

APPENDIX 6

24th February 2005 'Moot' Group Interview Transcript

Questioner: How did Moot start?

Person 1: It started very much with a group of people who wanted to do something without having a home to do it in. And then, that group of people found a home to do it in at St Matthews.

Person 2: In terms of the sort of target group, I don't know if there is one. I think we started off with us, which was originally 20 somethings and is now 30 somethings, kind of clubby creative people type ideas. But, I don't think that is necessarily where we wanted to stop. I think it would be nice to expand that. The group has really benefited from having people there who fall outside of that category and I think it is really important to have a good mix of people. I think that is helpful for the group.

Person 3: I think one way I see it is that it was a group of people who felt that churches they had been involved with were not really meeting their needs in terms of providing an environment that they felt comfortable worshipping in and providing an opportunity to explore faith in a way that made sense to us.

Questioner: Given that you have said something about church, do you want to say something more about why you needed to do something new, rather than doing something that was traditional?

Person 1: I don't know whether anyone thought about doing something new for the sake of doing something new. I think it was very much a case of people wanting to be able to express their relationship with God through worship or through however means they chose to, without feeling they had to conform or follow a certain pattern of church service, say 7 o'clock where you have a time of reflection and then a time of choruses and then a time of confession, which certainly works for a lot of churches and a lot of people find that very helpful. But for this particular group it wasn't even a reaction or a rebellion its just they wanted to be able to express their relationship with God slightly differently. And so its very much about finding a space or a home to be able to do that with authority or with leadership that would allow this group of people to do that.

Person 2: I think I've said this as a joke before, but I think there is some truth in it. When we started doing stuff with this particular church we had ideas and we would say stuff and kind of come up with suggestions – 'what do you think about doing x'? And the church would turn around and go 'yeah great, go ahead and do it'. I think that was really refreshing to have that kind of permission. And then there was equally, and this is the other side of it, there was the feeling for me that the church was looking at us and going, 'you make us look cool'. I mean that as a joke but they didn't have an evening service and it filled a nice space for them - certainly where there is an age group that wasn't necessarily there or hugely present. I think we've brought a whole group of people along that weren't there before.

Person 4: I think it is for people who are maybe on the fringes of Christianity or you could even say I think, wanting to explore spirituality or become aware of that. Compared to more traditional forms of church where the language, the sub-cultural language that is used is unfamiliar and if they are seeking spirituality it doesn't provide them an easy access point to Christian spirituality because they don't understand the language or the symbolism, because its, I don't know, old or they haven't grown up in a Christian tradition. So I think for people who are maybe post-Christian in that sense, it provides an easier access point to a Christian spirituality because moot uses the tools

of every day life and tries to use the language of every day life even though it fuses that with liturgy and obviously Christian elements, but it does that in a more contemporary setting and manner.

Person 2: Yeah, on that, I think I alluded to it earlier about creativity, but in my experience church is normally quite words-based. What we wanted to do was make it a little bit broader than that so that it could be visual, it could be sounds, it could be emotions, it could be touch, it could be a whole lot of other things which appeals to the whole person. I think that's what's important. Not that it's purely on the basis of appealing to people, but that it fulfils something that obviously wasn't there at some level, otherwise we wouldn't be doing it.

Person 4: But it also taps back into what you were saying earlier, in that because we wanted to worship in a style that we felt was appropriate for our own personal context or our own personal experience – whether that be musical taste, aesthetic taste etc. - a lot of people are interested in the arts and that side of things so are more visually driven perhaps than other people. I think that those 2 things go side by side in some sense so that because we were doing something that focused, it opens up the possibility of other people being able to interact far more easily with that than other things.

Person 1: for me, this is almost the evangelical aspect of the service that people don't really understand or don't really know. And to explain that or unpack that a bit further is - if you go to a certain church service that has a very similar style and format every week, so you don't really experience any personal, sorry, you don't really get to see or understand any personal relationship that the people doing the service have with God because they are following a certain format. And for me, one of the strengths and one of the greatest needs and one of the greatest aims of moot, is that every week someone has carte blanche freedom to be able to express themselves however they want to express themselves, or sorry, express their relationship with God, however they choose to express their relationship with God. So for me the services are two-fold, there's the contents – there's the actual focusing on God, but there is also the subtext to it – I sit there and think 'oh so that's how this person relates to God', which is quite profound as that also gives me a deeper understanding of God, but also a deeper understanding of the person doing it. And that is one of the greatest aims of moot because as I say, in the traditional format, it is very much an A4 sheet format that you will follow and so as the audience, as the congregation you don't really see any personal relationship with God, or any expression of that.

Person 2: I think if you are not used to, or are uncomfortable with the way someone else is expressing spirituality or relationship with God, it can be very uncomfortable at times, but I think that's a great thing, in that it pushes people outside what they are used to and gets, as Person 1 says, for people to think through another's perspective for a while and maybe come up with something they haven't thought of before.

Questioner: Is Moot a church in its own right? Is moot in a church? Is moot doing something to a parish, a network or wider, the idea of the Kingdom of God?

Person 3: I think one of the roles that groups like ours have traditionally had over the last 10 years or so, is that of almost a safety net for the rest of the church. As people drop out of church, not relating to it anymore, they will fall into a group like ours, where they can feel a little bit at home, it feels a bit more natural. I think some people have seen groups like ours in that kind of role, but I think they are, and they need to

be, a lot more than that. But in a way, I think that's how some people see it relating to the rest of the church.

Person 4: I think it also tries to place itself within the tradition of the church of England in the sense that one of the Church of England's' core concerns is to present the gospel afresh to each generation. That's a statement that moot takes seriously and so it finds itself at what you could express as the 'cutting edge' of the Church of England. So I think it very much fits within an Anglican tradition at its core. And the core elements that make up a moot service I think still fit within the Anglican tradition – there's liturgy, there's visual elements, there's typically call and response, there's participation, there's blessing, there's ritual and that fits with a whole spectrum of Anglican tradition – whether it be Anglo-catholic or even evangelical. So I think it follows in that tradition, its just maybe more 'cutting edge'.

Person 2: I'm just thinking about those things like parish and network and kingdom of God and stuff like that. They are all quite rigid categories, but actually as time goes on I think the boundaries between those things are eroded and if you were to come to moot, you can come as a parishioner, you can come as a member of st Matthews church, you can come as someone who is purely a mooter, or you can come as someone who's from the other side of London and doesn't quite know where to go. Due to our locality, geographically we are quite central, which makes it easier for people from different sides of London to get over to us. There are also other things that people from the day conferences and the web site – the web is a whole huge thing where people can get stuff out of moot as a community.

Person 1: But all is not a bed of roses and I agree with both of you, but taking it almost at a superficial level, how does this need relate to the parish? I think it could be said of moot that we don't really relate to the parish in the traditional sense. We don't really have that many connections with the local communities, we are probably seen and we probably see ourselves as a discreet service of the church, although within the church, but a discreet service of the church. There is little cross-fertilisation of congregation members between the different services. In terms of network though, I think the network of groups like moot is very good, but then you've got to broaden it out – moot is probably not as fixed in the more traditional networks and then when it comes to the kingdom of God, I guess that's a big question for us to answer – I think God's got to answer that really.

Person 3: I have to agree with you in saying we don't have much of a connection at present in the parish, but then, people don't live in parishes anymore. The way that society works has changed - certainly in a big city like London. Maybe that is one of the things that new groups like ours is doing - moving away from the parish model and maybe that is where the future of the church is.

Person 4: I think that within the urban context anyway, you look at st Matthews, and it isn't made up of people who live in that area and I think that any church in London in that kind of urban context, it isn't. So I think if we were talking about a more rural location, like moot was in Bangor in Wales, it would probably be quite different, I imagine that we would all probably live in a close local geography. But London is different in and of itself in that.

Questioner: What is the particular vision of moot? What is it trying to achieve? And what are the specific things that you wanted to see birthed when it started?

Person 2: I think that it is important to remember that moot is relatively young at 2 years old. And picking up on what Person 1 said earlier, I think it is right - the road to hell is paved with good intentions. But, as a starting out-group, I think some of the things we have talked about in terms of the creativity and stuff like that, was a big one in terms of aims and objectives and what we wanted to bring to stuff.

Person 3: I think one of the aims that seemed quite clear at the beginning, was that people wanted and needed a spiritual nourishment that they weren't finding elsewhere - this was one of the things expressed regularly by those who were involved at the very beginning. I think that was one of the main aims.

Person 4: I didn't join until after a couple of months of moot starting, but I think one of the things, coming from a group that was quite similar to moot, is that it became obvious that in having things like 'scripture space' and 'discussions' and 'prayer groups', that it followed a pattern that was far more akin to almost traditional evangelical church, such as cell groups and that kind of thing, where I think other groups just have highly creative, highly participatory services. It added a lot of things to that and provided, as Person 3 said, a way of developing your spiritual life in new and various ways which I think is certainly the heart of what moot is. I think the services in some senses aren't at the heart of what moot is, but it is a series of things that people can go to throughout the month, so people can grow - 'Scripture Space' for instance is something that encourages people to rediscover the sense of how can the bible relate to your every day life or 21st century culture - those kind of issues, which can't be addressed in the same kind of manner in a service. And equally the discussions take things onto a different level, so I think it's great in that there are many different things that go on that people can grow in different ways and choose to go to as many of those things that they want to. But they are all as equally a part of the community.

Person 2: I think that when we started out, we started fairly small scale two years ago, we didn't want to overdo ourselves and burn out within a short space of time, but right from the start I do think there was a sense that community was important in terms of aims, and also a sense of questing, right from the off, we were doing services but before we did those services, in meetings, we would talk around the issues we were going to do a service about; so if you were doing something about prayer, then we would talk for a while about the idea of prayer and we would try and discover that as a community ourselves in order to feed the service. Obviously as time has gone on, that has expanded to, as Person 4 says, 'scripture space' and a whole lot of other things which are really really helpful. Community and exploration in terms of spirituality and relationship to God were the two main things that I can think of that we started out with really.

Person 3: Another aim was to be a place where I could bring friends or colleagues who most of whom have had absolutely no experience of church and it won't be hideously embarrassing and that they will be able to relate to it. Because there are so many people who, of our generation, have ideas of spirituality and it introduces them to Christian spirituality, in a way that they can relate to - which isn't overloaded with slightly redundant practices.

Questioner: That's the first time you have talked about un-churched. Most of the other conversation was to do with what sounded like 'de-churched'. Has that been a conscious thing to focus on de-churched? Or can you describe to me where you think all that is going in terms of vision and mission?

Person 3: So far in our experience, most of the people who have been involved have been de-churched – people who have got church experience but who have dropped out of church. I would say the majority of people involved in our group and probably other groups like ours are de-churched. But I think we can't confine ourselves to that. And I think that surely part of our aims should be, as well as the de-churched, we should be a natural place for unchurched to explore Christian spirituality.

Person 4: Some of the ideas behind moot were for people to be able to access Christian spirituality in a public space, which I know we have done very little of, but I think certainly, that seemed to me to be one of the things that were at the heart of what moot wanted to do. But due to lack of funding and other things, it hasn't been as possible as we would have wanted it to be. Part of the reason why we have dealt mainly with de-churched people is because mainly de-churched people drop into churches, or drop by. I still think, as Person 3 said, one of the aims is clearly to engage with people who are interested in spirituality. I think the way to do that for moot is using public space and it is definitely in our future I think. It's just difficult at the moment with the property crisis etc. but it is definitely at the core of our mission to allow people to engage with Christian spirituality in a way that is authentic to who they are and where they are.

Questioner: Can you be specific what sort of things you mean by 'using public space'?

Person 4: I know that a lot of us are very influenced by café church and that style of doing things, after Ian visited New Zealand and various café expressions over there, as well as people's experience of Karen Ward in Seattle and the kind of café style things they have there which is very much using a public arena, a coffee shop, to allow people to come and to sit and to chill and to engage in Christian spirituality. I think that a lot of people have expressed desire to do something like that. That is certainly one of the things I would like to explore more.

Person 2: In terms of limited resources, there are lots of things we would love to do. In other groups I have been involved in doing cabarets and art shows and stuff like that, and that's a whole aspect of stuff that I would really enjoy doing again, but as I said earlier, because we started out small and expanded from there, the way in which I thought about it is in terms of the community snowballing in terms of adding people on as best we can to help the community expand. Beyond that, there isn't a great deal of activity but its not for lack of will. I think it's for lack of resources – you can spread yourself too thinly. So that's where we've left it for the moment.

Questioner: Shall we move on to methods, unless there was anything else anybody else wants to comment on?

Person 1: Just responding to your initial question, I fully agree with everything that has been said, but I don't think there is any particular strategy behind it in targeting groups. The question was regarding the de-churched and un-churched. I don't think there's any particular strategy to focus on each of those target groups, I think its just as simple and as superficial in a good way, as has been expressed so eloquently, i.e. A group of people who want to just, in a public space, be able to have an expression of their relationship with God, and allow other people to join in that. So it's inclusive of whoever you are – churchd, unchurched, de-churched...

Questioner: But how is that any different from what traditional churches are trying to do?

Person 1: Because traditional church operates out of private space, it isn't a public space.

Questioner: Is that how you feel? So, do you feel that what you are doing is the same as a traditional church?

Person 1: I have never thought about it and I don't particularly want to dwell on it actually. I just want to dwell on what we want to do. I wouldn't necessarily try to compare that with other things that other churches have done, or traditional churches have done. I don't think its been done before by a church, no sorry, it has been done before by a church, but I don't think it is done as often as it should be by churches. But I don't discredit anything else a church would do, or compare it either.

Questioner: When moot started doing this activity, how did it work it out and how was it agreed and how did it start? It's more about process and how it was worked out.

Person 1: There is going to be a recurring theme in this, but I think it comes back to anarchy in the greatest of most positive sense of the term anarchy, in that because the aim is for individuals to express their relationship with God, if an individual wants to do something, it's there responsibility to go and do it. I think that's very much the ethos in how things are started. So in terms of the services, its very much up to whoever wants to take services to go out, do it, source the materials, get help, etc etc and if somebody else has an idea, its very much up to them to take that forward, and if there is no enthusiasm within the group then it doesn't go forward.

Questioner: So is it individualistic or communitarian?

Person 1: I don't understand what those terms mean.

Questioner: Is it about individuals doing precisely what they want without reference to community or is it organised through and with a community?

Person 2: Well I think there is a sense of consensus about it. I don't think it was necessarily about people purely going off and doing their thing, most people would bring to the group ' I'd quite like to do this, do people think it's a good idea?' and at some level the community will either consent or assent to it. So, yeah, I think its right in the sense that everybody brings their own particular flavour and that's what the make-up of the group is. I can remember suggesting that we had a discussion based around a book such as Brueggemann or Walter Wink or something like that and initially that worked very well, but eventually the will for that disappeared and we eventually went on and did other things. And these were all things that at some level people either assented to or consented to.

Person 1: To come back to your question I think that is very black and white and I think what that question lacked was an understanding that the individuals make up the community and I can't recall a single time in the last two years, when somebody has brought something to the group and the community has said that they didn't want to do it. And I think that there is a responsibility within the individuals that make up moot, to think collectively as a community. In response to your question, it's not as black and white as somebody goes and does something on their own or does it as part of the community.

Questioner: Is there a decision-making process, a regularity of a meeting where the community makes decisions?

Person 1: No

Person 3: We do meet once a month, where ideas get run by the core members of the group. This is for anyone who wants to be involved in that process.

Person 1: I agree with you, but that isn't a decision making process, it's just a sounding board.

Person 3: Yes, but its a place where someone can share ideas and get feedback from the rest of the group. It's about as structured a decision making process we have. It's a consensus.

Person 4: Its not something where, I mean we talked about other forms and ways of doing church and what Person 1 said earlier about how a lot of forms of church have one sheet of paper and they do that every week – so by our very nature, because we are doing quite different things each week and not conforming to what one or two people say church should be like, the community itself decides or validates what people say as you said – by their assent or decent towards it. That's our interpretative tool, that's where we decide things, so that's the decision making process. We don't go to a committee and present something for three people to decide. You bring it to a group of the most committed members of moot because they come to an extra meeting and bandy it around – that's how we decide things.

Person 3: And as Person 2 said, if there isn't the enthusiasm for something, then it won't happen.

Person 2: I think there is a space for people if they don't like something or do disagree with something. Most people would feel comfortable with saying that they aren't all that happy with something. I don't think anyone has actually said that, but I think I would feel able to disagree. It would then get thrashed out within the group, within the community.

Person 3: I think we have had times when somebody has brought something and people have said 'I don't really like that.' But then once it was explained more fully, people have been ok. I am thinking about the service structure idea with specific elements to be included – at first there was apprehension from those who don't like to conform, but once people saw how flexible that could be, then they realised that it wasn't actually restricting them, that it was actually a help. Then people were happy to accept it. I think there are things people bring that maybe people are uneasy about and people feel free to express that and then eventually, either people come round to the idea or reject it.

Person 2: If someone turned up to a meeting and said they wanted to do three hail mary's at the beginning of the next service, I don't think that would necessarily lead to a veto, but to a full-on discussion about Anglo-Catholicism and what those various aspects mean. That's just an example of something that might get presented for discussion.

Person 1: Even though we have said that people can volunteer for services, the thing we are now encountering with new people in the group, is that most of the people who have initially done the services were people who have already been involved in alt worship or emerging church for a number of years, and were comfortable with that kind of method. One of the things we have had to face recently is, how do we encourage people who are on the fringes or that are brand new, to become involved in

that? I think one of the ways, is to put the experienced member with a less experienced member to try and encourage other people to participate. We are trying to encourage people who wouldn't necessarily offer to do a service.

Questioner: What activities did you plan to do before starting moot?

Person 3: If I remember rightly, the key activities that we wanted to set up were a service, and some form of discussion mid week. These were the key things we knew we wanted to do.

Person 4: and prayer groups.

Person 2: I think it was recognised that there was a lot of talent in the group and that we could do other things should we want to at a later date, but just at the start up, we didn't want to over-stretch ourselves or spread ourselves too thinly and wanted to stay simple and then expand activities as the group expanded.

Person 1: we wanted to start gently and not overstretch ourselves. We didn't want to start with a big bang and then implode within ourselves. We wanted to start gently and focus on simple things and see how that developed.

Person 3: There was an element of letting it grow organically - starting off with the basic ideas and seeing what else would come out of it.

Person 4: It's also from a desire not to be programmatic. I wasn't there from the start, but I can imagine that simply because people's experience of church had been where everything was programmed out and there was no chance to change how church had been defined from the year dot. From that, I think things come out of the group. So naturally not everything was planned from the beginning because people from the group bring different things. Someone might come in to the group and might bring with them something completely different. It's a desire to be open to what people say.

Questioner: Would you say then, that the vision is actually quite fluid?

Unanimous: YES

Questioner: Going on to the mission shaped church report, I don't know if people have seen that, but just to summarise, it looks at fresh expressions of church as a number of different categories of different forms of fresh expressions of church. Are there particular labels that you would use to describe moot, in terms of what was created? Things like alternative worship, café church, cell church, youth church, network church. Are there key labels that you would use?

Person 3: It's almost easier to say what we are not than what we are. Personally I don't like the term 'alternative worship' to describe what we do because I think we do a lot more. It makes it sound like we just do creative services.

Questioner: You don't just have to conform to one, it might be lots.

Person 3: I think our services will probably fit with the alternative worship. I haven't read the report and I don't know how they define all these things, but I don't like that label, as it's not just that.

Person 4: 'Network church' can definitely come into the equation. We are definitely not youth church or cell church. You could argue that at some points we do do café style church in that we sit in a court yard and have a service there and we have tea and coffee before services now, so there is an element of that and a desire for it to develop more of that.

Person 2: Taking up what you said about the 'alternative worship' or the 'creative worship' label. I think that labels are for jam jars rather than for people or things, but it was a label I was happy to be associated with for a while actually. I think 'alternative worship'...'Alternative to what?' is the question that usually gets thrown back fairly quickly.

Questioner: The question is not to validate whether alternative worship is a label but more about exploring it in the context of the definition within the 'Mission shaped church report'.

Person 2: what I'm saying is that initially I was happy to assent to 'alternative worship', but whether I am still happy to assent to that I don't know. I will have to look at the report.

Person 4: From the description in the report, I think we would be happy, but with the premise of what Person 3 says is that it does tend to describe just creative services, or some people could see it as that, but having read the report, we would be happy to say, yes, this is part of what we do.

Person 3: If you have read the report are there any of the others you would identify with?

Person 4: Just those three – alt worship, network church and elements of café/cell church. There may be others but I can't remember.

Questioner: When you have thought about the fact that you are 'being' church, is there a particular thing that you have in mind? e.g. Some groups talked about the influence of rublevs icon – in terms of being very relational – to be something that they then say that's God, therefore we are going to be that type of church. Is there a metaphor or an image or a particular model that you are holding quite dear in the way that you do moot?

Person 4: I think that 'trinity' has often come up in discussions. I know that Ian has got to the heart of some of the theology of being church. I know that a number of people identify quite happily with rublevs icon as church being a place of embrace, welcoming, as participation, all those resonance's that you have with the idea of Trinitarian theology, ideas encapsulated in that would resonate with the group. Whether it's as explicit as that I don't know – I can only speak for what a few other people have said and myself.

Person 2: My feeling is that whether its overtly said or not, it seems to me that a Trinitarian understanding of church is what tends to happen. I have talked a lot about community but I think that that's what we have come up with. Not everybody has a mind for theology and therefore they wouldn't necessarily be able to put it in those terms, but at the root I think that's what it is actually.

Person 1: My favourite word from what we have said is 'personal expression of relationship with God' within the community.

Person 3: I think that community is one of our key words.

Person 2: Organic – and another one we take for granted but is actually quite important – ‘Christian’.

Person 1: The thing about all these words and labels stems from, your right, your relationship with God is organic and Christian. So in expressing that, in my view, your style of worship will be.

Questioner: A slightly adjunctive question, but I want to go back over some of the things that have been coming up. How important are other people concerning your Christian faith? You talked a lot about ‘my’ relationship with God, how important is the community in terms of for you having a relationship with God?

Person 1: As I said earlier, when I go to a service what strikes me the most is not what I get out of the content. It’s me thinking through Person 4’s relationship with God and I get a deeper understanding of Person 4 as well as God/Christ/Spirit through the content of the service. And that for me is really profound. That for me is really evangelical as that is people expressing themselves in their own words and in their own style and people can relate to that and people understand that. People go ‘shit’ I can relate to that, I can figure that, or I can’t relate to it. Which is just as valuable and important. If people say, ‘I can’t relate to Person’s 4 relationship with God at all’, then that’s just as evangelical as people saying, ‘I can really relate to Ian’s relationship with God’.

Person 4: I think my understanding of this is that we take seriously the idea of the Incarnation and the Spirit of God at work within each of us, which reflects who God is and it’s only as we come together as a group and allow each other to express authentically our relationship with God, that we grow both as individuals and as a group because our relationship with God isn’t just myself in isolation from anything else, but rather its through moot and a whole lot of other networks and people.

Person 3: Without other people I would find it very difficult to have much faith at all. Other people in the group help me enormously. Prayer groups are a vital part of my spiritual being. Also in discussions, I learn so much about my faith from other people, or it might be that in hearing something that someone else says, it stimulates new thoughts. The other people in the group are a huge part for me of my faith.

Person 2: There is a lot of movement in what we do – in a service there is physical movement in the activities circulating with other members of the community and you can see other people going on their journeys at the same time as you. This creates a sense of both you as an individual and other people with you as well, journeying together. Also in the discussions there is a lot of movement as well in an intellectual sense, where people talk stuff over and intellectually chew things over and you can see people carrying on with their journeys in terms of what they say and how they express stuff. If it was just about that, I don’t think I would be happy - I think it’s about transcendence as well. It’s also about going beyond just you or the community in terms of how you get on with God. That’s hard to explain as it can be quite existential but it can be quite literal as well.

Person 4: An important element of how I think I relate to the community and the other groups I have been involved with before moot, and found it as much as in moot, is the sense that negative theology (or the acknowledgment that shit still happens in life), is an important element in my being able to express my relationship with God. In moot is

the acknowledgement that life isn't all rosy and that God doesn't take care of you so to speak, in ways that a lot of us have previously understood. A vital component for myself and my wife, is that acknowledgement and being able to grow in that and have a confidence in that – a confidence in not having confidence in God.

Questioner: Going back to the group, in terms of what you've describe as what you do, how would you describe the group? Do you see it as being legitimate church, do you see it as a congregation, how do you see it in terms of the Christian faith?

Person 3: I see us as church.

Person 1: I see us as a congregation and part of the global church.

Person 3: I see it as church and as a congregation.

Questioner: Do you want to say more how that links to 'how does the wider church relate to what you are doing? Are you seeing it in a bigger picture?

Person 1: This is very much my personal view and I don't pretend to speak for the group here, but I regard the church as a global man made structure to worship the Christian God, whatever denomination it is – whether its Catholic, Baptist, Protestant, Ana Baptists, Anglican, whatever it is and within that there are just several congregations. Some of the congregations are as big as Southwark Cathedral, some are as small as some dodgy cell church in West Wales, which may be Pentecostal or free church, but as far as God's concerned, I don't think he regards Southwark Cathedral as one church and St Matthew's as another church. He/she regards the global church and gets a big kick at seeing the different congregations.

Person 4: There's a political question behind your question – to politically understand the church either as an authentic expression of church within the Anglican tradition - and to say that, has certain political connotations. We would all agree with what you say, but that's a Gods-eye view of what church is. The human view of what church is means that we are supposed to do certain things (such as Eucharist etc) and it brings up the question whether we think we are an authentic expression of church in those ways. I think we are an authentic Anglican expression of what church is.

Person 3: I think you are right – we are an authentic expression of church (I don't know what it takes to be an Anglican expression of church), but we probably do fit in. For me personally, I don't feel Anglican but that's just me. I was Baptist for a lot longer than I've been in moot.

Person 2: There is a sense in which one has had to fight quite hard to have an alternative worship scenario, it hasn't always been as easy as it is now to do what we do. I think sometimes there is a tendency to be quite possessive about an alt worship congregation and quite selfish and to say that this is how we do it and blow the rest of you. But I don't think that is something that's really a problem for us. I think we are quite inclusive and welcoming and I think that we would be willing to at least be quite trans-congregational in the sense that someone from other congregations would be able to come and spend time with us.

Person 4: The wider issue of how moot sustains itself, having a building, growing in terms of financing things and getting staff to be paid for and Ian to be paid for in the future, to do that, we need to be an authentic expression of Anglican Church in order to qualify for that. That's what I was trying to get at – if we don't see ourselves as

authentic Anglican church and don't associate with Anglicans primarily, it puts in doubt some of the things we want to do. There is a tension there for me in that I think we need to be (and I don't mind being either).

Person 2: What you're talking about is the political angle. But there is also the question whether you feel confident enough that what we are doing is valid, and I definitely do. It is authentic and it is genuine otherwise we wouldn't be doing it or believe in it.

Questioner: We are getting onto the Anglican identity questions and I think that relates to what is new and what it inherited to the idea about what you think relates to 2000 years of church history and remembering the unique story of the Anglican church as something that links catholic (with a small c), and apostolic. Going back to that and thinking about services and what you do, how does it relate to what is new and inherited?

Person 3: To a certain extent, what we do, in terms of our services, actually draws a lot from the 2000 years of church history. Probably more than any church I've been involved in. We do look back – right back sometimes – by looking at the desert fathers etc and looking at how people have expressed their faith over the years and finding things within that that we can relate to and that we find useful for us in our present post-modern situation. Very little of what we do is particularly new. A lot of it is a more modern expression of ways that people have worshipped God in the past. You were talking about being less word-based and being more visual but then that's not new. IT may be new in our modern society, but it's not new in terms of church history.

Person 4: I wouldn't say particularly that anything we do is new at all. This idea of proclaiming afresh in each generation the gospel – we may not all put it like that, but I think using a data projector with apple Mac lap top is on a surface level is very new to some people who come to the services, but on a deeper level I think that nothing we do is new at all. It's all drawing on the tradition, but packaged in a contemporary way.

Questioner: Looking at how moot relates to Anglican structure in terms of deanery, parish councils, relating to parish priests - how does moot relate to the traditional accountability structures?

Person 4: We have three people on the Churches parish council. Two of which volunteer from our group, and through Ian who automatically sits on it who is an ordained deacon at St Matthews, there is definite accountability and relationship there. This is the main way in which we relate to the wider church, where ideas from the wider communities of St Matthews are passed on to us – whether for our involvement in things or concerns relayed back to our working group, which meets once a month, and discussed there or where we can have ideas that are taken to the PCC. Ian operates on a more day-to-day level because he works two days a week for St Matthews so obviously there is a communication there that happens more regularly than the PCC, where he can have the ear of Philip the incumbent to discuss things with him. There is an accountability there that happens more permanently.

Person 1: Members of moot become members of St Matthews church and financially contribute to the church, which is accountability both ways. St Matthews also has accountability to the members of the congregation - those members of the congregation who go to moot and those members who go to the other services.

Person 3: There has been a certain amount - during special occasions, during Lent and Easter week, we get more involved in what St Matthews as a whole is doing. There are people who are involved in moot who do go more regularly to the morning services and particularly Peter the NSM Assistant Priest, who comes very regularly to moot and

is very supportive of us. So there is some involvement of moot people in the wider church life.

Person 2: We are all aware of each other's existence and aware of what we are all doing. There is a certain amount of two-way traffic between people who go to the congregation on Sunday morning at St Matthews who come to what we are doing, and equally some of the mooters go to the Sunday morning service. In terms of accountability politically, which is what Person 4 was talking about, I am quite new to Anglicanism and am still trying to work out how some of these structures work. So it's a bit of a learning curve for me.

Questioner: Do you feel that moot has a relationship with the diocesan bishop – the bishop of London?

Person 3: Through Ian, yes. As he is an ordained deacon, there is a definite accountability and relationship there.

Person 4: He takes an interest in the group as well. He has done a discussion group and is doing one next month. So because moot is seen as a mission shaped church, he has oversight of moot and could be said to take a keen interest in its development. But I would say it's not on a day-to-day basis.

Person 2: On a personal level, he has been to a couple of the things that we do and I have talked with him about art. My initial impact is that he is a nice fellow.

Person 3: We do have more of a relationship with the Anglican structures than a lot of other similar groups by virtue of the fact that we have an ordained deacon as part of our group. That gives us more automatic involvement in the structures of the Anglican Church.

Person 2: As a result of that, Rowan Williams knows who we are and that we exist and what we are up to. Everybody seems to know who we are and so there is a sense that we are part of an Anglican communion as opposed to a Baptist one.

Questioner: Does anyone want to descent to that – thinking about Anglican? I heard what was said earlier about not feeling particularly Anglican.

Person 3: That's more of a personal level rather than the group.

Person 1: With regard to the political stuff, I think moot has a greater connection with the Anglican structures and political community than many other Anglican congregations around the country – many of the more traditional congregations are probably less intertwined with the Anglican structures. On a more personal level, I have been more interested in Anglican beliefs – as part of the Anglican Church, I have an interest and responsibility to try to understand the structure we are in. When there is a synod meeting, I take an interest where as before I might not have done.

Person 4: Thinking about our own position critically – part of that is because we have had to. In order for moot to be recognised, for it to be supported and backed in some ways and for us to develop, we have had to do that. The question behind that for me is, would we have done that if we didn't have to? If someone had offered us a café for free, would we have chosen the association? In my mind, part of it is because of the need to do that in order to carry on with what we want to do.

Person 2: That would equally apply if our structures were to do with FIEC or evangelical churches or the EA etc. We would just have a different relationship with a different set of people. That's not to say they are interchangeable or that it doesn't matter which one we go with, but speaking personally, I find the Anglican structure is much more helpful and easier to live with than some of the other church denominations I have been involved with over the years and I've been involved with a few. So for me it is a much happier relationship than others that I've been in.

Person 1: A much more fundamental question is, 'is moot cross-denominational?' i.e., would moot be able to operate in a Baptist church or a Pentecostal church or Catholic Church? And I personally think the answer to that is yes.

Questioner: Thinking about the future – is there a future? What is the future of where you would like moot to go?

Person 2: There is definitely a future for what we do. For me, a future for the group involves the community expanding and being more conscious of its calling to look after people outside the community a bit better. The very simple phrase 'feed the poor' is something that comes up in the bible a lot which leads to a discussion in definition about feeding the poor and who the poor are, but I do think that that's a way in which I would like to see the group expand. We are developing a link with a homeless hostel up the road and that's a step in the right direction, but personally I would like to see more of that expanding as the group grows in size and stature.

Person 3: We have covered the future a little bit in terms of the aims and objective of the group – we would like to do something that's a bit more café. Since we started at St Matthews, I've become aware of more bishops and people within the Church of England talking about (and with the mission shaped church report), about the future of the church, as it is looking a little bleak and they go on about the new expressions of church being the way forward and a future for the church. I find that slightly daunting. We are a small community and it's quite an onerous thing to think that the future of the church is on our shoulders. On the other hand it is exciting that there is a freedom to keep on exploring and doing new things and I think there is definitely a future and it's hard to say what the future is going to be because we are going to keep changing. We changed the way we do things and what we do just over the last two years and I think the future is more change and so its very hard to say what moot will look like in three years time.

Person 2: It's a bit presumptuous and egotistical to say, 'i've seen the future of the church and it's us'. I don't think that's just false humility there. I do believe in what we are doing and think that what we are doing injects something new and fresh and hopeful to the future of the church. Personally, we went off and did this because we felt it was not already existing somewhere or that certain needs were not being catered to. And therefore, if that focuses the ability to find out what peoples needs are is there, then hopefully we will organically respond to that future.

Person 1: I agree with Person 3. I would like our future to be for a group of people to remain humble and for a group of people to remain completely open to anybody to join them. That's all I want from the future.

Person 4: Wanting to do more out in the public space but recognising the at that requires more funding than we have at the moment, unless we have some very creative ways of doing that. Also thinking its great that the church sees groups like us as having a part in the future but I think our big thing is that I think we do, but only if we get some money and some other things that we desperately need i.e. To be

accepted in the fullest sense of the word. We can be accepted in a very trendy way but part of expanding what moot does, does require that second harder step. But I do definitely believe moot has a future. It's very open and would echo what Person 1 said – just to be open to other people and what other people bring and how we develop as a group.

Person 2: Another thing for the immediate future is just to keep doing what we are doing better and improve on it. I think there is a part of me that wants to say 'bigger and better' but I don't necessarily think that bigger is necessarily better. Better is better. How do you quantify success? It's very difficult. I don't know if you can necessarily.

Person 4: I think that to do things better, we want people to be able to engage in their Christian spirituality and to continue to explore that and journey in a way that grows. That we wouldn't remain static that we wouldn't get burnt out by doing too much too soon, but that people would not be able to quantify that in concrete terms but would be able to say 'yes we have grown' like Person 2 says, in terms of she's learning. So for people to continue learning more about the Christian faith and in terms of that sense of transcendence that people are, not accessing god more but feeling 'closer' to God and more at home in the Christian tradition.