

The Universal Christ and Historic Jesus

John R Gavazzoni

The following was John's response to a brother in Christ with whom he has enjoyed stimulating fellowship on a number of occasions. In this instance, "Barry" raises very pertinent questions concerning the relationship of the Universal or Cosmic Christ and Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of history. Barry's e-mail to John is included at the bottom of what follows so that it would be well to read that first to better understand. [Click to view](#)

John's reply:

Your question is very astute, Barry. There comes to mind immediately Paul's testimony, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." He didn't say that he determined to only know Christ as crucified among them, but that in knowing only Christ among them, he was careful to not neglect, but to include that which was scandalous to the Jewish religious mentality and the Greek philosophical mentality, namely, that the Love that planned and carried out the Christ event was a Love unto death and a death necessitated by the actuality of sin.

Of course we know that, as disobedience necessitated death, going back a step, the majestic, sovereign purpose of God necessitated disobedience. Without that revelation, one---though enjoying a measure of psychological benefit from a philosophy which, by some definition and in some sense, grasps something of a Christ-centrality in all things--- will fall short of coming face to face, at a cellular level, with the redeeming, reconciling, self-sacrificing heart of God.

One who may have been touched by the universal Christ in Spirit without historical explanation and connection---and I believe there have been many---will pass the test of whether or not that was genuine by recognizing that the Spirit that touched Him equates to the historical Jesus to the degree that he is confronted by "the old, old story of Jesus and His love" not merely in letter, but in Spirit, and to the degree that it comes to him without religious contamination.

It is the cross of Christ which is a scandal to the Jew seeking signs and the Greek seeking wisdom, while we preach Christ, the wisdom and power of God; wisdom that included the necessity of death in its aeonian purpose, a death fully shared by God Himself, and power which subjects Itself to weakness. This was foreign to the ancients' concept of the nature of a deity's wisdom and power, and foreign to contemporary versions of the same religious mindset.

This explains the phenomenon of sensing spirit-to-spirit fellowship with a Christian fundamentalist who, though his understanding of the reconciling death of Christ might be quite impure, but who, nevertheless, has come to intuitively know a link between the outworking of the love of God and the death of His Son. Yet, at the same time, I have to say that there are many Christian fundamentalists who embrace the doctrine of the cross intellectually, but have never felt the link to the heart of God. Without that link there is no regeneration, for as John wrote explaining the normative response to the gospel, "We have known and believe the love God has for us."

Whereas, someone of a more "New Age" mentality might very well have been touched by what E. Stanley Jones called "The cross in the heart of God," before connecting it with the historical cross of Christ. Jones wrote that "The historical cross of Christ lights up the cross in the heart of God." I believe that it is possible for a person to come under the influence of the Spirit of Christ before hearing of the historical Jesus and sense at least--and maybe more--a love that WOULD die for him if necessary.

An inward response to that sovereign moving of God in a person's heart, I believe would result in genuine regeneration. For that person to then hear the story of the Eternal One's actual aeonian life, death and resurrection, would confirm and enrich what he's come to know, shall we say, mystically. After all, we are not saved by giving mental assent to the historical facts of the gospel; we are saved by Christ Himself, in the Spirit, revealing Himself in the inner man.

I can't help but think that it may have been Wayne Dwyer that you referred to and I have listened most carefully to him and others like

him with great interest and fascination. I come away from those times realizing that, according to God's sovereign work in a life, the conceptual philosophical structure of their message could easily, on one hand, for one individual, "make straight the way of the Lord," while with another individual, connecting the insights presented by these contemporary teachers with the necessity of the actual, historical death of Christ, would be repugnant to him or her. All he/she would hear would be a connection that they felt was intolerant of "other religions."

Grace and peace to you, bro,
John

Please give careful attention to Barry's e-mail so carefully thought out and worded below:

Hello John,

Recently, I read something that I will paraphrase as follows: "because Christ was universal before he was historical, someone could "experience Christ" or "receive Christ" or "operate from a Christ perspective" without knowing the historical Christ." I agree with this, but I want to continue to expand a thought.

I happened to be watching a public television broadcast last night of a well- respected self-empowerment author. His basic teaching is that one needs to make a "free will decision" to no longer live out of a "ego-centered" foundation --a foundation he says is false, in order to become (re)connected with the "spirit force" (the real Self) that created the world, including you, and live a life of well being / goodness / love / godlikeness that was intended for you.

One of the points that this guy made, which I thought was excellent, was that the "design" or the "plan" of who you were physically going to be was contained in a microscopic element of sperm and egg that initially came together and, in reality, even this came from the Great Life Source that he was promoting a reConnection to. He made this point to illustrate that we get that which is seen from that which is unseen.

With this backdrop, let me see if I can present my question: I do believe that one could know the universal Christ without knowing the historical Christ. In other words, one could live Jesus (sonship) without knowing Jesus's name. However, just as what I'm physically going to look like now was in that microscopic particle of sperm and egg, wasn't the "slain lamb" that was witnessed in historical Jesus present in universal Jesus before he became historical Jesus?

So, if someone is going to "live" Christ without knowing him historically, doesn't it take a spiritual awareness that the universal Christ is a slain lamb?

Another way to make this point might be that the only thing missing from the self-help guy's presentation is a slain lamb. He promotes that the life you are living from the ego (where life is all about me) is a "false" place to be living from (this is true). He also promotes that there is One Life Source, One Energy Source, One Place from which everything "lives, moves and has its being" (also true).

However, don't I have to embrace the slain lamb, universally or historically, in order to reconnect to this Source? Isn't this the gospel - - i.e., that the Lamb reconnected everything, even when I was unable and unwilling to do anything about it? If I think that I've (re)connected without the slain lamb, don't I inherently connect to a Source that is False (i.e., a Source Masquerading as an Angel of Light/Life/Energy)? If you are spurred to any thoughts on this, I always appreciate and treasure what you have to say.

Take care,
~Barry

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