

End the Week with CME - September 11, 2009

11th Sep 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.

Welcome back to End the Week - it's a double issue this time, and will return in a weekly form on Friday 25 September.

Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship 2009-2010 Programme

The new BCD programme can be found at <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/training/> as well as our general leaflet, FAQs and a registration form if you wish to register to complete the full certificate.

There's a whole range of exciting modules available for lay people. You will soon be able to download and print leaflets and booking forms for the individual modules, but in the meantime you can book by emailing cme@covcofe.org.

If you have any queries about the BCD, please email Sarah Palmer at cme@covcofe.org.

CME Events Coming Up

September 23, 2009 - Models of Parochial Ministry

A Study Day hosted by the Rugby Team Ministry and facilitated by Dr Helen Cameron (The Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology). Wednesday 23 September, 10am - 4pm at St George's Church, St John's Avenue, Rugby.

The aims of the day are:

- To hear the experiences of others involved in the creative re-shaping of parochial ministry.
- To engage with an external theological reflector and with guests who are also interested in the alternatives to lumping more and more parishes together in the search for viability.
- To disseminate the developments more widely.

The cost for the day is £30 (including lunch). Grants for half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. For further information, contact Revd Mark Beach (Team Rector of Rugby) at rector@rugbyteam.org.uk or on 01788 565609. And to book a place, please contact Sarah Palmer (Coventry CME) at cme@covcofe.org or on 02476 521316.

October 19, 2009 - 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.

Monday 19 October, 10am-3pm at St Margaret's Chapter House, Whitnash <http://www.warwickgates.org.uk/st-margarets-church/>. The day will be led by Carol Clarke, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The same training will also take place in the Nuneaton and Fosse deaneries in November / December - dates and venues to be confirmed in the next edition of End the Week.

Cost: £40 for the day (including lunch). Grants of half the cost are available for clergy and Readers. Book through cme@covcofe.org.

November 25, 2009 - Handling the Past

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.

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.

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.

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

Rites on the Way Together

Thursday 15 October 2009 at Birmingham Cathedral, 10.30am - 3.00pm (registration and coffee from 9.45am). Speakers will be Revd Rhiannon Jones (Rector of Fulbourn and the Wilbrahams) and Revd Dr Tim Stratford (Team Rector, Kirkby Team Ministry).

This is a day celebrating loving relationships - betrothals, weddings, renewal of vows and "blessing" civil marriages. It will explore how churches can organise themselves and offer the liturgical, pastoral and practical means to meet these needs and opportunities.

The cost of the day, which does not include lunch, will be £15 (£12 for affiliate members of Praxis). For full details, including how to book, go to http://www.praxismidlands.org.uk/next_event.html

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 20 September (Trinity 15) & Sunday 27 September (Trinity 16) Mark 9. 30-37; 38-50

‘These Little Ones’

Safeguarding children is back on the agenda – not, sadly, that it’s ever really been away. But as a new set of diocesan guidelines is agreed and a series of training events takes place during the Autumn it’s a good time to ask again, ‘Why is safeguarding children important for the Church?’

The obvious answer is, because we are required to do so by law. But there is, of course, more to it than that. And the gospel readings for the next two weeks are a timely reminder of just why children matter in the Kingdom of God.

These passages are often discussed purely in the context of leadership and greatness. The children are reduced to simple illustrations, not much more than the props which Jesus had to hand to make a point to the disciples. Yet to discuss them in such a way seems to me to miss something important. I think the children were much more than illustrations of the Kingdom for Jesus. In some way they embodied what Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom was about. After all, he defined himself by the way he addressed God as Father, abba, the word a child might use.

When I first went to Uganda in 2000 one of the most obvious features of the country was its youth. At that time almost fifty per cent of the population was under 20. There were children everywhere! The first-century Mediterranean world was probably not much different. There were large numbers of children and they were a valuable but expendable commodity. Unwanted babies were regularly abandoned on rubbish dumps (many of these children became slaves). The Greek philosopher Plato wrote that ‘of all the wild beasts, the child is the most intractable...a treacherous, sly and violent creature’ that somehow, if beaten and tamed, might grow into a useful adult citizen. It’s clear from grave epitaphs that there was a deep and genuine affection for one’s own individual children, but children as a class came very low down the pecking order.

Jews, because of their reverence for God’s gift of life, did not abandon their children, to the surprise of most pagans, and of course the Old Testament includes several stories in which it is clear that God cares for and is able to use children (Moses in the bulrushes, the call of Samuel, and David and Goliath for example). Yet children even for Jews were still basically seen in commodity terms: future labour on a small-holding, someone to take on a family business, effectively a pension to provide for you in old age.

So when Jesus took a child in his arms (Mark 9.36) and warned about the drastic punishment awaiting someone who caused ‘one of these little ones to stumble’ (Mark 9.42, the ‘millstone’ is specifically ‘the millstone of a donkey’, in other words a very large one) he was doing a radical thing. Traditionally new-born

children were brought before the father for him to accept or reject. Amongst gentiles that meant choosing between life or death for the infant. Jesus' action in reaching out and taking the child in his arms powerfully conveys that to God even a possibly unwanted child is precious. Jesus, a man with no children himself, offers them a place in God's Kingdom.

In the Old Testament Law children feature largely as 'the fatherless'. Fatherless children had no-one to protect them and were seen as God's special concern (see, for example, Deut. 24; Psalm 10.18; 68.5; Prov. 23.10–1). In common with those who were destitute or those who were aliens, they had no-one to look after their interests and so were deeply vulnerable. In a world which was characterised by a complex web of social relations, children could easily drop off the scale, be kidnapped or just lost (remember the story of Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12 – how many other children dropped out of the pilgrim groups and were never found again?). Children did not matter to God because of any intrinsic worth which they had, simply because God, in his grace, cared for those who had no-one else to care for them. And he passed on this responsibility to his people. Those who mattered to no-one else mattered to the Church, as it reflected the character of God the champion of the champion-less.

The connection with today's emphasis on child safeguarding is obvious, and underlines why any form of abuse of children or tolerance of it has no place in the Church. Children, the undervalued and often overlooked, matter to God and belong to his Kingdom.

And Finally...

Children's Notes to God

A nun asked her class to write notes to God. Here are some of the notes the children handed in:

Dear God: I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday. That was cool.

Dear God: Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't You just keep the ones You have?

Dear God: Maybe Cain and Abel would not have killed each other so much if they had their own rooms. That's what my Mum did for me and my brother.

Dear God: If You watch me in church on Sunday, I'll show You my new shoes.

Dear God: I bet it is very hard for You to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I'm having a hard time loving all of them.

Dear God: In school they told us what You do. Who does it when You're on vacation?

Dear God: Are You really invisible or is it just a trick?

Dear God: Is it true my father won't get in Heaven if he uses his bowling words in the house?

Dear God: Did You mean for the Giraffe to look like that or was it an accident?

Dear God: Who draws the lines around the countries?

Dear God: I went to this wedding and they kissed right in the church. Is that okay?

Dear God: Did You really mean "do unto others as they do unto you"? Because if You did, then I'm going to get my brother good.

Dear God: Thank You for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.

Dear God: Please send me a pony. I never asked for anything before. You can look it up.

Dear God: I want to be just like my Daddy when I get big, but not with so much hair all over.

That's all, folks!

Richard

Richard Cooke
Coventry CME

Richard.Cooke@CovCofE.org