

Open Sanctuary – Being church in and outside of the building

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Can we as individuals and local groups offer safe places for others to meet God? This session will included an opportunity to review the places and people we use to offer access to “Church” and possibilities for developing them.

Well, I have never done this before. How do you present a passed seminar on a website? It was 5pm on a grey Tuesday night in Aviemore. There were about 20 of us in a small seminar room. Squashed onto the tables and a few chairs were the following items, designed to stimulate the mind and imagination.

A basket full of new teaspoons	To remind us to stir one another up when we went home.
A small wooden model town set	To help us think about being church where we come from.
Some mini “Jenga” sets	Don’t think I remembered to mention tower building and stability on the day but they were there.
A Life and Work August 2006 Opened at pages 22-23.	Article about Buddies Bus trying to make, Saturday night Sunday Morning in Sauchiehall St, Glasgow a safer place.
One Buddies Jacket	To help us think how we can help our staff and volunteers be as safe as possible? What is our duty of care to each other as Christians?
Dumbarton Road Corridor Social Inclusion Partnership Baseline Study January 2003 ° Dumbarton Road Corridor SIP	To remind us that it is worth doing some research concerning our local area and its needs. Local Authorities, libraries and Charities who have made recent funding applications may be able to provide this.
Child Poverty in perspective. An overview of child well-being in rich countries. UNICEF. ° The United Nations Children’s Fund 2007.	This downloadable document www.unicef.org/irc was there to encourage informed response to identified problems in our world.
“The Briefing” June 2005 issue 321 UK edition Matthias media in partnership with The Good Book Company. Becoming a welcoming church	“Talking to strangers can be daunting, yet the gospel of Jesus calls on us to open the doors of our church to all.” (a good topic for discussion is we had time especially when you consider safety as a factor!)

Working The Streets. A Handbook For Christians Involved In Outreach To Prostitutes. New Wine Press © 2002 Ruth Robb & Marion Carson	A practical book which encourages us to think carefully and prayerfully about what we do, why and how we do it.(Marion works in ICC)
“The because approach. Innovating church for all.” © 2005 Andrew Baughen. Authentic	This book offers a ‘safer’ way at looking at what we do, affirming what is good and finding healthy ways to stay fresh. Good food gone stale tastes bad.
Vision (Vision Express mag) issue 4 P28-30 “Seeing the light”.	Stained glass article, includes some ‘smashing’ church history also ‘stay in focus presbyopia up close’ (p27).
“How to bring the outside inside Let your home reflect the seasons.” Helen Ellery. Conran Octopus Ltd 2004	It’s an interior design book with a difference. We all had a look at the contents page. There could be transferable skills here for building church. Good cultivation tips.
The Glasgow Herald Friday March 2 2007 Helen Puttick (Health Correspondent) Front page Article	“One in four people living in deprived areas struck down with depression” Can we bring joy?
The Bible (NIV) Zechariah Ch2	This was read aloud
The Children’s Bible in Colour Hamlyn 1964	The Vision of John (from Rev 18,21) page 517-518 Also read aloud.
African Bible Commentary. Tokunboh Adeyemo General Editor. Zondervann 2006	Zechariah 2 (page 1079) comments on Jerusalem without walls by Yoilah Yipet Nigerian Anglican.
The Gospel of Mark Illuminated. A complete text of the Gospel illustrated by Rex Nicholls with notes by Patrick Vaughan. Lion Publishing 1990	Is this a ‘safe’ way do Bible study? (It is what I am using for my personal bible reading at the moment) Trying to live with a gospel for a while at least as suggested by Church Without Walls.
Riof Dougie MacLean. Dunkeld Records CD 1997. www.dougiemaclean.com	We had the first five tracks on in the background while we spent just under 30mins reflecting on our own church circumstances, browsing at material, making plans, writing notes or just relaxing. Song titles. Stepping Stones, Stolen, Scythe Song, Feel so Near and Gneiss Wind.

We reflected a little upon Zechariah and God being a wall of fire around Jerusalem.
About safety in what may look like unsafe situations.
1Kings 19 and Elijah with the earthquake, wind, fire and then the still small voice.
We noted missionaries with children who felt safer on the mission field than at home.
Being church is not always safe.
We took a quick peek at the book of Acts, noted the fire stuff at Pentecost and all the danger.
We need God’s protection inside and out.
Providing sanctuary means providing a safe place to rest and recover or perhaps even be reborn.
Resources will vary, intention should not. Most folk took a teaspoon home with them. (The spoons were not from the hotel, honest.) Hebrews 10:24