

## A purpose that involves a choice

Becoming a Christian involves a choice between two very contrasting ways of life. However such lives may work out in daily living, the motivation for each could not be more different. Two examples present this contrast very clearly.

**"I was certain  
that existence  
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*Dag  
Hammar skjold*

The first is that of Dag Hammarskjold, the respected first Secretary General of the United Nations. During his earlier years, despite a successful career as a Swedish government official, he had struggled to find meaning in life. Sometime in 1952 he wrote in his journal, which he titled *Markings*:

*I demand what is unreasonable: that life should have meaning. I struggle for what is impossible: that my life shall acquire meaning. I dare not believe, I do not see how I shall ever be able to believe: that I am not alone.*

Hammar skjold found what he was looking for in Jesus Christ. He said yes to God. From that hour, he said, "I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, thereafter, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal."

The second example is that of Mark Hatfield, recently retired from a very much respected career in the United States Senate, and at one time considered for the position of Vice-President. In a brief paragraph he describes the decision he made when sitting in his parents' home in 1954, thinking about the purpose of his life. He says:

*I could not continue to drift along, going to church because I had always gone. I saw that for 31 years I had lived for self, and I decided I wanted to live the rest of my life for Jesus Christ.*

Whatever position I may be coming from, whether from a life of drifting, a life of searching for answers, a life centred on living for selfish ends, or a life of respectability, yet without reference to the God who planned it all, the question that faces me is, "Do I really want Jesus as the Lord of my life?" If he is indeed the creator of the universe and the one who took human nature in order to bare the guilt of my sins, then am I prepared to surrender my life to him in gratitude? If so, he will not only offer me forgiveness and his continual presence in my life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he will also provide meaning and direction, and work in me to mould me into the kind of person he can use to fulfil his purposes in this world. A. J. Gordon said:

*If you would make the greatest success of your life, try to discover what God is doing in your time and FLING yourselves into the accomplishment of His plans and purposes.*

Meaninglessness leads to boredom, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency and suicide. According to Emile Durkheim, in his classic study of suicide, the greatest number of suicides are caused by *anomie*, which could be rendered 'normlessness' or 'meaninglessness'. And 'anomic' suicide takes place when somebody either has no goal in life or pursues a goal they can't reach, whether power, success or prestige.

A young Australian, Tim Corney, writing in *Zadok Perspectives* about the hopelessness of Generation X, "the children of the most divorced, most mobile parents this century", writes:

*As I walk the streets of my city, the spray-can voices shout out in polychrome unison the disillusionment, boredom and helplessness of a street culture that has stopped trying to make sense of the world.*