

# 'K&F'

## Kinloss & Findhorn Church News

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### May 2011



### From the Manse.....

A chance and rare tuning in to BBC Radio 2 recently, had me crooning along with the airwaves, much to the dismay of 'er-indoors'! **“And now the end is near and so I face the final curtain”**, warbled Frank (ol' blue-eyes) Sinatra! His problem was he enjoyed *a great many* final curtains! Alright, get to the point, so what has that got to do with our church you may ask? Unfortunately, rumours and counter-rumours about churches in Moray and threats of closures, seem to be on many folks' minds and it is, quite naturally, disturbing! The thing is, that down through the ages it has ever been thus. One doesn't have to go back far even in local history to witness changes that have reflected the need to review and revise. In our linked Charges, we have at least proved how we *can* share, and *do* meet together for special events. I hope and pray that this will continue to move forward in faith, love and mutual respect. Now, as most of you are aware, it is with considerable sadness that I have to slow down physically (not spiritually – praise God!). Soon, our Kirk Sessions will meet with the Interim Moderator (Graham Crawford) who will ensure that a Locum is in place as soon as is possible. Now, unlike 'ol blue eyes' I'm not even thinking about *any* final curtains! I would like you though at this time to read a portion from the Old Testament in Lamentations 3 v.21-23.

**“Yet this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness”**

For your patience, perseverance, love and laughter, but mostly your support and kindness, may God bless you all. Duncan and Dorothy

**Rev. Duncan Shaw - 4 Manse Rd, Kinloss - 01309 690931**

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## What a Grey day!

INCREASED life expectancy could be to blame for dwindling church attendances, a new paper has suggested. The research for “The Greying Church: The impact of life expectancy on religiosity”, published online in the *International Journal of Social Economics*, was undertaken by Dr Elissaios Papyrakis, from the University of East Anglia, and Dr Geethanjali Selvaretnam, from the University of St Andrews. The paper suggests that longer lifespans mean that people are tempted to put off worrying about what will happen to them after they die. Life expectancy in the West is forecast to continue to rise from its current average of 79 years, it says; so churches will have to accept that their congregations will be largely made up of older people. “Many religions and societies link to some degree the cumulative amount of religious effort to benefits in the afterlife,” Dr Papyrakis says. “We show that higher life expectancy discounts expected benefits in the afterlife, and is therefore likely to lead to postponement of religiosity. . . . “For this reason, religious organisations should be prepared to accept and attract a ‘greying church’, particularly in countries which have a high life expectancy.”

**(why not just stick to one age ? I’m still 24 in my dreams! –Ed.)**

(Who are you kidding ? ‘er-indoors!)

### It’s Funny How...

...hard it is to read a chapter in the Bible,

But how easy it is to read 100 pages of a best selling novel.

....people want to get a front seat at a game or concert

But scramble for a back seat at church services.

....we need 2-3 weeks notice to fit a church event into our busy schedule,

But can adjust our schedule at a moments notice for other events.

....how hard it is for people to tell others a simple gospel message,

But how simple it is to repeat gossip.

...we automatically believe what the newspaper says

But always question the Bible

### What kind of Church are we?

Ours must be a listening Church: listening church: listening to the questions people are actually asking. We must listen to those who differ from us. Nothing is so destructive as doctrinaire certainties. This must be a questioning Church continually developing in its understanding of the mysteries of God. But it must provide stability and permanence at a time of uncertainty. We must be aware of those who come here anonymously consciously or unconsciously seeking God. We must give the same attention to the Ordinary as we do to a Royal Wedding.

(by Rev Michael Mayne – Former Dean of Westminster)



**The essence of Easter is about following a sense of hope and purpose into our future. It is about following the Jesus who has “gone before us”- says George Pattison**

Just think how different our public debate about religion would be if we reconceived it as a debate about hope rather than about belief. When we ask: “Do you believe in God?”, the only real answers are: “Yes”, “No” or “Maybe”, as if God is some kind of object out there, some kind of fact or being, like Bigfoot or life in space, that might or might not exist. What if we began thinking of God less as something or someone that might or might not exist and more as the object of our best and truest hopes, as the promise that the best is yet to come and that we can be more than we are and other than we are: less the Alpha, the God who was in the beginning, and more the Omega, the God who is the life of the world to come? Then, the question would be less: “Do you believe in God?” and more: “What do you hope for? On what have you set your heart? Is it something you would dare to call – divine? Is it something worthy of being called good? Godly? Holy? Is it something that all – and not just you alone – could call a blessing?” Then, there would be much more to say than “Yes” or “No” or “Maybe”. *(This is an extract from the April 2011 issue of Reform)*

### **Cross.... about a Palm ? We should be!**

A CHRISTIAN employee is being investigated by bosses at the housing association where he works for refusing to remove a small palm cross from his van’s dashboard. Colin Atkinson, aged 64, has displayed the cross in his electrician’s van for the past 15 years. But Wakefield District Housing (WDH) asked him to remove it, after a complaint from one of its tenants. Mr Atkinson has refused. He said: “I’m really shocked and surprised by all of this. I have always had that cross in my van. It’s a symbol of my personal faith. It’s not offensive. It’s in a discreet place, and I am acting lawfully.” His case has now been taken up by the Christian Legal Centre. Andrea Williams, CEO of the Christian Legal Centre, said: “This smacks of something deeply illiberal and remarkably intolerant. Freedom of expression now needs to be robustly defended. When a man can’t display a palm cross in his van in a historically Christian country, it should give people serious pause for thought !

## Force for good

A London law graduate has turned his back on a potentially lucrative career and made it his mission to improve conditions in African prisons where welfare and justice are often in short supply. By Sally Williams. (courtesy of Telegraph magazine) In the sick bay at Kigo prison outside Kampala, Uganda, an inmate with malaria is asking for potatoes. He must be delirious because the only food prisoners ever get is posho (boiled maize flour served in great gobs) and beans made into a watery soup. The sick bay is a grim, dark room with black brickwork and scurrying rodents. There are no beds, only seven mattresses on the floor; dirty, half-unravelling things. And there are never enough drugs or painkillers. In the subterranean gloom, Alexander McLean, a young man from south London, is watching over the prisoner.. 'When he takes food he is just vomiting,' the guard reports to McLean, who is crouching by the prisoner's side, ready to transform this man's life, and many like it. McLean, 25, is the sort of high achiever who makes normal humans feel they have wasted their lives. ('Alexander makes me think, what did I *do* with my life?' a close friend says. 'Did I sleep the whole time?') A magistrate and barrister (although not yet practising), he is studying for a PhD and is the director general of African Prisons Project (APP), the justice and welfare charity that he founded when he was 19. He speaks at international prison conferences, and has become friends with Jon Snow, the journalist. McLean does everything from providing food to washing prisoners in hospital. McLean has been recognized on a global level through *Tearfund* and has chosen him for its Inspired Individuals programme . To help, contact either [Tearfund.org](http://Tearfund.org) or [africanprisons.org](http://africanprisons.org)

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### Funeral

(our thoughts and prayers for all those who are bereaved)  
Francis G Legge, Whiteinch, Kinloss – 20<sup>th</sup> April

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### And finally.....

**Not one line of the New Testament was written - not one sentence, whether Gospels, Epistles, Acts, or Apocalypse, was penned - apart from the conviction that he of whom these things were being written had conquered death and was alive forever.**

**(James S Stewart)**

May Grace, mercy and Peace be with you all, evermore!