

**M: Hermit Harakiri (Miscellaneous) – minus 12 points**

This anthropology basically pretends that deity alone is all we desire, so that without him we might as well be dead. The first part is summed up in the word, hermitism. Forget creation, humanity, etc. God—or Jesus if we forget the trinity—is all we need.<sup>1</sup> A reasonable example of this unreasonable is Darlene Zschech's *Jesus, You're All I Need* (1998).<sup>2</sup> This little number blithely ignores the father, spirit,<sup>3</sup> and creation, while Darlene tells Jesus that he's all she needs and only he gets her life. Strange to hear that she married—wasn't Jesus *all* she needed?—and possibly now 'lives,' in some sense, for her children as well? Actually, Jesus never needed her to live for him: he needs her not, and she's always needed more than him. *Genesis* pictures God as saying he wasn't all that Adam, the individual, needed. Hence *Ish* has *Ishah*, and Eve has Adam. Humanity was created as a society creature.<sup>4</sup> God always seeks to share us, never to hog us. He created us shareable. On what basis do we now dismiss fellow humanity, especially the redeemed who are eternally our brothers & sisters, and to whom we are to do good (Gal.6:10)? What now of food for the body, air for our lungs, gravity for our feet, Christian community for our maturation? Jesus is all I need? In fact, forget him, Darlene, the spirit is all I need! Huh? But why compete for folly?

Against our fantasy that we live for deity alone, is pitted the reality that God does not need us. From the outflow of his utter completeness, the source of creativeness created a material universe, his work of art painted in atoms, bundles of energy from the uncreated source. Perhaps it is to be our playground, once we're released from mortality. Be that as it may, so far as we know, only our planet has been given any creatures who have sufficient personality level (*imago dei* level) to fellowship with him. What if beyond Earth, millions of planets have such species, with Earth being the only sheep lost in rebellion, as *Out of the Silent Planet* postulated? Who knows? What we do know is that *Genesis* pictured a single human as needing companionship other than God. Come in Eve. OK, Christians have entered a new phase, what C S Lewis said might be called the next step in evolution, a spiritual birth into a kingdom unknown to Adam, and a new relationship, pictured as God's spirit indwelling us (Steve Hakes' *Israel's Gone Global*, 2013:101-3). Paul is sometimes misread as a lone bachelor, best placed for spiritual life! He's sadly misread. My take is that had his mission been much less risky, he would have loved to have been married, as Peter was. He certainly enjoyed working with women, whatever their missions (eg apostles, teachers) and encouraged them to be active in church. He was a team leader and key player. The corporate relationship of Christians together, is a biblical picture. God may be all I need to exist as a spirit, but he's never intended to be all I need to enjoy as a spirit.

<sup>1</sup> [www.joshhunt.com/mail48.htm](http://www.joshhunt.com/mail48.htm) is sensible.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus, you're all I need / Now I give my life to you alone / Lord, You gave yourself / So I could live / Oh, you purchased my salvation / And wiped away my tears / Now I drink your living water / And I'll never thirst again / For you alone are holy / I'll worship at your throne / And you will reign forever / Holy is the Lord. The last phrase either means the Lord is other than Jesus to whom she is singing, or should be Holy are you Lord.

<sup>3</sup> Possibly drink your living water hints at the spirit as being symbolised by water.

<sup>4</sup> Incidentally the emphasis (unique to man) was not on society for procreation but for companionship. Yahweh, in whose image we are, is the eternal society.

Who dares dismiss their fellow humanity, and say that deity is all we need? It sounds so spiritual, so unbiblical. *Revelation* pictures redeemed humanity as still having a corporate voice. True, postmortem relationships will be different. All marriages will be off (sorry Mormons), and family trees won't be seen for the true wood. Though some gravestones preach the heresy, thinking that the pleasantly here & now will be picked up after death isn't biblical. Couples here won't reunite the other side. Death ends the ties that bind (Rm.7:2). The woman who had had seven husbands does not return to any or all (Mk.12:23). Chocolates will give way to deepest love. Fellowship with each other will far exceed the deepest of loving bonds possible here, as universal joy replaces parochial touch. Deity will infuse all fellowship, all beauty. We definitely won't have a God-only mentality. For fullness of immortal life, we will need others, since that's how God's made us, a symphony, not a mere soloist. God shares. Jesus maintained his physicality. In the life to come, bodies will be invulnerable, but useful for containment, for differentiation from others, and for sensory contact with others. Others then; others now. Human fellowship was designed by God. Church fellowship is needed for present spiritual wellbeing, even as food is for our physical wellbeing. Those that cut off church can go onto starvation rations, the them & God of hermitude. Some starve to death spiritually, alas.

However, suitable qualifications to "all I need," expressions, can justify them. All I need to satisfy my hunger, is food; all I need to wash my hands, is water; all I need to do for eternal life now, is to accept God's offer of it. But many "all I need" claims are erroneous, because they're incomplete statements. Do "all I need" songs answer the question, "all I need for what?"

Songs that say that Jesus only lives to do a job, miss the point as much singing that we live only for some purpose. "Jesus lives to save," is foolish, as is, "I live to serve." Of course Jesus' living does save and unite, and my mortal life serves. But that's not a general reason why we choose to live—I don't think that we need a general reason to justify living mortal life. More anon. Incidentally, the directional word *unto* is handy: we live unto Jesus, but not for him—he doesn't need us in any absolute, ontological, sense. It is Hinduism, not Christianity, which downplays individualism. True, in war many individual's deaths for the many can be needed by the many, but this isn't a pattern of persons being lava lamp blobs, which by losing individuality enrich the underlying blob. Creator and creation eternally remain distinct. That is the creator's will. Individual personalities, yielded, desirous, are eternally incorporated into the One's life. That is the creator's grace. In *Antz* (1998), to realise the insignificance of individualism was, according to Z4195's psychiatrist, the "real breakthrough," for finding meaning in the collective. French existentialist Albert Camus, argued that the Greek myth of Sisyphus showed what life was about: absurd Sisyphus lived fully; hated death totally; existed meaninglessly. We go on without hope. Protest life is as good as it gets. Ultimately life was, Camus argued, meaningless, but even this didn't warrant suicide. He taught that we should live in the enjoyment of the ridiculous, rejecting the idea *God*, without rejecting life (suicide). Is *solitaire* the only game in town? Personally, I weep for Camus & Sisyphus precisely because they missed God's pattern and so didn't live life to the full (Jhn.10:10).

What do Christian lyricists say, when asked why we should live? Some reply that we should live in order to work for and/or worship deity. So *apart* from such a reason, does suicide seem logical, since *only* the spiritual reason warrants human life? It is possible that some lyricists have been tempted to suicide (I know that feeling), and have smuggled a spiritual reason to live into their lyrics? In the black hole, the abnormal, only one ray of light might seem to offer hope. The Dawn Treader, captured in nightmare, followed the albatross of light. But the majority, who live in the normal, even in the humdrum of life, do not need a reason to live—they simply lack a sufficient reason to die. Is the presumption of good philosophy *what justifies dying*, not *what justifies living*? Here, *live* and *die* relates simply to mortal life. On the secular scene, Liz Anderson's (1967) *Excuse Me for Living*, was a boyfriend thing: excuse me for living my whole life for you.<sup>5</sup> A depraved girl/guy romance. Some Christians make it a deity thing. We ought to never live *for* God, but ought to live *unto* him.

Did Wayne & Cathy Perrin live in order to worship deity?<sup>6</sup> Did Ronnie Wilson live only to see God's kingdom come?<sup>7</sup> Did Reuben Morgan live for the lord alone?<sup>8</sup> Incidentally did he mean obeying or having the lord (I presume Jesus)? Had the Perrins (or Wilson) a better reason to live? Have non-Christians no sufficient reason to live? Why should we boast of what God doesn't want? I don't want to be an eternal hermit, simply myself and God. God's created far more to life—why knock it? Must we buy into existentialism, to the extent that mortality is merely meaningless mockery, and outside Christ the only reason to live being defiance against absurdity? Creation remains a wonderful blessing in the natural world. Life without God is meaningless, true, no matter how purposeful, but it can still be enjoyable. And for Christians it is still a wonderful universe. I for one don't need a reason to keep on living, beyond the fact that I am alive and see no overwhelming reason to end my mortality. God is not the one being that keeps my soul content, even though he is the ground of my being. The abnormal is different. Imprisoned, wracked perhaps by pain, Paul was given the option to be with the lord though death, which is far better. He said his reason to keep mortal life, rather than to give it up, was in fact to mature God's people, who still needed him. An altruist, not a mercenary, he had reached that abnormal point where things are so wretched, that it seems as if the only thing that keeps us going is... The point where, if we cannot complete that sentence, we at least wish to seek death. But normally, we sing within the normal, not the abnormal. If we sing that God is the only reason that justifies mortal life, will not unbelievers say that we have lost connectivity with the joy of life? In the normal, to sing the abnormal is abnormal, not spiritual.

<sup>5</sup> Many secular songs fail miserably and lead to misery if swallowed, in proclaiming meaning as existing only in another human being: the romance of the Void, Nightmare Island.

<sup>6</sup> *When I Look Into Your Holiness* (1980) reaches into the awesome. *Awesome* is an adjective I seldom use of songs, so feel my deep grief as I lament its alien idea that suicide has lost the vote to its rival, worship—there should be no vote.

<sup>7</sup> *The Time We Have Is Precious* (1981)

<sup>8</sup> For example, *I Give You My Heart* (1995).