

Certainty and Strength?

Much of the worship in our churches seems to cling to the idea that we should be certain in our faith in a God who is imaged as strong and powerful as if by doing that we can create a church that is strong and powerful. In contrast we have the Biblical stories of Jesus overturning the tables in the temple and the Spirit moving among the disciples in a rush of wind at Pentecost. As we sit in our rather dilapidated church building and wonder how long it will be before the council Compulsory Purchase us it is tempting to long for a church that is strong and powerful. But rather than building a church of certainty and strength we are called on a journey into the unknown.

We look for a church
of certainty and strength
a church built on tradition
a church built on doctrine
like the temple of old
standing testimony to Israel's God.

The temple stands
magnificent and proud
a testament to an exclusive God
to division and conflict
it is here that tables are overturned
and animals run amok.

At the day of Pentecost
the disciples gathered together
shaken once more
by the rush of a violent wind
tongues of fire dancing among them
and the church was born.

The church was birthed into being
not of bricks and mortar
not of doctrinal certainties
not of stayed tradition
but of the chaos of a rushing wind
and the confidence of a dancing Spirit.

And so we gather here
in a world that is far from certain
in a world which is torn with conflict
in a world where the future hangs in the balance
and we give thanks that it is here
where the love of God embraces all.

And so we gather here
safe in the wisdom we have learned from our past
knowing that there is nowhere
that Christ will not go with us
empowered by the hope of the Spirit
and ready to face the reality of our world.

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