



The Call to Community
John T. Skinner



{connexion}



We are called to be AVAILABLE to God And to others...

To be available to God in the **call to community** when forsaking all others we turn towards Him, as disciples of Christ. It is then, **alone**, that we find ourselves **together**, with those companions on the same journey.

The purpose of this leaning event is to take a 'down to earth look' at what it could mean to be a participant in the new monasticism community,

Resources

The Community of Jesus

Genesis of a Community

A New Monasticism Vocation?

All available at www.schoolofnewmonasticism.com

Suggestions

To communicate his message Jesus called together a specific group of people who became: The Community of Jesus

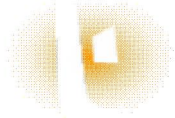
Peter was a fisherman and family man who said yes to Jesus invitation to join his community and join him on a preaching tour.

Imagine what questions Peter's Mother in Law would ask him when he told his family he planned to join the community of Jesus and follow him on a preaching tour.

Write down your answers

The Community Of Jesus

- *Specific features of The Community of Jesus:*
- *Geography*
- *The Community of Jesus were called to a specific geographic location:*
- *The Land Of Israel*
- *People*
- *They were called to a specific people:*
- *The Jews*
- *Message*
- *The were to communicate a specific message, which would be clearly understood by the people to whom they were called :*
- *'Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand'*
- *Community*
- *To communicate this message Jesus called together a specific group of people:*
- *The Community of Jesus*
- *A Way for Living*
- *Membership of the community of Jesus was by invitation only and involved a challenging and demanding acceptance of a way for living that required some pretty risky and dangerous living.*



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Membership of the community of Jesus was by invitation only and involved a challenging and demanding acceptance of a way for living that required:

Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

INTRODUCTION

We are now aware, that when Jesus began his public ministry his first priority was to call together a small group of people who would witness that the Kingdom of God had decisively entered human history;

The Community of Jesus was born.

We can now explore the 'way for living' that Jesus expected his community to aspire and the very down to earth 'rule' or daily spiritual disciplines that they needed to practice to live their new life. As a result we should now come closer to answering the question:

'How would membership of the Community of Jesus change and shape the way in which the first disciples and their families lived their lives?'

Specific features of the community of Jesus

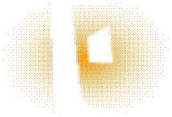
A Way for Living

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The Cry to God as 'Father' in the new testament is not a calm acknowledgement of a universal truth about God's abstract fatherhood. It is a Child's cry out of a nightmare. It is the cry of outrage, fear, shrinking away, when faced with the horror of 'the world' yet not simply or exclusively protest, but trust as well, 'Abba Father' *all things are possible to Thee*

(Rowan Williams)



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

The Community of Jesus were called to 'aspire' to a very different 'way for living' that was a reflection of them:

'Knowing the Person of Christ' being 'Citizens of the Kingdom of God' and their new birth into 'A New Creation A New Humanity.'

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sets out the 'way of living' required of those called to the Kingdom of God. The Beatitudes are at the very heart of Jesus vocation and mission,

Poor in spirit : A passionate, contrite acknowledgement and awareness that the world in all its beauty, and humanity with all its potential, are shot through with tragic contradictions and fatal flaws. **We trust in God for transformation.**

Mourn: A deep travail and inner grief as to how far we have fallen. **We repent of the sin and suffering we have caused.**

Meek: The inner strength to control the anger and frustration associated with our condition, together with the belief that with God all things are possible, **We live with humility and not false pride**

Hunger and thirst for righteousness: A longing for justice and mercy, the overcoming of evil and selfishness and their consequences **A deep longing to do the right thing**

Merciful: As we have been forgiven, **show compassion to others.**

Pure in heart: No longer lying to ourselves, to other people, to God.

Have pure motives that are not self-centred and destructive

Peacemakers Not only peace makers but those who are aware of the True nature of the conflict. **Peacemakers not Peacekeepers**

Persecuted: Putting justice, truth and mercy before personal security.

We stand firm in our faith no matter what the cost.

Living the Beatitudes is a universal requirement for all faith communities. However, the 'Way of living' faith communities will embrace will be specifically related to their own Vocation and Mission in the Kingdom of God.

Specific features of the community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Membership of the community of Jesus was by invitation only and involved a challenging and demanding acceptance of a way for living that required:

Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

Canticle of the Kingdom

Blessed are the poor in heart
For theirs is the Kingdom
Blessed are those who mourn
They shall be comforted

**Let your tender mercies
Come unto us
That we may live again**

Blessed are the merciful
They will be shown mercy
Blessed are the meek
They will inherit the earth

**Let your tender mercies
Come unto us
That we may live again**

Blessed are the pure in heart
For they will see God
Blessed are the peacemakers
They shall be called the sons of God

**Let your tender mercies
Come unto us
That we may live again**

Blessed are those who suffer
For righteousness to come
Who hunger and thirst for the Kingdom
Theirs is the Kingdom of God

Rejoice and be glad
For great is your reward in heaven
Émigré: a Daily Office ©2008
Morning Prayer



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

If the Community of Jesus were to aspire to a way of living reflected in the Beatitudes then Jesus was aware that they would have a number of difficulties and obstacles to overcome that would be **specific to** an

‘itinerant community of 12 men travelling without family and friends in a political and religious hostile environment.’

Jesus was realistic about the human condition. Even though the community lived in the presence of Jesus and witnessed his power on a daily basis they would still have a daily battle to live a new life. This is what they would specifically have to overcome.

Murder

We think of murder as an action limited to those without moral conscience or civilizations without an adequate rule of law, For Jesus, murder is an aspect of the fallen humanity and the right conditions will release its power in any context. Murder, like all sin begins in the heart before it expresses itself in action. As a result, Jesus equates anger, and the desire to hurt, get back at, or wound as having the same status as murder, and worthy of the same sentence.

Why would anger be a barrier to their way for living?

Adultery

Away from family and friends, travelling to new places, learning a new way to live, in contact with lots of new people. ***Why would adultery be a temptation for the Community of Jesus?***

Divorce

Adultery is closely linked to divorce, In the real world, the sacrifice of living a new life, also brings the challenges of new opportunities, Some true some false. ***Why would ‘Divorce’ challenge their way***

For Living

Oaths

Don't make promises that you can't keep, in fact, just say Yes or No, Be straightforward in your relationships with no ulterior motives. ***WHY?***

Specific features of the community of Jesus

A Way for Living

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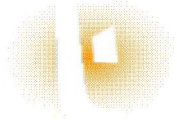
Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to Judgment But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.’

‘I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.’

“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

‘Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.’



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

An eye for an eye

Returning similar punishments for transgressions of the law was a common feature of Jewish life. In the Community of Jesus such transgressions were seen as opportunities to act in a completely different way: Turning the other cheek.

Would this response win them respect or ridicule?

Love you enemy

The most difficult and demanding of all Jesus commands: Love You enemies. **How difficult is that?**

Treasures in Heaven

Don't try to make yourselves financially secure for the future, Instead, secure your future in the Kingdom of God, make that your goal. **Is that being responsible?**

Anxiety about today?

Don't worry about every day necessities. Get on with what God has called you too, and He will take care of the rest. **That may be ok for individual members of Jesus community but what about their families?**

The Community of Jesus were called to a 'way for living' that would reflect the presence of the Person of Christ in their lives, their Citizenship of the Kingdom of God and their birth into a New Creation. That 'way of living' was embodied in the Beatitudes, the life to which they should aspire.

There would be specific 'wrong attitudes' that would seek to keep them from fulfilling their vocation and mission.

How would they bridge the gap between the life to which they aspired and life as they experienced it?

Specific features of the community of Jesus

A Way for Living

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Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

'But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.'

'But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'

'You cannot serve both God and Money.'

'So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Availability:

1, To the Person of Christ

a. Jesus has first call on their lives over...

Family and Friends

Jesus became the priority relationship, ahead of both family and friends,

"If people come to me and are not ready to abandon their fathers, mothers, wives, children, brothers, and sisters, as well as their own lives, they cannot be my disciples." Like 14v26

Lands and Property

In Jewish culture ownership of property, and land in particular had significant cultural and emotional bonds, that were not easily broken. "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother [or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life." Matthew 19v29

Financial Security

The normal and almost universal practice of saving for current and future Needs were to be abandoned for the sake of this epic moment. So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6 v 31-34

Specific features of the community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Membership of the community of Jesus was by invitation only and involved a challenging and demanding acceptance of a way for living that required:

Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

Available

obtainable
accessible

ready for use or service
convenient for use or disposal

not busy

not otherwise committed

capable of being used for the accomplishment of a purpose



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Availability:

1, To the Person of Christ

B. They were to know, trust and obey Christ,

To Know Him

Is to 'know' Christ as the Son of God, in the actual historical situation and circumstances in which he chose to reveal himself. Jesus revealed to His Community, his Glory, his authority and power in the midst of his own trials and tribulations, specific to his own vocation, It was in these very traumatic and challenging events 'they saw Christ'

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." John 17v3

To Trust Him

The disciples are to prove they can have confidence in Jesus in spite of the fact that the circumstances of their lives had changed since they joined him. To an outsider, their lives had become considerably more vulnerable rather than secure.

"If the world **hates** you, keep in mind that it **hated** me first.

John 15v18

To Obey Him

From the outset Jesus taught his community that within the personhood of God there is a hierarchy, The Son has come to do the work of the Father and obeys his commands. Christ can do nothing unless the Father commands him. In the same way, the community of Jesus are learning to voluntarily submit their divine and human right to order their own lives for 'the love of Christ'. Their kingdom must submit and surrender to his, from the very big decisions to the very small.

Specific features of the community of Jesus

A Way for Living

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Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

**'When we walk with the Lord
in the light of his word,
what a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will, he abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.**

**Trust and obey,
for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus,
but to trust and obey.**

Text: John H. Sammis, 1846-1919



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Availability:

2. To the Community Of Jesus

Personal Transformation

The community of Jesus was the school in which the disciples would have the opportunity to be transformed, both personally and corporately into Citizens of the Kingdom. Jesus had already both warned and reassured them that this would be a difficult journey. Yet it was one they were required to make, Transformation began in the community of Jesus, not outside of it.

3. To Mission

Jewish Nation

They were called to be available for mission to a specific people in a specific place; Israel. This was their single priority.

"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." Matthew 15 v 24

Poor Oppressed Afflicted

They were to be available to the poor, the outcast, the sick, the demon possessed, to minister healing and deliverance as instructed by Jesus. These were the signs the Kingdom was near.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Specific features of the community of Jesus

A Way for Living

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Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

**A brother came to me late one Friday evening.
"Pastor Burt, I have decided to divorce my wife, I tell you, it is finished. These last 15 years have been torture. She never shuts up, even to take a breath.**

It's always the same line;

If only....If only....If only...

Enough is enough.

Tomorrow I am leaving.

so now you know."

I knew this sister, and I had to agree, 'if only' was a significant part of her vocabulary, intoned in many different ways.

However, unmoved by his experience

I stood firmly on a truth my own Pastor had shared with me:

"brother, go, leave your wife, get that divorce.

Then tomorrow or the next day

You will go looking for another wife

And you will find one.

But I tell you, in a year or two

**You will be saying: If only...If only....If only,,,
God wants to make you holy not happy."**



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Vulnerability

1. Conversion

The biblical understanding of conversion is a process. We have been saved, we are being saved, we will be saved. For the Community of Jesus, true conversion was the ongoing struggle as fellowship with Jesus began to change the way they used to live and understand their future. Sometimes those changes coincided with their own hopes, at other times they challenged or clashed violently with them. It was during those moments they experienced the vulnerability of conversion,

"From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." John 6 v 66-69

2. Heretical Imperative

Jesus was crucified on the charge of being a Heretic. His teaching contradicted several religious beliefs of his day that were regarded as being supported by the Hebrew scriptures. His vocation and mission made an unspoken claim that Jesus was more than 'a' son of God but was the Son of God. This would lead to increasing vulnerability of the Community of Jesus and to the trial and death of Jesus,

Specific features of the community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Membership of the community of Jesus was by invitation only and involved a challenging and demanding acceptance of a way for living that required:

Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

Vulnerable

Susceptible: to criticism

to persuasion

to temptation

to attack

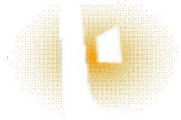
to physical injury

to emotional injury

to being wounded

to being hurt





Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Vulnerability

2. Heretical Imperative

"Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. 66What do you think? "He is worthy of death," they answered

3. No Status

Prior to their conversion the 12 members of the community of Jesus had clearly defined social status. They were businessmen or employees. They had families and friends, houses and land. They were part of the social and religious community. They had position in the local community, and were known by their deeds and actions. Their roles and place in society was clearly defined, understood and was socially and culturally accepted. They were now followers of Jesus, an itinerant preacher, formerly an odd job man with nothing to qualify him for this self appointed role. As a result they had placed themselves outside socially and culturally accepted norms , to live a life without status, and as a result, open to criticism and injury.

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn't this the **carpenter**? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offence at him. Mark 6 v 3

Specific features of the community of Jesus

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The Cost of Following Jesus

When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." Matthew 8 18 v 22



Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Authenticity

1. In Worship

Of the few instances in the Community of Jesus where it was recorded that they or those around them worshipped Jesus, all were linked to the realisation of who he was; Son of God Son of Man. Worship was a response, a heartfelt acknowledgement to God's Revelation of himself in Christ. It was an overwhelming response of love and thanksgiving which gave no thought to correctness. Worship was the recognition that grace, mercy and truth were at work in the world through Christ, and as a result faith, hope and love were qualities once again available to humankind, The fruit of Worship was seen in the willingness of the Community of Jesus to 'lay down their lives' in everyday decisions and deeds that reflected their faith and gave authenticity to their worship, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

2. In a Way for Living

Central to their vocation and mission was their willingness to go through the struggles involved in personal transformation and their conversion to the kingdom of God, This was worked out in their everyday circumstances, within the community of Jesus. Their mission was not authenticated by the signs they performed to announce the kingdom, but in the lives they lived as Citizens of the Kingdom. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13 v 34-35

Specific features of the community of Jesus

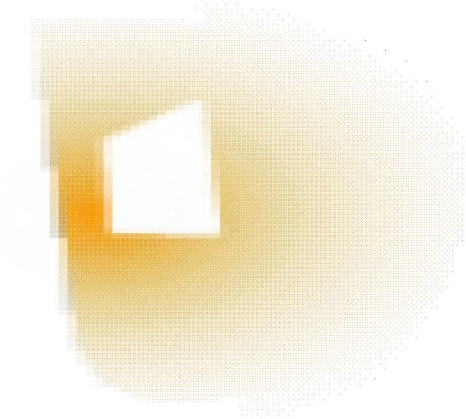
A Way for Living

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Availability: Vulnerability: Authenticity

Authentic

True
Genuine
Original
Worthy of belief
Real
Trustworthy
Factual
Reliable
Not False
Not Counterfeit
Not Copied





Émigré: The Community of Jesus

A Way for Living

Authenticity

3. In their Witness

A key element of the mission of the community of Jesus was to witness to what they had seen and heard from Jesus, Jesus had continually steered away from the sensationalism and popularity that continually tried to accompany the signs he performed. Instead, he chose a more anonymous route, where his words and signs would only make sense when they were firmly rooted in his message: 'The Kingdom of God is nigh.' His message was for 'those who had had ears to hear and eyes to see.' This is the type of witness in which the community of Jesus were schooled: To witness to the substance of the vocation and mission of Jesus and not a superficial rendition.

CONCLUSION

The Community of Jesus were called to a specific people, in a specific Place and a specific moment in history.

They were given a specific message, that would be clearly understood by the people to whom they were called, yet would make little sense beyond those borders.

Membership of the Community of Jesus was by invitation only, and it was made very clear what that membership would involve in regard To their personal lives.

Finally, they were to bear witness to The Personhood of Christ, The Kingdom of God and the New Humanity by aspiring to a 'way for living' embodied in the Sermon on the Mount, particularly in the Beatitudes. To aspire to that 'way for living' they were required to live a life of Availability, Vulnerability and Authenticity, in doing so The Kingdom of God would be revealed in them.

Specific features of the community of Jesus

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