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Repotting

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Repotting

Those who care for indoor plants and keep them in pots or wooden boxes, sometimes have to take a root-bound plant and place it in a larger container with additional soil, or the plant will wither and die. Fast-growing flowers and slow-growing cactus plants have in common that they either continue to grow or they die. Most plants do not mature to a completed size as do animals. Many a neglected plant will either break a pot as the roots continue to expand, or, lacking any potential for growth, visibly decline until no life remains in it.

We, of course, are not plants, and at some time in our development we no longer grow taller or develop longer arms and legs. Yet, we are akin to plants in our roots - the hidden internal supports that enable us to live as humans. Our lives are spiritual as well as physical, directly perceptible to the five senses, but more fully recognizable by our interior qualities. We might at times become "root-bound" and in need of repotting, lest we decline and become less human - a kind of "death while living."

We are not going to take ourselves out of our present bodies and replant ourselves in a larger one, since spiritual growth does not require more space but a more expansive outlook and attitude. For a personal example, we might look back in our history and recall a time when we were certain that there was only one "right" way to pray, or to drive to work, or to greet a guest. And then we learned that others had different, satisfying ways of praying, or varied their route to work, or adapted their greetings to the diverse cultures of their guests. Having observed other "right" ways of proceeding, we began to try some variations for ourselves.

Repotting for a plant can be traumatic when the roots are disturbed during the transfer from one container to another. Those who do the repotting will most likely provide extra care during the period immediately following the change. Since we do our own "repotting" when we choose, under various kinds of inspirations or pressures, to expand our outlook and attitude, we might need to exercise special care for our roots, so that we do not suffer damage. We do not make changes just because others around us act in a certain way; we pause, even if only momentarily, to acknowledge our deep desires for authenticity and integrity before opening ourselves to a wider perspective. We know that a mind and heart "open to everything" might well be described as a container that holds nothing of value. We choose a more expansive "pot" only when we sense that our spirituality, not vanity or a compulsion to please others, requires it.

We do the repotting for ourselves, but rarely do we create the occasions that invite, urge, or require us to at least consider making more space for different ideas, more persons, deeper values, and more generous commitments. We live in pots where we were planted.

We are more likely to succeed in our decisions about repotting when we acknowledge the love with which we were set into our environment, and in which we continue to "live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28)