

Hi everyone,

Take a look at the two pictures below. They are taken from essentially the same spot up on top of Three Humped Best, one of my favorite trails for mountain biking.

Which one did I take in the Fall? Which one this Spring, just a few days ago?



We are accustomed to noticing the signs that allow us to know the season of the year without effort. However, in terms of your inner life, the spiritual dimension of being human, you may not be as accustomed to reading the signs indicating the season you are in.

Like the seasons of the year, the spiritual life happens in cycles, movement through time. The danger is that the spiritual life literally becomes a going around in a circle. But when we learn to notice the season we are in, when we become aware of the spiritual movements within us, the circles can become a spiral moving us forward towards becoming the person we are meant to be: one with God, more like Jesus.

- What are you noticing about your inner, spiritual life?
- In terms of your spiritual life, where are you at right now? Spring? Summer? Fall? Winter? On top of a mountain? In the desert? Stuck on an island? At the North Pole?

What does God seem like to you? Albert Haase points out that “the importance of a healthy image of God lies not in the metaphorical shape it takes but in the godly enthusiasm it evokes for a life of loving service.” (Haase, *Catching Fire: Becoming Flame*, 37)

Here is a challenge: “An image of God that has remained static for decades can suggest that we have stopped growing spiritually or that we have come to idolize a mere picture—because, in the end, that’s all an image of God is, a picture, not the person.” (Haase, *Catching Fire: Becoming Flame*, 38)

Probably like many of you, I have been wrestling with, and pondering the appropriate response to, the discovery of the mass grave in Kamloops. On Wednesday I attended the Candlelight Vigil at Centennial Park in honour of the 215 children. It was a profound experience. I was especially touched by the beauty of the people leading the Vigil. Despite the pain and injustice, they advocated for peace, reconciliation, and a way forward together. The indigenous word they used for “welcome” was translated as “welcome, there is room.” Their advocating for “let’s learn to be treaty people together,” reflects who they are as a people. I found myself thinking, “Wow, I want to learn from them and become more like them.” Their generous and peaceful spirit as well as their desire to find a way to move forward together inspires me and reminds me of Jesus—his teachings and the revolution he started.

- How do you show up?
- What do others see when they look at you?
- What kind of values are revealed by how you live?
- How do you see God and what does your image of God evoke in terms of “a life of loving service?”

Where are you at in terms of your spiritual life? Are you just going around in circles or are you moving forward through the seasons like a spiral towards becoming the person you are meant to be? How is your image of God? Static or evoking “a life of loving service?” When I look at the descriptions of what God seems like to real people like you and me as recorded in Scripture, the discovery of the mass grave in Kamloops ought to evoke anger and commitment to actively work towards justice and reconciliation.

Here is a part of a piece written by Sarah Bessey:

“These 215 kids are not a sad anomaly; they are the official policy of Canada and the churches.

Ignorance isn’t an excuse or absolution.

This is not long ago: this is now.

This isn’t a dark chapter; this is our origin story especially if we are descended from settlers and if we are Christians.

Every step towards healing, towards justice, towards truth, towards reconciliation matters. So does every step away from it, every turned back or willful ignorance.

We have so far to go. Austin Channing Brown says “**reconciliation is what we practice after we have chosen justice.**”²

We still haven’t chosen justice. Not really.

How do we change the future when we won’t even fully tell the story of our past? The first thing we learned through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is that we can’t have reconciliation without truth. And truth demands justice. Reconciliation is empty platitude without systemic change.

What do we do now?

Well, we mourn. We lament. We name and acknowledge suffering. We let our hearts break and put away excuses, reasons, platitudes, silence. We educate ourselves and each other. We light candles and attend vigils and lower our flags, wear orange shirts and put teddy bears on our porches and

pray. on. We tell the truth to our kids. We repent. We make reparations when we can.

We actually read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and the Calls to Action and take them seriously.

We demand that the Canadian government and the churches commit funding to account for the genocide and to find the stolen children and restore them to their people. We demand that our leaders and their lawyers stop fighting survivors in court, provide equal funding, clean water and reform child welfare for Indigenous kids and families. It's a start."

You can read the full article here: <https://sarahbessey.substack.com/p/dark-chapter?token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjozMTQ0NTk2LCJwb3N0X2lkIjozNzA0NTAyNywiXyI6IklDNFJlIiwiaWF0IjoxNjlyODI0ODU1LCJleHAiOiE2MjI4Mjg0NTUsImZcyI6InB1Yi00NDIwIiwic3ViljoicG9zdC1yZWFiZGlubiJ9.40V1sz8KConj5PZ-pNqJFig5Nji1iDI4uNOc6UTGKHI>

Let's connect and let's keep talking so that we can learn to put reconciliation into action and become the people God has called us to be.

Andreas