

The Berean Papers

“[T]he Bereans. . .examined the Scriptures every day...”
(Acts 17:11, *New International Version*)

The Incarnation A Practical Doctrine

by Garry E. Milley

When Christian thinkers write about the Incarnation, they are speaking about the process whereby the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, without ceasing to be what He was, in Jesus became fully human. This mystery is usually spoken of as Jesus having two distinct natures, human and divine, in one person. It would be idolatry to worship Jesus if He were not in some way divine, or if he were divine in a lesser way than God the Father. It would be polytheistic to worship two or three gods.

The mystery of the Incarnation requires what we refer to as the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to keep us from the errors of idolatry and polytheism. The teaching is not so much an explanation as a description of a mystery. We who worship God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit must avoid both errors. As Christians, we see Jesus as the full revelation of God. The Incarnation means that Jesus is deity in the flesh! The way that happened was through the virginal conception via Mary, His human mother.

This may seem like a heavy intellectual puzzle, beyond the interest of most people. Yet, the Incarnation, while being a great mystery, has very practical

implications. Robert E. Webber never tired of saying, “The central problem of popular Evangelical Christianity is its failure to comprehend the full implications of the Incarnation.” God becomes human to save us. He did not simply decree salvation from heaven, but He accomplished it through a process of becoming, as it were, one of us!

This means that we should not create walls between what we consider sacred and secular. Such a distinction results in the demonizing of creation and culture, as if Christians were better off having nothing to do with either. God crossed the line in Jesus! According to Genesis, creation was created good, yet it is fallen. However, it is the object of God’s redemptive activity in Christ. Salvation is not just about souls, as if humans were merely souls with ears. God Himself dwelt in the flesh among us. He came to save us and will redeem us and recreate us in His image. He will even renew the whole cosmos. He loved the world and He came to save it and us.

Paul speaks about becoming “all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”¹ He considered the Incarnation to be a practical doctrine. God, through Christ, entered this world to save it; Christians are

saved out of the world, to be sent back in to save others.

However, we should not cease to be who we are as new creatures in Christ. There should be no compromise on personal holiness and integrity when we are being involved in other people’s lives. But, make no mistake about it, we must be involved “in the flesh” if we are to touch this world in a redemptive manner. This means that we must be on guard lest an exaggerated doctrine of separation prevents us from reaching out to others—in flat denial of the Great Commission and the historic event of the Incarnation.

God was involved to save us. Why are we not more involved in this world to save others? Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”² Think about it! Do something about it! 🌐

1. 1 Corinthians 9:22. All Scripture *New International Version*.
2. John 20:21.



Garry E. Milley is the senior pastor of Park Avenue Pentecostal Church, Mount Pearl, NL.