year! We’re hoping for better weather than last year’s event, but however cold and miserable it might be outside, you are sure to find a warm welcome at the Churches Stand – a free coffee and a friendly word!

It’s at Ingliston, Edinburgh from Thursday 20th – Sunday 23rd June.

UNDERSTANDING RURAL DEPRIVATION – Is the title of a report commissioned by Church of Scotland’s Rural Strategy Team, carried out by representatives from geography departments of Dundee and St Andrews universities. The report highlights differences of social deprivation between rural and urban congregational areas and variations within rural congregational areas. Technical details of classification criteria matched to government statistical ‘data zones’ come under the sister Technical Report. To read both visit:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/councils_committees_and_departments/mission_and_discipleship_council

A Spiritual Walk
Falkland
10.30 – 14.30
Saturday 25 May 2013

Scottish Churches’ Rural Group are hosting a spiritual walk this year, instead of the usual annual conference. The event will pick up many of the themes being developed by the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum and will celebrate the value of God’s creation.

The walk will be led by Ninian Stuart, the Keeper of the Falkland Estate, Carole Phelan, chair of Spirituality Task Force and David Atkinson member of SCRG and SPRF. It will cover 3 miles with a shorter, more protected route in the event of heavy rain.

Lunch will be provided
Cost £10
Bookings to shonapaterson@acts-scotland.org
(or at address on front page)
and the lost'. Wonderful stories of people healed on the streets through a bus project, or 8 youngsters baptised in a river from a local skateboard project, to the homeless women resettled in London, and examples of Fresh Expressions with diverse communities were shared at our annual gathering last week. This is the bread and butter work of Church Army, as we seek to bring the good news of Jesus to people who do not know him.

Having said that, quite a few CA evangelists find themselves less on the edge and more at the centre of church life, not so much 'doing', as advocating, resourcing and enabling evangelism to become the part of the life blood of all that we seek to do in bringing the kingdom. So, here are some headlines to reflect on mission and unity from my Church Army / Churches Together perspective:

The paradox of unity - we are both united like the branches of the vine, but also identifiably different like the parts of the body. As followers of Jesus with a common baptism we are one, yet in our denominations and traditions we are different. This is one of the many paradoxes of the Gospel and we all need each other.

Chicken and egg - which comes first? There have been many discussions about whether mission or unity.....

come first, from the first Edinburgh conference to the WCC papers for The forthcoming Assembly in Busan. Sometimes one leads to the other, and then the other way round. The relationship is not unlike the dance of the Trinity.

5 Marks of Unity - in the same way different models of mission have been identifies as '5 Marks', it is easy to see a number of different ways in which we understand the ecumenical vision. '5 Marks of Unity' is an interesting way of exploring our various approaches: working together / mutual accountability / visible unity / whole inhabited earth / coming kingdom of God.

New focus for ecumenism - with Street Pastors, Food-banks, Hope, and many other initiatives the ecumenical focus has shifted from the church and what size cup we use, to the community and how best we can serve together. With the focus outside of ourselves it is much easier to share in both the ecumenical and mission journey together.

There is an extraordinary story to tell of more and more churches working together 'celebrating our diversity' while 'serving the community'. As 'God so loved the world', we do well to celebrate the work of organisations who work with people on the edge and seek to turn the church inside out. It is all part of the good news of mission and unity / unity and mission.

Capt Jim Currin, CTE
Good NEWS

You can now read a history of the achievements of the Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland – normally referred to as “NEWS”. The Network was wound up in 2011 – partly because so many of its aims had been achieved. To make sure that its story was not lost, Lesley Orr, who was at one time the ACTS’ Associate Secretary who worked with NEWS, was asked to put together a brief history of the Network’s activities. This brief history, entitled “A Good NEWS Story”, has been published by ACTS.

In advance of the publication date of May 2nd copies were sent to each of the former members of the Network whose addresses could be found. With the copy went liturgical material and a suggestion that, on the day of publication at noon, each former member might choose to reflect on the content of that material.

Copies have also gone to ACTS' Member Churches, to national women’s organisations such as the Scottish Women’s Convention, to the ecumenical instruments of the United Kingdom and to a number of political bodies.

The history may be freely downloaded from the ACTS’ web site (www.acts-scotland.org) but printed copies are also available for those who wish them. Contact Tom Moyes, ACTS’ Network Officer, at tommoyes@acts-scotland.org or on 01259 222363 to request a copy.

No charge will be made for the sending out of single copies. Orders for multiple copies may incur charges.

I’m sorry there were no Nov 2012/ Feb 2013 editions.
A late December issue was issued instead as I was on extended leave from work. I hope this didn’t disappoint too much.

Best wishes, Shona Paterson, Network Officer.
As ACTS prepares to say farewell to Rev Francis Alao, Scottish Churches Racial Justice Officer, he shares an account of his time and experience in this role...

I came, I saw and was inducted.....

As time is winding up on my tenure as Scottish Churches Racial Justice Officer, I can not help look back and relive the experience of my time working within the ecumenical circle, and more widely in the course of duty. Many things come to mind – there are some good memories, some not so good, mistakes, lessons, happiness, joy, and most importantly, fun. It has been a mixed bag of feelings – pain, as well as anticipated relief.

My three year tenure seemed to pass really quickly, too fast to feel that I have made any truly significant impact. Despite the short extension owing to the goodwill of ACTS, I still feel as if I was just settling in to real business.

As the Racial Justice Officer, my remit is such that it’s difficult to structure because it is sometimes reactionary to situations where injustice is considered to have been done. However, my remit included addressing social injustices such as racial discrimination and human trafficking; acting as an interface between ACTS Member Churches and emerging or ethnic minority churches in Scotland; supporting marginalised groups or community such as asylum seekers/refugees and travelling community; organising and sustaining the momentum of Racial Justice Sunday, working with other ecumenical bodies (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – CTBI) and many more.

And sadly, I feel pain. Pain because most of the social menace the office and group as a whole were set up to address are still there, if not on the increase, at least in some way. Examples of these are the asylum system, trafficking issue, the plight of Gypsy/Travellers among others. The fact I am not passing the baton on to someone else as my predecessor did has also not helped this pain. ....

[Continued on p6]
Our world, our nation and society are yearning for peace at all cost, but undermine the need for justice at all cost. The fact is ……there is no choice between justice and peace! The late Pope John Paul said “If you want peace.. work for justice.”

Yet, I am relieved. Relieved that despite the enormity of the job, the little that I promised the Group has been delivered. This should serve as the kick-start to an ongoing relationship between the mainline Churches and the emerging Churches in Scotland.

More importantly, I am relieved that the end of my tenure is not going to be the end of my fight for justice. I will still be part of the Racial Justice Group and Minority Ethnic Christians Together in Scotland (MECTIS), working with people who have demonstrated commitment with many years of sacrifice challenging discrimination and social injustices. Some of them have retired but not tired, while some are still serving actively. This is not a case of ‘Truth is good if I am not the one to tell it,’ just that I need more induction in ecumenical terrain to learn the tact of making a point without making an enemy!

I am indebted to my colleagues at ACTS, including the former Assistant General Secretary, Lindsey Sanderson, who has since moved on to serve in other ministerial capacity. Though my role, in a sense is a subset of ACTS standard procedure, there are some grey areas, not well defined. Yet they welcomed and included me in all the general benefits of a staff member while they gladly undertook the tasks caught up in such grey areas. I could not have asked for a better team. Finally, I am grateful to ACTS who have given me the opportunity to serve in this capacity, even without prior medals of ecumenical pedigree!

The lesson: With about six years experience, the first two as a co-opted member of the Racial Justice Group and about four years as the desk officer of racial justice, I have been well equipped. I have acquired many valuable life lessons, as well as made life long friends. I have learned the value of hard work, dedication, and also how to tell your true friends from the others. I have also learned how to be more comfortable with diversity without losing my core values. It was quite challenging given my background – but overall a great experience I will soon miss.

Now I can say, “I came, I saw and was inducted…. In ecumenism”
Events…

Heart and Soul ❤️

If you come are not doing anything on 19th May – why not come along to Princes Street Gardens and join in with the fabulous Heart and Soul event, hosted by Church of Scotland’s Mission and Discipleship Council.

This year’s event has been inspired by the anniversary of Columba arriving on Iona a mere 1,450 years ago! Celebrating all the riches of the celtic theme which include pilgrimage, journeying and hospitality – plus more, the day is also shared with Pentecost.

The Day’s events promise to be as enjoyable and successful as last year, so if you missed that one, you won’t want to miss out this time!

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Brilliance in Brokenness

Amid the brokenness of some of Scotland’s most deprived communities, comes stories of hope, sacrifice, faith and love. A collection of textile art captures the brilliance of the lives of these special local people. 18 – 25 May

See www.faithincommunityscotland.org

For more information.

Times 10am – 6pm – no cost
Scottish Storytelling Centre
High Street, Edinburgh

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New Appointments:

Congratulations to:

Revd Trevor Jamison
who has recently been appointed as Environmental Chaplain to Eco-Congregation Scotland,

Christine Elliott, who has recently been appointed as the Director of World Church programmes within the small staff team at Churches Together in Britain and Ireland,

and…

Ron Clarke has recently taken up the post of Congregational Learning Team Leader within the Mission and Discipleship Council of the Church of Scotland.

If you have any interesting news or exciting events you’d like to share with us please be in touch with us by email: shonapaterson@acts-scotland.org or by post at the address shown at the front of this newsletter. Articles should be not overly long and may be edited to fit available space, but will not lose content. Thanks.
The 1450th Anniversary of St Columba’s Landing on Iona
Saturday 18th May – Friday 24th May

The Iona Community are hosting a week in May of celebration to mark the 1450th Anniversary of St Columba’s Landing on Iona. A very full and exciting programme from Saturday 18th May (19.30) to Friday 24th May (09.00) has been planned. The week costs £332 for a standard week at the Abbey and £310 at the MacLeod Centre. Concessions apply. Early booking is encouraged as places are limited. Further information and programme from Margaret Campbell on 0141 332 6343 or email: margaret@iona.org.uk

UK Tour 2013 - Don’t Miss Out!
Getting Your Kids Through Church Without them Ending Up Hating God

Every year, thousands of young people leave the church and for many of us, this is a personal concern. However many of them don’t actually turn their back on God, but on something else.

This tour, presented by Care for the Family, is an opportunity for parents, church leaders and youth workers to join Rob Parsons, Saltmine Theatre Company and Abi Williams as we discover together what that “something” might be – and try to change it.

Topics include:

- God has no grandchildren
- The jelly –mould syndrome
- Giving our kids a vision
- The Big Five that harm the faith of our children
- Creating a sense of belonging
- Preparing our kids for disappointment

The Tour will be coming to Central Hall, Tollcross, Edinburgh on Thursday 6th June 2013 and runs from 7.30 pm – 10.00pm. Tickets are £5 each.