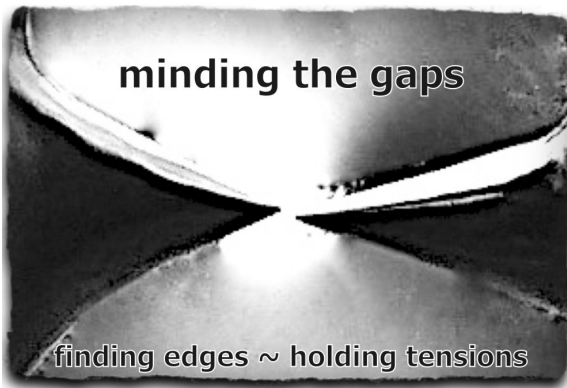


Continuing the Journey

Newsletter – Winter 2012



**30th April –
4th May
2012**

Have you booked yet? Are you getting excited about discovering new ways of **minding the gaps**? We are confident that our range of stimulating speakers have challenging material to encourage you.

An interview with Johnston McMaster gives a taste of the treat in store next year, with the challenge he hopes to offer of minding the gap by holding the tensions of “Living towards the vision”.

Two reviews encourage you to read in preparation for the stimulus of conference. Sue Colman commends Sara Savage’s book for the way it bridges the divide between theology and psychology. A booklet by Roly Riem, which gives a basis for the integration of counselling and faith, is also reviewed and highly recommended.

We hope that you continue to enjoy Nicola Slee’s Poem, *Edge* from the last newsletter

See you at Swanwick in April 2012.

Booking forms and further details of speakers can be downloaded from CTJ website www.continuingthejourney.com

CTJ Conference Office: admin@continuingthejourney.com

Tel: 0115 871 8564

Psychology for Christian Ministry

by Rebecca Nye, **Sara Savage** and Fraser Watts
2002, Routledge. ISBN 10: 0-415-24037-9 (pbk)

When ‘Continuing the Journey’ began its own journey of formation in the 1980’s those responsible for its birth may have dreamed of such a book, one which bridges so apparently seamlessly and effortlessly the historic divide and mistrust between theology and psychology. One of our speakers, **Sara Savage**, writes alongside Fraser Watts and Rebecca Nye, and together they offer a breadth and depth of experience and wisdom in the fields of theology and psychology.



The back cover states that ‘This professional handbook, the definitive textbook in its field, is tailored to meet the specific needs of Christian ministers as they encounter psychology in their training and everyday work’. As a trainee ordinand, this has been a core textbook for studies and one that I have returned to many times for assignment writing. I did a brief survey of my fellow students asking them to rate the quoted statement with reference to their own prior psychological understanding. All were positive as to the validity of the statement, and even those with professional psychological backgrounds (up to doctorate level) highly rated the book or would highly recommend it to others. When asked ‘How much has this book helped you make links between theology, ministry practice and psychology?’ again the answers were very positive.

The genius of the book is that it draws the reader in through a conversational style, starting each chapter with a series of essentially ‘icebreaker’ questions which engage the reader where they are located in their practice and beliefs. Indeed, whether approaching this book as theologian or psychologist, connection is made and the person then drawn into the subject matter of each chapter. This interactive style continues through a series of reflective questions which punctuate the text, ensuring the processing of insights gained and knowledge

acquired. And if it all starts feeling a bit intense and heavy, there are numerous ‘laugh out loud’ cartoons to burst any bubbles created by the sort of knowledge that puffs up!

Areas covered include *Personality and Religion, Development and Teaching, Counselling and Pastoral care, Organisation and The Church, Psychology and Theology*, moving from the personal, to the intra-personal to organisational. For example, in the *Personality and Religion* section there are chapters on Spirituality, The psychology of church services, Diversity among Christians and Unhealthy religion. Despite covering such breadth there is sufficient depth to enable a foundational framework of psychological understanding. Helpful charts are included outlining key theories, for example: Fowler’s Stages of Faith, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Erikson’s eight stages of development, and Assagioli’s egg-shaped Self. Acknowledgement is made of the breadth of spiritual traditions and how psychological understanding informs the great variety of pastoral ministries including biblical counselling, healing ministry, pastoral counselling, spiritual direction and social action. Current practices and ministry ‘tools’ are helpfully critiqued, for example the Alpha course and Godly Play. At the end of each chapter key themes are summarised, more questions posed on which to reflect, and further reading suggested; all immensely helpful in assimilating and developing what has been learned.

In the parlance of this conference, this book makes a professional and thoughtful contribution to ‘bridging the gaps’ between ordained ministry and psychological understanding, and in my opinion quite wonderfully succeeds....but it is, of course, up to the practitioner to integrate this into their own lives.

At £20-25 on Amazon it is not cheap, but it is the sort of book to keep on the book shelf, to pull down regularly to refresh knowledge and, possibly more importantly, to keep pressing those buttons we all have which, if unexamined, can hinder ordained ministry. We can so easily become agents of abuse and control instead of healing and encouragement.

There is an amusing youtube clip entitled ‘every home needs a harvey’ at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmzgkMsf_GQ If you have access to a computer watch it with this in mind: ‘every Christian minister needs a copy of ‘Psychology for Christian Ministry’ – just as versatile, surprising and useful as the dog!

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Psychology-Christian-Ministry-Rebecca-Nye/dp/0415240379/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1319019833&sr=8-1

Sue Colman



**Johnstone McMaster
in conversation
with Bill Bazely,**

21st October 2011, London
(edited due to space limitations)

Bill: Johnstone, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Johnstone: I was born in County Down in Northern Ireland, grew up in a small fishing village, and lived in various parts of Ireland, West Cork, Wicklow and various parts of Belfast. This enriching experience has helped shape my thinking and identity; Methodist minister, married with two children and two Scottish grandchildren. I enjoy soccer, having played and refereed for years, but now I watch from the stand and in front of the television. Reading is another passion, from novels to theology, politics and history.

B: You know the generic title of the conference is ‘Continuing the Journey? Can you tell us something of your own journey up to this point?

J: My journey has been varied in terms of working life. I have worked for some years in parish work. I've gone in little blocks of thirteen! Thirteen years in parish, thirteen years in youth work, and I've just gone over thirteen years in teaching at the Irish School of Ecumenics. I'm not sure what the next thirteen are going to be. But that's been a varied and very enriching journey. I've cherished all of it; the richness of, and the learning from, pastoral work, always with the desire to have an emphasis on education; the work with young people, the stimulus of that kind of activity. Then teaching from community education programmes to Masters programmes. That's been a journey that's taken me through a whole raft of themes and issues, dealing with ecumenism, reconciliation, community building and peace building. That's where my focus has been. It's been challenging and rich. There's still more to do and, I hope, a contribution to make in those areas.

B: The focus of this conference is 'Minding the Gaps'. I wonder how that title strikes you?

J: In terms of the conference title, it's richly ambiguous and that I think is ideal for creativity. There are a number of gaps that I can think of. The gap between, what I think we have wrongly described as, the secular and the sacred. A gap between, (another false dichotomy), faith and politics. There is a gap between theology and spirituality. There is a gap between the whole field of psychotherapy, theology and spirituality. These are gaps that need to be bridged. We need to integrate them. In many ways one also sees a gap as the familiar world disappears. Old markers and signposts have been collapsing; we are moving into something which we sometimes describe by the name of postmodernism but we're not sure what that is. But this in between bit is both unsettling and yet creative. For me, the metaphor that helps in a number of ways, is that of the experience of exile, in the Hebrew Bible, where it's an experience of dislocation, of displacement, of everything collapsing. Yet it has the potential to become, as in that

paradigmatic story, a place of amazing creativity. The gaps are creative and unsettling places, but perhaps the creativity thrives, in the unsettledness.

B: You've given us several conference worths of sessions there! As you've been thinking towards the conference, do you have a sense of what you might want to communicate in your session?

J: Well, being aware of the gap and the tensions that are in the gap, I've been thinking in terms of 'Living in tomorrow's world', or maybe one could also call it, 'Living towards the vision'. We have become more and more accustomed to, or aware that, we are living in a globalised world, a shrinking world, where interdependency has replaced independence as the buzzword as part of our discourse and vocabulary. So in the conference, maybe I would like to explore something of that. We talk about a lot of things being 'post' these days and there's some truth that we are in the post Christendom, post nationalism, post capitalism, post imperialism era. Where are we going though, into what kind of world? I'd like to explore some of that. What does it mean to build a world where we have democracy, pluralism and tolerance. What does all that mean for faith? Therefore, in the second part of what I would like to say, maybe I can try and explore 'Faith beyond belief', and how faith really needs to be reshaped and re-visioned. Also, how do we live in tension, with the tensions, and with the questions? Not with answers, but perhaps responses, which I think are different from answers. How do we live in that globalised world faithfully, which is what I take the word faith in the Biblical sense to mean? How do we live faithfully, and therefore, ethically, in this world of transition and change, and the in-between bit where maybe we now are? The significance and importance of this to me is the core Biblical theme of justice, of social justice.

B: Thank you very much.

Minding the gap between Therapy and Theology

The booklet '**On Being Human and Becoming a Person**' started life as one of the papers delivered around the theme of 'What is human?'



for the 1994 conference of the Clinical Theology Association (now the Bridge Pastoral Foundation). In it **Roly Riem** does what is all too rarely done: brings a depth of understanding of Orthodox theology into conversation with the theory and practice of counselling (in this instance person centred, as expressed by Carl Rogers and Brian Thorne) without caricaturing or simplifying either – in order to try to address the question of whether there is anything distinctive about pastoral counselling. In the process, he works the tension between the Orthodox understanding of 'person' as something one becomes – the fullest potential of human being, given as a gift by God through the person and work of Jesus – and the humanistic understanding of person as the transcendent potential of human being without any necessary reference to God. What emerges is a vision of what a pastoral counselling which is genuinely shaped by the faith inheritance of the Christian community, yet faithful also to the values of the profession, could look like.

I first read it some years ago when I was teaching pastoral care and counselling to ordinands and lay people. I read it now, as I embark on research into the place of pastoral care, counselling and ordained ministry in the accompaniment of those facing extreme personal crisis. I gained much then. I have gained more in my re-reading. This is a paper which should be read by anyone with an inquiring Christian faith who is interested in the fully functioning human person – whether they are a counsellor, a pastoral carer, a spiritual director or in ordained ministry. It deserves to be more widely known than its publication through Bridge Pastoral Foundation's private press (as a Lingdale paper, 1999. ISBN 9780948097317 £1.95) makes likely.

Ruth Layzell



Peter Legon of Lee Gone Publications has kindly given consent for reproduction of his cartoon above which is available as a postcard. www.lgpcards.com

Edge by Nicola Slee, which she very kindly gave permission for us to reproduce in our last newsletter, is from *Praying Like a Woman* published by SPCK 2004 ISBN 0-281-05599-8. I apologise for the omission of publication details from the printed version of the newsletter. There are more details of Nicola's publications and biography on the CTJ website.



Claire Wendelken. Editor

Places on the conference are limited and filling up fast

Book now to secure your place

We'll look forward to seeing you there.