

Key Insights for Christian Discipleship @ Jazz Evensong

Week 6 God Never Gets Tired of Caring

Exodus 3:7b-8a *I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them to a good and broad land.*

On his album, *Dear Heather*, Leonard Cohen recorded a song called 'The Faith.' The reprise, repeated 8 times, goes "O love, aren't you tired yet?" Rooted in the resilience of God's covenant with the Jewish people, this affirmation of God's steadfast and everlasting love speaks healing to world suffering from turmoil and trauma.

Whether our place of devotion and restoration
is graced by a cross, a star, or a minaret,
or is simply a space of quiet or of natural wonder,
I am convinced that the God of the Exodus,
the God who called a people back to being a blessing to all of God's creation,
is a work there, seeing and hearing the suffering of people.
But this God does not just see and hear.
This God acts to free people to flourish.
And when those people have trouble with that freedom,
when they recoil and rebel yet again
against the redemptive calling
to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God,
then God never tires of loving them back into relationship
with that God, with others, and with their authentic selves
to take up afresh their mission of blessing.

This week was Theolonious Monk's 100th birthday.
I had the privilege of MCing the tribute concert at Frankie's on Tues night.
I took a look back at Laurent de Wilde's 1996 biography
and was reminded that early in his musical journey
Monk played organ for an evangelist.
de Wilde made an interesting comment
about the ongoing influence of the setting and purpose of that gig.
"...it was Baptist church music in particular he played,
music of a much more intense and physical experience.
This music calls for dance and movement.
It is the very bond that joins the congregation together in their elevation toward God.
It's the rhythm of mystical ecstasy"

This is the kind of music, at its best, that frees people
to find and use the gifts that God has given them
to love and do works of justice that bless the whole creation.
That is what God created us to be and do.
And that God never tires of inviting and supporting us
to dance and move to the rhythms of divine grace and gratitude.



The Brentwood Declaration

How Brentwood Presbyterian Church Understands Its Faith & Mission

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth
and declared them to be very good.
God then created humanity, male and female,
to cultivate blessing throughout the world.*

*Rejecting the limits of their power,
our ancestors rebelled against God's vision of goodness,
resulting in toil, tyranny, trauma, and death.*

*But God never gave up.
In a definitive act of reconciling forgiveness,
God became incarnate among us.*

*In the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth,
God restored the original goodness of creation
as a commonwealth enjoyed on earth as it is in heaven.
The Holy Spirit continues to work out the fulfillment of that act.*

*Through the church universal in which we participate,
the Holy Spirit nourishes us to flourish as God's friends
through worship, learning, fellowship, and service.*

*By God's grace, in Jesus the Christ, through the Holy Spirit,
we know what it is to be loved and to love
amidst all the problems of the world,
and we are equipped, empowered, and sent
to sow the seeds of God's shalom in all of our circles of influence.*

*In the end, God's love will transform the heavens and the earth,
and bring justice, peace, and joy to every dimension of creation.*

The Christian faith is a response of gratitude to God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ. It is Gospel – good news - for all. The broad outlines of the story of how these good things happened and continue to unfold are found in the Brentwood Declaration.

There may well be some ideas and language in the declaration that don't make much sense to you. Participants in Brentwood are always open to exploring these matters further, especially our minister, Brian Fraser. He can be reached at jazzthinkbrian@gmail.com.

Part of a 50-week series of reflections at Jazz Evensong, Brentwood Presbyterian Church
For other insights, visit brentwoodpc.ca and click the Jazz Evensong Reflections Archives