

Even in Eccles...

Eccles is not in Manchester. Eccles is most definitely in Salford. Those who didn't know it, discovered this in the course of our Urban Embrace conversation. Over the course of three days, a group of us—either engaged in or exploring urban mission—reflected on themes of 'place' and 'community formation.' Unsurprisingly, one of the strands was how liturgy can help us to develop our sense of place and to build community.

Clearly, we couldn't just talk about liturgy. This was the product of an afternoon's community building.

In this particular time
In this particular place
—what even in Eccles?
—yes, 'specially in Eccles
We are
God is

Even in Eccles where
spent industry has left wasteland
and a spread of empty spaces
A derelict bridge house that speaks
of "once this used to be..." places.
A newer route up market and up river
Steals a long held name
—Downgrades and relegates
Swinging road and suspended water
to passing curiosity
Where powers that be decided...(bet it was Manchester and to be sure they didn't ask the folk of Eccles)... to hide smell and spread chemical production
in someone else's backyard.

In this particular time
In this particular place
—what even in Eccles?
—yes, 'specially in Eccles
We are
God is

The green belongs to everyone
Take and eat—
there's food growing on the high street.
It's for all of you.
There's flowers growing from the bricks and chimneypots.
Enjoy!
Those trees by the big house—
they are yours too!
Take a moment,
breathe deeply,
feast your eyes.
The green belongs to everyone.

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Defence. Defiance
What makes me angry?
Is it the threat of another
Taking my place?
Which cause will enlist me?
What is the drill?
Jesus says the big men
must become like toddlers...
To be great.
His drill is training in humility.
Sharing my place with the other
as if I were not the owner.

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Nice car, nice home, nice trees, nice place
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’
Displaced, re-placed, by passed, harassed
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’
Flash mob in town to challenge our thoughts
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’
Corridors of travel to places of power
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’
Boundaries of brambles, wire and walls
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’
Big men looking tough and alleyways avoided
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’
Two churches connected but not able to mix
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’
Demons appear in the cleanest of places
‘They’re nothing to do with us.’

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"Dorothy,"
Transgressor of spaces
Bounding
Playfully
Joyfully
Not knowing the rules
Not knowing there are rules
Not knowing
Not caring
A space transgressed
A space transformed
Bleak wilderness planted with life
Rigid faith invigorated by childish encounter.
"Dorothy," dog, child or imaginary friend
Dorothy knows no boundaries.

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In this particular place
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God is

Flour into bread
Water into wine
Eccles into the kin-dom of God
Beer into thinking space
Wasteland into a garden
A Co-op into a Castle of God
Bread into strawberries
Wine into beer
Symbols into the being of God
Strawberries are planted, grown and shared
Beer is brewed, poured and supped
And in our sharing
And in our supping
God is

[Share Strawberries and Beer]

At this ordinary table
At this ordinary time
We are
God is
Share and enjoy

Share a meal and good conversation.

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