

Faith, Hope and Love in Today's World: 'Love'

The success of TV sitcoms like 'Friends' and the soaps point to a hunger in society for a genuine experience of belonging and love. This is a great opportunity for the church to speak the good news of Christ into our culture by the way we live that truth in the life of the local church.

A hunger for relationship

The increasing fragmentation of marriage and geographical communities has left people hungry for a sense of belonging. Christians recognise the important of community, believing that we are made in the image of a Trinitarian God, whose fundamental nature is community. Our challenge today is to find new ways of relating and establishing community, appropriate to its setting, based more on networks of relationships rather than traditional ways of operating.

A hunger for demonstration

People today will only accept what we offer if they see that it works, especially in the area of handling conflict. The challenge is not dealing with conflict by simply sweeping it under the carpet. A church where there is no conflict has little relevance to our society!! Conflicts in the church can often seem like a distraction from the real work, but this is the real work. When others come near such a community they will instinctively know how real the relationships are.

How does our church community measure up in these areas?

We have a strategic opportunity to proclaim the gospel in a language that our society understands. It is the language of love, belonging and community. It's also good news for a society that is fragmented and searching for a sense of belonging. 'See how these Christians love one another' is as powerful a magnet today as it was 2000 years ago.

'The purpose of the church is to manifest an alternative way of seeing and living life.'
(John Westerhoff III)

The Rev Paul Hardingham considers faith, hope and love in a mini-series

Very often, when people first turn towards God
and realise that God loves them and
that everything about them matters to him,
a wave of joyful emotion overwhelms them.
But actual faith is mostly the realisation that,
even though we don't in the least deserve it,
God believes in us and finds us lovable.

This is astonishing.

Philip Pare