BUNYAN AND CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

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Category: Observations

Today's crop of blog posts has turned up a couple of very thought provoking pieces by a couple of my favourite writers.

Onesimus has written an excellent piece reflecting on the way John Bunyan talks about salvation in the Pilgrim's Progress.

> *Rather than an event, salvation in Pilgrimâ€™s Progress seems to be much more of a process, or better yet, a narrative. Bunyan simply isnâ€™t asking the question, â€˜When is Christian saved?â€™, much less answering it. Instead, salvation is viewed as a progress that isnâ€™t finally resolved until one emerges from deathâ€™s cold stream on the other side. The dangers that Christian faces on his journey are very real dangers. The battles he fights have real consequences. Wrong choices and wrong turns have the power to put his final destination, his ultimate status in doubt. Even at the gates of the celestial city itself, there is a diversion that leads straight to hell. There is real, meaningful and necessary growth in grace â€“ real progress.*
>
> *None of this is intended to cheapen the forgiveness of sins accomplished by the crucified and risen Jesus. Rather, I am suggesting that for Bunyan, forgiveness and the losing of his burden isnâ€™t â€˜salvationâ€™. This is not to say that trusting Christ for forgiveness is not important. For Bunyan, as for the Scriptures, itâ€™s absolutely necessary. But a salvation understood as forgiveness alone is incomplete. Salvation is much more than just addressing our legal difficulties, however necessary it is that those legal difficulties be addressed. We humans have more than just a sin-caused legal problem.*

Make sure you read the whole piece - though you might find it uncomfortable.

The other thought provoking piece comes from Christine Sine who reflects on the essence of Celtic Christianity:

> 1. ***Central to Celtic spirituality is incarnation and an intense sense of the presence of God.*** *â€œThe Celt was very much a God-intoxicated man whose life was embraced on all sides by the divine Beingâ€*
>   1. *The presence of Christ was almost physically woven around their lives*
>   2. *God was treated with awe, reverence and wonder but was essentially a human figure intimately involved in all creation and engaged in a dynamic relationship with it.*
>   3. *The Trinity was seen as family and each family unit, clan or community was an icon of the Trinity*
>   4. *All creation responds to Godâ€™s creative presence and sustaining love. God not*

> *only encircles and protects creation but also enlivens, activates and inspires it.*

Once again, it is well worth reading the whole article (this one is shorter). It isn't always comfortable to think outside of our normal denominational or theological boxes, but we can learn an awful lot when we do.