



"What does the Lord require of you; to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" Micah 6.8



A Place for Hope

As hopefully we leave behind the Siberian weather of December, the Place for Hope team would wish everyone a warmer and peace-filled 2011.

David Brubaker

Last year ended on a 'high' with a visit of David Brubaker and a series of events hosted by A Place for Hope. You may recall that we



had a date with Professor David Brubaker (professor at the Eastern Mennonite University in the States) at Carberry Tower in November. We hosted a number of get-togethers with a variety of groups from the Church of Scotland and other denominations. David was assisted by his colleague, Roger Foster, and together they led the week's programme which consisted of the following events:

Congregational Systems - Transforming Conflict

A group comprising the majority of Accredited Mediators within the church, along with several other key individuals from presbyteries and other councils engaged in exploring the tools and resources for understanding and addressing systemic conflict in congregations. At the end of the workshops, David and Roger offered the following comments - *"We were very impressed with the skill level of the Accredited Mediators as well as the general skill level in the room from other professional preparation"*. This praise from such well respected practitioners was a welcome endorsement of the mediation training run by Core Solutions which the Guild has helped to underwrite. The additional skills developed by our trained Mediators will enable us to support congregations facing conflict and demonstrate how that conflict can be transformed, creating hope and opportunity.

Priority Areas

An afternoon and evening was spent meeting two groups working within Priority Areas, understanding the challenges they face as well as hearing the amazing stories of

lives changed, particularly their work with younger people to redirect them from the use of violence. It was evident that their leadership and coaching programme was a key part of their ministry. David and Roger write of this visit as follows - *"We were inspired by this visit. It is clear that people in both Priority Areas and the larger church see opportunities for expanding their interaction. We see "A Place for Hope" offering a key bridge between the needs and resources of priority areas and the needs and resources of the larger church, as well as a vehicle for specific programming possibilities."*

Samoan Circle for Ministers

In response to an open invitation to up to 70 ministers, approximately 30 were able to attend Carberry to participate in conversations on the human sexuality issue. David commented - *"We believe that the process accomplished its stated goal of providing a safe space for honest and respectful dialogue. We also recognise that respectful dialogue is only a starting point for a group that needs to wrestle further with what it means to be the church in the midst of deep disagreement on a particular issue. Therefore, we believe it would be potentially transformative for this same group to engage again on these larger questions. Given the larger transformations taking place in Scottish society (as the church adapts to a post-christendom context) the question of what it means to be the church in a highly diverse cultural context merits more dialogue."*

The Samoan Circle offered a safe place for a different form of conversation to take place on the current debate on human sexuality as it faces the church. It was a good start and it is our hope that those who engaged, and others, would be prepared to continue the conversations along the line offered by Professor Brubaker. I believe *Place for Hope* can play a key role in facilitating such conversations, almost as the 'honest broker'. This is a deeply-felt issue facing the church at this time, potentially divisive, and we should be actively promoting these sorts of conversations.

Thanksgiving Dinner

This was a dinner hosted by the Moderator with an invitation extended to senior members

within the church, representatives from other denominations and invited guests. As well as attempting to compensate David and Roger for what should have been a Thanksgiving holiday with their families, the Moderator's aim was to promote *A Place for Hope* and seek to transform genuine goodwill for the Project into positive commitment in terms of time, participation and financial support for its long-term sustainability.

Leadership Team Workshop

Our last day was taken up with a group of leaders and managers from '121' looking at the challenges of leading through a time of transition. The day offered a rich mixture of open sharing and powerful stories, and demonstrated a clear desire to work collaboratively through an identified time of transition. David writes,

"We both greatly enjoyed the group of leaders and managers that gathered at Carberry and were impressed with their commitment and competency."

David and Roger left Edinburgh for the USA in the early hours of Saturday 27 November. They emailed that same evening to say that they had arrived home safely and were having dinner with their families – a timely escape from what became a snow-clad Scotland!

Our Aims for 2011 and Beyond

A Place for Hope, although a Guild project for 3 years, will continue beyond 2012 as a means of enabling the church to work through differences, where those differences can lead to conflict. As we continue to profile the work of Place for Hope, with your help, one of our aims this year is to give people the tools to speak openly and honestly, listen well, discern what matters and demonstrate the love of God in our interaction with one another.

We will continue to engage where conflict manifests itself through our trained Mediators. Already this year, we are supporting a number of ministers and their congregations to engage in 'difficult conversations', offering the hope not just

that the conflict is resolved, but transformed through collaborative action.

Building on the Carberry experience of the Samoan Circle we will be promoting opportunities for honest and respectful dialogue throughout the church.


Establishing a Centre for peace-building nationally and encouraging local initiatives based in the community remains a vision we wish to see turned into a reality through working with other denominations.

Thank you for your continuing support through your interest, prayer and financial commitment.

Guild Engagements


Our team of presenters look forward to meeting you at our forthcoming engagements. If you haven't yet heard our presentation, contact details are shown here. We very much look forward to sharing our news and telling you more about *A Place for Hope*.

A Place for Hope



Please continue to pray for this project as we seek to:

- Establish a live network of people throughout Scotland committed to the work of peacemaking and reconciliation;
- Fund a place recognised as a Centre where resources in mediation and reconciliation can be accessed; and
- Initiate a church-wide realisation of the importance of building communities of peace and reconciliation.



"The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress."
Joseph Joubert

A Place for Hope

We will be happy to arrange for a speaker to come to your Guild. Contact:



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