

Seeking a new era of religious dialogue



An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, Anniversary of John Main, WCCM International Newsletter, Winter, 1996.

Perhaps one of the perplexing dilemmas for traditional Christianity today is the meaning of communicating the gospel in a non-competitive way in the context of relationships with other faiths. For the exclusivist Christian, this is nonsensical. But perhaps the Spirit is trying to teach us something. Perhaps Christianity is learning that if it is truly universal it must find and recognize itself in all forms of human spiritual experience and in every kind of spiritual event. [. . .]

We [must seek] a new era of religious dialogue, of tolerance, mutual reverence and of learning from each other in a way those before us could never have imagined. Isn't this so compatible with the personality and example of Jesus? He rejected no-one, tolerated all and saw the mystery of God in all people and in nature. He ate with those he should have despised; he spoke with those he should have avoided. He was as open to others as he was to God. [. . .]

In Jesus, time and eternity intersect. But the intersection happens in human poverty of spirit. Poverty is the point where infinite mystery meets concrete existence. Poverty is not only the absence of things but the awareness of our need for others, for God. Human

neediness is universal. The riches and the most powerful, like the poorest and most marginalized, are all equally in need.

Need is simply the strong feeling that arises in response to the fact of interdependence. Wisdom is the recognition of our inter-relatedness, and compassion is the practice of our connectedness. In meditation we dive to a level of reality deeper than our surface, ego-driven minds where we are so often caught in the net of illusion of our independence and isolation. Untangling from that net is the daily work of meditation and it is also the new pattern of the practice of the presence of God in ordinary life.

**After meditation: Rabbi Brant Rosen, A New Rendering of Zechariah 2:14, 4-7
@rabbibrant.com 12.15.17**

A new rendering of Zechariah 2:14, 4:7 (Prophetic reading for the Sabbath of Hanukkah)

Let loose your joy for
your prayers have
already been answered;
even in your exile
the one you seek has been
dwelling in your midst
all along.

Quiet your raging soul
and you will come to learn:
every nation is my nation
all peoples my chosen
anywhere you choose to live
will be your Holy Land,
your Zion, your Jerusalem.

Open your eyes and
look across the valley
look at this ruined land
seized and possessed
throughout the ages.

Look upon your
so-called city of peace
a place that knows
only debasement
and desecration
at your hand.

Turn your gaze to the heavens
and there you will find
the Jerusalem that you seek:

a city that can never be conquered,
only dreamed of, yearned for, strived for;
a Temple on high
that can never be destroyed.

No more need for priestly vestments
or plots to overrun that godforsaken mount “
just walk in my ways
and you will find your way there:
a sacred pilgrimage to the Temple
in any land you call home.

Enter the gates to
this holiest of holy places,
lift up its fallen walls,
relight the branches of the lamp
so that my house will truly
become a sanctuary
for all people.

Yes, this is how you will
restore the Temple:
not by might, not by power
but by the spirit
you share with every
living, breathing soul.

[Download Printable version](#)

Photo by [Daniel Lonn](#) on [Unsplash](#)