



The Diocese of
Canterbury

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

CANTERBURY DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION OF READERS

Special points of interest:

- Forthcoming Reader Admissions and Re-Commissioning Service
- Readers Day and AGM
- Continuing Ministerial Education
- CRC Younger Readers Conference
- Suggested Reading
- Can God be discerned through the Arts?
- Isaiah's faith in God for the well being of God's people

Newsletter

Summer 2006

Welcome to the Summer edition of your Newsletter. Our focus this month is on Reader Ministry and the various conferences that have taken place to help us define the footprint of our distinctive ministry. Focusing on how we live out our ministry, take a moment to consider Isaiah and the faith in God that he demonstrated.

My thanks go to John Mulrenan who writes "Can God be discerned through the Arts?" and Fiona Clay for allowing me to publish her reflections on the "Younger Readers Conference." I am always looking for more articles, so please keep them coming.

More inside...

We look forward to our forthcoming Reader Admissions and Re-Commissioning Service at Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday 9 July. All are welcome. Please note that the service will now begin at 5.30pm.

Sunday 9th July at 5.30 pm - Admissions and Re-Commissioning Service at Canterbury Cathedral

**Readers Admissions and
Re-Commissioning Service
9 July 2006 at 5.30pm**

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

As previous Newsletters have given us this date for our diaries, this is a reminder that all Readers are warmly welcome to attend this year's Admissions and Re-commissioning service. It will be held in Canterbury Cathedral on 9 July at 5.30pm. Your support for those to be admitted and licensed as well as those to become Reader Emeritus would be appreciated. Not least, it is the annual occasion when we are able to renew our commitment to our Reader ministry corporately.

Robing, with academic hoods if appropriate, will take place in the Chapter House after 5.30 pm and the procession will be formed from 5.45pm. After the service the Readers Board invite you to the Chapter House for refreshments and an opportunity to meet the newly admitted and licensed Readers as well renew friendships with Readers across the diocese. This year Canterbury deanery Readers have kindly offered this hospitality. On behalf of the Board, may I extend our thanks to them in advance.

Please hold these Readers in your prayers as they prepare for a new stage in their pilgrim journey with God:

THOSE TO BE ADMITTED READER:

- **Hilary Baldwin**
St Mary the Blessed Virgin, Woodnesborough and St James, Staple
- **Frank Conley**
St Anthony, Alkham with St Radigund, Capel-le-Ferne and St Laurence, Hougham
- **Angela Daniel**
Holy Trinity, Milton Regis
- **Anne Talbert**
St Nicholas, Ash with Westmarsh
- **Tessa Taylor**
St Peter and St Mildred (City Centre Parish), Canterbury
- **David Wright**

Parish of Whitstable

- **Terry Wright**
St Dunstan with Holy Cross, Canterbury

THOSE TO RECEIVE THE BISHOP'S LICENCE:

- **John Mulrenan**
St Dunstan, Cranbrook
- **Peter Toon**
St Stephen, Canterbury

THOSE TO BECOME READER EMERITUS:

- **Mary Ambrose**
St John the Baptist, Barham with St Mary,
Bishopsbourne, St Giles, Kingston and St Margaret,
Womenswold
- **John Cox**
St Peter-in-Thonet, St Peter the Apostle with St Andrew,
Reading Street
- **David Essex**
Len Valley Benefice
- **Alan Freeman**
St Luke, Hawkinge with St Martin, Acrise and Swingfield
- **Keith Smith**
St Mary the Virgin, Sutton Valance with St Peter and St
Paul,
East Sutton and St Michael, Chart Sutton
- **George Sutcliffe**
St Margaret of Antioch, St Margaret at Cliffe with St Peter,
Westcliffe and St Augustine, East Langdon with St Mary
the Virgin, West Langdon
- **Thelma Wrathall**
St Nicholas, Ash with Westmarsh

and with my apologies to Thelma for omitting her name on the earlier communication.

Hilary Richter
June 2006

Readers and AGM

Harrietsham, March 2006

The Editor

Our focus for the Readers Day was Bishop Graham's presentation "Walking the Tightrope," presented at the CRC's Reader Conference held in Swanwick last year. Please see Gerald Mack's article in the Autumn 2005 edition of your newsletter for more details.

We were given the opportunity to discuss the role of Readers in the Church, first focusing upon the varied ministries that we enjoy and then looking at how Reader ministry might develop to meet the needs of a mission shaped church.

At the AGM we gave thanks for the work of Donald Baldwin who retired as Hon. Secretary. Donald gave of his best in this role and Warden, Hilary Richter thanked him for his hard work.

Our thanks too, to Gerald Mack who retired as CRC representative. We welcome Christo Thiarth who has now been elected to this role and we look forward to reading his report following the next CRC conference.

We welcomed Nigel Collins as the new Hon Secretary and wish him well in this role. Nigel introduces himself below...

From the new Honorary Secretary

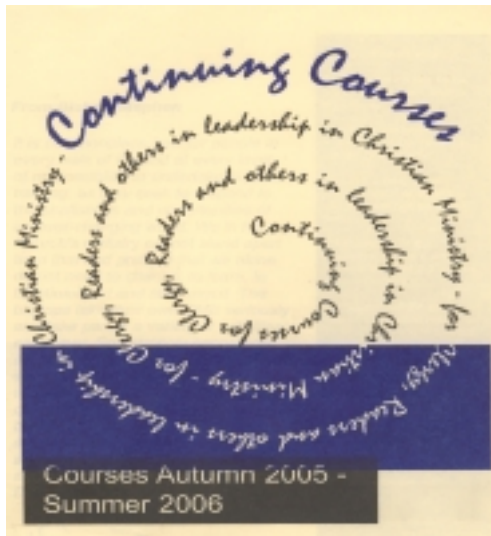
I'm Nigel Collins, married to Anne with five children aged 2 to 23! We live in Dover where I am Reader in the Buckland benefice.

I'm 46 years of age. I joined the Army at 16 and rose to the dizzy heights of Regimental Sergeant Major in the local Infantry Regiment. I trained as a Reader whilst serving in the Forces and was admitted and licensed in the Chapel at Howe Barracks in Canterbury in 1998. I left the Army (as a pensioner!) in the summer of 2000 and worked for a while at the Channel Tunnel.

I'm originally from West Sussex, but we settled in Dover mainly because Anne is a Dovorian, I would now consider Dover to be my adopted home town. My Dad was 80 on 1st June and is a Reader in Chichester Diocese; it was a great privilege to have been invited back there to preach at Pentecost as a celebration of my Dad's birthday and service to the local church there.

After I left the Army, I was licensed to the Buckland benefice in Dover where I live. Soon after this I became involved in a voluntary capacity with the Cross-Links ecumenical outreach project on the Buckland estate. Since 2001 I have been the full-time Lay Minister (Team Leader) of Cross-Links. Space here doesn't allow me to say much about this aspect of ministry now (maybe another time?), but suffice to say, it is an ecumenical expression of church trying to share the love of Christ to a deprived community (our website is: www.cross-links.org.uk).

I am keen to promote lay ministry, particularly that of the Reader and I am Dover Deanery Reader Adviser and a member of our Deanery Vocation Team. I hope to do justice in my new role within the Diocesan Association of Readers.



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

[An invitation to join the LMTS Pastoral Studies module](#)

Readers have enquired about deepening their understanding of pastoral skills or indeed reflecting and learning about this important part of ministry not included in Reader training in the past.

I am therefore pleased to be able to offer Readers the opportunity to join the Pastoral Studies module run by the Local Ministry Training Scheme. The LMTS provides training both to OLM ordinands and Readers-in-training in Canterbury. The pastoral studies module will run on ten Wednesday evenings starting at 7pm in Diocesan House from 13 September to 29 November this year. This offer would not though extend to the Saturday study days of the term.

Three or four Readers would be welcome to join LMTS students in this module in September. It would be necessary though for anyone interested in applying to make the commitment to attend all ten sessions.

The cost of the module is £80. Parishes may be able to offer a contribution towards this fee, otherwise please apply to me for funding from the Readers Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) allocation.

Should you be interested, please contact our Warden Hilary for more information. Early applications to attend this module are advised as the spaces are limited!

Education

Some say we need more courses – they give priority to knowledge

Training

Others give priority to skills

Formation

We must give priority to discipleship

Don't misunderstand, ministry is different from discipleship. If we have no personal prayer, study, or discipleship then the engine has fallen out of our bus. It is out of an abundant heart that mouths speak. We must gain authenticity otherwise we have nothing to offer (Luke 6: 35).

Readers are licenced to be leaders in prayer. We are “licenced authorised and commissioned” to preside over prayer - “We are the engine room of the church”

You cannot give what you haven't got” – Stephen Cottrell

“When a church becomes a house of prayer, people will come running” – Brother Roger of Taize.

“Prayer is the beloved coming into the presence of the lover to hear the words of love and reciprocate” If we stop reading the bible, make no time for prayer, then “We offer people an empty tomb of our worldly dreams” We are burnt out.

We live in an age where we try to do spirituality without God
We live in a church where we try to do Christianity without Christ

Don't confuse sanctity with dignity
Don't confuse Holiness with perfection

Compassion fatigue

God centred not self centred

Neither you nor I will grow an effective prayer ministry unless we are a people of prayer.

But there is even more to Reader ministry than prayer! We are people who preach and teach the Word of God. Our primary call is to preach the Word of God – Basil Hume

We must be a people of prayer, we must have a personal prayer life. This is the primary calling of any minister, ordained or lay. Preachers of the Word need to people of the Word. Our personal witness is so important. We must tell people what scripture means for us, there is no place for “soapbox theology.”

We must seek authenticity not authority. As we gain authenticity, we will as a by product gain authority (Matt 7: 28,29). “When Jesus had finished his discourse, the people were amazed at his teaching, unlike the scribes he taught with a note of authority. Compare scribe-like authority with Christ-like authority.

The church today focuses too much on quantity rather than quality. The emphasis is on more; more people, more ministries, more ministers, more younger Readers...

We should not go for quantity; instead we should aim for quality. It is quality that leads to quantity.

So how can we be better disciples? How can we be better Readers'?

We must manage change effectively – once we are satisfied with our ministry – God is knocked out.

“No such thing as a bad weather, just wrong clothes” – Billy Connolly

If we don't offer quality provision, we won't attract new people

We should imagine a whole liturgy - not just an homily. One that disrupts as much as it consoles, that offers us alternative images, that reshapes the way we think and imagine, enables us to react violently against the forces, internal/external, that enslaves us, then we shall no longer need to ask questions about why the church has lost its way and no longer speaks to the young and wider populations.

Buildings are important

What do our buildings and worship space say about our church

Notice Boards – easy to understand

Easy access

Tidy/untidy

Pictures

Welcoming/unwelcoming

The dance of worship

It is the way we do the Eucharist that alienates people? Clergy have a major part to play in this.

Preaching – let's not be too script lead, allow the holy spirit to lead

Cannot assume people today understand the Christian story

If we get the quality of our worship right – it will convert people to Christianity

Authentic, mutual, spiritual Friendships

Need to be interested in people for their own sake

Dancing not wrestling

Conversation not preaching

Respect for other religion/ethnicity

Readers have the benefit of links with the workplace

Evangelism – Sowing is not always reaping. We have created rocky soil Christians by expecting them to reap. We do not give them the opportunity to grow.

Readers are significant sowers/reapers/keepers

CONTACT

Apostles

Seekers

GROWTH

NURTURE

Pilgrims

Fellow Travellers

COMMITTED CHURCH MEMBERS

Churches that have success have a nurture position

Clergy/Readers to lead nurture groups

Have in place an apprentice leader, for ongoing development of new leaders

Psalm 126

Don't expect if you haven't sown

Don't expect to rejoice unless you have sown in tears

One day in a mission shaped church we will reap with joy

Where now, What next?

The age of a congregation is 10 years plus or minus, the age of its ministers. The church has struggled to get together 150 readers under the age of 45.

We need to know this...

How good are we really at Youth Ministry and Childrens' ministry?

The issue is with selection and training

We should encourage young people to ask questions of ministry and training.

The church has discouraged young people from going into ministry by telling them "come back when you are older" They went away but most have not come back!

How many of our vocational ministers are engaged with schools and colleges?

We need to go for healthy churches, before we go for growth

Go for healthy/authentic ministry, before age

An example, a company made drill bits, they thought their job was to make drill bits.

A management consultancy came in to review their ailing business, it showed them that their business was not to make drill bits; instead it was to make holes.

They now have a very successful business, one of the market leaders in laser technologies.

Christ centred authenticity

Mission Shaped

Father sends Son, Son sends Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit sends us

God is the engine in our bus, we must speak from the heart

Offer the best – quality attracts new disciples

God is on offer – not us or our ministry

If we ever feel daunted by the task that God has given us. “Be inadequate and offer our inadequacy to God as a gift.” (2 Cor 4: 7)

God says you are the clay jar, it is my gracious provision that will suffice. I will be with you. Remember, a Satsuma is not a failed orange!

Bishop Graham Dow spoke at the closing Eucharist in which we were invited to go forward for a blessing and be anointed with the sign of the cross.

Fiona's reflections (Reader at St. Mary, Chartham)...

I think I am still reeling! There was so much to absorb.

I was hugely relieved we weren't working on an agenda - having to produce action plans and proposals to go to national bodies to produce more meetings and pieces of paper. I thought the setting was fantastic (aided by warm weather, I imagine it could be freezing in the winter).

It was a great opportunity to share with other Readers, to hear their stories, to reflect on ministry, and to feel a genuine sense of hope out of discovering/ considering what makes a healthy ministry. The input on this was clear and helpful, in particular the first session on authenticity and authority. The image of training drivers for a bus whose engine has fallen out, and the need to get the engine put back in the bus will stay with me.

I feel I have a new understanding of God's plan for all his ministers which is living truthfully and trusting him, and not running ourselves ragged trying to bail out a sinking ship. If we can rest in him, and trust him enough to be honest with ourselves and others, and live our faith authentically then we will grow healthy ministries and healthy churches.

Further Reading	The Editor
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If you are inspired to explore ideas of authentic and healthy ministries, in more detail, why not seek out the following:

Suggested Reading for further study

Giles, R. (2004), *Creating Uncommon Worship*, Canterbury Press
ISBN: 1853115908

Leech, K. (2005), *We Preach Christ Crucified*, Church House Publishing
ISBN: 089869499X

Jackson, Bob (2002), *Hope for the Church*, Church House Publishing
ISBN: 0715155512

Singlehurst, L (1995), *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping, People Sensitive Evangelism*,
Crossway
ISBN: 1856840522

Cottrell, S. (2006), *From the Abundance of the Hear*, Darton, Longman and Todd
ISBN: 0232526362

“Can God be Discerned Through the Arts?” A Conference report from St George’s Windsor, May 15th/16th, 2006

John Mulrenan, St Dunstan, Cranbrook

I was invited to this conference because my Vicar knows that I am fond of poetry. It was the eighth in a series of seminars chaired by Michael Marshall, the Assistant Bishop of London. The overall title of the series is, “Belief or Disbelief in God: Can God be Discerned Through the Arts?” Previous seminars had dealt with music, painting, sculpture, dance and story-telling: perhaps rather late in the sequence, this one concentrated on poetry, and two distinguished modern poets, Michael Symonds Roberts and Michael O’Sidhail, were the guest speakers,

The success or failure of conferences, in my experience, generally depends on three things: the congeniality of the venue (so often nowadays in dreary modern hotels off motorway junctions), the size of the guest-list (Invariably, the larger the worse) and the audience’s willingness to be there. Signs here were propitious. St George’s House is within the grounds of Windsor Castle. There were just thirty participants, of whom half had followed the seminar-sequence from the beginning, and the others, like myself, had been invited for their special interest in poetry.

Poets ought to be good communicators, and these two certainly were. Michael Symonds Roberts opened with a lecture entitled “Freeing the Waters: Poetry in a Parched Culture”. He dealt with the difficulties a poet faces when addressing a post-modern audience who have almost entirely lost the framework of cultural reference on which poets used to depend, especially when tackling religious or spiritual themes. He gave detailed examples of how words such as “blood”, “wood”, “water” and “tree” no longer resonated, as they would previously had done, facing the poet with the burden of re-explaining and re-inventing the significance of such images.

Michael O’Sidhail was, by common consent, an outstanding speaker. Though in his brief introduction he showed an exceptional command of current philosophical and theological writing, he quickly moved on to the reading of his own and other poet’s work, and engaged his audience in lively, often hilarious debate, even when dealing with the twentieth century’s darkest themes. One of his own volumes, “The Gossamer Wall,” is entirely dedicated to the Holocaust. He painted a lively picture of his own Muse, “Madam Jazz”, whom he said he felt “Blew through him”, and he reminded us that jazz has its roots in the deep suffering of slavery, and yet is remarkable for its consistent spontaneity and gaiety. His talk was entitled, “Out of the Burning Bush”, a quotation from the Beat poet Alan Ginsburg, but he helped us to explore the image in depth: Moses having the curiosity to turn aside, and the voice which commanded him to recognize that, in the moment he decided to attend closely to a mystery he “stood on holy ground”, and in a sacred space. He wore his Catholicism lightly, but deeply, and when pressed eventually to answer the seminar’s central question, “Can God be discerned through the Arts, he retorted concisely, “Well, how the bloody hell else?”

As usual in seminars, much time was spent in group discussion. Though the participants were generally very well-read, it was of course a conference to attract committed Christians, and therein perhaps lay its weakness. To such a group, the obvious answer to the central question, “Can God be perceived through the Arts” is “Yes”: but I was uneasily aware that a more typically recruited audience would have answered the question differently – perhaps no longer, as thirty years ago, with a vehement denial, but more with an indifferent shrug.

St George’s was a remarkable venue. Whether you like its famous chapel is, of course, entirely a matter of taste. It is probably an even purer example of late perpendicular architecture than Kings, Cambridge, “more glass than wall”. Inside it is filled with royal tombs and monuments, right up to twentieth century. Its chancel is dedicated to the Order of the Garter, a decorous riot of heraldic insignia and banners. Not for nothing is it accorded the status of “A Royal Peculiar”. The poet in me could not help recalling the words of Robert Bridges:

Pride of Man and earthly glory
Sword and crown betray His trust.
What with care and toil he buildeth
Tower and temple fall to dust.
But God’s power, hour by hour,
Is our fortress and our tower.

John Mulrenan

'Isaiah' lasting faith in God's commitment to the well being of Jerusalem and the house of David'.	The Editor
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The Faithfulness of Yahweh

Despite Isaiah's sombre view of the future (6: 9-13) he demonstrated great confidence and lasting faith of God's commitment to the well being of Jerusalem and the house of David. Isaiah's theology leaves no room for the possibility that God would abandon his people or his ultimate purpose for the world. Perhaps it is not surprising that the Zion-David tradition should be so paramount in Isaiah's thought, since he apparently belonged to the well-educated classes in Jerusalem (Barton 1995:28f, Clements 1980a:12ff, Von Rad:1968). Isaiah's distinctive contribution to the biblical witness of God's activity and purpose is to claim that Yahweh rules from Zion through a specific human agency, the Davidic dynasty (Clements 1980a:14). Isaiah the reformer placed his hope for the future in the present and in existing institutions (OB Study Guide:89). His vision is not detached from this world but rooted in the potential of a reformed existing order. For Isaiah, Yahweh is concerned with real material circumstances of how power is exercised and the subsequent direction of human history. Human involvement is central to the realisation of God's will and purpose. Yahweh does not appear to recognise a distinction between spiritual and material issues.

In Chapter 1:4-9 it is evident that Isaiah's vision concerns Zion (1:8) (Clements: 1980a:31f). The people of Zion were the Lord's own children (1:2-3), such language strongly recalls the exodus from Egypt and the forging of the Covenant at Sinai (*Ex. 6:6-7; 9:1-2; 20:1-18*) (Anderson: 1988:50-54). They were chosen by Yahweh to play a key role in his purpose for the world but they were in no condition to fulfil their high calling (Clements: 1980a:31). Yahweh had been a father to them, but like headstrong children, they had rebelled against him and already this rebellion had cost them dearly. The image of verses 1:5-6 is followed by stark descriptions of their

condition in verses 1:7-9; burnt cities, devastated countryside, and the capital, Zion under siege from probably Sennacherib the Assyrian in c701 BCE (Motyer 1999:21,44). For these people the judgement of Yahweh was a present painful reality. Through this experience Yahweh brought his rebellious children (1:2) to repentance according to the Law of Moses, (Dt. 21:18-21) acting as both judge and parent (compare 1:9 with 1:2). The people did not understand (1:3) that Isaiah's far reaching vision was destined to have its final outworking in a new universe as set out in the disputed authorship of verses 2: 2-4; 65:17; 66:22 (Clements: 1965, Emmerson: 1992:12f, Schökel: 1987:165f).

The Remnant of Jerusalem

The rhyming lament of the prophet in verses 1:21-23 implies no change of heart among the people (Schökel 1987:168). The way of forgiveness was rejected and Yahweh announced judgement (1:24-26) (Clements: 1980a:36f). Surprisingly, expressed as purification rather than annihilation. Even in judgement, Yahweh showed mercy to his chosen people. Isaiah longed for the people to repent (1:5), but now everything depended on the remnant that Yahweh graciously spared (1:9, 10:21). Isaiah presents us with an image of crude ore being passed through a furnace and emerging as refined metal (1:25). The city, once faithful (1:21) will be faithful again (1:26); looking forward to David's return and the fulfilment of Yahweh's promises after judgement day (Motyer: 1999:49). The same underlying image is expressed in 1:27-28: the pure metal which emerges from the furnace is a remnant of those who repent while the rest are destroyed (Gehman: 1957).

A redactor introduces the word redeemed (1:27) (Clements: 1980a:36f). However the significant reference to "the redeemed" is found in 35:9 and anticipates that Yahweh's redemption is just and righteous (Anderson: 1978:44f), in accordance with his character. Therefore Isaiah foresees the day when the mountain of Zion will stand supreme as a symbol of the coming kingdom of Yahweh (Clements: 1980:55, Barton: 1995:69f). All nations and peoples will come to Zion to share with Israel in the blessings of Yahweh. It is a vision of universal peace (2:4) becoming reality only when nations submit to Yahweh (Gehman: 1957). It will be home to all believers

from the beginning to the end of human history (35:10; 51:11). Isaiah, possibly courtesy of the redactor (Clements:1980a:42), encouraged his contemporaries to live in the present as if the light of the New Jerusalem was already here (2:5).

Notwithstanding this, Isaiah was not blind to present realities, salvation seemed far off. The land lay desolate and ravaged by the Assyrians (Childs: 1967:20-22, Clements: 1980a:30-32), right up to the gates of Jerusalem itself (1:2, 7-8). Inspired by his vision for the future (4:2-6), Isaiah spoke passionately against injustice, faithless politics and hypocritical religion (Roberts: 1982). His faith was not an escape from reality, but a source of strength (Dooley: 1992). He reminded the people that Yahweh's ultimate purpose is not destruction but salvation, confident that the ancient promises would be fulfilled (Gen.17:7-8). Yahweh would not completely destroy Zion or divorce its people permanently from their land. A remnant would survive to enjoy the fruit of the land (4:2b) promised to their forefathers (Clements: 1980a:54, Brueggemann: 2002).

Zion and the Elect Remnant

Zion had been a holy city (4:3-4), exhibiting Yahweh's characteristics of faith and justice (1:21). It was the city where Yahweh's chosen King David and his descendants would rule forever (2 Sam. 7: Ps 2:8), where the people would assemble in the temple to meet with Yahweh (Pss. 76:1-2; 87; 122). A future Zion inhabited by an elect remnant (4:3), perhaps referring to Ex. 32:32, Ps. 87: 5-6, living in a holy city of perfect community, divinely purged of moral corruption. Recognising that Zion had yet to achieve utopia (Clements 1980b:25), Isaiah saw the people as pilgrims heading for a canopy of glory (4:5-6), where they would rest secure in Yahweh's presence. Perhaps alluding to the Exodus when Israel was protected and guided on its wilderness journey by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, the manifested presence of the Lord (Ex. 13:20-22; 14:19-20) (Motyer: 1999:60). Although their journey was punctuated by encampments (Nu. 9 15-18), they never found rest in their land. Now in Isaiah's time, rest seemed even farther away. However Isaiah believed that the final encampment of Yahweh's people would be the new Zion. Here the journey of a pilgrim people would end (4:5) (Clements: 1980a:54f).

How may Isaiah's faith in God inform us today?

Following Isaiah's example, we too should be rooted in the present world and concerned with people's material circumstances, their decisions and subsequent progress. Jesus highlighted that believers are a chosen people and have responsibility to spread the word of God. (Mt. 5:13-16). The welfare of the whole universe depends on how humankind responds to God's word.

Isaiah's faith was not an escape from reality, but the source of inspiration enabling him to face life. Christians must take responsibility for their actions, together with our present world leaders. Greater consideration should be given to multi-faith issues, perhaps creating space for mutual respect without compromising each other's beliefs and traditions. God acts with justice and righteousness, seen by Christians, in the supreme act of Christ on the cross. Isaiah envisioned peace, justice and righteousness through an elect remnant, a minority faithful community. Isaiah's vision was for a purified and restored Zion as home to all believers from the beginning to the end of human history. Arguably by Semitic tradition (Hinnells: 1997:7), this might include Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Isaiah reminded his people that God's ultimate purpose is not destruction but salvation. For Christians, the apostle Paul would agree, "God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ", (1 Thes. 5:9). Peter concurs, "Through faith...[we] are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). Therefore God is accessible to all and like Isaiah, we should have an inspired vision for the future as we make our personal pilgrim journey. Jesus himself prayed for this (Jn. 17:24) and John stated it later in the climax of the bible (Rev. 21: 22-27).

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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, Nigel Collins. 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.

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