

Transcript of “Christian Consumerism & Liturgy with Rev. Frank Ritchie.”

00:00:00 Speaker 1 21 elephants by Scottie Reeve.

00:00:14 Spanky Moore Hey, we're going past the giant corrugated iron sheep.

00:00:17 Scottie Reeve And dog.

00:00:18 Spanky Moore What's this place?

00:00:19 Scottie Reeve Tirau.

00:00:21 Spanky Moore Oh, You know I grew up on a sheep farm?

00:00:24 Scottie Reeve Yes, I did know that actually.

00:00:25 Spanky Moore Do you know what kind of sheep my parents bred?

00:00:28 Scottie Reeve Oh, angora, long haired Celtic?

00:00:32 Spanky Moore Not everything is a Wellington craft store, Scottie.

00:00:35 Scottie Reeve Yeah, all right.

00:00:38 Spanky Moore The Romney sheep, which is the backbone of the New Zealand economy

00:00:42 Scottie Reeve Oh yeah. Is it or is dairy the backbone.

00:00:44 Spanky Moore No, now that is, that's true.

00:00:46 Spanky Moore But back in the day. God I can tell you some stories about sheep.

00:00:52 Scottie Reeve You don't see a lot of people wearing wool these days, do you?

00:00:56 Spanky Moore No, no.

00:01:02 21 Elephants theme

00:01:30 Spanky Moore Alright, well, hey, here we are. Where are we? Parked somewhere on the side of the road.

00:01:35 Scottie Reeve Oh my word. we are in the nether regions of Hamilton. I mean, Hamilton is kind of the nether regions of the North Island to begin with, isn't it?

00:01:45 Spanky Moore I feel for Hamilton.

00:01:47 Scottie Reeve Yeah, it gets a harder time than it deserves, right?

00:01:49 Spanky Moore Well, it's because it's in the shadow of Auckland and it shows sort of Auckland's insecurity complex that it always has to sort of bully the minority culture. Anyway, we've just gone past the corrugated iron sheep.

00:02:00 Scottie Reeve Which is in the wonderful metropolis of Tirau.

00:02:04 Spanky Moore You are tuned into the 21 Elephants Podcast, and we did a series one last year because Scottie, you wrote a book, right?

00:02:12 Scottie Reeve Yeah, that's right.

00:02:13 Spanky Moore The book was called 21 elephants. Great book, but here we are doing a second series of podcasts. Can you tell me why we are on the road? Why have you dragged me from my wonderful hometown of Christchurch into the North Island? And why am I stuck in this immaculate rental car in the middle of somewhere I don't recognise.

00:02:31 Scottie Reeve Well after the first season of the podcast we had such a good time talking and heard from people all over New Zealand who were just pumped about some of the ideas and were asking us can you go a little deeper on some of those ideas. And one of the key threads that we saw were coming out again and again, was this idea of these modern problems that were big for millennials big for our generation. And we started to wonder if maybe we could go on a little bit of a road trip, visit some people who are living into some ancient solutions to modern problems. And rather than trying to invent something new to deal with the struggles we face today, drawing upon ancient wisdom and ancient practise.

00:03:14 Spanky Moore And it's been a great trip so far.

00:03:15 Scottie Reeve So much fun.

00:03:17 Spanky Moore We've dealt with some like anxiety and mental health issues, and we've engaged around cell phones and smartphones and some of this hyper connectivity. But we're going to continue on our trip. Before we keep going, I do kind of want to say, if you haven't subscribed to the podcast or rated us, we'd really appreciate that because it helps sort of more people get word about what we're up to and a lot more people subscribe to this podcast than we ever imagined. So, thank you for those of you who have subscribed.

00:03:47 Scottie Reeve Yeah, we looked the other day and we're coming up on about 5000 subscribers, which is pretty amazing. But one of the other groups we want to give a shout out to is Laidlaw College in in Auckland. I think they're also in Christchurch.

00:03:59 Spanky Moore That's right.

00:04:00 Scottie Reeve But Laidlaw do amazing theological training and they have paid for our flights and our petrol and a few of the costs that it takes to bring this podcast to you.

00:04:10 Spanky Moore Well, Scottie, take me. Show me this island of yours. Show me these wise gurus that dot this island and show me some ancient solutions to these modern problems. Shall we continue on my friend?

00:04:23 Scottie Reeve Let us foray on towards wisdom and truth.

00:04:28 Spanky Moore Scottie, start the Prado.

00:04:30 Scottie Reeve Start the Prado. Right, we are coming up on Cambridge in the mighty Waikato and where we're heading, we're going downtown Hamilton. Beautiful, beautiful, Hamilton. And we are going to roll into Zeal here in Hamilton, the youth centre where we're going to, be borrowing a recording studio for a couple of hours and we are going to be meeting up with the Reverend Frank Ritchie. Some of you may know Frank from years of radio journalism. He's done stuff on Newstalk ZB, but for years I think he used to run a Sunday night show on Life FM. Frank is a Methodist minister. And he wrote -

00:05:22 Spanky Moore Wesleyan.

00:05:23 Scottie Reeve Wesleyan?

00:05:24 Spanky Moore He's a Wesleyan minister.

00:05:26 Scottie Reeve Didn't he say Methodist? Aren't they the same thing.

00:05:29 Spanky Moore No, it's complicated. I have a Wesleyan friend, and if you call them Methodist, may the Peace of the Lord be upon you.

00:05:37 Scottie Reeve I'm going to ask him to clarify that for me. So, he is a Wesleyan Methodist minister, and he runs a little church up here called Commoners and does a lot of good thinking around habits and rhythms of life. And so, the problem that we are going to be addressing with Rev Frank today is around consumerism. It is around our insatiable hunger to always gravitate to the next and the new in the way and that consumerist anti gospel has overtaken a lot of our worship here in the West, where rather than doing church and being community, we often do church attainment instead. And so, what we're hoping, Frank will be able to bring is a richness around liturgy, around habits, around rhythms and some ideas about how these commitments help us to, to disentangle our spirituality from the God of this age.

00:06:45 Spanky Moore I do see that with like a number of the peeps I work with that there's both this deep desire for our spirituality that goes deep right, that goes somewhere. But at the same time, there's kind of an addiction to pretty like low commitment that people seem to gravitate towards worship and ways of being church that require as little of them as possible and give as much kind of bang as they can get for that.

00:07:17 Scottie Reeve Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:07:19 Spanky Moore So I guess, if I'm really into exploring with Frank - . Because liturgy sometimes can be pretty dry. Pretty tough going.

00:07:26 Scottie Reeve As we as we experienced last night.

00:07:29 Spanky Moore As we have experienced on this very road trip. I'm really interested to know from him is can it be alive. Can it actually be helpful. So, I'm not just looking for like a device that will like torture me so that I can feel spiritually superior to Pentecostals. I'm looking for something will actually give me life. And I want to know can you find life in liturgy, and can liturgy help me from the day-to-day deal with sort of the consumerism and advertising I'm surrounded by? Has it got anything to offer me in the day-to-day I inhabit or works in a monastery, but it doesn't really work when you get into a shopping mall. So that's what I want to know?

00:08:12 Spanky Moore What is New Zealand horse magic? That giant building we're driving past over there. Have you heard of that?

00:08:18 Scottie Reeve New Zealand horse magic?

00:08:19 Spanky Moore I think it must be a horse show where they must have dancing horses, did you see that?

00:08:23 Scottie Reeve Or potentially horses and black top hats that perform magic.

00:08:28 Spanky Moore I'll have to Google that one. OK, so we're on our way.

00:08:40 Scottie Reeve We're away?

00:08:41 Spanky Moore We're recording. We're happy. I'm going. You're going.

00:08:44 Frank Ritchie Am I going?

00:08:45 Spanky Moore Yeah, you're going.

00:08:45 Scottie Reeve Alright. Well, here we are in Hamilton at Zeal Hamilton. Sitting here with Reverend Frank Ritchie. Do you prefer Frank or Francis?

00:08:54 Frank Ritchie Well, it depends on. It depends on how people are viewing Francis. Since he's the Pope now. And everybody likes him. I quite like Francis. But if there was a

00:09:00 Scottie Reeve Are we going with Francis?

00:09:01 Frank Ritchie Yeah, we'll go with Francis either. Either is good.

00:09:03 Scottie Reeve So we are here with the Reverend Francis Ritchie. So, I think probably some people listening will know Frank's voice from the radio. You used to have a Sunday night show on Life FM a few years ago. Is that right?

00:09:18 Frank Ritchie I did. I did a show called the Green Room, which was two hours of talk back on Life FM for about 8 years. I did the night show for two years and the drive show for two years, but everybody remembers the talkback show. It's like the other stuff's just an anomaly to people. They don't remember the jokes. They just remember the controversial conversations on Sunday night.

00:09:35 Scottie Reeve Some call him the Mike Hosking of Life FM. So, Francis has a history of broadcasting and ministry and is a Wesleyan Methodist minister.

00:09:50 Frank Ritchie Yeah, we had a good long conversation about that before, before we started recording. Just to clarify, yes, I am Wesleyan Methodist.

00:09:56 Scottie Reeve And I just want to point out. Some of you may remember that Spanky corrected me in the car and said he's not.

00:10:00 Spanky Moore What did you say, Scottie? Wait a second. You listen to this Frankie boy, what did you say Frank was?

00:10:06 Scottie Reeve Well, I think I began saying he was Methodist and you said no, he's not. He's Wesleyan.

00:10:11 Spanky Moore Well, if you're not a Methodist, are you? Wesleyan is the first part.

00:10:16 Frank Ritchie It is. It is the first part, so the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand and the Methodist Church of New Zealand are two distinct entities. There was a split in 2000.

00:10:22 Spanky Moore They're two different things I would I'd be dishonest to sit there and not say that.

00:10:25 Frank Ritchie Yeah, I wasn't around for that split, but if someone said to me, what do you identify as a historically Methodist? Like I identify back to John Wesley, the early Methodism.

00:10:34 Spanky Moore See, I'm dealing with this postmodern reality. It all moves underneath wherever it goes. It's sort of like, well, I was ordained into this church, but I identify with this one.

00:10:43 Frank Ritchie But if someone said to me "What are you?" I'd probably say Methodist. What sort of Methodist? Wesleyan.

00:10:48 Spanky Moore Hey, what was the weirdest talk back call You ever got??

00:10:50 Frank Ritchie Oh mate, there were plenty. One. There was this brilliant one where I was finishing up last how far of the show? There weren't many calls coming in, so just started having a go at Benny Hinn's private jet, which I thought that would get some calls going and it did. And now this one young guy called up and he got tell told me I can't criticise Benny Hinn. And I said, why can't I criticise Benny Hinn? He said, "Well, God's called him to do what he's doing." I said, "Well, God's called me to do what I'm doing on the radio. Why are you criticising me?" And he said it's different. I said, how's it different? He said he's a Super Christian. I said thanks and hung up.

00:11:20 Spanky Moore Oh, that's so good. I've told Frank about my best call when I was doing radio as a guy, I wanted to cut my *****.

00:11:26 Frank Ritchie Yeah, that was good.

00:11:28 Scottie Reeve Tell us about that.

00:11:29 Frank Ritchie He called up too, rather than just sending an e-mail.

00:11:31 Spanky Moore Got him on the line, put on air. Hey, Spanky. Oh giddy caller.

00:11:36 Frank Ritchie Did he actually sound like that?

00:11:38 Spanky Moore Yeah. Yeah, he did. He was like I'm going to come and cut your *****. So, we were like whoa.

00:11:45 Frank Ritchie That's amazing. See, I had some decent complaints, but nothing that went that way.

00:11:49 Spanky Moore But Life FM you don't have that.

00:11:51 Frank Ritchie Everybody's passive aggressive. So, I had this one complaint that that came in sent via Hotmail anonymously and it wasn't sent to me. It was sent to some Christian leaders around the country. One of them was a friend, so he sent it to me. It was when civil unions were all going through that era of the Labour government that got a lot of people up in arms with the march down on parliament. And so, this person sent out this e-mail and described to me as this wolf in sheep's clothing that was walking the halls of New Zealand's biggest Christian media. I said I love gay people, duh. Said I was gay. My wife was pregnant with our daughter at the time and it closed out by, it was just this massive conspiracy. I was just covering a whole lot of stuff up in denial. The e-mail closed out with telling these other Christian leaders to pray that I would repent and come to the error of my ways, or that God would take me from this earth. That's so wonderfully dramatic.

00:12:49 Spanky Moore So option A or option B. Do you know what I mean? But there was an option C of course. Because there's option A as you repent, option B you get smitted. Option C they cut your ****.

00:12:51 Scottie Reeve I knew that was coming and it was still funny.

00:13:03 Frank Ritchie I didn't see it. Why didn't I see that one.

00:13:07 Spanky Moore Don't worry, Frank. We'll edit some of this out. OK. So anyway, Scott, yes, I think we've really cleared the microphones are going.

00:13:09 Frank Ritchie Tell my national superintendent that.

00:13:11 Spanky Moore OK. So anyway, Scottie, I think we've really cleared that the microphones are going.

00:13:13 Scottie Reeve OK. So, we have The Reverend Francis Ritchie here. And the reason we've brought him in is we're having these conversations around ancient solutions to modern problems. In the previous weeks, you've heard us. chat with Reverend Jean Malcolm at Saint Peters in Wellington. We went to Kopua Monastery with Father John. And this week we wanted to talk to Frank, because Frank runs a church - he has started a church here called Commoners, which is - I'm probably going to butcher this, but you can fill in the gaps.

00:13:47 Frank Ritchie I'll correct you if I need to.

00:13:48 Scottie Reeve It's liturgical church centred around simplicity, and we see that one of the big challenges for young adults, for millennials at the moment is around consumerism. This drive to always have better and better stuff. This thing of upward mobility and this desire to always want to be in 100 places at once, and an inability I guess to be grounded or centred because we're always chasing the next and the new. So, we think Frank might have some things to add to that. Frank, do you want to start by telling us a little bit about Commoners here and about what you get up to.

00:14:27 Frank Ritchie Yeah. So, Commoners is really, really simple. We planted Commoners just over a year ago in Hamilton, and I had this sense that our culture is really busy. People are frantically busy, and in the churches desire to entertain and to try and keep people with us we often load church life with programmes and entertainment, and it just adds to the busyness. So, you get people in order to run those programmes, going along to meetings, practises, organising. there's strategy, there's vision. So, all that stuff, that kind of just crowds people's Yes. So, we were asking the question, how does the church prophetically respond to the busyness? How does it respond to the noise and actually enable people to connect with God, not just to connect with church busyness and feeling like they're doing mission because they're involved in the busyness. So, in thinking that through I landed on liturgy. Liturgy is a huge part of my life. The practise of silence is a huge part of my life. I discovered it properly at Kopua Monastery after going through a faith crisis. So Kopua actually has a really special place in my life. Yeah, so simplicity. So, our services are really simple. There is no sung worship for instance.

00:15:35 Spanky Moore Praise the Lord.

00:15:36 Frank Ritchie We have some great musicians, but I figured that if we, if we got those musicians doing this Sunday thing regularly, that would involve practises, their creativity would be sunk in there. So, by not giving them that out, they've then found other ways to creatively express themselves one.

00:15:51 Scottie Reeve So, you've never had 10,000 reasons sung at your church?

00:15:55 Frank Ritchie No, we haven't.

00:15:57 Scottie Reeve Oh my gosh.

00:15:57 Spanky Moore Are you aware, friend, that you've just said the most radical development in church ecclesiology in like 300 years. You're aware of that?.

00:16:04 Frank Ritchie It's something that everybody notices. When they come in everybody points out that we don't do music.

00:16:11 Spanky Moore Musicians must be flocking to your church to escape worship practises and the prison that has become contemporary Christian worship music?

00:16:21 Frank Ritchie Well, we do have some amazing musicians who are exactly that. They've come out of the culture where they had to perform every Sunday. They just got burnt out and tired and just needed a space where they didn't have to. But those guys now are expressing themselves in other ways. We have one guy who goes and sits outside his laundromat, and he actually just plays hymns on his guitar. Just relax, confident about it. And he's got a couple of other people who join in outside his laundromat now. I would much rather they were doing it at the laundromat than in the church service on Sunday. So, I think that's great.

00:16:52 Spanky Moore You have got a problem though. Because like, if you turn up to church and you don't have group karaoke, you've got nothing to do. I mean, there is nothing. What do Christians do when they get together other than singing songs? So, imagine your church is failing. You've got nothing. It's boring. What does one do when one gets together and doesn't sing 10,000 reasons?

00:17:10 Frank Ritchie I would imagine that a lot of people would step in and say it is failing and it is boring. There's a really small group of people and it's not exciting. I believe in simplicity. I believe in the need actually for people to get bored and find things mundane, so that then they break from that need for the new and the fresh all the time. It's an addiction. You've got to break that addiction that involves withdrawal sometimes, but our service is one hour. The children are in for it as well. We have a really simple liturgy. We have moments of silence in the service, which initially took a lot of courage on my part. I get really nervous standing at the front and just calling people to a moment of silence and then saying nothing, thinking I hope they don't get bored. So, we have liturgy, we have communion, we take Holy Communion every Sunday.

When it comes to the Bible, we have 4 Bible readings defined by the revised common lectionary. So, I don't have to spend a whole lot of time creatively thinking what am I going to talk about this Sunday. And then when it comes to the Bible, we have a discussion together. So rather than me doing a sermon, I spend a week contemplating the passage. Then we read it out twice in the service and ask people to listen for words, phrases, ideas that stand out. It's the stripped back Lectio Divina exercise. And then they discuss that stuff together and then we discuss it together. Then I always have a piece of art that I connect to the gospel passage, and I share whatever my contemplations were for the week. And then at the end we have some really simple things that they can do to dwell with whatever's going on for them. Light candles. Write down prayers. They can sit in silence and draw if they like. It's a really simple Sunday service.

00:18:49 Spanky Moore Can you just give us a rundown of if, you had to do an elevator pitch of what liturgy is. I mean, mostly I think probably heard the word. Like most have heard it at least. What? What is it in terms of the way you're talking about it so that you can get the head around.

00:19:03 Frank Ritchie Yeah, I would. When I describe it to people who are coming in to us for the first time and they've never experienced liturgy, I just say our service is a time of guided prayer. And so, the liturgy gives us words in order to pray. And then there are words that I'm going to lead us in. And then there are words that we're going to say together and listen to those words and allow them to shape your prayer. That's effectively how it's described it.

00:19:24 Spanky Moore Sort of. It's almost like in this narrower sense of liturgy, it's almost like prayer and poetry. That's one way. So, if worship music is music, this is sort of the poetry equivalent with prayer.

00:19:37 Scottie Reeve So, liturgy it's prayers that we that we pray week after week, day after day. It literally means the work of the people. Is that right? You know, so it's like their prayers that talk about who we are and what we do as the people of God. And they're often on these rhythms. They have the same thing every day or the same thing every Wednesday or the different seasons, every Easter. We pray this every Christmas this.

00:20:00 Spanky Moore Hmm, like a container eh, is that right? They're like a really solid container.

00:20:05 Frank Ritchie Yeah. And by not having the music there, by having things like our liturgy, Holy Communion, that chance to reflect, those opportunities of silence we're also cracking that idea that this music part is where we worship and the rest is well, it's just something else. Maybe we learn a few things. So ,we're saying actually this whole hour is worship and then the life that you live as you step out of here is worship as well.

00:20:27 Scottie Reeve So, your thing is not that worship music is necessarily a bad idea. It's just that in the current culture we have, where kind of maybe that consumer is next and the new thing has got merged with the church, and where worship has been defined as the music. But you guys are kind of doing a bit of a prophetic action to say no, it's all worship. What we do here is that right?

00:20:47 Frank Ritchie Yeah, yeah, yeah. At the moment. And there might come a time when our people go, actually, we really do want to do some music in the service. We'll find a way to do that, that fits with us. But I also know that there's a church hopping culture that goes on where people are just looking for the next best band, and I didn't want those church hoppers coming to us because we had great musicians and a great band. And then just them moving on to the next big band. But interestingly, we skew male heavy, and I think it's because they don't have to sing. Providing a space where guys don't have to sing and don't feel like they have to sing seems to be a fairly, for want of a better term, attractive option for some. There's a freedom in it.

00:21:25 Scottie Reeve It's really interesting. What about, I mean worship in a kind of pentecostal context, as you know, kind of I guess quite an emotional, often quite a vulnerable kind of space. How does the like someone could hear your description of the service and oh, that sounds quite dry. How does how does vulnerability and emotion in some of those things which some people might see as part of a Sunday service. How does that look within Commoners?

00:21:51 Frank Ritchie It doesn't look very overt, and this has been a learning journey for me because one of the things I love about the whole Pentecostal approach is the sense that the spirit actually does stuff. The spirit is palpably present, and you can see the spirit doing stuff. So, I believe that can happen in liturgy and Holy Communion and in silence, but it's not very overt. I would talk about a slow, quiet spirituality. And it took me a little while to learn what to look for to see is the spirit actually doing something here? One of the really palpable moments came for me was sitting in our home group and we were going around our home group. This is our first time listening to everybody's stories, faith, of their faith journey. And we got to one guy who I just thought was coming along to our service, solid Christian. He had been part of been in a church that had just completely broken down here in Hamilton. And I thought he was just coming to us because he just needed another community, and he was just solid. We got to him, and he started talking about the struggle of growing up in a Christian family and the questions that he had, and he got to talking about Commoners, he comes up to me for Holy Communion every Sunday with a really straight face. You'd never think that anything was going on. And he got to talking about Holy Communion and just the tears started streaming. And he said, and I come up to you and you tear off the bread and you give it to me and you say this is the body of Christ given for you. And this is the blood of Christ shed

for you, and he said, and I believe it. I believe you're actually giving me Jesus. I would never you would never see that if you were just looking on a Sunday, but the spirit was clearly doing something with him. I have another young lady, who again comes up with a really straight face, but she shared with me the other day just how much communion has come to mean to her now. Meeting Jesus in communion. Or people talking about words in the liturgy that have stood out, or what they felt during the silence. If you just walked in and you just looked, you wouldn't see any of that stuff. But the spirit is very clearly up to stuff in our service.

00:23:55 Spanky Moore As we look at sort of ancient solutions to modern problems, so a lot of the young people I talk to and deal with, there's this deep pain really. Which is I've often sort of talked around this quote from a guy called Mark Sayers. I think it says, I mean, I've always attributed it to him. I'm guessing he didn't rip it off. That our desire for community is trumped only by our commitment to autonomy. And so many like we, I don't .. Be clear right, I mean, we're not dissing on anyone that goes to a church service regularly, or as part of the community for goodness sake. I mean this is good. It's good to be at something. But there's this pain, isn't there? Where people want some sort of depth. So, they want to be known. They want to be with people. They want to be known by God. They want to be with God. They want something that will actually help them have faith through their week. But they can't do it. They can't bring themselves to do it. They can bring themselves to turn up to something and to sit down and to get their hit. You know a relatively flashy something or you know, they want the church to do something for them. Do you mean put something better on for me. And it's not a surprise in some ways that consumerism started this, and the church tried to dance along. Like the church did its best to meet where people were at. To try to make itself appealing, which I think it should have. The thing that got through the back door is just like fat geese wanting to be fed. Like, just like, geese so fat they just waddle around, and it's like, throw it in my mouth, I can't even be bothered getting up. What so you. I like that you've ordered commoners around both like liturgy once, cause you're like I want to be a lazy pastor and actually have time to serve the Kingdom, right?

00:25:41 Frank Ritchie Well, yeah, it takes me 15 minutes, half an hour to put our service together every Sunday, which means that my focus is on pastoral care. Actually, just going and having coffee with people.

00:25:50 Spanky Moore Yep, and people might think that's bad or good. But regardless, that's what you do because that's the priority you feel Gods put on your life, right?

00:25:56 Frank Ritchie Yeah. And capacity. You know, we're a really small church. I get paid for a day a week there. I spoke to a minister the other week who was working 80 hours a week. He's not paid for 80 hours a week. Where's the? He's got a young family. Where's the capacity for that? So we've got people trying to do the big church thing and do services that are really involved and take a lot of prep, but they don't have the capacity for it. So they're burning out so.

00:26:18 Spanky Moore Well, it comes at a huge cost. That's the thing.

00:26:20 Frank Ritchie It does so, so Commoners, beautifully it fits my capacity. I don't have a lot more to give, so this is what I have so this is what we'll what we'll do.

00:26:29 Spanky Moore Loaves and fishes. I was wanting to know though, what do you think? Do you think liturgy is a gift that moves even beyond Sunday. Does it have something to offer us where it actually helps people. I often think around we're in a world where consumerism and doesn't sleep. Advertising hits us all the time, but that often the church rhythm deals with us on Sunday and

Tuesday. Small group night. Service. Do you think that he has anything to offer? The problem of the sort of roaming consumptive behaviour?

00:27:06 Frank Ritchie Yeah, that's a that's a really good question. I would say yes. And I would say yes, because liturgy for me was a was a lifesaver in a faith crisis. So, getting to that point of I haven't got anything to pray. What do I pray? How do I actually give something to God when I feel like I've got absolutely nothing? Silence was one answer to that, but liturgy was the other answer. And liturgy that comes from others. So, others giving me my prayers to a degree. So, knowing that I was praying with others. Psalms and Scripture are really good in that regard too. Dietrich Bonhoffer when he talks about the Psalms, talks about it being the prayer book of God, of God's people. So, when we pray these psalms, even if they're not what I'm feeling in any given moment, that when I pray these psalms, I'm praying the prayers of God's people. And so, if I'm not feeling this thing that I'm praying, I'm praying for somebody, for somebody else in that moment. I think liturgy does that as well, whether it be the New Zealand prayer book or many other resources that you can get your hands on. There are other people praying these prayers. They have been shaped by other people. So then when we dive into liturgy as our way of praying, we're praying the prayers of others with others, which I think is really beautiful.

00:28:20 Spanky Moore I've met with people in my own sense when they're when you're depressed, you actually struggle to come up with words, let alone words that point to God's hope and it's pretty interesting to have to be reminded, you know, to have words much better than your own. They're incredibly helpful in those drives.

00:28:34 Frank Ritchie And it's shaping and it's maturing. It calls us, it calls us beyond ourselves, which is where scripture, getting into Scripture regularly together I think is really important too.-Part of that entertainment thing is about imagination. What's seeking to capture your imagination and our world has all these messages and ideas that it's seeking to build our imagination with all the time. So, by diving into liturgy and scripture, our imagination is being shaped by the church and by God.

00:29:00 Spanky Moore I do love that simple thing. It's very interesting, isn't it? The whole simplicity idea. Because what you're saying is basically heresy. I mean because this whole idea is you got to give your best to God. You know we win or lose on Sunday. You've got to do your kind of big thing. But I've heard some. I remember speaking to a guy at the time I thought was very lazy, lazy Anglican minister, that said, you know the great thing about a prayer book Spanky? Give me 15 minutes notice. I can turn up. to anywhere. Boom church service beautiful.

00:29:24 Frank Ritchie Yeah, exactly.

00:29:25 Spanky Moore Roll it out.

00:29:26 Frank Ritchie In our church in terms of that, in terms of that laziness and giving God your best. I agree with giving God your best. It's just what does your best actually look like? Does it look like turning up to church meetings or does it involve inviting people around to your home? And doing meals and hospitality with people. So, by not having a lot of meetings, not organising a whole lot of programmes, our people understand that mission isn't serving a church programme. It's connecting with the people around you. So, regularly I'll see our people inviting other members of our church or those outside into their home to have a meal. They actually hang out together. Because they have the room and the capacity to hang out together, and they invite others into that. Because they're not just stuck in church meetings all the time.

00:30:07 Scottie Reeve So, one of the things I'm thinking you know, whenever I ask people at the church I run, Blueprint, what do you love about this place? And it's been the same for 12 or 13 years. They are millennials, young adults. They'll always say it's authentic. They talk about authenticity, and this is a big thing for, for millennials, I think. And we need to be our authentic self and one of the kind of continual themes we've had going around talking to people is, I guess, this polarity of the faux authentic self, versus the true self which God is revealing in us. But to someone who might say to you, they're like, well, how can I be my authentic self if I don't make up the words and I just have to say what you give me every week. Like what's your response to that? Like, where does what is? What is, where is Liturgy's place in me being my authentic self. Mate, can you help me out here.

00:30:59 Spanky Moore Suck on that one Frank. Just when you thought you had a good idea, Scottie shoots it down.

00:31:04 Frank Ritchie Yeah, I think that comes down to that question of what is your authentic self? You know we have thoughts and feelings about ourselves all the time that I don't think are actually true. And when you really sit down and get people into a vulnerable space, that that will come out. So, I think confession is such a powerful thing too. We can talk about that as well. And so, I think what you imagine to be your authentic self sometimes just isn't. And sometimes you need truth spoken into that from an external source. What does God actually say? And I think liturgy does that. Liturgy gives the capacity for truth to be spoken into us. Where so often what comes out internally isn't actually true, so I think liturgy...

00:31:45 Scottie Reeve But whatever rises up from your heart is not true.

00:31:48 Frank Ritchie No it's not true. There's a lot of lies that people are internally saying about themselves regularly. And you've got to hear something external to confront that and tell you who you really are. And I think liturgy, liturgy, good liturgy has the ability to do that.

00:32:07 Spanky Moore OK, mate good starter. The thing I want to know is this. It's around your earlier comment around, if you are a consumer, which we all are a bit, that you're an addict and that boredom isn't the worst thing in the world. And that sometimes what you're saying almost need to spasm. You know, you need to experience your desire to be titillated. And your approach is to say we need to...what? We need to challenge that and be comfortable with challenging that and that liturgy somehow helps. You're going to have. I mean, you're going to help us get our head around how a young person miserably praying through the same prayer, you know, uh, where are the light show? Where's the strobes? How is this a positive formation.

00:32:46 Scottie Reeve Because what you've seen so far, Frank, I don't think young adults listening to this podcast are going to flock to Commoners.

00:32:51 Frank Ritchie Oh, no, and they're not.

00:32:52 Scottie Reeve So, can you just give us something a little more attractive here?

00:32:54 Frank Ritchie And they're not. I think when you when you say something really prophetic that confronts predominant narratives in our culture, you're not going to be popular. Commoners is not going to be a big church. And actually, I don't want it to be a big church. But I was talking to my brother-in-law recently, who's been part of Commoners since the beginning, and he comes from a tradition that has no liturgy. So, it's been really new for him. And in the beginning, he found it wonderful. There was all this new stuff, and he could point out lines regularly that were standing out in the liturgy. We're driving in the car the other day and he said, he said to me, this has become the liturgy just feels mundane. And I'm like, that's really good. It's really good that you've got to that

point because now I think for him and many others, we can break that addiction of new and discover something on the other side that's a whole lot more relaxed. Our brains need to get bored. Creativity comes when we get bored. If you're always distracted and you're always being overloaded, and you've always got this new stuff, there is never a chance for your brain to relax and justice wander and see where it goes. With something like liturgy, once it becomes for want of a better word wrote, and you just know it and it's just internalised, there's something else beyond that.

00:34:08 Scottie Reeve Well, what I think maybe your pitch is. I think of that, you know that message translation, Are you tired, weary, burned out on religion? Come to me and I will give you rest. It's what it sounds like you're offering.

00:34:20 Frank Ritchie Yeah, yeah. If I were to say, what do I want people to have experienced when they walk out of our service. It'd be that they had a chance to sit and breathe. And just take a breath, and actually relax. And they feel a little more relaxed when they leave. Because if that happens then actually, I think they've got in touch with what God actually designed them to be, rather than that busy, stressed, frantic self. That if you relax, you've got more room to see what the Spirit is up to.

00:34:46 Spanky Moore I'd like to you to fill me in. This may not be part of sort of the Commoners thing, but you will have worked around with it. I'm particularly interested in the role of habit. So, like even like daily habit. And that we sort of discipline and the idea of having a habit, like other than going to the gym. Some people seem to be down with going to the gym. Most people have the habit of like watching TV or, you know, videos or going to the mall. They're certain habits, but it does feel like kind of consumerism. The point of consumerism, it seems to me, the way that you keep growing market share was to make us as weak as possible, so you could sell more shit. Like that seems to be how the thing has rolled. I mean, I genuinely believe that. So, we've got very sloppy impulse control now you know. What are your thoughts around liturgy, so beyond the Sunday, into like the daily rhythms that help. A lot of young people I talk to say they want to pray, but they don't know how to do it. And what I've loved about liturgy is saying, OK, here's what a prayer looks like in the morning. Here's what it looks like in the evening. If you do it, you've got. It done. So at the very least you've prayed, even if you didn't feel like it. But on a good day you have space then to also... You'll pray better words than you'll come up with and then have space for your own words in it. They need something like a rope around their waist in the storm of consumerism, blowing them around. Is there anything to that? Have you played around with habit? Have you seen habit be something that's helped young people find their way in a very noisy world?

00:36:17 Frank Ritchie The best story there is, my is myself. You know, I'm a night person, so I'll happily stay up at night and just watch hours and hours of TV. I have Netflix, I have Lightbox. I can watch hours of TV. But in order to find equilibrium, I decided that actually maybe I should try being a morning person, cause if I get up in the morning, I'm probably not going to watch TV. I'll do something else. So, I started a discipline of getting up at 5:00 AM, which is just ridiculous. So, I started getting up at 5:00 AM and utilising the practise of silence, answer and a book that offers some liturgy, so it guides my guides prayers. And silence was really important because I find it really anchoring. It says to me that I don't have to be a great father. I don't have to be a great husband, don't have to be a great church leader, prayer, Bible reader, studier. That actually in the silence it's just me and God. And we're good. Whether there's good stuff happening in the silence or not. And often my brain is just wandering all over the place. So I get up at 5:00 AM. I do that for half an hour to 45 minutes. then I head off to the gym. I'm a gym guy. 6:00 AM just to work on my physical self a little bit. And I've found that I'm a much better person when I do that. When I have that habit to start the day, my wife will tell you that I'm less of a prick when I've started the day like that

than if I haven't started the day like that. And I don't notice actually what goes on as the day unfolds, I don't notice the difference, but she sees the difference.

00:37:46 Spanky Moore But it's that that's hard that. I mean that the word discipline is not popular, so we often have to smuggle it in by saying it's a rhythm.

00:37:54 Frank Ritchie Yeah, I talk about rhythm a lot.

00:37:55 Spanky Moore Because no one can deal with it. But it is a discipline and yet it bears fruit.

00:37:58 Frank Ritchie It is.

00:38:00 Spanky Moore Scottie, I wonder if one of the great discoveries that sort of the younger generation is going to find is actually that limitation is a good thing. So that we live in a world where it's about infinite options and we've become overwhelmed. That's one of things I wonder around liturgy is right now, in theory, you could pray anything, so you pray nothing. Right, you don't know where to start. Liturgy is like well start here. What do you think? Do you think that's like a virtue that needs to be rediscovered.

00:38:25 Scottie Reeve Yeah, I think so. I came to faith in the Pentecostal tradition and through an Anglican church, but kind of an Anglican church that was Pentecostal. And I think, yeah, I knew there were all these things I was supposed to do as a Christian. That I was supposed to read the Scriptures, that I was supposed to pray, but it was I think I was like quite daunted by all of it because I never knew whether I had prayed for long enough or for the right things. You know you prayed for everything like praying for your family takes a while, you know, like and then if you lead a church, you've got maybe 80 or 100 other people, that you're, you know, you're upholding. And so, how you - I think inevitably as you get older, and you have more things in life. You know you have work, and you have key relationships and responsibilities. I just started to look for a way to order all of that so that I could actually do it. In the same way that when you first move into a flat at 18 or 19 or whatever, it's kind of just chaos, you know, and the dishes don't get done and you don't really much care for order. I think that was kind of my young spirituality, but there came a point where I needed to know where to place things and from that kind of the ordering of liturgy and structure actually comes a spontaneity, so I find that ...

00:39:47 Spanky Moore You don't get it all the time because when you get it, you take advantage of it.

00:39:50 Scottie Reeve Yeah. So, you know my most of my prayer at the moment looks like 20 minutes of centring prayer, which is in silence, but yet the other day, you know, 10 minutes in this joy rises up in me and I didn't until a couple of minutes later realised, I'm singing this psalm to God. You know. And it was like the spontaneity rose out of that, I think we talked about this the other day that idea that you imitate and then you innovate and some of us have never been taught to imitate or really I guess that's to be disciplined. Hey, as we've never been taught like, oh, so how do you pray? And I think liturgy is like a really helpful. I have never prayed more in my life than I did when we, our community, put in a 6:15 rhythm of prayer every evening.

00:40:40 Spanky Moore That's really interesting. You know, you were saying, how do you pray? And most people then fudge the answer.

00:40:46 Frank Ritchie Which brings up another point [about] where Commoner is. When I first sat down and started thinking about what our service could look like our one hour service, so I was thinking through discipling and thinking through what we would do that other people could just take

away and do in their daily lives. So, there's nothing that we do in our service that you cannot do at home. And I've talked that up.

00:41:05 Spanky Moore That's pretty interesting.

00:41:06 Frank Ritchie So, making sure that when you leave the service, you've discovered something that you can do at home, whether it be sitting in silence, bit of liturgy, even Holy Communion, writing prayers, lighting candles, everything we do you can do at home.

00:41:18 Spanky Moore I'm very uncomfortable with this lack of dependency though on the central pastor. I'm not sure how an income stream is going to be generated so this.

00:41:27 Scottie Reeve But I so agree with that idea of things being able to be taken away. Because I can remember even amongst the good of my teenage faith, which was very emotions driven and definitely very much about the group karaoke, there was the sense where my faith sort of limped from one conference to the next. And I was sort of counting on the next event I got to make me right with God again. For me to kind of feel what I had felt before. Because I think I was just kind of in a no man's land between there, you know, it's just like, well, what do I do now, because nothing feels as good as the 15 piece band. And I can't have that at home. You know, I can put on a Hillsong record, but it's not quite the same.

00:42:13 Spanky Moore Do you like one of the ... Of course, you move into different stages, so you might have how you are, your personality, like some people, liturgy is just hell on Earth. But there's also this life stage. And I mean, I'm sure that young people could get into liturgy, and they sometimes do. But they love getting together. And the thing just cranking. They love that. And I think what happens one day you wake up and you're like ugh this tastes, you know, I've eaten the sandwich so much. I don't enjoy the sandwich anymore. But you don't know other sandwiches exist.

00:42:43 Frank Ritchie I encountered that a lot and my chaplaincy work with people who work in the media. There's one group that I look after called Salt, solid bunch of Christians. A lot of them, are in existential crisis about their faith. The amount of people that I sit down with, who have grown up around church, they've only done the kind of evangelical Pentecostal flavour and they think that that's it. And now they've hit a crisis, and they're wondering what they do. Well, actually, there's a whole raft of other expressions here. And not that I want it to be consumerism, but actually there's some stuff in here that's deep and it's rich that you that you can tap into. Have you tried liturgy?

00:43:21 Spanky Moore Yeah. And one of the great questions some people have asked me is - when someone suggests liturgy or something restrictive that I feel on my inner spirit, which wants to fly and be free like an eagle, kind of begins to manifest against them. They always just very quietly say to me, it was very profound that when my mentor said this. He said. "I just want to pray. I want to be free. I want to express my Identity, the Lord is right here". And he said. "How's it going for you?" And I was like, "oh yeah, it's not actually working and I never pray." And oh no, I guess that's true actually. And I think the idea of being able to say to someone you want another way to pray, turn to page 602. That, pray these words as if they're your own, and when you can pray these as your own, not as someone else's. When you can begin to pray these as your own, you're going to start to get a feel for what prayer feels like. Do you have a? What's your like? What's your gateway drug for liturgy if you're saying to someone give it a shot. You got a good go to.

00:44:18 Frank Ritchie Oh, it would be the, even though I'm not Anglican, probably The New Zealand Prayer Book.

00:44:23 Spanky Moore It's helpful that you say that so that we don't have to say.

00:44:25 Frank Ritchie Yeah, that's where I turned in 2012, before my ordination, when I went through a faith crisis, which is the whole story in and of itself. It was The New Zealand Prayer Book that I turned to. And actually, some of our liturgy comes out of The New Zealand Prayer Book just because I think there's a beauty in it.

00:44:42 Scottie Reeve We had Brian McLaren come through Blueprint a couple of years ago, and we often give, if someone comes from overseas, we'll give them an Anglican prayer book to take away. And he's just thrilled because this thing has legendary status around the world. It is like a really beautifully put together prayer book, you know, and yeah, it's actually used beyond New Zealand in a number of places.

00:45:05 Spanky Moore Do you know something that you haven't mentioned yet is just briefly, it would be good to hear you talk around liturgy being prayers of the church. So not praying alone but praying with others because that's a bit of a mind bending concept for some people.

00:45:16 Frank Ritchie Yeah, yeah. And that that whole, that whole concept, it's a big concept in and of itself of the unity of the church, the unity of God's people is really significant. No matter where you are. If you call yourself a Christ follower, you are with other people. And so, then I love encouraging ways that people can, I guess somehow, enhances the wrong word, but really feel and get and understand that connection, that they're not alone. So, whether it be liturgy that other people are using, so Celtic Daily Prayer or The New Zealand Prayer Book, and following the week programme that exists in the prayer book. You're praying prayers with other people. Or Holy Communion every Sunday, no matter where you are. If you're someone who's travelling, popping into a church that's doing Holy Communion on Sunday connects you. So I, m not a ...

00:46:04 Spanky Moore Connects you in time too. That's the other thing.

00:46:06 Frank Ritchie So, this is the brilliance of it, and the wonder of it, is you're not just connecting with the people who are sitting with you and taking communion. Actually, you're connecting with the whole church globally and in the body of Christ as you take the body, you're connecting with the church historical and the church future. It pulls the whole thing together. Which is why I'm a big fan of helping people go beyond, when they think about Holy Communion, not just seeing it as symbols or all we're doing is we're taking these things. They could be anything to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross. Actually, no, you're uniting with Jesus in this. And as you unite with Jesus, Jesus, you're uniting to the whole body.

00:46:45 Scottie Reeve Liturgy is such a powerful thing for undoing this consumerist individualism, is that ties to some of what we talked to Jay about this. I've found as a Pakeha New Zealander a real sense of whakapapa, in that I was saying this to our church the other week that the average Anglican is not a Pakeha 32 year old male. It's actually a 20 something sub-saharan, African woman. And so, when we're praying, some of these prayers that the prayers that she is praying and that people are praying and persecuted churches and then that people have prayed for 1500 years or you know. I heard a great quote from Walter Brueggemann a little while ago where someone had said to him "I just feel like the Liturgy's got a bit old." And his question to them was, well, have you become it yet?

00:47:35 Frank Ritchie That's a good one.

00:47:36 Scottie Reeve So the idea is, you know, that the liturgy is not just words we pray, but that as we go through these things, they are transforming and changing us. So, you might be bored of the words, but do the words on the page, have you lived into those? Have they transformed you yet? Because you're not done with them?

00:47:50 Spanky Moore And you've got to pray them too. I think there's things you're not just going to read them. It's the same with the Psalms. The Psalms were boring as hell for me, and they changed when I thought "Oh so you can pray them".

00:47:59 Frank Ritchie Yeah, yeah, actually, pray them not just hear or see.

00:48:01 Spanky Moore Yeah, that's. And I think that's one of the things. It's not just sort of mumbling through, but go can I pray these. They become transformative in that way. Well, I would say that if someone's, you know, part of a church community where music's a big part and they're loving it, it's like boo you. That's great. I just know there's a bunch of people don't know, liturgy exists as a viable, historical, helpful, divine way to worship God and had something worth you know, giving a giving a go. Because of course we all know that many liturgical churches are miserable to be in. But I think there's a new generation that actually brings a new curiosity to it. And so yeah, that's great. That's great. You are so courageous doing it. You should do that at Blueprint. You should ditch all the music and just do what Frank does. And then you could look after people Scottie and I've been telling you this. You need to look after people better.

00:48:54 Frank Ritchie But then blueprint will get a lot smaller.

00:48:56 Scottie Reeve Yeah, I I employed a staff member to look after people. Well, thanks for thanks for coming in, Frank and.

00:49:02 Frank Ritchie It's been a pleasure.

00:49:03 Spanky Moore That's good.

00:49:20 Spanky Moore Where are we?

00:49:23 Scottie Reeve Currently, we're walking past the dogs.

00:49:25 Spanky Moore And the big satellite. Look at that.

00:49:27 Scottie Reeve A lot of big dogs.

00:49:29 Spanky Moore One of those old retro satellites some people used to pick up Seventh Day Adventist TV channels.

00:49:37 Scottie Reeve Yeah well. Seventh Day Adventists have a TV Channel do they.

00:49:39 Spanky Moore Yes, they do. How you feeling bro?

00:49:43 Scottie Reeve I'm feeling terrible eh. Come down with some kind of a cold. Which seems to happen every time we get together.

00:49:50 Spanky Moore Walking to the supermarket for supplies.

00:49:53 Scottie Reeve Yep. So that is the sounds of West Auckland you. can hear.

00:49:56 Spanky Moore Listen to that.

00:49:57 Scottie Reeve Wow laundromat.ehh.

00:49:58 Spanky Moore Baba Noodle cafe.

00:49:59 Scottie Reeve The noodle cafe.

00:50:03 Spanky Moore Five. Is it a \$5 meal?

00:49:59 Scottie Reeve That's pretty good eh. Lemongrass pork on rice.

00:50:07 Spanky Moore Well, Shit me Scottie Reeve. It's a \$5 meal in Auckland. You wouldn't get that in Christchurch. You don't get noodles in Christchurch.

00:50:19 Scottie Reeve It's all just dried out roast beef and three Veg eh. What do you reckon? What do you think of Frank's thing - Commoners?

00:50:29 Spanky Moore Yeah. So I really I didn't, I was caught off guard when he talked around, you know, what does it mean to do a simple church? Simple gatherings. Pretty interesting, isn't it? I mean, imagine the pastors listening to their conversation. They would be just vomiting in their mouth, eh.

00:50:48 Scottie Reeve Yeah, I mean, I must say something sounds nice about that as a church leader. The idea that you don't really have to do anything. He reckons he can pull together a service in 15 minutes. One of his key things was around simplicity around stripping everything back.

00:51:08 Spanky Moore I mean. It won't work.

00:51:13 Scottie Reeve It seems to be working for him. One of the things that caught me about what he said was, he said I think, the boring and the mundane can be good.

00:51:22 Spanky Moore And yes, so tell me. Is that true?

00:51:27 Scottie Reeve Well, I think we, in the society we live in, we tend to avoid boredom at all costs, don't we?

00:51:35 Spanky Moore How we're going to cross this road.

00:51:36 Scottie Reeve We'll just wait until the traffic stops.

00:51:38 Spanky Moore We go down to. It is there a? Oh, this is crazy.

00:51:41 Scottie Reeve Yeah, alright.

00:51:42 Spanky Moore OK, I trust you.

00:51:44 Scottie Reeve And here we go

00:51:45 Spanky Moore Alright. And what do we do now. Off to the island

00:51:47 Scottie Reeve To the middle,

00:51:48 Spanky Moore To the middle where everyone's turning off. Oh yeah. This feels a bit like death to me. You know back in Christchurch, Scottie, we don't have so many lanes. Yes.

00:52:02 Scottie Reeve Yes, or so many cars.

00:52:03 Spanky Moore Yeah, that's true.

00:52:04 Scottie Reeve But these roads are intact, so that's nice.

00:52:06 Spanky Moore Oh, that's too soon. Too soon? Well, as I always say, Scottie better the earthquake, you know, than the earthquake you don't?

00:52:15 Scottie Reeve Yup.

00:52:16 Spanky Moore You're all going to die down there. But I'll take your funeral. You'll have to fly us in, there'll be so many funerals.

00:52:23 Scottie Reeve Frank, saying that the boring and the mundane can be good. That actually sometimes it's good for us to be bored because that's actually where the creativity comes. And it does make you wonder. Like I mean, I don't know if you're like me, Spanky, but whenever I get bored pretty much, I reach for the device in my pocket and it's quite an insecure or a scary place to go as a church leader to create a culture that has room for people to be bored. I think that's pretty much the number one thing I wouldn't want Blueprint to be on a Sunday night is boring.

00:52:54 Spanky Moore Well, yes, you wouldn't want that to be sort of, you know and your Facebook reviews of Blueprint. Gosh, incredibly boring, but I really grew through it. You know, like that's not the normal pitch but I thought that was interesting how he named it though. As we are addicts to the sort of consumer church stuff, you know, we're addicts to entertainment and to getting our hit.

00:53:16 Scottie Reeve Isn't this ironic that we're having this conversation walking through a shopping mall now?

00:53:20 Spanky Moore Well, we just walked into Pack and Save.

00:53:23 Scottie Reeve Columbus, I think we have to go over there.

00:53:24 Spanky Moore Well, OK

00:53:25 Scottie Reeve So we've just walked into Pack and Save and I can see in front of me I reckon on this rack, about 18 different types of shampoo.

00:53:32 Spanky Moore Yeah, this is a good setting for this conversation. Actually, unintentionally, isn't it? So, I thought it was good how he sort of described that as addiction.

00:53:43 Scottie Reeve Well, he seemed to suggest that you starve the beast eh. That's kind of what he was saying.

00:53:46 Spanky Moore You go cold turkey.

00:53:47 Scottie Reeve You go cold turkey and you starve the beast. And he didn't seem to be that concerned with the people who didn't find Commoners, his liturgical church, who didn't find it for them.

00:53:56 Spanky Moore But yeah, you're right. You starve it you see? You don't indulge these addictions. He said you've just got to feel the boredom. That good things come out of boredom.

00:54:06 Scottie Reeve And do you reckon that's part of the problem with the way the church and consumer culture have become intertwined is that we actually indulge peoples addiction at church sometimes.

00:54:19 Spanky Moore Well, I think we see that as kind of being relevant and engaging in context. You know and where their culture is. Which is true. And so we've sort of done that with consumerism. We've said oh well these people all worship at the shopping mall, so maybe we need to be a bit shopping mally.

00:54:33 Scottie Reeve But are we ...

00:54:34 Spanky Moore But he says no. Give them water and bread. Are you are you looking for the lollies?

00:54:42 Scottie Reeve Going to have a look for a cold drunk actually. What have we got?

00:54:48 Shop Assistant Eftpos sir? \$3.50.

00:54:59 Scottie Reeve Thank you.

00:55:00 Shop Assistant Thank you.

00:55:06 Spanky Moore I mean. I guess worship music. It's one way to ground yourself, in truth. I guess liturgy is another way. Do you think Liturgy is better? Does it solve anything for us?

00:55:21 Scottie Reeve I think most of us. For many of us young, younger people we've actually never really learned how to pray and we've never really learned how to read the Scriptures. And yet we kind of try to like, improvise ways to do these things before we've kind of learned how.

00:55:43 Spanky Moore Yeah.

00:55:44 Scottie Reeve You know, my spiritual director talks about tradition. He says like the original latin, which I think is traditio or something like that .

00:55:52 Spanky Moore Throw an O on the end.

00:55:54 Scottie Reeve Yes throw an O on the end. Means the handing on, you know the passing on and I don't think many of us have actually had passed on to us like how to like livea Christian spirituality. And so literally is this thing which keeps us engaged with the Scriptures, which teaches us how to worship, where we are daily repeating who we are meant to be. So I don't know if liturgy should be the only stop, like there's still, room for other types of prayer and other types of worship. But it is something that grounds us in particularly, one thing I heard Frank say, which I really relate to, is the idea that he came to this point of kind of spiritual exhaustion, and it was in that space that he found liturgy. I think he said it basically saved his faith.

00:56:42 Spanky Moore Yeah, that's not an uncommon story really.

00:56:47 Scottie Reeve And this is the thing, right? People might critique it and say, well you know, it's too regimented, or it's too there's, no freedom in it. But you, what I can say is how much I used to pray before, liturgy was probably once or twice a week. And with the with the guiding of liturgy, I pray every day. Yeah, so?

00:57:13 Spanky Moore I don't think liturgy has to be rigid. I think it can be a container that houses our...

00:57:18 Scottie Reeve Ohh this doesn't work.

00:57:19 Spanky Moore We've come the wrong way. Where are we. I think liturgy can just be a container that sort of says here's some words to start with. You know, like the way you can use liturgy, you can still hold your personal prayer and your personal reading and your meditation and whatever.

00:57:35 Scottie Reeve Yeah.

00:57:36 Spanky Moore Words of gratitude. All that stuff, it doesn't have to be regimented. But I do, it does feel a bit like too much freedom hasn't ended up being a very good thing for us. And you come to appreciate freedom so much more, hey. Do you know what I mean?

00:57:48 Scottie Reeve Yeah. You know, I run a church that it probably does take 10 or 12 people each week to make it happen and does take quite a bit of organisation. And we do do worship with music, and I think that's really beautiful and powerful, and there's a sense of the spirit there, but yet we'll also do liturgy. I think I'm and maybe for some who have come from church structures where it's felt like you're doing all the stuff and you don't know why you're doing it that liturgy could be really freeing, but I don't think it needs to be one or the other. I think liturgy can provide some real stability to, you know, to someone from a charismatic or Pentecostal tradition too. That you can still go along on Sunday and have your rock concert, if that's you. But I think liturgy, you know, one of the good things that Frank said is about how everything they do on a Sunday is something that someone can do the rest of the week.

00:58:45 Spanky Moore That is good, isn't it? I think they're particularly good for people who are in dark, dry periods. I think liturgy is a really fantastic rhythm, you know, I mean, it's a safe rhythm that you can sort of find yourself in, but also if you're trying to get your daily prayer on. Man, it's so helpful.

00:59:05 Scottie Reeve And you're right in that what do you do on the day where you just have nothing to say to God? You know what do you do in the pit.

00:59:13 Spanky Moore On Tuesdays.

00:59:14 Scottie Reeve What do you do, you know, what do you do when you when you have just no words. And to be able to lean on the words of those who have come before you as an incredible gift I think in those moments. Or something that helps you to say, you know what, what you aspire to, you know, rather than maybe what is yet. Like so many of the Psalms. You know, the psalmist holed up with his enemies outside, and then saying, and yet, Lord, I will praise you. And you have to wonder if yet Lord he would actually praise him, or whether he was kind of saying, come on God. And sometimes in the Psalms you even see him reminding God of his promises and saying this is who you are, God, and I'm remembering. That's who you are trusting you'll come through..

01:00:00 Spanky Moore I've prayed those prayers too. I've reminded God who he's supposed to be. I remember. Yeah, I remember a particular in our prayer book. There's room prayer number six in the night prayers. I remember praying that the night after a friend of mine had taken her life, and because of course no one had any words. And I didn't suggest it. One of her friends suggested it, which I was surprised by. Because you really know you've moved on from hipster liturgy when in that kind of situation, it was suggested. So we busted out the prayer books, and I remember there's one particular year prayer number six is a beautiful one at night, but it's almost like an anthem for anxiety, really talks around the darkness of night and the night being still. And the night being quiet, but at the end that's sort of at the end it says, but we'll look forward to the new day of new joys and new possibilities, and I remember that night it was very hard to pray those words because it didn't seem like there were much, much joy and possibility at that time. And yet the gift that gave, as I had to say, I had to pray words I'd never choose to pray because it was a reminder, you know, a little reminder of the story we're in and liturgy is. So, I think that's what's really helpful. It continually it reminds us the story that we're in.

01:01:18 Scottie Reeve That's right. And I can you know. Over the years of praying the evening prayer from the Anglican prayer book, there's layers of meaning and experience that gets added to those

words. You know, like every Thursday night, it says be with those who will die tonight. And I can remember praying that one night and that was the night my auntie passed away from cancer.

01:01:41 Spanky Moore Yeah. Wow.

01:01:42 Scottie Reeve You know, so it's every Thursday be with those who will die tonight. And it's this memory of her. But it's this, you know, this grounding, this grounding presence which I found incredibly powerful.

01:01:55 Spanky Moore I think in the end, what we're really saying is it's not really anything against a church service that has bells and whistles. It's really more around prayer. It's around if we if the really the heart of the problem is a consumerism that sometimes leeches into our spiritual life. Right. And consumerism. What's I mean, you know, it has this idea that things are just disposable. There's always a better hit just out there that you don't really have regard for the thing in front of you. That you know, you get out of what you want and then you sort of dispose of it. What liturgy is it really is just slow prayer, isn't it? I mean, it says that the world we, we need a pattern, a rhythm that will slow us down and help us to regard the creation that God's made, regard each other, and that it helps us to actually pray, slow and to live slow lives in a very busy time. You know these markers that happen throughout the day, which is often how liturgy happens. You'd have maybe morning or noon or evening or night. The monks were staying with prayed 7 times a day. But you know, maybe an irregular person might pray once, or twice. They help kind of frame the day and slow us down and to remind us what the joys are the day contains and we should give God the glory for it and it just isn't always a natural thing. Without liturgy to frame that up.

01:03:14 Scottie Reeve And so often I find you know, in in our community where we have liturgical prayer at 6:15 every night, and there's so often after a hard day's work where I don't feel like praying. And then someone comes and knocks on the door and reminds me it's prayers, you know?

01:03:27 Spanky Moore I forgot.

01:03:28 Scottie Reeve Yeah and did you. You come and you sit down and you're like, uh, you know, but then, you know, after those first few sentences, you're like, oh yeah. And you fall into, you fall into the words.

01:03:42 Spanky Moore It's good. You know the truth is I find it very hard to kind of get around to praying, unless they kind of lock in a time. And I have a thing that if I don't feel it, at least I got through it. Isn't that terrible? That's true. Sometimes you feel it, sometimes you don't. I sometimes it's really helpful for me to go, well I objectively prayed today,. I tried to turn up, even when I couldn't turn up. Yeah, I know that goes against so much kind of more charismatic logic and I you would want to do it every day that way. But sometimes you all you can do is bring yourself eh. That's all you can do.

01:04:20 Scottie Reeve But I think I think one of the things that really excites me around liturgy, as you know, we talked, we talked when we were at Kopua Monastery about like, is this just all too hard? This idea of leaving empire of, you know, totally going away like Father John, but I actually think liturgy is something that everybody could weave into their day-to-day life quite easily.

01:04:43 Spanky Moore Yeah, it's true. It's a really, it's sort of like a monastery that goes in your backpack, you know, like you have a little like, like, there's a number of different prayer books, little prayer books, big prayer books. There's lots of guided things out there. It actually is just a really practical way to mark the days and to bring you know to bring the monastic life into the city. The different markers of the day are called the daily office in the church tradition. I always like that kind

of idea that the daily office sort of comes to your daily office. Do you know I mean? Like wherever you are doing your thing, the Daily Office is sort of designed to move with it. You know it's prayer on the go. Really. There is really. There's just so much in it when you're feeling lonely to know that you are sort of held within the prayers of the church and the prayers that have always been prayed.

01:05:29 Tom Lark "Best Weekend"

Best weekend I've ever had its such a good time
And I really feel bad cuz it'll never be this good again
Memories fade and so does a tan
But I'm gonna remember this weekend
Forever even when I'm
An old man
Doo doo doo do do doo do do doo do do doo doo do

01:05:59 Spanky Moore Well, Scottie, here we are in Hamilton. You've brought me to this place. I never dreamed I'd ever come to.

01:06:05 Scottie Reeve What do they call it? Hamilton, the Garden City. Is that right?

01:06:08 Spanky Moore No, no. Christchurch is the Garden City. I think you'll find.

01:06:12 Scottie Reeve Oh the city of sails is it? No, no. A river runs through it, Hamilton. No city of the future is it.

01:06:21 Spanky Moore No, that's a Rolleston. You know, I just want to thank you for bringing me here. I mean, I have my, I was sceptical about the North Island but since you've shown me around, I've just realised it's just such an exceptional country, you know? No, but the people, no the people, are so hospitable and generous and kind. And it's so beautiful. So thank you for bringing me here.

01:06:44 Scottie Reeve It's been an absolute privilege Spanky.

01:06:47 Spanky Moore Hey, it was fun meeting Frank today.

01:06:50 Scottie Reeve It was so great. We want to give a big thank you to Frank Ritchie, who's been on the airwaves for so many years and making such a positive difference in the media for a long time, and Frank has bought the most amazing wisdom today. So thanks River and Frank Ritchie for everything you bought to today's podcast.

01:07:07 Spanky Moore And what a courageous man. I think, even if we sort of take the piss of this and that. I think he's doing some really courageous stuff addressing the addiction. We salute you, Frank my man. Also, I'd like to say a big thank you to the musicians who have contributed some of our soundtracks. Renee and Dave, who have got our wonderful theme song from Alex the kids. So thank you to them also. Holly Arrowsmith and Tom Lark. So thanks so much for your creative genius. And also again like I said big thank you to our Laidlaw College who help chip in some cash so that we could do this road trip to cover some of our cost. And Laidlaw have fantastic counselling course if that's your buzz and you want to check it out, head along to landlord dot AC dot NZ and you'll find out more information about open days and what not. So thank you, Laidlaw.

01:07:56 Scottie Reeve And if you've found that from today's podcast you've been particularly interested in how you can practise liturgical prayer or begin a rhythm or a habit of prayer or life, a few resources we want to flick your way, you can go to 21elephants.co that's 21thenumberselephants.co. And if you go to the podcast page, there we have some resources there.

If you're based in Wellington too, every evening at 6:30 PM at Saint Peters on Willis St a group of us get together to do liturgical prayer. You're welcome to join us. And just finally, the 21 elephants book is still for sale. We've just printed a second edition of that because a bunch of you have been ordering more of those since the podcast has come out so please please get along and buy a book and support the work that that we're doing here with the 21 Elephants podcast.

01:08:49 Spanky Moore Hey, do you know something else, Scottie? I didn't tell you about. Someone messaged me the other day and said that they would love to get together for a, like, a podcast listening session and then discuss the ideas that have come up in the podcast which sounds incredibly pretentious, but you know that wouldn't be a bad idea, would it? Wouldn't it be great getting together with your friends?

01:09:11 Scottie Reeve And hey, actually one final shout out before we finish up. I just want to say a big hi to Charlotte who was in North Carolina listening to this podcast and has just moved to Wellington and started coming along to Blueprint.

01:09:24 Spanky Moore And so your little scumbag millennials, and you can't be bothered turning up to church. Charlotte moved all the way from the other side of the world to go to Blueprint.

01:09:31 Scottie Reeve Not only that, she moved from Trump country. My word, that's a long move.

01:09:35 Spanky Moore Where are we off to next bro.

01:09:37 Scottie Reeve Oh well, we're actually kind of staying around here. I think we're going to go grab a coffee somewhere in Hamilton, see what they have to offer and then we are going to catch up with the amazing Jay Ruka and see what he has to offer us on this journey.

01:09:51 Spanky Moore You know what I feel like, Scottie? What I feel like is a Hamilton Panini.

01:09:55 Scottie Reeve Oh, chicken, cranberry and brie, they sell them on mass here. Let's do it mate. Let's do it. You only Hamilton once.

01:10:07 Spanky Moore That's terrible. Alright, OK, let's do it.

01:10:15 Tom Lark "Best Weekend" continues

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