

'A life-changing experience'

Trinity in Zimbabwe
(in the photo) *pages 14, 15.*



The Bible and Science

Ernest Lucas and John Bimson summarize their papers given at the first of our open meetings on 'Can we trust the Bible in the 21st century?' *centre page pull-out section.*

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News

Trinity to start new part-time ordination course



Students who are studying for the part-time Certificate this year in the evening course.

Recent changes in the world of ordination training in the Church of England have opened up the opportunity for Trinity to develop a part-time training course for ordinands. We are delighted to announce that our proposals have been accepted by the Ministry Division, which means that we are now able to accept applications for part-time ordination training from next September (2011). This marks a new era in the college's historic calling to train people in mission and ministry for the future church. With the development of Open Learning and Part-Time Training, Trinity's vocation has extended in two very significant ways beyond its traditional residential base. God has been saying to us, for many years now, not to build walls around ourselves. These are exciting times for the outworking of this vision for the health and growth of the church in the 21st century.

The training leads to a University of Bristol Diploma of Higher Education in Theology, studied over three years. If you are able to attend our part-time teaching evenings on Tuesday nights and want to find out more about part-time training at Trinity, contact Jo Norman at the college for further course details. Independent, non-ordinands are also welcome on the course.

Paul Roberts, Director of Anglican Formation

First part-timers finish course

For the past two years students have been able to study part time for a University of Bristol Certificate in Theology, either through our evening course (officially recognised by the Diocese of Bristol for training its Ordained Local Ministers and Licensed Lay Ministers) or in the day time (which appeals particularly to student spouses). The first intake of part-time students finishes this year: a landmark for them and for us.

Ordinations

At the end of the academic year, 44 of our leavers will be ordained. They are going to the Dioceses of Bath

and Wells, Bradford, Bristol, Canterbury, Chelmsford, Chichester, Coventry, Derby, Exeter, Gloucester, Lichfield, Lincoln, London, Oxford, St Albans, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Ripon and Leeds, Salisbury, Southwark, Winchester, and York. This includes 11 from the part-time evening course who return to their churches in the Bristol Diocese as Ordained Local Ministers. We will include the full list of our leavers and their posts in the next issue.

Meet our students

Lorraine Izzard



When God whispered the word 'ordination' to me I told him that he'd need to shout it out loud. Already married to a vicar, I had no wish to pick up the mantle of priesthood for myself. However, the call persisted to 'go and get authority' for the ministry that I was already involved in.

I held off for some time telling God that I couldn't possibly move forward, I couldn't cope with any more, until my teenage daughter who has ME was better. One morning during a sermon God nudged me to obedience. The message was about Paul, how his ministry continued even in dire circumstances. I came home and read some more, realising that despite his 'chains' and maybe even because of them, his ministry had flourished. I started to push open the door towards ordination.

Finally, during my interview with the bishop all fell into place. I realised by now that I had been called to focus on the ministry of healing within the whole diocese and not just minister in one church setting. The bishop's vision for Licensed Lay Ministers fitted with what God had been saying to me. Returning home God showed me the story of Abraham and Isaac. I had been obedient in going for ordination but now I didn't have to. My one regret, I wouldn't be able to train at Trinity. However, a few weeks later a place became available on a pilot scheme - would I like it? God is good!

Lorraine used to run her own exercise business. She is now much involved in St Edyth's Church, Sea Mills, Bristol, where her husband is vicar: in supporting him and in prayer ministry and Christian dance ministry. She is in the second (final) year of the part-time Certificate course for LLMs.

More student profiles on pages 6 and 11.



Principal's letter

The words of the sending Word: his mission and ours!

George I. Koovor

'...Peace be with you, as the Father has sent me, I am sending you...' John 20:21

As an Indian student of Jesus I have had the joy and the privilege of living and settling in the UK. It has been an interesting journey, discovering over the past 20 years that I have lived here something of who I am, the nature of my calling, an appreciation of my context and the joy of being embraced by my local church. God has blessed me with a wonderful family, good friends and colleagues and a fulfilling role, and I have a general sense of enjoyment in life. Yet as an Indian Christian I have struggled within the life of the established historic churches in the UK and Europe. Is it the loss of community, or is it the formalism of our established churches and the conspicuous lack of joy or direction in our faith communities? Is the problem far deeper and more complex I wonder? Have we lost touch with the Bible, our Holy Scripture? Could it be possible that the church in Europe has Bibles but no longer a Holy Scripture?

Discover the living Word within the printed Word

The Bible reveals to us an awesome and wonderful God who lovingly engages with his creation and reaches out to humankind with covenantal compassion, love and grace. It offers us stories of people who have experienced this love, grace and mercy and who witness to a better way of living. In the Gospels we encounter Jesus of Nazareth, his wonderful life story. We meet people who had a relationship with Jesus and whose lives were transformed. They are the stories of real people who discovered in Jesus the doorway of life, truth, love, faith, grace and hope. What is exciting is that even today people who read the Bible in different contexts around the world testify to the power of the living Word touching and changing lives for the better.

Celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible

We are celebrating the 400-year anniversary of the writing of the King James Bible and I thank God for the treasure of God's Word. The Holy Scriptures have been so important to people of faith down through the ages; the psalmist writes '...thy Word is a lamp unto my feet...' It has guided countless generations of people in different parts of the world, offering light, direction, purpose, meaning and hope. The Christian Scriptures have offered people a world view and shaped civilizations and cultures, particularly in Europe. It has had an impact on the arts, whether it be painting, music, sculpture, architecture, or literature; even Shakespeare



Bible reading in chapel: our European students from (left-right) Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Germany and Finland

quoted from the Bible and used biblical expressions in his works. It has shaped our anthropology and our sociology by giving us an understanding of the worth and potential of the human spirit which is so precious and which must be protected and allowed certain freedoms. It has shaped our values and our understanding of the inalienable rights of the individual who must never be viewed as being dispensable. We thank God for the integrity, scholarship and vision that was invested in the translation of the Bible into English in the King James Bible, a monumental achievement that must be celebrated with joy and thankfulness for all it has contributed to the life and witness of the world church.

Reflections and lessons from John's Gospel on the mission of Jesus

Reading the post-resurrection story of Jesus in John's Gospel may give us a key to understanding the way of Jesus and our participation with him in his way of offering love, forgiveness and hope to people who are confused, lacking in direction, hope and joy. In the Gospel of John 20:19 onwards we read about the dramatic appearing of Jesus to his disciples who were hiding behind locked doors, scared and bewildered by the crucifixion and death of their teacher and leader. There was the strange news filtering through Mary Magdalene that she had seen and spoken to Jesus. He is risen and alive! Was this true? Could the testimony of a woman be trusted? No one is quite sure what to make of the recent happenings. The apostle John dramatically records in his Gospel that 'Jesus came and stood among them and said "Peace be with you!" ' He then goes on to show them the physical scars of his ordeal on the cross. The sheer amazement and joy of his disciples is palpable; it makes my skin tingle with excitement and anticipation. We in the church need to experience this living Jesus who is alive and real! Then again Jesus said '...Peace be with you; as the Father has sent me, I am sending you... ' John goes on to record that Jesus breathed on them and said '... Receive the Holy Spirit...' (20:21-22). This is an amazing bit of the Gospel which I have been thinking about a great deal and I would like to offer some insights and reflections.

The change of mood. The first thing I note is the change in the atmosphere from fear and despair to joy. The mood of Easter is unadulterated joy! We could do with more joy in our local churches. Secondly it confirmed the witness of



Mary: he is risen! It was Jesus who chose Mary to be the bearer of the Easter tiding 'He is alive!' Jesus was being radical by overturning the prevailing view that the witness of a woman was unreliable. He entrusted Mary with the most stupendous truth of the reality of his resurrection. He trusted this faithful woman who by her actions expressed her devotion to him. Jesus gives dignity to women through his commissioning of Mary to share with the brethren the good news of Easter: '...the Lord is risen!' The resurrection announcement brought with it the amazing hope of life beyond the grave. The good news was that Jesus is alive. If this is true, then what happened on the cross has new meaning and offers purpose and a way forward. Is there a message of hope in the Bible that we need to take on board to be more hopeful in the way we live our lives both individually and corporately?

Jesus the Shalom of God. The repetition of the greeting of 'Shalom!', i.e. 'Peace!', by Jesus was reassuring and a confidence builder; not only was Jesus alive but he was present with his disciples. He was able to show them his wounds inflicted on the cross which now were scars; healing was taking place. His work on the cross was indeed finished; there was no looking back. The work entrusted by the Father to the Son must continue in a new way through his students, but they needed to understand this task. It was Emil Brunner who famously said that the 'church is to mission as fire is to burning'. How many of us understand the call to participate in the continuing mission of Jesus?

The divine imperative. I am struck by Jesus' self awareness and understanding of his calling in John's Gospel. He was sent, entrusted with a mission arising out of the Father's loving heart for the world – John. 3:16. This awareness of being sent is something the apostle John wants us to come to terms with. Jesus was the 'sent one'. He shared in his Father's mission. He was sent for a purpose. In John 9, in the story of the healing of the man born blind, Jesus said in verse 4, 'We must do the work of him who sent me...' Jesus highlights his awareness of the 'must'. The word 'must' is an imperative a command, a non negotiable. Jesus had a sense of the divine imperative that would shape and determine everything he did. In John 20:21 he is acutely conscious of being sent by his heavenly Father and now he shares this holy destiny with his disciples; they were to identify with him by participating in his calling and mission.

Friendship an invitation to participate in the mission of God. In John 15: 9 onwards he shares the love of the Father with them and in verse 15 he identifies them as his friends and no longer his servants. I believe there is an invitation to experience the friendship of God, an implicit opportunity to enter through Jesus within the mystery of the Godhead and discover the secrets of God and participate in the purpose and plans of God. In John 20:21 Jesus invites his students, now his friends, to participate and be involved in his and the Father's mission as fellow 'sent ones'. What a wonderful privilege to share in this holy calling and to become co-labourers with Christ in our local communities!

Biblical truths that need to be highlighted

From these accounts in the Bible we learn that the church must be secure in the knowledge that the Lord Jesus is risen and alive today. He is present with us and he blesses his students by breathing into them his Holy Spirit. He commissions and authorizes his students to speak against sin and offer in Jesus the forgiveness of God. He challenges them to point to the more excellent way, the way of love – a love that is prepared to die for the sake of the other. The death and resurrection of Jesus viewed from this perspective transform the evil that was perpetrated that fateful Friday at Golgotha, where man was at his worst, and reveal a gracious God who is able to overcome evil and the devil with good. The words of Jesus on the cross were 'Father forgive...' The death of Jesus on the cross now becomes the good news and the triumph of God. It is the coronation of the King! Jesus becomes the atonement for our sin. The resurrection of Jesus is the demonstration of the power of God both over the devil and death, the cause and the consequences of our sins. Easter is the message of the power of God that releases people from the power of sin and death, with its burden of guilt and shame. His mission was to demonstrate the Father's love and offer the gift of grace through the forgiveness of sin.

I wonder if the church in the West needs to rediscover its identity as the sent ones. We need to gain a proper confidence in the Gospel who is Jesus, and to be far more aware of the divine imperative, i.e. our missionary calling. Europe needs a vibrant joyful Christian community engaging with its context and bearing witness to the risen Jesus. It is Jesus the 'sent one' who now invites us to share in his solidarity with his Father by responding to his call and joining him in obedience and accepting his challenge to go in the power of his Spirit with the mandate to be the light and salt to a sceptical and confused world.

May we this Easter season find creative ways of inviting others to know this crucified Saviour and risen Lord! Throw a party where there are imaginative opportunities to read the Bible and hear wonderful stories of people who have encountered Jesus and testify to being overwhelmed by hope, love and joy which must be the mood of the Christian today.

George I Kovacs

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‘Showing that we love them’: hands-on mission

Most of our students are involved in practical outreach, regularly in local communities and churches and through special missions. Some of them write about the new initiatives they are involved in.

College Green: next to the Cathedral

The College Green Pastoral Group ministers to the youth, shoppers and passers-by who often ‘hang out’ on College Green, by serving teas, coffees, etc., listening, building relationships, prayer and proclamation to a wonderful variety of people of all ages.

Since September 2010 the new team has been regularly present on College Green each Saturday afternoon during term time. We have also done three missions over separate weekends with a bigger team including other students, and greater intentionality in seeking to engage in both serving and in sharing the Gospel of Christ. The most recent mission was the weekend before Ash Wednesday when we served over 800 pancakes and numerous drinks whilst sharing testimonies by microphone, and also engaging in ‘treasure hunting’ – simply listening for a word of knowledge from God which leads to a supernatural evangelistic encounter.

These past few months have seen an increase in the amount of prayer offered and also positive conversations, with a few people giving their life to Christ. John Monaghan, who is new to the team this year, said after speaking with a homeless widower: ‘On the Green I have time to slow down and talk to people and hear their stories. It’s made me realise that everyone has a story, and those stories matter to God and should therefore matter to us too.’

One of the exciting by-products is that, as a team, we have grown closer to one another and to God through the experience. However, the ultimate experience is summed up by one of the most dedicated team members, Shaun Oliver, who speaks of the people served on the Green: ‘In a world where Christians seem to be increasingly portrayed as unbalanced, self-righteous, immoral, or out of touch, I feel it’s important to show people that we are not all like that ...! That we care about them and their problems, we don’t sit in judgment and that we try to love them as much as God loves us all.’

College Green team



Outreach with candy floss served by Mark and Lisa outside the Cathedral.

St Matt’s and Woodlands

Some of the new things being developed in the context group in St Matthew’s and Woodlands Churches.

Dove Street is a forgotten part of Bristol, three tower blocks full of single people with mental-health issues mixed with asylum seekers and aged people. It has been great to see the residents joining us for coffee and chat at the drop in and at Pastorate sharing food and being community, and taking part in the worship. I was in tears on the walk home from the drop in last week as one of the young men shared his story with me. I am looking forward to getting involved and shaping how things go from here in this context, how we will be the ‘hands and feet’ of Jesus to this community.

Ron Cross

‘Tea and Theology’ was launched in the autumn at St Matt’s with the intention of creating an environment where people can explore theology in some depth, ask questions and enjoy cake in good company. Despite its name, coffee is served! This year we have looked at various theological doctrines, and come next autumn, the plan is to engage with various theologians.

Jussi Honkakari



Meet our students

Jim Taylor



Looking back, it's amazing how God has led us to this place. Prior to Trinity I spent 15 years at 'Her Majesty's Pleasure', working as a Prison Officer in a maximum-security prison. I loved my job (most of the time) and worked with some amazing, courageous and inspirational colleagues. I supervised a wide range of prisoners, from young lads who had stolen cars to the most violent prisoners in the system. It was a fascinating life and a very different culture to theological college! I never imagined I would leave the Service, especially to become a vicar! I passionately believe that we all have a ministry: in our workplaces, our schools, our communities. However, in 2007 I went on a short-term mission to Manila working with street children and in the months following felt called to ordained ministry. My prison colleagues thought I was mad and I genuinely thought that each stage of the selection process would be my last – yet here we are today! We visited Trinity for an Open Day and it just felt right! We were sold on George's vision for the college but also saw a totally committed, gifted and caring staff team.

Jim leaves in the summer for a curacy in the Oxford Diocese. His wife Gill has completed the part-time Certificate and has been licensed as a Lay Minister. They are on Trinity's context-based training.

Wendy Brown



If you had told me ten years ago that I would be living in a single room, in Bristol, training to be a vicar... I'd have laughed at you. I was always a career girl, knowing I wanted to be a teacher from when I was five years old (just ask my little brother who got lined up with the teddies in my first 'class!'). Ten years ago I had just started a new job as a deputy-head in a central London multi-cultural school, earning lots, working stupid hours, living life in all its fullness. During that time God was busy turning me inside out, dealing with core identity stuff and increasing my excitement for the church and his kingdom.

I eventually quit my job in a ten-minute meeting, knowing without doubt that the call to be part of what the church was doing was too strong to abandon for 24-7 school! Thus began a three-year journey which took me round the world, through a lot of counselling training, into hundreds of schools and eventually brought me to Trinity... I came here because Dino (Trinity 2010, now a curate in New Zealand) told me I'd like it ... and he was right!

It has been an incredible couple of years – like all good journeys it's had ups and downs, tears and laughter, essays (lots of essays) and sticky toffee pudding! Best of all, I've walked this stage of the journey with the most incredible people – diverse, inspiring, honest, supportive, real, humble and wise ... thank you.

Wendy is in the final year of her two-year BA in Theology

Greg Wynn



As a young boy, I grew up with a real sense of God, his love and his call on my life. My Dad decided to heed God's call towards ordained ministry and he approached his bishop in South Africa and asked if he could move to the UK to study at Trinity College. The Bishop refused and suggested that he study in South Africa. I knew that I was called from that early age but was unsure what and where and how; my life has been unfolding according to his grace.

At 21 I was a youth pastor and loving life. I went for a swim in the sea on a Sunday morning; I got out and collapsed onto the beach. I woke up six days later in the hospital and they told me that I'd had a stroke; not the best news in the world. I had to learn right from the beginning again: to talk, to walk, to feed myself, I had to re-learn how to think, how to hear from God. Very soon I realised that it was the same God, the same world that he is redeeming, the same people that he wanted me to minister to. My calling had not changed, sure I couldn't worship on the guitar anymore, but I could tell them a funny story or two and demonstrate God's love, in the midst of the brokenness.

I'm now married to Tammy and my life is great! I am studying a Diploma in Theology, fulfilling a dream of Dad's. Through this I pray that God makes me a more rounded person, willing to serve him and others, although the food here seems to be dealing with the roundedness quite sufficiently!

Greg comes from Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal

Chris Owen



If you drop a marble into a bowl, sometimes it'll look like it's getting to the bottom, then it'll roll up the other side, but eventually it'll settle. And that might describe my path to Trinity, round in circles, going in the opposite direction, but arriving at the right place in the end. I didn't leave a career to train for ordained ministry in the C of E; instead the inescapable call led me through various temporary and interesting jobs in a variety of industries: unloading cars as they arrived from Japan, handling web content for armyjobs.mod.uk, gardening, marketing for a car transporter company and more. And as I passed through each, God chipped away a little bit more, chiselling (sometimes a painful experience) my character closer and closer to the way he wanted it. Meanwhile he was preparing me for what Nigel Scotland likes to remind husbands is the first church they are ordained to: marriage.

And as I started to understand that my call to ordained ministry was genuine, I began to look for a theological college that would take me further in the right direction. Strangely enough, I could see one out of my front window. I'd already encountered George and his mission to evangelise the heathen Europeans, and I knew that it was a mission that I wanted to be on board with. And so my chapter at Trinity started.

The Bible and Science

On this 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible, Trinity and Bristol Baptist College are taking the opportunity to put on four open sessions answering the question: 'Can we trust the Bible in the 21st century?'

The first, The Bible and Science, was held at Christ Church Clifton on 23 March. Here the two speakers, Revd Dr Ernest Lucas and Dr John Bimson, summarise the talks that they gave. Questions from the audience were answered by a panel consisting of the speakers plus Dr Christina Biggs, a physicist and director of the local Christians in Science group, and Professor Andrew Halestrap, Professor of Biochemistry in the University of Bristol.

To listen to the talks and the questions, go to www.christchurchclifton.org.uk/content/recentsermons/

The Bible and the Environment

John Bimson

Dr John Bimson teaches Old Testament at Trinity and speaks regularly on the Bible and environmental issues.

We are probably all aware that the world is facing an environmental crisis. In fact it faces several related crises, including rising pollution, degrading soils, acidification of the oceans and shortage of water. And all these are exacerbated by the double whammy of population growth and climate change.

But what has the Bible got to do with this? According to some of its critics, the Bible is partly to blame.

In 1967 Lynn White (Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles) published a paper which has been quoted many times since in discussions on religion and the environment. In 'The Historic Roots of our Ecologic Crisis' (*Science* 155, 1967, pp. 1203-1207) White criticised 'the Christian dogma of man's transcendence of, and rightful mastery over, nature', which derives chiefly, of course, from Genesis 1:26-28. According to White, 'Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt' for our environmental woes. Actually his essay was not meant as a blanket condemnation of Christianity, but a critique of its Western tradition, which he called 'the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen'.

White's analysis has plenty of modern echoes. Sir David Attenborough (interviewed in *Natural World*, Summer 2005) gave the following answer when asked why people act as if they are not connected with nature: 'I think it is related to our Judeo-Christian inheritance....

You can see in the Old Testament that the natural world was there to exploit – it was there for their benefit. That has cast a long shadow.'

There can be no denying that Genesis 1 has often (since the 17th century at least) been read by Christians as a licence for unrestrained exploitation of the earth's resources. But is that a legitimate reading?

The first thing to note is that Genesis 1 doesn't talk about humanity as simply having a unique status within creation. It is equally clear about our solidarity with the rest of creation; we are not separate from it. It emphasizes this in a number of ways.

Firstly, we don't even have a special day of creation to ourselves: we share the sixth day with the animals and creepy-crawlies. Secondly, like plants, animals and birds (Genesis 1:11-12, 24; 2:19) we are from the earth (Genesis 2:7). We also share 'the breath of life' (2:7) with animals and birds (1:30; 7:15, 22). And in 2:7 the first human is described by exactly the same Hebrew term used in 1:24 and 2:19 for the animals – *nephesh hayyah* (a point usually lost in translation, e.g. NRSV: 'living creatures' in 1:24; 'a living being' in 2:7).

Furthermore in Genesis 9, following the Flood, God makes a covenant with all life on earth. We often think of this as a covenant with Noah, but it's actually addressed to him and his family as representatives of all living things. The point is repeated six times in nine verses (9:10, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17) that this is God's covenant with all living things on the planet.

With our membership of the community of creation in mind, let's look at Genesis 1:26-28 and ask: How are we meant to 'have dominion' over other living things? In what sense are we to 'subdue' the earth?



An important clue lies in the immediate context of these terms. The statement that we are made in God's image is crucial; the grammar of v. 26 implies that dominion is the purpose of our being in God's image. As Richard Middleton says, '...the biblical imago Dei refers to the status or office of the human race as God's authorized stewards, charged with the royal-priestly vocation of representing God's rule on earth....' (*The Liberating Image: The imago Dei in Genesis 1*, Brazos Press, 2005, p. 235.)

The key phrase is 'representing God's rule'. Ruling in the image of God means ruling as God rules, exercising dominion under God's dominion and completely in tune with it. To unpack that further we must place Genesis 1 in its wider biblical context. It is clear from other parts of the Old Testament that God's rule is caring and nurturing, not exploitative or destructive. God's sustaining care is beautifully portrayed for us in Psalm 104, which could be called a celebration of biodiversity. Verses 10-24 portray a variety of species, each flourishing in its own ecological niche. However, the theme is not just diversity but God's generous provision of water, food and appropriate habitat for all the creatures mentioned, and the life-sustaining rhythms of day and night and the seasons which God has established. And notice what a low profile human beings have in this psalm; they are simply one of the many creatures for which God provides.

But my main point is this: The nature of God's rule, as pictured for us here, is that he sustains and nurtures what he has created, in all its variety and inter-relatedness (see also Psalm 145:9). The command to exercise dominion in the image of God therefore means: 'Go and do likewise'. It is not a licence for environmental irresponsibility or self-centred exploitation.

I want to turn next to the book of Job. Anyone who has pondered the message of this extraordinary book will have wrestled with the two speeches God makes near the end. This isn't the place to unpack them in detail, but one of the writer's aims is to fire a broadside against an anthropocentric view of creation.

The first speech begins with a tour of the marvels of the cosmos and then shifts (in 38:39-39:30) to animals and birds. Most of God's questions are about wild creatures of which people in the author's day had limited knowledge (they lived not only BC but BA – Before Attenborough), and they highlight Job's ignorance. For example, when he is asked, 'Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the does? Can you number the months that they fulfil [i.e. what is their gestation period]?', Job has no idea about the intimate details of these shy creatures of the wilderness. I like to picture him in the Mastermind chair with that intimidating spotlight on him while God fires the questions – and Job can only say 'Pass'. I imagine him wishing he could move on from general knowledge to his specialist subject – probably sheep. He breeds sheep, so of course he knows their gestation period: 145 days. Or camels – he'd be good on camels, too: 13

months for a dromedary. Donkeys? Yes, he can do donkeys – 12 months on average.... But mountain goats? He knows them only as fleeting silhouettes on a rugged skyline.

And that's the whole point of God's questions. They take us to 'where the wild things are'. They focus on animals and birds which seem pointless from a utilitarian human perspective, and whose behaviour makes little sense to us, perhaps even repels us. They lift the reader out of an anthropocentric rut, driving home the fact that much of creation is of no obvious use to human beings.

This theme also emerges strongly in Job 38:25-27. God governs the world in such a way as 'to bring rain on a land where no one lives, on the desert which is empty of human life, to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass'. If God cares for and sustains parts of the earth where no human beings live, how can it all be there just for us? We may have a unique status in creation, but it's a massive mistake to assume on that basis that it all exists solely, or even primarily, for our sake. It exists first and foremost for God, and has a value all of its own in his sight.

In short, the world-view here is not anthropocentric, but theocentric (God-centred). We may add that in the New Testament it becomes Christ-centred – 'all things were created through him and for him' (Colossians 1:16).

Near the end of Psalm 104 the writer declares: 'May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; may the LORD rejoice in his works' (v. 31). If God delights in his creation, and if creation displays his glory, this also has profound implications for the way we treat it. If we spoil and degrade creation, we diminish its ability to display God's glory. Once we grasp these biblical ideas, then in John Stott's words, 'our care of the creation will reflect our love for the Creator'. (J. Stott, Foreword to R. J. Berry, ed., *The Care of Creation*, IVP, 2000, p. 9.)

In other words, practical environmental concern is one way Christians should be fulfilling the command to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. And because environmental degradation threatens human welfare, care of creation is also an aspect of fulfilling the command to love our neighbours as ourselves. 'There is no other commandment greater than these' (Mark 12:31).

Some further reading

Dave Bookless, *Planetwise: Dare to Care for God's World* (IVP, 2008).

Robert S. White (ed.), *Creation in Crisis: Christian Perspectives on Sustainability* (SPCK, 2009).

Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (DLT, 2010).



Genesis 1-11 and Science

Ernest Lucas

Revd Dr Ernest Lucas worked as a research biochemist before studying theology. He is Vice-Principal and Tutor in Old Testament at Bristol Baptist College.

Most scientists recognise that science has limits: it can tell us 'mechanics' of the universe, how things happen, but it cannot tell us about the meaning of its existence, why we are here. The Christian faith provides answers to these 'why' questions. Some people say that Genesis also tells us how creation took place. So is Genesis an alternative scientific account of creation? Richard Dawkins thinks so, and rejects the Bible; some Christians think so, and reject science.

My contention is that, properly understood, Genesis 1-11 neither supports nor contradicts scientific theories of origins, because its primary meaning is theological, answering the 'why' questions. It leaves the way open for Christians to develop an understanding of Darwinism compatible with this theology.

Basic principles

God is revealed most fully in a particular person, Jesus, who lived at a particular time in a particular culture. This was the culmination of God's 'incarnational' method of self-revelation in which God's word came clothed in the words of particular people, using particular languages and particular forms of literature, all rooted in the history and culture of a particular nation. We must take this seriously when interpreting the Bible. Instead of assuming that we know how a part of the Bible should be read, we must ask some basic questions to guide our interpretation.

- What kind of language is being used?
- What kind of literature is it?
- What is the expected audience?
- What is the purpose of the text?
- What relevant extra-textual knowledge is there?

What kind of language?

Many people today read Genesis 1-11 with preconceived ideas of what kind of text it is. They unthinkingly adopt the prevalent secular modernist view that truth can only really be expressed in 'scientific' prose and are suspicious of figurative prose. Early Christian scholars didn't have this bias. They read Genesis 1-11 looking for clues in the text to tell them how to read it. This respects the authority of the text rather than imposing the reader's authority on it by assuming how it should be read.

In the fifth century Augustine concluded, 'Sacred Scripture in its customary style is speaking with the limitations of human language in addressing men of

limited understanding.' Writing over a millennium later Calvin develops this recognition that God 'accommodates' his way of speaking to the common language and idioms of the day and people's pre-scientific understanding. Commenting on Genesis 1:6-8 he says, 'For, to my mind, this is a certain principle, that nothing is here treated of but the visible form of the world. He who would learn astronomy and other recondite arts, let him go elsewhere. Here the Spirit of God would teach all men without exception and therefore ... the history of creation ... is the book of the unlearned.' He concluded that when speaking of the material world the Bible describes things as people see them, using 'the language of appearance', not as they might actually be. He therefore had no problems with things which tie modern 'literalists' in knots.

Calvin knew that the Hebrew word in Genesis 1:6-8 which the Authorised Version translates as 'firmament' (meaning something solid) means something made of beaten-out metal. That the Hebrews thought of the heavens as solid is clear in Job 37:18. Then there is the fact that both the Sun and the Moon are described as 'lights', meaning self-luminous entities, when in reality the Moon is only a reflector, a mirror. Calvin also comments that the details given of the location of Eden indicate that Noah's flood didn't cause a significant change in the geography of the ancient Near East (contrary to modern 'flood geology'). The impression that the flood, doubtless an historical event, was a universal event arises in part because the Hebrew word 'erets is translated as 'earth' (implying the planet) when it could be given its more usual meaning of 'land' (a specific locality).

What kind of literature?

The third-century scholar Origen found in Genesis 1 a clear clue that it is figurative literature in that there are three days with morning and evening, one of which (day one) doesn't even have a heaven, before the sun and moon are created. Not recognising this clue leads modern 'literalists' into all kinds of speculations not grounded in the text.

For centuries Christian and Jewish scholars have seen Genesis 1:1-2:4 as an extended 'figure of speech' in which God is depicted as a worker doing a carefully planned week's work. The earth is created initially 'shapeless and empty'. In the first three days God shapes it through acts of separation, creating empty spaces. In the second three days God creates things to fill the spaces. The acts on day four correspond to the spaces created on day one, those on day five to the spaces created on day two and those on day six to the spaces created on day three. At the end of each day God surveys his work and declares it 'a good job'. At the end of day six, he says that what he has created is 'very good'. He rests on day seven and hallows it.

This isn't a chronological, scientific account of creation intended to answer our twenty-first-century scientific questions. It's a theological account asserting



fundamental truths which we cannot list here. Origen found in the anthropomorphic language of Genesis 2-3 the clue that this is to be read as a figurative account of human origins, not a literal one. We can add that we now know that it is full of symbolic features found in ancient Near Eastern accounts of creation: the garden, the tree of life, the serpent, humans made of clay and a divine element.

What kind of audience?

These were ancient Hebrews and, as already stressed, we ought initially to read the text through their eyes. Another example of the difference this makes to our understanding concerns the genealogies, which 'literalists' use to construct a chronology. There is a striking parallel to the overall pattern of Genesis 1-11 in the Sumerian 'king lists'. In these there are 8-10 kings, each with very lengthy reigns, before the flood. There are then more kings with reigns of decreasing length. A post-flood king, En-Mebaragisi, is said to have reigned for 900 years. Other evidence shows that he was a real person who reigned for a normal time. Clearly numbers in this culture could be used with a symbolic, rather than literal, meaning.

What is the purpose of the text?

Biblical scholars now see the creation story as a piece of theological polemic, setting out the Hebrew understanding of creation over against the ideas prevalent in the pagan religions of their time. Much could be said about this. An obvious point is the story's monotheism. The other ancient Near Eastern stories begin with 'theogony', the origin of the gods. One of them then brings the cosmos into being, using pre-existing 'matter' of some kind. In Genesis there is only one God, the Creator of all else that exists. It is about 'cosmogony', the origin of the cosmos. God's existence is assumed.

Why are the Sun and Moon called 'lights' when there are common Hebrew words for Sun and Moon? Because for pagans the words 'sun' and 'moon' are also the names of gods they worshipped. Genesis 1:14-19 attacks such worship. The heavenly bodies are simply 'lights' (like big oil lamps!) created by Israel's God. Humans don't exist to serve these 'gods', rather they serve humans, as light-sources and calendar-markers.

Compatible with Darwinism?

Augustine and Basil of Caesarea didn't understand the words, 'Let the earth/waters bring forth ...' as commands obeyed instantaneously and once-for-all, but (as the Hebrew verb-form used allows) as God giving the material elements the permission and power to bring forth new life forms down through the course of time. Calvin believed in animal death before the Fall; otherwise why did God give them plants to eat and how would Adam have known what death meant? Only humans had access to the Tree of Life. This doesn't contradict the statements that the creation was 'good'.

The primary meaning of the Hebrew word used is 'fit for purpose'. If God's purpose included animal death from the beginning, we must accept that. The second-century theologian Irenaeus understood God's purpose as being to provide humans with a challenging environment in which to develop. Adam and Eve were morally innocent and immature and were intended to grow to maturity in this environment, meeting the challenges depending on God (cf. Hebrews 5:8-9).

Before Darwinism scholars had concluded that in the Bible death as a consequence of sin applies to humans alone. They also recognised that 'death' for humans in the Bible often refers to a spiritual state, a diminished existence cut off from God, not the end of physical existence (e.g. John 5:24; 8:51). This makes sense in Genesis 2-3, otherwise God's threat, 'In the day you eat of it you shall surely die', proves an empty one. Calvin understood Cain's fear of being killed to mean that humans other than Adam and Eve existed at the time. God elected Adam and Eve as representative 'federal heads' of the race whose actions affected the rest through a spiritual, not physical, solidarity. This fits with Romans 5, where our solidarity in Christ is spiritual, not physical. It suggests a basis for thinking of God bringing Homo sapiens into being by an evolutionary process and endowing a representative pair with God's image (a spiritual, not physical, quality).

These kinds of consideration provide a basis for a theology of 'theistic evolution'. Because 'all truth is God's truth' Augustine and Calvin held that Christians cannot ignore truth from outside the Bible in doing theology. Many today find the scientific evidence for evolution compelling and therefore cannot ignore it in their theology, based on a figurative reading of Genesis which is firmly rooted in traditional Christian orthodoxy.

This article is reprinted, with a new introduction, from Evangelicals Now (April 2010) with permission. Trinity College and Bristol Baptist College do not have a 'party line' on the subject; other staff may hold different views on some aspects of what Ernest says here.

Some further reading

John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (IVP Academic, 2009).

Michael Pfundner and Ernest Lucas, *Think God, Think Science* (Paternoster, 2008).

Ernest Lucas, *Can We Believe Genesis Today?* (IVP, 2007).

For details of the remaining 'Can we trust the Bible?' events, see back page.



Meet our students

SooJung Kim



It has taken 11 years for me to have a second chance at studying. Far back in the 1990s, when I was majoring in Christian studies at a women's university, the theological atmosphere was embarrassingly liberal, nevertheless I managed to gain numerous happy thoughts on womanhood. After about ten years of living mainly as a housewife, another opportunity of studying theology was given to me, this time at a theological seminary. The biblical approach was sound and the lectures were all aimed at building up Christian faith. However, I just could not accept the perspective on women which was suggested as 'biblical'; it was hard for me to match that implicit presupposition of degrading womanhood with something belonging to the God I know. The biblical perspective on women has become an essential question in my understanding of who God is and who I am. At first, I took the IELTS English test in order to apply to the distance learning MA course in another college. However, God surprisingly changed my husband's mind, and I ended up coming to Trinity along with him and our two teenage children! We came to hear about Trinity from a friend who had finished his research course in the UK. He described Trinity as a rare evangelical college, full of qualified faculty. We dared to take this first step, but our future is in God's hands. I hope through this God-given third chance, I can search for and find a very happy biblical message for all his beloved daughters, and of course, sons.

SooJung from South Korea is in the first year of an MA course.

Justin Tomkins



I was confused by a 'persistent niggle' that I needed to be ordained. Surely I didn't! It was only when I offered that inarticulate sense of call to the church and was encouraged to proceed, that the next steps started to be revealed. Having adjusted to the idea of going off to college, I was convinced that I needed to train at Ridley and to stay well away from context-based training. What did I know! On interview at Trinity, my wife and I felt very clearly that this was going to be our home during training and that we were called into the BS10 context. I think that God often speaks through my reason, so it was both disconcerting and thrilling to experience a different way of being led. I love being at Trinity, and the opportunity to be part of an intimate context community has been an awesome gift to us.

Looking back, I see God's provision so clearly in each aspect of bringing us here. That feels like an important insight as I slip too often into nervousness about what comes next! We've been at Trinity for almost three years now, and I very much hope to extend that time even further, to continue some research in ethics. Whether or not that door opens, God has provided for us so far and proved quite capable of turning my own muddled ideas upside down! I shall try and remember that over the next weeks and months!

Justin was a secondary-school chemistry teacher. After doing the BA he is registered for an MPhil which he hopes will be upgraded to a PhD.

Clare Brown



The great Scottish preacher, Henry Drummond, once wrote, 'Good men are good leaven.' This is a great reminder of our calling to become more like Jesus and, in doing so, to make a positive impact on the world around us. Yet the individual cannot function as God intended in isolation. In my experience, it is always a great blessing to work in an environment where Christians from different backgrounds and nations work together in unity and also celebrate the differences in their various customs and traditions. When I encountered Trinity I felt that this was such a place. I was drawn by the sense of community and I felt sure that students would be encouraged to be all that God made them to be. I have not been disappointed. I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to work towards a research degree in a culturally diverse, academically rigorous college, which also engenders the atmosphere of a church family. I have been able to hone my skills as a communicator and a writer through interacting with the lecturers and students. Even though I live in America and I am not always able to live on campus, I am warmly welcomed whenever I visit. I appreciate my wonderfully supportive research supervisor and it is also great to participate in regular postgraduate seminars. During my time at Trinity I feel that I have matured in my faith, whilst acquiring the vocational skills I need.

After doing a BA in Religious Studies and History and an MA in Religion and Society, both at the University of Gloucestershire, Clare worked in the music industry but felt that God was prompting her to go back to her roots and draw on her love of church history. She is now doing a PhD as a part-time student with Nigel Scotland on a Quaker philanthropist who was involved in the anti-slavery movement. She and her husband live in Tennessee.

David Gerrard



I'm in my second year here at Trinity College. I was 17 when I first felt God call me to ordination. As normal when God tells me to do something I really don't want to do, I ignored him completely (I sometimes think I should have been called Jonah!). So I instead went to university to train to be a primary school teacher. Over my time there I was repeatedly told by people that I should go into leadership in the church. However, I was enjoying my time at university and, after my four years, I got married and started my teaching career. I love teaching and loved the school I was lucky enough to get a job in. My wonderful wife got a job in the same school and we both made friendships that will last for our lives. However, deep down I knew I still wasn't doing what I should be doing and so eventually I told my wife that I felt I was called to ordained ministry. I made it clear that if she was against the idea I'd simply drop the subject, and part of me hoped she would be. Unfortunately, she simply informed me that she'd known for ages! So I applied for ordination and was accepted. As for why I came to Trinity, all I can say is that it felt right. We visited other colleges and, while I can't tell you why, they didn't feel right. Within minutes of arriving at Trinity we knew. This is the place the Holy Spirit wanted us, and wants us, to be.

Second year of the BA (Hons) course



A unique partnership

In the summer of 2010, Pastor Dia Moodley, from Bristol-based Spirit of Life Church, asked Trinity College if we had anything to train his congregation to become more disciplined in their own study of the Bible. His weekly Bible studies were well attended, yet he wanted his church members to study the Bible in detail for themselves. We agreed to experiment with our new course on the Gospel of John to see whether it could be used for a church Bible study. The following is adapted from a report by one of the church members:

A recent visit to the mid-week ‘Open Learning’ Bible study at our church was very interesting and encouraging. Eager to find out what this was, I made my way to the church where I found a group of people worshipping together. After a short welcome and a few announcements, the congregation split into smaller groups of about six each, dotted around the church auditorium. I was welcomed and kindly directed to one of the groups.

Within a few minutes I found myself involved in an amazing discussion on the Gospel according to John: Who wrote it? What was the main theme? Why was the word ‘logos’ used? These were some of the many topics being discussed. I was quickly and easily immersed in the discussion. I noticed that the study is very interactive; discussing in their individual groups what they have learnt at home through the course notes. The small group is guided through discussion questions and answers by a group facilitator. At the end of every block of study, students get to do a quiz and a short assignment.

This method of study is very different from the Bible study our church previously ran, where it was the pastor doing the teaching and the congregation listening week after week. Although the previous teaching by the pastor was good, the Open Learning Bible study gives the congregation an opportunity to become students and contribute to the lesson, an opportunity they have not previously had. As I looked around I could see that people were enjoying discussing and nobody was afraid to read, comment or give an answer. The Bible was



All the members of Spirit of Life Church Bible study groups use Open Learning materials.

being discussed and growth was being rooted in the lives of all those participating. As I left the church that evening, people were still milling around in the church aisles and in the foyer discussing what they had learnt, the questions for the next lesson and sharing ideas on how to do their assignment.

Although still in its teething stage, the Bible study is running well. This unique partnership between Spirit of Life Church and Trinity College to make quality Christian education, in an easy-to-learn format, accessible to every interested church member, is a fantastic opportunity. I had to admit Open Learning Bible study was different and different in a good way. It has surely grabbed my attention.



Right in the centre of Bristol: Spirit of Life church.

“

Anastasiah Watiri

(member of the Worship Team)

The Open Learning Bible Study has helped me to be confident in finding my way through the Bible and how to relate the scriptures from one chapter to another and from one book to the other... It has completely changed my life in the way of thinking, solving the matters, praying and also my walk with Christ.

Pastor Dia Moodley

We are committed to training our church members to know and study the Bible for themselves in a disciplined and in-depth way. I am excited about the way the Open Learning courses are appropriate to people of many backgrounds. They are of huge value in building up our church by helping members of the congregation to get to know the Bible, a vital tool for our faith.

”



Alumni news

'I thought this must be the end of the world': news from Japan

Hisitaka (Izzie) studied in Trinity 2005-7. He now helps to run the church in Sendai, which was badly hit by the recent earthquake and tsunami. He and Megumi (Meg) have two daughters, Caty (born in Bristol) and Sara. Here are extracts from emails from Meg (15 and 19 March):

At the moment, we can't sleep because earthquakes come one after the other. Sara is not too well – she's been in hospital for treatment for bronchitis. Another thing we are really afraid of is that the nuclear reactor has exploded and the place is only 100 km away from our place. So we might be exposed to radiation and that's the worst we could get. It is raining and snowing and if we get wet with that we're more likely to be exposed. We are confined at home. I don't mind suffering and dying for this but not my children. We may go to my parents' place but Hisa would have to stay here in the church and I really want my family to stick together.

We have been eating enough to get through but we can't really go out to buy things now. Shops are a mess as well. So many people queue for 2-3 hours to get food and toilet rolls and stuff. People have run out of petrol and so have we. We can't escape anywhere. Luckily we have water and electricity now and so we are out of darkness which is a relief but no gas yet; that means no hot water and no bath.

Last Sunday we had a service and some people came and we all felt God's grace. But I don't know if people should come considering this dangerous situation. Please pray to God that the things going on around the nuclear reactor will calm down and be solved as soon as possible so that no more suffering will fall to us and that our family doesn't have to separate but be able to settle down here in Sendai without being exposed to radiation. Please God, help us! Please also pray that we get stronger in the name of Jesus so that we'll get through this difficult time.

It's unbelievable to see the deadly power of tsunami. I really thought this must be the end of the world and Jesus might come - but no, not yet. We are so grateful that my family is all safe.

PhD in popular music

Ellen Loudon (2009) has gained her PhD from the University of Liverpool on 'Performing the popular: the context and composition of Liverpool Music Hall'. 'I have been studying popular music at the University in



the Institute of Popular Music for a decade - I did an MA in Popular Music Studies about 10 years ago and then started my doctoral work soon after. I have no idea what a curate in Everton does with a PhD in 19th-century popular music performance ... but watch this space. I am sure God has a plan.'

Trinity thesis turned into novel

Mike Burke (Trinity 1986-89) has recently had his first novel published – and it all started with a Trinity Master's thesis.

After completing the degree with Nigel Scotland in 2007,

he took a sabbatical from his job as parish priest. 'I used the time to do some creative writing - choosing to put some of the issues and ideas raised by my research into a narrative. A large part of the novel was written whilst spending study time at Trinity during that sabbatical three years later, and the result was *Daydream Believer* published in November by Highland Books.'

In Mike's words, 'It tells the story of Rev Kevin Birley, a Church of England vicar who has lost his joy and his confidence in the system that is meant to communicate the gospel to an uncertain and changing world. So what does he do next?

'The answer for Kevin, a forty something widower, involves pursuing his interests in music to join with a U2 tribute band on a national tour. The experience provides him with time for healing and renewed vocation to emerge in his subconscious, all tested by various encounters that provide a parable-like narrative to explore a number of contemporary theological concerns. This takes place against the background of cultural references to *The Matrix*, Jamie Oliver, Eddy Izzard, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Tracey Emin, Dr Who and of course, U2.'

Alumnus to be bishop

The Very Revd Adrian Newman (Trinity 1985), currently Dean of Rochester is to become Suffragan Bishop of Stepney, Diocese of London. He has served in urban parishes in East London, Sheffield and Birmingham and is the only dean to have completed the London Marathon and to have cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats (to raise money for the music tradition in Rochester Cathedral).



Come to the Alumni afternoon 15 June; see back page.



A life-changing experience: mission in Zimbabwe

"I found deep sorrow and pain, but it was overwhelmed by the faith and generosity of the Christians there."

Greg Wynn



The team in Bulawayo (left-right, front): Knut Heim, Mark Brickman; faces in the crowd: Mark Petitt, Greg Wynn (also on the front cover)

Zimbabwe is a country of stunning natural beauty and rich mineral resources. Over the last three decades, it has also become a country permeated by intimidation and fear. So the idea of taking a mission from Trinity College to a school in Zimbabwe's second city, Bulawayo, represented a unique challenge.

Invited by Chris Hingley from Petra School, the team consisted of Knut Heim (an Old Testament teacher); Greg Wynn (a native South African); Mark Petitt (a former Petra School pupil now studying at Trinity); and Mark Brickman (a Brit). Based at Petra School, we led assemblies, talks with faculty and grounds staff and classes with high school pupils, preached in local churches, and conducted evening meetings for the wider community.

In the evening sessions, Knut delivered talks addressing the spiritual and political situation in Zimbabwe, encouraging Christians to become more actively involved in combating injustice and living out the gospel. He preached with diplomatic skill but also great boldness.

We also had opportunities to learn about the complex political situation in Zimbabwe with a series of unique meetings with remarkable individuals. These ranged from a highly-placed opposition member of government; a white dispossessed farmer fighting a legal battle on the basis of the title deeds of confiscated white farms; and a black pastor working in the field of peace and reconciliation in rural communities shattered by political violence.

One of the most dramatic moments on the mission came with the team's visit to an impoverished

community of dispossessed people squatting on land outside Bulawayo. This community has been subject to systematic persecution by the government over the last three years, with families being split up and forcibly dispersed in the bush hundreds of miles away. It was a disturbing and challenging visit. Knut preached on the captivity of the Israelites and then asked us all to kneel down, lament, and cry out to God. What followed was a scene worthy of the Old Testament as the Killarney inhabitants, their black pastor, and the team howled to God for the community's deliverance.

Despite the political oppression, we also found a country marked by resilient faith, entrepreneurial ingenuity, and generous hospitality. Humour, optimism and deep devotion to God all marked our visit. Before leaving, we also had the pleasure of visiting a nature reserve 90 minutes outside Bulawayo. Amidst stunning rock formations, waterfalls and rapids crashing over rocks, we feasted with hosts and friends beneath thundering warm rain.

In short – a life-changing visit, with powerful moments of seeing God move in the lives of pupils, members of the community, and the team themselves. All of us hope to return to Zimbabwe in the future and pray that the church there remains strong in faith and courageous in working for justice and peace.

To find out more about the Petra Schools in Bulawayo, see www.petrahigh.com



Hope for youth in Zimbabwe

Carl Melville



Carl (back row, holding a child) with young Zimbabweans at Penhalonga

When I visited Zimbabwe in August 2008, it was at its lowest point. The economy had just collapsed and inflation was at record levels, there was an outbreak of cholera and other preventable diseases, hospitals were unable to get in vital drugs, schools, businesses and hospitals were all closing because of staff wages. We saw children lying on the side of hospital roads, waiting for someone to help, people carrying their loved ones in wheel barrows to see what sort of help they could find. The shops were bare, but yet still open for business as if nothing had ever happened.

While in the country for a month in January 2009, a group of us had a vision, after which we all felt compassion and love for the orphans of the country. We had seen orphans in such a bad way, and they really needed our help. My vision had taken me to a piece of land with a simple house in the middle. At this house were children, able to be free and begin rebuilding their lives.

Later in 2009, I went back to Zimbabwe for six months to open Tariro House, in Harare. The same house as in my vision. The house is still running today and has about 16 young people living there, aged 11-18. They are all orphans or vulnerable children in some way. They come from different backgrounds – street children, homeless, abused, scarred, failed at school, uneducated and so on.

This was the beginning of the charity Tariro – Hope for Youth in Zimbabwe. We started in 2009 helping just eight youngsters, and now we have over 70 children on our books, spread around Zimbabwe in our Tariro youth groups, projects and groups. We have a large group of young people at Penhalonga, Mutare. Here they are learning how to farm and grow food, make and mend clothes and school uniforms as well as gathering to sing, do homework and talk about their problems.

We have just started helping a small group of children in the Chipinge area. This area is extremely poor and the children struggle to stay in school and find food. This

affects their later jobs and skills. We would like to raise enough money to fund a teacher for those in our groups near Chipinge. This is going to be a huge challenge, but one really needed to make a huge difference to their lives.

Tariro means 'hope' in Shona. And that is exactly what we want to give to these young people – hope. Jesus gives us hope and calls us his children and our conviction is that no one child has to be orphaned, alone or unloved.

Before coming to Trinity Carl Melville, a first-year ordinand, spent nearly two years with the Monastery at Mirfield, exploring monastic life and values for young people. It was there he gained his interest in Zimbabwe. To find out more about Tariro contact Carl at Trinity.

News in brief

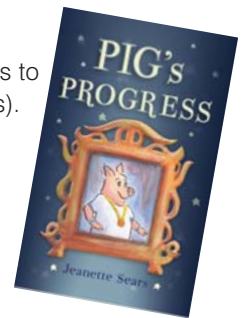
Easter missions and visits

During Holy Week students are taking part in missions in Horfield Prison (where we have a regular student placement) and Malmesbury Abbey. Some of the BS10 context group visited Uganda with their tutor, Revd Sonja Arnold. They went to Mukono Christian University and also shadowed parish clergy to gain insights into the life of the church in a very different setting. Another group went on a 10-day pilgrimage and study tour to the Holy Land led by Dr Gordon Wenham. More about these events in the next issue.

Novel with a purpose

Jeanette Sears's novel, *Pig's Progress*, is to be published soon (Piquant Publications).

It is a humorous all-age parable tracing the adventures of Parsifal, the littlest of the three Little Pigs, who is caught up in a life-and-death adventure. The idea is that the book can be used with youth groups, confirmation classes, etc, to take people through the basics of Christian doctrine in an entertaining way; there will be a free online study guide. 'It's also a fun way of re-thinking some of the parables of Jesus on important themes,' says Jeanette. 'I've used it "live" successfully with different groups before coming to Trinity, and it's good now to think of it being able to reach a wider audience in book form.'



Jeanette, who teaches Doctrine at Trinity, is also working on a series of murder mystery stories which highlight Christian doctrine, as well as a study of the theology of C.S. Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers and others. She is leading a Dorothy L. Sayers Murder Mystery Weekend at Lee Abbey, Devon, in the summer. She has recently announced that she is to leave Trinity in the summer to concentrate on her writing.

See also Mike Burke's 'novel with a purpose', page 13.



Don't miss out on the exciting events organised by Trinity!

See www.trinity-bris.ac.uk to know more

15 June Alumni Afternoon

Lunch for alumni (Booking essential) 1.00pm;
AGM of Trinity Association 2.00pm - 3.30pm;
Garden Party 3.30pm - 5.30pm; supper (booking essential); open lecture by Revd Dr Craig Bartholomew 7.30pm. Come and join us!
Bookings to Jean Williams at Trinity.

15-17 June Reading the Bible Ethically

Get to grips with biblical perspectives on Bible and law, immigration and asylum, economic challenges, poverty and development.

Papers from: Craig Bartholomew, Andrew Hartropp, Julian Rivers, Nick Spencer, Elaine Storkey, with input from Trinity faculty.

Bookings and enquiries to Samantha Hands at Trinity College Bristol.



22-24 June

The Gospel: God's Ancient Future – Global Perspectives on Mission and Evangelism

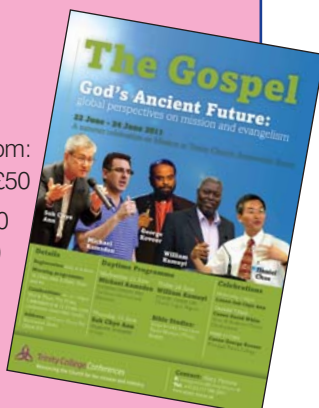
**Talks, Bible studies,
workshops, worship**

22 and 23 June 9.30am - 9.00pm:
£40 per day for alumni; others £50

24 June 9.30am - 2.15pm: £30
per day for alumni; others £40

*Lunch is included but not
accommodation.*

*Full programme and booking
form on our website or from
Mary Parsons at Trinity.*



biblefresh

It could change your world

Next Biblefresh events...

18 May

Can we Trust the Bible in the 21st Century?

2-The Bible and Jesus

Are the Gospels historical?
Did Paul invent Christianity?

Speakers: David Wenham and Steve Finamore.

28 September

Can we Trust the Bible in the 21st Century?

3-The Bible and Sex

Speakers: Andrew Goddard and Emma Ineson.

9 November

Can we Trust the Bible in the 21st Century?

4-The Bible and Violence

Speakers: Gordon Wenham and Knut Heim.

*All at 8.00pm Christ Church Clifton, Bristol with
break for refreshments followed by question time.*

*No need to book; information from Dr David Ball
at Trinity.*