



Arisen from Ruination

Br John Wilkinson reflects on one aspect of the Easter morning service, and one place where the Moravian tradition will be followed.

Easter morning should prove to be an atmospheric moment in the Burial Ground at Dukinfield this year. Our minister, Peter Gubi, plans to hold our Easter morning service in there, yes, in the Burial Ground at Dukinfield!

Abandoned in 1973 when the new church was built at Yew Tree, a couple of miles away, the Burial Ground was largely left to its own fate. It is very isolated, being surrounded on all sides by other property, and is only approachable through quiet residential streets, if you know exactly where to look. This was not so when the church was close to hand: it was very much part of congregation life. Easter morning services were held in there by Br Tom MaQuillan, weather permitting; there are rumours that his pigs had access to it for grazing; and one member recalls helping to chase them off into the slaughter house van. The final burial was in 1970, shortly before the move to Yew Tree and the years of decline began.

Now it is fit for Easter to be celebrated in there; minister in white, turf underfoot (springy or sodden), the roll call of those called home, the liturgy, and our triumphant songs of Resurrection. It will

be hard to resist, I expect, a resonance in our minds between the Resurrection of Christ, and our Burial Ground emerging to renewed life from the ruinous state of the last few decades.

And perhaps it will be a legitimate comparison to make. It cost us at Dukinfield plenty of commitment and effort to bring the Burial Ground up to scratch, and so we are all the more aware of cost to God of bringing us to an Easter Day, an extended and costly exercise. It began with kenosis, the self-emptying of the Son to achieve His Advent, as Paul describes in Philippians 2:7, and Wesley so tellingly recounts:-

Emptied himself of all but love
(MHB 266)

The whole of the Person and Work of Christ speaks of commitment on the part of God to secure our liberation, and its final summation on the Cross. We find to be the most compelling counterpoint and counterweight to our needs and shortcomings. Small wonder that we mark the Resurrection in the most resonant place that we know, the Burial Ground.

The recovery of ours began, in my recollection, with the visit of Sr Gudrun Schieve to the Lancashire District in 1988. The Sister wanted a quick tour of the District one Saturday morning, and the District Chair was Sr Dorothy Moreton, minister of Dukinfield, to whom I was 'apprentice' whilst at theological college. Sr Moreton thought that a student minister who had a car was the ideal guide for Sr Schieve, irrespective of our family preparations for going off on holiday that afternoon. With my wife Beryl's objections ringing in my ears, I left her to pack, and went off to pick up my tourist, feeling distinctly Sister-ridden that morning.

We visited all our churches, and I found out that what Gudrun meant by a quick tour included about a thousand photographs of each church from all angles, a solemn pacing round all the premises, hammering on each Manse door (no answers anywhere!), and intense quizzing of the student on the history and membership of each place. Finally, I was finished and sought my release: "But where is the Dukinfield Burial Ground, you have not shown me this?" I found out at that moment what the



**Charlotte Osborn,
Chaplain at
Newcastle Airport
reflects on her role**

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**Gomersal
Junior
Church go
bowling!**

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Arisen from Ruination *continued*

phrase meant "My heart sank" because I had no idea where it was, because I had missed my lunch, and because I had Beryl to placate, if I ever got home.

Finally, however, there it was, in all its awful sadness, and dear Sr Schieve could not and did not conceal her dismay.

It was dilapidated, the gravestones having been removed and stacked somewhere, the ground had made free to do its own thing, with weeds and self-seeded scrub trees and bushes ascendant where the nettles and brambles had given ground.

I suspect that Gudrun allowed her dismay to find expression in Dorothy's ear, because it seems to my recollection that the Burial Ground figured regularly at Church Committee thereafter, to no avail and no improvement.

I picked up on the story in 2004, on membership at Dukinfield in my retirement, to find the Church Committee still struggling with the issue. We did make some attempts to get on top of the mess, but it was not getting very far, when Sr Jean Parker, a magistrate, had the bright idea that the people to whom she gave community service orders, very often were tasked with working on sites that resembled our Burial Ground. We approached the Probation Service who administered the Orders. They were interested and the job of clearing the Burial Ground was taken on. What a difference twenty or so young men made! By the time they lost interest, the place was transformed, under control, looking decent.

Peter, our new minister, pitched in with a will, bringing a heavy duty lawnmower to bear, so that there has been no lapse but a steady improvement, to the point where we can contemplate holding the Easter Service there, a restoration indeed!

*Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lacked any thing.*

*A guest, I replied, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?*

*Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.*

George Herbert. 1593-1633

This writer was born into a cultured and wealthy family in Wales. His mother was a patron of John Donne and his elder brother, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was a distinguished philosopher and poet. George Herbert received a good education and became a scholar at the University of Cambridge; an Orator (public speaker), a Member of Parliament and a courtier. He retreated from public life to be ordained in his mid-thirties; made a late and happy, though childless, marriage, and settled in a rural parish in Wiltshire. He was a diligent parish priest and was much loved for his visiting the sick and providing for those in need. After some two years, he died here at the age of thirty-nine. His poems and prose were published after his death. Some of the poems, such as King of Glory, King of Peace" and : "Let All the World in Every Corner Sing", have become well-known hymns.

A word from the editor

As April brings, we hope, warmer weather and the new growth of spring, we move through Lent, recalling the drama of Holy Week, the death of Jesus on the cross, and the matter that changed everything, that made sense of the cross, the resurrection of Jesus on the first morning of the week. This greatest festival in the Christian year will be celebrated across our churches, starting on Easter Sunday, and continuing for a further six weeks.

There are some thanks for the past and requests for the future this month. We have the final instalment of the Open Book series, which started in the autumn of 2008; has appeared in nearly every issue since; and has covered all the Books of both the Old and the New Testament. The series has been

very well received, and has been used for reflection and study by many across the church and beyond. Started jointly by Brn Denis Monger and Peter Gubi senior, the series was completed single-handedly by Br Peter after Br Denis' death.

We hope to continue with the vision of providing useful material for preachers and for private use. If you could write on a classic prayer that you love, explaining why and how it is important to you, how it has helped at fraught moments, or encouraged or challenged you on the daily path, please send it in.

At this season of re-growth and rejoicing, it is helpful to know the ways in which people within the church spread their knowledge of God and God's ways. We can also

share this beyond the church province - for we never know where the Moravian Messenger goes!

Finally, this issue has another article about food poverty in Britain. Nearly every church seems at present to be supporting a foodbank. It is a major commitment in our time and resources; and those who work on foodbanks know of the pain of the people who are referred; their embarrassment; and the difference that respectful and practical support makes. A recent 'resurrection' story I heard was of a young man in desperation who had received a parcel, and had no words to express his gratitude. Knowing that they were short of plastic bags, he collected clean ones from his neighbours, and donated them in return.



Latest news from the Provincial Youth and Children's Office

FURY Assembly - Katie Biggs

I didn't know what to expect when I boarded the train to the United Reform Church Youth Assembly as the Moravian representative, and when I arrived at the tiny train station which was all but empty, I began to worry about what I'd let myself in for. Before long there were 30 of us squeezed into a tiny room waiting for a coach that was late! It gave us chance to get to know one, another as well as being the venue of a rather off key rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody whilst commuters looked on in bemusement! The venue for the weekend was Whitemoor Lake Action Centre and when we arrived we went straight into worship with about 100 others. For those who don't know me, I am generally quite a confident person but this petrified me, but when I heard the opening notes to the hymn 'As the deer pants for water', a Summer Camp classic, I knew all would be well.

The theme of the weekend was 'Lost and Found' and was the basis of the keynote talks and workshops which were central

to the weekend. Stewart Cutler was the keynote speaker and he regaled us with stories about getting lost in Asda and the deeper meaning of the Elbow song 'Open Arms'. Whenever Stewart had finished his speech there was a ring of silence around the packed room as everyone digested the inspiring message we'd just heard. Since then the question 'is the world a better place because I follow Jesus?' has rolled around in my mind. As well as talks, there were spiritual, emotional and practical workshops which involved learning different forms of prayer, discussing 'the right of the church to get involved in politics' as well as thinking about the stigma of mental health.

A major part of the weekend was the 'business' which included discussion and voting on motions. 'Motions' are ideas presented to the Youth Assembly which, if passed, are taken to the General Assembly, made up of the leaders of the Church, and if passed there are implemented nationally across all 1,500

congregations! All the motions we discussed were passed, for example one demanded an open discussion on sexuality within the Church and another asked for ministers to be trained to help parishioners with mental health issues.

However, it wasn't all serious, on Saturday night we were entertained by the comedian and Christian, Paul Kerensa, and as well his hilarious jokes we were treated to the story of Exodus to the tune of Bohemian Rhapsody - the book will never be quite the same again! We also played 'Sardines' which is a much improved version of Hide and Seek, and a game I expect to be played next year at Camp!

The weekend was spiritual, fun, and allowed me to form lifelong friendships. I would love to go again next year, but actually hope I don't, to allow another member of the Moravian Youth the same opportunity as I had to experience such an amazing event.

Hard Work and Happiness

It is a simple enough phrase but the words 'hard work and happiness' really do encapsulate the core values of Ockbrook School and our Primary School Grangemount. I believe that we place equal importance on both and achieve that elusive balance for our pupils and the adults that make up our wonderful school. This balance is, of course supported by our connections with the Moravian Church and the Christian values which underpin our daily life in school.

Ockbrook has a rich history and a bright future. We take pride in our academic achievement and we cherish our young people who work extremely hard to excel in the arts, sciences and humanities to cement their places at top universities and take bold steps towards rewarding careers and professional lives. As the new Head, I am committed to raising these achievements even higher in the coming years as I know these qualifications are the key factor in securing better opportunities in life.

Our pupils also work hard at sport. Many represent the school in team sports and individual endeavours like cross-country running and with coeducation, rugby, football and cricket are growing fast. As I write this, I receive news that our U12 Football team has beaten another local school (who I shall not name),

and the boys are telling me about the goals they scored! We are also fortunate to have amongst our numbers pupils who have achieved great sporting prowess outside the school arena including a girl in our Year 11 who is a National standard swimmer and could be an Olympic contender in future. Competing and excelling in sport is therefore important to Ockbrook and is an area that has my full support for the future.

Ockbrook is truly a happy school. New pupils to the school find it very easy to integrate and soon become part of the Ockbrook 'family'. Our openness and genuine warmth towards visitors and new starters is something of which I am very proud and it speaks volumes about our core values and inclusive ethos. So too does the loyalty and support we receive on a constant basis from our parents, governors and trustees as well as pupils past and present. Pupils feel so strongly about their time here that they have asked for a 'memory tree' to be erected on the grounds for them to attach a personal padlock bearing their name when they leave. This sounds like a great idea to me and I sincerely hope that a little piece of Ockbrook stays with them throughout their lives in return.

Tom Brooksby

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

It is hardly conceivable that the music of J S Bach was once virtually unknown. This was the case in the early 19th century; he was regarded merely as an interesting provincial figure until Mendelssohn resurrected his St Matthew Passion for performance in 1829. His music is now universally regarded as belonging to the very highest achievements of western culture in any form.

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in 1685 in Eisenach, a small town in Thuringia, to a family steeped in music. His mother died when he was nine, his father a year later, and he went to live with his elder brother who oversaw his early musical training, linked with school and work as a chorister in Lüneburg. In 1708 he was appointed organist to the court at Weimar, a post which he held for nine years before moving to Cöthen and finally to Leipzig in 1723 where he remained for the rest of his life. He was married twice and produced 20 children, many of whom died as infants, but some went on to distinguished musical careers of their own. His first wife, Maria Barbara, with whom he had a close and loving relationship, died in 1720, while Bach was away from home. His second wife, Anna Magdalena, was a professional singer, but otherwise not much is known of her.

His output was phenomenal, not least in response to the demands of the main churches in the city: St Thomas (where he was Cantor and teacher at the school) and St Nikolaus. Last May I was able to attend worship in both. Bach wrote some 300 church cantatas (of which 199 survive) which in recitative, aria and chorus reinforce the message of the Lutheran lectionary and its preaching. The cantata would be sung between the Gospel reading and the sermon in the morning service, which could last some four to five hours. How members of the congregation coped with this, especially in cold weather, is not recorded!

In addition to this, Bach was a prolific composer and performer for the keyboard (organ and harpsichord) and an accomplished violinist. He produced music for special occasions both for the Church and the city's orchestra. Regular Friday-night concerts (which Bach led from the keyboard) in a town coffee-house needed new music, not least for talented soloists in concertos. Two of his motets (Sing to the Lord a new song and Jesu priceless Treasure) are amongst the most difficult works in the choral repertoire to bring off.

One remarkable facet of his music is the deep understanding he showed both of the meaning of the texts he was setting and the potential for expressing it in music. To identify every nuance of his ability would require constant reference to an encyclopaedic commentary to almost every bar. One example: the music which, in the St Matthew Passion, accompanies Judas Iscariot's throwing down the money in the Temple which he had received for betraying Jesus, uses a falling cadence of 30 notes. One line in a cantata referring to human inadequacies is accompanied by the (natural) horn with no valves; the player is given a note impossible to define accurately which, of course, expresses his inadequacy!



Bach drew on a long-established tradition in the German churches of setting the Passion story to music for worship in Holy Week. With his St John Passion of 1724 Bach lifted this to a new level of intensity. The narrative is operatic, and its meaning explored through music of deeply contemplative reflection. Yet this was surpassed only five years later by the St Matthew Passion, a work that takes two and a half hours to perform and which constantly lifts the listener to new heights of spiritual insight and devotion. Its supreme achievement is acknowledged far beyond its original devotional purpose, and remains the ultimate expression of what Christ endured - and achieved - through the cross.

Among this enormous oeuvre there are some outstanding solo cantatas, and I refer to one in particular, written for the Feast of the Purification (Candlemas) which falls on 2nd February. This is no. 82 Ich habe genug (It is enough) based on Simeon's prayer in the Temple for the Christ-child, commonly known as the Nunc dimittis (Now Lord you let your servant go in peace). The central movement Schlummert ein (slumber now) is one of Bach's most beguiling melodies, generally accepted as being one of the very finest movements in all baroque music. Bach himself seems to have been particularly fond of it - it exists in settings for all four solos voices, though originally written for a bass. Performing it brings its own serenity, as it seems to reveal such profundity.

The massive heritage of choral music in the cantatas - amounting to something like 3000 individual movements - was given in its entirety during the year 2000 by John Eliot Gardiner, the Monteverdi Choir and the English Baroque Soloists. In the course of this "Millennium Pilgrimage" they criss-crossed Europe from their base in London, performing each cantata on the Sundays or religious festivals for which it had been created, singing in Bach's birthplace at Eisenach, in Leipzig, and St John's, Smith Square, in London, not forgetting Riga (in Latvia), Milan, New York and St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall - the practical logistics of such an undertaking defy the imagination!

In the opinion of many, Bach's legacy of cantatas and passion music is unsurpassed in giving meaningful expression to Christian beliefs and truths. The music offers an inexhaustible source of revelation of structure and beauty which some regard as the ultimate proof of the existence of God. The source and inspiration for all this is Bach's own faith, firmly grounded in his commitment to the Lutheran tradition. There is no obvious link with the Moravian Church as such; these works, both musically and dramatically, transcend all such divisions and offer a pathway to deeper understanding of the basic truths and demands of the Christian life. The great German writer and thinker Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, after hearing some of Bach's music, wrote that it was "... as though eternal harmony were conversing with itself". To explore such music for yourself, or, even better, to perform it, would reveal such beauty as may never before have been perceived. Here surely is a reflection of the Divine.

David Bunney

Face to Faith



'He asked several officials the way, and received confusing and contradictory advice. He was tempted to give up the quest, for his feet were aching and his grip dragged ever more heavily on his arm, but he persevered. The spectacle of the Muslim pilgrims at prayer had reminded him of the sorry state of his own soul, and he felt an urge to make an act of contrition in some sacred place before entrusting himself to the air.'

So writes David Lodge of an airport chapel in his novel *Small World*. We will never know the eternal significance of an airport chapel, or potentially of an airport chaplain, but meanwhile it is good to acknowledge that at least 140 airports around the world have designated chapels, and more than 250 have airport chaplains.



In the UK there are chaplaincies and faith spaces in all but one or two airports. Why would a secular institution provide a sacred space? For the past twelve years the chapel at Newcastle International Airport has offered space for reflection and peace for those who continue to entrust themselves or their loved ones to the air. It is accessible to staff and passengers alike every day of the year and written comments bear testimony to its value as 'a place of refuge in the midst of busy airport life.'

What it is about airports and travel that can cause us to pause and ponder our lives? Is it the absurdity of getting into a steel tube to be propelled at alarming speed around the world before being disgorged into another country and culture? Is it the very nature of journeying that leads us to think of pilgrimage, and of that inner journey which we are all on but pay little attention

to until confronted with some sort of disruption of our daily routine? Is it working in that atmosphere of constant arriving and departing that causes staff to look for the still place in the midst where there is a sense of changelessness and stability?

The chapel, or the multi-faith prayer space, and the chaplain are there to offer solace to travellers and staff. Airports form a strange space between places, simultaneously everywhere but nowhere: at home but also away, familiar but at the same time strange, friendly in a professional way so at the same time somewhat hostile. In the words of a first time traveller: 'there's just enough so that you know what to do, but not enough for it to feel like home, and so it is an alien space.'

Travel has become little more than an unsettling business necessity, a way of being entertained rather than a pilgrimage of purpose, discovery and healing. The destination no longer reconnects us to missing parts of ourselves, but the disconnectedness we feel in airports can often engender a spiritual search. Hence the need for a space in which to reflect, or a person with whom to connect.

Whilst we love to travel, we also need to be rooted, to belong, to understand who we are and where we fit. Whilst we accept the fragmentation that air travel offers us, we still hope for something that will bring all the pieces together, and make some sense of the journey. The questions of long air flights are still: who am I?; where am I?; where do I belong?; to whom am I responsible?

The airport chapel, or the prayer room, or the meditation space, offers faith permission to breathe, gives confidence to the traveller or the staff member to consider the 'other', or the truth of life. This space between two worlds, the physical and the spiritual, is a threshold that leads to silence, peace and interior harmony.

Being a chaplain to an airport recognises the truth of Psalm 24:1. 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it; the world and all who live in it.' Chaplains believe that the kingdom of God is open and available to all, and they put up signposts to that kingdom from the road people are travelling in their lives. It means that the airport chaplain engages with people and the issues that affect them right where they are, and links faith and work, church and world, responding to the sacred heart in so many secular lives. It offers the Christian ministry of faithful presence and pastoral care, but usually without a believing community around.

Alongside regular visiting of all staff, engaging with passengers to share their joys and their sorrows, and being part of the Emergency Orders, the chaplain has the unique responsibility to pray for the airport community, for its wellbeing and flourishing, that good and honest decisions will be made, that truth will prevail in business dealings and that a diverse workforce will itself experience joy and satisfaction and due pride in the process of being part of another's journey.

Somehow, we pray that through what the chaplaincy is able to contribute, people will be aware of the presence of God in the midst of everyday life.

The author is Coordinator British Isles and Ireland Network of Civil Aviation Chaplains

A minute drop in an ocean growing bigger and bigger

Br Mark Stonehewer, Social Responsibility Officer for the Fairfield congregation, writes on the links with a local foodbank

A year ago, the congregation at Fairfield decided to donate to a foodbank, at St. Mary's Church in Haughton Green. Awareness of poverty within the local area and contact with needy people visiting church prompted this action.

Since then, need has increased dramatically. Statistics from St. Mary's confirm that last year foodbank use rose by 41% compared with 2012. This is unsurprising, because during that period, increases in prices of food, fuel and rent hit the poor hard. Benefit changes in April 2013 had a massive effect, as did sanctions against people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance.

With the worsening situation, there developed an accompaniment of negative reactions, from those insisting that foodbanks were, themselves, part of the problem. Their reasoning ran that the service they offered created a demand, a soft option for scroungers. Driving to St. Mary's with a bootful of food donations, I was angered by Edwina Curry's comments on the radio. She suggested that, as many claimants she saw at a foodbank in Stockport were better dressed than those serving them, these people were using foodbanks as a lifestyle choice, as if the poor should only qualify for help if dressed in rags.

On arrival at Haughton Green that morning, I was greeted by the reality. Helen Holland, the foodbank supervisor, patiently stood, listening to a young man explaining his problems. His demeanour reflected his distress; the atmosphere, however, was one of care and concern, as the awkward client stumbled over his words. He would receive three parcels over the coming weeks, providing food for nine days ... and then what? Helen relates that cases of fraud are rare. In December, St. Mary's provided for a

young family who had no food for Christmas. Several weeks later, the father, now employed, arrived with three boxes of provisions in appreciation. Need comes from all areas of society, from teenage mums to professionals fallen on hard times.

In an article in the December 2013 Moravian Messenger, Liz Dowler, a leading expert on food poverty, wrote that "we need voices from the ground, telling it like it is, to those with power to change things. Local churches can help here, setting up systematic monitoring of what is happening and where". This is taking place at St. Mary's, and Helen has provided me with food headline figures for last year. During 2013, 370 families and individuals from our local Borough of Tameside received 677 food parcels. Most clients came from nearby, but 42 were from several miles away. Many walked long distances for help, were referred through a local agency, and were given bus fares for return journeys.

On 1st March, Helen related the following two stories to me. They convey the harsh reality of government legislation.

In January 2013, Jane began to babysit eight-week-old Rebecca, the child of her eighteen-year-old daughter's friend. Babysitting increased to the point where Rebecca stayed over. Before Jane knew what was happening, Rebecca's Mum disappeared, leaving Jane and family with the baby.

Rebecca's Mum continued to claim Rebecca's benefits and since then Jane's benefits have been stopped, even though she has a court order stating that Rebecca lives with her. The Mum has another child by a 39-year-old man and is claiming two lots of child benefit and tax credits, disabling any claim of Jane's.

Social Services and other agencies have proved ineffective.

Jane forages for wood to feed her stove and save on heating costs, has no money for food, and relies on her own feisty Mum, who is a tower of strength. In the midst of this is an adorable fifteen-month-old baby who calls Jane 'Mum' and whom she will not give up for anybody.

It's very complicated, messy and heart breaking. Jane was embarrassed to be coming, grateful for what we gave her and overwhelmed when we prayed and gave them both a Gideon New Testament. The few verses I read caused her to break down, as they described her situation completely.

Josh is an eighteen-year-old boy with learning difficulties. In foster care till the age of sixteen, he was afterwards homeless for several months. He has now been given a flat and went to make an initial claim for benefits. Because he has learning difficulties, the Benefits Agency refused to process his claim: they said he could not understand what he was applying for. His claim was cancelled immediately. He was told to make another appointment and to make sure he had a key-worker to help with the form.

Josh returned to his housing association to attempt to explain the situation. They are trying to find a worker to accompany him for the re-arranged appointment AT THE END OF MAY.

Josh and a very supportive keyworker came to us for a food parcel. Josh is the most polite, well-mannered and thoughtful young person ever to come through our doors. He wanted me to thank everybody who had donated the food - every individual.

Helen finished with these reflections:

It makes me so ashamed that our country treats people like this.....I'm so glad that we can help in some small way to help restore faith to these people who must feel that everything is against them.....but it makes me so angry that the media and the government and many other people think that everyone who is claiming (or not as in many the case) are people who choose not to work and use the system as a lifestyle choice.....

Please pray for those that use the foodbank - it's great to give people food and pray and help if and when we can - but it is just a minute drop in the ocean.....and the ocean is getting bigger and bigger. January and February have seen a 40% increase in usage again from last year.....fortunately, giving is also up on last year....much of that from yourselves.....we cannot thank you enough for all your support. Please pass on our love and prayers to all at the Church.....we are all in this together!

Celebrating the Gospel of life: Easter with the Book of Kells

The copy of the four Gospels we know as the Book of Kells is thought to have been made to honour Saint Columba, the Irish saint buried on Iona, off western Scotland. Now viewed by thousands of visitors each year in Trinity College Dublin, the book was probably started on Iona more than twelve centuries ago and taken for safety and perhaps further work at Kells during the Viking raids.

In spite of centuries of mistreatment, missing pages, cropped images and graffiti, it is a work of extraordinary power and beauty. It is lavishly illustrated, with a great deal of humanity, fun and profound theology. In a time when few could read and producing a book was an intensely costly community effort, it used pictures and symbols to refer to the Gospel accounts, their resonances with Old Testament stories and the inter-connectedness between passages. It strongly emphasises the unity of the four Gospels as one story of the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Some of the pictures ('illuminations', light-bringers) use symbols common at the time, which we are only now learning to understand again. In the 1980s, a short book by George Otto Simms showed how the illuminations were pointers for prayer. With the scholarly research done since, we can view them as a series of icons, spiritual images that refer to several scriptural passages at the same time, and draw us deeper into prayer.

When we look at the page for the Easter reading in Luke (24:1 to us, using the useful medieval system of chapter and verse divisions), we see a depiction of the Word rising with us as we read and reflect on the Word. It is hard at first for a modern eye, but we soon are drawn in. With modern technology we can buy a printed book with the illustration, or download a copy (http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID=MS58_003v). The page is fol. 285r).

The page is dominated by the word 'Una', Latin for 'the first' which is also the root of the words 'unity' and 'universal'. This beautifully-written word in the universal common language of the day is coloured in light shades of turquoise and delicate pinks, the colours of spring. From inside the 'U', as if out of a tomb, soaring through delicate interlace, two peacocks rise upwards. The peacock was medieval visual shorthand for resurrection. Four angels are present, looking astounded, sitting on the words. They

are reminders of the soldiers set to guard the tomb who were similarly astounded, but also draw us into the universal - the ways in which the Resurrection brought astonished joy to all creation. Above in the top-right corner, a colourful beast, his tongue hanging out and harmlessly entangled, is roaring off the page. Fierce beasts have been present through the Passion narrative, referring us to Psalm 22 which Jesus began to recite on the cross: 'Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me'; a psalm that ends with praise and the declaration: 'Future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn - for he has done it!'

Other images on this page, which would have been obvious to an early Christian audience, who were mainly illiterate but far more visually sophisticated than us, include snakes to represent the baptised Christian. These twine throughout the Book of Kells, and they refer not to the serpent of the garden but to those creatures of the earth that slough off their skins and are renewed. They rise upwards, a reminder of John 3:14-15 'Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.'

There is much more in this Gospel book, designed for use in church on great festivals. It honoured Saint Columba who worked at copying the scriptures so that they could be preached to all.

Most copies of scripture were small, portable and undecorated. Each was made by hand, from the slaughtering of new-born calves for their skin to the writing on the prepared vellum. Every letter was formed by hand, and a second scribe checked for mistakes. Finally the book was put in a protective cover or satchel, out of the way of damp, and mice.

Books then passed from place to place, those who could copied them, others read them aloud, and people heard the Good News. Occasionally, we come across one of the surviving festival books, like the Book of Kells, a work of great joy telling news of great joy, though it was made at the time of the fiercest Viking raids.

It is something that might give us hope today as we reflect on what evidence of our faith and joy in Christ we might leave as heritage to the spiritual children of the future.

Rosemary Power

Haiti

In January 2010 Haiti, suffered a massive and devastating earthquake and this was followed in October 2011 by severe flooding created by Hurricane Tomas which struck the area. Since then, many overseas aid agencies have been battling to provide food clothing and shelter to the tens of thousands of already-impooverished Haitians.

The Moravian Church in Haiti, which is a mission area overseen by the Jamaican Province, sought help from the Moravian Unity. In addition to special Collections from around the Provinces, emergency grants were provided by the Moravian Church Foundation.

In conversation with Br Paul Gardner, President of the Jamaican Province, it became clear that a very pressing needs of the Church in Haiti was for trained ministers. After discussion with Mission Board, we have been able to cover the cost of training for two students at the United Theological College of the West Indies, where Jamaican Theological students do their training.

This has been arranged through Br Gardner, and the cost is \$10,000 US per year for tuition and accommodation for a three-year course. The reports that follow are from Tireus Johmen Elie and Viles Dorsainvil, who began their studies in September 2013.

Bob Hopcroft



I left Haiti in September 2013 to pursue a course of study at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) in Kingston, Jamaica. It was organised by the Moravian Church in Haiti, the Moravian Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, and the British Province, to support the theological training of two Haitian Moravian members.

We arrived at U.T.C. the night of September 9th and commenced classes at 8:00 am on September 10th. It was a very difficult experience. The only person I knew was my brother and traveling-companion Viles Dorsainvil. My knowledge of the English language was limited. This posed a problem in my understanding the lecturers and for communicating in classes. I considered life at UTC a challenge. There was homework to be done, denominational classes and chapel to attend, meal preparation, choir practice, classes, all in addition to a church assignment. All activities here are important because they contribute to my ministerial formation. Despite the challenges, I am now having a better understanding of UTCWI and my course of study, as a result of assistance provided by the brothers and sisters in the Moravian community, my classmates and other Haitian students on campus.

Living at UTC provides an opportunity for me to interact with different personalities from different countries and different denominations. There are also students from neighboring universities who reside on campus. It is a challenge, but I am excited for the experiences gained as a result of studying in a multicultural community and with persons of different denominations.

My experience since my arrival at UTC has brought changes in my life. It has changed my way thinking generally, and my perception as to what it will take to minister in the church.

Tireus Johmen Elie



I am from the island of Haiti and I am a first year Moravian student at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) in Kingston, Jamaica. My experience here is a passageway to live better in community, and then to take on responsibilities wherever in the world I am assigned. According to one of the lecturers, UTCWI is recognized as the only ecumenical college in the Caribbean that trains pastors of various denominations together. As a Moravian I

share devotional services, Holy Communion, and daily activities with people of the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Island traditions. I also share my life with students studying other subjects who live on the campus.

It is at UTCWI where I fully understand and experience the Moravian motto: in Essentials unity, in non-Essentials liberty, and in all things Charity (love). This is also where I experience the power of prayer. I have always prayed this prayer, "God in every situation in my life may your will be done, in every step in my life may your will be done, and at every level of my life may your will be done".

Sometimes I am ambivalent, because reconciling the study programme with cooking, washing, denominational church, UTCWI and personal tasks is a challenge. Moreover, dealing with the noise of the vehicles passing by all day and almost all night long, as my room is close to the road, is another issue. Sometimes I cry when the noise wakes me up with a heavy headache. To deal with this physical noise, I take it as part of the training. God helps me to understand that the Moravian Church in Haiti is waiting for my participation for its development as a new Moravian mission area. So, if I am here, it is according to His will. May the will of God be done.

Viles Dorsainvil

Open Book { Proverbs }

The book of Proverbs forms part of the Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament, the other books being Job, Ecclesiastes, and some of the Psalms. There are also two books in the Old Testament Apocrypha. Many of these sayings are attributed to Solomon, who, according to First Kings, chapter four, verse 32, spoke 3000 proverbs and composed 1005 songs. But the collection includes contributions from Agur, and Lemuel, and 'The Wise'. The book is divided into eight sections which are each introduced with one of these names. The last of these is a poem in praise of a good woman, which begins at verse 10 in the last chapter. With the exception of this poem, the book may be read from virtually any verse of any chapter because it is a collection of sayings that do not necessarily follow on from one another. Most proverbs in the English language are memorable because of their brevity, e.g. the six words of 'A stitch in time saves nine', but Hebrew proverbs can be considerably longer. A good example is from chapter thirty, verses 24 to 28 which consists of almost seventy words and draws lessons from ants, badgers, locusts and lizards, all of which are used to make the same point. This is because the Hebrew word, translated as 'proverb', can also mean an allegory or a prophetic statement, or even a taunt.

The Wisdom Teacher ranked alongside the Priests and the Prophets in the history of the Hebrew people. See Jeremiah eighteen, verse 18, and included women as recorded in 2 Samuel chapter two and the latter part of chapter twenty. Prophets usually began their discourses with the words, 'This is what the Lord says' and Priests interpreted the

Law of God, but the Wise Ones, both men and women made no such claim. They spoke from experience and preached common sense, and although God is mentioned almost a hundred times in the Book of Proverbs, his name is usually associated with Wisdom rather than with revelation. A possible exception to this may be found in chapter two, verse 6 where wisdom is described as coming from the mouth of the Lord, that is, by revelation. One does not need to be a Christian or a Jew to appreciate the contents of this book, which is designed for the individual rather than for any particular collection of people. It may be correctly described as a summary of what is wise and what is foolish, and how to make a success or failure of life, whether one is a king or a peasant.

The first seven verses of chapter one describe the purpose of the book and end with the words, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' The fear of the Lord is described as the knowledge of God in chapter two, verse 5 and again in chapter nine, verse 10. It is also claimed to be an ongoing process which needs to be practised in every aspect of life. In chapter three verses 5 and 6, are the

words, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all your ways and he will direct your path.' Life is a matter of trust in God as well as knowledge of

'A man's heart plans his way but the Lord directs his steps.'

Ch 16, V9

God. For all the emphasis placed on common sense, it is also emphasised that God has the last word. In chapter sixteen verse 9 it is written, 'A man's heart plans his way but the Lord directs his steps.' This is emphasised again in chapter nineteen verse 21 where it is stated, 'A man may have many plans in mind but

it is the Lord's purpose that will stand.'

There is also a place for humour in the book of Proverbs. See chapter twenty six, verses 13 to 15 particularly, where the antics of a lazy person are described. 'The sluggard says, there's a lion in the street . . . As a door turns on its hinges, so does a lazy person on his bed. He buries his hand in the dish but it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.' In chapter twenty seven verse 14, the cheerful early riser who greets his insomniac neighbour with a loud voice at daybreak might as well curse him, while in verse 15, a nagging wife is like the constant dripping on a rainy day.

Throughout the book, wisdom is personified and there is a particularly beautiful description in chapter eight beginning at verse 22 with the words, 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth etc.' That quote is from the Authorised version but even in some more modern explicit translations, the passage has an outstanding beauty of its own. In closing I quote from Derek Kidner in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. 'We should do Proverbs a poor service if we contrived to vest it in a priestly ephod or a prophet's mantle, for it is a book which seldom takes you to church. Like its own figure of Wisdom, it calls across to you in the street about some everyday matter, or points things out at home. Its function in Scripture is to put godliness into working clothes; to name business and society as spheres in which we are to acquit ourselves with credit to our Lord and in which we are to look for His training.' Should anyone think that Proverbs is out of date, compare chapter twenty-five verse 21 with Romans twelve verse 20, as an example of thinking that is still before its time.

Ecumenical News

Moravian/ Church of Ireland Conversations

The conversations on behalf of the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church continued on 30th - 31st January 2014 at Gracehill Moravian Church. We were

joined by participants from the Moravian Church in England and the United States, and the Episcopal Church and the Church of England. In our discussions we explored our understandings of sacramental life, the threefold ministry of bishops/priests/presbyters and deacons and church membership.

We enjoyed the hospitality of the Gracehill Congregation and we were introduced to the history of the community in Gracehill. We also shared and enjoyed Eucharistic Hospitality.

We agreed to report back to the relevant bodies in the Church of Ireland and the Moravian Church. Meanwhile we continue to work on advancing this process of dialogue.

The participants were

Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory

Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher

Rt Rev John McOwat, Bishop, British Province of the Moravian Church

Rt Rev Graham Rights, Bishop, Moravian Southern Province of the United States

Canon Patrick Comerford,, The Church of Ireland Theological Institute

Rev Philip Cooper, Ecumenical Officer and Provincial Elder of the Moravian Church

Canon Ian Ellis, Rector of Newcastle

Rev Dr Tom Ferguson, Dean of Bexley Hall Theological Seminary, Columbus Ohio

Rev Sarah Groves, Minister of Gracehill and Provincial Elder of the Moravian Church

Rev Paul Holdsworth, Chairman of the Irish District of the Moravian Church

Rev Dr Callan Slipper, on behalf of the Council for Christian Unity, Church of England

Canon Helen Steed, Rector of Clones



Pictured from left: The Revd Dr Callan Slipper (representing the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity); the Revd Dr Tom Ferguson, Dean of Bexley Hall Theological Seminary, Columbus Ohio (Episcopal); the Rt Revd John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher; the Rt Rev John McOwat, Bishop of the British Province of the Moravian Church; the Rt Revd Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory; the Revd Sarah Groves, Minister of Gracehill and Provincial Elder of the Moravian Church; Canon Patrick Comerford of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute; Canon Ian Ellis, rector of Newcastle, Co. Down; the Revd Philip Cooper, Ecumenical Officer and Provincial Elder of the Moravian Church; the Revd Paul Holdsworth, Chairman of the Irish District of the Moravian Church; Canon Helene Steed, rector of Clones, Co. Monaghan; and the Rt Revd Graham Rights, Bishop of the Southern Province United States (Moravian).

Noticeboard April 2014

End Hunger Campaign

This Campaign is aimed to raise awareness that half a million people in Britain had to use food banks last year. there is a special Fast on 04 April. For more information, visit www.endhungerfast.co.uk.

An inquiry into hunger and food poverty by the All Party Parliamentary Group on hunger and food poverty and jointly chaired by the Bishop of Truro, Tim Thornton, and Frank Field MP, is to be launched in April.

Songs of Praise

Fulneck is due to feature briefly on the BBC programme 'Songs of Praise' on Easter Sunday. Sr Molly Lythe is being interviewed about the early service, and there will be some filming in the burial ground.

Congregational Register

Baptism

Gracehill

23rd February 2014

Lacie Jessica Garrett

Gracehill

16th February 2014

Sean and Paula
Tranter

Received
into
membership
by the Right
Hand of
Fellowship

Congregation News

Gracehill

The annual auction organised by Br. Billy Kitson was a great success raising £2,701.00 for the Church Building Fund.

The Irish District Men's Breakfast was held in Cennick Hall on Saturday, 21st September, 2013 when Br. Roy Douglas was the speaker. The event was well attended and all enjoyed breakfast prepared by Sr. Vera Montgomery and her team.

For harvest we welcomed Rev. Gary Miller from St. Colmanells, Ahoghill as our guest speaker. Harvest continued in the evening with a service of prayers, readings and hymns.

Over 400 people attended 'Heritage Open Day'. The old shop in the village, which is to be restored, was open this year for the day for viewing. Br. John and Sr. Rhebe Clarke arranged 'Music on the Maine' during October. Our organist, Sr. Alison McCullagh and Br. Sean Tranter on the cornet entertained us with popular classics. £725 was raised for the Church Building Fund.

In September one of our members, Sr. Lorraine Shorten, commenced training for the full-time ministry. We offer her and her family our support and prayers for her future in Church Service.

On the Sunday before Christmas our Church was full for the children's Nativity and Christingle service. It never ceases to amaze, the number of different storylines there are to tell the Christmas story. The children were superb - and the wonder when the lights were turned off, with only the Christingles lit and a Church singing Silent Night.



Gomersal

Members of the congregation and friends had a day of fellowship in November with a trip to the Chester Beatty library in Dublin. One of the great collections of the world, it is renowned for its holdings of biblical Papyri. We had a very informative guide, who explained the various items in detail and it was amazing to see the oldest known fragments of books of the New Testament, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, Revelations and the Letters of St. Paul. The guide arranged for his lecture to be sent to Br. Wilson, who passed it on to members who had been unable to go. In the afternoon some went to Trinity College to view the Book of Kells, while others had some retail therapy. Two members went to the "Dead Zoo", an intact collection of stuffed animals, with everything from a giraffe to a wren. It was like Noah's Ark but without the noise. We enjoyed a meal together on the journey home and the transport arrangements were in the capable hands of Patsy Holdsworth. The trip was such a success that we hope to have another outing in the spring.

Sr. Roberta Thompson celebrated her 80th birthday and was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Church Anniversary was celebrated on Sunday, 3rd November and our guest speaker was Dr. Rosemary Power.

Carols by Candlelight was on 6th December. Sr. Jane Dunlop and her Youth Fellowship choir sang, interspersed with readings, and the evening ended with supper. Christingle was held on Christmas Eve and a packed Church enjoyed the re-telling of the Christmas Story. Most certainly a wonderful performance by all the young people.

Five young people were confirmed - Lucy Douglas, Holly and Kristian Tranter, Mark Kitson and Christopher Millar. Four new members were welcomed - Carol and Stanley Turner and Jim and Margaret Mewha.

We send God's blessings to all our brothers and sisters who are unwell at this time.

Sally Weir

The Youth Group continues to flourish, jointly with Fulneck, with meetings and outings.

In January the Junior Church enjoyed a morning of 10 pin bowling at UK Bowl in Huddersfield, followed by lunch.

'Well-Being Wednesday' is held once a month in Church. It is run by Sr. Victoria Wright, and comprises of all-age yoga, a walk around the

village and surrounding area, plus refreshments. It is well attended by Church Members and the local community. All proceeds go to charity.

Prior to Christmas we again collected socks etc. for homeless people and those living in shelters. we are still collecting as the need is not confined to the festive season. The congregation is supporting a local Presbyterian Church in making up food parcels for people in difficulty, as it is easier to reach people from their central location, rather than from our more rural area. It is an example of how much a small congregation can achieve when we combine resources.

In December we enjoyed Carols by Candlelight with Ballinderry Primary School pupils, who sang and performed for us on wind instruments. The Christingle Service, in which the Sunday School children performed the Nativity, was a great success and the Christmas Day service was very well attended. Thanks to Br. Henry Wilson, who wrote most of this report and organised the trip to Dublin.

Marilyn Marshall

Ballinderry

Dates to remember

4
April

End Hunger Fast

Palm Sunday

13
April

18
April

Good Friday

Easter Sunday

20
April

28
April

International Workers'
Memorial Day
www.hazards.org/wmd

From Church House April

5th April

**Social Responsibility
Committee**

Sr Taylor

8th - 9th April

**PEC, BMB and Estates
Property Meeting**

The PEC

Prayer Notes

Sunday 6th April [Lent 5] John 11:1-45

Friend of Sinners, who loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, often blessing their house with your sacred company: be with us in our homes, that your love may rest upon us and your promised presence may be with us. As you wept at the grave of Lazarus your friend, look with compassion on all those who are sad and suffering, that they might know that all things work together for good to them that love you. Unbind them and let them go so that in you they might see the glory of God, for you are the Resurrection and the Life and whoever believes in you, though they die, yet shall they live and everyone who lives and believes in you shall never die. Amen

Sunday 13th April [Palm Sunday] Matthew 21:1-11

King of Kings, who entered Jerusalem in public and with great acclaim, yet continually coming quietly to those of a contrite heart and humble spirit; be with us now. As you entered the rebellious city of Jerusalem, enter our sinful hearts and make them wholly subject to you.

As your disciples welcomed your coming, make us ready to lay at your feet all that we have and are. Teach us to walk in your way all the days of our life, that we may not only confess and worship you on earth, but also be among that great multitude who in heaven shall wear white robes, and shall have palm branches in their hands, and shall cry: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb'. For praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and strength are yours, O Christ, forever and ever. Amen

Passion week [14th - 18th April]

Man of Sorrows, you called your disciples to go forward with you on the way to the cross. Since you first walked that road, countless millions have followed you. In all that we do as your disciples, save us from false familiarity with your journey. May we never presume to step into your shoes, but make us small enough to fit our own, and to walk in love and wonder behind you. Amen

Sunday 20th [Easter Sunday] Matthew 28:1-10

Merciful God, who made Mary Magdalene the first witness and herald of the glorious resurrection of your Son; grant to all who have fallen into the torment and captivity of sin to hear that wonderful voice of Jesus, which is able to subdue and cast out all evil; that there may be none without hope of mercy, or beyond help of him who died and rose again that we might be forgiven. Amen

Sunday 27th [First Sunday after Easter] John 20:19-31

Risen Lord, we rejoice that death could not hold you in its power and you rose again in triumph, greeting your incredulous friends, changing their sorrow to joy and giving them new life and new hope. We confess that our faith is often to be found behind the closed doors of our own hearts and that we too are sometimes afraid - of our neighbours, of the people we work with, and even of our own families. We admit that we also want to see and touch sometimes before we are ready to believe. Thank you for that blessing reserved for those who do not see and yet believe. Speak your message of peace to our hearts; show us your wounded hands and side that we might see that you are the same Jesus who was dead but is alive for evermore; burst the bonds of the fear that keeps us silent, and send us out, with your message not only in our hearts but on our lips that we might serve you in the power of your name. Amen

Richard Ingham

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