

EO'S

Edition 22
June 2009

A LICC Resource

also inside:

Rescuing Darwin -

Antony Billington reflects on God and evolution

How to be a super model - Jason Gardner

on the importance of setting a good example

Gospel edge in the land of rock -

Mark Greene sings the praises of U2's new album



Running on Empty

A first look at what the LICC/Spring Harvest survey reveals about the church

Tired, but Hungry for Growth

LICC's Imagine team look at the implications of some of the findings of the recent LICC/Spring Harvest 'Apprentice 09' survey

From Blair's wide-eyed optimism to Brown's bags; has there been a more symbolic change in contemporary British politics? Recently, all eyes have been on Gordon Brown's eyes – or, to be more precise, the weary bags beneath them. Appearing days after his elevation to PM, they have seemingly been expanding ever since.

Is Gordon Brown *the* man for our time? Perhaps. Is he *a* man of our time? Certainly. For Brown's tired eyes are empathetically symbolic of the wider sense of fatigue that increasingly defines our caffeine-addicted society. A recent poll revealed that lack of sleep is the biggest health concern for nearly half the population, and that more than a third are experiencing low-level general fatigue.

Exhaustion, after all, has huge social and relational implications. But our relationship to tiredness in today's culture is paradoxical: a source of shame, indicating our inability to cope; but also a badge of honour, signifying the importance of the work in which we are engaged.

Christians, of course, are not immune from the current exhaustion epidemic. Indeed, it is no longer just

prayer that brings the church to its knees, but also tiredness. That's the worryingly unsurprising finding of the recent 'Apprentice 09' survey that LICC conducted in association with Spring Harvest this year, in the run-up to their annual events at Minehead and Skegness.

**it is no longer
just prayer
that brings
the church to
its knees**

Spring Harvest's theme was 'Apprentice', and their desire, and ours, was to discern the issues people are struggling with as they seek to live for Christ in their everyday lives, and to identify those things that are actually hindering their growth in discipleship. We

also wanted to find out the extent to which people felt equipped and supported by their churches to face those issues.

The tired church

Three thousand people wanted to tell us about the issues they struggle with, both at work and at home (making this one of the most significant surveys among British Christians in recent times). The top four that emerged in each context were:

At work

- Stress (55%)
- Long hours (45%)
- Poor management/leadership (35%)
- Conflict (29%)

At home

- Home/work balance (47%)
- Parenting (33%)
- Presence of non-Christian family member (28%)
- Ill health or disability (26%)

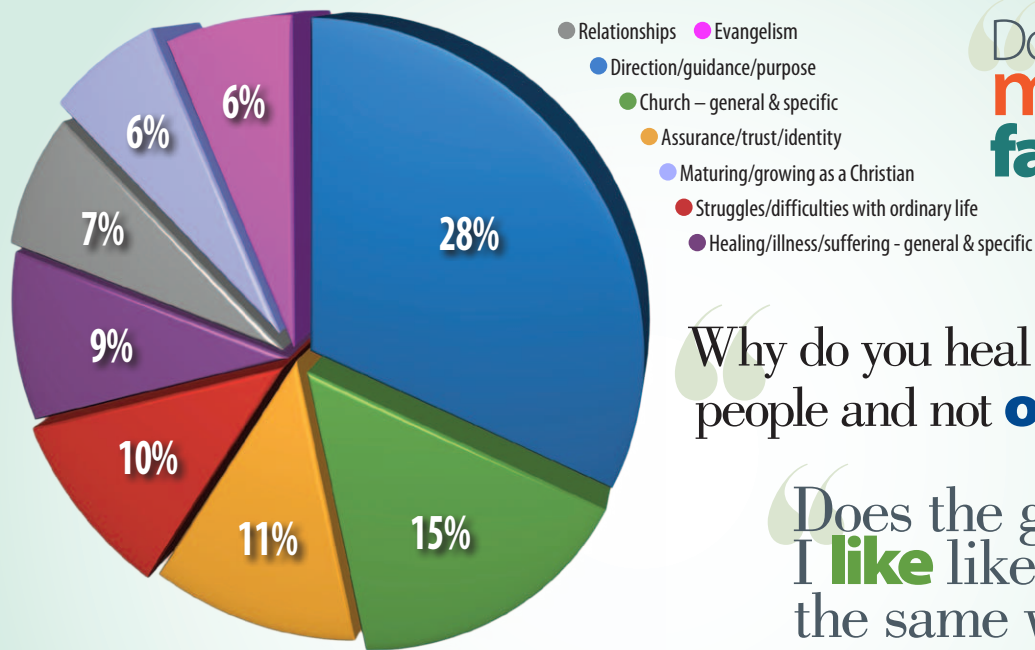
Given these findings, it's perhaps not surprising that the majority of respondents (55% - see Fig 1) identified fatigue and time pressures as the issues they struggle with to the detriment of their personal spiritual lives. Significantly, the survey revealed that fatigue and time pressures are a struggle for Christians across the age range (18-56+yrs). This may or may not be better than non-believers but it's certainly not dissimilar. True, further research might reveal that these are symptoms of deeper, more complex issues, but that shouldn't detract from the reality that these are what people *perceive* to be barriers to their spiritual development.

These high levels of fatigue and stress almost certainly help explain why people also identified Bible reading, prayer and hearing God as struggles that hinder their spiritual growth. Such disciplines are not easily undertaken at the best of times, let alone when you are tired and feeling short on time. Taken together, these findings are suggestive of a downward spiral towards ever-decreasing engagement with God. That said, we know from elsewhere that the reasons for the decline in Bible reading go beyond fatigue and time pressure to include people not seeing the point of reading it, being troubled by the presence of difficult passages (such as Old Testament war narratives) and being unconvinced of its relevance, not least in the wake of the rise of the 'new atheism' of Richard Dawkins and co.

The results are even more sobering when we consider that the survey was not of folk on the fringe of church,

Fatigue 55% **Time pressures 55%** **Reading the Bible 42%**
Prayer 39% **Guidance or hearing God 35%** **Witnessing 32%**
Applying faith to daily life 31% **Conflict in relationships 27%**
Ethical issues 16% **Doubts about faith or God 15%** **Suffering 14%**

Fig 1: 'What issues have you struggled with that have affected your personal spiritual life?'



Do you see
me as a
failure?

Why do you heal **some**
people and not **others**?

Does the guy
I **like** like **me**
the same way?

Why is life so
mundane a
lot of the time?

Will you *build*
your **church**
in this country
again?

Why am
I finding it
difficult to
pray?

Fig 2: Questions I'd like to ask God are about...

but of the committed at the core of church. These were people willing to invest considerable time and, indeed, money, to spend a week of their holiday worshipping and learning together.

Further depth was given to the survey by including: 'The question I'd most like to ask God at the moment is...', which served to highlight which of the many issues mentioned was actually the most pressing. Fig 2 illustrates the range of concerns covered by those questions. Alongside the chart is a small sample of the (often personal and moving) answers we received.

We will be issuing a fuller report on the survey findings in due course. However, it is already abundantly clear that we do need to take much more seriously the epidemic of fatigue that besets our nation. And indeed the church.

The challenged church

How can we release our people into joyful obedience to Christ's command: 'Come to

me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28)?

Such obedience, of course, is to be worked out here and now, in the midst of life, not in detachment from it. It is precisely because our citizenship is in heaven, as Paul wrote to the Philippians (3:20), that we must live here on earth as we will in heaven. Home away from home, as it were. To do that we need to learn how to help one another faithfully face the various issues and challenges which confront us in the different arenas in which God has called us to live and serve.

For this reason, the 'Apprentice 09' survey also asked people to indicate the context in which they find it most challenging to work out their apprenticeship of Christ.

For most people it's their workplace

(43%), followed by the neighbourhood (34%) and then the home (24%). Looking in more detail, 59 per cent of respondents in full-time employment identified the workplace as the most challenging place

to be a disciple. For those over the age of 65, it's the neighbourhood (60%), and for those under the age of 25, it's their college (35%), and their places of leisure (25%) that are the arenas of principal challenge.

And how is the church doing in equipping people for the challenges and issues they face? As far as the workplace is

concerned, well over two-thirds of people said that their church community equips them only a little (at best) to flourish in this crucial arena of discipleship and mission. Beyond the workplace, more than half of all respondents also felt ill-equipped

**we do need
to take much
more seriously
the epidemic
of fatigue that
besets our
nation**

by their churches for the issues in their home life. Regrettably, this confirms the findings of LICC's pioneering 2004 'Imagine' research survey.

Perhaps this is partly because many Christian leaders, whose frontline is pastoral ministry, struggle with similar issues to those confronting their congregations. Over two-thirds of the Christian leaders who responded to 'Apprentice 09' said that they struggled with time pressures, and over half with long working hours. And again this is nothing new, Evangelical Alliance research some years ago painted a similar picture. But it poses a vital question: Are we caring for our pastors?

Clearly, deep fatigue is an issue that we in the church can no longer afford to sleep on. Nevertheless, we will want to resist easy (and so ineffectual) answers to the question of how we can re-energise people, releasing them from the fatigue that, left unchecked, can so easily give rise to soul weariness. Indeed, as Paul Valler, an LICC associate speaker, makes clear in his book, *Get a Life*, the road to shalom in a frenetic, driven culture involves radical, prayerful thinking about what values and sources of identity shape our choices.

But of course, coming to God, as with stepping forward in any relationship, is exactly the last thing we want to do when we're tired. Escape seems preferable; we all have desert islands in mind. But can we afford not to come? Jesus knows there is no place of real peace and re-creation other than in him, but this requires a deliberate choice on our part, not just slipping on a cosy pair of slippers. In our exhausted culture, responding to Christ's invitation to rest is an act of radical obedience, signalling allegiance to a different set of values.

And allegiance to those values is a declaration of hope. Indeed, for all the depressingly familiar findings of the 'Apprentice 09' survey, there were beacons of hope.

The hungry church

Christians are tired. Very tired. But, our survey said, they are also hungry. Hungry to grow. There is a real appetite for whole-life discipleship out there:

- 48% of respondents agreed that regular attendees in their church came expecting to grow and change.
- 57% said that they *actively* see themselves as an apprentice of Christ.
- 59% felt that being a Christian helps them to flourish as a human being most of the time.
- 54% said they are intentionally praying about how God might use them to make a difference in the world.

There is a real
appetite for
whole-life
discipleship
out there

It's a picture of a people with a desire for engaging with the whole of life for Christ, concerned to make a difference in the contemporary context, and wondering how they might best do that.

What emerges from the 'Apprentice 09' survey, then, is a more realistic picture of the physical, emotional and theological issues that people are facing. The picture is not one of shalom, or even of shalom in the maelstrom, but rather of determined hope, living on under severe fatigue and pressure. And so we must wrestle with some crucial questions. How do we create Christian communities that

are not only intentionally missional, but also formed of people who aren't driven to exhaustion by work, or church, or a combination of the two? How can we create Christian communities that help people live a life marked by that peace that passes all understanding?

And this, of course, is the cause that continues to be the reason for LICC's existence. We want to contribute to the satisfaction of the hunger for meaningful discipleship by helping to grow whole-life disciple-making churches, and to envision and equip people for life on their frontlines.

That's been the heart behind the Imagine project and our partnership with our 16 pilot churches. Discipleship is a community project. As Alan Roxburgh & Fred Romanuk point out, 'Discipleship emerges out of prayer, study, dialogue and worship by a community learning to ask the questions of obedience as they are directly engaged in mission.' And many, indeed, are the stories of renewed vision and passion for whole-life discipleship that have emerged along the Imagine way. Nevertheless, as the 'Apprentice 09' survey makes clear, there is still much work to be done. That's why we're currently in the process of appointing an additional staff member to the Imagine team, and developing the next phase of the project. We're investing in those tales of transformation yet to be told, to the glory of God, through his church.



The Imagine team: Neil Hudson, Ben Care & Tracy Cotterell

Getting the Church to Work

Mark Greene reflects on an innovative approach to using his *Christian Life and Work Course*

‘It changed the culture in our church,’ he said.

Which is quite an achievement for a six-session DVD, and not a bad return for a mere £25. Indeed, though we’ve had quite a lot of positive feedback about the *Christian Life & Work Course* over the years – we reckon some 25,000 people have actually done it – we’d never been told that the course had had quite such a transformative impact on a whole community. What was the difference? And what could we learn from how the Reverend Paul Pease, the ‘he’ in question, and his church in Hook, had used the resource?

Spotting the opportunity

Firstly, Paul deliberately wanted to use a focus on work to help the *whole* congregation explore the broader truth that all of life is to be lived before the Lord.

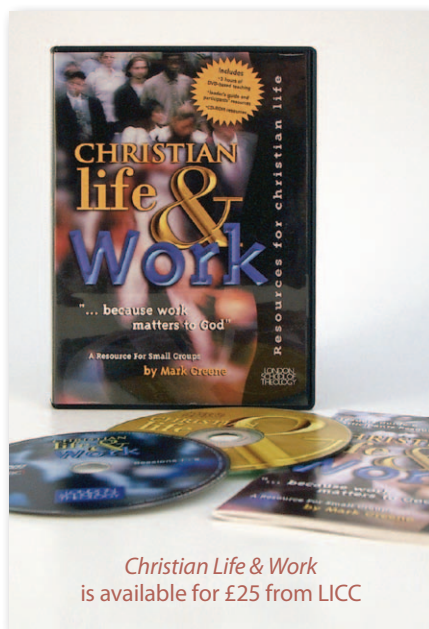
Secondly, he recognised that one of the key problems about encouraging all the home groups to do a series on work is that many people were not in paid work outside the home, whilst others were retired. Two dangers loomed:

1. If everyone did the course, some people might feel disengaged.
2. If only people in work outside the home did the course, they’d be separated from their usual support group.

This might have the advantage of putting all the ‘workers’ together, but it would have the distinct disadvantage of preventing their support group from hearing about their friends’ challenges and opportunities, and thereby learning how they might better encourage and pray for them.

Paul knew, however, that pretty much everyone in his church was engaged in purposeful activity beyond their homes.

Everyone knew people, everyone had spheres of influence – even if they might not yet see the school gate or the bowls club in that way. Besides, they were all part of the same community and therefore all called to ‘spur one another on towards love and good deeds’ (Hebrews 10:24). Or, as various translations put it, to ‘goad’, ‘incite’, ‘stir’ one another up to love and good works.



From work to ‘frontline’

Paul’s response was to position the series as *Christian Life and Your Frontline*, using the *Christian Life & Work* DVD as the resource. Everyone had a frontline – a place, a context where they felt that God was calling them to minister, so everyone could be involved. The new name made everyone feel included and, whilst self-evidently the material did focus on work in primarily non-Christian contexts, the inclusive title made people more alert to notice the differences between their various contexts, and quicker to support each other in them.

Obviously, you can’t actually change a church’s culture through one DVD.

Other things changed too: each of the three leaders used their Wednesday lunchtimes to visit someone on their frontline – wherever that might be. And Paul shifted the emphasis of his preaching – already a strong part of his ministry. He used to do what you might call high-octane, high-sugar, high-caffeine preaching; hoping to offer people a really encouraging spiritual high on a Sunday. What he calls ‘Relentless Preaching’. Now his aim is to provide ‘Pasta Preaching’ – slow release carbohydrate that’s appropriate for the marathon of Monday to Saturday; preaching that’s delicious and nutritious at the time, but releases its energy into the bloodstream throughout the week.

As Paul puts it, ‘A saying we frequently use here at Hook is “surviving and thriving on the frontline (and the frontline is where we are most of the time).” We are still totally convinced that the *action* is on our frontline, and we retreat twice a week behind the frontline for fellowship so as to encourage one another to get back out to the frontline once again to win people for Christ. I am really passionate about this and am convinced this is the purpose of the church and the best way to reach people with the glorious gospel.’

Interestingly, the team here at LICC now uses the word ‘frontline’ in all our teaching on mission. It’s a term that honours every context and binds people together in shared endeavour, even if that endeavour is pursued in different places. Certainly, the *Christian Life and Work* DVD does do ‘what it says on the tin’, but, as Paul and his community have shown, it has the potential to achieve a great deal more.

Mark Greene



Gospel Edge in t

When Bono met Billy Graham, the great evangelist asked him why he didn't preach. Bono replied that he'd been called to be a rock singer. And that was good enough for Billy. It's now more than twenty years ago since the Irish quartet began to pursue their calling to rock music, and they've gone about their daily work in a way that has commanded the respect and appreciation of non-Christian critics and audiences and, to the outside ear at least, has also been an uncompromising expression of their discipleship of Christ. It's an admirable achievement in any job in any age, but it's particularly remarkable in a sector usually associated with rampant promiscuity and profligate substance abuse.

Magnificat. Reminiscent not only of Mary's song, but also of the prophet Jeremiah's call, Bono sings:

'I was born, I was born to be with you in this space and time...'

I was born, I was born to sing for you.

I didn't have a choice to lift you up and sing for you,

I didn't have a choice to lift you up and sing whatever song you wanted me to.'

And then Bono lays his gift at God's feet, singing: *'I give you back my voice.'*

Should we all not do the same with the gifts we have been given?

Mark Greene finds much to *No Line on the Horizon* and

But God intervenes and manifests his presence in ordinary places: as the narrator is punching in the numbers at the ATM machine, or when he's on the subway speeding *'through the stations of the cross.'* God is there but no one else sees. It is *'vision over visibility'* – the eyes of faith.

Elsewhere Bono has, for the first time, crafted songs about fictional characters who still haven't found what they're looking for. There's a war correspondent,



The new album, *No Line on the Horizon*, brims with biblical allusion and is suffused with evangelistic intent. It is, for those with ears to hear, about the yearning for God, about gratitude for his presence and about living in the implications of his liberating love. Despite these themes, there have been no heavy-metallic screams of denunciation in the secular press but, rather, a generally positive response to an album that may not prove to be one of their very best, but is strong enough to suggest that it's not yet time for Bono to hang up his sunglasses.

The Christian heart that propels the band is clear from the second track, 'Magnificent', which is two parts love song, and four parts a personal

Bono's motive?

'Only love, only love can leave such a mark, only love can leave such a scar.'

This is the song of a man of faith. And his faith is in a God who is alive and seems keen to show it. The song 'Moment of Surrender' tracks a pilgrim's descent from a wedding night and a paean of gratitude to God for the beloved, through to a period of alienation:

'I've been in every black hole... At the altar of the dark star, my body's now a begging bowl, begging to get back to my heart, to the rhythm of my soul, to the rhythm of my unconsciousness, to the rhythm that yearns to be released from control.'

a Parisian traffic cop and, in 'Unknown Caller', a lonely man who is *'lost between the midnight and the dawning in a place of no consequence or company'*. It's 3:33 (half-way to 6:66 perhaps?), his clock and mobile stop working but still he gets a message from an unknown caller:

'Go, shout it out, rise up, oh, oh, oh, escape yourself, and gravity.'

If this sounds like positive thinking psychobabble then the line that follows makes the source of the call clear:

'Hear me, cease to speak, that I may speak. Shush now...'

Indeed, the song becomes an urgent summons to a new life: *'Restart, and*

The Land of Rock

admire in U2's new album,
and in the men who wrote it

reboot yourself, you're free to go...' The last phrase's association with prison is a metaphor for the bondage of sin, and a reference, surely, to Jesus' promise to set the prisoners free – for those with ears to hear.

Evangelistic? Well, yes, but in the way that parables are – open-ended, avoiding pat answers and sometimes chillingly sombre. So it is that 'White as Snow' is the musings of a man who grew up in some wide, flat, open place

on the remains of his own life and the contradictions of war. On the one hand, the bombs have wrought terrible destruction. On the other hand, a soldier generously takes out some oranges for a kid – from his tank. The song's power lies in its melancholy yearning for something better, for life to have turned out differently – for the journalist's marriage to have survived, to have found love again, for his job not to seem so dishonouringly reductive – squeezing *'complicated lives into a simple headline'*. Behind this blend of the personal and the global, lie two

Similarly, the believer is left with a challenge – don't forget the lost. In 'Stand-Up Comedy', Bono addresses the Christian: *'Stand up all you people, stand up for your love.'* U2 are confident in God. Are we? They aren't too sure.

'Stop helping God across the road like a little old lady.'

This may all sound rather cerebral but it doesn't feel that way. Nevertheless, U2 are concerned with ideas and self-consciously committed to pursuing the transcendent. As drummer Adam Clayton puts it:

'I think that is what we look for in our music, we are much more interested in finding that transcendent thing than in, say, finding just a good song. We don't



where the snow fell, a man who once *'knew there was a love divine, then came a time when I thought it knew me not.'* The memory of that love persists in the recognition that the only one who can give *'forgiveness when forgiveness is not'* is *'the lamb as white as snow.'* Nevertheless, the song ends in yearning, not for a land, or the days of his youth, but for a heart that *'could be white as snow.'* It's a moving portrait of a man haunted by some dark deed or some deep intransigent stain of sin.

'Cedars of Lebanon' is also a non-believer's tale and, at first hearing, seems a curious song to close the album. Downbeat, it's a Middle Eastern war correspondent's musings

unresolved issues. First: is God, high though he is, impotent in situations like Lebanon? Second: can anything worthwhile last?

*'This s****y world sometimes produces a rose,
The scent of it lingers but then it goes.'*

Why end an album this way? It seems to contradict all the affirmations that have preceded it. It seems to take the non-believer back to where he or she may have started. Perhaps that's the point. It's as if U2 are saying: 'this is perhaps what you believed when you first hit "play", but is this all there is for you? Has anything you've heard changed your heart?'

always hit it, but by looking for it we do abandon a certain kind of methodological approach... If you focus on mere method, Adam continues, 'Well, what you end up with is craft, and craft isn't exciting at the end of the day, because it is not an idea. Whereas what I tend to think is that we pursue ideas.'

Isn't it that very touch of the transcendent that we all yearn that God might bestow on all our work – whether it's a simple meal transformed or a business meeting suffused with creativity, mutual respect and generosity?

Rock on.



Rescuing Darwin

Antony Billington reflects on a recent report on God and evolution in Britain today

My wife is adamant we first met outside the laundry at college, whereas I know it was outside the Italian restaurant on Green Lane. Of course, our disagreement on this point is friendly and poses no threat to our relationship; somewhat ironically, it's even a source of celebration, since what really matters to both of us is *that* we met, not *how* we met. Likewise, where there are disagreements in the Christian family – over spiritual gifts, the end of the world, the nature of church leadership – it's crucial to remember what unites us rather than stumble over matters of secondary importance.

2009 sees the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. The milestones have provoked considerable discussion in the press, books, and TV – with many pundits giving the impression that religion (and

Christianity is usually in the line of sight) is either under threat or has already been made redundant. It has also provided an opportunity for Christians to engage with others on the topic, to reflect together on what's at stake and what's not at stake, and remind ourselves that we have too much invested in our relationship with each other, not to mention with our Creator God, to trip up on this dispute.

As part of a larger project on Darwin, Nick Spencer of Theos (a public theology think tank) and Denis Alexander of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion have written a report – *Rescuing Darwin: God and Evolution in Britain Today* – in which they seek to argue that Darwinian evolution does not necessitate atheism, and that Christianity and evolution are compatible. In 'rescuing' Darwin from what they see as false charges, their report prompts reflection on four related areas.

The significance of Darwin

The report plots Darwin's faith from before the Beagle expedition to the publication of *Origin* and beyond, and his struggles with suffering (not least personally, with the death of his eldest daughter). Although he had lost whatever Christian faith he had by the time he wrote *Origin*, and became an agnostic towards the end of his life, he

rejected the view that evolution entails atheism. Moreover, the initial reception of his theory, though not without criticism, was generally positive, and was accepted even by leading Christian thinkers – scientists and theologians – who did not see it as a threat to faith.

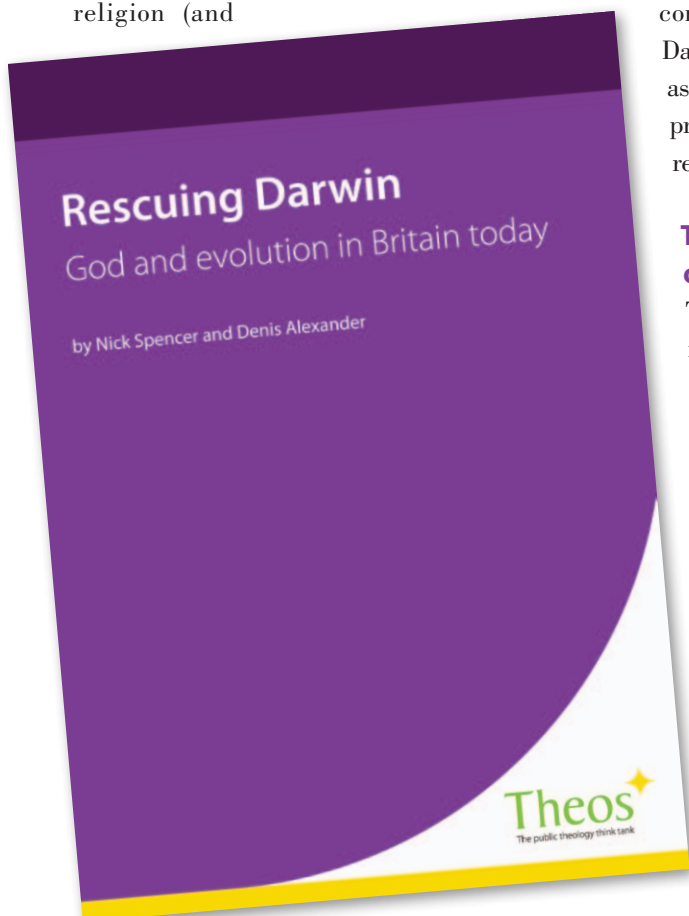
Disciples of Darwin are not always faithful to him in this respect when they argue that evolution essentially equates with atheism; Darwin would not have agreed with them. When faced with the choice of 'creation *or* evolution', many Christians feel compelled to say 'creation', and don't question whether they might have been subjected to a false antithesis of the 'who do you love – your husband or your son?' sort.

Part of the problem is that Darwinism has been encountered wearing various philosophical, social or political outfits. Darwin himself has been hijacked for views in which humans are merely machines or collections of chemicals, accidents of a random process, subject to blind forces, with morality reduced to self-interest. It should come as no surprise that it's not just Christians who have problems with this kind of 'hard' Darwinism. According to the report, none of this reflects Darwin's own position.

The interpretation of Scripture

The report includes a helpful section on Scripture, showing that many of the early church fathers exercised considerable flexibility in their interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis, and that figurative readings have continued through church history. Even theologically conservative scholars embraced a range of opinions on the issue of evolution. B

Faithfulness to Scripture requires reading it in appropriate ways



B Warfield (still highly esteemed and appealed to by supporters of biblical inerrancy) was happy to accept that God had guided the process, stating: ‘I do not think that there is any general statement in the Bible or any part of the account of creation, either as given in Genesis 1 and 2 or elsewhere alluded to, that need be opposed to evolution.’ Warfield’s high view of Scripture was not stymied by the possibility of evolution.

Faithfulness to Scripture requires reading it in appropriate ways. When biblical writers speak of the earth not moving (Psalm 93:1; 96:10; 104:5), we understand that has to do with God’s oversight rather than physical immovability. Interpretations of such references as evidence that the earth is at the centre of the universe, though sincerely and strongly held, were misinformed. That we now know this does not cast doubt on the authority of Scripture, but reminds us to be wise readers of it, open to correction by greater light.

We do less than justice to Genesis 1 if we make the category mistake of reading it as one thing rather than another. This may mean recognising it has been shaped as a piece of literature to show how God first *forms* the world (on days 1-3) and then *fills* the world (on days 4-6). Moreover, in its context, it engages with alternative worldviews to inculcate a particular view of God, the world, and the place of human beings in it. That it is not a scientific account of origins does not make it inferior or any less truthful. Again, none of this is to deny the inspiration of the account; it is to ask what *kind* of inspired account we are reading.

The nature of science

That science and religion are sometimes seen as rival descriptions of the way the

world works is testimony to the power of the sacred-secular divide. Christians, however, may work in science, as elsewhere, serving Christ through their research, seeing it as part of their discipleship to explore God’s world on behalf of others. Christians need not fear careful, honest scientific investigation, and we all benefit from its results. But we also recognise the *limits* of science – that where it might be helpful in answering the ‘how’ questions, it might not be the most appropriate place to look for answers to the ‘why’ questions, particularly if those questions relate to ultimate issues of identity, purpose and hope.

Christians of all people should know that human experience is larger than science alone can describe, and will be cautious of *scientism*, where science itself becomes a belief system, where evolution is elevated from a theory (albeit in the technical sense of a coherent, well-ordered model that explains some part of the natural world) to an all-encompassing worldview.

The report maintains that we do not have to choose between creation or evolution, since the two words describe different but complementary levels of discourse. Just as the Christian historian may acknowledge the ‘natural’ cause of an event in history and not thereby deny God’s providential oversight of history, so the Christian scientist might affirm God’s sovereignty in evolutionary history. The one form of explanation is complemented and completed, not necessarily contradicted, by other forms of explanation.

The doctrine of creation

Of course, significant questions about evolution remain, not least from a Christian perspective. The authors of the report try to answer charges that evolution is too wasteful, depends on chance, and involves suffering and death



– arguing that these aren’t as problematic as has sometimes been claimed. But issues like this rightly stay on the agenda for debate.

Christians will want to set that discussion in a wider context of an affirmation that creation is not an accident of nature, but an act of God the Creator (however the *mechanism* of creation is understood). Along with creation goes an understanding of God’s providence, that he is the one who upholds the created order. From a broader biblical perspective, creation is not so much a claim about the processes by which the universe came into being, and more a claim about how everything depends on God, of his commitment to restore it when it goes awry, and how that restoration is bound up with the cross of Christ. It reminds us that though we are creatures of the earth, we are made in his image, and thus live differently in the world and in relation with others as a result. And reflection on creation leads us, as it does throughout Scripture, to praise and worship of our great God.

The report by Nick Spencer and Denis Alexander, *Rescuing Darwin: God and Evolution in Britain Today* (Theos, 2009), is available for download at www.theosthinktank.co.uk. Contact LICC on 020 7399 9555 or mail@licc.org.uk for a free hard copy.



Many of the early church fathers exercised considerable flexibility in their interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis

How to be a Super Model

Jason Gardner outlines the importance of role modelling in the discipling of young people.

Apologies for the misleading title, this isn't about fad diets and choosing the right publicist (though you could probably find an article on those subjects by Mark Greene on the LICC website); this is about role models: copying a guru's good behaviour.

The art of copying someone or something gets both good and bad press in society. For example, copying a £20 note might take some skill but is generally frowned upon, and mimicking the dress code of the trendiest kid in school could result, in days of yore, in earning the negative moniker 'copycat'.

However, there are positive connotations as well, and nowhere more so than in the arena of apprenticing. Think of any well-known apprenticing scenario you like, and the idea of a novice closely following a master in order to observe and imitate their behaviour is a familiar tale. There's obviously Sir Alan Sugar and his would-be shadows, but most coaching relationships involve show and tell – the master acts and the student copies. And many a great artist also learned their trade by painstakingly nicking ideas from other great artists.

You often see this in the world of movies, where a director will nab a camera angle or an editing technique from a past master – although it's not called nabbing but rather 'homage'. So in *Star Wars* George Lucas displays his love of all things Japanese by 'borrowing' twice from the culture. Everywhere you look – on the both dark and light sides of the force – you can see samurai helmets;

Darth would very much be vogue in seventeenth century Tokyo. And aspects of the original *Star Wars* borrow from famed director Akira Kurosawa's film *The Hidden Fortress*. All very deliberate on the part of Lucas, partly because copying a master – the apprentice and mentoring theme – is extremely strong in *Star Wars* full stop. As Lucas says:

'Mentors help novices learn by doing – applying theory in practice – and



also inspire them to keep motivated and persevere. I've featured such relationships between mentors and apprentices in my Star Wars films.'

It's very true that the best apprenticing relationships feature the master assigning a task to a student and then reflecting on their performance. The only way the student matures is by being given increasingly more difficult tasks to master. But first comes observation, first comes witnessing the technique before attempting to copy.

And this is the case with Jesus' nurture of his disciples. For instance, in Mark's gospel we read, with more specificity than in any other gospel, why Jesus chooses the twelve:

'He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons' (Mark 3.14-15).

By the time Jesus actually sends out the twelve in Mark 6, they've had plenty of opportunity to observe how he preaches, what he preaches, how he drives out demons and the authority with which he does so. There's a strong consociation expected of their life with Jesus ('that they might be with him'), precisely so that they might not simply support him but might also benefit from the multiple formal and informal opportunities for teaching such 'being with' affords. They learn through close contact with the master.

No wonder that when Jesus left the building of his church in the hands of the Spirit-empowered disciples they knew precisely what they should get on with: doing what the master did.

It's also no wonder that many parallels have been made with the concept of apprenticeship and the concept of discipling. Apprenticing implies a hands-on teaching style where novice mimics master, as does discipling. This is why we see the apostles travelling with partners or in groups, and why we see them – and Paul in particular – taking young disciples under their wing.

This is an aspect of disciple making that we can't afford to overlook: that faith is better caught than taught. There is only so much that young people can learn in the formal teaching settings of church. It's through spending time observing those whose template for living is fashioned on Christ's model that they learn most.



Contact

Top titles for engaging with the world

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Oscar Wilde

Yet another film version of this novel is due to be released in September, so now is a great time to refresh your memory of, or discover for the first time, this provocative classic. Guaranteed to spark debate over dark arts, decadence and damnation, could this tale be spiritually sonorous rather than merely morally resonant? Does Wilde attempt to construct his own aesthetic order, in homage to the great god art? What functions do Dorian, Lord Henry and Basil perform in his service? Why does art suffer such a destructive collapse? The film will stir up renewed interest in the public arena – a chance to debate the detrimental effects of self-indulgence, obsession and sin; but also to grapple with the ideology of religions and the problem of hoping in any other god for redemption. **NAOMI SKINNER**



White Noise

Don DeLillo



This is a disturbing read. If you're already uncomfortable with the way life seems to be evolving into a series of adverts, epidemics and media broadcasts, your worst suspicions will be confirmed. But far from being merely a wry observation of our degeneration into hyper-technological solipsism, this book demands its readers ask searching questions. Following a year in the life of Jack Gladney, a university professor obsessed by a fear of death, the plot unfolds through a series of seemingly disparate events, each exploring, or increasing readers' awareness of the central themes and concerns of the text: death, technology and the increasingly thin line between art and reality. Like many great novels, it is best understood backwards – at its climax, Jack has a haunting episode in a nunnery and suddenly the question we're left to grapple with is: where is God? **NS**

The World's Wife

Carol Ann Duffy

Duffy's work is elastic, holding in tension diametric opposites with an easy poetic agility. *The World's Wife* brings together an interesting and diverse group of poems, which examine the historic and literary might-have-beens had heroes been heroines. Using simple words, her craft is held in her ability to raise complex issues and engender debate; Mrs Aesop, Mrs Darwin and Mrs Faust are given their say on their respective husbands' work to satiric comic effect, but causing the eruption of multiple questions. In the same vein, Mrs Scrooge (written for the *Guardian* in December last year) recasts a classic; but cutting through the wit, questions of a higher import emerge. **NS**



Choice

Highly recommended Christian titles

Dig Deeper

Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sach

Ever considered the Bible as quite like a chocolate bar, really? Or seen 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' as the starting point for unpicking the power of Hebrew poetry? Reading the Bible is often difficult; reading the Bible effectively can seem nigh on impossible. In the space of 16 short, and surprisingly digestible chapters, Beynon and Sach furnish their readers with a complete tool kit to conquer the fears and insecurities which often come between us and hearing, understanding and applying God's word in our lives. This book not only dispels the myth that would perpetuate the Bible as an ancient, mystical tome understood by only a few enlightened theologians, but also does so with verve and humour. **NS**



Real Scientists Real Faith

R J Berry (ed.)

This fascinating collection of testimonies from 18 academic scientists, provides a more responsible, honest and gentle weapon for the armoury of those who want to respond to the fierce and sometimes immoderate debates about the (in)compatibility of science and faith. It certainly deals with the implication, both written and voiced, that serious scientists cannot be Christians. However, in my experience academics in the humanities – sociology for example – are up against similar prejudice arising from their disciplines; someone needs to collect and publish their testimonies as well. **MARGARET KILLINGRAY**



Holiness

J C Ryle

Not for the faint-hearted, this meaty classic is worth persevering with. Each chapter stands alone as a complete argument, making it possible to approach in manageable fragments. Each looks at various aspects of the common challenges and struggles faced by Christians, and applies Scripture to encourage and correct misunderstandings. Several hard truths, such as sin, hell and predestination, are expounded – but graciously. Ryle also covers individual Bible characters in depth, and with surprisingly searing relevance to today's culture. Moses is an example of relinquishing earthly wealth and political dominion for the sake of the gospel; Lot's wife reminds us of the consequences of falling in love with our surrounding culture rather than Jesus. As relevant now as when Ryle wrote it, *Holiness* will make you want to change the way you live. **NS**



Continue Making a Difference

It's amazing the difference a legacy can make.

A few years ago, the receipt of a legacy was significant in enabling LICC to produce *Supporting Christians at Work*. Over 35,000 copies have been distributed, and it's gone as far afield as America, Australia and Canada, and it was even translated into Chinese. It was a vital moment in LICC's history – the first mass distribution of a LICC resource, and it created a model which has subsequently led to the distribution of thousands of copies of *Imagine, Let My People Grow*, and, most recently, *Supporting Christians in Education*.

A couple of years ago it was the money we received from a legacy that made it possible for us to appoint a Head of Faculty; someone to sharpen our biblical expertise, and to lead our work in helping Christians across the UK better engage with the Bible. It was a gap in our armoury, and without one of our supporters leaving provision for LICC in her will, we couldn't possibly have taken such a bold step – we just wouldn't have had the money.

At LICC we find ourselves with ever-increasing opportunities to disseminate the vital ideas that LICC was founded to champion to denominations, theological colleges, Christian organisations and churches, as well as a growing number of Christians.

We're seeking a sustainable, long-term change in the culture of the UK church, but our future plans need to be matched by financial resources to enable our vision to become a reality over the long-term.

Do take a moment to browse through the enclosed leaflet, and fill in the coupon to find out more about how you can continue making a difference.

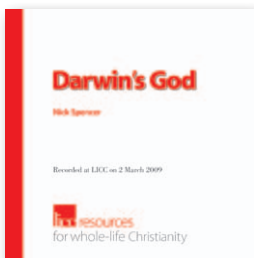


CD of the Quarter

Nick Spencer on Darwin's God

2009 sees the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of his *On the Origin of Species*. Nick Spencer, previously Research Director at LICC and now Director of Studies at Theos, a public theology think tank, tells the story of Darwin's religious journey and reflects on

what we might learn from it for the discussions surrounding creation and evolution today. Friends of LICC will find a copy of the CD enclosed. Further copies can be ordered at licc.org.uk/bookshop, or by calling 020 7399 9555.



Connecting to LICC

If you would like to find out more about LICC – how to become a Friend of LICC, receiving our mailings or our ever-popular bi-weekly emails, please call 020 7399 9555, email mail@licc.org.uk or write to us at the address opposite.

Toolbox

'Exceeded my expectations and challenged me greatly... Given me resources and tools to engage culture and lead my church to do so.'

'Very helpful, encouraging, and life-changing... Given a wealth of information and insights. Truly renewing and energising.'

'More confident to engage with the world at work and in my family on cultural issues.'

'Enabled, emboldened, encouraged.'

These are just some of the comments from past delegates on LICC's Toolbox course. To find out why the course inspires such passion and enthusiasm, book yourself a place now. The next Toolbox runs from 14-18 September. The week-long course in biblical and cultural engagement costs £295, which includes tuition, meals and cultural adventures. For more details, visit licc.org.uk/toolbox, or call 020 7399 9560.



Connecting with Culture Events Coming Up @ LICC Manchester

Sex and Sensibilities (June 11) – Join Nick & Gillian Hall as they assist us in unpacking what lies at the heart of our culture's obsession with sex, and the church's seemingly ineffectual response.

Mentoring, Self-development and Discipleship: A Whole-life Perspective (June 17) – Join Dr Shirley Jenner, lecturer in HRM at MMU Business School, as we explore the place of self-development projects in Christian discipleship, as well as a theology of reflective learning for the whole of life.

What a Way to Go: Society's Attitudes to Death (July 9) – How does the way we deal with death indicate something deeper about our society? How does the language our culture uses betray its fears? Join Dr Mark Lee, Consultant in Palliative Care at St Benedict's Hospice, Monkwearmouth Hospital, Sunderland as he explores a Christian response to this taboo issue.

Running a SME: What's it all About? (July 22) – What does it mean to be a whole-life disciple in the world of owning, leading and managing a small business? Join businesswoman, Sally Orwin, as she facilitates a conversation on the integration of organisational and personal aspects of running a business into a life of discipleship.

Venue for events: An Outlet, 77 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 2HG, 7-9.30pm. Cost: £4 (concessions £3) (food and drink not included). Further information at licc.org.uk/about-licc/events or churchmcr.com/orgs/4



The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity
St. Peter's · Vere Street · London · W1G 0DQ (t) 020 7399 9555
(f) 020 7399 9556 · (e) mail@licc.org.uk · (w) www.licc.org.uk
Editor: Nigel Hopper · Executive Director: Mark Greene
Designed & printed by x1.ltd.uk

All articles ©LICC – use only with prior permission from the publishers.
LICC Ltd is a registered charity No. 286102