

Continuing the Journey

November 2007

Autumn is suddenly upon us after an exceptionally wet summer. Ironically the sun shone in September - when we were all back to school or work in earnest. Behind the scenes, work to make the next Continuing the Journey conference a reality continues apace. As I write, the deadline for the discounted conference fee is approaching and the volume of mail received by the conference office has gone up accordingly.



'Landscape' by Sophie Hacker

Having worked hard to come up with, flesh out and find speakers to address the theme of 'Touch and Go' over the past year, the Planning Group meets again in early November to work at some of the practicalities of the conference such as small groups, workshops and bookstall. Later on in November, the speakers will meet for the first time - with each other and with some of the members of the Planning Group. This will give them a chance to share their current thinking and spark new thoughts in each others' company. The first stirrings of ideas for worship at the conference



Touch and go....

...connecting in a fragmented world
Conference 28th April - 2nd May 2008

are beginning to bubble as the worship sub-group meets to plan that element of our programme

In this issue of '**Continuing the Journey News**', you will find various trailers for our speakers, who have been invited to address our theme from the angles of spirituality, theology, psychology and social concern. You will find examples of **Sophie Hacker**'s art - both paintings and sculptures - scattered throughout the newsletter. If this whets your appetite to find out more about Sophie, do visit her website (www.sophiehacker.com). Sophie will be addressing issues of spirituality by looking at how art and faith touch each other and so touch us and aims to run a workshop of 'collaborative creativity' (no previous artistic experience required in order to join in). **Dave Wiles**, who will address the social concern strand, was interviewed by Giles Charrington for this issue's centre-fold slot and Lynette Harbourne has reviewed the book *Spirituality in the City*, edited by **Andrew Walker**, who will take a more theological angle on our theme. If you feel **Marlyn Donovan** (who will address the theme from the perspective of a practising counsellor) has been unfairly omitted, you could look again at Ruth Dormandy's interview with her which featured in the last edition of '**Continuing the Journey News**' by clicking on the 'Newsletters' button on our website (see back cover for details).

Those of us who are on the Planning Group are becoming more and more excited by the forthcoming conference which promises to be a rich combination of attention to the physical, the spiritual and the relational worlds in which we work. We hope you will join us and encourage others who might enjoy and benefit from the conference to come, too.

Ruth Layzell

Stay in Touch...

If you've mislaid your booking form, or need another for a friend, you can download them from the website (see back page) by clicking on 'Booking Form'. If you have any queries about bookings, please contact the conference office by email (admin@continuingthejourney.com) or phone (0115 9468227) and we will be pleased to advise you.

Touch the earth gently and Go green



Virgin and Child -
Sophie Hacker

Mogs Bazely writes:

Many of us have found that being a learning and worshipping community, meeting together and supporting each other in groups is essential to our well being. However, we are aware that conferences make an impact on the environment.

In recognition of current concerns about global warming, Continuing the Journey is trying to develop a policy to help to reduce the ecological impact of our

events. We have some ideas about this (eg using recycled paper, incentives to travel to our events by public transport, requesting The Hayes Conference Centre provide locally sourced, organic, non-GM food when-ever possible, sending brochures and newsletters by email when possible). **Please send us your ideas so that we can care for our environment: admin@continuingthejourney.com**

Get in touch

with a friend....

Continuing the
Journey
Conference



....and go
together

Mon 28th April-
Fri 2nd May 2008

CONNECTING WITH A SPEAKER

Giles Charrington enjoyed talking to Dave Wiles, one of our speakers for the next conference. Dave, who is director of the Frontier Youth Trust, had recently returned from his summer break, in which rather than sitting on a beach, he had spent time in African townships on the edge of Capetown.

Giles: Dave, I sense that FYT work puts you in a place where you are reaching out to people alienated from our communities and churches. What has it been like for you to try to bridge these divides?

Dave: It's been the most stimulating, challenging, fulfilling and frustrating thing I have ever done. But I've found that it is only when 'Faith' is spelt 'Risk' that we discover where God is. And other people are making the same discovery. You can't be patronising and say, 'I *ought* to be on the edge'. I find that I myself *need* to be on the edge. The fractal image – the image of chaos theory – occurs on the edge where growth can happen. So it's not about 'my mission', it's about what happens to me.

I don't think Christians are catalysts – a catalyst is something which changes another substance but remains unchanged itself. We are animators – we are changed ourselves by the processes we get involved in. Ghandi said, 'Be the change you want' .

Giles: Can you give us a flavour of the kind of issues you would like to address at the conference?

Dave: Yes, a major thread will be *don't believe the dominant narratives*. I'll be feeding back on some of the pilgrimages I make. Each year I take to the road, with no plans, open to what God brings.

Giles: So you might sleep rough?

Dave: Yes, if that's how it works out; or I take whatever hospitality is offered. Some guys sleeping rough might say, 'you're welcome to hang out with us tonight mate' – or I might have been offered a bed locally by a friend.

The dominant narrative is that kids are appearing on CCTV screens getting drunk and abusive and breaking the place up. But the same screens should also show them being helpful or caring to each other.

It's all about challenging the dominant narrative. If you problematise young people you risk re-enforcing poor behaviour and creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Research we have done shows that adults continually overestimate the crimes young people commit, and underestimate the good they do.

Giles: Does the Church come into this at all?

Dave: It very much comes into it. My son is researching how churches respond to youth in our area, and it is very likely that we will start a 'street pastor project' for night clubbers as a result.

Giles: So it's not fair to assume that the church is irrelevant in this area?

Dave: God does not have a plan B. He uses the churches and works through us.

Giles: The theme of the next conference is Touch and Go. How does this strike you in terms of your work with young people?

Dave: The funny thing is.... You've taken me back to Africa this summer: in the townships, one thing we did was to do face-painting for hundreds of kids. It became a metaphor for youth work for me. Because it is a legitimate, appropriate, way of touching young faces, it was empowering, enlightening, releasing. I will never forget one little girl who had a very disfigured face. Touching her face while praying was a powerful, loving moment. How many times will she be touched in that way?

Giles: Our continuing theme is the journey. Could you share something with us now of your own personal journey?

Dave: I have found lately that my spirituality and growing faith are 100% rooted in the Journey theme. It comes back to change, for me. Mark Nepo, a philosopher poet, said, "To journey without being changed is to be a nomad. To change without journeying is to be a chameleon. To journey and be transformed is to be a pilgrim." So I am at present finding, like David Watson, that I believe more and more about less and less. The theme of Christ's life, death, resurrection and my connectedness to this are central for me.

If, like us, you want to hear more from Dave, send your booking form soon, if you haven't already. And if you want to read more about the other speakers, visit our website and click on the 'Newsletters' button.

Book Review

Spirituality in the City pbk £12.99 ISBN 9780281057030
Ed Andrew Walker, SPCK, London, 2005

This book offers a rich variety of reflections on the religious experience of people and institutions in the city environment. I suggest it should not be read at one sitting, each essay deserving to be savoured and given individual attention. Andrew Walker, founder-director of the London Centre for Spirituality in Lombard Street, has brought together an eclectic selection of thought-provoking contributions by an illustrious galaxy of writers, including a foreword by Richard Chartres and essays by Mark Oakley, Rowan Williams, Rosalind Brown, Leslie Griffiths, Clare Herbert, Philip Sheldrake, Bernadette Flanagan, Andrew Davey and himself.

The essays cover a wide range of topics. Mark Oakley addresses the nature and meaning of faith and questions how city churches use their space. Rowan Williams identifies priorities for the church including the use and organisation of time, a plea for more holy spaces in the urban environment and a challenge that churches be seen to be more active in local decision making. He concludes with a reflection on the meaning of the word 'spirituality' in the context of urban Christianity. Rosalind Brown gives theological reflections of references to the city in the history of hymn writing and Leslie Griffiths explores political and social justice issues and the necessity for churches to maintain solidarity with the poor and disadvantaged.



Pilgrim Cross,
by
Sophie
Hacker

Philip Sheldrake addresses the influence the physical environment has on the human spirit and draws our attention to how little space is given for children and their need to play. Bernadette Flanagan distinguishes between different models of urban spirituality, giving clear descriptions and convincing examples from abroad as well as from this country. Andrew Davey considers how the urban context affects the way people pray and conversely the effects prayer may have in this environment; he also reflects on the message the Church of England's presence in the city may give.

The book concludes with Andrew Walker's essay on the Ignatian examen, making links between this form of prayer and his experience as a psychosynthesis therapist which makes the chapter of particular interest and relevance to those of us connected with Continuing the Journey.

I found this book stimulating, informative and scholarly, raising many questions and leaving me with areas of interest for further investigation which the provision of the notes and references will help facilitate.

Lynette Harborne

Do visit the



Continuing the
journey

Website

at www.continuingthejourney.com

Touch and Go...



...connecting
in a fragmented world

Conference 2008
Monday 28th April
– Friday 2nd May

And don't

forget to **book your place** on the conference
by completing the booking form and sending it to
Sara Kenyon at the conference office
86 Trowell Grove, Long Eaton,
Nottingham NG10 4BB.