

**INTRODUCTION TO MY "THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE" PRESENTATION: *ELI, ELI***  
**A B.U., Biblical Unitarian view of Psalm 22     JOE MARTIN     May 6, 2023**

I am 75, this is my XX presentation, for Theological Conference, CWS, etc. Please pardon me while I reminisce for a bit. I am not a prophet or a scholar per se. I am a son of a dirt worker (*georgos*, greek Jn. 15:1) named **George** Elliott Martin of Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana. (cp. Amos 7:14). He worked the fields, strawberries, cucumbers, corn, etc., and he worked the dirt roads in the Parish on his Caterpillar road grader, "maintainer." I remember, as a child, I would follow him on the road grader, at about ten years old, and throw any roots or trash, off the new dirt roads.

For Theological Conference inspiration, I reference Kent Ross and Anthony Buzzard, who kept pushing many of us to deeper understandings and a fellowship that encourages each other with a more biblical understanding among ourselves. I remember presentations of Syd Hatch (former Baptist preacher), Colin Brown (Fuller), Richard Rubenstein(a Jew), Joel Hemphill,(a gospel singer), Kermit Zarley (a golfer), etc. bringing further light to our gatherings. These are fond memories.

I remember in seventh or eighth grade, we had to write a paper on a famous person. For some reason, I chose Albert Schweitzer who was a musician, a doctor, and a missionary. He was born in Alsace-Lorraine (France & German heritage) like my great, great, great grandfather, George Nicolas Martin who came to New Orleans in 1849.

Schweitzer's father was the local Lutheran-Evangelical pastor. Schweitzer first focused on music and the organ. He also did a PhD, in Theology/Philosophy at the University of Tübingen in 1899. In 1911, he did his medical degree, for missionary work. *Quest for the Historical Jesus*, came out in 1906. Though we would not fully accept all of his work, he did challenge Orthodoxy and the status quo, and at least, got Jesus' message a bit. He received the Nobel Peace Prize for his "Reverence for Life." One quote from that is "Ethics is nothing other than Reverence for Life."

A few thoughts and quotes from Fuller times (me ~1984). David Allen Hubbard said at a Fuller gathering, "*Chesed*, is the most important Hebrew word," meaning, "lovingkindness," "covenant love," etc. (Micah 6:8... **Love Chesed**, *Ahvh Chesed*) George Ladd said, the "blessed hope" is all about the Kingdom (Anthony and I visited him). Speaking of Anthony, the early 80s is when I went to LaJolla, California to "discuss" COGGC/COGAF Theology. What a **BOMBARDMENT** of questions? Does one mean one/*Echad* to you? Is Jesus really human? Where do you see the dead? What is the gospel? Could you tell me about the Kingdom? Do you believe in a personal Satan? Etc. Then the road trip to Louisiana on the way to Oregon, Illinois. OBC/ABC The rest is history.

Lewis Smedes, in an Ethics class discussing the humanity of Jesus said, "It would be nothing to hang in there on a Friday afternoon if you knew for sure you would be the Top Dog in the universe come Sunday morning." Psalm 22 expresses some of Jesus' thoughts. Ray Anderson, stopped using the term "God the Son" in deference to the biblical "Son of God." Ralph Martin, in a NT class on Philippians 2:6 got into a heated discussion (the *harpagmos* / grasp question) with a super "Orthodox" student when he said in his British accent, "I take it therefore that he was not equal if he did not grasp at equality." The student practically

screamed back, “You don’t believe Jesus is God then.” He replied, “I’m simply reading the text.”

At Columbia Seminary (Atlanta), I also ran into many nice folks. The main one was Dr. Shirley Guthrie who wrote “*Christian Doctrine*,” a foundational source for Presbyterians (Reformed tradition having broken away from the Catholic church [RC]). I happened to be at the luncheon/party that celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and republication of that book. (I had him in two or three classes) He said,

“The Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Neither the word “trinity” itself nor such language as “one-in-three,” “three-in-one,” one “essence” (or “substance”), and three “persons” is biblical language. The language of the doctrine is the language of the ancient church taken from classical Greek philosophy.” *Christian Doctrine*, 1994, pp 76,77.

He also said that he now rejected the notion of the immortal soul. (p. 378)

“Bible-believing Christians must reject the doctrine of the soul’s immortality because it is based on an unbiblical understanding of what the soul is.” (379)

“... Hope for the resurrection of the body is the Christian alternative to hope for the immortality of the soul.” (392)

He was a student of Barth, and was quite outspoken at times. A favorite “semi-expletive” quote from him in class was, “God can do whatever the hell he wants.” Hurtado was asked, “Did Jesus ever think he was God?” He said, “HELL no!” These theologians! That’s almost as great as Joel Hemphill saying, “We need to KICK the Hellenism out of the Church!” (with appropriate kick at the pulpit!)

We’ve enjoyed the blessings, in the last decade, of Dan Gill, Joel Hemphill, Kermit Zarley, etc. Kermit has republished his Restitution book, with the title and subtitle, *THE RESTITUTION, Biblical Proof Jesus is NOT God*. (On Amazon, \$35). I ordered a copy because it is in “normal” book format. Kermit, co-founded the PGA Bible Study group for golfers on tour.

Since a great number quote him (Dunn, Ehrman, Hurtado, etc.) I highly recommend the rereading of *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, by the famous (to me anyway... lexicons etc), Walter Bauer. (Siglar Press reprint 1996) Bauer died, Nov. 17, 1960) Some quotes:

“Must not the historian... maintain as a primary principle the dictum *audiatur et altera pars* [let the other side also be heard]? (Intro, xxi )

Perhaps- “certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as “heresies” originally **had not been such at all... .**” (Intro xxii) (emphasis added)

“Only in the case of Rome can we state ... that orthodoxy possessed the upper hand. ...It is impossible neatly to divide the Christian writing known to us down to the year 200 between orthodoxy and heresy.” (P. 193)

“However, east of Phrygian Hierapolis we could hardly discern any traces of orthodoxy. Christianity and heresy were essentially synonymous there.” (229)

The pagan syncretism of the era “...with their syncretistic conception of the heavenly redeemer and filled with a dualistic contempt for matter, deprive his (Jesus’) earthly life of its main content.” (cp. NO Kingdom of God) (p. 239)

“Semitic-eschatological gave way to Greek-metaphysical.” (p. 298)

