

Is This a Fresh Biblical Idea or Pantheistic Heresy?

About a year ago, I saw an article that shocked me on a popular charismatic website. It was titled "Christ is All Things." Though the author did not use Far Eastern or New Age terminology, he was promoting either the doctrine of pantheism (the material universe is an emanation of God / God is all and all is God) or panentheism (everything contains a spark of divinity / God is in all and all is in God). He claimed that this is something Paul upholds in his writings, basing his idea on the CEB (Common English Bible) version of Colossians 3:11, "Christ is all things and in all people."

The author proposed that the traditional evangelical view of the "born again" experience is wrong (the idea that Jesus comes to live within a person's heart when He is invited to be Lord and Savior). Instead, he falsely asserted:

"Everyone has Christ in them. This would include Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, atheists and everyone else. No one is separated from Christ at birth. At birth, everyone is born with Christ within them."

He also maintained:

"Because creation has been made through Christ, Christ is in all creation, and the whole creation emanates with and reflects Christ. This includes humanity as well."

I shook my head in unbelief that such a heretical idea would be so blatantly promoted on a website endorsed by many respected charismatic leaders (who I am sure would disagree with this stance). Thankfully, once I brought it to the attention of the owner of the website, he removed the article.

This kind of talk is a repackaging of the New Age "Christ

Principle” I promoted as a yoga teacher back in 1970—the borrowed Hindu belief that there is a “spark of divinity”—the light of divine consciousness—within all human beings (false beliefs I discarded when Jesus became Lord of my life).

One major yet common mistake the author made was taking Colossians 3:11 out of its surrounding text (which is not proper exegesis, but its opposite, something called eisegesis). Let me also quote the two verses that lead up to this conclusion:

But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born from a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Gal. 4:4-7).

When the text is presented contextually, it becomes clear that Paul is not referring to all of humanity, but only those who are part of the true church of the living God. He is emphasizing that all who have “put on the new nature”—in other words, all who have been born again and become new creations in Christ—share an equal standing in the sight of God. The nationality, race, level of prosperity or social status of individual Christians matters little. The ground is level at the cross. “Christ is all and in all.” In other words, all who are truly saved by the washing of the blood of Jesus and the indwelling of His Spirit are equally important, equally loved and equally righteous in God’s sight.

When Paul said, “Christ is all,” he was not promoting pantheism—the idea that the universe is an emanation of God, so everything has a divine essence at its core. To think so is absurd, because such an assumption is not in agreement with the whole of Scripture. He was merely highlighting the

preeminence of the Son of God—like any one of us saying, “It not about church buildings, choirs and sermons—it’s all about Jesus!” As the Contemporary English Version puts it, “Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us”—but once again, “all of us” refers to the true church, not the human race as a whole.

Besides, if all people from the beginning of time have been born with the Christ nature inside of them, why did Jesus pray in John 17 for this to happen at some point in the future (which was answered with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost)—and why did He preface that prayer with the exclusive statement:

“I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me. For they are Yours” (John 17:9, MEV)?

If this proposed doctrine is correct, wouldn’t it have been more logical for Jesus to pray, “The whole human race is yours, Father, and they already have my Christ nature dwelling in them. Make them aware of what they already possess”? But He didn’t say that. Jesus made it very clear this would be the spiritual possession of only those the Father had given Him “out of the world” (John 17:6).

Listen to the last words of this great intercessory prayer, the words Jesus uttered right before He went into the blood-sweating agony of Gethsemane:

“O righteous Father, the world has not known You, but I have known You, and these have known that You sent Me. I have declared Your name to them, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:25-26).

Again, let me emphasize, if He (the Christ nature) was already within the hearts of all human beings, why would He pray as if this was a future thing that would yet be accomplished through the death He was going to die? Also, why would Paul later

suggest “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” if He was already there? (Eph. 3:17a).

If all human beings are sons and daughters of God in the fullest sense, and if He already dwells in all, why did Paul declare that those who have been redeemed have been adopted into the divine family and that God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts? That no longer makes any sense. Read the following passage carefully:

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Gal.4:4-7)

This passage makes it very clear that only those who have been redeemed (bought back and brought back by the purchase price of the blood of Jesus) receive the indwelling of the Spirit of God’s Son.

To believe otherwise is to deny the very purpose in Jesus’ coming. {eoa}

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