

Coming Next...

9.30 am

SESSION 3:

**Walking in the valley
of shadows and deep darkness.**

Bruce Kinsey



A photograph of Balliol College in Oxford, featuring a large, multi-story stone building with Gothic architectural elements like pointed arches and a prominent tower with a conical roof. In the foreground, there are vibrant red dahlias in full bloom, some with yellow centers, set against a backdrop of green foliage. A well-manicured green lawn and a gravel path are visible in the lower right. A semi-transparent blue box is overlaid on the bottom left, containing white text.

Bruce Kinsey

Chaplain/Wellbeing and Welfare Officer

Balliol College, Oxford

**Walking in the valley of
shadows and deep darkness**





T h e E l e p h a n t



in the Room

An exhibition of elephants in the historic books of Balliol College.

Openings: 11 am-4pm on Monday 7th May , Saturday 19th May, Sunday 15th July,
Wednesday 15th August; **3pm-7pm** on Wednesday 13th June

At other times by appointment with the Library: library@balliol.ox.ac.uk



Introduction



- What is the Shadow?
- Why is this difficult for Christians?
 - Our faith
 - The shadow of Jesus
 - Our Church
- How does this impact hospices and the places we work
- Some interim conclusions and questions



What is the Shadow?



‘Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life the darker and denser it is. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions’ *Jung 1938, p93*



A saint is someone in whom not enough research has yet been done.



Beware the perfect inspection
report.



Many of us believe that exploring our shadow can lead to a greater authenticity, creativity, energy and even personal awakening. Jung regarded this introspective process as essential for reaching mature adulthood.



That which is not dealt with is destined to be repeated... Sometimes we find that our shadow leaks through into our every day



Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.



Think of someone who annoys you... is there part of them which is/reflects a part of you?



My good self and my ego protect me from my dark side which is often a good thing because we have to go gently if we are to explore these parts of ourselves which are difficult to bear.



Why is this difficult for Christians?



Christianity and its view of human nature. Do we tend towards the view that ‘we are divine but flawed’, or do we move to the idea that we are ‘sinners in need of redemption’... which comes first... original blessing or original sin



‘try and make peace with the whole
of ourselves’



‘when this happens there is usually a strong moral indignation and the ground work is laid for a moral crusade’ *Murray Stein 1995, p17*



‘how is someone going to love the enemy within their own hearts and call that wolf their sibling...’ *Jung 1958, p341*



‘The shadow is made up of all the reprehensible qualities that the individual wishes to deny, including animal tendencies that we have inherited from our infrahuman ancestors, as well as modes and qualities that the individual has simply not developed’ *Wulff The Psychology of Religion 1991*, p424



To be whole we need to be brave, to explore our shadow and to work with God at the meaning of it and the role it plays. Even daring to try and engage with and be in conversation with our shadow.



‘exactly like any human being with whom one has to get along, sometimes by giving in, sometimes by resisting, sometimes by giving love – whatever the situation requires’ *Jung 1964, p183*



Why is this difficult for Christians? The Shadow of Jesus



‘tell me the picture of Jesus you have reached
and I will tell you some important traits about
your character’



Pfister suggests that all religious movements which seek to do good and to give hope tend to create fear as well as faith...



Three potential shadows in the teaching of Jesus

- perfectionism and idealism
- divisiveness of inclusion
- scapegoating



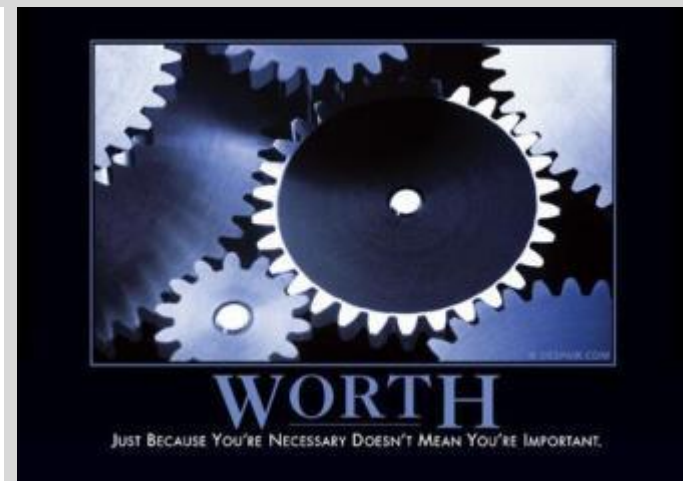
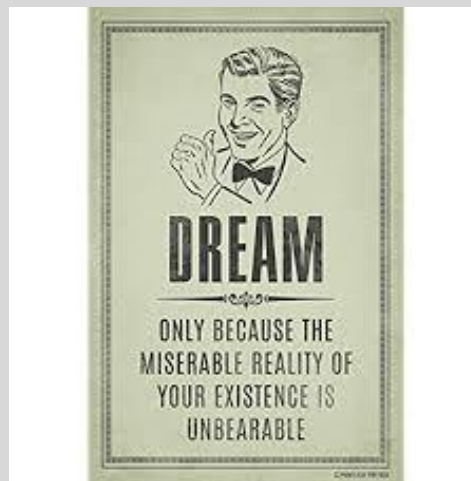
Further thinking on the impact of the
Shadow on our work



‘To learn to recognise, accept and integrate the shadow is to transfigure much of the bruised areas of the heart which dwell in fear and unease and rob us of joy and creativity’
O’Donohue Divine Beauty: the invisible embrace
2003, p104



Also the current fashion for demotivational cards...





‘There is a collective fantasy that the staff are nice people, who are caring for nice dying people, who are going to have a nice death in a nice place.’



If you don't feed the shepherd, the shepherd will eat the sheep.



The root causes of much institutional problems lie not in the personalities of the staff but in ambiguous goals, unclear role expectations and dysfunctional decision-making procedures.



- Function or role confusion, [challenge too from interfaith/no faith]
- Problems with boundaries, [do I have to do everything around here syndrome]
- Work overload, [how can I ever do enough?]
- Limited resources, and threat of further cuts



We need to listen to the way we are crying for help.



The ego ideal is formulated as a response to anxiety, and we are driven to pursue it by anxiety. It represents an end to the anxiety that drives us towards it... but at its core our anxiety concerns our finitude, vulnerability and mortality [according to the Becker 1973] and these are biological givens of being an organism [Freud 1955b]. We can transcend our Biology only in fantasy. And the clockwork organisation is one of those fantasies.



And Finally...



‘In principle any healthy religion should reinforce its adherent’s integrity, rather than subverting it by encouraging adaptive behaviour that amounts to dishonesty or hypocrisy and encourages repression’
Jeremy Young The Cost of Certainty, p 108



Jung also suggested that 90% of the shadow is 'pure gold a source of psychic energy holding those creative aspects of the individual that is unrecognised and unexplored'