



Other or Not

IN HIS LETTER to the Philippians, the apostle Paul emphatically stated:

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem *other* better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of *others*. — Philippians 2:3 (emphases supplied).

This foundational truth was exemplified by Jesus himself and was stated by him in his words to a young man: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour [other] as thyself” (Matthew 19:19).

The Postmodern Age and “Otherness”

Tragically, in this postmodern age the ultimate emphasis is on “me,” “myself” and “I.” As the French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), wrote:

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Hell is *other* people.¹

My original fall is the existence of the *other*.²

In this context, is it any wonder that the world is swept with rebellion, terror and violence and that a few are determined to totally dominate, if not eliminate, the others?

God and “Otherness”

The world has largely failed to understand, accept and celebrate the fundamental truth that God is the ultimate “Other” and that from the very beginning he determined to create “otherness.” Because God could not tolerate being alone, he designed the “otherness” of the universe, of nature, of life and humanity. Furthermore, he decided to become the human “Other” as Jesus Christ.

He is our ultimate “Other,” and we are his ultimate “other.”

For this reason, after his bodily resurrection from the dead, Jesus declared that he is with us always (Matthew 28:20). Furthermore, God

longs for all humanity to be for, with and to each other. In spite of humanity's rejection of the “other,” God as Jesus Christ will soon appear (Acts 1:11), raise the dead (Matthew 25:31, 32; John 12:32; 1 Corinthians 15:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17), convene the judgment (John 5:22, 27; 12:31; Hebrews 12:23), and proceed to transform all nature and humanity into the eternal embrace of all others and of “otherness” (2 Timothy 4:8; 2 Peter 3:13; 1 John 3:2). “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20)!

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“Other,” and we are his
ultimate “other.”*

Endnotes

1. Quoted in “No Exit,” at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Exit (emphasis supplied).
2. Quoted in jasper-hopkins.info/SartreLanguage.pdf (emphasis supplied).

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