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the baptist ministers' journal

contacts for the baptist ministers' journal

Editor: Sally Nelson, 4 Station View, Church Fenton,
Tadcaster LS24 9QY; revsal96@aol.com

Book reviews: Michael Peat, The Multifaith Chaplaincy Centre, The Grange,
1 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1TB; mike.peat@bristol.ac.uk

Of Interest To You: Arderne Gillies, Greenhill, 39 South Road,
Chorleywood, Herts WD3 5AS; rev.arderne@btinternet.com

Journal distribution: Jem Sewell, 2 Westbourne Park Villas,
London W25EA; jembmj@gmail.com

the baptist ministers'

journal

April 2019, vol 342, ISSN 0968-240

the baptist ministers' journal© is the journal of the
Baptist Ministers' Fellowship

useful contact details are listed inside the
front and back covers

(all service to the Fellowship is honorary)

www.bmf-uk.org

printed by Keenan Print (keenanprint@btconnect.com)

From the Editor

Childish chronicles?

How have you observed Lent—if at all, for not every Baptist does?

I am normally quite a fan of doing something practical in Lent—maybe making a donation or undertaking an action every day that is of service, or similar; but this year I wanted to do something reflective because I have been so busy. I decided that one of my commitments during these six weeks would be to re-read the whole of the Narnia Chronicles in the order in which they were published. I have not read the books in a single run since I was a child, having moved on to Lewis's 'grown-up' theological writing—although I have read the occasional Narnia book in isolation. This time I am reading the whole lot as an theologian, and it is a very different experience. The stories seem shorter (perhaps unsurprisingly—and so I have to 'ration' myself to spread them over the Lenten period instead of 'feasting'); and I am aware of and amused by the anachronistic language ('I say!' said Peter), and the middle class school system in which all the children seem to be educated.

What I didn't explicitly see years ago was the prevalence of metaphorical or narrative explorations of the divine-human relationship (though of course these metaphors do communicate themselves implicitly, hence the spiritual power of the series); nor the frequent allusions to biblical stories and themes. A Lion which appears as a Lamb, with a barbeque of fish on a beach, at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. The hints of a general resurrection in at the end of *Prince Caspian*: 'Sad old donkeys who had never known joy grew suddenly young again; chained dogs broke their chains…'; the prevalence of 'doorways' into Narnia—the liminal places—prompting me to ask myself how 'The Kingdom' invades 'the kingdom' in our experience? This Lenten task has been really enjoyable and in a sense it has allowed me to come to the faith 'as a theological child'.

I hope the articles in this issue will help us all in our own reflections: John Colwell's lecture on being shaped by the gospel (how do we steward the gift of life?); Chris Upton's challenge to think theologically about what we do with our worship spaces (how do we steward the gift of space); and Pieter Lalleman's article on the early church's use of money (how do we steward our possessions?).

I would love to hear from you if you have reflections or resources you would like to offer to the community of Baptist ministers reading this journal—for the glory of God, and for the furtherance of our service in ministry. My email is revsal96@aol.com.

Every Easter blessing *SN*

Indwelling the gospel story

by John Colwell

The theme of theology, primarily and foundationally, is the doctrine of God. It ought not to be necessary to state the blindingly obvious but too readily we approach the sub-themes of theology as if they were discrete, as if they were other than springing from an understanding of the doctrine of God as he has made himself known to us.

My friend Tom Smail (d. 2012) used to comment that, whereas we cannot know at all what it means to be God, we can and do know who God is: we can know who God is inasmuch as he has made himself known. The story of Israel as it is recorded in the Scriptures is, at the same time and more basically, the story of the God of Israel and God's self-identification as such. Israel's God is the one who called Abram out of Harran and Israel out of Egypt; the one who sent his people into captivity in Babylon and brought them back out of captivity; the one who caused the Temple to be built and then rebuilt, the one who caused it to be cleansed and rededicated following its contamination under Seleucid oppression. It is this one who creates and sustains his creation. It is this one who alone truly is God. For the people of Israel God is as he is rendered in this narrative. The *Tanakh* contains little or nothing by way of speculation, rather it is overwhelmingly narrative and even when it takes the form of commandment or proposition it does so in a narrative context. Israel's claim to know God is a doxological reflection on their story which is firstly God's story with them—or, to put the matter more straightforwardly, Israel's understanding of the nature of God, is narratival before it is propositional. Whatever significance we may accord to the superscriptions of the psalms they serve to relate these songs and laments to particular people in particular contexts, and even when such superscriptions are absent or minimal the psalms themselves are grounded in the history of Israel which is the history of this people with their God: such a context may be the occasion of the psalmist's confusion and complaint, but it is also the source of the psalmist's hope even in the darkest despair.

Moreover, the doxological reflections that comprise Israel's scriptures are explicitly and practically doxological: Israel is not called merely to record their story with their God but to celebrate that story and, by such means, to continue to participate in that story, to indwell that story. The great feasts of Israel were not mere commemorations of past events but were rather means of participating in those past events which were

thereby means of celebrating the people's present identity: to celebrate the Passover was and is to be identified as the people of God who were brought out from Egypt. The Hebrew word usually translated 'to remember' (זכר)is a covenant word, its significance is not exhausted by merely not forgetting (Passover is not a knot in the handkerchief lest Israel forget this defining story); it signifies a covenant commitment to take the past into account, a commitment that this past event should determine the present and the future. Through their festivals, prayers, and songs the people of Israel indwelt their story and, thereby, celebrated both the nature of the one who made himself known in that story and correspondingly their identity as his people.

Albeit by very different means, Matthew, Luke, and John (if, perhaps, not Mark so overtly) each ground their telling of the story of Jesus in the story of Israel. For Matthew this is achieved quite explicitly through the 'fulfilment' formula, relating the story of Jesus directly with the story of Israel and Israel's prophetic witness. For Luke the process may be more subtle but is no less explicit, not just the prophetic songs in Luke's first chapter but his manner of relating the subsequent narrative repeatedly resonates with Israel's story and expectations. All four Gospels relate Jesus' commitment to prayer, his attendance at the synagogue, his observance (at least) of the Passover—there is nothing whatsoever to suggest that Jesus, who readily criticised aspects of Jewish tradition, in any way separated himself from his people's celebratory indwelling of their story with their God. And perhaps even more significantly, for the Fourth Gospel the feasts of Israel, at least in part, give structure to the entire gospel narrative: Jesus is himself the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), Jesus himself is the bread of God that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (John 6:33), Jesus himself is the source of living water (John 7:37-39), Jesus himself is the light of the world (John 8:12), Jesus himself is the shepherd of his people (John 10:11) and, ultimately, Jesus himself is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25-26), the true and living way to the Father (John 14:6)—though Pentecost may be absent, the feast of Passover, the feast of Tabernacles, and the feast of Dedication provide a context for the extraordinary claims of Jesus throughout the first part of John's Gospel. It is surely not overly tendentious to conclude that, for the Gospel writers, the story of Jesus not only resonates with the story of Israel but brings that story to its ultimate expression. The one who is narrated in the story of Israel is the one who is narrated in the story of Jesus supremely and ultimately: Jesus himself is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15); the Word made flesh (John 1:14); the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being (Hebrews 1:3).

Contrary to the assumptions of some, the New Testament offers us little detail of the worship and devotional life of the earliest church. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians gives advice on the use and ordering of spiritual gifts, we may have examples of early statements of faith, of early prayers, and even of early hymns, but there is little clue concerning any possible ordering or structure of the earliest Christian worship. However, we do have Peter and John going up to the temple at the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1), and

Paul seeking a place of prayer while at Philippi (Acts 16:13, 16); we also have Paul's concern to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost with a gift from the churches (Acts 20:16). Though Paul's letters resist the imposition of the rite of circumcision or Jewish food laws on the Gentile churches he nonetheless is prepared to attend the Temple and to fulfil Jewish vows (Acts 21:26)—there is nothing that need lead us to conclude that Paul entirely separated himself from the rhythm of the Jewish festivals. But of greater significance, surely, is what Paul himself writes concerning the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the implication, taken together with references in Acts to the breaking of bread, that this act quickly became central to Christian gathering and Christian worship. Moreover, as with the festivals of Israel, this sharing in bread and wine was not a mere remembrance (in our more modest and restricted sense of the term), but a means of participating in the body and blood of Christ and, thereby, of those gathered being identified themselves as his body (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). However we understand the relationship between the bread of the Lord's Supper and the body of Christ, Paul is asserting a parallel relationship between the bread of the supper and those gathered to break this bread—as with the festivals of Israel, participation is a means of identification.

If the New Testament gives us sparse information concerning the structure and form of early Christian worship the earliest traditions of the church are of little more help. As the church became predominately Gentile rather than Jewish so the Lord's day came gradually to displace the sabbath as the day for corporate worship (to be declared a weekly day of rest by Constantine in 321). Though the date of Easter remained (and remains) disputed a period of preparation for Easter, a preparation of catachumens for baptism, a preparation for the restoration of lapsed Christians, had become commonplace by the fourth century as too had some observance of advent (leading up to Christmas), Christmas itself (the origins of which remain contested and contentious), and Epiphany. Also by the fourth century Judaism's hours of prayer had developed within the church into a recognisable liturgy of the hours: the Didache had commended the praying of the Lord's Prayer three times daily and the rise of the desert fathers and subsequent monasticism established this rhythm of daily prayer for monks and for clergy if not for the laity. In the West, in particular, the rule of Benedict of Nursia established this rhythm of prayer and rhythm of the Christian year, together with the weekly reading of the psalms, as the standard pattern of spiritual devotion.

I must admit that my memory of primary school history lessons in the 1950s is now scanty: I remember lessons on Roman Britain, Saxon Britain, and Norman Britain; I seem to recall that the text book for the latter was Mary R. Price's *Portrait of Britain*;[1] we learnt about the feudal system, strip farming, and motte and bailey castles (the emphasis was primarily on social history rather than kings, queens, and battles), I recall learning something about the trade guilds but, unless my memory is more faulty than I realise, I recall little about the religious influence of those trade guilds and, more significantly, I recall little being said of the quite phenomenal shaping of medieval Britain (or, indeed,

Medieval Europe) through the influence of the monasteries. It would have been near impossible for anyone living in Western Europe during the Middle Ages not to have been aware of the hours of prayer, of the rhythm of the Christian year, of the key elements of Scripture's story: the working week was punctuated with holy days and the commemoration of the saints; biblical stories were retold through frescos, stained glass, and mystery plays—we often think of a world before the printing press as impoverished through the lack of the availability of the Scriptures but folk then had other ways of recounting and rehearsing Scripture's stories, indeed, perhaps their ways of knowing were potentially more participatory than our own. During my rather limited engagement with the work of Thomas Aquinas I came across the comment (I really cannot recall where or by whom) that Thomas would probably never have met anyone who didn't believe in God, the notion would have puzzled him; the rhythms of Christian prayer and worship were ubiquitous. Famously, the young Thomas was fascinated by the question 'What is God?', but his mature writings are a series of disputations and contemplations on the God who has made himself known to us in revelation—that Thomas has so often been misunderstood and misrepresented may be due in part to our failure to recognise the contemplative and doxological character of his work.

Of course, this sacral culture was to change rapidly and irrevocably after the end of the fifteenth century: the invention of the printing press democratised learning and challenged the sacerdotal monopoly of such; the written text displaced the portrayed and enacted story. I am fully aware that I could be accused of succumbing to the temptation of romanticising the pre-modern just as I am aware of the on-going tragedy that is Constantinian Christendom and the abuses and distortions it has engendered. But I am also aware that, in our understandable, though often pompously modernistic, celebration of all that has been gained, we too easily overlook that which may have been lost. Not entirely lost of course: Western society as a whole may no longer dance to the rhythm of the Christian year but its observation, together with at least a pattern of morning and evening prayer, has continued within most Western churches (and certainly within the Eastern churches which remained until very recently largely untouched by these social upheavals). Nonetheless I suspect that, with the rise of Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism, an awareness of these rhythms became obscured.

It's a mistake to consider social and philosophical transitions as discrete: late-medieval Classicism develops into Renaissance which leads inevitably into Reformation that in turn paves the way for Enlightenment. The democratisation of knowledge transmogrifies all too readily into the individualisation of knowledge and the myth of pure objectivity. There are many ways in which the Enlightenment can be (and has been) summarised: for the purposes of this brief essay its principal legacy was the delusion that knowledge occurs in detachment, that there can be knowledge of an object without that knowledge being affected by a subject doing the knowing, and that the subject doing the knowing can do so in detachment from a community and tradition of knowing. Moreover, the

supposition that there can be pure objectivity generates a series of other detachments: for our purposes here, the detachment of doctrine from narrative and the consequent preoccupation with propositional truth; the detachment of ethics from doctrine, focusing on discrete dilemmas to be assessed according to foreseeable consequences or supposed rights, effectively detaching actions from agents; the detachment of study from a doxological context leading to a prioritising of knowledge and competences but with rather less attention to spiritual formation and shaping. Such detachments would have been incomprehensible within the pre-modern world: for Benedict, or Thomas Aquinas, or Bonaventura, doctrine could not be severed from worship, prayer could not be severed from the commitments of Christian discipleship.

As has often been observed, post-modernism is more properly understood as late-modernism, a development within modernism and continuing to be dependent upon it. As such, post-modernism is rather more helpful as a critique of aspects of modernism than in at least some of the more positive but diverse proposals suggested by its proponents. For the purposes of this paper perhaps the two most significant critiques of modernism would be Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge*,[2] and Alasdair MacIntyre's, *After Virtue*.[3] Polanyi (1891-1976), in what were originally his Gifford Lectures, pulls the rug from beneath the fallacy that we can know anything in detachment: we know through indwelling, through participation, in the context of our inclusion within a community of knowing; moreover, all knowing involves an element of trust—we know more than we can prove or establish. MacIntyre (1929-) both in *After Virtue* and then in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*[4] debunks the assumed universals of modernist ethics, arguing that notions of rights, justice, happiness *etc* are particular to particular communities and that only a renewal of an Aristotelean notion of virtue ethics, where the virtues are means to a desired end, can reunite the agent with the action. Moreover, such virtues, as habits, are nurtured and formed within particular communities that share a common goal. Such a ridiculously short summary of such profound and influential works can only be over-simplistic and personally biased—but I hope even these brief summaries are sufficient to demonstrate the resonance of the post-critical with the pre-critical, the post-modern with the pre-modern.

All theology should properly and primarily be focused on a doctrine of God, on who God has shown himself to be in his story with his people, but it is also the case that all theology, consciously or unconsciously, is inevitably autobiographical: I approach the doctrine of God in the manner that I do because I am the person that I am, because of the communities that I indwell and have indwelt, because of the narrative of my life. As Polanyi would argue, I ask the questions that I ask because I am the person that I am. The person that I am grew up in a Brethren home and spirituality: although my family's separation from the Brethren occurred before I was born, and although we began worshipping in a Baptist Church when I was nine, the spiritual atmosphere of my home remained thoroughly Brethren, thoroughly evangelical, thoroughly fundamentalist. I

was taught to recite Scripture and to remember biblical references; I was taught to pray at the beginning and ending of every day—though, as with most children so taught to pray, my prayers were of the 'shopping-list' variety. For a while, in the church where I spent my teenage years, I was responsible for distributing Bible-reading notes. There was one woman in the church, a woman I recognised then to be deeply devout, that I could not persuade to take such notes—she explained that she preferred to soak herself in much longer passages of scripture and to allow the Lord to speak to her through those passages rather than through the comments of others on those passages. At the time I simply didn't understand her: Bible-reading notes helped me to interpret scripture; I then had no conscious notion of scripture interpreting me (though, of course, it did). Moreover, as I grew older and increasingly realised the inadequacy of 'shopping-list' prayers my praying became ever more difficult, a difficulty massively compounded by the onset of a form of cyclic depression with which I have had to contend for the whole of my adult life. Of course you do not need to suffer from some form of clinical depression in order to struggle with prayer, to feel that your words are uttered into a vacuum, to feel defeated by the sheer weight of neediness, to search in vain for the words that truly express your deepest gratitude, hopes, and concerns: it is all too easy to abandon the discipline altogether and various surveys of ministerial practice suggest that rather too many succumb to the temptation.

One of the effects of severe depression, for me at least, has often been an undermining loss of concentration: there are times when I struggle to read any text and tell you what I've read and, at such times, ordering my own thoughts becomes an unscalable rock-face or, to change the metaphor, a quagmire impossible to traverse. At such times, when this darkness first was overwhelming, I found solace in at least some of the psalms, the prayers of Jeremiah, the questionings of Job, the resonant poetry of some of the older hymns; the encouragement that, apparently, I was not the first to feel like this and to struggle in this manner. In this context especially I should place on record the profound comfort of knowing that Charles Spurgeon seems similarly to have struggled and, remarkably in the context of 19th-century attitudes to mental illness, was willing to be entirely candid concerning such struggles.

It was my personal experience of such struggles that awakened me to the self-generated nature of evangelical spirituality (or at least the form of that spirituality in which I had been raised). Prayer is perceived as something you do rather than something in which you participate; there is commonly little or no link between a pattern of prayer and the narrative of the gospel; prayer is overwhelmingly individualistic, an expression of personal gratitude, hopes, and cares—but what should one do when there is no energy to generate such? For those early years of wrestling with the darkness my spiritual life, beyond the reading of psalms and the recitation of well-loved hymns, was characterised by long silences interspersed with pleadings prompted by crushing guilt; my praying couldn't release itself from the darkness I was feeling and, inevitably, my choice of

psalms and hymns to express that which I couldn't generate myself was itself determined by my felt despair.

I don't rehearse this personal context here either in self-indulgence or in the unwarranted supposition that the experience of others might parallel my own—though, as already stated, you don't need to experience clinical depression to struggle with prayer and, in particular, to struggle with this self-generated character of evangelical spirituality—I rehearse all this simply to be candid concerning the circumstances in which I embraced (or, perhaps, was embraced) by a more catholic spirituality. I use the term 'catholic' here (uncapitalised) with deliberation: I'm not alluding to a form of spirituality that is necessarily either Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or High Anglican; I'm employing the term 'catholic' rather in its simple and proper sense of connectedness or commonality across time within a universal community (it is the reference to a connectedness across the ages that renders the term 'universal' an inadequate substitute for the term 'catholic'). One of the greatest attractions of a pattern of common prayer is precisely its commonality: prayer thus embraced is not something I am generating in isolation but something in which I am participating, participating specifically, that is, in a pattern of prayer that is continuous in the Church throughout the world and across the centuries of Christian history.

I guess I must previously have encountered the common form of morning and evening prayer both at school and in various ecumenical gatherings but, if I'm honest, I had always dismissed it as a form of praying that was foreign to my evangelical identity. It was when, in one of my periods of darkness, I was given a pocket version of *Celebrating Common Prayer*,[5] a shortened and simplified version of the pattern of prayer for the Society of Saint Francis, that (perhaps in some degree of desperation) I adopted it as a framework for my own praying and, surprisingly, found myself quickly drawn into this embracing rhythm: as I have expressed it elsewhere, '…it felt like coming home'.[6]

The most immediate benefit of this discovery was a liberation from the burden of an entirely self-generated spiritual rhythm: such a structure need not, of course, replace the personal, the particular, the spontaneous, but it provides a structure into which the extemporary can fit and in which it can be shaped and preserved from the self-indulgent and merely parochial. For me certainly there have been times when the structure has been a substitute for the more personal though, even in the darkest times of depression, the structure with its prayers, readings, and canticles can prompt and ease the more personal. But just as such a structure frees one from the burden of the self-generated it similarly delivers one from the curse of individualism. The realisation that you are entering a structure and repeating words which, albeit through adaptation, have been used by Christian disciples over the centuries of Christian history and are being repeated by others throughout the world fosters a sense of being together even

when alone. But perhaps the deepest benefit of such a rhythm of prayer—though maybe a benefit not so initially obvious—is its potential to shape us. The point that I was attempting to establish at the beginning of this paper is that the people of Israel, through their celebratory indwelling of their story, were identified and shaped by that story: the rhythm of that re-enacted story engendered habits, practices, and assumptions far more effectively than the mere repetition of rules and propositions. If Polanyi, MacIntyre, and those who have followed in their wake are correct, we are shaped by indwelling, whether we realise it or not. To embrace a rhythm of prayer is to submit to such shaping through indwelling a structure that draws you through the seasons of the Christian year and, thereby, through the gospel narrative of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, the season following All Saints' Day, and the seasons of the 'ordinary'. Of course I know that, with the exception of Easter and Pentecost, the tradition of the Christian year is post-biblical, just as the feasts of Purim and Dedication are post-Torah, just as the Church's formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity and two-nature Christology are post-New Testament—later development doesn't necessarily negate validity nor, in this case, does it undermine utility as a means of indwelling the gospel story.

I recall my friend and former colleague Nigel Wright more than once opining that, with regard to a liturgy of worship, there seemed (to him) to be an inverse relation between confident conviction and the amount of 'faffing about' that occurred. I guess my response to that is to take it on the chin: I am fully aware that, anecdotally at least, those who struggle with faith tend to gravitate towards the 'top of the candle', and I would defend the tendency. What do you do when questions increase and deepen, when your sense of God's presence dims, when personal faith falters? If MacIntyre and others are correct you come to know and are shaped by indwelling, not by mere intellectual wrestling. In one of her crime novels (and I really can't remember which) P. D. James has Adam Dalgleish in conversation with another over a loss of personal faith: Dalgleish recalls his clergyman father's advice that, in such circumstances one simply should continue with the outward form of worship and prayer since such is the context in which personal faith is formed and nourished. I freely admit that there have been periods when this structured rhythm of prayer and worship has been the means through which I have been held when I was incapable of holding on myself.

Spurgeon's College was the means through which I was prepared for Christian ministry back in the early 1970s. In those days few Baptists would admit to using any form of daily office and few evangelicals would admit to seeking out a spiritual director. My discovery of this more catholic expression of spirituality corresponded to a similar discovery by several Baptist and evangelical friends. It coincided also with the expressed concern of several of my students (by then I was teaching at Spurgeon's College) regarding how they might maintain a discipline of prayer within ministry and by what means, subsequent to the mentoring phase of initial accreditation, they might

submit to a life-long discipline of accountability. It was in response to such concerns that the idea of an order for Baptist Ministry began to develop in me and in others.

Of course, the development of a distinctively Baptist pattern of prayer, and that specifically ordered to the practice of ministry, generates a loss as well as a gain. That which is lost, or rather qualified, is the sense of catholic connectedness: while the overall rhythm of the day and of the Christian year are maintained together with some of the common canticles and some modified set prayers, some of the particulars of a more catholic order have been sacrificed (for instance the daily recitation of the Benedictus at morning prayer and the daily recitation of the Magnificat at evening prayer). But if this more catholic sense of praying together has been qualified a more specific and distinctive sense of praying together has been gained. The rhythm of prayer being developed within the Order, while retaining the rhythms of morning, midday, and evening prayer together with the rhythms of the Christian year, engenders a sense of praying together with those who share a common ministerial commitment and responsibility, a ministerial commitment that is distinctively Baptist—or maybe I should admit, that is Baptist in a quite distinctive manner.

It would be unhelpful and a distortion of our development to suggest that the Order for Baptist Ministry was born in reaction, though generally those of us involved would distance ourselves from more managerial and goal-driven understandings of ministry. But more positively this distinctive pattern of prayer is developing in ways that connect us to our Baptist story, to mothers and fathers in our Baptist life, and in ways that can express an appropriate interconnectedness and non-hierarchical view of church and ministry. This particular pattern of prayer, of course, is freely available through the Internet to anyone who cares to employ it, but those of us committed to the Order, or moving towards that commitment, are similarly committed to meeting regularly in local cell groups both to pray together and to maintain a mutual accountability, are committed to gathering annually in convocation, and are encouraged to seek on-going spiritual direction. This commitment to mutual accountability (expressed through a series of examen questions) should not be underrated: for those with whom I meet every six weeks it is as crucial for personal commitment as is the background rhythm of personal prayer. Our Baptist polity is particularly vulnerable to the possibility of ministerial isolation: a rejection of any hierarchical view of ministry can issue in a lack of any structured form of accountability whatsoever. Of course, any form of accountability, hierarchical or mutual, depends upon honesty and openness, but perhaps a mutuality that expresses itself in eating together, laughing together, as well as praying together—and that in an entirely non-competitive and non-threatening context—encourages that honesty and openness.

I was ordained just over 44 years ago: I am all too aware of the temptations and pitfalls of Christian ministry, of the possibilities for pretence and hypocrisy, of the damage that derives from insecurity, defensiveness, and a lack of self-awareness. My own story may

have been quite different had some form of structured mutual accountability been encouraged 44 years ago. But (rather typically) I am wandering from the point of this paper: this cell group structure specifically enables an accountability to one another concerning our spiritual walk, our commitment to a rhythm of prayer—and it is the significance of such a rhythm of prayer that is the principal purpose of this present paper.

It is not just that a rhythm of prayer delivers me from the exhaustion of the self-generated (though it does), it is not just that a rhythm of prayer unites me to the Church in its praying over the centuries (though it does), it is not just that this particular rhythm of prayer joins me with others who share my specific commitments and responsibilities (though it does), it is also that this rhythm of prayer, itself shaped by the Christian year, enables me to indwell the rhythms of the gospel story and thereby, perhaps, to be further shaped and transformed by that story. The assumptions underlying this paper are that we come to know and are shaped by indwelling, that we do not truly come to know, and certainly are not shaped, in detachment. Nor is this merely a general epistemological assumption, it is rather a recognition that God is truly to be known in the manner that God first has made himself known: God ultimately has made himself known in the gospel story and therefore is to be known through a prayerful indwelling of that story. We indwell that story primarily through holy baptism and holy communion; we indwell that story through our hearing of that story through scripture and through preaching; but we can also indwell that story through a rhythm of life and a rhythm of prayer, a rhythm that echoes the manner in which that story unfolded.

All to easily ministerial life can degenerate into the chaotic: responding to one crisis after another, responding to the demands of others, the persistent interruptions of messaging services and social media, the pressures of meetings and of preparation for meetings. If such rhythms shape your life it is understandable that you should develop a more managerial than pastoral understanding of Christian ministry simply as a means of self-preservation, or, to put the matter another way—if a rhythm of prayer doesn't give shape to your life and service something else will.

This article was given by John Colwell, a founder member of OBM, at an OBM conference on 31 October 2018 at Spurgeons' College. Contact John on jcolwell@btinternet.com.

Notes to text

1. Mary R. Price, *A Portrait of Britain in the Middle Ages, 1066-1485.* Clarendon Press, 1951.

2. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy.* Routledge, 1973.

3. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory.* University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

4. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality.* University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.

5. *Celebrating Common Prayer: The Pocket Version*, David Stancliffe & Br Tristam SSF. Mowbray, 1994.

6. John E. Colwell, *The Rhythm of Doctrine: A Liturgical Sketch of Christian Faith and Faithfuolness.* Paternoster, 2007, p6.

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Ministry as 'curation' of sacred space

by Chris Upton

In this paper I will argue that 'curation' is a timely metaphor in thinking about my role as minister at West Lane Baptist Church, (WLBC). I shall show how, properly understood, curation can provide a fundamental underpinning for my work that is appropriate to the 21st century. Though curation could be applied to many areas of my role I shall consider primarily how it relates to the physical building of WLBC. I shall reflect theologically throughout on how my understanding of ministry has advanced in an increasingly 'progressive' direction.[1]

As 'curation' comes from the Latin root meaning of care, so a curator is one who 'cares for things'. In the Church of England a 'curate', simply put, is a priest in training who helps that priest in their 'cure of souls'. After a period of training they are ordained as a priest themselves and so move on from being curates. I hope to challenge the assumption that it is appropriate to move away from the language of 'curate' and 'curation' in ministry. Curation has become a buzz word, applied to a huge variety of different situations, but I shall consider the two most prominent archetypes: the museum and the art gallery, and ask how they relate to the ministry at WLBC. Central to this discussion is the recognition that the WLBC building affects my theology and my theology affects the WLBC building.

Curation of Museums and Galleries

A curator working in a museum selects certain objects from a collection to be viewed as her expertise and experience suggests. Curation has changed over time as museums have seen their roles change.[2] 'Traditionally the prime function of museums has been to gather, preserve and study objects',[3] but increasingly this has had to be balanced with a need to market themselves and to attract customers. Both aspects resonate with modern church life, where the 'given' of church-going has rapidly become a 'given' of church-non-going.

Much of the current interest in curators and curation comes from the sheer increase in 'stuff' that is present in today's world. Where only a century or so ago, a museum curator worked hard to gain sufficient articles to put on an exhibition, today the main

skill is in sifting the information so it is not overwhelming. Michael Bhaskar defines curation as 'using acts of selection and arrangement…to add value'.[4] He suggests that we are helped to negotiate modern life with its near-crushing overload of information by the process of curation. Where once 'more was good' now 'less is essential', and curation can 'cut through overload and navigate this new economic phase',[5] and with the rise of new media a new model of curation is needed.[6] All of this seems to resonate with me and my relation to the people of Haworth as a church minister. With the rise of the internet, accessibility to theological concepts has never been so easy, but discerning which of these concepts is most appropriate is tricky.

To write this paper I spoke with the curator of Haworth's Bronte Parsonage, Ann Dinsdale. From her museum experience she suggested that curators have to choose which objects to gather for an exhibition, and to find new and helpful ways that encourage members of the public to engage with these objects so that they can relate them to their own lives. She suggested that the curator performs a balancing act, allowing proximity to the objects without allowing the objects themselves to be damaged. She has the freedom to use her skills and expertise, but also consults with others to create something that will inspire, not just entertain or educate. She recognises a potential for curators to begin to see objects as 'holy relics', but counters this with an understanding that the viewers' experience is all important. Her comment on 'holy relics' is echoed by Pope Francis who is clear that when 'priests grow dissatisfied (they) lose heart and become in a sense collectors of antiquities or novelties',[7] and that this is to be avoided at all costs.

Art galleries are curated in similar ways to museums but have their own distinct emphasis. That art somehow captures truth and beauty, and that these traits are necessarily good has a great heritage, made plain by the Greeks and adopted by the church: 'Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things' (Philippians 4:8, NIV). Art galleries have therefore been seen to educate and illuminate the heart, whereas museums perhaps intrigue and interest the minds. I like Alan de Botton's recognition that, 'curators should dare to reinvent their spaces so that they can be more than dead libraries for the creations of the past'.[8]

Seven Aspects of Curation

The roles of the modern curator both in art galleries and at museums are wide and various. To give some structure to my understanding of curation I shall now consider Bhaskar's seven different aspects of curating, relating these curatorial roles to my work as a church minister. The aspects are reducing, refining, simplifying, categorising, displaying, storytelling, preserving.[9]

Reducing, Refining and Simplifying. Affluenza[10] is a modern disease heightened in the digital/information age. Oliver James's assertion is that with the dawning of the television 'needs (have been) replaced by confected wants' and that this is making people ill.[11] Where once museums worked hard to build up a collection of rare and collectable items, today there is just too much stuff, so that the role of the curator is to make the collection manageable. Modern life is also often considered to be too busy, with a 'lack of time' being frequently mentioned. In a similar way churches can get caught up in the same game, adding to the busyness of the lives of their church members. In a previous church of which I was a member, there was a meeting of some sort almost every night of the week, with the unspoken assumption that a committed church member should be there! This generated at least three conditions in many of the church members; they knew no-one outside the church membership; they felt guilty for not being at all these various meetings; and they were tired because they were doing too much.

At WLBC we have stopped most church activities, especially the ones that were less accessible to those who are not already practising Christians. Reducing time spent 'in church' has encouraged members to see themselves as part of the wider community.

Storytelling. Three main types of story are told at WLBC. The church community's stories of everyday life, the stories behind the different groups that use the building, and the story of Jesus and the gospel. Moschella is right to point out that story telling is a critical pastoral task and that 'real community can't thrive if stories are not told'.[12] The interweaving of these stories is facilitated by the physical building of WLBC, for without it where might these conversations take place, and might not the 'memory' be lost altogether? The yearly church calendar is grounded in the building, and, though WLBC does not change the colour of the altar cloth and so on, it has its own unique ways of highlighting the liturgical seasons that are evident throughout the building, and these are highlighted below.

Along with these stories and somehow interwoven with them is my own personal story. As I have served WLBC as minister I have taken on some of its characteristics and the church has taken on some of mine. As my story has constantly been shaped and influenced by life, so has the story of WLBC.

Displaying and Categorising. The concept of a building as a neutral white cube, designed to be an objective blank space which allows a clean and clear analysis of that which is displayed, has recently been subject to increasing questioning.[13] In many ways traditional church architecture was designed to be the very opposite of such a space. The pointing spires, dark and mysterious interiors, rood screens *etc* were all created to highlight the transcendence of the divine. In contrast the Baptist tradition threw out most of these features and built churches that were bland, but had excellent acoustics so that the transformative word of God could be heard by as many people as possible. When majority illiteracy was a given, this desire that the congregation could hear was sensible. Today, with most people being able to read, it might be argued that a simple audible telling of the gospel

needs to be balanced by the use of other senses. I agree with William Whyte when he says that 'different priorities, theologies, and changing tastes create different churches',[14] but I have inherited WLBC and will not be rebuilding it in huge structural ways because of cost and its Grade II listed status. We are, however, constantly redeveloping the internal heart of the church by displaying pictures, items of significance, icons, storyboards, Sunday school work…which all play a significant role in highlighting who is, and (by omission) is not, 'valuable' to the church. WLBC also has a vast array of notice boards and I take delight in displaying the latest 'Thank You letters' from charities to which the church has given money. In the church toilets a growing number of 'Toilet Twinning' plaques are visible as a conscious reminder that WLBC is fortunate to have what are often considered essentials. This reminds everyone that the church (both the people and the building) exist for the common good, and not just as ends in themselves.

Preserving. Preserving and transmitting a tradition has been seen as the 'prime purpose' of religious institutions.[15] The theological arguments about the church being the people and not the building are many and varied, but for most people who live in the village, the building does represent the church. For this reason the preservation (and updating) of the building is high on my list of priorities. The building provides a point of access for non-churchgoers that, in time, might be a springboard into a consideration of matters of faith. Paying attention to the building is partly a consequence of my practical training as a painter and decorator, with a desire to 'get my hands dirty' (and for once see the immediate fruits of my labour), but much comes from the congregation's desire to serve the village, in providing a facility that is useful for the needs of Monday to Saturday as well as Sunday. I am frequently surprised by the affinity that members of the village have with WLBC through a childhood connection, be it the tennis club, Gilbert and Sullivan Society or long-lost WLBC-going aunt. Interestingly, the modern 'health and safety', 'child protection' and 'accessibility' requirements that come with attendant red tape and paperwork have reminded the church of its calling to serve the poor and less able. That we have been 'a religious community largely adjusted to the status quo, standing as a tail-light behind other community agencies rather than a headlight leading men to higher levels of justice',[16] has caused WLBC some embarrassment, but it has been a learning point for the church and for me.

WLBC has its own unique set of memories preserved in a few physical objects: a flower stand that has the name of a member's father who died in WW2; a piano that was the gift of a loved Sunday School teacher and a chicken-wire cross that was connected to a church member who sadly took his own life, to name but a small selection. These collective memories are not likely to be held outside the membership of WLBC, but, for those 'in the know', their preservation is very significant. Simply put, the preservation of WLBC's building helps in the preservation of its members, and its upkeep helps us to continue to think about our place and purpose in the world.

A New Model of Museums

Bhaskar's seven aspects of curating highlights how curation is achieved by companies, and how this has affected business and individuals. He does not mention religion or the church at all, and so to flesh out how curation is done in practice, I shall consider the 2013 British Museums Association (BMA) report entitled, Museums Change Lives,[17] which has a number of significant points, and then draw some parallels between museums and the church.

1. Every museum is different, but all can find ways of maximising their social impact.

2. Everyone has the right to meaningful participation in the life and work of museums.

3. Audiences are creators as well as consumers of knowledge; their insights and expertise enrich and transform the museum experience for others.

4. Active public participation changes museums for the better.

5. Museums foster questioning, debate and critical thinking.

6. Good museums offer excellent experiences that meet public needs.

7. Effective museums engage with contemporary issues.

8. Social justice is at the heart of the impact of museums.

9. Museums are not neutral spaces.

10. Museums are rooted in places and contribute to local distinctiveness.

The fact that the BMA felt the need to issue this statement suggests that these areas have been contentious for museums and that a certain amount of reconsideration of current practice had been going on. However, it was in the BMA's focusing of attention on how best to serve the common good in circumstances very different to the days of its founding that gave rise to this ten-point list. My contention is that the church in general, and WLBC in particular, could learn from it as well. If this ten-point list could also be applied to a church it would also have a huge impact on the minister of that church. Every one of these ten points resonates with me and with my heartfelt views as to how a church should conduct itself. I suggest that I am not alone in this and that many 'progressive' church leaders and theologians are looking for, as Dave Tomlinson puts it, a 'Christianity for a New Age.'[18] If this is the case, will this Christianity not have to be sustained by churches of a new age too? What might the BMA's list say to ministers if 'museum' were crossed out and 'church' was substituted instead? While it would be possible to go through each of the BMA's ten points and do just this, instead I shall simply outline a single event that happened at WLBC and reflect upon it.

From Practice to Theory to Practice

A few years ago a non-churchgoing friend and I set up Haworth Cinema at WLBC.[19] In spring 2016, Haworth Cinema (HC) showed *Carol*,[20] a love story between two women. A number of church members were at *Carol* on the night it was shown and, after the film had ended, there was a general conversation between members and non-members alike. Most of the conversation related to the quality of the filming and the storyline but there was a significant commendation (from both members and non-members) given to me for daring to screen such a film in the church. It was as if a sacred/secular divide had been crossed in watching *Carol* in the worship space of WLBC. My theology has increasingly dismissed such a divide as unhelpful, and my preaching (I think) reflects this week in week out, but most filmgoers do not come on a Sunday morning and perhaps, watching *Carol* at WLBC with the church minister present, will have encouraged them to rethink their assumptions about Christianity.

If this was so then I suggest that *Carol* became a tool for apologetics (in a way that would not have been true if it had been watched in a different setting), and that HC had curated an 'affective space'[21] which enabled a 'transforming moment' to take place.[22] Practical theology encourages a moving away from a 'prose flattened world',[23] by its emphasis on the need to attend to the concrete reality of daily life. By doing this we recognise that 'there are ways of representing theological reflection which go beyond prose composition',[24] and I believe that showing *Carol* that evening was a good example, serving as an example of Ann Morisey's principle of obliquity.[25] Although it is impossible to quantify the impact that *Carol* had on the church, it is interesting to note that later in the year WLBC took the decision to open up a consideration of registering our building to be licensed for Same Sex Marriage (SSM), and that this motion was carried in January 2017.

WLBC's new stance on LGBTQ was not welcomed by all its members, but none have left since the church took this decision. In today's context WLBC's decision to register its building for SSM was underpinned by a 'practical theology (that) seeks to pay attention to people's various life situations and contexts',[26] rather than being bound by traditions of the past. The relationship between WLBC and HC is complex but each seems to add value to the other. Watching *Carol* required all of Bhaskar's seven different aspects of curation combine together to bring new wisdom, insight and understanding. That all this happened in the building of WLBC led to a formal change in practice of the community, and I believe this to be in keeping with the gospel.

Conclusion

In this paper I have suggested that 'curation' is a timely metaphor for my work as the minister at WLBC. In the Yorkshire Baptist Association (YBA), 12 (out of 110)

churches closed in the past ten years, all of which had troublesome buildings that were seen as hugely contributing factors to the churches' demise, and this pattern is likely to continue for some time to come. The church, (the *ekklesia*, the followers of the way, the people of God) has, over the past few centuries, often come to think of itself and be seen by society at large, as a static building, perhaps cold, little used, rather run down and a symbol of yesterday. Similarly, ministers (as the paid employees of churches) have likewise often felt their vocations changed from being priests and prophets who comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, into managers of buildings that are seen as millstones around their necks. The call from the YBA is always to move from maintenance (of a building) to mission, but I am persuaded that this gloomy paradigm can be usefully challenged by the modern concept of curation that would have churches not viewed as cold museums trapped in the past, but as centres of inspiration for tomorrow that draw on the lessons of yesterday, while engaging with all people today.

In my view, the binary distinction between maintenance and mission fails as it doesn't take into account that in many towns and villages in the UK, the church is the last public space standing (as budget cuts to local councils have seen village halls, community centres and council offices sold off), and a space that is inherently linked to the divine.[27] I have come to see, by trial and error at WLBC, that the church building, rightly curated, can and will provide a space where mission is inevitable. Along with being the minister of WLBC, I am the acting chair of the YBA Ministry Group (the body that evaluates potential candidates for ministry and oversees their induction) and on the governing body of Northern Baptist College (where ministerial candidates might prepare for ministry). Reflecting on 'curation' in a church context has forced me to reflect again on how we prepare ministers for the oversight of the buildings they might inherit along with the congregations. While not all church congregations have their own buildings, I suggest that currently the practical/ physical side of church leadership receives almost no input, with the focus being on primarily 'spiritual' matters, and that this is a failing that needs to be reconsidered. At the outset to this essay I highlighted my ambivalence towards my role as church minister but seeing my role through a curatorial lens helps me earth my 'spiritual' practices. This grounding of my faith seems to be at the heart of practical theology (also public and pastoral theology) and as I write this I am reminded of the incarnate heart of the gospel, as 'in Jesus Christ the reality of God entered into the reality of this world'.[28]

Chris Upton is minister of West Lane Baptist Church, Haworth, and can be contacted on chris@altruists.org.

Notes to text

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16. Extract from 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' by Martin Luther King, Jr., 16 April 1963 used in an article written by a church member for the local 'What's On?' magazine.

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Money in the early church

by Pieter J. Lalleman

The book of Acts, the longest book of the New Testament, is sandwiched between the gospels and the epistles. The content is largely narrative. Popular booklets derive all kinds of timeless principles from the book,[1] but not everything calls for our imitation.[2] For our purpose in this article, the book's authorship is irrelevant: 'Luke' is an excellent historian.[3] The book's dedicatee is one Theophilus, probably a wealthy sponsor of Luke and as such expected to pay for the copying of the first edition.

We are in Jerusalem, not long after Easter and Pentecost. The growing group of followers of Jesus is doing well. They don't have their own buildings, so they meet in private houses and in the temple.[4] The make-up of the group probably reflects the general population of Jerusalem quite well, perhaps with an over-representation of poorer people. Faith in Jesus was attracting people from all walks of life, not merely from the lower classes.[5]

Literary context

It is not hard to see that in Acts 2-5 longer stories and summaries alternate:

2:1-41	Story: Pentecost		
		2:42-47	Summary: The life of the believers
3:1–4:31	Story: A healing and its effects		
		4:32-37	Summary: The life of the believers
5:1-11	Story: Deceit		
		5:12-16	Summary: The life of the believers

Later in the book (6:7; 9:31) we also find summaries in between the stories. The focus of our attention in this article, 4:32-37, can be seen as an elaboration of 4:31. The fellowship is once again filled with the Holy Spirit and Luke describes one of the signs and wonders that take place in the name of Jesus Christ (v30). This would suggest that the events

described in vv32-37 have God's approval.

The parallel section, 2:42-47, acted as a summary which looked back on chapter 2 in its entirety; on the other hand, 4:32-35 looks ahead to the next two narrative sections, 4:36-37 and 5:1-11, which are opposites. It is also possible to see 4:32-37 as forming a diptych with 5:1-11, the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Luke first gives a positive description of the overall situation, then presents the awkward exception to the rule. In 5:12-42 he continues the story of the apostles from 3:1–4:31. As so often in our Bibles, the chapter division is wrong because 4:32–5:11 belong together.

Form and structure

The Greek text consists of only four sentences: 32, 33, 34-35 and 36-37. Verses 36-37 are fairly independent of vv32-35. First a general description is given, then Barnabas appears in the limelight. He is the positive counterpart of the corrupt Ananias. Luke probably selected Barnabas because he also plays a role later in the story.

Verses 32-35 have a concentric structure. The central verse emphasises the spiritual aspects, the verses around it the material aspects:

A 32
B 33
A' 34-35

Key words

Repetition of words is rare in our passage, so in that sense there is no key word. Yet many words point to unity and to possessions. In the Greek, most verbs in 32-35 are in the imperfect tense, the tense that indicates that things were being done repeatedly or habitually.

Verse 32. The words which describe unity repeat what we read in 2:1, 44 and 46. In antiquity this kind of unity was the ideal of philosophers and it had also been promised by the prophets of Israel (eg Jeremiah 32:39). A community of goods was another—as yet unrealised—ideal of many in antiquity. Luke does not speak about an absolute prohibition of personal ownership. People kept possessions, but no-one had an absolute claim on anything anymore; all things were available to everyone without the expectation that they would reciprocate (cf Luke 14:12-14).[6] The arrangement is not legalistic but focusing on need.

Verse 33. Jesus is being preached as Lord because he is the risen one. The 'great power' is an answer to the community's prayer (v31). As more often, the Greek word grace

(xarij) has more than one meaning. It indicates (a) the grace and favour of God; (b) the grateful response of the community; and (c) the 'favour of the people' (cf 2:47). Commentators tend to choose between these three aspects, but that does not do justice to the full meaning of the word.

Verse 34. We now get a more concrete description of events. Verse 35 shows that the need had not disappeared, so verse 34 means that there was a positive response to each request for assistance. The verbs indicate repeated activity. The other part of the diptych, 5:1-11, also shows that no-one was obligated to sell anything and distribute the proceeds (v4). Evidence for this is that according to 12:12 the mother of John Mark still owned a house in the city. We conclude that properties were only sold when the owner felt an inner persuasion to do so. This is no Communism.

Verse 35. The apostles are still acting as the leaders of the fellowship, not yet as the itinerant preachers they were meant to be. They look after the moneys that are given; this situation would change not much later (6:1-6). The reference to their feet (cf 37; 5:2) probably refers to a legal concept while the 'need' suggests proportionality and fairness.

Verse 36. The particulars of Barnabas are not yet relevant at this moment, but as a good narrator Luke introduces him at this point because of the large role he will have in subsequent parts of Acts. This introduction also anchors the story in everyday reality: Barnabas is a well known person, an identification figure, and this is a true story. The complicated explanation of his name does not need to concern us here.

Verse 37. The choice of words recalls vv34-35, suggesting that Barnabas is only one of the many who acted in the same way. At the same time he is an example for Theophilus, who also was not without means. The Torah did not permit Levites ownership of land (Numbers 18:20; Deuteronomy 18:1-2), but Jeremiah already possessed land (32:6-15) and the priestly historian Josephus reports that land ownership was normal in the first century.

Parallels

• Our section is closely related to the previous summary, 2:42-47, especially verses 44-45. In 6:1-4, we see that the community of goods has become problematic. In 9:36-42, 20:35 and 24:17 generosity is praised, whereas 8:18-24 contain criticism of the abuse of money.

• According to 11:27-30, the community in Jerusalem suffered as a result of a famine, so much so that they became dependent on other communities. This makes clear that in the long term, the community of goods was no success.

• Luke's gospel contains much teaching on money, possessions and almsgiving. No less

than 45% of the travelogue (9:51–19:27) is dedicated to this subject.[7]

• The comment in v34 that there were no needy persons recalls Deuteronomy 15:4. God had promised that there would be no poverty among his people. But see also Deuteronomy 15:7 and 11.

• Elsewhere in the New Testament, the subject of money and how to share it is also addressed, for example in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and in James (especially 2:1-7).

• Everyone in Israel knew that the Essenes also lived in a kind of community of goods, in a kind of monasteries. Admission to these communities was staged: novices handed in their possessions, but these were kept separate until the end of the novitiate. The difference is that the followers of Jesus live in this way spontaneously and voluntarily.[8]

• We have many descriptions of Utopia in Greek and Hellenistic literature, which include these elements of unity and sharing. A biography of the philosopher Pythagoras states that he was the first who said: 'Friends have all things in common' and 'Friendship is equality'. The biography also tells that his followers put these words into practice.[9]

• We conclude that Luke's description of the earliest church alludes to the Old Testament and to Greek ideals. This fact does not make his story any less historical, although words such as 'no-one' and 'all' might well be somewhat rhetorical.

Under the guidance of the Spirit, the first Christian community realised some ideals of Jews and Gentiles. Their unity caused the group members not to keep their money and possessions to themselves, but to make them available for the wellbeing of the community. This happened voluntarily and spontaneously. John Stott says that the church adopted a radical approach to possessions, which led to 'sacrificial action'.[10] As it happened willingly, private property was not banned (see again 12:12), yet it did have profound positive effects.

Later developments

In a section (XV) of his *Apology* (*ca* AD 125) in which he points out the virtues of Christians, Aristides of Athens writes:

Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and. rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his burial. And if they hear that one of their

number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them.

In the 4th century Basil of Caesarea (Basil the Great) often mentioned care for the poor and criticised the rich in his sermons and addresses.

Normativity

1. Some commentators suggest that it was not difficult for the first Christians to give away their possessions because they expected the imminent return of the Lord Jesus. With reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in the next generation, David Williams even argues that God in his wisdom caused the believers to use whatever they had as long as it was still possible.[11]

2. The Bible is authoritative but we are not meant to imitate every story it contains. Gordon Fee argues that the description of an event is not a normative experience and that we may not draw normative conclusions drawn from historical events: '...any normative conclusions from Acts are incidental to Luke's intent as a historian'. However, we can consider drawing normative conclusions when a particular action is more common.[12]

3. Ben Witherington states that Luke does not call us to imitate the past indiscriminately; not everything that the first Christians did calls for imitation. The stories must first be viewed critically. This is done by looking for positive, repeated patterns in the text and by observing if anything is said about God's approval or disapproval of certain matters.[13]

4. On the other hand, Luke nowhere gives the impression that the apostolic period was exceptional, unique or unrepeatable. When the conditions are met, a new community of goods may originate (Luke does not limit the number of apostles to 12 either, 14:14).

Application

• The sharing of possessions is a repeated occurrence in Acts; we can therefore assume that the author commends it to the readers. This is in contrast to, for example, the casting of lots (1:23-26).

• Luke never expresses the ideal that everyone in the community should be equal. The

sharing merely aims at the prevention and alleviation of poverty. Therefore, the community of goods does not have to be a rule for all Christian communities at all times – but it is a challenge. In Acts the church puts the teachings of Jesus, as narrated by Luke in the gospel, into practice.

• From Luke's perspective faithfulness to the gospel implies that a believer deals with their possessions in a wise and generous way.

• In the Christian community preaching and teaching about money and possessions have a legitimate place. We are invited to take the teaching of the Bible seriously in this regard too.

Pieter J. Lalleman is Tutor in New Testament at Spurgeon's College and can be contacted on p.lalleman@spurgeons.ac.uk

Notes to text

1. *eg* Michael Green, *30 Years That Changed the World: A Fresh Look at the Book of Acts.* Leicester: IVP, 2002.

2. See the discussion below.

3. Colin J. Hemer, *The book of Acts in the setting of Hellenistic history*; ed C.H. Gempf. Tubingen: Mohr, 1989.

4. A.J. (Arco) den Heijer, 'Worshipping God in the Eschatological Age: The Contest over Jewish Sacred Space and Time in the Book of Acts', forthcoming in *European Journal of Theology* 27.1 (2018).

5. Against a long-standing consensus, see the evidence in Udo Schnelle, 'Das frühe Christentum und die Bildung', *New Testament Studies,* 61.2 (2015) 113-143.

6. The Graeco-Roman practice of patrons and clients was based on reciprocity, cf. Kyoung-Jin Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology.* Sheffield: Academic Press, 1998, 253-283.

7. Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving*, 198, cf. 218-252

8. Brian J. Capper, 'The Palestinian cultural context of the earliest Christian community of goods' in Richard Bauckham (ed), *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting,* Vol. 4. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995, pp323-356.

9. Timaeus of Tauromenium, *Life of Pythagoras* 8.10.

10. J.R.W. Stott, *The Message of Acts.* Leicester: IVP, 1990, p107.

11. David Williams, *Acts of the Apostles.* NIBC. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1990, p93.

12. Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit.* Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991, pp83-104, see 85, 91, 94 respectively.

13. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A socio-rhetorical commentary.* Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998, esp 98, 102.

Reviews

edited by Michael Peat

Is Your God Too Small?

by David C Potter

Bible Reading Fellowship, 2018

Reviewer: Philip Clements-Jewery

Sometimes it is possible to discern the purpose of a book by considering the sources used by the author. In this book about Job only two main sources are cited, both from a rather narrow theological perspective. The author says he occasionally consulted other commentaries which he designates as being 'less helpful'.

His book is not intended as a commentary on Job, to be dipped into as required. Nor is it, primarily, another attempt at answering the problem of why a good and loving God allows people to suffer. Rather it is a guide for Christians who wish to go deeper in their study of Job. For that purpose it succeeds fairly well.

The author, David Potter, has served as a Baptist minister as well as, more latterly, an FIEC pastor. But his life's work has been to found and direct a charity, Prospects, for people with learning difficulties, for which work he has been honoured. Just before the end of the book he reveals his own family story of giving birth to and bringing up a child with learning difficulties, who died only a few years ago. David's insight into the suffering of Job is therefore seen through the prism of his own suffering, faith and hope: He knows what he is talking about when he writes of the experience of Job.

As mentioned, this is a study guide. Each chapter begins with the suggestion that the reader reads the relevant section of Job, and concludes with a list of things for reflection, prayer and action. There are the occasional and helpful comment boxes explaining matters such as how Hebrew poetry works, the nature of Wisdom literature, the difference between shame and guilt, and the meaning of redeemer/ redemption. And always there is the forward look to the New Testament.

There are places where those with biblical training might appropriately disagree with David's interpretation and application of the Old Testament text, but that need not detract from the value of the book when placed in the hands of church members. It might also be of value in small group study. And for those purposes I commend this book.

Buying God: Consumerism and Theology

by Eve Poole

SCM Press, 2018

Reviewer: Stephen Heap

The first part of this book is on theological method, the second on consumerism. The latter is lively, erudite, a resource for engaging with a consumerist society. The former seems disproportionately long (66 pages out of 174) with its relevance to what comes later not always clear. It includes an interesting survey of theologians, some strange omissions (for example Elaine

Graham's seminal work on public theology, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (SCM, 2013), and too many irritatingly overblown phrases *eg* 'the particularly obfuscatory jargon the Church has always used' (p3). Evidence the 'always' please! Baptists might also be irritated by Anglican assumptions—for example about 'the Church' being 'episcopally led, and synodically governed' (xv).

In the second, helpful and stimulating, section Eva Poole draws on her knowledge and experience of theology, finance and management to good effect. She sets the scene by outlining and critiquing capitalism and consumerism. Consumerism creates the demand capitalism needs to survive. Consumerism is not only about material goods, but seeking other things through the material, *viz* status, satisfaction, self-identity, a way out of anxiety and, seminal for her argument, the meeting of 'desire'. It thus has something in common with religion, including Christianity, which responds to at least some of the above. However, 'the material cannot satisfy an existential longing' (p83), for 'we find our rest in God' (p85).

'Christianity has the answers' says Poole. Christians need 'to amplify the message so as to proclaim a more visible alternative to consumerism' (p95). Central to that is developing 'theologies of desire' which might 'wean consumers off an addiction to that which cannot satisfy' (p97) in favour of a journey with God. In practical terms, that means the spiritual formation of Christians and the development of character to resist consumerism and live by Christian faith. Poole ends with ways Christians and others might resist consumerism and live by more godly ways.

It's good stuff, but, after some brilliant analysis, Poole offers an individualistic response to an in-part systemic problem. The roots of a systemic response are there in her writing; her demonstration of the benefits of co-operation over competition invites a re-consideration of capitalism, for example. Sadly, she does not develop such thinking. The second part of the book is still worth reading for its analysis, however.

Thomas Cromwell: A Life

by Diarmaid MacCulloch,

Random House, 2018

Reviewer: Michael Bochenski

The final instalment of Hilary Mantel's magnificent Thomas Cromwell 'Wolf Hall' trilogy—*The Mirror and The Light*—is expected to be published this year (2019). Commending MacCulloch's biography, she observed that '…this is the biography we have waited four hundred years for'. It really is that good, and all the more so given that some eminent historians, among them Geoffery Elton, had long considered Cromwell 'not biographable'. This was in part because a significant portion of his own writings were, it seems, destroyed by supporters as he began to fall out of favour with the tyrant he served—Henry VIII, a king who was, in my college principal Barrie White's words, 'not a nice man'!

MacCulloch has tracked down long lost or neglected documents (amidst chaotic Victorian-style filing) in the National Archives, in the British Library, and in what he calls a 'scattering' of documents elsewhere. The result is an outstanding biography. It is beautifully written, impeccably researched and annotated, and imaginatively illustrated. *Thomas Cromwell: A Life* brings vividly to life a fascinating man, story and period.

For many of us, our image of Cromwell was as Henry's thug—a brutal bureaucrat who ruthlessly suppressed dissent, political or religious, at his master's bidding; an early civil servant who ruthlessly accumulated wealth and land for the crown at the expense of the then Catholic church. MacCulloch captures that aspect of Cromwell powerfully, while painting a much fuller and empathic portrait of him. Cromwell the young man abroad '...the lowliness of (whose) origins has often been exaggerated'. Cromwell the 'Nicodemite' Protestant reformer who, having encountered Reformation teachings (notably those of Erasmus and Zwingli) as a young man on the continent, then committed himself to introducing them at home. His was, according to MacCulloch, above all, '...the story of discreet backing for dissenting religion' by someone who, from his early 20s, was already '...the future architect of the English Reformation.' Cromwell the loyal devoted servant of his first employer Cardinal Wolsey, who never forgave his co-reformer Anne Boleyn—'...the high-spirited, articulate and fiercely intelligent young lady of the court'—for her role in his master's downfall and sorry death. A family man stoically facing the deaths, in a short period of time, of his wife and two daughters. MacCulloch's 552-page pen portraits are manifold.

The growing dependence of the monarch on him as his fixer supreme, '...our trusty and well beloved servant', Cromwell was an outstanding early exemplar of a new alternative to 'going into the church'—the professional lawyer. His failures—MacCulloch is clear and blunt about them (though Cromwell has not been alone in them over the centuries!)—in important relationships with the north of England and with Ireland. His respect for, and kind treatment of, Katherine and Mary, as the king's new marriages left them frightened and isolated. His vehement opposition to the Anabaptists, after the terrorist acts of the 1530s in Munster. MacCulloch interestingly suggests that Cromwell's insistence on a new parish register system was, in part, a response to their threat—to root out any who refused to have a child baptised. MacCulloch's description of the burning of some early English Anabaptists in 1535 makes grim reading. Their executions in 1535 created '...one of the most spectacular burnings of heretics in England in the whole century, outclassing any single set piece of Queen Mary's reign twenty years later'.

There is more, much more. Cromwell's considerable personal armoury and wealth. Accounts of him 'at full throttle' cowing the king's opponents and of his unquestioning advocacy of the royal supremacy in matters both religious and political. His creative partnership with Cranmer—who he jealously came to view

as a kind of early 'Teflon man'—whose dealings with the king usually went much more smoothly than his own. His determined advocacy of new alliances with the Protestant Schmalkaldic League. His crucial role in persuading the king to commend *The Bishop's Book* replete with reform teachings, and to publish *The Matthew Bible* (a precursor to the KJV) even though it was largely Tyndale's work. Cromwell succeeded in keeping that fact from the king, who hated the man. Matchmaking gone horribly wrong—for in MacCulloch's bleak assessment Henry VIII was a man capable of 'murderous violence'—as the king came to blame Cromwell for the personal embarrassment and humiliation of his marriage to Anne of Cleves. Henry's disintegration fuelled by a '...deteriorating sense of discretion and control'. Cromwell's touching plea, after his imprisonment, to the captain of the guard '...not to make him linger long', and his anxieties for his surviving son and extended family. Henry's regret, before too long, at having lost '...the most fruitful servant he ever had'.

This is a truly wonderful biography, a fascinating read whether or not Reformation studies attract you. Near the end of his book, MacCulloch looks ahead to another famous Cromwell, writing thus of both Thomas and Oliver: '...one who came to the executioner's block on the order of the king of England; and the other who repaid the compliment'. To understand what England became during the reign of Elizabeth I, and—in time—how the relationships between crown and parliament, church and civil service emerged in the UK, some knowledge of Cromwell's life and career remains indispensable. There are no better guides to this than Mantel, and now MacCulloch.

Paediatric Chaplaincy: Principles, Practices and Skills

Paul Nash, Mark Bartel, Sally Nash (eds)

Kingsley, 2018

Reviewer: Ronnie Hall

If you are a healthcare or hospice chaplain then this is a must-read. While the focus is very much on paediatrics (and the case studies are all paediatric), there is a lot of interchange with other areas of healthcare and hospice chaplaincy. Healthcare chaplains will particularly appreciate the questions for reflection and the identification of further research at the end of each section. These will no doubt prompt the practitioner in areas of interest for them and act as a catalyst for their own research.

I am not a healthcare chaplain but I am a full-time senior chaplain in another sector. This is a book that will stay on my shelf because, even on first reading, I was taking notes and writing ideas down on my office whiteboard. For example, there is a very helpful section on managing chaplaincy provision and the team. While this is about healthcare, the principles are easily transferred to other sectors and have prompted me to think a little differently. Likewise, the two sections covering ministry to the organisational structure and ministering to staff also have very useful insight that I will unpack further with my own colleagues. The second section of the book, which covers specific skills for healthcare chaplains, is of lesser interest to me, but did make me look again at my team's skillset.

The book is written and edited by practitioners who clearly have a passion for their areas of research and ministry. This is not a theology of chaplaincy as such, but it is concerned with good chaplaincy practice. It is a book that a healthcare chaplain will dip into time and again as issues arise, and discuss the matters with colleagues.

This book, aimed at chaplaincy practice, is obviously not for church ministers and isn't broad enough to help with day to day church ministry. But for chaplains this book is outstanding and I can't recommend it enough.

Retirement Matters for Ministers: A Report on a Research Project into how Baptist Ministers Experience Retirement

by Paul Beasley-Murray

College of Baptist Ministers, 2018

Reviewer: John Rackley

Who are you, retired Baptist minister? Who are you as you sit in church? Do you sit comfortably? Who are you as you wait to be noticed? Do you wonder what has become of you?

Paul Beasley-Murray has produced a report that will show you that you are not alone. Its opening premise is that to be a minister is a high calling that deserves honour throughout the whole of such a person's life and not be overlooked in retirement.

He wrote it because there is little research on the experience of BU ministers in retirement. In addition, he wanted to check out the feeling that there appeared to be little pastoral concern for them once they retire and there needed to be an exploration of what happened to a minister once the pension replaced the stipend. So out went the questionnaires, and after their return he called on some for an interview. The result is a 125 page book which includes data and interpretation and an appeal to the BU and the Associations.

The interviews were for me the core of the book and should be essential reading for all ministers. They were honest, poignant, heartening and real. Some are just getting on with it as they have always done, but for others it is a troubling experience hiding remorse, hurt and loss.

It may be a report but it cannot be read as such—it describes the lived experience of Baptist ministers in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and it is moving. Whatever is done with it now, I hope a copy will go into the Angus Library, if for no other reason than to help a researcher in future who wonders what it was like to be a minister in this period.

Paul contributes an extensive analysis of the responses under the 16 headings of the questionnaire (raw data is in an appendix), which include: housing and health issues, looking into the future, relationship with God, a local church, friends , other retired ministers and the BU and Associations. They made me question my own process of moving into retirement and onwards. Too late really, but rewarding. It underlines for me that it is never too early to consider retirement. There are questions which we need to travel with us throughout our ministry and not keep to its close. There's an eschatological dimension that cannot be faced too early, a theological task when 'memento mori' meets one's destiny in Christ.

This is Paul's conclusion: This survey has revealed that there is a strong feeling among many retired Baptist ministers that they have been 'abandoned into retirement' by the Baptist Union and 'ignored and neglected' by the Associations. Now it is for the people, many of whom are Baptist ministers bearing significant care for the wellbeing of ministers in the BU and Associations to receive this challenge and respond.

Paul's responses include:

• How are retired ministers to know whether or not they are still within the mutual responsibilities of the covenanted ministry that the BU embraced in 2016?

• Can we learn especially from the advice from the Archbishop's Council handed down in 2014: *Supporting the ministry of retired clergy?*

• Might the Regional Ministers and Associations set up a system of 'Retirement Officers' who would offer support for ministers both before and in the early years of retirement?

As Paul shrewdly points out, 'retired ministers need more than pastoral care—they need to be helped to discover how they might continue to respond to God's call'. Some may baulk at such patronage—'I didn't need looking after in the pastorate, so I'm not looking for it now'. But times are a-changing—spiritual care and mentoring are not signs of pampering or dependence but an interpretation of what it means 'to walk with and watch over each other'. It would be helpful to know what is being offered to retired ministers in each Association and whether there is guidance available for local churches to consider what the retirement of their minister requires of them.

Paul believes that ministry is a high calling and deserves to be honoured, and so will start a debate that is old and unresolved: what significance do we give to the ordained? In our times has ordination become synonymous with induction? Has the attachment to ministry of the language of employment, job, work, day-off, pay and conditions reduced the minister to 'staff', and therefore it is no concern of the employer what happens after the final pay-cheque? For let us not overlook that in the end retirement is about how people experience the passage of time, mortality, vulnerability and the exploration of our identity in Christ.

Who are you, retired minister? Do you wonder what is to become of you?

The Abiding Presence: A Theological Commentary on Exodus

by Mark Scarlata

SCM, 2018

Reviewer: Pieter Lalleman

Mark Scarlata teaches OT at St Mellitus College, an Anglican training centre. Here he publishes a stand-alone commentary on an important book of the Old Testament. He does so from an unashamedly Christian perspective. The 24-page introduction clarifies his approach to Exodus and how he handles it. Here Scarlata states that 'Exodus appears to be a mosaic of traditions from different historical periods that have been brought together to produce

a coherent narrative of Israel's history and God's works among his people' (p9). He wants to focus on this text in its final form and on its theological meaning, referring to its authors as 'the sacred authors': 'Though the history behind the composition of the text is important—and is discussed throughout the commentary—the central task will be to examine the literary features of the book as a whole and how the text itself forms a coherent vision of the movement of God's Divine Presence as the climax of salvation' (p8).

The discussion divides Exodus into eight sections and offers a running commentary on each passage within these sections, not a verse-by-verse one. Some passages are very long, such as the one which contains all of chapters 11-13, making it hard to find comment on a specific element in the story. Scarlata focuses on the flow of the narratives, not on the details. His exegesis contains ample references to other parts of the Old Testament. It is easily readable and there are no footnotes, only references in brackets. Scarlata offers useful discussions of key Hebrew words, which are transcribed. At the end of each section we first find a summary and then a lengthy unit entitled 'New Testament'. The tone of the comments is positive throughout, even in the discussion of problematic issues such as the hardening of Pharaoh, and they contain much healthy biblical theology. There are no direct suggestions for preaching and teaching, let alone questions for discussion, but good readers won't need these. For attention to literary structures you also need to look elsewhere. On occasion, Scarlata says more about the hypothetical origin of the text than I find helpful for preachers, but one can always skip such comments.

I commend this book warmly. Scarlata is an expert guide who never shows off his knowledge. His commentary will help colleagues to preach and teach on Exodus (and I hope it will help them to preach through larger parts of the Bible rather than preach anthropocentric thematic sermons).

The Recovery of Joy

by Naomi Starkey

BRF, 2017

Reviewer: Robert Draycott

The subtitle is 'Finding the path from rootlessness to returning home'. It is an imaginative account of that journey from the depths of despair. The underpinning of the narrative is taken from the rich resources of the psalms. We can often gloss over those passages which are cries for help. Often such passages indicate someone 'clinging to God by their fingertips'. Naomi Starkey takes such passages seriously, and in the first two sections gradually leads the reader through other psalms towards the rock which she speaks of as 'finding a space to settle, somewhere to rest and nurture and be nurtured'.

The journey then continues from island to island through sections entitled *Ruins, Release* and *Return*. The islands serve to facilitate the idea of a journey until the final section on 'the recovery of joy'. This is well-written, imaginative, and makes an excellent link between the psalms and the reality that many experience, of feeling that they are in the depths of despair. It did not quite work for me, mainly because I was *reading* it. I would have preferred to have *heard* it, as I feel that format would have worked much better for me.

Of interest to you

edited by Arderne Gillies

NEW PASTORATES AND PASTORAL APPOINTMENTS

Chris ANDRE-WATSON	From Clapham (part-time) & Brixton (part-time) to Clapham (part-time) & Streatham, Transitional Minister (part-time), May 2019
Diana AVERY	To Reigate (Associate), date to be confirmed
Ronnie BARHAM	From Lordship Lane, Dulwich to Queen Street, Erith, February 2019
Abigail BICK	To Durham Road, Gateshead (Associate Team Leader), Feb 2019
Simon BURIN	From Enon, Sunderland to Bethany City Church, Sundeland, April 2019
Lindsay CAPLEN	From Consultant, LICC to Consultant, LICC (part-time) & Regional Minister, West of England Association (part-time), April 2019
Andrew CLARK	From Hertford (Associate) to Hertford (Pastor & Ministry Team Leader), January 2019
Ali DATSON	To Beacon Church, Stafford (Evangelist for Burleyfields), May 2019
Peter FOWLER	From St. Thomas, Exeter to Exwick, January 2019
Rosa HUNT	From Salem, Tonteg to Salem, Tonteg (part-time) & Co-Principal, South Wales Baptist College (part-time), September 2019
Gavin HUNTER	From Buckie to Stoneleigh, April 2019
Luke MANSFIELD	From Honiton to Hope, Plymouth, April 2019
Andrew McLAUGHLIN	From Bethel, Hawthorn to Bethel, Hawthorn & Beulah, Cilfynydd, January 2019
Claire NICHOLLS	From Christ Church, Ramsbottom to New Addington, May 2019
Todd NIGHTINGALE	From Mill End, Rickmansworth to Station Hill, Chippenham, March 2019
Anthony ORR	From Leamington Spa to Mountsorrel, May 2019
Phylip REES	From Tredegarville, Cardiff to Duckpool road, Newport, April 2019
John ROGERS	From Pantygwydr to Forest Gate, Blackpool
Susan STEVENSON	From Regional Minister, South Wales Baptist Association to Team Leader, South Wales Baptist Association, March 2019
Terry TENNENS	From Colchester (part-time Transition Minister) to Colchester, January 2019
Ian THORPE	To Wimborne (part-time), February 2019
Jacob WAIN	To Bromsgrove (Associate, Children & Youth), May 2019
Gavin WORRALL	From Moorlands to Reigate, date to be confirmed

MINISTERS IN TRAINING

Toby BUTLER	Northern (St Hild College) to Cornerstone, Bournemouth, Summer 2019
Andrew HAWKSWORTH	Northern to Altrincham, July 2019
Roger MARTIN	Spurgeon's to Lindsay Park, Kenton, July 2019
Sonya SETCHELL	Bristol to Stoke St. Gregory
David SKEET	Northern to Swallownest, September 2019
Gill WICKENDEN	Spurgeon's to Ewhurst (part-time), January 2019

CHAPLAINCIES, EDUCATIONAL APPOINTMENTS, MISSION & OTHER SECTOR MINISTRIES

Ann FRADGLEY	From Fleet Meadow, Didcot to Hospice Chaplain, Lincolnshire, April 2019
Ed KANEEN	From Tutor, South Wales Baptist College to Co-Principal, South Wales Baptist College, September 2019
Helen STOKLEY	From Woodside (Operations Manager) to Spurgeon's (Ops Manager), March 2019
Michelle ROMANIW	From Temporary Chaplain, University of South Wales to Associate Chaplain, University of South Wales, February 2019

RETIREMENTS

Jean ANDREWS	Charlbury, April 2019
Desmond GORDON	Brockley (Transitional Minister in retirement), March 2019
Michael PAGE	Chaplain, HMP Peterborough, December 2018

DEATHS

Brian BARKER	Retired (Northants Baptist Association), December 2018
Allan COX	Retired (Belle Vue, Southend), February 2019
Roger CUIN	Retired (Elland), December 2018
John DYSON	Barrowby, December 2018
Norman HARRIES	Retired (Huddersfield), December 2018
Peter HETHERINGTON	Retired (Bideford), January 2019
Frank HUNTER	Nationally Recognised Preacher, EMBA, November 2018
Guy LAWRENCE	Retired (Islington, also Swalecliffe, Whitstable in retirement), October 2018
Tasker LEWIS	Retired (Leeds), January 2019
Derek MOON	Retired (Frinton-on-Sea), January 2019
Stephen WARD	EMBA, December 2018
Michael WOOD	Retired (Croydon), November 2018

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Further details can be found at:

www.baptisthistory.org.uk

or

http://www.rpc.ox.ac.uk/research-life/centre-for-baptist-history-heritage/