



THINKING
ALLOWED

**PROGRAMME OF LECTURES AND EVENTS
2007 – 2008**

Cairns Church, Buchanan Street, Milngavie

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Christianity in the modern world is often criticised; indeed, sometimes it is ridiculed because of its apparent irrelevancy. The man or woman in the street seems to reject its message, seeing it as too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly use. “Pie in the sky when you die”, they say, “but what of now; what of the issues that confront and challenge us today?”

I suppose they mean the so called ‘war on terror’, environmental disintegration, the constant reminder of dis-ease in the life of the individual, or indeed, the sustained critique of all religion by so many within the secular community – be it in the world of science or the arts.

This year’s “Thinking Allowed” series, once again, seeks to shift the balance in favour of a contemporary Christianity that is both creative and constructive. As you can see, we have a range of distinguished speakers, all with international reputations, and all quite able to address the issues of our age and provide what we hope will be challenging and uplifting evenings.

I look forward to seeing you at this year’s “Thinking Allowed” series.

Rev. Andrew Frater
Minister, Cairns Church

Wednesday 31st October 2007

7.30 pm for 8 pm

Speaker: Professor David Fergusson, Head of the School of Divinity, New College,
University of Edinburgh

Lecture: "Religion and Its Contemporary Critics"

A response to recent popular material roundly attacking religion by authors such as Dawkins, Dennett and Hitchens



Educated in philosophy and theology, David Fergusson worked for several years as a parish minister in the Church of Scotland. Before returning to Edinburgh to his present position, he was Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Aberdeen from 1990-2000. His research interests include issues in Christian doctrine, theological ethics and the history of Reformed theology, especially in its Scottish context. He has served as President of the Society for the Study of Theology (2000-2002) and is a director and editorial board member of the Scottish Journal of Theology. He has delivered the Cunningham Lectures in Edinburgh (1996), the Bampton Lectures in Oxford (2001) and has been invited to give the Warfield Lectures in Princeton and the Gifford Lectures in Glasgow (2008). He has also lectured in USA, Korea and Japan. Currently, he is serving as chair of the UK Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS).

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

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. This is the eighth such event.

Speaker: Professor Phil Hanlon, Professor of Public Health, University of Glasgow

Lecture: "How do we combat the dis-eases of the 21st Century?"

The new epidemics of the 21st Century include depression, suicide, alcohol-related harm, sexually transmitted infection and obesity. Why should these problems erupt with such force at a time of so much prosperity? Could it be that the affluence of our modern world with its associated individualism, consumerism and inequality is driving the rise in these diseases? What are the root causes? Do we need to look deeply at how we understand our own humanity if we are to find more fundamental solutions?



Following a period when he gained clinical experience in adult medicine and general practice, Phil Hanlon took up a research post with the Medical Research Council in the Gambia, West Africa. On returning to the UK he completed a period of training in public health after which he was appointed to the post of Director of Health Promotion with The Greater Glasgow Health Board. In 1994 Phil moved to become a Senior Lecturer in Public Health at the University of Glasgow and was promoted to Professor in 1999. Between January 2001 and April 2003 Phil undertook a secondment to establish the Public Health Institute of Scotland.

His current research interests include 'culture and health', uses of integrated public health data and evaluation of complex public health interventions.

Savoury snacks, a glass of wine or soft drink will be served after the lecture, when Professor Hanlon can be met at a more informal level.

ADVENT

The Four Sundays before Christmas

At 8 pm

“STARLIGHT IN A STABLE”

Advent was always supposed to be a time of peaceful preparation. A time for opening doors; doors that would allow one to gain insight into the drama of Christmas day by day.

Nowadays the opposite seems to be true. This glorious festival has become so compromised by the feverish clamour of commercialism, and as a result the true story of Bethlehem has often been discarded, if not altogether destroyed.

Why not reverse the trend this Christmas and take time to journey in the company of wise men and shepherds as they follow their star to a stable. You will be very welcome amidst the silence of our sanctuary each Sunday.

Sunday 2 December

Sunday 9 December

Sunday 16 December

Sunday 23 December

Thursday 31st January 2008

7.30 pm for 8 pm

Speaker: Professor Mona Siddiqui
Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding, Department of
Theology and Religious Studies and Director of the Centre for the Study of
Islam, University of Glasgow

Lecture: "What's the point of inter-religious dialogue?"

The rise of inter-religious dialogue has not stemmed the rise of religious fundamentalisms around the world. What value then does this discourse have in today's political climate?



Mona Siddiqui is Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding at the University of Glasgow. She has published in the areas of the Qur'an, classical Islamic law and contemporary ethics. Professor Siddiqui also lectures internationally on inter-religious discourse in academic and public contexts. In addition to her academic work, Professor Siddiqui contributes regularly to the media and is the only Muslim woman to speak regularly on both BBC Radio 4 and Radio Scotland's 'Thought for the Day' slot. She serves as the Chair of the BBC's Scottish Religious Advisory Council. In 2005, Professor Siddiqui was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Society of Arts.

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

Thursday 21st February 2008

7.30 pm for 8 pm

Speaker: Rosemary Goring

Lecture: "Reading Between the Lines"

A glance at the bestseller lists seems to confirm that novelists and poets are a marching army of secular, atheistic thought. Yet while few contemporary writers openly admit to belief in any faith, and many are vociferously contemptuous of organised religion, are today's writers any less spiritually questioning, or wise, than the famous religious novelists and poets of the past?



Rosemary Goring is Literary Editor of The Herald. She was born in Dunbar and studied history at St Andrews University. After several years in publishing, when she edited books such as Chambers Biographical Dictionary and the Larousse Dictionary of Writers, she moved into journalism as Literary Editor of Scotland on Sunday. She was editor of Life & Work for a couple of years before joining The Herald. She has recently published an anthology of eye-witness accounts of Scottish history entitled 'Scotland: the Autobiography'.

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

JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK

“BEYOND THE CITY WALL”

At different times in history walls of significance have often been erected. The names come easily to mind – the Berlin wall, the Great Wall of China, or in ancient days, and much closer to home, Hadrian’s attempt to divide our own country.

The thing about walls is that they include some and exclude others; indeed, one side is usually occupied by the powerful and the other by the oppressed.

At Easter, by being crucified beyond a city wall, Jesus chooses to belong among the powerless, and as a result, says much about the nature of salvation. Even more important, however, is the sense of where God chooses to be permanently present – the God beyond, detached, separated, and eternally with those who feel the same.

Let us all journey to this place “Beyond a city wall” and discover a renewed sense of perspective around the events of Holy Week.

Each Evening
Sunday 16th March 2008
Through to
Saturday 22nd March 2008
At 8 pm
In the church

Easter Day celebrations
Sunday 23 March 2008

Service at Preaching Brae on Barloch Moor
at 7.00 am
followed by breakfast

Easter Family Service
At 10.45 am

For further information on any of the events
Please contact the Cairns Office at
11 Buchanan Street, Milngavie G62 8AW Tel: 0141-956 4868
e-mail: office@cairnchurch.org.uk
or on the web site: www.cairnchurch.org.uk