

"In God's Hands", Desmond Tutu,

Chapter Two Discussion Focus

We are created for complementarity

Not alone

- a) Genesis 2 "Then the Lord God said 'it is not good that the man should be alone ...' (but) has not science shown conclusively that human beings emerged on the scene after a long process of evolution? ... (However, the story in Genesis is) writing that intends to tell not the 'how' of things but the more profound 'why' behind those phenomena... The biblical stories about the beginning times are much more akin to poetry than to geology."
- b) "I need other human beings to help me become human in my turn. I would not know how to speak as a human being except by learning from other human beings, and I would not know how to think, nor how to walk as a human being. All these things I am able to do because I have been nurtured by other human beings".

"We should not want to be utterly self-sufficient; that just makes us less than human. We are made with inbuilt insufficiency so that we can know our desperate need of the other, of the one who makes up what is lacking in me; that is why God could say: 'it is not good for him to be alone.'"

Special

- c) "I have often been fascinated as I watch a symphony orchestra...Now and then the conductor will point to the back where someone who is holding a triangle will dutifully strike it and produce its 'ping'. Now, in our view, that is perhaps an insignificant instrument and the sound might be one we would not miss, and yet, in the conception of the composer, something unique would be lost to the total beauty of that symphony if that 'ping' were not to happen. ... Something irreplaceable would be lost to the glorious worship of heaven if your or my particular 'ping' were to go missing."

Together

- d) "There are many glorious moments when we inhabitants of the earth reveal our true characteristics, as members of one family, the human family, God's family." – Tsunamis, Twin Towers /11 September, abduction of girls by Boko Haram.
- e) "This doctrine about our essential unity can be even more disconcerting. Why is it that we continue to spend obscene, indeed diabolical, amounts of money, running into trillions of dollars, on what we call 'defence budgets' when, as we very well know, a minute fraction of those budgets would ensure that every single child on earth would have enough to eat, would have clean water to drink, would have a decent home and receive a good education?"

- f) In a normal, healthy home we don't say 'Granny, you will get food equal to the contribution you make to the family budget.' That would be an awful thing indeed. A baby contributes absolutely nothing to the family budget and yet, in a happy home, we lavish the baby with dollops of love and attention. In such a family, really is each according to their need and from each according to their ability. That is what God hopes will happen as we contemplate our relationships in our global home."
- g) "We are created for this deliberate network of interdependence, of complementarity, of family; God's family. Martin Luther King Jnr admonished: 'Unless we learn to live together as brothers (and sisters!), we will perish as fools.'

Obedience and openness

- h) Saul's conversion. Saul was a zealous and militant persecutor of the young Church. He was blinded by a brilliant white light on the way to Damascus, and while blind and praying, had a vision that a man named Ananias would come to restore his sight. Ananias was a member of the persecuted church and he had a vision in which the Lord told him to go to heal Saul ... he remonstrated with the Lord but obeyed ... and when he met Saul, the former and for all Ananias knew, still active persecutor of the Church he greeted him with the words "Brother Saul ..." This echoes Jesus's words after His resurrection when speaking to Mary: "Go and tell my brothers that I am ascending to my Father and their Father ..." These brothers who had betrayed Him in one way or another ...
- i) *discuss the above a) to h)*
- ii) It is really each according to their need and from each according to their ability.
 - a. *If we take this seriously, what are the implications for our tax system?*
 - b. *For benefits? For the Welfare State?*
 - c. *Is it possible to organize society on an entirely voluntary basis, according to these principles?*
 - d. *What do you think the conditions would be for this to be possible?*
 - e. *Do you think of yourself as someone with a need or an ability – does this colour your answer?*
- iii) Martin Luther King Jnr admonished 'Unless we learn to live as brothers (and sisters), we will perish together as fools.'
 - a. *What does it actually mean to live together as brothers and sisters*
 - b. *Is there anything practical we could do at La Cote?*