

WYCLIFFE HALL

- OXFORD -



Newsletter

HILARY TERM 2010



<i>Principal's Letter</i>	2	<i>Wycliffe Conferences</i>	12
<i>Staff News</i>	3	<i>Student News</i>	13
<i>Theological Education with Islam in Mind</i>	4	<i>Alumni News</i>	14
<i>Pushing the Mystery Button</i>	6	<i>Missions</i>	15
<i>Journeying with God</i>	8		
<i>Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics</i>	10		

Principal's Letter



Dear Friends

Is the study of theology useful and helpful for those called into the pastoral ministry?

My own answer is a resounding 'yes.' The reasons are two-fold.

First, the pastoral ministry with its responsibilities of teaching and oversight is

underpinned by deep and important principles of Christian theology. It does matter what we teach. It does matter that we have good foundations for pastoral practice. Secondly, it is important for Christian ministers to be well-equipped in theological argument and thought. I mean it. We need to be able to argue our case. We need to understand the challenges to Christian teaching which may come from either within or without the church.

However, there are some challenges which come from this engagement. Perhaps the most acute that I deal with is the relationship between academic study and Christian conviction and faith; more specifically, whether particular approaches to academic theology might be seen as incompatible with the revelation of Scripture. I would suggest three things in response to this challenge. First, we need to be able to engage with the arguments on their own terms – there are approaches to academic theology that fail to give due weight to Scriptural revelation, and we need to be able to critique such an approach. Secondly, we need to be prepared for difficult questions that might come our way

and think through how we respond. Thirdly, we need to submit ourselves to Christ under his Word, displaying holiness and faithful discipleship in our academic commitments which are part of our life in Christ and not to be separated from our faith.

For staff at Wycliffe this plays out in a number of ways. We are committed to our study and research feeding our teaching and preparation for ministry. We equip our tutors with significant study leave in order to facilitate this. We also encourage tutors to publish, not for the sake of it, but to contribute to both church and academy as part of our mission. All of this feeds into students' preparation for ministry. Under Christ I believe they are better equipped for that ministry by this engagement.

Our staff are flourishing. In September, Laura Wu became my new PA and the Revd Dr James Robson recently joined us. James comes to us from Oak Hill College and he will be leading our Old Testament teaching, working alongside Jenni Williams. Other news is that our newly-approved University course is underway. This course is examined by continuous assessment which enables all Wycliffe students to be offered University of Oxford courses. Finally, we say goodbye to Kevin Kinghorn who has been a part of Wycliffe for over ten years, most recently working on the American visiting students programme; he and his family are returning to the USA where we pray for God's blessing on their future.

Thank you for your support, prayerful and financial, of our ministry at Wycliffe.

With my love and prayers.

Richard Turnbull

Contact Us

Wycliffe Hall, 54 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PW

T 01865 274200 F 01865 274215 E enquiries@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk W www.wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

Admissions John Michaux
Telephone 01865 274205
E-mail admissions@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

DBTS Jacob Waldenmaier
Telephone 01865 274212
E-mail dbts@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

Friends of Wycliffe Hall
Telephone 01865 274200
E-mail friends@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

Library Chris Leftley
Telephone 01865 274204
E-mail library@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

Development Peter Walker
Telephone 01865 284876
E-mail development@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

Newsletter Catherine Atherstone
E-mail newsletter@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk
Designed by Holywell Press Ltd
www.holywellpress.com

Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics Katie Law
Telephone 01865 292933
E-mail admin@theocca.org

Staff Vacancies Helen Mitchell
Telephone 01865 274201
E-mail helen.mitchell@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

Photo credits
Thanks to Sarah Hayes for photos from Wycliffe visits to the Holy Land and Uganda; to Becky Derbyshire and Adam Chapman for their graduation photos; and to Holy Trinity, Brompton for the photo of Archie and Sam Coates.

Staff News

Conversation with James Robson

I have come to Oxford with my wife, Bridget, who is a speech and language therapist, and our daughters, Anna (13) and Naomi (12) – not forgetting our three guinea pigs! It is a huge move for us, particularly for Anna and Naomi as it is their first move for nine years. So we have some trepidation as we change jobs, schools, church and area but we are looking forward to serving in a new context and being part of the Wycliffe community.

I am excited about teaching Old Testament and Hebrew. The Old Testament is much neglected within, and maligned outside, the church and yet it was Jesus' Bible and is two-thirds of ours. My hope is to give the Old Testament to ministry students so that they in turn can give it to their congregations; and so that they may be formed, fashioned and shaped by it. It is also a great privilege and opportunity to be a learner and contributor within Oxford University.

In my own devotions, I have been using Dale Ralph Davis' *2 Kings: The Power and the Fury*; and Tom Wright's *Hebrews for Everyone* both of which have been very encouraging. It has been a white-knuckle ride over the last few months. Prayers have been answered in amazing ways and we have been surrounded by wonderful love and care from friends. However, while a lot has fallen into place, some aspects of the move have been less easy and the challenge is to



keep trusting and keep focused on Christ, not to become self-absorbed in the midst of all the change and pressures.

I am a person full of passion for many things, so if I were to choose a 'once in a lifetime' dinner guest I would want to choose someone who shared one of my enthusiasms. So maybe Viv Richards,

the cricketer; or Stephen Venables, the first Briton to climb Mount Everest solo; or maybe Franz Delitzsch, an Old Testament scholar who combined his studies with a vibrant Christian life; or, perhaps above all, St Jerome who, back in the fourth century, campaigned to translate the Old Testament from the original Hebrew rather than from Greek!

Revd Dr James Robson takes up the post of Tutor in Old Testament and Hebrew in January 2010.

Tutors' speaking engagements outside Wycliffe

There are many opportunities for Wycliffe tutors to serve the wider church community. Right across the board, they are involved in teaching at church weekends away, providing input at diocesan events, speaking at conferences and contributing at other theological institutions. Here is a flavour of what tutors have recently been involved in.

As well as three trips to the USA since the summer (to California, South Carolina and Arizona), Richard Turnbull spoke at a Norwich Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship study day, delivered seminars at the Liverpool Diocesan conference, preached at St Andrew's, Oxford, led a mission weekend at St James', Ryde in the Isle of Wight and spoke at the Cornhill Training Course in London.



Simon Vibert spoke at a weekend away for Trinity Church, Buxton and a men's breakfast at Christ Church, Virginia Water. He also led a day on 'Preaching with Passion' for the Solent Gospel Partnership and spoke at a Bible convention in Goring, Reading. Will Donaldson led seminars on aspects of Christian Leadership at the New Wine Summer Conference and Benno van den Toren has been on study leave, teaching and writing on biblical ethics in an African context.

Liz Hoare taught a week's MA course in spiritual direction at Durham and Justin Hardin spoke at Trinity College, Bristol on 'Challenging Traditional Readings of Galatians'. Jenni Williams led a CME day for Guildford Diocese on 'The Old Testament in the New Testament' and Andrew Atherstone has spoken on the Reformation at the Bath and Wells Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship and the South West Gospel Partnership.

Peter Walker was in New Zealand in July where he lectured a Biblical Theology MA module at Laidlaw College, Auckland; followed by speaking engagements in Nelson Diocese, at Moore College in Sydney, and at CMS and Ridley College in Melbourne. He gave a paper on Pauline chronology at the British New Testament Society and delivered his day-long Bible Overview for St Paul's Theological Centre, London, and for St John's, Blackheath.

Peter Walker at an event at the Vatican, meeting Lutfi Laham, the Greek Catholic Patriarch in Damascus

Theological Education with Islam in Mind

Nearly one in four people is a Muslim. What does this mean for a college equipping future church leaders for engagement with the world that 'God so loved'?



There is a polarisation amongst evangelicals about responses to Islam: should we be confrontational or should we be eirenic? The question arises about our mission to Muslims as well as about our socio-political relationships with Islamic communities and our theological responses to Islam. I want to suggest that the question is wrongly put. Of course the

followers of Jesus should be peacemakers – and, of course, there will be plenty that needs to be confronted in a quarter of the world's population! Rather than dichotomising hostility and peace, we need to ask how we can be truthful and faithful; and that has implications for every aspect of ministerial training.

Being truthful about Muslims. Before we can make a biblical response, we need to ascertain to what we are responding. Here are some of the questions that students need to ask:

Who are these Muslims to whom we are responding? Where does the particular individual in front of me fit into his/her community? These questions enable us to see Muslims as the human beings that they are, to distinguish between the vast range of people labeled 'Muslim', and to see the needs and concerns of the people with whom God is calling us to interact.

What informs their beliefs and actions? This question takes us first to the classical texts: the Qur'an, the Hadith and the classical interpretations that result in the various schools of Islamic law. We then recognise that it is but a small proportion of Muslims that study such texts: their understandings are determined by the particular interpretations of their communities, and also by such factors as culture, history, language, local religions and human need.

Laying foundations for faithful responses. Exploring such questions inevitably sends the student to his/her theological and ministerial studies with many new questions. Are Muslim views of family and community sometimes nearer to biblical models than western Christian views? How should we think about the Qur'an's interpretations of biblical figures? To what extent does the Islamic link between religion and politics mirror the Byzantine empire of Muhammad's time? What might a Christian state look like? How does the New Testament deal with political and territorial questions? What should we think about religious war? How does the example of Jesus help us to communicate with people who base their actions on law? What issues does a disciple of Jesus from a Muslim background face? How should we pray for Muslims in our public prayers? Every course studied is relevant!

Being truthful about ourselves. Reading the Bible in this, as in any other, context, reflects the questions back onto ourselves. Who are we, not only as Christians, but also as members of our various socio-political groupings as church, parish, ethnic group and country? How does that affect our perceptions and relationships? Is it really the Bible that informs the way we speak about Islam and relate to Muslims? What might it mean to walk in the way of the cross? We (teachers as well as students!) come face to face with our own fears and prejudices as well as with God's passions for justice, righteousness and salvation, and have fresh motivation for our studies of history, of pastoralia and of hermeneutics.

Faith, hope and love? Such a learning process should lead to the understanding of both positive and negative aspects of Islam, to a realisation that the eirenic/confrontational dichotomy is over-simplistic and, above all, to seeing Muslims as the huge variety of different human beings that they are – beings who are both made in the image of God and fallen; people for whom Christ died. The result will be a change in focus for our questions. Where we may have been concerned with preserving our freedoms and our Christian communities, we will become more concerned for the welfare of the Muslims. We will see that the prior question to 'What should we do?' is, 'What is God doing in this person, family, community?' 'What should we do?' then becomes, 'How can we honour Him and further His work?'

And so we come to our devotional lives, our pastoral training, our mission and evangelism, our teaching and preaching ministries:

- Can we develop confident faith in the good and wise God who rules the world, who has created Muslims as well as other human beings, who has acted in Christ, who will equip us with the Holy Spirit, and who is well able to honour His own Name?
- Can we live in the light of the sure hope of our own salvation and the urgent need of all peoples for that hope? Can we have hope of His good plans for His fallen world, for our corrupted societies and for saving Muslim people?
- Can we therefore learn how to love, in practice as well as in theory, both Christians who disagree with us and the quarter of the world that is Muslim?

The question of practical love takes us back to the first area of study; for it is difficult to love in practice if we do not understand who people are and how they act and think. But now we have a new motivation and new questions: what really matters to these people, and how can I minister to them? How can I help a bereaved family? How should a Christian minister behave if invited to a Muslim wedding? What is the appropriate use of both Christian and Muslim festivals? Which of their beliefs can be starting points for introducing them to Jesus? And how can I help the people in my church to embark on the journey towards biblical, Christ-like relationships with Muslims?

Dr Ida Glaser
Associate Tutor

Director of the Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies in Oxford

The Chavasse Lectures 2009-2010 Presented by Brian Griffiths at Wycliffe Hall

Markets, Money and Morals A Vision for Capitalism after the Crisis

The financial crisis has shaken the foundations of global market capitalism and poses a significant challenge to Christian mission in the modern world. In these lectures, Brian Griffiths offers a vision for the future based on the teaching of Jesus. The lectures will explore the spirit of market capitalism and the reforms needed to deal with environmental issues, global poverty, financial instability, and the culture necessary for people to thrive.



The first two lectures have taken place and covered 'The Teachings of Jesus & the Question of Money'; and 'Hard Questions for Bruised Bankers'. The remaining three lectures, to which all are warmly invited, will be on Tuesdays at 5pm as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 26 January 2010 | Restoring Hope for the World's Poor |
| 9 February 2010 | Scientific Evidence and Environmental Stewardship |
| 2 March 2010 | A Culture of Consumerism |

Brian Griffiths is Vice Chairman of Goldman Sachs International and director of Times Newspapers and Herman Miller. Previously he taught economics at the London School of Economics, was Dean of the City University Business School, Head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, and a Director of the Bank of England. For the past eleven years he was Chairman of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth Fund. He is currently a member of the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs.



Open Day lunch, November 2009

Pushing the Mystery Button: Clarifying What is at Stake

Whenever the Christian tradition has sought to describe God, it has always been with the caveat that God remains mysterious in various ways. But in what ways exactly? And, relatedly, when is it appropriate to appeal to the 'mysteries of God' in defending our own affirmations about God from possible objections?

The sharpest objection to Christian doctrinal claims such as the Trinity and the Incarnation is that they are logically absurd. In response, a minority of Christian writers historically have suggested that God is somehow 'above' the laws of logic. Yet the Christian majority position has been that logical consistency must surely mark all things secular and divine. After all, our ability to affirm *anything* depends on what philosophers have termed the Law of Non-Contradiction – a principle of logic which states that something cannot *be* the case and also *not be* the case.

If the Law of Non-Contradiction did not apply to God and his interaction with our world, then we would have no way of identifying heresy or stating the uniqueness of Christ. The claim that Jesus singularly atoned for our sins automatically rules out the idea that Jesus *did not* singularly atone for our sins. It also rules out an infinite number of other logically incompatible claims: e.g. that Buddha singularly atoned for our sins, that Winston Churchill singularly atoned for our sins, and so forth. Without relying on the Law of Non-Contradiction, we would have no way of saying that these claims are incompatible with the claims of Scripture. To allay the concern that nothing – not even logic – should be placed 'above' God, we can view the laws of logic as things we discover about the nature of God. God is, after all, a God of order and not chaos.

However, while acknowledging that our claims about God should be logically consistent, we should note that certain appeals to mystery *are* appropriate for Christians to make. First, there are Christian affirmations which are simply

unexplainable. For instance, how is it that God is a self-sustaining being, the cause of his own existence? What is the full, causal explanation of how God's 'speaking the world into existence' brought about the formation of physical matter? Answers to these questions are simply beyond our ability as humans to comprehend. Importantly, though, there is no logical inconsistency in what Christians affirm about the necessary existence of God and God's creation of the world.

A second category to which Christians will at times appeal is that of *tension*, which arises when the truth of one affirmation tends to come at the expense of another affirmation. The Biblical witness is that King David was a man 'after God's own heart'. And yet, we read of David's apparent acknowledgement (in response to the curses of Shimei) that he had indeed been a 'man of blood' (2 Sam. 16). Although there is nothing logically contradictory here, the more we affirm that David was a 'man of blood', the more difficult it becomes to maintain that David really was a man 'after God's own heart'. Still, there are ways to resolve this tension. For instance, we might note that God prizes humility and that David consistently admitted his mistakes and shortcomings.

A third category for Christian use is *paradox*, which refers to an apparent contradiction. The doctrine of the Trinity – that God is both three and one – reads like a contradiction. Yet, on further exploration, Trinitarian theology does not claim that God is 'three' in the same sense that he is 'one'. God is said to have one *essence* and to be one, unified being; he is said to be three *persons*. The surface contradiction turns out to be only an *apparent* contradiction.

We can affirm paradoxes easily enough when we know how the paradox is to be resolved. The more difficult issue is whether we should continue to affirm paradoxes when



Wycliffe alumni graduating, September 2009

we do not know how to resolve them. Some Christians view scripture as affirming both that God causes all events *and* that humans make free choices without being caused to do so. If one holds these views and can find no way of resolving the apparent contradiction, should one continue to affirm both?

One resource available to Christians in such a dilemma is the use of *models* – something which scientists also need to use. For instance, a scientist might use the model of billiard balls (which bounce off walls and off each other) in describing the activity of molecules. Since models rely on analogy, they inevitably break down at certain points. Thus, models only give us approximate knowledge of that which we are seeking to understand. Accordingly, if one were to appeal to models in affirming the yet-to-be-resolved dual

affirmations of divine causal control and human free will, one would need to acknowledge that there are further concepts more central to the discussion which we have as yet not identified. The appeal to approximate knowledge does allow one to avoid the charge of logical inconsistency (since models aren't meant to be unqualified claims about how things really are). But it does mean acknowledging that one's affirmations contain only *part* of the story.

The tools of philosophy cannot tell us when it is appropriate to appeal to models in making affirmations about God. But as with the other kinds of appeal to mystery, philosophy can help us clarify what is at stake.

Dr Kevin Kinghorn
Tutor in Philosophy and Philosophical Theology

Farewell to the Kinghorn Family

My connection with Wycliffe Hall goes back eleven years, when I came as a first year doctoral student. Over the years I have been blessed to know so many staff and students whose commitment to Christ is evident every day. I have long believed that Wycliffe is strategically placed to offer the combination of spiritual formation and world-class scholarship which provides the deep roots pastors need for a lifetime of effective ministry. I am grateful for the opportunities over the years to contribute to the Hall both as a student and, for the past six years, tutoring students in philosophy.

In January 2010 my family and I will move back to the U.S. – specifically, the state of Kentucky. We will be living about an hour away both from my parents and from my wife, Barbara's

parents. One primary reason for moving is to have more time to spend with them, and they are excited about the prospect of seeing their grandchildren regularly! I will be teaching philosophy at Asbury Theological Seminary, where I will continue to count myself a friend of Wycliffe Hall.



Student Profile – Felicity Davies

It matters which side of the hill you're born! Living in Gloucestershire as a small child the whole village worshipped on a Sunday; one side of the valley in the Church, but our side was very definitely Chapel! And Chapel I stayed until the mid-90s when we 'converted' to the Church of England.

God had been speaking to me about full time ministry for a while but I thought that everyone felt the same as I did and said "Here I am, send me". Well, no, said the wise Christians around me as they helped me to piece together pictures and words that I had had over a number of years. God kept on prodding and I kept right on wondering how he could really want ME, until a direct prophecy hit me so hard that I could no longer hide – anywhere – and here I am.

My poor husband started out saying, "If I'd wanted to be a vicar's husband I'd have married a vicar!" but he has ended up happily leaving work and selling our family home of 23 years without a backwards glance. After 27 years spent looking after ailing bodies as a specialised pharmacist, I was about to embark on training to capture and nurture people's souls for the Lord. Awesome!

God's timing and organisation are amazing as both our children are now virtually self-sufficient. He provided a perfect replacement for my job, and has opened up a whole new challenge for Tony as a support worker here in Oxford.

So, now that I'm here, how does it feel? Well, I'm learning loads just by being here, let alone through the teaching and study. Being part of a community that is growing and learning in love together is better than I could possibly have imagined. I don't have any theological training and haven't come with lots of preaching experience, so everything is a big learning curve – right down to 'how to write an essay'.

I really don't know where I'm heading after this. All I have done and will continue to do is to walk in humble obedience with our amazing God – one step at a time.



Journeying with God

Joy in the desert: 'exiles' but 'elect'

As new students here at Wycliffe you may be experiencing simultaneously great joy on arrival but also deep apprehension, hope but also fear as to what lies ahead. The Psalmist spoke of 'joy in the desert' (Psa. 63); and the apostle Peter at the start of his first letter speaks clearly to encourage Christian believers who find themselves experiencing these mixed emotions. We can also be encouraged by his words today.

You may feel lost or slightly disorientated as you start your time here; but remember you are 'called by God' and precious in his sight. We find this in Peter's opening greeting – 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect exiles...' Why does he refer to them as 'exiles'? Perhaps they felt rather far away geographically from all the action (in Jerusalem); or perhaps they were feeling socially dislocated – a tiny minority surrounded by a majority pagan culture. For whatever reason, Peter describes their situation as like being in 'exile'. But Peter knows there is a paradox here, which he conveys brilliantly by describing the exiles as 'elect': they feel like 'exiles' but deep down they are chosen by God – precious and not forgotten.

You too may feel geographically dislocated – far from home (bereft of London perhaps?!), missing your former employment; but you are in this place as someone 'called' and 'precious'. You may feel a bit of a social misfit, wondering if you belong, if you will find friends; but you are 'loved' – in fact, Peter goes on to tell you that God the Holy Trinity is right behind you: we are God's elect, his chosen, his beloved – known by the Father, forgiven by Jesus, and being sanctified by the Spirit.

There may also be times when you find being at Wycliffe really tough; but Peter would encourage you to hold on to the fact that you have an awesome future. Peter knows that he's speaking to people who are (or will be) going through the general trials of life and possibly also persecution. Yet he encourages them (and us) that these do not mean we are abandoned by God. On the contrary, God is somehow at work in all these circumstances – with the purpose of 'refining our faith', which is 'precious' to him, even more so than gold. We are not just to see God's purposes in the present, but also his big purpose for the future. The end-game is 'an inheritance kept in heaven for us that can never perish, spoil, or fade.' That is what is stored up for those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus – an 'eternal life' which gives us a present 'living hope'. So, one day, there will be no more of this living by faith, no more of this theological study about him, or even writing books about him – instead we will see him! He will wipe away every tear and we will be filled with 'inexpressible and glorious joy'. Peter wants his hearers to know that their belief in Jesus, their passionate love for Jesus, is not going to be wasted.

Isn't that a hope which can stir our hearts? Isn't that a project that can ignite in us a greater passion and hope for Jesus? Isn't that a future that can sustain us through some of our present trials and tribulations? And that glorious joy is not just a future hope, but a present one – one which we experience simultaneously with our difficulties. We may feel lost and in exile, but *right now* we have been found by God and are eternally secure. We may feel life's trials are just too much, but *right now* we have a living hope.

So if ever during your time at Wycliffe you feel something of an exile, hang on in there. Do not abandon ship. Trust in God's past call, his real presence, his future gift and even in the hard times, praise God for the future joy. As the Psalmist said, even though in a 'dry and weary land', "My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you."

Revd Dr Peter Walker
Associate Vice-Principal & Director of Development

Background image of the Judean desert, January 2009

Being in transition: rooted but ready to move

I don't belong here at Wycliffe. Neither do you. Yet I am supposed to be here. So are you. The writer of Hebrews 11 reminds us that Abraham, because he trusted God, left the land that he had and trusted God to travel to another, living in tents, waiting for a better city. He never settled. He kept moving on, waiting for a 'heavenly country'. He and the others listed in the chapter called themselves 'foreigners' and 'sojourners'.

On the other hand, Jeremiah 29 tells us of God's command to settle in a place that was quite definitely *not* God's promised land. Through Jeremiah, God told his people that, although they were indeed foreigners and sojourners, they should settle in Babylon, plant in it, get on with life in it, and pray for this place in which they didn't belong (vv 6-7). They should even build houses there, whereas Abraham was called to be a nomad. The city of Babylon was not the heavenly city and yet God told them to be a part of it.

So this is the witness of the Bible to the life of the believer – this tension of settling but passing through, belonging but not-belonging. If we do not hold the two together, we get out of balance. We either end up looking always to the next thing, in which case we can't be a source of good news in the place where we are; or we put down roots so strong that we cannot be, as we are called to be, wanderers for the gospel, willing to go where we are called.

So how then should we live? As this year begins and we have moved in and unpacked our suitcases, I want to ask all of us to check we've got the balance right.

On the one hand, the temptation can sometimes be to feel we are just passing through – all Hebrews 11. Maybe we're fired up for ministry and the thought of being here seems like a frustrating hiatus, a slowing down. We're already asking ourselves how we can fill any moment we're not in a lecture with ministry – outside, out there. Maybe we can't wait to go back to our home church in the holidays so we can pick up the reins of our old ministries. Maybe people have warned you that you just have to grit your teeth and get through this time; then you can get on with the 'real' ministry.

To those of us feeling this way, I want to offer the encouragement of Jeremiah. The Lord himself has sent us here and asks us to stay here for this time – here, in this community. He asks us to live and work *here*. To dig into books, grow essays, plant enduring friendships, grow ourselves and each other through discussion, prayer and acts of service. And outside Wycliffe also, we should sow the gospel, build a life, cultivate our local pub, grow people in our church. We don't belong here but, for this time, we have been called here. So let's unpack properly, put our clothes in the drawers, close our suitcase and put it in the cupboard. The Lord will tell us when it is time to pack again.

On the other hand, maybe we're so relieved to get here that the last thing we want to be reminded of is that we're a foreigner and a sojourner here. Maybe we've had endless battles – spiritual, ecclesiological, financial – to get here and now it feels like a Sabbath rest. I hope that you do find Wycliffe a place of great blessing; but at the same time we have to hold lightly to it, because sooner or later, the call of God will move us on. Here we need the encouragement of Hebrews 11 and the challenge is this: let's close our suitcase by all means, but we mustn't throw it out! The Lord will tell us when the times change and we will indeed be packing up again.

Revd Jenni Williams
Tutor in Old Testament

These are edited versions of two homilies given to new students in Wycliffe chapel in September 2009

Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics

“Your relationship with God is just a psychological crutch”

Has anyone ever told you that your faith is a ‘crutch?’ I remember getting into a cab outside a central London church. The cabbie took one look at my Bible and launched into his opinion of Christianity. He explained to me that belief in God is a crutch for weak, pathetic people who don’t have the strength to take responsibility for their own lives. When I answered, “Thank you very much”, with just a hint of irony, he blustered on with, “Well, I’m just saying it for your own good. A girl like you doesn’t need religion!”

This idea that Christian faith is a psychological crutch for needy people is a pervasive one, based on a number of assumptions.

God as a psychological projection

The first is that God is merely a psychological projection: he doesn’t actually exist in any real sense, but exists only in the minds of his followers, who have created him out of their own need – a need for a father-figure or a need to give significance to their existence.

The most famous proponent of this view was the Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). In arguing against the existence of God, Freud theorised that one’s view of God springs from the view one has of one’s father. When people grow up and find themselves thrust into the cruel, cold world, they look for a haven of security and protection from it. An adult can no longer look to parents for this protection, if he or she is to maintain dignity. Yet, Freud mused, we look for another ‘Someone’ to do this job for us and this leads to the idea of a ‘Higher Power’ or God.

From this perspective, God is merely a creation of the human mind, a projection emanating from human need and desire rather than a distinct reality. For Freud, God is made in humanity’s own image, the ‘ultimate wish-fulfilment’, the end product of human desire for a loving father.

How might Christians respond to this? Can God really be explained away so easily by one aspect of psychology? One obvious point to make is that the argument about projection cuts both ways. After all, isn’t it equally possible to say that Freud and other atheists deny the existence of God out of a need to escape from a father-figure, or to argue that the non-existence of God springs from a deep-seated desire for no father-figure to exist?

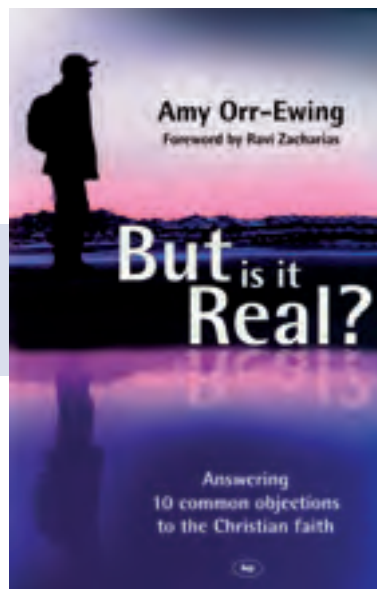
Clearly this doesn’t prove that God is real. Yet it does help us see that Freud’s arguments cannot prove that God does not exist; at the same time they do help us tackle the question of projection. After all, dismissing God as a psychological projection while claiming neutrality in our own psyche is disingenuous at best and cannot be an adequate basis for rejecting God.

It also quickly becomes apparent that a Freudian belief in God as a human projection cannot provide an explanation for the Christian faith of converts such as C. S. Lewis or Alister McGrath, who would rather not believe but find themselves compelled by the evidence that Christianity is true and real.

In fact, we may go further by suggesting that this desire for a God (who can fulfil our needs and provide moral order) exists precisely because human beings have been created to desire him. The man floating on a raft at sea is unbearably thirsty, but he won’t get a drink of water simply by being thirsty. However, the very existence of his thirst shows that a way for his desire to be satisfied actually



Amy Orr-Ewing



Lydia Asker

exists: fresh water. As C. S. Lewis put it, "Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists."

Ultimately for the Christian the important question is not whether I have a psychological need for a father-figure, or a desire for a father-figure not to exist. Rather, the question is about what actually exists: is God really there? The way to come to any conclusions about that is to investigate the evidence for his existence.

The second assumption we encounter is that because belief in God provides the faithful with a crutch, this means it is somehow suspect. The sceptic implies that, since the believer finds protection from the cruelty of nature and the evil of the world, this means the idea of God is like a talisman, an irrational superstition. But surely, if belief in God provides a positive moral framework that helps people to live constructively, that is not a reason to disbelieve in him. Similarly, if relationship with God enables the believer to find healing, wholeness and comfort in the midst of human suffering, we should not be surprised. After all, if God is real, his existence will have a massive impact on life and on the experience of life.

Only for the weak and inferior

The third assumption is that people who make use of this 'crutch' of relationship with God, and find it practical, meaningful and effective, must be weak or inferior. This is rather a strange idea, since surely it makes sense to access

any sources of support and relationship that are really there for us. If a God of love does exist, the rational thing to do is accept his love, to come to know him. Entering into that relationship will have a positive effect, and that does not make the person weaker than, or somehow inferior to, anyone else.

The idea that Christianity is a crutch for weak people assumes that God is a psychological projection. We have seen that this argument cuts both ways. The idea also assumes that this 'crutch' of a relationship with God should be regarded with suspicion. Here we saw that the fact that something works ought not to be a reason for rejecting it. On the contrary, if God does exist, we should expect his existence to have a real, palpable impact on our lives. It is only if he is not real that we ought to be worried about the 'crutch' he provides. Finally, we saw that it is not weak to accept God's offer of relationship and become Christian believers. In fact, it is the logical, reasonable response if God himself is real.

Amy Orr-Ewing
Training Director for RZIM Zacharias Trust and
Director of Programmes for OCCA

Summary of a chapter from Amy Orr-Ewing's 'But is it Real?' compiled by Lydia Asker, an OCCA alumna who is an Associate with the Zacharias Trust.

Student Profile – Lloyd Lee

Beginning a three year BTh has been the latest step in a process of God's nudging on my life, leading me to training at Wycliffe with a view to ordained ministry within the Church of England. "Church? Of England??" My background inspires these questions for several reasons. I am of Chinese descent, born and raised in Glasgow and have most recently done time as a solicitor in Manchester. Given my journey southward, perhaps it would be wise to learn French!

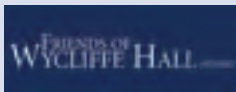
This week, at the time of writing, my fellowship group has led the services at chapel and we have focused on the theme of God's faithfulness - His faithfulness in the past and in the present, which gives assurance of His faithfulness in the future. This is what I have known to be true in my life and I continue to trust that it will be true till the end.

I am a fan of 'Post-it' notes and at the back of my Bible are many small pieces of yellow paper with prayer requests for others and myself. Two stand out as I reflect on where I am. One is a prayer for 'guidance as to future steps' written as I began the 'discernment' process over a year ago and the other I wrote as I was deciding on where to do my training. My request was to go to a place where I would find the following: spiritual formation – growth in love for Jesus and for others and growth as a Spirit-led man and leader; bible teaching – growth in depth of knowledge, clarity of understanding and love for God's Word; opportunities for service at a local church; and opportunities for relationships with both Christians and non-Christians that would last the span of life and ministry. All of these I have found at Wycliffe.

As I reflect on the circumstances through which God has led me here and on how God is currently working in my life, I have hope for the future – that He will continue to lead me to the places He has prepared and provide the means by which to glorify Him and to live wholeheartedly for Him wherever I am.



Wycliffe Conferences



Rediscovering the Authentic Jesus

Annual U.S. Winter Conference in Orlando, Florida, 26-27 February, 2010

This year's conference features renowned author and evangelist **Revd Dr Michael Green**, Chaplain and Lecturer at the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics. Michael Green is a prolific author, having written over 50 books, and has been heavily engaged in evangelism and apologetics for many years.

Michael believes that the recapturing of the truth about Jesus, and the return of society towards the ideals he taught and embodied, is the greatest hope for our civilisation. Join us as we are guided by some of Wycliffe's faculty to help us recapture this truth.

Rediscovering the Real Jesus: New Testament History with Revd Dr Peter Walker

Reconnecting with his Grace: Christian Doctrine with Revd Dr Richard Turnbull

Renewing our Lives in his Service: Mission and Ministry with Revd Dr Michael Green and Revd Dr Simon Vibert

Our time together will include worship, prayer time, alumni gatherings and optional outings around Orlando – including the chance to tour the headquarters of Wycliffe Bible Translators and Campus Crusade for Christ International. A highlight will be dramatic vignettes with **D Paul Thomas**, a frequent performer and preacher in churches, universities and theatrical venues throughout the country. He is Associate Pastor at Ecclesia Hollywood in California.

Registration details at www.friendsofwycliffehall.org



Great Awakenings: vital lessons from the past to inspire the future

Summer School 2010, Sunday 27 June – Saturday 3 July

You are warmly invited to the 2010 Wycliffe Hall Summer School.

Join with the Wycliffe teaching staff as we look together at the theme of revival – both within the Bible and in church history (with a special focus on Wesley, Whitefield, Simeon and Lord Shaftesbury).

The week concludes with a focus on the East African revival (with CMS guest speaker) and a college banquet (in Wadham).

Guest Speakers include: Fran Beckett, Michael Ward, Bishops John Pritchard and Michael Nazir-Ali.

Registration details at www.wycliffe.ox.ac.uk



Lives Jesus Changed

Simon Vibert, Christian Focus, January 2010

"If we were only allowed one book of the Bible on a deserted island, many of us would take John's Gospel. Its depths are fathomless. Therefore any new book opening up new treasures from the fourth Gospel is very welcome. One of the ways in which Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospels differ from John is that they recount Jesus speaking to crowds, whereas in John, we have many private interviews and conversations. This is the realm that Simon Vibert has marvellously mined in *Lives Jesus Changed*. Quite rightly the emphasis is not so much on the characters themselves but rather on the Lord Jesus and what He was – and is – able to do in numerous lives. Each chapter is very accessible and heart-warming. The detailed appendix reveals just how much meticulous scholarship lies behind this captivating book."

Jonathan Fletcher ~ Vicar of Emmanuel Church, Wimbledon, London

Student News

The past two terms have, as usual, been full of change – former students moving on and new students arriving. It is with great joy that we note that all of last year's leavers have now found jobs – Carl Bicknell at St Peter's, Stapenhill, Burton-on Trent; Ian Fletcher at Ifold and Holdenhurst, Bournemouth; Suzanne Hosking at St Merryn, Little Petherick and St Issey in Truro diocese; and Peter Kane at St Paul's, Chichester. Of last year's independent students, Greg Bannister is now in New York working at an Anglican church planted by Redeemer Presbyterian, and Julie Aldrich, a former Common Room President, has joined the Hall Council in addition to her work for a church in London. Also, over the summer, five Wycliffe engagements were announced – three of which are all-Wycliffe couples!

It has been a pleasure to have some great visiting speakers to Wycliffe this term, with the Bishop of Oxford speaking at a Thursday communion service, Dr Ravi Zacharias lecturing on the relevance of apologetics, and Professor Stephen Bevans speaking on 'constants in context' (faithfully contextualising the Gospel in Christian ministry).

Sport has featured highly on the Wycliffe agenda again this term, with students representing Queen's College in football, rugby and rowing. Wycliffe's own football team has also had a great start to the season following promotion last year, winning four of the first five games.

The termly snooker tournament has seen a significant upset with the reigning champion, Tom Loh, knocked out in

the first round. David Criddle, the organiser of the tournament, now has only two terms left to fulfil his dream of winning, after being beaten in the quarter-finals.

Our recent Gift Day was to support Anglican ordinands training in the Congo; help with the OICCU mission in the spring; and support a former OCCA student working as a travelling evangelist and apologist in the countries of Eastern Europe. Support has also been extended to the Alexandrian School of Theology in Cairo (Anglican Church of Egypt) to provide books for their growing theological library. All these concerns have resulted from the summer placements of Wycliffe students. It is a great joy to be able to continue to support brothers and sisters in Christ around the world.



Jonny Vaughan, Common Room President
Roger Revell, Common Room President-Elect



My name is Gershom Tumusiime Muhanga and I am an Anglican Priest in the Church of Uganda, North-Kigezi Diocese. I am married to Jane and we have seven children (four girls and three boys) and four grandchildren. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal saviour on 21 August 1987, when I was *already* an ordinand training for the ministry at Bishop Tucker College, Mukono (now Uganda Christian University).

In North-Kigezi Diocese I am the Principal of Canon Ndimbirwe Bible College, Kyamakanda. At this college we train church workers, both ordinands and lay workers, to certificate level in theology. Along with this, we do other supportive courses such as evangelism, and stewardship

and discipleship training. In the future we also hope to provide teaching in computing skills to our students and, ideally, to other people from nearby communities.

Since September 2009 I have been at Wycliffe to complete a term's study looking into the global Pentecostal Charismatic movement. The findings have been especially good, and I look forward to integrating the values and aspects into our Anglican worship practices back in North-Kigezi Diocese.

I am very grateful to the Church Mission Society (CMS) for the full sponsorship and facilitation that they have provided, which has enabled me to settle into Wycliffe and do my research with ease. I have found Wycliffe an exciting place to study, with its facilities, good food, accommodation and rich library. The community, students and staff, have been both warm and friendly and it has been easy for me to mix freely. A number of them have taken me out to visit some important places and cities in England, whilst others have invited me to their homes where we have shared fellowship and good food together. True Christian living is exhibited here at Wycliffe Hall. Praise be to our living God!

Alumni News

It was a delight in 2009 to welcome back alumni to Wycliffe for two specific events. In April, there was a gathering of around 20 graduates of the Diploma in Biblical and Theological Studies, who came to the Hall for a day which included teaching input from the Course Manager, Jacob Waldenmaier, worship in chapel and lunch together – as well as catching up on news and re-establishing friendships. This was followed in May by a reunion event for those who had studied at the Hall in the 1950s, which again was a time of reminiscing and re-connecting. Also, in November 2009 some alumni came back to look with Peter Walker at how his *Jesus Way* book might be the basis for a discipleship course.

A number of Wycliffe alumni have made the press recently. **Archie Coates (WH 2000)**, is leading the first Holy Trinity, Brompton church plant outside London – to the landmark building of St Peter's, Brighton, a church which had been marked for closure. Another first is **Paul Butler (WH 1983)** who will become the first Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham to take up the post under the new name



Archie and Sam Coates outside St Peter's, Brighton

for the diocese. Travelling further afield to exercise episcopal ministry is **Nick Drayson (WH 1983)**, who has been appointed Suffragan Bishop in the Anglican diocese of Northern Argentina – a country in which he has lived and worked on and off for 35 years.

From the archives

Lawrence Skipper, who died in May 2009, trained at Wycliffe 1939-41 during the early years of the Second World War. He recalled being one of the Wycliffe students who joined the local Home Guard. Oxford was felt to be under real threat of attack; some Home Guard units had only broomsticks to train with but these guardians of the Oxford Parks were issued with rifles! – and when on duty had to have them loaded. He remembered too that the mattresses for use during their rest periods were stored under the huge dinosaur skeletons in the University of Oxford Natural History Museum!

Alumni deaths

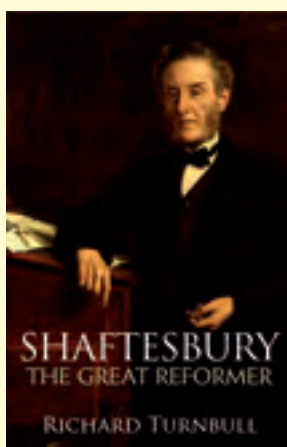
We extend our sympathy to the families and friends of those alumni who have died recently, including John Brown (WH 1937); Lawrence Skipper (WH 1941); Alfred Parker (WH 1949); Malcolm Ridyard (WH 1956); Trevor White (WH 1963); Jack Walne (WH 1987); and Rob Graham (WH 1999).

Dates for your diary in 2010

- In the steps of St Paul and the Early Church: a tour visiting Galatia, Cappadocia and Syrian Antioch (with optional extension to Ephesus): 8-17 April 2010
- 'School of Preaching' week: 14-18 June 2010
Details from Simon Vibert.
- Wycliffe Garden Party, Wednesday 30 June
- Trip to Oberammergau Passion Play and the Austrian Lakes, 21-28 August 2010
- Alumni Lunch, Saturday 25 September (to coincide with the University alumni weekend)

More details on the garden party and lunch to follow. Tour brochures available from Peter Walker on request.

Calling all past residents of No. 4! During the coming year we plan to look into the story of the residents of No. 4 Norham Gardens throughout its history. If you yourself lived at No. 4 as a student it would be very helpful to know. Please tick the box on the response form.



Shaftesbury: The Great Reformer

Richard Turnbull, Lion Hudson, February 2010

The seventh Earl of Shaftesbury was an Evangelical Christian with a real passion for the gospel. Uniquely, he held together evangelism, social reform and a campaigning Protestantism. Living and working mainly during the reign of Queen Victoria, Shaftesbury was involved with the founding and development of many of the great Evangelical societies – including the Church Pastoral Aid Society and the London City Mission. He visited asylums, walked the streets of London with the City Missioners and spoke to gatherings of convicted criminals in the slums. He had a great sense of his Christian responsibility to the disadvantaged and laboured on behalf of children in factories, chimney sweeps and those with mental illness, while also lobbying for improved housing and sanitation. He turned down Cabinet office in order to continue his Christian work. He was also prominent in the campaign against ritualism in the Church of England. Complex, aristocratic and Tory, he was a highly intelligent man who brought his faith to bear upon society. He was utterly

committed to the Bible, to evangelism across denominational divides, to the use of lay workers and to the defence of Protestantism. This major new biography, marking the 125th anniversary of his death, is the first for 25 years. New insights gleaned from his diaries and from the archives of the mission societies contribute to give us a greater understanding of the life and character of this fascinating and challenging reformer.

Missions

Being part of a mission team is of immense value to students as part of their training and formation and is seen as a vital part of that training. The teams are also highly valued by the churches and other organisations which invite us to join them. This year it will cost Wycliffe in the region of £5000 to send out our seven teams. Financial support to meet this target would be greatly appreciated. If you feel able to contribute in this way, please fill in the response form and send it FREEPOST; or visit our website: www.wycliffehall.org.uk/donate

Wycliffe students will be participating in seven college missions taking place in the spring. These include a second trip to Uganda led by Cathy Ross and a small group going to teach in the Central African Republic with Benno van den Toren. There is a town-wide mission in Bicester to be led by Michael Green involving all the local churches and another also led by Michael involving a number of churches in the Cotswolds. These two missions will involve OCCA students and Wycliffe ordinands working together.

In addition, we have a parish-based mission in West Sussex and another in rural Leicestershire where the incumbents are both former Wycliffe students. Finally, as in previous years a small group is going to Betel, a drugs rehabilitation centre, to live and work with the residents there. We thank God for all these opportunities and covet your prayers for the preparations and mission weeks as they take place. All these missions take place around Easter, the majority in the week beginning 14 March.



Wycliffe mission team in Uganda, Easter 2009

'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise.' (Ps 8:3)



What does it mean to speak about spirituality in the context of childhood? This verse from Psalm 8 tells us that children have a contribution to make to Christian life and worship. Even infants who cannot speak give glory to God and point to his majesty. Nurturing the spirituality that is part of our humanity and begins at birth is a huge responsibility that God has entrusted to us. It

is also a wonderful privilege. We tend to assume that it is up to us adults to impart spiritual truth to children, yet *they* have much to teach *us* about how to relate to God and to each other. Not for nothing did Isaiah say 'a little child shall lead them.'

In writing this booklet on children's spirituality I have been deeply moved at how scripture portrays children and particularly how Jesus treated them. Unencumbered by modern prohibitions, he took them in his arms and blessed them; he regarded their perspective on the world to be of the utmost importance as his teaching makes clear (eg Matt. 11:25; Matt. 18:3,4); and he had some of his harshest words reserved for those who caused a 'little one' to sin. This is all the more remarkable when we realise what status children had in the ancient

world. We think of children as vulnerable but to Jesus' contemporaries they were of no value whatsoever. To be an infant was to be without intelligence and therefore as nothing.

To say children are of value to God is not to say they do not need grace and salvation. However, nurturing their spirituality so that they grow up to know and love God for themselves is not a matter of pouring knowledge into beings that are empty vessels. Children have the capacity to wonder and they are often at home with spiritual things in a way that adults are not. Sadly this seems to fade as they emerge from infancy and their simplicity, richly open to experience of God, gives way to a streetwise attitude which keeps spiritual things well hidden. The Church has an important role, along with Christian parents, in enabling children to grow into maturity as spiritual beings. This means far more than 'child-friendly' churches and more frequent 'All-age' worship. We need to work with what is known about children's spiritual development to provide an environment where children are encouraged to explore and grow. The challenge of enabling children to grow in understanding of Christian faith and teaching without crushing their spiritual awareness is great; but there is much we can do if we try.

Revd Dr Liz Hoare
Dean for Women & Tutor in Prayer, Spirituality & Mission
'Nurturing the Spirit of a Child' is published by Grove booklets,
August 2009



God and One Woman..... One Day Conference

Celebrating Women's Ministries
Saturday 8 May 2010
10.00 – 4.00

Stories from the past to inspire
Issues from the present to explore
Hopes for the future to pray about

To book a place please go online to
www.wycliffe.ox.ac.uk

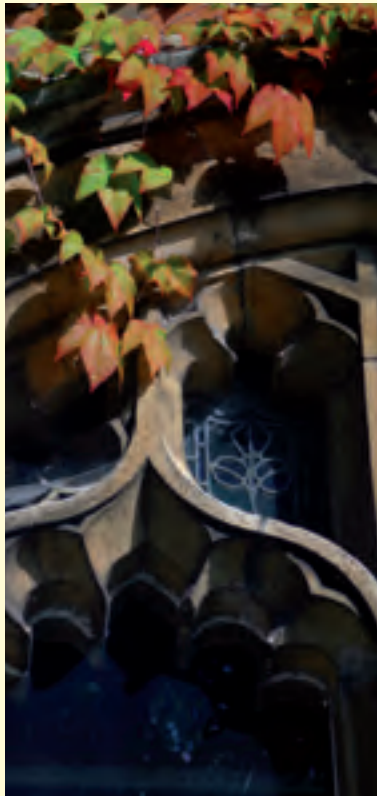
For more information please contact:
Wycliffe Hall, 54 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PW.
admissions@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk
01865 274205

Wycliffe Hall : committed to women in ministry



*"God and one woman make
a majority"*
Josephine Elizabeth Butler
(1828 –1906)

Josephine Butler has been
described as one of "the
most distinguished women
of the Nineteenth Century"
and is undoubtedly an
enduring example of
Christian social radicalism.



WYCLIFFE HALL

- OXFORD -

Equipping Leaders for Christian Ministry

Find out more
Visit us on our Open Day

Saturday 6 March 2010
10.00 – 4.00



Book now at www.wycliffe.ox.ac.uk
Or contact John Michaux on 01865 274205
admissions@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk



Wycliffe Hall, 54 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PW

T 01865 274200 F 01865 274215

E enquiries@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk www.wycliffe.ox.ac.uk