

Three Wise Hippies

Occasionally it is great to have a Sunday off from leading worship and listen to someone else's learned sermon. But it can also be dangerous as it can set my mind spinning off in all sorts of directions that the preacher probably never intended. On this particular Sunday after Christmas I was taken by the preacher's description of the wise men as being slightly alternative and hippie-like. I'm sure the rest of the sermon was very insightful but the idea of the three wise hippies completely caught me. So the next Sunday, which was Epiphany we all had great fun exploring the idea of the three wise hippies, and rediscovering values of peace, love and understanding. Occasionally it is fun to be a bit off the wall and yes we have fun in church!

We're on the move
the journey towards peace love and understanding
well, towards inner peace and love for those around us at least.

We're on the move
travelling the world to broaden our minds
to experience different cultures and religions and all things exotic.

We're on the move
travelling not by aeroplane or car but by foot and camel
the goal is not just the destination but the journey itself.

We're on the move
not led by sat nav or the confines of a map
but guided by the stars as they move across the heavens.

We're on the move
not encumbered by suitcases or excess baggage
just carrying the flower-power clothes on our back
oh and the tent, camping gas, sleeping bag, kettle...

We're on the move
a caravan of love, peace and understanding
opening our minds to experience
So remind me, what is it we are hoping to find...?

Oh you're hopeless, or high on something or other
Stop looking up at the stars and start looking down at your feet

Now you're the one who is tripping
What's so special about my feet?

No, I don't mean literally look at your feet
I mean look where we are, where we are going!

Well, we've just been to King Herod's digs
He seemed very friendly and wow,
The food, the drinks, the women
It kind of blew my mind....

You're in cloud cuckoo land again
What I mean is I don't think Herod's floral afghan was quite genuine
If you must know his protestations of peace, love and understanding
seemed a bit dubious to me.

You don't think he shares our conviction
That peace, love and understanding
Is embodied in the birth of a baby
That this could be the beginning of all the people living life in peace?

No, frankly I don't
I think he is more into making war than love
Now what on earth are you doing?
If we stop at every market stall in Jerusalem we'll never make it to Bethlehem.

Don't fuss, its only 6 miles
We can't turn up to see a baby and his parents empty handed
Now that's the joss sticks and some massage oil
Ahh, some gold beads, perfect!

You are crazy man
What's a baby gonna do with incense and ointment and beads?
Nappies and muslin squares would be more useful
Or you could get him one of those baby grows with a picture of Che Guevara on it!

But I had this vision!

What vision?

A vision of the baby all grown up!

What was he like?

Oh, he was a real hippie!

What do you mean?

Well, he travelled around the countryside
Preaching peace and love for each other,
He was a storyteller that people flocked to hear
And he was a healer and a bit of a mystic.

You mean he grew up to be a hippie too?

Yes, only he went a bit too far!

What do you mean?

Well, he shared this last meal with his followers
And made a speech about the bread being his body and the wine being his blood
And then he broke the bread and poured out the wine

And spoke about dying and leaving them
And rising and coming back to them.

Now you really are tripping and it's a bad one
What were those mushrooms you ate yesterday?

You haven't heard the end of the vision yet!

There's more?

Well then he really did die
Put to death for his preaching of peace, love and understanding
Put to death because he was too much of a threat to the establishment
Put to death because he talked about a God that loved everyone.

That's radical, man.

But then he rose again?

What do you mean, rose again?

Came back to life, walked the earth, rose again!
Well, at least that's what his followers said
They carried on living his hippie lifestyle
Preaching love, peace and understanding.

Wooah! Respect man!

So the gifts I've bought seem to make sense
Gifts for a future hippie in the making
I've also got a loaf of bread and bottle of wine for his parents
So I'm not entirely impractical.

Ok, if you're finished with the markets
Lets get to Bethlehem before it gets too dark to see
And find this baby.

[break bread]

This is my body

[break wine]

This is my blood

Wow, that was amazing
We found peace, love and understanding in a dirty, smelly stable
(just as well we bought the joss sticks)
We found peace, love and understanding in a mother and baby
(just as well we brought the massage oil – maybe she'll get into baby massage)
We found peace, love and understanding in family of refugees
(just as well we bought the gold beads)
Wow, God sure does work in mysterious ways.

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