



Minister's Musing

Two weeks ago, I posted this quote on the church's Facebook page (16 June 2020):

"Before Christianity was a rich and powerful religion, before it was associated with buildings, budgets, crusades, colonialism or televangelism, it began as a revolutionary nonviolent movement promoting a new kind of aliveness on the margins of society.

It dared to honour women, children and unmarried adults in a world ruled by married men.

It dared to elevate slaves to equality with those who gave them orders.

It challenged slave masters to free their slaves and see them as peers.

It defied religious taboos that divides people into us and them, good and evil, clean and unclean.

It claimed that every one, not just an elite few, had God-given gifts to be used for the common good.

It exposed a system based on domination, privilege and violence and proclaimed in its place a vision of mutual service, mutual responsibility and peaceable neighbourliness.

It put people above profit, and made the audacious claim that Earth belonged not to the rich tycoons or powerful politicians, but to the Creator who loves every sparrow in the trees and every wildflower in the field.

Before Christianity was a rich and powerful religion, it was a peace movement, a love movement, a joy movement, a justice movement, an integrity movement, an aliveness movement."

The path of revolutionary love beckons, "Follow me..."

Brian D. McLaren, *We Make the Road by Walking: A Year-Long Quest for Spiritual Formation, Reorientation, and Activation*, 2015,

In one week, it reached 1634 people, had 373 engagements, 34 "likes or loves", 6 comments and 21 shares. Given that most of our posts average about 60-70 people reached and very few people comment, that's pretty unusual. And for a social media post that doesn't have a picture, amazing!

So what was it that seemed to have struck such a chord with people?

Is it that it captures a vision, paints a picture, of what God's kingdom, God's intention for the world, is meant to be?

It is a vivid picture isn't it? And I wonder whether it struck a chord because this is what we dream of too, this is what we hope for too. And perhaps, somehow we know, deep down, that what we are a part of right now falls short of this vision.

On the Parramatta Nepean Presbytery page, in sharing the quote, Rev Dr Rob McFarlane made this comment:

An insightful and transformative statement.
It reinforces the twin questions churches have to ask.
Who are we called to be?
What are we sent to do?

How would you answer those two questions for Kiama Jamberoo Uniting Church?

How would you answer those two questions for yourself, as a disciple of Jesus Christ in the place you are in right now?

What would it look like if our entire church organisation and activity were shaped around McLaren's description? What changes would we need to make?

Let me know if you are interested in reading the rest of McLaren's book together. We could read a portion of the book and meet weekly or fortnightly to share our discoveries and discuss our questions.

Rev Kath Merrifield
2 July 2020