

press release

18 March 2010

Yorkshire illustrator sets Easter story in contemporary Leeds

A series of contemporary images by a Yorkshire illustrator is being published to portray the Easter story set in modern-day Leeds.

Various locations around the city feature in the drawings. The empty tomb is represented by the door of a funeral home, with other venues such as Caffe Nero in Albion Row and the lakeside in Roundhay Park appearing as settings for key scenes.

The series of 12 illustrations has been created as a way of depicting the story of the resurrection as if it was happening in this country in 2010.

Simon Smith, a widely acclaimed illustrator, has created the images which are published in the CPAS *Church Leadership* magazine and on www.church-leadership.org. The images are published alongside complementary text which can be used by churches this Easter as a series of prayer stations. The text has been written by the Rev Ian Adams, a writer and teacher on themes of emerging church, community, prayer and spirituality.

Illustrator Simon Smith said: 'I like the idea that the resurrection story includes real people, with real decisions to make. I think that setting the story in the here-and-now, in the place where I live, immediately makes the narrative and the characters less remote and more accessible. It earths the story somewhere very solid and tangible.

'I've illustrated a lot of biblical narratives in the past, almost all in a very traditional fashion – lots of pictures of men in biblical garb stood in front of what I've imagined Middle Eastern buildings looked like 2,000 years ago.

'However, I think that there's something provocative about setting the story in 2010. I think that good art challenges, questions and unsettles you. So I'm hoping that these drawings will invite folk to re-examine their understanding of the story, to maybe find new things in it, to go back and wrestle with the source material a bit.

'I had to think about the source material a whole lot more, finding parallels and little motifs and metaphors to hint at stuff in the original text. Hopefully you can see that there's a genuine engagement with the narrative and a wrestling with all the associated issues and challenges in there.'

The Rev Canon Sue Sheriff, vicar at St Mary's in nearby Tadcaster, is displaying the images during Holy Week and the week after Easter. Each day, one image and a brief explanation of what is being depicted will be displayed in a vacant shop premises in the centre of Tadcaster, mounted on 50cm by 75cm canvasses.

She said: 'The local geography used by Si Smith adds another dimension and means that these images are connected to the local community, especially as many people commute from here into Leeds. Hopefully younger people will relate to the images as well.'

'The images made an immediate impression and drew me into the resurrection story; every time I look at them I see something new. Si has handled the material so sensitively and the end result is a brilliant set of illustrations to be enjoyed by people this Easter.'

CPAS *Church Leadership* is published three times a year for church leaders at all levels, with an online archive of downloadable material featuring service outlines, worship resources, biblical reflection and leadership development ideas.

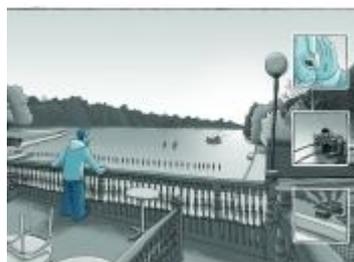
Rory Keegan, editor of CPAS *Church Leadership*, said: 'These images can help churches depict the resurrection story in a way which I hope will resonate with people in a new way this Easter.'

'Si Smith is a very talented illustrator who has developed these innovative images by using places in Leeds and contemporary characters to illustrate the story of the resurrection in a way which makes it more understandable, real and relevant to people today.'

Ends

For further information or higher resolution images please contact Olly Du Croz at CPAS on 01926 458443 or oducroz@cpas.org.uk.

Sample illustrations (jpegs attached, with brief descriptions at www.cpas.org.uk/leeds):



Notes to Editors:

- A free selection of the Simon Smith images can be viewed at www.cpas.org.uk/leeds.
- The full set of images and complementary text is only available to *Church Leadership* subscribers.
- *CPAS Church Leadership* is a one-stop subscription resource for lay and ordained church leaders. Published three times a year, the magazine is packed with service outlines,

biblical reflection, images and leadership development ideas. The *CL* website gives subscribers access to more than 10 years' worth of downloadable practical resources.

- **CPAS** is an Anglican evangelical mission agency working with churches, mainly in the UK and Republic of Ireland.
- **Simon Smith** is a widely acclaimed illustrator based in Leeds. See more of his work via www.proost.co.uk.
- **Ian Adams** is a writer, mentor and teacher on themes of emerging church, community, prayer and spirituality. He was co-founder and leader of the Oxford-based fresh expression Maybe. He's now based in Devon and you can find out more about his work at www.ianadams.info.