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THROUGH OUR Omega "practice community" we are learning about the life that wants to live in our back street London parish, our little corner of nowhere. Currently it may only be a petri dish smudged with the DNA of its host community, but it's also clear that we are cultivating something beautiful and resilient here in north-east Hackney. Yet what exactly?

In the early days, to give our venture some shape, we called in the charismatic evangelicals, the Alpha lot, the Holy Ghostbusters of the Diocese of London. A succession of engagingly confident young clergy have helped us over the last couple of years with our "Welcome" and our comms, as well as weaning us off our attachment to the pipe organ Victorian hymnody.

One thing I like about the charismatic evangelicals is their sense of expectancy. They are waiting for God to do a new thing, actively anticipating signs of growth. But it turns out that Omega is neither a "church plant" nor a "graft". If anything we're a rhizome, part of a root stem that grows sideways. Or maybe an underground irrigation system flowing through the common land of our parish into the River Lea at the bottom of Springfield Park? Or are we a rewilding project?

While we are still trying to sort our horticultural analogies, a man called Tom texts me and tells me he wants to be baptised. He says he wants to be baptised at our new Omega chanting service. He says he likes the vibe there and that's where he wants to become a Christian. Suddenly it's game on.

I HAVE A GODSON who is now 12. His parents are both professors of theology and so he's got that base pretty well covered. But it turns out, for reasons known only to the good Lord, we both support the same football team. And so, at the beginning of last season, while we were still winning some matches, I said I would take him to the Tottenham Stadium. What could be more fun?

As the season wore on, this looked like it might not be quite so much fun after all. And then, as the last few matches ran their course and our team was on its third manager of the season, I wondered whether a trip to watch the football might actually turn out to be more a case of trauma bonding than jolly outing. Humiliating relegation was a very real possibility.

I laid it out for him. What he said surprised me. He said that whether we stayed up or went down was less important to him than just being there. Fair enough, I thought. At the very least that approach would stand him in good stead as a supporter of Spurs.

So we made our way to the stadium on that last day of the season, not knowing what the afternoon would hold but confident that this was the beginning of something new. It was, after all, the feast of Pentecost, the day on which spectators traditionally take to the field of play.

ON THE FOLLOWING Sunday Tom was baptised at our chanting service. At the end of a period of silent adoration of the holy sacrament, he and I stood facing one another, with the monstrance on a low altar between us, surrounded by the 40 or so people attending as part of our new Omega community. A supporter of his stood beside him holding a bowl of water. Another held a towel. Tom was steady and expectant like a boxer going into the ring.

Out of the silence I asked him if he wanted to be baptised. Then, as he stood in front of me, I poured water over his head, baptising him in the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity. All that was audible in the nave of the church was Tom's sudden sharp intake of breath as the cold water covered his head and his face and then the slow drip, drip, drip on to the floor. Our attention was rapt. After a few minutes or maybe hours someone started a chant.

I realise that, for Omega Clapton, baptism is not about whether we are going to get promoted or avoid relegation. It is an entry point into a quality of attention where the interior and the exterior become one. It is about that quality of aliveness that flows from the inside of things, a new consciousness, a recognition that we are all already part of the field of play. That, in the Risen Christ, there has already been a decisive pitch invasion.

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