

The Self and the Kingdom

We are servants of the Kingdom rather than functionaries of the church. The questions for each of us is by what means can I, as a unique and irreplaceable individual – as a part of the body of Christ, and as a unique manifestation of God’s heart and nature – by what means can I be “I” and thereby contribute in my own special way to the building of the Kingdom?

To uncover and reveal my true self is to reveal God who expressed Himself in me. If my element is missing there is something irreplaceably lost. I want to suggest, then, that our primary purpose in life is to find ourselves, that we may become what, in some sense, we already are. That’s not so easy as it sounds.

The world is full of noise, physical and spiritual, so that it is not easy for us to tune into the quiet voice of God speaking in the depths of our hearts. We tend to get easily distracted; in fact, we seek distractions as we get lonely, restless, uneasy by ourselves. But it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks. We need not only to pray aloud but to listen very quietly and deeply.

It is our primary responsibility in life to find out who it is that “I” am, for the glory of God and for the service of humankind. It is not selfish; it is in the cause and spirit of service. This is our pursuit, our Holy Grail.

We will never find ourselves totally; we will never find God totally. It is the elusiveness of self and of God that stimulates us to search forever and grow forever. Because it is not only that we find ourselves “pre-fabricated”; we also co-create ourselves with God.

First we have to find that central line or point which must express “I”. In cosmic terms, that is what God’s Word is. It is not the end; rather, it is the beginning. It is the central point around which everything can develop. For individuals, too, there is a core or essence of ourselves that we are to find and then, out of that, like the oak tree that develops from the little acorn, we can grow and spread our branches far and wide. Nobody else can do this for us. Christ cannot do it for us. God cannot, and our church leaders cannot.

That is each one's unique responsibility. Only each one can do it for himself or herself. I would say that while a church leader cannot do it it is one of their main responsibilities to help their people find themselves.

During the exodus of the Hebrews, Joshua subordinated himself to Moses. In doing so, he was revealed as the faithful person that he was and, at the correct time, he found his proper place as the leader of the Hebrew nation.

It may seem to us during our "apprenticeship" (which may last for years) that we are lost, dormant, not going anywhere. So it must seem to trees in wintertime. But they are not lost; they are going somewhere; their sleep is so that they may wake in spring overflowing with the sap of life. Winter seems to be death, but it is as much a part of life as spring, summer, and fall. So long as we, within ourselves, are seeking our true selves (which is the same as seeking God), we will never get lost. As water inevitably reaches its own level we will come into our own. Like the homing pigeon, whichever way we are turned, we will orientate ourselves towards home and fly there.

In the period of our gestation or apprenticeship, almost any experience is useful, no matter how far removed it may appear to be from where we wish to go. We can learn from everything, gain from everything, so long as we seek our direction. If we are sincerely searching for our true direction, we will find it. Our own always comes to us.

A basic impulse of life is to develop. If the egg does not hatch it will go bad or be devoured by others. If we do not become our greater selves, not an imitation of anyone. This is our treasure buried in the field that Jesus talks about in Matthew 13. This is the pearl hidden in the oyster, buried at the bottom of the sea, for which a man or a woman would give all possessions to discover. This is the gift that we are given that by investing it we may make it multiply, as Jesus explains in Matthew 25. Whether we do this or do not is what will determine the value of our lives.