

## Training of Trainers - an International Event

An essential way of maintaining the quality of EFM is training every 18 months for all mentors and trainers (ie those who train the mentors). The March event mentioned in the lead article (p 1) was the second six day international Training of Trainers to be hosted and staffed by the three UK trainers – Gary O'Neill, Haydon Wilcox and Joanna Hobart.

The theme of Reflective Practitioners attracted 15 people from the US, Canada, Jamaica, Australia, New Zealand and, of course, the UK. We met at St Columba's House, Woking, (conveniently close to Heathrow and London), which provided the facilities we needed. These events are always stretching, challenging and fun – but most importantly they also help the trainers feel part of the wider EFM community. We strengthen existing ties, make new friends and come away energised.

As all the national Directors of EFM were present, the first ever meeting of these Directors was held following the training. It is hoped that links in the international Anglican Communion might be able to be used to promote EFM in countries where it is not strong. Each country presented various figures regarding staff levels, number of groups, students etc. It was striking and encouraging that these figures were in the same proportion whatever the size of EFM.



### Calendar

If you want to enrol for mentor training or make an advanced booking for the Convention please email the Administrator: [administrator@efmuk.org.uk](mailto:administrator@efmuk.org.uk)

#### Basic Mentor Training

**7th – 9th September 2007**  
St. Columba's House, Woking

**9th – 11th May 2008**  
Morley Retreat and Conference House,  
Derbyshire

**26th – 28th September 2008**  
St. Columba's House, Woking

#### Development Training

**29th February – 2nd March 2008**  
Venue to be confirmed

**Convention**  
**6th October 2007**  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in Birmingham Cathedral  
There is no charge for students and active mentors. All guests are welcome at a cost of £5

**EFM UK Management Group**  
10th November 2007

If you have any issues that you wished discussed, email Joanna Hobart on: [hobartjc@btinternet.com](mailto:hobartjc@btinternet.com)

### Fees

The student fees for those enrolling for an EFM Group are now:

EFM students full year £195

EFM students registered with Chester £ 270

The fee for mentor training inclusive of residential accommodation costs

Accreditation Training £180

On-going training for active mentors £145

Mentors are paid £55 for each student enrolled and studying in their group.

# REFLECTING THEOLOGICALLY

EfM

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

## "Changing Lives"

The newsletter for EFM UK



Theological Reflection (TR) is a phrase now used widely in academic circles as well as in Education for Ministry. Do academia and EFM view theological reflection in the same way?

EFM UK recently hosted a training event for EFM trainers from around the world to which Elaine Graham, Professor of Social and Pastoral Theology at the University of Manchester, was invited as our speaker. Elaine has written extensively on TR and while with us, as well as experiencing TR EFM-style, she gave two talks. The first was the more theoretical, on the art of TR, which concluded with questions for discussion such as what is 'theological' about theological reflection?, what are the marks of good TR?, is it caught or taught? – questions which all EFM students ponder at some time! Her second talk was on methods of TR, which helped put TR in a radical and historical context, identifying ways of doing it over the centuries. Could there be a retelling of history reviewing the way people have reflected theologically? Some of the methods she outlined are the following:

*'Theology by Heart'* looks inward. Examples given were of Psalm 139, Augustine's Confessions, Wesley's journals. Attention is given to the depths of human experience and some psychotherapy can be seen in this way. The feelings of the heart are transformed into theological narrative. Elaine wondered whether blogging could be seen as 21st century theology by heart.

*Parables* are a narrative theology, where truth exceeds the story. As always, our own experience informs what we learn at any particular time from the story. The word 'parable' immediately conjures memories of Jesus' teaching, but they continue to be used deliberately (eg Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress) and we are still to be shaped by all sorts of stories, both read and seen on stage and film. Liturgy can also be seen as the retelling of a story or event.

*Corporate theological reflection* is used when forming a community, such as the Rule of St Benedict. Indeed, any group today, while working out the way to embody the grace of God, reflects corporately.

*Love in action* (praxis) forms the basis of liberation theology. 'Right religion' entails 'right relationship' and the building of justice. Many believe that creeds or institutional religion are inadequate to express the reality of God – and so the Quakers say 'Let your lives speak'. The good news has to be active and in the here and now.

The methods identified by Elaine incorporated personal experience and reflection on Christian tradition; some touched on personal beliefs and contemporary culture. All these sources are familiar to EFM. However, it seems that the metaphor is what makes EFM's method unique. It is through the use of metaphor that we make a bridge from a particular individual experience, look at it from different perspectives and then take our own insights from it. This not only allows a group to engage in a reflection, but can also enable individuals to reflect by themselves more systematically. The questions that we ask of the metaphor stretch our thinking.

The fact that forms of theological reflection can be recognised as having taken place throughout the ages is affirming. We hope that this will enable us to realise that many of our meditations, exchanges and conversations are indeed ways of reflecting theologically and, when acted upon, influence our lives and the lives of those around us.

Joanna Hobart

EFM UK Trainer



The Day God Spilled Paint

Please contact one of us if you would like more information about EFM

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