

### **MLT Report- Incedo AGM Sunday 26 September 2010**

Six years ago I saw one of the most meaningful, impacting and beautiful expressions of “Incarnational Mission” I had ever come across. Gus and I were part of a “research group” looking at churches, missional communities, and expressions of faith in the USA and UK. We saw a very diverse range of in the 4 weeks we were away (and the extra week I did in the UK). But the expression of mission that I am referring to was in one small café near the Latino section of San Francisco.

Café Gratitude is an organic, vegan café; but they can explain themselves much better than I can, *“Café Gratitude is our expression of a world of plenty. Our food and people are a celebration of our aliveness. We select the finest organic ingredients to honor the earth and ourselves, as we are one and the same. We support local farmers, sustainable agriculture, and environmentally-friendly products. Our food is prepared with love. We invite you to step inside and enjoy being someone who chooses: loving your life, adoring yourself, accepting the world, being generous and grateful every day, and experiencing being provided for. Have fun and enjoy being nourished.”*

The menu has dishes such as *“I am dazzling”, “I am festive”, “I am Thankful”, “I am Honoring”, “I am Trusting”*- the list goes on and on. Every dish, every menu, every poster on the wall, and every staff member radiates the Kaupapa of the café. As we sat there, customers were greeted with hugs, conversation came before completing the order; they even had a board game on each table (in which no one loses- and everyone wins). The memory of the food and people still, six years later, remain as evocative, appealing and as heartwarming as they always have done; in fact even typing these words bring a lump to my throat as I cannot shake the impact this place had on me. People worked there, not because it was a job that paid the bills, they worked there because they saw the café as the ultimate expression of themselves and their own life journey. You see it was not just a café; it was the physical embodiment of a couple’s life and dreams. When you check out their website, you will see there is more than just a café now- but the heart of it remains the same.

Those six years ago when I had finished my *“I am Glorious”* tea, I noticed writing on the bottom of the cup- it simply said “What are you grateful for?” (I rather suspect that a church- run café might have had some inspirational thought based around purpose, or some thinly disguised bible passage). That is a question I don’t ask myself enough, so to honour that experience six years ago- I ask it now.

I am grateful for the hand of God that has lead Incedo through some great ups and fairly crappy downs in the last year. I am grateful for Hannah and Melody who have had to endure an “interesting” ride on the MLT over the last year. I am grateful for the fact that leadership in Incedo is not seen as the pinnacle of achievement, but rather another way to serve. I am grateful that Hannah, Melody, (and myself in a couple of months) will be finishing our season on the MLT to make way for other members who will start to. I am grateful for Blair, Sue, and Tracy who had a year filled with struggle and wrestling with issues. I am grateful for the fact that as a community we have grown closer, not as colleagues but friends. I am grateful for the people that hosted our weekends together. I am grateful for the Surge team, who gave us a great time of Mahi and community. I am grateful for the mission that goes on and is never talked about. I am grateful for Monday mornings- knowing that Kelly would have posted

another great video that will make us laugh/think/cry/get angry. I am grateful for Jo and the work she puts into the prayer updates (a vital tool for us in connecting). I am grateful for Bryan and Rochelle, who are legends and must have the patience of a saint. I am grateful for Greg and Terry, who worry about all things “computer” so that we don’t have too. I am grateful for Gus and the team who filmed and then organized “Losing our religion”. I am grateful for the families who travelled to Surge and other events- the sound of kids causing carnage was fantastic! Lastly I am grateful to Mel, Poppy and Maiah who have had to put up with a stressed, absent, worried, tired, and sick husband/father for the past year- they are my backbone and my life. I am grateful that this is my last report/update that I will have to write (and given the length of this one, I suspect that I won’t be the only one).

<http://www.cafegratitude.com>

Grace and Peace

Karl