

Signs of the Times

The Newsletter of Modern Church **October 2014 Issue 55**

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Modern Church is an international society promoting liberal theology. Founded in 1898 to defend liberalism in the Church of England, we now work ecumenically to encourage open, enquiring, non-dogmatic approaches to Christianity.

Signs of the Times

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Signs of the Times is published in January, April, July and October. It provides news and information about Modern Church and offers members an opportunity to communicate with each other in print. We welcome articles, notices, poems, suggestions, comments and suitable accompanying graphics. Articles published do not necessarily reflect a Modern Church perspective – in keeping with our commitment to liberal theology we believe that other views should be heard. Send material to the editor by 13 December, 20 March, 20 June or 20 September. Articles should not normally exceed 1,000 words. We prefer email but will process typed or handwritten text (phone for a postal address).

Editorial: Tell it *slant*

Anthony Woollard

Some 45 years ago I attended a conference on Christian education in schools. It was there that a bishop, giving the keynote address, introduced me to the words of Emily Dickinson:

**Tell all the truth, but tell it *slant*;
Success in circuit lies.**

In other words, in schools (including denominational ones) and otherwise, we need to get across the Gospel – however we understand it – more by indirect than by direct means.

During the summer there was something of a debate in the *Church Times* about evangelism. An article by the Archbishops’ adviser on evangelism claimed that too many churches were treating as an optional extra something which is classically regarded as a fundamental obligation. Some of us wrote in reply suggesting the need for a far more tentative approach to this issue. In turn, we were castigated in the letters column for personally attacking the author of the article (a really rather bizarre misinterpretation) and/or for ‘failing to set forth Jesus Christ’ and being in thrall to the English reticence about religious matters.

Well, we do have good news to tell – but what is it, and how do we tell it? What do we mean by ‘setting forth Jesus Christ’; setting forth *whom*, and *as what*?

Some people appear to know exactly who Jesus was and is, and exactly what his significance is to the world – including those of other faiths and spiritualities, a matter of perennial concern to members of Modern Church. Alan Race has explored that issue in his recent book on interfaith issues for Modern Church, and will be doing so again in next year’s Annual Conference, as Guy Elsmore is doing in his series of articles for this newsletter; but there are different theological views even within our organisation let

alone in the wider Church. Then as to key categories in the 'good news' such as atonement, resurrection and eternal life, there is at least an equal range of convictions and questions. And as to the social and political implications of all this – not least, perhaps, in the area of environmental concern which was addressed in our 2013 Conference and surfaced again this year – there is yet more scope for debate and searching.

In the very week of the exchange of letters in the *Church Times*, I was engaged in parish discussions about a vision statement under our new incumbent. My suggestions as it happened 'set forth Jesus Christ' very clearly indeed, but did not go on to define what that might mean in any narrow doctrinal terms; rather, they focused on values such as inclusivity and community within the context of the Christian tradition and above all Eucharistic worship. These values do give a message, but they 'tell it *slant*'. Diverse people and groups apprehend them in diverse ways. Perhaps this is the 'English reticence about religion', but, if so, it is an approach deeply rooted in the traditions of the Church of England.

Many of us would want to echo John Goodchild's views below on the Eucharist which supplement his views on the nature of liberal faith set out in our last edition. We are told by St Paul (not inerrantly of course!) that in that rite we 'show forth the Lord's death' – five little words jam-packed with meaning. But in the rite itself, and in the many acts of inclusivity and community which lead to it and spring from it, we 'tell it *slant*', and let the actions speak louder than words.

There is a place for words, of course, and the Ministry of the Word is crucial as the first part of the Eucharist. But even the words – the sometimes opaque Biblical passages, and the preaching which emerges from them – 'tell it *slant*'. Yet they are still evangelistic in the truest sense. 'Telling it *slant*' is not the same as failing to tell it at all; but it is very different from the black-and-white approach which the word 'evangelism' all too often conjures up. We do *not* claim a perfect knowledge of who this Jesus is or what he has done; and we find that some of the

claims of others arouse in us the reaction 'We have not so learned Christ'. The good news is that we know enough to show that following him is worthwhile.

I could perhaps, at this point, discourse upon the relationship between 'the Jesus of history' and 'the Christ of faith' – but that would need a few more pages! Instead, I invite you to consider a few quotations from the period in which my faith such as it is, was formed. Here are some words attributed to the Jerusalem priests in *Jesus Christ Superstar*:

He's just another Scripture-thumping hack from Galilee.

The difference is, they call him King: the difference frightens me.

Or by contrast, but at least equally allusive, David Jenkins' immortal soundbite:

God is as he is in Jesus, and therefore we have hope.

Or John Robinson's summing-up:

The good news [demonstrated by Jesus] is not just that Love *ought to be* the centre and meaning of the universe, but that it *actually is*.

Perhaps we do not all agree even on such statements as these. Yet we seek, and sometimes we find; and that is good news; and in various ways we tell it *slant*, and sometimes others catch on.

And so to the contribution to Modern Church's mission made by this year's Annual Conference and AGM. Others below give a flavour (and there will be further relevant material in future editions) but it was surely one of the best for many years. Martyn Percy's chairmanship drew together a remarkable range of contributions, drawing on sociology as well as theology and pastoral practice, to help us understand what a liberal Christian spirituality might be – and left us in no doubt that, as John Goodchild argued in our last edition, we do have a gospel to proclaim, a gospel of utterly generous and inclusive love; that

our so-called secular society may well be more receptive to that than we imagine; but that a deepening of our inner life, as individuals, as parishes and as Modern Church itself, was the pre-requisite of such proclamation. And might, indeed, be a large part of its content. We wrestled with the problem that our gospel is, as one participant put it, 'not tweetable'; it cannot be summed up in neat dogmatic soundbites – but for that very reason, though harder to communicate, might be more attractive to those who know that answers to the deep questions of the human condition are never simple. We wrestled too with the paradox that we were called to be inclusive even of those whose dogmatism excluded us, and yet must never be afraid of speaking the truth and condemning whatever was life-denying in some parts of the Church. Of all the inputs to the conference, perhaps the richest was Emma Percy's paper on mothering and particularly breastfeeding as a metaphor for spirituality and for ministry; even those of us who have the deepest doubts, and the greatest unhealed bitterness whether about the Church or otherwise, could not fail to be moved and renewed.

Another presentation was about Mindfulness, and the relationship between the original Buddhist version and its 'secularisation' today. At this point I cannot resist telling a story. Twenty years ago, elements of 'spirituality' were very common in the world of business and management education. Some of that, perhaps, was a conscious or unconscious cover-up for capitalism red in tooth and claw. I am not sure that all of it was – or is. When I left the Civil Service, I was sent on a pre-retirement day. I assumed it would be all about the practicalities; in fact it was mainly about what I can only call the *spirituality* of retirement. At one point we were taken on a guided meditation into the Arthurian legend, the Holy Grail and the Chapel Perilous! In the latter, we were told, we would find someone important to us (in my case it was a woman priest friend), and we were invited to ask them one question. I had just come out of a serious relationship, so I asked her: 'Will I ever find someone to take the place of my beloved X?'

Very clearly, she said 'Yes – but wait.' Well, I waited. And I found what I sought. What, I wonder, does that say about the relationship between 'secular spirituality' and faith? Answers on a postcard please.

At the AGM, we gained two new Council members (Tom Keates, Hugh Rock), and the Council then elected several new Trustees (Lorraine Cavanagh, Anthony Freeman, Ruth Fitter and Trevor Pitt). Linda Woodhead in her absence was elected President by acclamation; equally acclaimed was a spontaneous nomination to add Martyn Percy to our honoured list of Vice-Presidents. The absence through illness of our General Secretary Guy Elsmore (now happily back in harness) somewhat limited our discussions of the future; however, areas of progress were very evident, and not least in our revamped website for which Kieran Bohan must be thanked. Moreover there was a clear call for more opportunities to gather together as liberal Christians – and the upcoming day conference in Lichfield (notice repeated below) can be seen as one response to that. There was, too, good news about our planned 2015 conference (details attached at the end of this edition) – and I can separately report that those of us involved in the 2016 conference, honouring the 400th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare, are also making great though still early strides in the planning. And finally there were present several new and often younger people who we hope will be drawn into membership and in various ways contribute to our further activities (as some already are – see Greenbelt report below).

Yet perhaps the most powerful way in which the very experience of Modern Church can 'tell it *slant*' is the fact that, over the past year, we seem to have overcome real divisions and threats and pain within our ranks, and risen up again to respond to the needs of the Church and the world in an age which, as Martyn Percy and Linda Woodhead have made clear, is not irredeemably secularist and is more than ready for an effective gospel of reconciliation. Meditating on that experience, we can only speak of the grace of God. ■

Impressions of Conference 2014

Lucinda Murphy:

The 2014 Modern Church Conference opened with a simple instruction. Chair, Martyn Percy incited us to 'do some soul searching', to find the 'centre' of our spirituality. To a room full of liberally minded academic types, this appeared like a seemingly simple instruction with an almost certainly indefinite answer. 'Right', I thought, 'very meaningful, but here we are again, circling round and round our souls with no definite conclusion.' But I was wrong. 'Liberal' as the conference was, one conclusion, at least, *was* reached. But it was a conclusion which led to more intense searching rather than definite absolutism. What was this conclusion? Well, it was actually also a premise; a premise for our conference, but also hopefully a premise for our own spiritual lives and the spiritual life of Modern Church and of the wider Church. This premise, this centre, this conclusion, is not tolerance, or inclusivity, or modernity, or even liberalism itself, but in Martyn Percy's introductory words, 'nothing less than the mad, passionate, all-embracing, far-reaching love of God'.

So, we had indeed been going round in circles. These were not entrapping circles like the Buddhist circle of *Dukkha* described by John Peacocke but the kind of circles some of us discovered later on that week in Jan van der Lely's excellent introduction to the labyrinth. Physically walking the labyrinth, engaging in active discussion and worshipping together in silent prayer, we explored a rich form of meditation, a transforming kind of spirituality, ever moulding, ever questioning and never still. Each premise led us to a conclusion, a pause point; each conclusion gently guided us back out of the circle to a deeper premise. But what kind of spirituality is this? The conference concluded it was a spirituality with liberality at its core, a spirituality in which it is ok to ask questions, ok to doubt and ok to be creative, to turn the familiar into the disturbingly unfamiliar.

As in the parable of the Prodigal Son and Good Samaritan, we found spirituality can radiate from those we least expect; whether from Generation A, Generation Y, conservatives, liberals, Buddhists, or Grace Davie's 'centre ground', the 'spiritual but not religious'. This was illustrated particularly well in the stunning film *As It Is In Heaven*. Here, spirituality did not come from the expected; the priest or the self-righteous parishioner. It came from the disenchanted, demotivated, depressed stranger, from the woman severely abused by her husband, from the scorned retarded child and from a girl perceived by some to be nothing more than a whore. And this is not new. This kind of liberal love began, as Martyn Percy indicated, with Jesus Christ himself.

The conference set out to explore the 'spiritualities' of the 21st century. By its conclusion, many of us had found that the very act of searching through these spiritualities had in fact led us on our own liberating spiritual meditation. In answer to the conference title, our spirits were indeed liberated. The Spirit that liberated and is liberating and will liberate them, I think we can all safely agree, in the most 'liberal' way possible, remains ambiguously and tantalisingly ungraspable. It is one of the things, as Mark Oakley explained, we never knew we never knew. But, for all that we don't know about it, what we *can* know is that we desperately *want* to know it, whatever it may be. But rather wonderfully, it is this agonising, abundant but astonishing *want* which transforms us by the Spirit, inspires us to care for our neighbour and our world and moulds us as conduits of God's lavish love. ■

Carolann Martys:

I thought it was, as usual, an excellent conference in a perfect venue. Some speakers – in particular Martyn Percy and Mark Oakley – were excellent. Mark's content and delivery were outstanding.

Unfortunately, I felt the women speakers let it down somewhat. Mostly by their delivery. If the delivery is not good, it is not easy to appreciate

the content. Some read their papers in a flat monotone, not allowing for any modulation - yet there was an animation in their delivery when answering questions. Another, by contrast, was greatly over-animated and rather repetitive in delivering her paper. As a professional speech and drama teacher, I can tell you there are very easy techniques to deal with this sort of thing.

Finally, I would like to commend Tim Stead for providing the amazing film. What a privilege to have seen it! Look forward to next year's... ■

Eucharistic Sacrifice

John Goodchild

If you want to experience the Jerusalem temple don't fly to Israel, just visit your local abattoir. Two sheep were discussing Jesus the Lamb of God. 'I don't know whether he saved the world', said one, 'but he certainly saved us'.

Brenda Watson, in the April 2014 edition, is right that sacrifice no longer rings bells with us but to develop a relationship with God as with anyone we need something to offer. We already owe God our total obedience but fail to love mercy, do justly and walk humbly and everything we have is given us by God. However, one parent may give a child something so he can give it to his other parent. God gives us Jesus who provides a human life perfectly offered to God. In the Eucharist we associate ourselves with this gift to God as Jesus associated himself with us through eating with sinners. We may sing the Eucharistic hymn:

*And now, O Father, mindful of the love
That bought us, once for all, on Calvary's tree,
And having with us him who pleads above,
We here present, we here spread forth to thee
That only offering perfect in thine eyes,
The one true, pure, immortal sacrifice.*

Liberal Theology: Negotiating the '-isms'

Anthony Freeman

Recent articles on directions for liberal theology - by Jonathan Clatworthy (ST April 2014) and Michael Wright (ST July 2014) -- have made reference to 'theism' and 'realism' and related philosophical terms. The following notes are offered as a brief guide to these families of words and the way they have featured in recent theological debate, with a final word on their relevance to Modern Church.

God Talk

THEISM says that there is a God, who is personal, who created all that exists, and has a continuing relationship with creation while remaining distinct from it. Theists generally agree that God is eternal, almighty, all-knowing, and all-loving. Theism is the 'traditional' Christian attitude to the God of the bible, but there are variations within Christian theism.

Thus, some theologians say God is eternal by being outside time; others that God simultaneously inhabits all time. Some say God is almighty and so can do anything; others that God's own nature acts as a constraint, e.g. an all-good God cannot act in a way that is irredeemably evil. Some say God is good because God only does things that are inherently good; others that things only count as good because the inherently good God does them or approves them.

ATHEISM says that if there were a God, God would be as described by theists, but that in fact there is no such God.

DEISM (popular in the eighteenth century because it is compatible with Newtonian science) says that God created the universe 'in the beginning' but has subsequently left it to run according to its own laws, without further divine intervention.

PANTHEISM (associated with Spinoza [1632-77], although the term was coined after his death) says God is the totality of all that is.

PANENTHISM teaches that God is in all things but also transcends all things. Twentieth-century process theologians such as Charles Hartshorne and John Cobb claimed that theism's absolute gulf between creator and creation was a Greek aberration, while pantheism's denial of any distinction between them went too far in the opposite direction. They espoused panentheism because it restored the biblical balance of both a clear distinction and genuine interaction between God and the universe.

NONTHEISM is a less well defined term, useful for describing views of God that are positive but differ from classical theism. Among Quakers, where the emphasis is on practice rather than doctrine, the Nontheist Friends Network provides an umbrella support group for any Friend not comfortable with traditional theism, including atheists and those with a nonrealist stance (see below).

Philosophical Stances

REALISM is the philosophical belief that there is a 'way things are' that is independent of any human or other conscious awareness. 'Naïve realism' further holds that things 'in themselves' are exactly as humans perceive them to be. In contrast, 'critical realism', following Kant [1724-1804] and the most widely-held position today, insists that human knowledge of the universe is limited by human perceptual apparatus, so we cannot know the inner reality of things as they are 'in themselves'. For example, we see poppies as red because that is the way our visual system interprets the light reflected by poppies, but the colour red exists only in human consciousness, not in the outside world. Keith Ward has a useful discussion of realism in relation to our knowledge of God as Trinity in *Modern Believing* July 2014.

NONREALISM (or ANTI-REALISM) is the philosophical belief that there is no 'way things are' that is independent of human or other conscious awareness. In this view, the universe as humans perceive it, whether through their senses (empirically) or with their minds (rationally), is a construct of human consciousness, both individual and corporate. This is similar, but not

identical, to the classical Idealism of Bishop Berkeley [1685-1753]. It is the theological approach associated since the 1970s with Don Cupitt.

Philosophy and Religion Meet

Nonrealism is counter-intuitive and largely dismissed by theological liberals on the grounds that if everything is 'made up', then everything becomes trivial. Unless there is a Truth to be discovered (so the reasoning goes), there are no grounds, even in theory, for judging between the claims of rank superstition and those of critical scholarship, between the gods of Mount Olympus and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Against this are two considerations that might commend a nonrealist approach to theology, one philosophical and the other scientific.

First, there is some force to the claim of postmodern continental philosophers that 'there is no outside to the text' (i.e. the human mind is confined by its own word-bound experience and thinking). Even if there is a Truth about the way things are beyond our experience and imagination, by definition we cannot access it. If that is the case, critical realists are in practice behaving exactly as nonrealists, and working wholly within the limits of human experience and imagination.

Second, for nearly a century quantum physics has (at the very least) placed a large question mark against the assumption that the physical universe is a 'reality' waiting to be discovered by scientific investigation. The earliest and still dominant interpretation of quantum mechanics maintains that (1) there is no 'deep reality' (what a critical realist would call the nature of things 'in themselves'); and (2) 'phenomenal reality' (the nature of things as we experience them) is created by observation.

Ways of being 'Modern' Church

The word 'modern' was added to the name of our society in the 1920s, after pope Pius X had condemned (under the title 'modernism') the very thing we stood for, namely the Enlightenment project of bringing historical,

scientific and literary criticism to bear on the bible and Christian faith and order. This rather precise sense of the word proclaimed the society's support of modernism as opposed to dogmatism and fundamentalism. It could be argued that faithfulness to this heritage now requires the promotion of modernism (liberalism; critical realism) against postmodernism (radicalism; nonrealism).

But 'modern' also carries the wider everyday sense of 'contemporary', and a hundred years on we find postmodernism a significant and creative part of the current intellectual scene. Whether or not nonrealist 'theology' should be included in Modern Church's debates and publications is now a live issue within the society, and one to which readers of *Signs of the Times* may wish to add their voice. ■

(This debate will indeed be continued in the next edition – Ed)

Speaking about God in a Parish of Many Faiths - Part 2 of 3: Christian Inclusivism

Guy Elsmore

In the Parish of St Luke in the City, Liverpool, I regularly meet followers of other faiths. Life together brings opportunities and invitations to work alongside one another. How should I relate to people of other faiths? Should I be trying to convert them to Christianity? Should I refuse or welcome acts of worship which involve other faiths? How should the Churches in the St Luke's Team relate in mission to multi-faith neighbourhoods?

In the previous article I explored advice from 'classic' and 'contemporary' theological voices advocating an exclusivist approach. In this second of three articles, I shall look at the advice which might be offered by those who speak for Christian Inclusivism.

Inclusivist arguments seek to balance the Christian revelation with either or both of two other factors: (i) the reality of the experience of

God in other faiths and (ii) the notion of a God whose love is universal or has universal intent. Inclusivists argue that while Christianity may be the 'ultimate answer to the ultimate question', nonetheless, other answers to the ultimate question are true but draw that truth from a hidden relationship to the Christian answer.

A 'classic' exponent of inclusivism is **Karl Rahner**. Rahner's starting point is the familiar exclusivist assertion that the Christian revelation is the absolute and ultimate religious truth. However, this truth cannot be stated without consideration of the historical reality within which Christian mission occurs. Rahner, looking at the hard end of the 'scandal of particularity', asks his readers to consider whether if Christianity, for reasons of history, geography or politics is not a real option for people, how can there be an absolute obligation to submit to Christ?

Until the fullness of Christianity is a real and viable option in history for all people, Rahner argues that the pre-existing non-Christian religion, while in some ways sinful, must be seen as God's chosen way of salvation for that particular people in that place and time. Furthermore, as a way of salvation, it is bound to contain, amongst its imperfections, elements of grace, on account of Christ. Rahner's thesis rests on appeals both to Paul's speech in the Areopagus and to the will of God for everyone to have the chance to be saved. The person thus saved is not merely an adherent of another faith but may be seen as an 'anonymous Christian' in Rahner's famous and controversial terminology. The church, however, is and remains the outward and visible sign of hope in Christ which is the hidden reality behind all faiths. For Rahner, full-blown Christianity is a preferable and a more sure way of salvation than those offered by other religions.

Rahner might urge me to be reassured that my friends from other traditions are 'saved' through Christ whose dispensation reaches them even through Islam/ Judaism/ Buddhism etc. and he might ask me to think of them as anonymous Christians. However we must be careful not to

misunderstand Rahner's careful and idiosyncratic use of words. The notion of anonymous Christianity should never be offered as theology by which they might consider themselves saved in Christ under the dispensation of a different faith. Rahner would still urge me to play my part in bringing them into a full encounter with the living Lord Jesus. In my approach he would advise me to be like Paul in the Areopagus 'tolerant, humble and yet firm' in giving implicit faith the opportunity to become explicit.

A contemporary inclusivist who builds on Rahner's work is **Gavin D'Costa** who argues for what he terms a 'Trinitarian inclusivism'. For D'Costa, the doctrine of God as Trinity explains and enables both the particularity of the Church and the universality of the God's work. In particular, D'Costa's thought focuses upon the agency of the third person of the Trinity. It is through the Holy Spirit that God acts in and through other faiths. By proposing the Spirit as the universal expression of God's saving will, D'Costa seeks to avoid the charge of triumphalism or imperialism which is so often laid at inclusivism's door. The Spirit is the universal Spirit whose action in history is always particular.

The agency of the Spirit is a theme which finds resonance within many other religions in a way which Rahner's notion of a 'hidden Christ' within the religions may not. In Christian thinking, D'Costa's emphasis harks back to a very ancient line of thinking, held by the Orthodox Christian tradition, a tradition with a long history of cross-fertilization and dialogue with Islam.

In my case, D'Costa might propose that in dialogue with friends of other faiths, I will be privileged to recognise new truth about God through their testimonies and that I will have as much to learn from them as they have to learn from me. Where my non-Christian friends might have felt their faiths reduced to a franchise of Christianity in Rahner's approach, it might be that D'Costa's positive pneumatology would strike a chord and enable a yet deeper dialogue and understanding to develop.

On my way to St Bride's, late for a meeting, I rushed into Ahmed's corner shop for tea, coffee, milk and biscuits. Reaching the counter, I realised that I had no money and started to put the items back on the shelves. Ahmed invited me to take them anyway and told me that Islam taught that he would be blessed if I received his gift to the Church. I found myself wondering how many Christian shopkeepers would have done the same and whether I should use Ahmed as an example of the 'economy of the Kingdom of God' in that Sunday's sermon. ■

*In the next Signs of the Times **Part 3: Pluralism***

Greenbelt 2014 Lucinda Murphy



Modern Church was once again proud to take up its small part in the extravaganza that is the Greenbelt Festival.

Held this year in a beautiful new location on the outskirts of Kettering, the Festival certainly did not disappoint. With a wide range of arts and crafts, stalls, talks, book reviews, and performances to attend, many of us found ourselves unable to ascertain which way to divide ourselves!

These numerous activities included Mindfulness Meditation sessions with our own Tim Stead as well as significant contributions from our new President, Linda Woodhead who chaired a packed keynote discussion, 'Is the Church of England worth saving?' To cut a long

Our membership rates have been unchanged for five years and so with rising costs, it has been decided that from 1 January 2015 the standard rate should be £45 for a year. Those who feel that they cannot afford this are invited to pay £35. Members will be receiving a letter from Turpin Distribution about the new rates.

Would you kindly ensure that any **current standing orders** payable to Modern Church are **cancelled?** ■

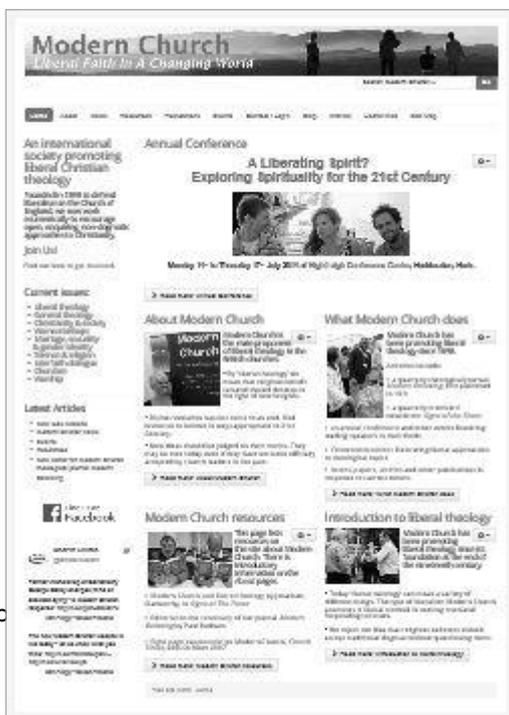
New look website

Kieran Bohan

JUST IN TIME for the 2014 Annual Conference, the new Modern Church website went live. I hope you like the new look, and find it easier to navigate.

Some features have changed:

- **Blog:** This will shortly be moved from Tumblr to the new site to make it easier for more people to contribute.
- **Social media:** every page has an option to share via Twitter or Facebook, and to add a comment using Facebook, Yahoo, AOL or Hotmail user profiles at the foot of each page.



- **Online payment:** This facility is currently being updated to integrate with the new website and will be restored shortly.
- **Bookshop:** On the old site this had become very large, and was not well used, so we have suspended it for the moment and plan to re-launch a streamlined version which we will promote more effectively via social media in future.

If you use social media and want to keep up to date with Modern Church, please 'like' our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/modchurch or follow us on Twitter: [@ChurchModern](https://twitter.com/ChurchModern). Help us to spread the word by sharing these links with others who may be interested in our work.

Moving to a new website platform is like moving house - it takes a little while to get everything just where you want it, to get all the pictures put up, and everything stored neatly so it's easy to find. With more than 600 pages, 900 menu items, 100 downloadable resources, and hundreds of images and external links, it's been a large task which has taken longer than expected, but I hope you will agree it was worth the wait.

I hope you will find the site more attractive, engaging and accessible. If you can't find something, or find a broken link, please help me to help you by letting me know in an email to: website@modernchurch.org.uk.

I would like to thank Guy Elsmore, Jonathan Clatworthy and Christine Alker for their support in managing the transition to the new website. As your new website editor, I will introduce myself on the blog and in *Signs* in the coming months. In the meantime, happy surfing! ■