Traditions of Spiritual Guidance

NO GREATER LOVE: RECLAIMING CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP

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THE AUGUST CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE of spiritual direction – for centuries an important aspect of religious life, especially in the monastic tradition – is being hailed as good news from a far country by many of us outside the Roman Catholic Church. Suddenly, Protestant ministers are being urged explicitly to undertake the spiritual direction of their flocks as a hitherto neglected form of pastoral care; laypeople hungry for guidance are seeking directors as, in another decade, they might have sought gurus in India or else in California.

A host of books on the practice of spiritual direction has been published in recent years; many seminaries are providing whole new curricula, certification programmes, even advanced degrees, toward this rediscovered 'specialization in professional ministry'.

It has even become politically correct in certain mainline circles not only to 'have' a director of one's own, but to be able (discreetly) to produce the fact as a kind of trump card on occasion, particularly if one has been clever enough to acquire a director of the really right sort: certainly a vowed Roman Catholic religious, preferably female, optimally of a famously rigorous order: a Carmelite prioress is ideal.

Unfortunately, Carmelite prioresses are in rather short supply.

The situation created by this sudden demand for a limited commodity – by this fashionable enthusiasm for a little understood form of relationship – has troubling implications, not only for what one might call the religious market economy, but also for the Church's working definitions of community, authority and love.

Let me hasten to say that, as a fully engaged and deeply ecumenical Protestant laywoman, I applaud the new interest in the responsible formation of the people of God. For far too long the Reformed tradition has tended to brandish the Calvinist dictum that 'God alone is Lord of the conscience' to defend a deeply rooted suspicion of personal piety in any save a missionary expression. The sad result has been that whole generations of the Calvinist faithful, dimly aware of an inner call to deeper union with the Holy, have had to struggle more or less alone and unaided to nourish their primary relationship with God.

'Worship' was what happened on Sunday morning; 'prayer', aside from family grace before meals, was what the clergy did for us. Justification was by faith alone, which became an excuse for ignoring or deriding as 'pietistic' any instinct for personal religion. *Scriptura sola* meant that the treasures of the

mystics have been either suspect or unknown. In the last twenty years or so, Protestant denominations have secularized and psychologized spiritual concerns to such an extent that a referral to a therapist or a twelve-step programme is often the best we feel we can offer people whose essential hunger may be for guidance in prayer.

Given this impoverished and impoverishing attitude toward prayer and a God-centred life, the notion that help is available, that trained spiritual direction is possible, is in fact good news. (I should also – modestly – add that I have benefited in the last decade more than I can say from the lion heart and eagle eye of my own director, who happens to be a Roman Catholic sister in a famous order, although she is not now nor has she ever been a Carmelite prioress.)

So on the one hand I rejoice to see the sometimes narrow Protestant view of personal religion enlarged by the richness of the Catholic mystical and monastic traditions of individual spiritual formation. The central insight, it seems to me, is not only sound but obvious: as Evelyn Underhill pointed out, when one is exploring the high country, one needs a guide who knows the mountain.

Nevertheless, I am made uneasy by the unreflective speed with which Protestants are adopting unexamined assumptions about the nature of growth in Christ, and about the extent to which such growth is impossible without benefit of clergy.

Kenneth Leech, whose book *Soul friend*[1] was a ground-breaking text on the ministry of spiritual direction when it was first published in 1977, has recently declared himself alarmed about the 'potentially extremely dangerous' way in which spiritual direction is being professionalized and seen as a 'specialists'' ministry, and about the degree to which institutes, networks and international organizations have sprung up to accommodate the current interest in training spiritual directors.[2]

In the time when feminist and lay reflections on the nature and structure of ministry are beginning to be heard, it seems a pity not to use those insights to evaluate some of the assumptions which underly the traditional forms of (as well as current trends in) spiritual direction. I do not mean merely, as is often said, that it is sometimes both overly 'spiritual' and excessively 'directive', although I agree with Margaret Guenther[3] and Kathleen Fischer[4] that that is often the case, to the detriment of women's experience and in perpetuation of exclusively hierarchical models of the religious life.

My present uneasiness stems more from a concern that emerging patterns of the director/directee relationship, as it is being promoted by some Protestant seminaries and churches, tend to support an already problematic view of ministry: one that is overly clerical, overly professional, and implicitly denies the sacramental value of ordinary friendship.

I suggest that the present openness to the importance of 'personal religion' in the life of Reformed churches might be a window of opportunity in more ways than one. Perhaps in addition to appropriating the wisdom of the Roman

Church's long experience of spiritual direction, Protestants might do well to consider exploring some perspectives other than the traditional 'confessional' model, with all of its powerful if unspoken assumptions about the superiority of vowed, celibate life. There might be benefit as well in reclaiming some of the implicit promises of Reformation understandings of mutual accountability, community discipline, and the priesthood of all believers.

Specifically, I hope that we can all, Protestant and Catholics alike, re-examine the marvellous possibilities inherent in authentic and responsible Christian friendship.

The idea of friendship as a positive agent in religious life has not, of course, historically been seen as an unmixed blessing by church authority. 'Particular friendships' were notoriously forbidden in the monastic novitiate, for example, and until quite recently Catholic schoolchildren were routinely warned that 'where two are gathered together, the Devil makes a third'. Even my own thoroughly Protestant upbringing was vigilantly supervised to prevent both intimate friendships *à deux* and (even worse) solitude. The jocund group was the thing; 'fellowshipping' was a labour-intensive activity.

Nevertheless, there is a strand of the tradition that, from the beginning, has seen friendship between Christians as a 'means of grace' and a reflection of our 'hope of glory'. Aelred of Rievaulx is perhaps the most famous proponent of the value of 'spiritual friendship'. His twelfth-century treatise is a classic on the subject and a gem of a book,[5] startling and poignant and persuasive.

Aelred, a popular young nobleman in the royal court of Scotland, became a much-loved Cistercian abbot, and seems to have had a personal genius for intimate friendship. But it was not merely his own temperament and experience that led him to hold friendship in such high regard. *Spiritual friendship* is, among other things, a variation on a theme articulated earlier by the philosopher Cicero, which Aelred adapts for purposes of a committed Christian life, also drawing powerfully on Scripture and St Augustine's *Confessions*.

That Aelred's view of friendship is exalted is evident throughout: great claims are made, in hyperbolic terms, identifying spiritual friendship among Christians with the perfect love of God so explicitly that he can go so far as to suggest that 'God is friendship'.[6] Aelred refers all human friendship to Christ: the friendship which ought to exist between us 'begins in Christ, is preserved according to the spirit of Christ, and . . . its end and fruition are referred to Christ'.[7] (Interestingly, two centuries later Thomas à Kempis would insist on the same groundedness in Christ, putting in Christ's own mouth the warning that 'your love for a friend must rest in Me, and those who are dear to you in this life must be loved only for My sake. No good and lasting friendship can exist without me.'[8])

Aelred goes on to claim that friendship is in fact indispensable to the abundant life: 'Among the stages leading to perfection, friendship is the highest'.[9] 'We have nothing better from God,'[10] Aelred declares. A life without friendship is hardly human at all:

> Scarcely any happiness whatever can exist . . . without friendship, and a man is to be compared to a beast if he has no one to rejoice with him in adversity, no one to whom to unburden his mind . . . or with whom to share some unusually sublime or illuminating inspiration . . . He is entirely alone who is without a friend.[11]

Aelred's tone occasionally reveals his debt to courtly forms of friendship (as his pronouns reveal his assumptions about the gender of his readers), but he is, essentially, neither sentimental nor romantic. On the contrary, he is, to modern ears, ferociously exacting and alarmingly demanding in his guidelines for 'that friendship which is spiritual and therefore true'.[12] True friendship will be stable,[13] and eternal.[14] It must be entered into carefully, with a mode of selection and a period of testing that sound remarkably like a novitiate. Most significantly, perhaps, true Christian friends, once selected and tested and admitted to real intimacy and trust, have enormous responsibility for each other, zealously to guard each other's good, and fearlessly to admonish each other's error.

> Let friend counsel friend as to what is right, securely, openly, and freely. And friends are not only to be admonished, but if necessity arises, reproved as well. For although truth is offensive to some . . . yet complacency is far more hurtful, because it indulges in wrongdoing and thus suffers a friend to be borne headlong to ruin.[15]

This deep and courageous loyalty presupposes the supreme standard of the sacrificial love of God, and echoes Jesus' own words: 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends'.[16]

This is a high view of friendship – high and deep and wide and glorious. And perhaps particularly corrective for us in the world today. Ours is a culture that, intending to celebrate individual freedom and religious tolerance, instead promotes loneliness and isolation, and effects superficiality, impermanence and self-interest in human relationships.[17] Possibly friendship is not taken seriously these days as a real element in spiritual growth, not because it is felt to be too dangerous to a holy life, but because it is too weak to be a factor at all. Our sense of what can be expected, hoped for, or relied upon among friends is far from Aelred's.

Nevertheless, his is not an impossible vision for us today – especially as of course we, no less than the medieval Cistercian community at Rievaulx, have the support of the Holy Spirit to preserve and sustain all our relationships. In fact, I am convinced that the recovery of an Aelredian sense of the value of true companionship among Christians would go far to address the apparently critical lack of good spiritual directors. In friendship, I believe, we may find a model for the Body of Christ as a living reality – a model for community, authority, prophecy, discernment and the all-claiming love of God.

At the heart of the Christian life is the relationship between ourselves and God. That relationship – which Leslie Weatherhead has called 'the transform-

ing friendship' – is an intimate, ultimate, passionate connectedness that is sustained by endless grace and costly discipline, that implies risk and vulnerability and trust at the deepest levels, that dares to affirm that 'unto God all hearts are open, all desires known, from [God] no secrets are hid'. That profound, covenanted mutuality – the 'I and Thou' of our primary relationship with God – is a gift and a promise that extends to all of us in baptism, and is (or might be!) the ground of all our relationships. Aelred sums this up with beautiful simplicity in the opening sentence of *Spiritual friendship:* 'Here we are, you and I, and I hope a third, Christ, is in our midst'.[18]

This is the deep union for which Jesus prays for his disciples: 'that they may be one, even as we are one . . . that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them'.[19] These are high claims indeed, referring human community and human relationships not only to the love that binds any soul to its Creator, but to the great mystery of the love between the Father and the Son, that dynamic uncreated unity from which all creation springs.

We are accustomed to seeing certain kinds of human love as aspiring to that life-giving height and depth: the bond between a mother and her child, for instance, or between a woman and a man in an extraordinary marriage. But Aelred suggests – and Jesus commanded – that much more of human experience than the maternal or the conjugal be intentionally rooted and grounded in love.

> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer; . . . but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. . . . I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.[20]

'I have called you friends,' Jesus said. What might it mean if we took seriously and joyfully the privilege of being his friends, and of being friends with each other in the same way?

One of the most immediately striking implications is obedience: 'You are my friends *if you do what I command you*'. Another is costliness: 'Love one another *as I have loved you*'. Whatever else it may be, Christian friendship is no facile matter of tolerant amiability or even gregarious solicitude. Christian friendship, as Alan Jones has observed, 'is for the healing of the world'.[21] Moreover, it 'is a much tougher and more resilient relationship than is often supposed.'[22] Where such Christian friendship is found, it will be characterized by reciprocal honesty and accountability, mutual support, and an attentive shared communion in the mystical Body of Christ.

Interestingly, much of what Scripture has to say about friendship assumes this kind of toughness: hearts and flowers are conspicuous by their absence in maxims such as 'Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another'

(Prov 27:17), or 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy' (Prov 27:6). Part of what it means to be a friend, it seems, is a risky and courageous determination to hold each other to account, a willingness not only to nurture and support but to confront and challenge.

Aelred, as has already been noted, is quite clear on this point: 'Friends are not only to be admonished, but if necessity arise, to be reproved as well'.[23] Easy tolerance of dangerous behaviour, or reluctance to appear interfering or judgemental, have no place in true friendship, Aelred would insist. No true friend will avoid the unpleasant necessity of reproving a friend lest 'the friend be borne headlong to ruin'.[24]

This, presumably, is where 'iron sharpens iron'. Being faithful to each other requires strength, even a kind of resistant hardness on occasion, a willingness to shout 'beware!' if we perceive a friend to be in mortal danger. Of course, this role in moral or spiritual crisis is classically the role of the prophet in the community. St John of the Cross assigned this prophetic role, under the charism of discernment of spirits, to the superior of the monastery; John Calvin similarly charged the kirk session with its solemn duty to warn the recalcitrant against the impenitent reception of the sacraments. It is also, perhaps, a natural role of any intimate friendship. However, as Maggie Ross reminds us, friendship

> too frequently shrinks from the prophetic role, and as a result, discernment amounts to little more than 'if it feels good, do it'. As Robert McAllister has pointed out, 'Everyone at some time needs the strength of a friend who says, Please don't do that; it is not good for you'.[25]

We are not accustomed to speaking of the 'prophetic role' in friendship, but it is interesting to note that Aelred does not hesitate to do so. 'Indeed a man owes truth to a friend, without which the name of friendship has no value.'[26] In fact, Aelred assumes difficult truth-telling in friendship to a rather breathtaking degree. He calmly commends the prophet Nathan not for his audacity in confronting King David with his own murder and adultery, but for the 'prudence' with which Nathan 'extracted from the king himself a judgment against his own person'. (The reference, of course, is to Nathan's famous parable of the ewe lamb, to which the indignant king responds by declaring that 'the man who has done this deserves to die', only to have Nathan implacably pronounce, 'You are that man'.[27])

If, as Alan Jones has suggested, one of the purposes of the spiritual life is that we hold up mirrors for each other that we may better see ourselves as we really are, then perhaps this is one area particularly suited to the intimacy and trust of friendship. Who can hold up convicting mirrors for us so steadily and compassionately as our dearest friends?

Another biblical image of dynamic friendship – as powerful but infinitely more poignant than that of 'iron sharpening iron' – is of the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1–12. The Gospel gives us an extraordinary picture in this

text (richly rewarded by meditation): Jesus is 'at home' in Capernaum, preaching to such a packed house that there is no way for anyone outside even to get near the door. But so determined are the afflicted man's friends that he shall be brought to Jesus that they remove the roof of the house and lower him down on his pallet through the opening they have torn for him. 'My son, my son, your sins are forgiven . . .' Clearly – marvellously – Jesus is touched by the love and faith of the paralytic's friends, who have gone to such lengths to carry their helpless companion and lay him at Jesus' feet. This is another defining characteristic of those who are friends in Christ: when we ourselves are unable, for whatever reason, to move toward God under our own power, God grants us friends who will carry us.

'A friend', quotes Aelred,

> is the medicine of life. . . . For medicine is not more powerful or efficacious for our wounds in all our temporal needs than the possession of a friend who meets every misfortune joyfully, so that, as the Apostle says, shoulder to shoulder they carry one another's burdens.[28]

Elsewhere, Aelred expresses his own profound gratitude to a friend at court who apparently rescued him from calamitous self-loathing:

> Terrible was the distress I felt within myself, tormenting me, corrupting my soul with intolerable stench. And *unless you had quickly stretched out your hand*, not being able to tolerate myself, I might have taken the most desperate remedy of despair.[29]

The pastoral function of friendship, stretching out our hands to each other, bearing each other's burdens, is closely related to and at least as important as the prophetic function. Both imply more intentionality and seriousness than popular notions of friendship generally assume. In fact, such an identification of functions (pastoral, prophetic) makes it clear that Christian friendship, as Aelred intended it and experienced it and celebrated it, is a kind of ministry, a ministry to which we are all called, as part of our membership in the Body of Christ, and for which we are all gifted.

Reclaiming Christian friendship as a real gift and call from God could have transforming potential for our life in the Church.

In an immediate and practical way, fostering a vocational sense of friendship might be part of a creative solution to the felt problem of supply-and-demand mentioned at the beginning of this essay. There might not be such long waiting lists for Carmelite prioresses as spiritual directors if we were more conscious that there is a great wealth – a veritable buried treasure – of guidance, support and nurture available to us among our own Christian friends. We might come to realize that our sudden need for a 'professional' director is not so urgent as we had first thought. We might learn to see, in retrospect, that in fact all our lives, through all our crises of joy and sorrow, all our moments of discernment and

choice, we have (as Lennon and McCartney remind us) gotten by with a little help from our friends.

It is a transforming moment for Jacob, after his dream of angels at Bethel, when he 'awoke from sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it" '.[30] Like Jacob, or like the disciples travelling together on the road to Emmaus,[31] sometimes we realize only after the fact that God has been with us. Sometimes part of that revelation of unrecognized presence is a revelation of the God-bearing friends who were present with us at the time. We see God by a creaturely light, Thomas Merton reminds us: sometimes the luminous creatures may be angels or strangers; sometimes they are our friends.

'A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter,' the Book of Wisdom affirms. 'One who has found a friend has found a treasure; there is nothing so precious as a faithful friend.'[32]

Recognizing the value of Christian friends to the Christian life – honouring their insights, giving thanks for their presence – does not of course require the dismantling of traditional structures of spiritual direction, with the more impersonal, unilateral and hierarchical expectations that that relationship typically carries. Spiritual direction as it has been classically understood and practised will no doubt continue to have a meaningful and valued place in the lives of many people, at many decisive moments in their lives. However, I do believe that claiming and honouring the role of friends in the Christian life could enormously enrich and enliven the range of possibilities for discernment and growth.

Such a sense of the worth of friendship could lead to greater depth and authenticity not only in peer relationships but in director/directee relationships as well. Without undermining the necessarily more unilateral focus of self-disclosure on the part of the directee, a deep awareness of Aelred's 'we two, with Christ a third' on the part of the director would go far to foster trust and intimacy between 'we two'. In fact, such a closeness between people engaged in spiritual direction would mirror not only Aelred's sense of friendship but also the tenderness and depth of St Paul's regard for the Christian community at Thessalonica: 'So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us'.[33]

Margaret Guenther, writing of the director's need to 'know in truth' in order effectively to help with discernment of the holy in the experience of the directee, has this to say:

> To know in truth . . . is to allow oneself to be known. . . . This is the truth that became incarnate in Jesus Christ, a truth known not in abstraction but in relationship. The shared commitment to truth ensures that the spiritual direction relationship is one of true mutuality, for both director and directee must allow themselves to be known. This marks one of the major differences between spiritual direction and psychotherapy: the director must be willing to be known – not just by

> her credentials, affiliations, and titles, but known in her vulnerability and limitations as a child of God.[34]

Whether we work as spiritual directors or as pastors in 'professional ministry' or minister grace to each other purely in the bonds of friendship, we need each other, and are privileged to love and to help each other. As St Brigid is supposed to have said, a person without a soul friend is like a body without a head. As certain contemporary theologians remind us, the classic affirmation of God as three-in-one serves as an emblem of the dynamic relationship at the heart of God.

By the grace of God, we live in eternal relationship with Christ, who calls us friends, in whom we are already joined together by the mystery of baptism into the body of Christ, the Church. From that perspective it is clear that Christian friendship partakes of holy and eternal mysteries, far transcending utilitarian notions of worth. (And, as Lyndall Gordon has pointed out, 'To see friends as useful is, of course, to miss the whole point of friendship'.[35])

Finally, then, the reclaiming of Christian friendship as part of the rich heritage of spiritual growth and support is not so much a political imperative, much less a practical solution to a staffing problem in parishes, as a recognition of a transforming reality already at work. Friendship is as much mystery as ministry.

Perhaps it is not surprising that it is a member of the Society of Friends, the American Quaker Thomas Kelly who – at least for me – most beautifully captures this sense of the sheer blessedness of the bond between friends in Christ. The chapter on 'The blessed community' in his classic *Testament of devotion* is a lovely essay on the mystical grace of Christian friendship. With striking parallels to Aelred (whom he does not appear to have read, however), Kelly writes of the 'Fellowship' as a gift from God:

> It is the holy matrix of 'the communion of saints', the body of Christ which is His Church . . . The final grounds of holy Fellowship are in God. Lives immersed and drowned in God are drowned in love, and know one another in Him and know one another in love.[36]

On the practical duties of friendship within the Fellowship, Kelly is as unequivocal as Aelred:

> Within the wider Fellowship emerges the special circle of a few on whom, for each of us, a particular emphasis of nearness has fallen. These are our special gift and task. These we 'carry' by inward, wordless prayer. By an interior act and attitude we lift them repeatedly before the throne and hold them there in power. This is work, real labor of the soul. It takes energy but it is done in joy.[37]

Again like Aelred, Kelly can sound ultimate about the role of friendship in the Christian life. Aelred suggests that 'God is friendship' – Kelly similarly suggests that friendship is the very fabric of the kingdom of God:

> Where the Fellowship is lacking the Church invisible is lacking and the Kingdom of God has not yet come. For these bonds of divine love and 'carrying' are the stuff of the Kingdom of God. [One] who is in the Fellowship is in the Kingdom.[38]

From his own vivid experience of this aspect of the realm of God, Kelly affirms that:

> Two people, three people, ten people may be in living touch with one another through Him who underlies their separate lives . . . We know that these souls are with us, lifting their lives and ours continuously to God and opening themselves, with us, in steady and humble obedience to Him. It is as if the boundaries of our self were enlarged, as if we were within them and as if they were within us. Their strength, given to them by God, becomes our strength, and our joy, given to us by God, becomes their joy. In confidence and love we live together in Him . . . All friendships short of this are incomplete.[39]

Perhaps if we reflect on our lives in this 'creaturely light', we will come to see – with a shock of recognition and delight – that, far more than we have ever realized before, our friends in Christ have revealed God to us, have carried us in their hearts, have stretched out their hands, have held up mirrors for us that shattered dangerous illusions.

Perhaps, in longing for such a friend, we may be given grace to become one, to invite the deep and joyful communion within the body of Christ that is surely part of what God intends for each of us.

For Christians, called and gifted to be friends of God and companions for each other on the way, all friendships short of this are incomplete.

NOTES

[1] Kenneth Leech, *Soul friend* (London: Sheldon Press, 1977).
[2] Kenneth Leech, 'Is spiritual direction losing its bearings?', *The Tablet* (22 May 1993), p 643.
[3] Margaret Guenther, *Holy listening: the art of spiritual direction* (Boston: Cowley Publications, 1992).
[4] Kathleen Fischer, *Women at the well: feminist perspectives in spiritual direction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).
[5] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual friendship*, translated by Mary Eugenia Laker SSND (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1977).
[6] *Ibid.*, I:69.
[7] *Ibid.*, I:8.
[8] Thomas à Kempis, *The imitation of Christ*, III:42.
[9] Aelred, *op. cit.*, II:15.
[10] *Ibid.*, II:49.
[11] *Ibid.*, II:11.
[12] *Ibid.*, I:37.
[13] *Ibid.*, III:6.

[14] *Ibid.*, I:21.
[15] *Ibid.*, III:104.
[16] John 15:13 (NRSV).
[17] Not that Aelred was himself unaware of these perils of false friendship either in the world or in the monastery: see Aelred, *op. cit.*, I:60 and II:57.
[18] Aelred, *op. cit.*, I:1.
[19] John 17: 11, 26.
[20] John 15: 12–15, 17.
[21] Alan Jones, *Exploring spiritual direction: an essay on Christian friendship* (Harper Collins, 1982), p 129.
[22] *Ibid.*, p 127.
[23] Aelred, *op. cit.*, III:104.
[24] *Ibid.*, III:10.
[25] Maggie Ross, 'The human experience of God at turning points', a paper presented at the Festival of American Spirituality (22 January 1988), p 18.
[26] Aelred, *op. cit.*, III:109.
[27] 2 Samuel 12:1ff.
[28] Aelred, *op. cit.*, II:12.
[29] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Mirror of charity* I:79 (emphasis added).
[30] Genesis 28:16.
[31] Luke 24: 13–35.
[32] Ecclesiasticus 6:14,15.
[33] 1 Thessalonians 2:8.
[34] Guenther, *op. cit.*, pp 46, 47.
[35] Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's new life* (Oxford University Press, 1988), p 199. This thoughtful biography of T. S. Eliot is also a fascinating account of the role of friendship in a Christian life.
[36] Thomas Kelly, *A testament of devotion* (Harper & Brothers, 1941), pp 80, 82.
[37] *Ibid.*, p 85.
[38] *Ibid.*, p 86.
[39] *Ibid.*, pp 86, 87.