

The Most Terrible Poverty  
Rome Williams

I'm alone in a lonely world  
And no one will admit that we're all sick of it  
My TV says my only hope is boy meets girl  
But what about friendship?  
Have we sunk that ship?

I'm looking for a reason to mourn no more.  
A season of sun but I'm stuck in snow  
Cuz just like you I feel I'm alone

2 in 5 of my generation  
Live in almost total isolation<sup>1</sup>  
And we're surprised at our rates of suicidal ideation?<sup>2</sup>  
I need a vacation from my social starvation  
Scratch that I need salvation  
I need help  
it seems that none of creation can satisfy the single thing  
that we need most

What we need is to not be alone

I know I'm preaching to the choir  
I know you've tried it  
To get away to escape  
to numb the numbness with entropy or entertainment  
We're meant for something more

We were meant to be loved not alone

We were meant to live, but instead we've contracted  
some sort of sickness  
that pushes people from us  
And then there's the symptoms that we've joined  
Where mental health has become a punchline  
Tension, contention, addiction, depression  
go on toss a coin

So let me offer a diagnosis, 95 theses notice, snap us outta hypnosis, but I'm pretty sure you  
already know this.

We were never made to be alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Haidt, "The Anxious Generation", 169.

<sup>2</sup> "Youth Risk Behavior Survey", CDC.

Lemme start at the beginning,  
I mean the very beginning.  
Cards on the table I'm a Christian, so  
Lemme go back to act 1,  
lights up raise the curtain:  
God made everything  
But here's the thing,  
every day he made something good  
Stars, ants, trees, yes  
Mountains, plants, seas  
And every time he said it was good,  
made as it should have been  
Except for one thing  
He made Adam before Eve

And it was not good for man to be alone

Since the beginning, Christians  
Have wondered about what this means,  
That there was "not good" before Adam and Eve even took from the tree  
What makes loneliness so insensible, reprehensible, indefensible that God destroyed it  
immediately?  
Mother Teresa called it "the most terrible poverty"<sup>3</sup>  
One pastor said it's the closest thing we have to dying, to be dead to all others,<sup>4</sup>  
To be ultimately individual. Unfeeling.  
And this has been the story of humanity  
Alone and defeated  
Because when we left, God stayed in Eden, separated from us by a little thing called sin,  
the thing that makes us enemies of Him.

Cards on the table, I'm a Christian,  
and what that means is that  
God didn't want life without Adam or Eve, sin couldn't keep him  
from loving the children of Eden.

Stop me if you've heard this story,  
I know where I'd be if God hadn't intervened.  
Lost and locked at sea sputtering gasping  
Still masking the fact that I was covering  
In order to stand tall like I had it all  
All I had was suffering

Cards on the table, I'm a Christian,  
And what that means is God made a mission

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<sup>3</sup> "Mother Teresa 1910-97", Oxford Reference.

<sup>4</sup> Andy Root, "The Relational Pastor", IVP, 61.

To become as lonely as you and me  
In order that we'd forever be freed.  
If you think I'm too preachy  
Please see that I mean well,  
Because God took a new name called Immanuel.

That means God with us. And if he's with us again then we're no longer alone.

God became a human, a man named Jesus  
In order that he could be just like us  
Because he was sick of being far from us  
So he came, and he lived, then he died.  
Full stop, he did what? If he was God then, why?

I'll let him speak for himself,  
he said he came that we "might have life, and life to the full",<sup>5</sup>  
and died for our sins "to bring us to God"<sup>6</sup>  
and "reconcile us" to him,<sup>7</sup> so our loneliness, our living death in the separation of sin would be  
destroyed just like He did for the very first man.  
Now there's nothing between us and Him.  
Because he didn't just die he rose from the dead  
Don't you know a dead god can't call you his friend.

Now we don't have to be alone.

See, Jesus didn't come just to live, die, and leave,  
To teach, or preach a philosophy.  
He left a people, he called it a Church,  
And gave it a couple commands,  
Demands that they would love first,  
Which we haven't often done, instead giving hurt.

I want to posit a new claim, that His command to love removes the stain  
of loneliness  
The pain of selfishness,  
shame of our injustice,  
and chose to entrust this  
Impossible charge to a people who would often fail, trusting that his love would prevail over  
their own pride and prejudice, hypocrisy and hubris, trusting that they could do this: they could  
follow him.

I'm a Christian, and though it hurts to admit it,  
We are not a people known for our obedience to Christ's command and

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<sup>5</sup> John 10:10, NIV

<sup>6</sup> 1 Peter 3:18, NIV

<sup>7</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18, NIV

We often mistake places on Earth for the Promised land  
See we have no king but Christ  
And no home but heaven  
We're servants not saviors  
Sojourners not citizens  
I apologize to my fellow Christians if that's hard to take in  
But if being a Christian is different from a party, policy, or political position, what kind of faith  
do I envision?

To be a Christian is to continually fail to fully love everyone,  
with the expectation that we'll try again  
to show them that they were so loved that God left his throne  
and died and rose so they'd never be alone,  
He left us a family and he called it a church  
So his presence his love would end our search

I know I'm living in a lonely world,  
And I'll admit I'm so sick of it  
I've found a reason to mourn no more.  
A season of spring to melt the snow, to show  
We are fully loved by Christ alone.  
He has brought life and life to the full.  
Come to him and you'll never be alone.  
You'll never be alone.

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