



# into the Melting Pot

*the question is more important than the answer*

Sunday 11 November 2018

## **Purpose And Mission? – notes from the session**

*What is the way of Jesus? How does it define our lives? What story do we tell? If some of us find the established church structure uncomfortable, how do we live with integrity to our 'beliefs'?*

What is Jesus' purpose and mission? Not to start a religion but to change the way we live, revealing a different picture of God to the established 'orthodox' one of his time.

The 'Followers of the Way' – the original language of this saying suggests a precise path / route with a binary choice.

Jesus the 'servant King' – showing a way of service and humility.

Buddhists are followers of the Way as well!

Jesus stripped back all the rules and expectations that had been added over the centuries, to re-focus on God as love, and each individual's attitudes and way of life.

Jesus didn't want specific rules, rather showed principles which need interpretation.

We noted that after 30 minutes of discussion we had not mentioned Jesus' death and resurrection, which many would see as central.

People are still meeting Jesus today.

Large groups lead to structure and conformity requires rules. The challenge of uniformity against diversity is a difficult reconciliation.

How do we react to the progress of science over a more literal reading of the Bible and the primitive science expressed within it?

Humanists worship humanity; as a species we have eliminated smallpox and could control famine. We have the intellect to solve problems.

Atheists have yet to catch up with progressive Christian thinking (who also don't believe in an interventionist, creationist God). Most societies seem to have a spiritual need and build it into their community. Dawkins suggests that 'religion' is some sort of survival gene.

*What purpose do we see in our lives, and the actions that shape them?*

It is not to 'make disciples' by 'converting' them.

Some are happy to follow the pre-Easter Jesus of Nazareth (Galilean mystic healer) but are uncomfortable with the post-Easter Christ created by the Church.

I want to be relevant, to be a contributor, an influencer. Most people lose relevance after their death, but Jesus is still relevant today.

Loving persons don't need a church, although a church community can provide a focus (eg Christchurch Café and Dan's Den). Joining a community can make our impact bigger. A community gives a sense of belonging and empowerment to do things, and as

individuals we can impact folk well beyond Christchurch. Many modern folk lack community.

Loneliness is a major issue today – church should be addressing this. Sometimes we spend too much time being a community to ourselves. Not many people know how to 'be' alone; so much of modern community is virtual.

If we give of ourselves, how much is enough? We can get burned out and need some time to love ourselves.

*If we have a 'mission', what is it? Is there a story to tell?*

Are we any nearer our purpose after this session? What is our calling, our drive? Is it that we don't care enough?

The 'Way' is a journey which takes us somewhere; things can change on the way and life itself changes us.