

86 What should the Church be like?

Today, a friend shared with me the following quote from *Re-enchanting Christianity*, by Dave Tomlinson (Canterbury Press, 2008).

Page 111: “The Church is by definition an inclusive community, because at its centre is the inclusive God whose love is manifest in the one who hung on a cross with arms outstretched. Church is not supposed to be a place of theological ‘purity’, or rigid conformity to certain beliefs and conventions, but a mishmash of believers, doubters, dissenters and malcontents, each of whom is grappling in his or her own way towards the mystery that is God. The Church is a place of refuge and hope, a place of prayer and laughter, a place of dreams and fresh imaginings, a place of birth and rebirth, a place of thought and theology, a place of weddings and funerals, a place where proud mums and dads bring tiny people to offer them to God, a place of parties, a place of bread and wine shared, a place of affirmation, a place of new beginnings, a place of freedom and generosity, a place of friendship, support and healing, a place of creativity, a place of reconciliation, a place of faith and doubt, a place where people can belong without necessarily knowing how or what to believe.”

No, it’s not saying ‘it doesn’t matter what you believe’, but it says to people ‘you belong even if you don’t believe exactly what I believe’. After all, it’s God we’re talking about, so who can say exactly ‘what God is like’?

I’ve just ordered a copy of the book!

Paul Bev. 01.11.19