

February 25th, 2011



Dear Friends

For some reason I rarely find myself on the mumbo-jumbo side of religion, or to be kind, the 'speculative' arena. Too calculating some would say! Maybe our personalities get too wrapped up in our own belief system and the image that we each call God.

I remember finding myself out in the cold when Watchman Nee's experientialism was the rage, similarly I've always been too absorbed with a current crisis to be concerned with 'the final' crisis. Give me a break, life is just too precious to be paranoid about what might happen. To be honest, I also squirm when confronted by the touchy-feely brigade, but how intolerant can I get?

Though, it seems like I'm in good company. I gather that the man from HQ isn't excited about 'Spiritual Formation' - a discipline that uses too much repetitive Bible reading, prayer and meditation to invoke some kind of transcendent experience, too eastern!

For some reason people who are too studious are labelled swot's, too emotional - luvvies, too spiritual - holy-joe's, too doctrinal -bible-bashers, too political - wonks, too much levity... such is diversity!

Robert Putnam in his 'Bowling Alone' provides an alternate perspective on social diversity. In contrast to the 'conflict theory', which suggests that if you put different people together, the outcome is friction, and the 'contact theory' which suggests that once people get to know each other they bond. He observes the 'constrict theory', which suggests that when confronted with diversity, people withdraw and become isolationist, communalism is diminished, which is just too bad!

The sound of 'harmonious development' for me meant equal doses of physical, mental and spiritual schooling. However, harmony has a few more notes. It is about getting the proportions and intensity such that we make music rather than noise, a flow of chorus and refrain, times of intensity followed by silence, passion and melancholy. It is about ideas from each arena resonating to form an integrated melody. Harmonious development requires not enhanced diva's, but a choir of emergent voices.

Thank you for singing in the laryngitis ward.

Best regards

Victor