
Hope
Times



Oct /
Nov 07

The inclusive God

Most of us, most of the time, feel left out – misfits. We don't belong. Others seem to be so confident, so sure of themselves, 'insiders' who know the ropes, old hands in a club from which we are excluded.

One of the ways we have of responding to this is to form our own club, or join one that will have us. Here is at least one place where we are 'in' and the others 'out'. The clubs range from informal to formal in gatherings that are variously political, cultural and economic. But the one thing that they have in common is the principle of exclusion. Identity or worth is achieved by excluding all but the chosen. The terrible price we pay for keeping all those other people out so that we can savour the sweetness of being insiders is a reduction of reality, a shrinkage of life.

Nowhere is the price more terrible than when it is paid in the cause of religion. But religion has a long history of doing just that, of reducing the huge mysteries of God to the respectability of club rules, of shrinking the vast human community to a 'membership'. But with God there are no outsiders.



Luke is a most vigorous champion of the outsider. An outsider himself, the only Gentile in an all-Jewish cast of New Testament writers, he shows how Jesus includes those who typically were treated as outsiders by the religious establishment of the day: women, common labourers (sheep herders), the racially different (Samaritans), the poor. He will not countenance religion as a club. As Luke tells the story, all of us who have found ourselves on the outside looking in on life with no hope of gaining entrance (and who of us hasn't felt it?) now find the doors wide open, found and welcomed by God in Jesus.

Introduction to Luke's Gospel

'This is why I, Paul, am in jail for Christ, having taken up the cause of you outsiders, so-called. I take it that you're familiar with the part I was given in God's plan for including everybody. I got the inside story on this from God himself, just as I wrote to you in brief.'

Ephesians 3: 1-3

Extracts from: The Message, The Bible in Contemporary Language, Eugene Peterson, NavPress.

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Prayer of Ignatius of Loyola

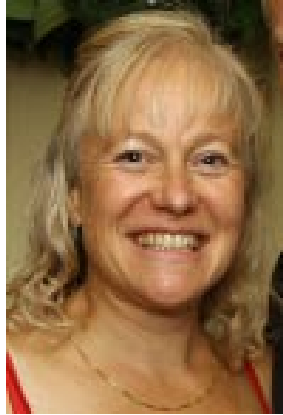
Teach us, Good Lord
To serve you as you deserve
To give and not count the cost
To fight and not heed the wounds
To toil and not to seek for rest
To labour and not to ask for any reward
Except that of knowing that we do Your Will
Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

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1 Peter 2 v9:

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

Congratulations...



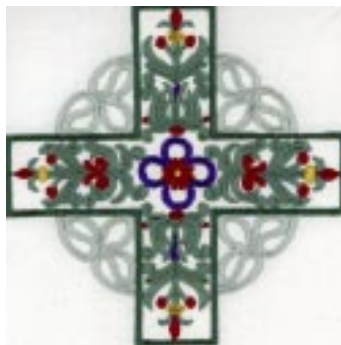
... to **Ros Johnson** on her appointment as Operations Manager at Hope Centre.

We are delighted that Ros is taking up this key role and we pray that God will bless and prosper her as she leads the dedicated team of staff and as she spearheads the work of Hope Centre.

Please pray for Ros as she prepares for her new post, which she will be starting at the end of the year.

... to **Ann and Samson** on the birth of their daughter, Sinead, a sister for Shaun and Sacha. We give thanks for the gift of this new life.

Psalm 139: 13 & 14:
'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'



... and to all those who are being baptised on Sunday 28th October:
Claire, Helen, Jack, Mandy, Paul and Sonya.

'We thank you, Father, for the water of baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in His resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in joyful obedience to your son, we baptise into His fellowship those who come to Him in faith.'

From Common Worship 2006

The Vision of Hope

The trustees of Hope Church – David Jones, Gavin Kibble and Amanda Kay – have been meet-



ing with John to consider our aspirations for Hope and explore what our 'vision' should be. As a result, we now have a strapline:

'...hope to those without hope...' and a Vision Statement:

'We want to show the love of God in action in Hillfields and beyond by working with the wider church and community using the resources God has given us to help those who are searching for hope.

We will seek at all times to express this through our areas of strength, focusing our resources and capacity to concentrate on those things we do best.

We will seek at all times to be responsible stewards of the resources and facilities entrusted to us and seek to use them with excellence.'

How do we implement this? Find out in the next issue...



The 'head of Christ'

In the Middle Ages, the faith of Europe came to life in the cathedrals' stained-glass windows. The art reached its highest level in France, and France's earliest known fragment is a 'Head of Christ' . It is one of the two oldest stained glass windows in the world (the second one is found in Durham). The glass, which was

made in about 1060 for the abbey church at Wissembourg in Alsace can be seen in 'the flesh' in the Museum de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame in Strasbourg.



Noah's Ark Mother & Toddler Group

Just a reminder that Noah's Ark has started back up again at Hope Centre following the summer holidays .

We ended last term with a party at Hope which was attended by 20 children and their mums; the group is really growing! We also met together in the holidays at my house for a garden party which God blessed with fantastic weather (and thank you Jesus for that as it meant I did not have 28 kids running round the house!).

I would ask for your prayers for the women and their families, and of course any unwanted clothes or shoes are very much appreciated. God bless all, Heidi

Bethlehem's 'House of Peace' at Rachel's Tomb

Ann Farr, a member of Pax Christi (an International Peace Movement) will be talking about her recent visit to a new peace project in Palestine. The project aims to support the courage and hope of the people of Bethlehem and help transform a place of conflict into one that is a sign of peace.

Ann will be speaking as part of Coventry Peace Month 2007 at the following venues:



Tues 6 November 7pm	Coventry Peace House, 311 Stoney Stanton Road
Wed 7 November 7.30pm	Earlsdon Methodist Church, Earlsdon Avenue
Fri 9 November 12.30pm	The Herbert, Jordan Well

Children & young people

Parent & toddlers

Every Monday
10 - 11.30am (Term time only)
@ Hope Centre
Contact: Heidi Davies

Creche @ Hope Church

for pre-school children

GLOW @ Hope Church

for primary age children

Every Sunday *except*
1st Sunday of the month
Contact: Marg Patterson (Creche)
or Mark Johnson (GLOW)

Youth Emmaus

for 11 - 16 year olds
Every Sunday after worship time
Contact: Michelle Williams
or Anna Cramp

Nooma Group

for 16-25 year olds
3rd Sunday of every month
6 - 8pm Hope Centre
Contact: John & Marg Patterson

Regular events

Hope Coffee Bar

Live music

7.30 - 9.30pm

Everyone welcome!

See back page for details
of this month's event

2nd week of the month

Homegroups

Various venues

3rd Wednesday of the month

Holy Communion

with prayer for healing

8-9.30pm

Hope Church

4th week in the month

Homegroups

Various venues

5th week in the month

Other activities,
such as outreach

**If you wish to join a homegroup,
please contact John Patterson.**

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Prayer events

Intercessory Prayer

Mondays

7 - 8.30am

Hope Centre

Contact: Michelle Williams

Africa Prayer Group

Bi-monthly 8pm

Contact: Mark Johnson

Turkey Prayer Group

12th November 7.30pm

Contact: Sue Jones

or Mary Lindley

Men's prayer

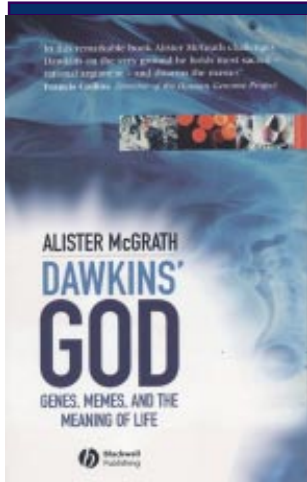
1st Saturday of the month

8 - 10am

Hope Centre

A time for fellowship
and prayer.

**Contact details can be found
in the Hope Church
Address Book or by
phoning 024 7663 3500.**



Richard Kay reviews Alister McGrath's *Dawkins' God*

Christians often get into conversations with others concerning the relationship between Christianity and science and can get badly stuck upon the subject of evolution. Alister McGrath is probably uniquely qualified to provide much insight on both subjects. He is the Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford University and has a PhD in molecular biophysics.

Richard Dawkins, the author of the book *The Selfish Gene*, is well known for his Atheism and for the direction he has taken Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory. I first heard Dawkins' militant Atheist preaching in 2002 when listening to Radio 4's 'Thought For the Day'. This programme had always consisted of helpful, uplifting, thoughtful and respectful meditations on God and life by Christians and those of many other faiths. However, Dawkins used this slot to patronise everyone who holds any faith position other than his own and condemned any belief in God as infantile.

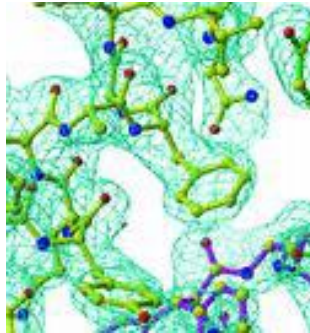
How *did* God create life?

Dawkins regards the theory of biological evolution to be an alternative to the explanation in the Bible as to why we are here. Let's consider two ways a Christian might counter this argument. Could both of these explanations be true, or if one is true, must the other be false? Some Christians, like Dawkins, think these 2 explanations are incompatible; to believe in God you can't accept evolution and if you accept evolution you must reject God. Other Christians, by accepting evolution as possibly and partly answering the question of how God created all life, accept both explanations as being in agreement. But if you reject evolution as being against God, then unless, like Alister McGrath, you really are very knowledgeable about the scientific evidence for and against evolution, then you are likely to be trapped if you attempt honestly to discuss



this with someone who doesn't share your faith in God but who knows the evidence for evolution much better than you know the evidence against it.

In *Dawkins' God*, McGrath systematically demolishes Dawkins' case against God. He isn't really arguing for a belief in God, just that having a belief in God is a reasonable position. He provides

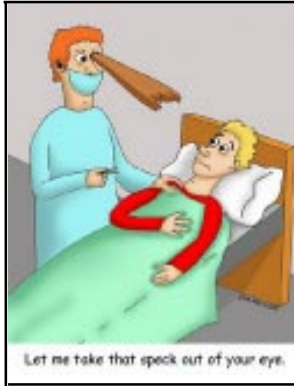


very readable and clear explanations of some of the history of Christian and scientific thought and philosophy. The core of McGrath's argument is that Dawkins is not addressing the long, deep and broad river of Christian thought about God throughout history, but is focussing on the particular ideas of William Paley who wrote in the first half of the 19th century.

'God of the Gaps'

Paley argued, at a time when science was taking on its modern form, that God was only in control of what science does not understand. Of course as Christians we accept that God is Lord of the unknown, but the Bible also claims our God to be Lord of what we do understand. The fact that something previously unknown becomes understood by science makes the God we Christians believe in no less great. Psalm 19:1 states (NIV): *'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands'*. The fact that cosmologists can now observe and understand how stars are formed and physicists know the laws governing the movements of the planets takes nothing away from the glory of our creator God, unless we happen to believe in the straw god proposed by Paley and argued against by Dawkins. Dawkins' demolition job on Paley's 'God of the Gaps' theology might even cause us to reaffirm our faith in a far greater, more real and alive God than the tame shadow presented by Dawkins or Paley!

This book isn't going to help a Christian find evidence against the theory of evolution, but for those with the time to dig more deeply into some of the real issues surrounding this debate I strongly recommend you read this mind-opening work.



Food for thought...

...'take the plank out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.'

Luke 6 v 42b

'All this wisdom comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.'

Isaiah 28 v 29

Smile awhile...

A rather pompous clergyman, rebuking his housekeeper for using his bath whilst he was away, said: 'I am grieved that you would do behind my back what you would not do in front of my face.'

The Trout Inn, which lies at the foot of the Yorkshire Wolds, is a popular port of call for cyclists and ramblers. The local vicar asked the innkeeper if he would display a notice giving details of the services at the village church. The innkeeper gladly obliged and the notice read: 'We will be glad to see you at any of our services. Clothes don't matter.'

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Bible translation: is it really necessary?

'Translation is the church's birthmark as well as its missionary benchmark: the church would be unrecognisable or unsustainable without it.'

Lamin Sannah, author of: *Whose Religion is Christianity: the Gospel Beyond the West* and citizen of The Gambia, West Africa.

Submitted by Keith and Lorraine Doust



Bringing Hope to Our Villages, Towns & Cities....

Hope 2008 is a national initiative providing churches of all shapes and sizes throughout the UK a fresh opportunity to work together across their communities over a twelve month period. It is as relevant for urban or rural churches irrespective of tradition.

Do more - Do it together - Do it in word & action

Churches across the United Kingdom are on a constant mission to serve and communicate with the 58 million residents and many visitors. 'Hope' proposes to support this on-going work, by facilitating intensified, united, focused prayer and a year of activities, communicating the Gospel through words and actions, creating a lasting legacy of both physical and spiritual change in the lives of communities and individuals.

Hope08 was founded by the leaders of three youth ministries: The Message, Soul Survivor and Youth For Christ. Although youth are energising the work, Hope 08 is for the whole church. It is designed to be grassroots, allowing people, churches and organisations to take relevant action in their communities.

For further information visit www.hope08coventry.com



~ NOTICEBOARD ~



Sunday services 10.30am

1st Sunday:

Family communion service with prayer for healing

2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays:

Regular service

4th Sunday:

Seeker service

Hope Church Sparkbrook Street Hillfields CV1 5LB

YOU ARE INVITED TO
**HOPE
ALL SAINTS
COFFEE BAR**



WEDNESDAY 31ST OCTOBER
7.30PM

HOPE CAFÉ
LIVE MUSIC & PUB QUIZ
COME...BE TOGETHER...CELEBRATE ALL SAINTS EVE

Taking care at Hope

As part of our 'safeguarding' policy can we ask everyone to be alert to any dangers for the children, young people and vulnerable adults of Hope Church.

This applies to all areas of the premises, but especially in the cafe, corridors and car park.

Parents, please be especially diligent concerning your own children.

Thank you

Next newsletter

Please send any items, notices, testimonies, book reviews, etc for the next Hope Times to Amanda Kay – e-mail: amanda@copsewood.net. The deadline for contributions is Monday, 26 November 2007.