



# into the Melting Pot

*the question is more important than the answer*

Sunday 08 November 2020

## **Covid and our faith**

*During 2020, the country spent many months under 'lockdown' restrictions, with Christchurch building closed. How has this affected our view of 'church' and spirituality.*

*The thirteen participants in this Zoom meeting made the following contributions:*

### **What do you miss due to lockdown?**

- Helping out in Dan's Den – the atmosphere, the people.
- LS29 – wondering how those families are doing during this time.
- Market Mission – reaching out to our community (but not the planning!); I enjoy talking to people, showing them love; it's good to be able to function outside the building.
- People – not being able to meet our friends at Christchurch; spontaneous conversations.
- The company found at the 9:00am service, and in particular the group discussions.
- The opportunity to worship in different ways.
- Actual Housegroup meetings, although Zoom has been helpful.
- The birdwatching trips we used to do – sitting in a hide can be quite spiritual.
- The Café – bumping into people.
- Singing together – which has always moved me spiritually.
- A sense of belonging is more obvious when we meet in person.
- Although Zoom helps a lot, we miss the non-Zoomers (although we can phone!).
- Sharing space – being able to touch/hug; now more aware of making eye contact and speaking to passers-by as you keep your 2m distance.

### **What are you happy missing?**

- I am happy missing the actual service at 9:00am with all the up and down business; I can't see myself returning to the building after restrictions are lifted.

### **What do you value most due to the lockdown?**

- Value the opportunity not to be busy, having time to reflect on faith and life.
- Having time to read - Robin Meyers 'The Underground Church' has been thought provoking.
- My daily walking out is a time for reflection, and can be spiritually uplifting.
- Time for reflection and reading; realising that so much time is frittered away.
- A Sunday service from a CoE church in Ireland on YouTube – simple, meaningful; it suits me and I don't want to miss it.

- Christchurch Zoom service is short and easy to get to; message sometimes difficult to get into, but breakout groups enjoyable (but it doesn't 'wow')!

### **What new things would you wish to take forward?**

- The Zoom service – good to be able to join in without leaving home at this time of year.
- Zoom meetings have enabled more to attend Trustees and Congregational Meetings (although not as easy for interactive discussion eg with Melting Pot).
- Possible to dip into different Housegroups via Zoom as there is no physical constraint on numbers.
- Being in your own home for a Zoom Housegroup perhaps makes it easier to be more open.

### **How has the pandemic affected your spirituality?**

- Since a family member has died, I now have doubts about 'life after death' and what I should believe. In particular, the funeral service which seemed to concentrate on eternity and the 'old-fashioned' idea of heaven being after life. *This evoked quite a bit of discussion and support.*
- Heaven for many is living life now, in love.
- Many shy away from the topic of death, but we should be open and honest.
- It is possible to have a sympathetic Christian funeral services for folk without the emphasis on life after death.
- People live on in the love they shared.
- Richard Holloway, previously Bishop of Edinburgh has written good books on the subject: 'Leaving Alexandria' and 'Waiting for the Last Bus'.
- What is 'spirituality'? Perhaps being involved with something beyond yourself.
- Daily yoga exercise, concentrating on your breathing and connecting with your body, has been a spiritual experience.
- The movie 'The Two Popes' was recommended.
- Wholeness of body mind and spirit in unison; we tend to read the Bible with a Greek/Roman world view understanding of these separate elements of a person, whereas the Jews had a more interconnected view (although the Bible is inconsistent).

### **What will the long-term impact be on your behaviours?**

- Need to be more community focussed, doing what Jesus would do, helping with the Food Bank, like Felicity and Sue with Refugees (and not this 'being saved' and getting people into the building).
- A priority on 'what can we give to help others?'.
- Zoom will carry on. The weekly Prayer Meeting works really well (and is easy to attend!); what to do with those without the technology is an issue.

### **What needs to change further?**

- We need nurturing to help us be out in our community.
- Housegroups could concentrate more on 'Bible Study' that helps us find out what we really believe. Others countered that their Housegroup takes what they are studying and makes it relevant to their lives today.

### **Closing thought**

From the Progressive Christian Network Britain magazine: consider the idea that 'God' is not a noun but a verb.