



Library Update



Hello and welcome to the September 2007 issue of the Mathew Hale Public Library newsletter.

We had a very successful lecture by Reverend Andrew Reid on 9 July 2007 on the topic "Genesis to Jesus: A Whirl Wind Tour of the Old Testament". Everyone who attended very much enjoyed his talk which can be downloaded in audio form free of charge from the website.

The big event of the month was the launch by His Honour DJ McGill SC of the book "Please No More Boring Sermons". His Honour spoke brilliantly at the launch which again was very well attended.

You can obtain a copy of the book by ordering online or making an enquiry at your Christian Bookshop. You can download a printed version of the order form or buy online.

Bishop John Noble (former Bishop of North Queensland) said in his foreword to the book

"Whether in the hands of someone just starting out as a preacher, or taken up by someone who has been preaching for many years, there will be something here which will be helpful in improving the central part of our work."

Included in this issue of the newsletter is a review by Bishop Graham Rutherford of Cannon Peter Adam's book "Majestic Son" which is an excellent commentary on the letter to the Hebrews.

Included also in the letter is a list of future events for the library.

One final very interesting lecture is that by Professor Alister McGrath at the Queensland Theological College which is set down for October 1 7.00 pm for a 7.15 pm start at the Raybould Lecture Theatre, Hawken Building, University of Queensland at St Lucia. Dr McGrath's topic is "The Bankruptcy of Atheism."

Dr Keith Weller
Honorary Warden

Review: Hebrews

Peter Adam has written a commentary which in his own words is "a beginner's commentary". He leaves aside all

the academic debates which have surrounded recent research on the background of the author's thought and the reader's circumstances. He shows no interest in speculating on the whereabouts of the letter's destination which takes up a good deal of space in some of the most recent commentaries such as that by W.L. Lane.

Lane allowed his speculation about the recipients being members of a tiny house-church in Rome to influence his interpretation too much, fascinating though his speculations may be. Peter Adam has made it clear that one of his main aims in preaching is to help the congregation to read the bible and interpret it for themselves. That same aim clearly applies to his ministry of writing.

This commentary ensures that the reader grapples with the actual biblical text and not just with the commentator's bright ideas about the text! No reader can cheat by ignoring the biblical text because the text is inserted in the commentary. To read one you must read the other.

Peter Adam knows too well the temptations to which Christians

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**Note that the library is currently open only for advertised events and every Tuesday from 3.00 to 6.00pm.*

who read books about the bible are subject!

The questions at the end of each chapter also throw the reader back on the text. Discussion groups will not be able to fly off at fanciful tangents as easily as they sometimes do. They will be forced to integrate their personal opinions and conduct with the teaching of Hebrews.

If there is little in the way of speculative background there is much in the way of the more certain Old Testament background which is helpful to the beginner. In particular the positive assessment of the Old Testament cult as the gracious provision of God is a helpful insight which is often overlooked by modern scholars. "The argument of Hebrews is not that priests and sacrifice in the Old Testament were wrong; rather, that they were right, ordained by God, but they pointed beyond themselves to the perfect work of Christ". (p 59) or again, "...people often think that the message of Christianity is that sacrifices and the shedding of blood are useless. But the writer does not say that the old covenant sacrifices did not work, only that they were not as effective as the sacrifice of Christ". (p 98)

In similar vein the remarks about the two oaths sworn by God are given the proper stress for the modern reader inclined to pass over such apparently strange and irrelevant reference. In this commentary, the overall biblical context is used to show how highly relevant these oaths are to today's readers. The exposition of the oath's end with perceptive sentences as follows: "So the Church of Jesus Christ is the result of God's promise and oath to Abraham; the story of the bible, and of church history, is the story of God doing what he swore to do...The story of our salvation in Christ is the story of God doing what he swore to do." (p 82) This is vintage Adam at its best!

Some final reflections are given for discussion. This reviewer would want to take issue with point number six which cites the preface concerning ceremonies in the Book of Common Prayer to the effect that Christianity, is in accordance with the teaching of Hebrews, a non-cultic religion. The author makes the suggestion that the emphasis on beauty in worship is likely to obscure this fact. But the very title of this book "The Majestic Son", evokes a desire to worship. Where do we derive our concept of majesty

from, if not from our experience of worship? Such questions only serve to show how thought-provoking the final reflections are.

Peter Adam is to be commended for a commentary which allows the Word of God to speak with sharpness and clarity from a New Testament book in which many are unable to see the wood for the trees.

Bishop Graeme Rutherford
of the Newcastle Diocese

Author: Peter Adam
ISBN: 9780949108128
Pages: 126pp
Publisher: Aquila 1992 (Rev 2004)
RRP: \$19.95

Upcoming Events

11 September: 5.30 & 7.30pm

"Preaching on the Gospel of Matthew"
Rev'd Dr Graham Goldsworthy

21 & 22 September: All Day

"Preaching Workshop"
Dr Tim Johnson, Rev'd Craig Ogden, Rev'd Adrian Lane
Brisbane (21st) Gold Coast (22nd)

30 October: 7.30pm

"Reformation"
Dr Stewart Gill

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