

Continuing the Journey

Newsletter – Winter 2009

Psst!... Look who's talking...



“Sadly this conference is only every 2 years so I definitely don't want to miss it in 2010”

“As a counsellor who is a Christian this conference nourishes both my spiritual and professional life”

Psst....! Have you booked yet?

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We are really looking forward to welcoming you at the conference in 2010 and want to remind you of the joys and benefits of attending. Inside you will find tasters for one of the contributors, one of the workshops and the writings of another speaker. Our hope is that you will be as eager as the participants quoted above not to miss such a stimulating opportunity. These are the dates to have in your diary.

Psst!... Look who's talking...
Conference Dates 3rd – 7th May 2010
Starts Bank Holiday Monday

Ruth Layzell talks with Bill Bazely, Speaker at Conference 2010



R: Bill, tell us a little about yourself.

B: I'm a mental health chaplain – in this post for 6 years but connected with mental health chaplaincy for 18 years, and before that 11 years in parish ministry in the Church of England.

R: Our generic title is Continuing the Journey. Tell us a bit about your journey to this point.

B: My journey into ministry began as teenager when a friend asked me if I'd ever thought of being a curate. I hadn't because I was planning to be an engineer like my Dad, but that question put a seed in my mind. Eventually, after working as an engineer, I trained for ministry in the Church of England. Then while I was looking after a congregation, one of my parishioners committed suicide which was a turning point for me in my sense of what I was meant to be doing, and led me eventually into working as a mental health chaplain.

R: And have there been any particular highlights or lowspots in terms of that part of your journey?

B: The high points for me are always about listening to people and hearing what *their* journey is – that's a metaphor I use all the time. Accompanying people on their journeys, listening to their experience, many of them at very difficult times in life, is how I think of my work as a chaplain. So as I say that's a metaphor I use a lot...

R: ...An accompanier of people on their journey.

B: Yes. I've reflected on why I do this work, why I'm *able* to do it, perhaps. I think I'm still working out my journey – and I suppose I'm always listening to other people's to give me some clues... There's a sense of journeying together.

R: Very much a two-way process...?

B: I hope so.

R: We've called this conference 'Psst....look who's talking'. What do you make of that title?

B: The picture that came to mind, thinking about it earlier today, was of opening a tin of drink and, if you've shaken it, it kind of bubbles over and you end up with really sticky fingers. In many ways it's a picture of what my work is like. When people take the risk of opening up to you, who knows what's going to come out? Sometimes it doesn't appear to be much more than a few bubbles (although it may seem very significant to the other person). Then at other times it's a whole pouring out of someone's experience - which is sometimes easier to manage than others.

The conference's original focus was around hearing voices, something I'm much more used to - listening to the voices that people hear. The shift makes me think about who is speaking when somebody tells us their experience. Who has given them their values, that sense of who they are or how they look at what's going on in the world? It's often interesting to try and work out with people where ideas and thoughts are coming from.

R: The voice behind the voice...? So what catches your attention in the title as it now is?

B: To me it suggests trying to see what's going on below the surface. It's not so much what I say that's important but what's prompted me to say it or what you hear when I say it. The intriguing thing about relationships is that what we think we're communicating may be totally different to what the other person's receiving. Maybe they hear something they've wanted to hear, or something they've picked up from underneath what's been said.

R: As you think towards the conference, what are you hoping to communicate?

B: I have had various ideas. It feels quite challenging to be the last speaker because I'll have listened to everybody else and to what's going on during the week. What I prepare may change in the light of that.

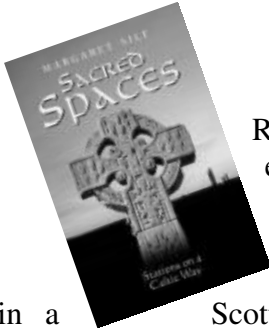
R: So to a certain extent you're keeping it open so that you are hearing the voices of the speakers and the conference as well?

B: I hope so - I'm looking forward to the speakers' meeting next week...

Sacred Spaces: Stations on the Celtic Way

by Margaret Silf

Speaker at Conference 2010



Lion Hudson Plc 2005 ISBN: 0745951864 RRP £7.99

Reading anything written by Margaret is like embarking on a personal journey of discovery. In a very simple and engaging style, she invites you to travel with her, in this case on the Celtic way. I discovered this book very aptly in a Scottish hermitage in the highlands; the author invites the reader to spend time in seven sacred spaces, weaving your own story, becoming whoever you really are.

The book takes us to the infinite knot, the high cross, the hilltops, the wells, groves and springs, the crossing places and finally to the boundaries. We stand still at each station, reflect and potentially glimpse the transcendent. Describing as “the thin places” in our lives those where the invisible and spiritual are tangibly present, Margaret, in her usual style, challenges us not only to read, but to participate, to use the rich stories, pictures and symbols. The stations take us through our life stages; the seasons of life from beginnings through transitions to boundaries and endings.

We are reminded of our individuality, as those who can live as islands, and of our connectedness, as we discover the common ground between us.

Margaret reminds us that to live life to the full we must journey in the company of risk, which challenges us to move out of our comfort zone. She says “almost everything in our western culture transmits the continual message that to live fully is to be comfortable, satisfied and free from pain. We treat the symptoms of our deeper hurting

with the message analgesics of pleasure and politeness, and we carefully avoid the thoughts and conversations that might tip us into the well”, the well being a place that is a source of life giving water, but can only be reached by descending into the depths of a deep dark shaft!

This is a taste of what is to come at the conference, I commend this and Margaret’s many other books to you.

Kim Gooding



At Conference **2010** Margaret Silf will be offering a work shop as well as a plenary session.

If this whets your appetite, then you may want to do some more reading beforehand.

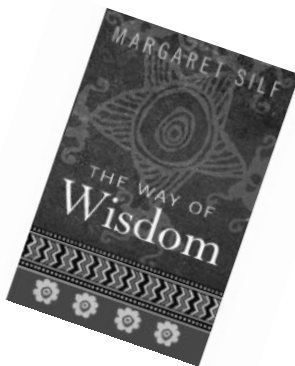
Margaret has sent us the following suggestions:-

One Hundred Wisdom Stories from around the world
2003

On Prayer and On Making Choices
2004

The Way of Wisdom 2006

All published by Lion Hudson



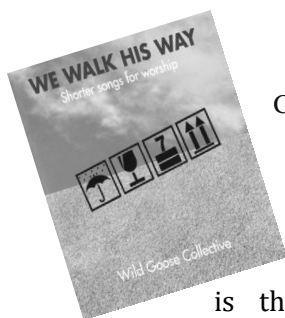
Psst....!

Another speaker has a link from her home page - see Isabel Clarke’s information about conference – and other reading.....

<http://www.isabelclarke.org/>

An excerpt from ‘Deadly threats & solemn warnings’ By John Bell

Contributor to Conference 2010



prefacing

‘We Walk His Way - Shorter Songs for Worship’

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1. DO NOT sit down at the piano with this book and go through it from front to back unless that is the way you read dictionaries and telephone directories.

2. In fact, DO NOT sit down at the piano with it. Sing everything out loud until the neighbours complain. Then ask them in to take the alto and bass parts.

3. DO NOT object that your neighbours cannot sing. DO NOT even object that your congregation cannot sing, unless medical certification regarding anatomical abnormalities is available. Everybody can sing. It just happens that one in four believe they can't, usually because of the friendly advice of a parent, teacher, boyfriend or girlfriend during a delicate stage of development.

Conceding that everyone can sing, DO NOT then argue that everyone cannot sing in parts. It happens in nearly every country in the southern hemisphere and it used to happen in Britain until music changed from being a participative activity to a spectator sport.....

.....8. DO NOT sing some of these songs 53 times a la Taizé and then wonder why people are not responding. Given the difference in temperature between Taizé and Tarbert, singers in the latter region

may have succumbed to hypothermia at the 28th singing. These songs are not just for people who are 'into' meditation.

9. DO NOT imagine that these songs were written by the monks on Iona. There have been no monks on Iona for over 400 years. And though these songs are sung in the Abbey on Iona, they originated in an overcrowded living room next to one of the most heavily polluted arterial roads in Glasgow. Anyone who can hear the waves lapping in the Sound of Mull when singing these songs should be referred to a specialist.

Fierce Goodbye

A workshop to provide a listening space for those who are concerned by suicide.

As part of a module in rural ministry I was studying last year, we visited Norfolk farms and heard stories of the terrible stress being undergone by our farmers in recent years. It has become a well-publicised fact that the suicide rate among farmers is particularly high, alongside that of GPs and Vets. No doubt we're all aware that the experience of suicide is couched in stigma, shame and silence. It breaks into everyday life with a strident cry that instinctively we want to stifle. One thing I remembered vividly from Kathy Galloway's talk at **Continuing the Journey** in 2006 was the statement that "Silencing is intimately connected with violence" (*Bennett-Moore 2002:38*) so I was challenged to find out why the church has historically seemed to do further violence to those suffering terrible despair by reinforcing the silence around the subject of suicide.



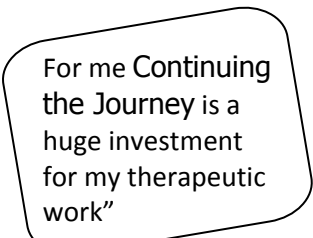
In his challenging book *Resurrecting the Person*, John Swinton underscores the understanding of the Christian church as a “community of remembering and storytelling that passes on and nurtures dangerous memories” (*Metz:1984:126*). He continues:

“Dangerous memories are stories of the ‘other’ – the victims of history who have been forgotten by society, but who remain at the forefront of the memory of God. In raising our consciousness to the reality of the lives of the oppressed, such stories become dangerous because they radically intrude upon and call into question, our complacent and comfortable present” (*2000:126*).

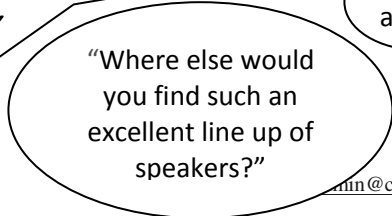
Since God is revealed to us as One whose bias is towards the poor, the suffering and the stigmatised, there is no doubt that the Church must become a community that first listens to, then remembers the dangerous stories, then ultimately stands in solidarity with those who suffer stigma and dehumanisation because they are despairing of their life, attempt suicide or have their lives ravaged by the suicide of another.

Our 2010 conference theme ‘*Psst!...Look who’s talking...*’, urges us to fully attend to the silenced voices in society and the church. This multimedia and interactive workshop aims to provide a safe listening space where ‘dangerous stories’ of suicide can be told, heard and honoured and where the Church’s ambivalence on the subject can be understood and challenged.

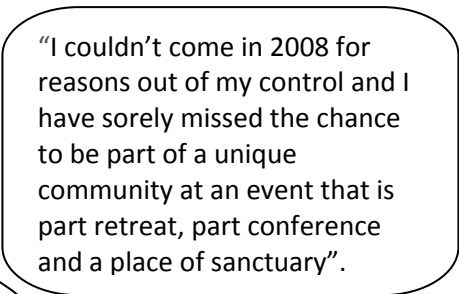
Mogs Bazely



For me **Continuing the Journey** is a huge investment for my therapeutic work”



“Where else would you find such an excellent line up of speakers?”



“I couldn’t come in 2008 for reasons out of my control and I have sorely missed the chance to be part of a unique community at an event that is part retreat, part conference and a place of sanctuary”.



Psst!...

25 hours of CPD

min@co