

“...we were not created for mere *knowledge of God*, but for ongoing *experience of the Divine*.”

It sounded like the plaintive moan of a calf involuntarily separated from its mother -- deep, guttural, haunting. Lurching from slumber, I clawed at mental cobwebs while trying desperately to identify the horrific sound. Imagine my chagrin when I realized the less-than-melodic notes were snoring produced by *my* vocal cords.

My wife had warned me that it was beginning to happen, but denial is a land of bliss and I retreated there quickly when she announced the presence of strange nocturnal noises. Maybe it was just gas. I could handle that – but snoring? Who would have thought?

My body continues to shock me with unexpected changes. The solar panel on the top of my skull expands at an astonishing rate while lush forests of ear and nose hair flourish. What’s with that? Each morning I wash my head and comb my eyebrows.

And my knees don’t function like they used to. Painful joints seem to run in the family genes but that doesn’t ease the discomfort. And speaking of genes, my jeans don’t fit like they used to. I never thought weight would be an issue for this skinny frame, but a burgeoning beltline is an expanding concern. Baggy shirts might disguise for a while but the day of reckoning will arrive (commonly called swim-suit season).

I have a growing grasp of why St. Paul described the body as a tent. Advancing years produce drooping and sagging. Even botox may not prevent that tattooed angel from becoming a fallen angel.

Though dwelling in a body in definite retreat mode, I am paradoxically aware of a soul advancing at an unprecedented rate. Yes, the person housed in this body feels healthier than ever before.

I’m more comfortable with who I am and less likely to be ruled by an impoverished, people-pleasing perspective. Awareness of what truly matters, registers more frequently on my inner radar and I have a growing tendency to adjust course accordingly. When it comes to taking offense, I’m more apt to live by the maxim, “It all matters, but not much”. I pray more and worry less. I’ve discovered the adrenaline rush of sitting in stillness and the absurdity of being ruled by the urgent. A mountain of desires has been whittled down to two priorities -- love God and others.

While pondering the “why” of this soul-health I have become convinced that it ultimately flows out of our spirit -- that part of our being created for God. The 17th century philosopher, Blaise Pascal, described it as “a God-shaped vacuum” within each person.

It would seem that we were not created for mere *knowledge* of God, but for ongoing *experience* of the Divine. The Bible teaches this is why Jesus came to Earth -- that we might *know* God. His plan was that life would splash from a God-filled spirit onto the soil of a parched soul. In this way, the soul could flourish even in the harshest of human conditions: rejection, abuse, pain, misunderstanding and fear. Thus, genuine life

flows not from some utopian concept of the absence of pain, but rather from a very real relationship with an equally real God.

Now if only He would add a little hair to my follicle-challenged head, life would be perfect.