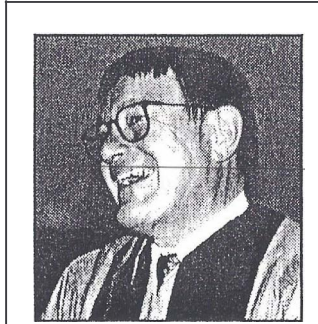


Time to claim our legacy of listening

I was reading *The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis the other day and a scene early in the book impressed me. The four youths, Peter, Lucy, Susan and Edward, are having a major argument about an amazing story that Lucy had told them; they decide to talk with an old professor for his help

This is how Lewis describes a part of that scene: "The next morning they decided that they really would go and tell the whole thing to the Professor. 'He'll write to Father if he thinks there is really something wrong with Lu,' said Peter. 'It's getting beyond us.' So they went and knocked at the study door, and the Professor said 'Come in,' and got up and found chairs for them and said he was quite at their disposal. Then he sat listening to them with the tips of his fingers pressed together and never interrupting, till they had finished the whole story. After that he said nothing for quite a long time. Then he cleared his throat and said the last thing any of them expected: 'How do you know,' he asked, 'that your sister's story is not true?'"

I thought to myself, "What an important gift we give to another person when we listen without interrupting." Then I wondered what the New Testament teaches us about listening.



From Your Pastor
Earl F. Palmer

Jesus acts in our behalf, he speaks the words of eternal hope, and he listens. John tells us in careful detail of the questions that are on people's minds as they encounter Jesus. He listens to a man named Nicodemus, a Samaritan woman by a well, a lonely man who sat by a pool for 37 years. He listened to those who wanted to argue as much as to those who were seeking help. John records for us the objections

Since Mark's gospel is written in a very fast-moving way it can almost look to us that Jesus during His ministry on earth mainly did things and that He spoke in short unforgettable sentences and parables. Mark's gospel tells in a brief and powerful way what Jesus said and did.

But we owe a debt to John, whose gospel who completes the picture for us. In John's gospel

that Jesus heard from the people, as well as the answers that Jesus spoke.

Listening is a gift of respect that our families and our culture need right now. Especially is this true when there is mistrust and isolation and where there are memories of harmful past events. We need to risk real listening, and we as Christians have a rich legacy of encouragement to take that risk because Jesus Christ listened to us. Each one of us, regardless of age, needs to know that there are at least a few people who are trying to hear what I am saying and if that can happen, then it might be possible that they will understand what I am feeling.

This does not mean I expect to always hear agreement with what I am thinking, because that can be patronizing and manipulative. But I want to be taken seriously and not written off because of my age or my sex or my race or my education. When this listening to each other happens, we begin the building of a house where friendship and trust can thrive.

Our Lord listened to us and He still does every time we pray or call for His help. Most of all he listens because He loves the ones who are trying to be heard. And then when we finally dare to whisper to Him, "Who are you?", He answers, "One who has waited long for you to speak" (CSL).