

## Creating Uncommon Worship

Richard Giles is a radical thinker rooted within the catholic-'ish' side of the Anglican church. When a priest in Yorkshire he reordered the church building with amazing effects for the worshipping community and the community they served. A former colleague of his once told me how the worship was so rich and varied that a song of the highest romantic catholicism eg *Sweet Sacrament Divine*, would be followed by a gentle modern worship song eg *Be still for the presence of the Lord*, when kneeling to adore the sacrament. Whilst a vicar and canon theologian of Wakefield diocese Giles produced a landmark book, Re-Pitching the Tent which is *the* book on how to best use your church building (please ask to borrow it). More recently he has become a Cathedral dean in the USA and produced another superbly informative and provocative book called, Creating Uncommon Worship-transforming the liturgy of the Eucharist.

Giles' books are beautifully designed and gently provocative and (I find) books that pay reading and re-reading. His style is refreshingly simple yet bordering on the profound and would be great to discuss in a small book group. Giles reflects on the different sections of the Eucharist service and how we together celebrate the Eucharist as the whole people of God so that it really is a time when we give thanks (*eucharisto*). For us here in East Bristol it is particularly suitable as Giles has some great ideas for us to develop the tradition of worship which we as a group of churches inhabit, in different ways, together. We could develop some good ideas to maintain our individuality and look at points of similarity too. He encourages us to, and shows us how to, develop our worship so it truly is the worship of the whole people of God, led by a president (the officiating priest) but without the hierarchy which we experience as inbuilt within our worship and liturgical spaces. (much a legacy of nineteenth century developments). It is a book with which few will agree in entirety but it will nourish all who engage with it from those interested in attending worship and have have devotional interests to those who contribute to the leading of worship as musicians, lay ministers, ordained priests and servers of the sanctuary.

At the diocesan conference Peter Moger a national officer for worship within the Church of England (transforming worship) led a workshop on what one can do within the law in terms of leading worship which was very useful indeed. During the workshop he led us all to consider how worship patterns and styles have changed and evolved during the last thirty to fifty years. People spoke of the movement from Matins (BCP) with everything led by a man or men to services and the Eucharist with women and men (and children) doing everything equally and using music from all over the world rather than just a hymn from NEH or A and M (possibly revised!).

Please do come along to the sessions I am hosting this Autumn based on Giles' book, Creating Uncommon Worship. Come and see and experience how we might continue the spirit of our tradition(s) of celebrating the eucharist and yet revitalise it/them with a deeper appreciation and awareness of how we might very gently breathe new life into them.

If you want to ask me more about this then do. This is not just another course but a great opportunity for resourcing, meeting new friends and being together as we develop our faith.

7.30-9.00pm. 11 Vicars close, Fishponds.

September 9, 16, 23, 30.

October 14, 21st.

And for those who wish to read the book beforehand:

Creating Uncommon Worship-transforming the liturgy of the Eucharist

Richard Giles, Canterbury Press, ISBN1-85311-590-8