newdirections

March 2007
£2·50

serving Evangelicals and Catholics seeking to renew the Church in the historic faith

Held in chains

'Am I not a man and a brother?'
Reflections on the abolition anniversary

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Vol 10 No 142 March 2007

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FEATURES

New DIRECTIONS
Founded 1993

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Subscriptions
New Directions is sent free of charge to all members of Forward in Faith. Individual copies are sold at £2·50.
All subscription enquiries should be addressed to FiF UK Office at the address above.
Subscription for one year: £25 (United Kingdom/EEC), £30 (Overseas).
Priests from Anglican Provinces in Third World countries and students in theological training in the Anglican Communion will receive a free subscription.

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The next issue of newdirections is published on 1 April

ND comment

When Josiah Wedgewood prepared the mould for the pottery medallion, bearing the legend 'Am I not a man and a brother?' and its picture of an African in chains, he was doing two things. He was using language (and imagery) inclusively, and he was expressing Christian conviction. There can be no escaping the fact – though Tony Blair tries to in his website letter on the subject – that the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade 1807 was the consequence of Christian belief.

All the most recent historical writing confirms this perspective. Professor James Walvin, the secular left-wing historian who came to prominence twenty years ago for disputing Mrs Thatcher's version of Victorian values, writes that 'to read the literature of anti-slavery…is to be struck forcefully by the degree to which opposition to slavery was couched overwhelmingly in religious terms.' And, as Walvin and his colleagues demonstrate, this is also true of the West Indian slaves themselves, to whom the Gospel was preached at the same time as political action was taken against the institution of slavery. Together they came to form, with their white brethren in the churches of England, the kind of Christian community Owen Higgs, writing in this issue, finds in the epistles of St Paul.

Marx was one of the first secular radicals to recognize the advantages to his cause of associating it with the anti-slavery campaign. Aiming to create the same sort of solidarity and moral fervour in the nascent socialist movement, he habitually referred to the capitalist system as slavery and to industrial workers as wage slaves.

Since then, and with varying degrees of justification, the words have been used by pressure groups to describe and mobilize support for campaigns against the social injustices they perceive.

Speculation about what might be a morally equivalent cause to the campaign against the Atlantic slave trade seems to have been revived by the bicentenary this month. It can be read both in the Prime Minister's letter and the *Churches Together* website <setallfree.com>. Suggestions made there include bonded labour, forced recruitment of child soldiers and human trafficking. Certainly all of these are akin to slavery, and all demand justice and liberation. But in his essay on the ending of the slave trade, which can be read on the *CT* website, Dr John Coffey has another suggestion: 'Like transported slaves, unborn children are out of sight and out of mind, and quite defenceless. Their destruction happens silently…'

This reminds us that 2007 sees the fortieth anniversary of another piece of British legislation, the Abortion Act. Dr Coffey might have added the legal position of the unborn child now is exactly the same as that of the transported slave then. She has no rights of her own at all. What is more, this modern slave institution is currently part of the law in nearly every Christian country.

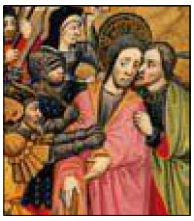
At a time when government legislation is being passed faster than the lawyers can study it, and when new offences are hitting the statute book faster than commentators can count them, the Sexual Orientation Regulations may seem no more than another trivial chapter in the unfolding raft of EU-inspired human rights laws. But they may be more than this.

In January and February we published articles from an evangelical viewpoint, pointing to the problems that might arise for Christian printers, photographers or owners of church halls. As it happened, the news broke in the media over Catholic adoption agencies. No one can tell where or how the new laws will strike, for though they are to come into force on Palm Sunday, no draft has yet been published – which is itself scandalous.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York are to be applauded for writing to the Prime Minister in support of those adoption agencies, even though the Church of England had no direct interest in the particular matter in question. Their criticism was clear, Christian and robust. As they pointed out, 'It is vitally important that the interests of vulnerable children are not relegated to suit any political interest. And that conditions are not inadvertently created which make the claims of conscience an obstacle to, rather than the inspiration for, the invaluable public service rendered by parts of the voluntary sector.'

'There can be no exceptions,' is the clear, stated position of the government, and yet an opt-out clause for religious groups had already been devised, and passed by the human rights lawyers, and put into effect in other European countries. Why can there be no exceptions? Because tolerance in this instance is deemed to be intolerable.

The question we ask is: why is *this* the case? For what greater principle must the great work of the Catholic adoption agencies be laid to one side? We shall all have to consider these questions over the coming months. There *are* principles involved, and the disagreements will prove deeply significant. ND



Slaves and salvation

As we mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade ***Simon Heans*** *wants us to see the institution of slavery and the motivation for its abolition as something far broader than is commonly understood*

medieval abolitionism is the missing context in the liberal writing about the campaign to end the slave trade

Since the Enlightenment, the Christian Scriptures have constantly been subjected to historical investigation by believers and sceptics alike. The Bishop of Durham, for example, never tires of telling us that he is an ancient historian and so wishes the conclusions he reaches to be judged according to the canons of historical inquiry. But there has recently been an interesting twist in the tale of two disciplines: historians have started deferring to theology.

It is modern historians who evince a new respect for theology. Michael Burleigh, whose two-volume study of European history from the French Revolution to Al Qaeda has been enthusiastically reviewed in these pages, is one of the leading figures in the movement to subject the post-Enlightenment period to theological investigation. The assumption of the historical critics of the Bible who emerged in the eighteenth century (and whose intellectual heirs still dominate its academic study) was that their methodology was scientific. This was the premise of the 'Quest for the Historical Jesus' which continues yet. But Burleigh and other modern historians who think like him have turned the tables on the Enlightenment and offer an analysis of the culture it has created in terms drawn from theology.

They argue that religious ideas which biblical scholars tell them they are required by the profession of history itself to place in an ancient historical context, are on the contrary very relevant to the study of modern history. My proposal in this article is that this anti-Enlightenment theological history also illuminates a historical subject that is not exclusively modern (despite the impression given by most of the literature produced for the bicentenary commemoration this month) but is ancient as well. I refer of course to slavery.

The text for my historical sermon is taken from the third chapter of St Paul's Letter to the Romans beginning to read at the twenty-third verse: 'Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.' But what direction to the study of the history of slavery is given by this passage?

The first verse concerning sin directs the historian to look for slavery in all societies, including of course those officially Christian. Because of the revelation of original sin, the working hypothesis of the theological historian will be that slaves will be found everywhere and in all times. She will recognize it as the default setting of human society. The second steer that this text gives to historical research will be towards seeing Christian doctrine as the solvent of the bonds of slavery.

These principles are applied to slavery's history by Rodney Stark in his book, called, I'm sure coincidentally, *For the Glory of God*. In ch. 4 of that book, using a wealth of examples, he demonstrates that the dynamic in the history of slavery has been the Pauline dialectic of sin and salvation, and also that historians of a liberal persuasion who have organized their histories around the more obvious *political* antithesis of freedom and domination, have been guilty of significant distortions of fact and interpretation.

Take as an example of the former the liberal myth that some societies have eschewed slavery. The idea goes back at least to Rousseau, who postulated a 'state of nature' in which men (and it was only men) gambolled innocently, until corrupted by the arrival of civilization. 'Man was born free,' he famously wrote, 'but is everywhere in chains.' His imagination was fired by the discovery of the New World and its peoples. Surprisingly, some of Rousseau's delusions have passed into scholarly work on these tribal societies. However, they may be considered to have been finally laid to rest by the definitive study of the social conditions among what we cannot now call Red Indian tribes, *Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of America* by Leland Donald. Stark summarizes its conclusions as follows:

As for being few in numbers, slaves made up a third of the population in some villages and ranged from 15% to 25% in many others… Rather than being limited to merely a few captives, slave status was hereditary… They were often traded or given away… 'Masters exercised complete control over their slaves, and could even kill them if they chose.' And they often did choose to kill the old and sick as well as the rebellious. Finally, slaves were often killed as ritual sacrifices, especially during their master's funeral to provide him with slaves in the next world and to exhibit his wealth to those remaining behind.

An error in the liberal Enlightenment interpretation of slavery was exposed twenty or more years ago by that great ancient historian, Moses Finley. He pointed out that, in his huge work on the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon devoted 'only a few decorous pages to the subject of slavery.' Finley's life work was aimed at bringing about an interpretive shift from Gibbon's liberal perspective to one in which slavery took centre stage in the study of ancient economy and society. He was swimming against the tide. As Stark comments: 'most famous Humanists regarded [slavery] as the price that had to be paid for the splendour of Greco-Roman culture, a judgement with which Friedrich Engels concurred, writing in 1878 that "without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art and science."' Here we witness nothing less than the collapse of the liberal interpretive scheme. That slavery is the condition of liberty is at the very least a paradoxical idea.

There is no need to rehearse the lamentable details of ancient slavery; this quotation from Mary Gordon gives the general picture: 'the growth of the empire had a background of human suffering which is unimaginable in its degree and extent… If such labour

killed [slaves] prematurely, the Roman master of Republican times might say, with the concise brutality of Tacitus, *uile damnum*, there were plenty more.' At least there were until the Roman legionaries ceased to be conquerors and were forced on the defensive. Thus the supply of slaves was cut off and, in Finley's words, 'the world of late antiquity was no longer a slave society.' But this does not mean there were no slaves; it means only that they were not ubiquitous as they once had been. So when did slavery die out in Europe and why?

This is a difficult question to answer. Stark quotes Adam Smith: 'The time and manner…in which so important a revolution was brought about, is one of the most obscure points in modern history.' The modern authority on medieval feudalism, Marc Bloch, believed he knew what happened to the slaves of Europe: they became serfs. And a serf was far from being a slave by another name. The life of medieval serfs, he insisted, 'had nothing in common with slavery.' Serfs were not chattels; they had rights and a substantial degree of control over their lives. They married whom they wished and their families were not subject to sale or dispersal. They paid rent and therefore could determine the hours and the pace of their work. But *why* this transformation from slavery to serfdom?

Here is G.K. Chesterton explaining the evidential problem associated with this question: 'No laws had been passed against slavery; no dogmas even had condemned it by definition; no war had been waged against it, no new race or ruling caste had repudiated it; but it was gone.' He calls this 'the medieval revolution,' but it was not like modern revolutions which have always featured the things Chesterton mentions. It was, as he puts it, anonymous. But it was also enormous.

Here is his explanation of why the slave became a serf: 'the conscious and active emancipators everywhere were the parish priests and religious brotherhoods… Countless Clarksons and innumerable Wilberforces, without political machinery or public fame worked at death-beds and confessionals in all the villages of Europe; and the vast system of slavery vanished.'

Those numerous and anonymous 'Clarksons' and 'Wilberforces' are essential to understanding the activities of their real life modern counterparts. Medieval abolitionism is the missing context in the liberal writing about the campaign to end the slave trade. Stark points out 'the fact that a virtual Who's Who of "Enlightenment" figures fully accepted slavery.' John Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Edmund Burke and David Hume had nothing to say against slavery and one or two things to say in its favour. Nevertheless Adam Smith was an abolitionist on the grounds that free labour was preferable, both economically and morally, to slave labour. Paradoxically his position was the inspiration for the Marxist Eric Williams' argument that abolition was caused by the uncompetitiveness of slavery.

This reason for abolition is cited with great respect on the Churches Together website <setallfree.com> even though the massive statistical researches of Robert Fogel and Stanley Engermann demonstrated more than thirty years ago that slavery was far from being a loss-making concern. One of their pupils, Seymour Drescher, has called the decision to abolish the whole slave system, both trade and production, as 'econocide'.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that abolitionists were not uninterested in the liberal economic case against slavery: Zachary Macaulay wrote a whole book about it. It is also true that abolitionism drew on the liberal political rhetoric of the rights of man and included politicians like the libertine and free thinker, Charles James Fox, who had little time for evangelicals like Wilberforce.

However, the longer Catholic perspective on slavery makes clear that there was nothing especially modern about the anti-slavery campaign. It was as old as the Church itself. 'Capitalism' and 'democracy' really did not have anything to do with it – except to give the kind of people who were opposed to slavery for religious reasons, the non-conformist middle and working classes, money and power to do the job. But they had to *want* to do it. Their motivation was spiritual and had its roots in the ideas of sin and salvation – just like medieval Catholic abolitionists. Of course they did not express their spiritual perceptions in the same way. For the Catholic, the issue was whether the slave was capable of baptism. To the Protestant it was whether he could hear the Word of God. Nevertheless, *mutatis mutandis*, Christians both medieval and modern answered with St Paul 'that all men have sinned' but have been saved 'through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.'

Perhaps it is worth reminding ourselves that Aquinas expanded the definition of spiritual capacity from the sacramental and evangelical by placing slavery in opposition to natural law and deducing that all 'rational creatures' are entitled to justice. Right reason, not coercion, is the moral basis of authority, he argued, for 'one man is not by nature ordained to another as an end.' Thus possession of reason rather than the inheritance of sin became the *differentia specifica* of the human. Although forming the basis of the teaching against slavery of the many papal encyclicals thereafter, it was also twisted by the Portuguese and Spanish entrepreneurs who were the first Europeans to engage in the African slave trade (Muslims had of course been trafficking in slaves from Africa for many hundreds of years before the setting up of the slave economy of the New World). They argued that Africans were not rational creatures but a species of animal and therefore legitimately subject to human exploitation. With this reasoning we are close to the discourse of Roman law which called the slave *instrumentum vocale* or speaking tool. All of which goes to show the universality of sin as well as of reason.

Rodney Stark quotes David Brion Davis, the influential liberal historian and author of the classic study *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* as follows: 'For some two thousand years men thought of sin as a kind of slavery. One day they would come to think of slavery as sin.' Of course Davis is arguing in typical Sixties fashion (the book was published in 1967) for the incompatibility of spirituality (especially a sense of sin) with political action. But as Stark shows, there was no such shift from one to the other in the history of slavery and Christianity. The theological principles of sin and salvation enabled Christians to see that slavery was a sin and that its victims should be saved from it. This is what is we are commemorating this month. ND

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Our mother Church

***Ernest Skublics** considers Mothering Sunday*

In a small church that never sees any children at Mass, half-a-dozen kids turn up for a laboured 'family service' with all the stops pulled out: visual aids, toys, acting, humour, horrible hymns, everything but a clown dressed for the circus. Much talk about mothers of course, but the liturgy for the day hardly figures. The Prayer Book Epistle inherited from the old Roman Rite that had given the name to this Sunday has disappeared.

Why do we need *separate* readings anyway, for a Mothering Sunday having nothing to do with Lent, when the original propers integrated both themes beautifully. The Fourth Sunday has a uniquely engaging theme, announced by the entrance antiphon: 'Rejoice (*laetare*) Jerusalem! Be glad for her, you who love her; rejoice with her, you who mourned for her, and you will find contentment at her consoling breasts.' Hence the old name for 'Laetare Sunday,' softening the lenten purple to rose vestments.

Popular piety around 'Mother's Day' has ceased to have anything to do with the liturgical year and its theological content. To give them their due, the alternative readings provided by the Liturgical Commission do connect motherhood with God's mysterious plan of salvation. But the populist tendency is to dedicate this day purely to recognition of mothers. It does not celebrate the Church as our mother, nor the heavenly Jerusalem as giving us birth into the freedom of the children of God. It does nothing to complement God's fatherhood with his motherly care for us, and it fails to recognize the characteristically providential role women – grandmothers, mothers and spouses – have traditionally played in turning their men – and when these were rulers, entire peoples – to Christ.

So, how could the pastoral opportunity of Mothering Sunday be exploited? Without presuming to offer specific homiletic hints, it seems obvious that the original epistle for Mothering Sunday presented the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church in her eschatological realization, as 'the mother of us all.' She is our mother in the sense that Sarah was the mother of Isaac: a free woman who has been made fruitful by God's intervention and promise, rather than the way the slave girl bore children to Abraham. And the children of this free woman – are also free and children of God's covenantal promise. So there is an icon here, drawn of a woman who by God's grace and promise becomes our mother, and this woman is the Church.

The primary point is an understanding of the Church by the analogy of motherhood, rather than motherhood *per se*. Obviously the analogy also teaches us a great deal about God's idea of motherhood, with a special emphasis on its freedom and ours, because this whole relationship and the destiny of the children is wrapped up in God's powerful love and election.

The task is to connect the liturgy, as the embodiment of the Mystery of Salvation here and now, with the popular piety celebrating motherhood, so that motherhood does not become the object of a purely secular celebration, while the lenten liturgy runs off as a piece of disconnected religion. ND

Ghostly Counsel

Public & private

***Andy Hawes** is Warden of Edenham Regional Retreat House*

The relationship between liturgy and personal spirituality is a complex one. I know individuals who find that the centre of their spirituality is liturgical. The experience of worship, praise and adoration is the one that is formative for them. For them, prayer alone is cold fayre. For some, worship can be the source of mediation that lasts for a week; it is touching the eternal, an experience that transfigures the days and nights that follow. I do not doubt what they tell me. Some people are not made to pray alone.

I know others who expect liturgical worship to be some kind of catch-all for their prayer and reflection. They are often frustrated and irritated by worship as a result. In my experience, it is the most prayerful people who can cope with the toddler rocketing down the aisle or with the man with a loud cough in the row behind. Those who arrive at worship seeking nothing but some kind of inner, individual prayer time are in for a rough ride (in most churches!).

Then there are others who resist all invitations and advice to attend corporate worship. These are often folk with a clear pattern of prayer and Bible reading. They find church does not fit. My own view is that this is not a matter for individual choice. It is a prerequisite for the Christian to belong to a community and for that belonging to be expressed in worship. In the Catholic tradition, liturgical practice of the Church, through the rituals of the seasons, draws the individual as a member of the Body of Christ closer to him as his love and purpose unfold. This is particularly true in Holy Week.

There are many excuses for not coming to church but there are very few good reasons. The Church has only room for one head and that is Christ – to put it bluntly, it is a bit big-headed to think you know best! Spiritual pride is dangerous. Liturgical tastes can vary and the 'cringe factor' may keep a person away. Nevertheless, these things can be overcome with a modicum of initiative.

Now a word for those who find themselves involved in public worship sometimes more than they would like. I am thinking of choristers, organists, servers, wardens and clergy. It is often the case that the individual spirituality of the leaders of liturgy is often compromised by the focus of the mind and the imagination on the preparation and performance of liturgy. The public responsibility crashes in on personal need. The first and most important thing is to be aware that this goes on. The response should be a deliberate one. Preparation for worship must be systematic and in good time; this liberates other subsequent prayer times to become listening to God rather than planning the next service.

We are all responsible for creating the optimum atmosphere for attentive worship in church. Prepare for worship by reading the lessons at home, pray for all those involved, get to church early, be quiet when you get there, join in as fully as you can, sing when called upon to sing, listen when called upon to listen and pray when bidden to pray. The small actions of each us count in creating a worthy act of worship by the whole.

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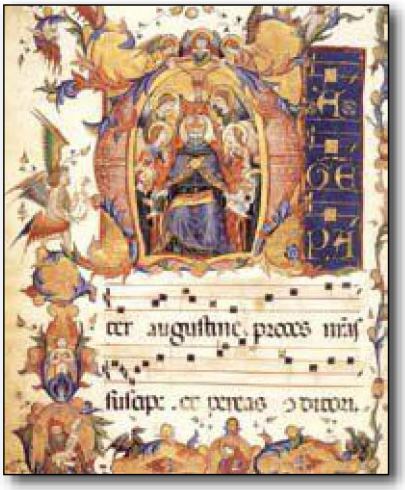
medieval religious or a book, sacred or secu- is whole being, and this ch did not merely *inform* im. All the learning he or she acquired in this way was offered to God, like the books from which it had been derived.



Concentration

These methods of study needed a level of concentration which is rare in contemporary society, when it is commonly assumed, for example, that reading and writing may be done against (or even require) a musical background. In medieval times, it was assumed that the discipline and perseverance practised in order to achieve the art of 'learning with one's whole being' improved the quality of life, and as has already been noted, strengthened the Christian character but, above all, it gave scholars, monks and nuns, an excellent working knowledge and understanding of theology. It was this which, when heresy threatened the Church, enabled them to defend and thus preserve the Catholic faith. Reasserting the truths of the historic faith of Christendom is still the most effective way of defeating attempts to undermine.

These medieval attitudes to learning seem strange in the twenty-first century, when it is impossible to ignore the developments in technology, educational theories and scientific ways of thinking which separates us from that earlier age. Yet these medieval methods worked, and there is much to admire in them; they encouraged a love of learning and a commitment to theological study, a high level of concentration, respect for genuine scholarship, both religious and secular; and (at this time of the year) a desire and serious intent to observe Lent as a holy season, for making real progress in the spiritual life. ND

Consider how different things were when books were not easily obtainable, because they were written and copied by hand, and when a whole flock of sheep was required to provide skins for the parchment of a single book – only a few pages could be produced from one sheepskin. Other animals, including wild ones which had to be hunted, were needed to provide leather for binding. This took weeks to prepare and even then, it often offered resistance to the quill or pen. The completion of a book was a great event and just as a new church building was dedicated with special prayers, so a book when finished was offered to God with an appropriate liturgy.

'Accept, O Holy Trinity, the offering of this book…' chanted the monks (in Latin), continuing with intercessions for the brethren who had prepared the parchment, for the monks who had done the writing, copying and illustrating, for those who would read the book, and finally for the future generations who would own it. To have produced a book was considered as valuable as building a church. In some ways, it was a greater achievement, for a church building serves only the local community, whereas the influence of a book can be far-reaching.

An abbot of the great monastery of to the words, which the monks called 'the voices of the page,' and the memory fixed and understood them, while the will desired to put into practice what had been learned. Doctors in ancient and medieval times recommended reading as a physical exercise because it was claimed 'it involved the body and the mind'; one learned with one's whole being.

Monastic libraries contained both classical and religious works, because any scholarly text was regarded with reverence. It was customary on Ash Wednesday for abbots to issue their brothers with books for Lent, but rarely were there sufficient religious ones to go round. The late Rosalind Hill, once Professor of Medieval History at London University, often referred to a monk who was issued with Livy's *History of Rome* for his Lenten reading. Disappointed, he explained to the abbot that he did not consider that this would help his spiritual progress.

'My son,' the abbot replied, 'do you believe that God is the source of all truth?' 'That I do believe,' said the monk. 'Then,' said the abbot, 'all scholarly books contain God's truth and you will find moral and spiritual lessons in Livy as well as in the book of Leviticus, if you are prepared to search for them. The revelations of God's truth cannot be restricted to the Scrip-

Moderately liberal

Let us not forget it is a fine thing to be liberal - open and generous
***Paul Griffin** discusses the right use of the word and its connotations*

We all, from our editor downwards and sideways, call those we disagree with 'liberals'. We are, I suppose, mindful that some of the most oppressive acts of recent times have been done in the name of inclusive liberalism. We are approaching the time when any football supporters' club will, in that name, be allowed to exist only on condition that it admits 25% of supporters of other clubs.

This use of the word, however comprehensible and even inevitable, is a pity, because to be liberal is a fine thing. Our Lord was liberal enough to say that if someone takes our coat, we should offer him other articles of apparel, and be liberal enough to take not merely one but two or more buffets round the ear. Even the normal use of the word 'liberal' to mean 'generous' has to be stretched to cover that.

New Testament signs

As always with a difficult concept, snags were visible even in New Testament times. The comments and actions of Jesus in regard to the Pharisees and the money-changers should warn us that matters are not straightforward. We are clearly not to pride ourselves on being a soft touch. There is the same sort of balance as existed in our Lord's attitude to the Law. He approved of it, but it must be applied in the right way, in fact liberally.

This is where elements in the Church leap in, and by wrecking the balance, give the word 'liberal' a bad name. Few doubt that the Church should be inclusive, but this does not mean it should never exclude. When it comes to love, kindness and social acceptance towards those with beliefs and practices unlike our own, we should be proud to say these qualities are intrinsic to our beliefs, but we do not alter the beliefs and practices themselves in order to accommodate theirs.

All great arguments are about the middle ground. It is like choosing a mattress. No one seriously wants something so rigid it forbids comfort, but equally no one wants one of those smothering feathery beds that give no support. In our time the consensus has unquestionably shifted towards the soft end, and at what point we stop and say 'no further' constitutes the nub of the debate.

all great arguments are about the middle ground

Keeping the law

Our Lord came to fulfil a Law that started with positive commandments and went on with a several-times-repeated 'Thou shalt not'. That Jesus realized the widespread neglect of obedience to these negatives is shown by the story of the woman taken in adultery. His attitude was kindly but firm. He, as it were, shrugged his shoulders and told the woman not to do it again. The message to the crowd was that they should look at the motes in their own eyes rather than worry about people equally immoral. There is no suggestion that Jesus condoned immorality, only that he recognized its pervasiveness. He never ceased to insist that we acknowledge and repent of our sins; not make new rules to legitimize them.

Liberalism in the pejorative sense may mean dodging the Law. It says, 'Yes, I am a sinner like everyone else. So is every ordained priest; and I am going to acknowledge this by becoming ordained and going on living with my girl or boy friend. God, after all, is a liberal.' Yes, indeed, but not to the point of going to work on the tablets of stone with a pile driver.

Desire to pick and choose

This demonstrates also the tendency of liberalism to pick and choose the substance of faith in order to achieve what is wanted, whether it is more priests for an understaffed church or a type of equality between the sexes of a sort not envisaged from the Creation all through the Christian era.

Liberalism is like wine, a marvellous thing until carried to excess. A moderate toast to it, therefore, accompanied by the hope that one day we may find a better term for our opponents. ND

To the point

ii Archdeacon in the chair

Our vicar is retiring and the archdeacon has said that he will be attending and chairing the meeting which the PCC has to have under section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 and, if the Council requests a section 12 meeting with the bishop and patron, he will be chairing that meeting too. Can he do this?

Under the 1986 Measure, section 11 requires a meeting of the PCC to be held, in order to discuss a number of important matters relating to the filling of the vacancy and the future life of the parish. If the parish priest is still in post he must not attend the meeting.

It is still an ordinary meeting of the PCC even if there are special matters to be discussed and it follows that, as the Church Representation Rules (CRR) require, in the absence of the chairman of the Council (the parish priest) the vice-chairman (who must be an elected lay person serving on the Council – CRR Appendix II, paragraph 1.b) chairs the meeting.

Not only does the archdeacon not chair the section 11 meeting, he has no right under the 1986 Measure to be present at it.

If the PCC decides to request a section 12 meeting with the bishop and the patron, the bishop has the power to nominate some other person to attend on his behalf (1986 Measure section 12.6). Often the archdeacon is the person chosen by the bishop, but this gives him no automatic right to chair the meeting.

Section 12.7 provides that the chairman of the meeting shall be such person as those present at the meeting determine. Thus, the chairman could be the archdeacon but, equally, it could be the vice-chairman of the Council or some other person.

The crucial canon

***Paul Benfield** summarizes what Canon A4 meant and the implications of its meaning in the future*

In July 2006 the General Synod passed a motion approving the setting up of a legislative drafting group to prepare draft legislation to remove the legal obstacles to the consecration of women to the office of bishop and also 'a draft of possible additional provision consistent with Canon A4 to establish arrangements that would seek to maintain the highest possible degree of communion with those conscientiously unable to receive the ministry of women bishops'. The words 'consistent with Canon A4' were the result of an amendment, proposed by Canon Jane Sinclair, on which there has been much comment since the vote.

The Prayer Book

Writing in *The Tablet* immediately following the debate, Bishop Richard Harries said that the effect of the amendment was that there will be no question in the future of opponents arguing that priests ordained by a woman bishop are not really priests. But is this what Canon A4 means? The Forward in Faith Legal Working Party considered the matter over the summer and has produced a paper that has been submitted to the drafting group [and which can be downloaded from the Forward in Faith website].

To understand what Canon A4 is really about, it is necessary to consider the full text and its history. The canon makes clear in its heading that it is concerned with the *form and manner* of making ordaining and consecrating. It has nothing to say about who may be ordained but only about the way in which they are ordained.

At the Reformation the Church of England introduced its own rite of ordination, commonly called The Ordinal, which is now annexed to the Book of Common Prayer. There were doubts in some quarters as to whether the new English ordination rite was, in fact, a valid rite of ordination. So the Articles of Religion of 1571 provided that the 'Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops and ordering of Priests and Deacons set forth in the Reign of King Edward VI' contained all things necessary to such consecration or ordination. From this provision concerning Cranmer's Ordinal has come down the modern Canon A4. It can be seen that it has relevance only to those bishops, priests and deacons ordained according to the Prayer Book Ordinal and nothing to say about those ordained according to the *ASB* or *Common Worship* rites.

Range of recognition

Much stress has been placed on the words that those ordained according to the Ordinal 'ought to be accounted, both by themselves and others, to be truly bishops, priest or deacons.' The language here is not the prescriptive 'shall,' but rather the exhortatory 'ought'. One of the few canons, like Canon A4, to use 'ought' is Canon B6.3 encouraging the observance of Days of Fasting ('whereof the 40 days of Lent, particularly Ash Wednesday and the Monday to Saturday before Easter, *ought* specially to be observed'). No one would suggest that it is mandatory for members of the Church of England to fast on Ash Wednesday and in Holy Week; its members are simply encouraged by the Canon to so. It can be seen, therefore, that in the canons 'ought' is exhortatory and aspirational: not mandatory.

Canon A4 has nothing to say about the status and quality of those who undergo a rite of ordination according to the Ordinal. Before a person ought to be accounted truly a bishop, priest or deacon, certain other requirements must be satisfied. There are requirements in the canons concerning age, marital status, sex (no woman can at present be consecrated a bishop) and the number of consecrators for a bishop. Only if those requirements are satisfied ought the person ordained to be accounted a deacon, priest or bishop.

That being so, we can contemplate that if we were to have women bishops it would be perfectly possible to have arrangements which limited the operation or recognition of women ordained, or men ordained by women bishops, as the Legal Working Party suggested in *Consecrated Women?* It would be possible that, enabled by a Measure, the canons could provide that a woman priest or bishop, or a man ordained by a woman bishop, may not officiate in the province of X or the jurisdiction of Y. Such an arrangement would mean that all bishops, priests and deacons of the Provinces of Canterbury and York would be recognized as such within those provinces; and all bishops, priests and deacons of the additional province or jurisdiction would be recognized as such within that new province or jurisdiction.

Canon A4

Of the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons

The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, annexed to *The Book of Common Prayer* and commonly known as the Ordinal, is not repugnant to the Word of God; and those who are so made, ordained, or consecrated bishops, priests, or deacons, according to the said Ordinal, are lawfully made, ordained, or consecrated, and ought to be accounted, both by themselves and others, to be truly bishops, priests, or deacons.

Continued provisionality

If contrary to our view, Canon A4 does indeed concern the recognition of the validity or orders, then in our view it has been suspended by operation of statute. From the passing of the Submission of the Clergy Act 1533 to the present day no canon may be passed which contravenes a statute. Since the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 – which allows parishes not to accept the priestly ministry of women – possesses the same authority as a parliamentary statute, then Canon A4, if not rendered invalid, has at least been suspended.

This point has been argued many times in the pages of New Directions. But the Bishops of Guildford and Gloucester find this language too hard a pill to swallow. They do not take the view that Canon A4 was suspended, but rather that its 'practical outworking' has been 'qualified'. Whatever the semantics, the legal and practical reality is that, to the extent that the Canon may concern the recognition of orders, it is *not operational.*

We conclude that the words 'consistent with Canon A4' in the amended motion passed by the General Synod add nothing at all. But we are concerned about the interpretation likely to be placed on those words on the basis of a mistaken understanding of them. The result could be to drive out of the church of their birth and baptism, those who have been perfectly entitled to hold in question, during this continuing open process of reception, whether those ordained as a result of a provisional decision may indeed truly be accounted as such. ND

Vicar heal thyself

***Francis Gardom** looks at Sara Savage's recent essay on clergy stress and the need to be nice and finds her analysis and advice sound and practical*

'Physician, heal thyself.' This proverb, quoted by Jesus, must surely be one of the oldest of jokes. Sick doctors, bankrupt accountants, burnt-out fire stations and bent policemen are all-of-a-piece with clergy whose lives (or parishes, or marriages) fall apart. Clergy widely believe such things 'ought not to happen' – to anyone who believes in a God with power to heal and save. Yet happen they do.

Sara Savage's contribution, 'On the analyst's couch: psychological perspectives on congregation and clergy', to the recent series of essays *The Future of the Parish System* [Church House, £12·99] should be read by clergy and those they serve. She is a psychologist and Senior Researcher at Cambridge.

She begins by reminding us of the positive aspects of parochial ministry: the parish church is at once a 'landmark' and a 'sacred place'; it professes to be 'for', not just those who choose to use it, but everyone living in a particular location; its links with local schools, colleges, hospitals and other institutions can reach out to those who would otherwise never darken its doors; many churches are treasuries of art, music, architecture and liturgy whose artefacts are not only 'on display' but in everyday use; it is seldom invasive – it does not trespass into the private lives of people further than they wish; and, perhaps most valuable, it is administered by clergy who are aware that they are unlikely to be a spectacular success as the world would understand it.

There are exceptions to these generalizations; nevertheless the parish provides a framework in which much good may be done, and potential harm mitigated by the checks and balances of the parish system.

Resistance to change

However, all these positives are, by nature, complex. Their downside is not so much when they are absent, but when they are pursued exclusively or in the wrong way. Thus, that 'tradition' which a parish church strives to uphold may indeed concern something integral to the 'faith once delivered to the saints'; but its importance can equally, over time, make it a do-or-die issue: any liturgical change, even a single hymn-tune, becomes the ground for civil war, although the number of pew-people who could accurately summarize the differences between Richard Hooker's and Thomas Aquinas' doctrines of the Eucharist could be counted on the fingers of two feet.

'We would rather let the church die than change,' they cry. Yet without change there can be no development – as teenagers discover. Adolescence brings both an addiction and a reluctance towards embracing change. They desperately want to be treated as adults, but find the responsibility it entails distasteful. So with churches: a deep-felt longing for contemporary relevance, which necessitates change, competes in their hearts with a sense of corporate heritage, which demands conservation.

history suggests that it is not the 'nicest' people who have had the greatest influence

'The need for niceness'

Beside such virtues-turned-to-vice, in any society both tastes and preferences exist which are fundamentally misguided. Sara Savage deals at length with what she terms 'the need of niceness,' whereby the niceness of church people from the incumbent upwards (or downwards according to your viewpoint) is regarded as a *sine qua non* of all parochial ministry. She says, 'While nastiness is clearly unproductive, the norm of niceness can tie churches up in knots.'

In an age which regards Relationships as the be- and end-all of human intercourse, it is inevitable that clergy who naturally possess the facility for 'being nice' will enjoy a great deal more sympathy (and therefore cooperation from their laity) than those who lack it.

Yet history suggests that it is not the 'nicest' people who have had the greatest influence for good on the societies with which they have been associated. Successful head teachers, political leaders, matrons, admirals and fathers (both biological and spiritual) have always had a streak of the hard-nosed disciplinarian about them. In recent times, the gradual but widespread erosion of such people from positions of leadership, not least amongst clergy, and their replacement by what psychologists term *passive dependants*, have established Christians' niceness as being the supreme virtue.

Misguided aims

'Passive dependant' does not suggest itself as a term describing such varied Christian heroes as Fr Dolling, Bishop Ryle, Dr Pusey, the Wesleys or George Whitefield. Each saw himself as a contender for, or soldier of, Christ. Whilst hindsight suggests they may have got some priorities wrong, none of them supposed that niceness was the supreme Christian virtue.

This latter-day pursuit of niceness has attenuated the ministry both of parish clergy and laity. To quote Sara Savage again, 'Everyone [to do with the Church] has to be on good behaviour. This erosion of the freedom to be an authentic self undermines the springs of spiritual and psychological well-being. A religious performance is then substituted, particularly if less-than-conscious erroneous beliefs are operating among the clergy: 1. I must be successful in everything I do. 2. Everyone must accept me. 3. Everyone must love me. 4. If I make a mistake I am a total failure. 5. If I disagree with someone they won't like me. 6. My value as a person depends on how other people view me.'

It is obvious where this leads. Conflict must be avoided, and hard decisions compromised to make them acceptable. 'Difficult' people must be treated with kid gloves. The result is stress, leading to disillusionment, as both clergy and laity start to realize that they have become neither what God, nor they, intended themselves to be.

Sara Savage ends with some sound advice. 'Stop clinging to the positives. Let them float on the water. What can survive, will survive. Face into the negatives. Develop the means to deal with them; use the resources that exist. Trust the process of change. Change is necessary and will occur whether it is welcomed or not. To welcome change is to trust that the Church has been, and will continue to be, a wise householder bringing out treasures both old and new.'

Sound advice indeed, but how difficult to apply consistently in practice! ND

devotional

Fasting and the soul
Arthur Middleton

Clement of Alexandria wrote a book entitled *Christ the Educator.* His advice is: find in Jesus the supreme guide and the midwife of wisdom. The passage entitled 'The Temple of the Ape God' reflects on the opulent outward appearance of pagan temples, with ornate stairways, porticoes, rare stones and paintings, glittering with gold and silver. Inside you will not find the god who inhabits the temple, only some animal; a beast draped in purple is the Egyptian god. The Christian's priority is not beautifying the outward appearance but beautifying the soul. Beautify the body only in a measured way. People who are obsessed with beautifying the body but leave the soul ugly are unconsciously copying pagan temples.

Today's culture is obsessed with fashionable and beautiful bodies. Plastic surgery reshapes the body into something attractive to the eye. Obsession with the body to the neglect of the soul is, says Clement, an unconscious copying of Egyptian temples. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit but lift the outer veil of such reshaped bodies and you will not find our God dwelling there, but an ape adorned with finery which has taken over the shrine. Obsession with the body dominates our culture. Its end is cosmetic, indulgence for a material rather than a spiritual end – better health, better shape, fitter body.

Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights. Fasting is a physical exercise for a spiritual end but has become unfashionable among Christians. It is primarily concerned with a healthy soul but can make a healthier body. Unlike dieting, fasting is always accompanied by prayer. Jesus fasted and prayed to discover what God wanted him to do. It was a testing time but became the springboard to his life and ministry. He found God's way was to be by death and resurrection. In Lent we prepare for Easter, for a deeper understanding of our part in God's way of death and resurrection. The Church calls us to fast and prayerfully listen to God.

In a lenten sermon, Leo the Great reminded his congregation about the Hebrews being punished for their sins by the tyranny of the Philistines. To overcome their enemies, they restored their powers of mind and body by fasting and prayer. They abstained from food and drink. Their fasting made them alert in mind and body, increasing their concentration and resolve to defeat their enemies.

Leo reminds us that we are surrounded by many oppositions and conflicts within ourselves that can be cured by the same means. We can conquer our spiritual enemies by God's grace, to correct our ways in favour of God's ways. Choosing God's way as Jesus did will amend our lives and will weaken those things in us that we thought unconquerable. For example, in dieting – the resolve you acquire through only sticking to certain foods defeats the bulges, and lowers the blood pressure and cholesterol that seem to be unconquerable enemies.

We fast and pray in Lent to confront in ourselves those things that prevent us from living in God's way. This is the wisdom of Jesus. In Jesus, we see that the divine is stronger than the human. 'Stronger is he that is in us than he that is against us,' St Paul said, 'our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness.' ND

'Which Lambeth Conference are you going to?'

A holy fool

A generation ago there was reawakened interest in the tradition of the *salos* or holy fool, the person who was 'a fool for Christ's sake.' Where the world saw only bizarre behaviour, to those with eyes to see, there was a message in the madness.

Long popular in the Russian Church, in the West, St Francis' reckless espousal of poverty and the later austerities of St Benedict Joseph Labre carried on the tradition of holy folly.

Until 2001. Then Harry Hammond, a 69-year-old, open-air Protestant preacher and Asperger's sufferer, mounted his stand in Bournemouth. He displayed a handwritten placard proclaiming that homosexual practice was immoral and that those engaging in homosexual acts should repent and believe the Gospel.

Asperger's often leads to the blurting out of views that would disturb polite society and would not fit into the alleged Anglican tradition of balanced moderation. Furthermore, the Wesleys and old-time Church Army evangelists apart, when did Anglican preachers ever stand on a soapbox?

Harry's preaching – or possibly ranting – soon attracted the attention of a group of gay activists who knocked him, his stand and placard to the ground, slightly injuring him. Fearing disorder, the police appeared and acted decisively to preserve the peace. They arrested Harry for annoying the gays. Harry appeared before a court, was found guilty and, shortly afterwards, died.

A modern holy fool? A counter-culturalist, similar to those early Christians of whom Celsus wrote that to them 'the world's wisdom is evil and the world's foolishness is insight'? An unsophisticated pensioner standing against modern received wisdom that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle? Earlier Christian ages might have enrolled Harry in the ranks of holy fools, or possibly even seen him as a martyr. Modern man has not ceased to revere martyrs, but wants higher profile figures – a Romero or Bonhoeffer. But poor, unknown, incoherent Harry – no altar will be raised nor biography written.

However, as the men of our generation count their failures, perhaps it's again time to 'Send in the Clowns.'

Alan Edwards

City of peace

The theme of Jerusalem in the contexts of both judgement and restoration

***Patrick Henry Reardon** is a Senior Editor of Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*

Among the themes that unify the Book of Isaiah, one of the more notable is that of Jerusalem, or the roughly synonymous Zion, the city of God. The names 'Jerusalem' and 'Zion' appear ninety-seven times in Isaiah. Jerusalem had been a religious centre long before David's forces captured it near the beginning of the tenth century before Christ [2 Sam. 5.6–8].

In the Bible's first mention of that city, we learn that its king, Melchizedek, was also a priest [Gen. 14.18]. When David, some eight centuries later, made Jerusalem his capital [2 Sam. 5.9], the traditional imagery associated with that ancient priest/king Melchizedek was absorbed into the official imagery of its new king, David.

With respect to Israel, David was the successor of Saul. With respect to Jerusalem, however, David was the successor to Melchizedek, whom we find identified as both king and priest in a psalm related to the Davidic throne [Ps. 110; cf. Matt. 22.43–5].

Prophecies

The theme of Jerusalem is treated differently in each of Isaiah's three parts: the prophecies of the Messiah [chs. 1–39], the prophecies of the Servant of the Lord [chs. 40–55], and the prophecies of the Triumphant Warrior [chs. 56–66]. Much of the context of the first part of Isaiah is the reign of Ahaz (735–716), the grandson of Uzziah. It was a period of massive, officially-sanctioned apostasy, so Isaiah's message to Jerusalem was one of judgement.

In fact, the book begins with indictment: 'Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more' [1.4–5]. This theme of impending divine judgment on Jerusalem continues through much of this first part of the book.

In the second part of the book, the prophecies of the Servant of the Lord, the historical context is the Babylonian Captivity. The oracles in this part of Isaiah are concerned with Jerusalem's restoration: 'Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins' [40.2]. And somewhat later in the same chapter, 'O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!" [40.9].

This theme of restoration continues in the third part of Isaiah, the prophecies of the Triumphant Warrior: 'The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,' [59.20].

A symbol of peace

What is especially striking about Isaiah's oracles on Jerusalem is the repetition of images and ideas about the holy city in all parts of the book. For example, in both 35.10 and 51.11 we find, 'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness,/ And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.' Again, in 65.25 we read about Jerusalem, 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,' These images of the holy city had all appeared in the first part of Isaiah [11.6–9].

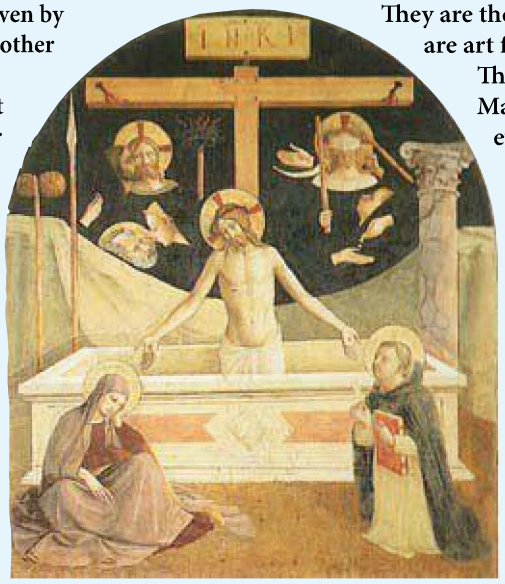
What is perhaps most ironical about Isaiah's oracles on Jerusalem – one the most 'fought over' places on the face of the earth – is the prophet's vision of this city as a symbol of universal and everlasting peace. ND

Sacred vision

The Man of Sorrows

In cell 26 of the Convent of San Marco, given by the Medici to the Dominican order, is another image adapted directly from medieval tradition. Standing in the sepulchre, Christ displays his wounds. ('All this I suffered for thy sake / say Man what suffered thou for me?' asks the Jesus of the York mystery plays.) All around him are the symbols of the events of the passion: the pieces of silver, the betrayal with a kiss, Peter's denial, the mocking and flagellation, the sponge and the lance.

The Mater Dolorosa (in the spirit of the *Stabat Mater*) is in contemplation to one side, St Dominic, with the Book of the Gospels in hand, is gazing at the image from the other. Nothing could make plainer the purpose of these frescoes, in every cell of the convent.



They are the very reverse of art for art's sake; they are art for salvation's sake.

This traditional representation of the Man of Sorrows is to be found in almost every late medieval book of hours, and with the advent of printing was issued on pious broadsheets, together with a declaration of the indulgences available to those who contemplated it worthily and recited the required prayers.

It is moving to find, in this convent of an order already noted for its intellectual distinction, such an image of popular piety. Too often the academic theologians of our own day grow to despise the more affective piety of the *plebs sancta Dei*, the holy common people of God.

Mark Stevens

Who killed Diana?

Hugh Baker reflects on the character of urban myth in the light of a recent Metropolitan Police inquiry and the social uses of soap operas, and finds support for traditional Christian morality

This story must be at least two years old, since it is that long since my daughter worked in Birmingham. My wife arrived home on a Friday, concerned. A work colleague had told her that a friend had received a phone call from a Muslim acquaintance for whom they had once done a favour. He phoned to say that since he was a man of honour, bound to repay any kindness done him, he felt obliged to warn them not to go into the centre of Birmingham the following Monday.

Alarmed, my wife passed this tale on to our daughter, then toiling in the shadow of Brum's Rotunda. Her unease lasted until Sunday, when she chatted to a member of our church whose family live in Banbury. Her sister there had received a phone call from a friend who had a friend who had a Muslim acquaintance who, owing them a debt of gratitude, had warned them not to go into Banbury on Monday next… It became evident that this fable had been replicated all across the land: it was what sociologists have labelled an Urban Myth.

No factual truth

The urban myth conveys no factual truth, but this is not its purpose. Its function is to help us to focus our attitudes on an area of life which we are in the process of trying to understand, in the way a soap opera may. What's your attitude to Paula Fowler's recent demise? It'll help you to distil your thoughts about mothers who refuse to let their adult children fly the nest. This myth helped its hearers, post 9/11, to decide their attitudes to the influx of immigrants from our former Empire.

Another myth now doing its work is that of The Royal Murder, i.e. that the Royal Family bumped off Princess Diana. The Metropolitan Police Inquiry, now finished after years of work and millions of pounds of our money, has reached the unsurprising conclusion that Diana died because her driver, extremely drunk, and trying to shake off the paparazzi, crashed.

Now that the Inquiry is finally finished, Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss has been wheeled out of retirement to conduct the Inquest. If (after further great expenditure of time, and our money) the Inquest reaches the same conclusion as the Inquiry, it will do nothing to change my wife's mind: the Royal Family done it.

In the public's eye, the following evidence is proven: (i) Prince Charles went off to sea without proposing to Camilla, who consequently became Mrs Parker-Bowles; (ii) Mr Parker-Bowles turned out to be a serial philanderer; (iii) when Charles eventually married a much younger woman, Camilla should have kept off the scene. She didn't; (iv) Charles should have told Camilla to keep off the scene. He didn't; (v) by the time Diana began extramarital hanky-panky, Camilla's slippers were firmly established under Charles's bed. It is not the truth of this myth that matters, but its existence. What is the purpose, to those who hold to it, of this myth?

Coded message

A myth is a coded message that speaks to something we hold dear in the heart. The limitations of our education may determine the bounds of how well we can articulate what we are feeling: hence the popularity of soaps – we express our half-understood beliefs by our involvement in, and reaction to, the denizens of Albert Square and the truths they embody. Fiction enables us to be theologians on our own, simple, terms.

For this reason, the Royal Family (who once could have happily broken all Ten Commandments in private, sheltered from the public gaze by the discretion of both servants and media) now serve as a soap. We feel we have the right to comment and to judge; and our judgement is… We admire the Queen, but we put Charles in the same bracket as Edward VIII – well meaning, doubtless nice enough chap, but unable to put duty before sentiment, and therefore not up to the job.

Such judgement seems harsh in a time when we applaud, or at least take notice of, shallow celebrities who make a career out of being disreputable. Such two-handedness on our part, however, indicates that we do not, *actually*, take the celebrities seriously. They are titillating, convenient, expendable. The Royal Family is different.

We want, in reality, to look up to them, admire them, have them as an image of what Christian family life (and here, the myth reaches beyond our own self-understanding) should be. We are disturbed by the younger Royals' divorce rate because we are disturbed by our own.

National revulsion

Recent reaction to the Jade Goody/Shilpa Shetty affair tells us that there is a revulsion out there to what we, as a nation, are becoming. We were all supposed to be enthralled at the 'reality' of Jade's (and her mother's) outbursts that we were not meant to have the temerity to complain. Gordon Brown, touring India at the time, suffered the full force of Indian disapproval; but then, India is a country of ancient civilization and (partly because of the Hindu caste system) complex, laid down, manners. More relevantly for us, 20,000 people in this country complained about it.

The programme's main sponsors, aware of their product's vulnerability to negative publicity, withdrew their cash: questions were asked in Parliament about Channel Four's remit as a public service broadcaster, and the tax that helps it stay afloat. The row refused to blow over.

All this indicates that there is still a substantial market for traditional moral Christian living. There are, undoubtedly, many Britons who, for the time being, prefer contemporary secular amorality: but it was precisely this that the early Church conquered, not by pandering to it, but by being something different. For God's sake, and our neighbours', let us stick to our guns. ND

Right on in Brighton

30Days is sorry it cannot find the time or energy to take itself to Brighton for its Lenten penance. The Parish Church of St Nicholas of Myra – 'the Ancient Mother Church of Brighton' – is marking the first five Saturdays of Lent with visiting speakers from 'five Anglican pressure groups,' who will be presenting 'their different views on current debates in the Church.' Yes, representatives from groups as diverse as *Affirming Catholicism*, *Watch*, *Changing Attitude*, *InclusiveChurch* and *Fulcrum* will all have their opportunity to explain why Forward in Faith is wrong! As the parish website so courageously puts it, 'Expect to be embraced by a community of searching and love.'

Good clean fun

Many thanks to the eagle-eyed 30Days reader who spotted this news of the welcome to the new Bishop of Taunton, Peter Maurice, which took place in Wells Cathedral in January: *The two passions of the new bishop were brought together at the end of the service. His enthusiasm for the ministry of the Church was coupled with his support of West Ham football club when a stream of soap bubbles suddenly appeared high over the nave altar. And the choirs and congregation burst into the West Ham song 'I'm for ever blowing bubbles.' Later in the afternoon West Ham drew 3-3 with Fulham at Upton Park. Fulham scored a last minute equaliser.* The lengths to which John Broadhurst will go for our constituency know no bounds!

Good Press

Excellent news from the diocese of London, where Bishop Richard Chartres has engaged top-flight Public Relations firm *Luther Pendragon* to provide 'communications support for the diocese.' Presumably, their services won't come cheap: amongst their other clients are Boeing, BAA (the owners of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, to say nothing of Naples and Budapest Airports) and Wrigley's (manufacturers of the chewing gum which so enhances our urban pavements); in 2005, the company turned over in excess of £5·2m and employed 46 staff. One motive for the appointment may of course be to ensure that the bishop receives regular press coverage. If so, a remarkable degree of success has already been achieved, with *The Daily Telegraph* covering the story of *Luther Pendragon*'s engagement by suggesting to its readers that the bishop's 'public relations mishaps include spending Easter on a freebie cruise and his suggestion that flying might be sinful because of the harm it inflicts on the environment (while spending more than £15,000 last year on fuel for his chauffeur-driven Skoda and for heating and lighting his offices)'. *The Guardian* weighed in as well, reminding its readers that the bishop had 'touched a nerve suggesting that flying and buying big cars were symptoms of sin.' Whether this is the sort of positive press coverage Chartres is expecting for his money remains to be seen.

Bad Press

With a stipend increase for 2007 of just 2%, clergy in the diocese of London will have to make do with a pay increase this year well below the rate of inflation. Still, at least that is one decision which won't receive a bad press, now that *Luther Pendragon* are on the case!

Lord – and Lady – of the Dance

The celebrations in Wales continue, marking the tenth anniversary of women priests in that Province. All those unable to be in St David's Cathedral made it to Llandaff Cathedral, where they were in for no end of treats. Apparently, the Bishop of Lund, in Sweden, the Rt Revd Christina Odenburg, presided at a liturgy, written specially for the occasion by the Revd Jan Gould, with 'particular references to women who feature in the bible' (presumably that's as opposed to the man featured in the Bible); the Archdeacon of Worcester, the Ven Joy Tetley (last heard of in the matter of TEA) gave 'a powerful sermon' in which she said that there is a 'purple-headed mountain' still to climb (what on earth does *that* mean?); the musicians included 'a theologian playing jazz saxophone and an ordinand on the drums'; and 'during the final hymn – We are marching in the light of God – joy overcame solemnity' as the 'congregation clapped as the women danced down the aisle, led by the Bishop of Bangor, the Rt Revd Tony Crockett, and Bishop Christina.' (Sceptical readers who think we make up all this guff should visit <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=32480> in order to see the 'dance' in question.)

Stop Press

30Days had just been online the other day – Tuesday, 30 January, actually – to sign the petition on the 10 Downing Street website: *We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to arrange for the cost of repairs to C of E church buildings to be reimbursed to help preserve our archaeological & historic heritage for the future* – when we noticed a new signature appear – that of one Colin B. Slee. Reflecting that it must be something of a first for 30Days and the Dean of Southwark to agree about something, we turned to the *Church Times* for comfort: *The cathedral staff meeting immediately agreed that this (petition) is very important. Encouragement to our congregation in written and oral notices has now followed… There is a sin – sloth – that is a combination of inertia and indifference, and primarily bears its rotten fruit in the form of 'those things which I have not done which I ought to have done'… Why are archdeacons not out drumming up support? What has Church House done to mobilise forces? Are all the other cathedrals indolent in this matter?* Thus fulminated Dean Slee to *Jezebel*'s letters page, fully seven days before he got round to signing the petition himself. Mind you, it's a good job he *did* sign it when he did, for it ensured that he beat 16 out of the 24 names to be found on the Who's Who page of the Southwark Cathedral website! We only hope that 30Days readers are altogether more pro-active and take themselves along to <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Preservation/> right away – we expect to see a massive increase in signatures as New Directions hits the streets. Those who fail can expect to read about it here first!

Copy for 30 Days should reach FiF office by the 10th day of the month:
30days@forwardinfaith.com

Slaves of Christ

Owen Higgs reviews Paul's writings to consider why he does not condemn institutionalized slavery in a way we in a later millennium might hope for and why the Gospel took precedence over all justice issues

'Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches.' [2 Cor. 11.24ff].

The witness of Paul

Yes, but what did St Paul do about slavery? One of the fashionable criticisms of Paul is that he was too accepting and too uncritical of slavery as an institution. This makes him the example of how after Jesus had returned to the Father, the Church compromised with society and either supported or accepted social injustice. Then, the story goes, in the nineteenth century, despite resistance from traditionalists, modern churchmen, open to the Spirit and the spirit of the age, saw that the Church had got slavery wrong and had it abolished. And because slavery is undeniably wrong, its case history has become the unanswerable proof that, under the guidance of the Spirit or human reason, the Church must reverse its scriptural but socially-conditioned teaching on other justice questions, especially the ordination of women.

Now, if it can be shown that under the influence of society at large the official teaching and practice of the Church has been unjust, this has to be taken seriously. And it has to be the 'official' teaching and practice of the Church – what individual Christians do or do together cannot be taken as the norm, otherwise we would have to say Christianity is in favour of sin.

It remains, of course, that individual instances of alleged injustice need to be looked at on their own merits. But we also have to ask whether in fact the Church did get slavery wrong, and if so, why.

A key assertion here is that St Paul has a lot to answer for. Is this fair? In his magisterial review of Paul's teaching, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Professor James M.G. Dunn, not I think a member of FiF, sets out a defence of Paul's treatment of slaves and slavery. Professor Dunn represents a significant scholarly consensus and what he says about St Paul carries authority.

First century society

He begins by describing some of the key features of slavery as Paul would have known it. First, in Paul's day slavery was not a moral issue but a matter of economics. We do not see it like that today, but people did then, and, to develop Professor Dunn's argument, we should judge Paul against the standards of his time. After all, an understanding and respect for other cultures is one of the defences against the inhumanity which looks down on different cultures and racial types and which uses that position of moral and cultural superiority to justify slavery.

Secondly, slavery was such an important part of the ancient world that economies could not have functioned without it. This is not to justify slavery, but to quote Professor Dunn, 'a responsible challenge to slavery would have required a complete reworking of the economic system and a complete rethinking of social structures, which was scarcely thinkable at the time, except in idealistic or archaic terms.'

Thirdly, though the Greek ideal of freedom was opposed to slavery, in practice the divide between slave and free was not clear cut. Greek law restricted a freedman's employment and movement. A freedman might be worse off than a slave if he had to find his own living. And amongst slaves social position varied greatly – the slave of a rich man might be educated and given wide responsibilities, advantages denied an ordinary labourer, be he slave or free.

Indeed, though this takes us beyond Professor Dunn's remit, slaves had a degree of freedom and influence which we might not have expected. Christian slaves who had been kidnapped were to be amongst the Church's most successful missionaries. This is shown in the *Life of Patrick*, when Irish princes say they do not want Christian slaves in Ireland in case they converted the country and upset the established order.

So, on the basis of this complex social background, Professor Dunn argues that we should not be surprised, and, we might add, be offended if Paul's attitude to slavery is 'ambivalent.' This is what he finds in the three key texts where Paul refers to slavery.

The crucial texts

First and most important is 1 Cor. 7.20–4. Here Paul writes that slaves should not be troubled about their status, though if they can take advantage of freedom they should. What matters more is their relationship with the Lord. In the Lord the slave is a free man, though a slave to Christ (and, we might add, if a slave to Christ then with no rights before God – there is no right to ordination, male or female). This relativizes all social relations, and, though Professor Dunn does not make the point, it is an advance on Seneca, the contemporary of Paul, who held the most humane views on slavery amongst pagans.

In the Letter to Philemon, it is not clear that Paul expected Philemon to free his slave Onesimus, so we cannot say Paul took an active stance against slavery. Rather, the letter tries to reconcile the two men, making clear that their relationship of master and slave has become one of brother, and brother in the Lord.

The third text is Col. 3.18–4.1. The essential point is the same – social hierarchies are relativized in the Lord. But here Paul addresses slaves themselves and he is also concerned that the Church does not scandalize society. These two latter points are important and raise issues

Canon Rodney Hunter Deceased

A mass of Requiem is to be celebrated at Pusey House, Oxford on Saturday 28 March 2007 at 12 o'clock in memory of Canon Rodney Hunter

Lunch will be provided after the requiem

RSVP (by 17 March 2007)

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