



The Konvikt

The magazine of the
Anglican Church of Luxembourg

The English-Speaking Church Community (Anglican Chaplaincy) asbl

Dear Friends

“In Dei nomine feliciter” On his 70th birthday St Willibrord (658-739) wrote down the most important dates of his missionary activity in the margin of his calendar and concluded with that Latin phrase: “in the name of God I find happiness”. It seemed good to be reminded of this story in the Abbey Church in Echternach. Joan and I were there, along with a number of our congregation, to join our Bishops Geoffrey and David at the end of their pilgrimage with other Anglican and Old Catholic Bishops from Bonn to Echternach.

The service, at the end of a delightful congregational picnic and mini pilgrimage around the lake at Echternach was a real boost for Joan and I. Our summer holiday had been marred by a number of upsetting personal events, the first of which occurred when we had an accident on the motorway within a few hours of leaving Luxembourg. The bad news was that our car was written off, the good news was that Joan and I and Jack were able simply to open the doors and walk out of the car; physically unscathed, but rather shaken.

Of course our troubles were as nothing compared with the events in Lebanon, and the daily grind of suffering in so many parts of the world. By now it should be clear to everybody that military victory in the Middle East and elsewhere is not only unlikely, but also it can never be a way of making peace, however necessary it may be to contain violence in the short term. As many military and diplomatic experts commented during the 5th observance of the anniversary of 9/11, it is likely that the conflict which much of the world is now engaged in will last for decades, like the Cold War, or perhaps like the Thirty Years War in the 17th century, which had such a profound and long-lasting impact on our own region.

St Willibrord's mission to this part of Europe was undertaken in similarly turbulent times. He worked tirelessly and systematically, (which was new at that time), but what seems to have been even more important was his courage, patience and diplomacy, which gained him a hearing for the Gospel. His faith in God was transparent to all: lived what he believed, and his legacy is still with us.

People are still turning to God. About 40 new people have joined us since the beginning of this year. As a chaplaincy we are increasingly seeking to serve the needs of newcomers, and you can read about some of our latest initiatives in this issue of the Konvikt.

Whatever the weather, whatever dramas might be happening in the world or in your personal life, I hope that, like Willibrord, you too can find your happiness in God. “In Dei nomine feliciter”.

Chris Lyon

ANGLICAN – OLD CATHOLIC BISHOP'S PILGRIMAGE

Although some people had been uncharitably sceptical about the amount of actual walking that bishops might do in their three days, in fact our Bishops Geoffrey and David had a physically strenuous and spiritually rich time as they walked with their Old Catholic brother bishops on the route from Bonn to Echternach. They were walking to commemorate the the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Bonn Agreement, which brought the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic Church into full communion.

St Willibrord is the patron saint of the relationship between the two churches. He was born in Northumbria in 658 to recently converted parents, who sent him as a boy to the monastery in Ripon. There he received an education and a vocation to be a missionary monk. In 690 he came to the European mainland with 11 companions to bring the Christian faith to the people of the Frisians, who had so far resisted evangelisation.

In those days (and in these days too, if only we knew it) Christian mission was not just about getting individuals to convert. It had huge communal and political implications. Willibrord gained the respect and support of local rulers, who allowed him to receive gifts of land for abbeys and schools, which is how the Abbey of Echternach was founded. His mission extended over the whole territory of what are now the Benelux countries, as well as into present day Germany and France. He lived to an exceptionally ripe old age, dying in Echternach on the 7th of November 739 at the age of 81 and was buried in Echternach. His body lies in the crypt of the Abbey church, now called the Basilica, underneath the central altar.

So it was to this place that the bishops made their pilgrimage, and about a dozen members of our congregation joined them there, moving on from the Sunday School picnic and mini-pilgrimage around the lake. That had been a delightful occasion for the 25 or so who came to act out the different aspects of pilgrimage, including hospitality and footwashing, and the telling of the story of Willibrord. For the group who went on to the Basilica, the service was an unexpected joy as we joined with the Old Catholic congregations of Aachen, Bonn and Koblenz in a bilingual German/English Eucharist. We sang well known hymns and chants but it was refreshing and thought provoking to sing half the verses in a different language, sometimes to a slightly different rhythm. The chief celebrant and preacher was Archbishop Joris Vercammen of Utrecht, who paid a moving homage to his predecessor of 12 centuries ago and spoke, in English, of the role of the church in the 21st century. It was a memorable occasion, made all the more joyful by the warm hospitality and generous *vin d'honneur* offered by the clergy and parish team of the Basilica. We all hope we might do this again one day. CL

Church launches *Shrinking The Footprint* campaign

The Church of England marked World Environment Day (Monday 5 June) by taking a further step forward in the campaign to 'green' the Church. All parish churches are being invited to carry out an audit of current energy uses so that a benchmark can be established. Once the size of the current 'carbon footprint' of the Church has been assessed, the campaign will roll out initiatives to shrink that footprint.

In 2005, General Synod debated Sharing God's Planet (Report from the Church's Mission and Public Affairs Council) and, among other things, asked for a report on a measured reduction in energy consumption of the Church of England in 2008. The Synod called upon the whole Church to engage with the issues of climate change and energy use at every level in the Church.

The Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dr Richard Chartres, who heads up the Church's Shrinking the Footprint Campaign, strongly emphasized what was at stake during a Synod debate on the environment in February 2005:

"There is spiritual work and there is scrutiny of our own life together in our use of the gifts of creation. The Archbishop of Canterbury has several times pointed out that we have no right to appeal to our contemporaries on this issue if we have failed to put our own house in order."

To coincide with World Environment Day, all dioceses in England will have received an Audit Pack to undertake the required assessment of current levels and types of energy consumption in church buildings in every parish. Church people are invited to promote discussion of the issues locally too. The audit resources are to be issued electronically to keep paper consumption to a minimum.

The Campaign will be supported by a dedicated website,
www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org

Creating "The 40% Church of England"

Shrinking the Footprint is the Church of England's national strategic campaign to enable its members and institutions to address - in faith, practice, and mission - the pressing issue of climate change. It aims to challenge, encourage and support the whole body of the Church to shrink our environmental footprint to create the "The 40% Church" by:

- Making a difference now by following the Shrinking the Footprint path - simple steps to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources by 2008

- Planning to make a difference in the future through a growing series of strategic initiatives and partnerships which will change Church activities, structures and processes, producing sustainable reductions in the Church of England's carbon emissions to 40% of current levels by 2050 - "The 40% Church"

Shrinking the Footprint's first challenge to the Church is to lighten our energy load to *mitigate* our impact on future climate change. Measuring our Footprint - the Church of England National Energy Audit - is the first step. Later activities will look at issues such as biodiversity, waste and water management, transport and other contributing factors, and also at what steps we should take to *adapt* to climate changes already likely to occur in the next 20-40 years. Although the challenge is considerable both in scale and because of the timescales involved, by concerted and consistent action creating "The 40% Church" can be a reality - see Loaves and Fishes.

Why Shrinking the Footprint?

Your Carbon Footprint is a measure of the impact your activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide, and is a measure of the relative impact of your lifestyle on the world's resources. Shrink your footprint and you contribute to slowing down and then reducing global climate change. Calculate your own carbon footprint at www.myfootprint.org or www.carbonfootprint.com.

Archbishop of Canterbury and Chief Rabbis sign historic agreement

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams and the Chief Rabbis of Israel, Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar and Chief Rabbi Yonah Metzger signed a joint Declaration which sets out a framework for continuing dialogue between them. Dr Williams described the agreement as historic:

"This is a most significant step in developing better mutual understanding and trust between the Anglican Communion and the Chief Rabbinate and worldwide Judaism."

The Archbishop was supported in the meeting by the Coadjutor Bishop in Jerusalem, The Rt Revd Suheil Dawani and by Bishops Michael Jackson and John Stroyan. The Chief Rabbis were supported by Rabbi David Rosen and by the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations, Sir Jonathan Sacks. The Archbishop paid tribute to Sir Jonathan and to Bishop Suheil for their constructive roles in the

discussions leading to this meeting. The agreement adds to the growing network of bilateral and multilateral dialogues between religious leaders in the Middle East and in the wider world. This network of dialogue is a major contribution to a world in which religious faith is an increasingly important dimension of people's lives and of national policies.

At a reception to witness the signing of the joint declaration, attended by 70 leaders of the Jewish and Christian communities of England, the guests heard a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Council of Christians and Jews and by the Director of the Centre for the Study of Jewish Christian Relations. The presentations illustrated the range of new initiatives taken by these two complementary organisations to take forward relationship between Christian and Jewish communities in England. Dr Williams said that the agreement would help to advance inter faith relations: "This is a potentially fruitful development for relations between Christians and Jews in general and for the peoples of the Holy Land in particular. What we've agreed today will provide a framework within which both practical and sometimes challenging issues can be discussed on the basis of mutual trust and respect".

The Archbishop and the Chief Rabbis also agreed on the need for a renewed sense of urgency in the search for long term peace, justice and security in the Middle East in general and in Israel and the Palestinian territories in particular. The Archbishop and Chief Rabbis called for the greatest possible response to the need now for reconstruction and rebuilding both of the physical infrastructure and of the emotional and psychological relations of Christian, Jewish and Muslim believers in the region. Dr Williams said that the dialogue would make trust and cooperation easier to establish: "We have acknowledged the tensions that shadow the present situation particularly the ongoing tragic conflicts in the Holy Land. But our hope has rested very firmly on this; that without friendship and mutual confidence, without the ability to speak to one another candidly and lovingly, we shall never be in a position where our relationship can change things and challenge things and move the situation forward."

The Chief Rabbis emphasised the responsibility of religious leaders to do their utmost to ensure that religion is not abused for violent ends.

THE YOUNG ADULTS GROUP

Who are we?

Over the past few years, more and more 20-somethings and 30-somethings have become members of our congregation – and we're some of them!

The group was formed this year. We aimed to establish a network of regular members, allowing them to grow together through the exploration of Christian themes, with particular relevance to our common situation (age, location, lifestyle, beliefs, etc.). At the same time, it is important to us to provide an informal and welcoming setting for new young people who arrive at our church.

The mix of people attending is very fluid, as each of us is kept away by other commitments from time to time – we find that this helps us to be open to new ideas and to bring a fresh approach to each meeting.

What do we do?

We usually meet fortnightly (on a Tuesday or Wednesday from 7pm), with each evening based on a theme. We discuss the theme informally, then move onto any current issues or questions that may arise. Sometimes – depending on the mood of the evening – we sing a little, before ending the evening with prayer / a said service. We invariably share in wine and food – often takeaway – at the start of the evening.

Special Events

We are arranging a group trip to the **Taizé** community during the weekend of Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th September. We hope that this will be the first of a series of visits and 'special events' through the life of the group.

How do I get involved?

Details of meetings (location, name of host, contact number) are printed in the Sunday Service sheet, and are also on the website, so feel free to just turn up. You can also speak to Ian Kent (021 209 606) or Cherry Hooper (021 437 486) if you'd like more details – we don't bite!

Watch this space!

With the group in its infancy, we're looking forward to big developments in the months to come – and we'll be keeping Konvikt readers up to date with our progress. The group image may evolve over time (all suggestions for a new name gratefully considered!), however we remain joined in our shared experiences and our shared faith. After all, a YAG by any other name...

***“Dance of the Spirit:
The Seven Steps of Women’s Spirituality”***

by Maria Harris

“When in your life do you find you are most awake?”

“When are you least awake? “

“Are there moments or times in your life when you feel called to be awake to life in a deeper way than you are now?”

These questions are on the first page of a book I have been reading over the summer and they drew me into immediate wakefulness. Good questions, I thought.

The book is called ***“Dance of the Spirit: The Seven Steps of Women’s Spirituality”*** and the author is Maria Harris (1932-2005) who was an international religious education consultant who started out her professional life with the Sisters of St Joseph in New York and spent many years teaching music before becoming involved in the academic world of education and religious studies. Having taken further studies herself and worked in significant teaching posts, she received invitations to teach in numerous universities and academic institutions throughout the world. Her writings increasingly combined her lifetime interests in the aesthetic, justice in the political order, and spirituality.

As women we are very aware of the rhythms of life. Indeed these are inescapable and inexorable in their recycling, passing and changing. Some moments within these rhythms are celebrated joyfully – the big “O” birthdays, some of these with increasing curiosity as the adjoining numbers creep up. But these are chronological, linear moments. What this book offers is an awareness of a different rhythmic series of movements in womens’ spirituality. These movements do not go up and down like the steps of a ladder or staircase but these steps are much better imagined as steps in a dance, where there is movement backward and forward, turn and return, bending and bowing, circling and spiralling, and no need to finish or move on to the next step, except in our own good time, and God’s.

The steps are Awakening, Dis-Covering, Creating, Dwelling, Nourishing, Traditioning, Transforming and there is a chapter on each. Harris teaches women how to dance to the music of their own souls by recognising just where in this dance of life we are and by learning new spiritual steps which can transform our lives. We weave in and out of these steps depending on our life situations at any particular time. Dance of the Spirit helps us not to get lost in this web but to

discern that there is a path which we can tread with more certainty as we nourish our inner selves. The book offers more than just awareness and recognition but a guide as to what we can do with that awareness. It offers exercises and meditations which seem like rich fare for the soul – comfort and challenge.

The book is published by Bantam Books and is available through Amazon websites. ISBN 0-553-35306-3

Joan Lyon

Congratulations to Becky

Congratulations to Becky Ray-Timmins, who has been elected as President of the British Ladies' Club. The BLC plays a vital role in our community in integrating newcomers to Luxembourg, especially those with small children, providing practical help and information as well as a social dimension.

As Becky picks up her new role she lays down the job of editor of the Konvikt. This is the moment to thank her for her patience and skill over the last three years.

Babysitter / Childminder available

Experienced teenage babysitters/child-minders available for Friday and Saturday evenings, also during school holidays - please call or text Elizabeth on 021-384002 and Alexandra on 021-501103. We will mind your children while you do your shopping, go to the theatre or a party, or just want to have a quiet meal.

Animal Hotel

If you are looking for someone to look after your house pets while you are away on holiday, simply give us a call and we can help you out - for week-ends or over Hallowe'en. Be they large or small: dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, gerbils, mice, fish, etc., we can look after all of them. Just leave them (with their food supply) with us at our house and we will feed them, clean their cages, walk them (for dogs) and keep them happy while you are away. The Animal Hotel is run by three teenage sisters and you can contact us at 021-384002 or 021-501103 (text or call after 4:30 pm) or 397798 (home).

EMMAUS – THE WAY OF FAITH

INTRODUCTION

“*Emmaus – the way of faith*” is a programme which the Chaplains would like to introduce to the congregation over the next few years. The Emmaus course began its life in one parish church in the Church of England and has been widely used throughout the UK and in different parts of the world in churches of various traditions and denominations. It is rooted in an understanding of evangelism, nurture and discipleship modelled on the example of companionship as told in the story of the Emmaus road. (Luke 24: 13-35)

JOURNEY

It is our intention that this will become a major part of our church life together which will offer a way for all of us to explore our journey of faith and how together we can play our part in the building of the kingdom of God. One quotation by a former participant says: The wonderful teaching of *Emmaus* is that ‘God meets you where you are’. This is not a course which sets academic standards or offers moral messages but one which invites people into a journey of deeper discovery about their relationship with God.

PAIRING

Emmaus is an attractive programme partly because of the content of its courses and the way that they are structured but also because it takes the insight that most people grow in faith through relationship with others and makes that a central plank of its method. The implication of this for us is that as we launch the programme, we are looking not only for newcomers and enquirers to join the course but also for more mature and experienced Christians who are willing to be sponsors and who are ready to talk about their own journey with a person with whom they will be paired for the duration of the course.

It’s a course which helps us discover that being a Christian can also be enjoyable as people get to know each other and feel free to ask whatever questions might be buzzing round in their minds. We offer the outline below which gives an explanation of the content of the course.

Emmaus: The Way of Faith is a means of welcoming people into the Christian faith and the life of the Church. It understands that, for most people, coming to faith is a long process. This journey is encouraged by inviting groups of people - enquirers, new members as well as people who have been in the church for some time - to come together regularly to share and study.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAMME WORK?

This programme has three stages:

1. **CONTACT** – this stage is about orientating the congregation to the way in which the programme works. It is absolutely essential for the congregation's leadership to deal with this stage but it would be desirable for a wider group to be involved as well. The material is presented in a booklet called "**Contact**" which is a simple guide.

2. **NURTURE** – this second stage is the point at which the programme becomes visible to the congregation ("It's where the rubber hits the road!"). It offers a flexible 15-session course on Christian basics. A nurture group is made up of enquirers, newcomers and people who have been part of the church for some time and who are willing to learn more about sharing their faith. Some of these may become leaders of future Nurture courses.

The topics covered in the Nurture stage are:

Part 1: What Christians believe

- 1 Believing in God
- 2 We need God in our lives
- 3 The life and ministry of Jesus
- 4 The death and resurrection of Jesus
- 5 The Holy Spirit
- 6 Becoming a Christian

Part 2: How Christians grow

- 7 Learning to pray
- 8 Reading the Bible
- 9 Belonging to the Church
- 10 Sharing Holy Communion

Part 3: Living the Christian life

- 11 Living God's way
- 12 Serving the Lord
- 13 Your money and your life
- 14 Learning to love
- 15 Sharing the faith

GROWTH – this stage offers something for everyone who wants to keep learning about and deepening their faith and their relationship with God. Within this stage are 15 short courses for groups concerning different aspects of the Christian faith. Each course lasts between 3 and 5 sessions.

If you would like to know more, please speak to the Chaplains.

The Hitch-hiker's guide.

On the island of Kaua'i we picked up a hitchhiker.

He looked wild and ragged in old shorts and tee shirt, with long hair and a flowing beard and very few teeth. He was charming and intelligent, even knew where Luxembourg was! He thanked us profusely for stopping for him.

He was camping on the beach, he told us. I asked where he lived. He didn't answer for a while.

" Bin on Kaua'i 7 years, bin homeless til November last year- tough when it rains and it's cold at night and you're alone."

We warmed to him as he related how he found work on the black recently as a carpenter's help.

"Lucky they took me on" he said, "at age 65".

"But I can live like a king for 2 weeks on social security when I'm not working!"

He looked happy, healthy and tanned. He was just going up to Princeville a few miles up the road, he told us, to get himself a coffee from the machine at the shops.

"Usually where I camp, I can get a coffee from other campers, but there's no-one else there now." he said rather disconsolately."

" I gotta lift other day, and the guy started quoting the Bible at me."

We nodded sagely at this revelation. One of the things which strikes visitors to the USA most is the level of religiosity.

"Told me I should get me a job and then I wouldn't be like I am."

The driver who had picked him up was a preacher – they're two-a-penny in the USA and the poor man had paid for his ride by being lectured on how he should get a job, clean himself up, give up this that and the other and become "respectable."

"But I know the Bible better'n him and I quoted him back good."

As we let our guest out and he gratefully waved we were reminded of a long-haired itinerant with flowing beard who had trained as a carpenter long ago and did not follow that profession, but wandered in the land, living off the charity of his fellow men and disputing with Pharisees.

Graham Chambers

Back to Sunday School

Children's activities in crèche and Sunday school have been continuing throughout the summer, and from 10 September onwards the full range of Sunday school classes will be on offer again. We changed the age groups slightly towards the end of last year, to try if possible to ensure evenly-sized classes. The groups are now 3+ to 5, 6 to 8, and 9 upwards. The 0 to 3+ age group is catered for in the crèche, and children usually decide for themselves – sometimes with help from parents or leaders – when they are too grown-up for crèche and want to start Sunday school.

If children are newcomers or feel a bit uncertain about joining the group, parents are always welcome to stay with them in crèche or Sunday school until they feel more confident. Each Sunday school group has a leader and a helper, all of whom have done child protection training.

What we do in Sunday school varies according to the theme for the day and the children who are there, but on a typical Sunday we might start with an opening activity, singing or discussion, followed by a Bible reading or suitably adapted story for younger children. Then we might think about what we learned from the story and how to apply this in our own lives, and back this up with art or craft work or drama, writing, puzzles or more in-depth discussion as appropriate for the age and interests of the children. This autumn the main topics will be trust and hope and we will be looking at the lives of some ordinary people in the Bible, (Ruth and Naomi, Job, Queen Esther, some of the disciples, blind Bartimaeus) who face and make some extraordinary decisions. Although these stories are about individuals the material reminds us that we although we are each on individual journeys of faith, we are a community and on this journey together.

If you would like to register your child in Sunday school, please ask Joan or one of the Sunday school leaders for a registration form.

"Finding Sanctuary

Monastic Steps for Everyday Life"

by Abbot Christopher Jamison

(Published in 2006 by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, ISBN 0-297-85132-2)

I recently received a surprise parcel from a friend. The best presents are often those unexpected, unbirthday gifts which you didn't even know existed and yet turn out to be just what you wanted.

"Finding Sanctuary" is a book that follows on from a series called "The Monastery", shown in 2005 on BBC2. The TV programme chronicled the progress of 5 ordinary men who spent 6 weeks experiencing the monastic way of life at Worth Abbey. In the book Abbot Jamison explains how, even without spending time in a monastery, we can still find sanctuary. Despite our busy everyday lives, he argues, by following step by step the discipline of St Benedict a place of sanctuary can be attained and we can embark on an educative process that will help us to see the whole of life in a different way. He details the steps needed and offers specific, practical suggestions for taking this idea further, indicating websites to consult and books to read. Some may see a monastic way of life as a narrow, shuttered existence, cut off from the outside world, where monks have shrunk back into their own private, inner spirituality, but this book emphasises openness to others and to the world, underlines the importance of community and makes an interesting distinction between spirituality and religion.

Not having seen the TV series, I came completely fresh to this thought-provoking book and was impressed by Abbot Jamison's wisdom, insight and breadth of scope. For those who are unsure of what they believe as well as for those with a firm faith, "Finding Sanctuary" makes inspiring reading. The perceptiveness of that special friend of mine - who recognised the book as being just what I needed at this juncture in my life and who went to the trouble of buying it and dispatching it to me - was perhaps also something God given.

Rupert steps down from Church Fair role

Only a few weeks after hearing the gratitude of the Church Council for his morale boosting co-ordination of this year's Church Fair, Rupert Birch has reluctantly had to step down from this role because of a change in work commitments which sees him taking on a completely new area of responsibility.. The Council heard the news with real regret at their last meeting. The search is on for a new Church fair co-ordinator. Read Rupert's account of this year's fair on page 17. Our best wishes for his success in a new post.

Calling Mums, Tinies and Toddlers - a date for your diary

When I was a much younger mum than I am now, I experienced a number of house moves when my children were under school age. Each time I moved I found a local church and discovered a very welcoming base which offered support and friendship.

Luxembourg is a place of constant movement and it would be good if we, as a church community, could offer not only a place where mums can get together and talk (perhaps about other things besides their offspring) and their offspring could make friends, but a place where we can spend a short time in prayer, perhaps teach the tinies some songs and have some reflection on our faith journeys.

A group of mums and little ones met to talk about this on 12 September and agreed that there is certainly a demand for this kind of gathering. The tinies obviously enjoyed each other's company and had fun with some shared toys.

We have agreed to meet on a weekly basis with the first few meetings at the Vicarage. Meetings will probably be on alternate Mondays and Wednesdays but a timetable will be available soon. By November we hope to be able to use a room in the Commune Hall in Schuttrange which is at the moment being redecorated and fitted out as a place for playgroups to meet – thank you to Bea Murphy for finding out about this and pursuing this idea. Another plan is to hold a monthly Pram Service – details to follow.

All mums, tinies and toddlers are warmly invited to the next meeting which will be on Wednesday 27 September at 10 am. Any interested friends would also be very welcome (space permitting!) as we hope that this will be an open, ecumenical group.

Joan Lyon

Ian joins Chaplaincy Council

Ian Kent has accepted an invitation by the Chaplaincy Council to join them as a co-opted member for one year. At the next AGM he will be eligible to stand for election to fill the post for a further two years. Ian is an accountant and committed church musician, singing regularly in our choir and occasionally playing the organ when time allows.

What is your favourite hymn?

BBC Radio 4 recently asked people to nominate their favourite hymn¹. This, together with a recent discussion on hymns in the Church Council, set me thinking firstly, that the idea of a favourite hymn is pretty silly, because there are all sorts of good hymns for different occasions, and secondly that since many people seem to have strong views about hymns, it might be interesting to have a slot in the Konvikt magazine for people to write about hymns that they like and why they like them.

To start off this correspondence, there is a hymn that is not necessarily my favourite, but I think it deserves to be better known. We have never sung it in our church because it is not in either of the hymn books we use. I first came across it when visiting our daughter in Littlemore, Oxford. The hymn book used in her local church is Kevin Mayhew's *Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New*, and this one (No 239) was I think the second hymn in a normal Sunday Eucharist service. It seemed to have no particular relevance to that day's theme, but I thought at the time that it would be a wonderful hymn for a funeral. I thought of it again when my mother died in May this year, and included it in the memorial service we held for her in the church in Woodmancote, Sussex, where she used to be a regular worshipper. The congregation included many of the choir and regulars in that little church (average age about 75), and afterwards they told me how much they had enjoyed singing that hymn although they had never heard it before, and how appropriate they thought it was. It helps that it has a familiar tune that is enjoyable to sing, the theme from the second (slow) movement of Dvorak's New World Symphony.

The words are by Michael Forster, who according to his website writes satirical verse as well as hymns, and I appreciate the way he acknowledges the pain of separation while conveying a positive and hopeful message. There is another version, using the same tune, on the Church Music website with words by William Arms Fisher and Ken Bible (sic) (described on the website as 'very emotional').

The words we sang are as follows:

*Going home, moving on / through God's open door,
hush my soul, have no fear / Christ has gone before.*

*Parting hurts, love protests, / pain is not denied;
yet in Christ, life and hope / span the great divide.*

*Going home, moving on / through God's open door,
hush my soul, have no fear / Christ has gone before, / Christ has gone before.*

¹ The winner of this contest was 'Dear Lord and father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways'

*No more guilt, no more fear / all the past is healed,
broken dreams now restored, / perfect grace revealed.
Christ has died, Christ is ris'n, / Christ will come again.
Death destroyed, life restored, / love alone shall reign.
Going home, moving on / through God's open door,
hush my soul, have no fear / Christ has gone before, / Christ has gone before.*

Why not send your thoughts on hymns that you like to the Konvikt editor?

Philippa Seymour

Junior Choir Seeks Members

This is for any girls and boys aged nine and over who like humming and singing. How about getting together to sing in a Junior Church Choir?

As a first step, we would aim to learn a few Christmas carols to sing at the Family Carol Service in December. There would be practices once a week, probably at Church on Sunday mornings at 10.15 for half an hour.

You need to be able to read words fluently, and it helps if you can also read music, but that's not essential. A sense of pitch is quite important. You can test yourself by getting someone musical to play or sing a note, and then seeing if you can hum it straight off. The rest is just practice.

To find out more, speak to a member of the Choir, ring the singing answerphone on 35 90 97 or write to eseymour@pt.lu.

Chaplain's day off becomes Friday

Because the Chaplain teaches religion at the European School his day off depends on his timetable, which changes every year. This year he has no classes on Fridays, so this has become his day off. This also happens to be the Assistant Chaplain's day off, so at the end of a difficult summer (see *Dear Friends*), there is another ray of sunshine, the chance to have time off together.

The office will continue to be staffed on Friday mornings by the Administrative Assistant, Elaine Birch.

This year's Church Fair: a personal reflection

Several months have now passed since this year's Church Fair so I think it's a good time to look back and share with you my experiences from organizing the event.

Firstly, we were blessed again this year with good weather. For those of you who know me, this was my biggest doubt about organizing the whole event, and probably the only thing we couldn't really control. Worse, there is no realistic wet weather contingency plan ! So, I can tell you, when the forecast for the weekend of the Fair was for good weather I was mightily relieved and felt even better when the forecast turned out to be accurate.

We are also lucky to be able to have such a great venue as Chris & Anna Vaudrey's garden in which to host the fair. It provides such a splendid backdrop. Many thanks to them for hosting us again this year and presenting the garden in such a lovely condition. I think they too were happy to see the sun shine for the Fair itself and for the preceding week.

I must also personally thank everyone who helped in any capacity to make the Fair the success it was this year. I felt my role was more of a coordinator, most of you (the stall holders and event organizers) did the organization, for which I was extremely grateful. I very much appreciated your help, your advice and suggestions based on your previous experiences. I thought our teamwork and patience in extremely hot conditions was outstanding for which we should feel justifiably proud. Just one final word of thanks to everyone for answering the emails and telephone calls promptly; it made the coordination so much easier, particularly as I was traveling for a good proportion of the time.

Finally, I would like to thank our sponsors this year: CITCO, KPMG, LuxGSM and FAST who, with their donations, enabled us to cover the costs of providing many of the attractions.

The whole experience of organizing and coordinating the Church Fair left me with very fond memories, I felt it was truly rewarding and I trust with many new friends. Make no mistake though, it is hard work, it does require a lot of commitment and dedication both in the months leading up to, and for the weekend of the Fair itself. Unfortunately, due to new work commitments, I will not be able to organize the Church Fair in 2007. So, are there any volunteers out there who would relish this challenge ?

And what about the future ? I think we have a wonderful event with wonderful people and it is well established on the Luxembourg social calendar. Nevertheless, we must continue to try new things to complement the more established attractions. Your ideas are welcome !

Rupert Birch

SUNDAY SERVICES

The normal pattern of Sunday worship is:

9.30am Holy Communion (said)

11.00am Holy Communion (sung with hymns)

at the 11.00 am service there is always a crèche and activities for children

1st Sunday of the month (except January and August)

6.30pm Choral Evensong

Harvest Thanksgiving service

Sunday 8th October

Contributions of produce, especially non-perishable items, gratefully received.

A footnote in Church History

David Heal is writing a history of our chaplaincy. He writes with a special request:

"As a result of the mission here in 1978, two church members were, apparently, made companions of the Society of St. Francis. At least that is what is recorded in Konvikt for that time.

However, no names are given and I would like to have them to add to the church history.

Does anyone know who they were? Please let me know if you do by emailing the Church Office.

David Heal"

Hola from the Dominican Republic!

A letter from Adam Mitchell

Dear sponsors,

I arrived safe and sound two weeks ago.

I spent the first week in Santo Domingo, the capital, learning spanish and getting accustomed to the Dominican way of life. I went to spanish lessons for three days, 8hrs a days, but there's no way I learnt to speak Spanish in three days! I can manage the present tense enough to hold small conversations - that's if I can understand what the locals are saying!

Spending the week with a dominican family allowed me to understand what Dominican life is like and although I was separated from the other volunteers, being in the company of three dominican girls of my age took my mind off the luxury in which the other volunteers were living!

I met the other volunteers on my first day here but they are all together, staying in a guest house, so I rarely see them, but I plan to meet up with them this weekend.

I am now staying with a lady in Barahona 3 hrs away from the capital further down the southern coast. I have been working temporarily in a field preparing it for the cultivation of onions. Next week I expect I will be building waterways of some sort.

On Monday another volunteer arrives in Barahona and will be working with me.

It's very hot and sticky so the cold showers here are a blessing. Most days it rains a bit. What I wasn't expecting was that all toilet paper goes in the bin and not down the toilet! Unhygienic or what? I also didn't expect the girls to pounce at the prospect of being my girlfriend (as soon as they've politely checked that I don't have one): what a difference that makes!

The public transport around here is on 'motoconchos' - motorbikes. There are as many bikes as there are cars, if not more. I'm surprised there aren't more accidents on the road as the standard of driving over here is crazy and motorbike helmets are rarely seen.

I have now more or less settled in here in Barahona and will most likely go back to Santo Domingo for the weekend. I'm enjoying it so far despite the hard work, and hope to be mistaken for a Dominican when I return home.

Bye for now,

Adam

Adam had applied to our Chaplaincy for sponsorship and with the approval of the Chaplaincy Council, Adam received some support for his place on the project from our Charities Committee.

A Communiqué from the Anglican/Al-Azhar dialogue committee

The Joint Committee, which is composed of a delegation from the Anglican Communion and from the Permanent Committee of al-Azhar al-Sharif for Dialogue with the Monotheistic Religions, held its fifth annual meeting in Al-Azhar on 2-3 September 2006 which corresponds to 9-10 Sha'aban 1427. This was held in accord with the agreement signed at Lambeth Palace on 30 January 2002 by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. We were very conscious that our meeting was being held in a time of particular political tension in the Middle East in view of the current turmoil involving the people of the region and also the tense situation in many Western countries arising out of a fear of terrorism. This has informed our discussion at this meeting. We were honoured by the participation of the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Mohamed Sayed Tantawy.

The theme of our dialogue in 2006 has been 'Freedom of Religion and Respect for Sacred Religious Values'. The subject was chosen in view of the recent controversy about the representation of the Prophet Muhammad in cartoon format and also attacks on sacred Christian symbols. The Joint Committee heard and discussed the following papers:

- *The Freedom of Expression and the Respect of the Religious Sites (Sheikh Omar El Deeb)
- * Freedom of Expression and the Respect of Holy Beliefs (Sheikh Ibrahim Atta Al-Fayoumy)
- * Freedom of Expression and Sacred Religious Values: a Christian (Anglican) perspective (Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali)
- * Representing Jesus Christ: A Christian perspective in dialogue with Islam (Mrs Clare Amos)

All members of the Committee affirmed that the teaching of the Qur'an and Islam encourages freedom of expression, with limitation to this freedom in respect of the beliefs and sacred values of all people. Similarly the Bible and Christian tradition also teach that our freedom is restricted due to respect for others. We noted however that the European Convention on Human Rights both promotes the right to freedom of expression but also recognises that it is at times necessarily restricted for the good of the wider community. We also referred to the recent legislation in the United Kingdom which prohibits incitement to religious hatred. We explored together the circumstances in which it might be right for limitations on the freedom of expression to apply, and all accepted that there are issues which affect people where sensitivity is clearly needed, which negatively affect people's feelings and beliefs.

1. We recommend that the United Nations take steps to draw up a convention regarding Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which in a way similar to Article 10.2 of the European Convention, would set out the conditions under which there can be restrictions in certain circumstances on the freedoms mentioned in Article 19, such as matters of public order, the protection of health, and the reputation or the rights of others.
2. The members of the Committee on both sides affirmed the right to comprehensive religious freedom, because there is no compulsion in religion, as our religious traditions teach.
3. Members of the Committee reaffirmed the initial agreement between Al-Azhar and the Anglican Communion which had been signed in January 2002 and the work of the Joint Committee so far. At this meeting we committed ourselves to ensuring the continuing implementation of the recommendations in our previous communiqués, especially on matters such as the need to remove misconceptions about our faiths. We welcomed the publication of the book 'Distorted Images', which seeks to correct misconceptions of both religions, which records the papers presented at our meeting in 2004.
4. The Committee also spent time on affirming the importance of developing the programme of scholarly exchange between Muslim scholars and students from Al-Azhar and Anglican Christian scholars and students from Britain, which had been formally agreed at our previous meeting in September 2005, and which is designed to further understanding by younger Christian and Muslim scholars of the faith of the other community. The Committee committed itself to developing and broadening this process of exchange.
5. Members of the committee expressed their sorrow for the current situation in the Palestinian territories. We appeal to the international community to work towards changing the situation for the better. Recent events in the Middle East have demonstrated the importance of working to resolve the conflict in Israel/Palestine. Members of the Committee affirm the right of all people in the region to live in peace and security.
6. The Committee expressed its deep sorrow at the extensive violence and destruction in the region, especially Lebanon, a country which had rebuilt itself after civil war. As our agreement in 2002 stated we encourage religious leaders to use their influence for the purpose of reconciliation and peace-making.

7. We appeal to the international community to support the governments of Iraq and Afghanistan to achieve national unity, total independence and live peacefully without external interference.

We agreed that the Joint Committee should meet again in autumn 2007 in London.

Signed

Sheikh Omar El-Deeb - Chair Al Azhar Dialogue Committee
Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali - Bishop of Rochester
Sheikh Ibrahim Al Fayoumi
Rt Revd Mouneer H Anis - Bishop of Egypt
Sheikh Taha Abu Krisha
Dr Yvonne Haddad
Mr Abdullah El Nagar
Mrs Clare Amos

When bad news happens.....

This was the topic discussed at a meeting in the Vicarage led by Chris Lyon on Tuesday 30 May 2006. Despite its rather gloomy title the meeting drew 13 people with a number of apologies from people who would like to have come but were unable to attend on that particular occasion.

The issue of “not knowing what to say” seemed to be a frequent hindrance to people making contact with those who had been the recipients of bad news. Very few of us have received training in this area but the importance of our presence or a phone call must not be underestimated. The advice given in the paper and the discussion which followed was very helpful.

The meeting also triggered the need for people to think about what we ourselves would like to happen in the event of sudden death in Luxembourg and what information it would be useful for relatives to have. This practical aspect, although obviously not always something we like to dwell on, was a very important part of this useful discussion evening.

If anyone would like to discuss this further or you would like a repeat evening, please speak to Chris.

JL

Dare we mention Christmas? Already?

It's not that far away but for those for whom the prospect of thinking up exciting Christmas presents for the same people every year is anything but exciting, then this is perhaps an easier and more meaningful option.

Look up www.christian.org.uk and click on Present Aid. There you can buy some fish, a few sheep, mosquito nets for a village and even several cans of worms to enrich farming soil and send them as Christmas presents. It's good to see that opening a can of worms is a better option than keeping the lid on!

The person to whom you want to send a present receives a card from Christian Aid.

The card says something like: "I've bought you a goat for Christmas...but I've sent it to someone who needs it more than you".

Thanks to your donation, Christian Aid then sends your chosen item to those who need these basic items of life in order to survive and to help them develop their lives.

A Christian Aid catalogue of gifts is included in the recent edition of the "European Anglican" which is available at the back of the church.

Check out www.oxfamunwrapped.com for a similar scheme.

Baptisms: June – September 2006

Eleanor Kate Wolseley	25.06.06
Benedict Paul Thorogood	9.07.06
Joshua Marc Thorogood	9.07.06
Caroline Ines Morris	9.07.06
Julia Elise Morris	9.07.06
Alexander Philip Barclay	26.08.06
Alexandre Thomas Paul Rogers	10.09.06
Thomas Christopher Green	10.09.06
Max Benjamin Green	10.09.06
Amelia Scarlett Green	10.09.06

Mission group in India still reeling from legal action

New Delhi (ENI). A six month legal battle against the Emmanuel Mission has financially devastated the work of the Protestant group, even though the high court in the Indian state of Rajasthan lifted restrictions and allowed it to resume its work, says a mission founder. "It is true that the damage to the ministries is irreparable by us," said M.A. Thomas, a founder of the Hopegivers International group, which supports the mission. He was quoted on the Web site www.newsblaze.com at the end of August. "Only God can heal it. Whatever we may be able to do, it would be only patchwork. But when God does it, it will be totally new.", *ENI-06-0720*

Russian Orthodox groups protest Madonna's Moscow concert

Moscow (ENI). Ultraconservative Russian Orthodox organizations have declared a "holy war" against pop singer Madonna and demanded that religiously provocative songs be pulled from her "Confessions" tour Moscow concert. Ahead of the 12 September concert, dozens of protesters last week called the singer a witch, then stabbed and trampled on a poster of her. They objected in particular to her performing in a crown of thorns in a pose imitating Jesus' crucifixion. Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders across Europe have also greeted Madonna's tour with outrage. *ENI-06-0723*

Middle East is most pressing global issue says world church leader

Geneva (ENI). The Middle East is the most pressing global issue today, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, has told the organization's main governing body, asserting that church and religious bodies can help attain a solution there. Kobia was speaking on the second day of the WCC's central committee as it met to navigate policy until the next general assembly of the world's largest grouping of churches meets in about seven years. *ENI-06-0690*

Turkish peacekeepers in Lebanon unacceptable says church leader

Geneva (ENI). A top Armenian church leader in Lebanon has told the United Nations that the participation of Turkish forces as part of the UN peacekeepers in the southern part of Lebanon is "morally unacceptable". "How can a state play a peacekeeping role when the culture of massacre and the ruthless killing of innocent women and children are part of its political culture?" Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Apostolic Church wrote in a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. *ENI-06-0692*

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