

A picture can paint a thousand words

Last week a friend gave me a copy of an old German painting called Det Breite und det Schmale Weg. Translated it means 'The Broad and the Narrow Way'. I had noticed a framed edition on her kitchen wall and my attention had been continually drawn to it. There was a certain pain and a certain hope entwined within it.

Designed by Charlotte Reihlen of Stuttgart in 1862 it was then painted by Herr Schacher also from Stuttgart, and later editions were produced in Holland in 1866.

Aside from the two obvious paths depicted in the picture, and although there are English editions, a German translation book and a magnifying glass revealed minute and interesting details in many of the figures. There were scriptural references under some of the scenes. The images were so comparable in how we personally experience life today.

Of course the broad and narrow way is sometimes discussed within religious parlance; and there is a belief that only a few are seriously on the narrow way to life eternal.

Outside of that discussion, the way to heaven is wide. Everyone thinks they are going there.

Today, so many people are compromising themselves through their very own interpretation on what constitutes the 'right' way of living by listening to people who they believe to be experts, religious scholars, enlightened masters, mentors and church leaders. It is troubling. Choice sections of scripture are often being randomly used to edify, justify or debilitate another. Coming from the wrong people, even if they are well intentioned, they are also turning people away, rather than bringing people to any real meaning or understanding of life.

It appears Christianity within the United Kingdom has never been so mixed up, so confusing, and so hypocritical as it is today. If people have lost all respect for Christianity, and are moving away from it, it is some of the religious leaders of our day and the church itself which has also encouraged and enforced that viewpoint.

Outside of organized religion, which also includes the mass importation from America of the Church Growth Movement, and the Purpose Driven Life process, some people are just going their own way. They have either lost their faith altogether, chosen the humanistic route of appearing more loving, they meet in small groups, or are often just alone.

Remote internet friendships are also becoming much more valued as a separation between the obvious decadent life of destruction and the false life found within so many churches drives them to seek more honest contact.

Could this really be the narrow way of life?

One Solitary Life

Maybe it was cynicism, or maybe it was pain and rejection, that has also seen others get deeply drawn away to quietly follow and listen to a voice of truth, rather than to the constant noise and legalism which seemed to be in direct contradiction to something which lay deep inside their hearts.

And if Christ came with a sword to divide, rather than a plan to unite all people together, then there is a very strange plan taking shape within the main religions. Is it good or is it bad? A translation book and a magnifying glass could be useful.

Revelations seven letters to the seven churches could also be relevant to Christian people today. Who is taking notice?

An article written by John Bingham, religious affairs officer

for the Telegraph states: "Representatives of almost a dozen congregations in the Home Counties are due to gather in a church hall in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, later this week for the first session of what that say could eventually develop into an alternative Anglican church in England"

Whilst disagreement and opposition publicly rage across the nation within the Anglican church based on its differences mainly towards marriage and homosexuality, and the watering down of the bible; many parishes are preparing to split away in an attempt to hold to the truths of the bible against the ever increasing compromises that the Church of England are continually making on these issues.

Using this crisis and more precisely 'using' all of the divisions that they created themselves, manipulators under another agenda are taking full advantage of the situation to now call for 'unity'. This conveniently falls under the popular concept of co-existence.

Promoting this unity the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently gave a very encouraging message to Muslims at the end of Ramadan this year which you can watch here. He is careful not to mention the name of Christ in his message as the way to God, but as in all interfaith interactions there is the mention of the word 'common' as in common good, instigating that in our common humanity all ways and roads lead to God.

However, it seems that it is only the Christian faith that is adapting and changing itself so rapidly in relation to all of the other religions who, in comparison, gain a certain respect by adhering rigidly and even forcibly to their own particular beliefs.

And whilst Justin Welby also made a statement earlier this year saying he was deeply sorry on behalf of the Anglican Church on how people were being persecuted for their

sexuality, a strange silence from other faith groups still seems to reign regarding the barbaric ways people who are found to be gay are treated, most especially in African countries. You can read the full article and listen to his speech [here](#).

Lights along the Way

Maybe A W Tozer knew what he was talking about when he wrote *The Loneliness of the Christian* and a walk that would result in people taking themselves away from the fellowship of good Christians as well as from that of the unregenerate world.

Nevertheless, it is good to see that there are genuine lights and over-comers from all walks of life, and there are at least a handful of true ministers who are not afraid to speak the truth and more importantly provide the antidote to us all in ways that offer true understanding.

Not giving in and embracing that which is wrong in us needs encouragement and compassion – not compromise.

The compromising church, like the seeker friendly church, which is so prevalent in the United Kingdom today, are not always the loving places they should be. They can be addictive for the feel good factor in comparison to the singular path which is much more difficult to take.

Preying on the statement of 'united we stand, divided we fall', ironically also used by Winston Churchill in 1941 in a speech broadcast from London to the United States; those currently promoting unity have initially really divided and conquered Christianity in order to build up a new type of religion.

Maybe a quote by Polydorus of Sparta explains things much more succinctly if we do not show caution in what we embrace.

"If you adopt your enemy's religion you are enslaved. If you

breed with your enemy you are destroyed”.

So which way do you go, the broad way of ‘unity’ and us all being one, or the ‘way’ of Christ? There is no other way. It is certainly something to think upon.

If you look inside yourself at the pain you feel when you discover you have compromised yourself too much with the wishes of others and the wishes of the world you may find an answer.

The images in this YouTube video paint a thousand words: The Narrow Way

Resources:

1. British National Churchill Museum
2. The British Museum Collection Online
3. Archbishop Justin sends greetings for Eid al-Fitr.
4. The Loneliness of the Christian
5. Welby sorry for Anglican ‘hurt’ to LGBT community.
6. Church of England parishes consider first step to break away over sexuality.

[These are my views as a woman living in England, on how the culture and spirit of my country has changed over 50 years. Why the country does not feel protected or strong any more, how it has lost, and is losing its values and decency, and how we are daily losing our free speech.]

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