

The Red Place

Installation, Perspex and Steel

Alison Thistlethwaite 2011

Constructed by Swindon Engineering and Metalworkers from whom we have received every assistance.

The red cube was first seen by Alison in a dream. In the dream, the cube was found in a small garden, the sort of ordinary back garden anyone might have with lap fencing and trimmed grass – but here was a large plastic cube in it, with a door to enter by. In a subsequent dream, Alison was impressed with the thought that she must make the cube, ‘exactly as she had seen it’.

Alison and others have had all sorts of ideas as to what the cube might mean or symbolise. But we do not want to spoil the experience by telling you about them!

However what we can offer is quite a simple parallel as a starting point. Why do you come into a cathedral? Perhaps because it is historic, famous and beautiful. But why is it attractive? Because it is a special place in the middle of a city, away from all the busyness that goes on outside. Within its walls, you are in a different world. You can be reminded of the bigger picture of life.

The red cube is not a gothic cathedral, even a very small one! But it is a reminder that we can be in a special space anywhere and everywhere.

Each of us has to find our own special space. A good physical space helps, of course. But the real space we can occupy anywhere is one that is beyond time and place. We can connect from any spot on earth with God who is ‘in heaven’ (a place beyond time and space) and for that time, we are at once on earth and with him there. Our space is opened up to his space.

The red cube is a reminder that each of us needs a place apart. It could be our own ‘special place’, and it can just be moments of quiet in a busy place. Wherever it is physically, the real place of meeting is the human heart, the place of openness, where we decide what really matters. This is the only place, if we are honest, where we can approach God.

In Alison’s dream, it is important to note that the red cube was simply there, it had arrived. It was not something humanly constructed to decorate the garden! It was just a place with a door. In the cathedral here, it is simply positioned as something that has arrived.

We do not create our meeting place with God. God has given us a meeting place in the historical man Jesus. Jesus simply came, as a person in space and time, and he met with people as a human and as God. He was the meeting place. Then he sacrificed himself for our sins so that everyone who accepts him could meet with God blame-free. He described himself as ‘the door’. He still is our standing invitation to ‘enter in’.