

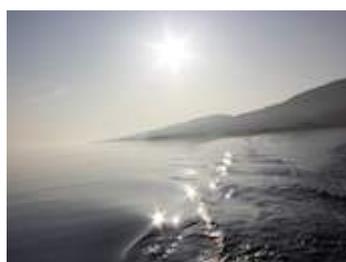


The World Community for Christian Meditation

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READINGS FOR 6/5/2012



An excerpt from "Dearest Friends: A Letter from Laurence

Freeman OSB, Christian Meditation Newsletter, Vol. 33, No. 1, April 2009.

"The distinction between the office and person," said Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "is wholly alien to the teaching of Jesus." In the end, the truth is personal and it can only enter the world when it has conquered the human heart.

And the personal is tried and tested in daily life. Perhaps this is one reason why we are so invasively curious about the private lives of celebrities. We think we will know them better or come closer to them if we know about their secret or mundane tastes and routines. Yet, we know remarkably little about these aspects of the lives of those spiritual teachers who have helped humanity to evolve and truly changed the human mind. It is their personal authenticity, not their personal diaries, that is the criterion for our trusting them and their transmission of the truth they embodied. This rare and powerful authority of the true teacher enables us to trust them and to try to put into practice what they taught.

Personal authority though is not the same as institutional force. For many modern people the dogmatic authority of Christianity is undermined by the insistence of orthodoxy everywhere, that "you have to believe this if you are to be one of us." As a child or an unself-realized adult we may accept it because it affords the security of belonging to a group with firm convictions and allays the fear of rejection or of being on our own. But the more closely it is examined the idea that belief can be enforced is absurd.

Belief in any truth-revelation grows through a process that includes both personal experience and trust in the authenticity of the teacher. It is not that the dogma of Christianity are unimportant but that they are so important that they cannot be reduced to ready-made formulas set in linguistic forms that never change. They are not stamped party-cards or visas into the Kingdom.

The dogmas need to grow in the soil of daily life like the seed of the Kingdom itself. Truth grows in us as we grow in relation to the truth. Any institution, political, educational or religious, that denies this, ends by losing the trust of its members. Good faith means trust as

well as belief.

After meditation: ?To Finding Again,? W.S. Merwin, PRESENT COMPANY (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2005), pp. 114-15.

To Finding Again

Everything else must have changed
must be different
by the time you appear
more than ever the same

taking me by surprise
in my difference
my age
long after I had come
to the end
of believing in you
to the end of hope

which was not even
the first of the changes

when I imagined
that I was forgetting you
you did not even need memory
to remain there
letting the years vanish
the miles depart

nothing surprising in that

even longing
does not need memory
to know what to reach for

and nothing surprises you
who were always there
wherever it was

beyond belief

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