

HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HAND?" YES, BUT WHICH HAND?

[Delivered at Bethel Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO 10-26-97]

1. At last weekend's ITEST workshop on the theme, "Creation AND Evolution", a question arose about the Darwinian (not Darwin's) phrase, "the survival of the fittest." Who are the "fittest"? Are they merely whoever happens to survive? But then does the phrase really say anything? Or is it just arguing in circles – the survival of those who survive? No, I think Darwinism says more than that. The fittest don't just happen to survive, by chance or coincidence. There is something about them that qualifies them to survive. Some are fit to survive.
2. But if so, there must be others – lots of others – who must not be fit, hence don't survive. Evidently lots of creatures (maybe even some "human" creatures) aren't "fit" to keep around. So it seems. But is that fair? Who said anything about fair? No wonder so many evolutionists prefer not to ascribe the whole process to a Creator. They are too pious, too "religious" to do that. For, what kind of cruel Creator would that be? At least there is a basic sense of fairness in their atheism. And Christians should give them credit for that. But then, how can we still speak about "evolution AND creation?" The question is really a question about God.
3. On Reformation Sunday it is fitting (forgive the pun) to recall Luther's distinction between God's "two kingdoms,"

God's "lefthand" reign and his "righthand" reign. Recall also that it is only in God's "righthanded" way of administering the creation, namely in Christ Jesus, that the Creator operates mercifully, forgivingly. But by the same token

it is the followers of Christ who then follow through, continuing to transfer the "lefthanded" creation over into the "righthanded" – from God's "old" way of running the world to God's "new" way.

5. A clue from Annie Dillard's "Holy the Firm."

*Hold hands and crack the whip, and yank the Absolute out
of there
and into the light, God pale and astounded, spraying a
spiral of salts
and earths, God footloose and flung. And cry down the
line to his
passing white ear, "Old Sir! Do you hold space from
buckling by a
finger in its hole? O Old! Where is your other hand?" His
right hand
is clenching, calm, round the exploding left hand of Holy
the Firm.
(p. 71)*

"So live," the poet calls to poor scar-faced Julie. "I'll be the nun for you. I am now." (p. 76) So I say to you, brothers and sisters, "be the nun" – Christ's righthanded "sweet- swappers" – for the scarred sufferers under God's left hand, suffering them into a "survival" for which he alone can make them "fit."

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