

SOME SERENDIPITIES

PHIL 1:12-26

I. IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT ME

- A. Paul's chains and our constrictions
 - 1. Aging—assorted ills curtail effectiveness
 - 2. Obligations—accumulating as families & friends face challenges
- B. Paul's rivals still advance Gospel/Kingdom—persistent reality in Church history
 - 1. Paul vs. Peter, Mark, Silas, Apollos et al (ca. 60 A.D.)—apostolic authority, essence of Gospel
 - 2. Tertullian vs. Clement of Alexandria (ca. 200 A.D.)—Jerusalem or Athens or both; rigorous or eclectic; narrow or broad minded?
 - 3. Augustine vs. Jerome (ca. 400 A.D.)—theology (with its philosophical dimensions) or biblical exegesis & exposition?
 - 4. Boniface vs. Venerable Bede (ca. 700 A.D.)—missions or historical scholarship?
 - 5. Dominic vs. Francis of Assisi (ca. 1200 A.D.)—concern for doctrinal teaching & preaching or living like Jesus & caring for the poor?
 - 6. Martin Luther vs. Philip Melancthon (ca. 1530)—impassioned sermons or careful scholarship
 - 7. John Wesley vs. George Whitfield (ca. 1750)—Calvin or Arminius, mass evangelism or small group discipleship?
 - 8. John Henry Newman vs. Charles Hadden Spurgeon (ca. 1860 A.D.)—liturgy & tradition or biblical preaching? Catholic or Baptist?
 - 9. Phineas Bresee vs. Seth Rees (ca. 1915)—Nazarene or Pilgrim Holiness approach?
 - 10. H. Orton Wiley vs. A.M. Hills (ca. 1935)—premillennial or postmillennial?
- C. “Through it all . . .”

II. IT'S ALL ABOUT HIM

- A. Christ revealed to me—the answer to life's greatest questions (cf. Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*; Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life*)
 - 1. Who am I? (extremist errors: angel or beast; self-esteem & self-help or helpless instinct-driven pawn? Shirley MacLaine & “I Am God” or naturalistic evolutionists' “evolved slime”?)
 - a. Image of God—despite sin worthy of reverence (C.S. Lewis: “no ordinary people”)
 - b. Joint Heir with Christ—thus able to say “Our Father”
 - 2. Why am I here? (meaninglessness of naturalistic science & philosophy)
 - a. Intelligent Design & “anthropic principle”—fine-tuned universe just right for us
 - b. Designed, above all, to worship Creator rather than creatures (cf. Rom 1:22-23)
 - 3. Where am I going? (nihilistic despair evident in Richard Dawkins *et al*)
 - a. Eternal life was ever on Jesus' mind—as evident talking with Nicodemus (Jn 3)
 - b. Jesus' Resurrection final answer—where He Is we can be also (Jn 14)
 - 4. Does anyone care? (Cf. *The Meaning of Your Life: Finding Purpose in an Age of Emptiness* by Arthur Brooks with data re widespread loneliness).
 - a. “God so loved the world that He gave . . .” (Jn 3:16)
 - b. Body of Christ (the Church) carries on His message & work via work of Holy Spirit
- B. Christ residing in me
 - 1. Early Church refrain: “God became man that man might become God”
 - 2. Enduring invitation: ask Jesus to “come into your heart” & many testimonies re reality
 - 3. Holy Spirit enters into and comforts believers
 - 4. Perennial petition: “Jesus help me”