

DioceSan News

THE FUTURE'S NOT ROSY FOR MIDGES

ONE of the highlights of last year's General Synod was, for me, the arrival of the MiDGeS, writes JOHN RICHES.

This was the Overseas Committee's imaginative way of drawing our attention to the importance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, geddit) which we're supposed to be achieving by 2015, a prospect which is not, at the moment, looking too rosy.

The Overseas Committee wished to encourage us to become like midges, annoying and needling people into doing something about these goals.

There's a theological principle at stake. God has created a world in which people should be able to live without fear: without fear of starvation, persecution, homelessness, poverty, ignorance, torture.

Human rights - on which the MDGs are based - is another way of talking about our God-given human dignity. So, at the risk of harping on, let me do a bit of midgy work.

Among the MDGs is that of banishing hunger and food insecurity. Initially, some progress was made towards this goal but recently things have got worse again.

More of the world's crops are being used to fuel our greedy cars; more grain is being used to feed animals for the table, as living standards rise in India and China. Generally this pushes food prices up, making life harder for the very poor.

In December I visited Malawi as part of a Scottish Government project, looking for products to import into the UK. One of the principal aims was to visit the rice-growing area in the north of the country, as

Also in DioceSan News this month . . .

Plans for new festival of arts, culture and faith

The drama of the Passion

Building on Companion Links

Speaking to an audience with confidence and clarity

we (the Balmore Coach House with our partners Rainbow Turtle in Paisley) are planning to bring in a container of rice early this year to serve in schools and to sell in shops and on church stalls.

I spent a fascinating day touring round the country areas around Karonga, which are intensively farmed.

POOREST

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of US\$170. For Africa it's densely populated, with 13.5million people. Some 85% of the population derives its living from agriculture; 90% of all farmers are small holders.

Typically such farmers will own 4 acres, but farm only about half of it, will have a hoe as their basic tool, will use 60% of their production for food and 40% as a cash crop.

Daudi Phiri, a 'model farmer' whom I met, farms all his land, uses 1.5 acres for maize and cassava and the remaining 2.5 acres for rice, producing an amazing 2.4 tonnes.

Most of this he sells to purchase agricultural implements, seeds and fertiliser, to improve the family's housing, to pay for health care and for secondary education.

Unusually, Daudi Phiri owns a plough and oxen. Nevertheless the achievement of planting, weeding

(three times during the growing season) and harvesting/threshing 2.5 acres *by hand* is extraordinary.

It is more than many can achieve, partly because of the cost of seed and fertiliser, and of agricultural implements, partly because of the sheer scale of the labour involved.

How can we help poor farmers in Malawi? By providing them with an international market where they can get a better price for their crops and so begin to work their way out of poverty.

If all you can do is grow just enough to live off, you will never make progress.

If you can grow a surplus, get a better price for your crops, then you can start to buy some basic tools, spend more on seed and fertilizer, and send your children to secondary school. You can plan and build up your family and your community.

Over the last year we have had a tremendous response from Episcopal churches across Scotland to appeals to sell the products we import from Swaziland.

If over the next few months you hear an annoying buzz, it means we're after you again to try some rice as well.

Or, of course, you could just give in and contact the Coach House on 01360 620254/742 before we strike.

Revd Canon Prof John Riches is a director of the Balmore Trust.

Getting the message over

IN the Diocesan Information and Communications Action Network (Infocomms for short) we work to help us all get our message over effectively.

Below we sum up what Infocomms has been doing over the past year.

Probably the most prominent area of the Network's activity over the past year has been the newly designed and restructured diocesan website.

Here, much effort and technical expertise has gone into reconciling the requirements of the diocese with the ExpressionEngine content management system.

The effort has been rewarded and the website has been well received,

Though the process of finding a suitable design theme was longer than expected, we are now able to offer free websites to charges in the diocese.

The object is to provide a basic design which is easily maintained using the WordPress content management system.

Some 15 charges have expressed an interest so far. Full details will be made widely available in February.

For several years now the Network has been using and recommending Yahoo Groups for running email lists. ClerumList and ClergyExchange are two that will be familiar to clergy members.

However, this free service has become increasingly cumbersome and unattractive.

We are now switching to Your Mailing List Provider (ympl.com) for announcement lists and to SimpleLists (simplelists.com) for discussion lists.

Both carry a small fee, but are easy to administer and do not carry advertisements.

Church magazines play a major role in inform-

ing, equipping and mobilising congregations.

It's a testament to their dedication that 22 magazine editors and helpers travelled from as far afield as Kirkcudbright and Dumbarton in October to take part in an Editors Day.

The event was arranged by Infocomms, with presentations from journalists and seasoned church magazine editors.

Topics included gathering copy, making schedules work, design, artwork, copyright and technology. A session on privacy and protection of children and vulnerable adults was particularly well received. Just as important was the opportunity for editors to meet, share ideas and pool experience.

Each left the host venue, St Margaret's Newlands, with a bundle of resources including DTP software and copies of one another's magazines.

For the coming year, we are taking soundings on demand for training in:

- ◆ *speaking to an audience with confidence and clarity;*
- ◆ *media relations.*

We are also exploring how we can make Diocesan News (DNS) more useful. To start the process, we have been asking magazine editors how it's used in each charge.

Our members are: Ian Ansdell, Revd Ali Chesworth (convenor), Susi Cormack Brown (DNS editor), James Currall (diocesan representative on the Provincial I&C Board), June Gray and Marilyn Pope.

Together we combine professional experience in ICT, adult and child education, journalism, PR and publishing, as well as years of editing church and diocesan publications.

We are keen for someone to join us who can bring marketing expertise to the team.

Susi Cormack Brown

Music and liturgy workshop

TUNES, Chants and Choices, a workshop on hymns and music in the Liturgy, will be held on Saturday 31 January, 9.30am to 3.30pm at St John's Greenock.

The leaders for the day are Revd Darren MacFarland, Ian McCrorie, Revd Anne Tomlinson and Frikki Walker.

Lunch and refreshments provided.

Booking essential by 26 January. Contact Linda Whitby of Education Action Network, 01294 276838, lindawhitby@btopenworld.com

TRAINING IN MEDIA RELATIONS

TRAINING in media relations may be arranged by the Diocesan Information and Communications Network if there is enough demand.

A course over one or two Saturdays might cover topics such as writing press releases, managing church news and making the most of media opportunities.

Email dns@episcopalglasgow.com to register interest with some details about the skills you'd like to work on.

New festival of arts, culture & faith

HAVE you ever been to Greenbelt (the annual, edgy Christian arts festival in Cheltenham)?

Have you never attended, but know of the concept?

Have you ever thought it would be good to have a similar festival in Scotland? Not MacGreenbelt, but something distinctly Scottish, arty, cultural and relevant to today.

Think faith meeting culture-arts-theology-ecology-politics-philosophy-spirituality-justice.

If so, read on for the background to 'The Project'.

Last August's Greenbelt hosted a conversation for anyone interested in 'doing something like Greenbelt' in Scotland.

At a second meeting in Perth in November, Dot Reid, John Cross and Graham Maule were appointed to take the idea of a Scottish festival a step further by asking people to join a steering group.

Graham Maule, of Iona Community's Wild Goose Resource Group, explained: "This we are doing.

"People are currently being approached, and in the meantime we have done a little bit more thinking and a little more organising so that we have more of a presence and more opportunity for people to join and have a voice in this thing."

The working name of the project is 'The Project: a Scottish festival of arts, culture and faith'.

Graham added: "We agreed in Perth that a series of smaller gatherings would be a good thing to shape the bigger event and to create a community of people willing to invest their time and energy in it.

"That will be the first task of the Steering Group - to call us together a couple of times in 2009."

Visit bebo.com/theprojectscotland to keep informed.

COMPANIONS TOGETHER WORLDWIDE

Gill Young spells out the aims of a conference on Companion Links

NEXT month delegates from around Scotland will gather in Glasgow to exchange ideas on how to strengthen Companion Links with Dioceses overseas, building on relationships developed at the Lambeth Conference.

Before last year's Lambeth Conference a number of overseas bishops and their spouses visited dioceses here in Scotland.

Many were from our Companion Dioceses and this time shared was clearly appreciated by our visitors.

Sharing in the life of other dioceses enabled many within our congregations to feel a closer link with our Companion Dioceses. But where did that lead us?

The need to keep such conversations going has to be a high priority.

With that in mind the Provincial Overseas Committee will host a conference on 21 March in Glasgow to examine how we can develop our Companion Links with Dioceses overseas.

Chaired by Revd Canon Duncan McCosh, convener of the Overseas Committee of the SEC, the conference will be opened by our Primus,

Bishop Idris Jones.

Bishop Idris said: "First and foremost Lambeth 2008 was an experience as a result of which we felt ourselves to be part of a living and lively community that was of great relevance in the world at large.

"Ongoing dialogue is of the utmost importance to the future of the Anglican Communion. Mutual sharing and support increases the sense of partnership with dioceses that are far from us in physical distance and reduces emotional and theological distance too.

"Also we must not forget the needs of the poor as expressed through the walk of witness that bishops and spouses shared together through the centre of London and the commitment of the Communion to support those agencies working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

Bishop Idris will open the discussion with a scriptural introduction to companion linkages and a reflection on what he has brought back from his overseas experiences, and a discussion exploring what global links are for.

Other speakers include Revd Canon Edgar Ruddock, director of the international relations team at USPG: Anglicans in World Mis-

sion. He will speak about how mission works in practice in today's world and how has it changed.

Revd Canon Stephen Lyon, general secretary of PWM (Partnership for World Mission), will have practical advice for making Companion Links work and lead discussion on what can we do to respond to the agendas.

Speakers will also share experiences of Companion Links in the Scottish context.

Delegates can expect to identify actions building on the value of the pre Lambeth Hospitality Initiative to develop and deepen the quality of Diocesan Link relationships and workings. These may include ways in which we can:

- ◇ Engage with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Five Marks of Mission;
- ◇ Renew and refresh relationships;
- ◇ Live out the challenge of the Lambeth Conference of 'listening and learning';
- ◇ Develop stronger more informed prayer links;
- ◇ Build on successes by sharing stories.

A registration form can be found at companionstogether.org.uk, or contact me on 0141 332 2160, info@companionstogether.org.uk.

News and events in brief . . .

DIOCESAN Synod for Glasgow & Galloway will be held this year on Saturday 28 February in the Glynhill Hotel, Renfrew, at 10am. Registration is from 9am.

FROM Saturday 28 February to Sunday 15 March is the sixth Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace. Build-up events include a Middle Eastern Film Festival at Edinburgh Filmhouse, taking place from 31 January to 19 February. Visit mesp.org.uk.

ABACK to Church Sunday presentation takes place on Tuesday 27 January at Renfield Church Centre, Glasgow, 10am-3.30pm. Contact Darren McFarland, Diocesan Mission Core Group (01505 812359).

THE congregations of All Saints Bearsden and St Andrew's Milngavie are looking for an enthusiastic, ecumenically-minded and inspirational new rector who can build on the strengths of the two linked congregations and help develop their mission together and in the community. To download the parish profile visit the home page of the diocesan website. Application closing date is 6 March. Contact mairi.e.ross@btinternet.com.

CHURCHES Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) will partner BBC Radio 4 and BBC Local Radio on a worship and prayer resource for Lent. This year's theme is Sense Making Faith, based on the five senses. Visit sense-makingfaith.org.uk.

What's good about being 104? No peer pressure.

IT was hailed the best quote from a conference on old age backed by the Scottish Episcopal Church, ACTS and Faith in Older People.

'Wasteland or Harvest Field?' was an ecumenical exploration of the needs of older people and the benefits they bring to churches.

In all, 120 people attended the successful one-day gathering held at Gillis College in Edinburgh. It drew speakers and participants from as far afield as Inverness and Norwich.

The purpose was to share recent work on old age and spiritual care.

A spokesman said: "Demographic change alerts us to the importance of considering the needs of the older members of our society not least within our congregations.

"We hoped to encourage those involved in training pastoral carers, eld-

ers, clergy, chaplains and all who visit or work with older people on behalf of our churches to take the topic seriously!

"We had to refuse places to 40 people as the conference was fully subscribed so we hope to offer a similar event in May in Inverness."

To subscribe to the Faith in Older People quarterly newsletter email info@fiop.org.uk.

MOTHERS' Union again is highlighting its work with mothers and carers facing adversity, through its Make a Mother's Day virtual gifts with Mothering Sunday cards.

Gifts include a place on a MU literacy circle, plants, livestock and latrines. Supporters can also choose a gift in memory of their mother.

Visit makeamothersday.org to order by 13 March for delivery before Mothering Sunday, 22 March.

Speaking to an audience with clarity and confidence

Would you like help to work on your presentation skills?

The Diocesan Information and Communications Network would like to hear from you if training or coaching (possibly over one or two Saturdays) would be useful for situations like...

- ◆ *Talking about your faith journey;*
- ◆ *Pitching for a grant;*
- ◆ *Delivering an annual report;*
- ◆ *Addressing a public meeting;*
- ◆ *Briefing a project team.*

Please email the Network to register your interest: dns@episcopalglasgow.co.uk .

Drama of the Passion

The Arts Chaplaincy in Scotland with the Actor's Church Union in Scotland will present a conference on 'The drama of the Passion' next month.

It will be in the Concert Hall, Mill Street, Perth, on Saturday 21 March, 10am-3:30pm. The conference is open to anyone in the SEC interested in links between drama and theology, between drama and liturgy.

The programme will be: 10:00 - Assemble and coffee. 10:30 - Welcome and introduction - Ann Mazur (Scottish Area Chaplain, ACU). 10:45 - Two Planks and a Passion; Theatre or Church - Chris Taylor (Chaplain to the Arts in Cumbria). 11:45 - Tour of the new Concert Hall. 12:30 - Lunch. 1:30 - Britten's Billy Budd - A Secular Parable of Salvation - Michael Fuller (Provincial Ministerial Education Officer). 2:30 - Literature and the Passion - Donald Orr (Secretary to the Arts Chaplaincy in Scotland).

Spaces are limited. Email Revd Ann Mazur to book your place at ann@mazur.org.uk

Next issue . . .

ITEMS for the March issue may be submitted by **Monday 9 February** (in prose text, not leaflets, adverts, posters or PDFs, please) to the editor, Susi Cormack Brown: dns@episcopalglasgow.co.uk, or c/o the Diocesan Centre, 5 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2DH.

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