



"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

Grace & Mercy 2010

It was a great privilege and pleasure to attend the annual meeting of the Guild in Dundee on a lovely sunny August day and to listen to the speakers, all of whom spoke so eloquently, expressing many of the sentiments embodied in *A Place for Hope*.



Indeed, as you know from an earlier newsletter and as he articulated in his speech at Dundee, the Moderator has adopted *A Place for Hope* as a major theme in his Moderatorial year. He is working with us to promote the project beyond the Church of Scotland, to engage our ecumenical partners and other agencies and people throughout Scotland. As a member of the church's Interim Ministry team, the Moderator felt drawn to support the Project with its vision for the future of conflict transformation and peacemaking in our churches and wider communities.

As an accredited Mediator, he will now have something to fall back on when his Moderatorial year is over!

Also echoing our hopes to resolve differences and restore relationships in our churches and out in the communities of Scotland was Lesley Bilinda, the second speaker, who - with the Tutu Foundation - seeks to reduce conflict and tension amongst young people in our inner city environments and change the culture from one of justice and retribution to that of mercy and forgiveness. Lesley's words resonated with me, given that at the core of this initiative is a desire to transform people's lives through the way we act and behave to one another in addressing our differences.

Lesley spoke of:

- encouraging a growing understanding and appreciation for one another;

- a willingness to forgive and recognise how much stronger and more fully human we can be through our interdependence one upon the other; and
- valuing our differences rather than seeing them as a source of conflict.

I have since met Lesley in London and had a rewarding discussion with her. She has given her support and

encouragement to the building of a truly encompassing and ecumenical centre for peace and reconciliation.

Lastly, but not least, Elaine Duncan of the Scottish Bible Society also made us think about what life would be like if we let go all our resentments and bitterness and let mercy flow and forgive. We live in hope for *A Place for Hope!*

David Brubaker

We are very excited at the prospect of a second visit to Scotland of David Brubaker, who was one of our keynote speakers at the Aviemore Conference in 2009. He has taken time out of his busy schedule to spend a week in Scotland, when he will meet with a variety of groups from the Church of Scotland and other denominations. David will engage in a programme to demonstrate, amongst other things, how difficult conversations and extreme diversity can be managed with grace and respect for all concerned.

David Brubaker is Associate Professor of Organisational Studies at Eastern Mennonite University, where he specialises in the study of religious and organisational conflicts. He has trained or consulted with over 100 organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, and has written a study in understanding and managing change and conflict in congregational life. He teaches that conflict can be redeemed and can bring about positive growth.

Accredited Mediators

Our Mediators have begun to work with congregations to address the range of issues that emerge when unresolved differences occur, exploring how we improve our understanding of one another and through this see God's kingdom grow and flourish. Through the next few months we will be continuing to look at the most effective ways the gifts and skills of those trained can be exercised.

The names of the accredited Mediators are available from the Ministries Council. The mediation network is managed by the Rev Gavin Elliott and contact should be made with him in the first instance.

We intend to offer another training course for prospective mediators next Spring, 2011. Following training and accreditation we would hope to have another dozen or so able to assist in our work.

Aims and Objectives

May I take this opportunity to remind all Guild members that, though designated a Project, ***A Place for Hope*** is in reality a means of transforming lives.

Conflict is and will remain part of our lives. Not surprisingly, the Church comprising people with different beliefs, values, traditions, desires and personalities is in no different position.

The difference we can demonstrate is the healthy management and resolution of our conflicts so that we can truly be seen as a place of hope within the Church, in our society and for future generations. A Centre for Reconciliation and Peacemaking in Scotland would promote, encourage and resource communities of hope, reconciliation and healing.

A Place for Hope



Please pray for this project as we seek to:

- Establish a live network of people throughout Scotland committed to the work of peacemaking and re-conciliation;
- 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.



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Guild Engagements

Our series of presentations for this session began on 8 September in Bathgate and are scheduled until April of next year. The feedback we have received already has been positive, with Guild members recognising the need to resolve conflict in the Church, and pleased that we are putting so much energy into such a worthwhile Project. We look forward to sharing our news and telling you more about ***A Place for Hope***.

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

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

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