

The Way of Jesus : Some Notes

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Followers of The Way

<http://www.navigators.org/us/ministries/b2g/articles/The%20Call/items/Followers%20of%20The%20Way>

Arthur F. Burns, former chairman of the United States Federal Reserve System and ambassador to West Germany, was a man of considerable gravity. Arthur Burns was also Jewish, so when he began attending an informal White House group for prayer and fellowship in the 1970's he was accorded special respect. No one in fact knew quite how to involve him in the group and, week after week when different people took turns to end the meeting in prayer, Burns was passed by — out of a mixture of respect and reticence.

One week, however, the group was led by a newcomer who did not know the unusual status Burns occupied. As the meeting ended, the newcomer turned to Arthur Burns and asked him to close the time with a prayer. Some of the old-timers glanced at each other in surprise and wondered what would happen. But without missing a beat, Burns reached out, held hands with the others in the circle, and prayed this prayer:

“Lord, I pray that you would bring Jews to know Jesus Christ.

I pray that you would bring Muslims to know Jesus Christ.

Finally, Lord, I pray that you would bring Christians to know Jesus Christ.

Amen.”

Arthur Burn's prayer has become legendary in Washington. Not only did he startle those present with his refreshing directness, but he also underscored a point about “Christians” and “Christianity” that needs repeating regularly. It highlights another important aspect of the truth of calling:

Calling reminds Christians ceaselessly that, far from having arrived, a Christian is someone who in this life is always on the road as “a follower of Christ” and a follower of “the Way.”

...

Calling reminds us that we cannot legitimately call ourselves “Christians” (followers of Christ) without truly following Christ. Following (obeying) the Person of Christ — not embracing a religious tradition — is the point. As Jesus Himself so pointedly asked, “Why do you call me “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say?”

Calling reminds us that to be “a follower of the Way” is to see life as a journey, a journey we will never finish in this life. We are all at different stages along the way and none of us alive has yet arrived. Trouble comes when we forget this fact and pretend that life is static and settled, as if everything were a matter of sharp lines, clear boundaries, precise labels, and final assessments. We may have discovered that He is the Way, but we are still just travelers on the road.

Calling reminds us that, recognizing all the different stages people are at, there are many more who are followers of Jesus and on the Way than we realize. To forget this and insist that everyone be as we are, at the same stage and with the same stories as ours, is to be a Christian Pharisee. For the Gospels tell us it was the Pharisees who were shocked at those following Jesus. Is this situation any different today? Are we saved by following Jesus or by trusting theologically correct formulations of believing in Jesus?

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The Jesus Way by Eugene Peterson

<http://www.jordoncooper.com/2007/04/jesus-way-by-eugene-peterson.html>

Posted on Thursday, April 26, 2007

I have been enjoying Eugene Peterson's latest book, [The Jesus Way](#). The book is based on this article published in Christian Century. Here is are a couple of quotes from the introduction

The popularized acronym WWJD ("What would Jesus do?") is not quite accurate. The question must be "*How does Jesus do it?*" - page 8

More often not I find my Christian brothers and sisters uncritically embracing the ways and means practiced by the high profile men and women who lead large corporations, congregations, nations and causes, people who show us how to make money, win wars, manage people, sell products, manipulate emotions, and who then write books or give lectures telling us how we can do what they are doing. But these ways and means more often than not violate the ways of Jesus. North American Christians are conspicuous for going along with whatever the culture decides is charismatic, successful, influential -- whatever gets things done, whatever can gather a crowd of followers -- hardly noticing that these ways and means are at odds with the clearly marked way that Jesus walked and called us to follow. Doesn't anybody notice that the ways and means taken up, often enthusiastically, are blasphemously at odds with the way Jesus leads his followers? Why doesn't anyone notice? - page 8

If Christ is King, everything, quite literally, every *thing* and every *one*, has to be re-imagined, re-configured, re-orientated to a away of life that consists in an obedient following of Jesus. This is not easy. It is not accomplished by participating in a prayer meeting or two, or signing up for a seven-step course in discipleship at school or church, or attending an annual prayer breakfast. A total renovation of our imagination, our way of looking at thing -- what Jesus commanded in his no non-sense imperative, "Repent!" is required.

The ways and mean promoted and practiced in the world are a systematic attempt to substitute human sovereignty for God's rule. The world as such has no interest in following the crucified King. Not that there isn't plenty of lip-service offered along the way across a spectrum ranging from presidents to pastors. But when it comes down to an actual way of life, most of the language turns out to be court protocol -- nothing to do with the way we actually order our affairs.

Those of us who understand ourselves as followers of Jesus seem to be particularly at risk of discarding Jesus' way and adopting the world's ways when we are given a job or a mission to accomplish, when we are supposed to get something done "in Jesus' name." Getting things done is something that the world is very good at doing. We are hardly notice that these ways and means have been worked out by men and women whose ambitions and values and strategies for getting things done in this world routinely fail the "in Jesus' name" test. Once we start paying attention to Jesus' ways, it doesn't take us long to realize that following Jesus is radically different from following anyone else.

The one positive thing that can be said for the ways and means approved and rewarded in this world is that they work, something magnificently, in achieving grandly conceived ends. Wars are fought and won, wealth is accumulated, elections are won, victories posted. But the means by which those ends are achieved leaves a lot to be desired. In the process a lot of people are killed, a lot of people impoverished, a lot of marriages destroyed, a lot of children are abandoned, a lot of congregations defrauded. - page 9.

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We Are God's “Friends” *And* God's “Children”

John 15:9-17 (New International Version / NIV)

⁹“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴**You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.** ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

John 15:9-17 (The Message / MSG)

⁹⁻¹⁰“I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done — kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.

¹¹⁻¹⁵“I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. **You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.**

¹⁶“You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

¹⁷“But remember the root command: Love one another.”

Romans 8:12-17 (New International Version / NIV)

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴because **those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** ¹⁵**For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”** ¹⁶**The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.** ¹⁷**Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,** if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:12-17 (The Message / MSG)

¹²⁻¹⁴So don't you see that we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. **God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!**

¹⁵⁻¹⁷**This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us — an unbelievable inheritance!** We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!

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Ask Of My Father, In My Name

John 16:16-28 (New International Version / NIV)

¹⁶"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

The Disciples' Grief Will Turn to Joy

¹⁷Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?"

¹⁸They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."

¹⁹Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?" ²⁰I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²²So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. **²³In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

²⁵Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

John 16:16-28 (The Message / MSG)

¹⁶"In a day or so you're not going to see me, but then in another day or so you will see me."

Joy Like a River Overflowing

¹⁷⁻¹⁸That stirred up a hornet's nest of questions among the disciples: "What's he talking about: 'In a day or so you're not going to see me, but then in another day or so you will see me'? And, 'Because I'm on my way to the Father'? What is this 'day or so'? We don't know what he's talking about."

¹⁹⁻²⁰Jesus knew they were dying to ask him what he meant, so he said, "Are you trying to figure out among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'In a day or so you're not going to see me, but then in another day or so you will see me'? Then fix this firmly in your minds: You're going to be in deep mourning while the godless world throws a party. You'll be sad, very sad, but your sadness will develop into gladness.

²¹⁻²³"When a woman gives birth, she has a hard time, there's no getting around it. But when the baby is

born, there is joy in the birth. This new life in the world wipes out memory of the pain. The sadness you have right now is similar to that pain, but the coming joy is also similar. When I see you again, you'll be full of joy, and it will be a joy no one can rob from you. You'll no longer be so full of questions.

²³⁻²⁴"This is what I want you to do: Ask the Father for whatever is in keeping with the things I've revealed to you. Ask in my name, according to my will, and he'll most certainly give it to you. Your joy will be a river overflowing its banks!"

²⁵⁻²⁸"I've used figures of speech in telling you these things. Soon I'll drop the figures and tell you about the Father in plain language. Then you can make your requests directly to him in relation to this life I've revealed to you. I won't continue making requests of the Father on your behalf. I won't need to. Because you've gone out on a limb, committed yourselves to love and trust in me, believing I came directly from the Father, the Father loves you directly. First, I left the Father and arrived in the world; now I leave the world and travel to the Father."

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