



The Clarendon Connection

News of Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church October 2007

Sunday Schedule

Choir rehearsal

9:45 a.m.

Worship

10:30 a.m.

Children's Education 10:45 a.m.

Refreshments and fellowship 11:30 a.m.

Communion will be celebrated on October 7th.

October Calendar

October 2nd, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. You are invited to the Worship Committee meeting (for more info, see page 2)

World Communion Sunday and collection of the Peacemaking Offering on Sunday, October 7th (for more info, see page 3)

Orders for Equal Exchange items will be taken at church on October 7th (for more info, see page 2)

Yoga, after the service on October 7th (for more info, see page 3)

Joint Session and Deacon's meeting on Wednesday, October 10th, 7:30 p.m.

Peace, Justice and Mission committee will meet at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 11th

“Young Turks Two” runs at the Nave Gallery from October 12th through November 4th, with an opening reception on Friday, October 12th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. followed by a free performance (for more info, see page 3)

Adult Ed returns, right after the service on Sunday, September 14th (for more info, see page 4)

Sunday, October 14th begins our stewardship drive for 2008 (for more info, see page 4)

Serenata Chamber Musicians, Saturday, October 20th at 7:30pm (for more info, see page 5)



Yoga, after the service on October 21st (for more info, see page 3)

Book group on Wednesday, October 24th at 7:30 p.m. (for more info, see page 5)

Friday, October 26th, 8:00-10:00 p.m., The Francisco Pais Quintet at The Nave Gallery (for more info, see page 3)

COMING NOVEMBER:

Sunday Evening Forum on November 11th, “Peace Is Every Step”, a film and discussion about Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen master, author and spiritual leader. (see Book Reviews for more information about the book of the same name as the film)

Parish News

Please keep the Gustafson family in your prayers, following the death of Karl’s mother, Louise Gustafson, on September 4th. A family funeral was held on September 8th and a memorial service was held on September 29th. Memorial gifts for Louise may be made to Church World Service.

ChurchWorld Service
PO Box 968
Elkhart, IN 46515-9962

Worship Committee

Worship Committee Meeting October 2nd, 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the Green Room

What does worship mean to us at Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church? How is the living community of faith made tangible in worship? How can we participate most fully in our faith on Sunday mornings? Earlier in the summer, Pastor Karl opened a dialogue in the congregation about the ways in which we are fulfilling our mission through worship and also the ways in which we might seek to worship more faithfully at Clarendon Hill. And while there were certainly many ideas raised up for the congregation to consider, we cannot begin to develop these ideas further without your help.

If you have ever thought about these questions, if Pastor Karl got you thinking more critically about worship at CHPC, if you have ever wanted to take a more active role in how we form community through worship at Clarendon, or even if you haven't thought about these things before but would like to, we strongly urge you to consider attending the Worship Committee meeting this October 2nd from 7-8pm. We will be meeting briefly to continue the conversation that began earlier this summer and to begin to identify places in which our worship strongest as well as places in which it might have room to grow. God bless, and I hope to see you there. Sarah Glass, Seminarian

The Presbyterian Coffee Project

Orders will be taken for Equal Exchange COFFEE (drip or whole bean) and TEA (English Breakfast, Earl Grey, Green, Rooibos) and CRANBERRIES, at church on Sunday, October 7th. You can send orders to Katherine no later than October 8th by phone (617-628-6716) or email (kgkg@gis.net). Delivery will be October 14th. Remember that for all products

we purchase through the Presbyterian Coffee project, Equal Exchange makes a contribution to the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

What is EQUAL EXCHANGE? In 1991, Equal Exchange became the first U.S. company to adopt international fair trade standards as guiding principles on 100% of their products. By working with democratic farmer cooperatives around the world and paying a fair price, Equal Exchange supports efforts to improve local communities, putting more control and greater income in the hands of impoverished, small-scale farmers in developing nations. We also serve freshly made Equal Exchange coffee at Clarendon Hill's coffee hours!

Introduction to Yoga

Come join our small, half-hour class during coffee hour (12:15 p.m., on Sundays, October 7th and 21st) to practice mindful breathing and gentle yoga postures. Great for stress release, improved flexibility and strength. If interested, please email Liz at cavator1@hotmail.com for more info.

Peacemaking Offering

“And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2)

What Is the Peacemaking Offering?

The Peacemaking Offering is one of four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The 192nd General Assembly (1980) of the former United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America called for an offering to be received to support peacemaking initiatives and peace education throughout the church when it adopted the recommendations in the report “Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling.”

The Peacemaking Offering is received by most congregations on World Communion Sunday, celebrated the first Sunday in October. It is recommended that 25 percent of the Offering received be retained by each congregation, 25 percent be used by synods and presbyteries, and 50 percent be used by the General Assembly ministries through the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

The Nave Gallery

“Young Turks Two” will opening at the Nave Gallery on Friday, October 12th and run through Thursday, November 4th. An opening reception will be held on October 12th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., followed by a free performance.

The Nave Gallery's Young Turks returns for a second year with an exhibition featuring art and artists 'taking a walk on the wild side.' The show aims to highlight all that is not part of the status quo. The work of ten artists questions, confronts, and, yes, attacks ideas, images, and ideology that others take for granted. Built on the joint premise that dissent can be healthy and rebellion may be messy, YTT artists show work exploring the world, their position in it and whatever commentary they feel the need to make on this relationship. This show was curated by Beth Driscoll of the Lady Cougars Art Gang. The artists are: Head Clausnitzer, Barbara Cone, Katie DiChiara, Tali Gai, Sydney Hardin, Jesse M. Kahn, Edward Middleton, Lee Powers, Melissa Sullivan, and Taryn Wells

Opening reception, Friday, October 12th, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Followed by FREE performance at 8:00 p.m. by Electro-acoustic works meet Brazilian choros. Featuring 'Abime Des Oisieux' by Oliver Messiaen w/ Todd Brunel on clarinets, Robert Rivera, cello, and Larry Carsman, guitar.

Friday, October 26th, 8:00-10:00 p.m., The Francisco Pais Quintet at The Nave Gallery \$10. The Francisco Pais Quintet features Portuguese-born Francisco Pais. Together they play primarily original music that blends elements of American jazz with European classical music and Pop. The quintet has been touring in Europe for five years, playing at a number of famous venues and jazz festivals including the Hot Club of Lisbon, the Cultural Center of Belem, the Almodovar Jazz festival, and Tomar Jazz Festival. As the leader of the quintet, Francisco has been fortunate to collaborate with musicians such as Chris Cheek, Massimo Biolcati, Dayna Stephens, Peter Slavov, Albert Sanz, Ferenc Nemeth, Nathan Blehar, Leo Genovese and Demien Cabaud. They have helped to shape the sound of his band and to inspire his compositions.

The Nave Gallery is an important partner in Somerville's vibrant arts community. It is a project of ARTS Somerville, a volunteer organization that draws upon the talents of local creativity, strengthening communication among artists and the public by presenting exhibits, performances, and educational activities, in collaboration with the Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church. The gallery is a noncommercial art space featuring work of both emerging and established artists. Run and staffed completely by volunteers, the Nave provides an important exhibition space for both local and regional artists.

All exhibitions are free and open to the public. Gallery hours are Friday 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday & Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

To see a schedule of events, which is updated often, please look at the website: www.artsomerville.org/upcoming.html

Stewardship Drive for 2008

The Stewardship drive will kick off on Sunday, October 14th in worship. The stewardship committee will be looking for members to contribute their tithe, as well as their time and talents to the budget, programs and missions for 2008 and for a "special" project. Come and find out more about it on October 14th!

Adult Education

Adult Education class will be beginning afresh on October 14th after service at 12:15. We will be beginning a study of *The Golden Compass*, the first book in Phillip Pullman's trilogy entitled "His Dark Materials." Selected in 2007 by judges of the CILIP Carnegie Medal for children's literature as one of the ten most important children's novels of the past 70 years, this novel has also drawn considerable attention for the ways in which it portrays the life of faith. (See Book Reviews for more information about the book.)

With this in mind, Adult Education warmly welcomes you to a casual discussion of the issues and ideas that present themselves in the novel. No prior reading of the novel is necessary, but you are welcome to do so if you feel inclined. In addition, this class is welcoming of all levels of age and experience. We hope to bring in a number of special

guests to facilitate conversations about the novel, so stay tuned for more information. God bless, and I hope to see you there. Sarah Glass, Seminarian

Serenata Chamber Musicians

"Key Signatures"

Art Opening Reception (artwork byMelanie Maz) and Chamber Music Concert
Saturday, October 20, 2007, 7:30pm at the New School of Music, 25 Lowell St,
Cambridge, MA \$10 suggested donation

Concert program:

Franz Schubert - Fantasy in F minor for piano four-hands, Op. 103, D.940

Margaret Cheng Tuttle, piano, and Yilin You, (guest artist) piano

Felix Mendelssohn - Sonata in F major (1838)

Monica Mitchell, violin, and Margaret Cheng Tuttle, piano

Max Bruch - selections from Eight Pieces, op. 83

Melanie Maz, violin, Jessica Lipon, viola, and Timothy Blalock, piano

Book Group

Book group is set to meet on Wednesday, October 24th at 7:30 p.m. They will be discussing "Reimagining Christianity: Reconnect Your Spirit without Disconnecting Your Mind", by Alan Jones. All are welcome! (See Book Reviews for more information about the book.)

Calling all teachers.....

We need you to help teach our children's Sunday school class.

We are looking for teachers for November, December, January, March, April, May and June. There is a sign up sheet right at the bottom of the basement stairs.

You generally sign up for a month at a time. (Classes run from September to June.) You can teach solo, or recruit a friend to teach with you. The curriculum is excellent, and there are plenty of ideas for interesting activities and much more material than can be used in the 45 minutes or so that the class meets.

Help Needed.....

Thanks to those of you who have contacted me about helping out on Sundays. We are always looking for new people, so if you haven't had a chance to respond, please let me know.

We really need folks to help us with our fellowship time after church. If you don't feel that you can or want to take it up on your own, you can always find someone else to share the responsibilities with you.

Or you can ask to be paired up with others who want a partner! You would only be asked to do the coffee hour about every 6 weeks (and if have more folks sign up, it would be even less often!)

Would you be interested in reading scripture on Sunday mornings? Do you have a passion about a mission project that you would like to introduce to the congregation? Could you help by bringing food and setting up the coffee for our fellowship time after

Sunday morning services? Are you willing to be a backup for our childcare person? If you are interested in helping out with one or more of these things, please contact Ellen.

Thank you from the Clean Your Desk Campaign

Here is the letter we received from Carol L. Ries, dated September 5, 2007 for the Quest for Peace staff about our contribution to the Clean Your Desk Campaign.

Dear Members of the Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church,

The Clean Your Desk Campaign is in its third decade. Imagine the number of students in Nicaragua who, over these past 22 years, received school supplies because of people like you!

Thank you for your recent donation of school supplies for students in Nicaragua. Your donation is vital to many children and adults who otherwise would not have an opportunity to attend school. Last year we had an increase of more than 200 individuals and groups join the campaign. Let's spread the word and add another 200 new folks this year! Wouldn't that be awesome?

You, the Institute of John XXIII, and the Quest for Peace form a great collaborative team of caring people. If any one of us dropped out of this "triangle of support," the Clean Your Desk Campaign could not succeed, as we know it. Let each of us continue doing our part to aid these students so they learn their three Rs.

Enjoy the beginning of a new school year with many blessings!

Thank You

We received a card from Evelyn Ebai, the wife of Paul Ebai, who passed away on June 28th. A service was held at Clarendon Hill for him on July 14th. She writes: "Dear Parishoners, Your kind expression of sympathy is deeply appreciated and gratefully acknowledged by the family of Paul Ebai."

Anita Roddick: 'I Don't Want to Die Rich'

by Rose Marie Berger

Friday, September 14, 2007 God's Politics, Sojo.com

Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop chain and supporter of fair trade, died on Sept. 10 at age 64 after a major brain hemorrhage brought on by complications of hepatitis C. Roddick, who was raised Catholic but had deep suspicion of organized religion, gained a new appreciation for Christianity at the UK-based Greenbelt Christian Arts Festival in 2004.

"What's wonderful about being my age is having to face your prejudices," Roddick told the Church Times. "I had no idea how big Greenbelt was. I had no idea how organized it was; how free it was; how joyful it was. And I had no idea that there was such a strong activist, trade justice plank in its platform. It's really hard, when you have had your antennae up for most of these movements, to have completely ignored it. I have fallen for the zeitgeist that says anybody who has a religious inclination has no sense of rationale or intellectual understanding and therefore should be dismissed. I am cheering the Greenbelt festival from the top of every bloody mountain ... for me, it's like a heartbeat. And it's youth. I'm ashamed of my bloody prejudices, but I'm delighted to be a convert."

On March 27, 1976, Roddick opened the first Body Shop in Brighton, England. When she decided to franchise the store, Roddick reached out particularly to women and trained countless of them in operating socially responsible businesses. In 2006, she sold the Body Shop empire, more than 2,000 shops worldwide, to L'Oreal for roughly £130 million. "Not content to simply run a globally successful, environmentally friendly business," reports the CBC's "As It Happens," "Dame Anita founded Children on the Edge in 1990, which focused the world's attention on the disadvantaged children in Eastern Europe. She campaigned tirelessly for environmental issues, and, as an entrepreneur and mother, became a model for businesswomen everywhere." In 2005, Roddick announced that she would be giving away her entire fortune. "I don't want to die rich," she said.

Sojourners was pleased to interview Roddick in 2003. She had just published two books *A Revolution in Kindness* (as editor) and *Brave Hearts, Rebel Spirits: A Spiritual Activists Handbook* (with Brooke Shelby Biggs). Sojourners' David Batstone interviewed Roddick in San Francisco.

David Batstone: The message from your new books is not what you expect to hear from the CEO of a major retail corporation.

Anita Roddick: Once I separated myself from The Body Shop, I wanted to get some ideas out. It's very hard in business to be listened to when you talk about revolutionary ideas; it's even more difficult to do so as a woman. The market found it hard to believe us, for example, when we claimed that business has to move beyond an obsession with the bottom line.

Batstone: Was that just rhetoric at The Body Shop?

Roddick: Absolutely not. I was never interested in how big our company could grow, but how brave we could be. The investment bankers talked about profits, but we talked about principles. It all comes down to where you put your material resources and energy.

Batstone: What lessons did you learn while building The Body Shop that are relevant to social activism?

Roddick: I learned that when enthusiasm comes from the heart, it is unstoppable. After the fall of the dictator in Romania in the 1980s [Nicolae Ceausescu], our company set up a project to help the country's appalling orphanages. Romanian women had been forced to have three or four children that would be raised to serve as soldiers or workers for the state. Over the next 10 years, thousands of our staff went to volunteer there; some would pay their own money to go, others won awards. These workers came back transformed, because experiences of real kindness will change a person's values. It's really hard to bring spirituality into work. But it can happen when we view spirituality as service to the weak and the frail.

Batstone: The Body Shop at times was criticized for not living up to its ideals. Why did that happen?

Roddick: Nearly all of the accusations could be traced to a corporate stalker. For nearly five years this individual tracked me. He made his money by fighting everybody in the social responsibility movement—Ben & Jerry's, Odwalla, Working Assets. He was very clever. He would exploit any mistake or oversight that I made. He also would manufacture falsehoods—like when he said we were doing animal testing—and the media would print these accusations. For a while, England [where The Body Shop began] was ready to topple

me off the pedestal. Looking back, I can see that we were really ripe for that. We were putting our head above the parapet and challenging everything. So we probably deserved to be slapped around a bit.

Batstone: How did you deal with that?

Roddick: Communication. Just about every day I wrote personal essays to our local shop owners. It was hard for them to see such negative things about their company in the newspapers.

Batstone: So you have long practice as a writer! What motivated you to write about kindness?

Roddick: It was the result of something that happened to me in America. I had written a book about corporate globalization, and it was released the week of the 9/11 tragedy. On the front cover of the book I had included a tagline, "globalization and how to fight back." So we stopped the release and shredded the cover. In its place, I wrote that we had to move toward a revolutionary kindness.

Batstone: You describe one of your books as a spiritual activists handbook. Do you have a religious background?

Roddick: Yes, Catholic.

Batstone: Is your faith still relevant to you?

Roddick: Absolutely. I'm in awe of liberation theology; that is where my heart is. I follow the great spiritual leaders like Jesus and Buddha who actually get their hands dirty. I do feel ashamed of the church at times. All that gold they stole from native peoples in the Americas, for instance. I think they should give it back. But that doesn't make me cynical. I'm moved by individuals that can polish their feelings of outrage over wrongdoing and do something positive about it. Many of us talk about kindness at great length but don't do anything. Our kindness has to be fierce.

Batstone: What does fierce kindness look like?

Roddick: It has to be bigger than the personal, and more than random acts. It is not satisfied unless human rights and social justice are present.

Batstone: Are you setting up an organization to apply the principles that appear in your books?

Roddick: No, there are enough great groups out there already that I can support. My books are more about education. Before I wrote this book, I didn't know anything about the Berrigan brothers, for example, and their 20 years of jail for peace activism. It was these kind of people I wanted to bring onto the radar screen.

Batstone: What quality do social activists lack?

Roddick: I'd like to see more of a focus on aesthetics. Any form of dissent has to have a sense of the carnival. If this is the world we want, it has to be full of joy and laughter. We also have to reclaim our language. Have you ever noticed how economic values supersede every other human value? We say, "How much have I invested in this relationship?" as if that's what is most important. Our language often tips us off to where we need some soul work.

Rose Marie Berger is an associate editor of Sojourners.

Israel Denies Re-entry Visas to Holy Land Arab Christian Clergy

Friends of Sabael--North America

Voice of the Palestinian Christians

September 23, 2007

The Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF)

The Israeli Government has rescinded its policy of granting re-entry visas to Arab Christian ministers, priests, nuns and other religious workers who wish to travel in and out of the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, according to information provided to the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF) by Christian clergy in Jerusalem.

Until now, re-entry visas were normally granted in Israel by the Israeli Government to Arab Christian religious workers in the Holy Land, and clergy traveled relatively freely to and from points overseas, including the United States.

However, HCEF has been informed that Arab Christian church workers will henceforth have to apply for re-entry visas at Israeli consulates abroad each time they travel outside the areas of Israeli control.

Since visa applications submitted to Israeli missions abroad are normally not acted upon for months after they are filed, his new Israeli policy means that religious personnel will no longer be able to move freely between their parishes in the occupied territories and any points out side of those areas.

Christian church workers normally travel frequently between their parishes and their churches' offices in Jerusalem. Some also must travel often to countries outside the region, including the United States.

Many of the clergy and other church workers in the occupied Palestinian territories are from nearby Jordan; the new Israeli policy will prevent them from visiting their families there.

Indeed, that has already happened. Rev. Fares Khleifat, a pastor and the only Greek Melkite priest in Ramallah, traveled to Jordan for several days in mid-September; when he tried to return to his parish on September 14, he was stopped at the Israeli border, and his valid, multiple-entry visa was canceled.

Forced to remain in Jordan, he has been effectively deported from the Holy Land by the Israeli government, and his parish now has no priest.

The new Israeli policy makes it unlikely that any Arab Christian priests, ministers or other religious workers from the Holy Land will be able to attend HCEF's Ninth International Conference, scheduled for October 26-27 in Washington.

Christian personnel based in the Holy Land have participated in all eight previous conferences of the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation.

Fighting atheist

by William C. Placher

September 18, 2007; The Christian Century

Book Review

God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything

by Christopher Hitchens

After you have written books attacking Henry Kissinger and Mother Teresa, what is left, really, but to write a book attacking God—or rather, since God does not exist, attacking all who believe in God? So Christopher Hitchens, the brilliant bad boy of Anglo-American high-culture journalism, must have concluded.

Though now an American, Hitchens still writes in the best tradition of British polemic—clever, vicious and very funny. No sense of political correctness, moreover, restrains him: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism—you name it; they are all stupid, and all dangerous.

In olden times, he argues, when ignorance abounded, there were excuses for being religious: "The scholastic obsessives of the Middle Ages were doing the best they could on the basis of hopelessly limited information." But now science has provided us with correct ways of understanding the world, and thus "religion spoke its last intelligible or noble or inspiring words a long time ago." Arguments from the order of the universe to the existence of God collapse in the light of modern science. Appeals to revelation are absurd once we know that there are many different purported revelations.

Judaism, Hitchens writes, rests on an ancient text whose barbaric laws and false history far outweigh its "occasional lapidary phrases." Also, "the 'new' testament exceeds the evil of the 'old' one." Jesus probably did not exist, and the center of his story is in any event appalling: "I am told of a human sacrifice that took place two thousand years ago, without my wishing it and in circumstances so ghastly that, had I been present and in possession of any influence, I would have been duty-bound to try and stop it. In consequence of this murder, my own manifold sins are forgiven me, and I may hope to enjoy everlasting life."

Islam, he continues, is a fraudulent mixture of bits of Judaism and Christianity. Hinduism has done India terrible harm. The British were about to grant the country independence anyway, but Gandhi turned what could have been a healthy secular movement toward a modern state into a disastrous attempt to return to the values and customs of the ancient Indian village. Buddhism fries the brain: "The search for nirvana, and the dissolution of the intellect, goes on. And whenever it is tried, it produces a Kool-Aid effect in the real world."

Hitchens insists that religions are not just silly but also dangerous. Jews, Christians and Muslims are always fighting on behalf of their faiths. Sri Lanka is torn apart by Hindu-Buddhist violence. Your own religious neighbors may seem friendly enough, but do not trust them: "Many religions now come before us with ingratiating smirks and outspread hands, . . . competing as they do in a marketplace. But we have a right to remember how barbarically they behaved when they were strong." And do not think those days are over: "As I write these words, and as you read them, people of faith are in their different ways planning your and my destruction." Religion poisons everything.

To be sure, religious folks do good as well as evil. Hitchens particularly admires Martin Luther King Jr. But at the core of what King taught, Hitchens maintains, were simple human values; King expressed them in Baptist sermons because that was the language shared by the people with whom he was communicating. On the other side of the ledger, Hitchens admits that nonreligious regimes, like Stalin's and Pol Pot's, can do terrible

things. But they do so only to the extent that they become quasi-religions, with sacred texts, absolute authorities and measures for condemning heretics. "Totalitarian systems, whatever outward form they may take, are fundamentalist and, as we would now say, 'faith-based.'"

It would be hard to find the standard arguments against religion presented in livelier form than they are in *God Is Not Great*. The book reads quickly, and even for most religious people grunts of annoyance will be balanced by regular laughter. Hitchens has not forged such a successful career without knowing how to entertain. Nevertheless, this is a flawed and frustrating book.

First—how to say this politely?—it is full of mistakes. George Miller, we are told (actually it was William Miller), founded a new sect in upstate New York in the 1840s, but the group soon disappeared. More than 20 million Seventh-day Adventists will be surprised to hear it. Hitchens reports in an excited tone, "One of Professor Barton Ehrman's most astonishing findings is that the account of Jesus' resurrection in the Gospel of Mark was only added many years later." Well, it is Bart rather than Barton (names are not Hitchens's strong point), and scholars generally recognized long before Ehrman was born that the ending of Mark is a later addition.

T. S. Eliot was an Anglican rather than a Roman Catholic. The Talmud is not "the holy book in the longest continuous use." Solipsists are people who doubt the existence of a world outside themselves, not people who are ethically self-centered. The ontological argument is not even close to the silly syllogism described on page 265. Hitchens writes that it is "often said that Islam differs from other monotheisms in not having had a 'reformation,'" then he goes on to correct that claim. But sure enough, 11 pages earlier he himself had said, "Only in Islam has there been no reformation."

And so on and so on.

The errors are particularly disturbing because so much of Hitchens's argument rests on statements that the Catholic Church teaches such and such, the archbishop of Canterbury said this, Muslims believe that. Most of these claims are simply unsupported assertions; when no sources are cited, one cannot help wondering if someone so sloppy with his facts might make up some of his quotations as well.

The second frustration of reading this book, at least for a theologian, is that its author seems not to have read any modern theology, or even to know that it exists. He does cite C. S. Lewis a few times and mentions Bonhoeffer with respect (implying that Bonhoeffer had stopped believing in God by the end), but in general his sources for contemporary Christianity are Pat Robertson, Billy Graham and Tim LaHaye. Of Barth or Tillich or Rahner—or their equivalents in other religious traditions—he has not a clue. When Hitchens wants to discuss modern interpretations of the Bible, he turns to Mel Gibson (really!).

Suppose I watched Bill Nye the Science Guy on TV, read the first three Web sites that popped up when I Googled "quantum mechanics," talked to the junior high science teacher who lives down the street, and then wrote a book about how superficial contemporary physics has become. Readers might reasonably protest that I should have read or interviewed some of today's leading physicists before jumping to such a conclusion.

Similarly, when Hitchens dramatically announces that parts of the Bible are not literally true, one wants to say that Origen figured that out and decided what to do about it roughly 1,800 years ago. Many theologians are thinking in interesting ways about the

relation of science and faith. Thoughtful historians try to sort out how much of the inspiration of "religious warfare" has actually come from religion, and how often religion has just been the excuse for people who wanted to fight anyway.

I do not mean that there are always clear answers to the issues Hitchens raises, much less that the religious side would always win the debate. My point is simply that among serious people writing about these matters, the argument has often advanced a good many steps beyond where Hitchens is fighting it—so however good his basic questions are, and however enjoyable his style, it is hard to take his contribution to the conversation seriously.

So here is a puzzle. When I went to buy this book, the first bookstore was sold out, and the second had a rack of *God Is Not Great* surpassed only by the stacks of Harry Potter. No doubt good writing deserves readership, and Hitchens can certainly write. In the age of talk radio and Fox News, the complaint that he often gets his facts wrong may be an old-fashioned objection. But something more, I think, is at stake. Similar books by Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris are selling nearly as well.

Many Americans today are scared of religion. Radical Islamic terrorists threaten the safety of major cities. George W. Bush assures us that God has led him to his Iraq policy. The local schools, under pressure, avoid teaching evolution. The Catholic archdiocese of Los Angeles is selling off property to pay victims of priestly sexual abuse. One trembles to think that many people get their picture of faith from the "Christian channels" on television. No wonder religion has, in many quarters, a bad reputation.

I think many of us—I do not mean just trained theologians, but ordinary folks in churches, mosques and synagogues as well—have found ways to be religious without being either stupid or homicidal. We are, as the cover of the *Christian Century* puts it, "thinking critically, living faithfully." Not enough of our nonreligious neighbors know enough about what we believe. We need to speak up.

Repeatedly Hitchens cites some horrible thing that some religious folks did or said and then notes that mainstream religious leaders did not criticize it. Although I do not always trust his claims, I suspect that in this case he is at least partly right. Too many of us have been too reluctant to denounce religious lunatics, and because of our reluctance we risk arousing the suspicion that we are partly on their side.

Hitchens ends his book with an appeal to his readers to "escape the gnarled hands which reach out to drag us back to the catacombs and the reeking altars, . . . to know the enemy, and to prepare to fight it." Shouldn't one of the lessons of this book have been that comfortable intellectuals should be more careful of using words like *fight*? Fundamentalists of one sort or another, after all, urge their followers to fight the evils of secularism and atheism. As the battle lines are drawn between the two extremes, it seems to me that folks like those who read the *Christian Century* need to put aside our obsessively good manners and shout, "Hey! Those aren't the only alternatives! We're here too!"

William C. Placher is professor of philosophy and religion at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Book Reviews

If you are interested, it would be great to read this book before attending our Sunday evening forum in November.

Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life by Thich Nhat Hanh, Arnold Kotler (Editor)

ISBN: 0553351397

ISBN-13: 9780553351392

Annotation

In this modern spiritual classic, a world spiritual leader and Zen master shows how to adapt simple Zen principles for daily living and the way to peace--the first practical book on the subject since *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. *Peace Is Every Step* offers ways to use everyday events--washing dishes, eating a meal, sitting in traffic--in the quest for peace and fulfillment.

From the Publisher

In the rush of modern life, we tend to lose touch with the peace that is available in each moment. World-renowned Zen master, spiritual leader, and author Thich Nhat Hanh shows us how to make positive use of the very situations that usually pressure and antagonize us. For him a ringing telephone can be a signal to call us back to our true selves. Dirty dishes, red lights, and traffic jams are spiritual friends on the path to "mindfulness" — the process of keeping our consciousness alive to our present experience and reality. The most profound satisfactions, the deepest feelings of joy and completeness lie as close at hand as our next aware breath and the smile we can form right now.

Lucidly and beautifully written, *Peace Is Every Step* contains commentaries and meditations, personal anecdotes and stories from Nhat Hanh's experiences as a peace activist, teacher, and community leader. It begins where the reader already is — in the kitchen, office, driving a car, walking a part — and shows how deep meditative presence is available now. Nhat Hanh provides exercises to increase our awareness of our own body and mind through conscious breathing, which can bring immediate joy and peace. Nhat Hanh also shows how to be aware of relationships with others and of the world around us, its beauty and also its pollution and injustices. The deceptively simple practices of *Peace Is Every Step* encourage the reader to work for peace in the world as he or she continues to work on sustaining inner peace by turning the "mindless" into the mindFUL.

This book will be the basis for our Adult Ed session. It's not required to attend the sessions, but for those who are interested here is some more information about the book.

The Golden Compass (His Dark Materials Series #1) by Phillip Pullman

ISBN: 0440418321

ISBN-13: 9780440418320

From the Publisher

In a landmark epic of fantasy and storytelling, Philip Pullman invites readers into a world as convincing and thoroughly realized as Narnia, Earthsea, or Redwall. Here lives an orphaned ward named Lyra Belacqua, whose carefree life among the scholars at Oxford's Jordan College is shattered by the arrival of two powerful visitors. First, her fearsome uncle, Lord Asriel, appears with evidence of mystery and danger in the far North, including

photographs of a mysterious celestial phenomenon called Dust and the dim outline of a city suspended in the Aurora Borealis that he suspects is part of an alternate universe. He leaves Lyra in the care of Mrs. Coulter, an enigmatic scholar and explorer who offers to give Lyra the attention her uncle has long refused her. In this multilayered narrative, however, nothing is as it seems. Lyra sets out for the top of the world in search of her kidnapped playmate, Roger, bearing a rare truth-telling instrument, the compass of the title. All around her children are disappearing; victims of so-called "Gobblers" and being used as subjects in terrible experiments that separate humans from their daemons, creatures that reflect each person's inner being. And somehow, both Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter are involved.

Synopsis

The action follows 11-year-old protagonist Lyra Belacqua, accompanied by her daemon, from her home at Oxford University to the frozen wastes of the North, on a quest to save kidnapped children from the evil 'Gobblers,' who are using them as part of a sinister experiment. Lyra also must rescue her father from the Panserbjorne, a race of talking, armored, mercenary polar bears holding him captive. Joining Lyra are a vagabond troop of gypsies (gypsies), witches, an outcast bear, and a Texan in a hot air balloon.

Publishers Weekly

If Pullman's imagination dazzled in the Victorian thrillers that culminated with *The Tin Princess*, in this first volume of a fantasy trilogy it is nothing short of breathtaking. Here Earth is one of only five planets in the solar system, every human has a daemon (the soul embodied as an animal familiar) and, in a time similar to our late 19th century, Oxford scholars and agents of the supreme Calvinist Church are in a race to unleash the power that will enable them to cross the bridge to a parallel universe. The story line has all the hallmarks of a myth: brought up ignorant of her true identity, 11-year-old Lyra goes on a quest from East Anglia to the top of the world in search of her kidnapped playmate Roger and her imprisoned uncle, Lord Asriel. Deceptions and treacheries threaten at every turn, and she is not yet certain how to read the mysterious truth-telling instrument that is her only guide. After escaping from the charming and sinister Mrs. Coulter, she joins a group of "gypsies" in search of their children, who, like Roger, have been spirited away by Mrs. Coulter's henchmen, the Gobblers. Along the way Lyra is guided by friendly witches and attacked by malevolent ones, aided by an armored polar bear and a Texan balloonist, and nearly made a victim of the Gobblers' cruel experiments. As always, Pullman is a master at combining impeccable characterizations and seamless plotting, maintaining a crackling pace to create scene upon scene of almost unbearable tension. This glittering gem will leave readers of all ages eagerly awaiting the next installment of Lyra's adventures.

This is the Book Group selection for the month of October.

ReImagining Christianity: Reconnect Your Spirit without Disconnecting Your Mind

by Alan Jones

ISBN: 0471457078

Synopsis

In this provocative new book, the internationally renowned Dean of the Episcopal Grace Cathedral in San Francisco delivers a resonant and comforting message to anyone looking for spiritual solace in today's troubled world.

Some intelligent people have been turned off by the idea of spirituality. A religion based on love and forgiveness, Christianity now seems, for some, unforgiving. Some who call themselves Christians seem divisive and rigid, saying that their way is the only way. In *Reimagining Christianity*, Alan Jones passionately argues that there is hope for Christianity, Christians, and spirituality--and for all of us on Earth.

Dr. Jones inspires you to think, to question, to dig deeper into the truths of existence as a way of deepening your spirituality rather than accepting rigid dogma. Drawing on his vast knowledge of history, religion, and the heart, Jones encourages you to open doors to those of all faiths and even to those who profess no faith at all. As you do so, you can better understand the powerful promise of Christianity.

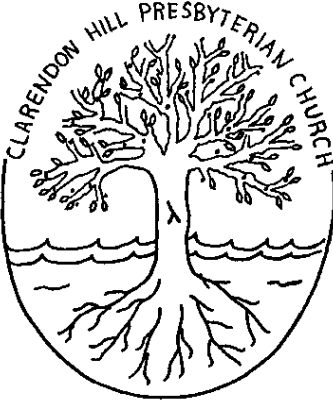
In *Reimagining Christianity*, Alan Jones shows us how to get past tribalism while heeding the call to unity; how to appreciate the poetry metaphor, and mystery of religion while avoiding strict literalism; how to fill the wound inside of us that religion may once have filled; how even non-Christians can be more Christlike than some who profess to be Christians; and how we can unlearn hate while learning to love and forgive.

Rich with moving anecdotes from the author's life and work as well as eloquent excerpts from other literary and spiritual works, *Reimagining Christianity* will strike a chord with anyone who feels the need to reconnect the spirit without disconnecting the mind.



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 Augustus Kwaa, Parish Associate/Evangelist Arnie James, Sexton
 Sarah Glass, Seminarian

LECTIONARY TEXTS

Oct. 7: Lam. 1: 1-6; Lam. 3: 19-26 OR Ps. 137; 2 Tim. 1: 1-14; Luke 17: 5-10
Oct. 14: Jer. 29: 1, 4-7; Ps. 66: 1-12; 2 Tim. 8-15; Luke 17: 11-19
Oct. 21: Jer. 31: 27-34; Ps. 119: 97-104; 2 Tim. 3: 14-4:5; Luke 18: 1-8
Oct. 28: Joel 2: 23-32; Ps. 65; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8, 16-18; Luke 18: 9-14
Nov. 4: Hab. 1: 1-4, 2: 1-4; Ps. 119: 137-144; 2 Thess. 1: 1-4, 11-12; Luke 19: 1-10
Nov. 11: Hag. 1: 15b-2:9; Ps. 145: 1-5, 17-21 OR Ps. 98; 2 Thess. 2: 1-5, 13-17; Luke 20: 27-38
Nov. 18: Isa. 65: 17-25; Isa. 12; 2 Thess. 3: 6-13; Luke 21: 5-19
Nov. 25: Jer. 23: 1-6; Luke 1: 66-79; Col. 1: 11-20; Luke 23: 33-43

Church Assignments

Scripture	Focus on Mission	Coffee hour	Nursery backup
Oct. 7 P. Auger	E. Schemerhorn	Gustafson/Cavano	E. Schemerhorn
Oct. 14 K. Graf	M. Nickey	Donovans	N. Jirmanus
Oct. 21 A. Kwaa	L. Cavano	Schemerhorn	K. Gustafson
Oct. 28 H. Rantisi	J. Bray	Camelio/Braga	V. Donovan
Nov. 4 J. Bray	K. Graf	Jirmanus	E. Schemerhorn
Nov. 11 J. Auger	P. Beran	Augers	N. Jirmanus
Nov. 18 R. Winchester	S. Donovan	POTLUCK	K. Gustafson
Nov. 25 E. Sweeny	D. Anderson	Reynolds/Graf	V. Donovan