

D0152

160, Sept. 8, Christian Faith and the Stages of Youth and Mid-Life

The relation of Christian faith to personal development
will differ in the various stages,
and it is important to say something about this
at this point.

You will discover that
I have a quite different estimate

of the psychological significance
of the person of Christ
than is present in Jung's writings.

I won't go into this at the moment,
but will simply indicate how religious living
will differ at each of the stages of youth
and middle life.

The function of a ^{healthy} religious in personal development
during the stage of youth seems to me to involve the following ³ parts:

- 1) the presentation of a life of service to others
as a worthwhile way to direct one's energies
in moving toward the choice of a profession or career;
the presentation of Christ, then, as a man for others
who calls us to follow in his footsteps
in a life of service and love;
- 2) the establishment of a meaningful community of people
whose lives have been touched by this call,
who find in the person of Christ
a model, an ideal they wish to follow;
- 3) the clear delineation of a moral teaching
regarding values to be integrated into one's life
as a way of seeing one's way through the questions
& confusions of this period in life:

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thus, e.g.:

- the integration of sexuality with love, fidelity, commitment;
- the establishment of a personal style of living that places possessions & money, etc., in the perspective of service & generosity, & doesn't make them the criteria of vocational choices;
- the ^{calls for generosity} presentation of the needs of the world in the areas of food, shelter, health care, education, etc., as motivating factors in vocational choice
- the emphasis on the message of God's love in the face of the fears of the unknown that haunt the psyche during this period.

Religion is related, then, largely to the consolidation of the ego in an orientation of life and vocational choice in harmony with the Gospel. Discriminate ego-development from egoism.

Religion's function ⁱⁿ the period of middle life is quite different: here it is to aid one along the inner journey much more than along the outer.

A major transition occurs in a person's life when one realizes that the principal adventure of one's life is no longer external, is now to embark on an inner, n. th. outer journey;

the inner journey is a movement toward the personal discovery of God at the center of one's being, calling one to an intimacy w. Him, to contemplative prayer,

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to union with Him.

There are not of course cut-and-dried divisions
into outer & inner:

e.g., one will never accept the call to generosity
in one's vocational choice
w/o an experience of God's love
that is very personal & intimate;
so that inner religious experience, prayer,
is very imp't. in the outer journey.

But the emphasis is on action, choice, decision, community
not on solitude, interiority, aloneness. So too w. 2nd 1/2 of life.

The division is one of emphasis:

the priorities of religion shift
as one's psychological development changes,
as one's tasks in life shift.

In the 1st half of life

religion's function in development
is a challenge to reach high,
and to go deep,
but for the sake of action;

in the second half,
to reach high

& to go deep

for the sake simply of finding oneself in God
& God in oneself,

for the sake of personal transformation
into union with God
for its own sake.

The vocational choice is made. Now go within, where truth resides.