

The Dreamweaver Tour

Let us forget our problems and quit seeking their solutions. Let us begin 150 years ago (lest our current problems bias us), and walk back through history looking at *how* and *when* it's major problems arose. Let us see if we can get a handle on *why* the problems arose, or at least *who was responsible* for them.

At each juncture let us briefly consider what is to be done. Then let us conclude "nothing right now." For these problems also had a historical context. It is not our problem, even if we can solve it. Let us continue to walk back through history. By the time we arrive at Pentecost we will not only have discovered a historical pattern, we will realize precisely what must be done, and we will pray God the more earnestly for Christ's return. In the meantime we must preach the word tirelessly and fearlessly, help victims of society's problems without seeking to aid society itself, by "making it better," and by means of a clear moral separation, steer clear of Worldliness.

In the end we will have discovered, at a bare minimum, a major pattern of corruption, and the trajectory of fallenness. We will notice that for the new church, what we might call "the Jerusalem Catholic Church," the church that was the capstone of Judaism, it wasn't the prophecies, it wasn't the patriarchy, and it wasn't the miracles of Moses that mattered. The Old Testament types *prepared*, but did not *define* this church. In the end it was that catastrophic, overpowering love of the God who had chosen them and who gave His son for them that most distinguished those early Christians. This allowed them to be stoned to death and beheaded and reviled without fear or backward glance. For what price was too great to pay for such love, and what meaning could life now have without it?

Dreamweaver realized that something had to be done about this situation without hesitation. That something was *Greek thought*. Much has been made of the "God-fearers," those Hellenistic Jews who were attracted to Judaism, but who could not quite cross the threshold of circumcision. By incorporating large numbers of them in the new and spreading church, a potentially serious defect was incorporated into the church – overweening rationalism. This gave birth to what we might call the Antioch Catholic Church.

Although many members of the Antioch Catholic Church did not suffer circumcision, some of them *did* finally suffer martyrdom. But the Hellenized Christianity they left behind lacked that complete purity of soul seen in the Jerusalem Catholic Church. The place of *catastrophic love* was now shared with *overreaching reason*, a reason that tried to explain, yes, but in explaining categorized and systematized the doctrines, the will, and the nature and behavior of God. Yet it could never explain or encapsulate His love.

And visible beneath the surface of the Hellenized Jewish Christian, was its fatal flaw, its secret sin. It had to have, but always lacked, a compelling *reason* to accept circumcision. For the Christian of the Antioch Catholic Church, reason was the judge and jury in making such decisions as well as in daily living. Love was no longer the sole life force. The eternal life given at salvation and defined by catastrophic love was modified so as to be shaped by reason. Indeed, this alone explains why late in his long life, ministering in Ephesus and in Asia minor, and facing the forces that would soon become Gnosticism, the apostle John could write little without infusing it with love and making *love* and *light* morally synonymous.

Then the Roman Catholic Church not only made *unity* the new *summum bonum* of the Christian mentality, it found and used political power to *enforce* its debilitated and weakened strain of Christianity. The "official" church was now a rationalized political force conscripted by

the government of Rome and further adulterated for another 1200 years.

Finally, we may see the Reformation in its true light. For it kept its rationalism, and it kept its political nature. It retained the dream of “Christian unity,” but was no closer to obtaining it through *reason*, than Rome had been to obtaining it through *force*. So while much of early Christianity was indeed recovered during the Reformation, much of Antiochene Catholicism and Roman Catholicism was retained, either because it was not recognized, or because it was thought useful. Indeed, so immersed had Christianity become in reason and politics, so overpowered had love become, that Christians killing Christians has continued, almost completely unexamined, to our own day.

If we remember the early Jerusalem Catholic Church and the Antioch Catholic Church and the persecuting Roman government, and then recall the teachings of Jesus and Paul on the subject of government, we can clearly see Christian separation in its *political* stance. Let the World rule within its temporal and geographical limits and let the church, not so much as an organism, but in its *individuals*, minister eternal life, light, and love.

Now let us discontinue our historical tour and return to our present moment. This notion strikes us as alien. Are we not to help the poor? Yes – but not through the offices of an organism neither intended nor able to do God’s will. Because the Reformation failed, or did not try, to wrest the church free of its 1200 years of immersion in politics, and because America was founded upon such contaminated notions of Christianity, not only did the government come to see itself as the dispenser of welfare, the confused church did so as well. Today, Christians almost universally believe in the *political* distribution of positive welfare – food, money, and clothing – is the job of the state. Christians have so given up the notion that such charity was never the job of the government, or, indeed of *any organization*, but always the job of the individual Christian, that no matter how clearly the Bible speaks to the matter, they cannot see it.

And just as the government today seeks to strengthen its grasp on power by adopting, as strictly political issues (i.e., it politicizes), such things as *immigration policy* and *environmental policy*, it *first* exercised this stratagem on the *Christian impulse to charity*. It is a simple case of having traveled so long together that neither the church nor the government can recognize its place in relationship to charity or welfare, much less to each other.