

Now for the Good News

Good news--the world has already been saved! It happened nearly 2,000 years ago. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It's not just "pie-in-the-sky-in-the-sweet-bye-and-bye" -- you can start slicing right now.

Not only is Jesus the door to life hereafter; he is also the author of a new way of life this side of eternity. For he said, "I am come that they might have life and might have it more abundantly" (that is might be full and meaningful.)

Why is it then, that when the world is seen through the stark spectacles of reality, it still looks like it needs saving? Was Christ's gesture on the cross a mere sophistication of Don Quixote's head-in-the-clouds search for the impossible dream, or did God have his feet on the ground when He came up with the idea?

A good question. And it has an answer.

God is not in the business of putting humanity on an assembly line to be fitted with mass-produced spiritual life-preservers. He has too much respect for the individual for that. He deals with individuals--"whoever believes in Him."

So, being that God does not force his salvation on the world as a whole, it becomes a matter of individual choice whether or not to appropriate that salvation. Because the world is made up of individuals, it will not experience its salvation until the individuals in it do.

How does this apply, practically speaking? Let's consider one specific threat to the world's safety--war. There have been more wars fought in this century, than in the whole history of the human race. Yet, man has probably never done more to try to save the world from war, even going so far as to set up organizations and appoint diplomats whose sole function is to promote world unity and peace. Then why does war still exist? The basic problem is to be found in man himself--he is self-centered.

There will never be peace on an international level, until there is peace on the national level. There will never be peace on the national level until there is peace on the provincial level. There will never be peace on the provincial level until there is peace on the metropolitan level. There will never be peace on the metropolitan level until there is peace on the level of the local neighborhood.

There will never be peace in the local neighborhood until there is peace in the family--in that dynamic relationship that exists between two people--husband and wife, brother and sister, father and son. There will never be peace on the interpersonal level until something happens to change the individual's basic nature of self-centeredness.

Have you ever wanted to take a vacation from yourself? You don't have to be the world's most self-centered person to find it uncomfortable living inside your skin with me-myself-and-I from time to time. Can you ever identify with the following self-description of a transparent first-century individual?

For that which I am doing, I do not understand: for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very thing evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death." (Selections from the Bible, Romans 7 & 8)

If the above self-analysis is a common complaint, then man's most realistic need is to be saved from himself.

The story is told of the missionary who was making the first translation of the Bible into Chinese, with the aid of a Chinese scholar.

As they worked, the Chinese scholar grew increasingly excited over the Bible. When asked



why, he replied, "What an amazing book. It tells me all about myself. The one who wrote these words must be the one who made me."

That is why Jesus of Nazareth--who visited this planet nearly 2,000 years ago, died on a lonely Roman gibbet, and rose again for the salvation of mankind--is the successful liberator and transformer of individual lives and ultimately the world.

He made the whole thing. "Before anything else existed there was Christ with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. He created everything there is--nothing exists that He didn't make. Eternal life is in him, and this gives light to all mankind." (John 1:1-4)

Does it not make sense that the one who created this world, would know best how to save it?

If you are like me, you would prefer to be a part of the solution, rather than a part of the problem. You may be asking, exactly how does an individual go about appropriating this salvation that Christ offers?

You will be glad to know that it's actually very simple. You don't have to join any religious institution, become straight-laced-sober-and-sad, or turn into a religious fanatic.

All you have to do is exercise your will and invite Christ to take control of your life and begin changing you. (A student recently presented me with the thought that self can be brought under control through self-discipline.

But I have found from experience that it takes someone a lot bigger than me, to keep my self in its place! If you haven't been on speaking terms with God lately, and don't know what to say to Him, here is a suggested prayer that serves as a model.

Lord Jesus, I need you. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank-you for forgiving my sins. Take control of the throne of my life and make me the person You want me to be.

If you would like further information, contact one of the Christian groups on campus. Come and help us show the world that it has already been saved!

Louise Elden

The Gamble

I had a thought the other day -- LIFE IS A GAMBLE. Like -- we can't be 100% sure about very much. We can't even prove God exists - for sure. So if we decide to bet on God -- there is a risk.

Now Christian, don't get up-tight. There is a basis for your belief. There is substantial evidence to support Jesus as a valid life alternative. But don't be fooled, your stance is still a faith position -- one you can't prove.

But come to think of it -- every life position is embraced by faith.

If I am a humanist -- I am a humanist by faith. I stake my life on man. I risk myself on what the humanist system believes and claims. I bet my existence of premises I can't ultimately prove.

I must realize that I sell myself out to something by faith.

If I gamble on the atheistic system...

I am an atheist by faith;

or an agnostic by faith;

or a Christian by faith.

If I wager on materialism, I am a materialist by faith; or a Hedonist by faith;

or an existentialist by faith.

Whatever I am, I am by faith. The choice is not between faith or no faith, but what I choose to put my faith in. Don't be deceived, you belong to some system. You are betting your life on something or someone.

As for me, I AM GAMBLING ON GOD.

Don Postenstai