



# Rainy Dayze

SEPTEMBER 2010



'that would be an  
ecumenical matter'  
edition



## On Being:

## 'that would be an ecumenical matter'

On my first trip to Africa, I was stunned by the number of different churches; hundreds of different brands and flavours, a veritable smorgasbord. But surely if they banded together they would be more effective and useful?

We all believe that ecumenism is a "good thing", don't we? Maybe it's just a vague theory that we know will never happen, because other churches have such weird ideas, making themselves inaccessible and beyond our pale. I know that my Episcopalian church is tolerant and accepting, but I'm not so sure about those Presbyterian types...

No wonder non-Christians are confused by our inability to co-habit. Do we journey towards the same goal, proclaim the same Lord, inhabit the same Kingdom? Are we united in love for each other as Christ loves us? At New College I think that we demonstrate our unity as well as celebrate our differences, having communion weekly, praising God and praying - together.

*There is one body and one Spirit,  
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,  
one Lord, one faith and one baptism,  
one God and Father of all,  
who is above all and through all and in all.*

Ephesians 4: 4-6.

*Ruth Green is currently in her 4th year  
at New College and an Episcopal ordinand*

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# ‘Ecumenism in a living community’: Château de Bossey

*As part of the recent New College candidates study trip to Geneva we journeyed to the village of Bossey, where we met the Rev Dr Dagmar Heller and were introduced to the work of the Ecumenical Institute. Below, Dr Heller describes potential study opportunities for those who would like to develop their ecumenical interest further...*

## **To study ecumenism in a living community: the study program of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey**

Why is it not possible to receive communion together with my catholic grandmother? This was one of the questions that led me to discover the brokenness of our Christian witness in the world. And the more I study these questions I discover how manifold Christianity is, and at the same time how difficult to accept the otherness of the others. But in a globalised world we are more and more depending on each other. Therefore I find it essential, not only to study the doctrinal questions which separate the different churches, but also to learn in an existential way how to live with people whose faith is different from my convictions.

The Ecumenical Institute Bossey offers a unique opportunity for such kind of study. Founded in 1946 by the reformed Dutch theologian Willem A. Visser ‘t Hooft as a place for the encounter for the churches engaged in the ecumenical movement the Institute belongs to the World Council of Churches and is attached to the University of Geneva. Every year it brings together about 40 students from all over the world and from all Christian traditions. Following different programs they study together, live together and pray together. Ecumenical questions are being addressed not just academically, but they become existential in the living encounter with ‘the other’. Bossey is known as „ecumenical laboratory“, and to study in Bossey is an adventure, in which a person is changed and opened. The result is an intercultural and interconfessional competence, which can barely be reached in the same intensity in other places. The study program contains academic courses as well as courses in the framework of the continuing formation program of the University of Geneva. For both the students can receive certificates on the basis of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The courses are conducted in English and the following programs are offered:

- Graduate School in ecumenical studies**  
1 semester, mid-September till end of January.
- Master of Advanced Ecumenical Studies (MAS):**  
2 semester, mid-September till end of June
- Graduate School – continuing formation:**  
1 Semester, mid-September till end of January

In addition there are seminars every summer on different themes.  
For further details as well as application forms please consult: [www.bossey.ch](http://www.bossey.ch)



# 'Visible expressions of unity'



I can scarcely remember a time when I was not 'ecumenical' – though I didn't know that's what it was called until much later! I was always fascinated by how other people worshipped, yet we were all Christians. In my parishes I worked closely with ministers and priests from other denominations and got to know their congregations as they got to know mine. It seemed a natural progression that led me into the next phase of my ministry as secretary to the Committee on Ecumenical

Relations. The horizons just kept expanding as I experienced the work of the ecumenical instruments and became used to a whole new world of acronyms – ACTS, CTBI, CEC, WCC and WARC now WCRC! All of these provide ways of exploring the unity we share in Christ and

sustain our awareness of the gifts of the world church.

Like most things, Ecumenical Relations can be hugely exciting or disappointingly frustrating. Exciting when there are breakthroughs in understanding and joint witness and service. Frustrating when good work in undermined by vested interests or new misunderstandings.

The challenge of the Edinburgh 1910 Missionary Conference and Ecumenical Movement that grew out of it was that God's mission is distorted by a divided Church. The search for visible expressions of our unity in Christ is not an option, but a calling. That can often mean seeking to heal memories. That is not to say that one memory is right and the other wrong. It is to seek to understand why we think differently and then walk on together into the future. That is one of the main motivating factors behind the Joint Commission on Doctrine's initiative to mark the 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation in Scotland together with the Scottish Episcopal Church this coming November. Why not book? You'll find the forms on <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/councils/ecumenical/ernews.htm>.

*The Very Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting is secretary to the Committee on Ecumenical Relations*

Booking forms for this day conference can be downloaded at:

<http://>

[www.churchofscotland.org.uk/councils/ecumenical/downloads/erreformationleaflet.pdf](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/councils/ecumenical/downloads/erreformationleaflet.pdf)



## THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION 1560 Marking the Legacy, Imagining the Future

**A day conference by the Joint Commission on Doctrine**  
(Church of Scotland / Roman Catholic Church)

to be held in the Storytelling Centre, 43-45 High Street, Edinburgh  
Wednesday 3 November 2010 • 9.00am – 5.15pm

with

**Professor Tom Devine • Rev Dr Alan Falconer • Rev Dr Alison Peden  
Prof Paul Murray • Very Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting**

Service in St Giles Cathedral, High Street, Edinburgh at 6 pm  
Preacher: Very Rev Dr John D Miller

**Tickets £5**

Booking on a first come, first served basis, as there are limited spaces.

# Notes from Geneva...

In June 2010 a group of candidates converged on Geneva for one of the perks of being a candidate student at New College – the annual ‘study trip’ (Jerusalem and Rome being the other two regular destinations). Geneva, of course, is well-known for its prominence in the Protestant Reformation and there were plenty of Reformation-related visits to be made. The Reformation Museum is fascinating, with an unforgettable dinner party and other bizarre projections. And you really must visit the archaeological dig under St. Peter’s Cathedral – it’s too good to be kept to just myself and Professor Brown. A walk through the old town is a real pleasure and there is, of course, ‘the Wall’, where the great and the good of the Reformation stand ever-vigilant.

Nowadays, Geneva plays host to a number of organisations whose activities continue to influence and affect the worldwide church. Of course, not all are associated with churches or even Christianity but the activities of organisations such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation and UNHCR should continue to interest us through their ethical and humanitarian work. In a sense such groups form a backdrop to what became the main focus of this visit – ecumenism.

The World Council of Churches has its headquarters in Geneva and was the venue for our first main visit of the trip. Their list of affiliated denominations, displayed on a huge board in their foyer, continues to grow. This, sadly, bears witness to the continuing fragmentation of the global Christian community. The WCC themselves are feeling the pinch as resources from supporting denominations continue to drop as those denominations themselves struggle to maintain membership numbers and necessary income. And yet there was never a sense of despondency from anyone we spoke with. The WCC continues to build bridges, resource education and encourage that sense of ‘one church’. Fragmentation does not need to be the same thing as division.

A visit to a WCC-supported college— the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey— highlighted the ‘seriousness’ of the work done by the WCC. The ‘togetherness’ they encourage is not simply an exercise in papering over the cracks but an encouragement to engage deeply in the differing theological issues underlying faith and praxis across the spectrum of Christian belief. Their strategy of ‘forcing’ diverse denominations to prepare worship together may seem contrived, but it allows those on the courses to get to the nitty-gritty of their faith and avoid any simple ivory tower contemplations.

Geneva may be considered a nexus – a connecting point or focal point – where significant factors came together for change. From there the change flowed out to affect western Christianity. We too, as individuals, can represent a nexus – a place where connections can be made. The lessons from the WCC encourage us to be more open in those connections we make.



Our thanks to Rev Ian Manson, members of his congregation and to the many others who extended their hospitality to us, making the visit a most memorable experience.

*John Orr has just finished an MTh at New College which examined Emerging Church movements. He is about to begin the probationary period of training.*

*More pictures of the trip can be found at John’s site: <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/johnkorr/Geneva2010#>*

# At the start of a new academic year, welcome



I'm glad to welcome you at the start of the new academic year, especially those of you who are beginning their studies in the School of Divinity. We trust that your time amongst us will be enjoyable and rewarding, both as candidates in training and as students belonging to a wider community of learning in New College.

Dr Alison Jack has left us to take up a temporary teaching post in St Andrews. We congratulate her on this new appointment and wish her well in her work there.

I am pleased to report that Rev Frances Henderson will succeed her as Assistant Principal for 2010/11. Frances will be organising our weekly worship and helping with the arrangements for next year's study tour which is likely to be in Jerusalem. Further details should be available early in 2011. In the meantime, I look forward to meeting you all in the coming weeks.

*Rev Prof. David Fergusson, Principal of New College*



Rev Frances Henderson

## 'One more step along the road we go':

## a new year begins...

Nikki Macdonald



Andy Haddow



Whether it's a new year or another year, there are several givens as we wander and wonder along this New College part of the road: it's a slog, it's great, it's all going waaaaay too fast, deadlines, teatimes, so much cramming and so little time, conversations—serious and silly. In the midst of the madness, mayhem and mind expansion one of the other givens is the shared companionship as we pull one another along—sometimes singing, sometimes kicking and screaming—on the road to ministry of one kind or another.

Alan Kimmitt



Lindsay Turnbull



This issue of Rainy Dayze has been focusing on ecumenism—hopefully you'll have figured that out by now! At New College, while there are folk training for ministry in the Church of Scotland, there are students who are also working towards ordination in other denominations. As we begin this new year we aim to be much more intentionally ecumenical in our approach, recognising that we share much in common: that unity does not mean conformity, nor diversity need to mean division and that shared laughter and conversation is a great way to break down barriers of misunderstanding. We're looking forward to seeing where this particular part of the journey takes us all!

New College Ministry Candidates Committee

2010-2011

*Nikki Macdonald, on behalf of the*

*New College Ministry Candidates' Committee*

# So, you're new around here?

**Where to find out about what's going on?** We have a **communications notice board** in New College, filled with information: from sign up sheets for speech training to the dates of social events, MTN info. and occasional info. from Ministries Council and other 121 departments. You'll find it between Rainy Hall just before the corridor that takes you to the Martin Hall... It's in the shape of a shiny blue Saltire :)

Also, if you're on Facebook, we have set up a **Facebook group** and are currently experimenting with it.

While you're looking at notice boards, why not check out **Praxis** aka the New College Mission Society. We will be doing joint events with them over the course of the year.

**Worship** is held each week during term time, on Thursdays at 1pm—1.30 in the Martin Hall. If you would like to get involved in this aspect of New College life, talk to Allan Kimmitt and Lindsay Turnbull, both on the worship committee. There is also a small chapel at New College where folk are free to just take time out to 'be'. It's located under the library at the end of the corridor.

**Social events** of various kinds take place during term time. The Freshers Week Ceilidh is a great way to get to know some of your fellow students. Every other year, New College holds a Burns Supper, and there is an annual Spring Dance, generally in March. Apart from these, there are social gatherings planned for those who are training for ministry: information on these will be on our notice board. The place for general procrastina... er,

socialising at New College is the Rainy Hall aka 'Hogwarts' dining room. Drinks and snacks can be bought there: make sure you pick up a 'loyalty' card and eventually get your free cuppa. If it's warm enough, the garden is a peaceful place to sit and have a quite sandwich.

**A place for your 'stuff'?** Lockers can be found in the corridor under the library and are available on a first come first served basis—you will need your own lock. There are also laptop lockers where you can leave your laptop to recharge while you go find a cup of tea.

**Placement opportunities** come in all shapes and sizes. There's a huge variety of possibilities to explore: from working in local parish church, to hospital chaplaincy, and even overseas. The next edition of Rainy Dayze will highlight a couple of the options available to explore.

**Rainy Dayze** appears 3-4 times over the course of the academic year. Hard copy can be found on the Candidate notice board but it is also online on the New College website—follow the link and then scroll to the bottom of the page to find a PDF version: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/divinity/about/church-scotland>

The editor is planning to hang up her journalistic hat during this coming academic year to focus on her PhD. If you would be interested in taking on what is a fun project to put together, get in contact with Nikki—details at the bottom of this page.

## Candidate 'lite'

With huge thanks to the legend that is Dave Walker for permission to use this cartoon. Do go visit his website at <http://www.cartoonchurch.com/blog/>

### HOW CHRISTIANS CAN WORK TOGETHER ACROSS THE DIVIDE

WE'VE GOT SOME OVER-RIPE TOMATOES HERE - WOULD YOU LIKE US TO THROW SOME OVER?

THAT WOULD BE GREAT. WE HAVE A SURPLUS OF SLIGHTLY ROTTEN EGGS HERE - SHALL WE CHUCK SOME ACROSS?

WE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE THAT - THANK YOU



## Newsletter notes:

Newsletter: comes out 3-4 times per academic year, unless the dark forces conspire and conquer.

This is a call for volunteers:

If you'd like to write a short article or poem for inclusion; fancy doing the wee prayer/ reflection slot for 'On Being'; have ideas for competitions/ or a wee silly something for 'Candidate Lite'; or would like to get

involved with helping to put together the newsletter... here's your chance! Talk to Nikki.

Next edition:

**'He was in the world'**

Copy due beg. Nov 2010.

Articles generally no longer than 250 words

Email the editor: N.M..Macdonald-2@sms.ed.ac.uk