



# LITURGICAL MAILING

- for all leading worship in our churches

SHEET 27

MARCH 2007

## OPENING THE LID ON FRESH EXPRESSIONS...

**WHILE THE TERM** 'Fresh Expressions' is still not widely understood in the Church (despite the availability of CDs and teaching packs which are designed to explain the concept by direct exposure to places where new worship is being developed) those of us who are responsible for leading services would do well to break down one of the core myths: that *Fresh Expressions* is only about exciting, multi-sensory worship that takes place 'somewhere else' - led by talented people who have heaps of time and nothing else to do! Liturgy is the work of the people - all of the people: specialists are just there to help. So this edition of the Rite Aid Mailing features two articles featuring different approaches. The first is by Andy Bowerman (full-time Mission Priest in the Airedale Deanery) and his work through "gracespace". The second article is by youth worker, Rich Jones, who describes the effect of music training in local parishes.



Andy Bowerman:

### OUR PHILOSOPHY...

We believe that it is our job, calling and privilege to make prayer and worship the heart of what it is to be church, even for those who don't usually go to church. We try to play and sing in such a manner that both leads and gets out of the way of worshipping. And although the quality of the music is extremely important to us, we are equally concerned with becoming the kinds of people whose lives bring worship to God. We aspire to be a team, a community, who lives what we sing

### WHY WE SING.....

A big group of people singing together is odd. It really is. Other than a football game or the occasional birthday party, people don't usually stand around and sing. But we do every Sunday at *gracespace*. Why? For starters it is a part of our history and tradition. We come from a long line of people who sing to and about God. From King David to Martin Luther to Bono, men and women have often expressed their faith, whether in painful cries or through gushing praise, with singing. The reasons behind this aren't always clear, but the power of music is undeniable. It seems to tap into deeper and

more honest places than words alone ever could. It has been said that music is the language of the soul. At *gracespace* we believe it.

So when we meet together as a community of faith, it seems only natural that we would try to use this language of the soul to connect with God and each other. Sometimes the songs are directed upward in celebration of the infinite love and greatness of God. And on those days we sing at the top of our lungs to thank and praise Him for who he is and what he does



and also to remind each other that we serve the King of all Kings. Other times the songs are more personal and reflective, giving us an opportunity to connect intimately with our Creator. This looks different for everybody but can involve confessing sin, inviting God to heal us or asking for wisdom and direction, any expression that naturally flows out of our experience. We want our worship to be both grounded in real life and reaching outward to the eternal.

### WHY WE DO OTHER THINGS...

Does music = worship? No. In spite of the fact that 90% of our "worship times" are singing, these words are not interchangeable. Music is to worship as Q-tips are to cotton swabs: one form of a bigger thing. We can sing without worshipping God, and we can worship God without singing. Ultimately, worship is an activity of the heart. Words, songs and actions are simply expressions.

To this end we will use all manner of creativity to aid and centre us in our worship, believing in the Jewish tradition that God is in everything we try to use the every day to point us towards God, or towards our need for his mercy and grace. Photographing trees and flowers, or piles of rubbish, taking the words of hit songs that we hear everyday and searching for God in the lyrics, eating Sunday lunch together and sharing the Eucharist with wine and Yorkshire puddings - we look for God's fingerprints everywhere, seeking the divine in the daily. We try to listen for God in every direction - inwards, outwards, backwards, forwards, and upwards.

Being a set of small groups meeting in homes we are able to experiment and explore together, gathering more occasionally for the bigger worship experience or celebration. We look to take part in the story of God and his people knowing where we have been to help find where we are going.

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*Rich Jones:* I was sitting in a coffee house in Great Horton one morning in November 2004. The topic of the conversation that day was church.

I had become increasingly eager to engage people in conversation about the “missing generation” and how, as a church we can turn things around.

From that conversation in the coffee house, we set about acting on a vision we had to create a bridge from un-churched to church amongst young adults. We began weekly meetings in the coffee house that comprised of a meal, worship, some time for discussion and prayer. In each part of the meeting we tried to be as creative as possible.

As the group grew and relationships began to be formed, we decided to begin a monthly gathering for young adults. The idea was that this would be for any young adult in the city that wanted to attend as well as being a setting that we could invite those that came along to the coffee house meetings too. It was at this point that people began to refer to what we were doing as a *fresh expression* of church. Interestingly though, those who were referring to this as a *fresh expression* of church were more excited about the coffee house gatherings. We began to wonder what the purpose of the monthly gathering was? Was there more to be gained from building on the community that was growing in the coffee house? Was that church? Archbishop Rowan Williams says “If ‘church’ is what happens when people encounter the Risen Jesus and commit themselves to sustaining and deepening that encounter in their encounter with each other, there is plenty of theological room for diversity of rhythm and style, so long as we have ways of identifying the same living Christ at the heart of every expression of Christian life in common”. Maybe these gatherings were church?

My work as a youth worker working with disaffected young people, has caused me to tackle once more the question of moving people from un-churched to church. In the case of such young people I believe that the love and support that they can get from an inter-generational church family is vital. I have seen young people from difficult backgrounds thrive in these inter-generational church settings. However, there is a sense that as churches we also need to strive to meet them where they’re at. When I’m not youth-working, I spend a lot of the rest of my time leading (music) worship and equipping others to do the same. I’m an advocate for progressive (music) worship and believe that our worship should be God centred but also accessible to those who may not be familiar with the traditions of the “church” setup. The music part of our worship can be a really powerful entry point into church and a worshipping life if it is contextually relevant as well as being sensitive to the needs of those already part of the congregation. A hard balance to judge, but a great tool when bridging the church and un-churched gap.

Recently I’ve been helping the South Bradford group move forwards in their (music) worshipping lives. This has included raising up and equipping lead worshippers both young and old in all three parishes. God has done some amazing work with those churches and the knock-on effect has been really exciting. I am now engaged in helping other churches and their musicians in a similar way.

Whatever expression of church you take part in, I believe that making your gatherings contextually relevant will prove to be essential in the mission to win lives for Christ and in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with all who walk through your church doors.

## PRAXIS TRAINING EVENTS: 2007

### Liquid Mass

*Fresh Expressions of Eucharist*

Thursday 27 March 2007 10.30 AM – 3.30 PM  
Birmingham (Anglican) Cathedral

Tim Sledge

*Mission Enabler, Diocese of Peterborough*

Bookings: Peter Furber pfurber@parousia.fslife.co.uk  
01684 574106

### Exploring Holy Space

*In him we move and have our being*

Saturday 28 April 2007, 10.00 AM – 3.30 PM  
Wakefield Cathedral

Sue Wallace

*author of the best selling Multi Sensory Worship series*

Bookings: Praxis, 19 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EB  
praxis@praxisworship.org.uk

### Taken as Read?

*Worship to deepen engagement with scripture*

Saturday 13 October 2007, 10.00 AM – 3.30 PM  
St. George’s Church, Great George Street, Leeds

David Hope

*Vicar of St Margaret’s Ilkley, formerly Archbishop of York*

Colin Buchanan

*Formerly Bishop of Woolwich*

Bookings: Chris Clough c.m.i.clough@blueyonder.co.uk  
01274 778053

*In the next Edition of the Rite Aid Mailing:*

- Details of the new *Praising in His Name* course
- Dates for the ‘Doing Baptisms well’ seminars

#### Contact names within Bradford

Diocese:

*Bishop’s Adviser in Liturgy:*

John Burniston, Rite Aid, 130 Haworth Road, Heaton,

Tel: 01274 543004 Fax: 0870 161 7424

email: john@saintmartin.demon.co.uk

*Chair, Diocesan Liturgical Committee:*

Chris Clough, 4 Scarborough Road, Shipley BD18 3DR

*Written by John Burniston on behalf of the  
Bradford Diocesan Liturgical Committee, March 2007*