

# **The Gospel of Inclusion**

## **Chapter Eight: The Gospel of Hell**

### **Notes, Questions, and Reflections**

In preparation for this week's discussion, please think about the [Basic Homework Questions](#) as you read it. Mark in your copy of the book or in your notebook which paragraphs pertain to these questions for you. Include your thoughts as to how they pertain to it. You'll be ready to engage in discussion with the Group.

Then come back to this page and check out the additional questions and thoughts from past courses that St. John's MCC people have had about the section that are listed below....

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## Chapter Eight: The Gospel of Hell

"The good news about hell is that there isn't one. There is no horrible inferno. If you feel defenseless without one, remember that hell is easily created by any of us. We create hell all the time – in Darfur, in inner-city gang territories, in communities divided by prejudice and bigotry. But the literal hell stuff stops here. It is a human idea based on human ignorance and fear of the unknown. Hell is a man-made concept, as are some of our concepts of heaven. If that unbalances you, ask yourself this: Why or how is the knowledge that others are suffering in hell part of the bliss of heaven for many people? Is that a Christ-like belief? Or is it a vindictive human need for power and superiority?"

"We damn ourselves here, now. Or we can save ourselves here and now with choices based on love, hope, and justice. God has taken care of our eternal salvation already. The rest is up to us." (p. 175-176)

Which passages or paragraphs interested or inspired you most from this chapter?

"God is mostly a human idea more than a spiritual one. We have created varying concepts of God for at least the last three thousand years. God has not been perceived outside a concept of a devil, and heaven has not been perceived outside a concept of hell. It is as if one is incomplete or unacceptable without the other." (p. 164) Does Pearson's statement make you feel uneasy?

"... That means that hell cannot be the eternal torment that so many of our religious leaders gleefully claim most of us are destined for. Hell must be something else entirely." (p. 164) How does that set with you?

Pearson discusses what he calls the "Law of Opposites" beginning on page 167. What does he mean by that? Is he saying that God is bound by this law like everything else? What other faith traditions do you know that embrace this concept?

"Self-hatred is born out of misunderstood duality." (p. 168) How does Pearson believe we should understand duality so we are not led toward self-hatred?

What does Pearson say the difference is between primary and secondary doctrine? (p. 168)

What was the Psalmist trying to say in Psalm 139:8? In Psalm 16:10-11?

"The concept of a God who systematically and eternally tortures His enemies is one of the great errors in religious thinking." (p. 169) **God doesn't do that! Humans do that!**

Pearson says, "It is not my intention to deny the existence of hell but to define it biblically rather than according to Greek [or Renaissance] mythology." (p. 171) How does Pearson define "hell" then?

"In Christian theology, the way out of or through hell is Christ Jesus. It always has been and always will be. But unlike what the world's religions tell us, we don't have to know it, believe it, or accept it. Jesus accomplished world redemption without our permission, before any of us was present on the planet." Can you accept Pearson's view of a simple faith?