

Lead, Radiant Spirit, Our Gospel Quest

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Lead, Radiant Spirit, Our Gospel Quest, is a prayer that the Joyful Holy Spirit (the *Mysterium tremendum et fascinans*) will guide us to find the Happiness Itself/God and His revelation, Jesus Christ in our tension filled lives. It is a book of lifelong Christian conversion, calling people reading the gospels to encounter God and allow themselves to be led by Christ's radiant Spirit.

The author claims that humans live in a tensional structure in both their human and theocentric lives that are subject to fields of pulls and counterpulls. The symbols of light and darkness, used often in the Bible, particularly in the Gospel of John reflect this tensional structure of humanity. The primary pull in their theocentric lives is the pull of the Father through the Son (John 6:44-45), whilst the counter pull is that of the world and Satan.

It is, with respect, a pity that the introduction is complex. It refers to the world of desire and the world of limits, of human interiority, and other concepts that are not fully explained or truly integrated into the rest of the book. Furthermore, difficult sentence structures and word formulations make the reading of the book unnecessarily demanding. Also, several text references are wrongly quoted. Though there are a number of promising assertions in the introduction, the author has, with respect, failed to systematically expand them throughout the book.

The author follows the generally agreed chronological order in his interpretation of the gospels. In his approach he uses a triangular paradigm: Jesus, the protagonist, who is an expression of the ways of God; the religious authorities, the antagonists, who reflect humanity without God; and thirdly the disciples, who are divided and reflect Christians and the tensional structures of Christian life within the pulls of God and the counterpulls of humanity.

Mark: Transfigured or Disfigured?

Using the three affirmations of the Sonship of Christ at his baptism (Mark 1:11) transfiguration (Mark 9:7) and crucifixion (Mark 15:39), the author claims that Christ, introduced as God's beloved, is a transfiguration of God's love, and finally the revelation of that love on the cross. Furthermore, the Christian story of conversion moves firstly from non-recognition of Christ, as the Good News, at the baptism, to part recognition at the transfiguration to full recognition at his death.

It is a pity that the author uses a saying by a disciple, Peter, (Mark 8:33) upon which to base his portrayal of the religious authorities as adversaries of God.

Matthew: God's Righteousness and Self-Righteousness?

The tensional structure in Matthew is found in the pull and command to do God's will, for that is God's righteousness as opposed to just knowing and talking about it (Sermon on

the Mount, Mt 6:10, 33, 26:42, 28:18-20). The challenge of Christians are those of the disciples, sons of the Kingdom, who having received and been entrusted with the promises of the kingdom, are to enact the law of love (Mt 25). The tension is between the present and the future, between the transformation of self-righteousness to God's righteousness, between the present and the Last Judgement. However, in this tensional theocentric life, the afflicted people have the assurance of Matthew: that, Immanuel, the risen and crucified Lord is with them (Mt 28:20).

Luke: Banquet Joy or Resentment?

The main thrust of Luke is universal salvation, including the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel. Salvation is the partaking in the Banquet of Joy by all who respond to the pull, particularly the marginalized, whilst the antagonists, the religious authorities reject the purpose of Gods for themselves (Lk 7:30) and thus resent the Banquet. The ultimate gift of God is eschatological peace and reconciliation to God in Jesus Christ. The author contends, that just as Luke holds the whole of Israel, that is every person, responsible for Jesus' death, so in every human heart is a cosmic conflict of pull and counterpulls as to whether this gift of God is accepted or not.

John: Gods Glory or Self-Glorification?

The author claims that in the Gospel of John 'glory' is the very expression of God, the very revelation of God In Jesus (Jn 1:14,13:31). The glory of Christ is thus the main protagonist of the cosmic tension between 'Light' and the 'prince of this world' (Jn 12:31; 16:11). Furthermore the glory of Christ transforms sinners, deformed humanity, making them beautiful, perfectly conformed to God as humanity was at her creation - in the image and likeness of God. The counter pulls of this beauty or God's Glory is love of the darkness (Jn 3:16), love of human glory (Jn 12:43) and love of self in this world (Jn12:25).

The chapter ends with a brief reference to the Holy Spirit of Reciprocal Love as the gift of God and the 'foundation for the scriptural pedagogy of the church.' Though the author claims that we cannot have faith without the Spirit, he fails to prove his further claim: that the literary structure of the Gospels, reflect the complementary operative ways of the Spirit. This is a pity, principally in light of the title of the book.

The final chapter, *The Universal Pilgrimage to the Mountain of God*, sets out a conversion paradigm. Firstly, as five stages of pilgrimage within the Old Testament, and thereafter the five stages are echoed as a New Testament fulfilment of the Old Testament pilgrimage. This chapter is regrettably not coupled to the introduction or the four chapters about each gospel. Indeed, a lack of a unifying theme throughout the book is a weakness, and detracts from the power of the book to convert.

In conclusion, it is submitted with respect that though the thought of living in structural tension of pulls and counterpulls is enlightening, the author has not given a new way in which we can continue our Gospel Quest.