

End the Week with CME - November 6, 2009

6th Nov 2009

Welcome to End the Week with CME! This weekly email is sent automatically to Clergy and Readers in the diocese (if you don't want to receive it, please send an email to CovEW-unsubscribe@lists.covlec.org) but anyone is welcome to subscribe to the list, and we are especially keen to pass it on to any interested lay people, especially those who may have responsibility for preaching. To subscribe they simply need to email CovEW-subscribe@lists.covlec.org.

Clergy Study Day

It was good to see so many people participating in the clergy study day on Monday. If you've got comments you'd like to pass on, or weren't able to complete an evaluation, please email sarah.palmer@covcofe.org

A History of Christianity

If you have access to BBC4, you may be interested to know that a new series A History of Christianity is being broadcast. It is presented by Diarmaid MacCulloch, Professor of the History of the Church at Oxford. The first episode was broadcast last night, but it is available to watch on the BBC iPlayer. The next episode will be on Thursday 12 November at 9pm. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00ntrqh>

The series is based on Diarmaid MacCulloch's recent book A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years (Allen Lane, 2009 ISBN-13: 978-0713998696). It is currently available on Amazon at the discounted price of £17.50 (usual price £35).

CME Events Coming Up

Safeguarding Children and Young People

This training will be based on the new Diocesan Guidelines and will cover all aspects of safeguarding, including types and indicators of abuse, how sex offenders operate, what to do if a disclosure is made, making a referral to Children's Social Care, ex-offenders in the Church, safe recruitment, Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The training days will be led by Carol Clarke, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Tuesday 17 November, 10am-3pm at **St Peter's Church Centre, Wellesbourne**

Thursday 10 December, 10am-3pm at **Holy Trinity, Attleborough**

This training is free. Please book through cme@covcofe.org.

November 25, 2009 - Handling the Past

How can we understand the role of historic churches as a positive mission opportunity rather than a negative burden? On this study day we shall look at Victorian strategy for mission, the situation we're in today, and share some ideas about the future.

An historic churches study day with Richard Cooke, Helen McGowan and Claire Strachan. Wednesday 25 November at St John the Baptist, Berkswell, 10am-3pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch). Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

January 14, 2010 - Multi-parish benefice day

Through a strange land: leading the rural church into the future

10am - 4pm at the King's Centre, Oxford

The rural church is caught between maintaining church as it used to be and seeking to imagine what it might become. The purpose of this conference is to:

- Acknowledge that the task is tough
- Recognise where the rural church has come from
- Think with daring and imagination about the journey ahead
- Share encouraging stories
- Inspire the rural church with hope, as God's people

The cost for the day is £40 (including lunch). Clergy and Readers can claim the full cost from their CME grant (CMD on the form). Full details and booking form can be found at http://www.coventrydiocese.org/upload/file/Through_a_strange_land_flyer.pdf

February 1, 2010 - Reconciliation

A study day on the theme of Reconciliation with Canon David Porter (Coventry Cathedral). Monday 1 February at Red Hill Christian Centre, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

February 25, 2010 - Mercy-Shaped Ministry

‘Since it is by God’s mercy we have this ministry we do not lose heart’. 2 Cor 4.

Ministry is demanding and costly but Paul insists its source is God’s mercy before all else. A day reflecting on what it means to live by the mercy of God and exploring what a mercy-shaped church might look like.

Through the day there will be input, prayer, personal space and shared discussion time.

A study day with David Runcorn, Thursday 25 February at Offa House, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

April 22, 2010 - Seeking the Angel of the Church

‘To the angel of the church write...’

Churches and communities, like individuals, have their own character and spirit. The reason long term transformation is often missing is because the spirit has not been named and ministered to. Based on the work of Walter Wink, a day exploring the name and character and ‘angel’ of our communities and how to minister to them.

A study day with David Runcorn, Thursday 22 April at Red Hill Christian Centre, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

April 27, 2010 - Learning from Luke

A Bible Reflection day with Paula Gooder and Richard Cooke. Tuesday 27 April at Offa House, 10am-3pm with an abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

July 6, 2010 - Spanish Mystics

A Spirituality Reflection Day with Ruth Tuschling, Tuesday 6 July at Offa House, 10am-3pm with an

abbreviated repeat from 7.30-9.30pm. Cost: £40 (including lunch) for the daytime course, £17.50 (including coffee and cakes) for the evening. Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

Other Events Coming Up

Global and Contextual Theology

This month there will be two open events marking the visit of Professor Stephen Bevans SVD to Birmingham.

19 November, 2 - 4pm at The Queen's Foundation

An academic seminar with the theme '**Theology in Global Perspective**'

To register or request further details, please contact Adam Hood at ah@queens.ac.uk or call 0121 452 2625.

21 November, 10am - 1pm at Newman University College

The session is entitled '**What Contextual Theology can offer the Church of the 21st Century**'

Lunch will be provided; the suggested offering for the morning and lunch is £15

To register or request further details, please contact David McLoughlin at d.b.mcloughlin@newman.ac.uk or call 0121 476 1181 ext. 2239.

Fr Bevans is the Professor of Mission and Culture at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

Ministry Where You Work?

Saturday 21 November 2009, 9am - 12.30pm at St Margaret's Chapter House, Whitnash (tea and coffee will be available) followed by a pub lunch (at your own cost) for those who would like to stay.

This is an invitation to all readers, OLMs and NSMs in the Coventry Diocese to attend a half-day workshop exploring 'What Sacraments Do I Discover At Work?' The programme will allow time to talk about what you actually do at work, and to explore how this might be ministry. In particular, the sacraments discovered in the course of that work will be explored. As well as talking together, there will be work in small groups and time for individual reflection. There will also be time for prayer, focussed on the issues of the workplaces discussed.

To book, or to request further information, please contact Revd Dr Felicity Smith on 01926 492452 or at felicity@fandi.me.uk

Preaching and Teaching about Science and Religion - a discussion group

The Darwin 150 celebrations this year, and the continuing activity of few well known 'public figures' have combined to bring publicity to the interaction between science and religion. There have been strong views expressed from both sides of the (assumed) divide, promoting standpoints of either strict biblical or strict scientific infallibility. Preachers and Teachers in the churches are faced with the need to respond to the concerns raised whilst taking in to account the scientific and theological backgrounds of their congregations.

The purpose of establishing this discussion group is to allow for the exchange of ideas, experiences and resources, so that those who 'labour in the vineyard' are enabled to learn from one another and so aid the understanding of those for whom they 'preach and teach'

The first meeting is on Thursday 26th November 2009 at 7.00 p.m at The Queen's Foundation, Somerset Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2QH

If you would like to attend, please contact Revd. Dr Adam Hood at hooda@queens.ac.uk or John Parkin at john.parkin@blueyonder.co.uk

Sexuality and Human Flourishing Conference

Saturday 6 February 2010, 10am - 4.30pm at Church of the Ascension, Stirchley, Birmingham.

A Day Conference to explore and celebrate our relationship with God, with each other, and with our inner selves. Speakers will be Arnold Browne, former dean Trinity College, Cambridge on The Scriptures and Sexual Diversity and Alison Webster, SR Advisor, Diocese of Oxford on Sexual Diversity and the Human Journey.

The aim of the day is to create a safe and holy space in which we can explore the themes of human sexuality, faith, and relationships, through listening, reflection and discussion. Cost £15 (Concessions £5).

For further information and details about how to book, please contact Daphne Cook, Centre for the Study of Christianity and Sexuality, on 01789 762 553 or at daphnecook@btinternet.com.

For details of all the events coming up, which have been advertised in recent editions of End the Week, please go to <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/learning/trainingstudy/>

Reminder - Special Book Offer ends December 1

My SCM Core Text: New Testament came out recently. It's an introduction to the New Testament, and some bits will be familiar to regular End the Week readers! It offers a fresh perspective for those who have been studying the NT for a long time as well as those who are just beginning, and is, I hope, readable and easy to follow. It provides a way in to some of the latest thinking about the New Testament and Jesus himself. The flyer and contents list can be seen at <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/learning/resources/> (scroll down to the 7th & 8th resources in the list).

The RRP is £24.99 but by passing on the author discount I can offer you a copy for £17.50 (a saving of £3.74 on the Amazon price!). To reserve a copy please email Sarah.Palmer@CovCofE.org and we'll let you know when the copies arrive to be collected from the Cathedral and Diocesan Offices, or make alternative arrangements.

Notes on the Gospel Readings for Sunday 15 November (2nd Sunday before Advent) Mark 13. 1-8

Prophesying the End

What led to Jesus' death? The Gospel of Mark suggests that the key accusation against him at his trial was that he had prophesied the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (Mark 14.58; see also John 2.19-21). His actions in the cleansing of the Temple prophetically enacted a time when sacrifices would cease (Mark 11.15-18; see also John 2.13-17). His perceived threat to the heart of Jewish faith inevitably set him on a collision course with the Temple authorities and therefore the Roman authorities who stood behind them too.

But Jesus was not wrong in what he said about the Temple. Its destruction by Roman hands in 70AD largely fulfilled Jesus' prophecy that 'not one stone shall be left upon another' (Mark 13.2, though some of the foundation stones were left – and remain there to this day). To the early Church this was a vindication of his words, a further sign that he was the Son of God and the saviour of Israel.

Some of Jesus' other words did not have the ring of fulfilment about them, however. His dark vision of a world out of joint waiting for a new age (Mark 13.5-37, the so-called 'little apocalypse') is very hard to untangle. Some commentators divide the prophecies contained in it into those which relate to the Jewish revolt against the Romans in 66-70 and those which relate to the end of time, but such divisions always seem artificial. What did Jesus really think would happen?

It's hard to pin down an answer to this question, partly, I suspect, because the apocalyptic language used is more foreign to us as a genre than most of the New Testament. These words are prophetic and poetic speech, full of vivid images, but not intended to be a literal guide to the end of the world (the telos, Mark 13.7).

Fundamentally Jesus' ministry shows us a man who hoped for a world set right, where God was in control, where the poor and powerless were lifted up and the rich and powerful toppled from their places. He offered to his followers not a blueprint for the future, but rather 'as it were a film full of flash-forwards' which poses a

'problem for the viewer. If we're not confused, then something is wrong: we are imposing our order on an intrinsically unordered narrative', as James Dunn says: 'The shattered mirror of prophecy gives a Picasso-esque image, and how the often jagged fragments fit into a whole is by no means clear' (Jesus Remembered Eerdmans 2003, p.485). Pressing the apocalyptic imagery of Mark 13 for precise details of Jesus' plan of salvation is the wrong thing to do and, as the history of interpretation shows, doomed to fail. It is more realistic to see Jesus in his last week offering to the Temple crowds the kind of imprecise, enigmatic, but enticing vision which had already drawn many followers in Galilee.

Yet within Jesus' words lie the seed of an idea which would take root and flourish after his death and resurrection: that in him personally the Temple would find its replacement. Paul in Romans memorably describes Jesus as the 'atoning sacrifice' (Rom. 3.25), but actually refers to Jesus as the 'mercy-seat', within the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple where sacrifices took place annually on the day of atonement. Did Paul see Jesus as a bit of furniture? Hardly! The symbolism is strange to us, but Paul's point is that Jesus' body is the place where God and humans are reconciled, which is the function of the temple's mercy-seat. He is the place to which humans come to be made righteous and he is God's means of sharing his righteousness with them. For Paul Jesus is the bridge between heaven and earth. At the 'mercy-seat' peace is established between God and humanity and a way to God provided. The picture Paul draws at the beginning of Romans of the unbridgeable gulf between the runaway world and its gracious creator is now miraculously set aside as he shows that Jesus is able to bring both sides together. For, 'while we were still sick, when the time was right' Jesus died 'on behalf of the ungodly' (Rom. 5.6); 'while we were still sinners Christ died on our behalf' (Rom. 5.8); 'being enemies we were reconciled to God' (Rom. 5.10). The same theme is also expounded in Hebrews, of course.

The 'birth-pangs' (Mark 13.8) are of a new world waiting to be born, when God will be all-in-all. The road to that new world runs through the cross rather than the Temple, which is why the cross will be seen to be the place of Jesus' triumph rather than his defeat, where his body will replace the 'mercy-seat' as the point at which heaven and earth touch. The cross, as we shall see next week, is the throne of the Son of God.

And Finally...

A taxi passenger tapped the driver on the shoulder to ask him a question.

The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up on the footpath, and stopped inches from a shop window.

For a second everything went quiet in the cab, then the driver said, "Look mate, don't ever do that again. You scared the daylights out of me!"

The passenger apologized and said, "I didn't realize that a little tap would scare you so much."

The driver replied, "Sorry, it's not really your fault. Today is my first day as a taxi driver - I've been driving a hearse for the last 25 years".

That's all, folks!

Richard

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