



UPDATE

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Welcome to *UPDATE*, World Mission's email newsletter. Please feel free to share any of the following items in your newsletters, bulletins and prayer diaries. Where appropriate, please cite the original source as well as World Mission. You can contact us at wmeditor@cofscotland.org.uk.

UPDATE will be taking its usual summer break from next week until the week beginning 17 August. We may issue brief bulletins during the break as appropriate. If you have any items of news, or if there are events in the late summer or autumn that you think we should know about, please send us an email. In the meantime, we wish everybody a restful and restorative time over the summer!

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Asia

We have terrorists on the run, says Pakistani foreign minister

Pakistan is claiming to have "turned the tide" in its battle with Islamist militants and says it has al-Qaida "on the run" after a series of government offensives. Pakistan's foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, said public opinion had turned decisively against extremists over the past few months, paving the way for the government's military successes. Speaking in London, he said, "Today, public opinion has converted to such an extent that the local tribes have set up lashkars [militias] to support army operations". His assertion was given weight by an opinion poll released today showing that 80% of Pakistanis believe the Taliban and other Islamist extremists pose a "critical threat" to the country. A previous poll in September 2007 found that only 34% viewed the Taliban as a threat.

Qureshi said 95% of the Swat and Malakand areas, which were seized by extremists, had been cleared of Islamist militias since a government offensive began in May. But the offensive has had political costs. Gul Bahadur, a Taliban leader in North Waziristan, declared an end to a truce with the government and a spokesman said his men would launch attacks against the government whenever they could. Qureshi said he was not surprised by the announcement. "As we've put on the pressure, they have realigned," he said. "We are taking them all on. We are not picking between a bad and a good terrorist. A terrorist is a terrorist.

Qureshi said the army offensive had succeeded in the Pashtun tribal areas where many had failed under the rule of General Pervez Musharraf because it had popular support under a democratically elected government. "I think we've turned the tide and democracy has played a significant role," he said. He argued that people in the Swat valley realised what Taliban rule was costing them in terms of lost livelihoods and missed education opportunities for their daughters. The Pakistani media had also lost both its fear and its illusions about extremists, who had once been portrayed as "Robin Hood" figures, he said. He claimed moderate clerics had been so alienated by the Taliban's excesses during its occupation of Swat that they had issued fatwas against suicide bombing.

Source: The Guardian ■ You can read the full story [here](#) ■ The Church of Pakistan is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Pakistan

North Korean food need 'critical'

North Korea is facing a "critical" food shortage, especially for children, the UN's food agency has said. The World Food Programme's director for North Korea said the agency was unable to reach millions of North Koreans due to a shortfall in funding. The director, Torben Due, said the World Food Programme (WFP) had received no new donations for North Korea since Pyongyang conducted a nuclear test in May. He also said Pyongyang had barred the WFP from using Korean-speaking staff. Mr Due told reporters in Beijing that the WFP had received only 15% of an international appeal for \$504m (£306m) and had to cut back plans to provide food aid to 6.2 million North Koreans to 2.27 million. North Korea has relied on food aid from China, South Korea and aid agencies to feed millions of its people since a famine in the 1990s resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands. Recent flooding and the suspension of South Korean fertiliser aid shipments have hindered food production. Children were particularly at risk, he said. "For children it is critical, and it means they do not have the nutrition required for growth."

Source: BBC NEWS ■ You can read the full story from the BBC [here](#) ■ The Presbyterian Church of Korea and The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea are the partner churches of the Church of Scotland in Korea

Africa

Ekwendeni nutrition project praised

We were delighted to meet with visitors from Ekwendeni in Malawi last week who were visiting as part of the development of their Twinning with Ross Presbytery. It was great to hear how the Twinning is progressing and to catch up with news from both parts of the world.

One of the Malawian visitors was Ms Ellie Kapenda who works with the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities (SFHC) project based in Ekwendeni. A feature about the SFHC project appeared in the June edition of National Geographic magazine and highlighted the SFHC project as an agro-ecological alternative to the dominant model of agriculture of fertilizers, hybrid seeds and pesticides generally being promoted for Africa. The author of the feature, Joel Bourne, visited the project in November 2008:

"There are no hybrid corn seeds, free fertilizers, or new roads here in the village of Ekwendeni. Instead the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities (SFHC) project distributes legume seeds, recipes, and technical advice for growing nutritious crops like peanuts, pigeon peas, and soybeans, which enrich the soil by fixing nitrogen while also enriching children's diets. The program began in 2000 at Ekwendeni Hospital, where the staff was seeing high rates of malnutrition. Research suggested the culprit was the corn monoculture that had left small farmers with poor yields due to depleted soils and the high price of fertilizer.

“At the small village of Encongolweni, a group of two dozen SFHC farmers greet us with a song about the dishes they make from soybeans and pigeon peas. We sit in their meetinghouse as if at an old-time tent revival, as they testify about how planting legumes has changed their lives. Ackim Mhone's story is typical. By incorporating legumes into his rotation, he's doubled his corn yield on his small plot of land while cutting his fertilizer use in half. "That was enough to change the life of my family," Mhone says, and to enable him to improve his house and buy livestock. Later, Alice Sumphi, a 67-year-old farmer with a mischievous smile, dances in her plot of young knee-high tomatoes, proudly pointing out that they bested those of the younger men. Canadian researchers found that after eight years, the children of more than 7,000 families involved in the project showed significant weight increases, making a pretty good case that soil health and community health are connected in Malawi.”

You can read the full article from National Geographic magazine [here](#). Find out more about the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities Project from their website: <http://soilandfood.org/>

■ The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Malawi

South African churches criticise Zuma about 'ruling until Jesus comes'

South African churches and the country's president, Jacob Zuma, are at loggerheads again over remarks by the leader that his African National Congress will rule until Jesus comes. The South African Council of Churches (SACC), which groups most of South Africa's churches and the Roman Catholic bishops' conference, issued a statement stating it is "deeply concerned" about President Zuma's words. SACC General Secretary, Eddie Makhue said, "We want to remind political leaders that we are living in a democracy and in a democracy the choices of the people are the determining factors, and therefore no leader can pre-empt what the decision of the electorate will be." Makhue said Zuma's comments were "confusing matters of the secular world with matters that are considered to be sacred".

An ANC spokesperson, Jesse Duarte, said in a statement, "Remarks made in Mpumalanga should be understood in the context of the president's confidence in the people of South Africa who have - in the last four successive elections - voted overwhelmingly for the ANC. We are confident that the people will continue to do so in future elections due to our track record and legacy."

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#) ■ The Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in South Africa

Zambian nurses end strike over pay

Nurses in Zambia have returned to work after a month-long strike over pay and benefits, which closed many hospital wards and caused a public outcry. The government agreed to look into their grievances after Church leaders intervened in the dispute and held talks with officials and unions. On Monday ministers threatened to sack any nurses refusing to return to work. Nurse leaders say the government has one month to come up with a better pay deal, or they will go on strike again. Fabian Kabulu, health director for the north of the country, congratulated the nurses on making a deal with the government. He said, "I am happy that the health workers considered the plight of members of the community".

Central to the dispute are wages, as well as allowances for housing and night working. Nurses, with the exception of senior managers, are demanding a 25% wage increase. The government has offered a 15% rise to all civil servants - and threatened to sack all of the nurses and bring in replacements from Zimbabwe if they did not go back to work. The nurses also want an increased housing allowance - it currently stands at \$38 a month. Correspondents say that figure is well below the average cost of housing in most parts of the country.

>> Our Mission Partners in Zambia, Ida and Keith Waddell, recently discussed the nurses' strike in their Blog. You can read their latest report from Mwandu Mission at:

<http://idaandkeith.blogspot.com/>

Source: BBC NEWS ■ You can read the full story from the BBC [here](#) ■ The United Church of Zambia is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Zambia

Middle East

World Mission staff get ready for Israel/Palestine

Rev Colin Johnston has recently returned to Scotland from Zambia completing 15 years of service to the United Church of Zambia. Following some well-earned rest and preparation he will leave towards the end of August to take up his post as Minister of St. Andrew's Church in Tiberias. Jimmy Maxwell is currently preparing to leave Scotland to take up his appointment as Chemistry Teacher at Tabeetha School in Jaffa. Prior to this Jimmy's Commissioning Service will take place on Thursday, 30 July 2009 in Fearn Abbey at 7pm to which all will be made most welcome.

Europe

Hungary remembers opening of Iron Curtain with mixed feelings

Hungary has marked the 20th anniversary of a symbolic opening of the Iron Curtain, which once separated it from neighbouring Austria, amid warnings from churches that Europe remains divided. "We, here in Eastern Europe feel that in this region and in this culture we need to run more, we need to worry more ... than in the northern or western part of our continent," said the Rev. Marianna Szabó-Mátrai, deputy Bishop of the southern district of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary.

Szabó-Mátrai was addressing a Lutheran World Federation consultation in Budapest on 'Church and State in Societies in Transformation', 20 years after the end of communism in 1989. Young people in Hungary, she stated, had learned, "that they need to be first, they need to win over their peers and see them as adversaries. If needed, the fight must be hard and harsh." Along with this goes, "the idol of the post-socialist times, the honour of money." Also addressing the Lutheran meeting, Professor Tibor Fabiny noted how Hungary had been badly hit by the global financial meltdown and had witnessed the rise of an extremist political party in recent elections to the European Parliament. "The experience of crisis, once again in modern history, has resulted in the sudden emergence and strengthening of populist and dangerous tendencies in the political discourse, the intensification of right-wing radicalism," said Fabiny, a Lutheran who is a professor at Budapest's Reformed university. "And this is not what we wanted 20 years ago."

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#) ■ The Hungarian Reformed Church is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Hungary

Events & Opportunities

MALAWI INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION, 4th July. The Scotland Malawi Partnership with the Association of Malawians in Scotland are hosting the 45th Malawi Independence Celebrations.

This year the celebrations will be taking place in the Renfield Centre (260 Bath Street, Glasgow) between 1pm and 5pm; it will include traditional and contemporary Malawian music by Nat Chalamanda and the Moyenda Band. A lunch will be provided and all are invited to bring Malawian dishes if they wish. We are extremely fortunate to have Miss Flossie Gomile Chidyaonga, the Malawi Deputy High Commissioner to the UK, addressing the celebrations.

All are welcome to this fun and informal event so please invite friends and family; it will be a great opportunity to celebrate with Malawians and friends of Malawi. For more information please contact Batson Kadzuwa (07950 367 023) of the Association of Malawians in Scotland or the Scotland Malawi Partnership (info@scotland-malawipartnership.org).

A PROMISED LAND will feature at the Scottish Storytelling Centre from Thursday 20 to Saturday 29 August at 7.30. It is our main theatre contribution to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Set in 1947 the play features a Jewish refugee (who is trying to reach Palestine) and a British Military Intelligence Officer, who have been brought together because of the life and actions of Jane

Haining, including her last weeks in Auschwitz. Written by Scottish playwright and journalist Raymond Ross *A Promised Land* pays direct tribute to Jane as if from an eyewitness perspective while also setting the Holocaust and post-war refugee traumas in controversial context -- then and now. The play will be performed by Theatre Objektiv, which is devoted to producing works of Europe-wide significance in Scotland, and directed by Donald Smith.

IN AID OF WAVERLEY CARE Come & Sing 'The Armed Man' with Christopher Bell

Venue: The Performing Arts Centre at Stewart Melville College, Edinburgh, Sunday 23rd August - Rehearsal 2pm / Concert 6pm

Following the resounding success of Waverley Care's concert of "The Armed Man" in 2008, Christopher Bell has again agreed to conduct this inspirational work as part of the Edinburgh Festival of Spirituality and Peace. A rehearsal commences at 2 pm and the concert is at 6 pm (please note earlier start time and that the concert is on a Sunday). Prices are £12.50 for singers (£9.50 concession) and £10 for audience tickets (£8 concession). Scores will be available to hire on the day at a cost of £2. To download a registration form click [here](#)

Prayer Focus

As ever, please use our news items above as a basis for your prayers.

- Pray for peace in situations of violence and strife in the world; that the hungry be fed; the sick healed; the naked clothed; and the poor lifted up;
- Give thanks for our Mission Partners, bringing their skills and faith to bear in different situations worldwide, and pray especially for those starting new posts;
- Ask for guidance for all the work of the World Mission Council; pray for members of the council especially those who are currently bearing ill-health; give thanks for all at church and presbytery level who engage with the world church through the work of the World Mission Council.
- Pray for the growing number of partnerships and twinings between churches in Scotland and those in other countries;
- Give thanks for God's care for His church worldwide.

Make your ways known upon earth, Lord God,
your saving power among all peoples.
Renew your Church in holiness
and help us to serve you with joy.
Guide the leaders of this and every nation,
that justice may prevail throughout the world.
Let not the needy be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Make us instruments of your peace
and let your glory be over all the earth.

Lord God,
you hold both heaven and earth in a single peace.
Let the design of your great love
shine on the waste of our anger and sorrow,
and give peace to your Church,
peace among nations,
peace in our homes,
and peace in our hearts,

in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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The WMC is the channel through which the Church of Scotland responds to the command of Jesus "Go into the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16:15). The Council works in many countries worldwide, usually on the basis of partnership with national churches and institutions and always with a view to involving church members in Scotland in the development of the work. Our mission is to empower everyone to discover, experience and share the challenges and opportunities gained by connecting with the World Church.



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