

Gazing as into a Looking Glass

Sandy MacDonald¹

I press pause
Then rewind
And re-live the experience
When something about me was challenged
As I reflect on my practice

My theology bumped up against a real-life situation
Where it didn't quite fit
What I thought I believed didn't meet
How I lived
What I said, what I did

I re-enter the moment
Picture what happened
Like watching a grainy video
Who was there, what was said
I pay notice to my emotions
Attend to my thoughts
Test my assumptions

This dissonance between my internal and external theology
Needs attention

I turn to Scripture
Gazing as into a looking glass
Themes, characters, stories
That inform, teach, rebuke, comfort
Reveal the character of God

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I consider my tradition
Gazing as into a looking glass
What does my church's history offer?
What do the key voices utter?
What's written in doctrine, in policy, in songs?

I give space to reason
Gazing as into a looking glass
Bringing my own and others' intellect to mind
Might knowledge from elsewhere inform?
I apply my mind in making sense

I recall past experiences
Gazing as into a looking glass
Have I been here before?
Have I seen something similar?
Did I learn from the past or brush hastily by?

My theology is not fragile
God is not scared
As I learn, as I grow, as I think
Integrating what's true of God's self
What's true of God's world
What's true of God's child
Into a lived and embodied faith

This real experience
In a place, at a time
Revisited
Reveals more of who I am
As one who longs to reveal the love of Christ
To the world around me