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Child Sacrifice - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2007/12/14 19:45

Child Sacrifice

I write this at perhaps the only time my Canadian culture recognizes the worth of sacrifice – Remembrance Day. Shaky, choppy images of battlefield horror may be the glorification of all things military or uncensored documented proof that all things are broken. Love or hate the Day, this individualistic, consumerist, me-first society can surely use the reminder of sacrifice for a cause bigger than you.

Ironically the most somber of silences at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month is quickly followed by that most maniacal of marches toward the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month. How quickly we move from one form of child sacrifice to the next. In the former we remember sacrifices made for the State; in the latter we gorge on sacrifices for the Self. In November we were a people willing to lay down our lives; in December we are gluttons for sale and credit. One generation of children – now steadily departing stage left - bear the scars of sacrifices made, a new one believes you can have what you want, when you want, sacrifice be damned.

Martin Luther once made the chilling statement, “idolatry involves a question of what you would sacrifice your children for.” The State or the Self: which idol is receiving our children these days? Perhaps, and probably, it is both. The power of any idol is its diabolical clout that convinces us to give up our young in its name.

Now, before we get heady, snap our suspenders and declare ourselves free of such silliness perhaps we need to be reminded of one limb of the Church’s love affair with the political left and the other limb’s desperate dependency on the political right. The State still begs for and consumes our offspring.

And, then, there is the surrendering of our kids to the selfish amusement and titillation of an age of decadence and excess with very few questions asked beyond, “Will that be cash or credit?”

As followers of Jesus we know the walk by faith is one of sacrifice: the self-sacrifice of Christ for sinners and the reciprocal sacrifice of the Self marked by the taking up of our crosses in an about face. You cannot be in Christ without accepting the sacrifice for you and making the sacrifice of you. In contrast to the demands of the State we are commanded to love even our enemies and name only one Lord. In contrast to the Self we are commanded to give up all that was once to our profit.

Yet even here, beneath a good God’s mothering wing, we do not escape the disturbing image of child sacrifice. Stanley Hauerwas says, “No ethic is worthy that does not require potentially the suffering of those we love.” Excuse moi? Think carefully: The Trinity gives up the Son. How many toddlers did Bethlehem lose to the Father’s decision to shine on David’s city? If you choose Jesus those you love are forced to live with the ramifications of your decision. To choose Jesus under Nero meant the potential suffering of your offspring. Household conversions meant embracing an ethic your loved ones could die for. Does this still happen?

Living with such an individualized society and spirituality we forget that it is still the case that what adults choose is what the next generation is forced to live and deal with. Since, statistically at least, this culture is abandoning Christian faith at record pace it begs the question: what god and ethic have we sacrificed our children for? And, for those who have named Jesus Lord: do we still believe this Christmas that He’s worth the wager?

Phil Wagler, pastor of
Zurich Mennonite Church in Zurich, Ontario

Re: Child Sacrifice - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2008/11/12 11:25

I found this article while searching for another; I read it and was inspired by this quote. Thought I would bump it for your consideration.

ginnyrose

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