

GOING TOWARDS YOUR TRUTH: DEEPENING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD by Robert Boule, *Melrose Books, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 119, £12.99*

Throughout this book Robert Boule keeps a clear focus on the objective of this study, namely 'to go towards truth'. What is the truth of human life? How do we come to recognise 'our truth'? And, how do we deal with the roadblocks that we encounter as we seek to take the high road to truth?

Our biggest obstacle is our tendency to identify our truth with our intellectual or spiritual faculties while ignoring or even suppressing our emotional faculties. Boule does not hesitate to state that without growing in emotional maturity, which presupposes an acceptance of our emotional woundedness, our spiritual growth will be sluggish and very often come to a standstill.

Boule helps us to understand ourselves, our inner woundedness and our, at times, surprising reactions, by employing the psychological concepts of true and false self, co-dependence, and projection. He alerts us to the reality of our inner world which influences our emotions and our decisions, even though much of it may be in the unconscious. We carry within us an 'emotional memory' of how our childhood needs for love, esteem, and security were met or ignored and even in our adult years this 'memory' remains alive and active.

His chapters on 'Our Emotional Being,' 'Understanding our Woundedness', 'The False Self' and 'Co-Dependence' open up for the reader, in a simple yet profound and clear way, the inner world of the person and prepare us to seek a true integration of the emotional and the spiritual in our human development. As he writes, 'When emotions are repressed, they don't cease to exist. They are buried in the unconscious, secretly influencing our present-day patterns of being and our ability to freely choose our behaviour' (p.8). He writes as a psycho-therapist firmly rooted within the Christian tradition and with a truly Christian vision of the person.

When the child's emotional needs are not met, the child is wounded by this lack of unconditional love and acceptance. The child's true self in order to escape from the pain goes into hiding. A false self comes to the rescue. It begins to live according to other people's expectations; it knows how to avoid rejection by always pleasing the significant people in life; it shuns pain at all cost. That is the agenda of the false self. Boule explores the journey of life in terms of the tension between the repressed emotional memory of the true self, seeking healing, and the dominance of the false self, which seeks to keep wounded emotions of 'the inner child' suppressed.

In a very short book Boule disciplined himself to pursue, in every page, his stated purpose of 'going for the truth'. The reader will be delighted to discover how much truth he can uncover in a few pages. He encourages us not to define ourselves by the 'false self', which is solely concerned with 'what I have, what I do and what others think of me'. The false self's agenda is to avoid pain at all costs, to maintain the approval of everyone, to repress the innate values of the true self rather than run the risk of alienating some peer group. The false self, co-dependent on the approval of others, keeps the true self in a prison of denial.

The Second Vatican Council said, 'we can only discover our true self in sincere self-giving. (*Gaudium et Spes* 24). As our true self begins to reassert itself, by living the truth of sincere self-giving, it comes into conflict with the whole self-seeking agenda of the false self. We become aware of our inner woundedness, of all the unmet needs of the inner child stored in our emotional memory. This is a moment of challenge and growth, a moment when we can open our whole being to the healing of the inner wounds.

The cross that each of us is invited to take up daily in our following of Christ is the emotional pain that is within – fear, anxiety, guilt, and shame: fear of risking unconditional love; anxiety about facing the future in total trust in God's

providence; guilt over our past failures; shame at not feeling good about ourselves. True self-fulfillment is not the fulfillment of the false self, with its co-dependent agenda of avoiding pain at all cost, but the fulfillment of the true self with its openness to give and receive unconditional love. Living this unconditional love opens our innermost self to the way of purification.

Seeing our cross in terms of this inner emotional pain, which seeks to prevent us from living our truth, helps us to see our following of Christ as the way to actualize our true self and limit and ultimately overcome the co-dependent behaviour of the false self.

The potential of the true self is awesome. We are made in the image and likeness of God; we have been redeemed and have become the 'temple of the Holy Spirit'. As Saint Paul says 'we are God's work of art' (Eph 2:10). The truth God reveals to us about ourselves fills us with amazement. Indeed, Pope John Paul said 'in reality the name for that deep amazement at man's worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say: the Good News. It is also called Christianity' (*Redemptor hominis* 10). As we begin to live the Gospel, live in amazement at our human dignity, we become painfully aware of our inner wounds, all those repressed fears and anxieties submerged in the unconscious. We become aware too, as believers, of our 'fallen state', our sinfulness. But our sinfulness should never overshadow 'the wonder of our being' (Psalm 139).

In this small book Boule has integrated psychology and spirituality, therapy and inner healing, faith and science. The one criticism I have is a very positive one, namely, that the book would be much more helpful had it been twice as long. Perhaps he can remedy this in a second edition?

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JUST WAR ON TERROR? A CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RESPONSE edited by David Fisher and Brian Wicker, *Ashgate*, Farnham, 2010, pp. 231, £16.99

Confession time first. I approached this book with deep prejudice about what is called the 'Just War' debate. It seems to me that it has little practical application. Apart from the belated condemnation by the United States Catholic Bishops of the Vietnam War, I know of no application of Just War principles to actual wars that might oblige soldiers not to fight in them. (I do not forget Archbishop Hurley who alone told young South Africans not to fight in apartheid wars nor Archbishop Romero who urged his fellow-countrymen not to kill their brothers.) Once we had swallowed Hiroshima and Nagasaki anything seemed permissible, including a nuclear deterrence policy that rested on our willingness to kill ten million Soviets.

Having confessed such prejudice what is this book about? The two editors, in their final chapter, explain that one of the book's main purposes is 'to show that the ideology of Al-Qa'ida is not shared by the overwhelming majority of Muslims'. Further, that military activity should follow ethics and not ethics military activity.

The issue of Islam and Al-Qa'ida is thoroughly discussed by Ahmad Achtar of Heythrop College and Tim Winter of Cambridge University, the latter himself an Imam. These are really the key chapters and need to be read with care. This is new territory for most of us. It seems that the official teaching of Islam and that of Christianity do not differ much if at all: both faiths believe that the direct killing of the innocent in war or otherwise is morally wrong.

But neither here nor anywhere else in the book is there a study of the reasons why many young Muslims, who do not support Al-Qa'ida's ideology, think that a war in the Middle East of political liberation from the West is underway. Until