

MODEM Matters

a hub for leadership, management and ministry

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First Light in Salisbury

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MONKEYS AND EMAILS

I was reminded by Stephen Cherry's excellent book on Time Wisdom¹ (see MODEM Matters, Issue 35) of the advice that used to be popular a few years back not to let people transfer monkeys from their own back to yours. The monkey under discussion is the feeling of responsibility that people manage to transfer to you when they tell you about something that is bothering them. Monkeys are gregarious little creatures, and will be happy to jump on to the shoulders of someone who is already carrying quite a few. You may quite like them, and it seems like a real kindness to accept others' burdens. You may even entice them across because it feels like that is what you are supposed to do in the spirit of 'bearing one another's burdens'². Or you might encourage them because you feel good about being seen to make a contribution.

The original article about this by Oncken and Wass³ in the Harvard Business Review was meant to encourage people not to accept monkeys too readily, to define the limits of their own responsibility and not let others push too much on to them. Cherry's take on it is more thoughtful, suggesting that we should be aware of how many monkeys we are collecting, how many we want, and whether we get caught up in a desire to seem nice which makes us excessively hospitable to monkeys. This is to the possible detriment of ourselves, those around us, the monkeys that get crowded out and even the monkeys that we have agreed to take but do not really have



the capacity to look after. This does not assume that we should be minimizing our monkeys.

Email culture has exacerbated the issue; monkeys are more readily available than ever, and it is easier for everyone to make you aware of their monkeys in the hope that you would

like to take responsibility for some of them. But it has also opened up a new way of avoiding taking the monkeys, which is that you simply do not respond to the email. I know of no research on this, but am I the only person who suspects that Christians in general, and ministers in particular, have developed a habit of leaving emails unanswered? In terms of keeping monkeys off their back this could be an effective strategy, because they have not accepted responsibility for something they did not want to do. In terms of organizations functioning well, though, it is a disaster, because the person who sent the email does not know whether it is (a) unread (b) read and acted upon (c) read with rising anger (d) accidentally deleted (e) inadvertently forwarded to Mars. With face to face conversations you can see whether the other person has heard, but with email, the uncertainty can waste a lot of time for the message sender. Such behaviour has come to be seen as very bad manners in other contexts. It is not even as if it saves time for the recipient; most emails need a response which takes less time than it would take to read them again later. How can people of faith have so little concern about wasting others' time? Or is this just me? I hope so.



MODEM Matters is the quarterly newsletter of MODEM: a national ecumenical Christian network, which encourages authentic dialogue between exponents of leadership, organisation, spirituality and ministry to aid the development of better disciples, community, society and world.

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1 Cherry, S. (2012) Beyond busyness: time wisdom for ministry. Durham: Sacristy Press.
2 Galatians 6, 2.

3 Oncken, W. and Wass, D.L., 1974. Management time: Who's got the monkey?. Reprint Service, Harvard business review.

CONFERENCE REPORT | SUE MILLER, JONATHAN EPTAGE & DAVID SIMS

WHAT IS THE CHURCH FOR? MOBILISING AND ORGANIZING BEYOND SUNDAY MORNING

Some 30 people met in Sarum College, Salisbury, in early December, just before the snow, for the annual MODEM conference. We have been emphasising the idea of MODEM as a conversation over the last few years, but we also want to offer input of the highest quality, and so we combined top quality keynote speakers with asking them to stay and join in the discussion throughout the conference. Our two keynote contributors, Professor Mike Higton from Durham University and the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission, and Revd. Dr. Graham Adams from Northern College and the Congregational Church went further than this, and agreed to split their keynote addresses into two halves, so as to get the discussion going on a broader base right from the beginning.

Mike Higton has been working on the notion of witness. This splits readily into two senses – the witness as somebody who sees something, and the witness as somebody who tells others what they have seen. The women at the tomb of Jesus saw that he was gone, and told others, although they were not believed. At that time they *were* the church. The church is the community of those who have been joined to the company of the women at the tomb, and the basic dynamic of the church was set up at that time; the community grows through receiving and passing it on. And the 'it' is not something that can be possessed, but something dynamic that keeps unfolding as scripture and experience illuminate each other. The disciples on the road to Emmaus did not make sense of seeing the risen Jesus until they talked to each other about it afterwards – 'Did not our hearts burn within us?' Witnessing may only make sense when

"The church is the community of those who have been joined to the company of the women at the tomb."



What does it mean to witness?

Graham Adams said that much of Jesus' story was to do with his openness to other people interrupting his flow. Graham's theme was the solidarity of the shaken, where the shaken are those who have been disrupted from the lives they have been leading; thus church is 'the solidarity of the shaken'. Starting

"Shakeness, openness to disruption, is an essential part of the church and of the gospel."

from the theology of Andrew Shanks, Graham talked about truth as openness and truth as correctness. Shakeness, openness to disruption, is an essential part of the church and

of the gospel, and it implies a public enterprise which is beyond our control, and beyond any human control. Truth as openness addresses the original sin of 'unatonement', our failure to be at one with reality. Graham did not say this to his ecumenical audience, but shakeness and openness to disruption may be something that those in more hierarchical churches need to be reminded about by Congregationalists.

We then moved into the first of two short sessions run by conference participants. Both ran their sessions twice to enable discussion in a more intimate group. John Gillibrand talked about the influence of practical and systematic theology on the management of change in the church. He applied insights from Foucault to this, and suggested that we underestimate the contribution that insights from the church might make to other organizations as a critical friend. Change management can usefully be related to pastoral care in the church, and they can learn from each other, particularly where they meet in activities such as chaplaincy. David Brown talked about culture in the church, and about the metaphor of 'leaven', which is the title of his book on the subject. Jesus focused not only on individuals and their needs, but also on their cultural context. Why is the church so often infected with a culture that is less loving and Godly than one might wish? How can we infuse the church with the culture and life of the wonderful 'love unknown'? The recent scandals of bad care in hospitals and care homes are not the result of hatred, but of lovelessness. The church needs to counter the prevailing lovelessness and instrumentality of the surrounding culture and to show a different way of being and relating

"How can we infuse the church with the culture and life of the wonderful 'love unknown'?"

together. Does the way that we do selection, appointments, budgeting, development and leadership achieve this?

Following Choral Evensong in Salisbury Cathedral for those who chose to attend, the book, 'Leading by story: rethinking church leadership' by Vaughan S Roberts and David Sims, (published by SCM Press) was launched, with Vaughan and David giving a taste of the book, and trying to persuade everyone that it was just what they were looking for in Christmas presents!

In the morning, our keynote speakers picked up from where they left off. Graham Adams talked about exposing what closes us down. Again following Andrew Shanks, he suggested that our lack of openness stemmed from three types of dishonesty. There is dishonesty as banality, where we let ourselves be carried along unreflectively, belonging to a herd, and not learning the lessons that others might teach us, not following the gospel's 'xenophilia', or love of strangeness. The response to this is to allow ourselves to be shaken, and to be sure that church is a solidarity of the shaken, not a defence against being shaken. Second, there is dishonesty as manipulation, the dishonesty of a gang, where we collude with powerful people in what we see as our gang within the church. We need to hold them to account, to give them the refreshment of a critical friend, and to maintain solidarity with the victims of all gangs, including our own. There is also dishonesty as disowning, where we refuse to acknowledge the shadow side of our past. We all have a messy history and we need to re-own and confess it. The role of the church is to foster a poetic openness to the God of truth-as-openness.

"Church is a solidarity of the shaken, not a defence against being shaken."

Mike Higton turned to the second aspect of witness, where you tell others what you have seen. This is a balancing act because we need to get people's attention, but then to point away from ourselves to the Kingdom of God. Witnessing involves showing the love and grace of God, telling people about it especially when we fail to show it fully, celebrating where we see the love and grace of God at work, and acknowledging that all of this is a pale reflection of what we are witnessing to. It involves placing ourselves under judgement, acknowledging that we are broken people, under grace, and that as church we have colluded with colonialism, capital and the comfortable. Being humble about these matters can also be a form of captivity as we perform humility, while remaining secure from being shaken and interrupted by God. There is no recipe for the balance between these elements; it is a lived wisdom. The witness of the church is more about how we hold ourselves open than it is about statements and claims.

We had two more shorter sessions, again dividing the conference community into two. Anthony Thorpe discussed the outcomes of a research project on chaplains and headteachers in Methodist state and private schools in England. School chaplaincy is clearly an example of mobilising beyond Sunday morning, with its pattern of working for five or six days a week with large numbers of young people. This is a research project which is still in progress, but new models of chaplaincy are developing from it, and questions are emerging about whether the headteacher is a religious leader, about

whether the chaplain is part of the leadership of the school, and about who the chaplain is there for. Keith Thomasson gave an autoethnographic case study of chaplaincy with an ecclesial community of people with learning disabilities. The Christian distinctiveness of the supporting organization had become obscured, and Keith talked to members of the community and staff to discuss their needs. 'Faith Saturdays' emerged from these conversations, and were a fascinating mix of bottom up response and top down strategy. Keith was chaplain for these events, which were described as a mixture of food, faith and fiesta. The different texture of life within a community of people with learning disabilities was described, and there was a lot of emphasis on what could be learned from the clients. The case study was rich and powerful, but its lessons for this participants included going with the grain of what is going on, not rushing, looking to learn equally from all, the power of inviting people to 'come and see', and the power of putting shared meals, spiritual development and sport together.

"A fascinating mix of bottom up response and top down strategy."

In conclusion, Mike Higton reminded us that, while at times it might have sounded as if we were discussing something that we ought to be doing, everyone in the room was already involved in witness, and we were talking about understanding more of what this means. Graham Adams reminded us that openness is about caring for people in their closedness, including others in church, and that we are called to be unifiers and co-creators of the church as well as interrupters. Other comments were about the importance of being open to being shaken, and the humility that this requires especially in those who are regarded as church leaders. This is a heart

"In the church what we can do is to know a little bit and point to more."

problem more than a head problem, but how do we develop the courage and humility to make ourselves open to being shaken? Can you be open the whole time,

or do you inevitably have to close off some things in order to be more focused? It is interesting that we were discussing all this in Advent, a time of waiting and hope – but a hope for something that we could never have scripted. Are there different liturgies of openness and correctness? Some prayers in church seem to try to tell people what they should be thinking and feeling whereas the Iona approach is an alternative model of how to invite people to bring what they are already thinking and feeling. We need to realise that in the church what we can do is to know a little bit and point to more. Pointing to what we have glimpsed is a good way to remember that it is not all about us. The humility with which both speakers and participants had offered their contributions aligned with this key message of the conference, and their offerings gave us much to take away and ponder.

CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS | JOHN ADAIR

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE CONFERENCE REPORT

John was one of the pioneers of studying leadership and leadership development in the UK, and has been a long standing member of MODEM. He is a much published and widely quoted author, and has edited MODEM books and written chapters for several of them. He was not able to come to the conference in Salisbury in December because he was busy meeting a writing deadline, but he kindly offered his reflections on the topic of the conference, using our conference report to see what he had missed.

What is the Church for? In this question 'for' is obviously a functional word indicating purpose.

"Only God is able to see the whole picture, the totality of all things including us."

In working with organisations, I have always found it useful to distinguish between Purpose, Aims and Objectives. Purpose answers the question 'Why?' Why does the organisation exist? What is its *raison d'être*? Aims are directions, more specific but still open-ended. Objectives are much more tangible and time-limited. Leaders should be able to relate them to each other, working either from the general to the particular or from the particular to the general — if you get my drift.

But in wider contexts the concept of purpose is far more elusive. Who could say, for example, what is the purpose of life? And the purpose of the Church falls into that category. Only God is able to see the whole picture, the totality of all things including us. Sometimes it is only towards or even at the very end of an enterprise or experience that the overall purpose behind it becomes clear to us.

What we see — unless we delude ourselves — is only a very small part of an inconceivably large whole, and even that we can see 'through a glass darkly'. The big picture eludes us. 'Many are the plans in the mind of men, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established' (Proverbs 19:21). Well, that is our hope.

The characteristic or defining belief of Christianity is that 'God is love' (1 John 4:8). And with that comes a belief that God has a loving purpose for the world: in the language of Jesus, the establishment of his kingdom on earth. Both God and the kingdom remain hidden, but perhaps things hidden are not the same as things entirely unknown.

It was in Antioch, we are told, that the early disciples of Jesus were first called Christians, probably by their opponents. Although that name only appears twice more in the New Testament, it has stuck to this day. Perhaps a more thought-provoking name for them appears in the Letter to the

Colossians where the author refers to 'my fellow workers for the kingdom of God' (4:10).

Turning to the Conference reports, these thoughts are reflected back to me in a number of places. David Brown's talk about the metaphor of leaven, based on his book (which I have read with profit), reminds us that alongside the apocalyptic clothing of the original message — now too archaic to our generation to swallow — there is a more organic or gradualist theme in the teaching of Jesus about the kingdom, one more in harmony with our more evolutionary or natural understanding of the creative process that we are led to believe is underway. I refer to images such as salt, leaven, light, plants and trees that grow imperceptibly from small seeds and bear fruit.

Graham Adams spoke of the calling of the Church to be an 'agent of the kingdom (work), a sign of the kingdom (pointing) and a sacrament of the kingdom (embody)'. Mike Higton also referred to the need of the Church 'to point away from ourselves to the kingdom of God'. And those two case-studies of chaplaincies in schools - one in a community of young people with learning difficulties - are really stories of agents of the kingdom seeking to work creatively in challenging environments.

"Those who love never seem to lack a sense of purpose."

Just one further thought. At some point during their stay at Sarum College I am pretty sure that all the participants would have said the Lord's Prayer, either individually or together. With regard to that first and cardinal petition, 'Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' Luther makes the point that God's kingdom is going to come anyway, whether or not we pray for it. Therefore, he suggests, we should interpret the petition as a prayer that 'the kingdom will come to me'. You will know better than I do what are all the implications hidden in the nutshell of that prayer, be it for an individual or for a church.

Those who love - as you will have noticed - never seem to lack a sense of purpose.

QUOTABLE CONFERENCE | JOHN SAMWAYS

MEMORABLE QUOTES FROM THE CONFERENCE

John Samways was first a geography teacher before being ordained, and serving as an Anglican Vicar in Brighton, Oxford and Keynsham near Bristol. Now retired, he was attracted to the conference by its title, and curated a list of quotes that he has been drawing on. The interplay between our two speakers was one of the highlights of the conference, so the quotes are presented over the next two pages side by side.

MIKE HIGTON

The scriptures are 'given' but not 'possessed' – we don't have a full understanding. Consider Emmaus Road story ...

We always need to be open to 'seeing more' – often happens at the 'edges' of churches/comfort zone. We discover more when we are not 'comfortable'.

The 'comfortable' church needs to be challenged.

The characteristic of a witnessing church is that it recognises its need to 'see more than we have already been given'.

Scripture leads us into 'experience' not merely 'information' – it is a gift that 'unwraps'.

'Vision' is not one we possess – we are to hold it lightly and to receive it back again, from people on the edge, in changed form.

To hold fast to openness is being open to more.

Our calling is to point away from ourselves (individuals/churches) – how compellingly do we do this?

We need to attract attention in order to point away!

To point requires the church to be 'eccentric'! It is also very challenging (for us).

4 elements of life are integral to a church being a witness (these 4 are not hierarchical):

- Showing. Showing we believe in the life of Jesus – living lives of worship and gratitude in the world, not seeking to defend ourselves. 'Join this life ...'
- Telling. Our showing is always deeply imperfect – telling of the love and grace go far deeper than we can ever show. Telling points beyond what we show.
- Celebrating – where we see this life beyond the walls of the Church – beyond our control. We need to cultivate 'appreciative understanding'.
- Acknowledging – recognising our failures, standing as failed sinners. Thus – don't look at me but look at the One who is the way, the truth and the life.

GRAHAM ADAMS

Graham often referred to writings of Revd Andrew Shanks

'Solidarity of the shaken' builds up a solidarity across all boundaries – a true sign of the Kingdom

The Church 'does' staleness – it needs to be shaken by fresh experience

'Shaken' = being opened up to what others give.

The Beatitudes refer to those being shaken. The Good News is scandalous ... the scandal of truth-as-openness rather than truth-as-correctness.

We need to accept that reality is > we thought it was.

We need to live with an 'inner civil war' – a challenge because it is always easier to live in a world with the framework 'sorted' (truth-as-correctness).

We need to receive that which opens us up. Merely comfortable, comforting religion is religion failing to do its job.

True religion faces the difficulty of reality – the Gospel demands a life beyond our 'herd'.

The gospel is a process not a package.

We are called to create a bigger solidarity.

How do you 'manage' organised/coherent shakenness?!

**Truth as correctness = static: is wrong.
Truth as openness = movement: is right.**

'God's love of strangeness' should open us up to things beyond the grasp of our reality. We need to foster 'xenophilia' = to love what is strange.

We are all faced with 'un-atonement' – i.e. a limited grasp of reality. God is open to it all and this should evoke truth-as-openness among us.

MIKE HIGTON (CONTINUED)

The Anglican Church is seen as a colonialist; capitalist; domineering Church.

We need to converse with competing views.

Have a discipline to be open to the distraction of your disciplines!

Are we praying for God to interrupt us in ways we cannot imagine?

Heresy literally means 'dissect' – therefore heresy divides.

The Church	vs.	The Kingdom of God:
Tradition		innovation
Scripture possessed		scripture unfolding
Correctness		openness
Care		liberation
Barrired		unbarrired

We need to be open to being interrupted.

GRAHAM ADAMS (CONTINUED)

Religion struggles to defeat un-atonement – seeks to address it but fails to solve it (?? Where does the Cross fit into this ...)

We think of God as a 'God of correctness' rather than a 'God of openness'

Un-atonement results in three dishonesties:

- Dishonesty as manipulation. The 'gang' determines what the direction of travel should be and this seduces us towards a future which serves our own interests.
- Dishonesty as banalness. We stick with what we know, 'our group has it', all the others are wrong. Can have many unforeseen, damaging consequences.
- Dishonesty as disowning. We boast in the version of our own story and deny problems along the way. Disowning is a longing for innocence.....

All three versions of un-atonement are universal. All too easily the Church perpetuates social control by propaganda. Jesus defied/exposed these powers.

The Church has the responsibility to foster 'voices' which have been ignored for centuries.

The early Church struggled with God's trans-community generosity.

The Church needs to build public alliances with those 'hearing other voices'.

How do we expose dishonesty as manipulation, banality and disowning?

The Church is called to be:

- An agent of the Kingdom = work
- A sign of the Kingdom = point
- A sacrament of the Kingdom = embody it.

The Church is called to:

- Undo un-atonement
- Distinguish between God and a 'false' God
- Recover truth as openness
- Foster the solidarity of shakenness

Allow your story to be shaken.

We need to put ourselves on the side of the seeker.

NEWS: CABE, MODEM MATTERS & CONFERENCE 2018

FAREWELL TO CABE

We were sad to hear of the closure of one of our sister organizations recently. CABE, an acronym for the 'Christian Association of Business Executives' has decided that its work is done. They say, 'The Trustees are very conscious of CABE's long and distinguished history and the important contribution it has made over the past 80 years in supporting Christians in business and the decision to close has only been taken after much thought, discussion and prayer.' In 1986 CABE launched the Institute for Business Ethics as a separate venture, and this will continue, together with the annual Hugh Kay lecture which it runs. CABE's aims and objectives were always different from MODEM's, but it is always sad to hear of an organization labouring in a neighbouring vineyard that feels that its time is over. We are grateful for the good work that it has done over the years.

MODEM MATTERS

EDITORSHIP

For the past two and a half years *MODEM Matters* has been edited by Annie Carter. She took the role over from Tim Harle, who had been doing it alongside many other roles in MODEM for a long time. Annie is an author and a freelance editor and writer, and has done wonders for the look and feel of the newsletter, as well as extracting the content from those who write it and turning this into what I hope you will agree has been a professional looking and enticing publication. She was not a member of MODEM before taking the role on, but has taken a keen interest in the organization and its activities during her time as editor, and brought her own Christian

perspective to the task. She has been an important part of helping us to think out how to take more advantage of newer forms of communication, which is still a work in progress. We are very grateful for all she has done. However, sadly, she has decided that she is at risk of being overwhelmed by a new job, new church roles, and family commitments, and has had to resign.

The good news is that Jeremy Fagan has agreed to take on the editorship, at least on an experimental basis while he finds out whether it is manageable. Jeremy is a MODEM trustee, Team Rector of an Anglican parish on the edge of Liverpool and has (among other things) an MA in Christian Approaches to Leadership from Sarum College. We are all very grateful to Jeremy for taking this role on, and please be especially nice to him while he is deciding whether the role is one that he can take on for the longer term!

David Sims

CONTRIBUTIONS

There is a wealth of wisdom, knowledge, experience and writing talent amongst the members of MODEM - we would welcome future contributions to MODEM Matters at modemmatters@modemuk.org.

2018 MODEM CONFERENCE

This year's conference will be on Thursday 29th November, at Carrs Lane URC Conference Centre in Birmingham. MODEM ventures North! Well, a little bit north.

BOOK REVIEW

CHURCH IN LIFE: INNOVATION, MISSION AND ECCLESIOLOGY

BY MICHAEL MOYNAGH

SCM Press, 2017, 462pp, ISBN 978- 0-334-05451-1, £35.

Reviewed by David Sims

Michael Moynagh is a prolific author who, after a PhD in business history, was then a parish priest for many years. He is now based at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and works for Fresh Expressions as Director of network development. In this large and comprehensive book he brings his social science background together with his theological training and his commitment to mission to produce a thorough and careful consideration of how churches might grow. Moynagh is an Anglican, but his data and his interests are ecumenical. The book weaves together cases, many from his own research, and a theoretical structure with which he makes sense of the data. He is well-read organizationally, and introduces ideas from complexity theory to help him understand his data, with particular value coming from the concept of emergence. He is a good social scientist, and is remarkably even-handed in his account of church reports. The book is a serious consideration of the evidence in favour of different models of church growth, rather than a partisan pressing of the claims of one particular approach. The book adopts an interesting see-judge-act structure, where Part 1 sees what is going on with emerging ecclesial communities, Part 2 judges those communities theologically and asks about their long term prospects, and Part 3 has suggestions for how we may act on the basis of Parts 1 and 2. For MODEM members, Part 3 may be less significant than the earlier parts because this is our home territory, but it is still refreshing to see such sensible, non-mechanistic commentary on how to make things happen in churches.

If we take it that all is not well with the churches in Britain, and that they are not currently fulfilling their mission as well as they might, what approaches to growth and renewal are available? Moynagh's three main alternatives are that we could do church better, but this approach has not shown much fruit, especially when we think how many people are doing it as well as they know how. We could consider church planting, taking the model of a church that we admire, and trying to replicate that model elsewhere, or we could look for a different way of doing church in the particular context in which we would like to do it, with the implication that no pre-existing model will fit the bill. He refers to these as emerging ecclesial communities.

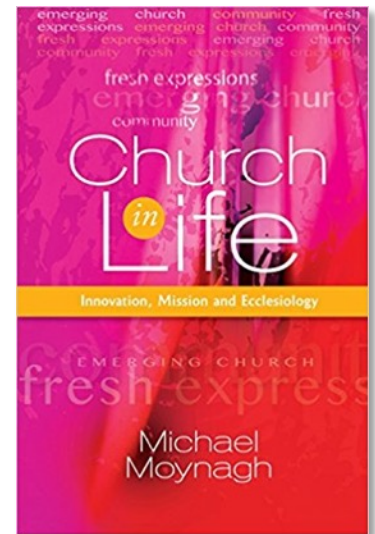
Church plants have a mixed record. My reading of Moynagh's account is that church planting has often tried to replicate a

"The book is a serious consideration of the evidence in favour of different models of church growth."

church in a different situation, but without anyone necessarily knowing which features of the sending church were the ones that led to its success and should be replicated, or which features would be appropriate to the new situation. They can end up being church centred rather than kingdom centred, sometimes with an emphasis on evangelism which makes friendships instrumental; you only befriend people in order to bring them to Christ. Moynagh's preference is for the complexity-based 'edge of chaos' which is more likely to be found in an emerging ecclesial community. These will only emerge as fully contextual expressions of church if they are opened up to their context by their leaders giving up control. Leadership needs to be shared; the Biblical model of mission usually involves teams rather than individuals. Giving up control enables those involved to sense God's presence in the journey and to encounter the Spirit. Some emerging ecclesial communities even include 'not yet Christians' in leading activities, as part of their journey to faith. This is in contrast to what he describes as 'power hungry approaches to mission', a phrase which needs all too little explanation for many of us.

Moynagh says that the church has got out of sync with almost everyone, which is one of the reasons why we need a more contextually based approach to mission. This makes immediate sense to me; I often feel that the project that many churches set themselves is – first, bring others to a churchy view of the world (perhaps patriarchal, homophobic, clearly in or out of the institution etc.), second, bring them to faith. The Gospel of social conservatism ends up taking precedence over the Gospel of our Lord. No wonder growth is difficult.

Moynagh's view of how this might be different is that there is a conversational heart to the Kingdom, that new ecclesial communities can be encouraged to emerge, and that this emergence will be continuous. 'Healthy communities do not emerge once. They keep emerging all the time'. The process by which communities are encouraged to emerge has many similarities with entrepreneurship, and the book offers a good



"Giving up control enables those involved to sense God's presence in the journey and to encounter the Spirit."

survey of the management literature in that field. For example, he quotes work which suggests that entrepreneurs see problems differently from other people. They take responsibility for doing something with them, and the problems become the entrepreneurial opportunity. Jesus bequeathed the means for creating a church, but not a church. Innovation will be essential, and will never be completed. The result of innovation in churches is not to create a new order, but to enter into continuous change. The model for an emerging ecclesial community is to improvise and learn from the feedback, not to predict and plan. To plan a new community with such thoroughness that we can be sure to get it right is a certain way of getting it wrong; innovation does not work like that, we would become arrogant if we could do it, and we would not be leaving enough room for the work of the Spirit or for the contribution of others. We need to be prepared to fail early, fail often and fail cheaply, as Bob Johansen put it.

Coupled with this is the notion of the church giving itself away. Moynagh suggests that there is an echo of the Eucharist in the need for generous self-donation by the church. It cannot be sure how its gifts are going to be used or what the effect of them will be. This is gift on the part of the church, not investment, and is based on a very different understanding of our relationship with God than the more causal models of



church growth that are prevalent among senior clerics in many churches. As a gift, it may or may not give returns, and that is the responsibility of God, not us.

This book takes a lot of reading; it is long and detailed, but it repays the time for anyone who is interested in how churches might develop in the future. You do not need to agree with

everything Moynagh says, and it is a tribute to the quality of the book and the care of its author that he gives you the tools to see where you might disagree. I occasionally struggled with Moynagh's view of the world. For example, when describing how things can go well, he often uses the phrase 'through the Spirit'; I am sure I have heard people use this phrase when they did not want to be challenged, so I wanted to know how he was assuring himself that what he was talking about really was through

the Spirit. He talks about emerging ecclesial communities that come to the end of their natural life, and I am not convinced by organizational life cycle models. However, this is no more disagreement than you would expect between any two people writing about organizations. This book is a major contribution to thinking about the future of mission.

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How do we fill empty churches?