My Strong Convictions – Gary Allen Henecke DD

God, the Creator, is the Father of all life and the source of everything that exists - to which we give the name *cosmos.* In that cosmos, he has given existence in two forms, one of which is touchable and seeable and which we label sa,rx *flesh.* The second form is the invisible realm of the pneu/ma *spirit.* The closest ancient man could come to that realm was to liken it to breath and to wind. The cosmos is the expression visible of the God and that the physical comes from the invisible and unseen. Yet, God by his very nature has expressed himself through simple proclamation – God's Word. The Word is God going forth from God. These utterances are the expression of his inward nature but are the source existence - of all life.

In Jesus, God was speaking through the physical nature of a human being so that humans might grasp his personal being and personality. He preceded the full revelation with concepts in vision and teaching through the nation of Israel. Then he became flesh and entered his own cosmos as a human. Our monotheism has become articulated through our understanding of that revelation the at-three in the oneness of God.

Christian theology - the study of God - centers upon the singular revelation God gave of himself in human history, which is Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, it may be correctly stated that true Christian theology is centered in Christology. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus, the Son. In him the Father is seen (John 14:9) and accessed. God was in the Messiah doing his ministry of reconciliation of the cosmos (II Corinthians 5:19). It is in this reconciliation that I believe history centers itself. The life of God was embodied in Jesus of Nazareth (in his person).

Kai. o` lo,goj sa.rx evge,neto
And the Word became (was made) flesh

I belong to the conviction that our theology is Christology. The heart of my convictions is that the entire mission of God can be summed up in his name Emmanuel. We cannot know God apart from the God who is in the man Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:19 A *God was in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.* God in Christ is fully God and not a form of divinity that is less than what Jesus called "The Father."

For me, Jesus the Nazarene is the revelation of God himself. He is the "I AM" and the I AM Come as well as the Amen Amen. In the Messiah God became flesh. The Yahweh of Israel walked within Israel reconciling all creation to himself. Jesus is neither the mere addendum nor amendment of Judaism, but he is the finale or fulfillment for which Israel existed. He is not the evolution of God, but the concept and goal of creation before and throughout the ages. He who died on Golgotha is seen in John 20:28 *Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"* and Titus 2:13 *awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* as well

as II Peter 1:1 ***Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.***

JESUS AS GOD

Romans 9:1-5 ***I am telling the truth in Christ (I am not lying!), for my conscience assures me in the Holy Spirit– I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed– cut off from Christ– for the sake of my people, my fellow countrymen, who are Israelites. To them belong the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, by human descent, came the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever! Amen. (NET)***

Most of us would be uncomfortable with what Ignatius wrote between 110 and 117 A.D. as he awaited execution by the Emperor Trojan. In seven brief letters he said: ***Before our God, Jesus the Christ was conceived by Mary*** **(Ephesians 18:2);** ***A love for Jesus our God, "permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God who granted you such wisdom"*** **(Smyr 1:1). Such statements fill the records of the early converts of the disciples. The Deity of Jesus is subtle in your New Testament.**

A. Implicit Christology:

1. Divine functions performed by Jesus

a. In relation to the universe

1) Creator - John 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb. 1:2
2) Sustainer - I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:17; Heb 1:3
3) Author of life - John 1:4; Acts 3:15
4) Ruler - Matt. 28:18; Rom. 14:9; Rev. 1:5

b. In relation to human beings

1) Healing the sick - Mark 1:32-34; Acts 3:6, 10:38
2) Teaching authoritatively - Mark 1:21-22, 13:31
3) Forgiving sins - Mark 2:1-12; Luke 24:47; Acts 5:31; Col. 3:13
4) Granting salvation or imparting eternal life - Acts 4:12; Romans 10:12-14
5) Dispensing the Spirit - Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:17, 33
6) Raising the dead - Luke 7:11-17; John 5:21, 6:40
7) Exercising judgment - Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:19-29; Acts 10:41; I Corinthians 4:4-5

2. Divine status claimed by or accorded to Jesus

a. In relation to his Father

1) Possessor of divine attributes - John 1:4, 10:30, 21:17; Ephesians 4:10; Colossians 1:19, 2:9