



Cymdeithas Efengylaidd yn yr Eglwys yng Nghymru
Evangelical Fellowship in the Church in Wales

EFCW BWLETIN

Hydref 2009

October 2009

Date for your diary

**The Rt Rev'd Andy John, Bishop of Bangor,
is to be the main speaker at our next Ministry Conference
for clergy and others in licensed ministry and their spouses.
It is planned for 15th – 16th November 2010.**

In this issue

Summer Conference	Page 2
EFCW visitors	Page 3
Street Pastors	Page 4
'Born again'	Page 5
FCA.UK	Page 7
A Passion for Life	Page 9
Profile	Page 10
Executive committee	Page 12

Our website – www.efcw.org.uk – is currently being redeveloped

EFCW – Registered Charity No 1047004

Summer conference

We were pleased to welcome Dr Elaine Storkey as speaker for our summer conference on 6th June. Elaine gave three thought-provoking addresses, taking as her overall subject 'Challenges for the Church', looking at issues which are of great current concern and yet are unlikely to be tackled in preaching or discussion in the normal week-by-week life of a church.



The first was the 'new atheism', which was no longer willing to engage in debate with believers, but presented a hostility based on secular fundamentalism, not on reason, to all religious belief. Rather than being indifferent or defensive, we as Christians need to admit the evils of the past committed in the name of religion, affirm revealed truth and expose the intolerance of the new atheists' position.

The second was the challenge to global awareness, especially to issues of war and peace, since Jesus is the 'Prince of Peace'. The West has been drawn into war recently as a response to atrocities such as 9/11, and is committed to the theory of just war. Yet many other current conflicts throughout the world are being fought with no such scruples, and are being fuelled by massive supplies of arms largely from the West. The supply of weapons needs to be cut, conditional aid given, and active attempts made to broker peace.

The final challenge concerned relationships and identity and, although it looked at the role of sex in contemporary society, it covered a far wider scope than simply sexual morality. Created in God's image we are relational beings, yet sin has alienated us from God and other people, and the redemption offered in the gospel is essential to restore us as individuals and society.

We are very grateful to Elaine for her stimulating contributions. The conference also included two other sessions: the lunchtime AGM and, after lunch, an opportunity to discuss recent developments in the Church in Wales and the Anglican Communion with Governing Body members on the executive.

EFCW Visitors

One of EFCW's main purposes is to offer fellowship, encouragement and support to its members, especially those who feel isolated. At the AGM, the chairman announced a new initiative to enable us to fulfil this more effectively. From the New Year, Peter and Anna Bement have agreed to take on the voluntary role of EFCW visitors, having recently retired from parish ministry in Llandeilo.

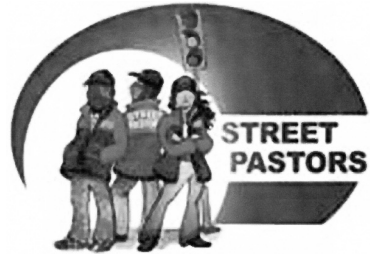
Peter and Anna's role will be one of informal support: listening, networking, sharing information, offering fellowship and encouragement. Although clergy are principally in mind – parish clergy, curates and retired ministers – all isolated members fall within their brief. If you would like them to include you in their visits, contact details will be given in the next issue of Bwletin.

Next year...?

The executive committee were disappointed that, in spite of having invited a well-known and excellent speaker, the summer conference continued the trend of falling attendances. At their next meeting they decided to ask you, the membership, what sort of event you would wish to attend, and where it should be held. Would a festival format be preferable to a conference? Is a summer Saturday the right time? Would it be better to arrange regional events rather than using a central venue? How far would you be willing to travel? And do you attend any of the major Christian celebrations such as New Wine, Spring Harvest or Keswick? – if so, which? Please write in or e-mail us to let us know. Tucked into this issue you will find a questionnaire to fill in.

Street Pastors

At the end of August, Bishop Dominic commissioned a team of twelve to serve the city of Newport as Street Pastors, the latest in a growing number of places in Wales to receive this new ministry reaching out to those on the town and city centre streets. One of the new team, a member of St Mary's Malpas, gave her testimony in church; these are extracts of what she said:



As most of you know by now, I'm part of a church initiative called Street Pastors. When we go out on the streets the question we are asked most is, who are you? You can see people looking at the uniform and reading the logo, then asking why, why do we do it and what do we hope to achieve? And we are out there asking similar questions – why do they act the way they do, why do they drink themselves into oblivion, and the truth is that there's an awful lot of people out there living without hope...

Les Isaacs who started Street Pastors in this country says he “has come to understand that people are looking for two things, time and love. Through our presence we are saying we have time for you, and through our actions we are saying we love you.” For our attitude we go to Philippians 2, where it says in verse 5 our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, and in verse 7 he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant and being born in human likeness. As I was thinking about this I became more convinced that worship is life-style. Everything we say, everything we do, whatever our jobs, wherever we are, whoever we are with, if we do it all unto God our whole lives are worship. And my hope is that, because of him who reigns in our lives, we can as a church give hope to people who are hurting.

If you want to know more about Street Pastors, and where they are working near you, see www.streetpastors.co.uk/CurrentLocations/Wales.

‘Born again’

This paper was prepared by Anna Griffiths as a discussion starter for a meeting of the EFCW Executive in July 2009, and is meant, therefore, to provoke debate rather than provide definitive answers.

What does it mean to be ‘born again’?

We invariably and inevitably understand from our own experience. Both from reading scripture and my experience of becoming a Christian, I understand being ‘born again’ as a spiritual event whereupon the Holy Spirit permeates the one of emerging faith and vivifies the human spirit within, to enable real communication and relationship with the living God. I understand it to be the event of salvation which is then to be ‘worked out’; the event of justification which is followed by the process of sanctification. It is a new existence, a status of being, entering the Kingdom of God enabling eternal life. Not just chronologically but also a condition in the here and now that is whole. Being born again is moving from ‘darkness into light’ and gaining a spiritual life – becoming a whole, healed / saved, human being and a member of the family of God – in Christ.

However, this doesn’t seem to be universally accepted!

A total unbeliever might reduce spiritual rebirth to a merely psychological phenomenon which may be reduced to chemistry. I have read a good deal by a ‘theistic’ neuropsychologist¹ who acknowledges the reality of brain pattern changes. Here we have an example of the science and theology interface where science may answer the question how and theology the question why.

That *something* occurs in such an experience seems empirically sound – neurologists have discovered by MRI scanning the human brain deeply in meditation or prayer, that the activity of the brain is profoundly reduced to the point at which it is explicable that the

¹ Eugene D’Aquili – see also Andrew Newberg; e.g. ‘Why God won’t go away’ by D’Aquili, Newberg and Vince Rause, Ballantine Books, NY, 2002

mind cannot distinguish between ‘self’ and ‘other’ and so attains what mystics might call a ‘union with the ground of being.’ However, again ‘spirituality’ is reduced to either psychological or chemical sources. The more open minded, d’Aquili et al., might acknowledge that some ‘deity’ is involved, that God is in fact the initiator of any physical phenomena. The more closed contend that we simply haven’t the knowledge yet to understand it, so ‘God’ is a convenient explicatory cause for humanity at present.

But what of the ‘churchgoer’ who is dismissive of ‘born again’ and uses it rather as a pejorative? What is it to them? What of the sacramentalist, Roman or Anglican, who believes that baptism is the point at which one is ‘born again’ or becomes a Christian?

Are we merely getting caught up in semantics and semiotics – or *is* there something very real, spiritual, a transformation by the power of God, that is occurring to an individual? If this is so, then is it that many of the folk that I come across have not been ‘born again’ and are not therefore ‘in Christ’? Is Pentecostalism which insists on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second blessing, actually referring to rebirth rather than a second distinct experience? Similarly, that the renewal movements in other denominations are simply using this second experience as a cover for their own entry into the Kingdom of God?

I am asking these questions since it is very apparent to me that when I meet someone else there is either an instant spiritual rapport – or there is not – either we are talking the same language – EFCW, Tear Fund e.g. – or we most distinctly are not. Is there not dialogue to be had to discover just what each sector of the church is understanding?

Is this the divide, or one of them, between the evangelical church and the liberal ‘church’ – or is it a red herring?

This question over rebirth is a bit like the Reformation debate over what happens at the Eucharist, is it simply symbolic, a memorial, or is it something more? Faith seeking understanding is good, but on this subject? Ultimately I’d be with Calvin’s sentiment when he stated of the mystery of the Eucharist: ‘I’d rather experience it than understand it.’

However, if it is truly substantive and, as I believe, an essential event for salvation, then surely we should be bolder in our evangelism and discipleship and not shove it in a corner marked ‘difficult question, avoid at all costs’?

I wonder if anyone would like to comment on this subject? If so I’d be delighted to hear from you. You can contact me at tudor@zoo.co.uk

Anna Griffiths



FCA UK

**The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (UK and Ireland)
was formally launched with a major day conference
“Be Faithful” held on 6th July in Westminster Central Hall.**

The hall was substantially filled with well over 1000 people from throughout the British Isles, and representatives from across the Anglican Communion. Contrary to hostile press reports, the general tone was balanced, positive and non-schismatic but loyal to the Anglican Communion and its spiritual heritage.

The morning session served to set the background for the conference, with worship, Bible exposition, and features on the Anglican Communion and Anglican identity. The afternoon, ending with Holy Communion, looked at the scene within the British Isles, with an emphasis on local mission. During the afternoon, Tudor Griffiths was invited to speak as representative of Wales.

In what ways do you hope that the FCA will serve the situation over the border in Wales?

First, I am delighted to have this opportunity today to indicate that this is the launch of FCA UK and not FCA England, because there is more to the UK than England.

Wales is different in at least two particular respects. The Church in Wales is disestablished – has been since 1920 – and secondly its culture is bilingual. We have our own particular traditions looking back to the Celtic church rather than Augustine coming to Canterbury, and within Wales we have our revival tradition. Contrary to some thinking, Anglicans were very much part of the 1904 revival. But the experience of the 20th century has been of a church that has been pretty battered but it has survived with a proud sense of its history and distinct identity. Within that and faithful to the *hen fam* – the old mother – is a major stream of orthodox Anglicans who are very much aware of a double commitment – to the Gospel as received and to the Church in Wales. We need to stress in Wales that the FCA is not a schismatic movement. In Wales there are a number of us, identified with the FCA and committed to the Anglican Covenant process, longing and praying to see the Church in Wales committed to the Covenant.

Within Wales the FCA gives a clear context of mutual support to the community of orthodox Christians – evangelicals like me and those Catholics who have problems with the ordination of women to priesthood and episcopate. There may not be agreement on the issue, but what FCA has shown is a common concern for the confessed faith. In Wales we don't have many parishes that can be clearly identified for instance as evangelical, but in my experience most Anglican Christians are fairly conservative with a small 'c' and welcome a clear expression of Christian teaching and faith that we find in the Jerusalem declaration. The FCA sends out signals that it's not just OK; it's good to believe these things.

FCA serves in terms of giving us fellowship within a wider community – both within the UK, but also beyond and further than England.

We look beyond and value links with Christians and churches in Africa and other parts of the world. We are a small Province, which has its advantages – but FCA can prevent us getting too introspective or introverted. It helps us to see the bigger picture of what it means to be an Anglican Christian.

So basically the FCA encourages us to be positive and confident in our witness within the Church in Wales and committed to the Church in Wales.

Tudor Griffiths



A Passion for Life

A Passion for Life is a national project aimed at reclaiming Easter 2010. The idea is that local evangelical churches will work together to plan and host a variety of ‘mission activities’.

As part of the project a series of excellent training DVDs, manuals and idea guides have been produced, and are available from the Good Book Company; they can be used either to prepare for Easter 2010 or preparing a parish for mission at other times. The training focuses on prayer – that we would pray for open doors, how to engage with our local communities, and help in preparing carefully to proclaim the gospel clearly.

I thoroughly recommend *A Passion for Life* and look forward to seeing God work across Britain at Easter 2010, as well as evangelicals working together.

Further details from www.apassionforlife.org.uk.

Andy Grimwood.

Personal profile



Ann M^cKnight was elected lay representative for St David's diocese at the AGM in July. Ann writes:

As my generational background is Church in Wales, I am pleased to be the new lay representative for EFCW in the Diocese of St David's.

Most of my life has been centred in a small area of South Wales. I was born and brought up in Barry, though my husband and I moved to Rhoose after we married and our two sons and my extended family still live in the same area.

We belonged to the church in Rhoose and our family life followed a normal pattern until the onset of my husband's terminal illness. At this point God became the strength of my life and my husband's death became a life-changing event in more ways than one. Through it, as time passed, I began to fulfil God's purpose for my life.

In 2003, in answer to God's call, I resigned as Church Warden and subsequently moved to Aberystwyth to become a full-time student of the Aberystwyth Academy of Christian Discipleship, part of St Michael's Church. It was this that marked the start of God's present path for me as, at the end of that academic year, I started learning Welsh. In 2006, I transferred to St. Mair's, the Welsh language Anglican Church also administered by Stuart Bell, and a year later became Pastoral Assistant, working through the medium of Welsh.

In 2007 I started training as a Lay Reader, a course which I have recently completed. I will be licensed in St. David's Cathedral in October.

I do not know what else God has planned for me, but I know that He has 'plans to prosper me and not harm me, plans to give me hope and a future', and that I can safely leave everything to Him and humbly follow His lead.

Ann McKnight



Have your say!

The EFCW Executive would welcome hearing from EFCW members with comments on issues raised, details of local activities, or short articles you may wish to contribute. Contributions should preferably be e-mailed to david@pagecf.plus.com with the subject 'EFCW Bwletin'. For the next edition, in February 2010, these should arrive not later than mid-January. The website www.efcw.org.uk welcomes similar contributions – please e-mail the webmaster, Rev'd John White, at jwhite74@googlemail.com. The Executive retains the right of editorial discretion with regard to anything submitted for publication.

Executive Committee

At the AGM on 6th June, Andrew Knight and Tudor Griffiths were re-elected as chair and vice-chair, Andy Grimwood as clerical rep for St Asaph, John White as lay rep for Swansea & Brecon, John Bewley as lay rep for Monmouth and Ann M^cKnight as lay rep for St David's. Since no nominations were received to fill the vacancies for a lay representative for Llandaff diocese, or for clerical representatives for Monmouth or Bangor dioceses, it was agreed that the executive could co-opt until the next AGM.

The executive committee for the coming year is:

<i>Chair</i>	Canon Andrew Knight
<i>Vice-Chair</i>	Canon Dr Tudor Griffiths
<i>Secretary</i>	David Page
<i>Treasurer / membership</i>	Pauline Page
<i>Governing Body rep.</i>	Ven Dr Will Strange
<i>Bangor rep. (clerical)</i>	<i>vacant</i>
<i>Bangor rep. (lay)</i>	Grace Meirion-Jones
<i>St. David's rep. (clerical)</i>	Rev'd Ian Aveson
<i>St. David's rep. (lay)</i>	Ann M ^c Knight
<i>Llandaff rep. (clerical)</i>	Rev'd Melanie Prince
<i>Llandaff rep. (lay)</i>	<i>vacant</i>
<i>St. Asaph rep. (clerical)</i>	Andy Grimwood
<i>St. Asaph rep. (lay)</i>	Anna Griffiths
<i>Monmouth rep. (clerical)</i>	David Parfitt (co-opted)
<i>Monmouth rep. (lay)</i>	John Bewley
<i>Swansea & Brecon rep. (clerical)</i>	Canon Andrew Loat
<i>Swansea & Brecon rep. (lay)</i>	John White

Arthur Walsh, a member of the executive committee until the AGM in June, suffered a stroke shortly afterwards and is now living in a nursing home in Weston-Super-Mare. Please remember Arthur, his wife Thelma (who has at present moved to Weston to be near him) and their family in your prayers.