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Redux Christianity

Beginning with the Absolute that there is a God and at specific times and places, working primarily through human personalities created in His image, stupendous changes are created in both nature and human civilizations to redux the past into the future.

Absolutes are defined as truth residing outside the auspices of human understanding. Another way to describe an Absolute is that it is a natural law in which we humans can only apprehend, but cannot change in the sense of its universal application. The reason we must resort to the use of the term Absolute is that the old term of truth has been so distorted and made politically correct that it no longer really defines anything but a spin of a faux reality.

The term Absolute, as a modern philosophical construct, became popular through the ministry and the writings of Francis Schaeffer. While produced in the turmoil of the 1970s, Schaeffer's most famous work,

"How Should We Then Live" is a video series that essentially dramatizes the cultural changes we now are having a very difficult time believing.

In our enlightened world, the reality of Absolutes causes all sorts of angst. How can we be continually evolving onward and upward when there already exists a standard that makes our matchless efforts seem moronic in their best spin?

So we see a contrast between the things of God and the things of man. As we have pointed out in previous weeks, Godly change works from the Universal to the individual. Human change begins with the individual to form a collective, to be administered by the more highly evolved above us.

In "The Christian Diaspora" we theorized that today's Christianity has really become an in situ diaspora, because the evolving world could not really understand a difference between their worldly religion and Christianity, both were



bigots of a similar cloth of personal peace through individual affluence.

Last week in “The Christian Redux” we proposed that it was essentially God’s problem to redux human culture and we have been given the grand opportunity to be living in these days. Before we wander into that cultural wilderness however, it seems important to do a little speculation on how the new Redux Christianity might look in comparison to today’s Diaspora.

The Protestant Christianity of the United States, and of the world for that matter, is essentially a religion of revivalism and personal holiness. Even though its seeds were imported from eighteenth century England, revivalism is really an American phenomena birthed just prior to the American Revolution, but became the growth mechanism of evangelical Christianity up to this day.

The revival essence proceeds through the preacher preaching, as individuals are converted to Christianity and then expected to put away the things of the world to live the victorious Christian life. The assumption behind the works is that once you “Ask Jesus into your heart,” the work of the preacher (and by extension his church) is completed. When you die God will welcome you into heaven and give you the keys to your mansion in Glory. Conversions are the focus, discipleship, as a catechesis concept, is a distant and often ignored addendum.

In that general theme, if I look seriously at the churches I have been affiliated with in my life, they must be considered essentially the best man has to offer. But if you enlarge those churches to the concept of what God would like to offer, then things don’t look all that rosy. Putting this on the Absolute scale of good thru bad, my actual experiences were on the positive side of mediocre, and generally what I have seen, there is a few very good, a few very bad, and a small number of just plain ugly.

What I am really saying is what may have been acceptable church teaching and preaching in the late twentieth century will not be sufficient as we move forward. So how are we going to pull that off?

We can’t, it can only be something that God will make happen, and the church, to and through individual Christians, will either be part of those God induced changes, or it will be left behind, and I am not talking about The Rapture.

In some sort of historical context, we are generally familiar with revivalism, we understand a lot less about the Reformation, even less about the split between the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. When it comes to the fall of Rome and the time of Augustine, it must be irrelevant. Then when we reach back to the church of the Apostles, that changed the known world in a century, we speculate that we would like to be part of that, but without the commitment.

In November 2007 we used the Biblical context from Ezekiel 37 of the Dry Bones Valley to describe what this coming move of God might look like. Combining the dry bones as our speculative contribution to the church of the Apostles, we can see, in theological terms, that our imperative desire should convict us to be the best dry bones we can be. Just as with the prophet, all we can say is, “O Lord GOD, You know.” if or how we can come to life.

Moving beyond speculation into the unknown, the vision must start in a valley of dry bones. Those dry bones surely do not represent “your best life now.” In fact we might question the very essence of our individual lives themselves. Scary huh? But it doesn’t seem as far-fetched as it would have a couple of years ago, or even earlier this year, or even last week.

Absolute historic Christianity is based upon the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ to satisfy the holiness Absolutes of God, by dying on a cross in Israel two thousand years ago. He was raised from the dead as the first fruit of that sacrifice as the witness of our justification. That is the essence of the historic Christian Gospel, the Good News.

Definitions:

propitiate |pr pi sh ē āt| verb [trans.] win or regain the favor of (a god, spirit, or person) by doing something that pleases them

justify | j st fi| verb (-fies, -fied) [trans.] 1 show or prove to be right or reasonable : the person appointed has fully justified our confidence. • be a good reason for : the situation was grave enough to justify further investigation.

2 Theology declare or make righteous in the sight of God.

When is the last time you have heard, or have you ever heard a sermon in church that used both of the above terms?

If you can't recall that sermon, or have never heard that sermon, welcome to your place in the Dry Bones Valley. Praise the Lord; you are about to become part of a miracle. If propitiation and justification are terms you generally understand, Praise the Lord with joy!

Now it really gets odd, because that miracle will be performed by God through ordinary or common means, or the Absolutes of natural law if you will. The real scary thing is the most common instrument to bring this all about will be the preacher-pastor who not all that long ago spent most of his time explaining how to live the victorious Christian life.

To make it even more amazing, church will not be something where you spend a couple of hours a week, sitting on your duff trying to stay awake. Sunday will become a time for you to get a vision of what you are to do with all those other hours of your busy week, as you get a glimpse of the reality that you are not called to be a round peg in a square hole. Perhaps you begin to understand that God doesn't create junk, and you are one of God's unique creations.

Not all buildings or gatherings that claim to be a church will proclaim this historic — now redux gospel, just as they do not do so today. However the difference between the dry bones, that will remain such, and the living souls will become apparent for the world to clearly see. Dead bones represent a gospel based upon a twentieth century defined concept of Protestant Liberalism. Even though it goes under terms such as the social gospel, reformation theology, social justice, or some other evolving term, it will basically proclaim the Babylonian worldview that if we all work together there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

We don't — can't live the gospel as these people would say. God says, "The gospel makes you alive, for the true gospel is based upon the external Absolute authority to empower you through God's grace of the Holy Spirit to do good works. The contrast is essentially between the mundane and the transcendent.

Rather than based upon the understanding of the collective elite, communities of redux Christianity are based upon the Absolute of teamwork. In that light churches are communities of teams. Since no two individuals are alike and each finds their worth and their work as an individual there is really no need for jealousy. Thereby they can change the broader world in ways we can't begin to fathom today.

Next week we will expand that teamwork concept into the secular community. However based upon the concept of natural law as an Absolute, God's creation will play an important role as a visual, secular and ordinary representation of the specific revelation of the Bible, which includes both law and gospel. As we become more visual in our communications rather than literal, those pictures, "worth a thousand words," can become the mechanism by which the redux of the broader human community can rapidly take place.