



December 2009 / The Truly Merry Plural Christmas

Christmas is really my favorite time of the year. Or its not. I can't decide. Hmm. Which one is true? How can I choose? This could be really tough. What if I offend someone with my choice? What if I offend someone with my other choice? What if I offend someone by starting the newsletter in such a bizarre way? Not to worry. The correct answer is Christmas is both my favorite and not my favorite time of the year. In the past I might have been pilloried for holding to such obviously contradictory notions, but I have "grown" past such small mindedness and have come to embrace totally contradictory ideas as the true earmark of the open minded and therefore loving person. No longer imprisoned by the "western" logic that so cruelly leaves no room for my new type of wisdom, I am now open to explore the new ideas that so many people from far places teach. Their ideas are quite old - they must be right. Why would they lie?

Most of what I just wrote is virtually verbatim from many conversations with new agers I have had over the years. It's to be expected - when you use mindless meditation and drugs to evade the mind then there is a price tag for the journey. Sadly many who call themselves Christians have and are falling for the same lunacy. In a recent book *Manifold Witness: The Plurality of Truth*, author John Franke argues that for the Christian to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, they must embrace the reality that truth is found in plurality. The fact that there might be several views on a particular doctrine doesn't point to the need for work, study and better interpretation. It points instead to the postmodern notion of truth as the construction of many different communities with no arbiter among them. Therefore the Holy Spirit and truth itself are found in the various contradictory and mutually exclusive options. One must embrace them all.

For many nominal Christians this has an instant appeal. Tired of arguing over eschatology or baptism or predestination? Well then this is the approach for you. Franke plays well on this theme. He states that in this new understanding, the Emergent Village can therefore claim, "to honor and serve the church in all its forms—Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, Anabaptist". In an excellent review of the book, Al Mohler (www.AlbertMohler.com) points out how this approach is nothing more than using postmodern language to bring up the same tired arguments that liberals have used for almost 170 years. I want to critique the book in a different way. Franke knows that the real discussion inside of the emergent swamp is not the argument between different denominations. That is so "Generous orthodoxy" ago! (Taken from Brian Maclaren's "A Generous Orthodoxy" which allegedly sought peace among all the different doctrinal discussions of the church - all the while slamming those who disagreed with him!) Instead the real issue that the emergent swamp is percolating is the much more radical notion that all religions, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Wicca, etc, etc, etc, should all be honored in the same way as the differences between Christians. One only needs to spend maybe five minutes at most at the emergent blogs and websites to catch that. Its not like they are hiding this - to them it is a selling point and "proof" of their open-mindedness.

Of course Franke is not quite pitching this yet - he is trying to present a more moderating view - but the slope is not slippery here - it is downright horizontal. If one were to read emergent authors like Burke or Salmonovic and so many others - there would be no doubt. Well then has Franke done the impossible? Has he undermined the law of non-contradiction? I don't think so. In putting his plurality of truth argument on the stage, he has presented this as a superior option to the old notion of truth as corre-

spondence to reality and exclusive. So we now have before us plural truth or exclusive truth. If Franke were consistent, he would have to have both as correct. But he can't do that and keep the Universalist notion afloat. The old mind set still thinks that either Jesus is the only way or he is not. That just won't do. Most of the emergent crowd is now ooing and cooing over Jurgen Moltmann and his poorly understood version of Hegel's dialectic. But this merely shows the same problem again. Is the dialectic the right way or is it not? One can play this game all daylong and get absolutely nowhere. Of course this is where many in the emergent crowd want the conversation to go – nowhere in as far as it concerns doctrine.

Franke claims this is a protestant problem in particular. But that is an ahistorical claim. The Catholic Church had to address the problem of Arius, who declared Jesus to be a lesser, created "god" than the Father. The Catholic Church rightly stuck with the Scriptures and declared Arius a heretic. If he were consistent, Franke would have to dispute this. There can be no heresy or no error in a "plurality of truth." Lets take this to somewhere where the emergent children like to play – their notion of social justice. Ok what can we say about this? Should we feed the poor or eat the poor? Are both right? Are both worth of honor? Do we apply the dialectic and feed some and eat the others? Do we feed some to the others thereby solving two problems at once? I seriously doubt this application of Franke's principle will go over well. I am probably going to be called a racist or Nazi soon for even bringing it up.

In contrast to all of this – let me say something a bit more meaningful and inspiring to you "But the Angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"(Luke 2). That is a exclusive truth which corresponds to reality and has changed the world. Let it change your heart again this year.

Nov 21 – 1:00–8:00 P.M. Haven Ministries Annual Party!!!

Nov 30 – Dec 11 – Parliament of World Religions in Melbourne, Australia. This is a huge event. I went to the Chicago Parliament in 1993 and talked to so many people from every religion and every part of the world. Check the website for my report from that event. Please pray that we can raise the money (five of the staff are planning to go Lord willing!) and for a safe trip and an incredible time of ministry.

Dec 15 – Last Home Bible Study for the year – The Gospel of Matthew
Keep checking back for more events.

January 11-15 = Raven crest Chalet in Estes Park. Apologetics

January 18 – Haven Ministries Board Meeting

January 19,26 – Home Bible Study. The Book of Matthew continued.

January 25 – Horizon College Denver – Two new class for me on Mondays.
The Book of Acts and The Philosophy of Religion

February 1,8,15,22.- Horizon College Denver classes.

February 2,9,16,23 – Home Bible Study – The Book of Matthew.

March 1,8,15,22,29 - Horizon College Denver classes.

March 2.9.16.23.30 – Home Bible Study – The Book of Matthew

March 13 – Denver Psychic Fair.

As always, check the website for more events. There is always much to pray for.

I am so thankful to the Lord to all of you for your prayers, gifts, encouragement and support. My extended family in Christ is truly one of the largest blessings in our life. I am still amazed after all these years that the Lord uses us and that yall support this ministry. We know that many people struggle with financial and job issues and we want to be sensitive to that. But we know that your prayers and help and awareness of the ministry's needs are important as well. This has been a tough year in some ways in giving for many ministries including ours. Please prayerfully consider your end of the year giving in light of this. We are behind in some important areas and have raised very little for the Parliament of World Religions trip. We would ask that you think and pray about this and see what role you might have. Thank you all again.

Prayer Requests

1) Thanks to the Lord for so many good things happening in our family. After the disaster of 2008, this year has been a great year of restoration and healing. Shawn and Kelly are married and moving soon to Albuquerque to pursue his music career. Gabe and Shaina are married now and based at Camp Pendleton in California. Scott has recently gotten serious about his faith again and we really hope and pray that the roller coaster is over. Joey is still on his roller coaster and this brings nothing but pain to all concerned. Rose and Andy are doing well in their walk with the Lord. Johanna and baby Kevin are doing well and it is exciting to see Johanna grow up so much in her walk with Christ and as a mother. Jonathan is still a big issue but even there we see some change. Terri hopefully will have surgery this winter and get this OVER with!!! I am still old and grumpy. Pray for our family as we follow our Savior and depend on His grace on a daily basis.

2) Please continue to pray for my family's salvation. I do have some good news on the cancer front – both of my parents and my stepdad are currently doing quite well with their treatments. My stepmom's relative who was kidnapped to the Muslim world is still a terrible hurt. My aunt just had cancer surgery and is in recovery as well.

3) Please pray for some friends and co-workers who have serious health issues. Our dear fellow ministers at Haven, Mark and Rose Rogeman, are both dealing with some pretty serious concerns. Also pray for many who have pressing chronic issues such as Becky R, Sherri C, Liz H, Sheila H, Julie, Gordon L and others. Also pray for our friends Susan L and two of her grandchildren who have all had surgery recently.

4. Please pray for several whose marriages have been damaged and destroyed by sin and/or cultic beliefs. Pray for Bruce, Mike, Brad, Jeannette, Michael, Pam, Mike, Leah, Tim, Rachel, Greg, Karina and many others.

5) Pray for the salvation for the Muslims, Gnostics, Mormons, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, as well as our Homosexual transvestite nun friend, some Japanese Buddhists I talked to recently at

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Writer

the psychic fair and many others wiccans, new agers and others. I can't list all the names with out running out of room but pray that the Holy Spirit will bring them to Christ.

6) Pray for the Haven staff. In addition to the issue with Mark and Rose mentioned above, please pray for Jim and Barb Choury as they raise more support, Jeff and Sandy Chrisman as they work on some family concerns and Rita who is traveling with Mark and I to the Parliament and then hopes to go on a mission trip to Russia early in the spring.

7) Please pray for our many friends and children who are serving with our military. As we have seen recently at Ft. Hood, the war is not necessarily so far away. Pray for our son Gabe and his friends Matt and Chris in the USMC and our son Scott who hopes to join him in the Marines soon. Pray for soldiers like Carlos and Matt and Josh and Nick. Pray for sailors like Josh N. We thank the Lord for them.



Special Prayer Request

The Parliament of World Religions will have over 8,000 people from every conceivable religion in the world. Please remember during the time of our trip (Nov 30 through Dec 11) to be in constant prayer that we will remain faithful and bold in our witness. Pray that the Holy Spirit will use all three to reach many there. And on a related note, pray that my wonderful wife of 31 years now doesn't go too crazy dealing with the animals at home. As I always say, our home is a zoo - sometimes the animals are in their cages, sometimes not...!

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