

16th October 2021

Search

**“You have riches and freedom here,
but I feel no sense of faith or direction.
You have so many computers,
why don’t you use them in the search for love.”**

Lech Wałęsa, from a speech in Paris, as quoted in the Daily Telegraph, 1988

I know little of the faith of the former President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa. Like many, I know of his influence in the 1970s and 80s on the welfare and future of his people. At the forefront of the pro-democracy movement, this electrician and trade-union activist from the shipyards of Gdańsk helped move Poland towards the end of Communist rule. He was the first democratically elected President in 1990 and has been the recipient of numerous prizes honours and awards. But I know little of the man, and next to nothing of his faith. I have more reading to do, I think.

I do know, however, that I have been inspired by his approach to issues of justice, democracy and freedom. And I value the sentiments he expresses in the quotation above. They come from a speech he made in Paris on his first journey outside the Soviet area. Which of us cannot find meaning in these words, applying them to ourselves and to the world in which we live? I reflected recently on a trend towards “hedonism” in our current society. We have our riches, freedoms, computers, possessions, welfare, all that’s needed to keep us in the comfort we feel we deserve. But where is the sense of faith or direction? Where is “the search for love”?

The Gospels tell a story of Jesus meeting with a rich young man, who asks him what he needs to do to live a good and worthwhile life. “Follow all the Commandments,” Jesus tells him. “I’ve done that,” the young man replies. “Then go,” said Jesus, “sell all you have and give it to the poor.” We’re told the man “went away sorrowing”, because he was very rich.

You have all you need, Jesus is saying, your riches, freedoms, computers, and all. But where is your compassion, your concern for justice, your self-sacrifice? You have all you need, and much more besides. “Why don’t you use them in your search for love?” Why, indeed! Why, indeed!

A prayer for today

*Living God, let me always search with diligence and commitment,
remembering that finding your love is my ultimate goal. Amen*

An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>