

## Ain't What I Used To Be

I've heard it said, "Be contented with what you have, but never too contented with what you are."

There is a story that comes out of Asia about a farmer who saw a tiger's tail swishing between two large rocks. In a moment of haste, he grabbed the tail and pulled. All of a sudden he realized he had an angry tiger by the tail and only two rocks stood between him and the tiger's teeth and claws! So there he remained, afraid to loosen his grip on the enraged animal's tail lest he surely be killed.

A monk happened by and the farmer called out in desperation, "Come over here and help me kill this tiger!"

The holy man said, "Oh, no. I cannot do that. I cannot take the life of another." Then he went on to deliver a homily against killing. All the while, the farmer was holding tightly to the tail of an angry tiger.

When the monk finally finished his sermon, the farmer pleaded, "If you won't kill the tiger, then at least come hold its tail while I kill it."

The monk thought that perhaps it would be all right to simply hold the tiger's tail, so he grabbed hold and pulled. The farmer, however, turned and walked away down the road.

The monk shouted after him, "Come back here and kill the tiger!"

"Oh, no," the farmer replied. "You have converted me!"

Conversion is nothing more than change. With money, conversion can be the change of a bill into coin or the change of the currency of one country into the currency of another. On the human level, conversion can be a change in beliefs, a change in ideas, a change in attitudes, a change in behaviors or a change in priorities. If the largest room in the world is "room for improvement," then it is good to leave plenty of room for change.

I like the old southern American slave's prayer:

"O God, I ain't what I ought to be  
and I ain't what I'm a-goin' to be.  
But thanks to you, I ain't what I used to be!"

-- Unknown

