



# THE Newman

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Jonathan Bush

The Newman's Postwar Support for Exiled Poles

Elaine Graham

Apologetics Without Apology

Robert Wilcher

Henry Vaughan and Anglican Survival

Laura Payne

Religious Groups and Violent Conflict

Report on the St Albans Conference on the Reformation  
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Update on the Association's New Structure  
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Cover picture: *The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, seen from St Columba's College, where the conference on the Reformation was held*

# Comment

There is a disturbing common theme running through a number of the articles in this January 2018 issue of *The Newman*. It is that religions that are supposed to be focused on God and love instead too often become preoccupied with jealousy and hate. The articles comment on how, over periods ranging from the 16th to the 21st century, these emotions have triggered oppression, forced migration and even mass murder.

It has not always been so. For many centuries Christians and Moslems co-existed peacefully in Egypt, for example. In medieval Spain there was mutual tolerance for centuries between Moors, Christians and Jews. Different Christian sects have agreed to live peacefully in most of Europe for the past 150 years or so.

But the rivalries can be fragile and destructive. Catholics, Orthodox and Moslems have collided brutally in the Balkans within recent memory. The current news pages are concerned with the persecution of the Moslem Rohingya by Buddhists in Myanmar. Moreover the new upsurge of radical Islamism across the Middle East has largely driven out Jews and Christians from countries such as Iraq and has led to outbreaks of terrorism in many parts of the world. Islam itself is seriously troubled by the modern consequences of the ancient split into Sunni and Shia divisions, currently manifested in the war in Yemen, for instance.

To a large extent these disasters occur because of the inflammable collision of different religions with other human identity-determinants such as nationality, loyalty to monarchs, language and culture. In England, during and after the Reformation, kings and queens swung – sometimes lethally for their subjects – between Catholicism and Protestantism. The Christian religion is focused on Faith, which is not just about a list of possibilities or preferences or ideals but is a framework of certainties. Those with different beliefs can appear dangerous enemies and may seem to threaten one's own religion and indeed one's own God.

## **Substantial differences**

In England we may shrug at the differences between sects and may concentrate on preserving the dogmas and rites of our own particular religion. This is why for all the efforts at Christian ecumenism the barriers remain substantial. The faiths remain vigorous and distinct but all the time the adherents are declining in number and in Europe, at least, Christianity is losing the battle against liberal atheism.

For many Moslems there is a clear lesson: Christianity has become decadent. Islam seems determined not to make such a mistake and is making advances in many parts of the world. Given the lack of a top-down structure in Islam this is providing considerable opportunities for extremists to justify to themselves, if not to others, taking the road which starts with oppression and leads on to barbarity and terrorism.

Is favour a sign of holiness and tolerance a sign of weakness? Jesus Christ himself advised us to love our enemies. And one of this month's contributors, Elaine Graham, quotes an observation by the Catholic philosopher Terry Eagleton that "the world is divided between those who believe too much and those who believe too little". Along with faith we need to possess a sense of perspective.

Barry Riley

# The Newman Association's aid to Polish Catholic intellectuals in Britain, 1942-1962

By Jonathan Bush

***This is a shortened version of a paper recently published in full in the October 2017 issue of the Downside Review. It was commissioned to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Newman Association. The author is extremely grateful to the Association for their generous stipend in funding the research and publication of this article.***

*"The test of our sincerity in the cause of justice is our concern for the resurrection of Poland, no less nay, even more, than the liberation of every other persecuted people".*

This quote, taken from a radio broadcast delivered on Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup> 1941 by Arthur Hinsley, cardinal archbishop of Westminster, is a reminder of the important and enduring relationship between the Catholic Church in Britain and the Central European state of Poland. It was spoken within the context of the Second World War and the continuing devastation caused by the German occupation of the country two years previously. But it remained applicable to the Catholic Church's attitude in the period following that war, when the inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe fell under the control of Soviet-influenced Communist governments.

Poles, along with Czechoslovakians, Hungarians, Latvians and Lithuanians, fled their homelands to escape from religious persecution, arriving in Britain in their thousands during the late 1940s and 1950s. Many lay Catholic associations, independent from hierarchical control, took it upon themselves to organise initiatives and raise funds for these exiles. The Newman Association was particularly active in supporting the tertiary education of Polish exiles in Britain in the Second World War and its aftermath by working closely with other Catholic and non-Catholic bodies to create an international centre for the dissemination of information to Polish and other Central and East European exiles; by raising money for grants to support Polish students in British and Polish universities; and by arranging cultural exchange programmes between British and Polish intellectuals.



*Cardinal Arthur Hinsley*

Many readers will be familiar with the early history of the Newman Association. Its very foundation in 1942 was an expression of the growing confidence of the lay Catholic middle class during the middle decades of the twentieth century. The organisation was established as a graduate society for both laity and clergy, developing out of a student organisation, the University Catholic Societies Federation. It was heavily influenced by John Henry Newman's concept of an educated laity and its active involvement in the Catholic Church and the wider society. Indeed its main object, as set out in the memorandum of association, was "to further the mission to the world of the Christian religion with particular reference to the Roman Catholic Church and in the light of the life and work of John Henry Newman, by promoting greater understanding of the Christian faith and the application of its

principles to the contemporary world”.

From its inception, therefore, the Association wished to foster a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith within the context of the contemporary world, actively encouraging its members to use their skills and knowledge to tackle the theological, social, political, and cultural questions of the day from a Catholic perspective. It was the purpose of the Association to utilise lay members of the Catholic Church in this mission and to seek “to bring greater recognition of the role of lay Catholics both as apostles to the church and as an important voice within the church for greater democracy and accountability”. In 1950 the Newman Association boasted a membership of 1,500 Catholic graduates “drawn from various professions and walks of life”. As well as a national Council it also formed local Circles, in most of the major British cities, with responsibility for organising events at the local level. Unlike the Catholic Union, which dated back to the 1870s, the Newman Association was not under the direct control of the Catholic hierarchy, seeing itself more as “a partner, if only a junior partner”.

### **The International Committee**

From the very outset of the Newman Association international events were high on the agenda. Indeed, the history of the Newman Association began with a meeting of an “international committee” on 5 October 1941, formalised a year later in the drawing up of a constitution for the organisation. In February 1943, the Association responded to a request by the Government to set up “a body of voluntary organisations interested in material and moral relief in post-war Europe”.

It was not, however, until after the war that a more formal policy towards Polish exiles was instigated. In November 1945 Frank Aylward, the chairman and secretary of the Association’s International Committee, together with the MP for Birmingham Moseley, Sir Patrick Hannon, met a delegation from the Polish Catholic Graduate Group formed at the recent Pax Romana Congress. At this meeting it was agreed that the International Committee would provide English-language classes for the benefit of those Poles arriving in England who had recently been liberated from concentration camps in Europe. The International Committee also expressed an interest in establishing an academic assistance committee to provide financial assistance to seminary and university students. Almost from its very inception, therefore, the work of the Newman Association was tied to the fate of the Catholics of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Newman Association was just one of several organisations, lay Catholic and non-Catholic, whose aim was to assist in post-war European reconstruction. Rather than remain isolated working within their own spheres, such organisations soon realised that collaboration was essential to achieve their aims. The Newman Association, with its influential backing and professional contacts, was often in the vanguard of initiatives in this regard, receiving the backing of the Hierarchy. For example, it worked closely with the Anglo-Polish Catholic Society and the Catholic Council for Polish Welfare, in matters affecting Polish relief. The Association was also represented on governmental boards with three International Committee members, sitting on the Central European Affairs Committee, and together drawing up a memorandum on the issue of Polish and other European exiles.

It was an undoubtedly a lay Catholic initiative, the opening of a “Newman Centre” by the Newman Association, which provided a focal point of support for exiled Central

and Eastern Europeans. Acting as an international hub for overseas Catholic visitors, the Centre at 23 Hereford House, Park Street, London was made available to the Association by a generous benefactor. Opening on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1942, the Centre quickly established itself as the cultural nucleus of the Polish exiled community. It is important to point out that functions were not only held for Eastern European countries, but also for groups and individuals from elsewhere, including receptions for parties from France, Germany, the



*This street door led to the upstairs suite opened as the Newman International Centre in October 1942.*

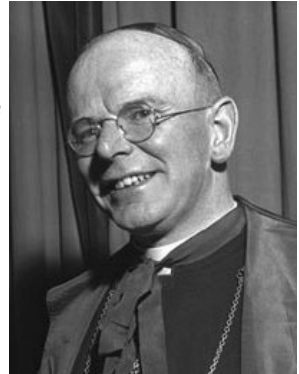
United States and India. Other receptions were arranged for delegates of conferences on all sorts of Catholic and non-Catholic topics, such as the Conference of Lawyers and the International Catholic Radio Movement. In this sense, the Newman Centre reached out to Catholics and non-Catholics far beyond its initial remit and helped to establish the Centre's "place in the intellectual life of London". In 1948 the Centre moved to larger premises at 31 Portman Square. During the 1950s, the Association's international events were included in "Today's Arrangements" in *The Times* and, by 1957, it could claim that its Centre had, "become known over the past ten years to members of Pax Romana in more than 40 countries, and hundreds of visitors have called each year in search of information, advice and introductions".

An important aspect of cultural activity at the Centre took the form of international lecture-discussion meetings, with the main meeting taking place on the first Sunday of each month after Mass. There were also regular weekly meetings to hear a range of respected international speakers lecturing on a variety of topics, as well as monthly "parliamentary evening" meetings. Central and Eastern Europe began to receive greater attention at many meetings following the Yalta Conference in February 1945, in which "members were left in no uncertainty...of the evils to come". Talks were given on a variety of international topics but lectures on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe remained a popular choice of topic throughout the late 1940s and 1950s.

The Newman Centre also hosted major international conferences on similar themes, many of which proved to be extremely popular. One of the biggest conferences organised by the Newman Association was on "Communism" in 1952. Preparations began in March for a December conference with the Union of Catholic Students and also with noted authorities on the subject including Sir Desmond Morton, who was head of the Foreign Office's counter-Bolshevist section in the early 1920s. The programme for the conference included as speakers Rev. D. J. B. Hawkins, Richard O'Sullivan Q.C. and Sir David Kelly, amongst others, and papers were published in a special edition of *Blackfriars*, the Dominican journal. The conference, which made a profit of £14 7s 6d, was a very successful one for the International Committee. The number of delegates present was not recorded but temporary loudspeakers were installed in the library because the audience was too large to be accommodated in the lecture room.

An essential element of life at the Newman Centre was its social aspect for exiles from different countries. These “casual meetings” allowed the opportunity for people to form friendships and for networks to be established. In 1955, the “At Home” aspect of the Sunday afternoon meetings was expanded “in order to give Newman members and visitors from abroad the opportunity to meet one another”. There were three large receptions during the year for members of Central and Eastern European countries, as well as students and graduates from Africa and Asia. Such events allowed Poles to feel integrated into the émigré community, thus inhibiting the possibility of developing mental illnesses, such as depression, schizophrenia or hysteria, common to migrant communities.

Financing the Centre remained a constant problem for the Newman Association's International Committee in its early years. On May 8<sup>th</sup> 1946 Hereford House was forced to close because the Committee could not afford for it to remain open. It was not until December 1948 that a new building, 31 Portman Square in London, was officially opened by Cardinal Griffin. To avoid the financial issues which had beset its previous home a charitable trust was established, the Newman International Foundation, on April 8<sup>th</sup> 1946, “to support the international programme of the Association and to acquire and administer an International Centre”.



*Cardinal Bernard Griffin*

Contributions were required from members, who were urged to contribute an additional sum of money annually to the International Foundation on top of their Newman membership subscription. This was fully supported by the Hierarchy with the Cardinal promising £1,000 a year for two years for the maintenance of an international office and a further £1,000 a year for several years for the support of the proposed new International Centre. Regular collections were taken from churches in support of the International Centre. This allowed the Newman International Centre the financial stability to establish itself on a firmer footing, with the Newman International Fund trustees recording an annual turnover of £12,000 in 1952.

### **Funding university students**

As well as providing a cultural hub for the Polish Catholic intellectual community, the Newman Association assisted those students unable to take their degrees in their home country because of the suppression of Polish universities by the communist government. In 1946, the Association decided to set up a programme to help fund scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate students to undertake a course at a British university, as well as aiding Polish graduates seeking employment in Britain. To fund the venture an additional charitable fund, the Newman Educational Foundation, was set up with a committee including Professor A. J. Allmand and the 12<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Lothian. This fund was active until 1949, when its functions were absorbed into the Newman International Foundation.

The aim of the Educational Foundation was twofold: firstly, “to enable the exiles to preserve the continuity of their Christian culture” and, secondly, “to enable them to make some useful contribution to their own countries when they returned and to the countries of their adoption while they were in exile”. The Association's stance

could thus be viewed as an attempt to bolster the defence of Christianity against the communist persecution of religion in the Soviet satellite states.

The educational assistance programme faced notable difficulties from the outset in post-war Britain. British universities were overcrowded and Central and Eastern European exiles were required to compete for university places with British servicemen returning from overseas. The first task of the Association was therefore to work with influential figures within the universities to allocate places for Polish exiles. Initial arrangements were made with Irish institutions with President A. O'Rahilly of University College, Cork, agreeing to the Foundation's request for twelve Polish students to be given places and to be subsidised directly by the Newman Educational Foundation itself, with a further grant from official sources to be received later.

In December 1946, it was reported that Professor Conway of University College, Dublin, and Fr. Browne of Galway, had offered twenty fee-paying places to Polish students. The project was extended and, at one stage, 150 Polish students had been accepted on to courses at University College, Dublin, and other Irish universities alongside official grants totalling over £100,000. The money for the Foundation was raised through appeals to Newman members, as well as donations from the Apostolic Delegate, the Catholic Council for Polish Welfare and other bodies.

However, the reality was one of financial hardship for these students. Initial responsibility for postwar Polish education fell to the Interim Treasury Committee for Polish Questions, an administrative body within the Treasury, with significant Polish representation including Count Edward Raczyński. In December 1946, the Interim Treasury Committee could not afford to pay the Polish students arriving in Dublin and Galway. It was only the efforts of Count Belinski, who managed to divert funds earmarked for Cork to be used as a loan for Dublin, that prevented the students from effectively being abandoned. In July 1947, the CCPW provided a donation of £2,500 and the Interim Treasury Committee was also able to raise an additional £2,500 to ensure that sufficient money was available to maintain the Polish students until September 1947.

### **Sixty scholarships**

The Polish Resettlement Act in March 1947 transferred the responsibility for Polish education from the Interim Treasury Committee to the Committee for Education of Poles in Great Britain led by George Gator. This ensured that Polish students were eligible for Ministry of Education grants, with £50,000 provided for sixty scholarships for Irish universities. There would now be little need for the Educational Foundation to offer its scholarship programme to Polish undergraduates in Ireland but, as Dr Aylward pointed out, "it was clear that these 60 scholarships would not have been awarded if the Newman Educational Foundation had not taken the initiative with the Irish negotiations in the previous year".

The Newman Educational Foundation turned its attention to English universities. In October 1948, two research students were being helped at the University of London with money available for a further student. Many of the exiles receiving aid to study in England were often in a similar precarious financial situation to those at Irish universities, particularly once the Educational Foundation was subsumed into the International Foundation and funds began to dry up. Between 1950 and 1952 the minutes of the Newman International Fund meetings regularly noted the difficulties



faced by Polish beneficiaries and extra money was often allocated to relieve their financial difficulties. By the early 1950s, however, these endeavours were beginning to bear fruit. The Newman Association's Annual Report confidently proclaimed a number of successes. The trustees noted that, with the exception of the Catholic Council of Polish Welfare, "no Catholic organisation in Britain has done so much to assist the Poles" with the scholarship programme.

### Exchange Visits

By the late 1950s and early 1960s the political situation in Eastern Europe was beginning to improve slowly and the Newman Association became more involved with facilitating tours to and from Poland. A three-week study tour of Britain, for example, was arranged by the International Committee for a group of Polish visitors from professional circles. This was organised by Dr F. Sawicki, a Warsaw physician, who invited the Klub Intelligencji Katolickiej (Warsaw Club of Catholic Intellectuals) to England. This club was one of a limited number of organisations established to provide a "discreet outlet for non-Marxist intellectuals in major Polish cities" following the appointment of Wladyslaw Gomulka as the Communist leader of Poland in October 1956.



*Wladyslaw Gomulka*

The group arrived on April 28<sup>th</sup> 1960, meeting various representatives of the Polish community in London and they were entertained by Newman members in London, Oxford, Birmingham, Manchester, York, Cambridge and other places. The English Catholic community was, however, far from united in support of this visit. A report in the *Catholic Herald* questioned the Newman Association's part in allowing "Communist collaborators" into the country. The International Committee's response was to "damp down any correspondence that may take place in the paper", publishing a supportive article in *The Newman*, the Association's own journal, to allay any fears of the provincial circles. Following the visit a hope was expressed for a return trip to Poland and this did indeed occur the following year.

In an article entitled "Lublin: so near and yet so far" by Dr J. M. Capes, a description was given of a visit by two Newman delegates to Lublin during August 5<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 1961, as guests of the Klub Intelligencji Katolickiej. The purpose of the visit was "to attend a seminar organised by the Club, on 'European Tradition and the Future', to see something of Polish life and culture, and to consider some of the problems facing Polish Catholics today".



*Lublin Catholic University*

The Newman Association also began to develop a strategy to assist students in the Catholic University of Lublin by providing grants to study in England. Mrs Vivienne Greene, the Hon Secretary of the Oxford Newman Circle (and also the estranged wife of the author Graham Greene), contacted the International Committee to ask if they could meet with Professor Mroczkowski, head of

the Department of English at the Catholic University of Lublin. It was agreed that two one-year scholarships could be offered at Oxford University for post-graduate research assistants from Lublin. The two Lublin scholars, Miss Janicka and Mr Swieczkowski, arrived in England in February 1957, with Miss Janicka's fees and expenses being paid jointly by the Catholic Women's League and the Newman International Fund. Further links were cemented by the Association's agreement with the Rector of Lublin University to provide a one-year lectureship in Lublin for a Polish scholar living in England. By the end of 1958, however, the Association handed over the financial management of the Polish students to Veritas.

### **Material support**

The Newman Association's support for the education of Polish students was also supplemented by material aid in the purchase of books and other equipment. This had been taking place since the 1940s. In May 1946, the chaplain of Veritas, Fr Belch, required the Newman Association to act as an agent in the forwarding of translated religious books and papal encyclicals to Poland. Veritas had been unable to send the books themselves owing to difficulties with the Polish authorities but the Newman Association was able to negotiate with the Polish Red Cross for the delivery of regular batches to the Caritas organisation in Gydnia. In November, Miss Gunter reported that the plan had been working successfully with a total of £12,000 worth of books being sent from London to Gydnia, with Caritas distributing these books throughout Poland. Aside from books, the Association also agreed to send food parcels to the relations of Polish exiles so that the recipients could send these parcels on to others. Larger gifts were also offered, including a private automatic telephone exchange for the use of Archbishop's House in Warsaw. In 1960, the Association even offered Lublin University machinery for a canteen.

### **Conclusion**

By the early 1960s, the Newman Association began to scale back its aid programme to exiles generally. As early as 1957, the Newman International Committee noted the decreased scale of activity which it put down to "declining needs", as well as "the difficulties in obtaining money for the purpose". Furthermore, Pax Romana was gradually subsuming the Association's work with Catholic exiles. Although the Newman Association (and the Union of Catholic Students) was to have representation on this committee, the Association appeared to hand over direct responsibility for aid to Catholic exiles to Pax Romana. Furthermore, in the same year, the Association also agreed to hand over all overseas non-university appointments work to the Catholic Overseas Appointments Bureau.

The Newman Association made a significant contribution to the lives of Polish exiles in the years following the Second World War. This support was inspired by a combination of anti-communism, pan-Europeanism and a genuine altruism informed by Catholic social teaching, but it also reflected a desire for lay educated Catholics to break out of the confines of their historically subordinate role within the Church, albeit with enthusiastic support and direction by the hierarchy. This encouraged the Newman Association, along with other Catholic lay organisations, to assume greater responsibility for undertaking ambitious initiatives unthinkable earlier in the century.

*Dr Jonathan Bush is an archive cataloguer in the library at Ushaw College, Durham.*

# Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir

The 75th anniversary of the Newman is a time to recall the important influence which the Association had in the early days of renewal of the Church, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. There were numbers of Catholic organisations existing but the Newman was the only one of any weight to work for renewal in the institutional Church.

The first significant action was the setting up of a Theological Studies Group by Fr Laurence Bright OP and my husband Oliver Pratt (later to become President of the Association). Study groups were set up around the country, each having a theologian as tutor. The participants had to write an essay each month on the theme to be discussed at the next meeting of the group. This went on from the early 60s into the 70s

It was members of the theological studies groups who came together as an Ad Hoc Group to campaign against the dismissal in 1967 of Herbert McCabe OP for saying, in New Blackfriars, the Dominican journal he edited, that the Church was corrupt. A "pray-in" was organised bringing in 1,000 people to Westminster Cathedral, a petition of 2,000 stimulated; articles in the press and conferences followed. The President of the Newman, John Bryden, was sent to Rome to intercede successfully with the Dominican Master General.

Practice in campaigning stood Newman members in good stead during the birth control crisis the following year. The Ad Hoc group undertook leading the opposition to Humanae Vitae by various means. There was grave danger of large scale lapsation. Two or three people, including Oliver, met the TV host David Frost and briefed him before his interview with Cardinal Heenan, which was effective: the Cardinal finally said that Catholics should follow their own consciences!

Around the early 70s one largely-ignored injustice was the way in which the institutional Church treated women. Academic women at Oxford organised the first British conference on this theme in 1973. I was at that time Chair of the Newman Family Committee (which also dealt with gender issues) and was asked to provide a position paper on the current position of women in the Church. The committee held that we did not really know how bad the situation was and so we conducted a survey on women's views and experiences. This went out to Newman members, many of whom also took it to their parishes.

As expected the vast majority of responses reported much-resented discrimination against women in the Church. Unexpectedly, as the question was rarely aired, between 70% and 80% were in favour of ordaining women for work in parishes, convents and mission areas where there were few priests. The parish groups were around 30% in favour of women priests. According to the National Board of Catholic Women this survey on the widespread discrimination against women had "enormous impact" on women attending the conference from all over Britain, and they took it back to their parishes and organisations.

Other distinctive areas where the Newman was leading the way included the Philosophy of Science and creative Liturgy. In the following decades many other renewal-minded organisations and groups developed and the Newman became less influential, but these groups have often been led by Newman members, or by those who honed their skills with the Newman.

Ilanthe Pratt

The Companies Act 2006  
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**Articles of Association**

of  
**The Newman Association**

Incorporated on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1947

(As adopted on [ ] 2018)

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Charity No. 1006769

## New Articles – a Consultation

A draft of the new Articles of Association for the Newman Association has now been prepared. This will be considered by Council at a special meeting on March 3rd. In the meantime the draft will be sent to all Circle Secretaries so that members can be consulted, and it is requested that all submissions should be received by the Hon Secretary by February 20th.

Members not attached to Circles are invited to contact directly the Hon Secretary, Brian Hamill (address inside the front cover of this issue of The Newman), to receive copies of the Articles.

## NOTICE OF 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Newman Association will be held on Saturday, June 9th, at 11.00am at St Bartholomew's Church, 47 Vesta Ave, St Albans AL1 2PE. The purpose of the Meeting is to receive the Report of the Council, to adopt the Accounts and the Balance Sheets for the year ending 31 January 2018, to receive the new Articles and carry out appropriate elections to the new Board, to appoint Auditors, and to deal with any other business, which the Meeting is competent to transact.

Details concerning the elections will be sent to all members in due course. These details are at present under consideration by the Council in view of the proposed changes.

## Manchester Newman Lecture 2018

### **Sarah Teather**

*Director, Jesuit Refugee Service*

Thursday, April 26th 2018, 6.30 for 7.00 p.m.  
Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street,  
Manchester M2 5NS

**BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL FOR THIS EVENT**

email: [dcq@mac.com](mailto:dcq@mac.com) or telephone 07764 946074



# Can religious groups help to prevent violent conflict?

By Laura Payne

## When peace and violence are examined through a faith-based lens a different set of factors come to the foreground.

A glance at the daily news confirms that religion is regularly complicit in violence. In early January of 2015, Boko Haram killed up to two thousand people in Baga, Northern Nigeria. As this massacre unfolded, two men stormed into the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in Paris and murdered 12 people. Hijacking a car, they told the driver "If the media ask you anything, tell them it's al-Qaeda in Yemen." Both before and after these events the so-called Islamic State (IS) drip-fed films showing the beheadings of civilians and hostages in territory it controls.



*A terrorist attack in Nigeria by Boko Haram*

of them Palestinian Muslims.

But to recognize that violence often involves religion is not the same as saying that religion is the driving force of violence. Conflicts normally have their causal factors firmly embedded in the material world. Politicians and armed groups use religion to divide neighbour from neighbour, call people to arms, and raise the stakes in their pursuit of power. Religious identity and ideology matter, but they tell us more about how conflicts are set in motion than about their causes.

Debates about religion and violence have raged for years and intensely so now. But one area that's underexplored is how people of faith can help to *prevent* violence—not just to manage or mitigate it, but ensure it doesn't take hold in the first place.

I work with religious groups in the thick of violent conflict in places as diverse as Nigeria, Zanzibar and Solomon Islands. Sometimes these groups have had a hand in exacerbating violence, directly or indirectly. At other times they have played a peacemaking role. And sometimes they have done both, even simultaneously.

In Rwanda, for example, several hundred clergy were killed during the genocide of 1994, some for being Tutsi and others for refusing to stand by as Tutsis were slaughtered. But priests and nuns have also been convicted as *génocidaires*, and church groups have been accused of failing to bear witness to atrocities or call

We are all too familiar with the idea of violence in the name of religion, and not just Islam. Other faiths have been complicit in violence throughout history, from the Crusades in the Middle Ages through to the recent brutalities of the Lord's Resistance Army in Central Africa. In July 2014, Israel's massacre in Gaza killed nearly 2,200 people, virtually all

those responsible to account.

Wars are never simple, and neither are religious institutions. But always, and even in the most desperate of places, I've come across people working to prevent violence who are inspired by their faith. They are remarkable not only in their conviction and commitment, but also in their foresight. To prevent violence one must anticipate it. This is what separates conflict prevention from response.



*An explosion in Jos, Nigeria, in 2014*

To anticipate violence is rarer than one might think. To organise in advance of it is rarer still. Sitting politicians have little incentive to raise the alarm in case it reflects on their competency. As is clear in Syria, the international community doesn't always welcome warning calls to intervene in internal conflicts, however high the levels of atrocity. And ordinary people are buried in the everyday,

trying to keep body and soul together and the wolf from the door.

But some donor governments and international organisations are now investing in conflict prevention. They sponsor election-monitoring missions, early warning systems, dialogues, and programmes to counter extremism. Groups like Ushahidi (or "witness" in Somali) crowd-map data during crises through text messaging and email, and use it to provide real time information and lay the groundwork for truth telling and accountability.

These initiatives appeal to the technocratic base notes of policymaking—where every problem can be hacked and social conflicts are just another bug in the system. This is ironic, because working with religious groups has taught me that preventing violence is more of an art than a science.

For all their readiness to build technocratic prevention mechanisms, most donor organisations have a blind spot when it comes to recognising the work that's already being done by religious groups. I can't blame them. Donors have their paymasters too. They are expected to show value for money and steer clear of controversy. They are risk averse, and working with religious groups is fraught with risk.

But this stance represents a huge missed opportunity. In the Nigerian cities of Jos and Kaduna, for example, church-led and interfaith groups are helping to tip the balance in favour of non-violent responses when crises emerge. They have the local access and real time information to intervene at critical moments. And they have the trust and influence required to build bridges between decision-makers, working over the long term so that these relationships are more resilient.

One interfaith group formed of ex-combatants in Kaduna literally counts the costs of conflict with communities, bringing home how destructive it really is. How much does a dead cow cost? A dead child? A burnt house? It can be harder for agitators to

mobilise communities when they can put a figure on what will be lost.

Another group in Jos organises local peace committees. Comprised of men and women, young and old, from different religious and political creeds and backgrounds, these committees are the eyes and ears of their towns and villages. They look for indicators of violence like irregular vehicles on the road at night, a tipped-off neighbouring tribe packing up and moving on, strangers asking questions, dialled-up political rhetoric.

When trigger points are hit the committees can take action quickly. There's often a gap between raising the alarm and effecting a response, but experience shows that the more localised the responses are, the quicker and more effective they're likely to be.

Other forms of prevention work try to tackle the underlying causes of conflict. In the Democratic Republic of Congo for example, the church-supported Baraka Academy teaches orphaned children whose parents were killed during successive conflicts in the Ituri district. Why? Because the founders had the foresight to know that today's street children, soaked in violence, are likely to become tomorrow's child soldiers, or the machete-wielding, glue-sniffing enraged young men whom politicians can hire for \$20 a time to go on the rampage. This is conflict prevention on a generational scale, attempting to halt the powerful dynamics that propel violence into the future.

Many of the characteristics that are vital for prevention work – like trust, local knowledge and navigation, and foresight – might apply to non-faith based organisations too. But the pastoral support that faith groups can provide and their closeness to people at life's most important moments mean they can often form relationships of a different quality.

Sometimes the importance of spirituality in guiding behaviour is explicit, as in Solomon Islands where the hands of ex-combatants are symbolically washed when they turn over their weapons. Also in Solomon Islands, a prison chaplain told me how, in the reconciliation ceremonies he hosts: "The offenders say something and then they ask the victims to forgive. I hold out my stole and everyone holds [a part of it] to show that they are connected. I say a prayer and the victims and perpetrators hug each other. The perpetrators stay in prison because that it is the law of the land, but they are now brothers and sisters again."

Sometimes the link to spirituality is less overt but still pervasive. Worldviews are underpinned by religious philosophies from which people draw strength to persevere with relationship building in testing circumstances. And sometimes, as with non-faith based organisations, it is simply being a local, permanent, trusted presence that bequeaths legitimacy and the mandate to act.

Of course these are success stories. What about the dilemmas involved in working with religious groups? They can be complicit in violence, and oppressive of women, minorities, young people – of most people, in fact. But governments can be oppressive too. They can discriminate, abuse, mismanage, torture and kill. And if isn't possible to change society without engaging with governments, the same goes for religion. In contexts where large parts of the population are religious (which means most of the world), religious groups are simply too big to ignore.

Even if they weren't, there is a lot to learn from them. When conflict prevention is

examined through a faith-based lens, a different set of factors come to the foreground. Technical fixes seem less important, faddish even. The importance of relationship comes into focus. The approach to time changes. The slow, steady approach I have witnessed in many places can yield real results. The tortoise can overtake the hare. Working with faith groups to prevent conflict may not be easy, but it is important. Ultimately we have to work with societies as they exist, not as we would like them to be. Where communities are held together in large part by religious institutions, that means coming out of the comfort zone of secularity.

Faith-based approaches are a provocation. They turn some of the conventional wisdom that has grown up around conflict prevention on its head. And that is badly needed – never more than now.

*Laura Payne, a Research Associate at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University, gave a talk on this theme to the Coventry Circle in November*



## London Newman Lecture 2018

The lecture will be given on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018, by Francis Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University Twickenham and a former British Ambassador to the Holy See. The place will be the Crypt of St Etheldreda's Church, 14 Ely Place, London EC1N 6RY.

## Concerning Circles

### **New Members**

We welcome Professor & Mrs R. B. Pulfrey, who have recently joined the Association and are attached to the Cleveland Circle.

### **Requiescant in Pace**

Your prayers are asked for the following members who have died recently:

Mr T. Conway (Edinburgh), Mrs K. Duggan (North Merseyside), Dr M. G. Hartley (Manchester & N. Cheshire), Miss S. M. Jones (North Merseyside), Miss M. J. Kelly (Manchester & N. Cheshire), Mrs V. O'Neill (Cleveland), Dr D. A. Withey (Eastbourne & Bexhill), Miss J. E. Walsh (Croydon).

*Dr Withey was a distinguished liturgy scholar and a founder member of the Eastbourne and Bexhill Circle.*

### **Subscriptions**

Reminders will be sent out soon to members who pay their subscription by cheque. Subscriptions paid by Direct Debit will be collected at the beginning of February.

**Bill White, acting Membership Registrar**



## Conference at St Albans

### 1517 and all that....

## The Relevance of the Reformation Today

Over 90 people attended the conference on October 28<sup>th</sup> jointly organised by the Newman Association and the Cathedral and Abbey Church of Saint Alban. The speakers looked back at the impact of Martin Luther 500 years ago and discussed the consequences for Christianity both in the period of upheaval that followed and in the modern era.

The speakers were:

- The **Right Reverend Dr Martin Lind**, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, on the theme *Life is a Gift*
- The **Reverend Professor Charlotte Methuen**, an Anglican priest and professor at the University of Glasgow, on *Martin Luther and the Church of England*
- The **Reverend Dr Patricia Took**, a former President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, on *Lutherish not Lutheran*
- The **Reverend Professor John Morrill**, a Roman Catholic deacon and professor of the University of Cambridge, on *The Scandal of Christian Disunity*

The following texts are shortened versions of three of the talks. A longer article by Charlotte Methuen will follow in our next issue, being an extended version of her talk at St Albans.

*Shortened transcript of talk by Bishop Martin Lind, St Albans October 28<sup>th</sup>*

### Life is a Gift

On the 31st of October 1517, exactly 500 years ago this coming Tuesday, Martin Luther was supposed to have nailed his 95 theses on the gates of a church in Wittenburg. As far as we know today, he might or might not have nailed his theses on that particular day. What we really know is that he wrote the 95 theses, and sent them to the authorities in Latin, but they were very quickly translated into German by a friend of his and circulated all over the country.

The debate was initially centred around the subject of indulgences, although that is now an obsolete issue which I won't go into today. But I would like to say that last year, on October 31st 2016, I was present in the Lutheran cathedral in Lund in Sweden

when Pope Francis came, together with the leaders of the Lutheran World Federation, to celebrate an ecumenical service. It was a very strong experience; in fact, I have to say that I was once myself ordained, 50 years ago, in the same building. It was also important that there was a confession of sins; on both sides these were admitted, by the Pope and the LWF leaders. There was also a thanksgiving prayer on both sides after the guilt of the Reformation. To hear the Pope of Rome thank God for the gifts of the Reformation was something quite new for me. It's good to start with this kind of event, which wasn't really possible even 50 years ago, not even ten years ago possibly, but now *is* possible. It is now crucial for the understanding between Catholics and Lutherans or even between Catholics and other reformed faiths.



*Bishop Martin Lind*

Today I am going into the relevance of Martin Luther's philosophy and I have four points which I would like to specially emphasise. But before I do that, I have to say that there are negative things to be said about Martin Luther. For me, as a Lutheran, it is crucial to start with the negatives. Only when you understand those negative points is it possible to see the positive issues in a new light.

### **Catholics hid the Gospel**

First of all, the worst mistake was anti-semitism. Yet in the beginning of Luther's career he was, in a way, in favour of the Jewish people. There are several examples of how he spoke in a positive way about them but I think he was also rather naïve in the beginning, when he was thinking that the Jewish people did not convert to the Christian faith because they had never heard the Gospel. The Catholics, he said, were hiding the Gospel. But thanks to Martin Luther and his friends the Jewish people could listen to the Gospel for the first time and they were all going to convert to the Christian Faith. But when they did not convert he was furious and disappointed and finally, in 1543, just three years before his death, he wrote about the Jewish people in his book *On the Jews and their Lies*. The book has been defended by Lutheran theologians on the grounds that the book was not anti-semitic but anti-Jewish, and Martin Luther was actually against the Jewish *religion*. In the book he argues that the Jewish religion is a false religion. I would not agree, however: for me, the book is clearly anti-semitic. Even in his own time some people were against Luther because of his anti-Semitic writings. Secondly, I would like to raise the question of his views on the Peasant War. This was the uprising of the peasants in 1524 and 1525, in Germany. It was a hunger uprising, it was simply that people did not have enough food. Their children were starving in their houses. Some say that his anger against the peasants was motivated by the fact that his enemy Thomas Münzer was in favour of the peasants' uprising. That may explain something but it was certainly no excuse. Münzer was the leader of the radical reformers, whom Luther called the dreamers, and he had a theology which Martin

Luther was heavily criticising. There was a kind of dichotomy between the inner and outer life, in which the inner life of Jesus was the only really important life.

In Luther's letter to the princes of Saxony in 1525 he wrote that everybody who was able should kill those peasants, openly or in secret, because nothing was more ugly than people who advocated uprising and revolt. About 50,000 people were killed, although there might have been more, and the war was infamous for its brutality.

Now Luther was, of course, a feudal man. He was a child of his times and he was defending the feudal system. But the way he was applying that was not defensible. In the feudal system everything came down from above, so the princes had a responsibility to guarantee welfare for the people, and yet the people were starving. The way Luther encouraged the killing of the peasants was absolutely irresponsible.

I have covered the negative points and I will now move on to four positive points. The first is that he believed in Creation. God, he said, has called all human beings to be God's co-workers, *cooperatures Dei*, with or against their will: in family, in society, in professional life. All people are called, not according to their Christian faith but because of their birth, because of their being created by God, as images of God. The deeds of human beings are better than they themselves.

So Creation is filled with love, according to Martin Luther. We are told to do good deeds, to live in love and the whole of Creation is filled with it. There are two other points on this issue, for which the relevance today is really important. When we read our mass media today, or we listen to television or radio, we often read about the humiliation of people, or violence against people. But human beings help each other each day in thousands of good deeds and our society is based on these deeds.

Secondly, this view of Creation will also lay open for us a new respect for other denominations. Luther teaches us to see God's deeds in every human being, independent of faith and nationality. We can get encouragement to open our eyes to our Moslem friends and to our friends of other religions to see how much we belong together.

### **The concept of inner life**

My second point is close to my first point: it is the view of human beings. Luther was clear that every woman and every man was a whole person. He wasn't in favour of a distinction between an inner and an outer life. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer – who was 39 when he was hanged by the Nazis in 1945 – in one of his letters from prison in 1944 the concept of inner life was an invention from the time of the Renaissance. But one of the main teachings of Luther was that human beings have a relationship to other people and to God. You might think that is rather theoretical but he had this distinction that what you do towards other men could be absolutely sinless, while what you do towards God is always coloured by your imperfection. So in front of God no-one is sinless. But in our relations with other people, God uses all of us in sinless deeds. Our deeds towards other people are also, certainly, God's deeds.

I would say at this point that Luther's theology and teaching could be summarised in the words: life is a gift. The whole of life, in a biological sense, is a gift. From birth, we can't live without the love of other people. And no-one can control his own life. Life is greater than ourselves. Our life belongs to God, and we have a responsibility for how we use it, of course, but it is always bigger than ourselves. This question of respect for

human beings has relevance today, not only in our Church life but also in our society: the need for a new respect for every human being in a holistic way.

Now, my third point. The foundation of the Church is the Living Christ, the living voice. The best witness we have about Christ is, of course, given to us in the Biblical texts. Luther is keen to understand the biblical text in the Living Christ, the liberating gospel in Christ. Where in this text is the message about the gift given to us? The Bible is certainly extremely important for Martin Luther. He uses the Bible very much against his enemies. And he has a dialectical way of keeping the outer letter together with the inner message. The Pope was, of course, in those days underlining the decision of the Councils of the Church, and Luther was critical of many of those decisions because of his readings of the Biblical texts. He couldn't find in Biblical texts the justification for much of what was taught by the Roman Catholic Church in those days. He was fighting on two fronts, you might say, against the Catholic Church for neglecting the Biblical scriptures, and against the radical reformers such as Thomas Münzer because they were also neglecting the Biblical texts. They were concerned so much with the inner message that they neglected the outer letter of what was really written in the book. So Luther kept the outer letter in line with the inner message.

### **Luther never wanted a schism**

My fourth point: Luther never wanted a Church split. Some years ago I saw a website, from a Lutheran Church (I won't say which one it was) and it was written there that the Lutheran Church was founded in the 16th century. But Martin Luther never founded any church: of course not. And he would be furious if he heard that. We believe that all Lutheran churches were founded from the beginning by Jesus and the Apostles. All Lutheran churches are linked to the origin of the Christian Church. Martin Luther himself was not a Lutheran but a member of the one Catholic and apostolic Church. His aim was to reform, to bring the Church to its origin, to the original commission of Christ.

My fifth point is a summing up of these four points. This is: *life is a gift*. I would like to underline that the message of Luther could be translated into those words. I know that we would normally say that Luther's contribution is seen in terms of justification by faith. I'm so happy that in 1999 we achieved the Joint Declaration between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. The Vatican and the LWF agreed that the main division in the 16th century, the question of justification by faith, now could be phrased in a way which would show we had a similar opinion in that question.

But today I think we need new words to describe what Martin Luther meant and I often use these words: *life is a gift*. It is just an attempt to interpret his main message. It is a message that fits in with his view on human beings, that we are all co-workers with God, and how life is a gift from God. We are sinners, but God will by grace give us our real life. Life is a gift, in a holistic view, both in the biological and creative senses but also in the spiritual way. So the whole structure of our existence is based on givenness. It is also in our Church life, in the sacraments: we receive in baptism a gift from God, in the Holy Communion, in the bread and the wine, we receive forgiveness in confession, also in the sermons, of course, in all cases the structure of givenness is there.

It's all about *Life is a Gift*.

*Shortened version of talk by Patricia Took, St Albans October 28th*

## Lutherish – connections and disconnections with the radical tradition

### Dissent

The tradition of radical dissent, from which Baptists trace their origins, is not rooted in the sixteenth century reform movement, but comes from the earliest days of the Church, when to proclaim in baptism “Jesus is Lord” was an act of sedition. The assertion that only Jesus owns our ultimate allegiance has found expression in every generation, emerging in the sixteenth century in the Anabaptist movement and later in Mennonite and Baptist congregations. Radical groups of all kinds, religious and secular, gained impetus from the energy unleashed by Luther’s protest. Dissenters still draw encouragement from his dissent, even though he came to regard dissent as dangerous and subversive. Nevertheless, he was the one who, in the face of mortal danger, made the protest that lit the blue touch paper. The danger did not deter him.

*“I am in duty bound to speak... I prefer the wrath of the world to the wrath of God; they can do no more than take my life.”*

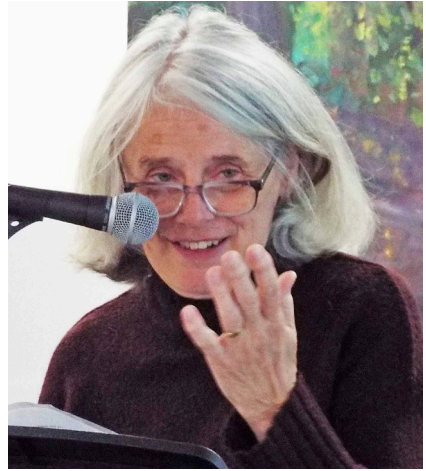
This sense of the unequivocal command to obey God rather than man is central to radical Christianity. The Anabaptists set out on their pilgrimage expecting martyrdom and indeed a whole generation of Anabaptists perished. Anna Jansz, awaiting execution in 1539 in Rotterdam wrote to her infant son:

*“I am going on the path of the prophets  
The martyrs’ and apostles’ way;  
There is none better.  
They all have drunk from the cup,  
Even as Christ Himself  
As I have heard it read.”*

Similarly, Bunyan’s response to the order to stop preaching the Gospel is described in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. When it looked as if he might be executed his response echoed Luther:

*“...it was for the Word and way of God that I was in this condition, wherefore I was engaged not to flinch a hair’s breadth from it. Yea, it was my duty to stand to his word, whether he would ever look upon me or no, or save me at the last.”*

In similar vein the American Baptist, Martin Luther King, spoke on the eve of his assassination of the American ideals, “freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to protest”, and continued:



*"Longevity has its place, but I am not concerned with that now. I just want to do God's will."*

## **Lutheran?**

There is, then, much in Baptist spirituality that is Lutherish. But our theology differs from Luther's, and the differences are reflected in the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle. This statement, written in 1873 and revisited in 1996, is still the basis of our Union. It is neither creed nor confession, but it outlines distinctive Baptist emphases within the broader Evangelical tradition. It contains three clauses. The third has little connection with Luther. It states *"That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world"*. This reflects a nineteenth and twentieth century world view, although it recalls the very effective missionary journeys undertaken by men and women in early Anabaptism when "every member of the group was regarded as a missionary."

## **Congregationalism**

The other two principles connect more fruitfully with Luther. The first states *"That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer his laws."* There are here no ecclesiastical, synodic or hierarchical lords, only the Lordship of Christ; no priests, bishops or popes, only a community of brothers and sisters in Christ. We might think of Luther's wonderfully provocative:

*"whoever comes out of the waters of baptism can boast that he is already consecrated priest, bishop and pope, though it is not seemly that everyone should exercise the office."*

In Baptist and Congregational communities a genuinely egalitarian theology is practised. Belief in the Lordship of Christ in each congregation, and in the capacity of each church to discern his will, has recently led us to place the difficult issue of human sexuality within that circle of discernment, each congregation deciding how Christ's love might best be expressed in their particular context. However, congregational governance is not what Luther had in mind. As protest came into conflict with political and ecclesiastical forces, and the new theology seemed to threaten the disintegration of society, Luther drew back from the radical statements of his Reformation tracts and rested increasingly on structures of authority never acknowledged by Baptists. The egalitarian and democratic aspects of non-conformism seemed to him a recipe for chaos and ultimately bloodshed.

## **Scripture**

Concerning Scripture, we share with Luther the commitment of Waldo, Huss and Wycliffe. We insist on Scripture as the litmus test of Christian life, seeing the Bible not as a static authority but as a conversation between God and his people. Our Declaration affirms the living Christ himself as our ultimate authority, with Scripture bearing testimony to him. There is a task of interpretation for each congregation under the influence of the Holy Spirit, a charismatic aspect to Scriptural authority and a provisional and contextual aspect to its guidance. Luther's approach to Scripture also had a flexibility and an intimacy beyond biblicism. He had his favourite books, and his unfavourites. At the beginning of the 1552 edition of his *Commentary on Romans* he

declares this letter is:

*"...the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul."*

Like Luther we understand Jesus himself, the Word-made-flesh, as standing at the gate of Scripture – he has the authority of "but I say unto you". For us, Scripture does not have an unchanging and undifferentiated authority but must constantly be heard afresh from the lips of the Lord. Our understanding of Scripture is very "Lutherish".

### **Baptism**

Next, we affirm: "That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day'." Luther rejected the notion of believers' baptism. And yet, his theology leads naturally to a sacrament of repentance and faith.

### **Conversionism**

For Luther personal faith had a strong conversional element, rooted in a fundamentally pessimistic assessment of human nature and will, but a joyful discovery of the sufficiency of God's grace. In response to the lively, immediate and personal offer of new life which God holds out to each man and woman there must be a response of grateful trust for new life to come to fruition. This was the rock on which Luther's entire theology stood. In our understanding of grace and faith as the well-spring of Christian life, Baptists are on common ground with Luther. For us this is properly expressed in the drama of Believers' Baptism; for Luther any sacramental outworking of his faith theology was too subversive to contemplate.

The social and political consequences of unpicking a belonging that was geographical and secular rather than spiritual were too drastic. The debacle of Münster in 1534, a failed Anabaptist rebellion, imprinted in him a horror of the revolutionary consequences of uncoupling church and state. Nevertheless, there is something very Lutherish about believers' baptism; the emphasis on conversion, the call to repentance and faith, the experience of those whom William James describes as the twice-born, born again from despair to hope, the experience of a baptismal life of death and resurrection.

### **Gathered Church?**

Luther's conversionism, however, led him into an impasse. How can you splice together a state church with a community of believers? Luther's dependence upon the German Princes resulted in the quandary of all Erastian settlements. It condemned Lutheranism to that gradual dilution of fervour which haunts all who espouse a Constantinian model of church. Much of his later work was devoted to efforts to arouse devotion in the lukewarm and faith in the faithless.

Even allowing, within the generally indifferent masses, a leaven of those who live a more committed life of faith, secular interests and secular culture will commonly trump the sacred in any society. Moreover for dissenters, both Catholic and Protestant, the Erastian solution was a disaster, as they found themselves in opposition not just to church but

also to state – not just heretics but traitors – as Elizabethan Catholics discovered.

### **Peace and Freedom and the Kingdom Agenda**

Some further issues remain significant and difficult in the relationship between radicals and Lutheranism, especially issues of freedom, peace and the Kingdom. Baptists continue to campaign for freedom of every kind - speech, thought, conscience, worship and person. This feels Lutheran:

*"A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."*

But Luther did not really mean it; he looked to the magistrate to enforce civic discipline, suspecting any increase in freedom. His response to the Peasant's War of the 1520s reveals a medieval commitment to a static social order and a deep fear of disorder. In his 1524 tract *"Against the Murderous Thieving Hordes of Peasants"* he infamously wrote:

*"Nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful or devilish than a rebel... It is just as one must kill a mad dog. If you do not strike him, he will strike you. Let everyone who can smite, slay and stab, secretly and openly."*

Luther believed in the obligation on Princes to enforce order, with violence if necessary, but he was not a man of violence, and doubted the value of force in matters of faith, trusting in the power of persuasion. Nevertheless on occasions he advocated violence. Here he stood in direct opposition to Anabaptism, which became almost universally pacifist as the sixteenth century progressed, a tradition re-expressed in Quakerism.

These issues of peace and of freedom form part of the radical passion for the realisation of God's Kingdom on earth. Dissenters have always had a utopian dimension to their faith, a dissatisfaction with both the institutionalised church and the status quo in society and state. This involves a solidarity with the poor and the excluded.

### **Contemporary potential**

There are some emphases here that could enrich the Church of today. Believers' Baptism, now widely practised, resonates strongly with an individualistic culture and perhaps speaks wisdom to those traditions that have previously been able to assume a cultural hegemony. In a Post-Christendom situation, where even the established church is established in name only, the model of a network of individual believers and congregations has become highly relevant.

For this generation clericalism is suspect, foundering on issues of power, authority and accountability, accentuated by much-publicised scandals concerning sexual abuse. The notion of external authorities making moral and spiritual decisions on our behalf is distasteful, and a dissenting, non-clerical model has more to recommend it.

Meanwhile we continue to treasure the heritage of Martin Luther, in particular the belief that some things are laid on the conscience that require an absolute obedience. This is currently most vividly expressed in the call of radical Islamism. The Christian church cannot mirror that violence, but the sense that there are some things worth dying for must continue to inform our proclamation. And it seems to me, that there is in the spirituality of Luther a warmth, an affective dimension of personal devotion, shared by dissenters, and still, and always, a source of life in the world.



*Shortened transcript of talk by John Morrill, St Albans, October 28th*

## The Scandal of Christian Disunity

I will start by looking at the document that came out of the great Council of the 1960s, the Second Vatican Council, a decree on ecumenism that was called *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the reintegration of unity amongst the churches. This is opening of a very powerful statement, and a really shocking statement compared to what went before: *"The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalises the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel."*

That is an extraordinarily powerful statement, and it is a command that we must submit ourselves with humility to reconciliation. It doesn't mean that we have to give up the things that we cherish. It means that instead of starting by enumerating the things on which we disagree we begin by enumerating the things on which we *do* agree.

*"Catholics in their ecumenical work must assuredly be concerned for their separated brethren: praying for them, keeping them informed about the Church, making the first approaches to them."* Other people may not have the fullness of truth as we understand it, but they live out that part of the truth that we share much better than we do, and therefore we learn from them.

The important thing here is to have the humility to listen to what other Christian communities have to offer that isn't part of our tradition. That's the difficult bit. So we don't want to give up the claim that we have the fullness of truth in the Catholic Church. But we have to accept that other people believe that they have the fullness of truth. The worst thing that you can do is look for the highest common factor, to have only the things we agree on.

I was teaching a sixth form in Bethnal Green last year made up almost entirely of Moslems. I said that in Elizabethan times there were Catholic terrorists but most Catholics wanted to be loyal to the Crown and loyal to the Church, rendering to Caesar what belonged to Caesar and to God what belonged to God. But they were told by each that they had to betray the other. And a minority became terrorists. The problem for the regime was, how do you deal with the radicals without radicalising the moderates? Today, we are in the same position, and we are making the same mess that they did.

Beyond words are swords. Those words, at the time of the Reformation, led to violent action. Take England, and the Marian martyrs: 282 Protestants were burnt alive for their faith. On the other side, 342 Catholics were tortured to death. That's what happens when words become swords. It is a catastrophe for humankind and a catastrophe for the teaching of Christ, but that's where we descended to.

In Ireland the majority of the population refused to accept the split with Rome: and it was a rare case in which the ruler failed to determine the faith of the subjects. You had a series of religiously-motivated rebellions and a series of religiously-motivated repressions. This culminated in 1641 with the massacre of about 12,000 Protestants

by Catholics. And 28 per cent of all the publications in England in the winter of 1641 were about the atrocities in Ireland.

On the other side, there was the legacy. Cromwell went to Ireland, firstly to avenge those massacres, and secondly because in order to safeguard the Protestant community the English Parliament had sent an army to Ireland. On the eve of the Civil War it couldn't raise the taxes, so it borrowed a million pounds – a huge sum – from the venture capitalists, who thought that if they were going to get five times their investment back it must be worth it, because the English always beat the Irish.

### **The origin of the Irish problem**

That means that in 1642 the English state committed itself to confiscating 25 per cent of Ireland, taking from Catholics and giving to Protestants in Britain. By the time Cromwell had finished his work it required another 25 per cent. In the 1650s half of the land of Ireland was taken from Irish Catholics and given to British Protestants. That was the Irish problem. So the legacies of the Reformation can be very long-lasting and very negative, which is why it is so urgently important that we build ourselves anew.

Henry VIII seized the monasteries. Some of them, of course, were centres of corruption. But many of them were devoted to living the life of Christ. In many cases the Church was the only place providing for the education of the poor, and bringing welfare to the poor. It is true that with Protestantism there came got the poor laws, administered by the parishes, and from the very beginning of reformation, Poor Relief. But there was always a division between the deserving and the undeserving poor. The monasteries did not do that, they did not judge, and neither do we in modern times.

When you become too powerful you take away from people their comforts and the communion of saints, and for me the central problem of the Reformation was the challenge to the living and the dead as the communion of saints in God's great Creation. The living were able to pray for and with the dead. The dead were able to assist us in our struggle through life.

Almost all of Luther's core teachings are in the end a rejection of the Communion of Saints in favour of something which was, for him, an enormous liberation, which is the impossibility of being good enough to live in heaven – a recognition that God will save me *despite* myself. Of course, he then added that those who were under the covenant of grace would be more able to live a good and holy life. You weren't in heaven because you had been good, but you were good because you had been given the assurance of grace. You take away human freedom to affect salvation and that's something which we are never going to be able to agree on. It's complicated, but there are two views and I happen to be on one side.

For me, the thing that the Catholic Church rejected, manifestly wrongly, was giving all Christians access to the scriptures. That religion of the Word was something that the Catholic Church was frightened of: the liberation that comes from being able to access the pure word of God. Even Luther never originally read the scriptures – what he read were the commentaries on the scriptures.

Luther himself derived the idea of how he should study the scriptures from Erasmus, from a disobedient Catholic who was, however, never, ever, going to be a rebel and leave. But Erasmus could imagine Pope Leo X arriving at the gates of heaven and

Peter saying “you’re not on my list” and Leo replying, “well, I conquered half of Europe, I burned thousands of people, I did everything in your name”. But Peter saying again, “you’re still not on my list”.

Erasmus was the one who more than anybody else said we should go back beyond the commentaries, beyond the Latin, to the Greek and the Hebrew. We should see what was lost when Jerome put it into Latin. And then we should put it into a language that everybody would understand. And that process was in train when Luther took that idea and ran with it and caused schism.

Later, when the Catholics did translate the Bible into English in the 1580s, it was deliberately a literary translation so that the priests could correct the false translations that

the Protestants were perpetrating. The translations became very much confessionally-determined. The only Catholic translation that there was for centuries, the Douai Rheims, wasn’t actually a readable translation and wasn’t intended to be. That was a big, big problem that we have had to learn to overcome.

One aspect of the Reformation, to me, is that there was a baptismal responsibility to share the Faith with others. It is unquestionably the case that the Protestant Churches, for centuries, even if they did it imperfectly, were more concerned to be involved with sharing their Faith with others. Their Faith was a gift to be shared.

### **A pilgrimage towards virtue**

Since the Council of Trent, when it responded to Protestantism, the Catholic Church has had a body of preaching which is pretty coherent; it is not the case that everybody believes it, but everybody knows what they are supposed to believe. The Augustinian tradition led to Luther – he was, after all, an Augustinian friar – and that is why he always had a gloomy view of human nature. God reveals himself insufficiently to us to be able to conduct our lives, so in the end the human condition is one of degradation in sin. And at the other extreme there are traditions which culminate, really, with Erasmus: that life is a pilgrimage towards virtue, that through education, through the support of the Church, particularly through the sacraments, and through encounter with history and Faith, it is possible to achieve salvation. It is the optimistic view of the human condition.

But both of those traditions were outlawed through the Council of Trent. What came out of Trent, which closed in 1563, was a middle position which we can call the Thomist tradition. This says that when God created the world he implanted himself into everything, so that every single thing is redolent of the nature of God. So God is *knowable*, but not known. Human beings can respond to the word of God, to the Sacraments, the Life of Faith, and through that can work their way towards the sceptres of the offer of salvation. Christ died for all, but not all will be saved. Not all will take



*John Morrill*

up that invitation.

But the important thing is that the Catholic Church chose not to continue to endorse the gloomy view of human nature in which there is no hope except through a divine gift. Instead there was the Erasmus programme, which was to develop mass education, to get back to the original sources, to foster renewal, to close down monasteries which were not fulfilling their tradition, to convert the assets into schools and to support all the movements towards lay spirituality which had been spreading across Northern and Southern Europe. Above all, it was to get control of governments: the Erasmians were taking over in all the courts of Europe.

At the time when Luther defied the Papacy there was every possibility of the Catholic Church renewing itself. It is perfectly possible that the Catholic Church was wrong in persecuting Luther and not trying to find a way of accommodating him. The fact is that what he started caused a schism which led to a disaster. It was possible not only in 1999, but also in 1541, for Catholics and Protestants to agree a formula on justification by faith.

I want to end by going back to hope. The parish I am in, which I think is not unrepresentative, Newmarket, incorporates 28 Anglican parishes and about 14 dissenting communities of one kind and another. We run a homeless shelter, a food bank, and we have a very healthy life of prayer together. So we don't begin by saying that we agree on what we agree on, and let's forget the rest. Let's agree on what we agree on and then be nourished by it, and then in humility listen to one another about what divides us, so the Holy Spirit can do that which we cannot do, which is to transform those contacts into sources of unity in the time to come.



*A tricky question? – Reverend Professor Charlotte Methuen, Right Reverend Dr Martin Lind, Reverend Dr Patricia Took, Reverend Professor John Morrill*

# Apologetics without Apology: Speaking of God in a world “troubled” by religion

By Elaine Graham,  
the Grosvenor Research Professor at the University of Chester

## Religion in Britain today: resurgence, decline, resistance

### Some brief cameos from recent news items:

#### Communities of faith

Following the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington in London, criticism of the local council and statutory authorities was rife. As the local community rallied to organise relief, and as people gathered to mourn the dead, one area of local civil society was prominent by its actions: the faith communities. Stories circulated that it was local Muslims returning from a local mosque who were amongst the first on the scene – by virtue of their observing Ramadan, they had been awake and up and about on the streets and spotted the fire. Muslim groups continued to contribute practical aid in the days following; and the local Anglican parish, St Clement and St James, also provided a place of refuge for relief workers, charity volunteers and traumatised residents. The parish priest described how he was woken by a call from a friend who had seen the fire; the first thing he did was to open the doors of the church. Subsequently, the following Sunday, the church building became a focus of a community act of worship attended by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

It's maybe not so much of a surprise to discover that religious people were so quick to become involved. People of faith are statistically more likely to volunteer in their communities; and, whether it's a matter of an accident of religious observance, or possession of physical capital such as church buildings, parish halls and community centres, here we saw the tremendous – and unparalleled – ability of religion to muster up what is called “social capital”.

But perhaps what is surprising is how we are constantly told that religion is marginal; that it's part of the problem, not the solution; or that mosques, churches and other faith communities can't welcome people on to their premises or offer hospitality without proselytising<sup>1</sup>, or trying to convert them.

And yet we know, too, that whilst religion can be a focus of unity, it is also a source of division and even hatred. Following the bomb attack on the Manchester Arena in May last year, reported incidents of hate crime and Islamophobia in Manchester increased. We then heard of the distressing incident outside the Finsbury Park mosque which may be classed as an act of terror or a hate crime; but clearly, people were being targeted for their religious affiliation.



*Tim Farron*

## **Tim Farron: an illiberal Liberal?**

Shortly after the General Election last June Tim Farron resigned as leader of the Liberal Democrats, claiming that he found it incompatible to be the leader of a progressive liberal party with his beliefs as an evangelical Christian on the nature of same-sex marriage. Whilst Farron had never claimed he would seek to change legislation in line with his beliefs, his views on “gay sex” had been a source of media scrutiny – some would say to the detriment of his party’s wider policies. It raises all sorts of issues about the relationship between private faith and public policy, and the question of whether those who appear to the public to be unreasonably religiously enthusiastic can be trusted in public office. As Tony Blair former PM himself admitted on leaving office, when public figures venture to mention religion or attempt to “do God”, they are branded as “nutters”.

However, the question with Farron is whether it was simply the fact of being an evangelical Christian or, as one commentator has suggested, his lack of adroitness at being able to field those difficult questions; his inability to be sufficiently coherent and fluent about both defending his own personal values and being capable of mediating them into something more comprehensible to the world at large.

## **From Secularisation to the Post Secular**

We live in unprecedented times. A generation or so ago, most social scientists or political commentators would have told you that religion was on the decline. In some circles, it was known as “the Secularisation Thesis”. As the world became more modern, more scientific and technological, more urban and industrial, the traditional bonds of church and religion were loosening; the cultural hold of Christianity on people’s hearts and minds was waning; science and reason would rule human affairs, whilst the things of religion, superstition and theology would gradually move to the margins of public life and silently wither away. And many people welcomed that, since they believed that any incursion of religion into public life represented a diminishment of our human freedom, and was incompatible with modern values of science, reason, enlightenment and progress.

But that’s not what has happened. Instead, we find ourselves confronted by new waves of religious faith that in their novel and unexpected qualities pose considerable new challenges for the way we think, speak and act in relation to religion. What we have had instead is the unexpected (at least to many Western eyes) resurgence of religion as a global political and cultural force. Even Britain, indeed the whole of Europe, is hugely more culturally and religiously diverse in 2015 than in, say, 1945 or 1965. This is largely due to patterns of migration from former colonies such as the British Commonwealth and Eastern Europe. And so one of the characteristics of the past thirty years has been the way in which religion has become newly visible and experienced as global phenomenon of considerable political and cultural power – whether for good or ill.

But this isn’t simply a religious revival; some communities may be more numerous, such as British Islam, but by and large traditional mainstream Christian denominations are really struggling. The most recent statistics on Church of England attendance record for the first time a dip below 1 million weekly attendance. Numerically, all the mainstream (Protestant & RC) denominations are losing members at a catastrophic

rate; in some areas, the Christian churches are kept alive by migrant congregations from Eastern Europe and Africa. So Christianity is institutionally struggling and changing, too.

Another trend alongside religious diversity and decline is that of the mutation and reinvention of what we think of as “religion” – away from institutional and creedal forms into more eclectic, possibly more individualistic forms of spirituality. Hence the rise of those who call themselves “spiritual but not religious”: and for whom, very often, it is not the teachings of the churches, or the figure of Jesus, but the institutional reputations of the churches that keep them away. Perhaps the most serious finding of recent research, and one which is quite relevant to our concerns, is the conclusion that religion is viewed increasingly not as something innocuous or marginal, but, as Linda Woodhead<sup>2</sup> has put it, “a toxic brand”. Reasons given are things like the Catholic Church’s record on the role of women, its opposition to same-sex marriage and its failures on child abuse.

Such resistance to religion comes out in the open in the shape of groups such as the National Secular Society, which continue to keep the flame of secularism and Enlightenment rationality alive. In the face of religion’s new visibility, they continue to argue that religion has no place in the modern world. They would argue that the death of God is the beginning of human freedom. Religion is inherently irrational, infantile and abusive. Such campaigners object to any religiously-motivated intervention in public life, such as policies around same-sex marriage, assisted dying, faith schools, and so on.

Hence the focus of attention on Tim Farron – as an evangelical Christian, his views on sexuality outweighed, for many, other progressive values. He was not trusted to keep his own Biblical views out of public policy – reflecting widespread unease and misunderstanding of how a Christian politician mediates his or her personal values into politics.

As I have put this elsewhere, we find ourselves “between a rock and a hard place” – between the re-emergence of religion on the one hand, often in ways we couldn’t have predicted, alongside continuing and often vociferous resistance to its presence



Bishop Graham Tomlin

in public. This unprecedented co-existence of the sacred and the secular is why I don’t think of our current situation as merely a religious revival, but as something quite novel and distinct. It is clear that against many expectations, religion has not vanished from Western culture. If anything, it is both fascinating and troubling; and we are still struggling to find a framework or narrative to encompass this.

Graham Tomlin, now Bishop of Kensington – who has been heavily involved in community responses to Grenfell Tower – in a recent book<sup>3</sup> described people’s cultural attitudes towards religious faith as follows:

*Not hostile to or uninformed about Christianity, often interested in spiritual questions and prepared to face the difficult issues of mortality and meaning. And yet*

*the Church is the last place they would look for answers.*

### **The Post-Secular Paradox**

The rise of militant Islamism, the growth of non-affiliated spiritualities, together with the marked discomfort towards expressions of religion in public, all reveal significant aspects of the shifting and convoluted fault-lines between religion and secularism. We find ourselves in what some people term a “post-secular” society, in which in which there are paradoxes of belief and unbelief, sacred and secular. As the philosopher Terry Eagleton has put it<sup>4</sup>: “*The world is ... divided between those who believe too much and those who believe too little.*”

I’ve been arguing that, as evidenced in the continuing interest in spirituality and the sacred, people have not lost faith in experiences that offer them a sense of wonder; which enable them to be caught up in a vision larger than themselves; that offer them some kind of personal and moral compass. And yet our culture is sceptical about the shortcomings of organised religion. What is to be done?

### **Learning to “Speak Christian” in a world troubled by religion**

Is it necessarily the case that as the world becomes more religious, then religion becomes more of a problem? How do we balance conflicting ideas of freedom in a liberal democracy; are they absolute, or do they have to be negotiated?

However polarised and fractured the public domain may be within this new post-secular dispensation, I’d want to insist that it is incumbent upon Christians to consider the basis on which they communicate with a public both fascinated and troubled by religion. Everyone, from church leaders and congregations to local activists and campaigners, needs to learn again how to “speak Christian” in these contexts. I suggest that this effectively calls for the recovery of a more *apologetic* dimension to our theology, in terms of Christians being prepared to defend their core principles and convictions *in public*.

### **Apologetics Old and New**

*Apologetics* is the term that refers to a type of Christian discourse that endeavours to offer a defence of the grounds of faith to a range of interlocutors. It has been described<sup>5</sup> as “*the attempt to defend a particular belief or system of beliefs against objections*”.

Traditionally, Christians always have been charged with the task of defending and commending their faith to a wide variety of sceptics and enquirers. Apologetics derives from the Greek term *απολογία* (*apologia*), meaning a carefully-reasoned defence of one’s actions or beliefs, especially in a court of law.

In the first two or three centuries of Christianity an *apologia* or apology came to mean the strategies adopted by Christians to justify their convictions to their religious, political and intellectual adversaries and interlocutors. So apologetics is essentially a question of how to engage with a non-Christian interlocutor in order to persuade that person of the validity of Christian faith and practice.

In contemporary theology, however, apologetics has perhaps somewhat fallen from favour, and has tended to become the exclusive province of mainly North American Protestant Evangelical theologians, referring to rational propositional argument that is intended to lead to conversion. This is not to say that defending and commending the faith should not be carried out as an essential part of Christian witness. However,



Christians today need an entirely different paradigm for their apologetics. And that's why I wonder what can be learned from some of the practices of early Christianity, when the Church was also surrounded by many different faiths.

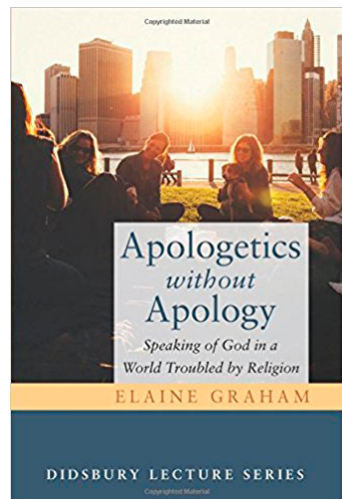
Some brief examples from the New Testament will have to suffice in the time available:

- Beginning with the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) the disciples communicated the Good News through the medium of the cultural and philosophical world-views of their audiences. Acts of the Apostles records how on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.14–36), Peter's address to the crowd was couched in a way that placed Jesus as Messiah, prophet of Israel and fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures.
- The apostle Paul's journey to Thessalonica (Acts 17.1–9) included a visit to a synagogue, where he presented Jesus as the fulfilment of the Jewish Scriptures and prophets, which appeared sufficient to generate a hostile reaction from his audience. But then, in the story of his visit to Athens (Acts 17.16–33), his task of preaching the Gospel switches to the adoption of altogether different philosophical assumptions.
- Then, when on trial in Caesarea (Acts 24.1–8), Paul has to defend himself against the orator Tertullus, he does so by appealing to the Jewish Laws and the Prophets. He is then transferred to Jerusalem (25: 1-12) where he avails himself of his rights as a Roman citizen to be heard by Caesar's court.

So apologetics has always responded to the challenges of its intellectual, religious or political context and attempted to "speak Christian" in terms accessible and comprehensible to people where they are and in ways that make sense of their existing world-views. The primary characteristics and objectives of apologetics during the first two or three centuries of Christian history were these:

- Deliberately adopting the world-views of one's interlocutors to commend the Gospel
- Refutation of ill-informed or specious representations of Christianity
- Responding to enquirers and seekers from beyond the community of faith
- Removal of doubt and obstacles to faith from within and without

Later apologists sought to show points of continuity between Christian thought and Greek philosophy, whilst others presented Christ as the fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures and prophets. Increasingly, as Christianity consolidated its position within the Roman Empire, apologies were addressed to civil authorities, in order to defend the reputation of Christianity against charges of immorality or sedition. Other apologetic arguments were developed in order to uphold those amongst the faithful themselves who were experiencing doubts or persecution, apologetics playing no small part in Christian formation and



nurture as well as the conversion and persuasion of non-believers. The tales of the martyrs may have had a significant apologetic function in this respect.

The first letter of Peter (3:15) offers a study of how Christians in the first couple of centuries negotiated their relationships with the outside world, especially in the face of scepticism from neighbours and hostility or worse from Imperial State power. For them, the main warrant of the Church's credibility (and that of the Gospel) is the proclamation in deed and word of Christ crucified.

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." (1 Peter 3.13-17).*

This is a text forged out of the collective experience of those who perceive themselves as suffering for their faith, which by all accounts was not uncommon amongst first and second century Christian communities. Such a social and political climate called for a particular kind of resilience, which the writer argues rests in the example and inspiration of Christ himself. The community is advised to see no contradiction between whatever difficulties they experience in the present and the reward or vindication that is to come, since this mirrors the logic of Christ's suffering and death and the promise of his resurrection. This is the "hope" that sustains them in their privation.

As the discipline of apologetics developed throughout Christian history, it became a sub-discipline of theology and took particular directions. Historically, it has encompassed evidentialist arguments, such as the historicity of the resurrection or the miracles; philosophical arguments for the existence of God; defences of Christian orthodoxy against theories of evolution or the origins of the universe. Within contemporary theological studies, however, apologetics is somewhat out of vogue and has become associated with a particular kind of Protestant evangelicalism founded on the exercise of largely deductive doctrinal reasoning.

### **Post Secular Apologetics**

I would argue, then, for a Christian apologetics framed less around the criteria of rational, evidentialist argument, and more as something that witnesses, in deed and word, to the wider canvass of an entire lifestyle. It narrates and renders transparent an entire world-view of loyalties, affections – and, most significantly, everyday practices. Apologetics isn't really a discipline of "proof", but more an art of persuasion and testimony, of bearing witness where one's own personal integrity is the greatest warrant.

Such an apologetics of presence and witness is, for Christians, rooted in their response to the initiative of God through Jesus Christ. That's very strong in the first letter of Peter: a sense that apologetics, of commending and defending the faith, is ultimately in the words of the Quaker George Fox, about "letting your lives speak". I would argue that apologetics is best understood as the testimony – in word and deed – to the presence of God *in* the world, addressed *to* the world. That's always a public theology: one that is open to public scrutiny – bilingual, communicative, rooted in, but not confined to, a particular heritage of faith.

So, this “new apologetics” – which in many respects is very old – is, I believe, grounded in an understanding that Christian apologies spring from the experience of participation in the life of God. That includes Christians’ incorporation – traditionally, through baptism – in the activities of God as creator, redeemer and sanctifier, which might be summarised as the missionary work of the Triune God in the world.

I would want to link this post-secular apologetics with the wider category of Christian mission, mindful of the retrieval in recent years of the notion of the *missio Dei* as the fulcrum of Christian presence and witness in the world. The imperative of common grace means evidence and warrant for our faith will be rooted in God’s work in the world, not in creedal or institutional dogma. Discerning and participating in the *missio Dei* takes us beyond the Church, locating God’s activity in the world. This requires a hermeneutic of discernment, participation and witness in order to be fluent in “speaking Christian” to the public square.

So a postsecular, “mission-shaped” style of apologetics might be characterised as having three principal dimensions or movements:

- i) Discerning the actions of God in the world;
- ii) Participating in the practices of God’s mission;
- iii) Explaining and articulating to others the theological values by which such *praxis* is sustained.

As a final observation, I would say that this places a clear onus on Church leaders and theological educators to put renewed energy into basic Christian catechesis and adult formation so that ordinary Christians are better equipped to “speak Christian” with confidence in their daily lives, especially as they face the challenge of justifying and defending the very relevance of the Christian faith in a culture that no longer grants automatic access or credence. The education of the laity, and their “theological literacy”, becomes a pressing priority for the credibility and effectiveness of Christian presence and apologetics. (The RC Church has been saying this since Vatican II).

In much of what I have to say readers may detect an indebtedness to many great historical Christian apologists—such as Schleiermacher’s appeal to the “cultured despisers” of religion, or Thomas Aquinas’ insistence on the marriage of reason and revelation at the heart of Christian theological thinking. Overall, however, it is my intention to capture some of the salient features of an approach to Christian apologetics which is capable of addressing a world that was, like our own, both religiously plural and deeply sceptical.

I see apologetics not as a weapon of conversion, but an expression of hospitality and a gesture of solidarity.

*This talk was delivered to the Wrexham Newman Circle on June 30th 2017.*

Elaine Graham’s book *Apologetics Without Apology* is published by Cascade Books.

## Notes

- 1 *The Problem of Proselytism* by Paul Bickley, published by Theos, 2015
- 2 *That Was the Church that Was* by Andrew Brown and Linda Woodhead, published by Bloomsbury, 2017
- 3 *The Provocative Church* by Graham Tomlin, 4th edition, published by SPCK, 2014
- 4 In a book review in *The Guardian* on November 12th 2014
- 5 *Thinking About Christian Apologetics* by James K Beilby, published by Inter-Varsity Press, 2011.

# “Then keep the antient way”: Henry Vaughan and the Survival of Anglicanism

By Robert Wilcher

Henry Vaughan was born in 1621 in the Usk valley, where—apart from three or four years studying at Oxford and the Inns of Court in London—he spent most of his life. While he was in London, the so-called Long Parliament met for the first time on November 3rd 1640 and he witnessed the beginnings of the revolution that would lead to the abolition of both the Church of England and the monarchy. His father recalled him to Breconshire at the outbreak of civil war and in 1645 he served as a lieutenant in a Royalist troop of horse at the Battle of Rowton Heath near Chester, in which the king’s forces were defeated. He later published elegies on a friend lost in that battle and another killed at the siege of Pontefract Castle early in 1649.

The poet suffered an even greater loss in July 1648, when his younger brother, William, died as a result of fighting for the royal cause. These deaths, the military defeat of the royalist cause, and the execution of Charles I in January 1649—together with the poetry and personal example of George Herbert—transformed Henry Vaughan (not yet thirty years old) from a writer of Cavalier verses into a devotional poet of the first order and an unflinching opponent of the Puritan regime imposed upon South Wales. During this period of defeat and bereavement, Vaughan was composing the poems that were assembled in his 1650 volume, *Silex Scintillans*.

The first of them, “Regeneration”, records his experience of awakening to sin and setting out on a spiritual pilgrimage. In the poems that followed he developed imagery that caught the mood of many of his compatriots, who were living like him in “a gloomie sphere, / Where shadowes thicken, and the Cloud / Sits on the Suns brow all the yeare”.<sup>1</sup> “The Lampe” evokes the “dead night round about” and the flame that briefly lights up “the dark world” is read as an emblem of the poet’s longing for an end to his misery: “I watch / That houre, which must thy life, and mine dispatch.” In the second of several elegies for his brother, he appeals to Christ for relief from the slow-moving hours of mourning:

*Come, come, what doe I here?  
Since he is gone  
Each day is grown a dozen year,  
And each hour one;  
Come, come!  
Cut off the sum . . .*

Such a longing for death comes from despair of any alleviation of his misery in this world.

Another resource is to anticipate an end to hopeless grief not merely in personal death but in “the end of all things”. “Buriall”, for example, implores a halt to the wearisome accumulation



Henry Vaughan

of days: *"Cut then the summe, / Lord haste, Lord come, / O come Lord Jesus quickly!"* This apocalyptic solution is given a political dimension in "The Brittish Church". He imagines the Church—traditionally interpreted as the spouse of Christ—begging her "glorious head" to return and save her from the brutality of men whose behaviour brings to mind those who crucified Christ. While "these here"—the Puritan oppressors—"their *mists*, and *shadows hatch*", their military agents "divide, and stain" what George Herbert had called the "fit aray" of the Church of England. In the second stanza, the ravished Church pleads that Christ will keep a record of the crimes committed against her and her persecuted flock and return quickly to administer justice. This desperate belief that the Second Coming is the only remedy for the historical plight of loyal members of the Church of England is distilled into four lines in the poem "Corruption":

*All's in deep sleep, and night; Thick darknes lyes  
And hatcheth o'r thy people;  
But hark! what trumpet's that? what Angel cries  
Arise! Thrust in thy sickle.*

Before the end of the 1650 volume, however, Vaughan begins to recover a sense of personal agency and historical purpose. The turning-point comes when he takes up a challenge issued by Herbert, whose poetry was widely revered as a definitive expression of the spirit of Anglicanism. Describing one of his poems as a "speciall deed", in which he dedicates his life and talent to the divine "will", Herbert looks forward to a poetic successor – "some kind man" who will not only "set his hand / And heart unto this deed, when he hath read", but "thrust his heart / Into these lines".<sup>2</sup> In "The Match", Vaughan makes an impassioned response both to the role that Herbert's poetry had played in his own spiritual regeneration and to this invitation:

*Dear friend! whose holy, ever-living lines  
Have done much good  
To many, and have checkt my blood,  
My fierce, wild blood that still heaves, and inclines,  
But is still tam'd  
By those bright fires which thee inflam'd;  
Here I join hands, and thrust my stubborn heart  
Into thy Deed,  
There from no Duties to be freed . . .*

As part of his new public task of carrying Herbert's work over into the next generation, he calls upon those who have been languishing like him in the depths of depression to assert their religious allegiance. The poem is appropriately called "Easter-day": *"Awake, awake; and like the Sun, disperse / All mists that would usurp this day."* And in "The Mutinie", speaking like an ancient Israelite in bondage to Babylonian overlords, he urges God to grant him a more active part in resisting the common enemy:

*Let me so strive and struggle with thy foes  
(Not thine alone, but mine too,) that when all  
Their Arts and force are built unto the height  
That Babel-weight  
May prove thy glory, and their shame.*

Later poems in the 1650 volume entertain the thought that the nation's problems may be resolved as part of the historical process rather than at the end of time. "The Constellation" vividly evokes the horrors of civil war, in which both King and Church are victims of the "black self-wil" of Puritan fanatics: "*The sons the father kil, / The Children chase the mother, and would heal / The wounds they give, by crying, zeale.*" But in the final verse, Vaughan looks to a better future:

*Give to thy spouse her perfect, and pure dress,  
Beauty and holiness,  
And so repair these Rents, that men may see  
And say, Where God is, all agree.*

At this juncture, we need to pause for a moment to look at the situation of loyal members of the Church of England in Britain, and more specifically in Vaughan's part of Wales, in 1650. The institution that had emerged in the reign of Edward VI and been established by the Elizabethan Settlement in 1559 was more liturgical than theological in emphasis. Its Protestant assurance was grounded in a life of worship made possible by the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible in English; and it had placed at the centre of its agenda the project of building up a Christian commonwealth through corporate worship.<sup>3</sup>

As an adolescent, Vaughan had participated in this tradition; and when he went to Oxford, at the end of the 1630s, he would have encountered the kind of Anglicanism that had been promoted by William Laud, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Laud sought to restore the order and beauty of pre-Reformation services as far as was compatible with the patterns of worship enjoined by the 1559 Book of Common Prayer; and Francis Mansell, the Master of Jesus College during Vaughan's residence, was committed to carrying through a programme of reform. In 1636, the chapel had been enlarged and embellished, and the services experienced by the young student from Breconshire would have been highly ceremonial.<sup>4</sup> A critic has imagined how, in the course of the 1640s, Vaughan must have "watched with horror the gradual extinction of the earthly manifestations of Laudian Anglicanism".<sup>5</sup>

The Parliament at Westminster, dominated by Puritans who regarded Laud's reforms as tantamount to a reversion to Roman Catholicism, passed a series of measures that systematically dismantled the established Church of England. The use of the Book of Common Prayer was forbidden, either in church or in private; the observance of the feasts of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun was banned; crucifixes, fonts, and vestments were removed from churches; altars were replaced by tables; and in 1646, the office of bishop was abolished. Once the king had lost the civil war and then his head, there was little that could be done in the open to preserve the Church of England. But there was a clandestine movement of what has been called "Anglican Survivalism", inspired by Henry Hammond, former chaplain to Charles I, and spearheaded by a group of younger controversialists, who were to hold high ecclesiastical office after the restoration of the monarchy and the Church of England in 1660.<sup>6</sup> These active opponents of Puritan reforms, several of whom had taken refuge in Wales, used the printing press to mount "a wide-ranging and resolute defence of the pre-1640 Church of England".<sup>7</sup>

Hammond was well aware, however, that the survival of Anglicanism would depend

upon something more fundamental than the continuity of its clergy and the vigour of its apologists. In 1654, he wrote that “unless some care be taken otherwise to maintain the Communion of our Church, it is to little purpose what any write in defence of it”<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Bishop Joseph Hall urged “orthodox and genuine sons of the Church of England” to enter into a ‘*Holy Fraternity of Mourners in Sion*’, whose “private Devotions” would hold the community together in the absence of opportunities for regular communal worship.<sup>9</sup> It was precisely on this issue—how to succour the faithful remnant of Anglicans and maintain its spiritual identity in a time of persecution—that Henry Vaughan’s endeavours as a writer in the first half of the 1650s were concentrated. And the local situation he found himself in at this time made this task even more pressing.

### The Gospel in Wales

On February 22nd 1650, an Act for the Better Propagation and Preaching of the Gospel in Wales was passed at Westminster. Under its terms, a group of local commissioners were empowered to remove clergy from their parishes. As a result, two hundred and seventy-five ejections took place across Wales, of which twenty-five were in Breconshire alone. Among them, Vaughan’s twin brother was evicted from the local church of Llansantffraed and a close friend, Thomas Powell, from the nearby parish of Cantref for “Adhering to the King, and Reading Common Prayer”.<sup>10</sup> Until suitable candidates could be found to fill the empty places, itinerant preachers were drafted in. In practice, however, almost every church within walking distance of Llansantffraed remained closed throughout the 1650s.<sup>11</sup> After the publication of the 1650 *Silex Scintillans*, then, Vaughan deemed it his duty – as the self-appointed successor to George Herbert – to devote his literary talents to keeping alive a sense of Anglican communion in the absence of services according to the traditional liturgy.

While new poems that would serve this purpose were accumulating, Vaughan made a contribution to the project of Anglican survival in a collection of prose meditations and prayers entitled *The Mount of Olives*, which was printed in 1652. The subtitle he chose for the work – “Solitary Devotions” – acknowledges that communal worship can no longer take place in “sacred buildings” and that “the Church” must now subsist primarily in the hearts of those who remain loyal to the tradition embodied in the Prayer Book. The work is, in effect, an alternative to the outlawed liturgy for private devotional use by Bishop Hall’s “Holy Fraternity of Mourners in Sion”. In a dedicatory epistle, Vaughan recalls that there is divine precedent for the exile of good men from the comforts of a house of their own: “The *Sonne of God* himselfe (when *he was here*), had no place to put his head in; And his Servants must not think the present measure too hard, seeing their *Master* himself took up his *nights-lodging* in the cold *Mount of Olives*.” In the body of the work, a prayer in time of persecution spells out the consequences of Parliament’s religious policy in South Wales:



Archbishop William Laud

*The wayes of Zion do mourne, our beautiful gates are shut up, and the Comforter that should relieve our souls is gone far from us. Thy Service and thy Sabbaths, thy own sacred Institutions and the pledges of thy love are denied unto us; Thy ministers are trodden down, and the basest of the people are set up in thy holy place.*

In a short *Exhortation* to the "pious Reader" he draws upon insights gained during his own struggle with despair: "*Think not that thou art alone upon this Hill, there is an innumerable company both before and behinde thee. Those with their Palms in their hands, and these expecting them*". The sense of isolation that might weaken Anglican resolve is countered with a reminder that the Church at its most fundamental is neither a building nor an institution but the "*innumerable company*" (in this world and the next) that makes up the living Body of Christ.

### **A new collection**

Asserting the validity of the liturgical calendar that had governed worship in the Church of England, Vaughan opens the new collection of poems added to *Silex Scintillans* in 1655 with "Ascension-day" and "Ascension-Hymn", and follows these at intervals with "White Sunday", "Palm-Sunday", and "Trinity-Sunday". Throughout the 1650 and 1655 collections he condemns the Puritan legislators for attempting to eradicate features of Anglican communal worship. In "Christ's Nativity", he angrily resents the prohibition of Christmas celebrations – "*Alas, my God! Thy birth now here / Must not be numbred in the year*"; and in "Dressing", he insists on imagining the reception of the "*mysticall Communion*" of the Eucharist – denied him according to the traditional rite – with reverential gestures that are no longer countenanced by the law: "*Then kneel my soul, and body; kneel, and bow; / If Saints, and Angels fal down, much more thou.*"

The Prayer Book services of Matins and Evensong are replaced by poems with titles that indicate private devotion rather than shared worship: "The Morning-Watch" and "The Evening-Watch". In the first of these, he participates with the whole of the natural world in a tribute of praise, in defiance of Puritan efforts to suppress such ritual adoration:

*. . . hark! In what rings,  
And hymning circulations the quick world  
Awakes, and sings;  
The rising winds,  
And falling springs,  
Birds, beasts, all things  
Adore him in their kinds.  
Thus all is hurled  
In sacred hymns, and order, the great chime  
And symphony of nature.*

And in "The Bird", the dawn chorus provides faithful members of the Church of England with a natural substitute for the Prayer Book service of morning worship, which is in sharp contrast to the gloomy practices of the regime that has banned its use.

The contemplation of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost reinforces the poet's determination to defend his vision of the true church against the "distractions" of Puritan pretensions to divine authority. Many of the radical preachers claimed that



they were illuminated by the same spiritual fire that had enabled the Apostles “to speak with other tongues” (Acts 2:1-4). In “White Sunday”, Vaughan dismisses the vain boasts of such men and turns to the Bible as the surest source of inspiration and truth:

*Can these new lights be like to those,  
These lights of Serpents like the Dove?  
Thou hadst no gall, ev'n for thy foes,  
And thy two wings were Grief and Love.*

*Though then some boast that fire each day,  
And on Christs coat pin all their shreds;  
Not sparing openly to say,  
His candle shines upon their heads:*

*Yet while some rays of that great light  
Shine here below within thy Book,  
They never shall so blind my sight  
But I will know which way to look.*

He directs his mockery at a particular dissenting group known as the “New Lights” that had gathered around Morgan Llwyd in Wrexham during the late 1640s. Llwyd became one of the itinerant preachers entrusted with the task of spreading the Gospel in Wales, who arrogated to themselves the divine favour granted to Job, when “his candle shined upon my head” (Job, 29:3).

Overtures were made to Vaughan by the victorious party, but unlike others in his local community, he would not forsake his political or religious allegiances. His refusal to collaborate with the Brecon authorities is expressed in a number of poems, most powerfully in *The Proffer*, which opens with a stern rebuke – “*Be still black Parasites, / Flutter no more*” – and contemptuously rejects their “*Sorcery / And smooth seducements*”: “*I'll not stuff my story / With your Commonwealth and glory*”. In his private capacity, he will sacrifice neither his support for monarchy nor his hope for the crown of immortality that awaits the faithful soul:

*Shall my short hour, my inch,  
My one poor sand,  
And crum of life, now ready to disband  
Revolt and flinch,  
And having born the burden all the day,  
Now cast at night my Crown away?*

And in the final stanza, he assumes his public role as the champion of persecuted Anglicanism as he admonishes and encourages others in the same predicament as himself:

*Then keep the antient way!  
Spit out their phlegm  
And fill thy brest with home; think on  
thy dream:*



*Oliver Cromwell*

*A calm, bright day!  
A Land of flowers and spices! the word given,  
If these be fair, O what is Heaven!*

Although the Propagation Act lapsed early in 1653 and Oliver Cromwell put in place less extreme policies for Wales when he became Protector in December of that year, Vaughan never accepted the new order of things. The preface to the augmented *Silex Scintillans*, dated 30 September 1654, dedicated the poems pointedly “to the Church, under the *protection and conduct* of her *glorious Head*.” That head was, of course, ultimately Christ, whose Second Coming was Vaughan’s surest hope for peace and justice; but in the context of history, the head of the Church of England was now Charles II, in exile over the water, but ready – when the time was right – to return to England and restore the outlawed church as well as his own kingdom. The volume ends with an appeal to God for a future dispensation in which the people will be “*like true sheep, all in one fold*” and blessings will flow “*as fast, as persecutions now*”:

*So shall we know in war and peace  
Thy service to be our sole ease,  
With prostrate souls adoring thee,  
Who turn’d our sad captivity!*

*Dr Robert Wilcher is an honorary fellow of the Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon. He is one of the editors of a new complete works of Henry Vaughan which will be published by Oxford University Press this summer.*

## Notes

- 1 ‘Death. A Dialogue’. All examples of Vaughan’s poetry and prose are quoted from *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, edited by L.C. Martin, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).
- 2 See ‘Obedience’, in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, edited by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 374-5.
- 3 This account is derived from John Wall’s book, *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp. 1-6.
- 4 See Graham Parry, ‘Vaughan and Laudianism’, *Scintilla*, 13 (2009), pp 186-7.
- 5 Leah S. Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), p. 171.
- 6 The term was given currency by John Morrill in ‘The Church in England, 1642-9’, in *Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-1649*, edited by John Morrill (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 89-90.
- 7 See John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 11.
- 8 Quoted by John W. Packer, *The Transformation of Anglicanism 1643-1660* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 46.
- 9 Joseph Hall, *The Holy Order, Or, Fraternity of Mourners in Sion* (London, 1654), pp. 3-5.
- 10 Quoted by F.E. Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan: A Life and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 110.
- 11 See Noel K. Thomas, *Henry Vaughan: Poet of Revelation* (Worthing: Churchman Publishing, 1986), p. 35.

# Circle Programmes

## All Circles

26 April	Manchester Newman Lecture	<i>Sarah Teather</i>
17 May	London Newman Lecture	<i>Francis Campbell</i>
June	National AGM	

## Aberdeen

Contact: Margaret Smith, 01224 314566

## Birmingham

Contact: Winifred Flanagan, winifredflanagan@gmail.com

3 February	Newman Reading Group	
22 March	Oscott and the Experience of the First World War and its Aftermath	<i>Dr Judith Champ</i>

## Cleveland

Contact: Judith Brown, 01642 814977, browns01@globalnet.co.uk

14 January	New Year Lunch, Parkmore Hotel, Eaglescliffe	
28 February	Communities of hope: Parishes without Priests	<i>Frank McDermott</i>
20 March	Living and dying in the Middle Ages	<i>Dr Peter Firth</i>
25 April	Mater Admirabilis', the birth of a global sacred icon	<i>Dr Stefano Cracolici</i>

## Coventry

Contact: Colin Roberts cjroberts08@talktalk.net

4 January	Epiphany Mass & Party	
20 January	Christian Unity Service, Chapel of Unity, Coventry Cathedral	
30 January	Blessed Dominic Barberi	<i>Fr. Julian Booth</i>
5 March	The Church and the Environment-Laudato si	<i>David McLoughlin</i>
10 March	Day of Recollection	
24 April	Migration and refugees in post Brexit Britain	<i>Daniel Hale</i>

## Croydon

Contact: Arthur Hughes, arthur.hughes116@gmail.com

13 January	New Year Party	
7 February	Faith In Politics. Young people talk about their year in Catholic Parliamentary & Public Affairs Internships	
6 March	Annual Lenten Mass	<i>Bishop Paul Hendricks</i>

## Ealing

Contact: Kevin Clarke Kevin.Clarke@keme.co.uk

18 January	Following Jesus as Pentecostals	<i>Rev Richard Buxton</i>
15 February	Baptists: Holy Fools or Children of the Reformation?	<i>Rev Dr Simon Woodman /Rev Dr Ruth Gouldbourne</i>
15 March	Grace, Works and Sanctification: Methodist Reformation Emphases	<i>Rev Calvin Samuel</i>
19 April	A Quaker View	TBA

## Eastbourne & Bexhill

Contact: John Carmody, 01323 726334, johnmh22@outlook.com

22 January	A retired Kenyan farmer revisits food growing today	<i>John Fowler</i>
19 March	The Fall and original sin revisited	<i>Revd Keith Williams</i>

## Edinburgh

Contact: Lyn Cronin, lyncronin@btinternet.com

16 January	Read the Bible but – "What is Truth?" (Jn18:38)	<i>Jeff Bagnall</i>
20 February	Thou shall not .....! Negative pedagogy, pastoral ministry and "Yes" to life	<i>Fr Jim Lawler</i>

## Glasgow

Contact: Arthur McLay, mclay@btinternet.com

22 February	The Church and the Marketplace	<i>Professor Christopher Moore</i>
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- 22 March Aspects of Islam *Dr Anthony Allison*
- Hertfordshire** Contact: Priscilla O'Reilly, 01727 864404, peor738@gmail.com
- 20 January A Muslim view of Our Lady *Mrs Farukh Sheikh*
- 18 February Newman and English Sensibility *Dr Jacob Phillips*
- 24 February Quiet Day led by *Fr Frank Johnson*
- 15 April AGM and talk The Apostolic Succession: Should the Catholic Church Have the Monopoly? *Pastor Bernd Rapp*
- Hull & East Riding** Contact: Andrew Carrick, 01482 500181
- LLanelli** Contact: M. Noot, 01554 774309, marianoot@hotmail.co.uk
- London** Contact: Patricia, 0208 504 2017
- Manchester & N. Cheshire** Contact: Chris Quirke, 0161 941 1707 dcq@mac.com
- 20 March Discipleship: An Unmarked Road *Bishop John Arnold*
- 26 April Manchester Newman Lecture *Sarah Teather*
- North Gloucestershire** Contact: Stephanie Jamison, 01242 539810, sjamison@irlen-sw.com
- 6 February New Light on Old Psalms *Dr Gordon Wenham*
- 6 March Reimagining faith: how developments in religious art reflect changing perspectives on faith *Rev Katie McClure*
- 3 April Mendicant Orders in the Church from the Thirteenth Century to the present day *Fr Richard Ounsworth OP*
- North Merseyside** Contact: John Potts, john\_potts41@hotmail.com
- 15 February Low Mass in the Extra-Ordinary Form and Talk – Tradition means Life *Fr. James Mawdsley FSSP*
- 22 March Isaiah in Holy Week: A discussion of the use of texts in the Jewish and Christian traditions *Rabbi Dan Lieberman/ Deacon Ryan Cook*
- 19 April A Day in the Life of a Hospital Chaplain *Natasha Pritchard*
- North Staffordshire** Contact: Vincent Owen, 01782 619698
- Rainham** Contact: Marie Casey, bmcasey@btinternet.com
- Surrey Hills** Contact: Gerald Williams, guillaume30@btinternet.com
- Swansea** Contact: Mario von der Ruhr, m.v.d.ruhr@swansea.ac.uk
- 29 January "The Sultan and the Saint": Francis of Assisi's Encounter with Sultan Malik al-Kamil of Egypt *Professor David Britton*
- March TBC *Professor M. D. Stringer*
- Tyneside** Contact: Ann Dunn, jadnew@btinternet.com
- 31 January The Our Father. An Early History of the Lord's Prayer *Bernard Robinson*
- 22 March AGM and talk TBC
- Wimbledon** Contact: Bill Russell, 0208 946 4265, william\_russell@talktalk.net
- Worcester** Contact: Heather Down, 01905 21535, hcdown@gmail.com
- Wrexham** Contact: Maureen Thomas, maureenthomas@uwclub.net
- 12 January AGM and Christmas Party
- 26 January Looking Outward after Vatican II
- York** Contact: Judith Smeaton, 01904 704525, judith.smeaton@btinternet.com