

A Contemporary Jesus

A Contemporary Christ has a better ring to it, but 'Jesus' is more acceptable in today's 'Christian' circles. (That is not to say that there is anything at all wrong with the name Jesus. It is indeed precious!) And the contemporary sinner has moved from being known as the lost, to being addressed as the unsaved, to being called the unchurched. The terms lost and sinner are not politically (nor religiously) correct, you know! As far as I can tell, the word 'unchurched' has not as yet made it into Mr. Webster's Dictionary - but I'm sure future editions will see that it's there; what with the encouragement of the Ecumenical movement - and sadly, Fundamentalism.

Today's Contemporary Christian: serving a contemporary Jesus; enjoying contemporary music; participating in contemporary programs and activities: the contemporary 'Church' is the center for all things 'spiritual' - just ask us! We have also Contemporary 'Christian counselors' to help with abnormal behavioral problems (previously identified as Sin) by carnal methods, who are unskilled in the use of scripture. (The Lord be praised for the Christ-honoring Counselors out there.) And this being at least partially the result of the lack of reverence for God and the Bible and the clear-cut preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by our 'contemporary ministers.'

I'm a bit confused: is "Just as I Am" being replaced by "Just Come as You Are?" The old fashioned 'mourner's bench' was a place where people actually knelt down in prayer? How archaic! The Meeting House was a place where hearts were moved; tears were shed; praises were echoed: now we find arms being waved, bodies swaying to the music, and what sort of 'praise' are we now hearing? "Thy word is a Lamp unto my feet;" or is it a 'Dance' unto my feet?

". . .the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" I Peter 1: 7d,8. But Hollywood has done the impossible: one can now see the Contemporary Jesus: on the wide screen of movie theaters, on the TV, on the DVD. Come now, and worship the image; behold the reenactment of the cross! With tearful eyes and with great emotion, bond with this, the Contemporary Jesus! Suffer with 'this Jesus' in the awful miscarriage of justice. 'They' have wronged him. . .But do not turn the cameras on the viewers; it is we who have grievously wronged Him (the True Christ.) And the terrible miscarriage of Justice is that He would die in my stead; receive my condemnation and my judgment. (But the Contemporary Jesus can do none of these.) Call the true Christ an 'innocent victim of circumstances' if you will - He was innocent; He was a sacrifice; but His suffering and death was according to the Eternal and Divine Plan of a Sovereign God.

But let's leave the Contemporary Jesus on the cross; at best let us bury him. A bodily resurrection and ascension and coming in power and glory to subdue earthly kings and kingdoms and set up a Kingdom over which He shall rule - well, that's just not acceptable for the Contemporary Jesus! Just worship a make-believe image. That way one can live his own lifestyle; make his own rules; be his own god. . .he can eat, drink, and be merry without worry. . .or so he thinks!

Think back to the days (or watch reruns) of Elvis Presley: he was (and is yet) perhaps the greatest of the Rock and Roll idols. Compare in your mind the 'congregations' that came to 'praise and worship' this Idol to some of the present day congregations that swoon and sway,

waving their arms in 'praise and worship' unto a Contemporary Jesus. They are disturbingly similar - aren't they?

In the conversation with Jesus, the Samaritan woman at the well said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," to which Jesus replied, "Ye worship, ye know not what." (Out of fear, thinking his people would return to Jerusalem to worship and turn their allegiance to Rehoboam, king of Judah, Jeroboam "made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: *behold thy gods*, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. . .And this thing became a sin" I Kings 12:28,30a.) What became a sin? The worship of Jehovah? Who or what was being worshipped: God or molten idols; God or mammon?

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" John 4:20a,22-23. Dare we say that much of today's 'praise and worship' is not done in 'spirit and truth?'

A similar situation is found in Exodus chapter 32: After he had made a molten calf, Aaron built an altar before it; and Aaron said To morrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and *rose up to play?*" They have come to present offerings to Jehovah? or to the molten calf? they have come to worship? or they have come to play? (Many are those who in their youth "played church": but now in their older years have seemingly never discontinued the practice!) So what was (is) the message to their (our) children? Follow our example? Go thou and do likewise?

The truth is, that there is an 'Image' of Jesus that is being *idolized*. Further, that this is a Godless worship; it is 'Jesus only,' if you please. "true worshippers shall *worship God* in spirit and in truth." What am I saying? That the worship being carried on of this Idol, this Contemporary Jesus, is a Godless worship. They who worship this "Jesus" are worshipping a counterfeit of their own making. Men cannot worship Jesus without worshipping the Father: but these do not seem to know that. It is a Spiritless worship. "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself. . .He shall glorify me" John 16:13,14a. Of what 'spirit' does an idol have to speak for him? As Jesus said, "Ye worship ye know not what." How easy it will be, when antichrist comes, to persuade them to 'worship the Beast!' They already have the mentality for it. No problem for them to switch their allegiance from one 'Jesus' to 'Another.'

The Contemporary Jesus is without authority; his 'word' is either challenged or blatantly ignored. But sadly, Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Eternal Word are grossly lacking in the acknowledgment of His authority by many groups, denominations, who call themselves by His name. By and large our churches have become self-governed, with those in authority deciding the moral standards of the church. Christ is exalted in name only; His glory being stripped away; His name not pronounced with deep reverence. Where *is* the true worship that was known by our fathers in the faith? If we should ever experience revival we might pray as did Ezra in his prayer of intercession for Israel: "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up into the heavens" Ezra 9:6. Have we not all sinned and come short of the glory of God? God help us.

A Contemporary Jesus! How ideal is that! No worry over sin and righteousness; over condemnation, judgment and death. Would this 'Jesus' send us to Hell? What Hell is that? No! We are in a state of 'rapture;' we have been 'caught up!' Let us float away on our 'cloud nine;' into bliss and happiness! There is now no condemnation to them which are in the golden idol, the Contemporary Jesus? Do they not walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit? No, the

promise, the assurance, is given them which are in Christ Jesus; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit! (Rom. 8:1.)

The fields are white unto harvest? Yes. But the enemy has come in during the night and has sown tares among the wheat. . .can you tell which is wheat and which is tares? But the Day of Harvest is coming. . .

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