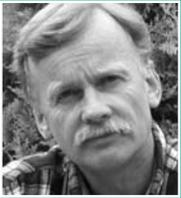


46: Messy Church



Messy Church is clearly popular and fun – but are those very qualities praise or problems? There are lots of questions to be asked about this most numerous kind of fresh expression. Does it have serious values beneath the cheerful bubbly image? Is there such a thing as 'pure' Messy Church and can that be contextualised without making compromises on the purity? What are the patterns nationally, why might it be that it attracts so many non-churched people, and in what ways may it be changing how we view church?

George Lings talked to the founder and researched local examples.

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The Sheffield Centre, Wilson Carlile Centre, Cavendish Street, Sheffield S3 7RZ

Tel: 0114 272 7451 Fax: 0114 279 5863

Email: l.keith@sheffieldcentre.org.uk www.encountersontheedge.org.uk

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Encounters on the Edge



no. 46:

Messy Church

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Discoveries about fresh expressions of Church from The Sheffield Centre

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Introduction

Messy Church is different from all other fresh expressions of Church. It is the most numerous with over 300 recorded examples as of April 2010; nobody knows how many other unrecorded ones there are. It has travelled across and beyond the British Isles, as well as being taken up by different denominations. It is supported by a dedicated staff: the Barnabas team within BRF. It has a delightful founder and champion, Lucy Moore, who is part of the Barnabas team. She has national oversight of its development and travels to meet with no fewer than 24 regional co-ordinators across England, with one each in Wales and Scotland. Their task is to offer



encouragement and training for prospective developments, build esprit de corps between examples in their area, and proffer implicit control. By all those features - between 2004, when the story started in Portsmouth, and 2010 - it has become a national phenomenon, has bred prolifically and has even begun to spawn second generation examples.¹

Its virtues include being one of the most easily taken up type of fresh expression of Church. It is the best resourced in terms of consultants to help a local church start and sustain one, with books that contain both a clear philosophy or DNA, as well as ongoing ideas and resources. Its website is a forum for the exchange of ideas between practitioners and a ready source of exploration for those wanting to try it for themselves. It also provides a low threshold for outsiders to cross. The crafts and the meal, enjoyed by family groups, are either side of the most 'churchy' bit which is very short. And because the worship section normally takes place in another venue, the really shy can slip out on the way there.

Yet its dangers are that it is easy to do badly and harder to do well. It is easier to begin than to sustain, and easier to attract attenders than build disciples. It is despised by some as trivial stuff for kids. It is tarnished in the eyes of others as being a franchise without contextual adaptation. It is dismissed by some as just more entertainment. Where does reality lie? I have only closely examined one example, but I have heard the stories of others and spent time with the founder and some of the co-ordinators.

¹ The only comparable case might be Cell Church, with its nationally organised support.

Messy Church unpacked

Messy Church core values serve as robust rebuttal of charges held against it. When lived true to its source, its literature and its informed advocates, 'pure' Messy Church has clear, defining values. They are sharp, persuasive and also more counter-cultural than I had expected. Perhaps it can be boiled down to three statements, each containing an affirmation and a denial.



and I thought the tards was bigger inside

- Messy Church is all age, not a children's activity.
- It is Church, not a craft club.
- Messy Church offers counter-cultural transformation of family life, not simply fun.

Counter-cultural

I want to comment further on the first and third bullet points. My own experience of congregational life reveals a spectrum of attitudes to children and young people. I recall attending traditional parish communion church with my parents where children were expected to turn up and keep quiet, pacified if need be by discreet distractions in the pews. The strongest contrast would be to my curacies, with their weekly family services, and later, early experimentation with all age worship that took the need for a variety of both educational inputs and worship styles yet more seriously. Perhaps these latter ways, that I thought more sensible and more normal, had dulled my perception of how counter-cultural Messy Church seeks to be.

I knew how often church services sent the children out as soon as decently possible, but had not picked up how society at large can do the same. Jane Leadbetter, the Liverpool area co-ordinator pointed out to me, for example, how advertisements for some holidays present images of the parents enjoying peace and quiet because the children are being entertained in a separate programme. The large annual Christian gatherings, such as Spring Harvest, have a similar pattern. The Government creates similar dynamics, by wanting

to have both parents in work and encouraging child care as soon as possible. 24/7 patterns of life and shift work also militate against families having time together. The TV left perennially on, coupled with individually based computer games are a very poor substitute for quality time together. Those in such family groups merely coexist without communing. Others have written about concerns that children are being made to grow up quicker than may be wise, including becoming both economically and sexually active.



Home alone but not together

Messy Church has set its face against this trend. There is strong belief that the Church has the opportunity to show a better way. Better than pontificate about what is wrong with society, how much better to embody, in Christian communities, what could be done that is better. So quite deliberately with a light touch, the first book made clear the stance.

Messy Church is a once monthly time when families come together, to enjoy being together, making things together, eating together and celebrating God together ...²

The word with the most emphasis is 'together'. The order may be significant too. *Coming, being, making, eating*, out of which *celebrating* God becomes more natural, because there has been space to notice what can be celebrated. There is symbiosis when worship enriches life because it springs out of life.

There is symbiosis when worship enriches life because it springs out of life.

² L. Moore, *Messy Church* (Oxford: BRF, 2006), p. 21.

Shapes are not values

It is true there is an advised shape.³

- 3.30 A period of welcome, games and light refreshment
- 4.00 Craft time in families
- 5.00 Celebration service in church
- 5.15 Hot meal together
- 5.45 Time to go home

However, more important are the underlying values. Just as happens with Cell Church, punters and critics can be deceived and think that the *shape* of the event is the diagnostic feature. Offer 'welcome, worship, word and witness' and some think they are doing Cell. Or provide 'welcome, craft, celebration and meal' and it must be Messy Church. In both cases **this is the error of confusing activity with purpose, and shape with values**. This problem is one that practitioners can fall into. I asked a Messy Church leader in Yorkshire what they were trying to do. The reply was: 'I take a theme, find some crafts, fit it to some songs and a talk and we lay on a meal.' The consequence of such pragmatism is to put a ceiling on what can be achieved, for the more sublime aims are lost in the task and its ongoing pressure of maintaining the activities. Ironically, just doing the shape opens the door to dumbing down the potential for transformed families and Christ-centred community. It begins the degeneration that settles for the fun and loses the wisdom. It also colludes with entertainment-based society and fails to build relationships.

This is a lesson that everyone involved in fresh expressions of Church needs to be aware of and steer away from. It manifests what occurs when the Church becomes desperate to do something to attract the young, meets something that becomes popular and we make the error that copies the externals without understanding the internals. Then good ways to work become both trivialised and blunted. Careful engagement with context reduces; once more church in attractational, provider-client mode rears its head; and counter-cultural impact, and equally important transformation, is lost.

From cloudy to clear

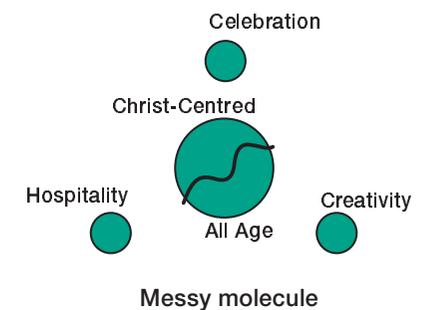
Within the short life of the Messy Church movement, I suggest the values have not fundamentally changed, but they have become more sharply put and even re-ordered. In 2006, the first Messy Church book talked of 'our principles, in no particular order' and a slightly religious list followed, beginning with worship and belonging to a church. Later in the chapter on aims the order and even content changes, though worship is still the first category discussed.⁴ I wonder in retrospect whether this order was partly chosen to persuade those with a traditional mindset of the Messy Church claim that this is Church.

Shake up a bottle containing liquid and solids and it takes time before the container goes clear. It may be that only through longer local experience, contrasted with observing diversity of practice and distortion elsewhere, that aims and principles become distilled into limpid values. New monastic communities have found this.⁵ In the wider re-imagination of the church **it is also taking time to see what is of the greatest importance and to separate out shapes of activity from the likely order in the process of their birth, and both of those from values that lie beneath them.**

The DNA

At my meetings with regional co-ordinators and in personal interview with Lucy Moore, I noticed the DNA of Messy Church is now transparent: hospitality, creativity, celebration and all age. Each component is a value, which then influences the shape and the order. I imagine this as a molecule shape suggesting a nucleus with all surrounding elements interacting with each other.

Readers may notice I have taken the liberty of adding the term 'Christ-centred', partly because Lucy Moore includes it in the original aims,⁶ and partly because the other values alone are heartwarming, evocative of what is human, but not necessarily Christian.



The DNA of Messy Church is now transparent: hospitality, creativity, celebration and all age.

³Moore, *Messy Church*, p. 22. I am not going to unpack the founding story as her books do this.

⁴ Moore, *Messy Church*, p.21 and by contrast pp. 35-39.

⁵Northumbria Community certainly found this. G. Lings, *Encounters on the Edge no. 29 Northumbria Community: Matching Monastery and Mission* (Sheffield: Church Army, 2006) p.20.

⁶ Moore, *Messy Church*, pp. 37-38.

So by 2010, the DNA is clearer and described in a helpful order. Messy Church life begins with hospitality and I think it no accident that the second book makes much of this value in Scripture as well as in creating a counter-cultural take on life.⁷ Notice too how this picks up the earlier key verbs, 'coming' and 'being', in the first Messy Church book. But it is not the case that hospitality is reduced to quality welcome after which relationships may be ignored. There is hospitality in the way a nervous adult is welcomed to a craft table, in the whole process by which a non-churched person is helped to cross the threshold to the alien world of a church building, and of course in the shared meal.

Then comes creativity, which links to the verb 'making' in the 2006 book. What a change this is from much of church. At worst the only expectation of children in church is they will 'make a noise'. Or, to be unkind, in a family service they 'make' a guess at the speaker's question or 'become stooges up at the front, holding up visual aids'.⁸ Frankly, do adults 'make' anything by their own choice? Sometimes there is space for the private inner responses to God that do matter, but much else has been precisely choreographed for them in book texts and now even more closely through pre-chosen Powerpoint slides. But in Messy Church, 'making' is not predetermined responses, but taking initiatives and also working together on the tables. It reminds me of when I first learnt that the much derided word 'fellowship' need not mean bad coffee and artificial conversations, but at root means being those who have a share – whether in a fishing business, or a eucharistic meal.⁹ Participation is one translation of both contexts and **turning being church back into a creative, participatory, communal hive of spiritual life is a worthy goal.**

The unintentional lack of 'making' in many churches is denial of us being in the image of God

Through true hospitality and creativity, those who come move from being clients for whom we provide. They become guests for whom we care. They also become co-creators with whom we are fellow artists and co-workers with whom we are partners. In the end, even the distinction between host and guest dissolves and so all age, Christ-centred community emerges. The unintentional lack of 'making' in many churches is denial of us being in the image of God but if that is the result, passivity which is highly diagnostic in church

communities, is deeply regrettable and fundamentally damaging. Any fresh expression of Church that seeks to reverse this is worth saluting.

⁷ L. Moore, *Messy Church 2* (Abingdon: BRF, 2009), pp. 50-62.

⁸ Lucy Moore, *All Age Worship* (Abingdon: BRF, 2010), p. 39.

⁹ Luke 5:10 and 1 Cor 10:16

Only then does the *celebration* occur and it is relatively short. I am thus fascinated to see links from this pattern to the *seven sacred spaces* of Encounters 43. How intriguing that hospitality and the 'refectory' are clear and primary, and that the craft echoes both 'garden' and 'scriptorium', making both prominent. People walk along 'cloisters' to gather in the first place and to change gear between the strands of the overall day and so come and go from a brief time in 'chapel'. **Once more it is a case where 'chapel' – or so-called church - grows out of the rest of the functions rather than defining all the others.** The team meet at another time expressing 'chapter' and so only 'cell' is not obvious. Messy Church thinkers are already on the case, exploring how to offer a quiet prayer table during Messy Church, and how to do messy discipleship at home, which are intuitive responses to that omission.¹⁰

All age?

My molecule diagram put *all age* at the centre. It applies to everything that happens in Messy Church; they are applications of this belief. The case for all age church is made by various groups.¹¹ In a book devoted to it, Lucy Moore deals with the principle at more length than the two Messy Church volumes would allow.¹² I am still in the process of trying to assess this. There is a tactical case for a move away from the past exclusion of children from much of the life of the worshipping community as problematic and unacceptable. I accept adults have much to learn from children as well as vice versa. I concur that too often the dominant learning style in church teaching has been cerebral, and the effects on discipleship have not been impressive. Endeavours based on liturgical, musical, high culture have possibly fared worse. There is also the deeper legitimate theological argument that the diversity within the Trinity and in the resultant creation, which includes humanity, demands a unity that holds the diversity together. The reconciling atoning work of Christ is the other great plank of the case that in Jesus divisions have been broken down, so unity across ages is the only way forward.

I am less sure it works that neatly. Can all kinds of people be together in one local manifestation of church? The same arguments could be aired, and are, in connection with race and with language. Here real hesitation about, and often open disagreement with, the homogeneous unit principle usually emerges.

¹⁰ Moore, *Messy Church 2*, p. 17 & pp. 20-34.

¹¹ Some examples are: Philip Mountstephen and Kelly Martin were the CPAS advocates. Daphne Kirk applied it to Cell thinking. Margaret Withers wrote *Mission-shaped Children* (London: Church House Publishing, 2006) and now works for BRF.

¹² Moore, *All Age Worship*, chapter 1, pp.13-36 and especially pp. 25-34.

Yet even this area is not straightforward. Generally, we are careful to avoid potential charges of apartheid and argue that different races should be able to gather together to be church. However at the same time, provision of services in different languages for some such groups is represented as acceptable. So for example it can be deemed wrong to exclude a Nigerian, but fine to provide difference for a Pole. **What seems to be lost very easily in this emotive argument is effective ways to model both diversity and unity.** That is a different challenge to what arises by bringing everyone together and finding ways to make that work reasonably, although the learning of patience and tolerance in dealing with difference are worthwhile elements of discipleship.

Sometimes this unity and diversity issue is fudged by use of eschatological texts, such as the vision of Zechariah 8:4-5. The all age concept is there, but the text is about Jerusalem, not what happens in the Temple. **All age advocates have confused what is true of the community with what happens in worship.** Or they have elided, as do many, the complexity of monastery and the simplicity of chapel. I am not arguing that children should never be allowed into worship, rather making the opposite point not to assume that they should *always* be there.



The children on the PCC voted to stop tea and coffee and only serve fanta and jelly babies

Take the ready parallel with a family containing parents and children of any age before they leave home. There are indeed important times when they are in one space: hanging around in the kitchen, sitting down for a meal together, playing a game or watching family TV, or going on holiday. But equally important are occasions for individuals to be in their bedroom or studying, having bonding

time between siblings or a parent and a child, and vital time for the parents when the kids are in bed or have gone to the grandparents. The longer story of this community is one of a mixture of times for all age, and for children and adults to have space from one another. While it is entertaining that sometimes children readily perceive things not picked up by adults, it is also true that not everything adults know should be disclosed to children. Here unity and diversity are expressed through the dynamics of being separate *and* being together. To be all age, all the time, would be appalling.

I think we need the same in church communities and thus equally doubt that all worship should be all age and that none should.¹³

Even Messy Church is finding that quality all age gatherings have their limitations. They are so demanding that once a month is usually all that can be sustained. A Messy Church leader I talked to who was running Messy Church fortnightly was finding the pressures created by resourcing the crafts, refuelling the team and providing the meal, meant that he had little time to build relationships with the very people it was all for. He is considering pulling back to monthly in order to make time for building the personal contacts that need to be at the heart of community. So an enormous question is: what should happen on the other weeks of the month?

Pure Messy Church

I have noticed both in this research and earlier study of Cell Church that 'pure' is used by teachers and advocates in both movements. I see it as dynamic equivalence for faithfulness to the founder¹⁴ and what they wrote. What does this mean? Lucy Moore is both passionate about the values and the diseased present situation in churches that they are intended to subvert. Yet the books make very clear that best practice continued to emerge as they were being written and the Messy Church model is 'not meant ... to be copied slavishly'.¹⁵ So is pure desirable and possible?

Despite the paradoxical conjunction of 'pure' and 'mess', it is desirable and possible that **all the above DNA components must be intended**, and to some extent operative, for a venture to be called Messy Church. Otherwise the ridiculous comparable situation occurs in which I have heard people say: 'We are doing Alpha without the food.' To use some similar presentational content, but without the diagnostic parts of the process, isn't Alpha.¹⁶ This in turn is different from proper contextualisation. A few examples illustrate the point. Lucy Moore does Messy Church in Portsmouth on a Thursday. Today only 1/12th of other examples share that choice. She chose it to avoid the problems that Sunday

Here unity and diversity are expressed through the dynamics of being separate and being together.

¹³ Lucy Moore herself agrees that there are legitimate times and needs for doing things separately. Moreover choosing any time or day for Messy Church will exclude some. *All Age Worship*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁴ I add that Lucy is both rightly proud to be the founder of what has worked well for so many others and concurrently dislikes the danger of celebrity culture and becoming Mrs Messy.

¹⁵ Moore, *Messy Church*, p. 10.

¹⁶ I have read a lecture for internal consumption at HTB on the implicit Theology of Alpha which argues, as here, that the process and values are a deeper feature than the content.

created for those she sensed they were called to reach, and Thursday fitted locally. But other days are equally valid.

I met more serious variants in a local story called L19: Messy Church which meets on a Saturday at 4 pm. It is not immediately after school, so they have dispensed with one stated part of the shape, the initial half hour of arrival and drinks, because they found most families don't need or want a refuel. Other places have found their accommodation doesn't allow them to cook a hot meal, so they run bring and share or serve drinks and sandwiches – a kind of English teatime that I still remember. Are these still 'pure' Messy Church? I believe you tell by the operative values and, if in doubt, by the presence of maintained relationship, and consultation with, the founder or their representative. Thus far it is clear that the time, day, venue and even shape, can vary. To my surprise, even 'craft' is not necessarily diagnostic, though it is undeniably messy. In the DVD and the first book, Lucy Moore suggests that there could be many alternatives, such as ecology, cookery, arts or sport based church and is disappointed these have barely emerged.¹⁷ Thus I believe she is right that **the value is creativity, because that reflects the imago Dei, rather than just one manifestation of it, such as craft.** Maybe mess is inherent too because neither creativity nor humans are neat, simple or flawless.

This relative simplicity is becoming awkward as Messy Church is now a brand which is part of its identity. Identity is part of what holds a movement together. So now there is a registered trademark within BRF and a defined legal logo. Here quality control and local freedom sit rather uncomfortably. If Messy Church commends creativity and also mess, how tight should quality control be? Yet if there is no control, how are the borders of truly Messy Church maintained and not diluted or worse corrupted? A current example is another case where Messy Church has gone with apparent success into a secular school which draws pupils from many faiths and none. The secular school welcome the Messy Church exploration of community, creativity and spirituality, but is both minded, and required, to opt for a pluralist stance that has ruled that though talk of God is allowed, reference to Jesus must be limited to his birthday. So is this Messy Church? In my view it is a legitimate missional way in towards that; it is a valid stage along the road. However, not being Christ-centred, either by language or intention, it cannot be Messy Church and interestingly is called Messy Families.

I conclude the DNA section hoping that readers are not frustrated at the musings of a theoretician. Rather, I hope they are intrigued that something apparently as simple as Messy Church turns out to be a far deeper and complex reality. Messy Church serves also as a working example of the issues that will always arise as a fresh expression of Church proliferates. These are issues which are typical of non-identical reproduction that I consider to be inherent in the nature of the Church, and to surface most acutely in its growing churches. I am encouraged that they are related to similar patterns in Christology. Put starkly, the paradox of Christ is that the eternal Word only speaks in local dialects¹⁸, or that the universal Christ is most visible when embodied locally. We follow Jesus as closely as possible, but that doesn't mean women becoming men, or Gentiles becoming Jews. We cannot escape from the call to double listening;¹⁹ it is inherent to being Christian and missionary. **The only healthy option is to faithfully improvise.** Messy Church is finding exactly the same. So let's explore one story.

Something apparently as simple as Messy Church turns out to be a far deeper and complex reality.

¹⁷ Moore, *Messy Church*, pp. 49-53 and *Messy Church 2*, p.12.

¹⁸ A. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p. xvi.

¹⁹ G. Cray (ed) *Mission-shaped Church* (London: CHP, 2004), p. 104, which explores attending to the voice of God through both context and tradition.

L19: Messy Church



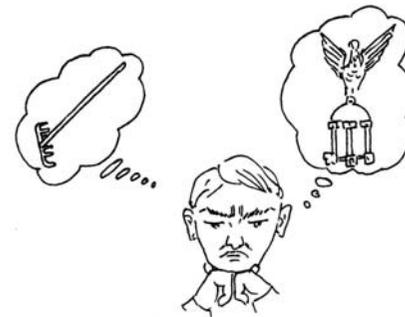
L19: Messy Church is not esoteric code for a variant on the theme, but merely the postcode of a leafy suburban area in the south west of the Liverpool conurbation which has a Messy Church that serves it. One of the four parishes making up L19 is St Mary's, Grassendale. The church was opened in 1854 three years after Cressington Park was completed for Liverpool merchants who jealously preserved their splendid new villa homes

overlooking the Mersey. It was in effect the chapel on the border of their gated private estate, in which even today you park at your peril. The parish today runs both sides of the A561 and across the road from the Park are semis and terraces. Further south is run down Garston village, with a number of boarded up shops that could not compete with the Speke shopping mall a little further out of town. So the parish is socially diverse and geographically divided. It is served by a vicar, Paul Ellis and two other lay staff, an honorary curate and three readers; this helps cover the demands of three Sunday services - 8.30, 11.00 and 6.30 - which used to total some 200 attendees, though this number, and at other places locally, has reduced recently.



How it started

Paul Ellis, knowing himself to be more of a teacher and evangelist than pastor, came to the parish in 2006 with a distinct sense of calling, and wanting to work with those in the congregation who wanted to reach out further than the scope of the existing services readily allowed. The result is a deliberate mixed economy of the inherited St Mary congregations (sometimes called insider church) and the L19 fresh expressions (or outsider church). At present there are three of the latter. *L19: Dream* is one of a half dozen network based groups, mainly for 20-30s, that exist across the diocese. They are co-ordinated by Canon Richard White, drawing for inspiration upon the instincts of both Alternative Worship and Cell thinking. The *L19: Reading Group* is a book club with a missional heart, still in its early days. *L19: Messy Church* is the third. There are hopes that further expressions could grow up, either around green issues or well-being and health.



the dyslexic agnostic wondered why church was rake and liver.

Together the current six expressions of church are a local embodiment of what Liverpool diocese calls 'Lake and River'; the first being more settled bodies of water with wider resources and the other fast flowing water with the ability to cut new channels. To connect across the three fresh expressions, to care for their team

members, guard the values, as well as be a bridge and interpreter to 'insider church', Paul has devolved some of his oversight role as Vicar to Karen Dooley, acting as Lay Chaplain to the L19 fresh expressions.

This ability to trust others and not to have to control everything is vital in the world of creating further fresh expressions.

This ability to trust others and not to have to control everything is vital in the world of creating further fresh expressions. She, having worked in the mobile phone industry, now acts as a Learning Manager. The enabling role fits well for her as she was increasingly finding being just part of passive traditional church was, in her words, like living on 'microwaved Christianity'. It lacked participation and creativity, and was too easily pre-packaged and so soon unsatisfying. Taking a *mission shaped ministry* course only bred further holy dissatisfaction. Now she can invest in

people who are themselves wanting to make a difference, by acting as mentor, support and critical friend to leaders of the various fresh expressions, as well as being regarded by those who come to Messy Church and the other L19 fresh expressions as their 'priest'.



Perhaps that leads the story to Jane Leadbetter, without whom this particular Messy Church might never have happened, let alone flourished. She and her husband Ian, who until very recently was Warden, are long time members of St Mary's. Jane, from a teaching background, also works for the diocese as children's work advisor within the church growth and ecumenism team. Through her role she came in contact with Lucy Moore and found her work and ideas inspiring. Diocese initiatives, such as a

Fresh Expressions *vision day*, a diocesan day conference followed by a *mission shaped ministry* course, all fuelled the thought: 'Should there be Messy Church here?' Some mission audit work and reflection on current church provision for children, let alone non-churched families, helped make a case. After a presentation to the PCC, permission was granted for a trial one off event in August 2008. The 80-90 who came exceeded expectations and its success has led to Jane renegotiating her work areas, letting go of some wider diocesan and school connections and at Lucy's invitation becoming a Liverpool diocese regional co-ordinator. Another option might have been to become a lay pioneer minister and focus on the local work but, as with Lucy down in Portsmouth, the mix of being locally engaged but also serving more

widely, has meant that from day one a team to run the local Messy Church has been essential, and moreover that team therefore cannot rely on the leader too heavily and must learn to be co-workers.²⁰

Publicity for this Messy Church happens in a variety of ways: there are fliers in local primary schools, posters in shops, a presence sometimes in the local market and a banner outside the hall. Word of mouth may be one of the most important, but the others keep a reminder going. It is mentioned in the parish magazine but there is minimal investment in telling existing church members. It is simply not intended for them.

Team Matters

As permission was being given, Jane set about looking for a team. In view of how many people had come to the first event, she aimed for at least 20. In her church, advertising for volunteers or putting up sign up sheets was not going to be the way forward. She went and found what she wanted. A good number were edgy people, on the fringe of things, so those who knew what life in the world was like; **she looked for those good at personal relationships and with gifts in hospitality and creativity.** Because a leader does not want to have to replace people too often she also looked for those with stickability. Sometimes it led to asking whole families and this ensures some male role models are represented. Aptitude not age was the key. The team I saw ranged from those long retired to people in their twenties, with some teenage girls as assistants at the tables. As the work has grown so has the team and now is a surprising 47, though not all are on duty every month. There is also an inner core team, which began with three and has now grown to half a dozen.

This sounds like a team to die for, as I heard other stories of small teams desperately stretched to cope. Why should such a large team be needed? Partly it is that this Messy Church attracts up to 180 people most months, whereas some others in the diocese only draw 40. But more than that, **it is quite a labour intensive way of being church.** The month I visited I saw eleven craft tables each needing two helpers.



²⁰ The reader of the Encounters series may notice a repetition here of the pattern set by Kerry Thorpe in relation to his Cell church in Thanet, and praised in *Encounters on the Edge* no. 41, p. 23.



In addition there is a small welcome team, supervisory staff like Jane and Karen, Ian the official photographer and five in the cooking team. Usually the team needed for the celebration is made up from those named – except the cooks for they are still very hard at work at that point. The celebration roles, that do need the most specialist gifts, include a narrator, operator of the Powerpoint, message giver and music maker(s). This last role can be canned or live.

Some may think that is a heavy resource compared to the ten or so it may take to run a good traditional service.²¹ Yet here some important values emerge. The number of those involved means Messy Church has found a way to have 40 people in active ministry, who might have been only warming a pew before. **They are learning and growing in their faith by the challenges of doing.** One helper Chris, explained how her background of church attendance in which being Christian was not something she felt with her whole being, contrasted with this kind of active engagement with other people. She was inspired by those she met, she developed a desire for outsiders to know what she had experienced and now had the chance to meet them and be with them. Serving was the route by which faith itself came alive and gifts in mission were unearthed. She has now taken this further and with others puts on a Messy Market every half term, taking a stall in the nearby Garston street market, where families and by passers can engage in a craft activity for free and take home something they have made, not just items they have bought. Conversations with other stall holders and the general public naturally arise in this context of mutual creativity and the counter-cultural demonstration of gift.



It also means there is some spare capacity to be able to show new leaders what is needed and help them grow into the values behind the activities. Just as important, with this number of helpers, if they have been schooled rightly in the values, **there are enough team to foster the building of relationships** with those who come. This contrasts favourably with the functional nod of a sidesman, or enthusiastic greeting of an official welcomer, which can be the sum of engagement with the relative outsider that often happens in church.

One more thing struck me about this team. While it is true they work well partly because it is going well (they clearly enjoy what they do), they are making a host of new contacts that nothing else has unearthed. All this is significantly enhanced because they have a leader who is brilliant at praising people and supporting them. At the end of the whole event, when I was tired just by watching closely, not only did Jane show grace and patience with my continued endless questions, but she enthused me with the significance of what was being done. She then kindly ran me into the city for my train back to Sheffield and then settled down to a long, and customary, email to all the helpers to thank them and highlight some of what had been good about that month, as well as what was being learnt. Churches – old and new - led with a mix of inspiration, attention to detail over pastoral care of the workers, and ongoing learning and review stand a great chance of flourishing.

What was it like?

The team meets beforehand at 3.45 to finish setting up the room, check the content of each craft table, continue the cooking and to stop and pray together. Here having a chaplain in a distinct role brings a useful focus for the whole group. Additionally, this is an important reminder that the team only sow seeds and water them, it is God



who brings the true growth as Paul reminds us, or as John put it: without Christ we can do nothing.²² Such an awareness can degenerate into a staid stock prayer muttered in a vestry before a service, or can be the tending of a living flame that burns a value into our spirits, teaching us both dependence and hope.

²¹ That number might be made up of a service leader, preacher, organist and small choir or a music group, readers, intercessors, sidesmen, welcomers and wardens. Of course in some places a clergy person can be seen taking most of those roles.

²² 1 Cor 3:7 and John 15:5.



The public event opens on a Saturday at 4 pm in the 1827 Church hall, adjacent to St Mary's Church. The buildings are clearly visible on the main road that bisects the parish. The hall grants the flexible open space for tables and chairs that are needed both by the craft stage and also the meal. It is also a halfway house to being in the community, as it is known and used by a mums and toddlers group that meets there four days a week, as well as a pram pushers group and a lunch

club/café for retirees. **All the Messy Churches I know directly choose a more neutral venue for the initial welcome and for the craft section.** I think this is more than pragmatism and part of the values and best practice in Messy Church to operate with incarnational instincts, not solely attractional ones, and come out of our 'chapels' and find points of genuine meeting with and in the local community.

The welcome

The hall has an entrance lobby, set out with a table and inhabited by a welcome team. Everybody has to be signed in, both for reasons of good practice should there be a fire, but also to apply the Messy Church discipline that all children are accompanied, as well as to police that there are not unexplained unattached adults. The signing in also acts as a register to create a longitudinal record of attendance, a basis for assessing how many of those who come are outside the existing congregation and a possible future basis for contacting people in their homes. The process seemed easily accepted and



I think it actually adds to the sense of coming to an occasion, or arriving for something worthwhile like queuing for a popular film at the cinema.

The only downside is that the administrative necessity can denude the personal element to welcome. A similar problem occurs in church welcome schemes, at hotel reception desks or entrances to aeroplanes. Affable civilities are assiduously cultivated but not actually convincing. The term 'hospitality industry' is an oxymoron. I believe Eddie Gibbs remarked that people don't join churches because of professionalised welcome but because they make six new friends. Bringing the membership of any church to the point where most members have moved beyond the blind ignoring of newcomers, through the cultivation of welcoming, to the genuine offer of friendship are mighty steps. I sense this journey is not yet complete in this case, but that is a common problem. In addition those fresh expressions of Church that are labour intensive have the upside of engendering involvement and the potential downside of their workers becoming entranced by the program and missing the people.



Craft and creativity

Children and adults then write their own badge, with some choosing to decorate



them, others merely putting a first name, and go on into the hall, where a feast of possibilities greets them with different activities on each table. Wisely there was also a hall welcomer, not just in the lobby, because the range of choices was almost bewilderingly wide for a first-timer like myself. I did not initially understand that

participants are free to stay at one table for the next hour or to range around them and try various skills and tasks. Quickly there was a happy buzz and it was obvious that there was easy movement around the tables. Here is another case that **when hands are occupied, minds are free and relationships flow and build.**

I did note that nearly every table had a woman facilitator, that all but one of the teenage helpers were female and on the two occasions I counted, there were only eight adult males in the overall grouping of 140+ on the day I was there. The team picture displayed earlier shows a similar preponderance, perhaps in this case one even more marked than the classic relative absence of males from congregations. Messy Church thinkers have learnt that **finding specific roles for men helpers is important** and some crafts and games have to be more dynamic, playing to kinaesthetic learners, and with a controlled sense of competition.²³ For them it seems more important to assemble something. So for example at L19: Messy Church the month after I went, they put on an outside activity and boys and men had a happy time making a city with a castle out of a sculpting combination of mud and compost, which sounds both messy and mind boggling.

Change of scene

After an hour, Jane, on a PA system clearly operating at its absolute limit, greeted all the happy messers and gave directions for the walk down the street and round the corner to St Mary's. The organisation of this was excellent, with helpers strategically placed en route and a warm welcomer at the door. This change of scene serves several purposes. Unless a church complex has several large halls, the one used for crafts has to be cleared to set out the room for the meal and the absence of children makes that a safer task. The change of venue also tacitly gives people the freedom to opt out if they don't want to go the church bit which is good repudiation of the worst aspects of compulsion under Christendom.



I feel ambivalent about the message that corporate worship must take place in a separate venue. Positively, the different spaces do allow different kinds of input and experience, and done well 'chapel' tends towards transmitting transcendence, whereas 'garden' or 'refectory' emphasise immanence. Negatively, it would be a pity if God got confined to 'chapel' while all the other areas were associated with fun, food and friendships. Thus it is important that living clear connections are made across the theme from the several places used.



Apart from the theme for the month strongly running across the whole event, another way to connect each stage is through the digital pictures taken by Ian Leadbetter of the activities in the hall. These are uploaded and shown via Powerpoint on the screen in church during the opening minutes while the crowd arrives and settle down. Not only are the children entertained by seeing themselves and what they made, but in an important sense, **their work is brought in as an offering.** I liked the understated yet obvious connection.

The celebration is brief. It is now 5 pm on Saturday (perhaps another reason why in a fanatical football culture there are few men) and everybody has already given an hour of their time. The pace engendered in the first hour is maintained, but in this case the sense of engagement, purpose and of everybody being together and working together diminishes. The team I sense are trying hard to make it work,



²³ Moore, *Messy Church 2*, pp. 47-48.



and there have been last minute illnesses knocking out those who were due to lead. The level of noise indicated both engagement as well as disruption and the team have found the non-churched children and parents have no view that one should be quiet or attentive in church. Was it culturally diagnostic that they were most quiet when watching a DVD clip? Can it also be true that use of amplification creates 'distance' between leaders and members and the latter can

feel shouted at? The celebration ends with a now locally liturgically familiar Messy Blessing and Messy Grace which was clearly enjoyed. Within 17 minutes the celebration was over, and people are happily trooping back for the meal.



Messy munch

Sandra's sausage and bean casserole smells good, is efficiently and quickly dished up and the buzz we knew with the craft time breaks out again as people sit down in family groups. It seemed the older the children were, and the longer they had been coming, there was a tendency for them to opt to eat in peer groups. Scrummy cakes followed and the whole thing was washed down with juice. In some contexts, this eating together not only models the value of family time, but also is akin to the work of Jamie Oliver in teaching people the value and even skills of cooking for the family. I could not tell whether helpers were all taken up with serving and clearing, or whether they choose to hold back from family groups

to give them their own time, or if some deliberately do go and ask permission to sit down with some families which could be a good time to gently build relationships. The half hour seems to fly by and Jane is using her natural authority and the struggling PA system to announce birthdays, very nicely



invites donations – because it is your Messy Church - and gives the date and theme of the next Messy Church. The final whistle has been blown and the crowd begin to melt away. There is a nice touch at the door – there is a bucket into which to toss a donation and both children and adults do give. Beside it is a large bowl with a chocolate to take away; giving and receiving sitting side by side, not payment and product.

The breakdown of the event was the work of experts. Spare food was put in containers for immediate use by others, the floor space was cleared and human ants scurried around stacking tables and chairs while others brushed clean the floor in an energetic manner that would not have disgraced an Olympic curling team. This is a team who have found an ease and purpose in working together and that sustains them for the considerable work involved.



Some further assessments

In most ways the attention to detail and overall organisation, run together with a deeply pastoral approach, is most impressive. **This Messy Church is not so much run as loved.** One example of thinking it all through, with a personal touch, is that when I visited and requested taking photos, I was asked to supply a photo of myself beforehand and this was posted up in various locations, rather too much like a wanted notice for Butch Cassidy or the Sundance Kid, yet helpfully explaining the role I was playing.

Another good example of attentiveness is that **they learn lessons quickly.** The contrast between the buzz in the hall and the harder graft in the church made me ponder. I guessed that the fit between the numbers, the ambiance and the



size of the hall help create a strong sense of ease and togetherness. As soon as the group entered the church, it was not only that some had entered an alien environment but also the bigger space, and the regimentation caused by pews, meant the togetherness dissolved. This disease and distance was then underlined by the church only having a small screen set within an archway, thus the pictures of the craft makers and their art were less obvious and worse the words to sing from the screen were unreadable from about halfway back.

Jane and I discussed this afterwards and her longer experience confirmed that when the 'talk' either made use of storytelling, or Godly Play,²⁴ the children were brought to the front and sat on the open chancel area. Then desirable features like participation, a sense of belonging and a sense of wonder were notably higher. Lucy Moore notes a similar dynamic, that she calls intimacy, in her third book *All Age Worship*.²⁵ As I write, the World Snooker Championship is on and a perennial positive comment on the Crucible venue is the cockpit-like mutual connection between crowd and players. If, in a right sense, **church also is theatre telling unfolding stories, we do well to think carefully about the spaces we use.** We also thought some church welcomers were needed, as this space presented its own challenges and people needed that support. I hear since that the very next month they brought people nearer the front and Jane was able to dispense with the microphone which also helps restore proper intimacy between animator and group.

The costs of running a Messy Church need to be taken into account. Careful use of leftover craft material and a growing awareness of where to shop for bargains means that the meal for 180 now works out at 30 pence a head, twelve times a year. The craft provision is higher at 75 pence a head. I suspect there are slight economies of scale that a smaller Messy Church might not be able to make. This all comes to £2,268, plus the PCC absorb the heating costs into their annual budget but otherwise do not meet these costs. No one is paid to lead or take responsibility, which is the major cost in some fresh expressions of Church. There's no such thing as a free fresh expression. Donations from members come to around £60 per month. Other sources include the giving of core team members and a local council grant of £1,000 that was used for storage cupboards, craft material and special needs equipment. I take these as healthy signs towards a self-governing and self-financing fresh expression.

²⁴ Moore, *All Age Worship*, p. 97 commends Godly Play, which is now 30 years old, as enhancing the value of story and especially for its role in evoking wonder, which in turn increases openness to the Spirit of God.

²⁵ Moore, *All Age Worship*, p. 78.

That leads to the dimension of self-reproducing. It seems obvious to me that the hall is now operating at capacity. This might be the glass ceiling stunting further progress. However, it might also be a godsend and point up that Messy Churches themselves have a natural ceiling size. For example, would a Messy Church gathering of 500 be so large that the sense of family diminished and knowing everyone by name would be lost?²⁶ Would that size prevent the effective use of storytelling and Godly Play? Would the team have to be so big and complex that event would eclipse relationships? We know the dynamics of congregations change markedly with size and I suspect this applies here too. I know of one example in Claygate, Surrey, that has already spawned its next one and now meets on two different days of the week. I shall be interested to learn how people like Lucy Moore, and regional co-ordinators like Jane, decide on the ceiling at which Messy Church needs to multiply in order to remain true to itself. I would be surprised, by its participatory and interactive nature, if they conclude that much over 140 normally remains healthy. Because Messy Church is not ideologically tied to Sundays, other days of the week do present themselves, but with all the attendant questions of how to best start another one, that generic wisdom on church planting and fresh expressions have much to contribute.

I would link to this that the L19: Messy Church register shows that over 600 different people have come in the first 18 months. Also it reveals that quickly and regularly the numbers have risen to around 180, at which the hall building is operating at maximum capacity. Moreover, it shows that on any given month there can be a large number of first timers. Conversations, not the register, suggest that **here a large number of those who come are the non-churched**, rather than the existing fringe and de-churched who anecdotally are the main fare of many other fresh expressions of Church. This is clearly important, and a point very much in favour of the Messy Church movement, but I am only guessing why it might be the case.

I outlined in the introduction a few components that make it a **low threshold** for non-churched first timers to cross. In addition to the emphases on craft and meal, I note that these are participatory activities, but without having to know esoteric information about how to perform them, or having to acquire special skills before being accepted. Here messy is rather important. Though for some,

²⁶ This desirable criterion is noted by Moore in *All Age Worship*, p. 71.

Messy Churches themselves have a natural ceiling size

braving the journey out from obsessive tidiness is rather scary, for most people having begun it, the fun arrives. And fun is a characteristic Messy Church word. Moreover, the presence of children who usually are not inhibited here also aids the process. Beginning by hiding behind them, adults also start to experiment and find being a novice or amateur is not a problem. This of course is all in marked **contrast to the outsiders' experience of attending worship, which can be neither clear nor fun and is run by professionals from the front.**

I also guess that the style and content leads on in a small step from families' positive experiences of school. Both are communities with an all age feel, in which several generations have varying parts to play. Both meet, create, play and eat. Both encourage learning by participation and experience. Both have environments which work with a structure or shape that enables both discipline and freedom. It might be that therefore implicitly people feel relaxed or at home. At the same time they perceive - perhaps only intuitively, not always consciously - that there is value added. They relearn how families do things together, share in making something, learn from each other's skills, spend time together through eating and so come out with a legitimate sense of both enjoyment and satisfaction. As such, Messy Church has offered them a gift that they unwrap and value, rather than put them through a process in which good is done to them. I doubt I have plumbed the depths of why Messy Church consistently draws so many non-churched, but I hope I have explored that it is a deeper phenomenon than just putting on fun things for a secular entertainment culture. There is too much inherent engagement and participation to make that charge stick.

I am glad to have seen a quality local example and came away more deeply impressed than I expected some months before I began the whole research process into the literature, let alone saw one in practice. I came away with more to think about in relation to what Church is, and this further erodes confidence that traditional congregational gathering has all the answers we need.

The national statistics

Having lived alongside one example, I wanted to see if there were national trends. The Messy Church website has a directory. This helps people find one near them if they want to explore whether to start one, and it builds a sense of a family of similar churches. The directory is not set up as a serious analytical instrument as it is self-registering with quite uneven entry details. However, I went on the site in April this year and by trawling through counted 301 examples. I do not know whether all these are still live and know of further ones that have been created. Some immediate trends stand out that are easiest to show in small tables.

Where?

Area	South	East Anglia	Midlands	North
	158	29	64	50

Entries are grouped by county. To help readers as to the division points, the southern border of the Midlands group is Cambridgeshire to Shropshire and the northern one is Cheshire to Lincolnshire. Readers should then be able to deduce the rest. The obvious point to note is the southern bias, and East Anglia adds to it. I have no data on how this trend has changed since the movement began down south in Portsmouth in 2004.

Which denominations are playing?

Anglican	Baptist	Independant	Methodist	Sally Army	URC	Unclear
106	20	4	65	9	11	92

This data is the most suspect, in that the source was not designed to make this explicit. I derived it from the name given and where there was no obvious denominational link classified the case is unclear. The only safe statement is to note that this kind of fresh expression travels freely across denominational identities. Some will delight in that; others may suspect it as ecclesologically lightweight.

When? - days of the week

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Varies
South	12	17	20	15	22	46	58	6
Midland	5	2	7	8	6	15	25	1
North	2	4	8	2	6	16	14	0
Total	17	23	35	25	34	67	97	7

Despite the founding story and its book that contains advocacy for not doing Messy Church on a Sunday,²⁷ there is a clear preference to do so. I have no evidence for the following guess but I harbour a fear that this may indicate some examples merely take the label Messy Church and attach it to an existing practice of a monthly family service and rebrand it. I would want to know that a dedicated period of creativity occurs, a meal is being served and that the spirit of it is all age. Then I don't care which day it happens.

I also noticed – though the overall figures mask this – that in the counties, but not across them, there was a tendency for the same weekday to be favoured. For example, in the Liverpool area, six out of eleven cases are on a Saturday and L19 the local founding story is on a Saturday. I don't know whether this means the cultures are similar and so it makes sense regionally or whether this is a less good copying tendency.

It also looks like later in the week is favoured more than earlier in the week. I can imagine all sorts of reasons why a team and the punters might not be wild about Monday – but it is not wrong.

How often?

	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	6 weeks	Bi-monthly	Termly
South	3	5	147	2	16	11
Midland	4	3	46	0	6	9
North	1	2	39	1	3	6
Total	8	10	232	3	25	26

The immediate headline is that as advised, monthly is the normal practice in all areas. I have no details about the tiny number doing it weekly but do wonder how long that can continue if what is done is true to type. It is also clear that over 1/6 of examples are putting on Messy Church less often than suggested. But I have no data on whether this indicates a process of building up to monthly, or if they are cases where small churches are doing something rather than nothing. Some termly examples link Messy Church to their major festivals and I can see this is a promising starting point but hardly a great end point.

²⁷ Moore, *Messy Church*, pp. 16-20.

Messy challenges

Once a month, then what?

This issue is not unique to Messy Church. It has occurred for decades with the classic family service and now is also seen across a variety of fresh expressions of Church which focus on creativity, take advance planning and involve larger teams. On the upside, once a month can be special and it is easier to recruit a team and sustain the pattern. There is time to reflect, learn and plan. It also provides a gentler route in for the outsider. The downsides include people having to remember the next date, a long gap if they miss one meeting, slowing the building of community, and missing out on important events in people's lives within a given month. In addition, **I know of few examples by which established monthly patterns were successfully converted into weekly ones.** This in turn assumes that a weekly gathering is a given in the rhythm of the local Christian community.

Messy Church 2 was partly written to address these questions.²⁸ This booklet should not rehearse all those ideas. I am glad that book is kind to the youthfulness of this movement, but not at all complacent that getting large numbers of the non-churched once a month is job done. Centrally Messy Church is clear that the goal is not to get Messy Church people into 'normal' church. Messy Church is Church, and the need is to find the way forward, not the way back. The goal is all age discipleship; leaders suspect that

practising faith in the home is a key way forward and offers suggestions of how that can be followed. It is too early to tell whether this is beginning to work.

Messy Church as a movement is also exploring whether a related event, that has a messy feel, can help. L19: Messy Church is thinking of dividing the 180 who come into three subgroups and inviting each to come once more in the month to Messy Church Plus which will explore further the theme of the previous full Messy Church.²⁹ One obvious link seemed to be to run Alpha, for it shares values of hospitality, participation, small groups and different learning styles. It has been tried and almost universally failed. People simply do not turn up. I know of another Messy Church up north that thought the Start course

²⁸ Moore, *Messy Church 2*, pp. 10-34.

²⁹ It's called Messy Church Plus because it is Messy Church, plus an extra week: an opportunity to get to know people in a smaller group and a chance to explore the month's topic within Messy Church at a deeper level.

was shorter, socially closer, and educationally simpler. Within a fortnight it stopped. The feedback from the group was: 'We enjoy coming to Messy Church, don't spoil it with all this God stuff.' It is more evidence that today's evangelism is harder than that of yesterday. **Alpha is becoming like Arnhem – a bridge too far.**³⁰ Another promising avenue is Messy Church leaders noticing that some parents are very keen to become involved as helpers, and serving is a discipleship trait. Messy Church thinkers are pondering either one-off sessions or even a course to train people. I myself wonder about the apprentice approach, which is messier (!) and begins in experience alongside a proven team member. Then any more formal training would build on that. This would also be a way forward to retain those members in their teenage years and be modelling that all age can include this self-defining and self-conscious age group.³¹

Messy sacraments

The issue of communion has been faced head on and I commend the coverage of the issue in *Messy Church 2*, including a service text that should not be written off as mere Zwinglian remembering.³² I suggest Messy Church could explore variation and have two different texts. A second one could be written focusing on participating, including an epiclesis, doubtless with appropriate crafts to match. I was also pleased to hear in my L19 visit that Paul Ellis takes the view that L19: Messy Church is Church and thus if baptism requests arise in that community, then it is entry into the universal Church, through that local expression of church, which should occur. In fact, Karen Dooley has already been asked about baptism, thus demonstrating how people see Messy Church, and also her role as Chaplain.

How is Messy Church changing our idea of Church?

Is Messy Church all that different to how we have understood Church? Some may think it just the next expression of the family service, which we have known since the early 1970s. It is true there are similarities. Both are usually monthly. They share that they are more visual, more child friendly, more open to laughter, and more interactive, than traditional church worship. Both may be vulnerable to what happens to attendance patterns when the children hit secondary school. Yet the differences are marked too.

³⁰ L19: Messy Church leaders are considering taking the content of Alpha but unpacking it in a 'Messy' way, so it is done in a way the families are comfortable with.

³¹ From now on, the leaders of L19: Messy Church plan to include a five minute chat about the Messy Church theme for that day within the team prayer meeting before the event, so that they start to disciple helpers, who often don't get to hear the Messy Message in the church.

³² Moore, *Messy Church 2*, pp. 62-67 with a proposed text on pp. 200-210.

Messy Church is Church, and the need is to find the way forward, not the way back.

Messy Church is Church, not just a service. That is, it is **the formation of a new community who are learning how to be, make, eat and worship together**, not provision of a service that the old community hope will attract newcomers. The choice of venue and the shape of the event reveal a journey to let the outsider participate creatively, not an invitation to become passive insiders. It also draws many more complete outsiders. The proportion of time spent in 'chapel' or public worship is distinctively low. It has put a meal back into the heart of being church. It seeks to build up families by giving them time working together and eating together, rather than merely having them in the same building. Here the shape and content mean adults can learn from children, not just vice versa. The language of all age aims to be more inclusive than the now loaded word 'family' has become. It requires a spread and level of team involved with people that exceeds the family service model. **Their desire is for discipleship, not attendance**, and they are actively pursuing how that can be made real. I conclude the differences are more marked.

However, there are wider lessons about how we think of Church. I think **Messy Church's most significant changes are to see Church as a creative, participative community**. It then models, in belief and shape, that worship grows out of that community.³³ I doubt all the local practice lives out that DNA, but that is true too of the gap between parish life and its theory. It is ironic. Messy Church is a splendidly self-deprecating term, like the keen sailor who says he just messes about in boats, yet it is actually a keen-eyed movement, on a mission to reach beyond existing Church and to helpfully mess up what we thought Church was. I asked Jane Leadbetter of L19 how Messy Church is changing Church. Quick as a flash she came back: 'It is far more hopeful, frees more lay ministry, and rediscovers all age family at the heart of Church.'

George W. Lings
1st May 2010

Cartoons : Tim Sharp

³³ Moore, *All Age Worship*, pp. 49-51.

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