

I am not the person to team up with someone who does not have a sense of humor. This came to light when we were going through the Center for the Ministry in preparation for our service with International Ministries in the Philippines. One of our tasks was to meet with a psychiatrist and take the Rorschach test (you know, when you look at ink blots and tell what you see). This was the last session for the day and as we were leaving the head of the Center asked how things were going. He knew our schedule and he knew where I had been for the last couple of hours. He commented that Dr. _____ did not have much of a sense of humor (he had been with me long enough to know I did). I responded, "Maybe it was a good idea to say 'road kill' a couple of times!" He just rolled his eyes and patted me gently on the shoulder.

Humor is a part of who I am. The way God made me, and I think humor is a part of who God is. After all, the one who created the camel, kittens and the duckbilled platypus must have a sense of humor. For me, humor is a part of who God is and I long to reflect God's glory in my life. How do we discover who God is?

The writer of Hebrews gives us the statement that Jesus came as the exact image of God. In Jesus we see/they saw the very reflection of who God is. He is the very reflection of God's glory. Remember Moses in Exodus 33? Moses longs to see God's glory. He asks of God: "*Show me your glory*" (33:18). God agrees. Moses is able to briefly see the glory of God. As Moses comes down from the mountain and God's presence his face shines with the glory of God. He comes to the people reflecting the Sinai glory of God (Ex. 34:29), "*...Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.*"

Hebrews says that in Christ we have the very image of God. The NRSV says that Jesus is, "*the exact imprint of God's being.*" Eugene Peterson in The Message puts it this way, "*The Son perfectly mirrors God and is stamped with God's nature.*"

Christ comes in God's image. God, Christ, comes in human form, in our image. He comes in the same manner we entered the world. He lives with our limitations. We are soon to enter into the Advent/Christmas season (I am told that Fred Myers already has Christmas decorations, etc. on display). It is the season when we again are reminded of the Incarnation of God – God coming and living with us. Jesus will feel pain. Growing up in the carpenter shop, if he hit his thumb with a mallet his thumb hurt just as ours would and does. He has not special powers to move from one place to another – he walks just as we walk. Yet, he is the very image of God. He is "*the exact imprint of God's being.*"

The writer of Hebrews uses a portion of Psalm 8 to affirm Christ's image and ours. We too are crowned with glory and honor and are just a little lower than the angels. We are male/female created in the very image of God. We too are created in God's likeness. This then leads me to a question: Whose image are we reflecting?

Now all of us have an image of God in our minds. We are made to form images in our minds when we hear words. If I say "dog" each of us immediately comes up with an image of a dog. If I say "kitten" each of us immediately comes up with an image of a kitten. Even if I say a person's name we produce an image of a person in our mind. When Chrystal referred to Abraham Lincoln during the Welcome and Announcements I immediately had an image of Lincoln forming in my mind, stove pipe hat and all. You remember the story of a young child drawing a picture. The teacher comes along and asks who the child is drawing. "God." The teacher responds, "But no one knows what God looks like." To which the child replies, "They will when I am done!"

Did you see God when you looked in the mirror this morning? If you want to see God go home this afternoon and look in the mirror, or turn and look at those seated around you this morning. We are created in God's image and in being so created we, too, should be reflecting the very glory of our God. We are called to reflect God's glory.

Now for me the key is that we are to reflect God's glory. I was glad that there was a fairly full moon the last two nights. I hope you had a chance to see its beauty; you could almost read by the moonlight. I remember the fall of 1987 when Diane was in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and I was in New Hampshire. That October we had a perfect "harvest" moon. I emailed Diane about how beautiful it was and how the color of leaves were magnificent in the light of the moon. She emailed back that it was also a wonderful bright moon in Thailand, although not reflecting the New England fall colors. We were reminded that we were both viewing the same moon, the same reflected glory of the sun. We shared a moment of beauty thousands of miles apart.

It was a few weeks after that that I was preaching in a village north of Chiang Mai. In my sermon that morning I mentioned the moon and how even though we were about as far away from each other as we could be mileage wise we enjoyed the same creation of God, the beauty of the moon. I also noted that the moon has no power within itself. It is a big, cold, barren rock floating in an orbit around the earth. What we see is not moon light but the reflection of the glory of the sun. What we see is the sun reflecting off the moon.

Now, I hope you see where I am going with this. We are the reflection of the glory of God (even my sense of humor, I hope). As I looked out over those faces in this remote village in northern Thailand I saw in their smiles the reflection of God's glory – The same glory that I see reflecting in your faces this morning. We have been called to be the reflection of God's glory. But we have to remind ourselves that we are only reflecting God's glory. We have no power within ourselves. In John 19 Jesus is on trial before Pilate. Pilate reminds Jesus that he has the authority of life and death over him. Jesus responds to Pilate's assertion of power, "*You would have no power over me unless it was given to you from above...*" (19:11). The supreme representative of the government from Rome has no power unless it is given to him from God. We are only the reflection of God's glory – we are not God's glory.

If we are only the reflection of God's glory then it is important that we stay close to the source of power, to the light which we are called to reflect. We need to be close to that which empowers us. Paul writes of Moses in 2 Corinthians 3:12-13, "*Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. Not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away*" (NIV). The further Moses was away from God the less his face radiated God's glory. The veil was not to hide the glory but to hide the fading of that glory. We need to stay close to the Son to reflect God's glory.

As we come to this table today on World Wide Communion Sunday we are reminded that we are not the only ones who reflect God's glory. As we take the bread and cup we are reminded of the worldwide family that reflects, before the world, the glory of God. May we come closer to the source of our power as we again eat the bread and drink the cup.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quoted is from NRSV, NCCC/USA 1989
NIV, New International Bible Society, Zondervan, 1989
Peterson, Eugene, *The Message*, Zondervan, 2002