

On Earth As It Is In Heaven, Pt. 4  
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(Based on Brian Mattson's series)  
C Against C, Part 1

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“A 22-year-old diabetic went into a coma when he stopped taking his insulin and died while his wife prayed over his body. A one-year-old baby died at home of pneumonia, and another infant died of complications from chicken pox. At least 10 babies and four mothers have died from complications of childbirth, according to records compiled by the coroner and the county health nurse. “You don't need to die of chicken pox,” said Barbara Clouse, the county health nurse. “You don't need to die of pneumonia. You don't need to die in childbirth.”

The first known death of a sect member was on July 1, 1976. Alice Rodgers, a healthy 23-year-old, died in her North Webster home after two days of labor and several hours of hemorrhaging. Her baby was stillborn. Mrs. Rodgers underwent her ordeal without medical care, despite the presence of an emergency medical station just blocks away.”

Just a few kooks from 35 years ago? All there is? If we peel back the layers, (1) we'll find an entire worldview and theology underneath this story which directly led to these deaths.

Extreme example of the CAC model, but one that sees an inherent conflict between one's (2) devotion to Christ and normal, everyday, material activities and things. It's a sliding scale—the more devotion to God, the less devotion to the things of creation. Technology? Worldly. Praying for illness? Spiritual.

Review: H. Richard Niebuhr “Christ and Culture”.

Christ Against Culture. This week we define it and consider “the good”.

Contrary to its own tenets, this system actually has a low view of God. How?

God is unable to work with the material that He has made. (3) More miraculous???

(4) In this view there is a chasm between the Spirit and matter itself.

This chasm is far, far less biblical than it is enlightenment-based (there we go again!)

(5) Enlightenment gave us hard and fast categories between *pure natural phenomena* (an observed or observable fact, occurrence, or circumstance) and *supernatural phenomena*, which must be believed—gotta have faith.

In our view, there is no chasm—in fact, there is no such thing as a purely natural phenomena. (6) Nothing by itself 'just is' or 'just does', because everything is upheld and sustained by God. No magic?

IPAD like Frodo holding the ring...do we really know how it all works?

“God creates the vine and teaches it to draw up water by its roots and, with the aid of the sun, to turn that water into a juice which will ferment and take on certain qualities. Thus every year, from Noah's time till ours, God turns water into wine. That, men fail to see. Either like the Pagans they refer the process to some finite spirit, Bacchus or Dionysus: or else, like the moderns, they attribute real and ultimate causality to the chemical and other material phenomena which are all that our senses can discover in it. But when Christ at Cana makes water into wine, the mask is off. The miracle has only half its effect if it only convinces us that Christ is God: it will have its full effect if, whenever we see (7) a vineyard or drink a glass of wine, we remember that here works He who sat at the wedding party in Cana. Every year God makes a little corn into much corn: the seed is sown and there is an increase, and men, according to the fashion of their age, say ‘It is Ceres, it is Adonis, it is the Corn-King,’ or else ‘It is the laws of Nature.’ The close-up, the translation, of this annual wonder is the feeding of the five thousand.” Bread is not made there of nothing. Bread is not made of stones, as the Devil once suggested to Our Lord in vain. A little bread is made into much bread. The Son will do nothing but what He sees the Father do. There is, so to speak, a family style.”

(8) Rather than using 'natural' and 'supernatural', we should use 'general' and 'special'.

My children's births were miraculous! But in a general way. The Virgin Birth is also miraculous, but in a special way. ALL of God's works are miraculous. Some of His works are regular and repeated, and some are unique and special one-time events.

It's the difference between mediated power (IV bags and computers) and unmediated, or immediate power (raw answered prayer).

The good? Some need to be qualified, but there are three:

1. Rebuke to us all—words like (9) 'radical' and uncompromising' can be used accurately for these folks. They seek to follow Christ at the expense of everything in their worldly lives. Easy targets, and they don't care. Omar Hostetler's comments that equated Xian persecution with being made fun of as an Amish. We shouldn't bring their sincerity into question. They've been historically one of the most mocked, derided, lampooned groups to ever exist. They have chosen to live as unknowns and fools for Christ in the world. Insofar as they serve as a 'check' for us, and cause us to examine our own compromises and concessions to the world, it'd valuable to study these folks.

2. There is a real sense in which Christ is against culture. The fall can twist almost anything. The self, the pursuit of power, pleasure, self-aggrandizement, wealth at the expense of others—this model is suspicious of *any* cultural endeavor for these very reasons. The ethically bad sense of the word "worldly" refers to the order or arrangement under which Satan has organized the world of unbelieving mankind upon principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and pleasure. This world is imposing and looks powerful, with corporations, armies, and Capitol buildings. It is often outwardly religious, scientific, cultured, and elegant, but it is upheld in any real crisis only by armed force, and is dominated by selfish principles. It is boiling over with national and commercial rivalries and ambitions and lust.

Eph. 2:1-3: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

3. In the CAC model, there really is a sense of God's holiness—His “otherness” from the world, and a very real sense of our own call to holiness and “otherness”, too.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

(2 Cor. 6:14-18, 7:1)

Yes? Can we read that (along with all other warnings against worldliness) and give a hearty 'amen'?