



Newsletter



For 2 weeks from Sunday 26th June 2011

Our aim is to *KNOW* God through Jesus, *GROW* in faith, and *SHOW* God's love in our community

L.I.C.C. consultant Nick Spencer writes

Rowan Williams is too experienced a public figure to have imagined that his recent editorial* in the left-leaning *New Statesman* magazine would have been received without a storm. And a storm there was. Media reaction, thanks to a little selective coverage, was instant and loud.

A recent report on the political activity of the Archbishops of Canterbury since 1980 shows this is not unusual. Archbishops are hardly strangers to political controversy, intervening on issues as sensitive as urban deprivation and criminal justice, family life and armed conflict. Whether or not British politicians 'do God', the Archbishop of Canterbury certainly does politics; indeed, he is one of the few people who seem genuinely able to do that most desired (and hackneyed) of things, and 'start a national debate'.

Some people, and not just jittery secularists, get nervous about this. Isn't the Archbishop's call primarily to proclaim the Gospel?

Well, yes it is; but it is a worryingly narrow conception of the Gospel that fails to see 'politics' - how we as a society treat the poor and the prisoner, the child and the 'enemy' - as falling under its concerns. As the theologian Oliver O'Donovan has written, 'rule out the political questions and you cut short the proclamation of God's saving power; you leave people enslaved where they ought to be set free from sin - their own and others.'

This has long been understood by Christians in Britain. Despite the heavily *cultural* tone of the King James Bible 400th anniversary celebrations this year, it is reasonable to say that the Bible has been the single most influential *political* text in British history. The Bible's influence on our commitment to political equality, toleration, justice, freedom, and democracy, not to mention the very idea of 'England' and 'Britain', is almost incalculable.

This does not mean the Bible has always been deployed on the side of the political angels (it hasn't). It does, however, mean that the Bible is an inescapably political book, and that we need to recognise this while, equally importantly, discerning and articulating its political message with care, humility and balance.

*Copies available from Revd Lisa

SERVICES

Sundays: St Paul's 10am: St Andrew's 11am
St Paul's, 7-8pm: 'Still Hour' of quiet prayer, but Parish Prayers, 7 - 7.30pm, on last Sunday in July & Sept.

Wednesdays: St Paul's 10am: St Andrew's 2pm

Weekday Morning Prayers: St Paul's 9.05 - 9.25am. Come & join us - all welcome.

NOTES

Thank you to all who supported these events.

St Andrew's: Strawberry Tea raised £232 and **Christian Aid** collection £260.

Melissa's sale after St Paul's service raised £42.38 for the Red Cross - Ivory Coast appeal!

Wanted - Imaginative Prayer Cards to carry round and to give others. Can you design one credit card size? The best will be chosen for our Parish Prayer card. Results announced at our joint service at St Andrew's on Sun 14th Aug. Questions? Talk to Revds Lisa or Catherine.

Copies of information about the **Arbitration & Mediation Services (Equality) bill** and Sharia law are at the back of church. Please lobby your MP about it sensitively and sensibly.

Congratulations to Rachael Winder, Elizabeth Quick, Phoebe Collier, Grace Burgess, Melissa Smith, Ross Mills, Jack Kehoe, Luke Daly and Ben Hallam on their First Communion.

Contact details are now at bottom of back page.

