

Greetings church,

What Henri concedes in these pages that he has been missing is a so-called “core truth”. He explains that the concept or idea of being beloved had always been in the ether of his life and existence but never, until the writing of this book, had he come so far as to claim it definitively as his core truth. This definitive declaration then is what allows him to communicate clearly with Fred and his peers that “the words ‘You are my Beloved’ [reveal] the most intimate truth about all human beings, whether they belong to any particular tradition or not”<sup>1</sup>. “Being the Beloved expresses the core truth of our existence.”<sup>2</sup> I hope you are grasping what Henri is communicating here. It is something that I myself try to communicate from the pulpit and in conversation on a regular basis. Neither our Christianity nor our faith; nor our baptism nor taking communion is what makes us important to God, or special to God, or loved by God. The very fact that we exist does those things. The implications of this are astounding. This means that even those whom the *Church* declares unloveable or deplorable, those whom the Church wishes to declare unimportant to God, or not special to God, or unlovable by God, remain beloved by *God*. This too then leads to even more astounding implications of care and inclusivity that are well beyond the capacity of the Church to embrace at this time. Praise be to God though that He is in it with us, His creation, for the long haul.

Henri contends that the opposite of belovedness is self-rejection. He contends that everything that we might think would distract us from our own belovedness all have self-rejection at the core. Success, popularity, and power all have their temptations but at their core they all serve as false solutions, false validations of our own previously rejected selves. Henri suggests that Fred has communicated to him that he struggles with arrogance most of all. “But isn’t arrogance, in fact, the other side of self-rejection? Isn’t arrogance putting yourself on a pedestal to avoid being seen as you see yourself?”<sup>3</sup> Henri is offering wisdom and guidance that says much of what negatively impacts us, we allow it to have a greater efficacy because of our unwillingness, or inability, to embrace the truth of the belovedness of all humanity.

This draws us back to the greatest commandment. How can any of us possibly hope to love our neighbors, if we do not first seek to love ourselves? If at some level we all struggle with self-rejection, then is it any wonder that we can so easily and nonchalantly reject our neighbors? Thus it would seem that embracing our belovedness as the core truth of our existence is not only life-changing and life-saving, but has the potential to be world-changing and world-saving.

In Christ’s Service,  
Pastor Eddie

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<sup>1</sup> Nouwen, Henri J.M. Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World. The Crossroad Publishing Company; New York, NY: 1992. p.30

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p.33

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p.32