

## Session 1:

CD Track 13

### BELIEVING AND TRUSTING

**14** *In this first of the two sessions in which we focus on faith, we begin at the beginning. How did our participants come to faith? First, Abbot Christopher of Worth Abbey.*

**CJ:** I was brought up as a 'cradle Catholic' and my life was filled with a series of experiences that have confirmed that faith. So, I owe my faith to a very loving and happy family background, where the practice of faith was just integral to that, so it was perfectly natural - there was nothing forced about it.

**15** *Now, writer and broadcaster, Anne Atkins.*

**AA:** I have no conversion experience to tell you of. I knew - as I knew that my parents loved me - that God loved me too, even more than they did, because of the way they brought us up, and the way they loved us, and the way they related - and relate - to God themselves. I first knew God through my parents.

**16** *And Tom Wright, the Bishop of Durham.*

**TW:** I grew up in a very ordinary, typically English, middle class, middle English, middle Anglican, Christian family and going to church was just part of what we did every Sunday. And saying prayers before we went to bed was part of what we did every day - and I never knew anything else. That became real for me personally, as I grew into it.

**17** *Christian preachers and writers sometimes draw distinctions between faith, or belief, and trust. Bishop Tom, Anne and Abbot Christopher help us to sort this out.*

**TW:** When you make me a promise which sounds remarkable, and I look

you in the eye and say, 'I believe you', that's not just an intellectual assent, it's 'I'm going with this' - and there our word 'belief' shades off into 'trust'. Trust is more personal - belief can include a more, sort of, propositional content. Paul says, 'We believe in the God who raised Jesus from the dead'. Now, that is a trust in a God who we believe to have done certain things, so the two work very closely together.

**AA:** There are different levels of belief. You can say, 'I believe in black holes in space', which is a belief that doesn't commit you to anything, but you're giving intellectual assent to it in a way that doesn't really matter much, one way or the other. You can say, 'I believe in private education, or state education, or the National Health Service', in which case you will then behave according to that belief. You will send your child to that kind of school - or whatever it may be. And then there's the final step of belief, which is, 'I believe in you'. And if I believe in you, I'll follow where you go, I'll trust my life to you, I will do what you say, even if it seems counter-intuitive. And that's the kind of belief that Jesus commands.

**CJ:** Trust is directed towards human beings. It's an expression of my confidence in your integrity, your goodness, your trustworthiness. Belief is about a particular set of doctrines within the Church, and faith is about the trustworthiness of God. But in the end I think it's more, really, about God having trust in me. Faith is the experience that God trusts me and I respond to that by trusting other people, so that I imitate God.

**18** *In the TV series 'The Monastery' it was fascinating to see young men grappling with, and in some cases coming to, active Christian faith. We asked Abbot Christopher, in whose monastery the programme was made, to reflect on this from his perspective as host.*