

My "Aha!" Moment

By Ed Brennen

I had always been troubled by the passage in the gospels wherein Jesus is quoted as saying that we are to leave house, wife, brothers, parents and children for the kingdom of God. I had been close to people who had literally left home and family and they brought nothing but tears and misery to many innocent people.

To understand and share in my "Aha" moment regarding this passage you will need to know that I was an active member of a mainline Christian church for most of my life. A disagreement with an edict from the local bishop ended with a suggestion that I either accept it or perhaps I should consider leaving. I was probably naïve but that certainly was not the response that I had hoped for. I had been going to that communion rail with my wife and my spiritual family for many years. After prayerful consideration I began my quest to find a new spiritual home. I went alone.

After about a year of praying, studying, and trying unsuccessfully to settle into other churches I was invited to a Quaker (Friends) meeting. Quakers believe that there is "that of God" in every human being, and we are to act accordingly. Sunday meeting is spent in quiet prayer and meditation seeking the will of God in their lives. That is it. There is no creed or what Jesus described as "man made laws". Having come from a creedal church with symbols, and rituals it took awhile for me to appreciate the beauty of Quaker simplicity and quiet meditation in my life. It may not be for everyone, but it has been a Godsend for me. There are no bishops or priests or other authoritative figures. There is just me and the light brought into my life through the presence and experience of God.

Those of you who are more intuitive than I probably are now saying, "Aha now you understand." I confess that until just recently I still did not understand. I was brought back to that troubling passage in a recent bible study session. After the reading no one offered a comment on the passage.

Later that same day however I finally had my "Aha" moment. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is here and now. To be a part of the kingdom we were to live our lives according to the Great Commandment of love of God and of neighbor. He taught us to withdraw to a quiet place and pray directly to God without an intermediary. If we did these things we would be one in Spirit with God and with Jesus (the meaning of the kingdom of God). There is to be no other authoritative figure in our spiritual lives save the in dwelling Spirit of God. We are to have no fear for the spirit of God will be here for us in our moment of need.

"Aha" now I understand if I follow the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and I seek the light of God for direction in my life, then neither bishop, minister, house, wife, brothers,

parents, nor children can ever keep me from following the light that I have been given. I am now comfortable with the passage. As they say I have been there and I have done just that.