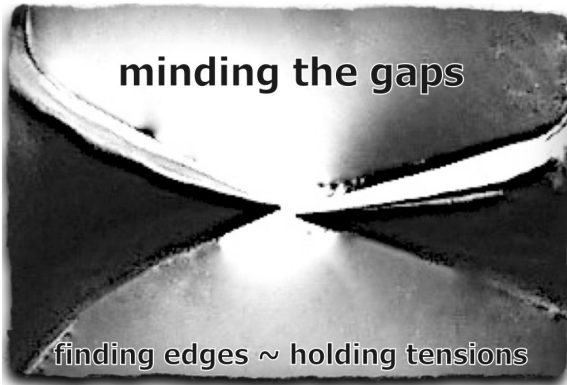


Continuing the Journey

Newsletter – Summer 2011



**30th April –
4th May
2012**

**Fees kept at
2010 level**

Following the success of last year's conference, the planning group were determined to offer as stimulating and rounded an experience in 2012. The topic which emerged was those things which divide as well as unite us – issues of difference as well as similarity, individuality as well as community, separateness as well as connection.

We explored the significance of creating space and reflected on providing bridges (see Hugh Jenkins' article inside). We were aware that the conference provides a bridge where people can meet each other across the gaps which sometimes divide us, become more aware of their edges and work the tensions in this 'true but temporary' community.

Hope to see you at Swanwick next year.

Book now and get an early booking discount.

**Booking forms can be downloaded from CTJ website
or contact the Conference office.**

www.continuingthejourney.com

CTJ Conference Office: admin@continuingthejourney.com

Tel: 0115 871 8564

An exciting array of Speakers have agreed to join us: make sure that you have the dates in your diary so you don't miss out on

Roly Riem: The Reverend Canon Dr Roland Riem, Canon Chancellor and Pastor, leads Winchester Cathedral's flourishing education and visual arts programmes. Roly is the author of *Being Human and Becoming a Person* - a Frank Lake Memorial lecture published by Lingdale Papers. As co-convenor of the Spirituality Group at Grove Booklets, he has written a couple of books in the series. At Winchester he leads pastoral care and ecumenical relations, with links to Methodist and URC churches as well as the Anglican communion. He has developed the welcome and interpretation at the Cathedral for visitors and pilgrims, enhancing its educational facilities. Roly's wider concerns include working as a governor for Peter Symonds College and as a director of Keystone Housing.



Married to Sophie Hacker, popular speaker at the 2008 Conference, Roly's meditations on Sophie's nine Sculptural artworks are published in their book *Icons of the Incarnation*, which also describes the processes of Sophie's work with musician Sarah Baldock to visualise the themes inspiring Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur*. Roly will be addressing the theological/biblical aspects of our theme.

Nicola Slee is a poet and theologian based at the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham. She teaches in the fields of spirituality and feminist theology, and has a particular interest in women's contemporary poetry that addresses issues of faith and spirituality. As well as writing poetry herself, (see back page of this newsletter) she regularly runs workshops on women's poetry and on creative writing. Her most recent publications include *Praying like a Woman* (SPCK, 2005), *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and*



Processes (Ashgate, 2004) and *Faith and Feminism: An Introduction to Christian Feminist Theology* (DLT, 2004). She has also written a series of adult Bible study materials, the most recent of which is *Seeing Jesus: Exploring the Bible through contemporary art* (Christian Education, 2005). Nicola is currently working on a second collection of poems and liturgical pieces focused around Mary. She will explore the spiritual aspects of **Minding the Gaps: finding edges, holding tensions.**

Dr Sara Savage is a social psychologist in the Psychology and Religion Research Group, University of Cambridge, and Senior Research Fellow in the Cambridge Institute for Applied Psychology and Religion. Formerly a dancer and choreographer, the influence of the arts is never far from her work. The author of *Conflict in Relationships: understand it, overcome it* (Lion Hudson 2010) she will invite us to consider the therapeutic/counselling aspects of our theme.



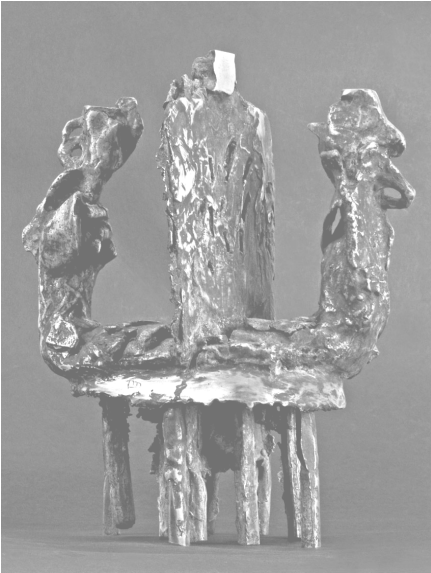
Johnstone McMaster: Dr Johnston McMaster is lecturer and co-ordinator of the Education for Reconciliation programme, Irish School of Ecumenics, Belfast. Co-author of *Communities of Reconciliation: Living Faith in the Public Place* and *Churches Working Together: A Practical Resource* his current research includes reconciliation and peacebuilding, Celtic Christianity and spirituality, ethical remembering, social ethics and inter-faith dialogue.



Dr McMaster has been involved in the development of a community education programme and chairs a number of initiatives as well as working collaboratively with community relations networks. He has lectured in Eastern Europe, Sri Lanka, South Korea and the USA. He will speak on the social/pastoral aspects of our topic.

► Reflections on Bridges ◀

The impetus to write about bridges comes from a beautiful bronze sculpture, *Dialogue on a Bridge* 2006, by the Romanian Christian sculptor, Liviu Mocan (see below).



When I was asked to write about bridges, I was reminded of the words of my PA when I was director of a national charity. She described the role of director as being a bridge, and then she added, “People walk over bridges”. They walk over bridges because they want to get from somewhere to somewhere, and do not necessarily take notice of where they are at the moment of doing so. Bridges are that, both noun and verb, and much more, I reflected.

Bridges are in-between spaces that join points which otherwise might be unreachable. They are usually less substantive and temporary in terms of the surrounding landscape, even if they have existed for hundreds of years. The spaces they traverse may be inhospitable, dangerous even, spanning places that seem far removed from seemingly safe and solid ground. Their supports can seem fragile. To begin to cross a bridge requires leaving a known place for possibly unknown territory, and in crossing, we become exposed.

An important thing about bridges is that they can join two places otherwise inaccessible to each other. In that sense, they make the impossible, possible. Sometimes their very structures are so awe-inspiring that they lift the heart, like the Millau viaduct in south-west

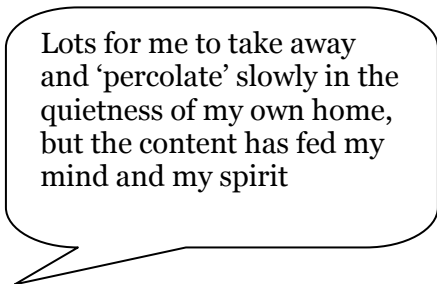
France that often stands above the clouds. At other times, they link different worlds such as armed border points at the Chirundu crossing between independent Zambia and Ian Smith's Rhodesia. I recall driving miles in darkness through the bush, through what felt like uncertain territory. One side was seemingly safer than the other, but really, neither was a good place to break down!

The sculpture *Dialogue on a Bridge* introduces other ideas about a bridge, of being in neither one place nor another, but shut off from, and unable to see or touch the other, so that dialogue is impossible with the immovable barrier in between. There they sit on their bronze bridge, on its spindly legs, surrounded by emptiness, fixed in time and place for eternity.

For me, the Continuing the Journey conferences are always 'bridging conferences'. For a moment we are neither where we were, nor where we later will be: truly that is a liminal moment. The conferences bridge my before and after. It may be tempting to stay on the side we are on at present and set up camp on the edge, but by doing that we would forego the view, the exhilaration of being in-between, of letting go a little, and of exploring new ground. I am excited by bridges, as much for what I do not know about the other side as the crossing itself. I hope others will feel the same.

Hugh Jenkins.

Reminders from last time – bridges to determination to book for 2012!

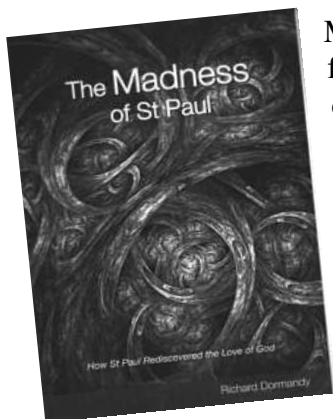


Lots for me to take away and 'percolate' slowly in the quietness of my own home, but the content has fed my mind and my spirit



I like to be challenged and go a bit outside my comfort zone

The Madness of St Paul: How St Paul Rediscovered the Love of God by Richard Dormandy



Many of you will know Richard Dormandy from previous **Continuing the Journey** conferences; one of my reasons for reading and reviewing this book is because I know him. The other, more important, reason is because it promised to show a different side to Paul than that which is traditionally presented.

Most of us will have grown up with an image of Paul as the “ideal Christian”, giving guidelines for living which feel impossible to attain. Sometimes in an effort to live up to the “ideal” he apparently presents, we end up denying the reality of our circumstances.

Richard outlines the steps he took to avoid completing the “Paul paper” when at theological college, or preaching on any of the Pauline texts during his curacy ... quite an achievement. When he could avoid it no longer, he discovered something in 2 Corinthians that others didn’t seem to be saying at the time; it struck a chord both with him and those he began to talk to about it.

In a very readable, small volume we are shown a different side of Paul. While Richard acknowledges that it is difficult to make an accurate psychological assessment of someone who has been dead for 2 millennia, his observations certainly speak to us in the present day.

Initially I had trouble identifying exactly what form of “madness” was being described. The beginning chapters describe a man in distress or depressed – not what I would usually call mad. But as I read on, I realised that the extremes of language used in the epistle, the anger,

insecurities and self-loathing, combined with the self-aggrandisement, self-absorption, his “all or nothing view” of the world, painted a picture of someone possibly suffering the cycles of bipolar.

A friend, who had suffered with depression, told me that, during that time, she had thought she was “going mad”. Labels are never very helpful – whatever we call it, Paul is shown as someone in emotional distress, in need of psychological help and support.

Richard speculates about the possible causes of Paul’s emotional distress, but, most powerfully, describes something of Paul’s journey out of depression ... or how he re-found his “mojo”. The foundation of this was a recognition of the character of God: principally that “unlike his worldly judges ... God does not require Paul to be successful before drawing close” (p.59). Richard shows that Paul finds a new way of writing about God – the “God of all comfort” who comforts us in “all our troubles”.

It would be easy from this short review to think that this is another story of how firm faith brings success, offering little comfort to any who suffer. However, in 2 Corinthians we have a description of a journey (possibly a long one). Richard made me think about how different Paul’s letter writing would have been from ours: long-hand on papyrus, rather than touch-typing on a keyboard. Plenty of time for reflection, when physical journeys take so long to make.

This book is the condensed product, in the space of a few short chapters, of several years of Richard’s reflection and although it doesn’t take much time to read, it encourages much longer deliberation on the nature of dark emotional states and the whereabouts of God when we’re in the middle of them.

Review by Sarah Watts

The Madness of St Paul is published by Redemptorist Press £8.95

ISBN: 9780852313848

<http://www.rpbooks.co.uk/products.php>

Edge

Come into the deep
where the ocean floor
shelves steeply away
under the thrust of your feet
Swim out
beyond your depth
Plunge into waters
cold and sweet

Come into the free,
cross the boundaries
of home and foreign place,
out into the open space
where earth and heaven meet
and the land recedes
beyond your sight
Taste the wide air,
sharp and sweet

Come over the edge,
where the rocky ledge
gives way to vastness,
sudden stark. Dive
into wild air, wide time,
beyond your sense.
Free fall into space,
sheer and sweet.

This is the leap
into life and death
way out beyond
all sense and sight and depth,
where the empty air
And water and abyss
Call

Come.

by Nicola Slee