

Credo
By Tami Jelinek

God/The Trinity

I believe in one Almighty God, Who eternally existed before all that is, and created all that is (Colossians 1:16-17). Scripture says, “I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no God (Isaiah 45:5). He is one God, yet mysteriously exists in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is called God and Creator (Philippians 1:2; Isaiah 64:8); the Son is called God and Creator (John 1:1,14; Colossians 1:15-17); and the Spirit is called God and Creator (Acts 5:3-4; Job 33:4). Father, Son, and Spirit are everywhere present (1 Kings 8:27; Matthew 28:20; Psalm 139:7-10); and Father, Son and Spirit are all-knowing (1 John 3:20; John 16:30; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11). Regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, which I see as the Christian theologian’s noble yet beggarly attempt to define the nature of the inimitable, transcendent God, Alister McGrath appropriately states, “the general consensus within Christian theology is that the doctrine cannot be demonstrated or established on the basis of pure reason, even though the doctrine can be shown to be reasonable once it has been established by reflection on revelation” (McGrath, CTR: 246).

I believe that God is sovereign over all His creation. He completely owns His creation (Psalm 50:10-12), and He completely controls His creation (Job 26:12-14). God has created all things and He controls all things for His own purposes and His own pleasure (Revelation 4:11; Psalm 135:6). God is also sovereign over the will and the actions of all people (Psalm 110:3; Proverbs 20:24). God has ordained the eternal destiny of all people. He has chosen some to be adopted as His children and caused them to believe the Gospel (Ephesians 1:4-11; Acts 13:48), and He has

ordained the judgment of the Gospel to be a “savor of death” to those who do not believe (2 Corinthians 2:16).

God is love, and He loves His children (1 John 3:1; 4:8-10). Contrary to what some early theologians taught, God is not “impassible.” He can and does experience suffering. As Jurgen Moltmann (b. 1926) writes, “If God were really incapable of suffering, he would also be as incapable of loving as the God of Aristotle, who was loved by all, but could not love. Whoever is capable of love is also capable of suffering, because he is open to the suffering that love brings with it” (McGrath, CTR: 227). Or as the Christ hymn of Philippians states, “He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). To grasp the depth of the agony Christ endured on the cross is to grasp the depth of His love for His people, for it was for “the joy set before Him” (Hebrews 12:2) that He endured such agony. God now experiences joy in His redeemed people (Zephaniah 3:17; Psalm 137:6), and desires to dwell with them (Psalm 132:13). Every gift we have comes from Him (James 1:17) and He loves to give good gifts to His children (Matthew 7:11). His love for His children is more enduring than a woman’s love for her nursing child (Isaiah 49:15), and He tenderly comforts and cares for them (Isaiah 49:15; 54:8). He is “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Psalm 86:15). These things I believe about God.

Whereas “process theology” attempts to deal with the so-called “problem of evil” by denying God’s sovereignty over His creation (McGrath, CTI: 214-215); a theology that submits to God’s revelation of Himself through Scripture as all-powerful and all-knowing, and as the Creator of all things including evil (Isaiah 45:7) is what allows us to be at rest in His love, and experience the joy of His presence that can never be lost because it depends wholly upon His word which can never fail.

Jesus Christ

I believe that Jesus Christ is—always was, and always will be—Yahweh, Jehovah (Jeremiah 23:5-6). When he walked this earth as a man He was God manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), and became “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14). As McGrath states, the conviction that Jesus Christ reveals God to mankind is “distinctive to Christianity” and “has been central to mainstream Christianity down the ages.” And as Karl Barth (1886-1968) writes, “when Holy Scripture speaks of God...from first to last [it] directs us to the name of Jesus Christ” (McGrath, CTI: 267). Jesus Christ is the Messiah and Savior anticipated by Israel’s prophets, and according to those prophets, this Savior could be none other than God (Isaiah 43:3; 45:21; Hosea 13:4). It is therefore not possible to call Jesus Christ “Savior” without also calling Him “God.” Both God and Jesus Christ are called “Savior” (Jude 1:25; Titus 2:13); the “King of Kings” (Daniel 2:47; 1 Timothy 6:14-15); the “Lord of Lords” (Deuteronomy 10:17; Revelation 17:14); “I AM” (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58); the “Holy One” (Isaiah 43:15; Acts 3:14-15); and the “first and last” (Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 2:8). God alone is to be worshipped (Exodus 34:14; Matthew 4:9-10); neither men nor angels are to be worshiped (Acts 10:25-26; Revelation 22:8-9); yet Jesus Christ receives the worship of both men and angels (John 9:35-38; Hebrews 1:6).

“The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This we call the “incarnation,” when Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35). He was made like us (believers, his “brothers and sisters”) so that He would be a “merciful high priest” who is able to identify with us in every way, having been tempted in all the same ways that we are. Yet He was without sin (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15). He offered Himself

willingly as the one sacrifice that has perfected His people forever. His priesthood on our behalf continues forever and he “ever lives to make intercession for us” (Philippians 2:6-8; Hebrews 7:24-27; 10:14). These things I believe about Jesus Christ.

The person and work of Jesus Christ are the foundation upon which Christianity, and all Christian principles are based. Christianity and Christian doctrine would therefore become arbitrary, baseless and irrelevant if not grounded in the relevance of both Christ’s humanity and divinity, and His claims to be the only God and Savior, which are certainties according to the doctrine of the incarnation (cf. Dorothy L. Sayers’ essay in McGrath, CTR: 318-320). Jesus’ question to His disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” (Mark 16:15) is a question of paramount significance for all generations, for if anyone does not believe that He is “I AM,” they will die in their sins (John 8:24). It is not enough to merely acknowledge Jesus as *a* way to God, for He claims, “I am *the* Way, *the* Truth and *the* Life, and no one comes to the Father, except through Me” (John 14:6).

The Holy Spirit

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity (One God mysteriously existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and is—always was, and always will be--Yahweh, the Almighty and Eternal God. In Scripture, the Holy Spirit’s names and attributes confirm His divinity. He is called both God (Acts 5:3-4) and Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18). He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), all-powerful (Luke 1:35), and every-where present (Psalm 139:7-10). He speaks for God (Acts 8:29; 13:2). The Holy Spirit is symbolized and physically manifested in Scripture by a dove (Matthew 3:16), wind (Acts 2:1-4), and fire (Acts 2:3).

As Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-79) argues, “Capable of perfecting others, the Spirit himself lacks nothing. He is not a being who needs to restore his strength, but himself supplies life” (McGrath, CTI: 229). The Holy Spirit fills (Acts 2:4), indwells (Romans 8:9-14) and intercedes for believers (Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit within us “bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” and gives us assurance of our faith (Romans 8:15-16). The Holy Spirit saves and sanctifies believers (Titus 3:5; Romans 15:16). He is also called “the Spirit of Truth” because He testifies about Jesus, who is the Truth (John 14:6; 15:26).

The Holy Spirit inspired, or “breathed” the words of the Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16). Jesus calls Him “the Comforter” (John 14:16), as He is our assurance that God is present with us, just as God the Father is called “the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3). These things I believe about the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit of God, and of Christ, Who unifies the church—by unifying all believers one with another, as each believer is indwelled by this same Spirit. As Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) writes, “He binds together the spirit of each and every one of us, and makes us all appear as one in Him...the one and undivided Spirit of God who dwells in us all, leads us all into spiritual unity” (McGrath, CTR: 205-206). Our unity as a body therefore depends on, and is guaranteed by, the divinity (specifically the life-giving power and omnipresence) of the Holy Spirit.

Creation

My own creation creed finds a comfortable affinity with artists like Michelangelo who is often quoted thus, “My soul can find no staircase to heaven unless it be through earth’s loveliness;” and with poets like Elizabeth Barrett Browning who writes, “Earth’s crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God; but only he who sees, takes off his shoes...” Or even with the Russian novelist Theodore Dostoyevsky, whose famous character Father Zosima

in *The Brothers Karamazov* eloquently entreats, “Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.” In all of these reverent reflections on the beauty and wonder of God’s creation, its mysterious and subliminal treasures of knowledge awaiting discovery are in the mind’s eye of the adoring worshiper. However a literal understanding of the Biblical “creation story” in Genesis is not. I do believe that God created the physical universe (nothing and no one exists apart from Him, cf. Colossians 1:17; Acts 17:28); but I do not believe that the Bible describes *how* He did it in scientific terms. “Natural theology” looks to the material creation to inherently prove God’s existence apart from the witness of Scripture; and fundamentalism appeals to a literal interpretation of Genesis and other “creation” texts to prove that God created the literal “heavens and earth,” and asserts that the “heavens” themselves declare this. But Scripture is clear that no one seeks God (Romans 3:11), and that the natural man cannot understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). It is only by divine revelation and God-given faith therefore, that the material creation becomes the revelation of God for the one to whom faith has been granted. In other words, the *natural* world confirms and assures the faith of the believer, to whom God has *supernaturally* revealed Himself; but apart from that revelation, the natural world does not inherently contain proof for the natural, unregenerate man of either God’s existence or His actions in the universe. And most significantly, the material, physical, cosmological creation does not inherently reveal God’s redemptive plan or acts to mankind.

I believe that “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1) is a reference to the beginning of God’s covenant with His people, and the first man and woman He

took from the “dust” of humanity (cf. Genesis 2:7, 1 Corinthians 15:45-47) and brought into covenant relationship with Himself, and to whom He gave the promise of eternal life in His presence. The “first (or old) heavens and earth” is a metaphorical reference to the natural man’s guilty conscience under the first law, or covenant (Deuteronomy 4:26; 30:19; Matthew 5:18; Hebrews 1:10-12; 8:13); and the “new heavens and new earth” is a metaphorical reference to the spiritual man’s redeemed and perfected conscience under the new law, or new covenant in the blood of Christ (Luke 22:20; 2 Peter 3:13; Hebrews 12:22-24). From creation to consummation, the Bible tells one story. Genesis and Revelation are the beginning and the end of that story. In other words, I understand that Genesis’ *creation* is the same in *nature* as Revelation’s *new creation*. They are covenantal counterparts. And so I conclude that Genesis speaks of a covenantal, rather than a cosmological creation. Therefore, I view the language of the Genesis creation story according to the Old Testament prophets who employ it to speak of the “new heavens and new earth” (Isaiah 65:17), and according to the New Testament apostles who employ it to speak synonymously of the “new creation in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 21:1-5). Genesis tells the beginning of the Bible’s story, which is redemption’s story, and Revelation tells of redemption’s climactic fulfillment. We are therefore free to explore the material world through science, and need not view modern scientific discovery as incompatible with a reverence for the authority of God’s word. These things I believe about creation. A more open view of creation is becoming increasingly significant in our post-Christian era, and offers a much-needed alternative to the false dichotomy created between the Bible and science by fundamentalist “creationist” dogma.

Human Nature and Sin

I believe that all men are by nature “sinners;” that is, they *naturally* transgress God’s law (sin is the transgression of the law, cf. 1 John 3:4) but it is not until God’s law is revealed to them that they are aware of their transgression and judged guilty by the law (in other words, sin is imputed to them), thus becoming guilty in their conscience toward God (Romans 5:13; 7:7-10). The bible describes the “natural” man, or “man from the dust,” as mortal and corruptible. Outside of Christ and His imputed righteousness, all men bear the mortal and corruptible “image” of this earthly man. But in Christ, having been “clothed” with His righteousness, we become part of the resurrected body of Christ, and bear the incorruptible and immortal “image” of the heavenly man, having “put on” the incorruptibility and immortality of Christ’s “heavenly body” (1 Corinthians 15:44f). This means that Adam was mortal and corruptible from his “creation” (God’s initiation of a covenant relationship with him). In his “nakedness” before God—a reference to the absence of the garments of salvation, or righteousness of Christ (cf. Isaiah 61:10; Revelation 3:17,18)—Adam was innocent and was not ashamed, as his conscience had not yet been convicted of sin by the law. But when Adam transgressed the revealed law of God, and attempted to justify himself by his own works of that law (as seen in the image of his “fig leaf” covering, cf. Genesis 3:7; Isaiah 59:6), he “died” (returned to the dust, cf. Genesis 3:19; Romans 7:9), or became separated from fellowship with God. The death Adam died “that day” in the garden was not a physical death, but rather a fellowship, or covenant death, from which he would only be raised in Christ. As the prophet proclaims, “Your dead will live, LORD; [together with your dead body, cf. KJV] their bodies will rise-- let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy--your dew is like the dew of the morning; you will make it fall on the spirits of the dead” (Isaiah 26:19, TNIV).

I believe this same death, and this same resurrection, occur for all those who have been judged guilty by the Gospel and respond with faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice on their behalf: "for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:22). I believe this resurrection is the fulfillment of the *Imago Dei* prophesied in the Genesis "creation" story. As McGrath summarizes, for many of the patristics, "the doctrine of creation in the image of God was seen as being directly related to the doctrine of redemption...Redemption involved bringing the image of God to its fulfillment, in a perfect relation with God, culminating in immortality" (McGrath, CTI: 349). In other words, I agree with the suggestion of those church fathers that the image of God is synonymous with the image of Christ. Therefore, the "creation" of man "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26) is prophetic of man being made a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), and not a description of man's natural, mortal and corruptible condition apart from Christ.

But just as it is not man's nature to obey God's law, but to transgress it, it is not man's nature to seek God (Romans 3:11). God speaks the truth about man's nature and hopeless condition through His prophets: "There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity" (Isaiah 64:7). These things I believe about human nature.

A truthful understanding of human nature is essential to a truthful understanding of the Gospel. For example, the popular, unbiblical belief that "man is basically good," or even various views on the Pelagian spectrum within professing Christendom that man naturally possesses the innate ability to choose faith and obedience to God, effectually diminish the preeminence of Gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). There is salvation only in Christ (Acts 4:12). And yet, no one can come to Christ unless the Father *drags* (draws by inward

power, Gr: *Helkuo*, cf. John 6:44) him. We are saved by grace, through faith, and that faith is not from within ourselves but it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-10). Not only is the true Gospel rejected by the belief that man has the innate ability to believe, or choose Christ of his own volition; but there is also the belief within some professing Christian denominations that one's salvation can be lost, through his lack of performance of "good works," which amounts to what the apostle Paul calls "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6f; 3:2-5). If we did nothing—because by *nature we could* do nothing--to gain our salvation, then we could do nothing to lose it. But to suggest that we could do something to lose our salvation amounts to a claim that we did something to gain it in the first place. But the true Gospel—the good news—invites us to rest in Christ's all-sufficient, *finished* work, and trust God's promise that nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39)—not even our own faithlessness, because our relationship with God—our restoration to His presence--began and is forever maintained by the faithfulness of Christ. To this Kathryn Tanner (b. 1957) speaks most poignantly: "God sets us in and upholds our position in relation to God, whatever we do, whatever happens to us. Despite the fact of human failing, faithlessness and death, we *are* alive in God" (McGrath, CTR: 681).

Salvation (Justification and Sanctification)

I believe that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Christ's death on the cross satisfied, or appeased (Gr: *Hilasmos*, cf. 1 John 2:2) God, who had decreed that without the shedding of blood there could be no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22; Leviticus 17:11). Christ's death as the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of His people was prophesied by Isaiah: "The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11); and Paul records the fulfillment of this prophecy: "For our sake he

made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Forgiveness is therefore granted to all who simply believe on the name of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-11; John 1:12); but as Paul makes clear, even our faith is a gift of God: “by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

I believe that we are justified (declared righteous—Gr: *Dikaioo*) solely by the redemption that is through Christ’s blood, and not at all by our own works (Romans 3:24,28; 5:1,9). Furthermore, we are sanctified (purified, cleansed, consecrated, dedicated—Gr: *Hagiazo*) through Christ’s substitutionary offering once and for all (Hebrews 10:10,14). I believe that both our justification and sanctification are inseparable from our salvation, which has been completely and irrevocably accomplished for those who are in Christ. As John Calvin (1509-64) states, “To be justified in God’s sight is to be reckoned as righteous in God’s judgment and to be accepted on account of that righteousness...having been clothed in [Christ’s righteousness, we appear] in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as a righteous person...Our righteousness is not in us, but in Christ. We possess it only because we participate in Christ; in fact, with him, we possess all his riches” (McGrath, CTR: 449). These things I believe about salvation—justification and sanctification.

Because Christ’s sacrifice satisfied God, He “does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.” He has removed our sins from us “as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:10,12). We who have been reconciled to God through the death of His son (Romans 5:10) are now holy and blameless in *His* sight (Colossians 1:22). We are now “found in Him, not having a righteousness of our own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ” (Philippians 3:9). This understanding of the extent of God’s mercy toward us has tremendous ramifications upon how we live with one another as members of His body. We who

have been reconciled to God are given the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18). To love one another as He has loved us, in obedience to Christ’s command, is to *view* one another as He *views* us: as clothed in the righteousness of Christ. And when we begin to see one another this way, it will change the way we treat one another, even as it changes the way we see ourselves, because we are looking at one who appears before God exactly as we do—“holy and blameless before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

The Church and Sacraments

I believe in one universal church of Jesus Christ, metaphorically pictured in Scripture as both His bride (Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:31-32; Revelation 21:22) and His body (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18,24). The church is also pictured in Scripture by the heavenly city, or the New Jerusalem (Ephesians 2:20-22; Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:2,9-10,14). While the New Testament writers often speak of “the church” or “churches” in terms of local assemblies, they also speak of one universal church over which Christ is the head (Ephesians 3:21; Colossians 1:18,24), to which all believers (in all times and places) have come (Hebrews 12:23). The church did not replace Israel; rather, the church is the embodiment of the “all Israel” to whom the Deliverer was promised (cf. Romans 11:26). In the church, both Jew and Gentile have been reconciled to God through Christ, and are now members of the same household—God’s own temple, to which He has come to dwell (Ephesians 2:11-22). Therefore the church is the fulfillment of John’s apocalyptic vision: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).

I believe that whenever believers gather physically, the church is gathered physically. I also believe that at all times and at all places, even when physically absent from one another, we are spiritually present with all believers even as we are present with Christ. Christ dwells with His church in a perfectly consummated and inseverable union; and we are likewise joined with one another in Him. We could no more cut ourselves off from one another than we could cut ourselves off from Christ. We are “one in Him” (Galatians 3:28). And we as the church, in our *practice* of communion with one another, are Christ’s “flesh and bones” (Ephesians 5:30). We are the tangible, *experiential* presence of Christ to one another.

To the degree that the practice of sacraments, such as the Eucharist (which is a carry-over from the Passover which Christ celebrated with His disciples, and which He fulfilled, cf. Matthew 26:26-28), heightens our awareness of our communion with all the saints, and draws our hearts toward adoring remembrance, and a worshipful reflection upon the mercy Christ performed by His cross, this practice may be seen as an integral part of our fellowship with other believers. Let each one follow their own conscience in this. However I break with church tradition which views the sacraments as efficacious toward salvation, or as making Christ present with His church. Christ has married His bride, and is always and forever present with her. The practice of the sacraments may call His presence into our remembrance, but that practice does not call His presence into being. God is eternally at rest in His love, Zion, Jerusalem, His chief joy (Zephaniah 3:17; Psalm 132:13,14; 137:6). These things I believe about the church and sacraments.

What one believes about the union of Christ with His church—whether it is an accomplished and ever present union, which cannot be diminished, or increased, but is already perfect; or whether it is a union which is being progressively accomplished through the practice of certain

rituals, and could be diminished or even lost by the absence of those rituals—is directly related to how one views the cross of Christ and whether or not it really accomplished the redemption of His people. If the sacraments must be practiced to either complete our redemption, or to somehow keep us in it, then the cross is diminished in our eyes. And we cannot say that in fact “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7); or that Christ truly did “enter the most Holy Place once for all, securing our eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12). But if we believe that by His “one sacrifice He has perfected us forever” (Hebrews 10:14), then we can truly experience the joy and peace of our accomplished salvation and be thankful that it is “not by works of righteousness we have done, but by His mercy that He has saved us” (Titus 3:5).

Eschatology (“Last Things”)

I believe “the last days” of which Jesus and the apostles speak are the last days of the Old Covenant age, “the old order of things” (cf. Revelation 21:4), which was passing away even as the apostles were writing. As Rudolf Bultmann (1887-1976) writes, “According to the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the eschatological event, the action of God by which God has set an end to the old world” (McGrath, CTR: 666). The Gospels are full of statements made by Jesus that He would come in His kingdom to fulfill everything that was written in “that generation” (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:22); and the apostles all taught that His *parousia* (the fulfillment of His eternal *presence*) was imminent, because that is what Jesus had told them (1 John 2:18; Hebrews 10:37; 2 Peter 3:12). I believe that what was immediately future to them in the first century, and imminently expected, was indeed fulfilled in the generation of “some who were standing there” (Matthew 16:28; Luke 9:27).

There is no dispute, even among Christians today who hold to a futurist eschatology, that Jesus taught the “time was fulfilled,” and that His kingdom was “near” and “at hand” (Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9; Matthew 4:17). There is not even any dispute that the book of Revelation opens and closes by stating that the things written there “must shortly take place” (Revelation 1:1; 22:6). The dispute is regarding whether Jesus and the apostles were mistaken about the timing of His kingdom. Sadly, many have followed the claim that they were mistaken into agnosticism because of what that claim suggests about the authority of the Scriptures. If the words of Christ and His apostles recorded there are not to be believed, then on what basis do we trust the authority of any of it?

I believe Jesus kept His word, and fulfilled everything that had been written about Him in Moses, the psalms and the prophets (Luke 24:44). I believe He is eternally present with His people, and that presence is heaven. Heaven has come to earth, but too many Christians are missing the joy of it, because they are looking to escape this “fallen” physical world in search of a sensual experience of the kingdom they deem greater than the eternal presence of Christ in Mt. Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22).

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