

WINTER 2019/20

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

FEATURES, COMMENTARY AND REVIEWS FROM MODERN CHURCH



Science *and the* Language of Prayer

Richard Baker on the growing dissonance between what we believe and how we pray

Taking Back Control?

Editorial by
Anthony Woollard

Life's Winding Trail:
Further Notes

Henry Disney

Book Reviews

Lorraine Cavanagh, Marcus
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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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EDITORIAL



Anthony Woollard
Editor

TAKING BACK CONTROL?

In one of Kate Charles' witty ecclesiastical mysteries, the story revolves around a churchwarden plotting to withhold the parish's regular payments (parish share/quota) to the diocese. Not because of any theological differences – but simply because he wants to “take back control”.

This newsletter has paid little attention to one of the defining “signs of the times”, the UK's departure from the European Union. In the debates leading to Brexit, the idea of taking back control has played a large part. This is about how we see

ourselves, as individuals and as a nation – our sense of existence and purpose. And it raises issues much wider than our relationship with Brussels.

Are we, simply, individuals (or an individual nation) defined by the degree of control over our own lives? Or is interdependence a better word to describe the human condition, both as a political and economic reality, and as an ideal in our relationships with each other and with the Mystery beyond ourselves?

Modern Church stands for liberal theology, and “liberalism” was born in an *continued >*

Signs of the Times is published in February, April, July and November. 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 images. 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 8th December, 8th March, 8th June or 8th September. Articles should not exceed 1,000 words. We prefer email but will process typed or handwritten text (phone for a postal address).



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As Donne said, no man is an island – and no nation is, either, in our interconnected world. Neither the European Union nor the United Kingdom is likely to come out well from the events of the past few years; but then neither was perfect to start with.

atmosphere of growing individualism, whether political, economic or spiritual. We have fought against the controlling tendencies of church authorities, as of other institutions that repress human freedom, and that battle is still needed. Yet we also recognise the dangers of an obsession with individual autonomy – whether in politics, economics or religion – as Lorraine Cavanagh reflects in a book review later in this edition. Ideals of interdependence – which respects individual freedom but sees it within an overarching story – are built into our Christian foundation. The Church, that deeply flawed institution, at its best can model such ideals in a way which few institutions can achieve – even in the apparently trivial matter of the sharing of resources across parishes, as well as in other deeper ways both public and interpersonal. Modern Church may be “liberal”, but it does not endorse any “ism” – not even “liberalism” in its many self-proclaimed forms – and that is wherein its liberality consists.

As Donne said, no man is an island – and no nation is, either, in our interconnected world. Neither the European Union nor the United Kingdom is likely to come out well from the events

of the past few years; but then neither was perfect to start with. Another great Christian insight, alongside the need for interdependence, is that every human institution is flawed, just as we all are – but also that all can be redeemed. We must, in any situation such as the present, simply find ways in which we can model the best available outcome, the fullest possible interdependence with integrity, whether at the geopolitical, economic, cultural or personal levels, and especially across the boundaries of a divided Europe and a divided nation.

Such interdependence may perhaps also be seen in one of Modern Church’s historic preoccupations – the relationship of religion and science. This issue includes two articles on that theme, and I would also mention here that our former Treasurer, Peter Mills, himself a mathematician, has published a modest apologia pro vita sua on the same theme entitled *Time to Think*; those members of Modern Church who remember Peter might wish to contact him (peterfmills@ntlworld.com) for further details. We hope to include more on the religion-and-science theme in our next edition.

Our articles remind us that there

are dark things in the natural world as well as light – and perhaps the scientists of today see that particularly clearly. The idea that humanity – or any culture, nation or individual – can and should “control” the natural world and remodel it according to some abstract ideal has been going out of fashion for some decades, and perhaps the climate emergency has finally put the lid on it. Yet, as I write this in the midst of a winter which seems particularly dark, I recall that darkness and light, winter and summer, are also interdependent. Luther’s cry “Where can I find a gracious God?” arose from what he perceived as his enslavement to the Church’s law, but those of us wrestling with the laws of nature, and of human behaviour in the spheres of politics and economics, and the grim way in which they come together in climate emergency, may well echo that cry. Yet out of that depth I hear again Bonhoeffer’s words “Only a suffering God can help”. And that interdependence of dark and light, and that healing suffering in the face of the hard world in which we live, come together in the message of Easter.

This is not a call to passivity. You and I, and our nation, and our species, all have work to do. There are many areas, from physical and mental disease to social and political sickness, where we can and must work to turn darkness to light. But we cannot “take back control” because in the final analysis we never had it. Yet if Love is a reality, “all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well”. **Andissintore dolor audae ped et fugiani hillabor sa consequodia dolest utae voluptatur restior abore aut**

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Science and the Language of Prayer



COVER FEATURE

Richard Baker considers the diverging paths of what we believe and how we pray.

Prayer, both public and private, has always been an integral part of Christianity, of Judaism before that, and, presumably, of the prehistoric cultures out of which Judaism emerged. Christians still use prayers from the Old Testament that may be over three thousand years old and many liturgies have changed little since first written several centuries ago. Even when prayers are expressed in modern language, the underlying form and implied understanding of God are often pre-modern.

The way we understand the world, however, has changed. Scientists have discovered that the universe is much bigger, older and likely to continue further into the future than previous generations imagined. They observe that physical and biological processes are governed by scientific laws. We know that many diseases are caused by pathogens and earthquakes by seismic disturbances. Neurophysiology and brain imaging give insights into how our thought processes and emotional responses are embedded in our physical brains. Randomised clinical trials offer a conceptual framework for

evaluating which interventions work and which don't.

The result is a dissonance between what we believe and how we pray. Although part of the wider challenge of incorporating advances in scientific understanding into our theology, prayer seems particularly resistant to change. When leading worship, I often preach a sermon with impeccable progressive credentials only to hear myself lapse into words and forms of prayer which embody a view of God that I no longer believe in. This can be exacerbated if others lead prayers or if set prayers that have been written many years in the past are integral to the service.

If we base our theology on scripture, tradition and reason only then it is difficult to see how we will resolve this dissonance (even if we add in a Methodist regard for experience). Our theology needs to take an equal account of science if we want to bridge the gulf between how most people understand the world and how we as Christians understand God. This is important to many existing Christians who already struggle with this issue. It is even more important for mission to *continued >*



How can our prayers of thanks for the natural world acknowledge the role of random variation and natural selection in its evolution?

people who now find it impossible to believe in the God that is implicit in so many of our prayers.

Within the UK there is a healthy debate about how science and Christianity interact but little of this focusses on prayer. David Wilkinson's "When I pray what does God do?" is the most obvious exception. Wilkinson, reflecting the approach of many of the current scientists who are prominent in Christian apologetics, adopts an essentially conservative position. He assumes that God's nature is already known and that our task is to reconcile this with scientific knowledge. An alternative approach is to assume that what we "know now [of God] is only partial" (1 Corinthians 13:12) and that science might help refine that understanding. This is essentially the viewpoint taken by Gerard Hughes in his classic book

on prayer "God of Surprises" when he writes, "True Christianity will always be critical, questioning and continually developing in its understanding of God and human life" and warns that if this critical element is not fostered that "religious belief and practice ... will have little relation to everyday life and behaviour".

So how might our prayers be affected if we were to take science more seriously? There are many types of prayer, but intercessory prayer is perhaps the oldest, most instinctive and most common. Much intercessory prayer still uses language that implies belief in a God who will intervene miraculously to bring about a particular outcome. The most basic observation of science, however, is that the world behaves in accordance with discoverable laws. Given that we have discovered the laws governing meteorology, should we still be praying for the relief of drought or the dissipation of a hurricane? Given that we have discovered the processes by which many diseases progress, should we be praying in expectation that those processes will be miraculously halted?

Moving away from language that embodies a pre-scientific understanding of God might free us to explore creative forms of intercessory prayer that are more aligned with a modern world view. Prayers could draw on imagery of an immanent God who works through us in a manner that is consistent with science rather than a transcendent God who intervenes independently through miracles that lie outside it. Such prayers might encourage more active engagement with the world amongst Christians and make it easier for others to share

our prayers without requiring suspension of their disbelief.

Similar issues affect other forms of prayer. How can our prayers of thanks for the natural world acknowledge the role of random variation and natural selection in its evolution? How can we seek and offer forgiveness honouring the insights of modern psychology? How can we approach meditative prayer and mystical experiences given our understanding of brain physiology? This article is too short to explore the implications of taking science seriously over the full spectrum of our prayer life, but I do hope it might encourage those leading prayers to think carefully about how they express them. Words and images that clash with a modern understanding of the world should be reviewed and the potential for replacing them with those that resonate with it explored. This process will not only enhance our prayers but should also deepen our understanding of God.

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Richard Baker was a Professor in Health Sciences at the University of Salford until 2017 and is now Lay Pastor at Bramhall Methodist Church. He has recently led a team organising a series of five seminars, *Science and the Language of Prayer*, with funding from the Scientists in Congregations programme at Durham University. More information is available at: www.bramhallmethodists.org.uk/scienceandprayer

Life's Winding Trail: Further Notes

By Henry Disney

Several commentators on my 2017 book *Regaining Life's Winding Trail* (www.austinmacauley.com), which was reviewed in the October 2018 edition of this newsletter, have noted that some churchgoers regarded me as 'heretical' for my rejection of the Virgin Birth. Some humanist scientific reviewers have viewed my Christian faith with equal disquiet.

As a 'lapsed atheist' with a subsequent career as a scientist, I regard observed facts and authenticated experiences as being sacred and all interpretations as being provisional.

From the earliest times humanity's contemplation of our amazing planet and its position in the universe gave rise to belief in invisible powers, spirits or beings 'responsible' for creation and providing an ethical code for living.

The Jews concluded there is only one God – responsible for all things and requiring commitment to 'right' living. For most Old Testament writers, the Jews are the favoured, 'chosen' people. The idea that God might be equally

concerned with the well being of the Philistines was not considered plausible! By the time of Jesus, the promised Messiah was expected to lead the Jews to freedom from Rome. Jesus' disciples were slow to reject this.

A most striking example of the notion of God's supposed preference for the Jews is the story of the Passover – probably the earliest documented case of an avian pathogen getting into pigs leading to a devastating epidemic in humans. The Jews would have escaped this epidemic by their cultural avoidance of pork.

Two ideas are common to most religions before the advances in science of modern times – first that the earth was the centre of the universe and second that an agent was responsible for every event, good or bad. From this latter misconception arose the supposed need to appease the agent by sacrifices. In the case of the Jews this was conceived in terms of appeasing the 'wrath' of God.

Belief in a necessary agent led to the misconception that God *continued >*

'The Holy Spirit frees us from the dictates of our biological and acquired drives. Those who live preoccupied with satisfying their own selfish desires, often at the expense of the well being of others, are to be pitied.'



The New Testament shows Jesus as fully human and so sharing the pre-scientific misconceptions of his culture.

was directly responsible for every organism in nature and every detail of its design. The theory of evolution and the microbial theory of infectious diseases disposed of this falsehood. Had God been the agent directly responsible for pathogenic organisms, then one would have to conclude that God is malign!

Many Christians have adopted this idea that sacrifices are required to appease the 'wrath' of God in their understanding of Christ's crucifixion. However, for me the essential purpose was to put an end once and for all to the nonsense of sacrifices being required to obtain God's favour. At the Last Supper, a Passover meal, Jesus laid to rest the narrative of God having favoured the Jews at the expense of the gentiles.

The New Testament shows Jesus as fully human and so sharing the pre-scientific misconceptions of his culture. His uniqueness lay in his unwavering commitment to live by the promptings of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

The resurrection of Jesus is the most significant event in human history and without it Christianity would not have happened. A puzzle for us today is the resurrection of Christ's body – inconsistently depicted in Scripture. My guess is that, given the cultural context of the disciples, only the disappearance of his body from the tomb, followed by the 'appearance' of his 'physical' body would convince them of its reality. The Spirit of Christ alone would have been perceived as a phantom,

and as such, a phenomenon to be feared.

I have encountered many who have attributed their evidently good, caring lives to their efforts to obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. To dismiss these authenticated experiences as living according to delusions is to impose the pre-conceived interpretation of a closed mind. Equally I have encountered atheist and agnostic humanists who have been caring, compassionate people of integrity guided by their consciences. These values reflect those of all the main religions and are largely their historical legacy. I suggest this inheritance provides us with the conceptual framework to allow us to receive the promptings of the Holy Spirit even if the source is not recognised. The Holy Spirit frees us from the dictates of our biological and acquired drives. Those who live preoccupied with satisfying their own selfish desires, often at the expense of the well being of others, are to be pitied.

I contend the essence of Christianity is this call to live by heeding the promptings of the Holy Spirit – a conclusion endorsed, for example, by Helen Burnett's article on Extinction Rebellion (Signs, July 2019), and perhaps hinted at in David Simon's article (April 2019) on "non-realism". I believe, in the light of the Resurrection story, that, as the Holy Spirit becomes a part of our very being, we will survive our physical death as an individual non-physical being in communion with God for eternity.

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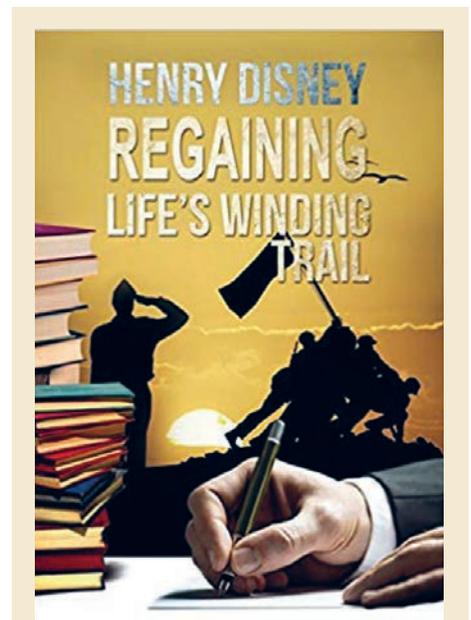
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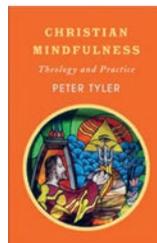
Henry Disney is a conservation scientist at the University of Cambridge, poet and author of 'Regaining Life's Winding Trail', published by Austin Macauley.



Dispassionate Mindfulness and Passionate Heartfulness in the Christian Tradition

In an age when some would describe themselves as ‘spiritual but not religious’ Peter Tyler’s book on Christian mindfulness is welcome. Those who are put off religion because they associate it with noise and power, will appreciate the doorway into wordless centred prayer which this readable book opens.

To this end, Tyler draws on the wisdom of a range of thinkers and masters of spirituality, from Cassian and Evagrius, to Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Thomas Merton. One of the book’s greatest strengths is that it does not try to ‘Christianize’ or appropriate the spiritual praxis of another religion. Buddhist mindfulness is not a tool designed to serve Christians for the refining of their individual prayer life,



Peter Tyler
*Christian Mindfulness –
Theology and Practice*
SCM Press, 2018

still less for thinking of themselves as particularly spiritual. It brings its own treasures, and the author seeks to enable the reader to appreciate the richness of Buddhist mindfulness teaching as it is reflected in that of some of the great Christian mystics.

The chapters on St. Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Thomas Merton give us plenty of insights into the way the simple discipline of mindful awareness in the present moment unites us with the prayer of the mystics and becomes something that is within the reach of anyone who is prepared to set aside a little time for focusing into their inner life. Tyler’s primary concern is with how the human person relates to the Divine. To this end, like the wise scribe of St. Matthew’s gospel (Matt.

13:52), who brings forth from his treasure what is old and what is new, Tyler brings together the riches inherent in spiritual traditions of widely different provenances.

Early on in the book we are introduced to the Indic terms *pali*, *sati* and *smṛti* which together translate as ‘memory’ (p. 8-9). This way of ‘remembering’ pertains to the discipline of being continually present to the present moment, and learning from it, as it is also reflected in the Spanish word ‘*recogimiento*’. Such a recollective attentiveness brings together two concepts which are central to the book, dispassionate mindfulness and passionate heartfulness.

Contemporary mindfulness in an age of individualism and ‘the preponderance of apps and online courses’, can lead to privatized religion.

At the same time, balance and counterpoint inform much of the discussion. There is never a sense of competing spiritualities. Instead, we are made aware of the need for equilibrium between the life of prayer and the everyday. Theresa’s exhortation to give substance to prayer through good works is not an endorsement of the kind of activism which so undermines the spiritual life of the Church today. It is a reminder of the need for respect for the integrity of other disciplines and spiritual traditions, for a balanced life and a willingness to learn from others. The author makes this clear as he also warns of the risks inherent in contemporary mindfulness which, in an age of

individualism and ‘the preponderance of apps and online courses’, can lead to privatized religion (p.66).

Here again, the wisdom of the past serves him well. As with the guidance on prayer given by Teresa, mindfulness, as taught by its practitioners, is not a set of instructions on how to get on in the spiritual life. As with all prayer, it is both wordless and discursive, respectful of what Theresa calls ‘the subtle nothingness’ into which all attempted journeys into the Divine will lead.

This book is both scholarly and accessible. With the practical exercises given at the end of each chapter, it will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of those who teach or practice spirituality, as well as to those leading interfaith events and quiet days, as it will be for anyone wanting to broaden their own spiritual horizons.

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— *Lorraine Cavanagh*

Lorraine Cavanagh is a trustee of Modern Church, former university chaplain and writer on theology and spirituality. Her most recent book will be reviewed in our next edition.



Rethinking Ministry for the Poor

This lively and easy-to-read book is one I wish had been available much earlier in my ministry.

In 1986, newly ordained Michael Mather started work in Indianapolis at Broadway United Methodist Church, which was large enough to be a cathedral and was known locally as “The White House.” The days when the area was respectably white middle-class had long gone and it had become a “black inner city.” The whole area was run down. Nine times in nine months Michael sang “Amazing Grace” at the funerals of young men, whom he knew, who had been knifed to death. The church’s outreach programmes were helping a few people, who would probably anyhow escape from the area, but Michael asked himself, “Is it possible to change the odds for everyone?”

In 1992, Michael Mather moved to a “social-service” church in South Bend. After a Pentecost service at which his text was “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh”, a woman said, “At the food pantry, we ask people how poor



Michael Mather
Having Nothing, Possessing Everything – Finding abundant communities in unexpected places
Wm. B Eerdmans,
Grand Rapids, Michigan,
2018

they are, not how rich they are – but Peter says God’s Spirit is poured out on all people.” This led Michael to reflect on Asset-Based Community Development programmes which start with the talents present in a community, rather than in what it lacks. So

when people came asking for food or money, they were asked first about the skills they had: “Could you fix a toaster?” or “Do you garden or Do you play a musical instrument” and if so, “Could you teach someone else?” So, when Adele was asked “What are you good at?” she said, “I am a good cook.” “Prove it by cooking us a meal.” It was fabulous, and soon Adele was being paid for catering for groups who hired the church hall for events.

The book is full of stories. I liked the one of when they decided to preach about the right use of money. They put up a notice ‘Ending Poverty’ with the service times below. A city leader rang to say, “It’s great that you’re ending poverty at 8.30 and 10.45. What about the rest of the time?”

The book is full of stories. I liked the one of when they decided to preach about the right use of money. They put up a notice ‘Ending Poverty’ with the service times below. A city leader rang to say, “It’s great that you’re ending poverty at 8.30 and 10.45. What about the rest of the time?”

Increasingly church programmes began with questions about what sort of change in the community people wanted and how they could help to achieve this. The intention was to discover unrecognised skills rather than providing services from outside.

Although the American context is very different, all professionals who work in inner cities could learn from this book and it would encourage parish clergy to reflect on their style of leadership.

When I was a Director of Training, my emphasis was on the priesthood of all believers and I had a chance to put this into practice at Christ Church, Bath, where I was the minister. I also had a demanding full-time job – so it had to become a ‘People’s Church’ where everyone shared in ministry. As more people took on leadership roles, so the congregation grew: but Michael Mather’s approach would have encouraged locals to do more to improve the life of the community.

Now, in retirement, taking services in chilly village churches, where the congregation is lower than the temperature, I wonder what impact there is on the community. Are clergy clinging on to old patterns of control rather enabling

laity to share in leadership? (not to mention the reluctance to give real responsibility of self-supporting and locally ordained clergy).

Reading *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything* should encourage clergy and all engaged in caring professions or community work to rethink their approach, so that areas which are labelled “deprived” discover “life in all its fullness.” *Ucia dit lacea dolupti ommod es doleseq uibusdam intiis rerio offic tem eratqui delestin enes alicto blam, voluptatus.*

Umet autaest estias dolupti nctori unt que nobit od utemodisqui seribus rerit latiae volore saperupta nobis experci tempost od quame aditincto blabor moluptae nis sin res que quo que volupta cullaborum nos at vende volores mod mil maio. Itae ea dolupient, sam et quo consequi destiumet re modi nes ut aspe exeris ut velit accaborit aborem coris apellab ipsusamet as illabo. Itae exeris ut velit accaborit aborem coris apellab ipsusamet as illabo. Itae.

— *Marcus Braybrooke*

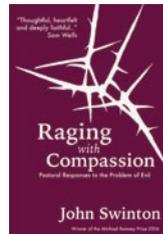
Marcus Braybrooke is a retired parish priest, interfaith activist and author



Navigating Theodicy in Pastoral Practice

This intriguingly entitled book was first published in the US in 2007 and is reissued here by SCM Press. Swinton, who is chair of Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, asks, all too briefly, “How can a God who is all-loving and all-powerful allow the tragedy, suffering and evil that leave such profound marks on our world” (p1). John Hick explains it, he says, as character-building; Augustine sees it as the deprivation of the good; it could be the result of original sin, the consequence of human freewill, punishment for sins, or some divine higher purpose. But none of these arguments help in a pastoral context, driving sufferers away from God, and are, as such, evil in themselves.

Quoting Hume (God is willing but not able, so impotent; able but not willing, so malevolent; both willing and able, so why is there evil at all?), Swinton claims that such rational approaches are the product of the Enlightenment. St Paul, by contrast, counsels perseverance in the face of



John Swinton
Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil
SCM Press, 2018

evil. The Christian response is to absorb, resist and transform its impact in faithful communities. Swinton defines evil as all that separates us [humans] from God. He wants a “practical theodicy”.

The existence of evil he admits “is inexplicable” (p84). The point is not to call for explanation, but ‘to learn faithful practices of resistance’ (p.86).

Successive chapters illustrate this approach. First, lament. Moving accounts of evil events are quoted, and silence, solidarity in suffering, the example of Jesus on the cross, listening, the use of the psalms, hearing people’s pain, all set the context for a faithful response.

A lengthy chapter then explores practicing [sic] forgiveness. The desire for revenge may be natural but it precipitates further evil (p.136). If there is repentance, evil acts may be forgivable, because Jesus died for all, though they may not be excusable. Hand rage over to God; leave revenge to him.

Next comes practicing thoughtfulness. This is a sustained critique of the commodification of the person. Prenatal testing for disability with a

Swinton defines evil as all that separates us [humans] from God. He wants a “practical theodicy”. The existence of evil he admits “is inexplicable.”

view to possible abortion is strongly resisted and adoption by the community advocated. After all, he says, ‘we worship an adopted God’ (p.209) (!).

And then friendship. A discussion of hostile attitudes to asylum-seekers and refugees speaks powerfully to our current international situation. He sees hospitality-in-friendship as a mode of resistance to evil’ P.216). ‘To offer Christ-like friendship to the poor, the

A discussion of hostile attitudes to asylum-seekers and refugees speaks powerfully to our current international situation

outcast, the victims of evil is to minister faithfully... To love God is to act in such a way’ (p.227). ‘Only love can truly conquer evil’ (p.246).

This book is about practical, pastoral responses. It is full of examples of evil and suffering, lengthy quotations from other writers, and proof-texts from the Bible; it interprets the word theodicy in terms of human action; it states that all will be put right at the return of Christ (he reveals his Calvinist origins (p.92)). It is irritatingly repetitive, describing everything in triplets (e.g. evil, suffering and death; anger, hurt and pain (p131)), and has no discussion of

corporate or institutional evil, suffering in the animal kingdom, or of natural disasters.

But it is heartfelt and deeply caring. There is an extensive bibliography and a helpful index. And it does what it says on the tin. Modern Church members, however, may well want other tins on the shelf with which to paint a comprehensive and convincing picture of the relationship between the existence of evil and a God of love. *Am, quae conse similis eos audicil luptatur ant atio et incitiame dolores evenihi caborem voluptaque nimusaperum ut utempor emporro receptatur?*

Mus. Optium ist, qui voluptam re nos asperum ut aborit ea estia velecab orenis aligendae. Nam ratquatis nis etur ratiam, sam quatiem quis aut voluptius rerum autem ut volum quae quis non et quantius exceper feribus eos sequasi-molum que voloribusdam voloria cus.

El ma dolo explaboritem rest, officabore poribus apicia simaio dolorest offictemquo teniscipis doluptur aut ra volupta qui ut omnihilique et et maxim veliqua sperrum si temmin veliqua sperrum si tem.

— Paul Brett

Canon Paul Brett is a retired priest living in Bath



**LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH**

**THEOLOGICAL
TRANSFORMATIONS**

MODERN CHURCH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020

Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th July 2020
High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts

Living in Love and Faith is the Church of England's latest project on sexuality, due to report during the same month as this conference. Modern Church is devoting this conference to a range of theological presentations which demonstrate how the Christian Gospel affirms, accepts and welcomes everyone, whatever their identity, gender or sexuality, and without reservation or ambiguity.

Chair: Professor Adrian Thatcher; **Chaplain:** The Revd Dr Tina Beardsley, SMMS

Speakers:*

The Revd. Dr. Tina Beardsley / Kieran Bohan / **The Revd. Prof. Chris Cook** /
Dr. Susannah Cornwall / **The Revd Canon Dr Julie Gittos** / The Revd Jide Macaulay /
Jayne Ozanne / Prof. Adrian Thatcher / **Alison Webster**

* subject to alteration



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