



Programme of Lectures and Events 2015 – 2016

**Cairns Church, 11 Buchanan Street, Milngavie
Orchardhill Parish Church, 12 Church Road, Giffnock**

INTRODUCTION

I'm delighted to have been invited to write the Introduction to this year's 'Thinking Allowed' programme of lectures run jointly by Cairns Church Milngavie and Orchardhill Parish Church, Giffnock.

I arrived at Orchardhill Parish Church in Giffnock as Locum minister in December 2013. I had not long returned to Scotland following five years in the Presbyterian Church in Zimbabwe. I suppose I was wondering what could match the excitements of the church life I had experienced in Africa.

In Orchardhill I was delighted to find a wide range of theological thinking. The Thinking Allowed programme encourages serious discussion of major Christian questions such as the origins of 'The Holy Scriptures' and the development of what we call 'the Church'. The links between Orchardhill and Cairns Church Milngavie give increased opportunities for exploring the issues, and for engaging with people from a variety of scientific, social, and philosophical disciplines.

These themes fit well with my own concerns. A great deal of New Testament study has focused on how much – in fact how little - of the Gospels, and the other Scriptural writings, can be proved to have solid historical foundations. New Testament Scholar Douglas Templeton has written a book which urges us to move beyond the search for the historical truth, and to look also for literary verification. His book is entitled '**The New Testament as True Fiction**'.

What I see clearly after 40 years of ministry, in settings ranging from a Glasgow housing scheme to rural Zimbabwe, to the outer Hebrides and to Giffnock Orchardhill, is that we have to free our imagination, and by this path to engage with the central mysteries of life and death which Jesus addressed. Thinking Allowed, the programme of speakers and the range of topics for this session, will play a vital part in this process. I look forward to it myself and recommend it to you all.

Rt. Rev John Miller, Locum Minister Orchardhill Parish Church

Thursday 29th October 2015

8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

THE ROY PATERSON MEMORIAL LECTURE

Roy Paterson was minister of Cairns for 29 years. His ministry was considered the very embodiment of the New Testament idea of Christian living, clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Sadly, Roy died five years after his retirement. It is entirely fitting that his ministry be honoured by holding an annual lecture in his name.

Speaker: Prof. D. Robin Taylor, MBChB; MD; DSc; MRCP
Senior Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh

Lecture: "Death: The Last Taboo"



For 100 years, the death taboo has shaped societal attitudes to death and dying. Not surprisingly it has spilled over into health care. Death-defying medical technologies have been hugely successful and longevity has increased dramatically since the 1960s. The "fix it" medicine policy of the NHS means that death is not abolished, only postponed. Yet meaningful engagement with our mortality is neglected. Strenuous attempts to avoid death at all costs often lead to bad deaths. Preparation for the end-of-life and getting rid of the death taboo now needs to be a priority.

Professor D. Robin Taylor was born in Scotland and completed his medical training in Aberdeen. He undertook postgraduate training in respiratory medicine in Belfast and Vancouver where he also studied at Regent Theological College. After emigrating in 1987, he worked as a Consultant Physician in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. He was awarded a personal chair in 2005 and a Doctor of Science in 2010.

His focus is now on end-of-life issues in patients with chronic diseases. After returning to Scotland in 2012 he was commissioned to develop and implement strategies to improve end-of-life treatment in the major hospitals in NHS Lanarkshire.

Robin was also a Baptist minister serving a congregation in Dunedin for eight years. From 2009-12 he was Dean of Student Affairs in the Faculty of Medicine and Young Adults' Pastor at Dunedin City Baptist Church. He was locum minister at St. Nicholas Parish Church, Sighthill, Edinburgh during 2014. He is currently a member of Palmerston Place Church of Scotland, Edinburgh.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served after the lecture when the speaker will be free to meet the audience on a more informal level.

THINKING ALLOWED: SATURDAY AFTERNOON LECTURE**Saturday 7th November 2015****1.30 pm for 2 pm****VENUE: ORCHARDHILL****Speaker: Dr Maureen Park, MA; AMA; PhD****Lecture: "What Lies Beneath: Interpreting Signs, Symbols and Imagery in Art"**

How often have you looked at a work of art and not been able to make sense of it? What is the point of engaging with paintings which baffle us with their complex signs and symbols or which appear to have little in common with our everyday lives? Learning how to interpret their visually dramatic imagery and looking beneath what lies on the surface for more subtle interpretations, we can begin to understand the context in which they were created and discover a fascinating window into the past - and a reflection on the present. Art can inform, guide, challenge and inspire us. This talk will explore not only the iconography of religious paintings and prints but a variety of works in which artists have expressed their own personal emotions through their choice and treatment of subjects.

Maureen Park is Senior Lecturer in History of Art at the Centre for Open Studies, University of Glasgow. A former curator at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Hagg's Castle Museum, she lectures widely on aspects of British and European art and art collections. She also publishes on the links between art, medicine and healthcare. Maureen is an Elder of the Church of Scotland.

Thursday 12th November 2015

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

Speaker: Prof. Helen Bond, MTheol; PhD
University of Edinburgh

Lecture: "Do Christians Need to Believe in the Literal Truth of the Virgin Birth?"



Only two gospels explicitly claim that Jesus was born of a virgin, those of Matthew and Luke. What is less often noticed is that large sections of the New Testament appear to know nothing of this remarkable claim. St Paul, along with the gospels of Mark and John, seems to assume that Jesus was born in the 'normal' way, as the son of Joseph. This talk will try to uncover where the story of the virgin birth came from, what role it plays in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and what ancient readers would have made of it. We'll see that the important place given to Jesus' birth in the fourth century creeds might well have surprised many of the earliest believers. Finally, we'll ask if it's possible to distinguish between historical fact and theological truth, and what are the implications of this for Christian believers today.

Helen Bond is Professor of Christian Origins at the University of Edinburgh, where she has taught since 2000. She is interested in all aspects of the social, political and cultural world of first century Judaea and directs the Edinburgh Centre for the Study of Christian Origins. Her books include *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (CUP, 1998), *Caiaphas: Friend of Rome and Judge of Jesus?* (WJK, 2004) and *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Bloomsbury, 2012). She has appeared in a number of TV and radio documentaries, and frequently acts as historical consultant for biblical dramas (including BBC's *Nativity* and History Channel's *The Bible*).

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Thursday 26th November 2015

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: ORCHARDHILL

Speaker: Mary Miller

Lecture: "More Questions than Answers"



Mary's lecture is a personal account of her experiences in Zimbabwe from 2007- 12. Initially, she went for a 3-month period to help with the development of governance and accounting systems in a rural district hospital. At that time the HIV / AIDS prevalence rate in Zimbabwe was 15.6%. A million children had been orphaned by the AIDS pandemic and it was estimated that around 133,000 children were themselves living with HIV infection.

Mary was quickly recruited to help in setting up psychosocial support services for some of these children in a deeply impoverished rural area.

She will describe the effects of the illness on HIV positive children and young people and how their situation was further affected by economic collapse and political violence. It focuses particularly on the questions of religious faith confronted by children, families and healthcare staff, and how faith impacts on and is affected by illness and disaster.

Mary went there having worked for more than 30 years in the Jeely Piece Club, a successful community organisation for children and families in Glasgow. Latterly Mary had trained as a Play Therapist and delivered services to children with emotional and behavioural problems in disadvantaged areas of Glasgow and East Renfrewshire..

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

ADVENT AT CAIRNS

“Stable Meaning”

In his new book, “Not in God’s Name”, the former chief Rabbi of Britain, Jonathan Sacks, draws the following conclusion about life today:

“Science, technology, the free market and the liberal democratic state have enabled us to reach unprecedented achievements in knowledge, freedom, life expectancy and affluence. They are among the greatest achievements of human civilization and are to be defended and cherished. But they do not and cannot answer the three questions every reflective individual will ask at some time in his or her life: Who am I? Why am I here? How then shall I live? These are questions to which the answer is prescriptive not descriptive, substantive not procedural. The result is that the twenty-first century has left us with a maximum of choice and a minimum of meaning.”

Christmas both celebrates and exploits the Western World’s desire to enhance its own affluence. From Advent to Epiphany our senses shall be assaulted; fostering the lie that this season of good will is more to do with consumption rather than conviction, getting rather than giving, gravitas sacrificed on the altar of glamour and glitz.

The four Sundays of December will therefore be set aside to focus on meaning. In other words, the theological significance of the Bethlehem event as it relates to the task of challenging what Sacks would later in his book refer to as “the empty, surrogate deities” of our present age. Things that in essence swap meaning for merry-making!

You are welcome to join us each Sunday evening of Advent at 8 p.m. in the Church.

Sunday 29th November 2015

Sunday 6th December 2015

Sunday 13th December 2015

Sunday 20th December 2015

ADVENT AT ORCHARDHILL

Sunday 29th November 2015 - 1st Sunday in Advent

Sunday 6th December 2015 - Holy Communion

Sunday 13th December 2015 - Christmas Cantata from the Choir

Sunday 20th December 2015 - Nativity Service

At 10.30 am in the church

Thursday 4th February 2016

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: ORCHARDHILL

A Discussion "On Being Connected to One Another"

Following last year's successful evening of discussion prompted by TED talks we will repeat the experiment this year. If you are new to TED, it is a non-profit organisation devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short powerful on-line talks. Some of these talks have been viewed by millions of people across the world. The two talks we will watch together are highlighted below.



Why would God create a Tsunami?

Rev. Tom Honey is Canon Pastor of Exeter Cathedral, and is unafraid to take on some of religion's tougher issues. In the days following the tragic South Asian tsunami of 2004, the Rev. Tom Honey pondered the question, "How could a loving God have done this?" Here is his answer.

The Power of Vulnerability

Brené Brown studies human connection – our ability to empathize, belong and love. In a poignant, funny talk, she shares a deep insight from her research, one that sent her on a personal quest to know herself as well as to understand humanity. A talk to share. Voted one of the best of TED talks of all time.



A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Thursday 11th February 2016

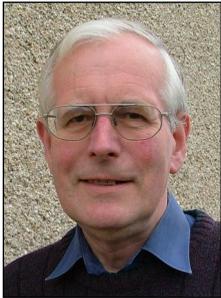
7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

Speaker: Rev. Iain Whyte, BA; BD; STM; PhD

Honorary Post Doctoral Fellow, Diaspora Studies, University of Edinburgh

Lecture: "Faith, Fiction and History: How Can We Deal with our Roots?"



Hegel's famous statement *The one thing we learn about History is that we learn nothing from History* seems all too true, given much of the current ecclesiastical, political, and international scene. But we can challenge that, if we neither ignore how history has shaped us nor cling to the fiction of 'objective' history. This lecture will explore how history can be a tool to manipulate the interests of the present, and how a romantic or static view of Biblical history can be very unhelpful to the life of faith and witness.

We cannot escape our history by digging our heads in the sand. The courage of the Biblical prophets and Jesus' own creative use of history can be tools of liberation. Honestly faced, history can also be a tool for healing and even reconciliation. If we have the courage to accept and examine our roots openly, we can find ways of celebrating them, individually, in communities, and in nations.

Iain Whyte graduated from Oxford in 1963 with a BA in Modern History, specialising in *Slavery and Secession in the American South*. After studying theology at Glasgow University and being licensed and then ordained in the Church of Scotland he went to West Africa to work with the Church in Ghana. He has worked in two parishes in Paisley and Coatbridge, been Chaplain to the University of St Andrews in the 1980s and the University of Edinburgh in the 1990s during which time he went back to his history roots in undertaking a PhD on Scotland's involvement in the abolition of slavery. A long time activist in human rights and African issues, he was National Secretary for Christian Aid in Scotland. In retirement he has written several books on slavery and abolition and served as President of the Scottish Church History Society.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Thursday 3rd March 2016

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: ORCHARDHILL

Speaker: Margaret Webb, BSc; Dip Ed; Dip Counselling

Lecture: "Tell Me The Old, Old Story – Where Christian Spirituality and Psychotherapy Converge"



Many of us enjoy hearing others tell a good story. But what about the stories we tell to ourselves? In this talk Margaret uses themes from Christian Spirituality and theories from Transactional Analysis psychotherapy to explore how the nature of the stories we tell to ourselves in the privacy of our own minds will ultimately determine our capacity to live life in all its fullness.

Margaret qualified as a secondary school teacher and taught for many years. In 1995 she was accepted to train as a counsellor at the Tom Allan Centre, then run by the Board of Social Responsibility of the Church of Scotland. On completing her training she worked as a volunteer counsellor and supervisor. In 1999 Margaret embarked on a 4 year training course in Transactional Analysis psychotherapy. In 2004 she joined a Primary Care Mental Health Team in treating people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties. Now as a UKCP registered psychotherapist she has a private practice in Glasgow.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Thursday 10th March 2016

7.30 pm for 8 pm

VENUE: CAIRNS

Speaker: Prof. Stuart K. Monro, BSc, PhD

Geologist and former Scientific Director of Our Dynamic Earth

Lecture: "A Geologist Reflects..."



As a geologist for nigh on 45 years and having seen the way scientific thinking has moved on in my lifetime, I'm sometimes prone to thinking that what I hear on a Sunday morning from the pulpit is pretty much what I would have heard as a child. This causes me to pose the question, "Has theology moved on at the same pace?" I find it disturbing that "literalism" is still prevalent, particularly among the laity.

Confronted with the concept of "deep time" as uncovered by James Hutton in 1788 and that of evolution by Natural Selection proposed by Charles Darwin, how should theology respond? Do we have a law of unintended consequences where many ideas are so embedded in the Christian culture that they become increasingly difficult to break away from? Do we need a new reformation? These ethical and rather nebulous concepts need to be seen against a background of REAL issues facing Society today; the dynamic nature of the world we live in as exemplified by the Nepali earthquake and the Eyjafjallajökull eruption, issues around climate change and how we use finite natural resources, especially food for an ever-growing population. Do we want to have two cultures in our Society or can science and theology move closer together? Discuss...

Stuart Monro graduated from Aberdeen University with a first class honours degree in Geology. He joined the British Geological Survey (BGS) as a geologist in 1970 and completed a part-time PhD at Edinburgh University in 1982. He was seconded to help set up Our Dynamic Earth in 1996 and remained as Scientific Director there till he retired in October 2014. Stuart has been involved in university governance and in the use government makes of scientific evidence.

Stuart is an elder at Fairmilehead Parish Church in Edinburgh and is keen on raising debate on the interaction of science and theology.

A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

Journey Through Holy Week at Cairns

"A Telling Truth"

When it comes to historical certainty our Christian convictions rely on the testimony of others. Evidence confirms that a body of people, broken by the events of Good Friday, were in time able to create a worldwide spiritual movement that would forever trace its origins to a cross and garden beyond a city wall. Something very profound changed the lives of these disciples; some significant spark ignited a new life force that would eventually bring hope out of despair, light out of darkness and even life out of death.

During Holy Week we shall reflect on the experience of others, both ancient and modern. Given a variety of testimony, hopefully we will also find ourselves drawn to an Easter truth found only in the telling.

Each Evening

Sunday 20th March 2016

through to

Saturday 26th March 2016

at 8 p.m.

in the Church

Easter Day Celebrations

Sunday 27th March 2016

On Preaching Brae, Barloch Moor at 7 a.m.

Followed by Breakaast at St. Andrew's

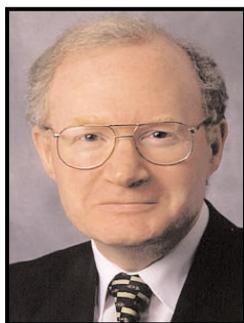
And in the Church at 10.45 a.m.

Advance Notice: Thinking Allowed Session 2016/2017
Thursday 27th October 2016 **7.30 pm for 8 pm**

VENUE: CAIRNS

Speaker: Prof. Kenneth McColl, MD; FRCP; F MedSci; FRSE

Lecture: "How Medical Science Makes Progress – and what about the Church?"



In his lecture Prof. McColl will describe the remarkable advances which have occurred in our understanding and treatment of gastrointestinal disorders over the past 50 years as well as the underlying thought processes by which these have come about. The reasons for the persistence of gastrointestinal symptoms, despite curing the diseases causing them, will also be addressed.

He will also ask whether there is a place for the inquiring scientific mind within the church as well as whether there is a place for the church within modern medicine.

Kenneth is a consultant physician in the NHS and Professor of Gastroenterology in the University of Glasgow. In addition to his clinical work he has undertaken extensive research into the causes of upper gastrointestinal disorders including ulcers, stomach cancer and oesophageal diseases

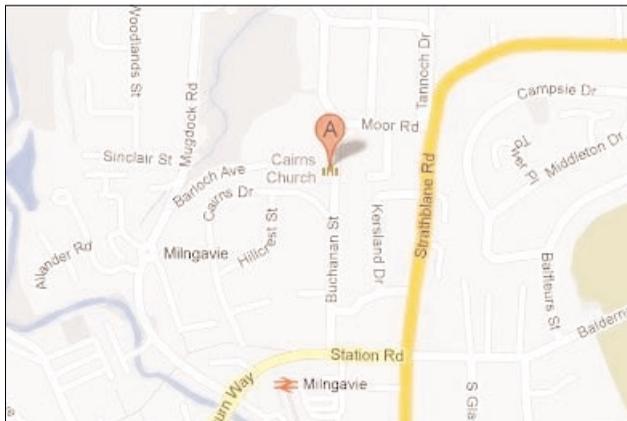
A glass of wine or soft drink will be served from 7.30 pm

For further information on any of the events please contact:
the Cairns Office at 11 Buchanan Street, Milngavie G62 8AW

Tel: 0141 956 4868

Email: office@cairnschurch.org.uk

or on the website: www.cairnschurch.org.uk



OR

Orchardhill Office at 12 Church Road, Giffnock, G46 6JR

Tel: 0141 638 3604

Email: secretary@orchardhill.org.uk

or on the website: www.orchardhill.org.uk

