

Ken's Story

I grew up as a conservative Evangelical
Very enthusiastic.
A son of the manse.

Throughout my childhood
I desperately wanted
To get my father's attention.
I think I got
God and father mixed up
Because he had the authority
And by Jove he used it

I had polio
It was a kid's hospital
Great fun.
I remember being quite sad to go home.
Hospital was an insight
It was a community to which I belonged
Because I walked with a limp.

In the New College residence
We were all new boys together
Studying to be Church of Scotland ministers
There was a real good community
But underground
There was a battle
Between the old way
And whatever the new was to be.

At New College we caught a fresh glimpse of something
It was daily bible study
It was all about small groups
It was quite open
Trusting people and their experience

This interview on which this script is based was conducted in the course of a research project supported by AHRC/ESRC (AH/H016589/1) and the script was developed with the support of AHRC (AH/K000527/1). Both projects were undertaken by researchers at the University of Edinburgh. For further information, see www.counsellingandspirituality.co.uk



We moved to Cumbernauld
Great people from all over the place
All thrown together
In a place that had
Little sense of community

I think the child in me rebelled
And said
“I don’t know where I am any more”
I was very challenged
Within two years I had a collapse

The old patterns collapsed
I couldn’t deny the battle
That was an awful time
There was no tradition to fall back on
Old things I’d relied on
Even though I’d rebelled against them
No longer held water
It was a huge turning point

The doctor sent me to a psychiatrist
There were eight of us in this group
Who all suffered from panic
I went to that group
Longer than I needed
Because I belonged there
It was a small group again.

Three of us together
Formed a real strong ministry team
And we got in tow with
Clinical theology
We put into practice
What we were learning together
Learning to be open with one another

Somewhere around there
Transactional Analysis becomes a thing in the Church of Scotland
I was trained as a tutor.
So all this was part of my ministry
And I was having insights
Into connections
Ministry, therapy, small groups

I got into spiritual direction and retreat work
Different strands were coming together
And that is what excites me.
Everything was grist to the mill.
What leads to life for you?
What does that say about your faith?

Sometimes I wonder
What on earth I'm doing here.
There must be more than this.
What is the more?
Do I call that God
Or do I call that something else?

I'm afraid of death when I think about it
You can see the roots of this
I don't know if there is anything
There's no ultimate certainty
In what I understand or believe

I think the spiritual is what animates
What makes me alive
What gives me life
That is the fullness of life
However we describe it.

Sometimes I wonder
What on earth I'm doing here
There must be more than this.
And that's where I still am.
I believe there is more
But don't ask me what
And don't tell me
In little packages
What it is.

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