

A response to the April CRC Conference

The World to Come?...Global Responses to Global Threats

Rachel Hand writes:

At the plenary of the April conference, Paul Rogers made a comment which was effectively a challenge for people of goodwill to use the democratic process to tip this time of change and uncertainty in the direction of justice.

A small ecumenical group in Sheffield is taking up this challenge, basing a new campaign, *Plan 2050 – Election 2010*, upon it. In campaigning for action to prevent Climate Change, we are campaigning for justice for the poor, and for future generations.

At present in the UK, there is not only an “energy gap” but also a “policy gap” in our political parties' plans to meet their obligations to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

Plan 2050 is a demand for the political parties to produce firm policies with dates and numbers, in time for the General Election. We feel the campaign can have a broad base as it is not party political, and is not pushing a particular solution to our country's energy needs. Therefore it complements existing environmental campaigns. It is intended as a reality check for our politicians.

We aim to have groups of campaigners talking to parliamentary candidates in as many constituencies across the country as possible, and we're currently recruiting people to co-ordinate this in their own constituency.

If you think you can help, please contact Rachael Hand giving your name, email address, postal address, phone number and constituency. Her e-mail address is plan2050@btinternet.com



The panel of Paul, Claire, Philip, Simon and Alan Race responded to questions during the last session of the Spring conference

ST MARK'S CENTRE FOR RADICAL CHRISTIANITY

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Autumn 2009

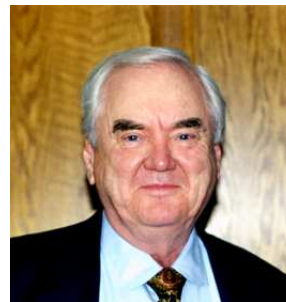


CRC Book Group to look at Robert Funk's work.

Wednesday 30 September in the lounge at St Mark's Church.

The lounge will be open from 6.00 for tea and coffee. Please bring your own food if you wish. The library will be open for browsing and returning books.

At 7.00pm **Peter Fisher** will present a paper on **Robert Funk**; whose books we have in our library. Robert was an influential N.T. scholar and co-founder of the *Jesus Seminar*.



As well as giving us a deeper appreciation of the work of Dr Funk, Peter will be pointing out the differences between Robert Funk and Geza Vermes. This is a follow up to the last meeting of the book group when Peter gave a very stimulating paper on *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus* by Geza Vermes. (Peter's paper is now on the CRC website or ring Christine on 0845 6434694 for a copy)

Peter's talk will be followed by questions and discussion finishing about 8.30pm.

A Chance to have your say ! at St Mark's CRC Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 7th November 2009 at 1.30 pm at
St Mark's Church, Broomhill, Sheffield
during our day with Ian Wallis**

Details inside Annual Report

**St Marks CRC office: c/o 4 St Marks Crescent, Sheffield S10 2SG
0845 6434694 info@stmarkscrc.co.uk www.stmarkscrc.co.uk**

ST MARK'S C.R.C. AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Wednesday October 21st: CRC will host Jack Spong as part of his PCN Britain Autumn tour. Doors open from 6.15pm for refreshments, address at 7.30pm

BISHOP JACK SPONG on *Eternal Life : A New Vision* - *Beyond Religion, Beyond Theism, Beyond Heaven and Hell.*

Jack Spong is author of many best selling books, including: *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism, Why Christianity Must Change or Die, Jesus for the Non-Religious* and *The Sins of Scripture.. Eternal Life: A New Vision* is the title of Jack Spong's most recent book.



Details and booking form: www.pcnbritain.org.uk
Please note that you need to buy a ticket before the event

Saturday November 7th 2009 : 10.00 am-4.00 pm

REV DR IAN WALLIS **Embracing the Other:** ***Jesus, Identity and Inclusivity***

Ian is the incumbent at St Mark's Church, Broomhill.

The day will be of interest to anyone who is:

- Struggling with traditional patterns of belief;
- Fascinated by Jesus and his enduring impact;
- Alarmed by the current religion-secular impasse
- Passionate about faith's capacity for mediating blessing



Wednesday November 18th 2009: to be confirmed

St Mark's CRC has extended an invitation to Lord Robert Winston

Professor Winston is the first Professor of Science and Society at Imperial College London. He has an international reputation for his researches into human reproduction and has pioneered advances widely used in fertility and IVF treatment. His *'The Story of God'*, is an account of how religion and a belief in the divine still preoccupies people in an age when science is king.



To book for these events contact St Mark's CRC:

St Marks CRC Office: c/o 4 St Marks Crescent, Sheffield S10 2SG
0845 6434694 info@stmarkscrc.co.uk www.stmarkscrc.co.uk

New arrivals to the St Mark's CRC library

- ***I and Thou:*** Martin Buber, translated by Ronald Gregor Smith pub. Continuum first published 1937 this copy reprinted 2008
- ***Between Man and Man, Martin Buber,*** translated by Ronald Gregor Smith pub. Routledge Classics first published 1947 this copy reprinted 2002
- ***Waking Up in Time:*** Finding Inner Peace in Times of Accelerating Change ; Peter Russell Origin Press pub. 1992
- ***The First Paul:*** Reclaiming the radical visionary behind the Church's conservative icon: Marcus J Borg and Dominic Crossan pub SPCK 2009
- ***The Case For God:*** What Religion Really Means: Karen Armstrong: pub. The Bodley Head 2009
- ***The Mystic Heart:*** discovering a universal spirituality in the world's religions; Wayne Teasdale: pub; New World Library 1999
- ***Future Tense:*** a Vision for Jews and Judaism in the Global Culture: Jonathan Sacks pub. Hodder and Stoughton 2009
- ***The Courage to Be:*** Paul Tillich with an introduction by Peter J Gomes: pub. Yale University Press 2009.
- ***Radical Then, Radical Now, On Being Jewish:*** Jonathan Sacks; Continuum 2000.
- ***The Story of God:*** A Personal Journey into the World of Science and Religion; Robert Winston pub. Bantam 2005
- ***Science and Religion at the Crossroads;*** Frank Parkinson pub. Imprint Academic
- ***Thirst ;*** Author Mary Oliver: pub. Bloodaxe Books 2006

**For more information about the CRC Library,
contact Maureen Bownas (Tel: 0114 230 2757).**

Group news:

- **New Sheffield Group?**
We have 5 people who would like to form a group in Sheffield – another 2 or 3 would make this viable. Give Christine a ring on 0845 6434694 if you are interested in thinking “outside the box”!
- **Paul Wilding writes from Matlock:**
We are a small group of CRC members living near Matlock, Derbyshire. We have been meeting once a month for some years now to discuss the writings of Spong, Borg, Crossan, Holloway etc. We are looking for others to join us on the pilgrimage. If you have any interest in such a group, local to Matlock, please email Paul Wilding at p_wilding@btinternet.com or phone him on 01629 733545.

TOMORROW'S CHRISTIAN

Seeking new ways to understand God and the art of meditation

A day conference with ADRIAN SMITH M.Afr M.A.

organised in partnership with PCN Britain

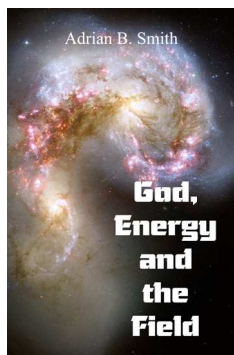
Saturday 17th October 10.00 – 4.00

at South Craven Baptist Church Near Skipton BD20 7LL

or Monday 19th October 10.00 – 3.00 (for clergy and church leaders)

at The New Beehive ,Westgate,, Bradford BD1 3AA

If you are interested in re-thinking your beliefs in a way that is open and explorative, and that links in with a spirituality that is reflective yet active, then this day is for you.



Adrian Smith is a Catholic missionary priest, lecturer and author. He is well known for his theological writings and in particular for his contribution to the search for a relevant spirituality in the context of modern beliefs. With 16 books to date, his latest book is *God, Energy and the Field*. (written in collaboration with John Hunt).

Adrian's open-minded approach to thinking about God and life means that he approaches his subject not from the perspective of academic intellectualism but from that of prayerful spirituality, seeking to make sense of the human experience of God in a way that is relevant in the modern world.

Linking spirituality with clear thinking he facilitates, in a very accessible way, the journey of exploring different ways of seeing God and how such faith might impact on how we live our lives.

Cost £16 (includes lunch and refreshments) concessions £11 PCN Members £14

Booking form from: Tomorrow's Christian Conference

Revd D. A. Warrington,
10 Sunnybank Villas, Glusburn, KEIGHLEY. West Yorkshire, BD20 8PY.
Tel : 01535 637012
or Jacquie Bennett tel : 01274 541068
or email : southcravenbaptistchurch@hotmail.co.uk

CRC Membership fee to rise....a little!

For six years, St Mark's CRC's membership fee has remained at £5. Over this time, costs have risen considerably: postage, stationery and administration are now more expensive. Our administrator is paid for two hours work a week, plus additional hours when the workload is higher.

The CRC council had a long discussion about this and was very concerned that the cost of joining should not deter would-be members. The Council decided that the minimum it could ask for membership for the coming year is **£7**. This will be reviewed again next year. We hope you will feel this is still good value, especially considering the discount on conferences for members.

Ian Stubbs, a CRC member would like your help

There are many social surveys about whether or not people are religious believers but very little is known about what people actually believe and why. I am doing some research to sample what some adults believe about various religious and related matters. I am especially interested in the views of those who have questioned and/or moved away from traditional forms of Christianity. My aim is to produce a book describing and reflecting on responses and looking at implications for the Church of England. If you would like to help, my email address is: iks47@o2.co.uk.

A brand new arrival in the CRC Library

This Life on Earth: edited by Dinah Livingstone pub. Sea of Faith Network July 2009

Grandmothers, philosophers, priests and ex-priests, reflect on *This Life on Earth*, their own lives and attempts to make sense of it all, or more general aspects of this life on a beautiful planet, which is now intensely vulnerable.

There are 23 prose pieces, all by members or associates of SOF Network, which regards religion as a human creation and a vital part of our human cultural treasury, and 15 poets, some members of the Network and some not, all contemporary except for one sixteenth-century Spanish mystic, who lives on in his poetry.

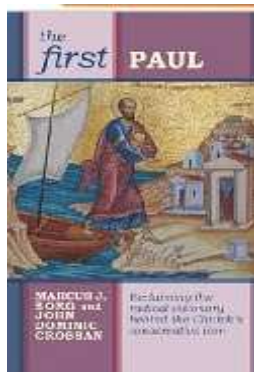
This Life on Earth is many curious and particular autobiographies, a warning and a celebration.

The First Paul: “Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church’s Conservative Icon”

Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan
Published by SPCK : 2009 ISBN 978-0281061587

**Reviewed by Adrian Alker,
Director of Mission Resourcing in the Anglican
Diocese of Ripon and Leeds**

Yet again the combined scholarly forces of Marcus Borg and Dominic Crossan have produced a book on Paul which is uplifting, visionary and accessible, even the chapter on Romans! As with their recent books *The Last Week* and *The First Christmas*, both authors have re-used previously published material but in a way which offers the general reader a more concise presentation without losing its scholarly approach.



Crossan’s defining work on Paul is to be found in his *In Search of Paul* but in *The First Paul* one also appreciates the pastoral and spiritualizing influence of Borg on the immensely knowledgeable and challenging temper of Crossan. The strap line with the book’s title reminds us that for the authors there is more than sufficient evidence to see Paul as a kingdom seeking disciple of the radical Jesus. ‘Location, location’ they say is all important in house purchasing. Borg and Crossan cry, ‘Context, context’ is vital in evaluating and understanding Paul. Quote : *Get Paul and his letter to the Romans out of the sixteenth century polemical Reformation world and back into the first century imperial Roman world.*(p.157)

And so the book takes us into the social, political and economic world in which Paul moves, with some fascinating details on, for example, housing density in Antioch...As in Crossan’s longer work, the letter to Philemon is dissected with great care to elicit some of Paul’s deepest convictions on the equality of Christians. The whole chapter on ‘Christ Crucified’ is a fine essay on personal and political transformation and dismisses the way in which substitutionary atonement has wrongly commanded the high ground here. The chapter ‘Justification by Grace Through Faith’, is so inviting that I wanted to begin a study group on Romans straightaway!

Towards the end of the book, the authors turn their thoughts to the importance and nature of the Christian community, of ‘Life Together in Christ’. The chapter made me want to burst into a church on a Sunday morning and say Of course what we are about is a sharing community of people where there is no hierarchy of social status, where all our gifts are equally valued, where our lives have been changed by the Spirit transplanted and where ‘Loving One Another’ means standing against the domination systems that rule the world! Well, we live in hope.....

Do read the book and discover that those difficult phrases about justification and righteousness, grace and works can really be understood in a clear and inviting way. Once more we are indebted to the passionate way in which both authors seek to convey the importance of the Jesus and Paul of the New Testament to the lives of Christians in the twenty first century.

Friends and Lovers - notes from Robin Story

The Quakers in Britain at their recent Yearly Meeting Gathering in York passed a resolution to treat same sex committed relationships in the same way as opposite sex marriages (see at www.quaker.org.uk.) You can send an e-message, to outreach@quaker.org.uk.

The Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA), at its 76th General Convention in Anaheim, California in July 2009 passed two resolutions:
1. To acknowledge changing circumstances” that call forth a renewed pastoral response from the church for considering same-gender blessings.
2. affirming equal access by all to its ordination processes.
Details at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009.htm>. You can send messages to: The Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church Centre, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA. Or e-mail <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/infoline.htm>.

Living it out A Survival Guide for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Christians and their friends, families and churches.

By Rachel Hagger-Holt & Sarah Hagger-Holt, who draw on the experiences of a wide circle of people. They use stories, reflections, readings, prayers, etc. ‘Upbeat, brave and open’. ‘Practical and affirming’. Canterbury Press: £9.99. to be Pub. Nov 2009. ISBN 9781853119996

