

Springdale College: Together in Mission

SPRING TERM NEWSLETTER

The Religious Condition of our Times

Recent figures from all across Europe suggest that the tide is beginning to turn for faith in what many have seen as a Godless continent. However, this is a complex story as well as a remarkable shift. It is certainly not the case that there is a uniform return to God across all ages, cultures, classes and genders. Still less is it the case that churches everywhere and of all denominations are growing. The reality is much more variegated and complex.

The key to unlocking the complexity of the situation we face lies in understanding what took place in that remarkable decade – the 1960s. Some have written of that decade in terms of “a religious crisis” and certainly the figures demonstrate something of that crisis. Church attendance and membership did not just decline so much as fall off a cliff – they plummeted to an extraordinary degree.

The arrival (through immigration) of other faiths, the desire to explore alternative spiritualities together with the wholesale decline of both numbers and vigor in the church led to a perception that Christendom was over for Europe and that the future was likely to be either very secular or very plural or both. To a degree that is exactly what has taken place since the 1960’s and yet the church has not entirely disappeared and there are indications of the return of life and vigor, at least in churches that are taking the mandate of mission seriously.

The 1960’s were a critical moment in redefining the relationship between church and culture – all are agreed on that much – but after that there is little agreement amongst academics as to what was going on at a deeper level. There are at least four views of the significance of the phenomenon of the 1960s and I explore these in more detail in another version of this article in my blog www.togetherinmission.org.uk and select Café Vista.

For the church, the process of redefining that relationship is what we call mission. I would argue that wherever the church engages in mission it is meeting an increasingly receptive audience. However there are at least two problems with such a situation. The first is that mission is hard work and can take us to the very edge in terms of our spiritual, physical, emotional and imaginative resources. There are many cases of burnout. The second is that many in the church still have absolutely no interest in engaging in mission. The ones who resist the missional imperative are often the ones who help in the burnout process of those who are responding to the missional call. We are not yet at a tipping point within the church whereby the missional imperative cannot be resisted but that it the tipping point we seek.

Martin Robinson

(For an in depth examination of the significance of the 1960s try Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, OUP, 2007)

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GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

IMPORTANT NEW RESOURCE - THE ATLA DATABASE

Springdale College now subscribes to the ATLA database. This is a huge collection of over half a million articles from a variety of theology and mission related journals that you can download. ATLA stands for the American Theological Libraries Association.

It is very easy to use. Log on to moodle and ATLA is on the front page, listed in the menu on the left. Simply click on ATLA and you will have access. This is a great resource for essays and dissertations. Here is an example of how to use it:

You want to find something on N T Wright and Justification. You type in his name and do a search. 483 articles are listed. You choose one called 'the justification debate' and click on the 'source' link. This gives you access to the journal you want.

Try it with a topic for your next essay. If you need help your local tutor is a good person to contact.

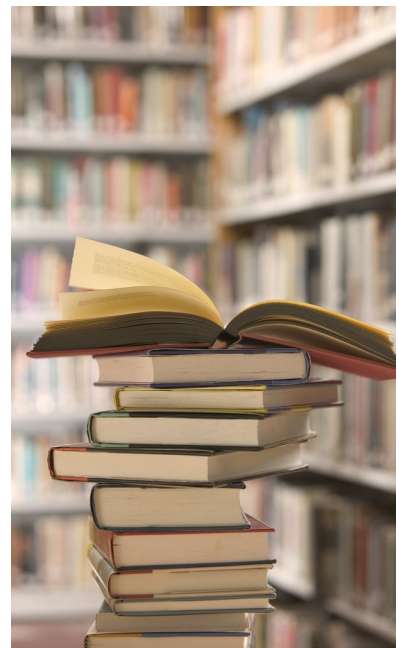
**Please ensure that you accurately reference the sources you have used through ATLA, including the author, journal, date of publication etc.*



RECOMMEND A FRIEND

It is very good to do the MA with others from our ministry setting or with our friends.

People are already beginning to let their friends know about Springdale's MA in Missional Leadership. Once your recommended person has enrolled on the course you will have 5 books on mission and leadership sent to you - to keep or to give away! There are more details in the previous newsletter.



SUMMER SCHOOL 2011 (OPEN TO ALL WALES AND YSJ STUDENTS)

The four days of Summer School is open to all our MA students, at any stage in the course.

This is a great opportunity to meet with other students and tutors in the Springdale community. We will publish further details of the programme later but the dates for your diary are 14-17 July.

The venue is the well equipped and comfortable King's Park Centre in Northampton. You can invite a friend as a 'taster' conference.

There is a charge for food and accommodation; teaching costs are covered in your course fees.



REFLECTIVE EXERCISES (YSJ)

Thank you for your reflective exercises. It is worth pointing out that these are intended to focus on ONE aspect of what you have learnt on the course; that might be a book, a concept or one particular unit. This can be related to your ministry, church, organisation etc., but the exercise is not purely a description of how you found the course. It needs to have at least some theory / ideas from your studies in it.

VIDEO RESOURCES

Some videos will soon be available to view on the TiM website. Martin has recorded an induction piece that explains the thinking behind the course; we have videoed a conference and interviews with Neil Coles (of Organic Church fame); there is also a short video of an interview with Paul Francis from Glenwood Church in Cardiff.

PEOPLE NEWS

Battersea Baby Boom!

Adam Baron, tutor at Battersea RSN, has become a dad recently. Adam's wife, Maria, had a girl, Sophie Grace, on Wednesday 12th January. Mum and baby are both well. Adam is also doing well, by all accounts. Congratulations to them both!

RSNs THIS TERM (YSJ)

Students on the YSJ MA should be aware of their RSN dates for this term. The course material for the modules you will cover is up-to-date. Please print out the verbatim notes and bring them along to the days. The first day will cover 406.2.1 and 406.2.3; the second day is 406.2.4 plus looking at outlines for essays. Please read the course material before coming along and, for day 2, bring along an essay outline.

I hope that everyone has mastered the mysteries of moodle by now. After logging in you can scroll down and access your particular course. For the MA there is a resources page and pages for each module. Bristol RSN has also started a discussion forum. Moodle is new to us at Springdale and we are learning as we go along, so do please bear with any teething problems and let Pete know if there are any particular difficulties.

Do you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter?
Email Theresa@sdcol.org.uk to be added to the mailing list



INTRODUCING BOB STRADLING VICE PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Bob joined SC:TiM as Vice Principal and Chief Operating Officer in September 2010.

He originally studied for a Business Studies Degree at Preston Polytechnic. It was during his final year he met his wife Helen who was completing her studies to become a nurse. After college he went into accountancy and qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1988. He then started his teaching career in helping to prepare students for the professional accountancy exams.

In 1994 he moved into Higher Education and started teaching in the Business School at Sunderland University. Various other roles at Durham University, where he is still a Visiting Fellow, and Inverness College UHI followed. At Inverness he was part of the senior management team of the college and was Head of School for Business and Creative Industries.

Whilst in Sunderland he served as an Elder in a local Baptist Church and was the sole elder for nearly three years during a period of interregnum. This experience led him to join the MA Missional Leadership course run by TiM and he graduated in 2009.

He loves working with students and supporting church leaders and so feels extremely fortunate to be able to combine these two aspects in his current role.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Richard: Richard@sdcol.org.uk

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- Vice Principal

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- Web/Administrative Support

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- Administrative Support

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We would encourage you to contact one of the above members of staff with any queries.

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