

"Tis a Gift"  
June 12, 2022  
York Center Church of the Brethren  
Preacher; Ralph McFadden

I am deeply and painfully mindful of the chaos of our daily lives. As are you. I hardly need to remind us of the national, international, and global issues and events that cause emotional, spiritual, and physical problems.

I therefore share with you this one sentence that underscores what the root of my thoughts are today. It was written by 19th century Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard. And if you remember anything from these thoughts, remember this. "Affliction is able to drown out every earthly voice. . . but the voice of eternity within a person it cannot drown."

Pride month

30 years ago, "Brethren Life and Thought" a quarterly journal, published as its Winter 1991 issue. As editor Warren Kissinger wrote, "This issue seeks to address the question as to whether the Church of the Brethren is extending Christlike comfort and grace to homosexual persons." Doris Cline Egge was the guest editor.

I recalled this particular issue of Brethren Life and Thought because Doris had invited me to write an article. It was my first initial public 'coming out.'

I also recall that issue and the article I wrote because when that issue of BLT came out, the Moderator of Annual Conference called me and shouted at me with voice of anger. He was fuming and irate, chewed me out because in my coming out it was my fault that these young men were dying of AIDS. I was, then a chaplain working with Hospice of Metro Denver - and was daily with young men dying with AIDS.

That was not, it seemed to me, recognizing the voice of eternity in each one of us.

'Tis a gift to be simple 'tis a gift to be free  
'Tis a gift to come down where we ought to be  
And when we get to the place that's right  
We'll be in the valley of love and delight

When true simplicity is gained  
To bow and to bend we shall not be ashamed  
To turn, turn will be our delight  
Till by turning, turning we come round right

Three Note: Quaker Downer's Grove Friends

Recently I have visited the Quaker Downer's Grove website sort of out of curiosity.

My former roommate, Ed Smith, and his wife attended there before they moved to Timbercrest. Ed had been a Ch of the B pastor, and one time was on the General Board of our denomination. The Quaker theology was important, vital, imperative, key to Ed's beliefs.

And it seems essential to me. What is the meaning of Pentecost? They acknowledged, in understanding Pentecost.... "A service that will explore the divinely embodied and the power of change made manifest in Pentecost. The power of change....."

Downers Grove Friends statement of invitation: We believe there is that of God in everyone. We make no distinctions in personal worth or value. We celebrate and embrace diversity in race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, abilities, class, opinion, and religious background.

Monks of Western Priory

I want to say something to all of you who have become a part of the fabric of my life.

The color and texture which you have brought into my being have become a song, and I want to sing it forever.

There is an energy in us which makes things happen when the paths of other persons touch ours and we have to be there and let it happen.

When the time of our particular sunset comes, our accomplishments won't really matter a great deal. But the clarity and care with which we have loved others will speak with vitality of the great gift of life we have been for each other.