

Reflection by Nate Bettger

Nate Bettger is a Spiritual Director and a former member of Illuman's Council of Elders. You can learn more about Nate at his website www.natebettger.com

I've been thinking a lot lately about Eugene Peterson's book entitled, *Christ Plays in 10 Thousand Places*. I often change it up in mind to think that "Christ dwells in 10 Thousand Faces." After a recent blog post on my process with these very profound phrases for me, my spiritual director reminded me that Peterson's title comes from a poem by Gerald Manley Hopkins.

As Kingfishers Catch Fire

*As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves—goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.
I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
Christ—for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.*

If Christ dwells in ten thousand faces, or he plays in ten thousand places, the questions I have to ask myself are, "What is my face that I show to the world? Who am I as a beloved son of God? What is my expression?" It seems to me that until I know this truth and allow it to be real in myself, I will never see it in others. I will always be prescribing a face that I believe is the right face to others. Most likely, it will look like what I think it should look like... probably me, or my set of ideals. This was one of the most difficult yet freeing things I have ever learned... how to be myself as Christ has made me to be, not to be the "Christian" that the Christians say I should be, or the "man"

that the men say I should, or even the person that I idealize myself to be.

My wise and beautiful wife said to me recently, "I'm through not loving myself. I'm done with it. I am just going to love all of myself from now on. I love myself! I even love that I am weird." We need to find that unique face of Christ that only we bring to the world, and live it... love it. The rest flows...

By Nate Bettger (Oregon)