

It's funny how something sticks in your head – especially when you have a few days to mull it over! Last week, while enjoying a few days away in Culburra, I kept thinking about the poem by e.e. cummings I shared with you last week, *may my heart always be open to little*, particularly the second stanza:

*may my mind stroll about hungry
and fearless and thirsty and supple
and even if it's sunday may i be wrong
for whenever men are right they are not young*

There are a few words used in a pejorative sense there: 'Sunday', 'men' and to 'not' be 'young'.

I don't believe e.e. cummings is speaking about our cultural obsession with age or physical beauty or new trends when he speaks about not being young, though I recognise the dangers of using the word 'old' pejoratively! Rather, I think he is speaking about reaching a place in our thinking and attitudes where we are no longer generative, when we can no longer receive from others or give to others. The verse that comes to mind is Matthew 18:3, Jesus saying to his disciples, *"Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Cummings' use of 'men' refers to humanity broadly, but also to the way the structures and institutions of society can be used to exert power and control over people's lives.

What is saddest, however, is what is conquered up by his use of 'Sunday'! As one analysis puts it, *"Sunday carries the weight of respectability—church, certainty, the weekly performance of being correct."* How sad that this is reputation of Christianity in our culture – yet another institution that wields power and control over others – Sundays representing *"the weekly performance of being correct!"* How far this image is from Jesus' declaration in Luke 4:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

I was reminded of our challenges, over the last few years, with the NSW/ACT Baptist Association, how they have been far more concerned with being 'right' than being listening to others; far more concerned with correctness (and one interpretation of correctness) than fellowship with one another.

But during the week I have heard other stories as well about pastoral situations (or not very pastoral situations) where someone has valued giving the right answer, rather than providing the right response to someone in need. It is something we have all been guilty of

at one time or another. We need to hold tightly to love - to our task of sowing love daily. As e.e. cummings' father, who was a Congregational minister in Boston, Massachusetts, surprised his congregation by crying out from the pulpit one Sunday: *"The Kingdom of Heaven is no spiritual roof garden: it's inside you!"*

So, I am making these lines of stanza two my prayer – and my prayer for CBC and the Open Baptists Association - and for Christians everywhere – so 'Sunday' may be known as a day of resurrection and renewal – of God bringing life into our world again and again and again.

*may my mind stroll about hungry
and fearless and thirsty and supple
and even if it's sunday may i be wrong*

Amen.

Belinda