

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

May 30, 2017

I hope that you had a good Memorial Day weekend, and that you spent at least some time being grateful for those whose sacrifice made our freedom possible. While politics shapes the orders given, the obedience that follows the orders is not about politics.

I was grateful to spend Memorial Day with Jill at our home on Lake Holiday, and as I walked around yesterday,

I was pleased to see flags and bunting all over the place. And I noted that one house, where an Iraq veteran lives, displayed a flag two stories tall.



For this week's *Laptop*, I want to share excerpts from several articles on a variety of topics. There's no common thread, just mental vignettes to ponder

The Most Astonishing Easter Miracle (It's not that Jesus rose bodily from the grave.)
Mark Galli, *Christianity Today*, April 2017

"The great miracle that the gospel proclaims is not merely that Christ lived bodily after the Crucifixion *but that he lives dynamically in us today.*"

"The most distinctive mark of Christians is this: We are people in whom the resurrected Christ dwells (Ephesians 3:17)."

"Paul seems anxious to do away with those categories by which we naturally form our identities, those aspects of our lives of which we are in many ways rightly proud, those dimensions we imagine make us unique and special. Instead he wants to drive home that which really makes us truly remarkable, that which forms our deepest and most astounding identity: our union in Christ Jesus."



Revelation Versus Revolution (The desire for social change is noble—if tempered by the Gospel)
Karen Ellis, *Christianity Today*, April 2017

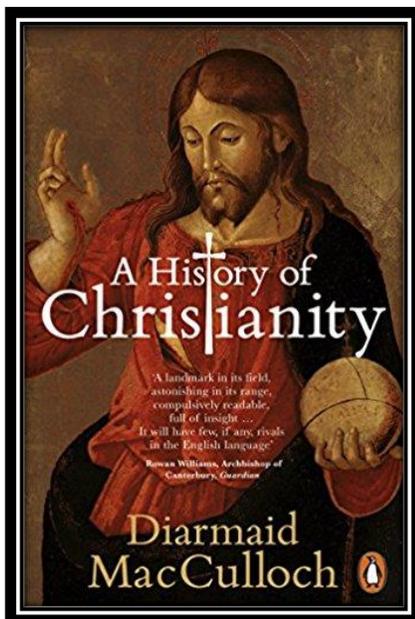
“Recently I was with Christians who live under a Communist regime. They’ve been thrown in prison repeatedly due to their faith, and descriptions of their awful imprisonment are peppered with details of the sweetness of Christ’s presence. . . . After decades of watching revolutionary power dynamics, our friends spoke a valuable truth: **Revelation is a stronger force than revolution.**”

“Power without revelation ultimately produces tyranny; resistance without revelation ultimately yields to anarchy.”

“Black Panther Bobby Seale echoed my friends toward the end of his life when he opened his formerly raised fist: ‘We have a spiritual and moral problem in America. *Our problem is not economic or political, it is that we do not care about each other.*’”



A Tale of Two Churches: For a people who’ve seen a great light, we’ve sure done plenty of dwelling in darkness Andrew Wilson, *Christianity Today*, April 2017



“In the last year, the greatest challenge to my faith has been reading about the church’s history (mainly from Diarmaid MacCulloch’s *A History of Christianity*). In many ways, the story of Christianity is full of light—mission, education, art, healthcare, abolition, compassion, justice—and I have read, taught, and loved that story for many years.

“But there is an undeniable dark side: attacking, burning, crusading, drowning, enslaving, flogging, ghettoizing, hunting, imprisoning, Jew-hating, killing, lynching, and so on through the entire alphabet. What makes this difficult to stomach is that the people involved, as far as we know, have loved God, followed Jesus, and received his Spirit.

“This poses several problems for believers today. There is **an apologetics problem**: If God is real, and his church is the light of the world and the salt of the earth, we really ought to be doing better. There is **a practical problem**: The consequences of our actions continue to sour the world, blighting efforts to cultivate peace and justice. There is **a theological problem**, namely that we are standing on the doctrinal shoulders of some who behaved appallingly. There is even **a personal problem**, in that the numerous specks in our ancestors’ eye mean that there must be at least one or two logs in ours. . . .

“Our low points expose the fallibility of our heroes, and prompt us to thank God that he built (and continues to build) his church through broken people. . . .”

“This can all be painful to think about . . . but it can also be strangely encouraging. After all, it is the people dwelling in deep darkness who, in their desperation, finally see a great light.”

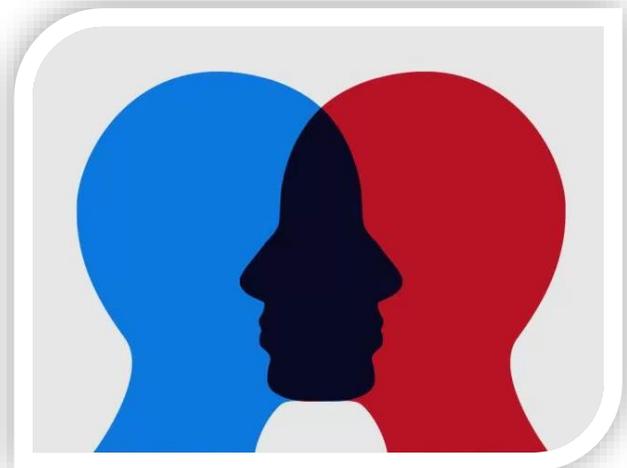
Differently Moral: What new studies reveal about outrage, relativism, and Christian witness
Ted Olsen, *Christianity Today*, April 2017

“In the past, lament over moral relativism had a political edge: Conservatives were cast as judgmental, liberals as morally lax. At least that was the caricature. Recently, researchers have asked whether conservatives really have a more robust moral mindset than liberals, and the answer has been a qualified ‘yes.’

“Jonathan Haidt’s influential *The Righteous Mind* (2012) argued that liberals and conservatives really do have radically different moralities and ways of weighing **loyalty, authority, sanctity, liberty, care, and fairness**. Conservatives embrace all six but emphasize the former ones, he said. Liberals are ‘indifferent at best’ to the first three. Haidt (a self-identified liberal who believes that there is no ‘one true morality’) argues that conservative moralities are more persuasive because they are broad; liberal moralities, he said, are ‘impoverished.’ . . .

“It isn’t that conservatives and liberals have shrugged off transcendent ideas of right and wrong. Rather, they each appeal to a different transcendent moral foundation. We are not in an era of moral relativism but moral pluralism.

“That’s not necessarily good news: It’s hard to build a unified society when we hold radically different moral visions. It’s even harder to have a conversation when we view each other as immoral.”



Well, that's all fairly somber, but all is not lost.

God is still sovereign, we are still redeemed, and Jesus is still the Hope of the World!

I'll close with some suggestions that have been made for a new corporate slogan for the Church of England as reported in *The Baptist Herald* (Spring 2017):

- Hopeless 2 Hopeful
- Sinners R Us
- We're open on Sundays
- A vicar is for life, not just for Christmas
- Come in for a faith lift
- We're a church, for Christ's sake
- Hospital for sinners
- 39 Articles: We can't quite believe in them but we can't quite let them go, either
- Rites for the wronged
- Wider, Younger, Deeper
- Prayers-R-Us
- Christ died to save sinners. Come and meet them.
- If anyone can, AngliCAN!
- Salvation4U

Rejoice. "Seriously." 😊

dave

