

# BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN

By Gerry Pierse

## **The children who were brought to Jesus**

*“People were bringing their children to him to have him touch them, but the disciples were scolding them for this. Jesus became indignant when he noticed it and said to them? ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them. It is to just such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs. I assure you that whoever does not accept the reign of God like a little child shall not take part in it.’ Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.” (Mark 10:13-16)*

## **The supreme lie in all of our lives is to think or feel that we are the centre of the world.**

1. As long as we live out of that assumption, we will exert every effort to defend it.
2. We will build a wall of protection around ourselves and fight off any one that threatens us.
3. So we accumulate goods, prestige, and power.
4. We get sucked more and more into protecting our position.
5. The ego is at the centre of life – in traditional theological terms this is called Original Sin.

## **The supreme truth on the other hand is that God is the centre of the world.**

1. When we learn this, we let go of the compulsive grasping for the false gods in which we tend to find refuge.
2. When we let go of these we find not loss but freedom – we find that our lives become simpler, more transparent, and freed from anxiety.
3. I think this is what Jesus meant when he said, “Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven.”

## **Characteristics of little children**

1. Children have no problem accepting *dependence*. They know that Mom and Dad are big and strong, and that’s just the way it is – that’s okay. It does not mean that they are unaware of their own power to influence and irritate Mom and Dad, but they do recognise and accept that their parents are the source of all power for them. So, too, we need to recognise and accept that we are children of God, and that all that we have is his gratuitous gift to us.
2. Children trust and are *trusting*. They are transparent before we adults teach them intrigue. They believe what is told to them and say what they believe. Children do not think; they do not analyze. They accept the world presented to them in its totality and in complete faith. They have no knowledge other than that which is presented to them. If they are told about a world of snakes or fairy men, they believe it totally. Children have great powers of concentration. When they are watching something that catches their attention or playing a game, they do it with great single-mindedness.
3. The child lives in a *transparent* world. Through saying the mantra we will also learn transparency. The Zen Master had a disciple called Banki. Banki was blind but, because he was blind, he could see many things that others could not see. When his Master died Banki said, “When other people express grief, I often hear joy. When others express joy, I often hear jealousy. But when my master expressed joy, it was joy; when he expressed grief, it was grief.” Through praying the mantra we too come to a more genuine child-like alignment of our feelings and responses.
4. Children do not think. They accept holistically in *faith*. When we are saying the mantra we are not thinking of anything, not even of God. We are not grasping. We are just being with the totality – the God who dwells within us. It is only when we become as little children that we can do this. And the way to it is the way of the mantra.

## **According to the Gospel, if we are to enter the Kingdom we must change and become as little children.**

1. I believe that one of the best ways to change is to start saying the mantra.
2. When we say the mantra we take the focus of attention off ourselves.
3. We are no longer concerned with the false gods that we have to build around our ego as we try to defend it.
4. As we take the focus off ourselves we come to sit calmly at our own centres. That is where Christ is, too. We find ourselves comfortable there with him. We can look out at the world through his eyes.
5. It is a strange thing that we can easily and joyfully cohabit in our own centres with Christ, but he can never move in with us. If we persist in keeping our false selves (or ego’s) dominating our centres, we keep his presence submerged and unrecognised.