



THIS IS YOUR SPACE BELONG

REFLECTION POINTS 31 MAY 2020

READING - ACTS 2:1-4

“ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:3-13

“ ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. ¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

REFLECTION POINTS

One of the questions last week followed the article by Arundhati Roy - what is the luggage we will carry through this time of transformation? Perhaps our luggage can be the gifts we believe we bring to the church, gifts that are given by God.

In this text from Corinthians, Paul is talking about gifts of the Spirit and acknowledging that churches need to test gifts as some are not from God.

- How do we know people's gifts are from God and what does that even mean?
- If we accept gifts from God build up the church, not tear it down, what does that look like? How does challenging the church fit here? And what about the concept of power?

Power is not in itself a bad thing, it's how it's used. People like Stephen Sykes who write on power in churches, say that the transparent existence of power in churches, with identified holders of that power, is healthier than having a void that anyone can move into, often without the gifts required and often without them being tested.* That may have happened in Corinth where some members are using their knowledge and religious experience to manoeuvre themselves into positions of authority in such a way that others wonder if they even belong. Hardly building up the church.

One way to ensure appropriate use of both gifts and power is accountability – accountability to God and to each other as a church.

But what does that mean and what does it look like in reality?

For the really keen, check out the Basis of Union and UCA regulations <https://resources.uca.org.au/resources/regulations>

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in all of this?
(*hint: it isn't about claiming the spirit's inspiration without being accountable!*)

How does this reading fit with 1 Corinthians 13 from 2 weeks ago?

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Can you see any links?

Come along to cuppa call on Sunday at 11.30am when we'll discuss these questions and more.

*Stephen Sykes, Power and Christian theology. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006)