

## A Mid-day Meditation

From

Sue's Perspective

*...A Reformation? Perhaps...*

A number of years ago I had the privilege of attending The Great Emergence Conference that was held at St. Mary's Cathedral in Memphis, Tennessee. While I was there I had the great pleasure of meeting and talking to several modern-day theologians – Tony Jones, Doug Paget, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Peter Rollins to name but a few. The one person whom I met that left me awestruck was Phyllis Tickle. She had an unassuming presence about her that radiated poise, grace, intelligence and a passion for Christ. Phyllis was the keynote speaker so I knew that I would be hearing her speak more than once. After her first presentation, I was hooked. She spoke about the church and all the changes that had taken place within the church throughout history. She talked about reformation and how painful it was every time there was one. It leaves me wondering, is this what we are experiencing right now?...

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If you look back through history, there have been several reformations/changes in the church – the Protestant Reformation; the English Reformation; the Counter Reformation; the Great Schism to name but a few... Each of those events took time. They did not happen over-night. As each reformation took place, there was pain, there was violence, and sadly, there was loss of life as the people who did not want any changes to take place fought back with all their might. Regardless, the changes happened, and life settled down – for a while until another group of people decided that there needed to be changes again...

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What is this pandemic doing to our lives? What is it doing to our understanding of what it means to be church? As I recall, Phyllis Tickle, along with others, said that the church is emerging from a post-Christendom church and becoming church for the people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are learning new ways of being. We are learning new ways of worshipping. We are learning new ways of being in communion with God. None of what we are learning invalidates who and what we were before this pandemic. What it does is give us the courage to tell the world that no matter how we appear on the outside, our message is still the same – to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and inner strength and to love your neighbour as yourself. This pandemic might mean a major change in the church as we know it, but it does not have to mean that the church is any less vital to the well-being of the world and the people in it...

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