



into the Melting Pot

the question is more important than the answer

Sunday 15 September

What Do You Believe? A gentle introduction to 'The Creed'

Thanks to Theology On Tap, Costa Living, Moor Faith.

Thanks to Rob & Christchurch for asking me to give one of the Lent talks 2013.

Jo Wales-Smith and I felt there was a groundswell of agreement for such conversations to continue – hence 'Melting Pot'.

We will do our best to be open and welcoming of all views: the lesson of multiple visits to Spring Harvest to me was the need to allow others to have different views (even if they found it hard to allow me mine)!

Labels are an issue: I will try not to use 'liberal' or 'traditionalist' or 'fundamentalist' or 'party line' or . . . as they are loaded with negativity.

Whether we like it or not we all have 'tradition' but it is how we evaluate, interpret, assimilate and then develop that 'tradition' in our time and place (our cultural context).

The Enlightenment, when science became established gave a paradigm shift to the understanding of 'truth' as it then became aligned with 'fact'.

This eventually led to a 'modern' view of biblical literality so that the 'Word of God' became the 'words of God' (Borg), revealing doctrine and what we must do to be sacred.

That was the context in which I grew up. Going to a boys school meant that, at the age of 14 or so, the local church youth club had a particular attraction, the cost being a Sunday morning slot. That context didn't work for me – I needed a route that allowed intellectual integrity (and I try not to suggest that is a pejorative, derogatory, phrase). I grew up a frustrated and angry Christian.

One key objective of these forums is to give permission to leave this earlier paradigm of literal-factual interpretation and move to a post-modern emerging paradigm of historical-metaphorical understanding that sees the Bible as a human response to God, that reads it in context, that enables relationship with God that is transforming life now and does not need to wait for the hereafter.

And I'm not saying right / wrong, I'm saying 'different'.

It's OK to be different.

So let's clear the decks of all that pent up frustration by initially being negative. It's OK to be negative for a while!

When looking at what you believe, it is lots easier to say what you don't believe.

A brief introduction to four meanings of faith . . .