

Truth Sets us Free to Love

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What we often call love can be the hungry, craving of our loneliness for comfort and possession. When it is disappointed – by whoever we projected it onto – our self-centred “love” can quickly turn to anger and despair. To navigate beyond this cycle, we need asceticism, the personal discipline of exercising our capacity for attention. Eventually this capacity becomes ego-transforming love. Paying attention to the real, not to our illusory version of reality, illustrates why truth sets us free, equally to love and to be loved.

The connection between meditation (the essential asceticism of the Christian life) and love (the source and goal of wisdom) is like a cord that draws a curtain in a darkened room and allows the divinizing light of a new holiness to flood in. The new holiness for our time is the recognition of God in all the conditions of our age, without nostalgia and tuned with all we have learned about human nature and the laws of the universe. It is a universal not parochial holiness. It doesn't depend on human approval but on the mutual recognition that occurs between ourselves and God in the contemplative state. Its offspring is the ecumenism of all faiths. Based on the pattern of history, we can guess that the renewal of Christian life will be achieved when a critical mass of disciples has learned how to navigate the perfect storm of our present crisis.

After meditation: “Citizen of Dark Times” by Kim Stafford in WILD HONEY, TOUGH SALT (Pasadena: Red Hen Press, 2019) p. 44.

Citizen of Dark Times

Agenda in a time of fear. Be not afraid.

When things go wrong, do right.

Set out by the half-light of the seeker.

For the well-lit problem begins to heal.

Learn tropism toward the difficult.

We have not arrived to explain, but to sing.

Young idealism ripens into an ethical life.

Prune back regret to let faith grow.

When you hit rock bottom, dig further down.

Grief is the seed of singing, shame the seed of song.

Keep seeing what you are not saying.

Plunder your reticence.

Songbird guards a twig, its only weapon is a song.

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