

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 3

For 28 March 2010

Dear Friends

There is a little known story I would like to share with you. The background canvas on which it was featured is crucial to its significance. So let's go back 500 years to Wittenberg, Germany. On a certain day in 1517 a young monk called Martin Luther took a hammer and nails and the sheet of parchment on which he had written 95 proposals (theses) for reforming the church. He was angry at the empty formalism, the greed, corruption and lack of spiritual depth he encountered. He called for a revolution within the church and to his surprise he was the match to the dry tinder of ordinary people. He was thrown out, but what sprang up was the Reformation, Protestantism, and the Lutheran Church.

- * Now leap across 500 years to 2006. Our story involves a passionate monk of the Dominican Order, who was also expelled like Martin Luther. His name is Matthew Fox. In 2006 he was in Germany to lecture and run workshops. In the week he was there the whole situation changed. He wondered what to do. Then at 2am one morning while praying and agonising over the situation he felt moved to do something bold and imaginative. Like Martin Luther he was angry and frustrated at the greed, misuse of power and abuse of people by the church authorities. He set about (at 3am) to write down his proposals for a fresh revolution. It was a sincere and passionate protest expressed in terms of what might be. As dawn broke he realised he had 95 proposals—far beyond the dozen or so he expected to produce.
- * His next step depended on friends to (a) translate his theses into German; (b) get permission from the Wittenberg city authority to put them on the door of Luther's church; and (c) to find way to nail them up as the doors are now bronze. He achieved all three goals—to the intrigue of tourists.
- * I'm sure Matthew Fox knew he would not spark the huge reformation that Luther did. But with the same spirit-filled energy and vision he wanted to keep alive the protesting in Protestant religion and to prod us all into seeing the need to keep on reforming our often stuck Reformed Churches.
- * On pg. 2 I have a go at elaborating two of his theses (statements). On pg. 3 I offer you a small selection of his sometimes provocative and always challenging statements aimed at appreciating and enhancing life.

Sincerely - Lester

Holy Week	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 29 March:	36:5-11	Isa 42:1-9	John 12:1-11
Tuesday 30 March:	71:1-14	Isa 49:1-7	John 12:20-36
Wednesday 31 March:	70	Isa 50:4-9a	John 13:21-32
Thursday 1 April:	116:1,2,12-19	1 Cor 11:23-26	John 13:1-17,
Maundy Thursday		Ex 12:1-4,(5-10),11-14	31b-35
Friday 2 April:	22	Isa 52:13-53:12	John 18:1-19:42
Good Friday		Heb 10:16-25	
Saturday 3 April:	31:1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4:1-8 Job 14:1-14	John 19:38-42
Sunday 4 April <u>Easter Day</u>			
Ps 118:1-2,14-24; Acts 10:34-43; 1 Cor 15:19-26; John 20:1-18			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 5 April:	16:1,2,6-12	Acts 2:14,22-32	Matt 28:8-15
Tuesday 6 April:	33:4,5,17-21	Acts 2:36-41	John 20:11-18
Wednesday 7 April:	105:1-9	Acts 3:1-10	Luke 24:13-35
Thursday 8 April:	8	Acts 3:11-26	Luke 24:35-48
Friday 9 April:	118:1-4, 22-26	Acts 4:1-12	John 21:1-14
Saturday 10 April:	118:1-4, 14-21	Acts 4:13-21	Mark 16:9-15
Sunday 11 April <u>Easter 2</u>			
Ps 118:14-29 or 150; Acts 5:27-32; Rev 1:4-8; John 20:19-31			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 12 April:	2:1-9	Acts 4:23-31	John 3:1-8
Tuesday 13 April:	93	Acts 4:32-37	John 3:7-15
Wednesday 14 April:	34:1-8	Acts 5:17-26	John 3:16-21
Thursday 15 April:	34:1,15-end	Acts 5:27-33	John 3:31-36
Friday 16 April:	27:1-5, 16-17	Acts 5:34-42	John 6:1-15
Saturday 17 April:	33:1-5, 18-19	Acts 6:1-7	John 6:16-21
Sunday 18 April <u>Easter 3</u>			
Ps 30; Acts 9:1-6,(7-20); Rev 5:11-14; John 21:1-19			

Some Comments

No. 32 of Fox's theses is:-

"Original Sin is an ultimate expression of a punitive Father God and is not a biblical teaching." Put alongside another of his statements in which he quotes Meister Eckhart (who in the 12th century was a priest at the same church where Martin Luther was ordained). "All the names we give to God come from an understanding of ourselves." (Eckhart) And Fox adds — *"Thus people who worship a Punitive God are themselves punitive."* And this very often means they have a hard and punishing attitude towards themselves.

- * In contrast to Original Sin (bad from the beginning) Fox says let's acknowledge the goodness and grace which Genesis tells us have been the hallmarks of the creative evolution since God looked at everything and said "It is all good", and has been going on for 15 billion years. Original Sin is a very recent bit of theological dogma about 300 years old; in contrast to the 15 billion of good creation. The Hebrew scriptures know nothing of original sin, and nothing in the Bible upholds this idea. To start our understanding of humankind with original sin is to begin with a disempowering concept, and an idea of God that underlines guilt, fear, punishment and death. What a contrast to Jesus' clear message (seen in his actions) that God loves the world and that the whole point of his coming is to ensure we experience life in abundance. (cf John 3:16 and 10:10)

No. 54

"The Holy Spirit works through all cultures and all spiritual traditions; it 'blows where it will' and is not the exclusive domain of any one tradition and never has been."

- * It seems quite disturbing to some people who have only heard of the Spirit within the context of their church's teaching, or a limited box of denominational understanding, to see the Spirit in a much wider context. To do so is not a denial of what those people have experienced. It can be seen as a widened view and a richer experience.
- * When we go to our biblical roots we find creation begins with a cosmic view of Spirit (in Genesis 1). There is no corner, no far off territory where Spirit is not brooding and bringing order out of chaos; and again that has been going on for 15 billion years. Another graphic metaphor for this vast cosmic dimension is the prophet EZEKIEL'S vision of the Spirit (the breath of Life) coming from the four corners of the universe to renew or enliven a depressed nation. The additional positive factor here is the emphasis on a Uni-verse, a Grand Oneness that persists no matter how many times we try to break life into right and wrong, true and false.

Celebrate the Original Blessing and the everywhere and always present Spirit!

A RANDOM SELECTION TO PONDER

- * God is always news, always young, and always "in the beginning".
- * Creativity is both humanity's greatest gift and its most powerful weapon for evil, and so it ought to be both encouraged AND steered to humanity's most God-like activity, which all religions agree is compassion.
- * Christians must distinguish between Jesus (an historical figure) and Christ (the experience of God-in-all-things).
- * Three highways into the heart are
Silence,
Love,
and Grief.
- * The Spirit of Jesus, and other prophets, calls people to simple lifestyles in order that "the people may live".
- * A church that is more preoccupied with sexual wrongs than with the wrongs of injustice is itself sick.
- * Sustainability is another word for justice, for what is just is sustainable, and what is unjust is not.
- * Religion is not necessary, but spirituality is.
- * Outer work needs to flow from our inner work. True action flows from being.

Matthew Fox continues his creative work—after writing more than 25 books on important creative themes such as spirituality, meditation, work, art, justice, compassion, prayer, renewal and much more. Matthew has visited NZ several times conducting workshops. In 1977 he formed an Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality. Rather than disband his unique faculty he started the University of Creation Spirituality which is called Wisdom University. Someone said to him about his 95 theses:- "They reflect the content, wisdom and understanding you have found in years of research, study and spiritual exploration." He didn't deny it.