

mayBe

a community
following in the way of Jesus
by prayer and action
for a better world now

THE TILlich 'COURAGE-TO-BE' SERIES [2] THE NEW BEING

• THE NEW BEING

We continue our series 'courage-to-be' inspired by Paul Tillich (1886-1965), pastor, philosopher, political rebel and theological radical. One of Tillich's great themes was the possibility of what he called 'the new being, the new creation, the new reality, the new state of things' - that somehow, in God's care, everything and everyone can and is being made new...

• SCRIPTURE RESOURCES

I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh...

Ezekiel 11 [God's ancient promise to restore Israel]

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5 [Paul's letter to the church in Corinth]

Jesus went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.

Luke 8 [the Gospel writer Luke reflects on Jesus's role]

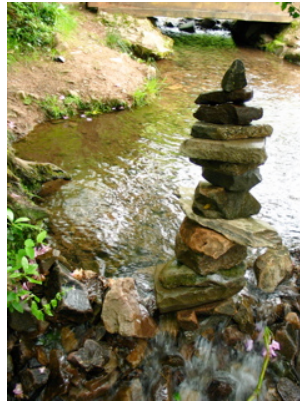
• THE THEOLOGIAN SPEAKS - PAUL TILlich

This is a series of quotations taken from an address given by Tillich and printed in full in the book 'The New being' University of Nebraska Press 2005.

If I were asked to sum up the Christian message for our time in two words, I would say with Paul: It is the message of a "New Creation."

We all live in the old state of things, and the question asked of us is whether we *also* participate in the new state of things. We belong to the Old Creation, and the demand made upon us by Christianity is that we *also* participate in the New Creation.

What is this New Being? Paul answers first by saying what it is *not*. It is neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, he says [see *Galatians 6:15*] It means that no religion as such produces the New Being. No religion matters - only a new state of things.



We want only to communicate to you an experience we have had that here and there in the world and now and then in ourselves is a New Creation, usually hidden, but sometimes manifest, and certainly manifest in Jesus who is called the Christ.

The question of a New Reality is of infinite importance. We should worry more about it than about anything else between heaven and earth. The New Creation - this is our ultimate concern; this should be our infinite passion - the infinite passion of every human being.

And now we ask again: What is this New Being? The New Being is not something that simply takes the place of the Old Being. But it is a renewal of the Old which has been corrupted, distorted, split and almost destroyed. But not wholly destroyed. Salvation does not destroy creation; but it transforms the Old Creation into a New one.

Therefore we can speak of the New Being in terms of a re-newal: The threefold "re," namely, re-conciliation, re-union, re-surrection.

Re-conciliation: Try to reconcile God. You will fail. This is the message: A new reality has appeared in which you *are* reconciled. To enter the New Being we do not need to show anything. We must only be open to be grasped by it, although we have nothing to show.

Re-union: The New Creation is healing creation because it creates reunion with oneself. And it creates reunion with the others. Nothing is more distinctive of the Old Being than the separation of man from man. Nothing is more passionately demanded than social healing, than the New Being within history and human relationships.

Re-surrection: Where there is a New Being, *there* is resurrection, namely, the creation into eternity out of every moment of time. The Old Being has the mark of disintegration and death. The New Being puts a new mark over the old one.... Resurrection happens *now*, or it does not happen at all. It happens in us and around us, in soul and history, in nature and universe.

Reconciliation, reunion, resurrection - this is the New Creation, the New Being, the New state of things. Do we participate in it? The message of Christianity is not Christianity, but a New Reality. A New state of things has appeared, it still appears; it is hidden and visible, it is there and it is here. Accept it, enter into it, let it grasp you.

• DISCUSSION RESOURCE

+ What, if anything, is happening around you at the moment that feels new and hopeful?

+ Is there a particular phrase or idea that catches your imagination in the resources here?

+ Tillich sums up the Christian message for our times in 2 words: "New creation". Jesus spoke in his setting of "God's kingdom coming". Which few words might you use to explain why you are on [or perhaps interested in] the journey with Christ?

+ Perhaps one of Tillich's great contributions in this area is to suggest that what God does is to re-new what has gone before, rather than tear it up as worthless. Which community, institution, business or similar would you like to see re-newed? What part could you play in its re-nawal?

+ If Tillich could be here with us today, what question would you like to ask him?

+ Look at the last phrase in the Tillich resource. What can we do, if anything, as individuals and as a community, when faced with the possibility of New Being to 'accept it, enter into it, let it grasp us'. What might that process look like? How might we be different as a result?

+ Coming out of this conversation are there any ideas for a ritual/ improvisation might we do at our Eucharist this weekend?