

## Got any trade-ins?

*"I traded in fundamentalism, legalism, theology, and doctrine, for LOVE and EMPATHY. One of the best deals that I ever made in my life. Less stress, more peace."* (Bryan Sherwood)

This morning, I read this quote by Bryan Sherwood and took pause to reflect on my apparent obsession with theology. It is ironic that the cornerstone of my theology is that theological correctness is not important to God. God loves us unconditionally, regardless of our theology and in spite of our sinful condition. God is like a loving Father who is always there for us, no matter what. If God wanted us to agree on theological issues, don't you think He would be perfectly capable of achieving that?

What we think about God (ie. our theology) is not nearly as important to God as what we think about our fellow man and our relationships with one another. It appears that the best "teacher" is this exercise in "trial and error" that we call life. Human experience is a better teacher than second-hand knowledge and/or speculation about what God is like and what God might or might not expect of us. What God has made absolutely clear to most of us is that love and empathy are far more important than ideology. This is the common thread of truth that weaves itself through all competing religious systems. This is the one truth that is "built into" all of us. This is the one truth that we all instinctively know. As our lives play out in this "crucible" of human experience, it seems that love and empathy are sometimes all that we have to hang onto. Through all the trials and tribulations of life God forces us to hold onto one another. We have each other. The most precious gift God has given us is one another.

As I have said before, when we lean on each other, we are leaning on God, because at the core of our being we share with God the divine/spiritual nature. We are all connected. God was, and still is, in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. The converse is also true. Christ is in God and we are in Christ. The Kingdom of God is not out there somewhere. It is all around us. It is us. I have spent the last 10 years or so studying theological issues rather intensely and it was not easy for me to arrive at this point in my understanding. I hope that by sharing these thoughts with you I can make your journey a bit easier.