

End the Week with CME - February 5, 2010

5th Feb 2010

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.

CME Events Coming Up this year

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.

March 16, 2010 - 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 day will be led by Carol Clarke, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

10am-3pm at St James, Fletchamstead. This training is free. Please 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.

Please note that there aren't many places left on the daytime session, so if you wish to book a place, please let us know as soon as possible.

May 26, 2010 - 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 day will be led by Carol Clarke, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

10am-3pm at St George's, Rugby. This training is free. Please 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.

July 15, 2010 - 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 day will be led by Carol Clarke, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

10am-3pm at Red Hill Christian Centre. This training is free. Please book through cme@covcofe.org.

Some bits and books

A DVD and four new books arrived this week, all of which may be of interest to End the Week readers:

- A History of Christianity – the first three thousand years - the DVD of Diarmaid MacCulloch's BBC series accompanies the massive book of the same name (still available at a substantial discount from Amazon) – but when shall I have time to watch/read them? It occurred to me that others might have the same predicament and wondered if anyone else would like to join me in a year-long journey through those three thousand years? The aim would be to split the book into six parts, corresponding to the TV series and meet every other month for a weekday afternoon (2.00-5.00pm) to discuss what we had seen or read. For those otherwise engaged in the daytime we could run a parallel set of evening sessions if there were sufficient interest. If you're interested why not drop me a line (cme@covcofe.org) by 20 Feb so we can gauge the interest and find some venues for meeting.
- Resourcing Mission: Practical Theology for Changing Churches (SCM Press) is by Helen Cameron, who facilitated a study day in Rugby last September on Models of Parochial Ministry (see <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/learning/resources/opt/-/item/439> for the collected papers from that day). It's described by Helen as being designed for 'busy people for whom the reading of a whole book is a relative luxury' and is a wide-ranging and realistic examination of issues such as time, money, buildings, decision-making and leadership and their relationship to mission.
- Reshaping Rural Ministry: A Practical and Theological Handbook (Canterbury Press) is edited by James Bell, Jill Hopkinson and Trevor Wilmot – Jill is local to us as the National Rural Officer for the CofE based at the Arthur Rank Centre at Stoneleigh. It's a relatively short book which grapples with the issue of how the church in the country-side is changing and contains many interesting and illuminating stories of what's going on out there.
- Together for a Season: All-Age Resources for Feasts and Festivals of the Christian Year (Church House Publishing) by Gill Ambrose is the third in a series of books which offer all-age resources to sit alongside the liturgical material in Times and Seasons - the others relate to Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, and Lent, Holy Week and Easter (up to Pentecost). So in this volume you'll find material for Harvest and the Agricultural Year, All Saints and Remembrance-tide, and some fascinating stuff on various saints' days under the heading of 'Following God's Call'. Much of the material, is available on the accompanying CD-ROM.
- Finally, This Risen Existence: the Spirit of Easter (Canterbury Press) is Paula Gooder's latest book – Paula needs no introduction in Coventry Diocese (and is running a day on Luke's Gospel with me on 27 April – see above). Her Advent book The Meaning is in the Waiting was recently described to me by someone as the best Advent book they'd ever read – it made them quite sad that Christmas came and meant that the book had to end! It can be read through the six weeks of Lent, or perhaps through the six weeks from Easter to Ascension Sunday.

Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship

These are the BCD modules that are coming up before the summer. If you know anyone who might be interested in any of these, please pass the details on. Full details about the Bishop's Certificate can be found at <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/training/>. Places on any of the modules can be booked by emailing cme@covcofe.org.

Mission in Today's Culture

This module is for anyone who is looking for help and encouragement in leading their church into growth and is led by Revd David Banbury (Director of Mission & Faith Development at Holy Trinity, Stratford).

11 Mar, 18 Mar, 25 Mar & 22 Apr, 29 Apr, 6 May 2010 (Thursdays) 7.30 - 9.30pm at Stratford-upon-Avon, Holy Trinity.

Where Do I Fit? Finding Your Place in God's World

This module tries to answer the questions: 'Where do I fit in?' 'How has God gifted me?', and 'What might God be calling me to in the future?' and is led by Susan Mileham (Vocation Advisers' Team Leader) and Revd John Parker (Vocation Adviser & Team Vicar, Rugby Team Ministry).

4 May, 11 May, 18 May & 8 Jun, 15 Jun, 22 June 2010 (Tuesdays) 7.30 - 9.30pm at Leamington Spa, St Mark.

Unlocking the Story of Your Church

Whether your church is a historic building or quite recently built, this module will help you to understand the history which has made the building what it is today, and also help you to tell its story, as well as the story of the people who have worshipped in it. The module is led by Richard Cooke and Helen McGowan (Divine Inspiration).

8 May & 10 Jul 2010 (Saturdays) 9.30am - 3.30pm at Tredington, St Gregory.

Learning to Preach

This module is suitable for anyone who feels a call to make a contribution to the work of their church through occasional preaching and is led by Revd Dr Richard Cooke.

10 May, 17 May, 24 May & 14 Jun, 21 Jun, 28 Jun 2010 (Mondays) 7.30 - 9.30pm at CPAS, Athena Drive, Tachbrook Park, Warwick CV34 6NG.

Other events

'Wisdom from Warwick' - Lent addresses 2010

- 21st February (Lent 1) **Psychology & Faith** The Revd Prof Leslie Francis
- 28th February (Lent 2) **Science & Religion: the contribution of Teilhard de Chardin** Prof Steve Fuller
- 7th March (Lent 3) **God, Philosophy & The Human Genome** Dr Sue Chetwynd
- 14th March (Lent 4) **Theology of Life? Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide** The Revd Mark Bratton
- 21st March (Lent 5) **Richard Beauchamp: 'Tomb thoughts from abroad'** Prof Julian Gardner
- 28th March (Palm Sunday) **Wisdom from Warwick: Links & Loose-ends?** The Revd Dr Vaughan Roberts

All 6.30pm at the Collegiate Parish Church of St Mary. Each Address is part of a service of Choral Evensong and is followed by coffee and an opportunity to question the speaker.

Easter Labyrinth, 30 March 2010

For the last 10 years, St Laurence's Church, Bell Green have been using their church building to create an Easter Labyrinth for local school children in Years 4, 5 and 6 (which compliments the Easter Module in the National Curriculum). They re-create scenes from the Bible, and use activities, images, craft and worksheets to give children and insight into the Easter Story. They also include something about Easter customs and food from around the world and aim to make the experience both thought-provoking and enjoyable.

St Laurence's have suggested that other churches could do this so, on Tuesday 30 March, there is an opportunity for all those interested to visit and experience the Easter Labyrinth for themselves. All visitors will be given copies of the worksheets and lots of ideas. Refreshments will be provided, and it's suggested that you might like to bring a camera!

If you wish to attend, please contact Mel Cleveland on 02476 688271 or at cleveland.mikeandmel@googlemail.com by Friday 26 March. The church address is St Laurence's Church, Old Church Road, Bell Green, Coventry CV6 7ED.

National Reader Conference, 23 - 25 July 2010

Preaching in the Internet Age with John Bell (from the Iona Community) and Paul Johns (from the College of Preachers). The programme will run from 4pm on Friday 23 July until 2pm on Sunday 25 July, at the University of Lancaster.

Application forms are in the autumn and winter copies of The Reader magazine, or you can download a form from <http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org/>

For further information, please contact Heidi Cartledge on 01926 641751 or at hcartledge@fightingclose.freemove.co.uk

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/>

Notes on the Gospel Readings for Sunday 14 February (next before Lent)

Luke 9. 28-43a

The Mountain and the Valley

It was just over 24 hours since I had been made deacon, freshly minted and bright as a new penny. Diffidently and uncomfortably aware of the gleaming white dog-collar around my neck I set off for the Church Hall to fulfil the first solo responsibility of my newly-ordained life. All afternoon I sat in the dark with the Women's Fellowship as they busily knitted blanket squares for Sudan and saw a slide-show on tropical eye diseases. Was this what I had been ordained for? I wondered.

The previous morning I'd been part of the awe-inspiring spectacle that is the ordination of deacons in Coventry Cathedral. Taken from our families and friends, presented to the Bishop, swept up in the colour, music, ceremony and sheer joy of feeling that a journey of years had reached its peak and that God had touched us and our lives, it was a moment of spiritual and emotional intensity. And on the next day, there was a talk about eye-diseases to attend...Later (much later) it struck me that somewhere between the two extremes of the intense and the banal which I had experienced in that short time lay the true mean of ministry.

Maybe something similar applied to the disciples, between the mountain-top of the transfiguration and the chaos of the valley where a child was in convulsions (Luke 9.28-43a). Peter's reaction to the first experience was to try to prolong and preserve it: 'let's build three shelters' (9.33). Meanwhile down below at the mountain's foot there is a child writhing in convulsions as the other disciples fail to fulfil the commission Jesus had only recently given them to 'drive out demons' (9.1). The implication is perhaps that the disciples do not regard the child as significant enough to warrant their precious time (see the counter-example of the child, 9.48 and John's apparent non-sequitur of an answer, 9.49). Between the blow-you-away intensity of the transfiguration and the dismal failure of deliverance lay the reality of the Kingdom which Jesus had come to bring.

For Mark's Gospel (followed by Matthew's) the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi and the confirmation of Jesus as God's Son at the transfiguration (Mark 8.27-9.9) is the turning point and centre of the story of Jesus. Luke slightly changes the balance, for it is Jesus' turn to Jerusalem, on the way to heaven (Luke 9.51), which functions as the middle of his Gospel. The transfiguration becomes a prelude to that moment when Jesus sets his face to the fateful city. And so Luke slips in the content of the conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah, which Mark and Matthew do not record: 'his exodus, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem' (9.31). There is a deliberate echo of the exodus of Israel from Egypt, accentuated by the presence of Moses (pretty much the horse's mouth if you wanted to know about the exodus!). The effect is to

anchor the story of Jesus in the story of Israel. Just as the momentary flash of Jesus' power on the lake had turned a storm to calm and showed the disciples a fleeting glimpse of who he really was (Luke 8.22-25), so the transfiguration and the talk of exodus there tantalisingly twitch back the curtain from the deeper realities that lie behind the facade of the everyday world. There is much more going on here than simply the story of a Galilean preacher who came to a sticky end in Jerusalem.

But the disciples struggle to come to terms with this. Leading up to Jesus' decisive turn southwards there are five distinct failures by them, all in chapter 9. This doesn't surprise anyone who has read Mark's gospel where the disciples are incorrigibly obtuse and get it wrong again and again. Yet once again Luke offers a different take on the same material. For him the disciples live up to their name, which means 'learners'. So in his Gospel, preparing the way for its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles, we see the disciples gradually, painfully, learning from their failures so that one day they will be able to lead the movement which Jesus leaves them with. The five failures are these:

- Failure to feed the hungry – Jesus comes to the rescue (9.12-17, note that Jesus expects them to feed the crowd, v.13);
- Failure by wanting to prolong the glory of the transfiguration (9.33);
- Failure to heal the child – Jesus again comes to the rescue (9.40);
- Failure to understand Jesus' call to suffer and a desire for greatness (9.45-46);
- Failure to recognise God working in someone else who is more successful than they are (9.49-50).

It's a pretty comprehensive charge-sheet!

Amongst the failures there is also an important theme that will help them ultimately to find their way out. Twice they are instructed to listen (vv.35, 44). Before this point in the Gospel Luke has narrated two-thirds of the miracles which Jesus performs; after it he will offer four-fifths of the parables which Jesus tells. The movement is unmistakable. There is a shift from action to reflection, from experience to understanding. Now it is time for them to listen to Jesus so that they understand the wider context of what he is doing. As Paul Borgman puts it, commenting on Luke 9.37-41, 'For Luke it is not privileged faith or correct procedure that ensures healing. Rather, it is lack of paying attention – a perversity – that prevents healing. The Jewish scriptures speak of Israel as a "perverse generation, children in whom there is no faithfulness" – as those who have ignored "loving the Lord your God" and "walking in his ways." [Deut. 32.20; 30.16] Jesus here accuses the disciples of the same for their failure with the little boy' (The Way According to Luke Eerdmans 2006, p.69).

The intensity of encounter with God and the intensity of encounter with evil which the disciples experience in this passage can both be misunderstood by them – both become places of failure as they mistake the work of God in their midst. The glory of transfiguration cannot be made permanent and static – for the God of Moses, Elijah and Jesus is a God always on the move, a God of the journey not the settlement. Nor can the child in the grip of a demon be regarded as unimportant – for God is concerned with the unimportant and insignificant too. In the next section of their journey with Jesus – and the next section of Luke's Gospel – they will learn how to be attentive and see God at work. Their education begins here. Between the mountain and valley they will find the truth of ministry in Jesus' way.

And Finally...

You'll have to concentrate on this one to get it...

A little girl walks into a pet shop and asks, with the sweetest lisp, "Excuse me, mister, do you have any wittle wabbits?"

And the shopkeeper bends way down and puts his hands on his knees so he's on her level, and asks, "Do you want a wittle white wabbit or a wittle black wabbit? Or maybe that cute wittle bwown wabbit over there?"

She in turn puts her hands on her knees, leans forward and says in a quiet little voice, "I don't fink my pyfon weally cares."

That's all, folks!

Richard

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