

Sea World/Pagan World

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On a recent trip my family went to Sea World. We had a great time looking at all the fish and taking in a few of the shows, but one thing really struck me. The park seems to espouse an abiding pagan/evolutionary worldview. The thought that there is an evolutionary point of view at Sea World probably doesn't come as a surprise to anyone. That paganism and evolution are related concepts may. The fact is that evolution and paganism are related. According to a pro paganism web site (resurrectisis.org), "Evolution was a fundamental precept of Pagan religion." Once you think about it, it makes sense. According to pagan doctrine, we all come from common roots, share a common heritage with Gaia (mother earth), who nurtured us and brought us forth. While most pagans and neo pagans believe in the divine of some sort, there is room for an atheistic view. Both views fit well with those who hold to evolution.

What is paganism?

It can be hard to define the overall scope of the pagan and neo pagan religions, but one thing seems to be consistent among them; it is a religious philosophy that reveres nature, where the gods and goddesses –if any– are natural, not supernatural. According to one web site (crystalinks.com), "Paganism is a religion of nature, in other words Pagans revere Nature. Pagans see the divine as immanent in the whole of life and the universe; in every tree, plant, animal and object, man and woman and in the dark side of life as much as in the light." In fact, a lot of the environmental activism of today is based upon a neo pagan worldview that compels people to protect the sanctity of the earth and nature.

How does Sea World fit in?

What does all this have to do with Sea World? Good question. While we were there, we took in the latest Shamu, the killer whale, show, *Believe*. We were treated to a wonderful display of trained animal behavior. The intelligence, understanding, and behavior of these whales is absolutely amazing. As I watched, I was reminded of the fact that God placed mankind at the pinnacle of His creation, and gave us authority over the animals (Gen 1:26-28; 9:2). I thought of James 3:7, "*For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.*" I

thought of how wonderful God's creation is, in that no one could even think of forcing these huge mammals to do our bidding against their will, but we can get them to do almost anything we ask simply by tossing a few fish into their mouths.

While I saw the interaction between man and beast as evidence of God's wonderful creation, it was obvious the developers of the show did not see it that way. As the show began, we were treated to a well-produced video on a set of four moving giant screens. It was a truly amazing show. During the video we were told about how we were all related: man, ape, whale, etc., with a common ancestry and a common need to protect our world. As it ended, we were treated to a view of the father, a somewhat scruffy and silly looking penguin; the crowd went wild with laughter (perhaps sometime in the future I will discuss the incessant efforts on the part of the world to denigrate men). Finally the image panned back, revealing more and more until we were looking at the magnificent blue orb of the earth against the black backdrop of space. The caption read, "Our Mother." The crowd applauded enthusiastically.

To me, the symbolism and message was unmistakable, but I suspect—and it is only a guess—that 90% or more of the people there had no idea, or didn't care about the message being preached to them. I am convinced that the vast majority simply takes the naturalistic and evolutionary context for granted without giving any thought to the consequences of that position.

Paganism -- A slap in God's face. . .

We have been told that Christians are arrogant to place themselves at the pinnacle of the world, to believe that mankind is special, above the rest of the animal world, above nature. How foolish we are to assert that a supernatural God created all things and created man in His own image. On the contrary, I say that it is the ultimate arrogance to look out upon the creation that God has placed before us and deny the power, if not the very existence of the God who put it all there. Verses like Ps 19:1 "*The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*" clearly demonstrate that God's creation tells us of His existence, and greatness. Humility suggests that we recognize Him as God and honor Him as the creator of all things. Further, it is a slap in the face of our God to elevate His creation to a position equal to, or even above the one who created all things, to worship by implication, if not in actual practice, the created thing rather than the creator. It is not surprising that God would declare his wrath against such men in Rom 1:18-23, "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress*

the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”

What can we do?

What do we say to a world that simply accepts as fact the pagan and evolutionary viewpoints? How do we tell a world about God the creator when they, for the most part, simply take for granted what they see and hear from the modern scientific community? How do we tell a world about the wrath of God that is revealed against a world that displayed the very arrogance and ignorance that this world today is showing? I really don't know. When I consider the endless creation vs. evolution debate, where the vast majority of people already have their minds made up. People simply fight to discredit the same old arguments. I seriously doubt that anyone willing to openly espouse a pagan philosophy would be willing to engage in an intellectually viable discussion about the true nature of the world and God. And even if we win the debate, what is the value of convincing someone that God created the world if that soul is still lost in sin?

I don't propose to have the best answer, but God does. In 1 Cor 2:2, Paul said, *“For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”* Paul certainly knew a lot more than just that; he could debate with the best of them. The point is that Paul understood it is the simple Gospel message that will convert the willing heart. There will always be some who are ready to listen, and even among those who accept paganism there are some who have minds open to honest discourse. Certainly we need to deal in some way with mistaken world views, but if they will listen to the Gospel first, then we can teach them what the Bible has to say about nature and the world.

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