

Module 1: In a Nutshell

Reading: *Process-Relational Theology*

Consider yourself an editor of this reading.

- Which statements would you **underline** to emphasize their value and importance to you?
- After which words and phrases would you **place a question mark** to indicate your need for clarification?
- Which sections would you **revise** in order that they might fit more closely with your present vision of God and the world?
- ◆ You are invited to **share your results** with others and listen to their results.

Process-Relational Theology

by Robert Brizee

Process theology proposes that we are made up of our relationships. We are related to everyone and everything: human, animal, vegetable and mineral. At our center is a creative process.

We live our lives in events, one moment following another. Each event has significance. We affect all other events in the universe just as all other events, no matter how tiny or far away, affect us, sometimes slightly and sometimes greatly.

We are persons who create ourselves in each moment from the complex influences of our personal past, the world around us, the condition of our body, and the persuasion of God. The past pushes us, the present surrounds us, and the future calls us. Within the limits of these pushes, walls, obstacles, gates, and persuasion, we have the freedom to create ourselves. We are free to repeat the familiar once again or risk something radically new.

God is a presence both within and beyond each of our events. God feels each event just as we do, suffering when we suffer, rejoicing when we rejoice. God knows us more intimately and tenderly than our parents, siblings, spouse, partner, or friends. Because of God's depth of feeling with us in our past moment, God can whisper to us a realistic possibility of who we might become in our next moment. God's dream for us is that we continually transform into more complex, intense, beautiful, and loving persons who desire this transformation for all creation. The possibility, the call, the dream, the vision that enters our being from the divine is both positive for us and for the common good.

Our calling is to co-create with God. We are lured to cooperate with God's vision of a universe that is beautiful: richly complex, embracing wide diversity, intensity, love, and harmony. In each moment we are beckoned to live within a realm in which God is

the poet of the universe, God is the fellow sufferer who understands, God is lover of all creatures great and small, and God is the one who invites us to “come dance with me.”

For Christians, God is revealed to us through Jesus Christ. Jesus knew God in the intimate terms of “*Abba*,” “Dadda.” Jesus lived within and spoke of the realm of God, inviting others to join him in this kingdom of God.

Our lives have meaning and significance as we adventure with God, knowing that neither we as persons, nor anything we do is ever lost. The drink of water that we give becomes a gift to the one who thirsts and to those who live beyond us in this world. That same gift is embraced tenderly in all its fullness in God’s own life everlastingly. Our memory may fade that we gave the gift, yet for God it is as fresh as the morning dew. Our deeds and ultimately we ourselves are gathered into the colorful quilt, the beautiful garden, the lovely symphony, which is the growing, deepening, enriching life of God.

This is the wondrous, mysterious, rich, awesome, unfathomable God toward which process relational theology can only point!

Opportunity to Journal

Date _____

Feelings, Impressions, Experiences, Intuitions, Illuminations:

Ideas, Insights, Concepts, Thoughts, Reflections, Clarifications:

Significant Happenings in the Group:

Questions Raised:

New Understandings about God:
