



BriefCACE

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Centre for Applied
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● The Future of CACE By John Altmann

Applied Christian ethics find their foundation in the purposes of God for humanity. These purposes could be fairly summarised in non-exhaustive form, like this:

- We are made to glorify God and to give thanks to him.
- We are meant to seek the good of others.
- We are reconciled to God by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and this gives us supreme reason to value relationships and seek peace.
- We are meant to strive for obedience and character development.

Within the area of these great purposes of God what might a small organisation like the Ridley Centre for Applied Christian Ethics do? We have limited resources so we won't be able to do everything good that we think of. What I'd like to do is give you an insight into the major accents or emphases that the CACE advisory board has decided will shape what we choose to do.

The mission statement of CACE says that: *CACE is a ministry of Ridley college that promotes the development, discussion of, and training in topical Christian and biblical ethical positions within the Christian community, the academy and more widely in society.*

Within this, we intend to put **some more emphasis on the idea of CACE as a training body.** We intend to focus on equipping others to discuss, defend and promote a lived out Christian position. This emphasis flows out of the principle of Christian ministry expressed by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2. The Apostle Paul had the vision of a teaching ministry that would go on after his death and ripple out to people and generations unknown to himself. He said to Timothy that his job was to teach other reliable people so well that they would go on to teach yet others the Christian message and its implications.

We think CACE is in the position of Timothy. We have received the apostolic deposit of the Christian faith in the scriptures and are entrusted with the task of training and equipping a group of people so well in ethics, that they themselves can discuss, defend, and promote Christian ethics in their church or workplace or home.

To give an example: we will run the 2007 annual CACE conference by inviting a group of 8-10 people to a training workshop with Dr. Michael Schluter about the way in which we could apply relational thinking in a more thoroughgoing way to different areas of our society. We will train these leaders to work out how Dr. Schluter's ideas might apply in their areas of expertise/interest and ask them to lead workshops at the conference later in July. Allied to this we would love to help equip you to run a seminar in your church on an ethical issue. We aim to train 10 CACE supporters to do this during 2007.

As a strategic priority, **we will also put an accent on helping Christians use ethics as apologetics.**

That is, help people make connections between the big purposes of God and ethical questions that are being debated in our society. We think Christian ethics, especially Christian ethics lived out in front of others, is a bridge to faith in Christ. We need to help Christians make the connections in speech and action between a Christian worldview and a Christian position on any one difficult issue. Those thoughtful connections are easily lost or ignored in the rush to stake out various positions as a litmus test of your true blue belonging to any one group.

It may be that BriefCACE will be reformatted to provide more basic help with apologetics for everyday conversation. We'd love to have some feedback from you about which issues we could best address apologetically to help the most.

Overall, we will probably be somewhat similar to what you are used to, but with a renewed emphasis on these particular accents, of

- Being a training body
- to equip others
- Helping Christians use ethics as apologetics

Any feedback or requests you might have would be gratefully received and you can always email us at cace@ridley.unimelb.edu.au or ring me directly.

John Altmann, Director of CACE, on 9850 2393

Could you run a seminar in your church on an ethical issue?

Consider the question *Would God use Email?* In the year 2000 I ran an Open Forum at St Jude's Carlton with this title.

The Forum was very well attended and attracted both Christians and non-Christians. After all, back then, this technology was still new to many of us. It was also easy to invite our friends because this was a topic we could all talk about. And "Would God really use email?"

Such a question requires an understanding of the character of God, a good knowledge of how God relates to the world and a familiarity with email technology and its consequences. There is the temptation to begin an answer to this question by talking about the technology. The key to the success of this Open Forum, however, was the explanation of the character of God and the way our Lord and Saviour relates. Some months later I met someone who said they were really wondering about how Christianity related at all to their lives. They happened to come to this forum and it was then that they could see God in their life.

Christ demands our whole life and that includes our work and play and family life and whatever else is left. Open Forums or seminars which address social, political and world issues can help us integrate Christ into all aspects of our lives.

In the event I ran, the speaker, David Lyon, was a professor of sociology specializing in surveillance. He was also a committed Christian with a sound understanding of God's redeeming love shown by the death of Christ. I suspect most congregations do not have a Professor of Sociology lurking in the pews. But that should not stop you running such a seminar. The source of speakers for other Open Forums we held were members of our congregation who were teachers, artists, architects, mothers, fathers, students, and doctors. We usually restricted ourselves to members of our congregation because people were more willing to bring their friends to hear people they knew. The people speaking sometimes found this platform the most daunting and frightening of their career. This was because their friends opinion mattered. But they also found this opportunity the most rewarding.

There are a few key principles to running a seminar like this successfully. Always hold a planning meeting with the speaker and representatives from the congregation. The speaker should be able to give an outline of what they intend to talk about. This gives the speaker and the congregational representatives an opportunity to discuss the key issues. It also provides the congregational representatives with an idea of what will happen at the Forum. Word of mouth follows and this, as any marketing agent will tell you, is the best form of advertising. Speakers benefit enormously, especially if they are feeling apprehensive because it is like a practice run without the pressure of a big stage. And I always used the planning meeting to organize all the other incidentals like advertising, seminar format and supper.

Could you run a seminar in your church on an ethical issue people are interested in? If you'd like to try this we would be happy to coach you in having a go! If you contact us we will help you with running a seminar as much as we can. So what are the issues you and your friends most want to find out God's perspective on?

Philippa Lohmeyer, CACE advisory board member, contact her at Phileandsteve@bigpond.com

BriefCACE is published eleven times a year and sent by e-mail to around 1000 readers. We welcome feedback, letters, or contributions for possible publication. BriefCACE is edited by the Rev John Altmann and supported by a grant from the Australian Research Theology Foundation. We are a free publication aiming to stimulate ethical thinking and action from a Christian perspective. You can subscribe to BriefCACE by e-mailing 'subscribe' to

cace@ridley.unimelb.edu.au

2007 CACE conference

Life through the relational lens:
a Christian approach to transforming society

Friday 20th July, 9am – 5pm
Saturday 21st July, 9am-1pm



Keynote speakers:

Dr. Graham Cole

Research professor of biblical and systematic
theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School,
Chicago, Illinois

Dr. Michael Schluter

Founder and director of the Jubilee Centre
Cambridge and the Relationships Foundation

Conference Description

The conference will present a principle based approach to transforming society from a Christian perspective. The principle of valuing relationships in a thoroughgoing manner has been worked on theologically and practically by Dr. Michael Schluter for over 20 years, leading to ground-breaking social campaigns and consultancy in Britain. His thought and action have been responsible for significant transformation in areas as diverse as prisons, health services, local area rejuvenation, working hours and care for the disabled. The conference will give you a basis for understanding why relationships are so important to God and a tool for evaluating the health of relationships in any area of life. The conference is structured around understanding the value of relationships as the foundation for theological ethics on Friday, and then exploring what constitutes and promotes healthy relationships in different areas of life in a workshop format on Saturday morning.

The program

Friday 20 July

9am	Registration
9.30am	“Christianity as a relational religion”, by Graham Cole
10.30am	Tea/coffee
11am	“Biblical law as a social paradigm in the light of the New Testament”, by Michael Schluter
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	“A biblical agenda for social reform”, by Michael Schluter
3pm	Tea/coffee
3.30pm	“At the heart of the good—relating persons—in-relationship to ethical theories” by Graham Cole
5pm	Depart

Saturday 21 July

9am	“Why and how to see the world through a relational lens”, by Michael Schluter
10am	“Exploring relationships using a relational health audit tool”, by Michael Schluter
10.45am	Tea/coffee
11am	Workshop groups
1pm	Depart or stay on for lunch

Workshop group options:

1. Hospitals and health services
2. Working in schools
3. Life in your home
4. Managing your own business
5. The life of the church
6. Hope for the disabled or chronically ill
7. New hope in local communities
8. Economics in the real world of relationships
9. Hope for ex-prisoners

Conference fees:

\$175	full conference
\$100	Friday only
\$75	Saturday only
\$25	Saturday lunch (extra)
\$100	concession fee for non-full time workers (or please talk to us if the fees would prevent you from coming cace@ridley.unimelb.edu.au)

Group Special: every third person has a 50% discount.

TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE FILL OUT THE FORM ATTACHED AND E-MAIL TO:
cace@ridley.unimelb.edu.au