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Welcome to the first issue of *The Reader* for 2010. Our theme this time is healing and wholeness. I spent some time wondering what to put on the cover this time round. After considering several options I alighted on this picture of a Monarch butterfly. I chose it because it looks so colourful, and may be both fragile and strong, I thought. It was feeding on a plant from which to draw strength. Yes, this would be my introduction to my theme.

A few weeks after deciding this I was watching a nature programme on television. You may have seen it too. It was a wonderful programme, and it told me all about the amazing life of...yes, Monarch butterflies! As I watched I began to realise that I had chosen not just something beautiful, not even something that was in some senses fragile and strong simultaneously, but also something simply amazing! The programme spoke to me both of fragility and of great strength. I discovered that Monarch butterflies, which weigh .5 of a gram, migrate from all over North America down to their winter home in Mexico. They get there in spite of not having been there before, as the cycle takes three generations to complete. It may be as far as 2,500 miles, and they may fly to heights of up to 10,000 feet. (They have been observed at this altitude by pilots of commercial flights.) The average speed is a mere 19 miles an hour, but they arrive at their destination in the end.

As humans we are even more amazing. We too may be very fragile, but in Christ we can be both fragile and strong. Like the butterfly on the flower, from him we can draw strength. We will complete our own ‘migration’ across the world to arrive at our destination, our place of rest in Christ. But the journey for us is not always easy; for us as for the butterflies there are hazards. Healing may sometimes be his gift to us or to others. Wholeness may be a gift for us, not necessarily in ways we might have chosen ourselves, but in Christ, complete it we will, so that we can ‘stand complete in him’ (Col 2:10 AV ).

Healing and wholeness is a very wide topic, so not every aspect is covered. I have to say that about half the articles are from people who are Readers, which pleases me greatly. As Reader ministry diversifies it is important that people develop a wide spectrum of skills to contribute to the body of Christ, and these are just some examples.

Other contributions include an interesting article about being a Reader in Baghdad, some seasonal material and for those of us who minister in the countryside, or those who think it might be romantic to do so, an article entitled ‘All Mud and Matins’. As it is still raining here in rural Wales, I go with the mud. Matins? Well, not my best option. Roll on spring, and maybe the odd butterfly, fragile and beautiful. Yes, after the mud, beauty.
Healing, Wholeness

‘A person’s spirit may sustain them in sickness, but if the spirit is wounded, who can mend it?’

Proverbs 18:14

The title of this article is threefold because each element plays a crucial part in the church’s pastoral ministry of care. Healing is much more than ‘getting better’. It includes living with limitations such as a disability and finds expression in words like wellbeing. Wholeness emphasises the importance of taking account of all aspects of a person’s background, culture and environment. Spirituality is the word which today incorporates all religions and faiths and people of no faith who seek meaning and value in the way they live their life.

Jesus’ public ministry which, as we know, lasted barely three years, was full of acts of healing. Healing played a critical part in his total ministry and, on every occasion, the context for healing was always the whole person. Jesus did not espouse the ‘medical model’ which locates disease and then removes it.

The acts of healing were all-ensambling and included:

- Physical healing: paralysis, leprosy, haemophilia
- Neurology: epilepsy
- Mental Health: depression, psychosis
- Blindness
- Disability
- Deafness

The woman who wished only to touch his cloak exemplifies Jesus’ holistic approach when he tells her that ‘her faith has made her well’ – more of this later.

In Jesus’ time and before, demon possession accounted for any disease which involved loss of control, epilepsy, delirium, convulsions, nervous disorders et al. In fact, in the Jewish tradition all illness was due to personal forces, which explains why so many accounts of healing in the Gospels read like accounts of exorcism.

The early church embraced and continued the healing ministry and we find both Peter and Paul performing acts of healing. As the church developed and became the established religion of the West, its healing ministry began to slip from view and much illness was understood in terms of sin and possession.

In medieval times it was religion which mostly provided the rationale for illness and disease in terms of judgement, retribution and the need for salvation. The medical profession adopted a rather less judgemental approach and ‘physicians and surgeons felt less inclined to moralise. They still accepted that leprosy might well have been inflicted as an act of divine retribution.’ (Medicine and Society in later Medieval England – Carole Rawcliffe page 17). Every Romanesque tympanum reminded the trembling penitent of God’s judgement and the division of the damned from the elect.

Nevertheless it was the church and especially the monasteries that provided hospital care. For a long time the hospital and its activities remained largely the church’s responsibility. It was, after all, the convent which provides us with the threefold order of nursing: Mother Superior – Matron; Sister – Sister; Novice – Nurse and it is interesting and worthy of further research to discover how many nurses and other allied healthcare professionals understand their work in terms of vocation. Not only were monasteries centres of excellence throughout Europe for education, farming, viticulture, and social care but also for hospital care.

Following the Renaissance and the birth of so many new ideas, medicine began to develop its own professional identity. The monasteries still continued to provide care for those with mental health problems; in Ireland until the 20th century. Many Victorian asylums were named after Christian saints and private hospitals from medieval times espoused old testament names ie Bethlehem (house of bread) as in the Bethlehem Royal in London and the Bethel (house of God) Hospital in Norwich.

The year 1948 marked a watershed in this country because it was the year the National Health Service was founded. A national service was established to provide not only free care at the point of delivery but also a consistent service across the whole country. Since its inception, it has undergone many reorganisations almost to the point of becoming routine every five years. Nevertheless, at its best, it is the best in the world.

Where does the church’s ministry of healing fit into today’s world of both private and public health provision? In the NHS the church is very well served by its 325 full-time chaplains and 1500 part-time chaplains. However, there are very few community based Primary Care Trusts which have chaplains on the payroll. There are those who say that chaplaincy is best provided by the local churches and others who say a chaplaincy in a PCT ought to be the responsibility of the local church. There are even a few who argue that all healthcare chaplains should be the responsibility of the church and not be a ‘drain’ on the health service budget.

The church today has a fivefold task:

1. To support local health services and provide a ministry of visiting in local hospitals.
2. To help to fill gaps in service provision.
3. To pioneer new areas of health care.
4. To ensure that there is always a theological critique of health services.
5. To develop the church’s own ministry of healing.

The church is not only a community itself but part of a wider community which it seeks to serve. The church community is ideally placed to support those who are admitted to hospital or who are unwell in the community through a sustained visiting scheme. Throughout the year there are days set aside to focus attention on particular aspects of health and healing. For example every autumn there is World Mental Health Day when the local church has the opportunity to support the day, make provision for exhibitions, seminars etc and organise a special service for people with mental health problems, their carers and families.

The local church will want to foster good relations with healthcare centres, hospitals and community health projects. For example, there are many church people who volunteer.

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to be part of the chaplaincy team working in the local hospital.

The church has always sought to provide support and care where there are gaps. A contemporary example is the provision of hospices for children which was pioneered by charismatic people such as Sister Frances Dominica. Just as the monasteries handed over the care they provided, so the church, especially in the last 150 years, has passed to the state social care, including work such as adoption and hospice care which began in Sydenham with Dr Cicely Saunders. As existing services are incorporated into local authority services, the church moves to the next challenge.

This task is to pioneer new areas of care, suffering and human need. Why? Because it is the way in which the church articulates and embeds the incarnation. It is how it serves the world that Jesus died to save. There are many examples of the church's pioneering role. History charts initiatives like ending the slave trade, the founding of Save the Children by Eglantine Jebb and her sister Dorothy, and examples from the Children's Society to St Mungo's which cares for homeless and abandoned people.

As services, new initiatives and care facilities pass from church to state, there is an ever present task for the church to reflect theologically on the provision of health and social care in all its complexity. It is not enough to hand the services over. Continual monitoring (in today's language) is required. Earlier I referred to the woman whose 'faith made her well'. The word originally used for 'making well' also means 'save'. The one word, sozo, with its double meaning brings together the two aspects of healing and salvation. The challenge and the question is 'how many church ministers understand that salvation is part of a healing process?' Conversely, how many health professionals understand the work they do in terms of a person's salvation, a person's spirituality bringing another dimension to healing and caring.

Here is another example of theological insight informing good practice. In the passage in St John's Gospel chapter 10 about the Good Shepherd, we read that the Good Shepherd knows his sheep. However, the hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and runs away. This has much to say about the use of agency staff and the continuity of care both in hospital and the community.

Finally we turn to the church's own ministry of healing, which continually needs to be rediscovered. Here Readers have an opportunity to enrich their own pastoral ministry. In the formal worship of the church, many places now include healing services and/or a healing section within a regular service, like Holy Communion. The healing service includes prayers and laying on of hands and in some traditions the sacrament of anointing too.

The latest research indicates that people who are supported by prayer and their local church community are better able to cope with their particular illness.

Outside formal church services, there is a wide range of pastoral activity which is a vital part of the church's ministry of healing. Visiting older people, the lonely and those who are rejected and abandoned by the wider society is a direct expression of Jesus' own ministry and teaching; so too is conducting worship in residential and community homes, marking the great festivals and providing the familiar and well known in hymns and songs (some refer to this as reminiscence therapy).

There are more specialist roles such as the deliverance ministry and 'home communions', as well as the daily routine of intercessory prayer. The prayer of the church should never be underestimated and people are forever reporting their feelings of support and wellbeing because they have been prayed for personally in their local church. The latest research indicates that people who are supported by prayer and their local church community are better able to cope with their particular illness.

Spirituality is the word on everyone's lips and it sums up the work and witness of all the faith communities. In the field of mental health, spirituality is often part of the diagnostic process because it is not possible to assess a person's mental health unless their spirituality is understood as well. It is this holistic approach to assessment and diagnosis which is being widely acknowledged as the way forward. Not only is there a National Forum for Spirituality and Mental Health which brings all the major faiths and mental health personnel together, but also there will soon be a national association for the study of spirituality, supported by universities where there are departments established for the study and teaching of spirituality.

The opportunities for Readers to develop a healing ministry are endless; nor does the work need to be highly professional or complex. Sitting by the side of a dying or unconscious person is a ministry of 'presence' which speaks not only of the presence of God and the 'hands' which bless people now but also of the love and care of God and the church. The mission of the church is found first in the pastoral ministry of every Christian congregation. It is quite simply here that people can see and touch the love of God at work in their world. It is a ministry of service to which many are called and feel privileged to serve.

Arthur Hawes retired as Archdeacon of Lincoln last year and now lives in London. He continues his long association with Mental Health and is co-chair of the National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum, as well as chairing the Mental Health Committee of the Archbishop's Council.
For Christ’s love compels us …
2 Corinthians 5:14

At the heart of Burrswood is a unique, independent non-surgical hospital registered with the Care Quality Commission, which seeks to combine the Christian healing ministry with compassionate care for the whole person alongside clinical expertise.

Burrswood was founded by Dorothy Kerin, who was miraculously healed of tubercular meningitis as a young woman of 22 in 1912. In 1948 she came to Burrswood, which then became a registered nursing home where orthodox medical care was combined with Christian prayer and counsel to create a place of healing for the whole person. She describes in her book The Living Touch how she was charged by God ‘to heal the sick, comfort the sorrowing and give faith to the faithless’, a commission which is still at the centre of Burrswood’s unfolding vision today.

CHRISTIAN WHOLE PERSON CARE

Today the hospital at Burrswood has an experienced interdisciplinary team with resident doctors, sixty nurses, a chaplaincy team that spans the Christian denominations, seven physiotherapists and a counselling team, all of whom are BACP accredited. We aim to offer total care for each person who is admitted to our 40 bed unit. This care, which begins with establishing a relationship of trust and acceptance, can be particularly helpful for people diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), or ME.

We keep the one who is ill at the centre of a closely knit team approach to treatment and care where confidentiality is shared with the patients consent. Those who have been ill for a while, who are struggling to prevent their illness becoming their identity, find this approach affirming and empowering. Even for a previously fit lady who came to us following a hip replacement, the teamwork was transforming. She found such a love at the heart of care that she was able to share her yearning for faith and her life of fragmented relationships.

We aim to be alongside the person who is sick, rather than focusing on any one particular disease process. So often people have got stuck in ‘the system’, with no-one stepping back to see the person in the patient. It’s not anybody’s fault, it’s just how the system has developed - and by the end of it all, some people feel quite fragmented. Our role is to bring the person together again, enabling them to live more fully in every area of their lives.

Treatment is focused on individual needs. It is carried out in a nurturing environment of safety and love where medical and nursing care is fully integrated with counselling, physiotherapy and Christian ministry.

Whilst admitting some who are acutely ill, Burrswood today specialises in the unique needs associated with:
- Step down post surgical and medical care
- Rehabilitation and physical therapy
- Counselling, psychological and behavioural issues
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Short term respite care
- Palliative and end of life care

Focusing on one aspect of our work may give a better idea of how we operate:

CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME / MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS (CFS/ME)

This condition is diagnosed classically as fatigue severe enough to cause a 50% loss of physical and social function for a minimum of six months, together with symptoms including sleep disturbance, concentration impairment, headaches, muscle pain, multi-joint pain, sore throat and tender lymph nodes.

Since resources for people suffering from this condition have been scarce and patchy over the years, Burrswood increasingly has had a role to play. Jesus was often found mixing with people on the edge of society, and that is where many with CFS/ME find themselves.

The cause of the disease is often hard to pin down, as there are often many
factors involved. There are many models which seek to explain what is happening to the body physiologically, one being that ongoing chronic stress can, in time, make people vulnerable to CFS/ME, the final trigger usually being a virus or an acute illness. This chronic stress can be physical – perhaps caused by overwork over a long period of time; emotional – such as relationship problems, multiple bereavements or unresolved childhood trauma; social – such as unemployment or homelessness; or spiritual – such as having a distorted image of God as one who constantly judges or whose love must be earned. These ongoing stressors cause an over-production of a chemical transmitter in the brain called serotonin. As a result, the receptors which would normally be ‘turned on’ by serotonin become insensitive and do not respond properly, resulting in fatigue and many other associated symptoms. The only way to make the receptors responsive again is to ‘turn off’ the input of stress – physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually – and to put in its place a structure and a way of life which will give the best environment for the body to get well.

Therefore when someone with CFS/ME comes to Burrswood, time is spent listening to their story and looking at what might be trigger factors in their particular situation. This takes time and patience from everyone in the team, as often the story can only be told in short episodes because of the patient’s fatigue. The beauty of the Burrswood approach is that the integrated multidisciplinary team is all under one roof, enabling the patient to receive the care they need in the one place.

One aspect of our approach is called ‘pacing’. This means organising the day into ‘bite-sized’ chunks of physical or mental activity, relaxation and rest. This both ensures that the patient doesn’t ‘overdo it’ causing rebound fatigue, and provides a structure through which, in time, the activity element can slowly be increased without detriment. Other elements may include medication and diet, graded exercise, sleep management, and learning how to bring fun and enjoyment back into a life which has become grey and monotonous because of the restrictions of the illness.

There are no ‘quick fix’ solutions, but as we draw alongside, listen, share their journey, and offer practical management, we begin to see people live more meaningfully, with hope for the future, and make steady progress. For many, it is the first time they have really been heard; for others it is the first time they have been given a practical approach to their illness, which empowers them and gives them new hope.

One of our patients wrote: ‘I feel that Burrswood has given me back my self-esteem and dignity and I truly believe this is because you are not just treated as a diagnosis for medical intervention. I felt that previously at other hospitals the medical staff would sometimes overlook that there was a person inside the broken body who does actually have views, feelings and emotions about what is happening to them.’

(For more information about CFS/ME and the Burrswood team approach, see: www.burrswood.org.uk/hospital/papers_training)

THE BURRSWOOD MODEL OF CARE
Those who come as patients, whatever the reason for admission, find their inner journey can be shared with a confidence that the depth of their need will be heard and understood. Those who are caring find they have, above all, to listen to God, seeking the mind of Christ for the one who is sick as they try to hold their pastoral hearts and professional minds alongside the certainty that Jesus longs to bring healing and wholeness.

We try to ensure that our nursing authority lies in authenticity – a modelling of how to be, as well as how to do. Often our hands are empty – we share our humanity and the seeming helplessness of some who are staying with us in the hospital.

Miraculous healing and ongoing suffering are realities of today. In this paradox we have to seek the mind of Christ, knowing that within the purposes of our sovereign God, who one day will make all things new, is a perfect harmony between the power of prayer and our God-given offering of medicine that opens the way to wholeness.

THE CARE OF THE DYING IS PART OF OUR MINISTRY
The love and security of the caring community brings about a situation in which emotional, psychological and spiritual distress sometimes cease to be masked, once physical pain is eased by the medical team. We have to accept that some may choose to retain the latter to stop other forms of distress from surfacing: clinging to known pain may feel preferable to allowing an inner world to be exposed. As the late Henri Nouwen writes, ´compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to share in problems, fear, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.´ In other words, compassion means being like Jesus. And that is our challenge!

HEALING AND THE CHURCH
Burrswood’s Church of Christ the Healer is central to the whole-person ministry of healing and the chaplains are integral within the inter-disciplinary team. Healing services with the laying on of hands are held twice a week alongside traditional and sacramental ministry and informal prayer. The hospital and guest house at Burrswood are adjacent to the church. The proclamation of the gospel brings healing today, enabling people to hear and enter into the living truth of the risen Christ and his salvation. The imparting of love and acceptance bring blessing and healing.

Anointing and the Eucharist are important areas of ministry, and confession is often an important step towards healing. Indeed the Church of Christ the Healer has been described as the outpatient department at Burrswood – although in reality that lies close by, in a wing built just over a decade ago.

We believe the ministry of healing should not be focused on the performing of miracles but rather on seeing the healing power and presence of Jesus transforming lives. This transformation may be manifested physically, emotionally, spiritually or in relationships. Those who receive will recognise God’s power at work. They will experience the care of a loving Father and be healed in ways they didn’t expect. Occasionally something happens that makes our spirits soar like eagles, now and then someone will get up and run; but more often we see people becoming whole, able to carry on more fully in their everyday lives. Our lives are lived working with the responsibilities and practicalities of everyday life – and that is surely where we need to know God’s transforming presence most of all!😊

Dr Paul Worthley is the Senior Physician and Dr Gareth Tuckwell is the CEO of Burrswood Christian Hospital, Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9PY
www.burrswood.org.uk
Music is... difficult to write about! Music’s effects are difficult to quantify, yet we all experience them. Music touches parts other media fail to reach, resonating in the core part of the brain. Music gives us physical sensations and spiritual highs, mental stimulation, emotional satisfaction.

Wikipedia solemnly states ‘there is no single and intercultural universal concept defining what music might be’. Annie Lennox is a little more helpful: ‘A human creation from a divine source... perhaps’.

So what could be happening when we interact with music? Is it merely entertainment or could there be lasting benefits? Is there a particular kind of music that is most beneficial to us? And if music really is divinely inspired, can it help us on our spiritual journey?

Music is...

**Foundational**

Our first sensations in the womb are sounds, the complex and constantly varying cross-rhythms of our mother’s heartbeat and our own, gurgles and whooshing sounds from our mother’s digestive system, muffled voices and music from the outside world. Here early brain formation takes place, we are ‘woven together’ (Ps. 139:15), embroidered, strands of music rhythm and sound colour forming a foundation to our early brain growth.

Unborn babies respond to music in the womb, here variation and intensity are important, if sounds are repetitive the foetus becomes habituated and responses are dulled, and music of a particular loudness or intensity can prompt a distress reaction. There may be a corollary with the ‘Mozart effect’ here – listening to the repetitive (‘minimalist’) Philip Glass music did not release the same learning potential for the rats at the University of Wisconsin as Mozart with its more varied harmonic and melodic vocabulary.

Music could be our first dreams and memories: unborn babies dream, are they recalling sounds and music they have recently heard? Babies remember music heard in the womb more than a year after birth.

**Developmental**

Early speech is musical, mothers instinctively use melodic shapes when communicating with their infants, this extra sound colour imitates the baby’s early vocal sounds helping it to be aware of its own vocal shapes, and to begin an understanding of language syntax.

Dr Seuss aided children’s reading not just by writing a fun story about the Cat in the Hat; it’s the rhyming rhythms that children latch on to, they can have fun with words in a musical way, connecting to the different tones and tone patterns of the words, thus spurred on to read and decipher text to aid this music creation.

And does listening to a Mozart sonata really help learning? Maybe by relaxing us just enough to improve brain focus.
Connective
Let’s play the music and dance! Music is a whole-brain activity connecting areas involved with speech, movement, sociability, emotion. Some music therapists are involved in stroke rehabilitation – helping individuals regain co-ordination and movement as the music triggers brain impulses prompting a physical reaction.

Music also connects us with each other – I’ve recently run a song-writing project with a group of autistic teenagers, and seen their enjoyment working together to create and perform their song, with dance movements added! The group had varying abilities with words and different anxieties about working with their peers, but music brought them together.

Transporting
A tune for Alzheimer’s patients can trigger a memory, of a certain place or face. Some music therapists work with dementia sufferers to revisit life experiences through music from their past, in the hope of helping them piece together some parts of a fragmented identity.

Music can also create a new place to take someone, for traumatised people a place of safety; music can provide a supporting frame, a safe enclosure, a means of holding the person who needs to be held. *Maybe this is the kind of process David employed when playing the harp for King Saul (1 Sam 16:23).*

Descriptive
Aboriginal art is interpreted in community rituals involving dance and music, here the artscape and soundscape come together for storytelling, the art is not complete without its accompanying soundtrack.

Some of our best modern-day composers are writing for film. It’s a broad canvas and an opportunity to create and interpret pictures in sound. For example, John Williams in his score for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* shows the bravado and excitement of the adventuring hero Indiana Jones in his ‘Raiders’ March’ and later in ‘Marion’s Theme’ explores the romantic element of the story, providing the excitement of the adventuring hero of the *Lost Ark*.

*I did a survey of friends recently; would they rather be on Desert Island Discs or This Is Your Life? Most friends opted for *Desert Island Discs*.* I think partly because there is less risk of unexpected and unwanted guests appearing from the past! On that radio programme you get to choose your own soundtrack or ‘film score’; the music conveys the emotional drama, the core truths beneath the text of your story.

Elevating
In the UK we have the unhappiest children and young people in the industrialised world*’* (and I suspect the most bored – I can speak with some authority having done three nights a week youth work for the past few years).

So I’ve been interested to see the awe with which the Simón Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela have been greeted on visits here as they’ve performed at the Proms and more recently at the Royal Festival Hall in London. It is the history of the orchestra as well as its musical proficiency and passion which inspires. This is not a rowdy group of young people, the performances and sounds are beautifully choreographed, yet each musician is a product of a system of safety; music can provide a supporting frame, a safe enclosure, a means of holding the person who needs to be held. *Maybe this is the kind of process David employed when playing the harp for King Saul (1 Sam 16:23).*

The musical sensibilities these young people develop... aid their personal development as well as providing future performing and earning opportunities for some.

*El Sistema* which has been running in Venezuela for the last 34 years. It draws disadvantaged young people off the streets and from schools in poor neighbourhoods and penal institutions, giving them a chance to learn an instrument, to practise and perform music together. For many this is a thoroughly elevating experience, a way out of a life of criminality and drugs.

For now our music, for all its wonder, is ‘echoes of mercy’ and ‘whispers of love’. The performance of the full score is yet to come. Although blind from early childhood Fanny Crosby’s words, inspired by a tune written by her friend Phoebe Knapp, celebrate all that her Kinsman-Redeemer has done for her, and the ‘blessed assurance’ this relationship brings. The music accompanies, with its rhythmical symmetry, choral sweetness and melodic simplicity, portrays the heartfelt love and joy and contentment Fanny has found.

Heavenly
‘This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long’
Fanny J Crosby (1873)

“Heavenly” – my final adjective. Is music the language of communication between the Lover and the Beloved?

I’m privileged to live in Wales, the ‘Land of Song’. One of the favourite songs in these parts is Calon Lân, with the line in the chorus ‘Dim ond calon lân all ganu’ (‘only a clean heart can sing’).

The psalmist is clear that he sings because of what God has done for him: ‘He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth’ (Ps.40:2-3).

Music accompanies and defines our stories. In the hymn quoted above, Fanny Crosby’s words, inspired by a tune written by her friend Phoebe Knapp, celebrate all that her Kinsman-Redeemer has done for her, and the ‘blessed assurance’ this relationship brings. The music accompanies, with its rhythmical symmetry, choral sweetness and melodic simplicity, portrays the heartfelt love and joy and contentment Fanny has found.

Paul Young is a music therapist and composer based in North Wales. He has practised music therapy with older people with dementia and young offenders and currently works with children and young people with special needs.

1 “What is music?”, Annie Lennox, Resurgence Magazine Issue 249 July/August 2008
3 Child of our Time study, A Lamont, Leicester University (2001)
A WARD VOLUNTEER & LAY CHAPLAIN
When I retired from teaching I trained in relationship counselling and then worked as a volunteer for Relate for five years. Just over a year ago I became a volunteer at Nightingale House. I began working in the day hospice, serving drinks and lunch, and chatting to the patients. I then felt that I would like to try working on the ward, unsure as to whether I would be able to cope with the emotions and suffering but keen to try. I still served drinks and meals but there was more opportunity to talk and listen to patients and relatives and I was able to use some of my counselling skills.

One day I was talking to a volunteer chaplain and telling him about my teaching and counselling experience. I had been attending the chapel service in the hospice when I was able and he asked about my faith. He wondered if I was interested in talking to the chaplain about becoming a volunteer on his team. This I did and I now find myself combining coffee making with prayer and Bible readings. I have been on training courses and met other chaplains as well as colleagues working at this and other hospices in different disciplines, learning more, especially about myself. So where is God in all this? I believe that God was at work when I talked to the volunteer chaplain at Nightingale House.

How has the fact that I am a member of the chaplain’s team changed my work at the hospice? I hope that God is now at the front of my mind when I enter the hospice. I feel that I am not alone when listening and talking to patients and relatives. I also know that I can ask for his help when words fail me, which they often do.

Working with the dying and their friends and families is a privilege and a humbling experience and I have gained much from sharing in their journeys, far more than I have given. I have also realised how important it is to be there for someone now because next time may be too late. I have found that a valuable relationship can be formed in just one meeting and I have learnt not to be afraid of silence. Patients are unique and so are their needs. Sometimes they want to pray and hear passages from the Bible read to them but I have met many whose spiritual journey needs a hand to hold, company, humour, understanding and non-judgemental listening: someone with the time to give who is less emotionally affected by their diagnosis than their close friends and family. The suggestion of a visit to the chapel or lighting a candle for someone they love can comfort a relative feeling useless and powerless and struggling to cope with what is happening.

So I am trying to work for God, to be his ears, voice and hands, to be a channel to let him help. I pray that I may be sensitive to the needs of others, forgetting my own shyness and be brave for God. For me this is what it means to be a Christian, being a hearer and doer of the word of God. Sometimes I feel I have failed or emotions overwhelm me but God is always there to encourage if I listen and my work is challenging and satisfying.

A DAY HOSPICE LAY CHAPLAIN
Why work in a hospice? This might be the first question that comes to mind when most people think of a hospice. They think of it as a place where people go to die, and so assume it must be very depressing. However, those who have any dealings with a hospice know that this impression is wrong.

I had known about Nightingale House in Wrexham while helping with initial funding when I was with Rotary. It was not until my wife attended the hospice as a day care patient that I realised what a wonderful, supportive and caring place it was. It was, and is, a happy place and my wife loved her days there. However, at that time if someone had said that I would be there three years later working as a volunteer, I would probably have laughed them to scorn, but that is what happened and I am still happily working there. So how did it happen?

When my wife died I had been a Reader with The Church in Wales for some time and I had been introduced to the Acorn Listening courses. Having completed some courses I was wondering how these new skills could be used for the benefit
of others. I did not particularly want to work in the hospital, and then remembered that our curate, who was always hard-pressed, was working as the chaplain to Nightingale House. So I asked if I could be of any help. I was surprised and felt threatened when she

Sometimes I feel I have failed or emotions overwhelm me but God is always there to encourage if I listen and my work is challenging and satisfying.

said I was just what she was looking for and handed me an application form to become a lay chaplain; that was something I didn’t think I could do, but she was very persuasive. After interviews and a CRB check, while still having misgivings, I became a volunteer.

Visiting as carer to a relative and working as a volunteer are very different and the chaplain took time to induct me into the new role. Nightingale House has a social group called the Cuckoos, (those who are in remission and do not need any treatment from the hospice but like to keep in touch with their friends) and I was first asked to support them. The other area she wanted me to work in was with the day care patients, visiting the ward only when requested.

One of the first things I found hard was to re-examine my understanding of spirituality. The chaplains, or pastoral carers as our name tags identify us, are there to help all people of all faiths and none and to come alongside them when they require help or are vulnerable. It means being a friend who they can trust and tell as much or as little as they wish and know that information will be kept confidential and that their dignity will always be respected.

To work within the hospice environment, as part of a multi-disciplinary team, is a great honour and a privilege and I have made many friends among the patients, their families and friends, the staff and other volunteers and especially with the chaplaincy team. Sometimes it seems that we have just had a pleasant chat with friends but on other days we know that we have been able to show God’s love and forgiveness and made a difference to someone. It all seems very worthwhile.

A LAY CHAPLAIN

Although I had spent a number of years working happily in a hospital chaplaincy team, I had never imagined becoming involved at a hospice. It was following a move to this area, at a time when I was waiting to see which
direction to take, that I heard Tracy Livingstone, Director of Nursing and Patient Services, speak about Nightingale House and felt prompted to attend an Open Day. From that time it seemed right to pursue the possibility.

There seems to be a fine balance between sociability and being effective in the task. I have needed to pray and think this through. Obviously a certain amount of sociability is essential in building up relationships – not only with the patients and their relatives, but also with staff and other volunteers. There have been days when I have gone home after my visiting and thought, ‘What was the point of being there? Did I achieve anything?’

I am no stranger to the concept of ‘faithful ministry’, in other words, of plodding on and trusting that what the Lord has instigated he will bring to completion. Nevertheless, the Lord has given us the abilities to contemplate and analyse – to practice what the College of Healthcare Chaplains describes as critical reflection.

Entering into a contract at the hospice implies joining a pretty vast network of specialties, interlinked yet operating independently. Surprisingly, there doesn’t appear to be a great deal of overlap. One has to remember, however, that a number of these specialties are correctly described as ‘caring professions’ and that the patient will have a variety of people who are ready to listen, reassure, broker solutions, etc, thus providing that very necessary spiritual care within the holistic framework.

I feel that this awareness should make us, as pastoral carers, focus on our own contribution to the patient’s well-being. We must not hesitate to follow-up any leads towards discussion of spiritual matters. There are times when nurses, in a kind attempt to spare us

distress, suggest that we should not go into a room where someone is in ‘the last throes’ – the very time when we would want to minister to the dying person and the relatives.

In fact, this last situation is the one which gives my own ministry one of its greatest satisfactions. The realisation that, when I had gently commended people into the Lord’s hands, they seemed to cease their struggle to hold onto life, has led to my understanding that we could perform a unique service at a

significant time. When sharing this with a group of district nurses, they said that so many times they had wished they could pray in that way for their patients – and how they valued Christian ministers at that moment.

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significant time.

CHAPLAIN COORDINATOR

As you can see from these diverse testimonies, working in hospice chaplaincy is a varied job! As a team, we have direct responsibility for the spiritual well-being of patients, their carers, staff and volunteers, but as Chaplain Coordinator I have additional responsibilities around training and education, liaison with local faith communities and development of spiritual care with other health professionals associated with the hospice. We act as the specialist team, but most pastoral and spiritual care is provided by staff and volunteers as part of their normal working duties. Within the hospice it is well recognised that everyone needs to be able to provide some level of pastoral care and we have a variety of training opportunities to help staff and volunteers meet this challenge. Some people are naturally gifted in this role and others need a little gentle help, but as human beings created by a loving God, we all have an inherent capacity to care.

As you have read, the hospice is a place of laughter and fun, held together by love and care from everyone in the hospice community and some of the best care is given by patients to other patients. It is within this community that we minister, just as any other ministry exists in community, helping reconcile that community to their journey with God, in this way for their patients – and how they valued Christian ministers at that moment.

This article was written collaboratively by the Chaplaincy Team at Nightingale House, Wrexham

http://www.nightingalehouse.co.uk
Healing in the context of Palliative Care

I try to avoid telling people what I do in my professional life. My answer either draws an uncomfortable silence or comments about how patient and kind I must be. Why? Well, I am a consultant in Palliative Medicine working in a large hospice in the north of England. Palliative Medicine has hit the headlines recently with articles about the Liverpool Care Pathway for the dying and the ongoing debate about assisted suicide. Palliative Care is about looking after people who have illnesses that are no longer responsive to disease modifying treatment and as such concentrates on symptom control and trying to improve quality of life rather than length of life.

At first glance it seems odd that I should be asked to write an article about healing when I work with people who have in the last few months or days of their life. It is important to be clear that a disease describes the changes that happen within the body that cause us to become unwell. On the other hand an illness is how we experience those changes as an individual. As modern medicine advances we now diagnose more diseases at earlier stages than ever before. As we survive longer and medicine alters the natural course of many diseases more and more of us live with less than perfect physical health.

Healing is a complex concept. Healing implies restoration of some element of our being that has been broken or damaged in some way. When applied to our health it implies a restoration of physical well-being. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (1948). The WHO definition is aspirational, implying as it does a state where all our physical and social needs are met and where we feel happy and fulfilled. Healing, according to this definition, is brought about through the practice of medicine, the implementation of public health measures and the pursuit of social justice.

From a Christian perspective health is defined differently to include the quality of our relationship with God. The Christian Medical Fellowship defines health as, ‘the strength to be fully human’ (CMF 1993). From this definition health is about being enabled to be the person God created us to be. This means that healing is not about instant cures or the restoration of physical function. If we accept this definition, then healing is all about God’s grace enabling us to be fully human (Church of England 2000). This implies that we can be healthy despite physical infirmities as long as the individual is in a right relationship with God.

So what is my understanding of healing in the context of palliative care? In my experience healing is common in palliative care but is rarely a one-off miraculous event of physical restoration. It is rather a more gradual process that involves a subtle but tangible shift in physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Such changes involve the input of a broad range of people and skills working together in a therapeutic community (Tuckwell 1997). Some of the healing is the result of medical and nursing interventions. Some of it is the consequence of the quality and focus of care. A key element of my understanding of healing is creating a space where an individual can feel safe enough to face the reality of the situation they find themselves in. It is about hearing and valuing the person’s story for what it is and not trying to fit it into our own understanding and expectations.

How is such a therapeutic space created? Different professionals will place emphasis on different elements but fundamentally all are looking to give an individual the time and support they need to risk facing their brokenness and offering them options for restoration. Thus a doctor will try and manage symptoms effectively so the individual has the energy to invest in other areas important to the patient such as relationships. A counsellor will try and help the individual to talk about their thoughts and feelings so that they can perhaps understand why they may be reacting to what is happening to them in the way that they are and thus learn another way to be.

Healing may occur at any time and through anyone who is empathic and caring. The smile of a volunteer giving out a cup of tea to a patient may help to restore some element of their faith in human nature.
any approach to healing that only focuses on function and ability rather than the inherent value of the person. It is vital that people with disabilities or chronic illnesses are valued for themselves and are not subject to inappropriate pressure to be healed through prayer. Such pressure, even when well intentioned, destroys hope and generates a sense of guilt and failure. Rather the Christian healing ministry should be about empowering and enabling all people to have a voice and contribute as they can to the community in which they live.

We all have a potential role to play. As Readers walking alongside people we can choose to have a significant role in the Christian ministry of healing. This is particularly the case, when dealing with people facing the end of their lives. The challenge for us is to provide dependable support that enables the person to face the reality of their situation without judgement or the creation of dependency. To do that, we need to learn how to actively listen rather than trying to offer solutions. We need to learn to be with rather than do to. We need to understand a little of the psychology of what it is like to live with a life limiting illness. As death draws closer the sense of loss is often profound for the individual and their family. The reality of leaving behind loved ones, the loss of hopes and dreams, as well as the uncertainty of when and how death will come makes this a time of profound emotion. There are rarely any simple answers – but being prepared to be with, and endure with, the person and their family through those times is a key element of this ministry.

There is a cost to caring and the ministry of healing. The healing ministry has to be grounded in prayer. It is also sacramental. It is hard to be with people who are suffering and for whom there are no easy answers. It is hard to hear their stories and not be moved. It is difficult to accept things that cannot be controlled. It can be frustrating when things do not improve despite a considerable amount of prayer and support being offered. It is vital then that anyone walking alongside someone who is facing the end of their lives has time to rest and relax as well as being self-disciplined. It is also important to address our own mortality, spending time understanding what we understand about the mystery that is death and how we understand the reality of eternal life. This has a considerable cost, as CS Lewis wrote:

‘To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one.’

Healing in our dying reflects the whole Easter story, starting with the pain of saying goodbye at the Last Supper to the pain of Good Friday before the joy of Easter Day. Most of us choose to avoid thinking about the end of our lives, yet the whole of our lives is preparation for our death. I suggest that praying for miraculous healing for people with life limiting illnesses is usually unhelpful, but praying for reconciliation and for peace is vital. I also suggest that we should never tell someone they will get better, as we cannot promise that. Only God can. In addition whilst we can empathise we should never say that we understand, for even if we have lived through a similar experience ours will be different from the one being lived by the person we are supporting.

If you are interested in this kind of ministry spend time at your local hospice and with your local hospital chaplaincy teams. Remember that:

‘He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds’ Psalm 147:3 (NIV)

Susan Salt

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A time to keep silence

Ministry of Readers to the bereaved

Christine Worsley
A Reader in Ely diocese

‘The funeral loomed ahead of her like some terrible cliff face which she must climb…’

The priest was speaking. Ruth heard the words very clearly, very distinctly, and yet could find no meaning in them; they were in some foreign tongue.¹

For Readers called to a ministry of preaching, teaching and pastoral care, words obviously matter. Readers are to be wordsmiths, those who weave and craft words, those who, at funerals, find and articulate words for others that can convey meaning in the face of the mystery of death. It is important that their words are understood, that they communicate something of the hope, truth, comfort and challenge of the gospel. It needs to be a very different experience from that of the young widow in Susan Hill’s novel, quoted above, who heard words that made no sense and which failed to speak into her experience of grieving.

In our largely non-churchgoing society it is still the case that the majority of funerals are taken by a Christian minister. However, the years since Hill’s novel was written have seen a phenomenal increase in the desire on the part of the bereaved to personalise funerals, to exercise choice in relation to readings, music and ritual actions. This shift has to some extent reversed the dilemma experienced by Hill’s widow, Ruth. Recently a Church of England vicar made the news by suggesting that requests by the bereaved for the use of non-Christian words at funerals were unacceptable, and perhaps cause for refusing to officiate at such events. For this minister, some of the words chosen by the bereaved were indeed heard as if ‘in some foreign tongue’.

For all ministers of the Word, there are real questions and challenges here: how do we maintain the integrity of gospel words in our pastoral care of the bereaved, when many of them hear our speech as increasingly strange and unfamiliar? How do we relate the stories of those who are bereaved and the words that they want to use to tell them, to the Christian story, when we often struggle to find a common language around loss and hope, death and resurrection?

WEAVING SILENCE AND SPEECH

Preachers are called to proclaim, but they are also called to be silent. Before anything else, Killinger argues, ‘our calling …is a calling to silence. Not to speak, but to be silent.’² For Killinger, all our words must be born out of being silent before God.

In what follows, I would like to develop this sense of the need for silence, to explore how we might see it as something which is interwoven with our pastoral practice, as something which we carry with us from our experience of prayer: something that we weave creatively with our words and actions.

In this broader perspective silence is closer to a quality of presence and of being; an aspect of our relating, Lyall has linked this perspective to the Christian understanding of the incarnation, one implication of which he sees as being that, ‘the communication of Christian truth is relational and not propositional.’³ To trust in the quality of our relating to carry truth is not easy, but it is crucial if our proclamations in words of Christian truths are to be heard and understood.

HEARING INTO SPEECH

In our pastoral ministry and specifically in our ministry for and alongside the bereaved, giving attention and listening aims to ‘hear into speech’ those who come to us as strangers to much of our language, those who are unfamiliar with our idioms.

Why is this important? The answer lies partly in our understanding of the nature of God; in our belief that we are called to serve a God who listens and waits on our speech. The idea of hearing others into speech has been used by theologians to highlight the importance for those who are marginalised or vulnerable of ‘finding a voice’. In an article, ‘Silence and the Patience of God’, Muers has explored an interesting interpretation of the idea of ‘silence in heaven’ from Revelation 8:1 (‘When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour’). Muers relates this to verse 4 of the same chapter, (‘And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God’) (NRSV), as referring to a time when God listens to the prayers of Israel: God is one who hears ‘creation into speech’, a God who waits and listens.⁴

The answer also lies in our ability to own the power of our words and our position within funeral ministry. We know that all bereavements are unique and that people react very differently to loss. Nevertheless, it is a general truth that within the context of a Christian funeral, where Christian words and actions are given, the bereaved are more vulnerable than Christian ministers. Within a consideration of the role of the witnesses in the book of Lamentations,
and a time for speech

O’Connor asks how a witness may bring comfort and concludes that they can do so by ‘giving language back to the bereaved in the face of intense pain, which is often “a slincer of words”’. She appeals to witnesses to be prepared to silence their own hope and confidence in order that the words of the bereaved may come to birth:

‘But please: Don’t say it’s not really so bad. Because it is. Death is awful… If you think your task as comforter is to tell me that really… it’s not so bad, you do not sit with me in my grief… To comfort me… Come sit beside me on my mourning bench.’

So let’s explore briefly how reflecting the life of a silent and speaking God within our funeral ministry may bring us closer to finding a shared language with those who are bereaved.

RITUAL WORDS AND SILENCE

We have the minister so the words will know where to go

Imagine them circling and circling the confusing cemetery.
Imagine them roving the earth without anywhere to rest

The need for the variety of emotions which surround the major events of life to be contained and find expression in formal rituals is common to humanity. The extract from the poem above highlights this and also the need for someone to manage or lead the ritual.

The poem also conveys a sense of the power of words within the experience of bereavement. In this regard, Davies has written of the ‘powerful weapon of language rising to defy death’, a weapon which, accompanied by other ritual acts, is able to assert the triumph of humanity over death. Moreover, for Davies and others, ritual has the power to assert triumph and to bring hope, beyond specific interpretations of the meaning of the words used within it: to put people in touch with a transcendent power, to move people into a new phase of life.

Can the fact that words within ritual have the potential to transform beyond their specific meaning, also transform our anxiety as ministers about the inadequacy and limitation of our words? Can we let go into the silence of trusting the pattern of movement, action and speech within the ritual, to carry meaning? It would be foolish to suggest automatic transformative potential; to say that participants will always be changed by it. But we can make change more likely by standing alongside the bereaved in that shared space in which we recognise together the significance and importance of ritual action. Increasingly we can and do share this space: we have witnessed a growing need amongst the bereaved to create public rituals around death and bereavement, to engage in communal action that can express a depth of loss and grief. Emerging from the silence of this shared space perhaps we may begin to listen and to talk with each other about symbols and actions to mark the significance of a death which are meaningful to all involved.

One way in which this might work is to understand the way in which the tripartite pattern of rituals which are rites of passage can mirror and carry the pattern of death and resurrection at the heart of the Christian story. Sheppy has directly related this pattern to the events of Good Friday, the pre-liminal phase of ritual), Holy Saturday (liminal phase) and Easter Day (post liminal phase). Again, it is too simplistic to suggest automatic understanding of the meaning of this pattern on the part of the bereaved, whether they are practising Christians or not. But in listening to the bereaved, can we hear whispers of this story of the hope of new life through and beyond the reality of death? Perhaps although people do not go to church, they have not completely forgotten the story.

INTEGRITY AND SILENCE

Some of my own anxiety – even fear – around this approach arises from a belief that somehow the integrity of the gospel, and my integrity as a representative of the church, will be compromised. Surely the gospel is about challenge too. Doesn’t silence and listening just give the impression that really, anything goes? But maybe I need to face my anxiety, rather than imposing it on others.

There is also much in scripture to challenge this anxiety. It is not possible to do justice to all of that here. I offer, briefly, two examples.

1 An important and recurring theme within the Bible is God’s special concern for those on the edge, or outside the regular worshipping community – the stranger, the poor. Kingdom values are ‘upside down’: here the first are last and the last first, and the heart of discipleship is to be found in identifying with the suffering of Jesus who himself ‘became a curse for us’ so that ‘in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles.’ (Gal 3:13-14 NRSV).

2 God, who is creator of the whole world, is also active, through the Holy Spirit, within the whole world. Just one illustration – the narratives in the early chapters of Genesis describing the establishment of the Noachic Covenant, believed to date from the post-exilic period, have been used to suggest that God’s concern for the whole of humanity, at this stage, had come to be seen as being as significant as his care for a particular people.

Of course, this does not remove the need for challenge. But, it does require me, as a minister, to recognise that the challenges of God may also come to me in the words – even strange and unknown words – of those for whom I seek to care. It does also mean that I can only begin to challenge when I allow myself as a minister of the gospel, to recognise that being alongside those whom God loves, whoever they are, is a calling to stand on holy ground. And on this ground, I do not need to defend God, but to listen and watch – to be silent before God, so that my speech may have integrity.

christine.worsley@office.ely.anglican.org

1 S Hill, In the Springtime of the Year, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1974
3 D Lyall, Integrity of Pastoral Care, London, SPCK, 2001
5 K O’Connor, Lamentations and the Tears of the World, New York, Orbis, 2002
7 D Davies, Death, Ritual and Belief, London, Cassell, 1997
8 P Sheppy, Death, Liturgy and Ritual-Vol 1, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003
Did you know that 1.8 million people visit a pharmacy daily in the British Isles and 84% of the population visit a pharmacy at least once a year?

The role of the pharmacist in patient health care has increased enormously in recent years. It has come about as a result of the recognition by Government after sustained pressure from the profession that pharmacy has been under-used as a health resource for too long.

When I started in practice some forty years ago the pharmacist was often referred to as a dispenser or chemist: the term pharmacist was hardly ever used by the public. Dispensing as far as the public was concerned was what a ‘chemist’ did. They also sold potions to relieve common ailments such as headaches, tummy ache, diarrhoea and the common cold. Often people would ask for a small draught to relieve their indigestion - perhaps mist. mag. trisil; the cost was usually sixpence. Chemists also sold other commodities such as tights, wigs, cosmetics, cameras and baby foods. Some, like Boots the Chemist, had a library which was very popular in the years just after the War.

To young pharmacists like me who had studied a multitude of sciences - pharmaceutical chemistry, pharmacology, pharmacuetics, pharmacognosy and forensic pharmacy to degree level, there was something rather disconcerting in having to spend time selling things which had nothing to do with one’s university studies even though it made good business sense. In fact, without commercial acumen, a career in pharmacy would be difficult within the confines of a high street chemist. Commercial awareness was necessary to enable a pharmacist to run their own business which many did. My first pharmacy opened in 1969 - as far as the public was concerned was what a ‘chemist’ did. They also sold other commodities such as tights, wigs, cosmetics, cameras and baby foods. Some, like Boots the Chemist, had a library which was very popular in the years just after the War.

As I encountered people willing to spend time selling things which had nothing to do with one’s university studies even though it made good business sense. In fact, without commercial acumen, a career in pharmacy would be difficult within the confines of a high street chemist. Commercial awareness was necessary to enable a pharmacist to run their own business which many did. My first pharmacy opened in 1969 - as far as the public was concerned was what a ‘chemist’ did. They also sold other commodities such as tights, wigs, cosmetics, cameras and baby foods. Some, like Boots the Chemist, had a library which was very popular in the years just after the War.

Over the years the professional side of pharmacy has increased so much that nowadays patients often ask to see the ‘pharmacist’ - a title of great respect to the public and also to their support staff - technicians, dispensers, accredited counter staff etc. I recognise this acutely, as I had a twelve year career break from pharmacy after selling my business. I came out of retirement last year to work as an occasional locum. The profession now takes on many clinical roles formerly carried out exclusively by doctors and nurses. Individual pharmacists have trained for these clinical roles to provide a much more professionally satisfying career. The standard now required of newly qualified pharmacists is reflected in the fact that the university course is now a four year Masters degree compared to the former three years for a Bachelors degree.

For many years, as a committed Christian, I have been very much aware that the Holy Spirit has always been at work, providing me with the energy, compassion, skill and dedication which have enabled me to help people with their healthcare. A degree in pharmacy provided me with the knowledge required to deal with the technical side of the job; but it is because of the Holy Spirit working within me that I am able to deal with people’s needs which go far beyond the mere dispensing of medicines.

Working as a locum I can find myself in many different locations and many different types of pharmacies - all with their own idea of how things should be run. Customers within the different communities I encounter also have their ideas of how things should be run - the two are not always compatible! My work as a locum in England has taken me from Plymouth to Skegness, from Taunton to Rye, with many in between plus some interesting places in London! I also do some work where I live in the Isle of Man.

A degree in pharmacy provided me with the knowledge required to deal with the technical side of the job; but it is because of the Holy Spirit working within me that I am able to deal with people’s needs which go far beyond the mere dispensing of medicines.

Pharmacists today are dispensing very potent medicines unavailable to previous generations, which when used properly are capable of relieving symptoms, and in some cases curing diseases which would have amazed past generations. We would do well to remember that without God’s creative power working in people none of these medicines would have been discovered. The discovery of penicillin is just one example of God’s work in progress. The development of the NHS together with further discoveries have revolutionised health care.

My working day starts at 8.30am and can go on until till 6.30pm sometimes with no breaks. When I clock on at a pharmacy I am from that moment legally obliged to sign on as the Responsible Pharmacist, taking responsibility for all that goes on within the pharmacy during my shift. Staff must be appraised, and the standard operating procedures must be adhered to in order to ensure that the public are safeguarded. Working with medicines is a serious business and can be fraught with danger! If a patient receives a prescription which has been incorrectly dispensed it becomes a criminal offence.

During a normal working day a community pharmacist has many different functions to perform. My first duty is usually making up prescriptions for methadone, needed by heroin addicts to help them to cope with withdrawal symptoms. The prevalence of heroin addiction is sadly more widespread than most communities realise, which is a tragedy that does not appear to be diminishing. Every day I see the results of many people who have been drawn into drug abuse, and are now struggling to give up their addiction.
of these patients are just ordinary people and not all are young. The knowledge that a few moments taken to offer a kind word of understanding is appreciated helps me to cope with seeing their distress. Understandably, many heroin addicts are embarrassed and a request for a private consultation is not uncommon. With each case I deal with I wish I could do more to help.

During the rest of the day in a busy pharmacy there may be several hundred prescription items to check. Advice will be given to patients to ensure that they understand the medicine they are given, how they should take it, and what possible side effects there may be. It is also important that patients should know how to get the best from their medicine. A patient may request a private consultation (Medicine Use Review). This is free to the patient, paid for by the NHS, and allows a pharmacist to explain the details of their prescription and answer any queries about the medicines. The consultation, which can last up to twenty minutes is private and confidential and can be the catalyst to the patient opening up about concerns relating to matters which they have been unable to discuss with others. I feel privileged to be trusted with their concerns and I provide whatever support I can, sometimes pointing them in the right direction - for example, to social services or the church when appropriate. Sadly, those who are most in need of help are often the ones who are least able to ask.

Not all the customers are ill. Emergency hormonal contraception (the morning after pill) is often requested. Pharmacists with a conscientious objection to this have the right to refuse to dispense it but they are professionally required to give the patient advice on where they may obtain it. Most people are aware that the morning after pill is increasingly being used as a form of contraception. It is essential that the patient is informed of the possible side effects, and that advice on future contraception is given.

There are many other demands on a pharmacist’s time: nursing home checks, cholesterol and blood pressure checks, cervical cancer screening, nutrition advice, weight management programmes, flu jabs, tamiflu supplies - the list is almost endless and increasing, such is the demand.

There is also the possibility in future, if parliamentary legislation goes through, that pharmacists will be expected to cooperate with physician-assisted suicide. Personally I feel this is a step too far. In another article in this magazine, Dr. Sue Salt will explain that most patients actually want excellent palliative care and effective pain relief to cope with the pain of terminal illness. For me, such legislation would result in a personal dilemma. Assisted suicide, with or without the legal assistance of a physician, involves administering a lethal dose of a drug, and I could not be involved in the dispensing of such a prescription.

The profession of pharmacy has developed almost beyond recognition during my career. This has been in part due to the aspirations and demands of the public. I know that despite the strenuous nature of the work, most pharmacists do a tremendous job for their patients, often going far beyond the call of duty.

I am proud to belong to this caring profession.

As well as being a Reader in the Diocese of Sodor and Man, Charles Flynn is an Executive Member and Trustee of the Central Readers’ Council and Secretary/PRO of the Isle of Man Branch of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

The Order of Jacob’s Well

The Order of Jacob’s Well was founded more than ten years ago by Archbishop Rowan Williams, who was at that time Bishop of Monmouth, together with a group of lay and ordained Christians involved in the Christian healing ministry in South Wales. These days the Order can be found throughout England, Scotland and Wales, and is expanding worldwide. The Order of Jacob’s Well is fully ecumenical in terms of both its membership and its outreach, being authorised through its Director to its Leadership Board and its Bishop Visitor, the Rt. Revd Dominic Walker of Monmouth.

The Order is under the gracious Patronage of Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose originating Charge to the Order was to discover those expressing a calling to the Healing Ministry, to encourage and teach and pray for them. Over the intervening years the Order has continued to grow and now has six UK Wells operating in ministry together with a large number of their own Licensed Ministers operating through their local churches around the country.

Being a religious Order, rather than just a like-minded fellowship, the members of the Order of Jacob’s Well consider their own direction and devotion to be one of studying and practising the particular New Testament Healing Ministry taught and practised by our Lord and by his immediate followers. This has led, over the years, to a great joy.

The Order has three aims: firstly to seek out those who have an hospitable heart which is open to the scriptures and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, expressing a calling to the Christian Healing Ministry and to test that calling. Secondly to create a network of recognised ministers and prayer centres across the UK to carry the healing light of Christ into the local community, and thirdly to support its ministers with education, authority, fellowship and prayer. The Leadership Board, ‘Alongsiders’, Candidates, Intercessors and Licensed Ministers together make up the family of the Order.

Membership of the Order of Jacob’s Well is open to anyone who has an interest in the Church’s Ministry of Healing and Wholeness and who, having read, consulted and prayed, decides to make a commitment to the Order’s Rule and Attitudes of the Heart.

Mike Endicott is the leader of the Order of Jacob’s Well.
The Gospels are full of them! From the start of his ministry to the arrival in Jerusalem leading into Passion Week, in all the Gospels there are many accounts of Jesus healing people. Miracles are such an important component of our Gospels that the BBC even made a series about them with Rageh Omaar fronting them to explore their theological meaning. The healings in the Gospels have often been a stimulus for those who have encouraged Christians to re-engage with this aspect of ministry and mission; I think of J Cameron Peddie and more recently John Wimber.

But what can they tell us about healing and wholeness? In this article we will approach that question in two distinct but interwoven ways. First we will reflect on a couple of ‘healings’ from the many dozens in the Gospels we could look at. Then we will consider the larger questions as to whether and in what ways they are meant to guide us with respect to healing ministry today.


40And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. 41And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus’ feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: 42For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. 43And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, 44Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched. 45And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 46And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. 47And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. 48And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. 49While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 50But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. 51And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Here are a few of my reflections on this Gospel story. There is more to be gleaned and much more still from the other healings we have. This is to stimulate you!

INTRODUCTION
Illness has a devastating effect on many people’s lives – not only the sick. The desperate (but inappropriate) behaviour of Jairus, an official in the local synagogue no less, indicates this (41). He pushes through the crowd – who had been patiently waiting for Jesus’ return – and throws himself at Jesus’ feet – in all the dust. His dignity and his role matter nothing. But illness devastates the sick person’s life as the woman shows us – at least if we peer behind the scene. Because of her continuous bleeding, this woman was permanently ‘unclean’ – she had to keep away from people, especially men, for if they came into contact with her, or anything she might have ‘contaminated’, they became unclean too (see Leviticus 15:25–31). She was prohibited from worshipping God with other people – synagogue and Temple were out of bounds for her. Everyone knew she was ‘unclean’ – it was a public shame as well as a private problem. So socially and religiously she was isolated and experienced deep rejection. Her presence in the crowd was dangerous, the fact that she touched Jesus would have been considered unbelievable. But Mark adds something else (which may or may not have been in the original text of Luke), ‘she had spent all she had on doctors’ (43 see Mark 5:26), and none of them had been able to help her. So, illness has significant financial consequences; this woman is impoverished by it. She might well have been rejected by her husband.
These two stories indicate many contrasts and comparisons which highlight the complexity of illness.

**SOME CONTRASTS**

Jairus’ daughter was young – bordering on womanhood aged only 12; the woman was clearly much older, having been ill for 12 years. Illness can affect us whatever our age. It goes without saying, although not from this passage, that men are equally prone to sickness, although not necessarily exactly the same kinds!

Some illnesses are short in duration, others can be lifelong. Jairus’ daughter’s illness seems quite acute, whereas the woman’s was chronic.

Jairus’ daughter was surrounded by a supportive family, the woman was alone.

The woman seeks her own healing, with the girl it is someone else – namely her father.

The woman had sought out medical help over many years; the implication with Jairus is that he had come urgently to Jesus. There is no reprimand in either case. This suggests that Christian healing is not to be seen as in opposition to standard medical help. In this sense each is or can be complementary to the other. It is not suggested that the woman was wrong to seek medical help and the fact that it is pointed out that no-one could help her, should probably be understood as indicating what was unusual – normally doctors did help with healing over time.

Whatever the contrasts and complexities, these stories (this story!) indicates that Jesus both wants to and is able to heal both people.

**SOME COMPARISONS**

Both are women – this is significant too; many of Jesus’ healings relate to women. Women were very much second class citizens, but not as far as Jesus was concerned. Their need constituted the grounds for his response not their gender or status (lack of it) or anything else.

Both were probably fairly well off (all the money the woman had spent would not get mentioned otherwise and Jairus’ position indicates that as well!) – but clearly this did not determine whether or not Jesus would heal. It is neither what they possess nor what they might achieve which motivated Jesus.

**THE ROLE OF ‘FAITH’ IN HEALINGS**

The woman exercises faith for herself – this is made clear by Jesus words to her, ‘My daughter, your faith has made you well.’ Clearly the 12-year-old didn’t – in her case it was her father who exercised faith for her healing. In both cases, however, the faith was not in ‘healing forces’ or ‘the regenerative power of the human body/mind/spirit’. In each case the focus of faith was on Jesus and his ability to make a difference. This ‘faith’ component was not reported verbally. The woman’s faith is expressed through her courage to be in the crowd and to reach out and touch Jesus. Again Mark’s fuller version makes this clear (5:28), ‘saying to herself, “If I just touch his clothes, I will get well.”’ That this is more than magic is indicated by the earlier words, ‘She had heard about Jesus’, as well as Jesus’ verdict on her. What we might note is that we do well to discern faith in people (even strange) actions or language rather than demand they use the correct formula! Jairus’ faith is again directed towards Jesus, and while it isn’t reported that he said ‘I believe you can heal her’ this is certainly the implication of the reported encounter (see vs 40–41). However, the faith was expressed by the willingness to leave his dying daughter to make the journey to Jesus and by his suppliant behaviour too. It was also expressed through his willingness to continue the journey with Jesus, when all seemed lost (vs 49–50). Even more noteworthy is his trust in Jesus in breaking the mourning rituals (v 52) – he was risking a lot at this point!

So while faith may have ‘healed her’ it was not faith that caused the healing. Faith is not positive, or even wishful thinking, rather faith was the connection between the person in need and Jesus who is the source of the healing. Indeed, Jesus stimulates and supports Jairus’ faith at the point when it might be wavering (v50). This verse also implies that ‘believing’ by someone involved is a critical component and that ‘being afraid’ rather than ‘unbelief’ is the opposite. Of course, ‘don’t be afraid’ is within scripture often the way of indicating God’s good presence.

So is that it? They make clear that sickness has no place in God’s kingdom’s purposes; they show that God can intervene to heal when it is appropriate. They underline the complex issues to do with sickness and sin, faith and healing, disease and wholeness (salvation). Above all, they point up the unique contribution of Jesus to healing for a few years in first century Palestine. We should not too quickly assume they are a model for all times! But as historical pointers to Jesus have they completely fulfilled their role?

**WIDER REFLECTIONS**

Hopefully, I have established the rich insights about sickness, healing and wholeness which the Gospel stories have to offer. But what are they offering us as Readers?

At one level these are stories which emphasise the unique ministry of Jesus in healing people ‘with all kinds of sickness’. As the passages in Luke 4:16–24 and 7:18–23 amplify, these amazing deeds, while they were acts of compassion, were also signs of the kingdom’s presence. In this sense they are unique to Jesus. As John’s Gospel puts it they are signs and witnesses that Jesus is who he claims to be – God’s Messiah and the people’s Saviour.

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**THE ROLE OF JESUS IN THE HEALING**

Another of the contrasts here is that with the woman Jesus is, at one level, an involuntary healer (this is unusual in the Gospels!) whereas with Jairus’ daughter he is very intentional – not only choosing to make a journey (and so leave the crowd who have been waiting for him) but every action once they arrive at the house (vs 51–55). But both incidents underline that the healing is from Jesus. The story of the woman gives us a rare glimpse into the draining cost for Jesus of healing (v 46). Both stories also indicate that Jesus’ ability to heal meant he experienced some level of ridicule (v 45, 53) another cost we might not have included!

It is also noteworthy that Jesus treats both the sick people in a way that restores their dignity and self-worth – his actions bring a normalising of their social networks and essentially build faith. He treats people as people not ‘the sick’ or ‘the dead’. They are not objects for investigation and scrutiny but persons with lives to live.

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In some ways it is tempting to say 'yes', because that means that as Christ's followers we are not expected to operate in a similar way. But, however uncomfortable it is, I cannot stop with the history – for that is to misread the Gospels and the rest of the NT, [which make it unavoidable that the early church and indeed any Christian community, faithful to Christ will be involved in bringing his healing to people.]

To stay with Luke for a moment. Luke recounts the sending of the twelve and the seventy under Jesus' direction and copying his ministry in healing as well as kingdom announcements (Luke 9:1–7; 10:1–12). At the end of the Gospel Luke points forward to the continuation of the activity of Jesus (24:47–49); he picks this up at the beginning of Acts (1:1–5) and much of Acts demonstrates that the kind of things Jesus did continue with the apostles and others. There are even instances where Acts seems to echo the Gospels or hint at the fact that the apostles were emulating Jesus (see the healing of Dorcas – 9:36–42).

In mutlisarious ways much of the rest of the NT points in the same direction. Whether it is Matthew 28 telling us to teach people to do all that Jesus taught (one of them being that disciples should go and heal) as the kitemark of discipleship; John's Gospel telling us that through the Holy Spirit we would do greater things than 'this' (John14:12–14); Paul's teaching on the charismata of healings and miracles (1 Corinthians 12:9–10) or his account of his founding ministry in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:5); or James instructing us to send for the elders if we are sick (James 5:14–16), so that we can be healed. It has long been recognised that the way some of the nature miracles (eg stilling of the storm) have been told was influenced by and applied to the context of the readers. So why not the healing stories too?

Given this and more, it is hard to avoid the view that the NT expects Christians to continue the healing (as well as the teaching, forgiving and justice) aspects of Jesus' ministry. If we are to proclaim Christ in any substantive way, then we must proclaim his power to heal and bring wholeness. If we are committed to honouring the presence of Christ among us then that presence is a healing presence as well as a comforting and challenging one.

So we do well to soak ourselves in the accounts of Jesus' healings that we have in the Gospels. We can understand healing as an in-breaking of God's kingdom, the restoring of life as God intends it to be. It is never we who achieve healing, always God's power operating through the Holy Spirit making real the mission of Jesus today. But we can certainly foster or hinder this aspect of Christ's whole ministry. Healing is to be received as a gift of God by the person who is ill as well as by those who through prayer and other approaches become involved in this ministry. The Christian story seems to indicate that it is as we become immersed with Christ in the Gospels that healing becomes more overt. 

David Sprigg works for Bible Society. David has written more insights about how we can go deeper into the Gospel stories in an article in The Meditation edition of the Bible Society publication TransMission

1 See The Forgotten Talent, Fontana 1966; Power Healing; Hodder and Stoughton 1986

Test of Faith – a theological review

Does science threaten belief in God? The Test of Faith DVD and the accompanying study materials, recently produced by the Faraday Institute of Cambridge University, answer this question with a resounding ‘No!’

The DVD contains three separate sessions in which potential areas of conflict between science and faith are looked at in the company of an impressive array of scientists, leaders in their respective fields, who are also committed Christians.

The first session, the origin of the universe and its vastness, are the subject of scientific exploration. ‘Why is there something rather than nothing?’ is a theological question, not a scientific one. It is asking about the very nature of existence, both our own and that of the universe. Science tells us a great deal about how things have come to be as they are, but it cannot answer the basic question ‘Why?’ The rationality of the universe and the precision of the properties which have combined to make our carbon-based life possible do not prove the existence of God – but are entirely consistent with it.

Religion seeks understanding and explanation. Why are we here? Who am I? What is it all for? We seek meaning and purpose for our lives. And that is something which science is unable to provide. In the second and third sessions we see that, on the basis of the best available evidence, Darwinism wins out over ‘Young-earth Creationism’ and ‘Intelligent Design’, and it is only the idea of God which stops us from becoming part of nature, red in tooth and claw. The idea of God leads us to conceive a transcendent moral law which makes us human rather than brute animals. Moral responsibility is not in our genetic make-up. DNA, genetics and the theory of evolution can begin to answer the questions of our origins as humans but not the way in which we live out our humanness, and have value as individuals loved by a Creator God.

There is only one reality and there can only be one truthful account of it. We are still a long way from having a complete account of all that is. What we have seen so far convinces many that it is a created reality and therefore the account must include an understanding of its relationship to the Creator.

That is what this DVD is about, it is exciting and inspiring, and the study materials which go with it will be of value to church and school groups who want to come to a better understanding of those most basic questions – Why are we here? What is it all for? Faith in God helps us make sense of it all.

The Test of Faith DVD and study materials are available from http://graphite.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday/Shop/

The DVD costs £7.00 and a paperback of personal accounts by scientists costs £6.00. The study materials cost £12.00 for the Leader’s Guide, and individual study booklets are £2.00. Packs of 6 cost £12.00. There is a Schools pack which includes DVD and study guides for £15.00.
I am moved to write to you, having just read the article ‘Four readers in an Interregnum’ by Catherine Hammond in your autumn edition.

We are having such a different (but not so different!) experience in our churches here on the borders of the Fens in west Norfolk. Our last vicar left us in May 2004 (or was it 2003?). We were a group of three rural churches, two in very small villages, alternating their Sunday morning Eucharists at 9.30am (with no other services) with an attendance of about six to ten. The third church was larger with an 11.00am Eucharist every Sunday and an attendance of 10-15.

Before our vicar left, he and the churchwardens arranged for visiting clergy to cover a good half of the services for the rest of the year, leaving the other services to the Rural Dean and the only Reader (me) to cover. I had been licensed in 2001. My experience was of some (very limited) preaching at services led by the vicar, but mainly of leading services on my own in the benefice and elsewhere in the Deanery where there was no priest available.

At the beginning of our interim, the then Rural Dean was a marvellous support, re-arranging the services in his own group of parishes, so that he could lead two Eucharists a month for us, including one at 8.00am. We found other priests who could lead the Eucharist for us, but I found myself leading at least one Communion by Extension a month and also leading two or three Services of the Word. I had a full time job, was Lay Chair of the PCC and for some years a churchwarden also. Two years ago I was joined by another Reader who completed her training then. That more or less coincided with the retirement of the Rural Dean and his replacement by the rector of a very, very busy group, who could not give us his services.

The largest of the three parishes joined a newly created, larger benefice earlier this year and they have already found a new rector. The two smaller parishes are now joining a new benefice of ten parishes, including 11 small villages. This group has only three Readers, including myself and the lady who has recently joined me. How long, if ever, it will take to recruit a priest for this group we do not know. We are supported by other clergy in the area, but they all have their own responsibilities. Our congregations are very small. Our small populations are local rural people typically with limited resources. All our churches are in need of serious investment in maintenance. None of us has meaningful financial resources.

Is this a tale of woe? NO, it is not.

I don’t know a lot in detail about the other eight parishes, in all of which I have led services over the years (and I am also Deanery Lay Chair, so should not be proud of limited knowledge!), but I can say of our two little parishes that we now have twice as many people coming to church as we did when we last had a vicar (still not as many as under the vicar before that – but we will get there!). We have more baptisms, weddings and funerals in our churches than we have had for years. We are finding that we can raise money much more easily (although our needs remain frightening – having just received one Quinquennial Report, requiring us to spend £40,000 as a matter of urgency on one of the churches, which we will just have to ignore).

We feel closer to Jesus every year. We are talking about tithing our church income (and will do it this year!), when in living memory we have hardly been able to give to anyone, only to beg for ourselves.

I can’t tell you how this has happened and the credit belongs to no individual at all. We stubbornly kept our heads above the water for the first two or three years and then it began to happen. Actually, we are half afraid that a new vicar could ruin things, although the right one could help us to soar. I suspect that both of us Readers are going to find it strange, possibly difficult. Neither of us has had meaningful supervision. Neither of us is used to sharing the services we lead. Neither of us is used to merely assisting. We are very used to working as a team of worshippers and sermons often verge on being conversations. Alleluia!

Keith MacLeod is a Reader in Norwich Diocese. He wrote this because he thought it would be an interesting contrast to the Autumn 09 article ‘Four Readers in an Interregnum’.
When I stopped working as a parish priest, I found myself ‘free to roam’ on Sundays. As I visited nearby churches, I discovered an astonishing variety of styles of worship. But I also found an astonishing variation in quality: some services were fantastic – while others were frankly dismal.

In one small village church, I found worship led by a six-piece band. A music teacher had inspired a group ranging in age from 10 to 70. In another, I found a choir of two – with one of them bravely attempting a descant. It was awful. But it made me think. What is a choir for? And who is it for? What is it doing for the existing congregation? And what effect does it have on newcomers and visitors?

Of course not every church can furnish a six-piece band. That is not the point. In that village they had thought about what their strengths were and what would be appropriate for their church, and then they did it with great enthusiasm, for an appreciative and growing congregation.

So why do we do the things we do in church? Who are they for? What do they achieve?

**THINKING IT THROUGH**

Recently I have been helping a group of people to think about planning a family service. They soon realised that some fundamental questions needed to be asked. What was the basic structure of the service to be? Should it be communion, and what effect would that have on the different groups of people who might come to it? Who was going to lead it?

This led on to what its basic style should be: Radio 4, Blue Peter, or CBeebies? Was it a ‘Children’s Service’, a ‘Family Service’ or ‘All-Age Worship’?

Discussing this caused them to take yet another step back: what place will this service have in the life of the church?

Is it an occasional add-on; perhaps a sop to those with children? Or is it an outreach service, enticing newcomers with something light and palatable before introducing them to the red meat of the gospel? Or is it actually the heart of the church, where all ages meet to learn and pray and form the new core of the village church?

Suddenly, from small beginnings, we are grappling with vital questions about the whole nature of the church and of God. This is theology – but theology that is so vital, that it needs to be discussed in ordinary, day-to-day language.

That family service discussion could have been held in any church – so what is different about the countryside?

**RURAL CHURCHES ARE DIFFERENT**

Rural churches are different from the suburban churches that most incomers (and clergy) come from, and different from how they were 20 years ago. They are even different from the church in the next village! Just because something worked well somewhere else doesn’t mean it will work here, now.

Having said that, do we really need to reinvent the wheel? What my travels have shown me is that we can learn a huge amount from each other – as long as we visit each other, and then think critically about every idea. Can we do that? Can we do it well enough to make people want to come to church? And, vitally, will it connect people to God? Will it connect with the people who are already there, and the people we want to draw in?

Because if it does not, it is not worship. If worship is to be a bridge, it must have firm foundations at both ends.

Secondly, rural churches often have very limited resources. We do not have a pool of people waiting to leap into action – they are already running most of what goes on in the village. So we need to focus, and make use of what we have. It is like surfing: surfers wait for a wave, and get on it, and it is fantastic. But between waves, no matter how hard they paddle they will never get that surge of energy and joy. It is the same in a small parish. When the choir runs out of steam, do not let it drag on, dragging down the worship with it. Instead let it rest for a few years. It’s time will come again. And if there is a group of young parents getting interested, now is the time to start a family service. As their children grow older it can become a youth service – and then it will stop. If we try to do everything, we will fail, perhaps at everything.

And the third crucial thing about the countryside is to understand people’s needs. A friend from London visited one of the churches I served – and was horrified by the way the half-dozen people there were scattered around the nave. ‘What I’d do is get all these people relating to each other!’ she cried. But what she hadn’t realised was that this village only had two extended families – and they had intermarried. So everyone in church that day was already related to each other. Will it connect with the people who are already there, and the people we want to draw in? And, vitally, will it connect people to God?

So the first crucial thing about the countryside is to understand people’s needs. They have two extended families – and everyone is already related to each other, so we do not need to ‘free to roam’ the church. And the two main questions to ask are:

- What is it doing for the people who are already there?
- What is it doing for the people who we want to draw in?

Both are vital, and both are to do with the church being a bridge to God. One needs the other. The church is a bridge, and a bridge needs firm foundations at both ends.
WHO’S RIGHT?
One thing I have noticed many times: rural churchgoers are so often told that they are wrong. New ideas, new clergy, new archdeacons . . . they all seem to assume that we have no intelligence, and no spiritual insight into our faith and our needs.

For example: why is it that rural churches often hold onto the old Prayer Book and traditional patterns of worship? Are they all stick-in-the-muds? Or is it that the older words speak of an otherworldliness that many people are looking for today? Might the older services help a very small group of people, close neighbours and even family, to find a way to worship that is meaningful and relevant to them without embarrassment? And why do people persist in asking for services without communion? Holy Communion draws a very hard line around the church. We are in, but you are out – and in a small community and congregation that becomes terribly obvious. Does embarrassing people in front of their neighbours encourage them to dip their toes in? Maybe people ought not to be so embarrassed in church. But if they are embarrassed, is the worship working for them? We are here to meet the needs of real people.

DOING IT PROPERLY – OR DOING IT WELL
The greatest enemy of effective rural worship is the idea of the ‘proper service’. ‘That’s how we did it at St Saviour’s,’ or ‘That’s how they do it at St Saviour’s’, or ‘We have to have a choir.’ Everyone wants to do it properly, but if we do it ‘properly’ we might not be able to do it well. I suggest that we all, locals and incomers alike, have to be prepared to sacrifice aspects of what we regard as proper, even essential, if our worship is to succeed. Yes, even me!

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
This is not about applying ready-made answers, or me telling you the best way of doing things. In fact it’s the opposite. It is about each worship leader, and each congregation, sitting down and thinking, ‘What have we got, what are we good at, and what are we trying to achieve?’ All too often, when I visit a church, I think, ‘Have you ever thought about this? Have you ever considered what it looks like to someone in the pew? Have you ever wondered why no new people are joining your church?’

This constant questioning can be uncomfortable, and it can risk spoiling one’s own appreciation of worship, at least for a time. Many professions get someone from outside to observe, and feedback, and this is something that churches might try.

What do we need to look at? Put simply, everything! From the welcome people receive at the door (and the advertising that brought them there) to the sourcing of the coffee for after the service.

Music is vital. Someone suggested we ought to sing the psalms. They are lovely when they are sung, but in a congregation of eight? And how do you sing anything without an organist?

Preaching can be difficult: I remember one preacher who avoided eye-contact with all six of his congregation and delivered his whole sermon to the font. It was weird, and rude! With small numbers I found the best solution was just to tell people about the sermon – what had struck me when I was preparing it, and what I felt the main lessons were. That gave me a way of chatting the sermon rather than declaiming it.

There is another side to preaching too: rural congregations can make heavy demands on a preacher. If you all live in a small community, your authority as a preacher depends much more on how your preaching and your life relate to each other – and your honesty about the inevitable disparity – than on any technical ability.

So:
• What is worship for?
• What are our strengths?
• Does our worship reflect our beliefs – about God, the world and the church’s place in it?
• Does it connect to the people there, and challenge their faith?

When two or three people are gathered together in a country church they can share an experience of worship so profound that it is life-changing. Are we allowing that to happen?

Paul Lack studied agriculture and forestry, went on to become rector of six tiny parishes in Worcestershire, and now lives in Herefordshire. He is the author of “All Mud and Matins? Understanding Rural Worship” published by Grove Books (Worship series No 196, 2008).
It’s always good to look back and celebrate the things that have lit up any period in our lives, be it a prayer of thanks at the end of the day, or reminiscing with childhood friends about the good old days. So here’s a quick toast to cinema over the last decade. It was the decade dominated by CGI, that saw the birth of sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, the re-emergence of 3D and the arrival of computer games that shared content with movies. That said, whilst CGI meant films went bigger than ever before, many of the decade’s best films have been those made on more modest budgets. One of the great things about looking back over the decade is that films that, at the time, were puffed up by hype, have now lost much of their lift, whereas those that have relied more on well crafted scripts, stimulating ideas, beautiful camera work and moving performances still continue to shine. So here are ten films which, even if not the most technically proficient, are at least my favourites and hopefully ones you can enjoy too.

**Atonement**

On the surface, Atonement is a story about writing, but really it’s a film about regret. And whilst Ian McEwan’s novel seems to conclude that there is no solution to regret, Joe Wright’s adaptation at least suggests the possibility that there might be. Dario Marianelli’s typewriter-inspired score transforms Atonement from an occasionally moving film into something far greater and its astonishing long-take around the scene on Dunkirk beach is just one of many high points. But it’s the music that moves that moment, and many others, beyond what is admirably complicated choreography to something deeper and somehow more important.

**Dogville**

Dogville is the kind of film that would simply never be made by a committee. Director Lars von Trier’s artistic choices are just too bold, unconventional and shocking. There are no sets or scenery, only a bare stage and a handful of props, yet somehow the film manages to be every bit as compelling as films with those things in place. On the surface Dogville is a story about a runaway girl who is taken in by a group of villagers only to gradually find herself being abused by them. It’s certainly not cheery entertainment. Instead we are treated to a powerful exploration of grace, judgement and the nature of God.

**Donnie Darko**

All too often, film directors are seen as the creative forces behind their work that are constantly put upon by their money-grabbing producers. So it’s nice to see that this is not always the case. The original Donnie Darko was a mysterious, thought-provoking puzzle that left you playing it over and over in your mind long after watching it. Of course the witty script, moody feel and great performances make it rewarding on numerous levels, but it was trying unpick not only what happened, but why, that was all the fun. The director’s cut then, which gives away the mystery in a few brief moments of additional footage, demonstrated that, in fact, it was the ‘evil’ producers who, for once, knew what they were doing.

**Italian for Beginners**

Ensemble pieces tend to be difficult to pull off well, particularly in a relatively short film because it’s so difficult to produce so many rounded characters. Yet somehow, Lone Scherfig’s Italian for Beginners manages to do just that. There’s a wonderful simplicity to the tale of nine ordinary people who all live in the same small town and gradually become friends. The character who stands out the most is Andreas - the newly appointed leader of a dead-on-its-feet local church. Andreas uses his lack of congregation as an opportunity to get out and meet the people around him. His approachability and his gentle humour put them at ease and help them open up to him. The pain of his wife’s recent death is tangible and it is a very real obstacle for his faith. But the film shows him choosing not to be a victim and finding his feet again as he helps others find theirs. The subtleties of what is really happening take a few viewings to emerge, but the humanity, warmth, approachability and humour are clear from the start.

**The Incredibles**

It’s 15 years since Toy Story but, incredibly, Pixar have yet to produce a bad film. Indeed others would argue that instead of this tale of superheroes forced into living decidedly unsuper lives, it’s Finding Nemo, Wall-E or Up that deserve a place in this Top Ten. But it’s the family in red lycra that gets the nod from...
me, not only for being the first CGI film to produce convincing humans, but for being a film that adults can enjoy as much as, if not more than, the youngsters. In a decade where superheroes have dominated the silver screen, only *The Incredibles* manages to combine very witty dialogue with poignant explorations of flawed humanity, without ever compromising the edge-of-the-seat action.

**LE FILS (THE SON)**
Another pair of filmmakers whose output over the last decade has been almost faultless has been Belgium’s Dardenne brothers. Like *Italian for Beginners* their films have spurned special effects, manipulative music and scenes written for Oscar ceremonies and relied on lovingly crafted scripts and subtle yet powerful acting performances. *Le Fils* is the tale of a carpenter/tutor overcoming the death of his young son and the subsequent disintegration of his marriage. It’s incredibly rare to see a film show a character drawn, almost in spite of himself, towards radical, transformational goodness, and it’s perhaps only possible because the Dardennes grasp that in real life the most important moments are often the most ordinary. As Paste’s Robert Davis summarised “the Dardennes treat the simple details of building a toolbox and the limits of human forgiveness as if they’re both vital, and somehow related.”

**PUNCH DRUNK LOVE**
Sandwiched between his three-hour *Magnolia* and his 158 minute epic *There Will Be Blood*, *Punch Drunk Love* is arguably Paul Thomas Anderson’s least ambitious work, but for me it’s the place where, freed from the extravagances of his bolder characters, he’s able to dwell on his lead character’s humanity. Anderson has always enjoyed playing with his audience’s expectations, and nowhere is this tendency better illustrated than here. Anderson cast Adam Sandler (yes that Adam Sandler) in his usual bullied, emotionally stunted, loser role, beset by pent-up anger; but instead of casting him in a string of ‘hilarious’ scenarios, he treats his character with concern and compassion. The result is a surprisingly sweet love story made all the more enjoyable by the beautiful visuals: on the big screen, the film’s end credits would be as at home in the Tate Modern as they were in the local multiplex.

**THIS IS ENGLAND**
The noughties were the decade with a heavy sense of nostalgia for the nineteen eighties and that’s very much to the fore in *This is England* even though this is a film far more about one of the darker sides of that decade - the rise of racist political parties. The film itself is defined by two incredible acting performances: one from the 14-year-old, and previously untrained, Thomas Turgoose; the other by Stephen Graham, whose climatic scenes are so chilling they make the hairs on your neck stand on end. Turgoose plays Shaun who falls in with a gang of friendly (and non-racist) skinheads, but ends up attaching himself to the charismatic local leader of the National Front, Combo (Graham). It’s the kind of film that could never be made in Hollywood, and at a time when allegiance to racist political parties is, sadly, on the rise yet again, it deserves to be seen far more widely.

**WAKING LIFE**
Perhaps the most bizarre film of the decade was Richard Linklater’s *Waking Life*. Not only pioneering rotoscope (digitally colouring in actual filmed footage) it also explored philosophical ideas and bizarre theories about dreams. It’s a film quite unlike any other, and the unusual, fluid, medium proved a perfect tool for exploring these complex and somewhat abstract themes. Whilst the script is essentially a series of short conversations about life, both waking and sleeping (each of which could produce a whole evening of discussion) the stunning floating visuals make *Waking Life* a truly cinematic experience.
Beating the gong for movies

Luke Walton
Bible Society
J Arthur Rank (1888-1972) has been hailed as the saviour of the British film industry. But he was also a man who lived by faith.

Rank started out in the family flour business, but felt called by God to switch his attention to the movies (‘I am in films because of the Holy Spirit’, he later said). He realised the role that well-made films could have in promoting the gospel. In 1933, he got involved in the Religious Film Society and began bankrolling the production of religious films.

This belief in the power of film led him into the movie industry. In the 1930s, the British film industry was in a sorry state. Hollywood dominated the global market for films. As a result, British films never got a look-in, either here or overseas. Rank set about changing all that.

He became a major force in British film, buying up movie theatres and film companies. At its peak, the Rank Organisation, of which he was the chairman, owned the Odeon cinema chain, several film studios, a series of production companies and even a distribution arm. In 1934, he built the famous Pinewood Studios (where James Bond is filmed).

Now a new film competition, The Pitch, has taken up something of the J Arthur Rank mantle, and has succeeded in attracting up-and-coming film makers across the UK to engage with the Bible. They have even held their finalist weekend in the boardroom at the studios, underneath the Pinewood portrait of the founder.

Even leaving aside the global economic situation, and the impact that many feel the London Olympic Games are having on the arts, the challenges for young film makers are significant. Like many careers, early success depends on skill, vision and hard work. But these qualities can be greatly enhanced with good networking and some lucky breaks – not least the crucial funding to get some early show reel. There are plenty of festivals that take short films and offer the chance to get noticed by producers, but seeking the pump priming funding is a challenge.

That is where The Pitch offers a unique opportunity. The competition invites film makers to submit ‘elevator pitches’ for short films based on ideas taken from the Bible. The 2010 competition is now underway, so you could perhaps consider making a contribution! The idea is that the film-maker has a few priceless moments in an elevator with a studio executive – can they use that time to describe the film that they have always wanted to make? Of course there is no elevator, rather a short video of less than three minutes which is uploaded to The Pitch website. This year saw people from all over the UK entering The Pitch showing fantastic imagination and drive. And the Bible proved the perfect foil for this creativity – with prophets, prostitutes, lovers, refugees, rebels, pranksters and politicians, it has enough for any budding film maker to choose from.

For one film-maker this will lead to having their own short film made with professional help worth over £20,000. The winner will then take their film to Hollywood, where they’ll meet Ralph Winter, the producer of X-men and Fantastic Four – a fantastic break for young talent in the UK film industry. No doubt J Arthur Rank would see something ironic about the Hollywood destination for the winner, but he was keen in developing universal recognition for UK film. The size of his outfit enabled Rank to drum up interest in British film across the world. The Rank Organisation acquired cinema chains as far away as Australia, Africa and the West Indies. Through this he was able to give many British directors and actors their lucky breaks.

Today the internet offers something of that global network. Despite only being open to UK film-makers in the first year, The Pitch has attracted interest from Mongolia to Argentina. Thousands of visitors viewed and selected their favourite pitches during the voting period in December last year.

As well as the public vote, the top ten were also selected by the industry panel of judges. This is the group who then had to pitch their concept live to that panel including Nick Park – creator of Wallace and Gromit and the renowned actor David Suchet.

The Pitch is essentially about reframing the Bible for a visual generation. Scriptures are packed full of powerful, personal messages, and film is the perfect medium to convey these in gripping and contemporary ways. This competition gives real people the chance to make real films, based on real stories. Along the way there is evidently a huge audience for the ideas and the content. Surely that would have warmed the heart of J Arthur Rank, who was not only a captain of industry. but also a Sunday school teacher in the Methodist Church. And his Methodist faith was the driving force in his life. In a 1952 interview, Rank spoke about the importance of Romans 1:17 – ‘the righteous will live by faith’ (NIV) – both in his life and in the life of John Wesley (who started Methodism). He remarked:

Faith; we all live by faith. All this [the Rank headquarters at 38 South Street] is nothing but faith.

To enter The Pitch for 2010, potential film-makers can register now www.enterthepitch.com
The story starts many years ago when the chaplain at the Faslane Naval Base commented that I would make a good Reader and that I should think about training for that role. After asking what a Reader was (how naïve can you get!), and resisting for a bit, I set off down the training route. I did this by distance learning while moving four times covering locations such as Thurso in Caithness, near Swindon, and Hampshire as well as being husband, father and Naval Officer. The academic element was provided by the Certificate of Christian Studies through St John’s Nottingham and for the practical element I was helped enormously by the chaplain and congregation of St Luke’s, at the Royal Hospital Haslar. The chapel is now sadly closed as part of the MoD’s withdrawal from Haslar. All this led to Licensing as Reader by the Archdeacon for the Royal Navy, on behalf of the Bishop to the Forces (who also has another role as the Dean of Windsor!).

Since then I have had what can be described as a ‘portfolio ministry.’ I have supported the church of St Peter in Titchfield which is the parish church we have attended as a family for five years now. Until recently my main work has been with the Sunday School as well as guest appearances as a Reader. Additionally I have devoted roughly one Sunday a month to the Church in the Royal Navy, initially at St Luke’s Haslar. When St Luke’s closed, along with many other fittings and fixtures, I transferred to St Ann’s in Portsmouth Naval Base where I now work with the Chaplain who first suggested I train as a Reader (I suppose a good example of reaping what you sow – I will let him decide whether for better or worse!).

Then the opportunity came up to serve in Baghdad with a focus in reconstruction of the infrastructure, an opportunity I

You may be wondering why a Licensed Reader who normally lives near the Solent would want to be in Baghdad, indeed sometimes I ask that of myself! In fact I am not here because I am a Reader; I am in Baghdad because I am a serviceman and as such can find myself in many different parts of the world doing many different things. However, it has to be said that as an engineer specialising in submarine propulsion systems, Iraq is not normally somewhere I would expect to go.
grasped with both hands motivated by a, perhaps idealistic, desire to do some good. While these experiences make another tale of dubious interest, the move to Iraq has offered a very different opportunity, the chance to work in a very small way with Canon Andrew White, the Vicar of Baghdad.

As a US led organisation, the coalition forces in Iraq are well served by chaplains of many different denominations. There are at least eight different styles of service each weekend in various parts of Baghdad providing for numerous denominational groups and styles of worship, with more during the week.

There are at least eight different styles of service each weekend in various parts of Baghdad providing for numerous denominational groups and styles of worship, with more during the week.

part of the Episcopal Diocese in Cyprus and the Gulf. The congregation is made up of US and UK military personnel, a wide variety of civilian personnel and diplomats with occasional visitors from charities and locals.

Recently, I was honoured to be formally granted Permission to Officiate by the Right Reverend Michael Lewis, the Bishop during a recent visit to Baghdad (see picture). As part of the Bishop’s visit, a small group of us, mainly from the US Embassy, were able to get together with some of the local congregation at St George’s.

For a church to survive in this place given the violence towards Christians is impressive: for it to be growing and now have a congregation of over 2,000 is exceptional. They were a warm and friendly group, full of joy, love and infectious laughter – how we could all do with some of that from time to time! They sang with great gusto and raised the roof in their responses. One of my great regrets is that the political and security situations effectively prevent me from visiting St George’s to meet them on their own territory. The church is, by all accounts, a vibrant place where the congregation thrives and a very busy health centre and dental clinic treats the local population irrespective of religion or ethnic group and without charge – but that is also another story and much better told by those who actually do it.

When Canon Andrew is in town then one of the small team of leaders does a fairly normal Reader role in our weekly service with Canon Andrew preaching and celebrating. When he is away, which is fairly often as he does much fundraising and working in both the UK and US, then the rest of us take over. There is a real community worshipping spirit and you could easily find the singing being led by a general on the guitar, the service led by myself, a US DoD civilian praying, and a UK Department for International Development manager preaching and celebrating from the reserved sacrament. For a time every Saturday evening, a small and very scruffy room in an outbuilding of what was once the worldwide Ba’ath Party Headquarters becomes a joyful and vibrant little church. There are some differences from what is normal at home: the body armour in the corner and most of the military (and some civilians) wearing pistols are two of the more obvious! It is also true that no-one dresses up for church and anything goes from combat uniform to jeans and T-shirts via formal suits. It goes to show that no matter what the building or the dress code, the presence of the Spirit in the people is what really makes worship happen.

Unfortunately my time in Iraq is being cut short, but these few months, and the people I have met and worshipped with, will always be special to me. May God bless them all in all their lives, work and worship.

Barrie Cran is a Commander in the Royal Navy
Medjugorje, a remote Bosnian village, has now become world renowned and millions visit there every year because of the continuous appearance of the Virgin Mary to children, who are now adults, which started 27 years ago.

In 1990, after many visits to Medjugorje, Ann Hutley, an Anglican at the time, conceived of a plan. It was to erect the Stations of the Cross at Wintershall estate near Guildford in Surrey, along a half mile rough estate road. Father Jozo Zovko had said ‘go home and build a monument, so that your great-grandchildren will know, that the Holy Mary is appearing to our world at this time.’

The attempt to copy the Via Dolorosa in southern England, on a life-like scale, was a formidable plan that needed much prayer and spiritual guidance. It quickly sparked the imagination of both well known and young would-be sculptors. Over a short period of a few months each one of the traditional 14 stations, in contrasting materials and styles were put in position. Some are solid bronze, and have been stolen but now replaced, others marble, several timber. One, in terracotta, depicts Jesus meeting his mother. The crucifixion, sculpted by a young man, Nicholas Fiddian-Green, who has since become Ann’s son-in-law, stands high in the trees and is a marble figure on a lead covered cross some ten feet high.

Regardless of the weather and never missing a month in nearly 20 years at 7am on the first Friday of every month an ecumenical group of Christians assemble to pray their way to each of the different stations. Of course they stand in the open woodland as reminders of all that occurred 2,000 years ago when Jesus came to save his people. Each station sparks a prayer of devotion or cry for help, and invariably the group are led by an ordained minister of one of the several denominations that serve the Lord each in their own way.

All are welcome and full details are available on the Wintershall website (www.wintershall-estate.com). This year Good Friday happens to be on the first Friday of the month when the Right Revd Christopher Hill the Bishop of Guildford will be leading the walk. However many regulars will be away that day as the Wintershall cast will be rehearsing and assembling in Trafalgar Square where they will be performing the Passion of Jesus to the public as a reminder of the Christian traditions of our country in a place of great historic heritage.
Reviews for THE READER

February 2010

H
A History of Christianity
Diarmaid MacCullough
Allen Lane £35 hbk
978 0 713 99869 6

Those who have read Professor MacCullough’s earlier books particularly his life of Thomas Cranmer and Reformation: Europe’s House Divided 1490-1700 will be surprised only by the scale of this magnificent book. It is subtitled ‘The First Three Thousand Years’ and starts with chapters on Greece, Rome and Israel in the 1,000 years before Jesus was born because he inherited expectations and culture from all three. This is not the only surprise. The book runs to over 1,000 pages with a further 80 pages of notes and a selective index of almost 50 pages and covers the whole history of Christianity worldwide. It is illustrated in both black and white and colour and is composed with an authority and erudition which is simply staggering. Books covering such a long period and such a variety of locations are usually multi-volume works by scholars expert in each field. Here is a book by one scholar who is able to write with authority on all periods. The result is a degree of coherence and insight into all aspects of the history of Christianity, which is rare indeed.

This is not a book to be read from cover to cover at consecutive sittings. It is to be savoured and digested section by section and perhaps reread. It is the work of an historian rather than a theologian and so takes the long view and does not assume the truth or even the good faith of all participants. ‘Historians’, Professor MacCullough reminds us ‘are by nature sceptical’. Successive sections reflect the changing perspectives on the faith through space and time drawing out similarities in the issues with which the faith has been confronted during its long history as well as contrasts between one area and period and another. This is a book which all Readers should read not least for the longer perspectives it offers on the current malaise of the Anglican Communion. We have been here before, though the presenting issues may have been different. The threefold thread of scripture, reason and tradition – often spoken of as the glory of Anglicanism – unravelled in the seventeenth century and helped to lead to Civil War and threatened to unravel again in the nineteenth century. But Anglicanism – a term incidentally invented in the nineteenth century – represents only a small part of the story of global Christianity and this book helps us to see ourselves as by no means the most important part of the story.

PETER WATKINS

W
Radiance of his Glory
David Adam
SPCK £16.99 pbk
978 0 281 06196 9

This book offers intercessions and prayers linked to the readings for the principal service for each Sunday of the three year Common Worship lectionary. Originally published as three separate volumes, this compendium is intended to help individuals prepare privately for the coming Sunday throughout the week by providing a centring prayer, intercessions with responses, a peace and a blessing inspired by the lectionary readings. It would be useful for preparing public worship especially the main Sunday service or a midweek Eucharist. The centring prayers and blessings are appropriate for wider use, perhaps in a house group. There is a certain repetition of themes and approaches – perhaps inevitable with a large collection by a single author. Although David Adam is known as a writer on Celtic themes this book does not have a particularly Celtic feel to it. It should have a broad appeal for congregations and would usefully complement other prayers published to support the Common Worship lectionary.

I was disappointed that the publishers had not unified the page numbering or collected the three separate introductions. A more serious limitation for Readers seeking to use these prayers in public worship beyond Common Worship, for example as additional prayers in BCP Morning or Evening Prayer, is the lack of an index. One index of subjects and one of Bible passages inspiring each set of prayers would have extended the flexibility of the book considerably.

SUE BOORMAN

B
The First Paul
Marcus J Borg and John Dominic Crossan
SPCK £8.99 pbk
978 0 281 06158 7

I heartily commend this book. It is subtitled ‘Reclaiming the radical visionary behind the Church’s conservative icon’. The authors, one Protestant and one Roman Catholic, take a mainstream, as against a fundamentalist or conservative, stance and set about this task with scholarship and energy. As they see it, the seven letters that most mainstream scholars now agree were definitely written by Paul contain radical thinking. They point out the contrast between the radical thinking of this ‘first’ Paul and the reactionary thinking that is to be found in those letters that most scholars now agree were written later by others using his name: this is where we find those passages that cause most modern unhappiness, particularly on slavery and women. The seven truly Pauline letters were mostly written to small communities of the early Jesus movement that he knew, often concerning questions or problems in those communities. They existed within the context of Judaism as well as the social, legal and religious framework of the Roman empire. The authors argue that if we wish to understand the letters we have to see them in that original context. They maintain that both Paul and Jesus were, to the end, faithful Jews. Further, that Paul was not setting out to start a new religion but was simply seeking, through what had been revealed to him, to help members of the Jesus movement communities to have a better and fuller understanding of God within the Jewish framework. Key issues addressed in this context include Paul’s declaration of the ‘Lordship of Jesus’, interpretation of Paul’s writing on the crucifixion and on ‘justification by grace through faith’, and life ‘in Christ’ and its social and other meanings for a Christian community. A succinct survey of Paul’s life, conversion and known travels provides a helpful setting. This book is lucidly written and clarifies difficult topics well. It is a pity there is no general index.

JOHN FC NICHOLLS

S
Mission Shaped Church
Graham Cray
C H P £10.95 pbk
978 0 7151 4198 2

I was, at first, sceptical of this report in book form, about Mission Shaped Church, Church Planting and Fresh Expressions. However this is a well written and challenging book with a comprehensive set of questions at the end of each chapter. It should be used in parishes and deaneries, especially as we are looking at the re-organising of deaneries and if we are really serious about making the church relevant for people today. The book also gives a list of internet sites which provide help and resources for those who wish to look at how to be church today. I was disappointed at how little importance was attached to the sacraments with only a few paragraphs concerning the Eucharist although the strength of traditional style of church is affirmed. There is an excellent chapter explaining the wide variety of Fresh Expressions.
with examples of each and their strengths and weaknesses.

**CHRIS GREGORY**

Joyful Christianity
Cally Hammond
SPCK
£8.99
978 0 281 06087 0

A companion to the earlier *Passionate Christianity* (which was based on the sorrowful mysteries), this is subtitled ‘Finding Jesus in the World’ and is based on the five joyful mysteries: the annunciation, the visitation, the nativity, the presentation in the Temple and the finding in the Temple. Biblical quotations are mostly from RSV with some from KJV. The opening question: Why do we believe in God? is explored in reflections in each chapter, both from the author’s personal experience of God and from a more general theological perspective. Each chapter ends with questions for further meditation and possible discussion. The book could be used for personal devotion or for group discussion and prayer, though it would probably be more suited to those with a Catholic background.

**WENDY AIRD**

Votewise Now!
Ed Rose Lymas
SPCK
£8.99 pbk
978 0 281 06192 1

Too disenchanted with politicians to bother to vote in the General Election? Reckon the crippling national debt means it won’t make any difference which party is elected? That was me... until I read this book. A perceptive introduction is followed by ten short, accessible essays, each focusing on a particular area of our national life (the economy, healthcare, social justice, education, housing et al) written by Christians who are ‘informed and engaged experts in their subjects’. For years the ‘economic test’ has dominated virtually all political debate – and current circumstances make it even more likely to do so. The writers encourage us to challenge those who want our vote by asking them pertinent questions about the social and environmental values underlying their policies. Each chapter refers to biblical perspectives on its subject – immensely helpful in relating our faith to our politics. The book’s subtitle is ‘Helping Christians engage with the issues’. This is exactly what it does. It joined me out of disillusioned indifference to an informed determination to be involved. No Christian should vote without reading it... and every Christian should vote!

**DEREK BALDWIN**

Towards the Light
Denis Duncan
SPCK
£8.99 pbk
978 0 281 06141 9

The term ‘spiritual classic’ is much overused, but applies in spades to this book. Cast as a devotional diary (albeit one whose author frequently feels that God is absent and prayer pointless), it is a brutally honest account of a distinguished 87-year-old Christian minister’s struggle with personal crises and clinical depression over a six-month period in 2007. Denis Duncan describes a protracted ‘dark night of the soul’ (during which his life seemed ‘nothing’ and ‘all motivation towards good or growth was simply lacking’) and its gradual yielding to God’s light, shining in and through the ‘negative equity’ of his soul; but the victory is hard won indeed. The book is profoundly, viscerally moving, not least because – rather than in spite – of the author’s precise, elegant, wholly unsentimental prose style. A ‘must read’ for all Readers who have experienced spiritual crisis and depression, and (still more so?) for those who haven’t.

**ROBERT MORGAN**

An Evangelical among the Anglican Liturgists
Colin Buchanan
SPCK
£20 pbk
978 0 281 06026 9

As the evangelical voice on the Liturgical Commission from 1964 to 1986, following a century when those who knew most about liturgy were Anglo-Catholics, Colin Buchanan lived and fought through a vital period of liturgical revision. He brought to the task a solid knowledge of an even more important period of liturgical change, from 1548 to 1662, and did much to remind us that the English Reformation was essentially Protestant. This collection of seven reprinted articles, mainly on the Eucharist but including Christian initiation, is an introduction to the niceties of both Eucharistic theology and synodical government – both of which LLMs and clergy need to know something about, if not too much, as they help preserve Anglican identity. The long essays on Cranmer and on the offertory were first published in 1976 and 1978 as Grove Pamphlets – another valuable service of the author in re-awakening evangelical seriousness about liturgy. Brief forewords and postscripts to each essay contribute to the sense of achievement rightly reflected in the work of a dedicated teacher and acerbic colleague. A thoughtful introduction by the Bishop of Coventry and an account of the liturgical blog ‘News of Liturgy’ by James Steven celebrate a career that deserves appreciation from the wider church.

**Nigel Harris**

Inside Story
Roger Steer
IVP
£12.99 hbk
978 1 84474 404 6

John Stott, whose life is the subject of this book, has been described as the second most influential Christian of the twentieth century – second only to Archbishop William Temple. He has already been the subject of a blockbuster biography published in 1999 and 2001 by his long time friend Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith, which ran over its two volumes to over 1,200 pages. This one is more modest and accessible. It will be welcomed not only by John Stott’s many admirers but for the light it casts on one of the main traditions of English Christianity and one which has become more significant recently as it has emerged from the ghetto.

John (though not a man to use Christian names) was converted as a boy at Rugby School – of which he became head boy – at the age of 16 and almost at once felt called to ordination in the Church of England. He went to Trinity College, Cambridge and, despite the vehement opposition of his agnostic father, a distinguished Harley Street specialist, persisted in his calling. He took Firsts in Modern Languages and Theology and went to Ridley Hall for ministerial training. His first curacy was at All Souls, Langham Place in the West End of London and when the Rector died less than five years later the congregation insisted that the curate – still under 30 – was the person to succeed him. The powers that be succumbed and the whole of his ministry has been based on All Souls.

John Stott has remained a powerful expository biblical preacher throughout his life. He played however an important part in widening the approach of evangelicals. The point of conversion was to imitate the lifestyle of Jesus and this meant taking both the church and the world seriously.

John never married and he once remarked that his enthusiasm for bird watching was his substitute for family life. He never became a bishop but perhaps his worldwide ministry of preaching and teaching has been less confining than an episcopal ministry in one diocese might have been – as John Wesley insisted two centuries earlier. This is a book which all should read – evangelicals will do so naturally but liberals and
Anglo-Catholics would benefit from the life and ministry of one particularly influential evangelical. PETER WATKINS

God, Actually
Roy Williams
Monarch
£10.99 pbk
978 1 85424 920 3

The author is an Australian lawyer who accepted the prevailing atheism until he was 30. Then he started to consider difficult questions and could not answer them without belief in God. Three remarkable features of the world strongly suggested that God must exist: the ordered complexity of the physical universe, the unique faculties of the human mind and love. Part One of the book expands reasons for this belief; Part Two the reasons for Christian belief and in Part Three the author considers questions of suffering, politics, other religions and life after death and shows that they need not negate the evidence for belief. A strength of the book is the way that every objection appears to be discussed and met. Readers who wish to preach or teach about the topics which the author covers will find useful facts and arguments set out well. Unbelievers who are willing to think honestly may be convinced too but this is a big book and a simpler version of Part One might be of assistance to some. JOHN TAYLOR

The Road Well Travelled
David Winter
Canterbury
£8.99 pbk
978 1 85311 964 4

David Winter’s book is a series of reflections on key elements of the various Christian traditions. Although the author’s roots are in the evangelical tradition, he has come to see that in many different practices, the Spirit of God can be there. He examines actions as diverse as reading scripture to the devotion to Mary or to icons, from devotion a daily office of prayer to anointing with oil. He shows how the diverse patterns of discipleship can benefit us now. You will probably not feel at home with all his suggestions, but David Winter makes us think about our own spiritual growth, helping us to see and to explore things that might not necessarily belong to our particular tradition and so to appreciate the value of ideas we might have been resistant to. The book contains ideas for prayer and reflection, which will help readers and others to develop appropriate and thoughtful ministries. CAVAN WOOD

In the Beginning was the Word
Gerald West and others
SPCK
£9.99 pbk
978 0 281 06168 6

This marvellous little collection of group Bible studies on the Gospel of John includes fifteen studies on the ‘I am’ sayings in John’s Gospel (this series was originally prepared for bishops and their spouses at the 2008 Lambeth Conference) and another series on the seven ‘signs’ in the Gospel. It is suggested that the readings from John are sometimes offered in dramatic format, with two or more readers. Each study, normally 3-5 pages, includes opportunity for prayer and reflection, together with notes for the group facilitator and/or the group, and questions for discussion. The notes presuppose an intelligent awareness of the Gospel, but this is Bible Study, not theological training. However, difficult passages are not fudged, there is, for example, an excellent treatment of Jesus’ controversial description of the Jews of his day (John 8:44). Highly recommended. DAVID BONE

Creation in Crisis
Ed Robert S White
SPCK
£12.99 pbk
97802810601907

The following statement encapsulates the message of the book: ‘Christian worship of God, however fervent, is meaningless and offensive to him unless it is accompanied by a profound change of heart demonstrated in just and righteous attitudes and behaviour...’ (p. 208). These extensive theological reflections upon our relationship to the earth develop this theme, reflections springing from a wealth of scientific detail. They cast new light on the science and each essay can be read in its own right. The Old Testament’s theology of creation makes it rightly the subject of reflection more often than that of the New Testament: the consideration of Christology in relation to creation, however, is memorable. Despite the views to the contrary among many Christians, Christian theology has to be related to the natural world if we are to be true to our humanity. Believers are called to live out their faith by engagement with the world if that faith is to be seen as relevant. As the subtitle states, here are ‘Christian perspectives on sustainability’. PETER ANDREWS

Make Corruption History
Daryl Balia
SPCK
£10.99 pbk
97802818060306

This is a frustrating book! Whilst one can be in total agreement with the author that corruption should be made history, it is, as most would agree, a dream fraught with near impossibilities and major contradictions. The author recognises this and also points out the crux of the matter: that there is an ‘absence of correlation between the introduction of corruption control measures and a reduction in corruption’. The author has an impressive CV: he was Nelson Mandela’s former Chief Director of Ethics, and it shows in this well-informed and comprehensive treatment of the subject. The case studies are well chosen and perhaps the best feature of this book, which in its entirety is a valuable contribution to the understanding of an age-old problem. Is it useful for Readers? I think on the whole the answer is ‘Yes’ but be prepared to face a salutary though frustrating read! ANDREW-BEDE ALSOP

One sometimes wishes that one had to hand or on one’s bookshelves a volume suitable to offer to an atheist or agnostic friend of academic leanings which deals intelligently with the Christian approach to atheistic belief, in a scientific and secular age. Here at last is such a book. Indeed I cannot recall when I last read a volume received for review with such enjoyment. God’s Credentials starts innocently enough with a study of monotheism and polytheism in ancient civilisations, leading one to think that this is another study of religious origins. But the study quickens pace and one soon realises that this is an unashamed defence of revealed Judaism and its culmination in Christianity. The text, though hugely detailed with copious footnotes and an extensive bibliography, is fluently presented. Dr Blair takes up arms (with formidable academic support) against the higher criticisms of the OT narratives, especially the Pentateuch and later those of the NT. He then risks all by attempting to ask searching questions about Darwinian evolution, especially as propounded by Richard Dawkins. The volume ends with a lengthy presentation of Christ as the living Word of God, in whom salvation alone is to be found. The book evolves into nothing less than a personal academic testimony to the reality of a God who has ultimately revealed himself in Christ.

One is so easily carried along by the speed and fluency of the author’s argument that one may fail to ponder at some length the logic of some of his reasoning. Yet all of the time the author constantly declares, ‘the reader must decide’.
Some Readers (those with higher degrees in criticism and hermeneutics) will not like this book, if only because the author so ably confronts many academic sacred cows. The very facility and fluency of his arguments may raise a few red flags. This reviewer, meanwhile, has been heartened to be reminded that, for example, however close we may draw to the moment of the Big Bang we still remain an infinite distance from answering the question, ‘How and Why and Who?’ Conversely, we are reminded that we do well to understand that the atheist may have as much reason for wanting to be an atheist as the Christian has for wanting to be a Christian. Learn and enjoy, but keep an open mind.

RICHARD CARTER

Reconstructing Early Christian Worship
Paul T Bradshaw
SPCK
£16.99 pbk
978 0 281 06094 8

For Readers with an interest in the development of patterns of worship in the early church this book is a must. It describes in as much detail as the earliest sources permit, how the Eucharist, baptism and daily prayer were understood and how, in the light of that understanding, they were celebrated. The author’s study of regional variations within the timescale illustrates the complexity of the situation. For instance, fourth century Syrian baptismal rites differed markedly from practice in Rome or Spain. Apart from this, the attempt to unravel such matters as the frequency with which Communion was received or as the frequency with which the anointing was administered will be of less interest to some. Perhaps of most value will be the author’s comments, at the end of each chapter, on the relevance of past practice as precedent for our worship today.

ROBERT BEVAN

SEP

Joy in all Things
Ed Damian Kirkpatrick et al
Canterbury
£16.99 pbk
978 1 85311 747 3

Here is a book for dipping into. Subtitled ‘a Franciscan Companion’, it contains a wide array of resource and reference material, all designed to help the reader experience the joy and simplicity of St Francis. Here you will find the story of St Clare as well as St Francis, and the rules of both saints. There are Franciscan prayers, settings of the office, devotions. ‘The prayers include “Make me an instrument of your peace” which we all think of as the prayer of St Francis but is in fact scarcely 100 years old. There are chapters on the essentials of Franciscan spirituality, living as a Franciscan, the Franciscan family and Franciscan holy places. Finally we have glossaries and bibliographies as well as a list of websites. Don’t be misled by a further subtitle ‘New International Version’. This is a new and enlarged version of a guide published in 2002, and the contributors are both international and ecumenical. This handsomely produced book would make an excellent present for anyone interested in Francis and the Franciscan way.

MARGARET BAXTER

God, Ethics, and the Human Genome
Ed Mark Bratton
CHP
£16.99 pbk
978 0 7151 4139 7

What is man? Does he aspire to be as God? Or does he derive from God skill, understanding and creativity and is he called to join with God in furtherance of his creativity? This book on the human genome contains ten papers originally prepared to help inform discussion in the Guildford diocesan synod on this contentious topic of which most of us have little understanding. In a way, education has posed similar problems because its practice also modifies the person we become. We still wrestle with these problems after hundreds of years. These papers helpfully present different approaches and the series will further our moral voice in serious conversation. As Dr Malcolm Brown points out in his introduction, to seek consensus yet would suggest a certainty which is premature.

JOHN BOTTERILL

Spiritual Intelligence
Brian Draper
Lion
£7.99 pbk
978 0 7459 5321 2

Subtitled ‘A new way of being’ this book sets the reader on four journeys of increasing depth. Each journey is itself divided into four stages: ‘awakening’, ‘seeing afresh’ ‘living the change’ and ‘passing it on’. The key task is to escape the ‘relentless chattering of our ego-driven minds’. It purports not to be about making people religious, but is from the author’s Christian perspective. The author certainly has insight as to where those outside of church might be itching. Readers may not find anything new in the early chapters. It is instead a book which one might recommend, in the course of spiritual direction. It is a workbook, with exercises which although easy to begin with can later challenge if not disturb. It is presented in a simple style and each section has a pertinent quotation from a wide range of sources which invite further reading.

SUSANNE MITCHELL

A Conversation Waiting to Begin
Oliver O’Donovan
SCM
£12.99 pbk
978 0 334 04210 5

This book is hard work – though considerably easier than the task of averting the multiple pile-up towards which, unstoppably and with an apparent degree of eagerness, the various wings of the Anglican Church appear to be driving it over what the author understatedly calls ‘the gay controversy’. In a series of ‘polemical essays’, Professor O’Donovan burrows deeply into the theology within which thoughtful Christians try to understand ethical problems in general, and this intensely current issue in particular. Thoughtful, yes, and elegantly written – well-informed, kind and compassionate, but the author cannot disguise his instinctive leaning towards the conservative option to which he is, of course, entitled. But the practical questions remain: may gay Christians (laity, priests, bishops…) sleep with same sex partners? – we know perfectly well that some of them do? With everything else going on in the world, why has the Church chosen this as the issue to crucify itself over, reinforcing the established view that Christians are obsessed with sex and its taboos? And are we obliged to take lessons in sexual morality from the Church in places where righteousness has not yet, apparently, exalted the nation in other ways?

ALAN KERSHAW
This is a wonderful book on a difficult subject. A selection of scientists from all fields of science writing openly and honestly as they tackle two questions: ‘What difference does their faith make to their scientific practice?’ and ‘What difference does their science make to their understanding of their faith?’ As these scientists cover the many areas of their work there are times when their faith is a challenge to the work they do that can make it difficult, the ethics that arise from some areas that cannot be ignored. Sometimes their faith is seriously tested. On other occasions their work strengthens their faith, some had discovered faith through their work. It was wonderful to read the words of some brilliant people whose God given brains are given to positive good. It felt an open subject and it was an exciting and interesting read – it did not close the mind to the theological issues raised, such as the distinction between extended Communion and the full celebration of the Eucharist on the one hand or Communion from the reserved sacrament on the other. The study deals with an area in which the role of Readers is highly important. The author challenges us to look beyond a utilitarian approach to deeper implications for the worshipping community.

HUGH SANSOM

The Theory and Practice of Extended Communion
Philip Tovey
Ashgate
£45 hbk
978-0-7546-6684-4

Extended Communion is the distribution by a deacon or lay person of previously consecrated elements during an act of public worship at which no priest is present. While Methodism also uses the term for Communion of the sick and housebound, that ministry is excluded from the study. Phillip Tovey considers liturgies published over the past 20 years by the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church and the Church of England. He examines case studies from both rural and urban parishes. He goes beyond practical reasons for the custom to the theological issues.
Gazette of newly admitted and licensed Readers

BATH AND WELLS
Admitted and Licensed 03 October 2009
Vigdis Adams......................................Wiveliscombe w Chipstable, Huish Champflower and Clatworthy
Sallyann Batstone..............................Tintinhull w Chiltonthorne Domer w Yeovil Marsh and Thorne Coffin
Ruth Cook............................................Taunton, St Andrew
Nicola Devitt....................................Rodney Stoke w Draycott
Yvonne Fry...........................................Bath, St Luke
Angela Gibbons...............................Chewton Mendip w Ston Easton, Litton and Emborough
Jenny Gollop......................................Somerton w Compton Dundon, The Charltons and Kingsdon
Christopher Green..........................Rodney Stoke w Draycott
Tom Harfleet......................................Frome, Holy Trinity
Nicola Mathison ....Bathwick, St Mary and Bathwick, St John
Richard Morgan..............................Blackdown Benefice
Tracy Prudhoe..................................Bath, St Luke
Ralph Roberts.................................Athelney Benefice
Jane Sedgman.................................Wheathill Priory Group
Janet Shellard-James.......................Street w Walton
Marlyn Thomas...............................Bathampton w Claverton

Welcomed
Margaret Hendy ...............................Wells, St Thomas w Horrington
Samantha Upham............................Trull
Marcus Wedge..................................Bathwick, St Mary and Bathwick, St John

BLACKBURN
Admitted and Licensed September 2009
Angela Ashcroft......................Copp, St Anne and Inskip, St Peter
Susan Bowman..........................Skerton, St Luke
Anne Briggs............Dolphinsholm w Quenmores and over Wynesdale
Cathleen Dawson.......................Lancaster, St Thomas
Susan Lloyd..............................Lower Darwen, St James
Kath Morris..............Hawes Side, St Christopher and Marton Moss, St Nicholas
Ian Rushton..............................Marten, St Paul
Paul Spencer..........................Penwortham, St Leonard
Nicola Whitehead......................Lytham, St Cuthbert
Lesley Wright..........................Nelson, St Philip

CARLISLE
Admitted and Licensed 01 February 2009
Connie Eddy..............................Benefice of Ben Holme Eden & Wetheral & Warwic

Licensed on transfer from another diocese 04 October 2009
Bryan Gray........................................Benefice of Cross Fell Group

Admitted and Licensed 31 October 2009
Rosalind Amey ..................Benefice of Hensingham, St John
Angela Butler ..................Benefice of Cartmel Peninsula Team
Linda Cooper ..................Benefice of Heversham and Milnthorpe
Sue Chapman ..................Benefice of Solway Plain Team Ministry
Annette Miller ..................Benefice of Cartmel Peninsula Team
Linda Radcliffe ..................Benefice of Maryport, Netherton & Flimby Team Ministry
Alan Taylor..................Benefice of Crosthwaite

Licensed on transfer from other dioceses
Elisabeth Arthurs ..................The Cartmel Peninsula Team
Julie Batchelor..................Benefice of Ulverston, St Mary with Holy Trinity
Michael Higginbottom ..................Benefice of Kirkby Thore w Temple Sowerby & w Newbiggin
John Parratt ..................Benefice of Arturere w Kirkandrews on Esk and Nicholforest

Relicensed
Diana Nicholson..................Benefice of Orton and Tebay
Gazette and licensed Readers

CHICHESTER
Admitted and Licensed 12 September 2009
Marilyn Appleby..........................Southgate, St Mary
Paul Bailey..............................Lynchmere, St Peter & Camelsdale, St Paul
Keith Durban-Jackson ..............Waltham, St Mary
Simon Forrest.......................Hove, Bishop Hannington Memorial Church
Roderick Ostler ..................Broadwater
Roderick Trickey ..................Framfield, Blackboys & Palehouse Common
Colleen Tsang.......................Bathwick, St Mary and Bathwick, St John

Licensed or given PTO after transfer from other Dioceses
Joyce Bowden..........................High Hurstwood, Holy Trinity
Elizabeth Eden ..................Rudgwick, Holy Trinity
Paul Godwin..................Felpham, St Mary
Jill Maddock ..................Meads, Eastbourne, St John the Evangelist
Peter Murray ..................Crawley Team Ministry
Margaret Parish ..................Battle, St Mary the Virgin

DURHAM
Admitted and Licensed
Karen Abbot ..................Benefice of Durham North Team Ministry
Elizabeth Armes ..................Benefice of Dalton le Dale, St Andrew w New Seaham, St Andrew
Olwyn Aylott ..................East Darlington Team Ministry
Peter Haig Cross ..................Harton, St Peter
Lana Green ..................Benefices of Stockton on Tees, St James (Hartlepool) w Stockton-on-Tees, St John the Baptist in plurality
Katherine Macpherson ..................Durham, St Nicholas
Constance Robinson ..................Benefice of Stockton-on-Tees, Holy Trinity w St Mark
Catherine Ross ..................Durham, St Nicholas

ELY
Admitted and Licensed 31 October 2009
John Marshall ..................Littleport, St George
Helen Randall ..................Soham and Wicken
Mary Sutton ..................Sutton, and Witcham w Mepal
Ruth Terrell ..................Papworth Team Ministry
Admitted and given PTO
Frances Leadon.........................................................Burwell and Reach

Licences Renewed
Andrew Deller.........................................................Fulbourn, St Vigor, Great Wilbraham, St Nicholas, Little Wilbraham, St John and Six Mile Bottom, St George

Licensed on transfer from other dioceses
John Dickinson.........................................................Ely Team Ministry
Tony Harper ...............................................................Ely Team Ministry
Shirley Holder ..........................................................Cambridge, Great St Mary

EXETER
Admitted and Licensed 03 October 2009
Elva Hodgson ..............................................................Chagford, Drewsteignton, Hittisleigh, Spreyton, Gidleigh & Throwleigh
Michael North .............................................................Blackawton w Stoke Fleming & Strete
Frank Robinson ..............................................................Blackawton w Stoke Fleming & Strete
Lynda Robinson ............................................................Blackawton w Stoke Fleming & Strete
Wendy Roderick ..........................................................Tavistock and Gulworthy, St Paul
Bryant Sanders .............................................................Kingsnymphym, St James the Apostle
John Shelley .................................................................Credition and Shobrooke

Licence confirmed following probationary year
Norma Baker ..............................................................Yealmpton and Brixton
Peter Barker ...............................................................Blackawton w Stoke Fleming & Strete
Carl Budden ..............................................................Plymouth, St Jude
Anthony Connell .........................................................North Creedy Team Ministry
Edwina Corderoy .........................................................Torquay, St Mary Magdalen
Sarah Cordingley .........................................................Torridge Estuary Team Ministry
Joan Ewins ...............................................................Kilmington, Stockland, Dalwood, Yarcombe & Shute
Michael Gould .............................................................Torquay, St Marychurch
Jacqueline Ward ..........................................................Two Rivers Team Ministry
Carol Wyatt .................................................................Two Rivers Team Ministry

Licensed following transfer
Veronica Dell ...............................................................Bovey Tracey, St Peter, St Paul & St Thomas w Hennock
Robert MacCurrah ..................................................Little Dart Team Ministry
Gordon Nickerson ......................................................Babbacombe, All Saints
Jane Sanham ...............................................................Plymouth, St Jude

LEICESTER
Admitted and Licensed 17 October 2009
Ann Flower ...............................................................Kibworth w Smeeton Westerby and Saddington
Viv Froggatt ...............................................................Leicester, The Ascension Team
Jan Harding .................................................................The Fenn Lanes Group
John Harrison .............................................................Sileby Cossington and Seagrave
Alison Iliffe ...............................................................Kibworth w Smeeton Westerby and Saddington
Sheila Langley ...........................................................Syston Team
Ann Ling .................................................................Leire w Ashby Parva and Dunton Bassett
and Claybrooke cum Wibtoft and Frolesworth
Rosemary Nicholls .......................................................Markfield, Thornton, Bagworth, Stanton under Bardon and Copt Oak
Jeanie Underwood .....................................................Ashby de la Zouch, Brendon on the Hill and Coleorton

LICHFIELD
Admitted and Licensed 06 September 2009
Gillian Brackett ..........................................................Heath Town
John Jordan ...............................................................Brewstow, St Mary & St Chad and Bishopsworth, St John the Evangelist
Margaret Kelly ..........................................................Central Telford Team
Christine Nixon .........................................................The Leek & Meerbrook Team, St Edward & St John
Linda Pickering ..........................................................Alton w Bradley le Moors, Denstone w Ellastone and Stanton & Mayfield
Paivi Pratt ...............................................................Chell, St Michael & All Angels and Chell Heath, Church of the Saviour
Doreen Sears ............................................................Walsall Wood, St John
Roy Smith .................................................................Standon, All Saints, Swynnerton, St Mary, Tittensor, St Luke and Cotes Heath, St James
Margaret Waltho .........................................................Chasetown, St Anne
Jennifer Walton ..........................................................United Benefice of Betley, St Margaret & Madeley, All Saints
Cathryn Ward ...........................................................Parish of Tamworth, St Francis

Welcomed to the diocese during the last twelve months
Linda Fell .................................................................Lichfield, Christ Church
Leigh Hammond .......................................................Praedoe (Extra Parochial)
Jean Towler .............................................................Horninglow, St John the Divine
Isobel Wickens .........................................................Radbrooke, Church of Christ the King & Meole Brace, Holy Trinity
Andrew Willetts .......................................................Burton, All Saints
Gerald Willis .........................................................Shrewsby, Holy Cross Parish (The Abbey & St Peter)

LINCOLN
Admitted and Licensed 10 October 2009
Stephen Bishop .........................................................Mid Elloe Group
Kay Butler ...............................................................Belton
Annie Davidson .........................................................Lichfield
Margaret Hardy ..........................................................Washingborough Group
Maureen Kendall .......................................................Withamside United Parish
Nigel Panting ............................................................The Lafford Deanery

Welcomed
Patrick Cooke

NEWCASTLE
Admitted and Licensed 03 October 2009
Karen Charman .......................................................Monkseaton, St Peter
Val Cowan ...............................................................Monkseaton, St Mary
Lynne Craggs .............................................................Blyth, St Cuthbert
Judith Dobson ..........................................................Kirknewton, St Gregory & the Glendale Group of Churches
Vicotor Spong ............................................................Gosforth, All Saints
Michael Spears ..........................................................Chevington, St John
Susanna Swales ..........................................................Alnmouth, St John & churches in the Lesbury w Alnmouth

NORWICH
Admitted and Licensed 05 September 2009
Bridge Archer ...........................................................Heigham, St Thomas
Jackie Clay ...............................................................Mattishall and Tud Valley
Julia Curtis ...............................................................High Oak, Hingham and Scoleton w Wood Rising
Jeanette Hawes .......................................................Stalham, East Ruston, Brundstead, Sutton and Ingham
Lynda Mansfield ......................................................Scole w Brockdish, Billingford, Thorpe Abbotts and Thorpe Parva
Amanda Sands ..........................................................Fakenham w Alethorpe
Christopher Whipp ..................................................Ditchingham, Hedenham, Broome, Earsham, Alburgh & Denton
Licensed
Carolyn Cliff..........................Great Yarmouth Team Ministry

PETERBOROUGH
Admitted and Licensed 03 September 2009
Carolyn Brawn.........................Thorpe Achurch, St John the Baptist
Ruth Crompton............................Rushden, St Mary
Diane Creasey..............................Greetham, St Mary the Virgin
Chris Hammett.............................Bretton, Holy Spirit
Katharine Reade..........................Wellingborough, St Mark
Ann Reed.......................................Flore, All Saints
Karin Smith.................................Helmdon, St Mary Magdalene
Phillip Spriggs.............................Wellingborough, Glenegales
Marion Welch.............................Earls Barton, All Saints

ST ALBAN’S
Admitted and Licensed 13 September 2009
Trevor Alexander......................Potters Bar, King Charles the Martyr
Penny Davies............................Royston, St John the Baptist
Richard Genochio......................Therfield, St Mary the Virgin
w Kelshall, St Faith
Stephanie Willcocks....................St Albans, St Stephen

Licensed
Bernice Parsons.........................Caldecote, All Saints, Northill, St Mary
the Virgin and Old Warden, St Leonard

ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH
Admitted and Licensed 17 October 2009
Philip Allison............................Exning w Landwade
William Cardale........................Bradfield, St Clare
Rachel Cornish..........................Felixstowe, St John
Malcolm Offord..........................Sudbury, All Saints

Licensed following transfer
Isabel Dalziel-O’Neill..................Kesgrave, All Saints

WAKEFIELD
Admitted and Licensed 27 September 2009
Freda Jackson...........................Lupset, St George
Teresa Monaghan........................South Kirkby
Judith Mulligan........................Almondbury w Farnley Tyas Team Parish
Stephen Oakley..........................Lundwood, St Mary Magdalene
Jean Senior................................Lepton, St John
Shelley Wild...............................Emley, St Michael the Archangel

WINCHESTER
Admitted and Licensed 03 October 2009
Beth Cantrell.............................Benefice of Boldre and South Baddesley
Janice Farrow.............................Benefice of Bournemouth, Holy Epiphany
Rachel Hartland........................Benefice of Yateley
Ian Hayes..................................Benefice of Yateley
John Newbold............................Benefice of Bournemouth, St John the Baptist
Ernie Ong..................................Benefice of Yateley
Mark Payne...............................Benefice of Throop
Malcolm Rittman........................The Warden of Readers
Lynley Wilkes.............................Benefice of Bournemouth, Holy Epiphany

Given PTO
Peter Pattisson..........................Brockenhurst

RIPON AND LEEDS
Admitted and Licensed 05 October 2009
Catherine Beaumont
Hannah Beck
Anthony Laotan
Sandra Lowe
Richard Oliver
David Smith
Anne Tunley

Licensed
Elizabeth Bassant
Joan Bousefield
Nathan Dring

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John Wheatley

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Albert Savage

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Peter Madge
William McKend

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Ruby Hall

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In the period of about eighteen months from the middle of 2008 until last November, the Ministry Division made three new appointments. The titles were not settled immediately, but the three posts are now known as National Consultants for Reader Ministry. Each has a specific brief – the first deals with selection, the second with quality in training and the third with CMD (continuing ministerial development).

I am also delighted that all three appointees are Readers. They are respectively Nick Daunt (Liverpool – selection), Sue Hart (Newcastle – quality in training) and Wendy Sargeant (Norwich – CMD). All three have taken up ex-officio places on the Executive Committee.

The appointments have come about as a result of a review of the level of support given to Readers by the Ministry Division, and a recognition that lay ministry in general will play an increasingly important part in the church of the future. Consequently, the ‘lay voice’ has been invited to have a specific input on the committees that discuss the future of ministry as a whole.

However, the hope is that the days of ‘them and us’ (lay and ordained) are gradually coming to an end. Nick, Sue and Wendy are not there to fly the flag for Readers – though I am sure they will do so if necessary – but rather to offer their expertise as full members of the committees on which they serve. They will also be available for consultation by the dioceses, to enable the spread of best practice (please excuse the jargon term) throughout the process of selection, training and post-admission continuing education.

The Lord we serve is surely entitled to the best that we can offer in the 21st century environment in which he has placed us. We should not be frightened of the idea of increasing professionalism if it also makes us increasingly effective in proclaiming the gospel. Please pray for Nick, Sue and Wendy in their new tasks.

Alan Wakely
Secretary, Central Readers’ Council

Now there’s an idea....

for when the general election takes place

But possibly only for small rural places! Why not set up a table outside the place where voting takes place? Fill it with unlit T lights. When people leave the Polling Station you can then point out the candles to tell them, and ask them whether they would like to take one home, or to a specific place, in order to light it as a prayer for our country. It may be better if the place to light them is non-denominational, but this will vary from place to place. Make sure you have the name of your church, or churches if doing this with Churches Together or Cyntûn in Wales, clearly displayed so that they can see this is a local event. If the weather was really fine they could even be lit out of doors, but given the British weather, which is even more unpredictable than British politics, this may be one step too far!

Need to know more?

With the general election coming up, you may be interested in a recent book. Published by SPCK, it is called God and Government. The editors are Nick Spence and Jonathan Chaplin. Nick, who works for the think tank Theos, has contributed articles to The Reader in the past. The blurb on the back cover says ‘What according to Christian thought is the proper function of government? That is the key question this lively volume seeks to address. It does not tell readers what to do, still less whom to vote for. Rather, it seeks to equip us to consider what we should be attempting to achieve in our role as “political Christians”, that is Christians employed, engaged or simply interested to discover our MPs answer about why Christians should vote for their party.

Another book is Votewise Now! Three parliamentarians from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties put the moral case for their parties in this book. They respond to the question ‘Why should a Christian vote for your party?’, which is published by a Christian social reform organisation The Jubilee Centre. The rest of the book offers other advice to constituents who want to vote in line with their consciences. There is also an accompanying group discussion guide and a video on the global economic crisis.

More information at www.christiantoday.com
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