

Eric
Butterworth
Speaks

Essay #28
"GOD'S GOOD TIME"...IS NOW

January is a poor time to begin a year. It might make more sense to begin it in the Spring when nature is reawakening to a new cycle of growth while January 1st is just another grim winter day. We say "Happy New Year!" but it is a nebulous thing. Why not simply say, "Happy today," or "Happy New You!"

It is not a matter of what will the New Year bring? Rather, it is what will we do with the continuing now experiences in the days and weeks ahead? As Carlyle puts it, "Every day that is born into the world comes like a burst of music, and rings itself all the day through; and thou shalt make of it a dance, dirge, or a life-march, as thou wilt."

The time of the New Year often calls forth reminiscences of the past and a pre-occupation with the future. How much better to get into the consciousness of the now, to stand confidently at the "mid-point of eternity", knowing that life is not yesterday nor tomorrow...but today, here, and now!

One of the many religious cliches that usually stands unchallenged is "In God's good time." One who is ill and in pain may cry out, "How long, O Lord?" And the pious one comforts him with the cliche, "In God's good time." Does this imply that God wants the person to suffer a little more to purify him for heaven to come? Another may cry, "How long before I achieve recognition, earn the promotion or attract a loved one?" How glibly he may be told "In God's good time." It is a meaningless and misleading bit of theological nonsense. There can be no past or future in God. Only the eternal NOW is. So, "God's good time" is now. Your good is not waiting on God, but on your willingness to "let God be God in you."

Life for so many persons is spent in the waiting room. From the time they are very young there is always the feeling of preparing for the "real thing." When I am old enough to go to school...when I can get married...when the children are married...when we retire to Florida....and on and on. Then, the realization dawns that much of what we have been waiting for is already past. So, we begin to look backward with regret and nostalgia, "How good it was when I was in school, when we were married, when the house was full of children, when I had a job to go to every day, etc." In other words, there is a confused sense of looking for our niche, our place in time and space. Somehow we overlook the place where we now are. It is to get this realization of "Where I am" right now that is important, that right now is the best possible place to be to begin to move in the direction I want to go.

There is no past or future in the eternal NOW of Infinite Mind. Thus, there is no future in which to realize Truth, or to know God, or to reach perfection. And there is no demonstration to make, because the only demonstration there is, ever was or ever will be, is God's and that is made now. This is a good realization to work with. You might print it on a card and put it where you will see it often:
THE ONLY DEMONSTRATION THERE IS, EVER WAS, OR EVER WILL BE IS GOD'S, AND THAT IS MADE NOW!

We may not be aware how subtly we are locked into the consciousness of time. We console ourselves and others by saying "These things take time, you know." We may be working in prayer for some good to manifest, and there may be the feeling, "If I just keep on praying...in time the change will come." What do we mean? That if we pray enough, God will hear us, or that His reluctance will be overcome? Give some thought to this. Recall Jesus' words, "You say it is six months until the harvest, but I say unto you, lift up your eyes for the fields are now white unto harvest." This is why he said, "When you pray, believe you have received, and you will receive." Prayer is not getting God to do something, but a process of getting into the consciousness of the Kingdom within where it is already done. Then, we need only "consent", or "let the kingdom come in earth as it is in heaven."

At the Unity Center a few years ago we conducted an experiment using a Portapak video tape camera in on-the-street interviews in which we asked on question of about

100 people, "What would you do if you had six months to live?" Some replied that they would live it up. Others said they would spend their time giving their all to their family, getting to really know them in their remaining time. A few said that the waiting would be unbearable so they would end their own life. The revealing aspect of the experiment was that every person interviewed read morbidity into the question. We did not ask, "What would you do if you had only six months to live?" The "only" was read into it by each person. We were simply asking, "What are you planning to do with your life in the next six months?"

We need to work for the consciousness of life as a whole experience. If one really gives his consent to life, past and future merge into now. Any concern for the termination of life will have no influence. He will be too busy living. One man was actually told by his doctor that he had only six months to live. People commiserated with him asking, "What are you going to do?" His answer was the same to all of them, "I will do what I have always done...live one day at a time." This was ten years ago. The man is still living one day at a time. They have been ten creative years. If he had lived them in anticipation of doom, they would have been ten years of hell. It could well be that he is well on the way to outliving his doctor precisely because he has kept his consciousness in the now of experience, the "mid-point of eternity", which is in the focus of the flow of life.

There is a tendency to equate time with life. We ask, "How long did he live?" It is irrelevant, other than to a historian. What counts is "How well did he live, how deeply did he live, how far did he progress in releasing his imprisoned splendor?" As Sir William Osler used to tell his patients, "Live in day-tight compartments.

Certainly one needs goals to give direction to life and vitality and depth to one's thinking. Have a plan for your life, and ideals toward which to work. But a goal is not a preoccupation for tomorrow, but a direction for today. There is no tomorrow, for when tomorrow comes it will be today. Certainly "live it up" in contrast to "living it down" in negative consciousness. Life is an unfolding adventure. Let it happen, and keep it happening in the now. Don't hold too tenaciously to things that have passed, nor grope too frantically for things you hope will happen in the future. Give your consent to today, for it is "God's good time."

In spiritual seeking, get immersed in the Presence. Don't deal with God in the past tense nor spend time trying to "find God" as though He were something to be encountered in another place at another time. The Presence of God is present here and now in this moment right within you as your potential for abundant living. You can realize your good "in God's good time," and God's good time is NOW.