



The



DNA of being a Christian

**Wednesdays, 7.30pm
at Bouverie Court,
Northampton**

As human beings we share a genetic heritage — yet we are each unique. As Christians, what is our DNA — the heritage and faith that makes us part of God's family?

What do I know? What do I believe?

What do you believe?

Is it all right to ask questions?

What if we experience things differently?

How does it all connect up?

Rediscover the Christian journey as the most exciting, challenging and rewarding



Introduction to the DNA of being a Christian Chris Peck – Sept 2010

My own journey of faith has been one of what Augustine described as 'faith seeking understanding'. I became a Christian in my teens in a context where it was considered dangerous to explore questions. You needed to accept the basic tenets of Christian faith; you could use your mind to find arguments to prove that they were true, but you weren't to question them. Questioning them would lead you to lose your faith.

What I discovered, however, was that as I questioned and faced some of the challenges thrown up by science and other disciplines, my faith grew deeper, wider, and stronger. I believe passionately therefore that through questioning we can move from faith to faith. This is not a process of picking and choosing what we want to believe, but a process of grappling with the realities of the Bible and the Christian tradition in the light of what we are coming to understand about our world and universe.

What helps me in that process is knowing that there are those who have travelled this road before me, whose faith is more lively than ever, and who can inspire me on my journey. What I find less helpful is what feels like packaged answers which don't seem to match the seriousness of the challenges and questions.

The vision behind the DNA of being a Christian is to gather a group of people who are on that journey of seeking a deeper faith through questioning and offer an opportunity to engage with people who are embedded in that journey and willing to share how their wrestling with questions in different areas enriches and deepens their faith.

We felt that it was important that what we offer 'scratches where people itch, and so each session will give us the opportunity to identify the questions we have about the topic. This is not so our visiting speaker 'answers' our questions, but so they are aware of what we are wrestling with as they share some of their questions and insights with us.

We believe profoundly that this cannot simply be an intellectual exercise, so we will give the opportunity in each session for reflection on how the exploration of that particular topic can impact on our lives, and each time we meet share reflections on our further journeying since we last met.

How sessions will be structured

Each session will be led by a speaker who will give us a window into how they grapple with and make sense of this area, and how wrestling with the questions enlivens and informs their Christian faith and life.

Participants will have the opportunity to bring their own questions and discuss with them in an open atmosphere, with members of the adult education team facilitating the sessions.

Each evening will seek to demonstrate how different parts of the DNA are connected with each other. The sessions will be framed with prayer and worship.

The course will be a good basis for those considering taking part in the *Living Faith* programme.

Wednesdays at Bouverie Court, 7.30-9.30pm
on the following dates in 2011:

June 1st: Jesus Christ: Speaker: Revd Dominic Barrington

Dominic is the Rector of St Peter and St Paul in Kettering. We are thrilled to welcome him back as a DNA speaker following his excellent and well received session on the Trinity.

June 8th: Moral Issues: Speaker: Revd Chrys Tremththanmor

Chrys is a Team Vicar in the Daventry Team with special responsibility for Welton; she has taught Ethics at St Michael's College, Llandaff where the Principal described her as 'an excellent and lively teacher who fully won the confidence of the students'. She led the very successful Living Faith module on Ethics at Peterborough earlier this year

June 15th: Worship: Speaker: Canon Bruce Ruddock

Bruce is the precentor at the Cathedral and liturgical officer for the Diocese. He has led very well received teaching sessions on worship across the Diocese, recently enriched by a sabbatical exploring a variety of styles of worship.

June 22nd: Evil and Suffering: Speaker:

Canon Lesley McCormack

Lesley was for many years Chaplain at Kettering Hospital and is now Chaplain at Cransley Hospice. She will be offering her theological reflections on her experience of ministering with people in situations of suffering.

The course is based on a belief that Christian faith is as much about finding God in facing honestly some of the difficult questions as it is about receiving answers.

Scripture shows us the people of God wrestling with the issues that faced them in making sense of God and sense of their world; as they reflected on their experience they came to renewed faith in God.

We will explore key topics with the help of people whose lively faith is forged in the midst of questioning. We will hold together the elements of reason, tradition and Scripture which have informed the development of Anglican thinking.

Sometimes it can feel as though we are not meant to ask questions, or if we do, we receive packaged answers which don't satisfy. As a result there can be an increasing gap between the rest of our life and Church; a gap which can lead to us lacking confidence in our faith or even quietly leaving Church.

The course is aimed at church members who are hanging in there but with questions about the Christian faith:

Does it all add up? Does it make sense?

Can we still in all honesty believe this stuff in the face of modern understandings and developments?

And how can I help others to make sense of it?

Easy ways to book

By telephone: Call Sally Crossley on (01604) 887049

By email: adulted@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Cost: £3 per session