Missional Eschatology Before Breakfast

There are these words:



> *Fearless warriors in a picket fence,*
> *reckless abandon wrapped in common sense*
> *Deep water faith in the shallow end*
> *and we are caught in the middle*
> *With eyes wide open to the differences,*
> *the God we want and the God who is*
> *But will we trade our dreams for His*
> *or are we caught in the middle?*
>
> *Somewhere between my heart and my hands,*
> *Somewhere between my faith and my plans,*
> *Somewhere between the safety of the boat and the crashing waves…*

That things are both "now and not yet" is a fundamental part of Christian spirituality.

It locates us in history: The Kingdom of God is **now**, for Christ is Risen! The Kingdom of God is **not yet**, for we look ahead to when Christ brings renewal and rightness to the groaning of all creation. We are "in the middle" in the pportunity to share in God's loving purposes, his *mission.* We are not too early nor too late to the dynamic plans of God. This is what *eschatology* and talk about the end of all things means for the Christian.

It locates us in ourselves: "**Now** we are children of God,

but what we will be has **not yet** been made known." (1 John 3:2). In the middle, we "work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and act in order to fulfill his good purpose." (Phil 2:12-13). We know now, whose we are, for certain. But we are incomplete, and we must have growth, refinement, maturation, strengthening.

"Now and not yet" therefore both *grounds us* and *stretches* us.

- We delight in what we have, but holy discontent with ourselves and the world spurs us on.
- We rejoice in where we have come to, but plans and ambitions must be abandoned as shallow and small as God's perspective invades.
- We have the peace of present rest, but the constant call makes us face our fears and turn away from the control and comfort that would placate them: "Your journey is not yet done, continue, walk this way with me."

The opposite of "now and not yet" is terrible. It's "this is all there ever was, and it's all there ever will be." In such things we are both rootless and directionless, simply adrift. Rather, lead me through the tensions and pains of the now and not yet, so that, being alive, I may live!

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