

Midweek Reflection # 6

Transcending our circumstances

"Life is not easier your way, Lord
but it is larger.

There's God ~
Looking at me through
cross-colored glasses.

To wrest from every savage moment
the infinite peace of God
to cling to His promises
even when my heart would be a scoffer
to live abundantly and with joy
centering my thoughts upon Him.

This is the challenge
the goal
and the prize."

~ Dona Hoffman, Yes, Lord

Dona Hoffman wrote those words during a long and painful battle with cancer in the 1970's. Her little book of letters, poetry and journal entries is a wonderful testament to God's faithfulness during difficult times. In the preface to the second edition, which was published in 2003, Dona recounts some of the many set backs that, after three decades of struggle, have her writing "for me this physical life is a painful experience, head to toe. And yet ~ and yet ~ life is not all that painful in the spirit! My soul still gladly sings the morning canticles and the evening prayers. In all my daily and hourly living, God is not absent."

Dona learned to daily thrust her soul into the deep places of God, and thus she, like so many others, known and unknown, has been able to transcend the circumstances of her life. Let me explain what I mean with a

simple analogy,
which I unfortunately cannot attribute to a specific source, but which is by
no means original with me:

There are huge icebergs in the North Atlantic which baffle cruise ship travelers when they first see them. In spite of strong winds blowing in the opposite direction and surface currents running counter to their movement, these icebergs move steadily forward. Nine-tenths of their bulk is under the water, thrusting deep into mighty ocean currents which ultimately determine the bergs movement, no matter which way the wind blows or the surface currents push.

People like Dona, who have learned to thrust their spirits into the deeper currents of God's grace and mercy can transcend the narrow limits of their circumstances, the "savage moments" that make up so much of life's reality! They can say with Dona, and with the Apostle Peter (John 21), "Yes, Lord!" when they discover that their journey is not where or how they expected it to be.

I am learning much, but have so much more to learn, from folks like Dona, and from the scriptures which have sustained her, about the deeper currents of God's faithful love and care. Jesus told his disciples, and us, to "Abide (remain) in me, and I will abide in you" (John 15). I am confident that this command is key to discovering those deeper currents. I believe St. Paul had those deeper currents in mind when he wrote to the church at Rome, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We are indeed "more than conquerors" through Christ who abides in us. And we can "wrest from every savage moment the infinite peace of God" no matter what life holds of joy or suffering, so long as our souls are carried by God's deeper currents along His paths and according to His purposes. Indeed, "This is the challenge, the goal and the prize"

With gratitude to God and thankfulness for the courageous example of Dona Hoffman.

In Christ's love,

Howie

