

expressions: the dvd - 2

Transcript - chapter 3

Dialogue and time-codes for chapter 3.

3: The Lord is Here

03:00:06:01 Narrator

Now it would be misleading to think that all fresh expressions of church are wild and whacky. In fact many of them take the ancient traditions of church really seriously and have the regular celebration of Holy Communion right at their heart. This is certainly the case for Moot, a fresh expression of church that meets round the corner from the House of Commons.

03:00:31:10 Ian Mobsby

There is a misconception that the church only exists for being an institution particularly in the high church tradition. But actually in the more catholic side of the Church of England there's 2,000 years of resources that are actually extremely important in a time of new mysticism.

'Now it would be misleading to think that all fresh expressions of church are wild and whacky.'

In a time where people are spiritually searching, actually there's something about liturgies that are quite transcendent and super spiritual that actually enable people to encounter something positive. So actually rather than thinking that the high church is kind of stuffy, there are huge resources. If we're thinking about drawing on the ancient to resource the future then we have things like labyrinths, Eucharist and all sorts of services like that. And actually when we frame into a post-modern context can be a great resource into encountering God. The challenge for us is actually about engaging people where they are to actually enable people to encounter a positive experience of Christianity.

03:01:24:14 Female

...that permeates the whole of creation.

03:01:27:04 Gareth Powell

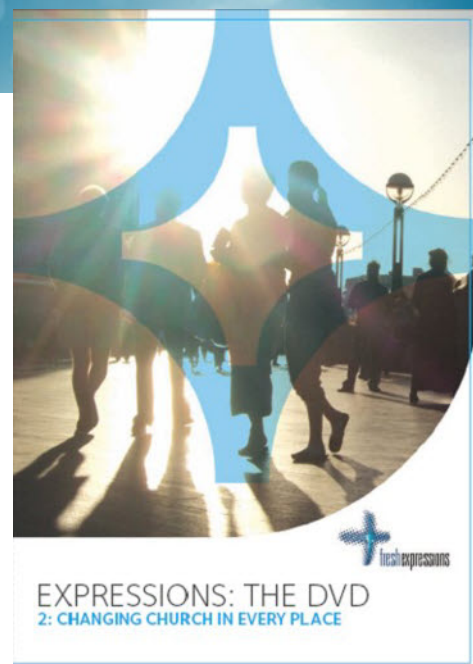
The Eucharist that we share in actually follows the same form and structure that you would get in any Anglo Catholic church in that it has a sense of drama. You have the smells and the bells and the sights and the sounds that you would associate with that including the regalia. But what it also does then is it seeks to reframe that very ancient practice for a modern or post modern world so that actually within that you would have things like the use of UV lights where people can draw and map out their own journeys from that week, songs that are used from in the secular kind of domain within that to give it a sense of the sacred. So it has a very kind of contemporary feel if you like while still maintaining a very ancient form.

03:02:10:15 Male

I think people in my age group find Moot particularly attractive because of its sensitivity and connectedness to culture. The services will contain elements of popular culture like music videos, symbols that carry a lot of weight and resonance in popular culture. It's very appealing for somebody of my generation.

03:02:29:15 Gareth Powell

One of the things that I think people are searching for today is authenticity. Using a very ancient form of liturgy allows people to connect to something that goes deeper than themselves and goes beyond themselves. And, in that way I think they see it as something authentic. Labyrinths are a very ancient form of encountering God that go way beyond the Christian tradition right into the Jewish and other Eastern traditions. But they're primarily a way



of journeying in quite a physical sense with God and they generally have a pattern almost like a maze where you will journey into the centre and then you will come out again. And Moot has used these several times in different contexts to enable people in their own way to encounter God and journey with God within that kind of labyrinth. There are things in contemporary society and the media that I think reveal a renewed interest in, particularly ancient Christian practices. I think of television programmes like the Monastery or the Convent. We as a community have been informed by those things as well in both in drawing up our rhythm of life seeking to draw on ancient monastic practice. But I think also in looking actually what it means to have a really deep community who are participating in life together and are seeking to follow Christ authentically just like you know monastic communities. And wondering what that would look like re-imagined in the City today. So if you like, I suppose a 21st century friary, which kind of becomes the hub of a community where you have arts and various guilds and crafts going on, but at the centre and the core of that you have a community of people faithfully following Christ, speaking of that, practicing hospitality in quite radical

ways that allow people to join in and journey with that community. And encounter God in quite unexpected and new places I think. So that's part of I think our dream of what Moot might become and hopefully is becoming. Drawing on very ancient things that I think you can see in the tv and the media.

03:04:31:05 **Ian Mobsby**

In cities I think communities are very important particularly thinking about faith communities. Because cities sometimes can feel a little bit like people - cohabiting strangers - where people really desire sense of intimacy with other people, but also fear it. So when I think Moot is very important, there's a very strong sense of spiritual community, a depth of relationship where people can actually feel that they're becoming more human as they learn about Christ and become part of a spiritual community. And it's vital that there is that depth because there is also in Moot something quite distinctive in the sense that we have a lot of people who belong, but don't necessarily believe. So there's that balance of depth of relationship that is about being more human as people rediscover and explore who Christ is.

03:05:13:06 **Female**

It's very, very important for me that there is a community where I feel really loved and accepted; that there is a meeting every Tuesday where we do different things where I meet people; that there is always a pub going after church. And it's really surprising for me, after just a few weeks that I'm already invited to people's houses and for meals and it's just a great feeling of community where I feel totally accepted.

03:05:38:06 **Male**

Father we give you thanks and praise through your beloved son Jesus Christ...

03:05:42:19 **Male**

I'm not a believing Christian. I never was. When I came first time to Moot it was like a small group, it was a very cosy atmosphere and I liked the style of the service. It was more independently organised, so it was quite a nice atmosphere; a warm, very friendly atmosphere.

03:06:01:09 **Gareth Powell**

Personally I see that being involved in Moot and helping to write some of the liturgies and seeing the work that Ian's doing and how the community develops, it really gives me a hopeful sense that actually my participation in the Anglican church whether that being an ordained ministry or not if I don't get selected, actually can be a very exciting thing where I can participate, help re-imagine the church and reinvigorate it. But also learn a lot from I think the other traditions and the catholic tradition in looking to how we re-imagine the church for today in ways that allow people to connect to who Christ is.

03:06:44:20 **Narrator**

You can take the traditions of church seriously and yet still be relevant even to a small section of contemporary culture. In Cambridge there is one church reaching out to the men and women in black.

03:07:05:12 **Marcus Ramshaw**

Goth culture is such an umbrella term. Ultimately it's a fascination with the darker side of life. I suppose also it is a community of people who draw in the outsider and are very non-judgemental. They preach and practice non violence on other people. You'll never see a fight at a Goth nightclub.

03:07:26:12 **Fraser Watts**

We got started on the Goth Eucharist here because we had a small group of

people in the church community were Goths, who were going onto a Goth nightclub that happens very close to our parish once a fortnight and we thought it might be helpful for them to have a Goth service before they went on there. And if we did some of the other Goths who go to the nightclub might want to come as well. Seemed a good idea, so we gave it a try and an increasing number of people have come.

03:07:50:18 **Marcus Ramshaw**

At the Goth Eucharist in Cambridge three quarters of the people that come to it are actually confirmed. They're actually the sheep that got away, not the black sheep of the family. They're people who used to go to church in their teenage years, but then because of depression or despair or stress or the failure of family or relationships, therefore the church has just not taken them seriously enough and they've felt God's abandoned them.

03:08:14:19 **Male**

I find it relatively easy to be part of the Goth community and Goths, at least in Cambridge, I don't think I can speak about Goths in general, will be quite open to difference. And part of that is they're quite open to people who are Christians. And I find this service easy if you like to come to because it's quite a sacramental service. Some alternative worship seems sort of light on content as it were whereas the Goth Eucharist is a proper Eucharist service.

03:08:37:12 **Male**

It feels right. It's atmospheric and beautiful and the services are genuinely moving and interesting and they appeal. There's a lot about Jesus Christ in particular which I maybe don't necessarily understand, but the services are phrased such that you don't actually have to be a Christian to get the message.

03:09:00:07 **Marcus Ramshaw**

As a priest I discovered a lot of my friends were still fascinated by the supernatural and fascinated by the Christian faith. And I actually wanted to find a way of creating a service in which they felt they weren't going to be judged by what they wore or their attitudes and where taboo subjects such as depression or self harming or suicidal thoughts or grief, actually were talked about in an honest way in the same way that say the psalmist does.

03:09:30:14 **Fraser Watts**

The Goths have a sense of the darkness of the world, but then Christians have a strong sense of what they call the fallenness of the world, which is really the same thing by another name. In fact I think the way we proclaim the Gospel here in terms of the light coming out of darkness is more authentically Christian than what happens in many churches on a Sunday morning.

03:09:51:18 **Marcus Ramshaw**

There are aspects of Goth lifestyle and culture which do fit ill at ease with Christianity. It does tend to be a more hedonistic and potentially decadent culture in terms of relationships, but that's basically because this is a group of people that feel completely rejected. And I thought Jesus Christ was very much on the side of the outsider and that's where he would be.

03:10:16:10 **Female**

Gothic sub-culture is just that. It's clothes, it's music, it's a taste in literature. It's not what we worship and what we don't, so there are indeed people who might enjoy a darker side of life. There are people who enjoy the darker sides of life in normal society. So you might as well be asking are there things in normal society that clash with church interests. Yes there are. And so there are in Gothic sub-

culture as well, but not to any greater extent I wouldn't say.

03:10:45:08 **Fraser Watts**

I suppose one of the important issues for us is sort of how much church needs to now be geared to people in particular sub-cultures and how far you can bring people from different sub-cultures together in church.

03:10:58:19 **Marcus Ramshaw**

...or from judgement... Lord in your mercy...

03:11:04:20 **Marcus Ramshaw**

I think all the Goths find a lack of spirituality in the church. The church actually often down plays spirituality and doesn't talk about difficult things. I've never heard any single priest preach about self harming and depression I think churches don't normally talk about. They seem to think that the answers are much more simple, you just become a nice middle class respectable person. And Jesus was none of those.

03:11:29:24 **Fraser Watts**

I think it's been particularly helpful in getting this service underway that it's been led by a priest who is a Goth and was involved in the Goth community in just an ordinary way before we had the idea of doing the Goth service. And I think it wouldn't have worked if we hadn't had that kind of link. So in a sense there has been indigenous leadership of this service right from the start.

03:11:53:24 **Marcus Ramshaw**

I actually want to find a very mainstream completely theologically orthodox Christian way to celebrate a lot of the issues that Goths struggle with and find answers for them. So in writing the liturgy I made sure it drew very heavily on the psalms, very heavily on Biblical passages and on a

variety of the writings of early church fathers and saints. So we'd come up with something which was unquestionably orthodox because I knew that this was going to be controversial and people always seem to think badly of a culture, which they don't understand. And because Goths wear black and wear scary makeup people seem to think they're Satanists or devil worshipers, but actually they're not at all. In fact I don't know a single Satanist in the Goth community. In fact they're fascinated with the Christian faith; with Catholicism in particular, but just have a jaded Christianity which will resonate with a lot of people.

03:12:57:05 **Narrator**

And fresh expressions of church in the sacramental tradition are springing up all over the country and not just among young people. Often the emphasis is on stillness and reflection.

03:13:42:24 **Philip Roderick**

Contemplative Fire is authorised and intended to be church with a sacramental life and a discipleship life, a prayer life and an action life. The intention of it is that people see this as a really accessible different way of being followers of Christ and being travelling companions on the way. So it's providing a place to do that based on the teachings of Jesus and that extraordinary way into God.

03:14:13:17 **Philip Roderick**

The spaciousness is one of the things that people really enjoy. If they come to one of our services there will often be a deep sigh or even tears saying 'oh I'm so grateful for some spaciousness'.

03:14:34:01 **Philip Roderick**

We will worship in abbeys or in farms to barns to schools to tiny little hidden monastic churches. And then we're now beginning to seed er, Contemplative Fire in different places.

03:14:46:22 Female

Coming to one of Contemplative Fire's gatherings helps me to go deep in the scriptural text in a way that doesn't normally happen in my experience in a local church. And it's being able to stay with the text and to let it speak and transform, the opportunity to express that in a number of different ways through creativity, through the visual arts, through actually using my body in worship. All part of a transformational experience.

03:15:15:22 Philip Roderick

Just relax first. That's the simple move...

03:15:20:06 Philip Roderick

Some of the people who come to us are hanging in to mainstream church by their fingertips. A number of people also have given up on church a long time ago, or have never reached church and are inspired by the figure of Jesus.

03:15:35:16 Male

I look at myself and my life as a journey. Just a few hours on a Sunday once a month, you can actually sort of stop that journey and take stock of where you are in a unconventionally spiritual sort of way. And that's I think quite inspiring.

03:15:55:05 Philip Roderick

...for the simplicity...

03:15:56:10 Child

It's not a traditional church and isn't like a chore with your parents or dad wanting you to come. It's different.

03:16:04:06 Philip Roderick

We use no books at all.

03:16:06:16 Philip Roderick

So we take the pattern of the liturgy, the ancient liturgy and we deconstruct it and we reconstruct it. We see our challenge all the way through symbol and sacrament as opening up, breaking open if you like the husk and saying what's truly deep down here and how do we re-express that? We work from the Gospel each time and in a small group break that open and allow its savour to fill into the pattern of the worship. We'll have the Gospel appearing not in a great chunk, but in little rivulets. We'll have not a great 20 minute sermon but teaching interspersed throughout. We'll have different movement, body prayers, so it's profoundly fluid and yet it's formed. And it's formed on the basis of the ancient Eucharistic liturgical pattern, but the way we interpret that each time is very fresh. A part of this call is the amazement that I have about the wealth of depth there is in the Jesus tradition ranging from Good Friday to parables to the early saints and so on. So we're making those available and people then say I am hungry. I have a real feeling that these fresh expressions are all about liberating liturgy and liberating theology and liberating spirituality. So the passion that I have, the delight I have when liturgy opens right up is that the whole great church is inspired.

03:17:42:19 CUT