

“When the World Comes Round”

Be very careful, then, how you live; not as unwise, but as wise. Those words, written nearly two thousand years ago seem to have been written for our benefit. They are timeless and they have no location in relation to the human condition.

How can I say this? The end of the first century was host to all the harbingers of the end times: the political power of the world was nested not in the representative republican government, but rather in the hands of a few, wealthy families. The economic condition of the most powerful nation on earth is in question, and it is engaged in military action both to maintain peace in outlying areas to ensure national security (the journalists recorded stories about the insurgents in Londinium and how they were such problem for the peacekeepers that their city had been destroyed with the fighting), as well as to ensure that much needed resources continue to flow to the people. The head of state was impeached roughly 15 years earlier. Nearly naked people fight in spectacles of public violence for monetary gain, and the entertainment of the masses. The many currencies of the world are tied to the treasury of that single nation. Sound familiar?

The day the world gets 'round to understanding where it is,
Using all it's found, to help each other, hand in hand

Two thousand years and nothing has changed. The world has yet to begin to understand itself, and that misunderstanding is plain to see every morning when we open the paper and read the headlines from the day before. We are inundated by the stories of victims, or litigation against a corporation, or a corporation who has run afoul of environmental controls. The list is truly endless and can be embodied in a single example. I have been a police officer for 14 years. In the days I was a patrol officer, I used to respond to 911 calls for the annoyance: neighbor with loud music. Upon my arrival, I would always ask the same question, “Did you ask them to turn it down

before you called 911?” I always received a negative answer. I have been both irritated by, and understanding of, that answer. In some neighborhoods, I can understand not wanting to speak to your neighbor about how they are bothering you – you are afraid you'll be killed. My normal strategy was to make contact with the offender and politely inform them that their neighbors were upset, then politely ask them to turn the music down. I think I can count on one hand the number of times I had to actually bring the law to bear on the situation. Once the music was down, I would stay and talk a few minutes. In that conversation, I would generally ask if they knew their neighbor. If the answer was “no”, I would introduce them. If the answer was “yes”, I would ask if they talked. Either way, before I left, I would get the two neighbors together and make sure they were both OK with talking to each other when something bothered them. On one job, I learned that the real problem wasn't that the music was too loud, it was that the complaining family hadn't been invited to a party held by somebody next to whom they had lived for 10 years. I rarely received return calls for neighbor troubles.

The day the world gets 'round to understanding where it's gone
Losing so much ground killing each other, hand in hand
Such foolishness in man, I want no part of their plan

It has been postulated that humankind created god in its own image. Perhaps that is the case. When we look at an idea common to all three of the revealed religions: our God has blessed our military to go forward and destroy those who worship our god in a different manner, it would certainly seem to support the understanding of a god in image of humanity. For the Israelites it was the carrying of the Ark by the Judeans into battle against the Tribe of Israel. For the Christians it is most notable in a series of wars against heathen Islam, held in the land of the Hebrew, known as “The Crusades.” For the Muslims we simply need, only, to watch the news. Now in each case, these bitter conflicts likely erupted from greed. Greed is defined as: An excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves – however, I believe that definition leaves out an important factor: the desire to deny others in regards to possessions and/or free-will. All three of the revealed religions purport to worship the same God of Abraham, yet there would

appear to be little room for cooperation amongst them. In my mind, it is easily supported that the fundamentalists of every religion do, in fact, create a god in their image. I, however, wish to shrug off the shackles imposed by worshiping such a human created god. Instead I seek to follow the divine plan for humanity – as laid out by the God in who's image I have been formed.

If you're the destructive kind
Now I'm working from day to day
As I don't want to be like you
I look for the pure of heart
And the ones that have made a start,

In our youth, we don't understand wisdom. Wisdom is the mark of maturing, and there are some who never mature. This lack of maturity becomes dangerous when those people come to positions of authority and direct the day to day lives of the common citizen. If we consider wisdom to be the ability to discover or judge what is true, right, or lasting, then how can we abide by the destructive actions carried out in our names? Once upon a time, I was an agent of destruction. I had no problem going into battle simply because I was told to go. I have since begun working to become a better person, to understand why I am asked to carry out violence against another human, and to understand the impact that violence, and denial of free-will, has on that individual as well as society as a whole. Each day, I strive to leave greed and the lust for power behind – instead, I strive for a true understanding of what has been given to me as a child of God. A full spirit, and a measure of understanding. While I take no pleasure in being victimized, nor can I hold a grudge against the offender. At some point or another, we have wronged our neighbors, and have enjoyed their forgiveness. In so following those examples, we continue to follow those who have made a start, while we provide a hand up rather than a hand out.

But Lord, there are just a few who bow before you, in silence they pray,
Oh how they pray for the day the world gets 'round

Despite the public personae of our leaders, we accept that those who spout vitriol in the name of the Lord are, in general, fairly hypocritical. Senators who argue against gay rights, are themselves in the closet. Congresspeople who take a public stance against abortion, yet have funded at least one for somebody they know. Those who will stand-up on Sunday morning television and tell us that licentious behavior is the work of the Devil itself – tearfully come before us, once they've been caught, begging forgiveness and spewing platitudes about how they have sinned against the Lord. I have come to believe that the most pious are those who are quiet and actually practice their faith, rather than go forward and tell others what their faith must be, and how it must be practiced. We need to look with our hearts for those who truly bow before God and seek the ways they can help to make the world a better place. Once found, we must follow those examples – ourselves becoming agents of change, silent, but powerful. Let our prayer be that the world will come to recognize its issues and will begin to seek solutions rather than the continued subjugation of peoples in an effort to band-aid over the problems we have caused in our pride.

Using all they've found
To help each other, hand in hand
The Day The World Gets 'Round

So let us return to wisdom. Wisdom is the understanding and practice of right living. Not right living based upon the social norms of the culture in which the individual finds themselves, rather, right living based upon the divine teachings. Those teachings are the same in all religions, it is the fringe elements that create dogma to suit their purpose. All major religions celebrate the human as a divine creature, either formed in the image of God, or an extension of god in our physical world. With that understanding, it is not such a radical idea that we should cease foolish living and seek out the will of God, making the most of all our days.

In an alternative reading for today, we would have heard the story of how pleased God was with Solomon and offered him whatever he desired: wealth, fame, you name it. Solomon requested wisdom – the ability to live with others in harmony. It was through this community harmony that Solomon achieved great fame and wealth. I suggest that we look to Solomon as a quiet example for how we are

to live wisely, to reach out a hand, and do our part to bring the world around to the fulfillment of its divine potential.