

The Church Of The Future

The Church accepts that it is always in need of reform. Since it is a community founded by a divine person, for weak and fallible human beings, it is destined to include a vast and perennial element of failures, fallings-short, missings-of-the-mark. At various points the whole community goes skew-whiff in one direction or another, taking it into its head that one or another element of its tradition is all-important, and missing sight in the process of something really vital that is in danger of being lost altogether.

Our role in this process is not negligible. We are to look at our Church with the eyes of concerned children surveying the state of their parents. There is much we can do for the Church, to restore and guide it, to fettle it up, to fetch out from the attic that helpful piece of furniture that lies unused, and which is just what is wanted in the present fix. We are to look at the Church and compare its condition with the real purposes it is meant to answer. We are to look at it as our inheritance, and take up our role in its history.

What is the reason for the formation of the Church? It may seem a way-out question, since the Church has been there for so long that it is just taken as a matter of course that it ought to be there and always will be. We might well ask whether Jesus wanted the Church we see before us today. Did he envisage any such reality? Or should we say that Jesus' human mind was not equipped to look into the twentieth century, to evaluate the historical conditions which lay ahead; should we think that it is our business to judge the signs of the times, and to try to create in our age the appropriate forms for the movement Jesus wanted?

If so, then the question is a good one. What does Christ want for the world, and what sort of organisation does he want for this to be accomplished?

What does he want the Church in the University to do?

What does he want me to do?

Think about your friends: those with whom you share the faith first: is there something in these relationships which show them to be Christian friendships?

Now think of those with whom you differ in religious terms. Do these people get to know you are a Christian? Do they talk about it, consider it interesting?

Do you have any sense that your belief in Christ affects your view of your time as a student, and the way you see your subsequent career?

Do you think your faith enriches, deepens, your life? Or is it a burden? Or is it a neutral part of your upbringing, like being taught your manners or proper hygiene?

Do you think your faith is sectarian, or built on truths which matter to everyone?