



January 2011 Edition

As the new year is now well under way, a lot of our busy schedules are in full swing again after the end of the holiday season (and for some of us, it felt like they never stopped!).

So how is 2011 treating you so far? Is it anything like what you expected? And have you kept those elusive and dreaded New Year's resolutions? :)

As a community, we re-dedicate ourselves to spreading the good news of God's love to all creation and to worshiping the One who will remain with us through all the ups and downs of the coming year, through times of celebration and times of mourning, times of thankfulness and times of need. And as part of your community, we look forward to accompanying you through all that this new year will bring!

Christian witness for climate justice continues

Even though the deadly consequences of climate change are already being experienced by some countries and regions – especially in Africa, the Caribbean and South-East Asia – political leadership on the issue is still lacking. In this situation, Christians in Geneva and everywhere are called to stand in solidarity with those whose lives are threatened by droughts, flooding and other effects of the changes we are causing to the atmosphere.

In December 2010, yet another round of United Nations climate talks ended without a legally binding treaty being signed. While the first-ever binding agreement on greenhouse gas emissions, the Kyoto protocol, runs out in 2012, a successor treaty still seems out of reach. Nonetheless, some representatives of churches and civil society saw signs of hope at the recent conference, which took place in Cancun, Mexico.

In an improvement on the process that led to the much-criticized Copenhagen Accord last year, the president of the conference managed to keep the climate negotiations in the multilateral track. Another step forward was the establishment of a "climate fund" that will support vulnerable countries as they seek to adapt to the worst consequences of climate change.

"The demands from the civil society and the churches have been heard. Now, we need to continue advocating for a just, ambitious and binding treaty", affirmed Dr Guillermo Kerber, programme executive on climate change for the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Christian organizations such as the WCC, the Lutheran World Federation and the international ecumenical aid group ACT Alliance joined hands for effective lobbying in Cancun and organized an inter-religious celebration as well as an informative side event on the moral dimension of climate change. The ecumenical Time for Climate Justice campaign was very visible on the premises where the negotiations took place as well as during a protest march in the streets of Cancun.

Christians on all continents have participated in an ecumenical photo petition for fair and ambitious action on climate change – including the Lutheran congregation in Geneva. Please visit <http://climatejusticeonline.org/take-action> to see all the pictures.





If you weren't there when we took our picture on the First Sunday of Advent, it is not too late to join the campaign: Write down the message you want climate negotiators to hear, and take a picture of yourself and the message board. Then send it to photopetition@gmail.com. Don't forget to tell your friends and family about it!

Ecumenical advocacy for climate justice will continue right up to the next UN climate talks, which are to take place in Durban, South Africa in December 2011. The photos taken around the globe by Christians who care will be on display in Durban, reminding negotiators of their moral responsibilities.

According to NASA, 2010, alongside 2005, was the hottest year ever recorded. "In terms of debate, 2011 will be a hotter year as awareness-raising and advocacy continue over the year towards COP17 in Durban, where churches in Africa have already started a process of preparation," said Kerber.



Submitted by Annegret Kapp

Haiti and Pakistan: where are they after the news cameras have gone?

Many lament the fact that after major disasters, the public quickly loses interest, news cameras leave, voluntary funds dry up and people on the ground are left without long-term, sustainable help to re-build their lives.

Yet the tragic situations in Haiti and Pakistan are two examples where ACT Alliance has had a continual presence and keeps its members updated on the work being done. The articles below outline their efforts and highlight those who continue to struggle for dignity and a better life.

For articles on Haiti, visit: <http://www.actalliance.org/hot-topics/haiti-earthquake>

For articles on Pakistan, visit: <http://www.actalliance.org/hot-topics/pakistan-after-the-floods-six-months-into-the-recovery>

Rendez-vous with Valerie Marinoni

Our 'Rendez-vous' series features an interview with a member of our Congregation - for those who find our refreshment hour is just not long enough...!



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Rather a long time ago. *Why?* The first time in 1960, I was still in the process of finishing my studies and moving back from East Africa to Europe – culture shock and all! And then three years later, for good – in every sense of the word!! I married Pierre and we had two children.

What are three adjectives that describe who you are?

I like to think I am fairly well organised, but impatient with people (I think) who are not, and seething with anger about injustice. *Do you resemble your friends?* Of course, I have some “atomes crochus” and share some mutual interests with most of them.

From whom have you learned the most? What is it that you have learned from him/her/them?

Probably my parents: open-mindedness, thinking the best of people, whatever their background, race or ideas.

Which traits do you appreciate in the opposite gender?

A sense of humour – and respect for others.

What traits do you appreciate in our Congregation and our Sunday service?

ELCG is full of good friends and has become an important element. Worshipping together with people of all ages is wonderful. What I learn – through words and music – keeps me going through the week.

Can you share a strong childhood memory? What did your Sundays look like in those days?

School holidays spent in searching for chameleons in the garden and enjoying nature, particularly the birds. Singing hymns with my mother and siblings during holidays, Sunday services at boarding school.

Where is the most beautiful landscape you can think of?

The spectacular Vercors and Chartreuse hills in France or the Jura silhouetted by a red sky at the end of the day.

What would the perfect dinner be? The perfect dinner company?

Something special I have slowly and carefully prepared. Friends who don't necessarily know each other but who are enjoying being together and enjoying the meal too.

God? Prayer?

Necessary to put everyday life into perspective.

When did you fall in love for the first time?

That was such a long time ago, my memory fails me!

What's your greatest virtue? Your greatest vice?

I think I'd better leave that to my friends to decide.

What's the best decision you've made so far?

Probably to join this Church!

At the highest summit: which painting? Which book? Which movie? What music?

Actually, one of Giacometti's statues, rather than a painting. A new cookery book or my bird book (along with my binoculars, of course! I can survive without films! Something choral - either baroque or contemporary: Haendel, Rutter, perhaps.

What was secondary school all about for you? And what did your country look like in those days?

Miles away from the family home – I had to fly to boarding school in a nearby country! This was before independence, so there was a strange gap between our family values (my father was a leprosy doctor and both parents committed Christians) and the opinions held by many at school.

What is your greatest fear?

In those days? Exams, possibly! I don't remember.

After secondary school, what was your next step? Did you have a 'master plan' for your future?

Not really. Life has been a long learning process!

What did friendship and dating look like in those days?

We lived miles from anywhere so making friends was really during school terms. But that also meant that family ties were important.

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If you could be Prime Minister for one day, what would you do? What's the point our leaders are missing? Is there hope for our world?

If political leaders were less obsessed with the next election, perhaps they would start to make the world a better place. Is there hope for our world? Oh yes – and that is what we must all work for.

What is Geneva for you?

This area is home.

How do you relax? What are the things that you intensely enjoy? Perfect happiness is... ?

Walking, bird-watching, trying out new recipes.

What is your motto in life? Where did it come from?

“To do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God” (the prophet Micah).

Life... do you think you have figured it out at this point?

Round the next corner there is always something new!

Submitted by Maarten Wilbers

Refreshment Rota for February

7 February	B (Versoix, Bellevue, Chambesy, etc.)
14 February	C (Meyrin, Vernier, Chatelaine, Lignon, etc.)
21 February	D (Grand-Saconnex and Petit-Saconnex)
28 February	E (Servette, Paquis, Vermont, Delices, etc.)

Black Movie Festival 11-20 February

Each year at this time, the Black Movie Festival in Geneva features films made by talented new filmmakers from Asia, Africa and Latin America, including fiction, documentaries, experimental and animation films. There is also Le Petit Black Movie festival, running parallel, dedicated to young viewers. You will find the programme for the Festival in many places in Geneva. Look for it! Films are in many languages, usually with subtitles.

Go to www.blackmovie.ch for details. There is the possibility to translate the information there into English.