

Dear Friends,

I spent part of my Tuesday watching a panel talking about the Future of Christianity. It was sponsored by the Center for Action and Contemplation down in New Mexico. Franciscan Monk Richard Rohr was one of the presenters as was Pastor Brian McLaren, James Finley, and Barbara Holmes. They gave no concrete answers but they shared observations about trends they were seeing. We started with a quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer that boiled down to Christianity will become its truest form when it is prayer and activism.

They see the future not as a retreat into orthodoxy or exclusivism, but embracing the faith and practices of other traditions to work side by side. They hope there will be a reconnection of the head and the body in our faith, not just being an intellectual assent or exercise. They talked about resurrection and that the 'church' or some traditions or theologies can die so something better can take its place. They lifted up that in the Bible, God has not shown a preference for institutions or traditions, but for love and justice. They reminded us that the Reformation was a shift from papal authority to the authority of scripture. They speculated that in Reformation, we are and will be from the authority of scripture to the authority of morals and humility or even the authority of the Earth in allowing the world to be our teacher of how-to live-in harmony.

I think the future of Christianity if it is going to not just survive but to truly thrive is placing our authority on love. It is the greatest commandment to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and the second is like it, to love our neighbor as ourselves. And we will include the planet and all life as our neighbors. To love is morality, humility, and sacrifice, but it also leads to abundance, peace, and never-ending joy.

Only time will tell what will happen to our faith and our country as we struggle with authoritarianism both in the church and nation. But I believe in love, the love of God for us, the love of Christ who shows us how to care, heal, and forgive, and the love of humanity and the world.

Peace

Pastor Enno