

Prodigal Son Worship – March 2010 at Pilgrim UC

Craig Mitchell

i'll write some reflection on "the landscape of desire" and post some video shortly. i used some of the materials from the fringe event in worship at pilgrim uc yesterday. (of course, today i'm completely stuffed!)

a conversation with steve and cheryl was helpful in getting me to focus on family issues, a direction in which i think i was leaning anyway.



i used my wood block print of [frank wesley's](http://www.frankwesleyart.com/) "forgiving father"

<http://www.frankwesleyart.com/>) and my slide set of rembrandt's prodigal son. i told a bit of athalie wesley's story as told to me last year, and then something of the story of my own family, as a recognition that family life is complex. the rembrandt slides were used with a reflective reading of the text, an invitation to people to find themselves in the story. i showed the wonderful short film "estranged" by nick buffalo about a conversation between a son and a father.

there were four stations. there are some unashamed references to the week prior... i played 'yearn' from ikon dubh and 'that home' from 'ma fleur' by the cinematic orchestra.



The Desert Place

(table with salt, vials of water & salt, my 'rabbit proof fence' clip with text)

*You were seeking freedom
dreaming of adventure
a new start, a fresh opportunity
a welcoming place
but instead you find yourself
isolated, abandoned
separated from yesterday and tomorrow
stumbling in a landscape of regret*

*what is your prolonged isolation
your unspoken loneliness
your deep regret?
what keeps you here?*

*take some salt in your hand
reflect on your own desert place
its unspoken territory within your soul*

*taste and see that the land is good
even this land, even this desert
it may keep you alive*

*what salty heaven do you taste?
what new horizon do you seek?*

*write your name in the salt
know that you are not forgotten here*

reflect on your journey

*take a vial of water
or a vial of salt - you choose
remember that there is life
even in this place
despite all evidence
always in this place*



The Winding Way

(black sheet metal with 'road' magnets used in the fringe event)

*What path has your journey taken?
Its twists and turns
its highways and byways
its dead-ends and retreats
its open roads and far horizons
its crossroads and forks
its roundabouts and returns*

*Reflect on your journey
where you have been
where you are
where you might wander*

*Imagine where you might travel from here
with hope as your guide
with peace as your longing
with love as your companion*

*Take some magnets
and let your journey reveal itself
connect it with others if you wish*



The Yearning Morn

(the perspex box covered in wax & the light box)

*Imagine waking on the road
covered in dust from the night-wind
chilled by the morning air
eyes blinking
ears ringing
bone-sore and throat-dry*

*a nagging thirst
a dragging hunger
a stubborn dream*

*why do you wake?
what moves your tired feet
shakes your weary head
whispers of home
and of what might be*

*for what does your soul yearn?
for what might your heart burst?
for what might your body break?
for what will you draw breath this day?*

*for what do you yearn?
long for? hope for? live for?
take a stick and write your longing on the box
give voice to your thirst
give word to the whispers in your soul*

The Rocky Return

(table strewn with gravel)

*You thought that the decision to return was hard enough
but you did not count on such a difficult journey
every step heavy
every memory painful
this pathway home is rough
broken by feelings you thought forgotten
reminders of how you were treated
why you could no longer cope
why you felt you had to leave*

*what might the journey home cost you?
the journey to reconciliation
the journey to understanding
the journey toward embrace
that you may feel you neither want nor need*

*take a stone and hold it in your palm
squeeze it hard and feel it bruise your skin
know that your feelings, your memories, are real
that this hurt you carry is not insignificant
it cannot easily be smoothed or dissolved
as if those things never happened*

*let the hardness of the pain itself
be an assurance that your journey matters
that your path to wholeness, to peace
is worth walking, however long it takes
and wherever it leads*

*let Love take fierce hold of this stone with you
let Love bear its bruises
let Love walk these rocky steps with you
until all is well*

*if you wish, place the stone on the pile as your prayer
or take the stone with you as a reminder of your journey*

here's a PDF of the text for the stations - [Download Prodigal Son Text](http://craigmitchell.typepad.com/files/prodigal-son-text.pdf)

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For the prayers of the people i borrowed steve's art from chapel - 3 different images from the rembrandt painting, each with different words - "embrace", "cut off" and "unfair". a copy of one of these on each seat, interspersed. people focused on the images while we prayed for others.

call to worship and statement of faith were from roddy hamilton,. adapted slightly

lots of positive comments afterwards.