

Christ and Culture

Have you lost a sense of wonder? On Tuesday morning I was out for my run. It was early into the run and as my eyes lifted from the pavement beneath my feet my attention became focused on flashing lights. It was dark and the lights were a little less than a half mile away. I was gaining on them at a steady pace. My thoughts began to race with anxiety as I tried to determine whose house they were out in front of. It seemed to me to be an emergency vehicle. I felt sadness for someone experiencing pain and suffering or worse. I began to think of what I would do when I got to where it was. I began praying for the one who was hurt and those attending them. Would I be able to assist, comfort someone, or pray with someone? Then suddenly the lights stopped flashing, and I could see through the dim light of early morning that it was a school bus. But before I could begin calming myself down, taking my prayers back, or start my judgmental thinking about how ridiculous it is that the school is picking up children from their homes before the dawn's early light, my attention was raptured by another light.



It was the light of the moon. I had already traversed from the house about a quarter of a mile and had not even noticed it. It was about two thirds full and it was bright. It hung in the sky off to my left as I ran up the street. The sky was clear and the sun, though hidden, was letting its cousin have his moment in glory. My thoughts left my anxieties behind as I considered the work of "His hands". I considered the moon in it's place and it seemed so at home and peaceful as it performed at it's Maker's pleasure. It's gentle and luminous presence lifted my eyes up from the contemplated pains of suffering my imagination had been busily and noisily distracting me with. I felt a sense of awe beneath it's warm light. There was in those moments wonder.

I can be distracted from wonder by busily doing the next thing, anxiously examining loss and pain, or the simple boredom of looking straight through the world in which I live. But there can be moments in our day or week where we allow ourselves to wonder, to see more than the simple moment in front of us. The moon in the morning made me think of something more. As my strides carried me up the road in the fading light of the moon before me, giving way to the greater light of the sun rising steadily at my back, I was thinking of more. There was a story of untold worlds unfolding through the Christian story revealed in the Bible. The beauty I was seeing, I was experiencing as real. It was not a chemical trick, or the laboratory of Sir Isaac Newton, but the unfolding story of the Creator and Sustainer of the world letting me into his beauty to wonder. It is sometimes the smallest things that can lead to the greatest astonishments. But we must be willing to wonder, to look and embrace what's there.

John Bois, who writes for SB Nation, helps us to see our need to wonder in these words from his short story, 17776, *"Humanity tried and tried to send themselves to other solar systems. In 3143, they succeeded and found...nothing. No life. Nothing interesting. A bunch of planets full of rocks and gas. They then deployed probes to visit other stars in the Milky Way galaxy...So we built what we could, and sent them out there. They found nothing even the slightest bit interesting. Everything was as they guessed it was when they saw it through their telescopes. It was the grandest anticlimax imaginable. It shattered what people thought of themselves and their destinies. The letdown was, in itself, so of a brilliant wonder of its own...People had a choice. They could continue wandering through the endless darkness, an absence of everything they loved, and endless void of disappointment and loneliness...or they could look down, and embrace wha they always had and loved."*

Bois is explaining the modernist story. He helps us to see how deceiving it can be. The Christian story tells us the truth. It tells us that the lovely things we encounter in the world from the baby you hold in your arms to the stars in the night sky are beautiful in themselves. But it also tells us that there is something behind them, the echo of God's voice speaking them and sustaining them into being. It's not just the thing itself which causes us to wonder and adore. It's the shadow behind the thing, just beyond our gaze. Its right before us to embrace in wonder.

As T.S. Eliot wrote,

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

Orthodoxy Corner

Christianity is a monotheistic religion holding to the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity. The Scriptures teach us God is one. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” - Deuteronomy 6:4 Yet, God has revealed that there are three persons in the one true God.

The New City Catechism asks and answers this way:

Question 3: How many persons are there in God?

Answer: There are three persons in the one true and living God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

The apostle Paul finishes his second letter to the church at Corinth revealing this truth with these words, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” - 2 Corinthians 13:14

This is a truth to be believed about the true God and an economy to be enjoyed. God is not only revealing himself mysteriously to us as a triune God, but he is revealing his works as a triune God. While we cannot comprehend his eternal, unsearchable and unchangeable triune nature, we can understand his working toward us as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. He is God our Creator, God our Redeemer, and God our Helper. “God is one infinite, undivided Spirit; and yet he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” This is a doctrine to be believed and enjoyed all our lives.

Kevin DeYoung says, “The doctrine of the Trinity is the most important doctrine that most people never think about.” While the word Trinity is not found in the Bible, the word is important in capturing the doctrine of the Trinity. We believe God is one, and this one God is three persons. God the Father is God. God the Son is God. God the Spirit is God. The Father is not the Son. The Son proceeds from the Father and is not the Spirit. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and is not the Father. Our Catechism answer tells us these three persons are not the other but they are equal in rank, power, glory, and majesty.

This doctrine is mysterious, but also practical. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are working in complete union in the Christian’s salvation. Therefore, Jesus commands his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). “The Father appoints. The Son accomplishes. The Spirit applies.” God is one but the work of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is not interchangeable or redundant. Therefore, we can glory in the majesty of God revealed in his person(s) and work(s). This helps to understand how his salvation is worked out in the lives of his creatures in a unified diversity. We live in a culture valuing individualism. But the Trinity teaches us to value a diverse unity. Christians can live, not in uniformity or an individuality in all our differences, but as a diverse unity alive in the triune God. He shares his gifts and graces with us and through us to make us his diverse community.

Check Your Calendars...

Church Workday Saturday September 28th

Join your church family for a workday at our property at 3100 Covenant Road on Saturday September 28th 8:00 am - 12:00 pm. We will be cleaning inside and outside the property. Please bring cleaning supplies and / or yard tools. We will be having lunch together at noon. Look for a sign up to bring something for the lunch. Thank you for participating.

Reformation Day Picnic - October 26th 11:00-2:00

This year’s Reformation Day Picnic is on Saturday October 26th 11:00 - 2:00 at 3100 Covenant Road. Scott Dinkins will be putting together an event team to organize this years picnic. If you’re interested in being a part of that event team please contact Scott at the church or by email scott@ccotc.org.