

Thursday Space

28 January 2016

What is Christianity ?

Michael Counsell

Michael Counsell describes in the preface to his book how one day he met a lady who asked him "How do I become a Christian?". He was so surprised that his answer wasn't very clear ... so he wrote the little brochure attached which he entitled "How to become a Christian", but which might better be entitled why do people become Christians and then what do they do?".

He sets out his booklet around three themes:

1. God's plan for you
 - a. A full and fulfilling life
 - b. Meaning, purpose and guidance
 - c. Peace
 - d. Heaven

2. Jesus' teaching
 - a. God is your loving father
 - b. We should love God
 - c. We should love all those we meet
 - d. Jesus is like God, as a son resembles his father
 - e. Jesus brought good news

3. So what should we do?
 - a. Admit that we are selfish
 - b. Ask God to forgive us and wash us clean
 - c. Ask God to help us change
 - d. Try to live a Christian life
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Bible reading
 - iii. Join the club!
 - iv. What does the club do?
 1. Communion
 2. Baptism
 3. Confirmation

Questions for discussion (*I have marked the relevant parts of the text with the same letters*)

- a) Have you ever tried to describe your faith to someone?
- b) What do you think of this description of Christianity? Does it adequately describe your faith? What would you add or express differently?
- c) Are most Christians welcoming and happy?
- d) How would you answer the questions "Who are you?" and "What are you here for?"
- e) Have you ever thought about heaven? What is it? What is it like?
- f) How easy is it to love all those we meet? What does this mean?
- g) Commitment – on page xxiv Michael Counsell's booklet invites the reader to "make or renew your decision to ask God's forgiveness and give your life to Christ". What do you think of that?
- h) What do you think of his description of prayer?
- i) "Join the club" – is that a good description of going to church?