



# *The* Wonder Springs Chronicle

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## The Wonder Springs Chronicle

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## *Man's Religions*

This week in our Cult Football series we look at the religions of man and how the world's, and especially America's problems, are really centered on mutually exclusive religious conflicts.

An evolving paradigm of our post-modern world is the belief that religion is really a vestigial remnant of our primitive past, which is totally unnecessary in our enlightened world. Hence those who confess no religion at all are by definition, culturally and mentally superior to those who regress to their religion and guns to find comfort in these difficult times.

However this worldview forces all religious thought subservient to human intellect, which in reality states we have reached the zenith of human understanding, and hence we have become gods in our own eyes. That in reality is just a religion of man.

Those who don't hold to the doctrines of the religion of man, look to some sort of higher power,

either personal, or in karma, or some force. Since this deity is by definition superior to human intellect, the rights and rites associated, creates a religion for man. This gives mankind external absolutes and attributes by which we make sense out of change in this world, that doesn't seem to make any logical sense to our finite humanity.

The United States was founded upon the religious principles of Divine Providence, and also the highest duty and reward in this life is to serve the Creator with every attribute of our lives. This is affirmed by the salutation of the Declaration of Independence which reads: "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

This universal religious view of the American founding can perhaps be best understood in the common-ordinary religious statements of Benjamin Franklin.



God lives — We will meet him when we die — He will judge us what we do in this life — We should therefore serve Him — The best way to serve Him is to serve your fellow man.

Franklin also is the author of the famous quotation, often thought to be from the Bible, “Heaven helps those who help themselves.”

In the context of what we have been trying to express in this column, these are common-ordinary transcendent views of reality. They do not necessarily fit with any specific revelation of God, or the supernatural, but rather just truthfully proclaim an absolute moral code applicable to all humanity. They are definitely at odds with the enlightened atheistic view, so prevalent in our world today.

Let us codify these worldviews in the terms of both revelation and historic orthodox Christianity:

Common-ordinary or Augustine’s “City of Man.” This includes both what we herein describe as natural law and common grace, but also a transcendence that does not specifically relate to specific doctrines of religious thought. This is expressed many times as being “good” or “evil.”

Uncommon specific revelations or Augustine’s “City of God.” This includes specific transcendent revelations as to how one is to live in a common and ordinary world, but also specific revelations of doctrines by which one might in some way reach a place in which life’s struggle is no more, and time ceases to hold us prisoner. This supernatural also contains the reality of good and evil.

When we combine the two we are left with sort of a universal paradigm, which loosely states: We live in a big bad world in which we are not at home, or more universally common, a desire to live in a better place.

To overcome that desire we then struggle to create a worldly shining city on a hill or some such earthly promised land. That utopia has been desired through a broad continuum of descriptions ranging from a heavenly “New Jerusalem” to “The Big Rock Candy Mountain.”

I was never a big fan of the so-called Religious Right, because of their desire to “re”create a Christian nation in the United States. I don’t find this created “Christian Nation” in any American

history I have ever read. Definitely there were a lot, especially of the early colonial immigrants to these shores, who sought to do just that, but eventually the grace of Divine Providence made that reality too complex for that to happen. In the process these disciples began to realize that it was wise to establish a unique form of governance where: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;”

What I find truly interesting, when you put this Christian Nation into true historic context, it is not all that different than a historic Islamic caliphate, except the Islamic caliphate includes the Old Testament ban on eating pork. Other than that they are pretty much the same, there is a religious ruling elite that provides religious oversight to a representative republican style government. Neither are really theocracies but rather — welcome to Iran of today.

This is simply an illustration to point out that if you are an enlightened common-ordinary personality, you do not possess the specific revelation knowledge and wisdom to discern the nuances between the world’s great religions, and definitely not the differences between the Moslem Shi’a vs. Sunni vs. Baha’i. In Christianity between, Baptists, vs. Roman Catholics vs. Presbyterians vs. Greek Orthodox vs. Nondenominational Charismatics vs. Liberation Theology congregations.

Now everyone in the United States knows the morality of a good Christian is summarized in, “We don’t smoke, we don’t chew, and we don’t go, and definitely don’t marry girls that do.”

Why would anyone want to be a Christian if the specific laws of the faith are no different than any of the laws of the other religions, for that matter even the common morality of the common-ordinary? Especially to become a Christian you have to be a real bad dude, and then go forward at some altar call, ask Jesus into your heart, and then be miraculously transformed from a dupe into a nincompoop!

As we wrote about last week, in the United States the general perception of a Christian is a right wing conservative, who until recently was a big government Republican progressive lite. We needed a constitutional amendment to ban abortions, gay marriage, restore prayer in schools, and now we can add repeal ObamaCare, provide term limits for Congress, ban gays in the military, keep the Bush tax cuts, and pay off

the national debt, so we can turn the country back to Jesus.

When you boil all this down to the resulting elixir, more people find the grace of God in creation, than they do in church. To them there is no grace in the specific revelation of Christianity; it is all law, just like every other religion. This is the antithesis of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity I wrote about in Progressive Christianity last week.

Since it seems from our Internet statistics for that report, that very few Christians did their assigned homework, or they read just enough to realize that all that we have believed for so long was a Christian myth based on a warm fuzzy lie, or that this was just too radical to believe. Follow the link for another shot at the end zone. This is not your Sunday afternoon Cult Football game.

Christianity is a unique specific revelation, among all the world's great religions in that it is based solely souly (sic) on the specific grace of God, fulfilling God's law, including the laws of other religions and the natural laws that govern God's creation.

Through the Divine Providence coupled with the Founders' mutual pledge of "our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor," they learned from first hand testimony that Nature's God was exceedingly able to bring about the impossible in human terms.

You really don't need the don'ts when they don't seem to have any value, both commonly and specifically. Furthermore all our restrictive don'ts — don't bring the change that we hoped would happen. In reality they have limited opportunity, frozen investments, and only caused chaos and noise.

Martin Luther's "Bondage of the Will" basically describes the place where the nation and the world finds itself. That bondage is the result of us trying to create laws to make us better, when in reality it is the specific revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his bodily propitiatory death for the sins of humanity, and his resurrection from death, that provide the only true hope for this world. That is the categorical indicative by which sin and death have been conquered, and provides the grace by which redeemed and justified sinners can change a hopeless, broken, and decaying world.

There is no other hope that has eternal value!  
Amen!