
Letters to A Young Episcopalian: Becoming

This letter is part of a series of fictional letters by Canon George Maxwell intended for Episcopalians young and old who wonder what it means to be faithful in the world today.

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Dear Anna,

I'm glad to hear that Bryce is feeling better.

And, yes, I'm happy to help you discern how you might like to approach your spiritual life.

I believe that being human is a journey of becoming.

We are, as the creation story of Genesis tells us, born in the image of God and, as early Christian writers interpreted that story, our task in life is to grow into the likeness of God.

This journey is often described as moving from death to life, or from captivity to freedom, or from blindness to sight.

I prefer to talk about it as moving from being asleep to being awake.

We wake up just naturally to some extent as we go through life. We learn how to love and find meaning and endure suffering.

There is another level of awareness, though, that takes a different kind of work.

This part of waking up depends upon our learning how to develop attitudes of openness and trust and surrender.

Now, when I say surrender, I don't mean giving up and passively accepting whatever comes our way.

I mean standing firm and actively staying in the flow of life that we can't control.

I think George Lucas got it right in the first Star Wars movie when Yoda tells Luke that he must "feel the force" around him, the force "between you, me, the tree."

All of this takes effort, of course. But, in the end, it's not something that we can make happen. It's something we have to discover through our own experience.

I sense that you are conscious of a level of life different from the one on which you are living and I would welcome the chance to share with you what I know.

The path you choose, of course, must ultimately be your own.

Your affectionate uncle,

Ames

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