

16th – 23rd November: Lily Sewell - Prayer for Ports and Harbours

In Alloa on the River Forth we have an old derelict harbour soon to be rejuvenated with houses, walkways and shops pertaining to river usage. Just behind this complex our new Academy has been erected and the neighbouring built up area houses many vulnerable people. Whilst praying over the harbour the drugs traffic was brought to mind, this is synonymous with many harbours and ports around our coastline, especially since the depletion of our Fishing Industry.

Pray for the protection of our Island home as you walk round harbour walls, coves and inlets. Our heritage of a clean Godly lifestyle is being eroded by what is unloaded onto our shores, bringing destruction where our fishing industry once brought in the harvest of the seas. Pray against this as you walk, sail, or in your homes, and bring abundant life and light to our ports, harbours, coves and inlets.

- Lord, please reinvigorate our fishing industry, and we will dance the victory dance!
- Raise a huge net of praise, prayer and dance to illuminate our harbour walls.
- We will stand alongside coastal Christians with a powerful shout of **NO** to the evil of drugs.
- Declare that our ports and harbours will be havens of industry, peace, and joy, and raising fishers of men.
- That people will rebuild the harbour walls of faith and hope in our seafaring communities.

While standing at the Scalloway Harbour on Shetland, April 2007, we asked the local people what they wanted us to pray for. 'Please would you pray for an increase in the white fish stock around the Shetland coast?' We happily did so and then moved on! After the 50 days we received a clip from the local newspaper reporting a noticeable increase in the white fish stock around Shetland, so much so that the local fish factory was to be increased in size!

And that wasn't all! While I was in attendance at the Scottish Parliament in January 08, I heard the Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture make reference to the increase of the fish stock in particular around Shetland Isles – an increase of 8.8%!

We prayed, God answered! Confirmed in the local newspaper and confirmed in the Scottish Parliament. 'When a believing person prays, great things happen.' (James 5:15b New Century Bible)

Bert McKaig, Connecting Scotland 2007.

23rd - 30th November: David Thomson

See David's article in the newsletter. His prayer points are as follows:

- Pray for an end to resource depletion, and a renewal of the sea's bounty.
- Pray for light in dark places, and an exposure of dishonesty and deceit.
- Pray for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit on our coastal towns and villages, and a calling back of the people to the faith of their fathers.
- Pray for new arrangements that will support small communities and their little fleets of low-impact fishing boats.
- Pray for an end to designated ports legislation that prohibits the smaller harbours from having fish landed there.
- Pray that politicians, administrators, scientists and fishers, will together humbly seek a way forward that will truly conserve our resource and provide employment and income for our people.



Prayer Diary October - November 2008

21st - 28th September: Brian Souter - Chief Executive of Stagecoach Group

Stagecoach Group is a market leader in travel in the UK, US and Canada. It operates recognised public transport brands in the bus, coach, rail and tram businesses, and strives to offer a high quality service to its customers. In the UK Stagecoach connects communities in around 100 towns and cities, running a fleet of around 7,000 buses and coaches. Two million passengers travel on its services every day, using a network stretching from Devon to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Stagecoach also operates many rail networks in England, and its joint venture, Virgin Rail Group, operates the West Coast long-distance rail franchise. Its registered office is in Perth and it was named Scottish plc of the year 2008. *Please pray for the transport sector:*

- Many small operators are on the verge of bankruptcy because of rising fuel prices.
- Fuel cost pressures are making public transport more expensive and this affects the poorest and socially excluded in our society.
- The increase in drug use and violence in our society is making the job of bus drivers much more dangerous.
- An increase in the number of road works and congestion creates pressure for drivers who need to be patient.
- Public transport is seen as part of the solution to our environmental challenges and modal shift and greater use of public transport is helping with this problem.

28th Sept - 5th October: Alfie Baird - Professor of Maritime Transport, Napier University

Whether it's coal from Australia to Japan, or computers from China to Turkey, world trade depends on ships and as world trade has grown, so has the demand for ships. At the beginning of 2008 the world shipbuilding industry reported its highest order level of all time, with over 10,000 new ships under construction to add to the many thousands already in service. This worldwide boom covers all types of vessels, but mainly container ships, bulk carriers and tankers. There is also high demand for ferries and cruise ships. More and more people are now being trained to undertake careers at sea. But spending maybe a month or more at sea does not always appeal and seafarer shortages are now a big challenge for the shipping business. Globalisation has led to phenomenal trade growth, and trade growth can act as a powerful stimulus for peace. Peaceful trade lifts living standards and so directly benefits people. More and more economies are being boosted by global trade and shipping and the maritime industry acts as an enabler of peace and prosperity. *Please pray:*

- for more free and fair trade between all nations.
- that, in nations where there is conflict and unrest, people may witness for themselves the opportunities that trade brings for a peaceful and positive society.
- that technological innovations can help us transport increasing trade volumes even more efficiently and sustainably than today, and safely.
- that more people will be motivated to seek a rewarding career as a seafarer.
- that the Lord's oceans on this earth continue to provide the most incredible and awesome natural highway for world trade.

5th - 12th October: Hugh Fraser - Farmer, Inverness

Having been actively engaged in farming for sixty years I can now indulge occasionally in the rather more gentle exercise of reminiscing on the changes which have taken place in agriculture in my time. Without a doubt my generation have seen greater changes than, perhaps, any previous one. As I think back over a lifetime on the farm I try to form an overview of the changes I have seen.

When I was young even the smaller farms employed labour, so there were always several people around. The work was labour-intensive, leading to quite a social way of life. The farm house was the nerve centre and hospitality could be legendary. Farming has now become an ultra modern, efficient and highly mechanised industry, producing much higher yields than of old. But progress comes at a price. Farming today is a lonely job. Only the biggest farms can justify employing the highly skilled labour required to operate the huge machinery of today. Many farms have been amalgamated leading to deserted farm buildings and the houses, let to urban workers, are empty all day. Many farmers' wives have full time jobs.

Cropping systems have also changed greatly over the years as more and more reliance on purchased compound fertiliser enables us to grow far bigger crops than the ground could produce naturally. I freely admit that the pressures of trying to remain in business in a difficult and often un-remunerative occupation often dictate the means used. However, we tinker with nature at our peril. Generally speaking, the earth is supplied with the essential minerals and trace elements in direct proportion to what she is able to produce. We now spend a lot of time and money trying to replace deficiencies of copper, cobalt, selenium, magnesium, sulphur and manganese and many others which are essential for plant and animal life, which have been removed by cropping the land harder than nature intended.

But where to now? The present farming generation could be faced with even greater challenges. Do we go down the genetically-modified route in crop production – or, the even graver question of G.M. livestock?

As I grow older I marvel more and more at the wonderful balance to be found in nature, and yet a very delicate one. I often think of the story of Creation, for as each part was completed it says 'And God saw that it was good.' Perhaps the wisdom and guidance the present generation requires could be learned from the One who created nature itself.

Please pray:

- For the isolation and loneliness that can be experienced by farmers, their wives and those who dedicate their lives to the vocation of farming.
- For God's intervention regarding the clinical depression that farmers can experience, which sometimes can be caused by various chemicals used in farming, eg disinfectants for sheep.
- For the land, and the depletion of basic elements and minerals so vital to our foods, the agricultural industry and to the basic eco-system.
- For the miracle of God's continued restoration of nature and all we have been given, and our wise use of it.
- For wisdom regards the future of farming and pressures regards the demands of genetically modified food and livestock.

12th - 19th October: William McLaren - Farmer, Perthshire

- We pray for the farming industry that it be given the strength and support to produce the nation's food.
- Especially at this time we pray for favourable weather so that the harvest can be safely ingathered.
- Give these farmers who may be leading a lonely life, working alone and for long hours, thy support and make them feel the importance of the job which they are left to do.
- Those that work with machinery keep them safe and even when they are tired working long hours make them ever wary of the dangers with these modern machines.
- Also those that work with livestock give them the help and support needed to tend their flocks and herds and keep them safe from the dangers of working with these animals.
- Keep our farmers and those who work on the land ever mindful of thy promise, that "as long as the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest will never cease". Make them ever grateful for thy goodness towards them.

19th - 26th October: Keith and Grace Redpath - Farmers in the Borders

See the newsletter for an article by Keith and Grace.

- Pray for those who struggle to earn enough to live – contending with difficult conditions and low prices being offered for their produce. Pray for those who feel isolated and despondent in their farming situation, often accentuated by negative press reports – that they would be integrated into their local communities and find people who will listen to them and understand their circumstances – that they will feel valued.
- Pray that farmers and crofters will make wise and right choices in how they cultivate the land, having an awareness of the environmental impact, bearing in mind that they are responsible for conserving it for future generations.
- Thank God for good dialogue between the Scottish Government and the farming industry. Pray that this relationship will grow and develop in an atmosphere of trust and respect as they wrestle with many complex issues. Pray that good and just farming policy is legislated for. It is possible to be a voice and an influence for righteousness.
- Pray that all those who work within the Agricultural Industry will see the "bigger picture" – that what they do actually can make a difference. That they are part of a "global village" and their dedication contributes to the vital job of feeding the world. Pray that some may grasp the opportunity to travel to developing countries of the world to share their skills and knowledge.
- Pray that genuine Fair Trade will become a reality both in the UK and abroad, and that justice will prevail in talks regarding farming subsidies - a particularly thorny issue for the richest nations of the world.
- "Father, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on EARTH as it is in heaven."

26th October - 2nd November: Guy Pembroke - Forester, Highlands

I have been with the Forestry Commission at Fort Augustus in the Highlands for the last two years. I work as part of a team of 34 members of staff who manage about 60,000 hectares of state-owned woodlands between Inverness and the North of Skye. Although a number of us work directly in the forests, I am mainly engaged in computer mapping through which I help to plan the harvesting and restocking programme. Work in forestry has become more diverse in recent years with a greater emphasis on recreation and conservation alongside woodland management for timber production. Many foresters are no longer doing a variety of tasks in one woodland but now increasingly specialise, contributing to the management of various woodlands. 17% of Scotland's land area is woodland, compared to 35% in the EU. About 7,600 jobs are provided directly by forestry in Scotland and another 3,100 in the primary wood processing industry. *Please pray for:*

- The effective witness of isolated Christians as salt in the forestry industry. (Matt 5:13)
- Safety in travel. Many in the industry drive 20,000 miles per year at work.
- That more people in our nation would contribute to their own mental health through visits to woodlands.
- Wisdom for Michael Russell, Forestry Minister for Scotland and Bob McIntosh, Director of Forestry Commission Scotland.

2nd - 9th November: Rick Hayes - Former Forester

Since the inception of the Forestry Commission in 1919 the primary challenge for forest managers in Scotland has been adjustment to change. The calls for change have often been led by urban dwellers and pressure groups, and by short term thinking.

All industries face change, but forestry is unique in that in general, the shortest rotation of the main crop is around 50 years. The planning cycle is thus inherently visionary, looking at aspects like landscape design, wildlife and water conservation and sustainable timber production for perhaps the next 100 to 150 years. This is overlaid with a policy of constantly improving and encouraging recreational and educational use of the forests for their true owners, the tax-paying public.

Forestry practitioners have responded to this process, absorbing and delivering the different values required by society and making efficiency gains decade by decade. The current requirement is to attempt to establish a place in the national consciousness of a value for forests as part of life, aspiring toward the way forests are regarded in for instance, Sweden, Norway and Finland. *Please pray for those employed in forestry:*

- Success in achieving their aims and satisfaction in their jobs whilst doing so.
- Relief of some of the pressures on staff, pressurized by accountants and politicians, who may not fully accept the sometimes devastating realities of uncontrollable factors such as weather, fires, pests, diseases and the fluctuating world price of timber.
- Relief from some of the destructive potential of the above natural and man-caused damage (in Scotland almost all fires are started by people, often deliberately).
- Favour with God and man on their great efforts to pull together many sciences and natural variables in their everyday life, "the art of forestry".
- Long term thinking and policy making by successive governments.

9th - 16th November: Derek Duthie - Chief Executive Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Asscn.

The Scottish fishing industry is much smaller than it once was but is still one of the largest in Europe with over 2,000 vessels and 5,000 fishermen. Many of Scotland's coastal communities remain heavily fisheries-dependent. The industry is diverse and the fleet is split into a number of segments, broadly including:

- 1,500 small inshore boats primarily fishing for shellfish
- a demersal fleet of a few hundred vessels targeting white fish such as cod, haddock and whiting and Scottish langoustine (prawn)
- a couple of dozen very large boats targeting mainly herring and mackerel

The Scottish fleet is managed by the Scottish Government Marine Directorate under the rules of Europe's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which many fishermen dislike because of its bureaucratic and 'one size fits all' approach. The main representative organisations, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation and its nine Constituent Associations, realise that although the CFP is far from perfect the industry is best served not by complaining about it but by engaging to try and find the best possible solutions for the Scottish fleet within it. Negotiations are complicated further for 'joint stocks' by the EU having to negotiate with third countries such as Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Many of the quotas in European waters are classed by the scientists as being over-fished or at risk of depletion. The fishermen do not always agree with the scientific assessments; however the fisheries managers cannot ignore the science and this can lead to very complex and difficult negotiations.

Some parts of the fishing industry have found it hard to recruit and retain crew in recent years as the negative publicity from reducing quotas and a buoyant energy industry has seen many men chose a career in the offshore oil and gas sector instead. This has led to a large migrant workforce from Eastern Europe and more recently the Philippines, bringing a new dimension with its own challenges. Some churches have been reaching out to foreign fishermen with many of the Filipino fishermen very responsive.

The rising cost of fuel has placed an additional pressure on the industry as this cost cannot be passed on because most fish is sold at auction. The Scottish Government has set up a 'Task Force' to come forward with recommendations on how the fleet can best deal with the problem both in the short and long term. *Prayer Points:*

- Wisdom for fisheries managers as they grapple with problems in order to find the right balance between stock sustainability and socio-economic considerations.
- A responsible approach by fishermen and their representative bodies as they seek a fair deal for Scottish fishermen in international negotiations and domestic management arrangements.
- That the large number of migrant workers in the fishing industry will feel at home and for the outreach work by local churches.
- That the bodies organising training for fishermen working in what can be hazardous conditions receive more certainty in their funding and that fishermen take advantage of the training programmes available.
- That the work of the Fuel Task Force is guided to reduce the burden on the industry caused by high global fuel prices.