

START THE WEEK 12th May 2008

CONSECRATION OF THE NEW BISHOP OF COVENTRY

Simon Lloyd, the Diocesan Secretary, writes:

The Reverend Canon Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, is to be consecrated as the next Bishop of Coventry on Thursday, 3 July 2008, at 11:00 am, at Southwark Cathedral, London.

The Diocesan Office is handling the distribution of tickets for this event. If you would like a ticket, please send a Self Addressed Envelope to Mrs Liz Ford, Cathedral and Diocesan Offices, 1 Hill Top, Coventry, CV1 5AB. I would be grateful if you could please also indicate whether or not you wish to robe as this will determine the colour of the ticket we send to you. It would be very helpful if I could please have your application as soon as possible and by no later than Thursday, 5 June. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Liz Ford on 024 7652 1307 or email at Liz.Ford@CovCofE.org.

CHURCHGOING ON ITS KNEES

Last Thursday The Times ran a double page article about Religious Trends – see <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article3890080.ece> The article by Ruth Gledhill suggests that Church attendance in Britain is declining so fast that the number of regular churchgoers will be fewer than those attending mosques within a generation.

A blog accompanies the paper and may pick up a discussion on www.timesonline.co.uk/faithcentral

Benita Hewitt, the new Director of the Christian Research Association, claimed that the article was seriously misleading.

She said:

The projections for Christians are based on traditional Sunday morning attendance on any particular Sunday morning, estimated from church censuses. This excludes the increasing numbers who attend less frequently than once a month, the increasing numbers who attend mid-week services and the increasing numbers attending less traditional forms of church. In contrast, the Muslim figures are based on an estimate of the numbers who claim to attend a mosque at least once a year. Recent research has shown that 12m attend church at least once a year, more than three times the number attending on any particular Sunday. We would not deny that fact that traditional churchgoing is declining, but there are many signs of growth as churches respond to the changing culture.

Our research shows that when we introduce non-churchgoers to church most are genuinely surprised to find something that is friendly, welcoming and relevant. There is clearly a need for the church to reintroduce Christianity to the UK. In future we will be focussing on more insightful research to help understand how best to build the bridges.

Lynda Barley from the Church of England has also written about the article in The Times and makes similar comment – see <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr4408.html>

(Thanks to Jim Currin of GFE for this)

RUN NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Reaching the Unchurched Network is holding its annual conference – entitled ‘MORE THAN THIS... breaking the mould of mission’ – in Peterborough on 17 – 19 June.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has graciously agreed to a video interview that will be shown in one of the main sessions. Stuart Barbour (currently touring with Graham Kendrick) will head the resident worship band for this event. Aradhna, (who capture the beauty and dignity of India's bhajan devotional melodies) will be leading some of the worship along with Pall Singh of East & West Trust. There will be a choice of 8 seminars on each day with the opportunity to go to two of these. Seminar leaders include Jonny Baker (CMS, Gerard Kelly (International Church, Amsterdam), Tom Burke (Grace Christian Fellowship Cork), Stephen Croft (Fresh Expressions), Krish Kandiah (Evangelical Alliance) and Pete Askew (Northumbria Community).

In addition on each day, one of the seminar options will be an opportunity for a Q&A session with the main session speakers including Brian McLaren who will be contributing throughout the conference.

You can find more details and book now on line at: <http://www.run.org.uk/R/envision/FutureC/NC2008.aspx>

iMATTER

Revd. Chris Stoddard, Director of RUN, writes:

Have you seen our new resource ‘iMatter’? A beautifully filmed DVD that is designed to be used as a free ‘give-away’ by churches, groups and individuals aimed at stimulating conversation, exploring questions such as ‘is there hope for me, do I actually matter and if so, to whom?’ This is RUN’s major contribution to the Hope 08 initiative. Further details and order on line at: <http://www.run.org.uk/R/imatter/default.aspx>

WESLEY OWEN

Richard Morris of Wesley Owen Coventry writes:

Wesley Owen has recently revamped its Church Partnership Scheme (CPS). The major change has been to scrap the need for churches to have bookstalls as a condition of membership. Benefits include discounts of up to 15% on most purchases, sale or return facilities and Bulk Discounts of up to 25% on some Bibles and other popular resources.

If you would like to receive more information and a registration form please contact Wesley Owen Coventry on 024 7622 2064 or email coventry@wesley-owen.com.

Richard also draws our attention to Creating a Prodigal Friendly Church by Jeff Lucas which he heartily recommends. He says:

In Exodus ch18 (vv17-22) Jethro (Moses father-in-law) did a brilliant management consultancy. He told his son-in-law three things, 1) there’s a problem, 2) here’s why, and 3) and here’s the solution. Using the Jethro ‘principle’ Jeff has looked at the mass exodus from our churches, pointed out the issues, explained why church is such a turn off to so many people and most importantly, provided a fistful of down-to-earth, practical solutions. The ‘older brother’ (church members stuck in their ruts) is the key to Jeff’s answer of how to build a prodigal friendly church. His solution is full of grace and wisdom. This is much his best book and deserves careful study. Who knows it might just be the answer to declining congregations.

CREATIVE COMMUNION

Creative Communion is a book by Margaret Withers and Tim Sledge that offers a wealth of practical ideas to

explore the elements of the Eucharist. The first part examines what it means for the congregation to meet as a worshipping community, through six all-age workshops or activity mornings. The second part comprises a six-session course designed to help young people live out the Eucharist in daily life. Both sections are based on the pattern of a service of Holy Communion: preparation, penitential rite, ministry of the word, offering, sacrament and departure.

The worksheet templates come with photocopy permission and are available to download and print as a pdf. See <http://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/product/9781841015330.htm> for more details.

OPEN FARM SUNDAY

Open Farm Sunday takes place on 1 June, when members of the public are invited to visit local farms. For more information go to: www.farmsunday.org or phone 024 7641 3911. The website has a comprehensive list of farm walks taking place in each region.

CONCERT IN AID OF RADFORD SEMELE

There is to be a concert in St. Peter's Church, Barford at 7.45 pm on Thursday 29th May in aid of the St. Nicholas Church (Radford Semele) Restoration Fund.

Music by Corelli, Bach & Handel will be performed by James Hewitt (violin) and Mark Dupere (cello) who are both from the Royal Conservatoire, The Hague. They will be joined by Chris Farr on the organ. Tickets are £8.00 (includes a glass of wine) and are available from Chris & Alex Farr on (01926) 620117 or at the door

800 YEARS OF HISTORY

Holy Trinity Church, Norton Lindsey, are holding a Flower Festival celebrating 800 years of history. It will be on 17 18 19 May open from 10.00am to 5.00pm Saturday and Monday and Sunday 2.00 - 4.00pm. Refreshments available Saturday and Monday only.

TWISTORI

Twistori, according to the site, is the "first step in an ongoing social experiment." The brainchild of Amy Hoy and Thomas Fuchs, Twistori pulls comments from the social networking site Twitter that contain specific keywords: I love, I hate, I think, I believe, I feel, and I wish. It then publishes the comments it finds anonymously in a non-stop, auto-updating river of news. The result is a continuous stream of feelings from the Twitter community. See <http://twistori.com/>

Have a great week!

With best wishes

Roger Morris

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