

# CR



**QUARTERLY REVIEW OF THE  
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**Artist:** Revd Matthew Askey  
**Medium:** Oil on wood panel  
**Size:** 20" diameter  
**Date:** August 2010

# Picture Prayer Meditation

## The Sacrifice of Abraham



Is Abraham surprised? Here we see him with the ram to prepare for a sacrifice: God's gift to him is now offered back to God in thanks.

He was willing to offer back to God all that had been given him; everything, even his only son, born of his old age, flesh of his flesh, foundation of the people of Israel. Abraham knew that all he had was not his, but that it was all a great gift - could it now be required to be returned? Perhaps he wondered on that, prayed about it; was he in debt to God? Was this child a real free-gift, was it all too good to be true? And he got his answer – Isaac was now free – the ram was given in his place. Gift upon gift; blessing upon blessing.

Abraham is famous for his hospitality, and we too have the responsibility to act as hosts to God, to welcome God into our lives and to serve Him. But just as Abraham discovered that day, we discover that we are never truly the host at all, because all we have has already been given to us. We welcome God, we welcome each other in the name of God; and we find that the true host, the *Lord of all life* has been there before us, laying the table, cooking the banquet, holding the cup and the bread, giving all that He has, even his body, so that we may be His hosts, in His name, sharing His gifts today.

Amen.

**Our brother Zachary Brammer CR died in hospital  
on 13<sup>th</sup> September.  
Funeral Requiem 11:45am Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September**

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## Superior's Notes

**W**e owe a big “thank you” to all who have so far given magnificently to the appeal for refurbishing the church. Over a quarter of a million pounds has come in over the last few months and nearly all of that has come from our friends and supporters. This is tremendous support, and we are greatly encouraged – the donations often accompanied by very moving letters. Please keep up the good work, not least of telling your friends, about the appeal and suggesting names to us – we have had some really good support in that too.

In the next few months we are going to have a blitz on approaching potential major donors, for which we have been preparing the ground, both here and in the USA, and one new and enthusiastic

worker for us in this is Sir Patrick Stewart, of *Star Trek* fame, more latterly a Shakespearian actor. A Mirfield boy, his first performance was in our quarry theatre. He was pleased to know we are restoring the theatre, and has offered to do something at its re-opening.

At the same time we say goodbye to Jonathan Pape, whose contribution to getting the appeal off the ground is now complete. We are very thankful for the sterling work he has done – he has been a very good person to work with, and we wish him and his family well in the future.

Start of work at the moment is held up, not least because an objector has asked for the proposals to go to a Consistory Court. The court will meet here on 30<sup>th</sup> October, and it requires in the meantime a tremendous amount of preparation and production of documents. Please pray for all involved. Once that is out of the way and we receive the necessary permissions, we will publish in the Quarterly pictures of the final plans for the church, which have undergone some changes one way and another.

Prayers too for our Aspirant Jacob Pallett, who is due to come here as a Postulant on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

**George CR**

## **The Mirfield Liturgical Institute**

**T**he Mirfield Liturgical Institute (MLI) was started in embryo a couple of years ago as the result of a long-held desire on the part of the not inconsiderable number of College staff and Brethren with liturgical interests to raise the profile of and better resource the already-considerable amount of liturgical teaching, research and formation work going on at Mirfield. As many readers will know, this of course goes right back to Fr Walter Frere CR and the arrival of the Community here in 1898 and the founding of the College in 1902. As the first Director of the Institute, and as a very unworthy successor to Walter Frere as liturgy tutor at the College, I am always very conscious of his legacy – his lantern slides beside my desk, for example, which he used in his teaching of College students and others before the First World War, are a constant reminder of his commitment to the teaching and study of liturgy based on sound scholarship and with an attention to detail of which he was a master! Frere has always been my inspiration, as those who know me even

slightly will have realised, but just as he was a central figure in liturgical reform as well as deeply appreciative of and steeped in the tradition of liturgical worship in these islands and beyond, so the MLI has in view the liturgy of today and tomorrow as well as the riches of the past.

The MLI is based at the College and reports ultimately to the College Council, but on a day-to-day basis it operates from my study with the support, encouragement, enthusiasm and practical help of many colleagues in the College, Community, the Yorkshire Ministry Course and further afield. Since it was founded and in a relatively short space of time there have been some significant developments in the work of the MLI. Central to its activity is the teaching of liturgy in the College and on the Course. Readers will be aware that the College and the Course are just beginning a new association with the University of Sheffield, and this has involved the recasting of the liturgical studies curriculum to reflect this and the fact that I now teach liturgy for both institutions. The result is a refreshed undergraduate module which continues to focus on the needs of those preparing for Holy Orders in the Church of England. Alongside this important consolidation of the BA liturgical teaching is a considerable development of the opportunities for study at graduate level. The new MA programme in association with Sheffield leads to a named **MA in Liturgy**, one of only three in the country and the only one north of the Trent (to take an arbitrary north-south boundary!) and we have taken the opportunity to expand the number and variety of modules on offer. Thus the list of modules now on offer includes: Liturgy, Culture and Context (the core liturgical module), Liturgical Texts, Themes in Liturgical Theology, Sacramental Theology, Singing the Word, Liturgy, Ritual and Sacred Space, Cistercian Studies. There is also, of course, the dissertation written on a topic agreed between the student and the course director. There is already considerable interest in the new MA: it is aimed at, among others, recently ordained clergy, more experienced clergy wishing to resume their studies, lay people and liturgical musicians, those who may be required to teach liturgy themselves, and those who wish subsequently to undertake research for a PhD in an aspect of liturgical studies.

The latter is the latest opportunity we are able to offer: an **MPhil / PhD in Liturgical Studies** through the University of Sheffield. This is a very significant development nationally, given the relatively small amount of higher graduate study opportunities in liturgy specifically on offer at UK Universities. We earnestly hope that such an initiative

can only serve to increase the potential for liturgical research and the provision of future scholars and teachers in the field.

Further work of the MLI includes expanding the sabbatical programme in liturgical studies for clergy and others; plans for regular seminars bringing together liturgical scholars and practitioners; study groups and day symposia on particular topics; the continuing forging of links with other institutes of liturgical study; and the offering of our facilities to independent scholars, groups and organisations. As an example of the latter, we have just hosted another very successful Conference of the Society for Liturgical Study, which will return for its Conference in 2012.

It may well be that readers of this article are interested in our work, and perhaps specifically in either the MA or PhD or both, or they may know someone who might be! Please do get in touch with me at the College with your enquiries and ideas: [bgordon-taylor@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:bgordon-taylor@mirfield.org.uk). The MLI has a page on the College website – please visit it!

**Ben Gordon-Taylor**

*Fr Ben Gordon-Taylor is Director of the Mirfield Liturgical Institute, Lecturer in Liturgy at and a former student of the College, and is a Companion of the Community. He is the co-author of three Alcuin Liturgy Guides, co-editor with Fr Nicolas Stebbing CR of a forthcoming volume of essays on Walter Frere, and Editorial Secretary of the Alcuin Club, of which Walter Frere was for many years the President.*

## The Long Pray Round

I suppose it is all our experience that God calls us to do some crazy things; training for the priesthood at Mirfield may be one of them. Last year God called me to ride a push bike from Cambridge to Market Drayton in Shropshire, via Mirfield, 274 miles in all. Those readers that knew me while training in Mirfield will know that I was more famous for smoking rollup on the fire escape of Bilson block, usually with a Gin in hand.

The bike ride was to raise some cash for my parish but also to raise awareness of Prayer, Science and the Monastic life. The route I took up from Cambridge told a story of the links between science and the monastic life. Before ordination I worked in genetics in a lab at Cambridge, where the ride began.

The link between the monastic life and genetics is the father of the discipline itself Gregor Mendel, who was an Augustinian monk. I told my friend who had never seen a monk before that CR were very hospitable. He then told me that we were sleeping ‘somewhere called

the annex'. Remembering cleaning rooms there in my student days I wasn't best impressed. I was then over the moon to see that we were staying in the lap of luxury in the newly modernised annex block.

Throughout the ride I made a documentary exploring these links and pleading for a better and more respectful relationship between science and theology. Fr Thomas gave a great interview on the Monastic life and Fr George accompanied me for the first few miles out of Mirfield on his eBay bike. You can view these videos and more on my YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/longprayround](http://www.youtube.com/longprayround)

I am currently editing the videos into a full documentary that will be finished at some point in the autumn. The thrust of the argument is that it is only possible to understand creation as a revelation of the word of God through evolution and not intelligent design. The video looks at the enduring influence of William Paley's natural theology and sees how such an argument does not square with either a biological or theological understanding of creation. The underlying plea in the work is to all of us to see all aspects of our lives as linked and brought to God through prayer. Something that CR does so well. As Fr Peter once said in upper church, it is all part of the Golden Thread, that musical note that began at the beginning and goes on till the end of time. It seems I did listen to at least some of my training.

**Revd. Hywel Snook**

## **Luke : The Missionary Theologian**

**W**hen we seek to understand the Gospel of Luke one of the key points we must not forget is that Luke also wrote Acts. Indeed those two books, separated in our Bibles by John are in fact held together in one structure. The story of Jesus begins in Nazareth (*Lk* 1:26); Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee (4:14) and much of his teaching takes place there. Only in 18:31 does he tell his disciples "see, we are going to Jerusalem..." Jerusalem is where he meets his death, and where he rises from the dead. Unlike the other evangelists Luke has all Jesus' resurrection appearances take place in and around Jerusalem. The disciples are specifically told to "stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (24:49). Acts then takes up the story of how the disciples, now called apostles (1:2 meaning 'those who are sent') receive the Holy Spirit and then immediately start preaching,



first in Jerusalem, then led out beyond Judea into Samaria, Antioch in Syria and then out into the Greek world with the Apostle Paul and his companions. Acts ends with Paul in Rome, the centre of the known world. Thus Luke maps out a missionary movement which starts in the rural Jewish area of Galilee, moves to its centre in Jerusalem (where right in Chapter One the priest Zachariah learns he will be father of the forerunner John), and then spreads rapidly out of Palestine, through the Greek cities and to Rome, the mistress of the world.

This is no surprise for anyone who has been alert to the priorities Luke gives to the coming of Jesus: in Luke 2:32 the prophet Simeon describes the child Jesus as ‘a light to enlighten the Gentiles’. As early as Luke 7 a centurion comes to ask Jesus to heal his servant and tells Jesus he does not need to come physically; he can do it from afar. Jesus says, “Not even in Israel have I found such faith.” Luke is warning us that the faith of the Gentiles, Greek and Roman, will turn out to be far greater than that of the Jewish people who should have recognised the Messiah. And at the end of the Passion in 23:47 it is the Roman centurion himself who proclaims Jesus’ innocence, “Certainly, this man was innocent.”

Most of the Gospel story is focused on Jesus, yet in Chapter 10 there is a sudden development. “Jesus appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him to every town...” Whether anything like this really happened in the life time of Jesus is at least doubtful. What is clear is that Luke has turned this story into an idealisation of the mission to the Gentiles. It was brilliantly successful (which Jesus’ own mission was not). Jesus says, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.” That is a triumph over Satan which must surely wait until after the crucifixion. Luke is anticipating the history of Jesus’ mission: it may seem to have failed as it comes up to the crucifixion, but in fact it succeeded brilliantly after that, as we (and he) know well. Within that same story he hints at what will happen: “Woe to you Chorazin, Woe to you Bethsaida...At the judgement it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you.” Gentiles will be saved while Israel is destroyed.

Luke of course is writing about 60 years after the death of Jesus. Jerusalem has fallen and has been destroyed so that ‘not one stone is left upon another’. The temple is gone; the Jewish people have scattered. Luke does not gloat over this destruction of the people of

God. But he makes it clear that the followers of Christ are the new Israel. Paul begins his preaching in Jewish synagogues. If they accept him they become the new Christian church. If they reject him he goes to the Gentiles and they become the new Israel. Increasingly, this becomes the case. Judaism and Christianity go their separate ways, tragically divided worshippers of the same God.

The Gospel preached is that which we have seen: it is centred naturally on the Resurrection of Christ, who is not simply risen from the dead but continually present to people through the Holy Spirit. Luke does not simply tell a story that happened in the past. It is a story which goes on in the present and is driving men and women into the future. The marks of this new gospel include the forgiveness of sinners, their restoration to society; it makes a new place for the poor and the weak (the majority of the new converts in the First Century world were indeed poor and weak); and it turns the world upside down.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

## **Anglicans in Saldanha Bay**

**E**ach summer a number of students from the College are given the opportunity to go on placement to South Africa, where historically the Community were engaged in missionary work and where they founded a theological college. Current members of CR remember teaching there, and Frs Nicolas and Aidan in particular are regular visitors to the country. This year I was fortunate to spend one month in the Diocese of Saldanha Bay (which covers much of the Western Cape), attached to three parishes in a town called Paarl, about an hour's drive from Cape Town.

Much of the work I witnessed would be familiar to parish priests in this country (home and hospital visiting; confirmation classes; youth events, weddings and funerals), and much of the worship closely resembled the liturgies of the Church of England (especially the ubiquitous use of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, which felt a little surreal if nevertheless rather touching in a country thousands of miles away from the one where these hymns were penned, and where baboons roam the mountain roads and the lemon-trees are

heavy with fruit even in winter – I took some persuading that it really was the coldest time of the year, given that most days the temperature was in the high 'teens!) Dividing my time between three churches meant that I was saddled with a heavy preaching burden – six different sermons on ten different occasions, in just four weeks. I was able to lace my homilies with a smattering of basic Afrikaans phrases, but was defeated by isiXhosa (one of the country's eleven official languages, and the one with the “clicks”). South African Anglicans are proud of their ecclesial heritage, and speak with great affection of CR, whose influence is apparent in the clergy's understanding of their priestly identity and mission.

I was bowled over by the warmth of the hospitality I experienced, and I'm sure after so many supper invitations, I ought to have paid an excess-baggage charge on the flight home on account of the weight I gained eating delicious traditional South African cuisine, including curry & *roti* (there is a strong Malay influence in the Western Cape), *bobotie* (spiced mince-meat under an egg topping), ostrich and *kudu* (antelope). I consider myself very fortunate also to have been on placement in the middle of South Africa's winelands!

Hosting the FIFA World Cup was just one sign of how far South Africa has moved in less than twenty years of democracy (though the noise of the vuvuzelas was a development I could have done without!); but the legacy of half a century of *apartheid* is still sadly obvious. Whilst most of the families I got to know lived comfortable lives, nevertheless I also visited people living in appalling conditions in makeshift or rudimentary accommodation, and I witnessed the effective continuation of *apartheid* socially and economically in the existence of the townships, such as Khayelitsha on the outskirts of Cape Town, where half a million people live in corrugated-iron single-room houses. Not all of the diversity of 'the rainbow nation' is good, but things are getting better, and the churches are at the forefront of encouraging a sense of social responsibility and solidarity. The Anglican Church in South Africa has yet significantly to face the challenges to church-going which blight the Church of England, but the beginnings of this malaise are evident, such as the absence from the churches of most young people. However, strong familial and community bonds may prevent so dramatic a decline as we have known in this country, and the Church there remains

in buoyant mood: people love going to church, and numbers on a Sunday are in the hundreds. The extent of lay involvement and responsibility is impressive, and there are some inspiring priests (including a number of younger clergy) who seem well equipped to lead the Church forward into the next generation.

I am enormously grateful to the Bishop and clergy of Saldanha Bay, and to the people of Paarl, for their hospitality during my time



*Holy Trinity, Paarl*

in South Africa; I further say 'baie dankie' to Fr Nicolas CR for arranging my placement. I consider my visit to have been an invaluable element in my own preparation for ministry, and look forward to visiting South Africa again in time.

**Richard Norman**  
Ordinand CoR

## **Religion, Peace & Development**

An International Ecumenical/Inter-religious Conference  
UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY – MUKONO  
24<sup>th</sup> May to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Religion is one of the most powerful worldwide forces – for peace but also for war - it may be that only in Europe is this not wholly true.

Religion is really powerful in East Africa, one of the most Christianised parts of the world. Its power was particularly disastrous in the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which religious leaders were seen masterminding the killing of thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Then there was the Kenyan involvement and/or failure to condemn this.

Uganda itself, the host nation for the conference, has no recent large scale ethnic and/or religious conflict, but its religious and political history is full of fierce religious conflict: wars between Roman Catholics and Anglicans (Church of Uganda), and between Christians and Muslims. Even today the Muslim-led Allied Democratic Front

(ADF), seeks to establish a Muslim state in a majority Christian country. The ADF has on several occasions justified its existence as a response to marginalisation of Muslims in Uganda.

Is it an accident that East Africa is an area where human relations are at their most fragile? The key question: ‘Is it possible for the East African region to experience improvement in the quality of peoples’ lives?’

The conference was organized by Rt. Rev’d Dr Fred Sheldon Mwesigwa, himself a longtime member of International Ecumenical Fellowship, newly consecrated Bishop of Ankole in the Church of Uganda (Anglican/Episcopal). It may be that its findings could have a still wider application, so the editors asked Kate Davson, International President of the IEF, to write about it for CRQR.

Kate herself believes that the IEF experience and practice of “being church” has a contribution to make. Here is her account:

**T**he only non-academic participant, I was most privileged to give a paper entitled ‘Living Today the Church of Tomorrow: Towards Peace, Reconciliation and Social Justice’.

Mine is the very personal approach of my own spiritual journey; my family history; and brief introduction to IEF’s history and deep spiritual ecumenism.

All of us need to identify the wounded and divided history in our personal lives - perhaps in our families; in our local churches; in our communities; in our nations and, of course in our world. Have we the courage to confront the demons we discover there? Have we gone far enough in identifying, accepting, and confessing them; in forgiving those who have hurt us, and in seeking to be reconciled with them?

From a deeply wounded state God transformed me: ‘He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me’ (*Psalms* 18:19). This transformation of who I am has brought me peace, and I believe my journey may be of value to others. Honesty with ourselves, with God, and with our neighbour, are imperatives on this journey if we are to overcome our divisions. In the words of William Wilberforce, my forefather, the anti-slavery campaigner, ‘We are all guilty - we all ought to plead guilty, and not to exculpate ourselves by throwing the blame on others.’

God’s will for me has been to seek fulfilment of Christ’s prayer ‘that all of them may be One, Father, just as you are in me and I

am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent me'. (*John 17:21*) My passionate desire for the unity of all Christian people – not uniformity but unity in diversity - brought me into the International Ecumenical Fellowship.

The story of the IEF is the story of pilgrims from many places, journeying together towards the same destination – the renewal of the Christian Church. In the more than forty years since our foundation, we have grown into a community of largely grassroots Christians inspired and encouraged to work for Christian unity. Our vision and inspiration of 'Living today the Church of tomorrow', shaped by events and personalities, is experienced by every member of IEF.

The significance of fellowship in IEF's name is that we are a living *koinonia*, a community bound together by the Holy Spirit.

One of our great strengths is the way that we bring lay and ordained Christians together across the divides of language, ethnicity, nationality, political structures, spirituality and Church traditions. This broadens our understanding of God and gives us a taste of what it means for all Christians to be a worldwide Church. We come to appreciate the gifts that God gives to different traditions and faiths, and find God challenging us through 'others'. In developing deep friendships with people from different backgrounds and cultures, we experience personally the power of Jesus Christ to make us one in Him. In this way, our service to God, through faith, helps others overcome fear of the 'other', in an inter-Christian as also in an inter-religious context– surely a path, if followed in love, that can only lead to peace and reconciliation. The gift of peace and reconciliation enables all to work together for the development of social justice.

How is this cohesion achieved? It is part of the founders' vision, themselves Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Old Catholics, Evangelical-Lutherans, Reformed and Orthodox, that "By prayer, study and action, the IEF seeks to serve the movement towards the visible unity of the Church according to the expressed will of Jesus Christ by the means He wills" (The Fribourg Statement 1967). This encapsulates IEF's vision for shared worship, discipleship and fellowship: "To serve the will of God, and unite the people of God, by hearing the word of God, proclaiming the praise of God, and breaking the bread of God".



Our action has been on different levels:

- in annual international conferences, held each year in a different country;
- in regional meetings in our different national contexts – we are currently from ten different European countries, five Eastern and five Western, with individual members in the USA and in Africa;
- and in smaller localised area group meetings.

The heart and core of each conference is daily worship and prayer. We normally begin each day with a creative spiritual morning office, we hold a daily Eucharist, each day in a different tradition. A speciality of IEF is the Service for Healing and Reconciliation.

- Within this framework we enjoy times for Bible study and at least one theological lecture. One of our problems is always the effect of the Tower of Babel, as we are usually about 12-15 different nationalities and languages at a conference. Enormous efforts are made to translate all lectures, liturgies, Bible studies and reflections into at least four main languages (English, German, French and Spanish).
- Discussion groups work in two languages, enabling each person to follow what is said.
- We meet in workshops on creative/biblical/theological/ecological themes;
- We visit places of special interest, meeting local traditions and cultures.
- We seek to be inclusive and open to people of all ages, and young people make a special contribution to our life together.

The IEF model shows how it is possible through peace and

fellowship and by becoming familiar with other Christian traditions to rid ourselves of the fear of the 'other' which lies at the root of our divisions.

At the Mukono conference, I became aware that each speaker was presenting a deep fear of conflict. Each fear has its own source, starting in slavery and colonialism, and derives from subsequent political, religious, tribal, or other aspects of African history.

I proposed that each particular wounded history be identified and named as the cause of fears that are barriers to peace and development. And then a further conference, to be held on 'Healing Wounded History', could show the way to peace and reconciliation.

The conference organisers hope to found a Religion, Peace and Development Forum - a non-governmental academic forum committed to intellectual and practical educational engagement with these issues. The forum will point ways forward towards unity and harmony in Uganda, East Africa, Africa and the world. There was an encouraging response to this idea. See our website for further developments.

**Kate Davson**

International President  
The International Ecumenical Fellowship  
[www.icf-ocumenica.org](http://www.icf-ocumenica.org)



*Ankole Diocese gets new bishop*



## Are some Holy Wells Early Christian Baptism Pools?

**T**wo types of Holy Wells are to be found around the British Isles and Ireland: water emerging from a hillside or stone face, and water flowing into a shallow stone-enclosed pool. I am proposing the following hypothesis for the latter type of holy well.

*“That the Holy Wells of the British Isles which consist of a shallow pool with flowing water and enclosed by masonry are early Christian baptism sites.”*

Other ideas about holy wells include 1) that they are pre-Reformation healing sites associated with a saint and her or his legend and therefore downgraded by the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformers as places of superstition, and 2) that they are pagan sites commandeered by Christians and really should be seen as a part of British ancient pagan customs. Both of these views are still prevalent in literature.

If my hypothesis is correct then these baptism sites were out in the open. People were baptised in them by paddling in the pools and having water poured over their heads. The early Christian founders lived in hermit cells and possibly constructed wooden churches. When more substantial churches were built baptisms moved inside the churches and floor fonts were used. These floor fonts were later placed on pedestals from about the 10<sup>th</sup> Century as the majority of baptism candidates were babies rather than adults. Meanwhile the original and substantial baptismal pools remained and came to be regarded as healing wells installed by the churches' founders.

From my travels around early Christian sites in Jordan and Israel, France and Minorca a pattern for the evolution of baptism pools and baptism basins emerges. The pattern appears to be rivers, then immersion pools and immersion tubs, followed by paddling pools and paddling basins and finally basins on pedestals.

Evidence for this pattern is

- *River immersion* - New Testament,
- *River paddling* - Third century painting from catacombs of San Callisto in Rome, along the Old Appian Way
- *Immersion pools* - The Byzantine monastic / pilgrimage centre

of St. Aaron near Petra, Jordan c. 475 AD, currently being excavated,

- *Immersion basin* - As above in the Byzantine church, also at Sensacq, France and at Son Bou, Minorca,
- *Paddling basin* - The recessed floor font at Cappadocia, Turkey and at Fournas de Torello Paleo-Christian Basilica, Minorca,
- *Paddling basin* - Floor font at Sainte Eulalie de Cernon, Larzac.

Wales has an abundance of such sites. One certain baptism site is St Tudno's Well and the baptism trough in a 'forgotten' part of the graveyard at St Tudno's Church, Great Orme, Llandudno. Here the baptism trough is filled with earth. Elsewhere in Wales shallow pools filled with flowing water abound. These include:-

- Peris' Well, or Ffynnon Beris, at Nant Beris near Llanberis, Gwyneth,
- St Beuno's Well, Treimerchion, near St Asaph,
- St Sarah's Well, near Ruthin,
- St Celynin's Well, near Conwy, 6<sup>th</sup> Century
- The huge baptismal pool at St Dyfnog's Well, Llanrhaeadr, near Denbigh, 6<sup>th</sup> Century
- St. Seriol's Well, Penmon, Anglesey. The site has his hermit's cell site dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> Century and a well or baptism pool.. In the Penmon Priory church alongside there is also a former immersion tub or floor font.
- St Winifred's Holy Well at Holywell has had a lot of money spent on the site over the centuries owing to royal patronage, yet it remains a large paddling pool with flowing water.

An unaltered baptism site or holy well of St Winifred is to be found at Woolston, Shropshire.

This brings us into England and a fascinating known baptism site dating from about 600 AD is St Mungo's Well at Caldbeck, Cumbria which is a shallow padding pool at the river's edge.

One paradigm to be avoided is that of dividing these sites into Catholic and Celtic. The sites belong to the period of the Great church, or Byzantine church, prior to the Great Schism of 1054 into Orthodox and Catholic branches. They are Byzantine baptism sites and the shape and format of the sites is best seen in the context of Byzantine Christian sites which extended from Ireland and Scotland to Jordan and beyond.

Is my hypothesis correct? If it is then we have an overlooked

treasure store of early Christian Baptism sites beneath our very eyes.

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For more illustrations see:

*Holy Wells: Wales: A Photographic Journey* (ISBN: 1854114859 / 1-85411-485-9)

Phil Cope. Seren. 2008

*Holy Wells, Cornwall: A Photographic Journey* (ISBN: 1854115286 / 1-85411-528-6)

Phil Cope. Seren 2010



*St Dyfnog's Well, Llanrhaeadr, near Denbigh (6<sup>th</sup> Century)*



*St Beuno's Well, Treimerchion, near St Asaph*

## South Africa 2010

After a long journey from Manchester to Johannesburg via Amsterdam, we arrived ready, or so we thought, for the challenge and the experience that lay ahead for us. We were full of anticipation in the knowledge that we were truly following in the footsteps of CR and of the history and contribution the Community of the Resurrection had established.

It is fair to say that in actual fact we were quite unprepared for some of the sights and the sounds that we were to experience during our five week stay.

It was, of course, just prior to the FIFA World Cup that we arrived and the sound of the vuvuzela was already being heard across the country. There was the anticipation and the excitement as the whole nation prepared to be, for once, a focus of the rest of the world in a positive light.

We stayed at St. Benedict's House, the home of the CHN sisters. These five nuns became our friends very quickly, ensuring that our accommodation was comfortable and that we had access to a TV in order to watch England do battle in the World Cup - that didn't last too long!

Father Thabo, chaplain to St. Martins School and Priest of Holy Trinity, Turfontein, was our host and within 9 hours of arriving in South Africa, we had slept, showered, had breakfast and were in front of a class of 18 students, all eager to hear about the UK and to find out more about us. The first 8 days of our trip was spent within the school, each class full of questions about our lives and life lived in the UK. We attended services in the beautiful school chapel and each of us was privileged to preach and to lead prayers in the wonderful, prayerful space that was the chapel.

The school closed for the 5 weeks of the World Cup and this gave



us the opportunity of seeing the 'real' South Africa, away from the glitz and glamour that had been created for the world and FIFA to see. We were able to get into the townships to places such as Soweto,

and Orange Farm which is home to approx. 14,000 people, 12,500 of who are unemployed. There is abject poverty, whole families living in one roomed shacks with very little in the way of possessions, and yet, these appear to be very happy people. We were both constantly struck by the smiles and laughter we encountered as we journeyed on.



We were privileged to meet people who have become friends even after our return to the UK. The priest of Orange Farm, staff of both St Martins School and the Prep school and too many others to mention in a short piece.

We were taken to Amco, a Methodist run charity which provides shelter and safety for abused women, an HIV/AIDS centre, food distribution and education. The staff showed so much passion and enthusiasm for their work and the whole day was an extremely humbling experience for us both. We helped in the soup kitchen run by the CHN Sisters and were immensely touched by that particular activity. The smile on the faces, and the gratitude displayed was very difficult for us to comprehend.

We learned a great deal about the history of the struggle for freedom by visiting the Apartheid Museum, the Hector Pieterse Museum, Sharpeville and Sophiatown, home and now resting place of Father Trevor Huddleston CR. We learned of the struggle of the youth in the Soweto uprisings and of the terrible massacres in Boipatong and Sharpeville. The first young boy to be killed in the Soweto uprising of 1976 was 13 year old, black boy Hector Pieterse and the museum is dedicated to his memory. The now iconic picture that was flashed across the world that week showed his body being carried by a still unknown man with Hector's 15 year old sister running alongside - it is a picture that we both knew well and there we were, 34 years later, stood talking to that girl, Hector's sister, the pain still showing in her eyes as she talked.

Wherever we went, we were fortunate enough to be guided by

people who actually lived all of these experiences and could at first hand give us the sense of what it was like both for them and for the people of the country. The Dean of Sharpeville gave us an entire weekend during which we were able to visit the sites of the massacre, to visit the graveyard, now home to the 69 victims, to visit the memorial garden built to remember them and to see what freedom means to the people of South Africa, fifty years on.

One of the most humbling experiences of all however, was being allowed into peoples' homes, to visit the sick, administer Holy Communion and to be able to pray for them and with them. This was not only one of the most humbling experiences, but certainly the most emotional. We are neither of us ashamed to speak of the tears we both shed once we were again in the privacy of our lodgings, and it was this that made us realize that we had been in some ways, a little unprepared.

Worship in the churches of the townships was a really memorable experience. Churches packed out with people all dressed in their Sunday best, dancing in the aisles, in the pews, on the pews and all singing in harmony, a terrific sound. What struck us was that these township people, living in very poor conditions with little or seemingly no real possessions, these people week by week are praising God and thanking him for His many blessings.

There is so much that we could write about, far more than we can fit into this small article, but it was the most wonderful, enriching experience - far more than we could ever have imagined, physically, emotionally and indeed spiritually.

I started by saying that we were in some ways unprepared, and what we were unprepared for was the fact that neither of us anticipated that we would return changed people. The truth however is that we have. The trip and all that we saw and felt could not fail to change us - for the better and we thank God that we were afforded such a privilege at this stage in our own faith journey.



**Steve Holt and  
David Pickett**  
Ordinands CoR

## Retreating to the West Highland Way

In the Autumn of 2005 I took a wedding for a relative in Scotland in the open air on the far shore of Loch Lomond at the foot of Ben Lomond, where only walkers, climbers and residents normally go. While there, I noticed signs for a long distance walk which passed that way. It runs from Milngavie, just outside Glasgow, to Fort William, a distance of 95 miles. I resolved to do it one day.

But the walk would take at least a week, possibly longer. I would have to take time off from my ongoing ministry in the Ramsbottom and Edenfield Team Churches in the Manchester Diocese and my other ministry to prisoners, which would all need to be planned and arranged in advance. Time passed and I never seemed to get round to doing it.

On our Christian journey it's a very good idea to take time out periodically to spend time on our own with God, in reflection, prayer and study, to be inspired and re-energised, redirected and renewed. We call it



going on “retreat”. I've always thought that in religious terms that's something of a misnomer. The word gives people the wrong idea. A “retreat” for a Christian is more a tactical withdrawal to enable regrouping for an advance.

I've been on retreats before. They form part of our training for ministry, although they are equally valuable for and available to all believers, lay or ordained, whether in active ministry or not. I hadn't done one for some time. Towards the end of last year I knew it was time I did and I decided I would. But again I never seemed to be able to get round to it. I also couldn't make up my mind where would be the best place to go. People normally go to some kind of residential establishment, perhaps a monastery, abbey or other Christian house specifically catering for retreats.

Then the idea came to me – why not combine the West Highland Way and a retreat? A long walk extending over a week

or more would give me space for reflection and prayer, time to read in the evenings and endless opportunities to be inspired. So one Wednesday morning in I set out from Milngavie (pronounced “Mull-guy” by the way!).

I had done long walks before but never day after day. Not knowing how my body would stand up to that, I played safe and decided to do the walk in 8 days. This resulted in a daily average of around 12 miles and allowed for a kind of “day off” on which I planned to do only 7 miles. It worked out well for me and resulted in a very enjoyable and not overtaxing walk.

I experienced all types of territory and conditions, ranging from gentle leafy countryside on easy tarmac paths in bright, warm sunlight to desolate, isolated moorland at an altitude of 1,700 feet, battling fierce wind and rain and in poor visibility. I stayed overnight in bed and breakfast places or hotels, depending on what was available. Some of them had good drying facilities for wet clothing, which were a boon. Fortunately the voracious Highland midges did not appear.

I met a lot of interesting people, from a number of different countries. This included one celebrity – Jimmy Savile (of “Jim’ll fix it” fame), who has a house in the Glencoe area and came for a drink at the hostelry where I was staying for the night. I enjoyed some splendid Scottish cooked breakfasts, the best of which was provided by a lady who I found has a nephew living only 400 yards from me near Bolton.

The spiritual, retreat aspect of the walk also worked out well. I learned greater discipline in personal prayer, with less emphasis on length of prayer and quantity of scripture reading and more on stillness and relaxing in God’s presence. If our prayer is easy rather than hard work, it can be a delight and something we eagerly look forward to. I also learned that God wants us to be ourselves when we come to him and that at the same time we also need to let God be himself. He is a God who knows, loves, understands and cares for us, who wants us to have life in abundance, not build him up into someone who has to have absolute perfection from us in every way. He knows how we are. Perfection is hardly possible for us now, but growing with him and in him into the person he planned us to be is, even though it will take time. It does however require being in his presence. In that, “a little and often” is better than “a



lot, but only occasionally”.

I was also able to visit one holy place on the way - the remains of the former priory of the Celtic Saint Fillan, at Strathfillan, situated midway between Tyndrum and Crianlarich along a major route through the Highlands (now the A82). Fillan came to Scotland from Ireland in 717 AD. He became Abbot of a monastery in Fife and later retired to live in this valley, through which he had often travelled and which later came to be named after him. He set up a chapel and was known for healing the sick, The priory was built in recognition of him soon after his death. Mentally ill people were dipped in the nearby St. Fillan's Pool until as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



I was privileged to be able to pray one of the daily offices in the ruins and wondered how long it might have been since that last occurred. The ruins are normally kept gated and locked although it is possible to see inside very easily. A young official of the local national park authority turned up within minutes of my arrival and let me in without my even having to ask. He was preparing for a guided tour that he would be giving to some visitors later in the day. God certainly provides!

If you are a walker, I can thoroughly recommend doing the West Highland Way, even if you only do part of it or do it a little at a time. If that is not possible for you, there are many other walking opportunities around the country. I can also thoroughly recommend a retreat, in whatever form and wherever you make it, particularly if it's Mirfield. Walking and going on a retreat alike energise, challenge, refresh and uplift. They are gifts to us from God.

**Revd. Jeff Davies**

## Tariro Grows Up

**I**t has been an amazing story, for me. Three years ago I thought I would try and raise a little money to help young people in Zimbabwe. I put a request out to our friends. I thought I might raise about £1,000. Within weeks we had more than two thousand, and the money kept coming in. First we needed our own bank account. In the last year it has become clear we needed to become a separate body. That is what we have done. Since the end of May **Tariro – Hope for Youth in Zimbabwe** has been a registered charity. We have our own little group of trustees. We continue to be supported by the Community who pay for much of my own expenses in going to Zimbabwe. Gradually we hope to move that expense also to Tariro as the Community has its own financial problems and we need to concentrate on our building work and strengthen our religious life.

Yet Africa is in the Community's bloodstream. We worked in South Africa for over a hundred years, and in Zimbabwe for seventy. CR is glad to be able to continue helping the Church in those parts of the Lord's Vineyard, and we ourselves gain a great deal by our involvement. Elsewhere in this publication you will see an account of students from our College in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Another student comes to Zimbabwe with me this summer. CR's work in Africa goes on; and while we have to put our attention to renovating our church, rebuilding our life here, Mirfield remains a foundation from which we can go out to work in other parts of the Lord's Vineyard. Without Mirfield and the Brethren's support, the work in Africa could not happen, but Africa gives us back life, hope and joy. Without the money from you readers of "CR" and your churches we could not do this work; I hope you also receive some of that infectious joy and new life which Africa gives.

Our work in Tariro has become more focussed as the months go by. Large charities like Christian Aid and Tear Fund do a magnificent work in feeding Zimbabwe and keeping the people alive. We are able to do the very enjoyable work of helping individual young people whom we get to know. These are mostly orphans or youngsters from desperately poor homes. We help get them back into education, buy them books, pay their fees. Sometimes we

find them somewhere to live. In many cases too we supplement their feeding. One of the nicest groups is the little group at St Augustine's, Penhalonga, under the care of the CZR sisters. They stay in their very poor homes but we meet their needs and the sisters mother them. In the picture below you will see Alban, in his red shirt. When I asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up he said confidently, "A bank manager"! Or Dick, next to him, who gets his lunch each day from the Sisters. When I got him to read to me he was so thrilled to have someone listen to him read he followed me around asking if he could read some more.



At the other end of the scale are the older boys and girls in Harare. One has succeeded against all the odds and got a place at university (and is being paid for by a supporter here).

Meanwhile Carl Melville has got funding from the RSCM in Canada to start musical work in Zimbabwe. As those who have bought "Nobody's Child" CD know, Shona kids are fantastic singers. One part of this work will be to start a small choir school in the little town of Chipinge in the South East of Zimbabwe. Here we will gather a group of young singers who cannot afford to go to school, get them a part time teacher, gather them each day at the church for prayer and Christian teaching, and encourage them to sing.

The challenge for us now in Zimbabwe is to help the little groups become more self sustaining. They must avoid the ‘begging bowl’ syndrome. Already small projects have been started to give them some sense of earning their own keep, learning how to support themselves. Money from England can’t be poured constantly into the same hole. New things must grow and the English money must move on to start and to fertilise another project while Zimbabweans regain their capacity to look after themselves.

So many of you have supported us I am embarrassed to ask for more. Yet if you would like to support us, or encourage other people, like your church congregations to support us, we will do our best to make the most of your generosity. We now have a website [www.tarirouk.com](http://www.tarirouk.com) and if you would like to know how to donate or to set up a standing order please write to me, or email [nstebbing@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:nstebbing@mirfield.org.uk). Please include a new Gift Aid declaration if you can.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

## Companions and Friends

**W**e are delighted to welcome three new companions this quarter; Fr Matthew Hill who is chaplain at Lampeter University, Stephen Oakley from the Barnsley area and Michael Stocks who lives in Essex.

Matthew has also organised a meeting of Welsh friends and Companions of CR in Llandaff cathedral on October 9<sup>th</sup> to see if there is any way of setting up a grouping in Wales. I shall be there and look forward to meeting many of you. Thank you to many of those we contacted who wrote expressing support, but apologising for not being able to come. Of course Wales, with its beautiful mountains right in the centre is not an easy country to drive across, so many of those in the north are well out of reach of Cardiff. Some have suggested getting together in Shrewsbury, or some other centre. If you think there is such a possibility please do take an initiative. I still think the best way forward is to try and make small groups rather than big ones; half a dozen like minded people meeting regularly for prayer, eucharist and perhaps discussion of

a book, and maybe a pub lunch can be very supportive and a lot of fun. It is also much easier to organise than the traditional large group meeting once a quarter.

Do please keep us in prayer. You will see from elsewhere in this journal that buildings have had to be delayed because of shortage of money and also building permissions. It is an uncertain time for us, but exciting too. We recently welcomed Fr Dennis Berk into the novitiate and will very likely have a new postulant in October, so we like to believe that God still has a future for us. This future includes you.

One of the features of monastic life today is the number of people who want to be seriously connected with the life. Although most communities grow smaller, most of us find more and more people interested in the values and vision of the life and wanting to share in it. We don't fully understand how to help such people. Our guest house is here and is well used; perhaps in the future when the buildings are further advanced it will be possible to convert some of our accommodation into longer term self-catering flats for those who want to share in our life. In the meantime all of you in your quiet way are sharing in our prayer and vision and you are a part of our interface with the society we serve. So please do keep in touch!

## **RIP**

Malcolm Perkins

Geoffrey Hamey

**Companions website details-** [www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk](http://www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk)

## **Companions List for weekly Intercession**

2010 version available via the Companions website or hard copy obtainable from the Companions Office. No charge, stamp appreciated.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

## Book Reviews

**Grace, Order, Openness and Diversity. Reclaiming Liberal Theology.** *Ian Bradley.* Continuum. £18.99 Isbn 9780567268907

“A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgement through the ministrations of a Christ without the Cross.” was Richard Niebuhr’s damning critique of liberal theology between the World Wars. Liberal theology has remained with a reputation for being somewhat vapid, nice, affirming and generally unsuited to life in a hard world; or it has been seen as largely unbelieving, reducing Christian faith to rational and human terms, and God to something like an affectionate uncle. So the word ‘liberal’ itself has become loaded with negative connotations.

That is a shame as it was a fine word with a fine tradition: those of us who grew up under and opposed the racism of Southern Africa were proud to be called liberals and it was sometimes dangerous to be so. Our own Community grew out of a liberal Catholic tradition: men like Charles Gore, Herbert Kelly, Henry Scott Holland and the Talbots were definitely not wishy-washy, or semi-atheistical, yet they were not afraid to subject theology and belief to stringent academic thought and it came out stronger and more alive as a result.

In this book Ian Bradley seeks to rehabilitate the liberal position. Much of his book is written in the light of the growing fundamentalist movement within the Protestant world, though clearly Bradley would see much of Catholicism or Islamic fundamentalism as part of the same unfortunate hardening of religious attitudes. Grace, Order, Openness and Diversity are, he argues, the marks of liberal theology. It is not hard to agree with most of what he says; God is a graceful God, forgiving, loving, open to the sinner. Order has its place in providing space in which people can genuinely seek God. Openness to other ideas and religions certainly seems more gospel-like than the closed rigidity one encounters in the fundamentalist traditions. We all need a willingness to question and explore the many issues that confront Christians today – gay sexuality, the place of the women, God and evolution, changing ethics, care for the environment and the ethics of the market place. Trying to deal with these questions on the basis of outdated decisions and thinking serves no one, least of all God.

Bradley occasionally mentions, but doesn’t really deal with, the perceived faults of liberals – their theology often is woolly and vapid and this cannot simply be excused as part of the ambiguity of

an unknowable God; liberals can often be astonishingly illiberal towards those with whom they disagree, which maybe shows they are simply human; liberal willingness to embrace almost any new movement or idea that comes along does often seem to be devoid of real critical thought. There appears to be a liberal agenda which liberals automatically accept simply because it is what the secular world wants.

What underlies the unhappiness some of us have with modern liberalism is its suspicion of doctrine. Bradley himself admits that liberals prefer to be fairly fuzzy about doctrine since it appears to them hard, cramping and confining and prevents people being fully human. That I think is the main weakness of his book. He quotes with approval Jonathan Sacks and Karl Rahner. Yet Sacks is not a liberal; he is an Orthodox Jew who studies and interprets the Jewish law in a way that reveals its profound concern for humanity. Likewise no one could accuse Rahner of being reluctant to use doctrine. Law, doctrine and dogmatics can be used to confine, cage and dehumanise men and women and present a harsh, judgemental image of God. That kind of theology must be resisted. But law, doctrine and dogmatics can be used to discover the truth, and clarify and deepen the wonder of God's revelation of himself and his will for humankind. A liberal theology, or biblical commentary, which reduces God and the Christian revelation to a few unassailable and unexciting truths is not a liberalism worth bothering about. That creates a desert and calls it peace. Real liberalism, in the Catholic tradition to which we belong, enhances the vision of the Kingdom as it opens up greater space for God's grace to abound. I would agree with Mr Bradley's aim of rehabilitating liberal theology particularly in the face of modern fundamentalism; but to succeed it will need more doctrinal bite than this book offers.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

**For All That Has Been, Thanks.** *Rowan Williams and Joan Chittister.* Canterbury Press, 2010. Isbn 978 1 84825 017 8

How can we say a heartfelt 'Alleluia' to those parts of our life that seem anything but praiseworthy? Is it possible to express thankfulness that is genuine in the face of a crisis that confronts and shakes us to the core of our being? These are some of the questions that Rowan Williams and Joan Chittister explore in their book *For All That Has Been, Thanks*.

Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun, begins the book with chapters

pairing off faith and doubt, and wealth and poverty. Archbishop Rowan Williams then adds two chapters looking at saints and sinners. These various chapters are not so much contrasted as they are viewed as being two sides of the very same coin. Instead of chapters being presented as ‘either-or’ scenarios, the authors show humanity fully present both in the brightness and in the darkness of life. This approach harmonises with the book’s intention of looking at life itself as one long alleluia moment. But the recurring question remains of how one is to deal with those moments that do not feel at all like alleluia moments.

Although both authors participated in the composition of this book, each author wrote their own chapters and the majority were written by Chittister. This collaboration is one of the book’s strengths and one of its weaknesses. It is interesting to observe the different perspectives of the two authors. Williams writes fondly of his Welsh heritage, whilst Chittister shows an American viewpoint as she hearkens back several times to the attacks upon New York’s World Trade Centre. The down-side of the book’s compilation is that there is not a seamless conversational flow. This is illustrated by the unfortunate separation of Williams’ chapters entitled ‘Genesis’ and ‘Exodus’, which are excellent when paired together but appear disjointed owing to the placement of Chittister’s seven chapters sandwiched in-between them.

The promotional material on the cover says that this book explores the subversive nature of the quality of thankfulness expressed by the word ‘Alleluia’. However its content did not strike me as having a sharp enough edge to be regarded as subversive. Yet it successfully avoided the risk of simply offering a response of saccharine piety to those horrific and traumatising events of life when one cannot even seem to utter the word ‘Alleluia.’ In the final chapter, Chittister asked the question “Why praise a God ... of tsunamis and earthquakes, of war and death, of suffering and pain?” (p. 191) How effectively she and Archbishop Williams have answered that provocative question will be up to you to decide when you read this book.

**Dennis Berk, NovCR**

**Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race,  
Gender and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies.**

*Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, editors.*

Fortress Press, 2009. Isbn 978 0 8006 6340 7

The editors of this book are professors at the Harvard Divinity School, and the essays that they have compiled reflect the scholarly standards



of that venerable institution. The book looks at how gender, ethnicity and identity operated in the New Testament era. Some of the essays examine how those three constructs shaped the early Christian texts in their original composition within the Mediterranean world in which their authors lived. Equally important is the focus of other essays upon the ways in which gender and racial factors influence our interpretation of those early texts.

In her introductory chapter Fiorenza acknowledges that “prejudice and domination” are the primary theoretical lens through which the essays are written (p. 4), and a feminist perspective pervades much of the book as it critiques the patriarchal lens that formerly was the primary tool for interpreting early Christian literature. Some of the essays seem deliberately confrontational in their assertions as they challenge one’s pre-conceived ideas and misconceptions, and thus this scholarly book is neither a comfortable nor a comforting read. Nonetheless it is worthwhile because it enlightens, by providing new interpretation tools through which one can see with greater clarity the attitudes and cultures of the early Christian world. Through the increase in our understanding of the dynamics at work in those ancient Mediterranean societies, we also can realise the continuing impact of the racial- and gender-based assumptions that operate within our society today.

The book is divided into two sections. The first five essays employ the methodology of intersectional analysis whereby the field of Early Christian Studies critically interrogates the structures of domination. These essays apply this methodology to such diverse topics as critical race theory, Jewish ethnic multiplicity, and Pauline rhetoric. One of my favourite chapters was Nasrallah’s essay on the famous statue of Aphrodite of Knidos, wherein she evaluated the sexual and racial invectives addressed to the aesthetics of that alluring statue.

The essays in the second half of the book focus upon the shaping of Early Christian Studies as a discipline capable of deploying an analytic of race, gender and ethnicity. These chapters deal with such intriguing topics as haunting by spectres, aesthetic ideology, incarnational theology, anti-Semitism in the Third Reich, and racism in the United States. I especially appreciated Susannah Heschel’s essay about the efforts within Nazi Germany to eradicate the Jewishness of Jesus by redefining him as an Aryan.

Each one of these thoughtful essays strives, as the jacket cover says, to “push against the marginalisation of race and ethnicity studies,” and at least to some extent they all contain some content that is provocative

enough to make a reader confront one's own prejudices. Perhaps the book's success will be judged by whether its efforts at pushing against the traditional boundaries of gender, race and ethnicity will result in a transformation of attitudes amongst those who read its essays?

**Dennis Berk, NovCR**

**The Manga Bible illustrated by Siku.** "Raw edition". Hodder and Stoughton. 2007. ISBN 978-0340910450



New versions of the Bible aimed at niche markets have come thick and fast in the past few years. There has been a 'Texters' Bible written solely in mobile phone 'text' language, a 100 minute version for the rushed and harried, and even a version in 'youth-speak' written in current 'street' idioms especially for today's teenage audience. All attempt to make the scriptures relevant to a new readership – and in particular those

for whom Christianity and God are concepts that have no intrinsic value or meaning.

Way back in 1966, the Good News Bible was designed especially at making the KJV understandable to a younger audience. Its huge popularity was in some part due to its illustrations with simple line drawings by Annie Vallotton. This Swiss religious illustrator managed, with the 500 line drawings included in the GNB, to capture the essence of the text and allow the reader to imagine the story through pictures as well as the words alongside.

The Manga Bible is another modern inheritor of this updating process, using illustration to essentially convey the message. Siku, one of the most respected artists of his generation – and one whose work is well known to the under 30s – has produced a bible designed to shock, unsettle, 'wow' and entertain. Best known for his art work on the comics *2001 AD* and the spin off *Judge Dredd*, Siku was tasked with producing a new version of the bible in Manga form – that is using a type of comic-strip animation in a story-book narrative. Manga itself is a phenomenon. A Japanese word literally translated as 'whimsical pictures', Manga has been in use since the nineteenth century, before becoming popularised in the 1950s as part of the American influence on comic and cartoon figures. And a Manga bible makes absolute sense – both commercially and in terms of opening the door to the scriptures to a youth market that would not consider sitting down to

read through any version – modern or archaic – of the bible.

This version though is about far more than just illustrations – powerful, evocative and often violent as Siku’s visuals are in this 200 page animation. Can this ultimate paraphrase reach a level that can inspire both interest and an interest in spirituality in young people that would otherwise pass them by? Clearly there is more than an element of ‘dumbing down’, both in the choice of what is included and excluded, and in the way stories are told and the language used. When Joseph’s jealous brothers spot him coming towards them the speech bubble reads ‘There goes the dreamer. Let’s snuff him!’ Indeed throughout the text, stories are often brutally told and at times God seems to become Judge Dredd in His effort to find, judge and execute punishment as some celestial law enforcer. Only in Jonah is there a more ‘comic’ rendering, allowing a softer tone to both storyline and graphics. A plus side is the small ‘want to know more’ box with each story, giving the biblical reference for those who want to read the full version.

In the New Testament section the Manga Bible has come in for a degree of criticism that has accused it of having an anti-semitic agenda. The Jewish figures are portrayed as negative, often rapacious, violent and deeply sinister individuals. Jesus himself is drawn as powerful, convincing and in-control – a long way from the Victorian meek, mild and gentle figure, a God of love and tenderness. Here instead Siku sees Jesus as ‘The original superman, that’s why he appears as he does, in silhouette and exploding into the scene in heroic poses.’

The Manga Bible is certainly effective in what it does well – presenting the Bible in manner that immediately draws in interest from younger readers with its dynamic graphics, extraordinary characters and almost ‘science-fiction’ feeling to the art work text. However, the question is whether, having written it as a comic, this will inspire readers to want to know more – to see a spiritual sub-plot within the giant ‘bangs, whoops and whooshes’. All these new versions promise much, and indeed often do deliver a new audience for the scriptures. The question is whether that audience is then interested enough from such superficial work to take a further step. But perhaps that is not Siku’s objective. As he comments, this ‘is the stuff that our “Once Upon a Time” and “Happy ever After” stories are made of.

**Andrew Wallis**

*There are other editions of the Manga bible, from the same and other publishers and illustrators. This is the one that has come our way. (Editors.)*

**Baptizing Harry Potter: A Christian reading of J.K. Rowling.** *Luke Bell OSB.* Hidden Spring 2010 \$16.00  
Isbn 978-1-58768-058-8

I found this to be an excellent read and I feel sure that anyone who has read all the Harry Potter books will enjoy it. It will increase your enjoyment of the Rowling novels, help you to appreciate more fully the theological implications of the stories and act as an aid to your insight into spiritual warfare. I would re-iterate the author's warning. If you haven't read the novels then this book will be useless to you. If you are going to read them, then don't read this until you have finished reading them all, otherwise it will spoil your enjoyment (a bit like someone telling you the football results just as you are settling down to watch Match of the Day).

I normally object to books about books especially those that try to bring out the Christian meaning underlying a book or film ('The Gospel According to...' genre). A novel has its own enclosed world and however profound the Christian meaning within, it is more often than not a mistake to try to match every word and concept up with the Gospel story.

The Harry Potter books are permeated with ideas that Christians will recognise and find congenial. Top of the list is sacrificial love – even a very horrible person such as Draco's mother is prepared to risk everything to save her son. Closely related is the power of such sacrifice. Lily Potter's personal sacrifice is the chief agent in the ultimate defeat of evil. The final book is openly Christian in its discussion of the nature of death and the possibility of triumph over it. I have not read anyone suggesting it but I wonder if the imagery of the woman and the serpent in Revelation lies behind the conflict between the woman's seed and the serpent king at the heart of the Potter stories.

Fr Luke Bell OSB provides us with a profound and entertaining examination of the seven books. He observes the themes of good and evil, the world of the supernatural, life and death, love and sacrifice, power and weakness, freedom and determination. You would not need to be a paid up fan of Harry Potter or hold any conviction about the Christian nature of the books (though you would need to read them) in order to enjoy this exploration of themes so essential to the Christian life.

**John Gribben CR**

**Lift High the Cross** John Gunstone. Canterbury Press. 348pp.  
Notes, index, photos, £25. Isbn 978-1-85311 -817-3

Our former student, Philip Corbett, recently co authored *Defend and Maintain*, a history of the Church Union from its foundation in 1859 until 2009, distributed by the Additional Curates Society of Birmingham. 116 pp. Index, photo's. Isbn 978-0-85191-328-5. One of its chapters is *Anglo Catholic Congresses and the Union*.

Now another former student, John Gunstone, has written a whole book about the Congresses (and allied gatherings) from the first in 1920 until the Centenary Congress in 1933. Canon Gunstone is an author and Journalist with twenty five other books to his credit. I seem to remember his writing in the 1960's or 70's for the *Church Times* with sympathy about the charismatic movement.

Over the years the Congresses involved a wide range of participants in a variety of ways: Archbishop Atnenagoras of the Orthodox church, Bishop Butler OSB of Westminster, G K Chesterton, T S Eliot, Bishop Henson of Durham, Sheila Kaye - Smith, C S Lewis, Mother Margaret OHP, Princess Margaret, Dorothy L Sayers, Evelyn Underhill, to say nothing of an evangelical Bishop of Salisbury, a President of a Rubberworkers' Union, a Lord Justice, an Admiral of the Fleet and a Marshal of the Royal Air Force, though some of these personalities were involved at dates outside the scope of this history. Over the years a variety of CR brethren participated in the Congresses: Biggart, Frere, Gore, Graham, Huddleston, Talbot, Thornton.

One seldom takes up a biography, diary, history or memoir connected to Anglo Catholicism without anticipating laughter from affectionate anecdote or bon mots or character sketches or mordant wit or ironic self deprecation. Which is only right and proper: it is God who gets the laugh on our first Christian matriarch, Sarah; her son our second patriarch is called Laughter (*Genesis* 18,11-15 and 21,1-6). Throughout salvation history God wins by losing, stoops to conquer, lives by dying. However, the two histories noticed here are so full of meticulously researched detail that there's little space left for humour. These histories gather up and store for us much information which may perhaps be of use when we make decisions for the future.

But here and there are treats, as in Gunstone. A Dean of Winchester complained that Anglo Catholic clergy uniformly wore black. He would have been pleased to read that at a large Priests' Convention in 1921, "There were beautiful young clergymen in delicate grey suits, grey Homburgs with black ribbons and pale wash - leather gloves.

Several others wore the white linen of the tropics. Elderly men with figures which showed the march of time, wore Panama hats set at a jaunty angle". As Dean Inge commented, "The Anglo Catholic party is breaking up into petty factions and will not survive more than a few years".

When the Congress of 1923 sent greetings to the Pope there was outrage. In 2010 a Scots Prime Minister who is Presbyterian invites the Pope to pay a state visit to Great Britain. Some situations do change for the better. "This is the Lord's doing: and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it" (*Psalms* 118,23-24).

**+ Robert Mercer CR**

**Walter Kasper.** *Harvesting the Fruits.* Continuum. 2009. £9.99.  
Isbn 978 1 4411 6272 4

Walter Kasper is one of the Catholic Church's foremost theologians; he is also head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. In this book he examines the theological fruits of the decades of discussion between the Catholic church and respectively the Anglican, Reformed, Methodist and Lutheran traditions. The work is unashamedly theological and requires a clear head to perceive the distinctions made. That is itself significant. Kasper's examination shows that we are united by far more than divides us. Not only are we united by our common discipleship of Christ, but we believe much the same things about all the central doctrines of the faith. Even in those areas where it was thought for long that difference between us was intractable, like justification by faith or the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, real agreement has been found. This is a cause of great thanksgiving and should inspire us to seek with renewed energy and theological commitment for the unity that God desires.

In a final section, after summing up the many agreements achieved, Kasper points also to the disagreements that remain. One is an approach to theology which he describes as that of the *History of Religions School* and which Cardinal Newman would simply have called 'liberal'; that is a relativism which focuses on a subjective understanding of theology, and an enslavement to the confusion of post-modern thinking which makes it impossible for writers to say what they mean, because they doubt so much whether meaning has meaning. One solution to this, he thinks, is to give more attention

to the great symbols of the faith, the Creeds, which give theology an objectivity that some modern theological approaches do not. Kasper also identifies the understanding of the church as being a major area where further hard work is necessary, in order to bring together equally true insights concerning the local congregation's connection with the universal church. Also remaining is the relationship between Scripture and Tradition; no longer is it possible for either side to oppose these two great witnesses to the activity of the Holy Spirit in Christian life but the extent to which one interprets the other remains unclear. Not surprisingly a disagreement on sexual ethics appears, though he attributes this largely to a lack of common anthropology.

What is clear from this examination is how far all the churches (including the Roman Catholic) have moved. If they have not actually changed their positions (and mostly they have not) they have certainly generously opened out to each other and been willing to extend the boundaries of their teaching, to be willing to think of their faith in strikingly different terms and so to allow the presence of Christ in theological discussion to draw them together, rather than assert a human tendency to use theology in order to divide.

Theology is not everything; cultural issues are a large factor in keeping the churches apart. Yet Kasper reminds us of the centrality of theology. Truth unites us and falsehood divides. Making sure that the foundations of the united Christian church are well established in truth will ensure that the church is fully centred on Christ and on God's revelation of his love for humankind.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

### **The Legacy of John Paul II**

*edited by Gerald o'Collins and Michael Hayes, Continuum 2008*

This book offers an appreciative review of the aftermath of the very upfront papacy of the first Pole ever to sit on the chair of St Peter. The writers are leading Roman Catholic theologians, many Jesuit, but there are also contributions from an Anglican (Christopher Hill). There is a good piece on 'the man' by Edward Stourton. A series of well-considered essays cover areas where he made an especial impact, such as ecclesiology, moral theology and relations with other religions, especially those where his contribution was most radical, such as with the Jews and with Islam. In the eyes of

the ignorant, this is a Pope who was 'conservative' and this book will do something to bring light to that dismally one-sided view. He directed moral theologians back to the scriptures, went further towards those of other faiths than any predecessor and saw to an agreement of the main issue of division of the reformation era. One of the strengths of the book, however, is that the appreciation is balanced by criticism. One may find this in the pieces on ecclesiology for example, where the influence of von Balthasar on John Paul II is evaluated, quite severely one might think, by Philip Endean, S.J., who has battled in a long innings on behalf of Karl Rahner against the great Swiss. The abiding tensions between institution and personal freedom and response are never far from the surface and may be traced with benefit by those of another church which also has to face them and whose response is not much better. The treatment of von Balthasar by one of the most astute of Roman Catholic thinkers in England, John Mc Dade S.J. repays careful study and he comments on the matter of authority: 'Like a tango, it takes more than one for authority to work well, but it only takes one to ruin it: either the one in authority or the one under authority' (p65).

Anglican readers will be especially interested in Bishop Christopher Hill's appraisal of the contribution to the ecumenical endeavour, given in a response to Archbishop Kevin McDonald. He talks of the downside of the pontificate (*Dominus Jesus*, issued during the Pope's infirmity) and of the Pope's unique character, but terms his contribution as 'huge'. Perhaps more could be made of that extraordinary document, *Ut unum sint*, in which John Paul II acknowledge the difficulty posed by Roman Catholic claims for the papacy and sought assistance from non Roman Catholics in understanding the gift of this primacy. It remains one of the most moving utterances of the late pontiff and surely one of the most prophetic.

Happily the book avoids any comparison with predecessors or his successor; this is not that kind of book. One misses a contribution from the Orthodox ( a main concern of his ecumenical vision and his view of Europe, as having 'two lungs') and there is none on the impact of his rule on the doing of theology or on the life of communities, parochial or religious in the church. However, the legacy is a huge one and what we have here is an extremely helpful introduction to the theological contribution made to the life of the church of Christ by one of its most visible leaders in recent years.

**Thomas Seville CR**



**Dissent or conform? War, peace and the English churches  
1900-1945.** *Alan Wilkinson.* (SCM 1996.) Lutterworth. 2010.  
362pp. £22.50. Isbn 978-0-7188-9207-4

This immensely detailed survey is a worthy sequel to Dr Wilkinson's definitive study *The Church of England and the First World War*. (SPCK 1978, SCM 1996). Like its predecessor it provides an amazingly comprehensive collection of information and viewpoints, carefully collated and lucidly yet concisely presented.

We read how the Free Churches and the Roman Catholic Church appeared almost to seek to excel the somewhat critical Church of England in their support of the British government in World War One; and then how nations and individuals were perplexed over how to deal with the fascist powers and dictators in the 1930s. The pacifism of Dick Sheppard, Bishop Barnes and several theologians including Charles Raven persisted as a minority standpoint, yet Bishop George Bell of Chichester won renown for his famous Lords attack upon area bombing by the RAF, and for his rapport with continental Christians over post-war reconstruction. From the bishop's arguments a position of nuclear pacifism drew strength, and Wilkinson's studies stretch to cover the unfortunate Cold War period. They will grace any public or private bookshelf.

**Frank McManus**

From the editorial team

This review of reprints gives us the opportunity to ask readers who would be interested in purchasing a reprint of *Alan Wilkinson*. 'The Community of the Resurrection Centenary History'. SCM 1992 Isbn 0 334 02526 5. Only 4 copies are currently listed on Amazon/Abebooks, costing between £25 and £100. Mirfield Publications are negotiating for such a reprint. It may cost readers as much as £35, and our funds do not run to paying the new publishers for, say, 500 copies. Therefore please let us have your name and address/e-mail if you would be interested in paying in advance for one or more copies.



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# Centenary Church Appeal



Joseph Hobson, one of CR's Oblates, has written a book, the proceeds of which will go to the Church Appeal. The book titled 'Cathedral Bobbies,' gives an insight into the history and works of the dedicated teams of constables who have served to protect some of our greatest cathedrals for hundreds of years. It records the major, yet little known role, played by the church in the development of policing the United Kingdom over many centuries. The book includes a number of early photographs of police officers who have guarded our Cathedrals. To get your copy of the book send a cheque for £5 (inc P+P) to: Mirfield Publications, Community of the Resurrection Stocks Bank Road, Mirfield WF14 0BN.



*Church of the Resurrection Centenary Appeal Fun and Fundraising day, 25th July 2010*



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