

APPENDIX 5

Feb 22nd February 2005 'Sanctus 1' Group Interview Transcript.

Questioner: Was there a target group? Was there need that was not being addressed? What was the vision?

Person 1: My partner and I moved here in central Manchester just after we got married in 1999 and we basically went round every church in the city centre trying to find somewhere we felt we might fit in. Pretty much safe to say when you walk in and you look like a normal-ish nice young couple the first thing they do is either to ask you if you want to run their youth group which we didn't or we just everywhere else you went you had to 'check your brain in' at the door and that was the phrase we kept using to describe the experience, like 'I'm not going back there again' or 'I really felt I couldn't ask a question', I couldn't do this and I couldn't do that and we both had been involved in loads of different churches before but I had been involved in what was then the 'Third Sunday Service' in Bristol I lived there when I was a teenager. I just felt there is nothing like this here but with no mechanism or any way in which to start and nothing like that ourselves so we just kept on meeting with different groups of people that we knew and the church became in-and-around our dining table or going to the pub or what ever and that was really fine for a couple of years but it was very frustrating. We had already known Ben from a couple of years previously at a bigger gathering that we had met up. He e-mailed and said I'm coming to Manchester and looking for a house so we said great come and use our sofa bed if you want to come up and stay, and at that point I think you turned up and said well actually this is what I am doing and this is how it fits.

Person 2: I think in some ways the story goes back further to the IRA bombing of 1996 and when the bomb went off in 1996 the city centre was wrecked and whilst it was a bad thing at the same time it was a catalyst of change in the city centre and that coupled with a section of the population moving back to city centre, which is what is happening, members of the diocese have recognised that strategically the city centre is an important place. In 1991 there were I think 987 residents in the city centre. By 2005 they estimate there are going to be 20,000 people living in the city centre and over 78.9% of those are aged between 18 and 40 and I think the Anglican Church recognised that it wasn't really connecting with those new residents and as well as that it kind of depends on how you, because the city centre is quite important, but it depends on how you view the city centre. As a hub of networks. On one level there are those people who live in the heart of the city centre, those 20,000. But, also there are those who use the city centre which is about 300,000 people every day and arguably where you work where you socialise where your friends are is where you live you may sleep in Didsbury or somewhere in the suburbs but you spend 60% of your time in the city centre. So there are those people who are part of the network and those who are in the hub, and I think the diocese responded to that need really.

Person 1: I think in the broadest sense what Ben is saying is the theoretical and strategic end of what our practical experience was. We lived in a flat in the city centre. We didn't have a car. Sunday morning, try catching a bus! and invariably in Sunday morning at the time normal church starts on Sunday mornings. And it just didn't fit our lifestyle you know, we were away so many weekends because we have friends who live elsewhere. We have family commitments and with everything else we just thought it was really inappropriately structured. We even tried going to go to St Anne's which was just very entertaining because it was proper BCP Sunday morning services. But all the things we could get to, none of them were relevant and none of them made us feel like we wanted to be there, in fact quite the opposite they all made us feel like we

would rather be anywhere else, so what you say Ben has been our practical experience without knowing I am part of 78.9% of the population.

Questioner: Do you want to say a bit more about what the diocese planned with you? Are we happy to say that was the key point in Sanctus 1's beginning.

Person 1: Definitely. I think it would have been a very different group and I have already said this to everyone else we are so lucky because we had a paid worker right from the start and without that I don't think it would be what it is in the same way because you see groups that don't have that. It is evidently much harder and the groups are much more prone to fragmentation and all sorts of other difficulties and because of us knowing that was what Ben and Ruth were coming here for, we just sat around in their front room one evening going right, Ok so what does church look like? What shall we do? When shall we do it? How does it work? But it was, your being there, or it would never have happened without that, because we just didn't have particular relationships with those informal or formal networks in church that we could have said lets start something like this, it just would not of have happened.

Person 1: Yes

Questioner: So are you saying that the allocation and resources and Ben's job was the focal point of the beginning of Sanctus 1?

All: Yes

Person 2: It was a vision originally resourced by the Church Army really. St Anne's which is the city centre church went into interregnum 3 years ago and the diocese took that opportunity to take a strategic review of what was happening and I think the diocese ideally wanted to make St Anne's the powerhouse church in the city centre but they didn't quite realise where St Anne's was at which is at a really very traditional 1662 congregation who travel from all over Greater Manchester some come from Liverpool some come from Warrington just for 1662 prayer which is fine if that is what you want, come and get that, but at the same time it has no real relationship with the city centre. So ideally the diocese wanted to change that and make St Anne's a real positive parish church in the city centre but that didn't really happen, so when I arrived at St Anne's was an interregnum so for the first year I was linked with Manchester Cathedral, and then after a year back up to St Anne's.

Person 1: We were also talking at that stage with the Archdeacon about the vision of what we could be in relation to the City centre.

Person 2:Yes, so regarding resources the diocese provides a full time rector at St Anne's and a part time associate rector at St Anne's. I am funded by Church Army and the Church Army offered the diocese to put a paid worker in and the diocese just paid for my housing.

Questioner: To do what?

Person 2: To do something creative and experimental in the city centre. I don't know if the diocese knew exactly what it wanted. They got offered a free worker in the city centre and if they were thinking strategically I shouldn't have been appointed till the rector was appointed but because I was available and had to strike while the iron was hot, they went for it and I was placed in the city centre not really knowing anyone with

limited support networks and just asked to get on and do a job and it potentially it could have gone quite pear shaped, but it worked out.

Questioner: Going back to that connection between the group of people that were doing something around networking, plus Ben in the picture and obviously other people coming together. What was it you were specifically trying to do? What were you trying to birth when you started? What did you agree to start with?

Person 2: Initially we just agreed to meet on a Wednesday night and explore what church was. Within that we spent time in prayer and worship. We spent time getting to know one another we spent time just building community and building relationships. On one level that is not very strategic about thinking where are we going in the future but it was fundamentally important in building community.

Person 1: Much more effective than sitting down and writing some 3 year plan, like year 1 we are going to be this we are going to have X number of people. We knew Ben and Ruth in the broadest sense we knew who they were and they knew who we were, and we had met them two or three times.

Person 2: Once had a conference

Person 1: Only once

Person 2: I think so

Person 1: Oh, we had emailed maybe loads then – so it just led to us exploring who we were imaging it, but at the end of the day because Ben is paid to do it there is a slight distinction to it, because you have some idea of what you were coming to do you. You had in the broadest strokes a description of something creative or whatever in the City centre and we just like thought, Ok, that sounds really good we can hitch and hook up to that, as that sounds much more our thing than any of this other stuff. So, Yes I think it was about just building a relationship and starting with that very core group of us, 4 or 6 people and seeing where that led us. I don't think we started off with an amazing vision of where it would go.

Person 2: No. I think the initial idea was just to build community and in the city centre were over 50% of the apartments are single residency, it means that it can be quite fragmented, there is not a massive sense of community in the city centre. There are in certain areas which you can fit into a certain people group, and you can build community, but it can be a very lonely place.

Questioner: So you started meeting on these Wednesdays what happened next?

Person 1: We decided we would meet weekly on a Wednesday and then we would do a once a month something that came out of Wednesday, and I was really specific about this when I tell other people particularly church people why we did it, it is not like Sunday was the main product and Wednesday was the by-product. Wednesday was the 'meat and veg' and Sunday was like a 'we are here this is what we are doing, this is like an expression of where we are at, at the moment, what we are discussing', so there was a public formal outworking of that, that other people could engage in and then potentially inputting feedback into Wednesdays if they wanted to. So it was very much not focused around being a service. My brother who is a Vicar thinks we are an alt worship group with a bit of community attached. I would say we are a community

first and foremost and we happen to do stuff that looks a bit like alt worship and there is a big distinction there.

Person 3: Sundays are a good open door really, because people are used to going to church on Sunday. So it is fairly easy to get them to come along to "I want to check this out on a Sunday" rather than something on a week day.

Person 1: Yes, so that was the next step really.

Person 2: I moved here in September so we started meeting in about October time. Our first service was in January 02, so there was a few months to get to know each other and our second service was in March and then after that when went monthly. So I think in my head I wanted to go monthly from the start but it just took a while to work up to that and when there is only a few of you, resourcing it is quite difficult.

Person 1: That was really it I think.

Questioner: And you thought of Sunday as distinctly worship did you or how else would you describe it?

Person 2: One of the differences with a Sunday night is we publicised Sunday night. For me Sunday night is the first point of entry for a lot of people so they come along and see what we are doing then after that come to Wednesdays. I think Sunday is a slightly more accessible than a Wednesday night. Yes?

Person 1: You don't have to make as much of an impact, it is much more anonymous you could come in – God forbid that this is what actually happens – but somebody comes in and sits at the back and leaves 30 seconds after - you could do that and it would be quite easy to walk away from it with very little.

Person 3: Yes you could participate as much as you want.

Person 1: Vulnerability Yes.

Person 3: Also if you are used to regular church there is less of a cultural jump to make than when you go to a Sunday thing because it is a bit more like a service with things happening at the front, while Wednesdays are very different and would possibly frighten some people off.

Person 2: On Wednesday you need to be a fairly confident person at first, because we start with coffee and tea so you need to be able to chat with people, you can't come in from the start and be anonymous and sit down.

Person 1: Somebody is going to say Hi who are you? Giving that whole nice to see you kind of thing so Sundays are easier in that sense.

Questioner: (To person 3) So you came in after it had started, what were you first impressions when you encountered it? What did it feel like and why did you keep going?

Person 3: Well you see I had given up on church. I am very different from <person 1>, I wasn't looking for a church at all, quite the opposite. I had given up on church for various reasons just been hurt by church, that's it, me and church are over. Me and God fine but as far as church is concerned that was it and then just bumped into Ben via a mutual friend.

Questioner: What sort of churches were you going to before?

Person 3: I had been going to fairly main stream and generally evangelical Church of England for many years. I was there for 19 years and at that point I was only going to the churches because I had made a commitment to do 3 or 4 years worth of youthwork with them on helping out on Sundays and I really enjoyed that. But I had stopped going to the services and my whole spirit was not in the church at all I was just working my time really.

Questioner: Was there a particular reason - was it just because it was not feeding spiritually? Was there a gap between church and the world that you lived in?

Person 3: Numerous reasons. Partly because the style of the church was a problem for me, in that I wasn't encouraged and I just fell out with the whole style of standard church worship really. The other part was, the church had a habit of putting dogma and traditionalism over pastoral care, above and beyond the pastoral care programme, and I kept seeing people hurt. Another part, being gay in the church was a problem for me as well and loads and loads of reasons. I mean it was so ridiculous I always remember my last Sunday someone who ironically was involved in Sanctus at the start, he is still going to that church, and he collared me on the last Sunday, and really gave me a right telling-off for leaving saying, you have got to stay you have got to stay, and I said to him, I was so out-of-here years ago spiritually, that you know the horse had bolted a long time ago. As for my first impressions of Sanctus, I first came to a Wednesday actually and the series was exploring different acts of worship. I walked into a full-on high Anglican 'smells and bells' traditional church service, which was kind of the opposite of what I was looking for, but I was assured that we are just exploring different ways of worship, it is not always like this.

Person 1: Which is why we said to everyone please come twice, because if you come once you might have that sort of experience and just go "what the heck?".

Person 3: I was told exactly that I was told to come for 2 Wednesdays because they might be quite different. A good job I did really isn't it.

Questioner: So what made you stay?

Person 3: I wasn't judged. I liked the creativity and it was full of people that were roughly the same age and the same kind of people really. I went along and people welcomed me and spoke to me. I tried a few other churches in the past you can go to services and just get completely ignored. I liked the alternative feel to it really, I like the style was an issue for me, it was more of what I was into. I was involved in the whole of the alternative worship thing in the early 90s as well, so there was a kind of cultural connection there.

Questioner: Is there anything else somebody wants to add to that so far?

Person 2: There is tons more to the story because <person 3> started coming a year and a half ago?

Person 3: Yes, it was April May June something like that?

Person 2: So we are only halfway through the story. At that time we still had the one group didn't we on Wednesday night at 8 o'clock and running a monthly service. In January of last year 04 we went to 2 groups on a Wednesday night – one at 6.30 and

one at 8 o'clock. The reason for that was, I think, if you try to build community it is far easier to do that with a small group of between 15 and 20 people rather than 30 people like we were at the time, and so we felt it was a good move to go to a 6.30 and 8 o'clock group and at that time there was probably about 15 people in each of those groups. One of the things people were worried about was keeping relationships with those who were in the other group, so then we agreed to on the 2nd Wednesday of each month to run a shared meal and service together as well so now on the 2nd Wednesday we do that so at least there is a point of contact of people. So that happened about a year ago now and then its just a case of carrying on with that pattern at 6.30 and 8 o'clock. Once monthly service on a Sunday night

Person 1: Its really easy in something like this, it makes me realise, I feel really lucky because I know the detail from when we started this, but how quickly you forget. How many venues did we try before we ended up at Sacred Trinity? How many people came and when who were still involved in very Sunday morning main stream church, who came and saw us and thought I quite like this as a supplementary thing, and then wandered away again because it actually wasn't really for them. Or people who arrived to a real fundamental part of the community but then left because they moved jobs or whatever. There were loads of things like that embedded in the way that Sanctus is and the way that as a result of them being part of our community and the buildings we have met in and the abysmal stuff that we have done that I think sometimes – like we tried having a Wednesday night in a bar in town which is a really great pub but really really rubbish when they have got loads of background music, really really busy, really difficult to find, when were doing a session, I cant remember why we used them, we did a session when we wanted to do something that was quiet and reflective and we just sat there going "this is really like interesting" in comparison between the 2 like the real busyness of the pub and then something that actually was quiet. We tried out loads of spaces.

Person 2: We met at the Cathedral for the first 12 months.

Person 1: And it is not an irony that's lost on many of us that as an emerging church we have ended up back in 16th/17th century church building. Its not where we thought we were going to be when we started out so there are lots of things like that on the journey that you forget really.

Person 2: The cathedral was good and it was helpful but it was never really home was it. The cathedral was a diocesan building that is home to so much. It could never be home whereas the Sacred Trinity where we meet now is far more home. We met at St Anne's as well and nothing deflates the place, the place is so inflexible not just the people but the space as well it is all fixed in tiny little room and it just wasn't suitable.

Questioner: **Do you want to say something about the additional events that you are doing more events than what you said. If you could bring us right up to date with what else you are doing. You talked about community, worship and I am also aware there is quite a lot of mission.**

Person 2: I'll talk about one of them and you can talk about the other. The one I'll talk about is 'mind body and spirit' fairs. I kind of want to back track in some ways because we do missional events, but I would argue that mission is part of the kind of DNA of what we are about, and so we do these mission events but in some ways they are great to do and they open us up to people but at the same time mission is key to what we are about, and if people don't invite their friends along, then we wont grow, and when you start with 4 people that needs to happen so something we have done

for a couple of years is the 'mind body and spirit' fair which is a New Age fair at Manchester 'G-Mex' and this year between 8 and 9 thousand people came through the doors, paid £6.00 to get in, if you had a stall there it costs £400-£500 to have your aura read or photographed it was £15. To have your taro read was £20. You can buy the essence of Christ which is a perfume kind of spray there, and what we are saying is this is essentially a commercial sense spirituality, and so within that context we provided a kind of sacred space, a place for people to pray. In the space there was a kind of different spiritual installations and the installations were where people could go up to wash their hands, plasma ball, drop a stone, prayer wall and on top of that we offered prayer for healing and just prayed with people and spent time with people. People were just really pleased to see us there. I think they got a certain amount of security from it, seeing a Christian Church in that context. So yes that was a kind of missional activity that we were involved in. Is there anything more to add to that?

Person 1: No, I think we thought it was good and other people that it was good to see a Christian Church standing there doing their thing. I think it was just another example of why it was so good for us to be there to understand just where loads of other people's heads are at, and why it works and doesn't work.

Person 3: I think the other reality is that we encountered that was people are no matter how left field Sanctus is, people are not going to cross from 'mind body spirit fair' into Sanctus 1, there needs to be somewhere middle, which is what we are working at for this years fair, when we do it again. There is still quite a significant culture jump into church no matter what its like. The other event that Sanctus is good at, I think is finding people. I know so many creative people, Sanctus is generally very good at recognising peoples creativity and giving them the opportunity to do stuff. One thing I didn't mention about why I stayed at Sanctus 1, I was very quickly jumped upon to DJ at the monthly services.

Person 1: So we just did to you what loads of people had done to us when we turned up to church we went "Ah you have got something we want"

Person 3: So out of that we are doing an event called '2', which is a quarterly event that we doing in the northern quarter which is very trendy and we do it in the basement of a bar and its visuals and electronic chillout music. It is somewhere for people to come and just sit and chat its just music in a bar but the visual element are quite big and impressive last time and music that we try and keep fairly cutting edge and yes it just works, we have DJs and VJs and it is just a presence we don't really do anything with it. We don't hand out tracts, it is just a presence in the northern quarter of the city centre. I kind of understand it as our version of a traditional church barn dance, which is kind of somewhere to socialise somewhere to meet.

Person 2: I remember someone saying to me the churches need to socialise together and get to know one another and that creates a good vibe and good feel, and in some ways that is just what a church barn dance does. It creates a sense of community and at the same time it is an easy place to invite friends to, so there is a few people who invited friends last time who have no relationship with church and they thought it would be a good place to invite them to so they could discover that Christians are not all 4-eyed 2-headed monsters.

Person 3: The bar reacted really positively, I was absolutely gobsmacked. I have done this before at other DJs events where you go and do something and the people know that you are Christian and you put on the very cool music and very cool visuals and they say they want you Christians back and that's what happened. The guy behind the

bar was like 'man, I wish we did more nights like this'. It's amazing just to get that connection really.

Person 2: Reflecting back on it, I think in regard to overt evangelism that was happening, it was happening in the relationships that were forming and those which were growing. There was a girl who worked there who talked to one of our blokes about what church was about what his faith was about Someone else was talking to a girl who just hated church, fallen out with church, real and major pastoral issues with what the church was about. I think old school style of evangelism, we would have an event in the bar half way through, the music would have been cut, the visuals would have gone off and I would have stood up and given an evangelistic presentation. Not only is that crap evangelism it is also disempowering for a community of people, and I have enough faith and trust in people within Sanctus 1 to get on with the evangelism and get on with mission which is happening in the relationships.

Person 1: Our newest thing hasn't even happened yet as it is so new – it is embryonic.

Person 2: Which will be a 4.30pm service on a Sunday aimed at families because we have just had a baby aimed at everyone inclusive. For families for all.

Questioner: Thinking about, I don't know if you have heard of the 'mission shaped church' report. There is certain terminology in it, not that it is an exhaustive list, but of those labels, do any of these labels fit with Sanctus 1? Now I know labels are a generalisation, and that many fresh expressions of church do not conform to one because many are combinations of various, but the key ones are, café church, youth congregations, network churches, ecclesiastical communities and others. Are they the kind of labels that you would recognise as having something to do with Sanctus 1?

Person 2: I think we are an alternative worship community, a network and a café church.

Person 1: They are only labels and it is language that is very specific to a very specific group of people, who have read the report and who respond to it in that way and so just like reading a star sign you are reading it for how many thousand people every day, because there are 12 star signs and 56million of them fits everybody in that star sign. I just don't know that I like any of those specific pins on a map.

Questioner: It sounds like you resonate with some of the labels but you just named three?

Person 1: You can use the labels in all sorts of ways. I might know the language so I can say well yes. If I talk to somebody outside of any of these defined areas, I couldn't go we are a network church we are a café-styled Church.

Questioner: The questions are about what the report is trying to define. I am not trying to say you must use these words in your communications with people in your social context.

Person 1: Those three we are definitely.

Person 2: We are also a local ecumenical partnership.

Questioner: What do you mean by that?

Person 2: I think in the future I probably see an informal team developing with the Methodists which relates to the Anglican-Methodist covenant, there will be shared resources both people and space wise.

Person 3: I am very wary of labels. Labels are one of the reasons why I am disenfranchised within traditional church. There have been various times when I kind of sit and think oh yes Sanctus 1 is Church of England which makes me want to run a mile. So I try and keep a distance.

Person 2: In some ways it is a balance because I need to play the labels game and I need to sell Sanctus 1 to the Anglican hierarchy, and so I need to think what language I use to sell Sanctus 1. It can be helpful for me but when people come to Sanctus 1 we do say we are networking blah blah we usually use the words emerging

Person 3: But even that, what are you emerging from darkness? What does that say about existing church? and when I speak to people in Macclesfield it isn't quite the cultural centre of the universe and try and explain the church I go to, I used the phrase the emerging church and they just look at me like a gold fish.

Questioner: I want to go back to the question about the way that you see being church. I always find it very interesting whenever I go to an alt worship group, somewhere there is always a print of Rublev's icon. That is an example of an image that is used quite heavily and I am aware that you did the whole thing about Trinity. Just thinking about models of being church is there a think about the nature of God or something like that you hold very dear to the way that you are church?

Person 3: The Trinity resonates a lot with the way we do services, not just with the fact that we use the symbolism of lighting 3 at the beginning of services reflecting God's presence with us.

Questioner: So why is Trinity important from your perspective?

Person 3: I don't know.

Person 2: I think the reason people pick up on it is because when we first met we talked about the 3 things worship mission and community and I see that as embodied within the Trinity more than anything else, in the sense that the Son was a missionary from God, there is a sense of community, there is a sense of worship, there is a sense of interdependence, a sense of relationships being built, there is a sense of confirming peoples gifts.

Person 1: The whole holistic, inclusive kind of thing.

Person 3: It's the way Sanctus 1 uses that. My old church I can picture its mission statement and its 'In Up and Out' thing. I think it is the way Sanctus 1 uses it, and it uses it a lot more creatively much more interestingly.

Questioner: But how and what are the implications of that. It sounds like there something distinctive about what you are saying it is but I do not yet tangibly understand what that difference is.

Person 1: I think it is about the way we behave towards each other and our wider cultural and social contacts. I think we are more inclusive and less judgemental and

more respectful and more open than some forms of church. I think we also recognise that whole relationship with our wider cultural, economic, work, our lives and our everything else, and we say that things are not distinct and separate but that the Trinity model gives us ways of being church that is far more holistic and integrated into modern life. Practically it gives us that sense of an authentic and holistic Christian approach to everything, so it is about using all 5 senses using your whole self in church, and stuff that is about embodying what you do which is what in a very crass way what Jesus did for God.

Person 2: I also think our starting point was community. On our first flyer for Sanctus 1 we used the word Christian community. Regarding worship mission and community, community as with the Trinity was the starting point and so I think developing that sense of community reflects what is happening in the Trinity and I think in the city centre particularly as I said earlier it is a lonely place and people want community a place to belong .

Questioner: So it's no coincidence then you use Rublev's icon to reflect that model.

Person 3: Yes – although we don't use it for every service.

Person 1: When we were discussing the Trinity and that sort of thing, we were also talking about tarot and if you look at the symbols buried in icons in the same way that you look at symbols buried in tarot you can see that there are resonance's of all sorts of stuff, hidden meanings, disguised things which need to be brought to life, and I think that is the key example of the difference between it is really nice to sit in a church and look at an icon, when you get out of church you are not going to continue carrying an icon round to people saying 'hey look it has 2 fingers on the table that means...', they don't get it but you can find other ways of doing that in the real world in your normal life and that's the sort of embodiment bit of it but you carry it. Its not just a Sunday morning thing or Wednesday night thing it's a sat through Sunday thing, it is a whole of life thing.

Person 3: There is another thing about using the Trinity as well as something holistic and balance sort of thing. I think that is important for some of us who have been part of churches that concentrate too much on one area, it is all about Jesus songs, or whether it is churches are great movements of the holy spirit, and there are a lot of churches that don't really seem to be balanced and I think that is something that makes Sanctus 1 distinctive.

Questioner: Are there any other models or images or metaphors that are important to the life of Sanctus 1?

Person 2: In some ways we have never identified a model.

Person 1: The metaphor thing is interesting but I cant think or explain at the moment, nothing comes to my head, but I am sure the way I explain to other people I do use metaphors, I just can't think what they would be.

Questioner: I will give you some examples. Do you see the church as servant to the world? do you see it as a 'priesthood of all believers' do you see it as the 'body of Christ'. These kind of very traditional but very challenging words and there are others, such as king, as priests as servants as lover – how do you see it ?

Person 3: It is all of those and more. I don't get an impression that we particularly focus on any one thing I think we are always looking for new metaphors and exploring different words.

Questioner: Give me an example I have just given you a load give me some specifics ones that you hold dear.....

Person 2: I don't know if there is. We have explored what church is about what it means to be church rather than more of the kind ecclesiological models of what church is.

Person 3: We have looked at the idea of God as the creator, and us being a creative community.

Questioner: When you say you have looked at what it means to be church, what does that mean? how does that resource your ability to be say better church?

Person 2: I think the whole weekend away last year was about looking at the difference between church, cult and community. In some ways we explored models which 'church' fall into and then it was helpful to define the difference between each of them to work out what we were.

Questioner: And what were you?

Person 1: Well I think a lot of people would look at us and that people do look at Sanctus 1 as more of a club than a community but I think we use that word so much it means so many things to so many people, that without very very strict definition which I would resist for the labelling discussion that we had previously, not that it isn't helpful to define it, but to have it in an organic flexible definition.

Questioner: So fluidity is very important to you

Person 1: Yes we love our flexibility and our organic identity.

Questioner: So that seems to be very important to the whole way you see community as being quite fluid and organic.

Person 2: If I tried to nail a model to Sanctus 1 , I would be lynched.

Questioner: I am picking up that there is something about fluidity that is an important metaphor – something about the fluidity of God in terms of three persons and the fluidity then of the community that responds to the people involved in it.

Person 3: Because it is not dogmatic or judgemental.

Questioner: Exactly sounds like a very unspoken core aim

Person 2: There are a few people in Sanctus 1 find that quite difficult who want to be able label Sanctus 1 and put it in a box.

Person 1: Or simply want more structure or defined control.

Person 3: Who on one level want to be able to sign a piece of paper which says you are in and then you sign up to these kind of set beliefs and I can totally see the value in that because it gives...people know when they belong when they are in and when they are out but at the same time it is a potential point of exclusion as well.

Person 1: I had this very conversation last night with somebody who was saying that UCCF had asked them to sign their piece of paper before they went to speak at a College or whatever and they just said well if I could stand in a church and say till death do us part but be divorced in 2 months what do you think me signing your piece of paper, just so that I can come and speak to your group, says about my commitment to you. You should be able to say you were either a person that is in or a person that is not or a person that engages with a person who doesn't, and that's were you find yourself not where others find you.

Person 2: I think the problem is with our approach is that some people find it difficult to know when they belong and it's a fine line.

Questioner: It's a relational belonging rather than a traditional one?

Person 2: Yes because its relational its quite dependant on myself and my wife spending time with people and building those relationships. It would be far easier to give people a piece of paper to sign rather than invest time with them.

Questioner: So in the terms of where you are at you talked about community, you talked about change quite a lot, you talked about fluidity. So is it also the concept of journey – if this is wrong tell me – is the concept of journey part of something you talk about?

Person 1: I think there is but I think at the same time we all recognise that it comes with potential for cliché and for being horribly overused particularly in a Christian context.

Person 3: I thing there is a fundamental understanding that the Christian faith is not 'cut and dried', it is a journey and yes we don't overuse the cliché.

Person 2: On Wednesday there was a reference to journey and our personal journey.

Person 1: I think a few of us are quite wary about over emphasizing it because it does seem so almost traditional now. How many churches think that faith is a journey or that life is a journey?

Person 2: Which it is – you just don't need to keep saying it.

Questioner: Looking at the evaluation questions - you have said quite a lot so I am just wondering if the 2nd question there where it talks about key works, are there any other key words particularly about the Christian faith that we haven't said.

Person 1: Mystic, Apostolic.

Questioner: What do you mean by Mystic?

Person 1: Well I would certainly go Celtic as within that so we can write that back in.

Person 2: Mystic or about mystery?

Person 1: Possibly both.

Questioner: We need to define terms if we are going to use them so start with mystic

Person 1: What comes from an ancient wisdom into a contemporary form and there are lots of traditions...we have talked about the desert fathers for instance which was really interesting. There are things that can be distilled or reused from that ancient wisdom into our contemporary lives.

Questioner: So in what sort of events have you used this then – gives me an example

Person 1: The celebration of the saints is very important and I think we have used that in various way.

Person 2: At the moment we are going through a series on Lent aren't we, so we are sticking to the churches calendar so we are connected to the past through that.

Questioner: Using the Anglican calendar?

Person 3: Yes

Questioner: What are the connections?

Person 3: I am just picking up on something with a connection with the Celtic saints and Celtic spirituality in terms there was a journey in faith which we touched on and also it is very much about 'sacred space' as well and something which is keen to Sanctus 1 I think is creating the sacred space in the heart of a busy city centre.

Questioner: What do you mean by that?

Person 3: A place where people can stop and connect with God. A place where they can come in and just be.

Person 1: Very close to but not removed from, it is still connected with the everyday.

Questioner: So it's about having a presence?

Person 3: That links with our events '2' and the 'mind body spirit' festival and just having a presence.

Questioner: So you have got this far – you have got Ben working for you – you have got these events going – what do you think your future is – do you think this is something that is going to end when the particular relationships of your community break down or do you think it is something that other people are going to inherit and take on. Is it really that fluid?

Person 3: I think we need to say that Sanctus is right for now and it works for now. It may be in 10 years time Sanctus does not work and it is right for it to end. That's great and doesn't devalue what it is about now. It is a really helpful as it resources people's spiritual journeys at this moment. It may be in 10 years time that we have taken over Manchester and formed our own Diocese, but I think we need to be open

to the possibility that it may in 10 years time may finish. Taize which is doing great work at the moment but in 10 years time may end – there is nothing wrong with that.

Person 1: Churches generally are not very good at allowing things to fail nor knowing when they fail or moving on from failure. I think we recognise that, but at the same time I would quite happily have conversations with people which go along the lines that when Ben leaves his post and we get someone else to do what he is doing that will be really hard for that person and it will be really hard for us but we are going to find a way to make it work and it is going to keep going. That's an entire assumption, and he is going to go, and it will happen, much as we love him, he will leave sometime we will get someone else however that is funded or put together or resourced or whatever Sanctus looks like at that point there will be continuation I am absolutely certain.

Person 3: I think Sanctus will continue to change, I don't think it is a kind of community that will go "this is what we do" and that's it, because they just become like the places that you just don't want to be like. I think we are already changing the fact that we have got our first child and something like that can have a very significant effect., then it changes and I think maybe some people are not happy with that but its got to and people do need jobs and ventures big change

Person 1: We have always said that the way that Sanctus is set up and the way that we are at the moment, the people have a massive impact on who we are and what we do as a community because we are still even at what 50 60ish, quite a group that is able to be impacted. If someone came in with an absolute driving passion for something they could still have a huge influence, whereas we get into talking about bigger members it is much harder for that to happen, and so they way we have been set up right from the start if <person 3> really loves DJing then great that's fantastic we can use that and we can do '2', if someone else comes in and they really like some spurious thing then great we will have it. It can then really change our boundaries and push us into different directions.

Questioner: One point of information for me then - so in terms of church, trad church tends to have one very active person the minister, and lots of passive people. What is your balance between being pro-active and passive, how would you say that balances within Sanctus 1 – is there an expectation of participation?

Person 3: I like the idea that you can go to a Sanctus service and just stay at the back and go I think this is really important to have that. What you have to keep a check on is because then you become a consumer culture.

Person 1: It is that giving and receiving thing, I think is important that you do get out of Sanctus 1 a lot of what you put into it I think. Some people struggle with this non-existent, non-hierarchical whatever they perceive that non-structure as being, is that they do not know how they sit or where they sit if they come from that mind set that I need to find my place, but to participate is to say to Ben or to me or others or to anyone else who is doing anything, can I help, what can I do, and that can be washing teacups on a Wednesday evening or it can be instigating a whole new something or leading a service or making a flyer, and that participation is not just about sitting in a service and saying a prayer its about taking part in the community

Person 3: I know that when I do stuff for Sanctus whether it is leading a session of the week or DJing or whatever or clearing out the church yesterday I know that I'm doing it because I really want to do it and its quire refreshing actually. I have never had that before with church where I have actually really wanted to do stuff. In the

past I have always done stuff because that what you do really you can't expect it really and its like wow, I know that if I didn't want to do stuff with Sanctus I would stop tomorrow, and Ben would come knocking at my door more that a DJ, but there is that option.

Person 2: In regards to services, usually I work with 2 or 3 other people or <person 1> who will head that up, and that encourages participation because people feel there is someone whom knows a bit more about what they are doing and so people feel a bit freer in participating in it. Wednesday nights I estimate at the moment, we seem to have a lot of other people on Wednesday nights at this particular time but over the course of a year I reckon 20% of Wednesday nights are done by other people and ideally are probably getting that higher maybe 25% but I would like to get that higher and that's partly a fault on my behalf because it is easier for me to do a session than to spend some time I mean its great <person 1> and <person 3> know, who just get on and do it, but other people who have not done it before, I need to spend a lot of time nurturing them. But on another level a chap who led a session with me the other week for him that was – I spent a lot of time working with him and getting him to do that session but for him it was a really fantastic experience and something that he learnt so much through.

Person 1: I think there is also a point that <person 2> won't know this really to other than by people saying afterwards when <person 2> is away for any length of time for a weeks holiday or how many foreign visits did you do last year? You were about 4 weeks in Namibia we pretty much tried to ring fence 5 or 6 weeks paternity leave. You won't know because you weren't there people do take a lot more responsibility and they make a huge effort particularly when <person 1> is not there particularly to say no that I would end up carrying a lot of it and then they feel that we have to get involved we have to – and the sense of ownership increases when <person 1> is not around. There is a balance as he know what he's talking about and he can do it and it is really easy and that's what you are there for but also the community needs to take that responsibility for themselves and not be carried but sometimes we need to carry <person 2> and that needs to be a two way thing.

Questioner: You have described quite a lot with the word church so obviously there is with some groups there is an issue about calling themselves church that obviously isn't the case with you.

Person 2: At first we called ourselves community as I said earlier but I think it was important to call ourselves church I also think it is an English thing. There are a couple of Koreans a couple of Germans a 3 Americans come to Sanctus and they have no problem calling Sanctus church but people who are more English need church on a Sunday morning struggle to call or its harder for them to make the transition in calling Sanctus church.

Person 1: In this context of course I would use that word because it is a certain word and it means something to you and it probably means a similar thing to me as it does to everyone else around this table – how you take it outside this context I'm talking to colleagues at work about it or my mates about it or people I meet at 'mind body spirit' or there are other words and other phrases that I would use in different contexts which to me means the same thing and I don't mean to be derogatory. Sometimes I use church and sometimes I call it other things.

Questioner: I need to know what do you mean by church, what does church mean to you?

Person 1: I think church indicates the succession from one point to another and being part of an on going tradition, but it also means in my head a formalised sense of the body of Christ on earth. That sounds very big but not only are we connected into this rich tradition using that term, but we are also part of a much broader thing in the spiritual sense of where we fit. It is about that body of people. It's definitely about a group of people and we could be church anywhere.

Person 2: It's about being focused on God and Christ.

Person 3: I use the word church with everybody.

Questioner: **That means that in the world that you exist in a) that they understand what that means b) that you feel there is some integrity about that word within the context of Sanctus 1.**

Person 3: Yes

Person 1: There are people like that who I know at Sanctus 1 who would only ever say church like a couple of these people, from other countries and people who come from other broader traditions who have ended up in Sanctus would happily use that phrase consistently all the time to everybody and anything and they are happy about that and I think that's really positive and I would not want to take away from that, but I also think that for me it is not right and I am sure for other people it is not right so it is a language a label.

Questioner: **We need to talk about the wider church involvement – say <person 2> did something you didn't like or someone else in Sanctus 1 did something you didn't like how does accountability work not just within your community but outside of it?**

Person 2: I am part of the staff within St Anne's that's where my line management is, so I am accountable to the Rector of St Anne's. I am also accountable to Church Army and my line manager within that Sanctus ! also has a steering group which has on it the Archdeacon, Area Dean, George Lings from the Sheffield Centre and a few people from Sanctus 1. Whilst that was self selected, it was selected by me and they officially don't have any power, I don't have to do what they say.

Person 1: It's more of a reporting structure and it has an accountability built into it. This is what we are doing and this is where we are going and they make suggestions and come back to us and say how is that informed, where are you understanding that from where does this fit into a wider picture.

Questioner: **How do difficulties get sorted out then?**

Person 1: Outside the community or inside community?

Questioner: **Both**

Person 1: Inside, I think it is important that everybody are open and honest in a constructive way and so whenever we are talking about stuff that might cause problems or where there is a conflict which doesn't happen very often, but when it does – it's about that being respectful towards each other and being sensitive to each other. We did a whole series on death which was a great start to January – it was that whole sense of, we don't know what every bodies experience is about this particular subject might be, everybody needs to be quite careful not tip toeing around in a real

way but we need to be quite aware of each other and those are the sort of principles I think we bring to any potential conflicts, butting of heads that goes on.

Person 2: In three years or so in Sanctus there have been 2 or 3 points of quite serious conflict. One was quite personal to myself and my wife a few years ago and was painful for us both, and that was resolved, in some ways that's not a good example because that is too personal.

Person 1: In the broader sense if there was an issue where somebody or something upset somebody else generally speaking <person 2> or I would mediate between those people and say what happened? why did it happen? what do you feel about it? what do you think they feel about it? and at some point create a discussion around with those people whoever or however may be around that issue which might then feed back into something that we do on a Wednesday and so I hope that we can constructively pick out things that might be central issues.

Person 2: I always say at the beginning it is not how well we get on it is how well we make up

Questioner: So if someone was not happy with your responses and wanted to take it further where would they go?

Person 2: It depends – they can take it to the Archdeacon they can take it to the diocese.

Questioner: Your Archdeacon is your line accountability on a pastoral level?

Person 2: On a pastoral level it is more to the Rector of St Anne's and people know that's where I am licensed to.

Questioner: Are people of Sanctus 1 on St Anne's PCC or any reflection on the Deanery?

Person 2: No

Questioner: Has that been deliberate?

Person 2: Deliberate or not..

Questioner: You are technically outside the structures aren't you?

Person 2: We are technically outside of the structures for one significant reason is that I am licensed at St Anne's which is in one parish, we have services at the Cathedral which is another parish still in the same deanery but also services when we meet Wednesday nights at Sacred Trinity which is in another parish in another deanery so we can't fit into one deanery so we are essentially outside it we don't fit the existing structures.

Person 3: If some one at Sanctus did have a disagreement with what you did or what both of you did or complained do they know where to go?

Questioner: There are some people who would be concerned about the safety of joining a particular church where the line accountability because of potential abuse as we well know from experience so how would you respond to that?

Person 3: On the notice board at Sacred Trinity which says what Sanctus is about it says that I am part of the staff team of St Anne's and it gives details about the steering group.

Person 1: Every flyer we send out says <person 2> is licensed to the Anglican Bishop of Hume, so I think that is important not just when we have a falling out but in terms of where we stand in the broadest tradition as well because how do people know who we are how do they know we are not a cult we are a community within that very valid tradition, although we might be operating in a very different way to the rest of the local traditional church.

Person 2: The website says we are licensed to the Bishop of Hume, and all the flyers to.

Questioner: There is an inconsistency there about line-accountability because you are outside the structure, which may raise some people's concern?

Questioner: A Line of accountability to see clearly one identifiable ministry plus representatives of your community able to influence the diocese at the PCC Deanery level so that you are actually recognised as a church therefore have representation to a wider body into Church of England policy.

Person 3: But the exclusion is happening to us, we have no way we can belong, we don't fit with the current structures.

Person 1: I don't know that we are being met half way? why are we making all the running? and I say that in the nicest possible way as the Church Army are fantastic in what they do and we are very grateful and as a church we make every effort to show how grateful we are to the diocese and Church Army for their support an encouragement but we do a lot of the running to meet and the sense of using the Cathedral in that is quite a good example. We are very welcome to use it but we are not very welcome in the building in a practical sense week in and week out, and so there is a sense we are Anglican but we are also covered in the broadest sense, stand outside that and I think there is strength to sometimes be able to say we stand a little to one side of it, rather than saying we are absolutely subsumed by the institution and hence that to a large extent why various members of the community would be in Sanctus 1 but not be in main stream Church of England.

Questioner: In terms of the fact that it is the Church of England that enabled the project to occur and have funded it. You say you feel part traditional and slightly to the left had side of it what does that mean in terms of a relationship to the denomination?

Person 2: The reality is that we cant have a relationship, because the way it works equals three parishes across 2 deaneries with people travelling, it means that there is not structure in place were we can belong. I would love Sanctus to belong.

Questioner: The new pastoral measure going through should help you?

Person 2: Yes the Pastoral Measure is going through synod but by the time the legality gets through it is going to be 5 to 7 years.

Questioner: So you are hoping that as the Anglican Church evolves its sense of developing ways of being church, that they will eventually get the system in place to enable you to belong is that it?

Person 3: That is what I would like whether that is what Sanctus would like.

Person 1: I think we have to make it absolutely clear that there are people in Sanctus 1 who are uncomfortable about the fact it is an Anglican initiative and people would love to have seen it as an ecumenical thing or would love to have seen it as a – wouldn't necessarily see it as an Anglican Church of England thing.

Questioner: Why not and what does Anglican mean in that context that worries people. What is it about Anglican that worries you?

Person 1: I lay my cards out and say that I am Anglican through and through having been to loads of other churches. As a classic example there is a guy who comes to Sanctus who is a practising Catholic but for him Sanctus is also very real form of church and his cultural and family background would not allow him to say that Sanctus is church because it doesn't exist within their understanding of what that church structure is.

Person 3: There is a similar thing with someone else from a vineyard evangelical background and whenever we do anything slightly liturgical he freaks.

Person 1: He gets quite upset about some stuff.

Person 3: Absolutely

Person 1: Because he perceives it is too Anglican but a lot of that at the end of the day is we all come with our own experiences our aims ideas our own theology our own whatever and we are all very grateful for the fact that, and I think this is very genuine and I am not just saying this because it is the right thing to say but we are very grateful to the Anglican Church because of the fact that they initiated it, the Archdeacon in particular is very consistently supportive and encouraging and I think would defend us against, but it is that sense of ownership within the diocese is very good.

Person 2: There are things that happen each year I submit a report to the Bishops of the diocese and we are starting to pay money towards the diocese as well and things like that show that we want to be connected and we want to be part of it, but we don't want to be a congregation of St Trinity we don't want to be a congregation of St Anne's.

Questioner: Because you would alienate people and because we are being church.

Person 1: Yes, and it cuts both ways as there points with which the Anglican Church would like us to take a parish share but where do we fit in that and how do we get response from them so it is a sense of meeting half way.

Questioner: Do you resonate the stuff, which comes from the Archbishop about wanting to change the core of the structure of the institution so that 'fresh expressions of church' like yourselves becomes a core vision for the Church of England, which is what it is doing under what is called fresh expressions. Is that the stuff that you resonate with and then you rebel

against having to be parish church. Is that what I am gauging right that your vision of being network church and therefore what <person 2> is saying is awaiting the structures to fall into place to validate that, is it where you are at?

Person 1: Yes – within a mixed economy of the church full stop.

Questioner: Basically what that means is that the church that you are used to can co-exist with churches that Sanctus 1 is seen as just a legitimate as others.

Person 3: One of my problems with Sanctus 1 is the Anglican C of E side, even though I do recognise the fact that it is allowed it into being. I used to be a happy clappy at an Anglican thing originally, so one of the things I don't like is this liturgy and Bishops and all that thing – I really don't like it at all.

Questioner: Why don't you like it – is it tradition?

Person 3: It is tradition it is a cultural thing, it's the fact that the Anglican church in my eyes seems to be for other people and not me. I spent my whole life going to soul survivor and greenbelt and being a post-evangelical manager of an evangelical bookshop and actually having feet in both camps and I find that narrow focus unhelpful.

Questioner: Anglican for you then is you see as quite narrow – I don't want to put words into your mouth. When I say that word it is negative, something that is quite narrow quite arrogant something very institutional. Is that right?

Person 3: I don't think institutional is a bad thing not necessarily arrogant, just not focused wide enough. The church is so much wider I think the biggest challenge for the church as a whole has isn't the gauge of how we structure church or what ever, it is the fact that one day Sanctus 1 will work alongside the message in partnership, you ask would that be the ultimate gospel challenge to us?

Questioner: I have asked a lot of questions. We have spoke a lot about the connection between Anglicanism and yourselves – is there anything that we haven't spoken about?

Person 2: Just a brief comment really, when the diocese appointed me they didn't have an exact idea of what they wanted. They knew they wanted me to be creative but they didn't know what that would involve or evolve, whereas my understanding of other things like B1 in Birmingham, was that they were far more strategic, from the diocesan point of view. Take 30 people put them in the city centre and say this is church. With me it was appoint one person and see what happens, now that's great for the amount of freedom I get but at the same time it means that the diocese is almost working on the hoof to create structures first and responding to our needs and only respond to the fact that I want to build relationships and have good relationships with the diocese. The danger is that I could have gone off and done anything potentially, however it has worked well, and we are trying to work in partnership and playout are own pretty unique calling in this diocese.

Questioner: With regard to structures have they licensed you to mission and they have ended up with church and now don't know what to do with it. Is that a good summary?

Person 3: Yes maybe – the license for the city centre mission.

Questioner: They have to catch up with the fact that actually what is resulted is a Church.

Person 3: Yes

Questioner: How do you think other churches in the area and the wider church view Sanctus 1?

Person 3: The wider churches - I think is St Anne's views it in a positive way because it means they don't have to do anything. Sacred Trinity I think they are pleased that the building is being used. Churches within the diocese have quite good profile so come and use us as a resourcing place so tonight's service, there will be a few people from other churches in the diocese will come in looking for ideas. So generally we have a positive relationship with most churches in the diocese.

Questioner: And outside of the Church of England?

Person 1: Great relationship with the Methodists

Person 3: Yes good relationship with the Methodist, good relationship with URCs

Questioner: Evangelical groups?

Person 3: We don't really have a relationship with the evangelical churches and that's not being a conscious decision I think, we are part of the city centre churches forum in the city centre and the evangelical churches aren't, so there is no forum for relationships to take place.

Questioner: And finally I have given an open thought is there anything else you want to say- 'why Sanctus 1'?

Person 1: We went through about, I don't know how many names there were lists and lists of things we met up about 5 of us in the first month or so that we going and said we can't keep doing this church Wednesday night thing, it has to have a name, and so we went through all sorts of names and decided that Sanctus is a great word to describe us. It sounds a bit mysterious, it has a resonance with all sorts of stuff that was culturally obscure and it sounds a bit clubby although we are not clubby at all but it was that slight, and the '1' comes from the post code sense in fact if Salford had a post code in theory is should be S1 but Sheffield but Salford is M3 St Trinity but it is that S1 and also in the community one church one God etc...

Person 3: Sanctus 1 holy 1 - I think is quite clever and also the S1 is probably lots of things called Sanctus just makes it a bit more street wise.

Questioner: Is there anything else that you want say that we haven't covered?

Person 1: You haven't asked us any of the questions I thought you were going to ask us which I think is extremely interesting. I thought you would ask what is the place for bible in Sanctus 1, I mean it is great to discuss stuff like this in a very strategic kind of way do we fit and what do we think and how do we work way, which is really refreshing. I think it has been really interesting just to listen to what has been said.

Person 2: I am aware that a lot of Sanctus 1 is built on me, and the fact that I am full time and we have been very lucky. Therefore when I move on it will be quite key to get the right person and probably more important than getting the right person to start up with putting the second person is probably more important and way harder.

Person 1: We know that I think.

Person 2: Also at the same time there is a leadership growing.. I was just saying that although when I move on I think it will be important that the group is growing within Sanctus and that is something we are starting to work on in developing leadership.

Questioner: Maybe someone within Sanctus 1 and maybe coming along and actually getting ordainedwithin the group?

Person 2: On one level although I disagree with the premise about having an ordained person it becomes Church of England.

Questioner: That is not what I mean.

Person 1: I wonder why it needs to be someone based within the group somebody taking it on I think its real strength is having somebody as a leader who takes it on an runs it because otherwise what happens is everyone else who is part of the community the body of the community then would have to almost take responsibility for its setting towards these structures we don't necessarily any of us have the political nouse about the Anglican Church and nor the theological training nor would necessarily want to and I think the difference is we see – It might happen I'm not saying it wouldn't – but I think we see the way that people tells us stuff for years in Sanctus is very different than saying if there was somebody who really felt a burningthen great but why within Sanctus?

Person 2: One possible way in the future would be taking ecumenical partnership linking with Methodists with a member of Sanctus whose Methodist ministry is part of Sanctus community could take something on. I mean in some ways it is evolving and see what happens.

Person 3: That is the story of Sanctus 1 in a way that's how things are, it is organic it has evolved it does seems that its quite good there isn't a 3 year plan.

Person 2: You see we have put a meeting of people together to talk about strategy and where Sanctus is going and one level that fills me with great fear and trepidation but at the same time, it needs to be fluid, so they can evolve within the group rather than it being a rod to beat the group.