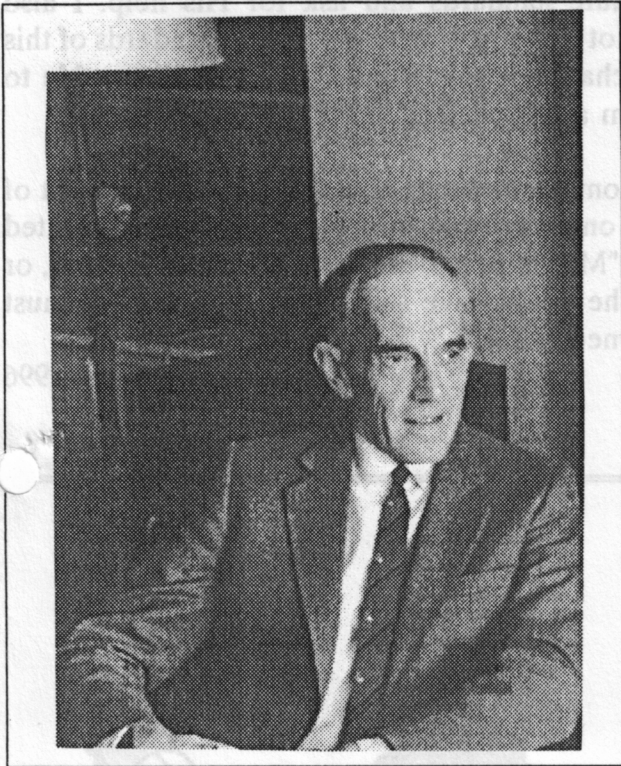


Credo

Why I Choose to be a Christian Duncan McGregor

Should this go in?

Diode



I cannot say that I chose to be a Christian. Many years ago after being through Sunday School and Bible class and having generally been to church twice on Sunday, it was expected of young people to join the church. Eventually I joined a group, said some vows and was ordained a communicant member. It didn't seem to make any difference to the way I lived. I still got into mischief and was easily led by older friends but always longed to find what God's will was for my life. Whenever I said the Lord's prayer "Thy will be done, thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven". How do we find out what God's will is today?

At the early age of five while staying with an Aunt I had a very bad experience and could have easily rebelled and turned violent. but my Aunt was a good pianist and we sang hymns around the piano on Sundays. The one I always remembered was "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so..." and I used to wonder how Jesus loved me, so I started a search. Also my father died when I was four and I missed him greatly - someone to talk to about our defeats and victories and to search together to

find an answer. So I was on my own, the same as my sister because mother could never talk about what went on in the family, especially about father, as I longed to know what happened to him.

The first clue to an answer came when I heard a story that had a great influence on my thinking. It was about a French woman who was a socialist leader and led in the resistance during the war. Her son was tortured by the Gestapo to try and force her to tell who was in the resistance, so she hated the Germans and wanted them wiped off the face of the earth. She was challenged by the idea of how do you bring unity to Europe without the Germans? She struggled for three days and nights to put right what was wrong in her own life in the light of God's absolute standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. She apologised to Germans for her hatred and had a transforming experience of the Holy Spirit and became completely free of hatred. She travelled through Germany many times and apologised for the hatred she had and was decorated for what she did to bring unity between France and Germany.

With this and many other stories of change in peoples lives, I decided to experiment by looking into my own life in the light of God's absolute standards to see if there was anything I needed to put right. I argued for some time that there was not much wrong with me. the ideas were pretty old fashioned and you cannot live absolute standards - we will never be perfect. But the family situation was getting worse, my sister was getting into extreme difficulties. So I finally decided to ask God if there was anywhere I fell short of His absolute standards. It was very revealing. I used to think in terms of relative standards so I could push the line between right and wrong to anywhere that suited me. God showed me many areas where I fell short of His standards. When it came to absolute love I discovered I hated people because of the very bad experience I had when I was five years old. When it came to hating this evil, asking God to help me forsake it, confessing it to a close friend and restoring for it, I found it very difficult and discovered what a colossal pride I had. When it came to restoring, I had the thoughts to apologise to the people concerned for my hatred. An extraordinary thing happened - I was freed from the hatred and my attitude and thinking was completely transformed and we became open and honest in the home. I began

to think in the positive, whereas I had always thought in the negative and completely new light came into the meaning of sayings in the Bible. One of the greatest sayings of Jesus in Luke 9:23 "If anyone wants to come with me (they) must forget self, take up (their) cross everyday and follow me". I discovered that I needed to take up my cross every day by crossing out my pride, admitting where I am wrong instead of blaming others (as I still do). It seems to be deep within my nature not to admit my wrongs, but God can help me if I ask. God also frees me from self in areas of fear and greed, including purity, when I am humble enough to admit where I fall short of His absolute standards and ask for His help. I also discovered the truth in Paul's saying in Romans 12: 2 "Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God - what is good and is pleasing to Him and is perfect".

To love God now means to listen and obey thoughts that come, sometimes only whispers, in the light of His absolute standards and to love thy neighbour fully, the only way I can fully forget self. As was stated by William Penn 1644 - 1718, the founder of Pennsylvania, "Men must choose to be governed by God, or they condemn themselves to be ruled by tyrants". Today he would have said: "Men and women must choose ..." The greatest tyrant is self. I choose to be governed by God.

April 1996

Editorial

Welcome to our first edition.

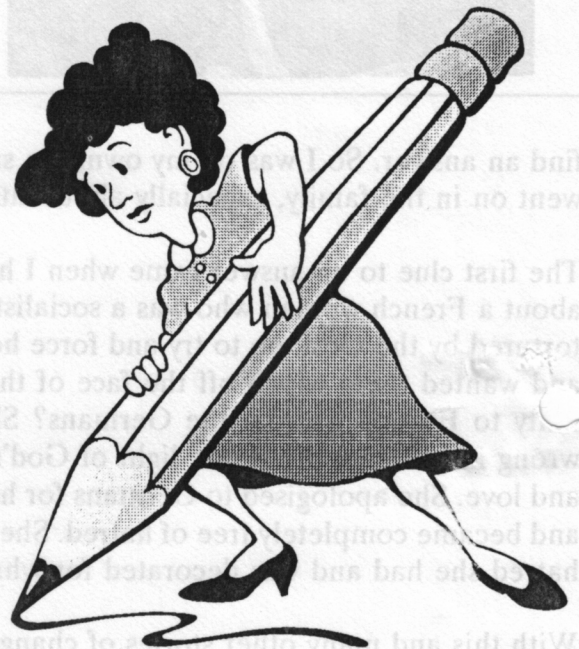
Four of us have taken over editorial responsibility for the St Andrew's News.

We are keen to include more news from groups within the church and your creative input. Reviews, poetry and articles are all welcome. If you have suggestions for material please speak to one of the team - we are keen to follow up any leads ... Articles etc can be left at the church office with Roz.

We are contemplating a Rainbow Room column for the next edition.

Lesley Aitken has done a great job in producing the News. Now it takes four of us to do her job!

Deborah, Gillian, Marie and Roz.



A young Sallie (Salvation) Army lass asked an old Scotsman.

"Will ye give a shilling tae the Lord? she asked.

"How old are ye, lassie?"

"I'm just sixteen" she answered.

To which the old man replied:

"Weel I'm seventy-nine an' I'll be seein' Him afore you, so I'll just give it tae Him mase!"

(thanks to Agnes Kennerley)