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Nature's God is the human Messiah!

In the article a couple of weeks ago we mentioned the quotation from Gandhi where he stated that he did not have a problem with Christ but he did have a problem with Christians. As time has past since that article I have been pondering in a similar vein, why so many people don't seem to have a problem with Nature's God but they also have a problem with His Christians.

Now an easy answer would be that the gospel is offensive to sinners, thus when they see Christians for some reason they are turned off. Of course the underlying premise behind this hypothesis is that pagans find Christian piety offensive. But this begs a much deeper question. "Is the piety in question genuine humble piety, or some sort of self righteous legalism accompanied by a smug superior attitude?"

Of course those who live lives of self righteous legalism and a smug superior attitude will

answer, that pagans are turned off by their personal humble piety. So we can quickly see that any meaningful discussion here achieves nothing of substance.

Growing up in the Lutheran Church one of my favorite hymns was Beautiful Savior. In many other churches it is known as "Fairest Lord Jesus." It seems to stem from Jesuit roots about 1677, but for some reason it has achieved the common title as the "Crusader's Hymn," but has no connection to the actual Holy Land Crusades.

*Beautiful Savior, King of
Creation*

Son of God and Son of Man!

*Truly I'd love Thee, truly I'd serve
Thee,*

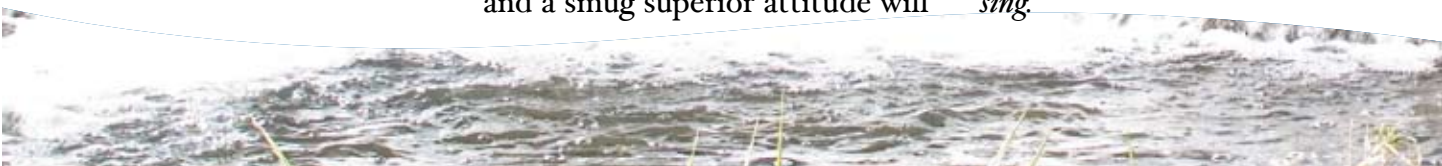
*Light of my soul, my joy, my
crown.*

*Fair are the meadows, Fair are
the woodlands,*

*Robed in the flowers of blooming
spring;*

Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,

*He makes our sorrowing spirit
sing.*



*Fair is the sunshine, Fair is the moonlight,
Bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels in the sky.*

*Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, Praise, adoration
Now and forevermore be Thine!*

The song in its four short verses ties a strong bond between Jesus the human Savior and the Creator Jesus and Creation. What is extremely interesting is in what we have seen is the non-Christian disconnect between the Creator and the Savior or Messiah of humanity. Putting that in the same construct as with Gandhi and others, "I don't have a problem with Creation, but I do have a problem with the Creator. What they don't seem to get is that the Christ Jesus that they don't have a problem in the Gandhi context is in the other context the one and the same Creator.

Putting everything thus far into a relationship, it seems that Christians should sing only verses one and four, and Gandhi and all the rest of the people can only sing verses two and three.

Therefore being somewhat generous to the feelings of both groups, Christians are in their church on Sundays and therefore don't know the Creator's Creation. And likewise those non-Christians are in their church on Sundays and therefore don't know Creation's Messiah.

It would seem logical if Christians would like to win non-Christians to their church and Christ, perhaps the church should be located in the woodlands and the forest sophisticatedly emphasized as God's creation.

I would submit that most American evangelicals interpret God's grace in applications of specific law, the legalism of shal't knots sic . The when confronted with a broadening of these common religious laws into the area of natural law they become afraid and retreat back to the suburbs and their suburban churches; to talk about creation and the Jesus they can read about in books.

Those non-Christians roaming the hills, swimming, and fishing in the lakes, enjoying God's common grace, may at times wonder what the laws their Christian friends are learning back in their suburban church, in their quest for personal peace and affluence. That is why church is boring, You can deal with personal peace at affluence during the boring workweek, why be subject to a boring Sunday sermon.

We live in a society in which the common bonds that used to hold communities together no longer function. Hence most people are left to their own devices, except when they are told what to do at work. "So why should I go to church on Sunday when I can go, to a baseball game, or a hike in the woods? All I will here in church is somebody else talking at me, trying to sell me something.

One might question, even though the Bible clearly states that the God of the Bible is the Creator and sustainer of nature, why Christians are so arrogantly creation deficient? Probably for the same reason they are also Biblically inadequate. Then in the discussion of theology, Christian doctrine, catechesis, they leave so much to be desired. Dietrich Bonhoeffer called this "Cheap Grace" or "Sloppy Agape."

In the twenty first century the world calls this worldliness, Christians call it by more descriptive adjectives, like emergent, seeker sensitive, people friendly, community driven, contemporary worship, a more exhaustive list is the same in every suburb, just like the people. Most can tell you the date when they asked "Jesus into my heart." However only those educating themselves outside the Sunday church service can really tell you what Jesus did. That includes, in creation, prophetically, legally, as Messiah, and in the future.

There is an old church story, which I will abbreviate greatly. Jesus calls his disciples, to be fishers of men, so what do they do? They study, and study, and study how to fish, but they never go fishing.

I realize that is a Biblical creation metaphor, so instead, why not a revival service in church or in the park on a hot summer Sunday night? Or better yet why not eliminate the second service on Sunday morning so people can do what they really want to do?

So let us summarize non Christian thought for the Christian, for after all it is the middle of summer. “There is really no reason to go to church at all, because there is not anything you can learn in church that you can’t learn elsewhere, for free, or at least those other guys are pretty much upfront with the money they want you to spend.”

It is no wonder the world is in economic chaos, the salt and light creation metaphors , which the church is supposed to bring to the world has become white flour and darkness.

Here are a few suggestions to change that:

Learn some natural science. I know the language has some of those definite evolutionary terms, but just consider it a foreign language, like Spanish, or German, or Russian. Simply treat those evolved words as creative fiction for that is their true substance. After a while you might be able to discern for yourself whether Al Gore, is a pagan revivalist, or whether the current global cooling we see is really the effect of the total reality of global warming. That surely makes it hard to figure out which is positive and which is negative climate change.

Learn some theology. Every Sunday we publish the Lord’s Day reading from the Heidelberg Catechism. From the Internet search results it seems to be one of the few places that the weekly reading appears. This is truly amazing, because we post it for it teaches excellent basic Christian theology, not because we hold to Reformed or Calvinist doctrines, whatever they are. We do this with special thanks to Fredrick III elector of the German province of the Palatinate from 1559 1576. Who tried unsuccessfully to bring some unity between his Reformed and Lutheran subjects.

Actually go fishing, for fish, with some of your “friends” who may never go to church. Boy that might make them think you really have something to say about something important. Then go to the store and buy some fish to cook on your grill and invite them over. It is much cheaper that way except for the grill, but that is a sunk cost anyway.

Finally learn the difference between, “what would Jesus do” and “what Jesus did.” Hint: What would Jesus do is imperative biblical law. What Jesus did was indicative legal justifying redemptive grace. Once you know the difference tell somebody else at your church. If you don’t go to church let the grace of Christ fill your life, so that you can actually be able to attend a real church and be “salt and light” or a real “fishers of men” in a hungry fishing hole.

So as we close this week look at the words again to “Beautiful Savior.” Spend a little bit of time contemplating the grand connection between the unity and diversity of Nature’s God and the human Messiah. If you are not humbled by either concept, perhaps you need to spend sometime learning more about Nature’s God or we human’s Messiah.