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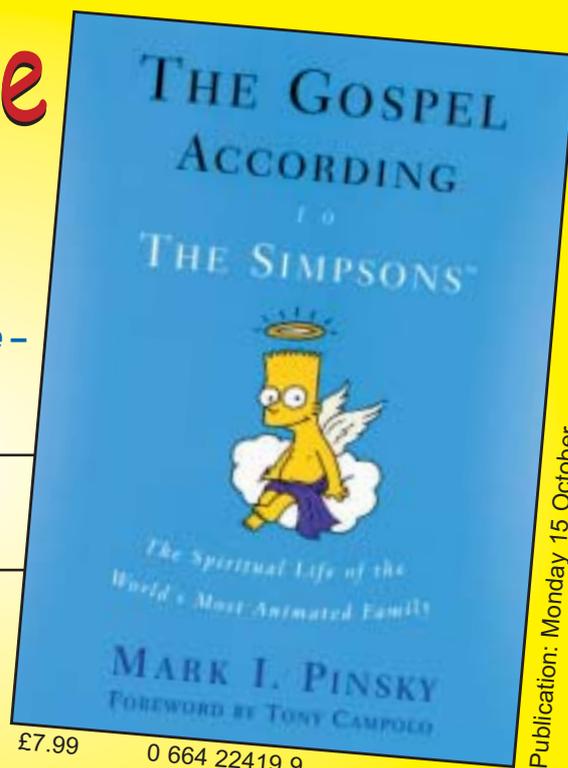
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*The Reader* is available in the UK for £4.40 for four issues a year. Cheques should be made payable to *The Archbishops' Council*.  
ISSN 0300-3469



Cover: 'The Tree of Life' altar-cloth by Mrs Enid Newman of the Trefoil Guild. The Millennium Chapel at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire.



Autumn 2001 Volume 98 No.3

# THE READER

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The picture on the cover of this issue of *The Reader* illustrates a Millennium success story – though one that has also experienced a fair few of the traditional Millennium hiccups. Regular readers may remember that in the first issue of the 'new format' *Reader* which appeared in February 2000, we featured the story of the building of an ecumenical chapel at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. Both the Arboretum – planted in memory of the people of the twentieth century, particularly those who died as a result of war – and its chapel were the brain-child of David Childs, a Reader from Salisbury Diocese. Back in February 2000 we boldly stated that the chapel would be consecrated on Easter Day that year, and that we hoped to carry a picture of it shortly afterwards. Well, that was a slightly over-optimistic statement! David Childs had to cope with a number of headaches before the chapel was completed – not least the original builders going into liquidation! But it is now open and can act as the heart of the Arboretum – making visible the spirit of remembrance and reconciliation in which the forest has been planted. And we have kept our promise – for our delicate cover picture is a close up of part of the altar cloth in this chapel. Not surprisingly it depicts a tree! It is inspired by that visionary verse from the Book of Revelation, which speaks of the new Jerusalem in the following terms: 'On either side of the river was the tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit... and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations'. (*Revelation 22.2*) The collage of red, yellow, gold, brown, green and auburn leaves on the tree represent the diversity and inter-dependence of the nations of the world.

It is an excellent cover to use for this particular issue, which explores the role of Christians and the Church in society and the world – a world that often seems to be 'fragmented' (see the article by Andrew Britton) and in need of 'healing'. This sense of woundedness affects both our own 'nation' and the wider panorama of 'nations' – indeed one of the results of globalisation is the reality that 'no nation is an island entire of itself' (to adapt John Donne) – we all in this world are in it together and the ultimate health of our world depends on us all. So our articles this time touch on the arenas of work, of politics, of peace-making, of social justice, of Church and State, and of preaching in the practical context of our here and now. It is a real feast; though I must also apologise that lack of space has meant that we have had to omit our normal 'Bible study' feature. However there will be plenty of Bible study next time round!

Referring to the November issue, may I remind you that we are hoping to include a 'Postings' page in which we invite any of you who wish to comment briefly on your experience of the first year of 'Common Worship'. That depends on getting contributions in – by the middle of September please. So do get thinking and writing.

One other request. In my postbag a few weeks ago was an email written by a Reader working in Indonesian Borneo (see how *The Reader* travels!) who appreciated the modern religious art we incorporate in the magazine. We do seem to have established a 'tradition' of our covers depicting interesting pieces of art which have been created recently – inspired, at least in the broadest sense, by a Christian perspective. I have a few more examples up my sleeve – but if any of you know of any windows, sculptures, paintings, tapestries that might be used in this way I would be very glad to hear about them.

**Clare Amos, Editor**

# Word Incarnated – Word Incarcerated?

With his renowned ability to address a topic vividly, **Rt Revd James Jones**, the Bishop of Liverpool and recently appointed as Chairman of the Church of England's Board of Mission gives some personal pointers to help people preach in today's world and society.



I am aware that if anyone looks me up in Crockford's they will find my entry is very thin! Not only was I ordained at the age of thirty-four, I then spent eight years as a curate. What Crockford's omits (even though I put it on my form!) is that I became a Reader in my twenties. This marked the beginning of my licensed ministry in the church.

I was on the staff of Scripture Union heading up the production of audio-visuals and in the parish church of St Nicholas in Sevenoaks (where I had gone to teach RE and Latin after graduating in Theology and a PGCE in Drama and Divinity). I was running the Youth Group with the curate and



helping with some of the first family services, now better known as all-age worship.

## Minister of the Word

The call to be a Reader was for me a call to be a licensed minister of the Word. Although there are other dimensions to Reader ministry I believe strongly that this essential element must not be neglected. Even though from my days as an audio-visual producer I believe we should seize every media of communication to broadcast the Gospel, I also believe that there is something unique about preaching

which no other medium can supplant. To hear and to see the message affecting the preacher as they preach is one of the most powerful aspects of preaching. Of course, there are sermons when the message seems to bypass the messenger. When that happens it is of little surprise that it makes no impact on the congregation. Yet when the truth is evidently shaping the preacher the audience cannot gain-say its power.

One of the reasons that Readers can feel undervalued is that in some places we have lost the centrality of the Word. The Anglican tradition is bi-focal with equal emphasis on Word and Sacrament. Yet much modern church architecture and re-ordering

schemes reveal the marginalising of the proclaimed Word. Pulpits and lecterns are dismantled and either demoted to contraptions from which you would scarcely deign to announce the week's notices or relegated to walk-on parts in the liturgy! The undermining of the Word has led some Readers to hanker after sacramental and pastoral ministry because they feel this is more valued and there is greater scope for such ministry in a Word-neglecting church. Without resisting the call of God to

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Be careful of the post-modernist critique which is robbing the church of confidence, because people are still asking the same questions.

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some to go in this direction I long for a recovery of the centrality of the Word – especially in this current missionary era in England. Those seeking God are full of questions. Be careful of the post-modernist critique which is robbing the church of confidence, because people are still asking the same questions.

Last year I visited fourteen secondary schools and listened to the questions of thousands of sixth formers. Why Jesus and not some other religion? Hasn't science disproved God? How can you believe in God when there's so much suffering? I found these young people alert to issues which the Church has been slow to address but which the Bible teaches



such as the environment and their fears for the future of the planet.

The church desperately needs Readers as ministers of the Word trained in apologetics who can engage with those seeking faith. We need Readers equipped to make connections between the Word and the World.

### The Word and the World

In Mark 4.26-29 Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to someone scattering seed on the ground. The picture is of a process. When the seed hits the earth there is a biochemical reaction. 'The earth produces of itself' (in Greek, 'automatically'). It's a mystery for the sower 'does not know how'. The inescapable thrust of this parable is that there is an inevitable reaction of growth when the seed hits the earth. In other words, Jesus envisaged such a reaction of growth in the Kingdom whenever the Word connected with the World.

When I was praying and meditating on this parable I found myself questioning why we seldom see this reaction of growth in England today. The

unavoidable conclusion I came to was either the parable was an exaggeration or the reality is that the Word is somehow being inhibited by us from actually connecting with the World. I have come to the latter view. The Word Incarcerated rather than the Word Incarnate. For all sorts of reasons at national, regional and local levels we have kept the seed in a husk. We are not connecting with our communities. And, we've imprisoned the Word in abstract concepts and obscure language instead of incarnating him in concrete images and vivid stories.

When I was in the parish I was taking a course for those leading children and young people. I was exploring the difference between abstract concepts and concrete images and our almost perverse disposition to use language and abstract ideas that actually distance the hearer from the Truth. To make the point I gave the group an abstract concept, one of the most popular, 'God is love' and asked how many times they thought it occurred in the Bible. To help them I suggested a figure, over or under five hundred times? A man shot up his hand and shouted 'Five thousand times!' The answer is twice! Never in the Old Testament. Never on the

lips of Jesus. Never in the Gospels. Never in Paul's letters. Twice only and both times in the Letters of John. Yet the Bible is an album of many pictures and stories telling us how God loves us and sometimes in the most surprising way. When St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 wrote that we 'see through a glass darkly' he made no mention of darkness. What he actually wrote was that we see through a mirror 'in an enigma' – in stories and pictures, in similes and metaphors. This is the method of Jesus. We need to recover this to the ministry of the Word. Jesus told stories with adults, not for children, although I am sure there were many in the crowds that flocked to hear him preach and teach.

### PLAT

I hesitate to share the following because there is something personal and private about how each of us communes with God before we preach. Over the years

I have been led to pray for four things – Power, Love, Authority and Truth – to PLAT each sermon.

I pray for the power hidden in that longing that the Word should

go out and return not empty. The Word does have the power to transform by challenging and converting the hearer to be obedient to God's will.

I pray for the love that impelled and compelled Jesus to reach out to those in need. So often we can find our hearts cold towards God and if it weren't for the fact that it was down on the service sheet there are times we would gladly forego the opportunity to preach. There is no alternative to coming again to the foot of the cross, seeking forgiveness and tasting the meat of the one who 'bade me welcome yet my soul drew back guilty of dust and sin'. There is also the difficulty of consciously or sub-consciously using the service to settle scores with people. Resist this like the plague or it will cause disease. Imagine your congregation as if they had all been led to faith by you personally. If you have no love for them, pray for God's love.

I pray for authority, for that spiritual authority that even his detractors recognised in Jesus' teaching when they confessed that they had never heard someone teach with such authority. It was an authority that came not from a hectoring voice or authoritarian manner but from one who kept his

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quiet times with God the Good Father away from the pressures of the crowd.

I pray for Truth – that in all the stories, anecdotes, illustrations and parables the Spirit of God would do that unique work of opening eyes to see the Kingdom in all its dimensions and lead people into the Truth who is Jesus.

When I shared these four things with someone at a Preaching Conference she added Freedom. Oh to be free of what other people think! To be free from the text to engage with the people eye to eye. To be free to preach the Word without fear or favour. The question that I ask of God mostly when returning from a service where I have preached is 'Did you speak, Lord.' Only eternity will reveal the answer.

*James Jones is Bishop of Liverpool and Chairman of the Council of the College of Preachers which offers unique resources and courses for preaching. If you would like to follow up this article on preaching please write to him at the College of Preachers, 10a North Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9AB for an information pack about resources for preachers.*



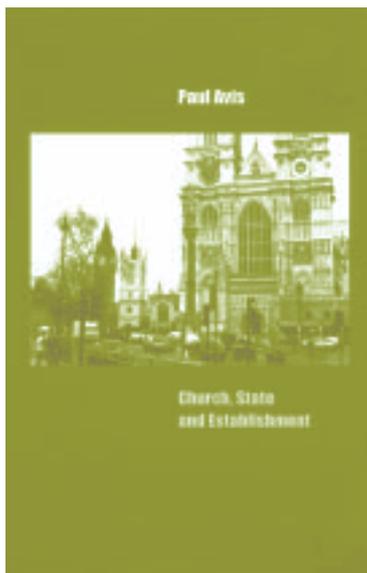
# Church, State & Establishment

In view of the theme of this issue of *The Reader* we asked **Prebendary Paul Avis** to introduce his most recent book *Church, State and Establishment*.

Issues concerning the relation between Church and State are very much alive. The question seems to be cropping up on all sides. I need only mention: constitutional changes to the United Kingdom through devolution; proposals for the reform of the Second Chamber; the changing character of nationhood and statehood through globalisation; ecumenical rapprochement with the non-established Nonconformist churches; even the current review of the law of marriage. Ministers and church leaders need now, in a way that they have not needed for quite some time, to be able to speak in a theologically intelligent way about Church and State in the purposes of God.

In this book I focus on the relation between Church and State in principle and on the particular instance of this, colloquially known as the 'establishment' of the Church of England. But the motive and dynamic is thoroughly missiological. One of my major concerns is for the effective (and that means united) mission of the Church of Christ in this land to the nation – a mission to individuals, households, communities, institutions, networks and in terms of public doctrine. That is a huge challenge and one that will tax the resources of all the churches that are able to work closely together. That mission focus is why I ask such questions as:

- What does it mean to be a truly national Church with a nationwide mission of service and witness?
- What sort of relationship between church and state has theological integrity?
- What is meant by that much abused word 'establishment' and what are the various models of 'establishment' among the Christian traditions?



- Is the established status of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland a help or a hindrance to their mission?
- What are the realistic hopes for churches united ecumenically in a national mission?

## Church and state

We have almost lost the language that the Christian Church developed over the centuries to enable it to think theologically about its relation to the God-ordained institution of the state. There are no doubt complex reasons for the current sense of distance between Church and nation, Church and state. A major cause is the process of the secularisation of culture. Secularisation has undermined the public significance of religious practice and the public profile of the churches. A linked factor is the process of the pluralisation of society. As a result of the increasing pluralisation of communities and their institutions, the historic national church begins to take its place as one religious institution among many and its qualitative distinctiveness

becomes toned down.

But the causes of this mutual alienation also include the pathology of militant, aggressive nationalism in the twentieth century, where national sentiment has sometimes become the vehicle of racism or of some other demonic ideology. The historic ideal of a partnership between Church and State, as two divinely ordained institutions, given for the well-being of humankind, has been further corroded by the collusion of the churches with such nationalistic regimes – whether that has taken the form of warmongering by some bishops of the Church of England in World War One, the assimilation of much of German Lutheranism to the Nazi regime in the 1930s, the Concordats between the Holy See and the Fascist dictators, or the chauvinism of some national Orthodox churches. But in the Christian theological economy, abuse does not destroy use. Not all the historical expressions of an integral relationship between Church and State can be condemned as corrupt, though no doubt all have been imperfect.

As I have already hinted, I maintain that there is a fundamental missiological reason for revisiting the question of Church and State. There is a national, as well as a local and a regional dimension to Christian mission. I am quite clear that these territorial (sociological or demographic, we might say) contexts provide simply the *opportunity* or *occasion* for the Church's mission, not the *ground* of it. Mission is grounded primarily in the *missio Dei*, the outworking of God's gracious purpose for the whole of God's creation. It is grounded derivatively in the God-ordained nature of the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. But mission cannot happen without such contexts, such 'occasions'. Therefore, the possibility of an overt, recognised,

mutually beneficial relationship or partnership between Church and State should be taken seriously.

I take some time in the book to recover some key elements of this lost language. I attempt to summarise the complex biblical picture. I then touch on medieval political thought, Luther, Calvin and modern Roman Catholic theology. But I spend most time on what I regard as the classical Anglican tradition – the theological articulation of the relation between Church and State in Hooker, Burke, Gladstone, Thomas Arnold, Coleridge, Maurice and Creighton.

Of course I recognise that times have changed enormously since the days of the Bible and even of our forebears in the faith. That is why I take the trouble to trace, step by step, the emergence of a *de facto plural* – and ideologically pluralist – society, from the seventeenth century to the present. I note the further paradigm shift from a pluralism of Christian communities to a pluralism of world faith communities (anticipated by the presence of Jews from Cromwellian times). I ask whether these changed circumstances negate what the Church has consistently taught about the relation in which it has sought with the State. I propose a modulated interpretation of the Church-State relationship – one that maintains continuity with the Christian tradition, yet takes seriously our present pluralist context. That does not lead me to abandon the ideal of ‘establishment’, properly understood – far from it!

I see no reason to backtrack on what theologians have taught about the State’s obligation to acknowledge God and Christian truth, to provide for the spiritual, as well as the material needs of its citizens and to protect and support the mission and ministry of the Church. I hold that this obligation still pertains in spite of far-reaching cultural changes and I recognise that it takes many forms that are still operative even in our supposedly secular world. I explore ways in which I believe the Church-State relation can make sense in England – in Britain – especially in an ecumenical age.

As a result of our amnesia with regard to the tradition, there is, I believe, a danger that we may misread the signs of the times. I think there is evidence that some are making precisely that mistake. To me, the signs do not point to ever advancing secularisa-

tion and ever increasing distance between church and state. Instead they suggest a trend towards the deeper involvement of all the churches, including those in the dissenting tradition that historically have been most reserved about being linked to the state, in the structures of civil society.

As I argue later, the sovereignty of nation states may be compromised by globalisation, but states are assiduously legislating (in the context of transnational political and economic realities) with undiminished intensity for the lives of their communities, institutions and individuals. Whether we consider healthcare, education, housing policy or manufacturing industry, agriculture and commerce, we find that the state is at the same time both one step removed from the sharp end of things and yet all-pervasive. States may delegate, but they also regulate. They may devolve, but they do not cease to control. The issue of sovereignty is very much alive in the British constitutional context.

In the British constitution, we may say, sovereignty is vested in the Queen in Parliament under God. That sovereignty impinges heavily on the way that individual citizens, whether Christians or not, conduct their lives. It impinges equally rigorously on societies or communities, such as churches. Like all institutions in civil society, the churches cannot avoid being deeply involved at the level of the state. I am afraid that those that think otherwise are deceiving themselves. To fight such involvement, on the grounds of misguided principle, risks marginalisation and irrelevance. The churches, like all institutions in civil society, are inevitably implicated in a relationship to the state. They need a theology to guide them in this demanding relationship.

### Establishment

The highly visible bits of the Church of England’s historic, constitutional relation to the state that people tend to get excited about are, in my view, not the most important. They are simply the cherry on the cake. Issues to do with the Crown’s involvement in ecclesiastical appointments, how many bishops there should be in a ‘reformed’ Second Chamber, and the legislative competence of the General Synod in relation to Parliament are merely the ripples on the surface of the deep. I am entirely happy to defend most aspects of these arrangements as they stand. I

am not aware of any sustainable, principled objections to them. When they are seen in their historical perspective and constitutional context they are better understood.

But it is the submerged nine-tenths of the iceberg that is really important:

- The principle of partnership in service between church and civil society.
- The national pastoral mission of the church that aims to reach the whole community, territorially understood.
- The state’s recognition of the things of God and its responsibility for the spiritual welfare of its citizens, in preference to a purely secular constitution.
- The acknowledged role of the church in the debate over public issues.

It is these things, rather than the other more contingent matters, that form the substantial content of ‘establishment’.

‘Establishment’ is a word that has led many astray. It has almost come to be assumed – without proper investigation – that establishment is barely defensible. By the same token, what would probably be involved in ‘disestablishment’ (assuming that could be defended as a viable option and were politically and constitutionally feasible) needs much more considered handling than it often receives. The terms establishment and disestablishment are a minefield. They need careful unpacking. My position may be dubbed by some ‘antidisestablishmentarianism’. There is a certain mild satisfaction in being associated with the longest (or what was until recently the longest) word in the language. But my concerns go well beyond what is usually understood by that portentous word. They are theological, ecclesiological and fundamentally missiological. Those are three more somewhat over-long words that I would feel entitled to throw back at anyone who might wish to stereotype or trivialise the argument that I develop in this book!

*Paul Avis is General Secretary of the Church of England’s Council for Christian Unity, Sub-Dean of Exeter and Director of the Centre for the Study of the Christian Church. ‘Church, State and Establishment’ is published by SPCK, ISBN 0281054045 £8.99.*



**Reg Bailey**, who explains below his own unique place in Mothers' Union history, tells us more about this organisation and its important role in the life of society.

## Adventures in Management

**W**hat do the man from Del Monte, a Home Pride flour grader, and the Chief Executive of the Mothers' Union have in common? The answer is me. For over twenty-five years I have worked in those roles. Not, I might add, all at the same time! Until just two years ago, I worked in industry, largely the food industry, and mainly involved in turning companies round that were in difficulties.



Alongside my job as Managing Director of those companies, I was also a Reader in the Church of England. As a Reader, it seems to me that you have a head and heart that's informed by your training and experience as a Reader, and a unique and valuable perspective on the Church and Society, that comes from having both feet firmly in the work place. It always seemed to me that this was the ministry for which I was called.

I certainly had both feet firmly planted in the work place. It is never an easy task, taking the tough and often costly decisions about making a company profitable again and reconciling that all the while with your Christian faith. Over the years though, it has been gratifying to see some difficult situations brought back from the

brink, with all that means for jobs, security and those who have invested in money in the organisation.

Over the years, I have worked in a variety of different situations. In turnarounds it is either successful and you move on leaving the business with new owners, or it is unsuccessful and you move on to try again. In 1994, I had moved on following the successful sale of Del Monte and spent the next five years turning round Danish Bacon Company for its shareholder group. So it was that in 1999 I was looking for a new situation.

### The last thing on my mind

Probably the last thing on my mind was the thought of working in a full-time role in a Christian organisation. That is, until I discovered the Mothers' Union were seeking a new Chief Executive. 'They won't want you – they'll want a woman' was my wife's immediate reaction but a conversation with the search firm engaged to find the new Chief Executive soon reassured me that they were simply seeking the right person for the job, gender didn't come into it.

Subsequent meetings with the trustees fired my enthusiasm for getting involved with the Mothers' Union. I knew about it, of course, at the local level through my own church, and the involvement of my wife as a Branch Secretary. But the more I engaged in conversation with the trustees the more excited I became about the work that the organisation undertook and indeed the prospects for growth.

I was appointed in June 1999 and encountered a flurry of media interest as the first man to take on the role of Chief Executive in 125 years. Most of the interest centred on why would any-

one want to work for the tea-making wing of the Church of England, or an organisation that granny used to belong to. That is, after the curiosity of my gender had passed! The Mothers' Union is, however, probably the best kept secret in the Anglican Communion. The work of the organisation falls broadly into four key areas:

- Social Policy lobbying and research into marriage and family life;
- Related project work both in the United Kingdom and around the world;
- Empowering our members with resources to develop the prayer and spirituality that is at the heart of the ministry of the Society;
- And of course, the finance to enable our work to develop.

Since family life is so central to Society around the world, the remit of the organisation is vast. We have over one million members in some 62 countries, and our members are engaged in a ministry that encompasses some 77 prisons in the UK and Ireland, engaging with prisoners and their families, a network of Family Contact Centres where estranged parents can meet with their children in a safe, friendly environment, through to Parenting 2000, a project to train Parenting Group facilitators, who will help parents who are seeking to develop better parenting skills.

If that is the United Kingdom and Ireland, then in the rest of the world, we have some 300 workers who get alongside families where they are and help meet the needs of their communi-



ties. This means we are actively involved in basic healthcare projects, concerned with HIV/ Aids palliative care, and run numerous educational support projects for those families whose economic circumstances otherwise preclude them from basic learning. We also have pilot programmes providing literacy training for women and girls in Burundi, Malawi, and the Sudan. All this alongside training schemes to help generate income for families, and all in a solid Christian framework supported by a strong emphasis upon prayer. It was not so long ago that a senior member of the clergy passed a comment to me that almost every time

he had attended a meeting where someone said that a particular project was impossible, you could turn

Their commitment to improving conditions for all families everywhere leaves me breathless.

around and find the Mothers' Union already doing it. After two years I think he was correct.

Everyone says the job must be very different from anything I've done before. There are, of course, some differences from industry but, broadly speaking, the task of a Chief Executive in any organisation is the same. It is all about helping to develop the strategy and imparting the vision wherever it's possible to do so. It's about managing the resources available to you and using them to best effect.

**Rooted in society**

Possibly the thing that has astounded me most has been how rooted the whole is in Society. There is no sense that the work of the organisation is removed from the hard reality of life. I suppose I had always felt that working in industry would keep my faith firmly

grounded in reality. Some church leaders seemed so airy-fairy and divorced from reality, I certainly didn't want to go down that route. There was no need to worry though, I have never met such a bunch of down to earth people and their vision for what can be achieved through the gospel puts me to shame. Their commitment to improving conditions for all families everywhere leaves me breathless.

'What does the Lord require of us?' Micah asked almost three thousand years ago. 'That you love mercy, seek justice, and walk humbly with your God.' It could almost be the verse for the Mothers' Union, so relevant is it to the work that goes on. Our projects seek to bring about the Kingdom, here and now, our social poli-

cy work seeks for justice, and the whole is carried in a quiet calm way, the best kept secret?

Am I settled in this role? Do I think I can add value to the organisation? I think the answer to that is yes. There is a great deal to do, but unlike a turn round where your role is to sort out, and move on, this is different. I want to see my time at the Mothers' Union characterised by helping our members gain confidence in what they do, set things on a growing financial basis, so that even more programmes we need to do can be financed, and then to help get our voice, the voice of so many powerless families, heard around the world, and around the corner. Now that is going to take time.

We need too, to set membership of the Mothers' Union on a different basis. The traditional branch membership idea, where the only access point

to the organisation is to join your local branch, isn't right for everyone. Younger working women in particular, and men, who subscribe to the aim of the Society, but cannot or do not wish to participate at the branch level, must be encouraged to become Diocesan or Central members. These schemes have been around for a while but still attract only a minority of people, as their existence is not well known. The tendency will be for these to become more widespread, but the idea of the fellowship of the branch will of course always be important and significant.

The key is flexibility, and the Mothers' Union has always adapted to survive. Mary Sumner, its founder, started by a concern for parenting. One hundred and twenty five years later, we are faithful to that concern, but I doubt somehow, that she would recognise our parenting training today. One thing I am certain of, she'd be thrilled that we shared the concern.

The Mothers' Union website can be found at:  
<http://www.themothersunion.org>

God of compassion,  
Whose Son, Jesus Christ,  
the child of Mary,  
Shared the life of a home in Nazareth,  
And on the cross drew the whole  
human family to himself:  
Strengthen us in daily living  
That in our joys and sorrows  
We may know your presence  
to bind us together and to heal;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Who is alive and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, now and for ever. Amen  
(© from 'The Mothers' Union  
Worship Book')

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# Fragmentation and the Love of God

**Andrew Britton** is a Reader at St Margaret's, Chipstead, Surrey. He worked as an economist in the Treasury, and then as director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. He was executive secretary of the Churches' Enquiry into Unemployment and the Future of Work, and is now Chairman of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance. This article reflecting on the state of our world and society today is based on the keynote address which he gave to the Central Readers' Council conference at Swanwick in July 2000.



**T**he modern world is fragmented, the post-modern world even more so. Somewhere, way back in time, we think that society was cohesive, personal identity was secure and the world made sense. Perhaps it was in the 1950s, perhaps before the First World War, or perhaps as long ago as the Middle Ages. All we can say is that it is not like that now. We feel nostalgic for a past that we cannot date, for a paradise that we cannot clearly recall. Whether we would actually enjoy living in such a society is, of course, another question altogether.

The love of God draws us into unity, collects up the fragments and puts us together again. But this is a promise for the future, not a means of revisiting the past. And it is unity in God, not just a recognition of common loyalties, interests or views. It is unity within a Christian community. So how do we, as Christians in a post-Christian society, live in the world, without being children of it?

## Fragmentation of Society and the individual

Orthodox, neo-classical economic theory, with which I am familiar from my professional life, is based on an assumption called 'methodological individualism'. There is no such thing as society in orthodox economic theory; everything is explained in terms of individual choices, individual values and preferences. Individuals should be left alone, as far as is possible, to do as they please. This is the myth behind a very influential social philosophy and some very strongly held political views. It supports our commitment as a society to 'human rights' and to democracy. It is, as economists well know, built

on an assumption which cannot possibly be true.

In fact there can be no such thing as an isolated individual. We are social animals with social instincts built into the workings of our brains. As God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone' (*Genesis 2.18*). As human beings, as persons with distinctive characters and identities, we are formed by our relationships to one another and to the social groups in which we live. The separate personality which we cherish is in fact a 'social construct'. So individualism is a myth, but a myth which has tremendous power.

Modern man, a creation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is (or claims to be) autonomous. 'Economic man' according to orthodox theory has a well-defined utility function; in other words he knows what he wants and what is good for him. He does not need any external point of reference. He can make up his own mind. But equally we find that modern men and women in real life are beset by anxiety. One becomes uncertain of one's own identity if there is no-one able to confirm it. Autonomy can mean loneliness. Left to one's self there is a danger of fragmentation, of falling apart.

After modern man comes the post-modern person. Now we must deliberately choose our own personalities. We each have a part to play, a character to personify, a role of our own creation; and we can switch from one role to another. We choose our work life, our home life, our sex life, our prayer life. We

construct ourselves, assembling a person from bits and pieces. Sometimes the fragments do not fit well together; sometimes they are a real work of art. In a fast-changing world people have to be flexible. We cannot expect to be exactly the same person all of our life. We may change our jobs, our homes, our partners, not to mention our opinions and our values. When our life falls apart for us we just have to build another.

In a fragmented society, there is no generally agreed code of moral conduct, no means of resolving ethical disputes. That is another difference between being modern and being post-modern. Modern man sought to establish a secular code of conduct: he believed in duty, public service, 'manliness' and such like. Post-moderns can appeal to no authority except their own feelings or sense of fitness. Religion too has become a matter of choice. Many people are seekers, wanting to find a purpose for their lives. This is consumer religion, religion as patronage. It is one thing to place your whole trust in a system of belief and practice which you accept as ordained by God, quite another to construct your own system out of disconnected fragments of personal experience and speculation.

## A fragmented view of the World

Knowledge is accessible as never before. There is plenty of information to be found, on almost any subject. It can be transmitted, sorted, stored and retrieved at negligible cost, at least by those with the right technology. But this does not mean that we can make any better sense of the world in which we live. On the contrary the mass of information may make understanding more difficult. An advertisement for computer software invites us to 'create our own universe'. But what does it all mean? What does it add up to?

The modern world view divides knowledge into science and the arts. Science is concerned with facts that can be established and with theories that can be tested by observation and experiment. The rest of knowledge might be classified as fiction, unless it was true by definition or pure logic.

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We construct ourselves, assembling a person from bits and pieces. Sometimes the fragments do not fit well together; sometimes they are a real work of art. In a fast-changing world people have to be flexible.

Within its own ambit science unifies knowledge very successfully: chemistry follows from physics; biology follows from chemistry, and so on. There is even talk of a 'theory of everything' which would encompass all the laws of nature within one explanation. But this modern unification of knowledge might well exclude morality, aesthetics and religion as irrelevant, meaningless or untrue.

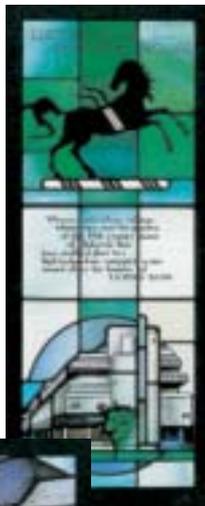
In reaction to this scientific imperialism, some adopt a romantic view of truth, exalting intuition above reason or observation. A few still cling to a pre-modern belief, ignoring science, or denying its truth when it seems to conflict with revelation. Others maintain that a line can be drawn between scientific knowledge and religious knowledge, and that the two do not conflict or compete. There is now another option, which might be called a 'post-modern' position, saying that all so-called knowledge is constructed by society, whether it is described as science, religion or anything else. If we take this approach to its logical conclusion, the distinction between subjective opinion and objective knowledge vanishes altogether. If there is no truth 'out there' at all, then, of course, our attempts to invent one will be inconsistent and fragmentary.

In this chaotic world the churches themselves are fragmented, but they all still preach a gospel that speaks of community, of coherence and of truth. Despite their actual disunity, they look for an ideal society in which the whole of humanity will be joined together in the love of one God.

### Unity and the love of God

In St John's gospel Jesus prays for his disciples: 'And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they might be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one' (*John 17.22-3*).

The Biblical pattern of society is



From the booklet *Windows on the world of work*, featuring windows from Christ Church, Blackfriars, Diocese of Southwark. Windows by Goddard and Gibbs Studios Ltd London.

based on unity with God as well as the unity of individuals with one another. The commandments to love God and to love our neighbour are inseparable. Instead of a mythical contract between sovereign individuals to establish society, there is a covenant between God and his people. The church is the body of Christ, and its individual members are not viable in isolation. The bond which holds

people together in this ideal community is love, love for God as well as love for one another. The application of this model to modern secular societies is problematic, perhaps inappropriate.

Social cohesion and the instincts that support it are universal and part of human nature. But not all cohesive societies are to be applauded. There is a kind of unity that is based on compulsion, exploitation or the repression of individual freedom. Unity often depends on a common hostility towards outsiders, on the existence of an external threat, real or supposed. If the individualism of 'modern man', with its insistence on human rights, is seen as a revolt against such communities, then it is surely justified.

Religious communities have been, and sometimes still are, oppressive in just this way. That is why the bond has to be love, not just religious belief. A loving relationship with God gives meaning and value to individual lives, and presupposes free will and liberty. We can serve one another without loss of dignity if that service is an offering to God. But, if there were no God, then it would not be blessed either to give service or to receive it.

Individual identity, in the Bible, depends on a relationship with God. To seek to establish autonomy without God is to be guilty of sinful pride. The modern concerns for self-awareness, for self-esteem, for self-fulfilment, all fall under this judgement. It is only by losing myself that I can be found. Rebirth must be preceded by the death of the old identity. The Christian

response to modern anxiety and the fragmentation of individual lives is that the quest for self-sufficiency is always in vain.

The Bible also defines the beginning of wisdom as the fear of God. As there is only one God, there is only one truth. God sees everything that he has made, and he sees that it is good. Perception and evaluation cannot be separated. In contemporary terms what religion provides is a meta-narrative, a story which explains all other stories.

In this chaotic world the churches themselves are fragmented, but they all still preach a gospel that speaks of community, of coherence and of truth.

Knowledge is unified by the praise of God. Jesus is the Truth, as well as the Way and the Life. This does not mean, of course, that Christians should reject the knowledge that comes from scientific investigation, or adopt a pre-modern view of the world. On the contrary it sets before us the task of integrating contemporary thought into a framework of faith. This is a perennial task which needs to be undertaken afresh in every generation.

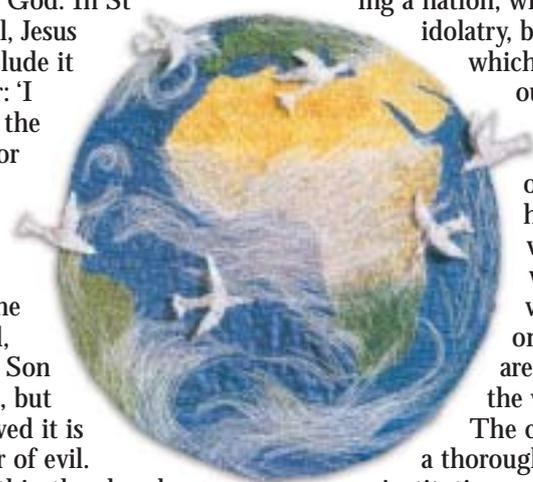
As against the fragmentation of society, of the individual and of the world as we see it, the Christian faith presents a unity grounded in the love of God, and in his work of atonement in Christ. It is not a nostalgia for a real or imagined past, it is a vision of future promise. It is not just a logical consequence of monotheism, not just a celebration of natural human sociability, but the result of a struggle against the forces of chaos. It is impossible without a painful sacrifice, an act of reconciliation and atonement.

In order to bring about this reconciliation, God must identify himself with us, and also identify us with him. It is a two-way representation, in the person of Jesus Christ. He represents us to God, and also represents God to us. In this way we can be united to him, and the purpose of creation can be achieved. In the process we are also united to one another. The reconciliation is with individuals and also with the society of believers as a whole. We are like sheep brought together as one flock, guided by a single shepherd. As the head of the church, Jesus represents the whole body. The community as a whole is redeemed.



Embroidery by Pamela Pavitt.

The world outside the Christian community remains fragmented and cut off from God. In St John's gospel, Jesus does not include it in his prayer: 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me' (John 17.9) God loves the whole world, and sent his Son to redeem it, but until it is saved it is in the power of evil. The love within the church is a witness to God's universal love. Jesus does not ask that his disciples should be cut off from the world, yet there is no suggestion that atonement is possible outside the fellowship of the church.



### The Church and the World

This is the contrast with which we, as present-day Christians, have to live: on the one hand a fragmented, pluralistic society, on the other the vision of unity in Christ. There always has been tension of this kind between the society that we live in and the kingdom of God to which we belong. In our own times it takes this particular form.

In some ways, the society of today is more like the society of New Testament times than that of any period in between. The first-century Roman Empire was also a pluralist society, in which men and women felt alienated, in search of their true identity and purpose. Something like globalisation was happening around the Mediterranean; it was an age of affluence for some, destitution for many others. Then, as now, there was nostalgia for a more simple past, combined with wonder at recent human achievements and the enjoyment of present ease. It proved to be very fertile soil for the spread of the gospel. Perhaps, therefore, we should take our model of the relationship between the church and the world straight out of the pages of the New Testament, St John's Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of St Paul.

But present-day society, in this country at least, is also very different from that of the New Testament. We do not live in a pagan society, but in a post-Christian one. Another Biblical

model might be that of the faithful remnant, like the prophets we are calling a nation, which has lapsed into idolatry, back to the faith by which it once lived. That is our dilemma. The good news that we would proclaim is, for many of our audience, old history. In the local village community, in which we imagine that we or our ancestors once lived, the cottages are grouped around the village church.

The church is seen as a thoroughly conservative institution, associated with nostalgia for the past rather than with a vision for the future. And that perception is not wholly mistaken. We are the custodians of the national past, the great cathedrals and the parish churches, the sacred art and literature, Remembrance Day, the National Anthem and the school Nativity Play. This is a legacy which we cannot refuse.

Legacies from the past, however, are seldom unmixed blessings. We do not want to find ourselves in the position of the old pagan religions which Christianity displaced in the late Roman Empire. They celebrated the local community, no doubt, gave religious dignity to political power and the occasion for solemnity or feasting. But they were empty shells, from which the real conviction had evaporated. They had the form of worship without the substance.

If, today, the church aspires to be the focal point for a local, or indeed a national community, the fate of that civic paganism gives a necessary warning. Is this real or is it wishful thinking? Are the cottages really going to group themselves again in the shelter of the church spire? What would the church have to give up to make that

possible? Can we be the fiercest critics of secular society, as the gospel demands, if we are also its most enthusiastic promoters.

As a church, we have to resist two temptations. The first is splendid isolation. There is a danger of creating a Christian ghetto, or more likely a Christian theme park. It fits all too well with post-modern pluralism that a few eccentrics should choose a style of life quite different from that of the others. It so easily becomes a play or a performance. A project to reconstruct the

We are not supposed to be citizens of this world; we are supposed to be resident strangers, citizens of another country altogether.

early church cannot possibly be successful. It will always be a copy, never the authentic original work. We have to build something new and the inspiration for it has to be our own today.

But equally there is the danger of assimilation. It happens all the time: Christians give their blessing to secular causes and institutions as if they were the gospel. We give an aura of sanctity to the latest manifestations of human pride, and in exchange we receive an image of contemporary relevance. We are not supposed to be citizens of this world; we are supposed to be resident strangers, citizens of another country altogether.

Society is indeed fragmenting, and we are fragmenting with it. The natural response would be to do our best to put the pieces together, in whatever pattern seems best to fit, probably a pattern from the past. But that is not what the church is here to do. The church is not here to promote unity as such, only the unity which centres on the love of God. It is not a unity we can experience fully in this life; but it is the direction in which we must point.

### Broken

Help us Lord to understand the nature of your brokenness,  
And to perceive that beyond the breaking of tendon and tissue,  
was severance from your Father.  
May we applaud that break which shook Heaven's structure;  
As love and justice stood in unflinching confrontation.  
May we applaud your brokenness, ensured to rescue us to wholeness;  
And from a broken world of separation.

(From 'Becoming...' by Garry Harris, Adelaide, South Australia)



# NO WORK NO MASS:

## Re-integrating workplace and faithplace

**Martin Jones** who has contributed this challenging call to Readers to live out their laity is a Stipendiary Reader in St Albans Diocese and has been full-time Workplace Chaplain in Luton from 1989.

### The Holy Communion affirms human work

**N**o work, no mass' is a quote from Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) a Roman Catholic theologian. By it, he meant that unless people do the work of baking bread and fermenting wine, there are no raw materials for the Holy Communion, and the ordained priest becomes redundant in his presidential role. This remains true, whether the work is domestic and unpaid, or carried out on an industrial scale for wages.

So, when the offertory of money, wafers, and wine is reverently processed through the nave to the altar, we should perceive these gifts ('which earth has given and human hands have made...') as symbolising the blood, sweat, joys and tears of our own weekly work, paid or unpaid. And we should rejoice that God accepts and sanctifies these imperfect man-made gifts, to 're-issue' as sacred food to sustain us spiritually through the coming week. Why don't we make these connections?

### My Father is working still, and so am I

The words spoken by Jesus in John 5.17 undergird the biblical view of work. But David Westcott in his book *Work well, live well: rediscovering a biblical view of work* (1996) writes of the church's neglect of work, citing a survey by Mark Greene of London Bible College, who found that 75% had never been asked by their minister about their ministry in the workplace, and 50% had never heard a single sermon on work.

Scripture teaches we have a divine command to work (*Genesis 1.28 'Fill the earth and subdue it'*), acting as God's stewards in partnership with him



*Christ the Worker* by John Hayward. The Chapel, 'Wychcroft', Blechingley, Surrey.

(*Psalms 8.7*). 'Work is part of God's plan of salvation' notes Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* of 1982. We worship a God who is himself a worker: he creates, sustains, redeems, and sanctifies. He intends our work to be prosperous, and unlike Anglican intercessors, has no favourite occupations, treating the work of dustman and nurse with equal regard.

### Complementary mission and ministry – lay Christians and Industrial Chaplains

Despite a lack of church encouragement, some Christians do prayerfully try to discern God's presence and activity in their workplaces. The Industrial Christian Fellowship is a helpful national agency, as is the exciting journal *Faith in Business Quarterly*. Ruth Etchells, the former Principal of St John's College, Durham, comments on the calling to lay ministry as follows:

'To be called to lay service is to be called to live fully in the secular world, to be at ease in it, to know its idiom and assumptions, to engage in its arguments and affairs, because one's centre is there. It is not to sally out from one's "real" centre, the parish church,... for sorties into industry or whatever. It is to live in... and to earn one's income from them; and there, in that place where one's energies are committed, to engage quite consciously in mission and ministry. It is to see oneself as committed for work outside the "club" of the church in its parishes and diocesan structures, with no responsibility whatever for maintaining them.'

(*Quoted in 'Work in Worship', edited C Butland, 1985*)

By contrast, the mission and ministry of industrial chaplains is different from and complementary to, this ministry of lay Christians. The chaplain is not employed by the institution. He or she mediates a representative Christian presence in places of work, available to all employees of whatever faith or status. An Industrial

chaplain takes an informed interest in the company and the issues it faces, and brings these workplace concerns into the worshipping church, enjoying the immense privilege of unsupervised access round the site, and as well as being independent of power groups within it.

### Reader Ministry: Reconciling faith-place to workplace

There are I believe some 10,000 Readers active in the Church of England. All have been trained to lead public worship and to preach. All have done, or are still doing, 'secular' work, either paid or unpaid. All have been trained, in theory, to think theologically about the world and society. But since I was licensed in 1986, few Readers in my experience actually *want* to make the spiritual and theological connections between parish life, and working life! Few of us seem to have the spiritual appetite and self-discipline for this venture. In today's church, to take the secular workplace seriously is to be unfashionable, bizarre, irrelevant, and faintly disloyal. It is more cosy, affirming, and popular, to become a lay-clone of the incumbent and PCC, comfortably imitating their hierarchy of priorities!

But in doing so, Readers deprive their clergy and congregations of the greatest potential gift that God has placed in their hands: the gift of reconciling sacred and secular – of bringing together what centuries of sloppy spirituality and church culture have falsely separated. 'We are failing to make the connections', says the Bishop of Liverpool in a recent address to the Baptist Assembly, 'with the real material world that God loves, sustains, and is redeeming... We have reduced [Jesus] and his resurrection, and his church and his mission to a subjective, individualistic and private experience.'

(*Church of England Newspaper, 11/5/01*)

Our vocation as Readers is neither superior nor inferior to that of ordained priest: it is different. Its glorious *difference* lies in its daily rootedness both in the explicitly sacred, and the explicitly secular, and in our duty to join them together. In this sense, we Readers are God's prophetic gift to the Church, twenty-first century Celts, to help it remake these connections. By our obedient love, we can use our training and worldly experience to weld together what human sin and laziness have allowed to grow apart.



# A Passion for Peace

**Mary Roe**, who here shares her love of peace-making, was married to the late Gordon Roe, Bishop of Huntingdon. After reading theology as a mature student at the University of Durham, Mary had senior roles in religious education. She is a licensed Reader and is involved in the work of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.

I was a pacifist long before I was a Reader. In those days friends and acquaintances would dismiss my opinions as the eccentricity of an otherwise normal person. After I was licensed even strangers became anxious to probe my views and my reasons for holding them and asked very searching questions – a daunting reminder of the respect which a blue scarf can apparently still command. This led me to look more deeply into my reasoning in order to give a better account of my conclusions than just my gut-horror of the obscenity of modern warfare and a string of quotations such as, ‘Blessed are the Peacemakers’ (*note: Not Peace-keepers*) ‘Love your enemy,’ ‘Turn the other cheek,’ and Paul’s rather ambiguous advice to the Romans in Chapter 12 of his letter. However, we can’t cast doubt on the importance of such texts, because they point to the way that Jesus himself followed, all the way to crucifixion. He lived what he preached and commanded us to follow his example.

## Love your neighbour as yourself

How do we respond to other scriptural and dominical commands, from the Decalogue’s ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’ to ‘Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me’? It

Embroidery by Pamela Pavitt.

seems that the commandment to love our enemies and our neighbours as ourselves is the only one we have deliberately struck off our list of faith’s demands, deciding that our Lord was being totally unrealistic to the point of naivety in this instance. We all, clergy and lay people, know that human nature is weak and that some commandments are easier to keep for some people than others, depending on their temperament and circumstances. But to acknowledge human weakness is not to accept it as part of God’s purpose for us and call vice ‘virtue’ and failure ‘success.’ To do so is to live in a looking-glass world of our own creation.

A similar progress of *acknowledging* human frailty becoming *accepting*, then *embracing* and finally *exalting* it would lead to some extraordinary situations in other areas of Christian morality. Just imagine reversing the commandments ‘You shall not commit adultery’ or ‘You shall not steal!’ What extraordinary scenarios could be imagined – with ministers and even bishops all playing their part to help ensure that clear biblical injunctions are stood on their head!

What a ridiculous thought! I imagine that would have been the response, too, of the early Christians if they had been allowed a glimpse into the future and seen crusaders marching and riding with the cross on which Christ allowed himself to be killed, emblazoned on shields and banners, spurred on by the promise of so many years off their stay in purgatory for every Saracen head lopped off; men fighting and killing in the name of Christ, over possession of the very place where he exercised his ministry of healing, preached his gospel of peace and love, and eventually was crucified ... . Surely incredible, they would have thought?

Moving on into our own day, they would, of course, be amazed at the nature and scope of our weapons of destruction, but I suspect they would be even more astounded at the blasphemy of naming one atomic missile, ‘Corpus Christi’ and the launching pad for another, ‘Holy Trinity’.

It seems that in our efforts to follow the Christian way of life, the command to love our enemies and to turn the other cheek is one commandment too far. We agree that adultery and theft are contrary to God’s purposes for us and, despite temptations and occasional failure to resist them, we are ready to repent, ask God to pick us up, dust us

down and help us to start afresh.

People often think they have scored a hit when they demand to know, ‘What would you do if someone were about to rape your daughter?’ I hope I would put myself between her and her attacker to try to stave off the violence; this change in intended victim could well cause the rapist to pause just long enough to think again and the situation might be saved. Of course, it might not work, I might have placed myself at risk to no avail, and if the situation deteriorated, I should probably end up lashing out with all my strength and any weapon that came to hand. But even then, should I not also repent any excessive damage I inflicted on my daughter’s assailant and pray for him? At a national level, where response to a perceived threat is less immediate, should we not *first* check that the threat is real (not just in our paranoid imaginations) and try to be peacemakers? Another knock-down question often hurled at us is, ‘What would you have done about Hitler?’ The answer to that may lie in another question, ‘If the 73% of the German population in the 1930s who were paid-up Christians, had adhered to Christ’s principles, where would Hitler have found his troops? – from among the Jews?’

## Speaking peace to near and far

As a Reader, do I preach pacifism in season and out? I hope not. I was licensed to teach and preach *the whole Gospel of Christ* and that means exhorting my fellow Christians to try to live the life of Christ, in every situation even if the way leads us to the Cross, strengthened by the sacraments which incorporate us into the Body of Christ – the true Corpus Christi. How hopeful am I that we can turn this commandment to ‘turn the other cheek’ right way up again and re-instate it as a tenet of the Christian life? I do see signs that, like Winnie-the-Pooh coming downstairs on his head, people feel that ‘there must be a better way of doing this’. Jingoism and nationalism are suspect in many quarters. (Patriotism need not entail violence or aggression.) I hope that the days when a nation’s leader could boost flagging popularity by declaring war on the other side of the world are passing. Maybe pragmatism has a part to play in our peacemaking? The Holy Spirit of peace can work through many unexpected paths!



# Cross Currents

In view of the theme of this issue of *The Reader* – as well as the General Election earlier this year – we felt it appropriate to invite three Readers who were all local Councillors to set out how faith and politics linked together for them. Here, listed in alphabetical order of their surnames, are their contributions. We are very grateful to each of them for being willing to do this – though perhaps we had better emphasise that the standard editorial caveat – ‘the views of contributors do not necessarily represent the views of the Central Readers’ Council’ must certainly apply in this instance!

**Paul Adnitt, Reader, St Gabriel’s Church, Blackburn, and Liberal Democrat Councillor, Ribble Valley Borough Council.**

Three important dates, or milestones, in my life are: January 1991 when I was appointed a primary school headteacher; September 1996 when I was licensed as a ‘Reader’ and May 1999 when I was elected a Ribble Valley councillor. I am therefore involved in education, politics and the church. Some people would say that you should not mix any two of these, never mind three! I strongly disagree. To me a Christian should be involved in all facets of life, religious and secular.

## My Early Journey into Politics

I first became involved in politics when the SDP was formed in the early 1980s. Before that I had been vaguely interested, but not actively involved. A card was pushed through my door asking me to join. I responded and joined. Here was a party I felt seemed to be going places and going to make a difference. When the SDP and the Liberal Party merged I was there. So I was a founder member of the Liberal Democratic Party.

Being a Christian involved in political life was interesting and opportunities soon arose to put my faith to the test. First, I would go out on the doorstep and listen to people and try to help. Secondly, I found opportunities to witness to Jesus among my political colleagues. I never pushed my faith onto anyone, though I did make it clear that I was a Christian. They often asked me questions, often in the most unlikely places and times. People seemed interested in what I thought and felt.

I did have some difficulties at the time in my church in Birkenhead. I was churchwarden then and was regularly asked to preach. I was occasionally accused of using the pulpit to preach politics – though I was and still am very careful to make sure party politics are never mentioned in my addresses. Perhaps the fact that I was suggesting that Christians should be involved in the real world in a practical way was misinterpreted!

## A Reader and a Councillor

Being a Reader in my church in Blackburn is challenging, especially as we are entering an interregnum. My decision to stand in the local elections in May 1999 for the Borough of Ribble Valley was greeted in some circles with disbelief. How would I find the time? (Ribble Valley lies to the north east of Blackburn and is a mainly rural borough. It has recently been devastated by a serious outbreak of Foot and

Mouth disease.) In the end I succeeded in being elected. I won by one vote on the fourth recount. They don’t come much closer than that!

Trying to do both roles is a bit of a juggling act sometimes, but I do believe God has a role for me in these very important ministries. I believe that I have been chosen to bring a Christian perspective into local politics. This is not always easy, but being a Christian in today’s secular world is not easy.

## Politics and the Christian Faith

Why, in my opinion, do politics and Christianity go together? Politics is about everyday life. It is about people. Politics does affect people’s lives. Christianity is also concerned about people. Jesus’ ministry was to do with people with everyday lives in ordinary situations. Jesus did not stand back and leave it to others. The disciples did not pass by on the other side. The disciples of Jesus were involved. Jesus was involved with all and in all.

I am a Reader for the same reason. I am involved in politics. I am trying to follow Christ’s example. Politics should be about people and our concern for them, improving their lives, supporting the community. Christianity is about people and how we treat them and whether our love for Jesus shows in our response to, and love for, those we meet day by day.

My Christian beliefs affect my political life, just as they do my work as a headteacher. I am trying to live out my faith in a practical way in all I do – in the community and with individual people.

Why am I a member of the Liberal Democratic Party? Some words from the party constitution sum it up for me: ‘The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.’

## The Future

I pray that my Christian faith will continue to give me the strength to meet the challenges I will face over the coming years on the Council – that I shall make decisions based on my Christian principles and not on the values of an increasingly secular world.

I thank God that my involvement in politics in the local community gives me a practical insight into the real life lived by ordinary people, that I can use to help me relate more effectively to people, as a Reader in the Church of England.

Being a Reader and a Councillor are not two distinct areas of my life, rather they are a part of my wider life as a Christian.

**Carl Carter, Reader, Millom with Thwaites and Haverigg, Diocese of Carlisle, and Labour Councillor, Copeland Borough Council.**

When I was considering, with the encouragement of my vicar, the possibility of training as a Reader, one of the areas of concern was the fact that I was a high profile Labour councillor – in fact at the time that I was accepted for training, I was deputy mayor of the borough as well as being the chairman of the community services committee. So obviously we had to be sensitive to the pastoral aspect of a Reader’s ministry, possibly more so than the teaching and preaching dimension. The question of the reaction of



parishioners to someone who they were used to seeing in the political arena actually robed and leading worship was the major concern.

This is the background to which I came to the role of Reader. My wife and family and I had always been regular worshippers in our parish, although we had moved from one church in the parish to another. For a number of years I was a sidesman and churchwarden, while Karon, my wife, started and ran the Sunday school in our village, and we also started our church youth club. So I was already closely involved in the life of the parish. When our vicar approached me about being a Reader it seemed to be a natural progression, not only of my journey in faith but also of my commitment to trying to improve conditions for those least able to help themselves.

It was a very daunting prospect; to take on a two year course that would involve considerable time in travelling, as well as having a full political life and a full time job then as an electrician and now as the senior area manager of The Princes Trust in Cumbria. At the very beginning of my training the then Principal of the Carlisle and Blackburn Training Institute, Canon Myrtle Langley, advised us to drop our involvement in other areas of voluntary work, something not so easy to do in elected public life.

I am pleased that on the whole our fears about people's reactions were unfounded, apart from the odd isolated case.

**A voice for the voiceless**

I have always maintained a distance between the pulpit and the council chamber in what I say and do when I am on church business. But I have always held the belief that my Christianity and my Socialist beliefs go hand in hand. As

Christ's work on earth focussed on the unfortunate and the most disadvantaged of society, so the work of a local politician, when not formulating grand policy directions, was also to speak for and represent the same sections of society.

I have been a member of the Labour party since 1982. The catalyst that made me join was Margaret Thatcher. What she was doing to the country and to the most vulnerable members of our society, caused me to burn with rage. This was not the time of huge popularity for the Labour party, but it was the only place outside the church where as far as I was concerned there was some semblance of hope. I soon became deeply involved with the party machine, and yet still maintained a strong faith and relationship with God and his church.

**The Promised Land?**

It often seemed that we in the Labour movement were condemned, like Moses, to wander in the wilderness but we always had the belief that the land of milk and honey would be ultimately delivered, even if it was through the ballot box!

So after nearly twenty years involvement, numerous elections, local, national and international, we are entering the historic second term of a Labour government. My hope is that over the next four years the government is more radical and will remember the least well off in our country and implement measures that will eradicate child poverty and homelessness, improve our health care and education. We have in Tony Blair, a practising Christian, who I hope is swayed by his religious beliefs when putting together his programme for the country.

**Clive Scowen, Reader, Christ Church, Roxeth, Diocese of London and Conservative Councillor, London Borough of Harrow.**

'Will you give up your political activities if you become a Reader?' asked one of the panel at my Readers' Board interview in 1983. The thought had never crossed my mind. I had been an active member of the Conservative party for a number of years, though I was not yet a councillor; equally I was an active member of my parish church. In my response I managed to give the (erroneous) impression that I thought the policies of the Thatcher government were the only possible political expression of the gospel. The panel, clearly shocked, said I had too much confidence in my own opinions for the work of a Reader!

Despite that initial setback I continued my political activities and leading services and preaching at church through two interregnums. In 1990 I became a Councillor in the London Borough of Harrow; in 1991 was admitted and licensed as a Reader.

**'Jesus is Lord'**

'Jesus is Lord!' is one of the oldest confessions which unites Christians, and the conviction that Jesus is Lord is the unifying factor from which my work both as a Reader and as a councillor proceed. To me, both are ministries in which I seek to use the gifts and abilities God has given me in his service.

Jesus has been made Lord over all things for his church: when he ascended to the Father's side he gave gifts to His people. I exercise a Reader ministry in my parish church because I believe Jesus has given me gifts to preach, teach and lead people in worship. In my church tradition the role of a preacher is to open up and expound the scriptures rather than focus on his own experiences, ideas or political opinions.

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But the earth is the Lord's and everything in it: Jesus is Lord of the universe and the rightful ruler of this world. He is as concerned about the people of my ward and the community of Harrow as he is about the people who belong to his church. He died for all humankind and desires that all should become subjects of his kingdom. That kingdom is breaking into this world but it is not of this world: it is not built or extended by political activity, for no political philosophy or programme can change the human heart. Yet God calls his people to be active in human society. The exiles in Babylon were told to seek the peace and prosperity of that city and to pray to the Lord for it, so that it might prosper. (*Jeremiah 29.7*) 1 Timothy 2.1-2 urges that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. In Babylon and in the Roman empire opportunities for political involvement were decidedly limited: in most cases prayer was the only thing God's people could do to have an impact on the political life of their society. Prayer remains vital, but in our democracy today we have opportunities to get directly involved in the political process. God calls some to such involvement as a ministry in Christ's name, as valid and important as ministries in other arenas of life. I believe Jesus has given me gifts to use in the political arena, to argue for courses of action which I hold to be right, to represent the needs and views of those who elected me, and to seek creative solutions.

**Conservative and Christian**

Membership of the Conservative Party is consistent with my convictions as a Christian, though I respect those who express their discipleship through membership of other parties. A fundamental tenet of Conservatism is a belief that all human societies and ideologies will always be flawed, because of what Christians call 'original sin': Utopia is unattainable by political means, and the art of government is to harness human selfishness to the common good. Conservatives are therefore sceptical of radical change in structures or of political philosophies which offer solutions to all society's problems. Instead we prefer to keep tried and tested political institutions and constitutional settlements which have stood the test of time and have evolved checks and balances to protect them from the effects of human fall- enness. So, along with many Conservatives I would prefer to retain the council committee system which has evolved over the last 100 years, rather than concentrating power into the hands of elected mayors. Conservatives are essentially pragmatic, especially at local government level, and seek to adopt policies and strategies which will deliver quality services with maximum efficiency. Eliminating waste, getting value for money and keeping down the burden of local taxation are prime objectives. Above all Conservatives believe the primary duty of the state and of political institutions is to restrain evil and promote a secure, crime-free framework in which civil society can flourish. I believe that this view is consistent with a Christian vision of an ordered and stable society in which the gospel of Jesus can flourish and produce radical social change, not through political programmes but by the power of God's grace transforming the lives of individuals, families and communities.

In the 10 years I have been a Conservative councillor and a Reader I can honestly say the only conflict between those two roles of which I have been aware has been one of time - given that I also have to work for a living.

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**Gloria Helson** was elected to begin a five year term as Vice-Chair of the Central Readers' Council in March 2000. To give Readers an opportunity to discover more about this unusual woman who now holds a key role in 'Readerdom' Clare Amos talks to Gloria.

**CA:** Gloria, I believe that you were the first Cornish woman to be licensed as a Reader in Truro diocese – back in 1975. What was it like being a pioneer?

**GH:** I wasn't particularly conscious of being a pioneer, partly because I had such loyal support from the Vicar and the PCC. I was aware however that about half the congregation didn't approve of women in ministry in general, and half of the rest didn't like me because I was seen as too young and too new!

**CA:** So what had led you to take this daring step?

**GH:** I think it was the overpowering sense I had of being totally loved by a totally loving God. I hadn't been a regular churchgoer, but then I had a new baby, whom I took to the Tiny Tots service – I felt it was important to fulfil the baptismal vows I had made on my child's behalf. I started to read the Bible, and had a conviction of the deep truth of what I was reading. Some time later I went on holiday and met people who were atheists but fascinated by my story. I felt frustrated that I couldn't answer their theological questions.... when I mentioned this to my Vicar, he said that I should get trained. So I began the Readers' course: with a priest for a tutor, and four exams to pass!

**CA:** Which aspect of theology do you most enjoy?

**GH:** I have always cherished the Old Testament. I feel that when you really study the God revealed in the Old Testament, you discover a God so loving, gracious and fantastic that you can understand the incarnation. I do believe that Christianity needs Judaism to be fully understood – so I am a member of the Council of Christians and Jews. And then the emotional Cornishwoman in me finds myself responding to the poetry of the prophets, and to powerful stories like the tale of the death of David's child, and how people were so afraid to tell him about it. Or there is that wonder-

All Christians have to be qualitatively different from non-Christians because we are empowered by the Holy Spirit



## Getting to Know... Gloria Helson

ful piece in Hosea when God says 'When Israel was a child I loved him' where you have the picture of God leading Israel and pressing him to his cheek like a doting parent. God knows that he ought to punish the people for their wrongdoing, but he just can't or won't bring himself to do so. There is this amazing understanding of a loving God who has made himself weak because he loves. This whole ethos

then comes through in the New Testament where Jesus is this loving God incarnate. It is the sheer gracious untameability of God in the Old Testament that excites me. But it also makes demands on us as well. There is that key

phrase *'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.'* That is taken up in the stories where we see people like David trying and failing and we can identify with both the failure and also with the aspiration to love God.

**CA:** Can you tell me about your professional work – which sprang out of your involvement with theology during your Reader training.

**GH:** Yes, I went to college at 40 to train as a teacher of Religious Education. I loved teaching and have just retired after being Head of RE at a Comprehensive school in Launceston. It was a privilege to have the chance to say to young people, 'Think about life, and its meaning.' Teaching a philosophy course to the Sixth Form was a real highlight, because I see truth as being an attribute of God and feel it is essential to think as clearly as possible. I used to have on my classroom wall, 'God requires unsupervised honesty.' I heard the phrase on Radio 4 when an Indian girl said her father told her this when she had left home in India and come to England to start up a fabric company.

**CA:** Teaching RE these days involves teaching about other faiths. Did you find this a problem for you in view of your own Christian beliefs?

**GH:** I was happy to teach other faiths because it meant we learned about other people, and I believe that knowledge and discussion reduces fear and misunderstanding. I was a child during the war and its aftermath, and the consequences of the danger that results when we don't understand others has always been very apparent to me. The



underlying principle of my teaching was teaching the young people to see how belief leads to action. We could see how people's beliefs affect their lives, for example we considered what it must be like to be a Muslim and pray five times each day. Then we considered what we ourselves believe, because it affects the way we act. The big gap today seems to me to be between those who know there is God and search for him and those who don't think there is anything other than what you can experience with your senses.

**CA:** How did your work as a teacher and your ministry as a Reader go together?

**GH:** Both involved stimulating people to consider that there could be a God and that it made sense to live your life on the basis that belief in God means action. Increasingly I found myself exercising my Reader ministry in the context of my work, though in the time of Bishop Michael Ball I also became a Bishop's Troubadour, part of his team that was involved in Parish Teach-ins, speaking on requested topics like prayer or the Old Testament.

**CA:** Can you tell us what's special

about Cornwall and being Cornish?

**GH:** It's a hard, tough, beautiful Duchy with a sense of history and tradition. It's a stable place to come from because of the tradition. Somehow it is important that you know where your grandparents come from.

**CA:** Gloria, I hesitate to ask you this, because I know that this last year has been appallingly difficult for you on the personal level, with your husband's death in March. Are you willing to tell us something about your family situation?

**GH:** I loved George and was married to him for 35 years. He worked as a quarry manager in Cornwall, and a year or so ago he was diagnosed with silicosis, the miners' disease. During the last year of his life as he became progressively more disabled I was able to look after him like a baby ... and it was an expression of my love for him. It was important that the person I had loved as a young man I could love and care for when he was disabled. And it was a really special time. We managed to talk with each other with an honesty and openness that was so important for both of us. But it was also a very physically wearing period, that gave me a

new compassion for those who have had to care for others over many years.

**CA:** One final question. What is your vision for Reader ministry? In one or two sentences!

**GH:** That there should be parity of esteem for clergy and laity, that Reader ministry should be recognised as a glory of the Reformation, and that the Church should better utilize all the talent it has! Christian ministry in all its forms is essential, and we huddle in our churches counting the congregations and accepting stagnation! It won't do. Readers are vital here. We are not priests *manqué*! We are lay people with a particular calling because of our place in the community. I am saddened by *laissez-faire* and laid back attitudes in both clergy and Readers. I am saddened by the waste of talent in the church. In this post-modernist, individualistic, godless society, I am haunted by the words of God, 'My people are ruined for lack of knowledge.' *All* Christians have to be qualitatively different from non-Christians because we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and it must show in what we do and say and how we live.

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# Work, Worship and the World

The selection of prayers included here touch on the themes of work and the wider health of our world.

## Total quality management

Creating God

You manage the universe with peerless excellence,  
Pulsing creative energy into the heart of all things  
Holding in being all skill and knowledge  
The cosmos lives only by your will and power.

You invest in your creation

Nothing less than all,  
Your living self made flesh in all  
Who share your work of love,  
Seek justice, spend themselves  
To seek out truth and beauty  
In work of hand and mind and soul.

We offer you

Our longing for perfection  
Our systems based on the pursuit of excellence,  
For maximum efficiency,  
Minimum expense.

We pray

For all who are constantly audited,  
Yet ill-supported or inadequately resourced.  
Teach us to encourage real development  
Of skill and mind and heart  
And enable joy in work completed.  
Show us how to value what cannot be measured –  
Patient commitment, individuality, humour, quirkiness,  
Comradeship and kindness.

Show us how to manage companies,

Corporations and communities  
To create that wealth which is  
Real well-being, wholeness,  
Your shalom.

And help us to understand that your quality standards

Are measured not in paperwork or profit  
But in the growth of love in humankind;  
And that your investment demands

Return  
In Justice.

Amen  
(© Heather Pencavel)



## Creating the Church of Tomorrow:

*A prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero*

It helps, now and then, to step back  
and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,  
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction  
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying  
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.  
No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No programme accomplishes the church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted,  
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation  
in realizing that. This enables us to do something,  
and to do it very well. It may be incomplete,  
but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference  
between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.  
Amen.

## Fruitful work

'By the sweat of your brow you shall eat your food'

For those who sweat under the hot sun,  
working the dry ground, longing for rain  
we pray:

God let them see the fruits of their labours.

For those who sweat in heavy industries,  
sweat running dry

as one by one the furnaces are switched off  
we pray:

God let them see the fruits of their labours.

For those who worry in the night,

sweating over a decision,  
whom to make redundant,  
whether this firm can keep going...

we pray:

God let them see the fruits of their labours.

For those who sweat in someone else's field,

at someone else's workbench,  
fingers raw and tempers frayed,  
for pence...

we pray:

God let them see the fruits of their labours.

For each of us,

when we have deadlines,  
rushed jobs,

when we do not know if we, or our work,  
are accepted or rejected,

when we sweat over it,

we pray:

God let us see the fruits of our labours. (© Bob Warwicker)





# Fishing in the Net

All of a sudden all sorts of publications have discovered the Internet and started their own columns, sometimes weekly, with the author's favourite sites. Given the inevitable time between writing and publication in a quarterly journal, there must be a risk that by the time an article such as this is published some of its contents may have appeared elsewhere. But at the end of the day an article like this is very much about the writer's own discoveries in the fascinating world of the Internet. I have a particular interest in liturgy and liturgical resources. In the months leading up to the introduction of Common Worship, and in the months since, resources on the Internet have been a great help both in coming to terms with the content of the new liturgy, and in getting to grips with the practicalities of producing service sheets and booklets and finding some of the wealth of supporting material that is now available. An earlier article in this series referred to the group called Christians on the Internet (COIN) at <http://www.coin.org.uk/>. A good deal of information and practice was shared amongst the members of its various newsgroups, and some of the results of that have found their way on to web sites prepared by members of COIN. One such site is



[www.labarum.uni.cc](http://www.labarum.uni.cc) prepared by a member of the Royal Army Chaplains Division to provide resources for his fellow chaplains, in particular ready-made service booklets and service cards for various Common Worship services. The files are available for downloading both in Word and Acrobat format, the latter being useful if the booklets are simply to be printed without further editing.

Similar liturgical resources are at <http://www.eade47.freemove.co.uk/liturg.htm> and this site also has links

to other useful sites. The site at <http://oremus.org/> has been mentioned in earlier articles, and is a treasury of liturgical and other resources.

It now seems possible to find the texts of most liturgical material on the Internet (although it has to be said that in some cases copyright restrictions may not have been fully complied with, so do take care in what you use and how you use it.) Some sites have gone to great lengths to set out clearly the copyright position that applies to the use of their material. For example <http://justus.anglican.org/~ss/ccp2001/> contains the text of Celebrating Common Prayer with all its supporting material and guidance on how it can be used.

Some other sites which provide texts for liturgy also provide a wealth of musical resources, and in some cases visual support with artwork and clip art as well. The excellent site at <http://www.christ.org.uk/> provides resources in all these categories. It also has a liturgical calendar that can be downloaded and easily installed in many of the popular computer diaries.



Other music can be downloaded from <http://www.dur.ac.uk/~dcl0tdl/tldmus.htm> and from <http://www.saintgregorys.org/Music/MFLbook-contents.html>. From both these sites it is possible to download and print out sheet music in Acrobat format and also to download Midi files in order to play back tunes. Incidentally, the relatively inexpensive Mozart programme



<http://www.mozart.co.uk> can be extremely useful here: it can convert downloaded Midi files into written music and also provide the opportunity for writing music which can be converted into Midi files. This proved very useful in our parish when we were

trying to work out new musical settings to use with Common Worship.

Still on the theme of music,



<http://www.oremus.org/hymnal> is a very useful site, allowing searching for words and tunes of a considerable collection of hymns, together with the ability (subject to copyright limitations) of downloading those words and tunes as Midi files. But you do need Quicktime on your computer (downloadable free from the site) to get best benefit from the site. If you want to try metrical Psalms, <http://www.homestead.com/metricalpsalms/index.html> must be the site to visit with words to download and appropriate tunes suggested.

Sometimes when preparing service books and service sheets we want icons or other religious drawings, rather than clip art, to illustrate them. There is a good range of icons, together with explanatory notes of each, at



<http://www.umcbelton.org/miscellaneous/symbolsicons.htm>. Others can be found on <http://www.christ.org.uk/> mentioned earlier.

Keeping abreast of the religious and Christian news is not always easy; coverage in the normal press is patchy to say the least. The new BBC religion and ethics page has a wide range of material and is up-to-date. When you are in the page click on 'news' for the day's press cuttings:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/>. There are links, among other things to the various services on BBC TV and radio. *Peter Bowes phbowes@bigfoot.com*

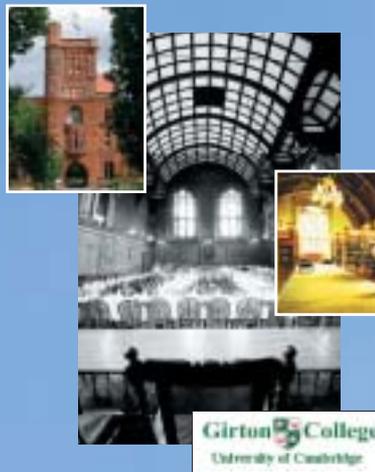
*Canon Peter Bowes is Warden of Readers for York diocese, a Lay Canon of York Minster, a member of the CRC Executive and a member of the small group which created and maintain the CRC Website.*



Central Readers Council  
National Conference 2002

# Seamless Robe

Weaving God's Future Church



- Girton College Cambridge
- Friday 13 – Sunday 15 September 2002

Keynote speaker: Canon Dr Robin Greenwood

Evening Speaker: Revd Tim Jenkins, Dean of Jesus College

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Please note that due to limitations on the amount of meeting space available, full attendance at the conference is restricted to Readers and Readers in training. However spouses or friends who would like a weekend in Cambridge are welcome to stay at the College for the weekend at a cost of £150. This covers accommodation and all meals.

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# Seamless Robe

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## For your bookshelf

**W P**

### Using Common Worship Holy Communion

*Mark Beach*

0 7151 2003 4

**W P**

### Initiation

*Gilly Myers*

0 7151 2006 9

**W P**

### Marriage

*Stephen Lake*

0 7151 2004 2

**W P**

### Funerals

*R Anne Horton*

0 7151 2005 0

Church House Publishing  
Each £8.95

except Funerals £9.95

The English language was at a magnificent peak when Cranmer came to distil the round of monastic services into the daily offices and our *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) was compiled. Today the world looks very different. Our understandings have evolved and broadened. In *Common Worship* (CW) we have an inclusive revision of our prayer book incorporating experience from the experiments of the *Alternative Service Book* (ASB). The challenge of how best to use this opportunity is taken up in this series of resource books.

We are a broad church and options are provided to meet differing emphases. In Order One of the Communion Service, for example, there are eight variants of the Eucharistic Prayer compared with four in ASB, opening up a wider range of biblical imagery, symbolism and allusion. There is a richness of additional seasonal material. These books help us to appreciate the understandings we are expressing in our worship and better to organise it. Doctrinal implications of optional forms and the evolution of the service from

BCP through the test of ASB to options in CW are helpfully summarised. In the occasional offices we have to speak to people of varying conditions who often have little recent contact with the church. I particularly like the range of material in the new funeral services and the guide under review provides suggestions about how we can use its forms to be more sensitive in our ministry to the bereaved.

From frequent usage it is easy to take a form of service for granted. All in all whether we are using the new services or not these books are most valuable in focusing our minds on what is happening, what we are saying and what we could say within our tradition of Anglican worship.

JOHN BOTTERILL

**W B**

### The Word of the Lord Year C

£20 hbk

1 85311 370 0

**W B**

### The Word of the Lord: Collects and Readings for special occasions

£17.99 hbk

1 85311 355 7

*Ed Brother Tristram*  
Canterbury

Those leather bound presentation pulpit and lectern Bibles lie collecting dust in the vestry. We now read the Bible in church from books of selections for Years A, B & C or from disks which we print out on the notice sheet. No wonder our young people can no longer find their way round the Bible! Sadly however, this development which began with ASB is irreversible. If your parish still needs a book which prints out the readings for Sundays and saints' days this series from the Canterbury Press would be an excellent choice. Year C now joins Years A and B already published and provides readings for the principal,

second and third services for Sundays and the main feast days, in an attractive, durable hardback which is a pleasure to handle. A fourth volume in the same series provides readings for occasions such as baptism, marriage, ordination and institutions as well as for occasions such as harvest, church unity, world peace, healing and wholeness services and many others. This book, unlike those for years A, B and C includes collects and post-communion prayers.

PETER WATKINS

**B**

### Dictionary of New Testament Background

*Ed Craig A Evans and Stanley E Porter*

IVP £29.99 hbk

0 8308 1780 8

The authors deal with people, themes and movements in a series of articles which allow the reader to relate them to their historical, literary, religious and social contexts. They draw primarily on written evidence while making extensive use of archaeological and geographical data where relevant. Articles are structured in an accessible manner. Cross-referencing is carefully done and there are extensive bibliographies. To take examples, Prophets and Prophecy begins with an analysis of terminology, moves on to pagan oracles, prophecy in the Graeco-Roman world, prophecy in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the writings of Josephus and Philo. It does not discuss the way in which prophecy is used in the New Testament; it makes the point that 'it becomes evident just how wide-ranging a conceptual framework the NT authors had to draw on'. The article on the Holy Spirit contains plenty of references from the Old Testament and from Jewish and non-Jewish sources, but

does not discuss New Testament teaching. This is a major scholarly work of reference. It is what it says it is – a source of background material. Prospective buyers should glance through one or two articles to see whether the book is likely to meet their own interests and needs.

GORDON GEDDES

**B T**

### New Dictionary of Biblical Theology

*Ed TD Alexander and Brian S Rosner*

IVP £29.99 hbk

0 85111 976 X

Biblical fundamentalism blays claim to the mantle of classical evangelicalism. It is however new, not yet 100 years old, resulting from a combination of events and movements. Hundreds of years of developing exegesis were cast aside. This book seeks to resurrect, in a fundamentalist straightjacket, Biblical Theology which withered 40 years ago. The 125 contributors include many from the American Bible belt, and only four women. Readers will expect and find bias. After some general articles, often turgid, 250 pages discuss the theology perceived in each book of the Bible. Sound articles, as on Chronicles and the Song of Songs, stand side by side with weak or tendentious ones. Provided they are aware of the presuppositions of the authors, Readers will find useful sermon material in the last 500 pages. However few will be happy to see Adam treated as a historical figure, though the suspect word 'evolution' manages to creep in. The Babel story is history, and public prophecy is strictly limited to males. Themes rather than individual words are investigated. Occasional reference is made to intertestamental material and the development of ideas over time is acknowledged. The relationship ➤



of Old Testament type to New Testament anti-type is clear, but the Old Testament is always seen as the precursor to the Christian gospel, never as supporting a religion coherent in itself. Handle with care.

ALAN D ROGERS

**B S**

**What they don't tell you: a survivor's guide to biblical studies**

*Michael Joseph Brown*  
Westminster John Knox  
£7.99 pbk  
0 664 22220 X

This book begins 'It is the first thing I tell my students when they enter my classes, the academic study of the Bible is not the same thing as the kind of study that is conducted in your Bible study'. This is an important thing to bear in mind. The book is intended as a guide to students who may feel lost or bewildered when confronted with the

sort of academic arguments which arise in colleges and universities.

If someone is planning to do such an academic study this book lays down a series of 28 rules of thumb to guide students through the somewhat confusing arguments with which they will be confronted. Some of these rules are applicable to any Bible study, such as 'Be careful not to read your modern assumptions into ancient texts', and are always valuable but those for understanding biblical scholarship will be of less value outside the classroom.

TOM MARRIOTT

**B S**

**Psalms**

*James Limburg*  
Westminster John Knox  
£14.99 pbk  
0 664 25557 4

I have been waiting for a book such as this, which brightens out the life, the

drama, the tears and the laughter of the Psalms. Each Psalm is printed in full in the text of NRSV and is followed by a clearly written analysis. Professor Limburg avoids jargon and gets to the heart of the Psalm by giving a sometimes racy title to each Psalm and to each section of it. Psalm 40, for example, is entitled *Good News Bulletin* and the three sections *A Song and a Saying* (verses 1-4), *What is True Religion?* (verses 5-10), and *Do it again Lord* (verses 11-17). The analysis includes the immediate historical background, references to echoes, parallels and quotations elsewhere in the Bible and an account of its accepted use in Jewish practice or Christian worship.

The author stresses the importance of taking each Psalm as a whole. We do a disservice to Psalm 137 or 139 if we take no account of their harsher verses. The

context too is important: the Psalms are in a meaningful order. Psalm 58 while completely unsuitable for Christian worship becomes more understandable if it is considered in the context of Psalms 57 and 59. We see the connection of thought that runs through other sequences for example Psalms 61, 62 and 63. This reinforces the value of the systematic reading of the Psalms as in BCP or ASB lectionaries.

This book makes no claim to be devotional. It aims to present the Psalms as they are and provides many modern and sometimes contemporary illustrations of the essential teaching. The preacher or leader of a study group will find much to value in this well produced book. It will lead readers to a more intimate view of the Psalms and enable them to see them in a completely new light.

KENNETH ADAMS

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**B W S**

**Abba Father**

*Kenneth Stevenson*

Canterbury £11.99 pbk  
1 85311 382 4

This book by the Bishop of Portsmouth consists of three parts, each containing eight chapters and all sandwiched between a prologue and an epilogue. As pointed out in the prologue, the Lord's Prayer was composed in order to be used (part one) and prayed (part two). Part three contains theological snapshots of eight interpreters of the prayer – saints such as St Theresa of Avila, Evelyn Underhill and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. On a recent visitation by the Bishop of the eight deaneries of his diocese the Lord's Prayer was studied in depth and at each Deanery Eucharist a Lord's Prayer hymn, specially written by the Canon Missioner, was sung. It is included in an appendix, together with an account of how it came to be written. For study or devotion this book can be thoroughly recommended.

COLIN NICHOLLS

**B W**

**The message of Matthew**

*Michael Green*

IVP £9.99 pbk  
0 85111 536 5

The names Michael Green and IVP take me straight back to the evangelical scene (not entirely my scene) at my university in the late 60s when both preacher / author and publisher represented the best in Bible-based Christianity. This work on the first gospel – part of a series called *The Bible Speaks Today* – aims to be, in Michael Green's words, 'a running commentary ... which would excite the readers but be academically responsible'. It is in fact a preacher's commentary in the William Barclay style, not a verse by verse annotation but each section covered thoroughly with

moderately conservative scholarship and practical exposition. There is a solid introduction and the useful study guide at the end, including questions for each section, could solve your house group planning problems for months. If you want a new commentary on Matthew and are not unhappy with the churchmanship this work is likely to satisfy you.

RODERICK CLARK

**B**

**Resurrection people: studies in the Resurrection narratives of the gospels**

*David Catchpole*

DLT £14.95 pbk

0 232 52376 2

For one whose trade, like mine, is in words, this scholarly book, based on lectures, contains some fascinating detail, illustrating well the ways in which language can be edited, with the highest motives, in a production process which subtly adjusts facts, manipulates meaning and, bluntly, scores points against rivals. The consequences for apparently established theology are unpredictable. David Catchpole, himself a reader, plunges into the competing perspectives and preoccupations of the richly varying Christian communities which made up what we prefer to think of as *The Early Church* and that gave birth to each of the gospels. How Jewish did Christians have to be, Matthew's and Paul's opinions on this subject being so radically different? In what sense did the disciples see the risen Jesus? How quickly did the church routinise charisma as they constructed their formal hierarchies? Who first spoke the words of the Magnificat? Was Jesus' earthly family dysfunctional? Who was the beloved disciple? David Catchpole's answers are not the received ones, and not at all comfortable. I found ➤



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them all provocative, many plausible. Well worth a read and it's easy to dip into.

ALAN KERSHAW

**B**  
**An introduction to the study of Paul**

*David Horrell*  
Continuum £9.99 pbk  
0 8264 4921 2

This is an excellent introduction both to Paul's letters and theology and also to Pauline studies. Horrell is a good teacher. He lucidly summarises Paul's background and life before seeking to provide the resources and tools for us to wrestle with his thought. He succeeds admirably at several levels. He summarises a vast amount of past and recent scholarship to give us both the accepted and minority views. He hopes to inform our own reading and studying of Paul and he raises questions rather than giving answers. For those who like to read deeply there is a wealth of suggestions. In this wise study there are only a few stories and arresting images but it is a book to draw on for the next decade of your ministry.

JEREMY HARVEY



**W**  
**The Sixth Times Book of Best Sermons**

*Ed Ruth Gledhill*  
Continuum £9.99 pbk  
0 8264 4983 2

The annual Preacher of the Year award, sponsored by *The Times*, must be seen as an encouragement to those who, contrary to much received opinion, believe that the sermon is far from dead, but must remain the dynamic centre of the Great Commission to proclaim the Good News. Each year hundreds of sermons are submitted for the award and

the best are published. Printed sermons are something of an anomaly, in that part of the message is found in the immediacy of live preaching. Nevertheless words matter and so does content. The forty sermons in this volume are wide ranging and include some fine writing; most offer earnest wisdom. Yet this reviewer found them almost all bland, and lacking in any unity of purpose. The foreword to the volume is by Canon Michael Seward, himself a fine preacher. He quotes from the Victorian Henry Liddon whose 'voice rang out like a trumpet, telling of righteousness and temperance and judgement, preaching ever and always, with personal passion of belief, of Jesus Christ and him crucified'. Readers looking for that kind of fire will have to look elsewhere. Others who value a broader, softer brush may find something to stimulate their own efforts from the pulpit.

RICHARD CARTER

**T P**  
**God for the twenty-first century**

*Ed Russell Stannard*  
SPCK £12.99 pbk  
0 281 05342 1

This is a collection of 48 one-thousand-word essays by specialists in the general field of science and religion. Most of the authors are American or British scientists and Christian, though other faiths are represented. Related essays are grouped in nine sections each with an introductory summary. Inevitably there is some repetition and the wide range of topics – genetic engineering, the limits of science, quantum physics, Darwinism for example – and restricted space, mean limited depth. The great majority of contributors are, however, models of lucid and stimulating writing. A few are

rather fanciful. The book is not difficult to read; there is some merit in being served with one or two ideas expressed economically by writers whom many would find difficult in a different format. Rather than a substantial main course this is more like a high quality hors d'oeuvre which nonetheless affirms the potential of science to inform religious understanding – and of religion to illuminate the deeper questions sometimes raised by science.

PAUL BREGAZZI

**T P**  
**Evil and Christian ethics**

*Gordon Graham*  
CUP £14.95 pbk  
0 521 79745 4

Does being a Christian involve the endorsement of a particular way of life? Can we believe in absolute values? Is there a rational basis for belief in God? As its bibliography demonstrates this book seeks to provide a wide-ranging justification for moral endeavour grounded upon hope in God's providence. Since secular evaluations fail to account for evil's power and significance, moral relativism must be rejected. The biblical foundations of Christian ethics do not provide distinctive guidance regarding specific problems. They rather call for moral faith and responsibility which ultimately contribute to the redeeming purposes of God. Readers concerned with the relevance of the gospel in a secular world will find this a challenging book.

ALAN D JONES

**P S B**  
**Unleashing the Lion**

*Eric Petrie*  
SPCK £14.99 pbk  
0 281 05324 3

*Unleashing the Lion* is a creative book: it attempts to address some of the many issues of health and healing in the church

from a variety of perspectives. Gospel references are focused on St Mark's gospel – the evangelist's symbol is a lion – and some of the healing stories in the narrative are discussed in the form of case conferences. Other accounts are from the current experience of individuals who, in different ways, need to be made whole. This material is interwoven with a historical perspective of both Christian and secular approaches to healing. Finally with the image of Aslan, the lion of CS Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and a challenge to the ways in which the church attempts to constrain the power of God, the reader is confronted by the healing power of the broken body of Christ on the cross.

JEANNE MALES

**P H**  
**A history of pastoral care**

*Ed GR Evans*  
Cassell £49.95 hbk  
0 225 66840 8

This book succeeds in giving an overview of pastoral care. It is divided into five chronological sections: the Biblical foundations, the early Christian world, the middle ages, the early modern period, and the modern world. The 22 chapters are written by as many authors. My initial fear was that such a wide spectrum of content and authorship would lack coherence. This is not the case. It is a book which can be read from cover to cover or used for reference to any subject being studied. Contributors are experts in their field and are drawn from a range of academic disciplines. Pastoral care is defined broadly. This would be a valuable book for a diocesan library and contains full references and bibliography.

HUGH MORLEY



**W S**

**A manual of Anglo-Catholic devotion**

*Andrew Burnham*  
Canterbury £20 hbk  
1 85311 354 9

For priest, Reader, intercessor, and religious, this collection of prayers, services and devotions reaches the parts that *Common Worship* touches without impressing. The Bishop of Ebbsfleet is to be congratulated on the compilation of a treasury for which today's Anglo-Catholics have been waiting. Impeccably produced, the Morning Office and Sacraments lead into prayers and lectionaries for the Catholic year: prayers for all seasons, from many sources – most refreshingly, some from St John of the Cross, Jean-Jaques Olier, St Jean-Baptiste Marie Vianney and St Jane Frances de Chantal.

There is the full Psalter and Canticles; prayers and intercessions for the evening and night. The Rosary is delightfully illustrated with Martin Travers' drawings of 80 years ago, bringing back particularly happy memories for this reviewer, of her childhood introduction to the artist-designer whose antipathy towards ritual divergences and ceremonial chaos earned him the title of 'enfant terrible of the British Museum rite', but enriched our Anglo-Catholic tradition immeasurably.

Several versions of scripture – notably NRSV and RSV – are used for this 670 page manual and the traditional sits easily alongside modern language in the prayers and offices. Around 30 hymns, old and new, are included, adding to much else in the work which recalls beloved Latin lines of former days. I was particularly pleased to see that the Stations follow the treasured Alphonsus Liguori method while allowing ample latitude for individual expansion. This

is a manual for church, home and car, even the annual pilgrimage to Walsingham. But keep it safe, for many will want to borrow it!

JOYCE CRITCHLOW

**And finally...**

Malcolm Low, a Reader in the Portsmouth diocese, has written and published *A branch shall grow, the history of Jesse tree windows from the 12th to the 20th century*. Copies are available from him at 59 Moresby Court, Westbury Road, Fareham, Hampshire, PO16 7US price £5.60.

In 1991 Carolyn Headley wrote *Grove book W115 Readers in the Worship of the Church of England* (1 85174 463 0). She has now brought it up to date using some of the earlier work but incorporating substantial new material. This is a valuable summary of Reader ministry which could be handed to any incumbent who might not have realised the scope of Reader ministry or to any Reader candidate who needs to know what they are letting themselves in for.

Three other Grove Books relevant to Reader ministry are *W163 Infant Baptism in Common Worship* (Colin Buchanan 1 85174 460 6), *R4 Understanding Songs in Renewal* (Victoria Cooke 1 85174 462 2) and *P85 The Churches and Race* (David Haslam 1 85174 458 4). Each book in the Grove series costs £2.50.

**Broadcast reviews** – The 'Religion in Broadcasting' group of the General Synod is preparing a report. It needs Christians to offer up to 300 word reviews of radio and television programmes sent in to Church House by email. To take part contact the Broadcasting Officer – jonathan.jennings@c-of-e.org.uk

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**Henry Jerwood**, St John the Baptist, Knowle  
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**Judi Ranson**, St James, Shirley  
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**Paul Wilson**, Christ Church, Burney Lane  
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**Ryk Parkinson**, Leverington  
**Michael Warner**, Bassingbourn and Whaddon

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**Jill Beckett**, Martham with Repps, Thurne  
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**Cynthia Chitsiga**, Swardeston  
**Keith Dignum**, Hainford, Hevingham, Stratton Strawless  
**Margaret Fisher**, Cromer  
**Carol Henderson**, Carbrooke and Watton  
**Alison McTaggart**, Martham with Repps  
**Andrew Mash**, Swaffham  
**Sandra Mitchell**, Martham with Repps  
**Kevin Mitchelson**, St George, Tombland, Norwich  
**Gillian Powell**, Rushmere and Kessingland  
**Adam Pyke**, Dereham and Scarning  
**Clifford Self**, Hainford, Hevingham, Stratton Strawless  
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**Colin Thomas**, Ellingham and Rockland  
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9 OCTOBER 2000

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**Michael Jeffs**, Desborough

29 OCTOBER 2000

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**Christopher Ward**, Weedon

13 MAY 2001

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**Jeremy Firth**, Oundle  
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17 MARCH 2001

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7 OCTOBER 2000

*Admitted and Licensed***David Edwards**, St Lawrence and St Matthew, Jersey**Richard Elphick**, Sherfield on Loddon, Stratfield Saye

with Hartley Wespall and Stratfield Turgis

**Barry Foot**, Fawley**Sarah Groombridge**, Hartley Wintney with Elvetham,

Winchfield and Dogmersfield

**Gillian Hargraves**, Eastleigh**Malcolm Harper**, North Stoneham and Bassett**Jennifer Hewett**, Bitterne Park**Susan Hobbins**, Hatherden with Tangle, Weyhill and

Penton Mewsey

**James Hogg**, Burton and Sopley**Neil Houlton**, St John the Evangelist, Boscombe**Carolyn Jennings**, Bishopstoke**Helen Little**, St Paul, St Helier and Jersey Hospitals**Malcolm McCarraher**, Lyndhurst, Emery Down and

Minstead

**Christine Matthews**, Bitterne**Peter Noble**, St Lawrence and St Matthew, Jersey**Susan Noble**, St Lawrence and St Matthew, Jersey**Martin Phillips**, St Mark, Southampton**John Soper**, Ringwood**Ian Toombs**, St Lawrence, Alton**Jillian Walsh**, Herriard with Winslade, Long Sutton, South**Warnborough**, Tunworth, Upton Grey and Weston Patrick**John Whitham**, Totton*Licensed***Gillian Knowles**, Milton**John Lang**, Brockenhurst**Georgina McCausland**, Highfield**Robert Marsh**, Kempshott**Noeline Page**, All Saints, Southbourne, Bournemouth**CHURCH IN WALES****MONMOUTH**

21 APRIL 2001

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## In Memoriam

The deaths of the following Readers have been notified to us:

### Birmingham

Mr R Healey  
Mr R Lewis  
Mrs J Nightingale  
**Canterbury**  
Mr J Haynes

### Chelmsford

Miss M E Bailey  
**Ely**  
Mr R Dakin  
Mrs P Cullen  
Mr R Disdle  
Mr H Ransley  
**Exeter**  
Mr NA Sturgess  
Lt Cmdr MDH Thomson  
**Guildford**  
Mr Barrie Allcock  
Mr Carel Elias

Mr Peter Greenhill

**Lincoln**  
Mrs J Burgess  
**Liverpool**  
Mrs M Leiper  
Mr AT Davis  
Mr R Wright  
**London**  
Mr H Groome  
Mr A Wynn  
**Manchester**  
Mr R Hankinson  
**Oxford**  
Mr F Bossingham

Mrs C Winter

**Peterborough**  
Mr J Whitehead  
**Portsmouth**  
Dr A Oakley  
**Ripon & Leeds**  
Mr G Green  
Mr J Hainsworth  
**Rochester**  
Mr K Mellow  
**Southwell**  
Mr L Littlewood  
Mr G Shipman

### Winchester

Mrs J Palmer  
**Church in Wales**  
**Bangor**  
Mr WD Williams

We give thanks for their work and witness and remember those who grieve.



## Gleanings

### North East Readers' Conference 2001

Over 50 Readers and Readers-in-Training from the 7 North East Dioceses attended a Day Conference entitled *Ethical Dilemmas in Medical Genetics* held at St Mary's Parish Centre, Garforth. The principal speaker was Professor Chris Wild (Leeds University) who split the morning session into two parts. In the first he explained in very simple lay terms the meaning of DNA and what this allowed scientists to do. In the second part he explored some of the ethical dilemmas that these advances have created for Christians. This provoked a lot of discussion and everyone agreed to have a shorter lunch break than planned, in order to have more time.

Over the lunch break many took the opportunity to discuss the issues further in small groups and to put questions forward for the Brains Panel in the afternoon. As well as Chris Wild, the members of the panel were Jennifer Jackson, an agnostic and Chair of the Ethics Committee at Leeds University and Revd Dr Jonathan Pye, who has been appointed Principal of Wesley College, Bristol. Brian Bentley, retired senior lecturer in Radiology, chaired the panel. Discussion was lively and varied, ranging from Dolly to IVF to the use of genetics in the fight against hereditary illness.

The day ended with Choral Evensong in St Mary's led by the church choir and the collection was split between St Mary's and RSMA. General opinion on the day: Good, can this training event be repeated?  
(Contributed by Wendy Plant)

*Editor's note:* We hope to feature Professor Wild's talk in an article in a future issue of *The Reader*.

### Textures of Tomorrow

Two of the pictures we have used (on p.10 and p.12) in the current issue come from an exquisite book *Textures of Tomorrow: Words and Images on the theme of Reconciliation* edited by Kate Compston and produced by the United Reformed Church. Contact the bookshop at the URC Headquarters on 0207 916 2020 for more details.

### Sad news

I know from the comments that were made to me how many of you appreciated the moving article written by Janet Nightingale that appeared in November 2000. In it Janet drew together her journey through Spain on the Pilgrim's Way, her thirst for justice and Jubilee, and her experience of living with cancer. Sadly Janet's leukaemia, which appeared to be in remission late last year, returned with a vengeance in January and Janet died in March. A courageous and very gifted woman.



Friends of John Haynes, a Reader in Canterbury diocese, who also died recently, sent me this picture of the 'Parable puppets' that John used to carve to assist him with his preaching and teaching. The set in the photo depict the story of the Good Samaritan. Another creative Reader!

### Editor's postbag

The Editor's postbag has been particularly heavy this quarter! Several of you found the train of thought in Angela Tilby's article in the last issue quite difficult to follow – although others appreciated her wrestling with the

post-modern context with which mission in Britain needs to engage. Appreciation was expressed as regards pictures, prayers and 'Fishing in the Net' as well as Mark Pryce's article on spirituality in the city. The email discussion rumbles on, and comments have been received both for and against a regular letters page. (We will be discussing that at the next meeting of the Editorial Committee.)

I often wonder what to do with the number of unsolicited articles I receive which are not suitable for publication – perhaps because they are too personal in their concerns. My suggestion is that those who submit articles should let me know whether, if the article is not published, they would be willing to send out copies of it to other Readers who write to them enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. I am afraid that neither I nor the CRC staff could be responsible for such distribution ourselves – we simply don't have adequate man or woman power. I would then print the writer's name, address and the title of the topic within *The Reader* so that people who were interested could make contact. What do you think?

### News from the Dioceses

From the November 2001 issue we are hoping to run a regular feature in which diocesan Reader representatives in turn share something about the particular dynamics of Reader ministry in their diocese. Stephen Tooke of Ely Diocese has volunteered to be the brave guinea-pig for this November: do we have further volunteers for the 2002 issues of the magazine? Please contact the editor if you would like to explore this possibility – it is probably helpful if writers have official involvement in the Reader structures of their diocese.



## The Last Word – from Church House

The retreat was wonderful, the desert amazing and the camel painful! That in a nutshell sums up, inadequately, my Sinai experience. It brought the Old Testament accounts of the wanderings of the people of Israel vividly to life as also the gospel accounts of the temptations of Jesus. When I recalled that Jesus was challenged to turn stones into bread and found myself looking at a desert floor that was not smooth with sand but covered with thousands of stones, I realized that it would have been possible for Jesus to feed not only himself, but the whole people of Israel as well! We met several times each day for worship in our own 'Tent of Meeting', a Bedouin tent pitched to one side of our camp. Our retreat leader provided the spiritual food that I for one needed and we had the time, space and silence in which to reflect and pray for several hours each day.

Several of the Bedu stayed with us as the camels carried additional water whenever we went for a walk in the cooler late afternoon. Water was a priority – we were commanded to drink 4½ litres of water per day in order to avoid dehydration, to cover head and neck, to use plenty of sunblock and to wear long sleeves and we understood the reasons for these warnings. The Bedouin baked bread for us at breakfast and lunch each day. And the camels? Well, after two hours I got over my fears but it was painful and I bear the scars.

The stars had to be seen to be believed. It was a real experience to lie in my sleeping bag on the desert floor looking up at a sky that was covered in stars in a way I had never seen before even in quiet areas of the Dordogne. I returned feeling renewed and restored.

One of the Desert Fathers, Bishop Theophan, wrote 'The principal thing is to stand before God with the mind in the heart, and to go on standing before him unceasingly day and night until the end of life'.

### The Diaconate report

The consultation on the Renewed Diaconate was a great disappointment to me when I, along with others, was invited to see part of the draft report of the working party.

My disappointment arose from the fact that there had been no radical look at the Diaconate but a concentration on the ways in which it could be renewed and increased as a permanent order. No resolution for the current difficulty with the Deacon year as we know it, was proposed. I was surprised to hear the Deacon described as providing the 'bridge' ministry since I have a clear recollection of this description being applied to Readers during the course of the 125 celebrations in 1992 and on many occasions subsequently, and I made representations on this issue among others.

The working party were familiar with the history of the Reader movement and this was faithfully recorded but though they felt that they were opening the way for greater lay participation in ministry I remain unconvinced that this has been achieved. The report will have been presented to the House of Bishops by the time that this issue of the magazine reaches you. If the Bishops agree, the report will be sent to the General Synod for debate during the November sessions. The contribution of Synod members who are Readers will be important.

Pat Nappin, *Honorary Secretary*

PS. For the 2002 Readers' Conference please see the information on page 20.

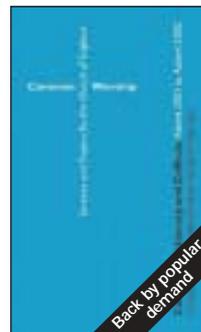
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