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Why Me? The novel - novel

Novel:

1. noun: a fictitious prose narrative of book length, typically representing character and action with some degree of realism

2. adjective: new or unusual in an interesting way

Well if you reverse the position of novel two with novel one, you have the context of this current “Why Me?” undertaking. So this why me excursion will develop into a new, hopefully interesting way to describe a fictitious narrative, with some degree of realism, eventually the story line will relate to where we currently are, how we got here, and where we may be headed. Over these courses of course we will begin with the beginning, the beginning of it all, and move rapidly forward. Because of the genre, which herein is developed, we will do this in a linear fashion, which we will learn early on, may be in itself fictitious, in the grand scheme of the cosmos.

The idea for this exposé came from a book I purchased many years ago in the theological section of a used bookstore in Seattle. The story was written by a Lutheran pastor someplace in the eastern United States during the middle of the twentieth century. The scenario revolved around the historic figure of Martin Luther, given the heavenly assignment to return from eternity to check out what had happened to the church that bore his name, in the almost five hundred years since the Reformation. He was then to report back to God his findings and any recommendations to change the course of history. As I remember, the essence of that report, Luther found that Lutherans were basically majoring on things of minor importance, with a very minor emphasis on the specific historical truths of both the Reformation and Christianity.



In our current world where everything is all about me, all the time, in every circumstance, no matter the outcome, it logically follows; that in the good, we take credit as independent results of are ascending abilities. Anything that does not achieve the greatness that we hope, must be the fault of someone or something else. This failure also deserves greater distinction if we can blame it on other people as individuals.

Because of the historical context of this novel it makes no sense to blame this failure on our parents. In similar light for conservatives to say it is or will be caused by Barack Obama and the Progressives, definitely stretches credulity. In the same aspect for liberal Progressives to blame the current mess on George W. Bush and greedy capitalists really is a leap of blind faith into a world not of reality, but the cosmos of wishful thinking.

With the inherit weakness of twentieth and twenty first century American education it is too much to ask you to search for historic figures to blame for our failures, simply because you learned very little history in your formal educational processes and what little you did learn was spun in the spirit of academic revisionism. This allows us to forever repeat the mistakes of the past, so that we shall evolve to the point where reality only exists in current narcissism and anything else is irrelevant.

Therefore the following question is multiple choice, there is only one answer, you must choose one answer. If you choose the wrong answer, it really doesn't matter for over the continuum ahead you will be indoctrinated into the truth of this novel novel. In the spirit of the age, look at the process as sort of green composting that doesn't produce any carbon dioxide or flatulent methane gas.

Who of the following men of history deserves most of the credit, both in thesis and antithesis, for the world in which we now live?

A: Charles Darwin

B: John Calvin

C Mohammed

The correct answer is B: John Calvin, who you will learn more about throughout this exposé. Now many people will believe that his Reformation religious figure has nothing to teach you and will want to find something or someone that who is more akin to your beliefs. But wait, before you drift or click away, stop and think, everything that you hold dear is really just the antithesis of what Calvin believed. Sure you can't see the direct link, it has been distorted and twisted over time, but everything that, you are, is directly a linear progression from and through Calvinism to you. Through this evolution, both the atheist and the evangelical, are, and still remain humans, even if we don't like to admit it.

Charles Darwin was probably the most influential antithesis of John Calvin, and you will learn that much of what you have been taught, came to western culture through Darwin. Your evolving understanding of the good, the bad, the ugly, and the common mediocrity, can all be blamed quite easily on John Calvin and Calvinism.

Mohammed did have an influence through the Islamic expansionism in Eastern Europe during the sixteenth century, but that influence had only a minor effect upon the French Calvin doing his work in Geneva, Switzerland at that time. Furthermore those, who we westerners call Islamic Jihadists, find the Great Satan in capitalistic materialism, which like Darwin is an antithesis of a form of free enterprise that erupted in Europe after the Reformation. Again John Calvin and Calvinism are the cause and effect of all of this turmoil. Really all we westerners want to do is to be left alone, to do our own thing, and retire undefeated, to do whatever we might want to do, if we really knew who we were.

So for this novel novel to propose the story line, a little insight into the author is in order. I am not a Calvinist, but just like everyone else now alive on planet earth, my life was altered by contact with John Calvin, through the Presbyterian Church in the little town of Reardan, Washington. Reardan is a village of about four hundred souls just over twenty miles west of Spokane, on Highway 2.

When I was about five years old my dad became the grade school principal in Reardan. We lived in Reardan for nine years. The first house we rented

was on the wrong side of the railroad tracks and very small. For reasons I am not aware of, we then moved for a time to a run down big grey house just across the street from the newly completed grade school. There we inherited an old Springer Spaniel named George, which was also my father's name.

Located on that block was the grey house on the southeast corner and on the northeast corner was another house occupied by the Presbyterian minister, who had a daughter named Kathy, who was my same age and we played together as much as young boys and girls did that sort of thing. On the west side of the block was the Lutheran church with its parsonage. Even for a town the size of Reardan much of that block was then vacant land.

Probably because of our close living proximity and my relationship with Kathy we began going to the Presbyterian Church. It was at a summer Vacation Bible School, where I heard this story about the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who came to earth to die for the sins of humanity on a cross. On Easter Sunday he rose from the dead, and those who believe in this death and resurrection for their justification before God as sinners, when they die will go to heaven.

I still can remember the circumstances of that time and place, so when more typical American Christians asked me where and when I got saved I use that event. I always get some rolling eyes because I didn't go forward at a crusade or a church altar call, as required in most of evangelicalism, but this is my story and I'm sticking to it.

Not long after that, Kathy's dad got a job with the big Presbyterian Church in Spokane and they moved there. We soon rented another place in much better physical shape and eventually bought a house about a block west of that old grey house, so it was about a block from the Lutheran Church.

Sometime, probably when I was in the sixth or seventh grade my dad had some sort of operation in a hospital in Spokane. During his time in the hospital he was visited by the fresh out of seminary new Lutheran pastor,

but the pastor of the Presbyterian Church didn't bother to show up. This made my dad mad, and in consultation with my mother, we decided to become Lutherans.

I had been baptized as an infant in the Lutheran Church in Wilbur, where I was born, I have no idea why. Wilbur, about sixty miles to the west and about three times the size of Reardan had at that time both a Danish Lutheran, where my great grandmother attended, and a regular Lutheran Church. I assume my baptism was at the Danish Lutheran, mostly because my Godparents were named Sorenson.

So my parents began going over to the Lutheran Church in the evenings to receive religious instruction and I started to begin to take weekly catechism classes after school with the three best looking girls in my class, Cheryl, Dorothy, and Gail. That was really cool. Sometime after that my parents were baptized and became members and I was confirmed Lutheran.

To this day my theology basically remains Lutheran, but when we moved to Kettle Falls for high school and during my college days, I began to have problems with what I learned later to be the disease of Protestant Liberalism that infected and devastated all mainline American denominations during that period and continues to this day. The social gospel, is not the Christian gospel. During that time and until I walked into my office and closed the door and said, "God if you are real get me out of here?" I called myself a Martin Luther, Lutheran.

After that office experience, began my real education into the theology and their applications as presently found in Christianity in America. My first taste of this broader understanding of Christianity was found on television. That education included Robert Schuler all the way to Jimmy Swaggard. Through that Pentecostal connection I eventually spent a number of years at an Assembly of God church, under a mature second generation Pentecostal pastor who had seen it all and ran a very tight congregation where the gifts of the spirit were understood and practiced, but never allowed to be abused.

From there I moved to the nondenominational structure of Calvary Chapel, founded basically

during the hippy era in Costa Mesa, California by Chuck Smith. During that time I was serving in Germany with the Army Security Agency with a Top Secret security clearance.

There are now more than a thousand Calvary Chapel congregations in the United States and around the world. In Calvary Chapel you find somewhat the beginnings, but more the development of what is generally understood as the charismatic movement in American Evangelicalism. So far there is a resistance to forming a true denomination in the classic sense and considering the world in which we now live; that could be a good thing.

Doctrinally Calvary Chapel is a little bit Calvinist and a little bit Arminian. They even have a song to help bring humor and understanding to these mutually exclusive Protestant paradigms. We will deal with this later in "Why Me?" when we get to the historical developments of Christianity as it grew in the United States, beginning with the pilgrims, and as it became the predominate force of not only American religious thought, but also a fundamental underlying influence in her politics.

Since my move back to Eastern Washington, the only churches nearby are classic, legalistic, and fundamentalist, something I could never handle. So when in Spokane, I visit a conservative LCMS Lutheran Church on the South Hill of Spokane not that far from where I stay when I am in the area. Last winter while living in my motorhome on Spokane's West Plains I visited a lot of churches that seemed to be trying to play the Calvary Chapel game without any of the vision or the resources.

At the Synod of Dort, which ran from 1618 1619, we find the development of the five points of Calvinism, generally known as the TULIP. Those canons essentially said that if you didn't embrace those five points, you were by definition an Arminian, as developed by Jacobus Amminius. The only exception to that understanding was reserved for Lutherans, who predate the controversy, which I assume is the reason for their Arminian pass. What is interesting is that both the historic Lutheran Church and Calvary Chapel embrace very similar doctrines in terms of

human salvation through the gospel, accepting only up to a few of the TULIP's tenants. In this context, we see that Calvary Chapel doctrines are basically charismatic Lutherans and the Lutherans maintain their status as "God's truly frozen chosen."

I have been twice to the park in Geneva, where stand the statues of the great men of The Reformation, among them are Calvin, Zwingli, and others. Off to the side stands what looks to be a large tombstone with the name of Martin Luther inscribed. What I have found interesting is in Switzerland in general and Geneva in particular, the trains always run on time, like to the second, and everything is very neat and orderly. My question has always been, is this precision the result of John Calvin's influence on Geneva that makes it as it is, or is Geneva responsible for the John Calvin, who changed the world?

I now believe that the two concepts are basically synergistic. The natural witness of Geneva and Switzerland as the high point of Europe is obviously true. To live surrounded by mountainous grandeur of God's created glory, it is impossible to not reflect that created goodness and order, and attempt to incorporate this into all aspects of human endeavors. John Calvin came to Geneva and did a very good job of putting the two together in a symbiotic form. In short it is all downhill from here, that includes naturally, politically, financially, and in human religion. That downhill includes the whole world.

Next week we begin at the beginning to develop a paradigm of why it all matters, especially when we have been placed in a world in which it seems nothing matters, except money, power, and politics. That novel novel writing will take place from that Luther tombstone location in the Reformation Memorial and therefore has no axe to grind with either the Calvin follower, or those who create the antithesis of what became of his work.

I have a compatriot who has stated the problems with American Christianity did not begin when the Ten Commandments were removed from the schools, the problems began when we chose to take the Ten Commandments out of our churches.

Like that second generation Pentecostal mentoring pastor, over the last quarter century of the pilgrimage through the American church,

I have seen some good, some bad, a very little absolutely ugly, and a whole lot of what I used to call mediocrity. Very recently I have changed that mediocrity concept to dumbed down, originally tried by choice, and now we lack the informational energetics to find any Reformation except by the grace of God alone, as it always has and shall be.

That dumbing down begins with changing God's Law, as stated in the Ten Commandments and throughout scripture, into suggestions for leading the victorious Christian life. We have made that lifestyle available to all, by just once asking Jesus into your heart by your emotional decision. Then we work really hard in the world and in church to justify this new position, both materially and spiritually. Finally if things get really bad, like difficult, we will be Raptured away, to spend the most fulfilling and challenging time in human history, sitting it out in heaven, to return when it is all over, to be again really cool dudes, and dudesses sic .

We are now told that all this is our current attempt to be relevant to a lost and dying world, but this irreverent reality is really as old as the church itself, in that it attempts to replace the covenant of God's grace with the Law of Sinai. This logically leads to incompetence, incontinence, and infertility, all vestiges not of renewal but

senility. Yet we still have the gall to blame our culture for its shortcomings.

As we explore our historic past through this novel novel we will see what the German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was martyred by the Nazis, called "Cheap Grace," is what we all hope our religion will provide. What is really required and is in stark opposition is "Costly Grace" which helps us to understand the true and world changing, "Cost of Discipleship."

The "Why Me?" novel novel now moves forward to hopefully show through imagination and flexibility, why this time and all its profound messes, can really become the basis for Reformation and Refounding of values that transcend this disorder and again shall bring dignity to humanity as individuals created in God's image, again seeking and finding a unity in our personal and community diversity.