



The Diocese of
Canterbury

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

CANTERBURY DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF READERS

Special points of interest:

- Reader Ministry Debate
- Continuing Ministerial Education
- Readers Residential Weekend
- Mark's Portrait of Jesus
- Suggested Reading

Newsletter

Spring 2006

Welcome to the Spring edition of your Newsletter. Our focus this month is on the Gospel of Mark and I hope that you will find it of interest.

As the General Synod debates the future of Reader ministry, we have the opportunity to influence the debate. It is therefore important that we keep ourselves up to date with the debate and to add our voice where appropriate. In this issue you will find web links to enable you to learn more about the debate. I would welcome your comments on Reader Ministry for publication. Also included is Anne McVittie's excellent reflection on the Readers Residential Weekend at Aylesford Priory in November of last year.

If you have yet to submit your Reader Agreement to Warden Hilary, please do so by the end of March 2006. It is an important part of your ministry as it sets out the key activities of your ministry and provides you with the opportunity to discuss your training and development needs with your incumbent.

More inside.....

Dates for your Diary - 2006

Saturday 18 March - **Readers Day including short AGM** at Harrietsham Village Hall (see separate communication)

9 – 11 June – **Younger Readers 18-45!! Conference** – London Colney

12-14 June – **Diocesan Residential Conference** at University of Surrey, Guildford.

For more details please see the Diocesan website:

<http://www.canterbury.anglican.org/general/index.htm>

Sunday 9th July at **6 p.m.** - **Admissions and Re-commissioning Service** at
Canterbury Cathedral

Reader Ministry Debate

General Synod February 2006

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:6

Reader Ministry came under the spotlight at General Synod in February when Nigel Holmes from Carlisle introduced his Private Member's motion. The motion as amended and carried, read:

“That this Synod, aware that the work of the ten thousand Readers is crucial to the mission of the Church, request the Archbishops' Council to consider how this nationally accredited office should be developed, and Readers more fully and effectively deployed, in the light of the welcome recent introduction of a great variety of patterns of voluntary local ministry, both lay and ordained.”

For more information please refer to the following websites:

Background note:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/gsmisc812a.rtf>

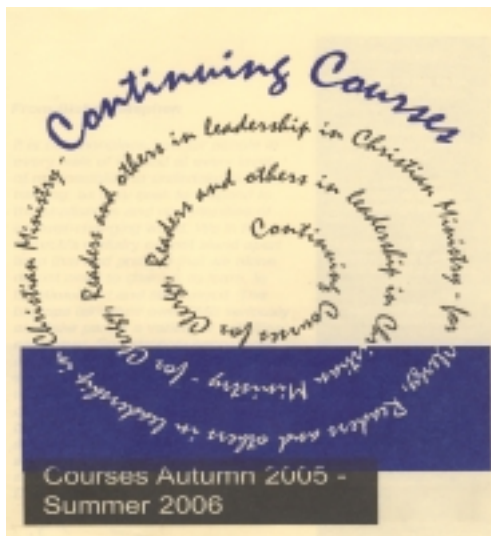
Note from Ministry Division:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/gsmisc812b.rtf>

Audio of the debate: <http://217.207.180.12/synod/session0611.wax>

The debate is set to continue throughout the year and we are all encouraged to add our voices to the debate. Your next opportunity will be at the *Readers Day at Harrietsham* – DON'T BE LEFT OUT! We Readers act as bridges into their local community, whether at work, at home or in church. A bridge between lay and ordained, a bridge between the church and the world. As Bishop Graham set out at our Swanwick conference last year, the Reader walks a tightrope between the church and the world. How do you think our reader ministry should be shaped in the 21st Century?

As well as attending the Readers Day on Saturday 18 March. Why not let the editor know your views for publication in this newsletter. The editor will be pleased to receive your comments at david.r.kemp@btinternet.com



Continuing Ministerial Education (CME)

"Everyone undertakes in-service training as they seek to respond to an ever-changing world. We in the Church's ministry cannot stand apart"

+Stephen

The **Diocese of Canterbury** has launched the 2005/06 series of courses available until Summer 2006. Bishops Stephen and Graham encourage us to take part in some form of training each year. Why not take a look at the Diocesan Booklet "Continuing Courses Autumn 2005 – Summer 2006" to see what courses you would like to book..... If you have any suggestions for future courses please send them to our Warden; Hilary.

Basic Enneagram Courses – A weekend course for those with no previous knowledge of the Enneagram.

What is "The Enneagram?"

It is a tool of compassion which helps us to understand ourselves and our motivations. It describes nine different personality styles and teaches that no one type is a better than another but that each of us approaches life seeing it through a different lens of assumptions and perceptions. The Enneagram encourages us to make sense of our own personalities and to access possibilities for change within ourselves.

A Course date: Friday 28 April – Sunday 30 April 2006 at St Peter's Church Centre, Ditton, Nr Maidstone. Price £45.00 including books, For more details please contact Rev. Margi Walker, 1 Ensigne Cottages, Shalmsford Street, Chartham, CT4 7RF (01227) 738690

Ridley Hall Cambridge – Resource and Refresh provided especially for resourcing and refreshing Readers. It is a rolling programme of short residential events in April and September, each year. If you would like further information – dates of future events, programmes and speakers either see www.ridley.cam.ac.uk or write to: The Administrator, Reader R&R, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, CB3 9HG.

Readers Residential Weekend

Aylesford Priory
18 - 20 November 2005

Anne McVitte

Enriching our ministry: receiving, reflecting and responding – an exploration of spirituality through the senses.

To begin at the end: among the comments made at the Sunday morning round-up session were that the weekend had been as integrated experience of spirituality; a helpful mixture of experience and practical resources; it would take time to process our experiences and respond; and did we need more IT expertise and courses in PowerPoint?

What lead up to these comments? On Friday evening canon Peter Brett started us off with a thoughtful reflection and discussion on the life of prayer. Aided by helpful handouts. Lest we should doze off the first question we discussed in pairs was, “Do I believe in God?”

Come Saturday and , after Morning Prayer and a hearty breakfast, we joined the “Carousel”. Stop for a moment to reflect that this is a “merry-go-round”. Sharing from their gifts, expertise and enthusiasm in a most generous way our three speakers brought joy and freshness to the “Carousel”.

Seeing: the global language of the visual artist

In three groups we joined the Carousel at different points. I started with Slade-trained artist Dinah Roe Kendall whose vivid and striking paintings of the Gospel scenes make a powerful impact through facial expressions. Gesture, body language and composition. The scenes are depicted in modern settings in a style reminiscent of Stanley Spencer. We gained much from sharing our reactions as Dinah’s husband Nigel projected her pictures. Dinah’s conviction is that art isa a global language transcended all barriers. Her paintings speak to children as well as adults and have moved prisoners to tears. They are beautifully reproduced in her book “Allegories of Heaven”, incorporating Gospel passages from “ The Message” translation (www.piquant.net ISBN 1- 903689 – 12-0).

The labyrinth; a walking meditation

My next step was the labyrinth which was not so much a sensory experience as a whole body, mind and spirit experience. I find the labyrinth a paradox. By walking a highly constrained and confined path you are set free from the present preoccupations into a calmer, more integrated realm. Perhaps this is not surprising since paradox, mystery and enigma are keynotes of our religious experience. Among other things, what the centuries-old practice of walking the labyrinth does is to provide “the sacred space where the thinking mind and the imaginative heart can flow together” (quoted from the handout on the day).

It was the Rev Carolin Clapperton, curate of St Mary of Charity, Faversham, who introduced us to the history and use of the labyrinth. Using masking tape she had formed a labyrinth on the hall floor. Each of us in turn set off on our walking meditation after Carolyn had lit a candle and said a prayer. As we compared experiences it was clear that these were varied with some elements in common. Words are no substitute for a feet-in experience. Perhaps in a Quiet Garden or Abbey. Carolyn showed us a “finger walk” labyrinth made in clay that had enabled a blind man to have a meaningful labyrinth experience. She is very willing to talk to parish groups (Tel: 01795 538334).

Spirituality through hearing: sounds and silence

Dr Colin Baker’s lively presentation was stimulating and enjoyable. A worship leader at Holy Trinity, Margate, he covered a range of topics: sounds we like, dislike. Sounds of nature, hymn tunes, the interplay of music and words, the harmonising of music and visual images and more. We also explored hearing loss and deafness in the context of spirituality.

Colin’s presentation moved smoothly from music with accompanying visuals to video clips and back. This highlighted the potential of modern IT techniques to enhance worship and spiritual experience, as well as the need for us and our parishes to become more skilled in these techniques. His comprehensive handout, including references to books and musical pieces, provides a wealth of material for further exploration.

Go... to love and serve the Lord

At the Eucharist on Sunday, Bishop Graham preached on Christ the Servant King, reminding us that Christ’s authority is a serving, grace-rooted, “for us” authority. Our hope and security in Christ free us from self-concern to serve others. We returned home much enriched by all we had experienced and our worship and fellowship together. Bishop Graham had spoken of authentic Christian spirituality being transformative. We look for this in ourselves and our parishes.

Thanks be to God... and many others!

A Portrait of Jesus through the eyes of Mark	The Editor
--	------------

Here we will reflect on how the narrative of Mark's gospel portrays the identity of Jesus and its relevance to the twenty-first century. To achieve this I will examine the various titles attributed to Jesus by Mark including the motifs of the "Messianic Secret" and the "Suffering Servant."

Christ or Messiah

Mark begins his narrative by describing his book as "the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). We will therefore use the term "Christ" or "Messiah" as the first step in revealing Mark's portrait of Jesus. The Greek word *christos* or "anointed" translates in the Septuagint from the Hebrew word "Messiah". Christ is therefore equivalent to the Hebrew "Messiah", "God's Anointed". The narrative of Mark makes it clear that Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah enjoining silence on demoniacs (3:11-12) and on the disciples whenever they confronted him. This led to the hypothesis of the "Messianic Secret" and is considered to have been introduced by Mark to explain why Jesus was rejected in his lifetime but proclaimed as Messiah following his death and resurrection. The secrecy motif is concerned with the aspect of Jesus' ministry where he sought to maintain an element of secrecy about his own person and work (Tuckett 1983: 1). Before Passion Week, perhaps indicating that Jesus became a reluctant political Messiah, he deliberately avoided referring to himself as "Messiah" or even allowing others to use it of him (Räsänen 1990). However once Peter gave it to him (8:29), he accepted the title and immediately ordered his disciples not to tell. Despite this, "Messiah" became one of the incriminating semi-political charges brought forward as a theological trap by the high priest at the trial of Jesus (14:61). Jesus accepted it as true (14:62), knowing it would bring an instant charge of blasphemy (14:64).

Son of David

Closely linked with the Greek *christos* is the main Jewish messianic term "Son of David." In Jewish terms this means earthly kingship. While we cannot know why the blind beggar used the term of Jesus, Mark's reasoning is clear (10:47). In his narrative the crowd shouts with great expectation at the triumphal entry of Jesus (11:9). For them, reflecting Hebrew thought, the word "Messiah" specifically meant the coming of God's kingdom, a restored Davidic kingdom, as prophesied by Isaiah Son of Amoz. Although Matthew cites the "Son of David" (Mt 21:9), Mark does not make this explicit (11:10). The Jews may have thought only of an earthly and human "Son of David," but for Jesus, the position had supernatural status (12:35-37) equated with "Messiah." This is so important that Mark has Jesus introduce the subject himself. It

is not added for controversy or as a trick question from his enemies. Jesus makes the point himself to correct a limited and humanistic understanding of the title “Son of David.”

Son of God

The final title used by Mark in his opening sentence (1:1) is “Son of God,” occurring at pivotal moments it brings together the supernatural and human sides of Jesus. The focus is on a powerful Jesus, healing, exorcising, working miracles and teaching with unprecedented authority (Anderson 1976). Notwithstanding the “Messianic Secret”, the transcendent glory of Jesus breaks through. Jesus is given divine accreditation at baptism (1:11) and at transfiguration (9:7). Later Jesus emerged victorious over Satan and his demons who knew his true identity (1:34). At Caesarea Philippi (8: 27-33), Peter confessed Jesus as Messiah or Christ. The most significant confession breaks from the lips of the Roman Centurion at the foot of the cross (15:39) (Anderson p48). Lohmeyer in Anderson suggests,

“The Son of God is not primarily human but a divine figure... not merely endowed with the power of God, but is himself divine in his nature... his word ... work... and essence. Yet Mark’s Jesus appears ... distinctly human who defies Pilate and travels the lowly and obscure way of the cross (8: 11-13).”

Son of Man as the Suffering Servant

Despite the suffering and death of Jesus featuring prominently in Mark’s passion narrative, Jesus is slow to emerge as the suffering servant. Peter’s identification of Jesus as the Christ, Gk. *theios aner*, a divine man working miracles (8:29), forced Jesus to inform his disciples of his forthcoming rejection, death and rising again (8:31). However at this point there is some ambiguity between suffering and glory. For the Son of Man is also “the Son of the Blessed One” (14:61) and “the King of Israel” (15:32), possessed of supernatural powers (13:21-22) whose coming in power and glory is awaited by all (Dan. 7:13). In Mark’s gospel Jesus does not call himself servant as used by Isaiah 52:13, instead he used the title “Son of Man” coming to serve and give up his life as a ransom for many (10:45). While Deutero Isaiah 53: 10-11 portrays the servant as one who has come to suffer, there is no suggestion that the servant is divine, or if it is collective or individual. In Mark, Jesus took the suffering and triumphs predicted of the Servant in Isaiah, and used them to explain the work of the Messiah (8:31). Here Jesus sees himself as the divine individual (12:37), and bridged the gap between suffering and glory.

We now have a picture of Jesus as a divine, supernatural and powerful figure and yet intensely human with fully human emotions (14:33-34). Evidence of divinity can be seen in Mark with John the Baptist depicted as messenger and forerunner prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 1:2-3), and Jesus directly equated with God. Isaiah’s original description of the coming of Yahweh is in Mark transferred to the coming of Jesus. Conforming to this, John indicates the divine status of Jesus, describing him as one more powerful than he (1:7). The nature-miracles (Sanders 1993: 154-157), calming of the storm (4:41) and walking on water (6:48), further confirm divine status and demonstrate Jesus acting as Creator-God. For Jesus’ enemies, his claim to forgive sins (2:7) to override the Sabbath (2:28: 3:4) and to be the Messiah and God’s Son (14:61-

62) were sufficient to indicate that Jesus claimed to be divine. Their rejection of these claims confirm that they did involve a claim to deity. They would not have dared to invent such a blasphemous claim, although clearly they were ready to seize upon it and use it to their advantage.

When Jesus disclosed that he had come to serve and give up his life as a ransom for many (10:45), he chose for himself the title “Son of Man” . Jewish belief is that upon death humanity goes to the grave until the end of time when body and soul are raised on the last day. Therefore Jesus must have accepted himself as the apocalyptic Son of Man, foresaw his death trusting that God would raise him up on the third day. For me this paints a picture of Jesus reflected by Mark and the early church. An apocalyptic figure, returning at the end of time, a suffering figure and the fully human Jesus.

How is Mark’s portrait relevant to us in the twenty-first century?

Mark paints a multifaceted picture of Jesus. A divine supernatural figure emerges, intensely human with fully human emotions. Someone who has suffered the worst that society can throw at him – death on a cross and yet who offers profound hope. It rises to a crescendo in 8: 29, with Jesus asking “Who do you say I am?” Here Mark challenges his readers to answer for themselves. Brueggemann (1993) writes of a three-storied universe seeking to reflecting biblical evangelism in our post-modern world. Each story reflecting different aspects of life in society with its own particular needs and positive or indifferent images of Jesus. The various titles of Jesus discussed in this essay must be unlocked through effective teaching of the Christian faith. This should allow people the opportunity to answer the question “Who do you say I am?” for themselves. Mark wrote his gospel responding to the needs of Christians in house-church communities with whom he was in contact. Like us today Mark’s first listeners were well aware of their own weaknesses and failings and needed to hear the Christian message of Christ who understands their suffering and offers real hope. It is a key message for us to understand through the actions of Christ on the cross that we can be forgiven and restored in Christ

Mark’s portrait of Jesus is very relevant to us at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Our task in the Christian church is to identify new ways of communicating this portrait of Jesus and reveal its secret to a sub-Christian world who cannot echo Peter’s response “You are the Christ” (8:29).

Further Reading	The Editor
------------------------	-------------------

If you are inspired by Mark's portrait of Jesus and wish to explore his ideas in more detail. Why not seek out the following:

Suggested Reading for further study

Anderson, H. (1976), *The Gospel of Mark*, London: Oliphants.

Brueggemann, W. (1993), *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism*, Nashville: Abingdon

Culmann, O. (1959), *The Christology of the New Testament*, London: A&C Black.

Farrer, A. (1951), *A Study in Mark*, London: A&C Black

Hanson, K.C. & Oakman, D.E. (1998), *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts*, Minneapolis: Fortress.

Hendriksen, W. (1975), *Mark*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust.

Räisänen, H. (1990), *The Messianic Secret in Mark's Gospel*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark

Sanders, E.P. (1993), *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, London: Penguin.

Stanton, G. (2002), *The Gospels and Jesus*, Oxford: OUP.

Tuckett, C. (ed) (1983), *The Messianic Secret*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

We do hope that you have found this edition informative and interesting. As you will be aware we would like to issue Newsletters and other documents concerning your Reader Ministry by e-mail. To help us, please ensure that we have your correct e-mail address by advising any changes to our Hon. Secretary, Donald Baldwin. Of course if you do not use e-mail we will continue to send items by surface mail.

Please send your comments or items for future editions by e-mail or write to David Kemp, Reader at Holy Cross, Bearsted with St Mary, Thurnham at my address below.

Warden:

Hilary Richter
The Farmhouse
Acrise Place
Acrise
Folkestone
Kent CT18 8JX
E-mail: hrichter@diocant.org

Secretary:

Donald Baldwin
11 Woodland Way
Woodnesborough
Sandwich
Kent CT13 0NG
E mail: donaldrbaldwin@supanet.com

Editor: David Kemp
21 Fulbert Drive
Bearsted
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 4PU
E-mail: david.r.kemp@btinternet.com